
My house, our house, their house: A case study of house sharing for the over 65s

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Abstract

Societies are looking towards innovative ways of accommodating the increasing number of people reaching 65 and without the provision of home ownership. This research follows five years of the development of a philanthropic social housing initiative whereby 10 women over 65 shared living spaces in two purpose-built houses. It investigates the viability and limitations through a context-based, naturalistic case study. The researcher is both a Trustee and a Relationship Manager of these houses, enabling an insider's access to the experiences whilst posing ethical and methodological challenges that are a salient theme. Ethical concerns about objectivity, conflict of interest and power imbalances are moderated by a relational/collaborative orientation to research and practice.

Narrative inquiry includes reporting the lived experiences of the participants and drawing on participant observations, interviews, notes, reports, and the researcher's journal: rich narratives illuminate the complexities and contradictions of shared households. The research is contextualised within literature showing that previous housing initiatives, whereby strangers share living spaces, have not been as successful as anticipated. This study concludes by speculating that we are possibly repeating ideologies implemented 20 – 30 years ago if looking towards shared housing as a solution to social challenges. It notes that the ideologies are formed by those who are charged with finding solutions, but not necessarily shared by those who are expected to live in these arrangement. Whilst providing affordable accommodation, the houses are also a social environment which can be both convivial and challenging, with variations of lived experiences and no easy reconciliation when conflicts of interest arise. One person's attempts to achieve comfort and mastery of their environment can impact on other's attempts to do the same.

The richness of data provided here enables insights of use to future housing planners. It raises awareness that 'ageing in place' in shared households is also aging in another's place, and gives concrete evidence of how shared space plays out in lived reality, the positive benefits of congeniality, the daily negotiations, and the reactions that spiral into dissatisfaction. The thesis concludes with the need for clarity about what shared housing might deliver.

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Patsy, who imparted in me a strong sense of social justice and an inquiring mind and to my daughters, Ngawai.and Waimarie

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I was often asked why I undertook such a journey at my age. The answer is because I could. It is a privilege to study at this level. This path has been enabled by the many who have paved the trail beforehand and the support of those along the way.

I first want to acknowledge God. It is through faith that I obtained the confidence and stamina to walk this journey and gained a greater sense of purpose and meaning in my life.

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Chapter 1. No house is an island

John Donne (seventeenth-century preacher, poet, and essayist) said, 'No man is an island.' In like manner, no house stands alone. No family exists in isolation. We must concern ourselves always with the 'big picture.' That is why 'a well-built theology' includes the house, the people who built and funded it, those who live in it, and the larger community and world in which the house is located." (P.119, Millard Fuller 1994, founder of Habitat for Humanity)

When I heard about the shared housing project for older women being deliberated by the Bays Community Housing Trust (BCHT), a housing Trust associated with my church, I immediately knew I wanted to be involved. It had all the components I was passionate about: affordable rental accommodation; ageing; and community well-being. The concept of sharing a house with friends when we finished working was often a topic of discussion amongst my female friends and acquaintances. I am a 'baby boomer' i.e. someone born between 1946 and 1964, a period where there was a high birth rate. I thus join the ranks of this large cohort entering a time of eligibility for the universal NZ superannuation that cuts in at age 65. I do not own my own home. I am single. I like the company of others. I am curious. I wanted to know if communal living could work for me or those I know. I identify with the participants and expect to be in the same situation as they are in the very near future. I knew the Trustees and approached them after they gave a presentation on this project with the statement, "*I like what you are doing, how can I support you?*" This group of church leaders invited me to be a Trustee and I was voted into this role soon afterwards at a church members meeting. I later volunteered for the role of Relationship Manager (RM) for this project. I was the only female Trustee and the person with the most suitable skills, experience, and enthusiasm to manage the social aspects of older women living together. This central role, which is more about facilitation than authoritative managing, is explained and exemplified in more detail in the ensuing chapters.

My motivation for doing a Ph.D. developed separately from this housing project. This path stemmed from a desire for self-growth. I completed my Masters in Psychology 23 years prior to my decision to undertake a doctorate. I was an outsider to the university and had no connection with the academics within.

These two divergent pathways were merged in my quest for a Ph.D. topic and supervisor when it was pointed out that the housing project was a perfect subject for a Ph.D. Around the same

time, I met with the funder's representatives who told me they were hoping that this housing project would be evaluated in some way but there was no funding for this. The seed was planted and watered. The topic met that criteria often cited: choose something that you are passionate about. My background in community work with expertise in psychology gave credential, although I was aware that this project fell outside of traditional discipline boundaries, or crossed them. I enrolled in the Ph.D. a year after taking on the RM role and before the house build had begun. My research interests complemented my involvement in this housing project.

The RM role evolved with the different stages of the housing project:

- Community preparation - Networking in the community, working towards the inclusion of the household in the neighbourhood community.
- Tenancy preparation - Setting up the documentation and procedures and recruiting the tenants.
- Household building - Developing relationships with and between the tenants. Facilitating the process of them establishing their households.
- Monitoring and maintenance - dealing with issues that arose.

It is clear that I have a significant non-research involvement in this housing project. The ethics committee were concerned with potential conflicts of interest. This research could have been conducted in a more traditional manner had I been only an outsider researcher. I was not. Thus my own story of how I have negotiated tensions between researcher and RM roles is a central part of this research.

1.1. My research case

This research is a bounded case study. The primary purpose of this research is the provision of a real-life exemplar to further an understanding of shared space living for those in their later years. Detailed, context-specific case studies are a valid scientific research method providing a depth of understanding essential to further social science knowledge and effectiveness (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Schwarz, 2012). This is especially crucial in areas where exemplars are lacking, such as shared rental housing for older people in today's society.

I started writing field notes and journal entries when I first enrolled as a part-time doctoral candidate in 2013. For the ensuing five years, I privileged the RM role, recording the activities

in this naturalistic setting, before working more closely with the data in an academic setting. I did not develop a disciplinary or theoretical lens at the early stage, as my intention was to capture the experiences with an open mind. As articulated by Swedberg (2012), who advocates the importance of exploration in social research, my methodological perspective was one of discovery rather than justification of a pre-existing theory. Later, emphasis was placed on making sense of the empirical data within its context, or in other words theorising (Kushner, 2017).

I align myself to the case study approach of Robert Stake (1978; 1995; 2010), whereby the researcher provides enough description for the reader to know and understand a particular case in context and within their own experiences and interpretations. Narrative inquiry as a methodology fits well with this case study approach.

My perspective was firmly grounded in the research setting and the community of practice. What I attended to in the field was guided by the following original research aims:

- Capture and evaluate the experiences of the tenants.
- Document the development of this model from conception, design, and building of the house.
- Evaluate the processes; what works well, what does not, and why.
- Provide a thesis that will enable others to implement or adapt this model.

My interest in the possibility of living in this situation myself, and my responsibilities as RM also influenced what I attended to. I wanted to explore the relationship between this housing model and ageing. The following question thus loomed large as I engaged in the research process:

- Is this shared housing model an appropriate place to age?

1.2. The thesis landscape

I invite the reader on a journey through my various roles and experiences. The narratives relate to the specific time they were written thus reflecting the development of this housing model and changes over time. These narratives enable an understanding of the lived experience of those involved in this shared housing model that my unique position in this research permits.

The first four chapters detail the housing project (the setting) and the novice field worker and RM navigating how to ethically conduct research in such a setting (the methodology). The

next three chapters introduce and explore the literature relevant to this case. There are six chapters of narratives (the lived experiences that raise different issues), then the concluding chapter.

This longitudinal study spans five years. My initial field narratives are written in the first person and present tense. I have allowed this tense and voice to predominate in these narratives with the more academic researcher's voice being a disruptive element, as opposed to an academic text being disrupted by contributor voices. The emphasis in the narratives is on the embodied nature of the research. The field observations constructed into large narratives are coloured dark blue. The narrative below, 'May 2013 – A beginning' is an example of the embodied researcher/RM voice, while I use a more formal third person voice when discussing the socio-political influences following this narrative. The smaller field writings e.g. journal entries are indented and of a different font than the main body. Direct quotes from participants are italicised.

1.3. May 2013 – A beginning

Leaving home, I glance out towards what was once farmland bordering the furthest north-eastern street in Auckland City. For the past 15 years I had enjoyed the view of the ocean and green expanse as I travelled this road; one side urban the other rural. Change happens. The Auckland Mayor leading the drive towards Auckland being "the world's most liveable city" turned the first sod this month heralding the beginning of the housing construction on this 165-hectare site that will eventually hold more than 2000 exclusive houses.

I am heading to a street 16 kilometers away at the other end of the North Shore. I certainly know of this street, even though I cannot recall ever visiting it before. It has a reputation. I even found an overseas reference to it in a London based website (Global Report, 2009). They quoted from a local newspaper article: "Living in a Scary Street" (North Shore Times Advertiser, 2009). This neighbourhood has a long history of violence and crime. When I surveyed local people about building on this street I received mixed reactions. While everyone thought the concept of a house for women over 65 to share was a great idea, some had reservations about building it on that street. One person made a comment that this neighbourhood would benefit from having such a house.

I take note of this journey, mindful of what I see, what I think, and my reactions. This is the start of my fieldwork. Before leaving my local area I take another look at the now brown, barren looking area, dotted with the heavy machinery slicing roads through the landscape. No

social housing will be built here. In fact, we locals question who could afford the cost of these sections and covenanted house designs.

As I turn into Tonar Street, my first impression coming down the gradual slope is of a quiet peaceful suburban street lined with established trees in varying shades of autumn colour. I notice splashes of bright white flowers and shrubs outside some places. The newer buildings on the right appear well looked after, in contrast to the older accommodation blocks on the left. I later read about these new buildings and their history. They were completed in June 2010 (Housing New Zealand, 2009) as part of the Northcote Community Renewal project. Newspaper articles from 1999 (Auckland Council, 2016) tell a story of plans to demolish the state houses in the area, homes to over 200 families, and replace them with more intensive housing for older people and the private sector. The residents rallied together to stop this. In 2003 the Northcote Central Development Group Trust was formed, (Jensen, Kaiwai, Greenaway, & Conway, 2005; Panuku Development Auckland, 2016) a partnership between the community, Housing New Zealand (the government) and the local council. Through this Development Trust, the community was able to ensure that some of their needs were being met, for example, larger houses to accommodate three generations and larger families. These newer buildings resulted from this partnership. The 1990s was the era that the government sold 11,000 state houses (Howden-Chapman, 2015). While the post-war build of state houses resulted in an improvement in housing quality (Howden-Chapman, Baker, & Bierre, 2013), the ageing, inadequately maintained housing available to public/social renters now is implicated in a falling standard of living and poor health outcomes (Howden-Chapman, Isaacs, Crane, & Chapman, 1996; Howden-Chapman et al., 2013) .

Looking at the landscape ahead, the chicanes on the road forced me to slow down. The two-story duplex housing NZ units here and the surrounding streets are identical to those in Otarā, where I grew up in the 1960s to 1980s. These are synonymous with high state housing, low-income areas and this area is the only place on the North Shore I have noticed this type of building. Figure 1 consists of views of the street facing left and right of the front door of the house taken in 2015.



Figure 1: Street view from front door. Source: Author

The land where the house will be built is halfway down this street. We (BCHT) recently purchased the section next door for a second similar house to be built sometime in the future, but it is the first one I am interested in. It is through the first house that this social housing model is initiated, developed and disseminated. I know the criteria for this house, but they have not been established yet for the second one. It is thought that the next house could be for men. What happens to and within the second house will follow on from the work and knowledge gained from this first house.

I park outside the section and take notes. My impression of the housing in this street is one of variation. It is a mixture of houses, some stand-alone, some joined, different styles of apartment blocks, two to three stories, old and new, some well looked after, others not so much. There were some nice gardens, whilst others had no shrubs or obvious garden. As diverse and different as the people I saw on the street.

I am surprised to see people out and about on such a damp day. Mostly they are Polynesian, though I did see one Asian person at the house beside the access way, and two European men taking a piece of furniture from a house nearby. One large man possibly in his twenties, face mostly hidden by sunglasses and a beanie, walks down the other side of the road turning his head my way. I presume he is watching me watching him (but trying not to be too obvious).

After an hour and a half sitting in my car, observing the street, I drive 800 meters to the shopping centre. A security guard is strategically placed on the corner of the small street running through the centre. This shopping centre has an interesting history, from one of decline in mid-1990 to a vibrant ethnic precinct fuelled by mainly Chinese immigration and businesses (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012).

Over the coming months, I spend time in the area, interacting, observing, and getting to know the people, neighbourhood, and community within which we are placing not only a house but people.

My fieldwork had commenced yet the influences that launched this housing project began well before this.

1.4. The socio-political influences on the conception of the project

The period leading up to the funding and building of the houses was a specific time in history; New Zealand had yet to experience the long-term effects of the global financial crisis a few years earlier but there was still an acute awareness of global instability and uncertainty. The world was bracing itself for what some termed "the silver tsunami" (Delafuente, 2009; Schumpeter, 2010). The baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) were about to reach 65, the time when they would be eligible to leave work (if they were in employment), and 'retire' on the New Zealand universal old age pension. This cohort had experienced more instability in the employment and housing market at the start of their careers than the previous generation (Koopman-Boyden & Mason, 1993). There were concerns as to how this unprecedented event will impact our societies and how best to deal with this demographic change in our societies. Statistics and forecasts on the effects of these changes were prevalent, resulting in an increase of global papers, books, and presentations on ageing. A World Assembly on Ageing was held in 2002 with the United Nations (2001) publishing a report on global trends: *World Population Ageing: 1950 – 2050*. Statistics New Zealand (2006) published their demographic predictions up to 2051, to inform of possible future implications and the nature of our ageing population. Our cities were also growing and The World Health Organisation (2007) published a guide to Age-Friendly Cities, asserting that the combination of population ageing and urbanisation pose specific challenges to our societies and world. Housing was one of the areas this report covered. In 2009 a Housing New Zealand funded report, *Older People's Housing Futures in 2050: Three Scenarios for an Ageing Society* was produced by the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa (Saville-Smith, James, Warren, & Coleman, 2009). These publications reflect a desire to predict and manage the risks associated with this global phenomenon.

The need to provide more rental housing for this growing population was highlighted in the discussions on population ageing. In our neighbouring country, Australia, a 100% increase in the numbers of older renters by 2026 was predicted (Jones, Bell, Tilse, & Earl, 2008). This followed up from an earlier report (Jones, Bell, Tilse, & Earl, 2004) alerting policymakers that affordable rental housing for this group of people needs to be addressed within the next 20 years. The conversation about housing and older renters in New Zealand had already started.

Thorns (1993) argued for more state housing for older people, to cater for the growing numbers of those who do not own their own homes. He stated then that if left to market forces, opportunities for the less affluent will be restricted and they will get caught in poverty traps without state intervention in housing. Thus predicting a poorer quality of life for the increasing number of older non-homeowners. Davey (2006) reported on a growing percentage of older people who do not own their own homes. She pointed out that renters have less housing security. Davey introduced the possibility that rental accommodation was of lower quality and Howden-Chapman and colleagues later confirmed this (Bierre, Howden-Chapman, & Early, 2013; Chisholm, Howden-Chapman, & Fougere, 2017; Douwes, Howden-Chapman, & Crane, 2012; Howden-Chapman et al., 2012; Howden-Chapman, 2015). She also concurred that the stock of social housing available for older people requires upgrading and was not necessarily appropriate e.g. mainly three bedroom homes built with families in mind (Davey, 2006).

Thorns (1993) highlighted that experiences and inequalities throughout one's life influence homeownership and wealth, therefore future housing options. In New Zealand, it is Maori and Pacific people as well as women who are more at risk (Thorns, 1993), the latter of whom this research targets. Lifetime disadvantages based on gender roles, e.g. caregiving, lower wages and career trajectories (Rashbrooke, 2013), as well as the fact that women live longer than men (World Health Organisation, 2014) and are more likely to live alone (Statistics New Zealand, 2016c), means that women are particularly at risk of experiencing housing difficulties in later life. The New Zealand Housing Strategy (Housing New Zealand, 2004) also specified women as needing extra support with housing while recommending that low-cost communal and supported housing be developed. This strategy report advocated for social housing options to be increased and partnerships be formed between local authorities and community housing providers (at that time termed third sector providers). A case study was presented in this report of such a partnership in Hamilton, whereby central and local governments alongside a community housing group and Abbeyfield New Zealand, built a 10 bedroom house for older renters. Research on different housing models for older people was also one of the recommendations (Housing New Zealand, 2004) pointing to the importance and usefulness of my research. The Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa /New Zealand published a report around the same time: *Accommodation Options for Older People in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Davey, De Joux, Nana, & Arcus, 2004). Presbyterian Support Otago published a report on housing and older people *With My Boots On* (Povey & Harris, 2006), as did the NZ Council for Social Services (2006) in their report *Rising to the Challenge*, all three highlighting the

need to address accommodation options for older people unable to afford their own home or to buy into retirement villages.

Despite the growing need and urgency reflected in the research and reports, the local and state authorities were reducing their involvement in housing for older people (Johnson, 2015; Health and Disability NGO working group, 2012). The government was looking at other ways of divesting its responsibility for social housing. The state-owned Housing Innovation Fund was set up to develop a capacity for community organisations and local authorities to provide housing in their communities (Davey et al., 2004).

It was through a community philanthropic organization, the ASB Community Trust, now known as Foundation North, that funding for a housing project to provide affordable rental accommodation for women over 65 was initially obtained by the Bays Community Housing Trust (BCHT). Thus the first house was conceived. Once BCHT secured this funding and building plans were underway, a successful application was made to the government's Social Housing Unit (a system that replaced the Housing Innovation Fund) for the second house.

1.5. The Project

The Bays Community Housing Trust (BCHT)

The Bays Community Housing Trust (BCHT) came to be when a small group of people from Long Bay Baptist Church saw a need in their community for affordable, quality housing for people experiencing mental health challenges. The Trustees are volunteers who want to make a positive difference to the community and genuinely care about improving the lives of the people they house. It was through the experience of providing such housing that BCHT became the community housing provider on the North Shore affiliating with the wider network of community housing e.g. Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) and Auckland Community Housing Providers Network (ACHPN). The aim of BCHT is the provision of affordable (paying no more than 80% of current market rental), quality, and suitable housing for those in their community in economic or social need. By 2018, BCHT owned 13 one bedroom units, 8 houses (five of these were new builds), and leased 12 units from the state-owned Housing New Zealand.

Specific to the housing project in this research, an evaluation plan was commissioned by the ASB Community Trust to support initiatives they invested in. Lack of affordable housing for older people and increasing demand were identified as factors contributing to the need for the

housing project. Physical features of the proposed house included a flat site, and closeness to transport, shops and medical facilities. The funding was targeted to economically disadvantaged women who were able to live independently. The objectives covered a range of variables such as relief from loneliness, effective use of housing resources through to the expectation that a successful project would result in more communal houses being funded and built.

The physical structure.

The only land found within the budget that would accommodate a large single-level house was in an area of high state housing and low incomes. A five bedroom house, with each room having an ensuite, was both cost-effective and practical for the purpose. The architects had experience in housing for older people as they designed the Auckland Abbeyfield shared living accommodation. A Lifemark rating of 5 was attained, i.e. the house was designed for ease of current and future use as it met the industry requirements of safety, usability, and adaptability. This included wide doorways and hall, walk-in shower, kitchen design, and entrance ramp. Due to costs, there was no guest toilet as initially hoped for. There were two lounges and two sinks, hobs, ovens, and microwaves in the kitchen. Input into the design came from consultation with industry and community, e.g. Trustees and people we knew, in particular, other women.

Figure 2 is an overlay from the architect drawings. The same plans were used for both houses. In order to promote individuality, there were slight differences in the frontage, entrance, and interior and exterior colours. Based on early learnings from the first house, the second house was designed to have a smaller laundry and larger kitchen.



Figure 2: Layout of first House. Picture by Kevin Lynch reprinted with permission.



Figure 3: Front and back of houses 2014. Source: Author

The case for five bedrooms.

Any house with over five bedrooms is considered a boarding house with resulting regulations, responsibilities, financial and operational costs. A five bedroom house comes under the rules of standard tenancies. The difference between a standard tenancy and a boarding house tenancy is that in a boarding house, the landlord is able to set the rules and has a responsibility for ensuring the common areas are clean. The boarding house landlord also has the right to enter the house at any time without notice and boarders have less authority, control, and responsibility than a standard tenant would. The five-bedroom houses operate as individual rental agreements with the tenants having responsibility and authority over the common areas.

When it comes to regulations, boarding houses are subject to stricter fire and safety regulations (Part 1, Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006). To be even more specific, Section 21A (c) specifies “*providing accommodation for more than 5 persons (other than in 3 or fewer household units)*” as having to comply with detailed regulations (New Zealand Government, 2017). As a charity, we are mindful of how we utilise our limited funding and resources. Building and managing a boarding house would have required extra compliance and running costs.

The social structure

While the provision of housing is the primary purpose of BCHAT, the social well-being of residents is important. BCHAT Policies and Procedures include the following:

BELIEF: Affordable, accessible and appropriate housing is fundamental to the health and well-being of individuals, families and the community

MISSION: To provide and facilitate access to social housing options on the North Shore through the provision of safe, accessible and affordable housing for people in social or economic need.

CORE PURPOSE PRIORITY: To provide affordable, quality rental accommodation to people on the North Shore with social needs, especially mental ill health [This was the purpose when BCHT started. With the advent of the housing for older people, and a partnership with an organisation housing youth in transition, the focus was no longer solely on those experiencing mental ill health]

(Bays Community Housing Trust Policies and Procedures, Governance and Housing Management October 2005)

In the formation of this housing project, there was a general awareness of loneliness and social isolation amongst older people, especially for those living alone. The UK had launched its campaign against loneliness for older people (Bolton, 2012). Age Concern New Zealand's theme in their widely publicised 2013 awareness week was, 'No New Zealander should ever die of loneliness' (Age Concern, 2013). BCHT considered the social aspects of this shared housing model in our planning, keeping in mind that the house is a place of social interfaces as well as a place to dwell, while keeping within our budget. For instance, in order to encourage social interaction, larger communal areas were incorporated, rather than increasing the size and utility of the bedrooms. We (BCHT) promoted this housing model as a place of companionship and community. The information we provided (Appendix A) was worded to reflect this.

Community networking

Encouraged and supported by BCHT, I took on board the responsibility for community networking as part of my RM role. I approached organisations and people whom I thought would have an interest in the housing project and connections with people who could benefit from the accommodation we were providing. The local Kaumatua (Māori elder) advised us to bless the land before the building started; it is an important cultural practice. My field note from the day illustrates this process:

It's lightly raining when I arrive outside the house site; the small group of three people standing under two umbrellas seems insignificant in the middle of the large section. While we wait for the last Trustee to arrive, we talk with the local elder (Kaumatua) who has come to bless the land. The conversation is relaxed; there are many areas of commonality, with us all

wanting the best outcome for the house and community. It was also a chance for me to introduce my links with similar communities so that I'm not perceived as a total outsider, just another privileged white person coming into their community who has no idea of the everyday lives of the people who live there. We gathered together for a photograph, sheltering under umbrellas, the large tree behind us harboured an array of birds and we were serenaded with the song of a tui in its branches. The rain was getting heavier and it was mentioned that rain is a symbol of good luck when a blessing is done, as water is cleansing. We formed a loose circle as the Kaumatua started the blessing. Bowing our heads as he prayed; we all shared the same hope for this piece of land. The prayers were in English first, and included a blessing on those working on the project, and that the house be a place of peace and solace. Some of the blessing was in Maori and translated afterward. He asked for the Lord's protection over this land and that God sends his angels to surround the property. For me, being present at this blessing was a moving experience, and tears came to my eyes as I felt the sincerity and meaning behind the dedication of the land for the purpose of improving the lives of others. (June 14, 2013)



Figure 4: Blessing of the land. Source: Author

The 24th June 2013, the day the building was to begin I hang around waiting to see the start, but only the drain layer is here. I observe and talk to whoever walks by. I approach a younger Asian woman and an older Pacific Island woman, both of whom seemed unable to understand or speak English. I was later told that for some people on the street, English could be their third language. Other Pacific or Asian languages are learned before English. Introducing myself to some younger Pacific Island women and men I invite them to the sausage

sizzle/BBQ we are hosting this weekend. The BBQ is an opportunity to connect with those in the neighbourhood, inform them of what the building is going to be, and answer any questions. An older European woman, a longstanding street resident, stops to have a chat. She is wondering how five women will manage with only one kitchen. I meet many locals over the ensuing months as I regularly visit the building site and get to know the neighbourhood.

People, especially those involved in the community organisations are supportive and willing to share some of their local knowledge. They tell me there is a real need for accommodation for older Chinese women coming over here to be with their children. Their children subsequently move on to another country leaving their older parents behind. It is pointed out, though, that this group often has assets and may not qualify as tenants for the house. Korean women's housing needs are also highlighted as intergenerational living is not working for some. This is backed up with research by Young Han (2014), in her Masters of Social work thesis, with whom I meet on my university campus later.

As the house is being built, people in the neighbourhood are looking out for it. A community worker tells me how pleased the locals are it is located there and that the community has a sense of ownership. I was once chastised by a group of school children as I walked around the house "*Miss you're not allowed to be in there*". Others inform me about youths and children who were hanging out on the building site at night. The police regularly patrol the street. A Trustee, temporarily staying in the first house since the opening, is disturbed one night by noises in the construction site of the house next door. Yelling out from the deck, he sees someone running away with a bag. A workman reported a bag of his tools missing. He speaks to a few neighbours. The bag is returned the following day.

At the official opening, a variety of people come to support this initiative. Funders, local politicians, organisational leaders mixed with the local people and community organisations. The local primary school children perform a kapahaka (traditional Maori action song).



Figure 5. Opening of the first house, February 2014. Source: Author

First house - breaking new ground

As the house was being constructed and I networked in the community, people I spoke to said this was a great idea. Responses were positive and encouraging. The general thought was that there was a huge need and we would have no problems filling the rooms. Community leaders and organisations were aware, advertising had been done, and the processes, procedures, and documentation were developed. We were ready for the onslaught of applicants.

It did not happen! There was a slow response to our publicity, and inquiries were mainly from people who did not fit our criteria. They had to be women, over 65, limited assets (i.e. unable to purchase a place of their own), and able to live independently. There were no inquiries from women currently living in the local neighbourhood.

I addressed the Kaipatiki Community Trust network of local community services and found out it was assumed that the house we were building was for older mental health service users, as BCHT was associated with mental health providers. I did not think this was the only reason inquiries were slow. This concept was unknown and no-one really knew how it would work.

We received widespread promotion at the house opening, making the morning and evening TV news programs. There was an article in the local paper, and we also placed an advertisement

in this paper. Despite this publicity, we still were not inundated with applicants. Within 2 months, four of the rooms were filled, although the last one remained unoccupied for another three and a half months. Being the last person in is much less desirable, especially when there was a brand new house being built next door that they could have been the initial occupants of. The first occupants not only had a choice of room and space in the common areas, but they were also able to establish themselves and a household culture that newcomers would thus enter into.

Second house

As the second house was close to completion I wondered if we would fill it. There was a working model for this house and an article was published in the local paper featuring three of the women residing in the first house. It was no longer unknown territory. No specific gender was stipulated for this house, so it was advertised as ideally suited to single men or women over 65. BCHT did not know where the greatest need was.

This time, there was a greater initial response to our publicity and advertising and I arranged a meeting at a local café for those interested. Five out of seven who expressed an interest turned up, two of whom were men. Three of the tenants from the first house (Sunrise House) came to share their experiences and answer any questions. The prospect of mixed gender was discussed at the café and none of the women were willing to share with men, although the men said they did not mind mixed flatting. As applications were received from two women, and none from the men, my recommendation to the other Trustees was that the second house (later named Dunmovin') should also be exclusively for women. The first four rooms were occupied quickly, although it took a further six weeks for the last room to be taken.

Chapter 2. Research relations

Since the New Zealand census in 2013 which informs the current national scholarly literature, there is an abundance of grey material on the housing situation that I consider relevant as it provides context and influences the awareness of those involved in this housing project. A perception that there is a severe shortage of rental accommodation with a real possibility of homelessness and hardship is highly pertinent to this research. An original contribution of this research is that I capture and present the stories from lived experiences that occurred in the context of current affairs. In this, and the following chapter, I have contained such media happenings within a two-month window of time, and also included day to day interactions in this time period that exemplify my involvement. These excerpts allow me to illuminate aspects that otherwise would remain hidden. I view these events such as the one below as relevant and part of my research experience. For example, if housing was readily affordable and available, there may be no need, or support, to build the houses. The current housing situation is a major influence on one's decision to move from or remain in the place they reside in.

Today, January 23rd, 2017, the 13th Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: 2017 came out (Demographia, 2017). Auckland is ranked the 4th least affordable city in the world, in terms of medium income to medium house prices. It is considered severely unaffordable. Last year it was 5th.

2.1. My interest in this research.

The first news story to grab my attention was one where an octogenarian was moving out of what was described as unsatisfactory living conditions (TVNZ 03/01/17). The article headline read, "An elderly Auckland resident is sounding a warning about the substandard living conditions on offer to those who can't afford the city's escalating market rents." The 84-year-old navy veteran said that *"health-wise, safety-wise, it's not acceptable, not in this day and age in this country"*. The local MP was filmed helping this man shift and said that this state of affairs was not uncommon, *"There are thousands of people in this situation find[ing] themselves living in the most appalling slum conditions. It just shouldn't be allowed to happen"*. The landlords were reported to have stated that the tenants (living in a shed, 2 buses, and a caravan) on their property had nowhere else to go, and therefore would be homeless if not for what they provide. Excluding the obvious poor quality aspects of this accommodation, there is a premise in this statement that has relevance to this research. Could a similar

discourse of comparing a superior position in relation to a less desirable one be used to justify the value of this housing model, i.e. those that live in the shared houses are 'lucky' to have a place as the alternative is worse? If this argument is used, could such provision of accommodation mask systemic societal inequalities, limit choices, and provide a rationale for the underdevelopment of what may be more appropriate housing? If so, could those involved in the creation of shared housing be contributing to a housing problem rather than a solution to it? These questions concern me.

The news story continued. A government agency was contacted by the news reporter and the response was to quote the residential tenancy act and inform of subsequent fines that could be imposed on the landlord for breaches of this act. The next day the Mayor of Auckland said he was appalled. An investigation by the council ensued. "Mr. Goff [the Mayor] says Auckland is struggling to house its burgeoning population, with the ongoing crisis forcing increasing numbers into substandard accommodation. *"We can move people out of the substandard housing but find that there are still people sleeping in cars,"* he said. *"What we need is a bigger supply of social housing and we need more investment in that area."*" A nearby homeless couple, who have been living in their van on the street for the past 10 years, was interviewed. I had seen this couple previously when the homeless problem was eventually highlighted in the media the previous year. (TVNZ, 04/01/17 <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/mayor-orders-investigation-into-substandard-auckland-rental-fled-84-year-old?auto=5269826133001>).

The octogenarian was assisted by the Ministry of Social Development into temporary motel accommodation. Problem solved? Not likely! Maybe for this one person, if he is lucky, but there are others in similar situations. I wonder how he ended up living in that place. Where did he live before? Where will he go next? Will he be back in the news in the future? What about the other tenants? I want to know more about the couple living in the van. They had been offered alternatives (emergency housing), so why then do they see the van as their best option? I am aware of the housing situation in Auckland and deeply saddened by the paucity of available, affordable and appropriate homes. This lack of a basic necessity impacts the lives of the poorest members of our community most. I agree with the octogenarian and the MP, that this type of occurrence should be considered unacceptable in our society.

I listen to an interview with the retirement commissioner Dianne Maxwell, on retirement incomes. *"The biggest group of vulnerability that I am worried about now is people who are renting in their 50's or 60's, going into retirement as renters. That is a group that I am really worried about, and we need to be doing some serious work because that is going to be an issue".* (Radio New

Zealand 22 January 2017. Podcast 21:00 mins)

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/322833/super-expensive-super-prompts-call-for-budgeting-policy>.

It is not just the lack of affordable, appropriate rental accommodation that is of concern. Those who are entering the later stages in life without the capital that homeownership brings can face further disadvantages. The specific financial relationship between ageing and housing is explored in this thesis.

2.2. Preparation

To prepare for my RM role and the development of this model I read widely and was especially attracted to writings and ideas by people who build, empower, and nurture community. I sought out community development leaders and literature on this topic as I pursued an approach and networks that would advance and benefit the housing project. Before I enrolled in my Ph.D. and had access to the University library, I purchased other books related to working with and within communities to develop my RM role and shape my lens. One of my initial readings was *Community: The structure of belonging* (Block, 2009) with a focus on community as a space of belonging:

Community, as used here, is about the experience of belonging. We are in community each time we find a place where we belong...the opposite of belonging is to feel isolated and always (all ways) on the margin, an outsider (Block, 2009, p.xii)

I anticipated that the women coming into the house would share a sense of belonging and community. Block (2009) placed importance on making connections and having conversations while also providing practical steps for leading small community groups. He describes community leaders as architects, who listen and advocate rather than dictate. My initial readings helped shape a collaborative approach towards this project and research. They also provided direction and ideals that were not always easy or possible to attain in the real world. This research exemplifies some difficulties of working with diverse people in a community setting, adding depth to the theories that inspired me.

A subsequent book, *The abundant community* (McKnight & Block, 2012), while encompassing community development principles such as working together for the good of all, focused more on building cohesive neighbourhoods. Other books from North America such as *Ageing in community* (Blanchard, J.M., & Anthony, B., 2012) and *Reimagining your*

neighbourhood, (Anthony, 2015) provided examples of community-oriented neighbourhoods that appeared to be working well in terms of social connectedness and working collectively. These were neighbourhoods that the authors and selected contributors themselves experienced, helped create and/or lived in. In reading these earlier writings, I developed a sense of hope and optimism that the households would develop into a cohesive unit and be a positive influence on the wider neighbourhood.

Baker (2014) also wrote about ageing in community. She interviewed people from nine different living arrangements e.g. co-housing, shared housing, intergenerational living and naturally occurring retirement communities, advocating for ‘baby boomers’ to start planning and looking at other options to retirement villages, living alone, going into a care home or moving in with family. She stressed that with the advent of baby boomers reaching retirement age, more options in terms of living arrangements will be created than in previous generations. BCHAT’s use of the word ‘innovative’ for the housing project placed this project (in my mind) at the forefront of this anticipated societal shift I was reading about. *My house our house: Living far better for far less in a cooperative household* (Bush, Machinist, & McGuillin, 2013) is a book written by three women who purchased a house together, sharing some of their lived experiences, insights and practical tips for others who may do the same, and providing me with a sense of how the households may operate. *The senior cohousing handbook: A community approach to independent living* (Durrett, 2009), was another resource I consulted as I attempted to understand the lived experiences and possibilities of sharing living spaces with others. The above works were written by people promoting philosophies and lifestyle options for those who have choices, with an emphasis on what is working well in these situations. A valuable contribution of this research is the lived experiences of people who may not have the resources to enable a range of choices in living arrangements, and the inclusion of examples of what may not be working so well.

My focus was on how best to enact my RM role. The texts above, written for the public by those at a grassroots level, challenged and inspired me to reflect on my own assumptions while reinforcing relational ways of interacting with others. I believed that conducting ethical research in this setting depended on ethically relating to others i.e. with respect, and concern for equalising power. Prioritising the RM responsibilities and the participants’ lives over the researcher sensibilities creates tension in this research project. Such a stance disrupts the hegemonic hierarchy of knowledge production. Natural science knowledge has long been considered to be at the top of this hierarchy, with ‘common’ knowledge lower in rank.

Knowledge and power have a symbiotic relationship, one of reciprocal legitimation (Weiler, 2009). Thus the centrality of the RM responsibilities and relationships attends to power imbalances within this research in particular '*whose knowledge counts*' (Weiler, 2009). One of my original contributions is that I privilege the lived reality and knowledge of the participants. This research also exemplifies the lived reality of research in such a setting and the tensions I as researcher face in navigating the borders of community and academic spaces. It is through these tensions that valuable insights and understanding of methodological challenges in the field are enabled.

2.3. Collaborative community research orientation

Social Constructivism and Critical Theory

I chose to further explore a community based participatory research orientation which has foundations in critical theory and social constructivism (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Wallerstein & Minkler, 2011). This orientation provided an academic framework for the community focused approach I was forming. The active participation of the women in constructing their lived experiences was an integral part of this research. I viewed knowledge and meaning as a co-construction with the participants as we engaged in the process of making the houses their homes. There was no absolute or objective truth being sought, only agreement as to what was plausible in the circumstances and context. These are the assumptions of social constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Creswell, 2013; Crotty 1998; Guba and Lincoln 1989; Patton, 2015). This viewpoint is consistent with valuing the different experiences and perspectives of the participants, without judgment as to some truths being superior or more real than others.

Not only did I view this orientation as being essential for the respectful relationships required in this research, but also for understanding the complexities of this social housing model and the impact this has on the lives of those who dwell within it. Critical theory is concerned with domination and inequalities; challenging the hegemony of privileged groups and the oppressive power they can yield to maintain their privilege (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). Thus a critical perspective forced me to deliberate my own roles in this project. I could not adopt a dominant stance as RM or researcher, neither could I take on a superior 'helper of others' identity. Taking a more humble position with an awareness that the research setting is another's home, I placed value on the people and the relationships. I was mindful that my privilege in accessing this research project comes from the grace of others allowing me to be

part of this, therefore not contingent on my position, but on theirs. Critical theorists value a research approach that is relational and inclusive of the 'researched' voice and knowledge.

Research with and for community

The collaborative approach is doing research *with*, and *for* the community. In this case there are varied communities and partnerships (active and passive) within this collaboration. An active partnership is between BCHT and the women in the houses. More passive communities, i.e. those who are not directly participating in the research but are interested or impacted in some way, include the local communities and community organisations serving older people or housing. I also add pragmatism to the definition of collaborative research. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that good research in social sciences is driven by problems not methodology. It was the research aims more than a research methodology that directed my methods of inquiry. I was initially guided by principles based on Israel, Shultz, Parker & Becker's (1998) seminal work on community-based participatory research, subsequent participatory research with older people (Hoban, James, Beresford, & Fleming, 2013), and community research within New Zealand (Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector Research Centre, 2007). The principles of egalitarianism; co-learning; empowerment; balancing research and action for mutual benefit; moral responsibility; and long-term commitment are considered to be an orientation to research (Israel et al., 1998; Israel, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2005b) underpinning collaborative approaches. I view these principles primarily as empowering research with an orientation to relationships. They underpin my research.

Feminist, indigenous research and other such communities of practice, with ensuing values of collaboration, democracy, and concerns about power relationships have similar underpinnings (Creswell, 2013). Although this research is not by Māori for Māori or about Māori issues, I share the same standards of respectful relationships and the equalising of power dynamics that are embedded in Kaupapa Māori frameworks (Bishop, 1996; G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999). The Māori research principles of mutual respect, shared benefits, human dignity, and discovery (Durie, 2005) challenge traditional research practices (Bishop, 1996; Denzin & Giardina, 2007; L. T. Smith, 1999) as does this research. Aligning a non-Māori research voice with Māori research voices that challenge the hegemonic hierarchies of knowledge production is another valuable contribution of this research, especially in a New Zealand context.

My professional practice (unrelated to this housing project) as a health professional working with older people for many years has been client centred and service focused. Working

collaboratively and respectfully with a focus on service and relationships is an established way of interacting with others in professional practice. I am trained to record with an awareness that the person I write about can access my writing if they so choose. Respectful relationships are an important aspect of this collaborative approach, which in my case equates to respecting that information about someone belongs to them. I, therefore, asked permission, respected that the house was their home, valued the person and their knowledge, and was prepared to maintain the relationships for a long period of time.

Participation and collaboration

Although I started out adopting a participatory research doctrine, I prefer the term collaborative rather than participatory, as the latter is associated with a responsibility on the part of the community to participate in all areas of the research. The participatory principles of Israel et al. (1998) were framed for different groups of stakeholders coming together to research a specific need in the community, a bottom-up approach rather than the top-down approach of researchers dominating the knowledge production and ownership. In practice though, I discovered that in this small-scale research, and within the regulations of a Ph.D., the gold standard ideal of equal partnership and involvement on all levels is not practical in this context. Listening to the voice and opinions of older people (as with any group of people), in matters that pertain to them, valuing their knowledge and contribution allows a researcher to benefit from participants' 'participation' in a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship. When participation, though, involves an expectation of participant involvement and commitment, with responsibilities to this process, it can be counterproductive (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Nolan, Hanson, Grant, & Keady, 2007). This is the case not only to the individual but in the political and communal context of how older people and their roles in society are being structured and valued (Martinson & Minkler, 2006; Minkler & Holstein, 2008). Is there an expectation that retirees living in the houses should actively contribute to our understanding of the houses? As the women and I worked together, it became apparent that they were individuals who were comfortable with different levels of involvement in the research. Some did not want to be involved at all and some wanted to know everything, actively challenging not only my research practice but also the outputs. The narratives provide examples of this lived experience and the research environment. Collaboration and inclusion can only occur if there is a space for this. The voice and influence of those who wanted a greater involvement is irrefutably stronger in this theses than those who did not. Yet it was essential that I respected the level of participation that was offered. My role as RM meant that I had to be especially attentive to ensuring the participants retained power and a sense of citizen control. Cornwall (2008) highlights the difficulties in defining participation in research, stating that it is

contextual, based on the purposes and the participants, and can vary during the course of the project. This research provides an example of the complexities and challenges of collaborative research, contributing to the scholarly conversations on participant involvement in research.

The quality of collaborative research can also be challenged. Bob Stake (2004) considers that participant involvement in evaluation dilutes the professional judgment of the researcher: *“Many of us expect that the quality of such an evaluation will be technically inferior and in some ways conceptually less deep...”* (p. 106). Although a supporter of action research and participatory evaluation, he believes that giving too many people a share in the decision making, designing, and interpretation of a research project can be problematic when seeking useful generalisations (R. Stake, personal communication, February 17 & 19, 2017). Stake (2004) continues on to explain that this should not exclude participation as a strategy of choice if it suits the situation. I argue that participant involvement, not full participation with research responsibilities, in this particular research does suit the situation. If some research quality is seen as compromised by those who would prefer a more objective methodology, it is a necessary trade-off that needs to be managed through transparency and supervision. The criticisms above about participation are not directed at participation per se, but about the types of participation, and the intentions and the position of the researcher. Arnstein (1969) developed a typology to depict a continuum of participation, referred to as Arnstein’s ladder of participation. The levels ranged from manipulation and therapy to delegated power and citizen control. There are distinct aspects of this housing project, with differing levels of involvement, power, and control:

- The development of this model, e.g. the building of the houses and activities pre-tenant occupation – consultation with the wider community after the section was purchased. There is no power, control or involvement by tenants and a high level of involvement by me as Trustee.
- The household – a shifting of power, control, and involvement from me as RM to the tenants as the households are forming. The tenants have high control, power, and involvement in their households once they are established.
- The research – I see this more of a collaboration with me as a Ph.D. researcher having a responsibility and an ownership of the research process and the tenants as having the power and control of what is written about them. Initially, though, these lines were not clear to me as a novice researcher navigating the field of participatory research and

aiming for the textbook gold standard of equality and participation in every aspect of the research.

This list, like Arnstein's ladder, is also a simplistic representation of complex and dynamic processes. It is based on intention, but in reality there are varying degrees of involvement at different times and stages and with different participants.

Figure 6 depicts the areas of collaboration and involvement for those involved in this housing project. The arrows denote a relationship; they do not, however, indicate the level of involvement. For instance the contribution of the initial tenants to the design on the second house was minor. The RM and the tenants have a significant involvement and influence on the research.

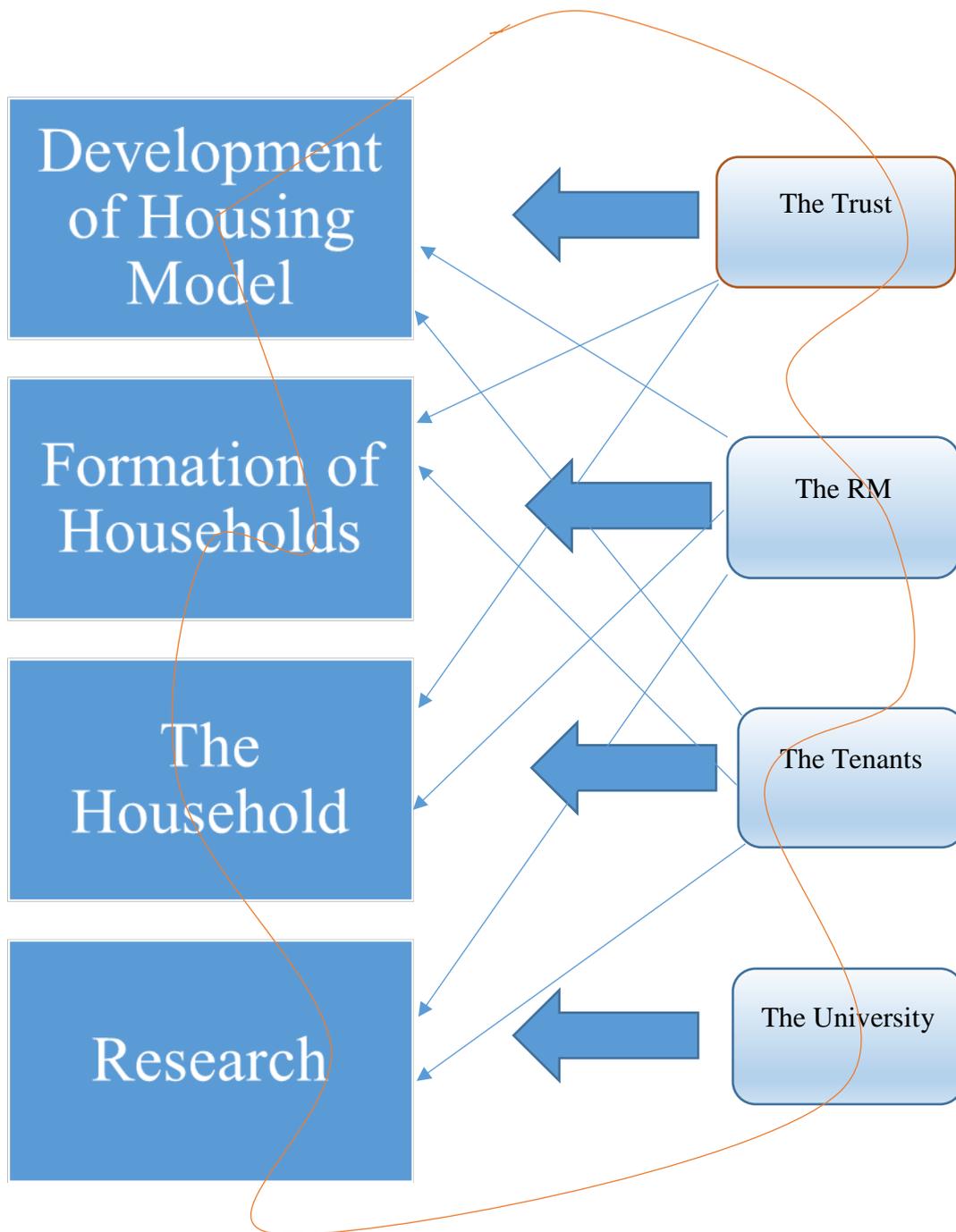


Figure 6: Involvement, responsibilities, and collaboration of the primary parties in this housing project.

Thick arrows signify main responsibilities/involvement, thin arrows indicate a secondary or some level of involvement. The thread depicts my connectedness.

2.4. Biases

My relationships with others and my research objectives influenced what I attended to and reported on. On one hand, there are incentives for emphasising the positive aspects of this case. Any negative inferences I illuminate, e.g. what is not working, has implications for everyone involved and for my relationships with others. My natural inclination is to be viewed in a positive light. BCHT is providing needed services to our community. Funding for future projects could be compromised. The participants' identity is also at stake. It is their home and their community. I care about them and value our relationships. I acknowledge these pressures and cannot escape the subjectivity of the decisions I make at every level. I unashamedly considered the reputations and feelings of others when I chose what was included. This is relational research. This is an ethical stance. On the other hand, if this research is to inform the future housing for older people including myself, I want to highlight aspects about this model that would be of interest to those contemplating funding, building or living in shared housing. I am personally frustrated in everyday life when organisations and individuals, in the process of promoting themselves, obscure what is not working so well. Informed decisions are impaired when this occurs. A greater understanding and subsequent progression occurs with an awareness of what is not working so well.

