

This project is nominated for the Craft and Making Award due to the clear personal investigation into the subject through 'hands-on' practical explorations and their beneficial effect on mental health and well-being. Through 'craft and making' in their own design practice and research, and subsequently within their interior design project proposal, the student was able to carefully and successfully connect theory with practice.

The project began with the student's personal reflection on their experience of arts and crafts in relation to COVID-19 and their mental health. Creating art had been a successful activity/method for taking time out as well as processing emotions.

Investigations into 'making' prepared the evidence to form a brief to create a series of spaces for students and staff at the University to engage with the meditative act of knitting/crochet and weaving as a preventative and healing step towards improved mental health.



## Brief

### Summary of project theme

The project is a response to the government investing £3 million into mental health hubs for university students and recent graduates to close the gaps between university mental health services, local mental health services and NHS mental health services. The project will be a proposal for what a mental health hub could look like as a space for learning about mental health whilst enabling university students and recent graduates to feel equipped to take care of their mental health and well-being. The space will be a preventative measure to reduce the amount of people who might otherwise depend on the NHS, local or university services when they reach a point where more urgent intervention is needed. The mental health hub will be a development of the student experience which will improve student well-being, student satisfaction as well as providing an opportunity to develop life skills that will support personal and professional development.

### Summary of users

Students and recent graduates from the university will be the users of the space so there will be a vast range of users of different ages and from different cultures who will need to feel welcome and able to use the space. The space will be an informal setting for the users to gather. Those who come to the hub might be looking for a starting point to know more about themselves and their mental health, while others will use the space to improve and maintain healthy mental health and well-being practices. Those using the mental health hub don't have to be struggling with mental health issues, they could just be wanting to take some time to take care of their well-being and reconnect with themselves or others. Some users might also use the space as a place to stop by and relax at different points during the day. There will also be university user groups such as societies who will use the space to support the running of extracurricular activities.

# Benefits of Site



**Central campus**  
Easy to find lots of surrounding university buildings. Good place to stop between classes or meet friends. Easily accessible for every mode of transport.

**Proximity to spaces that benefit mental health**  
Close to current wellbeing services, close to spaces where activities that relate to societies and student life take place. It is also close to green space which can help support activities that take place in the hub making it a good meeting and starting point.

**Football and privacy**  
It is in an area with a high football but not a direct route to the main library so there is less football and more of a sense of privacy for those who might not feel as comfortable about accessing a building associated with mental health.

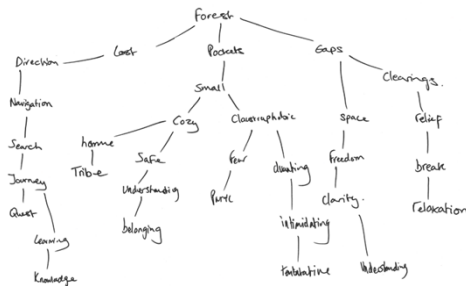
**New student centre proposal**  
Site within the pre-existing proposal for a new centre for student life the building is not currently included within the proposal but adorns seamlessly and would target a part of the student life that needs to be discussed more.



7 George Square has a number of historic features. The features that I preserved in the project was the original iron work, the glass in filled atrium and the life work that featured on the floors and walls of the stairways. The building has numerous architectural features such as the mansard roof and the carved stone key stone at the entrance of the building all of which I documented while on numerous site visits.



# Atmosphere and Concept



In my atmosphere drawings I explored feelings of finding connection, belonging and feeling lost. Thinking back to analogies of mental health feeling like a knotted ball of yarn or a dark forest I wanted to show there were glimmers of hope and help. Which is how I wanted my project to feel. The waiting room takes a dull grey area and turns it into a space to for exploration where excitement and clarity can be found through education and connection with others.



