

Liveable Communities, Healthy Environments or ‘Slumification’ in Glen Innes, Auckland, NZ?

Kathryn Scott, Angela Shaw and Christina Bava

Introduction

Glen Innes is a suburb of Auckland, New Zealand, currently undergoing a community renewal programme together with rezoning to allow higher density housing development. Urban renewal is commonly aimed at improving the aesthetic quality of a place, with a focus on amenities and the town centre, and with an underlying assumption that these changes will create stronger communities (Talen 2000). Mary Douglas, commenting on symbolic acts performed in ‘modern’ societies related to cleanliness and renewal, stated ‘we must treat the spring millinery and spring cleaning in our towns as renewal rites which focus and control experience as much as Swazi first fruit rituals. ... We are separating, placing boundaries, making visible statements about the home that we are intending to create out of the material house’ (Douglas 1970: 84).

Ethnographic research in Glen Innes reveals a range of competing perceptions of urban renewal and intensification. Within these competing perceptions, however, there is a common theme of what is needed to create a ‘healthy environment’, which people strongly linked to the physical and built environment. Douglas’ (1970: 12) notion of ‘positively reordering our environment, making it conform to an idea’ is useful in exploring competing discourses. The local council is attempting to create a more ‘liveable’ community by a

'reordering' of the built environment, and it is assumed that this reordering will create a safer living environment (Auckland City 2004). Local residents and business owners aim for a healthier living environment, with particular focus on safety and health of residents. Some residents support a reordering of the built environment, for example, if intensification can create more affordable homes and, from their perspective, will contribute to health and well-being. For other residents, particularly private homeowners, this reordering to intensify housing in Glen Innes is perceived as decreasing the 'liveability' of the place. There is concern that intensification means 'slumification'.

This paper examines the competing perceptions of healthy environments, housing intensification and 'liveability' in the context of urban renewal. Perceptions of what makes a 'healthy environment' (and conversely, an unhealthy environment) are explored through public and private discourses.

Background

New Zealand city dwellers have traditionally seen suburban life, with single dwellings on large sites, as the 'norm'. In the last ten to fifteen year period, strategising and planning at all levels of government has occurred, aimed at accommodating growth, limiting sprawl, maintaining the rural fringes of the city, improving transport options and 'liveability' and preventing further degradation of the physical environment. Increasingly polluted skies, heavy reliance on cars, changing household dynamics and a growing demand for a greater range of housing forms have helped shape these strategies. Meanwhile, population growth continues. In the Auckland region, where approximately a third of the nation's population

resides, the population has increased from 700,000 to approximately 1.2 million since 1970 and is expected to grow to around 2 million by 2030 (ARC 2006). Much of the anticipated growth is to be accommodated by intensification of housing.

Single dwellings accounted for 82 percent of New Zealand homes in 2003 (Beacon Pathways 2006). This is changing rapidly, however. In Auckland, approximately 25 percent of building consents are currently for multi-unit dwellings and these are expected to outstrip single dwellings from 2011 to 2016 (Beacon Pathways 2006). Former leafy suburbs have been largely carved up into 300-500 m² sections and terraced housing, town houses, duplexes and multi-storey apartment blocks are becoming more common in some targeted growth areas. Population density in Auckland is 18.9 people per hectare, similar to Sydney and Melbourne (Arbury 2004).

Intensification¹ presents a major challenge to the ‘quarter-acre-pavlova-paradise’ culture of many New Zealanders. The relatively recent and rapid ascension of medium to high density housing in New Zealand has been met with considerable backlash in the media and from the public.

Concepts of ‘liveability’ driving urban planning agendas

In the last ten to fifteen years the term liveability has been adopted by local government authorities, internationally and locally, to articulate desired social and environmental outcomes in urban environments. Liveability refers to a range of features, usually related to the physical environment, that are intended to make a place good to live in. Liveability is

one element of New Urbanism that has had a significant influence on urban planning in the last decade or so.

New Urbanism is based on the principles of compact urban form and the enhancement of the community, with an underlying assumption that alteration to urban form will lead to improved social and environmental outcomes (Dixon and Dubuis 2003; Godschalk 2004; Southworth and Parthasarathy 1997). Compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly developments are intended to provide public places for people to interact, reduce reliance on cars and facilitate improved efficiency and uptake of alternative transport systems (including public transport, walking and cycling). Another related concept is Smart Growth, a predominately US-based concept that focuses on constraining sprawl through growth management legislation (Tregoning et al. 2002).

New Urbanism and related concepts have their roots in the sustainable development movement, itself brought into the mainstream in the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development's *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987). Sustainable development seeks a balance between economic development, ecological preservation and intergenerational equity (Godschalk 2004).

In New Zealand, local governments are incorporating the concept of liveability into growth management strategies. The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 1999 (ARGS) was collectively developed by the region's local councils and implementation commitment was then signalled through sector agreements. Auckland City Council, the territorial local authority, thereby signed the Central Sector Agreement (CSA) in 2004, identifying growth capacity and sequencing of development as required under the ARGS. Liveable

Community Plans are the key implementation strategy of the CSA. In this context, medium to high density living is assumed to lead to greater liveability.

Auckland City's Liveable Communities 2050 strategy defines liveable communities as safe, attractive places that encourage walking and cycling, offer a choice of lifestyle and a choice of transport, have mixed-use at their core and are able to create a sense of belonging (Auckland City 2000).

