"Buildings converted into cheap rental accommodation as an essential low-income housing alternative in the inner-city of Durban".

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To my parents, thank you for all you have done for me, for your support, for your encouragement and love.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBC	-	Better Buildings Committee
iTRUMP	-	Inner Thekwini Regenration & Management Programme
CBD	-	Central Business Districts
UNCHS	-	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
NDoH	-	National Department of Housing
THP	-	Transitional Housing Programme
ICSF	-	Inner City Shelter Forum
COJ	-	City of Johannesburg
EMA	-	eThekwini Municipal Area
BESG	-	Built Environment Support Group

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Over the past two and half years spontaneous conversions of disused and under-utilized buildings into precarious cheap rental accommodation have been blotching Durban's inner-city landscape. Sharp increases in the number of conversions within important business precincts and core areas of Durban's inner-city have raised immense concerns amongst various municipal departments and more importantly the Better Buildings Committee (BBC) and the Inner Thekwini Regeneration Urban Management Programme (iTRUMP).

The Municipality faces a huge challenge in addressing this problem. The greatest stumbling block is that not much is known about the dynamics of this trend. In addition there are no specific policies to regulate this type of use. The majority of converted buildings were not initially designed for residential purposes. Many were old deteriorating offices, warehouses and commercial buildings that were structurally altered to create spaces for human habitation. Most were considered to be in violation of several national building codes and health and fire regulations.

In a move to prevent serious injuries or outbreak of catastrophic fires similar to the Drill Hall experience in Johannesburg (Sunday Times, April 8 2002 – Annexure 1), the Municipality ordered landlords and landowners to comply with the necessary council requirements or cease operations indefinitely. In another move to ensure that iTRUMP's broader urban renewal initiatives were not jeopardized, 'accommodation establishments' located in core areas of the inner-city were identified for closure. While the Municipality was successful in 'closing down' several non-compliant inner-city buildings, it did not resolve the immediate needs of displaced and homeless people. Being evicted without alternative housing by the council or housing departments, tenants were left to their own devices. The problem merely exacerbated, shifting back

onto inner-city streets and increased overcrowding in already crowded "accommodation establishments" operational elsewhere in the city. "Accommodation establishments" were providing some means of accommodation in the inner-city, clearly indicative of a housing solution for many.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

South Africa still faces huge housing back-logs. The government's existing housing delivery system deliberately promoted homeownership on the periphery and overlooked the potential of rental tenure as a housing option for the poor. Poor locations away from urban opportunities have made subsidised housing unsustainable. Even well positioned social housing is unaffordable to the very poor. Whilst some chose a life in the inner-city, many were forced to move to be close to cheap shelter and income opportunities. As a result, what many governments in developing countries are facing is a considerable lack of affordable inner-city housing which makes for a gaping hole in housing policies and strategies. The eThekwini Municipality views conversions to cheap rental housing as detrimental to initiatives to revitilise the city. The approach has been to evict tenants in 'badly converted' buildings without alternative housing. With high urbanisation of the poor predicted to persist unabated over the next 20 years, there is a concern over the availability of affordable housing in the inner-city. Essentially there is a burgeoning need for shelter for those groups of people who cannot afford the cost of market rentals or subsidised housing. Hence it is argued in this report that "accommodation establishments" is possibly filling a "missing link" for affordable inner-city housing for the homeless and perhaps the City of Durban should focus on promoting such rental stock and supporting the quality improvements of such housing in the inner-city.

1.3 THE RATIONALE FOR THIS RESEARCH

Clearly in most developing countries and in Durban, (South Africa) peripheral informal settlements have dominated the political arena, whist the settlement crises within inner-city buildings have essentially been overlooked. As a result there yet remains very little

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documented research into understanding the more recent shelter challenges facing the very poorest of inner-city dwellers in a developing context. Questions about what the trend is all about, why is it happening, who are the tenants, who are the landlords, why are people living here, what are their living environments like etc. have not been researched and answered. Hence the main aim of this dissertation is to learn as much as possible about this phenomenon and to evaluate its appropriateness in satisfying the needs of the homeless and its potential as an affordable and essential inner-city housing choice for the very poor.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

"Are converted buildings into cheap rental housing the inevitable outcome of inner-city housing processes and do they represent an opportunity for inner city housing for the poor?"

1.5 SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

- What buildings are being converted and why?
- What are the characteristics of this typology of housing, where is it located and why?
- Who are the people that live in this type of accommodation and why do they live here?
- Is this type of housing meeting the needs of its clients?
- Who are the delivery agents of this type of tenure and why?
- What are the demands, constraints and opportunities of this type of housing delivery?
- How should this type of tenure be addressed to in policy terms?

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

"Converted buildings into cheap rental accommodation provide an essential alternative that is satisfying a much needed demand for affordable housing for 'no to low' income earners".

1.7 KEY CONCEPTS

1.7.1 "Accommodation Establishments"

This term is used by the Municipality to refer to the conversion of buildings adapted into cheap rental accommodation for the homeless. In terms of the building bye-laws "accommodation establishment" refers to "any premises in or upon which the business of supplying lodging (with or without meals) for reward is conducted for more than four persons, but does not include: flats or maisonettes, a home for the aged, a hostel which is controlled by a University or school and a hotel which is registered under the Hotels Act of 1965" (Act 70 of 1965 Accommodation Establishment bye-laws, Ordinance 25 of 1974).

1.7.2 Homelessness

Much of this dissertation has to do with the phenomenon of 'homelessness'. In developing countries the concept of homelessness is highly complex. The definition for homelessness adopted in this dissertation applies to a person:

"who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence; and an individual who has a primary night-time residency that is a supervised privately operated shelter adapted to provide living accommodation and communal facilities".
(Stewart B. Mckinney's homeless Act of 1987; Schurink, 2003).

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Despite having access to accommodation individuals in this situation may still be considered homeless due to the lack of appropriate support aimed at facilitating social reintegration. In this context, homelessness refers as much to the lack of housing as it does to the lack of social networks.

1.7.3 Shelter

According to the Social Housing Foundation (SHF, 2004) the term shelter refers to a housing intervention to assist the destitute and homeless focusing on social welfare services. Normally 'shelters' are managed by NGO's or faith-based organizations (Brand, Lund, Poulsen and Ramagoyane, 2004). However the term 'shelter' for the purposes of this dissertation loosely refers to buildings converted into rental accommodation provided by the private sector as a commercial venture and which does not provide welfare services.

1.7.4 No to Low Income Groups

For the purposes of this dissertation the term refers to those individuals who may be employed full-time, involved in piecemeal work, informal trading, unemployed relies on begging and whose daily earning capacity is very low.

1.7.5 Inner-city

According to Byerley and Kabi (1995), the inner-city is defined as the area of the city that undertakes a wide range of functions, provides numerous services, is the commercial hub of the Metro region, is characterised by a high degree of infrastructure development, is centrally located and exhibits a high density usage of space. Bearing this in mind and for the purposes of this dissertation the inner-city of Durban is defined as the core CBD because it exhibits intense activity, has a high level of infrastructure and development and is the commercial hub of the city. The frame CBD supports activities within the core and also includes residential districts which are Albert Park,

Victoria Embankment and mixed use activities along the Beachfront and Point precincts.

1.7.6 Densification

Densification refers to strategies to compact the city focusing on increasing thresholds and intensifying development. First, increasing population densities (ie. The number of people per hectare) allows people easy access to work reducing the demands for travel. Second, intensifying high-density development (ie. The number of dwelling units per hectare) promotes the sustainable use of land, reducing urban sprawl, preserving the land on the periphery and the recycling of land within cities (Jenks et al, 1996). Both of these approaches have strong links with this research topic.

Housing policies for example may be structured in a way to increase densities through conversions or replacement of existing stock. South African cities have some of the lowest residential densities as compared to other major cities in Asia and Latin America (Todes et al, 2003). They offer limited opportunities for low-income households to access high-density inner-city housing. Recently however, with intensifying urbanisation there are two conflicting forces affecting densities. Firstly cities are becoming more spread out perpetuated by low density subsidised housing on the periphery. But paradoxically some inner-cities are becoming denser by occupation. For example in the inner-cities of Johannesburg and Durban processes of invasion and succession are altering old race and class patterns and the inner-city is becoming an important source of accommodation for some low-income groups, resembling patterns found in developed societies (Todes, 2003).

1.7.7 Urban Renewal

Urban renewal has become a central tool in South Africa's urban policy framework. Urban renewal activities are based on the implicit policy assumption that inner-city decline is linked to market failures due to the collapse of private sector confidence in the inner-city. In response to such declines South Africa's urban renewal projects tend

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to emphasise property related interventions thereby undermining social and economic strategies. Hence it is argued that an important facet of urban renewal strategies is the development of housing and social amenities that respond to the social needs of the poor.

All the above concepts and definitions have strong links with inner-city rental tenure as a way to contribute towards densification; revitilisation and integration of South African cities (see Mthembi-Mahanyele, 2002:5; Gardner, 2003; McKay, 1999; Rust, 2003).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This dissertation relied on observations, fieldwork and qualitative and quantitative research methods. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used and analysed.

1.8.1 RESEARCH COLLECTION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

The research involved various methods in the collection of primary and secondary data.

Firstly the topic of research is a fairly recent subject in developing countries hence the researcher had relied on a very wide selection of secondary sources of information found mainly in journal publications. Other secondary sources included unpublished research and internet searches. The information gathered centred on gaining a better understanding of the most recent theoretical concepts, views and ideas surrounding changes taking place in inner-cities and its implications on housing needs and demand, recent developments in rental housing internationally and in South Africa and homelessness in both developed and developing contexts. Secondary data also included a recent case study of similar trends in São Paulo and Johannesburg which offered useful lessons for this thesis. Secondary information was extracted from the eThekwini Municipality data base and was used to provide more insight into the characteristics of buildings in this study. Secondly, in the area of primary data the research involved observations and fieldwork of the case study area and buildings, interviews which were

structured and semi-structured including questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions.

1.8.2 IDENTIFYING BUILDINGS TO BE RESEARCHED

In order to identify the three buildings to be studied it was important to uncover the extent of the phenomenon within the inner-city, to identify those areas in which it was occurring and to determine the types of buildings that were being converted.

Primary and secondary sources of information were used to carry out this task. Primary data was sourced through street-by-street fieldwork within the study area. This involved observations and informal interviews with homeless people begging at intersections for rent money, people loitering outside shop entrances, beggars on the street and car guards. Questions revolved around: finding out the names, addresses and locations of 'shelters' in which they lived in, including others which they frequented or which were known to them in the area. Secondary information was sourced through interviews with key Municipal Officials directly involved with addressing the conversion of buildings in the inner-city. Interviews with the Building Inspectorate Manager and City Health Officer for the central business district, yielded lists of converted buildings:

- that have been closed down by the city council.
- that were earmarked for closure in 2004/2005.
- that were contravening building bye-laws and that were in conflict with town planning objectives.

The collation of the above sources of information made it possible to generate a list of addresses of adapted buildings and a spatial map of their locations. Thereafter land uses of buildings were determined by using the Municipalities Database and plan records to find out the types of buildings that were being converted. Based on the location and type of building three buildings from a list of forty one were selected to be studied.

These buildings are:

- Aliwal Night Shelter
- The Nest, and
- Upperclass Night Lodge

1.8.3 OBSERVATIONS & FIELDWORK

Fieldwork techniques and observations involved assessing the living environments of converted buildings based on a standardised checklist focusing on facilities provided, the quality of natural light and ventilation, the condition of walls and floors, sleeping environments, the condition of toilet and ablutions and fire-escape routes. This provided an understanding of the characteristics of this housing type, the quality of the living environment and what the trend was all about.

1.8.4 INTERVIEWS

In the collation of primary data a series of interviews were conducted with officials from the city-council, building owners, landlords and tenants. Interviews were semi-structured discussions around issues related to the research topic. Interviews were carried out with key Municipal Officials of the eThekwini Municipality to learn more about the trend, to find out what the problem was all about, where buildings were located, what buildings were being converted and what measures were in place to manage the problem. Interviews with building owners and landlords focused on management aspects, reasons for conversions, conflicts and problems that building owners were experiencing. Recorded interviews with tenants were to elicit their life stories which have led to their current living circumstances.

1.8.5 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to tenants living in the three converted buildings. The questionnaires were designed to determine the socio-economic profile of residents including finding out the perception of tenants on the sharing of facilities, their current living circumstances and the reasons why they chose this typology of housing. This helped answer the research questions about who the people where and if this type of housing was meeting tenant needs.

1.8.6 RESEARCH SAMPLING

The number of respondents interviewed was 58 in total, 20 at Aliwal, 21 from The Nest and 17 from Upperclass. The number of respondents varied because they were randomly selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. The researcher tried as much as possible to balance the number of male and female respondents and tried to get an even racial spread of participants to answer questionnaires or to engage in the research through informal discussions.

1.8.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used to analyse data from questionnaires and interviews. Tenant's perceptions were ranked according to most relevant to least relevant. Questions on the demographic profile were tabulated and represented graphically (graphs). Spatial locations of converted buildings were represented on a map. Building plans of the case studies were used to show conversions and to provide a descriptive analysis. The researcher where possible, took photos of the exterior and interior spaces of converted buildings which assisted in describing this typology of housing, its context and helped in the overall assessment of the living environments.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

There were a number of shortcomings when carrying out this study.

Firstly, the phenomenon that is the focus of this research is fairly new. Not much research has gone into exploring the settlement dynamics of poor people living in converted buildings in inner-cities of developing countries. There has just been one research document focusing on similar occurrences in Sao Paulo and Johannesburg which has shed some light on the phenomenon in both these cities. In addition recent research on rental tenure in a developing context is very limited and focuses more on 'back yard' shacks and household landlords and not much research focuses on inner-city rental tenements and landlords who operate in this field. Hence much of the research relies on UN-HABITAT publications and selected expert views in the field of rental tenure.

Secondly, carrying out fieldwork and administering questionnaires were rather difficult tasks. The reason is that tenants arrived at their places of accommodation between 5pm to 8pm in the evenings. The problem is that many of the tenants were not so willing to participate in the survey because they were pre-occupied with preparing for the night. In addition they were afraid because buildings of such nature were being closed down by the city council and the researcher was viewed as a threat. Nonetheless 58 respondents did complete questionnaires.

Thirdly, Black respondents were particularly difficult to survey. Even though many could read and understand English they were too afraid to fill-out questionnaires. In spite of this 17% of the 58 respondents surveyed, were black.

Finally, due to the publicity certain buildings were receiving at the time of the dissertation, the landlord of one of the case study buildings refused to allow any photographs of the interior and facilities to be taken. Hence this study has to rely on

descriptions and the plan of the said building to relate to the reader the living arrangements, facilities etc.

1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The **first** chapter sets the tone for this dissertation. It provides a background to the research problem it spells out the research question, the subsidiary questions and the hypothesis that would be tested. It discusses the need for this study and looks at the key-concepts and important definitions. Thereafter it discusses the research methodology that will be used to carry the research forward. It talks about the primary and secondary sources of information and concludes with some of the problems experienced when carrying out the study.

Chapter **two** is the conceptual framework underpinning this study. It examines the forces of change taking place in inner-cities worldwide its implications on housing needs and demands. It then touches on homelessness in both developing and developed countries. It highlights the different definitions and typologies of homelessness. It looks at the causes of homelessness and concludes by making the point that homelessness in a developing context is multi dimensional and requires responses that go beyond the need for shelter.

Chapter **three** is the policy framework underpinning this dissertation. It contextualises rental tenure internationally highlighting its neglect. It discusses significant changes in rental housing and policy internationally. It examines various actors in the rental sector and provides an insight on the contentious issue of housing quality. It provides a broad overview of housing challenges facing South African cities focusing on the rental sector. It talks about significant milestones in South African housing policy and shows the importance of the private rental market. It then looks at different rental housing typologies, expanding on Transitional Housing. Finally the chapter concludes by looking at the important paradigm shifts in our understanding of rental housing in developing countries.

Chapter **four** discusses the case study of Durban and the findings from the research.

Chapter **five** discusses the recommendations and conclusions based on the research findings. It revisits the research problem, and reaffirms the hypothesis of this dissertation

CHAPTER 2 – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INNER CITY CHANGE

The phenomenon that is the focus of this dissertation needs to be understood within the context of relevant concepts and important trends that are impacting on urban centers. This chapter discusses these various related issues from an international and local perspective which are transforming inner-cities and the implications they have on the poor and housing needs.

2.1.1 URBANISATION

Africa and Asia face an explosive demographic shift as their urban populations surge from 35% to 50% over the next 30 years (Oucho, 2001; AMCHUD, 2005)[1]. Whilst this study is not about urbanisation dynamics it acknowledges that urbanisation is the force that is transforming world cities such that 'income poverty' and 'housing poverty' is increasing rapidly. Its rapid rate is provoking profound socio-economic change and poses serious environmental challenges (UNCHS, 1999). In developing countries high urbanisation rates persist against a backdrop of huge housing back-logs, high unemployment and a severe lack of affordable shelter[2]. These incapacities have manifested in informal settlements, urban slums and more recent settlement crisis patterns within inner-city buildings (UNCHS, 2001).

South Africa paints a very similar picture. Its history is one of segregation and spatial fragmentation based on race. The reverse effect of previous years of apartheid planning is now significantly impacting on South African cities (Oelofse, 2003). As a result

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[1] Globally, the urban population is projected to increase by more than 2 billion people, from just over 2, 9 billion (48%) in 2004 to about 4, 9 billion (60%) in 2030. It is also expected that the world's slum population will increase by slightly over 1 billion, from just over 0, 9 billion (32%), to about 2 billion (41%) over the same period. What this means, is that half (1 billion) of the 2 billion increase of the world's total urban population will be urban slum dwellers.

[2] Some 21 million new houses are required each year between 2000 and 2010 in developing countries. Thereafter an additional 14 million units will be needed for the next 20 years to make up for the current housing deficit. (UNCHS,1999)

South African cities are experiencing decades of 'delayed urbanisation', the consequence of a breakdown in past laws. This has resulted in a rapid influx of huge numbers of people into urban areas in a very short space of time. It has also resulted in increased in-migration of foreigners previously restricted under apartheid laws. Overall, South African cities are growing more rapidly than anticipated (Mabin, 2000; Cities without Slums, 2002; Medium Density Housing Programme, 2003). Statistics show that more than half (55%) of South Africa's 45 million inhabitants now live in urban areas. Some have fled declining economies in rural areas in search of employment in the inner city. Others have subsidised homes on the periphery but rely on the inner-city for their income needs. They maintain their rural homes and linkages, often supplementing their family's income 'back home'. What this means is that they would rent the cheapest accommodation in the city in order to maximize savings. This also means a duplication of housing needs and high demands for more affordable rental accommodation in the inner city.

2.1.2 DECENTRALISATION OF POWER TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Another global trend impacting on developing countries cities is the move towards decentralisation, which has given cities new roles and responsibilities. The devolution of power from national to local government affects urban policy as local authorities are now responsible and accountable for the quality of life in cities (Engelbrecht, City Alliance Network; undated). In South Africa, the responsibility for housing delivery is in the hands of municipalities. However, too few municipalities have housing departments to deal with the added responsibility or the financial capacity to do so (Medium Density Housing Program, 2003). Worsening matters has been weak political commitments to enforce municipal by-laws and the ongoing fiscal crisis. This has led to a breakdown in the quality of urban management resulting in urban lawlessness. Abandonment, neglect and illegal occupation of buildings have since increased, ostensibly undermining private sector confidence in the inner-city (Engelbrecht, City Alliance Network; undated). As a result cities are experiencing increased urban decay, a process discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.1.3 INNER CITY DECAY IN SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES

Urban decay began in South Africa from as early as 1960. There was a mass exodus of commercial and retail businesses to the outskirts. Up-market chain stores down sized in the C.B.D and were replaced by low-grade, small scale and homegenised retail shops. The aging built form in the inner-city struggled to attract investments because of the systematic loss of agglomerations and the inability to accommodate newer technologies (City Alliance Network, Cities without slums – undated). Even inner-city apartment blocks were undergoing physical decline. Morris (1999) notes a number of interrelated processes and actors involved, such as landlords, tenants, local and national government policies, property administrators, caretakers and the redlining of districts by financial institutions as a contributing cause to urban decay. For example, owners and institutions of commercial and residential properties stifled maintenance activities and service charges as the fear and perception of declining property values began to set in with the change in demographics (Morris, 1999). This only further entrenched actual urban decay.

For many black households moving to the inner-city was an absolute improvement in their living circumstances, however there was certainly a general lowering of living standards in the area (Oelofse, 2003). It is argued that the urban poor did not have the necessary income to ensure the adequate maintenance of the housing stock. As a result overcrowding and subletting followed to make-up monthly rental thereby overloading existing infrastructure and facilities and contributing to the physical decline of buildings and the overall decline of the inner-city (Crankshaw and White, 1995). Crankshaw and White (1995) also pointed out that these less desirable buildings and locations attracted poorer residents who were more likely to overcrowd their accommodation and overstrain already decaying services.

2.1.4 ECONOMIC DECLINE & THE INFORMAL SECTOR

In many developing countries and in South Africa the informal sector is considered a symptom of incapacity on the part of the formal sector to provide jobs and housing. Yet

it is the most important arena most accessible to the urban poor for their housing and income needs. Whilst the formal city is expanding at rates of 3 to 4 per cent, the informal city is growing at twice that. According to Khan (2003) this growth in informalisation has direct implications on housing policy. This is to say in theory, that housing poverty is an outcome of urban poverty, and economic growth will result in employment translating into the absorption of the poor into the formal economy and eventually resulting in the access to housing. But declining economies and growing urban poverty in developing countries are resulting in the diversion of already scarce resources to more immediate survival strategies (Khan, 2003). This means that a large number of residents in the developing world will still continue to reside in squatter housing, derive their incomes in petty commodity production and informal activities and access services not necessarily through the state.

What this also means is that the attractiveness of the informal economy and the economic opportunities of the inner-city for the poor have major implications for demands for well located housing. Evidently, this has led to is a fertile market for owners of declining inner-city housing stock and under utilised vacant commercial buildings.

