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**Social factors affecting the design and management of  
state-subsidised medium-density housing in Cape Town**

**Jeannette Carol de la Harpe**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Engineering Management (in the field of Urban Management)**

**Department of Civil Engineering  
Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment**

**University of Cape Town**

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July 2007

I know the meaning of plagiarism and declare that all the work in the document,  
save for that which is properly acknowledged, is my own.

J. C. de la Harpe

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# Social factors affecting the design and management of state-subsidised medium-density housing in Cape Town

## Abstract

Many urban planners and designers have recognised the notable discrepancy between state policy in recent years supporting the densification of urban housing development, and broad acceptance of this approach by residents, in particular recipients of state-subsidised housing. This study sought to investigate the reasons for this in acknowledgement of the negative experiences of these residents, and to produce findings that could help to reduce the drawbacks still strongly associated with densified housing estates.

The study gathered primary data from 75 in-depth interviews with a range of key informants, as well as residents of a number of existing medium-density clustered housing estates. Further information was drawn from other recent related Cape Town studies, which included data from another 1 400 interviews.

The study findings highlight the apparent interdependence of the physical and social environments, whereby social problems and circumstances prevalent within (but not exclusive to) poorer neighbourhoods can result in additional pressures that affect residents in the densified built environment. Evidence emerged that necessary improvements at the sites, both physical and social, were unlikely to occur through existing management structures in the absence of strong lobbying on the part of residents. Lack of effective resident representation increased the vulnerability of disadvantaged neighbourhood estates and resulted in significant deterioration of both the local built and social environment.

Analysis of these findings in relation to current trends in the management of social housing, indicate that there are essentially three important steps to take in addressing the main problems and challenges identified:

Firstly, developers must take better cognisance of detailed design guidelines necessary for densified social housing. Design guidelines tailored for local environs need to be substantially expanded by appropriate local research.

Secondly, establishment of effective resident committees or associations can significantly promote and support residents' rights and responsibilities in managing the social housing estate. At all the study sites, this component of resident representation in estate management – whether positive or negative – was found to outweigh the impact of design and associated physical attributes, in affecting quality of life at the estates.

Thirdly, a review of mechanisms to address this (including international examples), suggests that a different approach is needed to the current system. An overarching Partnership development model is proposed as the most effective long-term vehicle for moving forward on the complex challenges of design, delivery and management of densified social housing in the city.

## 1. Introduction

The principle of containment of urban sprawl through densification of the built environment has now become policy at the national level. This follows years of debate and advice from researchers and practitioners in the field, and is based on and complementary to a range of relevant legislation directly relating to city housing and other service delivery.

The emphasis of current urban development policy has focused especially on the urban poor, and is repeated and clarified within particular contexts in the following Acts (- among others, and also in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 198 of 1996): The Housing Act (Act 107 of 1997); the Western Cape Housing Development Act (No. 6 of 1999); the Green Paper on Development and Planning (1999); the National Environmental Management Act; the White Paper on Environmental Management Policy for South Africa (Notice 749 of 1998); the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999); the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) – Second Amendment Act; the Development Facilitation Act (DFA, 1995); and various amendments, notably the Housing Amendment Act (2001). In addition, the specific “Integrated Development Plan” or IDP is a requirement at local government level, where it is meant to serve as the major strategy or ‘tool’ for city development. A useful overview of policy context with reference to these Acts (and others), is found in the Public Service Commission (2003) report on the National Housing Subsidy Scheme, with some mention also in the IDP handbook (NBI 2000:110).

At local level, where the impact of delivery or lack thereof is most keenly felt, it is worth noting that all strategic objectives of the IDPs specifically include the directive to locate affordable housing closer to job opportunities as well as other social facilities and amenities within the core city area (DOH 2003:8,13; Public Service Commission 2003:15). This is an important acknowledgement that the distinct ‘satellite township’ configuration of

apartheid urban layout and its far-reaching consequences must be challenged and changed.

With regard to recent comment on the 'compact city' debate, Todes (Harrison et al 2003:110 -111) notes that although the principle of the densified built environment is espoused at policy level – for instance in the DFA of 1995 – implementation of it appears to fall short. Todes's examples (Harrison et al 2003:111) of this shortcoming, are that housing policy favours ownership, yet cannot cover costs of densified housing on infill city land; and local authorities may not influence project-level housing location [or form], despite acceptance of the 'compact city' principles.

Nevertheless it is evident in Cape Town that the trend is fast establishing itself, as noted by Behrens (1993) more than a decade ago. However, despite these new trends in policy and practice, it is evident from recent studies in the field (CTCHC 2004 and 2005; City of Cape Town 2005) as well as numerous interviews relating for this study, that there continues to be strong and widespread resident resistance to densified housing environments in Cape Town (- notwithstanding the popularity of gated middle- and upper-income clustered housing complexes). Practitioners and other experts in the field of city housing provision and associated services are fully aware of this, but are under increasing pressure in line with current policy, to plan and build denser residential housing precincts than were common in the past.

## **1.1 Background to the study**

In early 2003 the City of Cape Town Department of Land Restitution and Other Projects initiated a project to investigate perceptions and attitudes of residents regarding multi-storey medium-density city housing. The intention was to build on the relevant findings of a previous study, linked at the time to the first proposals by the then-Cape Town City Council in the early 1990's for the redevelopment of District Six: 'High-density medium-rise housing: perceptions and opinions of tenants' ([former]- Cape Town City Council,

1993). The purpose of the 2003 study was to explore and suggest broad design guidelines to inform the planning and design of affordable multi-storey medium-density inner city housing, and particularly for the redevelopment of District Six, based on an investigation of the perceptions of residents and beneficiaries. By definition, this focused the market segment for investigation to the low- to moderate- income category of residents including beneficiaries of housing schemes variously described as subsidised, or 'social housing', or 'assisted', or 'affordable'. (The terms 'low-cost' and 'low-income' housing are now less commonly used because of negative connotations.) The broader study findings were intended to provide a platform for discussion in the planning and design of similar types of housing throughout the Cape Town metropole.

The commissioned study of 2002-03 focused on a compilation of design guidelines articulated by each of the various segments of respondents (residents, housing officials, community representatives and other key informants). These were found to correspond closely with those formulated in a definitive (if now dated) study by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986). But despite the initial focus exploring residents' response to the design of sites, buildings and units, the findings emphasise that the quality of these residential environments appears to be dependent in the main on management and related social support mechanisms. This is the focus that is explored in more depth in this dissertation.

## **1.2 Tasks and responsibilities on this research project**

The City of Cape Town Department of Land Restitution and Other Projects secured full project funding from the USAID-SA Division of Democracy and Governance. As a freelance researcher I was contracted to the project, under the registered trade name of my company 'Resource Access' (of which I am the sole member). I was involved in the original project motivation and wholly responsible for project costing and budget; research design and methodology; questionnaire construction; field assignment; management and co-ordination of fieldwork; supervision of data capture;

data analysis and interpretation; presentations of results and full report write-ups. Specific methodological concerns were discussed with the project Reference Group and the supervisors of this thesis in the usual way.

The full reports of the broader commissioned study are held by the City of Cape Town (CCT 2003 and 2005). This dissertation is a separate piece of work with a focus based on insights gained during my work on the commissioned study. I have made use of certain relevant primary data gathered for the commissioned study (during 2002-03), to support my arguments where necessary.

## 2. Problem definition

Simply stated, there is a notable discrepancy between recent state policy and support for the densification of urban housing development, and broad acceptance of this approach by residents. On the one hand, policy is being strengthened with regard to obviating wasteful urban sprawl, while on the other, the general South African concept of desirable housing type lags behind in the commonly-held preferred form of single detached dwellings on own plots.

Vociferous objections to densifying traditionally low-density single-dwelling neighbourhoods, directed at the City Planner's Department and developers, are well-publicised through numerous editions of the Independent Community Newspapers (Cape Town). Strong views by residents of all classes against densified housing are noted in some recent studies, including those for the Cape Town Community Housing Company (CTCHC 2004 and 2005), the City of Cape Town (CCT 2003 and 2005), and the CMC Densification Study Phase 3 (2002). Related to this, poor quality building and severe social problems associated with the multi-storey flats of the ex-Council housing estates (mainly located on the Cape Flats) remain legendary in the psyche of Cape Town residents. Furthermore, these are strongly associated with forced removals under the infamous Group Areas

Act, where people of widely differing areas and means were unceremoniously dumped together in newly-built Council flats. Perceptions to this effect are evident in the same studies by the City of Cape Town (2003 and 2005), as well as transcripts from related studies (HSRC 1991; Cape Town City Council 1993). A short conclusion to her book by Fortune (1996:130) succinctly expresses the effects of this; as does the following quote (CCT 2005:186):

"I lived in District Six and I lived near the mountains and I used to walk in the mountains; and the day when my mother said we had to be chucked out, as I was eating, my tears fell in that plate. And I asked my mother but why, why can't you people stand up, why can't they chastise, – the imams and the priests? She said, " – we can't stand up, they will put us to jail". And I was seventeen years old when I cried like a baby... How can they do this, how can they get away with doing this? Some people died, old people had heart attacks.. And after that I – as a young child of eighteen – I made a decision that something like this is never going to happen to me again."

*(- Resident Committee representative, Bo-Kaap.)*

## **2.1 Problem statement**

Given the context of accepted policy and practice on 'compact city' development which includes densified housing, the problem statement for this dissertation had two dimensions to it:

Firstly, a focus on reasons for the apparent dissatisfaction of residents with the design of medium-density multi-storey housing (- what aspects of design can be addressed to lessen their dissatisfaction?); and secondly, an expansion of this to include the concerns of residents beyond the effects of physical design (- what other social aspects affect this housing environment?)

## 2.2 Rationale

The rationale for the study is explained with reference to issues of policy and practice relating to the apparent necessity for increased urban densification. In the case of Cape Town, this is discussed in the Metropolitan Spatial Development framework (MSDF) document and related MSDF Review (City of Cape Town 2003), as well as other related studies mentioned here.

The basis is, given the need for containment of urban sprawl discussed in those and other reports, densification is now being promoted in the delivery of subsidised housing. However, the history of systematic forced removals in Cape Town to densified housing on the Cape Flats and the intensely negative experiences of these residents is not being taken into account in the current broader debate.

In South Africa, virtually no post-occupancy evaluations are undertaken. Although unfortunate – in terms of providing useful data to improve on design as well as strategy – this is not surprising under circumstances of massive housing backlogs and consequent focus on faster delivery than has occurred since 1994.

Cursory evidence as provided by media reports and requisite public participation processes for development, suggests that strong resistance to a densified residential environment cuts across class and income group (for example, as recorded at the June 2003 presentation of the District Six Draft Contextual Framework by the City of Cape Town Department of Land Restitution, to the Woodstock Ratepayers Association and other civic-based interest groups<sup>1</sup>.)

Furthermore, it is clear from numerous media reports on local developments, that well-organised Residents' Associations in wealthy neighbourhoods are able to successfully pressurise municipalities to curtail

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<sup>1</sup> Preliminary working documents for City of Cape Town 2003 Internal reports on design guidelines for the development of medium-density low-rise (clustered) city housing.

the level of housing densification proposals. One example is the proposed densified housing development opposed by the Fernwood Residents' Association in Newlands, 2002 (pers. comm. P. de Tolly, 2003). Under-resourced communities are usually unable to do so despite their opposition, as acknowledged by the CTCHC in proceeding with their densified housing estates. Examples among others, are Morgen Village, Mitchells Plain, and Stock Road, Philippi (pers comm. M. Bregman, 2003).

In investigating the target group of subsidised residents' dislike of and resistance to densified housing, it was necessary to explore in some depth these residents' experiences of living in existing medium-density housing. This would include detailed reflection and interpretation of the perceptions and opinions of residents, in order to gain a clearer understanding of their priorities and preferences as well as the corresponding reasons for these views.

### **2.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To identify issues and analyse residents' experiences – both the problems and opportunities – of living in existing (subsidised lower-middle income) low-rise medium-density housing developments;
- To ascertain residents' priorities and preferences – as well as the reasons for these views – with regard to living in these buildings and neighbourhoods.

The underlying premise was that there is a strong correlation between the physical design and layout of housing units and the social relationships and interaction between residents, particularly in multi-storey housing. These physical-social relationships were to be explored in the study, with a view to better understanding the impact of medium-density housing design on these particular residents, taking into account their social circumstances.

## **2.4 Research questions**

The following three core research questions were posed:

### **2.4.1 How does the physical design of unit, building and site affect the residents?**

The following elements were identified as necessary for inclusion in investigation, the emphasis being essentially on both social and physical functionality of the densified residential environment:

- Housing density and form
- Dwelling mix
- Building form and orientation
- Image: Popular form, conforming image and identity
- Personalisation, materials and external design control
- Edge treatment, boundaries, entry, access, connections and facilities (pedestrian and vehicular)
- Private and public space; and common space precincts
- Aural and visual privacy
- Private amenities
- Purpose-built activities and facilities including children's play space
- Landscaping and landscape quality
- Management and maintenance issues
- Surveillance, safety and security
- Community identity (including social homogeneity and life-stage of residents)

### **2.4.2 Why is there deep resistance to densified housing design by state beneficiaries, while middle-class home-owners increasingly favour clustered medium-density housing?**

Primary data from other studies indicated the dissatisfaction of subsidised housing recipients. Regarding middle-class trends, Behrens's study (1993) provides statistics<sup>2</sup> on increasing numbers of townhouse and flat developments in his discussion of the trend towards densification in Cape Town, evident especially from the early 1990's, and the growing preference of middle- to high-income residents for medium-density cluster housing. A continued increase in the figures reflecting densified building forms on an annual basis, is recorded within the Building Surveys Department of the City of Cape Town.

A prominent example of implementation of the new policy is the continuing development of densified infill housing on previously-owned state land well-located at railway station precincts, notably facilitated by Intersite Property Management Services<sup>3</sup>. In Cape Town, these include the new residential developments adjacent to stations at Retreat, Thornton, Claremont, Plumstead, and Garlandale (Athlone). However, it is important to note that none of these developments include state-subsidised housing units. Primary data gathered from some of these sites for the commissioned study, produced much negative response.

#### **2.4.3 Are there ways to address the discrepancy between necessary densification now promoted by the City of Cape Town, and the negative experiences of many subsidised housing residents?**

On the one hand, the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) document and its more recent MSDF Review (City of Cape Town 2003) as well as other related studies mentioned here, discuss in part issues of policy and practice in relation to the necessity for increased urban densification. Definitions and possible benefits of urban densification are discussed succinctly and in some detail in the City of Cape Town [former Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC)] Densification Study (Phases 1, 2 and 3, 2002).

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<sup>2</sup> Behrens (1993:51) quotes from Rode's Reports (1990 and 1992) on the SA property market, Vol. 3, no. 3 and vol. 5 no. 3, Real Estate Surveys, Bellville.

<sup>3</sup> Intersite is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the SA Rail Commuter Corporation (SARCC).

New and infill housing densification (– relative to conventional suburban densities in South Africa, most commonly detached dwellings on single plots), is fast becoming an accepted middle-class trend and a priority issue in current city development and management<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand, severely negative images of densified housing forms expressed by respondents in recent studies include ‘rat-holes’, ‘duiwelhokke’ (pigeon-lofts) and ‘blokhuise’ (block-houses) (CTCHC 2004 and 2005; City of Cape Town 2003 (transcripts) and 2005). Respondents also spontaneously commented on their opposition to densification: for example, a Mitchell’s Plain resident mentions “intense dislike of the density of Mowbray as one enters from Klipfontein Road [and] sees Mitchell’s Plain as a haven from this type of denser city building” (CTCHC 2005:49).

## **2.5 Anticipated outcome**

The data were analysed and compiled with reference to a review of guidelines for the design of medium-density assisted housing. It was anticipated that many of the problems experienced by residents were caused or worsened by poor design of the units, buildings and sites. This was confirmed.

However, evidence on influencing social factors indicated further that the drawbacks in design were secondary to the problems caused by lack of effective management and related support mechanisms for residents. The significance of this impact had not been anticipated.

## **3. Approach to analysis**

The approach was to analyse, interpret and synthesise the study data in relation to literature and current debates among practitioners in the field.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the rapid development of clustered housing in the Bloubergstrand – Tableview area, where the failure to plan for adequate bulk infrastructure services has been much publicised.

Two strong underlying features of the problem being investigated, emerged from results as the research progressed.

The first was that while there were (or had been) attempts at design in the interests of residents – at the very least, improvements where there were few or no favourable design aspects at the outset – at each of the study sites, these continued to be outweighed (in the eyes of residents) by serious design flaws that significantly affected quality of life at these estates.

Secondly, it became apparent that prevailing socio-economic circumstances (within the study sample neighbourhoods) could not be divorced from the physical design attributes. This was found to correspond with the view of Marcus and Sarkissian (1986), in explaining the rationale for drawing up their design guidelines: that while design can influence behaviour, it cannot cause it. In essence, physical design encourages or discourages the way in which people use space and how activities take place in a setting. Based on the evidence this study, I would take this further by linking it with the way in which on-site social dynamics – both formal (through regulatory or managerial bodies) and informal (interactions among residents) – plays a determining role in the perception and use of space.

Finally, an analysis was done on the question of possible responses to addressing design and management for improvement of the densified social housing environment:

With reference to the issues raised by respondents, an overview of literature and practical examples on development partnerships was incorporated in the analysis. One of the most interesting is the history and process of '*mutirão*' or 'direct collective participation' in Sao Paulo described by Rolnik and Cymbalista (Harrison et al 2003:281). This movement towards co-operative partnership management links strongly with the concept and practice of Partnerships for assisted housing development in USA cities<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> These were independently reviewed for the first time by the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) at Rutgers University (New Jersey) over the period 1995 – 1999.

While conditions in other countries differ in many ways from ours, the Cape Town Partnership embodies a localised approach which is outlined here as an example of how the complex management issues might be addressed, in contrast to the current approach.

#### 4. Format of reporting

Following the above introduction to the study, I have chosen to begin by setting the context with reference to selected reports on densification and design. This is useful in providing a basic frame of reference for discussion of the interview data and findings.

This is followed by the report on primary data gathered in the field, and an analysis of these results with reference to other research and literature relevant to the range of issues and debates.

I then extend the discussion to include the broader literature review, much of it in response to important issues raised during the fieldwork. This final synthesis of findings leads to the concluding chapter.

Selected publications relevant to design guidelines are discussed here first as a useful starting point to set the context.

## 5. Compact cities and design:

### Recent guidelines informing this study

The following nine reports provide useful contributions to topical issues of design and densification and are reviewed at the outset in order to set the context. (The broader literature review is discussed further in Section 10, in synthesis with interview findings and implications. Newspaper articles are mentioned in some cases of current and controversial issues reported on at the time of the study. These are included mainly for interest rather than as supporting evidence.)

The selected publications with contextual reference to a range of design guidelines found to be relevant to this study, include the following:

1) At site and neighbourhood planning levels, The Public Service Commission (2003:30) mentions “clear official guidelines on what an acceptable level of community facility provision is”, in relation to subsidised housing developments. For this, it draws on CSIR guidelines (2000) for the provision of community facilities incorporating maximum distances, threshold populations per facility, and minimum space requirements.

I would argue that in practice these are largely irrelevant and seldom applicable. Although these guidelines specify maximum walking distances for a host of facilities such as crèches and schools, clinics, parks, recreational facilities, religious and community centres, libraries, post offices, information centres and municipal offices (including pay points), we see that these remain entirely absent in most greenfield developments. There are any number of examples of this tragic absence; Delft will suffice for Cape Town. Likewise, the specifications on minimum internal space requirements become meaningless when dependent families of substantial size are the beneficiaries of 40 m<sup>2</sup> accommodation.

A more constructive approach is to work from the premise of 'innovation' that is clearly acknowledged in the National Housing Code (p.15), quoted in the Public Service Commission Report (2003: 36):

"The complexity of our housing crisis requires much more than a straightforward approach to building houses. Our crisis is not just about an enormous backlog, but also about a dysfunctional market, torn communities and a strained social fabric, spatial as well as social segregation, and a host of other problems. Our response to this crisis must be innovative and diverse. If we respond only to the numbers that must be built, we risk replicating the distorted apartheid geography of the past. If we respond only to the dysfunctional market, we risk alienating households so impoverished that they are unable to access any other market. And if we develop our houses as though the housing crisis is only about bricks and mortar, we risk wasting the enormous potential for gearing the massive reconstruction and development effort happening in our country. The need for innovation is not only in respect of the policy we develop – that it be flexible enough to respond to varied situations and varied inputs – but also in respect of how we implement the policy that exists."

This report (Public Service Commission 2003) also notes that projects with commonly low densities result in a lack of services and related activities as population thresholds are too low to sustain a range of commercial activities or public transport services, and cites the CSIR Red Book recommendation of minimum gross residential density<sup>6</sup> of 50 dwelling units per hectare.

2) The Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) mentions the aim of higher housing densities than the low current average of 11 dwelling units per hectare (du/ha), to gross densities of "100 du/ha gross on the activity spine and 40 du/ha within the broader corridor" (MSDF Review Phase 1 2003:91). The subsidised Stock Road (Philippi) housing development achieved a gross density of 55 du/ha. These densities seem

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<sup>6</sup> Gross density includes all land – such as roads, parking, services, amenities and other non-residential land-use; net density is usually higher as it covers a smaller land area largely excluding non-residential land-use.

relatively low: by comparison, gross densities of each of the housing estates of this study, designated 'medium-density', are much higher at around 150 du/ha. However, as discussed in the findings, a serious lack of common space (either purpose-built or open) at these estates was evident. The MSDF Review (2003:77-81) also notes in general the pressure being placed on available infrastructure by rapid growth in higher-income densified housing developments within the city.

