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Mainstreaming passive houses

A study of energy efficient
residential buildings in Sweden

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The passive house concept has become increasingly popular in the building sector in the last twenty years and is deemed to play an important role in aligning the housing sector with climate and environmental policy objectives. However, for such buildings to play this part they need to be more widespread, more common and more accepted by mainstream actors and institutions. The deployment of passive houses involves changes and adaptations in different parts of society. It involves changes in institutional and organisational set-ups, and it involves market and regulatory changes. Previous research on passive houses has focused on demonstration projects or has taken for granted that a dissemination will lead to a full-scale transition of the building sector. This puts undue focus on emerging actors and technologies emerging in isolation. This thesis investigates the wider deployment of passive houses with a focus on mainstreaming. This means that focus is on different social arenas where the deployment of passive houses is negotiated between multiple actors. This thesis contributes to a comprehensive picture of how passive house deployment is shaped through a study of attempts to mainstream these buildings in Sweden. It shows how such attempts have been partially successful in specific companies and regions, but it also shows how a normalization of these buildings has been limited due to market, regulatory, and political developments.

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