AMS NEST Social Animation Project
Club Offices & Precincts

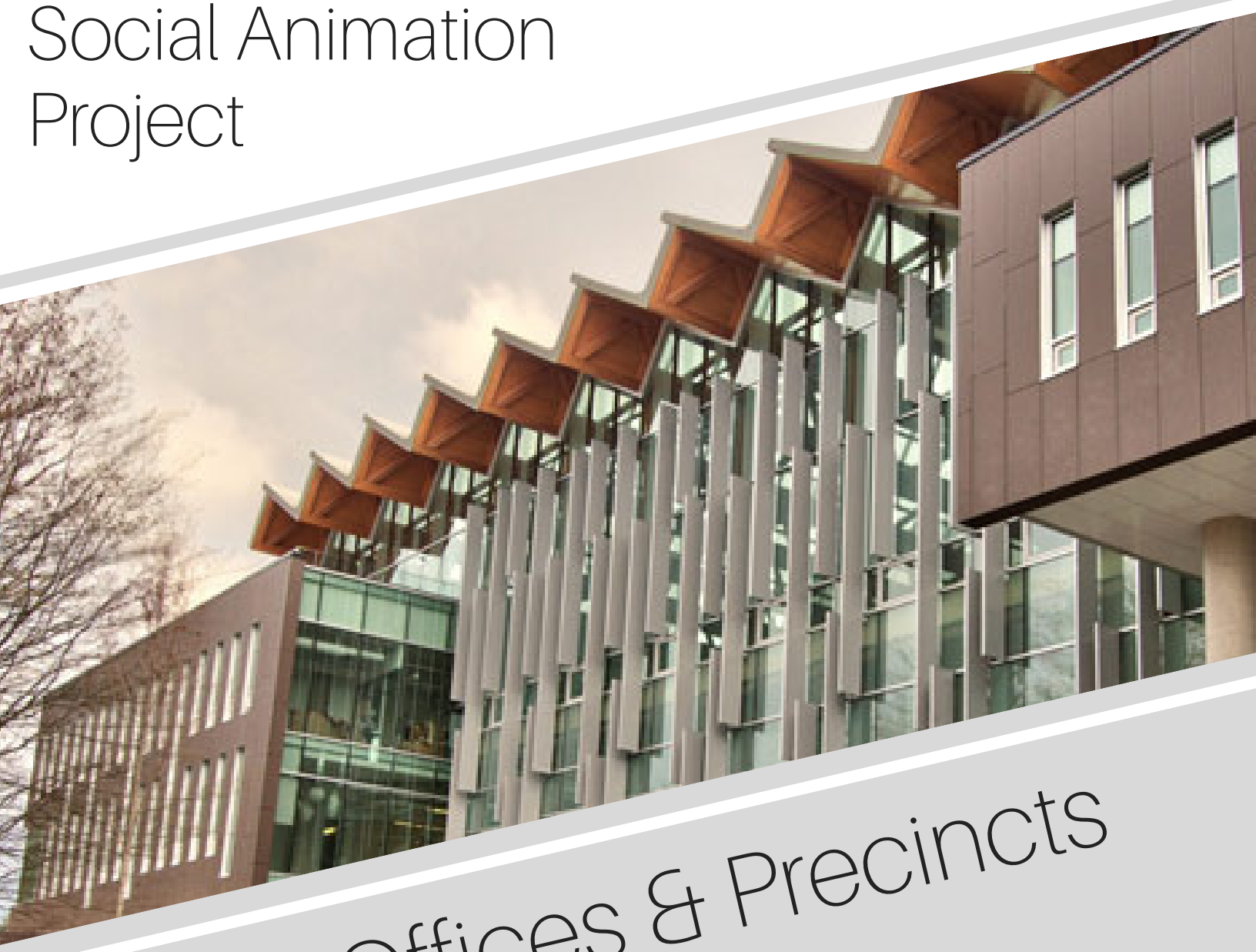
Kathleen Heggie, Oliver Dann, Saki Aono

University of British Columbia

PLAN 522

May 03, 2017

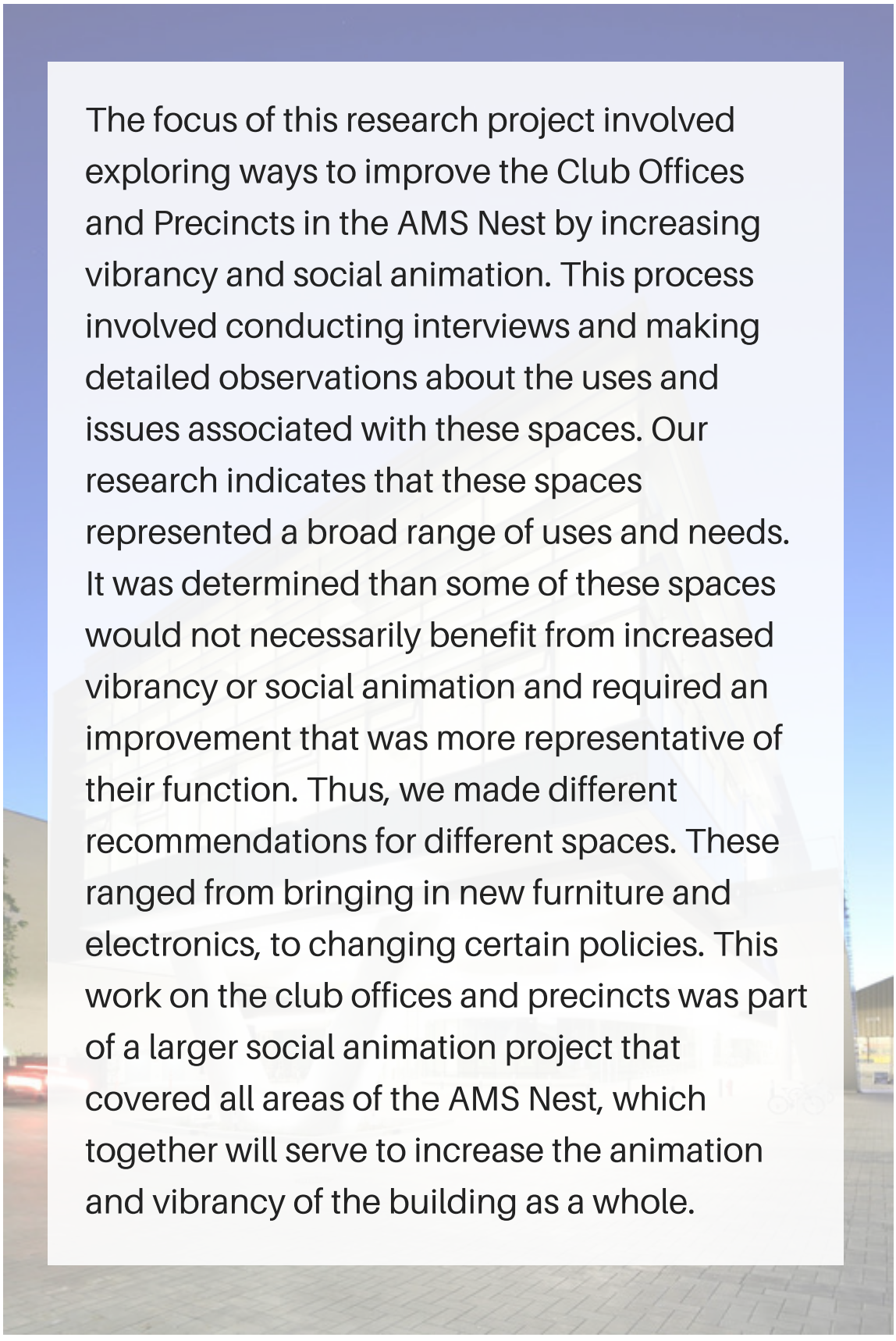
AMS NEST
Social Animation Project



Club Offices & Precincts

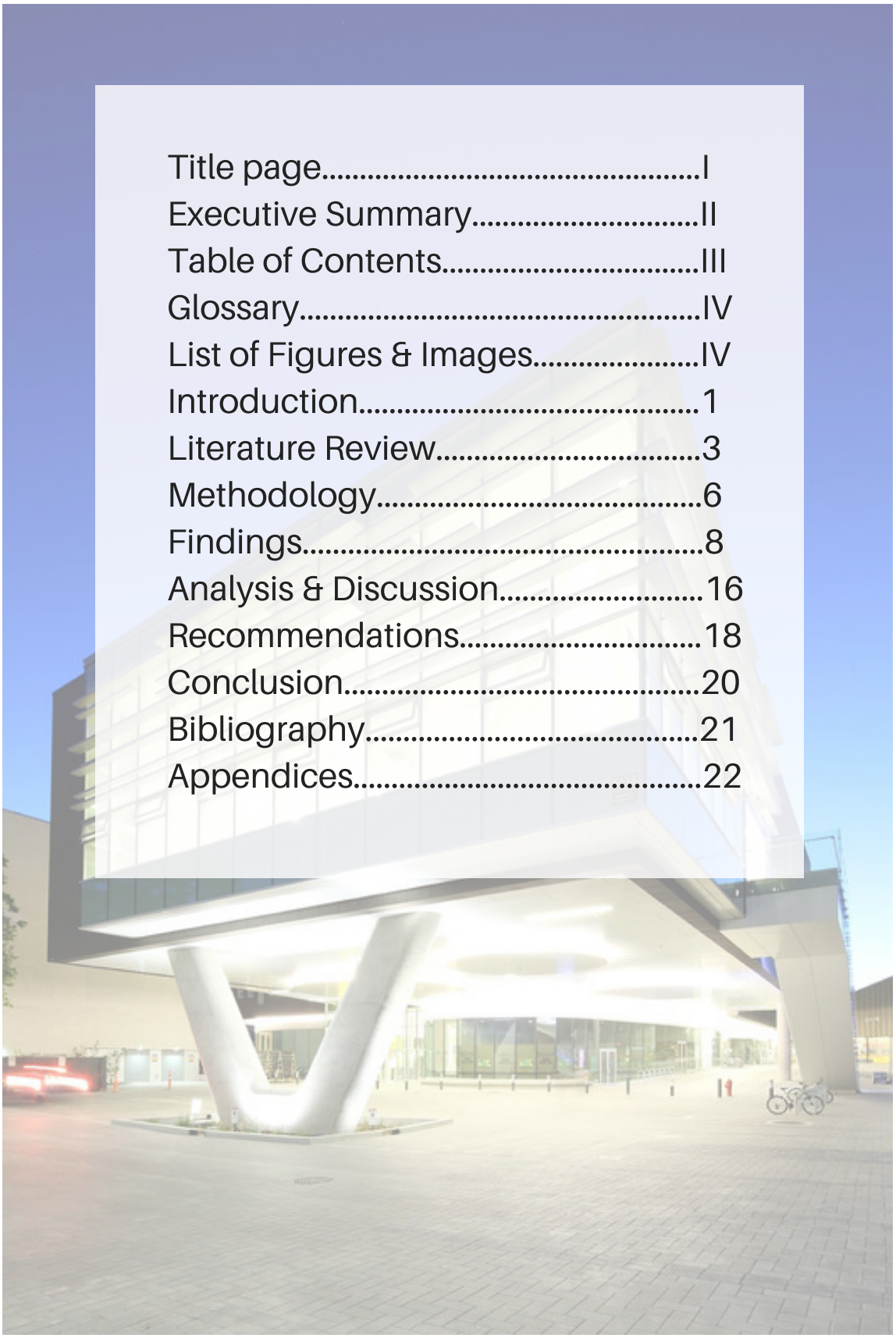
Group 7
Saki Aono,
Oliver Dann
& Kathleen Heggie
for PLAN 522

Executive Summary



The focus of this research project involved exploring ways to improve the Club Offices and Precincts in the AMS Nest by increasing vibrancy and social animation. This process involved conducting interviews and making detailed observations about the uses and issues associated with these spaces. Our research indicates that these spaces represented a broad range of uses and needs. It was determined than some of these spaces would not necessarily benefit from increased vibrancy or social animation and required an improvement that was more representative of their function. Thus, we made different recommendations for different spaces. These ranged from bringing in new furniture and electronics, to changing certain policies. This work on the club offices and precincts was part of a larger social animation project that covered all areas of the AMS Nest, which together will serve to increase the animation and vibrancy of the building as a whole.

Table of Contents



Glossary

Social animation

: promotion of the synergy between individual and collective well-being through increased interconnectivity and overall liveliness through place.

Post-occupancy evaluation

: theoretical mechanism designed to provide insight into how buildings meet their occupant's needs and pinpoints ways to improve aspects of the structure's design and functionality.

List of Figures & Images

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Goal & Context

The goal of this research project is to enhance the vibrancy and social animation of the AMS NEST through an ethical, exploratory inquiry into the qualitative and quantitative mechanisms that contribute to these attributes. Within this context, our specific research focus encompasses the club offices and precincts that are distributed across the third and fourth floors of the Nest. Unlike many of the other designated research areas in the Nest, our allotted space is not a single homogenous area, but rather a multitude of different areas, each with a slightly different function and sense of place. The unique and multifaceted nature of this area will require several approaches and solutions in order to maximize vibrancy and functionality within these spaces. For example, the club offices embody a much different set of functions and needs when compared to the precincts, and each individual precinct demonstrates different functional characteristics and needs when compared to each other. Considering the different uses of these spaces, our research also explores whether an increase in vibrancy and animation is synonymous with an improved space or if the spaces