

The Green Energy Newsletter,

Written by Architects and Engineers - for Architects, Builders, Developers & Real Estate Professionals.

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ARCHITECT'S MARKETING FORUM: an ongoing dialog on marketing. If you have an idea you are willing to share, send it and we'll share it here.

SUCCESS! (by Mark English, AIA). Last week I described my proposals going out to clients who have long range plans, and who are ready to act, because they realize that this market slow down is a great time to pick up property for less and to hire architects and builders who are hungry.

Well...I can report that this humble idea works..... In fact, I am meeting tomorrow with that client I previously described to finalize our agreement, so that he and I can move forward with his project.This means that, right now, there real folks who are just waiting to take advantage of the lower property costs, lower contractor and material costs, and the accelerated bureaucratic reviews now available..... All Architects need to do is go find them.

So, by ignoring what appears to be a down market and instead pursuing those "imagined" clients I have actually found that there is a large pool of clients who have not lost their good lines of credit, and who are now ready to move forward..... These are savvy folks who waited during the over-priced construction markets of the last couple of years. From that pool of ready to go clients I also have another SF client who has requested a firm proposal for an addition/remodel.

The latest rumor leak is that Obama's stimulus package may also include Federally guaranteed mortgage rates at around 4.5%, available next May which will create demand for architects.

Good luck to all of you!

PASSIVHAUS is not PASSIVE SOLAR

The Passive House Institute in Germany has recycled and improved upon an American concept from the 1970's, and has then rebranded it as the PASSIVHAUS.

Passive houses use significantly less energy than do existing or new conventional residences. In fact, they use so little heating energy that a conventional heating and cooling system is not necessary. The house stays warm by recycling heat that is generated from internal sources.

The German institute has developed an energy modeling program, the Passive House Planning Package (PHPP) which is similar to title 24 modeling and determines whether the finished residence will meet the Passivhaus energy consumption goals.

To learn more we interviewed SF Bay area Architect Nabih Tahan who recently completed construction of a Passivhaus residence in Berkeley. Here is that interview.

Hugenot: "What kind of building is adequate in our mild bay area climate (Title 24 zones 2 & 3) to meet the PHPP standard?"

Tahan: "As with conventional Title 24 based designs many different building envelopes can qualify, and the PHPP model is used by entering different values for the insulation, fenestration, thermal mass, etc. until the optimum design is achieved. But, generally, the Passivhaus envelope is more air tight than are conventional design residences. In a Passivhaus the ventilation is controlled by the continuous mechanical ventilation system, which also handles all internal heat collection and redistribution. The underlying principle is "Build tight, ventilate right".

Hugenot: "If a Passivhaus does not require a conventional heating system, then where does the heat for the residence come from?"

Tahan: "In a typical house every light bulb, computer, refrigerator, oven, hair dryer and toaster generates heat. This heat can not escape because the building envelope is tightly sealed. The only place this heat can go is through the ducts of the constant ventilation system which utilizes a heat recovery ventilator to transfer this heat from the air being exhausted into the fresh outside air being supplied into the house. This provides both energy efficiency and excellent indoor air quality (IAQ). Typically, a passivhaus reduces the heating or cooling loads by 80 to 90%. So, a back-up heating system is still necessary to provide the remaining 10-20% that is required."

Hugenot: "What efficiency levels do passive houses achieve?"

Tahan: There are three measurements that define a Passivhaus:

- The building envelope is constructed so that the heating requirements will not exceed 1.4 kWh/ft² per year.
- The outside source energy requirements will not exceed 11.1 kWh/ft² per year.
- The building shell is so airtight that it will pass less than 0.6 airchanges per hour at a pressure above ambient of 50 pascals.

Note: GCP calculates this to be 1.045 psi, and for a 2500 ft² house the air loss limit would pass less than 20cfm at 1.045 psi.

Several articles and videos have been in the local media over the last week, and can be viewed at the links listed below:

To watch a video on all this go to this link: http://abclocal.go.com/40/story?section=news/life_to_discover&id=6532082
To see a TV news segment by Richard Hart, which Channel 7 (ABC news) aired on November 30th about this house. To see the video click on the both small pictures to get to the video player. Also, The Daily Cal (UC Berkeley campus paper) has an article and video at: http://www.dailycal.org/article/100788/home_appliances_help_to_heat_local_passive_house. Additional information is available at www.homeenergy.org, where subscribers can read Tahan's article online. Or contact him in person at sabitahan@abcplobal.net or (510)948-5311.

DESIGNS USING CERTIFIED TITLE 24 AUTHORS QUALIFY FOR GREEN POINTS:

One of the easiest ways to pick up extra Green Points, under Section J - Building Performance, of the Green Point-Rating (GPR) Checklist, is to have your Title 24 documentation authored by Mark English Architects where Alan Hugenot, is a Certified Energy Plans Examiner (CEPE).

Many Northern California building departments are now specifically requiring that all Title 24 documentation is to be authored by a CEPE. We can also to review the home's design for maximum efficiency and interaction of the building elements, to identify specific opportunities where measures that exceed Title 24 can be cost effective by modeling the home and by identifying additional green building opportunities for the project. Homes that exceed Title 24 by 15% or more may also be eligible for ENERGY STAR® certification.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: Making sure that particular green measures work within the overall design concept and that the combination will satisfy Title 24 energy compliance, while also keeping you apprised of new developments in GREEN DESIGN is a full time job...which we do for you at GREEN COMPLIANCE PLUS...as your own, on call (24/7), Title 24, Green Energy Compliance Experts.

Once we computer model your project for Title 24 compliance (during your preliminary design), our project specific energy analysis based on that model can be tweaked as the design changes and we can point the way to that Brighter Shade of Green your clients are seeking.

Give Alan or Mark a call at Green Compliance Plus (415 391-0186) to discuss your Title 24 documentation needs or any Green Energy Subject.

WE WON'T BE PUBLISHING AGAIN UNTIL THE FIRST WEEK IN JANUARY....Happy Holidays to all.