3) The CMC Densification Study (City of Cape Town 2002) provides a number of examples of multi-storey city sites, selected by the authors to illustrate positive attributes of the densified cityscape. Two of these estates feature as examples in the above study, and by coincidence were investigated in this study: Springfield Terrace and Retreat Station. Springfield Terrace as a 'pilot project' is noted as an example of a public housing programme which indicates to private developers the feasibility of this type of densified development. However, our studies show that, firstly, there is deep, unqualified resistance to the Springfield Terrace housing typology (not necessarily by Springfield Terrace residents). Secondly, there are serious design flaws as well as ineffective management structures and these drawbacks negatively affect quality of life for residents at this site. The Retreat Station housing attracted such severely unfavourable response by Focus Group participants, that it had to be rejected as a viable study site.

The CMC Densification Study (City of Cape Town 2002) and other studies by planners, designers, architects and engineers, focus almost entirely on the physical and logistical factors of the built environment in their discussions of urban densification. Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) also note this pattern, referring to a US study which found that while 96 percent of urban designers surveyed were aware of the existence of social research, only 20 percent had ever used any such research in their work (Marcus and Sarkissian 1986:5). In contrast, a look at the social factors immediately highlights at the micro-level, the specific effects of design as felt and experienced in their daily lives, by the occupants of densified housing.

4) With reference to the focus of this study, the District Six Contextual Framework (City of Cape Town 2003) includes an outline of proposed spatial design principles in broad terms. While useful as terms of reference, these do however remain wide open to interpretation by roleplayers with different interests and are limited in terms of detailed precinct design or 'street-level' application. Within the strategic framework, design principles are expressed in the most general terms that provide no indication of the micro-design of buildings and their immediate surrounds, which are needed to produce the loosely-defined desired built environment described in the document.

5) In presenting a number of design guidelines, the District Six Heritage Impact Assessment (le Grange 2003) intended (among other uses) to inform the Development Framework for District Six. This provides a focus on contextual understanding of the site "drawn from the character and qualities of the former urban fabric" (le Grange, L. Architects and Planners 2003: 6). While the publication outlines broad guidelines in cognisance of the social and physical history at this politically and physically sensitive site – fringing the inner city, between mountain and sea – the guidelines cannot account for social factors that will affect the quality of life of returning and future residents. With reference to historical features, the report notes that design incorporating "clustered enclaves" permits the design of streets as "public and social spaces" (le Grange 2003: 35). But linked to this, the present-day issue of private motor vehicles and parking is unresolved: seemingly rather innocuous, this has emerged instead as a burning issue with enormous spatial, design and cost implications. In redeveloping the historic inner-city precinct to include its former substantial residential component, private motor vehicles – in terms of numbers as well as safe parking – is one where past and present circumstances differ markedly and this poses serious challenges for planning of the redevelopment.

6) Contextual literature concerning the social perspective on design was further focused with reference to an analysis of primary data from the Urban Studies report 'High-density medium-rise housing: perceptions and opinions

of tenants' ([then]- Cape Town City Council 1993). The findings of this report indicate the importance of influencing social factors: "Respondents' levels of satisfaction regarding their flat unit were affected more by aspects of the social environment than by the physical characteristics of the dwelling" (Cape Town City Council 1993:51). This report aided in formulating more specifically the selection of features reflecting residents' perceptions and preferences which would be necessary in the consideration of design guidelines.

7) Refinement of the coverage of investigative questions needed for this study, was furthered by discussions with key professionals involved in the project as well as relevant literature in the field, such as the 'Guidelines for social housing design' (SDI – DEF 2000). This publication (in the form of a type of handbook) refers to the early work done on the relationship between design and social housing in South Africa by the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust (ICHUT) and the Johannesburg Housing Company in 1998. The report defines social housing as follows (SDI – DEF 2000: 7):

"Social housing promotes improved quality of life and the integration of communities by providing affordable, high standard, subsidised housing with the added benefit of regeneration of the area in which the housing stock is located. The process is managed by viable and sustainable, independent institutions, which encourage the participation of residents in the management of their own communities. Social housing is aimed at low-to-moderate income families and takes account of a wide variety of tenure forms. It does not include immediate individual ownership."

The publication explains each of the aspects mentioned in the above definition. While it does not mention levels of density, the focus is entirely on medium-density multi-storey housing clustered on common open space. However, the guidelines (formulated by practicing planners and designers in the field) are once again at the level of principle and offer an extremely cursory attempt at specifying design criteria for 'quality social housing'. For example, the following criteria are listed (SDI – DEF 2000: 5):

[Social housing estates must -]

- "Fit into and enrich the neighbourhood
- Provide for the range of residents' needs
- Integrate residents and the neighbourhood
- Make every resident proud of his or her home"

The most important criteria were proposed in this publication as follows (SDI – DEF 2000: 13), but these also come across as conflated and rather superficial 'tips' on sound design criteria and features:

"Affordability; Quality; Mixed use" (in terms of tenure options and having residential and commercial spaces; and "On site support facilities" (such as an office and a community meeting room).

Also added, were these features: "Good waste and surface water management; Social spaces and safe play spaces for children; Good landscaping; Laundry facilities".

8) The most salient reference on the topic remains the extensive study entitled Housing as if people mattered: site design guidelines for medium-density family housing, (Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986), based on 100 highly detailed, painstakingly- collated 'Post-Occupancy Evaluations'<sup>7</sup> of public and private housing developments in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (– the rationale for use of research from these countries being English as the common language).

Based on these studies, the authors produced a set of design guidelines focusing on family-oriented clustered housing, the relevance of which is thoroughly supported by the results of our most recent studies almost two decades later (CTCHC 2004 and 2005; City of Cape Town 2003 and 2005). Interestingly, the design features succinctly presented by the Sydney Department of Environment and Planning in their report on design guidelines for medium density housing (Technical Bulletin 16, 1983),

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<sup>7</sup> Only studies using recognised social survey methodologies were used by the authors (Marcus and Sarkissian 1986:6).

correspond closely with those of Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) on a wide variety of features.

It is worth noting that Marcus and Sarkissian's study (1986) was motivated by the recognition that planners and architects "work under especially severe constraints" (Marcus and Sarkissian 1986:1) in terms of cost and time limitations, often conflicting demands of public- and private clients, as well as an absence of socio-economic and perceptual information concerning the prospective residents. In this respect the value of post-occupancy evaluations in providing useful information, is clear. Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) describe how limited is the value of critique among professional roleplayers, as compared to the "discrepancies between designers' and residents' perceptions" (Marcus and Sarkissian 1986:3) highlighted by post-occupancy evaluations.

It seems that in this regard not much has changed in the intervening two decades. Their observation is supported by the findings of this study, which indicate that, firstly, professional players interviewed (as 'key informants') were acutely conscious of competing demands made by professionals from different sectors on the same project (e.g. engineers, planners, architects, public authorities and private developers).

Secondly, very few of this study's 'key informant' professionals – except to some extent in the case of community-based advocacy organisations – seemed to be aware of just how widely residents' views differed from theirs with regard to desirable (not to mention functional) design qualities of the densified residential environment; and thirdly, when these discrepancies were defined and clarified, they were often dismissed by practitioners or professionals as the result of ignorance or wishful thinking on the part of residents. In contrast, the validity of residents' perceptions and preferences based on their experiences, evident in the results of this study, is amply supported by the assertions of Marcus and Sarkissian (1986).

Like their predecessors Untermann and Small (1977), Marcus and Sarkissian's involvement in the field led them to the view that "Clustered housing [is] a socially and ecologically desirable form" (Marcus and Sarkissian 1986:7). On the strategic level, the authors point out the simple underlying premise to be understood: that housing is not only a product but also a process. They assert that since the housing environment changes over time, with changing social profiles and related needs of the occupants as well as influences or impacts from the broader city environment, there needs to be flexibility in terms of possible design modification as well as managerial responses to options for ongoing improvements appropriate to these requirements. This view corresponds entirely with that of Swartz (1994) in his report on tenant involvement in the redesign of a community housing complex in Canada, outlined below.

Both Swartz (1994) and Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) maintain that appropriate resident involvement in design and management of the housing estate is necessary, a view that is strongly supported by the findings of this study. The authors note (Marcus and Sarkissian 1986:7):

"It is ... essential that the residents themselves have some control over their home environments and can effect changes through tenant participation in management or through cooperative arrangements".

And while acknowledging that design of the residential environment clearly does not determine the social or behavioural response of residents, Marcus and Sarkissian conclude (1986:7):

"... we have also learned that the design of environments affects people in a multitude of ways and that, in terms of their well-being, it matters deeply."

Resident involvement in the improved design of their homes and neighbourhoods, in terms of function and quality, is well served in a report by Swartz (1994) on this process. The study neatly encapsulates the complexity of exactly what needs to be taken into account in bridging the gaps between financial expedience, architectural solutions, and what people actually consider a comfortably livable place:

9) Swartz (1994) reports on tenant involvement in design: the lobby re-design process at the Dan Harrison Community Complex. This was a 376-unit, attached, multi-storey social housing complex managed by 'Cityhome', Toronto's non-profit Housing Corporation. In 1991, a Committee was formed in response to a review advocating re-design of common space that had a negative impact at the complexes. The review identified various deficiencies in physical design, as well as in 'image' and 'marketability' (Swartz 1994:3). The report on this process accurately reflects the immense level of detail or micro-design required, for providing quality living space in the densified subsidised home environment. For instance, consideration is given to the 'territorial zones' ranging from public to private as follows (Swartz 1994:21):

“Private space – spaces used and personalized by tenants;  
Semi-private space – spaces accessed with a key [i.e. by tenants and staff];  
Semi-public space – space which is accessible, but on private property; and  
Public space – space which is freely accessible by the general public.”

Within each of these, consideration was given to, for example: patterns of movement; entry points, security and access control; integration with the historical (existing) neighbourhood; accommodation of a range of household types; linkages between and within outdoor and indoor spaces; relocating usage of space; anticipating possible future needs, and so on. Each aspect is considered in relation to facilitation of 'active' and 'passive' activities, and the complex social dynamics of the residents. The report emphasises that 'perception of place' changes constantly, and therefore spatial design and usage should (or does) also change, in response to changing social dynamics of neighbourhood and community. In this process, Swartz (1994) emphasises the need for physical design to respond to issues of social development. The report details the profile of tenants, community, staff, and other roleplayers that formed the basis of organising the process of "establishing a community development framework" (Swartz 1994:21). Furthermore, implementation of the re-design of this estate depended on development data in relation to social, organisational, physical, and economic aspects of the study area.

## 6. Methodology

Numerous sources on recognised social research method relevant to the research design of this qualitative study, were consulted and applied in the study and these are mentioned here where necessary. Preliminary contextual information was gathered by means of focused literature review as well as informal in-depth face-to-face discussions with key informants.

A further 75 interviews, using a series of three different and complementary approaches, were conducted with the following groups of informants:

### 6.1) Key informants:

- a) Informal, preliminary in-depth discussions with a variety of professionals, practitioners and residents (9)
- b) Formal, in-depth discussions with selected key informants (11) in the field (using open-ended discussion guides)
- c) Formal, in-depth discussions with representatives (9) of the Resident Association, Committee or Body Corporate representatives from 5 selected housing estates.

### 6.2) Focus Groups:

- a) One group of District Six housing beneficiaries (14 participants)
- b) One group of residents (9 participants) from existing medium-density housing estates

### 6.3) Residents:

A total of 32 structured questionnaire interviews were conducted, with 8 residents from each of 4 selected housing estates.

The first phase of preliminary interviews helped to inform the nature and scope of the more detailed discussion that followed, with a wider range of key informants as well as the Focus Group discussion with residents of existing 'medium-density' clustered housing estates. Issues raised by key informants and Focus Group participants refined the scope and coverage of the next phase, which comprised the detailed structured interviews with 32 residents and their Committee or Association representatives at four selected sites (– which I identified as the most useful for exploring the relevant issues). An additional Committee representative was interviewed at a fifth site. Sites were originally selected in discussion with the Study Reference Group<sup>8</sup>.

#### **6.4 Note on Key Informant interviews**

Initial face-to-face interviews with 11 key informants from a range of organisations and institutes relevant to the subject under discussion, were undertaken during July and August 2003. Informants were representatives in management positions from the following organisations, bodies, or fields of expertise:<sup>9</sup> (- number of interviews in brackets)

- Independent consultants - urban planning and design (2)
- Trustees (housing estate Body Corporates) (3)
- Trustee (Land Restitution claim redevelopment) (1)
- Non-profit company – housing delivery (1)
- Local authority official - environmental management (1)
- Non-governmental organisation - housing and development advocacy (1)
- Independent private developer (1)
- Ward Councillor (1)

A loosely – structured discussion guide was used but open response was encouraged. Each key informant was in a management position in his or her

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<sup>8</sup> City project officials and consultants listed in Acknowledgements.

<sup>9</sup> Interviews were conducted in confidence to encourage open discussion and key informants are entitled to remain anonymous. The identities of individuals not objecting to disclosure are listed in Acknowledgements.

particular organisation, and was free to contribute views and opinion in both a personal and professional capacity on any aspects of the subject, drawing on their considerable experience in the field.

## **6.5 Note on selection of sites**

The main criteria for selecting the subsidised housing estate sites were a) relative density (- 'low-rise, medium-density' clustered housing), where b) positive initiatives had been instituted to create or recently improve these dwellings with, and in relation to, their immediate surroundings.

The private, moderate-middle income Kenilworth Park estate served the purpose of a useful 'control group' against which certain aspects of social response to the densified housing design could be compared.

Using these criteria, the following sites were selected:<sup>10</sup>

- 1) Bo-Kaap ex-Council flats
- 2) Springfield Terrace (Woodstock / Zonnebloem): subsidised home-ownership;
- 3) Parow Park: (municipal) subsidised rental accommodation;
- 4) Kenilworth Park: private home-ownership development (moderate middle-income).
- 5) Albow Gardens: (municipal) subsidised rental accommodation (- Residents' Committee representative only).

All households at these sites were eligible for state-assisted housing and were required to supply proof to the local authority (City of Cape Town Department of Housing) of monthly household income of R 3 500 – R 5 099 in 2002-3.

These were qualitative interviews and no results can be regarded as statistically representative of all residents at these sites or elsewhere.

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<sup>10</sup> Note: certain site options where criteria were met with regard to physical improvement of housing clusters, had to be excluded from the study as negative gang-related control of the neighbourhoods had totally undermined the intended upgrading.

Sampling of 8 residents at each site (32 in all) was haphazard, but with the following criteria applied at each site:

- 1) Any resident available and willing to be interviewed on site
- 2) A relative spread of age and gender among respondents (- to ensure a corresponding range of perspectives or responses to conditions)
- 3) Residents who had lived at the complex for a number of years (- who would be more familiar with local aspects of the issues being investigated)
- 4) Residents living in different parts of the complexes (including ground floor and above ground; to reflect opinion according to varying locality at 'micro-level')

These criteria were applied to aid in reflecting a fair variety of circumstances in respondent profile regarding life-stage and family structure. This ensured that similar perspectives that emerged, were not primarily a result of very similar circumstances or family situations.

**Field observation** took place at all the sites, especially with reference to issues raised by respondents. Additional site visits were also undertaken to observe conditions elsewhere, in relation to the issues raised.

## **6.6 Note on resident interviews**

Detailed structured questionnaires for the 32 estate residents took 45-60 minutes each and accommodated open-ended comment for almost all questions. Likert-type rating scales were applied to aid in standardising the measuring and interpretation of residents' perceptions on perceived quality and importance of various features selected as relevant to the design guidelines. All ratings allowed for open-ended comment and reasons for the views expressed.

USAID-SA funding allowed for the employment of four additional professional interviewers, one group facilitator, and two data capturers to

help transcribe recorded interviews. Descriptive data from the questionnaires (specifically, the rating scores), were run on Statistica (– with no further statistical analysis required for this study), and re-formatted by a statistician in SPSS for ease of use.

All instruments were pre-tested in the field and refined before use.

The site profiles in the following Section 7 describe the four subsidised housing estates selected for the study.

### 6.6.1 Household profiles

In total, householders interviewed at the four subsidised housing sites comprised 17 women and 15 men, with a spread across age groupings as follows:

Age group: Respondents	Number	%
1 16-24	2	6.3
2 25-34	4	12.5
3 35-44	9	28.1
4 45-54	10	31.3
5 55-64	4	12.5
6 65+	3	9.4
Total	32	100.0

Household family structures of respondents included themselves and spouses as parents, their children (including married children with their own spouses), uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, and grandchildren.

A varied spread of family life-stages was evident, with households including babies or toddlers, primary school children, adolescents, single parents, couples without children, as well as single unrelated adults sharing accommodation.

The main home languages were Afrikaans (16 households) and English (13 households); additional were French (- Central African, 1 household) and isiXhosa (2 households).

## **6.7 Note on the 'control' site: Kenilworth Park**

The Kenilworth Park precinct was selected as the single private development assessed in the study, mainly to serve as a 'control' site, where, as a private development, the market incentive ensured that attention was paid to certain aspects in order to attract home-buyers to a desirable, middle-class, medium-density residential environment.

Only resident representatives were interviewed, not householders. Images of medium-density features from this site were used as show-cards to stimulate discussion and explanations during focus group discussions with residents of subsidised housing estates, including the District Six claimants.

University of Cape Town

## 7. SITE PROFILES

(Sources: Field notes, interviews, City of Cape Town Housing and GIS Departments)

a) Springfield Terrace, Woodstock: Roger East Rd; Queen Rd; Springfield Rd.

See GIS aerial view of location over page.



Site Data – Springfield Terrace Block C	Specify
Number of homes / units	18 units this block
Number of storeys	2
Number of residents	= 80
Size of units: Number of bedrooms	1,2 and 3 bedrooms
Other rooms (All 2 bed or 1 bed)	Kitchen, lounge and toilet
Size of Units: Floor space	Basic range (bedsit) 27 m <sup>2</sup> .
Square metres (-range if varies)	(2-bedr) 54 m <sup>2</sup> , (3-bedr) 73 m <sup>2</sup>
Size of plot / common ground square metres	Street and pavement - frontage
Year when built	± 13 years ago (1989)
Building / complex management:	Body Corporate; Sectional Title
Tenure – Rental / ownership	11 bought; 7 renting
Household income	R 3 500 – R 5 099 per month
Subsidised / open market	Subsidised by the state as first- time buyers
Site Data – Springfield Terrace Block F	Specify
Number of homes / units	13 Units this block (133 for entire complex)
Number of storeys	2
Number of residents (if known)	+ 50
Size of units: Number of bedrooms	1,2 and 3 bedrooms; main bedroom 3x3 m
Other rooms	Kitchen, lounge and bathroom/toilet
Size of Units: Floor space	Basic range (bedsit) 27 m <sup>2</sup> , (2-bedr) 54 m <sup>2</sup> , (3-bedr) 73 m <sup>2</sup>
Year when built	12 years ago (1991-2)
Building / complex management:	Sectional Title / Body Corporate
Tenure – Rental / ownership	Ownership and rental
Household income	R 3 500 – R 5 099 per month
Subsidised / open market	Subsidised for first-time home-buyers only. Levies paid to Body Corporate representative



a) Springfield Terrace, Woodstock; Roger East Kdr; Queen Kdr; Springfield Kdr

SPRINGFIELD

SPRINGFIELD

- b) Bo-Kaap / Schotschekloof estates: Yusuf Drive; Tanabaru St.  
See GIS aerial view of location over page.



Site Data - Bo-Kaap flats	Specify
Number of homes / units	Complex 1: 191 Complex 2: 24
Number of storeys	2-5 storey blocks
Number of residents	+1700
Size of units; Number of bedrooms Other rooms ( <i>Lounge, Kitchen and Bathroom</i> )	1,2 and 3 bedrooms (Bachelor flat: 1-bed and lounge)
Size of Units; Floor space Square metres (-range if varies)	(Complex 1: 191 units) Range 32 m <sup>2</sup> up to 97 m <sup>2</sup> (3 beds + lounge) (Complex 2; 24 units) 2-bedr. 66 m <sup>2</sup> - 3-bedr 84 m <sup>2</sup>
Size of plot / common ground square metres	Unspecified / common ground
Year when built	Early-mid 1930s; before WW 2
Building / complex management: Developer / development body / or Administrator: Sectional Title / Body Corporate	Body Corporate
Tenure - Rental / ownership ( <i>Sectional Title</i> )	Ownership
Household income Subsidised / open market	R 3 500 - R 5 099 per month Subsidised; open market only after 10 years; If now sold, Council takes 80% of selling price; Received first time subsidy (once-off) when bought.

b) Bo-Kaap / Schotscheekloof estates: Yusuf Drive; Ianabaru St



17101499

c) Parow Park, Parow north: Frans Conradie / Fifth Ave.

See GIS aerial view of location over page.



Site Data – Parow Park	Specify
Number of homes / units	521
Number of storeys	3 storeys
Number of residents	+ 2200
Size of units: Number of bedrooms	1,2 and 3 bedrooms
Other rooms	Bathroom, kitchen and living room
Size of Units:	1 bedr: 43 m <sup>2</sup> and 48 m <sup>2</sup>
Floor space	2 bedr: 55 m <sup>2</sup> and 60 m <sup>2</sup>
Square metres (-range if varies)	3 bedr: 62 m <sup>2</sup> and 67 m <sup>2</sup> [Additional: Reported 72 m <sup>2</sup> ]
Year when built	+ 26 years ago (1977)
Building / complex management:	City of Cape Town Administration
Tenure Rental	Rental
Household income	R 3 500 – R 5 099 per month
Subsidised / council	Subsidised rental based on sq metres of floor space; intention to move to full market-related rental

*Field note: At present there is a forensic enquiry into the entire complex. Part of this will investigate how tenants acquired places at the complex. It was intended specifically as subsidised accommodation for people who cannot afford open market housing. It seems that some tenants who have moved in (in recent years) may not qualify for subsidised accommodation. Unemployment is given as the main reason resulting in residents/tenants falling behind in payments, who then come forward to make arrangements with Council. City of Cape Town has now taken over the housing complex from Provincial Administration for the past 2 years.*



c) Parow Park, Parow north: Frans Conradie / Fifth Ave.