require investment in other qualities, such as functionality. Currently, the spaces are not being used as effectively as they could be. The precincts lack a vibrant atmosphere (e.g. plain design features, derelict furniture, overall disorganization) which does not create an inviting space, and the club offices are used more for storage and less as a meeting space. The overarching problem with these space appears to be that they are not efficiently utilized, and also lack character and functionality.

1.2 Research Question

Primary Research Question:
How can we improve the design of club offices and precinct spaces to optimize social connectivity and the potential vitality of place through social animation?

Sub-questions:
- How are the offices and precincts currently used, and what makes these spaces unique from each other?
- How do the current users of these spaces perceive them and what improvements do they want to see?
- What animations could improve the vibrancy of these individual spaces and lead to a more holistic and integrated use of the space overall?

1 Introduction con't

1.3 Indicators of Social Animation

Social animation: promotion of the synergy between individual and collective well-being through increased interconnectivity and overall liveliness through place.

- Friendliness: likelihood of striking up conversation with person beside you
- Vibrancy: synonym of liveliness; the opposite of dull; full of energy and life
- Comfort: state of social and physical ease
- Usability: the extent to which the space is accessible and suitable for its uses
- Integration: sense of connection with the surrounding environment
- Sense of Place: strength and feeling of character through design

1.4 Research Goals

- Determine how the designated spaces in the Nest are currently being used
- Understand the perceptions of Nest users about how these spaces are being used and how spaces can be improved.
- Determine what physical interventions would increase vibrancy and animation in the Nest

2 Literature Review

The Alma Mater Society (AMS) Student Nest has become a prominent building representing the student society of the University of British Columbia (UBC). The building features a variety of uses from food outlets to work spaces, creating a platform for greater student social interaction and workspace. Despite the astounding amenities and architecture, however, the space's atmosphere lacks a sense of vibrancy. Thus, the purpose of this review is to gain greater insight into post-occupancy evaluation (POE) as a methodological framework often used to understand the gaps between uses and students needs to help capture the essence of what vibrancy and animation represent in social spaces. This review will examine POE literature covering its theory and history, practical applications, as well as strengths and weaknesses. This focus will help achieve a deeper understanding of POE as the building evaluation methodology that will be employed in analyzing the potential for increasing social animation in the Nest.

