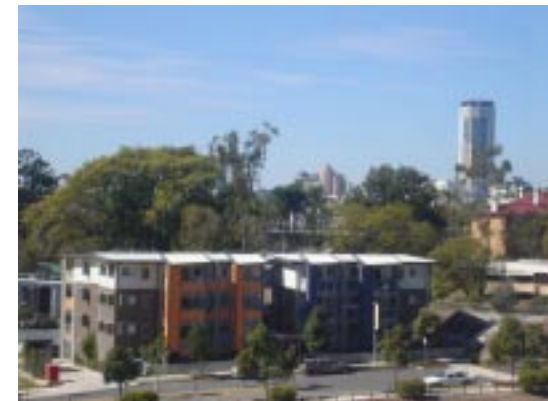


The Kelvin Grove Urban Village: Key Design Aspects to Connect People, Place, and Health in an Inner-City Residential Development



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Structure of the Presentation

1. **Background and Rationale for Study**
2. **Research Questions**
3. **A Case-Study: The Kelvin Grove Urban Village**
4. **Methodology: Interviews and conversations with mothers from the Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) apartments and The 'Blog'**
5. **Findings**
6. **Implications and Future Directions**

A Health Inequalities Study...

Why do lower socioeconomic living contexts produce less healthy lifestyles and higher morbidity and mortality rates?

- In Western Countries, such as Australia, socioeconomic inequalities mean health inequalities, with poorer demographics being more likely to have less healthy lifestyles and health
- Socioeconomic living contexts, measured at either the household, neighbourhood, or geographic area are greater predictors of health than individual measures of socioeconomic position
- From a health perspective, you are better off being poor and living in a rich area, than being rich and living in a poor area
- Research shows that neighbourhoods are powerful predictors of lifestyle and health across the lifecourse

What we know from the Urban Design Literature?

As Jackson states, 'while causal chains are generally complex and not always completely understood, sufficient evidence exists to reveal urban design as a powerful tool for improving human condition' (p. 191).

Contemporary design literature points to the following outcomes as 'most in demand', and simultaneously most difficult to deliver:

- Community (Gleeson, 1994)
- Diversity (Luymes, 1997)
- Participation (Al-Hathloul, 2004).
- Sustainability (Van den Dobbelstein & de Wilde, 2004)
- Identity (Oktay, 2002; Teo & Huang, 1996).
- Culture and History (Antrop, 2005).

An interdisciplinary research effort, that asked the questions...

- What is it about lower socioeconomic living contexts that generate less healthy lifestyles?
- What is the role of the urban neighbourhoods in either exacerbating or alleviating these effects?
- What aspects of urban design – psychological, social, physical – are important for influencing how people behave and feel from a health perspective?
- What are the social, psychological, and cultural processes that create the connections between people, place, and health that we observe in epidemiological research?
- **Note:** This study looked at *physical activity* as a health-related behaviour via which we could explore the relationships between people, place, and health, however, the study was not about physical activity per se.

The Kelvin Grove Urban Village: A case-study for investigating the research questions

- What is KGUV a case of?



- What does KGUV allow us to study?





About the Kelvin Grove Urban Village

- 16ha, 2kms from Brisbane CBD, 800-1000 residential apartments
- Based on design principles of 'New Urbanism'
- Emphasis on creating a diverse, vibrant, inner-city planned development
- Mixed-tenure – Brisbane Housing Company (BHC), private, student, and supported accommodation
- La Boite Theatre, Creative Industries Precinct, Health & Physical Activity Building, IHBI, variety of shops
- Environmentally sustainable – won recent award at

Official website: <http://www.kgurbanvillage.com.au/>

Research Methodology

- 8 in-depth interviews with low-income parents living in Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) units
- 8 household level interviews
- One community focus group
- Informal notes, conversations, and observations from community socials/meetings etc.
- The Blog: *'The Effects of a New Urban Context on Health'* <http://theeffectsofanewurbancontextonhealth.blogspot.com/>

Findings: People, Place, and Health

'Histories and Baggage': What people bring to a place and how this affects what they do there...

