



For Immediate Release

Artscape's Green Arts Barns Official Groundbreaking Celebrates an Innovative Partnership with All Levels of Government

Redevelopment of historic Wychwood TTC streetcar repair barns in St. Clair and Bathurst community set to be transformed into multi-tenant arts and environmental centre

TORONTO –Wednesday, June 20, 2007- Today, Artscape celebrated the official groundbreaking of the Green Arts Barns, an \$18 million redevelopment of the historic Wychwood TTC streetcar repair barns in the St. Clair and Bathurst community. **The Honourable Michael Bryant, Ontario Attorney General and MPP St. Paul's**, and **Councillor Joe Mihevc, Toronto Ward 21 St. Paul's West** joined **Tim Jones, President and CEO of Artscape** in the ceremonial groundbreaking of this multi-tenant arts and environmental centre run by and for the community.

“We knew at the outset that we would need a strong and compelling vision to attract the level of interest and investment required to bring the Barns back to life” said **Tim Jones**. “Today, all levels of government, numerous foundations, corporations, and individuals are on board. We are thrilled to have a growing chorus of supporters who understand the value of this new model of multi-tenant centres where artists, environmentalists, and community members can rub shoulders, share ideas, and generate creative energy to fuel our city”.

“Arts and culture plays a crucial role in building strong and prosperous communities,” said **The Honourable Caroline Di Cocco, Ontario Minister of Culture**. “For artists, finding housing as well as studio space that is affordable and appropriate to their craft in a booming city can be difficult. That’s why the McGuinty government is pleased to support the Green Arts Barns with a \$3-million investment.”

“The Green Arts Barn is an innovative example of heritage preservation and will be an exciting showcase for green technology,” said **Bryant**. “The government is pleased to work with artists to promote sustainable communities and green practices. In addition, it will enrich our community, while reflecting and celebrating Ontario’s cultural diversity.”

The City of Toronto provided \$790,130 through a grant and waived fees and property taxes. Toronto also provided the land to Artscape at no cost. "The Green Arts Barns will be a tremendous addition to the community of St. Paul's and to the artistic life of Toronto and I'm proud to have helped make them a reality," **Councillor Mihevc** said. "On behalf of Mayor David Miller and Toronto City Council, I want to congratulate all the partners -- whose vision and hard work have led to this day."

Scheduled for completion in Spring/Summer 2008, the Green Arts Barns will showcase sustainable, energy-efficient design principles and encourage community accessibility and collaboration. The barns will provide new homes for 12 non-profit arts and environmental organizations. In addition, the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program is contributing \$1.82 million for 26 units of affordable housing.

Artscape will redevelop and manage four of the five former TTC streetcar repair barns as a multi-tenant centre. The Green Arts Barns will be a dynamic community-driven space and a home for experimentation and innovation where new ideas flourish. It will be a place where people from all walks of life will come together to make their community a better place to live, work and play.

Also attending today’s ceremony were representatives from the non-profit arts and environmental tenants of the Green Arts Barns: The Stop Community Food Centre, B Current, Cahoots Theatre Projects, Citizens’ Environment Watch, Images Festival, Latin American-Canadian Arts Projects, LEAF Toronto (local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests), Na-Me-Res/Tumivut Arts Workshop, The Storytellers School of Toronto, Toronto School of Art, Theatre Direct Canada, Theatre Gargantua, and Women’s Healthy Environments Network.

Representatives from funding partners included The George Cedric Metcalf Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, TD Bank Financial Group, Toronto Atmospheric Fund, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and McCarthy Tétrault LLP.

Neighbourhood supporters attending were Friends of a New Park, Taddlewood Heritage Association, Wychwood Heights BIA along with the lead architect on the project Joe Lobko, du Toit Allsopp Hillier Architects.

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BACKGROUND

About Artscape

Celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year, Artscape is a not-for-profit enterprise engaged in culture-led regeneration. Its work includes anchoring creative communities within affordable spaces and building authentic and dynamic places by connecting creative and cultural resources. Artscape has played a catalytic role in the regeneration of some of Toronto's most important creative communities including: The Distillery Historic District, Queen Street West, Liberty Village and Toronto Island.

About the Green Arts Barns

The barns will provide new office, performance and rehearsal space for 12 non-profit arts and environmental organizations:

- B Current
- Cahoots Theatre Project
- Citizens' Environment Watch
- Images Festival
- Latin American-Canadian Arts Projects
- LEAF – Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests
- Na-Me-Res/Tumivut Arts Workshop
- The Storytellers School of Toronto,
- Toronto School of Art
- Theatre Direct Canada
- Theatre Gargantua
- Women's Healthy Environments Network

In addition, year-round space will be made available for community events and festivals. The site will operate a year-round temperate greenhouse, sheltered garden, outdoor bake oven and compost demonstration site run by The Stop Community Food Centre. There will be 15 artist work studios and 26 artist live/work studios.