2.1 POE Theory and History

POE is a theoretical mechanism designed to provide insight into how buildings meet their occupant's needs and pinpoints ways to improve aspects of the structure's design and functionality. Preiser and Vischer (2005) define POE as "the act of evaluating buildings in a systematic and rigorous manner after they have been built and occupied for some time" (p.8). Hassanain, Al-Hammad, & Sanni-Anibire, (2016) reflect and build on this definition by asserting that "POE involves systematic evaluation of opinion about buildings in use, from the perspective of the people who use them" (p.6). According to the literature, this evaluation is typically orchestrated through intensive quantitative and qualitative research conducted directly with the users of the building. This is an advantageous tactic as it utilizes a multi-method research approach and provides a direct, unmediated connection to the building users (Hassanain et al, 2016; Preiser & Vischer, 2005). The intended outcome of the POE process, as suggested by Riley, Cotgrave, & Kokkarinen (2015), is designed around the modification of the physical environment to match the perceived desired of the building users as well as providing a knowledge base for advising future building designs. According to Preiser and Vischer (2005) the theoretical framework of building performance evaluation (BPE) and, subsequently, POE was derived from the interdisciplinary field of cybernetics, defined as "the study of human control functions and of mechanical and electronic systems designed to replace them" (p.4). This contributed to the systems approach of POE that factors in the relationship between humans, processes and their physical, social, and cultural environments. Both Riley et al (2015) and Preiser and Vischer (2005) link the emergence of POE to residential development in the late 1960s. It was primarily used to study the design of rapidly built mass housing initiatives for disenfranchised populations after World War II. It became obvious that there was a gap between how these structures were being designed and how they were being used. Despite its origins in new construction, the authors assert that POE has evolved into a tool for tailoring building performance around the changing needs of building users in existing structures (Riley et al, 2015; Presier &Vischer, 2005)

2.2 Practical Applications of POE

To further understand the use of POE, it is essential to review its practical applications in the context of school facilities and offices. A prime example of the use of POE in a university setting is exemplified by Hassanain et al. (2015) in their study of the university cafeteria at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals regarding its technical and functional performance. Similar to the AMS Nest project, the assigned indicators are relevant to concepts of social animation as it addresses comfort (acoustical and visual), interior and exterior finishes indicative of the appeal of space, and human factors which pertain to consumer satisfaction. The methodology involved qualitative data collection methods including walk-through inspection, focus group discussion, and user satisfaction surveys. The user satisfaction surveys were analyzed quantitatively through a five point Likert scale. Thus, this study highlights the importance of triangulation, to obtain conclusive results and recommendations Another essential methodology related to POE is BPE, which is used to evaluate an office space of the Deutscher Herold Insurance Company in Bonn. The study aimed to "determine the effects of the building on work efficiency, and to identify which building elements are important for future building projects" (Walden, 2005, p. 120). Along with on-site observation, the main data source was the BPE questionnaire which "compared present building conditions with those aspects considered most important for future buildings" (Walden, 2005, p. 121). The questionnaire involved rating the environmental and spatial quality of office spaces. The key findings from this research highlighted the need for better accessibility and the unpleasant aesthetic appeal and odour of conference rooms. In terms of odour, such finding allowed the researchers to deduce the issue of fumes from the new furniture (Walden, 2005, p. 122). These case studies stress the importance of triangulating qualitative and quantitative data when using POE for educational and work facilities. Both studies follow the methodology of collecting qualitative data through site observations and focus groups in order to construct follow up surveys that provide quantitative results. Finally, as studies on educational and office spaces, both examples provide essential factors in assessing the building performance that are pertinent to vibrant spaces.

2.3 POE Strengths and Weaknesses

Preiser (2002) distinguishes POE from other methods by noting its "holistic and process-oriented approach" which encourages consideration of social, political, economic, and other external influences (p. 9). He lists various short-, medium- and long-term benefits associated with POE, from its ability to increase user satisfaction, to significant cost savings, to overall improvements in building performance. The most important of these benefits, he proposes, is "its positive influence upon the delivery of human and appropriate environments for people through improvements in the programming and planning of buildings" (Preiser, 2002, p. 13). However, Preiser's piece lacks consideration of any downfalls of POE.

2 Literature Review con't

Martin and Zimmerman (2001) provides a strong examination of both the strengths and weaknesses of POE. The overarching benefit they identify resembles that in Preiser's article, yet they emphasize POE's ability to provide continuous building improvement through a "feedback loop" (Martin and Zimmerman, 2001, p. 169). The barriers to POE highlighted in this article are largely centered around agency and accountability, questioning who can be held responsible for conducting and paying for the POE process, and then implementing its suggestions. Riley, Kokkarinin and Pitt (2010) build off Martin and Zimmerman's work, agreeing that POE's primary value is in its ability to inform ongoing improvement. They question, however, whether POE is more useful for producing research than for providing solutions to identified issues. Based on these articles, there appears to be consensus that one of the most significant aspects of POE is its inclusion of qualitative data, as opposed to more traditional, quantitative methods based on a building's mechanical or functional systems.

A noticeable gap in POE literature is variety in the building types to which it is applied. Both Riley, Kokkarinin and Pitt (2010) as well as Brown (2016) express this, mentioning specifically that high-rise residential and higher education buildings have received little POE analysis. Hopefully, the social animation project undertaken at the AMS Nest will help fill this gap by applying POE to a building at the core of UBC, a center for higher education. With an awareness of the theoretical and historical foundations of POE, its various practical applications, and its pros and cons, this project will both benefit from and contribute to existing POE literature.

3 Methodology

We used a combination of primary and secondary data to complete our study. The secondary sources used in our literature review helped frame the approach and direction of the study, and the primary sources helped build the site-specific knowledge that was needed to accomplish this process. One of the first decisions that we had to make involved how we were going to approach the task of collecting meaningful data, given the diversity of the spaces. We decided to study the offices together, as they all shared a relatively similar sense of place and function, and our recommendations for these spaces would likely be uniform. However, our initial investigation of the precincts revealed that each one was relatively different from the others, especially the largest one on Northeast corner of the third floor. It appeared to have evolved a different use and culture than the others so we collectively decided to study it separately and make recommendations that were different than the other precincts. For this reason, we labeled the precincts differently. we labeled this largest precinct 'A', the adjacent precinct to the Southwest 'B', the one Southwest of that 'C', and the single precinct on the fourth floor 'D'. A labeled map of the precincts can be seen the figures 1 and 2 in appendix A. We employed a multi-method research approach, drawing from verbal-textual and visual-spatial research methods in order to achieve a well-rounded understanding of the different spaces. The triangulation of the data collected through these mediums proved to be an important aspect in understanding the issues these spaces face, from a multi-perspective approach. It is also important to mention that the set of spaces we were originally assigned included the bookable rooms on the third floor, however initial research revealed that it was very difficult to collect data as our respondents demonstrated very little awareness or interest in discussing this space. Ultimately, we decided to drop this area from our study and focus our attention on areas that could yield more meaningful results.

3.1 Verbal Textual Data Collection

We began the data collection process with in-depth spot interviews, using a set of questions we had previously developed for this purpose. We targeted users across an evenly distributed sample of the precincts and club offices. The interviews consisted of warm up questions, main questions, and cool down questions, and typically lasted between 8-10 minutes. The questions that were featured in the interview were designed to extract information about the precincts and covered themes associated with our research questions. We approached club office data collection using an impromptu focus group format. We looked for well-populated club offices and engaged willing participant groups for a 15 to 20-minute conversation that was loosely based on a set of open-ended questions we had previously developed. We were fortunate in that each of these two sessions had had representative participants from all of the clubs that shared the respective offices. Both the individual interviews and focus groups were recorded and later transcribed - these transcripts are available in appendix B. This became the foundation of an analytical process where we individually searched for common themes and keywords in our transcribed interviews and discussed what we had found as a group. As a result, we were able to find common categories to code the data in a manner that will help answer our primary research question. The relevant themes and codes are listed in Table 1 in the appendices. These codes were then used to analyze the general response given by the participants.