Little is known about social outcomes of various settlement forms in New Zealand (Syme et al. 2005). Policy discourse is based on the assumption that intensification and community renewal will improve liveability, while popular discourse, as represented in the media, assumes that it will lead to 'slumification'. The experiences and perceptions of people living in (and near) medium to high density housing have received little attention. This is largely due to the relatively recent emergence of large-scale, higher density housing. The authors of this paper have been engaged in research that includes examining people's experiences and perceptions of different settlement forms.²

Research approaches

Ethnographic research in the suburb of Glen Innes informs this paper, together with other research and evaluation undertaken in Glen Innes by Scott.³ The first stage of the research involved a close examination of Council documentation and public submissions to the Glen Innes Liveable Community Plan and to Proposed Plan Modification 61 (PPM61) to allow higher density housing in Glen Innes (Scott and Shaw 2005). While homeowners' and other stakeholders' views on urban renewal and intensification were strongly articulated in

submissions, many residents, particularly state tenants, had not made their views known. Many had signed pro forma submissions rejecting intensification in its entirety. However, although all submissions were given credence, Council gave closest attention to submissions that gave reasons for rejection or support of the changes.

Subsequent ethnographic research (February to September 2006) included participant observation, media reviews, interviews and focus groups with state tenants and other residents and stakeholders. Researchers (Scott and Bava) interviewed ten residents and an additional six who took part in a focus group. Almost all were state tenants. Twenty interviews were undertaken with other stakeholders - some of whom were also Glen Innes residents - including social service providers, *iwi*,⁴ local government, government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Glen Innes context

Glen Innes rates in the highest decile of deprivation in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2001). Glen Innes also has relatively low standards of living compared with the rest of Auckland, and particularly in comparison with adjacent suburbs. Stark disparities in social statistics also exist within the four census unit areas of Glen Innes (GI North, GI East, GI West, Pt England). Median personal incomes in 2001, for example, ranged from \$11,300⁵ in Pt England to \$23,500 in Glen Innes North (compared with \$23,300 for Auckland City). The unemployment rate ranged from 19.9 percent in Pt England to 6.1 percent in Glen Innes North (compared with 7.9 percent for Auckland City).

Glen Innes has a youthful population and is an ethnically diverse suburb, with Maori (17 percent) and Pacific (34 percent) populations significantly higher than city-wide (8 percent and 14 percent, respectively). The suburb is characterised by a predominance of state housing, accounting for between 60 and 70 percent of housing (and over 90 percent in some streets). State housing includes mainly single dwellings, as well as some duplex and multi-unit blocks – including three-storied ‘Starblock’ flats near the town centre. In-fill housing, where ‘standard ¼ acre sections’ have been subdivided to house two to three households, has become increasingly evident in recent years.

Glen Innes was developed in the 1950s as a state housing area and included Auckland’s first comprehensively planned town centre (Auckland City 2004). The post-war baby boom, the migration of rural Maori to Auckland and planning policies contributed to a significant increase in the population in the broader Tamaki area within which Glen Innes is situated (Shirley 1979). Many of the new migrants to Glen Innes came from Freeman’s Bay, an inner-city suburb that had undergone an urban renewal programme in the 1950s, leading to its gentrification.

Urban renewal and intensification in Glen Innes

In 2000, Auckland City Council selected Glen Innes as one of several ‘priority one’ areas for change that could accommodate future growth, based on criteria set out in the AGMS. The Glen Innes Liveable Community Plan (*Glen Innes into the Future*) was released in 2004, following four years of consultation and planning. This provided the specific planning framework for managing growth. The creation of a new Residential 8 zone is the

Plan's key implementation method. Within the context of urban design guidelines, the zoning change is intended to enable medium-density housing (including town houses, terrace housing and low-rise apartments) within ten-minutes walking distance from the Glen Innes Town Centre and public transport services. These guidelines also include criteria for visual and acoustic privacy, landscaping, private open space, energy efficiency and neighbourhood character. Minimum floor areas of forty m² are required, in response to concerns about recent construction of very small apartments in multi-storey blocks in the central city of Auckland.

The introduction of Residential 8 zoning to Glen Innes was a two-step process. The initial 2004 plan change applied only to a state housing estate known as Talbot Park. The change supported the Talbot Park Community Renewal Project, a \$45 million project to provide 206 new and refitted homes.

Council subsequently notified a comprehensive plan change in 2005 to introduce Residential 8 zoning to wider Glen Innes. Rezoning applies to approximately 481 privately owned and 684 publicly owned residential properties. In response to rezoning plans, 586 submissions were made to Council, the majority opposing the plan. At the time of writing, a public hearing had taken place and submissions were being considered.

The Talbot Park Community Renewal Project, nearing completion at the time of our research, seeks to address issues of community and personal safety, local employment opportunities, community health concerns, education and social service provision and community pride (Housing New Zealand Corporation [HNZC] submission to the draft *Glen Innes Into the Future* plan). Housing includes the renovation of nine three-storey multiplexes – known as Starblocks because of their star-shaped form – and the construction

of 111 new homes, including large single dwellings, terrace housing and three-storey multiplexes. Two parks are being developed on site and on-site tenancy management and community development strategies are being implemented.

The Starblocks, with a total of 108 flats, have been internally refurbished. Site areas have been redeveloped based on Crime Prevention Through Environment Design principles (Auckland City Council 2005), including fencing that maintains visibility, security lighting, a visible car park, landscaping and digital building access. Not all tenants who were moved out during the renovations and redevelopment of Talbot Park have chosen to come back, some because they had become established elsewhere, some because they did not see the new, smaller dwellings as suitable for families.

HNZC has also installed a range of sustainable urban design features in Talbot Park including those aimed at reducing the impact of storm water on the receiving environment (rain gardens, permeable paving), water recycling (rain tanks) and energy efficiency (solar panels).

