THE MPC AND
ARCHITECTURAL
DIVERSITY

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. 5

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION ............................................................................. 7
   Problem Statement ............................................................................................... 8
   Research Objectives ........................................................................................... 9
   Reasoning Behind the Chosen Topic ................................................................... 9
   Methodology ........................................................................................................ 10

CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND .................................................................................. 12
   The History of the MPC ..................................................................................... 13
   The Popularity of the MPC ............................................................................... 17
   The Positive Factors of the MPC ....................................................................... 19
   The Negative Factors of the MPC ....................................................................... 22

CHAPTER 3 - THE MPC, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY ................................. 26
   Definitions for: - Diversity and Creativity ....................................................... 27
   Why We Need Diversity ..................................................................................... 28
   The Opinions of Authors and Theorists on the MPC ....................................... 33

CHAPTER 4 - REVIEWING ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY .............................. 37
   Case Study 1 - Quakers Hill, Blacktown ......................................................... 39
   Case Study 2 - Newbury MPC, Blacktown ...................................................... 48

CHAPTER 5 - EVALUATION AND COMPARISON ........................................... 49

CHAPTER 6 - CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY .... 49

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION ................................................................................. 49

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................................................................... 79

APPENDIX ............................................................................................................ 84
CONTENTS OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 2.1 - Garden City Model founded by Sir Ebenezer Howard........14
Figure 2.2 - Original Concept Design and Plan for Palos Verdes Estate....16
Figure 2.3 - Club House at Newbury..................................................21
Figure 2.4 - Kids Playground at Newbury.............................................21
Figure 2.5 - 'The Village' a Gated Community in Florida.....................24
Figure 2.6 - Land Clearing.................................................................25
Figure 3.1 - Architecturally Diverse Streetscape of Quakers Hill........28
Figure 3.2 - City of Daly.................................................................29
Figure 3.3 - Brussels.................................................................31
Figure 3.4 - Residential buildings in Brasilia......................................32
Figure 3.5 - Youth on Skate-board..................................................36
Figure 4.1 - Quakers Hill Locality Map.............................................40
Figure 4.2 - Dwellings in Quakers Hill.............................................41
Figure 4.3 - Newbury Locality Map..................................................48
Figure 4.4 - Modern Contemporary Architecture in Newbury..............50
Figure 4.5 - External Colour Concept Master plan..........................54
Figure 6.1 - Tree House Designed by Baumraum...............................70
Figure 6.2 - Public Art in Chicago....................................................73
Table 5.1 - Words Associated with Newbury and Blacktown.............66
Table 6.1 - Charles Landry's (2006) initiatives to allow for the design of
creative places.................................................................72

***It should be noted that both sources and references for the figures
and tables are located within the bibliogrophy of this thesis
ABSTRACT

A Master Plan Community (MPC) is a popular form of residential development. The MPC provides physical and social infrastructure by use of design controls and master plans to market a specific quality of life and the element of ‘community’. This form of residential development has been referred to as ‘romantic’ or ‘picturesque’ and is often promoted to represent a utopian environment, creating an improved way of living in respect to social objectives. However, the MPC designed with the goal of creating a diverse and unique environment also attracts accusations of inauthenticity and homogeneity. It is argued that this form of development can produce bland and uniformly designed dwellings and streetscapes. This poses a question as to the degree of character and originality that MPCs provide and whether these developments will be considered valuable in terms of future heritage. This thesis reviews two sites (Newbury and Quakers Hill located in Blacktown) to explore these concerns through a review of literature and planning controls, site analysis and interviews. It considers the importance of architectural diversity within the built environment, its influence in producing unique and creative spaces, and methods to create interesting urban streetscapes.
Little boxes made of ticky tacky,
Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes all the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.

And the people in the houses
All went to the university,
Where they were put in boxes
And they came out all the same,
And there's doctors and lawyers,
And business executives,
And they're all made out of ticky
And they all look just the same.

And they all play on the golf course
And drink their martinis dry,
And they all have pretty children
And the children go to school,
And the children go to summer camp
And then to the university,
Where they are put in boxes
And they come out all the same.

And the boys go into business
And marry and raise a family
In boxes made of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tack
And they all look just the same

(pictures and lyrics from Smith and Schimmel, 2007)
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION
There are numerous social, economical and environmental benefits of the master plan community (MPC – which is a form of residential development which provides infrastructure through the use of a master plan) for the various stakeholders (including the private sector, public sector, community and residents) who invest in this form of residential development. It is therefore no surprise that the MPC is “an increasingly prominent residential development” (McGuirk and Dowling 2007, 21) within Sydney, as well as a popular form of development and phenomenon overseas. The popularity of this form of residential community can be justified to the ability of the MPC to evolve and change to the needs of the market and accommodate a large suite of demands (such as safety, privacy, and market values) for its current and future residents.

However there have been numerous theorists, authors and artists who have regarded this form of residential development to be homogenous in design and lacking in diversity and creativity in terms of both architectural style and urban form (i.e. certain theorists have critiqued the use of a common design template for the design of these communities). This theoretical shortfall of diversity and creativity is particularly linked to MPCs, as it is argued that this form of development can produce bland and uniformly designed dwellings and streetscapes.

One such theorist is Susan Fainstein (2005) who is a Professor/Acting Director of the Urban Planning Program in the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University. Fainstein (2005) is of the opinion that MPCs are initially designed with the goal of creating a diverse and unique environment, however are attracting accusations of in-authenticity. This poses one to question what degree of character and originality MPCs provide to an area and whether these residentially planned communities will be considered valuable in terms of heritage and be worth preservation in the future.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is this view of ‘diversity’ and ‘creativity,’ in relation to the MPC, which is to be discussed and examined in this thesis, alongside with a brief consideration of the arguments for and against the MPC. The concluding results will include a determination being made as to whether the critiques of the MPC are justifiable and the changes (if any), which can be implemented to create an architecturally diverse environment. This thesis will also examine the importance of an
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

architecturally diverse streetscape and suggest methods to be implemented to create an interesting and inspiring urban environment. The concluding results of this thesis will be achieved through a review of literature and planning controls, site analysis and interviews.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives for this thesis include the following:

- Evaluate the arguments for and against the MPC, specifically focusing on the arguments of diversity and creativity both in the architectural form of the dwellings (inclusive of the streetscape) and the urban form of the MPC.

- Provide an understanding concerning the history and popularity of the MPC.

- Compare an MPC and an existing suburban environment in terms of diversity and urban form.

- Outline the importance of producing diverse architectural designs within a streetscape and the importance of creating innovative and usable spaces.

- Provide the perspective of different professionals on the issues of diversity of architectural design and urban form.

- Identify the actions and roles planners and other professionals can take to initiate architectural diversity, create a strong local character and establish a creative and innovative space.

REASONING BEHIND THE CHOSEN TOPIC

The problem statement mentioned above was inspired by a field trip to three MPCs: Newbury, Ropes Crossing and Nelson’s Ridge. Debriefing from the field trip provided me with the realization that the three communities visited had relatively uniform residential dwellings. All of
the residential dwellings within these three MPCs were designed in the style of ‘Modern Contemporary’ architecture and were similar in form, colour and composition. Additionally, the urban form of the three MPCs held many similarities, as they all included a community/recreational facility being located in the centre of the development surrounded by a dense residential component which became sparse as it moved further from the centre facility.

Following this field trip, my interest in the elements of architectural diversity within the MPC developed and I decided to research theorists who held a similar view of the MPC. The research of planning texts and journal articles revealed that other theorists such as Leonie Sandercock, Jane Jacobs and Susan Fainstein, as well as a number of others also shared similar views and had conveyed similar messages and themes throughout their literature (i.e. themes of in-authenticity of MPCs, importance for an area to produce diverse and creative environments, the significance of creating character and the impacts of restrictive planning controls). These findings encouraged me to choose this topic for my thesis proposal.

It should be noted that although the topic of social and ethnic diversity within an MPC is both an important and interesting topic, this thesis deals specifically with the issue of architectural diversity and therefore the topic of social and ethnic diversity will not be included in the research or findings of this thesis.

METHODOLOGY

The background information and determined conclusion to the above mentioned problem statement, was obtained from three primary forms of research, including:

Literature review
The first phase of the methodology included a literature and data review. This included obtaining information from such texts as journal articles, newspaper articles, planning texts, zoning and cadastral maps, and council residential and neighbourhood character studies. This literature allowed me to identify key themes and theories on the topic and base my ideas on these themes, as well as obtain greater knowledge on the subject and an understanding of the perspective of different theorists/writers such as Leonie Sandercock, Elizabeth Farrelly and Charles Landry. This
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

review also included an in-depth analysis of relevant Blacktown City Council’s Development Control Plans and Newbury Architecture and Design Guidelines. This analysis included a thorough review of the controls and provisions within these documents and an evaluation of how limiting these provisions were in respect to architectural diversity.

Site visit
The second phase of the methodology included conducting two site visits to the two chosen sites (Quakers Hill and Newbury, located in the Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA)). The sites were selected on the basis of their location in Sydney’s Western Suburbs (i.e. more MPCs are being built in Sydney’s West, due to the amount of undeveloped land within this region) as well as the ability, through networking, to obtain interviews from the residents of these suburbs. The field trips included in-depth observations of the architecture of the built environment and the form of the suburb/MPC, recorded through photography and note taking. The site visits included walking the streets of the sites, reviewing the architectural form of the dwellings, analysing the diversity of the area in terms of architectural style/periods and assessing the model template used within the MPC (in-depth information concerning the site is included in Chapter 3 – Case Studies).

Interviews
Phase three of the methodology included conducting in-depth interviews with a Blacktown Council Town Planner, a Mirvac Architect No.8016, a Landcom Senior Development Manager, a resident of the Newbury MPC, a resident of Quakers Hill, and a Department of Planning Senior Officer who worked for the Sydney North West Regional Team. The interviewees were selected through networking and referrals and were contacted via email and invited to be involved in the research aspect of the thesis. The interview questions were largely varied among the different participants, however some questions were the same. This allowed for a broader range of content to be analysed as well as providing me with the ability to compare and contrast questions of a similar nature (in-depth information concerning the interviewees and interviews is included in Chapter 3 – Case Studies).
A “Master Plan Community is an intensive form of master planned estate in terms of strategic planning and capital expended on both physical and social infrastructure” (Gwyther 2005, 59). MPC’s are mixed use developments which are predominantly residential in nature, however may also include land uses such as open space, private and public recreation, retail, commercial and in some instances business. MPC’s generally include a considerable quantity of amenities, services and infrastructure within their boundaries, which are for the specific use of the residents of the development and in certain cases for other persons who reside outside the community. An MPC concentrates on the provision of physical and social infrastructure through design controls and master plans to produce a marketable quality of life within a community (Gwyther, 2005).

The MPC (referred to as the ‘romantic’ or ‘picturesque’ suburb) is often implied to represent “the largest manifestation of utopian place making” (Gwyther 2005, 57). This form of residential development is commonly connected to utopian expectations, as there is a belief that this model (to accommodate residential growth) can create an improved way of living in respect to social objectives such as: civility, social harmony and communalism (Gwyther, 2005). This romanticized perspective of the MPC is often used as a marketing technique and commonly illustrates a community which is exultant, safe and connected, with residents uniting to the built and natural environment as well as having the ability to form lasting relationships with other members of the community.

THE HISTORY OF THE MPC

The origins of the MPC lie within the late nineteenth century garden city movement, which was founded by Sir Ebenezer Howard. The garden city is a self contained suburb/city with its core comprising of a public space, in the form of a central park, surrounded by strategically located public buildings such as libraries, town halls, etc. Beyond this core is a ring containing a retail/business sector, followed by a ring consisting of dwellings and local gardens. The outer ring of the garden suburb consists of industrial, manufacturing, warehouse and agriculture uses, which are surrounded by a railway line. In addition, the garden suburb is connected to the garden city and other garden suburbs through the use of road and rail infrastructure (refer to Figure 2.1 for the garden city model).
CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND

The initial popularity of the garden city movement was largely connected to the overcrowding, noise and pollution of the industrial city, which influenced many of the populace to look to areas which contained a greater connection between the built and natural environment (Akimoto, 2007). The introduction of innovative transportation and communication measures allowing for easy accessibility and communication between the city and the suburbs further allowed individuals to look outside of the ‘polluted city centre’ to find their ‘utopian’ lifestyle (Akimoto, 2007).

Figure 2.1 – Garden City Model founded by Sir Ebenezer Howard

The garden city/suburb became an influential theme within the planning of communities throughout the twentieth century and Ebenezer Howard’s garden city ‘Letchworth Garden City’ located in Letchworth, England “attracted international renown and emulation” (Miller 2002, 6). The growth of the garden suburb movement and the use of the garden suburb model in various countries allowed this type of suburban growth to become influential on an international level, especially in America (where the MPC evolved). In this regard, further initiatives and ideas
originating from the garden city/suburb movement and the principles founded within the garden suburb influenced such models as MPCs.

By the 1920’s, Frederick Law Olmsted’s design principles, which put in place standards for the improvement to the garden suburb model, were established (Akimoto, 2007). These included (Akimoto, 2007):

- Recognition of local flora, fauna and topography;
- Recognition of the importance of public spaces;
- Introduction of a local open space element to the centre of the suburb;
- Separation of transport modes;
- Use of non-grid street patterns;
- A connection to be formed between the suburb and nearby city centre, through road infrastructure; and
- Formation of an ‘entrance’ to the place.