3 Methodology con't

3.2 Visual-Spatial Data Collection

We used a mixed method approach to capture visual-spatial data using the photo voice and participant observer techniques. The photo voice involved capturing images of the physical spaces inside our study area, the activities that are transpiring inside, and the people that are occupying them. Once these images were captured, we analyzed the most pertinent pictures by codifying them and extracting thematic content. We used the complete observer method within the participant observer technique to gain a new perspective regarding the uses of the spaces and activities that take place inside. This method involves blending in to the environment and making observations without interacting the unknowing participants. The primary area focus of this technique was the precincts, as the use of the offices is restricted to club members and we felt that imposing ourselves in such a situation would lead to an inorganic process and, ultimately, unreliable data. We recorded the number of people using the space, the types of activates that were taking place, and how these changed over time. Similarly, to the data collected through the photographs, we analyzed our observations and extracted key information relating to the usage of these spaces. The graphic characterization of these spaces is captured in figures 2,3, and 4.

3.3 Study Limitations

The limitations of this study of involved several factors. The first we came across was the variation between the spaces that we were assigned. This made it difficult to establish a uniform process and required us to developed several different research approaches. The uses of these spaces were very broad, and each group of users tended to use the spaces for a different function. This was especially true in the club offices. Soliciting meaningful input from the participants was another major challenge. It was obvious that many of the participants had not previously considered the concepts that were brought up in our interview questions and this lead to many brief and seemingly indifferent responses. Further, if a particular interview or focus group became animated, it was difficult to keep the conversations on track and limit the digressions. The time that was absorbed by these digressions limited the meaningful data be were able to accumulate.

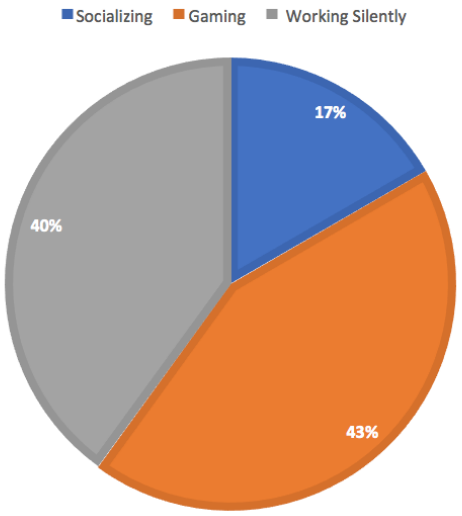
4 Findings

4.1 Precinct A

4.1.1 Verbal Textual Data

Typically, Precinct A is a space that is used for socializing, eating and playing video games, both individually or as part of a group. It seemed that the primary use was related to gaming as some users felt the space was not ideal for studying due to the high noise level and distracting atmosphere resulting from gaming as indicated by the quote below. Moreover, the segregated uses of this space is outlined further by Figure 1. Its users tend to be 2nd year students between the ages of 19-20 who use the space approximately 6 hours a week.

FIGURE 1. USES OF PRECINCT 'A'



"We're not allowed to study in there ("club room"), so we're just eating. We don't study here, it's too loud here"

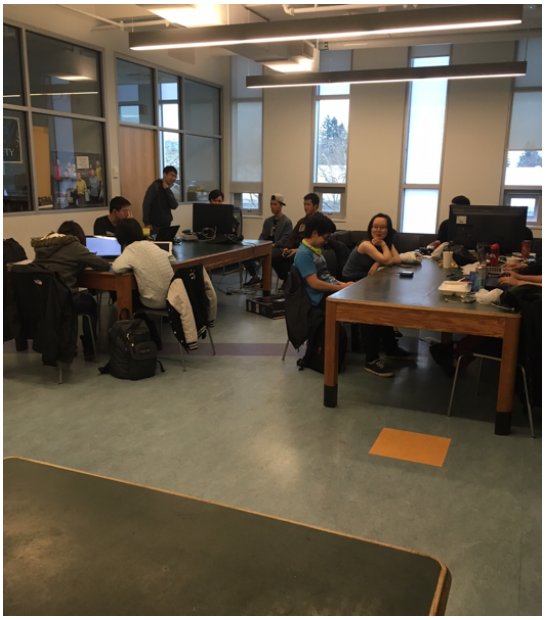


Image 1: Precinct A

The thematic content of the data is featured around functionality, physical attributes, feelings, challenges, and demographic information. Interviewees found the functionality of the spaces to be relatively adequate and serving its purpose as a place for socializing as depicted by Image.

While participants indicated that they were quite reasonably comfortable in the space, certain complains about specific issues arose more than once. The overall aesthetic of the space was addressed numerous times. Several participants did not like the finishing or flooring in the space and found the appearance of the furniture, specifically the chairs and tables, to be rather undesirable.

One interviewee saw a significant disconnect between the modern aesthetic of the NEST and the derelict furniture that filled the precinct. Therefore, a common note regarding the furniture was that most were transferred directly from the old Student Union Building (SUB), which did not match with the architectural design of the new Nest. More specifically, a respondent had mentioned that the inside seems to have a limited budget, signifying a perceived lack of vibrancy in the space.

4 Findings

4.2 Precincts B, C & D

4.2.1 Verbal-Textual Data

As a result of coding for functionality, the most common use for the precinct area was studying. Additionally, others described the area as a space to sit or eat and use as a quiet area. Thus, it seems the precincts are often used as a sedentary space, for users to rest and stay for long periods of time, both individually and in small groups.

In terms of physical attributes, several items related to the existing furniture were brought up. However, these words can be divided into whether they were positively or negatively perceived by the context of the respondent's answer. Physical attributes which respondent's suggested as additional improvements included long tables, couches, cushions, newer and 'better' tables, and water fountains. After the interview, we realized that the third floor lacked water drinking facilities and users had to go to the ground floor to have access to water. Although an increase in tables were desired, some perceived wood-based table negatively.

Interestingly, despite the old and dated furnishings, many users seemed to enjoy the bland atmosphere as it was suitable for studying. As indicated by the quote below, the lack of excitement by the place was deemed appropriate to use the space for studying purposes. Additionally, many respondents indicated that because of this casual atmosphere, they perceived this place to be more relaxed than the library where there is a level of pressure to stay quiet and focus.

"There isn't really anything exciting about it. It's good because there are a lot of outlets. It's good the way it is.. It's for studying and I need it to be a dry, bland environment, but maybe add whiteboards"

In regards to the interviews conducted in Precinct B, C, and D, the keyword relating to the atmosphere of the space was 'casual', further implying that students used this space for everyday tasks such as studying and eating. Although specific feelings associated with social connection and comfort were not explicitly stated, we were able to get a sense of the social atmosphere based on the respondent's answer to question 7b and 8a. Interestingly, although a lot of the respondents used the space for studying, many of them also felt socially comfortable and that these places adequately fostered social connection. This is largely attributed to the fact that many people learnt about this space through friends, and often came to the precinct with their peers to study. These findings suggest that the focus of improvements should be catered towards increasing physical comfort as opposed to social comfort.

4 Findings con't

There were several challenges that were identified through the interviews. Those that were specific to the relevant precincts included the primarily the outdated furniture of the space and the dim lightning that was evident towards the back end of the precincts. Additionally, some respondents described the problems evident in their specific club office, which was the lack of ventilation in the confined space, seeing as many clubs shared one room. Therefore, we found that there was a tendency for the club rooms to get stuffy as a result of overcrowding.

In terms of the user profile, interview respondents were undergraduate students with the age range being primarily in the early 20s. Each respondent also spent a similar number of hours in these areas as two hours seemed to be the norm as indicated by question 4.

