



Sense of Place:

Public Housing in the
greater Mount Druitt area

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A Bachelor of Planning Undergraduate Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Built Environment
University of New South Wales Sydney Australia October 2009



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Abstract

Public housing has been part of Sydney's urban fabric for many decades. Recent heightened media coverage of anti-social behaviour within public housing areas of Sydney often times attaches a negative stigma to the residents, their place and their home. This thesis is an investigation that considers sense of place as experienced by public housing residents in the Greater Mount Druitt area. The connection public housing residents have to home and their community is also explored. This thesis presents literature reviewed and relevant theoretical frameworks regarding the history of the Greater Mount Druitt area, place theory and its related sub-constructs and the qualitative research process.

The thesis also includes a comprehensive blend of intense personal commentary gained through in-depth interviewing from a diverse demographic range of public housing residents. An inescapable connection has evolved with one particular commonality between them all, the place they call home. This thesis demonstrates that a sense of place is not only vital within the home but also the community. Sense of place for the residents can be expressed and seen through the significant attachment to family, friends and home. However, the overall impression of connection to community for the residents was minimal. The contention is that the residents do have a sense of place although it is confined in space and limited in social setting and relationship to others. An appropriate investigation needs to be undertaken for future planning considerations and implementations within the area to ensure a sense of place is attainable beyond the 'four walls' of the home.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is not only a culmination of the past six months but a piece of work that represents the past five years of study in the Bachelor of Planning. The past three months in particular, have been intense, exciting, challenging and satisfying. I would like to sincerely thank my family, friends and colleagues who have supported me and provided constant encouragement while undertaking the Bachelor of Planning degree.

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Table of Contents

1. Mount Druitt's Sense of Place	
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Problem Setting	2
1.2 Thesis Statement and Objectives	4
1.3 Conceptual Frameworks	6
1.4 Significance of the Research	6
1.5 Chapter Summary	7
2. Mount Druitt: Past and Present	
2.0 Introduction	8
2.1 Location and History	8
2.2 Demographics	14
2.3 Chapter Summary	22
3. Literature Review: Conceptual Frameworks	
3.0 Introduction	24
3.1 The Meaning of Home	24
3.2 Phenomenology	27
3.3 Place Theory	29
3.3.1 Sense of Belonging	31
3.3.2 Place Identity	33
3.3.3 Attachment to Place	35
3.3.4 Place Making	37
3.4 Sense of Place	39
3.5 Chapter Summary	41
4. Methodology	
4.0 Introduction	42
4.1 Literature Review	42
4.2 Qualitative Research Approach	43
4.3 Chapter Summary	50
5. Mount Druitt: The Findings	
5.0 Introduction	51
5.1 The Media	51
5.2 Urban and Social Planning	55
5.3 Sense of Place and Home	63
5.4 Recommendations	72
5.5 Chapter Summary	74
6. Conclusion	
6.0 Introduction	76
6.1 Review of Thesis Intent	76
6.2 Limitations of Research	77
6.3 Future Research	78
6.4 Concluding Remarks	79

Bibliography

Appendix

UNSW ethics approval

Study Participant Project Information Sheet

Study Participant Consent Form

Interview Questions

Interview Schedule of Study Participants

Interview Reflections

Study Participant Thank-you Letter

List of Tables

Table 1: Key Statistics: Blacktown City Council	16
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List of Figures

Figure 1: The greater Mount Druitt area, Blacktown Council, Sydney	9
Figure 2: Aerial photograph: The greater Mount Druitt area and satellite suburbs	11
Figure 3: Arterial Map: The greater Mount Druitt area and satellite suburbs	11
Figure 4: First Railway Station at Mount Druitt 1881	12
Figure 5: Two storey house	53
Figure 6: Town house	53
Figure 7: Empty and vandalised housing complex	54
Figure 8: Suburban Park	57
Figure 9: Community graffiti mural	58
Figure 10: Close up of ‘Alice in Wonderland’ graffiti mural	59
Figure 11: Traffic bridge and tunnel	60
Figure 12: Laneway between house	61
Figure 13: Graffiti underpass	61
Figure 14: Bidwill community garden	64
Figure 15: Bidwill community garden 2	64
Figure 16: Outdoor shopping centre, Ropes Crossing	65
Figure 17: Indigenous community murals vandalised	67
Figure 18: Indigenous community murals vandalised	67
Figure 19: Indigenous community murals vandalised	67
Figure 20: Local drive-thru bottle shop and pub	68
Figure 21: local bottle shop and supermarket	69
Figure 22: Community church and centre	70
Figure 23: New Franklins shopping centre	70
Figure 24: Community group based graffiti art	73



Chapter 1
Mount Druitt's Sense of Place

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis topic. An overview of the thesis problem setting enables an imminent perspective of the current issues to be considered throughout the research. The thesis statement and objectives are explained with reference to the topic as well as a brief introduction to the conceptual framework considered for the literature reviewed. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the significance of the research.

Public housing has been part of Sydney's urban fabric for many decades. Over recent years public housing estates and tenants have come under extreme scrutiny in relation to violence, drug use, ethnic conflicts and health, especially through the media. The cohesion and well being of residents within any community is vital in enabling and providing a safe and liveable environment. The interactions of people with their neighbourhoods and external social, economic and physical environments are pivotal in the recognition and understanding of their sense of place. This thesis focuses on the greater Mount Druitt area, located in Sydney's western suburbs. The focus suburbs include; Mount Druitt, Lethbridge Park, Bidwill, Shalvey, Hebersham and Emerton.

This thesis seeks to achieve an overall consideration of place theory and its relation to public housing in the Mount Druitt locale. The literature reviewed focuses on the notion of place and its relevance to public housing. Sense of place as a construct of place will be of particular importance when 'unpacking' what place means to the residents of greater Mount Druitt. The qualitative research process undertaken is integral in achieving findings and recommendations for this thesis. The philosophical concept of the kinaesthetic experience as discussed by Tuan (1977) (touch, smell, sight, sound and taste) enables a familiarity and personal framework of place and a connection to place. To understand sense of place it is also beneficial to consider sense of belonging, identity, attachment to place and place making. A particular focus on the meaning of home will also be considered. As stated by Easthope (2004) "... ideas of 'place' is intertwined with the ideas of community, collective memory, group (and individual) identity, political organisation and capital flow' p.128). Although, these sometimes complex sub-constructs of place overlap, place is inextricably bound-up in what people perceive as meaningful and their experience of place (Relph 1976, Tuan 1977 and Dovey 1985).

1.1 Problem Setting

There has been recent heightened media coverage of anti-social behaviour within the Mount Druitt area. The media plays a distinct and sometimes controlling role within modern day society. Over recent years, the portrayal of events and issues in many public housing communities has been displayed in a negative manner, mainly through television, newspapers and the internet.

The perception of people living in public housing and their environment are often misconceived. Makayla, a resident of an area in Sydney that holds a considerable amount of public housing stated, “I don’t no why people always put Campbelltown and Rosemeadow down as scummy and not suitable to live in. It’s a beautiful place” (Macarthur Chronicle 2005). Public housing communities are located across Sydney. Housing New South Wales (HNSW) is the government body that is committed to providing housing for people in need. As stated by HNSW “Residents in affordable housing reflect the diversity of the communities in which they live, with a mix of ages and life stages” (HNSW, 2009).

Urban and social planners play an important role in providing adequate access and facilities for areas with a high proportion of public housing. The greater Mount Druitt area holds a significant number of HNSW dwellings. An area such as this may be considered to be highly sensitive due to social mix and socio-economic backgrounds. It is essential that there are places within the community that people can connect with and see as a positive representation of the people who live there. The planning, implementation and review of public housing should be considered at local, state and national levels. People who are placed in public housing are most likely from low economic and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. It is critical that the environments they are placed in benefit them and their community. There are a number of factors to be considered when planning and improving such areas, including; infrastructure, services, sense of place and place making as well as social cohesion. Tuan (1977) believes that as members of a profession, “planners would like to evoke ‘a sense of place’” (p. 3); they have the ability to shape environments (physically, socially and culturally) and inform policy.

Subsequent chapters in this thesis provide an insight into the ‘lived experiences’ of residents in public housing in greater Mount Druitt and their personal opinions and reflections on sense of place within their community.

The Media

The media can play a role in society that controls, consumes, perceives and provides instant access to current events.

Over the past decade in Sydney, the way in which public housing has been portrayed through the media has been primarily negative. Recent research undertaken by Arthurson (2004) has dealt with a number of these ‘negative’ issues, mainly focusing on social cohesion and tension within public housing. Arthurson’s reviews have been used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) who acknowledged problems of “poor design, poverty, older residents' problems, low education levels, high unemployment and increasing levels of crime and violence” (AIFS, 2003). Such issues have been portrayed on television and in newspaper articles establishing a negative perception of these particular areas. The AIFS states that “disadvantaged people are believed to have disadvantages compounded by living in neighbourhoods of concentrated socioeconomic disadvantage such as public housing estates” (AIFS, 2003).

With continuous negative portrayals and perceptions of public housing in Sydney this thesis seeks to engage with residents of greater Mount Druitt’s public housing to document the personal opinions and emotions relating to their own sense of place and experience. The focus is to provide an insight of how residents are connected to and feel about their community.

Although there is not a considerable amount of negative media available in relation to public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area in recent years, the overall perception of public housing areas in Sydney has been documented. The most recent media coverage within Sydney related to public housing was that in the suburb of Rosemeadow in Sydney’s south-west (‘The Rosemeadow Riots’). A newspaper article in the Sydney Morning Herald titled ‘Rosemeadow a failure: minister’ reported that “The Rosemeadow riot and serious social problems in that and other public housing areas are a result of a failure by governments in recent years” (SMH, 2009). The problem of perception not only lies with those reporting on specifics but also within government policies. This article further stated statistics relating to unemployment within the area and the high number of one parent families and comparing them to the national average. The way that the media can portray and control an issue as

sensitive as this can sometimes provide misconceptions for the general public, who may not understand social issues within the area.

There are often a number of social, economic, cultural and political issues related to such events. For the residents living in public housing in greater Mount Druitt, the sense of place they hold is rarely documented. Other media portrayals include these newspaper headlines in Sydney: “Boy accused of gun threat at Rosemeadow” (The Daily Telegraph 2009), “Social housing plan prompts slum fear” (The Daily Telegraph 2009) and “Retirees’ chickens’ necks broken in random act of cruelty” (The Daily Telegraph 2008). “Retirees’ chickens’ necks broken in random act of cruelty” (The Daily Telegraph 2008) provided an insight into an event that took place within the greater Mount Druitt area earlier this year. The report stated that “...a cattle dog cross was found hanged by its own leash in a park at Mount Druitt” (The Daily Telegraph 2009). Animal cruelty has been an issue within the area recently. A resident explains a similar story in the Chapter 5 of this thesis. Although the event may have taken place, it is the media that has control over how it is represented and the detail and information provided to society. The reason why such an event may have happened is pivotal to understanding and providing the truth behind the story and acknowledging social and cultural problems that may need to be addressed. When the media portrays an area that holds a number of minority groups in this manner it is difficult to encourage a sense of place and pride within the community as it also affects those who live there.

1.2 Thesis Statement and Objectives

Thesis Statement

In order to foster ownership, pride and healthy living conditions in a public housing area, it is vital that its residents have a sense of place, attachment and belonging toward their community.

Thesis Objectives

A Sense of place acts as the central theme to this thesis. The thesis aims to investigate and articulate ‘sense of place’ as experienced by residents living within greater Mount Druitt’s public housing. This thesis will pursue the following objectives:

1. Provide a problem setting to include current misconceptions regarding public housing communities as places within the Sydney urban landscape. This will be highlighted through relevant media articles and supported by scholarly texts.
2. An analysis of the researched location will be undertaken to include the history of the greater Mount Druitt area as well as an interrogation of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data pertinent to the locale.
3. Research and identify the meaning and definition of place and its sub-constructs; sense of belonging, place identity, attachment to place and place making. 'Sense of place' and 'the meaning of home' will be considered separately due to their importance to the thesis topic. This will be considered and expressed through a literature review of an array of sources including; scholarly texts, planning journals and articles, research conducted in the field and government based websites. These sources will be attained through hard copy books, printed texts, published documents and the internet.
4. Identify whether a 'sense of place' exists for public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area. This process will be closely connected to the methodological procedures commenced through the qualitative research approach. In-depth interviews with public housing residents will provide the basis for the outcomes and findings of this thesis. The research collated will in turn provide a comparative analysis with the literature reviewed. Photography will be integral in supporting the findings to ensure that the respondent can empathise with the written results. The photographs will provide a sensual journey for the reader so that what is being spoken about can be seen, both positive and negative.
5. Critically evaluate sense of place within the homes and community of residents in the greater Mount Druitt area. This will be conducted by the results from the in-depth interviews with support from the literature reviewed. Furthermore, to define place within the community through both theorists' and resident perspectives.
6. Develop recommendations through an intertwining of literature and qualitative research methods for future implementations in planning policies and documents. This will provide an insight into some possibilities for government and non-government agencies to continue and embark on 'sense of place' community initiatives and projects.
7. Provide a research based thesis on the sense of place of public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area through a rigorous literature review, conceptual

methodological and qualitative research approach and present the personal experiences and perceptions of residents living within the community. Limitations of the research and possible future research will also be discussed.

1.3 Conceptual Frameworks

The overarching conceptual framework of this thesis is place theory. This thesis is grounded in theory relating to 'place' and its sub-constructs. Key place theorists including; Tuan (1977), Relph (1976), Dovey (1985) and Casey (1993) have provided insight into place theory and in particular sense of place. It is evident that to define sense of place is difficult, with theorists such as these unable to agree on one single definition. The underlying theme within place theory is the perception and meaning of place. As Tuan (1977) avidly champions, the kinaesthetic experience one often associates with place through the senses is how a place is defined and how it is perceived as meaningful to the individual. Places and spaces can both hold personal experiences and meanings; it is the sensory feelings that connect a person to place.

There are a number of sub-constructs within the place framework that are also considered. Sense of place is the overarching theme and will be considered throughout each sub-construct. The meaning of home is also vital in understanding the topic. Understanding sense of place will also be crucial in implementing correct methodological processes and appreciation the findings.

Other sub-constructs to be considered include; sense of belonging, place identity, attachment to place and place making. To understand the overall conceptual framework of place theory and sense of place these must be considered. The literature review in Chapter 3 includes analysis and critique of this conceptual framework.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Urban and social planners play an important role in implementing plans, policies and designs, as well as understanding and providing for the community. This thesis provides an academic structure to place theory and delves into the personal experiences of sense of place as experienced by public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area.

Research has been undertaken in regards to attachment and connection between people and place for specific reasons. As mentioned earlier, negative media in relation to public housing areas across Sydney provides a platform for the interest and importance of the topic at hand. Similarly to planners, the media plays a central role in many peoples' lives. The control and sensation of the media can often be overwhelming. This thesis seeks to acknowledge and appreciate the personal feelings, emotions and opinions of those living within the situation of public housing in the western Sydney area.

As this thesis focuses on a topical issue relevant to past, present and future planning, the findings will hopefully provide a current framework and useful information for government bodies and private planning practices to use and relate to for future planning considerations and actions within the western Sydney region. Public housing and its' residents are part of the Sydney urban setting and should be consulted and included in the place making process of their community. This thesis seeks to make a contribution to future place-making planning documents, policies and considerations in public housing areas, specifically greater Mount Druitt.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced various components of the thesis topic including, the problem setting, the thesis statement and objectives, the conceptual frameworks to be considered and the significance of the research. This thesis seeks to investigate whether public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area have a sense of place within their community and if so what it is. The thesis is based on a rigorous literature review of place theory and its' sub-constructs as well as an intense qualitative research methodology. Place theory is complex with no specific definition although theorists agree that it involves understanding the meaning and perception of place. An overview of the study location and history will be provided in Chapter 2.



Chapter 2
Mount Druitt: Past and Present

2.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study area of this thesis. It addresses the geographical location, the history and demographics of the greater Mount Druitt area. The chapter provides an understanding of the physical relativity of greater Mount Druitt in relation Sydney. It offers a comprehensive blend of information relating to Blacktown City Council, the location of the study area within the Council and the suburb precincts that are included in this investigation. ABS data was collated on Blacktown City Council and the specific suburbs residents who were interviewed lived in. This data was also compared to the Sydney Statistical Division (SSD) average. The data selected relates to population characteristics, age, housing type, nationality, religion, income and employment. These are vital in understanding the environmental, social, cultural and economic behaviours and status' of residents in each suburb. This information will also provide support to the sense of place they may embrace.

A review of the demographics for the study area will provide a comprehensive appreciation of the composition of those who live there. This is important in considering the methodological process of the site visits and in-depth interviews as well as providing an overview for the consideration and understanding of the findings in Chapter 5.

2.1 Location and History

The greater Mount Druitt area is located within Blacktown City Council Local Government Area (LGA) and situated approximately 35 kilometres west of the Sydney central business district. See Figure 1 below. The greater Mount Druitt area consists of a number of satellite suburbs. The suburbs that are located within this specific area include; Mount Druitt, Lethbridge Park, Bidwill, Shalvey, Emerton and Hebersham. The residents interviewed as part of the qualitative research process live in public housing in these suburbs.

