Transition, Memories, and Loss: Narratives of Home and Community in Purpose-Built Aged Housing-TAFTA’s Langelier Towers

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Report compiled by Dr. Marc Kalina.

Assistant researcher Ms. Elizabeth Ampofo.

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<td>ART</td>
<td>Antiretroviral Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNG</td>
<td>Breaking New Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<td>DUT</td>
<td>Durban University of Technology</td>
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<td>JCH</td>
<td>John Conradie House</td>
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<td>SAHRC</td>
<td>South African Human Rights Commission</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa’s Constitution (1996) states that every individual has the right to adequate housing, and in the 20 years since the end of Apartheid in 1994 the state has made substantive progress, increasing the percentage of the population living in formal housing from 65% to nearly 80% (StatsSA, 2011). In total, the South African state has built more than three million state-subsidised houses since 1994, while other forms of subsidised housing, such as social housing or hostels, has accommodated hundreds of thousands more (StatsSA, 2011).

The state’s approach to housing provision has meant to be broad-based and inclusive, while addressing historical and racial inequalities. To this end, South Africa has adopted what Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2017) refers to as a “leave no one behind” attitude. This includes making special requirements for national, provincial, and local government to accommodate the most vulnerable groups of society through the provision of ‘special-needs housing,’ defined by the Housing Act of 1997 (No 107 of 1997) as state-subsidised accommodation aimed at marginalised groups, or otherwise vulnerable groups, such as orphans, the disabled, victims of violence or abuse, the homeless, and the aged. The Act (1997) recognises that these individuals face unique barriers towards accessing other forms of state-subsidised housing, such as Breaking New Ground (BNG) houses or social housing, and must be served through alternative forms of housing provision. The Special Housing Needs Policy and Programme, drafted in in 2015 but not yet approved by cabinet, aims at providing housing opportunities for persons who – for a variety of reasons – are unable to live independently in standard-type housing or require assistance in terms of a safe, supportive and protected living environment and who therefore need some level of care or protection, be it on a permanent or temporary basis (DHS, 2015). The Policy (2015) embraces an indirect form of housing provision for special-needs groups, with its main objective being to provide capital grants to approved and registered NGOs “for the acquisition or development of new and/or the extension of and/or upgrading or refurbishment of existing special-housing needs facilities for persons or households with special-housing needs”. This policy formalises and acknowledges the role that non-state entities have historically played in South Africa in providing housing and services for vulnerable groups, while attempting to shift the burden of special-needs housing provision from an overwhelmed public sector to civil society.

Of the vulnerable groups mentioned above, the aged1 (or elderly) represent a rapidly growing proportion of the South African population. Since democracy in 1994, due to a number of factors, including the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, South Africa actually witnessed a marked decline in life expectancy (Stats SA, 2017). However, over the past decade, the expansion of health programmes and improved access to antiretroviral treatment (ART) has helped to turn

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1 Defined by Stats SA as individuals 60 years and older.
this trend around, and South Africa has witnessed a marked improvement in life expectancy between 2007 and 2017 (Stats SA, 2017). As a consequence, the proportion of the elderly within South Africa’s population is growing, reaching 8.1% in 2017, with some estimates by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2015) predicting it will reach 15.4% by 2050.

Currently, aged individuals in South Africa are generally economically better off than the general population, with only 40% of the aged population living below the poverty line, a statistic partially accountable to the growth of state-provided social support grants (Stats SA, 2017). However, they are less mobile than younger individuals, are more vulnerable to risk. Furthermore, although the census suggests that more than half of aged individuals are able to reside within extended family networks, these types of arrangements are most common in rural areas, with those living in urban areas being particularly vulnerable to homelessness, hunger, and poverty (Stats SA, 2011). Housing this growing segment of the population represents a persistent and mounting challenge for the South African state, and although the Special Housing Needs Policy and Programme attempts to leverage the support of civil society towards housing provision for the aged, the unratified state of the Policy, and a lack of commitment by state housing entities, has led to overcrowding and shortages for South Africa’s most vulnerable.

1.1. Research Questions

State-subsidised housing not only serves to provide shelter to lower-income or otherwise disadvantaged peoples, but can also strongly influence an individual’s identity or sense of community. Existing praxis within the discipline of the built environment have neglected this critical role of home and neighbourhood, and as a consequence, state housing interventions in South Africa have not been effective in creating inclusive and equitable urban spaces.

The “Narratives of Home & Neighbourhood: Possibilities for Reimagining Urban Planning” project explores this challenge through an examination of the ways in which state housing models shape the social landscape of the city of Durban, South Africa. The project focuses on six different models of state housing in Durban, specifically a mega-human settlements, hostels, subsidised municipal residential estates, informal settlement in-situ upgrades, social housing company-run housing developments, and purpose-built state subsidised aged housing. The research focuses on how residents create ‘homes’ out of the physical materiality of the form of state housing in which they find themselves, and how these built forms shape sense of self, neighbourhood and belonging.

The main research questions of the ‘Narratives of Home’ project are:

- What are the meanings residents attach to home and neighbourliness in specific types of state-delivered housing?
  - How do residents create places that are understood and experienced as home?
How are the concepts of neighbourliness and neighbourhood understood and shaped in clusters of housing units?

- What kinds of place identities develop in these spaces and why?

- How does the design of the built environment in these spaces enable or constrict social relations, and in turn shape people’s sense of home, belonging and neighbourhood?

- How do residents transform the built environment through everyday livelihood practices and ways of belonging?

- What are some of the intended and unintended social consequences of living in state delivered housing?

1.2. Research Site

This study explores these questions through participatory, qualitative research conducted with residents of Langeler Towers, a new, purpose-built, and state-subsidised aged housing building owned by The Association for the Aged (TAFTA) and located in the Addington/Point area of central Durban. Langeler Towers was opened in 2016 and was built with partial funding from eThekwini’s Department of Human Settlements. It comprises 11 stories, each with approximately 20 rental units (see Plate 1). Residents comprise a mix of tenants of those that are new to TAFTA housing and those that were moved from other TAFTA buildings.

This site was selected for a number of reasons, including: the reputation of TAFTA as a leading aged housing provider in eThekwini, the status of Langeler Towers as a new building with a mix of new and previous TAFTA residents, the size of the building, the nature of the state subsidy used to finance the building’s construction, its access to the beachfront and the inner city, and the unique demographics of the Addington/Point area. Moreover, the focus on aged housing is justified because this is a state-housing model that has received scant attention in post-apartheid South Africa.
1.3. Research Team

The principal researcher for this study was Dr. Marc Kalina of the Urban Futures Centre at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Dr. Kalina is a human geographer specialising in spatial development, governance, and urban geographies. He has had extensive training and experience with participatory qualitative methodologies.

In order to assist with the study and facilitate the data collection processes this study utilised a part-time research assistant, Ms. Elizabeth Ampofo, a Masters student in Communications at the Durban University of Technology. Ms. Ampofo’s primary role was to assist with focus group facilitation while providing isiZulu translation when needed.

1.4. Report Structure

This report is structured over the following sections:
• **Space, Place, and Community**: This section describes the theoretical underpinnings beneath notions of space, place identities, neighbourhood and community, which provide the conceptual framework for the research.

• **Housing the Aged: A Global Challenge**: This section presents a brief survey of the literature around the design of state-subsidised aged housing. It begins by describing major global trends around aged housing, specifically the debates between purpose-built aged housing and programmes for aging in place. The section concludes by highlighting the limited literature on aged housing in the global south, and South Africa in particular.

• **Methodological Framework**: This section provides an overview of the methodological framework utilised by this study, including its approach to data collection and analysis.

• **Creating ‘Home’ in Langeler Towers**: This section begins the analysis of participants narratives by unpacking the meaning of ‘home’ to residents, while describing the ways in which they have attempted to create a sense of ‘home’ or place identity within Langeler Towers. Furthermore, it highlights challenges residents have faced in transferring existing notions of ‘home’ into Langeler Towers.

• **Langeler Towers as a ‘Neighbourhood’**: This section explores the ways in which a sense of neighbourhood and community have developed within Langeler Towers. It specifically unpacks the role of the built environment in constraining or fostering this sense of community.

• **Conflict, Poverty, Loneliness, and Death**: This final data section unpacks some of the unintended consequences that have occurred as a result of housing arrangements in Langeler Towers, and the impact that these consequences have had on resident’s sense of place identity.

• **Conclusions and Recommendations**: The report concludes by reflecting on the study’s research questions, and the implications they may have for future housing the design. The section also presents a number of design recommendations, including those offered by Langeler Towers residents and staff.

2. Place, Attachment, Dependence, and Identity

   2.1. Introduction

The concept of *space* and *place* are fundamental to geography. Different interpretations of these two interrelated terms are rife within the discipline, causing misunderstanding and rendering them difficult to use practically or theoretically (Mazur and Urbanek 1983). Generally though, for the
purposes of this report, ‘space’ can be used to refer to a constructed area or landscape, while ‘place’ refers to the features of a space, physical or human, that make it distinct (Thrift 2003). Space is the physical — the room, the building, or the sidewalk — while place refers to the characteristics that make these spaces meaningful to the individuals to which they are attached (Lewicka, 2011). At its core, development is a struggle with place — a series of processes through which spaces are ordered in ways that gives them greater potential, or makes them more attractive to human needs (Thrift 2003, Agnew, 2011).

This section describes a number of concepts related to the creation of place, home, neighbourhood, and identity which serve as useful analytical tools for interrogating the questions posed in this study. Place attachment is a key element of the person–place relationship, and is described by Milligan (1998:2) as “the emotional link formed by an individual to a physical site that has been given meaning through interaction”. Place attachment is generally described as having at least two dimensions: place dependence and place identity. First, place dependence describes the way in which an individual contextualises’ their functional relationship with a place. Second, place identity is a bit more ephemeral, and is used to describe the ways in which individuals form attachment to places through the ways in which they engage with them. This section contextualises these two concepts with geographical literature while operationalising them as analytical tools. Lastly, the section concludes by briefly discussing home, neighbourhood, and community as socially constructed places.

2.2. Place Dependence

Place dependence was first described by Stokols and Schumaker (1981: 457) as “an occupant’s perceived strength of association between him or herself and specific places”. In other words, place dependence concerns how well a setting serves goal achievement given an existing range of alternatives (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). It can be conceptualised as the opportunities a setting provides for goal and activity needs (Stokols and Schumaker, 1981). An individual develops place dependence when a particular place meets their needs and supports the achievement of their goals (Anton and Lawrence, 2014). For a particular space this can include access to goods and services, access to economic activities, the environment, social opportunities, or its level of comfort and amenities (Erwin 2017). Higher place dependence exists when the individual considers their current place as better than alternatives (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). According to Joregnsen and Stedman (2001), place dependence can be unique in two ways. First, it can be negative to the extent that a place limits the achievement of valued outcomes. Second, the ‘strength of connection’ of the social actor to the setting may be based on specific behavioural goals rather than general affect (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). Finally, according to Anton and Lawrence (2014) the formation of place dependence usually precedes that of place identity. When a place suits a person’s particular needs, they become dependent on it, stay for longer, and increase the likelihood that a sense of place identity will form.

2.3. Place Identity
Place identity, another form of place attachment, has received considerable scholarly attention because of the fundamental role that place plays in forming an individual’s personal identity (Proshansky, Fabian, & Karminoff, 1983; Lalli, 1992; Wester-Herber, 2004). First coined by Proshansky (1978) place identity refers to refers to the symbolic meaning a particular place has to an individual. It can be defined as the process by which, through interaction with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific place (Stedman, 2002). In other words, place identity would be a component of personal identity, which develops according to the elements that typify a specific area and the nature of the interactions that occur there (Wester-Herber, 2004; Bernardo & Palma, 2005). Place is an essential component to self-identity because it contributes to the process of identity formulation as defined in Breakwell’s (1986) ‘Identity Process Theory’, specifically self-esteem, self-efficacy, distinctiveness, and continuity. Places that contribute strongly to these processes are more likely to be assimilated into identity structures, i.e. places that make us feel good about who we are, in control of our lives, unique, and consistent with who and what we believe ourselves to be (Anton and Lawrence, 2014). Other interpretations of the concept put an even stronger emphasis on human agency (Korpela, 1989; Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). For instance, Korpela (1989) argues that place identity as a psychological structure arises out of individuals’ attempts to regulate their environments. To Korpela (1989), our behaviour and actions within our environments enable us to create and maintain a coherent sense of self, while empowering us to present that self to others.

The notion of place identity has also been described in the literature as possessing a communal or social aspect (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Harner, 2001). For instance, Harner (2001, 660) defines the shared social and cultural aspects of place identity as “a cultural value shared by the community, a collective understanding about social identity intertwined with place meaning”. Dixon and Durrheim (2000, 32) stress the role that language and human dialogue plays in tying people to place, pointing to the “collective practices through which specific place identities are formed, reproduced and modified” (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000: 32). These practices allow people to make sense of their location in space, and within a greater community or city.

2.4. Home, Neighbourhood and Community

Home is the ultimate place. An intensely personal space, home can possess a wide array of meaning and attachment for differently place individuals (Lewicka, 2011). Home is something that does not appear, home is something that is created, and individuals must have the agency to create their ‘home’. Interpreting place identity within the context of home underscores how the creation of homes helps individuals to maintain self-coherence and self-esteem, as part of the process of self-definition. This can be reflected through the ways in which individuals customise, decorate or personalise the space they identify as being home. Thus, within the context of home, place identity is not just an individual’s relationship to a particular place but the place itself becomes part of that person, part of their very identity as an individual, and part of their own concept of self (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000).
Neighbourhood is ultimately an even more fluid concept. Neighbourhoods often lack clearly defined boundaries and their interpretations are often personal and subjective. As Lewicka (2011) describes, individuals living within the same space may define their neighbourhood differently based on their own experiences and what criteria or attributes they use to define neighbourhood. A sense of community refers to the social aspects of such places to which individuals may feel attachment. Individual well-being is often strongly correlated with a perceived sense of community, while research suggests that individual place attachment is more likely to contribute to community attachment (Galster, 2001; Lewicka, 2011; Pretty et al., 2003)

3. DESIGNING HOMES FOR THE AGED: A LITERATURE SURVEY

3.1. Introduction

Although there is a significant body of scholarly literature that addresses the construction and design of home and neighbourhood within various forms of public housing (see Wood, 1961; Yancey, 1971; Francescato, 1979; Coley et al., 1997; Carmona, 2002; Bothwell et al., 2010; Ilesanmi, 2010; Mohit et al., 2010), there appears to be a significant research gap on the relationship between the aged and public housing, particularly written from a built environment perspective. This gap is particularly notable because research on the design and availability of public housing often discusses the importance of accommodating minority communities (see CAEPR 2010; Milligan et al., 2011; Quintilliani, 2014), but the aged are rarely included in that discussion. Moreover, there appears to be a recent and relatively large body of literature on incorporating elderly satisfaction into the design of public spaces (i.e. parks, etc.) (see Arnberger et al., 2017; Srichuave et al., 2016; Yung et al., 2016; Yung et al., 2017). This suggests that the aged are seen by planners and scholars to be a vital component of the urban environment despite their absence from public housing narratives.

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief sketch of the few existing, relevant pieces of scholarly literature on the aged and public housing. It begins by describing the various thematic foci of recent scholarship, including an emphasis on quality of life and aging and place, and concludes by presenting the few sources to comment on purpose-built aged housing from a design perspective. In general, the review suggests that design of purpose-built aged housing must be sensitive to the varied and often unique needs of its prospective residents, while allowing for the maximum of continuity between their old lives and new.