Exploration

Journey

Connection

# Research Surveys and Key Findings

From analysing secondary research in relation to initial goals of the project I highlighted key issues that are faced by students and how it affects their mental health as well as how they approach speaking out about those issues. In contrast there was clear advice from the NHS about how to care for our well-being which didn't go into depth about more complex issues that we all face that can have an impact on well-being. Using this information as a foundation, the project became a way to create an opportunity to apply advice for better well-being as well as bridge some of the gaps for more complex socio-economic based issues.

**Primary Research**  
In the past 12 months, over a 5th of respondents (21%) worried about finding out of food.  
In the past 12 months 1/4 (25%) ate less due to lack of resources or money.

A third place that specialises in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing practices within a city setting.

- 52% felt lonely or isolated during the autumn term
- 64% of respondents felt COVID-19 had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing
- Academic/Learning Support was the most common form of support access during autumn term

**Hub**  
The effective centre of an activity, region or network.

Being lonely: Mental health problem more than half (57%) reported concealing mental health problem for fear of stigma etc.

Mental health is a state of Mental Well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well, work well and contribute to their community.  
-WHO Jan 2022

Well-being...?  
-Sense of belonging, self worth, self-esteem, raising chemical changes in the brain to help change mood, having a sense of purpose.  
- Oxford English

Mental health account for 28.1% of burden of disease in the UK. Mental health services only receive 1% of NHS funding.

Edward Peck (Student Support Champion)  
2022-23

## NHS 5 Steps to Wellbeing



Image Question Set 1  
Question Set 1 Findings

Academic pressure caused the most concern at university followed by time management.  
Half of the participants asked said they don't have access to the tools and resources that are readily available to take care of their mental health and well-being.  
Majority of participants said they would go to a building that was specifically to help with mental health and well-being.

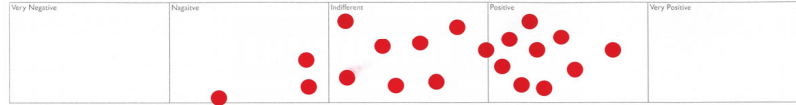
Students 3 SEP  
Does not practice freedom based, housing crisis or local authority cut

Don't having suitable local employment with reasonable wages for high levels of depth have an impact on mental health.

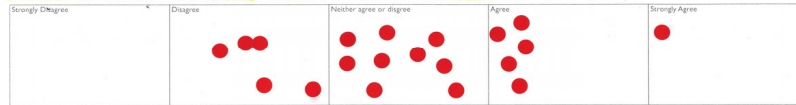
The outcome of my primary research showed that majority of students asked turned to their friends and family for emotional support and advice as opposed to university services or other health care services. From asking more abstract questions about where people go to cry, reflect and release emotions it showed that socially people who go to places where they had control over their environment, had a sense of comfort or could feel some sense of ownership of the spaces that they were in. Often turning to nature or bedrooms.

### Question Set 1

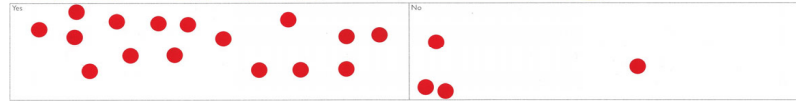
Being at university has a **positive** impact on my mental health!



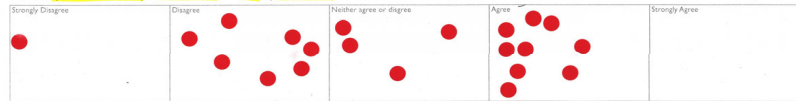
I have access to tools and resources that are readily available to take care of my own mental health and wellbeing independently when I am feeling down!



Would you go to a building that has been designed to help guide and support you with caring for your mental health and wellbeing in a casual setting?



There are spaces in the university to discuss issues that affect my mental health!



My primary research was the driving force behind my project as I wanted to give voice to the students who I was designing for. As mental health is a sensitive subject I did a questionnaire to gather thoughts and opinions. Initially I left it around university buildings but people were more receptive to the questionnaire when I was present. I found that it made people feel more comfortable about giving answers to my questions and opened up more of a dialogue.

