



Building on the past

Editorial

October 17, 2011

The redevelopment of the Lang Tannery complex in downtown Kitchener has moved the site from its 19th and 20th century roots into the 21st century. Where once hides were turned into leather, high-tech specialists now resolve computer problems.

Known as the Tannery District, the 350,000-square-foot complex has become the home of 28 high-tech companies, including Google, as well as a variety of other businesses.

The Tannery is a wonderful complex from a business perspective, and it is just as interesting from a planning and architectural viewpoint.

The Canadian Urban Institute has acknowledged the site's importance by awarding it what is known as a Brownie Award. The name comes from the word "brownfield," which describes old industrial sites used for modern purposes.

The site, developed by Cadan Inc. of Toronto, is more than worthy of the award.

The City of Kitchener and Waterloo Region also deserve credit for their role. Together, they provided Cadan with \$891,000 to help pay for the environmental cleanup required at the site. The money was well spent because the city and the region have an interest in the health of Kitchener's core.

One question remains to be answered: What other buildings in the region's cores will developers look at and turn into something worthy of an award?