In the American context, developers began to purchase reasonable sized parcels of land, invest in features such as infrastructure and landscaping and impose stringent building deed restrictions, which required approval of the built form by an ‘Art Jury’ to control the design of private dwellings and safeguard the appearance of the planned suburb (Akimoto, 2007). This introduced developments such as the Palos Verdes Estates in California illustrated in Figure 2.2, which was at the forefront of other garden suburbs as it was the largest new town to be designed and developed from a single general plan which included an Art Jury to control the design of private buildings (Akimoto, 2007). In addition a zoning plan was also established to determine the architectural style districts within the Estate (Akimoto, 2007). Palos Verdes Estates was “the largest single piece of city planning by private enterprise at that time in the USA” (Akimoto 2007, 60).

Although, Palos Verdes Estates was a garden suburb it was also an MPC and illustrated the evolution of the MPC model and its growth and separation from the garden suburb model. It should be noted, the MPC is a more evolved and complicated from of garden suburb inclusive of infrastructure, building deed restrictions and is designed from a single master plan.
CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND

The evolution of the MPC also included Sheldon Cheney’s (the designer of Palos Verdes Estates) proposal, in 1927, which recommended an MPC include: zoning plan; traffic plan; transportation plan; transit plan; public infrastructure and services plan; open space plan; programs for improved housing; and a plan for architectural control (Akimoto, 2007). Other influences on the MPC included an alternative image of the suburbs emerging, in the 1980s, which established walking-scale pedestrian-friendly suburbs constructed around public transport and retail (Akimoto, 2007). In 1991 Peter Calthorpe, a new urbanist, drafted a set of design principles, which highlighted the significance of: integrated public transport and land-use planning; connected greenbelt/wildlife corridor, and the establishment of a regional centre (Akimoto, 2007).

Figure 2.2 – Original Concept Design and Plan for Palos Verdes Estate

Today, in NSW, it is common to find the requirement for a master plan (for the development of land above a specific size or land which is, in parts, environmentally sensitive) within regulations, such as State Environmental Planning Policies and Regional Environmental Plans. These requirements are included in planning instruments to make certain that large scale residential developments include improved outcomes in respect to environmental concerns as well as the provision of appropriate infrastructure and community services. Moreover, McGuirk and Dowling (2007) state that local councils are supporters of the MPC (used as an instrument for the enhancement of existing planning regulations).
CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND

THE POPULARITY OF THE MPC

“Master-planned residential developments are becoming increasingly important as a part of the urban residential fabric and as an increasingly popular means of residential provision” (McGuirk and Dowling 2007, 22). In the context of Australia, MPCs are primarily large scale, integrated residential developments which include both physical and social infrastructure within their boundaries (McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). These MPCs are predominantly positioned along the ‘growth edge’ of a city’s fringe, however they are also located on sizeable greenfield, brownfield or urban renewal sites (McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). In recent years the MPC has become a progressive form of residential development in Sydney’s western suburbs, although MPCs can also be found in the eastern suburbs and inner city region. This is evident through the large number of MPCs which are being planned and constructed within western Sydney, such as Newbury and Ropes Crossing.

One of the reasons for the MPC’s popularity is due to the increase in house prices within the eastern and inner Sydney suburbs which has seen homebuyers increasingly looking towards Sydney’s outer suburbs to purchase their home, it is these suburbs which provide a large number of MPC developments (as land in these areas includes large lots of undeveloped and less expensive allotments, i.e. cheaper land prices for the developer results in less expensive selling prices to the customer). This view was reiterated when interviewing the MPC resident who stated that the main reason for purchasing the property within Newbury was due to the lower prices of the house and land packages (MPC Resident, 2007). This trend is illustrated through the ‘December 2006 Quarter Housing Data’ report, composed by the Australian Property Monitor. The report states that “houses in Sydney’s Western Suburbs declined by 4% over 2006 whilst property markets in the more affluent Eastern Suburbs surged by 5%” (Australian Property Monitors 2007, 1). The report advises that prosperous eastern Sydney suburbs such as Bellevue Hill and Palm Beach were achieving double digit growth at the detriment of outer suburbs such as Macquarie Fields and Narellan (Australian Property Monitors, 2007).

The Sunday Herald Domain 2008 Property Guide identified western Sydney suburbs such as Blacktown ranking 464th with median house prices at $305,000 and median units prices at $245,000 and Penrith ranking in 465th with median house prices at $310,000 and unit prices at
$215,000 (The Sunday Herald, 2008). It is these western suburbs which include a large number of MPCs such as Ropes Crossing and Newbury. In comparison, eastern suburbs such as Bondi ranked 51st with median house prices at $1,167,000 and units at $550,000 and Darling Point ranking 2nd with median house prices at $3,500,000 (The Sunday Herald, 2008). However it should be noted that not all MPC land and house packages (even certain MPCs in western Sydney) are less expensive then houses/units in the suburbs.

It should also also been noted that the development of city centres through such plans as the NSW State Government’s City of Cities: Metropolitan Strategy (2005) and the NSW State Government’s North West Subregional Strategy (2007) has ensured western suburbs have access to growing employment capacities and services via their city centres, such as Rouse Hill Centre and the Parramatta CBD which can sustain a large level of employment and commercial usage. As a result, the MPCs located within the western suburbs of Sydney are becoming popular for both the home buyer and the developer.

Sasha Tohme’s (2005) article ‘The burbs are back in fasion’ Sunday Telegraph focuses on the growing popularity of the MPC. The article states “Sydney's love affair with apartments was driven mainly by lifestyle and with house and land developments now offering similar facilities, they were becoming increasingly popular” (Tohme 2005, 6). The article emphasizes both the attraction of the developer towards the MPC as well as the demand for these developments by the home-buyers, who are seeking a certain lifestyle. It is this lifestyle, which is believed to become the underlying feature behind the popularity of the MPC. The article promotes the idea of the numerous benefits and simplicities of living within an MPC, as well as the commonly argued ’feeling of community, security and safety’ one is said to experience when residing within the MPC environment (Tohme, 2005). Tohme (2005) suggests that “these days its [MPCs] advertisements are filled with photos of tumbling children and messages like ‘because little feet weren't meant to play on concrete’… plays up the family-friendly angle” (Tohme 2005, 6) as well as the ability to know your neighbour and feel secure and safe when walking the streets.

Additionally, the article also includes quotes from prospective residents of the MPC, who prefer the comforts of the planned community. These persons have commented that in their search for the Australian dream, their search for houses within close proximity to the city found a selection of
housing which was both crowded and small (Tohme, 2005). When inspecting homes within a planned community they were surprised to find larger house and land packages where they had sufficient space and were not exceptionally far from the city (Tohme, 2005). Tohme (2005) has acclaimed these features to be the underlying reasons for the growing popularity of the MPC, whilst, Geoff Joyce (General Manager of Urban Renewal at Landcom) states that the change in the design and concept of projects is the reason for the increased popularity of the MPC (Tohme, 2005).

The marketing of MPCs has also allowed this form of development to gain popularity with the consumer and introduce the market to the benefits of the MPC. The marketing of the MPC is increasingly important to its popularity. Laurie Ford (1998) who is the vice president of MPC marketing and sales at Weyerhaeuser Real Estate states that marketing of MPCs has changed in the past few years. To date the following marketing techniques are used: developers target a greater number of consumers (e.g. single parent families, empty nesters); developers research the population base and collect information concerning the lifestyles, background, etc of residents from nearby suburbs and those who are moving into those areas; developers clearly outline the benefits of residing in the MPC and the investment values of this form of residential development; in addition the environmental sensitivity of the development, layout, sense of community, infrastructure and services becomes a major selling point for the developer (Ford, 1998).

**THE POSITIVE FACTORS OF THE MPC**

The MPC has numerous social, economical and environmental benefits, which are distributed among the private sector, public authorities and homebuyers who profit (in one form or another) from this form of investment. MPCs commonly focus on providing self sufficient, mixed-use, community orientated residential developments, which utilise social and planning initiatives to create a sense of community and accommodate the demands of its residents, playing particular focus to environmental sensitivity and sustainability.

The social advantages of the MPC includes greater opportunities for accidental and planned interaction, the creation of a sense of community and pride and the feeling of safety for its residence, in comparison to existing suburbs. Developers commonly advertise the ability of the
CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND

MPC to create and sustain a sense of pride and belonging, which has become an important feature of the MPC and one which is actively sought by its consumers. Ropes Crossing Project Director, Arthur Ilias stated that “community connections are important for fostering a real sense of community, so we’re starting early to create strong social networks, foster neighbourhood safety and establish lifelong friendships” (Delfin Realty NSW 2006, 2).

A sense of community and interaction is created through the design of the MPC which commonly utilize networks of interconnected cycling and walking trails between uses, such as open space corridors, recreational uses and town centres to allow for accidental interaction and the opportunity to ‘know your neighbour’. Certain MPCs also utilize the inclusion of resort like recreational facilities (e.g. community club houses as seen in Figure 2.3, entertainment areas) to create a common place to be utilized amongst members of the community and allow for unplanned and planned interaction between neighbours. Certain MPCs also include welcome nights, events, newsletters as well as numerous other initiatives to allow for community involvement. This enclosed ‘know and trust your neighbour’ atmosphere of the MPC also allows for the feeling of safety and security.

MPCs enable a self-contained community to be created allowing for easy and timely access to community and educational resources, health facilities, open space as seen in Figure 2.4, emergency services and other demanded infrastructure, which is located either in a nearby centre or the MPC itself. This becomes one of the major selling points of the MPC. The market and public sector demand the provision of a considerable quantity and quality of public resources and services, and has become a means of enforcing contribution from the private sector. The provision of desirable infrastructure and resources results in greater numbers of investors/home buyers demanding a share or home within the MPC, thereby boosting the economic return for the private sector. Macquarie Bank's head of property research, Rod Cornish stated that "with a master-planned community we have the ability to control the destiny and timing of the delivery of those services in line with the needs of the growing population" (Lipman, 2007, 1). This illustrates one of the major economical advantages of an MPC, as it provides the private sector with financial rewards and provides the community with timely and appropriate infrastructure and services.
Additionally, the changing responsibility of local government has meant that the public sector no-longer plays a direct role regarding up-front infrastructure and service provisions, as a result there has been a refocus towards negotiating standard provisions and controls over the timing and delivery of these services and provisions (Minnery and Bajracharya, 2005). Ruming (2005) advises that the public sector has withdrawn funding for infrastructure and services, and has placed this responsibility into the control of the private sector. This has a number of economical advantages for the government. Not only does this allow for government monies to be paced into other need public services, it also allows for revenue raised from the development to be placed back into the community. However, it must be noted that this does not mean the public sector has reduced its responsibility in the management and administration of the MPC, instead this system demonstrates the variety of governance used to deliver the MPC product to the market (Dowling and McGuirk, 2006).

The MPC also has environmental advantages, which include environmental protection on a small scale, such as reduced dependencies on motor vehicle uses, due to the close proximity or inclusion of infrastructure and services on site (less dependence on motor vehicles also creates a safe, environmentally friendly community). However, public transport from MPCs (located in the western suburbs) to nearby business districts and employment regions is minimal. Therefore resident of MPCs in Sydney’s western suburbs are largely dependent on private transportation,
CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND

when travelling to employment areas. Thereby creating a trade off, with minimal short-travel car usage, however an increase in car usage from MPCs (in the western suburbs) to employment areas.

In addition, environmental issues such as: degradation of natural resources (wetlands, forests, bush lands); the scare of low dam water levels; the depleting quality of watercourses and waterways as a result of pollution levels and diminution of open space are reviewed when designing and developing an MPC. It is these developments which lead to an increased amount of open space areas and the conservation of environmentally significant lands, thereby producing (to an extent) an environmentally conscious development. Developers also dedicate environmentally sensitive lands when they are offered incentives such as bonus floor space ratios.

Webster (2004) holds the opinion that environmental sustainability can be accomplished, by use of: widespread commercial/business and retail development; compact mixed-use developments; pedestrian and cycle way orientated design; design that limits and controls motor vehicle use; incentives to encourage greater public transport patronage and utilisation; dedication of vulnerable and environmentally sensitive/significant land; utilisation of a recycling system; and consistency with BASIXs requirements. It should be noted that the above-mentioned ideas are considered during the design of an MPC as architects, urban designers and planners seek to market a product, which is environmentally sustainable.

THE NEGATIVE FACTORS OF THE MPC

Although the MPC has various advantages, such as those mentioned above, there are also numerous economic, social and environmental disadvantages in this form of residential development, such as the timing of the development, social exclusion, social differentiation and fear of security. Author Brendan Gleeson (2006) is of the opinion that the possibility for a classless suburbia has been ‘quietly eroding’ through such developments as the MPC, as there is doubt as to whether MPCs can provide social solidarity and tolerance in a community where diversity can be respected and celebrated.

The development of an MPC largely depends on the compromise and negotiation between the private and public sector, each facing losses if the residential development does not satisfy the
CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND

expectations of the market. However, both these parties hold varied views which may place
difficulties on a compromise being reached and may result in an extensive timeframe for the
development of the MPC (which includes the purchase of land, negotiations of zonings, approvals,
staging, guidelines, etc). Minnery and Bajracharya (2005) states that the timeframe is a concern for
the private sector as it leads to uncertainty about the final outcome and markets response, as the
needs and wants of the society, family structure and job location is continuously changing.

Many of the characteristics of MPCs currently on the market operate to appeal to a particular
‘type’ (i.e. the belief of the ‘right type of people’) of family/person “non-resident can be designed
out of these exclusionary communal formations” (Dowling and McGuirk 2006, 4). This results in
those from an upper socio-economic background investing into a prestigious MPC which
comprises of ‘added extras’ and high class luxuries through community services and design
elements (e.g. golf courses, artificial lakes, club houses) whilst those individuals who are of a
middle social economic background only affording to purchase into an MPC which lacks the
added extras and good locations. Additionally, lower income earners are mostly excluded from the
MPC market. Consequently, this results in clusters of wealthy communities in specific locations
(usually near the city center/waterfront locations) and middle socio-economic background
communities in other locations, creating a class driven and divided society, where the exclusion is
derived from the selling price. It is this ‘privatized’ MPC which is believed to exclude
“undesirable persons and things at a distance, while bringing more desirable persons and things
closer together” (Gwyther 2005, 62). This exclusiveness can result in damaging social impacts
creating a ‘them’ versus ‘us’ society. As the MPC’s community will have strong relations with
other persons from that community, due to similarities in their economic backgrounds, it will
undeniably develop an artificial barrier between the outer community and the MPC populate.

