

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

# **Gated communities in Sydney: A search for security**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite growing material affluence, today's society is increasingly characterised by fear, anxiety and insecurity. The causes are diverse and include economic restructuring, 'the war on terror', crime, immigration, the privatisation of public services and infrastructure, and neo-liberal politics. The response of some individuals has been the retreat from the public realm and an increasing focus on the private sphere of the home. For the affluent, gated communities are seen to offer a solution. Gated communities are residential developments which are characterised by physical security measures such as gates, walls, guards and closed circuit television cameras. This type of residential development is often criticised because of the potential to cause divisions in society; it can generate an 'us and them' mentality. This thesis argues that gated communities are an expression of the desire of individuals to exert greater control over their living environments. They may help to reduce uncertainty, provide personal protection, and protect family and home from unwanted intrusion. An understanding of the experience of residents and their motivations for moving to gated communities is essential to enable the provision of alternative residential environments which encourage social interaction and improve community well-being.

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context of study

*The social and political times in which Australians live have made ‘comfort’ a pressing issue. At the broadest level, we live in a Western world constituted by a fundamental paradox: our increasingly affluent lifestyle...is juxtaposed with a greater culture of fear (Furedi 1997); anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty structure our everyday lives and threaten our sense of belonging (Bauman 1999). In other words, the comfortableness of our material well-being is offset by a greater tendency towards a pervasive experience of discomfort. (Noble, 2005, p. 108)*

The inspiration for my thesis is encapsulated in Noble’s quote. Australian society is becoming more and more affluent, as evidenced by the demand for larger and larger homes, oversized four-wheel-drive luxury vehicles and the ubiquitous iPod. Clive Hamilton and Richard Dennis (2005) aptly describes the way we are driven by consumerism as ‘affluenza’.

In Australia, the sources of anxiety are diverse, including economic restructuring, ‘the war on terror’, crime, immigration, the privatisation of public services and infrastructure, and neo-liberalist politics.

*[There is a] fear that something will go horribly wrong – something out of our control. And so we are led to accept that we need men of steel to protect us. This Orwellian distraction works by making us feel we have little influence over the course our collective life will take. (Parker, 2006, p. 30)*

Certainly this fear and insecurity have become more prevalent in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Bali bombings. Noble attributes this to ‘an adroitly managed fear campaign’ orchestrated by the Australian federal government ‘in which national integrity and well-being became entwined with issues around border security, crime and policing, and cultural harmony’ (2005, p. 109).

An unfortunate consequence of the ‘fear campaign’ is the disengagement of society ‘from politics, from current affairs, from social issues’ (Mackay, 2005, p. 1). This uncoupling results in a feeling of helplessness.

*[People are left f]eeling daunted by a 'big picture' that seems beyond their control, [so] they bring their horizons up close: me, the family, the backyard, the street, the school, the weekend, the holidays. (Mackay, 2005, p. 1)*

## **1.2 Problem statement**

The pervasiveness of fear and accompanying feelings of uncertainty has fuelled a desire to create a buffer between the individual and society. For some, the desired separation can be achieved by living in gated communities. Gated communities are residential developments characterised by a focus on physical security measures such as gates, walls, guards and closed circuit television cameras. I believe that as gated communities exclude non-residents, they provide a more controlled and ‘perfect’ environment for their inhabitants.

It is their power to exclude that is often criticised by academics, the media and the wider community as they have the potential to cause divisions within society and create an ‘us and them’ mentality.

However, gated communities may help reduce uncertainty, provide personal protection and protect family and home from unwanted intrusion. This thesis focuses on the experiences of residents from three case studies of gated communities in Sydney: Paradise Close in Cherrybrook, Raleigh Park in Kensington and Macquarie Links. It is important for governments to understand why people choose to live in gated communities in order for them to actively address societal anxieties and to ensure a more cohesive and inclusive society.

### **1.3 Thesis objectives**

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between gated communities and security. The key objectives of this thesis are to:

- Understand the distribution and nature of gated communities in Sydney;
- Examine the reasons why people choose to live in gated communities;
- Explore whether living in a gated community reduces uncertainty and improves quality of life and well-being;
- Determine whether residents of gated developments experience a ‘sense of community’; and
- Identify the implications of my research for planning practice.

### **1.4 Relationship to planning**

Housing has many intangible benefits ‘such as privacy, security and intimacy...not things we can touch, but we experience them, as it were, as by-products of the relationship between our dwelling and ourselves’ (King, 2004, p. 21). Planners play a significant role in the development of new housing estates on the fringe of Sydney and in the redevelopment of existing housing. As ‘home’ is of central importance to a person’s life and their well-being, planners are partly responsible for the well-being of the community.

This thesis will explore the extent to which the perceived security of a person’s living arrangements affects their well-being as articulated through their personal security and relationships with others. This investigation will attempt to understand why people live in gated communities and whether gated communities attend to the anxieties and desires of residents. This knowledge may assist planners in creating built environments which encourage social interaction and improve the well-being of the community.

## **1.5 Outline of Chapters**

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter One introduces the research and outlines the context and key aims and objectives. Chapter Two discusses the research methodology employed. Chapter Three introduces the gated community as a form of residential development. Problems of definition, the history of gating and worldwide distribution are discussed. Chapter Three also outlines existing international research on gated communities and the main criticisms and benefits of this type of development. It concludes with a discussion of the commonly proposed motivations for living in gated developments. Chapter Four explores gated communities in the Australian context, focussing particularly on Sydney. Examples of gated developments in Sydney are presented. In Chapter Five, the three Sydney focus case studies are introduced. Chapter Six offers a thematic analysis of the research and identifies the key themes. Key findings are explored, including the reasons for living in gated communities, sense of community and sense of security. Through critical analysis and discussion, Chapter Seven will highlight how my findings can inform town planning practice. In the final Chapter Eight, I conclude with an overview of my research and make suggestions for further study.

## **1.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has established the context of study and outlined the main issues and themes to be discussed. My thesis explores insecurity and anxiety in society, the worldwide growth of gated communities and whether the two are connected in a search for security and community. The next chapter explains how the research was approached and the methods employed.

# 2

## METHODOLOGY

This thesis involved a study of literature and past research, as well as personal interviews.

### 2.1 Literature review

In order to understand the theoretical context of the proposed research I undertook a critical review of relevant scholarly literature. It was discovered that there is a plethora of scholarly literature available on gated communities in the United States (US) and elsewhere. However, Australian empirical research is limited to a small number of unpublished theses. Other literature is generally not research-based and with a few exceptions is restricted to media articles and presentations. This thesis aims to address the deficiency of scholarly research.

### 2.2 Case studies

An in-depth case study examination of three gated communities in Sydney was undertaken for this thesis. A case study approach was employed as a means to ‘focus attention on one or a few instances of [this] social phenomenon’ (Babbie, 2001, p. 285) and permit an in-depth examination of the gated community in Sydney.

The three gated communities were selected on the basis that they each vary in geographic location, scale and in terms of community facilities and security features. It was important to select three contrasting communities in order to investigate the breadth of experience of gated community residents in Sydney.

The first community studied is Paradise Close located in the suburb of Cherrybrook in Sydney’s north-west. Paradise Close is a small-scale, low density greenfields development with limited community facilities and security features. The second community investigated is Raleigh Park which is located in Kensington in Sydney’s inner east. Raleigh Park is a large-

scale brownfields development and contains a mixture of dwellings including single detached townhouses and multi-storey apartments. It has a variety of community facilities and security features. The third community examined is the suburb of Macquarie Links located in Sydney's south-west. Macquarie Links is a large-scale greenfields development containing low and medium density dwellings. Macquarie Links features extensive community facilities and security measures.

Internet browsing of promotional materials on developer and real estate websites contributed to an understanding of the nature of the selected case studies. Newspaper articles, advertising brochures and websites provided information regarding the marketing of the developments.

A search of relevant development and building applications for the subject developments was made at local councils. Development and building applications provided an indication of the motivations of gated community developers.

To understand the demographic and socioeconomic nature of the case studies, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for the communities was collected. Crime statistics were sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and the ABS.

### **2.3 Research approach**

Qualitative research methodologies were utilised for this thesis. They are 'characterized by their humanism and holism...a philosophical position that argues that humans and human behavior cannot be understood or studied outside the context of a person's daily life, life world, and activities' (Low, 2002, p. 31).

Qualitative interviews were conducted to facilitate the collection of detailed, rich information in order to appreciate the experience of living in a gated community. The alternative approach of a quantitative survey would not have enabled the depth of understanding required to address the aims of this thesis (Babbie, 2001). Further, qualitative approaches are considered to be a more sensitive way of conducting research (Minichello et al., 2000).

The in-depth interview technique utilised can best be described as 'focussed or semi-structured' to enable the in-depth examination of the interviewees and their ideas (Minichello

et al., 2000, p. 62). This technique facilitated ‘access to, and an understanding of, activities and events which [could not] be observed directly by the researcher’ (Minichello et al., 2000, p. 70).

In part my research drew on the work of Setha Low, an American anthropologist. Low studied a number of American and Mexican gated communities to ‘document the existence of urban fear in its many forms and its influence on residents’ residential narratives’ (2001, p. 45; 2003). Low interviewed gated community residents in the United States and Mexico and lived in gated developments in San Antonio, Texas as part of her research.

### *Resident interviews*

This thesis involved interviews with residents from each of the three gated communities. In addition, four families from the Paradise Close community participated in a focus group. All resident interviewees’ names have been changed to ensure the privacy of residents who do not wish to be identified. A list of interviewees is attached (Appendix One).

An open-ended question schedule was developed to examine the issues central to the research questions (Minichello, 2000, p. 65), namely:

- Motivations for moving to a gated community;
- The experience of living in a gated community; and
- The effect that living in a gated community has on insecurity, well-being and personal security.

The interview schedule was designed to elicit the greatest range and depth of response. The resulting schedule reflected Schwartz and Jacobs’ ‘patterned organisation or structure of conversations and, specifically, interviews...[with] three parts to the structure – openings or beginnings, topical sections or middles, and closings or endings’ (1979 in Minichello et al., 2000, p. 80). The interview schedule was organised in sections which related to the key research themes:

- Likes and dislikes of living in a gated community;
- Security;
- Community/Sense of community; and

- The nature of gated community residents in terms of age, family structure and cultural background.

The resident interview question schedule is attached (Appendix Two).

Resident interview participants were approached on the basis of contacts through family and friends. This was necessary due to the impenetrable nature of Paradise Close and Macquarie Links. Attempting to approach people from outside the gates may have aroused suspicion, thus causing distress and discomfort.

A thematic content analysis of interview and focus group transcripts was carried out and each transcript was coded based on the themes identified (Low, 2001; 2003). Thematic coding facilitated an understanding of:

- How residents had come to move to a gated development;
- Their experiences whilst living there;
- Their relationship to other residents;
- Their opinions on the importance of security; and
- The advantages and disadvantages of living in gated communities.

#### *Development and real estate industry interviews*

In order to understand the rationale for the development of gated communities and the means by which they are marketed and sold, it was necessary to interview or correspond with representatives of the development and real estate industries. A list of interviewees is attached (Appendix One).

## **2.4 Observation**

Field visits were undertaken to gated communities throughout the Sydney area to observe their location, size and structure; architectural style; community facilities; and security features. Photographs were taken to enable a visual comparison of the different communities. The behaviour of residents and the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic was also observed. The case study communities were visited on a number of occasions in order to

glean a fuller understanding of resident experiences described to the researcher during personal interviews.

## **2.5 Ethics approval**

In accordance with the University of New South Wales ‘Human Research Ethics’ guidelines, an application was lodged to the Faculty of the Built Environment Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel prior to the commencement of the research project. Ethics approval was granted, with conditions. Carrying out research in an ethical manner is important to ensure that participants and members of the wider community are not adversely impacted upon by the research process or the publication of data (Minichello et al., 2000). The Human Research Ethics approval is attached (Appendix Three).

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter has explained how my research was undertaken. Case studies were chosen in order to provide a breadth of understanding of the gated community in Sydney. Qualitative in-depth interviews and site observations were utilised to ensure a thorough understanding of the experience of gated community residents. A variety of secondary sources of information were explored including scholarly literature and statistics. The next chapter introduces gated communities and provides a review of scholarly literature and research findings.

# 3

## INTRODUCTION TO GATED COMMUNITIES

This chapter examines gated communities as a form of residential development, including the history of fortification and how this tendency has evolved over time. I will describe the different types of gated developments throughout the world, their distribution and the reasons for their development. Finally, I summarise the motivations for living in gated estates, criticisms and perceived benefits.

### 3.1 Introducing gated communities

Gated communities are by no means ‘new’ phenomena. However, the increased prevalence of this kind of residential development since the 1970s has drawn attention from scholars and commentators worldwide.

For Blakely and Snyder, gated communities are controversial, in that they comprise ‘residential areas...in which normally public spaces are privatized’ (1997, p. 2). The gated community is a ‘manifestation of broader social forces’ (1997, p. 28) such as privatisation, which is reflected in the use of physical devices to moderate the influences of the outside world. Low believes that residents of gated communities in the United States ‘are using the walls, entry gates and guards in an effort to keep perceived dangers outside of their homes, neighbourhoods, and social world’ (2003, p. 151).



It has been argued that gated communities are an ‘anathema to Government policies aiming to increase social cohesion and reaffirm linkages between neighbourhoods’ (Blandy et al., 2003, p. 6). Low has also stated that ‘the gated community contributes to a geography of social relations that produces fear and anxiety simply by locating a person’s home and place identity

in a secured enclave, gated, guarded, and locked' (2003, p. 231). Despite this criticism, gated communities are a common form of residential development in the United States (Figure 3.1), South Africa and Latin America and are growing in popularity in places such as Indonesia. It is debatable as to whether they are gaining popularity in Australia (Burke, 2006).

### 3.2 Defining gated communities

Blakely and Snyder in their seminal work *Fortress America: gated communities in the United States* define 'gated communities' as secure housing estates 'with designated perimeters, usually walls or fences, and controlled entrances that are intended to prevent penetration by non-residents' (1997, p. 2).

A common feature of a 'gated' development is a perimeter wall which encloses the whole development (Figure 3.2). Vehicular access to the development may also be restricted by a gate or a boom arm and entry is gained by entering a pin-code into a key-pad at the entryway (Figure 3.3), by use of an access card or by screening of person/vehicle by security personnel.

Security may be ensured through a variety of means:

- 24-hour security patrols by guards and 'back-to-base' alarms (Figure 3.4);
- Panic buttons to alert security guards of a perceived security issue;
- The use of guard dogs or closed-circuit television cameras; and
- Electric fencing, spikes and other forms of anti-intruder treatments (Figures 3.5 and 3.6).



**Fig. 3.2 Gated community perimeter wall, Johannesburg, South Africa**

Source: J. Wedgwood (2006)



**Fig. 3.3 Key pad at Jardine Court gated community, Willoughby, Australia**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



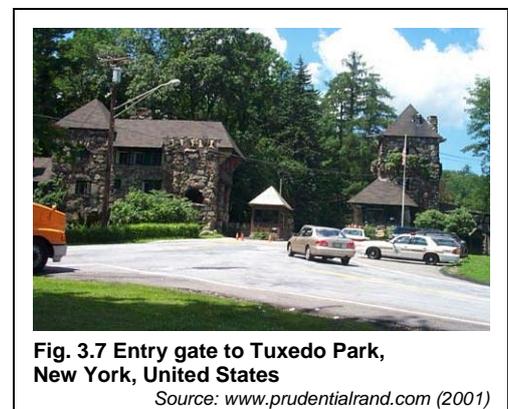
**Fig. 3.4 Security company sign, Raleigh Park, Kensington, Australia**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



### 3.3 The history of gating and gated communities

Fortified communities have their roots in England circa 300 B.C. Roman soldiers erected walls and defences within the villages they occupied to protect themselves from mutinous villagers (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). Medieval towns also featured walls, towers and gates (Low, 2003).



Residential gated communities first appeared in the United States in New Jersey, New York and Brooklyn in the late nineteenth century (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003). Llewellyn Park in Eagle Ridge, New Jersey was a community built for the wealthy in the 1850s. Tuxedo Park in New York (Figure 3.7) and Sea Gate in Brooklyn were resort communities, with Tuxedo Park enclosed by a barbed wire fence to enable residents to partake in hunting and fishing, and Sea Gate featuring its own private police force (Low, 2003).



