

Studying the Influence of Systematic Pre-Occupancy Data Collection through Post-Occupancy Evaluation: A Shift in the Architectural Design Process

Authors : Noor Abdelhamid, Donovan Nelson, Cara Prosser

Abstract : The architectural design process could be mapped out as a dialogue between designer and user that is constructed across multiple phases with the overarching goal of aligning design outcomes with user needs. Traditionally, this dialogue is bounded within a preliminary phase of determining factors that will direct the design intent, and a completion phase, of handing off the project to the client. Pre- and post-occupancy evaluations (P/POE's) could provide an alternative process by extending this dialogue on both ends of the design process. The purpose of this research is to study the influence of systematic pre-occupancy data collection in achieving design goals by conducting post-occupancy evaluations of two case studies. In the context of this study, systematic pre-occupancy data collection is defined as the preliminary documentation of the existing conditions that helps portray stakeholders' needs. When implemented, pre-occupancy occurs during the early phases of the architectural design process, utilizing the information to shape the design intent. Investigative POE's are performed on two case studies with distinct early design approaches to understand how the current space is impacting user needs, establish design outcomes, and inform future strategies. The first case study underwent systematic pre-occupancy data collection and synthesis, while the other represents the traditional, uncoordinated practice of informally collecting data during an early design phase. POE's target the dynamics between the building and its occupants by studying how spaces are serving the needs of the users. Data collection for this study consists of user surveys, audiovisual materials, and observations during regular site visits. Mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative analyses are synthesized to identify patterns in the data. The paper concludes by positioning value on both sides of the architectural design process: the integration of systematic pre-occupancy methods in the early phases and the reinforcement of a continued dialogue between building and design team after building completion.

Keywords : architecture, design process, pre-occupancy data, post-occupancy evaluation

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