In the perspective of Brendan Gleeson, fear is influencing members of society to progress from
the suburbs into the “security and isolation of exclusive residential communities” (Gleeson 2006,
49). Rofe (2006) advises that whilst the world outside the confines of the gate is subjected to
crime, violence and eroding safety, the MPC offers its community with safety through a fortress-
oriented environment. Interestingly, Minton (2006) argues that the fear of the community is not
supported by crime statistics, which illustrate a gradual fall of criminal behaviour and acts taking
place in America. However, research conducted in 2006 throughout America concluded that 90
per cent of people who were questioned believed that crime was on the increase (Minton 2006). Minton (2006) believes that this fear of crime associates with the trust of community members and not with proven statistics (which illustrate otherwise). This shortfall of trust in community members can have detrimental social impacts on the society at large.

Security is provided within the MPC by means of physical elements such as security measures, gates as seen in Figure 2.5, territorial and unwelcome devices, private security presence, and fences and through social measures such as public surveillance, knowing and respecting your neighbours and their properties (achieved through community participation and events) and community surveillance groups. This level of security is implemented because the suburbs are considered to be a disordered location where one does not know their neighbour and persons have to protect themselves, lacking respect for property and place. The MPC is believed to offer the respect and security that the suburbs are believed to lack.

**Figure 2.5 – ‘The Village’ a Gated Community in Florida**

In Minton’s perspective “it seems evident that the creation of closely guarded ‘malls without walls’ that keep out undesirables and ring fence them in ghettos of exclusion, damages these levels of trust” (Minton 2006, 30). Kohn (2004) is of the perspective that exposure to diverse cultures can offset the distrust and fear apparent in segregated societies such as MPCs “gradually undermines the feelings that people of different classes and cultures live in the same world” (Kohn 2004, 8). It is believed that residents of MPCs are not as exposed to persons of diverse
cultures and ethnic groups, in comparison to people living within the suburbs or city, this can potentially result in negative feelings regarding specific cultures and groups creating a segregated society (Kohn, 2004). Over time the populace of the MPC can become targets of the ‘excluded’ outside suburban community, and result in further segregation within the community.

The MPC also includes environmental disadvantages. Specifically, MPCs located in western Sydney which include the subdivision, land clearing and development of largely undeveloped areas as seen in Figure 2.6, some of which include endangered flora and fauna. Even if the developer chooses to retain some of the endangered species located on the site, these habitats usually become fragmented and disconnected from the remainder of the bush-land, minimizing its ability to survive.

**Figure 2.6 - Land Clearing**

Additionally, this form of development has been regarded as homogenous in design and lacking in diversity and creativity in terms of both architectural style and urban form. Richard Florida (2008) states that MPCs can lack in diversity and uses the example of the Seaside Community in Florida which was used in the ‘Truman Show’ a film where the main character was unaware that he resided in an artificial world which was broadcasted on television intended to entertain the ‘real’ world. This plays on the proposed ‘in-authenticity’ of the MPC, which is to be discussed further within this thesis. Kim Dovey (1999) Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design states that MPCs are isolated from the forces of change and “enforce totalizing codes of behaviour in order to construct such ideal imagery and to protect it as economic and symbolic capital” (Dovey 1999, 153). This MPC disadvantage will be further discussed in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 3 - THE MPC, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
CHAPTER 3 – THE MPC, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

The development of a diverse space and the use of creative and innovative ideas to create such a space are important for any built environment professional. Phillip Parker (2008) believes the built environment has the ability to impact on our moods and our behaviour. If spaces are unique and calming they will promote positive and enjoyable feelings for the people who frequent them, however if they are homogenous and overpowering, the opposite effect will take place. Parker (2008) states that planners and architects have a responsibility to both current and future generations to hand down spaces that portray creativity, encouragement and innovation and represent the values of our time, as he argues that we mould our spaces and in return they mould us. It is important that professionals who work to create the built environment research different ways to produce environments, which stimulate creativity and innovation and produce spaces which are unique and enjoyable for all who utilize them. It is also important that eccentric ideas are not disregarded and professionals such as planners are not afraid to suggest ideas that are different and may at time appear impossible to implement. For it is philosopher Bertrand Russell who stated: “do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, forever opinion now accepted was once eccentric” (Parker 2008, 19).

DEFINITIONS FOR:- DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

However, before we can start analysing MPCs in terms of their diversity and creativity, we must first understand the meanings behind these two terms. Diversity is a term which has a multitude of meanings, these meanings depend on the discipline that the term is defined in. In relation of the built environment, diversity refers to a mixture of different urban landscapes and architectural styles within an area as illustrated in Figure 3.1. Diversity also refers to a combination of different planning uses within a region through the use of zoning. Diversity also means a variety of cultures, ages, sexes, ethnic groups and backgrounds, etc. who utilize a space. Each of these definitions relate and affect the other, and are therefore connected in a complex and intricate way. Susan S. Fainstein (2005), a Professor in the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University, questions whether planned environments, such as those of the MPC, can in fact create diversity or only manifest a ‘staged authenticity.’

Similarly creativity is a term which largely depends on its context. In terms of the built environment a creative space is an influential space, it is a place which houses new ideas and...
designs and influences its inhabitants to be stimulated, innovated and motivated to create. Charles Landry states that “today’s classic was yesterday’s innovation. Creativity is not only about a continuous invention of the new, but also how to deal appropriately with the old” (Landry 2000, 7). Louis Albrechts (2005), a Professor in the Department of Architecture, Urban Design and Regional Planning at the Katholieke University in Belgium, conditions that creativity stimulates a professional to consider a problem, challenge or situation through a different/new approach allowing this individual to invent imaginative and original futures as a solution to the problem. Albrechts (2005) poses the question as to what planning does creativity require and what creativity does planning require. Similar to Fainstein’s question, this is an issue which must be closely analysed as town planning, as a profession, cannot grow and develop without the examination of elements such as diversity and creativity of a space and a profession.

**Figure 3.1 – Architecturally Diverse Streetscape of Quakers Hill**

**WHY WE NEED DIVERSITY**

Diversity within architectural form is an important element within any streetscape. Its importance lies with the many benefits it brings to both the built environment and the inhabitants of the space.
This form of architectural difference not only attracts a diverse and creative community, it also allows the residents of the space to find a sense of place within the unique environment created.

One view outlining the importance of diversity lies with Stephen McMahon (2005) who states that in his experience few artists choose to reside in suburbia, as artists echo criticisms that these environments do not nurture innovation and inspiration, instead they promote conservatism and conformity. In many respects this belief is reaffirmed through the works of various artists, such as the work of Malvina Reynolds in her song “Little Boxes.” Anecdotal evidence suggests that these lyrics were inspired by the visual appearance of the dwellings in the City of Daly as identified in Figure 3.2, located in California. It has been suggested that during an outing with her family Malvina drove past Daly City and observed the similarity of the dwellings, many of which were designed by developer Henry Doelger, resulting in these structures to be similar in appearance (Smith and Schimmel, 2007). McMahon commends that “in the land of mc-mansions…the challenge confronting planners and urban designers is to facilitate, rather than to ignore, the potential role for new suburbs to foster creativity” (McMahon 2005, 27). These new suburbs have the potential to become creative environments, if appropriate steps are taken to ensure that legislation implemented to direct residential design is unrestrictive and allows for innovative ideas and developments to be constructed.

**Figure 3.2 – City of Daly**
Qualitative data administrated by Psychologist Mikhaly Csikszentmihalyi justifies McMahon’s observation concerning the connection between creative environments and creative individuals. Mikhaly Csikszentmihalyi, whose research offers an understanding into the personalities of ‘inventors,’ conducted interviews with 90 ‘highly creative’ individuals (including actors, authors, scientists, politicians, etc) and through his interaction with these individuals, discovered the significance of context on the creative outlet of those ‘creative’ individuals (Forsyth, 2007). His study found that “in order to make a real difference, creative individuals need to have a context (termed a ‘domain’) and an audience (a field)” (Forsyth 2007, 463). Therefore, the ‘creative’ person requires an environment which fosters creativity, this environment must inspire the individual to be creative. An environment that is homogenous and bland in design does not provide an appropriate context/domain to flourish creativity, which may lead to the individual seeking another environment to reside in or result in the hampering of that individuals creativity. In addition, the education system for planners can become more innovative (this is also referred to as the ‘context’).

This views of Psychologist Csikszentmihalyi is also reiterated by professor Harold M. Proshansky, an environmental psychologist, who argues that psychology highlights the significance of variability in the built environment and the requirement of this environments ability to change, “the overall suggestion is that, unless forcibly restrained, most higher organisms engage in an active process of seeking this variability if not found in the immediate surroundings” (Sinou and Steemers 2004, 61) Proshansky believes that individuals organise their physical environment to maximise their freedom of choice, therefore choice and variety are two significant values and should be reflected on in the decision making of architectural design within MPCs (Sinou and Steemers, 2004). Therefore, the MPC must accommodate for a diversity in housing choice, this diversity must not only lie within the choice of different housing stock (e.g. studio apartment, three bedroom dwellings) there must also be a diversity in the overall appearance of the dwellings and streetscapes, leading to variability within the physical environment.

Additionally, Charles Landry (2006) states that “the most successful ‘creatives’ tend to cluster in places of distinctiveness and so the geography of creativity is lopsided” (Landry 2006, 272). Landry (2006) believes that places in the outer suburbs suffer from declining possibilities and reduced stimulation, and therefore a creative divide is present, between areas of the cities and the
outer suburbs. Mapping the residence of creative persons in Adelaide, by COMEDIA, illustrated that creative persons reside in areas of distinction, character, transformation, heritage and edginess illustrated in Figure 3.3 (Landry, 2006). In addition, Richard Florida states that creative people desire to reside in places with amenities and places of open mindedness, tolerance and self expression to allow for productivity advantages, knowledge spill-overs and economies of scale “it is the innovation that stems from a diverse pool of resources” (Florida 2008, 67). Although, the above mentioned characteristics are common to the city streetscape due to the city’s ability to transform at a faster rate (a result of globalized cities) than that of the outer suburbs as well as the city’s age and the inclusion of numerous heritage items within this space, the density of the city and the diversity of residents and visitor frequenting the area. However, this does not mean the outer suburbs are environments which cannot be creative. The development of inspirational areas can still be achieved within the outer suburbs.

Figure 3.3 – Brussels

Jane Jacobs states that homogenous environments although are believed to signify order, aesthetically they carry disorder by portraying a lack of direction “in places stamped with the monotony and repetition of sameness you move, but in moving you seem to have gotten nowhere”
CHAPTER 3 – THE MPC, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

(Jacobs 1992, 224). In these situations east is the same as west, and south is the same as north, this sameness results in a lack of movement and direction and adds a sense of confusion and chaos (Jacobs, 1992). It is these ‘bland’ environments, which cannot create a sense of place, as residents are not surrounded by places which are individualistic and alive with life and movement. An example of an environment discussed by Jacobs (above) can be illustrated through the planned Brasilia located in Brazil, which is a city built of identical multi-storeyed developments, each representing a homogenous monument, surrounded by a vastness of open space containing community facilities (refer to Figure 3.4) (Cornish, 1991). Edward Cornish (1991) states residents of Brasilia find difficulty in finding their way around the city due to the uniformity of the space and architecture and firmly disagreed with the boxes they resided in, claiming it is only in their homes that they are able to express and practice their individuality through decorations (Cornish, 1991). From Edward Cornish’s article, it is evident that a sense of belonging and place is found within the ‘inside home’ of those residing in Brasilia, rather than the outside built environment.

**Figure 3.4 – Residential buildings in Brasilia**

The above paragraphs illustrate that persons of all professions and walks of life need a creative environment to reside and foster in, these places allow people to be inspired and flourish in their creative endeavours. Additionally, creative and diverse spaces allow for a unique character and sense of place to be created, which is not only a planning initiative it is also an important element in terms of urban design principles. Dwellings from different architects using the designs and materials from different eras can create such a unique space, where old and new architecture work
CHAPTER 3 – THE MPC, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

to create an innovative streetscape. Additionally, styles and monuments from different cultures can be used to attract a diverse community within an area, and add a culture and antiquity to a streetscape. Jane Jacobs (1992) argues that physical diversity (i.e. diversity in the built environment) stimulates economic and social diversity.

THE OPINIONS OF AUTHORS AND THEORISTS ON THE MPC

There have been numerous theorists and authors who have regarded residential developments such as the MPC to be homogenous in design and lacking in diversity and creativity in terms of both architectural style and urban form. Two such authors include McGuirk and Dowling (2007) who are of the opinion that smaller MPCs target a specific market niche and therefore mostly function as homogenous enclaves. However they argue that larger MPCs (which are of a suburb scale), although are alike in ‘design intensity,’ are considered to be heterogeneous in nature, as they include a mixture of dwelling types such as apartments, dwelling houses, terrace etc, which offer greater lifestyle, household and value mix, then that of the uniform suburban estates (McGuirk and Dowling, 2007).