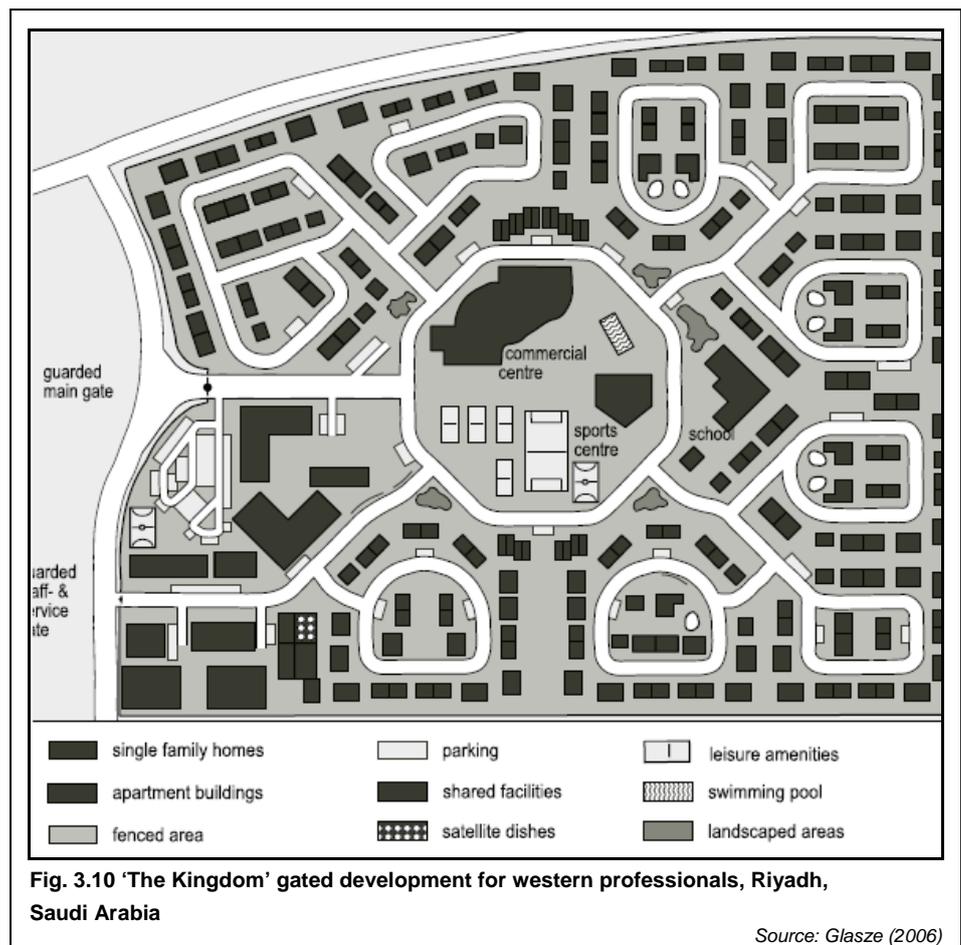
In pre-eighteenth century London, the royal family and other wealthy persons ‘forted up’ to protect themselves from the sometimes rebellious lower classes (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).



In the nineteenth century, gated settlements also appeared in the Caribbean in the form of Spanish fort towns (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).

In the US, a lack of adequate attention to the ‘continuing problems of racial conflict, poverty, inequities in housing and education, and increasing criminal violence’ (Sandercock, 2003, p. 115) led to an urban crisis in the 1960s and ’70s. This provided the impetus for a white/middle-class exodus to the suburbs. Sandercock states that instead of addressing social problems, ‘policy elites’ ‘chose to buy protection, fuelling the growth of the private security industry’ (2003, p. 116) and facilitating the creation of residential developments centred on security. The first of these was Leisure World, a retirement development in Orange County, California, which Low identifies as the beginning of the trend where ‘middle-class Americans walled themselves off’ (2003, p. 14).

During the 1970s, the first Argentinean gated country clubs were developed in response to ‘a decade of social unrest and pre-revolutionary troubles’ (Thuillier, 2005, p. 256; Roitman, 2003, 2005). Gated developments also appeared at this time in Brazil (Caldeira, 1996; Carvalho, Varkki,



and Anthony, 1997; Coy and Pohler, 2002), Chile (Salcedo and Torres, 2004) and Saudi Arabia (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002; Glasze, 2006).

The 1980s saw gated communities develop across the globe. In the United States, country club type developments including those centred on golf courses that were ‘designed for exclusivity, prestige and leisure’ (Low, 2003, p. 14) flourished. In 1987, Sanctuary Cove on the Queensland Gold Coast ‘marked the arrival of a new residential development form’ (Gleeson, 2006, p. 72) to Australia. Fourway Gardens, developed in 1987, was the first walled development in Johannesburg, South Africa (Jurgens and Gnad, 2002). Bulgaria (Stoyanov and Frantz, 2006), Canada (Townshend, 2006), England (Blandy, 2006), Indonesia (Leisch, 2002), Lebanon (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002), Portugal (Raposo, 2006) and Russia (Blinnikov et al., 2006; Libertun de Duren, 2006) also experienced the development of modern gated communities at this time.

### 3.4 Prevalence of gated communities

Gated communities are a very popular form of development in the United States, South Africa, Mexico and Latin America. However, it is difficult to know how many people reside in gated developments, primarily because comprehensive surveys have not been undertaken. Low (2003) estimates that 16 million people in the United States live in gated communities. In comparison, Burke (2006) suggests that approximately 100,000 people live in gated communities in Australia. Atkinson et al. (2004) indicate that there are approximately one thousand gated communities in England.



**Fig. 3.11 Gated community in Johannesburg, South Africa**

Source: J. Wedgwood (2006)



**Fig. 3.12 Mountain View Village gated community, Sofia, Bulgaria**

Source: Stoyanov and Frantz (2006)



**Fig. 3.13 Gated community in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada**

Source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) (2006)



**Fig. 3.14 Former Victorian lunatic asylum, now gated community, south-west England**

Source: Blandy (2006)

The popularity of gated developments is explained in different ways throughout the world. In America, for example, they have risen in popularity over time due to social change, an increased fear of ethnic minorities and a general anxiety promoted by the media and government (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003; Le Goix, 2005). In South Africa, relaxation of restrictions on the mixing between races, and a desire for white South Africans to protect themselves from crime, resulted in the emergence of gated communities (Beall, Crankshaw, and Parnell, 2002; Jurgens and Gnad, 2002).

In Latin America, security compounds are a means by which the rich can separate themselves from the poor (Roitman, 2005) and local governments often welcome the much needed investment in their local area (Libertun de Duren, 2006). Low (2003) found that residential areas in Mexico are being gated illegally because crime rates are high and the police do not provide adequate protection. The civil war in Lebanon during the 1980s lead to an increased demand for ‘enclaves where a secure supply of water and electricity was guaranteed’ (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 220, p. 330). Likewise in Russia, Lentz points out that ‘security’ in gated estates ‘implies more than just the protection of life and limb...It also includes the guarantee of the long-term functioning of ‘normal’ residential infrastructure, e.g. the provision of water, gas, electricity, heating, regular waste collection, lift maintenance and so on – services which frequently failed in formerly state-owned and now municipally owned housing in the period of transformation’ (2006, p. 216).



**Fig. 3.15 Koura Hills gated community in Bechmizzie, North Lebanon**

Source: [www.viviun.com](http://www.viviun.com) (2006)



**Fig. 3.16 Koura Hills gated community in Bechmizzie, North Lebanon**

Source: [www.viviun.com](http://www.viviun.com) (2006)



**Fig. 3.17 Quinta da Penha Longa gated community in Lisbon, Portugal**

Source: Raposo (2006)



**Fig. 3.18 Quinta Patino gated community in Lisbon, Portugal**

Source: Raposo (2006)



**Fig. 3.19 Bella Montagna, Austin, Texas, United States**

Source: D. Kolb (2006)



**Fig. 3.20 Gated community in Johannesburg, South Africa**

Source: J. Wedgwood (2006)



**Fig. 3.21 Paradise Village Resort, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico**

Source: www.wikipedia.org (2006)



**Fig. 3.22 Gated community in Maringa, Parana, Brazil**

Source: www.skyscrapercity.com (2006)



**Fig. 3.23 Prados del Oeste, Santa Ana, Costa Rica**

Source: realestate.escapeartist.com (2006)



**Fig. 3.24 Infill gated development, northern England**

Source: Blandy (2006)

### 3.5 Motivations for living in gated communities

*Desire for safety, security, community, and “niceness,” as well as wanting to live near people like themselves because of a fear of “others” and of crime, is...expressed by most residents living in gated communities. (Low, 2003, pp. 9-10)*

Lows' quote encapsulates the variety of motivations for residents moving to gated communities. Motivating factors include:

- Desire for security and fear of crime;
- Protection of the private sphere;
- Exclusivity;

- Predictability and property values;
- Search for community;
- Retreat from failing public government; and
- Identity, packaging and social homogeneity (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Forwood, 1999; Low, 2003; Frantz, 2006).

I now discuss different issues related to these motivating factors.

#### *Desire for security and fear of crime*

*Living in a gated community...temporarily suppresses and masks, even denies and fuses, the inherent anxieties and conflicting social values of modern urban and suburban life. (Low, 2003, p. 11)*

Gated communities are commonly regarded as a response to residents' fear and insecurities. Certainly, research into how fear affects individuals has focussed on 'anxiety, mistrust, alienation, dissatisfaction with life, and even mental illness...[and] the breakdown of social cohesion and solidarity' (Liska, Sanchirico and Reed, 1988, p. 828). Gated communities are seen to provide personal safety, protection for family and the security of material goods.

#### *Protection of the private sphere*

A home provides a sense of security and safety. Physical and psychological security may be gained by being able to lock the door, thereby erecting a barrier between resident and the outside world. Housing has many intangible benefits, 'such as privacy, security and intimacy...not things we can touch, but we experience them, as it were, as by-products of the relationship between our dwelling and ourselves' (King, 2004, p. 21). Gated communities extend the private realm beyond the dwelling to the roads and community spaces within a development. Accordingly, Frantz believes that security estates 'present carefree environments for parents who elsewhere would have to worry about traffic, abductions and the character of their children's playmates' (2006, p. 73).

### *Predictability and property values*

*[M]any inhabitants of guarded housing estates seem to be looking for security – the security of living in an environment in which the physical and social qualities are regulated by private contracts and perceived to be more stable than in ‘normal’ neighbourhoods. (Webster and Glasze, 2006, p. 232)*

In gated communities, usually residents own their own allotment of land and a share of the common infrastructure and facilities. A body corporate or Homeowner’s Association (HOA) oversees the collection of fees and organises the maintenance of the commonly-owned areas and facilities. There may be covenants and by-laws to restrict, control and regulate the design of the development and resident behaviour. Restrictions may control:

- Dwelling design, paint colour and external alterations;
- Fencing;
- Pet ownership;
- The weight of vehicles permitted inside the development;
- Garden maintenance and planting types;
- The parking of vehicles, trailers and boats on the road; and
- The erection of flag poles (McKenzie, 1994; 2006; Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003).

Through these restrictions, a degree of predictability and quality is maintained throughout the development. Every resident is aware of the limitations and non-compliance may result in reprimands from the HOA. The restrictions may ensure that property values are maintained over time, thereby making gated communities a ‘less risky investment’ (Frantz, 2006, p. 73).

### *Search for community*

The decline of the traditional neighbourhood community has been seen as an undesirable trend (Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 1994; Katz, 1994) and the enclosed nature of gated communities are seen as one way of bringing it back (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003). Advocates ‘often argue that by allowing neighbourhoods to establish and protect their boundaries and to control access to their territory, the residents of gated communities will

develop a sense of identity and security, both of which are vital to strong communities' (Blakely and Snyder, 1997, p.129).

### 3.6 Criticism of gated communities

Gated communities are often criticised. These critiques range from the exclusionary nature of gated communities to their inability to reduce crime and fear of crime.

#### *Exclusion and homogeneity*

Blakely and Snyder are critical of gated communities due to their 'exclusionary aspirations' (1997, p. 3). Nevertheless, exclusivity is often the very reason residents desire those estates (Low, 2003; Frantz, 2006; Icklow, Interview 25/9/06). It is often argued that gated developments create divisions within society by excluding those who cannot afford to buy into the community (Grant, 2005), thereby creating an 'us and them' mentality (Burke, 2001a; Low, 2003; Sandercock, 2003).

*...the presence of gates may well create a feeling of security for residents inside the gates, it may also create a sense of unease about the area beyond the walls...[In a reverse process, the creation of a perception that designates those beyond the walls as 'outsiders' is inevitable..[a]nd it is only one small mental step from being an outsider to being a threat. (Burke, 2001a, p. 147)*

Gated estates tend to attract people of similar socioeconomic and cultural groups and therefore 'enhance land use, class and age segregation' at the local scale (Grant, Greene and Maxwell, 2004, p. 83). However, some argue that gated developments 'may well create very vast local differences in status and economic advantages but [Macquarie Links in Sydney's south-west] has allowed 80 families, who otherwise would have lived on the North Shore of Sydney, to actually live in the Western Suburbs thereby decreasing the regional disparities' (Montefiore and Atkins, 2006). Regardless, Burke (2006) and Grant, Greene and Maxwell believe that security estates 'fly in the face of aims of social integration and cohesion at the larger urban scale' (2004, p. 83).

### *Reduction in street connectivity*

Developments which do not allow through-traffic limit street connectivity and reduce the permeability of an area, forcing non-residents to travel around the community where otherwise they could travel through, potentially reducing pedestrian activity of non-residents (Burke and Sebaly, 2001).

### *Crime and fear of crime*

Gated communities do not necessarily reduce crime. Setha Low's (2003) respondents reported that many robberies were committed by members of the community or by 'outsiders' such as cleaners, builders and landscapers working within the walls. She found that many residents did not report a reduced sense of fear after moving to a gated development and in fact many people had become more fearful and more anxious (2003; Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Atkinson and Flint, 2004). Further, Atkinson and Blandy argue that fortifying an area may cause 'the displacement of crime away from increasingly hardened targets, inhabited by those who can afford access to security, towards those areas which present softer targets' (2005, p. 185).

## **3.7 Benefits of gated communities**

Despite criticism, gated communities do have some positive aspects, including achieving certain desirable planning outcomes. These encompass:

- Higher densities;
  - Maintenance of amenity and design standards;
  - Provision of community facilities and open space;
  - Increased vehicle and pedestrian safety; and
  - Opportunities for the development of a sense of place, character and community.
- (Grant, Greene and Maxwell, 2004, p. 83)

Other benefits include the development of a sense of community for residents, and a reduction in pressure on local governments to provide and maintain infrastructure and facilities.

### *Sense of community*

Proponents of gated communities argue that as walls and gates clearly define community space there is an increased community desire to protect that space. Oscar Newman (1972, in Dovey, 1998) developed the concepts of 'territorial reinforcement' and 'defensible space' whereby a clear definition of space is considered to increase awareness and 'ownership' of that space. Further, restrictions on non-resident entry mean that gated community residents are likely to be more familiar with their neighbours and thus are easily able to recognise a 'stranger' or potential intruder. This has been likened to the Neighbourhood Watch model which relies on neighbours to work together as a community to improve personal safety and household security by 'encouraging interaction and a sense of responsibility between neighbours and communities' (Neighbourhood Watch Western Australia, 2006).

### *Reduced pressure on local government*

Gated communities contain private roads and private community recreational facilities which are provided by the developer and maintained by residents. This reduces the burden on local government to provide facilities and maintain infrastructure such as roads and stormwater systems. As residents still pay council rates, Grant describes gated communities as 'cash cows' (2005, p. 283) for local government. Many researchers have reported that local governments in the United States (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003; McKenzie, 2006), Canada (Grant, Greene and Maxwell, 2004; Grant, 2005) and Argentina (Roitman, 2005; Libertun de Duren, 2006) do not discourage gating because of the clear financial advantages of this form of development. Interestingly, Libertun de Duren (2006) reports that gated community developers in Argentina offer to pave roads outside the development as an incentive for approval.

## **3.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter has reviewed literature relevant to gated communities in an international context. The history of the fortified city and the growing trend for the gating of neighbourhoods has been explored. In discussing the different manifestations of gated communities throughout the world I have attempted to summarise why people want to live in these developments, criticisms and the potential benefits. The following Chapter discusses gated communities in Australia.

# 4

## GATED COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

This chapter introduces gated communities in Australia, focussing on Sydney. Research on gated developments is explored and critiqued. Through a series of photographic illustrations, I demonstrate that Sydney is home to a variety of gated communities.