3.2. Aged Housing in the Literature

From a research and policy point of view there seems to be an emphasis on aging in place over purpose built aged-housing (this includes foundational and newer literature) (see Addae-
Dapaah and Wong, 2001; Aini et al., 2006; Brown, 1997; Gaymu, 2003; Gonyea, 2016; Kaida et al., 2009; Meng et al. 2017; Pastalan, 2016; Pynoos, 2018; Szanton et al., 2016; Wiles et al., 2012; Young, 1988; Zhou et al., 2015). Within studies on non-purpose built aged-housing investigations seem to have centred on resident’s quality of life- mostly health and income related issues (see Mancini, 1981; Gillman et al., 1986) but because these investigations occurred in non-aged specific forms of public housing, design is not central to the conversation.

Research on purpose-built aged housing focuses on other factors, notably affordability and financing, over design (see Gibler, 2003; Ong, 2008; Miller, 2011). Two main exceptions have been identified during the course of this review. First, Kose and Nakaohji (1991) provide a detailed architectural assessment of aged housing in Japan. They identify the importance of continuity of lifestyle for the elderly transition to aged housing. For this reason they argue that purpose built aged housing should be designed in a way that allows for the elderly to maintain their existing lifestyle and should provide continuity in transition from old homes to new (Kose and Nakaohji, 1991). To the authors, essential design standards should include the long-term livability of new housing construction, the safety, comfort and usability of housing, and the ability of accommodation to adapt to dwellers needs (Kose and Nakaohji, 1991; Kose, 1994).

Second, Salcedo et al. (2016) provide an architectural assessment of a purpose built ‘village of the elderly’ located in Sao Paulo, Brazil. They found that a lack of specific technical knowledge on human aging contributes to problems related to the accessibility and safety of residents. In other words, those who design and build housing for aged, often have a poor understanding of their specific needs and limitations. As such, purpose built aged housing is often ill-adapted to resident’s needs. For example, they cite the design and provision of small one-bedroom units and kitchenettes as insufficient areas for the performance of daily activities and the accommodation of furniture, leading to the restriction of mobility, dissatisfaction and stress.

One last study, though not specifically about purpose-built aged housing, deserves mention due to its relevance to this research. Gonyea et al. (2016) examines loneliness and depression among older adults in urban subsidized housing in the United States. Their findings suggest that loneliness is a significant contributor to depression amongst the aged living in subsidised aged housing. Moreover, depression can affect not only physical health but also motivation for self-care; thus, untreated depression may contribute to the development of social behavioural problems, which can influence the length of tenancy for older adults in independent subsidized housing. Gonyea et al. (2016) conclude that the prevalence of loneliness and depression among older residents of subsidized housing underscores the need for greater coordination and integration of housing and health services in addressing these often-coexisting problems. Furthermore, they argue that the identification of older residents who are experiencing feelings of loneliness, sadness, and depression, through culturally sensitive screening, can aid in the implementation of early interventions.
4. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide contextual background of the study through a description of the study area. Section 4.2 begins by giving an overview of The Association for the Aged (TAFTA), a KwaZulu-Natal based non-profit organisation (NPO) that owns and manages Langeler Towers. Section 4.3 continues with background information on Langeler Towers itself, including its history, construction, specifications, and the details of the state-subsidy which funded it.

4.2. TAFTA

The Association for the Aged (TAFTA), founded in 1958 in Durban, is a registered non-profit organisation (NPO), which according to their mission statement, advocates and promotes the well-being of older persons in order to alleviate distress of the elderly and other vulnerable groups. Having identified suitable housing as a principle barrier to ageing with dignity in South Africa, TAFTA aims to provide a range of low-cost options for the elderly, as well as a variety of social support services, such as Meals on Wheels and Home Based Care, to enable older persons to continue living in their own homes (TAFTA, 2018).

TAFTA currently owns and operates 14 buildings spread across eThekwini. Altogether, more than 2000 individuals live in TAFTA accommodation, however demand far outstrips supply, and many new residents spend significant time waiting for an opening (TAFTA, 2018). Services and accommodation are intended to be either free or affordable, and as such, the organisation relies heavily on donations from the broader community. TAFTA is governed by a Board of Management and its current CEO is Ms. Femada Shamam.

4.3. Langeler Towers

Langeler Towers, the site of this study, is a new TAFTA residential unit located in the South Beach/Addington area of central Durban. Begun in July 2012, the building was completed in October 2015, with the first residents taking occupancy in November 2016. Construction of the building cost R151,704,711, of which, R69,887,981 was provided through a partial-subsidy from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements- the first of its kind in South Africa for aged housing. The building was designed by MAB Architects and built by Stefcon Projects.
The site of Langeler Towers is significant to TAFTA as it is also the location of John Conradie House, which, built in 1968 was the organisation’s first building, and was the first specially designed home for frail aged people built in South Africa (see Plate 2). Langeler Towers has been built as an addition to John Conradie house, with the two buildings sharing a lobby, parking lot, first floor healing garden, and laundry facilities (see Plate 1). John Conradie possesses a canteen as well as a number of speciality services, such as nursing and frail care, which Langeler Towers does not provide.

Langeler Towers is eleven stories tall and is designed to provide accommodation to approximately 400 residents. Rooms come in a variety of configurations from en-suite studios to 3 bedroom flats which share a communal bathroom. All rooms are self-catering and designed for independent living. As a result, the building seeks to attract a slightly different demographic of the aged, targeting a younger (55 and up), more active, healthy, economically sufficient clientele. Rooms are designed to be move-in ready, with built in storage and cooking spaces (see Plate 4.2), requiring new residents to bring little in the way of furniture. TAFTA will even provide a bed at no cost if needed. Unlike John Conradie House, which runs at a loss due to its wide array of services, Langeler Towers was intended to operate at a profit. This profit would subsidise the running of John Conradie House in order to provide long-term financial sustainability for the complex. In order to fill Langeler Towers TAFTA contracted Tyson Properties as a managing and letting agency. The contract is due for renewal in January 2019, however TAFTA has decided not to renew, and will bring letting in-house. The building currently runs at a loss because 99 units remain to be filled.
TAFTA’s plans regarding Langeler Towers have not proceeded smoothly, however. In 2016 another TAFTA building, Ray Hulett House, located near City Hall in the CBD was found to be structurally unsound. Due to the enormous cost of refurbishing the structure TAFTA decided to sell the building. As a result of this decision hundreds of Ray Hulett House residents needed to be re-homed. Options were given for other TAFTA facilities depending on the income and health, but ultimately the majority of Ray Hulett House residents were moved to Langeler Towers. Thus, rather than Tyson being responsible for renting the entire building, the former Ray Hulett House residents occupy the bottom 5 floors, with TAFTA as their landlord, while Tyson manages just the top six. Most former Ray Hulett residents live in 3 bedroom shared flats, which are most common on the lower floors, with larger flats being more common on the upper floors. However, due to the presence of married couples there are often more than 3 individuals per unit, with roommates of mixed genders often sharing a communal bathroom\(^2\). Roommates were assigned at random, and residents were not allowed to choose who they share a flat with. As this study will demonstrate, this decision has been contentious, as Langeler Towers is a very different building than Ray Hulett House, however, the arrangement is considered permanent by TAFTA.

5. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1. Introduction

\(^2\) Flats at Ray Hulett House were considerably more spacious than at Langeler Towers, with private ensuite bathrooms and dedicated lounge space.
This section describes the methodology that has been utilised for this research. Kitchin and Tate (2000, p. 6) define a methodology as “a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate a phenomenon or situation within a framework dictated by epistemological and ontological ideas”. Thus, the purpose of this section is to describe the research process, while articulating the reasons certain methods were used in relation to the research objectives and the theory within which the project has been framed.

The aim of this study is to evaluate how residents of Langeler Towers create ‘homes’ out of the physical materiality of the rooms in which they find themselves, and how these built forms shape sense of self, neighbourhood and belonging. To explore the research objectives derived from this aim, and the broader ‘Narratives of Home’ project, this study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach, drawing on 12 participatory focus groups conducted with residents and TAFTA staff. This data, in addition to participatory observation and primary document analysis, is analysed using thematic analysis in order to collect information and draw out major themes.

5.2. Social Constructivism

The research process for this thesis falls within the realm of qualitative research and uses deductive reasoning set within an interpretive and constructivist paradigm as its strategy for generating data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This paradigm has partially emerged as part of the ‘interpretive turn’ in social sciences which has rejected positivist assumptions of objectivity and absolutism while embracing hermeneutics and reflexivity (Mottier, 2005). The adoption of a constructivist approach has influenced the research design by emphasising the need to interpret the constructions of reality of respondents while acknowledging the co-creation of knowledge produced during the interview process (Mottier, 2005). From a social constructivist viewpoint, the exchange of information is not one-sided. Instead, researchers and their research subjects are dialectically related in learning from each other (Holt & Willard-Holt, 2000; Prowse, 2010). This means that the learning experience is subjective, and requires that the researcher’s culture, values, and background be acknowledged in the interplay between learners and tasks in the shaping of meaning. This assumption of co-created knowledge is central to a constructivist approach.

The ontology of a constructivist approach is of a socially constructed reality centred on thematic trends. The ontological assumptions of a constructivist approach are that reality is both local and specific. In other words, reality is unique per group and individual and is actively being constructed and influenced by the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A constructivist approach favours qualitative methodologies (Mottier, 2005). According to Merriam (2009), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the way people interpret their world and their experiences within it. This study is qualitative because it follows an approach orientated around the gathering of data from oral sources- placing emphasis on the search for themes to interpret the meaning that people have constructed in their lives (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). Furthermore, the study is deductive because the research process begins with a theoretically formed proposition about citizen’s understandings and interpretations of development- allowing the data to support or contradict theory.
Finally, this research has also been a reflexive process. Broadly speaking, “reflexivity” entails turning back on oneself – a critical process of self-reference that, in its most transparent guise, expresses the researchers’ awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and hence their impacts upon it (Davies, 1999; Moseley & Laris, 2008). Moreover, within the research process itself, reflexivity refers to the ways in which the individual researcher as well as the process of doing research affects the products of research across all phases, from the initial selection of the topic and case study, to the final data itself (Moseley & Laris, 2008). This research has been reflexive in the way in which the researcher has interrogated his own methodological approaches while in the field in order to understand what factors influenced both his behaviour and thinking at the time, the thoughts and responses of the respondents, as well as the process of knowledge co-production that existed between researcher and subject.

5.3. Gaining Access to the Study Site

This study was conducted in Langeler Towers, an aged-housing building owned and operated by The Association for the Aged (TAFTA). As such, significant gatekeeper negotiation with TAFTA was required before accessing the study site. This included numerous communications with head TAFTA staff, meetings with the TAFTA CEO, Ms. Femada Shamam, and a presentation to the TAFTA board given on the 13th of February, 2018. Final approval for site access was given on the 19th of February, 2018 (see Appendix 4). Since gaining access to the site the researcher has been required to liaise with Langeler Towers staff when in the building, as well as provide regular updates on the progress of the study to the TAFTA board. This, has been positive, as it has shown that there is an audience within this key stakeholder for critical research.

5.4. Data Collection

This study utilised a qualitative and interpretive approach, collecting data through a series of (12) participatory semi-structured focus groups conducted in March and April of 2018 with Langeler Towers residents and staff. Defined by Krueger (1994, 6) as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment,” focus groups interviews are a qualitative methodology consisting of small structured groups with purposefully sampled participants, normally led by a moderator (Bowling, 1997). They are set up in order to explore specific topics, and individuals’ views and experiences through group interaction. As with other qualitative methods in which meaning emerges from the participants, focus groups have an element of flexibility and adaptability not found in one on one interviews (Krueger, 1994). Moreover, their open-ended nature offers the benefit of allowing insight into the world of the participant through the eyes and words of the participants themselves (Bowling, 1997). Moreover, the communal nature allows for another layer of knowledge co-production, not just between the respondent and researcher, but also among the respondents themselves.
Focus group interviews were organised according to floor and were advertised in advance through fliers hung in communal spaces in Langeler Towers (see Appendix 1). All residents who wanted to participate were welcome. This led to some groups being large, to the point of unwieldiness, with respondents often speaking over each other, but allowed everyone to have a voice (see Table 1). Focus groups were held in communal areas in the building, either the first floor activity room in Langeler Towers or the 6th floor conference room in John Conradie House, depending on availability. Focus group interviews lasted approximately two hours each, and meetings were catered with cakes and cool drinks. Sessions were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher, with the assistance of UFC staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Floor</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1st</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<td>29/03/2018</td>
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<td>06/04/2018</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/04/2018</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/04/2018</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: List of Focus Groups*

All participants were compensated for their time through the gift of a toiletries hamper (see Plate 3). This gift was decided to be appropriate after consultation with the TAFTA board and building staff. The practice of gift-giving, though potentially problematic, is acknowledged in the literature to be appropriate. As Koch (2013) notes, a researcher cannot simply take from
the communities in which they work. It is unethical to continue to work with and gain information from local individuals without giving back. Thus, it is contended that an awareness of the context led to the selection of these forms of compensation that did not trivialise the respondents time without too strongly incentivising their participation (Koch, 2013). A few consequences of gift-giving did emerge during the course of the fieldwork however, as many residents clearly participated solely to receive the gift at the end, while the present of the hampers in common areas between Langeler Towers and John Conradie House led to resentment from JCH residents who were not given the opportunity to participate.

5.4.1. Focus Group Activities

Each focus group featured three main activities designed to draw out themes related to the study’s research questions. The first exercise saw participants drawing three pictures, one of their old home, one of their current home at Langeler Towers, and a third showing their dream home. After the first three focus groups, the third drawing request was slightly modified to asking participants to show their dream Langeler home, if TAFTA gave them unlimited scope to modify it. Participants were given approximately 10 minutes per drawing (see Plate 4), and afterwards individuals were asked to share their pictures. Discussion centred on the aspects of their drawings that contributed to a sense of ‘home’, as well as on

Plate 5.1: The Toiletry Hamper Presented to Participants
the ways in which individuals altered their rooms to make them feel more like ‘home’. The activity served to stimulate conversation around the research questions, while also serving as an ice breaking activity for the focus group.

The second activity involved a word exercise association, by which the researcher would name a public space in the building or immediate area and participants would give the first word that would come into their head as response. These gut reactions would spark further discussion on each space. The purpose of this activity was to learn how residents use public space, what factors contribute to designing a good public space, and, finally, what are the barriers that exist towards residents utilising public spaces?

The third activity involved a more traditional semi-structured narrative discussion around neighbourhood in Langeler Towers. Residents were prompted with questions designed to draw out themes around the ways in which they interact with each other and with TAFTA staff, as well as the factors that contribute to a sense of community within their floor and the building. Finally, each focus group closed with the opportunity for participants to raise any issues that were not previously discussed, or to share any other concerns they might have.

5.5. Analysis
This study utilises thematic analysis to organise and interpret the themes which emerged during the data collection process. Thematic analysis, a qualitative methodology common within social research and a popular form of social constructivist analysis, is the process utilised to interpret the data collected for this study. The interpretive nature of thematic analysis greatly compliments the interpretive turn taking place with the social sciences (Mottier, 2005). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p. 154), the purpose of all forms of constructivist analysis is to reveal the “cultural materials from which particular utterances, texts or events have been constructed”. Through the framework of a social constructivist paradigm, emphasis is placed on identifying themes that show how social constructions of reality are created and how they influence the thoughts, experiences, and decision-making of groups and individuals.