77105

77105

- d) Albow Gardens, Rugby: Koeberg Rd.  
See GIS aerial view of location over page.



Site Data - Albow Gardens	Specify
Number of homes / units	212 Units
Number of storeys	A Block = 2 storeys B - J Block = 3 storeys
Number of residents	5x212 = 1060 There are 212 flats units Some have between 3-8 persons (e.g if average 5) = 1060 (e.g if average 6) = 1272 (e.g if average 8) = 1696
Size of units: Number of bedrooms Other rooms ( <i>bathroom lounge kitchen</i> )	1,2 and 3 bedroom flats; Lounge, kitchen, bathroom
Size of Units: Floor space – Square metres (-range if varies)	1 bedrm = 34 m <sup>2</sup> 2 bedrm = 54 m <sup>2</sup> 3 bedrm = 68 m <sup>2</sup>
Year when built	1975
Tenure - Rental	Rental
Household income	R 3 500 – R 5 099 per month
Building / complex management:	Subsidised rental - Municipality



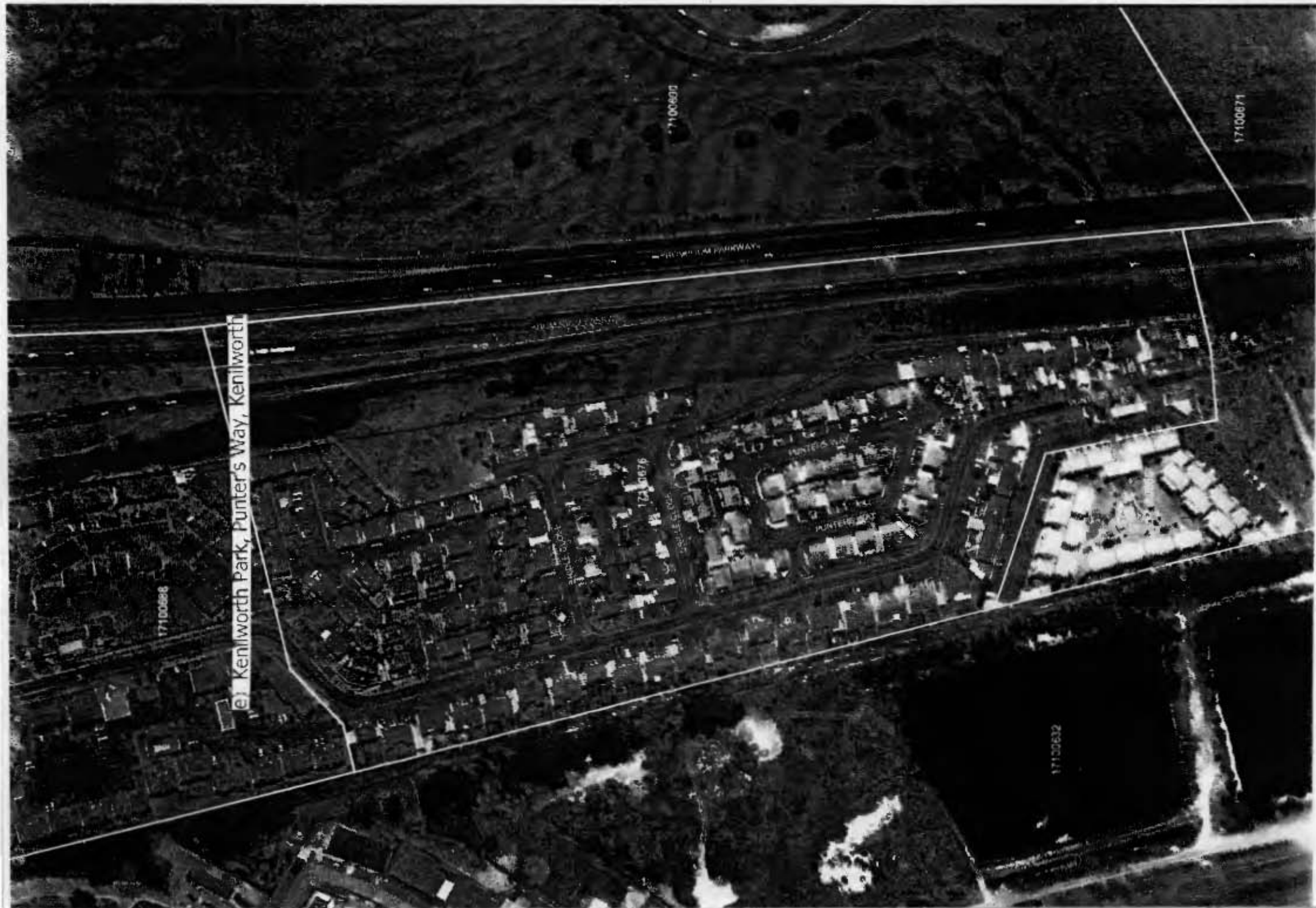
d) Albow Gardens, Kugby: Koeberg Rd.

e) Open market 'control' site: Kenilworth Park precinct, Kenilworth:  
Punter's Way. See GIS aerial view of location over page.



<b>Sample Data - GREYVILLE</b>		<b>Specify</b>
Number of homes / units		88
Number of floors storeys		Single storey and double storey
Number of residents (if known)		Fully occupied
Size of units: Number of bedrooms		Bachelor flats to 2 bedroomed units (- Lounge, kitchen, bathroom)
Size of Units: Floor space – Square metres		Range 1-bed - 35 m <sup>2</sup> and 41 m <sup>2</sup> 2-bed - 54 m <sup>2</sup> and 57 m <sup>2</sup> (No individual plots)
Year when built		1994
Building / complex management:		Body Corporate; and Sectional Title or rent from owners
Tenure - Rental / ownership		Rental and ownership
Subsidised / open market		Open market
<b>Sample Data - ARLINGTON CLOSE</b>		<b>Specify</b>
Number of homes / units		92
Number of floors storeys		2-storey
Number of residents (if known)		Fully occupied
Size of units: floor space		31 m <sup>2</sup> (1 bedr) 56 m <sup>2</sup> (2 bedr)
Number of bedrooms		All 1- and 2-bedroomed; (- Lounge, kitchen, bathroom)
Year when built		1996
Building / complex management:		Body Corporate
Tenure – Rental / ownership		Private ownership and rental (from owners)
Subsidised / open market		Open market





e) Kentworth Park, Punter's Way, Kentworth

17100868

17100800

17100871

17100876

17100832

PUNTER'S WAY

KENTWORTH PARK

PUNTER'S WAY

PUNTER'S WAY

PUNTER'S WAY

PUNTER'S WAY

## 8. Discussion of interview findings

In summary, the results from interviews with the three different categories of respondents – key informants, focus group participants and study site residents – clearly emphasise the importance of a coherent social and physical functionality of the densified residential environment: the social and physical home environments interact and affect each other closely.

Analyses of these results were applied to selected existing, relevant design guidelines from a number of previous studies where possible, in particular, Marcus and Sarkissian (1986).

Firstly, responses to design aspects mentioned and the influence of social factors were contextualised by the discussions with key informants. This is followed by a reflection of issues raised by focus group participants, residents of medium-density multi-storey housing; and thirdly, selected key results of interviews with residents of subsidised medium-density housing and one private complex precinct, are discussed.

### 8.1 Key informants: Perceived advantages of the densified housing environment

Opportunities for creating a favourable environment in new housing developments, were highlighted by key informants in general as follows:

#### 8.1.1 Communal space

Design and materials used in communal space should focus on visual appeal, including the use of greenery and landscaping, and cost-effectiveness to keep future maintenance costs low. Provision or assisted access to community support services are essential: these include childcare centres, as well as designated purpose-built children's play areas, administrative office space and meeting space for residents.

Concerns about the high rate of unemployment and the number of householders working informally from home, prompted suggestions to facilitate by design 'work from home' space – in the form of house space and rented office or workshop space, within the immediate neighbourhood. Rental space for small business can also generate income for social housing estate management.

All respondents cited home ownership (as opposed to rented accommodation) as a major positive factor, especially in gaining motivation and co-operation among residents on management and maintenance issues. Rental accommodation was on the whole regarded as problematic, in the absence of capacity to control the associated conditions and often anti-social behaviour of tenants. Opinion was that communal ownership of housing estates must include resident rights and membership: this fosters a positive sense of ownership and accompanying responsibility. The social housing form can encourage skills exchange and volunteerism among residents for maintenance services. Favourable opinions related also to the advantages of pooled resources for (external) building maintenance.

### **8.1.2 Encouraging owner investment**

In contrast to the subsidised housing market, the potential for positive outcomes in the provision of medium-density housing developments was identified as resulting from the somewhat more flexible lower-middle or moderate-income housing market (as opposed to low-income), mainly due to increased levels of affordability.

The opportunity for 'cross-subsidisation' through profits raised from the sale of non-subsidised houses within the same development, was discussed. This relates also to creating the conditions for, or encouraging, private investment and commercial opportunities within or linked to the development. In the case of larger-scale developments, there is the opportunity for designing enduring public-oriented buildings and spaces that can be adapted to the needs of future inhabitants (in the long term).

The point was also raised that materials of differing quality and costs could be incorporated into the same development, to offer wider options for residents and at the same time lessen the sharp distinctions between buildings that are easily recognisable as 'low-cost', and other houses.

Examples of urban renewal projects (particularly from overseas) cited by respondents, also highlighted the fact that opportunities created by mixed commercial and residential use in densified development can have very positive social and economic effects. However, careful design of mixed-use precincts is critical. Responses by both residents and key informants indicate that great value is placed on housing location within easy walking distance of services and facilities (- in particular, shops and public transport).

### **8.1.3 Environmental considerations**

With regard to the broader environment, small pilot projects indicate that a measure of success is possible in incorporating environmentally sustainable approaches in new densified subsidised developments. The opportunity for taking into account simple design solutions (such as the orientation of buildings for maximum sunlight), and installing energy efficient fittings, is particularly suited to new developments and is a proven significant cost-saving mechanism for residents and institutions in the long term.

Environmental education programmes have had beneficial effects on raising awareness of the significance of environmental factors (including cutting energy and water consumption costs), among residents.

### **8.1.4 Management bodies**

The roles of Body Corporates in regulating the neighbourhood environment in positive ways, was raised. This includes estate Trust control of design guidelines for any alterations to the original form of the buildings or common space areas. Negotiating and establishing formal linkages with existing community services and facilities within the surrounding neighbourhood,

was noted as a positive opportunity. Local neighbourhood support for a new development and its residents can be secured through the process of negotiation in the planning phase of the development. It was noted that social housing beneficiaries can effectively take control of their social environment through active involvement; but it must be acknowledged that, being in many respects disadvantaged, they need formalised mechanisms of practical and skills support for this from other sources.

All respondents noted the opportunity for a measure of increased security through community surveillance (- but this has to be weighed against security problems of trespassing and vandalism associated with unsecured complex housing and common space). Community co-operation on security concerns can also be directed through the Body Corporate or Trust.

#### **8.1.5 Resident involvement**

In new densified developments, resident involvement can be more easily incorporated into future management of public space, including responding to choices or preferences for usage and types of community facilities. Institutional support for non-governmental- and civic- group involvement in related projects (such as job creation) as part of an integrated approach to development, can be very beneficial. Participatory planning processes and well-managed information and publicity programmes have the potential to change negative perceptions of surrounding residents and beneficiaries of densified housing developments.

A major point of discussion was that the best way to construct and maintain a positive environment is through the control exercised by residents themselves. Committed resident involvement has the power to reverse the degradation of urban neighbourhoods, with accompanying social and economic benefits.

## 8.2 Key informants: Perceived disadvantages of the densified housing environment

Key informants highlighted the following issues – many of them common to all respondents including the focus group participants – which in their opinion, impacts negatively on densified housing development.

### 8.2.1 Quality control

There is a need for building inspectors on site to monitor workmanship of the precinct development throughout the period of construction. Local authorities are aware of the problems and should devise strategies for effecting more control and investment in lower-income housing developments. Initial poor design of units and open space, and the omission of supplementary facilities and finishes (of the buildings and ground surfaces, play areas, landscaping, laundry areas), can lead to rapid deterioration in the overall quality of the neighbourhood environment.

### 8.2.2 Maintenance of communal space

There is an ongoing problem with lack of resources to maintain communal space and facilities (such as refuse areas, common walkways and stairways, recreational open space and children's play space, parking areas, and also communal-use buildings). Added to this is the difficulty of many residents (home-buyers) to afford loan repayments, and especially levy payments; this also relates to probable increases over time. Effective estate maintenance is dependent on the ability of all residents to pay.

### 8.2.3 Communication and site management

More effective communication systems are needed between the various parties involved – for buyer awareness and education, and developer awareness of buyer needs and preferences. Tenants, as opposed to owner-

residents, can have a negative impact on the estate environment due to their lack of motivation to adhere to regulations and the resulting difficulty and tensions of controlling unruly and inconsiderate behaviour in the neighbourhood.

#### **8.2.4 Affordability**

Inadequacy of the existing state subsidy and related financial support frameworks, is a serious obstacle to providing an acceptable product: respondents commented that it is 'impossible to deliver' an adequate housing product for the subsidised market under present circumstances. The high cost of providing bulk infrastructure, imposed by local authority standards, was emphasised as a negative factor.

The problem of affordability for poor or unemployed residents results in non-payment, which may lead to eviction. Unemployment was cited as the major factor in lack of affordability for residents of lower-income housing. Residents have unrealistic expectations of what can be provided at available costs – relative to their circumstances. Non-payment of housing- and service-related fees for whatever reasons, is an obstacle to success in the social housing environment. Appropriate education of beneficiaries in this regard must be greatly improved. However, the major cause of non-payment is undoubtedly inability of low-income residents to pay (Public Service Commission 2003:20). This includes also the over-extension of householders to credit purchases and other loan repayments (pers. comm. M. Bregman, 2004).

#### **8.2.5 Historical factors**

Deep-rooted social problems cannot be solved by physical design; but can be positively affected by it. Residents' perceptions are based on previous negative experiences associated with high-density living in poverty-stricken areas, with all the accompanying ramifications. Existing authorities have no incentive to take a creative and different approach to housing development

in the lower-income housing market, as long as they simply work on 'delivering low-cost houses' through their current systems. South Africa has a history of unimaginative, limited design responses in housing delivery, especially of related public buildings, which negatively influences perceptions of the quality that it is possible to achieve. Acceptance and conformity of the subsidised social housing estate within the existing local neighbourhood can be an obstacle; however, it also has potential for positive spin-offs.

### **8.2.6 Environmental awareness**

Initial capital outlay required to build 'sustainably' (- in a long-term cost-efficient and environmentally sensitive manner), is often more than the amount required for conventional building. It is difficult to source funding to address environmental issues, as these are not considered priorities and many of the benefits are evident over the long- rather than the short-term. Local authorities do not allocate sufficient funds for this purpose, residents are unable to pay extra costs, and financial institutions are unaware of the benefits of making loans available to support these initiatives (as they do overseas). Awareness of environmental issues is generally low among residents: education with regard to the benefits of environmental sustainability is a major and necessary undertaking.

### **8.2.7 Crime, anti-social behaviour and security**

Destructive influences on the residential environment (especially for example in densely-built areas of Observatory, Salt River and Woodstock) are the presence of 'slumlords', inappropriate commercial activities located insensitively in a residential environment (such as late-night pubs and clubs), and crime. All respondents discussed the negative impact of crime on all initiatives, a prevailing social issue that cannot be easily addressed. The improvement of this situation is dependent on a range of factors over the long term. Nevertheless, the application of certain design principles (- a good example being the orientation of houses in relation to the street) and

the vigilance and control by residents within their immediate neighbourhoods, can dramatically reduce crime impacts in the short term. Costs of additional security measures are a burden on residents.

There is an over-reliance on the voluntary services of Trust members, who have to carry the associated costs themselves. There is a need for logistical support and training of resident representatives around the development process and future estate management, for successful outcomes.

### **8.3 Focus Group discussions: Residents of multi-storey medium-density housing**

#### **8.3.1 Focus Group profiles**

The first focus group participants were recruited from a variety of medium-density housing developments including Sea Point, Woodstock, Zonnebloem, Diep River and Retreat, where four of the nine participants were from the Lake View (Retreat Station) development. The group included four men and five women, both home-owners and tenants.

The District Six focus group (- former residents who are beneficiaries of the current redevelopment), comprised twelve participants of six men and six women but from a range of different areas, housing types, income levels, ages and life-stages. They were joined by family members who were present as observers (but who occasionally interjected in the discussion).

#### **8.3.2 Key perceptions identified**

While most of the issues raised by the medium-density unit residents were very similar to those raised by former District Six residents and other key informants, the discussion dynamic within the groups did not allow for a more systematic coverage of social- and design influences.

On the whole, residents of existing multi-storey housing were less hostile to the concept of this type of development in principle, than the District Six focus group participants.

However, most participants from both groups had experienced serious problems in their housing environments, relating to both physical and social elements: notably layout, building size and quality, common space use and maintenance; and exposure to anti-social behaviour that could not be effectively regulated. These expressed disadvantages echoed those outlined by key informants in Section 8.2.

### 8.3.3 District Six focus

There was some difference in emphasis from District Six focus group participants to the issues. The complex, highly politicised and emotive context of returning families to a 'redeveloped District Six' obviously affects all aspects of the redevelopment. During group discussions there was difficulty in focusing on the study objectives of issues affecting design guidelines, as participants tended to focus on the complexities of the District Six resettlement process.

The discussions reflected something of a contradiction between the nostalgic longing for the close-knit community of District Six past, and the preferred form of housing development as expressed by the participants. The 'sense of place' so valued by past residents is illustrated, for example, by the following quotes:

Person 5: " - for me, what I want is for the old people to sit on their stoep and talk again –"

Person 2: "It would be so lovely" (*Voices agreeing*)

Person 4: "Because what we had in District Six, we had a community, right? We had Silvertree, we had St. Marks Hall, we had Bloemhof Flats Hall. Our old people could pay them, go sit and sew, go sit and – you know the things was there; walk and shop; and that's what I want. People could – my ma

kan weer gaan shopping doen, en ek gaan nou gou winkel toe; en ek gaan nou rus by Mrs. Dinges se huis. That's what I want – communication, and a family life.” (*Voices agreeing.*)

Person 3: “Well, old District Six neighbourhood, ja, that was always there, with that District Six spirit.”

Person 5: “A ‘welcome home’.”

Person 8: “The same feeling you used to have, one community, one family, we all felt as one; family care and consideration for each other.”

### **8.3.3a) Comment on expressed preferences and effects**

The conditions conducive to this neighbourly atmosphere are very unlikely to flourish within the preferred middle-class suburban image so clearly synthesised by most of the focus group participants. Their design preferences emerged in the form of single dwellings on (large) plots, with driveways or garages, security fencing, gates and a ‘shopping complex’. All of these features serve very effectively to separate and isolate neighbours from one another, creating an ‘inward-looking’ environment that marginalises the public space arena to the point of alienation. The hostile strangers reportedly feared by residents, are then positively attracted to exercise their control over public space.

It hardly seems possible to reconstruct the environment so valued by the District Six claimants without due reference to the denser, multi-storeyed urban form that characterised the area in its heyday. Most (but not all) participants rejected all references to compact or densified design as problematic – albeit for valid reasons of their own, based on their Cape Flats experiences. They seemed unaware of the possibility that the legendary ‘spirit of District Six’ was in fact nurtured by the physical proximity of neighbours – induced at least in part by its multi-storey houses, overlooking its narrow streets.

## 8.4 Residents of multi-storey subsidised housing estates: analysis of findings

The interactive relationship between design and social conditions was most obvious in the data from interviews with residents and their representatives at the housing estates. This confirmed the picture that emerged from key informant and focus group discussions.

Characteristically at these estates, socio-economic problems have contributed towards a general material and social degradation of certain sites, and at certain times more than others (- overcrowding, poor property maintenance, anti-social activities especially associated with drugs and gangsterism, etc.) On the positive side, it was evident that residents may have or develop very strong inter-family and community ties that promote co-operation and mutual support for the benefit of the neighbourhood as a whole.

Certain responses reflecting the interactive effects of the physical and social environments are evident in the following results:

### 8.4.1 Site management

Regarding estate management, various levels of responsibility for cleaning and maintenance were in place among the Body Corporates. These were divided between private services usually contracted by Body Corporates (caretakers, cleaning, gardening, building repair and maintenance, etc.) and municipal services, as well as some voluntary services by residents.

Opinion ratings indicated that in general, residents were more satisfied with the efficiency of private maintenance services rendered than with municipal services. Only at the private Kenilworth Park precinct were these services mainly rated 'good'. All respondents rated maintenance services as 'important' or 'very important'.

The main problems were noted as slow response times to maintenance problems (especially of Council services); uncaring attitudes of residents to maintaining the properties; littering by residents and passersby; and the problem of neglected common open space around the housing precincts.

