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Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology at University of Gothenburg to be publicly defended on Friday the 18th of September 2020 at 13.00. room C350.

VERNACULAR BUILDINGS AND URBAN SOCIAL PRACTICE

Wood and people in early modern Swedish society

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Abstract
Wooden houses were major components of the early modern Swedish townscape. Yet, today these buildings have largely disappeared due to fires, demolition and modernity. The main themes of the thesis are the study of what kind of wooden building techniques were used within the urban environment. The research questions address the organisation of wooden buildings within urban space, through a series of micro studies. The social dimensions of the buildings are investigated, in terms of function, layout and how these changed over time, as well as queries concerning internal comfort such as insulated/ uninsulated and heated/ unheated spaces. Themes such as production of space, regarding how the urban was formed, built and organized, but also populated and used are addressed.

The study researches multi-disciplinary sources with mainly archaeological data, supplemented by investigations of preserved early modern wooden buildings, dendrochronology as well as historical records and images. The production, use and function of the early modern wooden building stock has been investigated through five micro studies focusing on the towns of Nya Lödöse, Gothenburg, Stockholm, Jönköping and Falun. The first one deals with the building culture connected to log timber construction, its layouts, use and function as well as place in society. The second one concerns the prevalence of timber-framing in terms of mapping, function, use and construction. The third case study examines post and plank construction in urban settings also in relation to mapping, use and function. The fourth deals with the storeyed building as a cohesive part of the urban building stock, with focus on layouts, function and dating of preserved buildings but also in searching for traces to find the storeyed house archaeologically. Finally, the fifth case study investigates and compares the building stock in the urban centre and the archaeologically less researched urban periphery through historical records to link people, places and activities from these interconnected spaces.

The combined studies show how the wooden building stock was ubiquitous in the early modern Swedish townscape at all levels of society. Timber-framing was usual as a building practice and well integrated, in addition to being spread over a much wider geographical area than previous research has acknowledged. All three building techniques were commonplace often in a mix of constructions. Variability has come forth as an important aspect throughout the study. The little Ice Age influenced new strategies for creating warm housing, clearly affordable to the populace. Changes as well as continuity in layouts featured simultaneously within the building stock, while the storeyed house became an increasingly important part of the urban. Wooden buildings housed the bulk of the urban population. Despite the destructive results of the reoccurring urban fires, the population kept on building in wood continuously producing similar however differently iterated built environments and spaces.

Keywords: *historical archaeology, early modern, city scape, urbanity, Swedish building practices, building stock, log timber construction, timber-framing technique, post and plank construction, storeyed buildings, mixed techniques, the production of space, social dimensions, centre, periphery, marginality*

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