

WELLNESS ARCHITECTURE

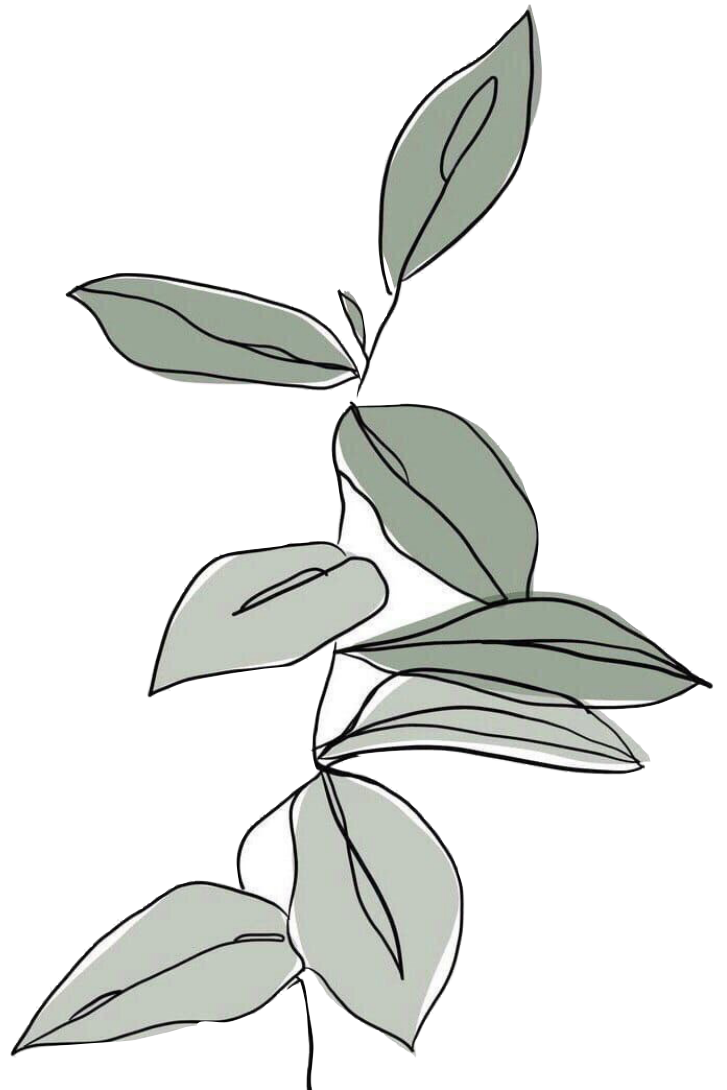


HOW THE STUDY OF WELLNESS WITHIN HOTELS CAN
INFORM GREATER WELL-BEING WITHIN
AND BEYOND OUR HOMES

MARIE COUTURIER

“A shared city encourages a sense of community, collaboration, and togetherness. It is designed for social interactions through shared facilities, public spaces, coworking and co-living spaces, and transportation. It enables pooling intangible resources too, like skill-share, shared mobility technologies, or initiatives that encourage meaningful social connections.”

The Shared City



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Introduction

This dissertation will explore how the study of wellness within hotels can inform greater well-being within the home. This will be done through the investigation of what spatial conditions are required to install a sense of well-being in hotels. Two case studies will be investigated in depth, The ZedWell hotel and the Ham Yard hotel.

Wellness is about feeling good physically and mentally, having a routine that works to make us feel good every day. But the concept of wellness varies for everyone as we experience different bodies and environments. It is more than just your physical health. Indeed, some people might not realize how the quality of the places, where we live, work and study, therefore, impacts our happiness significantly. Wellbeing is a term that is growing in use and popularity. Within the hospitality sector, much work is being done to create spaces that satisfy a growing expectation for wellbeing. These spaces matter- becoming our temporary home - even if only for a short time. We will discuss the principal spatial required conditions of well-being in hospitality spaces: What do these spaces need to install to create a sense of well-being in an occupant? Are some of these factors more important than others? Do we need to include all of the requirements to feel good within a space or only one?

“I became interested in this subject following some experiences I had in my childhood. Growing up, I moved a lot because of my father’s work. Almost every 3-4 years, we were in a different country in Europe. Even though I had the chance to familiarize myself with various cultures, languages, architectures, histories, it was hard as an 8 years old little girl to change her lifestyle routine overnight. During moves, we had to stay in a hotel which, in my opinion, is not the best transition from what used to be called home to a new home. Every time, I would feel homesick, stressed and sad because it wasn’t “home”. My first experience in a new country always began in a hotel room with the same layout, same colours in the middle of a city that was unknown to me.”

Marie Couturier

What can Zedwell and The Ham Yard Hotel tell us about Well-being? Can we learn from them to improve our homes? Or even more our shared, community environments? We need to bring a greater sense of well-being into hotels and beyond. By incorporating some fundamental design elements such as light or even nature, the way people feel within a space will significantly change.

My research will be supported by literature including *Happy By Design: A guide to Architecture and Mental Wellbeing* by Ben Channon, which explains the relation between buildings and happiness through a series of understandable design tips. Then incorporating the theories explored in *L’Architecture du bonheur (The happiness of Architecture)* by Alain de Botton, we see the importance of placing happiness at the heart of design and ways to make our life more harmonious. Also, a fundamental book in Interior Design, *The Emergence of the Interior* by Charles Rice, reminds us of key themes, concepts and experience of the domestic life. Last but not least, *The Ideal City* by Space10 Gestalten is an optimistic book about the future of cities, bringing together the best and brightest examples of the urban future.



70%

*of the world population is projected to live in
urban areas by 2050*

United Nations

80%

of our time is spent indoors

Happy by Design

“Interiors needed to be imagined by the architect and client alike, as if both were the ‘future inhabitants’ of the plan.”

Charles Rice



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Spaces for Well-being: The required conditions

The purpose of Wellness Architecture is to design buildings (working or living spaces) that have a positive impact on people's well-being. It's about finding new ways of living by prioritising happiness and wellness. Although this new concept is starting to emerge in our cities, it is still very hard to bring it to the residential sector. So how could we improve this situation? Where can we find inspiration? Luckily, a sector has already rethought their design through the lens of Wellness Architecture: hotels.

Located in Viana do Castelo (North Portugal), FeelViana Hotel is a sustainable four-star hotel which advertises itself as "perfect for a retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life". Built 200 meters from the sea, it was conceptualised to welcome everyone: family, friends, couples and kids. From relaxation massages to physical activities, it offers a wide range of options to improve people's well-being. This hotel represents the perfect balance between mental and physical well-being by considering the design of spaces. But what are those spatial requirements which make FeelViana Hotel stand out from other hotels?

Psychology

Interior can affect our moods either in a positive or negative way. Which is even more true while setting foot in a new place such as a hotel. During holidays, we are strangers who most of the time don't know anything about our surroundings. The first impression will be decisive in the likeness people will take to a building. This is why, as designers, we must focus on the entrance when creating a space: "It should be clearly defined and have a strong sense of identity [...] It will create a sense of freedom and improve our happiness" (Happy by Design. Part VII: Psychology, page 103). Therefore, we must create an atmosphere right at the beginning. It could be through the use of materials or the use of volumes. For instance, FeelViana's entrance is quite spectacular. Right from the beginning, you know where to go thanks to the separation of the main building from the entrance, which is the first thing clients are led to see. The staircase and elevator directly invite visitors to go upstairs, pointing towards the reception on the top floor. The atmosphere of the entrance is welcoming and warmth thanks to the use of timber from floor to ceiling, inviting visitors' eyes to its bright high ceiling.