There were also compliments regarding good service from Council and private contractors, as well as good management regarding maintenance from Body Corporates. These included *communication* with management authorities, which was considered by most respondents to be either 'average / fair' or 'good'. But overall ratings for *management efficiency* in addressing residents' concerns, fell below 'good'. In return, *residents' willingness to respond* to management body requests and demands (such as abiding by rules, levy payments, etc.) was thought by most respondents to be 'poor' to 'average', with only one third considering it 'good'.

#### **8.4.2 Effects on young people**

##### **8.4.2a) Children's play space**

Conditions for children at the sites, was another feature commonly rated 'poor'. Besides the most highly rated feature of a safe and secure residential environment, respondents regarded facilities for children as the next most important aspect of their neighbourhood. At all the sites, purpose-built equipped play space was located on peripheral land at the edge and separated from the housing precinct, out of view of the units and often fenced. As a result, besides being inconveniently and unsafely located, they were vandalised, neglected magnets for anti-social behaviour and unused by children. In the Bo-Kaap precinct, only the two neglected municipal parks exist, largely with the same effect.

It was clear that the play space needs of children living in each of the sample clustered housing environments were not adequately met. Only about half of respondents felt they lived in a good area for raising children:

these were mainly those living in the private mid-income upmarket Kenilworth Park complex. Most respondents felt that surrounding play space for children was unsuitable and inadequate. Without adequate play space within view of caregivers, possible dangers to children are increased. Residents' comments on essential play facilities that children should have in the local residential environment, included safe, well-maintained open ground for (e.g.) ball games and enclosed play parks for small children with suitable equipment. Play areas should be within view of homes. Children should not have to, as the norm, compete with traffic for play space in parking lots and streets surrounding their homes. These responses correspond entirely with the design guidelines researched by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986).

#### **8.4.2b) Facilities for adolescents**

Similar concern was expressed by all resident respondents about the lack of facilities for adolescents. Many commented on the crucial need to accommodate teenagers or young adults within their neighbourhoods. At the stage where they are especially vulnerable and exposed to the pervasive influences of drugs, gangsterism and other risk-taking behaviour, the existence of established sports- and social facilities and networks offering alternative outlets for their social and physical needs, goes a long way towards minimising those risks. At the local residential level, outdoor or enclosed space for games and a venue for indoor socialising were regarded as essential facilities for the youth.

#### **8.4.3 Anti-social behaviour and activities**

Overall, more than half of respondents felt there were activities in the neighbourhood impacting negatively on local residents. This was not the case for Kenilworth Park, but was a problem at all the other sites; so excluding Kenilworth Park, at the subsidised housing estates almost all respondents felt there were significant negative social impacts in their neighbourhoods. This related mainly to drug use and drug peddling taking

place in the immediate vicinity or estate common ground outside the houses. Shebeens or taverns run from homes were also cited as a problem, as besides the problem of drunkenness, this attracted strangers to the area at all hours.

#### **8.4.4 Focus on Springfield Terrace**

With reference to the single selected site where other studies have been undertaken, the review by Dewar (1995) explains the origin and process of well-located Springfield Terrace as an inner-city pilot housing infill project begun in 1989. The original objectives of the scheme as set out in Dewar's report, indicate that a number of these were met (or partially met, to varying degrees) according to our interview records.

**8.4.4a)** A brief listing of **design successes** reported by our respondents, includes for example the following:

- Size and placement of windows in the units;
- Provision of useful storage space;
- Orientation of the buildings to enhance protection from wind and rain;
- Access to backyard space for the smallest units, located on ground-floor (for that purpose);
- First-floor balcony space;
- Attention to design detail and finishing of building facades;
- Placement and access limitation of shared entrances and stairwells;
- Planting of trees at front and back of the precinct.

Significantly, the validity of these acknowledgements is given further support by concurrence with the design guidelines listed in the City of Cape Town reports of 2003 and 2005.

However, certain assumptions and aspects of the original precinct- and building design resulted in difficulties for residents.

**8.4.4b)** These relate in particular to the broader as well as more strategic objectives, including the following **design drawbacks:**

- Highly inappropriate placement of purpose-built children’s play space;
- Related inadequacy of children’s play space;
- Lack of sufficient parking space (- not recognised at the time due to lower levels of car ownership ten years ago);
- Lack of differentiation between vehicular and pedestrian use of road space;
- Dominant vehicle use of common street space highlights the lack of provision of defined social space;
- Placement of washing lines on poles below windows (- this was recognised as less than ideal at the time of building);
- Garbage storage space (- inadequate; – but indications are in fact poor management of garbage storage space);
- Lack of handrails to grip on, along the stairways.

Furthermore, a number of important strategic objectives planned for Springfield Terrace were not met, including the following:

- Occupant households at the precinct had remained ‘race-based’ and not the opposite, as intended;
- The desired ‘social mix’ of households had not occurred; (- although specific level of poverty was clearly reflected in varying levels of building maintenance between entire blocks);
- Increasing local thresholds had not resulted in revitalisation of existing community facilities, nor increased usage and maintenance of these facilities;
- Upgrading in the surrounding area had not occurred.

Mismatches between intended results and actual circumstances, can serve to illustrate the limitations of design in significantly affecting negative social

conditions. A brief focus on one of the lessons apparent from the Springfield Terrace model from the findings of this study, illustrates clearly the impact of such discrepancies:

#### **8.4.4c) Car ownership**

The intentional design of the street onto which the units front, for both social and vehicular use, was considered by residents as highly inappropriate. This view is strongly supported by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986). The Springfield Terrace objective was “where street use space was primarily designed as social space, as opposed simply to movement space for vehicles” (Dewar 1995:4). Dewar’s report (1995:6) states further, “the issue of parking proved to be one of the most intractable bones of contention between the design team and City of Cape Town officials.” This refers to the designers’ conviction that the streets should have been narrower, used primarily as social- and play space, and noted that only 30 % of residents at the time owned a car.

In fact, the unforeseen outcome over time has been a dramatic increase in car ownership among working class families, as well as the constant presence of cars from visitors to the residents (-notably including their relatives), who drive from the far-flung satellite suburbs created under apartheid. Consequently, at Springfield Terrace car owners have long since won the battle in the conflict of use, as vehicles firmly took precedence over social or pedestrian use of the street space.

This continued trend of rising car ownership, coupled with poor public transport services and the social connections between friends and families relegated in the past to specific ‘group areas’, resulted in clear indications from recent related studies (City of Cape Town 2003; CTCHC 2004 and 2005), that the continuing debate on accommodating cars within housing precincts should sensibly be closed in the current circumstances – that is, until public transport is a viable option. As reported in these studies

mentioned, at present provision of secure parking space within the densified residential precinct is essential.

#### **8.4.4d) Definition of vehicular and pedestrian space**

Overall, study results are that the lack of spatial definition between pedestrian and vehicular space leads at the very least to notable inconvenience for both pedestrians and drivers. Numerous problems raised by residents relating to conflict over vehicle- and social or pedestrian space at each of the study sites, indicates that it is one of the poor design elements that now demands much more rigorous application of mind by the planners and engineers of new clustered housing developments.

Ongoing conflict at Springfield Terrace over common street use occurs for a number of reasons. The main drawbacks as described by respondents, are listed as follows:

- Significant traffic danger for children at play;
- high levels of noise (from car users), especially disturbing late at night;
- General lack of privacy as cars park up against the front of units;
- Unwanted social encounters between groups congregating around cars and residents entering or exiting their units;
- Conflict among car users over parking space, especially relating to how close to their units residents can park;
- Security problems arise as intruders to cars take advantage of 'social space' to arrange vehicle break-ins; and conversely, house break-ins are facilitated by intruders being able to park, watch, and target premises.

#### **8.4.5 Access control and security**

Some of these problems are magnified by lack of any access control to the housing precinct. Requests by residents to install access control of the precinct roads and service lanes behind the buildings, were consistently refused by Council. The same issue (of resident access control denied) prevails at the Bo-Kaap, Parow Park and Albow Gardens study sites. Other similar circumstances to all those listed above, applied at the other sites and in particular at the Bo-Kaap complexes. The problems were less pronounced at Parow Park and Albow Gardens, where units do not front onto roads. However, in these cases other security problems arose, where cars were parked out of sight of their owners' units, another serious design flaw (also noted as such in the study by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986)).

The 'control' site of private housing at Kenilworth Park, exhibited more successful compromises in this regard within its precincts: these included, for example, much more stringent traffic control (- limited access roads; speed bumps); parking space spread within sight of units, or adjacent to units but off-street; and clearly defined pedestrian walkways, as well as social- and play space.

#### **8.4.6 Occupants in relation to number and size of rooms**

The problem of overcrowding of housing units, evident to some extent at all low-income sites unless continuously controlled, apparently relates more to social- than design factors: that is, the obligation of families to house their dependent relatives, and/or to obtain rental payments from tenants to supplement their income.

A number of other recent studies among working class households living in overcrowded conditions (City of Cape Town 2005; CTCHC 2004 and 2005) indicates a preference for adequate number of rooms over room size within the unit. The main reasons for this are to accommodate appropriate

separation of children and adults, as well as the obligation to house dependent relatives at times (if not permanently).

Residents at Springfield Terrace recognised that the discomfort of overcrowding in some units was a result of these obligations rather than a feature of room size. Nevertheless, residents were uniformly satisfied with their room dimensions at the older buildings of the Bo-Kaap, Parow Park and Albow Gardens estates; while room sizes at Springfield Terrace and – interestingly – the more recently-built private Kenilworth Park complexes, were perceived by most respondents as ‘too small’ for comfort (around 30 - 40 m<sup>2</sup> for one-bedroomed units). However, actual room sizes at each of the sites reveals that there is no notable size difference (relative to number of rooms), between any of the estates.

This point is of interest with reference to the study by Evans (1996:11), which notes that “94 percent of households dissatisfied with their dwellings claimed that the reason for this was the actual nature of these structures”; and “more specifically, almost half of these households indicated that the primary cause of dissatisfaction was the fact that their dwellings were too small” (Evans 1996:11). However, this perceived need is always relative to household size. The perception may relate more to the pressures faced by low-income householders than to physical size of the units. Dewar (1995:9) notes this aspect in the Springfield Terrace report:

“.. people tended to express size preferences around need rather than affordability – the survey indicated the largest units would be the most popular, while the market eventually revealed a greater demand for the smaller units.”

Further to this issue, Evans (1996) notes Department of Housing policy of two- to three bedrooms with total floor space of 24 – 36 m<sup>2</sup>. With average household size of potential social housing beneficiaries at 4 – 5 persons (Evans, 1996: 312; City of Cape Town 2005:15-18; CTCHC 2004:43), this is clearly inadequate both in terms of number and dimension of rooms.

To supplement the analysis of respondents' perceptions in Section 8.4 above, it is useful to clarify and summarise responses and impacts of certain specific aspects of site- and building design that were discussed.

## 8.5 Response to 'show card' images

Resident response (at all the study sites) to these key aspects of design and function of the buildings and adjacent space, is effectively illustrated by the following annotated photographs. Additional comment is included where appropriate on relevant issues at other sites visited during field observation.

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## 1. RESPONSE TO 'SHOW-CARD' IMAGES

The following 'show-card' images were used during Focus Group and in-depth interviews with residents to stimulate response on likes and dislikes of selected key aspects of the clustered housing environment.

The main points relating to residents' comments are highlighted here.

'Top of mind': first impressions -

### A) Facing enclosed central garden: Favourable response

- 1) Enclosed gardens or common space surrounded by the housing cluster
- 2) Scope for personalising individual units (e.g. security gates, awnings)
- 3) Stairways leading into the building

A 1)



A 2)



A 3)



B) Facing the street: enclosed private parking

- 1) Enclosed private parking was highly favoured (1)
- 2) Response to living rooms facing the street was neutral if set behind barriers (1), but seriously disliked where no barriers exist.
- 3) Wide unsheltered open parking lots were not favoured (2)

1)



2)



- 3) Facing a narrow parking strip (3) was preferred to (2)



- 4) Dwelling units facing each other was rejected due to lack of privacy from neighbours (4)



5) Units facing open street with low barriers and open parking, was rejected as totally unsuitable (5).



6) Facing central courtyard with parking and garden was favoured (6); but cars encroaching on common central space clashes with pedestrian use.



7) Dwelling unit backing on parking bays and street was favoured (7); with unit fronts facing central garden (8)



8) Unit fronts facing central garden (8) were preferred to facing the street, for reasons of privacy and security



9) Dwellings facing the street with open off-street parking was approved of (9) on condition that access to the housing precinct was controlled (- in this case, by a single entrance roadway).

C) Parking:

Options for private parking were most favoured:

10) Garage parking was liked but generally thought too expensive to consider.



11) Car-port adjacent to the unit was approved, even if open: more secure than carpark further from unit.



12) Fenced-off carport was the best-liked option: cost-effective and secure.



#### D) Children's play space

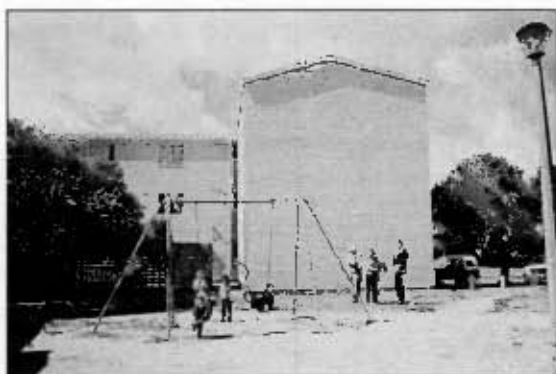
- 13) Walled-off play area, set aside from housing clusters that back onto it, was completely rejected as unsafe, inaccessible and alienating:



In an extraordinary lapse of judgement, no doubt motivated by cost, this facility also lies adjacent to a highway on the left – separated by a low wire fence. Not surprisingly, it is a 'white elephant' at the complex but also attracts anti-social activities.

*(Kenilworth Park)*

- 14) – 15) Units overlooking central garden play space was favoured – even if parking was also accommodated:



- 16) *Children's play area at Albow Gardens:*  
Location insufficiently overlooked by units;  
No delineation of space;  
Inappropriate grass surfacing worn away – cannot be maintained due to cost.

### E) Boundaries to the residence

The issue of boundaries preventing entry to residences from public streets was considered by all respondents as essential due to the threat of crime, anti-social behaviour on the streets and protection of privacy. Consequently, all images presented for discussion that showed low boundaries (16, 17) or no boundaries at all were totally rejected (18, 19; over page).

Palisade fencing that prevents entry but retains visibility ('permeable boundaries' in urban planner jargon), was the most preferred option (20, 21).

Solid walls were also generally rejected as unsafe as they block visibility, but were preferred for privacy if the dwelling lay adjacent to main roads or highways (22).

However, this image of walled roadways is condemned by informed urban designers for its deadening visual effect on the cityscape (JS Architects and Urban Designers, 2003).

Plants as a feature surrounding houses or fencing was not favoured by most respondents as this was also considered an obstacle to visibility where intruders or criminals can hide (23).

16)



17)



No boundary between unit front and public street was totally rejected as unsuitable: security risk and invasion of privacy (18 and 19):

18)



19)



The 'house-like' image such as Figure 20 below, was strongly favoured by respondents. This building is a section of a cluster of 3-storey apartment units, but presents a more homely residence image than a conventional 'block' structure.

20)



21) 'Permeable boundary' types such as palisade fencing was preferred to solid wall boundaries: increased visibility for security.



22) (Solid walls not favoured)



23) (Shrubbery not favoured)



F) Stairways to entrances

Common access stairways built into the cluster building (24) were preferred compared to stairs outside (25 and 26), as internal positioning was considered less intrusive, safer, and preventing casual loitering around stairways.

Handrails were considered essential (– absent in 26), as support for climbing stairs.

24)



25)



26)



### G) Flats

Images of blocks of flats were totally rejected even when they offered favourable features such as balconies and basement parking (27, 28; see also 16).

Flats were disliked mainly due to their association with lack of privacy and capacity to encourage slum conditions – due to social problems prevalent in the disadvantaged environment discussed in the study analysis (such as overcrowding, noise levels, sale and consumption of alcohol and drugs).

The 'block of flats' image was also considered a significant 'step further away' from the conventional middle-class image of a private house, than the medium-density low-rise cluster housing images.

27)



28)



H) Row shops and living above shops, facing the street (- 'Show-card' images)

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Focus Group discussions indicated vigorous rejection (- by group participants as well as by residents interviewed individually -) of separate shops in rows lining the street, with or without living quarters above. Responses indicated that advantages of **convenience, ease of management and better security** of the conglomerrated shopping centre facility were the major considerations. In all cases, however, although the defined shopping centre design was preferred for provision of local area retail services, it definitely **did not replace the need and appreciation for small neighbourhood 'corner shops'** or cafés for fresh everyday purchases (bread, milk, fruit etc.)

Alternative compact street-facing 'shopping centre' design in the densified city setting was cursorily explored and this received favourable response from participants. Examples of a possible approach acknowledging this preference (bearing in mind different options for varying and attractive architecture), include the popular compact Kloof Street area shopping complexes. These are pictured below – all three located within easy walking distance of each other:



As an example of economy of scale, Maynard Mall in Wynberg with its attempt at a vernacular architecture, spans 3 floors and an additional underground parking level. The building complex covers one street 'block' bordered by major roads and has a total floor area for business rental of 24 000 m<sup>2</sup>, housing 77 shops.



1) Landscaping and trees: Communicare subsidised housing estate, Wynberg

Many positive responses were recorded in informal interviews with residents and key informants at this site.

Regarding landscaping, mature trees were highly valued. Other examples pictured here indicate drawbacks in extensive use of grass (expensive, high-maintenance, water-intensive). Raised planted areas at a level higher than the road, have only limited boundary terracing of slopes leaving potential for future erosion and expensive maintenance.



## 2) Study sites: Resident interviews

- Additional key points, with particular reference to examples of design drawbacks

### 2.1) PAROW PARK

Steep grassed humps in the landscaping (graded site rubble at the time of construction), proved to be entirely without merit – they were not used for anything and blocked visibility. Large parking lots of unmarked bays behind blocks (- not pictured) were a major security risk: regarded as hiding places for criminals, placing residents at risk, and where cars were regularly broken into or stolen. No access control or boundaries at the site also resulted in security risks: ground floor residents erected their own barriers. Drying laundry has to be within view: communal washing lines (- not pictured) were designed out of sight and behind barriers, so as to be unusable for residents (- theft of washing, unsafe for residents and used as toilets by passersby).



## 2.2) ALBOW GARDENS

Active residents in one section had created indigenous gardens at the front of their blocks, accentuating delineation between the estate and the public street (a). Unplastered brick buildings (with no balconies) were strongly disliked. Residents created their own makeshift boundaries in an attempt to distance their private dwellings from the public domain in the better-kept sections of the estate (b). Children's play area was poorly located: not sufficiently within view of units; no delineation of play space and walkways; no child-minding seating facilities; and inappropriate grass surfacing cannot be maintained (c).



a)



b)



c)

### 2.3) SPRINGFIELD TERRACE

Insufficient common space relative to building density, and lack of distinction between vehicular and pedestrian space are two major problems for residents at the site. Ground floor units fronting the street experienced severe intrusion of privacy. The detail and variety added to building facades were appreciated (- de-emphasising the disliked unplastered brick and otherwise block-like appearance), as were the trees bordering the road.



#### 2.4) BO-KAAP

No traffic control measures on the roads result in dangerous speeding of traffic. No provision exists for off-street parking. Steep sandy slopes are inadequately secured and inappropriately grassed. Local common space and facilities are wholly inadequate relative to building density.



### 3) KENILWORTH PARK

In most instances the investigated needs and aspirations of the residents at all the other sample sites coincided strongly, but in some aspects, noticeable differences were evident with regard to better conditions and management at Kenilworth Park than at the four subsidised housing estates.

Notable examples include better parking facilities, better landscaping, and much better property maintenance services.

The following clips give some indication of the successful 'clustered housing mix' design at Kenilworth Park:



The case of Kenilworth Park is useful in exploring approaches that address some of the main issues raised during interviews, on the nature and scale of new housing developments. The site is located opposite the retail precincts Kenilworth Centre and Access Park, and adjacent to major transport routes. The following favourable attributes correspond with many of the design preferences expressed by the subsidised housing residents:

- Access to the precinct is limited, with no busy public thoroughfare route. Business premises are clustered at the main street junctions at the entrance to the precinct (Punter's Way).
- Housing clusters are built to similar standards, but in varieties of form and style: these include some single dwellings with enclosed or semi-enclosed yards, rows of semi-detached single storey homes, rows of attached double-storeys, as well as fully enclosed multi-storey complexes.
- The different clusters each have their own residents' committees and communal facilities, but the use of these and other activities occurs across the different clusters. This environment provides variety that adds interest, encourages a sense of community and identity, and provides scope for individual preferences.
- A range of housing types and clusters also offers options to move house within the same neighbourhood if the circumstances arise, as some residents have done.
- Privacy and safe play spaces are evident (- but improvement of facilities is needed). The relative range of house types and prices attracts a varied mix of residents.

However, certain definite shortcomings at this site evident as follows:

- Generally, drawbacks at this site include the lack of appropriate facilities (- recreational, library, etc.) within walking distance, especially for young people. Lack of secure boundaries between the development and the freeway fails to discourage crime at the site.
- Many design improvements are possible – one of the worst errors is the poor siting of a children's park set behind high walls alongside the freeway:

consequently dangerous and never used by children, and a magnet for anti-social elements.

Finally, a prominent issue at the time of interview was the reportedly poor relationship between the municipality and residents, due to poor communication and lack of clarification of respective roles and responsibilities. The lack of effective residents' associations or any community-based forum, was identified as a major drawback in lobbying for improvements in the interests of all the residents of the various enclaves within the precinct.

