

release
PRESS

International Isover contest wins unprecedented support

SGI/087, Wednesday, 18 February 2009

This year's international competition, sponsored by Saint-Gobain Isover, for students of architecture and engineering to design a building along passive house lines, attracted unprecedented interest when it was officially launched in the UK this month.

Scientist Dr Witta Ebel of the Passivehouse Institute attended the launch of the national stage of the competition www.isover-students.com by Isover's head of innovation Gerry Mitchell on Wednesday 4th February at the University of Nottingham.

The university has not only entered the competition again (it won the UK stage last year) but has had the contest accepted as part of its official syllabus. It has been joined this year by the University of Lincoln and more than 200 students from both universities joined Dr Ebel for the launch in Nottingham's Sustainable Research Building.

The competition was launched seven years ago with the University of Belgrade in Serbia and this year has attracted entries from an unprecedented 16 countries. While previous years have focussed on designing buildings such as hotels, houses, schools and even exhibition stands and discos, to passive house (or Isover multi-comfort house) standards, this year's is an office building in three climate zones – cold, moderate and hot.

Thousands of Euros of prize money is at stake at both national and international level, with finalists from all the nations taking part gathering in Slovenia in April for an all-expenses-paid three-day award ceremony. Compilations of the best of the entries are then featured in a book and a calendar.

Gerry Mitchell told students at the launch: "The purpose of the competition is not to show the passive house concept works. Of course it works - there are eight to 10,000 houses built across Europe to passive house standards. What we are trying to do is show that the passive house concept can apply to any building, no matter whether it's an office building or school."



Saint-Gobain Isover

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Guillermo Guzman, lecturer in architecture at the university's Institute of Architecture and competition co-ordinator, said: "This is the second year running students at Nottingham's School of the Built Environment have been invited to take part in this prestigious competition and they will face fierce international competition to design the best low-energy PassivHaus-designed office building."

The Isover competition launch took place alongside a Green Refurb exhibition and symposium at the university's School of the Built Environment on energy efficient measures for existing homes. Isover took a stand at the exhibition and Dr Ebel spoke on passive house design at the symposium.

The symposium also featured talks by Penney Poyser, presenter of BBC's "No waste like home" and Gill Schalom of msarchitects, on the EcoHome (a low-carbon refurbishment of a Victorian semi on the campus); Julian Marsh, of Marsh Grochowski architects, on energy-saving refurbishments, and Gilli Hobbs, director of resource efficiency at the BRE, on a one-stop-shop for housing refurbishments.

ENDS



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