Figure 1: The greater Mount Druitt area, Blacktown Council, Sydney



Source: Google Maps, 2009

Blacktown City Council

The Blacktown City Council area is predominately residential, with rural sectors to the north and industrial and commercial precinct land uses. The total land area of Blacktown LGA is 47 square kilometres. It is a culturally diverse LGA that provides a large proportion of public housing for people in need, in particular the greater Mount Druitt area. The area has evolved immensely post World War II through large numbers of immigrants moving to the area. The LGA is also home to the largest population of Indigenous persons in NSW, a total of 5,240 in 2006 (ABS 2006).

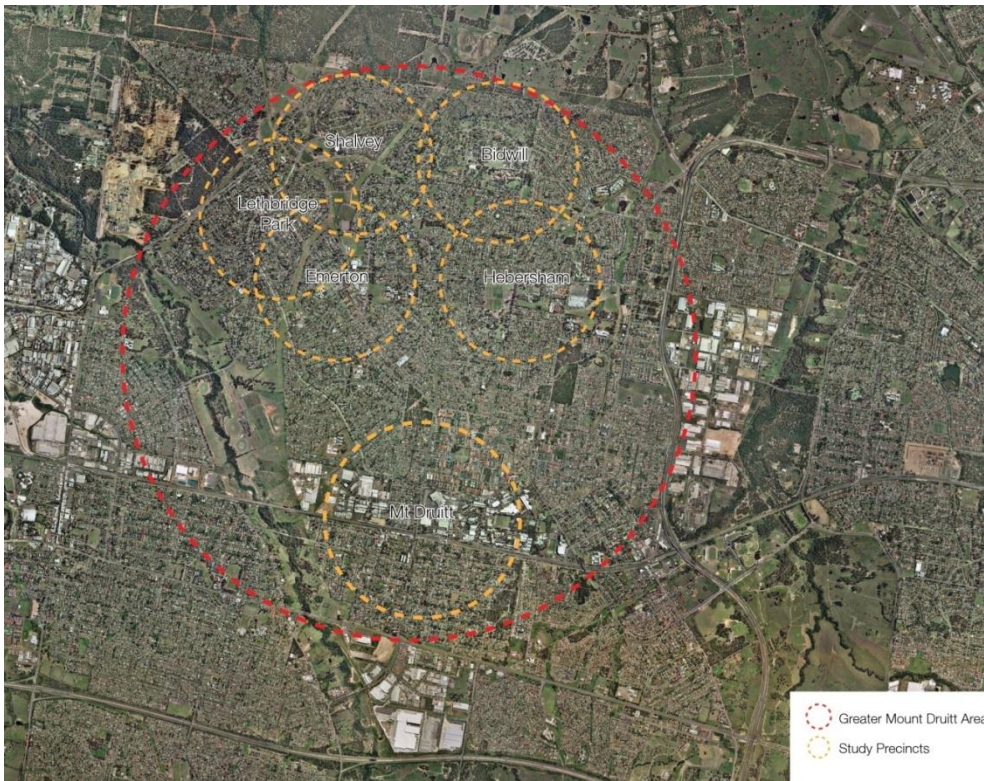
As stated on the Blacktown City Council website the original inhabitants of the Blacktown area were the Dharug Aboriginal people, with European settlement of the area dating back from 1791 (Blacktown City Council 2006). Blacktown was originally used for agricultural purposes including farming, grazing and timber collecting. The population of the area was stagnant until the mid 19th century when the Sydney rail network was expanded, connecting the area to metropolitan Sydney. The subdivision of original land grants was also undertaken. The population continued to grow through the early 1900s with a total of 18,000 residents post World War II. The largest period of population growth was between 1954 and 1976

where the population grew from 32,000 to 160,000 residents, largely due to an influx of immigrants. This growth has continued with the current population at approximately 291,612 as of 30th June, 2008 (Blacktown City Council 2009).

Major physical, environmental and social features of the Blacktown City LGA include: Westpoint Shopping Centre in Blacktown, Westfield Mount Druitt, University of Western Sydney (Blacktown Council), a number of TAFE Campuses, Featherdale Wildlife Park, Blacktown Olympic Centre, Parklea Markets, Blacktown District Hospital, Mount Druitt Hospital, Prospect Reservoir, Parklea Maximum Security Prison and a number of parks and leisure facilities. The main transport links to and from the LGA include the Motorway 7 and Motorway 4 as well as the main Western and Richmond railway lines.

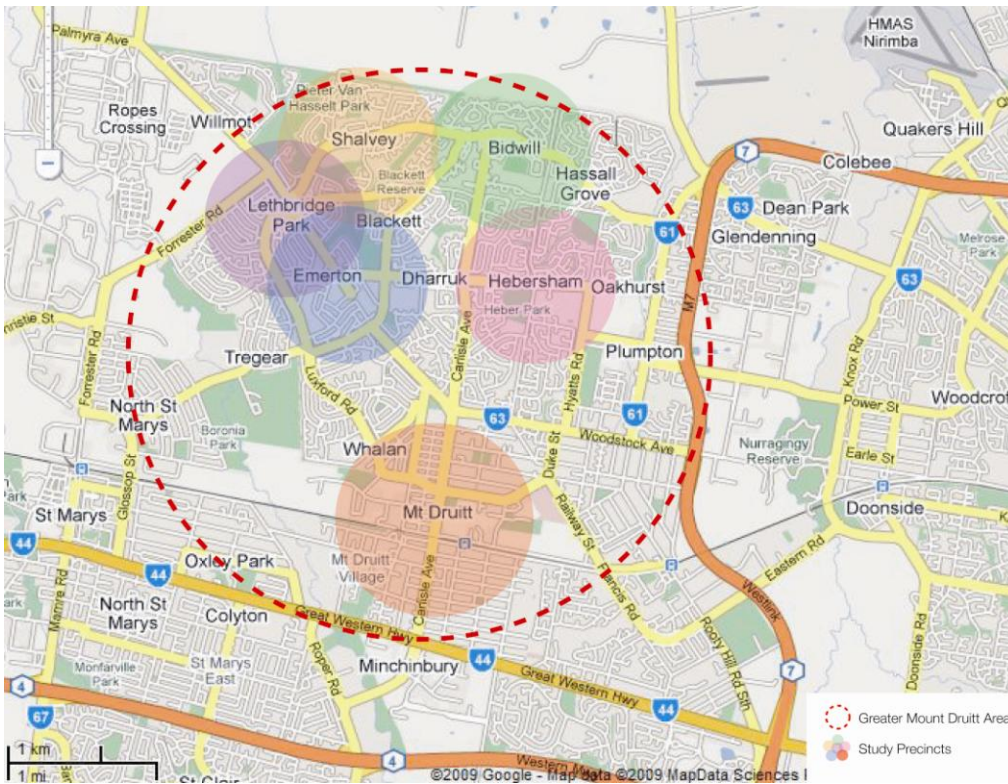
The study area is located in the south-west of the Blacktown LGA. The greater Mount Druitt area feeds off the suburb of Mount Druitt. Smaller satellite suburbs (Lethbridge Park, Bidwill, Shalvey, Emerton and Hebersham) surround Mount Druitt and form part of the greater focus area (See Figure 2 and 3 below). The greater Mount Druitt area has expanded and developed to include these satellite suburbs over the past 150 years. The suburb of Mount Druitt is located next to the western Sydney railway line and was considered to be the main town for the region since early settlement in the 1800s. The suburbs that surround the Mount Druitt town centre were established and formed under new land release grants as outer ring suburbs to Mount Druitt during the late 1800s. The majority of public housing was introduced into the area during the mid 20th century.

Figure 2: Aerial photograph of the Greater Mount Druitt area and satellite suburbs



Source: Google Maps, 2009

Figure 3: Arterial map of the greater Mount Druitt area and satellite suburbs



Source: Google Maps, 2009

Mount DrUITt

The suburb of Mount DrUITt is predominately residential with industrial, commercial and institutional land uses throughout. Mount DrUITt was named after George DrUITt, a former soldier who “oversaw the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges by convict labour around Sydney... and was granted land within the area” (Blacktown City Council 2009). The suburb was originally established in 1837 when the grant was recorded. “A “handsome looking mansion” was built (opposite the present Mt. DrUITt Park). The home became a social centre for the weekends after his guests had driven from Sydney, as DrUITt had become known for his lavish hospitality” (www.mountdrUITthistory.org.au 2007). The connection of Mount DrUITt to the rest of Sydney in 1881 via rail link, see Figure 4 below, played an important role in the development of the area.

Figure 4: First Railway Station at Mount DrUITt 1881



Source: <http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/our-city/history/the-city/mt-drUITt-historical-photographs/mt-drUITt-railway-station---1881.cfm>, 2009

The increase in population during the 1950s to 1970s meant that new residential subdivisions had to occur; public housing was also prominent in the area at this time. This was largely due to the arrival of immigrants from countries including the Philippines, Samoa, Fiji, United Kingdom and Lebanon. Mount DrUITt community features include: Westfield Mount DrUITt,

Mount Druitt TAFE, RAAF Memorial Park, Mount Druitt Swimming Centre, Federation Forest and a number of schools.

Lethbridge Park

Lethbridge Park is also an established residential area and is also named after early landholders (Blacktown City Council 2009). The area saw an increase in population post World War II up until the 1990s when a decline in population and housing size took place. Major community facilities in the area include a Police and Community Youth Club as well as two schools.

Bidwill

Bidwill is predominately residential with an array of bush and parklands surrounding the suburb. The suburb was named after local botanist in charge of the Botanic Gardens, John Carne Bidwill (Blacktown City Council 2009). Similarly to Lethbridge Park, Bidwill saw an increase in population during the 1950s to 1970s and a decrease in population during the 1990s. The main landmarks of Bidwill include a shopping centre, parks and reserves as well as two schools.

Shalvey

Shalvey is an established residential area with minimal growth until the late 1800s and early 1900s. An increase in population took place between 1950 and 1970 with a small decline during the 1990s. Since the 21st century the population has remained stable. Major features of Shalvey include parks, reserves and two schools.

Emerton

Emerton provides a commercial precinct, parklands and an established residential area. Emerton was also named after an early land holder, William Fredrick Emert (Blacktown City Council 2009). Major population growth occurred during the 1950s and 1960s with a decline in population since the start of the 21st century due to minimal dwelling development and a decrease in household size. Main community features within the area include the Emerton Leisure Centre, the Village Shopping Centre, parks and schools.

Hebersham

Hebersham was named after Bishop Heber of Calcutta, whose diocese included NSW (Blacktown City Council 2009). It is a mainly residential precinct with an increase in population during the 1950s to 1970s and somewhat of a decrease since the turn of the century due to limited development and smaller household sizes. Major features of Hebersham include a school and reserve.

2.2 Facts and Figures

The demographics of the study area have been reviewed as part of the methodological process of understanding the people and environment within Blacktown LGA and the greater Mount Druitt area. The residents who partook in the in-depth interviews live within the selected suburbs shown previously in Figure 2 and 3. The following data has been taken from the Blacktown City Council website 2009 as a community profile guideline in response to the 2006 ABS census.

Blacktown City Council

As of 2006, Blacktown City Council had a total population of 271,710 persons, with 134,874 males and 136,836 females. The indigenous population included 7,055 persons (2.6%) compared to 1.1% for the SSD. There were 160,479 (59.1%) persons born in Australia compared to 60.4% for the SSD. In regards to persons born overseas the Blacktown City Council area was slightly higher than the average for Sydney with 93,103 (34.3%) compared to 82,521 (31.7%) for the SSD. A total of 62.7% of residents were aged between 18 and 64 years of age (170,310 persons). The Blacktown City Council area had a higher proportion of infants aged 0 to 4 years old (8.2%) compared to 6.6% for the SSD and a higher proportion of children aged 5 to 17 years old with 20.9% of the population compared to the SSD of 16.9%. The LGA had a lower percentage of people aged 65 to 84 years old (7.5%) compared to 10.7% for the SSD. Overall, the Blacktown Council area has a higher proportion of Indigenous persons, and persons aged 0 to 17 years of age compared to the SSD. Although, the area has a lower proportion of persons aged 65 to 84 years old.

In regards to households, the average household size is 3.02 relative to the SSD of 3.08. Over 50% of the population were considered to be couples with children 38,346 (53.3%) compared to the SSD of 36,976 (49.3%). The total one parent families were 14,209 (19.7%) compared to the SSD of 12,741 (15.6%). The number of couples without children, 25.4% of the

population compared to 33.2% for the SSD. 75.6% of the total population were one family households compared to 66.8% for the SSD. Overall, the LGA had a higher proportion of couples with children as well as one parent families in comparison to the SSD. There were a lower proportion of couples without children. Between 2001 and 2006 there was an increase of 1,514 couples without children.

In relation to the country of birth, the highest proportion of persons were born in the Philippines 16,125 (5.9%) compared to 1.3% of the SSD. Other nationalities with a higher proportion of persons born overseas in comparison to the SSD include; India, New Zealand, Fiji, Malta, Sri Lanka and Sudan. Since 2001, there has been a large increase of people born in India and the Philippines and a decrease of those born in the United Kingdom.

A total of 81.9% of people nominated a religion with 35.3% of the population recognising as Catholic compared to 29.1% for the SSD. Religions that were higher than the SSD average included; Islam (4.6%) compared to 3.9% for the SSD and Hinduism (3.7%) compared to SSD of 1.7%, these religions also saw the greatest increase in numbers from 2001 to 2006. Overall, Blacktown LGA is diverse in culture and religion but is predominately Christian.

In regards to income overall 15.7% of the population earned a high income and 40.6% earned a low income compared with 21.9% and 37.9% respectively for the SSD. 93.2% of the labour force was employed (those aged 15 years and over) and 6.8% unemployed. The total number employed is slightly lower than that of the SSD of 94.7% and the number unemployed is higher than the SSD of 5.3%. Table 1 below shows an overview of some specific demographics for Blacktown City Council in 2006.

Table 1: Key Statistics, Blacktown City Council

Key statistics (summary statistics)	Blacktown City		Sydney Statistical Division		Sydney Statistical Division		Change 2001 to 2006
	2006		2001		2001		
Usual Residence data	number	%	%	number	%	%	
Usual resident population							
Total population (b)	271,710	100.0	100.0	256,367	100.0	100.0	15,343
Males (b)	134,874	49.6	49.3	127,308	49.7	49.3	7,566
Females (b)	136,836	50.4	50.7	129,059	50.3	50.7	7,777
Population characteristics							
Indigenous population	7,055	2.6	1.1	6,068	2.4	1.0	987
Australian born	160,479	59.1	60.4	157,606	61.5	62.3	2,873
Overseas born	93,103	34.3	31.7	82,521	32.2	31.2	10,582
Australian citizens	228,173	84.0	82.6	218,018	85.0	84.4	10,155
Australian citizens aged 18+	160,446	59.1	62.2	151,259	59.0	63.4	9,187
Age structure							
Infants 0 to 4 years	22,412	8.2	6.6	22,262	8.7	6.7	150
Children 5 to 17 years	56,755	20.9	16.9	54,599	21.3	17.6	2,156
Adults 18 to 64 years	170,310	62.7	64.2	160,038	62.4	63.8	10,272
Mature adults 65 to 84 years	20,292	7.5	10.7	17,993	7.0	10.6	2,299
Senior citizens 85 years and over	1,942	0.7	1.6	1,460	0.6	1.4	482
Average household size (persons)	3.02	--	--	3.08	--	--	-0.06

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006 and 2001)

Mount Druitt

As of 2006, Mount Druitt had a total of 13,411 residents, 6,733 males and 6,678 females. The indigenous population consisted of 286 persons (2.1%) 1.0% higher than the SSD. The population characteristics for Mount Druitt are interesting as 42.5% of the population were born in Australia and 45.7% were born overseas, with the SSD 60.4% and 31.7% respectively. 63.4% of the population were aged between 18 and 64 years of age with a higher proportion 10.0% of those aged 0 to 4 years and 19.5% of those aged 5 to 17 years compared to the SSD average. Mount Druitt has a smaller proportion of people aged above 65 years old (8.0%) compared to the SSD (12.3%). Overall, Mount Druitt has a higher proportion of Indigenous persons and those aged below 18 years of age compared to the SSD.

There were a total of 52.4% of total families classified as couples with children and 21.4% stated they were one-parent families. These were both considerably higher than the SSD of 49.3% and 15.6% respectively. There was an overall increase in couples with children and on-parent families within the area from 2001 to 2006. It is evident that there are a large proportion of younger people within Mount Druitt as well as one-parent families. Since 2001 an increase was also seen in family households, lone person households and group households.

Similarly to Blacktown LGA, Mount Druitt has a high proportion of persons born in the Philippines (10.7%) compared to 1.3% for the SSD. Mount Druitt also had a larger proportion of people born in Iraq (3.3%) and Fiji (3.2%) compared to the SSD of 0.5% and 0.7% respectively. People born in Sudan and Afghanistan were also higher than the SSD. Even though most people were born in Australia, Mount Druitt is culturally diverse.

In regards to religion, 81.7% of the population nominated a specific religion compared to 74.9% for the SSD. Mount Druitt holds a larger proportion of those who said they were Catholic (36.4%) compared to the SSD of 29.1% and a larger proportion of those who nominated Islam as their religion 12.9% compared to 3.9% for the SSD. It is evident that religion is an important facet in the lives of Mount Druitt residents which is important to acknowledge in providing facilities for the community.