2.1.5 URBAN RENEWAL

Another force of change that has far reaching implications for the poor is urban renewal. The primary objective of urban renewal interventions is to restore investor confidence by creating a sustainable property market and by diversifying and restructuring the local economy. South Africa however, lacks a clear national policy framework to contextualise or support urban renewal. Despite this, local authorities are developing policies from the bottom up, and regeneration projects are still happening in the interest of reversing urban decay to promote economic growth (Engelbrecht, 2003).

However the projects taking place tend to emphasise property related interventions thereby undermining social and economic strategies. Critics argue that property-led regeneration initiatives focus more on physical as opposed to the social aspects of

renewal. Such urban renewal interventions have led to demolitions and evictions displacing the poor in the interests of improving the economy. However it is argued that these create more problems than they aim to solve (Satterthwaite, 1981 cited in UNCHS, 1989; UNCHS, 2001). The basic dilemma is that without subsidies, very poor tenants can only afford to live in the inner-city if the housing conditions are unsatisfactory. Any attempts at improving deteriorating property will lead to regentrification, higher rents and the displacement of poor tenants Researchers tend to agree that there needs to be a clear policy regarding the urban poor, and that urban regeneration strategies need to support the development of housing and social amenities within the inner-city.

Moreover, researchers call for urban renewal strategies that contextualise South African cities (apartheid planning, delayed urbanisation etc.) and which form part of a broader urban policy framework (Fraser, Morabe and Topham, 2004).

2.2 HOMELESSNESS

Another growing problem in developing countries is homelessness. Developing countries however suffer from a major lack in information on this trend. Much of the literature on homelessness comes from Europe and America, whilst in the developing world only India seem to study in depth this part of the population (Springer, 2004). Tipple (2002) argues that whilst theories of homelessness in advanced nations may be different to conditions in developing countries they still offer useful lessons for when these countries start addressing issues of homelessness. Much of the problem that is the focus of this study has to do with homelessness. Hence this section makes reference to the most recent approaches to this trend in both developed and developing countries.

2.2.1 HOMELESSNESS & THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Adequate housing is considered a basic human need featuring in the constitutions of many countries as a human right for example The Universal Declaration on Human

Rights[3] (1948), South Africa's own Bill of Rights[4] (1996) and the Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)[5]. Despite such widespread legal provisions there is not a single country that is not confronted with problems associated with inadequate housing or homelessness (Position Paper on Housing Rights, UNCHS, 2001). Homelessness and the right to adequate housing and human rights in general are intertwined. Issues of discrimination, segregation and exclusion are linked to violations of the right to both adequate housing and to issues of homelessness (Lynch et al 2000). For example without adequate housing humans experience difficulty in securing and maintaining employment or participating in social and political activities, their health is at risk, education is inaccessible, violence easily perpetrated, privacy is impaired, social interactions are frequently strained, freedom of expression is lost, victimisation and stigmatism by society is common and the list goes on. Therefore it is argued that being homeless is an extreme example of social exclusion and a violation of numerous universal rights afforded to all human beings.

2.2.2 DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

In developing countries there are no explicit definitions for homelessness. For example, those in informal settlements or traders who have rural homes but live on the streets or in shelters to be close to work by developing countries standards may not be considered homeless. However, judging from perspectives in economically advanced countries people in these situations may very well be (Fadane, 1998 in Larsson et al; Speak et al, 2004). What this means is that homelessness is relative to the context, political and

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[3] *"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services… …."* (Article 25 [1] United Nations (1948).

[4] *Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing; that (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right; and that (3) No one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions* (South African Constitution, 1996).

[5] *"The State parties to the present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and for his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realisation of this right…."* Article 11 (1) Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

cultural climate in which it occurs. In a developing context definitions are critical to assist Governments in prioritising limited resources to those homeless in priority need (Schurink et al, 2003).

Home as a social concept is time related referring to the stages in ones lifecycle, that is the notion of family, the parental home, the marital home and the ancestral home. The word 'home' has connotations of personal warmth, comfort, stability, security and a sense of belonging. (Austerberry and Watson, 1986 cited in UNCHS, 2001). 'Homelessness' is the contrary of these, and is expressed in connotations of coldness, indifference, social exclusion and marginalisation (Cooper, 1995; Tipple, 2002). Clearly the definition of homelessness is complex and goes well beyond the notion of shelter.

2.2.3 HOMELESS PEOPLE'S SELF DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

It is argued that homeless people's perceptions and definitions of homelessness would be more relevant in any policy or strategy. Younger homeless people tend to emphasise security and permanence of accommodation more often than physical conditions when defining homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al, 2000). However studies by Watson and Austerberry (1986: cited in Fitzpatrick, 2000) found that poor material condition was often an important focus for single homeless women in their self definition of homelessness. Homelessness could be best understood as a 'phase model', which is explained in terms of the erosion of social links combined with a decline in self-image and personal well being. In other words homeless people pass through different stages and behaviour before they can accept themselves as homeless (Schurink, 2003). Studies by Olufemi (2002) concluded that homelessness in the South African context closely resembled the 'detachment' concept of social exclusion. The issues that were highlighted were dissociation, distancing, stigmatism, labelling and disconnectedness. Thus homelessness was much more than losing a house and responding to homelessness involved more than just providing one. Homeless people require "encouragement in terms of motivation, aid, participation and co-operation" (Olufemi, 2002) together with the provisions of shelter.

2.2.4 TYPOLOGIES OF HOMELESSNESS - DEVELOPING NATIONS

The literature on homelessness defines three categories of homelessness in a developing context to be:

- Supplementation homelessness is a consequence of migration of people (usually single men) from their rural homes to the city in search of employment. Economic migration is the origin of their deliberate homelessness. The choice not to spend on housing is mainly to supplement rural livelihoods. (Speak and Tipple, 2004).

- Survival homelessness - is similar to supplementary strategies whereby people migrate in search of jobs. The difference is when they are unable to send enough money to improve their village situation the connection with their rural homes is attenuated. Eventually they loose contact with their villages and form new social networks in squatter camps or on the streets (Speak et al, 2004).

- Homelessness as crisis management – Whilst all homelessness is a response to some form of crises, this category makes reference to personal or household crisis resulting from family-break up's, a death in the family, bereavement disasters or evictions. Also included in this category are those with mental illnesses and others with personal problems of alcohol and substance abuse. Those experiencing crisis homelessness are given little chance of exerting control or choice over their circumstances and unlike the previous categories their homeless situation offers little opportunity for upward trajectory (Speak et al, 2004).

2.2.5 THE 'NEW' HOMELESS

Homelessness no longer refers to the stereotype of transient single male substance abusers or to elderly men who sleep on the street or in public places. Recent research uncovers the emergence of a 'new homeless' group defined as families, younger

women, younger men, children, refugees[6] ethnic and migrant groups (Schurink, 2003). Across Europe and America there is a significant increase in the number of women falling into the abyss of homelessness (Hoch, 1998; Watson and Austerberry, 1986 cited in UNCHS, 2001; Edgar and Doherty, 2004). Despite gaps in recent statistics in developing countries, studies in Delhi (Rag-Collectors) and South Africa revealed a significant number of women with children amongst the homeless population (see for example, Fadane, 1998 in Larsson et al; Olufemi, 1998; Tipple et al. 2002; Ghafur, 2002; Mander, 2004; Schurink, 2004).

This is an indication of structural changes that is taking place which positions women as new welfare clients and the increasing feminisation of poverty and to the policies and politics of women's needs.

2.2.6 SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Homelessness is considered as the most serious manifestation of 'social exclusion'; representing the denial of a fundamental requirement of social integration which is adequate shelter (Fitzpatrick, 2000). Social exclusion makes it impossible for an individual to realise their potential, to be an active member of society, by getting and keeping a job or raising a family. Viewing homelessness within a context of social exclusion calls for responses that are more comprehensive than if homelessness is to be dealt with on its own (strictly as a housing issue). Although ensuring access and provisions of adequate housing is considered a principle key to social inclusion, the welfare and social circumstances of homeless people must also be taken into account. Strategies therefore must not only facilitate the access to affordable accommodation but also aim to provide for successful reintegration into mainstream society. Consideration must be given to issues of social participation, personal security, control and empowerment included with the provisions of adequate shelter (Edgar et al. 2004).

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[6] As earlier mentioned refugees have gained worldwide recognition as part of the 'new' homeless (Tipple et al 2002). Within a developing context refugees living on inner city streets and in perilous housing conditions are most profound. Despite the researcher having encountered a number of foreigners while conducting fieldwork it is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, except for references as part of an observation.

Clearly, homelessness is as much about social relationships and personal welfare as it is about the access to adequate housing.

2.2.7 CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS- STRUCTURAL vs. INDIVIDUAL

Earlier debates on causes of homelessness revolved around two broad categories: individual and structural. The former focuses on society, on wider social and economic forces such as changing labour and housing markets. The latter, identified factors associated with personal characteristics of individual homeless persons as the most relevant, highlighting alcohol dependency, substance abuse, social and behavioural problems and illnesses as the main causes of homelessness (AHURI, 2004).

More recent research however, has uncovered that neither of the two approaches effectively identifies the full complexity of homeless issues (AHURI, 2004). For example, factors identified as major contributors to structural theories are (1) shortages in affordable rental housing, (2) unemployment and high levels of poverty (3) changes in the family structure, and (4) declining or non-existent public support and (5) evictions. Clearly, it is apparent that apart from evictions not everyone affected by the remaining factors ends up homeless, nor is homelessness a random selective process. However, once structural factors have created the conditions for homelessness, individuals experiencing personal problems and circumstances (individual factors) significantly increase their risk of becoming homeless. Hence it is now perceived that there is a continuum across both structural and individual factors in identifying the underlying causes of homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al 2000; Schurink, 2003).

2.2.8 SHORTAGES IN AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

A major cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing which results from a combination of various other societal and economic factors such as:

- a lack of new private rental or public sector housing and the loss of existing social housing through privatisation, demolition, conversion, gentrification and

rising rents.

- increased demands for housing caused by changes in household size, household formation trends, regional population growth due to migration and changes in gender roles

- landlords limiting the access to rental housing to those with low incomes. In some countries changes in income support policies eradicating security deposits (first and last months rent) has made housing inaccessible to lower income groups by private landlords. Whilst in numerous other countries where security deposits do exist, it is still unaffordable, placing rental housing out of reach of the poor. (Gilbert et al, 2000).

2.2.9 UNEMPLOYMENT & HIGH LEVELS OF POVERTY

At the most basic economic level homelessness is caused by poverty and unemployment (UNCHS, 2001). Insufficient income is also a major contributing factor. This results from various issues relating to poor localised economic conditions such as changing economic structures, a decline in real incomes and a lack of public sector assistance (Erbele, Planning and Associates, 2000; Schurink, 2003). The polarisation between highly skilled and well paying 'good' jobs and temporary, insecure and very low paying 'poor' jobs (Fitzpatrick et al, 2000) has led to increased risks of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion (Edgar et al, 2000).

2.2.10 CHANGES IN FAMILY STRUCTURE

Changes in the structure of the nuclear family also play a role in generating homelessness. Family fragmentation results from increasing divorce rates, death, escalating lone parent households, step families and breakdown in relationships. (Fitzpatrick et al, 2000). A common cause of women's homelessness internationally is domestic violence. Battered women experiencing poverty often have to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness (Watson and Austerberry, 1998 cited in Fitzpatrick et al, 2000).

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2.2.11 DECLINING WELFARE SAFETY NETS

Unlike industrialized nations, welfare support in most developing countries is non-existent. Here, public sector support was mainly channeled to peripheral informal settlements (subsidies, infrastructure upgrades etc.) Those living on inner-city streets or in privately provided accommodation were more or less left to fend for themselves (Speak et al, 2004).

In Peru for example, those living on the streets are denied the right to land. Even In welfare states such as China, which prides itself on no unemployment and homelessness, recent relaxed controls, have resulted in increased numbers moving away from their places of registration. Without registration cards, they are unable to access subsidised housing through the normal channels and cannot afford housing on the open market. These people live in villages, fragmented from society without entitlement to schools or welfare support. In Indonesia those without an identity card are not beneficiaries of development, dwellings or basic services regardless of the poor state of their current housing circumstances. In Peru, those living in dilapidated tugurios, which are in such poor state that they pose health and safety hazards are not included in the official definition of homelessness. Finally in India, pavement dwellers are not entitled to land or housing because they are not registered voters and do not have ration cards (Tipple and Speak et al, 2004). These are perfect examples of Edgar's (2004) state of social exclusion and marginalisation. Recent research of homelessness in the following nine developing countries: Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ghana, Peru, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Zimbabwe confirm that almost all of them have virtually no welfare support in response to specific homeless needs (Speak and Tipple et al 2004).

2.2.12 EVICTIONS

In countries where tenant rights are weak, evictions are commonly considered the main contributor to homelessness (UNCHS, 2001). The worst case of homelessness is forced evictions which is considered the most traumatic form of urban violence. Internationally there have been 40 documented cases of forced evictions (UNCHS, 2001 - Habitat

International Coalition), more than half (22) of which were initiated by municipal authorities and one in four by national governments. Usually the reasons given for evictions are to improve conditions for a greater social good. However this is normally at the expense of the urban poor. In many evictions unsuitable land or health conditions have been cited for clearing of poor housing and urban slums. However this usually increases rather than decreases health problems. More often than not evictees tend to be worse off than before the eviction and evictions tend to compound the problem they were presumably aimed to solve (Speak et al, 2004). The important issue of forced evictions is the way in which they are undertaken, with little or no dialogue with those displaced. There is neither respect for the needs of evictees nor is there alternative solutions which minimise the scale and disruption caused to those been evicted (UNCHS, 2001).

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of the forces of change and significant trends that are taking place in cities which have direct and indirect implications on the existence of the poor in the inner-city. Perhaps the most powerful force is urbanisation which has far reaching implications for housing needs and demand. The attractiveness of the informal sector and the economic opportunities presented by the inner-city is still going to continue to attract the poor for a very long time. What this means is an increase in urban slums and informal subdivisions of inner-city tenements where most of the poor will find affordable shelter. Other forces of change such as the devolution of housing responsibilities to Municipalities, where overall capacity is a major problem raises concerns over the future of affordable inner-city housing for the poor. Currently Municipalities are engaged in urban renewal to reverse inner-city decay but this is happening without planning for the future of the poor and with little public participation. Homelessness is another trend which is impacting significantly on affordable housing needs and demands in inner cities. In developing countries where urbanisation is greatest, there is growing awareness on the rights to adequate shelter and the urgency of addressing homelessness. The complexity of defining homelessness especially in a developing context is clear. Equally clear is the importance of definitions

in prioritising the necessary support. This chapter clearly shows how sometimes homelessness is used as a survival strategy in a developing context. The feminisation of poverty and the emergence of the 'new homeless' have serious implications on responding to homelessness. Clearly there is not one single cause of homelessness but a complex combination of structural and individual factors, which makes the job of addressing the problem a daunting task. It is clear however that addressing all forms of social exclusion is critical in addressing the problem of homelessness. What come across strongly from this chapter are the need for clear policies and strategies with regards to the presence of the poor and their needs within inner-cities.

CHAPTER 3 – POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 RENTAL HOUSING

A decade ago very little was known about rental housing in developing countries. Not much was known about whom tenants were, their living conditions or who provided such accommodation. What is certain is that there are many similarities between the informal rental markets across most low-income countries. This chapter looks at rental tenure internationally and in South Africa.

3.1.1 DEBATE ON HOUSING POLICY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

For decades the debate on housing in developing regions focused on the idea of informal settlements as a vehicle for home ownership for the poor. Just about all low-income housing policies aimed at ownership as the only solution to the housing crisis. However assumptions that all people in informal settlements were owners or potential owners were never true. Researchers found a considerable amount of the urban poor were renting accommodation in squatter settlements and informal sub-divisions (Gilbert et al, 1993:4). Still, governments in developing nations have done little to recognise the importance of rental housing. Its neglect was based on a western ideology that owners made better citizens than tenants. Moreover, Governments were afraid that promoting the rental sector would result in large scale landlordism along with all its negative implications. However, such arguments have been proven to be flawed (UNCHS, 2003).

3.1.2 HOMEOWNERSHIP VERSUS RENTING

Despite the effort by developing cities to promote homeownership, rental tenure still constituted a major section of the housing stock and in some instances tenants were in the majority (see Badcock, 1986 in UNCHS, 1989 and Gilbert and Varley, 1991). Even in the worlds most developed societies such as Sweden, Switzerland and Germany,

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more than half of the population rents accommodation of some type (60%, 67% and 60% respectively) (UNCHS, 2001 a:96). These countries are a clear model for rental housing, effectively attesting that decent shelter is not reliant on high rates of ownership. It cannot be argued that a dominant rental sector has undermined democracy, reduced security or minimized economic growth in these societies (UN-HABITAT, 2000). Countries of Western Europe have avoided many of the housing problems of the United States because of their tenure neutral policies and appear to have a much lower incidence of slums despite lower levels of homeownership (UNCHS, 2003).

If homeownership is not an indicator of national prosperity and economic growth then why have so many developing countries encouraged homeownership for so long? Clearly it is irresponsible for policy makers to continue sacrificing "rental tenure at the altar of owner occupation", considering that more than half of the population resides in rented dwellings (Gilbert et al, 2003:2). Governments need to realize that at some stage in everyone's life they may need to rent accommodation of some type. Hence they must revise their housing policies and formulate strategies for rental housing so that it is not biased to non-owners.

3.1.3 THE STATE OF RENTAL TENURE INTERNATIONALLY

Recently, governments in both developing and developed countries have included rental tenure as part of their housing policy frameworks. The reasons for this are varied in relation to the particular context, but it can be explained within the framework of an international trend in which homeownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable or unattainable. Economic decline, commercialization and scarcity of land in developing nations have made homeownership through squatting increasingly impossible for the poor, hence renting and sharing accommodation have become more frequent (see Caulfield, 2000 cited in Nell, 2002). Also, the demand for rental housing is not only a function of income but also the availability of infrastructure, accessibility to work including various other reasons. Demands for rental tenure are also inextricably linked to a decline in supply of rental accommodation. Fewer units are available for rent due to

numerous factors including the decline in institutional involvement in the housing sector, the sale of existing rental stock and a shift away from supply side to demand side interventions (Caulfield, 2000 cited in Nell, 2002). All these factors combined have resulted in increasing homelessness and overcrowding in both the developed and developing world (Rakodi et al, 1995).

3.1.4 SIGNIFICANT PARADIGM SHIFTS IN RENTAL HOUSING

Kumar (2001) writes that rental housing can benefit both tenants and landlords. For those that are unwilling or cannot afford to become owners, accessibility to affordable rental accommodation is critical in their pursuit of an urban livelihood. Landlords of rental housing benefit by using rents to supplement daily consumption expenditure (Gilbert, 1991) and as a safety-net against inflation (Ikejiofer, 1997). Globally, research shows that the small scale landlord is an important agent in the provision of affordable shelter (see Ikejofor, 1997; Kumar, 1996; Watson and McCarthy, 1998). However, providing support to the rental sector is viewed as politically contentious because rental tenure is considered as poor quality housing supplied by exploitive landlords (Watson and McCarthy, 1998). This view of rental housing, it is argued is based purely on a normative judgment of quality. A more realistic approach would be to assess the extent to which private landlords are contributing to the range of rental tenure and the extent to which this has responded to the diverse affordability needs of poorer individuals and households (Kumar, 2001). On the notion that all landlords are exploitive, researchers disagree. Kumar (1996) suggests that exploitive landlordism tends to happen within a framework of monopoly or in rapidly growing cities with very tight housing markets (Pugh, 2000; cited in Kumar, 2001). Amis (1984: cited in Kumar, 1996) points out that the literature shows that such occurrences in poorer cities are an exception.

3.1.5 RENTAL HOUSING POLICY INTERNATIONALLY

In the First World rental tenure was mainly a supply-side intervention, with the state developing and managing the rental stock. Since the 60's and 70's Governments have abandoned this approach because it was too expensive and inefficient. Hence the state

adopted the role of facilitator and focused on demand driven interventions (Nell, 2002).
In developing countries the building of public rental housing was far less influential
because the amount of public rental supply relative to the total housing stock was much
more limited than developed countries. Following the 1970's few governments in
developing countries built for rent and whatever was built was sold off to tenants.
Moreover, developing countries have had explicit formal and informal housing policies
which encouraged homeownership (Tebbal and Ray, 2000). Nonetheless, rental tenure
was still promoted because it was garnering much support and attention from policy-
makers, researchers and international circles as an effective way in widening the shelter
options available to the urban poor (UNCHS, 2000; UNCHS, 2003). Clearly policy
responses to rental housing vary across countries. They can be categorized into two
main approaches: those aimed at stimulating supply (supply side) and those that focus
on demand (demand side) see TABLE A.

TABLE A - Literature summary of supply side and demand side interventions

SUPPLY-SIDE	DEMAND-SIDE
Subsidisation of capital and operating costs: Historically, supply-side interventions sought to reduce rental charges by subsidising the capital and operating costs of rental housing (generally known as social, public, council or non-profit housing). In most countries, public/council stock is declining because governments don't manage them effectively.	**Subsidisation:** These types of interventions include providing a subsidy to households as a contribution (partial or entire) towards the rental for an appropriate unit. Also known as a housing allowance, voucher, or rent supplement
Encouraging landlords: These types of interventions focus on encouraging landlords to provide rental accommodation through: • Tax incentives • Withdrawing rent control • Providing access to resources • Revising building regulations, zoning controls, etc • Tax relief in respect of Income earned through rental.	**Rent controls:** These types of interventions include soft rent controls which do not undermine the market, including rents that cannot be raised above market rentals, protection against radical changes in rentals due to changes in demand, and rentals that stimulate socio-economic integration by remaining the same in attractive areas as in poor areas.
Special support for small-scale landlords: These types of interventions involve: Providing subsidies to stimulate the production of rental accommodation Providing access to finance using new financial instruments (Shorebank) and guaranteeing future housing subsidies Providing security of tenure so landlords feel confident of their investment.	**Rent structuring:** These types of interventions seek to establish affordable rentals through, for instance, rental averaging through cost pooling (as is done in Sweden, where older stock subsidises newer stock),10 rent point schemes (where rent is related to the quality and location of the stock), cost indices (based on market transactions of comparable housing), and affordability schemes

Source: Mathew Nell and Associates 2002.