### 4.1 Gated communities in Australia

The first gated community in Australia was ‘Sanctuary Cove’ (Figure 4.1). Developed in 1987 on the Queensland Gold Coast, Sanctuary Cove started a trend for the development of retirement communities with security features. Since then, the number of gated communities has increased. They are predominantly concentrated on the east and west coasts, in tourist regions such as the Central Coast, North Coast and Hunter Valley of New South Wales, and throughout the capital cities in all states (Burke, 2006). Forwood notes that gated communities ‘tend to be limited to the capital cities and coastal areas that are experiencing high levels of population growth’ (1999, p.43). As noted in Chapter Three, it is estimated that 100,000 people live in gated communities in Australia (Burke, 2006).



Fig. 4.1 Australia's first gated community, Sanctuary Cove, Gold Coast, Queensland

Source: [www.sanctuarycove.com](http://www.sanctuarycove.com) (2006)

The emergence of gated developments in Australia appears to have occurred as a result of the concept being ‘borrowed’ from the US and elsewhere (Sider, 1996). In comparison to the US or South Africa, crime is not a significant problem in Australia. Derek Bebbington, then senior development manager with Meriton Apartments said in 1989:

*Australia doesn't have a huge security problem, people aren't shot on the streets. I don't think the Australian people are ready to pay the cost for security. Only a minority might seek that sort of living environment. (Bebbington, quoted in Sider, 1989, p. 29)*

Similarly, Peter Icklow (CEO of Monarch Investments, developer of Macquarie Links) suggests that future demand for security-based communities is likely to be limited to a niche market (Interview, 25/9/06).

#### *Australian studies on gated communities*

Very few empirical studies of gated estates in Australia have been carried out. Matthew Burke's research involved a tour of Queensland, the North Coast of NSW, Sydney, Adelaide, South Australia, and Western Australia (Burke, 2006). Whilst on the Gold Coast Burke observed that a particular gated community was ‘an amazing space...architecturally neat, the quality of the dwellings and the communal space, private marina, the attention to detail to things like paving, the landscaping and waterways’, concluding that this kind of amenity is ‘what people are paying for and also for the restricted access’ (Burke, quoted in Montefiore and Atkins, 2006).

Burke investigated the pedestrian behaviour of residents in gated communities and noted that ‘increased levels of street safety, particularly at night time, are undoubtedly beneficial towards encouraging pedestrian activity...the removal of through traffic, by the barrier effect of the gates, lessens the overall traffic volume, making the street itself more amenable to occupation by the pedestrian’ (Burke, 2001a, p. 146). He concluded that the improved perception of street safety is a positive thing for residents, however the permeability of an area with gated developments is reduced.

*[T]he impacts of the walls and gates on connectivity are delivered not necessarily to the residents of the gated communities themselves, but [are]...are instead foisted onto their immediate neighbours. (Burke and Sebaly, 2001, p. 71)*

Michelle Forwood (1999) carried out in-depth interviews with residents of the communities of Settlers Green, Westleigh; Carlton Court, Summer Hill; and Macquarie Links. She found that motivations for moving to these estates varied, as did residents' experiences. Brendan Gleeson indicates that gated communities in Australia:

*...[appeal to] people who want to escape the threat of terrorism, job insecurity, cultural changes and more gloomy news about resource shortages and water restrictions...It's not just about keeping out burglars...There is definitely a sense of insecurity and vulnerability in the community. (quoted in Macken, 2005, p. 6)*

However, gated developments are not very common and not as easily recognisable in Australia. This is evidenced in the difficulty encountered by Michelle Forwood in describing gated communities to council officers, especially when 'respondents had different notions of what a gated community comprises' (1999, p. 45). Forwood contacted councils within the greater Sydney region and found that:

- There is a lack of statutory controls relating to the development of gated communities;
- Auburn is the only Local Government Area (LGA) to prohibit gating;
- Of those council officers who said gated estates were discouraged in their LGA, none cited social concerns, rather they focussed on physical and aesthetic problems; and
- Existing residents of LGAs did not raise objections to developments on the basis that they were gated.

## 4.2 Gated communities in Sydney

By contacting the majority of councils in the Sydney metropolitan area, Forwood (1999) compiled a list of gated developments to determine the distribution of gated communities in Sydney. For this thesis, searches of developer and real estate websites and newspaper articles identified additional communities to be investigated. Whilst it is likely that there are other gated developments in Sydney, my field work confirmed the existence of fourteen gated communities in the Sydney area in eleven locations (Figure 4.2).

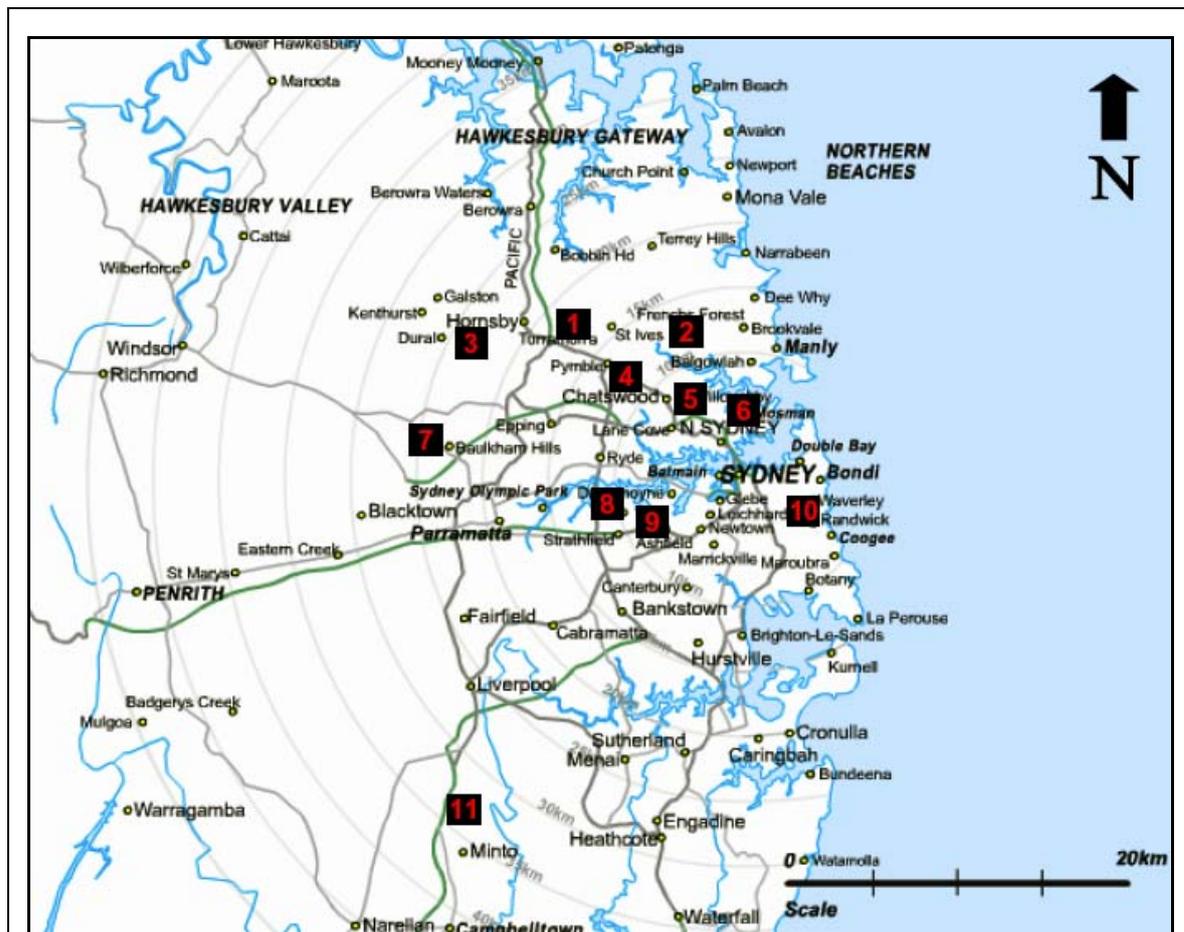


Fig. 4.2 Distribution of gated communities in Sydney

### Key

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Billyard Grove, Turramurra  | 6. Raglan Street, Mosman         |
| 2. Zenith Garden, Frenchs Forest   | 7. Bingara Crescent, Bella Vista |
| 3. Angel Close; Paradise Close; Priory Close; and The Manor, Cherrybrook | 8. Liberty Grove                 |
| 4. St John's Wood, Gordon  | 9. Carlton Court, Summer Hill    |
| 5. Jardine Court, Willoughby   | 10. Raleigh Park, Kensington     |
|  | 11. Macquarie Links              |

Source: Adapted from [www.visitnsw.gov.au](http://www.visitnsw.gov.au) (2006)

Figure 4.2 indicates that the majority of gated communities are situated in the north of Sydney. All gated communities are located in suburbs where greater than 23 percent of households earn a weekly income of \$2,000 or more (ABS, 2002d). These areas also feature high percentages of people with university qualifications, white-collar workers and home ownership; and low levels of unemployed people (ABS, 2002d).

All gated communities in Sydney are unique in terms of their age, location and attributes. Tables 4.1 to 4.14 summarise the key features of gated communities in Sydney identified by the researcher.

**Table 4.1 Billyard Grove, Turramurra**

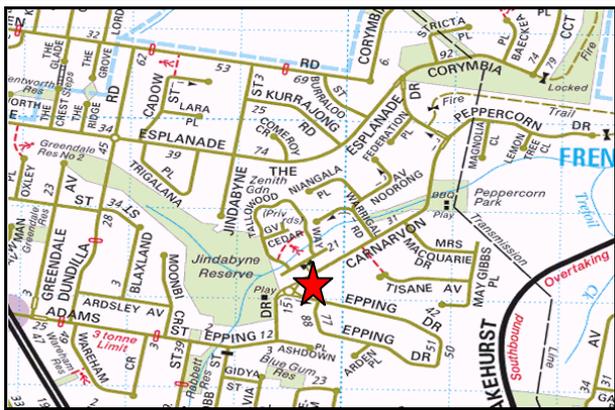
	<p><b>Location</b></p> <p>Billyard Grove, Turramurra</p>
<p><b>LGA</b></p>	<p>Kur-rin-gai</p>
<p><b>Size</b></p>	<p>1.4ha; 7 dwellings</p>
<p><b>Dwelling type</b></p>	<p>Detached Two storey</p>
<p><b>Security features</b></p>	<p>Gates Perimeter fence Security guard/Maintenance officer Alarms</p>
<p><b>Community facilities</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Number of vehicular entries</b></p>	<p>One</p>

Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)

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Source: D. Quintal (2006)

Table 4.2 Zenith Garden, Frenchs Forest

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Carrarvon Drive, Frenchs Forest
	<b>LGA</b>	Warringah
	<b>Size</b>	48 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates; Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Swimming pool; Children's playground; Tennis court and squash court; Gym and sauna; Function room; Conference room; Parks
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Source: Zenith Garden Neighbourhood Association (2006)

Table 4.3 Angel Close, Cherrybrook

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Angel Close, Cherrybrook
	<b>LGA</b>	Hornsby
	<b>Size</b>	5 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	None
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Source: D. Quintal (2006)

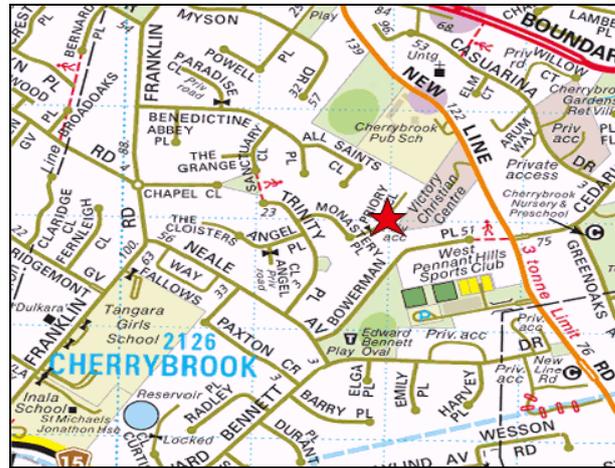
Table 4.4 Paradise Close, Cherrybrook

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Paradise Close, Cherrybrook
	<b>LGA</b>	Hornsby
	<b>Size</b>	1.4ha; 14 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Tennis court
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Source: D. Quintal (2006)

Table 4.5 Priory Close, Cherrybrook

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Priory Close, Cherrybrook
	<b>LGA</b>	Hornsby
	<b>Size</b>	12 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Tennis court
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Source: D. Quintal (2006)

Table 4.6 The Manor, Cherrybrook

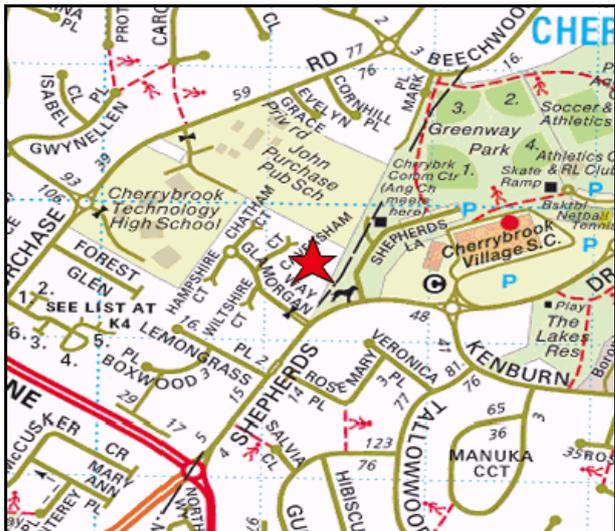
 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Shepherds Drive, Cherrybrook
	<b>LGA</b>	Hornsby
	<b>Size</b>	50 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Club house Tennis court Swimming pool
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Table 4.7 St John's Wood, Gordon

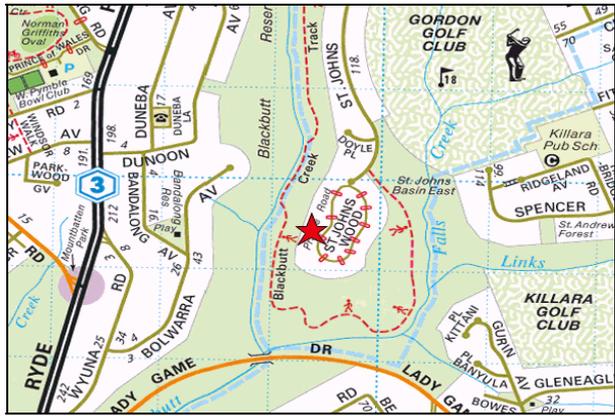
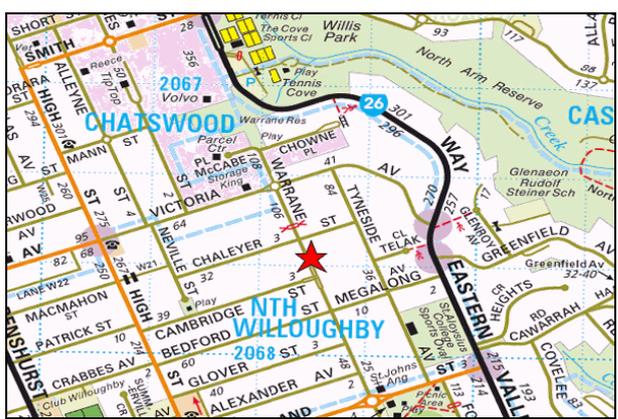
 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	183 St John's Road, Gordon
	<b>LGA</b>	Kur-rin-gai
	<b>Size</b>	142 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached; Attached townhouses; Apartments
	<b>Security features</b>	Security station 24 hour security guard Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Tennis courts Swimming pool
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	Two	



Table 4.8 Jardine Court, Willoughby

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	77 Warrane Road, Willoughby
	<b>LGA</b>	Willoughby
	<b>Size</b>	14 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Tennis court
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Source: D. Quintal (2006)

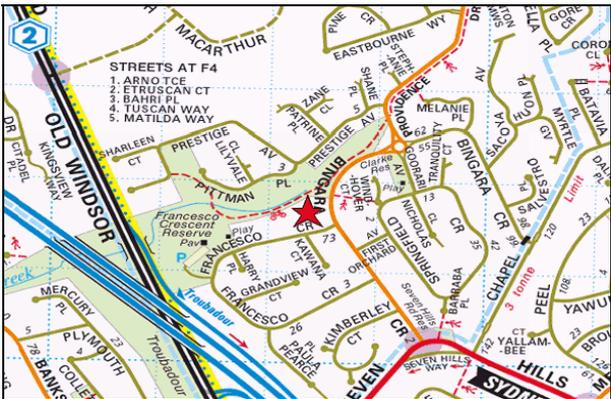
Table 4.9 Raglan Street, Mosman

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	83-85 Raglan Street, Mosman
	<b>LGA</b>	Mosman
	<b>Size</b>	<20 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Tennis court Swimming pool
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	



Source: K. Wedgwood (2006)