Compared to Blacktown LGA Mount Druitt has a higher division between those considered as having a high income (8.2%) of the population compared to those who have a low income (43.6%) of the population. These statistics vary greatly in regards to the SSD of 21.9% and 37.9% of the population respectively. In regards to employment 89.6% of the labour force was employed and 10.4% unemployed. Those employed is 5.0% lower than the SSD average and those unemployed is almost double the average across Sydney. Overall, Mount Druitt is a low socio-economic area with a large number of unemployed residents this could be linked to the larger proportion of public housing in the area.

Lethbridge Park

In 2006, a total population of 4,636 persons lived within Lethbridge Park, 2,240 males and 2,396 females. There were a total of 348 Indigenous persons (7.5%) living in Lethbridge Park, over 6.0% higher than the SSD. A total of 69.5% of residents were born in Australia and 20.3% were born overseas. In regards to age, 58.2% were between 18 to 64 years old and

24.4% aged 5 to 17 years, compared to the SSD of 64.2% and 16.9% respectively. No persons were aged above 85 years old. Overall, Lethbridge Park has a high proportion of its residents aged between 5 and 17 years old. This statistic may relate to the need to implement and monitor infrastructure or programmes that cater for younger people.

In regards to household types Lethbridge Park is similar to that of the SSD. Lethbridge Park holds a larger proportion of lone person households (23.9% compared to the SSD of 21.8%). Between 2001 and 2006 there was a decrease in family households and an increase in lone person and groups households.

It is interesting to note that the majority of people born overseas in Lethbridge Park's are from the United Kingdom (4.2%). The major differences between countries of birth between Lethbridge Park and the SSD were Samoa 2.6% compared to 0.2% respectively and New Zealand 3.8% compared to 2.0% respectively. There has been a decrease in population growth of people born in the United Kingdom between 2001 and 2006 with an increase of those born in Samoa.

In regards to religion, a total of 74.6% of persons nominated a religion which is similar to the SSD. The dominant single religion was Catholic (28.1%) with Anglican second (24.9%) in comparison to the SSD of 29.1% and 17.1% respectively. Overall, there was a decrease in Catholics and Anglicans from 2001 to 2006. The higher proportion of Christian religions may be due to the higher proportion of those born within the United Kingdom in comparison to Blacktown LGA and Mount Druitt.

Statistics relating to income show that 4.5% of residents earned a high income and 52.7% earned a low income. This difference varies greatly from the SSD (21.9% and 37.9% respectively). In relation to Mount Druitt, Lethbridge Park has a smaller proportion of high earners and larger proportion of low income earners. The data relating to income is also replicated in that of employment status with 83.2% of the labour workforce employed and 16.8% unemployed. This varies significantly compared to the SSD of 94.7% and 5.3% respectively. It is evident that Lethbridge Park is a diverse, multicultural society with similar sized households to the rest of Sydney but considerably more disadvantaged in regards to income and employment status.

Bidwill

In 2006, Bidwill had a total population of 4,414 persons with 2,075 males and 2,339 females. 11.3% of the population were Indigenous (500 persons), over 10.0% more than the SSD average. 68.3% of the population were born in Australia and 20.9% born overseas. This is similar to the demographics portrayed in Lethbridge Park but differ from those in Mount Druitt that has a higher proportion of persons born overseas. 56.0% of the population were aged 18 to 64 years old, 28.1% were aged 5 to 17 years and 9.8% aged 0 to 4 years old compared to 64.2%, 16.9% and 6.6% for the SSD. Similarly to Mount Druitt and Lethbridge Park, Bidwill holds a large proportion of younger people.

Overall, Bidwill had 36.2% couple families with children and 45.9% of one-parent families. In comparison to the SSD couple families with children were considerably lower in Bidwill (SSD 49.3%) and one-parent families considerably higher in Bidwill (SSD 15.6%). Government and community services of single parent families and their children provide beneficial support within a community, particularly one with a low socio-economic status.

The dominant non-English speaking country of birth was Samoa 2.7% compared to 0.2% for the SSD. 4.2% of residents were born in New Zealand compared to 2.0% for the SSD. Bidwill has a smaller proportion of people born in the United Kingdom (2.6%) compared to the SSD of 4.3%. It is evident that Bidwill has a strong presence of Islander cultures but similarly to the previous suburbs is culturally diverse.

There were 73.3% persons in Bidwill with a nominated religion. The dominant single religion in Bidwill is Catholic with 28.9%. Although, the largest changes in religious affiliation from 2001 to 2006 were a decrease in those who said they were Catholic and Anglican.

In regards to individual incomes, 4.5% of the population earned a high income and 54.1% earned a low income. These percentages are similar to Mount Druitt and Lethbridge Park and continue the trend of the region having a low socioeconomic status. 80.5% of people were considered to be employed in the labour force in 2006 and 19.5% were unemployed. These statistics vary greatly from the SSD average unemployment rate of 5.3%.

Shalvey

In 2006, Shalvey had 3,728 persons with 1,816 males and 1,912 females. There were a total of 304 Indigenous persons (8.2%), 69.1% Australian born residents and 22.5% of persons

born overseas. The SSD of persons born overseas was higher at 31.7%. Similarly to the suburbs mentioned previous, there were a larger number of younger people within the area (26.8% aged 5 to 17 years compared to the SSD of 16.9%) and a smaller number of those aged over 64 years old (5.3% compared to 12.3% for the SSD).

There were a high proportion of one-parent families within Shalvey (36.0%). This was similar to Bidwill and drastically higher than the SSD of 15.6%. The Shalvey area did have more family households (82.5%) compared to the SSD of 68.6%. Household types remained relatively the same from 2001 to 2006.

In regards to those born overseas the predominant country was New Zealand with 4.5% of the population compared to 2.0% for the SSD. Although, a lower proportion compared with the SSD people born in the United Kingdom made up 2.8% of the population. A larger proportion of people were also born in Samoa (2.1%) compared to the SSD (0.2%).

Catholics and Anglicans make up over 50.0% of the total population of those who nominated a religion in Shalvey. There has been an increase in those who nominated themselves as Islam (4.3%) from 2001 to 2006. This percentage is also higher than the SSD average of 3.9%.

Overall, 6.8% of persons earned a high income and 50.4% earned a low income. These statistics replicate the previous mentioned suburbs. A total of 85.9% of the labour force was employed and 14.1% unemployed. Although slightly lower than Lethbridge Park and Bidwill it is still significantly greater than the SSD.

Emerton

In 2006 a total of 2,210 persons lived in Emerton, 1,089 males and 1,121 females. 6.4% of the population were Indigenous, 59.2% were Australian born and 30.5% were born overseas. Those born in Australia and overseas were similar to that of the SSD. Emerton had a high proportion of younger persons aged 5 to 17 years (24.0%) compared to the SSD of 16.9% and a lower percentage of people aged over 64 years old compared to the SSD.

Between 2001 and 2006 there were no significant changes in household types in Emerton. 41.3% of total families were couple families with children and 31.9% of one-parent families which was considerably higher than the SSD. The high number of single parent families has

been a common demographic of all suburbs identified for this thesis. Community support and facilities are integral in providing adequate access and services for both parents and children.

The dominant non-English speaking country of birth for Emerton was the Philippines. Also, Emerton had a high proportion of people born in New Zealand (6.4%), Samoa (2.9%) and Fiji (2.1%) compared to the SSD of 2.0%, 0.2% and 0.7% respectively. This high proportion of Islander cultures is similar to that of Lethbridge Park. 3.6% of the population were born in the United Kingdom.

The high proportion of Christian religions (both Catholic and Anglican) is similar to that of the previous suburbs. Emerton also has a higher proportion of those who said that they were Islamic (4.6%) compared to the SSD of 3.9%. 76.7% of the population nominated a religion.

Overall, 6.1% of the population earned a high income and 49.0% earned a low income. 85.4% of the labour force was employed and 14.6% were unemployed. Between 2001 and 2006 there was a decrease in both those employed and unemployed, with the number of people in the labour force decreasing by 10.0%. These statistics may relate directly to the need for public housing in these areas and possible employment opportunities and programs for the future.

Hebersham

In 2006, there were a total of 5,522 persons in Hebersham, 2,711 males and 2,811 females. 400 people (7.2%) identified themselves as Indigenous, 61.9% Australian born and 28.6% born overseas. There were similar statistics in relation to ages as those suburbs previously mentioned with a high proportion of young people and children and lower proportion of those aged above 64 years old.

A total of 47.0% of families were couple families and 28.6% were one-parent families, much higher than the SSD of 15.6%. There was also an increase of couples without children from 2001 to 2006 (+50). Hebersham holds a greater proportion of family households than the SSD.

Similarly to Mount Druitt, Hebersham has a high number of people born in the Philippines (4.1%) compared to the SSD of 1.3%. There were 3.0% of persons born in Fiji, 2.8% born in New Zealand and 1.8% born in Samoa. 3.5% of people were born in the United Kingdom.

In 2006, Hebersham had a similar proportion of those nominated as Catholics and Anglicans in relation to the SSD. Although, there was a high quantity of persons who nominated Islam as their religion (6.4%) compared to the SSD of 3.9%. This could be in relation to the higher number of people born in Pakistan and Lebanon than in other suburbs studied.

Hebersham's individual income statistics is second to Mount Druitt yet still substantially low compared to the SSD average. 7.5% were considered to be high income earners and 45.8% considered to be low income earners (SSD 21.9% and 37.9% respectively). Overall 89.1% of the labour force was employed and 10.9% unemployed. This is somewhat better than the other study suburbs besides Mount Druitt.

2.3 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the historical context of the greater Mount Druitt area and provide a local and regional geographical understanding of the study area. The chapter investigated the social, environmental, economic and cultural frameworks and expressed statistical information of the particular demographics through ABS data. By reviewing and investigating this background information it provides an appreciation of the people who live there and an introduction to the considerations and methods embarked upon throughout the thesis.

Based on research from the ABS, the following information is a summary of key themes that emerged from all suburbs discussed above:

- there is a high proportion of Indigenous persons within all suburbs;
- Mount Druitt has a large number of people born overseas while other suburbs have a larger proportion of Australian born residents;
- throughout the greater Mount Druitt area there is a strong sense of cultural diversity of people born overseas, in particular persons from the Philippines, New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa;
- there is a large number of one-parent families across all suburbs;
- religion plays an important role within all suburbs as most suburbs have a high proportion of people nominating a religion compared to the SSD;
- the most common religions are Catholic and Anglican, a smaller but notable presence were that of Islam and Hindu;

- there is a high proportion of younger people aged under 17 years old in all suburbs and a lower number of people aged over 64 years old (compared to the SSD); and
- all suburbs reveal a significantly high proportion of unemployment and low income earners compared to the SSD.

The following chapter looks at the literature reviewed and the accompanying conceptual framework used.



Chapter 3
Literature Review: Conceptual Frameworks

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to achieve an overall consideration of the place theory conceptual framework. A similar framework was considered by Gustafson (2001), presenting “...an analytical framework for mapping and understanding the attribution of meaning to places” (Gustafson 2001, p.5). The literature reviewed focuses on the notion of place and its sub-constructs; sense of place, the meaning of home, sense of belonging, place identity, attachment to place and place making. Place and its relevance to public housing will also be addressed. Sense of place, as a construct of place, will be of particular importance when ‘unpacking’ what place means to the residents of greater Mount Druitt. As stated by Easthope (2004) “... ideas of ‘place’ is intertwined with the ideas of community, collective memory, group (and individual) identity, political organisation and capital flow’ (p.128). Sometimes these complex sub-constructs of place overlap, place is inextricably bound up in what people perceive as meaningful and their experience of place (Relph 1976, Tuan 1977 and Dovey 1985).

The review firstly considers the meaning of home and its relationship to public housing. Phenomenology literature was reviewed to acknowledge the importance of the philosophy to the qualitative process and its connection to place. Furthermore, it established the foundations of a rigorous qualitative research methodology. Overall, place theory provides an understanding over how each sub-construct inter-relates, in particular sense of place. The conceptual links between each sub-construct will be argued throughout.

3.1 The Meaning of Home

The definition of home is difficult to explicitly define (Benjamin 1995). Benjamin provides a widely accepted definition: “The home is that spatially localised, temporally defined, significant and autonomous physical frame and conceptual system for the ordering, transformation and interpretation of the physical and abstract aspects of domestic life at several simultaneous spatio-temporal scales, normally activated by the connection to a person or community such as a nuclear family” (Benjamin 1995, p.158). Tuan (1977) states that we “... readily accept our home as place” but “... we must make an extra effort to realise that smaller places exist within the home” (Tuan 1977, p182). The two main conceptual environments to be considered are the community and the home. The connection and sense of

place residents have with the community and home will be investigated as part of the qualitative research method.

Relph (1976) speaks of home and dwelling as being important in most people's lives, and consequently being significant in one's identity. Home has been highly researched in regards to identity Seamon (1979) and Duncan (1982). A lecture undertaken by Susan Thompson at UNSW in 2008 provided insight into the meaning of home and the importance to identity. Thompson (2008) explained the multidimensional nature of home in relation to others, social networks and self identity. One's home represents who they are through physical, social and personal messages and symbols. The home can be a personal space but also encourages interaction and socialising between family and friends. The memories, emotions and meanings that may arise between a person, events and objects within a home can promote a sense of place and attachment.

Moore (2000) focuses on placing home in context, acknowledging that there has been "... a lack of critical innovative theories and methods' to examine home..." (Moore 2000, p.207) with previous discussion on home focused more on the personal rather than the social and cultural. Homes' often hold memories, feelings, emotions, objects, events and relationships that people connect with. Residents will be asked about their emotional attachment to home and whether this is comparatively similar or dissimilar to that of their community.

The connection between place and home has been studied by a number of humanist geographers and theorists (Relph 1976, Tuan 1977, 1980 and Seamon 1979). "Their work highlighted the human qualities of places and the bonds that develop, focusing on the landscape of place and home rather than the social or psychological processes within it" (Moore 2000, p.209). Moore (2000) reiterates that there is limited research on the social and cultural aspects of place within the home. The cultural diversity of a city such as Sydney provides a platform for further investigations into this area due to a multicultural society that lends itself to such aspects, including ceremonial. Home for many may be the physical 'four walls' that surround them, it may be a specific space within a building, a community centre, a church or no explicit space at all.

The affective bonds people had with home were studied in the 1960s with specific focus on home in the 1970s. There have been numerous meanings associated with home over the past 30 to 40 years from home as a symbol of self (Cooper 1974) to home as a social and cultural unit (Hayward 1975) to a comprehensive list by Despres (1991) who identified 10 general

categories of home focusing on psychological, social and cultural elements. The main theory that developed from these studies relating to home was that of place attachment. Moore (2000) states with reference to (Schumaker and Taylor 1983, Giuliani 1991a, 1991b and Altman and Low 1992) that the theory of place attachment is the study of the affective components of the attachment bond with places (Bonnes and Secchiaroli 1995). People become attached to places through a number of different facets; involvement with the community, social networks, satisfaction, cultural elements and time spent. Moore (2000) notes, that even though attachment is seen as a personal concept it can be perceived through objective criteria, suggesting the “attachment approach emphasises the process by which people and home places develop relationships” (p. 211). The process of becoming attached can be seen as an objective process that is undertaken to arrive at a sense of place.

During the 1990s, theorists Gurney 1990, Despres 1991 and Somerville 1997 began to investigate the particular changes that had been occurring in and around the home. A more post modern approach towards what a typical home involved was emerging with studies linked to single adults, older people, home-based workers, homeless people, shared ownership and different ethnic groups. Such diversity within home and neighbourhoods can be seen across many parts of Sydney, including the greater Mount Druitt area as referenced in Chapter 2. The meaning of home is constantly changing due to those who live within it and the social and environmental changes within society. This is seen through the research of Easthope (2004).

Easthope (2004) provides a broad understanding of the theories and processes undertaken to define home. In the 21st century home can be considered to be a combination of spatial, social, psychological and emotive circumstances. Easthope (2004) explains that particular spaces are inscribed with meaning by a person so that they become a home. Furthermore, the home is understood by people in different ways through contexts and cultures, with home being a “special kind of place” (Easthope 2004, p. 135). For residents living in public housing the meaning of home will be crucial in understanding the sense of place they may have, in particular towards ownership and identity.

3.2 Phenomenology

Dovey (1985), explains that “place is a concept that spans the scales of human environment interaction from the armchair to the planet” (Dovey 1985, p. 93). In relation to the investigation undertaken for this thesis, the ‘armchair’, described by Dovey, may be likened to that situated within the home of a public housing resident and the planet to be considered as their community. This link is also pivotal to the findings of the thesis as it will provide an insight to the attachment and connection these residents have inside and outside of their home. Phenomenology is the relationship between person and world (Seamon and Mugerauer 1995). It is important to understand this concept as it provides an explanation of how one may associate with their personal identity or community. Moore (2000) in reference to Casey (1996) states that phenomenology “... makes home the primary and central point from which the rest of the world is experienced and defined”. The home is the inner nodal point that a person will return to and can be seen as imperative to the phenomenological philosophy. Bachelard (1964) also agrees that home is a “haven and our corner of the world” (Moore 2000, p.209). This description acknowledges the phenomenological links to the intimacy one experiences within the home.

