

The builder of these \$1.7-million modern houses repurposed or recycled 98 per cent of the home they replaced



By **Tess Kalinowski** Real Estate Reporter
Sat., March 30, 2019 timer 3 min. read

They look and live like most newly built Toronto suburban homes. But for their builder Scott Simmons, two Etobicoke houses that were listed for sale on Thursday are the realization of a 30-year dream of sustainable construction.

The side-by-side, three-bedroom, four-bathroom houses open up to views of generous back gardens with windows that extend almost from

floor to ceiling and from wall to wall. But the real selling feature for Simmons is that they were constructed with as many sustainable, recycled and Canadian-made products as he could find.

“When we demolished the original house we recycled, repurposed and reused 98 per cent of it so only 2 per cent went to landfill,” Simmons said. The lot with the original house, on Chauncey Ave. in the Sunnylea neighbourhood, was severed to make way for the two new homes. “And it wasn’t that crazy hard. It was just, pay attention, be careful, a different way of thinking and really caring about what you’re doing.”

Features include radiant floor heating, metal roofs made in Fenelon Falls, Ont., and corrugated steel siding.



The houses have standard plumbing for the moment — but Simmons says he is hopeful buyers will take him up on an offer to help them

install a grey water recovery system that sends water from showers and sinks to a cistern in the basement where it is recycled to flush the toilets.

Once installed, the system can reduce household water consumption up to 40 per cent, and can be as easy to maintain as a standard household furnace, requiring only an annual filter change, he said.

Have your say

Would you buy one of these sustainable homes if you had the money?

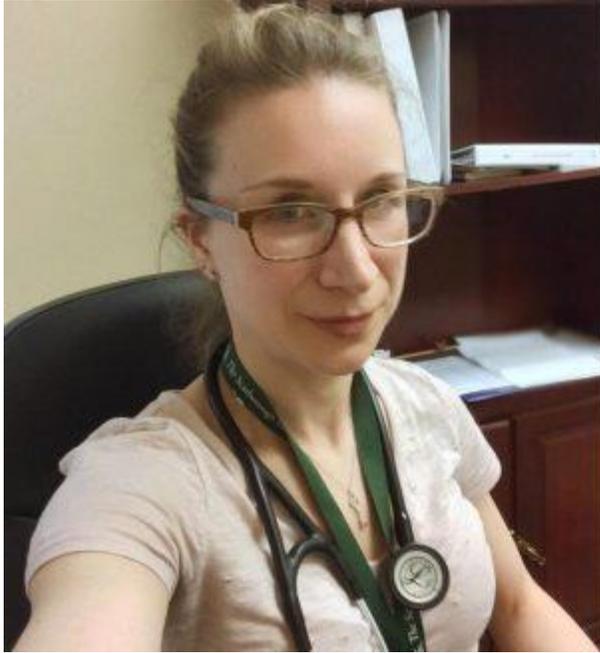
- Yes, it sounds like a great way to be environmentally conscious.
- No, the plumbing sounds disastrous.
- I might consider it.
- I'm not sure.

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“Three or four showers provide enough water to flush the toilets for a family for a day,” Simmons said.

All the doors, baseboards, trim and kitchen cabinets are made of Polyethylen Terephthalate (PET), a durable recycled acrylic, that Simmons says he used in a daycare project a few years ago and has held up perfectly.

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“People want scrubbable trim. This stuff you can go to town on it,” he said.

Radiant floor heating means there was no need for bulkheads, making for bright, clean-lined interiors.

“Everyone steps back when they see how big and clear and light the main floor is,” he said.



Kitchen counters — made in Simmons’ company shop Hauswork Ltd. — are Krypton, a solid surface made from 70 per cent quartz dust and aluminum. The material is a combination of natural minerals and resins. It is non-porous and antibacterial, warm to the touch and resistant to scratches or dings and can be repaired if it is damaged.

“I want to be able to build this way, to build responsibly in terms of the materials and the way we build, and the quality we’ve built ... and be able to have that profitable,” Simmons said.



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The technology is impressive but not intimidating, says Royal LePage realtor Mary Jo Vradis, who has listed the houses for Simmons at about \$1.7 million each.

“It’s run the way a normal house is run. It’s just run more efficiently,” she said.

The homes were a labour of love, Vradis added.



“(Simmons) definitely put his heart into it. Money wasn’t the object. It was more showing this can be done. It’s kind of the big thing — people are being more mindful of the environment. We have a plastic problem,” she said.

“I love these houses. I’m really attached to these things. It’s going to be tough to let them go,” Simmons said.

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