An emphasis on the positive can reinforce and mask social inequalities, denigrating those who have less opportunity while exerting pressure to conform to positive, value-laden, neoliberalist ideals (Friedli & Stearn, 2015; Gill & Orgad, 2018; Robertson, 2018). My leanings are towards social justice and this research also comes under the umbrella of critical qualitative research (Denzin, 2017). These critical underpinnings are implicit as I avoid the possible stigma associated with highlighting social inequalities (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Critical theory shapes my lens.

Ethical dilemmas and choices in qualitative research occur at all stages (Blee & Currier, 2011) and I would add, at all levels - from unconscious attention to particular details to careful construction of narratives. There are multiple views from which this research could be represented, and my intention is to provide enough detail for the reader to be able to look past the subjectivities and discern for themselves. This thesis judiciously traverses a tightrope between participants' right to privacy and the public's right to know.

2.5. Fluid positioning

This leads to a discussion of whether I positioned myself as an insider or an outsider. To identify as one or the other would be a way of illuminating power differences, biases and research practice. From a social constructivist perspective whereby one can have multiple, shifting identities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) I cannot fix such a position. Thomson & Gunter (2011) contend that to do so can be misleading and obscures the complexity, fluidity, and messiness of fieldwork research. McNess, Arthur & Crossley (2015) argue that with more collaborative research methodologies a polarised positioning of either insider or outsider, researcher or researched needs to be challenged. My relationship with the women in the households was contingent on how we (myself and each participant) perceived that relationship at the time. There were times we worked together, but not all of us. I was included in social activities in the houses, whereby other Trustees were not. Not all tenants attended these social activities. Sometimes I felt and acted like 'one of the group' and believed I was accepted as such. Other times I was aware that I was not. I did participant observations at the same time as observing my participation.

I have professional boundaries I adhere to in my RM, Trustee, and researcher roles that set me apart from the residents in the houses. In the beginning, I was the insider and the women were entering into my world. As the women made this world their own, I increasingly became an outsider entering their world by invitation only. The balance of power, which initially raised ethical concerns, shifted over time. The lived experiences of this shift and the fluidity within my position and relationships in this research setting is a unique and valuable contribution to the field of qualitative research and methodology. In most other social research settings the researcher enters the field as an outsider, gradually moving towards acceptance within the researched group. Thus my researcher relationship is atypical, and I foresee that I will always have an element of being more of an insider than other non-residents, based on my relationships with the women and our history together in establishing the households.

The position from where I represent this case, my selves, and the participants is another location to be discussed. Again I shy away from a singular, fixed vantage point and take a more fluid positioning such as 'working the hyphen' (Fine, 1994) of self-other. A position of working with and acknowledging the complexities, fluidity and multiple selves in research.

Avoiding identification with extreme, static positioning allows me to explore more fully the spaces between polarities, such as the relationships between self and the housing

project. Finding the balance between my involvement (self) and the setting itself can be a difficult task. Bullough & Pinnegar (2001) point out that too much 'self' can easily appear indulgent and confessional while too much focus on setting is just another aspect of 'traditional research'. The balance I see is found in the intersection between the points. Likewise, I attempt to find a balance between the different voices in the narratives when representing the lived experiences. As Fine (1994) points out, if one is 'working the hyphen', representation is a co-construction.

There were times when I unintentionally digressed from my collaborative stance. I noticed that this was especially possible when I was focused on academic productivities rather than relationships. The fluid dynamic nature of my roles and relationships, where I 'work the hyphen', meant that decisions and compromises were constantly negotiated. It was during these times that I depended on critical reflection emanating from an acknowledgement of my human, imperfect, contradictory nature and an awareness of the literature.

2.6. Representation/co-construction

Research equity, representation and the co-construction of knowledge in community-based participatory research is an integral aspect of an academic-community partnership, encompassing the dimensions of positionality, power relationships, identity and privilege (Muhammad et al., 2015). While this is true of my doctoral project, the resulting multi-dimensionality has posed challenges. The heterogeneity of the participants, when they all have different relationships with myself; when the setting changed over the duration of the doctorate; and when my research was inflected by various motivations, experiences, and opinions; has influenced the style of this thesis.

I initiated the process of knowledge construction by writing the narratives and formulating the chapters, before sharing these with the participants. The participants were given the opportunity to challenge, edit and comment on what is written about them. Taking my work back to the participants is a co-construction of knowledge, a collaborative research practice (Harvey, 2015) and one that depends upon reflexivity. This practice is an integral aspect of my research design, reflecting the participants' power over their own data and the extent to which it is shared.

Asking permission to share someone's data with others is a fundamental professional and ethical practice, one that a single informed consent form is inadequate to cover. Consent in the

context of this research was ongoing. This was especially applicable to the research setting whereby the participants knew each other well enough to identify individuals. With the participants having power over how they are represented, the need to be sensitive, creative and mindful in my writing was an essential skill that I endeavoured to develop over the course of this research. My professional discipline not only helped me to manage unexpected ethical dilemmas, but it also situated me within an ethical framework that guided decisions and stances, such as how to represent the case. My choice of using narratives in the present tense to capture the sense of lived reality emerged from my belief that the participants' lives deserve prioritisation.

There are legitimate concerns when it comes to power imbalances with representing others. It has been seen as unethical and arrogant to speak for others, as this reinforces oppressive relationships (Alcoff, 1991; Oliver, 1992). Richardson (1997) states that speaking for others is frowned upon in postmodernism and feminist research. She questions: “*Is it possible to both serve the host community and serve yourself in a sociological text that bears your name as author*” (p. 111). I wrestled with this, especially at the beginning, and we (myself and some of the participants) talked about publishing a book on the houses together as a fundraising venture for BCHT in the early stages. We have yet to decide on authorship or content. This dissertation though is required to be my sole-authored academic piece of work. I have boundaries in this research that may be extended beyond it.

Alcoff (1991) proposes that a practice of speaking *with* and *to*, rather than speaking *for* will minimize the risk of misrepresentation and domination. Concerns over power imbalances and speaking for others influenced the development of the emancipatory/critical paradigms (Oliver, 1992) which underlie my collaborative approach of doing research *with* rather than *on*. While this in itself does not infer there will be no incidences of misrepresentation, inadvertently speaking *for* rather than *with*, or negative consequences, I can only proceed with an awareness of this possibility, and a practice that lessens the chances of this happening. The significance of this research to future directions in shared housing for older people means that I take the risks of my own limitations with an awareness of these risks. Richardson (1990) contends that the only alternative to issues on representation is not to write.

Representation is not confined to only the narratives from the participants. It encompasses the entire dissertation as a representation of this housing model and those who have participated in this. Academic language and writing practice can exacerbate power dynamics, reinforce academic authority and decrease access to the research (Lather, 1996). I endeavour to balance the different needs of the multiple audiences I write for, while keeping my language as

accessible as possible. The participants will have access to the dissertation and drafts. Their opinion is as important to me as the academic examiners’.

The women who agreed to participate were aware this model was a new way of living that is of interest to others. They wanted to actively share their experiences and contribute to the research. The utilisation of this research and the audiences that might be accessing this information was on our minds as we constructed our stories.

2.7. Challenges and compromises.

There are other challenges with my approach, some of which will become evident in the narratives that follow. The participants are not one unit, but a collection of individuals who do not necessarily share the same values, stories, opinions or beliefs. Not everyone wanted the same level of participation and not all the voices were heard equally in the group situation e.g. meetings. Some were more articulate and vocal than others, and others declined the invitation to participate. I privileged the participation of the initial tenants (who were enthusiastic about this research) over those that came later. I spent more time with these initial tenants as we explored how this housing model could work. By the time the second house was open, my involvement in the households had diminished, and I had already amassed a large amount of data. Collaborating with various personalities when a consensus or a shared understanding did not occur was challenging. Due to inexperience and my inductive approach, I did not understand fully what I was doing at various stages.

The commitment to equality, moral obligation, and empowerment comes with ongoing responsibilities and awareness of limited control over the research processes and outcomes. Negotiation and compromise were necessary for collaboration. I was limited by the information that the participants allowed me to collect, and they had the power to veto any information or interpretation that I might have considered useful. Their data belongs to them.

Sometimes participation did not occur. People were busy and not everyone was interested. Not everyone read or responded to what I sent. When there had been discord in the households between participants, collaboration was more difficult. If participants’ found themselves frustrated with the house, they could feel disinclined to contribute to research about it. I was sometimes seen as not supportive when interpersonal conflicts were not dealt with by me in the way individuals would like. During these times of household conflicts, some participants were not as willing to engage and actively withdrew their information. Withdrawal of information is also data as well as evidence that there is a created space where this can occur.

That was their choice. These tensions were inevitable with my multiple roles and managed by prioritising my RM position. As RM I managed the situation as researcher I recorded the experiences. I also become more cautious around exacerbating relational tensions and tried to avoid being seen to favour any one person or group. As such, I intentionally disengaged from the households to some degree. From my experience here, it felt that the hyphen existed between my roles, but also, and perhaps more particularly, between my involvement in the lived world of the house, with its kitchen sink pleasures and squabbles, and the world of academia, with its libraries, professionalism, and ivory tower wherein squabbles become 'critical theory'. I have been tugged by the contrasting rules of engagement, and differing nuancing of duty of care.

Always, a consultation and feedback process takes time and sensitivity. For me, the real and ordinary world of my participants within the house-that-needs-to-feel-like-home demanded my loyalty not just as a Trustee and RM, but also as a researcher. I was committed to ensuring that I did not share personal information without prior approval. Re-presentation of anything that could identify a person within their social networks (especially to others in the households) was sent to the person concerned for their comments and consent. Consent is not confined to a signed informed consent form: it is ongoing, requires time, communication, and attention to relationships. Even in medicine, where the legalities of informed consent are strict, ongoing collaboration with patients on any treatment that affects them is considered ethical practice "*Consent is always required, but informed consent is not*" (Whitney, McGuire, & McCullough, 2004, p.59).

Privacy and anonymity are a major challenge in this research approach whereby the participants know one another well enough to identify each other in the narratives, or as the quote below indicates, may mistakenly think they do.

A tenant emailed me (19/02/17). She was upset with what I wrote about her in this chapter. I apologised, offered to rectify this then searched (the document and myself) to see how this occurred. It wasn't until the early hours of the morning that I realised the story she was referring to was not about her at all, it was in regards to someone else, of whom had previously read this section and was happy with what I had written. (20/02/17)

In this case, the narrative had already been shared with the other participants so could not be taken back. My need to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants within the households as well as in the thesis is a limitation of this study. There are also lines of inquiry that were not taken as I balanced ethical and relational dynamics with the need to know. I erred on the side of caution and did not inquire if I thought it would be too intrusive. Not all

relevant information made known to me as a researcher was revealed in the narratives as I prioritised the relational nature of my involvement with the participants. An example of this was prioritising my choice to use only one household as an object of study with collateral data from the other household. This deflected any inclination to compare households. While illustrating similarities and differences between households would be useful data, there was a risk that such comparisons would elicit or be interpreted as value judgements that may harm the participants. While that need for care and caution limited what could be represented in this thesis, I suggest that my experience, and explicit discussion of the tensions of working the hyphen (Fine, 1998), make a valuable contribution to the understanding of research methods.

This research setting lends itself to novel experiences and possibilities for new knowledge that is impossible to predict. There were challenges, but rather than these challenges being a barrier to my methodology, they need to be acknowledged, reported and worked through. They are part of this research. I see the most important aspect of this study is the integrity of the process, in that the relationships were respectful and the participants maintained their power and control over their information. The unique situation I was in of being so close to the research, having a personal relationship with the participants, being involved in all aspects of this project, having longitudinal access to data and knowledge, provided an opportunity to obtain information and knowledge that would otherwise be lost.

Chapter 3. Research strategies

Although this is a new social housing model, it is not a social experiment, nor is it a social milieu within which to test theories and concepts. The research is situated in a context of discovery which entails theorising based on the data rather than a context of justification whereby data is collected to justify a theory (Swedberg, 2012). Thus I entered the field with few fixed ideas and without academic confinement within one theoretical or methodological framework. I see my researcher role as one of knowledge facilitation rather than that of expert or judge. A plurality of values, perspectives, and methods are embraced in this naturalistic qualitative inquiry. Taking a pragmatic and emergent approach, I developed, honed, and enacted the methodology in the field. Detailed, interpreted narratives were constructed as I observed, participated, and recorded the unfolding experiences over a span of five years (part-time research). The previous two chapters position me within the research setting. In this chapter, I locate myself within academic literature, disciplines, paradigms, and conversations. This research crosses disciplinary boundaries and may come under the aegis of multiple established qualitative research traditions all of which contain their own variations. It is beyond the scope of this research to cover or do justice to all these possibilities.

3.1. Pragmatic approach

I have no experience of life in a household whereby only the cook cooks, the gardener gardens, or the maid cleans. Likewise, I have never been subjected to academic precincts whereby only a statistician can use statistics, an observer has to be an ethnographer, telling stories is the sole domain of a narrative inquirer, or for that matter, any research with women by women is feminist research. I use whatever reasonable methods are available for attaining the research objectives. This research traverses fields of study and paradigms that are not methodology specific and/or are inter/multi/trans-disciplinary in their own rights such as gerontology (Schwarz, 2012), collaborative research (Israel et al., 2003; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003), critical theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002), narrative inquiry (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008; Chase, 2008; Clandinin, 2013; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012), case study and housing studies.

Qualitative scholars have used various metaphors defending and describing their deviance from traditional singular research methodologies: *bricoleur* being a Jill (Jack) of all trades (Lévi-Strauss, 1966); quilt maker, jazz improviser or montage filmmaker (Denzin & Lincoln,

2003); magpie who takes what attracts him/her (Carter, 2014); and 'rooting' and 'shifting' in different spheres as the need arises (Pryse, 2000). Laurel Richardson depicts the complexity of the various genres and disciplinary boundaries as a 'pleated text' (Richardson, 1997).

Kincheloe and colleagues point out that, with the complexity of social research today and the recognition of alternative knowledge claims that differ from hegemonic post/positivism, the use of more than one methodology is well suited to not only interdisciplinary, but also multidisciplinary research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011).

Conducting research in the chaotic spaces of lived reality requires a flexibility of thought, action, and methods, with a focus on the objectives of the research and the research relationships rather than the processes. Loyalty to the phenomenon under study in this environment is important (Emerson, 2004). The multiple realities and meanings inherent in constructivism; the collaborative, community focus of participatory paradigms; and real-world pluralistic pragmatism match a flexible research approach. A fluid, pragmatic way of making meaning from the lived experiences of researcher and participants is suited to my research approach as I embrace and represent the complexities of the research project, the multiple roles and relationships, while valuing all perspectives.

I prefer to use the metaphor of weaver for how I manage the complexities of this research. Weaving has long been a metaphor for storytelling e.g. 'spinning a yarn'. Weaving is a process whereby various threads such as ways of thinking, seeing, doing, experiencing, and acting are intertwined, braided or knotted. Some of the threads that contribute to this research have already been identified e.g. relationships, roles, audiences, motivations, research orientation. The various strategies I expand on in this chapter are also threads, as are the lived experiences of the women in this research.

There are a number of key approaches I familiarised myself with to help make meaning from the research experience. This housing model is a bounded case (case study). The houses are social environments and I conducted a naturalistic inquiry into the lived experience of those involved in this living arrangement (ethnography). My involvement in the research and the setting foregrounded issues of personal and power relations (autoethnography/critical theory). The intention of my inquiry is to provide others with the information they need to assess the value of this model within their own interests (evaluation). I utilise narratives throughout to accomplish this (narrative inquiry).

Blending these strategies is a natural pragmatic methodological decision that suits the task at hand, and is not without precedent. Case study theorists such as Robert Stake and Robert Yin are also significant contributors to the field of evaluation (Alkin, 2013). Kushner (2009) discerns that case study and program evaluation developed together, with scholars contributing to both fields. Stake asserts that all evaluation studies are case studies, although case studies per se are not necessarily evaluations. Advocating the use of descriptive narratives in case representation, Stake (1995) mirrors principles of narrative inquirers such as, meaning drawn from experiences, situated within context, socially constructed knowledge, and researcher as narrator (Chase, 2008; Clandinin, 2006; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Ethnography and narrative inquiry are melded together in Richardson's CAP (Creative Analytical Process) ethnography. When viewed from the perspective of the research objectives, the strategies I use are interconnected. Thus this research provides an example of blending strategies and collapsing boundaries. Providing such working examples of different ways of producing knowledge contributes to qualitative methodological conversations.

I discuss the strategies I adopt further, locating my particular research within the well-matched traditions of case study, narrative inquiry, and a collaborative research approach. These three strategies cover research orientation, research focus, and data production. The way I utilise these strategies are attuned with constructivist and critical underpinnings. I also briefly attend to the other underlying evaluative and ethnographic influences.

3.2. Case study

The documentary that I reference in the journal entry below, like my research, is a specific case that uses inclusive methodologies to represent lived experiences in order to educate, enlighten and inform with the intention of enhancing our society.

I watch a short documentary today <http://features.nzherald.co.nz/under-the-bridge/>. A group of journalists/photographers spend a year at a high school. The producer wanted to communicate homelessness, child poverty and educational achievement in low decile schools, in an accessible way. The mass of footage (data) over that year was cut down to 30 minutes. What was presented was carefully thought out. *"What we wanted the project to hopefully achieve is to give us insight into what it is like within a school, in a community like Papakura, so that people that aren't in the community actually get insight or empathy. If we don't have empathy within our society, then we aren't going to get positive changes in places where they need it"*. (Johnston, Scott, Craig, & Reed, 2017) (08/02/2017).

A case is a bounded unit; there are, however, differing perspectives on defining a case study and how it could be used (Ragin & Becker, 1992). In discussing some of these differences, I clarify my overall approach, what I attend to and why.

Three types of case study are proposed by Stake (2003): intrinsic, instrumental and collective, depending on the purpose. The latter two use a case study as an instrument to support another research objective, such as exploring a theory or a phenomenon, with a collective case study using multiple cases for this purpose. In these two case study designs the case is secondary to a greater understanding of an extrinsic interest (Stake, 2003). Intrinsic case study focuses on the specificity of the case itself and best describes the in-depth study of this housing project, which is aimed at enhancing an understanding of the particulars of this case. My research aims are to provide an understanding of this housing model.

The primary intrinsic focus does not preclude this in-depth case study being used in other research as an exemplar to further another theory or issue. In fact, a valuable contribution of such a case study, is that it provides insights of use to further research. It is through such real-life exemplars within the context of discovery that knowledge and disciplines are advanced (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Kuhn, 1962; Schwarz, 2012). There are numerous possible lines of inquiry for further research that were uncovered in this unique case. It is well beyond the scope of this study to follow through with every possible interesting feature in detail; instead they are exposed for others to expand on. While case studies are a rich source of further research ideas, the primary value of this in-depth case study lies more with the knowledge gained from a deeper, context-specific understanding than from the propensity to generate theory or concepts (Flyvbjerg, 2006). To privilege theory not only reinforces an epistemology that objective knowledge devoid of context is more scholarly than other forms of knowledge production, it is also incongruent with my research approach and aims.

There is a difference between the case study approaches and epistemologies of Robert Stake and Robert Yin. Yin, with a background in experimental psychology describes case study in terms of experimental design (Yin, 1989) and argues for comparison and generalisability in case study, not only as a source of external validity, but also as a contribution to general knowledge, “...*empirical research derives greater benefits when the lessons from individual studies can be compared and contrasted, producing a cumulative knowledge base*” (Yin, 2015, p. 315). Stake (2010), however, with a background in education and programme evaluation advocates an in-depth understanding of the particular:

“By emphasising a particular experience, dialogue, context, and multiple realities, a researcher can lessen the chance of simplistic understanding. ... Emphasis on comparison may give us what we want most to know, [causes and effects, how things work] caring little to know about the complexity.” (p.28).

Stake’s approach aligns more with my ethics of care and methodology. The following quote links my constructivist worldview, use of detailed narratives and privileging lived experiences with Stake’s approach to case study:

“...a constructivist view encourages providing readers with good raw material for their own generalizing. The emphasis is on the description of things that readers ordinarily pay attention to, particularly places, events, and people, not only commonplace description but “thick description,” the interpretation of the people most knowledgeable about the case. Constructivism helps a case study researcher justify lots of narrative description in the final report” (Stake 1995, p.102).

Stake encourages the use of narrative ‘thick’ description to enable others to construct their own meanings. Providing vicarious experiences through narratives, *“so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves”* (Stake, 1995, p. 85) enables a deeper understanding of a case. It is through these naturalistic generalisations that tacit knowledge is generated. Tacit knowledge is concerned with understanding and knowing through experience, as opposed to propositional knowledge which is concerned with explanation and reason (Stake, 1978). Flyvbjerg (2001; 2006) supports Stake's approach as he argues that context-specific, real-life examples that facilitate experiential understandings are conducive to a higher learning process and expertise than context-free, theory-laden knowledge. In line with my flexible approach, Stake (2003; 1995) proposes no structure for writing up a case, leaving it up to the researcher to discover what works best for their particular circumstances.

Helen Simons (2009) constructed a definition that takes into account the commonalities between the different case study approaches, such as real-life context, depth of understanding, detachment from specific methods and research intent:

“Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a ‘real life’ context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action.” (Simons, 2009, p.21)

This case study is an exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of this particular housing arrangement in a real-life context. It is research-based and inclusive of different methods. The primary purpose is to generate an in-depth understanding of this

housing model to generate knowledge that may inform policy development, professional practice, and any person or group who has an interest in this housing model.

3.3. Narrative inquiry

Narratives are a means of producing the accounts and descriptions that facilitate an in-depth understanding of this case. They provide a way of looking deeper into the various layers, finding meaning within, and enabling insights into a social context (Carless & Douglas, 2017; Chase, 2008). There is a call for social scientific writing to be engaging, accessible and less boring (Gilgun, 2005; Lather, 1996; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Sword, 2009; Tedlock, 2005; Wolcott, 2009). Narratives not only enable an engaging style of writing, but quality narrative accounts are seen as essential to qualitative inquiry:

“Qualitative researchers need to be storytellers... To be able to tell (which, in academia, essentially means to be able to write) a story well is crucial to the enterprise. When we cannot engage others to read our stories – our completed and complete accounts – then our efforts at descriptive research are for naught” (Wolcott, 1994, p.17)

Narrative inquiry is more than telling a good story or writing well. Writing as *a method of inquiry and discovery* is a subjective practice, partial, contingent and dynamic (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). It links with a collaborative/relational research approach and understanding lived experiences:

“Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience. It is nothing more and nothing less. Narrative inquiry is situated in relationships and in community, and it attends to notions of expertise and knowing in relational and participatory ways” (Clandinin, 2013, p.13)

Richardson formulated CAP (creative analytical process) criteria to produce rigour into a practice that differed from conventional social scientific writing while still needing to reflect a valid way of knowing and representation (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). The intention in formulating the CAP criteria was to demonstrate the use of both a scientific lens and a creative lens to view the social world. Using these criteria (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) in the context of this particular research, the following standards would pertain:

1. **Substantive contribution:** Does this research contribute to our knowledge of shared accommodation for older women and stimulate new ideas and understandings on sharing space in such a living environment? Is there enough relevant information in the narratives to establish plausibility?

2. **Aesthetic merit:** Is it easy to read and accessible to multiple audiences? Do the narratives “*invite people in and open spaces for thinking about the social*” (p. 962) in ways we may not have previously thought about? Do they provide a space for other interpretations?
3. **Reflexivity:** Have I made my position known so that the reader is aware of the lens I use? Do I represent the participants ethically? Is my subjectivity apparent as an influence both on and of the research and writing?
4. **Impact:** Does this research, the way it is written have an emotional or intellectual effect on the reader, not only in regards to the content but also the presentation.

Although Richardson (2005) states that the standards within these criteria are high and difficult to attain, I hold them up as criteria that are consistent with my orientation and values. Each of these criteria can be seen woven through this dissertation. They are criteria of which the reader can assess this work. These criteria also provide a rigorous framework for this thesis legitimising a relational approach that is accessible and relevant to multiple audiences. For example, my use of my own journal enables highly pertinent grey literature to speak into the thesis as it spoke to those of us involved in this study:

On the radio this afternoon I listened to another example of the housing situation. This one highlights the monetary cost to the taxpayer: “Janie Davis has been living in a Whangarei motel for six months because she can't find anywhere else to live. Paid for by Work and Income, the bill is now nearing \$40,000. Ms. Davis is just one example of a housing crisis that is spreading out of Auckland - she is a high priority on the Housing New Zealand (HNZ) waitlist, and said she has applied for more private rentals than she can count. But because neither she nor HNZ have been successful, Work and Income has been forced to pay \$1610 a week for her family to live at the Kamo Motel for the past six months... Eight of the 12 rooms at the Kamo Motel are occupied by people waiting for a state home. Their rent, around \$800 per room, was paid for by the government...” (RNZ, Checkpoint, 10/02/2017)

These journal reflections document the vivid social background that demonstrate the significance and relevance of this research. By cutting these in as insets that disrupt the prose, I aim for an aesthetic that recreates my own experience of being engaged in scholarly research that delivered a series of emotional charges. The writing style in this paper facilitates the easy to read, narrative accounts and descriptions that are required for naturalistic generalisations as well as providing accessibility for non-academic audiences. I favour the terms ‘case study’ and ‘narrative inquiry’ as a means of explaining what I did and how I am doing this. There are also evaluative and ethnographic influences that are briefly discussed below.

3.4. Ethnographic and evaluative influences

Using ethnographic perspectives and strategies, such as participant observation over a long period of time allows a window into this household, and are a means by which I can capture the deeper layers of this case. The works of ethnographic scholars, e.g. Becker (1998), Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (2011), Whyte (1981), Humphrey (1975) and Wolcott (1994) were consulted at various stages of this research for guidance in working in the field, and hence ethnography has influenced my approach and methods. There is also support for a subjective and collaborative approach within the works of Tedlock (2005) on public ethnography as she advocates for sharing of knowledge with other audiences. Autoethnographic threads are present as my journey, reflections, experience, and subjectivities are interwoven throughout this thesis.

My collaborative approach weaves with MacDonald and Walker's (1975) democratic evaluation principles, whereby the focus of research is the provision of information to the community, and it is the range of audiences the evaluation serves that is the measure of success. While democratic evaluation is justified by "the right to know" (MacDonald & Walker, 1975), my case study setting is a home, and the rights of those living there delimits the public right to know.

The 10th State of the Nation report came out today (02 February 2017). Auckland's housing situation is worsening. House prices and rents continue to increase at a faster rate than incomes. There is an estimated shortfall of 18,000 new builds in Auckland over the past five years. Alan Johnson a Social Policy Analyst reported "*an alarming lack of safe, affordable housing that has resulted in a level of homelessness not seen in New Zealand in the lifetime of most Kiwis.*" (Johnson, 2017. p.1).

3.5. Methods of inquiry

In my professional practice outside this project, as a front line health professional, I am required to write detailed notes after interactions with clients. I maintained this discipline of writing notes and keeping records, especially in the first two years. I started recording from the beginning (May 2013), keeping a journal of activities, thoughts, and reflections and writing field notes. I also generated reports, house meeting minutes, conducted one on one interviews and group discussions.

As I wrote and rewrote, I was also theorising, interpreting and analysing (Emerson et al., 2011; Kushner, 2017; Merriam, 2009; Wolcott, 1994) choosing what to write, how to represent the

situation, what to highlight, to include or to exclude. I was engaged in the process of making meaning as I collected data.

Documentation

I kept a record of my activities and practices and summarised these in a monthly report that I presented at the Trustees meeting from June 2013 to November 2014. Records and reports provide a record of the development of this shared housing approach. I have my notes and information relevant to the RM role, such as records of inquiries. The house meeting minutes and Trustee meeting minutes are another source of data.

I receive a phone call from a participant. During our conversations, the topic changes to the research. I had given her a copy last week of what I had written so far in this section and she is questioning some of it. We discuss some other issues that I note for future reference. (04/02/17).

Participant observation

Participant observation was my main method of data collection. I considered my position is being 'participant as observer', whereby the RM role took precedence over my observer/researcher role (Merriam, 2009) and was the primary reason for my presence in the field. My RM role provided insider access and was also part of the case under study.

My field notes were written as soon as possible after the experience, mostly the same day. If there was a delay in writing these up, I noted this and only recorded what I was certain of. I sometimes recorded my observations on a Dictaphone soon after leaving the field. I spent time rewriting the initial field notes, converting them into a comprehensive narrative, examples of which can be found throughout this dissertation.

Journals

Throughout this research I kept notes, reflections and information in a variety of formats. Initially I sent weekly journal reports to my supervisors. I used an electronic journal, emailing notes to myself, and for two years (2014 and 2015) I kept a written daily journal. These journal entries include information for the RM role, reflections, and thoughts on what I had read as well as research data.

Interviews

I thought it was prudent to conduct a formal interview with the participants when most had been residing in the houses for 18 – 24 months. I chose to use an open-interview technique, relinquishing control to the interviewee, and stepping in with questions if and when I felt it would help or I needed clarification. The resulting narratives reflect not a line of questioning,

but what the individuals thought was important at the time. It is likely that they had talked amongst themselves and had thought about what they were going to say beforehand. The interviews were all different, with varying degrees of input and prompting from me. My interview procedure as demonstrated below, is consistent with a relational approach to research as opposed to a hierarchical one.

My interview invitation took the form of an email to everyone:

I miss the earlier times when I met regularly with everyone, as there doesn't seem to be a reason to now that everyone has settled in. In saying that, I would like to meet with everyone on an individual basis for two main purposes, one to catch up and see how things are going for you, and at the same time get more data for the research. (Email, February 2016)

The interviews took place in various settings; at a park, café, bar, deck, their bedroom, the guest lounge, wherever they chose. I made the following note after the first interview:

This was the first interview I've done this year... I didn't have a plan of what I wanted to find out, to me, just spending that time with people, i.e. the Relationship Managers role in nurturing the relationships was the actual main focus... Hopefully what comes out is what is important to the interviewee. I've kept everyone informed on the progress of my research, and told them that I'm going to collate all the information I have and try to make sense of afterwards, for now, I'm still collecting data, not looking for anything specific. (Notes on first interview 18/03/16.)

I became more purposeful in the later interviews as I received feedback from supervision and gained more experience and confidence:

I told her that what I was interested in was "basically how did you come to be here?" "I'm here to tell your story" and explained we will edit it, and she can withdraw it at any time. "So what brought you to Tonar St?" (Field notes 20/05/16)

3.6. The participants

Demographics

The exact demographics of the participants will not be disclosed to enhance confidentiality for such a small group. They are all Caucasian women, over 65 and able to live independently. The age at coming into the houses ranged from mid-60's to mid-80's, with the majority being in their 70's and born in New Zealand. All tenants have connections to the North Shore area, but none had lived in the immediate neighbourhood. The participants had the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms.

Recruitment

BCHT's expectation when we began recruiting in 2013 was that we would be inundated with people wanting affordable quality accommodation, and the biggest problem would be how to be fair and enable access to those who were in the greatest need. The first priority was to offer the accommodation to those in the local area ensuring that people had the opportunity to stay in their own communities. Referrals were invited through the community organisations as we networked with them and information was posted on notice boards in the area. There were no inquiries from women currently living in the local neighbourhood. Our details were included in the Seniorline (District Health Board) list of rental accommodation for older people on their website and hard copies distributed through agencies such as Age Concern. We placed an advert in the local newspaper. The greatest number of inquiries came from an article on the project published in the local newspaper. For the second house, we went further afield and posted information throughout the North Shore, on community noticeboard, and in doctor's surgeries. BCHT also had registered as a social housing provider by then, and hence had referrals from the newly formed government agency (Ministry of Social Development) social housing register. We also advertised online through Trademe property (similar to eBay).

As RM, I fielded all inquiries, explained the concept on the phone and sent further information. We received over 100 inquiries from the first newspaper article up to the opening of the second house. After the initial discussions, those who fitted the criteria (or thought they did) were invited to view the place. An application pack was provided at the time of viewing. Anybody had the right to submit an application. BCHT recruited the initial tenants, and the resident tenants then had a say in whom they would like to join their household when a vacancy arose. Publicity for the first house specifically stated women only and gender was not stipulated for the second house initially.

It was originally hoped that prospective tenants could meet each other beforehand. There were not enough suitable inquiries for this to happen for Sunrise House, the first house. By the time the second house was ready we had a list of interested people. Four weeks before the second house opened, I met with three women and two men. We were joined by three current tenants who shared their experience. The women present said they would not like to share a house with a man. Two of these women became tenants.

Once an application form was received, applicants were assessed by two people, one being a gerontology nurse, the other either the RM or the Property Manager. I met with all applicants before this assessment as I showed them through the house. The assessment and subsequent

ratings as to the need and suitability to live in community were filled out independently by each assessor and then compared and discussed. I sent a short profile to BCHT's Chairperson, Property Manager and Development Manager for approval to accept the application.

All those in the initial recruitment who filled the criteria and completed the application process were accepted. No application was rejected by BCHT. While there were many who expressed an interest, viewed the houses, and received an application form, there were few who actually followed up and submitted an application. In two cases, partially completed applications were withdrawn by the applicants when they themselves decided the accommodation was not suitable for them.

The research project was discussed with the participants usually at the time they were shown through the house. They were informed that they were under no obligation to participate and it was not a condition of their acceptance. The informed consent form was presented after they had moved in. They were aware of their rights to withdraw and some exercised this right. I could not anticipate all situations and dealt with developments as they occurred, in line with my RM and Trustee responsibilities of ensuring the safety, rights, and autonomy of all residents. That responsibility aligned with my researcher obligations to ensure participant safety.

Vacancies

Mid-February 2015, there was a vacancy in one of the houses. By this time I had a list of people who were interested. Two of these followed up after viewing the house. They met with other tenants when they came to view the house and an informal meeting with everyone was held. The current tenants' choice was considered as part of the selection process and their choice was upheld. The other person withdrew her application before we informed her of the outcome. A similar procedure occurred when another vacancy came up. I contacted those on the waiting list, and informed my networks. We did not formally advertise. The vacancy was filled by someone all tenants agreed on.

Not only did the ongoing housing narrative surface through the news, I often received phone calls from various people:

I receive a phone call from someone interested in the housing model. We meet at the local café. A friend of hers found our advert for flatmates that she had cut out of the paper in 2014, and passed this on to her. She is renting and has enough money to buy a house with others. Not enough for a house of her own. She likes the concept of sharing and wanted to know more about this model, how it was working, how it got started, how it could work for her. (17/02/2017). I

suggested she look at Tauranga, as a few years ago I had heard about a group of people trying to set up something similar there. Listening to the radio this morning http://www.radionz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=201833774 Speculators are buying up properties and Aucklanders are moving to Tauranga, squeezing the locals out of the market. Rents are high and rental properties are scarce. (19/02/2017).

My research project is pertinent to the current challenges faced by our society.

3.7. Making meaning from the data.

As I was collecting the data, making notes, rewriting, and progressing through the research, I became aware of issues and themes. I also took into consideration common assumptions from a variety of people when they commented on this housing model e.g. use of common areas, characteristics of residents. My intention is to “*invite people in and open spaces for thinking about the social*” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p.962), by challenging some of these informal assumptions. These themes are explored in further detail, providing insights into the lived experience of those participating in this shared space living.

Wolcott (1994) uses the terms ‘description’, ‘analysis’ and ‘interpretation’ as ways of organising and transforming data into a more meaningful form. Balancing the relevance of these individual activities to the research project is a challenge for all social researchers (Becker, 1998). As outlined previously, description is a thread relating to both case study and narrative inquiry. It is a means by which to represent the lived experience of the participants and make meaning from these experiences. I construct my descriptive narratives with some degree of interpretation and analysis (Becker, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Wolcott, 1994) much of which happens intuitively (Stake, 2010).

Making meaning in this context is less about sitting at a desk analysing text or sorting into categories and more related to a slow process of gradual intuitive understanding (Cetina, 2014). Theorising occurs in the social context. Meanings and interpretations in this research are co-created and negotiated, which is consistent with a constructivist worldview, and my collaborative approach. My continued presence in the field allows time for the participants to reflect. Informal discussions with peers, family, and others as well as ongoing dialogue with me as RM and researcher support this reflective process. It is through this intersubjectivity that the legitimacy of the data is to be determined.

3.8. Ethics and trustworthiness

Ethical consideration in terms of participants, researcher, and research is needed when boundaries such as researcher/participant are blurred (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). How to ethically conduct research in such a setting is a central thread in this research and a major contribution of this thesis. Ethics is steadfastly entwined with my research approach, as elaborated throughout my thesis and demonstrated within the narratives. My previous chapters demonstrate a relational practice with inherent ethical sensibilities, whereby confidentiality and trust are crucial. I have previously argued that ethical conduct is not relegated to a single informed consent from a committee. The ethics of researcher, e.g. my motivations, are also intrinsic to how I situate myself in this research. This tightrope I traverse is challenging:

I receive a phone call from a participant. I included my RM role description when I gave her a draft of a chapter to look through. I was aware that the document could be misunderstood outside of the business context it was written. I chose to be transparent and include it. I was also aware that she would possibly challenge me on this as she is not happy with the handling of some issues and has previously questioned my role. She did. We had a long conversation. (13/02/2017).

The ethics of the research requires further consideration. How do we trust the quality or 'truth' of this research? What constitutes good research? This has been a topic of much academic debate over the years as qualitative research moves from defending its position in terms of experimental framework, to grounding research procedures and quality within the various paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). I do not claim that what I present is objective knowledge or an objective truth; it is subjective, or more precisely intersubjective.

Subjective validity means that truth is relative to human nature and perhaps even to particular humans. What is valid for one person may not be valid for another. Likewise, the subjective utility of something is based on personal judgment and personal desires. Each person is the best judge of events for himself [sic]. (House, 2010, p.56)

There is an agreement as to what is plausible under the circumstances with the participants and the audience. The narratives are submitted to the tenants to read and approve. With control over their information, it is more likely that the participants are represented, and their lived experiences shared accurately. It is through the transparency of this research that trustworthiness can be established.

House (2010) suggests that one needs to look for truth, beauty (coherence) and justice when assessing the validity of qualitative research. In my case, I argue that intersubjective

agreement (truth), narrative description (coherence) and my accountability to the participants (justice) are indicators of plausibility and trustworthiness.

Another news story that tugged on my heart. This one is from Rotorua. Young mothers and their children living in appalling conditions, paying very high rents to do this. They have nowhere else to go. (Hall, One News, 22 February, 2017). <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/pregnant-tenant-living-in-squalid-over-priced-rotorua-flat-fed-up-lazy-landlords>

Headlines this morning on the radio and online newspaper – The government has blown the emergency housing budget. They underestimated the amount of homelessness. A service provider and the Prime Minister talk about the social problems these families have that result in them being homeless. "... very complex cases were being flushed out, including people who have been blacklisted in the private sector, who have often been evicted from the state sector and have criminal records including drug offending and family violence."

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/politics/news/article.cfm?c_id=280&objectid=11808199 In the Radio NZ interview, he [the Prime Minister] denies a housing crisis being a significant factor for people living in motels "it's a crisis for those families of which housing is a part" (21:00 minutes) <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/morningreport/audio/201834686/pm-not-worried-about-housing-grant-blowout-not-a-sign-of-housing-crisis> .

The leader of the opposition was quick to refute the discourse of homelessness being the result of socially deviant behaviour, "the truth is that a lot of the families needing emergency accommodation aren't families who are other users of social services, they are actually working families. They are people who have been priced out of the rental market and there is no affordable or rental properties around and they are desperate"

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/morningreport/audio/201834696/labour-slams-emergency-housing-budget-blowout> (1:15 minutes).

No mention today of older people, it is less convincing that our elders are socially deviant, violent, rent defaulting addicts, or currently working hard. Older people are just another group vying for recognition of their unique situation amongst the growing voices of others competing for the same resources, or should I say necessities of life. (Journal, 27/2/17)

The news about the housing situation is continuous and not only attests the value of this research project, but also illustrates the information the participants are receiving.

In the previous chapters, I have discussed at length how I conducted my research from a theoretical perspective. The following chapter exemplifies the practice in real life. The processes and concerns of the ethics committee are discussed and elucidated in more detail to provide an example of relational research behaviour and practices that can further the deliberations on ethics in collaborative field research.

Chapter 4. Roles, responsibilities, relationships, and practice

4.1. Negotiations with the ethics committee

How to ethically conduct research in such a setting is an important issue surrounding this research. An application to the University of Auckland, Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) was made early, and the process of responses and meetings took ten months. The UAHPEC's main concerns were on the dual roles of RM and researcher. Conflicts of interest, the position of authority, personal gain from conducting the research, coercion, power imbalances, and involuntary participation were issues that the UAHPEC required me to address. I was also asked if I would stand down from my roles as Trustee and RM or conduct the research in another setting.

I met with the ethics advisor and left this meeting believing that the committee either did not share my understanding of the ethical principles and practices embedded in the RM's duty of care, or they did not think that I would adhere to these guidelines outlined in my initial application. I faced a dilemma. To comply with their directives, I would have to change my approach, be an outsider, only a researcher and relinquish the RM role. I was not prepared to do this for three main reasons. Firstly, I did not believe that it was in the best interests of the tenants for me to relinquish these roles. Secondly, the new research design would compromise the intention and the values I hold in regards to relational, collaborative research by positioning me as an unknown, unrelated, 'objective', academic researcher. Thirdly any knowledge gained through my ongoing involvement and participation in the project would be lost.

My responses to UAHPEC were made before the first house was fully occupied as ethics approval is required before data collection; so, although the following is written as though I was subscribing to a practice, I was pre-empting what could occur. I informed the UAHPEC that:

My research interest and my professional interest are proscribed by the tenants and subordinate to their interests. I have to negotiate my way in the house with the residents, and everything I do as RM and as researcher is subject to their continuing approval. All [practices] are governed by their well-being and autonomous control of their environment, and this includes the Ph.D. and the reason for doing it. If, in the end, my interests and theirs appear to diverge I will have to reassess the basis of the doctorate. That, however, is unlikely as there is no situation whereby I would have to choose between the rights and well-being of the residents and the knowledge

gained for the research.... I have no authority in the house and I am in no position to coerce the tenants. I only enter the house with their permission. I am bound by the tenancy act, by the oversight of the Trustees and by the ethics of community collaborative research principles (as mentioned previously). The selection process for tenants includes input from other Trustees as well as a geriatric nurse, and it has been made clear that their tenancy is not conditional on participation in the research. I have, however, mentioned that as this is a new model, we will be evaluating this but only with their ongoing approval. The tenants will be writing the house rules and I and my research will be subject to those rules. The Ph.D. will only proceed as far as the women want it to. If they decide they do not want to participate, we will, again, need to reassess the Ph.D. (Memo to UAHPEC, 20 March 2014)

Objectivity was also addressed as this was another concern of the UAHPC, and I responded in the following way:

This research falls under the rubrics of participant observation, case study, and narrative inquiry. In these methodological approaches 'objectivity' is subordinate to the recognition that the researcher's subjectivity is inescapable, but needs to be disciplined procedurally. The focus is on the respondent's subjectivity and the methodological aim is to be aware of but to suppress the researcher's subjectivity. Using techniques of reflexivity (such as submitting my accounts to the critical judgment of the house tenants; making the research process transparent and discussed; being open about my values) it is possible to achieve intersubjectivity – i.e. agreement on what is plausible and reasonable to all. Where consensus cannot be reached the researcher must yield. Whether or not objectivity is achievable, more important to participant observation of this kind is impartiality and respect, an acceptance that the research role is to properly represent the subjectivities of, in this case, the tenants. Indeed, there is a risk that, in this particular context, if the researcher were to try to assert something that was 'objectively true' this might be equivalent to wielding authority (of interpretation) over the tenants. Settling for intersubjectivity allows the tenants leverage over whatever interpretations I may have. (Memo to UAHPEC, 20 March 2014)

Acknowledging that the research process is as sensitive as the UAHPEC identified, the ethical safeguards/practices within this setting were also highlighted:

[T]he research process is saturated with ethical safeguards and sensibilities. I am immersed in cultures that protect the rights and well-being of those I serve. In my professional practice, I work in the community with older adults alongside other health professionals and have done for many years. I have formal training in the use of informed consent, client rights, privacy and confidentiality, and regularly administer Informed consent forms to my clients for signing. The Housing Trust also has robust policies and processes in place, such as the opening sentence of their code of proper practice - *"As a group and individually, the Trustees are committed to the adoption of ethical conduct in all areas of their responsibilities and authority"*. Community Housing Aotearoa, the Trust's governing body, also has a code of best practice which includes Tenants' Rights (clause 6.1.1 – *"All the organisation's policies and procedures demonstrate a clear commitment to the rights of tenants"*, P.94), and Standard 6.2 *"Tenant Involvement:*

Tenants contribute to the decision making of the organisation" (p.96). I am associated with many networks in the community including Age Concern, all of which uphold the rights of vulnerable groups of people. My supervisors are also experienced in this area with Saville Kushner having numerous international publications related to research ethics and Kathy Peri being a seasoned practitioner of ethical research with older adults. (Memo to UAHPEC, 20 March 2014)

Initial ethics application was submitted to the University of Auckland, Human Participation Ethics Committee in August 2013, approval was obtained 15 May 2014, reference number 010367 for three years. Approval for an extra three years was granted on 29 May 2017.

In these responses to the UAHPEC, I was setting rules and standards for myself as a researcher that impacted on my RM roles. Later when leadership, decisiveness, and direction could have been of benefit to the households, adhering to the researcher ethics of collaboration and equality that I carefully detailed in my ethics application, inhibited me from taking a position of authority. Thus in the negotiation of ethical approval, the researcher's role potentially constrained the RM role.

My relationship with the participants in this research was obviously contentious. While I saw the relational research orientation within a collaborative research framework as an ethical protective factor (Israel, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2005a; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) the UAHPEC considered this relationship to be a risk factor. The action and complexity of ethical relations in fieldwork are often detached from the clinical, biomedical paradigms that can underpin University Human Ethics Committees (Christians, 2007; Murphy & Dingwall, 2007). There is a call for a change in the ethics frameworks adopted by ethics committees to take into account participatory styles of research in the social sciences (Boser, 2007; Denzin & Giardina, 2007; Goodyear-Smith, Jackson, & Greenhalgh, 2015; Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011). Protocols requiring precise pre-definitions of methods and roles are not suited to emergent collaborative research approaches (Goodyear-Smith et al., 2015). Ethical discussions occurred before I even entered the field, and were based on what might happen.

What is needed is a greater understanding of the research in practice. What is the nature of the relationship both camps (i.e. relational researcher and the UAHPEC) are so zealous about? This relationship is explored in this chapter that is also a representation of the earlier experiences of field research. I include field notes and journal entries illustrating the complexities and interdependence of the roles, while also providing the reader access to my lived experience as a participant in this housing model and a real-life exemplar of ethics as

played out in the field of contextual relational research. These experiences add support to the petitions for collaborative relational researchers to be ethically accountable to those they research more than to the institutions that are removed from the research practice (Denzin & Giardina, 2007).

4.2. Negotiating my roles

The notes below were written during an atypical period when tensions in the households were escalating. I want to stress that the contents of these notes are not examples of the everyday culture in the households and that these tensions have long since abated. I share these experiences as they provide an illustration of the roles and relationships and how they are negotiated:

Another demanding full day at work [my paid employment]. Walking out of the building, my thoughts are already on the evening ahead as the door shuts behind me. The meeting two months ago was cancelled, so it's been nearly four months since we got together. I've prepared well for this one. I want to introduce an exercise that will build relationships and enable people to appreciate their differences. I had previously arranged that we discuss what the first year in the house has been like. This was intended primarily for the research (Ph.D.), although of interest as Relationship Manager (RM). I haven't specifically generated much information for the research. The large amount of data I already have has been the result of recording what has been happening. I wonder if I will achieve what I have planned tonight. What could go wrong? Will the discussions flow naturally? Will I be able to record my observations at the time (Ph.D.), without hindering the process? Halfway through the hour-long bus journey home, I receive a text cancelling the meeting as someone isn't well. I do not take it for granted anymore that all tenants know what is going on just because one or two are aware. At this time they aren't communicating well. I take the initiative, ask who needs to be contacted, and then send a text informing two tenants. The text I receive also includes an update of some tension within the household that the writer had informed me of two days previously. This is regarding another tenant isolating herself again, apparently ignoring everyone. Returning home there is a message on my landline. It is from this tenant [the isolated one]. She isn't coming to the meeting and wants to talk to me. I sit down for 30 minutes to chill out before ringing her back. All I can spare the next day is forty-five minutes in the morning. That won't be long enough for her she said. The phone call lasts nearly 2 hours.

