



‘Soften the traces of time: An intergenerational living scheme for older people in Newcastle facing the challenges of social segregation, loneliness and maintaining independence.’

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## Tackling loneliness with award-winning architectural design

A Northumbria graduate’s innovative proposals for an intergenerational living scheme for older people have won a second prestigious national design award.

Master of Architecture Graduate Faye Sedgewick created winning design concepts for her 6th Year Architectural Project ‘Soften the traces of time: An intergenerational living scheme for older people in Newcastle facing the

challenges of social segregation, loneliness and maintaining independence.’ Her in-depth research, professional execution and brilliant commercial awareness led her to triumph in the 2019 [RSA Student Design Awards](#), winning the Marketing Trust Award under the theme of Alone Together.

In collaboration with the Marketing Trust and The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), the RSA design brief Alone Together asked students to consider how different groups in society are affected by loneliness and design a way to reduce its impact on one or more of the following: physical health, mental health, or access to services.

In response to all three strands of the brief, Faye developed a design proposal for the abandoned Grade II listed Keelmen’s Hospital on City Road, Newcastle illustrating how the deserted site could be transformed into successful, intergenerational living spaces - complete with shared gardens and leisure areas.

The Keelmen’s Hospital, which was built in 1701, has been vacant for several years, having last been used as student accommodation. Faye’s design aimed to repurpose the building and its grounds, to create a living space that could tackle some of the challenges often faced by older people, such as social segregation, loneliness, and maintaining active and independent lives.

In a departure from the ‘standard’ model of elderly care, Faye’s plans demonstrate how the building and its grounds could become a mixed-use development where older people and younger residents, including families, could live side by side; reflecting the historic and social legacy of the Keelmen themselves. The development would be made up of a range of housing types alongside creative studio workshops, leisure spaces and community and wellbeing facilities, with the aim of offering a better quality of life for the older residents and enhanced fulfilment to the younger residents.

The proposals are geared towards maximising health, safety and wellbeing, for example, the therapy and wellness centre incorporates a GPs, a fitness facility and treatment rooms for use by both residents and the local neighbourhood, while the shared allotments enhance the sense of care and community ethos between the residents, encouraging stronger connections.

Faye's ideas were, among other forms of research, inspired by a research trip to the Humanitas Residential Care Home in Deventer, the Netherlands, where she explored first-hand what living in a care home is like for an older person, their relationships with neighbours and the interaction with the surrounding built environment. The home developed an initiative aimed towards active ageing for residents, by implementing students into the home to live amongst the older people. The fresh idea of intergenerational living to such extremes stemmed Faye's curiosity to understand if such a project proves to be effective and if so, could the UK implement similar initiatives.

The RSA Student Design Awards is a global curriculum and annual competition for higher education students and recent graduates run by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA). Established in 1924, the RSA Student Design Awards is the world's longest-running student competition and the premier programme focused on design for social change. Each year the Awards challenge emerging designers to tackle a range of design briefs focused on pressing social, environmental and economic issues. In 2019, over 700 submissions were received from students studying in 25 countries across 5 continents.

Faye was awarded this prize for her 6th Year Architectural Project, tutored by [Professor Paul Jones](#), and her Student Research Project, supervised by [Dr Lesley McIntyre](#) of Northumbria's department of [Architecture and Built Environment](#). She continues to work with the themes developed throughout this work in her PhD, which she is currently undertaking at Northumbria University.

Faye said: "I was extremely shocked to win the Royal Society of Arts Marketing Trust Award for the 'Alone Together' brief. For my architectural work to be recognised as an example of innovative and imaginative work that seeks to support the social challenges of loneliness means a great deal to me. My personal interest towards designing a supportive built environment and the award success has strengthened both my interest and self-belief in this topical issue, leading me towards doctoral study to develop my ideas for real world impact within the built environment."

This is not the first award Faye's 6th Year Architectural Project has won. Last year, the quality, imagination and feasibility of the project led to Faye being awarded the [National Student Designer Award](#) at the Association for Project Safety (APS) National Awards.

Professor Paul Jones said: “Faye’s proposal for intergenerational living is an outstanding example of design research. Her approach was thoughtful, appropriate and timely. She created a neighbourhood that- if built- would be an uplifting place to live, and would promote the natural association of people of all ages.”

“Very few developments of this kind have managed to achieve this in the UK.”

Northumbria’s Architecture courses have an outstanding reputation, with recognised strengths in student satisfaction and student employability. As part of a £52m investment in its campus, the University has recently completed the construction of new Architecture Studios at its city campus in the heart of Newcastle, further enhancing the quality of this highly-regarded course.

Designed by the award-winning practice Page\Park architects, the new facilities opened to students earlier in 2019 and include over 1400 m2 of light-filled, modern teaching studio space and a new student hub.

To find out more about studying Architecture and Built Environment at Northumbria come along to one of our upcoming Open Days or go to [www.northumbria.ac.uk/architecture](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/architecture).

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call 0191 227 4604.



## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339



### **Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

[andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk)

07708 509436



### **Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

[rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk)

07377422415



### **James Fox**

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

[james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk)



### **Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk)



### **Gemma Brown**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk)