

32 Lincoln's Inn Fields: Post Occupancy Evaluation



Report by
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16 October 2013

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Why conduct Post Occupancy Evaluation?

Commissioning independent Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) after a move into new accommodation is now established good practice. Following the POE of the LSE's New Academic Building (NAB) in 2009, the School commissioned ZZA Responsive User Environments, who specialise in user research of buildings and settings, to undertake a similar evaluation of the newly completed 32 Lincoln's Inn Fields (32 LIF) from the perspective of building users.

The value of systematic learning from POE is twofold. One is identifying additional benefits that can be obtained at the building that is researched. In most new accommodation, minor tuning to given elements can enhance its performance for the users, enabling an increase in productive use. There is typically scope to achieve enhancements at nil or low cost. Such measures may involve changes to elements of the fit-out, the building management, or user protocols, such as provisions for recycling.

The second benefit is guidance on follow-up procurement, to help ensure that successful aspects that the users endorse are incorporated in future projects, and conversely, that aspects that warrant improvement are addressed.

The POE at 32 LIF

The objectives for the POE at 32 LIF were:

- Independent evaluation of the accommodation's effectiveness for key user categories
- Identification of aspects on which physical, management or usage changes could add value in the ongoing use of the accommodation
- Identification of successful attributes to replicate in future development
- Identification of points for improvement to address on future property projects undertaken by the School.



About the building

Heritage

32 LIF is a majestic Grade 2-listed, eight-storey building at the south east corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, in the London Borough of Westminster. It was built for the Land Registry in 1903, and the LSE acquired it as part of the School's Strategic Plan to improve teaching and research environments for students and staff. Given its heritage status, building works were carried out against requirements for considerable retention of legacy elements - the external fabric, windows, internal corridors, stairwells, doors - even a lift! The building opened for use by its first occupants in January 2013.

Adaptation for contemporary use

The building's lobby is a new glazed pavilion with entry through Lincoln's Inn Fields, and also Portugal Street - on a more direct route from most of the LSE campus. The Basement, Lower Ground and Ground floors accommodate teaching facilities and informal spaces. Floors 1-4 house academics, administrative staff and PhD students - in single and shared offices, as well as open plan workspace. The Fifth Floor is a shared workspace for postgraduate students.

32 LIF has solar panels on its south and east sides to generate additional electricity and reduce the building's carbon footprint. All the main plant - including boilers and hot water generating equipment - was renewed with high efficiency modern plant, and new energy-efficient lighting was installed throughout, to maximise energy efficiency. The building achieved a 'Very Good' BREEAM rating - an independent certification of sustainable development.

** The 24 student datasets cover both types of space, and are drawn from a total of 40 interviews, where some students only responded to questions on the teaching space, and some only responded to questions on the informal space.*

How the study was done

The research design for the 32 LIF POE related to the scope of the POE at the NAB, adapted to reflect both specific conditions at 32 LIF, and the evolution in workplace practices and building use.

ZZA interviewed two samples of building users, to represent variations in requirements and experience of the different user constituencies. The first sample was drawn from the range of 'residents' with assigned workspace in the building. This comprised:

- Academic staff (12)
- Administrative staff (8)
- Postgraduate students (10)

The second sample comprised non-resident users - undergraduate and postgraduate students using 32 LIF's teaching spaces for classes or revision, and/or using the social spaces for independent work, social activity or relaxation. This sample comprised:

- Students taught in the key teaching spaces and/or using the building's informal spaces (24)*

The interviews were undertaken 09-23 May.



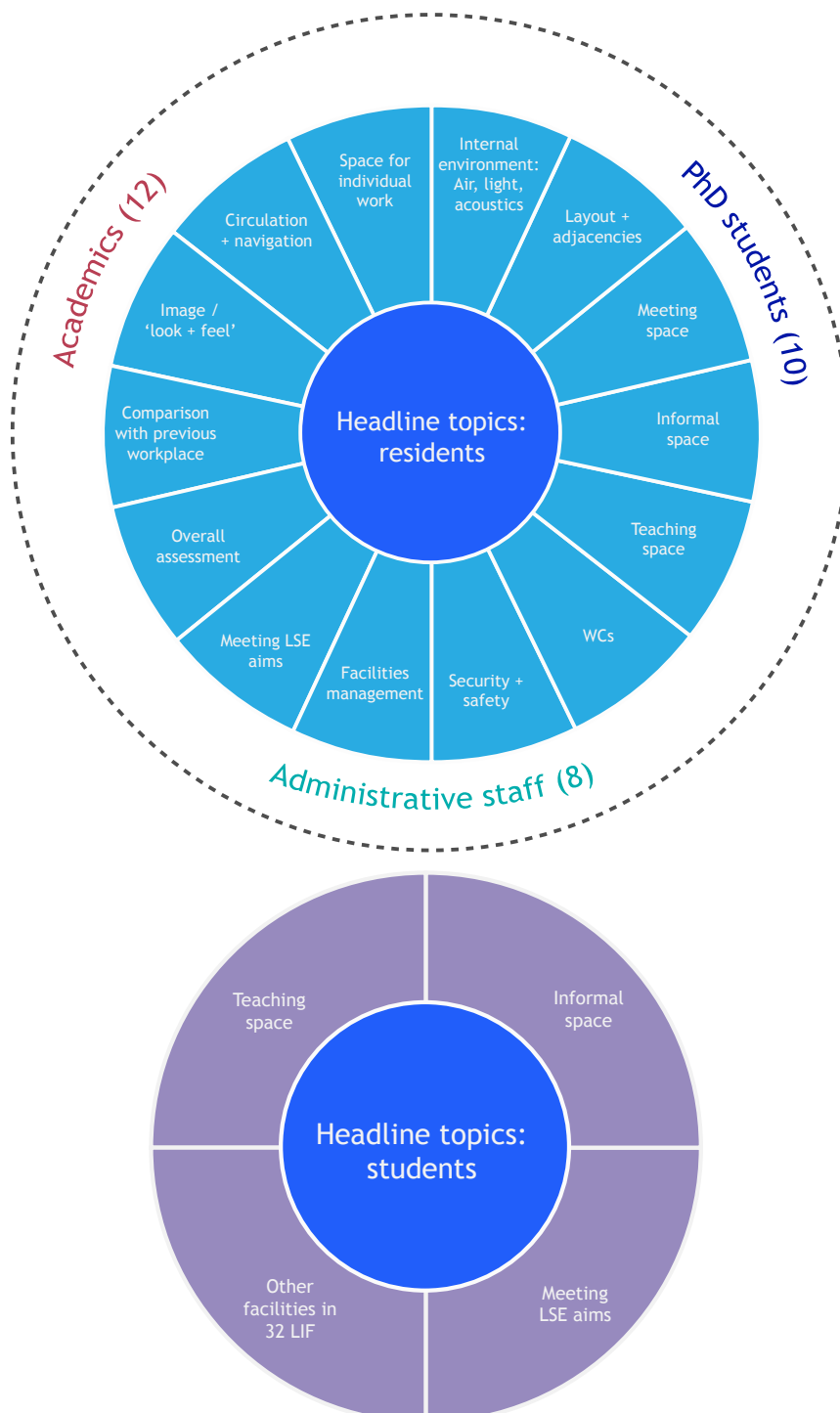
Heritage staircase, one of the listed elements retained within the building

What the research covered

The research with the resident sample covered a series of 131 questions under fourteen headline topics that represent key aspects of building use. These include: circulation, space and furniture for individual work, space for collaborative work and teaching, internal environmental comfort, building 'expression' - its look and feel, the building's management, and users' views of how 32 LIF meets their perceptions of the School's aims.

Students using 32 LIF's teaching and social spaces have a more limited exposure to the building. Thus they were asked to answer a shorter set of 53 questions under four topic headings, related primarily to the building's lower floors.