I hesitate, questioning myself; there is no correct thing to do here. What do I record of what is said, if anything? During the phone call, I jot down some notes on whatever spare paper I have on hand; it's something I automatically do now. I need to understand the situation and I may need to remember what was said. I write this reflective journal entry (Ph.D.) and also summarise some of the main points I could remember for my future reference (RM). Do I intend to include what was said in my research? No, I don't. As a researcher, all records could be data. What do I do then with information I don't think should be shared? Do I therefore not record it? That could be a loss. The information I receive is useful in my position of RM. I can't remember everything that is said, I have been challenged by tenants for not remembering or recording something, and accurate notes can be reviewed if needed. To manage this tension I have given myself permission to record whatever I see fit; what I use directly for the research, however, will be censored to maintain the privacy, dignity, and respect for the individual tenants. In line with my methodology, it also should be approved by those I'm writing about. Our dialogue doesn't need to be made public; in fact, it would be unethical to do this. My priority is to deal with the situation, to act as RM, not as researcher. In practice though, the very act of writing this places it in the researcher realm. (30 October 2015)

The obvious tensions between the roles in the note above illustrate how I work through these pressures in the field. My roles as a participant and a researcher are intertwined. Even when I am fully engaged in my RM role the researcher role is not only present, it has the potential to influence my practice and vice versa. Throughout the research project I was forced to thoughtfully consider the implications of my actions, such as recording, as I simultaneously developed and enacted my roles in this setting. The following narrative provides more insights into how the roles are managed and implemented in the field.

A request came. One I could imagine most researchers would dread receiving. A participant asked for her interview information to be returned to her and not shared with anyone else. In my researcher role, I know exactly what to do. I do what she asks without question. It is her data. Of course, I am disappointed, it is valuable data. The interview and transcription had already taken quite a bit of my time. As a researcher, this disappointment is short-lived; I see all data as relevant, including this request. It is all part of the case. As a researcher, I carry on as normal recording what is happening, collecting data, whatever that may be. I don't know at this stage what will be useful. This focus on data collection is one strategy I use to reconcile my different roles. If I am only a researcher, this incident at the very least provides evidence of ethical research practice. I am much more than a passive observer, and through my role as

RM I am not only aware of the context of this request, I am part of it. This incident provides an opportunity to explore more fully my roles and relationships in this project.

The night before I receive the email request for the return of her data, I arrive home late after attending another of the many recent public talks on the housing situation in Auckland. I note a missed call from one of the houses. The landline rings. I'm not close to the phone, so I intentionally let it ring without answering. I recognise that this is the first time since I've been involved with the houses that I don't want to engage with any of the tenants. I write in my journal; *"I think I've hardened. I'm not trying to please them all now. That's good. My relationship with them is changing, and that's not such a bad thing."* (19 October 2015)

My field notes from when the first house was establishing attest to closer personal relationships. This was a period where I was constructing my roles in this environment, learning how this would work in practical terms. As the RM, I was intent on building relationships with the women. I was the person who was their first and main contact with BCHT. It was I to whom they disclosed initial information. I was privy to their personal stories. As researcher these stories are valuable data. As an RM, confidentiality is inherent in my professional practice. I was forming what I considered to be friendships. I wanted to protect the residents from any possible misunderstanding, harm or exploitation. The following notes highlight some of the complexities and interrelatedness of the differing roles at that time.

The next note is written when I was showing another person around for the last vacancy in Sunrise House:

I realise that I have another hat apart from researcher and RM, it's the one of friend. This may seem risky to some, but quite in line with participatory research and respectful, enduring relationships. These role priorities were tested today. Alice took the new person under her wing to talk to her about the house. I wanted to know how Wendy was doing after her operation (friend), at the same time I also wanted to listen to the conversations of Alice and the other person as this was data (researcher). I also wanted to ensure the prospective tenant received all the information and start establishing rapport with her (RM). I have to admit, I don't feel as though I had given her enough personal attention; the current tenants, though, are quite happy to talk to others and promote the house, and they are the experts now (I may, therefore, be relinquishing some of my RM role, but this is still good data e.g. to what extent are they taking on this responsibility and how). Whilst Alice was talking to this person, Wendy was talking to me, telling me about her week, so I concentrated on what she was saying and missed out on the other conversation, choosing friend over RM and researcher. I also took

Wendy out for a coffee afterwards, this of course took the time I had set aside for networking and delivering the flyers (RM/Trustee), but again choosing the role of friend first. Nonetheless, I was rewarded with some useful data [which I subsequently used in a presentation two years on]. Wendy said that when she went into hospital the others offered to drive her but she declined this offer as it was early morning, peak traffic, so she caught a taxi. Wendy said it felt like family when they saw her out the door to her taxi. When she came home from hospital, the door was again opened for her with someone welcoming her home; she said it felt like coming back to family. (July 23, 2014).

The following week, I spent the night in the soon to be occupied room. Note the use of the term 'fellow researcher'. I was not only trying to find a 'title' that indicated equal status, (as opposed to tenant or participant), but also an attempt at following the participatory research principles of equality and partnership:

Started off with three tenants (Polly, Mimi, and Alice) walking down to the cafe where I had arranged to meet with a group of people who were interested in the [other] house. I didn't expect them to be there although I had invited them. I felt supported. This would be something sisters or friends would do; they wanted to surprise me.

My time staying over was very social, felt like I was part of a group, I belonged. All of us got on well, sharing food, laughter, conversations, watching the netball together. They had arranged dinner, Mimi had cooked a ham. She had wanted to cook a ham, but as she is only cooking for herself, hadn't done it, but thought that she would as this was a special occasion. We all contributed to the vegetables and dessert. The dinner table was set up with place settings and wine glasses; everyone busied themselves in the kitchen and told me to relax, not to do anything.

I took my last four field notes to show the fellow researchers what type of things I make notes of. Read out one and left Alice to read the others. They seemed OK with this. I didn't edit it, just read it as I wrote it. I wanted to just relax, not think about research or RM role, just to be.

In the morning, I was greeted with a freshly brewed cup of coffee by Mimi, Polly offered me her bread to make toast and enjoy some of her homemade marmalade, and Alice offered me the fruit salad (from dessert last night) and yoghurt. Feeling really good about what I'm doing and privileged to be around such amazing women. (2 August 2014)

4.3. The complexity of relational research

I introduce terms like 'fellow researcher' and 'friend' as I try and make sense of these roles and relationships. *Another amazing morning with the fellow researchers (Notes, July 26, 2014).*

One of the ideals of community-based participatory research is equal partnership, whereby the community of interest (in this case, the women living in the houses) is involved in all aspects of the research process, e.g. planning, decision making, analysis, and dissemination (Israel et al., 1998). I saw this inclusive approach of researching *with* rather than *on* as my ideal and a framework to work towards. In reality, this thesis is my piece of work. I am the one responsible for the work that goes into this research project and the one who gets the Ph.D. on completion.

I looked for ways of equalising the relationship. When I was asked to present at an Age Concern Seminar on housing options, I invited the women to co-present with me. One accepted and we presented together. Her presentation was well received by the audience. I suggested to the women that maybe we could write a book together. To me, it was the epitome of equal partnership and participants' ownership of their information.

Being a novice researcher, I was not clear myself what I was doing at the beginning, so I was unable to clearly convey my methodology to the tenants. I read about collaborative research, case study, participant observation, evaluation, journaling, and narratives; the real understanding, however, came from actually being in the field. It was through putting the theoretical learnings into real-world practice that I learned what was working and what was not. The fellow researcher perspective does not always work so well in this context. The principles of participatory research are designed to guide community groups. To place the responsibility of researcher on the tenants is bordering on risky practice, even if they believe it is their choice. These blurred boundaries became apparent when it was time to publicise the next house. We (BCHT) approached the reporter who had already done the previous two articles in our local newspaper. A follow-up article would have been well received. I discussed this with the tenants, and my approach was to support their autonomy to contact the reporter themselves if they chose to. I acknowledge that there may have been an element of obligation in their 'free choice'. On the other hand, to not give them this choice would have denied them this opportunity. Could this be disempowering, and controlling? I do not believe they felt persuaded to do this. One said she did not want to and that was accepted by all. She agreed to an interview for a later radio program. A similar situation occurred when I was contacted by a reporter wanting to do an article on older people living in the community. Two

tenants who were available at the time arranged a time to meet with him. Some have been very clear that they want to promote BCHT in such ways. The following reflections highlight some of my inner tensions at the time as I confront my power relationships:

Standing back and allowing the women to tell their story, and take control of the situation with the reporter, is evidence of following the participatory principles. I could have been included and tried to keep some control, but that's disempowering for the women, although it could make me look good and keep me in the picture. By doing this, I've implicitly handed over the reins, demonstrating that this is their house and their lives. They are rising to this. They likely would have done this anyway but may have felt some loyalty or gratitude to me and not felt as free as they could have to pursue this. Is it me dictating the lines of responsibility/authority/involvement, or is it the women? If I did hold on to the role of gatekeeper and 'controlled' the meeting/relationship between the reporter and the women, would the outcome be different? I don't know. They are all very strong women. Mimi wrote to the local paper offering the household to be used as an example of using the new organic recycling pilot, and I only knew afterwards. How do I feel? There is a part of me that does feel left out, I feel I want to know everything, to have a say, but on the other hand, this is also not what I want. I know this isn't about me it's their home, and the less I do or become involved, the more the women can (and do) take ownership and responsibility. This is what it's about. **It's not as much about how I'm involved or involving myself, but more where I'm not involved. This is where real empowerment comes, not only for the tenants but myself** [emphasis in the field note]. This is a different way of thinking, and it will be helpful for me to keep this in mind when the voice from the past tells me that I need to be in control more. (July 26, 2014)

The decision to connect the tenants with the reporter was one based on my RM role within my interpretation of the participatory approach. In my researcher role, this would likely not happen; reporters do not normally get access to participants. This time it worked out. Everyone involved was happy with the results and the next house is promoted. The boundaries, though, were starting to blur. Following the ensuing article in the local paper I received numerous calls, many from those interested in the next house, and some from those interested in the inhabitants. We (the women and I) discussed how to manage these and in line with the procedure I used for the reporter, I passed the requests on to the tenants to follow through if they wanted. This worked until I receive a request from the University publicity department wanting to feature my research. I was asked if they could include a video clip. As

with all requests, I forward it to the tenants. My journal entry summarises how easy things can get out of hand:

The publicity editor of the university magazine approached me a week or so ago and asked if they could also do a short video to highlight the research and the article. I had just forwarded a request from another person (who was doing a private book project) and thought I'd give the tenants the choice again. Both of these people were pushing me to set a time. One of the tenants got back and was happy to do this, two didn't reply...I knew the other two didn't want to. I was getting pressure to set a date and hadn't heard back from anyone. I ring the only one who had replied initially. She was also feeling pressured, didn't know what it was all about and didn't want to do this. She did mention that she wanted to help, and I assured her again that there was absolutely no pressure to accept. She said they had been talking about it the previous night. I mentioned this to Saville [my supervisor at the time], who said if the women are feeling this way, it could just be the tip of the iceberg and to call it all off; so I did. Also the article about me [for the University magazine], as this also would highlight the research and I could consequently be fielding quite a few calls. It was best to keep out of the public eye and just let the tenants be. He also suggested I stop all my recording and research for a while. Next step is to discuss this at the house meeting, especially how they want me to field requests.

Learnings:

I was more focused on my researcher's role than the RM role, and this contributed to my lack of insight into the anxieties facing the women.

I'm not infallible. I start with high ideals, but they can easily get lost in the moment.

I need to put protections in place; this could be that I decline all requests.

The women are feeling safe enough to decline these invitations, evidence of no coercion.

I got caught up in the culture of the women wanting to promote the house and the concept and did not see that it was getting too much. I also got caught up with the idea that the women are co-researchers, and forgot that this was their home and their lives. (28 August 2014).

What about the role of friend? I am not sure when this changed, possibly when the first house was filled and tenants were moving into the second house; I no longer needed to show people through the first house. The household was establishing and they were bonding more with each other than with me. Aware that I cannot take sides or show favouritism, my relationship with the women was also changing. Soon after the first house was fully occupied, one tenant

said she felt uncomfortable with my dropping in informally yet other tenants said they wished that I did. This had an impact on how I related to the whole household and influenced my shift from friendship to a more professional relationship with the tenants, a shift I see as inevitable and fitting. The following field note not only illustrates the tensions but also demonstrates how I negotiate my access to the household:

I'd been back from my trip six weeks, and still had the chocolates I bought for the households I was in the area [had them on hand and] thought it was a good time to drop them off... I also was aware I hadn't been there for some time. I intended to hand them to whoever was home, apologise for not making contact sooner, and then leave. For me, I am comfortable being flexible, fitting in, so I go with no expectations. Reconnecting and giving them the gift was the sole purpose for me. As I parked on the road, Ruby was leaving the house and heading my way. She was pleased to see me and insisted I come back with her for a 'cuppa'. Only her and Wendy were in. She said Wendy wasn't feeling that well and was hoping for a quiet day. I stayed in the hall by the front door, whilst she knocked on Wendy's door to see if she wanted to come out. Beckoning me into the kitchen, Ruby put the jug on. Wendy came out and we all sat in the lounge to talk.

While I was there, someone else came home, I was on the couch with my back to the bench, therefore couldn't see up the hall. Mimi came into the kitchen and was using the sink just behind the couch I was sitting on. I got up and gave her a hug. We talked briefly. Mimi asked me if anyone knew I was coming. I felt like I had been caught doing something I shouldn't have. Mimi has expressed this in the past. She feels uncomfortable with any visitor in the lounge, as it restricts her use of her kitchen. It has caused some friction amongst the women when this has been discussed. I felt uncomfortable like I shouldn't be there. She soon left to be with the guest she brought, who was in her room. When I had previously apologised for not coming sooner, Wendy again said to me that I can pop over any time.

I've tried to tread very carefully around this issue; how do I then make arrangements to visit? I've tried calling the landline and asking whomever answers if I can come over at a certain time. This ended up with me making arrangements with one person. I am very careful not to be seen to have favourites and try to include everyone where possible. If I just arrive, I see whoever is around if they wish, I'm not singling someone out for special attention. I enjoy the company of them all and want to maintain the relationships, be accessible. I am more comfortable with loose arrangements and flexibility; I realise, however, some others are not. This is a conflict within my RM role. As RM, I represent the landlords; I also need to maintain relationships and be accessible. For me, maintaining relationships is about spending

time with people; not necessarily goal-oriented time like house meetings. It's about listening and just being there. I am challenged in finding a way to do this if visiting the house is so problematic. Maybe I need to behave more professionally, keep a distance, keep to reasonable hours, i.e. don't just turn up on a Sunday. I think it will evolve to be this, whereby I come only when invited. That way it's up to the tenants to manage the relationship with me on their terms. They are all different, and I have different relationships with every one of them. Some don't ask for my assistance or time, they seem to cope with what's happening and don't need my involvement, whereby some do. Some make an effort to maintain relationships and include me in what is happening.

I wanted to contact one of the tenants. After work, it's late when I settle down and think about people I need to contact. I would usually make phone calls between 8 and 9 in the evenings. I hesitated about doing this. It's their evenings. So I called her while I was at work. She replied, "*Aren't you at work?*" She wasn't expecting me to call her during my work hours. It's something I have to work out. (November 1, 2015)

I was still trying to find ways of respectfully relating to each individual, and how I visited. There had been discussions around how I could visit this house, with no consensus, and I did not follow this through to resolution. This was a contentious issue and I did not want to cause more conflict.

In fact conflict between residents was a possible influence behind the request for the interview transcripts and notes to be returned. At the time of that request, there was a conflict between a resident and another in the house, and the resident who withdrew her data was not happy with the way I dealt with this conflict. She said she believed the information she had shared with me could be used against her. Just as my relationships with the tenants can open doors for me as a researcher, it can also close them. Later another tenant withdrew her interview transcription at a time when issues were not resolved to her liking.

In regards to interpersonal conflict, an independent conflict resolution service is offered (and funded by BCHT). Individual counselling with an accredited counsellor was made available to any of the tenants. Dealing with conflict was part of my RM role and trying to understand what was happening was essential for me both as RM and as researcher. While I tried to be independent, I was not detached.

4.4. Researcher role's influence on the Relationship Managers role

It is obvious that my RM role provided access to my research data. What is less apparent is that I also utilised my researcher role to enhance the RM role – a dynamic missed in the ethics process. As my visits to the houses became less frequent, I did not have the same social interactions with the tenants. I wanted to maintain contact, check to see if they are OK, and ascertain if there is anything I need to do, without singling someone out, or overly focus on a problem. I used the research as a reason to visit and talk, e.g. discuss a question, or a presentation. I openly combined the roles, the researcher role secondary to the RM one.

My reason for meeting with Ruby was first to ascertain how things were going for her. I had been wanting to catch up with her before this as I was aware there may be some specific challenges with being the last person in a household whereby the others have all had time to settle in together and establish their own routines, 'rules' and boundaries. I told Ruby that this [her well-being] was my first priority and my reason for meeting with her and that I was also very interested in finding out what is happening for her... I asked if she would mind if I recorded our conversations and use this for my research. She was happy for this to happen... Ruby knew what I wanted, and why, and I let her talk. I said very little. (Field notes: 11 July 2015)

The following narrative provides an example where I did not recognise a change in attitude that crept in as I transitioned from fieldwork to writing up. It also exemplifies participatory research in practice and the data that comes from such interactions:

This research and my relationships with the women develops and changes over time. I become complacent. The women are managing their households with minimum input, I'm not at the houses much, and my time is spent on campus. Two and a half years after the first household was established, I am preparing a presentation for a conference. Intent on making a good impression, I spend my time thinking about what I want to share, writing and rewriting the presentation, getting it to how I wanted. I had promised the following ... *"There are many aspects to this research, for this presentation, however, I will be sharing some of the complex and often unexpected experiences of sisterhood - of living in the 'hood', that is particular to this setting. This research provides practical, real-life examples of familiar concepts such as; community involvement, participation, connectedness, and ageing well."* I feel I will deliver on this and include examples of what is and is not working so well. I just needed some photos of the house for illustration. I let the households know beforehand that I will be over and could catch up with whoever is around if they are available. I spend time seeing those that

were home at Dunmovin'. I was ready to leave when I thought maybe they would like to hear my presentation. I had just printed it out but had not practiced it. Standing up preparing to start, Wilma comes in, "Wendy is waiting for you". As Wendy is waiting outside ready to go out, I don't start, instead, go straight over to next door then decide to walk down the road with Wendy to the shopping centre. I have included a story on Wendy in my presentation, as an example of how the house may not be working well for some people. Walking alongside Wendy, I contemplate reading this piece out to her. I know she values her privacy so I was initially hesitant. What if she doesn't like what I've written? What if she doesn't want me to include her in my presentation? I think more about it then realise that it is the right thing to do, to not do this is a betrayal of trust. If she doesn't like it, I'll have to find another story to tell. I realise then that I have been so focused on preparing for this conference that I have taken it as though this is MY presentation and it is really an afterthought to share it with the women concerned. As we were walking along I read out my piece to her. She asks me to make a small change as I was too vague on one point and there was a chance it could have been taken the wrong way by others. She provides more information to make the sentence clearer. I feel so relieved that I have checked with Wendy first realising that obtaining her permission to tell her story to others in the houses should have been foremost in my mind, not an afterthought. What was I thinking! I am saved from what could have been a serious mistake, not only as a researcher but also on a personal level. Collaboration and participants' ownership of their own data is at the heart of my methodology, and here I was taking their information and using it as though I had exclusive rights to do what I want with it. I wonder how often this happens to other researchers, and if they would admit to it. I see learning opportunities in my imperfections. I return to Dunmovin', and read my presentation out to the two who are home. They tell me they really liked it. Again it doesn't occur to me to share with everyone until later that day, as I am sitting at my desk reflecting on what had happened. I email everyone with the script. I am surprised when I receive a phone call at work. It is a polite invitation to make myself available on the Monday to discuss my presentation. My initial reaction after the phone call is that they don't like what I wrote and they don't approve. What do I do? I've carefully prepared and started to practice. What happens if it's only some information they don't want, but I think makes for a more balanced perspective, how do I handle that ethically? Do I do what they want, or what I want? I have to think through the issues. Would I compromise the integrity of the research to promote only a positive image of the houses – no I couldn't do that. But neither can I see myself overriding the wishes of the women, as that will compromise the integrity of my methodology. I come up with a tentative solution: if I am unable to present what I think is a balanced view I will then turn my research

into a working piece on doing ethical research in this setting. It is just another part of the research, an interesting ethical dilemma that in my case, with my theoretical underpinnings, I will have had to respect the participant's wishes. I then contemplate how I would handle it if all but one wanted me to go ahead with what I had prepared. I don't have a ready answer to that so would cross that bridge if I had to. I have the wisdom of experienced supervisors.

I read the string of emails discussing what some considered as more important information to present at the conference. No-one at that stage disagrees with what I have written. Some interesting suggestions are put forward, the whole focus of my presentation, though, would change if I take these into account. I realise then that this feedback and the upcoming meeting is a great opportunity. This could be valuable information, and it was.

The invitation was from one household and I include both households in my email acceptance of the meeting. I am later informed by someone next door that they hadn't really been invited to this; therefore their views are not included. That is another challenge, and I attempted to address this by inviting them to meet with me about my next presentation. No-one responded.

I arrive and the three women who have actively participated in this research from the beginning are waiting. They consider themselves to be the pioneers, the ones who have been involved in this research from the start. In the early stages, we had many discussions about their inclusion in this research and how I saw them as research partners. I seemed to have forgotten that as I hadn't been actively collecting data or discussing the research with them since the individual interviews. It is midday and they had prepared lunch. As we settle in around the table and start our lunch, they begin. They inform me that they don't think the story of two people who keep to themselves should be told, there are better stories to use. Why give time to people who didn't make an effort to join in, and have caused unease to others with their non-conformity. They would rather I represented the houses with more positive stories. Someone said they didn't see the purpose of including the story of one choosing to stay even if she had the financial means to go.

From the start, I didn't say much, just listened as they interacted and discussed amongst themselves, talking through their own perspectives. Alice had been struggling for some time with the fact that the household wasn't how she imagined it would be. It didn't fit her idea of a warm, hospitable, friendly atmosphere, where friends are welcomed and people do things together. The content of the presentation enabled her to talk more about these issues. Polly's positivity was evident in everything she said and she worked on putting together a concluding statement for the presentation, to end it on a positive note. She acknowledged there are

difficulties and has often said that they aren't insurmountable, and everyone wants it to work. Mimi had sent me a very thoughtful email about what she thought was important to present to others such as having a decent place to live, financial security and that this option provides a midpoint between the luxury that the rich can afford and inferior housing for the less well off. She weaved these ideas throughout the discussions.

After 1 ¼ hours of discussion, I delivered my oral presentation to them. There was silence.

"I wouldn't change a thing," said Mimi "when you say it like that its very different than reading it"

Although there are differences in how a verbal presentation and written word may be perceived, I would suggest that Mimi's statement had more to do with the foregoing discussions, participation, and control. There was no disagreement as the participants proceeded to discuss the content in more detail. I put together a concluding sentence for the presentation based on these discussions and emailed this to everyone for agreement.

Returning to the concerns of the UAHPEC regarding conflict of interest, power imbalances, coercion, and objectivity, in my case, I believe that ethical practice in the field is influenced more by embracing a relational approach to research than theoretical ethical directives.

This particular research could not be possible if I were not personally involved in this housing project, the household, however, would function without me as researcher. This research provides examples of the negotiation of ethical relations and practices in the field, managing multiple roles and developing a methodology in a real-life setting. By doing so, it makes a valuable contribution to the field of emergent, community-focused qualitative research.

Chapter 5. A space to live: The New Zealand context

5.1. Older people and homeownership.

Older cohorts have grown up with the expectation of homeownership which has been part of the New Zealand culture (Bourassa & Shi, 2017; Eaqub & Eaqub, 2015; Howden-Chapman, Signal, & Crane, 1999; Thorns & Sedgwick, 1997). The majority of older people are homeowners, with 75 percent of those over 65 in the 2013 census, either owning or partially owning their own home (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). This prevalence is declining with an increasing number of people reaching 65 without the benefit of this significant asset and also as renters in a society that has not yet adapted to this situation (Keeling, 2014). The customary housing trajectory after leaving the family home was renting as a youth, buying a first home, changing or upgrading the home according to family structures and employment opportunities, then using this asset to fund retirement lifestyle options (Davey, 2006).

History

New Zealand has had one of the highest rates of homeownership in the world (Thorns & Sedgwick, 1997), although home ownership rates are much lower for Maori and Pacific people (Waldegrave, King, Walker, & Fitzgerald, 2006), and declining at a faster rate than the general population (Statistics New Zealand, 2016a). The majority of people of European descent in New Zealand over 65 are beneficiaries of post-war homeownership policies. These government interventions promoting and enabling homeownership were more than just the provision of shelter and development of suburbs. The asset of a house was expected to provide a form of social security, a safeguard against poverty in old age (Castles, 1996). Asset-based welfare systems, of which property ownership dominates, have been an established retirement social security approach by governments worldwide (Doling & Ronald, 2010). This was particularly prevalent for those working and buying their houses when there was greater stability of employment, lower cost of housing and government incentives into homeownership through the 1950s and 1990s, especially for male-headed households (Thorns, 2000; Thorns, 1993). Statistics from the NZ census show that homeownership for all ages has been declining from 73.5% in 1986 and 1991 down to 64.8% in 2013 (Statistics NZ 2015). A growing number of people are consequently excluded from this source of inequitable retirement provision; projections for the New Zealand population are for a marked increase in older renters (Davey et al., 2004; Keeling, 2014; Saville-Smith et al., 2009). This increase is occurring within a homeownership culture whereby there is an expectation that older people

own their own homes as they have had opportunities to do so that younger generations have not.

Intergenerational considerations.

This intergenerational clash may not be rampant, but it is present and has the potential to sway future directions in housing policies if the younger generation is to influence housing futures. Commentators have argued that previous access to homeownership has led to an inequality that favours a select group of people i.e. the homeowners at the expense of those who do not have this asset (Doling & Ronald, 2010; Ronald, Lennartz, & Kadi, 2017). Older generations have been collectively blamed for the dearth of similar opportunities for younger generations, fuelling intergenerational conflict (Hurley, Breheny, & Tuffin, 2017).

The government is the primary social housing provider and funder of social housing. If the provision of affordable and appropriate housing for older renters is only possible through state intervention, then public opinion and attitudes do matter because they influence government decisions. Social gerontologists Streib, Folts & Hilker (1984), conclude their book on research they conducted on shared housing in the 1980s with the following:

“We cannot forecast whether the number and scale of these experiments [referring to the shared housing models that were scattered around the USA in the 1980s] to deal with older people and their needs will be expanded further. This rests not with the older generation but with the decisions and values of younger people. Such intergenerational cooperation provides the possibility for citizens of modern societies to contribute to the solution of this ongoing problem [the needs of an ageing population] and perhaps create the kind of society they will find waiting for them when they, too, become elderly” (p.248)

As will become apparent in the next chapter, these researchers had an optimistic perspective on shared housing that my research on the lived experience of this living arrangement does not necessarily corroborate with. Nonetheless, for those of us who are nearing retirement, it is likely to be these younger generations who will be making decisions on our behalf. Hopefully, they do so with knowledge, awareness, and wisdom. The stories that this thesis brings to light may help to make older renters more visible in their courage and limitations. Thus assisting in breaking down prejudices or envy that spark intergenerational division and mitigate against vilification of older people, especially older renters.

Homeownership matters

There are financial and social benefits of homeownership. It is considered to be a safeguard against poverty in retirement; it is a means of increasing one's wealth and disposable income as well as decreasing accommodation costs (Thorns, 1993; Waldegrave & Cameron, 2009; Yates & Bradbury, 2010). Homeownership is also a protection against the insecurities of tenancy and rent rises. It is this financial security, autonomy, and choice, rather than the actual tenure status that has been related to greater psychological and physical well-being (C. Baker & Baxter, 2012; Howden-Chapman, Chandola, Stafford, & Marmot, 2011). The stability of place associated with homeownership also enables participation in family, community and society engagement (DiPasquale & Glaeser, 1999; Lindblad & Quercia, 2015; Thorns, 2010) all of which contribute to overall well-being. Mental and physical health is related to the quality of housing, and generally, rental houses are inferior in quality than owner-occupied houses (Howden-Chapman et al., 1999; Howden-Chapman et al., 2011). Homeowners are more likely to be able to choose the community, place, and space that they age in, although this may not be as certain for low-income homeowners. Herbert & Belsky (2008) in their review of low-income and minority homeowners in the US reported that the social benefits associated with homeownership such as life satisfaction, mental and physical health, self-esteem and greater control can be offset when the cost of homeownership becomes too great, for example, the cost of maintaining a home. Generally, though, homeowners have the asset they can capitalise on, renters do not.

5.2. Older renters

Not only may older renters be financially worse off through lack of a capital asset and having to pay rent, but their costs are also generally higher than homeowners. Using a methodology developed in the UK to establish a minimum income for healthy living (MIHL) for older New Zealanders, O'Sullivan & Ashton (2012) found that the MIHL for renters was significantly higher than for homeowners, and the running costs (e.g. heating) of living in a lower quality house were more. They concluded that the state universal superannuation was inadequate to cover basic costs of maintaining health for renters who have no other form of income. Alan Morris interviewed older renters in Australia (Morris, 2006; Morris, 2009; Morris, 2011) and his research shows the vulnerabilities older renters experience, when paying a large amount of their income on accommodation, and the negative impact this has on their quality of life, such as mental health, nutrition, heating, physical health, social inclusion and general activities of daily living. He highlighted the Australian 2006 census figures showing that 80% of older

renters with low incomes pay more than 30% of this income on rent, with 23% of these paying nearly 70% of their income solely on rent (Morris, 2011). Morris (2011) also pointed out that many older renters live with the possibility of homelessness. The news articles I included in the previous section evince that older New Zealand renters are also very aware of this possibility. Older renters are likely to be living precariously, having fewer resources for healthy living, quality of life and social inclusion, all adding to what is likely to be an accumulation of disadvantages over the life course.

Rental housing for older people in New Zealand has been severely neglected in terms of planning, provision, and development of the rental sector. Sally Keeling (2014) noted a lack of choice and availability, an undeveloped rental housing sector and a decline in local government housing stock. Add to this, competition with other groups for available rentals, an increase in homelessness and housing deprivation (Amore, 2016) due to affordability and availability factors, and a rental sector that lacks controls or regulations for renters (Bourassa & Shi, 2017), and the future for older renters does not look good. A recent report published by the Salvation Army titled *Homeless Baby Boomers* (Johnson, 2015), signalled the rise of extreme poverty and homelessness amongst older people. When a seminal edited book on the implications of New Zealand's ageing population was published (Koopman-Boyden & Mason, 1993), there was a small but pertinent reference to older renters, "*unless the state actively supplies accommodation for the poorer elderly, either directly or through targeted subsidies to local authorities or to private welfare or commercial organisations, the outlook for this group is bleak*" (Thorns, 1993, p.117). Since this prediction twenty-five years ago, there has been an increase in older renters and no increase in rental accommodation specifically for older people. This bleak future may have already arrived for many - and may continue to be so.

5.3. Living alone

"[T]here is no mistaking the fact that today more people throughout the world live alone than ever before, and that even more will likely join them when they are affluent and secure enough to pull it off" (Klinenberg, 2012, p.212)

Prevalence

After world war two there was a marked increase in older women living alone in the United States, i.e. from 12% of widows in 1910 to nearly 70% by 1990, with wide societal change over this period such as smaller families and greater incomes being attributed to this development (Kramarow, 1995). Koopman-Boyden & Moosa (2014) point out that older

people who find themselves living alone by circumstances rather than choice e.g. losing a spouse, get used to this lifestyle and subsequently do not seek to live with others. Klinenberg (2012) highlights rising wealth as a main driver as well as the security provided by welfare states in our societies and the longevity of older singletons (people living on their own). Independence, which can manifest as the ability to live on one's own, is highly valued in many western societies and can be seen as a sign of success (Koopman-Boyden, Cameron, Davey, & Richardson, 2014; Portacolone, 2011). Social constructions of independence and success are thus also contributing factors. Intergenerational living was declining in developed countries at the turn of the century with older people preferring 'intimacy at a distance' (OECD, 2002) supporting New Zealand's ageing in place policies (Davey et al., 2004).

There is some indication that there continues to be an upward trend generally towards more sole person households in this 21st century; although the data on this trend in relation to older women is unclear. A UK study using data from national statistics between 1984 and 2010 found an increase in the percentage of men aged over 35 living on their own, but not a significant increase for women over 60 (Falkingham, Demey, Berrington, & Evandrou, 2012). Single person households in New Zealand are projected to increase in relation to other households, i.e. a 1.7 percent increase a year from 2013, compared with a total household increase of 1.2 percent. There has, however, been little change in the 2001, 2006 and 2013 census on the percentage of one-person households (Statistics New Zealand, 2016b), indicating that an increase in numbers is related to natural population growth rather than an increase in preference, or ability, for living alone. The analysis accompanying these statistics show a projected increase of 206,000 one person households by the year 2038 (MacPherson, 2017) and for those over 65, the projected increase is 166,400 in this 25 year period; an extra 50,000 in Auckland. More dwellings suited to one person households rather than family units may be needed to accommodate the demand.

Social issues

Living alone has been unreasonably viewed as a negative social problem (Klinenberg, 2012). Social isolation and loneliness are undoubtedly associated more with those who live by themselves (Routasalo, Savikko, Tilvis, Strandberg, & Pitkälä, 2006; Victor, Scambler, Bowling, & Bond, 2005). These complex social constructs, though, are not always well defined in the literature (Victor, Scambler, Bond, & Bowling, 2000). At a basic level, social isolation is related to the quantity and quality of social interactions, whereas loneliness is a subjective feeling of social deprivation (Victor et al., 2000). In relation to this housing project,

living with others provides an opportunity for social interactions yet one could still feel lonely if these social interactions are perceived to be negative, exclusive or problematic.

Data from a longitudinal American National Health Interview Survey of non-institutionalised people over 65 was analysed for the relationship between living arrangements, measures of loneliness and both psychological and physical health (Greenfield & Russell, 2011; Henning-Smith, 2016; Weissman & Russell, 2018). Whom one lives with matters. Living with a spouse is related to better outcomes. Those living with people who are not their intimate partner, e.g. with children, family or others, experience similar levels of loneliness and psychological distress to those who live alone (Greenfield & Russell, 2011; Henning-Smith, 2016). There are gender differences, with women who live on their own reporting less loneliness than men on their own, but higher levels of loneliness than men when living with one's children (Greenfield & Russell, 2011). Gieveland & Tilburg (1999) report that loneliness when co-residing with adult children can be related to reduced time socialising with peers, greater responsibilities and possible loss of privacy and self-determination. Women who live with others or on their own are associated with having a lower quality of life than women who live with only a spouse (Henning-Smith, 2016). Living with a spouse is also related to better physical health than those living alone or with others (Weissman & Russell, 2018). There may be many reasons for these correlations, e.g. a tendency to live with others as health and functionality decline or financial benefits of living with a spouse. The actual living conditions or arrangements of those who live with others were not included in these analyses, apart from a small sample residing with their children. Neither were the meanings associated with these places examined. These studies though indicate that living alone or with others is not a straightforward dichotomy. It would be useful if future researchers further differentiated living with others e.g. with friends vs strangers, from preference versus need, the number of people, what spaces are shared, the balance between privacy and company, and also the context in which one lives alone, e.g. proximity and frequency of social contacts.

Preference

Motivations for living on one's own and what constitutes a 'meaningful life' were examined in a New Zealand study (Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014). Forty-three older people living on their own in the Waikato region were interviewed. Independence, freedom and personal control were found to be the main motivators for living on one's own. The researchers found that declining health, loneliness and social isolation were de-motivators for living alone. In maintaining a meaningful life though, participants reported that they were aware of the possibility of social isolation and loneliness and made an effort to engage in social activities

and maintain social contact with others. In fact, the personal control one has when living alone can enable choices and decisions conducive to a purposeful and meaningful life (Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014).

When examining the increase and appeal of living alone Klinenberg (2012), found that living on one's own can also be seen as a choice, an opportunity for solitude, a chance for control, freedom, and autonomy. In interviews with 53 older (aged 65 to 93) white women living alone in America, different perceptions of living alone were found (Eshbaugh, 2008). First responses to a question about how one feels about living alone were recorded. Seven respondents had a negative perception, 26 were neutral and 20 had a positive response. Being one's own boss/independence, freedom to make and follow one's own schedule, and eating what one wants were the three most enjoyable aspects of living alone (Eshbaugh, 2008). The positive response group were more likely to be younger while the negative response group had a mean age of 82.7. The negative response group had been on their own for nearly half the time as the other groups and reported more depressive symptoms, difficulties in living alone and lower self-rated health. There is scope for further research on perceptions of living alone and factors such as age, health, functionality, and length of time living on one's own. Similar to the New Zealand research (Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014) the lack of companionship and help with housework as well as fear of falls/accidents were considered the most negative aspects of living alone (Eshbaugh, 2008). These factors may be related to increased frailty in the older negative response group. Depression and loneliness were assessed using self-reported measures and clinically significant symptoms of depression were indicated in 22 out of the 53, including five of the seven 'negative' respondents. The measure used for depression (CES-D) does not diagnose depression; it only shows depressive symptoms, thus including those with one reported symptom through to 19 symptoms. Eshbaugh reported no moderately high levels of loneliness in any respondent and surprisingly lower levels of loneliness were reported in the 'negative' group, than in the other two groups. The women were recruited from flyers in the community, indicating they may have been connected to social and community networks. Eshbaugh's research highlights the heterogeneity of older people and concurs with other research, e.g. (Klinenberg, 2012; Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014) that living alone can be a preferred and positive experience, not necessarily synonymous with loneliness or social isolation.

5.4. Attitudes towards sharing

The literature on living alone does not necessarily enlighten us as on how people view sharing with others. Attitudes towards sharing spaces with others are contextual. Sharing with whom and for what purpose are important considerations and contingent on individual circumstances and resources. A recent report using co-design principles with homeless older women in Australia (McFee, 2017) concluded that:

[T]he overwhelming preference for older women was to have their own home, and for that home to be permanent and safe so that they would not be homeless again and so that they could be supported whilst they aged in place. (p.4)

This Australian research was in response to concerns over an increase in older women being housed in boarding houses. Thirteen older women either homeless or at risk of homelessness participated in workshops on aspects of housing and design. A desire to be treated with respect and housing security were the two important factors underpinning their housing choices. Sharing with others was explored as an option and the circumstances under which they would consider this. The participants looked at shared housing (with no more than four people sharing a house), as a means of accessing services and possibly live-in carers, but this was not their preference if they did not have care and support needs. This finding is highly pertinent to my study and congruent with other overseas literature discussed in the following chapter.

Despite a lack of evidence that those without care and support needs have a preference for sharing a house with others, those who design, develop and implement shared housing view these models as possible ‘innovative’ solutions to housing and ageing issues. An Australian study from schools of Engineering and IT, (J. S. Nettleton & Sufan, 2017) with the Australian-Arabic community concluded that there is some support in this community for shared housing. While their study does not appear to be scholarly or peer-reviewed and there are problems with the research design, it directly canvases opinions on shared housing. The researchers based their findings on the 13 percent of 520 respondents who answered yes to either question: “Do you think the shared model of accommodation [sharing with three other people] is applicable?” or “Do you have any objections to your own parents living in shared accommodation” (J. S. Nettleton & Sufan, 2017, p.37). The majority (74%) of respondents were under 65, most considered themselves to be economically advantaged, and 47% of participants were homeowners. None of the 42 people aged from 65 – 69 chose shared housing as their first choice. The opportunity for private sector interests to explore business models of shared accommodation was stated as the practical implications of their findings. Rather than

support a case for shared housing from an older person's perspective or preference, Nettleton and Sufan's research highlights the increasing interest in building and developing these models from a provider's perspective.

There is also an increasing interest in sharing from a policy/funding perspective. Trends in the refinement of The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy, of which "*affordable and appropriate housing options for older people*" (Ministry of Social Development, 2001, Goal 3) is a stated goal, indicate a move towards shared housing as a rental option. In 2001 when this strategy was developed, the rental housing objectives pertained to traditional central and local government rental housing. In acknowledging the need for appropriate rental housing, the aim in 2001 was to support local councils to incorporate universal design (that accommodates a loss of function and abilities as one ages) and energy efficiency in their pensioner villages (Ministry of Social Development, 2001). In 2008, two more objectives were included reflecting a shift from traditional housing choices provided by the state and councils, i.e. dwellings where single people one can live on one's own, to more alternative options, i.e. shared housing, "*Develop low-cost communal housing and support housing arrangements for older people.*"(Office for Senior Citizens, 2008, 3.7). This shift reflects the emerging issues arising from ongoing discussions on this strategy, of more people ageing in place and living alone with a call for a variety of housing responses to these issues (Office for Senior Citizens, 2006). A subsequent aim of enabling housing choices allowing for ageing in place resulted in a grant to Abbeyfield from the Housing Innovation Fund (Office for Senior Citizens, 2007), the same fund that BCHT accessed for the second house. In 2014 non-government social housing provision was being encouraged and housing options expounded to specifically include "*communal living or flatting options such as those offered by Abbeyfield, which provides affordable rental housing for older people in locations around the country*" (Office for Senior Citizens, 2015, p. 22).

5.5. Current options in New Zealand

Affordable rental housing for older adults without direct provision for health care in New Zealand has historically been dominated by local (council pensioner flats) and central government (Housing New Zealand). These are predominantly clusters of single bedroom units. In 2014, central government initiated state housing reforms (Housing New Zealand, 2014a). Although these reforms were marketed as signaling the intention to increase the number of social housing providers and options (Housing New Zealand, 2014b), there were

concerns that this reform had not necessarily equated to an increase in the supply of affordable and social housing (Auckland Community Housing Providers Network, 2014) in practice. Rhetoric designed to defend political decisions that are sometimes fiscally based can be removed from the actual reality.

The local government social housing stock of pensioner units declined in 2002 when the Auckland City Council (Auckland central area) controversially decided to sell off all their pensioner rental units as they no longer wanted to provide social housing (Gosche, 2002). The 1542 pensioner units were sold to Housing New Zealand (HNZ), so effectively responsibility for older renters shifted from local to central government. But in this shift, the renter profile changed: the units were no longer earmarked for pensioners, who found themselves in competition with the general needy public. Hamilton City Council recently voted to do the same (Hamilton City Council, 2014), intending to sell their social housing on the open market in a more blatantly capitalistic endeavour. After concerns from the public about selling them off, they were sold to a social housing provider. Councilors in the now-amalgamated Auckland Council recently voted to increase their stock of 1412 pensioner units, with another 40 yet to be built (Casey & Watson, 2016). The land these are to be built on previously contained 68 old pensioner units, and the council purchased adjacent property with the intention of building eight blocks containing 225 units for older people as stated in the Auckland Plan (2012). The land adjacent was sold on the open market to fund the building of the 40 units (Auckland City Council, 2017), which are well short of the intended 225 and the original 68 houses for older adults. Clearly, there has been a change in plan unrelated to a reduction in need. In the three cases above, houses and land that were originally intended for the provision of accommodation for older people are no longer specifically for this group.

Places in these social housing pensioner units are in high demand and there is nothing available or foreseeable on the North Shore (Linda McKenzie, Letting Manager, Haumaru Housing, personal communication 11/12/17), which is the area BCHT operates in. The waiting list for social housing, including the council pensioner units now managed by Haumaru Housing, is controlled through the Ministry of Social Development's social housing register. This register categorises people into 'Priority A' and 'Priority B'. 'Priority A' is 'at risk' and in need of immediate housing and 'Priority B' are those with a 'serious housing need'. Those that may be in need, but not deemed serious need, do not get on this waiting list. Hence if a woman shifted into one of our houses, and found out they did not like it, they would be unlikely to be re-placed on this list as their need is not great because they have a place to live. The specific number of older people on this high priority waiting list for a place on the

North Shore in Auckland is not defined, but the numbers overall are increasing. In 2017 there were 146 one bedroom places (not age specific) needed in the Waitemata, Kaipataki and Hibiscus Coast/Bays areas that include the North Shore, climbing to 199 in 2018. One hundred and forty nine people (not age specific) in these areas are categorised as 'Priority A' in 2017, and by September 2018 this number had increased to 214 and throughout New Zealand. For those over 65 nationwide, the numbers increased from 529 - 806 between 2017 and 2018. Many older people are averse to going on a general 'social housing' register (personal communication with Gabby Clezy, CEO of Haumaru Housing, 13/12/17) therefore these figures do not reflect the total numbers of older people in serious need of rental accommodation. There is likely to also be a significant number who are in need but are not severe enough to be considered at risk or in serious need. There is likely also to be older people who for various reasons such as family loyalty or stoicism may not have articulated their situation well enough to be deemed a priority and endure their living situation. These statistics though strongly indicate that as the need for appropriate, affordable rental accommodation for older people is increasing, the supply is not keeping up.

Older people can rent in the private sector and receive government accommodation supplements to help offset the costs; they first need to secure private accommodation on the open market. This is a market where age appropriateness is not a consideration for landlords. There is a shortage of low-cost rental accommodation, poor housing security and quality, and strong competition for what is available. To compete in this market, access, and familiarity with technology and relevant websites as well as transportation to attend multiple viewings is desirable. Younger cohorts often have an advantage in these arenas.

In a recent government-commissioned report on housing (Johnson, Howden-Chapman, & Eaquib, 2018), it was shown there is an increase of about two thousand people per year since 2011 receiving both superannuation and accommodation supplement. This indicates that private rental accommodation for older people is becoming more prevalent and also unaffordable on the pension alone. There are also the issues of tenure security and low-quality housing associated with this private rental market (Chisholm et al., 2017; Howden-Chapman et al., 1999; Howden-Chapman et al., 2011; Howden-Chapman et al., 2012). The costs of shifting into another equally insecure rental place are another factor renters have to contend with. In New Zealand, the bond can be a month's rent. Moving for older people usually means paying for a truck and two men. Landlords can raise the rent routinely in a competitive rental market, and this volatile, threatening environment grows harder as older renters continue to age.

Shared space accommodation in New Zealand

Boarding facilities specifically for older people are another rental accommodation option. Abbeyfield and Selwyn Village's Hansen Close are the only two in Auckland, though there are other Abbeyfield houses throughout New Zealand and worldwide. In these 10 – 12 bedroom houses, services such as meals and maintenance of the common areas are provided with a housekeeper/manager present, either living in or on-site for 5 or more hours a day. These models, to my knowledge, have no provision for health care although Hansen Close is part of a retirement village with a hospital and Abbeyfield is a global non-profit organisation with extensive experience in elder care. The Abbeyfield model overseas started out with those who required services but not care; as the residents in their facilities aged and became more fragile, this organisation has adapted their model to incorporate more provision for care in their physical and organisational structures (Salmon, 1982; The Abbeyfield Society, 2010). The main points of operational difference between the houses BCHT have built, referred to here as the shared space housing approach (SSHA), and the Abbeyfield and Hansen Close approaches are that the SSHA house only five people per residence and no services are provided. Those in our houses manage their households and their meals themselves.

All three models provide accommodation and an opportunity for social interactions. All three have to balance their operations with the financial aspects of providing this service. There are subtle differences in the intentions and focus of the three models. Abbeyfield and BCHT have a volunteer component in their governance and operations. Addressing loneliness was the main reason Abbeyfield was started, and this remains a core principle (Salmon, 1982; The Abbeyfield Society, 2010), although being unable to live alone independently (i.e. a need for services) is also a component (Streib et al., 1984). The housekeeper's role and the shared meals incorporated into this model are a reflection of the concern for loneliness. Economic need is not well defined in any of the three models. For BCHT anyone who cannot afford a place of their own is considered. The eligibility criteria for the Auckland Abbeyfield house is having 'modest' assets, with consideration for those having 'limited' assets if they can supplement their board with the State living alone pension rate (an extra \$30 a week) and the accommodation allowance (Abbeyfield, 2017). Hansen Close's criteria include both financial and social need. Limited savings, i.e. being mainly reliant on NZ superannuation, living alone and seeking companionship are aspects of their eligibility criteria. Hansen Close, being a part of the Selwyn Group, an organisation that owns and manages retirement villages and other services for older people provides a service managed through their established business structures.

BCHT chose five bedrooms, to make the best use of resources e.g. funding and available land. Hansen Close also chose 11 bedrooms for financial/business purposes (The Selwyn Foundation, 2011). Abbeyfield states that they carefully balance the intimacy of smaller numbers with the maximisation of resources (The Abbeyfield Society, 2010). It was important to all that the places feel like a home, not an institution.

For New Zealand, as far as I can ascertain, the SSHA and the above models are the only other housing models in this country with shared living spaces that were intentionally built for older renters. There are several past and present shared rental housing models overseas that I discuss below.

Chapter 6. Similar housing models internationally

“Those of us who have been around for a long time generally find that the same discussions we had twenty-five years ago are being rehashed by an entirely new generation of Gerontologists.” (Professor Edward Folts, personal email 7/12/17).