An examination of the concept of liveability in the Glen Innes Liveable Community Plan, PPM61 and supporting documentation (Scott and Shaw 2005) indicates that the Council started from the point of accommodating growth by increasing housing densities (form), while placing controls on quality (design). Other themes of amenity, accessibility, vitality and viability of the town centre and infrastructure are prioritised as necessary to create a 'liveable' community. As these themes are related to place, they fit within the traditional planning realm and are the 'core business' of Council. Slightly less related are local economy and safety. The themes of recreation and community facilities, social processes, affordability and health are acknowledged as important, but are not what Council

are focussed on in this context. The theme of sustainability appears to underpin the push for accommodating growth through changes to settlement form, but is not a strong focus in the discourse.

Submissions from residents (and others) started from the point of socio-economic issues, including safety, health, local economy, social processes, recreation and community facilities and affordability. Residents who opposed the plans stated clearly that these issues needed to be addressed first before considering introducing more people into this area of extremely high deprivation (HNZC is legally required to house those categorised of 'highest need' first). Themes of vitality, accessibility, quality of design, infrastructure, sustainability and amenity were also considered worthwhile; however, they were not prioritised in the discourse (Scott and Shaw 2005).

A parallel community consultation process was undertaken in 2004 and 2005 by a local community development project on behalf of residents who felt they had had no meaningful input into the Liveable Community Plan process. This visioning exercise identified four key priorities: enhancing community leadership; harnessing Glen Innes pride; strengthening community well-being; and working together (Hancock and Chilcott 2005). The aim of the visioning project was to broker the best possible deal for the community based on these priorities (T. Liew, pers. comm. 2005).

The paper now turns to issues related specifically to higher density housing, community renewal and perceptions of health and well-being of residents.

Perceptions of Higher Density Housing

P1: 'The advantage of these houses over here [at the town centre], where you're going to have dairies [convenience stores], you're going to have restaurants in them and you don't have to go outside. You just catch the lift to the next floor and buy something from the dairy.'

P2: 'Then you'd definitely go mad!'

Residents' views on intensification and community renewal ranged from cautiously supportive to very opposed. In-fill housing, whereby larger sections are subdivided to house more than one single dwelling, was often equated with intensification, yet this is not what Council mean when they propose intensification. In fact, HNZA aims to remove some in-fill housing due to ongoing problems. Council's statements that greater attention to quality design, in particular of public open space, will lead to improved living environments, often fall on deaf ears. Residents saw this attempt at urban renewal as just one of many attempts to revitalise the town and recalled earlier projects that made great promises but, in their view, amounted to little:

'This street got an award when they redesigned it [for in-fill housing] and for six months it looked good ... unfortunately, they ruin it by not keeping it up ... [they said] it is going to be wonderful, it was going to be beautiful ... now they're doing Talbot Park and of course it's not going to be anything like [my street]. Well, if you looked at Talbot Park ... it doesn't look like the wonderful plan where there was going to be this room and there's going to be play areas. And now all you see is these

great [multi-storey] units like these ones and then there's another lot right behind them which is not going to give any privacy or light or anything. It's not good for families - very bad.'

- private homeowner

Common themes related to higher density housing identified in submissions and in subsequent fieldwork and interviews with residents and social service workers are discussed below.

Medium density housing not suitable for 'families'

There was general consensus that apartment blocks were not suitable for families with young children - private outdoor spaces too small for children to play and noise from children playing were common concerns. Numerous submissions and interviewees commented that 'children need green spaces to play' and this was equated to private rather than public open space: 'The only place they can go is outside to the park' or 'There is nothing better than watching kids playing in their own backyard on green grass.' Private backyards were considered ideal for family life, with open space for children to play and for family to relax, garden and entertain in private. However, a group of local homeowners discussing their expectations of private outdoor space did reflect changing attitudes, with views on big backyards ranging from 'normal' to a burden in terms of maintenance.

People expressed concerns that floor areas in apartments were too small and that children needed to be able to move between indoor and outdoor spaces easily (indeed, 'indoor-outdoor flow' is a strong feature in New Zealand real estate marketing). The noise of children playing was also seen as a problem that could disturb neighbours and potentially lead to disputes.

A: 'When the child is in the foyer it just has to scream or anything like that, it echoes. If you ask me, it's like a prison. It echoes right through.'

P: 'You'd be nervous in a place like that, it would get into your nerves.'

People felt that children should be free to 'run and shout' without too many constraints, that apartment living would not allow this and this could be stressful for parents as well as neighbours. One Starblock resident commented: '[In the next door flat] a lady ...always says to me "my son wasn't too loud, was he?" "No". She's always saying that all the time because she's not too sure'. Some people also had security concerns for children in shared public spaces and in multiplex apartment buildings.

People are not designed to live in close proximity to each other

A common view of people very opposed to higher density housing, including many private homeowners and tenants in single dwellings, was that 'people are not designed to live in close proximity to each other'. These people were concerned about a lack of privacy, noise

pollution, tall apartment buildings shading neighbours, the potential for conflict between neighbours and a general lack of control over the surrounding environment. One person who lived in a privately owned apartment commented ‘...it’s fine if I come home in the middle of the night and I’m loud and I have people over and I might have a fight with my boyfriend or whatever, but it encroaches on you and you can’t get away from it’. A private homeowner commented ‘...you’re in an apartment block like [Starblocks] and you’ve got loud noise or people thumping or people banging on your door, it’s really quite scary’.

Opponents to higher density housing saw close proximity of neighbours as bad for people’s health and well-being, particularly when multiplex dwellings were tenanted by ‘high-need’ people.