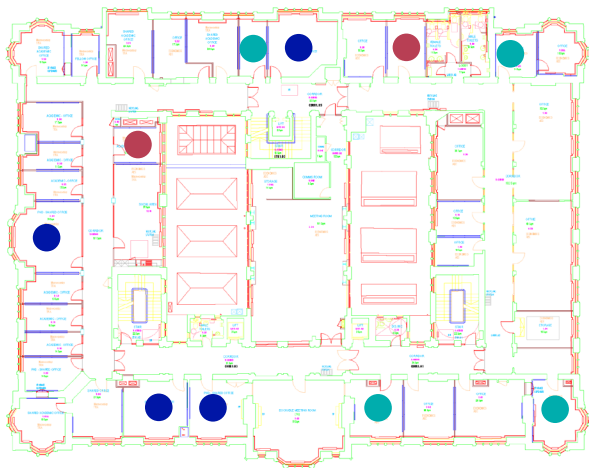
Most of the questions to both samples involved evaluation by the interviewees. The remaining questions established patterns of use.



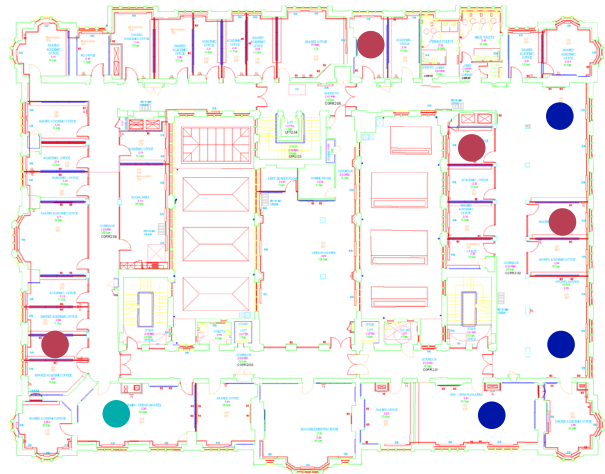
Whom we interviewed

Resident sample

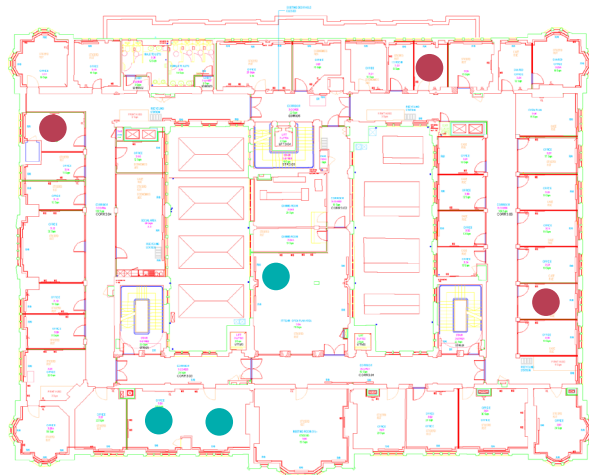
This was populated to incorporate a distribution of vertical and zonal positions in the building, and the varied types of workspace provided for the three categories of user: single offices (mostly academics), shared offices (academics and administrative staff) and open plan areas (PhDs). The following plans show the spatial distribution of the sample across the building.



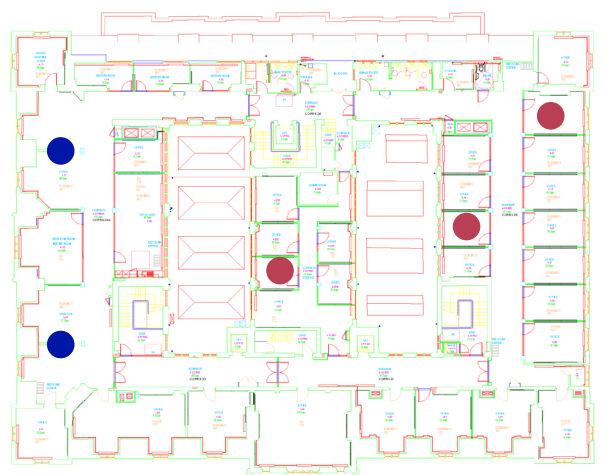
First Floor



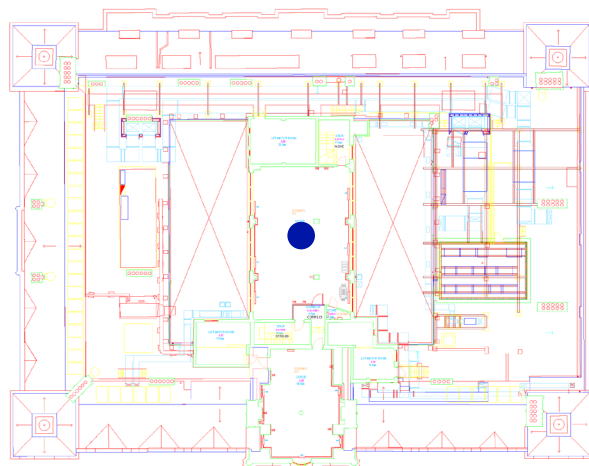
Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor

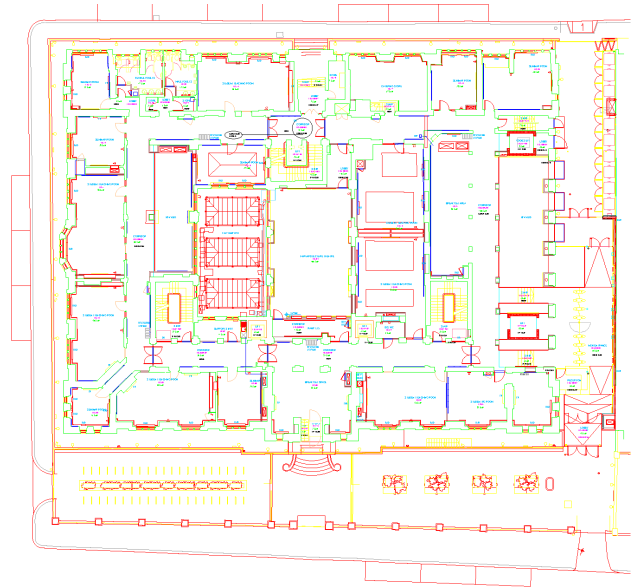
- Academics
- Administrative staff
- PhD students

Student sample

This was populated to reflect use of varied teaching spaces on the three teaching floors (shown below), and 32 LIF's informal spaces.



Basement



Lower Ground Floor



Ground Floor

About the data

ZZA's research is essentially ethnographic, capturing data that provides a valid representation of users' experience.

The methods also serve the requirements for programmatic action. To that end, the data is coded to generate quantitative results, distinguishing what users rate as working well, what they find acceptable, and what they experience or consider as being below par.

Thus for most questions, interviewees are asked to provide an evaluative response that is structured on a three-way profile that reflects or broadly correlates with:

Positive
OK
Negative

The codes are aggregated to provide a quantitative profile of response for each question, and for the respective topic headings under which they fall. In its representation of what is working well, what works acceptably, and what could work better, this structure is helpful in informing where future effort should be applied.

To facilitate an action focus, the aggregated results are also classified in three bands, presented in the three-way colour notation:

Major Success: evaluated as 'Positive' by at least 80% of respondents

Success: evaluated as 'Positive' or 'OK' by at least 80% of respondents

Issue: evaluated as 'Negative' by more than 20% of respondents.

The thresholds that define these bands reflect a high standard of user satisfaction as the determinant of effective performance. Whilst high, the 80% - 20% threshold is the standard that ZZA propose all experienced property teams employ.

Narrative data is captured alongside the coded data, to account for users' ratings and describe their underlying views.



Results: extensive endorsement

The evaluation of 32 LIF is atypical amongst ZZA's Post Occupancy Evaluations in users' extensive endorsement of the project's outcome. This result applies both to the evaluation by residents with workspace in the building, and interviewees who are taught in the building and/or use its informal space.