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#### 4) Desirable features: summary example

Particularly favourable responses were made by Focus Group participants to features of these images:

##### ENCLOSED GARDENS



##### PALISADE FENCING



##### CARPORT / enclosed parking



## 9. Synthesis of study findings:

### Analysis and discussion in relation to design and management of the densified social housing environment

The above illustrated summary of key responses to design questions may appear deceptively simple, even insignificant in the broader scheme of things. But this highlights the crux of the problem: firstly, that design has not been given due attention in light of its impact on the perceptions, daily options and activities of residents; and secondly, that design solutions need to be supported effectively by ongoing management. The basis for this assertion is discussed in the following analysis.

As a number of key informants mentioned during interviews, buildings erected are there to stay, at least in the foreseeable future. The 'mistakes' made by designers and developers in relation to some of the appalling low-cost housing projects we have all seen, are there to be lived with for decades into the future. The blame for this lies not only with unscrupulous developers, but also with the lack of public authority standards and support mechanisms in the process. Marcus and Sarkissian (1986:4) make exactly the same observation in their study of two decades ago:

“Although designers have made avoidable mistakes (some of horrendous proportions) that people will have to live with for decades to come, the blame also lies with fee-paying clients, design programs, ways in which government standards are applied, social researchers unwilling to stand up and be counted, and bureaucratic departmentalism (passing the buck).”

#### 9.1 The limitations of design

Discussions with respondents reflected a very wide range of issues relating to the challenges and opportunities for successful functional design principles of the medium-density residential environment.

Study results illustrated by some of the 'show-card' images give an indication of the improvements that can be effected by good design, as well as reasonable cognisance of residents' preferences. Nevertheless, as Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) maintain in their comprehensive study, these should be carefully considered and applied according to often highly specific circumstances of any given development.

Ravetz (2001:137) highlights the pitfalls associated with a deterministic approach that assumes the physical planning and design of housing will create a positive social response in behaviour of the residents. Early examples of this, initiated in the 1930's in Britain are described by Ravetz (2001:138). These include the 'Radburn' layout which 'facilitated social encounters', the setting of houses around a central green to promote 'spontaneous co-operation', the necessity of including a community centre or tenants' hall as a meeting place. There were very high expectations linked to the provision of communal space and facilities. However, Ravetz elaborates on the extreme difficulty of the running costs, management and maintenance of communal facilities. Related confusion and conflictual situations were not satisfactorily resolved. The clear parallels with our local current circumstances needs little further comment. An example of these difficulties is referred to in a quote from the case at Lake View, Retreat (p. 83).

In disadvantaged neighbourhoods where social problems prevail, poorly designed and managed buildings, common space, and ultimately neighbourhoods, facilitate the escalation of these problems that quickly take over as the defining feature identifying the neighbourhood. The numerous ex-Council housing estates on the Cape Flats following forced removals during the apartheid era, provide some shocking examples of this and circumstances highlighted at the study sites confirm this observation.

The findings are discussed here in the form of an integrated synthesis derived from the results of all aspects of the study. Accordingly, in the final analysis the following issues should be taken into account in response to

questions of densified housing design that were posed at the outset of the study.

## **9.2 Social profile**

The desirability of social homogeneity of households and household type in the neighbourhood environment is a complex issue. On the one hand, respondents – usually in conversation off the record (not audio-recorded) – showed a deep intolerance and hostility towards sharing the immediate neighbourhood with residents of either cultural (including religious or faith-based), class or ethnically different backgrounds. Piloting of the original detailed structured questionnaire in which it was intended that some measure of ‘tolerance of diversity’ could be obtained from residents (using the Guttman scale)<sup>11</sup>, indicated that this objective should be dropped.

On the other hand, it was also clear that there were many positive working examples of tolerance of diversity within the housing complexes where interviews took place and these provided a balance to the converse expressed. Also, tolerance and appreciation of social diversity were sources of pride among some respondents (in particular, a powerful nostalgic reference in the District Six claimant interviews.)

“The neighbours are very friendly. Even though we are from Burundi, we get along well with the residents. They look out for us, and show a lot of trust. We feel accepted here.” (- *Tenant, Springfield Terrace.*)

### **9.2.1 Sources of social conflict**

The main cause of conflict in the socially diverse environments of the sample sites, centred around differing norms and lifestyles that impacted negatively on close neighbours. These were in particular, noise levels and standards of cleanliness relating to maintenance of the residential

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<sup>11</sup> Cumulated scale giving “a unidimensional assessment of attitude”, explained in Robson 1993:261-264.

environment. Persistent anti-social activities such as excessive drinking of alcohol, often associated with fights, public smoking of dagga and evident drug-dealing, were serious cause for concern and conflict. Other causes of conflict that surfaced less often concerned disputes over disturbances by car drivers, parking space, and differing norms relating to child-rearing and the care of pets. Minor differences based on cultural and class norms – such as differences in taste relating to décor, customs around festivities and family life, etc. were generally well tolerated – even if a source of irritation or mild derision among neighbours.

### **9.3 Management solutions**

Clearly, it is possible to control adverse impacts due to differences in norms and lifestyles through the imposition of reasonable or agreed rules and regulations by management bodies and these must always be negotiated. Interview results indicate that in the private clustered housing environment (Kenilworth Park; Lake View; Grassy Park (Victoria Road); Observatory; Sea Point), lack of enforcement of agreed rules results in the most likely response of the offended residents simply moving out. This does not solve the problem as it results in class- or cultural divisions within neighbourhoods becoming further entrenched; as it evidently did in the above examples. In the case of the subsidised housing environment, moving out is not usually possible and failure to control sources of conflict can lead to serious confrontation (- study transcripts recorded at Springfield Terrace, Parow Park, Albow Gardens).

Interviews with key informants, focus group participants, residents and their representatives, indicated that the answer lies in the establishment of highly effective management bodies for the densified social housing environment, which are capable of negotiating and enforcing the relevant regulations. All the management bodies investigated in this study faced serious problems: they were either under-resourced, disorganised or inexperienced, or had individuals who were ineffective in their roles. Residents could not be given the level of education they required in relation to home-ownership, Sectional

Title and other salient issues affecting the management of the complexes. Many committees at the sites had, however, achieved significant progress despite the drawbacks. Bearing in mind that these sites were selected as the more positive examples of medium-density subsidised housing estates, it is clear that resources must be sought and capacity built to establish and support effective management structures.

#### **9.4 Mix of household types**

Notwithstanding modern changing household structures including increasing numbers of single-parent households, broadly speaking the traditional extended family unit is still strongly in existence in the Cape Town households surveyed (City of Cape Town 2003 and 2005; CTCHC 2004 and 2005) and is regarded in many ways (by its members) as an important and desirable household structure, not only as a result of financial necessity. However, it is very important to plan for the necessary space and facilities to support the positive functioning of the extended household. This relates in particular to internal space in the home to accommodate as far as possible the changing needs of growing children and the elderly within the household - as opposed to inflexibility and limitations of size and design that result in severe discomfort in living conditions, or some household members having to move, or entirely moving house.

##### **9.4.1 Household responses to changing needs**

Where a variety of forms and housing types exist, study evidence suggests that residents will generally move house within the immediate area wherever possible to accommodate changing needs, rather than move away (- study transcripts recorded at Kenilworth Park, Springfield Terrace, Lake View, Grassy Park). Designing according to this principle of providing a flexible mix or range of options that encourages the establishment of settled residential precincts, aids in mitigating against social problems associated

with constant turnover of residents, overcrowding, etc, that can undermine positive features of the dense built environment.

While housing is probably considered the most important personal and family investment, there is resistance to regarding housing as a commodity, for sound economic and social reasons including the importance of building established close-knit communities over time. This view is supported by other studies including Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1994).

#### **9.4.2 Design for residential groupings**

With regard to 'residential grouping' in terms of such variables as age, income and family size, the same principles apply to some degree in terms of design to support a residential mix while accommodating different needs. Social homogeneity in household profile is practical in broad terms where similar lifestyles allow for positive social interaction and support: for example, young families in homes overlooking safe play areas for children, and the elderly accommodated with some degree of privacy in the family home, with basic facilities close by for age-appropriate socialising. Clusters of units designed specifically for retired people within a broader residential mix, may also offer a favourable environment as it allows for sharing of resources for special-needs care and privacy without isolation (Communicare spokesperson, Wynberg and Thornton Communicare social housing estates, 2003).

How do we prioritise the needs (or even preferences) of residents within limited budgets? Marcus and Sarkissian (1986:20) suggest that in principle the needs of vulnerable residents should take precedence: for instance, the needs of children living and growing up at the site should take precedence over accommodating the needs of visitors at the site; and the needs of house-bound residents such as the elderly or disabled, should take precedence over the needs of the employed commuter.

Able-bodied working adults including couples not living with children or ageing parents, can comfortably live above ground level and generally require less 'sedentary family' space both indoors and out. They are also more mobile, likely to invest in residential property in the short term, as well as making up an important component of the rental market. Upstairs apartments and lofts should more commonly be aimed specifically at this residential sector rather than at families. Complexes and clusters can be designed with sales of most upstairs units targeting this market, as well as separate blocks or clusters at the perimeters of precincts that accommodate more traditional family household structures.

The finding is that it is much more practical to design clusters with each dwelling unit on its own single level rather than incorporating staircases within a unit, so that those housed in units above ground level are self-selected as suitable candidates from the start. However, this sensible approach is complicated by the requirements of subsidised title deed and Sectional Title in relation to multi-storey clustered units (pers. comm. H. Potgieter, JS Architects and Urban Designers).

## **9.5 Building form and scale**

### **9.5.1 Block and cluster size**

The preferred form for medium-density clustered housing involves ideally a mixture of styles and forms, the densest of them remaining in the form of relatively small blocks separated from each other. For example, home-buyers clearly preferred units clustered in two-storey blocks of four rather than eight, if given the choice (- sales at the Cape Town Community Housing Company 'Royal Maitland' subsidised housing estate are a case in point).

Apartment blocks at a larger scale were not considered desirable. Perimeter block solutions were seen in a relatively positive light due to the opportunity

for increased security, the preference again being for the 'human scale' in relation to height and block or cluster size. These preferences correspond entirely with recommendations on block and cluster scale by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986), the Sydney Dept. of Environment and Planning (1983), and reiterated in more recent studies discussed by Bosma (2001). Favourable comments by residents related to perimeter views allowing better surveillance of both street and central enclosed space, safer play spaces for children and generally better control of public access to the residential precinct. Business hub clusters at or near housing enclaves were also viewed as potentially favourable buffers between residential space and unprotected exposure to intrusive thoroughfare of the public street.

### 9.5.2 Living upstairs: physical constraints

As mentioned, living above ground floor, including in two-storey duplexes, was generally disliked by most respondents because of the inconvenience of stairs. In the case of households with elderly and infirm or disabled members, stairs are clearly more than just an inconvenience. The number of residents affected by difficulty is higher than commonly supposed: at the very least, 5% of households. This figure on physical disabilities was the result of this study's District Six claimant survey. However, if we include infirmity due to illness and age-related frailty, the figure rises to 14.5 % of these households (that is, 123 of 850 households). In the case of residents in deprived informal settlements, a recent local study (City of Cape Town 2005) found an even higher 20% of these households affected: 8% with disabilities and 15% with chronic illness.

In its comment on 'special needs', the Public Service Commission report (2003: 81) acknowledges the very limited extent to which targeting for special needs occurs. Further comments relating to the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997) suggest an overall cost increase of as little as 0.2% in incorporating inclusive access into the planning phase of a project. This is far more cost-effective than alterations or late attempts to make facilities accessible after the fact. At an

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international disability conference held in Cape Town reported on in the Independent Community Newspapers [Cape Town] (Dec 16, 2004), city deputy mayor Gawa Samuels was quoted highlighting the need for decision-makers to “support all measures which prevent or reduce the occurrence of disabling conditions”; and, “Inclusive design is a necessity that must be considered from the concept phase of every project. It can no longer be an ‘added-on’ nicety.”

Families with young children were also strongly opposed to double-storey and above-ground accommodation due to the perceived inconvenience and danger of stairways and balconies. On the other hand, residents who were not hampered by physical limitations in using stairs and who had lived upstairs in multi-storey housing of relatively good quality (that excludes for example ex-Council flats), were certainly amenable to it or even preferred it.

## **9.6 Access**

### **9.6.1 Management of shared entrances**

While individual entrances to houses were preferred, shared entrances were well tolerated where this was ‘reasonable’ – for instance among a small number of units within a cluster – on condition that there are agreements regarding keeping shared entrances clean and clear of obstacles. The issue with size is that smaller clusters are much easier to manage due to ease of communication and closer personal contact, which encourages personal responsibility. Most respondents did experience problems with shared entrances (- except when between very low numbers such as two units, or in the higher-income private housing), relating to cleaning maintenance, blockage by storage of articles (including rubbish bags and bins) and the use of common entrances for socialising or ‘hanging around’, that disturbed residents.

## **9.6.2 Privacy and security**

There were mixed responses relating to visible entrances. Responses indicated a definite trend towards favouring 'screened' entrances – partially obscured, at an angle to or facing away from the street – for increased privacy and better security (- that is, entrance to the house and the interior not being constantly visible by passersby from streets and thoroughfares). Having a front entrance as well as a back- or side door for ground floor living was considered essential; respondents made clear the advantages of this option as opposed to only one entrance.

## **9.7 House image and identity**

### **9.7.1 'Middle class' image**

The need for individual identity reflected in house image did not emerge as a strong factor (perhaps reflecting a general notable absence of this in the context of South African housing developments). While respondents did comment positively on opportunities to personalise entrances, this was secondary to the desirability of overall aesthetic appeal – this relating especially to an image of what respondents described as 'neatness' that imparts a sense of 'decency' to the residential environment, matching the image of middle-class neighbourhoods. This expression corresponds with observations in Marcus and Sarkissian's study (1986), which explores reasons for the rejection, by social housing beneficiaries, of the 'low-cost housing' image.

### **9.7.2 Reducing visible class distinctions**

Importantly, variety of housing form and image can also defuse differences in status divisions and stereotyping between social groups. At present, much of the resistance to multi-storey housing from the emerging middle-class, stems from bitter experience of the original Council housing estates on the Cape Flats. Respondents from the relatively better examples of densified

cluster housing environments were far more likely to recognise favourable aspects to this form of urban living, than those who had not experienced it.

At worst, cluster housing (in any form) was described by respondents as 'rat-holes', 'duiwehokke' (pigeon lofts), or 'blokhuis', the same responses given for blocks of flats. In contrast, there was evidence of a growing recognition of a 'stylish' and 'trendy' image associated with loft-style living, 'lock-up-and-go' multi-storey environs, as well as the valued benefits of better security, maintenance advantages and possibly increased affordability, of the well-designed densified housing form.

## **9.8 Variety of house image**

A variety of house image in the residential environment was seen in a positive light. Residents were aware that this offered a desirable range of choices for home-buyers as well as lending a more personalised atmosphere and enhancing definition and sense of place. Variety adds interest, allows for the recognition of landmarks, and decreases the de-personalised anonymity of uniformity.

### **9.8.1 Range and gradation of buildings**

The successful design of an appealing mixed-form residential environment catering for different tastes and circumstances across different resident groupings, can help to redefine the stereotypical image distinctions over time to allow for a more practical, creative and flexible approach to different forms of housing. This approach has been successfully applied at the Kenilworth Park site. Where developments are planned to accommodate residents of widely differing socio-economic status (- such as the District Six redevelopment, and Weltevreden Valley north of Westgate Mall in Mitchell's Plain) , it is very important to design a range and gradation of housing-type precincts by cost, complemented by mixed-use business – residential options. This allows a more natural non-discriminatory 'blending' of difference and avoids the defensive and offensive boundary-wall and buffer-

zone scenario between high- and low-income precincts. It is interesting to note that this variety of form – ranging from detached dwellings on plots, to medium-density, to high-density blocks, and homes attached to businesses – was a feature of the varied District Six environment as it developed piecemeal over the years; and the blurring of class and cultural differences associated with particular housing forms was certainly a feature there.

## **9.9 Finish and quality of buildings**

No respondents mentioned other less conventional or alternative building materials and finishes. The major concern was poor quality of cheap materials, especially cement block and brick as opposed to clay brick, due to poor insulation qualities and high maintenance costs of cement observed and experienced by many residents. Poor quality workmanship of buildings was always raised as a concern. The quality of older buildings, especially with clay brick walls, was very highly valued. As noted in the NBRI Special Report (1987), conventional masonry construction (concrete brick and block) is the dominant form for South African housing and this remains the case today. In terms of existing market conditions, the NBRI report (1987:G2) discusses the following reasons accounting for this situation:

Material cost is low; unskilled and semi-skilled labour costs are low; the medium is adaptable to large and small-scale building at various levels and designs; it is easy to extend or modify; and consumer acceptance of a strong tradition of masonry construction (in South Africa).

Other recent studies confirm this view (pers. comm. Prof. Emeritus Bruce Boaden, UCT Department of Construction Economics). However, the recent study for the Cape Town Community Housing Company on consumer response to alternative methods and materials for housing (CTCHC 2005), indicates in contrast that there is definite scope to challenge this view, to the benefit of housing beneficiaries. The CTCHC is therefore in the process of constructing housing using alternative methods and materials at its pilot project 'Highlands Village' site, north of Westgate Mall, Mitchell's Plain.

### **9.9.1 External finishes**

The use of robust low-maintenance external finishes was valued far more highly than other factors affecting individual image and appeal. For instance, aluminium window frames were most favourably viewed due to low maintenance, even though the aesthetic appeal of wood was appreciated. Metal frames that rust were completely rejected. As expected, the preference for external finishes fell within conventional limits of what constitutes the South African experience of a 'homely' middle-class image, such as face-brick or smooth plastered walls. Painted unplastered brickwork was generally much disliked by all respondents, being strongly associated with the low-cost housing environment, especially flats. In the case of painted exteriors, pale and neutral colours were preferred on grounds of being less jarring or possibly offensive, while residents liked the option of being able to choose their own colours when they were in a position to repaint or refurbish their own homes over the years. Most residents of Body Corporate-controlled housing were happy to accept majority decisions on colours, also on the understanding that these were usually suitably neutral (- even though some individuals expressed a preference for their own less usual taste in colour).

### **9.9.2 Roofing material**

There was a strong preference for tiled roofs as opposed to metal, while no other roofing materials were mentioned as preferred. Further exploration of this issue indicated that this was definitely due to the perceived robustness of tile, easy replacement of damaged areas and associated lower maintenance costs, rather than simply aesthetic appeal or image. Metal roofing materials were considered less robust, as well as noisy. (In Royal Maitland metal roofing was installed but with sound-proofing; another design solution, such as in the new District Six clusters and Morgen Village north of Westgate Mall, has been to hide the metal roof cover behind a raised pediment.)

### **9.9.3 Interior finishes**

Preferences for interior materials and finishes reflected many of the same principles relating to maintenance costs. Parquet (wood block) flooring was highly favoured for perceived low maintenance and easy repair as well as aesthetic appeal. Other preferences were for tile or other durable, easy-clean hard floor surfacing. "Cheap carpeting" as floor cover was generally disliked for its poor quality and cleaning requirements. Residents definitely preferred to be given options for selection of interior décor finishes that allow for differences in personal taste and affordability. (This also related strongly to the style, location, size and quality of built-in shelving and cupboards.)

### **9.10 Interior space**

#### **9.10.1 Room size**

Residents' preferences regarding interior space reflected a wide variety of individual views, apparently according to family circumstances and life-stage as well as personal choice. All the housing units at the study sites were of similar size range, that is, from 27 – 31 m<sup>2</sup> for one-bedroomed units, to around 54 or 56 m<sup>2</sup> for two-bedroomed units and up to 73 m<sup>2</sup> for three bedrooms. All had comparable lounge space, kitchens and single bathrooms with toilets. Main bedrooms of different units were also similar with floor space at about 3x3 m.

#### **9.10.2 Number of rooms and occupants**

Most respondents found their internal space adequate, although there were complaints about the rooms being too small. These complaints related mainly to cases where families were sharing living quarters (with extended family or lodgers). Although these residents were aware that the units were not designed to accommodate the number of people living there, they were unable to afford alternatives. Therefore, although the space may be considered adequate for the intended household sizes, in reality many

families in the lower-income brackets are obliged to stay in overcrowded conditions. This problem is unlikely to be resolved in the near future with the current situation of levels of affordability and lack of housing stock. This point is also noted by Dewar (1995), and highlighted in results of the informal settlements survey (City of Cape Town 2004).

### **9.10.3 The bathroom problem**

Strong opinions on the need for bathroom facilities on both floors were expressed during discussions on duplex-style living. Most respondents cited the need for a bathroom on the ground floor to accommodate elderly members of the family. The pilot project of the District Six redevelopment was modified at great expense at a late stage in the process, to accommodate this need in the case of elderly claimants returning to the site (pers. comm., architect L. le Grange, 2003).

Innovative design solutions to this issue were noted in examples of assisted-housing estates in Northern California, Seattle, and New Jersey in the United States, where variations on 'one and a half' bathrooms are installed on both floors. A separate hand-basin located next to the toilet and a storage cupboard, situated on a landing between bedrooms, allows for significant flexibility in the simultaneous use of ablution facilities by household members and maximum use of space.

The use of screens and dry-wall partitions are other important cost-effective considerations in the partitioning and layout of rooms for privacy. This problem has not been resolved thus far in our subsidised housing design, based as it is upon the cost-effective square layout (with bathroom door on livingroom); nor are alternatives considered an option due to cost (pers. comm. H. Potgieter, JS Architects and Urban Designers).