- Families of origin and personal backgrounds
- Previous living ecologies and neighbourhoods: The norm of living in fear and daily risk management

How do the design principles of KGUV interact with the backgrounds and current situations of BHC tenants?

- Marketing rhetoric, concept, and place reputation
- Aesthetics and attractiveness of built environment
- Mixed land-use and proximity to destinations
- Parks, green spaces, and health-related resources
- Mixed-tenure living arrangements



Families of Origin – How ‘healthy’ are tenants’ histories?

Ok, now this question is going back in time. When you were growing up, how important was a healthy lifestyle in the family you grew up in? Were your parents or carers encouraging you to be fit and healthy or was it not really talked about that much?

Not really talked about. We used to bring ourselves up. My mother was a real, you know. She wasn't a very nice person. We brung ourselves up and looked out for each other.

So you had a lot of other things to worry about, besides health?

Yeah, well my mum used to get flogged up somethin' fierce, so.

Can you tell me what you mean by that?

She used to get, what's it called? Like, domestic violence.

Oh. So your mum was beaten up? (pause) By your dad?

Yeah, by my stepfathers. Not my real father, cause I didn't know who my real father was until I was 18. I've never met my father.



Families of Origin – How ‘healthy’ are tenants’ histories?

So it was a tough childhood?

Very tough.

And with the alcoholism, that obviously comes with a lot of problems.

A lot of problems. A very lot of problems. Cause with alcoholism, I got molested by an uncle and I felt the best thing to do was to tell my mother? And I remember the guy saying, you can tell you and she's not going to believe you, and I told my mum and she would not believe me and I was really just hurt in the heart. I ran away. That was it, you know. She didn't believe me. Although before she died, before she died she knew that I was telling her the truth.

How old were you when this happened?

Eight years old.

Eight? And you ran away?

Eight. And I kept on running away and running away.



Previous Living Ecologies and Neighbourhoods: The norm of living in fear and daily risk management

'I lived in Sydney, there was a place in the South West. And it was near townhouses and I hated that place. I hated going out after dark 'cause it was pretty scary, with a high unemployment level. Just um, walking down the road, they knew you would have a few dollars on ya, so they'd roll ya for the money for grog or smokes.'



Previous Living Ecologies and Neighbourhoods: The norm of living in fear and daily risk management

Yeah, we come from a place that's down in New South Wales.

So that had some bad stuff?

Everythink. You can't even walk out your backdoor...

For fear of?

For fear of the kids, they can't ride their pushbikes 'cause they will get bashed and robbed for 'em. If you're out, after a certain time you will get rolled for shoes, your money, your wallet, different things like that. It was just... a lot of the areas aren't safe no more.



Marketing Rhetoric, Concept, and Place Reputation



So the Fortitude Valley you felt was a dangerous place, so what about this place, you said this place makes you feel really good, what is it about this place that does that?



'It makes me feel good, because I am like around a university, and the people round here, I've sort of noticed, it's sort of like a respectful place. And it makes me feel younger' (laughs).

Marketing Rhetoric, Concept, and Place Reputation



‘But there’s a real buzz here, and I like being part of that, and we’re in the media, and basically we live where everyone would love to live, right in the city. And I love watching the uni students going around and everyone doing their thing, it feels really good, and it reminds me of when I did ‘varsity for a while...’



Aesthetics and Attractiveness of Built Environment

If you had to describe the place to someone how would you do that?

It's beautiful (laughs) It is. It's lovely. Nice and peaceful.

OK. How does it make you feel about yourself and your family?

It makes us feel really good. It makes us feel poshy for once, you know?

It makes you feel poshy?

Cause we've had dumps all the time, and we haven't been in anything like this before.

And does this reflect on you?

It does, it does. You feel down, you feel like you're nothing, but now here we feel like we're something, you know, cause we're in something nice. It makes us feel good.