Lessons from developing and developed countries (discussed in this section) suggest
that a combination of responses is necessary for an effective housing sector and this is
what usually happens in most countries. From the literature review there is a wide range

of actors in the rental housing sector. The next section discusses these various roleplayers.

3.1.6 TENANTS

From the literature, the combination of supply and demand factors results is distinctive tenant profiles in different countries. The decision to rent depends on the cost of renting versus the cost of owning and the size of the rental stock. Tenants rent for various reasons. Some value the flexibility renting offers whilst for others, it is a conscious decision. For those whose incomes are too low or insecure to enter into owner-occupation or into social housing, the only choice available is renting (Gilbert et al, 1991; UNCHS, 2003).

In Latin America, Turner (1967) talks about the 'bridge headers' who are new migrants to the city. They value the proximity to work over and above the quality of shelter, and ownership is secondary. In contrast are the 'consolidators' who are willing to trade off location and services in preference of a self-help home on the periphery, which could be improved and left behind for their dependents (Turner, 1967 cited in UNCHS, 2003). Tenants in Mexico's city-centre never looked for their own home because ownership meant a move to the periphery away from employment opportunities (Gilbert et al, 1993). In Delhi, tenants chose to rent purely based on location, even though they owned homes elsewhere in the city (Wadhva, 1993). This is also evident in South African cities where migrants have urban and rural ties (Goodlad, 1996; Fadane, 1998 in Larsson et al). In Johannesburg, the influx of blacks as apartheid fell away was premised on the advantages of access to employment in the city-centre (Morris, 1999; Crankshaw and White, 1995). These trends all point to Turners (1967) 'bridge header' model.

The whole idea of whether people 'choose' their own tenure or 'decide' the key issues in their lives is debatable in the housing literature (UNCHS, 2003). What is certain is that people are rational beings and would naturally choose the most feasible options Clearly tenants vary in relation to the particular context and within socio-economic and political circumstances and most importantly, in relation to housing policies.

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The next section discusses another key roleplayer in rental housing which is landlords.

3.1.7 LANDLORDS

Historically landlords have been viewed negatively by politicians and tenant activists because of large-scale landlordism and exploitation. In many countries, the large-scale landlord is a figure of the past (UNCHS, 1989). What is evident in recent years is the emergence of the small scale landlord, who in many countries provides as much as 50% (in some countries even more) of the rental stock. Relatively few landlords control large numbers of property, a vast majority have no more than two. (Gilbert, Mabin, McCarthy and Watson, 1997; UNCHS, 2003). From the literature, it is argued that landlords need to be examined in relation to the nature of the business they operate, their financial status, the amount of property owned, their legal status and the reasons for owning / letting of property (UNCHS, 2003). Kumar (1996) distinguishes between three categories of landlords. They are:

- Subsistence landlords – who rent out rooms in order to sustain or augment household income for everyday subsistence needs.
- Petty bourgeois landlords – who rent one or two units for income invested in improving their quality of life.
- Petty-capitalist landlord – who owns more than one property and dwellings for rent, to expand capital in the form of landed property.

Not much literature focuses on landlords who rent out converted inner-city buildings for cheap accommodation. Rakodi (1995) talks of the 'professional landlord' that speculates with the demand of cheap housing. It is perceived that such landlords straddle across the professional, subsistence and petty bourgeois. It is argued that much more research with this regard is required to ascertain the motive for letting by such landlords.

3.1.8 LANDLORD AND TENANT RELATIONSHIPS

The literature demonstrates that relationships between tenant and landlords vary in relation to the type of rental operation. In large scale exploitive types of operations owner/landlords and tenants hardly interact with one another and where the operation is much smaller there is a more cordial relationship between landlord and tenant. In almost all cases neither tenant nor landlord is aware of the law and very rarely do signing of rental agreements take place (Gilbert, 1993). Examples of buildings in Johannesburgs inner-city that were well run were those managed by tenants and landlords that took a personal interest and that took the time to build good relationships with tenants (Crankshaw and White, 1995).

3.1.9 RENTAL HOUSING STOCK

From the literature review there is a diversity of rental stock in developing countries. Researchers documented rental options that differed both within cities and across countries by location, quality, level of service and rental (Kumar, 2001). In Mexico, researchers found two types of rental housing. The formal or controlled market characterised by public and private accommodation and the informal or uncontrolled market, comprising of rental forms in slums and informal settlements (Gilbert, 1993). In Ahmedabad, yet another semi-controlled market exists which neither falls within the regulation of rent control or the open market (Wadhva, 1989). These housing typologies are described as beds in part of a room, and a room not found in the homeownership sector. In other cities such as Lagos rental accommodation does not include a bed, just an area for sleeping in a building (UNCHS, 2003). Rakodi makes particular reference to a phenomenon similar to 'South Africa's conversions' involving the informal subdivision of buildings initially built within the formal sector (Rakodi, 1995). Other types identified by UNCHS (2003) include rooms in subdivided inner-city tenements, rooms in custom built tenements, rooms and beds that are rented by the hour in boarding and rooming houses.

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3.1.10 HOUSING QUALITY

The question of quality is a sensitive issue in developing countries because millions of people live in extremely poor quality housing (UNCHS, 1989). Experience has shown that poor tenants tend not to complain of 'poor quality' because they are rarely prepared to pay more for better accommodation (Crankshaw and Gilbert, 1999). Most importantly, renting offers the poor valued flexibility in response to sudden changes in economic circumstances. To denounce rental housing because of poor quality is to ignore the extent to which local provision and consumption are finely matched (Kumar, 2001). Worldwide, Governments are challenged to ensure housing quality. However, the literature cautions that improving the quality of poor shelter often runs the risk of being counter-productive. Lessons from Scotland showed that enforcement of strict construction standards only increased the cost of housing and encouraged overcrowding (Daunton, 1983 cited in UNCHS, 2003). Likewise clamping down on landlords for renting unsafe and unsanitary shelter is risky, turning badly housed people into homeless people (UNCHS, 2003).

Whilst there is strong support for stricter planning controls and building standards, the ongoing debate is that these are set far too high for low-income housing production (UNCHS, 2003). This goes against Turner's argument that housing standards should be less concerned with physical quality and more concerned about the role that shelter plays in household survival strategies (Turner 1976 cited in (Gilbert et al in UNCHS, 2003). Of course this does not imply that there should be no standards at all, but it is argued that standards should be much lower for housing intended for the poor.

The greatest challenge in terms of standards and quality are to be found in decaying inner-city rental housing. In the face of high demands for cheaper rooms it is insensible to prohibit such accommodation. Instead the researcher argues that minimum requirements about habitable space, washing facilities, fire regulations, ablution facilities and recreational areas are much more sensible. Also, regulations over property rates and tariffs could be lowered for this type of housing. In these ways the cost for renting could remain affordable.

3.2 RENTAL TENURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Increased urbanisation, growing homelessness, reduction of influx controls and South Africa's housing policy have resulted in large numbers of people renting accommodation in urban areas. This section looks at the state of South Africa's housing sector, paying particular attention to the paradigm shifts focusing on rental housing.

3.2.1 SOUTH AFRICA'S DENSITY CHALLENGE

South Africa's response to housing back-logs mainly took the form of 'RDP' homes (one-house-one-plot), which perpetuated sprawling, fragmented settlements and low urban density patterns. This prompted the need for urban spatial restructuring, urban compaction and integration (UNCHS, 2004). However, South Africa's housing policy is shaped by local and national politics which led to the development of policies to fast-track subsidised housing to gain political support. This only produced a more segregated urban form, detrimental to the long term objectives of urban restructuring (Huchzermeyer, 2001). Hence, South African cities are still grappling with a severe density challenge that is perpetuating unsustainable settlements.

3.2.2 SOUTH AFRICA'S RENTAL SECTOR

South Africa's housing policy promoted homeownership in two forms. One has been the transfer of ownership of dilapidated housing stock to tenants in state financed homes. The other has been to offer low-income families subsidies to purchase their own homes (de Loor, 1992). Only in recent years has rental tenure been acknowledged as an important facet of South Africa's housing strategy. Despite the policy vacuum, rental is the second most efficient housing market after the high-income primary market in South Africa. A range of rental options, mostly in the private sector exist, that provide affordable housing for one third of South Africa's households (Gardner, 2003; Watson & McCarthy, 1998). From 1994 onwards there was strong support towards subsidies to institutions willing to supply subsidised rental housing (RSA, 1994). Called the

institutional subsidy, it was offered to organisations willing to provide rental accommodation for the bottom end of the market (Goodlad, 1996). Since then the institutional subsidy has become an important part of rental housing delivery especially within inner cities. Whilst this type of housing is promoted in policy terms, it contributes a very small proportion (2%) of the total housing delivered since 1994[7].

3.2.3 THE RENTAL HOUSING ACT OF 1999

The Rental Housing Act of 1999 aimed at stabilising the rental market and focused on tenant-landlord relationships in a bid to encourage future investments. Whilst the objective of the Act is admirable, it is criticised for focusing primarily on the formal market and not the informal one. This means that small-scale informal rental such as rental of rooms and subletting would escape regulation leaving tenants in such accommodation unprotected. Furthermore it seems the act focused more on tenant-landlord relations as opposed to the development of the rental stock (Comments of the Urban Sector Network to the DoH, 1998; Nell, 2002). It is argued that the Act does not adequately address the issue of communal rental living where the line of privacy is impaired and where lease agreements are rarely signed due to the nature of this type of housing.

3.2.4 IMPORTANT SHIFTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HOUSING POLICY

Housing subsidies were promoted as a primary mechanism to deliver housing to the poor. However, new emphases in 2000 reshaped housing policy in important ways. Firstly, the Grootboom[8] judgment changed the way of thinking in housing policy. It re-

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[7] Presently there are an estimated 60 Social Housing Institutions (SHI's) which manage around 25 000 housing units in South Africa (Gardner, 2003; Social Housing Foundation 2003).

[8] [8] *"The state must create conditions for access to adequate housing for people at all economic levels of our society. State policy dealing with housing must therefore take account of different economic levels in our society"* Yacoob J (Government of the Republic of South Africa and Others, 2000). *"The states obligation to provide access to adequate housing depends on the context, and may differ from province to province, from city to city, from rural to urban areas and from person to person. Some may need access to land only; some may need access to land and building materials; some may need access to finance; some may need access to services such as water sewerage, electricity and roads. What might be appropriate in a rural area where people live together in*

interpreted the right to adequate housing by stating that: a housing programme must be varied, catering to all the different housing needs of the poor, according to area, economic level and housing choice. Secondly on the concept of sustainable development [9] and sustainable housing, it is argued that inner-city, medium to high density rental tenure could achieve a wide spectrum of sustainability outcomes. These are summarised as contributing to urban integration in terms of land conservation, efficiency in terms of services, accessibility to economic opportunities and to employment and reduced commuting, lowering pollution levels (Medium Density Housing Programme, 2003).

Both Grootboom and the sustainability debate changed the way of thinking in housing policy. The DoH began to acknowledge the importance of rental tenure in contributing to densification, revitalisation and integration of South African cities (see Mthembi-Mahanyele, 2002:5; Gardner, 2003 and Rust, 2003). Likewise urban planning policies focused on halting inner-city decay through a land use planning mix which encouraged public facilities residential and business activities (Dewar, 1992). A critical component to this approach is cheap accommodation for the poor seeking shelter in inner-cities (Aldrich and Sandhu, 1995 cited in: Habitat, 2004). While this was a significant step forward, rental tenure still remains an under emphasised part of South Africa's housing policy (Gardner et al, 2003; Rust, 2003). Nonetheless the DoH realised that sustainable medium density rental housing could be effectively achieved through sustainable social housing institutions and adequate private sector involvement (Rust, 2003). Hence rental housing had become conflated with one particular model and that is social housing.

A major problem conceptualising medium density housing in terms of social housing however, is that it excluded the very poor (Social Housing Policy, 2003:5). People accessing shelter from housing institutions need to earn a steady income formally or informally in order to afford the rentals. The question arising from this then is what

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communities engaging in subsistence farming may not be appropriate in an urban area where people are looking for employment and a place to live" Yacoob J (Government of the Republic of South Africa and Others, 2000).

[9] Sustainability is defined in relation to threats to human survival by disregard of the environment and resources in pursuit of economic growth and higher living standards.

tenure options are available that caters for those households or individuals that do not qualify for social housing? The answer is the focus of this dissertation and is found in the private rental market. For a while now, a significant amount of housing satisfying some of the needs of the very poor is being met outside the states housing programme. This is in keeping with international trends and locally the private rental market is providing a substantial and a much valued addition to the housing stock. It is argued that with the appropriate strategies this typology can positively contribute towards urban renewal, densification and poverty alleviation.

3.2.5 EXISITNG PUBLIC & PRIVATE RENTAL TYPOLOGIES

In the South African context the following rental typologies exist:

- Transitional Housing for the homeless who have very low incomes (R450 – R1250).
- Social Housing – Targets people earning less than R3500 and surveys indicated that people earning less than this amount cannot access social housing.
- Council Flats – Targets people earning between R800 and R4000, although affordability levels for rentals range between R144 and R1200. Operating costs exceeds income and therefore this type of housing is unsustainable.
- Privately developed flats – People in flats chose to live in the inner-city and earn an income in excess of R3500 per month. Privately developed back-yard rooms – These are mainly located on the fringe and accommodate people that earn an average of R1000 and rentals are at an average of R100 per month (Development of a Medium Density Housing Programme, 2003)

Housing departments were aware of the need for rental accommodation at a very low-income level, hence the introduction of the institutional subsidy which could be harnessed to provide transitional housing for the homeless (Gardner et al, 2003; Rust, 2003). However even transitional housing excludes the very poor and this is demonstrated in 3.2.6 below. Other affordable rental options in the inner city are

provided by the private sector which includes single rooms in converted old office blocks and warehouses (the focus of this dissertation).

3.2.6 BACKGROUND TO TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

The Transitional Housing Programme was a result of an initiative by the Inner City Shelter Forum (ICSF) of the City of Johannesburg (COJ) for dealing with homelessness in the inner-city. Johannesburg is the only province at this point that has a formal programme for transitional housing (Poulsen, 2000). Transitional housing is temporary accommodation (18 month tenancy) near or in the inner-city for households or individuals in transition between homelessness and permanent accommodation. It is achieved through conversion or upgrading of existing inner-city buildings through the Governments institutional subsidy and managed by a housing institution. It provides homeless people and families with shelter including communal ablution, cooking and dining facilities. All projects have life skills training and empowerment, premised that these would assist tenants to move on to affordable permanent accommodation. In this way it attempts to bridge the gap between homelessness and the ability to re-integrate with society (Poulsen, 2000).

3.2.6.1 BENEFICIARY REQUIREMENTS, TENANCY AND SUBSIDY

To qualify for transitional housing beneficiaries need to be South African citizens and except for children under parental care, must be18 years or older. The subsidy excludes persons receiving pensions or grants. Single residents must earn not more than R1250 whilst households collectively must have a monthly income of R2500 or less. The maximum tenancy is 18 months. The subsidy amount is R3750 per unit/bed or R15000 per household of four and the total subsidy amount is determined by the number of people accommodated at the facility (Poulsen, 2000).

3.2.6.2 PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED WITHIN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

All projects rely heavily on outside funding for daily expenses and maintenance. The Housing Board's subsidy is a once off payment and is too little to implement the project, acquire the land or buildings and pay for construction or refurbishment. Hence additional funding needs to be sourced. Furthermore, the buildings available for transitional housing are not suited for living and require extensive adaptation which increases costs and compromises on quality. This means higher maintenance over time.

Since the subsidies are too low and rentals are not enough, effective management is critical to ensure ongoing fund raising to sustain the projects. Worsening matters is that most tenants are in intermittent employment hence rentals are irregular. Furthermore, Transitional Housing Projects are located in commercial and industrial zones which mean rates and tariffs are exorbitant (Poulsen, 2000). This means that collection and management of arrears is critical. Clearly a major problem across all projects threatening their sustainability has been the lack of operational funds and the implementation of effective management structures.

Within the social and spatial fabric there are a number of problems. Profiles of beneficiaries are highly varied and their needs are complex, making it difficult to formulate typical models for support and access to resources. Many need social welfare, pensions, training and rehabilitation. A significant problem is unemployment. Most are in semi-permanent jobs, making it difficult to move on from Transitional Housing. Hence many return to the streets once their term of transition comes to an end, defeating the purposes of trying to address homelessness. A concern spatially, is the relative ease with which tenants can cohabit both at the level of sleeping and sharing of minimal communal facilities. The line of private and communal activities in all projects is blurred and is an area of conflict. Due to financial constraints, compromises have been made in terms of the built fabric and bare necessities have been provided in communal and private spaces (adapted from Poulsen, 2000).

Most importantly is who is actually benefiting from Transitional Housing? Within a context of severe shortages in affordable accommodation this is a very complex question to answer. Transitional Housing caters for those earning between R400-R1250 per month and includes people in informal, semi and permanent employment who are not necessarily considered to be homeless or destitute. This implies that those earning below the lower limit are not catered for and no housing provisions are meeting such demands. Another major problem is that at the other end of a period of transition there is very little affordable formal housing for people from Transitional Housing to move into. Some residents in Transitional Housing could perhaps move into better accommodation if it was more affordable. Social housing is clearly very expensive and the rental gap is exorbitant whilst being in unstable employment. At the same time there are residents who are finding it difficult to cope with the cost of Transitional Housing and have to leave the facility. Clearly at both ends of Transitional Housing continuum there is a missing link for cheap shelter and either way people may very well fall back into destitution (Poulsen, 2000). Hence it is argued that converted buildings into cheap rental accommodation in the private sector are perhaps filling the missing link for affordable housing at both ends of the Transitional Housing spectrum.

3.2.6.3 LESSONS / CRITIQUE OF TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Housing practitioners need to understand where Transitional Housing sits within the broader framework of National Housing policy for the delivery of housing. It is important to gauge the extent of need for Transitional Housing which is currently satisfying a very tiny percentage of homelessness. Hence there is a need for other forms of accommodation and services that could assist Transitional Housing in terms of identifying people that could qualify and who could benefit more from the programme. If careful thought is not given to encouraging other forms of cheap rental tenure, then the Transitional Housing Programme will fail in its intended function as a place of transition to better living. This would only perpetuate a vicious cycle of homelessness.

3.3 CASE STUDY SÃO PAULO & JOHANNESBURG

A phenomenon in Sao Paulo and Johannesburg has provoked the attention of practitioners and policy makers. This trend involves the informal subdivision of commercial and industrial buildings into smaller dwelling units with communal access and facilities housing large groups of people. Essentially these buildings have become shells for informal settlements. This chapter provides an overview of this trend and the lessons that could be learnt for similar trends taking place in Durban's inner-city. This section relies heavily on the work of Roger Few et al, (2004).

3.3.1 BRIEF CONTEXT OF SÃO PAULO AND JOHANNESBURG

São Paulo and South Africa are very different on the surface but Gilbert and Crankshaw (1999 in UNCHS, 2004) note much in common between the urban contexts of the two countries in general. In terms of social, economic and urban development both are very similar. Huchzermeyer, (2002 in UNCHS, 2004) notes similarities between the two in terms of poverty, inequality, spatial segregation, informal settlements and the informal sub-division of buildings (Few et al, 2004).

3.3.2 SUMMARY & COMPARATIVE FINDINGS OF TRENDS

From the case studies there are some commonalities between the inner-city housing crises facing Sao Paulo and Johannesburg. Residents in both studies have the same conditions of housing deprivation with similar environmental health implications. Typical characteristics of their subdivided dwelling units are:

- Very small rooms;
- dense occupation and extreme overcrowding
- poor ventilation and insulation;
- a lack of privacy;
- inadequate lighting;

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- common access and circulation routes;
- inadequate sanitation and ablutions.

However, cortico residents are slightly better off economically with many in secure employment as compared to those in 'shack farms'. Overall people have occupied buildings to be closer to economic opportunities and urban facilities in a context where cheaper shelter alternatives in central areas are scarce (Few et al, 2004).

The level of living conditions, social cohesion and community organisation in corticos were found to be much more stable and longer established than the 'shack farms' of Johannesburg. Cortico residents aspired to create better housing conditions for themselves. The study found a strong sense of community amongst cortiços dwellers and where this was combined with management and organisational structures, living conditions were better. This denotes the importance of the social networks that have established here (Few et al, 2004).

In contrast, transitory single males living in an underutilized building in Johannesburg showed neither evidence of social cohesion nor any motivation to improve their deprived living circumstances. Shack farm dwellers had more diverse origins, shorter residency and a lesser attachment to their dwelling units or community. It could be argued that Johannesburg has a small and relatively new 'shack farm' sector therefore community cohesion would be weaker. Most hoped to move to an RDP home, or to an informal settlement or simply go back home. There appears to be a passive reliance on Government to provide housing instead of them mobilising to fight for their right to shelter. The political history of urban housing movements is more consistent in Sao Paulo than Johannesburg. The housing movements in Brazil have been strong in gaining knowledge over the years in social organisation and mobilization in demanding solutions to poor housing problems from Government (Kowarick and Bonduki, 1994; Fernandes and Rolnik, 1998 cited in Few et al, 2004).

In Johannesburg the momentum of the housing struggles by ACTSTOP and other community organisations during the time of apartheid has not carried through to today's

society. After apartheid, there has been a huge influx of black people into inner-cities and these groups do not share the same political history of inner-city housing struggles as before or as compared to Sao Paulo. This difference between the two cases, it can be argued, relates to the longer history of informal subdivided housing in Sao Paulo as compared to Johannesburg (Few et al, 2004).

The next section examines the policy approaches in the two countries in response to these trends.

3.3.3 POLICY RESPONSES IN SAO PAULO & JOHANNESBURG

Both cities have responded to informal subdivisions of formal buildings in different ways. Sao Paulo is the only city that has a strategy to deal directly with this form of housing. The Government in Sao Paulo funds the *Companhia de Desenvolvimento Habitacional e Urbano* (CDHU), tasked with developing a programme to specifically address the needs of cortico residents. Still in its early stages a task team of social researchers and architects are working closely with the cortico community to develop plans for new or renovated buildings that would be desirable and affordable for the poor. In the past the Municipality of Sao Paulo built high risers for low-income groups which proved to be too expensive for intended beneficiaries. Hence the new programme proposes smaller homes with minimum standards that would be rented out to the poor with the option to purchase (Few et al, 2004).