#### **9.10.4 Open-plan design**

There were mixed responses to open-plan livingroom or kitchen design, with some being very much in favour and others very much against this option. There was agreement among all, however, that bathrooms should be designed as separately as possible from the kitchen and living room areas – that is, not opening directly into these rooms – and preferably relegated to as unobtrusive and private a niche as possible.

#### **9.10.5 Scope for reconfiguration**

With regard to initial number of rooms versus options for dividing larger rooms at a later stage, residents preferred the idea of a completed unit and balked at the thought of having to undertake any future changes to the unit. However, this immediate reaction seemed to be based on a serious concern of additional expenses and disruption at home caused by alterations, as well as the desire for immediate comfort in the case of larger households.

A different view is explored for example in the Royal Maitland development, where options for future enclosing of open-plan loft space to an additional one or two rooms impressed some buyers as a bonus to the potential and value of the property. Another consideration in this regard, given the reluctance of residents to move house, is designing with the option to expand upwards with attic or loft-style 'room-in-roof' prospects (of varying height) at a later stage, for changing family needs or future opportunities for rental income. However, as noted by the designers interviewed, the base of the building has to be constructed initially to accommodate such future heightening.

#### **9.11 Private open space**

As expected, private open space was highly valued by respondents. This was most evident in the focus group discussions, but did not emerge as a feature rated 'important' overall in resident interviews at the four sample

study sites. This was due to the relative priority of other features of the housing environment rated during the structured interviews.

If given the choice, respondents always preferred access to private yards above communal open space. However, most residents at the study sites did not have this facility. The South African climate is highly conducive to being outdoors for much of the year, so the preferred option of attached private open space is a separate issue to simply supplementing limited interior space.

#### **9.11.1 Flexible options, modest needs**

There was no particular distinction or preference between the various forms of private open space. Enclosed yards, stoeps, courtyards and balconies were all considered most important functional outdoor space offering a range of benefits and were often mentioned spontaneously, in some detail and with great appreciation by respondents. Uses mentioned included for example, private space to relax “outside the four walls”, either for increased personal privacy or socially with visitors, as well as allowing important casual social interaction between neighbours. The added space was also valued for visitors during gatherings, for storage of items, drying washing, gardening and pet space.

References to and current use of these places revealed that residents were satisfied with spaces of modest proportions. The criteria for satisfaction were being able to sit comfortably, for instance “with a couple of chairs and small table”; to erect a drying rack on a balcony or ‘twirl-dryer’ line in a yard; and for keeping pot plants or a small garden.

#### **9.12 Laundry space**

Within the clustered housing environment, residents’ common space was usually in the form of washing lines erected with or without a hard surface below. Where these were still in use, residents reached agreement among

themselves on sharing space and times. However, in most cases communal washing lines had become disused because of the theft of washing.

Where there was open access with screened off areas within common space, (such as the washing lines behind boundary screens at Parow Park), the area was used by homeless people as toilets and sleeping areas, and abandoned by residents.

### **9.13 Privacy and community**

Surveillance over public spaces was considered very important, mainly for security but also to allow for keeping in touch with neighbourhood activities. However, residents disliked either the front or back of their houses being so close to the public domain that the proximity of neighbours and passing strangers alike, is both visually and aurally intrusive and disturbing. Residents living above ground valued the distance this afforded them from public walkways.

#### **9.13.1 Buffer space**

Transitional spaces in the form of stoeps, lobbies, front gardens or verges with boundaries all aid in creating desirable 'buffer zones' between public space and the private home. Within complexes, the need for a buffer is less than in the case of residences fronting on public streets. Residents often mentioned that they had 'got used to' the disturbance. Indications are that transitional space (other than purpose-built features such as stoeps and lobbies) need not be more than a metre wide or less, the important criterion being that a barrier – for instance in the form of plants, awnings, or other unobtrusive or symbolic screening – is possible.

## **9.14 Public space**

The issue of public space was a major concern around which residents expressed strong misgivings, while emphasising its importance in principle. Clearly, maintenance and security in relation to public space – (whether built or open) are the main drawbacks, with these spaces all too often falling into a state of neglect in the current social and economic environment.

### **9.14.1 Public space: Maintenance**

Generally, municipal maintenance of public open space was viewed as inadequate. It was evident that private resident associations often pay for (or sometimes volunteer) private maintenance services of public space to improve the situation, for example in keeping refuse sites clean (where storage and retrieval is in public space), trimming verges, cleaning parks, and also street cleaning. While these initiatives are encouraged by the municipalities, it is unrealistic to expect private residents, especially in under-resourced neighbourhoods, to bear the cost and responsibility of adequate ongoing maintenance of public space on a regular basis (Ravetz 2001; Marcus and Sarkissian 1986). However, it is necessary to encourage or formalise co-operative forums for this purpose, especially where the need is greatest, to take appropriately shared responsibility for the maintenance of public space.

## **9.15 Transport and parking**

The complex specifics of transport, car ownership and parking fall into the arenas of both private and public space. The CMC Densification Study (City of Cape Town 2002) states that “parking requirements are an effective means of preventing densification if they are too onerous.” (CMC Densification Study Phase 3 [Draft] 2001:28.) The report further recommends that parking standards and requirements as they impact on densification, should be reviewed in the city’s new Integrated Land Use

Management System, and states “Ideally, areas that are well served by public transport should not require off street parking” (CMC Densification Study Phase 3 [Draft] 2001:28.) It is unclear in the statement whether this principle is meant to apply also to the residential areas included in the coverage of the densification study. If so, the approach advocated is simplistic and clearly untenable in present South African circumstances. Reasons for this are explained as follows:

#### **9.15.1 Note on car ownership**

Car ownership among moderate- income households is significant and growing rapidly. More importantly, these residents vehemently defend their right to the same convenience as higher-income car owners and secure conditions to protect an important capital asset in the form of their car. While this study’s findings are clear on the fact that everyone values good public transport, and (– in the case of working-class commuters – ) uses the services now available extensively, especially for daily travel to work, it is absurd to imply that emerging middle-class residents (or others) should remain car-less. Limited usage of private cars – already a feature of lower-income car-owners, of necessity – is a separate issue to not owning a car at all.

The extent to which vehicle ownership is increasing in South Africa’s current phase of relatively stable interest rates and inflation, is outlined in a Mail and Guardian news article (July 16-22, 2004). The article explains that this new affordability is likely to see rapid further growth in car sales “over the next decade exceeding the 30% increase experienced between 1994 and 2004” (Mail and Guardian July 16-22, 2004). Provision of adequate, safe, convenient parking in densified residential precincts remains a priority, certainly in the eyes of residents. Restrictions or user fees relating to parking facilities in inner-city business districts, is another issue altogether.

## **9.16 Management and maintenance**

This aspect, largely overlooked in the design of residential estates, emerged as the most critical component in addressing problems relating to both social and physical factors. Given its significance therefore, this aspect is expanded at this point to include a more in-depth discussion of interview findings, with reference to selected literature in the field.

At the study sites where effective resident representation had been established and strengthened, interviews as well as on-site observation showed that significant improvements in management of the social and physical environment had been accomplished. This was especially evident at certain of the blocks in Bo-Kaap, Springfield Terrace and Albow Gardens.

### **9.16.1 Impact of resident representation**

The nature and strength of representation varied greatly among the different estates. It was evident that the most gains in terms of resident satisfaction at the housing estates had been made where strong resident representatives took their role seriously and in return were respected and supported by residents. The best examples of this were found at certain Bo-Kaap clusters and certain Springfield Terrace sections, and one section of Albow Gardens:

- The conditions at the Bo-Kaap (ex-Council) flats, a dense and on the whole poorly designed housing environment, were significantly improved by the growing strength of resident representative bodies. For example, the most notable of these took the form of lobbying Council for logistical support in the transitional phase to private ownership of units, and involvement in processes of building upgrading and maintenance.
- At Springfield Terrace, the threat of gang control of the area was pre-empted by committed and concerted effort to evict drug dealers and reclaim legitimate resident control of the precinct.

- At Albow Gardens, blocks with strong resident bodies had similarly limited the influence of drug-seller control and maintained their buildings and surrounds, in stark contrast to blocks lacking organised resident representation.

Such differences between enclaves within a single precinct were also evident at Lake View (Retreat), and at Kenilworth Park, for the same reasons.

### **9.16.2 The role of residents in management**

In summary, where strong residents' committees were established at the study sites, much was achieved in dealing with existing problems as well as supporting the role of residents in the ongoing management of their estate. Where the representative body was weak or divided, resident co-operation in abiding by regulations – including payment of levies – was very poor. Consequently, the buildings were poorly maintained, there was disunity among residents, lack of communication in general, and problems tended to spiral out of control. In a number of such cases, homeowners had moved out and let their properties, which worsened the situation.

However, resident representatives were plagued with the impact of chronic under-resourcing. Their influence on management at all the study sites and effective forums for that purpose (- including the more upmarket Kenilworth Park precinct), was entirely inadequate in terms of sustained promotion of residents' interests. This meant that putting in place necessary steps for residents to take appropriate responsibility for effective management of their estates, fell far short of what they felt was satisfactory.

A more in-depth investigation of this prevailing situation is useful to shed light on the implications.

### 9.16.3 Limitations of the resident representatives' role

With reference to such complex management issues as affected by social conditions – quite apart from payment (or not) and collection of rent – Ravetz (2001:113-114) discusses these influences on rent levels, overall housing budget, input in design and consequent management implications, repairs and maintenance, selection and placing of tenants, and numerous educational aspects relating to lifestyle and social behaviour at home and within the broader estate. Ravetz (2001:113) notes that these issues of “housekeeping” and “working-class affairs” have long been regarded as ‘low-status’. Consequently, the significance of these issues in relation to the standard and quality of living conditions at subsidised housing estates, is largely ignored.

The parallels in the South African context generally, are very clear. The focus of Residents' Associations on ‘bread and butter’ issues of utility services, property maintenance, etc. serves to reinforce the perception of the mundane nature of residents' interests in relation to their housing environment and further dilutes broader interest of management authorities, developers and policy-makers in residents' issues. The standard focus remains primarily on the collection of payments, which, while fundamentally important, does not occur with reference to residents' challenges within their broader socio-economic context and is therefore itself not effectively addressed.

Closer investigation of resident associations at this study's sites reveals something of the risk and cost (to residents and their associations) at which any progress is made. In this regard we find reflections of the same in the detailed study by Ravetz (2001:146), who describes the hallmarks of all civic associations by definition: informally-constituted, and filled with “factions, rivalries, betrayals, and leaders contending not only with their authorities and amongst themselves, and moreover doing it on behalf of uncaring and often carping tenant populations” (Ravetz 2001:147).

The following example of a local equivalent is clearly revealed in this verbatim transcript from a key informant regarding the Lake View site:

“At Lake View, there was a community centre. The main developer of the land was Intersite, and the building was put up by Rabie, the developer. That was their offices, where they operated from, which then became a kind of community hall – or was supposed to. And then there was this conflict around the management of it. Title deeds were drawn up for a transfer to a Community Trust. And there was just no agreement of what it should be... But eventually they just demolished it, because people were ripping it off. No-one was managing it, it was vandalised. ... I think the problem is, the developer's done with the development, ... but there's not support afterwards to make sure there's capacity to understand the management of those houses, the actual transfer of it. So that is not there, you know... And that's the problem.”

(K. Mullagie, private developer and community facilitator.)

#### **9.16.4 Mainstreaming effective resident representation**

It is important to note that the informal tenants' movements and organisations in British Council estates had thoroughly disintegrated as effective agents of estate management by the 1970's, as described by Ravetz (2001). In its stead, the 1990's has seen the firm establishment of 'partnership' management bodies for housing and neighbourhood development.

In the UK, housing partnerships were generally constituted by tenant management co-operatives (residual from the 1970's) and local authorities, with substantial policy- and financial support from central government. In the arena of partnership management, a maze-like complexity of committees, corporations, agencies and associations play their various parts in the myriad tasks of housing administration: from physical aspects of planning, design and maintenance, to enforcement of regulations, to social and economic support for struggling residents, to integration of enclaves of vulnerable and deprived areas with their broader surrounds.

While the characteristics of these systems remain by nature difficult and fraught with the pressures of ongoing negotiations between residents and various management authorities, the definition of roles, relationships and responsibilities through formalised partnerships has resulted in much practical progress. Ravetz (2001:146) also describes notable examples of training programmes for resident representatives, which, coupled with the existing experience of participants, enjoyed great success. The development of one of the Bo-Kaap Residents' Associations as recorded in the interview transcript of this study, echoes this process.

#### **9.16.4 The role of the Trusts**

As is generally well known and accepted in the recent South African social housing context, a crucial ingredient to successful functioning and management of the estate is formal establishment of an administrative body such as a Trust. The role of a well-run Trust has many potential advantages, offering communal protection and opportunities not otherwise accessible to residents. These exist in varying degrees of formalisation.

The recent history of Trust management of South African social housing estates is highly variable in terms of their effectiveness. Social Housing Trusts, while acting effectively in principle as agents for fund administration, are not easily able to exercise wider influence in necessary fundraising and management of related neighbourhood developments that have a significant impact on the success or otherwise of the social housing estates.

Besides those Trusts currently in existence in Cape Town for specific social housing redevelopments such as District Six, Protea Village (in Newlands) and Tramway Park (in Sea Point), a more established example is Communicare, which moved in recent years from operating as a Trust to a Social Housing Institution (SHI). Communicare has operated as a low-profile but successful non-governmental agency for social housing since 1929. The constant challenge of funding social housing is met in part by using the proceeds of their investments (for example, in shopping centres and high-

income property developments including blocks of flats), to cross-subsidise affordable housing schemes. This introduces our post-apartheid formalised management vehicles, the Social Housing Institutions, into this discussion.

#### **9.16.6 Role of the Social Housing Institutions**

Design guidelines and management of present-day social housing in South African cities must take into account the role and function of the Social Housing Institutions. The National Department of Housing discusses these in its Social Housing Policy report (2003).

These agencies have a particularly strong history in Europe and Scandinavia. With massive state support, the overseas institutions have been responsible for housing development on a scale unknown in South Africa: for instance, in the Netherlands, over 50% of all housing has been provided by the SHIs (DOH Report Annexure C, 2003:35). The report notes that a significant feature of the SHI is “the increasing use of regulation through the encouragement of a best practice regime” (DOH Report Annexure C, 2003:35).

A hallmark of current SHI developments elsewhere, is the promotion of ‘mixed income’ neighbourhood development and in this respect, South African cities face major challenges in dismantling the rigid race- and class spatial and cultural legacies of apartheid planning. In Cape Town the potential of the District Six redevelopment and associated Central Business District – Woodstock – Salt River axis (and beyond) offers an unprecedented opportunity for successful mixed-income, densified urban regeneration with a substantial residential component. In light of this drive for inner city revitalisation and emphasised by the findings of this study, it is argued that residents of subsidised housing estates must establish and strengthen representative committees or associations to secure their interests as they negotiate this regulated environment with partnering state and private investors. This approach is discussed more fully in Sections 9.17 and 10.11 on partnership management.

### **9.16.7 Note on affordability**

Affordability and financing of assisted housing are crucial issues but these fall beyond the scope of this study. Unsurprisingly, the problem of affordability emerged often in spontaneous commentary by respondents during interviews. It was clear from in-depth interviews with key informants at all the sites, that households had difficulty (to greater or lesser degrees) in making monthly payments and the effects of this on estate maintenance, management and inter-personal relations was significant. Due to the magnitude of the problem, funding has remained a central focus in SHI management.

### **9.16.8 Overview of the Johannesburg SHI experience**

Examples of the Johannesburg social housing schemes experience highlights this point. Much has been written about these institutional vehicles which face very similar obstacles although their focus has been primarily on inner city housing, in contrast to Cape Town. Johannesburg's SHIs were first established in 1996 in an effort to redevelop the area and limit the evident social and financial degeneration of the Central Business District and surrounds. The initiative has had limited success. At the time of writing Johannesburg had eight social housing institutions<sup>12</sup>. One of these, the former Seven Buildings Company, collapsed in 2002 due to defaults on loan repayments by five of the seven inner city flat buildings financed by the company. In contrast, the Johannesburg Housing Company (JHC) has experienced some success in attracting private sector investors (with support in the form of subsidised interest rates and commercial loans), for its

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<sup>12</sup> JHC (Johannesburg Housing Company, responsible for 5% of the redeveloped buildings there); the others are Cope, Johannesburg Transition Housing Trust, Badiri Housing, Connaught Properties, Trafalgar Properties, the Affordable Housing Company and Contax Dienste (Mail and Guardian July 18-24, 2003).

social housing projects. Johannesburg Housing Company executive Taffy Adler of JHC comments on the inner city regeneration programmes:

“... their success hinges on the co-operation of citizens, and the government, non-government and private sectors” (Quoted by reporter V. Robinson, Mail and Guardian July 18-24, 2003).

The Johannesburg Social Housing projects house about 65% of subsidised tenants, with 35% non-subsidised rental stock – to allow for the growth of a favourable investment environment of mixed-income communities, according to JHC executive Taffy Adler (Mail and Guardian July 18-24, 2003). The Gauteng provincial government established the Gauteng Partnership Fund to attract private sector funds, by providing financial guarantees. (This is a similar plan to the National Housing Finance Corporation established in 1996, to draw banks into the social housing sector through partnerships with government.) The Gauteng Partnership Fund aims to attract necessary private sector funds, notably through the recent Community Reinvestment Bill. The bill effectively pressurises banks into lending for low-income housing, with financial guarantees supplied by provincial government. Adler believes that such private sector financing is the most important factor for the effective delivery of social housing. This view is supported by that stated in the Social Housing guidelines review: “To make their housing affordable, many social housing institutions have to try and find other sources of funding in addition to the government subsidy and the project loans provided by the HIDF” (SDI – DEF 2000:18).

#### **9.16.9 Challenges for the Cape Town Community Housing Company (CTCHC)**

Related challenges for Cape Town’s social housing delivery agency, the CTCHC, includes for example the scale of building repair costs for their contract with the City of Cape Town. This amounted to more than R 10 million in 2003, to repair over 12 000 poor quality houses delivered under their auspices (pers. comm. M. Bregman, 2003). Two of the greatest difficulties facing the CTCHC are a) mechanisms for generating adequate

funding to complement inadequate state subsidies for social housing and b) clarification and co-ordination of roles and responsibilities of development stakeholders or partners, in particular the public authorities (pers. comm. M. Bregman, 2004). Meanwhile, in general disputes among the various authorities at local, provincial and state level over who is responsible for what, have continued unabated to detrimental effect in the case of every new social housing development being undertaken (pers. comm. M Bregman; H. Potgieter; J. Snyman, 2003).

These brief overviews give a clear indication of the core concern of the Social Housing Institutions, namely, by their own admission, funding. This has understandably developed as a result of the crisis in affordability of mass housing. Yet the SHIs are expected to deal with everything from funding to design to construction, quality control, resident education, collection of payments, maintenance and operational management from site to unit levels.

#### **9.16.10 Role of the Social Housing Foundation (SHF) in support of the SHIs**

The SHF was established in 1997 with the purpose of “providing emerging social housing institutions with capacity-building and technical assistance” (SHF 2000:20). To this end, the SHF has produced ‘toolkits’ among its publications to guide and support SHIs, on a very wide range of deliverables to be undertaken. The toolkit documents do note quality and design considerations, but these – and their ‘tips for the design brief’ – are outlined in principle only. The full ‘toolkit’ reflects a range of impossibly complex tasks that the SHI is supposedly responsible for, including property management. While their ‘in principle’ outlines are useful, many are too cursory, poorly conceived and explained, such as the “basic residents satisfaction survey” (SHF 2000:9:7).

Evidence from this and related research indicates that in reality, the SHIs cannot hope to adequately direct, oversee or deliver on the multiplicity of

critical considerations that have been placed under their auspices. If we consider this finding with that of the evident necessity for effective, pro-resident management of the densified social housing environment, we can make the link of finding a possible vehicle for addressing these challenges. The Development Partnership model as a forum for co-operative management is discussed here as an option.

### **9.17 Development partnerships as a forum for pro-resident management**

With reference to the recent studies mentioned including those for the City of Cape Town (2005) and the Cape Town Community Housing Company (2004 and 2005), the co-ordinated development of a range of necessary public facilities and amenities within the precincts of new city developments is essential. An overarching management forum incorporating all relevant roleplayers to further entrench the integration of physical and social components of the housing development, would be in a position to address the challenges in a way that the SHIs cannot.

#### **9.17.1 The function of development partnerships**

Dedicated development partnerships for South African cities should use criteria to suit the specific developmental needs of the areas they serve. Partners may focus – according to their core business – on co-ordination in implementation of any of the social and physical developments deemed to be essential for building stable communities for the urban poor. These may include for example, constructing and maintaining affordable housing; housing finance management; developing commercial sites; facilities for children and the youth; community social services; access to education and training opportunities; healthcare initiatives; greening, food gardening and environmentally protective practice in water and energy use; welfare services including food aid; safety and security; and so on.

The lynchpin of a development partnership would be the sound financial management of neighbourhood development initiatives, including measures for funding support of social housing estates (including rental), and critical support for the stabilising of residents' micro-business activities until they become self-sufficient. An essential principle is that the Partnership should facilitate supportive linkages between roleplayers in their focused development tasks, but respect the autonomy of each member agency as an independent entity.