Mixed Land-Use and Proximity to Desirable Destinations

- *'Well I took 'em to the park, and High Five was on, and I take 'em to that, and the shops are closer here... Yes, the kids are more settled here. They can go to libraries' n that here and a park just up the road'.*
- *South Bank and The Lyric Theatre are only 15 mins away for all the activities we enjoy and buses are available every 10 mins*
- *I love the Victoria park, if you walk there at night is it wonderful sightseeing, you can see the beautiful city*
- *Roma Street Parklands are beautiful and they are just over there, so that is fantastic to go to'*
- *I like that I am close to Roma cause Roma is close to everything and you can get to anywhere from Roma*



Potential Psychological Barriers to Shops and Services

- There's the IGA there 'n that, but I don't think we (referring to BHC residents) are meant to be using those shops, I think they are mainly for the others and the uni students...



Parks, Green Spaces, and Health-Related Resources



- *'I have also been motivated to go for a run in the area, which I haven't done for years due to illness, and have found the pathways useful for this as they are broad'*
- *'It is good for physical activity especially walking and jogging and going sight-seeing is good exercise. And going to the shops'*
- *'I like the parks surrounding the area because they are so gorgeous and I feel comfortable and satisfied with the air'*
- *On one of our walks we visited all the parks in the area and I saw that Grey Gums park would be ideal when small children of my friends and family come to visit as we can take them for a walk up there and let them kick a ball around and we can sit and talk*

Potential Barriers to Using these Resources...

- Disability & Illness
- Caring duties
- Living alone, confidence, and fear
- Psychological and social barriers around feelings of comparison, body-image, and inadequacy





Mixed-Tenure Living Arrangements

This place, we've had a few hiccups along the way, we've had a man come in and it's the wrong house... with a gun. So that's why we've got the dog here. But um, someone came in with a gun, and they came into the wrong place, so...it was a bit full on. It's a bit like the Bronx here at the moment.

Mixed-Tenure Living Arrangements

Yeah. We've had someone get burnt by hot water by her boyfriend, and the police rock up here like every day. I think it's calming down a bit now, but it's become like pretty full on, like that all comes with the people who are being moved here as well, like yeah, we're all from the same lifestyle but some of us have changed and some of us are still there. So its difficult in that way, where they have tried to put all lower class people in one building, where some people have moved on and some people haven't.



Mixed-Tenure Living Arrangements

Oh look, it is really frustrating. We ring the real estate up, and it's a 'police matter'. You ring the police up and they come over so many times that it gets ridiculous. And it gets to the point where you just ignore it.

When you say Urban Village to people, they just think of it as Department of Housing. Yeah. They think 'Oh you live at that community housing place'.

And do you think it reflects on you?

Oh it does. Yeah. I think well they think I'm a drug addict just like everyone else is around here. And I feel like 'I'm not one of them!' And I don't want to be categorised into that.



Mixed-Tenure Living Arrangements

And so how does this make you feel, being surrounded, and being in close proximity to these people?

Can't stand it. I just think it's disgusting. I mean, fair enough everyone's got their own lifestyle but when you are living in a box and you're in the middle of it, and you don't fit in with the people who live here. I feel like I'm an outsider, especially because they leave lots of needles lying around near the bins, so I don't want my kids even going outside. And if they do, I have to make sure they always wear shoes.

Another quote from a longer story told by a participant...

I just like doing my washing late, cause then the kids are asleep and I can get up and clean the house a bit better and do the washing and hang it out, and so I am walking out to hang the washing out and I hear some lady screaming 'You stabbed me, you blah' so I just bring the washing back in and shut the door (laughs). I think 'I'll hang out the washing tomorrow' (laughs again).