Figure 1: FeelViana entrance



Figure 2: Natural light lounge area



Figure 3: Artificial light in bedroom

Light

We can see how the architect thought about the location and orientation of the hotel. Facing South, this positioning provides as much natural light as possible in their main rooms and bedrooms facing the sea. Not only did they think of where the light would hit the building, but also how to maximise its effect. After the entrance, visitors arrive at FeelViana's open reception/lounge which is overlooking the ocean. Thanks to its high ceiling, strategically placed openings were created to let the light engulf each corner of the space with a beautiful sense of drama. "Windows higher up a building will receive more daylight than windows on lower floors, as more open sky is visible. This is why many buildings have smaller windows on higher floors." (Happy by Design. Part I: Light, page 13). Natural light is essential for human beings, but sometimes, spaces don't let it through. We therefore can integrate artificial light when it is well conceptualised for a specific use within a space. "Studies have shown that emotions are experienced

more intensely under bright, harsh lighting, which can have a negative impact on our mood in a variety of ways" (Happy by Design. Part I: Light, page 21). This is why we have to be careful to prefer the use of indirect light in order to improve our productivity and alertness. For example, the hotel's bedrooms offer people the choice of the type of light they want to use depending on their needs. There is the typical bedside lamp but also a hidden soft straight line of lights above the bed which lightens the space without being in direct contact with the eyes.

"When exposed to sunlight, the skin absorbs vitamin D, a critical nutrient that prevents bone loss and reduces the risk of heart disease, weight gain, and various cancers."

Sarah Garone, Nutritionist



Figure 4: Bedroom lounge



Figure 5: Bedroom terrace facing nature



Figure 6: Pathway to access bedrooms to main building

Comfort & Aesthetic

Light will also be very important as it helps us to define details like colours, textures & materials. We are happier when we feel comfortable in a space. "If we are uncomfortable, we are far less likely to want to engage with our bodies and we therefore tend to switch off from the physical world, which can be detrimental to our mental wellbeing" (Happy by Design. Part II: Comfort, page 27). Thus, we must design pleasant and cosy hotel rooms by avoiding visual monotony while playing visually with colours and tactile materials. It is important to keep in mind major aspects while designing: keeping the noise out, thinking about the temperature of the building as well as the supply of fresh air. Some bedrooms are part of the main building, but the hotel offers private apartments away from the noisy restaurants and activities of FeelViana. Located in the middle of the forest, privacy is a privilege the hotel can provide to their customers so they can enjoy the best experience: being in a home-feel space with an outside terrace amongst nature which is ideal to relax in a quiet and fresh place. The design of the bedroom works well with the warm colours of the carpet and sofa, as do the geometric patterns. The use of timber on the wall gives character to the bedroom and it minimises echoes.

Nature

Located between ocean and forest, FeelViana Hotel offers the ideal environment. "More than 50% of the world's population now live in cities" (Happy by Design. Part IV: Nature, page 53). As human, we are losing this vital connection with the outside world, that's why we need to incorporate a sense of nature in our design. Plants offer a number of benefits to our mood and happiness: not only do they provide the emotional rewards associated with nurturing a living thing but they also clean the air we breathe, simultaneously improving our physical and psychological well-being. Customers are amongst nature, regardless if they're eating in the restaurant or staying in their bedroom. And that's because the hotel put sustainability first. Everything was designed and conceptualised to preserve the environment. Thanks to new technologies, the hotel is becoming an example of Wellness Architecture: solar thermal energy to heat indoor pool and sanitary water, automatic shutdown system of all lights and air-conditioning system when guests are absent from the room, upcycled decorative elements as well as the use of natural and reusable materials.

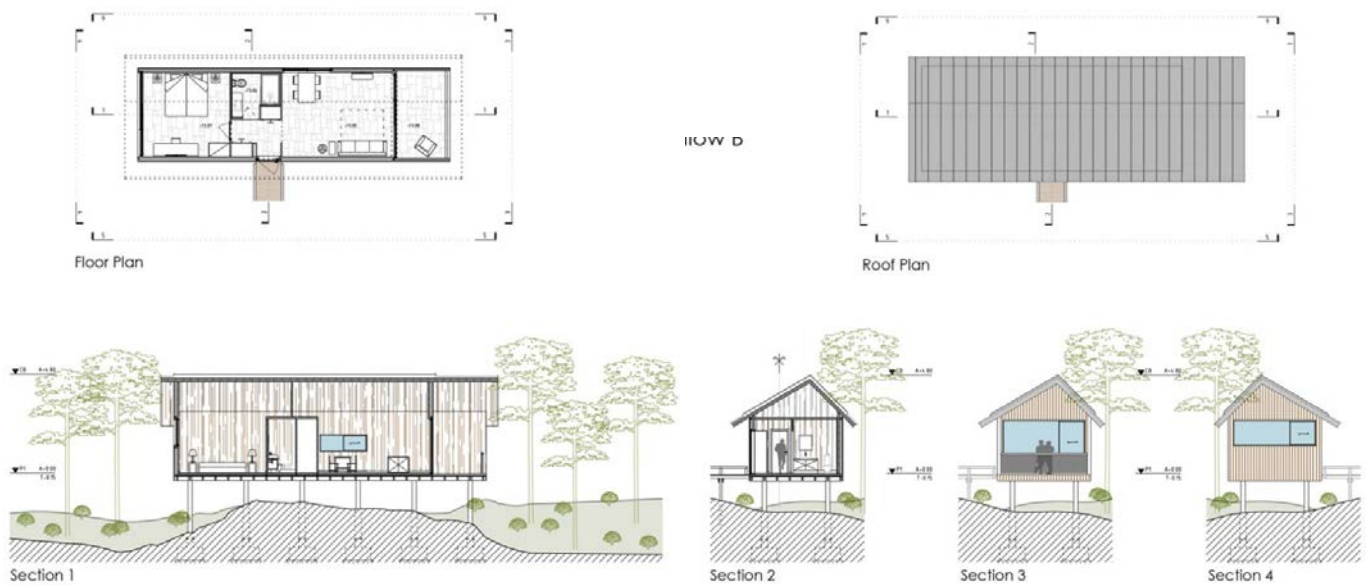


Figure 7: Layout bungalow B

"Mental health problems are common and account for the largest single source of disability (23%) in the UK."

Faculty of Sport & Exercise in Medicine

Activity

FeelViana's creator imagined a place where lovers of action and nature could practice their favourite activities. "The goal was to offer a more comfortable and relaxed setting for families, children and groups of friends" (FeelViana Hotel). Indeed, situated 200 meters away from the ocean, the hotel offers a large range of sports, mostly connected to water: biking, pump track, kitesurf, wind foiling, windsurfing, paddle boarding etc. Studies have shown that sport can have a profound effect on mental health: "Strong evidence exists showing a 20-30% reduction in depression in adults who participate in physical activity daily" (The Role of physical activity & Sport in mental health article by the Faculty of Sport & Exercise in Medicine UK). Running, swimming and cycling are considered to be the best sports activities for a healthy mind and body. Moving our body can improve our heart function, reduce the risks of diabetes, control blood sugar and lower stress levels. But most of us find it difficult to make time to exercise. That's why, our role, as designers, is to bring the notion



Figure 8: Plan view of FeelViana bungalows

of sport into our daily lifestyle by finding ways to motivate people in a gentle way. For instance, beyond the aquatic activities offered at FeelViana, the hotel's layout allows guests to do exercise without necessarily realising it. Some bedrooms are not connected directly to the main building so the only way for clients to access the Wellness Spa, swimming pools or even the restaurant, is to walk 10-15 minutes. By doing this trip six times a day, people have already walked an hour during the day. .



Figure 9: FeelViana beach, aquatic activities

Control

People often don't realise how important it is to choose our environment. Generally, hotel's bedrooms have the same layout with the same furniture, materials, colors etc. It might not seem obvious but giving people a choice on what they want to do, where and with whom is an important benefit to our well-being. Indeed, "The perception of control is closely linked to our happiness [...] if we believe we have more control we feel content. [...] It is therefore paramount to ensure that its users feel like they have control over their immediate environment" (Happy by Design. Part III: Control, page 39). For instance, people have the choice of staying in the main building or to retreat in bungalows for privacy and silence. Depending on who you are with or what kind of stay you want to enjoy, FeelViana has four different bedroom layouts: standard room, junior suite, suite or bungalows. "If you want a break, to recharge your energy or simply to enjoy some me time, our Spa, with relaxing massages and treatments, is the perfect place for you" (FeelViana Hotel).

