

Press Release

19 September 2014

Sustainability award presented to Passive House pioneers

Award honours ground-breaking work of Bo Adamson and Wolfgang Feist

Darmstadt, Germany/Lund, Sweden. A high-level recognition for contributions to energy efficiency in buildings was awarded to the Passive House pioneers Professor Emeritus Bo Adamson and Professor Wolfgang Feist with the presentation of the Sustainable Building Award (Årets Framtidsbyggare) on Thursday in the university city of Lund, Sweden. Over 25 years ago, the two physicists developed the concept of a building that needs no active heating; today, the resultant Passive House Standard forms the fundamental basis for energy efficient construction throughout the world. The Award was presented by the former EU Commissioner for the Environment, Margot Wallström.

The central idea for the Passive House was developed in 1988 in Lund during a research trip made by Wolfgang Feist with Adamson as his academic host. Through funding by the State of Hesse, the first building based on this principle was erected in 1990 in Darmstadt, Germany and was systematically monitored in the following years. In 1996, Wolfgang Feist founded the Passive House Institute, which holds a leading position internationally in the research and development of concepts, components, and planning tools for particularly energy efficient buildings. Bo Adamson continued to pursue the topic of Passive House at the University of Lund until his retirement.

Passive House is based on five key principles: an excellent level of insulation, avoidance of thermal bridges, highly insulating windows and frames, an airtight building envelope, and ventilation with heat recovery. The first pilot project in Darmstadt served as proof that, with careful planning, it was possible to lower heating energy consumption by about 90 % compared to conventional buildings. Later research projects gradually demonstrated that this principle works in every climate for all building uses, regardless of construction type, provided that the heating and cooling energy demands remain below scientifically predefined limits.

“Receiving such an award, especially at the University of Lund, is a great honour for us”, proclaimed Feist. “This is where the foundations were laid for an attractive, comfortable, and also affordable solution for climate protection.”

Twenty-five years after the first theoretical foundations were laid, the Passive House Standard is now established internationally with tens of thousands of projects completed worldwide. This progress was made possible due to the fact that the additional costs for higher quality construction, in particular, for increased thermal protection and windows with insulating coatings, have steadily dropped over the years. Today, the added investment pays off within a few years through saved energy costs. Passive Houses are thus not only energy efficient and comfortable, but also economically attractive.

The Sustainable Building Award is conferred by the Swedish SUEB Foundation (Stiftelse för utveckling av energieffektivt byggande) in cooperation with the University of Lund. Wolfgang Feist and Bo Adamson received the award in the “Innovators” category. Ing-Marie Odegren, Director of the housing association of the town of Alingsås, Sweden, was honoured as a “Multiplier”. Young students of the University of Lund received the award in the third category for the “Talented”. Announced for the first time in 2014, this award by the SUEB offers annual prize money totalling around € 130 000 (1.2 million Swedish krona). Further information about the SUEB and the Sustainable Building Award can be found online at www.aretsframtidbyggare.se

Press contact: Passive House Institute | Benjamin Wunsch | +49 (0)6151-82699-25 | presse@passiv.de