Dovey (1985) focuses on the differentiation between the sub-constructs of place; spirit, sense and home and acknowledges that “...the processes of interaction between people and setting” (Dovey 1985, p.93) are what largely influence meaning. The connection one may associate with their home compared to community may be similar or different. Dovey (1985), exercises the thought of participatory place-making as a theme that helps develop this association. Place making policies and projects are common practice in the planning world today and consultation process with residents is fundamental. The interaction between person and setting is essential in encouraging identity, pride and stewardship within the community.

Phenomenology is “an attempt to build a philosophy and methodology without the pre-suppositions inherent in the methods of scientific empiricism” (Dovey 1985, p.93). Dovey, speaks of the importance of phenomenology and the methodological roots of ‘place’. Phenomenology is “by far the most common philosophical foundation of the ‘place’ movement” (Dovey 1985, p.93). This theory has been understood and put into practice through rigorous in-depth interviews that have taken place as support for the thesis. The

phenomenological concept described by Dovey is imperative to the findings and recommendations made by the qualitative research conducted to discover the 'roots of place'.

The methodological approach to this thesis clearly focuses on a thorough literature review across a number of academic and scholarly texts. With reference to Relph (1970), Dovey states that phenomenology "...does not seek to reveal 'facts' as science does, rather it seeks to reveal and understand our experiences as they appear to us, with meanings and values intact" (Dovey 1985, p.93). The outcome of the thesis is based on personal experience and understanding, the phenomenological approach is appropriate as 'place is "not primarily physical but rather experiential"' (Dovey 1985, p. 94). The in-depth interviews will allow for 'intact' experiences that are not predetermined.

Dovey explains that the concept of place is problematic, purely due to 'place' being primarily "...an experiential category and intangible to the core" (p. 94). With reference to Heidegger (1962) this intangibility emerges through place being an experience of ourselves and of our 'being-in-the-world'. The in-depth interviews took place within the homes of the 17 residents' selected. This experience allowed for a personal appreciation and understanding of the sense of place evident for the residents and a primary connection to the source of the study areas. To be in the position to understand and be in their own 'world' and their 'intimate' space ensured that the kinaesthetic senses spoken about were also tangible and realistic for me. Furthermore, Dovey states that "... 'place' implies both people and meaning... 'sense' of place then depends on the quality of the experience and the depth of meaning" (Dovey 1985, p.94). The quality and depth of the meaning of a place can be heavily influenced through government policy, providing appropriate infrastructure, services and community events. To gain an understanding of the sense of place for residents within the greater Mount Druitt area, it is vital that the quality of experience and depth of meaning is evoked throughout the interview.

Easthope (2004) provides an analysis of the importance of Heidegger's (1962) work on 'place' and the influence Harvey (1996) and Casey (2001) have had on developing Heidegger's (1962) arguments in relation to place and the phenomenological experience. Heidegger (1962) recognised that "...who we are ... is influenced by our relationship, through our bodies, to the outside world" (Easthope 2004, p. 132). It refers to the correlation between the human mind, the body and the location that surrounds us. Heidegger's (1962) reference to the 'workshop' can be likened to that of the 'dwelling' or home. The importance of this is

that the connection one may have with the ‘workshop’ or being-in-the-world, may be similar to that of the attachment one has with their home or community. Harvey (1996), speaks of dwelling as “...the capacity to achieve a spiritual unity between humans and things” (p. 300-301). Similarly, Relph’s (1989) reference to Heidegger states “...places are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations” (Relph 1989, p. 26-29). The memory one holds about a particular place is stagnant in the mind through a particular repetition, act or event. The association one may have with the place or people within it also allow for a particular connection, positively or negatively.

Tuan (2001) also associates the understanding of place through the concept of cosmos and hearth, the world and the individual. Tuan states that the philosophical experiences of both “...often overlap... to the fact that we are both body and mind” (Tuan 2001, p. 319). The phenomenological method undertaken is essential in conveying the true experience and heart-felt emotion of those interviewed; the mind and the body. This approach will provide a strong response to the literature researched as well as allow for an imminent perspective on sense of place within public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area. Placing the researcher within this environment does not necessarily provide instant access and understanding to the connection of people and place but it does allow for a brief association to the kinaesthetic sensory modes that may be discussed. This in turn will secure a strong foundation for a strong visual experience through the use photography and accurate commentary within the findings.

3.3 Place Theory

‘Place’ is a highly complex concept, this ideal was brought to fruition by field geographers in the 1970s (Easthope, 2004). Over the past 30 years academics and theorists have studied ‘place’ in its entirety. Heidegger (1973) place as a relationship between our mind, body and outside world, Relph (1976) sense of place and placelessness, Tuan (1977) the separation between the positive effects and ties one has with place (topophilia) and the sense of being home (rootedness), Proshansky et al (1978, 1983, 1987) and Hull et al (1994) work on place identity and Altman and Low’s (1992) work on place attachment were all significant milestones in research literature regarding place.

To provide a meaning of ‘place’ is somewhat difficult. Over time, theorists’, including the above, have defined ‘place’ and its relativity to place making, place relations, textures, geography, community, culture, and home. Key place theorists such as Tuan (1977), Relph

(1976), Dovey (1985) and Casey (1993) cannot agree on one single definition for place, although an underlying theme within place theory is the perception and meaning of place. This relates to the way people feel, think and act toward the environment in which they live (built and natural), the kinaesthetic relationship. Tuan (1977) suggests that “place is security and space is freedom: we are attached to one and long for the other” (p. 3). Place is often seen as a position or location usually defined within space that relates to the personal meaning and emotion someone associates with it. Space is not necessarily defined or does not necessarily hold personal meaning although the need for space is constantly sought. Not only is place theory difficult to define, but it is also paradoxical. Casey states that place has the ability to “direct and stabilise us, to memorialise and identify us, to tell us who we are and what we are in terms of where we are (as well as where we are not)” (Casey 1993, p. xv). Casey explains that place is something that defines us positively and negatively. We may be associated to a place through love or fear, through want or need or through predetermined factors. Place provides us with memories of the past as well as thoughts for the future.

The importance of place in regards to housing research has been reviewed by Easthope (2004) that focuses on the relationships people have with their home and their sense of place within the home. Easthope (2004) agrees with Massey’s (1995) argument that ‘place’ is a social construct and that we “actively make places” (p.48) and that our ideas of place “are products of the society in which we live” (p.50). To characterise or limit the definition of society can also be difficult. The society in which we live could be seen as that of the home, the neighbourhood, the town or city, the nation or the world.

Easthope (2004) explains the similarities in work and opinion of Gieryn (2000) and Soja (1996), that places are both physically built as well as felt and imagined, likewise Massey (1995) and Jess (1995), also agree that places are built and that there is always an interpreted element. Harvey (1996) argues that the notions of place have diminished in recent times with the continuous pressure and visibility of globalisation. The world is more connected, closer and smaller, it has become more strenuous and fast passed and provides little security and stability for people, who consequently seek place (Easthope 2004). The world is seemingly becoming ‘smaller’ with the need for place becoming more abundant. Technological advances in recent times have ensured that the connection between people is immediate and the connection to place is minimal. Massey (1995) has suggested that people interact, consult, and understand not only within their home but their local, regional, national and international realms. Massey (1995) further explains that places are open nodal points situated within

social interactions across the world, places are not seen as “coherent, bounded and settled” (p. 54) but “every place is ... a unique mixture of the relation which configure social space” (p. 61). Places are open, allowing people to come and go, yet a significant place relates to an experience that evokes meaning and thought, captured within the mind.

The idea that places cannot exist without us and we cannot exist without places is a theme that is agreed upon by Sack (2001) and Massey (1995). However, Sack’s belief that space is easily used and manipulated into a particular place has been criticised. Space and place are terms that are often confused. Casey suggests that “space and place are two different orders of reality between which no simple or direct comparisons are possible” (Casey, 2001 p. 404). Similarly Easthope (2004) explains that “place and space are not interchangeable; they are understood to be different orders of being” (p.129). Place is located within space yet they are two separate entities. The connection one has to place is experienced through meaning, thought provocation and the use of the senses.

3.3.1 Sense of Belonging

Easthope (2004) states that “a person’s sense of place can provide them with a sense of belonging” (p.131), with one feeling connected to a specific place this can contribute positively to their daily lives, sense of security and healthy lifestyle. The neighbourhood one lives in as well as the physical environment impacts the quality of life one has. Sense of belonging is important in understanding place theory due to the fact that one identifies with a particular place through specific people, objects or memories. A sense of belonging is formed through the elements of a place. The more one associates with a place through positive contributions that are reciprocated the more they feel connected to it.

Sense of belonging is closely tied with the identity one may have to a particular place. Moore (2000) states that “place identity is similar to place attachment in that it concerns the bonds between people and places (sense of belonging)... concerning how places form part of the self-identity” (p. 211). The bond a mother has with their child could be similar. The child feels a sense of belonging when in the presence of the mother and vice versa. The bond someone may have to a particular place may be due to a similar connection of love, care, need or security felt towards it. Sense of belonging within a community can also be seen as forming part of one’s self identity. A community event, the local church or the local

playground at the park may form that place connection and ultimately a sense of belonging that they associate with their neighbourhood.

Young (2004) seeks to understand whether a sense of belonging can be measured or not. Young provides results from quantitative and qualitative research focusing on women's health within a certain community. This research technique could also be used to understand sense of place for public housing residents. 'A better sense of neighbourhood was associated with better physical and mental health, lower stress, better social support and being physically active' (Young 2004). Haggerty and Williams (1999) also stated this in their text on self and sense of belonging; that an environment can provide someone with a healthier mind, body and soul. It is understood that a sense of belonging is often associated with positive aspects of a place and person. An environment may be considered healthy and viable to provide a sense of belonging but the well being of the person who frequents it must also be considered. As stated previously, many people who live in public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area are of low socio-economic backgrounds. Adequate social support and services should be considered when assessing the sense of belonging residents feel towards their community.

Ng et al (2005) studied housing related environmental factors in relation to place belonging particularly in urban renewal projects in Hong Kong. Ng et al (2005) speaks of the 'layered impacts' of dwelling, neighbours and community on residents' sense of belonging and attachment to place. Place belonging is '... a sense of belonging to a particular place as if it were one's own home, is territory-based and can be distinguished from belonging to a social group based on ethnicity, gender, religion and so forth' (Ng et al 2005, p.349). Sense of belonging is considered to be more than the predetermined factors of one's life. Ng et al (2005) explains that a sense of belonging is as intimate as that of the connection to one's home. It takes time and understanding of a place to acknowledge a specific sense of belonging. One may feel as though they belong to a community because they are accepted but a sense of belonging is much deeper and encourages an inner emotional attachment through mind and body.

Ng et al (2005) found that one's housing environment, whether it be the particular home, street or suburb mattered to residents in quality of life in Hong Kong. This paper considers the current views on belonging to a community and the sense of place one feels within their neighbourhood and home. Urban renewal has become a planning process that sets out to

achieve better living and lifestyle standards for the residents who live there. Ng et al (2005) proposes three significant key concepts that must be considered in regards to the urban renewal process; the dwelling, the community and the neighbourhood. Cattell's (2001) study on poverty and exclusion. It provides a glance at the 'real' life worlds of people living within public housing. An in-depth interviewing process was also undertaken to understand first hand experiences of sense of belonging. Qualitative research techniques are valuable in accessing and processing relevant data and information. To understand whether people feel a sense of place within a community it is beneficial to speak directly to the residents (phenomenological methods) to understand their emotional, social and physical attachment.

Sense of belonging can instil a sense of stewardship and ownership about and towards a place. One may feel a sense of belonging through cultural or social means although it is an inner emotion that truly connects a person to place that makes them feel as though they belong. Sense of belonging is closely tied with sense of place as a sense of place can emerge through an environment that encourages a positive and healthy environment that one yearns to become a part of.

3.3.2 Place Identity

There are a number of factors to consider when acknowledging one's identity in relation to place. Place identity may be associated to the relationship one has with their social, cultural or personal environments. We start to identify ourselves with these places, both at a larger scale (city, nation, etc.) and at a smaller scale (neighbourhood, workplaces, homes, rooms etc.) (Giuliani 2003). As much as a place influences one's identity, the identity of a person or people also influence a place, this may be seen through the personal decorations to a house or a garden bed. Research into place identity came to fruition during the 1970s largely due to the concern of 'placelessness' in modern environments (Relph, 1976, Duncan and Duncan, 2001). Placelessness is important to place identity as it provides insight into the considerations that may be needed to form or provide an identity. Without a place identity it is difficult for one to associate the community or home. Providing options such as, social events, landmarks or sporting teams, within the community may enable one to feel an identity. One may feel obsolete in a placeless society, with no connection or attachment to anything. It is important to understand the relevance of placelessness and the feeling of not belonging as it can provide negative and unhealthy social consequences.

Hull et al (1993) studied place identity; symbols of self in the urban fabric. He explored the conceptual and empirical nature of place identity within Charleston, South Carolina following a devastating hurricane in 1989 (Hugo). He looks at specific symbols and icons within the landscape that contribute to self identity, sense of community and sense of place. A qualitative analysis of residents was conducted, regarding their physical and emotional loss as well as memories of place identity after the hurricane with six major categories emerging; connection to past, social groups, community character, functional needs, emotions and feelings and personal accomplishments. The sense of place the community had with their environment focused largely on its natural features with specific place based features such as a church representing a cultural or social symbol. Place features serve as icons and symbols that contribute significantly to the memories and values one holds to their identity and place (Hull et al 1993).

Hull et al (1993) references (Proshansky 1978, Krupat 1983, Shumaker and Taylor 1983, Proshansky et al 1983 and Korpela 1989) when stating that “Place identity refers to the contribution of place attributes to one’s self identity” (Hull et al 1993, p.109). “Place-based meanings tell us something about who we are and who we are not, how we have changed and into what we are changing (Stokols and Schumaker 1981). Self identity on the other hand is stated as “... rooted in many facets of daily life: the roles we play; the groups to which we belong; the things we wear; the items we purchase; the places we frequent or remember; and so on (Belk 1988 and Sack 1988)” (Hull et al 1993, p.109). What is physically located within an environment as well as lifestyle routine provide opportunities of connection and representation for the individual and neighbourhood.

It is important to note the difference between place identity and self identity as both contribute to the development of a sense of place. Self identity can best be explained through the Tuan’s (1977) concept of topophilia, the affection one has with place. This affection is often stronger for some people than others and is closely linked to sense of place; the experience, meaning and emotion specifically related through the kinaesthetic. Duncan and Duncan (2001, p. 4) also recognise that topophilia can “produce place for people”. The relationship one may have with a particular place may alter the meaning of that place for them and others. This may be in relation to familiarity, knowledge or time spent in the place. Bachelard (1964) argues that places influence the mind and we adapt or connect to them. Rose (1995) believes that this process is reciprocal and responsive, with place affecting mind and body and mind and body affecting to place. Places may provide the chance for a person

to become attached due to its ambience, aesthetic or significance to them socially or culturally. Although, one's self may act upon instinct to associate with a specific place through emotion, meaning or experience. Both processes allow for self identity to form. Easthope (2004) argues that "Place provides the missing link between the false Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body and between home as a social, cultural and emotive construct and house as a physical locality (Easthope 2004, p. 136). Self identity focuses on who we are through the actions we undertake and the beliefs we hold.

The meaning a place can be associated with the frequency one has with it. As Korpela (1989) suggests "... people actively (but perhaps not consciously) use place-based meanings to regulate their self definitions by focusing attention on meanings that balance or respond to pressures of daily life" (Hull et al 1993, p. 110). Place-based meanings can provide mixed emotions but people may seek specific places to relate or counteract a certain feeling, they are controlled by the individual. These meanings are more often heightened when one relates to 'home'. The features of a particular place represent the symbol one connects to it, providing place identity and ultimately self identity. The memories that may be associated with this place can evoke a sense of place (Hull et al 1993).

Person-environment fit stems from the identity one may perceive to have from their home or neighbourhood. Hull et al with reference to (Michelson 1976) said "... a major contributor to residential satisfaction is the degree to which the needs of the residents are conveniently met by the environment" (Hull et al 1993, p.116). The opportunities that a person's environment offers can relate directly to the way they may feel in day to day life. The focus of this study, public housing within Mt Druitt could be considered an example due to their socio-economic background, facilities provided and support offered. As stated by Hull et al (1993), it is difficult to formulate recommendations on one case study but it is possible to make some general observations that may have relevance in the broader context of urban planning.

3.3.3 Attachment to Place

Raffel (2006) is concerned with exploring the innate person-place relation and the idea of places providing people with 'nourishment', believing that 'place' analysis has diminished with a major focus on 'space' over recent times. To understand or analyse a person Raffel (2006) believes that one must consider their actions, the people who influence them and their

place. When considered these characteristics also provide an understanding of the attachment one may have to a particular place.

Raffel (2006) acknowledges a paper written by McHugh (2005) who argued that "... place is an important and even essential concept for theorising social action" (Raffel 2006, p. 19). Raffel and McHugh agree that human experience is most influential in determining the emotions of one's place, "... human experience of the world is of an inter-subjective space, an arc of encompassing language and history within which is formed a sense of tradition, of place, and of one's self in that place" (McHugh 2005, p.137). People position themselves in time and location, feeling a sense of attachment. Attachment to place is important in understanding place theory as it provides an understanding of the processes undertaken to in experiencing sense of place.

