

Anna Braide Eriksson

Residential Alterations: Adaptability, Usability, Flexibility: Conditions for Social Sustainability?

Many residents today lack the possibility to adapt their homes for their everyday needs. The housing market is ruled by the belief that ways of residing are a commercialized life-style-question. Long-term considerations including future adaptability are almost completely lost within this very short-term and short-sighted view. The second demographic transition is now taking place in the Western world resulting in large changes in the population structure. Despite this the residential design and its rules and regulations is very much the same as it was forty years ago. Therefore, today we can presume that there is a wide gap between accelerating diversity in articulated consumer preferences on the housing market. This situation calls for a more sustainable residential design. The issue of residential alterations can broaden perspectives on the described situation. The aim for my work is to study how usability, adaptability and flexibility in residential design can operate for social sustainability.

Positive Footprint Housing+ is a research project in cooperation between Chalmers University of Technology, Riksbyggen and Johanneberg Science Park. The project shall embrace questions of sustainability for housing. My PhD licentiate thesis is a part of this project. I have made former studies on residential design based on field work. This work will practice theoretical conceptualization, case studies of projects and research by design in Master studios.

Desired outcome is reflections from and discussions with the established building sector about residential design from a future sustainable perspective. Riksbyggen is a relatively large and important actor and stakeholder on the Swedish housing market today. They manage, build and sell housing. With knowledge about questions of diversity, flexibility and social sustainability in housing they can bring these issues forward in their future work. In this context residential alterations can be a practiced model for residential design as an aspect of social sustainability.