Johannesburg unlike Sao Paulo did not have a specific policy for 'shack farms' in the inner-city. In fact 'shack farms' are viewed as one of the housing crises that the city faces and which the city intends tackling through its inner-city housing policy. Two policy approaches are mentioned. The first deals with the growing problem of degraded buildings. As many as 10, 000 buildings in various stages of decay have been identified in the inner-city, half of which form part of the Better Buildings Programme. The objective of this programme is to identify private developers willing to renovate identified buildings and manage the project for themselves including the residents. The second approach focuses on social and transitional housing within the inner-city. At

present around 5% of the housing stock within the inner-city is under social management. Although local government policy on inner-city housing in Johannesburg has to a certain extent increased the delivery of social and transitional housing there yet remains a housing gap for no and very low-income earners (Few et al, 2004).

3.3.4 LESSONS FROM CASE STUDY FOR DURBAN'S INNER-CITY

What comes across strongly from the Sao Paulo and Johannesburg experience is the need for governments to be proactive in policies relating to cortico's and shack farms. In the 1960's and 70's minimum standards for low-income housing were set too high, out-pricing the poor from housing intended for them. It is still too early to ascertain whether the policy approaches adopted in these two countries will repeat the same mistakes of the past. However, there is a high risk that the present policy interventions could fail as a long term housing solution especially if it leads to re-gentrification where rehoused people move on from properties they cannot afford. The existence of informal and poor quality housing is because of high demands for shelter that is cheap (Boaden and Taylor et al, 1992; cited in Few et al, 2004). From the experiences in Sao Paulo and Johannesburg including other developing countries, researchers caution against removing such poor quality accommodation and stress the need for governments to add to the housing stock instead of reducing it (Crankshaw et al, 2000).

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a wide understanding of rental tenure in both developed and developing countries. It highlights the neglect of rental tenure by developing countries in favour of homeownership and how this has impacted on housing policies and strategies. It points out the move of Governments from "supply" to "demand side" interventions and how this has reduced the available rental stock to poorer individuals and households. It explains the motive behind renting; showing that for many being close to work was a priority over quality whilst ownership was secondary. What come

across strongly from the literature review is two very important paradigm shifts in our understanding of rental tenure. The first is that it is no longer sufficient to view rental tenure as a linear progression to an ultimate goal of ownership. Individuals and households may occupy various types of tenure at various times in their lives based on their own socio-economic circumstances. This then implies that a wide range of tenure choices are needed for a well functioning housing sector.

The second shift is the role of the small scale landlord as producer of rental tenure. No longer is it the case where landlords are seen as exploiters and tenants the exploited. Rental housing is viewed as a socio-economic. In both the developing and developed regions the role of the small scale landlord as a producer of rental tenure has been overlooked, hence it is argued that policies should be developed to understand and respond to their needs. This chapter then discusses the advent of rental tenure in South Africa as an important facet of housing policy. It talks about shift in focus from homeownership to rental tenure. It discusses the institutional subsidy and Social Housing Institutions as the delivery agents of rental tenure in South Africa. It highlights important changes in the housing sector which redefined the role of Government in the delivery of housing. It makes the point that whilst Social Housing is too expensive and out of reach for the homeless, the private rental market has for a while been satisfying those needs. It also points out that even Transitional Housing has not really addressed homelessness. It makes the point that it is important for Governments to support the development of other forms of rental tenure so as to assist Transitional Housing programmes, and other housing initiatives to increase the housing stock as well as to broaden the tenure choices that are available to the urban poor. This makes for a vibrant and well functioning housing sector which clearly is in keeping with trends internationally.

Finally this chapter looks at the case study of Sao Paulo and Johannesburg where similar trends of informal sub-divisions of inner-city tenements are taking place. The case study cautions against Governments repeating the same mistakes of the past when it comes to housing delivery intended for the poor. It makes the point that poor quality accommodation exists because there is a demand for housing that is cheap.

CHAPTER 4 – CASE STUDY DURBAN

The case-study aims to explore the dynamics of converted buildings into cheap rental housing and to evaluate its appropriateness as an essential housing choice for the homeless. This section examines the context of Durban.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF DURBAN'S INNER-CITY

4.1.1 LOCALITY OF DURBAN

Durban is a city on the eastern seaboard of KwaZulu Natal covering an extent of 2,297 square kilometers and having a population of just over three million people. The local authority of Durban is the eThekwini Municipality (eThekwini Municipality IDP 2003-2007) (see MAP 1).
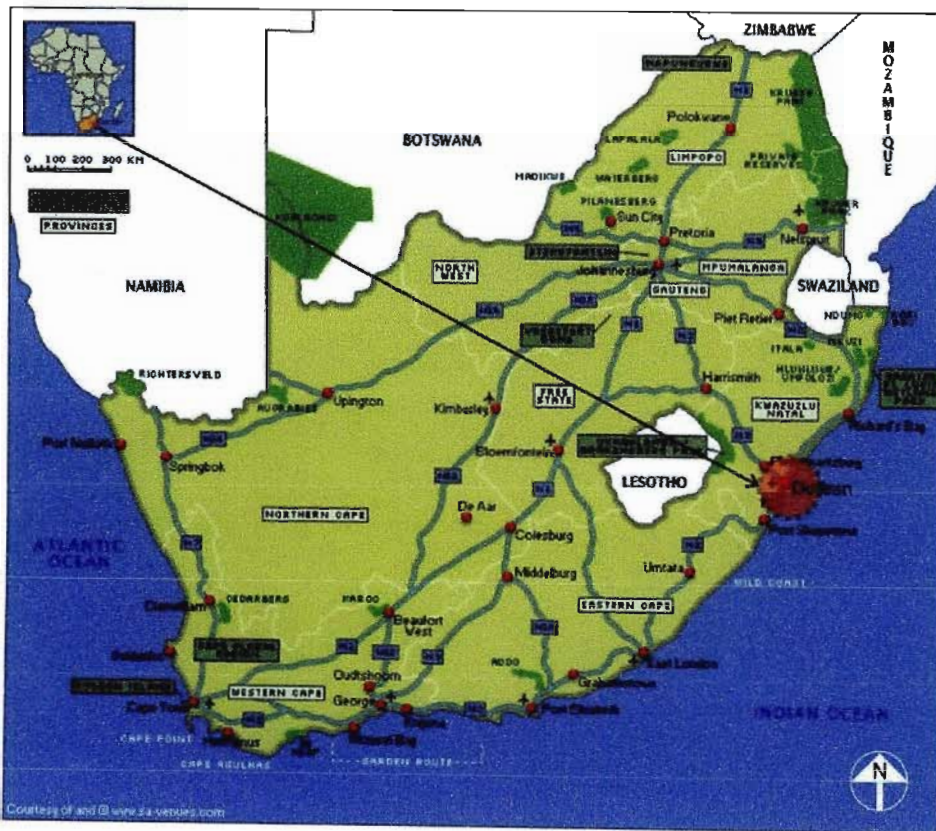
MAP 1 - LOCATION OF THE CITY OF DURBAN - Source: www.sa-venue.com

4.1.2 CURRENT TRENDS IMPACTING ON DURBAN'S CBD

The CBD has been undergoing significant changes some physically visible and others less obvious. Of importance to this study is increasing homelessness, high urbanisation rates, the informalisation of the economy the decentralisation of businesses from the CBD and Urban Renewal Strategies. These are elaborated below.

An important force of change impacting on Durban's CBD is urbanisation. Durban's annual population growth is 2.15% and the projected urbanisation level to the year 2020 is 62%. This implies that in 20 years time almost two thirds of the total population will be living in urban areas, of which the eThekwini Municipal Area is the largest (Population Indicators, Durban Metro, 1999). Durban is experiencing what is termed 'delayed urbanisation', whereby the sudden relaxation of influx controls have resulted in large sums of people flocking to cities over a very short space of time (Medium Density Housing Programme, 2003). A significant number of these migrants are experiencing homelessness and come to the city in search of shelter. Others come in search of work and often enter into the informal sector which makes up a staggering 33% of South Africa's 67% formal economy (SAAIR, 2002/03 Survey).

Another force that is altering land-use patterns in Durban's CBD is decentralisation. Durban's inner-city is a prime location for retail and office space. However the attractiveness of lesser congestion, convenience and security of the outskirts has resulted in the relocation of shops and offices. According to Viruly Consulting (2000) operating costs for offices in Durban's CBD are much higher than decentralised locations. The CBD has an overall vacancy rate of 29.12% (Davies & Associates, Iyer Rothaug Collaborative and Larry Aberman, 2001).

In the industrial sector, poor performance of the economy over the years has resulted in limited investments. High interest rates and low manufacturing has dampened rental growths. Hence the demand and occupation rates of warehouse space have remained very low (BESG, 2002). Similar to the office and retail sector, a significant number of warehouses in the city remain vacant and unprofitable to owners. Changes are also

taking place in the hotel and accommodation segments. As the urban centre decays it has become less appealing to up market clients. Hence, hotels and buildings offering inner-city accommodation have adapted, lowering their standards to meet new demands for cheap daily rental accommodation. Poor urban migrants are attracted to these areas where rental accommodation is cheap. Hence, the ratios between visitors to the city and long term residents have become skewed. Those that remain in the city are either very old or very poor (Building Refurbishment and Revitalisation Study, 2002).

In the residential zones a major problem has been poorly maintained buildings associated with demographic shifts where landlords demanded higher rentals from black tenants. Overcrowding followed in some cases as affordability levels decreased. This resulted in a deterioration of buildings as non-payments of rentals discouraged spending on maintenance (BESG, 2002). As buildings began to spiral downward they became more attractive to the poor.

Durban's overall vacancy rate is high, greater than Johannesburg or Cape Town (SAPOA, 2004). Rental levels have kept apace only in nominal terms, whilst the overall take-up of space has remained rather weak. This has prompted the city to embark on a CBD revitilisation campaign comprising of catalytic and consolidating interventions[10] to restore investor confidence in the inner-city and to curb the decentralization of existing businesses (iTRUMP, 2003). Of relevance to this study are catalytic interventions such as the regeneration of the Point and consolidating interventions such as the urban upgrades of West Street, Aliwal Street and Point Road. An important facet of such interventions is building revitilisation. These urban renewal strategies have had significant implications on the existence of cheap rental accommodation for the poor in important districts within the inner-city.

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[10] Catalytic interventions are defined as large-scale capital projects that will have a "significant impact on the physical, social and economic aspects of the inner city". Consolidating interventions are defined as strengthening and reinforcing existing activities, such as projects that uplift and improve the physical environment and the public realm. It also involves improving the way the city is managed, improving the co-ordination between different functions and also involves further planning if and where necessary (Building & Revitalisation Study, 2000).

4.2 INTERVIEWS WITH KEY MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

By now it is clear that the research topic is a fairly new trend and hence it was important for the researcher to learn as much as possible about the problems and issues surrounding it. Hence the first part of the analysis involved collecting qualitative and quantitative information. This was achieved by interviewing key respondents to learn first hand from their knowledge and experience more about the subject matter. In order to do these four officials from relevant departments of the eThekwini Municipality were interviewed. These respondents were selected based on their roles and involvement with the identified problem. The following Municipal officials were interviewed:

- Senior Townplanner for the Special Consent division of the Development and Planning branch of the eThekwini Municipality. Responsible for assessing special land use applications and reports to iTRUMP which is the decision making authority on this typology of housing.

- The Principle Building Inspector of the CBD of the eThekwini Municipality. His role was assessing building compliances with the National Building Regulations.

- Metro Fire Inspector in charge of fire related issues for the CBD of the eThekwini Municipality and also represents the fire department at iTRUMP's special operations meetings reporting on 'bad buildings' within the inner-city.

- The Divisional Manager of the Environmental Health Branch - actively involved in dealing with the matter of converted buildings and 'bad buildings' in the inner-city. Also heads up the operations team at iTRUMP.

4.2.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

From the interviews, it is clear that a major problem from a health, fire and building control perspective is that the majority of converted buildings did not comply with National Building Regulations. Buildings did not comply with, minimum health codes, ceiling heights, minimum habitable room sizes, the number of ablution facilities in relation to the resident population, the necessary fire-escape routes and fire fighting-

equipment. Another major problem identified was the choice of materials used in construction. According to the fire official in most cases chip-board and maisonite were used as partitions for rooms and this burned very easily. Ideally he said "materials should be non-combustible and partitions should have an adequate fire-rating". Other problems were old electrical wiring and incorrect electrical connections. A critical issue in all buildings was adequate natural light and ventilation which in the event of a fire was necessary to prevent affixiation.

The immediate responses by the Municipality in dealing with such 'badly converted buildings' has been litigation resulting in high court decisions ordering business owners to cease operations. This was done to prevent injuries or fire outbreaks commonly happening in similar kinds of buildings in Johannesburg.

Whilst officials found many buildings to be poorly adapted, they did indicate that many could comply with the necessary regulations. The problem officials said was that building owners in particular were reluctant to invest on renovations when they have sub-leased their buildings to other tenants. From the interviews it became clear that cheap rental housing apart from being in great demand was also yielding substantial returns. For example some landlords were profiting at least R30, 000 to R45, 000 a month tax free. Hence officials felt that building owners were being irresponsible in their unwillingness to invest in improving building conditions. This prompted the Municipality to take a strong stance against illegal uses and unscrupulous landlords/ building owners. It was felt that they were exploiting tenants and charging them exorbitant rentals for poor quality accommodation.

From a Townplanning perspective, it was felt that low-income accommodations in the inner-city were linked to negative implications on businesses and commercial activities. The Townplanning Department was inundated with complaints from business owners who were against being surrounded by such housing because they felt such developments would only encourage vagrancy and petty theft and reduce their property values. Moreover this type of use was considered detrimental to the urban renewal projects that were planned and currently underway in core areas of the city. Officials

unanimously agreed that the current regulations to regulate this type of use were inappropriate because it focused more on the legal requirements on running such a business, which catered for a different caliber of people, such as those interested in cheap short-term lodging, who were not necessarily homeless. It was felt that these regulations ignored the social welfare aspects such as mental health, employment, education, counseling, and pensions etc. which were linked to this typology of housing. Officials acknowledged that there was strong evidence such as the high number of converted buildings and the significant number of tenants to suggest that there is a dire need for this typology of housing. Officials felt that the way forward would be to define this type of use and put in place appropriate policies to manage and control it within the city.

What comes across strongly from the interview responses is that the Municipality has focused much of its attention primarily on the development control and management aspects which have arisen from the conversion of buildings. Even the approach in responding to the problem has ignored the social aspects that are linked to the act of conversions. It became clear to the researcher that very little was known about the people living in such buildings. This implies that there is a very little understanding of the settlement dynamics of this trend. From the interviews the researcher gained a better insight to the problem from a Municipal perspective.

4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS – CONVERTED BUILDINGS

TABLE B lists 41 buildings converted into cheap rental housing over the past three years. It shows that 39 % of the 41 buildings are 'inactive' (not operating as rental accommodation) whilst more than half (61%) are still in operation. From the 25 active buildings the Municipality has identified seven for closure in the up and coming months (highlighted in yellow) (C. Tree, 2005; K. Bennett, 2005). Buildings defined as 'inactive' were in contravention of several building and health regulations and did not satisfy townplanning objectives. Although a number of buildings have closed down under much pressure from the Municipality, they are still discussed in this study to demonstrate the extent of the phenomenon.

TABLE B – List of converted buildings in the inner-city.

No.	BUSINESS NAME	ADDRESS	CURRENT STATUS
1	Acutt House	37 Acutt Street	INACTIVE
2	Powerhouse	18 Albany Grove	INACTIVE
3	Aliwal Night Shelter	8/16 Aliwal Street	INACTIVE
4	Lighthouse Lodge	47/51 Aliwal Street	INACTIVE
5	Shirley Chambers	5/9 Baker Street	ACTIVE
6	Durban Accommodation	53 Cato Street	ACTIVE
7	Not Listed	7/9 Fisher Street	ACTIVE
8	Blenheim Hotel	37 Gillespie Street	INACTIVE
9	Four Seasons Hotel	81/83 Gillespie Street	ACTIVE
10	Palm Beach Hotel	106/108 Gillespie Street	ACTIVE
11	Not Listed	24 McArthur Street	INACTIVE
12	Not Listed	25 Mona Road	ACTIVE
13	Tremona Hotel	38 Mona Road	ACTIVE
14	Palmerston Hotel	40/42 Palmer Street	INACTIVE
15	Not Listed	26 Parry Road	ACTIVE
16	Lionell House	10 Pickering Street	INACTIVE
17	Vogue	29 Pickering Street	ACTIVE
18	Tropical Heat Entertainment	124 Point Road	ACTIVE
19	Backpackers	154 Point Road	ACTIVE
20	Anchor Lodge	172 Point Road	INACTIVE
21	South Beach Shelter	429 Point Road	ACTIVE
22	The Nest	473 Point Road	ACTIVE
23	PLM Motel	542 Point Road	ACTIVE
24	Unknown	550 Point Road	ACTIVE
25	Unknown	556 Point Road	ACTIVE
26	Tong Lok	562 Point Road	INACTIVE
27	South Beach Hall	21 Rochester Street	ACTIVE
28	Hotel Ritz	32 Russel Street	INACTIVE
29	New Ritz	36 Russel Street	ACTIVE
30	Not Listed	11 Smith Street	ACTIVE
31	Metropole House	106 Smith Street	INACTIVE
32	Upperclass	181 Smith Street	ACTIVE
33	Not Listed	501 Smith Street	ACTIVE
34	The Palace	33 Stanger Street	INACTIVE
35	Nu Rand Hotel	85 Stanger Street / 147 West Street	ACTIVE
36	Wingfield (Old Wing)	72 St. Andrews Street	ACTIVE
37	The Lonsdale	34 West Street	INACTIVE
38	Hilton Mansions	123/124 West Street	INACTIVE
39	CJ's Night Shelter	144 West Street	ACTIVE
40	Palm Shelter	160/172 West Street & 157/159 Palmer Street	INACTIVE
41	New Bennies	174 West Street & 6 Unioun Lane	ACTIVE

Source: City Health, Building Inspectorate & Fieldwork 2005/2006

Key for Table 1
Current status of bldgs.
Active
Inactive
Identified for closure

LOCATION OF CONVERTED BUILDINGS

LEGEND

● LOCATION OF CONVERTED BUILDING

Roads.shp

MAP No : 2

Scale 1:15,000
Source : eThekwini Municipality, Fielwork & Interviews, 2004/2005
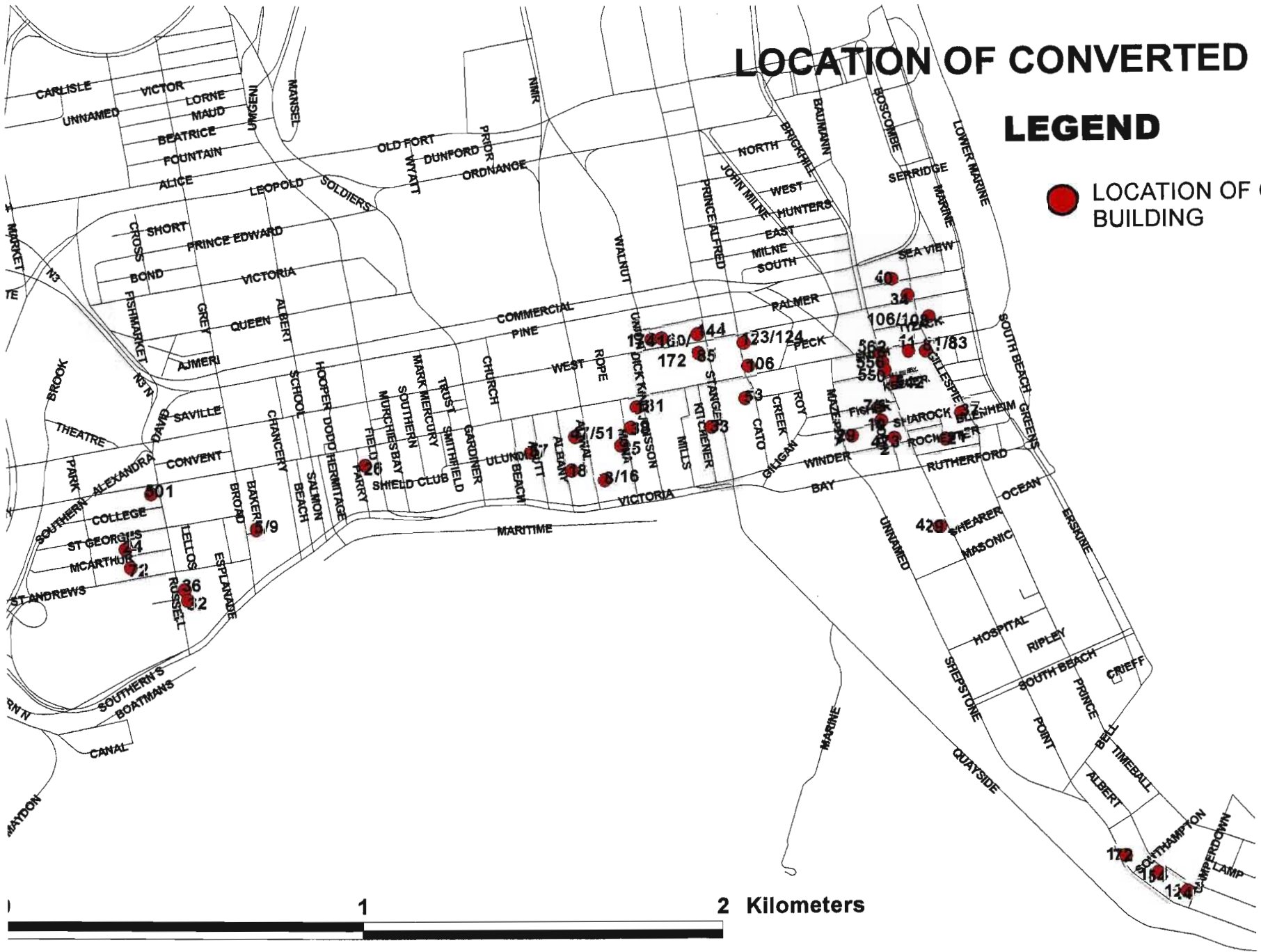
1   2 Kilometers

4.3.1 LANDUSE OF CONVERTED BUILDINGS

FIGURE 1
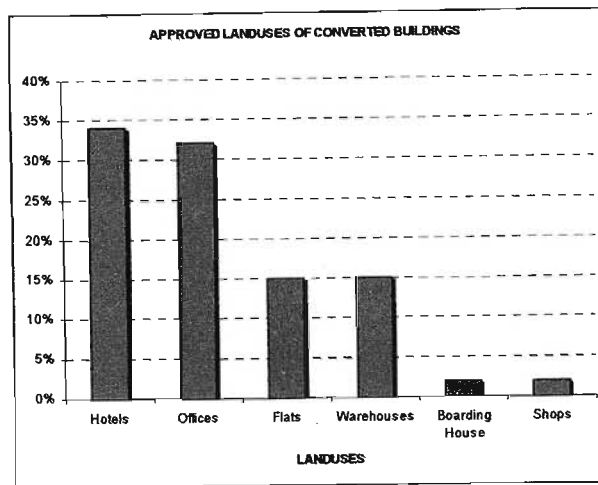
Source: eThekwini Municipality Townplanning and Plan Records 2005.