Broadly, thematic analysis is a methodology used for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Deductively driven data analysis works ‘down’ from pre-existing theoretical understandings (Ezzy, 2002). Unlike content analysis, which begins with predefined categories, thematic analysis allows categories to emerge, putting great emphasis on the interpretation and deductive abilities of the researcher. From a constructivist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced, rather than lying inherently within individuals. Therefore, thematic analysis conducted within a constructivist framework does not focus only on individual’s motivations or understandings, but instead seeks to theorise about socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts collected in the field (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As a methodology, thematic analysis is most frequently conducted using a 'coding' process which attempts to organise data under a number of umbrella groups or categories. Once the data has been 'coded' and organised it is much easier for a researcher to identify themes and formulate answers to their research questions. A ‘code,’ in qualitative research, is most often a word or phrase that represents a summative or essence-capturing attribute from the data identified by the researcher—or in other words, a theme (Saldana, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that there is no hard-and-fast answer to the question of what proportion of your data set needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a theme. Rather it is left to the judgment of the researcher to determine the themes. Moreover, an account of themes ‘emerging’ or being ‘discovered’ is criticised as a passive account of the process of analysis that ignores the active role the researcher always plays in identifying themes and selecting which are the most relevant to the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The software programme Nvivo was utilised to assist with the coding process. Interviews were transcribed within Nvivo and its tools were used to code “nodes” or themes and structuring the data to address the research questions. Nvivo also allowed for the streamlined management of interviews and focus group data while storing relevant quotes by participants.

5.6. Budget
The budget for this study was estimated at R42,185. This includes: R4,500 for focus group materials, R4,500 for focus group refreshments, R10,800 to compensate participants, R4,500 to hire a research assistant, R12,500 for transcription services, R2000 for a final seminar at Langeler Towers, and an additional 10% to cover incidental costs. This amount was fully disbursed to the researcher, and has been spent, except for a remaining R2000 for a report-back session at Langeler Towers to be held early in 2019. Amounts spent closely matched those estimated, however the cost of participant compensation was nearly 50% more than expected, the difference being deducted from the transcription services which were sourced within the UFC to save costs. All receipts have been kept and are available on request.

5.7. Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical issues were considered in order to protect the integrity of the research process as well as the confidentiality of participants. First, the ‘Narratives of Home’ project has been granted ethical approval by the DUT Institutional Research Ethics Committee and was assigned the number IREC 003/17. During the course of the research all DUT ethical standards were maintained. Participation was strictly voluntary, and individuals could withdraw their participation at any time. Prior to each focus group participants were presented with an information letter (see Appendix 2) describing the study and its key research questions. Participants were also given a consent form (see Appendix 3) describing the ethical considerations of the study, which was signed by every participant and returned to the researcher. Consent forms have been safely and securely stored in the researcher’s office at the Durban University of Technology. Copies of the final report will be available to both the TAFTA board and residents of Langeler Towers.

All interviews were audio recorded. However, no names were ever asked, and the anonymity of individual respondents has been protected. In this report participants have not be identified, except by the floor in which they reside at Langeler Towers. All audio recordings have been safely and securely stored on an external hard drive in the researcher’s office at the Durban University of Technology. Per the researcher’s agreement with TAFTA, he may provide interview transcripts to the TAFTA board on request, but will maintain personal possession of the audio files.

6. CREATING ‘HOME’ IN LANE RLER TOWERS

6.1. Introduction

As described in Section Two, a sense of ‘home’ is a deeply personal place attachment that transforms a given place into an expression of an individual’s identity, as well as a core element of their concept of self (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). As the literature suggests, and this section further articulates, ‘Home’ does not appear, rather it is created through the
agency of an individual to transform a space to reflect their needs and personality (Lewicka, 2001). The purpose of this section is to explore the role of ‘home’ in the lives and identities of the residents of Langeler Towers. Section 6.2 begins by unpacking the meaning of ‘home’ to residents, specifically the emotional and physical aspects of the concept which particularly resonated with respondents. It also discusses the ways in which their needs and understanding of ‘home’ has shifted as they transition into aged housing and the later phases of their life. Next, Section 6.3 explores the ways in which residents have transformed their units in order to create a sense of ‘home’ or place identity within Langeler Towers. This section also highlights a number of challenges present in the building that have hindered residents’ ability to personalise their living space. Sections 6.4 and 6.5 highlight two major challenges residents have faced in transferring existing notions of ‘home’ into their new residences, namely the importance of family and personal space. Finally, Section 6.6 concludes by summarising key themes and reflecting on the study’s research questions.

6.2. What is Home?

At the start of each focus group interview participants were asked to reflect on their own interpretations of ‘home’ by drawing and sharing a picture of one residence from their life that most felt like ‘home’. Finally, at the end of each drawing session individuals were asked to draw and share a depiction of their ideal home, either in a TAFTA building or somewhere else. As described in Chapter 5, the drawings themselves were not particularly revealing, but the process allowed participants to reflect on these places, contributing to vibrant group discussion.

To participants, ‘home’ was a place of emotional attachment. Without prompting, words like happiness, peace, freedom, and love, were consistently used by respondents to describe previous ‘homes’ (see Plate 5). Of these feelings, the most popular emotion evoked was comfort - a house was ‘home’ because it was a comfortable space. This included a level of place dependence - ‘home’ was comfortable because it had everything one needed for their life, but ‘home’ was also comfortable because it possessed a number of characteristics that reinforced each individual’s sense of self and identity. Although these characteristics often overlap, conflict, or reinforce each other, a number of clear themes can be identified. Thus, to participants the main features of ‘home’ include: family, independence, personalisation, space, and connections to larger communities and to the natural environment.

6.2.1. Family

To most respondents, the presence of family was the most essential element of transforming a place into a home. Many drew pictures of previous family homes full of children, or reflected on growing up themselves in multi-generational households (see Plate 6). For some, this
included reflections on happy childhoods spent in large and dynamic family units, as one respondent from the 11th floor (06/04/2018) articulates:

My home was a very simple home in Howick. It wasn’t a double story or whatever, but it was very cosy. I used to stay with my brothers and sisters. We would play outside in the trees and run around like wild things and we were very close. We had good communication. We’d talk to each other as brothers and sisters. Mom and dad were always there to assist us at all times when we had problem. I miss the times we used to come together as a family we come and unite and be a happy family. That was good for me.

Many respondents expressed great fondness for past multi-generation homes where individuals across a broad spectrum of background and ages could find a sense of belonging. Space was seldom in contention, and ‘home’ was a place where everyone was welcome to stay, even if a bed was not immediately. One respondent from the ninth floor (05/04/2018) described their childhood home through this interaction:
Q: And who stayed here?

A: The entire family. You know in those days we didn’t worry about how many people stayed in the house because it was a different situation

Q: Ok, Why? What made it different?

A: ...These days... you can’t visit without picking up the phone and calling. In those days if somebody comes from far away and we didn’t have transport... if his family came and visited me on the weekend, I’d say don’t go home just stay the night, you find a spot to sleep in the house and you sleep, that is how it works.

Plate 6.2: One resident’s multi-generational home

This often extended to the sharing of scarce resources for those who grew up in more financially strained circumstances. However, a number of respondents reflected on this as a positive more than a burden, as one individual from the sixth floor (04/04/2018) described while sharing her picture:

My grandmother is here standing by the door, we didn’t have a lot of money but what we had was enough, and when we were coming from school she would cut one piece
from the garden or a guava even if all ten of us were coming from school each one of us had a piece, so there was a lot of sharing and caring. Kitchen stove, two bathrooms, cold water and there was an outside toilet, which was the bucket system then, I remember that because I was so terrified of that system, kids playing in the yard, washing stone, cold water, hanging the clothes drying, old buildings with tenants as well. We all shared.

Many other individuals described the houses in which they raised their children as feeling the most like ‘home’. The ability of the space to allow them to create and foster a family of their own was an indelible element of home. These emotion also worked in the obverse, and for some, particularly those who had been widowed, a sense of ‘home’ was intrinsically tied with memories of passed loved ones, and thus tinged with a sense of loss. Even for those that had previously transitioned to aged housing, family remained a central feature of their definition of home, and former residents of Ray Hulet House who chose to draw their Ray Hulet apartments generally reflected on the space those units provided for hosting and entertaining visiting family members. Finally, the central role of family in respondents’ concept of ‘home’ was also extended to animals, with many Langeler residents reflecting on the role past pets played in forming cohesive family units, as well as providing a sense of safety and security.

Although most of the respondents were reconciled to living away from family, and indeed many had willing transitioned to aged housing, being able to maintain some physical connection to family remained a central part of most ‘dreams’. This largely manifested in space to host visiting family members- either a spare bedroom where guests or grandkids to stay overnight, or entertainment space to use during visits.

6.2.2. Independence

In slight contrast to (but not mutually exclusive from) the previously described strong attachment to family and memory, for some respondents ‘home’ represented a place of freedom in which they could live an independent life. For one individual on the seventh floor (04/04/2018), this meant the ability to live a life-style of their choosing and to entertain when they wanted. For others who had left previous multi-generational living spaces, establishing a ‘home’ was being able to claim some private space for themselves. For another respondent from the sixth floor (04/04/2018), an important step to creating ‘home’ was establishing distance from family in order to foster a sense independence:

This is my home in Secunda, where I was a single parent I brought up my two kids. We were the first non-whites on the street, but I just adapt wherever I go. What I liked about this place is that we were far from family... I am a very independent person and typically the Indians want to get in to your space and so forth, so while I was a single male parent my family didn’t interfere with my kids
6.2.3. Personalisation

The ability to customise the aesthetics of a place to suit one’s personal needs and taste, either through design, decoration, or furnishing, was a central aspect of participants’ concept of ‘home’. For one respondent from the fifth floor (29/03/2018) who had built their own home this meant having complete agency over the design of the structure, as well as a sense of pride in having constructed it themselves. For most though, being able to select the décor, such as carpets, drapery, hangings, and pictures, were essential in personalising a space to reflect each individuals personal identity, while fostering a greater sense of place attachment. This also extended the innumerable personal items that fill a home, such as books, which possess personal importance and create individual happiness. Furniture was also very important, and many individuals, particularly those who came from Ray Hulett House, reflected on the ways they had furnished their home to accommodate their needs and create a more comfortable space. A respondent from the fourth floor (29/03/2018) reflected the importance of these individual aspects in the following interaction:

A: When I used to live at Ray Hullet I decorated my home very well. I had plants, I had pictures on the walls, I had a little lounge, I had a little kitchen and I had a bedroom on the other side

Q: And how did these plants and decorations make you feel?

A: It made it feel like a home. Like I am a human being.

For respondents, agency to personalise past living spaces greatly contributed to a sense of ‘home’ and personal attachment. For some, it also fostered a sense of stewardship, inspiring them to constantly maintain and improve their space, as one respondent from the tenth floor (06/04/2018) recalled:

Inside my house we had a lovely windows and we put in beautiful curtains.... I loved to keep everything clean. Our beautiful brown floors! I’d get down on the floor and put the polish on and my husband would come on his knees and shine those floors until they are shinning. We were young and he would do anything for me because we were in love. We loved one another and we had children and at 17:00 they would come inside as soon as the street light are switched on, everything was in order everything was done accordingly.

This quote also reflects the ways in which these elements (i.e. family, personalisation, etc.) are all bound up in memory and identity and are difficult to disentangle as individual fundamentals of ‘home’.

6.2.4. Space

Another element of home which emerged is something I describe as ‘space’, but encompasses such factors as size or roominess. Indeed, the concept of ‘space’ or spaciousness was
generally the first point to emerge when individuals reflected positively on past homes (usually in conjunction with ‘comfort’). Space allows for customisation through furniture and decoration, the accommodation of friends and family, as well as allowing the ability to entertain guests. For some respondents, having a large enough home provided them with purpose and kept them busy, as one woman from the eighth floor (05/04/2018) described:

I miss my late husband and my garden because normally I like to plant and spend time in the morning in the garden, cleaning because I loved my cleaning, it occupies my time and keeps me busy and fit.

For others, a larger ‘space’ evoked more of a sense of freedom, of choice, and of homeliness. As many described, ‘it feels like home because I’ve got space’. ‘Space’ provided potential, and allowed for flexibility in family arrangements. Having extra bedrooms allowed for the accommodation of family, children for some, but also extended family or visitors from out of town. A woman from the ninth floor (05/04/2018) described such an arrangement at her previous home:

Number one it was spacious, you are comfortable, and you have got your whole family with you and whoever comes from wherever was always welcome to come and stay. We don’t have a problem, you know we throw a blanket on the floor - it was comfortable.

Bigger rooms accommodated more people, but also more furniture and personal effects. One man from the ninth floor (05/04/2018) lamented the size of modern homes, “The houses of today have very small rooms, that was a huge house, because you could fit twice the amount of things that you can fit in our room.”

A larger home is also something that one is proud of, and wants to show off. Having the space to entertain guests, for many, strongly contributed to a sense of home. One woman from the eighth floor (05/04/2018) described her previous home and the importance of entertaining, “It was comfortable and cozy and I could entertain one or two friends, sit and have a cup of coffee and so it was more spacious”. To participants a proper home should allow for private space, as well as space to entertain family and guests.

In their ‘dreams’ most respondents no longer looked for the same amounts of ‘space’ they had enjoyed earlier in life, indeed for many down-sizing had been a motivation for moving to Langeler Towers. However, having the space to maintain continuity of lifestyle between old and new remained an essential feature of participants’ drawings. This includes space to host family and other visitors, to entertain neighbours and guests, to indulge their hobbies and relax, as well as a bit of ‘elbow room’ so that individuals will feel comfortable and not cramped in their own homes. Respondents also overwhelmingly rejected open plan living arrangements, and instead favoured separate rooms which more clearly demarcated private spaces, such as bedrooms and bathrooms, from entertainment and living spaces.

6.2.5. Part of a Larger Community
For many respondents being part of a larger community, be it a neighbourhood, family, or the larger city in general, contributes to a greater sense of home. For example, when reflecting on past homes, many respondents expressed a longing for the close knit neighbourhoods in which they once lived. Communities were like families, with individual households mingling, working together, playing together, or sharing a meal. Home wasn’t just your house, but the street, your neighbours’ place, and the sense of belonging and identity that came from continuity, hardship, and struggle. One respondent from the ninth floor (05/04/2018) described growing up in such an environment:

That house was built in 1958, by my father and it went to me, and the community made life so beautiful because people had a different attitude because now with people you don’t know who your neighbour is. But in those days anybody could walk into anybody’s house and have a meal.

Other respondents who grew up in blocks of flats describe the corridors and stoops as being extensions of their homes, as well as space for personalisation and customisation, with neighbours competing to out decorate each other during the holidays. For former Ray Hulett residents this sense of a home being part of a larger community extended to their sense of being residents of Durban, being located in the centre of the CBD, and connected to the life and energy of a major city.