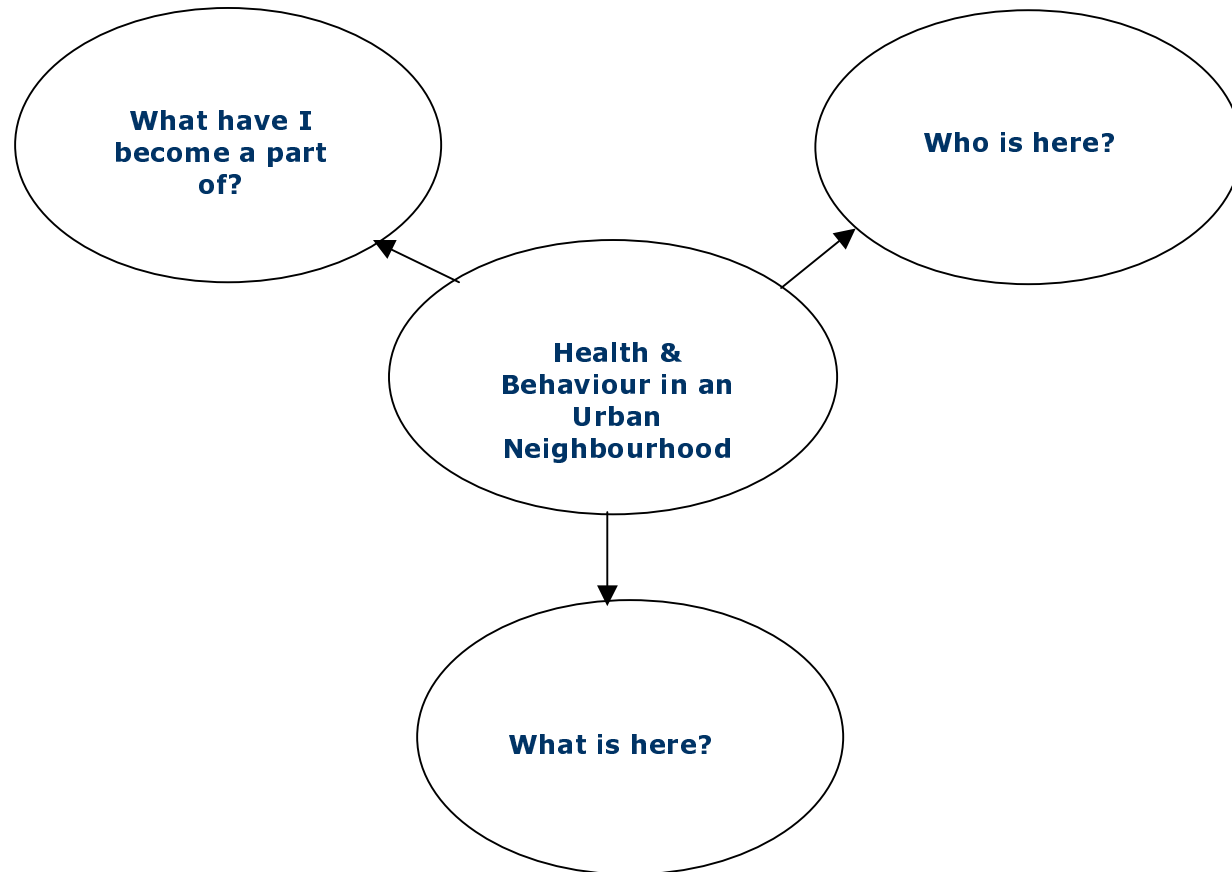


Summary of Findings and Implications for Design...



- Residents arrive with their own perceptions and expectations based on personal histories
- Reputation in media and marketing rhetoric is important for generating a positive outlook about a new living environment
- Attractive aesthetics and design of housing gives a psychological 'lift' to tenants
- Proximity to desirable destinations is a proponent of more active and healthy lifestyles
- Pathways, parks and health-related resources generate both physical and psychological health benefits
- Close-proximity of lower socioeconomic residents in medium-density apartment living is producing a number of challenges that require urgent attention
- A lack of resources providing activities for children of all ages, respite care, childcare, a neighbourhood or referral centre, and positive community development may jeopardise positive effects of new urbanism at work in this environment...

Model for thinking about the way people interact with urban design



Thanks for listening 😊

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