Fainstein argues that MPCs are initially designed with the goal of producing a unique and diverse environment, however states that it is these residential developments, more than any other, that attract accusations of in-authenticity, “of being a simulacrum rather than the real thing” (Fainstein 2005, 6). This opinion is also voiced by author MacCannell, who believes certain places mimic a ‘staged authenticity’ as opposed to the real thing, where areas that seek to produce environments which embody local character, often house chain stores and global corporations, “there is an implication that the authenticity that underlies a genuine diversity apparently can be attained only spontaneously” (Fainstein 2005, 11) From this quote, it is implied that as spontaneity is not practiced when designing and developing an MPC, as this form of residential development is carefully planned and structured, it is less diverse when compared to existing suburbia (which is structured to an extent, however with far less restriction). Additionally, residential development such as the MPC, although seek to add to the local character of the surrounding suburbs, often greatly differ from this character, as the feeling and impression of the area changes as soon as you enter the boundaries of the community. MacCannell continues to say that where residential development incorporates some form of architectural originality, the cost of the development
increases dramatically, therefore it is common for cost and market imperative to restrict variety within planned communities (Fainstein, 2005).

Fainstein (2005) attributes the popularity of the MPC development to a successful ‘product formula’ (i.e. model/form of the MPC) that is desirable to consumers and has dwellings built in accordance with a set standard. This is identified in quote “it also, however, results from imitation of a successful product formula that, as disseminated by the global media, becomes seen as desirable by consumers everywhere” (Fainstein 2005, 6). The success of this formula/model for the MPC is to some extent attributed to globalization, which has resulted in this models over use, throughout different areas of the world, resulting it planned suburbs holding a specific likeness to one another. Kozlowski states that “neighbourhood character and heritage values are identified as components that significantly contribute to the creation of a sense of place” (Kozlowski 2006, 38). However, as many MPCs are newly formed and the buildings, within these spaces, hold a likeness to one another it is unlikely that these areas will be heritage listed in the near future. This poses one to question the future heritage significance of these spaces and their contribution to the local character of the area and surrounding suburbs.

Knox (2005) blames the problem of the lack of diversity on globalization, which he believes has produced a ‘fast world’ where the communication barriers from the past are no longer an issue and the growth of suburbs around the world occurs quickly. In this world there is an intense connectedness that brings millions of companies and people by use of global networks to consumption, product, communication and knowledge (Knox, 2005). Although it is true to say that such a ‘connected’ world, has resulted in places to change at a faster rate, it is debated by theorists that the more these suburbs are changing the more they look the same, this undoubtedly results in places which lack individual character and diversity (Knox, 2005). Conversely, Madanipar (2006) is of the view that the global environment provides competition and design provides a means of one place being distinguisingly different from another. However, one only needs to look at the developments abroad to see the cross-country similarities between the design of buildings (specifically the design of office blocks and the design of contemporary residential dwellings) which are similar in appearance. Although, professionals should look to other countries for ideas, there should be considerable changes made to the product to suit the subject locality.
Knox (2005) further argues that in today’s global economic system, time is money. Therefore, it is not uncommon to have situations where significant pressure is placed on companies to design an MPC in record time. Less time is utilized when standardized models are used, especially when these models have been proven to work. Therefore, companies can adopt a standardized model (with minimal change) to the subject site. Additionally, the developer is often motivated by the rewards that a residential development produces, which is dependent on four variables: selling price, production and infrastructure cost, anticipated rewards and land acquisition costs (Tiesdell and Adams, 2004). Hence, if the price of the land increases, the developer will be required to cost cut in other areas, areas such as the implementation of diverse architectural styles, which may have originally been anticipated to be allocated to several architecture companies as opposed to one company.

The theorist Jane Jacobs urges town planners and urban designers to avoid ideas and models of ‘ideal cities,’ which she coins ‘radian garden city beautiful,’ instead she urges planners, urban designers and architects to observe and understand the making of ‘real’ places, where people enjoy their interaction with the streetscape and appreciate the space (Fainstein, 2005). She explains that these places are “characterized by congestion, multiple interactions among strangers, short streets, and mixed uses” (Fainstein 2005, 5). It is these places, which are diverse in their uses and architectural styles, that Jacobs believes stimulate creativity, desire and fantasy (Fainstein, 2005). The elements, which Jacobs discusses, are important to any residential suburb (not just the city), as these characteristics create an identity and uniqueness to any space. It is these elements which attract the market, and with it the creative class. Already established suburbs in many ways illustrate such a character as many of these places have evolved with less restriction placed on the design and development of their streetscape and built form, in comparison to many MPC developments. It is these established environments that demonstrate diversity in their dwelling design and as such an interesting streetscape, with a unique and colourful urban forms.

Jacobs (1992) believes that diversity should be left in the hands of the market, conversely, Fainstein (2005) disagrees with this view stating that in the past urban centres and neighbourhoods were owned by multiple owners and smaller lot sizes, however in today’s society the scale of development is vast and motivated by imitation. Fainstein (2005) states that development around the world is somewhat similar in form, and on the rare occasion where developers attempt to
incorporate local character the result is often superficial. Additionally, Elizabeth Farrelly (2008) believes that in the past architecture was about beauty, however to date, it is about money, with today’s society consisting of two classes: the developers (who constructs and sells the product) and the consumers (who purchases the product), neither of whom is concerned with the architecture, making of place or urbanism. Farrelly (2008) states that contemporary buildings have minimal public-face roles, to make them anonymous, allowing them to be bought and sold effortlessly. Farrelly (2008) questions the messages that these buildings send to the public realm and its inhabitants. In many respects Farrelly’s views can be applied to the MPC, and the types of buildings, which are constructed within these area. Buildings which hold many similarities, making them unproblematic to sell and allowing the place to be uniform and clean lined.

Sandercock states that:

Rational planners have been obsessed with controlling how and when and which people use…space. Meanwhile, ordinary people continue to find creative ways of appropriating spaces and creating places, in spite of planning, to fulfil their desires as well as their needs, to tend the spirit as well as take care of the rent (Fainstein 2005, 5).

An example to the above quote is illustrated through Figure 3.5 which shows how public stairs are used by youth as skateboard equipment. Thereby the youth is using the stairs in a creative way to fulfil his desire.

Research into this field of diversity suggests that although urban theorists are unanimous in their belief of the importance of diversity and its positive impacts on both a place and its residence, their opinions differ in regards to the types of environments that should be produced by planners and often question whether planning can create innovative and creative spaces (Fainstein, 2005). This is especially significant in the case of the MPC, which sees a number of theorists question whether enough diversity is produced in such environments and whether these places can promote creativity and innovation.
CHAPTER 4 - REVIEWING ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY
CHAPTER 4 – REVIEWING ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY

This chapter contains two case studies: Quakers Hill and Newbury which are located in Blacktown. An investigation of these two areas was completed through the use of three methods, including:

- Site visits allowing for an in-depth observation of the sites;
- Review of the controls used to manage the sites; and
- In-depth interviews with professionals and residents of the site.

As part of the research for this thesis two full day site visits were conducted in Quakers Hill and Newbury. The site visits were conducted on Sunday 7 and Sunday 14 September 2008 at 12:30pm (images below include streetscape of Quakers Hill and Newbury). It should be noted that the time and date of the site visits might have affected the number of people walking/driving through each site, thus impacting on the character of the place. However, being a warm Sunday afternoon it is perceived that the weather would encourage people to be outdoors.

In the case of Newbury, the information centre was visited (prior to the site visit) which provided pamphlets and a map of the area. This was not done in the case of Quakers Hill, as this suburb is an established area with no information centre.

The site visits included both driving through the sites as well as walking through the suburb/MPC on foot. The decision to walk through certain streets of the two sites was executed in areas deemed important to the analysis of architectural diversity in the area, inclusive of streets with divers/lack of architectural styles, opposite open space areas and areas on main streets.

An analysis was made in regards to the architectural style of dwellings, landscaping used, streetscape and urban form of the site, character of the area, the diversity of the area in terms of architectural style/periods and the model template used within the suburb/MPC. This analysis was recorded through photography (with approximately 200 photographs taken across the two days) and note taking which was used to describe the buildings, urban form and character of the area.

Please note that the evaluation and comparison of the two sites is covered in Chapter 5.
CASE STUDY 1 – QUAKERS HILL, BLACKTOWN

Site Description:

In the early 1800s Quakers Hill consisted of four land grants: 2,000 acres to Major West; 695 acres to Joseph Pye; 400 acres to William Henry Allcock; and Robert Campbell Estate, which were used for farming purposes (Blacktown Council, 2008). In the early 1900s Quakers Hill began to be subdivided into lots of 5-acres for its use as market gardens and poultry farms (Blacktown Council, 2008). In the 1920s butcher shops and grocery stores were developed, establishing a commercial centre (Blacktown Council, 2008). To date, the area is mostly residential, however areas of poultry farms and small-scale farming are still located within the suburb (Blacktown Council, 2008). Quakers Hill is currently divided into two sections, the older part contains houses built in the late 1970s and 1980s whilst the newer part consists of dwellings constructed in the 1990s. Thereby, providing the suburb with a variety of architectural styles and forms due to popular dwelling styles in those eras.

Quakers Hill is bounded by (located in the Blacktown local government area) is bounded by Burdekin Road, Richmond Road, and Railway Road and comprises of predominantly rounded cul-de-sac streets refer to Figure 4.1. The recreational and open space areas, which allow for both passive and active recreation, are scattered throughout the suburb. It does not appear that the suburb was developed from a standard model/template but rather the suburb evolved through an individual development application process.

The perceptual edges to Quakers Hill are not easily distinguishable, as they blend with the surrounding suburbs of Blacktown. The first impression received when entering the suburb is one of usability and progression. Whilst on the site visit the roads, footpaths and front yards were in constant use by residents and visitors. This constant use of the roads/gardens/streets could be a result of the weather, time and date of the site visit (conducted on a warm Sunday afternoon) which may have encouraged residents to spend the day outside.

The streets of Quakers Hill were wide with footpaths and street verges on both sides of the road. The streetscape felt open and non-claustraphobic and the mature trees and street furniture provided
CHAPTER 4 – REVIEWING ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY

an interesting and green environment. There was a balance between the height of the buildings (which were of two storeys or less) and the length of the road and setbacks, allowing for a sun filled and uncluttered street.

Figure 4.1 – Quakers Hill Locality Map

The character of the area was portrayed both through the street activity and the connection between the built and natural environment through the use of different dwelling colours and forms and the greenery of the landscaping and street trees. The mature trees, shrubs and vegetation on the street verges and in the front yards as well as the heritage elements within the suburb, provided the area with a sense of place and character.

The streetscape included a variation of housing styles and facades, with inspirations obtained from the P&O style Cottages and Gothic Style Cottages, specifically the roof and awning elements, facades, shape of windows, columns, etc. A number of the dwellings were constructed in the
present styles such as: Neo-Classical, Contemporary and Post Modern styles as well as having elements of Federation, Spanish and Italian styles. There were a few dwellings which provided a significant departure from the surrounding streetscape, thereby contributing to the originality of the urban form and adding an interesting contribution to the overall streetscape, refer to Figure 4.2.

It should be noted that none of the houses were identical to the other as each house included a number of elements/features that were different to the adjoining dwelling. The streetscape included an extensive variety of homes with each dwelling providing its own individuality and element to the streetscape. In addition, the landscaping and fencing of each dwelling was different and added to the eclectic appearance of the suburb.

The overall architecture within Quakers Hill was diverse and creative, including inspirations from previous architectural styles, inclusive of modern features. There were also a number of dwellings which were vastly different and provided significant contributions to the streetscape as well as monumental pieces to the character of the area.

**Figure 4.2 – Dwellings in Quakers Hill**
The dwellings within Quakers Hill included a number of additions and alterations as well as a diversity of housing styles, as identified in the photographs on this page.
CHAPTER 4 – REVIEWING ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY

Controls:

Three main planning documents which control residential development in Quakers Hill, include:

- Blacktown Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1988;
- Development Control Plan for development in the residential zone (referred to as DCP - RZ); and
- State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (triggered through the DCP).

Blacktown Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1988
The Blacktown LEP 1988 includes a merit based set of objectives for development in the residential zone, which mainly focus on maintaining the character of the zone and surrounding land-uses as well as focusing on the scale, bulk and appearance of the proposed development and ensuring it does not adversely impact on adjacent properties (Blacktown City Council, 1988). These objectives are non-restrictive and allow for variation. It should be noted that these objectives do not specifically refer to architectural design.

Development Control Plan for development in the residential zone (DCP - RZ)
An in-depth analysis of Blacktown City Council’s DCP - RZ found the guidelines to be fairly non-restrictive in nature. The DCP is divided into sections which outlines controls for different housing types (e.g. detached housing, integrated housing, residential flat buildings) under which a set of objectives and controls are inserted to guide the applicant with both procedural information as well as information concerning planning controls (such as height limits and setback controls). It should be noted that controls such as setbacks, height limits, parking space sizes and subdivision sizes contain strict numeric controls. The remained of the document is non-limiting in its regulations, especially those controls relating to the design of the home. Although on some occasions restrictions such as seeking that the dwelling is compatible with surrounding dwelling and the streetscape is used, this proves to be one of the few controls which new dwellings are subject too.

DCP - RZ contains a set of six main objectives at the beginning of the document. These objectives outline controls in which housing design is to be followed. An analysis of these objectives has

- 43 -
identified that they allow for both interpretation and innovative design. In Particular, the controls
do not specify what era or material is to be used and ensure that both contemporary and traditional
or mock traditional designs can be utilised. The controls also state that the housing should create
architecturally stimulating streetscapes, which lends itself to innovative architectural designs. The
six standards include (Blacktown City Council, 2006):

- Ensuring housing provides for the needs of current and future occupants;
- Ensuring accessibility between outdoor and indoor space;
- Preserving local characteristics;
- Establishing safe and socially active environments;
- Creating architecturally stimulating neighbourhoods/streets; and
- Ensuring controls provide housing choice and affordability.

As outlined above, the six standards are relaxed and encourage the applicant to consider issues
such as solar accessibility, changeability and other initiatives which allow for better design.
Although the DCP encourages applicants to consider certain elements of design it does not state
what types of materials should/should not be used and where elements such as balconies should be
located.