**Table 4.10 Bingara Crescent, Bella Vista**

 <p>Source: <a href="http://www.street-directory.com.au">www.street-directory.com.au</a> (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	30-34 Bingara Crescent, Bella Vista
	<b>LGA</b>	Baulkham Hills
	<b>Size</b>	14 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Detached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Tennis court Swimming pool BBQ area
	<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One
 <p>Source: <i>D. Quintal</i> (2006)                      <i>D. Quintal</i> (2006)                      <a href="http://www.domain.com.au">www.domain.com.au</a> (2006)</p>		

**Table 4.11 Liberty Grove**

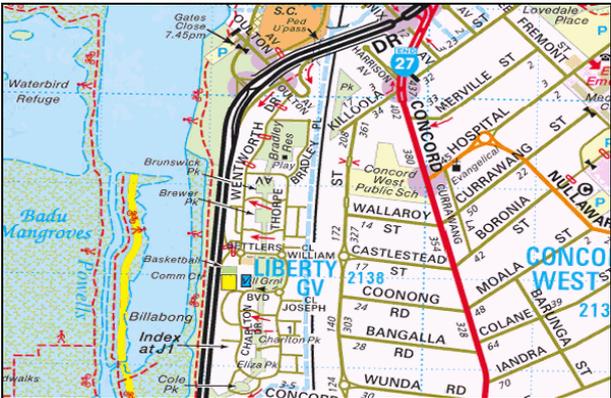
 <p>Source: <a href="http://www.street-directory.com.au">www.street-directory.com.au</a> (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Homebush Bay Drive, Liberty Grove
	<b>LGA</b>	Canada Bay
	<b>Size</b>	>350 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached; Attached townhouses and terraces; Apartments
	<b>Security features</b>	Perimeter fence; Security gatehouse; 24 hour security guard; Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Shop; Tennis court; Swimming pool; Basketball court; Parks
	<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	Two
 <p>Source: <i>D. Quintal</i> (2006)</p>		

Table 4.12 Raleigh Park, Kensington

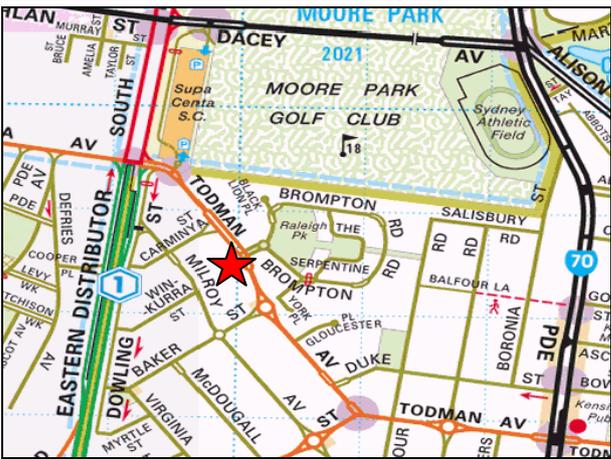
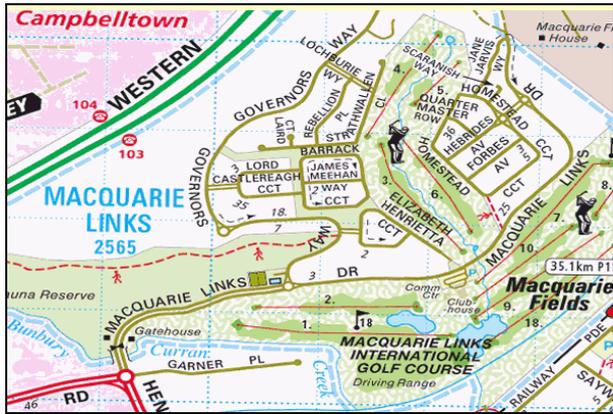
 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Todman Avenue, Kensington
	<b>LGA</b>	Randwick
	<b>Size</b>	12.34ha; 500 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached (one and two storey); Walk up flats; Apartments
	<b>Security features</b>	Perimeter fence; Security gatehouse; CCTV cameras; 24 hour security guard; Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Shop; Child care centre; BBQ areas; Tennis courts; Swimming pools
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	
 <p>Source: D. Quintal (2006)</p>		

Table 4.13 Carlton Court, Summer Hill

 <p>Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Carlton Crescent, Summer Hill
	<b>LGA</b>	Ashfield
	<b>Size</b>	4 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Attached Two storey
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates Perimeter fence
	<b>Community facilities</b>	None
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	
 <p>Source: M. Forwood (1999)</p>		

Table 4.14 Macquarie Links

 <p>Source: <a href="http://www.street-directory.com.au">www.street-directory.com.au</a> (2006)</p>	<b>Location</b>	Macquarie Links Drive, Macquarie Links
	<b>LGA</b>	Campbelltown
	<b>Size</b>	150ha; >350 dwellings
	<b>Dwelling type</b>	Single detached (one and two storey); Apartments
	<b>Security features</b>	Gates; Boom gate on vehicle entry; Security gatehouse; CCTV cameras at entry; 24 hour security patrols; Alarms
	<b>Community facilities</b>	Golf course; Tennis court; Swimming pools; BBQ area; Community hall
<b>Number of vehicular entries</b>	One	
 <p>Source: D. Quintal (2006)</p>		

### 4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined existing Australian research on gated communities and described the distribution of gated communities in Australia. Gated communities have been located, identified and described to allow an appreciation of the variety of gated developments in Sydney. The next chapter introduces the three case studies examined for this thesis.

# 5

## CASE STUDIES

Three case studies were chosen which represent a cross-section of gated communities in the Sydney area (Figure 5.1). The three communities are disparate in terms of location, time of development, scale, demographics, socio-economics and the prevalence of crime in each LGA. The communities were selected because they each have extraordinary security features which serve to differentiate them from conventional residential development. This chapter will discuss the characteristics of the case studies.



Fig. 5.1 Location of case studies

Source: Adapted from Visit NSW website [www.visitnsw.com.au](http://www.visitnsw.com.au) (2006)

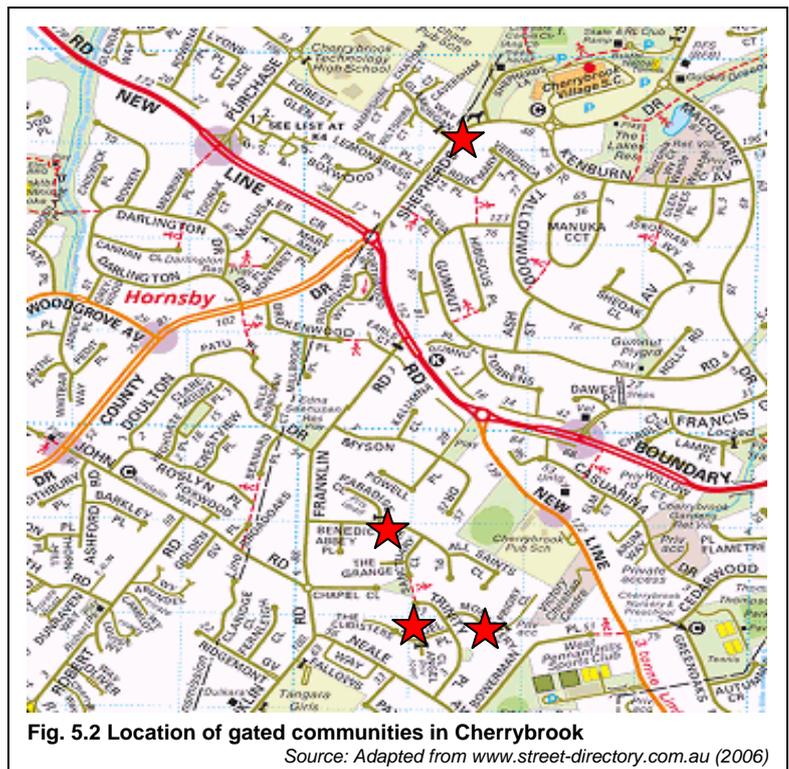
## 5.1 Paradise Close, Cherrybrook

### *Suburb history*

The suburb of Cherrybrook has an area of 8.4 square kilometres and is located in the Hornsby LGA in Sydney's north-west (Figure 5.2).

Prior to the 1970s, the Cherrybrook area was predominantly rural in character. The adoption of the Sydney Region Outline Plan in 1968 relinquished the County of Cumberland 'green belt' and designated Cherrybrook as an urban release area. Residential development commenced in 1978 following the rezoning of part of the Cherrybrook area from rural to residential (Hornsby Shire Council, 1992).

The built form of Cherrybrook is characteristic of 'urban release areas with a curvaceous street pattern serving regular shaped allotments' (Hornsby Shire Council, 1992, p. 18). Further, the 'dominant streetscape ambience is one of openness created by a road setback of generally 9m, underground power lines...an absence of front fences' (Hornsby Shire Council, 1992, p. 18) and the low density nature of development.



There are four known gated communities in Cherrybrook – The Manor, Angel Close, Priors Close and Paradise Close (Figure 5.2).

## Demographics

Cherrybrook has a population of approximately 18,759 persons (ABS, 2002a). In 2001, 39 percent of the Cherrybrook population were born overseas (ABS, 2002a). 9 percent of the population are aged 65 or over and 39 percent are aged 24 years or under.

Dwellings in Cherrybrook are predominantly single detached dwellings (79 percent of dwellings) (ABS, 2002a). In Cherrybrook, 50 percent of dwellings are fully owned, 33 percent are being purchased and 12 percent are private rental dwellings (ABS, 2002a). Less than 0.0012 percent of dwellings are public housing.

## Crime

Table 5.1 demonstrates a decline in recorded property offences for residential dwellings in the Hornsby LGA since 1997. Significantly, break and enter offences have halved, with an annual percentage change of -4.7 percent. However, since 1997 domestic violence related assaults have more than doubled.

**Table 5.1 Recorded criminal offences for residential dwellings 1997-2005, Hornsby LGA**

Offence	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Assault - Not domestic violence related	50	50	65	51	88	62	53	73	62
Assault - Domestic violence related	89	122	108	125	167	137	148	183	200
Sexual Offences	31	43	46	64	43	38	40	77	62
Robbery	3	3	4	2	10	2	3	2	4
Break and enter - dwelling	1084	1095	979	1014	854	796	606	542	509
Motor vehicle theft	53	58	83	42	64	36	32	28	34
Steal from motor vehicle	128	111	165	52	55	45	51	42	47
Malicious damage to property	366	400	409	230	265	224	272	266	324
<b>Total</b>	<b>1804</b>	<b>1882</b>	<b>1859</b>	<b>1580</b>	<b>1546</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>1205</b>	<b>1215</b>	<b>1249</b>

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2006)

### Development history

In 1987, Hornsby Council approved a development application for subdivision and the creation of a private road, community tennis court and erection of a perimeter fence and security gates (Figure 5.3).

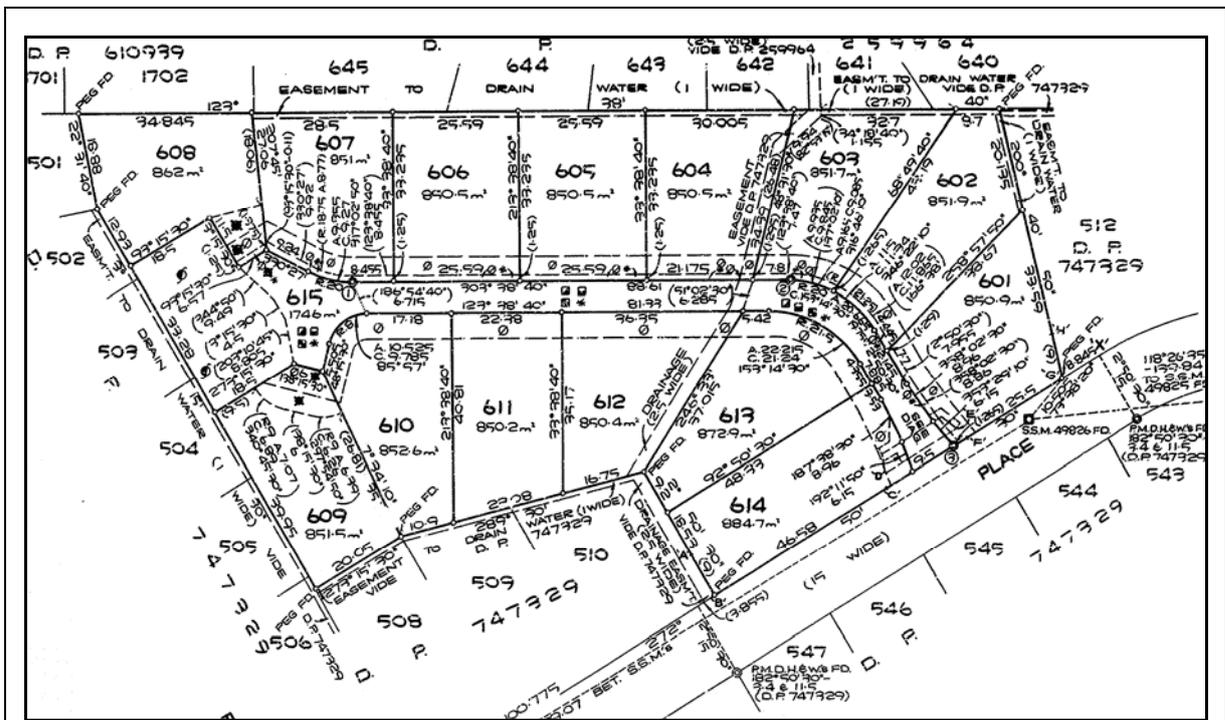


Fig. 5.3 Plan of subdivision of Lot 511 in DP 747329, Benedictine Place, Cherrybrook

Source: Land Titles Office (1989)

The rationale for the Paradise Close proposal is explained as follows:

*Market acceptance of [the Priory Close gated development] has confirmed the initial perception of a substantial and unsatisfied demand within the market place for quality Torrens Title land with private amenities and with the protection and convenience offered by a security development. (John G. Nelson Pty Limited, 1987, p. 2)*

The proposal 'afford[ed] the opportunity to create an innovative development, under resident control, with potential for integrated Estate design...and zero Council maintenance burden' (John G. Nelson Pty Limited, 1987, p. 7). Paradise Close 'is directed towards those property owners who wish to maintain co-operative control over their residential environment, to have security from unwanted intrusion, and who are prepared to accept the additional maintenance and operational costs associated herewith' (John G. Nelson Pty Limited, 1987, p. 4).

### Site design and security features

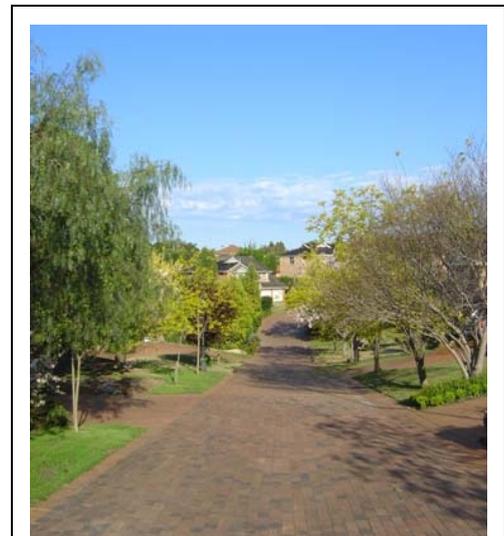
The Paradise Close development contains fourteen detached Torrens Title dwellings on a private cul-de-sac (Figure 5.4). The road, landscaping along the front boundary and a tennis court to the rear of the property are commonly owned under Community Title (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). The development has a total area of 1.4ha. The allotments have an average area of 855m<sup>2</sup> and the community allotment has an area of 1,746m<sup>2</sup>.



**Fig. 5.4 Aerial photograph of Paradise Close**

Source: Adapted from Google Earth (2006)

The development is enclosed by a perimeter fence of approximately 1.8 metres in height and steel gates of approximately 3.0 metres in height (Figures 5.7 and 5.8). A pedestrian gate is located adjacent to the vehicular entry. Access to the development is gained by entering a PIN code into a key pad adjacent to the entrance (Figure 5.9), using a remote control, or via intercom (Figure 5.10).



