

For immediate release

Canadian firm sustainable.TO Architecture + Building takes top prize in international *Passive House* design competition

(Toronto, Ontario - May 24, 2011) Canadian firm sustainable.TO Architecture + Building has taken the top prize in an international competition to design a *passive house* for New Orleans, Paul Dowsett, sustainable.TO principal, announced today. Acclaimed as “an incredibly thoughtful and viable response to this challenge,” sustainable.TO's “Low Cost, Low Energy House” was selected from 65 entries from around the world. The competition was launched by the ArchDaily website and DesignByMany, a challenge-based design technology community.

“Winning this award is hugely exciting,” said Dowsett, “confirming that it is possible to design an affordable and sustainable house that is also attractive -- no matter the climate -- and validates our approach to design and construction.”

The challenge for both students and professionals was to design a *passive house* for hot and humid New Orleans focusing on key components of The Passive House Standard and the 2030 Challenge, which has influenced the Better Buildings Initiative issued by US President Obama. Submissions came from Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the UK and the US.

According to the Canadian Passive House Institute, the Passive House Standard is “the world’s most ambitious and scientifically verified route to truly sustainable buildings, achieving 80 - 90% energy savings over conventional construction.” Originating in Germany and Sweden, today there are over 25,000 single and multi-family *passive houses* worldwide.

About the winning design

“Low Cost, Low Energy House” features an airtight, thermal-bridge free and super-insulated envelope combined with passive shading in the summer and solar heat gains in winter; concrete floor topping for thermal mass to radiate the heat into the space as required; highly reflective galvalume wall and roof cladding; a balanced energy recovery ventilation system and split-zoned high-efficiency heating and cooling units with an ultra high-efficiency on-demand water heater and supplemental radiant floor heating. The use of low-cost, durable and long-lasting materials, and proven construction techniques assures value to returning homeowners.

In accordance with post-Katrina building codes, guidelines and best practices, the house is raised 7 feet above grade, securing its safety during flooding and providing shaded parking, storage, and outdoor living spaces.

“Low Cost, Low Energy House” is not the first design by Dowsett using the principles of The Passive House Standard. Previously, as a principal at Scott Morris Architects Inc., he was also responsible for two off-grid, *passive solar houses* in Ontario (the Hunter House and Frog's Hollow).

About the judges

“Low Cost, Low Energy House” was chosen by a select group of judges, including: David Basulto, co-founder of ArchDaily; Katrin Klingenberg, co-founder the Passive House Institute United States (PHIUS); Alejandra Lillo, co-founder of Undisclosable Design; Corey Saft, assistant professor in the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and Trey Trahan, FAIA, President and Principal-in-Charge of Trahan Architects.©© ©

Sustainable.TO Architecture + Building was founded in 2009 by entrepreneur David Daniels and architect Paul Dowsett. Sustainable.TO Architecture + Building draws on Dowsett’s two decades of “green” design. The company sees clearly through the dense fog of technologies, products and philosophies to provide realistic, achievable and affordable resource and energy-efficient design /build solutions for home and workplace.

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Note: Digital images are available.

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