In total, we can count seven Well-being spatial requirements which can improve our lifestyle within a space: psychology, light, comfort, aesthetics, nature, activity and control. Unfortunately, FeelViana is located only in Spain. What about London? Could there be other hotels which respect the criteria of Wellness Architecture?



Figure 10: Wellness Spa



Figure 11: Bungalow's balcony

“It is normal that we are attentive to the meaning of objects, among which we live, as we are to the faces of the people we frequent.”

Alain de Botton



2

One district, two hotels

Timeline of Piccadilly Circus' History

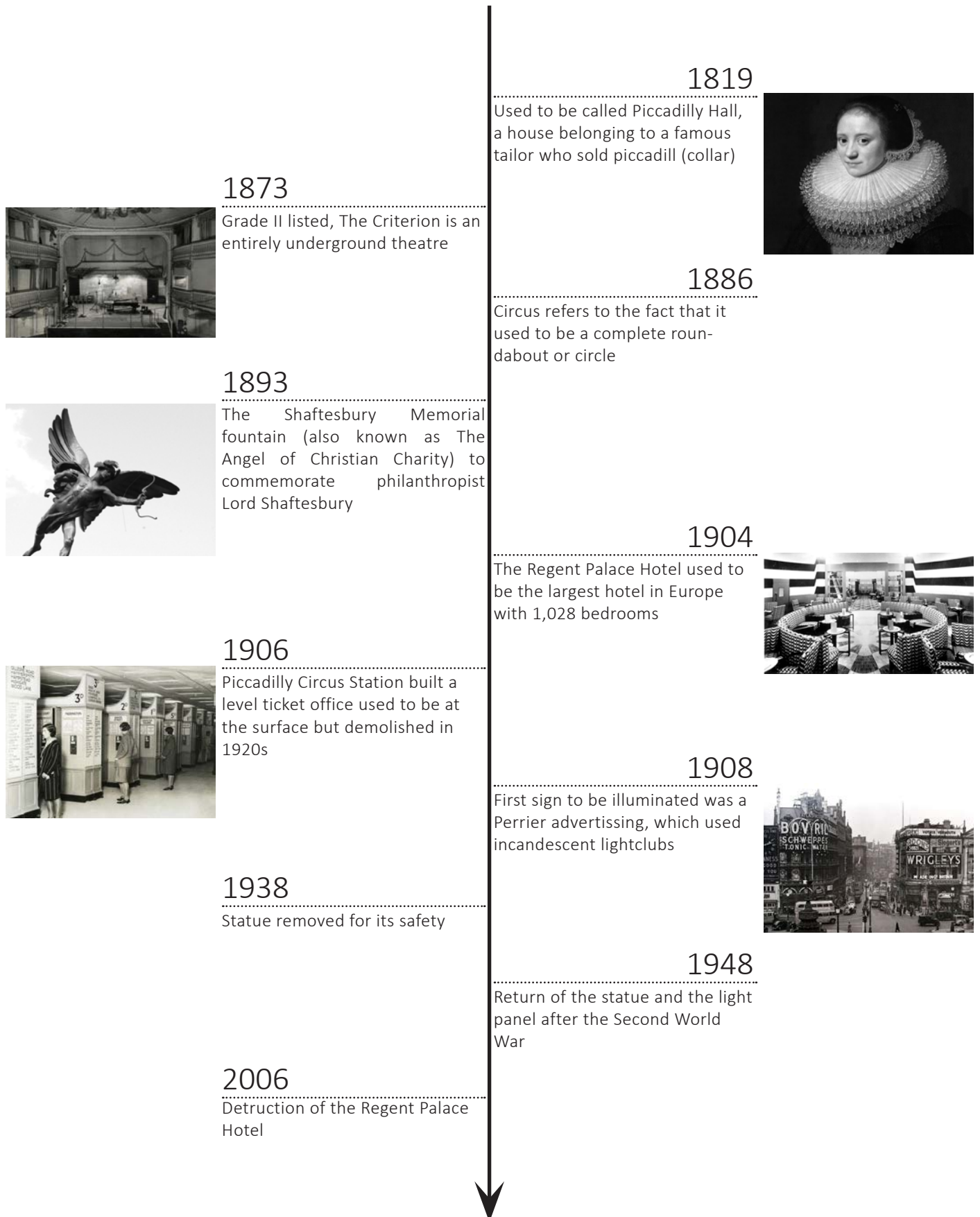




Figure 12: Piccadilly Circus

Once considered the centre of the British Empire, the square has become one of London's most popular tourist attractions. Thanks to its location, in the heart of the capital, it offers easy access to shopping and entertainment venues. The place is also known for its bright advertising panels which gives an impression of Time Square in New York.

«It's like Piccadilly Circus.» This sentence is used a lot in England to refer a place or a situation where many people gather. Indeed, the place never sleeps. And yet, it is in the middle of London traffic that our two case studies of Well-being are located: the ZedWell Hotel and the Ham Yard Hotel.

The ZedWell Hotel

Designed by architects Neri & Hu, the ZedWell Hotel is a lifestyle concept designed to promote sleep, positive health and wellbeing. Located in the center of Piccadilly Circus' chaos, it offers the opportunity to reconnect with yourself. Their goal is to create a space where you can switch off properly from stress and anxiety. They believe sleep is fundamental for your physical and mental health: "Sleep isn't a state of mind we must embrace to live better".

First impressions are very important. Depending on the context and the situation, they help us ascertain what we will like or not. In terms of a person, we're going to ask ourselves whether we like it or not. It is the same with spaces. That is why the design of an entrance, whether of a house or a hotel, will determine how we will feel as we visit this new space. "The Goldilocks principle, where the aim is to provide a space that is neither too small nor too big, but instead is well-suited to its purpose" (Happy By Design. Part VII: Psychology, page 107). This principle was named in reference to the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears which is about a

little girl who tastes three different bowls of porridge. One is too cold, the other too hot and the last one has just the right temperature, which is the one she prefers. This is how the notion of «just the right quantity» was born. This sentence can be explained for different disciplines such as psychology, economics but also architecture. Indeed, the key to successful design is not going with something that's too much or not enough for the job but striking just the right balance. For example, the ZedWell entrance is located under arcades between a bank and Five Guys, which could be hard to find for some people as its location might not be the first place people would look like for a wellness hotel. It can be frustrating to not find your hotel, especially when you are new in town. People would rather put their bags down, relax or visit the city instead of looking for the entrance because "the first impression of a building sets the tone for the spaces beyond. [...] only part of a building that everybody is guaranteed to use" (Happy By Design. Part VII: Psychology, page 103). In terms of aesthetics, the ZedWell Hotel wants to offer the best experience possible to their clients. In order to do so, they use "a variety of sustainable & recycled

Figure 13: ZedWell, entrance/ reception area





Figure 14: ZedWell, two people bedroom



Figure 15: ZedWell, four people bedroom

components, saving on resources and helping ensure our hotel plays its role in environmental protection". For instance, natural oak is found in all their room, as well as in the staircase, the wall or the furniture. ZedWell mainly use green tones as "green and blue are generally considered more calming, and are better suited to bedrooms or quieter spaces" (Happy By Design, Part V: Aesthetics, page 71). Indeed, it is often used in Japan for appeasement within relationships. Found in a reception room or a lobby, it brings serenity; in a restaurant, the colour invites to healthy eating. Using natural elements soothes us. Studies have shown that being in contact with nature promotes our physical and psychological well-being. It can also reduce stress and depression, improves our self-esteem, sense of happiness and creativity. By introducing green plants into spaces, it reminds us of the forest with the fresh smell of nature: "it's important to breathe clean air, as it simultaneously improves our physical and psychological wellbeing" (Happy by Design, Part IV: Nature, page 55). Thus, to allow an optimisation of sleep, each bedroom of the hotel has an air purifier. According to the ZedWell Hotel, to "encourage you to breathe deeper, Zedwell purifies the air to ensure urban pollution stays firmly outside of our walls". The bedrooms are the most important parts of their concept. Carefully designed, the hotel chose to use sound insulating recycled materials to create "quiet cocoon" spaces. According to the book Happy By Design, "noisy neighbours can trigger panic attacks or anxiety" and "noise from

roads or railways can severely disrupt sleep, which plays a key role in happiness". It is important to acoustically insulate living spaces as it can impact our concentration and productivity. And we feel more relaxed and reassured when our intimacy is respected. One of the particularities at the ZedWell Hotel is the absence of windows in most spaces which was designed to allow clients a full connection with themselves. While it is an interesting choice, light is an integral part of building design. Through light, we know about times of day, weather etc. Natural light impacts the comfort, health and mood of individuals. According to Happy By Design, "Building's massing and orientation is integral to how much light each space will receive, and which areas will be overshadowed" (Part I: Light, page 9). Therefore, rather than removing external openings, ZedWell could consider using skylights, single-story or even courtyard which can easily bring useful daylight inside the hotel. To maximise the use of light, buildings should usually be oriented east-west. Unfortunately, the ZedWell Hotel is oriented north-south which does not allow daylight properly.