State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development

DCP - RZ also refers applicants to SEPP 65 which includes general non-restrictive design
principles to be considered by the applicant when designing a residential flat building. The
intension of the SEPP is to: improve design quality to achieve aesthetic buildings and streetscapes
with improved built form; satisfy changing demographics and social profiles; and maximise safety
and security whilst considering environmental sustainability (Department of Planning, 2002). The
SEPP states that “good design is a creative process which… results in the development of great
urban places: buildings, streets, squares and parks…good design serves the public interest and
includes appropriate innovation to respond to technical, social, aesthetic, economic and
environmental challenges” (Department of Planning 2002, 1). The SEPP allows for both
interpretation and changeability.
Interviews:

Interviews were conducted with a resident of Quakers Hill (on the 21 August 2008), Senior Planner from the Department of Planning (on 3 September 2008) and Planning Officer from Blacktown Council (on 5 September 2008). The interview questions reviewed issues such as: administration roles in regards to the MPC; meaning of architectural diversity; perspectives on design guidelines; opinions of streetscapes; etc. The overriding message obtained by the researcher from these three interviews was that all participants had both a negative and a positive opinion in regards to MPCs.

The Senior Planning Officer at the Department of Planning advised that in the late 1990s/early 2000s master plans were written into various environmental planning instruments with the idea that they would provide a step down from broad controls. These plans were intended for larger sites with the purpose of obtaining cohesive and improved outcome in terms of combined services as well as to provide a more predictable urban environment. The Senior Planner was of the opinion that in some instances master plans were artificial as a similar result could be accomplished through a good development application process. Additionally, the private sector could achieve master plan outcomes without the legislative framework. The Senior Planner’s guess was that this is the reason they lost favour in today’s planning instruments. The Planning Officer at Blacktown City Council stated that Council has limited involvement in the MPC process and is predominantly involved in the initial master plan process (i.e. establishing the development application for a subdivision and the structure of community management scheme) as well as making certain that all endorsement of applications made by the review panels do not conflict with council’s DCPs.

In the opinion of the Departmental Senior Officer, there are negative and positive factors concerning MPCs. The Senior Officer stated that the purchase of a home is the biggest investment a person makes and has a huge impact on the quality of their life, thus people desire certainty and predictability. The MPC provide that certainty for the buyer as they know what they are receiving in terms of open space, facilities, urban fabric, etc. From the perspective of the government the MPC allows government agencies to seek larger contributions than obtained from smaller/individual developments. However the negative aspects of the MPC include: providing sterile/artificial communities (i.e. they create a specific environment for a specific group of
people) and can be gated in terms of their operation “therefore they quash creativity a bit…I think it is something that you wouldn’t want to see everywhere, I think it is good to have that choice” (Departmental Senior Planner, 2008). In terms of the demographics, the Senior Planner stated that the MPC community was not a real reflection of the surrounding community where people of different ages, backgrounds, family structures reside, and unless you have different groups of people growing side by side with one another you cannot understand the needs of those persons. However, the Senior Officer advised that there were people who desire to reside in smaller dwellings and share communal space.

In terms of the design guidelines, the Senior Planner was of the opinion that they deliver what people are buying into (i.e. certainty and consistency) and encourage factors such as appropriate landscaping, walkable communities and energy efficiency. Although, some controls can be overly restrictive (i.e. when obligating people to paint their home/fences a certain colour).

In regards to Newbury, Blacktown Council’s Planning Officer stated that there was a mixture of built form and there was a definite difference between the lots sold to individual home builders (which are basic brick finishes with lower maintenance obligations) and lots developed as part of a large pack by developers such as Mirvac (which are generally of a higher standard with high quality finishes including different types of paints, rendered finishes and feature materials used). The Planning Officer stated that there was a definite theme along Stanhope Parkway (main entrance to Newbury) however there was a sense of repetition. The Planner advised that the types and designs of building used in Newbury was not much difference to Mirvac developments in other parts of Sydney.

The Council Planning Officer stated that the community was generally pleased with Newbury, as each development application was endorsed by the architectural panel and was reported to the community association (which represents the views of residence). The Council Officer also stated that there have been instances where applicants have sought for alteration or additions to their home. The Council Officer advised that when people buy into Newbury they do not realize that everything is much more controlled, when compared to existing suburbs.
A question within the interview and one asked to all participants was to define ‘architectural diversity’ and what this meant to the interviewee. Participants spoke of creating an interesting human environment and not stifling creativity by having too prescriptive development controls; creating a visually pleasing environment to be in and utilizing different elements of the streetscape; and the manner in which the buildings sit between hard and soft space. The Council Officer stated that architectural diversity was fairly subjective.

The resident of Quakers Hill stated that the factors which attracted her family to their home was: its proximity to employment, retail, transport; family orientated neighbourhood; affordability; the number of bedrooms in the home, size of the block, brick home, position of dwelling on the block; and the exterior appearance of the home (a dark brick Spanish style semi detached home, built in the late 1970s). The resident stated that unlike some newer suburbs, there was a substantial amount of architectural diversity in Quakers Hill “you can walk down my street and every house looks different whether it is because of different styles, different single or doubles storey, different coloured bricks, textures” (resident of Quakers Hill, 2008). The resident advised that because Quakers Hill was an older suburb many of the dwellings were renovated, rendered or newly landscaped and therefore they were all quite different from one another. The resident stated that the streetscape of her suburb was “fantastic” specifically compared to newer suburbs. The resident explained that the streets of Quakers Hill are wide; include native, mature and strategically placed trees; the houses are setback an appropriate length therefore the streetscape does not feel claustrophobic; there are footpaths on both sides of the road; and it is a low density suburb which feels open and welcoming.

In regards to Newbury, the resident stated they personally did not like the area and would not reside there, for the following reasons: the narrow roads; the planter boxes on the roadway are a safety hazard; the front and secondary setbacks are small; the footpath are only on one side of the road; houses developed too close to one another; expensive; no public transport; and the streetscape feels claustrophobic. The resident continued to say that although there were some beautiful homes in Newbury there were also instances where you could tell that the same builder built the homes because all those houses look exactly the same. The resident of Quakers Hill advised that they prefer the streetscape of their older suburb then that of Newbury. The resident
CHAPTER 4 – REVIEWING ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY

stated that the older suburbs offer more uniqueness and more opportunity for the landowner to renovate and put in new gardens.

CASE STUDY 2 – NEWBURY MPC, BLACKTOWN

Site Description:

Newbury, designed in 2000, is bounded by Old Windsor Road, Sunnyholt Road and Stanhope Parkway refer to Figure 4.3 and is developed around a model template, which sees the site divided into 7 neighbourhoods containing approximately 180 lots (each), which are developed surrounding a community facility.

Figure 4.3 – Newbury Locality Map

Both the physical and perceptual edges to Newbury are easily distinguishable as you become aware that you have entered a new space as soon as you walk into the suburb. The first impression received is one of non-use and silence. Upon the site visit there was little interaction between the researcher and the residents of Newbury, as there was minimal pedestrian and open space activity.
It should be noted that similarly to the Quakers Hill site visit, the Newbury site visit was conducted on a warm Sunday afternoon. However, unlike Quakers Hill the streets of Newbury were seldom used. This could be because the residents where either away from the suburb or indoors.

Newbury’s street network includes a curved road pattern with lot shapes predominantly rectangular (some lots, such as corner lots are irregular in shape) ranging from 400sqm to 700sqm. Recreational facilities, schools and community facilities are strategically located around the site to allow their position to be within walking distance of the residential zone. The open space facilities are of a large size and allow for both passive and active recreation, they also include elements such as fountains and vegetation which creates an interesting appearance within the space.

The density around community facilities is predominantly higher as it is along major parks, water features and major roads (through the use of dwelling types such as townhouses, duplexes and attached dwellings). A decrease in density is seen further from major centres/roads (using dwelling types such as attached dwellings).

The streets are relatively narrow with no footpaths used (in some locations) other than a street verges between the block and the road. In most locations there is a balanced ratio between the height of the buildings (two storeys) and the length of the road and setbacks providing a non-claustrophobic feeling. It should be acknowledged that the streets are not visually green (as the planted trees are no yet mature) and contained no street furniture other than lighting. The character of the area could be summarized as: exclusive and quiet due to the lack of street activity and interaction.

The architectural style of the dwellings included ‘modern contemporary’ refer to Figure 4.4 no other styles were identified (by this researcher) on the site visit. It should be noted, that there were a minority of external features which may have been inspired by other eras/styles of architecture. However these were very few with most houses not using many external features.

In certain locations there was homogeneity in the dwelling design with little or no variation (i.e. a row of similar dwellings on after the other). In other locations there was a clear common theme
and the similarities included the finishes and facades, however the overall shape/appearance of the dwellings although ‘modern contemporary’ was different.

Overall, there were some distinguishable differences between each cluster of dwellings within Newbury due to: colour combinations, appearance of verandas, columns used near entrances, timber valace used, use of glass, fountains, roof finishes, timber finials and lunette windows. However, in the opinion of this researcher there was very little difference between buildings and the first impression of the overall streetscape was one of relative similarity, clean-cut finishes and balance. It should be noted that there were no homes that stood out from the streetscape or that were considered to be of future heritage significance.

The overall architecture within Newbury had a commonality. The most significant visual difference from a first glance was when houses were either one storey or two storey, eye catching colours and when face brick was used as opposed to a smooth finish.

Figure 4.4 – Modern Contemporary Architecture in Newbury
controls:
Three main planning documents control residential development in Newbury:

- Blacktown Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1988 (please refer to description above);
- Development Control Plan 2006 – Stanhope Gardens (referred to as DCP - SG); and

Development Control Plan for Stanhope Gardens (DCP - SG)
An in-depth analysis of DCP - SG found the controls to be in some respects more limiting in nature when compared to DCP - RZ. DCP - SG is divided into two parts: public domain and residential development. These parts are divided into three components including: objectives (aims of the section); performance criteria (standards which are to be considered on merit); and controls (measures and provisions).

Controls such as setbacks, height limits, and subdivision sizes contain strict numeric controls. However, it should be noted, there are more numeric controls within this DCP when compared to DCP - RZ. In addition, the controls included within DCP - SG include additional regulations under the two parts (i.e. public domain and residential development) not found in DCP - RZ. DCP - SG also includes diagrams and figures outlining opportunities and preferred options and appearances of certain development. Although DCP - RZ also includes figures, DCP - SG takes the performance criteria one step further and provides more comprehensive controls under each component.

DCP - SG is based on merit assessment and discusses issues such as creating a unique and memorable environment based on the relationship and character of the surrounding facilities. Although these elements, such as those included in DCP – RZ are generic, there are more specific and restricted provisions contained within this control plan. An example of this can be illustrated through control: “front fences or walls should be between 0.6m and 1.2m in height. Front fences should be partially transparent” (Blacktown City Council 2006, 58). However, these controls although more limiting then those used when assessing a development in Quakers Hill, still allow for diverse architectural space and are fairly non-restrictive in nature. This is mainly because there
is no information on the architectural styles of dwellings. This DCP stops at providing objectives for the overall streetscape.

Newbury Architecture and Design Guidelines (NR&D Guidelines)

The introductory paragraph to the NR&D Guidelines advise that the intention of the guidelines is to produce high quality design outcomes in terms of comfort, functionality, appearance, presentation, desirable streetscape, energy saving and neighbourhood character, stating that “only well designed quality homes are to be built in Newbury, thereby providing the necessary protection for the long term value of their home and investment” (Landcom 2003, 1). Mirvac Architect No.8016 (2008) advised that the Guidelines were developed to outline the architectural style and colour palette suitable for homes built with the estate and outline the design objectives in a general manner to allow for architectural diversity, while at the same time providing enough requirements in terms of building setbacks, heights and external finishes in order of establishing a level of uniformity and conformity throughout the estate.

The Guidelines, which are legally binding, warn applicants that desired additions, alterations or minor works to their home (i.e. additions of privacy screens, sun shades, fences, etc) are required to be submit as a proposal to the Architectural Review Panel for review. The sought additions/alterations are then assessed in terms of their compliance with the Guidelines and protective covenants as well as their impact on the amenity and appearance of the neighbourhood.

When assessing the provisions of the Guidelines it is evident that they are more restraining then the controls within Blacktown’s DCP. The Guidelines include restrictions on the following elements:

- materials, finishes and colours of garages;
- walls (i.e. “where walls are to be painted, the colour of walls are to be selected from the colour palettes provided, or as approved by the Architectural Design Panel” (Landcom 2003, 15);
- roofs and roofing material;
window frames, security doors and fly-screens which “will need to be either powder coated or painted to match the main entry door colour…departure from this will need to be submitted to the Architectural Review Panel for approval” (Landcom 2003, 51);

- gutters, fascias and down-pipes;
- driveways;
- fencing;
- letterboxes (i.e. “off-the-shelf freestanding letterboxes are not permitted” (Landcom 2003, 23));
- landscaping controls which identify the container size of the shrubs and accent trees, which are planted in the front garden as well as mentioning consistency with the plant palette; and
- face-brick and colour of the dwellings are to be chosen from those colours provided in the colour palettes.

All of the above elements have some form of restriction that must be complied with. These restrictions range from controls concerning the colour, form or finish that the element must be coloured/painted (which is outlined within the appendix of the Guidelines) as well as numeric restrictions on certain elements. It should be noted that the NR&D Guidelines advise that in instances where proposals depart from the Guidelines (however are consistent with the objectives and performance criteria) approval may be obtained from the Architectural Review Panel. Therefore, this adds a level of assessment to minor works, which in effect restricts certain types of diversity by adding increased cost and delay.