Interestingly, lack of privacy did not stand out as an issue for the Starblock residents we interviewed and some expressed feelings of security and comfort in having people nearby. Some residents in public and private apartment blocks commented that they did not have much interaction with neighbours and this suggested that ‘polite avoidance’ was a valued approach to maintaining community relations:

P3: ‘I’m in a star block, at the top. I thought I’d be in it for three to six months. I thought how could anyone live in that area, what a terrible place. Circumstances changed, I’ve been there for sixteen years. Love it. If I could throttle the tenancy manager I’d be happy ... No lawns to mow, it’s easy living, in a sense...It’s good security on the third floor.’

Interviewer: ‘And your neighbours, how does that work?’

P3: 'If I don't see them I'm happy... We've got a very quiet block and everyone seems to keep pretty much to themselves.'

P4: 'Same with our block, all the neighbours keep to themselves, very quiet. Say hello in the morning and hello at night and that's about it.'

- dialogue between two Starblocks residents, one in another part of the city and one in Glen Innes

A small group of tenants commented that when it comes to higher density living, it was 'about how you feel on the inside' that counts. Nevertheless, a strong view was expressed by other residents that 'you'd have to be crazy to want to live there [in the Starblocks]'.

Medium density housing can provide affordable, 'healthy' homes

[Medium density housing] for a great number of people to be housed in the smallest space and low maintenance and that brings the cost of housing down and at the same time providing for some accommodation for some people who can't afford it, including families. Because at the moment we have about 4000 people waiting for housing in Glen Innes alone and we haven't got any houses. Something like this, I guess, [medium density housing's] practical in a sense but it's a matter of getting used to a new kind of lifestyle to fit in with what's available, I guess that's what it is.

- state tenant

Starblocks residents identified some issues on living in close proximity to neighbours, including noise considerations, feeling 'jammed in' and tenancy control approaches by HNZN, though these residents said they enjoyed living in the revamped apartment blocks. The homes were perceived to be healthier to live in, 'like new' after the renovations with improved ventilation, security and outdoor public space. The homes were also considered very affordable, an important factor as there is a shortage of affordable homes in Glen Innes. Some liked the fact that apartment living meant they did not have the expense or work of maintaining private outdoor space and for this reason were prepared to live in a smaller living space. One woman said that although she was the only one in her block with a child, she enjoyed living there because it was a good place to meet people and they felt safe there. Social service and community development workers in Glen Innes also reported that Starblock tenants were generally happy in their refitted homes and that some of these tenants have a 'new lease on life', feeling good about where they live and this is having an impact on other parts of their lives: 'Having a nice home gives you confidence to move forward'.

State tenants appeared to be taking a 'wait and see' approach to community renewal and intensification processes and this approach was also observed by people undertaking a Random Household Survey in Glen Innes in 2005 and 2006. State tenants spoke of the potential for providing more affordable homes for people in need and the fact that these would be new homes to replace older style homes badly in need of refurbishment was

particularly appealing. State tenants often commented that Glen Innes was well situated, easy to walk around and well-serviced by public transport. This was an important aspect of why Glen Innes was a good place to live. Almost all properties in the Residential 8 zone are within 400 metres of a park or reserve and Council are committed to improving the quality of these outdoor spaces.

Some state tenants remained strongly opposed to intensification. The operator of a local radio station stated in the public hearing of submissions to PPM61 that none of their listeners supported the zone change and that he had had between seventy and eighty telephone calls directly objecting to it. Quality of construction was raised as a concern by some state tenants, who perceived some of the newer construction materials as inferior and likely to deteriorate rapidly and require maintenance for which tenants would be expected to pay. Others were watching with interest and were particularly anxious by what they perceived as the adoption of a 'town cramming' approach and the impact this could have on residents. One Starblock resident liked her flat but, commenting on the construction of apartment blocks in close proximity to hers in Talbot Park, said, 'our road is real narrow, imagine when they've finished all the buildings, you'll be stuffed in like a [sardine], won't be able to get out of there'.

Narrow roads and reliance on public open space for recreation are two features of this compact form of development and clearly challenge cultural perceptions of what creates a 'healthy environment'.

Tenancy management is key

HNZC has taken what they describe as a strong tenancy management approach in Talbot Park, based on the view that there was a need to guide people on how to live in close proximity to one another and ensure properties are well looked after. Many people were not used to sharing outdoor open spaces, corridors, stairwells, building entrances and parking areas (however, residents were quick to point out that higher density housing is not new to Glen Innes, the Starblocks being built in the 1960s). Close management includes regular inspections of properties, meetings with tenants to inform them of their obligations to HNZC and to other tenants and requirements to sign agreements on acceptable behaviour. Tenants who do not adhere to the requirements are moved out. HNZC take the view that many people would like to live in Talbot Park and bad behaviour by tenants will not be tolerated. HNZC has also adhered to design guidelines and invested in outdoor public open space to improve amenity values, aimed at making the neighbourhood a healthy environment. As HNZC has been repeatedly criticised for not taking good care of properties in Glen Innes and for allowing very anti-social behaviour to continue in their properties, close attention to tenancy management is, in HNZC's view, what marks Talbot Park out from previous renewal attempts.

