

Survey of student views of desired design characteristics of student accommodation halls

Background and objectives

Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Forum was in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and the Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Area had seen the development of a number of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) blocks in the area. The Forum expressed concern at the some of the characteristics of the blocks eg size and massing, lack of green space and amenity space but wished to explore the views of students themselves. Students from the community outreach team at Leeds University attended a forum meeting in February 2019 and agreed to hold a workshop discussion to *explore why students choose PBSA, locations, spaces and facilities*. The workshop was held after a team meeting on 1 March 2019 and the outcome was a questionnaire listing the characteristics identified using an attitude scale (1 to 5) and within the length specified (no more than one side of questions). See pages 4 and 5 below.

Methods

The responses were collected on a single afternoon March 22 in the union cafeteria and a total of 98 responses collected. Students were approached by one of the LUU community outreach and encouraged fill in the questionnaire and/or to speak to two members of the LWNF. Fruit and confectionery were available as thanks for their help. For a count of the results see page 3 below.

The questionnaire was further used with a group of 13 Urban Planning undergraduate students at Leeds Beckett University in February 2021. The assignment included completing the questionnaire and comparing their responses with the LUU results and offering a critical assessment of the questionnaire and results. See page 2 below

Both sets of results were processed using an Excel spreadsheet by the secretary of the Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Forum. The results were discussed with Unipol Director Martin Blakey and Kelly Anne Watson in February 2020, who confirmed similar findings in their much bigger surveys, and informed the draft PBSA Design Code.

Key Results

The characteristics which scored the highest average scores were broadly similar across the two groups despite the disparity in size (LUU – 98 responses, LBU – 13 responses).

The five highest were: Location, Cost, Views/natural light, Social- opportunity to meet people with Storage space (LUU) or Size of room (LBU) in the next place. Location scored highest with the LUU students and Social with LBU group. Both groups scored Height of the block and Washing machine in own room in the lowest place. For more details see below page 2.

Conclusions

The **draft PBSA design code** was discussed at a Forum meeting held on 10 March 2020. Plans were developed with Aron Clark from LUU to hold a number of targeted focus discussions to explore the design code with different groups of students eg international, disabled students but these arrangements had to be cancelled due to Covid. The draft design code includes design principles including: Health and wellbeing, Location of PBSA, Connections and movement, Building design, Room design and Management.

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Average scores ranked for both sets of responses

Importance of Design characteristic & No of responses (score on scale 1 (low) to 5 (high))	Average score n=97	Rank LUU	LBU Feb 2021 n=13	Rank LBU
Location is convenient 79 responses	4.4	1	4.7	2
Cost n=98	4.2	2	4.5	3
Views, natural light n=97	4.1	3	4.2	4=
Social – opportunity to meet people n=98	4.0	4=	4.8	1
Storage space in room n=97	4.0	4=	4.0	7=
Security n=98	3.9	6=	3.9	9=
Facilities provided in own room n=97	3.9	6=	4.0	7=
Size of room n=97	3.7	6=	4.2	4=
Communal facilities e.g. lounge, gym, laundry, games rooms, shared kitchen n=97	3.6	9=	3.9	9=
Recreation space e.g. to sit outside, exercise etc N=97	3.6	9=	3.1	12=
Like the character of the area n=98	3.5	11=	3.3	11
Close to shopping and/or entertainment n=98	3.5	11=	4.2	4=
Eco friendly e.g. green roofs, water capture etc Use of sustainable building materials n=97	3.5	11=	3.1	12=
Greenery around the block n=96	3.5	11=	3.1	12=
Space for deliveries n=97	3.4	15	3.0	16=
Easy to book online n=98	2.8	16	3.1	12=
Bike storage n=97	2.4	17	1.9	19
External appearance n=97	2.4	18	3.0	16=
Self-catering facilities in own room n=97	2.3	19=	1.5	20=
Can't find other accommodation n=89 N=74	2.3	19=	2.9	18
Height of block – e.g. below 10 storeys N=74	1.8	21	1.5	20=
Washing machine in own room n=97	1.7	22	1.3	22

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Leeds University Union responses – count of responses**

When you choose a SA Hall to live in, how important are the following ... ? (please circle 1 ... 5 for importance)

Q1	Location is convenient 79 responses In what way?	0 Not important	1	8	32	38 Very important
Q2	Like the character of the area n=98	2	19	26	34	17
Q3	Close to shopping and/or entertainment n=98	1	17	23	46	11
Q4	Easy to book online n=98	14	26	31	18	9
Q5	Security n=98	1	9	24	32	32
Q6	Social – opportunity to meet people n=98	1	11	19	27	40
Q7	Facilities provided in own room n=97	1	2	12	20	38
Q8	Cost n=98	0	4	20	30	44
Q9	Communal facilities e.g. gym, laundry, TV lounge, games room etc n=96	4	22	32	29	9
Q10	Can't find other accommodation n=89	25	24	31	6	3

