

Background

The promotion of energy retrofit to homeowners is an important policy strategy to reduce operational energy use in dwellings and mitigate climate change. Energy research and policy typically focus on the cognitive (logical) aspects to motivate retrofit decisions, such as savings on energy bills and health considerations. However, this focus appears to have neglected the emotional aspects of how homeowners themselves make sense of the potential benefits of low-carbon dwellings.

Theoretical lens and methodology

To encompass both the emotional and cognitive aspects of energy retrofit decisions, the authors developed a *home-meanings* framework around the concept of *perezhivanie*^{1,2} (emotional and cognitive experience). We backgrounded our theoretical construction by drawing upon current literature of home-meanings and empirical insights from: (i) eighteen case studies, in ten of which homeowners achieved significant carbon emission reductions through retrofit activities, while in eight they did not; (ii) a stakeholder workshop (n=36), representing various actors interested to advance domestic energy retrofit activities in the UK, e.g. industry, government, academia, intermediaries.

Results

We analysed the data to identify positive experiences associated with low-carbon dwellings. These experiences are organised in five themes: (i) control over one's environment; (ii) **Happiness in everyday life & Health and well-being**; (iii) **Caring identity, citizenship & Climate concerns**; (iv) **Future-resilience & Financial considerations**; (v) a full integration between and individual and their environment. The authors developed a **Home** for the **Common Future (HCF)** heuristic, which captures three out of five identified themes (ii–iv). We suggest that the heuristic can be used for promoting the benefits of low-carbon dwellings.

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References

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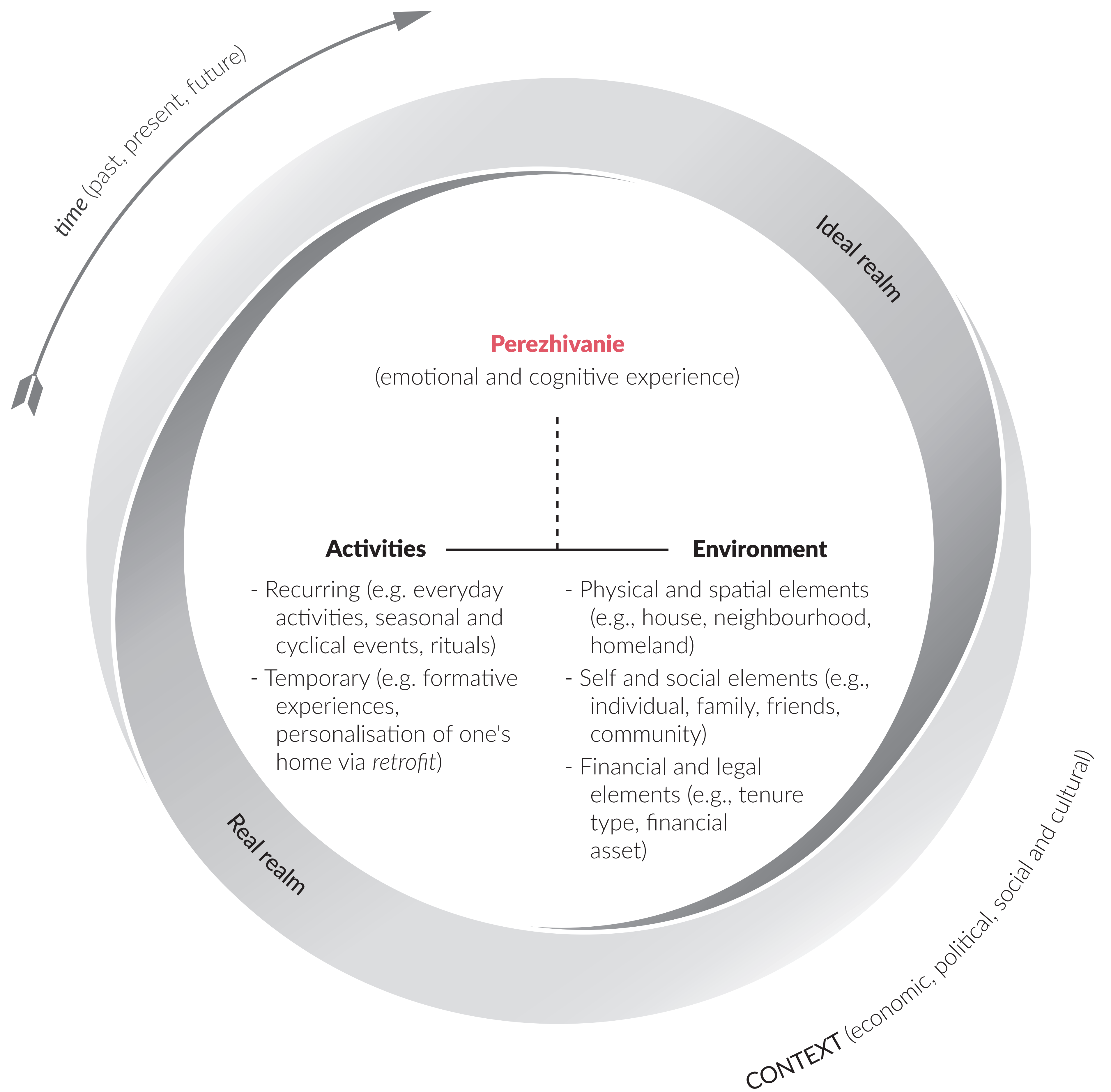