Tenancy control measures were a bittersweet experience for tenants, with tenants wanting restrictions on other people's behaviour but at the same time resisting the implementation of controls as an infringement of their rights and feelings of self-control. Much of the talk about living in Talbot Park centred on the tenancy control measures, seen by some as too heavy-handed, making some feel fearful, and were the only thing some residents did not like about living there. HNZC's approaches to information exchange were also questioned and some people were unsatisfied with the induction process being

implemented. Tenancy agreements were considered ‘incomprehensible’, in contrast to agreements prepared by the Department of Work and Income that had been reworked to be easily readable and understandable.⁶

Impact of neighbours

There is a common perception that intensification makes existing residents feel ‘invaded’ by incoming residents and that this disrupts community relations and places considerable strain on community resources. An example was provided of a long-standing resident whose home was bordered by four neighbours for many years. In just a few months, the four had increased through intensification to ten neighbouring houses. The resident felt her living environment had been invaded by strangers, which strongly affected her sense of connection to her own community. Other people found living next to existing flats was invasive because of the noise and frequent comings and goings of tenants, which they feared would be greatly amplified with higher density housing. Several people commented that HNZC has no process for introducing new residents to the wider community, and that residents perceived intensification as being ‘done to them’ with no benefits for them. HNZC has a process for getting new apartment block residents together to meet each other, but turnout has been low.

Slumification or gentrification?

Talbot Park was a toe in the water for Housing New Zealand and the council but the consequences were dislocation of existing tenants and 'slumification' of the area.

- Auckland Housing Lobby Submission to PPM61

A common concern among social service workers, private homeowners and residents of neighbouring suburbs was that a higher concentration of low-income people would exacerbate existing socioeconomic problems: very poor health, high demand on social services, unemployment, crime, safety and security issues, graffiti and lack of community interaction and engagement in community issues. Intensification was equated with 'slumification'.

At the moment the flats at Talbot Park are being re-vamped. They all look really nice then the tenants move in and they now look like a ghetto. There [sic] verandas look ugly, people drinking outside them and sitting under trees, throwing rubbish outside. It is a waste of money if people are not going to look after them and bring the area down. And now you want to put more of the flats in the area, bring in more people who don't care. On my street there is one area there [where] a lot of housing are put close together. It is the messiest, noisiest area on the whole street and you want us to say yes to more of this. NO THANK YOU.'

- submission to PPM61

People who objected to higher density housing frequently drew on overseas examples of social housing estates ‘gone bad’ and used words such as ‘slum’ and ‘ghetto’, which are not commonly part of the New Zealand vernacular. The following extract from a submission to PPM61 shows the outrage many people expressed:

The Maybury [Street] experiment is the sort of abysmal result that could be duplicated across the Pt England and Glen Innes area, should the Isthmus plan be followed. What a social disaster! What a neighbourhood nightmare! ... Glen Innes does not need, nor do I support or want, any similar eyesores and social disasters. STOP plans of possibilities now for another Maybury! Glen Innes and Pt England have the potential to be a district and suburb of high quality and attractiveness. I for one am sickened by the fact that the neighbourhood I so love and appreciate, will likely as not, turn into a residential fiasco, a ghetto, a slum. Whose interests are being served other than policy makers who seem set on making their mark in someone else’s patch?

Council and HNZA attempts to engage residents in the planning process and inform them about the planned designs and outcomes have clearly failed to replace these existing images of higher density housing.

Submissions from homeowners expressed concern that revitalisation of the town centre would fail because of the concentration of poverty they anticipated through intensification. One submitter commented, ‘The only shops that will benefit through the extra people in the neighbourhood are the TAB [betting agent], takeaways, Lotto and pub.’ Urban renewal

included revamping the town centre and homeowners expressed a desire for a more diverse range of shops and community facilities. There were repeated calls for an arts centre, for example.

In contrast to fears of 'slumification', some state tenants saw the urban renewal and intensification plans as likely to lead to gentrification: 'As happened in Ponsonby in the 1960s', 'fear of being pushed out to Otara', or as one person said in an oral submission, 'I am afraid this is shorthand for moving some of the community out.' Fear of gentrification was heightened by close proximity to comparatively wealthy suburbs. State tenants said they liked the shops in the town centre because they were very affordable, and feared urban renewal would change this:

Glen Innes has got everything you need, all the shops here, it's convenient. You can walk to the supermarket, you can buy clothing here, you can buy everything you need ... I know people which moved out of the area ... and they all complain that everything is just so much more expensive ... they just can't afford a lot of things and especially having big families. Here even second hand clothing and so on for the little ones...

- state tenant

State tenants wanted to see more affordable, accessible community and recreational facilities, particularly places 'with a heart beat' (often said in reference to the expensive to rent and often empty Council-owned community centre). Residents were concerned that

there was very little in Glen Innes for youth, with no appropriate places to meet, little for them to do and few local jobs. Larger recreational facilities for large Pacific groups were also badly needed.

The Auckland Housing Lobby, a group strongly opposed to intensification in Glen Innes, is reportedly supported by many state tenants. Clearly, diverse views exist between and within the various range of stakeholders.

Housing for whom?

The push by HNZC for higher density housing, including more two-bedroom apartments, was response to a demand for smaller, two-bedroom homes for state tenants. Many residents questioned why smaller house were being provided when so many large Pacific families in Glen Innes were in need of housing. There was concern that these small apartments would become home to large, low-income families, with dire consequences for families. One long-term homeowner who had observed that garages in Glen Innes always became homes to families commented:

I remember when they first talked about [Talbot Park] I said to [HNZC] now don't put garages in, just put carports and maybe a little shed for the bikes. If you do put a garage in, make sure it's fully lined and preferably has toilet facilities and is carpeted and sound proof so that people can live in them comfortably.