"By opening a window, we get a direct connection to the outside world, which is key, given the amount of time we now spend indoors, as it boosts energy levels."

Happy By Design

Known for being a wellness hotel, the ZedWell might be a precursor of what hotels may look like in the future, as it has many advantages that are not yet designed in hotel chains. ZedWell considered the wellbeing of their clients by using sustainable and friendly materials, but also to improve their bedrooms with air purification, insulation of the space, Egyptian cotton sheets, use of natural oak and gentle lighting. But, by wanting to go as far as possible in the optimisation of the wellness of spaces, the hotel forgot an important point that some people cannot ignore: natural light. The absence of windows in bedrooms remains a sensitive subject. As a human being,

we need light, especially as we spend 93% of our lives indoors. According to *L'Architecture du bonheur*, "We can understand, and publicly explain, why we think a building is beautiful or ugly based on the things it tells us about. The notion of buildings that speak helps us to put at the centre [...] the question of values according to which we want to live" (Part 3: buildings that speak to us, page 91). So, wouldn't it be better to find a balance between the ZedWell Hotel design and what hotels look like today in order to create a better well-being environment?



Figure 16: ZedWell, lighting staircase



Figure 17: Ham Yard, street view

The Ham Yard Hotel

Following the question above, in this new chapter, we will be analysing our second case study: The Ham Yard Hotel. Located in the southwest corner of Soho, it was designed in 2014 by the architect studio WOODS BAGOT. Even if the hotel doesn't mention being a wellness hotel on their website, they nevertheless meet many required conditions of well-being.

Unlike the ZedWell Hotel, the Ham Yard is situated at a dead end which opens onto a small inner courtyard. The private street brings a feeling of protection while still being easily accessible to taxis and pedestrians. Due to its location, it is surrounded by buildings yet stays quite airy and bright. First impressions are not the same for everyone. But why? According to Johann Kaspar Lavater, in his work "Physiognomy" published in 1778: "One look will change from an apologetic expression to an individual convinced of their right through microscopic eye movement. [...] It is normal that we are attentive to the meaning of objects, among which we live,

as we are to the faces of the people we frequent" (The Happiness of Architecture, Part 3: buildings that speak to us, page 108-109). When applied to interior design, finding a building unattractive may simply be the fact that we don't like the temper of the kind of person we recognise in its facade. So, Architectural forms that we deem beautiful are versions of the people we love. This is why some people might prefer the Ham Yard Hotel, as the facade will remind them of someone they like. We often talk about a person who is bright and smiling. It can be the same feeling when you look at the front of the hotel. This feeling can be emphasised with the use of nature. As shown in the picture above, a tree was planted in the courtyard. "Trees, planting or changes in level can be used to screen tall buildings, and also help with reducing the sound of pollution from urban surroundings" (Happy by Design, Part IV: Nature, page 61). Indeed, this place doesn't feel like being in London but more likely in the countryside, as it is very silent. Piccadilly Circus' traffic can barely be heard.



Figure 18: Ham Yard, entrance & reception



Figure 19: Ham Yard, winter garden

“Ideally, give a building’s inhabitants choice over colors furniture or finishes where possible, and you will help to develop a sense of ownership and belonging.”

Happy By Design

Another welcoming space: the entrance. It can determine whether we will like the building in its entirety or not. “Successful entrances create a sense of home or of a welcoming place” (Happy by Design, Part VII: Psychology, page 103). The Ham Yard entrance has large windows which allow natural light to pass through. Even though it is on the ground floor surrounded by huge buildings, the windows illuminate the space, reflecting the rays of light on the white walls and high ceiling. Upon their arrival, guests will feel the light, often associated with well-being and freedom. Unlike ZedWell, which has almost no windows, the Ham Yard is the opposite. Light is an essential element because “strategically placed, light sources can help to highlight specific areas where people may wish to retreat to read, study or simply relax” (Happy by Design, Part I: Light, page 25).

The hotel has a veranda, whose main purpose is usually to allow people to enjoy a living room that is naturally bright. It can also serve as a greenhouse or winter garden. In the hotel, the veranda is an extension of the restaurant. Situated next to the tea room, the natural light highlights the function of the space which is a relaxation area with a summer look. It is perfect for people who want to escape the cold and sometimes rainy weather of London. Thanks to the light, it is easier for people to identify details of a space. It is key to combine aesthetics and comfort in order to create a sense of well-being. The Ham Yard Hotel is composed of different styles: each room has its atmosphere. New details keep popping up thanks to a surprise effect created by playing with materials and colours. Customers can’t get bored because

the space seems to constantly change from one room to another. It keeps the monotony that can sometimes be found in hotels out of the equation: “Tactile materials encourage us to engage directly with our physical sense of touch, which is often overlooked despite its importance” (Happy by Design, Part II: Comfort, page 29). Though, having so much detail in a room doesn’t necessarily please everyone. Leonard Koren, architect and aesthetic theorist, studied for many years the concept of Wabi Sabi, which is the celebration of imperfection, which can make objects more “human” and less manufactured, and foster a sense of belonging, making us feel safer and more comfortable. “Happiness is achieved internally, not externally, and that it can be gained from an appreciation of a “beauty

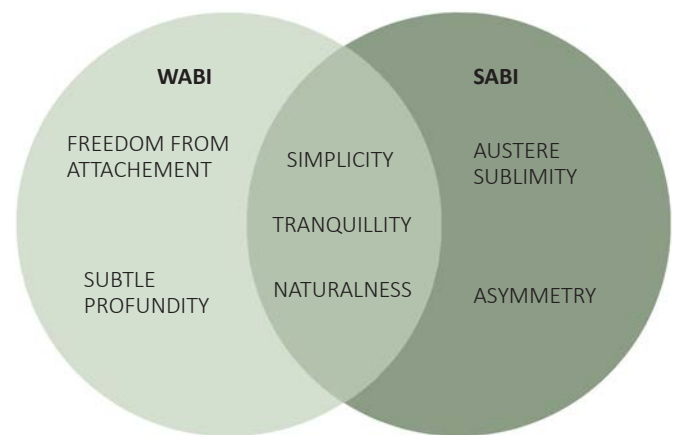


Figure 20: Diagram of Wabi Sabi concept

of things modest and humble”, and your ability to be happy with what you have now” (Happy by Design, Part V: Aesthetics, page 69). Highlighting the imperfections of a place or object can therefore become a way to celebrate and appreciate it better. The Ham Yard interior decoration is quite overloaded by its wide variety of colours, materials and patterns. While a certain detail might not be to one’s taste, taking a step back and looking at the room in its entirety will allow the whole perspective to change.



Figure 21: Ham Yard, library/ relaxing area

For instance, looking at the picture above, people might wonder: “Why put this kind of statue of the Queen of England?” or “Why put this kind of statue of the Queen of England?” or “Why put a dark and sad painting instead of a more joyful one?”. By wondering about those choices of design, the first impression is being questioned and a feeling of concern could arise. This feeling brings nothing to our well-being. That is why it is important to look at a room in its entirety. The space then becomes a warm sided library with a beautiful fireplace, shelves filled with books to read, or a beautiful bouquet of flowers. The statue of the Queen of England blends into the scenery.