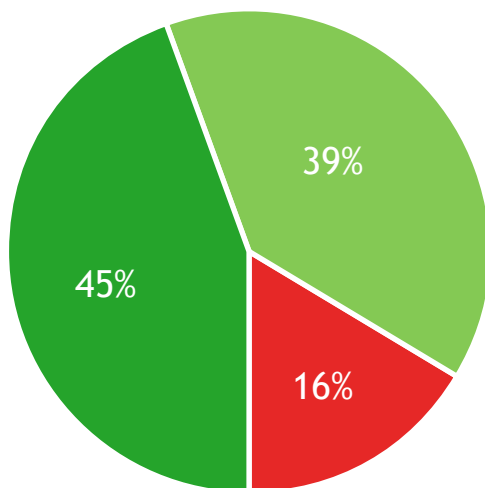
This result is demonstrated in the high ratio of Major Successes amongst the aspects evaluated, followed closely by Successes. Given that these results reflect the high levels of user satisfaction that define the performance thresholds, this result is especially notable. Aspects that are identified as Issues are in a small minority.

The quantitative profile of this achievement is seen in the following graphs.

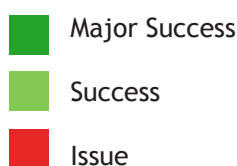
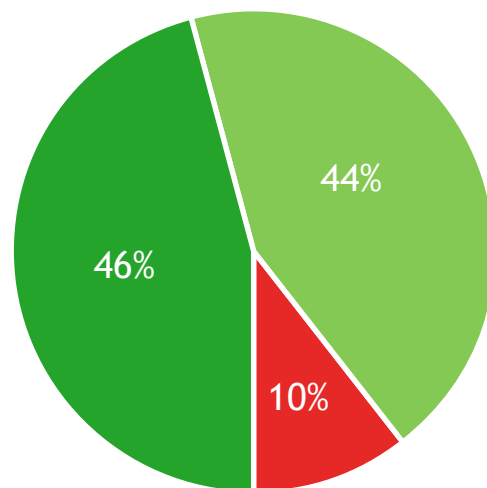
Users report Major Successes and Successes under every topic heading. Indeed, some topic headings (for both the resident and non-resident samples) are primarily evaluated as Major Successes, and others include no component aspect that has been identified as an Issue.

A particular success centres on the headline topic of 'Air'. This is typically a topic enlisting considerable dissatisfaction in research on building use. In contrast at 32 LIF, 82% of residents evaluated 'Air' positively, defining the headline topic as a Major Success.

Overall resident sample

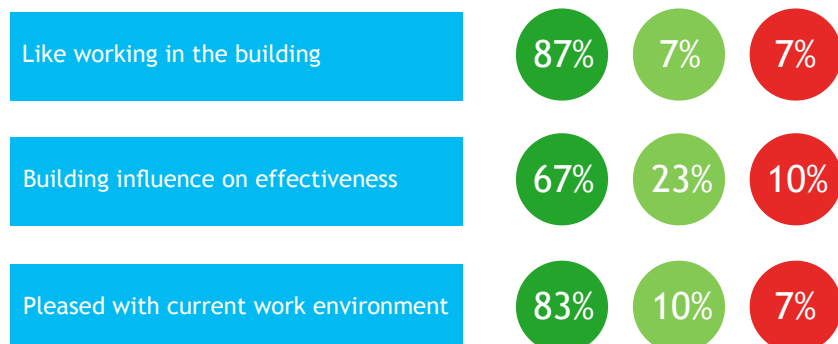


Student sample

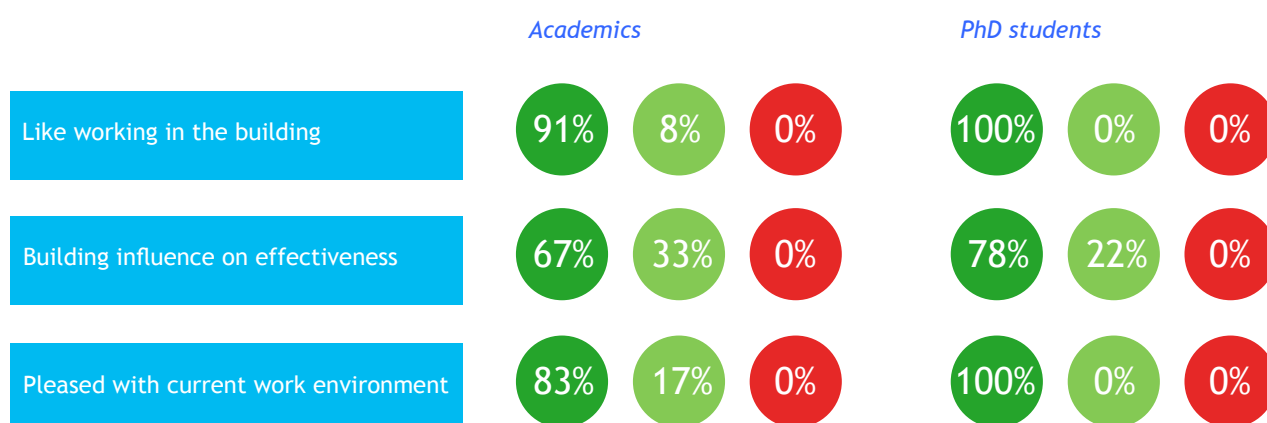


Achievements: resident sample

The objective of accommodation is effective support for the activity it houses. The following results evidence the overall positive contribution that 32 LIF makes for its resident users:



Of the three constituent user categories involved, neither the academic nor PhD interviewees gave any negative evaluation in respect of these important indicators.



The above flags up that administrative staff, as a sub-sample, did not entirely share this profile. There are some aspects on which the different user categories report different results, including some Issues that are distinctive to academics, administrative staff and PhD students. These are presented on pp.28-33 of this report, following the account of the sample-wide results. This is not to suggest an unduly negative view on the part of administrators; some of the unexpected positives that users report include satisfaction with an aspect about which they were apprehensive before the move - notably working in the open plan, a change in working environment experienced mainly by administrative staff in 32 LIF.

*Without a doubt, the natural light [makes me more productive]. In the old building, if you came in fed up, you stayed fed up. Here you come in, you look at Lincoln's Inn Fields and see people running or with their dogs, and you feel much much better.
(Admin staff)*

*I very much enjoy working here. I've become more motivated from being in an open plan office. You can't put too much emphasis on the communication - it's really brilliant.
(Admin staff)*

The results are powerful in portraying the residents' positive evaluation of 32 LIF. The qualitative data reinforces their endorsement of the accommodation, giving reason and voice to their ratings. Those component aspects that are negatively evaluated by the overall resident sample are discussed on pp.23-27 of this report.

Comparison with previous workplace

76%

13%

12%

- All aspects taken together
- Building image - on the outside
- Building image - inside
- Your immediate working environment
- WCs

Most of the resident population were previously based in the St Clements or Lionel Robbins buildings. Comparing six aspects of 32 LIF with their previous LSE workspace, 32 LIF is rated as better on every count, barring the informal kitchen spaces.

I think it's better for a lot more people. Here, everyone has access to daylight and a window. Not everyone has great views, but they all have windows that they can open. That's a big improvement - open plan sealed office spaces are environments from hell.
(Admin staff)

Image: look + feel

79%

17%

4%

- Look and feel' - on the outside
- Look and feel' - circulation spaces and common parts
- Look and feel' - the building entrance
- Look and feel' - on your floor

Interviewees are very positive about the considerate restoration of 32 LIF, and in particular appreciate the period detailing. The 'grand' look and feel of the circulation spaces is repeatedly referenced amongst interviewees' 'favourite things about the building'.

I love the staircase and corridors, and the general grandeur of the corridor space - I liked the building from the first time we walked through. And it has an ongoing positive benefit - you walk through it every day and feel it's a nice building. I've just come back from the US, visiting a building that's like a cheap motel. This is much nicer.
(Academic)

Circulation + navigation

76%

13%

12%

- Stairs - conveniently located
- Stairs - entrance clear
- Stairs - 'Look and feel'
- Easy to find your way - to the building
- Easy to find your way - into the building
- Is the internal signage effective
- Lifts - reliability

Residents report that navigation around 32 LIF is effective, having got used to the plans and routing by the time of the research. They consider the signage effective and that lifts provide reliable service.