**Fig. 5.5 Private road, Paradise Close**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



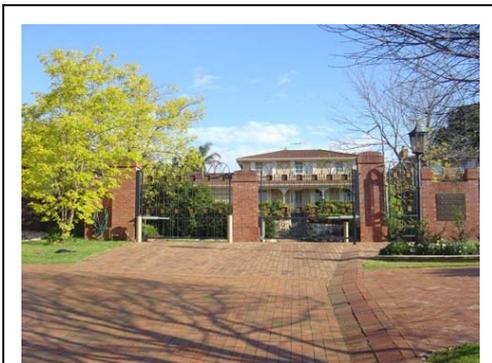
**Fig. 5.6 Tennis court**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.7 Entrance gates**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.8 View to Benedictine Place**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



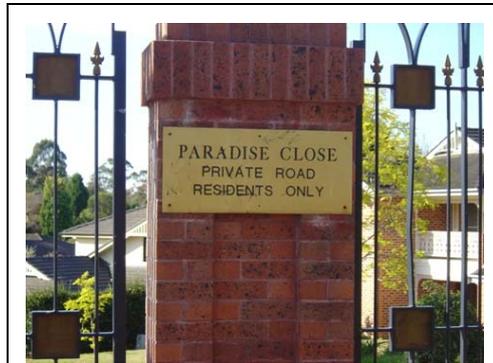
**Fig. 5.9 Key pad**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.10 Intercom and letterboxes**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.11 Private road sign**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.12 View from inside gate**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.13 House adjacent to tennis court**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)

## 5.2 Raleigh Park, Kensington

### *Suburb history*

Kensington has an area of 2.6 square kilometres and is located in the Randwick LGA in Sydney's east (Figure 5.1). In the late 1880s a ban was lifted on development in the Sydney water supply area in which Kensington is now situated, thereby facilitating residential development (Randwick City Council, 2006). Development of the area was accelerated by the extension of the tram line to the Kensington racecourse in 1900 (Randwick City Council, 2006).

### *Demographics*

Kensington has a population of 11,071 persons (ABS, 2002b). 44 percent of the Kensington population were born overseas (ABS, 2002b), 10 percent of the population are aged 65 or over and 38 percent are aged 24 years or under.

Dwellings in Kensington are comprised of apartments (60 percent of dwellings), single detached dwellings (24 percent) and semi-detached dwellings such as townhouses or terraces (6 percent) (ABS, 2002b). In Kensington, 30 percent of dwellings are fully owned, 11 percent are being purchased and 45 percent are private rental dwellings (ABS, 2002b). Only 1.2 percent of dwellings are public housing.

In the years 1991 to 2001, Kensington experienced a population increase of 18.7 percent. The development of Raleigh Park is considered to be largely responsible for this increase (Randwick City Council, 2006).

### *Crime*

Table 5.2 demonstrates only minor changes in the number of recorded criminal offences for residential dwellings in the Randwick LGA, in most categories, since 1997. However, break and enter offences have significantly decreased with an annual percentage change of -7 percent.

**Table 5.2 Recorded criminal offences for residential dwellings 1997-2005, Randwick LGA**

Offence	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Assault - Not domestic violence related	101	87	104	122	128	117	161	149	139
Assault - Domestic violence related	257	225	206	186	247	282	274	259	253
Sexual Offences	52	38	43	35	40	61	62	60	63
Robbery	12	9	12	16	15	16	10	10	9
Break and enter - dwelling	1412	1909	1335	1793	1922	1638	1492	1313	1086
Motor vehicle theft	63	81	103	74	114	100	90	147	76
Steal from motor vehicle	50	69	169	66	128	88	97	112	79
Steal from person	0	0	0	0	0	7	13	12	5
Malicious damage to property	411	417	416	415	449	474	538	536	490
<b>Total</b>	<b>2358</b>	<b>2835</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>2707</b>	<b>3043</b>	<b>2783</b>	<b>2737</b>	<b>2599</b>	<b>2200</b>

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2006)

### Development history

Raleigh Park is located on a 12.34ha site three kilometres to the south of the Sydney CBD. The development is sited on the former W.D. & H.O. Wills tobacco factory site adjacent to the Moore Park Golf Course and Moore Park Supacentre (Figure 5.14). W.D. & H.O. Wills manufactured tobacco products on the site from 1902 until the early 1980s (Randwick City Council, 2006).

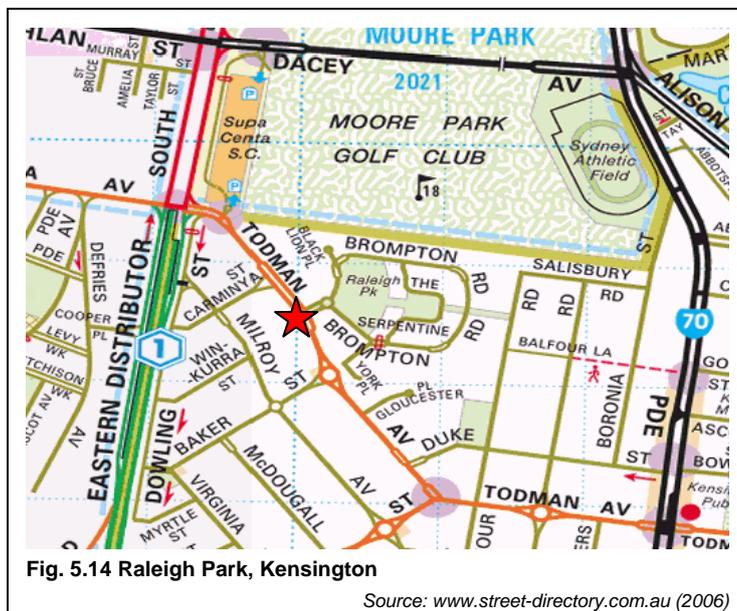


Fig. 5.14 Raleigh Park, Kensington

Source: www.street-directory.com.au (2006)

In 1989, Randwick City Council granted development consent to the Mirvac Group and Westfield Design and Construction for the development of approximately 150 Torrens Title dwellings and 350 Strata-Titled apartments in six towers on the site (Figure 5.15 and 5.16). Raleigh Park was the first site to be developed under Community Title legislation in NSW. The detached and attached low density dwellings are Torrens Titled and each has joint ownership of the community facilities. The apartments are Strata Titled with a common pool for each building and shared ownership of the community tennis courts. Unlike recent Community Title developments, the roads within Raleigh Park are owned and maintained by Randwick City Council.



Fig. 5.15 Raleigh Park aerial photograph

Source: Adapted from Google Earth (2006)

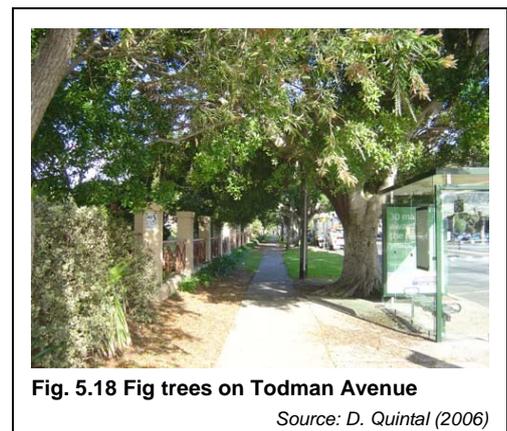
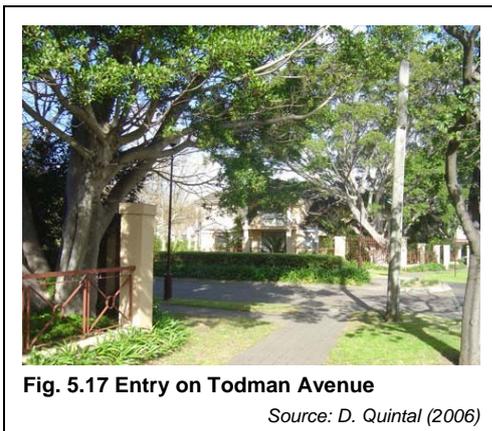


Fig. 5.16 Raleigh Park Masterplan

Source: Mirvac Group and Westfield Holdings (1997)

### Site design and security features

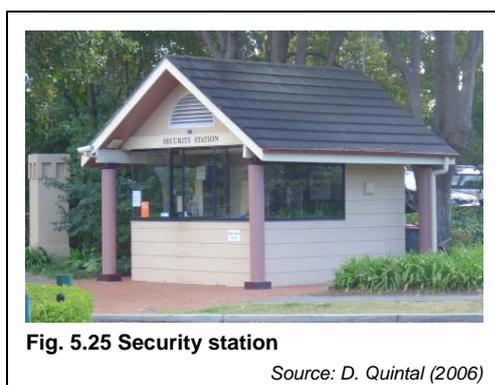
The Raleigh Park development was designed to retain features of heritage significance, including the factory administration building, perimeter fences and gates and fig trees (Sinbandhit, 2006) (Figures 5.17 and 5.18). The development features three parks, eight swimming pools, two tennis courts, a child care centre for sixty children and a shop (Figures 5.19 and 5.20).



Detached townhouses front Todman Avenue, Gloucester Place and Balfour Road (Figures 5.21 and 5.22). Internal roads service all other townhouses and the multi-unit apartment towers (Figures 5.23 and 5.24). The towers vary in height from eight to thirteen storeys and are located along the northern boundary of the site fronting the Moore Park Golf Course.



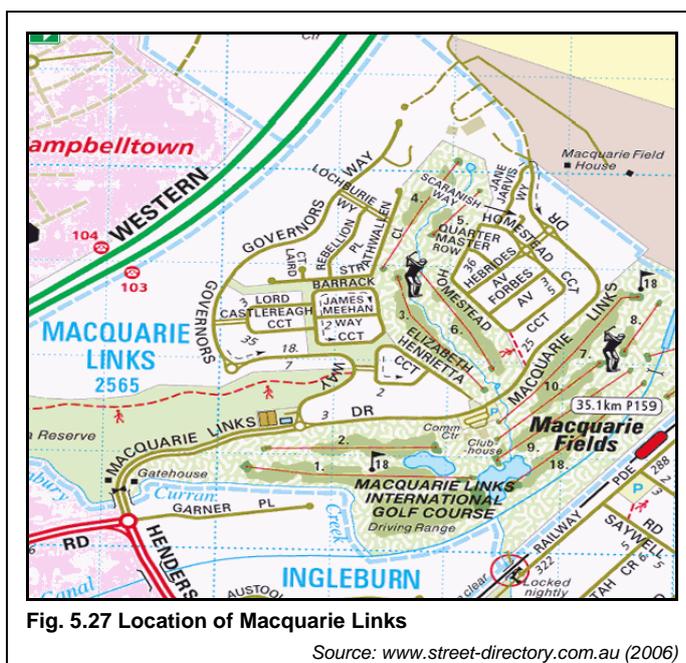
Raleigh Park is not ‘gated’, however it is enclosed by a 1.8 metre perimeter fence comprised of rendered brick columns and decorative steel panels (Figure 5.21). The original factory gates and fences have been retained at the vehicle entrance and whilst they cannot be closed, they give the impression that the estate is ‘gated’ (Figure 5.17). Adjacent to the entry is a security station manned by a guard who patrols the streets twenty-four hours a day (Figure 5.25). Closed-circuit television cameras transmit images to the security station to enable the monitoring of activity within the estate. Signage throughout the development warns visitors that security guards and cameras monitor the development (Figure 5.26). All dwellings have alarm systems connected to the security station or external security companies.



### 5.3 Macquarie Links

#### Demographics

The suburb of Macquarie Links is located in the Campbelltown LGA in Sydney's south-west (Figure 5.27). It has an area of 2.2 square kilometres and a population of 328 persons at the time of the 2001 Census (ABS, 2002c). 34 percent of the Macquarie Links population were born overseas (ABS, 2002c). 4 percent of the population are aged 65 or over and 41 percent are aged 24 years or under. Since the 2001 Census, the development has been completed and hence the population of Macquarie Links is more likely to be around 1,000 persons (approximate occupancy rate of 3 persons/dwelling and approximately 350 dwellings).



According to the 2001 Census (ABS, 2002c), all dwellings in Macquarie Links are detached, however since that time apartments have been constructed. In Macquarie Links, 16 percent of dwellings are fully owned, 73 percent are being purchased and none are public housing dwellings (ABS, 2002c).

#### Crime

Table 5.3 demonstrates an increase in the number of recorded criminal offences in all categories, except break and enter, for residential dwellings in the Campbelltown LGA since 1997.

**Table 5.3 Recorded criminal offences in residential dwellings 1997-2005, Campbelltown LGA**

Offence	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Assault - Not domestic violence related	280	271	343	329	420	391	398	414	451
Assault - Domestic violence related	633	689	618	666	726	782	826	947	897
Sexual Offences	159	212	209	204	230	196	224	246	228
Robbery	12	16	15	13	18	17	15	13	23
Break and enter - dwelling	2734	2831	2738	2100	1776	1448	1529	1822	1375
Motor vehicle theft	173	167	129	114	161	144	182	217	186
Steal from motor vehicle	146	130	107	90	148	106	166	210	165
Malicious damage to property	1525	1385	1388	1336	1488	1404	1444	1729	1836
<b>Total</b>	<b>5662</b>	<b>5701</b>	<b>5549</b>	<b>4853</b>	<b>4967</b>	<b>4508</b>	<b>4796</b>	<b>5611</b>	<b>5176</b>

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2006)

### Development history

Macquarie Links was developed by Monarch Investments in the mid-1990s as a greenfields masterplanned housing estate (Figure 5.28). It was recognised as a suburb in its own right in 1997 (Campbelltown City Council, 2006).



**Fig. 5.28 Macquarie Links Masterplan**

Source: Adapted from Masterplan of 'The Peak' at Macquarie Links, Monarch Investments (Undated)



**Fig. 5.29 Macquarie Links aerial photograph**

Source: Adapted from Google Earth (2006)

Approval for Community Title subdivision of the site was granted in 1995. Macquarie Links is located on 150 hectares adjacent to the suburbs of Macquarie Fields and Ingleburn (Figure 5.27 and 5.29). Adjacent development includes the heritage-listed Macquarie Fields House, Hurlstone Agricultural High School and Glenfield Park Special School to the north, the Ingleburn Industrial Area to the south, the southern railway line to the east, and the Hume Highway to the west (Figure 5.29).

#### *Site design and security features*



**Fig. 5.30 House on Governor's Way**

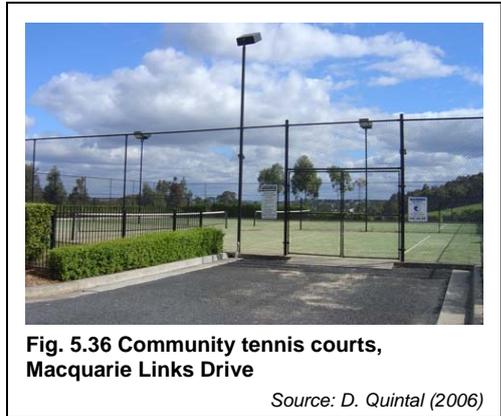
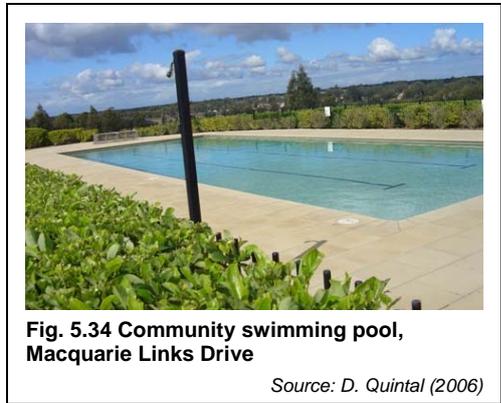
Source: [www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au) (2006)



**Fig. 5.31 Houses fronting golf course**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)

Macquarie Links contains over 350 dwellings, comprising a mixture of low density detached housing and multi-storey apartments (Figures 5.30 to 5.33). Community facilities include swimming pools, tennis courts, parks, barbeque facilities and a community centre (Figures 5.34 to 5.37). Single detached dwellings and three storey walk-up apartments front the 18-hole golf course which divides the site and flanks the eastern boundary. A community centre and golf clubhouse are located adjacent to the golf course (Figures 5.37 and 5.40). A flora and fauna reserve is located in the south-western corner adjacent to the tennis courts and barbeque area. A hotel precinct containing a hotel with restaurants, bars and childcare facilities is proposed in the northern part of the site adjacent to Macquarie Fields House (Monarch Investments, 2006).



A 1.8 metre perimeter cyclone fence is located along the eastern and northern boundaries. The golf course (Figure 5.38) and flood channel to the east, and the Hume Highway to the west provide a physical barrier to access. Electronic steel gates with brick pillars adorn the vehicular entry to the site (Figure 5.39). Adjacent to the entry is a security station which is manned by a security guard twenty-four hours a day. The electronic gates are closed only at night; however a boom arm across the entry driveway is permanently closed. Visitors are stopped at the gate to enable the security guard to record their licence plate and to enquire as to why they are visiting before entry is permitted. All dwellings have back-to-base alarm systems and telephone connections to the security station to alert the security guard in an emergency or in the event of suspicious activity. Cameras at the entry transmit images to the security station to enable monitoring of vehicular activity.