Some might even find it amusing. And the painting is in harmony with the colours of the books. It is true that the details of form, materials and colours are important in a space. They allow us to awaken our

senses like sight, touch, hearing, smell and even taste. But Interior Design is primarily guided by the functionality of a room, leaving a power of control to the users. In general, hotels will standardise their rooms with the strict minimum. But when we are at home, this control goes through the furnishing, the intensity of the lighting and the acoustics. Well-being is about giving freedom to people to act depending on their own needs. According to Barry Schwartz, in the video “The paradox of choice”, “the way to maximise freedom is to maximise choice”. For instance, the Ham Yard has several leisure rooms such as libraries or mini living rooms to relax, read and work in peace, to give clients the choice to come if they want to: “By creating spaces with varying characters, designers can give users direct control over the type of environment they choose to place themselves in” (Happy by Design, Part III: Control, page 47).

Moving between the public & private - The Ham Yard Hotel

Figure 22: Ham Yard Hotel mapping private/ public



Ground floor plan

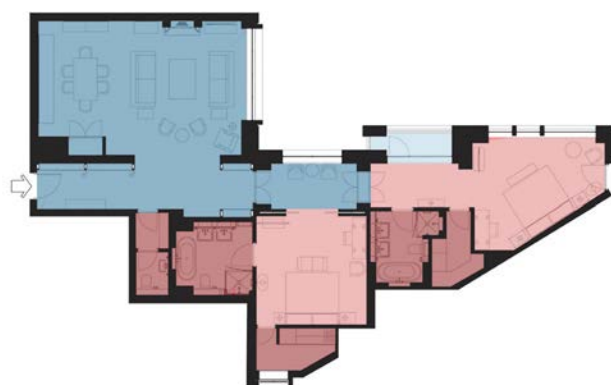


Short section

- Private
- Semi-private
- Public
- Semi-public
- Outside



The Oak leaf suite



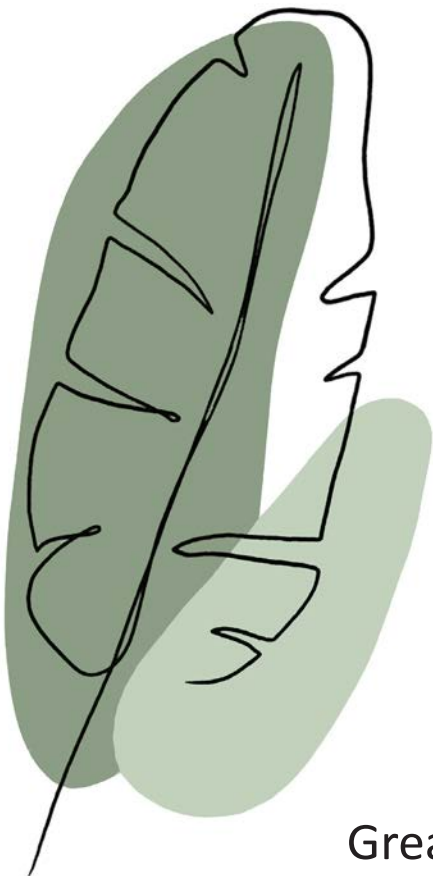
The two bedroom Oak leaf suite



The terrace suite

“An ideal city should be fully enriched by nature, have buildings made from organic materials that are surrounded by parks, with streets that are walkable and bikeable, and areas that encourage wildlife.”

Michael Green



Greater well-being within our homes & beyond

Designing for happiness will mean different things to different people. However, there are certain rules and/or advice to consider, as a designer, in order to support people's mental wellbeing in their homes. Through the analysis of our two case studies, the ZedWell Hotel and the Ham Yard Hotel, we could find four main aspects to prioritise to improve people's living environment.

Light

The first one is to ensure that both quality and quantity of light are provided, suitable for each space's purpose. The Ham Yard Hotel has very bright, warm and welcoming spaces thanks to the use of light. Whether in the reception or the bedrooms, they managed the windows in order to maximise the full potential of natural light in each of their spaces. Designing a winter garden at the back of the hotel helped brighten the space. Situated on the North facade, it receives little light, but the presence of ceiling windows illuminates the room all day long. Regarding artificial light, the ZedWell Hotel chose not to have windows in the bedrooms but offers the possibility to regulate the intensity of the light so their clients can choose their desired lighting. They also carefully placed the lights around the bed or the bathroom mirror.

Escape & Relaxation

The second important aspect to consider is the spaces reserved for escape and relaxation. For example, it could be creating a mini-library dedicated to reading and quiet time like the Ham Yard Hotel. The peaceful living room/library we can find in their reception can also be a source of inspiration, as it welcomes visitors to relax for a moment. The bedroom should also be carefully considered. Even though needs differ from one person to another, a good quality sleep generally requires the same conditions for every human being. Sleeping spaces can be improved by improving air quality by adding an air purifier or air conditioning, for example. Good soundproofing materials, like at the Zedwell Hotel, can also improve

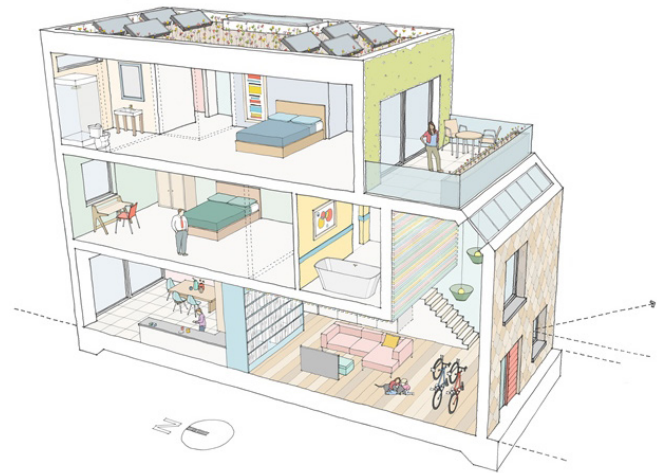


Figure 23: Happy House Model by Ben Channon

wellbeing in bedrooms, especially in big cities. It is important to integrate those aspects in our homes, as they help us to reconnect with ourselves while disconnecting from work or school. A place to escape the world for a few minutes.

Connecting with nature

Another way to improve wellbeing would be to involve plants, water and wildlife wherever possible. Nature facilitates relaxation, comfort and clean the ambient air. It could be by using natural materials such as timber, oak, bamboo like did the ZedWeel Hotel in their bedrooms. Or it could be by bringing wildlife inside. Like the winter garden at the back of the Ham Yard Hotel.

Opportunities for exercise

Last but not least is to encourage exercise. Some people might not find the strength to move their body: "the gym is too far" or "I don't have the time" is often heard in conversations. Maybe our job, as designers, is to help people have a simpler access to a space for exercise. By conceptualising an environment that favours space to do sports and storage for exercise tools, it would be easier to dedicate a routine which allow people to take this time more easily.

Happy Models: Applying the theory to practice

We could significantly upgrade people’s mental and physical well-being by modifying a few design aspects. As quoted in the book, *L’Architecture du bonheur*, “The most sincere architectural impulse seems rather linked to a desire for communication and commemoration, a desire to express oneself than through words, through the language of objects, colours and materials: an ambition to let people know who we are- and, in doing so, to remind ourselves.” (Part 4: Ideal home, page 154). We’ve talked about how incorporating a healthier lifestyle in our houses/ apartments. But what if we applied those rules beyond our homes. Improving where we live is a good start, but perhaps could these efforts be lost once we step outside. We need to consider our environment, what’s surrounding us, in order to feel happier and secure as much as we can.



Figure 24: Compayne Gardens - 20/02/22

In the North of London, Primrose Hill’s area is known for its pastel-coloured Regency townhouses where families reside. Chalcot Square Gardens is a typical English arrangement. However, roads are cutting between houses and shared outdoor space which can be a stressful problem for its young residents. So, would it be better to get rid of the concrete and leave space for nature by creating communal gardens? This kind of display exists in the South of Hampstead, but are yet still rare. If we take Chalcot Square Gardens as an example, we could rearrange it to create a well-being environment for the people living around it. The following pages are the result of my research by applying the four rules of well-being, seen in this chapter, in my sister’s apartment and Chalcot Square Gardens.