Raffel (2006) further explains with reference to McHugh (2005) the notion that place and person must be considered interlinked but the requirement to belong can actually constrain one's identity. People feel as though they need to belong to a place to feel a sense of happiness and enjoyment and hence secure a sense of pride and belief within themselves and that place. Raffel (2006) explores the notion that identity stems from place and that it is not "... belonging per se that is necessary to establish how a place is part of a person" (p. 85) but the emotive attachment a person has. Many people may oppose a particular place but are still considered to be connected to it due to its necessity or 'nourishments'. Raffel (2006) explains that "... a person cannot be separated from a place in something like the way a fish cannot be separated from water" (p. 85). Similarly this could be considered in regards to people living within public housing, some may oppose it, but they are part of it, through need (McHugh 2005).

Easthope (2004) explains the relationship between Heidegger (1973) and attachment to place, that "...places are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations" (Relph 1989, p. 26-29). We become attached to a place through repetition and affection that may grow over time. Heidegger's (1962) concept of 'Being-in-the-world' establishes the attachment one forms with that space and the memories that consequently form. Tuan (2001) explains that the attachment one has to place often overlaps, with both mind and body contributing. Casey (2001) argues that this is not the case the "...stronger the self becomes, the less important place should be" (Easthope 2004, p. 133). Casey's (2001) opinion suggests that the more familiar one becomes with a place that the

attachment or relationship with it becomes less viable. The attachment to place is continually evolving and continually remembering and feeling. Place attachment is personal and is taken through time via mind and body. Easthope (2004) sympathises with Tuan (2001) stating that “...the more we rely on the cosmos for our development, the more we desire the hearth” (Easthope 2004, p. 133), recognising the overlap between the two. This concept relates to Tuan (1977) where place is security and space is freedom (p.3).

As stated by Hauge’s (2007) in regards to identity and place, concepts like "place attachment," "place-identity," and "place identification" are theoretically and empirically difficult to separate (Speller, 2000). Each concept is imperative to understanding place theory and practice. “The influence place has on identity is seen as a result of a holistic and reciprocal interaction between people and their physical environment; people affect places, and places (and the way places are affected) influence how people see themselves” (Hague 2007, p. 1). The attachment one has with a place can provide an insight into understanding the relationship between the two and the underlining meaning of what the place means to the person and what the person ultimately means to the place and its significance.

3.3.4 Place Making

In Skennar’s (2004) argues that present day place making practice has become an after-thought in many urban planning projects. With an increasingly large focus on commercial and private sector development, it is integral to encourage, implement and provide places within urban and suburban environments that people can connect with. Agreeing with Harvey (1996), Skennar speaks of the importance of place making management and sense of neighbourhood in a time of globalisation. A main focus of the article is the interest in Australia’s cultural and diverse identity, with the goal of successful environments that alleviate ‘loneliness, stress and community breakdown’ (Skennar 2004 p.19). New strategies may need to be executed within communities to allow for this. A particular focus of this thesis is to investigate whether this place making process has or will occur in and around Mt Druitt’s public housing.

Skennar (2004) speaks highly of community consultation, “... often we encounter unloved and desolate locations that fail to attract people” (Skennar 2004, p. 19). It is beneficial to be proactive and engage the community when developing or redeveloping sites. This allows for results that respect their environment, provide, adapt or keep places of significance and

ultimately seek to ensure a sense of community, identity and belonging. Skennar (2004) states that community places should be “places that stimulate a variety of uses by different people, places that exude imagination, are memorable and become a magnet for daily life” (Skennar 2004, p. 19). The concept and use of places that hold memory is also agreed upon by Lynch (1972) and Tuan (1977 and 1980). Skennar (2004) advocates the importance of social mix, diverse interests, ages and cultures in the place making process, with many urban public spaces losing the connection they should have to community life. He believes this could be due to the “... vehicular movement paradigm of the modern city...” (Skennar 2004, p. 20), the lack of commitment and low expectation that many people may hold.

Planning public space for diverse communities, for example public housing, can be difficult and often challenging. Skennar (2004) acknowledges that there is a lack of understanding and little experience in this field. It is imperative to consult, participate and research communities and places before the designing process. Consequences may include poor safety and loss of vitality, quality and character within and around an environment. Skennar (2004) provides an insight into what he believes is becoming a “... two tiered society, those engaged, and those increasingly isolated” (Skennar 2004, p.20), many people’s lives are becoming complex and busier, with many beginning to have a “... poorer understanding and experience of social and spatial issues at a micro scale” (Skennar 2004, p.20). The increased pressures and desires of private developers to build must also be considered. The importance of educating and involving the community on the planning process is vital in guaranteeing a successful outcome.

The strong suburban culture of Australia, lends itself to the utopian lifestyle, “The Australian Dream”. Skennar (2004) recognises that many public spaces are currently not attractive and provide a low energy and absence. He associates this with the previous idea of globalisation “... connections are difficult to make... engagement in daily life is remote” (Skennar 2004, p.21). Tuan (1977) provides a similar example in regards to trees being planted on campus to “...make it look greener, more pleasant” (Tuan 1977, p. 141), deliberately creating place. With or without leaves these trees are known to students and provide a “potential place for intimacy” (Tuan 1977, p. 142). There has been an increase in concern regarding public spaces as legitimate meeting places due to safety. Skennar (2004) suggests that there is a great opportunity for public space to become more vibrant and seek to provide a sense of place that can be attained by residents and visitors. We need to “... realise and celebrate what people bring to place and make this central thinking” (Skennar 2004, p.22). Skennar (2004) and

Tuan (1977) similarly agree that place has a human and emotional dimension. For a sense of place to occur, a paradigm shift is needed. The collaboration of planning, the consultation process and delivering objectives should encourage places that people want to associate with and feel connected to.

3.4 Sense of Place

As sense of place is the overarching theme of this thesis, it is possible to extrapolate key themes from the above place theory constructs to further demonstrate their importance.

As noted by Easthope (2004), “one’s sense of place can be a very influential force in one’s life” (p. 132). If people are able to identify and *see* themselves in a place, then they will be able to envisage themselves becoming a part of that place, its history, present and future. Their sense of belonging will emerge as part of this identity as their connection to the place has been formed through experiential, meaningful and thoughtful processes. The attachment to place is seen through time passed and memories held, the physical and emotional. The identity one holds within place represents the way they act, how they feel and who they are. The practice of place making is integral in formulating a landscape that can be accessible for everyone within a community to enable the process of attachment, identity and belonging to take place. Sense of place is therefore a combination of all sub-constructs as it provides that innate and intimate experience of personal acceptance and experience within a place. Tuan (1977) suggests that “Intimate experiences are hard to express” (p. 137) and hence sense of place evolves from within.

Rose (1995) states that “peoples’ sense of place can become heightened when they think that it is being threatened” (p. 95), this can also cause detrimental consequences. Public housing areas such as those in the greater Mount Druitt study area often hold a diverse mix of cultures as well as a large number of low-socio-economic tenants. The sense of place residents have within these areas may be heightened due to these environmental sensitivities and the correct place making procedures need to be considered when implementing new changes to the community.

Tuan (1977) explores the “common experiences” of space and place and their relationship to experience, self, mind, environment and time. Common experiences can be considered to be vital to physical and social changes within a community. People from similar cultures may

connect differently to a place than those of another. Although sense of place is a personal experience that develops over time commonalities between the ways others associate with the same place are crucial in understanding possible community and planning actions to be taken by Council and HNSW.

Tuan (1977) investigates whether place is permanent and the significance the people within a place are to making the place meaningful, "...place is an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present" (p. 154). Why certain people associate with particular places can be related to historical factors that emerge over time; environmentally, socially or culturally, "...place is a pause in movement" (Tuan 1977, p. 138). This 'pause' suggests that a place can be stagnant but it is the work undertaken by the mind that continues the movement of the place through recollection and memory. Places that relate to occasions of genuine human exchange can occur within the home or the community. Genuine human exchange can offer the sense of belonging one may seek or need in a particular location. Although this may be considered to be a community based concept the relation to sense of place is still evident through the actions undertaken by other to invite or exchange personal messages or actions.

Tuan (1977) expresses the idea of the values different objects or landmarks provide for particular occurrences of happenings that we don't necessarily realise. For instance, trees providing aesthetic appeal and street lamps providing light and places to meet. These become symbols of communal boundaries that are associated with place identity and sense of place through the bond they may have with the object or area. The connection people have with the natural environment through touch, sight, sound, taste and smell contribute to the kinaesthetic experience and sense of place that may be associated with it. Tuan (1977) provides a vivid kinaesthetic scene that depicts the intimacy between human and environment, "The trough of dust under the swing and the bare earth packed firm by human feet are not planned, but they can be touching" (p.143).

Hull et al (1993) explains that it is vital to learn from the past in regards to future place making ventures in providing the ability for one to find a sense of place. Lynch (1972) argues that an important function of the built environment is that it provides objects of memory and it is important that we are readily able to change, adapt and replicate past memories and feelings towards it so that a sense of place can be carried throughout generations. The thought of time and place is important to consider in gaining a sense of place in a new or old

environment. Similarly, Tuan (1977 and 1980) reflects on the importance time plays in place. “As years pass the places of personal significance remain the same... in time the sense of place extends beyond individual localities to a region defined by these localities” (Tuan 1977, p.183). To ensure the significance and identity of a place is preserved the importance of the environment in which people live must be upheld, this is physical. Tuan (1977) further speaks of the “feel” one has with place and that it takes longer to acquire. The “feel” a person may have is something they nurture within and cannot be physically changed although if the physicality of that place is altered the sense of place may weaken.

Tuan (1977) explains the idea of place for a planner may be different to that of a resident who lives there, suggesting a planner may look at the physical and socio-economic characteristics of an area as ‘districts’ or ‘neighbourhoods’. Planners may consider them to be ‘places’ but only as an intellectual concept (p. 169). In reply to this Tuan (1977) suggests that the people who live within these areas would not need to consider these concepts as they see the physical and social setting as “...remote from their immediate needs” (p. 169). Sense of place is a meaningful experience one associates with personal connection. Ownership, pride and healthy living conditions are essentials in promoting sense of place, attachment and belonging toward a community.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the conceptual framework used to understand the relationship between place theory and its sub-constructs, in particular sense of place and the meaning of home. The phenomenology philosophy was discussed and its importance to understanding place theory through qualitative research techniques. Sense of place is a complex concept and relates to the meaningful experiences one associates to a specific environment. Yi Fu Tuan has been an influential theorist in regards to sense of place and its development over the past 30 years. The following chapter will consider the qualitative research process undertaken to obtain an insight into the sense of place of those living within public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area.



Chapter 4
Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological approach used for this research and outlines each of the research methods used during the process (a literature review, in-depth interviews and photography). Patton (2002) suggests that using more than one form of data collection, triangulation, increases “credibility and quality by countering the concern (or accusation) that the study’s findings are simply an artefact of a single method” (p. 563). Richards (2005) also believes this technique that is used to overcome possible bias that can arise from the use of a single method. A review of past and current academic literature was carried in relation to place theory and its sub-constructs. A brief review of media related information to public housing in greater Mount Druitt was also undertaken. ABS data was collected, analysed and forms vital links between the literature and findings.

4.1 Literature Review

Richards (2005) suggests that the reviewing of literature be a continuous process throughout a research project. Literature was considered prior to the commencement of this thesis and the review of the literature was continuous throughout. Patton (2002) critiques this method with consideration of the process being both constructive and detrimental in regards to new texts providing bias. New texts published after the commencement of this thesis were not reviewed.

There has been extensive research on place theory since the 1970s from various disciplines such as geography, sociology, anthropology and architecture. The basis of this thesis is a review of academic literature; scholarly texts, journal articles and other publications supporting place theory and its sub-constructs. The focus of the reviews were that of place theory, sense of place and the meaning of home. Sense of belonging, place identity, attachment to place, place making and the philosophy of phenomenology were also considered.

A review of Mount Druitt’s historical context and statistical analysis regarding physical, social, cultural and economic factors was also undertaken through an examination of government websites, media articles and ABS statistics. This process provided specific information on the past and present demographics of the study area.

4.2 Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research analysis was the preferred research methodology due to the fact that place theory is evaluated within the context of human interactions and experience with the environment. Patton (2002) explains that phenomenology in the qualitative research process provides an underlying supposition that “there is an essence of essences to shared experiences” between the researcher and participants (p.106). The study focused on whether or not residents felt a sense of place toward their community and home. The sense of place could be considered to be physical, social or emotional. In order to understand and gain insight into the sense of place residents at Mount Druitt hold, it is beneficial to consult with the people who live there and this was best conducted via in-depth interviews; a standard qualitative method.

This thesis considers results from the qualitative research study of in depth interviews with residents of greater Mount Druitt’s public housing and a psychologist working with these residents. As stated by Lyne and Kilby (1994) “It is all too easy to abandon qualitative or subjective judgement in favour of the more easily grasped quantitative analysis and retrospection. Qualitative judgements about the potential of a place are at least as valuable as computer print outs, they are just more difficult” (p.24). Sense of place is strongly connected to the emotive subjectivity one has towards something. The qualitative analysis process provided personal feedback that strengthened the previous literature and provided insight into possible change as well as acknowledge positive aspects.

In-depth Interviews

In order to uncover rich data about residents’ sense of place in greater Mount Druitt’s public housing, in-depth interviews with local Mount Druitt residents were conducted. A preliminary process was undertaken to gain approval to conduct the in-depth interviews. A mandatory application to apply for ethics approval through the UNSW’s Faculty of the Built Environment’s (FBE) Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel (HREAP) was undertaken. The appropriate forms and documents were submitted in order to conduct the interviews (See Appendix for HREAP approval, Project Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form). This application outlined the following: title of thesis project, the purpose of the investigation, the objectives of the project, an outline of the proposed methodology, explanation and description of the participants to be selected and recruited, location of study

area and interviews, confidentiality forms and acknowledgements and project information statement. A fieldwork application form was also submitted at a later date. This provided the FBE with adequate information regarding time and procedures of my site visits. It was proposed that 10 to 12 in-depth interviews were to be undertaken, including residents of public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area, an urban or social planner from Blacktown Council and one psychologist. The final total number of interviewees included 17 residents and one psychologist.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) recognise that the in-depth interviewing process is “...one way of telling stories about societies or social worlds. These methods may be no better or no worse than any other methods; they just tell different kinds of stories” (p. 12). The use of interviews as a research tool captured the emotive responses that were essential in gaining a thorough perspective and understanding of the issue at hand. A quantitative procedure would not allow for a full expression of feelings to emerge as was needed as part of appreciating the views and opinions of residents. The interviews were not intended to be an overall representation of the study area or of people living within public housing. The purpose of the interviews was to provide a selection of opinions across a diverse demographic. The interviewing process can provide benefits for both the interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer can discover copious amounts of relevant data while the interviewee may experience a personal benefit or understanding of the subject area from the questions asked. The interviews conducted was an opportunity for me to become part of the residents lives, placed in their homes, offered food and drinks while sitting at their dining room table, experiencing their place.

Patton (2002) believes that the interviewing process should be one that is enjoyed and that the subject area is worth investigating. I knew that I would be considering a topic that related to social planning and the minority groups within the Sydney context. I have always had a passion for wanting to achieve something that would be beneficial for not only myself but for others and this thesis allowed me to try and accomplish this. I knew that the topic I chose would be a challenging and interesting experience.

The process behind formulating the correct questions to be asked within the interviews related directly to the major themes discussed throughout the research. Themes for the interview questions were organised prior to the submission of ethics forms to the FBE HREAP. The themes for the questions were directly linked to the thesis statement, objectives and literature reviewed. I wanted to ensure that the interview questions were not only able to

provide me with excellent information but was also understood by the interviewee. The questions were targeted towards four main themes, listed below. The responses were rich in content, personal in depth and passionate in response.

- Background Information
- The Role of the Media
- Blacktown City Council
- Urban and Social Planning
- Sense of Place
- The Meaning of Home

All participants agreed to be part of the interviews and acknowledged that they could be quoted anonymously. Residents are identified as Resident 1, Resident 2, Resident 3 and so on, in Chapter 5. (See Appendix for complete list of interview questions).

Residents were asked background information regarding age, ethnicity, housing experience and their feelings towards recent heightened negative media targeted at public housing in Sydney. Furthermore, residents were asked about their opinion of the involvement and planning by government authorities in their neighbourhood and finally about their sense of place in their community; whether they felt connected, attached or felt as though they belonged to the area. The interview questions were designed to be innovative and open, allowing the respondent to express true feelings through extended answers (Fontana and Frey 2000).

The significance of the in-depth interviews was to develop ideas and theories of human experience that were personal to the greater Mount Druitt residents. The interviews, observations and historical context that were gathered enabled open-ended and non-quantitative responses. This provided intricate, subjective thoughts that supported the literature researched. Through the in-depth interview process residents were also asked about 'special' places that they were connected to through; touch, taste, smell, sight or sound.

An in-depth interview was also carried out with a psychologist who has worked in the area for over 30 years. Similarly to the resident interviews, the psychologist was asked questions relating to past and present work, the area of work, thoughts and opinions on the media and government influence on HNSW residents as well as any thoughts on the sense of place seen from an 'outsider' perspective.

The in-depth interviewing process is integral to the success of the thesis as it lends itself to expression through the expansion of thoughts and words. It is not limited in answers and is ultimately a conversational style research technique recorded through digital medium for analysis, critique and synthesis.