It was more difficult to navigate at the start, but I'm used to it now. When I have people coming here for meetings, they seem to find me.
(PhD)

I usually use the stairs, and it's easy here with an office on the Second Floor - and with such attractive staircases! It was harder in the Lionel Robbins Building.
(Academic)

Space for individual work

83%

8%

9%

- Enough space around your workstation
- Any awkward space
- Desk suitable for work
- Chair comfortable
- Storage provision - for books
- Storage provision - for filing
- Storage provision - for personal items
- Secure storage for laptops
- Sufficient IT / data points
- Wifi - in your workspace
- Wifi - elsewhere in the building
- Effectiveness of meeting furniture
- Sufficient power sockets
- Facilities for copying and printing

The space for individual work is considered spacious, with appropriate provision of furniture and storage. Academics in particular note the effective provision of meeting furniture in their offices, with 92% rating this as positive.

I didn't have a table and chairs in my previous office, and now I can sit and talk in an incredibly informal way, with plenty of space for papers.
(Academic)

I really like my office. And I like the look of the building, with the wooden floors and the tiles - it's aesthetically pleasing. I liked my office before too, but it was so small that you could hardly have a meeting there with one person. Now it's a professional place to entertain!
(Academic)

There's loads of space at my desk, much more than I had before.
(PhD)

Internal environment: air / light / acoustics

72%

11%

17%

- Air - draughts
- Air - humidity
- Air - feels fresh
- Window you can open
- View to the outside from work area
- Light - right level of natural light
- Air - temperature at right level
- Temperature elsewhere in the building
- Light - level effective to do your work
- Noise - elsewhere in the building

The building's openable windows are popular with residents, as a means to access fresh air. The converse - the absence of mechanically delivered air - is also remarked on as a positive.

It's fresh - there's no delivered air in the building, no air-conditioning.
(Academic)

The window's great - it's the best thing about the whole office, having the window options.
(Academic)

We have the best view in the building! It's pure luck. I suppose it might be even better higher up, but I'm not complaining. There's no jealousy I don't think - as admin staff, we're in the office all the time, so it's fair we get a view.
(Admin staff - Lincoln's Inn Fields elevation)

In the previous building, we had movement sensors and environmental sensors, and they were sometimes in conflict. Here I have a switch, so I can control the light. And I do also use the blinds when the sun is very bright, or else I couldn't see my computer screen.
(Academic)

Layout and adjacencies

80%

12%

8%

- PhDs effectively located
- Admin staff effectively located
- Departmental reception conveniently located

The general arrangement of academics, administrative staff and PhD students across the floors is endorsed. No question on the topic of layout and adjacencies is rated as an Issue for the overall resident sample. The complementary and friendly support of the 32 LIF reception team is referenced as an effective solution, in place of departmental reception areas.

Unlike before, PhD students are seated in different streams, which is a better arrangement. They're closer to the faculty they work with.
(Academic)

I'm very close to my supervisor, that's great.
(PhD)

They're great downstairs on reception - they always phone the appropriate person. Up here, people generally go to the main office, or come to another admin office - that's fine.
(Admin staff)

Meeting space

77%

12%

11%

- Sufficient power sockets
- Sufficient IT / data points
- Availability
- Allocation and booking system
- Design

This headline topic relates to meeting rooms and space for meetings in individual offices. Residents can also use informal spaces at 32 LIF for meetings. All component aspects are endorsed as Major Successes or Successes. A large meeting room on the First Floor is designated as a facility for use across the School, rather than the exclusive use by departments. Access to this space is by booking via a central administrative team.

I use my room, or seminar rooms for larger groups.
(Academic)

I run four departmental committees, and I can always find a room.
(Admin staff)

I've not had any problems setting up a meeting. For a meeting that I set up, I'd book a meeting room, and for me, I'd meet my boss in his office mainly.
(Admin staff)

Normally I can be in my room for meetings. From time to time I'll use the breakout spaces and the café as well.
(Academic)

Informal spaces

79%

17%

4%

- Functional for your needs
- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Sufficient power sockets
- Sufficient IT / data points
- Appealing settings

The informal spaces are described as clean and functional, with appropriate facilities. No issues are identified in their respect. However, several interviewees suggest that more comfortable furnishings in the breakout spaces would define them less as kitchens, and afford a more conducive setting for conversation.

They're very nice. I mostly use the breakout space on our floor to get drinks, but I do also have conversations there - standing and talking, and I sometimes bring food from the café, when I'm not having lunch in the SCR, which I mostly try to do.
(Academic)

It's perfect as a kitchen, but if I want to talk to someone, I'll do it in my office.
(Academic)

There's no couch, just small tables and chairs. It's not very inviting. It's important to have a little bit of an invitation.
(Academic)

Security and safety

90%

7%

3%

- Access and exit arrangements - inside office hours
- Feel you and your property are secure in the building
- Feel confident of evacuation in an emergency
- Access and exit arrangements - outside office hours

The interviewees evaluate all aspects of security and safety at 32 LIF as Major Successes or Successes, including effective access and exit arrangements - both in and outside office hours. A high majority, 80%, report participating in at least one fire drill, with almost all feeling confident of effective evacuation in an emergency.

Access is fine so far - I've been in when I wanted to.
(Academic)

Access is easy - there was no interface at the entrance previously, but the security people here are excellent - they get in touch very quickly. It's fantastic security for us, we feel good having them in the building.
(Admin staff)

WCs

63%

25%

12%

- WCs - Quantity
- WCs - Location
- WCs - Design and fittings
- WCs - Cleanliness

WCs are often a source of dissatisfaction in POE studies. In contrast at 32 LIF, despite some criticism of specific aspects such as the hand dryers, the topic heading and its four component aspects are evaluated as Successes.

The loos are pristine.
(Academic)

The fittings are good, with one exception - the hand dryer is ineffective. Other floors have nice Dyson ones. And we have no other drying option.
(Academic)

Facilities Management

56%

18%

26%

- Felt adequately supported during the move to this building
- 'Welcome goodie bag' effective
- Space for notices and other information - in your department
- Space for notices and other information - rest of the building
- Recycling scheme easy to use
- Building fulfils your expectations of environmental performance

Although negative ratings on some aspects identify the topic heading of Facilities Management as an Issue, most of the questions in this set elicit a rating of Success. This includes the support that was offered when people moved to 32 LIF from their previous accommodation.

The people organising the move sent emails about guidelines, and arranged a company for the actual moves. There were clear dates for the move events - it was easy for us.
(PhD)

Many things were surprisingly effective, for example you could use the computers as soon as we arrived, all your books were in the right place, everything brought over from the previous office was here.
(Academic)

I felt supported during the move - there was a very good person to address queries to.
(Admin staff)

Meeting LSE aims

76%

14%

10%

- 32 LIF enables the school to improve learning and teaching
- 32 LIF makes a sympathetic contribution to the urban landscape
- Of a standard to attract world class students
- Of a standard to attract world class academics
- 32 LIF brings people together in mutually supportive ways
- Circulation and informal spaces promote productive interaction
- 32 LIF facilitates a humane and respectful place to learn and work

POE research must consider details, a host of which combine to create and define places that perform effectively or less well. The overall outcome arises from specifics. At a strategic level, however, accommodation must relate to an organisation's high level aims. In this respect, the user endorsement of 32 LIF's contribution to the School is affirmative.

My favourite thing is the fact that you can interact with colleagues more easily. Having everyone on the same floor does promote collegial relationships.
(Academic)

Having a kitchen for PhD and staff is a good idea. It promotes PhD interaction, and it's good to have that in with staff space.
(Admin staff)

It's a better space for interaction than before - I meet many more colleagues. Before, I saw one subset of them a lot, and the others not so much. Now we're all in one building, and my Centre is all on one floor.
(Academic)

The entire department is in one building, which is nice.
(Academic)

To have the research centres together is a good thing - and I expect it helps the teaching too.
(Academic)

Whilst the questionnaire did not inquire about the co-location of Economics within one building, this was volunteered as a positive attribute of the new accommodation, a benefit included in the citation of interviewees' 'favourite things about the building'.