There is a rich history to be found in the United States that I draw on to understand this shared space housing approach (SSHA). As I inquired deeper into the literature and personally communicated with some of those involved, I found that this ‘innovated’ housing approach is not as innovative as I, and others involved in this project, assumed. I wonder if our shared housing project would have transpired as it did if information on the previous efforts and learnings of others was available and more accessible. This current research adds a post-millennium case to the existing literature and when combined with past lessons can inform future housing projects.

I found only one case in America where permanent shared housing similar to the SSHA is still operating which I introduce before placing comparable shared housing models within the wider context of alternative housing, shared housing, and service provision. Three specific housing models are discussed in more detail providing insight into these shared housing initiatives from late last century. Although seemingly a great idea at the time, they are no longer in existence now. We have to wonder why. As discussed in the previous chapter, sharing a house with others is not a popular housing option. People will make this compromise to access services, affordable housing and a roof over their head in the absence of suitable alternatives. As such, for older people who do not want or need services, and have access to affordable traditional housing, there is little advantage in sharing with others. Those involved with the development and implementation of these alternative models promote the social benefits, yet those that live in these environments are not motivated by social reasons to inhabit shared housing. In fact, psychosocial well-being may be compromised by moving into such an environment where a propensity for negative social interactions is high.

6.1. Case study exemplars gap

When BCHT was planning this project we did not know of any other shared housing models without the provision of services. We were aware of the Abbeyfield model and Hansen Close had not been built. Many small-scale, community-based alternative housing models internationally are not recorded in scholarly journals and what research I have found favours

the organisation perspective over the lived experience of the residents. Like the SSHA, these housing projects are small-scale by not for profit organisations who likely do not have the resources or capacity for research. Streib, Folts & Hilker (1984) reviewed 15 community organisations in the United States that provided shared housing for older people. These organisations developed their own housing models based on the needs of their communities; most were unaware of other models when they developed their own. It was through the support I received to do my Ph.D. that this research project was enabled.

A very similar model to the SSHA, as discussed below, is still in operation in the United States. Both the person who initiated this project (Bob Campbell) and the one who is now managing it (Dan Wu) declared that no research has been conducted on this project apart from its inclusion in a larger study on depression in the 1980s (Bob Campbell, personal communication 3/11/17; Dan Wu, personal communication and 4/11/17). I was unable to find any reference to the study of depression from the 1980s to early 1990s as the exact year, institution and name of the researcher was not recalled.

With such a gap in the literature today on shared housing projects for older people and their lived experiences, this current case study makes an important contribution with a practical application of informing further housing projects. When I have publically presented to various groups on this housing model, there has been a keen interest in the outcomes of this project. These presentations include formal and informal talks to community organisations and their members, forums in the social housing sector, and academic conferences. The conferences covered gerontology (domestic and international), community development (domestic), and research methodologies (domestic and international). As discussed previously, shared housing is being integrated into policy documents. Without the research to inform a move towards shared housing, projects like the SSHA could be promoted and funded just because it seems a good idea rather than as the result of research-informed decision making.

6.2. Senior Housing Solutions (SHS)/Charities Trust (CT)

The following information was obtained from an hour-long phone call with Bob Campbell, the person who developed SHS in 1996 (7/10/17), and personal emails (between April and November 2017) with him and Dan Wu, the CEO of Charities Trust (CT) who now manage the houses.

This example comprises of eleven, 2 – 5 bedroom shared houses for people over 62 situated in Silicon Valley where housing is expensive and in short supply. Yet, according to Bob Campbell, the model was designed with a social mission in mind - to increase activity and socialisation, and decrease depression. He stated that isolation, loneliness and premature death in their older population were apparent at the time this initiative started. The intention of SHS was to assist psychosocial outcomes; a case manager was employed to take responsibility for the psychosocial needs of the residents and facilitate group processes in the houses. While a social element may have been their mission, the current tenant selection criteria provided by Dan Wu contained no social need criterion. The referrals come from housing agencies, not social agencies. I thus assume that the predominant need underlying and driving this model today is for housing rather than social connectivity.

The five-bedroom houses are renovated older (20 – 30 years old), three and four bedroom houses. The design includes three bathrooms to five bedrooms (one room has an ensuite and there are two bathrooms shared by the four other bedrooms). The bedrooms are private, but other areas are shared. The rationale behind the five bedrooms is the same as the SSHA, small enough to have a family feel, and one bedroom short of the boarding house category. They also incorporate universal design, e.g. raised toilets and accessible showers and make improvements as needed.

Unlike BCHT, CT is required to accept referrals from the equivalent of the New Zealand social housing register. I have concerns about a similar mandatory relationship between the social housing register and shared housing provision becoming established in New Zealand. There is a risk that those who have already faced lifetime disadvantages, and may continue to do so, will not have a choice about whether they share a house with strangers or not.

Dan Wu (personal email 14/10/17) said that CT is not able to discriminate based on gender; two of the eleven houses are female only, the rest are mixed. The tenants, although able to meet new people beforehand, have no power in deciding who comes into their houses to join them. I was told they could try to discourage the person beforehand or make it difficult for them so they leave.

I specifically enquired about the social aspects of the houses and Bob said when he was involved there were ongoing challenges with personality and emotional problems. Some houses worked perfectly, while others did not work so well. The social side of this model was vital but frustrating. He said some residents were ‘impossible’ and made other’s lives miserable. He also said that they had successfully revoked tenancies, indicating irreconcilable

differences and conflicts. Presently, a separate organisation affiliated with CT provides the social support and services to all their low-income tenants, managing any social issues within the houses.

“The social dynamics between new roommates often can cause unexpected frictions. Hence, we have resident services to help individuals to learn to cope with shared living. This would also allow our property management staff to deal with only property related issues.” (Dan Wu, personal email 14/10/17)

Bob Campbell recounted that there was an enormous amount of grant writing and work that went into keeping up and covering operating expenses. They had the houses, the tenants, and low vacancy rates but could not keep up with operation costs. I wonder if the cost of managing the social aspects of sharing spaces may counter any financial benefits of shared housing for tenants (if the cost is to be recovered from them), or providers. If alternative funding or volunteer time are used to enable needed social services, could the real cost of shared housing be obscured?

6.3. Alternative housing

Shared housing for older people falls under the term alternative housing. Alternative housing is generally considered alternative to both traditional housing (e.g. family homes and the equivalent of New Zealand's council pensioner units, or sheltered housing in the UK), and institutional living (i.e. hospital-level care) (Heumann, 1976; Lawton, 1981; Streib, 1978). The traditional housing options for non-home owning older people in New Zealand are primarily places one can live on one's own, or as a couple. These dwellings are not dissimilar to that of other western countries such as the USA, England, and Australia whereby alternative types of housing make up only a small portion of housing options.

According to M. Powell Lawton (1981), a prominent environmental gerontologist, localised alternative housing such as the SSHA will not be a viable answer to our housing problems:

[I]n no way should alternative housing as we have defined it here be looked at as a generalized solution to the need of the aggregate of elderly for better housing. The need is far too great to be met by these small programs (Lawton, 1981 p. 78)

He makes the point that the traditional housing models can provide for the continuum of support and housing needs of older people, and are the preferred choice. It is only when the

enabling factors, such as availability or affordability, are lacking that alternative housing is created and taken up.

For housing that is shared, Lawton (1981) also did not think this is workable for those who are completely independent, as is the case with this SSHA criterion. He asserts that only people who require some level of support are willing to compromise independence and privacy for services or care. In his outline of what factors people take into consideration when choosing a place to live, increased social benefits have a lower priority than personal security and the need for privacy. A familiar environment and maintaining independence are the top factors that influence people's preferences.

One attribute of smaller alternative housing models is that they enable organisations (such as BCHT) to serve their communities (Lawton, 1981). The observation that smaller houses and projects are best contained, initiated and managed within local communities was also made by Streib et al. (1984). If these housing models are demonstrated to be of less benefit to the community and in particular to the individuals housed within them than expected, we would then need to ask the question - who benefits most from the provision of alternative housing?

6.4. Shared housing

The term 'shared housing' is generally used to define a house shared with non-family irrespective of the number of residents, motivations to share, governance, or physical and social structures within the house. The two main shared housing models for seniors are 'group housing' and agency-assisted programs that match up a homeowner (often an older person) wanting to share their house with someone seeking accommodation (could be a younger person). It is not always clear in the literature which model is being discussed, and I differentiate the two by referring to the latter as 'house sharing' (HS) when this has been specified. I also prefer the term 'shared house' to 'group house' as the latter is a common term today for groups of people with special needs e.g. intellectual, mental or physical impairments, residing in a house with services provided. Special needs housing is not a focus here. Although HS is a different model, the sharing of spaces with unrelated people (i.e. not family members, lovers, spouses or friends, but strangers on first contact who negotiate their relationships from there) is pertinent.

While informal sharing arrangements are common today and throughout history, more formal arrangements had started by the 1980s in the USA (Schreter, 1984). A growing awareness of

the economic and social disadvantages of living alone as well as the reduction of state housing programs were reported as the drivers behind this appeal (Schreter, 1984). The need for care and services were the primary focus of some shared housing models and also some clustered housing models where living spaces are not shared, such as congregate housing (Heumann, 1976).

Financial benefits of sharing with others are not disputed in the literature. The social benefits, though, are less evident, corroborating the assertion of Lawton (1981) that the social benefits of shared housing are not the primary motive when considering where to live. In a case study of HS in San Diego (Pritchard, 1983), only 16 of the 89 house sharers reported companionship as a reason for sharing and 11 of these were the homeowners. Pritchard cites practical support (such as housework) and financial considerations as the main reason for people to want to share their own home with others. According to Schreter (1986), having others around was considered to be the most important benefit of shared housing whereas financial advantage was cited for the HS. Both the homeowner and the accommodation seeker's responses are included in her HS results, the owners' motivations are thus combined with those of the seekers'. Schreter's statement was also not qualified with any other information as to who made these assertions, the agency or the residents and whether they were referring to having staff around or other residents. I have read the literature Schreter draws from and I do not share her assumptions. For example, in the Philadelphia Geriatric Centre's study discussed later in this section, while isolation and loneliness was reported by those going into shared homes to be a greater factor in their move than cost, if taken in context, the unsafe neighbourhood was the main factor, and the isolation they experienced was directly related to friends and family moving out of this neighbourhood (Brody, 1978).

A recent study on a virtual village model (Mount Vernon at Home) (LeFurgy, 2017) found that while the social benefits (e.g. preventing social isolation) are promoted and marketed, it was the practical support offered with membership that was the primary attraction. In fact, the social activities were seen as a supplement to one's established social networks, and a possible safety net if, and when, their friends move away or die. Research on shared housing projects for older people in America by Streib et al. (1984), indicate that these alternative housing models are primarily developed to delay entry into nursing home care. If social advantages were a motivating factor, and an outcome, of these housing models, I would expect there to be more examples and references to these benefits in the literature especially from the perspective of those living in these places.

I wonder if the prospect of loneliness and social isolation in older age seems to be a concern shared by providers, but not recipients. Differences between the ideals of those providing a service and the experiences of those receiving it are not new. Luken & Vaughan (2003) highlight this in regards to housing practices and older women living alone. They concluded that the discourse on older women living alone is that this is a social problem, neglecting the lived experience of those who are managing this situation quite well. For example, those living alone can attain their social needs and maintain a meaningful life by pursuing interactions with family and friends outside the home (Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014). On the one hand, shared housing is promoted as being a positive social experience but on the other, I have found little evidence to support this in the literature. Shared spaces provide an environment where social contact occurs. It is assumed that this social contact is a positive experience when claims are made about shared housing addressing social isolation and loneliness issues. Social contact, however, is not unerringly positive.

Indeed in some of the cases discussed below, the social aspects of shared housing, rather than facilitating positive interaction, can have negative effects. Diana Myers (1989), a shared housing consultant in the 1980's, analysed the results of a survey of staff at 18 shared houses and 16 HS projects conducted by a shared housing agency. The benefits of sharing houses were espoused in her article (which did not contain references). On the other hand, the respondent's opinions on what they perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of shared housing models were congruent with other research. Respondents reported that the provision of accommodation at affordable costs was its main strength. The primary issues staff felt these organisations faced were lack of resources, such as finance and staff, and personality conflicts between residents.

Shared housing predominated the literature in the 1980s but it is HS that does so now. It is beyond the scope of this research to present a full discussion on the range of HS programs whereby older homeowners share their home with another; they are varied, the research is not consistent, and they are not as relevant to the SSHA as the housing models discussed later in this chapter. What is relevant is that HS models have not developed as well as expected. When Johnstone (2001) evaluated HS programs in Canada, there were only ten remaining whereby 20 years previously there had been 22. In a study of 89 housing 'matches', Pritchard concluded that "*The nature of home sharing between older adults was found to be highly individualized and predominantly short-term*" (Pritchard, 1983, p.178); unmet expectation was the main reason cited for dissolution of these arrangements. In his research, 60% of the matches did not last as long as three months. The reasons for opting into this service also vary.

Johnstone (2001) stated that HS had moved from a focus on homeowners avoiding institutionalisation to housing affordability, e.g. paying a mortgage or house maintenance. I would suggest that housing affordability has always been a factor for HS seekers. In a study of 144 HS, 44 percent of participants reported that they were drawn to this situation for financial reasons (Pynoos, Hamburger, & June, 1990). Even more emphatically, 68% of those seeking a place to live in Pritchard's study cited financial need as their reason for sharing (Pritchard, 1983).

More current literature also suggests that the care aspect can be a predominant feature for those offering a place in HS programs today (Coffey, 2010). This was the case with a failed New Zealand programme. For three years (exact dates are unknown but it was running in 2011, but not in 2013) Presbyterian Support Services self-funded a HS program. They closed down due to insufficient support, citing a lack of understanding from the health needs assessment service (Lorna Cowen, General Manager Social Services, Enliven, Havelock North, personal email 21/06/2013). Their HS program included 10 hours of support to be provided to the homeowner per week by the accommodation seeker (Coffey, 2010). I began this research project expecting there to be more success stories and a growth in this type of living. This does not appear to be the case.

6.5. Historical shared housing initiatives.

Social Gerontologist, Gordon Streib and colleagues (Streib et al., 1984) conducted a five-year research project on shared living arrangements in America and Abbeyfield in the UK. They used qualitative methods of inquiry e.g. participant observation, formal and informal interviews with residents, staff and Boards. Closely affiliated with the Share-A-Home Association (discussed later) the researchers attended their meetings and one of the authors lived in three of the Share-A-Home houses over six months. Another of the authors (Edward Folts) was a department chair of the Share-A-Home Board for nine years. The researchers visited other shared facilities/organisations and informally interviewed their residents, staff and board members. In total, 40 of the 80 known shared houses in North America were visited. Fifteen of the 900 UK Abbeyfield homes at the time were also visited. The current number of houses today on the Abbeyfield website <https://www.abbeyfield.com/about-abbeyfield/> accessed 02/04/2018 is 500 in the UK and 850 worldwide, a significant decline in the UK since the 1980s. This decline is not only consistent with the trend outlined above in regards to HS, but other house sharing initiatives have also failed to thrive as expected.

For their research, Streib and colleagues organised workshops and seminars around the USA to reach as many shared housing organisations as possible. Almost all the housing models they encountered had services provided, shared meals, and ongoing regular support. These models thus fall under a more modern term ‘service integrated housing’ (SIH) (Howe, Jones, & Tilse, 2013; Jones, Howe, Tilse, Bartlett, & Stimson, 2010). For the SSHA, it is expected that if support or services are required, these are accessed privately or through the district health board services as per the process for any community-dwelling older adult.

The focus of these shared housing initiatives with services was the provision of a non-institutional environment for those who were unable to live independently in their own homes (Streib et al., 1984). The researchers optimistically referred to the households within these shared houses as ‘families’. Unavailability and unaffordability of housing were not mentioned as a motivation for establishing these houses. The recipients of these shared housing models could well have owned their own homes as there was not enough information provided to ascertain the financial situation of the residents. Many of the shared housing models researched by Streib and colleagues in the 1980s were started independently by religious or other community organisations (Streib et al., 1984). Like BCHT, they were responding to what they saw as a need. At that time, in North America, the need appeared to be for supported accommodation. Given Lawton’s (1981) assertions that people will opt for shared housing if this addressed their need for services or support, one would expect SIH models to be more popular and successful than shared housing without services. Most of these models did not survive, suggesting that a similar outcome may be expected for the SSHA, unless there are other powerful forces at play, such as no other option, that disable people from enacting accommodation preferences.

Streib et al. (1984) considered that the shared housing model was successful in that it, *“provides a comfortable home, a safe and secure environment, companionship, and nutritious meals at a modest cost”* (p. 186). Even though there was extensive contact with residents in their research on shared houses, the voice and lived experience of these residents were rarely seen in their findings. This is another literature gap and reason why research on the lived experience of those participating in the SSHA makes an important contribution.

The limited portrayal of the social life within these models, though, does provide some indication of what it could be like to live in shared housing. While companionship was mentioned as a ‘success’ factor, in reality, few close relationships formed between residents in the houses (Streib et al., 1984). For the fifty-one residents in Share-A-Home that were interviewed in depth, only four reported they would confide in another resident. Conflicts were

evident with “*some encounters between residents that were neither quiet nor cordial*” (Streib et al., 1984, p.66). The researchers reported that the typical response to conflicts was avoidance, putting up with things, holding on to unresolved tensions or telling someone else e.g. the researcher or the house manager. They noted that the potential for conflicts and disagreements was high in such shared living spaces and there was no structure for dealing with these. The prevalence of such occurrences, however, was not revealed in their writings; social cohesion between the people sharing houses was also not a focus of their research. The authors did stress that it was very important to develop a ‘family-like atmosphere’, as this is the attraction for shared housing, and that these ‘family’ groups need a stable long-lasting organisation to facilitate social bonding of non-kin groups. I point out later, the ‘family-like atmosphere’ was not the draw card. Again it appears as though there are differences between the convictions of service providers and the reality of service users.

I searched the grey literature for the 15 shared housing organisations detailed by Streib et al (1984) in their research. Few remain and none in the same capacity. I not only searched under the given name but also any other links that were mentioned on websites to ascertain if they are still in operation. I could find no record of eight of these projects. Of the other seven, one large hotel-like facility was stated as being no longer in existence with the reason being, ‘competition from private assisted-living facilities’. There was no record of one house in a two-house project and the remaining one was a 24-bed service integrated facility with 24-hour staff and meals provided. The house that was not mentioned on the website, and likely no longer operates, was a 12 bedroom place with no live-in manager and the main priority for acceptance was compatibility with others. I could not find any record of The Philadelphia Geriatric Center's Community Housing, which I detail later, in existence now. Another project still in operation is a 29-bed service integrated facility with meals and live in staff.

I contacted Small Group Housing in Hawaii who had eight shared houses at the time of Strieb et al.’s research and found that only three are still in existence in 2017. The increased cost of renting these homes and an inability to maintain them at full capacity were the reasons given for the demise of the other five (Stella Wong, Vice President of Programs, Catholic Charities Hawai’i, personal email, 5/12/17). Furthermore, they are now a temporary shelter for some, while the organisation supports placement into other senior housing. Two other projects seem to have changed from shared living houses to self-contained single apartments. One of these was Enriched Housing.

Enriched Housing

Enriched Housing New York described by Streib and colleagues (1984) was another model with relevant similarities to the SSHA. Three, three-bedroom apartments were acquired. Residents had the autonomy to make their own house rules. They had housekeeping services provided four hours a day, five days a week, and ongoing support, such as regular planned outings, from the church and volunteers. This organisation reported that they had difficulties finding tenants although the rent was low. Streib et al (1984) postulated that this might be due to a stigma about shared housing for older people being similar to nursing homes. The voice of the actual residents or those who did not make a final application is not presented in the literature, so we can only speculate as to the challenges in recruitment. The researchers did, however, provide a response from the social worker who managed the places:

“She noted that Enriched Housing, like other alternative living arrangements for the elderly, is one of the last housing choices people wish to make. Most persons would prefer to stay in their own homes and regard the sharing of bath and other facilities as a problem... there is a very strong emotional attraction to the idea of living independently even when that arrangement is inappropriate. Until and unless, that attraction is overcome, by either increasing frailty or familiarity with group projects, elderly residents will continue to be disinclined to move to such facilities as Enriched Housing” (Streib et al., 1984, p. 109).

The residents in this shared home housing project did not want mixed gender, citing modesty and privacy as the reason. The residents in the existing SHS/CT model described previously, do not have this choice.

According to the website of this organisation, the Enriched Housing program, while still in operation, no longer provides shared apartments. (New York Foundation for Senior Citizens, 2017). Presumably, the shared housing arrangement did not work as this program has since progressed from sharing living space to providing one bedroom apartments or studio rooms. A statement on their website concurs with the research outlined previously e.g. (Lawton, 1981; McFee, 2017): *“The Foundation’s subsidized buildings were developed with the understanding that most seniors prefer to live on their own”*. The subsidised accommodation is available for those who require a certain level of support, not nursing home level, e.g. able to dress and feed oneself. Services are still provided to these independent renters, but not in a shared housing environment. The same progression, from shared living to living on one’s own, is found in the following example.

Philadelphia Geriatric Center's Community Housing Project (CH)

This housing project (CH) was well researched with a 6-year pilot study (Bronson, 1972), and subsequent follow-ups (Brody, 1978; Brody, Kleban, & Liebowitz, 1975; Lawton, Brody, & Turner-Massey, 1978; Liebowitz, 1978), providing useful literature on the development of alternative rental housing for older people. There are some striking similarities with the initial stages of this initiative and our 'innovative' SSHA. CH started in 1965 out of a need for 'intermediate' housing options for older people who could live independently. There was a shortage of affordable accommodation for older people in the city, especially for those with low incomes. The first house in this project was an existing house altered to provide accommodation for four women. It was situated close to the Philadelphia Geriatric Centre (PGC) that hosted a number of other residential, health and social facilities. The residents had their own bedrooms but shared one bathroom, a kitchen, and the other facilities. Housekeeping was provided once a week. Social services were in place with separate social workers involved with each resident. The need for housing was the main selection point and they were screened for their ability to manage in such a setting. The screening processes for this project were not documented. This house operated for only three years, and the following problems were noted:

(1) insufficient screening of personalities and background to provide congenial matching of residents;

(2) 4 women sharing one kitchen;

(3) The involvement of more than one social worker, which was an uneconomic use of professional time since many services overlapped.

Most of the social work time invested was spent in mediating the personality clashes among 4 divergent people with varying ways of life and educational backgrounds. In spite of these limitations, 3 of the women lived together for 3 full years. Although each complained bitterly about the others, none openly contemplated leaving the premises. (Bronson, 1972, pp. 23-24)

This model was clearly not working out well. It was disestablished when the women left. In 1967 the PGC used the lessons from the first house when remodelling their next one. This time they included a kitchen in each room, improved bathroom facilities, provision of a meal, linen service, extended their housekeeping service to include rubbish removal, and assigned one solo social worker. The cost did, however, go up by 63% to \$65 per month as opposed to \$40 for the first house. In the screening process, families were included to ascertain family approval and support as well as highlight any family issues that were present or might arise.

People were selected based on similar backgrounds, education and personality traits. The PGC's medical director also screened the medical records provided. This house accommodated three women only. No men or couples submitted an application. For these two housing projects, 25 women in total were interviewed.

Unfortunately, there is not enough information to make a thorough comparison especially with the first house and the SSHA. For example, there was no detail on the layout of the kitchen and living areas, and I wonder if this environment had an impact on the quality of interactions. It was evident that there were personality differences with the residents, and I wondered whether this could possibly be the case with the social workers as well. Could conflicts have been handled differently with a different outcome? Did the women know each other beforehand? What were the personality types chosen for the revised model and how? What people were thus excluded from this housing and what happened to them?

The last phase of this project was the remodelling of nine existing houses close to the PGC (Brody, 1978; Brody et al., 1975). Each house was remodelled into three separate apartments with a bedsitting room, bath, and kitchen. Only the main living room and the entrance were shared. These apartments were more expensive than the previous models ranging from \$95 - \$98 per month and did not include a meal or housekeeping. I will state the obvious here - the development of this model progressed through to a reduction of shared space and an increase in rents.

Like BCHT houses, the funding for the PGC's community housing project came from grants and rent subsidies that were set up specifically to help address the need for affordable accommodation (Liebowitz, 1978). Criteria for consideration for the apartments in the last phase were similar to the SSLA - over 62, able to live independently and 40% were occupied by those with limited assets, as measured by eligibility for public housing. As with the SSHA, not all those who initially enquired followed up with a completed application (87 applications from 300 inquiries), indicating that it was not a popular option, but more popular than the previous two phases. The demographics were not provided, but the literature on this indicates there were only women tenants. Although lack of affordable housing options was the rationale for this project, the main reason people gave for shifting into this accommodation was *"deteriorated properties in neighbourhoods with high crime rates from which families and friends had fled, leaving those who remain lonely, isolated and fearful"* (Brody, 1978, p.125). To put this into perspective only 14 of the 87 participants (including those who were unsuccessful in their application) reported that their current dwelling was too costly (multiple reasons were allowed), and 11 were forced to move due to redevelopment. Fear of crime, poor

housing conditions, and loneliness/isolation were the main motivators for making an application. The motivation for people to move into these apartments was very different from those in the SSHA. The PGC renters were moving into a better neighbourhood, whereas ours, in the SSHA, were more likely to be moving into a less desirable neighbourhood than where they came from.

This body of literature on the development of the PGC community housing project not only provides valuable longitudinal research but also scholarly discussions on alternative housing. When comparing the CH with other alternative models, Liebowitz (1978) found only two of ten housing models that would best fit into a particular category of communal living most similar to the SSHA, “*a voluntary grouping of individuals who share decision making, apportion tasks, help each other, and share the financial aspects of their collective home much as in a natural family*” (Liebowitz, 1978, p. 140). These are the failed Alternative to Living Alone (ALA) and Share-A-Home Association. According to Liebowitz (1978), the ALA used existing houses for older people to share. I was unable to find the source or other documentation on this project. The reference provided was an undated summary report. The failure of this project was attributed to the fact that most people think this is a good idea, but not for them. “*Most of the older people they interviewed did ‘not want to share their living space with others, although they are not hostile to the idea for other people’*” (Liebowitz, 1978, p.140). A conclusion from this report (cited in Liebowitz, 1978) was that shared housing for older people ‘is not simply a rational solution to some housing problem’ and that current cultural values would prohibit the growth of this type of housing.

The literature on the PGC corroborates other research and theorising on shared housing that has been discussed; namely that the social spaces within shared housing can be challenging. While sharing living spaces may seem a good idea, from the perspective of those seeking a solution to a shortage of affordable housing as well as a possible solution to loneliness and social isolation, sharing living spaces with others can be a limitation of these models from the perspective of those who may be living there. These alternative housing models do not stand the test of time, suggesting they may not be a viable housing option in the long term.

Lawton (1981) writes of two costly projects looking at alternative housing for older people in North America that failed to eventuate. One in 1976 contacted over 3000 people, only 100 followed up and requested more information, but too few were willing to actually move to make it viable. Another similar initiative a few years later, scoping for a large-scale national network of retirement cooperatives, concurred that there was not enough interest. Actual

details such as size and developmental stage of these projects are lacking but Lawton concluded that:

...opportunity for the exercise of independence is high, while security, social opportunities, and the group support of the collective are excellent. What overrides these positive advantages seems to be the increased possibility for interpersonal conflict that is secondary to the loss of privacy, particularly where more than just two or three people share kitchen and bathroom as well as other spaces. Secondly, one may speculate that the uncertainty in people/s minds as to how long their energy reserves might last in this rather demanding setting would also be a deterrent.
(Lawton, 1981, p.73)

With the research by Streib and colleagues (1984), the literature on the following shared housing project also supports the trends and inferences in the examples outlined above.

Share-A-Home Association

Within a decade of James Gillies, the founder, starting and managing the first Share-A-Home house in Florida in 1969, there were 10 ‘families’ operating containing between six to twenty people in each. They lived in various housing structures from a former convent to a six-bedroom ranch house. By 1982, 22 units were accommodating 306 people in different towns and cities around America. This authors heralded this growth as a shared housing “movement” (Streib et al., 1984). The operation of these households included the employment of someone to attend to the household chores and other tasks paid for by the residents.

Streib (1978), who had previously researched intergenerational communes of like-minded people, discusses this model within the field of ageing, stating that it meets three important social-psychological needs: choice; being with people who care; and feelings of autonomy and dignity. Interestingly, this is similar to BCHT’s statements of independence, community, companionship, and choice (Appendix A), of which I personally worded in the brochure we sent to people. Streib's statement, though, appears to be in stark contrast to the actual reality. When Streib and colleagues interviewed 51 residents (Streib et al., 1984), they found that they did not choose group or shared living, but they would prefer to live on their own. Most came because they could not live alone due to frailty. They did not share the ideology of ‘family’ or community that the founders had, nor did they seek new friendships. Nearly one third reported that they had no alternative. The residents also believed that this was going to be the last place they lived unless they went into an institution. The following quote could be as relevant today for shared housing:

"Whatever else the Share-A-Home might have been to a resident, it was first and foremost housing – a place to live, and a good place at that. Yet it was not traditional housing, for in these settings an individual moved into an on-going household of older people who were living in very close proximity ... it is this aspect of moving into a household of strangers that creates not only opportunities for companionship and security, but also some highly stressful situations" (Streib et al., 1984, pp. 59-60)

These findings are in congruence with what Lawton (1981) stated about the benefit of shared housing being the services or care that come with it, and not in the fulfilment of social or psychological needs, which could, in fact, be compromised. The findings also exemplify the incongruence between the positive intentions of the providers and the actual experience of the recipients.

Like the previous shared housing models, Share-A-Home also did not last the test of time. By 2002, it appears as though this model was struggling to survive:

"[O]nly the homes under the direction of the original founder [James Gillies] many of which were personally managed by him, flourished. And they did so only while the founder was able to personally oversee the operation of each home" (Folts & Muir, 2002, p.18).

The original researchers had also moved on and did not publish any follow-up research or analysis, suggesting that the interest in this housing model had waned. Gordon Streib's subsequent publications were focused on retirement communities, e.g. (La Greca, Streib, & Folts, 1985, p.211), and a later article on conflict in retirement communities (Streib & Metsch, 2002) made no mention of Share-A-Home. Unfortunately, useful insights into conflicts within the shared housing he was so familiar with were not included in this paper.

I could find no reference to the Share-A-Home Association still being in operation and contacted Professor W. Edward Folts, a Gerontologist who was involved in the initial research and the department chair of this organisation for nine years. He did not know of any of these facilities still operating (personal correspondence 7/12/17) and believes the main reason for this was regulatory issues e.g. dealing with issues of being both a shared home and a boarding house. He also highlighted the difference between the ideologies of those that develop these models and those that live within them:

"As far as I know, the disconnect between the founder's (Jum Gillies) "vision" that the Share-A-Home model was a utopian answer to a variety of issues relating to aging

and the reality that few of the residents shared that vision was never resolved” (Folts, 2017, personal email 7/12/17).

In the SSHA model, we did not face the same civic and community opposition that Share-A-Home did. We did, though, share their ideals of a positive social environment and cooperative community within the houses. Like the shared housing initiators that have gone before us, we also believed in the viability of our housing model and that we were making a positive contribution to our society.

It appears that we are in a similar situation today as the Share-A-Home era, whereby there is a need for affordable and appropriate rental housing for older people and a resurgence of a trend towards shared housing as a means of addressing this need. Alternative models may address availability and affordability, but are they an appropriate alternative for older people? To attend to this question we need to look more closely at the social environment within shared houses. In the following chapter, I explore literature on the experience of place. I also change my nomenclature from shared space housing approach (SSHA) to shared space living arrangement (SSLA) to reflect and reinforce the altered perspective, from sharing a house to one of sharing the space within the house. The focus also shifts from the providers of housing to the people that live in these created spaces.

Chapter 7. Sharing spaces: Cohouseholding

In the previous chapter, housing for older renters and shared housing models were explored to aid an understanding of such housing provision. This current chapter aims to do the same with a focus on the social arrangements within shared space housing models. Literature on cohousing, while not strictly addressing ‘cohouseholding’, i.e. sharing a household, provides a platform to explore sharing spaces with others. There is a gap in the literature of older people’s lived experience of sharing a house, so studies of younger shared households are used to help make meaning from the experiences of the older shared households. The appropriateness of the shared space living arrangement (SSLA) housing model for older people is explored through the field of environmental gerontology, specifically the residential normalcy conceptual framework (Golant, 2011; Golant, 2012; Golant, 2015b).

7.1. Cohousing/collaborative housing

I think we primates have been communal for 80+ million years. We thrive on companionship. Loneliness is the worst experience a human can have. I think because we’ve been tribal for so long that loneliness is the experience of being without a tribe...Most people are not prepared to return to being part of a tribe. Alas it is a skill most of us have lost. Senior cohousing is an intelligent midwife assisting a return to tribal life. (Patch Adams, M.D. in Durrett, 2009, pp.xiii - xiv)

In chapter two I discussed how I prepared for my involvement in this housing model by aligning myself with people and literature that promote and encourage a sense of belonging and community. Like Patch Adams, I considered that a collective, community focus (as opposed to an individualistic, independent focus) supports inclusive communities, enhances overall well-being and counters social isolation and loneliness. I was in accordance with the sentiments of those who advocate that ageing in community with others is a preferable way to live than aging on one’s own (Anthony, 2015; Bamford, 2005; Blanchard, J.M., & Anthony, B., 2012; Choi, 2004; Durrett, 2009; Glass & Vander Plaats, 2013; McKnight & Block, 2012; Tyvima, 2011). For these proponents of living in community with others, cohousing, a housing model with a specific intent on creating and nurturing community, is widely endorsed. The ‘tribal life’ is seen as the natural state. Patch Adams, though, discerned that most people do not share this perception and few are willing to live in such ‘tribal’ groups. As pointed out in the previous chapter, sharing with others is not a preferred option for older people unless there are other advantages. There are those, such as housing providers, who might share the

communitarian sentiments and beliefs that living in a close intentional community is a good idea - for others. Those residing in cohousing communities, though, generally choose to live in community with others. They also usually have control over whom they share with and how sharing with others transpires.

Cohousing models are as diverse as the communities they serve. Each one is designed and managed by their community to encourage social interactions with the community's specific needs, cultures, and values in mind. Consequently, cohousing is difficult to compare or explicate from the literature (Fromm, 2012; Tummers, 2016). In an attempt to define universal aspects of cohousing, Durrett (2009), who is widely cited in the literature, lists the following characteristics of cohousing, which are not unlike the collaborative principals discussed in chapter two:

- *'participatory process'* on all levels, e.g. resident-led;
- *'deliberate neighbourhood design'* that encourages social interactions;
- *'extensive common facilities'* sharing some everyday living spaces;
- *'complete resident management'*; and
- *'non-hierarchical structure'*, i.e. equality of relationships with equal decision making responsibilities.

Information and research on cohousing is largely advocacy (Golant, 2015; Tummers, 2016), hence positive aspects of this housing model are often fore-fronted. While it is common in Europe for cohousing communities to include rental and social housing (Sargisson, 2012), much of the English literature on cohousing comes from the North American version of cohousing, which is predominantly owner-occupied. In a survey of 116 North American cohousing communities, 89% owned their own homes (Sanguinetti & Hibbert, 2018). The dwellings within these communities can also be assets, contingent on market demand (Williams, 2008), thus it is in homeowners best interest to promote the benefits of their lifestyle.

Senior cohousing generally comes under the rubrics of intentional retirement communities for the more affluent (Durrett, 2009; Golant, 2015a; Ruiu, 2015; Williams, 2008). Homeowners in cohousing communities are free to sell and buy elsewhere if their situation does not work for them. They have choices and resources that social renters do not.

Another point of difference between the SSLA and cohousing is that cohousing residents have a much greater level of control and ownership of both their built and social environments. Unlike the residents of the SSLA, who were strangers when they moved in, cohousing residents typically know each other beforehand. In fact self-selection and shared values are considered to be a crucial aspect of the cohousing model (Bouma & Voorbij, 2009; Chiodelli & Baglione, 2014; Lietaert, 2010; Williams, 2005a; Williams, 2008). Relationship building and group cohesion occur in the years before the actual building is completed as people work together to plan and develop the physical and social structures of their intended communities (Brenton, 2008). During this group forming period, conflicts and differences have time to be addressed and resolved prior to people moving in. A cohousing community will likely have already gone through the community development phases of '*excitement*'; '*jockeying for power*' and '*settling into roles and structures*' (Shaffer, 1993) or the small group '*forming*', '*storming*', '*norming*' and '*performing*' stages (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) by the time individuals finally settle into their shared lifestyles. If the physical building happens first and is then filled with people who have not formed these bonds, as occurred in the SSLA, group interpersonal dynamics will be different (Brenton, 2008).

As mentioned previously, rental and social cohousing communities are common in Europe. The term collaborative housing is used by some to broaden the definition of cohousing communities to include social and rental housing complexes (Fromm, 2012; Lang, Carriou, & Czischke, 2018). It is the active intention of creating a community that differentiates collaborative/cohousing from other mainstream housing models, regardless of who is initiating or managing the intentional community. Unlike resident-led, owned and managed cohousing communities, there may be varying levels of resident control over the physical and social environments for communities of renters.

Western Europe has a strong history of social and rental housing (Magnusson & Turner, 2008); thus rental and social cohousing communities can reflect the specific housing, culture and social policies of a country rather than a subordinate alternative to home ownership. In Scandinavian countries, having an active resident group that manages the facilities, and the needs of the community, is a requirement. Resident control is, thus, incorporated into their collaborative housing models. In Northern Europe, where cohousing originated, cohousing has expanded from resident owned and initiated housing to one whereby the social housing and rental sectors have adopted cohousing structures (Williams, 2005b). This trend is also occurring in greater Europe, reflecting a paradigm shift towards increased public participation and community-led development as well as a response to the housing crisis in this region

(Czischke, 2018). A focus on participation and addressing community needs may result in the residents of collaborative housing having more control over their environment; the latter point concerns me though.

We need to be mindful in times of housing deprivation and clearly identify whose aspirations are being primarily addressed in shared housing projects. Are these initiatives a product of society's desire to provide more housing for its citizens or the desire of certain individuals to live in community with others? There is a risk if shared housing is initiated by policy makers, providers or funders, of a top-down approach that could compromise the resident-led, self-managed, cohesive, cooperative nature of cohousing communities. Pressure for the State to provide public collaborative housing in times of housing shortage is not new.

After a large January 1995 earthquake in Kobe, Japan, interdisciplinary professionals, including researchers who were knowledgeable about Swedish collaborative housing, and the government, got together to plan a collaborative public housing facility for the elders in their community (Fromm, 2012). A housing development initiated by non-residents with an intention to foster community within the built environment ensued. Ten collaborative housing complexes were built and Fromm (2012) reported on the first of these, Mano, in more detail.

Mano was completed in December 1997 and hosted 21 'silver housing' units for older people. Residents in Mano were selected through a public application process and therefore were likely to have been strangers. Before they moved in, these prospective residents met seven times to discuss how to live together, e.g. negotiating rules and furniture for common areas. A resident's board was created in the process. Ten years after Mano was built, research on nine of the housing projects established that the affordable rent was the main reason people lived there. Although most of the residents used the common areas at least once a month, only about half were satisfied with the common spaces. Fromm (2012) concluded that the reason for low satisfaction was due to: affordability being the main reason for them being there rather than a desire for company; lack of involvement in the planning stage, i.e. they came after the building was designed; and lack of support to create common activities given their age and diverse experiences.

Other research supports Fromm's assertions. Community participation was significantly lower in municipal-initiated compared to resident-initiated communities in a study of 28 Scandinavian senior cohousing communities (Choi, 2004). Choi (2004) found that there were a large number of people (up to 57.5%) who did not participate in any common activities in these places and concluded that this non-participation may be due to rental housing allocation

in some communities allowing people in who might not be ready for such community focus. *“The problem might lay in present rental housing allocation system that anyone can be allocated in the cooperative rental housing even though they are not ready to live in this way (Choi, 2004, p. 1214).* Indicating that there may be differences in community participation between those who proactively choose to live in an intentional community and those of whom the choice may be more reactive, e.g. not the preferred choice, but the best under certain circumstances.

There are other factors pertinent to social housing providers that can influence lack of participation in community life. From the medical sciences, it is known that life course inequities can have a negative impact on health and behaviours, limiting the capacity for less advantaged older people to engage in social activities (Beard & Bloom, 2015; Olshansky et al., 2012). Fromm (2012) postulated that because the residents in Kobe were of low income and in their later years, their focus was more on maintaining a stable life rather than building or maintaining a community. In a case study of Canadian low-income women in a rental housing complex, precarity and ageing were associated with a lack of both energy and resources to engage in social activities (Funk, Herron, Spencer, Dansereau, & Wrathall, 2019). Brenton (2008) hypothesised that there is a different mentality between the passivity of those who have been recipients of housing programmes, and the active citizenship inherent in cohousing communities. They propose that the agency of administrators (such as housing providers), and a top-down welfare system can exacerbate this mentality. There appears to be an added layer of complexity when placing non-economically advantaged people, in need of affordable rental accommodation, in a shared housing environment with the expectation that a cohesive community-like atmosphere will naturally ensue. The findings of both the Japan and Canada studies (Fromm, 2012; Funk et al., 2019) imply that extra resources are needed to support communities when social collaborative housing is provided in response to a housing shortage.

There are cases where community-led projects collaborate with external organisations to enable living in community with each other. Partnership is a way of reducing costs and financing the development for a group who have already formed. Brenton (2008) outlines the plight of a well-organised community group of lower-income older women in the UK who had been lobbying for ten years to obtain funding and a site to build their cohousing facility. On their own, they were unable to attain their goal of living in community with each other. Advocates for state funding and promotion of collaborative housing initiatives frame cohousing as a positive contribution to society (Brenton, 2008; Lietaert, 2010; Williams, 2005b). Chiodelli & Baglione (2014) argue against state funding stating that there is a lack of

evidence as to the reported benefits of cohousing on the wider community. They contend that cohousing projects should be treated the same as if they were private housing projects. I believe it is not helpful to look at cohousing communities as homogenous and each set of circumstances needs to be assessed on their own merits. Chiodelli and Baglione (2014), from urban studies in Italy, were referring to private residential cohousing communities. These were people who could afford to create their own communities if they chose to. Brenton, a cohousing advocate from a sociological perspective, wrote her report to be a resource for local authorities as a means by which they can respond to the UK government's national strategy on housing for an ageing society (Brenton, 2008). She represented a different perspective and a different group of people.

Issues or possible problems with external agencies/funders in collaborative housing projects is less about their presence and more about who holds the balance of power over what happens in the community, e.g. who gets to live there and how the community is organised and managed. It is incongruent with the intentionality and operation of resident-led, community-focused cohousing communities for an external partner to have control over the running of the community. In reality, there will be continuums of collaboration much like Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969), ranging from total resident control to total external provider control. Cohousing dwellings in the Netherlands are mostly owned by housing associations; Bouma & Voorbij (2009) state that this involvement poses challenges to social interactions and well-being as well as being a risk to the community if the association gets to choose the residents. There are also examples of working partnerships between housing associations and residents that allow collaboration in the selection of new residents (Ruiu, 2015).

The small group households of the SSLA are not resident-led, intentional communities like the cohousing communities outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Having power and control over whom one lives with, and how this is enacted, is likely to be an essential aspect in establishing the positive, cohesive community which BCHT envisioned. The nature of such provider-initiated accommodation means that the responsibility for filling the rooms lies with the provider. The provider also has a responsibility for the well-being of all the residents; thus some oversight and authority is necessary. Establishing resident power and control in provider-led housing developments and the formation of cohesiveness in a group of divergent people who came together primarily because of cost, rather than wanting to live in community, will likely be ongoing challenges for all involved in shared space housing models.

7.2. Older peoples experience of sharing places

Sharing communal spaces outside one's house, as in cohousing, is not the same as sharing spaces within one's house, i.e. 'cohouseholding'. As outlined previously, the literature on shared housing for older renters is dominated by service integrated housing whereby the common spaces are likely to be shared with, and managed by, staff. Communal meals are also often provided in these places. Socialising with others within the shared space is thus inherent in the everyday rhythm of these houses and governed by established operating structures. The SSLA does not have the same prescribed working arrangements. Those living in the SSLA have the autonomy to create their own social environment, albeit bounded by the autonomy of each of the other residents.

Although there are differences between the SSLA and service integrated housing, the lived experience of older people dwelling in serviced spaces has some relevance to this study. Searching through Scopus, Web of Science, and the first 200 entries in Google Scholar, using the keyword 'Abbeyfield' I found no research articles on the experience of Abbeyfield residents. Literature specifically on the Abbeyfield model for older people focuses on describing and explaining the model rather than understanding the lived experience of the residents (Dunster, 1986; Reid, 2008; Salmon, 1982; Wotton, 1986). Kartupelis (2015) reported on surveys conducted by the Abbeyfield Society assessing the spiritual needs of their residents. These surveys were conducted on the house manager, at least one resident per household, and other parties such as Trustees, volunteers and visiting clergy. The research findings were framed from the organisation's perspective, not the residents', e.g. comments on benefits and the organisation's treatment of staff, and how a 'family' atmosphere is fostered. A search using broader terms such as 'shared housing' came up with references that have already been cited in the previous chapter bearing no specific research articles from the perspective of those residing within these living arrangements. There is a current gap in the literature and an obvious need for research on the lived experience of shared housing for older people.

There are, though, a small number of post-millennium studies on the experience of younger people in shared housing. These emanate mainly from the area of psychology and sociology as they focus on the social environment of shared places.

7.3. Young people's experience of shared housing: Whom one lives with matters

The empirical research on younger house sharers consists of instrumental case studies using established shared housing environments to explore certain phenomena such as: geography of place in Australia (McNamara & Connell, 2007); discrimination and preferences with New Zealand house sharers (Clark & Tuffin, 2015; Clark, Tuffin, Frewin, & Bowker, 2017; Tuffin & Clark, 2016); youth housing inequality in Italy (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli, 2016); social aspects of food sharing with New Zealand flatters (Williamson, 2005); and young professional's housing choices in England (Heath & Cleaver, 2003; Kenyon & Heath, 2001). All these authors state that there is a paucity of research on shared housing for younger people. My study also contributes to these scholarly conversations on sharing spaces.

House sharing, colloquially known in New Zealand as flatting, is an established and expected practice for younger people in New Zealand, especially white, middle-class tertiary students when they leave the family home (Williamson, 2005). It is considered the domain of the young. *"Shared households typically consist of highly mobile, single, childless, young adults living communally with other non-kinship residents"* (Clark & Tuffin, 2015, p.20). Flatting can also be viewed as a life stage experience that is only appropriate and acceptable during one's youth (McNamara & Connell, 2007) and as a rite of passage (Clark et al., 2017). In Australia, shared housing is the most common living arrangement for those aged from 15 – 24 (McNamara & Connell, 2007).

Age-related differences for choosing to share a house is cited by Clark & Tuffin (2015), but what these differences are is not explicated. Ahrentzen (2003), in her essay on shared housing, and referenced by Clark and Tuffin, proposed four key reasons for sharing a home: emergency (temporary need), residential improvement (a better quality place), social support (can include financial support, child care, companionship) and caretaking. Only the last one (the provision of care) was singled out as being what she considers specific to older people. Economic grounds are surprisingly absent from this rationale, although finance was identified as the primary motivator for house sharing in most of the other research on younger house sharers, e.g. (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli, 2016; Clark et al., 2017; Heath & Cleaver, 2003; McNamara & Connell, 2007). Both younger and older people have specific financial situations associated with their stage of life e.g. low pay and part-time work while studying or gaining work experience for younger people, and limited income or opportunities to earn for those over 65. It is possible that within a culture of homeownership the prospect of older people 'flatting' for

similar reasons as younger people, i.e. emergency, residential improvement or social support has not been seriously considered. Despite some differences, there may be similarities in the lived experiences of younger house sharers and their older counterparts.

Preferred people to share with.

With the prevalence of flatting opportunities amongst younger people, there are more chances of forming relationships with other like-minded renters and a selection of people to share with than older renters have. Kenyon and Heath (2001) noted that their young respondents were accustomed to sharing and there was a tendency to share with people they already knew.

As one young woman argued, 'having always shared at university as well, I think it's just – it was just natural for us to just carry on living together and then it just made sense as well, because we all got on really well' (Kenyon & Heath, 2001, pp. 629-630).

On the other hand, Clark and colleagues (2017) specifically enquired about preference for friends versus strangers in their qualitative research on flats situated in three cities and four smaller towns. The city dwellers were more amenable to sharing with strangers than town dwellers, but there was also an understanding that one can move if the situation becomes too bad. Positive aspects of living with strangers reflected the desire to form and maintain friendships (Clark et al., 2017). For example, living with friends might compromise the friendship in some way and sharing with strangers was an opportunity to make new friends. Another study also found that for those shifting to a new city for work, shared housing offers quick access to prospective friends and social life (Heath & Cleaver, 2003). Some respondents in the research by Clark et al. (2017) mentioned that with strangers there are no expectations at first and ground rules are easier to establish. One participant mentioned that he knew people who preferred the social distance of living with strangers. They conclude that “particular preferences are inevitably based on past experiences and entail complex justifications” (Clark et al., 2017, p. 1202).

Clark and Tuffin (2015) in their research on young, experienced house-sharers, looked at age, gender, and ethnic discrimination when choosing housemates. There was a strong preference for people of a similar age. This age discrimination, however, was related to a difference in the life stage and lifestyles, e.g. professionals or workers not wanting to live with students or those unemployed, not wanting a ‘*mince and mixed vegetables*’ or a party flat. Specific gender preferences were seen as less important than having a gender-balanced household. There was a slight bias towards recruiting female flatmates as they were perceived to have better housecleaning skills. Respondents showed aversion to sharing with people of other

ethnicities, citing cultural differences especially with recent immigrants, language/communication challenges and nonconformity to social norms, expressed by one participant as ‘peculiar behaviour’.

Tuffin & Clark (2016) subsequently explored discrimination and stigma attached to those experiencing mental ill-health. Judgement in this context is based on who one would be willing to live with. Those with ‘controlled’ or ‘invisible’ mental health issues such as depression, were generally reported as acceptable flatmates. Safety and trust was an important factor. For most of their participants, however, it was the ability to participate in the household that was the main consideration:

The key element was the importance of flatmates making a contribution to flat life rather than [and not] being an emotional drain and legally or economically compromising the safety and harmony of living with others. (Tuffin & Clark, 2016, p.115).

These findings suggest characteristics that will enhance rather than diminish the flatting experience for others in the household are actively screened for in prospective flatmates. Flatmates were thus judged on their perceived ability to live in community with others. These researchers acknowledged the need for discernment when choosing whom to live with in a shared house situation

Finding the right flatmate requires discrimination and if shared living is to function effectively, a fine balance is required. Potential problems in flatmate choice must be astutely assessed as mistakes can be costly. (Tuffin & Clark, 2016, p.115).

Tuffin and Clark (2016) concluded their article stating the need for further research on the interpersonal relationship influences of successful and dysfunctional flats. Who gets to choose who lives in a place is a factor that was not addressed by Tuffin and Clark, but it is raised in the research explored below on experiences of house sharing.

Different household types - sociability differences and control

Two studies included both the control of housemate selection and the sociability of households (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli, 2016; Heath & Cleaver, 2003). Heath and Cleaver studied English, affluent professionals (non-students, aged 18 – 35) while Bricocoli and Sabatinelli focused on Italian graduates and students (aged 18 – 32). Both came to similar conclusions. There was a correlation between sociability and control over whom one lives with. Those households where the residents did not have that control, have weak, less trusting relationships and a high turnover of tenants.

Bricocoli & Sabatinelli (2016) from the field of architecture and urban studies aimed to promote the improvement of rental conditions for younger Italians in their research. Interviews with 40 young people from 16 dwellings showed a large variance in the experience of house sharing. The researchers characterised these households into cold and warm. In the 'cold' households, relationships are distant. The landlord chooses the tenants, people tend to stay in their bedrooms, and they live there mainly for economic reasons.

“Little social exchange is found in these situations, with no or little emotional connection, and little perspective to develop meaningful relationships: people come and go until their job contracts expire (or take them to another city or country), or their housing needs change, and little or no link will survive” (p.194)

Within the 'warm' households, relationships are trusting and reciprocal. These residents usually choose whom they live with, social interactions with housemates are sought, and common areas extensively used.

“..these 'warm' forms of sharing are accompanied by and, at the same time, favour the development of, both reciprocal material support and emotional bonds within the micro-cosmos of the shared household” (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli, 2016. p.196).

Being able to choose whom one lives with is considered to be the main factor in house sharing being a positive experience (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli, 2016). The researchers noted that those who chose to leave the family home into shared living did so to 'warm' places rather than 'cold' ones, or would stay at home until they found something suitable. Thus 'warm' was preferable to 'cold'. They further defined these groups as 'cold' being 'constrained to share', in that single rooms are rented out by a landlord to unrelated people, and 'warm' being those who "share as a lifestyle", usually with a nucleus of people who know each other.

Heath and Cleaver (2003) introduce a continuum of household types from communal households on one end to stranger households on the other:

“Communal households are marked by an overt commitment to, and expectation of, operating as a collective, manifest in a variety of shared activities both inside and outside the house, and a broadly similar outlook on life amongst residents....In contrast, relationships in stranger households are tenuous, with little sense of commonality beyond sharing the same address” (p. 92-93).

They found that households can move along the continuum at any time as dynamics between the residents change. Clark and colleagues also used the phrase “sharing with friends versus living with strangers” (Clark et al., 2017). Table 1, compares these two types of households in terms of sociability.

Table 1. Different Shared Household Types. Based on the literature on younger shared households.

	High Sociable Households	Low Sociable Households
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose whom they live with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord chooses
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often knew each other beforehand • Close relationships • Similarities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to be strangers • Tenuous relationships • Little or no emotional connections • Not much in common
Socialising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate special occasions • Seek social interactions with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal social interactions
Common areas/Bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise these extensively • Rarely spend time in their rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bedroom is the individual's living space
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not share food
Household management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective co-operative environment • Reciprocity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not pool resources
Main reason for shared living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companionship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic

Kenyon & Heath (2001) analysed group interviews with 77 young people in 25 shared houses (the same data set as Heath and Cleaver's). They found that households of people who knew each other beforehand adopted more collective strategies of household management such as shared food and household bank accounts. Sharing food is an indication of social cohesion according to Rebecca Williamson (2005). Her New Zealand sociological study of 7 shared households comprising 31 young people, distinguished between households that shared food and pooled resources and those that did not. All but one of the households she studied shared food and she noted that the majority of those in the six 'shared food' flats knew each other beforehand, whereas five out of the seven in the flat that did not share food, were strangers before moving in. This flat "*functioned well as a social group, but all flat members led relatively separate lifestyles and did not display the intimacy of the other flats*" (Williamson, 2005, p. 3), indicating that a household can be functional but not socially cohesive, in contrast to the portrayal of 'warm' vs 'cold' by Bricocoli and Sabatinelli.

I associate the word 'warm' with pleasant feelings, whereas 'cold' as something to avoid, likewise with the terms 'lifestyler' versus 'constrained'. This opens the door to a brief discussion on the notion that a more sociable household could be construed as superior to, or more functional than, a less sociable one. From the field of psychology, we know that people have different personalities and levels of comfortableness in social situations. For example, people's perceptions of themselves and others impact on how they relate to, and with, other people (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Work on sociable and shy personality dispositions show that there are those who prefer to be with others than alone, and those who are tense and inhibited when with others (Cheek & Buss, 1981). Other factors such as dietary requirements, schedules, and income can inhibit sharing food (Williamson, 2005) which in turn is linked to sociability. No one household type will suit all. For some, a less sociable environment may be more functional and/or desirable. Placing subjective values on levels of sociability could be another example of the ideals of providers/researchers not being in congruence with the lived experience or preference of residents.

Company and privacy

The company of others was viewed as both a positive and negative aspect of shared housing by Kenyon & Heath (2001). Having others around to talk to, or watch TV with was described as comforting. Women, in particular, found security in having others around and knowing that someone is aware of their presence or absence. Nearly all considered living alone as unappealing and associated this with loneliness, boredom, isolation, and insecurity. There was, however, a constant compromise between privacy and company. Not having private space for entertaining partners, e.g. a romantic dinner, was problematic in the common areas. Tensions and personality clashes were mentioned and complaints of housework inequity were common. Households of strangers were cited as having more of these issues. Most respondents reported having lived with 'nightmare' housemates at some stage. It was acknowledged that when the need for privacy becomes more important than company, or the difficulties of living with others becomes too great, most participants would move on from shared housing. There is an expectation that they will move out when they want to. This must also come with an expectation that they can.

Communal spaces

Shared space in most of the households in Heath and Cleaver's research (2003) was well utilised. People ate, watched TV and congregated in the lounge and kitchen. Heath and Cleaver found that even though most had a TV in their room, very few spent time alone in their rooms:

“... surprisingly, only a handful of respondents ever spent much time alone in their bedrooms, with the vast majority preferring to spend their waking hours in the shared spaces of their households when they were at home. When time was spent in bedrooms, this was usually in order to secure an element of privacy: to work or study without distraction, to watch a favourite TV programme, spend time with a partner, or just to get some peace and quiet away from others.” (p. 101).

McNamara and Connell (2007) discussed the personalisation of the communal spaces as a reflection of equality. One of their participants, a female student living with an owner-occupier, reported that she considered her room as her home. This student stated that as there was nothing of hers in the other areas of the house, the common areas did not feel like home. In the SSLA, where there is likely to be divergent personalities and tastes, personalising the common areas could be problematic. Personal items in the common areas may lead to dissension, disputes and inequalities (real or perceived), especially for those coming into an already established household. Not allowing personal items on display could result in the common areas not being regarded as homelike or home. The private bedroom may thus be the only part of the house considered as home. Finding common ground for the communal areas may be difficult for a group of people who have not been involved in the planning and development of the house or have the ability to recruit like-minded people to share with.

7.4. Ageing and place: Where one lives matters

Where people grow old influences their ability to age successfully (Golant, 2015a, p. 351)

Research on younger households helps make sense of some aspects of the lived experience of older house sharers; people over 65, however, are at a different stage in their life course. The relationship between older people and the spaces/places they live is discussed within the discourse of environmental gerontology. There are distinctive differences, though, between the small-scale shared space living approach (SSLA) at the centre of this research and the majority of research settings that underpin environmental gerontology frameworks. “My home” in the context of the SSLA is also “her home” and “our home”. Research on older people’s attachment to place, belonging, meaning of home (Oswald & Wahl, 2013; Oswald & Wahl, 2005; Wiles et al., 2009), and autobiographic insideness (Rowles, 1980), have typically been conducted on older people who are homeowners. They are premised on people who have a history and constructed layers of meaning attached to a home that they own.

As with many of the alternative housing models for older people discussed previously, accommodating, adjusting, and adapting to functional decline underpins environmental

gerontology frameworks. Environments can be enabling/disabling/inclusive/exclusive (World Health Organisation, 2007). Thus objective features of environments are widely used to assess the appropriateness of a place for people as they age. Golant (2015a) argues that while objective measures and the judgement of outside 'experts' are important indicators of appropriate places to age, the subjective experiences of older people are an equally valid perspective from which to view the relationship between ageing and environment.

My collaborative methodology favours this experiential approach, proposing the worldview of those living in the SSLA. The subjective worlds of those involved in this housing project are likely to be varied. More so as the residents have come from different backgrounds with divergent life experiences, functional abilities, expectations, social worlds, and coping skills. What may be perceived to be an appropriate place to age for one person at any given point of time may not be for another. As such I cannot generalise or provide a conclusive answer to the research question at the beginning of this thesis: "Is this shared housing model an appropriate place to age?" To whom would I be referring? Instead, I look towards an established theoretical framework that privileges the perspective of the participants, to help make meaning from the data with respect to ageing in this environment.

7.5. Residential normalcy: A theoretical framework

The theoretical model of residential normalcy (Golant, 2011; Golant, 2012; Golant, 2015b) focuses on the emotional experience of individual-environmental fit, i.e. is the environment consistent with the needs and goals of the person. As this framework is based on how a person may feel about their environment, it can be applied to the SSLA and incorporates the diverse experiences of the participants in this study. The shared housing model particular to my research is not exemplified in the residential normalcy literature and as such this research provides a valuable contribution to the field of environmental gerontology.

Residential normalcy is made up of two emotion-based independent experiences; residential comfort and residential mastery. Residential normalcy is defined as:

Places where they experience overall pleasurable, hassle-free, and memorable feelings that have relevance to them; and where they feel both competent and in control - that is, they do not have to behave in personally objectionable ways or to unduly surrender mastery of their lives or environments to others. (Golant, 2011, p.193)

The ideal environment, one conducive to ageing successfully and well (Golant, 2015a), is one where a person is in both their residential comfort zone and their residential mastery zone.

They are places where one feels comfortable, contented, and stimulated and also in control e.g. influential, autonomous, dominant, secure, powerful, strong, peaceful, and confident (Golant, 2012). The opposing situation is the experience of negative emotions: discomfort, powerlessness, anxiety, insecurity, helplessness, submissiveness, frustration, and lack of control.

When residential normalcy is not attained, people adopt coping mechanisms to increase their likelihood of achieving congruence. These coping mechanisms are either assimilative (proactive, solution focused) or accommodative (changing one's thoughts and perceptions to match the situation) (Golant, 2011). Using a repertoire of coping strategies, though, does not guarantee residential normalcy will, or can, be achieved.

People make compromises in their aspiration for residential normalcy, settling for the best place they perceive is possible even if it is not perfect. Compromises are likely to be a feature of the SSLA, not only when changing residences but also in the everyday negotiation of the common and social spaces. Often environments have what Golant (2015a) refers to as split personalities. They can become emotional battlefields (Golant, 2012) where there is residential comfort, but no mastery or vice versa. Under some circumstances, e.g. financial constraints, neither residential comfort nor mastery is possible (Golant, 2011).

The coping strategies or repertoires of different individuals in the same environment will vary and are based on the subjective awareness of what is possible and likely to be effective. Personal resiliency, environmental resiliency and an ability to make decisions are the three factors that influence coping repertoires. Personal resiliency is influenced by the personal resources one has such as finances, personality, health, and past experiences. High socioeconomic status is related to an enhanced ability to cope, adapt and attain residential normalcy (Golant, 2015b). The low socioeconomic status that characterises the tenants in the SSLA could thus have an impact on their ability to proactively seek solutions if they were unable to attain residential normalcy within this living arrangement.

Resilient environments encompass more than the physical environment, such as age-friendly places. One of the indicators of a resilient place is, “*resilient older residents with shared vested values, interests who support and participate in collective responses (vs individual self-reliance)*” (Golant, 2015b, p.76). When sharing spaces with others, a resilient environment could be characterised by the likelihood of sharing with others who have similar values and ways of operating in the communal areas. It would mean living with people who consider the needs of everyone in the household and are community-minded vs individual minded.

In the case of the SSLA, of particular relevance is the dynamics between the residents and the governance related to the houses. Having leaders, i.e. in this case BCHT, who are aware and responsive to the needs of the residents are another factor. I would add that coping repertoires within a shared social housing environment will also be influenced by the control each resident feels they have over a variety of factors such as whom they live with; their perceptions of their housing security (e.g. could they be forced to leave); other housing options based on the presence of enabling factors i.e. availability, affordability and appropriateness (Lawton, 1981); the personal cost (emotional, physical and financial) of moving out; the social environment (e.g. the behaviour of others) and the quiet enjoyment of their home such as in the common areas.

Common areas

The common areas are a space that is unique to the SSLA and not represented in the residential normalcy literature. No one resident has the authority or complete control over these areas. These spaces are intended to be managed through collaboration and compromise. Individual coping repertoires such as personal resiliency will influence how residents negotiate these areas. It is a space where interaction with others is inevitable. The bedrooms are private domains but the residents do not have the freedom to utilise the common areas as though they were their exclusive spaces. These spaces are neither private nor public. They are ‘my’ space, ‘her’ space, ‘our’ space, and ‘their’ space if you take into account individual ‘ownership’ of certain spaces such as refrigerator shelves or kitchen bench space. Guests, invited by, and familiar to, one person are likely to be strangers to the others in the house especially at the beginning. Likewise, having friends and family visit in the common areas reduces other residents’ control over their environment and privacy. Not having authority to host guests or family in one’s own house, or only in the bedroom or front lounge by prior arrangement, can be restrictive on both residential comfort and mastery to those who value this. For some though, this may not be an issue or they cope by finding other means of socialising if they can, such as meeting family and friends away from home. One person’s attempt to gain residential normalcy can directly impact on the residential mastery and residential comfort zones of others in the house.

If one can attain residential comfort and residential mastery when living in the SSLA, then this housing model could be considered an appropriate place for that person to age in. The SSLA, though, is not resident-led; the people dwelling there may have dissimilar values, interests and expectations. Personal resiliency and coping repertoires may be low due to life course influences, so attaining residential normalcy in this setting will have its challenges. The coping

repertoires used and the ability of people to achieve residential normalcy in the SSLA will vary between individuals. This study illuminates the different experiences people may have in the same setting and just how significant these differences are to the complexities in evaluating appropriate places to age.

Chapter 8. Participants, pushes, pulls and preferences

8.1. Motivations for moving into shared housing

Moving is a major decision; one not taken lightly. Unlike younger people who readily relocate with changing needs and desires, older people are usually reluctant to move even when a place no longer suits their needs (Erickson, Krout, Ewen, & Robison, 2006; Golant, 2015a; Litwak & Longino, 1987). In fact, changing environments can be a hugely stressful activity for older people especially if the places they move to are relatively different from where they move from (Lieberman, 1975), such as from living on one's own to living with others.

From a developmental perspective, there are three types of moves for retirees: moving for a better lifestyle; moving to access support due to some loss of function; and moving into institutional care (Litwak & Longino, 1987). Healthy and recent retirees, i.e. the younger old, will usually migrate for a better lifestyle if they have the means to do this. Moving into the social environment of shared housing may be either a lifestyle choice and/or a conscious choice to live with others for social support, including the security of having others nearby. In the field of migration studies, decisions to move, or not move, are based on factors that attract or repel one from a place as well as any obstacles or barriers to moving (Lee, 1966); in other words 'push' and 'pull' factors (Erickson et al., 2006). In regards to older people, the residential normalcy framework parallels the 'push' and 'pull' descriptors and barriers. Before moving voluntarily from a place where residential normalcy has not been achieved (a push factor), a person would have:

- exhausted their personal coping repertoires;
- perceived that they will have greater congruence in their new place;
- believed that the move is viable, e.g. the opportunity to move exists; and
- assessed the barriers in terms of physical and psychological resources, e.g. the actual move must not be overly burdensome or stressful (Golant, 2011).

From the residential normalcy perspective, moving is an extreme assimilative coping strategy to attain residential normalcy (Golant, 2011). For those who have limited resources to enable a preferred option and for whom living with others is not a preference, the decision to move to shared housing will likely be prompted by more 'push' than 'pull' factors. Movers will have to take into account the viability of the move and the physical and psychological resources required. Important considerations include the uncertainty of moving into an unknown environment such as: sharing a house with strangers; the need to downsize; the current and

future challenges in accessing affordable, appropriate housing; the barriers to moving again such as costs and practicalities; and whether there is possible alternative accommodation should this arrangement not work. The possibility of future age-related functional and physical decline is also a consideration; it is possible that they may not have the resources of energy, finances or opportunity to move again.

When older people undergo a move to a place where residential normalcy is still unlikely to be achieved, it could speak more about the situation and place they were leaving than the place they are going to. In this, I concur with Lawton's assertion that it is only when the enabling factors of availability, affordability and appropriateness are lacking that shared housing is taken up by those who are able to live independent of formal care, support or services (Lawton, 1981).

8.2. Participants

Below I have summarised personal histories of participants to represent some of the contributing factors to renting in later life including 'pushes' and 'pulls' for moving into a shared living environment. The information below comes from a variety of sources such as conversations, field notes, and documentation rather than a specific line of inquiry. Different pseudonyms in this chapter are used to enhance confidentiality as identifiable narratives are not the focus.

Julie had been living in her rented place for 12 years before it was sold. She had to move just as she was having knee replacement surgery. There were no available rental properties where she lived and I was shown a newspaper article confirming this. Her only family were on the North Shore and she had tried extensively to find a place to rent there before searching in the wider Auckland area. Like many of the other tenants, Julie had her name on the waiting list for a council unit. She found accommodation in a block of 46 studio units in which she thought was only going to be temporary accommodation. This facility mostly housed short stay, young people, students, and new migrants. Each furnished room had an ensuite but no kitchen or sink. The communal kitchen was of commercial standard but Julie found it was not age-appropriate as the sinks were deep and the equipment was heavy and hard for her to use. She had great difficulty taking a cup of tea or food back to her room due to the heaviness of the fire doors, so she rarely cooked. There were stairs in the main entrance and the place was on a hill. Julie spent much of time in her small room with no view. The bed in the room was too low for her to get up from easily and she was not permitted to install a landline. Not having a

telephone impacted not only on her social life, as Julie was not proficient in using a cell phone at that time, but also the connection of a medical alarm. When she applied for a room in the SSLA, Julie had been in the studio room for four months. She was becoming increasingly depressed and losing hope of finding anything else.

Jackie and her husband, Steve, immigrated to New Zealand with a young family in 1981. They built a house, “*and we worked at the same time so it was hard, it was hard.*” Her husband was homesick and wanted to go back to their country of origin to live, so they sold up to return to their birth place. Jackie missed her children, who had made their lives in New Zealand, and they eventually came back. Due to circumstances, when they returned to New Zealand they did not have enough money to buy a house.

They had been living in a council unit on the outskirts of Auckland about 60 km away from Tonar Street. Steve had advanced Alzheimer's disease. When Jackie could not cope anymore she took the recommendation of health professionals, who advised her to find a residential placement for Steve on the North Shore where she and Steve would be closer to their son.

Before I left [the council unit], I always do a lot of checking up and I phoned Auckland Council and I told them the situation and they said “Oh yeah, you can live with your son because you’ll get a house within four months”... right... so then when I phoned them up, “Oh no, you’ll have to put in a new application, everything changed”. So I completed the application and put it in and she said “there is [sic] no houses, there’ll be no houses for a long, long time because we’re not reallocating, we are doing them up as they go”, and so that was the plan. I had phoned up and found out. I said to [her son], I’ll probably only be with you for about 4 months which would be fine, and then it all went (thumbs down). And I said, “But you promised me”. “Well everything’s changed, you have to...it is new application forms” [Council’s reply]. (Interview 2016)

Not long after she moved in with her son, her daughter-in-law became unwell.

So I was only there four weeks when [daughter-in-law] was diagnosed and that basically changed everything because we realised, further along the months, that there wasn’t a cure for this cancer. So it was a rental house that they were in. So it was very difficult and plus I was very, very tired because I’d looked after Steve for about 4 years and I was exhausted. And packing everything up just sort of took the last bit of my energy. I was trying to help with the housework and things like that and it was too much for me, just too much. I was in to see Steve every day and I was coping with his problems, and my own problems and their problems and that’s how I ended up to be in the house. (Interview 2016)

Heather was another who came to New Zealand to be close to a child who lived here. She married a New Zealander and they owned their own home until his business started to fail,

resulting in them losing the house. They rented after that and when he went overseas she was not able to keep up with the rising cost of rental housing on her own. For Heather, security is important. This means, knowing what her costs will be, being able to plan accordingly and having no surprise expenses (such as house maintenance). It was this security that was the main draw card for her with the SSLA. Heather reported, that at the time when she was looking for rentals, she 'just knows' if a place will be OK. She said that some places were awful and she would not be happy there, but knew that she wanted to live in the SSLA.

Stacy who was raised on the North Shore and has family there has a congenital impairment that impacted on her ability to earn enough to buy a house. Her impairment did not stop her from venturing out and travelling around the world. She spent 20 years overseas, surviving on a disability subsidy from her years of working in Australia before returning to New Zealand. As she had not lived in New Zealand for the ten years prior to retirement age, she was not eligible for NZ superannuation. She had been living in an apartment for a year before moving into the SSLA. It was the cheapest place she found but it still cost her \$100 a week more than her income; her modest savings, which were being rapidly depleted, rendered her ineligible for government accommodation supplement.

Dawn and her husband sincerely believed they were doing the right thing financially by selling their house and placing their money into interest-earning investments before the global financial crisis hit.

I might state that by this time much of the money that we had obtained for our house had gone by the board with finance companies with whom we had invested it, thinking we were being good stewards of our money, getting good interests and living comfortably, but of course the finance crash came and a lot of our hard-earned dough over 50 odd years went down the drain, which presented me with a very difficult situation. Fortunately, Mark knew nothing about it. He had passed away two months beforehand. He would have taken this very heavily. I realised I would have to tighten my belt and get over it.

When Mark died I was going to stay on in the rented house until the owner decided to sell it. So it was very short lived actually, being there by myself, and my eldest daughter ... when I was having difficulty finding somewhere to live that I liked and could afford, she said, "why don't you put your stuff in storage and come and stay with us until you sort yourself out". She, by the way, was at that time separated, and so I was widowed, we were able to help each other, and it worked out very well... I had my own room with my own bathroom in her house. Of course, the family came and went, her grown-up family, some staying, some overseas and back and forth, all sorts of ups and downs, highs and lows... So several years went by and I still was there, everything was fine and I was perfectly happy and nobody else complained and we had a great old household really. But I always had a private agreement with myself, that if my daughter met someone with whom she

wanted to team up, I would be the one to move. This had nothing to do with anybody else, it was just my own arrangement. In due course, having been there six years, in the latter three years she had met someone whom she liked enough to team up with and he came to the house to live and I got used to that too. That was what she wanted and he's a very nice person, so I got used to that, but after a while I felt that it was time to look for something else; because I felt they should have the house together without a third person living in. (Interview 2016)

Liz's husband was a teacher in a rural community before he passed away aged 32. Although she also taught there and had other jobs in the community, she had no qualifications. Liz and her young son had to leave the house that was provided for the tenure. She was living with an aunt when she met her next husband. The daughter they had together has special needs. She married a third time and lost her house after this husband took money from her that he did not repay.

As I walk Liz back to the car after our interview. I notice her index finger and the one next to it; they are noticeably bent at about a 30-degree angle towards the others. I ask if she has rheumatoid arthritis also. *"No, my husband did this to me"*. Explaining that she went to the doctors and was advised to get them re-broken and set again, but it was too painful at the time for her to do this. (Interview notes, 2016)

I see no need to expand on this note; Liz did not.

Liz ended up renting and caring for her mother who came to live with her until she passed away. The rent was increasing above what Liz could afford on her own, despite holding down a long-term part-time job in retail.

Half of the women were working, to some degree, when they came into the SSLA; although all decreased or stopped their paid employment since moving in. Louise and Ellie felt they had to continue working in their 70's to cover the cost of accommodation and other basic expenses.

Louise was still working fulltime when she came to the house. She had debts to pay off e.g. legal fees incurred after a relationship breakdown. *"If I retire I would not be able to afford residential rents currently being asked"*. Louise had worked hard all her life, growing up in a rural community and marrying a farmer at 19. *I've worked at least two jobs at a time, most of the time.... worked two evenings and a Saturday shift after working all day*. Coming out of a previous long-term relationship, with less than what she thought she should have got, she managed to purchase a small unit. The unit was on leasehold land, enabling her to buy into the market, but paying the mortgage on her own was still a struggle. When the lease increased she could no longer afford the payments and had to give this up. She had been flatting ever since.

Some of these flats were in large mixed households. When she applied for a place in the SSLA she was sharing a house with one other person, who was moving on, and the owners were increasing the rent.

Ellie was left with no assets when her husband left her. She lived at the back of her daughter's section for six years before renting a house and taking on students/boarders to make ends meet. This house was sold and she rented a unit at a retirement village, moving in just two days before she found out about vacancies in the SSLA. The unit she was in was due to be demolished within two years to make way for a new licence to occupy apartment block. When Ellie moved to the retirement village unit, only two bedroom units were available so her rent was higher than a one bedroom unit. Ellie worked part-time as a cook at another retirement village to make ends meet. She was particularly drawn to living with others as she did not want to live on her own.

Tilly [I keep her original pseudonym as the following was part of her story that is presented later] told me she had been "*a really wealthy woman*" and owned a house in Remuera [an affluent suburb of Auckland] some years ago. She had been a nurse and held managerial jobs in the finance sector. Tilly thought her future was secure. "*You can plan for the worst case scenario but you don't plan [for someone else's behaviour], nobody can*". Her life drastically changed when a stranger approached her on the beach one day. She disclosed that she was stalked and harassed for a prolonged period to the point she lost her job and had to move out of her house. Tilly has been fearful of living on her own since. She said she also lost money when her lawyer embezzled her savings. She later moved in with a boyfriend, and when this relationship started falling apart she had difficulty finding a place that will accept her dog. A male acquaintance offered her a room in his house. Not long after she got there, she was hit by a car when out jogging and was laid up for many months afterwards. Five years later she is still getting treatment for an injury and ongoing pain from this accident. The arrangement she was in, was intended to be temporary and was not working out well. Her dog had passed on. She had put her name down for a council social housing place a few years before applying for a place in the SSLA. Tilly had wanted to live back on the North Shore where her doctor and hairdresser were situated.

These narratives provide real-life examples and insights into some factors contributing to non-homeownership of women over 65. They indicate that there are more 'push' factors influencing the move to the SSLA than 'pulls' towards living in community with others. I have summarised these factors in Figure 7.

Low incomes and opportunities for Women	Family responsibilities and ties	Unexpected, unplanned events	Lack of provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low paying jobs • Financial security attached to husband's career • A need to continue working to afford accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring roles of women • Desire to live close to family • Complications living with family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to New Zealand after a long period of time overseas, lacking awareness of loss of entitlement and the current cost of living • Retirement savings being eroded with basic housing and living costs • Global financial crisis – investment losses • Losses of savings and assets due to dishonesty and behaviour of others • Accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of availability • Unaffordability • Inappropriateness

Figure 7: Contributing factors in seeking accommodation in the shared houses

As discussed previously, social benefits are not considered a strong motivator for moving into shared housing (Lawton, 1981). This does not preclude the possibility that there are those who are ‘pulled’ towards shared housing:

I realised that at [my age] I seriously needed to consider my future and this was my chance. I am so excited about this opportunity of joining some amazing ladies being supportive and part of the team. I'm also very aware that there is no reasonable priced accommodation out in the marketplace for elderly women so what you are providing is nothing short of a miracle for the likes of me. (Application form 2014)

This participant had made it very clear in other interactions that she did not want to live on her own and was attracted to living with others. She was also thinking of her future needs. I interpret these needs as social. The financial benefits of affordable rent were also implicated in her decision.

One would expect that the SSLA would attract those in the community who want to live in community with others. The profiles, which show that there are some who are specifically ‘pulled’ towards sharing with others, also support Lawton’s (1981) premise that the motivations for the creation and uptake of shared housing are lack of availability, affordability, and appropriateness. In other words, there is a desire to move from a place that is so incongruent with one’s needs and goals that one is willing to undertake the stress of moving and take a risk that the place they move to will be better than the place they moved from. We need to question - if the place they were living in was more affordable and appropriate, would they be attracted to shared housing.

All the women would have their own complex sets of motivations for moving, consisting of both push and pull factors, which were not a direct focus of my inquiries. At the writing up stage of this thesis, though, I realised that I wanted to know if there was an attraction to living with others, or not, and specifically inquired about this.

8.3. Preferences: sharing or a place of one's own

The literature on shared housing indicates that most independent, single, older people prefer to live on their own rather than sharing a house (Koopman-Boyden & Moosa, 2014; Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014; Lawton, 1981; McFee, 2017). I was curious to know what the participants' preference was, so I sent an email or a text with the following questions mid-January 2018:

- If you had the choice now of a new one bedroom place in the neighbourhood paying the same rent, would you take it?
- If this choice was available to you before moving into Sunrise/Dunmavin', would the one bedroom place have been your first preference?

The questions were worded to keep as much constant as possible; hence a new house, in the same area, at the same cost, was specified. There was an important context to the timing of these questions. The neighbourhood was being redeveloped so the likelihood of an available and affordable new house in the area was a possibility. New state houses had recently been completed a few doors down from the SSLA with more houses being built in the street, neighbourhood, and surrounding area. Of further note, when these questions were put forward, there were some ongoing issues in one household with a consensus there that the atmosphere in that household was not pleasant at that time.

The willingness of all the women to respond and share their preferences was striking. I received six replies within hours, three within the next five days and I followed up the last person with a phone call a few weeks later.

Five gave an emphatic response, such as the first reply:

My answers to both these questions is a BIG YES, I yearn for my own place every day. I think for me being married to my hubby for 52 years, flatting was too much of a shock to my system [capitals in original email reply].

The other five respondents provided some rationale before stating their preference.

Preference

There was an even split in the responses. Four stated they would have preferred a place of their own in the first instance and still do; four stated they wanted to live with others and still do. Thus, the experience of living with others did not alter the preference of these eight women. There was a slight, but not definite, change in preference for the remaining two. One, whose initial preference was a place on her own, would ‘possibly’ shift to one now in certain circumstances. The other, who did not, and does not, want to live alone, would consider shifting out and be on her own if she could have a dog for companionship.

I was challenged as I attempted to find a value-free term to abbreviate and differentiate these two distinct groups in the ensuing discussions. Words that describe personal characteristics mirrors that of the value-laden ‘warm/cold’ or ‘lifestyler/constrained’ markers in younger house sharers (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli, 2016). Labels for those who expressed a desire to live with others (such as lifestyler, sharer, contributor, citizen, community-minded, co-operative, and social), in my experience, are associated with positive values. Antonyms or labels such as non/less social or consumer (getting needs met) have more negative connotations. Using ‘independent’ for the group that prefer a place of their own and subsequently ‘dependent’ for the other group is also not helpful terminology. I thus choose OP (own place) and WO (with others) to identify the two preferences. I can only postulate that this challenge is a reflection of negative societal values about living on one’s own as previously discussed. There is scope for more research on the language and attitudes surrounding living alone.

Rationale

Most responses were via email and some were verbal. Although comments were not requested, all but one respondent, an OP, elaborated on their preference. These comments provide insights into why the OP’s remain and why the WO’s continue to be satisfied with their living arrangement.

For the OPs, the barriers in moving to a place of their own were highlighted, e.g. the cost and effort of shifting out. The woman who said she would ‘possibly’ move to a place on her own now, and would have preferred to a place of her own over shared housing initially, said she values her independence which I interpret as still preferring to live on her own. She, like all the others, weighs up the costs and benefits (pulls, pushes, and barriers) and personal coping repertoires when contemplating if a move would be practical. There is some indication that although her preference is a place of her own, it is the cost of relocating as well as the extra costs of living on one’s own that would hinder her from moving:

I think everyone values total independence at our age – but now that we have off-loaded most of our belongings (although we could still probably furnish a one bedroom flat) it would be difficult to move. Also, there is the cost of power, water etc., which would possibly be extra.

As well as costs, there are also lifestyle/accessibility considerations that would influence decisions. The following comment from an OP highlights the fact that it is not just a simple matter of preference, one has to have the means of activating that preference, and compromise may be necessary, especially in regards to environmental features that make life easier:

She said she would consider other things when choosing a place to live, such as the extra cost of utilities, and accessibility issues, e.g. hills, closeness to facilities. She did make it quite clear though that she does not like shared housing, so her answer would be yes to both questions, in that she would prefer a place on her own. The cost of shifting to a place on her own would be a factor she would have to consider, as her limited savings are being eroded. (My notes after the conversation)

The next respondent also ranked financial considerations high in her preference. For this person, if the place she was living in previously was more affordable and appropriate she would likely have not moved into the SSLA:

If option became available now: Yes [would move], if rent included same benefits we receive here. If option was available prior this one: Again, yes [would choose living alone] if within financial limits. These are difficult questions as both options have advantages & disadvantages.

In contrast, not wanting to live alone is an obvious attraction with the WO's except for one who prioritised the physical environment rather than the social. This respondent mentioned there is an element of risk associated with sharing that she was prepared to take:

Truthfully, I think I would have tried sharing. As to the other question the accommodation would need to be better than what I have now. In other words something too good to be true. Because what we have now is very good, as one knows one has to take their chances in sharing with others.

One WO mentioned finances; not in the same vein as those who feel their choice is influenced by a lack of finances but to illustrate that living in the SSLA is a preference:

*No (it is not just the room...it is the security that is so important when ageing...)
Again, NO!, .for the same reason...even if I had the money, I would still prefer not to be alone*

The following WO qualifies her preference further by highlighting the balance she can have between company and privacy. She shows a continuum of sociality that occurs in a shared

house, from knowing others are around if needed, being in the awareness of others, actively socialising with others and reciprocity:

Yes, this choice was on my horizon first off & I felt that I would give it a chance & here I am after [XX] yrs. I'm a people person and am enjoying being in a community situation and although we enjoy each other's company most of the time, it's nice to know that I can have some alone time. We share, check on each other if sickness is about, play scrabble etc., and have the same tidy habits, which is important to me as I don't want to keep cleaning up after others. So, as far as I'm concerned this is the perfect living situation for me as a single woman over 65 yrs. Knowing that there are close neighbours to call on gives peace of mind for me also.

The following resident also mentions similar standards and continues on to reflect on aspects she sees as challenges in her household:

I would not have been interested in taking a one bedroom place as I never wanted to live alone. The concept in Tonar St is ideal for a 'fit' person who is capable of living/sharing with others...we are lucky that people are particular about the house/property and take a pride in it. There possibly needs to be more thorough screening of prospective tenants with regard to how they see their own ability to get along with others and sharing responsibilities. Some people have no experience of this. e.g. camping/group activities/being part of a team/running a business (staff)/caring for family/ etc. etc. which help us to prepare for "senior flatting".

8.4. Negative social experiences

These results indicate that for this small select group of 10 women, the preference for living alone or with others is constant irrespective of positive or negative lived experiences of sharing. Of note, most of those in the household experiencing issues, such as those elaborated on in chapter 13, said they would choose to stay. Moving away is only one strategy to attain residential normalcy (Golant, 2011). If one's environment is no longer congruent with one's needs, older renters may be as reluctant to move as the frail homeowners who experience layers of meaning and attachments to the homes they have inhabited for many years. This case study provides real-world experiences with which to further such theoretical models. It also gives rise to theorising on social interactions in shared housing.

As experienced in other shared housing models, negative social exchanges and interpersonal conflict are likely to occur in this type of living arrangement (Bronson, 1972; Lawton, 1981; Myers, 1989; Streib et al., 1984). Empirical research on older adults shows that negative social interactions otherwise described as unpleasant social encounters (Krause & Rook, 2003) have an impact on psychological well-being (Finch, Okun, Barrera, Zautra, & Reich, 1989; Rook,

1984; Schuster, Kessler, & Aseltine, 1990). The literature on negative social exchanges takes into account the types of relationships although the particular relationships between older house sharers are absent in this literature. Offer and Fischer (2018) differentiated kin and non-kin when studying difficult relationships, using relationships between co-workers as the context where people do not choose whom they have to interact with. A study of negative interactions from longitudinal data on older people, used the relationship categories of spouse, children, other relatives, and friends (Krause & Rook, 2003). The relationships within the SSLA do not easily fit into these categories.

Some research indicates that positive exchanges can counteract the effects of negative social exchanges. Okun & Keith (1998) found that for older people, positive exchanges with family can provide a buffer for negative social exchanges with others, and Lepore (1992) found that in college students, perceived social support reduced the psychological distress of social conflict with roommates. If this is the case, it is possible that as the residents are mobile, and have outside interests and social networks, these social contacts may enable them to cope with these conflicts as opposed to those who are less mobile or socially connected. Some of the women regularly housesit, providing them with long periods away from the household. Other research, though, has found that the relationship between negative and positive interactions is not that straightforward (Lincoln, 2000). A study on older women's social interactions (Rook, 1984), indicates that negative and positive exchanges may have independent effects on different domains of psychological well-being, with negative exchanges having a stronger influence on well-being than positive exchanges. In reviewing psychological research on positive affect and health, Pressman & Cohen (2005) also conclude that both negative and positive affect are likely to be independent of each other. Negative social interactions, therefore, should be considered in their own right rather than something that can be cancelled out by positive experiences. Nonetheless, as the residents age and/or spend more time in the house than in outside interests, it is likely that there will be more interactions between them and less contact with established social networks. The impacts of this have yet to be realised in this setting.

The SSLA housing model enables avoidance of social interactions with others in the house if desired. There are incidences whereby some specifically avoid interacting with others and utilise the kitchen when others are not around. This strategy has been relayed to me by the people themselves as they describe how they cope with conflict and also by others in the house when they noticed a prolonged absence of another in the common areas. Having the freedom to choose when one enters or interacts in the common areas can help minimise the chance of

conflict or exposure to negative social contacts. Those in serviced integrated housing where meals are provided may not have as much choice. A low occurrence of social contact, though, can inhibit communication and may contribute to misunderstandings that further enhance negative feelings. When one person does not interact, others, especially those who are more socially inclined, have felt unease:

There is a distinct group of three who are more social, appear to get on well together, will initiate social activities within the house and between the houses... All of them have expressed concern about the 'deviant' in their house. They are concerned that the 'deviant' is depressed, she stays in her room with the door shut, doesn't interact much, is negative, and doesn't seem happy. Comments like "I feel I'm walking on eggshells", "she isn't fitting in", "others are affected by her attitude and behaviour", "we are trying to include her", "we feel as though we have done something wrong", have been relayed to me. There is genuine concern and a feeling of helplessness. (Journal, 12/11/14)

Regardless of the stress that conflict may cause, wanting to move out is not readily expressed. I have heard from more than one of the women during episodes of prolonged negative interactions, that personally impact them, that they have a right to live in the house. They have told me they would not allow others to push them out of their house. I did not inquire further to ascertain if this sentiment might reflect: a social stance e.g. 'I am not at fault so I will not leave even if I could'; a coping mechanism because moving is too difficult; preference e.g. the house is superior accommodation to what they would find elsewhere and they value this; or their ownership and sense of home. One of the OPs has frequently mentioned that the quality of the accommodation in the SSLA is important to her. Regardless of having minimal social interaction with others in her household, this OP also recognised that some contact with others, even if it is negative, may be better for her than being alone:

I discussed with her that there is a social element to this situation that maybe isn't fitting in well with her, that maybe another type of accommodation would be suitable. Her response was that this is the best rental accommodation in Auckland, it is good quality, and it is not good for her to be isolated. (Field notes June 2015)

A similar attitude was conveyed by the one WO who cited the quality of the housing over the social aspects of sharing. The low rental costs, for this respondent, was her draw card for this type of housing when I interviewed her nearly two years previously. She also relayed that it would be both personally beneficial, as well as difficult to live with others. Later in the interview, she said she was looking for belonging which she may not have experienced in her life previously:

We talked about this type of housing. That this housing may not be for everybody. She said this may be the only option if people fall on hard times and only have their pension to fall back on... I asked her if the house is part of her journey.

I guess it is. Believe me, I didn't really want to live here. The reason being is I probably..., I just come to..., I guess I don't want to..., I guess I don't get too close to people... That's why I did this. I wanted to and yet I didn't. I find it very confronting...

I'm also looking for, um, acceptance. I'm trying to be truthful here. I think I do feel accepted here. Yes. They've accepted me. I think they have accepted me... I don't know about all of them, but I feel a bit more accepted here.(Interview and notes April 2016)

Both these women above felt that they lacked social skills; thus living with a group of others provided them with an opportunity for the social connections and sense of belonging that they believed they needed in their life. Their comments show that both the social and the physical aspects of the houses can be an attraction for both the WOs and the OPs.

Another point of interest is that most of those who have vacated are WOs, and it is the other WOs who have had a greater influence over these exits than the OPs. It is possible that the WOs place a higher importance on having a cohesive household and a positive social environment than the OP's. Those who desire to live with others may have higher social needs, goals, and expectations and as such, when the social environment is incongruent with these needs, they adopt coping mechanism to enhance their mastery and comfort zones. The OPs tend to retreat to their room where their comfort and mastery zones are. It is the WOs that I have observed being more dominant in their views on how the households 'should' run. The initial applicants were predominantly WOs. Therefore the order of coming into the house may be a factor. Would stranger households of OPs, be more compatible than stranger households of WOs? There are various personalities involved and the sample is much too small to conclude a generalisable finding from my observations. Future research is warranted.

Considering that those looking for accommodation with a preference for sharing (WOs) could be drawn to this model, one would expect a predominance of the applications for tenancy to be from WOs. This was not the case. There were only five WOs, six if Alice is included. This low number is not enough to ensure that shared houses like the SSLA will be filled with those who want to live with others. This finding concurs with Golant (2015a) when he postulated that it is only a tiny proportion of older people who seek alternative accommodation such as cohousing.

Chapter 9. A story, ageing in place, and security

Although the decision to move into the SSLA may include more ‘pushes’ than ‘pulls’, participants are grateful for a quality place to stay. It is a place that is likely to be better than the place they left. The participants often highlighted the positive aspects of living in this setting.

The following interview with Bonnie was conducted about 18 months after she moved in. This particular narrative was chosen as an exemplar of the lived experiences of living in the SSLA. Bonnie succinctly covers much of what other participants have articulated. The interview is central and included here as a whole piece, rather than raking off individual elements and exporting them to various sections in support of specific themes. This narrative focus is consistent with my intrinsic case study methodology and is a means of facilitating vicarious experiences, providing a deeper understanding of the case. In particular, the chapter demonstrates the CAP criteria by:

- contributing to our knowledge of shared accommodation for older women;
- stimulating new ideas and understandings on sharing space in such a living environment;
- providing relevant information in the narratives to establish plausibility;
- inviting people in and opening spaces for thinking about the social in new ways;
- enabling other audiences to access this knowledge and information; and
- making my position and influence explicit.

Bonnie’s interview enables a linking of theory to the lived experience and further discussion on security and ageing in the SSLA.

For this interview there were no preconceived questions; instead Bonnie had the freedom to express what she thought was important with further spontaneous enquiries by me. I was anxious about ‘doing’ research and a few times attempted to lead a line of inquiry that I thought might have been useful when the time came to engage with literature. It was also the first of the interviews, so neither of us had expectations. ‘A morning with Bonnie’ provides a window into one participant’s lived experience, how she views this housing model, insights into the interactions and management of personal/private spaces, the neighbourhood, expectations, and reflections on ageing and retirement villages.

9.1. A morning with Bonnie.

The setting

Bonnie was sitting on the deck outside the lounge when I rang her that morning and she chose that place for the interview. She greeted me at the door, and as we walked down the hallway, she brought up the term 'elderhood'. Obviously, she had been thinking about this word and talking with others. I did not recall mentioning that term recently, although we had previously discussed it in the group when looking for an alternative term for 'older people'. She told me 'they' had been discussing this and a couple of them do not really like this term. One told her she does not like the word elder, another thought 'wisehood' might be a better option. I had brought coffees so we went straight outside to the plastic outdoor table. It was a late summer morning and very pleasant on the deck. I sat overlooking the empty green sports field at the back, while Bonnie sat opposite, facing the garden between the two houses.

Benefits of this house

As I sat down and reached for my notebook, Bonnie started with "*So living in the house...*" I had not settled yet. Laughing I commented, "You're going too fast". With that, we both erupted in laughter. Bonnie obviously had been thinking about what she was going to say. There was nothing new to me in her opening statement as I had heard it before from her and others:

Living in the house – fabulous! From my perspective, it's been far, far better than what I had before. I used to rent a little cottage behind another house that was also rented. I was never at ease. I'm at ease here. No landlord breathing, peering over you and telling you that you have to pay more. There's security, friendship that we've got. Now that we've been here a year, we spin off each other; we know each other well. I was thinking about this the other night; I would miss all these people. It's taken a while for the personalities to get to know each other, so it's a security, friendship, financial burden relief because we know we have to manage. We know that the rent won't skyrocket and we won't be put out and that's a huge relief. And yes, having the neighbours of course, [she points to the other shared house next door] also we've got to know some of them, but not as well as our own 'inmates' - [another eruption of laughter from us both] you could say we all have our own lives and they [the household next door] interact with each other a different way than we do. I think we have the better house. Gentler laughter from us at the implicit friendly rivalry. Bonnie starts waving in the direction of the kitchen next door. I look around and see Polly through the window. I wave too. This is the thing. There's Polly if she was to see us she would call out and give cheek because that's how

friendly we are. Polly was not looking our way and had not noticed us sitting on the deck trying to get her attention.

Attitude to life

There was a pause, so I ask, “So in terms of changes in your life. Have you had any insights about the way you think about life, about yourself, has that changed since you’ve been living here?”