### Question Set 3

What kind of resources or spaces would you like to help you with your mental health? Who would you use this space? (e.g. there a particular area of your or certain times of the day)

Casual spaces to pop in and talk  
Maybe something with animals (got this hardy society)  
Casual space where you can discuss/talk to someone - maybe a friend (staff member or volunteer) around student age?  
A space where you can break stuff.  
More space specifically for ethnically diverse students (i.e. Black, specifically)  
Casual, private space with a plant or into 'bubbles' if the day when you discuss.  
A calm, quiet space in a common area, listening maybe group, noise because of groups.

Where would you like to support with your mental health and wellbeing and why?

1. Friends  
2. Family + friends  
Family + friends  
Friends -> be go through similar things  
Friends  
Friends  
Friends + family  
Usually family  
Friends of family

What do you currently do to take care of your mental health and wellbeing?

Just keep it all to myself  
listening  
meditation  
meditation, meditation, self-care, talking with someone I try to wake up early and do chores.  
I go to therapy as well as exercise  
Always need to go outside at uni work.  
I either play games or watch short games  
I go to the beach.  
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I go to the beach.

Any thoughts on experiences, spaces or support for mental health and wellbeing in general that you would like to see implemented?

It can be a thought that is on your mind or even an idea.  
I feel like there's not enough quiet spaces  
I would be great to have a space that's well-lit, not casual, often mental health design outside of a medical setting would be great!  
Any time you have after FREE acceptance and PEKI clinic for students that was very helpful so my mental health.

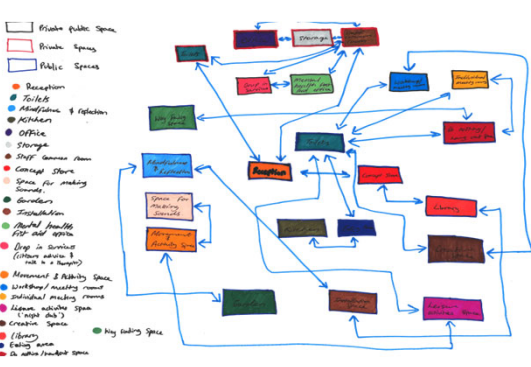
**Services**  
Places where you can get help and spaces for staff

**Therapies**  
Spaces to release emotions and be mindful

**Relaxation & Casual Spaces**  
Spaces where there is always a place for you to just be

**Domestic**  
University can be a shock to the system some spaces are a needed taste of home

During the I broke down the types of key spaces in my project. Each space helps to facilitate the 5 ways of well-being as well as offering spaces which offer the typical help found in a more medical setting.



Case Studies  
And Making Samples



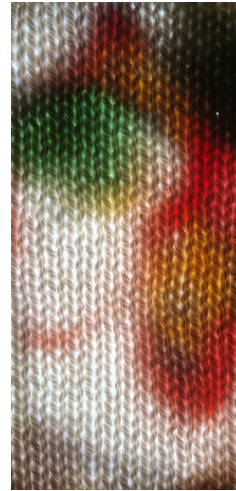
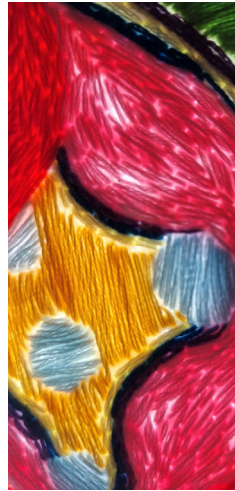
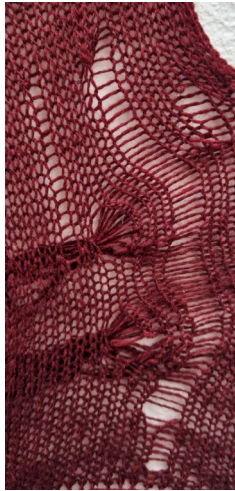
Image Credit: Names Aids Quilt Website