5.2.2 Visual-Spatial Data

Image 2: Precinct C

The observational data provided insight largely on the functionality, occupancy, and challenges of the precincts. Users of Precincts B, C and D used the space primarily for working and studying individually or in pairs as depicted in Image . The quiet atmosphere was emphasized by individuals plugging in their earphones.

The occupancy of each precinct coincides with the size of the precincts as Precinct A has the largest area and also had the highest occupancy. Moreover, club members of offices located in Precinct A seemed to utilize the space for gaming activities. However, in Precinct B and C, there was a clear segregation between club members in their offices and non-club members in the precinct areas. Thus, there was a relatively low occupancy level with the maximum level of occupants being eleven users in the afternoon.

Furthermore, in comparison to Precinct B and C, Precinct D had the lowest amount of users which may be attributed to the fact that it is located further from the stairs. Due to the low utilization level, this precinct was much tidier than the others and seemed to be used less than Precincts B and C.

"The exterior of the building looks a lot better than the inside of the building, the inside seems to have a limited amount of budget, they seemed to just have put white paint on the walls and move stuff from the old SUB and called it a day."

Another complained of the lack of back support offered by the chairs. The complaints about the furniture were not limited to surface issues as several participants cited the bulkiness of the tables to be problematic as it interfered with their mobility when moving about the precinct. Existing regulations of the space discouraged the moving of the tables as it was harmful to the floors, so the users felt disempowered to make changes, by moving the tables, on their own.

Additionally, the lack of electrical outlets contributed to their frustration as they were unable to charge their electrical devices and the locations of the existing outlets presented a significant tripping hazards is wires were forced to be laid across high traffic areas. Some participants felt that the layout was not as functional as it could be and some dead space could be used for features that would improve the precinct, such as storage units, or day user lockers

Despite these discomforts, there was a general sense of wellbeing from an emotional standpoint in the precincts. Participants were excited and felt comforted by the precinct's social atmosphere and mentioned the presence of friends as a feature that contributed to the social cohesion of the space. However, this excitement was confined to this social atmosphere, an overwhelming number of respondents indicated that the aesthetics did not contribute to their excitement.

5.1.2 Observational Data

The observation revealed that the dominant activities in this space were studying and playing video games (Image 3), either on individual laptops or as part of a group on a monitor that is connected to a console. On each of the dates the number of individuals partaking in each of these activities was roughly half and half. Also, the majority of people that were studying were sitting the tables instead of the couches during both of the sessions. This is not surprising as the couch areas seem to be one that is more dedicated to gaming, given its proximity to available monitors.

Image 3: Gaming set-up in Precinct A

More people were eating during the second session, however this is likely due to its closeness to lunch time. In both sessions it became abundantly clear that there were an insufficient number of outlets. Several of the existing outlets had 5 way splitters plugged into them and each of the splitter outlets were in use. Not only did this this put electrical strain on the circuits, but presented a tripping hazard in a main corridor within the precinct. Additionally, Precinct A also had two couches in addition to the wooden tables. It seemed there was also an excessive amount of chairs, as they were stacked in the corner. Overall, the participant observation sessions provided insights into aspects of usage that would not have been revealed in the interviews and have contributed to the richness and depth of the data.

The physical attributes that were observed remained relatively similar across all three precincts. There was a noticeable lack of greenery in each space. Moreover, all three areas had uncovered ceilings in which pipes were visible. Precinct C and D seemed to have the least amount of attractive physical features as they lacked a bulletin board. However, all precincts had lockers available for storage, although whether these lockers were being utilized by precinct or club office users were unclear.

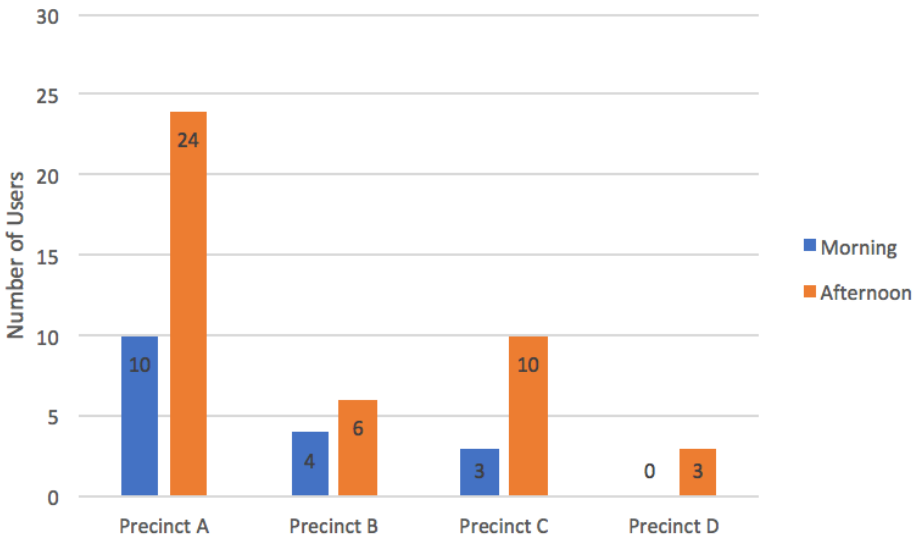
4 Findings con't

In terms of challenges, the visible areas for improvements included the lack of plants and accessible outlets. Thus, rather than visible challenges, the obvious challenges were mainly rooted by their lack of presence. For example, there were no appliances such as microwaves and kettles that may be of convenience to those eating in the precincts. Additionally, the surrounding club offices seemed to be underutilized as it was used as a storage space or were left vacant, indicating a lack of vibrancy in the overall precinct zone as indicated in Image .

Image 4: Club Office in Precinct C

In conclusion, from our observational data, we were able to figure out general trends and movement patterns of all four precincts. For example. our counts revealed that these spaces were utilized to a far greater extent in the afternoon than in the morning as indicated by Figure 3.

Figure 2. Precinct Occupancy per Time of Day



In addition, through our observations we were able to find that Precinct A had significantly different uses in comparison to both Precinct B, C and D. As shown in our observation table, most users of Precinct A used the space for gaming with others, whether it was on the monitor or their personal computers. While Precincts B, C, and D were primarily used as a relaxed study space that also invited the capacity for socializing. Therefore, these findings suggest that these Precincts should be considered separately when addressing our respective recommendations.

4.3 Club Offices

4.3.1 Focus Group A: Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club

In regards to the club offices, a focus group was conducted with the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club that is located in Precinct A. During this session, we found that they shared the space with the Origami Club and the Magician's Club. This club space differed from the adjacent clubs largely due to the bookshelves that were stacked for Sci-Fi and Fantasy books as shown in Image 2. Additionally, the members had indicated they brought in their own fridge and microwave to improve the functionality of the space.

In terms of functionality and the subsequent challenges, the indicated uses were phrased as places to hang out with other club members. For the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club specifically, this space was used both for the storage of books as well as places to hold club meetings and office hours. Out of all three clubs that shared the space, it seemed the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club used the space most often given the share of the furniture. Following this use of space, a common dissatisfaction with the office was the lack of space. The members had expressed their concerns that some clubs only used these office spaces for storage. However, clubs like the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club that use it both for shelving and club duties found that there was no room to hold proper meetings.

For the social aspect, the members revealed that despite the large precinct area, they personally had very little interaction with the surrounding club members. This was rooted largely to the fact that the precincts were occupied by 'louder' groups. Moreover, the clubs that used this area seemed to be limited to those who owned their own game consoles. Another source of concern related to the management of the club offices. Many were concerned about the process of which clubs were assigned in which room. They indicated their preference to be located with clubs that shared common interests or mutual friends. Also, they were largely opposed to the restriction against decorating the club windows which many clubs seemed not to follow due to the lack of monitoring. Thus, the responses signified that there was a lot of internal dynamics between clubs that affected the use of this space.