*I've always been an independent person, so I just adapt to whatever situation I found myself. My feeling when I came here was; ‘Oh, what if the other ladies don’t like me’. My personal life has changed because I go dancing and now I have a dance partner I don’t have to go along on my own anymore and just hang around waiting for a dance so that social thing has given me a focus. It was just something that happened soon after I shifted [a natural occurrence within her established social networks, unrelated to shifting to the SSLA]. From a personal point of view, that’s good for me; I don’t have family close by and grandchildren like the other ladies in here; so I haven’t got that focus; so my dancing and my friend is my focus. It’s a different focus from some of the other ladies. And I think that it’s probably something that... when you don’t have a similar focus to others it’s something that they can’t quite understand. I might not understand what it’s like to have grandchildren, and they don’t understand what it’s like to **not** have grandchildren. But we still support each other and talk about it.*

Getting on with each other

She continues after a six-second pause. *We are very interested in each other in an empathetic way. We help each other. I can remember one day last year. I'd had a bad day. I had one of those sort of days that everyone has, and I came in, two others were in the kitchen. I said, "Can I just tell you this?" There was nothing that I wanted help for, it was to just ‘get it off’ [her shoulders]... and because we’re all women, they said “Sure – go for it”. You know! We both laughed a little then, the laugh you have when there is a mutual understanding between two people. But some people don’t get it. Whereas a man tries to fix things - we just listen in empathy. So for me personally, that’s lovely. As [Rebecca] said once recently, it’s so nice here to come home to really nice people.*

“Do you have time when you just want to shut yourself off from everyone?”

We all do, for instance when you've been out sometimes, you just want that headspace, some downtime, some going to ground time, and you don't particularly want to have a great ‘pow-

wow' with everybody. So we often just come in, shut our door, we all do this. If we saw someone's door shut we respect that. We wouldn't go banging on someone's door. We sort of have this thing between us that if the door is shut it means someone wants their space. So unless it's something, unless you've just spoken to them and you wanted to add something, or the phone rang for them, or there's an urgency, we don't go barging in. If the doors open, oh yes we'll natter as always. So we work that out and give each other space. I guess it's just a sort of courtesy thing. You know your own needs and you understand they have the same.

The neighbourhood

And you know, talking about our environment here it's not an environment in this street I would choose to have, it's a different social texture. We laughed again as I told her how I liked the phrase social texture. And there are some people around here that have a few dogs that roam and cars that come around corners with very loud ghetto blasters. Overall we don't feel threatened or anything nasty, well I don't ...umm and I don't know that I personally have got to know... I mean there is a very nice lady here [gesturing to the house on the other side of the walkway], an Asian lady, I haven't gone and said hello to the neighbours, probably because we've got each other here. A few times I've thought - 'Oh I must go whilst she is out there' - well I don't think anyone else is bothered particularly, ... the others [in the other BCHT house] talk to the neighbours on the other side [The driveways between the other house and their neighbour are adjacent, separated by a wire fence. These neighbours have small children and are therefore often outside. They also came to the house opening, so a familiarity was formed. The neighbouring house Bonnie is referring to is across a section wide expanse of lawn and occluded from full view by a hedge. Thus there are fewer opportunities for naturally occurring interactions].

I asked, "So you feel that you don't have the need as you have your neighbourhood here [within the house]?" As I was wondering if living with others in this situation might actually inhibit interactions within the neighbourhood.

That's the thing really, we're complacent we have each other. If I had been living in a little flat here on my own...

"Hello good morning" – it was Wilma greeting us from the dining room. We had a quick chat about the weather before she moved off.

... normally when I've been flatting on my own, I would always go and introduce myself to the other houses, the people either side of me. It's a courtesy thing. Not only that, you might need

each other one day; for whatever reason things happen, fires happen, people get sick. Some people don't think of it like that they just get so complacent in their own little world. Because I've had to be on my own for a long time, or maybe I've just got that in my personality. For instance, when I lived in Christchurch and had two dogs I'd always go next door and introduce myself and talk about the dogs.

“Do you do anything else in this neighbourhood? – in Northcote?” I asked

I [her emphasis] don't because there's nothing in the shopping centre apart from shopping. Oh, the library! I walk up there a lot but I don't join any groups around, I'm not into mah-jong or tennis or tai chi, you know, I don't do any of those things; they're all around here if you want them. That's just me personally, yeah. I would be the same in any community, I would look for the things that I wanted and it's usually dancing. That's the thing I like doing. And swimming; I go swimming on my own; I just go. Had a few nice swims this summer.

Local people have a picture of us. They thought we were all wealthy. Now they've analysed us. You can be sure they've observed each one of us. My feeling is that if we're in trouble, there would be someone who would help us. I don't feel segregated. I think they've accepted us. We are the white more affluent looking. We're different.

Expectations

I asked about her expectations moving in.

I thought that maybe I won't be liked by the other people and maybe I won't fit in. That was just the lack of security. Umm and not knowing what I know now, that we all do our own things with meals. I thought we might have to sit together. That was the expected thing. Or whatever. I didn't know what to expect having never lived in this sort of ... [long pause] Perhaps I didn't have expectations. I came in thinking that I'd learn how to deal with this new situation, so it didn't faze me, I knew I just had to blend with this new situation, I didn't come in with an expectation that we would all sit around the table having a meal together every day or here doing knitting. No, I didn't have those expectations, so I came and thought I'd just have to blend with whatever's going on. I'm fiercely independent and I thought that at least I had my own room if I couldn't stand anybody else...or they can't stand me [laughter from us both].

On life stages and ageing

“When you were younger, about 20 years ago, would you have considered going into a place like this and would it have been any different?”

Twenty years ago I would still have been married. It wouldn't have occurred to me, When you're only in your 40s, 50s, anything to do with old age is so far away that you don't even dwell on it, you can't even imagine it. If someone had said "Well what are you going to do when you're 80, are you going to live in a rest home", well I wouldn't have known [laughing]? You don't discuss it when your 40 [more laughter].

When I was doing homecare work, [Bonnie had been employed as a personal care and home help assistant for older people in the community before living in the house] I came across a lot of elderly people, just doing their housework or maybe showering [them] and so I got more of an insight. I learnt all these things I wasn't going to do when I was "old", and yeah umm trying to listen to their stories and hearing all the amazing wisdom. They'd tell you about their lives. There's a huge library of stuff in people's mind that gets lost, things they went through. So yes, working with older people, the stages, yes; it's hard when you get older you might go into dementia stages and you don't know it.

If one of us gets do-la-li [circling a finger beside the head] at least there's four other people who would alert the trust and say 'we think Bonnie has gone a bit do-la-li...' [Laughter]. There might have to be different things happen. So again that's nice, having that... [Pause of 6 seconds]. I jumped in saying "someone else to watch over you? Umm, [she looked away and up]... well they're not responsible, but they're there and they notice things. Yeah. Then if we all got do-la-li together... It's something you put out of your mind because you never think you're going to get old, you thought you'd be 35 forever. So you just have to accept it... [Long pause]... Accept things. It's like you know when people are grieving and people say 'move on', you never move on, you get to a stage where you accept.

Comparison with retirement villages

This concept, of us, living together like this, far exceeds what my observation of some of what's around in the retirement villages. People have bought as a couple, one might die and they end up living there alone. They don't seem to have a lot to do. They seem lonely little people that just robotically go to morning tea. They are kind of marooned in a great big mausoleum of a village. And so, really, we've got a much better feel because we can enjoy our garden, we can give each other cheek, we're part of a family. For instance, one local retirement village I went to had a beautiful outdoor seating area under trees with seats. The whole time I went to visit people there, did I ever see anyone sitting there, having a cup of coffee? – No. So they make all these facilities for them, and they don't get used. So you have these lonely little people sitting in rooms like institutions.

“Why do you think that happens?”

I think possibly the family has said earlier that they need to buy a unit, then one of them passes away, or gets a bit senile. It's kind of loneliness that I used to sense. I'd much rather have this. Here, though, you've got your own rooms and communal spaces same in a retirement village. Retirement village is just like everyone in the street. Just little houses next door to each other, people don't have a lot to do with each other.

“So what is the difference between you using these facilities and someone in a retirement village who does not?”

Umm oohh, she paused to think about this. The money. They've bought in. It's part of a complex. They don't have anything more to do with their neighbours any more than they would if they bought into a street. But we are all living in a house together. You have one person there rattling around in a big apartment sometimes. It's one house with people in it whereas they're in separate houses in a retirement village.

Do you feel any safer though?

No, it's just as safe. I guess if you were senile and not mobile... Even here if one of us was like that the others would be extra vigilant. We all check at night [the windows and doors]. Look this is Saturday, it's quiet, there's no-one around.

I can see that Bonnie has analysed her situation carefully and sees it positively. I am reluctant to move away and turn back into a researcher to link Bonnie's data to theory that would diminish her evaluation. I know that one of the ways people can deal with incongruent environments is to use psychological accommodative coping strategies (Golant, 2011). If they cannot easily change their environment, they can change their perceptions of their circumstances. For those who do not have the option of moving to a place that is a viable possibility for those who can afford it, comparing their situation favourably to retirement village living can be a way of coping with the situation they are in. Focusing on the positive, adjusting their emotional reactions to a less than ideal place, minimising the effects the place may have on their well-being, making favourable comparisons with others and/or finding other means of emotional satisfaction, are examples of accommodative coping (Golant, 2011). Given that sharing a place with others is not necessarily a preferred accommodation option, and that other choices are not readily enabled, accommodative coping strategies are likely to be used in some degree by all the residents in the SSLA. Yet, I want to argue that this does

not mean that positive evaluations are less real. Two relevant themes for the SSLA stand out in this narrative – ‘ageing in place’ and security.

9.2. Ageing in place

Ageing is associated with physical changes and decline. I was often asked when presenting on this model: “Who looks after the residents and what happens if they become unwell”. BCHT assumed that the behaviour or an impairment of one person should not adversely impact on others in this non-kin household. For example, BCHT liaised with Alzheimer’s NZ and a dementia strategy was set up. A functional perspective was adopted - addressing concerns if they become an issue for a person or the household. Although no physical support or compensating from other tenants is expected, they are aware of each other’s capabilities and may support in informal ways. Lawton (1981) points out that this support is an advantage of living with others, be that a spouse, family or non-kin. This may be the case in intentional communities where people have chosen to live together and support each other. There are differences, however, when one lives with people who were strangers and have no responsibility for another’s well-being. A natural care and concern for others, though, does exist. The SSLA, by the very nature of having people living together in close proximity, reduces risks associated with living alone e.g. accidentally leaving an element on or falling and not been found. It is likely, though, that for this model, household tolerance of another’s impairment and support is lower than if living with family or good friends. The responsibility for ensuring that a residents’ behaviour does not impact on another resident or the household lies with the landlord. Those living in the houses are well aware of this. When planning for the advent of functional decline and ageing in place, it was expected that as per any other person in the community who has support needs, i.e. is unsafe or unable to manage on their own, the appropriate agencies will be engaged when needed. BCHT intended to support and liaise with the family to do this. In practice, there are issues of privacy and capacity with the reality of working with the family or other professionals. There are no paid social workers on staff or budgeted for. Permission to liaise with family or other organisations is required from the tenant. From my experience in seeking such permission, it has been declined.

Although individuals have had packages of care, i.e. from home help community services, the SSLA has aspects that may inhibit one from being able to age in place as long as they might if living on their own. One resident expressed her concern for the future should she be unable to contribute to the maintenance of the common areas.

Maintaining the house. This caused her some concern as these tasks were getting harder for her to do, but she continued to do so believing in pulling her weight. She likes to do her tasks but is concerned that there will come a time when she can't. She stressed she wasn't looking for solutions; but will figure those out herself when the time comes. This topic was only raised as she feels it needs to be considered for the future. She did not think that the cleaning/maintenance of the common areas was well enough thought out. If she were in her own place, she would be supported with home help to continue to stay there. She would also have the choice of when and what she does: leaving some things to do, e.g. dishes, until she feels ready; family members might help out; or she could pay someone to do tasks. This flexibility and interventions are not so easy in the communal spaces. She said that maybe the rent should go up to pay someone to manage the communal areas. (Notes, January 2018)

Funded home help is not available for shared areas and living with other able-bodied people can exclude one from this service. I specifically asked a provider about home support and described the SSLA. Their emailed response after consulting with the NASC (Needs Assessment and Service Coordination, Ministry of Health) was:

In this scenario generally, we would only attend to the areas the patient only uses (i.e. his bedroom). In shared spaces, this would not be included in our funded housework support. However, for example, there is support for cooking for the patient, the support worker will be requested to tidy up the kitchen following the task identified. Also, this type of scenario could be taken on a case to case basis considering that the adults at home may have their own individual support needs.

The normal WDHB [publically funded health board] NASC criteria for funded housework support would be:

The patient should have a Community Services Card [available to those with low incomes and assets].

Whether or not the patient lives with an able-bodied person at home. In certain scenarios, able-bodied people even if they are not related to the patient are considered in the equation as they may provide support to each other. (Clinical Service Delivery Manager, Vision West, Personal Communication. January 22, 2018).

As well as the impact living with others can have on the provision of services that enable ageing in place, the use of equipment designed to assist people to remain at home can also be obstructed. A resident raised the topic of equipment in the common areas. When she first moved in she said the lounge furniture was too low for her to use. She therefore seldom socialised with others in the lounge or dining room. She would not consider any equipment such as chair raisers in the shared areas, as this would look 'too much like a rest home'.

XXX did not look happy with YYY having personal items in the common areas. This could be an area of contention, as XXX mentioned that she would not have any of her chair raisers in the common area, she did not want it looking like a rest home. (Notes, 2014)

Residential comfort includes not being in an environment that elicits negative emotions (Golant, 2011). For this person, having equipment in the common areas is reminiscent of a rest home and her emotional response to this was negative. She would rather not use the furniture in the lounge than have equipment that will enable her to do so. While there is an accessibility aspect to this stance, as well as residential normalcy implications, there are other possible influences. Decisions such as not wanting equipment in the common areas can be more complicated than just an attitude towards equipment, and caution is needed in interpreting single incidences outside the broader context. Simon (1978) discusses functional reasoning in regards to the relationship of behaviours to conscious or unconscious goals or social needs. This person has consistently stated that she prefers to stay in her room and rarely socialises in the common areas. It is possible that sitting in the lounge does not fulfil a social need, even if she was enabled to do this. Perhaps staying in her room is a coping mechanism underlying other challenges within the shared spaces. She may also not want to be singled out as less capable or requiring extra attention. There are others to consider in these spaces, their needs, her relationship with them, and their right to have an input in such decisions. The decision may not have been solely hers to make. Negotiating these shared spaces successfully requires specific skills and experience, or at least a perception that negotiation is possible; which in turn are related to feeling comfortable enough and having some control in the negotiation process. No-one else in the household expressed that they would not want chair raisers to my knowledge. Any opposition to having equipment in the common areas has a likely impact on the residential normalcy of others who may benefit from equipment at some stage. People may be less likely to feel comfortable in accepting equipment to assist their independence, socialisation and daily living tasks if someone else expresses strong opinions on this. The decision of one can set a precedent and influence the culture of the household.

When it comes to personal items in the common areas there is a range of opinions on this within the houses and has been a cause of conflict. To avoid dissension, one household has strictly kept to the 'rule' of no personal items in the common areas. The common areas are to be left the way BCHT initially furnished the house. A consensus is expected to be sought for any extraordinary items or activities that might impact on others. I was informed that even turning on the air conditioner in the lounge requires everyone in the household to be consulted. The kitchen extractor fan does not; but the use, or not, of this fan has been a cause of ongoing friction with some wanting it on to eliminate cooking smells and others not wanting it on as

they do not like the noise. The process of seeking agreement (and then obtaining it) is likely to be a barrier for anyone wanting to leave equipment such as a special chair, perching stool, walking frame, wheelchair or aids of any kind in the shared areas. This also applies to kitchen aids that improve accessibility and function, e.g. tactile markers or special lighting for those with age-related low vision, a jug cradle for pouring hot water.

Not having full control over the presence of home support and equipment in the common areas may impact on feelings of environmental mastery as competency in these areas are compromised. If the bedrooms are the only place in the house where one feels in both comfort and mastery zone, then it is understandable that the residents will spend more time in their rooms and less time in the common areas.

Sharing living spaces with others, where there is no direct provision of services and no onsite manager with the authority to make decisions for the well-being of the group, creates specific challenges when it comes to utilising supports that enable ageing in place. The attitudes and opinions of individuals within the household drive the culture, precedents and acceptable practice in the common areas. There is the propensity for inequalities to emerge as the stronger, more dominant personalities and/or those who were there first have more opportunity to get their specific needs met. With shared spaces such as in the SSLA, one person's attempts to attain a congruent residential environment can impact on another's attempt to do the same. This situation is a fundamental limitation of this housing model that is demonstrated in subsequent narratives.

9.3. Security

The term security has different meanings in different contexts (Bourbeau, 2015) that are not always well defined in the literature. Living with others can enhance a feeling of personal security by having others around in case something happens and a reduced risk of crime. Security, as identified by the participants in this study, is primarily associated with housing stability related to renting from an organisation for whom provision of housing and affordable rents are the core business. This psychological dimension of security is closely associated with the feelings of financial, housing and personal security. Confidence, trust, predictability and continuity in the social world is the basis for ontological security (Giddens, 1990).

Mimi articulated a sense of security when she wrote the following list that was read out at a dinner BCHT put on for all their tenants. Her list illustrates the financial and housing security that social housing provides as well as benefits of living with others

One Year On

A year ago I jumped at an opportunity to be part of a new project for tenancy with Bays Community Housing Trust (BCHT).

And as one who sometimes assesses my choices after the fact, I thought I would have a look, one year on, at what I have lost or gained by this choice.

Losses:

The dreaded power bill

Phone/internet bill

Water bill

Unaffordable rent raises

Housing uncertainty

Empty, cold house

Loneliness

Gains:

Stability and peace of mind

Friendships

Sisters I never had

Comfort

Affordability of living expenses

Sharing of burdens, emotions, joys and mishaps

My retiree life is better than I could ever have imagined.

(May 2015)

Financial and housing security

Social housing is perceived to provide not only security of tenure but lower rents and thus enable a greater quality of life than one would have if renting in the private sector. Morris (2009), in his comparison between older renters in Australian private and public housing, found a marked difference between these two groups not only with security of tenure and housing costs but also their capability and functioning because of this security. Eleven of the 14 private renters interviewed in his research claimed they did not have the psychological or financial resources to engage in anything but the basic functions of life, e.g. they were unable to participate in social activities. Their lives are precarious, not knowing when their rent will go up and they spend a great deal of their time and energy on just surviving (Morris, 2009). Older renters in New Zealand are also likely to be living precariously (insecurely), having few resources for healthy living, quality of life and social inclusion (O'Sullivan & Ashton, 2012). The participants in this study would be well aware of this precarity.

Not having to worry about house maintenance or utilities is another element of housing and financial security and also ontological security. When I interviewed Mimi a year after she wrote her list, she explained how renting is different in the country where she grew up. She

said over there, renting is the norm, *it's not just for those on low incomes*. It is also regulated so that the rents cannot just go up when somebody feels like it. She was taken aback at the cost of renting when she came here and the competitive behaviours that disadvantage older people seeking accommodation on the open market:

When you're young you don't think about this, you can always earn money, not a problem, but when you're on a pension, a fixed income, it then becomes a problem. There are some areas that actually exist where the highest bid gets the rental and when you are on a pension... I saw the advertising on this house. For me it was a lifesaver, it really was. I don't really get lonely; security was a big issue, for me. My personality is that I like security... means I know what the rent is... Anyway, so there you are, your advertising was perfect. I knew I could make a budget, I could count on that, I knew I wouldn't be thrown out if the house was sold, you never know what could happen but, I don't believe that the Trust... I think the Trust looks at this as a lifetime thing and for me it's a no-brainer... (April 2016)

During that interview Mimi showed me a journal she kept, containing a running record of her costs since moving to the SSLA two years previously. Being able to manage financially in relation to one's current environment, feeling in control, and comfortable are aspects of residential normalcy (Golant, 2011).

Wilma expressed the same sense of insecurity as Mimi with renting:

Sometimes when you're living in a rental situation, you never know when you're going to get shifted on, you never know when they're going to sell it or put the rent up. OK rents go up, I can understand that, but you're more secure where we are... I think. And I mean... well I know why you did it, it's because I mean rents over here are just... lots of places they're very, very high. (May 2016)

Insecurity of tenure is a risk people face when renting from private landlords or their agents/property managers. Precarity is a term used by sociologists for insecurities today (Purser, 2013). Housing insecurity, though, has not yet been gained prominence in the precarity literature; although as this research highlights, housing insecurity is a precarity actuality. The term precarity is still linked closely to employment, with housing insecurity considered a consequence of employment insecurity (Wilson & Ebert, 2013). A New Zealand publication on precarity had no chapter on housing insecurity (Groot, Van Ommen, Masters-Awatere, & Tassell-Matamua, 2017). Standing (2012) defines a precariat in the labour force as a person with: low job security and income; no solid basis in place, community or relationships; less opportunity to plan for their future due to instability in their present situations; and lower status and rights than those who have had more opportunities to become enmeshed in their communities and society. There is scope for further research specifically

paralleling the precarity literature on the work-age phase of the life course with living situations for older retirees. Older renters may have been living precarious lives and a precariat worker will probably become a precariat older renter.

Reduced connections with community, place, and relationships; lack of control of one's future; lower status in society; and less opportunity and choice as to where and whom they live with are all associated with housing insecurities. The possibility, or presence, of housing insecurities such as homelessness, poor quality housing, and ageing in poverty are also related to ontological and physical safety/securities. Lack of adequate shelter or making trade-offs to afford shelter, such as going without heating and food, directly impact mental and physical health (Howden-Chapman et al., 1999; Howden-Chapman et al., 2012; Howden-Chapman, 2015). Sharing a house with others, if this is the only conceivable means of improving one's financial and housing security, could be a trade-off some people are prepared to make in precarious times that they would not consider if their housing and financial situation were more secure.

Physical/personal security

Safety and security are often touted as a reason to move into a retirement village; safety from what, however, is not well defined. Jacobs (1974), in his ethnography of a large early retirement village, found that safety and security from outside threats was one of the main reasons people bought into this community. Ironically, people in that community were still wary of walking the streets at night; there was no law enforcement in the village and people did not feel secure enough to leave their doors unlocked even when they were home (Jacobs, 1974). Security, as it pertains to moving into a retirement village later in life, is underpinned by the possibility of functional decline and framed in terms of personal safety risks of living on one's own without help available if something happens e.g. falls (Fonad, Wahlin, Heikkila, & Emami, 2006; Sergeant & Ekerdt, 2008). In a study of Abbeyfield residents (Kartupelis, 2015), security for them meant being safe from physical harm and the security of living with people they trust. It was not clear if those trusting relationships were other residents or staff, or if this trust emanates from the presence of established routines, processes and oversight. Trusting relationships are an aspect of residential mastery (Golant, 2011), and in a shared living environment could be essential for one to feel comfortable and in control. Living with a person, or people, one does not trust, relate to, or get on with, would presumably impact on feelings of security. The residents in the SSLA did not know each other beforehand; thus the presence of trusting relationships was not secured. This lack of certainty would likely have been a consideration when making, or not making, an application for the SSLA. Security

associated with having others around is thus contingent on the relationships within the households, an unknown factor when deciding to share a house with others.

Ontological security

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, to be safe from physical harm is a basic need (Maslow, 1943); housing, financial and personal security needs are tangible manifestations of this safety domain. Wahl, Iwarsson and Oswald (2012) relate Maslow's work to the foundations of environmental gerontological frameworks. Theories such as person-environment interchange are based on the psychological needs of belonging and agency (Wahl et al., 2012), which are higher up the hierarchy (i.e. can only be adequately addressed once the lower needs are fulfilled) than the physical need for safety.

Ontological security, initiated in psychiatry by R.D. Laing (1969), an existentialist, is a means of understanding the psychological and social dimensions of security. Laing used terms such as the 'ontologically insecure person' and regarded ontological insecurity as an existential position. Importantly, ontological security for Laing originates from the self. Outside influences, e.g. housing insecurities from this perspective are viewed as a threat to one's feelings. Giddens (1984; 1990) further developed this concept to the field of sociology. He focused on everyday routines in his theorising on ontological security. Saunders (1984) built on this when he argued that the desire to own one's home is based on the need for ontological security in having a place to call one's own in a world where belonging and life meaning has been eroded alongside a decline in kinship ties and traditions.

Dupuis & Thorns (1998) specifically looked at ontological security in relation to older people and the meaning of home in New Zealand. Their focus was on the home as a secure base within which routines are enacted. Nettleton & Burrows (1998) examined insecurities of homeownership and fore-fronted financial insecurities, inequality and poverty in the ontological security debates. Colic-Peisker & Johnson (2010) also studied the anxieties facing homeowners and placed financial security at the foundation of ontological security in today's world:

“Although people need more than economic security to live happy and fulfilled lives, in Western capitalist societies economic interest is considered “the bottom line” and economic security is, by implication, seen as the primary basis of ontological security.”
(Colic-Peisker & Johnson, 2010. p.354)

Although not directly addressing housing or accommodation, Mansvelt, Breheny & Stephens (2014) in their research on ontological security and economic resources of older New

Zealanders highlighted the influence of context, life experience and circumstances on feelings of security. Security is more complicated than a lack of material and economic resources; there are individual differences in how secure one would feel in the same environment.

The residential normalcy framework is also based on an individual's experiences of their situations. Trust, predictability, continuity and feelings of being in one's comfort and mastery zones are ontological securities and particularly pertinent in the shared space social environment of the SSLA. Housing and financial needs are being met with the SSLA and possibly physical and personal security needs; what is not clear is if the SSLA satisfies a need for friendship and belonging.

Chapter 10. Navigating the shared spaces

The shared living spaces are where social interactions between residents mainly occur. As pointed out previously, there is a lack of research that guides our understanding of what it might be like for older people to share a house. What literature we do have on house sharing is on the experience of younger people who are at a different life stage. At the time the house was being planned and promoted, a banking company put out a memorable TV advertisement about older people flatting. This popular advert portraying a highly dysfunctional flat, was recounted with humour by people I came in contact with. Older people sharing a house was a novel idea and this advert likened it to flats of younger people squabbling about shared space. The bank advertisement's depiction of older people in a flatting situation was designed to emphasise the need to save for retirement. The underpinning moral was that flatting in one's later years was not a desirable situation to end up in. Drinnan (2012), a media writer for the New Zealand Herald, on promoting the success of this advertisement, wrote in his column:

"Commercials that raise a smile are rare enough. So DDB and Westpac deserve congratulations for the new "flatties" commercials showing the perils of getting old and not owning your own home.

DDB executive creative director Andy Fackrell said: "We've all been in a flat full of morons that we want to escape from - a lifetime of niggling among flatmates - and had warnings about the looming flat meeting. In our mind, it was also about changing the typical bank ad which featured happy couples with balloons and rainbows.

"It's got a cross-section of people like [a] guy on drums who can't give a damn about others, the prissy women always miserable and one doing the washing - and the anal retentive guy with his special milk marked in the fridge," Fackrell said." (Drinnan, November 2012 - Flat spot is a winner.

Retrieved from

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10849331)

I did wonder whether this satirical portrayal of flatting influenced people's perception of sharing a house with other older people; thus impacting on the delay BCHA faced in filling the rooms. The experience of sharing a household with other older people in a situation like the SSLA was unknown. Uncertainty about living with others was a common reason people gave for not applying for a room in the first house. The advertisement, though, did spark dialogue on what it might be like for those over 65 to share a house. Paul Charman (2013) a lifestyle columnist in the NZ Herald, in his article 'Why older people make good flatties' had a more positive perspective on older people sharing spaces:

The Westpac Flatties TV ad, a warning to all bad savers, has been a hit. It's been voted people's choice on blogs and has also won an advertising industry effectiveness award.

The ad makes its point in a highly entertaining way. Elderly but also apparently broke, the flatties seem doomed to share a home with milk-stealing slob. Now they must pay for previous spendthrift ways, as horrid flatmates leave washing in the machine, play drums loudly in their bedrooms and - we can safely assume - do other annoying stuff.... It's all great entertainment but, in its basic premise, quite wrong.

Most oldies of the type shown, say aged from late 50s through to late 60s, have excellent people skills. In my view, they're the one group likely to carry off with a bit of style the kind of flattie depicted. Most in this age group have learned the benefits of taking responsibility for their own belongings and caring for those of others...why should they not enjoy the benefits of living with others in a communal setting? It would presumably provide them with company, security, and – since they don't seem to have enough for places of their own – financial benefits...and some of the oldies I know would have sufficient experience, integrity and settledness to make this kind of arrangement work quite well. In a city as hard pressed by a housing crisis as Auckland is, perhaps a sane version of the Westpac Flatties concept is worthy of consideration.
(Charman, November 2013, retrieved from:

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=11151197

As Charman pointed out, in times of a housing crisis, this could be a good idea. How it would work in practice though was unknown and open to such speculation. My longitudinal research on the actual lived experiences of older women sharing living spaces enables this unknown to be known. Picking up the issues raised by the bank advertisement and responses, and to aid an understanding of the everyday lives of those dwelling in the SSLA, I further discuss housework and the sharing of the common spaces.

10.1. Housework

Household chores can be an area of tension within households (Altintas & Sullivan, 2016; Heath & Cleaver, 2003; Rende, 2015)). In researching younger shared households in Australia, Baum (1986) stated that domestic chores were a major source of conflict and a determinant of a household's success. The literature on housework, in general, is dominated by a focus on gender inequalities and the gendered nature of traditional household roles (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Manke, Seery, Crouter, & McHale, 1994; Sullivan, 2016). Inequalities in the division of housework associated with gender and parental roles do not directly apply to this household. There are no couples, they are all women who are technically of equal status within the household, and they are not living with their children. Residents' responsibility for the management and maintenance of the communal areas distinguishes this model from service integrated housing models for older people, whereby a

housekeeper is employed. The SSLA is a novel situation that needs to be considered in its own right. The following descriptions of the everyday occurrences in the communal areas offer a window into the experience of living in these households.

There were challenges at first, but not what the literature on households of younger adults might suggest, whereby resentment over others not doing their fair share is common (Baum, 1986; Heath & Cleaver, 2003; McNamara & Connell, 2007). The over 65s in the SSLA do not habitually leave their mess for others to clean up or actively avoid doing their fair share of housework. The main issue with housework at the beginning was that there were not enough tasks for people to do. It was common for someone to do a job only to be told that this had already been done. One person told me she was once accused of 'hogging' the vacuum cleaning.

The desire to engage in household chores was apparent early on when Wendy found the vacuum cleaner BCHT provided difficult to use, as it was heavy and hard to hold. The others in the household freely offered to do the vacuuming for her. Not a problem they said, this is what living together is about. If one cannot do something the others can do it; there is always something else one can do. Wendy, who has worked with people living with disabilities, found that not being able to vacuum impacted on her ability to participate in the housework as she would like to. She was prepared to buy her own vacuum. BCHT purchased another one for the household that Wendy could use.

A type of 'roster' was eventually set up (Figure 8) whereby the ticks indicate that the job had been done. No names were entered and it was conveyed that it did not matter who did the task. Personal responsibility and fairness were not an issue. The purpose was to avoid doing something that had already been done. The list was not ticked religiously.

2017	VAC	DUST	KITCHEN SURFACES	DISH WASH STOVES	TEA TOWELS	EXTRAS
1/2					✓	
1/2		✓	✓	✓		
4/2					✓	
5/2						COOKTOPS
7/2	✓				✓	
8/2	✓					TOASTER
9/2		✓	✓	✓	✓	
13/2					✓	
15/2					✓	
16/2		✓	✓	✓		

Figure 8: Housework list. Photograph: Author

Whenever I inquired about the housework, I got a universal response that it is no problem, often accompanied by a look of bewilderment that I would even ask this. The following dialogue between residents, when I asked them about the housework, typifies the attitude towards housework:

Bonnie: "If I see something that needs doing then I just do it and it's the same to you two ladies [addressing Cathy and Wilma]... you just get in and swing the vacuum cleaner... [All erupted then into song: "Sadie the Cleaning Lady"]

Bonnie: "Cathy might say ... I'm going to do the louvre windows..."

Cathy: ... "I haven't done them yet"...

Bonnie: ... I'll say "oh are you, that's nice",

Rebecca: "I looked at them the other day and thought, well if I get time I'll do those. I looked at them again and didn't have time"

Cathy: "I even got the little things to clean them... now I know that you all know, I'll have to do it now"

Rebecca "So where's the little gadget kept so I know if I get time"

(Transcribed notes 4 November 2015)

Having similar standards of cleanliness is seen as a positive aspect of living together. Even if someone slips up and forgets it is not seen as a problem:

Cathy: "Basically, if we use the kitchen we leave it tidy for the next person, otherwise, we'll be saying... left that there. A bit like the Westpac ad. It's OK if someone occasionally leaves something there, they forget."

Rebecca managed a household of various ages in her previous flat, as she was the oldest and the leaseholder. When I posed the question, "*The other places may not have worked if there wasn't someone around enforcing the rules, why does this work?*" others answered this, providing their insights into why they think it works so well:

Wilma: 'cause we're just wonderful.

Bonnie: We are all mothers, you're used to looking after the house and the welfare of people.

Cathy: It's just being respectful of others.

Bonnie: But because we are all so tidy, it's no big deal if someone forgets. Often we will just do the extra dishes or something as it doesn't happen all the time.

Rebecca: I think we are actually the other way, we go overboard to ensure we don't leave a mess for someone else. Good standards.

(Transcribed notes 4 November 2015)

When one household was developing, the women were hyper-vigilant. Polly and Alice, in particular, expressed how they tried extra hard to be respectful, cooperative and compromising even though maintaining the standards had become onerous for them at times. They wanted this to work and were anxious to do the right thing.

[W]hen the household was forming, they decided not to ever leave anything around on the bench. They were to tidy up after themselves straight away. They seemed to have strived to do this even though it has caused stress, food getting cold when they have to clean up before eating it, anxiety if they think they may not have cleaned up enough, anger/resentment (these terms weren't used by the tenants) at other people's mess not being cleared up immediately. They all felt this should be relaxed. They admitted they were all tidy people, and do take responsibility for their own mess, but would like some leeway. To be able to eat their dinner, and relax a little before cleaning up. To be able to leave things around for a short time without someone coming and reminding them they have left something around. (Notes on House Meeting 21/08/2015)

A year after this meeting, when discussing the household standards again, similar sentiments were present. The three participants in the discussion below enjoyed the benefits of having a spotlessly clean and tidy common area. It is possible, though, that Polly and Alice's comments reflected the compromises they were willing to make in order to maintain these ideals and co-

operate with each other; they were compromises that they may not have made if they were living on their own. Accommodative coping strategies enable such compromises, e.g. focussing on being thankful, accepting someone else's standards that potentially could undermine another's (as per Alice's comments that Mimi cleans up after they had gone to bed even though they 'never leave it a mess'), making light of being accountable to others, and assuring oneself that their previous behaviours (or feelings of residential comfort and mastery) may no longer be suitable in a shared living environment.

Mimi: Were very clean here and...

Polly: ...and very thankful

Alice: I come in at 2 o'clock in the morning and think 'Oh she's been here already' [referring to Mimi].

Mimi: Sometimes I get ahead of myself

Alice: We never leave it a mess

Mimi: Oh no, never. But I can tell you it needs ... My extra attention I always do it when nobody's there... [Pause]

Mimi: Housework here isn't an issue because we like a clean house. We've been trained. We've done it all our lives.

Polly: And Big Brother is watching us [laughter] there is a motto in this house – you leave it clean for the next person.

Mimi: And that's respectful

Polly: When you're at home...

Home, in this case, refers to where Polly lived previously. A comment that I did not follow through with but alludes to a possibility that the common areas are not considered 'home'.

...you think, I'll just leave it there and fix it later, I'll just put this on the bench for now. We can't do that.

Alice: Sometimes I'd like to do that [slight laugh] but I can't

Polly: But we mustn't do that.

Mimi: That's the thing when you're sharing, always making sure that it's alright for the next one.

(Transcript of discussions 26/8/16)

When I interviewed Mimi, she told me she has a habit of clearing up immediately after herself and admits to having high standards. She also pointed out that she did not expect others to follow suit; although from the notes and conversations above, others may have taken on the compulsion of conforming to her standards:

“From my upbringing, even if I was alone I would do it. With the nuns for 9 years, I’m used to cleaning up after myself and people find me annoying, but I’m so used to doing this, I’ve been trained since age 6, to age 13/14 to do this, I was a boarder, 250 girls, you have to do your bed every morning, clean up your dishes, pick up after yourself, you never left anything behind where you were, so for me living in these conditions is easy. I don’t have to learn it, but of course, being such a perfectionist... I’m a perfectionist... I’m so perfect it annoys me... and so, I have to live with that, I have to learn to accept that. It annoyed my daughter, it annoyed my husband and it annoyed everybody around me. I’m a perfectionist, it has to be perfect. If it’s not clean, I don’t like it [she laughs at herself]. It is annoying for people living with me.

I asked how difficult it was for her with the behaviours of others, who may not have the same standards:

Ah... [long pause while she thought about this]... I don’t know... I think it’s harder for the others than for me, you know [chuckle]. They sort of accept a few things, like in the morning I shine the kitchen, my way, and they’ve accepted that. I do it around 5, 5.30 in the morning, nobody’s there, and then I come back afterwards and make my breakfast, and so they’ve accepted that. They know I’ll do that every morning.

“What about you? How do you cope?”

Oh, I just do it. When they come in in the morning, it’s all shiny and clean, and nice.

I asked if she ever gets upset if someone messes it up again.

No [said immediately], Oh no, Once I’ve had my breakfast and the day’s gone, that’s it! The morning, first thing. When I raised my kids I used to stay up until midnight so that in the morning it’s clean.

Mimi expressed that she was more concerned about how she affects others, than how they impact on her. I would say that this is also the case with others. Most have told me how they were apprehensive at first with how they will fit in with others, and how the social interactions would develop, especially at the beginning when they did not know each other. For instance, would they eat together, what would others expect, what would become the norm? Living in a harmonious household has been relayed to me in different forms as being important to this group of women. As Polly has said many times “*We want it to work and are committed to making this happen*”.

I have found no other literature on the domesticity of non-partnered and non-family, shared households of women aged over 65 to help explain the housework phenomenon. Bush, Machinist & McQuillin (2013), three women over 65 wrote a book about their experience of sharing a house with similar experiences around housework:

We've had more fun doing household tasks than we ever did before, probably because we are not doing them alone or trying to coerce an unwilling partner to do unwelcome work. Fortunately, we share a similar level of motivation to create a comfortable, aesthetically pleasing home, so no one baulks at the tasks. (p.121)

What is equally interesting about the experience of living together that these three women recounted was that housework was barely mentioned. There was no specific chapter or even paragraph on this topic. I can only surmise that housework in households of older women is not the source of conflict that is recognised within groups of younger house sharers.

The women coming into the SSLA have all run their own households for many years and/or lived on their own. They are well experienced in being responsible for the upkeep of their homes. I believe there is more to it, though, than habit, skills or maintaining a certain standard. All, even those who do not participate as much socially within the household, want to do their fair share and contribute. Everyday activities in social situations have been related to belonging or 'togetherness' (Nyman, Josephsson, & Isaksson, 2014). This Swedish study on enacted togetherness found that contributing to others (or in this case the household) was a way of feeling needed, appreciated and valued (Nyman et al., 2014). The field of occupational therapy and the residential normalcy theoretical framework each offer a base for further theorising on this housework phenomenon.

Occupational therapy is concerned with actions, person and environment (Cutchin & Dickie, 2012), and establishes that it is through the everyday actions that meaning, purpose and choice is developed and enacted (Hammell, 2004; Hasselkus, 2006). Being prevented from engaging in personally gratifying daily activities is likened to a sense of imprisonment by Hasselkus (2006), who terms occupational deprivation a violation of one's human right. If this is the case, being able to do regular chores, if one is capable and willing, is an expression of freedom, choice, empowerment as well as providing a sense of purpose and meaning.

A willingness to do housework and/or engage in personal gratifying daily activities such as housework may also relate to residential comfort and mastery. On a basic level, having a clean tidy house where everyone in the household shares similar standards and values concerning housekeeping is congruent with being in one's comfort zone i.e. pleasurable

feelings about the physical environment, and a hassle-free feeling. Housework is not only a way of maintaining that pleasurable environment, but it is also about personal mastery over one's environment i.e. feeling competent and in control. In a shared space environment, however, attaining residential normalcy is more complicated. There are constant compromises around individual differences e.g. in the way items around the home are placed, the dishwasher is stacked, the kitchen towels are washed, the use of extractor fans etc. These compromises are efforts made to maintain peaceful relationships which relate to residential comfort in this social setting, such as hassle-free feelings (Golant, 2011) or living in a harmonious household. Housework in this shared space may also be a form of household contribution, equalising relationships and implicitly negotiating a share of the control (mastery) over the common areas. The more similar individual's attitudes are to what is comfortable and equitable the fewer compromises people will have to make to accommodate other's needs and maintain household harmony.

I do wonder what the impact of a paid housekeeper would have on residential mastery if doing housework is a personal expression of participation, ownership, control, comfort, freedom, choice, purpose and meaning. What happens when there is a greater divergence between individuals on what they consider comfortable, and when compromising in this situation becomes too onerous? When does this become an issue that needs to be dealt with? Would a loss of residential mastery associated with having a housekeeper/manager be an acceptable trade-off if it maintains household harmony/comfort?

10.2. Sharing spaces

Housework is only one activity related to the communal areas. The following summary of the first house meeting with a new tenant provides examples of how this space is negotiated. The meeting was called to welcome a new person into the household and answer any questions she might have. I constructed the notes from a recording of the meeting. I do not usually write such detailed minutes but intentionally did so this time, firstly to provide a record of the discussions with enough detail and clarity to help inform other residents coming in. Secondly, I was also aiming to capture an outsider perspective to share with those within the household, thus increasing their awareness of the house culture. I wanted to make the implicit rules more explicit. Thirdly, I also was aware that I might use this record as data for the thesis. I have included this record in its entirety

Questions raised [by new occupant]:

Can I put plants on the common deck, and also my outdoor table and chairs?

What is my contribution to household expenses?

What space can I use in the kitchen for preparing my meals?

Plants and table on the deck:

This is actually the only 'rule' - Anything put in common areas has to be in consultation with others in the household. This does not necessarily mean a consensus has to be reached. The rationale behind this is to avoid people cluttering up the common areas with personal possessions. The discussion that ensued brought up some interesting points.

The spirit of this rule is generally followed. There are instances where plants are put on the deck temporarily, e.g. sharing flowering plants for others to enjoy, or pots waiting to be shifted elsewhere.

There is a health and safety issue if something is blocking exits.

If it is agreed by all that you leave an item in the common area, it is for all to use. You may choose to gift this to BCHT or still 'own' it and this needs to be communicated. General wear and tear and possible damage are to be expected.

One person said she does not want to be responsible for other people's items. Extra furniture means having to shift more things to clean around, creates clutter and she does not want to look at other peoples' possessions.

No decision was made on the planter until everyone has seen it, and how it might look on the deck. One said that she does not use the deck so it does not matter to her as long as the exits are clear and a clothes rack can be put up on the deck.

Contribution to Household Expenses:

There is a system in place whereby everyone is responsible for certain cleaning items. This seems to be working for everyone, although some willingly opt to buy more than others. The new person agreed to buy washing powder and Oxypower for washing tea towels.

Kitchen space:

Longer term residents (2 and 3 years) have established ways of doing things. Someone coming into this household is at a distinct disadvantage. When we talk about the kitchen, terms that identified spaces belonging to people were used frequently, "your spot", "that spot

is still empty and it was scheduled that it was for you before you came in”, “her space”, so it is no wonder a new person would be hesitant, trying to fit in, being considerate of others, and not knowing her ‘place’. The new person initially stood back and just ate an apple in her room as she tried to figure out where she could fit in, not only for space, but for the best time. Busiest times are around 5 pm.

The previous last person in was asked what it was like for her when she first came. She said there were a lot of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’, that it felt very restrictive and it did not feel like a home she could relax in. She also admitted to not adhering to everything that was said. Another person had alluded to the unwritten rules. It was important that this topic was discussed openly and we had a long and robust discussion summarised below:

While there are no reserved spaces and people are aware that no-one has rights to any particular space in the kitchen, people do have their favourite spaces and these are often related to how they utilise the kitchen. People regularly use the most convenient spot for them.

One has all her ingredients and equipment in one corner; therefore, she likes to prepare her food there. She is very good at minimising the space she uses and cleans up quickly after herself.

Another likes the space at the end of the bench; she travels between the fridge, cupboard and sink and avoids the other ‘busy’ kitchen area. She does not want to get in peoples’ way or them in hers, as she does not move fast so that end suits her best.

The fourth person in the house [originally] was assigned a space and has used this ever since. She recalled a time early on when she was reprimanded for using too much space.

Another has a space she uses but is reluctant to call it her spot and stated that if someone else is using it when she comes in, then she will go somewhere else. “It is not a big deal”.

A spot was suggested for the new person as others were not using it. This space, however, was not the most convenient one for her. She said she would like to be closer to the compost bin as she uses a lot of vegetables. She also found that she was getting in the way of another when using this space.

I will add here: Is this space empty because others also find it less convenient? If so is it fair that the last one in (who is equal to everyone else) gets left with spaces no-one else wants?

Generally, though, finding a space to work is not considered a major problem, as rarely (if ever) is everyone preparing food at the same time. Some prepare early and eat early, some

prepare early and eat late, and some prepare later and eat later. Some dishes that take more time to cook, e.g. curries and soups, can be prepared earlier in the day. People will often wait until the kitchen is less busy. No-one has a set routine. It is fairly flexible. One woman said she does not have time to cook with her busy lifestyle at present, so buys ready-made meals.

Use of space does cause some dissension at times. Everyone needs to be mindful that there are others who might be coming in to prepare their food.

Visitors:

The new person came in the kitchen once to find another tenant entertaining her visitors there, and she apologised for disturbing them, feeling like she had intruded. It was acknowledged that there have been many discussions about this and it was explained that people should feel free to have guests over with consideration and those living there should not in any way feel constricted in their activities.

(House meeting 13 March 2017)

At the time of the meeting, the above issues, in regards to space, had not been communicated to me as ongoing or major problems. When Ruby came into the already established household, she encountered similar claims to favourite spaces in the kitchen, but she did not consider these spaces as fixed:

"When I first came in I had the little spot between the sink and the oven top, I had that spot and someone just said oh "Polly likes this spot" and I said "I do too. May the best one win", I didn't make a big thing, nobody made a big thing of it, so anyway, when Polly came back [from a time an absence], I still had the spot, but sometimes if she was there first I just moved to another spot, I never said anything ... I don't care where I move as long as I have a spot, if I don't, I have to go out. Nobody should really have their own spot. We all have our favourites, I have my favourite, but if someone has taken it I just move to somewhere else if I can, and I do, and so should everyone else. This is what we are all living together for." (Ruby, July 2015)

Mimi's comment below indicates that the spaces are being constantly negotiated:

"Sometimes I tell Ruby, "can I squeeze in here somewhere, she spreads around ... try to remember that there are others coming in " the other day I said "Where can I go" she said "over there" I said "Oh OK, I'll go over there", I thought OK [laughing]"

As with other narratives I have shared, the notes on the house meeting above is a perspective on a specific time for a particular purpose. A subsequent observation soon after the meeting provides more naturalistic data.

The kitchen door is shut, so I knock and call before I open it. Ruby and Tilly are sitting in the lounge watching the evening news. Despite my informing the household that I was coming the day before, they looked surprised to see me. Ruby had an empty plate on her lap and Tilly is eating her dinner... Wendy comes in says hello and takes a tray out of the oven. She then takes her food to eat in her room as usual. For less than an hour, I alternate between sitting in the lounge and standing in the dining room talking to whoever is in the kitchen. Everyone at some stage is there during that hour, and at times there was nobody in the kitchen. I did not notice any disorder, chaos or mess and recall there being ample room for others to work. Ruby got up and said she wanted to clear her dishes. When Tilly finished she said she wanted to get her plate in the dishwasher before it got too full. Ruby offered me a cup of tea and the three of us went back into the lounge. Ruby got up to put the dishwasher on and Polly came in to prepare a salad. I observed Ruby hovering around the sink and dishwasher as she was cleaning up, oblivious to the fact that she was hindering Polly behind her trying to get to the bench. As I was standing there talking I could see through to the kitchen next door. Two of the women were standing beside each other at the bench busy preparing their meals. Both kitchens, dining rooms, and lounges were clean and uncluttered. Everyone was able to do what they needed; there were periods of activity, periods of conversation, and relaxation. (Field notes 21 March 2017)

I have been to the houses on many occasions at different times, and they have always been clean and tidy. One household was informed I was coming but seemed surprised to see me. I have no reason to think that my presence impacted unduly on the rhythm of the households.

These notes provide an insight into what it is like in these households, and that it has little in common with the Westpac advert depiction. Paul Charman's predictions that the experience, character and maturity of older people are more likely to result in a positive living experience than a life sentence with slob, morons and niggly people, is a more accurate representation of the everyday interactions in the common areas. Also in accordance with his earlier statement, this group of people do appear to have a style and experience which may differ from younger house sharers, which certainly lends itself to more investigation as to why this may be so.