Figure 1: Home-meanings framework

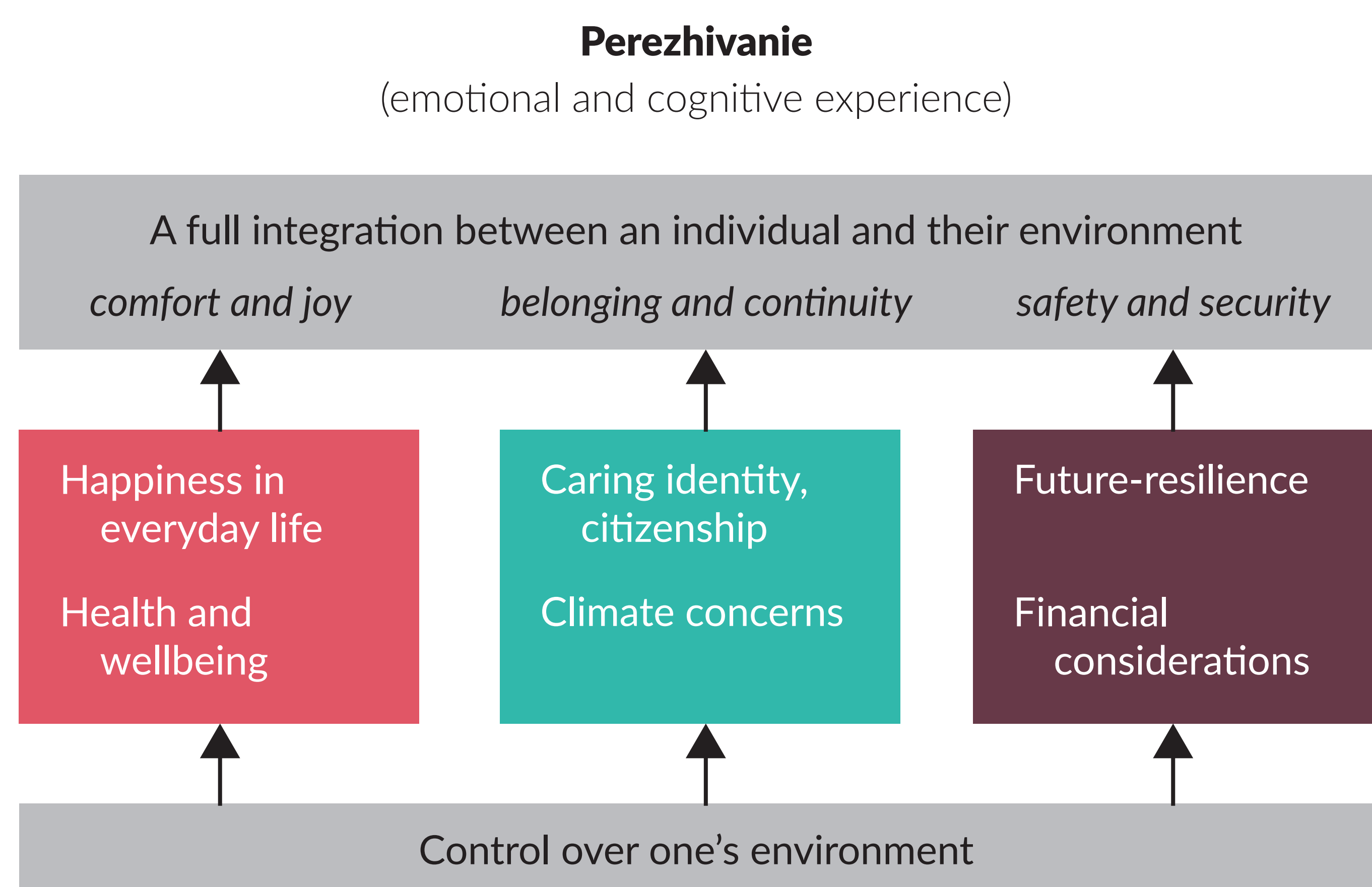


Figure 2: Five themes of positive emotional and cognitive experiences associated with low-carbon dwellings



Figure 3: Home for the Common Future (HCF) heuristic to promote low-carbon dwellings