After the interviews were conducted an extensive process took place to transcribe and collate key themes and quotes from the recordings. The transcription process is important in understanding what the participants have said on reflection through written and typed methods. It is also important to recollect any specific events, symbols of language that may have occurred within the interview when deciphering the transcription. Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that "...you need to be clear on the distinction between what the interviewees said and what you interpreted or summarised" (p. 204). This process allowed for further comprehension and identification with the information provided by the residents and psychologist. The research gathered will inform the recommendations and tie together the literature and findings.

Study Sampling

A purposeful sampling technique was used to select and locate the interviewees. My uncle, Harry Mayr, is a psychologist who has worked within western Sydney professionally for over 30 years. I approached him at a family event in March 2009 and spoke to him about ideas for this thesis and the possibilities of qualitative research techniques. When the greater Mount Druitt area was selected as the focus of this thesis my uncle offered to help me with the selection process of locating and setting up potential interviews. A purposeful sampling process encourages "information-rich cases...from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton 2002, p. 46). The interviewees had to reside within the greater Mount Druitt area and live within public housing. During the site visit further opportunities arose in regards to potential interviewees that in turn allowed me to gain more information and total 17 resident interviews.

There were a number of factors that encouraged the selection of public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt locale. Sense of place is personal to each human being and a similar approach could be undertaken in any community. Particular interest for the selected area was due to recent negative media concerning poor living standards, crime and violence within western Sydney, ABS data collected in 2006 also presents findings of a disadvantaged

society. Principally in areas including Mount Druitt, Lethbridge Park, Bidwill, Shalvey, Emerton and Hebersham. It was envisaged that the investigation of the sense of place these residents felt to the physical and social features of the environment would provide knowledge and depth to future planning initiatives and understandings of the residents.

Participants

A total of 17 residents from the greater Mount Druitt area and one psychologist were interviewed for this thesis. Of the 17 residents 11 were male and six were female. The resident ranged from 19 years old to 65 years old with the average age being 47. The majority of residents interviewed were Australian, other nationalities included; English, German and Armenian.

In regards to their dwelling type, nine residents lived in houses and eight lived in flats or units. All residents lived within public housing. The time lived in these particular dwellings by residents in the greater Mount Druitt area ranged from one year to 33 years, with the average being 17 years. Most residents lived by themselves or with a spouse with two dwellings holding more than two people.

Most residents interviewed said that previous to living in their current dwelling in the greater Mount Druitt area that they lived close by, within Blacktown LGA. Some residents lived as far as Mudgee and Katoomba, west of Sydney and Mosman on Sydney's North Shore. Residents were asked to sign a confidentiality form and were provided with project information sheets.

The psychologist interviewed currently owns' his own practice within western Sydney and works with a number of people who live in public housing across this region. He has been working within the greater Mount Druitt area for over 30 years, with experience and insight into the development and growth of the place and the people who live there.

Interview Protocol

Initial contact with residents was conducted through my uncle and his business. I provided him with information on the project as well as times and date. Residents were contacted by telephone and in person. The purpose of my thesis was explained and they were told that the interview would take place in their home, if suitable. There were a total of 12 agreed participant interview times. The opportunistic approach towards the process meant that an

extra five participants agreed to participate on the day. As the interviews took place within the home of each participant it allowed for a personal approach and ensured privacy. The setting was crucial in allowing a free-flowing conversation with minimal interruptions. Conducting the interviews within their home was challenging for me as it created a new qualitative research experience. A brief conversation took place prior to commencement of each interview about the project, confidentiality and how they were generally. Each participant was provided with a Project Information Statement and a Confidentiality Form to agree to.

All interviews were recorded digitally. The recorder was placed in visibility of the participant and they were told that the interview would be recorded for my personal use only. The recorder allowed me to concentrate purely on the interviewing process, questions, emotions, body language and responses provided by each resident. In regards this technology, Minichiello et al (1995) states that “the interviewer is free to be an attentive and thoughtful listener... the raw data remains on the record” (p. 98). The ability to replay and listen carefully to the interviews post event was crucial in understanding and remembering specific facts or emotions through the tone of voice and storytelling. The material was later transferred to computer for a transcription process.

Post Interview

Approximately five days after the interviews were conducted I sent a personalised letter to my uncle to pass onto each resident who participated in my research. The interviewing process was extremely intense, exciting and confronting at times. After the interview concluded many residents asked me questions in relation to what I thought of my own questions. Some residents also asked whether my thesis would provide research that would be considered by higher authorities. I also undertook a post interview reflection where I sat down immediately after the interviews were conducted and started to write down thoughts, words and images that had remained in my mind. (An interview reflection is located at Appendix).

Site Visits

In addition to the literature review and in-depth interviews, a number of site visits to the greater Mount Druitt area were carried out. Site visits were conducted on August 28th 2009, September 18th 2009 and October 16th 2009. The site visits were vital in understanding the location and its relation to the study. Furthermore to the qualitative research approach, site visits took place to gain a greater consideration of the geographical area, the community facilities and atmosphere described by the residents interviewed. After the in-depth interview process concluded a third and final site visit was undertaken to locate and appreciate places of interest acknowledged by the interviewees.

Although aerial photographs and topographical maps allowed for a broad invite into the area, the physicality of the site visits provided a three dimensional appreciation and experience. This process allowed for a familiarity that was beneficial when reviewing and commenting on the findings and recommendations of this thesis. This method of research could be linked to the phenomenological approach of 'being-in –the-world' Heidegger (1962), described in Section 4.3 of the thesis.

Use of Photography

Photographs were taken on each site visit to express the nature of the area as well as the answers provided by the residents. The use of photography portrays the views of the residents in regards to their community and the sense of place they hold within it. It is often said that a 'picture tells a thousand words' and the application of visual medium throughout the thesis helps to convey this. Patton (2002) states "photographs can help in recalling things that have happened as well as vividly capturing the setting for others" (p. 308).

Throughout the in-depth interviews residents were asked to comment on places they were connected to, spaces they frequented, their relationship with neighbours and their sense of place. When specific places, spaces or emotions were spoke about in reply to these questions a brief photographic journey was undertaken. The camera became a tool that captured the specifics of place for these residents in their community.

Although the experience of interviewing residents within their homes was beneficial to the findings and overall understanding of the topic, the photographs provide a visual stimulus that can be associated with the text.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the methodology undertaken for this thesis. It provides an overview of the literature collaboration process and importance as well as materials used. It also included a detailed analysis of the qualitative research procedure and practice proposed and implemented. This included the procedure undertaken towards formulating questions and the in-depth interview process, details on participants selected, interview protocol and post interview reflection and the importance of site visits and the use of photography for this thesis. The methodology that supports this thesis is pivotal to the findings and recommendations made. Chapter 5 will consider the findings from the in-depth interviews and provide analysis and critique in response to the literature reviewed. Further recommendations will also be made.



Chapter 5
Mount Druitt: The Findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates whether or not public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area feel and experience a sense of place within their community. A total of 17 in-depth interviews were undertaken with residents in suburbs including; Mount Druitt, Lethbridge Park, Bidwill, Shalvey, Emerton and Hebersham. These suburbs are located within the greater Mount Druitt precinct and fall within the Blacktown LGA. An interview was also conducted with a psychologist who has worked in the region for over 30 years. The findings provide the backbone of the thesis as they express the ‘real life’ views and opinions of public housing residents and their connection to their environment. The findings present a storyline of personal commentary that may sometimes be viewed as politically incorrect. The purpose of this chapter is to supply current qualitative research and analysis in regards to public housing residents and their response to questions relating to the media, urban and social planning, sense of place and home. Recommendations are considered at the end of the chapter as a retort to the results found. The residents will not be identified due to confidentiality.

5.1 The Media

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis the media plays an important role in present day society. Over the past decade technology has become more advanced, especially in regards to accessing latest news events. There is a fine line between what is reported to be true or not and the interpretation that follows. In regards to public housing areas across Sydney news reports are sometimes brutal in the representation of people and events. Often the other side of the story is not seen or heard.

Public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area were asked to consider their thoughts and feelings towards negative media directed towards them, their suburbs or other public housing complexes. The response from residents in relation to how they felt when they saw negative media towards public housing was two-fold. Residents either did not care or felt negatively towards the portrayal. Resident 11 stated that “It doesn’t affect me but it pisses me off that they target these places to advertise... all these things happen in other places too... and it happens everywhere... Crow’s Nest, Mosman, Neutral Bay but it doesn’t have the same

affect” (Resident 11 2009). Overall, residents felt as though public housing was targeted within the media as places of violence, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Reasons for this perception were agreed upon by most residents, “...there is too much of it concentrated in a small area... there are too many public housing “grottos” or estates” (Resident 11 2009). Figure 5, 6 and 7 below present some of the current types of public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area. Resident 5 explained that you get use to it after a while and accept that this is where you live. Resident 4 provided a personal insight into the emotions felt when seeing negative media on public housing, “It brings you down... it makes you look bad... it’s just that one group that does it for the whole of Mount Druitt” (Resident 4 2009). One extremely sensitive resident acknowledged that the media does portray events within the community, “...the other day (some kids) stole a bloody chicken from the high school... what they done is throwing it around by its neck... the main rooster... they grabbed it by the neck, throwing it around kicking it and he took it home and fed it to his f***en dog... and they were on the news” (Resident 17 2009). Furthermore, it was explained that rocks had been thrown at buses and that illegal graffiti is common across the community. Although this may be the view of a local resident the representation of such an event through the media can often lend itself to negative viewpoints and particular stigmas for the community. Similar stories and headlines were discussed in Chapter 1. Rarely do possible social, economic and environmental issues that may have caused such an event be recognised, considered or dealt with in a professional manner. Two similar stories were reported in the media in regards animal cruelty in the area. “Kitten doused with gasoline, set on fire” and “Kitten severely beaten, thrown in trash to die” were headlines that appeared throughout the media (Pet-Abuse.com 2009).

Figure 5: Two storey house



Source: Greater Mount Druitt Area, Dowler 2009

Figure 6: Town Houses



Source: Greater Mount Druitt Area, Dowler 2009

Figure 7: Empty and Vandalised Housing Complex



Source: Greater Mount Druitt Area, Dowler 2009

Residents were asked about what people outside the area may think of them. This question was related to the power of the media to influence the views of those living elsewhere. Resident 1 stated that when he lived in Blacktown he “...got more work than at Mount Druitt, because Mount Druitt has such a bad reputation... everyone who comes from Mount Druitt is either drug f***ed or has gone out and bashed someone or done crime, they always put Mount Druitt down” (Resident 1 2009). This perspective expresses the concern one resident holds on the stigma Mount Druitt has and shows the power the media can assert over reputation and personal well being. This supports Tuan’s (1977) view that one is unable to grasp a complete understanding of an environment unless they have experienced it themselves. Resident 1 went on to say “That is what I hate about Mount Druitt, I just want to get out of here” (Resident 1 2009). This view was also seen by a resident who had workmen at her house recently contracted through HNSW, she said “we had workmen here for our kitchen, one workman said well what is she going on about she’s getting it for free” (Resident

15 2006). The perception of public housing areas throughout the general public can often be disheartening. As discussed in Chapter 1 preconceived ideas of place, through media, can fuel anti-social behaviour and encourage an unwanted stigma to the people and environment.

5.2 Urban and Social Planning

The way residents feel and interact within a community can depend on a number of social, environmental, economic and cultural factors including race, religion, employment and living conditions. The role of Blacktown City Council is imperative to ensuring that planning and development of the LGA benefits the wider population. Obviously, Councils' cannot control all facets of life but they are able to guarantee that the best possible practice and solution are undertaken in regards to community facilities, services and events. HNSW also plays an important role within the lives of the residents interviewed as they oversee the dwellings they reside in.

Residents were asked about their opinion of the responsibility Blacktown City Council administers in regards to community consultation. The most common answer across all 17 residents was that they felt Blacktown City Council did little to communicate with them. Resident 13 stated that "...you get the odd flyer but I don't really participate in it" (Resident 13 2009). Resident 14 said that ""Through Aboriginal Housing you always get flyers in regards to BBQs and voice your opinion and how they can improve their services... but to me it is a waste of time because we have had the workmen here and they say they will do something and they lie" (Resident 14, 2009). Overall, there seems to be a lack of physical communication between residents and Council. The psychologist interviewed stated that "I don't believe Blacktown City Council is doing enough... the Mount Druitt area is the "ugly little sister" of the Blacktown Council area seen through a lack of resources on Council's behalf" (Mayr 2009).

Some residents said that there are weekends for example, where you are able to get your dog micro-chipped for free or you are able to collect some native plants for your garden. It was evident that many resident would like to see a local festival occur in the area, to try and bring the community together. As discussed by Dovey (1985) it is important to understand the connection one has with a place and the "...the processes of interaction between people and setting" (p. 93). This was further encouraged by Mayr (2009) "If Council started to target community events that were actually practical and made sense to those who live in Mount

Druitt... community events in the past they have been in the local paper because someone thought it would be a good idea without any major consultation in regards to transport; how residents would get there, cost; can they afford it and whether it is on pay week or not on pay week and is it relevant to my existence within Mount Druitt”.

One resident stated their support for HNSW, “I say thank god for public housing... If my marriage didn’t break up I wouldn’t be here... I had five kids under 8 when my marriage broke up, so it was here or no where... no money, nothing” (Resident 15 2009). Although, she went on to say that “...they (HNSW) need to treat us more on the human side because I think they treat animals better than we are treated”. This comment was largely due to the opinion that HNSW has control over their physical home and ultimately their immediate future. This relates to the importance of Relph’s (1976) opinion that the home is important in most peoples’ lives and that it establishes a sense of identity.

The importance of community facilities to cater for all ages, cultures and groups is imperative in the well being of any society. Resident 16 stated that the Council did provide a community hall down near the local shops but he did not want to go there because he said it was mainly used by Islanders. Local community halls should provide a sense of pride and place within a neighbourhood and encourage a mix of cultural identities to interact and socialise. A similar response was given in regards to recreational areas including parks, “There are parks for kids to play in but they are unsafe and stuff gets vandalised” (Resident 17, 2009). Figure 8 below provides an example of a typical suburban park within the study area. As discussed in Chapter 3, Easthope (2004) states that “a person’s sense of place can provide them with a sense of belonging” (p.131). Providing specific places for certain cultures to meet within a suburb is also beneficial to ensuring their own culture is represented but not at the detriment of the wider community. Mayr (2009) also contributed suggesting that he would like “To see a service within the local community that helps others ...even though most of the residents have nothing... if they see that they can help someone else this will in turn make them feel better and that the area would be a proud place to live”.

Figure 8: Suburban Park



Source: Greater Mount DrUITT Area, Dowler 2009

The issue of safety within the greater Mount DrUITT area was also brought up by residents, especially those with children. Easthope (2004) recognises the importance of how one feels in their physical environment and how it affects their sense of place and sense of belonging. Resident 17 stated that they believed Council should implement better bus systems for school children and provide safer parks. “My son has had a knife held on him a couple of times... he was coming home from school on the bike and these group of guys were chasing him with knives and rocks so he went to the police to ask if they could drop him home and they said he was a liar and didn’t care” (Resident 17 2009). Communication between different governmental bodies and the community is essential in gaining a greater understanding of local issues and rectifying them through mutual support.

Residents were asked whether they believed Blacktown City Council could do more to make them feel connected to their community. As discussed previously, McHugh (2005) argues the importance of connection to place in regards to providing people with ‘nourishment’ and the

yearning for sense of place. The common response from residents was that Council do build “things” in the community but “they do not last long” (Resident 4 2009), “...they wouldn’t be there tomorrow, the vandals will take it” (Resident 6 2006). Raffel (2006) explains that it is not necessarily the physicality of a place that someone is connected to but “the emotive attachment a person has”. Blacktown City Council could focus their improvements of place making towards whether the community will feel an emotive connection rather than just the physical need. If a new park or local community centre represents the community and is a place of pride then vandals may be less likely to damage it. Such an example was spoken about by Resident 1 “...something good that the community has done around here is some decent graffiti artwork... they have done ones like Alice in Wonderland and The Godfather” (Resident 1 2006) (This can be seen in Figures 9 and 10 below). These graffiti artworks placed around the greater Mount DrUITt area have not been vandalised due to the involvement of community groups.

Figure 9: Community Graffiti Mural



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt Area, Dowler 2009

Figure 10: Close Up of 'Alice in Wonderland' Graffiti Mural



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt Area, Dowler 2009

Specific issues that residents believed Blacktown City Council and HNSW should focus on included; minimising shopping centres that had places to purchase alcohol close by, providing public housing flats with people in them that don't necessarily mix culturally or socially, the design of public housing flats with enclosed balconies and the laneways that are currently being closed off by Council, that alternative solutions to accessibility and security be made. Residents spoke of their concern in relation to safety around the laneways in particular. Designed in the 1970s these laneways now pose social concerns to accessibility and security for residents. "I am afraid to use the laneways but if Council block them off there is no escape" (Resident 1, 2009). Figure 11, 12 and 13 below show various laneways and their surrounds. Mayr (2009) suggested that there would be a need to reconsider a large proportion of past and present planning methods within the area if a connection to place is to be established. "The question is how do you transition from the past into the future... we saw today old places being gutted and new places being built... who is going to be targeted to be put into those new areas ...an over population of any minority group on mass would cause a bit of a problem within such a small living area... it would be great if they could be dispersed and mixed into a normal community" (Mayr 2009).