The security features are emphasised in advertising for Macquarie Links.

***24 HOUR SECURITY CONCIERGE FOR PEACE OF MIND***

*As you drive through the front security gates, the first thing you'll notice is the reassuring face of your security concierge who welcomes you in, while keeping unwanted elements out. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (Macquarie Links Estate advertisement, Monarch Investments, 2000)*



**Fig. 5.38 Golf course**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.39 Gates and guardhouse at entry, Macquarie Links Drive**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.40 Golf clubhouse**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.41 Tennis court signage**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)

The rationale behind the development of Macquarie Links as a security enclave is explained in an advertising brochure for the estate:

*The issue of security is becoming increasingly important in today's society.*

*At Macquarie Links we have addressed this issue sensitively and responsibly. It is our intention to develop a prestige estate, which offers security beyond that experienced elsewhere in the area and with the option to extend that security further if the residents wish at a later time. We are not building a walled enclave but rather a community in which residents can enjoy the peaceful and quiet amenity that Macquarie Links will offer.*

*...While fencing around the golf course and estate will be sufficient to achieve our stated security aims, it will be carried out so as not to be intrusive. If the community decides that they want more then more can be added. We are attempting to create an actual and perceived level of security, which will serve the residents in Macquarie Links and create harmony with the general community. (Monarch Investments, 1997)*



**Fig. 5.42 Promotional signage**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.43 Houses on Macquarie Links Drive**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)



**Fig. 5.44 Houses fronting golf course**

Source: D. Quintal (2006)

## 5.4 Management and development restrictions in the three communities

Each community is substantially different in terms of location, scale, recreational facilities and the complexity of security measures. Despite these obvious differences, the three communities are managed in similar ways and are all subject to restrictions through by-laws and covenants.

### *Management*

Raleigh Park and Macquarie Links are managed by strata management companies and are divided into several different bodies corporate based upon consecutive development stages. Paradise Close is managed by a HOA which is run solely by the residents.

The body corporate or HOA is responsible for the collection of levies and the coordination of repairs and maintenance of the assets which are commonly-owned under Community Title. Residents meet to discuss resident development proposals, maintenance issues and the scheduling of maintenance works. All residents must pay levies to ensure that there are adequate funds to meet security, maintenance and repair costs.

Paradise Close is unique in that the residents manage the community without the assistance of an external management body. Further, Paradise Close residents are involved in working bees to maintain their commonly-owned allotment.

Macquarie Links Golf Club is managed and maintained independently of the community by ClubCorp. Memberships are available to both residents and non-residents, e.g. non-residents may become members of the golf club with the purchase of a lifetime membership of \$46,000 (Christine, Interview 8/9/06).

### *By-laws and covenants*

Each community is subject to by-laws and covenants which place restrictions on dwelling design, property maintenance and landscaping. In all developments there are restrictions on the colours of exterior paint and materials and requirements for the maintenance of gardens.

In Raleigh Park and Macquarie Links, external alterations to all dwellings must meet pre-ordained guidelines and be approved by the body corporate. Driveways, roads and footpaths in Paradise Close and Raleigh Park are subject to a prescribed paving colour and type. Table 5.4 outlines the by-laws and covenants which are unique to each community.

**Table 5.4 By-laws and covenants**

<b>Paradise Close</b>	<b>Raleigh Park</b>	<b>Macquarie Links</b>
Dwellings are to be two storeys in height and constructed of brick and tile	Pets are not permitted	The erection of flag poles and satellite dishes is prohibited
Lightweight construction materials are to be minimised	Vehicles are not to be parked on the road	Fencing must be constructed from brick
Vehicle weight restrictions apply on the common road	Front fences are not permitted	All letterboxes must be of the same design
	Non-residents are permitted to use the parks	All driveways must be the same width

Raleigh Park and Macquarie Links residents indicated that the by-laws and covenants were strictly adhered to, particularly with respect to external alterations to dwellings. Raleigh Park residents acknowledged that over time residents are becoming more accepting of the need to change some of the by-laws or be more flexible, for example with respect to exterior paint schemes.

All residents noted that tensions arise within the community when residents do not comply with the rules and that this was an inherent problem of community self-management.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter has provided an introduction to the physical, demographic and socio-economic aspects of the three case study communities. Paradise Close is a small-scale, low density gated community. It lacks the complexity of community facilities and security measures which characterise both Raleigh Park and Macquarie Links. Raleigh Park is the densest of the three developments and has the greatest variety of dwelling types. Macquarie Links is the most heavily secured in that it employs guards, alarms and gates and is isolated by physical features such as the Hume Highway and the Southern railway line. The following chapter discusses the experiences of residents from the three case studies.

# 6

## THE GATED EXPERIENCE

This research provides an insight into the lives of people who live in gated communities in Sydney. Through thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews a number of themes were identified. They can be summarised under three overarching themes: the *motivations for moving to a gated community*, the *search for security* and the *search for a sense of community*. These themes provide the basis upon which I will discuss the experiences of residents, comparing my findings to those of other researchers.

### 6.1 Motivations for moving to a gated community

Much of the research regarding gated developments addresses the motivations of residents for selecting this form of housing (see Chapter Three). Interviews with residents of the Paradise Close, Macquarie Links and Raleigh Park communities indicated disparate reasons for choosing to live there.

My findings are similar to Forwood's (1999), in that they reveal that location and availability of facilities are more important attributes of gated communities for residents, than security measures. This is particularly true for the Paradise Close residents interviewed who initially considered the gates to be unattractive. The residents of Raleigh Park moved to Sydney from central western NSW to take up employment. Accordingly, attributes of the community such as design, security features and location did not influence their decision to live there.

#### *Moving to a gated community*

Unlike many of the residents of American gated communities (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003), the search for physical security was not necessarily a motivating factor for residents. Rather, it was the package of features provided by the development including location, house design and community facilities. Indeed, Glasze, Webster and Frantz consider that there is an overemphasis on insecurity as an 'explanatory factor' for the popularity of gated developments.

*Security is only one service that residents want and it is generally packaged up with other services. Locational choice is made on the basis of subjective evaluation of bundles of civic goods. (2006b, p. 2)*

A real estate agent working in the Cherrybrook area reinforces this conclusion.

*Generally buyers will come in and there will be certain aspects of a property that they will want. A lot of the time it will be [the number of] bedrooms, whether it has a pool, the size of the house, location is always a big plus as well. There would be selected buyers that would come through wanting something in a gated community, but the odds are more that you would have to say, 'Well, I have a suitable property, but it's in one of these gated communities'...Gated communities are for a smaller niche market, you're not going to have a lot of people who are just looking for that kind of property, it's more if [a house in a gated community] meets some of their criteria, and they just happen to like it. (Travis, Real estate agent, Interview 21/8/06)*

Claire, David and Lucy moved to Paradise Close in 1994 and were looking for either a 'house that required no work' or 'a bare block of dirt' on which to build their own home (David, Interview 29/8/06).

*David: This [block of land] was one of very few. And it was the only one that we were really happy with because it was rectangular and it was flat. Everything else was on the side of a cliff, or on a busy road.*

*Claire: And we'd come off a busy road so we didn't want another busy road. So the fact that it actually was in an estate didn't actually have any bearing on it at all. (Interview 29/8/06)*

For a resident who moved to Paradise Close in 1997, the combination of a large house with a shared tennis court was a big attraction.

*...to get a place with a [tennis] court you were obviously going to have to compromise somewhere or on price. And usually the homes were fairly low-grade, well nothing like we have up here where you get the advantage of the shared facilities and being able to use it pretty much any time you wish but you don't actually have to buy the property including that with the home. (James, Interview 17/9/06)*

For residents who had moved to the estate in the last three years, 'value-for-money' was a prime motivator for purchasing their home.

*Our reason for moving into that house was price performance of the house, the features, you know the tennis court and our house had a pool and the features with all of that in this location - if you go 150 metres that way to West Pennant Hills you pay literally twice as much for exactly the same thing...So it was very good value for money with all the features. (Michael, Interview 17/9/06)*

Peter emphasised the fact that his wife was initially unhappy with the gates, despite the 'value-for-money' that the house represented.

*...there weren't many houses on the market and those with a comparable price didn't offer what this house offered. Elise was a lot more hesitant, in fact she didn't want to move here at first and that was for the simple reason because of the gates. And it was actually a barrier to – we were both a bit hesitant, it was a barrier to coming in. (Peter, Interview 17/9/06)*

### *Location*

Christine and Andrew were both born in the Campbelltown area and have always lived in nearby suburbs. Bert Goodwin, the Managing Director of Macquarie Links Realty noted that 'about a quarter of the residents have moved...from homes within ten kilometres of the estate' (O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 12). Both Christine and Andrew moved to Macquarie Links because they were living on acreage and could no longer maintain their properties, yet they wanted to remain in the locality.

*Christine: ...we had an old bungalow home at Chipping Norton on two acres and a beautiful garden and it was lovely, just lovely, but the house was seventy or eighty years old or something and we had renovated it when we first bought it and it needed doing again and we just weighed up, we're going to spend \$300,000 on this old house, that will always be an old house...So we said, "Right, we'll put it up for sale".*

*Andrew: ...we lived on a few acres on the other side of the railway line [from here] where for ten or 15 years we bred thoroughbred horses...but like Christine, it was getting a bit much for me...So we started to look around, of course having lived here all my life, and I was aware of the Links and how attractive it was so we came up and had a look and next day bought the house. (Interview 8/9/06)*

Like the Macquarie Links residents, those of Paradise Close had generally moved from within Cherrybrook or from neighbouring suburbs. Some residents had lived in West Pennant Hills and some had come from Epping, however all other residents had relocated from elsewhere in Cherrybrook. David believes that around '80 percent of real estate transactions are just residents moving around in the local area' (Interview, 17/9/06).

*In Cherrybrook...there isn't a high rate of turnover. It is very family-orientated and basically they want their kids to go through the schools, they have quite good schools around there. I think you will find that most residents will stay [in the area] for a substantial period of time. (Travis, Real estate agent, Interview 21/8/06)*

Peter agrees, 'Cherrybrook's a nice spot, there's good schools and whatnot, so it's a good place to raise kids as well' (Interview 17/9/06).

## 6.2 Search for security

*So what exactly do residents mean when they say “I feel secure in my community”? At an emotional level, it means feeling protected and that everything is right with the world. (Low, 2003, p. 77)*

‘Security’ is derived from both the physical and social aspects of gated communities. It is not limited to the physical security provided by gates and walls and has a number of dimensions, including:

- Personal and family safety;
- The safety of children;
- The knowledge that your neighbours are interested in looking out for you; and
- The protection of material goods.

Residents from all case study communities have, over time, come to appreciate the security afforded by their residential environment. However, initially many were hesitant about the security and were concerned that people living there would be neurotic.

*...the expectation you have not knowing anything about a street with a gate is that people will be completely security-conscious and utterly paranoid and hiding behind ten security screens on top of the gates and it’s actually the complete opposite. (Michael, Interview 17/9/06)*

Yasmin worried about the impression that living in the estate would give to outsiders.

*...we were a bit apprehensive at first, it’s just the gates almost look like people don’t want to visit you and we didn’t know whether the gates were there to keep us in if we were that dangerous, or people out. (Yasmin, Interview 17/9/06)*

The various aspects of security as experienced by residents are explored below.

*Personal and family safety*

Gated communities appear to provide a feeling of safety for their residents.

*Dana: ...how would you say that living here is different from living, say just over the road [Todman Avenue]?*

*Robyn: Safer.*

*Mark: No, yeah I think it's safer, it's quieter.*

*Robyn: You feel safer.*

*Mark: Maybe it's your perception, but we get very few break-ins and things like that, we have twenty four hour security. (Interview 30/8/06)*

Christine was drawn to Macquarie Links partly because of the golf course and in part because of the security.

*I was attracted by the resort feel, the security and the proximity to the city. Security wasn't a fear before; it was more that I could see what would happen in the future, when I was older. The fact that someone is there 24 hours a day gives you the feeling you are safe. (Hope, 1999, p. 10)*

These feelings were reiterated during my interviews. For example:

*I guess the idea of having a closed gate was an attraction. The security. Knowing there was security. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

Macquarie Links residents indicated that opting to live in a gated community is a matter of choice.

*[The security system is beautiful. And we want it that way. They say you know, it's a bit ostentatious to have the security guard on the gate and all this sort of thing but that's what we want and we're willing to pay for it. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

'Feeling safer' was important for a number of residents of Paradise Close, particularly for those who have husbands who travel or work overnight.

*David: I know that Marie who lives the next one up from Belinda, when Robert used to be away on business trips, she really hated it if the gates were open... when he was gone. It really upset her because of the sense of security of having that gate closed when he was gone.*

*Peter: It's the same with me because I travel a bit, perhaps one or two nights away a week, and for [my wife] Elise, she likes the fact that the gates are closed, the neighbours are close and it's a lovely street. (Interview 17/9/06)*

The experiences of female residents reflect research which indicates that women are generally more fearful than men of being a victim of crime (Harris and Jensen, 1998; Commonwealth of Australia, 2004). Holmes, Hughes and Julian found that 'elderly people and women express the highest levels of fear. Paradoxically, however, they have the lowest rate of victimisation' (2003, p. 335).

### *Safety of children*

Reduced traffic is a favoured aspect of gated communities for residents with young children. Residents of The Manor gated community in Cherrybrook emphasise this aspect.

*...my kids can ride their bikes in total safety without being run down by some hoon. (Crowys, quoted in Hills, 1998, p. 9)*

Raleigh Park residents mentioned the advantages of having less traffic.

*Robyn: You see kids roaming around here, but you don't see kids out in the streets out there.*

*Mark: These kids play all the time just in the streets here, and they find that they can walk around in the other streets [because] there's no speeding cars, everyone basically slows down. (Interview 30/8/06)*

The secure environment within the community allows children to play freely.

*Having small grandchildren [it is important] to have them be able to do what they want to do around the area. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

Peter described the way children play on the street in Paradise Close as a 'free-for-all'.

*...you come here during the school holidays [and] they're just riding up and down it's really free-for-all, people here respect that, I think most people are mindful of the kids in the street...either their kids have grown up here or they have little ones so that's quite nice. (Peter, Interview 17/9/06)*

Michael and Belinda agreed that Paradise Close is 'a lovely safe environment for children' (Michael, Interview 17/9/06). From the perspective of someone who grew up in Paradise Close, Lucy confirmed the attractiveness of the street for children:

*Lucy: ...it was fun [growing up here]...there were probably half a dozen of us about the same ages, and we had summers, we used to swim in each other's pools and watched television when it was raining in each other's houses and there was always someone to hang around with. We used to walk to the primary school together, when we were still going to primary school, we used to walk back together. It was fun and Friday nights were sitting outside during the summer and having bar-be-ques and now that I'm a bit older, yeah, just hanging out with all the little people. (Interview 29/8/06)*

*The security of 'community'*

Christine explained that because of 'the closeness of the people in here, they're watching out for everybody' (Interview 8/9/06). This 'closeness' is particularly important in that it allows residents to identify something or someone that is out of place and take action to remedy the situation.

*[B]ecause we're a little community if somebody sees something they immediately ring the gate and the security guard's up there. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

The smaller scale of the Paradise Close development means that residents look out for one another. One resident compared how this differed to his previous residence.

*...people got robbed two doors up from us [at our last house] and we didn't really know whether they were home or whether they were away, whereas here, if anybody's going to be away, most of us would know about it and we just keep an eye on the place you know? (James, Interview 17/9/06)*

The protective nature of the Paradise Close community is particularly evident in regard to the welfare of other residents' children.

*...even the fact that the kids have been on the street riding their bikes and Michael's said, "Put your helmet on", you know, things like that which I really like, in a community that's what you do, you look after one another's kids and that sort of thing. (Yasmin, Interview 17/9/06)*

Claire believes that she could rely on her neighbours to help her daughters.

*...if something unforeseen happens I feel confident that they could go to anybody else in the street and someone would sort them out...you hope that doesn't happen, but you feel secure...you do feel that little bit more confident that other people watch out for them too. (Claire, Interview 17/9/06)*

### *Protection of material goods*

Gated communities are designed to protect material goods as much as the people that live in them. However, crime statistics indicate that break and enter offences in all three LGAs have declined sharply since 1997 (Chapter 5). Regardless, residents appreciate the additional security.

*...it's something we hadn't thought of before moving in here...that security might actually be of benefit. [But] because we're the kind of people who accidentally leave our doors open when we go on holidays it's probably a bit of a bonus. (Yasmin, Interview 17/9/06)*

Likewise Andrew and his wife have found the physical security provided in Macquarie Links to be advantageous.