Under the subheading ‘architectural style’ the guidelines state “each area is to have consistent architectural style” (Landcom 2003, 39) therefore mixing of contrasting styles is discouraged. It should be noted, that this type of restriction is not included in the controls relating to Quakers Hill. Therefore, the main method of achieving architectural diversity within Newbury, appears to be focused on varying materials and colours. This is
confirmed by the Mirvac Architect No.8016 who advised that the diversity lies in the fact that not all houses have the same colour choice, materials and finishes, allowing houses to have their own individual style, however still blend and relate to each other. It should be known that colour choice is also controlled through the Guidelines refer to Figure 4.5. This colour choice is determined by whether your home is located within the summer, autumn or winter sector of the neighbourhood.

The Guidelines allow the applicant to mix and match between the combinations of each palette. Each summer, autumn and winter palette includes a selection of choices on the colour combinations between render, face brick and feature colours. Each palette includes:

- brick colours ranging from dark to light;
- Wall paint colours;
- Roof tiles;
- Feature colours for pergolas, porches;
- Window and door frame colours; and
- Paving selections and stencilled/stamped concrete.

Thus, it is evident that the objective and controls used to assess development within Newbury are more limiting then those used when assessing development in Quakers Hill.

**Interviews:**

The interviews conducted with the resident of Newbury (on 11 August 2008), Senior Development Manager of Urban Development at Landcom and architect of Mirvac No.8016 (on 18 August 2008) included a set of questions which reviewed issues such as: the Newbury’s market; researching the design use within Newbury; meaning of architectural diversity; community feedback regarding the MPC; streetscape and urban form of the MPC; why the resident choose to reside in the MPC; and positive and negative aspects of living within an MPC. The overriding message obtained by the researcher from these three interviews was the positive opinion each participant held in regards to the Newbury MPC.
Landcom initiated investing in the MPC phenomenon as a response to the State Governments objective to build ‘better communities’ by promoting sustainable development, walkable communities and providing accessibility to infrastructure and services. As a response to the above mentioned State Government goal Landcom advised that it strives ‘to lead by example’ in its developments. This State Government initiative was specifically adhered to when designing and developing the Newbury MPC. Although, it should be noted that the Senior Development Manager at Landcom acknowledged that there was both support and dissatisfaction with Newbury from the public, overall the development fulfilled the State Government’s initiative to ‘build better communities.’ Thus, Newbury was originally marketed as ‘selling a dream’ through images of lifestyle and proximity to community facilities and services (such as school, open space, shopping centres, club houses, etc) for second and third home buyer (who were specifically families). To date, Newbury is marketed as ‘selling the reality’ (as it is no longer a dream, as all the facilities have been developed) providing proposed buyers with their last chance to become part of the community.

The development was marketed through radio, television and local print, with most of the sales obtained from a 10 kilometre radius to the site. The Resident of Newbury previously lived in an apartment in Strathfield (an existing suburb). The decision to reside in Newbury resulted from the ability to purchase a ‘new’ home as opposed to an ‘older style’ home. The MPC resident stated that investing in an MPC was the best way to purchase into this type of market, where you could afford a ‘new home,’ at a relatively affordable price. Other areas researched by the resident of Newbury before buying into the MPC included Kellyville Ridge and the North West Growth Centres, which also included ‘new’ style housing.

The resident of Newbury spoke positively of Newbury and commented that the positive factors of living within the MPC was its services and facilities, parks and reserves, proximity to shopping facilities, the young families residing in the area and community organized events. Additionally, the Senior Development Manager at Landcom stated that those who support the development state that it protects their investment and provides them with a level of confidence in their assets, however some echo criticisms that the guidelines limit their options. Other negative aspects of residing within Newbury, as stated by the resident of the MPC included: residents not cleaning the
facilities after use, noise from the community area, damages done to the club house and non-residents using club facilities.

A question within the interview, and one which was asked to all participants was to define ‘architectural diversity’ and what this meant to the interviewee. The responses from this group where fairly similar, with only minor difference included (which may have been a result of the background profession of the participant). Participants spoke of incorporating diverse housing styles as well as considering the appearance of the whole community “when I hear it I think of it as something different, building something that’s unusual and different than normal” (MPC resident, 2008); built form and elevation in regards to the overall streetscape; product type (effected by the budget); planning arrangement of each product (i.e. 2/3 bedroom housing); range of architectural elements; and facade treatments (including diverse materials and selection of colours). All of these answers included the visual appearance of the overall urban form within an area.

In regards to the design of the dwellings within Newbury, Landcom looked to its competitors which became the premises of initiating the design guidelines and having a greater influence on the urban outcomes and produce. The architecture chosen was through a collaborative approach between Landcom and Mirvac Divisions which included: the Construction Division, Estimates Division, Designers Market Division, etc who worked to research what types/styles of housing sold in the area, what the clients wanted and expected as well as budget requirements.

The style of architecture ‘modern contemporary’ was chosen to follow the concept that the residential component (inclusive of duplexes, triplexes and dwelling houses) was to be designed surrounding the leisure and lifestyle facilities. The dwelling design which is currently used is an adaptation of the designs developed eight years ago (when the master plan and guidelines for the MPC were established). The current architecture style of housing constructed on the site has not significantly changed from the designs used in the initial stages of development. Furthermore, the dwellings which are constructed (on the house and land packages) include the architectural styles of homes which sold at a faster rate during the early stages of development, as well as including changes from client feedback from the earlier stages of development. Within Newbury, the architectural styles of the dwellings are comparatively similar to one another as a result of the
guidelines. However, there have been some changes made to the processes and product used as a result of new products and construction technologies entering the market. Landcom and Mirvac have stated that the design of the dwellings have not changed as the homes have sold with relative ease.

When questioned about the ability to alter/add to the outside design of the dwellings the Senior Development Manager at Landcom stated that people were always seeking some form of variation in regards to the dwelling design/colour. The Mirvac architect No.8016 stated that if a resident sought to make changes to their dwelling (such as adding a pergola) they would need to contact Mirvac and Landcom and the proposal would then be assessed by the Newbury Architectural Review Panel (once Landcom and Mirvac are no longer involved in the project, variations will be assessed by the Community Association - as the development is community titled). It should be noted that all proposals must comply with the objectives of the Architectural Design Guidelines as they are a legal entity.

The Senior Development Manager at Landcom stated that the difficulty of altering the Architectural Design Guidelines lies with the continuous changes which are made to building techniques as a result of new technologies, new materials/colours entering the market and market perception changing over time. Both the Landcom and Mirvac interviewees stated that they must be careful in changing the Guidelines and design of dwellings as previous refusals to applicants who sought vast changes, may result in those applicants being disadvantaged. For this reason the guidelines have not been altered.

When asked why the resident of Newbury chose her specific dwelling house she informed that the decision was based on the interior spaces, number of rooms and dwelling floor space area. In regards to the architecture of the dwellings the resident of the MPC stated that the houses that were designed by Mirvac were not identical, however that one could tell they were all developed by the one architect due to their similarities. The resident of MPC stated that there were requirements “to make sure everything looked uniform” (Resident of Newbury, 2008) Additionally, the resident of the MPC stated that the streetscapes including trees, greenery, shrubs, footpaths, cycle ways, planter box, reserves and the overall appearance “looked really nice” (Resident of Newbury, 2008).
CHAPTER 5 - EVALUATION AND COMPARISON
CHAPTER 5 – EVALUATION AND COMPARISON

This chapter will seek to evaluate and compare the findings that have been outlined and discussed in Chapter 4 to offer a determination as to whether Quakers Hill and/or Newbury are diverse in terms of their architectural styles and urban form. This evaluation and comparison will be discussed in terms of the finding of the site visit, controls regulating the two sites, the in-depth interviews conducted (discussed in Chapter 4) and the opinions of authors and theorists (discussed in Chapter 3).

As outlined in Chapter 4, the controls regulating residential development in Quakers Hill (and other established suburbs in Blacktown) include merit-based objectives. These objectives are non-restrictive and allow for variation. Although, in certain instances numeric and aesthetic restrictions are used, the provisions allow for both interpretation and innovative design as they do not limit the applicant to specific architectural styles, forms or colours. In particular, the controls do not specify what era, material or colour is to be used and ensures that contemporary, traditional and mock traditional designs can be utilized. The instruments also advise that dwellings should create architecturally stimulating streetscapes. These types of statements lend themselves to innovative and diverse architectural designs.

The non-restrictive controls regulating Quakers Hill have enabled greater architectural diversity within the suburban streetscape. This is evident through the results of the site visit which show there to be an architecturally diverse streetscape within the area, including a range of dwelling designs such as Spanish and Italian inspired housing as well as more modern architectural styles such as designs from the 1960s era. Furthermore, the streetscape includes housing with different colours, alterations and additions, landscaping, finishes and facades. These elements have allowed for a unique and varied streetscape to be created and one which is enjoyable to the residents of the area.

Conversely, the controls and objectives for development within Newbury are more controlled and limited. Firstly DCP - SG is more restrictive in nature when compared to DCP - RZ. DCP - SG includes more numeric controls and diagrams outlining opportunities and preferred options, to encourage a specific exterior appearance in residential development within Newbury.
The NA&D Guidelines add yet further restriction on development (whether it be the construction of a new home, additions and alterations or minor works) within Newbury and require an application to be submitted to the Architectural Review Panel for approval. Restrictions in the Guidelines include controls for colour, form and finish of residential dwellings. This supports MacCannell opinion that where residential development incorporates architectural originality, cost and time increase considerably (Fainstein, 2005). It is evident from the examination of the guidelines and the interviews that minor works need approval from the Architectural Review Panel, thus increasing both cost and time for the applicant. It can therefore be assumed that a development which is unique, will lead to yet further increases in cost and time. This may deter landowners to develop original and creative residential designs and instead settle for the standard design which will be approved with minimal difficulty.

The somewhat restrictive nature of the guidelines is illustrated through the housing stock in Newbury. The site visit identified that although all the houses are not identical there are definite similarities between each dwelling. These similarities range from the colour combination, the form and style of the architecture as well as the facades and treatment of the housing. When first entering the site you are aware that you are in a different space and have left the ‘suburb’ and entered the ‘estate’.

In addition, Kozlowski (2006) states that neighbourhood character and heritage values contribute to the making of a sense of place. As there are no heritage buildings or stand out monuments within Newbury, the first impressions the area offers is a lack of uniqueness and sense of place. This is also portrayed in the minimal use of the street (during the site visit). Conversely, Quakers Hill projected a sense of place and character through its interesting and diverse streetscape as well as the use of the street by residents and visitors. It should also be noted that due to the many similarities between the housing stock in Newbury and the absence of standout designs, it is unlikely that the buildings of Newbury will be considered heritage significant in the near future, as they do not embody historic, social, aesthetic or scientific heritage principles.

It should be noted that author Setha Low (2003) states that the number of court proceedings in America has risen as residents of MPCs have attempted to deregulate the inflexible controls, however have been unsuccessful as these controls are significant to the marketing of the product.
Low (2003) provides an example of a resident from Manor House Community, located in New York who advised that everything had to be agreed on by the homeowners association board (from the appearance/material of the storm door to the plants grown in the front garden). It is this appearance that makes certain that the ‘niceness’ (i.e. in the words of Setha Low to keep environments homogenous, clean, orderly, controlled) of the area is not hindered and therefore the value of the dwelling is not reduced (Low, 2003). Similarly, the Departmental Senior Planner stated that although design guidelines deliver certainty some controls are overly limiting (i.e. when obligating people to paint their home/fences a certain colour).

Evan McKenzie states that this type of development control may result in the loss of rights and the ability to challenge the existing rules, due to signed contracts (Low, 2003). Unlike provisions regulating existing suburbs where standards are objective and are enforced with consultation from the community, who can apply for variations and use the court system. These protections are unavailable to those residing in an MPC (Low, 2003). A search of the NSW Lawlink website found no court-cases where residents in NSW have taken legal action against developer’s of MPCs, however this could occur in the future as the MPC becomes a more dominant form of residential development. Furthermore, the Senior Development Manager at Landcom as well as Council’s Planning Officer stated that people were always seeking some form of variation in regards to the dwelling design/colour. Therefore, it is evident that residents of Newbury are continuously seeking changes to the design of their dwellings, and this is unlikely to change in the future. It also illustrates the restrictive nature of the controls resulting in a more uniform streetscape when compared to existing suburbia.

It can therefore be determined that the main method of achieving architectural diversity, within Newbury, appears to be somewhat focused on varying materials and colours (although these are also controlled through the colour palettes) instead of architectural styles. This is evident through the site visit, which illustrated that the underlying architecture used at Newbury is ‘modern contemporary’ with all dwellings comprising a certain similarity in their form and colour. A majority of the buildings within Newbury have a pitched roof and tend to be of two storey height, fences are low and constructed of brick, windows are mostly rectangular in shape and the dominant colours include whites, reds, blues, creams and greys. The controlled nature of the Guidelines means that there is less architectural diversity within Newbury when compared to
surrounding suburbs. Additionally, it can be stated that the controls quash the ability to have varying and different architecture within Newbury (i.e. contemporary adjoining federation).

It should be noted that a content analysis of the DCP - RZ identified the word ‘innovative/innovation’ mentioned seven times within the document whilst the word ‘creative’ was mentioned twice. In comparison, the DCP -SG and NA&D Guidelines did not mention these terms. Thus, it is evident that the objectives and controls used to assess development within Newbury is less focused on designing innovative and creative dwellings and instead focused on establishing conforming and uniform designs. It is evident by the Newbury streetscape that the regulations of Newbury do not encourage architectural innovation whilst the general regulations of Blacktown promote architectural risk.