The Community Development Partnerships of cities in the UK and USA focus their efforts on the most deprived residential areas. They are also evaluated annually according to their stated goals, using a range of measurable benchmarks<sup>13</sup>. These agencies are fundamentally different to South African housing Trusts and SHIs: these would be only one of an essential consortium of roleplayers in the management and development process of the designated area. Such dedicated Community Development Partnerships are able to grow incrementally according to changing needs with the upgrading or redevelopment of an area. This follows the principle advocated by Swartz (1994) in his emphasis on the need for ongoing change in spatial design and usage, in response to constantly changing social dynamics of neighbourhood and community. By using a Partnership agency to formalise a strategy of investing matching public and private funds, managed in a manner that generates profits, low-income social housing estates (of varying income or social status) can be subsidised and regulated on an ongoing basis.

### **9.17.2 The Cape Town Partnership model**

A current local example of this approach in principle, is well served by the Cape Town Partnership. At present the Partnership focuses on management and co-ordination of city revitalisation from the Central

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<sup>13</sup> These include a variety of measures promoting economic development: such as number of jobs created; number of units built and managed (housing, commercial, industrial; including floor space); assets operated at loss or not; leverage in attracting further development funding; effectiveness of training programmes; increase in job placement and household income of residents; etc.

Business District through District Six, Woodstock, Salt River and into Observatory, the impetus for its origins being rather different to its current *raison d'être*. But the combined muscle and flexibility of the Partnership – ensured through legally binding formalisation of membership rights and responsibilities, and a co-ordinating rather than implementing role – suggests strongly that appropriate application of this model could be the most effective vehicle for driving the successful integration of social housing initiatives.

A final synthesis of the range of evidence is discussed here with wider reference to relevant literature in the field.

## 10. Literature review: discussion in relation to the problem

The full picture emerges if we place the above analysis within its broader context of approaches to delivering mass housing in cities that have had a bearing on present-day practices. Background research drew on a wide range of literature other than the documentation already referred to, and these are included in the reference list. The following selective overview attempts to highlight the nature and extent of the complex interrelationships between the social and physical factors that form the focus of this study.

### 10.1 The social context

The point of departure for this study was to explore social aspects of working class communities living in densified inner-city housing in Cape Town, rather than to begin with desired or existing features of the physical design of these neighbourhoods. Initial literature review for the project therefore began with a broad overview of social aspects of low- to moderate income communities resident in densified inner city environments. This provided significant insights into the practical aspects of lifestyles, activities and living conditions of those residents. Just as significant, was exploration of less tangible qualities such as sense of ownership of the

place, neighbourhood or community as 'home', prior to the start of forced removals in the mid- 1960's, described for example in extensive archive collections of newsclippings, books, articles and printed ephemera on District Six. A range of other readings on various working class city housing estates elsewhere (including notably Ravetz, 2001), highlighted the many common experiences of residents at these sites.

## **10.2 The impact of American mass production of housing**

More broadly, interesting parallels with the South African process and the development of housing in United States cities, can be drawn from an overview such as that by Rosenberg (1993). For instance, in 1940 half of all adults in their early twenties in US cities lived with their parents. Recent local studies (CTCHC 2004 and 2005) suggest that the same general scenario exists among working class Cape Town households, as a combined result of the housing backlog as well as the inability of young adults to afford new home ownership. Rosenberg notes that in 1945, "98% of American cities reported housing shortages" (Rosenberg 1993:141). Thus home ownership in the USA became the top priority in the years of post-war material growth, expanding hugely from 45% from 1890 – 1945, to 62 % in the fifteen years following World War 2 (Rosenberg 1993:141).

Entrepreneurs William and Alfred Levitt played an important role in this development – Rosenberg describes them as "the Henry Fords of home building by applying methods of mass production to housing" (Rosenberg 1993:141). Levitt's 'production line' development of his first 17 500 identical houses at Cape Cod (New Jersey), was named 'Levittown'. These units were sold for \$ 1500 less than houses supplied by competing developers, yet at a profit of \$ 1000 each. The style was single dwelling covering 15% of a plot; thus began the ideal of the suburban lifestyle that Rosenberg describes as "the single most powerful symbol of the dream of upward mobility and home ownership for American families" (Rosenberg 1993:142), a history with far-reaching consequences for urban design, also discussed by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986:8) and Untermann and Small (1977:7). One

repercussion of the spread of suburb housing development in the USA was government allocation of huge amounts of funding for highways that made suburban living possible for working people.

### **10.2.1 Ghetos of exclusion**

Another interesting parallel with our South African situation, is the way in which the politics of race affected the development of suburban housing. Black buyers or residents were barred from Levittown. William Levitt was quoted on the subject as saying this was “not a matter of prejudice, but one of business. As a Jew I have no room in my mind or heart for racial prejudice. But, by various means, I have come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then 90 to 95 percent of our white customers will not buy into the community” (- quoted in Rosenberg 1993:145). In 1948 this practice was declared unconstitutional in the United States, but the struggle for acceptance by blacks into white suburban communities continued to be a long, hard and often bitter one. Furthermore, the Federal Housing Authority did not approve mortgage bonds for women-headed households or for racially-integrated communities.

This practice has similarities with South African bank or financier ‘redlining’ of certain neighbourhoods and developments (within the last ten years, until state intervention as well as stable lowered interest rates motivated change in this regard), on grounds that they are credit risks. In the US, the result was that older neighbourhoods within or closer to central city areas, deemed credit risks, steadily decayed and the perception strengthened of suburbs “as a refuge from the social pathologies of the disadvantaged” (Rosenberg 1993:146).

The impact of these practices at the time, manifested in increasingly overcrowded inner-city apartment blocks inhabited by poor black families that migrated to the cities to work. The legacy of these ‘ghettoised’ black and hispanic inner-city neighbourhoods in US cities remains one of their greatest

challenges. We see clear parallels with this scenario in South African cities at present.

### **10.3 The design of European social housing**

Moving on to a review of an architectural perspective on desirable forms of densified inner-city housing, the compilation of writings edited by Bosma (2001) of approaches to the problem of post-war European mass housing, is a useful starting point.

The formation of the European SAR (Foundation for Architects' Research) was the founding impetus of attempts at constructive inner-city social housing. The SAR was formed by a core group of concerned architects involved in mass housing construction during the Dutch post-war reconstruction period. It became formalised in 1965, having been preceded by almost two decades of searching for solutions to the problems of European post-war housing. The SAR developed rapidly, with strong political buy-in, to wield significant influence in this field (in Europe and beyond) over the years. Originally (in keeping with approaches at the time), the process was driven by professionals in the field. With the strengthening of civic movements from the 1970's onwards, coupled with a recognition of social research findings, the needs of beneficiaries became incorporated into European urban planning to a greater degree, with major impacts.

### **10.4 Rethinking high-rise mass housing**

The history of the SAR essentially reflects in full circle the role and response of 'mass housing' beneficiaries to housing design (– and more broadly, urban design –) from that time up to the present day. It is here that we note the turning point in understanding of the qualities that distinguished medium-density, multi-storey, clustered housing from high-density, high-rise post-World War public housing. The latter became renowned for its anti-social legacy in UK and European cities, resulting in the applauded implosion of

certain notorious blocks and the major redesign of others less blighted.

Bosma writes (2001:254):

“Social resistance to tall residential buildings and the subsequent fear of ‘apartment neurosis’ abruptly halted the wave of high-rise construction that had marked the previous decade [1950s-60s]. In its stead appeared low- and mid-rise construction which, .... began to determine the new housing image. The importance of urban design increased as elements like lots, dwelling units, streets, woonerven, public space, and infrastructure required a more coherent and integrated approach.”

### **10.5 Medium-density design solutions**

The approach turned decisively to one of ‘small-scale’ urban design. In Rotterdam, for example, the development at Beverwaard is assessed by van Hoogstraten and Vos (Bosma 2001: 282 – 286) in terms of then – new SAR directives:

“Beverwaard was to acquire its identity and remain recognizable as a small-scale urban area on the basis of a high degree of housing density in (stacked) low-rise buildings.”

Residential precincts were divided into sections of 900 housing units each. A number of architects were then commissioned to design approximately 200 dwellings each. Interestingly, this was to ensure that “The environment was to be rich and varied...;” “Within the sub-plan, each architect could give reign to his [sic] ideas on urbanism and, within the global subdivision plan, could design walls of facades” (Bosma 2001:286).

Van Hoogstraten and Vos (Bosma 2001:286) elaborate on desirable features of design, as determined by architects in response to social research, such as the following:

Bordering buildings and floor plans were “essential to the street wall” and “helped to determine the perception of urban space”;

“Possibilities included staggering the depths of front and rear exterior walls, adding extensions, and opting for other variations..”. Access to

upper-storey housing units and “gallery housing” had to “relate well to the street”. “Stairwells, balconies, oriels, staggered facades, design options for corner areas, woonerven, yards, gardens, spacious district pattern – the entire repertoire was aimed at maximizing the quality of life offered to residents of Beverwaard.”

Significantly, accommodation of small-scale business operations was also later incorporated into residential buildings. The perceptions and preferences of residents evident in this study’s results, echo in remarkable detail these aspects for successful city residential design as highlighted by the new ‘SAR73’, as it was known.

## **10.6 Desirable densification: finding the linkages**

Generally in our Western cities, the 1970’s can be identified as the period when a clearer understanding of the advantages of medium-density clustered housing became manifest as an alternative to the two extremes of inner city high-rise high-density, and its peripheral sprawling suburbia.

Untermann and Small (1977) point out that while densely clustered housing forms have existed successfully for thousands of years in urban centres or settlements the world over (- of which the authors give numerous examples), the rise of the modern post-industrial city reflects a history that is highly specific to various modern social and technological factors:

“We are gradually discovering the need to understand what scales and densities will enhance individual privacy and safety while engendering a sense of community. ... We are discovering that while suburbia is wasteful of land, the urban settlement is too far removed from the land. Between these extremes is cluster housing which can afford a reasonable degree of privacy, private outdoor space, and ground orientation at densities much higher than suburbia. Furthermore, we are discovering that much more social benefit can be gained by aggregating shared open space.”

Significantly, the authors also make reference to the physical – social relationship of this built environment typology: “- the scale and organisation

of the clustered settlement described not only the physical setting, but the social setting as well.” (Untermann and Small 1977:1).

## 10.7 Precursors to RDP<sup>14</sup> housing concepts and legacy

Locally, for better or worse, we seldom if ever find the prescriptive response to design for the perceived benefit of residents described with such enthusiasm by Van Hoogstraten and Vos (Bosma 2001:286) in the Beverwaard development. In its stead, we do have a persistent engineering-biased approach for the provision of housing-related facilities and services, seemingly as a complementary but separate development process. An example of the tradition on which this mechanistic approach is based, is the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) Special Report (1987), published by the CSIR. This report reflects the apartheid approach to planning and management of low-cost housing at the time, which has had and continues to have far-reaching effects. The emphasis is strongly on physical, scientific aspects of building houses and all but ignores the social component. In a section ironically entitled ‘Expectation, choice, affordability,’ (NBRI 1987: B4) the report notes “A house of 40 m<sup>2</sup> is significantly cheaper than one of 80 m<sup>2</sup>, although size reductions do not necessarily bring about proportional cost savings. “ This report also notes that “square ... and simple designs are most cost-effective” (NBRI 1987: B5); and ‘core’ and ‘shell’<sup>15</sup> housing are described as “two techniques which can be used to reduce the initial cost of a house.”

It is not difficult to see the extent to which this singular concept of the cost-reduced 40 m<sup>2</sup> square core house influenced delivery of the original RDP housing with which long-suffering beneficiary residents are now saddled. While it is fair to say that these weak characteristics of our subsidised housing projects including low densities, small size of units and poor

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<sup>14</sup> Reconstruction and Development Programme, a post-apartheid government development strategy

<sup>15</sup> ‘Core’: building a portion of a house to a design that allows for later addition  
‘Shell’: building only the outer structure leaving internal walls and finishes to be completed later

building quality have long been recognised, highlighted for instance in the State of Human Settlements report (DOH 1999:46;64;70), it is also true that this housing has continued to be defined by these features.

Thus we have the situation where Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, as speaker for the Nelson Mandela Lecture of November 2004, refers to some current South African housing efforts as “an insult to what we have struggled for.” He stated in his speech, “We should be able to say, whilst it has been important to build over one million housing units, that many of these are just not acceptable. People call them Uno’s like the Italian car. They are our next generation of slums” (SAFM broadcast of the Nelson Mandela Lecture, 24 Nov. 2004).

### **10.8 Institutional challenges to delivery**

As noted in Section 9.16.6, a brief look at the social housing utility companies regarding the difficulties of implementation indicates that while their capacity for delivery is dramatically affected by the terms and conditions of funding, subsidies, the necessity of liaising with a host of other public and private roleplayers in the process, as well as beneficiary communities, they bear primary responsibility for the final product and its aftermath – such as building quality and maintenance, and the inability of impoverished beneficiaries to make loan repayments. The obstacles faced by these implementation agencies are therefore daunting and complex.

### **10.9 Logistical constraints to design solutions**

The reality of immense logistical difficulties (in terms of cost, time, numbers of units, and affordability) encountered in public authority attempts to deliver an adequate housing product on the N2 project has been reported in the media over the past year. The Mail and Guardian report ‘Housing for sardines?’ (Mail and Guardian May 6-12, 2005) gives an indication of the limitations that will be felt by “three people per bedsit and six to a one-bedroom flat” in the densely-built multi-storey units – in essence no different

to the standard recipe for the Cape Flats enclaves of apartheid-era flats. Comment by Professor Vanessa Watson of the UCT School of Architecture and Planning relating to design, highlights this issue: “[Professor Watson] said that while it is important to continue densifying the city it was also important that the units were designed correctly. ... “the two and three-storey units on the Cape Flats built in the 1950’s, 1960’s and 1970s were examples of how not to build high-density suburbs” (Weekend Argus Feb 19, 2005).

The above reviews in relation to the problem support the study findings that there is apparently no adequate mechanism for effective resident representation to address crucial ongoing issues of design, quality, maintenance, management and support of densified subsidised housing estates. Policy is in place and appropriately promoted by those in authority; but implementation and sustainable management are lacking and these require meaningful resident representation.

## 10.10 Resident representation and involvement

### 10.10.1 The British Council housing lessons

The nature and importance of resident representation is highlighted in the incisive study by Alison Ravetz (2001), using an historical approach to describe the changes in British Council Housing in relation to aspects of working class culture. Salient to this discussion is her well-founded observation of the situation that developed as a result of “a long-term, and of course unintended, consequence [of] the virtual ghettoization of some [Council] estates,…” (Ravetz 2001: 7).

During this situation in the 1980’s, British Council housing was rapidly privatised and tenant involvement emerged more strongly in the regeneration of estates under private management. Ravetz (2001: 7) points out:

“... the emergence of various ‘community’ professionals who developed new spheres and standards of professionalism, in community development, architecture, technical and planning aid, where they worked not so much on as with client populations; ... they sought to encourage people to define and serve their own needs.”

This change in approach to resident involvement – by means of encouraging the establishment of channels for ‘self-management’ by tenants of social housing – highlights the crux of the matter; and it is not in the positive way that self-management is commonly imagined these days as an ideal of public participation:

“There were in this potentially enormous implications for a new ‘urban governance’, based on a politics largely outside the conventional framework of political parties and programmes. To ask tenants and their families to take collective responsibility for their estates not only went counter to the prevailing trends of an individualistic, anti-collectivist society, but would ask a lot of any population, let alone one that was by definition deprived and kept in a state of dependency” (Ravetz 2001:7).

The related burdens and inevitable burn-out of volunteer representatives is a well-documented phenomenon. The difficulties of ‘responsibility without power’ are discussed by Ravetz (2001:217), who also raises the issue of ‘gatekeeping’ by housing or estate managers, whereby residents are given preferential treatment or discriminated against for whatever reasons, by those in influential or decision-making positions (Ravetz 2001:129).

Rubenstein (1995) touches on the ad-hoc nature of lobbying and its impacts by civic interest groups in South Africa (Indicator SA 1995:71-74) from a somewhat more positive standpoint, with the view that surges of activism around particular issues if and when they arise, is a vital part of the democratic process and a feature inherent in the nature of civic group interest. It is perhaps in this light that we should view the conspicuous civic protests against lack of housing- and service delivery in South Africa that

have erupted in the past two years, embarrassing to the government and unprecedented since democratic elections in 1994.

A review of these studies in relation to the interview data, show us that neither public authorities nor existing vehicles for delivery such as the SHIs, are sufficiently able to both drive and manage the existing and potential social housing environment. In many ways, housing densification exerts even greater pressures in this regard. A wider review of selected literature on approaches and mechanisms to address the needs of social housing beneficiaries in the city, leads us to consider the prospect of formalised Development Partnerships – which have a much broader reach in terms of development influence – to face the challenges more effectively.

#### 10.11 Rationale for a different approach: examples of best practice

As explained in Section 2.1, the problem statement of the study expanded in acknowledgement of the inextricability of the social and physical factors being explored, and the apparent need for social support. Key findings on issues of estate management indicated clearly that most of the design flaws affecting residents as well as interrelated social issues, could be effectively addressed by management solutions. Central to this theme was the presence or absence of strong resident representation in estate maintenance, administration and management. In-depth interviews with managerial key informants as well as literature reviews on this complex issue, highlighted this feature.

##### 10.11.1 The *mutirão* Partnership movement

The Sao Paulo experience of social housing management introduces some important points in this regard. The paper by Rolnik and Cymbalista (Harrison et al 2003:281 – 293) cites the example of 'self-managed housing' in Sao Paulo, the *mutirão* movement which they describe as "first connected to autonomy, participation and the decision-making process and control over

public policies” (Harrison et al 2003:281). The movement originated with a focus on the management of low-cost housing, especially construction costs, but evolved into a process whereby self-managed co-operatives were formed, funded by municipalities to support ‘high-risk’ cases identified by social workers.

According to Rolnik and Cymbalista this response later matured into “.. ‘personalising’ the projects, influencing their design, and eventually, co-managing the whole process.” ...” Finally, the movement began to formulate *different concepts of managing the city, based on partnerships and shared responsibilities*” [my emphasis] (Harrison et al 2003:282).

Sao Paulo housing development has experienced ongoing efforts to ‘mainstream’ management partnerships between neighbourhood social housing communities and government bodies. Various experiences in Sao Paulo lead these authors to conclude that successful partnership collaboration (through the *mutirão* process) requires ..”a high degree of legitimacy at the city level (above particular parties and groups) to achieve success and continuity” (Harrison et al 2003:293). The authors note that this is a long-term process, with tensions always present between the roleplayers (- unsurprisingly); but it is one which ensures that the interests of vulnerable residents cannot be sidelined.

This scenario of effective partnership management in the context of a developing city is useful to us, and can be linked to models performing a similar function that are in place elsewhere. For example, a wealth of literature exists on the USA experience of collaborative city development partnerships.

### **10.11.2 Partnerships in US cities**

The first independent evaluation of the Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Community Development Partnerships (CDPs), was commissioned by major partnership funders The Ford Foundation in

1993 and undertaken through 1997-8 by the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) at Rutgers, the State University, New Jersey. I was responsible for compilation and construction of the questionnaires for the survey. The study encompassed an evaluation of 219 Partnership organisations from 25 selected cities across the country. A succinct description of the role of Partnership organisations is given by Johnson (1995):

“Community Development Partnerships pool the resources of local foundations, corporations, banks and government agencies to strengthen support for Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and not-for-profit groups like the council that spearhead projects to rebuild their neighbourhoods” (Johnson 1995:21). This is because local area ‘Community Development Corporations by themselves find it difficult to raise enough money to support their operations’ (Johnson 1995:21).

This report (Johnson 1995:23) further describes that such a Development Partnership is “... a way for the private, public and not-for-profit sectors to work together to rebuild communities without duplicating efforts” (S. Apple quoted by Johnson 1995:23). Each Partnership member contributes a different emphasis, according to the particular strengths and areas of expertise of each.

A review of literature in the field of Community Development Partnerships and Corporations in US cities at the time of the CUPR evaluation, indicates that these can provide an efficient platform for facilitating local initiatives through community organisation methods that stimulate community participation in ‘taking ownership’ of the neighbourhood. This is reported for instance by Nye and Glickman (1995), Burns and Spilka (1997), and Keating (1989). Numerous articles explain how vital practical assistance can be offered by partnership agencies on a variety of fronts. Kretzmann (1995:9) lists “concrete tool and methods” to this effect that can help communities to attract support and investment from a position of strength.

Johnson (1995:21) notes many examples of assistance for CDCs in Pittsburgh, such as operating support for organisations (e.g. staff training, organisation building); operating support for technical assistance (e.g. organisational development, planning, housing fund management; Sectional Title property management; book-keeping and accounting); providing a forum for operationalising existing government support programmes – local, provincial and national; providing low-interest loans and grants for commercial and residential property development projects; and equity funds providing tax incentives or credit to companies that invest in affordable rental housing or other socially responsible investment projects. In this way, the problem of chronic unemployment can be reduced by appropriate support of self-employment initiatives and facilitating training and skills development. Keyes et al (1996:20) offer informative discussion on the extent of networking and relationship-building required among various agencies to manage low-income housing – such as “... governmental, philanthropic, educational, and other institutions that channel financial, technical, and political support to non-profit housing sponsors.”

Furthermore, essential social services and programmes can be extended through Partnership channels. Lewis (1993) outlines a number of case studies indicating the effectiveness of such initiatives through the inner-city Newark New Community Corporation. Sullivan (1995) describes in more detail the deep complexity and effectiveness of committed, Partnership-funded social support services in deprived communities in New York, Chicago and Minneapolis.