Figure 11: Traffic Bridge and Tunnel



Source: Greater Mount Druitt area, Dowler 2009

Figure 12: Laneway Between Houses



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt area, Dowler 2009

Figure 13: Graffiti Underpass



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt area, Dowler 2009

Residents were asked about positive and negative aspects of living in public housing in the greater Mount Druitt area. There were a number of varying responses to this question with one resident speaking about the opportunities they could have with the home they lived in “...all they need is a little TLC... you could extend them and do small changes and they could be really nice houses” (Resident 6, 2009). The down side of this is that residents said HNSW does not allow them to alter their homes in any way. Resident 5 in particular stated the following: “I would like to cement a part of the backyard but HNSW has told me that you have to smash it all up and get rid of it all... aren’t you meant to try and do something for the place and they charge you... I also put brand new masonite in the kitchen, ceramic tiles and all and they came in and ripped it all up and put back what was there before... I wasted all that money so I don’t have an incentive to make the place look better” (Resident 5, 2006). As previously mentioned, Moore (2000) explains the importance of home place relations in reference to theorists including (Relph 1976, Tuan 1977, 1980 and Seamon 1979). Moore (2000) focuses on the importance the landscape of place and home in gaining that vital connection. These residents are trying to find a sense of place within their own homes but are restricted by rules and regulations, including alterations that may make the ‘landscape’ of their home more personal.

Responses from resident were mainly negative. When Resident 8 was asked about some positive aspects of living in public housing in the area the response was “In Lethbridge Park...? You are kidding me right? ...the best thing about living here is that you can shut the door” (Resident 8 2006). Many resident spoke about the companionship they had within the local neighbourhood and stated that “Friends are important... we look after each other” (Resident 9 2009). Mayr (2009) states that “most people believe it is the friends within the community that is the good thing about it... it is these bonds that make them feel that this is my home and this is the area in which I live in”. A number of residents said that they grew up in the country and that they would prefer to live along the coast or inland. This insight suggests that future planning for public housing could focus on past connections or memories, areas where eligible persons for public housing lived previous. Childhood memories and the connection to land relates directly to sense of place; meaningful and the kinaesthetic experiences (Relph 1976, Tuan 1977 and Dovey 1985).

Some negative aspects of living within public housing included; crime, living within close proximity of your neighbours and the mix of cultures. Resident 15 lived in a detached dwelling and stated that “...unfortunately when they do confine you in a group you have a lot

of trouble... we have a lot of trouble across the road and down the road and not everyone mixes, we are all too close we need to separate a bit more... we don't get to choose... we get put next to our neighbours" (Resident 15 2009). It seems that there is little regard to the procedures relating to house placement. Many residents spoke about being placed in housing where they had no similarities to their neighbours socially or culturally, with Resident 12 stating that "There are so many different nationalities in the one area it is difficult to find an identity" (Resident 12 2009). As stated in the literature reviews place and self identity are important relationships to one's sense of place and is linked to the theory of topophilia (Tuan 1977). As previously mentioned, Duncan and Duncan (2001, p. 4) recognise that topophilia can "produce place for people". Residents must be able to locate their own identity to gain a sense of place within a community which is difficult if this cannot be done within the home.

5.3 Sense of Place and Home

Questions in regards to sense of place related directly to the conceptual framework of place theory and its sub-constructs discussed in Chapter 3. Mayr (2009) stated that a sense of place for him was "An identity and a feeling I have of where I live and where I am". Residents were asked to consider places that they felt connected to within the community. The responses were varied and included local community centres, the local pub, shopping centres and the home. As discussed previously Easthope (2004) states that "one's sense of place can be a very influential force in one's life" (p. 132). The connections these residents have to these places provide an insight into their identity and sense of belonging.

Resident 1 stated that he felt a connection to a local community centre which is part of the Catholic Church. The reason for this connection was that "...it is away from everyone in the shops... I go up there to try and find more about my history... it is actually really good, they have BBQs up there, people from family relations, there is more help up there than there is on the streets" (Resident 1 2009). Resident 4 (2009) said that "...there is a community garden that people go to up at Bidwell... I don't know how much socialising goes on there because it is locked up behind gates". Figure 14 and 15 below depict Bidwell's community garden.

Figure 14: Bidwill Community Garden



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt area, Dowler 2009

Figure 15: Bidwill Community Garden 2



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt area, Dowler 2009

As Young (2004) stated the social support systems that are located within one's community provides a better sense of community. Resident 6 spoke of the love of shopping and a fond connection to a place located outside the immediate study area, "I do a lot of shopping but I go outside the Mount Druitt area to St Mary's... I like the outdoors of the shopping centre... I don't like Mount Druitt" (Resident 6 2009). Figure 16 shows a new shopping centre in Ropes Crossing similar to the one described by Resident 6. Council may investigate why residents may prefer another local shopping centre than that provided in their neighbourhood, the positive attributes and why they find the experience of being their more exciting, fulfilling or personal. An overwhelming number of participants responded that their connection was purely based on their home. Resident 11 stated that "I stay at home more than I go out... because of a negative incident that happened to me" (Resident 11 2009), while Resident's 12 and 13 both said that "they preferred to stay at home" (Resident 12 and 13 2009).

Figure 16: Outdoors Shopping Centre, Ropes Crossing

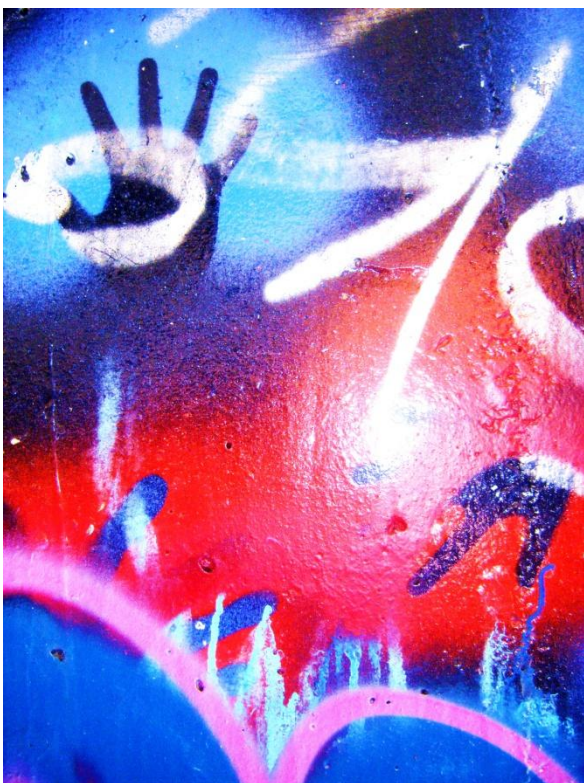


Source: Greater Mount Druitt area, Dowler 2009

There was a fear that “Everyone knows everyone and if something happens than everyone knows (about it) and they turn on you and they could have been your best mates and all but they don’t care” (Resident 13 2009). As discussed previously, Rose (1995) states that when someone may feel threatened that their sense of place may diminish. The connection of home to these residents is therefore vital for their health and well being. Armenian born Resident 10 (2009) recounts an experience when approached and spoke to by people of the Islander community, “why don’t you go back to your country...and I was scared... I said I came here on a duty... and they said what is that... and I said to make you a human being... the quicker you become a human being I go back”

When asked to speak about whether the residents felt a sense of pride within their community all respondents said that they didn’t. Resident 1 made reference to younger people saying “No...because the mentality of the next generation of people living in Mount Druitt... we get a new park and they come and destroy it or burn it or graffiti it... like this one up on the corner the park benches have been ripped out” (Resident 1 2009). Figures 17, 18 and 19 below provide examples of graffiti vandalism of Indigenous murals in the area. Resident 3 stated that there was no community in the area and people are frightened, “They have just put a new clothes line in and they’ve burnt it... that’s why we need a security fence around the place” (Resident 3 2009). Resident 17 also said “No, I have pride of my own kids... I am proud of my kids” (Resident 17 2009). As reviewed within Chapter 3 the place making process is integral in encouraging a lively and healthy environment that seeks to encourage a sense of pride and stewardship within the community. Dovey (1985), exercises the thought of ‘participatory place-making’ as a theme that helps develop this association.

Figures 17, 18 and 19: Indigenous Community Murals Vandalised



Source: Greater Mount Druitt area, Dowler 2009

Residents were asked to consider their ‘favourite’ place to be within the greater Mount Druitt area. Resident 11 (2009) said “Right here, my home” and Resident 17 (2009) said “My favourite place is my home”. Other responses included the local pub and the backyard shed. Figures 20 and 21 below provide an insight into a typical bottle shop and pub within the area. The meaning of home for these residents is evidently crucial in their sense of place, as acknowledged in Chapter 3, Easthope (2004) explains that particular spaces are inscribed with meaning by a person so that they become a home and that home is a “special kind of place” (p. 135). Easthope’s understanding of home, particularly in public housing areas, proves pivotal in recognising the attachment these residents have with them. A similar response was provided by Mayr (2009) “People can identify with the plaza, next to the train station so everyone knows where that is, and in that area there are government services, they know of the other satellite suburbs but there is nothing in particular that stands out or represents them as a community, they enjoy being at home”.

Figure 20: Local Drive-Thru Bottle Shop and Pub



Source: Greater Mount Druitt area, Dowler 2009

Figure 21: Local Bottle Shop and Supermarket



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt area, Dowler 2009

Furthermore, residents were asked about any specific community events that they attend or know of within the area. There was a mixed response from residents, with some not knowing of any events taking place, some that did and who attended and some who did but didn't attend. Resident 10 (2009) stated that "The church puts on community events in the community centre" (See Figure 22 below) while Resident 1 (2009) said "There is one coming up soon down here for the opening of Franklins" (See Figure 23 below). The design of the new Franklins shopping complex is questionable due to its location to a local pub, the blank facade and the proximity to laneways. As discussed previously Dovey (1985) believes that place implies both people and meaning and that 'sense' of place then depends on the quality of the experience and the depth of meaning" (p.94) that may come with it.

Figure 22: Community Church and Centre



Source: Greater Mount Druitt area, Dowler 2009

Figure 23: New Franklins Shopping Centre



Source: Greater Mount Druitt area, Dowler 2009

Community events should be marketed, not be exclusive and recognise the importance to community. For these events to conjure up any sense of place there needs to be interaction and connection between people and setting. Resident 14 (2009) explained that people do not really come together in the area because people are frightened or facilities are vandalised, stating that “You might have some of your affluent families get together with some of their neighbours but in these areas you can’t”. Resident 14 (2009) further explained that “Housing really need to step up to the mark because they are just throwing you in houses... closing the door and telling you to survive and the parks are not even safe... even during the day... they promised years ago to put in a skateboard thing for kids... we have no where for kids to ride bikes”. She sympathised in that she stated that “I can understand in some circumstances why they don’t put things up because it does get vandalised but then” (Resident 14 2009). As discussed in Chapter 3, Easthope (2004) refers to Heidegger recognising that “...who we are ... is influenced by our relationship, through our bodies, to the outside world” (p. 132). The way one may feel or act within a place provides an understanding of how they feel connected to it. Community and social events that encourage participation from residents is fundamental in this instance. Resident 15 (2009) suggested that HNSW should “screen us more and select certain people to be located in certain areas” to allow for the first steps towards a community sense of place to occur within a complex or street.

A specific question that related directly to home was whether residents felt an emotional connection towards it. Some resident found that they had a physical connection while others an emotional. Resident 6 (2009) stated “I have a history here... It’s my home”, this can be linked to Relph’s 1989 theory that places are constructed through memory and emotion as well as repeated encounters. For some residents most of their daily life is spent within the home. Resident 2 (2009) said “it’s not a home but the four walls are our security” and Resident 7 (2009) believed that “Of course I will miss living here a little bit if they moved me... I wouldn’t miss the house... the friends yes, but wherever you move you will have something over your head”. Resident 15 (2009) speaks about the continuous ‘changeover’ of residents within public housing areas. Old residents move out and new residents move in every year, “... with the changeover you don’t get established... If you have a home you get the chance to make a community”.

Residents were finally asked whether or not they would move if they could and if so where to. Most resident responded that they would move out of the greater Mount Druitt area if given the opportunity. Although Resident 11 (2009) stated that “I wouldn’t, I enjoy it here...

if I had a choice of going back to Mosman, Dee Why, Neutral Bay, any of them... jam it up your arse... for the simple reason you can't go next door and say 'g'day' to your mate or walk down the road and know the lollie pop lady". Residents that respondent with the suggestion that they did want to move spoke about places that they had lived previously, during their childhood including country NSW and along the coast, "I would want to move up the coast or to the country... I grew up on acres of land south west of Sydney... that is my home" (Resident 8 2009). Resident 17 (2009) stated that she would like to be "Somewhere near the beach or something... somewhere where it will be safe for the kids and for me in my old age". Resident 3 (2009) said that he would want to be somewhere closer to his family (Rooty Hill or St Clair). With only one resident stating that he would want to continue living in the area if the opportunity to move arose suggests that personal connection to the place and environment is lacking.

5.4 Recommendations

It is apparent that the above findings provide an overview of the opinions and thoughts of a selected group of residents within the greater Mount Druitt area. This thesis has recognised the importance of sense of place to the individual and the community, specifically for public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area. The need for Blacktown City Council and resident to communicate and consult with one another is imperative to ensuring the best possible outcomes physically, socially and environmentally are met. To ensure that this takes place the onus lies with Council. HNSW also plays an important role in improving the connection residents have with their home. The main issue here is that the residents are unable to locate their sense of place due to the control of the HNSW. This has been seen through the lack of support provided in trying to implement alterations to a home that the residents may benefit from on a personal and social level.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Hull et al (1993) explains the need to learn from past place making ventures to provide appropriate changes within a community. Fundamental to this is the need to understand the socio-cultural determinants of those living within the area. Although information within a media report is sometimes correct the media may contribute to the perception of the area from those situated outside. Positive events and Council initiatives will encourage the perception of the area to change, including those who are residents.

The issue of security and safety within the region is paramount in delivering a happy and healthy living environment. Public transport options for children to and from school will encourage anti-social behaviour off the streets. Community based programmes such as that related to legal graffiti artwork within the area will not only encourage community participation but provide landscapes that people may associate with through identity and belonging. Figure 24 below shows work done by a local artist as part of a community group initiative across the greater Mount DrUITt area. Due to the high proportion of unemployment within the area there is an opportunity to initiate employment based programmes within the region between community services, Council and residents. This will not only encourage residents to be proactive within the community but also interact on a social level, outside their homes.

Figure 24: Community Group Based Graffiti Art



Source: Greater Mount DrUITt area, Dowler 2009

It is evident that there is no specific identity one can relate to in greater Mount Druitt. As the study area includes six distinct suburbs, it may be encouraging to see an identity within each suburb rather than that of the greater Mount Druitt area or Blacktown LGA. This could provide a catalyst for future sporting competitions or local community festivals between each suburb. A competition between the suburbs could be undertaken to create a landmark sculpture that represents the past, present and future aspirations of the people who live there. Residents should be able to go to their local park or local shopping centre and see, smell, touch, taste and hear the senses that make their neighbourhood a special place to be. I believe a rigorous qualitative research process is undertaken to include all residents within the study area and investigate the needs and wants of the community and how they can participate in possible place making projects in the future. Mayr (2009) also stated that HNSW and Blacktown Council need to address the “very bad social experiment in the 60s that targeted single mums with kids and a mix of different cultures... this trend has continued with the introduction of other cultures... the address issues faster in areas of affluence than they do in areas of poverty”.

Overall, a sense of place is nonexistent within the greater Mount Druitt area, particularly outside the ‘four walls’ of the home. The sensitivity of the area expressed by residents and seen through the lack of community events, feelings of insecurity, mix of cultures and inability to form a close bond with their homes encourages residents to seclude themselves rather than seek a sense of place. As discussed in the literature review, Tuan (1977) speaks of the kinaesthetic experiences vital to connection with place; the way people feel, think and act towards an environment. It is evident that place relations are minimal within the area and that the attachment to place is absent.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the findings from the in-depth interview process. This chapter provided first hand experiences and opinions of residents living within the greater Mount Druitt area. This chapter identified the role of the media within society at large and the effects it has on public housing residents. The need for future communication between Blacktown City Council, HNSW and residents in regards to achieving a sense of place, belonging, identity, attachment within the community and the home.

Recommendations have been made which, if acted upon may allow residents the opportunity to not only feel a sense of place within the home but also the neighbourhood. Not only will this benefit the residents but the LGA as a whole. Place making initiatives within the LGA could provide positive media coverage and precedents to be followed by other areas. The following chapter, the conclusion will provide a review of the thesis intent, limitations of the research, future research options and concluding remarks.



Chapter 6
Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis examines and reviews the thesis intent, limitations of the research and suggestions for future research in the area. To ensure that the objectives of the research have been met particular reference will be made to the thesis statement provided in Chapter 1. Finally, some concluding remarks in relation to the thesis will be addressed.

6.1 Review of Thesis Intent

The research sought to address the following thesis statement:

In order to foster ownership, pride and healthy living conditions in a public housing area, it is vital that its residents have a sense of place, attachment and belonging toward their community.

