

23 August 2011

Let's stay calm

Let's take a step back and take a breath.

Passive House Institute (PHI) has chosen an approach to Passive House that fosters mutual trust, collaboration and synergies. PHI will continue to uphold these principles in its work.

Although provoked – I'm only human, after all – I'll refrain from responding to all the craziness that currently abounds, as I believe a deeper look at the recent communications from both organizations speaks for itself.

The fact is that our relationship to PHIUS was based on two contracts:

- One for use of our [Certified Passive House](#) certification scheme and label
- The other for the service we provide in the issuing and grading of the international [Certified Passive House Designer](#) exam (not to be confused with the [CEPH course](#), which, correctly identified by PHIUS as coming from an EU project, is independent of the administration of the international exam).

These contracts, eagerly demanded by PHIUS some time ago, were both signed and standing. After meeting with PHIUS in May to speak about building friction in the US, we received, along with the minutes now published on the PHIUS website, a letter dated July 1st denying the relevance of the minutes or anything discussed during the meeting: "There may have been a misunderstanding during the meeting that we were agreeing to conditions when we were only affirming that we had understood PHI's preference/conditions for collaboration." These 'conditions', however, are not new or additional requests but fundamental parts of the standing and signed contracts. PHIUS, it seems, had no intention to uphold these contracts. After publicly slandering PHI and some of its other partners, who also have the same contracts in place, PHI was forced to terminate its contracts with PHIUS.

At no time did PHIUS have a contract to even sell PHPP, let alone to adapt it (no, this is not merely about imperial versus metric – PHI fully understands and supports the needs of American designers to use numbers with which they are familiar, and is currently working on a solution). Nothing has changed except for the fact that PHI has now demanded PHIUS discontinue the illegal sale and adaptation of PHI's property.

Differences in approach and background are, upon closer look, also quite transparent: PHIUS would like far further reaching control of what is happening in the North American Passive House scene than it currently has. These ambitions conflict with the open approach chosen by the Passive House Institute, which makes a point of publishing all its research and offers assistance to all organizations wanting to collaborate in a decent and honest way. I am convinced that geographical monopolies are neither expedient nor possible. It's my belief that people, especially those at the forefront of innovation, should be encouraged to use their own brains and be given the space to breathe.

With that, I come back to my initial thought: *let's take a step back and take a breath*. Passive House is a reliable approach with a sound scientific background. It is not going anywhere and remains as strong as ever.

Sincerely,



Passive House Institute



Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Feist