6.2.6. The Natural Environment

A final theme that was echoed by respondents as being an essential component of ‘home’ was being able to foster and maintain some sort of connection to the natural environment. Respondents, particularly those who previously lived in single family homes, often reflected fondly on past yards, gardens, and other outdoor spaces, while nature elements featured prominently in drawings of past ‘homes’, often eclipsing the picture of the house itself (see Plate 7).
For some, it was the tranquillity and freedom of the outdoor space that most contributed to a sense of home. The garden was an extension of the home in which family, children, and pets could play and be free. It was a space in which one could ‘breathe’. For others, the aesthetics of the plants themselves were valuable, either the trees they had planted themselves, or the flower beds they cultivated (see Plate 8). One woman from the tenth floor (06/04/2018) reflected on their former garden, “This home in Cato Manner..... we did our own gardening, in the summer time we would have a lot of flowers, and the memories of those flowers are dailiers, asters and many others”. The woman from the tenth floor (06/04/2018) continues, “In the winter times we had sweet potatoes in the garden and madumbhe’s, we used to get all those things from our garden as well as green beans and we lived a very great life.” This sentiment extended to fruit trees which many respondents recalling the cultivation and harvesting of, as being a central aspect of family and household life.
Plate 6.4: A respondent reflects on their flowers

Although most respondents understood that such outdoor spaces may not be realistic for aged housing, while reflecting on their ‘dream’ homes, some outdoor space remained a central feature of drawings. This included both private spaces such as balconies or small personal gardens, as well as larger shared garden spaces in which individuals could relax or entertain guests. In lieu of dedicated outdoor space, even just having the space and light inside one’s home to keep potted plants was considered essential.

6.3. Transforming Space

Residents arriving to Langeler Towers in 2017 and 2018 were tasked with recreating a sense of ‘home’ within a brand new building- a living situation new to most residents and seemingly blank slate. Although residents are still relatively new to the space, and the development of attachment and identity take time, early developments have been revealing. This section examines these processes. It begins by exploring resident’s first impressions of their rooms. It continues by describing the changes they have made after moving in in order to personalise their space, and it concludes by discussing the changes they would like to make, as well as the barriers that prevent them.
The data from this section is largely derived from the drawing activity, during the second part of which individuals were asked to draw and describe their current flat in Langeler Towers. Analysis suggests that a number of design decisions (both intentional and unintentional) associated with the units in Langeler Towers has prevented residents from being able to create a sense of home within their new living spaces, inhibiting a sense of place identity from developing.

6.3.1. First Impressions

For most respondents, their first impression of their new Langeler Towers flat was largely shaped by their reaction to the small size of the unit. Many respondents claim that they were never shown the units prior to move-in, and nonetheless, had little choice in the matter. This sentiment was particularly echoed by former Ray Hulett House residents who were required to move in a short time frame with little consultation. For most, the size of their new house filled them with dismay, and it remained an emotive question at the time of the interviews. In fact, when prompted with the question, ‘shocked’ was the most common response, with other emotions such as disappointment and anger being offered. A number of individuals also recall being physically sickened. One woman from the seventh floor (04/04/2018) described her arrival, “I collapsed and started crying- I have started trying to adjust but I didn’t know what to expect at all.”

After the initial shock upon seeing the unit, the first step was to map out a plan for the space, as one woman from the sixth floor (04/04/2018) described:

I think where I was going to put my bed and where I was going to put my TV, it was many, everything just came together, because I had this mental picture of how I wanted to see it and seriously it is the way I visualized it and more

For many, however, the process was much more painful and a majority of respondents recall being overwhelmed with the downsizing they would have to do in order to fit into their Langeler unit. One man from the tenth floor (06/04/2018) described his impressions:

When I first heard of Langeler Towers I went up and they took us around and showed us these places and you obviously had to choose what you wanted, I looked at it and said oh this place is small how am I going to fit all the stuff that I have got?

TAFTA staff within Langeler Towers admit that first impressions are not always positive, adding that for former Ray Hulett House residents the transition was particularly difficult. As staff member describes, the initial trauma of the move has significantly impacted the ability of these residents to adapt to their new surroundings:

You see from the onset they weren’t shown the rooms they would be going to and they were allowed at the last minute to view and I would say it is one third of the size of the room that they had previously so it was a major adjustment for them, they had to get rid of most of their things for them to be accommodated in these rooms, and
that was really a sore point for them at the start and it took a while for them to really adjust here.

Beyond being shocked by the small size of the flats respondents also reported being struck by how dark some of the internal units are, as well as the lack of windows. The shared toilet and bathroom facilities were also an initial source of anxiety for new residents in the lower floors, particularly those who had previously had en-suite, private facilities at Ray Hulett House. Nonetheless, not all initial impressions were negative, and some residents, particularly those living on the higher floors remember being struck by the cleanliness of the building, the neatness of the flats, as well as the views available in some of the units.

6.3.2. Customisation and Personalisation

Since moving in residents have made a number of small changes in order to customise or personalise their space and make it feel more like ‘home’. One of the first things that residents do to transform the space is filling it with objects, like furniture, that make the space more comfortable. One woman from the eighth floor (05/04/2018) describes how she has changed her flat:

I have got a nice big curtain, I have put another cupboard, and I in fact have got a big room and I have got my sitty right there and I have got a coffee table, and that in fact makes it more cozy.

A comfortable chair, a small table, specific appliances, or a special bed were all items that residents commonly highlighted in describing their units. Also important were smaller pieces, such as books, movies, or other entertainment items that help keep residents occupied throughout the day. For some, these items also form part of treasured collections that are important to self-identity and contribute to place attachment.

The major barrier towards this time of personalisation is space. As described in Section 4, individual units are small, with built-in cupboards and kitchen space. The intention, according to building staff (10/04/2018) is for the units to be move-in ready, with residents needing to bring little beyond a bed\(^3\) and basic kitchen appliances (i.e. mini-fridge, microwave, and hotplate). This leaves scope for little personal furniture beyond possibly a chair or a small sofa and side table. For most residents, massive downsizing was required prior to moving in, which remains a source of grief and resentment. One man from the tenth floor (06/04/2018) described his experience:

Well coming from a bigger place, where we had basically everything in our homes, we built up over the years, we had a full lounge suite, carpet and television and double televisions and fridges, freezers and our son used to stay with us. ...We had to sell everything of to be able to move here, the situation we were in didn’t give us any alternative and that decision was made and that was it, coming here that was it and

\(^3\) TAFTA will even provide a bed free of charge to any individual who should require one.
there was no going this way or the other about it.

For residents who had to sell off furniture, the experience marks a sharp divide between their old life and their new, and most residents were able to recount either a prized wardrobe, seat, cupboard, or bed which they miss in their new home.

The lack of space rules out any unique furnishing or arrangements, leading to the rooms feeling standardised and bland, inhibiting a sense of place identity from forming. As one woman from the second floor (28/03/2018) described, “You cannot make this room a home, it’s too tiny, there’s no space”. A man from the first floor (27/03/2018) echoed this sentiment, “We cannot do much in there we are squeezed there, we are in a big squeeze because the place is very small, and you cannot do much on that space”. Due to the lack of space for furniture, many residents have nowhere to sit beside their beds. Many describe spending most of their day either in or on their bed, with it serving double duty as couch and dining room table. As their only piece of furniture, the bed is central to many resident’s lives. For these individuals, the only way they can show some agency over the space is the way in which they position the bed, while others take great pride in the cushions and comforters they use to decorate its surface (see Plate 6.5).

Plate 6.5: Single Room (Photo Credit: TAFTA)

This issue of space as an inhibitor to personalisation and the formation of a sense of ‘home’, is most apparent on the bottom five floors, where rooms are smaller and have been subdivided in order to accommodate the former residents of Ray Hulett House. There, as described in Section 4, many flats consist of three small, individual rooms, subdivided by thin drywall sheeting walls, all sharing a common corridor and bathroom. For these residents there is little space for furniture as the floor space of the room is almost entirely occupied by built in cabinetry, the kitchenette space, and the resident’s bed. For these residents a whole array of unflattering metaphors were used to describe their living conditions, including ‘boiled-up sardines’, ‘trapped in a can’, ‘tomb’, ‘matchbox’, ‘rats in a cage’, and ‘mouse-trap’ (see Plate 6.6). For these residents ‘tearing down the walls’ is the most important and impactful change that they can envision.
These drywall partitions also serve as a barrier to another form of personalisation and customisation, the hanging of pictures or other decorations on the walls. For residents on upper floors, the hanging of family photos, pleasant art, wall hangings, or other types of decorations have served as an important step in customising their room in order to make it feel more like a home. A woman from the eighth floor (05/04/2018) describes the way she has decorated her room:

Well I am happy with my room, on the walls I have got a frame, with two beautiful dogs they are lovely with long white fur, and then next to it is one colourful picture of two birds. On the other wall I have got two mirrors, they are decorated and below that I have got my TV, decoder and a string of lights. So I have made it kind of pretty and it is sort of bold coloured… It is very comfortable, but I have made it [that way]. I feel happy when I am inside.

Of the items that could be hung as decoration, family photos were overwhelmingly important for most respondents, representing a sense of continuity between their old lives and their new. For some, particularly widowed women, pictures of husbands or other passed family members were of great significance, and a signal marker of ‘home’. For others, being able to display portraits of grandchildren was a mark of pride, and these were among the most important of their personal effects that they were able to bring with them into their new home (see Plate 6.5). Many respondents reported putting great care and thought into the ways in which these pictures were displayed, either colour coordinating them or arranging them in just such a way as they were in previous homes.

However, in the rooms with plaster board partitions, predominantly located on the lower floors, residents are unable to hang any items, such as pictures, on the walls, because they are too thin to support nails or other fasteners. As many of these residents described, you
cannot put a nail into the wall because it will go right through to the other side. As a consequence, residents in these rooms have been unable to decorate or personalise their rooms in the same way that residents on higher floors have been able to do, and as a result they feel less connected to the space. Other limits on personalisation have also contributed to this disconnect. For example, residents report not being allowed to put down carpets or rugs or hang your own curtains. As a resident from the second floor (28/03/2018) described, “No carpets allowed. You cannot even have a bedside mat. When you get out of your bed you must get onto a cold floor. It is uncomfortable and frustrating because it feels like we cannot even change the floor.” Moreover, the built-in cupboards, despite being a free source of storage for residents, also prove to be a source of irritation for some. For one, they cannot be moved, looking residents into a particular room configuration that may not be satisfying. Furthermore, they preclude the ability for a resident to use their own storage options, and as a consequence many residents were forced to get rid of previously owned cupboards that they would have preferred.

According to building staff (10/04/2018), many of these design decisions were made in order to ensure uniformity and to provide new residents with a move-in ready living space. Moreover, the partitions on the lower floors were put in not by choice, but as a last minute effort to accommodate the large number of former residents moving from Ray Hulett House. This is a result of hard decisions TAFTA has had to make in order to accommodate as many individuals as possible on limited resources. Although the decisions may have been made in good faith, they have combined to create a sterile, impersonal living space that residents are not only disempowered to develop into a ‘home’, but are actively and systemically discouraged from personalising (i.e. through bans on carpets, curtains, and other physical changes). As a result, many residents have been unable to create a sense of ‘home’ in Langeler Towers, and instead feel like they are merely occupying space, not living existing in what one resident from the third floor (28/03/2018) described as ‘borrowed space’. Although they have formed some attachment to the space, it has occurred through dependence (for many, bound in a lack of alternatives), because they have been unable to assert their own identity on the space in meaningful ways.

6.4. Family and Memory

The inability to customise and personalise their space has limited residents’ ability to create a sense of ‘home’ in Langeler towers, however, other unintended aspects of their living situation has also hindered this process. As Section 6.2 described, family is integral to most respondents’ sense of ‘home’. Moreover, for the aged, being able to spend time with family members is an important point of continuity between their old lives and their new. However, space restrictions within rooms at Langeler Towers makes it difficult for residents to entertain guests. Rooms do not include entertainment space, so for most residents, the only sitting space is, as the previous section described, their beds, or perhaps one chair. The following quotes describe why this is problematic and often embarrassing for residents:

It makes you feel embarrassed when someone comes over. Now the visitors will come and sit in the bed and we sleep in the bed and fart there, I sometimes have visitors
but then I have got no chairs or benches for them to sit, they sit on our beds and we do not like that (Eighth Floor, 05/04/2018).

Every little space is utilised, I will sit on my bed because it is my bed, and if somebody doesn’t have a chair I would make them sit on the foot of the bed. I could buy more stuff but... there is no space (Eleventh Floor, 06/04/2018)

We cannot entertain visitors because they have got no place to sit... we are so cramped, but when the grandchildren all come they all go to the bed they have no space to sit (First Floor, 27/03/2018).

As described in the previous section, family and entertainment space were central features of previous ‘homes’. Moreover, when designing their own homes during the ‘dreaming’ phase of the drawing exercise, a separate sitting or lounge space was the most frequent request so that residents could more easily entertain visitors, and family in particular. As such, the limited to non-existent entertainment space in resident’s rooms have led to a situation in which they are reluctant or unable to receive visits from family. This situation is exacerbated, according to respondents, by the parking situation at Langeler Towers, which does not include any provision for guest parking. Rather, visitors must park on the street, which respondents describe as being unsafe and unpleasant:

All of us get visitor ... especially on a weekend, they struggle to get parking outside and they are not allowed to park inside unless they bring something big to drop it of inside. My son in law also came and they broke into his van outside, now they are scared of coming and leaving their cars outside (Ninth Floor, 05/04/2018).

My daughter almost got killed in her car as she was just trying to get out of the parking and a taxi was coming from the bottom, he stopped ten inches away from my daughter’s front door, where she was sitting. It is very dangerous. They do not want to come so often now (Tenth Floor, 06/04/2018).

For some, this has created a situation in which family members simply do not visit because of the difficulties and inconveniences. One gentleman from the fifth floor (29/03/2018) recounted this experience and the impact this situation has had on his life:

I will give you one example, three weeks ago I had two cars come in, we were in Chatsworth and two cars came in and dropped us and the other car, so all my nephews, nieces and everybody. We were supposed to come and show them where we live, but they couldn’t, they just dropped us on the road because there is no parking. People were standing on the road and hooting, and they said you know what we will come and visit you some other time, they dropped us on the road and they went. It was very sad that our people couldn’t come in and visit us.

As previously described, tangible connections to family are an essential component of ‘home’. It is hard to know whether these issues are really at fault for residents’ disconnections, as in
many ways aged housing are models of disconnection, and a number of other factors, independent of the building itself, could be responsible. However, according to residents’ perceptions, space limitations, both within flats and with Langeler Towers in general, have affected residents’ ability to maintain sufficient relationships with family members, inhibiting the formation of a sense of ‘home’, and contributing to significant loneliness and mental anguish.

6.5. Privacy and Personal Space

Beyond space in which to entertain family and friends, ‘space’ is important for providing residents with a sense of individuality. As a previous section described, ‘space’ evokes a sense of freedom, of choice, and of homeliness- a sense that a given space is your own. However, when asked to reflect on their Langeler Towers home, the most common refrain from respondents was a lack of personal space, leading to very little privacy and a sense that residents were ‘living on top of each other’. Two design factors most significantly contributed to this feeling. First, the proximity of the rooms create a situation in which sound carries easily between units, and residents are easily disturbed by noises coming from their neighbours. The following conversation from the eleventh floor (05/04/2018) illustrates how this impacts residents’ ability to enjoy their personal space with infringing on their neighbours’ privacy:

A1: I’ve got wonderful speakers and a radio but I can’t even bring it to play myself some good music in because the room is so small, I am actually cramped in my room

Q: Why can’t you play the radio?

A1: I cannot put the sound on because I am going to disturb my neighbour so I consider her also, I actually consider everybody

A2: When I put my sound on I have to ask my neighbour if he is sleeping or whatever, if he says its fine then I listen.

A3: I have got to ask my neighbour all the time are you comfortable with the sound.

Although the way the sound carries between rooms was mentioned as a problem on all floors, it is most acute on the lower floors, in rooms with the plaster-board partitions. In these rooms residents report having to be particularly conscious of noise, as the television, conversations, or even snoring can travel between rooms. This significantly erodes a sense of privacy for residents as the following quotes illustrate:

There is no privacy. When a husband and wife are having a quarrel, we all hear it, we all have to experience it. And then, the next morning, we must see them holding hands, and we all know there business (Fifth Floor, 29/03/2018).