From FIGURE 1 it is clear that the dominant land use of adapted buildings are hotels (34%), followed very closely by offices (32%), which are scattered in various sections throughout the city. Thirteen residential flats make up 15% of the adapted stock, mainly clustered in sections along Point Road. Warehouses equal the number of flats (15%) and are spotted in areas of West Street, Cato Street, Smith Street and Point Road. A boarding house located in St. Andrews Street and a converted shop on Aliwal Street make up the remainder 4% of the total number of converted buildings within the city.

4.3.2 THE NATURE OF THIS TREND

The nature of the phenomenon being studied in this dissertation has a sporadic spatial characteristic (see MAP 2), occurring in various districts within the eThekwini Municipal Area (EMA). Those important districts are Albert Park, the core Central Business District (CBD), North East CBD, Victoria Embankment, Beachfront and the Point (see MAP3). The trend is occurring for a number of wider reasons such as increased urbanisation coupled with large-scale unemployment, increasing urban poverty, growing homelessness and a lack of affordable inner-city housing. The decentralisation of offices and retail, decline in the hotel and manufacturing sectors and the downward spiral of residential buildings in the inner-city, all have in some way contributed to a significant number of buildings deteriorating, becoming vacant and dysfunctional. Hence an important factor as to why this trend is also occurring is the high availability of rentable space coupled with high demands for affordable accommodation in the inner-city.
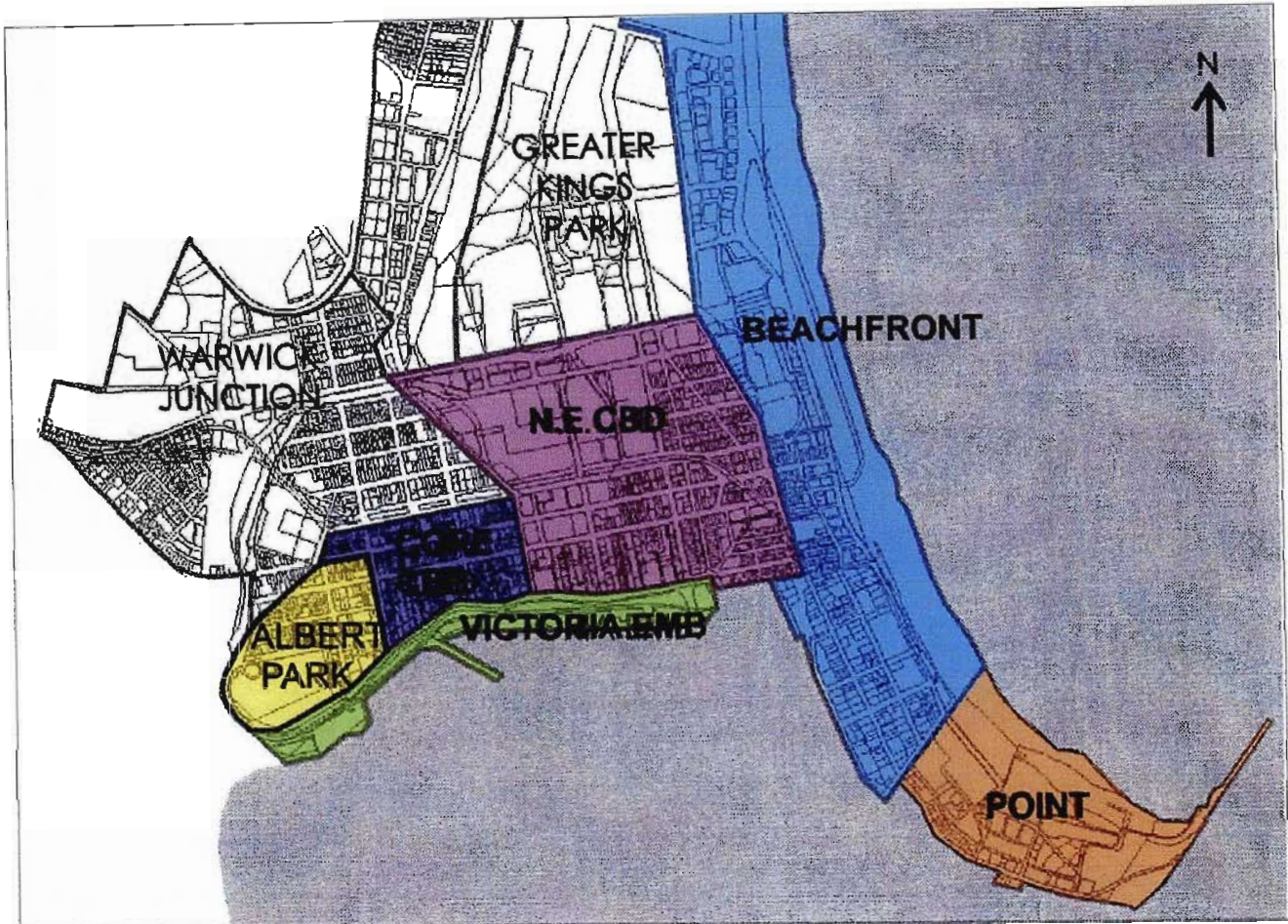
MAP 3 – INNER-CITY DISTICTS WHERE THE TREND IS OCCURRING. Source: Fieldwork & Interviews, 2004/2005

4.3.3 THE CASE STUDY BUILDINGS

From the analysis thus far three buildings are selected to be studied. To do this there are two important factors to consider:

- The type of building being converted.

    From the previous section, the majority of buildings being converted into 'rental accommodation' are offices and hotels followed by warehouses. For the purposes of this dissertation converted offices and warehouses will be analysed. Flats and hotels will not be dealt with for obvious reason (they are designed for

residential use) whilst there were no active converted shops at the time of this dissertation.

- The location of the adapted building.

From the previous section it is clear that the phenomenon is occurring in different districts within the inner city. There has been much focus in the media and by the Municipality on buildings of this nature within important precincts of the inner-city; hence buildings in prime locations of the CBD will be targeted.

Based on the above criteria TABLE D is a list of three buildings selected to be studied and MAP 4 shows their spatial location.

TABLE C – List of Case Study Buildings

ESTABLISHMENT	ADDRESS	LOCATION	LANDUSE
1. Aliwal Night Shelter (A)	8/16 Aliwal Str.	Core CBD	OFFICES
2. The Nest (B)	473 Point Rd.	N.E CBD	WAREHOUSE
3. Upper Class Night Lodge (C)	181 Smith Str	N.E CBD	WAREHOUSE

LOCATION OF CASE STUDY BUILDINGS

LEGEND

🔴 LOCATION OF CONVERTED BUILDINGS

🟢 LOCATION OF CASE STUDY BUILDINGS

OLD FORT

ORDNANCE

WALNUT

SOLDIERS

FIELD

COMMERCIAL

PINE

MARK

WEST

CHURCH

SMITH

ACLIFF

PARRY

MARITIME

VICTORIA

CATO

RUSSEL

PRINCE ALFRED

MILNE

BRICKHILL

BOSCOMBE

MARINE

LOWER MARINE

SEA VIEW

TYZACK

GULL

FISHER

MISSION

BAY

GILLESPIE

GREENS

OCEAN

MASONIC

UNNAMED

POINT

PRINCE

SHEPST

QUAYSID

ERSKINE

0.7   1.4 Kilometers
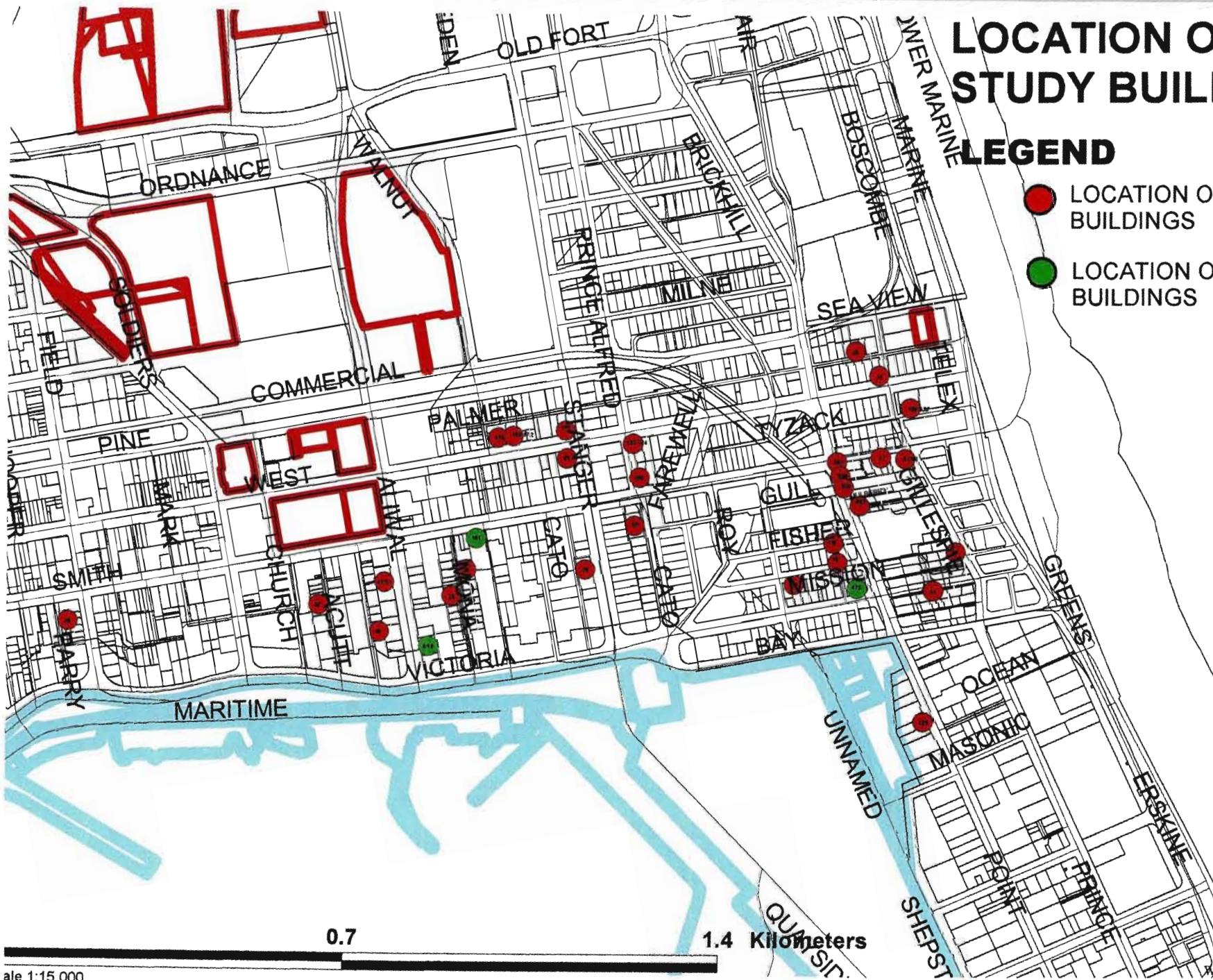
ale 1:15,000
urce : eThekwini Fielwork & Interviews, 2004/2005

MAP No : 4

N
W   E
S

4.3.4 THE LIMITS OF THE STUDY AREA DEFINED

Based on the spatial locations of Aliwal Night Shelter, The Nest and Upperclass Night Lodge, the study area is defined as the area between Smith Street in the North, and Victoria Embankment in the South and delineated by Point Road in the East and Aliwal Street in the West (MAP 5).

MAP 5 – LIMITS OF THE STUDY AREA
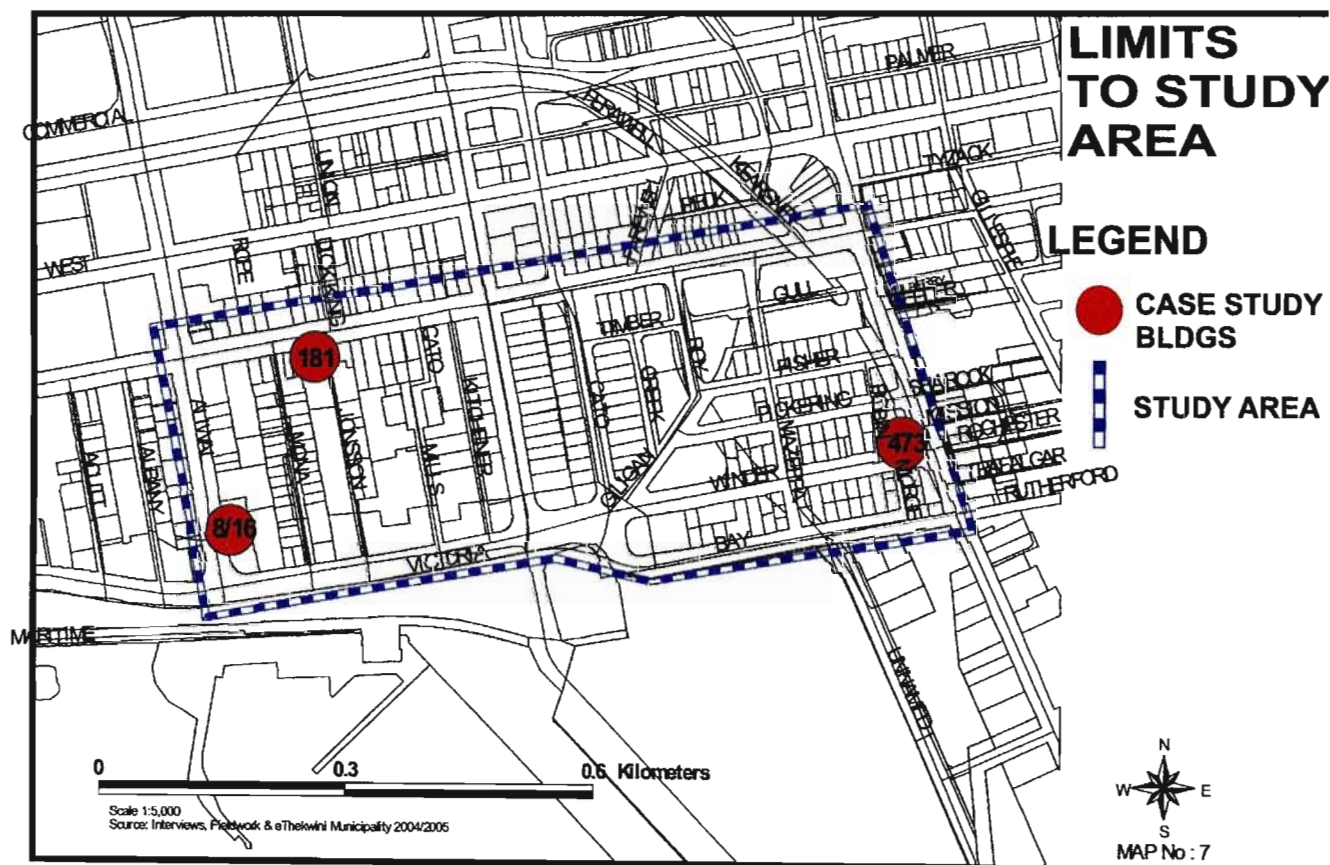
4.4 PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BUILDINGS

This section provides a comparative analysis of the physical characteristics of the three case study buildings namely Aliwal Night Shelter, Upperclass and The Nest.

4.4.1 LOCATION & CONTEXT

Aliwal Night Shelter is located at the Victoria Embankment end of Aliwal Street in a core area of the CBD whilst Upperclass is situated on the corner of Jonnsson Lane and Smith Street bordering the CBD whilst The Nest[11] is sited on the corner of Point Road and Winder Street, on the outskirts of the CBD. The context of Aliwal Night Shelter is characterised by high profile offices, commercial activities and medium density flats whilst the general district around Upperclass is motorcar dealerships and other land use activities which provide support to the core. Upperclass is bounded by a mixture of residential and commercial activities of varying degrees and borders on an important tourist development corridor. All three case study buildings are quite visible in their setting (MAP 2 & 5).

4.4.2 PREVIOUS USE OF BUILDINGS

Historically, Aliwal Night Shelter served as a club and offices for the Merchant Navy who also owns the building. The upper floor of Upperclass and The Nest were previously used as storage facilities by their owners, J.P Cigarettes and Nicks Furniture respectively. In all three cases the buildings had remained vacant for more than a year before they were adapted to serve residential purposes.

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[11] Due to the sensitivity of the residents accommodated at The Nest (Case Study C) it was impossible to obtain internal images of the sleeping areas and facilities. The Nest had been the focus of extensive media reports, hence the landlord refused the researcher permission to take pictures as this he said, "would anger residents and may cause and altercation". Therefore plans and descriptions for this building have been used.

4.4.3 DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS

Aliwal Night Shelter is three storeys high, with commercial activities on the groundfloor, a bar and restaurant on the firstfloor and staff quarters on the second floor, whilst Upperclass and The Nest are two stories high with Upperclass giving way to offices and The Nest having a mixture of commercial activities on the groundfloor.

Fig 1 – Aliwal Night Shelter
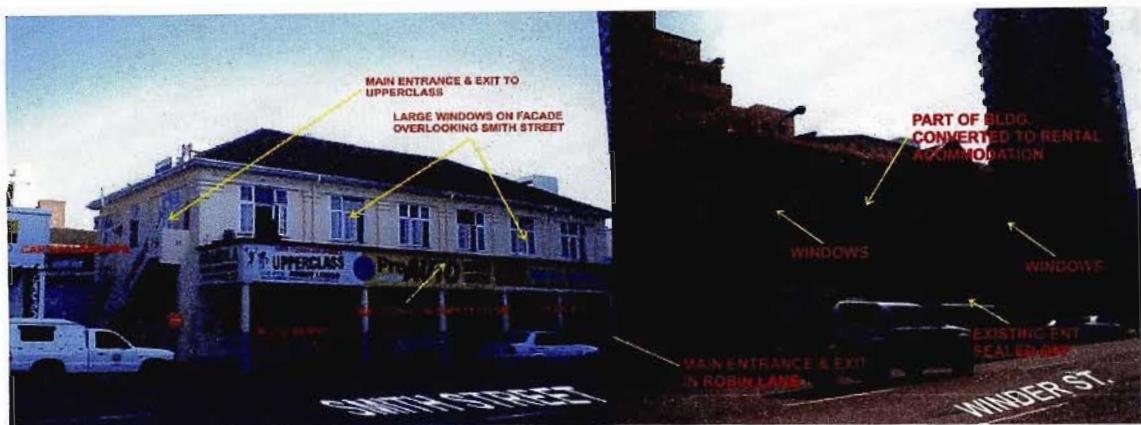
Fig. 2 – Upperclass   Fig. 3 – The Nest

The parts of the building that have been adapted for rental accommodation in Upperclass and The Nest are located on the firstfloor, whereas in Aliwal Night Shelter it is situated on the groundfloor. Hence in Aliwal Night Shelter there is some level of interaction between tenants and activities on the street.

In Aliwal Night Shelter and The Nest the main entrance and exit overlooking Aliwal and Winder Streets respectively have been cordoned off. A narrow service passage on the southern end of Aliwal Night Shelter serves as the only access into and out of the facility. In Upperclass the main access and exit is via a narrow steel staircase which does not easily permit two-way traffic. Upperclass has a main access way via a gated concrete staircase on the side of the building in Jonsson Lane and also has a fire escape on the western end of the building.

From the external façades there are very few signs of deterioration in all three cases, however internally the buildings do show significant evidence of neglect. All three buildings are open planned with Aliwal Night Shelter exhibiting the most deprived living conditions of all. The internal space in Aliwal Night Shelter was very poorly cross ventilated as compared to Upperclass and The Nest. Making matters worse in Aliwal Night Shelter, were leaking pipes which damaged the carpeting, rising damp and a murky living environment. The internal condition of The Nest also showed signs of deterioration (walls needed painting, carpets look tattered, ablutions needed repairing and redoing, doors needed to be replaced, stairwells and entrances and exists were poorly constructed etc.). Compared to Aliwal Night Shelter and The Nest the living environment of Upperclass was in better overall condition.

4.4.4 RESPONSIBLE AGENTS

For the purposes of this study the landlord refers to the agent that sub-leases the building from the owner. Tenants in the case study buildings refer to the person to whom they pay monthly rentals to as their landlord hence the same is applied here.

In all three case studies landlords have secured short term tenancies with the owners of buildings. It was discovered from interviews that the landlords of Upperclass and The Nest at some stage in their lives were homeless and through a change in circumstances were now the delivery agents of this typology of housing in the inner-city. Landlords in all three case studies pay a rental of approximately R15, 000 to R 25,000 per month to

building owners and are also responsible for the payment of service charges. In all three cases the motivations for owners subleasing their buildings were very similar.

- For example the building owner of Aliwal Night Shelter said that he was *"finding it very difficult to secure a tenant for the past year or so"*. In that time he said *"the building remained vacant and he was paying exorbitant rates and taxes"*. He also said that *"it was a strain on his existing business to make-up for losses of the vacant space"*. The owner indicated that since a tenant has been leasing the ground floor, despite the late payments it was a financial relief to him.