*...it's true that you don't get the graffiti and the hoon type element that you get in some suburbs because of the security. And that's a big plus, a very big plus...I appreciate it very much now and in talking about the area I stress that to friends who say, "What's it like?" I say, "Well, it's lovely, I can get out of my car and leave it in the drive and sometimes leave the key in". (Andrew, Interview 8/9/06)*

A developer of a gated community in Roselands emphasised the importance of physical security.

*We felt security was an issue, with all the crime rates happening in a lot of areas...If you are an executive travelling a lot, you can leave your terrace and go away for four months and know your possessions will still be there when you return. (Skelsey, 2005, p. 15)*

### 6.3 Search for a sense of community

This thesis is concerned with examining geographically-based groupings of people, or what is known as the ‘neighbourhood community’.

*A socially interactive space inhabited by a close-knit network of households, most of whom are known to one another and who, to a high degree, participate in common social activities, exchange information, engage in mutual aid and support and are conscious of a common identity, a belonging together. (Cater and Jones, 1989 in Valentine 2001, p. 112)*

My research indicates that residents of the Paradise Close and Macquarie Links communities experienced a sense of community and belonging. Varying notions of community are discussed below.

#### *Finding ‘community’ within the gated community*

Blakely and Snyder (1997) found that sense of community is not a primary social value within gated communities. Rather, it is ephemeral, based on common interests and income levels and not on an actual bond with their community (Wilson-Doenges, 2000). Further, Wilson-Doenges found that ‘in general, gated communities do not increase sense of community, and may actually decrease it’ (2000, p. 609).

Similarly, Raleigh Park residents did not report any sense of community amongst residents, nor did they feel as if they were part of a distinct territorial community. Having moved from rural NSW, the Raleigh Park residents interviewed found that in Sydney they had lost the sense of community and neighbourliness to which they were accustomed.

A lack of ‘territorial functioning’ may explain the reduced sense of community experienced. Wilson-Doenges explains that the ‘bulwarking’ approach utilised in gated developments may not be effective in creating appropriate ownership of space.

*A gated community resident pulls up to the gate in her car, rolls down her window*

*long enough to insert her card to electronically open the gate. She drives through, drives down the street to her house, presses the garage door remote control, drives in, and shuts the door. She enters her home after deactivating the alarm system, closes the door behind her, and reactivates the alarm. (2000, p. 608)*

Interestingly, the Raleigh Park residents' experiences paralleled those reported by Wilson-Doenges.

*Mark: There's no sense of community here...everyone goes into their garage, the door goes down, and that's about all really.*

*Robyn: You don't really speak to them. Nobody speaks.*

*Mark: We've never spoken to the people across the road. We speak to these people and those people [indicating next door and across the road].*

*Robyn: We wave to them [indicating a different house across the road] and they don't wave back. (Interview 8/9/06)*

I asked Mark and Robyn if they thought that this lack of community was as a result of people working a lot and not spending much time in the community.

*I think it's more that your doors shut. Everyone's got an electric door, and once you go in then bang! they're gone...they'll stop when you're outside, but when you're inside you don't see anyone. So that's where it cuts it out, if you go for a walk people will say good morning, they're all very friendly in that way, but yeah that's about it, it's just that fact that everyone goes inside and most of them are working and these people over the road they start at quarter past six and get back at I don't know what time, no idea what they do. (Mark, Interview 8/9/06)*

In Raleigh Park 'everyone minds their own business and gets on with it' (Mark, Interview 30/8/06). Accordingly, Raleigh Park residents rely solely on non-residents to look after their home when they go away.

- Dana: ...if you were to go away would you be able to rely on anyone to collect your mail or water your garden or anything like that?*
- Mark: No, the mail goes to the post office.*
- Robyn: It's not like – I grew up in Epping and the neighbours did everything, it was a real community. It's not like that here.*
- Mark: If we want someone to water the gardens we just get the gardeners to do it.*
- Robyn: And if we go away on the weekends the security guard throws the paper over our fence so it's out of sight. That's something we might have got a kid to do [when I lived in Epping]...but because there's the security guard here we don't. (Interview 8/9/06)*

In contrast, the residents of Macquarie Links and Paradise Close experienced a sense of community underpinned by values such as commonality, unity, sense of belonging and community solidarity.

Christine moved to Macquarie Links in 1998 and was one of the first residents to live there when the estate was largely incomplete. Consequently, she was able to welcome people as they moved into the community.

*[B]eing [one of] the first in here we got to know everyone that was moving in so we would take a basket of hot scones and a thermos of tea and take it to all the neighbours, it was really nice, it was lovely. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

*A sense of belonging,  
A sense of place...  
The gift of time,  
The gift of space.  
This is your home  
This is your game...  
Where you know your neighbours,  
Where they know your name.  
Welcome to Macquarie Links Estate.  
Your home...*

**Fig. 6.1 'Your home in Macquarie Links'**

*Source: Macquarie Links advertising brochure,  
Monarch Investments (undated)*

Likewise, upon moving to Macquarie Links in 2004, Andrew immediately sought out friendships with his new neighbours.

*When we moved in I put my head over the fence to the neighbours and said, “We’ve just moved in, would you like to come over and have coffee on Sunday?” or Friday, or whenever it was, that’s when it started...So, that’s a nice atmosphere, and perhaps I try to generate that subconsciously but I don’t think that’s unique at all, I think everybody has good neighbours [here]. (Andrew, Interview 8/9/06)*

### *Sense of belonging*

The residents of Paradise Close identify their development as a community.

*...we have a very strong sense of community which I don’t think other people necessarily have to the same extent and it is sense of belonging, because we do have a commitment to each other because we have the body corporate arrangement that sort of sets the structure and we do things together, working bees that turn into big barbeques... (Claire, Interview 29/8/06)*

Claire recognises that a sense of association with other residents has its roots in the formal body corporate arrangement. Likewise, Andrew from Macquarie Links sees the community association meetings as a ‘good social communication opportunity’ (Interview 8/9/06). The relationships between Paradise Close residents are also born out of a sense of common purpose.

*The other thing I like about it it’s a little bit like building your own community inside and it’s more like a country town where you go out the front of your house and you can actually speak to people and sort of everyone’s got almost a little bit of a vested interest in you, you know, “How are you going?” so it’s really friendly... (Yasmin, Interview 17/9/06)*

As a result of having a ‘vested interest’ in one another, Paradise Close and Macquarie Links residents enjoy a sense of belonging. This is felt with residents of the immediate, street-level neighbourhood in both communities, and in the case of Macquarie Links, with residents throughout the estate and non-resident members of the golf club.

For members of the Paradise Close community, the fact that they have shared values ensures that they feel a sense of belonging within the community (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003). Consequently, Paradise Close residents take on responsibility for the well-being of their neighbours.

*Peter: ...you talk about values, this street has very similar values, the kids are raised, they've sort of got the same sort of rules, respect, whatnot so you do feel comfortable if something were to happen they could go to other people.*

*David: And the good thing is that all the kids have seen all the people, like there's no house in the street that the kids wouldn't have seen the people that live there, so if Blake fell over and skinned his knee out the front here it wouldn't be a problem to him if Claire sorted his knee out and then took him home, he'd feel pretty cool. 'Cos they all know that no one is going to do bad things to them. (Interview 17/9/06)*

'The exchange of social support between neighbours' is known as 'neighbouring' (Farrell, Aubry and Coulombe, 2004, p. 12). Neighbouring is related to 'community involvement and feelings of attachment to, loyalty to and satisfaction with the neighbourhood' (Farrell, Aubry and Coulombe, 2004, p. 12).

Valentine discusses the significance of 'mutual aid and support' (2001, p. 112) within a community in the creation of a sense of community cohesion. The Macquarie Links residents interviewed found that others were more than willing to provide assistance.

*I was sick last year and I had so much, so many people want to do things, it's amazing. Whereas at Chipping Norton I would have only had my own personal friends. And these are people [in Macquarie Links] that we've never met, we hardly know. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

Christine's experience at Chipping Norton indicates that community is no longer geographically based (Webber, 1963 in Walmsely, 1988; Wellman, 1979 in Valentine, 2001).

However her recent experience shows that there is a close-knit community within the bounds of Macquarie Links. Christine emphasises the importance of neighbouring behaviour by noting that '[e]verybody's there for one another, I don't know of anyone here that wouldn't do something for you' (Interview 8/9/06). This was also reflected in the experiences of Paradise Close residents.

*...people borrow things from each other and help each other out...people have done things like that, when people's appliances have broken, you've got people wandering around the street with their half-cooked dinners going, "Does your oven work? Mine's broken, can I put my dinner in your oven?" (Claire, Interview 29/8/06)*

My research indicates that within gated communities, neighbours can develop trusting relationships which allow individuals to depend on one another. Skenner's argument that today's society values 'independence rather than interdependence' (2004, p. 22) does not apply to the communities of Paradise Close and Macquarie Links.

#### **6.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented my findings through an examination of the key themes. Significantly, residents were not necessarily drawn to gated communities for physical security. However, for some, physical security had become more important over time. 'Security' in gated communities represents more than just physical security. Indeed, the development of a sense of community affords a more valuable notion of 'security' than could be provided by gates alone. The next chapter discusses the implications of my research for planning practice.

# 7

## **GATED COMMUNITIES: VALIDATING A NEW COMMUNITY**

This research has provided an insight into the experience of people living in gated developments. I have found that gated community living is characterised by shared values and living environments. As expressed by Low (2003, p. 57) this encompasses ‘shared territory, shared values, shared public realm, shared support structures, and shared destiny’.

My research has also revealed that living in a gated estate has distinct benefits. These include high levels of amenity; increased certainty in design; a sense of community and belonging; and enhanced feelings of safety and security. The control residents have over their residential environment is a significant factor in these benefits.

In this chapter I bring the outcomes of the research together and explore the implications of this research for planning.

### **7.1 Controlling a new sense of community**

This thesis has examined the motivations and experiences of gated community residents. My research is qualitative in nature. It cannot be said to be necessarily representative of all residents from the case study communities nor all gated communities in Sydney.

My findings indicate that people are not primarily motivated to move to gated communities for security. Rather, the ‘package’ of dwelling, facilities and location, and value for money were the prime reasons for settling in a gated community. The motivations of residents from the case studies are consistent with the findings of Glasze, Webster and Frantz (2006), in that when people purchase a home in a gated community they are purchasing a bundle of goods which includes security.

This research has revealed that there is a not a great demand for the security provided by gated communities, contrary to the findings of researchers from the United States and South Africa (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Beall, Crankshaw, and Parnell, 2002; Jurgens and Gnad,

2002; Low, 2003). Notwithstanding, many residents have come to appreciate the security on offer over time, despite initial reservations. A majority of residents appreciate the benefits which accompany security such as reduced traffic and increased road safety, and thus the suitability of the community for children.

*Environmental amenity and increased certainty*

The case study communities are characterised by high levels of residential amenity. Environmental amenity can be beneficial to the well-being of residents. Andrew mentioned the 'atmosphere' of Macquarie Links as an attractor (Interview 8/9/06). Raleigh Park residents also enjoy the tranquillity of their community.

*I know one thing a few people say is they work in the city and they get off the bus down on Anzac Parade...and they walk into here and they just feel peaceful, relaxed. It's green...and it just makes them feel good after the city. (Robyn, Interview 30/8/06)*

Residents are also attracted to the communal recreational facilities, including tennis courts, swimming pools and parks.

*It is like resort-style living. You have access to a lot of things that you couldn't afford otherwise. For a house nowadays to have a pool and a tennis court on its own...you are attracting quite a high price, whereas in a gated community it is considerably less because those facilities are shared. (Travis, Real estate agent 21/8/06)*

For the residents in this study, gated communities in Sydney also appear to offer stability, continuity and certainty. This is because those living there are able to exert greater control over their residential environments to preserve the amenity of their community. For example, restrictions on dwelling design, fencing, driveway materials and landscaping are imposed by covenants and by-laws in the three case study communities.

Interestingly, some see this as an unpleasant feature of gated and masterplanned communities.

*The image of the local community has been extensively commodified by many urban*

*developers for the purpose of marketing residential properties; with the support of local authorities, these developers have imposed detailed regulations and restrictions on developments in order to ensure the purity of their 'product'. (Peterson, 2003, pp. 2-3)*

However, the previous experiences of some residents are evidence of the impact that unwelcome changes to a neighbourhood can have on a person's sense of satisfaction with their living environment.

*...Chipping Norton, when it first started to be developed over there it was quite nice but then a lot of old homes got pulled down and units were built. So once the units went in, it lost the niceties about it. (Christine, Interview 8/9/06)*

Likewise Andrew was affected by adverse changes in the area near his previous residence.

*...the Government approved a horrendous development immediately on the other side of the railway line [from our house in Ingleburn]...that was a 24 hours a day, seven days a week container terminal. With four rail sidings and gantries, the noise was intolerable, so we decided...we were determined never to leave but they drove us out. (Andrew, Interview 8/9/06)*

The restrictions within Macquarie Links and Raleigh Park provide residents with the assurance that the amenity of their residential environment will be maintained in the future.

*The original developer had put together a set of guidelines which became a bit of a bill of must-dos and I think most of that is now written into the by-laws, for things like you can't have anything on your house that might be offensive to others. (Andrew, Interview 8/9/06)*

Residents are also able to maintain the value of their property investment by ensuring that other residents comply with the by-laws and covenants.

*[Making] external [alterations] is pretty hard, you've got to go through a whole lot of committees to change anything externally. (Mark, Interview 8/9/06)*

The restrictions do not suit all residents. Some Raleigh Park residents kept pets and erected pergolas against the by-laws. Subsequently, they moved out because they ‘didn’t like being told what to do’ (Interview 30/8/06). Notwithstanding this, residents interviewed acknowledged that ‘it’s very hard to enforce the rules’ (Mark, Interview 30/8/06).

*It could cause a problem in the community if one of us decided that they wanted to have a grey concrete driveway...in theory they can’t have it because it’s against the covenant, but in practice you try digging it up. (David, Interview 17/9/06)*

### *Community self-management*

The legal requirements associated with ownership under Community Title enables residents to mitigate change within their immediate residential neighbourhood. The management structures of Raleigh Park and Macquarie Links facilitate resident participation in the decision-making processes regarding development proposals. Residents also participate in the management of commonly-owned property. In Paradise Close, residents run all HOA meetings, co-ordinate repair works and take part in working bees.

Yasmin said that she felt that residents in Paradise Close are ‘building their own community’ (Interview 17/9/06). Interviewees from all three case studies acknowledged that while not everyone attends HOA meetings, the residents that do enjoy being involved in decision-making which affects them and their community. However, community self-management is not without its’ problems, as was reiterated by a resident from Paradise Close.

*Well we had issues with the tennis court at one time...[at the HOA meeting] there was a comment made [by a resident] that they thought one of the kids was conducting coaching on the court and it wasn’t the case, and it really upset the parents and the kid sort of got into a fair bit of trouble. (James, Interview 17/9/06)*

Accordingly, Peter noted that living in a development with Community Title is only suitable if people are prepared to accept the responsibilities of sharing commonly-owned property and the management of those assets.

*I think because it is the type of title it is, people have had to have thought, “Do they want to be part of the community?” So they’ve had to have thought through that process before they come so they know what they’re getting into and we surely did, we talked about it a lot before we came in. (Peter, Interview 17/9/06)*

Like other Strata and Community Titled developments, gated communities are only accessible to those who can afford to purchase a house and pay substantial ongoing levies for commonly-owned facilities and maintenance. However, gated communities differ from other developments in that residents pay a premium for the provision and maintenance of security measures such as guards, gates and security systems including alarms and closed circuit television cameras.

*It is a bit of an extra burden on the owner, it’s extra money that they are going to have to continuously pay, but it’s the cost of getting those services...[For example] if you have a pool in there they don’t have to worry about cleaning it and maintaining it and they’re going to use it and so those costs will level out. (Travis, Real estate agent, Interview 21/8/06)*

#### *Community within the gated community*

Michael Ignatieff questions ‘whether it is possible to feel a sense of belonging in societies which change as rapidly as modern ones do, and which are divided by race, class, gender, and religion, and which are strongly driven by the power of money’ (1996, in Petersen, 2003, p. 1). A different notion of community may be emerging.

*...instead of individuals having their greatest involvement (sense of community) with those among whom they lived (neighbours, as defined on the basis of nearness or propinquity), a situation was arising where, at least for professional and managerial groups, communities might be spatially far-flung, but nevertheless close-knit, intimate, and held together by shared interests and values (communities based on common interest rather than propinquity). (Webber, 1963, in Walmsley, 1988)*

However, this emerging type of community is not borne out by my research. Macquarie Links

and Paradise Close residents enjoyed a sense of community and belonging based upon their immediate neighbours and within the geographic bounds of the estate. Moreover, trusting relationships and strong social support are much valued by the residents (see Chapter Six).