In order to research the above statement a comprehensive academic and qualitative investigative study was undertaken. This statement related directly to the sense of place public housing residents in the greater Mount Druitt area had. The intent of the research was to understand the conceptual framework of place theory and its sub-constructs; sense of belonging, place identity, attachment to place and place making. The overarching theme of this thesis was sense of place. The meaning of home was also considered as it relates directly to place theory and holds importance in correlation to the public housing theme of this thesis.

Chapter 1 established a problem setting that provided an insight into negative media coverage of public housing and the perception that is associated with it. Thesis objective were stated and carried out through Chapters 1 to 6. The conceptual frameworks were discussed in relation to place theory and its' sub-constructs as well as the overarching theme sense of place and the meaning of home. The significance of the research was also acknowledged in relation to the role of planners in place making.

Chapter 2 provided an examination of the study area (greater Mount Druitt). This was conducted to provide a sense of geographical location, history of the area as well as a thorough explanation of each precincts demographics. This process provided an overview of past and present changes; environmentally, socially, culturally and economically. It also acknowledged the low socio-economic statuses of current residents in the area, the high

proportion of Indigenous population and younger people as well as a large proportion of one-parent families.

Chapter 3 provided a thorough literature review on place theory and expansion on the conceptual frameworks explained in Chapter 1, including phenomenology. This provided a foundation of previous scholarly work that helped establish a knowledge base of the concepts and philosophies to be worked with.

Chapter 4 discussed the methodology behind the thesis, including the importance of the literature review. The qualitative research approach selected for the thesis was explained and justified. The in-depth interviewing process that included; study sampling, participant information, interview protocol and post interview reflection was discussed. The importance of site visits and the use of photography were also mentioned.

Chapter 5 provided the findings of the in-depth interviews and the relation it had to the literature reviewed. The specific themes relating to the interview questions included; the media, urban and social planning and sense of place and the meaning of home. Possible recommendations and considerations for future initiatives within the area were also presented.

For residents within the greater Mount Druitt area sense of place was nonexistent. It is suggested that a rigorous qualitative research study is undertaken into place attachment, identity and sense of belonging within the region by Blacktown City Council. The public housing residents provided an insight into the limited personal identification they are able to instil on their dwellings. As the meaning of home plays an important role with sense of place it is crucial to provoke ownership and pride within the space to allow for a healthy living environment.

6.2 Limitations of Research

Limitations of this research included timeframe, participants interviewed and some specifics of the qualitative investigation. The timeframe of this undergraduate thesis was approximately three to four months. This timeframe meant that a particular amount of work had to be considered within these limits to ensure that the research conducted was beneficial to the overall study. This included limits in regards to literature reviewed, people interviewed and the area of the study location.

The number of residents interviewed was originally planned to be six. This figure rose to 12 when my uncle was able to contact further participants willing to undertake the interview. The final number of residents interviewed was 17 due to opportunistic occurrences on the day of the interviews. This included people who were enthusiastic about the topic area and the possibility to be interviewed with no prior contact. A limit on the number of residents interviewed was established after this due to time constraints relating to transcribing, analysing and implementing the findings into the thesis.

Limitations were also discovered in regards to the site visit and use of photography for the thesis. The study area provided some obstacles in regards to ensuring safety and privacy. Although I was with my uncle at all times the opportunity to take photographs were restricted due to people socialising in certain areas and the need to ensure that no one would be identified. Residents spoke of their connection to their home. Photographs were also unable to be taken here. I would not consider the area to be 'unsafe' as such, but, like any neighbourhood, someone with a camera in their hand attracts attention.

6.3 Future Research

The theory of sense of place is a relatively new concept considered by planners. Sense of place research can be undertaken in any environment or society. It is evident that the particular study area chosen would provide a stimulating and challenging task. There is an opportunity for future qualitative research to be carried out within the area and include a larger sample size.

This thesis focused on public housing residents within the locale, with results that suggested future consultation between government bodies and residents is needed to encourage place making projects involved all members of the community. Future qualitative research could also include residents who have purchased their own homes to provide another dimension.

As this thesis focuses heavily on sense of place for residents of the greater Mount Druitt area, it was established that government related interviews could possibly be undertaken through future research of this topic. Possible interviewees could include urban planners within Blacktown City Council, specifically those who work on 'place making' projects, social planners and researchers from private firms who have undertaken projects relating to place and those who work directly with then public housing residents from HNSW.

As it is vital for any resident to experience a sense of identity, pride or ownership within their community it is possible that Blacktown City Council seek to implement strategies or plans for community events and activities that encourage this participatory action.

Other possibilities for future research may include; the selection process undertaken by HNSW in regards to resident placement (socially, economically and culturally), the current place making policies in action within the area and place making precedents within other LGA's that may be considered.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

Public housing plays a vital role within Sydney's urban landscape. Negative media images and headlines in recent times have encouraged stigmas to be associated with these areas. The greater Mount Druitt area holds a diverse demographic profile that suggests a high proportion of unemployment, one-parent families, younger people and low income earners. The area is also home to a mix of cultures including; Indigenous Australians, Australian born residents, people from the United Kingdom, Philippines, Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand and Lebanon.

It needs to be reiterated that a sense of place provides a meaningful connection and experience within a setting. In order to foster identity, ownership, pride and a healthy environment, sense of place, attachment and belonging need to be considered. For residents within the greater Mount Druitt area a sense of place within the home and community was nonexistent.

Perhaps the greatest challenge heading forward is establishing the pivotal link between community, Blacktown City Council and HNSW, so that future consultation processes occur regularly, include everyone and are publicised so that residents can contribute positively. If this relationship can occur it may provide the opportunities needed to evoke a sense of place for residents, within the 'four walls' of the home and the community.

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Resident Interviews:

Residents 1 to 17

Location: Individual homes within the greater Mount Druitt area

Time: September 18th 2009

Psychologist Interview:

Harry Mayr

Location: greater Mount Druitt area

Time: September 18th 2009

Photographs:

Ben Dowler

Location: greater Mount Druitt area

Time: August 28th 2009, September 18th 2009 and October 16th 2009



FACULTY OF THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

HUMAN RESEARCH
ETHICS ADVISORY
PANEL

13 July 2009

Application No: 95034
Project Title: **Sense Of Place: Mt Druiitt Public Housing**

Attention: Christine Steinmetz

Dear Ben Dowler,

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

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

All further information/documentation (if any) is to be submitted to FBE HREAP via Student Centre. Please submit originals plus four copies. Email submission will not be recognised.

Decision

Approved with
conditions

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

Advisory comments:

Item 1

It is unclear who is being surveyed and how they will be selected or approached. Please forward this the HREA Panel to complete your file.

2

Your application indicates that you may need to obtain one or more Letters of Support before you conduct your research. Letters of Support are required whenever you involve any organisation (other than UNSW) or any individual (other than an employee of UNSW) in your research, whereby: (a) you intend to interview, survey or include employees in a focus group; or (b) your research is wholly or partly funded by any organisation (other than UNSW) or individual (other than an employee of UNSW). Please contact your Supervisor for further direction (if applicable). A Letter of Support must conform to one of the formats indicated in **Form 6**. Please forward all Letters of Support to HREAP to complete your file.

3

Your application indicates that you may require your research participants to be issued with Project Information Statement. The purpose of the Project Information Statement is to provide information about your research to participants before they make a decision to participate. It is required whenever you undertake interviews or focus groups collect data using questionnaires, or use records or database information from sources not on the public record.

Applicants must use the current **FORM 3 'Project Information Statement'** template, which may be downloaded from the FBE HREAP website.

Please provide a copy of the HREAP approved Project Information Statement to each participant.

- 4
- Should you or your participants be making photographic, video or audio recordings that include people, please be aware that:
- Recordings in public places do not generally require the permission of the people who are in those public places. However, this will depend upon the sensitivity of the subject matter and the situation.
 - If you will be specifically identifying any person in photos or videos which you intend to publish, you will require their consent to do so.

Photographs or videos of identifiable people on private property should not be made without their consent, even when taken from public property.

- 5
- You may need to complete a FBE Fieldwork Application Form. This must be obtained prior to physically conducting your research. Please seek the advice of your Head of Program or Head of School.

- 6
- We do not recommend that you use your own personal address or telephone numbers on any documents issued to participants. If possible, you should supply UNSW contact details.

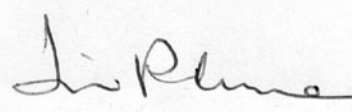
- 7
- Approval is granted to the applicant for a twelve month period from the date of this letter. Any approval to conduct research given to the applicant is done so on the condition that the applicant is at the date of approval: (a) a Student undertaking an approved course of study in the FBE; or (b) a member of Academic Staff in the FBE. If, at any time subsequent to the date of approval and prior to completion of the research project the applicant ceases to be either of (a) and (b) above, then any prior approval given to the applicant to conduct will be deemed to be revoked forthwith. The applicant must inform the FBE HREA Panel immediately upon any change, or possible change, to the applicant's status that may affect any prior approval given by the Panel to the applicant to conduct research.

Evaluation Authority:



Michael Brand (Convener)
FBE HREA Panel

Approving Authority:



Jim Plume
Head of School
Faculty of the Built Environment

PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



FACULTY OF THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Date:

Project Title: Sense of Place: Public Housing in Mount Drutt

Approval No.: 95034

Participant selection and purpose of study

You are invited to participate in a study of the sense of place within Mount Drutt's public housing. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you will be able to provide a personal and beneficial insight into the sense of place within these communities.

Description of study

If you decide to participate, I will undertake a one on one interview of approximately 30 to 40 minutes at a location suitable for you. The total amount of time recommended to set aside will be approximately one hour. We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, or except as required by law. If you give me your permission, I plan to include the results in my undergraduate thesis, to be presented to the academic planning staff of the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of New South Wales.

Your consent

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with The University of New South Wales or other participating organisations. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice by completing the statement below and returning this entire form to:

Christine Steinmetz
UNSW Built Environment
Sydney, NSW Australia
2052
West Wing, Red Centre Building, Kensington Campus

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask Ben Dowler on either telephone: 0403 538 608 or email: bendowler@hotmail.com. If you have any additional questions later, Head of Program, Peter Williams, 9385 5295, p.williams@unsw.edu.au will be happy to answer them.

Ben Dowler

REVOCAION OF CONSENT. Project Title: Sense of Place: Public Housing in Mount Drutt

(Please send this entire form to the above address.)

I hereby wish to withdraw my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that such withdrawal will not jeopardise my relationship with The University of New South Wales, other participating organisations or other professionals.

.....
Signature

.....
Please PRINT name

.....
Date

PROJECT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Sense of Place: Public Housing in Mount Druitt



FACULTY OF THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research project.

This PROJECT CONSENT FORM enables you to indicate your preparedness to participate in the project. By signing this form, your signature indicates that you have decided to participate.

You will be given a PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT that explains the project in detail, and that statement includes a revocation clause for you to use if you decide to withdraw your consent at some later stage. The PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT is your record of participation in the project.

This PROJECT CONSENT FORM will be retained by the researcher as evidence of your agreement to participate in this project.

Please complete the information in this box.

Please indicate which of the following options you agree to by ticking one of the following options:

- I consent to being quoted and identified
- I do not want to be quoted or identified but am prepared to participate anonymously

.....
Signature of Research Participant

.....
Please PRINT name

.....
Date

Name of researcher: Ben Dowler

Interview Questions for Residents

Background:

Age:

Nationality (place of birth / ethnicity):

How long have you lived in public housing in the Greater Mount Druitt area?

How long have you lived in public housing?

Who lives with you?

Where did you live before you lived here?

Questions relating to the media:

Over recent years there has been some negative media in relation to public housing in Sydney. How does this make you feel?

Do you think the media portrays public housing and their residents in a positive or negative way? Why?

How do you think people who live outside the Greater Mount Druitt public housing area view you?

Questions relating to planning and the environment:

Does Blacktown Council consult with you in regards to changes that may be made in the community?

How does Blacktown Council communicate with you in regards to changes being made in the community?

Do you believe Blacktown Council could do more to make you feel connected to your community?

Have you ever been asked to participate in community consultation in regards to community facilities and benefits?

Are you able to tell me about some positive aspects of living in public housing in the Greater Mount Druitt area?

Are you able to tell me about some negative aspects of living in public housing in the Greater Mount Druitt area?

Sense of Place Questions:

What places or spaces are you connected to within your community? Why?

Are you proud of your community? Why or why not?

What places or spaces do you often go to within your community? Why?

Where is your favourite place in the Greater Mount Druitt public housing area? Why?

Is there a space, place, building etc. that you believe represents you or your community?
Why?

What community events take place within the Greater Mount Druitt public housing area? Do they bring the community together?

Are you emotionally connected to your home? How? Why or why not?

Who do you interact with in your neighbourhood?

Do you enjoy living in this community? How could this be improved?

How do you believe you contribute to the community?

Would you move if u could? Why? Where to? Why there?

Is there anything stopping you from belonging to your community?

Are there any other comments or thoughts you have on your connection and sense of place within your community?

Thank you very much for your time!

Interview Questions for Psychologist

Background

What is your occupation title?

Who do you work for?

How long have you been a psychologist?

What type of work do you undertake and who with?

Where does this work usually take place?

What areas of work are you focused on?

Are your clients of specific social, economic or ethnic background?

Do you work with people who live in public housing estates in the Greater Mount Druitt area?

Planning

Do you believe Blacktown Council is doing enough for people in public housing? Why or why not?

Do your clients speak of their community in a positive or negative way?

What are some positive aspects of their communities?

What are some negative aspects of their communities?

How do you think the local government could help to improve community spirit in these communities?

How do you think the local government could improve a sense of place within these communities?

What are some important planning issues that need to be addressed in public housing in Mount Druitt?

Sense of Place

What does a sense of place mean to you?

Do your clients talk about a sense of belonging to their community? How?

How do you think this could be improved?

Are there special places or spaces in which your clients feel connected to in their community?

Through your studies and work are there particular places, spaces or other things that people connect with more than others?

What do you recommend Blacktown Council improve in Mount Druitt's public housing areas so that people feel proud of where they live?

Do you have any more comments on the connection and sense of place present for residents in the Greater Mount Druitt area?

Thank you very much for your time!

Interview Schedule: Friday 18th September 2009

Interviewee	Time	Location	Dwelling Type
1	8:30am	Bidwill	House
2	9:15am	Lethbridge Park	Flat/Unit
3	10:00am	Bidwill	House
4 and 5	10:45am	Lethbridge Park	House
6 and 7	11:30am	Emerton	Flat/Unit
8	12:15pm	Shalvey	House
9	1:00pm	Shalvey	House
10 and 11	1:45pm	Emerton	Unit/Flat
12	2:00pm	Mount Druitt	House
13	2:45pm	Mount Druitt	House
14	3:30pm	Lethbridge Park	House
15 and 16	4:15pm	Emerton	Flat/Unit
17	5:00pm	Emerton	House
Psychologist	6:00pm	-	-

Interview Reflection

In order to gain the information needed for my thesis a number of in depth interviews with public housing residents in the focus area were needed. The in depth interviewing process provided the opportunity for residents to respond in a personal and explanatory manner which may have been limited if dealt with through a quantitative research approach, such as a survey. Residents were randomly selected by a psychologist (my uncle) who works with residents in the greater Mount Druitt Area. This method was essential in allowing residents to feel at ease about being interviewed about something that is seen as very personal.

The psychologist approached residents to set up times throughout the day of the 18th September 2009. A total of 17 residents were interviewed and one psychologist. The purpose for conducting the interviews was to gain a greater understanding and insight into the sense of place they hold within their home and community. The interviews were recorded via a digital medium with all residents agreeing to provide quotes for the thesis but not be named.

I awoke at 5:30am and made the journey to my uncle's house in Croydon Park. My uncle set aside time out of his schedule to spend the day with me while I interviewed the selected residents. We arrived in the greater Mount Druitt area at approximately 8:30am. My uncle drove me around the study area and pointed out specific landmarks, facilities and areas where the residents lived. The interview schedule allowed for up to 45 minutes with each resident. Some interviews went for approximately 20 minutes while others went for the total 45 minutes. Each interview took place within the residents home, some of whom lived in houses, some in apartments and some lived in town houses.

I was able to walk around the study area between interviews and take photographs of specific objects or places mentioned by residents. This process also allowed me to immerse myself within the landscape, touching the urban fabric and textures by hand and foot.

It was an intense day of interviewing, understanding and appreciating the answers of the residents. Each resident was welcoming and allowed me to become part of their home through offering food or drink to introducing me to other family members. All residents seemed interested in the topic area I was researching, with one resident particularly interested in whether the findings would be published or provided to Council for future benefits within the area.

I arrived home at 9:00pm that night and had a greater understanding of the living styles, views and opinions of residents in greater Mount Druitt and their sense of place within their home and community. Personally, I feel the experience was life changing due to the realisation of living conditions, lack of connection to place and personal struggle.

Thankyou!

Thank you for participating in my in depth interview on the 18th September 2009, it was a great experience and I truly appreciate it. For you to welcome me and allow me the chance to experience your home and life was beneficial for me, not only in regards to my research for my thesis but for me as a person. To have the opportunity to speak directly to you provided me with an understanding and familiarity of the sense of place you hold within the greater Mount Druitt community.

Hopefully, issues that were raised will be considered in regards to the future planning of your area and public housing generally. Thank you again for the chance to speak to you about your home and community and for giving me the chance to talk to you.

Kind Regards,

Ben