Why I say there is no privacy is because in the next room the person is on the phone and you can hear the whole conversation in your room and if you are in your phone
and the next person can hear the whole conversation. You can hear there TV clearly because the walls are so thin (First Floor, 27/03/2018).

We are separated by boards. The neighbour, when they sleep at night, they may kick the wall and you will get a fright (Third Floor, 28/03/2018).

You can actually hear your neighbour snoring as if they were right next to you (Fourth Floor, 29/03/2018).

The orientation of these partitioned flats, three bedrooms open to a central corridor, also limit privacy as guests must also walk past the open doors of the other rooms. For residents with outside friends, boyfriends, or girlfriends, this was described as extremely embarrassing, and not befitting the lifestyle of an independent adult.

The other serious point of concern around privacy and personal space for residents, specifically those sharing the flats with the partitioned bedrooms, is the communal nature of the bathroom facilities. As Section 4 described, in these units three bedrooms (each containing 1 individual or a married couple) are positioned around a shared hallway linked to a shared bathroom, containing a toilet, sink, and shower (see Plate 6.6). To many of those affected, this is far too many people to be sharing one restroom. This is particularly true for former Ray Hulett House residents who had enjoyed en-suite bathrooms in previous TAFTA housing. As such, access to, and ownership of the restroom is a constant source of conflict between neighbours. At points, tension over the shared restrooms even came to the surface during focus groups as this exchange from the first floor (27/03/2018) illustrates:

Q: What about the toilet? Do you find that it is accessible?
A: No every time she said I mustn’t use her toilet.
A2: The one is annoyed with the other
A: When I try to use it I find that she locked it and I went to report it they went and opened it. I now go to the passage toilet when she is in the shower because the toilet is the shower also so that is why she doesn’t want me to use the toilet.
A: I have a lot of problems with her and today, and every other day we have a problem. I cannot live like this

Although TAFTA is responsible for cleaning restrooms on the lower floors regularly, many feel that the overcrowding in units has contributed to a disgusting and untenable situation. This is exacerbated by the fact that residents are elderly, as an interaction with the Fourth Floor (29/03/2018) describes:

Q: Ok, some people say it is not a good situation, it is ok, there are too many people sharing it but they keep it clean
A: Not all

A2: We are not all the same and that is the case

Q: So it depends on who is using it hey, it depends on your situation, some people have it ok, and some people it is difficult?

A2: Because it is old people. Some of them may have accidents and you cannot blame them for that, and everybody doesn’t think that way

A3: If one person is in the loo there, where is the next person going to go?
A4: Yes if you also want to use the toilet and it is an emergency where are you going to go? Where are you going to use the toilet because we are sharing the bathroom and toilet? If someone is in the shower, how do you use the toilet?

The way that sound carries within flats also affects the lack of privacy associated with the shared toilet, as residents reporting hearing, and often smelling their neighbours using the restroom, even behind closed doors.

Plate 6.7: Typical Shared Restroom (Photo Credit: TAFTA)

The issue of lack of privacy and personal space concerning the shared bathroom space was particularly felt by those individuals living in mixed gender situations; for example, sharing a flat with a married couple. This was widely reported by respondents to be improper and a constant source of embarrassment and discomfort for those affected. Female residents were particularly disturbed by the situation, causing some residents to request room changes, as a conversation from the Fourth Floor (29/03/2018) suggests:
A: When they put them here, they put two men and one lady in the one place to share and if somebody has his wife, husband or is a widow how do you do that? How do you put other men and woman to share, I cannot understand it.

Q: How does that make you feel?

A: It makes you feel terrible because a friend of mine moved from the one place into the other and in a month’s time she went back and took her older place because she was so uncomfortable.

A2: It was me.

A: And I mean look it is not a nice thing.

Female respondents also reported feeling uncomfortable undressing in their room or using the restroom for fear or being seen by male roommates. For some women, having mixed gender living spaces has led to them feeling unsafe or being unable to relax in their own homes. Conversely, males in the same position reported being unable to walk around without a shirt on or leave their door open for fear of making their female roommates feel uncomfortable. This dynamic was reported as being exacerbated by the drinking habits of some male residents, which add an unpredictable and often volatile dynamic to roommate interactions.

The lack of privacy and personal space for residents has contributed to a situation in which many residents feel embarrassed and disgusted by their living situation. They live on top of each other, yet feel alone. They are afraid to have guests because the space does not allow for it and they are ashamed to have family members confront the conditions in which they live. Personal and ‘public’ space is blurred, as guests who do visit must sit on resident’s beds. One woman from the third floor (28/03/2018) articulates how some feel, “We live like animals, even... the shacks are better.... They brought us from Ray Hullets and dumped us with no choice”- showing that place identity is certainly relative. Building staff (20/04/2018) recognise the problems, but are powerless to make new arrangements as alternatives for residents do not exist, and what was meant to be a temporary solution has solidified into, what staff describe, as a permanent state of dysfunction.

These conditions have contributed to a range of unintended consequences for affected residents which will be discussed further in Section 8, however, the immediate impact is that residents feel disconnected from their living space. There room has come to represent a space of tension and discomfort, rather than a space of peace and relaxation. In these conditions creating a sense of ‘home’ has been difficult for most residents, particularly those in partitioned rooms, while place attachment has only developed through dependency and a lack of alternatives, rather than the formation of a positive place identity. Again, although this is particularly the case on lower floors, it does also speak to the experiences of many residents on upper floors.
6.6. Conclusions

The purpose of this section has been to explore the meaning and role of ‘home’ in the lives and identities of the residents of Langeler Towers. As Section Two described, a sense of ‘home’ is a deeply personal place attachment that transforms a given place into an expression of an individual’s identity, as well as a core element of their concept of self (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). To residents ‘home’ is a slightly nebulous concept, but yet represents a place of emotional attachment. The most common words used to describe ‘home’ include comfort, happiness, peace, freedom and love. For respondents a house was a ‘home’ not only because it had everything one needed for their life, but also because it met these emotional needs while reinforcing each individual’s sense of self and identity. Of the tangible elements that contributed to the formation of a ‘sense’ of home, respondents emphasised the importance of family, independence, personalisation, space, and connections to larger communities and to the natural environment.

However, ‘home’ does not appear, rather it is created through the agency of an individual to transform a space to reflect their needs and personality (Lewicka, 2001). Unfortunately, due to circumstances, as well as a number of unfortunate design decisions within Langeler Towers, many residents have had little scope to create ‘home’, and instead feel disconnected from their living space. Family was identified as the central element of most respondents lives’, and although most had reconciled to living away from family, and indeed many had willing transitioned to aged housing, being able to maintain some tangible connection to family remained a central element of most conceptions of ‘home’. However, due to room size limiting their ability to entertain guests, a lack of public parking, and a sense of embarrassment at their living conditions, most respondents reported their living situation as having a strongly negative impact on their ability to maintain continuity in family relationships.

The small size of residents’ rooms has also restricted their ability to customise or personalise their space in order to make it more closely reflect their personal taste and needs (see Plate 6.5). Although some residents, particularly those on higher floors with bigger rooms, have been able to decorate in a way that is pleasing and conducive to a sense of ‘home’, most residents were forced to downsize and sell most of their personal items to fit into their new living spaces. Also, a number of design features, such as built-in cupboards and kitchenettes, although sound on paper, have had the effect of limiting resident’s ability to customise the space to suit their needs. Moreover, residents who live in rooms with plaster-board partitions are unable to hang pictures or other decorations, while a number of rules against specific furnishings, like carpets or rugs, are highly resented. Finally, lack of personal space and privacy has both challenged the dignity of residents while further limiting their ability to form meaningful attachments to the living space.
As a result, of these circumstances most rooms feel highly standardised and impersonal. Moreover, they have combined to create a situation in which many residents feel like they are just borrowing or occupying space that does not belong to them. Most residents have been unable to create a sense of ‘home’ within Langeler Towers, and as a result, the space does not reflect their identity in meaningful ways. This disconnect has fostered a number of unintended consequences, for residents and staff alike, which are discussed further in Section Eight.

7. LANGELER TOWERS AS A ‘NEIGHBOURHOOD’

7.1. Introduction

Neighbourhood is a fluid and often subjective concept. As Lewicka (2011) describes, individuals living within the same space may define their neighbourhood differently based on their own experiences and what criteria or attributes they use to define neighbourhood. Moreover, although neighbourhoods may be considered more than a collection of homes, a sense of ‘home’ and a sense of ‘neighbourhood’ often correlate, as individual place attachment is more likely to contribute to community attachment (Galster, 2001; Lewicka, 2011; Pretty et al., 2003).

The previous section explored how residents understand the notion of ‘home’, and how they conceptualise Langeler Towers as a collection of ‘homes’. This section examines the ways in which residents understand ‘neighbourhood’, how they have created a community within Langeler Towers, and how the built environment has hindered or helped the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’. Section 7.2 begins by unpacking the meaning of ‘neighbourhood’ to residents, specifically the emotional and physical aspects of the concept which particularly resonated with respondents. Section 7.3 explores the ways in which a sense of neighbourhood and community have developed within Langeler Towers. Sections 7.4 and 7.5 explore the role the built environment has played in constraining or fostering this sense of community. First, Section 7.4 examines the intersection between ‘home’ and ‘neighbourhood’ within the building, and how the design challenges that inhibit the creation of the former also impacts upon the latter. Second, Section 7.5 interrogates the ways in which public space within Langeler Towers shapes resident’s social interactions and daily lives. Section 7.6 examines the role that building management has played in fostering a sense of community. Finally, Section 7.7 concludes by summarising key themes and reflecting on the study’s research questions.

7.2. What is a ‘Neighbourhood’
To most respondents ‘neighbourhood’ was an extension of ‘home’- a place of comfort, family, and community. A neighbourhood was a place where individuals could live independent lives, but also had vibrant social networks at play, which were sources of emotional or material support when necessary- a community that many described to resemble a family. Although individuals within a neighbourhood may come from different backgrounds or beliefs, there was a sentiment expressed that a strong sense of community can overcome any number of differences in order to unite neighbours. One man from the sixth floor (04/04/2018) encapsulated that feeling when describing his childhood home:

We only lived in flats, and then my sisters lived in cottages and we used to go visit when they got married ..... and went out on their own. Another thing is that we stayed in one area for quite a while, like looking at 15 to 20 years, so we knew a lot of people around there and our community was very mixed it wasn’t just Africans or Coloured’s. It was a mixed thing because we were staying near the market and across the road from us we had where the white people used to stay. There were rules and regulations but the fact is that there is also a lot of things like..... looking at the time of Apartheid where you couldn’t swim at certain areas and couldn’t do certain things due to the restrictions, but we were like ordinary mischievous little boys swimming all over the place, played football and then eventually as we got used to the people around us they became our friends. The thing is it was a community where, it was not the case where you are going to say there was discrimination. If there was Eid and the Muslim people are celebrating all the people used to celebrate together, Christians, Hindis and everything. People had this tight community where everyone respected each other.

Home was not just your house, but also the street and your neighbours’ place. In a positive neighbourhood, the line between home and community is blurred and permeable, and many respondents reported fond memories of walking freely into neighbour’s homes to share a meal, a story, or childcare.

For most respondents, reflecting on old neighbourhoods was a happy but sometimes bittersweet occasion. Many of the spaces they recalled were communities in which they had grown up in, raised their children in, and had hoped to spend their elderly years in. This history underscored a realisation for many that neighbourhoods, and the accompanying sense of community, do not spring up overnight, but rather are fostered and developed over time through the sense of belonging and identity that came from continuity and success, hardship and struggle. Moreover, ‘neighbourhoods’ and community can degrade and disappear, as people move away and are replaced, when neighbours stop communicating, or when physical barriers arise. Nonetheless, a strong sense of ‘neighbourhood’ or community and a strong sense of ‘home’ appear intrinsically linked to most respondents, feeding the same notions of belonging and identity that make an individual feel at ‘home’.
7.3. Community in Langeler Towers

Focus group discussions with residents indicate that a sense of ‘neighbourhood’ and community does exist among residents. However, analysis shows that it has developed slowly, and particularly on the bottom five floors, has developed out of a shared sense of hardship and resignation. On the top floors residents see each other less frequently, so the bond is less strong, however, on the lower floors, where residents live in closer proximity to each other, there is a sense that residents live in greater need. In the absence of family or other caregivers, contributing to a stronger sense of community and neighbourhood. This section describes how this sense of community has developed in the two years since the building opened: first by describing the arrival process for new residents; second, by describing how a sense of community and neighbourhood has developed over time, and; finally, by describing the ‘monitor’ system and other forms of community self-help through which residents check-in on each other on a daily basis.

7.3.1. Arrival at Langeler Towers

When residents first move-in to Langeler Towers there is no official programme for arrival. According to staff (10/04/2018), new arrivals generally come on move-in day with their things, given their key, and are directed to their flat. Once the keys have been passed off, the new resident is on their own. As one staff member (10/04/2018) explains, this process can be explained by the nature of the building as an independent living facilities. As such, TAFTA wants to give new residents maximum freedom, as she explains:

Langeler Towers is not an assisted living building, residents are meant to be fit and independent. Sometimes the residents do not want to be [bothered], because remember there are some that are some that are economically well off and some that are not. Those [with means] do not want to be baby-sat.

However, they do say that in some cases, staff will go out of their way to make sure residents are more settled in the building, either through a tour of the facilities or other sorts of advice. Nonetheless, this curt introductory system has left many residents with a poor understanding of building rules, as one gentleman from the Fifth Floor (29/03/2018) explains:

To tell you quite honestly when we moved in here we filled in forms, policies regarding what we can and cannot do in TAFTA, but not even one resident has got a copy of that policy. Now I do not know whether I can drink in the building or not. We need a copy so every time I am thinking of having a shot I must go and look at that policy to see whether I can have it or what.

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4 The top floors are also not let out completely yet, so there are fewer tenants per floor.
Either way, residents are left to meet their neighbours and integrate into the existing community as best they can. According to residents, they get to know new arrivals slowly, through chance meetings in the corridors, brief greetings and small talk.

7.3.2. Building a sense of community

Despite the lack of introductions, a sense of community has developed amongst residents. Among respondents there is a lack of consensus over how long such a feeling took to develop, however, it was clear that it took time to build and did not just occur overnight. By the end of the first year, or after six months according to some, most floors had developed a bond based on the consistency of seeing the same people every day, particularly on the bottom floors where residents are living in close proximity. For most, their neighbours have become one of the most positive aspects of living in the building, and genuine friendships seem to have developed over what is, relatively, a short period of time. When asked to explain how this occurred, many pointed to their circumstances; they were dumped here and they had to make the best of it. Thus, to some degree, Langeler Towers has become a ‘neighbourhood of necessity’.

However, many residents feel that TAFTA has missed opportunities for further reinforcing a sense of ‘neighbourhood’. Mention has already been made of the lack of a programme for new arrivals. However, many residents felt that TAFTA could do a lot more, through holidays, programmes, and activities, to integrate residents into their new community, particularly as most individuals come from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds. One gentleman from the Fifth Floor (29/03/2018) explains:

Like for example, we have got Easter weekend coming and there is nothing being done, everybody celebrates Easter and everybody needs to know what is Easter about. We [should] get together, have somebody to talk about Easter. Maybe from every religion talk about Easter, what is it, and because everybody is going on a long weekend and so forth and not only Easter when it comes to Christmas and when it comes to Human Rights day and when it comes to Youth day. When it comes to Eid day, you see on the Eid day we can call all the Muslims to come and tell us what is Eid all about. We all know about the Muslims but we do not know what is Eid all about, you know?