Figure 25: Chalcot Square Gardens - 26/02/22

Visit of Compayne Gardens

Contact was made with the Vice-chair of the organisation CRASH Hampstead, Alan Mason. There is a good layout: apartments on one side and houses on the other side with each their own garden. A stone pathway separates the residents' privacy and the shared garden. It is separated in three parts: tennis courts/ playground, the green garden and the silent area.

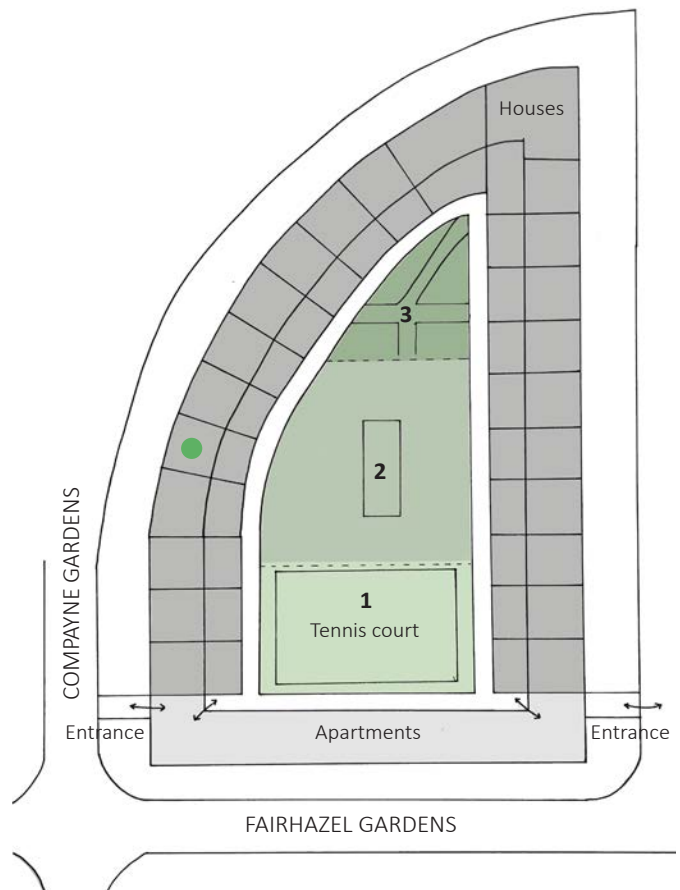
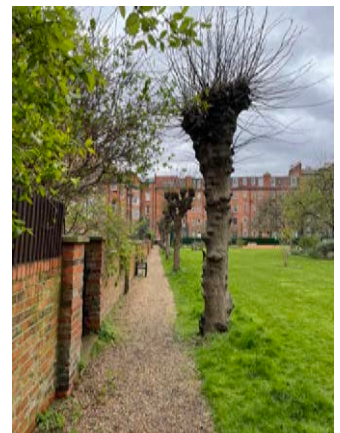


Figure 26: Map of Compayne Gardens



Figure 27: Inside Compayne Gardens



“It is interesting that we know so much about a good habitats for gorillas but we know a little about a good urban for all sapiens.”

Jan Gelh

The home:

Happy Apartment Model

This apartment is situated in Paris 16^{eme} arrondissement. My sister is renting the place for her studies. Right now, the main room is around 36 m². The living room is on one side and the dining room on the other side. Facing the south side, the apartment is very bright during the day, but my sister spends most of her time studying in her bedroom: "It's hard to focus on my work sometimes as I have my bed right behind me. I just want to sleep. My bed is the place where I relax." What if she had a place dedicated for relaxation time? "I don't move my

body as much as I want to. I don't have the courage to go to the gym or even the space in my apartment." Thus, by moving the dining table the other way, I had enough m² to create a mini library with a sofa and storage for books, games and sport equipment next to a window. This way, we are maximising the m² of the space, and ensuring both quality and quantity of light. Thanks to a design that has wellbeing in mind, my sister doesn't have excuses anymore!



Figure 28: Happy model apartment before



Figure 29: Living room before



Figure 30: Happy model apartment after



Figure 31: Living room after

Beyond the home:

Happy Environment Model- Before

In this example, the road is cutting between houses and the park, which can be a stressful problem for young parents with children. The traffic is present and the view of cars spoils the landscape. Nature is present but people might not use the park as often as it doesn't have any real function or outdoor activities. So, what would happen if the street disappeared and the park was reimagined?

The streets are replaced by private gardens leaving the possibility for the residents to accessorise it according to their wishes. From the windows, nature is dominating the landscape, no more concrete, except a little pathway in order to delimit private (homes) to semi-private (park). Last but not least, the park has been refurbished in four parts: the sport area, chilling area, kids' area and eating area.



Figure 32: Roads cutting between home & park



Figure 33: Park with no function



Figure 34: Plan view before

Happy Environment Model- After



Figure 35: Plan view after



Sport area



Chilling area



Kids area



Eating area

“Always buy a good pair of shoes and a good bed, as if you aren’t in one, you’re in the other.”

Gloria Hunniford

Conclusion

Wellness is about feeling good physically and mentally. For that, we must feel comfortable in the place we live or stay. This dissertation shows how the study of wellness within hotels can inform greater well-being within the home. Hotels play an essential role when it comes to taking care of the wellbeing of their residents, even if they experience different bodies and environments. By respecting certain criteria such as psychology, light, comfort, control, aesthetic, activity and nature, these features will have a positive impact on the well-being of people using this space.

Knowing where you are going to sleep, during a trip, is crucial. We can spend so many hours looking for a hotel that suits our criteria and expectations. It will become our home for a short but important time.

Through the analysis of our two case studies, we can spot ideas to use in our homes, and mistakes not to commit. For instance, the ZedWeel Hotel has a lot of potential by using sustainable materials and improving the functionality of bedrooms. The concept is good: "Sleep isn't a state of mind, we must embrace to live better", but in reality, it might be a bit too extreme when removing windows. Indeed, natural light is vital in a room. People might not be ready to give up on light. Compared to the Ham Yard Hotel, which is bright and full of various openings depending on the atmosphere they want to create.

People can easily project themselves like they were in their own environments. But you have to be careful when mixing colours and patterns. Less is more. It might get too personal, and in this case, make people feel overwhelmed sometimes.

Following the spatial required conditions of Well-being are important. However, it doesn't mean we have to put all of the criteria into practice, but if we were to use some of it, our lifestyle will improve. We could start by ensuring both quality and quantity of light are provided and suitable for each space's purpose. By involving plants, water and wildlife wherever as possible in a practical way. Or by encouraging exercise. Finally, last but not least, dedicating spaces for escape and relaxation rather than our bedrooms, but more of a mini-library. As an Interior designer, it is our duty to find the right balance in our homes and environment.



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APPENDIX

Illustrations

Figure 1

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Figure 2

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Figure 20

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Figure 21

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Figure 26

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Couturier, M. (2022). *Hand drawn 3D visual Plan view before*.

Figure 35

Couturier, M. (2022). *Hand drawn 3D visual Plan view after*.

Site diary

11/10/21 – First visit at the ZedWell Hotel

The place is hard to find. It took me at least 30 minutes to find the hotel as it was badly indicated compared to google maps. The entrance was hidden under “arcades” between a bank and five guys. At first, I didn’t feel at my place as it did not look frequentable but once inside, the atmosphere changed completely. Compared to the hustle and bustle of London, the hotel is very quiet. You don’t hear any outside noises like traffic, construction or people. At first, I felt good and relaxed. I could hear quiet music with just instruments, no lyrics. It was nice and relaxing. But very quickly, I realized how quiet it was. I was not very reassured, sitting alone at the reception. A customer arrived. The reception is helpful, at our service and listening. The materials remind nature with the use of wood, dark green. However, I found it a little too dark and oppressive. No windows at reception and lounge as described on their website. A weird thing is that in the basement, there’s a nice lounge to relax but there’s no one. Whether it’s guests or the hotel staff. On the other hand, everything has been designed for social interaction: large tables to eat and work or different places to sit and talk. When I wanted to explore the lounge, I triggered an alarm. I was so scared. There were no signs or signs that indicated a ban on walking. After this incident, I felt uncomfortable. I felt like I wasn’t in my place as if I were an intruder in the hotel. I took a look at the bathroom. They’re pretty creepy because there are mirrors everywhere. I find that oppressive. I left with a bad impression.