Chapter 11. Sociality

The shared spaces are more than places where everyday tasks are conducted. They are also social spaces. The literature on younger shared households associates stranger households with low sociality, whereby people just rent a room, social interactions are minimal and the pooling of resources and sharing of food are rare or non-existent. Thus, based on the literature a low level of social interaction would be expected in the households. On the other hand, a high level of social interaction was anticipated when the SSLA was promoted as a place of community and companionship. In reality there are examples of both high and low sociality. There are some who want more social connectedness, and some who do not. There are changes over time within groups and within individuals; and there are times people get together for a specific purpose. It may be more useful to think of sociality as a continuum, whereby the sociality of these households, containing diverse individuals, change depending on the dynamics within (Heath & Cleaver, 2003). The narratives in this chapter provide examples of incidences where socialising occurs. Later chapters elucidate the sociality further and show that individual's do not necessarily get their social needs met; be that the desire to live in a community of like-minded people, or a desire for privacy and to be on their own.

There were organised social interactions within and between the households. A notice of an 'event' was typically placed on the fridge/s, an open invitation for all to attend. BCHT Manager, his wife and I had always been invited to the joint (i.e. both houses) Christmas party that is still held every year. Different people initiated these events, not everyone attended and there were some who have openly stated that they did not want to attend these or to be personally invited. Spontaneous social get-togethers were rare as far as I was aware. The following narratives, written at various times, provide examples of the lived experience of these social occasions.

11.1. Celebrating together - both households

May 3, 2015. Birthday and welcome to the latest tenant.

It's been seven weeks since the latest tenant (Ruby) moved in and today was the day that was the most convenient for everyone to hold a welcome party. Just goes to show how busy everyone is. It also happened to be her birthday, as well as three other birthdays within two

weeks of today. I knew about this over a month ago and was reminded last night when nine of the tenants attended the dinner put on for all BCHT tenants.

A squiggly inflated balloon was hanging from the front door handle, and when I got closer I could see the words 'Welcome', and 'Sunrise House' written on this. I rang the doorbell and could hear laughter as people were coming up the hall to answer the door. I was asked for a password before they opened the door. Alice let me in, sporting a pirate hat, a thick chain hanging from the wide belt, leather looking studded black fingerless gloves, black calf-length pants, and a black and white striped top with a black bolero jacket. A welcoming, cheerful pirate. Mimi was poised with her camera/phone to take a picture of me and "the pirate" as I entered. I could hear the camaraderie as I was walking down the hall, noticing more long squiggly balloons hanging down from the lounge window opposite the hall. I joined the party on the back deck. Lovely warm feeling with everyone there. A tasty homemade snack was placed in my hands and some reshuffling of chairs occurred so I was closer to the table. The talk was initially about the dinner last night, lots of laughter over the video that Mimi took of me and Alice 'line dancing'. The term 'elderhood' from my proposal was mentioned, and sisterhood. "Where does the name hood come from," someone said, and I couldn't help but make a connection with the nickname of 'the hood' for this neighbourhood. The conversations progressed to enjoying the company of other women and a feeling of sisterhood. Oh, how I wish I had a Dictaphone to record the conversations [but I would not have in this situation]. If there was evidence for how this housing model was working, it was present tonight in the interactions and dialogue happening. *"I never thought I would get on with a group of women, but it's wonderful"* *"I feel I have sisters I never had"* *"I'm enjoying the company of other women"* Lots of praises for the housing model. *"Much preferable to living with someone who owns the place, it's very different and better to have an equal relationship"*. A 'thank you' to me and Neil for getting MSD [Ministry of Social Development] to finally agree to the living alone allowance. Talk about Abbeyfield and the criteria and cost of living there. Mimi is very keen on fundraising for BCHT to build another house like theirs. The topic of doing a calendar girls calendar was mentioned again, of course with hoots of laughter and who will be what, with what props; pot plants, cupcakes, bow and arrow *"it will have to be a big one for me"*. *"Who will be number 12?"* Our property manager was nominated - he has a beard, so he would have a Santa Claus theme. I was enjoying the conversations so much I didn't notice if everyone did. When this [the calendar proposal] was first brought up at the opening of Dunmovin', it was a joke, so I thought, but this seemed to get a bit more serious. Someone said they had the Great Barrier calendar girls fundraising calendar, with the name of the

photographer on it. Oh oh! *"It has to be web-based, it's the only way to go" "We could sell two million at one dollar each"*.

It was a potluck with everyone bringing something to share. Delicious food; beef hot pot, salmon pie, spinach quiche, bean and tomato salsa, broccoli/feta/vegetable salad, stuffed savoury apricots, chicken, potato au gratin, then two cakes and rum balls were passed around for dessert. Of course, because of the birthdays, there were three candles on the cakes.

In short, I had a very enjoyable evening with nine of the tenants. One tenant didn't join us, she stayed in her room. She did, however, come out to use the kitchen at one stage. She had attended the dinner last night. I felt really comfortable.

May 07 2016 - Dancing at Dunmovin'

Another fish n chip/ birthday night at Dunmovin'. Cathy answered the door with a warm welcome and I could see the birthday girl Bonnie down the hall, looking as trim and stylish as usual. I later commented on how nice her blue patterned top was, to me it was quite striking against her white Capri pants, "Oh, I got this from Farmers years ago" was her reply. She had birthday cards and her presents laid out on the coffee table in the lounge. I don't really remember when we started giving gifts for birthdays, but it seems the right thing to do lately. Mimi reminded us that we had decided not to give presents, and I had tussled with myself last year if I should send birthday cards. For me, it's because I'm specifically invited to a birthday party. Ruby arrived not long after me and Rebecca came in after work as we were eating our fish and chips. The place was decorated with balloons, a happy birthday banner, a plastic birthday tablecloth and the birthday paper plates were on the table alongside the designer serviettes. A large plate of chocolates and another of grapes also decorated the table. The wine glasses were on the bench to be filled up as people arrived. The CD player was prepared, sitting on a side table just inside the lounge facing the dining room. As soon as we had finished our meal, the music started and we were up on the floor dancing away our dessert and chocolates. Wilma is the hand jive specialist, but Bonnie can keep up with any dance moves. We tried, but messed up on the Saturday night fever; when do we point to the ceiling, roll our arms or move to the side? Whatever! We made it through that song, only to realise it was the wrong one. Mimi took a video of four of us attempting these dance moves to the Bee Gees music, saying she was going to put them on you-tube. She has an account. The Pasadoble was hilarious. Bonnie picked up a scarf from her gifts, gracefully waving this before Rebecca, having us all in hysterics especially when Rebecca started barking as she 'charged'. That was also videoed. Someone pointed out that the kitchen/dining in Dunmovin' is bigger and easier to dance in than the house next door.

At one stage I wondered if our music would disturb the neighbours; and when Bonnie pulled up the back blinds, I imagined that if there was anyone on the sports field, they would linger and be entertained by the scene through the window.

Christmas

My notes around Christmas parties are scarce as I fully participate in the festivities at this time of year. For the first Christmas, a celebration was arranged at Dunmovin'. I recall the house being well decorated for the occasion.

Dinner, finger food and nibbles at Dunmovin' [seven of the women were there as well as myself, and I would expect that the property manager and his wife were also present]. The house was done up lovely. Alice said that after seeing how Dunmovin' decorated their house and got into the Christmas spirit, they [unclear who she was including in this statement, but I recall that Alice was the initiator and most of the decorations were hers] put some decorations up [this had been an area of contention, with no one wanting to rock the boat as not everyone in that house liked a lot of Christmas decorations]. I said I was pleased they are making it their home and just doing it. Alice said she has to, *"it's too hard on them* [referring to those who want to personalise the house] *not to"*. (Journal 18/12/14, comments in retrospect bracketed)

The following years I observed not only that there were fewer decorations in both houses, but also that there was more of an individualistic than a collective feel about the houses.

I had felt a bit alienated from those in the houses lately, wanting to visit but having no apparent reason to do so and being uncomfortable just turning up, feeling as it's not the right thing to do now, but not yet finding a way to keep in touch. It is Christmas, and I was invited to for a get-together. I couldn't make it, will be away, so missed this chance to interact and also get a feel for what Christmas is like for them this year. Has it changed, how well are they all interacting, who won't be there and why? Well, I can only do what I can. Christmas is a great opportunity to reconnect, so I made everyone a small Christmas cake. I feel now that this is a house of individuals, so I made individual gifts, I think that's more appropriate now, whereas last year I thought of the houses as more of a collective, i.e. a household - not ten individual people.

I couldn't see much Christmas decorations around, not like last time....There was a potted red hibiscus tree with three large blossoms and a red peace lily on the deck. I mentioned about the Christmas decorations, the plants looked a bit Christmassy, and there were a few small decorations placed around the communal area. I asked if they had a tree last year, Polly couldn't remember, said that Wendy would know. Wendy came out and sat with us. She said they did have a bigger tree last year and it was Alice's. Alice put up some of her decorations

the previous year. Alice is overseas, and will be for Christmas. I walked over to next door. Emma greeted me at the door, she seemed to be the only one in. She took me to the lounge area to see their decorations when I asked if they had a tree like last year. There was a string of Christmas characters across the window in the front lounge advertising it was Christmas time. I found out that Wilma had put these up. The 4 or 5 foot decorated Christmas tree just inside the door demanded people look at it. The little side table that held Emma's handmade Christmas ornaments last year had only one of them, and Emma said the other ornament was someone else's, she had to give them some room. All the doors going down the hall were decorated, I assume by the occupants, as they were all different, ranging from intricate decorations to a couple of strings of tinsel tacked above the door. The table had a Christmas centrepiece; there were red and green balloons on the corners of the dining room and the lounge. A window decal "Merry Christmas" was on the window facing Sunrise House. I got the impression that everyone had put something of theirs out to share. No big tree in the lounge, but there was a smaller one on the coffee table. I remembered last year the decals on the front door that were visible from the road. They weren't there today. I didn't stay long as I had other things to do that afternoon. As I was about to leave, Bonnie came in. I asked who was going to be around Christmas day, Emma wasn't sure, and said she wasn't going to the party next door. Bonnie said that she doesn't think Rebecca will be home, and Cathy won't. She will and she isn't sure about Wilma. (Field Notes 22/12/15)

Scrabble Nights

Regular scrabble nights were organised. I had not attended any of these nights although I had been invited. It was standard practice for both households to be involved and they alternated between the houses. My notes of 10 October 2015 indicated that they started around this time but there was some apprehension over hosting this in the communal areas, where not everyone in the house appreciated outsiders in this space.

Polly arranged a game of scrabble recently and three from Dunmovin came over for this

There were two games of three people on the kitchen table playing. Alice did say that she was a bit on edge at first, although it was arranged for 7.30. She is wary of upsetting people. She said at the meeting when they talked about having people over; she remembers XXX saying that it would be OK after 7. (Journal Notes, after a conversation with Alice, 10/10/15)

A previous note reinforces this:

XXX [the same person as above] said she doesn't want to mix with the others from next door, doesn't like them coming over, she signed up for a room, not 10 people all wanting to be friends, she doesn't want to be friends with anyone in these houses she picks her friends and she is

careful whom she chooses as a friend, and it certainly won't be anyone from these houses. (Notes from a conversation I had with one resident after others had expressed concern for her not joining in 02/11/14).

In 2018, these scrabble nights were still going every week, although there was a core of only two, with others joining in if they wanted to. One resident said she was excluded from playing scrabble due to interpersonal conflict between her and one of the regulars.

The following note, while not a celebratory occasion, is another illustration of the relationships and collaborations between the houses. Their involvement with the neighbours and also the wider community are also exemplified.

Neighbourhood watch

Alice and Polly had joined in a neighbourhood watch group in June/July 2015 but there were discussions about having their own between the houses. Cathy arranged for the neighbourhood watch coordinator and the fire service to come over and talk with both households. Mimi had agreed to be the contact for one house, and Cathy the other. It was mid-week and only five were available to attend, two were at home but did not want to join in; but one of these did turn up after our morning tea when the fire department came. Mimi came up the back deck and I hadn't seen anybody just popping in the back door before. It was really nice to see the camaraderie between them all. I got up part way through to get my notebook when the conversation turned to the neighbourhood children and safe houses. I wanted to record this incident. The day before, two children from an adjacent house got out of school early arriving home to find that their mother wasn't at home. So they had the foresight, and the relationship, to come next door to Sunrise House. It wasn't long before the mother came home... I wasn't intending on going to the dinner that was arranged for that night as I had a lot on and I didn't want to overstay my welcome. I was invited again and I thought "why not". I enjoy the company of the women, I genuinely do, and I've been thinking about this friendship/managers sort of thing. It has been hard, these hats. Moreover, I have had to compromise some friendships that I would have liked to have established and developed a bit more, but feel the distance because of my RM role (Field Notes 15/4/16)

11.2. Celebrations – within the household

There are also times when a smaller social occasion suits, and I have been privy to some of these:

July 8, 2015, fish and chips night at Dunmovin'

The kitty system was working well; there was too much money in it, so a decision was made to have a fish and chip night before Rebecca went away on her trip. Bonnie opened the door and offered me a pair of warmer socks; it was a cold night. Walking up the hall I saw Emma and Wilma chatting in the lounge. The table had been set with placemats, side plates and wine glasses, looking very welcoming. Rebecca hadn't returned from work and Cathy had gone to get the fish and chips. I sat with the two in the lounge, joining in the casual conversations. I can't remember now as I'm writing this up, what we talked about a couple of hours ago, but it was pleasant.

The heat pump had been on and the door to the hall was closed. The atmosphere was welcoming, comfortable, pleasant, familiar and friendly. I was invited to stay the night if I wanted - on the couch. When Cathy arrived with the fish and chips, Bonnie took six plates out of the oven where they had been warming - a nice touch. I was directed to sit anywhere, "but don't you have your favourite places", the answer was 'no'. They don't sit at the table together. They eat at different times and often on their own in their rooms. I couldn't help but think how nice it must be for them to eat together occasionally and fish and chips means no-one is contributing more or goes to too much trouble.

I brought a wine; Rebecca brought her bottle out and so did Cathy. Rebecca is leaving tomorrow and we heard about some of her other travels. Whilst there the phone rang; Cathy went out of the room and talked for a while before coming back in and handing the phone to Rebecca, saying it was someone from Sunrise House ringing to wish her a good trip.

I enjoyed the night. *"We haven't got anything for dessert", "I was going to get something then ran out of time", "me too, I had thought about it"*. Someone got a tub of ice-cream, another brought out a can of Black Doris plums, six plates were dished out and we all enjoyed dessert. Everyone pitched in to do the dishes, no fuss. A very pleasant night. (Field notes 08/7/15)

The following year when I attended a similar night, the warmth and friendly banter were still there. There were, however, subtle differences in the collective culture.

March 18, 2016, fish and chips at Dunmovin'

It was all arranged. Bonnie opened the door for me, ushering me into the kitchen where the table was set with 5 places and the plates were warming in the oven. Wilma was around, Rebecca was in her room and Cathy was running late. No mention of Emma and I found out after enquiring later was that Cathy invited her and her reply was a simple "no" said without

eye contact. Wilma said she put an envelope with \$5 under her door so she could buy herself some if she wished.

A very enjoyable night filled with good company and laughter. Wilma said that Cathy had called it an 'F n C' night, initially not realising what she had said until they all erupted in laughter.

There were five of us and five different bottles of wine. We all had a glass of our own wines and used the tongs to grab our fish from the box on the table, then helped ourselves to the chips laid out on a plate. Bread and butter were present and two people brought out their tomato sauce, whilst another produced vinegar. I can't remember what we talked about but do remember enjoying the conversations and the company. (Field notes 18/03/16)

The obvious change is that one person chooses not to join in now. The others still include her; she is invited to come and they returned her monetary contribution from the kitty. It was only when I read these notes together that I was aware of the move away from sharing food and wine to consuming one's own in a social situation. This possible, slight decrease in collectiveness has likely occurred as the household has developed and experimented in what works best for them.

July 10, 2015, bon voyage for Mimi

I had been invited for drinks with the tenants to see Mimi off. Polly had arranged this and Mimi, however, had already arranged to go out to dinner with someone else later.

Alice opened the door for me, the others, Polly, Mimi and Ruby were in the lounge. Wendy was in her room, I didn't ask, but Alice said she knocked on Wendy's door.

There was wine, figs, cheese, and crackers as well as a homemade damson paste that Polly had made; she later gave me the rest of this to take home. Friendly conversations.

Alice slept in this morning, her clock told her it was Saturday. We all laughed as she demonstrated how she washed "under here, under there, and under there" put a hat on, didn't have breakfast but made it to work.

Everyone said how uncomfortable the chairs and sofas were. Alice said they gave her a bad back. Polly said the settee was suitable for her long legs, but the chairs were not. Alice said that that's why they don't use the lounge that much.

As we were chatting, Wendy came into the kitchen. She said she had forgotten the gathering was on. She put the oven on then went back into her room. I asked her about the chairs as she

had said soon after moving in that she didn't find them comfortable, and she said she doesn't like to sit on them. (Field notes 10/7/15)

The point that was made about the furniture not being comfortable has to be taken into account when contemplating the regular use of the common areas. Is it a reason, an excuse or just one of many factors that contribute to these common areas being underutilised.

April 22, 2016, Polly's birthday

Polly invited me that day to drinks and nibbles at Sunrise for her birthday. As usual, she is a wonderful hostess. One of Alice's friends was also there, I had heard about her, a stylish woman in her 80s who used to be a ballet dancer and teacher. Mimi took this woman home as she was going out to play pool. I was pleased to see Wendy there. She didn't stay for long, but it was great she made an appearance. The usual comfortable laughter and conversations. I do enjoy the company of these women.

Polly invited me to have dinner with her one night as her guest. This was in conjunction with a regular craft night that Polly and Alice had been trying to organise in an attempt get people together and intentionally create a sense of community.

18 July 2016 dinner with Polly

I was greeted at the door by Mimi when I arrived for dinner, with Polly coming up behind her. Everyone was there at some stage. They were all aware I was coming. Polly had prepared some cheese and her damson paste with crackers on the side, and Mimi brought in some tapenade on crackers; we all shared this. Polly offered me a wine. Wendy was preparing her dinner, didn't come into the lounge with us, but interacted with others in the kitchen and took her dinner to her room. Ruby had prepared hers; Mimi coordinated hers to be ready as ours was. Alice was the last in the kitchen and Polly offered Alice some of the braised steak pie she had made for us as she came down from her room when we were eating. She declined this as she had her own dinner, but she did take up the offer of dessert. We talked for some time. I arrived at six and left around nine o'clock. No craft was done. A pleasant evening, one that enhances the atmosphere, gets people together.

Of course, I was not there all the time and usually know of these celebrations when invited. One morning I was with someone at one house and we both popped over to say hello to the other household:

It was Cathy's birthday, and we were shown photos of the morning whereby they dressed in onesies and fancy dress and had breakfast together. The table still had a Happy Birthday banner

on it and a chocolate cake was there with a note for all to help themselves. We had some, and the photos [of the dress ups] were hilarious. (Notes 16/07/17)

I end this section on sociality with a field note when the house signs went up on the houses. This narrative captures a significant moment in time and some context around this. Beginning with a reflection and then a discussion on how the places came to be named, it continues on to showcase earlier aspects of this housing model. Social cohesion at this point in time is evident in this piece.

11.3. Signs up - 30 May 2015

Two years ago, (May 2013) I drove to Tonar Street for the first time to describe what I saw. It was my first field trip, my first field notes. I was apprehensive and unsure why, what and how to write. I have travelled the same route many times since and written a lot of field notes capturing the stories of the development of - first this housing project and now the homemaking.

Today I was back at the same spot, celebrating the naming of the houses, with the signs finally delivered. Although the first house was finished over a year ago, negotiating these signs to get to this stage was a process that to me was well worth it. The outcome was evident today; twelve of us were there to see these signs go up outside each house and enjoying the company and once again celebrating the houses and the lives within. The whole naming process started with some Trustees thinking the first house should be named. I remember at one stage numerous emails going around with suggestions, some minor disagreements, and little consensus between us. It was too contentious so we held off until the house was tenanted with the first four people and quite rightly passed this on to them to decide. Alice did some research and put some time into looking at the history of the area, coming up with a few suggestions; none of which seemed to fit. Some people were enthusiastic, others indifferent, just like the Trustees were earlier. The name Sunrise House was chosen, the house was seen as a new beginning and also the sunrise visible from the lounge was often enjoyed by those living there. When decisions like this are made, it may not mean everyone wholeheartedly agrees; it usually means that there are no major objections. It may not be a big deal for some and others may compromise. When the next house was filled, a pukeko started visiting to the delight of some, and Pukeko House was put forward as a name. One person had a bad experience of this bird and therefore really didn't like this name; so this was an objection that was respected by all and another name was sought, ending up with "Dunmovin' and reflecting

that no-one wanted to move again. Having a pukeko on the sign was agreed on. To me this is how things work in the houses, everyone is respectful, there are compromises, it may take time but everyone is committed to working it out. Apart from trying to get a consensus, the long delay in getting the signs done reflects the volunteer nature of the work of the Trustees with everyone juggling other priorities within their own schedules and demands.

Before I continue, I want to take a minute to reflect on those names. Sunrise - a new beginning is a profound statement. It is a statement of hope and optimism, a new and brighter future that is being created, and a new way of living. Dunmovin' is another powerful statement; one of determination to make this work, and a reflection of the challenges and struggles that everyone has been through to get here. This is home.

Today these names are going public; they will be seen by everyone who passes by. Sunrise House is the first stop; the bubbly is poured and we congregate into the front lounge for toasts and a few words. BCHT Manager (Neil), his wife (Pat), and I join all but one of those living there and the five others from Dunmovin'. The 'speeches' reflect how happy everyone is to be there and how well it is working. Some comment on how their quality of life has improved and all are very appreciative of the opportunity to live there. There is some mention of how well everyone gets on despite being different. It isn't all about the benefits to the tenants. Pat said how challenging it can be for Neil when managing some of the other houses. When he comes home, however, after being at [these houses] he is full of praises, loves coming here, and is well looked after when working around the properties. Pat told me later how much she enjoys visiting, as I do too. The atmosphere in that room is one of warmth, camaraderie and cheerfulness. BCHT provided the house, but it is those living there who have created the home, they are the ones who made this a place they enjoy living.

We all move outside to put the signs up and gather at Dunmovin' for drinks and food that everyone contributed. The conversations continue and I pick up on the subtle aspects that illustrate more fully what was said and also what wasn't said about living there. Everyone lives busy lives, and the fact that they made the time to be there shows a commitment to each other. All pitched in and contributed to the food, drinks, cleaning up planning and coordination. I found out that [Alice and Cathy] had made an effort to meet with and befriend one of the younger tenants, in one of the other BCHT houses, who was struggling with both mental and physical challenges. Neighbourliness closer to home was evident in the relaying of an incident where a neighbour in need felt comfortable enough to come over and asked for help with something. A casual invite from one household to another to join them in watching a movie at home tonight portrays the relations and community between the two houses. The

laughter and friendly banter, reinforce what was more formally said earlier about how happy people are to be there and how well it is working for them. I was serious when I said that I want a room in one of these houses, who wouldn't want to live here?

This chapter and the previous two, focus on the earlier times and aspects of this housing model that are working well. These are examples that can be used to convince ourselves and others that this housing model is successful and there should be more of these houses. If I had left the field to write up my thesis at this point, the tone of this research may have been entirely different. Everyday experiences and interpersonal relationships within the households are not intrinsically a continual positive experience for everyone at all times. This longitudinal study has been able to weather the contradictions, the highs and lows, and capture the impact of the SSLA over time on the lives of the participants, providing a deeper understanding of this housing model. The ensuing chapters illuminate areas where the SSLA is not working so well for some.

Chapter 12. When things do not work out

There are many examples of what is working well. Sometimes, though, we can gain a better understanding of a case when things do not operate as expected. It is in the times when one or more person's attempts to achieve their residential normalcy collide with other's attempts to do the same that the downside of sharing living spaces come to light. The following narratives tell a story of what is not working well for some. Only one household is represented in this chapter, and the one that follows, as this is the household I have had more involvement with and vacancies have occurred. These narratives reinforce that both the housing and research projects are about people and their lives not just about a housing model. The following two chapters are the perspective of two residents thus are particular to the individuals concerned. We as readers are privileged to these narratives only by the generosity of all the participants who allowed them to be shared. It is also through the research methodology that these narratives are enabled. It is these voices and experiences that are missing from the literature, voices that provide valuable insights into this housing model.

12.1. Alice's experience

Alice was one of the initial women in the houses, staying two and a half years. She allowed me to capture her story three weeks after she had left. I rang her as she was travelling between venues from a funeral. She told me she was not in a good space and invited me to her place later that afternoon to talk. Before I represent this interaction, I share my reflections on how the house did not work well for her.

When I thought about the upcoming meeting with Alice, my first priority was to allow Alice to be heard by me as a Trustee. She had told me on the phone that she did not think BCHT did enough, and she would like the Trustees to know how it is in the house. She did not feel she had been listened to. What she had consistently said for a few years is that she wanted BCHT (in other words me as RM) to rethink what they tell people about living there. "Is it just a boarding house?" Alice's expectation when she moved in was that BCHT's priority was to create a place of companionship - a community of people who wanted to live with others. She had told me on a number of occasions that being part of a close community was what she signed up for and the repetition throughout the notes below shows evidence of her enduring dissatisfaction that this had not occurred as she expected. She wrote a small piece to promote BCHT, on what living there meant to her a few months after she shifted in:

I have been blessed to find such a place to share with women my own age facing similar financial, relational, and future loneliness issues. It was way beyond my dreams. I had searched to find something like this for many years, to no avail. Most women I know are either still married, have enough money to live alone, or aren't interested in sharing their lives with others. Some would rather be lonely. They are missing out on so much adventure and character building which living here is providing for me. Sharing is a blast from the past and brings back that feeling of togetherness, of family. As we grow in this together we may bring that bond of family back, which in turn may inspire others to do likewise. (Abridged, 25 June 2014)

This was more her ideal, something that Alice thought would eventually happen as they all got to know each other better. Six weeks after she had moved in, and before writing the statement above, differences were emerging:

[Alice]...was not sure about the concept of the house but when she first set foot in it she [relayed that she] knew she wanted to be here. Polly and Alice told me how everyone seemed to have different ideas on how the house was going to be run. Alice and Polly want the company, and Wendy and Mimi tend to keep to themselves more, spending time in their rooms. There have been no shared meals yet. I observed, however, the flowers on the table and Alice said she bought them for Polly as she knows that Polly likes to have flowers in the house (Notes, 31 May 2014).

At the second house meeting a few weeks later everyone individually shared their expectations. Alice expressed her desire for a convivial atmosphere that was not yet happening, and a hope that it will develop to meet her needs:

In the beginning I was so excited, after 10 years I've finally come across something that will help financially but most important to me was the sharing, Sharing for me was just that. Being part of something. I didn't want to live in my flatmate's pockets and having a space of my own was good, but only for a temporary escape from my room, because I want to use this house. It's my home ... so it's been a bit difficult for me in a sense because things aren't happening.... I just don't feel that we are sharing as much as we could. Sharing activities, I don't mean meals, but sharing activities hasn't happened yet in homely things e.g. jigsaws hasn't happened [Alice wanted to set up a jigsaw in the front lounge, but at least one other did not want it in the common areas]. I will wait and see whether it will. All have been very good to me, very nice to have someone to share with, when you have a problem or something like that, instead of loading it on my family and friends. You can say something here and someone will help you with that. Getting to know how we all work... I would rather talk about things. When I walked in the first day it didn't feel like anyone was a stranger at all. Once we have worked out all the common areas, understand and work through that, I'm sure it is going to be better. (Transcription. June 18, 2014)

At this meeting, other's expectations were voiced, and the different attitudes and values around privacy and company are evident:

I consider it a privilege, to be here and I think it's a very wonderful situation and I feel that it is made up of people who want it to work. I get the impression that we will all like this communal living to work, we will do our best to see that it does— by being flexible and cooperative. I would want it to work and will do anything I can to make it work, between us and whoever else comes in here. I think we are all caring people and I feel that that's good and we have the ability to make this whole thing a wonderful success. The whole thing is working well for me, I am absolutely thrilled with the way things go and I think there is nothing we can't work through. We all have our differences but there is nothing we can't work through by speaking to each other and understanding. It is like a marriage, you try to see things the way others do. Any group of people coming together have to want to work to do that. A bit like going camping, you learn to fit in with others in your group. I think the main thing is caring and wanting it to work. And I think we will do that. People ask me how am I getting on in my new home, I know they are all expecting me to say oh this and that – it is just fine, it is wonderful and I mean it. (Polly, June 18, 2014)

My expectations coming here were quite different. First of all I was in dire straits financially, so my first expectations were overly financially, I slept like a baby. So that's very good. I'm a very private person, don't like people in my space, my private space is very important, so here I am learning for the first time in my life to share. So I consider the girls here as sisters, sisters that I don't have here. My sister is overseas and not in my space. There are things you tell your sister that you wouldn't tell your neighbour so to me these people are all my sisters and this is a very good feeling. I get my privacy and space. I really genuinely like everyone. I think this is great it's wonderful. Takes a while, huge adjustment, and little steps at a time. It is bringing us closer together, trusting each other and helping each other. We are all there for one another. I think we are getting to know that. I noticed that Alice, she waited for me last night, she was happy to see I was home, and I thought that this is really nice. The other night when Alice took Wendy [for an appointment] it is just family, so you know there are these moments when you can't help nature, you wouldn't get this with strangers. Even with family you do not want to impose, among us you don't feel this kind of restriction, we know we are there to help. So that's quite an outcome I didn't expect actually. (Mimi, June 18, 2014)

I came with the idea that it was going to be a wonderful place, and this is a wonderful place it is all that I wanted. The section is great, you take people as you find them around here. I'm also a very private person and don't like sharing myself and my thoughts, I do like to spend a lot of time in my room, but am quite happy to share the facilities. I'm not a community type person. I don't like to be too contained. People may think I'm a bit strange but I think we fit together well. I'm more than happy in this regard. It's absolutely wonderful. It's working for me and I've got to learn to fit in; I know I need to share a bit more. But I do like to go away and have private times. Only negative is the long-winded meetings. I'm not in favour of long-winded meetings. Other than that I'm quite happy. They get off the subject, I'd like to go through with the things

and get done with the meeting. So far we have had so many meetings but it seems to consume a lot of your own personal time and when we go off the subject and flitter all over the place it takes an extra hour when we could have done it perhaps in an hour. That's the only thing I'm not happy about, other than that everything else is fine. We are all learning to live together. For me this is heavenly. (Wendy, June 18, 2014)

Ruby, who came in last, had a similar perspective:

Ruby mentioned that she is a solitary person. – talked about the use of the lounge room. She doesn't like coming in and finding people there. She pointed out that she isn't that close to her flatmates. Said she compromises, doesn't say anything about small matters, lets the little things go. (Meeting field notes January 2016 when discussing having visitors in common areas)

When differences were discussed once, Alice said how she liked to be helpful, liked people to be happy, and often felt responsible if she could not contribute to this. Wendy explained that she did not like to be made a fuss of and she did not want, or ask for, help.

Six months after she had moved in Alice told me that things were not that good in the house, it felt like a prison to her. She expressed frustration that some others were acting like they were just renting a room, and did not act 'communally'. The following week she again told me how it was not working like she thought it would, and that "*people stay in their rooms, don't come out much, stick to themselves*". House meeting minutes reflect that although the different perspectives on how the household would function were discussed, it had not been resolved to Alice's satisfaction:

More discussions on house visitors. Is this just a room we rent or our home? (House meeting minutes 5 November 2014).

At this meeting Alice brought with her the initial information provided by BCHT about the house, pointing out that it was stated that the house was for people like her who wanted a community-minded household, *'and would appreciate living in community with others, this house offers an affordable, innovative lifestyle that emphasises choice and companionship'*. For her, the household was not meeting this criterion. She often reiterated this statement when communicating her dissatisfaction with the way the household was operating. She challenged BCHT, asking why some had *'got through the net'* referring to those who were not as community minded. At one house meeting, she requested that new tenants be informed that the household is not cohesive so they were aware of this before they apply. Alice also stated that it was my responsibility as RM to deal with this issue and it was not fair that I had 'passed the buck' to her to deal with.

By August 2015 Alice openly stated to me that she wanted to leave after a house meeting where the same issues were still being raised:

I think the meeting went well, not how I expected it to go. I went with a plan, but it took a life of its own, and that was OK. The main time was taken up discussing having people come. Alice brought it up and Mimi was surprised saying she didn't know that Alice had felt that way. Lots of discussion around this. Three of them are very sure they don't want others in the main lounge or kitchen, although they did talk of exceptions. Polly said she has adapted. Some statements I wrote down about this were:

- Don't want to interact with other's friends.
- Feel I'm intruding on other's conversations

There was some discussion on those from [the other SSLA household] next door. It was said that they have a different relationship with this household than other's friends, and it's even more important not to allow them over and intrude. As one person put it "they are not my close friends". Group arranged get-togethers were OK, and hosting in one's own room or the front room was acceptable, but not just coming in for a coffee. Well, this was the opinion of three. Polly said she really likes it if she comes in and people are there, whereas three do not. Alice was quiet, I tried to draw her in, to tell us how she feels, what would her ideal situation be, and she said that there is nothing for her to say as it would not change she can see that. The others are very clear about what they don't want. She later told me that these conversations helped clarify her options, she realised then that she doesn't want to live in this house. She is too different from the others, it is not working for her here. Alice asked if I could help her find another place [soon after she withdrew this request]. She said she liked the concept, but in this house, she is not happy. She said the others [apart from Polly] have different ideas. (Notes on meeting, 21 August 2015)

In October 2015, Alice talked about her issues with not feeling good enough, feeling rejected, as though it was her fault that things were not working. She said she just wanted to help people but they did not want that help and she did not know what she was doing to upset people but believed she must be. At that time there were personality clashes within the household that required outside mediation.

I knew it had been difficult for Alice. She dreamt of something different, a closer community. Alice had tried to establish a close, supportive, happy community, one where people shared, got on with each other and made a difference. She would do little things for others, like the flowers for Polly, organise get-togethers, made up nicknames, and tried to instil some fun into the gatherings. She asked hard questions, consistently challenging me and BCHT about decisions she did not agree on. When a name was being sought for the house, it was Alice who researched possible names and came up with Sunrise House – A New Beginning. This was a

statement of hope and optimism; a new and brighter future that is being created and a new way of living.

At a discussion about an upcoming conference presentation I was preparing for, Alice talked through these issues again.

*Alice: I never want to live alone... but the concept that I was given was that it **would** be a community.*

*Mimi: Well that is what they felt would happen... I think this is what they **felt** would happen...*

Alice: I agree with that. But it put me in such a position that it's changed me, my personality because it's not what I signed up for...

(Transcription notes 22 August 2016. Emphasis was in the spoken word)

Alice contacted me the day after this discussion to state that she has realised that three people in the house are able to live their lives in the house exactly as they want, but two people cannot.

I reflected on my role in this situation. If I was to take a position, privileging one side over the other, which position would I take? Acknowledging that I am a social person and I identify with those who enjoy the company of others, I would prefer to live in a place that is welcoming and hospitable to others. I also respect that there are those who are not as comfortable with the same level of sociability. BCHT used the discourse of loneliness in later life as being an issue this model may address when we promoted the house. Did I unwittingly give false expectations? On a number of occasions, we (the household) had discussed how decisions are to be made e.g. consensus or majority but had never come up with an absolute conclusion. Should I have, or could I have, wielded authority here; and if so, what effect could this have on the household, my position, and my relationship with the women living there? When describing the power relationships for the ethics application I had stated quite clearly that I have no authority in the house and the residents have autonomous control over their environment. The initial information sent out (FAQ's) states the Relationship Manager's role is one of facilitation and the tenants have control over their household and are to negotiate the individual house rules together. I question if a stronger leadership role would have helped; but if this were the case, the power relationships, and hence ethical and methodological positions, would be compromised. The researcher sensibilities may have influenced the RM practice in this respect. I would still not have taken an authoritative stance in my RM role, though, as my collaborative orientation to practice and research were compatible.

Alice has told me on a number of occasions that the SSLA is not a place she would like to grow old in.

Alice looked tired, she said she can't imagine growing old there. I've noticed over the past few months her vitality wane. A distinct loss of the enthusiasm she used to have for the place and the concept. (Journal 22/01/2016)

She also said that she is not looking forward to when they all get older and stay around the house more; she doesn't want to grow old in the house. She mentioned that she tries to make herself invisible and mentioned wearing beige [so she does not draw attention to herself]. (Journal 26/09/2016)

I discussed with the Manager of BCHT what Alice said about not being able to live the way she would like to. He had been aware of this ongoing issue and sent the following email to the tenants:

Socialising at Sunrise House

The goal of the Trust is that the house will be treated as a home for all tenants. This means different things to different people, so there will need to be some compromise by everyone.

Currently, the lounge and dining room are under-utilised, which is a waste as they are a significant investment.

Some people like to have friends to visit, share meals, afternoon tea, etc., this is an expected activity in a home. It would be helpful to let other flatmates know a day or so ahead when this is likely to happen.

Clearly, when you have guests in the lounge or dining room it is done on the understanding that you are close to the kitchen where others may be cooking, so your conversation is not private. This is a normal operating situation for a family.

Clearly, all privileges could be abused by overuse, so moderation is necessary, i.e. friends for lunch two days every week would be overdoing it. On the other hand, prohibiting entertaining guests is also not satisfactory.

The front lounge is sometimes appropriate for guests, but it is also a shame that the main lounge and dining are so infrequently used, so there are occasions when that is the most appropriate meeting place.

You may wish to chat to me about this.

(Email 10 September 2016)

I wanted to know from Alice what she feels we could have done better or differently. How can we learn from this and improve? I have to admit to feeling some responsibility and was saddened that she feels she had to leave.

Alice did not move to go to a better place; she moved out of a situation she found too difficult to stay in. There were also personal costs in moving from the SSLA to a place of her own,

such as equipping her new place and higher rent. These are costs she was prepared to pay to move from the SSLA.

12.2. Moving on

I arrived at the small unit attached to another one at the end of a cul-de-sac. It was only a 10-minute drive from Tonar Street. The place looked comfortable. Alice had not had a power bill yet and was conserving power and water as the rent is significantly higher than she had previously been paying. Her TV was not tuned properly so she could only get 2 channels and she has no internet connection. These are costs she was avoiding. She told me she misses her cappuccino. That is a treat that she no longer can afford. Her family bought a fridge and some furniture for her. Showing me a jagged can where it has been opened with a knife as she has not yet got a can opener, we prepared to share a meal later. Alice heated the food up in a double boiler, as there was no microwave either.

Seated at the small round dining room table in the lounge, Alice told me about her concerns for Polly still living there. They have similar sociable temperaments, and she did not think the house was conducive to this type of personality. With sadness, she conveyed how she would not now get to see the development of the street and neighbourhood. A place she proactively connected with when she moved into Tonar Street. She will not continue her association with the community gardens. She has left. Even the household of women next door is left behind; she relayed that she does not feel comfortable going there now.

About an hour into our discussions I turned the recorder on, and for the next 100 minutes, we tried to make sense of what happened.

Alice started off by saying that we [BCHT] need to design the common areas better, and what follows highlights frustrations, unwritten rules and conflicts that were still fresh in Alice's mind.

Cooking smells were upsetting and a cause of stress. Alice had worked in hospitality and does not like to have cooking smells linger and infiltrate furnishings. This had been discussed at meetings, with the initial people in the house agreeing to use the extractor fan and keep the door closed between the hallway and the kitchen when cooking. The last person who came in did not like the noise of the fan, and would *"do what she wants to do ... we would have the door shut, she would open it... that caused friction. And one would come in and say, 'I've just*

walked in the hall and it stinks of food', and I thought, we're doing what we said we would do, so what can you do?" Alice alluded to another who wasn't following the 'rules' as well.

Alice had complained about the BBQ smells from the adjacent deck. Initially, she put up with the smells infiltrating into her room as time went on, however, she approached BCHT Manager and me. The Manager looked at what was reasonable by using apartment living as an example, finding out that BBQ's are allowed on the decks of the apartment building he enquired about, he therefore would not intervene. Alice had approached the person herself and this person told us she tries to minimise any impact by sometimes using the BBQ earlier when Alice was not around then heating her food up later.

Alice doesn't like the smell of my BBQ... so what I tried with her is I try to orchestrate it. I wait until she's not there and do my cooking, and afterwards, I warm it up. I'm very careful, I'm mindful of that, I've been very careful. I work with her. I could have said "stuff you, I'll have a BBQ here, too bad for you", you know and blah blah blah, that's not the way we should work... OK let's try and see if we can make a compromise, she put up a shield, and I'm careful, I keep it clean, I try very hard not to annoy her. I could have told her to "stuff it", but I don't believe that it should be that way. So I think that not everybody thinks like that and in a house like this. We should all be able to negotiate. Otherwise, somebody has a temper tantrum and then it all comes out and it's not good

She also said that she informed Alice when she was going to cook on her BBQ so Alice can shut the door to her deck. Alice would rather that nobody had a BBQ on their decks as it impacts on her and restricts her use of her deck.

I returned to the first statement of Alice's about the design of the common areas. She was not sure how the design could be improved but did say that maybe the household went overboard in the beginning with trying to keep the house perfect. "*Maybe we shouldn't worry about it because we are all fairly conscious of the house, wanted to keep it quite good... we are all clean people.*" Following on from this, Alice talked more about the pressure to do everything 'correctly' as they were establishing: "*We were all trying to be on our best behaviour*". Having a housemate who had high standards of kitchen cleanliness contributed to some individuals feeling personal pressure to keep things extra clean, "*Then there was the fuss - fuss about not letting us work out our own way of doing things*". If one of them left a pot boiling, another would walk up to their room and tell them about it, instead of turning it down, or they would be reminded if their clothes were in the washing machine after the cycle had finished.

A general agreement made early on was that the noise in the kitchen was reduced as much as possible after 7 pm when people who wanted to use the lounge to watch TV could do so. This started with one tenant having a routine of watching the six o'clock news whilst eating her

dinner. It was agreed that 6 pm was too early to finish cooking and dishes, so 7 pm was a compromise. Everyone had a TV in their room, but not necessarily all had a good reception. There were also some who like companionship and sitting in the common lounge. Alice said people would still cook, have conversations and rearrange the dishwasher after 7 o'clock when she and another were trying to watch TV. She interpreted the noise after 7 pm as being "rebellious". I questioned further and she said *"rebellious to the fact that I'm going to do what I like whatever time it is"*. She suggested that in terms of future design that this be taken into account. Alice put her TV in the front lounge once, but this caused problems with some others in the household who saw this as Alice extending her personal space and spreading out into the common areas.

Alice related how she ended up eating alone in her room most nights. *"I hate eating in my room"*, but eating in the dining room on her own was not that pleasant either, even when others were in the kitchen preparing their meals. Three of the others regularly took their meals to their rooms. Spending time secluded in her room did not appeal to Alice, she liked to leave her door open, even at night. She said that the tendency for others to shut themselves in their rooms concerned her and believed that as she got older there would be no companionship as people will just live in their rooms. *"I don't want to grow old in that place that has the door shut... and yet it was going to be my home. XXX said she won't leave there, she is going to go out in a box. I don't want to go out in a box in that type of environment. But this environment [her new place] is not for me. Yes I can see that it's good, I can have people [over], and not feel uncomfortable about that, but I'm still on my own. It's not something I wanted. I still have the pressure of no money, and the pressure is hard. As you know there is nowhere to go from here. You can't go into any social housing, because you've been in there [in the SSLA], so they won't accept you"*.

Relaying that her friends and family feel uncomfortable when visiting, she mentioned that her daughter told her that she would not want to come over if Alice was sick because of the atmosphere in the house. Alice admitted that at one stage she was happy living there, but this changed. I ask her what she would consider to be homely. *"Not shutting your door. A family thing"*. Openness is valued by Alice: open doors; open to conversations when you pass someone in the hall; open curtains; open personalities. *"Life's to be lived, not shut behind doors and curtains"*. Alice enjoys reciprocal relationships, sharing with others and spontaneity. These are not necessarily what others value.

We talked about the personality differences (my terminology), she encountered. There was conflict between Alice and the last person that came in. *"As we went on ... and it got worse I*

was disappointed in myself. I was getting angry and I didn't like that." We (the two parties and myself) had a meeting about this conflict, together, and individually, in July 2015. It was not resolved. Feeling ill-equipped to address this adequately, I recommended outside conflict resolution services. This was agreed on, with some mediation/counselling sessions paid by BCHT. Subsequently, BCHT agreed to set aside some funds for individual counselling sessions should any of the residents wish to utilise this at any stage of their tenancy. The differences remained though and in Alice's words, *'were left to fester'*. I noticed a polarization within the household, with either empathy for Alice or discontent with the way Alice was behaving. The divide increased. Some months later I was contacted by another tenant as Alice was not adhering to the 'rules' and misusing the common areas by putting items there. A meeting was arranged with everyone. Some expressed a concern that meetings get negative and nasty so they do not want to attend. In fact, only two people said they wanted the meeting, three did not, but they all came. Alice did not say much at this meeting, she had her chair turned slightly away from the table, whereas the others faced in. Not all of the women want me to be involved in their meetings, some say they can sort it out themselves. At this meeting, though, it was acknowledged that meetings do not occur otherwise. We dealt with ways of communicating, and they (an uncontested statement, with some agreeing) decided to hold their own meetings for communicating practical issues with the use of communal areas. It was also agreed that the person who wants change, or approval [for something], calls a meeting and these meetings are to consult with each other and discuss issues with the common area, not for personal issues. Personal issues between two people were to be discussed between the parties concerned, not at group meetings.

Alice told me she was disappointed in this meeting. She wanted to talk through the underlying personal issues. Rightly, or wrongly, I made the judgement call to actively exclude personal differences and issues, instead to focus on behaviours. I saw the potential for more harm to occur. Later after this conversation with Alice, I talk this over in outside supervision. Maybe handling this differently would have resulted in different outcomes, we will never know. My interpretation of a collaborative approach was certainly a factor. I acknowledge that my involvement in the household does have an impact on the household dynamics.

On further questioning, Alice said that she views some people in the household as strangers to her now. *"When I meet someone, I don't treat them as a stranger"*. I asked if they ended up becoming one *"Yeah, yeah. Well, they did because of the attitude... I then just started to see the worse in them, and then the worse in me. I was reacting"*.

A part of the definition of residential normalcy comes to mind as I reread this narrative: “...they do not have to behave in personally objectionable ways or to unduly surrender mastery of their lives or environment to others” (Golant, 2011, p.193).

We ate our dinner and afterwards talked more about the design of the house. It was the kitchen where interactions happen and Alice pointed out that if people were not talking, or if there had been some conflict, it can be uncomfortable being in that space.

Alice finished up by questioning BCHT's values. "What are the Trusts core values in setting up the house?" "To provide accommodation" I answer. She said she had discussed this also with BCHT's manager. Alice questioned my role and ongoing involvement in the house; if it is only about accommodation, there is no need for a Relationship Manager. "Oh, I think it is still needed" I reply. "Why? They're not using it, are they? They don't want to use [a Relationship Manager], they don't want meetings, and we can't have a meeting of our own because we are not mature enough. Obviously, we can't talk about it".

12.3. Areas of contention – privacy vs company

As is highlighted in Alice's story, there are different perspectives on socialising with others in the communal spaces. An earlier conversation exemplifies not only these perspectives but also how the presence of these differences can impact on one's sense of home in the shared areas.

Polly: This is my home and I don't want to be treated like a visitor or my visitors unwelcome. Some are very happy to see others have visitors in the house. It is starting to feel like it isn't a home.

Mimi: It is our home but not just our home, it is a shared home and the idea is that if you have somebody in the lounge here, the other people feel uncomfortable and they retract. We are sharing a premises, and not everyone knows every else's visitors so it's a bit awkward when using the kitchen whilst someone else's visitors are in the lounge. Because it's hooked up to the kitchen and the TV and the resting and lounging area. Because it's in our utility area it makes it awkward.