Many respondents thought that such events or holidays would be a positive way for residents to spend time together and develop a sense of community. As it stands, there is a strong impression amongst respondents to address the difference in backgrounds between residents.
7.3.3. Monitors, self-help, and community

Although bonds of friendship and companionship have emerged between residents of Langeler Towers, the building’s sense of community appears to have largely developed as a network of support and self-care for a group of individuals who are transitioning between different phases of their lives, and are largely going through a difficult time, either emotionally, physically, or financially. Many residents reported looking in on their neighbours daily to make sure they were well, as one gentleman from the Eighth Floor (05/04/2018) describes:

I will phone and ask, are you ok? I have her telephone number, I have my neighbour’s telephone numbers, and we look out for each other that way. If you are going out somewhere we tell each other that we are going away and that type of thing.

Similarly, many residents described being worried if they did not see their neighbour each morning. For this reason, it is common for residents to leave their doors open when they are home and awake, so that neighbours can check in on and them and know they are ok. Likewise, it was reported that if residents go outside of the building, either to the shops or on longer excursions, it is customary to inform your neighbours beforehand so that they do not worry. For many, these informal support networks contribute to a greater feeling of safety and security.

These systems seem to have arisen, at least partly in response to a mismatch in expectations between what residents expect from TAFTA and what TAFTA has the staff and resources to provide; a mismatch that has morphed into a perception held by many residents of abandonment or neglect on behalf of TAFTA and building management. One system that TAFTA has put into place is a network of floor ‘monitors’, a designated person for each floor who is responsible for checking and reporting on their neighbours well-being and for playing a facilitation role between residents and building management. Monitors are also responsible for orientating and introducing new arrivals. However, because the position is unpaid and on a volunteer/elective basis, results are mixed between floors. Moreover, despite the ‘monitor’ system being a TAFTA initiative, most respondents saw it as being another example of residents looking out for each other, rather than TAFTA care.

Finally, throughout the building, and particularly on the lower five floors, gossip is one of the main ways in which information is spread. According to most respondents, gossip is more widespread in Langeler Towers than in their past neighbourhoods. Some respondents attribute the prevalence of gossip to the diverse backgrounds of building residents, though it is probably attributable to the tight-living quarters and the fact that many residents spend the majority of their time at home. Widespread gossiping has had both a positive and negative impact on the formation of a sense of community. It has been positive because it has been a necessary outlet for frustration, allowing residents to commiserate with each other,
particularly when the animosity is directed towards TAFTA. However, it has also hindered the development of a sense of community by limiting the interactions that residents will have with each other, for fear of becoming the subject of gossip. As one gentleman on the Eighth Floor (05/04/2018) explained, “I don’t want to ask my neighbour for a cup of sugar, then the whole building will know that I asked for a cup of sugar, you know what I mean?” This idea that gossip has contributed to a number of grudges between residents and a general atmosphere of negativity within the building is discussed further in Section Eight.

7.4. Home and Neighbourhood in Langeler Towers

Neighbourhood is envisioned by respondents to be an extension of the home, and in healthy situations the line between the two is often blurred. Although a sense of community has become established within Langeler Towers, a number of design challenges associated with resident’s room has hindered its growth. Chief among these is the small size of residents’ rooms, which, as Section Six described, is a major inhibitor towards the development of a sense of ‘home’. Because living conditions are so confined, residents are unable to visit or entertain each other in their flats. As such, simple social activities like sharing a meal, watching television, or playing cards are impossible because rooms do not accommodate such activities, as this exchange with residents of the Fourth Floor (29/03/2018) illustrates:

Q: Do you have each over to share a meal or have a cup of tea?

A1: They would come and sit on the bed?

A2: Where would they sit you don’t have a table and all that. It is impossible.

A3: There is no space for another person...

For former Ray Hulett House residents, entertainment space was one of the qualities they miss most about their old homes, and they recounted often entertaining neighbours for braais, tea, or drinks. As such, most residents spend the bulk of their time in their rooms, alone, watching television. Doors are open, but residents report feeling isolated and alone in their rooms, sitting on their beds, and largely reliant on their television for company in between organised activities or personal excursions outside of the building.

7.5. Public Space

In the absence of private entertainment space within flats, most residents encounter each other and socialise within communal spaces of the building, such as the corridors, lifts, laundry room, salon or activity space. However, although organised activities are viewed as strongly positive by most residents, public space within the building has not been designed in
a way to encourage or facilitate social interaction, and has, as such, hindered the development of a sense of community or ‘neighbourhood’.

Most interactions between residents occur in the public spaces of the building, particularly the corridors, lifts, and the laundry room. Unfortunately, these spaces do not facilitate social interaction, because they are largely utilitarian, sparse, and lack seating. The corridors for example, are particularly uninviting, being open to the elements and roughly finished, residents describe them as being damp, windy, and often unsafe during inclement weather (see Plate 7.1). To residents, the space feels unfinished, more like a construction site than the corridor of an aged housing buildings, which one resident (29/03/2018) described as resembling a freeway. Moreover, the open nature of the corridor forces residents to keep their doors closed during inclement weather, a perennial worry for those with interior, poorly lit rooms, as this quote from the Fourth Floor (29/03/2018) explains:

When it is raining you have to stay in your room. It becomes a bit emotional because soon as you see the weather changing and it is going to rain you have this fear that your room is going to get flooded. You have to keep that door shut otherwise the room is going to get flooded.

Altogether, it is a space residents do not want to linger in, and could not if they wanted to for lack of seating or shelter. These spaces are in stark contrast with similar corridors in John Conradie House which are enclosed, comfortable, and furnished with a small lounge and decoration on each floor. Likewise, the laundry room, because it is shared by residents of both John Conradie House and Langeler Towers is badly overcrowded and hot, and residents are eager to move quickly through the space so that others can utilise it. Finally, the salon is a popular place for female residents to socialise, however it is a small space and also lacks sufficient seating.
Langeler Towers does possess a number of dedicated social spaces, however they are either inadequate, or over-regulated to the point where residents are reluctant to use them. For instance, both the lobby and the first floor healing garden feel like spaces that were designed to be appealing but rather feel more performative than functional. The ground floor lobby was described by most respondents as attractive and a space they are proud for guests to see. It can also get quite busy or congested, as people come and go throughout the day, which gives the space some vibrancy, as it serves as reception and lobby for both TAFTA buildings. However, it feels like a space that was designed to be moved through, rather than lingered in, and seating is sparse. Moreover, because the space is shared with John Conradie House, there is significant demand for the seating that is available. The exception is the café, which is open to the lobby and has plenty of seating; however, it is reserved for customers and is usually empty. Finally, the salon, also accessed of the lobby, is a hive of social activity, often filled to capacity with women either chatting or having their hair done. However, it is a very small room, and seems poorly equipped to function as a social space, despite the large social role that it has come to fulfil in many residents’ lives.

The healing garden on the first floor, an open-air lounge with ample seating and potted plants (see Plate 7.2), was designed as a space where residents can gather, socialise, or relax. When asked about the garden, the first response by respondents is usually that it is beautiful, peaceful, lovely, etc., however, when questioned on how they use the space, most residents revealed that they rarely interact with the space. When pressed on why, respondents expressed a belief that the space is too over-regulated, to the point where it is non-functional. In fact, one woman from the Fourth Floor described it as the ‘depressing garden’. The following quotes demonstrate the perception of residents that the space is over-regulated:

Plate 7.1 Exterior Corridor in Langeler Towers
It is very nice, but nobody is allowed to talk to anybody there, the people just have to sit quietly (Eighth Floor, 05/04/2018)

You have got the garden but there are too many restrictions, one is you cannot eat there, another one is you cannot have your cold drink there and so forth and so on (Fifth Floor, 29/03/2018)

Listen there are about ten rules of things you cannot do. Can’t, can’t, can’t, and so you would rather not go (Fourth Floor, 29/03/2018).

There seemed to be a strong interest on behalf of respondents that the garden be opened up to a broader range of activities, specifically that the ban on eating and drinking be lifted so that the space could be used for braais. However, many others expressed the feeling that the healing garden was a waste of time and money during the construction of the building that could have been better spent improving residents’ rooms. Finally, the most frequent users of the space are the frail care residents from John Conradie House, who are often taken there by building staff to enjoy the fresh air. This, however, has given rise to the impression amongst
Langeler Towers residents that the space is intended solely for frail care use, and if they were to use the space they would be disturbing those users. In fact, more than a few respondents expressed the belief that they were not allowed to use the healing gardens at all, which building staff strongly refute. These factors have combined to make the space feel inaccessible for ordinary residents.

Besides routine encounters in the corridors, lifts, and lobby, the most common place in which residents interact is during activities, most often held in the first floor activity space (see Plate 7.3). These activities include religious services, games, fitness exercises, and other social events. Organised by TAFTA or other outside groups, such events, are for many residents, the highlight of their day, and often the principal motivator to leave their rooms. As one woman from the Sixth Floor (04/04/2018) described, “you cannot sit in your room [all day], there are a lot of social things to do that is very age appropriate”. However, despite the opportunities, many residents say that not enough take advantage of the planned activities and rarely leave their rooms, contributing to loneliness, depression, and other social problems within the building, which are already symptomatic of aging.

The first floor activity room itself is well designed, and seems more than adequate to host the range of activities that are organised. In addition to seating and tables, it also is well lit, with nice views and facilities for table tennis. However, it is the only dedicated activity space in the building, and when in use during activities, such as church services, it is not available for other residents to use. This is particularly true on the weekends, where it is nearly constantly in use for different activities. As such, it has limited use as a social space, or as residents would wish,
as a lounge space in which residents can make a bit of noise, or entertain guests and visiting family. This highlights the need for more multi-purpose spaces within the building so that residents can more easily take advantage of communal space for social or recreational purposes.

Due to the aforementioned lack of dedicated social spaces within Langeler Towers, residents have carved out social spaces from other areas of the building and its surrounds, in particular in the parking lot and on the sidewalk and bus stop just outside. When approaching the building, the first thing one notices is the constant presence of aged men or women, either sitting on the sidewalk, at the nearby bus stop, or around the parking lot. When asked, residents say they take advantage of these spaces because of a lack of social space inside the building. As a resident from the Fourth Floor (29/03/2018) described:

We usually go and stand outside and talk because it is so hot upstairs. It is an open space, and we do not have many of those. But it is not a good space... there is no cover and there is nowhere to sit.

Furthermore, because the building is a non-smoking space, residents who smoke must also use the sidewalk or parking lot space. As a consequence of this, the sidewalk in front of the building is often littered with cigarette butts and other trash, a state that many (non-smoking) residents resent.

Perhaps due to the tight quarters in which residents live and the lack of dedicated recreation space, most residents choose frequently to leave the building, and go out into the city, in search of recreation or relaxation. To this end, the location of Langeler Towers, in close proximity to the beachfront, is generally acknowledged by residents as one of the building’s most attractive features. For those on the higher floors, with broad views over the city, beachfront, and the harbour, the view was one of the qualities they valued most about their home, and those with good views tended to be much happier about their living situation in general. As a woman from the Tenth Floor (06/04/2018) stated, “I might not have a lot of space but I have got a view to die for”. However, even for those without a view, the location of Langeler Towers holds many positives, according to residents, including: access to free activities and well-maintained public space at uShaka Marine World and the Golden Mile, reliable public transport, quality natural environment, and access to shops. A man from the Eleventh Floor (06/04/2018) described how having access to the beach was of personal value:

I walk a lot in the beach, which is one big advantage, the beach is right on your doorstep, you walk for an hour and come back. And in the afternoon if you feel like it you can take another walk. That is about the pleasure of being here, it is near the beach.
For others, access to the conveniences and facilities of the city are even more important, particularly those that are of value to aged, such as healthcare. Another resident from the Eleventh Floor (06/04/2018) articulated this, “the transport is right here if I want to go to the hospital it is very convenient, that is one thing about this building that I love the most, it is the convenience of everything”. Some negatives of the location were mentioned by residents, such as traffic, noise, the homeless, beggars, concerns over crime, and litter on the streets, however these seem more indicative of the urban setting than the particular location of the building.

Finally, when describing public space within Langeler Towers, a number of residents described spaces in previous TAFTA buildings that they felt had positive social functions, and are absent in Langeler Towers, particularly a dining hall and residents’ mailboxes. For former Ray Hulett Residents the dining hall at that building was a major source of social cohesion and community interaction. A place where everyone could meet and greet each other on a daily basis. For these residents, this absence is heightened by the fact that neighbouring John Conradie House has a dining hall which they are unable to use, as well as by the fact that the kitchenette and the need to self-cater occupies valuable space within their rooms. Lastly, a number of residents described the post-boxes as a valuable social space in past buildings. Like, the dining hall, it served as a space in which neighbours could meet and have a chat. Currently, the post is kept in a pile at the reception desk, and residents resent having to sort through the stack to find their own mail.

7.6. TAFTA, Tyson, Neighbourhood, and Community

The sense of community that has developed within the building does not extend to building staff or TAFTA in general, whom residents cite as being indifferent to their hardships. Respondents reported TAFTA staff refusing to make calls or arrangement transport for sick residents, failing to implement systems for daily check-in or emergency buzzers, and being deaf to resident feedback or criticism, either voiced privately to building management, or publicly at community forums. This sentiment seems underpinned by a miss-match in expectations over the nature of ‘independent’ living within Langeler Towers. TAFTA seeks to allow residents maximum independence, while providing as few services as possible, while residents expect to be more ‘looked after’. This contrast is drawn starker by residents past experience in TAFTA buildings, such as Ray Hulett House, which offered a wider array of services and amenities, as well as the presence of John Conradie House next door, which provides significant assisted living and wellness services as well frail care.

The split in management responsibilities between TAFTA and Tyson Properties further complicates relationships, dividing residents from staff. For those on the sixth floor and

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5 Ray Hulett House provided meals to residents, while flats also contained small kitchenettes for self-catering.
6 Building staff reported that such a system was in place, in this case a red disc that is hung on resident’s door handles and rotated in the morning, signifying good health. However, residents dispute this. The researcher never observed a red disc during his time in the building.
above, their immediate landlord is Tyson, not TAFTA, despite the fact that Tyson does not have a presence in the building\textsuperscript{7} and all staff are TAFTA employees. A staff member (20/04/018) describes how building management views their responsibility towards ‘Tyson’ residents:

Six to eleven is like having a flat... yes we assist with maintenance issues... but in terms of your well-being, you come in as a fit living person. Yes, if there is a problem and you are sick or whatever the case may be, we phone that relevant ambulance service and then you are off to hospital and then we can still phone the family and say your mom has been taken to hospital. But, from there that is where we draw the line. That is where the family intervenes.

However, this relationship is not so clear to residents. A woman from the Eleventh Floor (06/04/2018) describes the confusion and hassle that this causes for affected residents:

The worst part is when you are ill they do not want you to take your statements here because you are in sixth floor and in [Langeler] Towers, they know you do not belong in TAFTA. You have to go to Tyson, and when you go there, they tell you that you belong to TAFTA, Now, where do you go now?

This situation has created the impression for some affected residents that they are Tyson when it is convenient for TAFTA and TAFTA when it is convenient for Tyson. Meanwhile, both ignore them. A woman from the sixth floor (04/04/2018) encapsulates this sentiment:

They take my money, and every end of the month my bill is going up, but when they have to attend us they do not want to attend to us. They do not want to even send Ann who is a nurse down to come and see to us at the sixth floor, they refuse. Ann tells you she is not in charge of the sixth floor.

