



**For immediate release**

**Carboniferous past meets Carbon neutral future in new building by award-winning designers WHW Architects**

Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 9, 2008 – The award-winning architects at WHW say they've created a building that combines Joggins' world class fossil past with the needs of a carbon neutral future.

The new centre is the focal point of a community effort to have the world-famous cliffs declared a UNESCO world heritage site. UNESCO is expected to make a decision when it meets in Quebec this July.

"Our goal from the beginning has been to design and build an exceptional environment for the collection and study of a world renowned fossil resource. And this green building – with its harvested rain water, green roofs and daylight spaces – could generate over two thirds of its energy without burning fossil fuels" according to WHW design architect Ron Burdock.

Three elements dominated the design of the building: showcasing the extraordinary fossils, reflecting the cultural history of the Joggins coal mining era and articulating the magnificent power of the cliffs. To see those cliffs is to witness the world's most complete fossil record of terrestrial life during the Carboniferous Period, between 300 and 360 million years ago.

The result is a cutting-edge example of a green, sustainable building. Every step of the design process considered the local community, the natural environment, the historical significance of the site, and the desire for a modest ecological footprint.

WHW specified local materials including Wallace sandstone, hemlock timbers, Solera glazing, and a made-in-Nova Scotia wind turbine. Recycled steel was used in the structure, fly ash replaced up to 35% of the Portland cement and recycled materials were used in finishes such as gypsum board and carpet. The building design incorporates off the shelf energy efficient technologies such as air to air heat pumps, solar collectors for heating hot water and photovoltaic cells for generating electricity. Natural light replaces artificial illumination wherever possible and of course operable windows provide a natural source of ventilation.

"The building uses approximately 1/3 less energy than a comparable structure. By harnessing alternative, carbon free energy sources such as the wind and sun, roughly two thirds of the building's energy needs will be provided from clean, renewable sources," says Burdock.

The project is registered with the Canada Green Building Council and the design team hopes to achieve LEED silver or even LEED Gold green building verification. LEED achievement (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) at any level reflects an exceptional level of building quality.

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"The project marks a crossroads where the ancient, Carboniferous past meets a less carbon-dependent future," says WHW principal for the project John Crace. "Our client has been very proactive and looked ahead as much as they have celebrated the significance of the past. What they have now is truly one of a kind in the world."

*WHW Architects won the commission after responding to a Request for Proposals in 2005. WHW and their team were responsible for the entire site development including programming, LEED facilitation, site and landscape design, building design and interpretive exhibit planning and design.*

*WHW Architects is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Established in 1945, the firm is considered a leader in the practice of green building design. With a staff of over 50, including 14 LEED Accredited Professionals, it is also the largest architectural practice in Atlantic Canada. WHW has built a long-standing reputation by listening carefully to their clients and providing exceptional professional service with creative flair. [www.whwarchitects.com](http://www.whwarchitects.com).*

- 30 -

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