5.3.2 Focus Group B: Ski & Board Club

The second focus group was carried out with the Ski & Board Club which were located in Precinct B and shared with the UBC Surf Club. The responses were slightly different to those found with the previous group as they were fairly content with the office space despite the lack of storage space. However, the functionality aspect remained the same as the space was used primarily to carry out club duties such as selling tickets, organizing trip sign ups, and holding meetings.

4 Findings con't

However, due to the lack of space, the members revealed how the space was not catered for studying, but was used for socializing with friends within the club. This was also highlighted by the high rate of circulation in and out of the club room by various members who used to space to socialize and have their lunch.

In regards to challenges, a similar concern was brought up about the lack of space and the management of club offices. Firstly, the Ski & Board Club felt they could benefit greatly from improved shelving and racks for storage purposes especially given the heavy equipment such as their boards. Due to their high demand for storage space, they also revealed they used three of the smaller lockers available in the precinct area. In addition, the Ski & Board Club alone had fifteen members on the executive committee, which heightened their problem of the lack of space in the office. Interestingly, despite this lack of space, the clubs seemed to underutilize the bookable rooms.

"We have a lot of stuff stored but we could use a rack.. clearer storage.. racks! With both clubs in here it gets pretty busy."

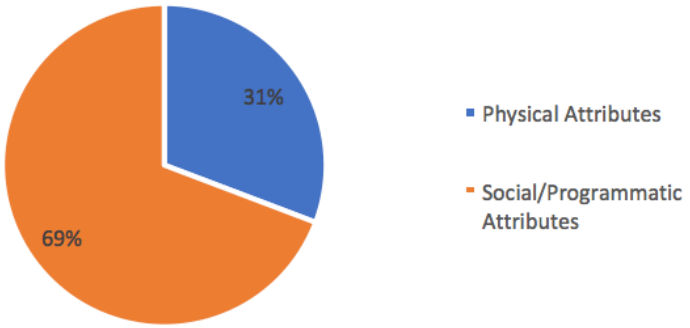
Secondly, another concern, however addressed to a lesser degree was the assignment of club rooms. Similar to the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club, the Ski & Board Club initially had hesitation with being assigned with a club with diverging interests. Thus, they were able to specifically request to be roomed with the Surf Club due to their shared interests and mutual friends. Given the social vibrant atmosphere comparable to the club office shared with the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club, it seemed being able to share offices with similar clubs contributed greatly to the social animation of space. Additionally, the overall design of the space seemed more harmonious as these clubs required the same storage units and shared the same taste in decorative furnishings.

"Originally we were put with another club but then we asked if we could switch since there's so much social crossover between the two clubs. And we're definitely happier with this set up - lots of mutual friends and we have similar interests"

Despite a high level of interaction within the club office, it was found that many of the club activities did not spillover into the precinct as done by some of the gaming clubs in Precinct A. Instead, the precinct area was perceived more as a study space that was used by non-club members. Thus, similar to the Sci-Fi & Fantasy Club, the precinct area was not used for interacting with other clubs in the near vicinity and neither clubs showed interest in communicating with the surrounding clubs. Given these findings from each focus group, it seems the challenge was related to the lack of space and the consequent lack of freedom in designing the space to cater for their specific needs and uses. The concerns regarding the physical attributes were centered mainly around the lack of storage space. However, it seemed that the club office users were overall satisfied with their own space that they had managed to personalized. In contrast, a greater challenge was the evident lack of interaction and integration with the surrounding areas and clubs.

4 Findings con't

Figure 3. Stated Recommendations by Club Office Users



Following this finding, we were able to deduce and categorize the attributes associated with the recommendations disclosed by the club office users. As a result, we found that an overwhelming amount of users felt social and programmatic solutions were of greater need as depicted in Figure 3. These solutions relate to administrative tasks on behalf of the AMS in assigning club rooms and conducting midterm assessments on club office usage.

5 Analysis & Discussion

An analysis of the above data sheds light on who is using the Club Offices and Precincts and how, as well as the successes and opportunities for improvement in the design of these spaces.

5.1 Precincts

Most users were reasonably content with the sense of place and friendliness of Precinct A, which is used primarily for socializing. As noted, most participants used the space primarily to meet and spend time with their friends, for example by playing video games. In this way, Precinct A was already fairly socially animated. Similarly, respondents seemed generally satisfied in regards to friendliness and sense of place in Precincts B, C and D. While these three precincts are used primarily for studying, rather than socializing, respondents seemed to appreciate the casual, quiet atmosphere that made them feel comfortable engaging in other activities such as eating.

Concerning all precincts, areas that did not receive such positive feedback related to indicators of comfort, usability, and, in a physical sense, vibrancy. This was highlighted by the multiple comments we received that expressed dissatisfaction with the furniture (e.g. inadequate or old tables and chairs), lack of electrical outlets, poor room layout, and overall dull aesthetic. It should be noted that the "comfort" indicator was perceived in two senses: physical and social. While it performed weakly in a physical sense, it received generally positive feedback in a social sense (e.g. users' willingness to speak to the person next to them).

Therefore, enhancing their physical attributes, as laid out under "Recommendations", could best optimize the Precincts' designs. For example, upgrading to different tables better suited to the rooms' needs, or providing food and drink amenities such as water fountains and microwaves, could help improve the indicators that received the poorest feedback. These physical changes could positively reinforce the indicators that did perform well, such as sense of place and vibrancy, by encouraging more people to spend more time in the precincts. In turn, this would enrich the unique vitality of place and social animation of these spaces.

5.2 Club Offices

The Club Offices, we found, had both functional and social uses. The fact that different clubs occupy each Club Office means that each office is used very differently and has its own unique atmosphere. While predominant patterns in their uses were identified, such as for club gatherings or storage, the social vibrancy and sense of place in each office are quite specific to the clubs that occupy it. Therefore, our recommendations for Club Offices are reflective and supportive of these spaces' individuality. Our suggestions attempt to include the users themselves in the re-design process by providing them with a degree of autonomy and the resources necessary to design their own spaces and influence the extent of social animation.

5 Analysis & Discussion

5.3 All Spaces

Looking at both the Club Offices and Precincts as a whole is where the Integration indicator becomes key, as we found that there was very little interaction between different clubs in and around Precincts and Club Office spaces. This was alluded to mainly during the focus groups with club office users. This is reflective, partly, of the reality that these spaces aren't particularly apt for "social animation" or "vibrancy," since the rooms are intended for quite specific uses by a somewhat narrow group of users. Recommendations such as adding food facilities in the precincts, could help bring people together and foster more social connectivity between clubs as members may meet while waiting for a microwave.

5.4 Discussion

In reflecting upon and analyzing the information we obtained from the users of the Club Offices and Precincts, the merit of performing a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) became quite evident. Through both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, we were able to identify both successes in the spaces' design, as well as areas needing improvement. This multi-method research approach was highly beneficial, as much would have been missed had we relied on either only observational or only verbal data; a triangulation of both methods provided a much more complete, reliable, and richer overview of the spaces, their users and uses. By speaking with these users (through both focus groups and interviews), we were able to gain valuable insight into how the Club Offices and Precincts were being used and whether this corresponded with the architects' original intention for these spaces.

While the actual layout of these areas was beyond the scope of this project, we were able to identify various ways in which the interior design (such as furniture, aesthetics, amenities) could be altered or improved to better suit the purposes of the users of these spaces. Importantly, we derived from both observation and verbal data that, despite the intention of the AMS Nest project having been to socially animate these spaces, the Club Offices and Precincts were in fact already as socially animated and vibrant as their users wanted them to be. Instead, we identified a greater opportunity for enhancement in their functionality. Thus, POE served as a very appropriate theoretical framework for this project, as it allowed us to investigate not only the physical aspects between humans and their environment, but also the social (e.g. dynamics between club offices) and cultural (e.g. likelihood of students to engage in conversation) factors. Thus, several years after the AMS Nest's opening, this POE seemed very timely and applicable, as users had had enough time to settle in, experience the design, and develop new needs and ideas for how to improve their space.