Moreover, the divide also splits residents between TAFTA and Tyson people who both live in the same building, but pay different rates, have different quality rooms, and are treated differently by building staff. Although, this has not necessarily led to conflict, it has bred some resentment between different floors.

Finally, many respondents expressed the sentiment that TAFTA is interested more in profit than residents’ well-being, an observation underpin by it being common knowledge that Langeler Towers was designed to subsidise the running costs of John Conradie House. Much of this, according to building staff (10/04/2018) can be attributed to a mismatch of expectations between what new residents expect from TAFTA and what TAFTA actually has the resources to provide. This is compounded in Langeler Towers by the design and intent of the building to be run as ‘independent’ aged housing and the pre-conceived expectations of residents for care and support. The sum of these factors is that many respondents see TAFTA (and Tyson) as being external to their community, and an organisation that does not

\textsuperscript{7} The Tyson office to which residents are referred is located at uShaka.
necessarily always act in the best interests of residents. To some degree, this has contributed to fostering a sense of community amongst residents, as they feel they must look out for themselves and each other. However, this has only really occurred on a floor-by-floor basis and the TAFTA vs Tyson split has inhibited the formation of a building-wide sense of community, or understanding of Langeler Towers as a coherent ‘neighbourhood’.

7.7. Conclusions

The purpose of this section has been to explore how residents of Langeler Towers understand the concept of ‘neighbourhood’, and to what extent a sense of ‘neighbourhood’ has formed within the building. As residents describe, and as the literature suggests, the notion of ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘home’ often correlate. To most respondents ‘neighbourhood’ was an extension of ‘home’- a place of comfort, family, and community. Neighbourhoods are sources of emotional or material support when necessary- a community that many described to resemble a family. Although individuals within a neighbourhood may come from different backgrounds or beliefs, there was a sentiment expressed that a strong sense of community can overcome any number of differences in order to unite neighbours.

Analysis shows that a sense of community or ‘neighbourhood’ has to an extent, slowly developed across the different floors of Langeler Towers. However, rather than developing out of friendships or other social bonds, though these are very in place amongst some residents, it has largely been formed out of a shared sense of hardship, as a form of self-help and support, and a sense of being ‘in the same boat together’ through a difficult period in their lives. Moreover, to an extent, shared resentment against TAFTA and Tyson Properties has created a bond between residents, but served as barrier between residents residing on different floors.

The built environment has both helped and hindered the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’. Similar to the creation of a sense of ‘home’, limited space in residents’ apartments has served as a barrier to fostering social relationships by inhibiting residents’ ability to entertain or host guests. Due to this limitation, most neighbour-to-neighbour interaction occurs in communal spaces, such as the corridors, lifts and lobby, which are largely spaces that have been designed to facilitate movement, and through a lack of seating and other amenities, discourage residents from lingering. As a result, most interactions are brief and limited to simple greetings. Purpose built social space, such as the healing garden and the first floor activity room go a ways to address this design challenge. However, over-regulation, in the case of the healing garden, and a lack of space in the case of the first floor activity room, have rendered these spaces either inaccessible or insufficient. These deficiencies have hindered the formation of a sense of community, forcing residents to carve out their own social spaces, or leave the building altogether for recreation or relaxation.
8. CONFLICT, POVERTY, LONELINESS, AND DEATH

8.1. Introduction

Sections Six and Seven has described how residents of Langeler Towers interpret ‘home’ and ‘neighbourhood’ and the extent to which these two concepts have manifested or been created within that space. Analysis of respondent interviews suggests that although both concepts have developed to an extent, their formation has been inhibited by a number of factors associated with the built environment of the building, principally the tight, impersonal living conditions, and a lack of useable, positive public space. As such, the formation of a sense of ‘home’, and to a lesser extent, the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’, has been stunted, resulting in a number of unintended social consequences for residents and building staff alike.

The purpose of this section is to explore these unintended consequences and the impact they have had on residents’ identity and quality of life. Section 8.2 begins by discussing loneliness and the impact it has on residents’ emotional well-being. Section 8.3 examines poverty, and the relationship that residents have with their finances, and the role that TAFTA plays in that relationship. Next, Section 8.4 examines the nature of conflict in the building, both between residents and between residents and staff. Section 8.5 explores residents’ relationship with death, and the way in which their living conditions have impact that relationship. Finally, Section 8.6 concludes by summarising key themes and reflecting on the study’s research questions.

8.2. Loneliness and Depression

When respondents were asked how they feel when they are in their rooms, the overwhelmingly most common response was ‘lonely’. Simply put, when in their flats most residents do not feel that they are at ‘home’, rather there is a gnawing sensation that they are trapped in someone else’s space. One respondent from the Eleventh Floor (06/04/2018) captured this feeling, saying “I feel like I am in jail, but I do not have a cell mate, I am alone in a cell.” This metaphor of prison was frequently invoked, at least once per floor, with Langeler Towers being compared to Robben Island on several occasions. This loneliness manifests both physically and emotionally within residents, contributing to frequent bouts of depression and sickness, and, as articulated later in this Section, negativity and conflict.

Although this overriding sense of loneliness may be a factor of aging and transitioning to aged housing in general, it is exacerbated by the built environment in Langeler Towers. These factors were discussed in detail in Section Six and include: the lack of space to entertain guests
and visitors; lack of parking that limit family visits, and; small, poorly lit, impersonal, and standardised flats which do not reflect the tastes or needs of residents. Those who are able, get out of the building for entertainment, or as Section Seven described, have carved out social spaces of their own, such as the bus stop in front of the building, as a woman from the Ninth Floor (05/04/2018) describes:

I used to go past here with the bus because I did not stay here and I used to say ‘shame man look at the poor old people sitting by the bus stop,’ and I used to think to myself they are waiting for the bus but they are not. It is because they are so sad, bored and alone that they sit outside and that is not right.

However, many residents are not as mobile, outgoing, or resourced, and may be for other reasons, reluctant to leave the building. Moreover, although there are regular social activities occurring throughout the building, as the previous section described, many do not participate, choosing to remain within their rooms. In the absence of companionship or conversation, most residents rely on the television for company, with many describing spending the majority of their time watching television, and often just leaving it on throughout the day in order to combat their loneliness. As a result, many residents reported feeling abandoned by society (and for some, though it went unvoiced, their families), as if they had dumped at Langeler Towers in order to die.

For some residents there is a sensation that their life is slipping away, that they are wasting what was meant to be their retirement and their golden years, as one man from the Second Floor (28/03/2018) described:

Sometimes you feel like your life is just going away day by day and year by year but you are not enjoying the warmth of your life. We do not live we exist”.

A woman from the Ninth Floor (05/04/2018) also captured this feeling:

All of us are getting older we aren’t getting younger at least let a person live in a place where they can live in comfort a little bit you know what I mean you can see your neighbour outside they are smiling, but here if you look at most of the people here they look sad, lost and alone.

Many were expecting to be able to pursue new hobbies, or were expecting more continuity between their old life and their new. For example, one woman from the Second Floor (28/03/2018) had been a seamstress previously and had been hoping to maintain the hobby as a way to keep busy in Langeler Towers. However, the lack of space within her room forced her abandon that goal. She still has the sewing machine, boxed up in her cupboard, but there is no space in her room for a table on which to use it.

For many, this sensation of wasted time is compounded by disenchantment with their decision to move to Langeler Towers, and a feeling that this is not what they were expecting when they signed on with TAFTA. Most respondents complained that they were not properly
shown the rooms prior to move in, while former Ray Hullett House residents expressed that they had little choice but to accept whatever arrangements TAFTA made on their behalf. For many, this contributes to a feeling of being cheated by TAFTA- that they are being taken advantage of by the organisation. As Section Seven described, building staff (10/04/2018) ascribe this to a mismatch between residents’ expectations and what the organisation is able to provide. The organisation does do quite a bit to provide for residents’ needs, despite limited resources, and for many TAFTA has provided a level of housing security that would normally be unattainable for many. Nonetheless, the feeling persists amongst respondents, contributing to significant resentment of both TAFTA and building staff amongst residents.

However, for many residents this disenchantment has turned to resignation. Among respondents, it was a common sentiment that life at Langeler Towers was far from perfect, but most acknowledged that they had few other options- TAFTA is all they could afford- and that they should learn to live with their situation. As some described, the daily routine of being alone, unhappy, in their room is a constant reminder of how they have run out of options in their life. For a few this resignation has helped them adjust, as one man from the Eleventh Floor 06/04/2018) described:

I like the place I only took it because of the rental. I only get the pension, which is right for this place, [but] once you’re quiet, you behave yourself, you adjust to the place.

However, many others have struggled to adapt, as a woman from the Fourth Floor (29/03/2018) expressed rather bleakly:

Langeler Towers... just one room and we are charged too much of money but we have no other options because we have nowhere else to go and live. We are unhappy because every day is a misery

Nonetheless, some respondents were careful to express appreciation for TAFTA (one or two in each group), acknowledging that their situation could be a lot worse and that there are few other organisations willing to provide the services that TAFTA provides. In many ways this is illustrative, because it shows that TAFTA does do quite a bit for its residents, but is largely in a thankless position, providing a service few others are willing or able to provide.

8.3. Money

Underpinning many residents’ depression, resignation, and lack of alternatives, is an awareness of their own personal poverty, which has led them to TAFTA housing in the first place, and constantly impacts upon their daily life. Within focus group interviews, this most commonly manifested in respondents’ resentment over the amount they pay to TAFTA in rent, and an obsession on behalf of some respondents over getting what they consider ‘good value’ from the organisation. When asked to describe their flat during the drawing exercise, many chose to emphasise what they were paying in
rent when complaining about the size and features of their living space (see Plate 6.5). This is exacerbated for some by the knowledge that TAFTA makes different arrangements with different residents according to their means, so that some are paying less or more than others are paying for a similar space. This is particularly the case along the TAFTA vs Tyson divide, where residents on higher floors are paying higher rates to Tyson (for similar space) to live in a TAFTA building, as this interaction with residents of the Sixth Floor (04/04/2018) demonstrates:

A1: [Floors] one to five, they pay approximately about R 1 600 and I am paying R 2 700, same room same everything, same small window, I have got the proof if you want it.

A2: What is the criteria?

A3: We have the exact same accommodation. The same small room. We pay R 1 344 and down stairs they are paying R 950

Concerns over rent were particularly exacerbated at the time of the fieldwork by the recent knowledge that rents would be go up at the end of the month\(^8\), and that there would be another end of year increase, decisions residents’ feel was poorly communicated and will leave them with little left to live on.

For some, concerns over finances reflected more serious, day-to-day, consequences. Those living on just their pension are left with very little money after TAFTA automatically deducts rent. A woman from the Eleventh Floor (06/04/2018) explains being in the situation:

A person who is getting a grant of R 1900 will have to pay R 1600 so for the rest of the month they only have R300 left in their pocket. How are we supposed to live on that? I have to battle the whole month and they [TAFTA] don’t consider that.

Many respondents who rely on their pension reported struggling to get through the month after paying rent, and some described taking drastic measures, such as skipping meals, going hungry, or soliciting other forms of charity in order to survive. Some respondents reported having to turn to their children for additional financial support, a move TAFTA advises for financially distressed residents. However, for many, asking their children for money is a humiliation and a last resort, as one woman from the Fifth Floor (29/03/2018) describes:

My pension goes to my rent. We don’t have another form of income to support ourselves, we have to depend on the children to give us whatever they can and that is disgusting... we cannot do anything we have to wait for our children to give us

The situation is difficult for TAFTA, as they are limited in the amount of financial relief they can provide, and as building staff (10/04/2018) describe, the rents brought in currently fall far short of covering operating costs. However, this financial stress further inhibits residents’

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\(^8\) Due to the VAT increase
ability to create a sense of ‘home’, as they are constantly worried about their future, making their time and position in Langeler Towers feel unsettled and impermanent.

8.4. Conflict

Surprisingly, given the building’s status as aged housing, conflict between residents and between residents and staff is frequent, and sometimes aggressive or even violent. However, although all communities feature episodes of conflict, most of the conflict in Langeler Towers seems to be a direct result of resident’s living conditions. One of the ways that this has manifested is in what building staff (10/04/2018) have referred to as an ‘atmosphere of negativity’. As they interpret it, individual residents are unhappy or uncomfortable within their living spaces, and this gets in turn vented onto their neighbours and staff. This is particularly acute in the lower floors where residents often live in much closer quarters. According to one staff member (10/04/2018) negativity, almost like a disease, can spread from individual to individual across a floor:

You will find that if there is a problem it does not stop there, they have to tell the neighbour, and the next neighbour has to tell the next neighbour. Therefore, by the end of that day or week that whole floor becomes so drilled with negativity that they do not look at any positivity to the home as a whole, hence bring down the whole place in negativity.

This reflects the culture of gossip described in Section Seven, which has at times formed rifts between neighbours and hindered the formation of a sense of community. Additional factors such as shared bathrooms and mixed gender living situations also contribute to the negativity, as they are major sources of stress and anxiety for some affected residents. For instance, the focus group interaction described in Section Six illustrates how disputes between neighbours over access to the toilet can quickly escalate into resentment and conflict.

Finally, according to one staff member (10/04/2018), the negativity cannot just be ascribed to conflicts around individual resident’s privacy and personal space. They argue that many other factors can contribute to the atmosphere of negativity, many of which are beyond TAFTA’s control, and to some degree, reflect the realities of aging:

There are a lot of residents that are adjusted to their rooms. I think they are upset because family maybe does not visit them, they are unable to get their sickness going, or their health is now starting to deteriorate, it is now a psychological thing. I am here left to die so I have got to make everybody else miserable.

No matter to what it can be attributed, this atmosphere of negativity takes a toll on resident’s mental well-being, and is a large contributor to the loneliness and depression described in a previous section.
Negativity in Langeler Towers often boils over into conflict. According to respondents, these disputes can most often be ascribed to incompatibilities between neighbours—what one staff member (10/04/2018) described as ‘personality conflicts’. As they describe:

Just like I said in terms of that cleanliness and behavioural patterns, one is used to living a different way of life and here they are expected to live a totally different one. There is conflict of interest. You will find that one resident consumes an excess of alcohol and the other one does not drink at all and then he comes out as rowdy that becomes a complaint.

Some respondents attribute the frequency of such ‘personality conflicts’ to the broad and diverse backgrounds of residents. As they see it, residents come from all different communities and have just been thrown together into Langeler Towers, a reality they feel TAFTA has inadequately prepared its residents for. The building’s Staff is at the front line for resolving conflicts. Most staff members are easily accessible to residents, and are confronted daily with innumerable request, complaints, and insults. As such, they are easy targets for residents when tensions in the building reach a boiling point. As the building’s ‘punching bags’ they describe frequent blistering interactions with residents, as one staff member (10/04/2018) describe

They can get very, very vulgar…. It is sad to know that we have got to respect you like our own parents if not more than that and we get told all kinds of words. You get the desk banged at your face, fingers pointed at you at any given moment, the F word, the B word you name it we go through all that, and you have got to smile and say it is ok mom, it is ok dad.

Furthermore, some residents bypass building staff altogether and go straight to the police with their disputes. According to Staff (10/04/2018) police respond to resident calls frequently, sometimes three to four times a week, with many residents having become known by name to the police.