All interviewees stated that there was both positive and negative factors attributed to the development of an MPC, the positive and negative factors were largely consistent across all participants. However, the question referring to the definition of architectural diversity was substantially different across the two case study groups. This difference may be attributed to the definition one held of the term ‘architectural diversity’ as well as the person’s profession and employment. The answers obtained from the Department, Council and suburb resident interviewees focused more on the creation of an interesting human environment and not stifling creativity whilst answers from Landcom, Mirvac and the Newbury resident interviewees focused more on incorporating diverse housing types and styles and considering the appearance of the streetscape. The main difference was the acknowledgement of the importance of creativity and innovative spaces from the first group. Additionally, the interviews revealed that those participants who were involved in the development/administration of the Newbury estate were predominantly of the view that Newbury was architecturally diverse whilst those who were not involved in the process had a broader understanding of what diversity involved.

It should be acknowledged that certain comments voiced by the Senior Planner of the Department, Council Planning Officer and resident of Quakers Hill were in accordance with the theorist opinions mentioned in Chapter 3 of this thesis. The Senior Planner’s opinions were similar to that of Fainstein and MacCannell who argue that MPCs attract accusations of in-authenticity and being a simulacrum (Fainstein, 2005). The Senior Planner believed that in some instances master plans
were artificial and a similar result could be accomplished through a good development application process. The Senior Planner further explained that MPCs could provide a sterile/artificial community as they: create a specific environment for a specific demographic; can be gated in terms of their operation; and quash creativity to an extent. This perspective is one, which is outlined by numerous theorists who believe certain places, such as the MPC mimic a ‘staged authenticity’ as opposed to the real thing, stating that authenticity can only be attained spontaneously (Fainstein, 2005). This ‘staged authenticity’ is evident in Newbury, as it is marketed to second/third homebuyers who are predominantly families and was developed in a controlled manner through both the master plan process and the Guidelines.

Additionally, Council’s Planning Officer stated that the types and designs of buildings used in Newbury was not much difference to Mirvac developments in other parts of Sydney. The resident of Quakers Hill also stated that in certain areas of Newbury one could tell that the homes were built by the same builder as the dwellings were similar in appearance. Furthermore, the resident of Newbury stated that the houses that were designed by Mirvac were not identical, however that one could tell they were all developed by the one architect due to their similarities and there were requirements “to make sure everything looked uniform” (Resident of Newbury, 2008). This view resembles Fainstein’s (2005) perspective that development around the world is somewhat similar in form. This justifies the belief that residential developments within MPCs around Sydney have a certain similarity, which is not found (to the same extent) within established suburbs which encompass greater architectural diversity and character.

This view is confirmed by the resident of Quakers Hill who was of the opinion that their suburb included more architectural diversity in comparison to places such as Newbury. The resident stated that this diversity was a result of different styles, types, colours and textures of dwellings. This is because Quakers Hill (like other established suburbs) evolved and changed through time, with the permission of add-ons, exterior renovations, mixing of architectural elements, diverse landscaping, etc thereby adding difference from one building to another. It is these suburbs that offer more uniqueness. It can be stated that this type of diversity is not easily permitted within Newbury as it would not comply with the objectives and controls of the Guidelines. Therefore, it can be assumed that Newbury will evolve at a slower rate and external changes to the dwellings will be few as a result of the Guidelines and the influence of the Architectural Review Panel.
The Architect of Mirvac informed that the dwelling design is an adaptation of the designs developed eight years ago and has not significantly changed. Furthermore, the architect stated that the dwellings which are constructed (on the house and land packages) include the architectural styles of homes which sold at a faster rate during the early stages of development. This confirms Farrelly’s (2008) opinion that contemporary buildings have minimal public-face roles to make them anonymous, allowing them to be bought and sold effortlessly. The somewhat generic appearance of the dwellings at Newbury allow them to be bought and sold with relative ease as they have little individuality, thereby providing a bigger market for the product. Although, this design allows for more certainty and predictability to the buyers and sellers, it must be remembered that these houses have little individuality.

The Landcom interviewee stated that Landcom initiated investing in the MPC phenomenon as a response to the State Government’s objective to build ‘better communities’ and Newbury was originally marketed as ‘selling a dream.’ It can therefore be assumed that Newbury was marketed as an ‘ideal place’ – i.e. ‘a dream’ achieved through the use of a standard model (which sees the centre of the suburb characterized by a communal facility and surrounded by dense residential development, which becomes more sparse as one moves away from the facility). This view of an ‘ideal model’ is consistent with the perspective of Fainstein (2005) who attributes the popularity of the MPC development to a successful ‘product formula’ (i.e. model/form of the MPC) that is desirable to consumers. It is this model that is used within Newbury, which coins it (by the developer), as ‘a dream.’ Fainstein (2005) goes on to say that planners have been preoccupied with controlling when, how and which people use spaces. This is specifically evident in Newbury where the guidelines set out strict controls placing restrictions on how residents design their space. However, it must be noted that theorist Jane Jacobs urges planners to avoid ideas and models of ‘ideal cities’ and instead urges professionals to observe ‘real’ places which are diverse in their uses and architectural styles (Fainstein, 2005).

The Table 5.1 illustrates a set of words which have been associated with the first impressions of both Newbury and Blacktown suburbs by the interviewees (this formed two of the questions in the interview). An analysis of the table shows that there are both positive and negative words associated with both Newbury and surrounding suburbs. For the purpose of this thesis I will focus on words which specifically relate to architectural diversity. It is evident from the table that the
surrounding suburbs illustrate more words which specify an urban form which is diverse and creative, such as: messy, eclectic, interesting, evolving. Conversely, there are also some negative words associated with the surrounding suburbs, such as: conforming and common. In comparison, there were fewer words which described Newbury being creative/innovative. Positive words for Newbury include: quality, clean lined, elegant, articulated design. The word sameness was also used.

Table 5.1 – Words Associated with Newbury and Blacktown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newbury</th>
<th>Surrounding suburb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>evolving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Conforming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging planning principles</td>
<td>Bare minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Traditional planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary style</td>
<td>Federation style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean lined and elegant</td>
<td>Face brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting</td>
<td>Detached homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulated design</td>
<td>Garages and driveways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced elements</td>
<td>Eclectic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sameness</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially exclusive</td>
<td>Messy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Spacious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetically pleasing</td>
<td>run down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good facilities upfront</td>
<td>Older styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrower streets</td>
<td>Larger street frontages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, it is evident that the controls regulating residential development in Quakers Hill (and other established suburbs in Blacktown) are far less restrictive when compared to the controls regulating Newbury. The analysis of the site visit sees Quakers Hill to be far more architecturally diverse than that of Newbury. Additionally, it can be perceived that the architecture in Newbury although not identical, is quite similar and does not offer the same diversity as that of the established suburb. Furthermore, it must be remembered that what is perceived as high-quality and creative architecture in one time period may not be perceived that way in another period, “fashion and conceptions of the way spaces are to be used change and affect judgments about what constitutes good quality domestic architecture” (Troy 1997, 24). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that whilst appropriate planning controls are an important element within any planning system, these controls cannot be too restraining and must allow for an area to evolve and grow with time allowing architectural change to be accepted.
CHAPTER 6 - CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
CHAPTER 6 – CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

There are numerous changes which can be initiated to allow and encourage diverse and creative places to be constructed. These modifications include legislative and educational changes such as amending existing environmental planning instruments and guidelines to allow for flexibility as well as introducing the planning profession to the arts and the elements of urban design to stimulate the production of innovative solutions. Another form of change is altering the practices and perceptions adopted by planners, which involves changes being made to the way planners think and problem solve, this can be achieved through revolutionizing the education system for the planning profession.

In many respects the job of the planner is to determine the future of a space and implement appropriate regulations and legislation on that place to make certain it develops in an appropriate manner. However, Albrechts (2005) believes that the future cannot be predicted or controlled and planners and other professionals working in this field cannot continue to apply such logic to the design of a place. Albrechts (2005) believes that this logic, of predicting and controlling the future, begins with the way planners are taught. This teaching also encourages planners to reproduce solutions by using past answers to solve new problems. “Planners for too long have just been (and still are) trained just to react to problems and difficulties. They are focused on reproducing answers on the basis of similar problems encountered in the past” (Albrechts 2005, 262).

This problem solving technique may result in poor planning as all problems are different, even if these differences are minor. Therefore by stamping past solutions onto new problems, planners are not adequately assessing the specifications of each dilemma. An example of the described situation includes the use of a common model template (urban form) across a number of MPCs (i.e. cases such as Newbury where residential zones surround community facilities). Author G. Alexander believes that neighbourhoods are diverse and have a specific culture therefore applying a single model of the ‘utopian’ neighbourhood is a recipe for catastrophe as “it is important to avoid single function planning and even more important not to transform the promising models into imaginary dream cities” (Alexander 2006, xix). In many respects Newbury has been marketed as a utopian neighbourhood as the developers are selling ‘a dream’ which has now become ‘a reality.’ Thus, notwithstanding the success of model templates in terms of achieving social, economical and environmental objectives planners should consistently formulate new and improved models to achieve superior results and allow for diverse neighbourhoods to be created.
Author Elizabeth Farrelly is of the opinion that “to create a good city according to plan is in fact oxymoronic; an attempt doomed to failure” (Farrelly 2008, 140). However, it should be acknowledged that although it is difficult for planning to generate creativity with strict regulations, this does not mean that regulations should be abandoned to allow for creativity (Landry, 2000). Instead, this means that regulations and the regulatory process should become more flexible with the inclusion of innovative incentives and acknowledgment devices (Landry, 2000).

Charles Landry (2000) the founding director of COMEDIA, a cultural planning consultancy located in Britain, states that the challenges in designing a creative space is to go beyond guidelines for best practice. There is a danger in adopting best practice guidelines as some believe this will lead to imitating ideas and formulas which have been tested and tried and not assessing the guidelines in terms of the individuality of the space (Landry, 2000). Landry (2000) suggests applying the principles instead of its template and introducing benchmark programs, as creative ideas have shelf life and therefore each project needs to be constantly assessed on its outcomes and performance and ensure changes are made at the appropriate times. Applying the principles of the guidelines as opposed to the template will not only allow for professionals to determine the important factors and cater for these factors within the draft plan, but also allows for sufficient flexibility resulting in the creation of a diverse environment.

Troy (1997) states that architects have always had limitations which they have had to accommodate for any buildings design, these limits ranged in their restrictive nature sometimes in the form of range of materials, colours (such as the example of Newbury), social conventions, issues of amenity etc. Troy (1997) concludes that regulations neither discourage nor encourage high quality architecture and the profession of planning has little control over the quality of design as property is privately owned. Although, Troy is correct in implying that planning cannot control good or bad design, however planning should encourage innovative design and where possible should allow flexibility in its regulations to allow architects to be inventive.

In opposition to the opinions of Troy, certain theorists have stated that design controls suppress architectural expression and result in the design and construction of unadventurous, bland and safe designs (Carmona, 1998). With some Critics arguing that the development process has prevented expressive design and challenges an architect’s entitlement to freedom of expression, however
CHAPTER 6 – CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

encouraging reproductions of past styles (Carmona, 1998). In addition, certain commentators have stated that standard designs are more likely to obtain planning approval whilst innovative designs such as seen in Figure 6.1 which may violate the provisions within the guidelines are subject to greater scrutiny by the design and planning panels, leading to increased costs and delays which discourage innovative approaches (Carmona, 1998). It is no wonder that this type of system deters architects to be creative as this creativity is characterized by increased cost and time delays. It is evident that Newbury seems to support this conclusion, where original designs seem to produce a more costly and time consuming process. Therefore, the main changes to be made to reverse this cycle of non-creative building design includes: introducing flexible urban design criteria to assess development quality; professionals with design skills be placed in the assessment roles; and providing the ability for persons to learning across the disciplines (Carmona, 1998)

Figure 6.1. – Tree House Designed by Baumraum

Changing the mind-set of the planner is a key factor in solving the problems outlined above. Planners must acknowledge that answers/solutions to problems can be unique, even unconventional, allowing the planning profession to ‘break-out-of-the-box’ (Albrechts, 2005). However it should be noted that accomplishing such a radical change in the ‘thinking’ of planners is a difficult and long task, especially when teachers who are pushing for innovative approaches
are often blocked by resistance and legislation conducting lectures which are often too narrow focused (focusing on legislation and development controls) to allow for creativity (Landry, 2006). Therefore the change to allow for creativity could begin with the education system through such changes as: re-introducing elements of urban design into the planning curriculum; and introducing architectural electives to allow the planner insight into the perspective of the architect. This changed curriculum will allow planners to understand that a development which stands out and is different from the remainder of the streetscape, is not necessarily a negative factor, that regulations should not always be followed as rigidly as they are written and innovation and creativity needs room for growth. It is important for planners to acknowledge that innovation in the design of an area can occur through “invention, meaning the discovery of new ideas with far-reaching potential... and innovation proper, whereby new ideas are adapted, packaged and applied in practical ways” (Forsyth 2007, 463).

It is common knowledge that the planning system is continuously changing with many pushing the system to become more development responsive and innovative (Madanipar, 2006). This is due to a number of reason, one of which is the pressure placed on the planning system and the planning profession “to become more plan based, more forward looking and visionary, and more interested in the qualities of places, all features that it shares with urban design” (Madanipar 2006, 183). This is further evident through Charles Landry’s (2000) research which involved him questioning a group of officials and asking them if they saw themselves as being creative, they all answered ‘yes’ however when he inquired why this creativity was not evident in their work they replied that stimulated ideas emerged at home, whereas in the work force procedures, hierarchies and administration systems narrowed their views and their creativity disappeared. Therefore, it is important that administrative procedures promote rather than stifle creativity. This creativity could be achieved by relaxing the administrative and legislative procedures in place, within the planning system (specifically those controls relating to the appearance of buildings).

