

Issue 5

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LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Saw Swee Hock Student Centre Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

This newsletter serves as a post-occupancy update on the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre

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Estates Division Saw Swee Hock Student Centre



It seems such a long time since we started this project. It began as a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) competition in April 2009. The Architects, O'Donnell + Tuomey (ODT), were appointed in July 2009 and design ran until October 2010. Planning permission was granted in September 2010 and the Contractor Osborne, were appointed in November 2010. Demolition commenced in May 2011 and construction of the new building began in October 2011, with final completion in December 2013. Staff and students moved into the building in January 2014, some five and a half years after initial inception.

It has been a fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable process for all involved.

Our stakeholders have changed several times during the life of the project—we've seen three Directors, two Chaplains and five SU General Secretaries in that time!



Since opening its doors on 6th January 2014 the building's distinct design by ODT has been highly acclaimed by the architectural community and it has been shortlisted for

architecture's highest accolade—the RIBA Stirling Prize. The winner will be announced in October 2014. But for those who use the building, its provision of productive and enjoyable activity and spaces is what really counts.

You said, we did

As part of our continuous improvements, lessons learnt and feedback from previous Post Occupancy studies we placed information boards within the building to explain its various features. These were intended to be used until Easter but proved extremely popular and they will remain in place until after the start of the Michaelmas term.



Yours sincerely

K Kinsella
Director of Capital Development

Post Occupancy Survey

Following established practice in Post Occupancy Evaluation, LSE Estates commissioned ZZA Responsive User Environments to conduct systematic research on the effectiveness of SAW for its range of users.

Here is a summary of the POE, together with Estates follow-up actions.

The new Students' Union: users' views

The research involved face-to-face interviews with samples of people using workspace in the SAW's office zones, and a sample of students using the building's specialist spaces.

The twenty-two office users were asked 122 questions and the fifty students sampled for their use of specialist spaces were asked 75. Overall, this entailed 105 evaluative questions on different aspects of the SAW. The aggregated coded responses generated quantitative outputs, and the researchers also captured the users' narrative data, providing voice and reason to their metric evaluations. The results were banded into three categories:

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

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

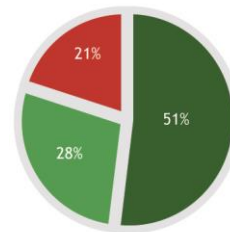
Issue: evaluated as 'Negative' by more than 20% of sample.

Classifying results this way gives ready visibility of the relative incidence of user opinion, and provides and a systematic user steer on future action to LSE Estates.

Strong endorsement

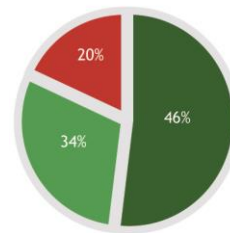
Despite the high thresholds of satisfaction used to index effectiveness, the aggregated responses demonstrate the SAW's considerable achievements. Users evaluate the highest proportion of aspects as **Major Successes**, followed by **Successes**. By contrast, the **Issues** they identify are in a small minority.

Office users

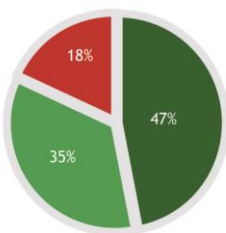


■ Major Successes
■ Successes
■ Issues

Student users



Overall sample



In general the building is a massive positive asset. The old SU facilities weren't even half as good. I can pray, revise, and do SU activities all in one building. For me, it's hugely beneficial and highly functional. I have nothing but praise for it. (Student user, The Venue)

The design is very inspiring. The fact that they could fit such a building into such a small space makes you feel like anything is possible. (Student user, Learning Café)

I really like it. All the spaces have been well thought out. It's the building I come to at the start of the day. It's also easy to access. (Student user, Juice Bar)

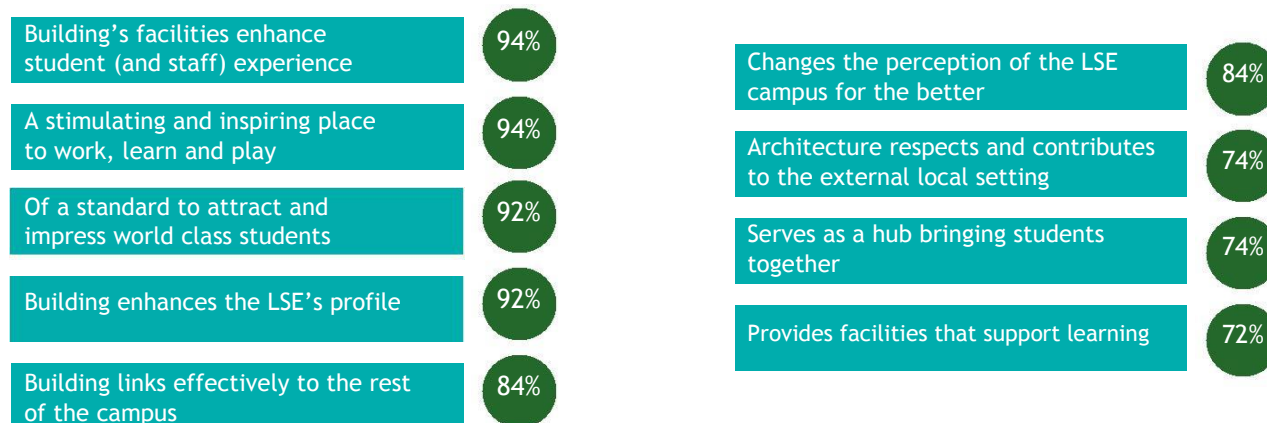
Main entrance canopy

© LSE in Pictures on Flickr



Serving and promoting the LSE

The interviewees were asked questions tailored to the SAW spaces they use, as well as to the centre overall, and all were asked about the building's contribution to strategic aims of the School. The results demonstrate the high effectiveness of the SAW in aligning with LSE's strategic aims:



The building shows that LSE invests in infrastructure and wants to stand out. It could really become a landmark building for LSE. It's not just another building, it has character. (Student client, Careers)

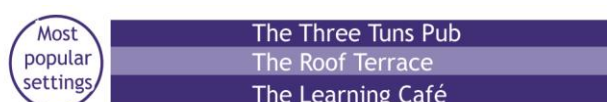
I can see everything from inside. The structure of the building is intuitive - you want to find out more when you look at it. (Student user, Dance studio).

Our workspace is a lot more collaborative and accessible, so people feel free to come in and talk to us. (Office user, Media Centre)

The building is a lot bigger and more open. It feels very connected to the facilities. (Office user, Media Centre)

Multiple uses: cross-promotion of services

A distinct potential benefit of both working in and using the student centre relates to its range of facilities and amenities, with the associated potential for users to engage in varied activities. Both the office users and those using the SAW's specialist spaces make extensive use of the building for multiple purposes, including facilities other than the index spaces in relation to which they were sampled. This feedback affirms the SAW's realisation of an initial key objective set for the centre, to be a participatory student hub, encouraging cross-promotion of student services.



Going forward

Of the relatively few aspects that have been evaluated as **Issues**, most relate to operational aspects and can be addressed by communication or fine tuning the SAW's management and house services. Suggestions include:

More awareness of activities in the SAW

- Facilitate student activities outside the building
- Provide digital bulletins outside and / or in the Ground Floor reception / First Floor Learning Café

Lifts and stairs

- Promote use of stairs as an easy and sustainable means of vertical movement in the SAW, with the bonus of enjoying its animated staircase and views
- Remind gym users that stairs make sense for fitness

WCs

- Resolve reported problems with cleanliness and smells

Occupant's guide

- Incorporate updates in an online guide

Catering setup

- The service has to be viable: home-prepared food can be eaten in the cafés, just not food bought elsewhere

Air and light

- The SAW has operable windows and blinds - they are there for users' control and comfort

Noise

- Transfer of noise across partitioning between separate spaces has been checked and addressed

Storage

- Feasible storage provision for books and laptops to be made available as and where users require.

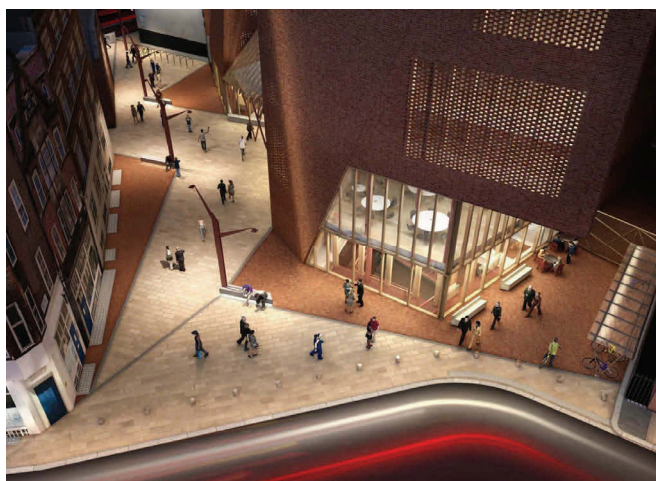
See the full quantitative results of the SAW users' evaluation, and further selections of user quotations, in [ZZA's Summary report](#) on the LSE Estates webpage.

SAW provides a range of specialist spaces for student and staff use:

- Dance and Exercise Studio
- The Weston Café and Roof Terrace
- Bao Yang Meeting Room
- LSE Careers Service
- SU Gym
- LSESU Reception and Offices
- LSESU Advice and Counselling
- LSE Residential Services
- SU Media Centre
- Faith Centre
- Denning Learning Café
- LSESU Meeting Room
- SU Activities Resource Centre (ARC)
- Reception
- The Three Tuns Pub
- SU Venue / Night Club

Ongoing improvements

The project is not yet quite complete. We are working with colleagues in Westminster City Council, who own Sheffield Street, to complete the pedestrianisation of this area. The scope of the works has been extended up to the side of the Peacock Theatre and between Parish Hall and the White Horse pub. New lighting, seating and planters have just been installed.



Sheffield Street pedestrianisation

Works on the conversion of Parish Hall will commence during Summer 2014 and continue until early 2015. Three new teaching rooms will be created within the building, with improved accessibility. The external appearance will also be improved in order to complement the look and feel of the new public realm.

A public sculpture entitled 'The World Upside Down', by Mark Wallinger is planned for the area between Parish Hall and Peacock Theatre.



Proposed public art—'The World Upside Down'

Open House 2014

The building was showcased on 20th and 21st September 2014 as part of London's architectural Open House London event. Over 380 visitors were given guided tours of the building by members of the project team, including Emma Lovegrove, Principal Project Manager and Willie Carey from Architects, O'Donnell + Tuomey.

An Archifacts sheet was produced for the event. To view this and to find out more about Open House visit lse.ac.uk/intranet/students/campusLondonLife/sweeHockStudentCentre/OpenHouse2014.aspx