- The owner of Upperclass said that the *"warehouse space was redundant and vacant for over a year"* and he *"wanted to earn an income to supplement his rates and bond payments"*. He said that *"nobody wanted to rent storage space anymore and that's why he opted for converting the space"*.

4.4.5 MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES

In all three case studies the range of management activities are similar with slight variations. In all cases landlords have employed security guards and cleaning staff for the daily upkeep of facilities and to carry-out laundry duties. However in Upperclass there is a team of tenants who assist in the daily management of activities, carrying out maintenance, preparing the daily meals, collection of rentals etc. These individuals are paid a salary. In Upperclass and The Nest the roles and responsibilities of manager are carried out by the landlord. Whilst in Aliwal Night Shelter the landlord employed a live in manager. The difference in Upperclass is that the landlord lives at the accommodation he lets out. Judging from observations it could be seen that he took a personal interest in his tenants, taking the time to respond to their needs and to build good relationships.

4.4.6 DESCRIPTION OF TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION

In all three case studies the types of accommodation provided are similar and defined as rooms and designated dormitory style sleeping areas. However The Nest only caters for dormitory style sleeping (see Annexure 4 for Plans, Fig 6,7 & 8). All case studies provide accommodation for males, females, families and single mothers with children.

Dormitory style sleeping is in the open planned sections of the building free from partitions. Beds, double bunks or sponge mattresses are aligned along the walls and in the centre of the open planned areas. Beds are generally aligned very close to one another in order to maximise numbers which compromises on walking space in between beds. This is the typical arrangement that could be found in The Nest.

Fig. 7 – Dormitory Style Sleeping
in Aliwal Night Shelter

Fig. 8 – Dormitory Style Sleeping
in Case Upperclass

Where Aliwal Night Shelter and Upperclass differ is in the choice of materials and sleeping arrangements. For example in Aliwal Night Shelter, partitions were crudely constructed from dry-wall office screens of 1,8m high to create rooms of varying dimensions (some too small for legal habitation $2 - 3$ m^2) whereas in Upperclass rooms were made from cement blocks and were legal habitable spaces and better quality (according to National Building Regulations). In Aliwal Night Shelter, rooms were constructed back to back to reduce cost and maximise space but with little consideration for natural light or cross ventilation. However in Upperclass, rooms were positioned in

such a way that they enjoyed ample light and ventilation. Sleeping arrangements in Upperclass are better laid out than in Aliwal Night Shelter, with ample space between beds which also limits over crowding (see Figure 9 and 10).

Fig. 9 – Cubicles in Aliwal Night Shelter   Fig. 10 – Cubicles in Upperclass

4.4.7 SERVICES

In all three case studies there is a varying level of services that are provided. However tenants in all instances are supplied with a minimum of beddings, which include a blanket, a pillow, and for those that sleep in the dormitory (on the floor), a thin foam mattress for a little comfort. A stock room is also provided for the storage of tenants' personal belongings. In some cases such as in Upperclass and The Nest, tenants have access to ironing facilities, plug points and laundry services at a nominal fee. Other services found in The Nest for example, allow tenants access to a computer, internet and printer. In some cases tenants are provided with a free meal which may be prepared by the resident cook or by some charitable organisation.

4.4.8 ABLUTIONS, WASHING & DRYING FACILITIES

In all three case studies shower and toilet facilities are most problematic for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most critical is that there are far too few toilets for the resident population. Another major concern, especially for female tenants is the lack of privacy.

Toilets and showers in all three case studies do not have doors and this problem is compounded especially where toilet and shower facilities are communal. Poor wall and floor finishes makes these spaces susceptible to rising damp and unhygienic conditions. Finally, toilet fittings and wash hand basins in all three cases seems to break down most frequently due to cheap fixtures and high volumes of usage.

Fig. 11 – Toilet & Shower Facilities in Aliwal Night Shelter

Fig. 12 – Toilet & Shower Facilities in Upperclass

From all three case studies, only Upperclass appears to have provisions for washing and drying facilities. Tenants in Aliwal Night Shelter and The Nest improvise by washing their clothing while they shower and drying them out windows and over dry- wall partitions. In this way tenants save on laundry costs.

4.4.9 COOKING AND DINING FACILITIES

All three case study buildings have dining areas. However, only Aliwal Night Shelter and The Nest have provisions for cooking. Dining areas in Aliwal Night Shelter and The Nest appear to be make-shift spaces with crudely constructed table and benches for seating. In all instances dining rooms are too small in size for the resident population. Tenants In all three cases are not permitted to cook their own meals. However the resident cook does prepare a daily supper for tenants.

Fig. 13 Cooking & Dining Facilities – Aliwal Night Shelter

Fig. 14 – Dining Facilities – Upperclass (NB. No cooking Facilities in Upperclass)

4.4.10 RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Recreational facilities in terms of a communal gathering space for tenants in all three cases takes place in sleeping areas and dining rooms, which do become overcrowded when facilities are at full capacity. A television set in all instances provides some level of entertainment for residents. Other types of entertainment provided in Upperclass and The Nest include board games, darts, billiards books, internet etc (see Fig. 14). There is very little opportunity for recreational activities outside the facilities. However tenants do socialize at the entrances.

4.4.11 NUMBER OF TENANTS, RENTAL CHARGES AND ADMIN.

On a given night as many as 100, 109 and 60 people may rent a space in Aliwal Night Shelter, Upperclass and The Nest respectively. Tenants start arriving at facilities at four in the evening and remain till 9am the next morning. Pensioners, pregnant mothers and those that are ill are permitted to stay at the shelter during the day. Of course, there is a rental fee attached if they do intend staying on till the next morning.

Rentals across all three cases vary and range between R10-00 – R18-00 for a place to sleep in the dormitory and goes up to R30-00 to rent a room for the night. Pensioners are charged a flat monthly rental of R432.

A daily register is kept by the manager / landlord at all facilities as a record of tenants and transactions which take place. Administration at The Nest is far advanced as compared to other facilities. For example tenants are required to fill out a book-in application which has important information such as Names and Surnames, I.D. Numbers, contact details and information of next of kin or friends in the event of an emergency. This information is captured on a computer database and used as a register and for monthly financial projections.

4.4.12 LEASE AGREEMENTS & HOUSE RULES

There are no formal lease agreements between tenants and landlords in all three case study buildings. Hence the rights of tenants and landlord are unprotected in terms of the law. Tenants in all three case studies have to obey certain general rules which do not allow alcohol, drugs or loitering. Other rules do not allow food and smoking in sleeping areas. However it is uncertain if these rules are strictly adhered to because observations did indicate that people did break many of them.

4.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF TENANTS

This section summarises the findings from questionnaires of 58 respondents and informal interviews conducted in all three of the case-study buildings. 20 individuals from Aliwal, 21 from The Nest and 17 from Upperclass were selected to participate in the survey. The results from the questionnaire will be used to attempt to answer the research questions:

- Who are the people that live in this type of accommodation and why?
- Is this type of housing meeting the needs of its clients?
- What are the demands, constraints and opportunities of this type of housing delivery?

4.5.1 Age

FIGURE 2 – Source: Survey 2006
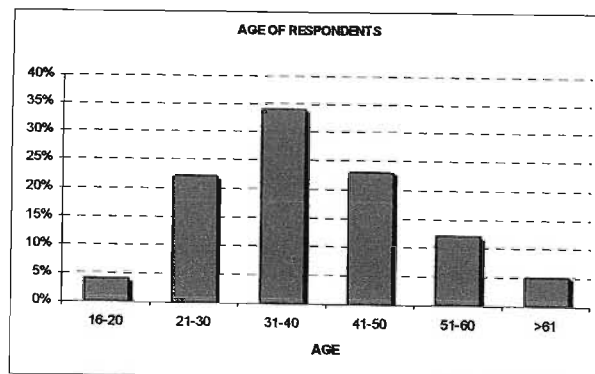
From Figure 2, the majority (34%) of the 58 respondents were between the ages of 31-40, whilst 23% were between 41 to 50 years old. A younger age group between 21 to 30 accounted for 22% of the survey population whilst 9% were between the ages of 51-60 and

5% were 60 years and over. A small group of respondents aged 20 years old and less, made up the remainder 4% of respondents. From the above statistics, the overall demographic profile across all three case studies is highly varied. It also shows that the majority of those that are homeless are much younger than the traditional homeless.

4.5.2 Gender

FIGURE 3 – Source: Survey 2006
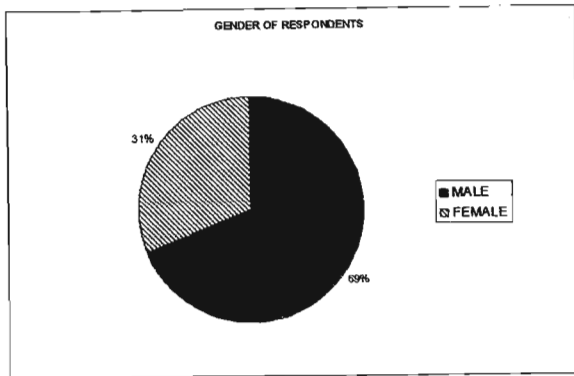
Off the 58 respondents surveyed 69% were male and 31% were female. What is important to note is a significant number of women are falling into homelessness.

4.5.3 Race

FIGURE 4 – Source: Survey 2006
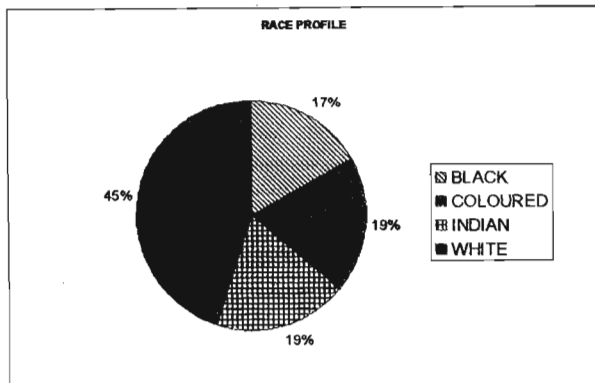
From Figure 4, the majority (45%) of the 58 respondents surveyed where white followed closely by 19% Indians and 19% Coloureds and 17% Blacks. It has to be pointed out that these figures do not reflect the racial distribution of homeless people living in the case study buildings. This highlights a major problem encountered by the researcher whereby many black respondents were reluctant to participate in the survey. The reason why whites feature as the largest group is because they were very much willing participants in the survey. However from observations and interviews with tenants and landlords it has been established that the racial mix is very much evenly distributed across all race groups (Mr. T Govender, Mr. Raj and Mr. Soswa Thomas, 2005/2006). The racial profile is useful in showing that homelessness in the South African context is no longer

perceived as a predominantly black problem, but a problem experienced and increasing across all race groups.

4.5.4 Nationality

FIGURE 5 – Source: Survey 2006
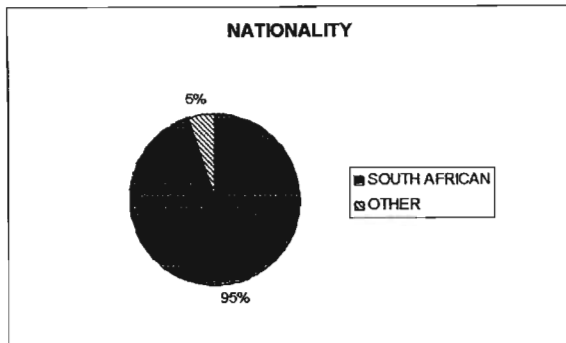
From Figure 5, most respondents (96%) were South African citizens, whilst a mere 4% were not. It has to be mentioned that the researcher had encountered a significant number of foreigners who were living in some of the buildings surveyed. For example there were a number of foreigners from Malawi, Barundi, Congo Mozambique and Zimbabwe at Aliwal and an Iraqi National refugee found renting at Upperclass. In the researcher's opinion homeless foreigners need to be dealt with on its own. Hence it is only mentioned in this dissertation as part of an important observation that requires more research. This research focuses primarily on South African citizens.

4.5.5 Marital status

FIGURE 6 – Source: Survey 2006
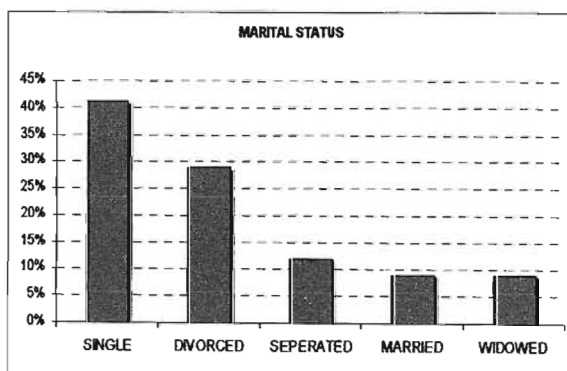
From Figure 6, a large percentage of respondents (41%) were single, 29% were divorced, and 12% said they were separated. The remaining 18% were made up of respondents who indicated that they were (9%) married and (9%) widowed. This then suggests changes in the family structure which are structural causes of homelessness.

4.5.6 Respondents with children

FIGURE 7 – Source: Survey 2006

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WITH CHILDREN

41%
59%

■ HAVE CHILDREN
☐ NO CHILDREN
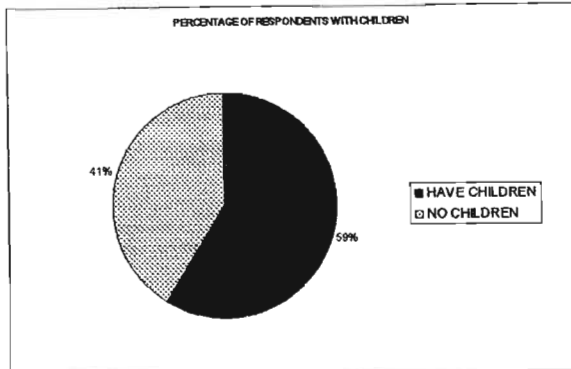
Off the 58 respondents more than half (59%) were parents but only 15% had their children living with them whilst 85% did not. This then suggests that responses against homelessness need to address the needs of children and involves other sectors such as education, social welfare and health services.

4.6 EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

4.6.1 Level of education

FIGURE 8 – Source: Survey 2006

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

PRIMARY SCHOOL   SECONDARY SCHOOL   SOME DIPLOMA   SOME UNIVERSITY DEGREE   NO RESPONSE
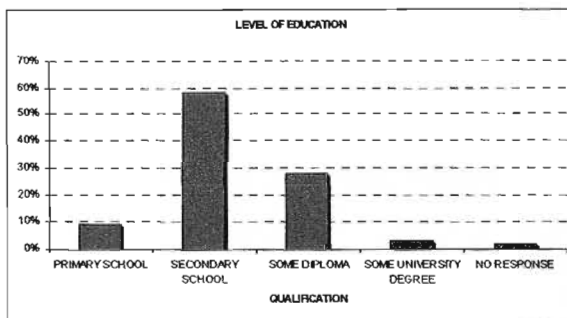
QUALIFICATION

From Figure 8, 9% of respondents had a primary level of education whilst 58% went to high school. 28% indicated a tertiary qualification at a technical institute whilst 3% said they had some university degree. One person did not respond to the question. This shows that a significant number of respondents were well educated.

4.6.2 Employment

FIGURE 9 – Source: Survey 2006

EMPLOYMENT OF RESPONDENTS

29%
71%

☐ EMPLOYED / SELF-EMPLOYED
■ UNEMPLOYED
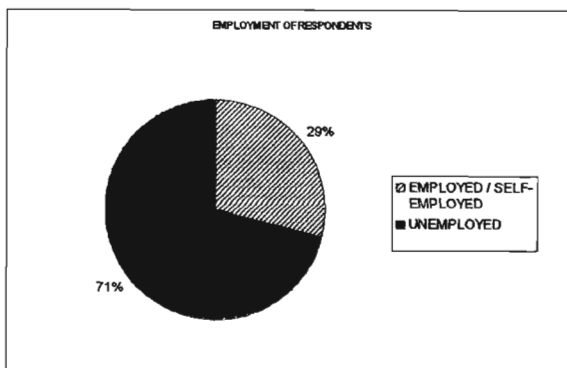
From Figure 9, 71% of the fifty eight respondents indicated that they were unemployed whilst 29% were either employed formally or were in business for themselves. This supports the notion

that at the most basic economic level, homelessness is caused by poverty and unemployment. Also, even though 29% of respondents were in some sort of employment their incomes were not sufficient enough to afford a home or to rent a flat o buy food.

4.6.3 Type of employment

FIGURE 10 – Source: Survey 2006
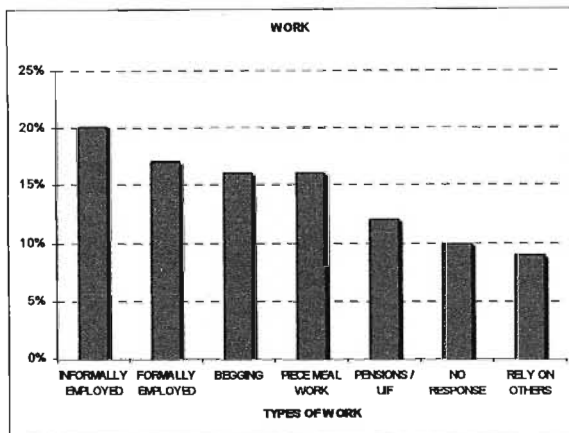
Figure 10, shows the activities that 56 of the 58 respondents were involved in to earn money. Whilst the majority (20%) were informally employed as hairdressers, informal traders and car guards 16% relied on piecemeal work. 17% were active in the formal sector as skilled and semi-skilled artisans whilst a significant number (12%) of respondents begged for a living. Those that were recently retrenched and older (45-60) relied on their unemployment funds (UIF) and pensions for their income. What this shows is that the majority of respondents relied on intermittent sources of income.

4.6.4 Daily earnings

FIGURE 11 – Source: Survey 2006
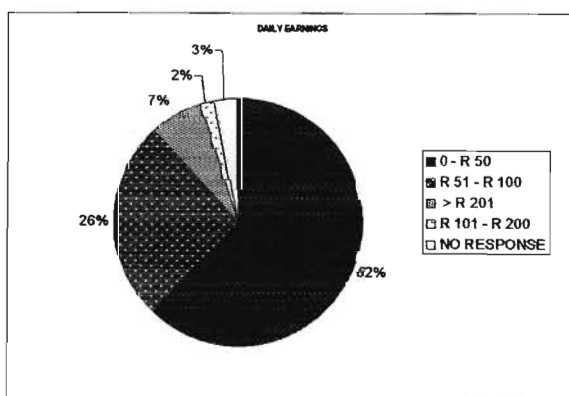
From Figure 11, 56 of the 58 respondents (62%) earned not more than R50 per day, followed by 26% whose incomes were between R51 to R100. A small number (2%) had an income of between R101 to R200, whilst 7% earned a sum greater than R200. What this shows is that the overall earning potential of the majority of respondents surveyed was very low. This then suggests that respondents would choose the most feasible housing option in order to save money.

4.7 TENANT PERCEPTIONS

4.7.1 Origins of tenants

FIGURE 12 – Source: Survey 2006

PLACES TENANTS CAME FROM

- CAPE TOWN
- DURBAN
- JOHANNESBURG
- OTHER
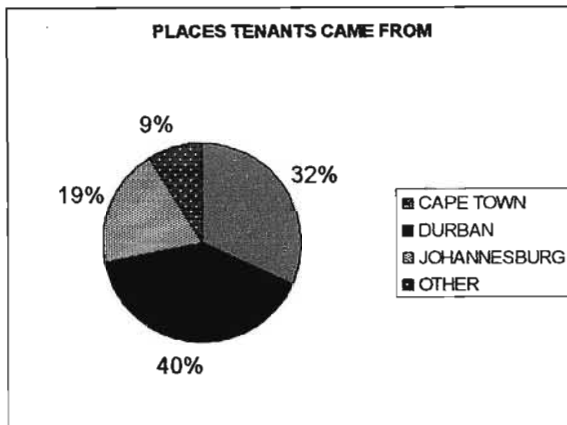
Most of the tenants (40%) questioned were from Durban and surrounding areas, whilst 32% had relocated from places like Cape Town, 19% from Johannesburg and 9% (black tenants) migrated from other areas such as Umzimkulu in the Transkei, Nkandla, Swaziland and rural farms.

Tenants that relocated from other provinces were asked to give a reason why they moved to Durban instead of other cities such as Cape Town or Johannesburg or anywhere in their hometowns. From the responses, it appears that many where homeless before arriving in Durban. Their motivation has been to get away from the colder streets in Johannesburg and Cape Town and the lack of homeless shelters in other towns such as Port Elizabeth. Others have moved for economic reasons, in search of employment whilst many cited family responsibilities.

4.7.2 Respondents perception on their homelessness

FIGURE 13 – Source: Survey 2006

HOMELESSNESS

- HOMELESS
- NOT HOMELESS
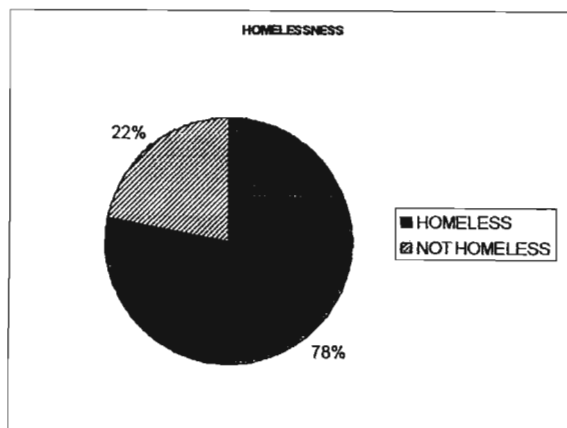
Of the 58 tenants that filled out the questionnaire forty five (78%) said that they were in fact homeless whilst thirteen (22%) said that they were not. Reasons that were given as to why the latter group did not consider themselves as homeless are as follows:

- *"I have a home in Stanger, but its too far away from where I earn money to live"*
- *"I have a home in the farm but there is no work there"*

- *"I have a house in the townships but I am a Taxi driver and I have to live in the city"*
- *"This is just temporary till I find a job"*
- *"I am not homeless; my medical condition has changed my personal and family circumstances that I had to resort to living in a shelter"*

Some respondents indicated owning a home elsewhere which points to a duplication of housing needs whereby people respond to their economic circumstances in a manner that is rational and feasible. It is argued that much more research and time is needed to fully establish the extent of homelessness in the Durban context.