In respect to the MPC, it is important that planners not only focus on controls, policies and implementing guidelines on the residents of a planned community, planners should also review each site and anticipate the future of that area and the future character that area should radiate as well as its place in the local government area.
CHAPTER 6 – CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

It is also believed that new design ideas emerge from a cycle of orthodoxy, obsolescence and radicalism, emerging “as new ideas in response to the needs of the time or as a challenge to the way these needs are met. If successful, these ideas are spread and become widely accepted by other designers” (Madanipar 2006, 191). Furthermore, Madanipar (2006) states that places are not static and are continuously changing and growing in new ways. It should be highlighted that the Newbury MPC has ensured that change does not occur through their specified guidelines and colour schemes, which ensures the area remains unchanged over time. It is important that the MPC of today allows for the evolution of the planned suburb to occur. As change is expeditious (due to the global economy) and inevitable specifically in terms of design, where change may come in the form of: new styles in architecture, market demand, introduction of different materials and technologies used.

Table 6.1 - Charles Landry’s (2006) initiatives to allow for the design of creative places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global and Local Influences</td>
<td>Harmonize the space with local culture and its uniqueness, however allow for global influence – i.e. mixing old architecture and historical buildings with new architecture and modern style buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>Involve the community in the decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Risk</td>
<td>Planners need to plan for risk instead of against it and design places that withstand risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Although one must learn from existing ideas and communities, it is important not to duplicate these communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Alliances</td>
<td>When designing an area there must be a mix of professionals which must learn from one another by moving away from the blame culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational System</td>
<td>Education in the arts is of high importance to creating a unique space as the arts can offer innovative thinking and visual stimulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iconic Projects</td>
<td>Places need iconic projects to capture profile and attention, however these icons must reflect a number of layers, from the history of the space to its perceived future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Architectural competitions should be used to encourage creativity and innovation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6 – CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

Other changes which may be introduced to establish diversity within an MPC is through the use of decoration, ornaments and public art (as seen in Figure 6.2) within the public spaces and dwelling designs. From the observations undertaking on the site visits to Newbury the overall character of the space can be summarized as without distinction. However these spaces can be transformed into unique and creative environments with the introduction of ornaments and decorations to add distinction and individuality to the dwellings. Moughtin et al (1999) suggests that ideas and forms used for ornaments and decorations can be obtained from historical traditions and previous architectural styles and modified to suit modern architecture styled buildings. Moughtin et al (1999) acknowledges that we cannot return to the time of great renaissance architecture, referred to as the ‘ideal time’ except in the sense of the inspiration which can be gained from such grand architecture.

**Figure 6.2 – Public Art in Chicago**

As identified above, there are countless changes which can be made to allow for an environment to be diverse and creative and allow for planners to understand what makes an area unique and inspirational. The above concepts should be both taught to planning professionals and followed to allow notable places to be created as creative spaces need “the spark of the alternative; the sense of place, of non branded space; the imagination of what could be displayed in action, younger and older people challenging conventions in behaviour, attitudes and even dress” (Landry 2006, 340).
CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION
CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

There are numerous economical, social and environmental benefits of the master plan community (MPC) for the private and public sector, community and the residents who invest in this type of development. It is therefore no surprise that the MPC is a popular form of residential development within Sydney as well as a growing phenomenon overseas.

However some theorists have regarded this form of development to be homogenous in design and lacking in diversity and creativity in terms of both architectural style and urban form. These opinions have brought numerous questions to the forefront such as what degree of character and originality MPCs provide an area and whether these communities will be considered valuable in terms of heritage in the future. It is these opinions and questions which have been analysed and discussed throughout this thesis. In addition this thesis also discusses the importance of creative and innovative spaces within the built environment as well as including recommendations as to how professionals can foster the creation of such spaces.

The importance of this topic lies in the popularity of the MPC and the dominant use of this form of residential development within the Australian urban environment as well as the built environment overseas. It is therefore necessary that these residential communities are designed with character and difference. This difference must include both variation between residential communities as well as allowing for diversity within each individual residential community.

The research objectives covered within this thesis included: an evaluation of the arguments for and against the MPC; providing an understanding concerning the history and popularity of the MPC; comparing an MPC and an existing suburban environment in terms of diversity and urban form; outlining the importance of producing diverse architectural designs within a streetscape and the importance of creating innovative and usable spaces; providing the perspective of different professionals on the issues of diversity of architectural design and urban form; and identifying the actions and roles planners and other professional can take to initiate architectural diversity, create a strong local character and establish a creative and innovative space.

The investigation, conclusion and recommendation to the above mentioned concerns was obtained through a review of literature and planning controls, site analysis and interviews. The collaboration of information to satisfy the research objectives as well as the determination of a
CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

position to the problem statement, was achieved through three primary forms of research including: literature and data review which included collecting information from journals, newspaper articles and planning texts as well as completing an in-depth analysis of relevant Blacktown City Council Plans and Guidelines; two site visits to Quakers Hill and Newbury which included walking the streets of the sites and recording (through photography and note taking) the architectural form of the dwellings, analysing the diversity of the area in terms of architectural style/periods and assessing the model template used within the MPC; and conducting in-depth interviews with planning and architecture professionals as well as residents of the chosen sites.

However, it should be noted that the research found within this document is limited as the thesis only examines two case study suburbs in one local government area in Sydney (i.e. only one MPC and one suburb were analysed). As there are varying types of master planned residential communities, such as: master plan communities, master plan estates and gated communities further research should be completed in terms of the architectural styles of the dwellings and the urban form of the community for each type of residential community. This research should also include a comparison between the different types of residential communities in respect to their location in both Australia and overseas as well as comparisons being made between residential communities constructed and occupied in the past (i.e. the 1990’s) in comparison to today’s MPCs. Further research within this field of study should be encouraged as the results found allow for an understanding of the way suburbs grow in terms of architectural diversity as well as an understanding into the popularity of the MPC, the future of this form of development and the changes to be implemented to improve the MPC.

From the research obtained it can be concluded that there are numerous benefits to the MPC. These benefits include providing a greater opportunity for accidental and planned interaction (when compared to that of existing suburbs) as well as a sense of community, establishing a sense of safety for the residents, creating a walkable community, allowing for easy and timely access to infrastructure and service provisions as well as providing particular attention to environmental sensitivity and sustainability. Conversely, there are also numerous economical, social and environmental disadvantages to this form of residential development, such as the timing of the development, social exclusion, social differentiation and fear of security as well as environmental degradation. Additionally, as stated above, theorists have regarded this form of residential
development to be homogenous in design and lacking in diversity and creativity in terms of both architectural style and urban form. Theorists have argued that MPCs are initially designed with the goal of producing a unique environment, however seem to attract accusations of in-authenticity.

As illustrated within this thesis diversity is an important element within any streetscape. Its importance lies with the benefits it provides in respect to the built environment and the inhabitants of the space. This form of architectural difference not only attracts a diverse and creative community it also allows the residents of the space to find a sense of place within the unique environment created. These places also allow people to be inspired and flourish in their creative endeavours and encourages social and economic diversity.

It is evident (from the literature, controls, interview and site analysis) that the controls regulating residential development in Quakers Hill (and other established suburbs in Blacktown) are far less restrictive when compared to the controls regulating Newbury. Therefore, the analysis of the site visit sees Quakers Hill to be far more architecturally diverse than that of Newbury. Additionally, it can be perceived that the architecture in Newbury, although not identical, is quite similar and does not offer the same diversity as that of the established suburb. It can also be assumed that in the future Quakers Hill will further change and develop as the controls allow for the homes within this suburb to alter in appearance. However, the area of Newbury will most likely stay the same due to the more restrictive guidelines in place.

In response to the problem statement and the concerns of theorists, it is safe to say that to an extent the critiques of the MPC are justifiable as we are creating an environment which is far less architecturally diverse than that of the existing suburb. Therefore, it can be stated that the MPC environment is neither architecturally diverse nor unique. As it has been illustrated, although the buildings are not identical they are all constructed in the same architectural style and produce no monumental buildings which stand out from the streetscape. In respect to the urban form of the MPC, it is safe to say that the use of a common template is utilized, as this template has demonstrated its success by allowing residents of the community to be located in close proximity to community facilities and open space as well as promoting a walkable community. In addition, the MPC (to an extent) manifests a staged in-authenticity as it provides a community which does not always reflect the diversity of people who reside in the surrounding suburbs (i.e. 

- 77 -
CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

the suburbs includes young families, the elderly etc whereas Newbury was predominantly marketed to second and third home buyers who are predominantly families). Furthermore, the streetscape appeared repetitive and the streets were largely abandoned and not in use.

Moreover, in the perspective of this researcher the MPC environment was not one which was perceived to be of heritage importance as it did not illustrate any items of significance in terms of the heritage conservation principles (social, historic, aesthetic or scientific heritage). The MPC did not appear to include any buildings or monuments that were significantly important for conservation for either the current or the future generation.

That said, the purchase of a home is the biggest investment a person makes, therefore people desire certainty and predictability in such an important investment. This certainty and predictability is provided for in an MPC as people know exactly what type of community they are buying into. In addition, there are people who desire to reside in an MPC, therefore it is safe to say that these types of communities are here to stay. Nonetheless, in the perspective of this researcher, although the MPC has numerous advantages the planning controls for this type of residential development should be less restrictive and should allow for greater integration into the surrounding communities.

To conclude, there are numerous changes which can be initiated to allow and encourage diverse and creative places to be constructed. These modifications include legislative and educational changes such as amending existing environmental planning instruments and guidelines to allow for flexibility as well as introducing the planning profession to the arts and the elements of urban design to stimulate the production of innovative solutions. It should be acknowledged that regulations should not be completely abandoned to allow for creativity, however they should be more flexible to allow for innovating and creative ideas to flourish. Another form of change is altering the practices and perceptions adopted by planners which involves changes being made to the way planners think and problem solve. This can be achieved through revolutionizing the education system for the planning profession. These changes could begin by re-introducing elements of urban design into the planning curriculum and introducing architectural electives to allow the planner insight into the perspective of the architect, allowing planners to understand that a development which stands out from the remainder of the streetscape is not a negative factor


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**Interviewees:**

Resident. 2008. ‘*Resident of Quakers Hill.*’

Resident. 2008. ‘*Resident of Newbury.*’

Senior Planner. 2008. ‘*Department of Planning*’

Planning Officer. 2008. ‘*Blacktown Council.*’

Senior Development Manager of Urban Development. 2008. ‘*Landcom.*’

Architect No.8016. 2008. ‘*Mirvac.*’

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APPENDIX - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Developer of MPC:

Why did Landcom decide to develop a Master Plan Community (MPC)?

How was this MPC marketed and who was it marketed to?

How did you research the market?

How did you research the design?

Did you look at what your competitors were doing in terms of architectural design?

What does architectural diversity mean to you?

What feedback have you received from the community in regards to the architecture and colour combinations used in this MPC?

Have there been any questions asked, from home buyers or others, regarding variation in the architecture used?

What are 5 words which describe the streetscape of your MPC?

What are 5 words which describe the streetscape of the surrounding suburbs?

What is the relationship between yourself and the architect?

Architect of the MPC:

What does architectural diversity mean to you?

Why did you choose this type of architecture for the MPC?

Where did you get your ideas from?

How did you research the design?

How are design decisions made?
APPENDIX

Who decided on the type of architecture to be used?

What is the relationship between the developer and the architect?

What are 5 words which describe the streetscape of your MPC?

What are 5 words which describe the streetscape of the surrounding suburbs?

**Resident of the MPC:**

What attracted you to reside in the MPC?

What do you feel are the best and worst things of residing in an MPC?

Where had you lived previously?

What does architectural diversity mean to you?

What attracted you to your house?

What is your opinion of the streetscape within this MPC?

What is your opinion of the architecture within this MPC?

From the photos below, which of the spaces do you think creates a unique and innovative urban landscape? Why?

From the pictures below, which of the spaces do you think would allow you to be inspired and allow for individuality? Why?

**Council DA officer:**

What was council’s role in administrating the MPC (if any)?

What does architectural diversity mean to you?

What is your perspective on the design guidelines used within the MPC?

What is your perspective on the architectural styles used with the MPC?
APPENDIX

What are 5 words which describe the streetscape of the surrounding suburbs?

What do you look for in the design of a house when determining a DA?

What feedback did you receive from the community in regards to the architecture and colouring used in [selected] MPC?

What was the relationship between council and the developer?

From the photos below, which of the spaces do you think creates a unique and innovative urban landscape? Why?

From the pictures below, which of the spaces do you think would allow you to be inspired and allow for individuality? Why?

In your opinion is diversity in architectural design and urban form an important element in the urban streetscape?

How can planners help create a diverse/unique suburbs/environments for residence?

**Resident of suburb:**

What attracted you to reside in this suburb?

What does architectural diversity mean to you?

What attracted you to the house?

What is your opinion of the streetscape of your suburb?

Have you ever been to the Newbury development Master Plan Community (MPC)?

If so, what is your initially feelings towards the MPC?

If so what is your opinion of the streetscape within this MPC?

If so what is your opinion of the architecture within this MPC?

Would you ever consider living in an MPC? Why/why not?

From the photos below, which of the spaces do you think creates a unique and innovative urban landscape? Why?
APPENDIX

**Planner from the DoP:**

What does architectural diversity mean to you?

What is the DoP’s role in the administration of an MPC?

What are your views in regards to MPCs?

What are your opinions of MPC’s and diversity and the creation of a unique environment?

What are your opinions on design guidelines?

What can planners and other professionals do to initiate diversity in regards to the urban landscape?

Have you ever been to the [selected] MPC?

What is your opinion of the streetscape within this MPC?

From the photos below, which of the spaces do you think creates a unique and innovative urban landscape? Why?

From the pictures below, which of the spaces do you think would allow you to be inspired and allow for individuality? Why?
Erratum

Reference to ‘Madanipar’ throughout the thesis ‘MPC and Architectural Diversity’ is spelt incorrectly.

The correct spelling is ‘Madanipour’

The correct reference for the material will therefore be the below:


Sabina Miller