18/10/21 – First visit at The Ham Yard Hotel with my mom

Easy to find as it is in a dead end with in the middle a small courtyard that surrounds a tree. Even if we’re still out in the middle of London, we can’t hear traffic. It’s cozy, we feel like we’ve left the capital. The reception is warm and helpful. We’re taken care of pretty quickly. There are many people but it seems very quiet both for a Monday morning. They put us in a part of the restaurant a little bit apart and more clamorous. Sitting next to a beautiful winter veranda, we enjoyed our lunch.

Mum’s opinion: *«It is cozy as there are different atmospheres. We could feel at home. Lots of nature, green, it’s refreshing especially as we are in winter and raining. There is a good mix of colors and materials. In each room, it’s different. You won’t find the same furniture over and over again. I would definitely come back and see how it looks when it’s sunny. I can see myself having dinner with the family, having a good time. Very pleasant to stay in. I wonder what it looks like upstairs. If I could, I would spend a night at this hotel.»*

23/10/21 – First visit at The Ham Yard Hotel with my dad

Same as last week, we were well received and decided to have dinner at the restaurant of the hotel. This time I realized how much it was a lifestyle hotel meaning everyone can come. Whether you are staying as business travelers or as a family on holiday in London. In fact, at the restaurant there were all kinds of people: a couple, a large family, a business lunch or even with friends. Each of these people were at different places in the restaurant according to their needs. For example, the family was opposite and away from businessmen. The dishes were delicious, healthy with good quality products, varied but a little too expensive for a student like me. During this visit I discovered that there were many small lounges and

libraries at different places of the hotel. With an English style, I could see myself working very well on the armchair in front of the fireplace. These look like spaces that could easily be found in our living rooms. The fact that these rooms exist gives the hotel more life. This allows guests to escape from their rooms while having privacy in a quiet and cozy space.

20/02/22 – First visit Compayne Gardens

For this visit, my goal was to just have a look around the neighborhood to understand the layout and the connection between the roads & the buildings. And maybe have a chance to visit the private gardens by talking to someone or if there was any open door. It wasn't the best day as it was raining, and nobody was outside. At least, it allowed me to observe in detail the various possible entries to access the private gardens. Except for the residents' back garden, it is impossible to have even a little look inside. Everything was well conceptualized. As a stranger you can't see what is happening inside. And the only exterior access are these two massive doors which are each closed by a padlock. It just demonstrates how private and safe it is.

10/03/22 – Second visit Compayne Gardens

This time, I went in the middle of the week on a Thursday afternoon. It was a beautiful day and not too cold. I imagined children playing in the shared gardens with other neighborhood children. Unfortunately, it wasn't a successful day. People were not very cooperative. For the few people I talked to, they were busy. But I noticed for most of them a question was coming back often: "are you living in the area?" or "are you part of the residence?" Of course my answer was no. I explained that I have tried to contact their association CRASH South Hampstead, but I had no response. There was one person who could have helped me but without the association's agreement this would not be possible. They do not live alone but in a community. Some people may not be in favor. And I completely understand. On the contrary, this visit made me realize how much each neighbor cares about the other and that everything is well secured.

04/04/22 – Visit Compayne Gardens

I was surprised how much of what I had created looked similar to the shared gardens of Compayne Gardens. Apartments are on one side and houses on the other side with their own private little garden. A stone path separates people's privacy to the main shared garden. The space is well secured. The access points are at the corner of the houses in an underground passage. Residents are the only to have access using a communal key. The garden is divided into three parts. The first is a tennis court apparently little used for sport but by children as a playground. The second part is the largest with its large green space: *"when it's sunny everyone is outside tanning and kids are playing. The garden was used a lot during lockdowns when Covid appeared"* according to Alan. Finally, hidden at the back of the garden, the third part is the quietest. It was decorated by an urban planner living in the residence. Every 2-3 weeks, someone takes care of the plants but residents can also help to maintain the garden. They can plant flowers or even create a small vegetable garden.

Alan has been living here for the past 30 years. He likes it: *"we are only 5-10 minutes away from Finchley station and it is very peaceful. You don't hear any traffic."* People get along well. If you want to create a party or use the tennis court you need permission. Last but not least, pets are allowed but must be kept on leash.

Correspondance by email with Crash South Hampstead
10/03/22

Dear Crash South Hampstead,

My name is Marie Couturier. I am currently in my final year of Bachelor of Interior Design at Regent's University. My end-of-year thesis focuses on the study of Wellness within hotels and how it can inform greater well-being within our homes. This will be achieved through the investigation of what spatial conditions are required to install a sense of well-being in our environment.

I am very interested in your residents' association. South Hampstead is a rare area where the layout of homes leads directly to a common garden. As they are private, it is impossible for me to see how it looks like inside. With your help, I wanted to know if it would be possible to visit the interior of your gardens to improve my research topic. It won't take a lot of time. I just want to understand the design and layout around the houses.

I have joined the details of my dissertation teacher and personal tutor in case you wanted to contact someone.

Kristina Bonnington
Associate Lecturer
bonningk@regents.ac.uk

Laoura Englezou
Assistant Professor- Personal Tutor
englezol@regents.ac.uk

In the case of a possible visit, I am free on the weekends and next week, in the morning, on Monday 14th or Thursday 17th. This visit would help me so much for my dissertation.

In the hope that I have shared my enthusiasm with you, I remain at your disposal for any further information and, in the expectation of meeting you, please accept, Ladies and Gentlemen, my best wishes.

Kind regards,

Marie Couturier

Qualitative 1 to 1 interview

Interview of Manuella - 31/12/21

68 years old, Married

Retirement in London

When you hear about well-being, what does it mean to you? What is your definition of well-being? And in terms of interior design, how do you associate it with Well-being?

“For me, if I want to feel good, I need cozy interiors, something welcoming and warm. Everything that is in white with right angles will give me a feeling of coldness, and I won’t feel good. Then everyone has their own definition of wellbeing, so in terms of space, I prefer the countryside. To feel good, I need an outdoor space like a garden or a big terrace which overlooks nature. During the lockdown, I said to myself how lucky I am to have access to a garden and to be able to enjoy it when it’s sunny. To be in an apartment it is to be locked up for me. And I won’t be good.”

I’m going to introduce two hotels that are both located in Piccadilly Circus. The first one is called ZedWell Hotel. Their concept is to allow you to reconnect with yourself. Made of eco-friendly materials only, it is also a place to destress, relax and forget the chaos of London. Their bedrooms are carefully designed to promote sleep, positive health and wellbeing. Known to be cocoon rooms, their particularity is that they do not have windows in order to disconnect completely from the outside world. The second one is called The Ham Yard Hotel. Even though nothing is written about well-being on their website, they offer benefits that we don’t see in other hotels. Each of their bedrooms and suites are crafted to various atmospheres depending on your preferences. Also, you have access to a drawing room, a library, a roof terrace, a spa, a gym and to finish at a theatre. So here is my question, if you were to stay in London, which of these two hotels would you choose? And why?

“I would definitely choose the second hotel because the first one, for me, is too clean and there is too much flat surface. I like the wood but I don’t like the atmosphere. Not enough in terms of furniture or decoration. It makes me feel like a Zen hotel with Japanese culture.”
The name of the hotel is ZedWell. “Yes, exactly, it doesn’t speak to me. It doesn’t relax me, on the opposite it stresses me out because it’s too empty. And I find that for me a successful hotel is a hotel that both allows you to escape from your daily life but reminds you of your surroundings. Because at home it is where you feel good, it is your decor as you like. So, for me, a hotel I would like it to look like what I like. So, if I can find myself at home in a hotel, that would be great. When you travel in the country or in the city, that’s your change of scenery, but to feel good if you have something that speaks to you with your references is better. For example, the second hotel, if you put me in a room full of books with the little cozy armchairs, I see myself very well having a tea and relaxing after spending a day shopping. Then I will feel good. And the fact that they have personalized rooms is perfect too, because it means that we can call them and ask depending on what we’re looking for. If you have children, you can want connecting rooms, or if you want a room with blue or green tones, that’s great. So definitely, the second one, The Ham Yard Hotel.”