6 Recommendations

"It's a big space but it doesn't hold many people; there's a lot of empty space that could be better used."

6.1 Precincts

As our findings suggested that most users were content with the current social animation and atmosphere of the precincts, our recommendations concerned primarily physical changes. Based on ideas given by those interviewed, we recommend the following additions to enhance the overall functionality, comfort, and aesthetic of the precincts.

All Precincts

Plants
Lockers
Shelving
Outlets

Lamps
New finishings (floors, wallpaint) for better overall aesthetic

Precinct A

Shelving / lockers on back wall
New assortment of tables
More couches & armchairs

Precincts B & D

Variety of long tables
Tables with outlets
Whiteboards

Study space

Precinct C

Circular tables
Water fountains
Microwaves

Kettles
Couches
Painted/chalkboard walls

Social space

6 Recommendations

6.2 Club Offices

We found that each club office was used in its own, unique way depending on the needs and habits of the clubs who shared it. Therefore, our recommendations comprise programmatic suggestions that will enable clubs to enhance their office space in a way that reflects their specific uses, and will foster strong relationships between clubs and AMS administration.

Provide fund and list of objects, furniture or accessories (e.g. shelving, plants or new chairs) that club offices can request from AMS to allow each club to personalize their own space

Include more input from space users in administration of space (e.g. letting clubs choose who they share an office with and how they use space)

"We have a lot of stuff to store, like boards and tents, so we could use cleaner storage with racks. With both clubs in here it gets pretty busy."

7 Conclusion

In the end, the AMS Nest Social Animation Project proved to be very worthwhile in that we were able to identify opportunities to enhance the social connectivity and vitality of place in the Club Offices and Precincts. We discovered that the Club Offices and Precincts are currently being used primarily for studying and socializing, although the proportion of each activity varies significantly between Precincts. These spaces are each quite unique, due to the multitude of different users who occupy them for different purposes (for example, an outdoors club uses their room quite differently than a mahjong club). As such, we found that the desired improvements across the different spaces varied between clubs and precincts. A main theme did emerge, however, which was the desire for enhanced functionality, comfort and usability of the spaces, which led to primarily physical recommendations. This is a reflection of the fact that most users were fairly content with the vibrancy and social animation of the spaces already, and felt little need for their spaces (i.e. Club Offices) to be more integrated. This was likely a result of the fact that the Club Offices and Precincts are used for quite specific purposes by a somewhat narrow group of users, compared to other areas of the Nest such as the Atrium. By employing a Post-Occupancy Evaluation approach, we were able to gain a thorough understanding of these spaces' users and uses, as well as any discrepancies between them. Further, we were able to base our recommendations on the true needs and desires of these spaces' users, which will hopefully serve to enhance their connectedness to the space as well as each other.

9 Bibliography

Brown, C. (2016). The Power of Qualitative Data in Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Residential High Rise Buildings. Journal of Housing and the Built Environment. 31, 605-620.

Hassanain, M. A., Al-Hammad, A., & Sanni-Anibire, M. O. (2016). Post-occupancy evaluation of housing facilities: Overview and summary of methods. Journal of Performance of Constructed Facilities, 30(5),

Hassanain, M. A., Mathar, H., & Aker, A. (2015). Post-occupancy evaluation of a university student cafeteria. Architectural Engineering and Design Management,12(1), 67-77.

Preiser, W. F. (2002). The Evolution of Post-Occupancy Evaluation. In Learning from our Buildings: A State of the Practice Summary of Post-Occupancy Evaluation (pp. 9-22). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Prieser, W., & Vischer, J (2005) Ch. 1. The evolution of building performance evaluation: an introduction, in Assessing Building Performance, ed.

Wolfgang F.E. Prieser and Jacqueline Vischer (Oxford: Elsevier), pp. 3-13.

Riley, M., Cotgrave, A., & Kokkarinen, N. (2015). Prevalence of POE in UK higher education institutions. Structural Survey, 33(1), 4-14.

Riley, M., Kokkarinen, N., & Pitt, M. (2010). Assessing Post Occupancy Evaluation in Higher Education Facilities. Journal of Facilities Management, 8(3), 202-213.

Walden, R (2005) Ch. 11. Assessing the Performance of Offices of the Future, in Assessing Building Performance, ed.

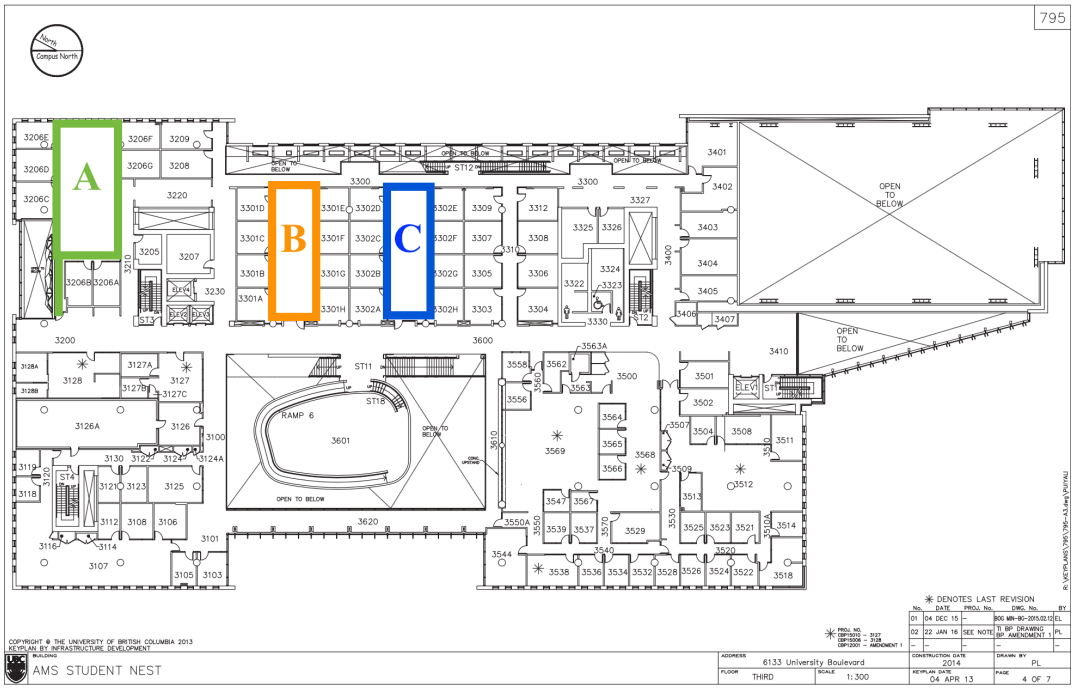
Wolfgang F.E. Prieser and Jacqueline Vischer (Oxford: Elsevier), pp. 118-126.

Zimmerman, A., & Martin, M. (2001). Post-Occupancy Evaluation: benefits and barriers. Building Research & Information, 29(2), 168-174.