### **10.11.3 The local scenario**

The local Cape Town Partnership stands as the city's most prominent and successful city partnership initiative, formed in 1999 and South Africa's first major city partnership formalised to bring about revitalisation of the inner city. This was necessary as by the end of the 1990s, degeneration of the inner city had resulted in an increasing exodus of big business, with a corresponding annual loss of R 400 million in rates and taxes to the Council

(Weekend Argus June 11, 2005). Inner city revitalisation is multi-faceted. Apart from ongoing management concerns, strategies to attract investment as well as diversification and expansion of industries, it is also concerned with building housing catering for all income brackets – but in particular ‘affordable housing’. These issues are discussed by Cape Town Partnership manager Andrew Boraine (Weekend Argus June 11, 2005), who notes that “The city would benefit tremendously if the city bowl and its surrounds tripled their population in the next 10 years” (– a scenario most Capetonians would probably balk at).

An overview by Garner (2003:14-15) summarises the nature and role of the Partnership, the focus of which has necessarily adapted over the years in response to changing conditions and demands. Significantly, in its bid to promote the renewal of Cape Town’s city centre and related axes to this core, the Partnership defines its role as primarily that of a management and co-ordinating body (and not a direct service provider), lobbying major stakeholders and policy-makers, guiding decision-making and directing provision of expertise and resources by other relevant roleplayers (or stakeholders) where necessary. Of critical importance to the success of the Partnership has been the *constituted, legally binding nature of the formalised relationship* of Partnership members<sup>16</sup> (my emphasis). Boraine describes the Partnership as “a hybrid model” (Garner 2003:15) which is based on successful examples of urban regeneration in the UK and the USA.

This evidence supports the idea that the formalised ‘development partnership’ model offers a flexible but controlled option for accommodating the interests of diverse development partners, while protecting and promoting the public interest including subsidised housing.

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<sup>16</sup> These include, for example, public and private bodies such as the City of Cape Town, Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Business Against Crime, South African Property Owner’s Association (SAPOA), Cape Town Tourism, Cape Town Heritage Trust, South African Black Technical and Allied Careers Organisation (SABTACO), District Six Museum Foundation, Table Mountain National Park, Mandela Rhodes Foundation, and the University of Cape Town.

**10.12 In summary**, based on the literature review, the following viewpoint is argued:

The negative overarching context is that, twelve years after repetitive and well-intentioned rhetoric on mass delivery of state-assisted housing, it is abundantly clear that the various public authorities do not have the capacity to carry this out effectively despite full recognition of the problem. A positive response by the public authorities includes acknowledgement of the drawbacks of urban sprawl, as work-seekers from poverty-stricken hinterlands (and others seeking opportunity), continue a steady and justified migration to the cities. This has added impetus to the establishment of current national and local government policy on the 'compact city', urban densification in general and including housing; yet on the whole has failed to speed up delivery, to deliver quality housing, or to find sustainable solutions to funding and affordability.

There is a dearth of comment in the literature on the impact of prevailing social circumstances of low- to moderate- income residents in Cape Town (or more generally, South Africa) on the design of densified housing, or *vice versa*. Yet the outcome of this interrelationship accounts for the overwhelming dislike that most residents (and potential home-buyers) evidently feel towards this housing type.

In acknowledging this prevailing situation, and in light of current policy at national and local levels of government on densification of the city, it is necessary to focus on practical methods of narrowing the divide between what subsidised cluster housing commonly offers, and what the residents feel they need. Certain aspects of studies in overseas cities<sup>17</sup> relating to the issue, offer useful insights on which we can base models for local 'best practice' initiatives. In this regard, it is argued that the Cape Town Partnership approach (and the overseas models on which it is based), offers possible bridging mechanisms for integrating financially viable city property

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<sup>17</sup> UK, European, US and Latin American cities

development and management, while protecting the interests of social housing residents.

## 11. Conclusions

Quality of the densified housing environment from a social perspective includes certain critical considerations in the design and planning of these developments. Detailed interview data from this and other studies indicate deep resistance to densified, multi-storey subsidised housing development – both by prospective beneficiaries as well as residents of existing surrounding neighbourhoods. The overwhelming perception, usually justified, is that low-cost housing developments to date have resulted in unacceptably poor quality building and maintenance, coupled with the impact of deep-rooted social problems prevalent in poor communities. However, the study also shows that resistance to the densified form can be overcome through successful pilot projects and experiences:

### 11.1 Good design promotes acceptance of densification

Residents of existing densified cluster developments where improvements had been effected, were amenable (or at least not opposed) to the form. So in general, while these findings indicate that the 'house on own plot' image remains the strongly preferred form of residence, there are certain principles illustrated in the analysis on a variety of design questions. These must be taken into account in encouraging acceptance of clustered housing.

The key to acknowledging the 'single private house' preference of subsidised housing beneficiaries is to include by design, the features or characteristics of the perceived lifestyle afforded by this image; and which have proven validity in terms of quality of life for residents. This includes for instance, taking into account a sense of privacy, yard space or open space for relaxation, scope for personalisation of the unit and locale, etc. This finding is strongly supported by Marcus and Sarkissian's definitive study

(1986) as discussed, and can be accommodated in well-designed cluster housing.

## **11.2 Cognisance of the integrated neighbourhood design**

Within the broader neighbourhood, careful attention to the location of housing types and support facilities in relation to each other, is also critical. Developing a gradation and variety of compatible housing types in a range of prices within the same (broad) residential precincts, can encourage the establishment of neighbourhoods that promote inclusion and diversity (of class, culture and ethnicity) without conflict; in contrast to facilitating the placement of enclaves of vastly different socio-economic status directly adjacent to each other.

Connecting spaces between housing precincts should accommodate opportunities for 'bridging' or neutral social mixing. One such example includes densified business hub clusters, which should be designed on peripheries such as roadways, junctions or entrances to delineated housing precincts, and not within the residential domain. Within the subsidised housing precinct, business hub design should include basic facilities that support micro home-based industry, for example in the form of storage and packing rooms, sales and order outlets, cleaning areas, etc., depending on the most practical requirements of residents.

In terms then of both logistical considerations and design criteria, this study's findings indicate that, firstly, application of these types of design guidelines would aid in significantly enhancing the quality of life experienced by residents in general, of medium-density subsidised housing estates.

## **11.3 Inclusion of communal open space in design**

Secondly, the most prominent example of error in planning and design indicated by the study findings, is that both early and recent densified housing developments seriously lack adequate public- or common social

space. This refers to both open space and built facilities. Added to this lack is the absence of attention to the location, design, maintenance and management of common space.

These trends undermine the principle of provision and maintenance of public space within the neighbourhood, and the resulting negative impacts on the densified social housing environment are significant. The outcome of inadequate social space on such city neighbourhoods is wholly negative. As explained in this analysis and discussion of study results, adequate public space – in terms of size, location, design and management – is essential to compensate for lack of social and recreational space external to the spatially-limited multi-storey clustered housing unit. Additional emphasis on design and management of communal space and facilities should be applied with recognition of the particular social pressures faced by disadvantaged and impoverished communities. This point is reiterated in conclusions of the survey reports of three informal settlements in Cape Town:

“Well-managed communal space is of critical importance in the social housing environment, to reduce pressure imposed by the confines of the household unit “ (City of Cape Town 2005:81).

#### **11.4 Beyond design: the social factors**

In summary, relatively few of the design guidelines formulated through the results of this study as well as extensive literature in the field, have been successfully applied at these Cape Town study sites, which were specifically selected for their positive attributes. Those aspects that do match the design guidelines (City of Cape Town 2003 and 2005), were spontaneously recognised and highly valued by residents.

While the planning of new residential city precincts should develop and take cognisance of design guidelines and apply these wherever possible, success in terms of the final product – a functional, favourable neighbourhood well-integrated with its surrounds – depends heavily on a

very wide range of influencing factors. In particular, it is apparent from other study findings discussed here, that socio-economic conditions continue to dictate the quality of the physical and social environment, and not *vice-versa*.

This brings us back to the overwhelming importance of ongoing and supportive management of densified social housing:

### **11.5 Management and resident representation**

Necessary improvements at the sites, both physical and social, are unlikely to occur in the absence of strong lobbying on the part of residents. Social housing recipients face particular pressures and challenges, for which practical support at the neighbourhood level is conspicuously absent.

The presence of effective resident representation is identified as critical. Strong residents' committees are notably the first point of departure in addressing current and changing needs of residents, both within the housing precinct as well as in relation to the broader urban environment. This point is supported by literature in the field (Rolnik and Cymbalista, 2003; Ravetz 2001; Rosenberg 1993), and was evident at each of the five sites in this study: the greatest advances were made where strong residents' committees had evolved in response to the need for improvement of both social and physical conditions at the housing precincts. Conversely, weak or non-existent resident representation had resulted in visible deterioration of the physical sites, as well as escalating social problems and resident conflict.

#### **11.5.1 Pro-resident managerial support**

In light of these findings, it is not enough to say that strong resident representation or existing Trust management is essential for successful regulation and ongoing improvement of the densified social housing environment. These residents are more likely to be disadvantaged in many

respects and lacking in certain critical management skills, prominently including financial and administrative. Stakeholders in the physical development process are not renowned for their efforts to ensure post-construction viable estate management; nor are the Social Housing Institutions best placed to deal with this, given the scale of their core concerns.

Therefore, in order to positively affect the myriad inter-dependent influences between the social, economic, biophysical and built environment aspects, there needs to be an alternative pro-resident managerial support system that is flexible and responsive enough to address these complex challenges on an ongoing basis. This will improve the chances of densified social housing precincts to become integrated, viable and functioning assets within the city, rather than marginalised enclaves with persistently negative physical and social images.

### **11.6 The Development Partnership approach**

A brief overview of 'best practice' in other cities internationally, provides some useful pointers. In particular, the United States examples of city housing and development partnerships suggest a model which can be realistically discussed with reference to the South African, and more specifically Cape Town, situations.

The key in terms of co-operative Partnership-driven development and management revolves around the necessity of a dedicated platform for managing city precinct upgrading and general development on an ongoing basis. In the USA, cities have decades of experience with Community Development Partnerships (CDPs) and Community Development Corporations (CDCs). Independent evaluations of these agencies have given some indication of their value and success in building strong, self-sufficient communities in marginalised and deprived areas.

While our circumstances in South African cities are very different to those in the USA, our need for integrated delivery of facilities and services for the biophysical, built and social environment on fundamental levels is considerably more acute. Many housing and urban development practitioners have indicated that the only way to move closer to the ideal of integrated delivery, is through the meaningful and sustained collaboration of roleplayers from different sectors and areas of expertise. To be successful, indications are that dedicated partnership bodies that can serve as platforms for long-term fundraising, distribution of funds according to local priorities, and related management services for local development, offer the most likely solution.

**11.7 In summary,** the conclusion is that there are essentially three important steps to take in addressing these challenges, to improve the chances of acceptance and success of densified or compact social housing within the city:

The first is cognisance by all roleplayers in delivery of the development<sup>18</sup>, of detailed design guidelines that take into account residents' needs, such as those formulated by Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) and highlighted here, or otherwise expanded by appropriate research.

The second is commitment to the formalised establishment of effective Resident Committees or Associations, to promote and support residents' rights and responsibilities in managing the social housing estate.

Considering the destructive impact of poor or absent management, the third and most effective step is the suggested application of a Partnership development model:

This approach can ensure the viability of the social housing estate as well as integration of the precinct within the broader community. Such partnership

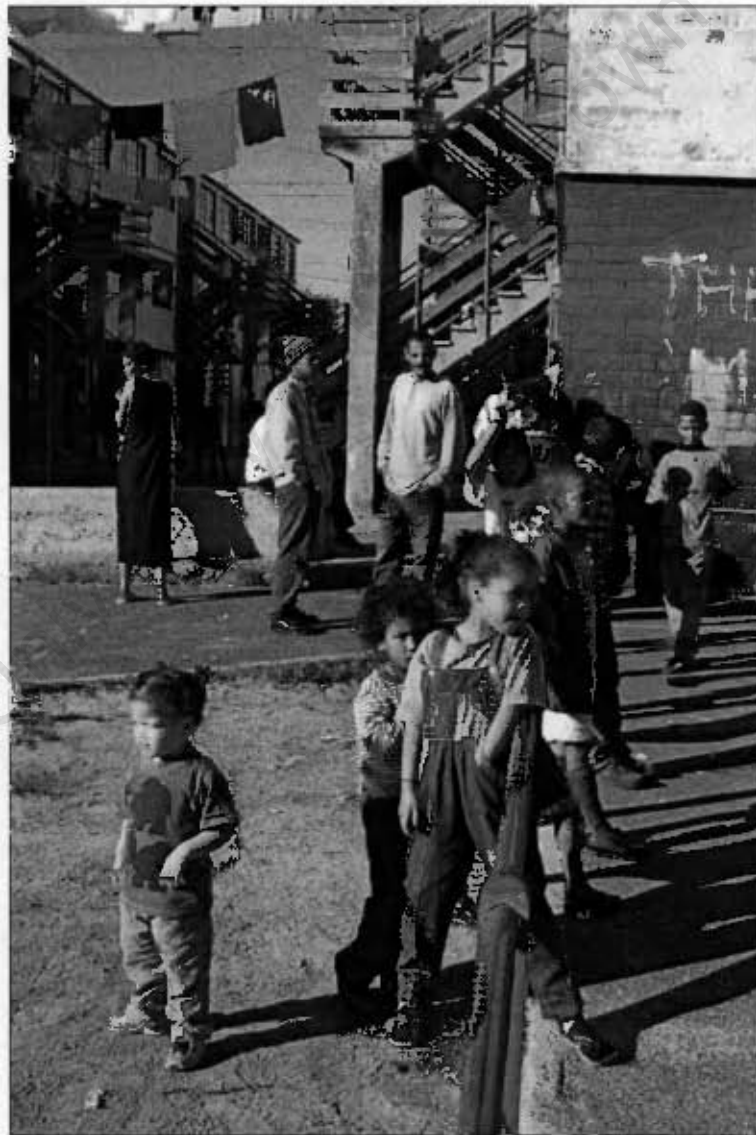
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<sup>18</sup> Including engineers, planners, architects and designers, funders and relevant local government departments

agencies can be structured as permanent platforms for effective management of necessary financial and administrative controls of the social housing neighbourhood, with essential accompanying support in the form of co-ordinated localised community- and social facilities and services.

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"Ek hoop dié dinge gaan in ag geneem word, ek hoop so; want dit is nie net die bakstene in die gebou nie: "people are living there". Ja, so true; en dis waarom dit gaan." (- Residents' Committee representative, Albow Gardens, Rugby)



Mannenberg, Cape Town, 2005 (City of Cape Town photographic archives)

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### District Six Study Reference Group (2002-3):

Peter de Tolly; Phillip Romanovsky; Lucien le Grange; Nadia Wessels

Informal interviews:

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Communicare housing estates: residents and maintenance officer.

Key informants: Practitioners, officials and organisation representatives -

Mr. Arries; Basil Davidson; Charmaine Williams; David Barry Wolmarans; Mr. Geduld; Mrs. H. Kwalie; Henry Sias; Herman Potgieter; Jac Snyman; Khalil Mullagie; Latief Ely; Leonard Lopes; Lindsay Butler; Louise Rhebock; Mastura Gasant; Mervyn Bregman; Monica Davids; Ozzie Asmal; Paddy Chapple; Mr. Rabin; Sharon Paulsen; Trevor Whales; Warren Smit.

District Six Beneficiary Trust:

Terence Fredericks; Stan Abrahams; Nazeer Khalfe; Anwah Nagia and Committee Members.

District Six Museum: Valmont Layne

Cape Town Municipal Reference Library: Bess Junowicz

City of Cape Town Housing Office officials (for Bo-Kaap, Parow Park, Albow Gardens)

Focus Group participants:

- 1) District Six housing claimants (tenants and home-owners)
- 2) Residents of existing multi-storey medium-density housing complexes: (tenants and home-owners) Sea Point, Woodstock, Zonnebloem, Diep River, and Retreat (Lake View).

Statistical tables: Conversion to SPSS: Targetlink Research

District Six sample verification: Professor Owen Crankshaw, Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town; Nick Green (Nick Green Consulting)

Interviewers: (of 32 residents at state-subsidised housing estates)

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Logistics: Alex de la Harpe and Gina Bergh

Site photographs were taken in 2002 – 2003 by J. C. de la Harpe

# APPENDIX

## METHODOLOGY: ADDITIONAL NOTE

### 1) THE FOCUS GROUP METHOD

'Focus group' methodology is widely known and applied in the field of social research. Most qualitative social research methods publications include explanations of the method and use. It is now most commonly associated with standard market research. The following note is made with some reference to explanations in Robson (1993), Yin (1993), Moser and Kalton (1971), Rubin and Babbie (1993), and Hall and Hall (1996).

The 'focus group' is an effective and widely-used method of primary data collection. It is a qualitative technique highly suitable for identifying key issues – especially including new or unexpected motives and values - in relation to perception, belief and behaviour. Attitudes that emerge through the discussion process, can be used effectively to identify broad trends in relation to the issues being investigated. The success of the technique is dependent on the suitability of participants and the skill of the facilitator. The focus group consists of (ideally) 9 – 12 recruited individuals who discuss their attitudes, perceptions, motives and concerns on particular topics outlined in a discussion guide, with a group facilitator. Essential practical arrangements facilitating sound response include the use of a comfortable venue, provision of refreshments, break time, and time limit to the discussion. Recruits are screened for suitability and the focus group is not meant to be in any sense statistically representative, inclusive of communities or stakeholders, or otherwise reflective of a public participation process. Standard practice is provision of a nominal gratuity (at least R100 per person at the time of this project) to each participant. This is only made known and presented at the end of the discussion and is not used in any way as an incentive to participate. The facilitator encourages conversation from all participants but does not direct or evaluate what is said. The session is recorded and transcribed verbatim. A trained analyst provides a content analysis and summary of the transcripts and a report of the findings.

respondents' degree or strength of opinion in relation to the quality or feature being measured - it is useful to summarise ordinal scales of satisfaction, agreement, importance, and so on by using averages or measures of central tendency (mean, median or mode) that assume equal distance. In such cases, as in this study, the scales are then presented to respondents – words with corresponding numbers – as equidistant categories. 'Show cards' with the scale labelled with words and corresponding numbers are handed to the respondent (if literate), presenting the categories as equidistant. The scales therefore do make the assumption that the distances between categories are equal, although this is in fact not really true, statistically speaking.

For practical purposes then, it is noted as acceptable applied market research practice to assume that the distances are equal and to use measures of central tendency to summarise the data. It is common practice even to compute weighted indexes, means, etc. to the frequencies. This practice is anathema to 'purists'; but according to experienced researchers Mark Webb (Targetlink Research) and Nick Green (Nick Green Consulting), because social research aimed at reflecting perception and opinion (as in market research) is not a 'pure science', it can be argued that the 'ordinal scale' tool that summarises data in a reliable and repeatable fashion - without any intention to mislead but rather to make better sense of the data - should be used where practical.

Where the distribution is bipolar, that is responses are fairly evenly spread between the two extremes of the scale, the mean is a poor estimate of central tendency and any statistical reference will state that in such cases the mean should not be used as the results are simply misleading. If bipolar distributions are evident in the rating scale results, the cause of this needs to be determined. This may, for example, be a result of religious, political or culture-bound perceptions where vast differences of perception and opinion occur.

Another common cause of bipolar distributions is behaviour. For instance, a question such as "How often, per month, do you do your household shopping?" may result in an average result of "every two weeks". But if a large percentage of respondents shop weekly and the rest monthly, an average of "every two weeks" is not helpful. One should instead look at the proportions of weekly and monthly shoppers – that is, the modes of each distribution – to get an accurate reflection of shopping frequency (M. Webb, Targetlink Research).

## 2) INFLUENCING FACTORS

Influencing factors to consider in this study – both in Focus Group discussions as well as structured questionnaire interviews – included the following:

Factors influencing cross-cultural or -class research include extreme vulnerability of the measurement process to error (- also with regard to qualitative research methods), especially in linguistic and conceptual frames of reference. It is important to limit this as much as possible by applying 'linguistic equivalence' (Bulmer and Warwick 1993:174-5) in the questionnaires in order to avoid misinterpretations; and accurate and detailed translation where necessary.

Interviewers and facilitators were therefore screened for suitability to the project, using the criteria of their ability to understand evident class or cultural and linguistic specifics, and were then further trained for these special requirements. It was necessary to rely on their understanding of the project intention, expertise as interviewers and skill to explain clearly, in the vernacular, the exact meaning of the questions to respondents. Open-ended responses were translated into standard English or Afrikaans (depending on respondent's choice) for data capture and transcripts.

## 3) RATING SCALES APPLIED IN STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

The following note is made with reference to Robson (1993), Clegg (1982), and personal communication with Mark Webb (Targetlink Research) and Nick Green (Nick Green Consulting).

Five-point Likert-type ordinal scales were used to standardise interpretation of respondent perception and opinion relating to the features being assessed. The resulting data values represent categories with some intrinsic order (for example, 'low, medium, high; strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree'). Ordinal variables can be either string (alphanumeric) or systematic numeric values that represent distinct categories (for example, 1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high).

While it is not correct to assume equal distance between categories described by ordinal numbers, in market research ordinal scales are widely used for the practical purpose of standardising responses in such a way as to make the results and interpretation thereof more reliable. This is particularly the case in eliciting

The following basic 5-point rating scales were used to standardise respondents' strength of opinion in the interviews with residents:

**Rating scale A:**      Rating of quality

1= 'Very bad'                      2= 'Poor'                      3= 'Average' / 'fair'  
4= 'Good'                              5= 'Excellent'

**Rating scale B:**      Importance rating

1= 'Not at all important'                      2= 'Unimportant'  
3= Neutral – neither important nor unimportant                      4= 'Important'  
5= 'Very important'

(example of scale readings – 'Importance')

