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E.ON builds energy-efficient semi

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E.ON, one of Britain's big six energy suppliers, is teaming up with the University of Nottingham to build a replica 1930s house that will be used to test technologies aimed at improving the energy performance of Britain's ageing housing stock. The three-bedroomed semi-detached house on the university's "Green Close" will replicate what the partners describe as "many of the ageing and energy-inefficient domestic properties" in Britain.

The government has set a target for new houses to be zero-carbon by 2016 but industry experts acknowledge big efforts will be needed to improve the energy performance of the existing housing stock.

According to E.ON's head of research and development, Dave Clarke: "Homes are big contributors to the causes of climate change as they account for almost a third of the carbon dioxide emitted in the UK. The fact of the matter is that, even with the government's target for all homes to be zero-carbon from 2016, we'll need to retro-fit low-carbon measures to existing homes to significantly reduce our emissions."

The house will use the latest low-carbon technology to generate and manage energy within the house and will have an extension designed to make the maximum use of solar panels.

Dr Mark Gillott, research and project manager for creative homes at the university, said: "It will be lived in. We want to show the real savings, to get real data, from real people." He said that more than 21m homes - 86% of the current total - will still be in use in 2050. "It's vitally important that we identify and research technologies aimed at reducing the energy consumption associated with existing homes."

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