

# AND ANOTHER THING ...

## Green Living in River Forest

*Passive home provides inspiration for the rest of us.*

by Stacy Karel  
Community Contributor

This home is green to the extreme! I sat down with Brandon Weiss, of Weiss Building and Development who is a LEED AP Green designated builder and a Master Certified Green Professional to discuss this Passive House in River Forest and what the average homeowner can do to make their home more energy efficient.

You may be wondering what makes a home a Passive House. A Passive house uses 90 percent less energy to heat and cool than a typical home. There is no furnace and no gas to the home. The home is almost air tight, having less than .6 air changes per hour and utilizes thermal bridge free construction, which does not allow the conduction of heat (escape in the winter and entrance in the summer).

The window orientation and size maximizes the southern exposure and the only supplemental heat source is a small electric mini-split that the homeowner can use if needed. These homeowners decided to add in solar to heat the water heater and use lots of reclaimed, renewable and recycled materials.

While a Passive home is a little more expensive to build,

total ongoing expenses are significantly less making it a great long term investment, for your wallet and the environment! More information on Passive Homes is available at [www.phaus.com](http://www.phaus.com)

You may be wondering how you can make your home more energy efficient. Weiss advises the safest way is to conduct a BPI - Building Performance Institute test to check the energy efficiency, comfort, safety and ventilation of your home. Like seeking doctor's advice, BPI's audit suggests areas of the home where changes would make the most difference in energy efficiency and which projects give more bang for the buck. You can get more information at <http://www.bpi.org/homeowners.aspx>.

Making improvements through rehab or replacement are perfect times to increase your home's energy efficiency. When you replace your home's siding or roof you can add insulation externally. When you replace your windows, hot water heater or furnace, look for energy efficient models.

*Stacy Karel is a real estate broker with @properties in Chicago's Bucktown office. You can search the MLS on her website at [www.CONDOChicago.com](http://www.CONDOChicago.com) or visit [www.AtPropertiesMarketReport.com](http://www.AtPropertiesMarketReport.com)*



**This Passive house in River Forest uses 90 percent less energy to heat and cool than a typical home.**

Photo courtesy of hbu



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