The most frequent solution to neighbour vs neighbour conflict is to have one party move to another room or another floor altogether. Building staff (10/04/2018) report that they are largely successful in defusing most conflicts that occur within the building. However, on a few occasions conflicts between residents have turned violent. A respondent from the Sixth Floor (04/04/2018) described one such incident:

My white friend went and asked the coloured guy at 06:00 in the morning [to turn down the volume of the television] and our lease says you will have quiet time until 07:00 in the morning... he comes out with a knobkerrie and he hit the guy on his head and the management was nowhere to be found I had to run to frail care, I had to call the police here, I had to get the ambulance here and the police didn’t want to take a statement.
The respondent attributed this incident to building staff’s inability or unwillingness to enforce house rules and the propensity of some male residents to drink alcohol to excess in their rooms. Staff (10/04/2018) further cite unreported, and often undiagnosed, mental health issues, such as dementia, as challenges towards maintaining peace in the building.

8.5. Death

A final unintended consequence of life in Langeler Towers is the relationship residents have with death. It is not necessarily surprising that elderly individuals in aged housing should be concerned with death. Moreover, a number of recent deaths in the building in the weeks leading up to the fieldwork would have naturally put the topic on respondents’ minds (see Plate 8.1). However, the consistency and voracity in which respondents invoked the spectre of death during interviews suggests that thoughts of death weigh on residents unhealthily. Moreover, there was a clear perception amongst respondents that death in Langeler Towers was not just a consequence of residents’ age, but also a reflection of the loneliness and depression that they interpret as consequences of their current living conditions.

According to respondents, residents of Langeler Towers had been dying at an extraordinary rate, 23 in the past year alone, according to one man from the Second Floor (28/03/2018). Although these deaths are surely attributable to a broad range of factors, including the deceased age and health, there was a consensus amongst respondents that they died due to stress, and the shock of having to adjust to life in Langeler Towers. According to respondents, those that died had been unable to survive the transition, and the resulting depression and isolation had caused their health to deteriorate. Furthermore, there was a belief that former Ray Hulett House residents were particularly susceptible, as their transition had been abrupt and painful for many.

Moreover, in every interview respondents recounted stories of residents who had died in their rooms, not been noticed as missing, and only discovered several days after their death. The following quotes illustrate this trend:

How many people have been found dead now in their rooms? I have heard of people being found dead lying in their rooms for three days (Eighth Floor).

About seven people have died in this place and half of them died when their children or relatives came to look for the person and they find that the person is not answering their phone and not opening the door. They start knocking, they then go and take the manager up, only then do the relatives or the poor children realise that you know what their mom or dad is on the floor dead and gone (Fifth Floor).

9 This number has not been verified by TAFTA. The number of deaths reported by respondents was often inconsistent.
Respondents attribute these situations to TAFTA neglect, specifically the lack of a tag or disc system for monitoring the well-being of residents (see Section 7.3.3).

Plate 8.1: One respondent’s ‘Dream Home’
At present, when a resident dies TAFTA puts a brief notice on the community notice board by the lifts. Some respondents see this as a missed opportunity on the part of TAFTA to strengthen the sense of ‘neighbourhood’ and community within the building, as one woman from the Eighth Floor (05/04/2018) describes:

If somebody passes on they don’t even put a picture with the name saying that person has passed on, they don’t even have a memorial on a monthly basis at least once a month for those who have passed on as a service, because at the end of the day we are all friends.

There seemed to be a further resentment that TAFTA staff did not attend the memorial services of former residents, and did not offer transport for residents who would like to go pay their respects. This seemed, to some, to give the impression that once you were dead, TAFTA no longer considered you their problem, as one woman from the Eighth Floor (05/04/2018) described, “they don’t sympathise with the family. It is like once they leave with the mortuary van then they are no longer one of us anymore”. However, according to building staff (10/04/2018) they are reluctant to take a leading role on such circumstances, for fear of conflicting with the wishes of the deceased’s family.

8.6. Conclusions

The purpose of this section has been to explore a number of unintended consequences that has arisen as a result of residents’ lifestyles and living conditions in Langeler Towers. Those identified include loneliness and depression, challenges with money, conflict, and death. These issues are broadly interrelated. Although some of these consequences may be partially explained as factors of aging and the challenges of being poor, the built environment in Langeler Towers exacerbates them. Lack of malleable personal space and functional public space has limited resident’s ability to create a sense of ‘home’ in their new space. Likewise, the same factors have hindered the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’ within the building and between residents and TAFTA. Building staff do their best to cope under such conditions, and do what they can to keep tensions among residents from boiling over. However, many residents are poorly adjusted to their new lives, which offers poor continuity from old to new, and as result are lonely and depressed, leading to conflict, stress, and in some cases, death.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study has been to explore how residents create ‘homes’ out of the physical materiality of Langeler Towers, a partially state-subsidised aged housing facility run
by The Association for the Aged (TAFTA) in Durban, South Africa, and how these built forms shape sense of self, neighbourhood and belonging.

The main research questions of the study are:

- What are the meanings residents attach to home and neighbourliness in specific types of state-delivered housing?
  - How do residents create places that are understood and experienced as home?
  - How are the concepts of neighbourliness and neighbourhood understood and shaped in clusters of housing units?
- What kinds of place identities develop in these spaces and why?
- How does the design of the built environment in these spaces enable or constric t social relations, and in turn shape people’s sense of home, belonging and neighbourhood?
- How do residents transform the built environment through everyday livelihood practices and ways of belonging?
- What are some of the intended and unintended social consequences of living in state delivered housing?

By way of conclusion, Section 9.1 reflects on each of these research questions, while drawing on both the theory and literature presented at the start of this study in order to contextualise its findings. Finally, Section 9.2 offers a number of design and management recommendations, including those offered by residents and staff, to a number of the problems described in this study.

9.1. Conclusions

To residents of Langeler Towers ‘home’ is a deeply personal place attachment that transforms a given place into an expression of an individual’s identity, as well as a core element of their concept of self (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). To residents ‘home’ is a slightly nebulous concept, but yet represents a place of emotional attachment. The most common words used to describe ‘home’ include comfort, happiness, peace, freedom and love. For respondents a house was a ‘home’ not only because it had everything one needed for their life, but also because it met these emotional needs while reinforcing each individual’s sense of self and identity. Of the tangible elements that contributed to the formation of a ‘sense’ of home, respondents emphasised the importance of family, independence, personalisation, space, and connections to larger communities and to the natural environment.
The notion of ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘home’ often correlate. To most respondents ‘neighbourhood’ was an extension of ‘home’- a place of comfort, family, and community. Neighbourhoods are sources of emotional or material support when necessary- a community that many described to resemble a family. Although individuals within a neighbourhood may come from different backgrounds or beliefs, there was a sentiment expressed that a strong sense of community can overcome any number of differences in order to unite neighbours.

However, as Lewicka (2001) suggests, ‘home’ does not appear, rather it is created through the agency of an individual to transform a space to reflect their needs and personality. Unfortunately, due to circumstances, as well as a number of unfortunate design decisions within Langeler Towers, many residents have had little scope to create ‘home’, and instead feel disconnected from their living space. Family was identified as the central element of most respondents lives’, and although most had reconciled to living away from family, and indeed many had willing transitioned to aged housing, being able to maintain some tangible connection to family remained a central element of most conceptions of ‘home’. However, due to room size limiting their ability to entertain guests, a lack of public parking, and a sense of embarrassment at their living conditions, most respondents reported their living situation as having a strongly negative impact on their ability to maintain continuity in family relationships.

The small size of residents’ rooms has also restricted their ability to customise or personalise their space in order to make it more closely reflect their personal taste and needs. Although some residents, particularly those on higher floors with bigger rooms, have been able to decorate in a way that is pleasing and conducive to a sense of ‘home’, most residents were forced to downsize and sell most of their personal items to fit into their new living spaces. Also, a number of design features, such as built-in cupboards and kitchenettes, although sound on paper, have had the effect of limiting resident’s ability to customise the space to suit their needs. Moreover, residents who live in rooms with plaster-board partitions are unable to hang pictures or other decorations, while a number of rules against specific furnishings, like carpets or rugs, are highly resented. Finally, lack of personal space and privacy has both challenged the dignity of residents while further limiting their ability to form meaningful attachments to the living space. As a result, of these circumstances most rooms feel highly standardised and impersonal. Moreover, they have combined to create a situation in which many residents feel like they are just borrowing or occupying space that the does not belong to them. Most residents have been unable to create a sense of ‘home’ within Langeler Towers, and as a result, the space does not reflect their identity in meaningful ways.

Likewise, the built environment in Langeler Towers has also hindered the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’. Similar to the creation of a sense of ‘home’, limited space in residents’ apartments has served as a barrier to fostering social relationships by inhibiting residents’ ability to entertain or host guests. Due to this limitation, most neighbour-to-neighbour interaction occurs in communal spaces, such as the corridors, lifts and lobby, which are largely
spaces that have been designed to facilitate movement, and through a lack of seating and other amenities, discourage residents from lingering. As a result, most interactions are brief and limited to simple greetings. Purpose built social space, such as the healing garden and the first floor activity room go a ways to address this design challenge. However, over-regulation, in the case of the healing garden, and a lack of space in the case of the first floor activity room, have rendered these spaces either inaccessible or insufficient. These deficiencies have hindered the formation of a sense of community, forcing residents to carve out their own social spaces, or leave the building altogether for recreation or relaxation.

Nonetheless, analysis shows that a sense of community or ‘neighbourhood’ has to an extent, slowly developed across the different floors of Langeler Towers. However, rather than developing out of friendships or other social bonds, though these are very in place amongst some residents, it has largely been formed out of a shared sense of hardship, as a form of self-help and support, and a sense of being ‘in the same boat together’ through a difficult period in their lives. Moreover, to an extent, shared resentment against TAFTA and Tyson Properties has created a bond between residents, but served as barrier between residents residing on different floors.

As such, the formation of a sense of ‘home’, and to a lesser extent, the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’, has been stunted, resulting in a number of unintended social consequences for residents and building staff alike. Those identified include loneliness and depression, challenges with money, conflict, and death. These issues are broadly interrelated. Although some of these consequences may be partially explained as factors of aging and the challenges of being poor, the built environment in Langeler Towers exacerbates them. Lack of malleable personal space and functional public space has limited resident’s ability to create a sense of ‘home’ in their new space. Likewise, the same factors have hindered the formation of a sense of ‘neighbourhood’ within the building and between residents and TAFTA. As a result, many residents are poorly adjusted to their new lives, which offers poor continuity from old to new, and as result are lonely and depressed, leading to conflict, stress, and in some cases, death.

9.2. Recommendations

The following conclusions have been derived based on the feedback of both residents and building staff. Surely not all of them are feasible, but hopefully they can serve as helpful guidelines for future housing interventions.

- Rooms should be redesigned to include dedicated lounge and entertainment space, so that residents will be able to maintain relationships with family and entertain neighbours and guests.
• Plaster-board partitions and communal toilet facilities should be avoided in order to maximise individual privacy and dignity and to minimise conflict between residents. En-suite toilet facilities should be standard.

• Apartments should allow for greater scope for personalisation and customisation.

• Safety features like intercoms, panic buttons, burglar bars, and disc/tag monitoring systems should be implemented where feasible.

• Public space should be designed in a way that encourages socialisation and communication. This includes adequate seating and lighting. Dedicated public activity and entertainment space on each floor would compensate for the lack of private entertainment space. Outdoor space should be tailored to the needs of residents, and should allow for a diverse range of activities.

• Building staff should be empowered to engage and connect with residents in order to develop a greater sense of building community and interconnectedness.

• Conflicting and overlapping management structures should be avoided.

• Efforts should be made to maintain continuity of lifestyle for residents in order to ease their transition into aged housing and mitigate the stress associated with lifestyle changes.

• Introductory sessions jointly hosted by residents and building staff.
10. WORKS CITED


How do you transform a house into a home? What is a 
neighbourhood and how does one develop? How can we 
design better housing for the aged? Please help us answer 
these questions!

As part of its ‘narratives of home’ project, a team of researchers from the 
Durban University of Technology will be holding a series of focus groups 
with residents of Langeler Towers. Meetings will be arranged by floor. 
Focus groups will last approximately two hours. Participation is completely 
voluntary and confidential. Meetings will be lightly catered, and each 
participant will receive a complimentary toiletry hamper as a thank you. 
Please see the below schedule:

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11.2. Appendix 2: Letter of Information

*Narratives of Home and Neighbourhood: Possibilities for Reimagining Urban Planning*

**Principal Investigator:** Prof Monique Marks (PhD)  
**Co-Investigator:** Dr Kira Erwin (PhD)

Dear Participant

A team of researchers from the Urban Futures Centre (UFC) at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) have been funded to carry out a research project located within the eThekwini Municipality. The research will take place between August 2017 and December 2018. The aim of the research is to explore how residents within five locations attach meaning to their homes and neighbourhoods within housing that is provided or subsidized by the state. The Langeler Towers is one of the five residential sites that have been selected to form part of this study.

During the research period, a team of researchers will visit the site and conduct research through interviews and other participatory methods with residents. You have been asked to take part in the research project because you are a resident of Langeler Towers. Participation in the study is voluntary and you may refuse to take part or withdraw from the research at any point with no negative consequences.

In order to protect your identity, the researchers will provide you with a pseudonym. All information provided to the researchers will be treated confidentially and it will be stored safely. There are no immediate benefits to taking part in this research besides contributing to our understanding of how residents, like yourself, experience living in Langeler Towers. This information will help the researchers engage with city officials and professionals to highlight the importance of listening to residents’ perspectives when designing and creating city spaces.

The results of the research will be presented in a public workshop in your area, where you will be free to discuss this us and ask questions. The results of all 5 of the research sites will also be...
published and presented at local and international conferences. The findings will also be shared
with city officials and professionals, as well as the broader public, through a series of workshops,
exhibitions and public shows.

There are no costs involved in taking part in this study and no financial remuneration will be
provided for taking part. We thank you for taking the time to consider taking part in this research
study.

If you have any further questions regarding the research project, please contact either the principal
investigator or co-investigator using the details provided below. Complaints can be reported to the
Director: Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof S Moyo on 031 373 2577 or moyos@dut.ac.za.

Kind regards

Prof Monique Marks
Principal Investigator
Urban Futures Centre at Durban University of Technology
031 373 2180
moniquem@dut.ac.za

Dr Kira Erwin
Co-investigator
Urban Futures Centre Durban
031 373 2017
KiraE@dut.ac.za

__________________________  ________________________
CONSENT

I………………………………………………………………………… (name of participant) hereby confirm that;

• I have been informed by the researcher, (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: ___REC 160/16_____
• I have also received, read and understood the above written information letter regarding the study
• I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details will be anonymously processed into a study report
• In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher
• I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study
• I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study
• I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me
• I agree to have the research interview audio/video recorded

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11.4. Appendix 4: TAFTA Letter of Response
19 February 2018

Dr Marc Ronald Kalina
Post- Doctoral Research
Urban Futures Centre
Email: Marc.Kalina@gmail.com

Dear Dr Kalina,

Thank you for your presentation to the CLASS subcommittee on 13 February 2018.

The committee has discussed your request to conduct the study at Langeler Towers and are pleased to inform you that permission has been granted subject to the following:

- Kindly liaise with Mrs Fareed regarding timeframes and logistics; while we will endeavour to facilitate the timely completion of your study, this cannot always be guaranteed.
- The compensation to participants will be discussed further and agreement reached
- Kindly consider adding the staff as participants to your study. The opinions and data collected will assist with further planning.
- In addition we would like to use the information to publish papers, preferably as co-authors with you, for the reasons discussed.

We encourage you to maintain an ongoing supportive association with TAFTA by way of volunteerism by you and your students in promoting the vision and mission of TAFTA, beyond this research project.

We wish you success in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

F Si:amam
CEO