Achievements: student sample

Like the quantitative Post Occupancy results for the resident sample, the evaluation by students using teaching and/or informal spaces in 32 LIF is very positive in affirming these facilities. This endorses the building's contribution to the School's strategy for improved and expanded infrastructure.

Teaching venues

Comparison with previous teaching venues

75%

17%

8%

Students are almost entirely positive about the teaching spaces in 32 LIF, which they consider better than most other teaching spaces in the School, and on a par with those in the NAB, which are also popular.

It's really good - better than anything else, except for possibly the NAB. It's much more comparable to what we're used to in the States.

It's great, just wonderful. The whole building is really light, with good chairs, and the teaching equipment is really good, it's built in. And I like the desks in rows in the classrooms, it's easier to talk. And there's a good air quality here.

It's good - a lot better than the rooms in other buildings.

Set-up in the teaching venues

71%

21%

8%

- Enough seats available
- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Teaching space compared to other buildings
- Ease of getting in and out of 32 LIF
- Ease of getting to and from teaching space from entrance
- Seats comfortable
- Desk surface - for placing materials and taking notes

Most component aspects of the teaching spaces are endorsed, covering ease of access, capacity, furniture and cleanliness.

It's great to be able to move the chair around the desk rather than being stuck in one place.

The teaching spaces here are closer to the main door than other buildings, so it's easy to reach them - they're all either one level up or one down, while in other buildings they might be on the top floor.

It's always really clean. This building generally always feels clean and new.

Internal environment in the teaching venues

71%

21%

8%

- No draughts
- Speakers clearly audible
- Speaker and display material visible from all positions
- Temperature
- Humidity
- Air feels fresh
- Lighting - general ambience

The student evaluation of the teaching spaces is in line with 32 LIF's overall achievements in internal environmental comfort. The POE identifies the teaching venues as effective in respect of temperature, air quality and ambient lighting, as well as with acoustics and sightlines supportive of effective teaching.

You can open the windows so it does feel quite fresh, even after a while sitting there.

There are no problems with the temperature or humidity that I could tell in an hour. I've been doing a mock exam, sitting writing, and I could easily take a real exam in there - it's very easy to work here.

There's plenty of natural light.

The acoustics are really good - the best thing about the room. The acoustic walls are great in the corridor too - it's so calming if you put your ear right next to it.

Technology in the teaching venues

81%

13%

6%

- Effective wifi
- For audience - AV - visual display
- For audience - AV - acoustics
- For delivery - AV - visual display
- For delivery - AV - sound projection
- For delivery - AV - ease of connection

As the LSE's newest accommodation, 32 LIF has come on stream in an era of high technology enablement, and technology provision in the teaching venues is evaluated as a Major Success overall. Of the students who have used the AV facilities for presentations, 100% evaluate them positively for display and sound projection.

Wifi is fine all around this building.

The AV set up is good and clear.

The AV is very easy to use - a touch screen display. It's pretty intuitive.

The AV system is something that this university gets right.

Study experience in the teaching venues

70%

25%

6%

- Ease of concentrating
- Design facilitates engagement with speaker and other students
- Inspiring design

All three component aspects of study experience at 32 LIF are evaluated as a Major Success or Successes. The results vouch for effective learning and engagement.

I think it's easier to concentrate with fresh air - it makes you feel less drowsy.

There's no noise from outside - it's good.

Yes, I like the desks in rows - people talk more.

The space is better than the rest of the campus. It's better for engagement.

Informal spaces

The students' observations highlight how positively they regard the informal spaces at 32 LIF - in themselves, in relation to other LSE facilities, and even in comparison with the NAB which is frequently cited as the closest LSE comparator.

Overall effectiveness of informal spaces

75%

23%

2%

- Informal space compared to provision elsewhere in the School
- Overall effectiveness of informal spaces
- Catering provision

Students identify Major Successes in the overall effectiveness of informal spaces at 32 LIF, and in comparison with other social spaces in the School. As teaching in 32 LIF becomes more established, there is likely to be more intensive use of the social spaces, and overcrowding is a point to watch for. However, overall the positive response to the standard of social space in 32 LIF serves as a beacon for future LSE projects.

It's by far the best of all the spaces in the School - it's similar to the NAB, but feels more compact.

It's much, much nicer than other buildings. With the exception of the NAB, all the others are in serious need of refurbishment. There was a lack of spaces to congregate before.

It's my new favourite place to come and work.

The spaces are less crowded, and people are very respectful so they're quiet - people treat it more as a study space than somewhere to socialise.

Set-up in the informal spaces

74%

19%

8%

- Seating comfortable
- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Sufficient power sockets
- Enough seating
- Tables functional
- Décor

Students endorse the design and set-up of the informal spaces, with all component aspects identified as Major Successes or Successes.

It's one of the only spaces where there's always somewhere to sit and study on the whole campus.

It's inviting - the NAB's more like a classroom space, this is more for lounging.

It's really modern. It's interesting that they chose bright colours that make people feel positive.

The couches all have power outlets which is really convenient.

The sofas are very comfortable - I really like to sit here.

Internal environment in the informal spaces

94%

3%

3%

- Informal spaces - no draughts
- Informal spaces - humidity
- Informal spaces - air feels fresh
- Informal spaces - lighting
- Informal spaces - temperature

Again, and consistently with the affirmation of 32 LIF's internal environmental conditions, students endorse the conditions in the building's social spaces, with the topic heading overall - as well as four of its five component aspects - evaluated as Major Successes.

It's not as stuffy as some of the other buildings.

It's fine here. The library always seems humid.

It's very good, very bright - it doesn't make me feel sleepy!

The temperature is a big plus here. The library is either too hot or too cold all the time.

Meeting LSE aims

65%

25%

10%

- 32 LIF attractive as a learning and working environment
- 32 LIF makes a sympathetic contribution to the urban landscape
- Circulation and informal spaces promote interaction

Like the building's resident users, the student interviewees who use its teaching and social spaces endorse 32 LIF in meeting LSE aims.

It's the best. It feels really open, but not like the NAB which is too open. I'm really impressed with the fact that sound doesn't really carry in the open spaces - they're quite quiet.

It's really clean, I like the modern simplistic design, and the fact that there're so many areas you can escape to is a little more conducive to studying.

It seems quite 'post-grad', which always makes it conducive to work.

It's nice that it expands the campus a bit.

I would say it definitely makes a contribution to the landscape. I really like the entrance extension, and it's a great building. I am done with my course in June, but I wish I'd been here for my three years.

I like that it looks so old and grand, and it looks good by the park.

I like the interaction here. In the NAB there's a lot of student congregation, but this facilitates it in a more relaxed way.

It's the best building, easily.

Raising the bar: resident sample overall

Evaluation by both the resident and student interviewees provides significant endorsement of 32 LIF from the perspective of its users. However, an objective of POE is identifying scope for improvements, to inform future projects and add further value to the accommodation that is the subject of evaluation. These learning and action points are instructive in helping to optimise any organisation's estate.

Whilst representing a minor proportion of the component aspects covered by the evaluation, the research at 32 LIF identifies a series of points for improvement. The following account presents those aspects identified as Issues (evaluated as Negative by more than 20% of interviewees).

Comparison with previous workplace

Informal spaces in the building

Issue
27%

There are numerous factors involved in the identification of informal spaces as an Issue. Mostly they relate to the breakout spaces on the academic floors, which are both perceived and described as 'kitchens'.

- Smaller spaces than previously
- Get very busy - little room to sit down
- Furnishing is uninviting - no sofas / soft seating; lacks a 'common room' feel
- Feel overlooked through the glazed partitions
- More enclosed / less 'open' than previously
- Disappointing external view - overlooking the well to pipes and ducts.

