

# Consumers' housing choices and perceptions on wood as building material – "it's not such a stone monster"

## English abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine consumers' housing choices and their perceptions on wood as building material. The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on studies on housing preferences, choices and decision-making, as well as on cultural valuations of housing and studies on significance of wood in housing.

The research material consists of seven theme interviews. The interviewees have purchased an apartment from a wooden double-storey house under construction. The key themes in the interviews were the valuations of housing and the most important features in housing. In addition, the wishes and expectations towards new dwelling were discussed and the importance of wood material in housing choices. The interview material has been analyzed using thematisation.

The results confirm the previous research data indicating that the most important criteria for choosing an apartment are location and the price of the dwelling. Other features that are important include housing in a new building and rowhouse-style housing. Interviewees also expect a short distance both to nature and to the city center from the apartment. Living in a new building is associated with carefree living, without a worry of renovation and ease of resale. Rowhouse-style housing and a private yard are especially important for dog owners. Dog ownership affects many consumer preferences. Negative attitudes towards multi-storey apartment buildings are associated with poor past housing experiences, negative perceptions of concrete and apartment buildings suburbs.

Interviewees generally hold a positive image of wood as building material. Wood is considered an ecological, aesthetic and healthy material. Consumers are suspicious of wood fire safety, durability and moisture tolerance. Wood is suitable for use in an apartment almost everywhere, but excessive use does not appeal to the eye. Consumers require unbiased knowledge of the positive properties of wood compared to other building materials. Consumers want personalized and ready-made housing solutions. Consumers hope to be able to influence the appearance of the building and the courtyard area.