

**INSTALL INTUITIVE APPLIANCES  
AND TECHNOLOGY**

When assisting in the selection of appliances and other equipment, consider the length of time a person may own the equipment. Appliances that have a life-span greater than 10 years should be considered for their accessibility in addition to other features, even if vision loss is not of immediate concern. Appliances should have contrasting switches and hardware, and respond audibly when operated.

Declining vision does not have to lead to the loss of autonomy. Often, simple design strategies and low-cost modifications can allow people with vision loss to live in their own home with greater independence and enhanced safety.

Amy Pothier and Jesse Klimitz are accessibility specialists for AccessAbility Advantage — a joint venture between March of Dimes Canada and Quadrangle Architects Limited. [www.accessabilityadvantage.ca](http://www.accessabilityadvantage.ca)

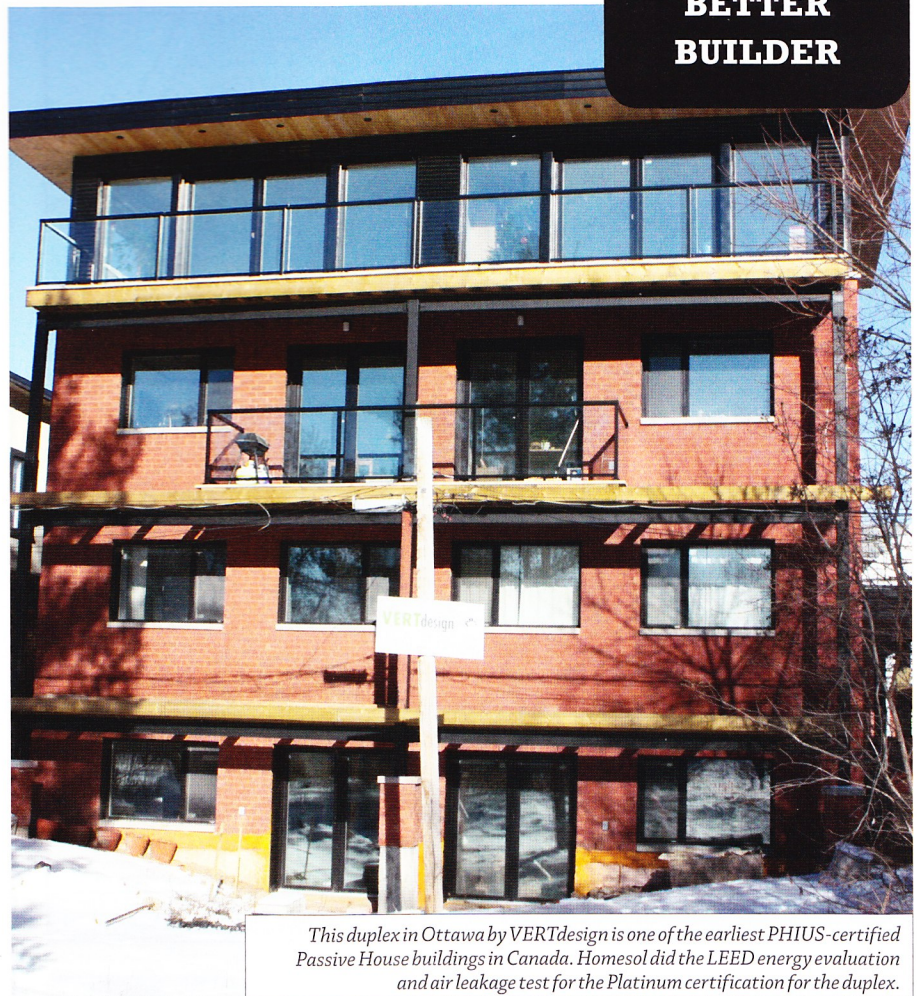
# Active in Passive House

Ryerson University  
hosts Passive  
House training  
course

BY ROLF BAUMANN

**Ross Elliott wants to inspire a new generation of Canadian Passive House architects, designers, contractors and engineers to build to the emerging Passive House standard that can reduce home energy costs by up to 90 percent.** With this in mind, Elliott recently assembled a North American team of Passive House consultants to teach at Toronto's Ryerson University with the goal of creating a new generation of expertise around the world's highest residential energy design standard.