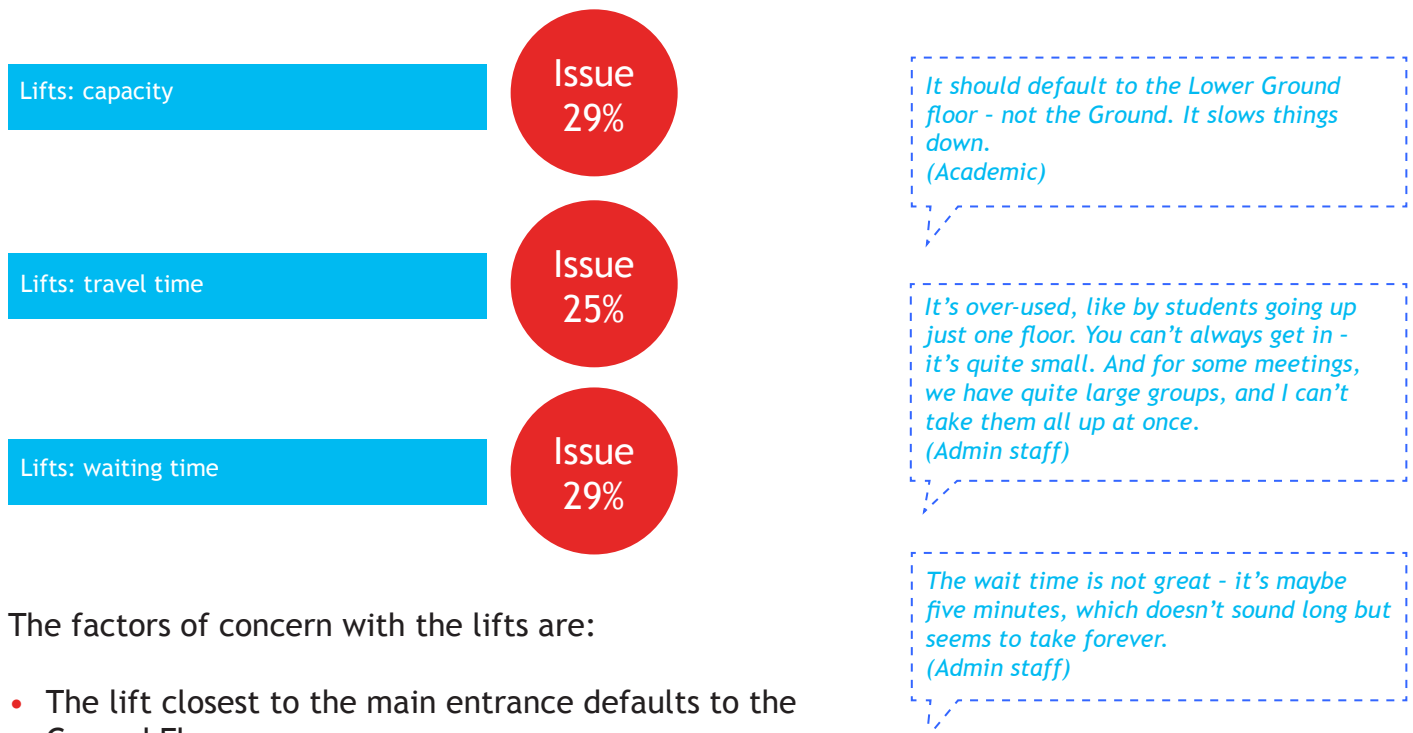
It doesn't have sofas, you can't really sit comfortably and relax. The previous space had softer seating, and it was more open.
(Academic)

It's better for students, and really buzzy now, but the informal space is more like a kitchen. The room at St Clements was large, furnished with comfortable chairs, more like a drawing room, with carpets and soft chairs. Although the microwave did downgrade it, it had a common room atmosphere which a kitchen doesn't capture.
(Academic)

It's really a staff kitchen. If a student is coming for help, the kitchen is not the right setting.
(PhD)

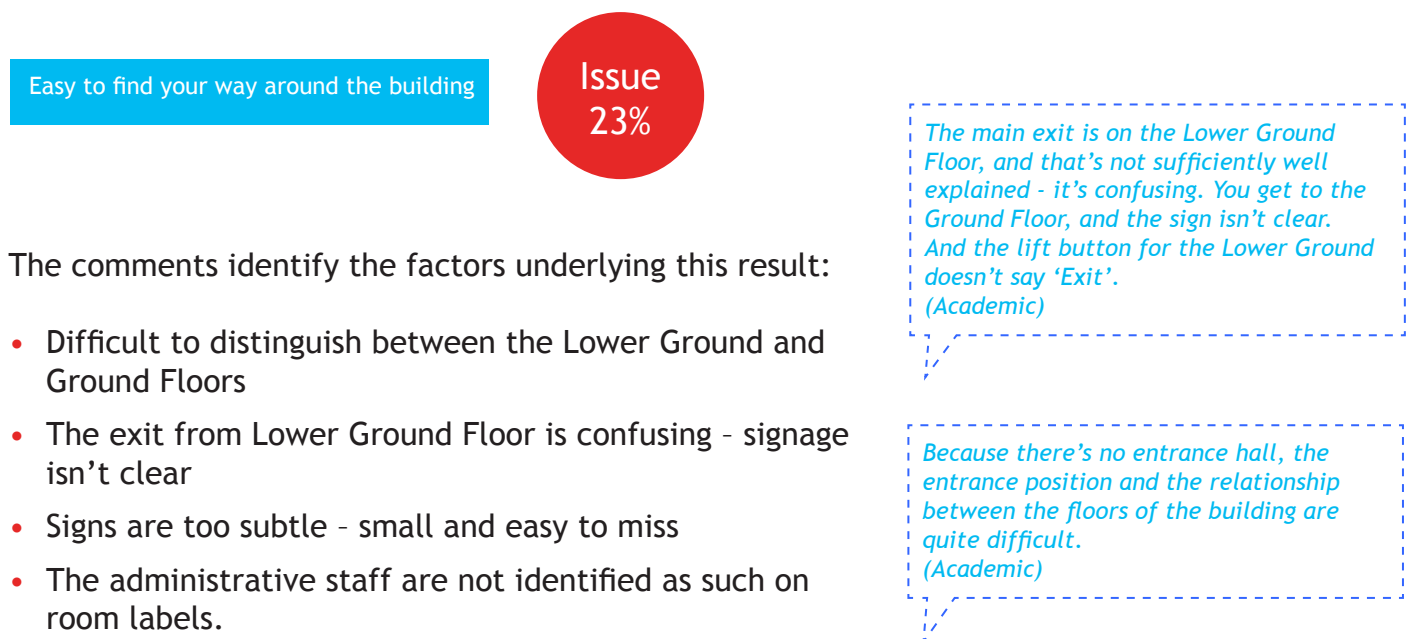
Circulation and navigation

The Issues pertaining to lifts and wayfinding are linked, with the likelihood that people rely on lifts more than they would if the routes between the Ground and Lower Ground Floor were more intuitive, and the route to exit the building - at Lower Ground level - were more obvious.



The factors of concern with the lifts are:

- The lift closest to the main entrance defaults to the Ground Floor
- This lift is heavily used, whilst the lift further along the corridor is reported as underused
- Consequently, lift travel is reported as restricted and slow.



The comments identify the factors underlying this result:

- Difficult to distinguish between the Lower Ground and Ground Floors
- The exit from Lower Ground Floor is confusing - signage isn't clear
- Signs are too subtle - small and easy to miss
- The administrative staff are not identified as such on room labels.

Internal environment

Air: control over thermal conditions

Issue
32%

Against the substantially positive evaluation of most aspects of 'Air', the single Issue identified concerns user control. The points in this regard are:

- The heating level is set remotely, with offices cooled by opening the windows
- Hot water pipes warm the rooms even when radiators are off.