Even when single people did live in smaller units, there was concern that single people often made bad neighbours and could threaten others feelings of security:

[I know of] single women living, there are lots of single units here today already and you have lots of single men together and a lot of them have just come out of jail or are mentally ill or they are alcoholics or they have mental health issues which may or not be their fault ... I know of one building just down there on Maybury Street where there's twelve units, only two women in those units and the rest are single men. One woman has been assaulted twice. If it was all families and not lots of single units [it would be better].

- resident of neighbouring suburb

There was a common perception that communities were best with a predominance of families, meaning households with two parents and two or more children. Meanwhile, the strongest demands for HNZN homes are from single parents with one or two children, single people and large families (a small number of large family homes have been built within Talbot Park). People reminisced fondly about when Glen Innes was first established as a state housing area for low-income families. When asked what she thought of high density housing, one state tenant asked, 'What about large families? Where will they go? ... You're building a society here of single people and just couples, professionals, you're changing the whole environment.'

Ownership and occupancy issues

A strong theme in submissions was that there were already 'too many state houses' and there was a call for a greater mix of private and publicly owned homes: 'The answer to Glen Innes' problems lies not with intensification of housing, but with addressing the income mix of its residents'. There was a strong perception that state tenants - and HNZC - did not take good care of their homes. HNZC's housing allocation policy of housing those with the greatest need was also considered to contribute to a deteriorated socio-economic environment. Overwhelmingly, the concern was that the plan would lead to a greater concentration of 'high need' people in a small geographic area, with all the related problems of poverty and disadvantage. However, while there were repeated calls for HNZC to sell off some of their properties, there was also concern that Residential 8 zoning would allow poor quality development and that properties would be rented out with no maintenance or tenancy management:

My concern is with these [higher density houses] if Housing New Zealand bought them, then forget it, it would just be terrible. But also if people started buying high density housing I could see what would happen, they would sell them like they do in the inner city and they would be rented out and you would get more of the same, and I think that's where the danger is. I think if they built them so they were nice apartments, expensive to buy so that people who had to live in them had a bit of money, that would help change the face of Glen Innes, but I can't see that happening.

- homeowner

HNZC staff said they were aware of residents' desire for a greater ownership mix in Glen Innes and for the 'pepper potting' of state tenants throughout the city rather than their concentration in certain suburbs, but are unable to change housing policies without direction from central government. Council are aware land ownership and occupation cannot be controlled through rezoning and the Resource Management Act processes. While there is an expectation that rezoned land would be developed for owner-occupier high density housing, the land could equally become rental investment properties.

Housing tenure and structural changes to employment are considered internationally to have a greater influence on tenant well-being and social equity than housing density (Burton 2000). An Australian study (Randolph 2005) indicated that the current higher density market in major cities in Australia is distinctive as it is predominantly a rental market. This is likely to apply equally to New Zealand cities, and this has serious implications for management. A strong theme at the 2005 New Zealand Community Housing Conference was that rental investments were 'passively managed' at best, and housing issues are seen as a private problem rather than a public good. Rental investments are predominantly owned by 'Mum and Dad investors', are often under-maintained, cold and damp, and are commonly sold every one to three years (Saville-Smith 2005).

Impact on the health of the physical environment

One of the reasons Glen Innes was selected for intensification was because Auckland City Council considered the necessary physical infrastructure to be in place. Some submitters expressed concern that intensification in Glen Innes would lead to increased traffic, more air pollution and a greater impact on reserves, historic sites, parks and waterways. Some questioned the ability of the existing infrastructure to cope with an increased population and were concerned this would have negative impacts on the health of the environment. For example, one local resident said that the local beach already has serious storm water and sewerage problems that prevented swimming. Talbot Park residents appeared to have little or no knowledge of the development's sustainable urban designs, which are aimed at preventing any further degradation of the receiving environment, including waterways and coastal areas. Volunteers were actively engaged in removing graffiti and picking up rubbish in parks and on beaches, but it was feared this level of goodwill and ownership would not last with a much higher density of housing.

Discussion

Helms (2005) observes that 'liveability' strategies in Glasgow are being driven by an agenda to reduce crime and not poverty. As with Glen Innes, social equity and urban justice issues have received little attention. International literature suggests issues such as increased poor health, crime and low amenity values are more likely to be the result of concentration of poverty than housing type or density (Syme et al. 2004). It remains to be seen whether the combination of community renewal and intensification will lead to a more liveable community - and for whom.

Many submitters to the Glen Innes Liveable Community Plan, particularly homeowners and social service providers, saw the attempts at urban renewal as mere ‘window dressing’ aimed at painting over the problems of poverty and inequality and the essential ‘polluting’ nature of a concentration of state tenants. The urban renewal process raised residents’ expectations that their concerns about socio-economic issues would be addressed as priority concerns. This contrasts with the Council’s expectations that the community will accept changes in form and, in return, will benefit from improvements to the place to be made. Council consider such changes to lead to a healthier place to live, which will in turn have spin-offs for residents, who are expected to act collectively and collaboratively with HNZN and other stakeholders to improve socio-economic outcomes.

Discourses related to liveability, community renewal and intensification highlight the competing interests of residents, often collectively referred to as ‘the community’. Critics point to the uncritical way in which the notion of ‘community’ has been applied in urban planning, and the flaws in assuming a causal link between urban form and specific social-psychological responses (Talen 2000; Chapman and Larkham 1999). In a review of the notion of ‘sense of community’ in planning, Talen (2000: 180) concludes that the ‘best we can confidently say is that certain types of physical designs promote certain types of social behaviour and responses for certain kinds of people’. In Glen Innes, urban renewal strategies such as improving amenity values in the town centre improve business and homeowners’ sense of belonging and safety, but provoke fears of gentrification in state tenants.