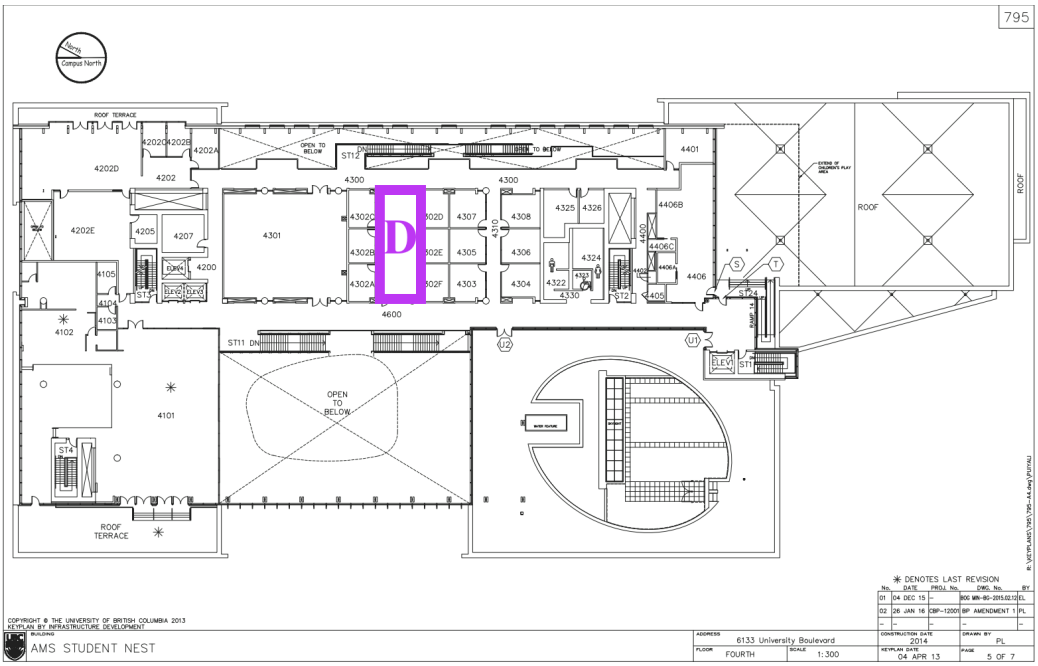
8 Appendices

Appendix A

Precincts A, B, and C



Precinct D



Appendix B

Interview Transcript

Interview

- Precinct A2
- Precinct B1
- Precinct C1

1. **a) Are you a member of any clubs on campus?**
    - Yes, the UBC Mahjong club
    - Yeah, Triathlon Club, Krav Maga, and Effective Altruism
    - No

   b) If yes: does your club have an office at the AMS Nest?
    - Our club room is kind of our office I think
    - Yes, all three
    - N/A

2. **What do you mainly use this space for? (e.g. for individual versus group work; for working or socializing)**
    - We're not allowed to study in there ("club room"), so we're just eating. We don't study here, it's too loud here.
    - Kind of a connected space, usually no one hangs out here. So you can easily come in here and study.
    - For studying, both individually and with friends

3. **How did you know about this space? [Prompt: by walking by, coming to your club office, etc.]**
    - Before the Nest was here, we were in the old SUB, and we were assigned the room so naturally...
    - From the clubs I'm involved in
    - Friends

4. **On how often do you use this space each week? [Prompt: compared to how much time you spend on campus overall]**
    - I probably drop by at least 3-4 times a week, just for lunch, one hour-ish. I live on campus. On campus, I spend 4-5 hours per day.
    - 3-4 days a week, an hour to two each time. I spend 10 hours a day on campus.
    - 2-3 hours per day

5. **What made you decide to use this space rather than any other possible spaces on campus?**
    - I don't like to go to the library, I think it's too crowded and you get pressured into studying. Here, you can do whatever you want at your own pace, it's a more casual atmosphere.
    - It's close to the bus loop and usually no one uses the inside space, everyone uses the space outside of this area. And you can close the door.
    - A lot of my friends come here too

6. **a) Do you feel excited by this place?**
    - Certainly, one of the better buildings in UBC. In terms of the precincts, sort of.

- No not really. When you come in here first, you see these table that came from the old SUB, they're older than me almost so it's reminiscent of the old Nest.
- I don't have any feelings towards it

b) Why or why not?

- Because there is so much happening right here, and when I'm sitting here, it's more that I just need to find a space, instead of "I'm coming here to have fun".
- When you come in here first, you see these table that came from the old SUB, they're older than me almost so it's reminiscent of the old Nest.
- Just used for studying

c) What could be done to make this space more exciting (aesthetic, social)?

- I'm not sure, I never really imagined this space have this sort of vibe. Maybe more towards renovations. Cause I'm in Sauder, and everything inside is monochrome, and I like that a lot. Beautifying it, making it more modern. Like the tables are wood-based, and these came from the old SUB. So maybe some more chrome, metal that has more of a modern vibe. The exterior of the building looks a lot better than the inside of the building, the inside seems to have a limited amount of budget, they seemed to just have put white paint on the walls and move stuff from the old SUB and called it a day.
- There is quite a bit of space so they could put in more tables, more space for people to work with. And you can have plugs in the tables, so there isn't a tripping hazard.
- Not sure

'. a) Do you feel physically comfortable in this space [Prompt: temperature, air flow, lighting, furniture, overall aesthetic?] Why or why not?

- Yes. Generally, it's okay, nothing major. Our club room has a ventilation problem, when a lot of people are inside, it gets very stuffy.
- Yeah, some of these are good, some of the precincts gets dark (towards the back especially).
- Yes, nothing problematic in particular

b) Do you feel socially comfortable in this space [Prompt: safe space, friends with people in this space, Would you feel comfortable striking up conversation with another user in the same space as you? Why or why not?

- A lot of the people here know each other, so yes.
- Yes, especially with the club around, we know what's going on.
- Yes

i. a) Do you think these spaces foster social connection (between individual users and larger groups of users such as clubs)?

- Yes
- In some ways yes, in other ways no because the club rooms are so crowded with several groups, a lot of the times we spread into this space. A lot of the times the outside space is a quiet area where you don't really hang out because it's their ("the club users") space in a way.
- Yes

b) What could be done to improve social connection?

- I think just this room in general, is already pretty good on that regard. I don't think we need anything else.

- Spread where the clubs are, and how many clubs are in per room. So they don't have to spread out into this outside space.
- Not sure

9. Are there any design/physical features that make this place functional for you?

- Better desks and chairs, like mentioned before.
- Not really
- More couches and cushions, so it's not just a set-up for studying

10. What changes or improvements would you like to see in this space?

- I'm not sure, I don't really go anywhere else. I honestly think it's fine.
- More seating space, more space to do work. Especially, long big tables where everyone can work together.
- More water fountains, it's annoying to keep having to go downstairs to fill up the water bottle

11. What is your role at UBC? [Prompt: e.g. undergraduate student, Masters student, PhD, staff member, student representative, faculty, visitor]

- Undergraduate student
- Undergraduate student
- Undergraduate student

12. How many years have you been at UBC?

- Three
- Five
- Two

13. How old are you?

- Twenty
- Twenty-two
- Nineteen

14. Would you like to be part of an upcoming focus group, if so could you share your e-mail address?

- No
- Yes
- No

Appendix C

Observational Data Table

	Precinct A	Precinct B	Precinct C	Precinct D
Date	Jan.31st 2016			
Time	10:30am	10:35am	10:40am	10:45am
Count (# of people)	10	4	3	0
Activities	Some people studying Some people chatting Low noise levels Groupings of people seem divided ⅛ club office doors open	Most people studying All sitting at one table Minimal chatting Low noise levels Little foot traffic ⅛ club office doors open	2 people chatting Most people studying (laptops out) All sitting at tables Low noise levels Little foot traffic ⅛ club office doors open	Nobody in precinct but 2 people in club office
Physical Features	4 large tables 2 TV monitors 1 TV for gaming No plants	2 tables 11 chairs Both doors to hallway open 2 bulletin boards Office windows decorated Walls and ceilings all white No plants Lockers Clock Outlets	2 tables 10 chairs Club office windows decorated Both doors to hallway open No bulletin boards Walls and ceilings all white No plants Lockers Clock Outlets	2 tables Much tidier Looks less used Walls and ceilings all white No plants Lockers Outlets Both doors to hallway open
Noticeable Clubs	UBC Sci-Fi Mah Jong Club Cooking Club	Ski & Board Chinese Varsity Club UBC Yoga Club Dance Club Quidditch Club Ultimate Frisbee	Film Society World Vision Project Paths Red Cross	