However, Low argues that the 'community' within gated developments is 'a specific kind of community that includes protecting children and keeping out crime and others while at the same time controlling the environment and the quality of services...one imagined from childhood or some idealized past' (2003, p. 230). Overwhelmingly, it seems that the notion of 'community' has become entwined with the control of neighbourhood design and restrictions on access for non-residents. Further, the unusual nature of gated communities could play a role in deciding what type of residents live there and therefore may reassure some residents that newcomers will be 'just like them' (Davis, 1998; Low, 2003; Gwyther, 2005). This desire for control appears to be related to the focus on the individual in an era which is increasingly characterised by uncertainty (Hamilton and Dennis, 2005; Mackay, 2005; Gleeson, 2006).

## 7.2 Implications for planning

*As the suburbs become more and more urbanized, researchers and citizens have become concerned with a decline in sense of community and an increase in fear of crime. In an attempt to reverse this trend, planners and developers have used design strategies to create communities that provide residents with a more close-knit and safe place to live. (Wilson-Doenges, 2000, p. 597)*

This research shows that gated communities do provide a sense of community and stability for their residents. However, for those outside the walls, the perception of the community may be different. As Low (2003), Sennett (1974), Young (1990) and Petersen (2003) have stated, we need to be cautious about considering community to be an intrinsically positive thing, particularly with respect to gated communities.

*While [the gated community] provides a feeling of stability and comfort for "insiders," in an extreme form it reinforces perceptions that those who are not in the community are "outsiders" or marginal, and unworthy of being included. (Low, 2003, p. 65)*

All residents interviewed for this study refuted this perception vehemently. However, as this research does not explore the experiences of non-residents, it is not possible to comment on whether they are made to feel like ‘outsiders’. Notwithstanding this, residents see themselves as part of the wider community in their locale as well as their immediate gated community. There was no indication that residents were trying to secede from society. In fact, many residents regarded this perception as absurd. This sentiment is reflected in Claire’s comments about the negative attitude towards gated communities.

*It’s interesting though the perception you get from, [to her daughter Lucy] even your geography textbook at school, there is a picture of our estate...The perception, and what they said in it, and what you sometimes see in the media is the portrayal that people come into these estates because they want to hide themselves away from what’s outside, but nobody here perceives it like that. It’s very interesting, they’ve got a completely different idea about it [to us]. (Claire, Interview 29/8/06)*

Macquarie Links residents have experienced opposition from the broader community. This appears to be linked to living in an exclusive development located adjacent to suburbs experiencing social disadvantage, such as Macquarie Fields. Brendan Gleeson suggests that the search for ‘community’ *within* gated developments is just as much about escaping *from* wider society.

*The asylum seekers flooding into gated and exclusionary estates seek disengagement from the ‘social’ as much as they pursue the embrace of ‘community’. (Gleeson, 2006, p. 149)*

Macquarie Links has received political criticism from the State Member for Campbelltown, Graham West.

*I say ‘suburb’ and not ‘community’ as [gated communities like Macquarie Links] are the enemy of community. (Bladen, 2001, p. 1)*

Residents provided the following response to the criticism from Gleeson and West:

*Andrew: ...there is a perception, I think it's a false perception, it's not truly their perception, it's a politically-generated theory that the people who live here are snobs who want to bring their children up so they don't have to mix with the people out in the community.*

*Christine: ...I've had a lot of people say to me, "Well you've got to have a lot of money to live in there, you know that people that are too good for everybody else live in there". It's not true. I'd step down to the person in the gutter and help him if I had to, it's not true. (Interview 8/9/06)*

The gated community residents interviewed do not believe they are intentionally excluding non-residents from their community or trying to secede from society. Nevertheless, by their very nature gated communities are exclusionary and this has implications for the cohesiveness of society. Gated communities 'are disruptive of other people's ability to experience "community": community in the sense of an integration of the suburb and the city, community in terms of access to public open space, and community...[characterised by] racial and ethnic integration and social justice' (Low, 2003, p. 230).

This research has not examined how non-residents feel about the gated communities and their residents. However, as community facilities are privately owned non-residents are denied access and, for example, are unable to enjoy the nature reserve in Macquarie Links.

Another unfortunate aspect of the self-provision of community facilities is that developers may be able to argue that they should be exempt from the payment of Section 94 developer contributions or similar requirements for the provision of facilities to the wider LGA. Accordingly, as the recreational benefits of gated communities are exclusive to residents, gated communities cannot provide any spill-over benefits for the broader community.

The exception among the three case studies, and an interesting alternative, is Raleigh Park. It is unique in that the roads are owned by Randwick Council and a covenant on the parks requires that the general public have access to them at all times. Further, the shop and child care centre within Raleigh Park are accessible to all. This provides an alternative blend of a development with security and a conventional neighbourhood. Perhaps councils should be

requiring developers to provide access to open space within their developments as a means to share the benefits (e.g. the nature reserve in Macquarie Links) with the whole community.

### *Alternatives to gating*

This thesis has in part examined what draws people to gated communities. It is crucial for planners to understand why people are motivated to live in these developments so that alternative and improved residential environments can be provided to the wider community. Finding alternatives to gated communities is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, this form of development is very attractive to developers.

*Developers recognise the opportunity for niche marketing [of gated communities]: they effectively combine the aesthetics and common appeal of a private controlled development (with its attractive amenities and common maintenance) with the lure of a homogenous community of residents: people of similar ages, wealth and lifestyles. (Grant, 2005, p. 282)*

Secondly, local governments in Australia are vulnerable to the lure of gated and masterplanned communities, ‘especially in traditionally working class subregions that have come to view them as investment prizes and/or means for reducing their own planning and servicing responsibilities’ (2006, p. 170). For local governments, it may be easier to allow developers to provide gated communities.

*‘Who’s going to pay for a Macquarie Links the whole world can use?’ (Peter Icklow, quoted in Bladen, 2001, p. 2).*

A councillor from Campbelltown Council concurs with this assessment.

*There are advantages to council from community type developments as the infrastructure is provided and maintained by residents. (Rudi Kolkman, quoted in Bladen, 2001, p. 2)*

Thirdly, gated communities can provide additional benefits for local governments.

*Affluent developments of adult households are typically seen as good neighbours, unlikely to generate NIMBY responses. Attractive entry features, fences, and landscaping can improve land values in an area. Hence it becomes hard to say 'no' to such proposals. (Grant, 2004, p. 283)*

Finally, a lack of planning guidelines for gated communities in Sydney does not enable councils to control this type of development (Forwood, 1999). Accordingly, Forwood (1999) believes that planners in Sydney need to 'take another look' at gated communities.

*Concerns about segregated projects and the possible impacts of gating will not make private communities go away, nor will they reduce the demand for enclaves. As a profession, planners need to engage in a public debate about the implications of gated developments and the character of government responses to them so that we can establish appropriate policies and practices for future planning. Only then will we find ourselves prepared to deal with this important issue. (Grant, Greene and Maxwell, 2004, p. 84)*

Addressing the issue of gated communities is a difficult task. If planners are to offer viable alternatives to gated communities, they must design neighbourhoods which provide privacy, security, desirable local amenities and adequate traffic management (Grant, Greene and Maxwell, 2004). Certainly, recreational facilities were highlighted as a 'desirable local amenity' by residents of the case studies and this may indicate a need for the provision of additional recreational facilities in cities.

Masterplanned estates and some gated communities have adopted 'new urbanist' ideas in their design (Gleeson, 2006). New urbanism is a movement in planning designed to enhance localism and community interaction in urban life (Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 1994; Katz, 1994). It was discovered that gated communities enable the establishment of a localised community based upon propinquity and the creation of a 'friendly' environment for residents. However, some characteristics of gated communities do not reflect the intent of new urbanism. Gated communities are privatised spaces with generally homogenous land uses. Another feature of gated communities is their social homogeneity facilitated by higher entry and ongoing costs, particularly in areas where the gated community is an 'island of privilege

in a sea of uncertainty' (Gleeson, 2006). Residents interviewed for my research reported that their communities are generally culturally diverse, however economic diversity did not appear to be feature of my case studies. Gleeson believes that homogeneity can be avoided by 'ensuring a better mix of housing choices and therefore a more sustainable social structure' (2006, p. 177).

State governments should be encouraged to legislate in order to manage the development of gated communities, particularly large masterplanned estates such as Macquarie Links. Gleeson (2006) suggests that masterplanning can play a role in shaping new development without being exclusionary, provided it is supplemented by government investment in the public realm of new urban areas.

Planning controls could be implemented to ensure that the negative features of gated communities are minimised and that the positive aspects are accentuated. At a local government level, statutory controls which require developers of gated communities to provide a percentage of affordable dwellings and a mix of dwelling types could be put into practice. Covenants on open space, like those in Raleigh Park, should be imposed to ensure public access to open space. Public access to open space does not necessarily confer a right to use resident recreational facilities. Private use of recreational facilities could be maintained by the use of lockable gates which can be opened only by residents using a swipe cards or pin code. Notwithstanding this, masterplanned communities such as Newbury in Sydney's north-west have private community facilities and are not gated. Therefore, I suggest that justification for the gating of roads and pedestrian accessways be required at the development application stage. Burke's (2003) research indicates that gated communities alter the pedestrian activity of non-residents. Consequently, traffic studies would be required for gated proposals to ensure that impacts on external traffic flows and pedestrian networks are minimised.

### **7.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed the findings of my research and explored their broader implications for planning. Gated communities meet, in part, resident needs for recreational facilities and for a stable living environment. Addressing the anxieties of today's society is an ongoing challenge, however planners and urban designers can play a role in designing spaces, places and communities which encourage interaction and social cohesion. Governments must focus their attention on the public provision of infrastructure, facilities and services in order to restore confidence in the public realm.

# 8

## CONCLUSION

Gated communities are an extremely attractive form of development for residents. My research has shown that gated communities provide physical protection and offer a high level of residential amenity and recreational facilities. The sense of community and belonging felt by residents improves their well-being in that they are able to rely on their neighbours for support and assistance, affording a more valuable notion of 'security' than could be provided by gates alone. Further, through restrictions on design and access, gated communities may help to reduce uncertainty by enabling residents to exert greater control over their living environment.

Gated communities are popular with developers because they provide a unique marketing opportunity. Further, through Community Titling, the imposition of by-laws and covenants allows the purity of their product to be maintained in perpetuity. Gated communities also appeal to local governments in that they reduce the need for the public provision and maintenance of infrastructure and recreational facilities.

It could be said that the desire to live in gated communities represents the retreat of the individual from the public realm and an increasing focus on the private sphere of the home. To some extent, they address the anxieties and insecurities which characterise the Australian consciousness. However, relying on gated communities in the private sector and additional policing in the public is not an acceptable means by which to placate the insecurities of the community (Low, 2003).

*[These measures] are inadequate solutions for what is actually a complex set of issues raising from profound concerns about one's continued existence and emotional stability to everyday problems with economic survival and maintaining a particular way of life. (Low, 2003, p. 231)*

My research indicates a need for planners to provide appropriate and viable alternatives to current forms of residential development. These alternate residential communities must provide privacy, security, opportunities for social interaction, desirable local amenities and adequate traffic management (Grant, Greene and Maxwell, 2004).

Through the design of new living environments, planners and urban designers can play a role in encouraging social interaction and in doing so improve the well-being of the wider community. Governments must focus their attention on the public provision of infrastructure, facilities and services in order to restore confidence in the public realm.

Research is required to ascertain the attitude of the wider community to gated communities in Sydney and their residents. It is important to explore the feelings of non-residents in order to appreciate the impact of these developments on the cohesiveness of society.

Further, knowledge of the distribution of Australia gated communities is lacking. Accordingly, a comprehensive survey is required to facilitate an understanding of the nature, prevalence and distribution of Australian gated communities and thus identification of the kinds of places in which they are most likely to be developed. This new knowledge will enable planners to develop statutory controls and guidelines for gated communities to ensure that wider community benefit is maximised and adverse impacts are minimised.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX ONE – INTERVIEWEES**

#### **Resident interviewees**

##### *Paradise Close*

- David (50+ years), Claire (50+ years) and Lucy (20+ years)
- Peter (40+ years)
- Michael and Belinda (30+ years)
- Yasmin (30+ years)
- James (50+ years)

##### *Raleigh Park*

- Mark and Robyn (50+ years)

##### *Macquarie Links*

- Andrew (80+ years)
- Christine (60+ years)

#### **Development and real estate industry contacts**

- Peter Icklow, CEO of Monarch Investments, developer of Macquarie Links;
- Vong Sinbandhit, architect and planner, Mirvac, developer of Raleigh Park; and
- Travis Brown, Real estate agent, Century 21 Real Estate West Pennant Hills.

**APPENDIX TWO – RESIDENT INTERVIEW QUESTION SCHEDULE**

1. When did you move here?
2. Who do you live with here?
3. Where did you live before?
4. Have you lived in this area before? If so, how long have you been living in the area?
5. Is there a sense of community here?
6. What kinds of people live here?
7. Why do people live here?
8. Can you tell me about the security features? Gate/guard/cameras/alarms?
9. Do you appreciate the security?
10. Community facilities – what is available and how is it managed?
11. Is there a homeowners association/body corporate?
12. What do you like/dislike about this community?
13. How does living here affect your wellbeing?
14. How would you say it is different from where you have lived previously?
15. What kind of rules are there about house design, landscaping etc?
16. How do property values in here compare to outside?
17. What is the rate of turnover?
18. What is the balance of owners to renters?
19. Would you move to another gated community if you had to move in the future?

**APPENDIX THREE – ETHICS APPROVAL**

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES



FACULTY OF THE  
BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
HUMAN RESEARCH  
ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL

27 July 2006

Application No: 065033  
Project Title: **Gated Communities in Sydney and Resident Well-being**

Attention: Dana Quintal  
Student No: 3060044

Dear Dana,

Thank you for your application requesting approval to conduct research involving humans. The Panel has evaluated your application and upon their recommendation, has attached the decision below.

Please be aware that approval is for a period of twelve months from the date of this letter, unless otherwise stated below.

**Decision**

Approved with conditions                      Your application is approved; however, there are certain things you must do, before you may conduct your research. Please see below for details, and your responses will assist us in completing your file.

<b>Items that must be completed before research can commence:</b>	1	You will need to obtain a letter of support from the organisation's management, especially when you intend to interview employees. This letter of support must conform with <b>Form 6</b> , and should be on the organisation's letterhead and be signed by the appropriate person. Please forward all letters to HREAP to complete your file.
	2	You will need to complete a FBE Fieldwork Application, and obtain approval to carry out your fieldwork. This must be obtained prior to physically conducting your research.
	3	It is unclear who is being surveyed, and/or how they will be selected or approached. Please forward this onto the Panel Administrator to complete your file.
<b>Advisory comments:</b>	1	Should you or your participants be making photographic, video or audio recordings that include people, please be aware that: Recordings in public places do not generally require the permission of the people who are in those public places; however, this will depend upon the sensitivity of the subject matter and the situation If you will be specifically identifying any person in photos or videos which you intend to publish, you will require their signed consent Photographs or videos of identifiable people on private property should not be made without their consent, even when taken from public property

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 | You do not need a Consent Form for participants completing a Questionnaire; however, Consent Forms are needed whenever participating in a Focus Group or In-depth Interview, or whenever an interview is recorded |
| 3 | Please be aware that the HREA Panel cannot approve interviews or surveys of participants under the age of 18. Please see your Supervisor for further direction.   |

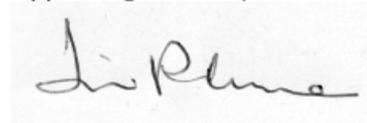
Any approval to conduct research given to the applicant Researcher is done so on the condition that the applicant Researcher is at the date of approval: (a) a Student undertaking an approved course of study in the FBE; or (b) a member of Academic Staff in the FBE. If, at any time subsequent to the date of approval and prior to completion of the research project the applicant Researcher ceases to be either of (a) and (b) above, then any prior approval given to the applicant Researcher to conduct will be deemed to be revoked forthwith. The applicant Researcher must inform the FBE HREA Panel immediately upon any change, or possible change, to the applicant's status that may affect any prior approval given by the Panel to the applicant Researcher to conduct research.

Evaluation Authority:



Graham Fletcher (Convener)  
FBE HREA Panel

Approving Authority:



Jim Plume  
Head of School  
Faculty of the Built Environment

Copy to: Susan Thompson, Supervisor