Respondents were also asked to describe in their own words what they felt to be homeless. The responses received are as follows:

- *"I am struggling, depressed, sad and lonely. I am not sure if I can make the rent for the nigh, I am on anti-depressants from Addington Hospital*
- *"Lost, terrified , frustrated and angry"*
- *Delusional, terrible, lonely and afraid"*
- *"Very unhappy, home is where the heart is and it is not here"*
- *"It is not a good feeling because I am not used to living like this but in a way it is not bad."*
- *"I am quite happy because it is more of a responsibility if I had a place of my own"*
- *"Have friends here and we are like a family so I am okay" (Upperclass)*
- *"Not too bad, could be worse, happy to have a roof over my head and my daughter is safe and sound with me" (The Nest)*

There appears to be a mixed reaction amongst respondents over their homeless circumstances. Whilst some expressed a sense of not belonging, a sense of alienation from family and society, feelings of frustration, fear and anger others expressed a sense of acceptance of their homeless predicament. They were content with the mere fact that they had a place of safety. Others have likened the place they are living in to a 'home and security' and to a 'sense of community and family' indicating a sense of belonging, identity and purpose.

4.7.3 Places respondents lived before shelters.

FIGURE 14 – Source: Survey 2006
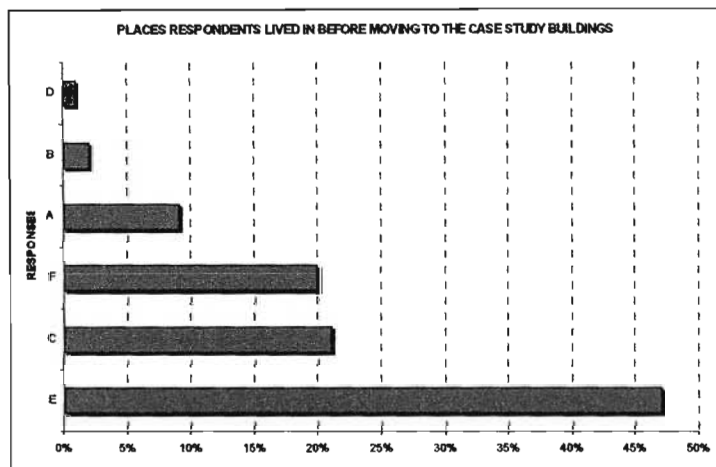
LEGEND	
NO	PLACES
A	ON THE STREET
B	IN FRONT OF BUILDINGS
C	IN PUBLIC PARKS
D	BUS SHELTERS
E	HOMELESS SHELTERS
F	OTHER

From Figure 14, it is clear that the majority (47%) of respondents lived at shelters for the homeless, such as the case study buildings. Others (21%) said they lived in public parks, whilst 20% lived in places such as rented flats and shelters for abused women and children. 9% lived on the streets while 2% slept rough in front of buildings and 1% slept in bus shelters. What this means is the shelters were providing a much needed refuge for respondents who otherwise would be exposed to the elements.

4.7.4 Reasons for respondent's homelessness.

FIGURE 15 – Source: Survey 2006
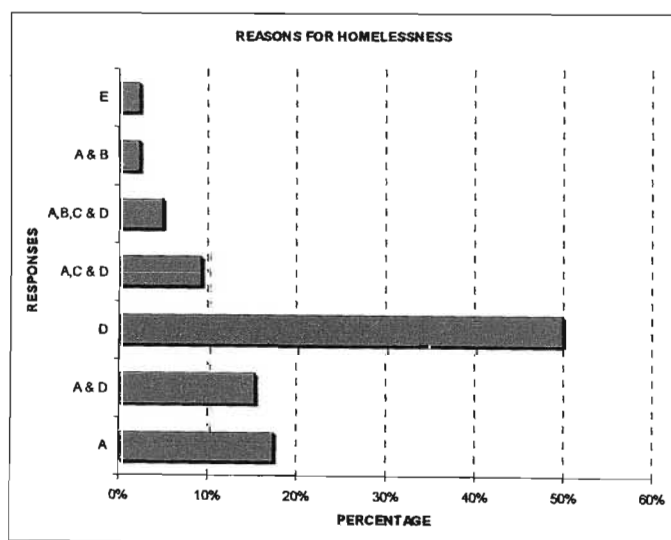
LEGEND	
RESPONSES	
A	LOST YOUR JOB
B	EVICTED FROM WHERE YOU LIVED
C	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
D	BREAKDOWN IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
E	OTHER REASONS

Respondents were asked to select from a list (in the questionnaire) the main reasons which contributed to their homelessness. From Figure 20, it can be seen that half (50%) of the respondents cited a "breakdown in family relationships" as the main reason why they were homeless whilst 17% indicated "unemployment" as the root

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cause. Others indicated a combination of these factors such as "unemployment resulting in a breakdown in family" (15%), unemployment and domestic violence resulting in loss of family (9%) and unemployment resulting in evictions (2%). 5% indicated all of these factors combined whilst 2% mentioned additional reasons such as medical conditions such as cancer, T.B, abandonment, death of children or spouses, in search of friendship and companionship, bad friends, drugs and alcohol abuse. This then suggests that homelessness in the Durban context is certainly a blend of structural (unemployment) and individual factors combined (breakdown in relationships etc.).

Whilst this is the case for many of the respondent's homelessness, others have indicated deliberate homelessness as a survival strategy. For example, Dudu an African woman aged 22 related her story: *"I come from Richards Bay where I lived in a shack with my family. I left home to look for work so I could help with money for school for my 5 year old son living with my mother. I found a job here in the shelter and I send money home every month, it's hard but the shelter is cheap".*

Other reasons by respondents point to the severe lack of decent affordable shelter in the inner city. For example, Jacque a 63 year old white male living in Durban for many years related his story: *"I live in a shelter because I am a pensioner. I don't have enough money for a deposit to rent a flat. When I was younger working as a Marine Engineer I could afford to rent a decent place but because of my age I can't find work. I have a family but they have their own homes and families and I don't like to intrude in their lives. All I am looking for is a decent place to live and no place would be ideal because I am not used to living like this".*

Intermittent and insufficient income is another major cause of people's homelessness, for example Thomas a 24 year old African male relates his story: *"I came to Durban from East London mainly to look for work. I can't find a job where I live at least in Durban I found a piecemeal job in Sydney Road. I live here alone but my home is in East London. I live in this shelter because it is cheap, I can't pay R600-00 or R1500-00 to rent a flat and have no money for the deposit because I don't earn as much. If I get a better job I will move".*

4.7.5 Reasons for living in this type of housing

The 58 respondents who answered the questionnaire expressed three main reasons why they preferred this type of living arrangement. The majority (85%) said that "it is the only accommodation available that they could afford", whilst 10% said, it provided them with a "place of safety which was far better than sleeping on the streets" and 5% indicated convenience as the main reason (ie. locality in the inner-city, being close to shops and amenities and to economic opportunities).

4.7.6 Tenant perceptions of facilities

FIGURE 16 – Source: Survey 2006
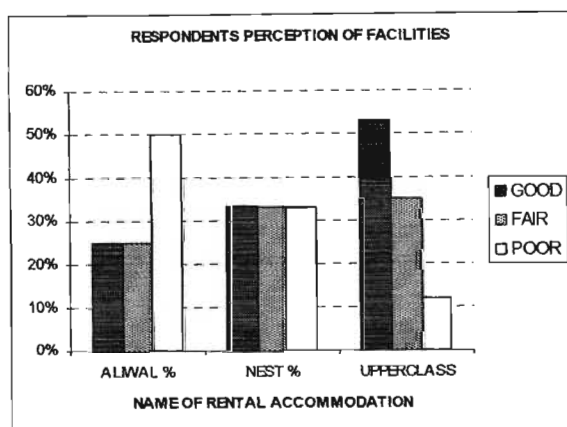
Respondents were asked what their perceptions were of the facilities in which they were renting. If the response was poor, respondents were required to provide reasons why. The responses received for each of the case-study buildings are represented below:

In Aliwal & The Nest

The majority (50%) of tenants at Aliwal felt that toilets, showers and ablutions were in poor condition, whilst 25% felt that they were in fair to (25%) good condition. Respondents from The Nest were divided on the subject: 33% said that they were poor, 33% fair and 33% said they were good. Tenants living in both Aliwal and The Nest had similar reasons as to why this was the case. In both buildings, there were long ques, especially in the mornings to use toilet and shower facilities. This is an indication of too few toilets for the resident population. There was total disregard for privacy because toilets and showers did not have any doors. In both, respondents indicated that toilets broke down nearly every week. Tenants in both establishments were unhappy that there were no proper washing or drying facilities.

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Upperclass

More than half (53%) of respondents at Upperclass found the toilet and ablution facilities to be in good condition whilst 35% felt that they were in a fair state. A group of 12% found facilities wanting and in poor shape. The reasons given were very similar to the previous two establishments i.e. broken toilets and the evident lack of privacy. Other comments were that the roof leaked when it rained.

4.7.7 Tenants' perceptions on sharing living environments

FIGURE 17 – Source: Survey 2006
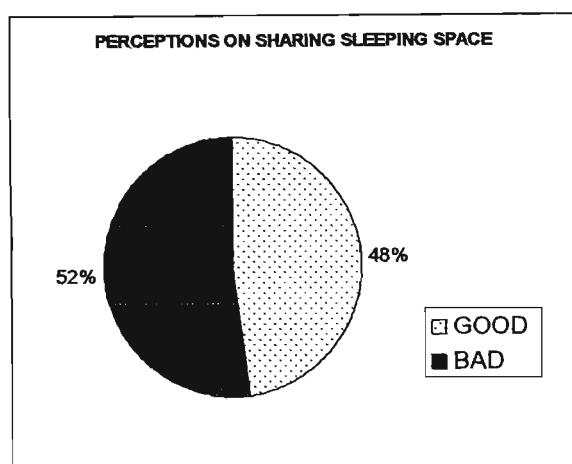
Respondents were asked to express their feelings on the sharing of sleeping space with other people. It was interesting to see that whilst 42% of the 58 respondents felt that it was "bad", a significant number (48%) felt that it was in fact acceptable, and they "had to adapt to their circumstances". A significant number of black respondents (compared to other races) felt "good" about sleeping arrangements. It is assumed that black respondents interviewed were subjected to far worse living conditions than what they were experiencing now. Others who shared the same sentiments said that "they lived like a family" and sharing sleeping spaces was not a problem. In fact respondents said "that it allowed them to meet people from different backgrounds". Those that indicated that it was "bad" mainly did so because there was a severe lack of privacy. Women in particular expressed preference to being separated from the men. Whilst some complained about the noise, others complained about their possessions being unsafe. Many said that there were "drunks and druggies" around them all the time and they had to tolerate having "people in their faces" and having to "witness the trauma in the daily lives of other tenants". Others expressed concern that sharing was a serious health risk and that they may contract Tuberculosis and other contagious diseases. This shows that in communal type living and sleeping arrangements there are bound to be problems

amongst tenants. The most important issue is to address the need for privacy. Perhaps some architectural solution could be used to achieve this.

4.7.8 Tenant mobility or permanence in choice of accommodation

FIGURE 18 – Source: Survey 2006

FACILITIES RESPONDENTS STAYED AT

15%

■ STAY AT ONE FACILITY
▣ FREQUENTS OTHERS

85%
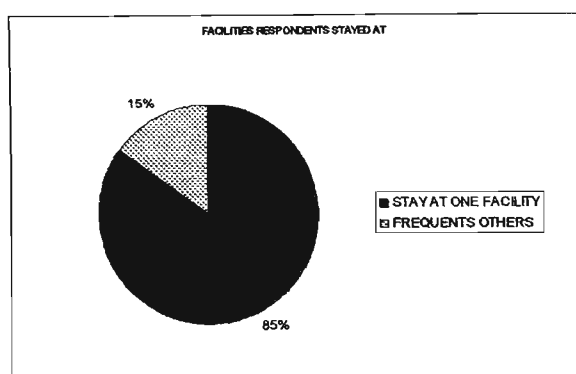
Respondents were asked whether they lived at just one facility or whether they moved around, and if they did, to give a reason why. From the questionnaire it was discovered that 85% of respondents preferred living at just one facility, whilst 15% said they would normally rent the one which was closest to them on that particular day. Those that preferred staying at one facility had friendship ties with other tenants and such is the case in Upperclass and The Nest. Some tenants said they were motivated by the quality of the living environment and preferred "staying at facilities that were clean and not overcrowded" (respondents from Upperclass and The Nest). Others looked for the cheapest accommodation available and where a free meal was provided, hence for them quality of the living environment was not the main issue (Respondents at Aliwal). Clearly this housing type was satisfying a wide range of needs in the inner-city even though in some cases the quality of accommodation was questionable.

4.7.9 Tenant – landlord relationships

FIGURE 19 – Source: Survey 2006

FACILITIES RESPONDENTS STAYED AT

15%

■ STAY AT ONE FACILITY
▣ FREQUENTS OTHERS

85%
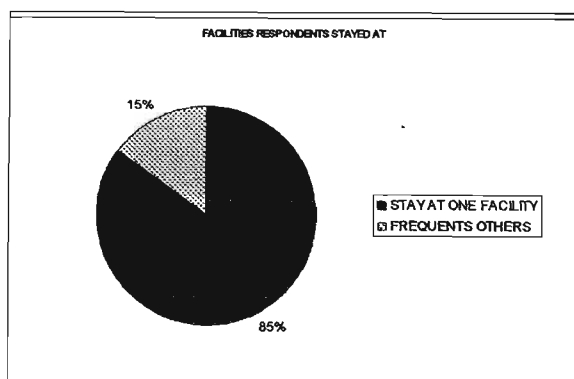
From the 58 respondents 62% indicated that they did have a friendly relationship with their landlord whilst 38% said they did not. Some tenants said that they did not even know who the landlord was. A significant number were not pleased with their landlord because he had not responded to any of their complaints. The landlord from Aliwal is never at the

establishment during the day to avoid confrontation. His business is purely a commercial exercise. In the remaining 2 case studies the landlords lived at their place of business and took a personal interest in the daily operations of the facility and managed to build good relationships with tenants. For them the act of letting property has been an improvement in their own living circumstances.

4.7.10 Tenant rights

FIGURE 20 – Source: Survey 2006

DID RESPONDENTS KNOW THEIR TENANT RIGHTS

47%

53%

■ YES
☐ NO
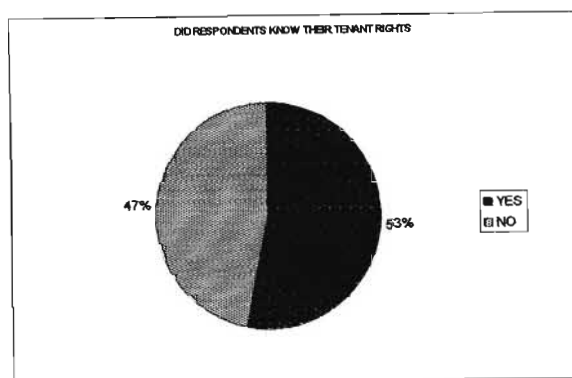
Respondents were asked whether they knew their rights as tenants. Whilst more than half (53%) said yes, 47% said no. It is important to note that most tenants were pre-occupied with dealing with poverty, unemployment and personal problems in their daily lives than to be concerned with tenant rights. Many felt that if they demanded their rights to adequate living conditions it may push up the price of rentals and this they said they were afraid of. Whilst this may be the case for some, others strongly voiced their rights to shelter when their building was threatened by evictions.

4.7.11 Changes tenants would like.

Respondents were asked to list what changes they thought were important and needed at the accommodation that they were living at. Some responded by saying that they needed *"stricter controls, security, rehabilitation, and counseling and welfare services"* (tenant response). This points to a major gap in combating homelessness which is an integral part of reintegration of homeless people into mainstream society. Other responses focused on *"the need for lower rentals"*, which is an indication of the severe levels of poverty respondents were experiencing. Some were concerned over the overcrowding by landlords. Many indicated specific improvements to their living environments such as: *"more toilets and showers"*, *"cubicles for greater privacy"*, *"proper beds instead of mattresses on the floor"* *"cooking, washing and drying*

facilities". Female respondents were particularly concerned over sharing of living arrangements with males and the majority preferred to be accommodated separately.

4.7.12 Time spent renting & being evicted

Respondents were asked to provide a timeframe for their stay in the case study buildings and where they would go if they were evicted. What comes across strongly from the responses is the uncertainty felt by many. Whilst some had long-term intentions of remaining where they lived very few said they would leave in a short space of time. Again respondents were uncertain where they would move onto if they were evicted or if the building was shut down. Some expressed a sense of despair and desperation by saying *"only god knows"* and that they would *"be homeless again and go back to the streets and then commit suicide"*. Some said that they would be *"stranded and stand a good chance of losing all their personal pocessions and even their safety if they moved back to the streets"*. A significant number said they would *"definitely move to another shelter"*. A few said they may *"consider going back home"*. The responses from tenants strengthen the argument that converted buildings into rental housing are certainly filling a missing link for affordable accommodation.

4.8 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The main reasons for this phenomenon are the ready availability of vacant space, homelessness and a severe lack of affordable inner-city housing. Building owners were motivated by the strong need to supplement incomes from otherwise non-viable investments to cope with high rates and service charges. Hence in view of the demand for cheap housing it made economic sense to convert vacant and underutilised buildings to into residential uses.

Buildings that were converted were open planned warehouses and offices which were easier and cost effective to adapt into sleeping areas and rooms. Whilst The Nest and Upperclass provided accommodation that was of a slightly better quality than Aliwal

Night Shelter, there were some major problems found in one or more of the buildings. Such problems were:

- Overcrowding and high densities.
- Small room sizes for human habitation.
- A severe lack of privacy.
- Poor natural light and ventilation.
- Lack of adequate fire escape routes.
- Lack of facilities for washing and drying of clothing.
- Inadequate common circulation routes.
- Insufficient and inadequate toilet and sanitation facilities in terms of quality and quantity.
- Poor choice of materials and finishes.

Despite problem areas, this housing typology is satisfying demands because it is affordable and being cheap means that the quality of accommodation would be sub-standard.

Rental accommodation positioned on the first floor (The Nest and Upperclass) appear to work much better than on the groundfloor (Aliwal Night Shelter) because activities within the facilities do not clash with other land uses (businesses/commercial).

What comes across strongly from the analysis of these three buildings, is that they are very similar in physical description to facilities provided in Transitional Housing, except that they are of a questionable quality, lack the necessary social and welfare services (found in Transitional Housing) and do not benefit from public sector funding. Nonetheless these three buildings are still providing much needed shelter for homeless individuals who clearly have 'nowhere else to go' and who cannot access subsidised, social or Transitional Housing or any other housing typology for that matter.

The landlord who is sub-letting from the owner found in The Nest and Upperclass fit the profile of subsistence landlords. They do not own more than one property and the motivation for sub-letting is to augment everyday needs. However there are those that

are in the business for investing in improving the quality of their own life (building owner of Aliwal), which fit the description of the 'petty bourgeois'. What is clear however is that the motivations for letting in the case-studies do not suggest large scale landlordism but supports the notion that landlords and tenants are operating in their specific environments in response to the social, economic and urban pressures which they face.

In all three cases respondents did not know their rights as a tenant. There is little evidence to suggest a formal process to be followed in dealing with problems such as evictions, disputes, fires, accidents, violence, injuries, illnesses, death and any other related issues that may arise. This is a concern, especially when mothers and their children, the elderly and those with medical conditions and disabilities are accommodated in such buildings. Clearly a major problem exists in this living situation where tenant and landlord rights are largely unprotected. In all three cases there are no formal agreements between landlords and tenant. Ironically this is what attracts many of the poor to this typology of housing. They value the flexibility that it provides. Many of the tenants use this type of housing intermittently often when they can afford to. At the same token, there are those that are permanent residents whose rights are largely unprotected. This means that policies need to be specifically designed to address the settlement dynamics of this typology of housing.

The majority of respondents were homeless for various reasons. Whilst a significant did have a home elsewhere, they are still considered homeless for their sojourns in the inner-city. This implies that homelessness in the city of Durban represents a combination of homeless concepts found in both developing and developed countries. Homelessness is as much a combination of structural and individual factors as it is about rural to urban migration. This implies that strategies to combat homelessness in the South African context needs to target those that are in priority need. It is argued that this would only be possible through 'outreach programmes' and presently the buildings being converted into rental accommodation is the first step in that direction.

The main reason why people lived in the case study buildings was because it was the cheapest accommodation available, where currently there are no other alternatives in the inner-city. Moreover it was much safer than the next option which was sleeping on the streets or in public places. In addition it was located in places where the homeless need to be to survive, to have access to some kind of income generating opportunity.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this dissertation is to learn as much as possible about buildings converted into rental accommodation and to evaluate its appropriateness in satisfying the needs of the homeless and its potential as an affordable and essential inner-city housing choice. The previous chapters have shed some light on this subject and have answered the research questions that have been posed at the very beginning of this research topic:

- Who are the people that live in this type of accommodation and why?
- What buildings are being converted and why?
- What is the characteristics of this typology of housing, where is it located and why?
- Is this type of housing meeting the needs of its clients?
- Who are the delivery agents of this type of tenure and why?
- What are the demands, constraints and opportunities of this type of housing delivery?
- How should this type of tenure be addressed in policy terms?

This chapter drawing from the literature review and research analysis thus far will show that buildings converted into rental accommodation is an essential tenure choice that is satisfying much housing demands for 'low' to 'no' income earners. It begins with providing some recommendations in responding to this typology of housing and provides a conclusion to support the hypothesis.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the current housing policies and the findings of the three case studies the following recommendations are put forward.