Polly: To me it's a matter of common sense. I like to bring my friends through and introduce you and my friends as that would be what I'd do in my own home. If it's inconvenient then we will go up to the front lounge, its common sense. I have noticed that very rarely do people sit at the table and eat, so what's wrong with me inviting friends to eat with me at the kitchen. Everything is interlinked, it's common sense. Having people for lunch, then you need to ask the question of how long, its common sense. If I'm in here with visitors and someone comes to cook, we will move. It's extending the courtesy, making people feel it's a home and they can use it, as long as there is no intrusion. I've got used to not bringing people into lunch, and

nobody uses the table and chairs, why would they mind if I brought someone in to have lunch here. If I was to bring my girlfriends in to have a shared lunch, which we do 2 or 3 times a year, I would ask if I could do this and negotiate. I see this facility here and no-one using it. I just feel it's very sad if we feel we can't bring visitors in to meet our flatmates in the first place because that's what I'd like to do and anything that has been suggested has received a negative response. (Transcribed from a discussion at House Meeting 5/11/2014)

Sociability within the household is the other area that has been challenging. There are those who generally do not socialise well within the households. Other more social household members find this behaviour strange and difficult to live with. I wonder if the majority of people in a household were 'loners' would a more social individual be accepted or considered 'deviant'. Maybe there was an aspect of this in Alice's experience. Preferring to spend time alone in one's room is not that exceptional. In a New Zealand study of two care facilities it was noted that despite staff encouraging people to not spend time alone in their rooms, there were residents who chose to do this (Jaye et al., 2015). The authors suggested that while this separateness could be associated with social isolation and marginalisation, being in one's own space can also be about autonomy and privacy. The lived experiences exemplified in this research on the SSLA contribute to the conversation and debates on attitudes towards spending time alone. In particular, could expectations and attitudes of providers differ from the desires of the individual? Is it reasonable to expect older people to find companionship with people they may not choose to be with?

As a narrator I need to make explicit my standpoint. This housing model is both a place of shelter and a social environment. When there was a seemingly impassable clash between the two, I prioritised the shelter function of the houses. I believed that everyone in the house had equal rights including the right to keep to themselves if they choose. As long as they were not harming others, cleaned up after themselves and participated in the upkeep of the communal spaces, they had the right to live there. Keeping to oneself or not engaging with others is not a breach of a standard tenancy agreement, thus not a behaviour that I would act on. I did, however, make an effort to maintain relationships and monitor the situation to assess if there may be have some underlying issues that needed attention when concerns about separateness were raised. Detachment, though, can and does impact on the well-being of the household and those within it. My role as RM was to attend to this social side of the housing model and I acknowledge this dilemma. My choice not to prioritise the social was influenced by the greater need of available, affordable housing than an expressed need for companionship in the application process. The previous narratives support this. My standpoint had been honed over

time as I attempted to manage the issues and contemplated the same question that Alice put forward "*What are the Trusts core values in setting up the house?*"

I had been approached by two or more tenants on several occasions who felt that someone did not fit in because they kept to themselves. I had also spent many hours with those concerned listening and trying to help work through this issue with them. Some residents found that this isolating and 'strange' behaviour could be distressing and difficult to cope with. Comments I received from residents in both houses highlight that this is an ongoing issue:

Just concerns about occasional personal issues with other flatmates, e.g. not coming out of room for weeks at a time, which is not healthy physically or mentally, minimal ventilation with windows and doors (Tenant Satisfaction Survey response 2017)

From my notes, late 2014, of a meeting with two residents who were unhappy with another one:

Negative, not joining in, stays in her room, excludes herself from everything, does not follow anything others have set up, and seems to go out of her way to complain and not follow what is happening, making a point of letting people know she won't... They feel that the atmosphere of the house is being affected by XXX's attitude and they aren't happy. My reflections - From my perspective, there isn't much I can do about this. My thoughts are that we can't force XXX to be friends or join in if she doesn't want to.

In an earlier note, one woman mentioned the impact it had on her when there was someone in the house that was keeping to herself. She felt a responsibility to include everyone:

She talked about the issues she was having [with this behaviour] especially around the area of never being able to please XXX. (Field notes 2014)

The other party though had a different perspective on this. She did not appreciate this attention or concern as summarised in the following field note:

She also expressed that she doesn't want anyone going out of their way or worrying about her. She did mention other tenants who get hung up and over analyse everything i.e. have I offended someone, are they OK, etc. and said that's their problem if they do that, they are responsible for [themselves], she doesn't want anyone to take responsibility for her well-being. (Field notes 2014)

For those that kept to themselves, the attention of others may be as equally uncomfortable for them as their separateness was for others. One confided that because of this attention she would not like to die in the house:

She said that she dreads dying in the house. This led to an interesting conversation. She wouldn't want the household to find her. Would hate it if they started making a fuss and they haven't got her [family's] contact details. Knows that they would all be running around making a fuss and she wants a procedure to be followed and BCHT called who would then call her [family]. It is family she wants to be there, not the others. She would rather die in the hospital than in that house. When I said that most people want to die at home. She said it's not really her home. She reiterated how she values being independent. Doesn't want to live with family, doesn't want people making a fuss of her. (Field notes 2016)

For this person, at this time, she clearly did not consider the shared house as her home. I did not inquire further about her reasoning for this and wonder if she was in a household of similar people, would she feel like it was more a home. It is no secret though that this resident would like a place of her own.

At a meeting that was called to discuss the issue of one person keeping to herself, one woman relayed how she is indirectly affected as this behaviour influences the atmosphere of the household:

I am also stressed, the impact this is having on everyone else affects me, I'm the buffer, and I feel for [the other two] and think that we need help. I'm supporting them through this. I would like this sorted before the new person comes in.... I try and get on with everyone and will just try harder (Meeting notes 2014).

Another note indicates that one person [who keeps to herself] is not considered an active member of the household decision making, and exemplifies how the household manages this:

Majority rules. We can just ignore her. She shouldn't be making the rules. If she doesn't want to abide by what the house... If 4 of us decide we want this, we can have it. We are all tippy-toeing around the issue. We're courteous to her and she can't dictate to the rest of us. BCHT needs to deal with [this] situation, something's got to be explained to her. Someone is poisoning the well. We are 5. In my room, it's about me. Outside it's about us. One person isn't playing ball. She doesn't make the rules for the house. [She] is not complying to the concept of this house and it is hindering all of us (August 2015)

The next chapter illustrates the challenges in a household when a new person comes in who does not 'fit'.

Chapter 13. Tilly's story - the end of the line.

When Alice left, I informed my networks that there was a vacancy and Tilly was referred. She came to the house more than once to meet with the others. At one of these meetings BCHT Manager (Neil) was present, but I was not. He relayed the following interaction which I noted:

Neil said that there was one point when XXX [a tenant] was explaining her interpretation about having people over, YYY [another tenant] was going to say something, and XXX told her strongly to let her finish what she was saying. Neil said that he thinks there was a discrepancy between what XXX said about having visitors and what she means. Tilly contacted me after this meeting and asked if there were any conflicts in the house. I am not sure if she used the exact word 'conflicts'. I explained that there were, but did not go into detail. (Journal 7/12/16)

At this visit to the house, another resident did not come out of her room to meet with Tilly as she did not feel the need to meet with any new person or influence who came into the house. The other three all agreed Tilly would be a good fit for them and within six weeks of her eventually shifting in I was told that she was of benefit to the household.

This sentiment did not last though. Challenges faced by other shared households outlined in chapter six such as interpersonal conflicts (Lawton, 1981; Streib et al., 1984) and the difficulties these conflicts pose, not only to the residents but also the organisation, are exemplified in this chapter. This story of a new person coming into an already established household adds dimensionality to issues such as hierarchies and power, rights and responsibilities, achieving residential normalcy, home versus house, sociality, moving, and the complexities of managing household conflicts. The following narrative was composed from notes and an interview requested by Tilly (24/6/17) about four months after she had moved in.

13.1. Tilly

I first saw Tilly at her house and when I entered her driveway; a petite woman with dark hair pulled back into a ponytail waved to me from the deck. I waited for her grandmother to come out as this woman looked to be in her twenties. It was not until she got closer that the grey streaks in her hair and the fine lines around her eyes and face revealed she was older. I was not surprised when she told me she was still running 8 – 10 kilometres a day to keep herself fit. She told me her daughter lives overseas, she has no close family in New Zealand and many of her friends are also based overseas. She had lived on the North Shore previously and her doctor and hairdresser were close to Northcote.

Despite her small stature and gentle voice, Tilly relayed that she does not shy from making a stand against injustice. Tilly described herself as being a social, relaxed, easy-going person, happy for people to just drop in on her at home. *When I had my own place and people came around we'd just listen to music, or whatever, and they could stay as long as they like, and all the rest of it, and often they would hang out and have a meal or whatever. You know we'd just hang out, you know what I mean.*

Speaking to others before moving in, Tilly was told that they go dancing and play bridge. She had an expectation that she would join in and be part of a community of like-minded people. When she first arrived, Tilly initiated Friday night nibbles and drinks for the household and started to utilise the lounge, with others joining her there.

Her gregariousness was supported by an earlier observation.

Ruby and Tilly were sitting in the lounge watching the evening news. They looked surprised to see me. Ruby had an empty plate on her lap and Tilly was eating her dinner. Tilly mentioned that the lounge was getting some use now and Ruby agreed. ... Ruby offered me a cup of tea and the three of us went back into the lounge...I was thinking of the new person in [Tilly] as I'm writing this and give her a call. She said that as she eats in the lounge or the dining room, others come to join her. (Notes 21/3/17)

Moving in

When Tilly was shifting her possessions into the house, she aggravated her previous neck injury and hurt her wrists while packing and moving boxes. I had supported her at the hospital when she had a procedure to alleviate the neck pain. She reported that the tendons on her wrist had separated from the bone after lifting the boxes and that some renovations at her previous place hindered her from getting all her possessions out to move in fully. Shifting had been more stressful and difficult than she anticipated, *“Obviously I don't ever want to shift again if I can avoid it... it would have to be a real emergency”*. She was paying the rent but had not slept at the SSLA for a few months after signing up. The other tenants were wondering if she was still coming. They had not heard from her, and one voiced then that maybe she was not the right person for the house.

After Tilly eventually moved in, the others still did not see her much. Tilly reported being in a lot of pain and often staying in her room recuperating. She told them of her problems but felt their response was not as sympathetic or understanding as she expected. Tilly interpreted their responses to mean that nobody wanted to hear about other people's health problems.

Tensions building at first house meeting

For Tilly, it had not been an easy transition into the house although she said it was going well for the first few weeks. The atmosphere changed after the first house meeting in March 2017. This meeting was arranged by the residents to welcome her and answer any of her questions. Tilly was unsure how to negotiate the common spaces. I was at this meeting when tensions became apparent between Tilly and another. This tenant accused Tilly of misinterpreting her and having a ‘beef’ against her. She told Tilly not to ask her any more questions. I was informed later that there was a context to the statements that were not apparent at the meeting. The other tenants called another meeting between them all a few weeks afterwards. The situation between Tilly and the other tenant had worsened, with Neil and myself being informed, by other residents after the fact, that the meeting did not go well and they were ‘shocked’ at the verbal aggression from another towards Tilly. Tilly told me she felt so stressed that she ate 2 packs of chocolates, 4 Easter eggs and half a bar of dark chocolate at 3 am that morning. There were concerns expressed by some that they had not seen her for days after this meeting.

On the fifth day of her seclusion I knocked on her door early afternoon. Tilly opened this in her dressing gown and wearing dark glasses. The curtains were shut keeping the daylight out. Tilly told me she had a massive migraine, something she rarely has. *“What had happened was that I’d had that migraine, I really had a bad one, and I actually, in retrospect, I think it was the second meeting that caused it. When I look back on it I think it stressed me out so much, I bottled it up and took it out on myself. Because I had not had a migraine since I was... I’d had one before, and it was a whopper, a real whopper [the recent migraine]. I think it [what happened at the meeting] did have a lot to do with it when I look back on it, and probably my neck... because I was really stressed out. Because I was really upset after that. People say let it go over the top of your head, but it’s easier said than done. I was meditating and stuff, but it was still eating away at me, and I’m thinking what can I do to make this better. The thought did occur to me, ‘what have I done coming here’”*

Sociality from Tilly’s perspective

Relations between Tilly and the others in the household started to deteriorate and Tilly kept to herself more. She admitted to staying in her room partially to avoid conflict but also because she likes her own space. While she might genuinely like to keep to herself at times, her previous tendency to dwell in the shared areas and engage socially with others indicated this reasoning could be a psychological accommodative coping strategy. It was not until a few months following the meetings, and after encouragement from Neil and myself, that Tilly

eventually started to spend time in the lounge and dining room: *“I am the only one using the lounge, although Polly will occasionally sit down, but usually she doesn't, just everyone gets their meal and they go to their room. They have their TV there. People said its community, it's a community house, and it's not what Neil expected either, because he said to me, we've got that beautiful table and chairs, and I'm the only one sitting down at the table and a few times I have to say, in the summer, Polly did sit down, but it is never used, never. It's such a waste and to me, I know when I had a family I would always sit down at dinner time and that was the time you chatted, and I know that people have their own lives and everything, but I didn't expect that everyone just goes to their own rooms and disappear... I could easily go out and buy a TV, but what is the point of having a lounge if no-one uses it... I didn't expect that people would be falling over each other, but I certainly felt that occasionally people would get together.”*

The camaraderie and shared social activities that Tilly expected when coming in did not happen. She was unwell initially and subsequently the relationships had broken down. Also she felt the atmosphere inhibited her spontaneous and hospitable nature. She relayed a time she told her sister-in-law not to come over with her young nephew as Tilly did not think that the household would appreciate a 4-year-old child in the house. Tilly said she understood it was a community only to find out it was not the community that she expected. I questioned this further and she explained that she had been told subsequently that *“we all just rent a room”*. Despite Tilly never having contact with Alice, this is the same term that Alice used. Tilly also alluded that she likes company but would prefer to be alone in her room than alone in the shared areas. Her room would, therefore, be what she considers her home, not the other areas: *“It seems like lost time being alone...I'll be much happier in my own room when it is finally tidied up and it will really seem like my space properly, and then, I can really say that that is my home, but even now...Well this [my room] will be my escape place for where I can go and be alone more. “Is this your room you are talking about?” I questioned in relation to what is home to her. Well this will be my escape place for where I can go and be alone more but it certainly does not feel like a home like next door [referring to her perspective that the household next door is more social than the household she is in] and I know Neil said he wants it to be like a home, a community and he said he wasn't aware of what it was like.”*

In a subsequent conversation with Tilly about seven months after she had shifted in (7/10/17), she told me she broke down in tears when her doctor asked her how she was getting on in her new place. She said she did not realise how much it had taken its toll and affected her and that she had suppressed a lot, trying to just get on with things. At that time Tilly had a flare up of

an autoimmune response that had occurred occasionally in the past, and she put this down to the stress she had been under. This flare-up resulted in her not coming out of her room, further isolating herself from the others for a prolonged period.

When Tilly was well enough to come out of her room after this seclusion, she told me she was anxious about how the others will react to her, fearful that she would get some negative comment she would not be able to cope with.

Tilly did not fit in

There were complaints from others about this reclusive behaviour.

The atmosphere is not good. Tilly has been in her room without others seeing her for 7 – 8 weeks. She reports a serious autoimmune flare-up that inhibits her from wearing clothes. This could be exacerbated by stress. She said she has had this in the past, but not this bad....XXX reported that she was concerned that maybe she wasn't the right person for the house. Notes 15/11/17

I spoke to all in the household individually about six months after Tilly had moved in (before this prolonged isolation incident). They all said that they did not want Tilly there and that the atmosphere in the house had deteriorated since she had come. There was general agreement that it was not a pleasant place to live. It was clearly expressed to me by two of the residents, the ones who would voice this, that BCHT should not have accepted this person. The other two in the household would not normally have this type of conversation with me but they did say they did not want to interact with Tilly and that they, like the others, did not trust her. The Trust Manager and his wife received the same feedback when they interviewed everyone eight months after I did.

BCHT staff and I were being frequently lobbied by household members on this issue by the other residents who were making it clearly known that they did not want Tilly in their house. Neil was being called upon more often than normal for various matters, so much so that BCHT Chairperson took the responsibility to field any non-property issues.

While much had been said about what was happening in the house, there are two factors that were incontestable. Tilly stayed in her room for long periods (days and weeks), making no contact with anyone in the house and others in the household have been verbally aggressive towards Tilly. I had witnessed the verbal aggression myself at meetings, one where Neil and a mediator were also present. Others had relayed specific incidences, often with a comment that they were shocked, “[We] just sat with our mouths open in amazement and disgust.” Some observations and notes I had made in relation to the behaviour of others:

He said that whilst Tilly isn't completely innocent, the behaviour of the others is not ideal. He used the word hostile. (Journal 6/11/17)

[I]t seemed a destructive verbal attack on Tilly that I could not see any base to and no compromise on XXX's part in wanting to resolve this ... My thought about this meeting is that there were three who were openly antagonistic towards Tilly. There were times it did get heated. There were personal attacks aimed at Tilly, nothing I see as being justified as something that she is doing that impacts on the household any more than what others do... There were specific incidences that were brought up, miscommunication, whereby one party said something and the other denies it. Where Tilly was concerned, however, she was directly called a liar by three different people. I am astounded. There was no "I think you were mistaken". It was a direct "you are lying". (Notes from mediated meeting 1/7/17).

This is where I noticed XXX really antagonistic towards Tilly (Side note when transcribing the recording of the meeting 13/3/17)

Such 'objectionable' behaviour is included in the definition of residential normalcy, i.e. "*they do not have to behave in personally objectionable ways or to unduly surrender mastery of their lives or environments to others*" (Golant, 2011, p. 193). If this antagonism is a means for others to achieve, or restore, a level of residential normalcy, then their attempt to do so directly impacts Tilly's feelings of comfort and control in this setting.

My role – the end of the line

Dealing with interpersonal conflict was a part of my RM role. I had many meetings with residents unhappy with me not taking their side, feeling like they had not been listened to and their concerns not being addressed to their individual satisfaction. When household conflict and disharmony escalated with this new person joining the household, I decided to step down from my role as RM at the end of 2017. This decision was influenced by a number of factors.

I questioned if I was exacerbating the situation and was, therefore, part of the problem. The new person was coming to me for help and advice in settling in, she felt she was getting conflicting messages, and looked towards me for guidance and authority. Residents were exercising autonomy over their space. The two initial house meetings with the new tenant were arranged without informing me or requesting my presence. It was only when I asked about having a meeting that I was informed they had arranged one and I was then invited to attend. The next one they held themselves and informed me afterwards. It was probable that my support for the new person was seen, by some, as undermining their autonomy. They all said they did not trust her and it was also possible that the specific attention I was giving to her, as a newcomer, contributed to this. There was a lack of confidence, explicitly expressed by some residents, in my ability to deal with the issue of the new person not being compatible

with the others in the house. I was aware that how I was handling the situation was not working. These residents did not want her in their house, and their well-being was being compromised. I also factored in the amount of time and personal expense (e.g. phone calls and petrol) I was expending trying to manage what was happening. I did not have the time to effectively deal with this situation and I also questioned if I had the resources and skills to do this. It was time to relinquish the RM role and prioritise my researcher's role in writing this research up.

13.2. Epilogue February/March 2018

I have added an epilogue to wrap up the stories in this chapter and the one before it. When the conflicts in the house started to impact on Tilly's well-being, I was prepared to advocate for her with other housing providers to find her a more suitable place. She said she would not want to move as she liked the area. There are also other considerations such as the financial, physical and emotional cost and effort of shifting.

Tilly still has not unpacked all her boxes, and it has been nearly a year since she moved in. She was not sure if she was going to get asked to leave, or if things became so unbearable that she would have to leave, so did not unpack in case. Does not like shifting, it is too unsettling. Has been offered her previous place back, but does not want to go back. A recent drug bust happened in that street. Said she feels safe at Tonar St. (Notes after a phone conversation 29/01/18)

BCHT addressed the issues in the house. Two of the residents were given a 90-day notice to leave. Tilly was one of them. She contacted me extremely distressed when she heard the news. She said she thought relationships in the household were improving and did not see this coming. I was told by BCHT Manager that the other person took this news well, as if BCHT had done her a favour by issuing this notice. That may well be, as she subsequently was placed as a high priority on the social housing register, therefore had a greater chance of getting into another social housing place than many others who were waiting on their list. I had stopped collecting data by this stage therefore there is no follow up on the full impact of these changes on the individuals or the household.

I met Alice for coffee and learnt that she recently moved into a council pensioner unit. She had taken on extra work as a cook at a retirement village to cover the costs of living on her own in private rental, and this had been taking its toll on her. Alice had only once gone back to the house since leaving. She reiterated how she was let down by BCHT or more specifically me as

RM for not advocating for her with BCHT. Alice told me that I did not do enough for her, and she should never have had to leave. I was reproached for prioritising the research over the RM role.

Bonnie gave notice, citing long standing disharmony in the house in relation to her not (and never) getting on with another. BCHT is commencing a building project including two shared houses with four bedrooms each including ensuites. These houses, built on a slope, will have internal stairs and the rooms will likely be rented out to younger tenants selected from the government social housing register.

Chapter 14. A journey's end – casting off

My life will be changed in ways I can't foresee, but that's life, it's a journey. I don't know who will be in the house, how they will get on or what their visions and plans are. I will need to remind myself that it's not my house, it's their home. It's OK to have my visions, but in the end, it is their lives. (Journal notes, 28 July 2013)

My task was to explore the complexities and uniqueness of the SSLA with the purpose of generating an in-depth understanding and knowledge that would be accessible to all who have an interest in shared housing. The way I went about generating this knowledge, i.e. my methodology, became a central aspect of this research as I balanced the researcher role with my non-researcher involvement in this housing project. One of the major contributions of this research to academia is my explication of balancing ethical concerns for participants against my own role. In disseminating the findings of this research, the needs and interests of both the academic and community audience are considered.

14.1. Summarising the project and discoveries in the field

The housing crisis for older people continues to escalate. The need for appropriate, affordable rental accommodation is increasing without a corresponding increase in housing to cater for this growing demographic group. The Bays Community Housing Trust (BCHT), enabled by public funding, built two houses whereby women over 65 flat together in a shared space living arrangement (SSLA). The SSLA provides accommodation to ten older renters at lower than market rent; from that perspective, the model is successful. The Trustees volunteer their time out of a genuine concern for the community and well-being of the people they serve. The social benefits of sharing a house with others were promoted as a feature of this housing model and design features to encourage social interaction are incorporated. Although it is not explicitly stated, there was an expectation and hope that this housing model would enable a cohesive, supportive community, enhancing the well-being of those living there. BCHT anticipated households containing friends who would mature and grow old together. At the very least, the SSLA is likely to be a better place than the one people moved from.

There are some for whom this living arrangement appears to be working well. The positive aspects of the SSLA should not be negated. There are many instances, illustrated throughout the narratives, whereby social cohesion and camaraderie is apparent. The life experience, character, and maturity of the participants are evident in the stories of how the women in this study share spaces and lives with each other. Those living there want to make this arrangement

work for them, aware that it is possible they will be living there for the rest of their lives. There are enough examples of what might be working well that can be used to support the replication of this housing model as a means of accommodating the increasing numbers of older renters. The findings, especially these positive elements of the SSLA, could be presented to the public as a practical means of providing housing with added social benefits.

Wrapping these examples up, tying them in a pretty ribbon and presenting this housing model as a clever solution to society's woes can be misleadingly one-sided. If shared housing is to be replicated, and seen as a viable housing option, there needs to be some acknowledgement that this way of living is more likely to be a compromise than a choice for those who have a housing need. The attraction of shared housing, without services and formal supports, is likely to be predominated by the need for shelter of which could be addressed more appropriately by affordable, sole-occupancy housing.

There are limitations to this model that this research uncovered. The appropriateness of such accommodation for those over 65 is questionable, as are the social benefits. The following limitations inform not only those interested in shared housing for themselves or others but also those seeking to develop other innovative housing models.

14.2. Limitations of the SSLA

Shared housing is not a popular housing option

The findings and the literature suggest that shared housing is not an ideal for the vast majority of older people. BCHT expected to be inundated with applicants, providing a selection of people to choose from, thus ensuring a good match between those likely to be suited to living with each other. This was not the case. The thought of sharing living spaces with others, particularly people whom one does not know, was a common reason people gave for not following up with a completed application. For a small minority, though, the companionship that shared housing offered was a draw card. Despite the demand for affordable rental accommodation, and a large waiting list for the local council pensioner units (i.e. a place of one's own), the vast majority who inquired, and the many who were likely aware of the opportunity but did not make contact, were not prepared to take up the offer of shared housing. This response is consistent with the literature which indicates that single older people prefer to live on their own (Koopman-Boyden et al., 2014; Lawton, 1981; McFee, 2017).

Overseas interest by older people in sharing living spaces has also been underwhelming in the literature. Lawton (1981) asserts that those who can live on their own, choose to do so; it is only under certain circumstances, such as the need for services or care that they are willing to compromise their independence and privacy to share with others. The benefits in sharing space with others are thus in the provision of services and care, not companionship, for the majority of older people.

There are, of course, some for whom living with others is their preferred living arrangement but these are likely to be only a small minority (Golant, 2015a). Half those residing in the SSLA reported that they would prefer a place of their own. There is likely to be insufficient interest from those desiring to live with others to ensure the viability of future shared housing projects that do not provide services.

Previous shared housing projects have not been as successful as anticipated

Those involved in the development of this housing model thought that sharing a house was a novel and innovative solution to the modern challenges of an increase in older renters and a shortage of affordable, appropriate accommodation. It seemed a great idea. We (BCHT) were unaware at that time that what we had envisaged, and built, had been thought about and implemented previously. In the United States predominantly around the 1980s, there was a move towards the provision of shared housing, driven partly by a lack of affordable, appropriate accommodation (Streib et al., 1984). Delaying or preventing more expensive institutional residential placements by providing services cost-effectively and efficiently to those who were unable to live on their own, was another driver for these shared housing projects. Most of these housing initiatives in North America are no longer in existence, and we have to question why. The shared housing model although seemingly a great idea has not worked well in practice over time.

The earliest well-documented project, Philadelphia Geriatric Center's Community Housing Project progressed through three stages (Brody, 1978; Brody et al., 1975; Bronson, 1972; Lawton et al., 1978; Liebowitz, 1978). Their initial shared household was similar to the SSLA. It was a four-bedroom house with shared kitchen and bathroom and included weekly housekeeping services. When this arrangement did not work out, their next model included a kitchen (but not an ensuite) in every room and more services such as meals. Social services were also provided to residents in both these stages. Evolving from what they learned about the first two models, the final model was the provision of single occupancy bedsit apartments with shared entrance and living room per three apartments. The development of this project

progressed through to a reduction of shared spaces and a subsequent increase in financial costs. It was clear that shared space living was not functioning well.

Other shared household initiatives such as home sharing and Abbeyfield UK, although still successfully operating, have not developed and grown as expected. The cases of shared households in the literature are all varied; many have an aspect of service provision and most were developed in a different era, so comparisons need to be made with caution. It appears that the ideologies of 20 – 30 years ago when looking towards shared households as a solution to current social challenges are being repeated. The reasons for these shared household initiatives failing to flourish is only speculative as there is a paucity of research on these. The literature indicates that shared housing/households are not a preferred choice for the majority of older people and the social benefits of living with others is not a priority (Lawton, 1981; LeFurgy, 2017; Pritchard, 1983). Under certain circumstances, however, sharing is a compromise that people may make in the absence of better choices.

There is also an indication both in the literature and this research, that living with others is not necessarily the positive social experience that providers anticipate or unwittingly promote. The social environment of the SSLA can be both a place of companionship and conflict.

Negotiating the social spaces in these houses, especially over a long period, can be stressful and difficult. Already there are signs that the social issues experienced in these earlier models are being replicated today in BCHT houses. As with previous research on the development of shared housing initiatives, what BCHT and supporters thought was a great idea may not necessarily be shared by those we expect to live in these houses.

I found only one organisation (Charities Housing, previously Senior Housing Solutions) in America where permanent shared households without provision of care or services are still operating. This organisation is required to draw from the equivalent of the New Zealand social housing register. Those living in these houses, and the organisation managing these, have limited control over who goes into these households. Because it is unlawful to discriminate against gender, the households are mixed gender. The social needs of the Charities Housing residents are met by a large affiliated organisation, separating the functions of tenancy and social services.

I would not like to see such a mandatory relationship be established in New Zealand. The risk of forcing people to live in a situation they are not ready for, or do not want, is too great. A loss of control for both the residents and the social housing provider over who comes into the shared households could have a detrimental effect on the households.

Living under one roof does not mean a sociable, cohesive household ensues

In promoting the benefits of shared housing/households, 'family' cultures and positive social outcomes are declared by organisations including BCHT. There is an indication in the literature, and in this research, that those in households of people who did not know each other beforehand do not seek a high level of social interaction with those they live with. Those that do may be disappointed when others do not share their concept of community. Living with others does not guarantee friendships. There are times of high sociability where people intentionally get together and friendships are apparent. On the whole, though, the households tend to lean more towards the low sociable end of a continuum of household sociability. These low sociable households are associated with strangers living together, eating their own meals, living in their bedrooms, and basically renting a room while living their own lives.

There is a tendency to portray sociability in positive terms, implying that the alternative is negative. The literature, as well as my findings, suggest that a high level of sociability are more the ideals or expectations of the providers than residents. In cohousing communities, it is not unusual for residents to spend the bulk of their time in their own private spaces, or in the wider community, than in the communal areas (Williams, 2005a). These cohousing communities though do not share a house, a dining room or lounge like the SSLA. It is unrealistic to expect a household of adult, unrelated people who did not choose whom they live with, to act like a cohesive, close family or friends who 'hang out' with each other in the common areas when they are home.

There is a balance between company and privacy that appears to work well for many in the SSLA. Older people, though, are not homogeneous, and obtaining this balance for everyone is idealistic. One person in particular who strongly desired, and actively pursued, a more sociable household was disillusioned. Insufficient household sociability (for her needs) influenced her decision to leave. The majority of those living in the houses came to the household with already established social networks and activities whereby their social needs were met outside the household. Even if they were strangers beforehand, they became familiar with each other yet still chose to retreat to their rooms. Spending more time in their own rooms may reflect a choice for privacy, it may also reflect the added complexities of social/shared spaces. Physical comfort, e.g. being in a space where one's possessions are located and accessible, such as a comfortable armchair, books, radio, TV, computer or crafts is another possible reason for not fully utilising the common areas such as the dining room and lounge. There is scope for more research in this area. A person may feel more comfortable and in control when in their private bedroom than in the common areas that have to be negotiated with others. There are likely to

be parallels between spending time in one's own room and a preference amongst older people to live on their own.

The assumption that putting people together is a cure for loneliness prevails in the marketing of shared space living. This assumption needs to be confronted and not accepted, or promoted, as a rationale in future shared housing developments.

The SSLA is not an intentional community.

The SSLA is not an intentional community. The need for housing predominates the desire for community. The creation of intentional communities of like-minded people who want to share spaces with others, such as cohousing, are usually resident led and managed. The development of cohousing communities is a lengthy process often starting years prior to the buildings being erected (Brenton, 2008). By the time people actually live together, residents usually have well-formed relationships and processes in place.

For the SSLA, the relationships, the development of the community, and the establishment of household operations occurred after the residents moved in. The SSLA is not resident-led. The residents did not drive the project, did not design their living spaces, they have no ownership, and they do not have full control of whom they live with. They were not a cohesive community when they came into the house. This has ramifications for how they relate to and bond with each other.

The residents do not have full control over whom they live with

Having control of whom one shares with, and under what conditions this sharing occurs, are fundamental characteristics of cohousing communities (Bouma & Voorbij, 2009; Durrett, 2009; Lietaert, 2010; Williams, 2005a). Those living in the SSLA do not have the same level of control over whom they share spaces with. Resident-led decisions would be workable if everyone in the household has similar ideas on who would be a suitable fit, were prepared to take responsibility for recruitment, and communicate with each other. There is a risk that with a diverse group of people who may not have common interests, or similar preferences, a consensus will be difficult to reach. This would be especially pertinent if there are already two distinct groups vying for the extra person to support their perspective.

There will also need to be enough suitable people submitting applications for a choice to be made in a reasonable time frame. The underwhelming public response in applying for a place in the SSLA suggests that a surplus of future willing applicants will be unlikely. The financial viability of this housing model and subsequently the housing security of the residents could be

jeopardised if there were long periods of vacancies. A trial period is a way of ascertaining suitability but is this feasible? It took several weeks before the household decided that the last person who came in did not fit. It also took a few years of dissatisfaction for another to realise that she could not live in this situation. The financial, emotional, and personal cost and effort of shifting is something that could deter someone from 'triallying' a room.

The building is the target of funding - a structure that is then filled with people who need accommodation. Supporting an already formed group of people, whose priority is to live together, could increase the power to develop a socially cohesive household and address their specific social needs. This is already done when families and extended families are housed together. The ethics of public funding to support groups of non-kin to live together would need to be carefully considered and may be best left to the private market (Chiodelli & Baglione, 2014).

Security can be contingent on household relationships

The confidence, trust, predictability, and continuity of having a stable place to live that is not detrimental to health and well-being relate to feeling secure in one's accommodation. The narratives, especially those that highlight what is not going well, demonstrate that this security can be compromised when living with others. One participant felt pushed out when things did not go well for her. She moved out of a situation she found too difficult to stay in despite the emotional, physical and financial costs of moving. The later evictions resulting from household disharmony highlight the housing insecurity associated with sharing a house with others. It could have been any other one, two or three people who were asked to leave the household in an attempt to restore peace. There is no guarantee that future interpersonal issues, conflict, or household disharmony will not result in another person feeling they cannot continue living in the households for their own well-being or, for that matter, being requested to leave for the well-being of the others. Either way, it can be a precarious existence; one that is at least partially dependent on the personality and characteristics of others in a shared living environment.

Personal security associated with having others close by can be found in shared housing, but only as far as those relationships are trusting relationships. Living in close proximity with others that one does not get on with or trust, and having to interact with them daily, could well be a source of insecurity and stress.

Ageing in the SSLA is also ageing in her space and their space

An ideal environment for ageing is where a person feels they are in both their residential comfort and mastery zones (Golant, 2012). With shared spaces like the SSLA, an attempt to achieve comfort and control of one's environment can impact on another's attempt to do the same.

Have those involved in this housing project created an environment that will enable people to maintain their independence, comfort, mastery, and dignity if faced with a loss of function and health as one ages? There are universal design features in place and BCHT had considered the possibility of equipment in the common areas. The possibility that one, or some, may feel uncomfortable with adaptive equipment in these areas was not fully considered. Equipment that enhances one person's competency can encroach on another's comfort zone e.g. chair raisers in the common area. Equipment to increase independence around a home may also enhance feelings of inadequacy in such social settings, or stigmatisation (Shinohara & Wobbrock, 2011).

Living with non-kin and sharing spaces could actually inhibit access to the support needed to maintain physical independence, such as publically funded home help, and remain in their own houses. There is an assumption that living with other people and sharing tasks is a buffer that can compensate for a decline in functioning. Informal support by others in the household is also an expectation by the providers of publically funded home help services. This informal support may be expected if the other household members are family. In the case of the SSLA, there is an awareness that as the residents are renting individual rooms they are not responsible for others, neither are they expected to take on extra responsibilities to compensate for an impairment of another. As one resident said, "*we did not sign up for that*". The responsibility of ensuring that tenants can manage independently in the household lies with BCHT and individuals. The residents are all ageing in different ways. I had anticipated a high level of collectivism and communication around people's individual needs, especially when some tasks become more difficult for some to manage, for example, deciding to pool resources and hire a housekeeper. Such mutual support is the intention of some cohousing communities (Glass, 2009). Collective decisions like this, though, have not happened to my knowledge, and I was aware that some individuals were more likely to conceal or find ways to compensate for their weaknesses rather than seek support and solutions from others. In this social situation, there may be a compulsion to keep up with others and not be seen as a burden. The housework phenomena of everyone wanting to contribute adds some support to this assertion.

As with previous shared housing models, the provision of services is an area that will need to be addressed at some point especially if other accommodation options are not enabled. If BCHT provides services, the cost of these will likely be passed on to the residents, even those who do not require or agree to have services. Having someone extra in the house providing these services will impact on the dynamics of the household. For some this may be a positive direction - for others, it may not be. A reduced ability to function in the common areas could result in residents spending even more time in their rooms and not utilising the kitchen. Sharing spaces has already been highlighted as problematic when physically one does not feel up to it, e.g. getting dressed to go into the kitchen to make a cup of tea, using mobility aids in the shared spaces, the effort to get to the kitchen only to find someone else is using the space or appliances, and maintaining the household standards.

Ageing in the SSLA is also ageing in 'her' place and 'their' place also, and I would add that for some people it may be less likely to be seen as ageing in 'my' place or 'our' place. I am sure individuals in the houses are adopting coping mechanisms to manage their ageing related physical challenges in the SSLA, and for now, they are bearing this responsibility themselves possibly to the point of exclusion for some.

Moving to a more suitable place is inhibited once in.

A low turnover of tenants should in no way be used as a measure of the success of such models. If the SSLA was not working well for an individual, moving out can be the last resort. It is likely that a move will only be considered if a place that is better suited to their needs is found, the move is seen as achievable, and the process of shifting would not be '*overwhelmingly stressful*' (Golant, 2011). It is ironic that the reason for the existence of the SSLA, i.e. housing availability, affordability, and appropriateness, also contributes to entrapping people in a situation they cannot easily get out of. To move out of the SSLA one would need to have a place to go to. The waiting lists for social housing places are long. Those who accept a place in the SSLA are deemed to have a suitable place to live and are, thus, no longer eligible for a high priority listing on the social housing register. The SSLA restricts people's future housing options.

Moving also entails financial and psychological resources, such as moving costs, refurnishing a new place, and adapting to a new environment. Most of the residents significantly downsized to move into their room in the SSLA because the shared areas were fully furnished and equipped. The costs of furnishing a house again could be quite high. To move again, one could also lose any benefits of living in the SSLA such as lower than market rents and a

quality built environment. Emotional bonds and social connections developed through living in the SSLA and the wider community may also be weakened or lost. These weighty costs have an impact on a decision to not only move out should a more suitable place be found, but to also actively seek other accommodation.

14.3. Future considerations

Traditional sole-occupancy housing may well be the most appropriate housing option for the majority of single, older renters. As Lawton (1981) concluded, alternative housing such as shared housing is only created and accessed when the preferred traditional models of housing are not available or affordable. If shared housing is to be established as an alternative to traditional housing, additional consideration needs to be given to the creation of a social environment conducive to well-being.

The assumption behind shared housing is that it is cost-effective. However, if resident well-being is factored in, this may not be the case. Compelling strangers, for whom sharing with others is not a preference, to live together, is likely to create social stressors that may then necessitate social service interventions. Managing the social aspects of shared households could become too complex and large for volunteers alone to manage effectively. The cost of managing this social environment will need to be factored into the budgets. If social interventions are delivered through separate funding or volunteers, the real cost of shared housing could be masked.

Residential normalcy and hence the appropriateness of a place for ageing could be enhanced by increasing the functionality of the individual rooms such as including some kitchen facilities in them so residents can more comfortably dwell in a place where they have greater control over their environment. Again, the economic viability of doing this will need to be assessed. The provision of services and support with effective strategies to manage the common areas also need to be considered. Service provision, larger more functional personal areas and social services will all add to costs that will likely be passed on to residents.

I have serious concerns about a mandatory relationship between the social housing register and social shared housing provision, as set up overseas, becoming established in New Zealand. My extensive involvement in this research project means I am concerned by the risk that we follow overseas trends. There is already some indication in policy documents, i.e. The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy (Office for Senior Citizens, 2015), that communal living and

flating for seniors is being looked upon favourably. The implications of social shared households in policy and practice need to be considered. There is less choice for those who cannot afford other options.

The benefits of shared housing may lie more with the providers and funders than those who are expected to live in them. Are those who may already have experienced disadvantage to be expected to live in an arrangement that others with more choices would be unlikely to choose? Could houses such as the SSLA hinder the growth and provision of traditional sole-occupancy housing by providing a cheaper but less appropriate alternative?

14.4. Limitations and strengths of the research

The challenges and limitations of working in collaboration with others are highlighted in the narratives and discussed in the body of this thesis. I reiterate some of the main limitations here. The narratives are only a representation of a specific time and specific people. There is not a full disclosure of everything that occurred in the field. I carefully considered what I disclosed and how I did this, taking into account confidentiality, relevancy, and possible negative consequences. Some voices are more prominent than others in the narratives, and yet this does not infer that their perspective was more important.

I did not include the voices of the other Trustees, such as BCHT Manager. In excluding these trustee voices I have privileged mine, which does not necessarily represent theirs. I chose what I attended to, what I wrote, and how I represented any situation. I thus cannot claim full co-construction. Instead, I question if this is ever possible with a variety of personalities and agendas. One thesis is insufficient to accommodate all perspectives adequately and transparently.

When choosing between disclosing information and the women's right to privacy, I have unapologetically responded to the latter. It is the confidentiality and privacy between the participants that have influenced what I include more than the anonymity of participants to those who are not part of their social worlds. Working the hyphen between sharing information and maintaining privacy is done through consciously writing the narratives to include information as well as creating spaces for interpretation and checking in with the participants before sharing their information with others. While I had to be extra mindful when disclosing anything from the field, due to my professional practice of care and relationship

with the participants I was also in a unique position to gather information that an outsider may not have been privy to.

Although the selectivity of information is a limitation of this research, the volume of information gathered over a longitudinal period of time is a strength. If I were writing this conclusion two years earlier, before the episode of household disharmony, my ending would likely have been different. Happenings at the end of my data collection phase illuminated areas of incongruence and conflict that fore-fronted some challenges inherent in this housing model. A limitation of this thesis is that I did not follow up and explore tensions in more detail, such as the ethical dilemmas and the impact the evictions had on all involved in this housing model.

My emergent, collaborative methodology, with a focus on discovery rather than explanation, meant that I did not intentionally follow up on specific areas of inquiry when in the field. There are many questions and areas that require further research. The differences between home and house within this setting were not explored, although alluded to in the narratives. Further investigation into the perceptions of home and house when spaces are shared, like in the SSLA, would make an interesting contribution to this literature and the field of environmental gerontology. The sociality of the households is a neon arrow pointing to a need for further research, especially in the areas of social isolation, loneliness, and social cohesion. The housework phenomenon is worth exploring further. This study provides a rich unfinished tapestry of lived experiences with open threads inviting others to weave these further into their interests, curiosities, and inquiries.

14.5. Final reflective journal entry

I had not been to the houses since the Christmas party and pre-arranged a social visit as I was in the area. Sitting in the lounge with all five women from one house, another who turned up from next door, plus BCHT Manager (Neil), I am feeling really comfortable. I know and like these women, feel welcome and included. I look around and think how nice it is to be with others in this way, to be part of a group. There may be personal undercurrents at times, no doubt some clashes as happens in many households; there are also times like these where the atmosphere is pleasurable. The highs, lows, and in-betweens of involvement in these households are all real experiences. At this moment it is a high, a pleasant feeling of belonging and being with people I like and enjoy being around. As I talk to Neil outside afterward, I find out that Bonnie has handed in her notice. She is going to live with a friend. My feelings are mixed. I am pleased she has a place to go to. I am concerned about the others in the house, how will they feel about her going, who will replace her and what impact will this have on the household dynamics. I am brought back to the practicalities of the situation, as Neil asks me how we as a Trust replace her and the other vacancies, what role do I want to take in this now. I experience some

discord followed by a feeling of detachment. My response came easily. I will not take on this responsibility but will provide support as an advisor. I have moved on, it is time for others to experience and understand the practicalities of shared housing, especially as this appears to be a direction community housing is heading. I go next door, they are expecting me. One is just leaving; one is not in, and another who has the flu waves from her room. I am welcomed in by the other two in the house, the ones who have been asked to leave. On the surface there is civility, I am acutely aware, however, of the context and interpersonal dynamics occurring. I am uncomfortable and cautious about how I interact in this triad. Sadness is the dominant emotion I feel, as well as helplessness. I want the best for them both and for everyone else in the household. I listen to one express her disappointment, frustration, fears, anxieties, and difficulties as she looks for other accommodation. She has not found anything yet. I later phone Bonnie and have a long conversation with her. Her main reason for leaving is ongoing disharmony in her household related to an inability to get on with one person. I have known about this situation from the beginning and it has not resolved over the years.

I am relieved I no longer have the responsibility of this often time-consuming volunteer role, at the same time feel deeply saddened for those whom the SSLA has not worked for. I also feel very blessed to have got to know all these women of whom I genuinely care about. (Journal 13 April 2018)

14.6. Conclusion

A criterion for living in the SSLA is that people need to be able to live independently when they move in as no services or care are provided. If there are no formal services, and social benefits are contestable, and other individual preferences are not available (or affordable or appropriate), the attraction of shared housing is likely to be predominated by the need for shelter. If this accommodation is not the most appropriate and not the preferred choice, then are we being socially responsible? By building more shared houses, could we inadvertently provide an environment that may impair well-being rather than enhancing it? At present, it appears that traditional housing is the most appropriate accommodation option for older people, but that does not preclude the development of other models that might factor in the findings from this study.

To conclude. The bottom line for me is whether I would personally choose to age in a shared household such as the SSLA. In the first two years after the houses were occupied, my answer would have been yes. Now, my answer is no. It is not a place I see myself ageing. I could live in shared accommodation as a means of reducing costs to enable a lifestyle and purpose whereby my daily life is enacted outside the house, e.g. working or studying. I am already doing this now. The thought of dwelling in such an environment if I were to spend the majority of my time there is not appealing at this stage. Being one of the last people moving into an established shared house of unfamiliar people is something I would avoid. I now

realise I would prefer a place of my own, with people I trust living nearby, over sharing a household with four people I do not know well and may have little in common with. I would, however, still consider sharing with like-minded friends, especially if there were enabled alternatives should this arrangement not go as well as expected.

Appendix A. Promotional material for prospective tenants



**BAYS
COMMUNITY
HOUSING
TRUST**

An innovative lifestyle for independent older people

We are very excited about our latest affordable housing project and we know you will be too.

Our society is changing fast, and the members of the Bays Community Housing Trust are constantly looking for ways to improve the services we provide for older people who are in social or economic need.

Our population is aging. Around the world people are living longer, more active and healthier lives, meaning there is a greater urgency for more affordable, age-friendly rental accommodation, and the demand for this is likely to increase.

We have a vision for our elders to be able to live in a homely, safe environment and to be treated as valuable individuals, with dignity and respect, despite the restrictions of spiralling housing costs on the Shore.

Stable and appropriate housing is fundamental to the health and well-being of all our community, not just

individuals. Our latest, innovative model for affordable rental housing has a lifestyle-quality focus.

Promoting independence and allowing for companionship and community, this new social approach provides choices that we would appreciate ourselves, should the need arise.

We strive to express God's love in practical ways to older people who are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, and to help them enjoy their later years.

The information about our latest housing project (on the back of this flyer) may benefit you, or someone you know – or may inspire you to help us keep building a better future for all.

Members of the Long Bay Baptist Church set up the Bays Community Housing Trust in 2004. With help from all quarters we have made great progress in our efforts. Look for details on our website.

PO Box 89 185 Torbay, Auckland 0742 | Ph: 09 473 8371 | Email: keith@bcht.org.nz | Web: www.bcht.org.nz

Northcote House progress (Dec 2013)



Company, choice and affordability

The Bays Community Housing Trust is building a five bedroom house in Northcote where five independent older women will be able to make their home together. It will be completed in February.

The bedrooms each have an en-suite bathroom and deck and will be furnished personally by the resident. Shared facilities are furnished, and include two lounges, kitchen, dining area and laundry.

Ideally suited for single women 65 and over of any or no faith who are able to live independently and would appreciate living in community with others, this house offers an affordable, innovative lifestyle that emphasises choice and companionship.

As co-tenants, the residents have the freedom to collaborate and create a home they can all enjoy living in, as well as have an influence over decisions that affect them.

Our relationship manager, who is experienced in social and community work, will liaise closely with

the residents to support the well-being of everyone in the house.

We have designed this innovative community house for a Lifemark Rating of 5, which allows for ease of use for older people. It is conveniently situated in Tonar Street, close to the Northcote Shopping Centre, Countdown, public transport, the library and other community services.

To be eligible for consideration, prospective tenants must not have significant assets, nor own a house of their own.

The rent will be around \$220 per week, including power, water, internet and communal phone.

If you know any sociable women who may appreciate the opportunity to meet us and ask us questions about community life at our Northcote house, please contact Robyn Barry for more information.

phone: 09 473 9247
mobile: 020 4008 8754
email: relationshipmanager@bcht.org.nz



**BAYS
COMMUNITY
HOUSING
TRUST**

Affordable housing for all

If our housing could benefit you or someone you know, or if you can help the with the work of our Trust, we would love to hear from you.

PO Box 89 185 Torbay, Auckland 0742 | Ph: 09 473 8371 | Email: keith@bcht.org.nz
Web: www.bcht.org.nz | BCHT is registered as a Charitable Trust, 1587004 and with the Charities Commission, CC29961. BCHT is a Ministry of Long Bay Baptist.

A ministry of
LONG BAY Baptist

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