How important do you think these design features of a SA Hall are? (please circle 1...5 for importance)

Q11a	Height of block – e.g. below 10 storeys N=74	Not important 44	2 14	3 6	4 8	Very important 2
b	External appearance n=97	24	30	27	14	2
c	Eco friendly e.g. green roofs, water capture etc Use of sustainable building materials n=97	6	13	32	21	25
Q12a	Size of room n=97	3	4	28	43	19
b	Views, natural light n=97	1	4	17	37	38
c	Storage space in room n=97	1	5	15	47	29
d	Self-catering facilities in own room n=97	35	25	18	10	9
e	Washing machine in own room n=97	64	14	9	6	4
Q14	Communal facilities e.g. lounge, gym, laundry, games rooms, shared kitchen n=97	4	16	21	31	25
Q15a	Greenery around the block n=96	7	9	29	34	17
b	Recreation space e.g. to sit outside, exercise etc N=97	5	11	20	44	17
Q16	Space for deliveries n=97	8	17	25	26	21
Q17	Bike storage n=97	37	21	13	12	14

Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Forum

Survey of design needs of Student Accommodation Halls (SA Halls, aka PBSA)

We are a forum for local people (including students) making a Neighbourhood Plan to improve planning in our local area. A large number of students live in purpose-built Student Accommodation halls in our area and we would like to know about your experience and views to help us draw up design guidelines for future developments. Thank you for your help.

Do you live in a SA Hall this year? ...

Yes | No

Have you lived in a SA Hall previously? (please circle)

Yes | No

Your current postcode

Where are you thinking of living next year ?

SA Hall | House/flat share | Other (please state)

not applicable

..... ***Please turn over to complete a few questions about what factors influenced your choice of SA Hall and what features you think are important in the design of SA Halls.***

Thanks very much for your help

****Little Woodhouse is closer than you think ...***

Little Woodhouse covers the area between Woodhouse Moor to the north, down to Kirkstall Road and the river, and from the University of Leeds across to Hyde Park Road, the old boundary between the parishes of Leeds and Burley.

Originally part of 'the Lord's waste' (rough scrub and pasture), the lands were used for grazing animals and drying cloth (tenting). Little Woodhouse was described in 1715 by the Leeds historian Ralph Thoresby as "one of the pleasantest Hamlets in the Parish" and its main street only demolished in the 1970s to make way for the Clarendon wing of the Leeds General Infirmary.

Since the 1990s many of the larger Victorian terraces have been converted for multiple occupation. Blocks of apartments have replaced some large houses and former school buildings in Belle Vue Road, St John's Road, Clarendon Road, Westfield Road, Woodhouse Square and notably, Hanover Square (with a façade replicating the original Victorian housing).

The largest green spaces are the Hanover and Woodhouse Squares, and the Rosebank Millennium Green a 5-acre natural green space founded 2000 and run by a voluntary Trust. In the 21st century large blocks of purpose built Student Accommodation have been built in the Burley and Kirkstall Road area, and more recently close to campus.

****If you are interested in learning more, or in joining the forum (free to all living or working/studying in the area) please contact Barbara Mitchell bamitchell92@gmail.com or Deryck Piper deryck.piper@btinternet.com***

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When you choose a SA Hall to live in, how important are the following ... ? (please circle 1 ... 5 for importance)

Q1	Location is convenient In what way?	1 Not important	2	3	4	5 Very important
Q2	Like the character of the area	1	2	3	4	5
Q3	Close to shopping and/or entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Q4	Easy to book online	1	2	3	4	5
Q5	Security	1	2	3	4	5
Q6	Social – opportunity to meet people	1	2	3	4	5
Q7	Facilities provided in own room	1	2	3	4	5
Q8	Cost	1	2	3	4	5
Q9	Communal facilities e.g. gym, laundry, TV lounge, games room etc	1	2	3	4	5
Q10	Can't find other accommodation	1	2	3	4	5

How important do you think these design features of a SA Hall are? (please circle 1...5 for importance)

Q11a	Height of block – e.g. below 10 storeys	1 Not important	2	3	4	5 Very important
b	External appearance	1	2	3	4	5
c	Eco friendly e.g. green roofs, water capture etc Use of sustainable building materials	1	2	3	4	5
Q12a	Size of room	1	2	3	4	5
b	Views, natural light	1	2	3	4	5
c	Storage space in room	1	2	3	4	5
d	Self-catering facilities in own room	1	2	3	4	5
e	Washing machine in own room	1	2	3	4	5
Q14	Communal facilities e.g. lounge, gym, laundry, games rooms, shared kitchen	1	2	3	4	5
Q15a	Greenery around the block	1	2	3	4	5
b	Recreation space e.g. to sit outside, exercise etc	1	2	3	4	5
Q16	Space for deliveries	1	2	3	4	5
Q17	Bike storage	1	2	3	4	5

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