5.1.1 ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENT BYE-LAWS

It is argued that "accommodation establishment" bye-laws and the requirements as stipulated therein are too broad and not specific to the phenomenon in this study. The bye-laws focus more on the legal requirements on running such a business and include stringent fire, health and building codes which are inadequate for housing intended for the poor. Hence the term "accommodation establishment" (adopted by the city council) and the regulations as set out in this document are inappropriate in defining the conversion of inner-city offices, warehouses and commercial buildings into cheap rental housing. From this study it was found out that overall, respondents considered this typology of housing as a place of safety away from the harshness of the Durban's streets and public places. Hence it is proposed that this typology of housing be referred to as 'safe-homes'. It is further argued in this study that new standards for this typology of housing be developed. This is expanded further in the next section.

5.1.2 BUILDING REGULATIONS – APPROPRIATE CONTROLS

The case studies researched in this dissertation suggest that Government and housing departments need to be more proactive when responding to buildings being converted into rental accommodation. However this is a rather difficult task when responding to inner-city housing in the face of such high demands. In the past, minimum standards for low-cost public sector housing were set far too high out-pricing the poor from housing that was originally intended for them. This brings to the forefront a major problem identified within converted buildings namely poor compliance with National Building regulations. This study argues that housing and building regulations restrict housing action favoring the poor. Therefore inner-city informally subdivided housing requires

regulations to be relaxed for their sustainability. Even zoning regulations needs to be more flexible and facilitative to these kinds of development. This does not mean a complete desertion of regulatory frameworks but regulations should relate to context. Policies should include the enforcement of minimum standards in private and public sector housing which reflect affordability criteria and at the same time protect tenants from unsafe shelter conditions. Just as Gilbert (2000) suggests that regulations should be proscriptive rather than prescriptive and should explicitly define what is not allowed and which is backed up by strong enforcement (Gilbert, 2000). It would make better sense for each building to be assessed on its own merit. For example fire and health regulations, minimum requirements about space, washing and drying facilities, densities, minimum room sizes, cooking and dinning facilities, minimum ceiling heights, the number of toilets and ablutions should be assessed in terms of the context of the building and recommendations to improve living environments should be explicit. Strict fines need to be introduced to prevent owners and landlords from overcrowding their buildings.

5.1.4 INCENTIVES FOR OWNERS & LANDLORDS

Clearly buildings converted into rental accommodation without public sector funding is providing affordable accommodation that is in some cases like Aliwal, The Nest and Upperclass acceptable, despite issues surrounding privacy and the number of toilets etc. Regardless of these pitfalls people have shelter and are better off than living on the streets. It is argued that informal subdivided housing often exists because there is a demand for this type of housing at a price that is cheap. Improving the housing conditions runs the risk of being counter productive, particularly if it leads to regentrification where people move on from housing they can ill afford. The problem with poorer facilities and lack of privacy in the case studies is that building owners and landlords are unwilling to re-invest to improve living circumstances. There are two approaches in improving this. The one would be enforcement and the other is offering building owners incentives to improve building conditions. Thus far the enforcement route has been unsuccessful in getting owners to comply. Instead owners or landlords could be offered incentives, such as reduced rates and service charges, rates rebates etc.

in favour of improvements to the living environments of their buildings. Simple interventions such as providing more toilets and showers and installation of doors, and partitions to improve privacy, better access and exits, providing more windows, better quality materials and finishes etc. could greatly improve the health and safety aspects of such buildings. In this way rental costs would still remain low and affordable to all tenants.

5.1.5 SECTORAL INVOLVEMENT WITH HOUSING

Combating homelessness requires action that goes well beyond the provision of shelter. Therefore sectors such as employment, education, social welfare and health need to work in parallel to assist homeless communities in the inner-city to better their lives. Hence it is argued that buildings converted into rental accommodation could serve as places for 'outreach' initiatives. This suggests that such accommodations could become the first 'point of contact' for the homeless to gain access to skills training, education, social services, health care etc. Also, such places could identify homeless individuals with special needs (disabilities, serious medical conditions, abused women, drug and alcohol addictions, depression, mental illnesses etc.) and direct them to the necessary and appropriate support. The advantages are that shelter needs could be taken care of by the private sector. This means that public sector funding instead of being absorbed in the adaptation of buildings, (institutional subsidies as in the Transitional Housing Programmes etc.), could be diverted towards more important needs such as, rehabilitation, social services, welfare and support to reintegrate the homeless back into society. Strong partnerships need to be created between the private and public sector and other stakeholders so as to encourage quality improvements of converted buildings.

5.1.6 HOUSING POLICY & HOMELESSNESS

This study demonstrates that social housing and subsidised housing is out of reach for very low income earners. Hence the current policy in dealing with homelessness has been Transitional Housing, and this approach has equally been unsuccessful in targeting beneficiaries experiencing real need (see Poulsen, 2000). Judging from the analysis in

Chapter 4, people accessing converted buildings fit the category of those in priority need. They have no other housing options available to them unlike those living in shack settlements that have at least a roof over their heads. It is argued that converted rental accommodation could assist transitional housing in identifying those homeless individuals or families who could benefit more from the programme. In addition there is no affordable housing for people to move on to from Transitional Housing or for those who are struggling already within the program to fall back on. The unavailability of affordable accommodation before and after transition only results in a vicious cycle of homelessness. This study has demonstrated that the private rental market of converted buildings into cheap rental accommodation could serve as a safety net, filling this missing link for affordable housing. This implies that it is imperative for housing practitioners to understand where converted buildings fit within the broader framework of National Housing policies and strategies.

5.1.7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

From the analysis of the case studies, it is clear that there still is a need for greater public participation between all the stakeholders involved. The full potential of landlords as providers of affordable inner-city rental accommodation is yet to be realised by local authorities and housing departments and needs to be positively harnessed in policy terms. Similarly the complexity of homelessness in the Durban context is a great challenge. Bearing in mind that homelessness in Durban resembles ideological constructs from both developing and developed countries, means that homelessness is as much about urban-rural migration as it is about individual and structural theories. Hence responding to such multi-dimensional problems requires effective public participation.

5.1.8 CAPACITY BUILDING OF TENANTS

Lessons from Brazil show that the only way to combat serious urban problems is through greater public participation. The history of housing movements in South Africa is very short-lived and current roles of tenants are very weak, based more on

dependence than on dialogue with the state for housing needs. Hence it is argued that building the capacity of tenants is a crucial intervention for tenants to be able to rally together and fight for their rights to adequate shelter. Some of this activism could be seen from tenants of The Nest in Durban, who through the media were able to avert being evicted from their rental accommodation by the Municipality (Daily News, September, 2004). It is argued that this was short-lived and since then very little has been done to improve their housing circumstances.

5.1.9 URBAN RENEWAL & DENSIFICATION

From the literature review the potential of the rental sector in contributing to urban revitalisation, densification and integration of South African cities is increasingly recognised (see Mthembi-Mahanyele, 2002:5; Gardner, 2003; McKay 1999 and Rust, 2003). However in Durban urban renewal strategies are happening without planning for housing needs for the urban poor. Careful consideration must be given to urban renewal strategies that support the development of housing and social amenities within the inner-city. It is argued that halting inner-city decay could be achieved effectively through a land-use planning mix which encourages public facilities and residential and business activities, an important component of which is affordable rental housing for the poor. In his way low-income housing could benefit from comparative land use activities ensuring its sustainability.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This dissertation has shed light on a number of issues that are impacting on developing countries paying particular attention to trends that are occurring in the inner-city of Durban.

It has brought to the forefront changes which are taking place in cities and how these are altering land-use patterns where underutilised buildings are being converted to residential uses. It discusses the urbanisation of poverty and the implication this has for

needs and demands for affordable inner-city housing. It talks about the neglect of rental tenure in housing policy and the role it is now playing in light of new developments in the housing sector where homeownership has become too expensive, or unattainable. No longer is rental tenure viewed as a linear progression to an ultimate goal of homeownership. It makes the point that at some stage in everyone's life they may need to rent accommodation of some type. Hence it argues that Governments should be seeking to add to the housing stock instead of reducing it. It also makes the point that poor quality housing exists because there is a demand for housing at that price, clamping down on such accommodation turns badly housed people into homeless people. Instead housing standards should be less concerned with physical quality but should look at the role shelter plays in household survival strategies. It then shows how developing countries are now taking cognisance of homelessness and homeless needs in inner-cities. It then makes the point that homelessness in the Durban context is a combination of ideas from both developing and developed countries and responding to such diverse needs is a great challenge.

Bearing the above in mind it is argued that the case study building in this dissertation demonstrates the significant role rental tenure is playing in the inner-cities of developing countries in particular the inner-city of Durban. Moreover the typology of housing which is the conversion of inner-city buildings into cheap rental accommodation offers the following opportunities:

- It is the cheapest most accessible rental accommodation for low to no income earners, homeless people and households who cannot afford social housing or sustain a subsidised home on the periphery and therefore have no other shelter alternatives.
- It widens the housing choices available to consumers so that they could arrange their housing in accordance with their own needs.
- Provides much valued accessibility, flexibility and mobility for consumers.
- Presents an opportunity for the poor to gain access to some level of economic opportunities and facilities and amenities.
- Presents an opportunity for 'outreach initiatives' which identifies those in priority

need, an d as a 'safety net' for those that are not coping within Housing Programmes such as social housing, subsidised housing and transitional housing.

- Provides an opportunity for new uses for otherwise vacant and underutilised buildings and with the correct policies such buildings could be revitilised enhancing the inner-city landscape.

- Provides an opportunity for building owners to augment their incomes to pay rates and taxes and service charges.

- Provides the opportunity for landlords who sub-let from owners to supplement their household incomes for everyday subsistence needs.

- Increases the performance of urban areas by increasing densities and facilitating urban renewal.

This dissertation clearly demonstrates that social housing and transitional housing are not the only answer to solving the housing backlog. Bearing in mind the many opportunities that this typology of housing affords the poor, it proves the hypotheses to be correct in that "Converted buildings into cheap rental accommodation provides an essential alternative that is satisfying a much needed demand for affordable housing for 'no' to 'low' income earners.

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ANNEXURE 1 – NEWSPAPER REPORTS

Homeless shelter shutdown

Residents have less than a week to find alternative accommodation

SHARLENE PACKREE

A LITTLE three-year-old boy plays on a bed merrily not knowing that in a week's time he might not have a place to live in.

His home, The Nest, is among a number of buildings – currently used as accommodation establishments – in the Point area and have been earmarked for closure by the eThekwini Municipality.

Correspondence from the municipality's lawyers states that The Nest Christian Shelter in Winder Street was being used unlawfully as an accommodation establishment and thus was in contravention of several by-laws and regulations.

Residents at the shelter have to vacate it by next Tuesday, September 14, after they were given a two-week grace period at the beginning of this month.

Ryan Fourie and his mum, Shireen, have spent the past year living at The Nest where they are provided with three meals a day and a place to sleep.

Shireen said: "I don't know what I'm going to do, where must I go with my son?"

She also said that of all the shelters in the area, The Nest was the best. "I feel very safe here and my son loves everyone here, we're almost like a big family."

The shelter has been operating for two years and provides a safe place for people who are homeless.

Residents of the shelter pay a nominal fee of R15 a day and receive three meals, shower facilities and a laundry service.

Another concerned resident, Yvonne Ketley said: "I've lived at other shelters, this is the best, why do they want to chase us from our home?"

She said some residents have allegedly been threatened by police who said they would forcibly remove them.

Deon Naicker, a resident, said: "We have nowhere to go, there are children here too."

Soswa Thomas, manager of the shelter said: "I'm very concerned about my people as they have no where to go."

He said residents cannot understand why they being evicted as they don't cause a problem in the area. "The shelter is very strict about things such as alcohol and drugs. We have a 24-hour security and even a demarcated area for residents to smoke.

Beverley Livadas, owner of the building said: "We were given an ultimatum to evict the people, however, we are very concerned about them."

In a letter to residents, The Nest's pastor, Even Holst, said he had solicited help from various government departments but could not get any help as to the short-term solution of the evictees' accommodation requirements.

"Let us keep our heads high and put our minds together so that you can find alternative accommodation. I feel for you, but everywhere I turn I meet a brick wall and nobody is willing to help us in this dilemma, so it is very discouraging," said Holst.

Nowhere to go . . . Audrey Thomas and her daughter, Channon, are worried about their future as the only home they know is being closed down   PICTURE: SANDILE NDLOVU
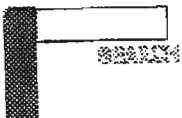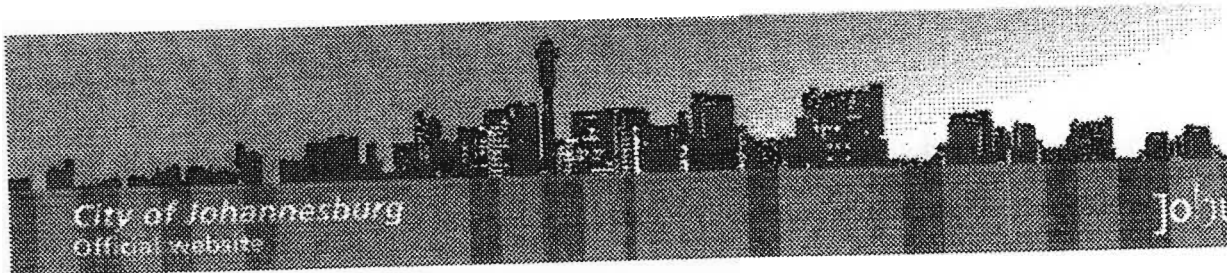
City of Johannesburg
official website

NEWS UPDATE

No entry here ... down a side alley,
smoke rises from the blackened hulk

Picture: LUCILLE DAVIE

Fire engine spraying water on to the
still-smouldering building in the early
hours of the morning

QUICK FACTS

- Squatters moved into Drill Hall soon after the military vacated the premises in 1994

- City officials planned to move the Drill Hall squatters to a social housing settlement at Vlakfontein

- The Drill Hall was the scene of the infamous nineteen fifties "Treason Trial" of 156 anti-apartheid activists - including Nelson Mandela

- City officials planned to restore the Drill Hall, which was expected to be declared a National Monument
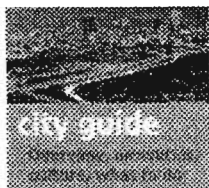
Drill Hall occupants

Five burnt to death in Drill Hall inferno

April 8, 2002

By Thomas Thale

- How the firemen saw the fire
  Three striking pictures of the Drill Hall blaze, taken by firemen themselves as they battled the blaze

FIVE people were burnt to death, and four injured when the 98-year old Drill Hall building in the city centre was set alight during a domestic squabble between two of the hundreds of squatters living in the building.

Malcolm Midgley, spokesman for Emergency Management Services, said 218 people were in the building when the fire started. The injured were admitted to Helen Joseph Hospital where they are recovering. Rescue dogs are still searching through the rubble for survivors.

This is the second inferno to engulf the building in less than a year. Five people died when a section of the building was accidentally burnt in June last year.

Edward Gwegwe, who was sleeping in his shack inside the hall when the fire started, said he was woken up by a loud quarrel between a husband and wife who lived in an adjacent shack. "The argument soon developed into a fight and the woman suddenly doused the shack with paraffin before setting it alight. It was hell. We struggled to get out. I lost all my possessions," said Gwegwe.

Councillor Sol Cowan, MMC for the inner city, said: "This incident was reported to the Joburg Connect Centre at 1:50am this morning. The first fire engine arrived on scene at 1:59am. Four operational fire stations from Rosebank, Fairview, Brixton and Central handled the fire, which gutted the whole building."

ANNEXURE 2 - PLANS

EX. SERVICE PASSAGE

EX. DUCT

EX. STORE

MALE & FEMALE ABLUTIONS
NOTE: THIS IS NOT ACCORDING
TO WHAT THE BUILDING HAS

EX. ABLUTIONS
scr.

scr.
EX.- WOMEN

REGISTER COUNTER

30M. F.H.R.

DINING
DINING
carpet

MAIN ENTRANCE & EXIT TO
THE BUILDING

4600

80

9264

8634

80

3450

80 1700

OPEN PLANNED DORMITORY
SLEEPING AREA

DRY WALLED CUBICLES
READING ROOM
carpet

TEA KITCHEN
scr.

A

DRY WALLED CUBICLES
ROOM
carpet

LOUNGE / TELEVISION
carpet

NOTE. 80mm DRY WALL
PARTITIONS - 30MINUTE
FIRE RATING

EX. OFFICE

4600

80

3954

80 1540

80

DRY WALLED CUBICLES
ROOM
carpet

A

DRY WALLED CUBICLES
STORE
carpet

PASSAGE

SERVICE PASSAGE

SERVICE PASSAGE

DRY WALLED CUBICLES
OFFICE
carpet

DRY WALLED CUBICLES
LINEN
carpet

ROOM
carpet

B

OPEN PLANNED
DORMITORY
SLEEPING AREA

RECEPTION/WAITING
carpet

DOORS THAT HAVE BEEN CLOSED OFF

EX. 50mm
W.M.

STEEL GATED
SIDE ENTRANCE

4100

80

5200

80

4484

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

ALIWAL STREET

1. PLAN OF ALIWAL NIGHT SHELTER

JONSSON LANE

SMITH STREET

STAIRS
MAIN ENTRANCE — **GATED CONCRETE STAIRWAY**

BOOK IN AREA
RECEPTION

LANDLORD / LIVE-IN MANAGERS QUARTERS

LANDLORD WC & SHWR

IRONING AREA

GROUND FLOOR BELOW

EXIST STEEL GRID

ACCESS. TO BALCONY OVERLOOKING SMITH STREET

STORE ROOM

DOORWAY IS SEALED

SITTING AREA
LOUNGE & DINING & GAMES

DORMITORY SLEEPING AREA

NEW DORMITORY AREA
EXISTING CONC SLAB
MAXIMUM NO OF BEDS - 30

BALCONY

BALCONY
EXISTING CONC SLAB

PRAYER ROOM

BRICK CUBICLE
CUBICLE

CUBICLE

CUBICLE

BRICK CUBICLE

FIRE ESCAPE

CUBICLE

CUBICLE

ABLUTIONS

BRICK CUBICLE

TENANT ABLUTIONS

CUBICLE

CUBICLE

BRICK CUBICLE

ACCESS TO DRY AREA

EX ROOF

DRYING AREA

BALCONY
EXISTING CONC SLAB

PLAN OF UPPERCLASS NIGHT LODGE

ROBIN LANE

SIDEWALK

MAIN ENTRANCE & EXIT TO THE NEST

KITCHEN

MALE & FEMALE ABLUTIONS

DOUBLE BUNKS

DORMITORY SLEEPING AREA

DINING

INTERNET / IRONING RM

EXISTING DOUBLE DOORS - PREVIOUS ENTRANCE CLOSED OFF

LOUNGE / RECREATIONAL ROOM

PASSAGE

DOUBLE BUNKS

NB. ABLUTIONS ON SITE HAVE NOT BEING BUILT ACCORDING TO PLAN SEE DESCRIPTION

DOUBLE BUNKS

DOUBLE BUNKS

LANDLORDS OFFICE

OPEN PLANNED DORMITORY SLEEPING AREA

DOUBLE BUNKS

WINDER STREET

SIDEWALK

STORAGE ROOM

DOUBLE BUNKS

DOUBLE BUNKS

LANDLORDS ROOM

PASSAGE

DOUBLE BUNKS

FIRE ESCAPE HAS NOT BEEN BUILT

EXIST ELECTRICAL SUB STATION SITE
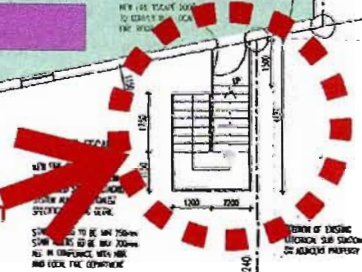
SIDEWALK

POINT ROAD

PLAN OF THE NEST

ANNEXURE 3 - QUESTIONNAIRE

1

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO LEARN ABOUT TENANTS PERCEPTIONS ON THEIR CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS – ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND IS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY

No._____
Date. 15/08/2005

1. Where are you originally from?

....

2. If not from the city of Durban, why did you not go live in the city you came from?

....

....

3. Do you or did you own your own house anywhere else before?

A. YES

B. NO

4. When you first moved to the city where did you live?

A. ON THE STREET

B. IN FRONT OF BUILDINGS

C. IN PUBLIC PARKS

D. BUS SHELTERS

E. HOMELESS SHELTERS

F. OTHER (Please tell me)...

5. What are the **reasons** that led you to becoming homeless?

(You can tick more than one from the list)

A. LOST YOUR JOB

B. NO MONEY TO PAY FOR HOUSING

C. EVICTED FROM WHERE YOU LIVED

D. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

E. BREAKDOWN IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

F. NOT HAPPY WITH WHO YOU LIVED WITH

G. NOT HAPPY WITH WHERE YOU LIVED

H. OTHER REASON (Please tell me why?)..

....

6. Tell me what do you feel to be homeless?

....

....

7. What are the **reasons** why you moved to the inner-city of Durban?

(You can tick more than one from the list)

A. TO LOOK FOR A JOB

B. TO MAKE MONEY ON THE STREET

C. TO BE CLOSE TO SHOPS

D. TO LOOK FOR A PLACE TO LIVE

E. OTHER REASON (Please State)..

8. What is the **<u>main reason</u>** why you choose to rent in this type of accommodation?

....

....

....

9. How do you feel about sharing sleeping space with other people?

A. GOOD

B. BAD

IF 'BAD' PLEASE TELL ME WHY?...

....

....

10. Do you feel that you can afford the rental that you are paying at this shelter?

A. YES

B. NO

If 'NO' Please tell me how much you can afford?..

11. What do you think about the facilities in this shelter?

(Please tick one)

A. GOOD

B. FAIR

C. POOR

If you say its 'FAIR' or 'POOR' tell me

why?...

....

....

....

....

12. Do you feel that it is 'GOOD' or 'BAD' that you are not allowed at the shelter during the

day?

A. GOOD

B. BAD

PLEASE TELL ME WHY?...

13. Do you have a friendly relationship with your landlord?

A. YES

B. NO

14. Do you know of your rights as a tenant?

A. YES

B. NO

15. Do you consider the shelter to be your home?

A. YES

B. NO

IF 'YES' OR 'NO' TELL ME WHY?..

....

....

16. What changes would you like to see at the shelter?

....

....

....

....

17. For how long do you think you are going to live in a shelter?

....

....

18. If this shelter were to close down, where would you

go?..

....