Phrases such as sense of community, social cohesion and vibrant communities come from a social capital discourse and are widespread in policy and planning documents in

New Zealand and beyond. Critiques of the notion of social cohesion, with their reliance on concepts of unitary, bounded societies, ignoring issues of power, change, pluralism and conflict, have a long history in social science. Commentators on 'community sustainability' have made the point that different sectors of the public will have diverse interests, needs and expectations in relation to defining the triple bottom line of sustainability, and it is therefore more useful to develop locally defined definitions (Gale and Cordray 1994; Scott et al. 2000). Because of the strong functionalist legacy of the concept of 'social cohesion', and related problems of 'social exclusion', there has been a move towards terms such as 'social engagement' and 'social inclusion' to refer to the values and practices of purposeful social interaction that allow for societal cooperation, conflict and pluralism to be intrinsic parts of a civil society (Kearns and Forrest 2000). Similarly, the Auckland City Council includes a 'sense of belonging' in their definition of a liveable community (Auckland City 2004), and while Council are currently building partnerships to improve connectedness and community engagement, there is still much work to be done in this regard (Scott and Bava in development).

There is increasing recognition that grassroots or 'bottom up' programmes that engage communities in identifying and addressing community concerns are preferable to 'top-down' approaches by external agencies (Munford and Walsh-Tapiata 1999). However, in Glen Innes, this expectation places a burden on communities that lack the internal capacity to meet. Many short-term initiatives are led by various agencies, and all struggle to engage residents in a meaningful way. There is an urgent need for sustained policy commitment for long-term (ten to fifteen years) funding of grassroots initiatives, supported by a whole-of-government approach (Mathur et al. 2004).

To return to Mary Douglas' plea that we examine urban renewal from the point of view of 'positively reordering our environment, making it conform to an idea' (Douglas 1970: 12), it is clear that discourses of healthy or liveable environments show a close relationship to the built environment. Cultural landscape approaches to the environment highlight the way landscapes are continually imagined and shaped, and question who has the power to determine the outlook of the spaces (Holdsworth 2004). Private homeowners in Glen Innes, strongly represented in submission processes, can be seen as attempting to maintain order by resisting changes to settlement form, through discourses of healthy environments. A high concentration of state tenants is in a sense perceived as 'polluting' the environment, and Douglas would account for this not as based on anxiety to escape disease but rather as a positive effort to organise the environment to conform to an idea. Council and HNZA are attempting to reorder the environment to conform to new urbanist principles, with attention to design and quality. State tenants have little control over form, quality or design, and, like homeowners, express a sense that this reordering is being done 'to them', despite Council attempts to engage residents in consultation around the process.

Conclusion

Low-density housing symbolises middle-class New Zealand - stability, independence and control over private indoor and outdoor space - and these representations, though under threat, are far from being eliminated. Auckland City has little available land to accommodate even natural population increase, and while the public generally does not

want urban sprawl, it also does not support intensification. Critical dialogue on intensification is badly needed.

For Council and HNZC, reordering space through urban renewal and intensification in Glen Innes is anticipated to lead to improved liveability for residents, and at the same time, to re-establish a sense of order or safety through various design principles. Residents are expected to respond to this reordering process by having a greater sense of belonging and self-reliance to address poverty-related issues.

The need for locally specific indicators of liveability has been recognised by Council and HNZC through a process of consultation and collaboration. Talbot Park residents' desire for a range of housing styles and construction materials so that they 'don't look like state houses', for example, has been accommodated. People living in revamped Starblocks perceive their living environment to be healthier and more suited to their ways of life than single dwelling homes, in part because of, rather than in spite of, the lack of private outdoor space. Close attention to tenancy management and removal of problem tenants is responsive to residents' concerns about poor property management in the past. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles have been applied, and Talbot Park residents report feeling safer than in the past. Collectively, these approaches could lead to an enhanced sense of belonging and connectedness for residents, while providing affordable homes for people in need.

However, many homeowners and other stakeholders consider that an even greater concentration of high-need state tenants is 'a recipe for disaster', and likely to undermine these reordering attempts. The response to claims that Talbot Park residents are happy in their new homes was commonly, 'it won't last'. The 'polluting' nature of state tenants

strongly underpins public discourse related to community renewal, and existing residents, including homeowners and tenants of private and public properties, often speak of the problems of many of the incoming residents, including mental health and crime-related behaviour. HNZC's requirement to house first those of 'highest need' is blamed. Many residents made a call for reducing poverty and associated social ills, and reordering the environment is considered unlikely to do that. State tenants expressed concerns that urban renewal is designed to 'push them out' of Glen Innes. Many residents expressed a strong sense of attachment to Glen Innes, but feared that community renewal and intensification might further impact on feelings of community belonging and connectedness.

A common issue raised by all stakeholders is the sense that they are strongly constrained by national, regional, city and local policy and legislative and statutory requirements. Auckland City Council staff reported feeling constrained by regional growth management strategies, by HNZC's housing ownership, allocation policies and willingness to construct and maintain quality homes, and by limited capacity to attend directly to socio-economic issues in Glen Innes. HNZC staff reported feeling constrained by national policies that prohibit sale of HNZC properties and by a perceived lack of political will to drive 'pepper potting' of state-owned properties in new developments. HNZC staff also felt constrained by Council's restrictions on the extent of public open space, since Council are responsible for maintenance of these spaces. The construction of narrow, 'walkable' streetscapes are also a struggle to get through Council. These key stakeholders are attempting to cut a path through a complex array of contextual issues to accommodate growth. Meanwhile, community-based programmes struggle to address local socio-economic issues with short-term funding and limited resources.