*We can open the window, but we can't control the heating.
(PhD)*

*I can turn the radiator on and off, but the pipes run regardless and still give out heat. When the sun comes in during the afternoon, you can't cool the room.
(Academic)*

*You can't reduce the heating when it's on - it was too hot before they turned it off for the summer. So we opened the windows, but that's not very sound ecologically.
(PhD)*

Acoustics: noise in workspace

Issue
30%

Noise in workspace, identified as an Issue for the resident sample overall, is mostly an Issue for administrative staff and, to a lesser extent, for PhD students. Academic users are also affected by these factors, though not sufficiently to evaluate noise in their workspace as an Issue, largely because they address this by closing their doors. This is not an option for the PhDs whose workspace is open to the corridor, even where cabinets have been inserted to buffer sound intrusion. The noise sources are as follows:

- Printers in the corridors
- Students congregating in corridors
- Conversation in the kitchens
- People walking in corridors
- Noisy closure of doors in the corridors
- Noise from technical equipment - WCs / air-conditioning.

*There's noise from people walking by, and people in the kitchen and meeting room.
(PhD)*

*Having the big printer next to my office is disturbing, so I close my door, but generally speaking I prefer to work with the door open.
(Academic)*

*Noise comes from all the student study rooms. They're in use all day, so it's not just transitional noise between teaching periods. It can get a bit much, and the noise is annoying for the people using the study rooms too.
(Admin staff)*

*Students congregate out there in the corridors. I can hear them even with the door shut. The shared rooms generate noise too.
(Admin staff)*

Significantly, given that the building's occupancy involves a move for numerous administrative staff from singleton offices to shared space, there is scant reference to noise in the workspace being generated by colleagues. The same holds for PhDs working in shared spaces.

Light: general ambience

Issue
20%

*It was too bright. Then it was adjusted, but now it flickers. The flicker is in the bulb itself.
(Admin staff)*

Light: right level of artificial light

Issue
27%

*They don't go bright enough when it's darker outside - or cloudy, or dull. And we can't dim them. There's an environmental sensor that reacts to light level outside, but the light doesn't go up enough when it's dull outside.
(Admin staff)*

Light: control enough over light levels

Issue
30%

*It could be better - it's too bright. I would like more control, either for the room or individually. At the moment it's just on or off. There are a lot of lights, and there must be an option for more refined control.
(Admin staff)*

Whilst these results apply to the resident sample overall, the data segmentation makes it clear that they are not in fact Issues for the academic users, but reflect the experience of administrative staff and resident PhDs. The qualitative data show the factors at play as arising from a combination of technical performance and lack of user control:

- Lights flickering
- Lights are not manually dimmable / more control would be preferred
- Automatic sensors respond to exterior light levels, resulting in ineffective alignment.

*I could have more flexibility - like a dimmer.
(Academic)*

Facilities management

'Occupants' Guide': useful on move-in

Issue
31%

*It was unnecessary, and funny to have that when workmen were still tramping round the building for two months. I would rather have spent two more months in our previous building, and come to a ready building without needing an occupants' guide.
(Admin staff)*

'Occupants' Guide': useful ongoing

Issue
77%

*I don't look at it - I had a look at the beginning and never used it again.
(PhD)*

The evaluation of all component aspects of Facilities Management is affirmative, except in respect of the the Occupants' Guide that was provided to inform people about 32 LIF when they moved in. The negative evaluation is based on users perceiving the guide as irrelevant - both initially, and in their ongoing use of the building.

Meeting LSE aims

32 LIF links effectively to rest of campus

Issue
30%

Against the considerable success that the POE evidences in 32 LIF meeting wider LSE aims, the single Issue identified by the overall resident sample relates to the building's location relative to the rest of the School.

The users' comments reflect current facts: that the building is further from the existing campus than most other LSE accommodation. However, they also reflect recognition that this is a moveable feast, as the School expands and shifts towards Lincoln's Inn Fields.

*It feels disconnected.
(PhD)*

*Previously I could navigate between all buildings using tunnels and bridges. Now you have to go outdoors to come here.
(PhD)*

*It doesn't feel connected to the rest of campus yet - but in five years' time it might. This had to happen to push on the developing campus. And for LSE to have access to Lincoln's Inn, and to show pictures of Lincoln's Inn, is a nice face for the university.
(Admin staff)*

*It's slightly further than most buildings, but LSE is so compact that it only adds about 45 seconds, so it's fine.
(Academic)*

*We're not as central as we were previously, but with the NAB and this and maybe the Cancer Research building, the campus is moving this way.
(Academic)*

Distinctive Issues: resident subsets

Not all categories of user have equivalent accommodation at 32 LIF, nor use the building in the same ways. Given this variation, some Issues only impact on people in certain roles. The following sections report on discrete Issues identified for resident academics, administrative staff and PhD students respectively, where the aspect in question is not identified as an Issue for the overall resident sample.

Academics

The academics tend to be agile users of university workspace, evidenced by commitments at other institutions, home working, and out-of-hours access. Their use of the building is the most 'diluted' by working elsewhere. When they are at 32 LIF they - in the main - have individual offices, with the level of control that this implies. Against this backdrop, only two distinct Issues were identified for this user category.

Informal spaces promote interaction

Issue
30%

It's too austere.

It's not appealing. If you want people to bump into each other, you must make it more inviting.

It's a pity it's a lot of offices off one corridor - I'm used to working in the open plan. More open plan and hot desking spaces might provide a better balance than simply rooms off corridors. I think an open plan environment with shared desks promotes effective working.

As with the Issue regarding the informal 'kitchens' identified for the resident sample overall, academics report the breakout spaces in the departmental areas as very functional kitchens, but uninviting as locations for spontaneous social interaction.

Some also refer to the layout of offices off corridors as mitigating against interaction, indicating that open plan arrangements might foster discussion.

Recycling scheme easy to use

Issue
33%

It's good that they recycle, but it's annoying that we can't have bins in our offices. You have to get up and go outside every time.

It's a terrible system! It's fine to recycle, but the idea that we don't have a bin in our offices that gets emptied is ridiculous. Also, the paper recycling has a small opening: I end up putting paper in the mixed recycling. It's not practical.

Notwithstanding support for sustainable practices, the lack of bins in offices is perceived as inefficient and arbitrary.

Administrative staff

Most of the Issues distinctive to a given user group at 32 LIF are identified for administrative staff. This doubtless reflects the nature of their work, involving occupancy in the building for more concentrated periods than the academic residents.

Individual workspace

Issue
25%

25% of administrative staff identify five Issues with their individual workspace:

- Comparison with previous workspace
- Enough space at and around workstation
- Awkward space in your workspace
- Insufficient power sockets in ineffective locations
- 'Look and feel' on your floor

For some administrators, the move from singleton offices in their previous workspace to shared space at 32 LIF is not effective, although some administrative colleagues report this as a benefit.

The circulation space is a bit narrow, but it was our decision to have L-shaped desks, which Estates would not have provided.

There's not enough space on my desk. It's smaller than before. There just isn't space for the files I work with.

It's definitely worse here. Having shared offices makes me feel downgraded.

The decor is awful, it's shoddy. And I don't like the colour scheme - there are too many colours, and not in the university scheme.

Internal signage effective

Issue
25%

Confusion over signage seems to impact disproportionately on administrative staff, as redirecting people in the building often falls to them.

I get a constant tapping on my door from people who are confused. I've put a sign on the door to direct people. Because I'm halfway round the floor from the first staircase, people give up and knock when they get to me.

Temperature elsewhere in the building at the right level

Issue
38%

The reported problem areas vary, but include WCs, corridors, kitchens and meeting rooms.

The corridors are stifling, especially towards the end of the week. There's not ever a window open.

The loos are freezing in cold weather. There's different heating in there, and they turned it off in both the ladies' loos.

Light level in workspace effective for working

Issue
38%

25% rate it as too bright, 13% too dim.

I often work with the light off - in winter I used a lamp. There are a few people around with lamps.

Noise disturbance elsewhere in the building

Issue
50%

The reported sources are similar to those that the overall resident population identify for 'Noise in workspace': people in corridors, doors slamming, noise from kitchens and bathrooms, and mobile phone conversations.