Finally, when you stay in a hotel, what criteria do you need? And in terms of well-being, what are the things you think are missing in a hotel? How can we improve them?

“That’s not complicated: cleanliness. That’s number one. I always look on the Internet for ratings. They have to be as high as possible or I can’t stand it. It doesn’t matter what the price is, whether it’s expensive or not. After the geographical location according to what I want to do. I’m not going to take a hotel five kilometers away from what I want to do if I don’t have transportation. And finally, the value for money. And how to improve them? There is a lot to change. In terms of cleanliness, apart from being in a 4-star hotel, there is progress to be made. I find it unacceptable to have a 3-star hotel and that it is not clean enough. It is up to management to make sure that it is clean in the hotel so that people feel good during their stay. Then it is often the quality of the bathrooms that leaves to be desired. I find that there are very few hotels that work on the design of bathrooms, and on the functional side of bathrooms. For example, we end up flushing the toilet, but we have to wait until there is pressure to shower. These are small details, but they are important for my well-being. To make me feel good. Finally, I would say a living space as you showed me in the photo of the library. You don’t find that in all the hotels, it’s accessible to everyone and it’s pleasant. Especially in England with the little chimneys, it’s a reproduction of your home. Having a fireplace will make you feel like you’re in your living room and it’s nice. Often this kind of space will be small spaces or places of passage next to the reception. And you do not want to land in this place. Also, there is a real problem of soundproofing. We can hear too many noises: the corridor, the rooms next door. It’s annoying when you try to rest and you hear people coming home at midnight in their rooms. For example, the ZedWell Hotel, their rooms are soundproofed but on the other hand there is no window. It is a bit like a casino. You lose track of time, and that’s not good. And it’s nice to enjoy the sun, to look at the city of London. It’s a shame to be in a cube. Without a window, no, I wouldn’t stay in a hotel like that. That’s not possible. However, next to an airport it would be more convenient because the view is monotonous and we do not necessarily want to see airplanes all day long.”

As an Interior Designer, when creating a space, we have criteria to respect in terms of well-being such as nature, brightness, comfort, activity etc. Does it talk to you in a hotel?

“Yes, of course. Comfort is paramount and so is nature. It’s nicer to stay in a hotel that would have access to a park or garden rather than buildings. If I have a choice, I prefer to have breakfast outside in the summer. After the hotel does not have this option, a winter garden with a beautiful bay glass, flowers. It changes everything, because green plants relax me. It brings me extreme well-being to have nature around me. For me it’s very important in a hotel.”

Interview of Sophie - 31/12/21

20 years old, Student

Based in Paris

“Yes, so for my well-being, I need to be surrounded by the people I like. To feel good. Then, in terms of Interior Design, the brightness is very important. I can’t be in an interior that is not too dark. I need light to work especially in Paris where I don’t necessarily have the means to have a small exterior. Then I would say the smell is also important. If it smells like it is rotten then it is not pleasant at all. I need lots of windows to ventilate the room. It’s better when you breathe correctly in a space. Another important point is cleanliness. Otherwise, I do not feel good personally. I could not settle properly in a space. I need to put my stuff down like I’m at home. And for that, it has to be clean. So, brightness and cleanliness are the two most important points for me.”

“Without hesitation, I chose the second hotel, because of the lack of windows in the Zed-Well hotel. Having a room without a window, I find it a little oppressive. And then, as I said, daylight is mandatory for me. When the weather is nice it feels good to look at the city. The fact that there are still windows in the restaurant, that there is a roof terrace is good but it does not change my decision. I find that the bedroom is the most important thing. When I go to a hotel, I spend most of my time in the bedroom. Moreover, what I like about the second hotel is the interior decoration. I find it welcoming and warm. There are lots of different atmospheres and colors. It’s welcoming, I can relate my home with their interiors. While in the first hotel it’s pretty cold in terms of color and materials. But I do like the fact that they focus on sustainability. But my choice is for The Ham Yard hotel.”

“The most important thing is cleanliness. Otherwise, I won’t feel comfortable sleeping or relaxing in a space that is dirty. Can we talk about people as well? For example, at the reception, it’s nicer when you feel that you are listened to and accompanied instead of hearing «Here, the key of the room». Afterwards, I like the interiors where there is an atypical design, something that surprises me compared to ZedWell where everything is the same. I don’t like when it’s monotonous. It makes me sad. The Ham Yard looks lively with all these colors and different decorations. There is a style for everyone. Then, I find the rooms are sometimes too small. For example, you don’t have enough space to put your suitcase on the floor and settle down. It makes me feel like I’m not allowed to be in the hotel. Like they want me to leave already, when I just got here.”

Interview of Cynthia - 02/12/21

35 years old, Married with one toddler

Based in the countryside of France

“Well-being is general to me is the balance between body and mind. So, feel good in your head and be in harmony with yourself. And in a space, I feel good when I find cleanliness, brightness. When it’s tidy and organized. It must not be too heavy in terms of decoration and furniture. It must be airy, so that I do not feel oppressed. And also, when the spaces are well defined also’ is to say a room a function.”

“I like the ecological rating of the first hotel because it uses eco-responsible materials. It’s good that this hotel thinks about our planet. But I think I would choose the second hotel. I find it much brighter, more colorful. It makes me want to travel thanks to the pieces that are different from each other. The fact that you can choose your room according to the theme you want to have, I find it more fun. So, I think I would go to the second hotel. It’s brighter and it’s important to me the natural light. It looks more alive. The other one is also very nice but I find it a little too dull for the shot. Also, there is a nature aspect in the Ham Yard that is very agreeable with the use of green plants. It’s warm, it’s cozy and family-friendly. I see myself spending a few days with my child, discovering the city of London and resting quietly in the room or even drinking tea on the veranda.”

“What I would like to find in a hotel, it will come back to what I said earlier but of the brightness, storage with an optimization of spaces. For example, I don’t want to have a huge room with a small bathroom. It would be meaningless. Or, if I travel with my child, I need space to store the stroller and our suitcases. Also have space for my daughter to play in the bedroom. Often it is in front of the entrance door of the room or, in the middle,

between the bed and the suitcase, which is the only point of passage of the room. It's not practical at all for families. I would like to see a better quality of materials, that they are more ecological. Then no living or very little, I don't feel comfortable when I'm in my room but there are people who can see me. The room has to respect my privacy and that of my family, and people in general. Especially when it's not your home, your space, it takes time to adapt. We visit the day, we are tired so we do not necessarily want to have people who know what we are doing in our room. Finally, it would be nice to have a play area or a room to bring people together without screens. For example, a room with a foosball table or a reading corner, so that people can be together without having to phone or computers. Especially for children who spend their time on it. They need to have fun after visiting all day."

Interview of Josiane - 31/12/21

62 years old, Mother

Based in London

If, 20 years ago, you had been offered the option to live with your four daughters with a shared garden, would you have accepted? Security, privacy etc

"Yes, probably. That's a good idea. "Children call children." Meaning, when children hear other children, it makes them want to play. That's how you connect, and socialize, especially when you live in a country that's not yours. It allows to meet between adults and why not organize parties or meals on the weekend without any obligations. You can also take advantage of your private garden to isolate yourself when you feel like it. In terms of security, if there are locked portals that only residents can use with a special key, I think I would feel safe. I wouldn't have a problem letting my children play in the shared gardens, knowing that I would always have a window to watch them from a distance. If not, you can always check with an adult to see if they are available to watch the children. Make rounds, find out if one person is more available than another while you go shopping or if you have an emergency. Finally, in terms of privacy, houses must be well insulated, especially if they are touching each other. I have to feel at home. I don't want to hear from my neighbors."



MARIE COUTURIER

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