Notes

1. Intensification, the movement towards higher density development, is known as consolidation in Australia, the Compact City approach in Britain, and Smart Growth in USA.
2. This research is part of the Learning Sustainability research programme, a six-year programme (2003-2009), funded by the Foundation for Science, Research and Technology, aimed at examining different forms of settlements in relation to environmental, economic and social performance. The programme is led by Opus International Consultants, with Landcare Research and the University of Auckland as project partners.
3. The Low Impact Urban Design and Development (LIUDD) programme (www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/urban/liudd) and evaluation of a Glen Innes community development project (Mathur et al. 2004).
4. Maori tribal and urban groups.
5. In early 2007, the exchange rate was NZ\$ 1.00 = € 0.54.
6. The Residential Tenancy Act dictates the form of Tenancy agreements, although this Act is currently under review.

References

Arbury, J. 2004. 'What Contribution Has the "Compact City" Had to the Search for Urban Sustainability?' Working Paper, prepared for *Objective 1. Learning to be Sustainable: Tool for Adapting the Shape of Existing Cities and Settlements*. Auckland: School of Geography and Environmental Science, The University of Auckland.

Auckland City. 2000. *Growing Our City through Liveable Communities 2050*. Auckland: Auckland City Council.

Auckland City. 2004. *Glen Innes Into The Future*. Auckland: Auckland City Council.

Auckland City Council. 2005. *Safer Auckland City: Introduction to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*.

www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/auckland/introduction/safer/cpted

ARC (Auckland Regional Council). 2006. *Auckland Population Household, and Labour Force Projection Model: Summary Report*. Auckland: ARC.

Beacon Pathways. 2006. *Market Segmentation: Notes for Strategic Planning Day*. Auckland. www.beaconpathway.co.nz

Burton, E. 2000. 'The Compact City: Just or Just Compact? A Preliminary Analysis', *Urban Studies* 37: 1969-2001.

Chapman, D. and P. Larkham. 1999. 'Urban Design, Urban Quality and the Quality of Life: Reviewing the Department of the Environment's Urban Design Campaign', *Journal of Urban Design* 4: 211-233.

Dixon, J. and A. Dubuis. 2003. 'Urban Intensification in Auckland, New Zealand: A Challenge for New Urbanism', *Housing Studies*, 18 (3): 353-368.

- Douglas, M. 1970. *Purity and Danger*. Middlesex: Pelican Books.
- Gale, R.P. and S.M. Cordray. 1994. 'Making Sense of Sustainability: Nine Answers to "What Should be Sustained?"', *Rural Sociology* 59 (2): 311-332.
- Godschalk, D. 2004. 'Land Use Planning Challenges: Coping with Conflicts in Visions of Sustainable Development and Liveable Communities', *Journal of American Planning Association* 70: 5-13.
- Hancock, F. and J. Chilcott. 2005. GI Visioning Project. Glen Innes: Ka Mau Te Wero.
- Helms, G. 2005. 'Cleaning Up the City: The Liveability Agenda as a Means for a Socially Just City?' Conference presentation, Royal Geographical Society-IBG Annual International Conference, London, 31 August-2 September 2005.
- Holdsworth, J. 2004. 'Change and Contesting Identities: The Creation and Negotiation of Landscape in Donetsk', *Anthropology Matters Journal* 6 (1): 1-9.
- Kearns, A. and R. Forrest. 2000. 'Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance', *Urban Studies* 37: 995-1017.
- Mathur, N., K. Scott and S. Strang. 2004. 'Ka Mau Te Wero-Health: Spinning the Web of Change through Organisational Networking'. Conference presentation, The Social Policy, Research and Evaluation Conference, 25-26 November 2004, Wellington, NZ.
- Munford, R. and W. Walsh-Tapiata. 1999. *Strategies for Change: Community Development in Aotearoa/NZ*. Palmerston North: School of Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University.
- Randolph, B. 2005. 'Higher Density Community: Current Trends and Future Implications'. Conference presentation, Strata and Community Title in Australia for the 21st Century Conference, 2005.

- Saville-Smith, K. 2005. Keynote presentation, National Community Housing Conference, 3-5 November 2005.
- Scott, K and C. Bava. In development. 'Visualising Community: An Ethnographic Approach to Social Network Analysis in Glen Innes'.
- Scott, K., J. Park and C. Cocklin. 2000. 'From "Sustainable Rural Communities" to "Social Sustainability": Giving Voice to Diversity in Mangakahia Valley, New Zealand', *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 433-446.
- Scott, K. and A. Shaw. 2005. 'Report on Local Community Perceptions of Liveability'. Auckland: Opus International Consultants.
- Shirley, I.F. 1979. *Planning for Community: A Mythology of Community Development and Social Planning*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Southworth, M. and P.B. Parthasarathy. 1997. 'The Suburban Public Realm II: Eurourbanism, New Urbanism and the Implications for Urban Design in the American Metropolis', *Journal of Urban Design* 2: 9-26.
- Statistics New Zealand, 2001. *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings 2001*.
www.stats.govt.nz/census2001.htm
- Syme, C., V. McGregor and D. Mead. 2005. 'Social Implications of Housing Intensification in the Auckland Region: Analysis and Review of Media Reports, Surveys and Literature'. Report prepared for Auckland City Council, Waitakere City Council, HNZN and Auckland Regional Council.
- Talen, E. 2000. 'The Problem with Community in Planning', *Journal of Planning Literature* 15: 171-183.

Tregoning, H., J. Agyeman and C. Shenot. 2002. 'Editorial: Sprawl, Smart Growth and Sustainability', *Local Environment* 7 (4): 341-347.

WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development). 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.