It's noisy in these small communal areas like the kitchen - from the microwave and the kettle, and from people talking. Mainly the kitchen space is used for teaching, and the noise level goes up and up and up. It happens quite a lot. If visitors are walking through the corridors, they look up to see what the noise is about.

Students on mobile phones. We're in a busy corner with study rooms. This is the only floor with student rooms on it.

Felt adequately supported in move to 32 LIF

Issue
38%

This relates to maintenance 'snags' and 'niggles' that are perceived to have impacted on productivity, and which users consider to have been avoidable.

In light of this, 38% of administrative staff also considered the provision of a welcome 'goodie bag' as placatory and a waste of money.

It was just a mess. All the snags after the move could potentially have been flagged much earlier.

We wanted a building that's fit for purpose, not a little bag with a rubber.

32 LIF brings users together in mutually supportive ways

Issue
38%

Administrators report a sense of being split apart from academic colleagues and students in the building.

As an admin person, you don't really link up. You communicate, but you're not part of the same thing as academics.

I feel that everyone is more split apart here.

System for booking meeting rooms effective

Issue
25%

This relates to some rooms being designated for general use across the School, and managed by central administration. This limits their availability for use by residents in the building.

We thought we'd control the meeting spaces, but the School has control of one on this floor and the arrangements aren't communicated properly - we've had block and duplicate bookings.

The furniture is too heavy. The tables need to be 'tippable' to be able to put them round the sides of the room, but that isn't at all easy for me to do. And the chairs are way too heavy.

Design of meeting rooms

Issue
38%

The underlying points include the glass-panelling in meeting rooms, and the meeting furniture, which is reported as cumbersome when room layouts need to be changed.

I don't like the glass panels in 1.04 and the 4th Floor. There's a tendency for people in the room to look out, and people in the corridor to look in.

Overall assessment

Issue
25%

- Like working in this building
- Building influence on effectiveness
- Pleased with current work environment

In contrast to academics and PhD students, the administrators' overall assessment of 32 LIF identifies some Issues. The value of the segmented data is in the granulation it affords, and recognition that despite the strong endorsement of many users, not everyone's transition into the new building has been as smooth and as pleasing.

It affects the way you feel about your role and I think it is slightly negative. I like my job, but the academic staff got the offices they wanted, and the admin got what was left, with no choice. Academic rooms have always been bigger, but at least everyone had their own room before.

I liked our old building. It felt better. You were in the middle of everything - you could hear and see students, and you were on the campus. Here, we're just in a trophy building on a corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

PhD students

The segmented data also highlights the differential experience of PhD students in the building, identifying more discrete Issues for this category of users.

Enough storage for books

Issue
22%

Storage is a real issue. There are piles of books and things in the corners. We feel like the room hasn't been completed yet.

Storage is identified as a (slight) Issue by the PhD students. In the open plan, individuals each have a set storage allocation, which some students find insufficient for their needs.

Right level of natural light in workspace

Issue
22%

It's nice to have some natural light but it's not enough to work by.

Working at banks of desks in the open plan, some PhD students are situated further from the windows than most office users at 32 LIF.

We aren't on the brightest side of the building.

Temperature in the workspace at the right level

Issue
22%

It was too hot, now it's too cold - I think they've had problems. When the heating was on it was too hot, now they've shut it off and it's too cold, especially in the mornings.

In a shared workspace, the temperature may well not be to everyone's liking. This aligns with the data segmentation on lack of control over thermal conditions identified for the overall resident sample - 56% of PhD students would like more individual control, compared with 32% for the sample overall.

We can open the window, but we can't control the heating.

Security in 32 LIF

Issue
22%

Although PhD students have lockable storage units, there is a level of concern about security of possessions in the open plan.

I feel secure myself, but I have an open plan desk, and people are always around in the corridors because they can access all floors. Students come looking for space to revise, and you don't really know who's around. I do leave stuff on my desk, so it's not really secure - though I do put things in a locked drawer if I go away to lunch or something.

Departmental reception effectively situated

Issue
43%

In contrast to academic and administrative staff, who endorse the reception facilities, PhDs report a lack of clarity surrounding visitor arrangements.

Reception doesn't have a clear policy. They don't know whether they should let people up, or just direct them. Sometimes they'll call up to you, but it depends on who the visitor is.

Provision for departmental notices

Issue
27%

PhD comments indicate a lack of awareness regarding provision for departmental notices, coupled with their inclination to find information online.

I haven't seen anything like notices or information, so I guess I'm not aware of it. It doesn't seem like there's anything.

I wouldn't be looking. I haven't seen notice boards - we get everything by email.

It would be good to have physical notices - for example to ask for quiet in the workspace. You can't say that in an email, people will forget they read it or they won't pay attention.

Raising the bar: student sample overall

Against the students' extensive affirmative evaluation of 32 LIF's teaching spaces, they do identify some Issues, which are set out below.

Teaching venues

Desk surface - for laptop use

Issue
25%

I felt cramped - the tables are very thin, and there're too many people on each table.

Sufficient power sockets in the right place

Issue
36%

There's not space for laptops and notes.

Desks are reported as too narrow for laptop use, and interviewees report a limited distribution of power sockets.

There are no plugs - they only have them at the front and the back, and it means some people can't take notes.

Sockets tend to only be at the front and the back, with none for the desks in the middle.

Lighting effective for learning

Issue
25%

Although lighting levels are considered to be suitable for ambience, problems are reported with flickering or uneven lighting, and with lighting sensors, which are experienced as distracting.

The lights were flashing - there's something wrong with the light. It was a distraction to my working.

The light seems to have a life of its own.

Other facilities in 32 LIF

Effective display of notices + information

Issue
44%

I haven't seen any notice boards.

I haven't seen anything - the only thing I look at are the schedules on the room doors, which are really helpful.

The students report lacking awareness of space for notices in 32 LIF.

I haven't really seen any. It's nice in the other buildings - in the NAB they do reminders of daily events.

Meeting LSE aims

32 LIF links effectively to rest of campus

Issue
29%

As with the resident sample overall, the Issue in respect of the building's location relative to the rest of the LSE campus is identified for this sample as well. Reinforcing the points already made, students appreciate this as an Issue associated with the benefits of an expanding campus.

Once you find it, it's great, as it's right next to the library - but finding it can be difficult.

It feels connected in particular when the Portugal Street door is open, but when it's not, you have to go all the way round.

It's set apart - I had a hard time coming across it. Actually I like that though, it makes the campus seem larger and less congested.

I like it being further away. The whole campus feels bigger, but the building still feels part of it - and it's like Lincoln's Inn Fields becomes part of LSE too, which is nice.

Forward action

The inclusion of 32 LIF in the LSE estate is an important step in the School's Strategic Plan, and the POE evidences its extensive success. Looking ahead, it also suggests the following strategic points for action.

Exploit potential

The POE results are highly endorsing. Addressing the points for improvement that users identify will release still fuller potential.

The potential to be a world class environment is so much greater if we could get the little things fixed.

Diverse users

The highly positive results for the overall sample of resident users eclipse some issues identified for constituent user categories. Given the small size of the sample sub-sets, notably for administrative staff, it is important to recognise that the findings may have a wider bearing.

The particular learning point is attentive engagement with administrative staff on whom so much of the School's successful performance depends.

Early days

The POE was conducted at a productive juncture for the resident population, not least in representing a milestone until which users could reasonably be expected to contain any frustrations they may have experienced directly following their move into the building. However, this timing did not provide for:

So far the temperature's been OK, but we haven't been here for a whole year yet.

- Evaluation of the teaching spaces by teachers
- Evaluation of 32 LIF's informal and teaching spaces when the building's capacity is more intensively used
- The impact on entrance and circulation space when 32 LIF is in fuller use
- Thermal experience in 32 LIF through a full seasonal cycle.

These considerations suggest the relevance of follow-up evaluation. This could also consider the effectiveness of any changes made in response to the findings reported here.