Elliott is the president of Homesol Building Solutions Inc., a company that conducts thousands of evaluations in-



*This duplex in Ottawa by VERTdesign is one of the earliest PHIUS-certified Passive House buildings in Canada. Homesol did the LEED energy evaluation and air leakage test for the Platinum certification for the duplex.*

cluding Energy Star for New Homes, home energy audits, R-2000 and LEED, and has also twice been awarded EnerQuality Evaluator of the Year. He's currently involved in eight Passive House projects and anticipating another 30 this year.

"Buildings in Canada, plus their associated electricity use, currently exceed all transportation emissions combined. Why are people still content to build leaky, uncomfortable, energy-guzzling homes when we know a better way?" asks Elliott.

"Passive House buildings can be built now, in Canada, with North American building techniques and technology, and deliver huge energy savings in the Canadian climate. Smart people will buy a Passive House, not only because it's the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do," says Elliott.

"Over nine days we offer the most detailed course available in Canada on Passive House design. Our Certified Passive House Consultant (CPHC) training course is the first in Canada

being taught by people who are already Certified Passive House Consultants."

What also makes this course unique is its recognition by the Ontario Architectural Association (OAA) and the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), which qualifies it for 32 hours of continuing education credits. The course is planned for later this fall (visit [www.homesol.ca](http://www.homesol.ca) for current information and updates). Elliott's team of trainers from across North America for the CPHC course include:

- **Russell Richman**, CEO of Russell Richman Consulting Ltd., an engineering firm in Toronto specializing in sustainable buildings. He is also an assistant professor of Building Science at Ryerson University.
- **Ryan Abendroth**, the certification manager at the Passive House Institute US and a certified passive house consultant and trainer. He is also principal of Passive Energy Designs LLC in Missouri.



## BETTER BUILDER

- **Graham Irwin** of California has worked in construction for more than 20 years and was one of the first Passive House Consultants in the U.S. He has a degree in physics with additional studies in engineering and architecture and he is principal of Essential Habitat Consulting.

Passive House design represents the world's highest energy standard for residential and commercial construction and delivers energy cost reductions of 70 to 90 percent. Passive House is also equivalent to the Canadian standard for home building by 2030 — making today's Passive House buildings almost two decades ahead of their time.

"Passive House building hits economic and environmental sweet spots, as the buildings reduce energy costs and resource consumption," says Elliott. "For a 10 percent increase in building costs, you make back your money in about 10 to 12 years. If energy prices go up, that return on investment happens faster."

Elliott's Passive House course is a smart response to consumer demand. A study done in the spring of 2011 for the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) found that energy efficiency is now a "must-have" feature for buyers and has become "significantly more important" to Canadian consumers.

A series of U.S. studies in recent years reveal green features are a key factor for consumers:

- 70 percent of buyers are willing to pay more for a green home;
- 80 percent of buyers would choose the most energy-efficient home;
- 55 percent list "green" features as an important part of the decision to purchase;
- 70 percent of homebuyers are more likely to buy green in a tough economy;
- 79 percent are willing to pay more for a home with predictable energy costs.

"This course offers a Canadian perspective on this new generation of sustainable buildings. The course is of particular interest to architects and provides real benefits to engineers,

contractors and designers who want to improve both energy and environmental skills while learning how to build the kind of home that clients want and will pay more to buy," says Elliott.

Rolf Baumann is the CEO of The RGB Group — Real Green Buildings for Life. RGB Group is Canada's LEED developer and builder offering green building, project and construction management. Baumann developed the first certified LEED for Homes Platinum residential development in Ontario. [www.realgreenbuilding.com](http://www.realgreenbuilding.com)

## Audit Alert

### When your small business gets audited

SUBMITTED BY ICAO

**It's the letter or phone call every small business owner dreads:** The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) wants to conduct an audit. Now what? Here are some dos and don'ts from chartered accountant Andrew Flynn, a partner with Hutton Evans Flynn LLP in Lindsay.

#### DO: UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE BEING ASKED

"There are three main types of requests or audits," explains Flynn. "The first is a request for information, which follows a tax filing of some kind. It usually comes in the form of a letter and asks you to provide supporting documentation for a claim."

The second is a desk audit, which usually follows an unusual filing, such as a large HST refund for one quarter. "This could be a phone call or letter asking for more information," says Flynn. "The CRA can request information or conduct a desk audit up to three years after the filing in question, and you have 30 days to respond."

The third type — which is rarer — is a field audit. "This means the CRA wants to examine your books," says Flynn. "Maybe you're just unlucky and have been picked at random, or maybe you are in an industry that has not been following good tax filing practices."

