

Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Wellbeing valuation in the built environment

2. Format:

Verbal presentation

3. Author(s) Name:

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

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5. Abstract (300 words):

Wellbeing has emerged as an influential agenda in the built environment in recent years, promoting the social and, significantly, the economic aspects of triple bottom line sustainability. With a proven business case, it embodies an accessible and affirmative goal for occupants and practitioners alike, compared to the technical discourse of restraint that surrounds energy efficiency. As the property market increasingly demands user-centred environments, evidence-based design proven to deliver wellbeing outcomes for end users is essential. The challenge of capturing and disseminating this evidence to a range of expert and non-expert audiences is therefore a topical

professional concern. A novel wellbeing valuation approach is presented consisting of a validated multi-item scale to measure the wellbeing of building users and its monetisation using techniques from Social Return on Investment (SROI), a social impact methodology. The multi-item scale is based on a psychological definition of wellbeing made up of five components: affect, satisfaction, competence, relatedness and autonomy. Financial proxies are applied to the result in order to value its impact and produce a monetised ratio of costs to wellbeing outcomes. This combination has the capability to communicate the value of design in a powerful and transformative manner. Wellbeing valuation is a nascent practice that provides the professions with opportunities to collaborate with end users and develop new knowledge about building performance and experience, enhancing the ability of practitioners to shape the built environment in positive ways.

6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Kelly Watson is a Research Associate in the School of Environment, Education and Development at the University of Manchester. Her interdisciplinary research considers the value of design to building users, including its effective measurement, dissemination and potential to impact built environment decision-making. Her current project investigates the measurement and valuation of wellbeing as an outcome of the built environment, developing from her PhD research which applied a social impact methodology, Social Return on Investment, to a set of case buildings. Kelly holds an MSc in Environmental Governance and a BSc from the Geography Department at the University of Manchester.