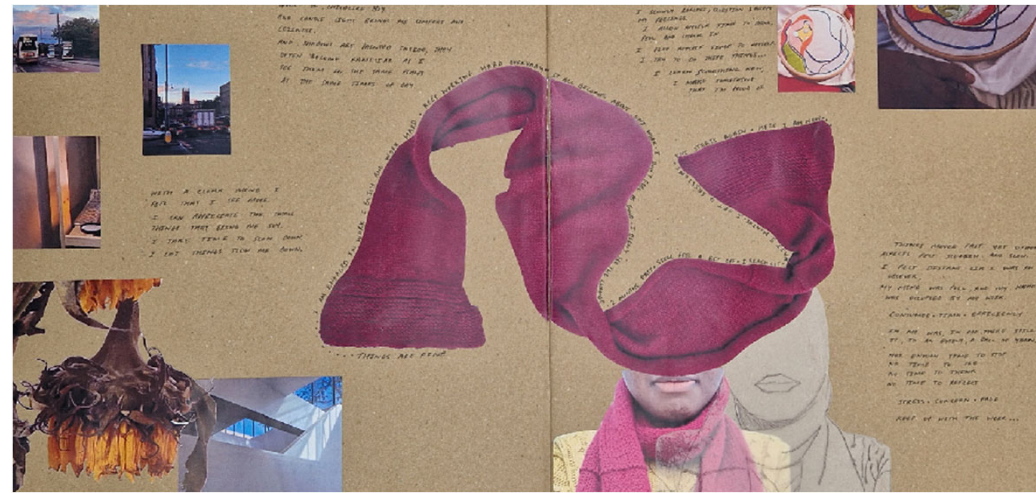
Photo of a Stitch-Art  
Note: Crafters stitching outside MAS Stom  
Image Credit: Polly Braden

Houston: Vote Quilt, Irene Williams, 1975  
Image Credit: Souls Green Deep

For my dissertation I researched the role of arts and crafts in giving voice and enabling emancipation. I formulate the option that art and craft has an important role in opening up conversations in non-confessional manner. It also brought people together and helped spread messages. All while being mindful causing people to exercise flow through focus and calm. I applied this to my project and textiles and making become part of the core of my conceptual theme.



Textile samples I made and experimenting with light and textures. I wanted to see how textiles could be used and showcased in my project.



Proposed Plans

Plans show the areas of Making and define the paths and flow through the building



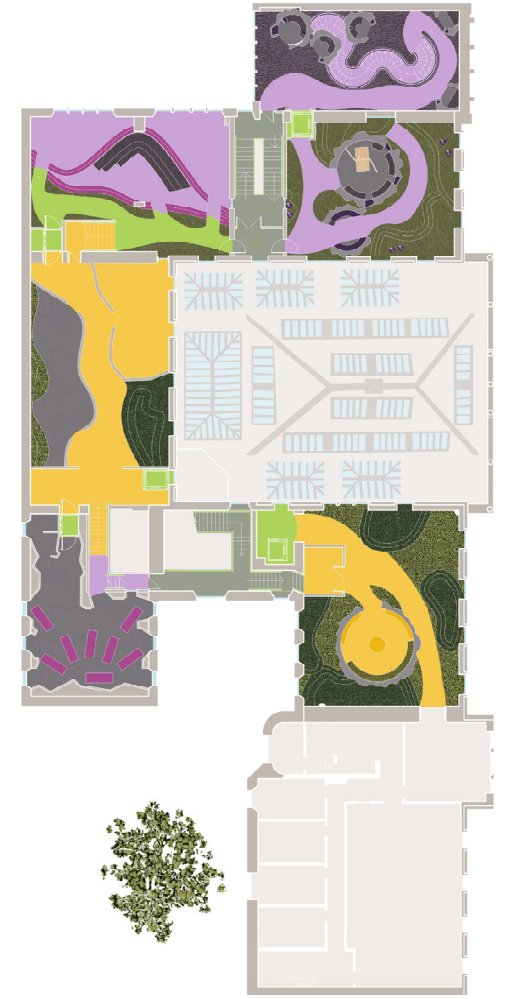
Basement



Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor

