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BSc Urban and Regional Planning (Honours) Research Report

Private Student Housing in Braamfontein



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Sikhokele Ncame

A Research report submitted to the faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Planning Honours.

Johannesburg, 2016

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own independently produced work. It is being submitted for the BSc Honours Degree in Urban and Regional Planning to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.

……..

(Signature of candidate)

…….Day of…… ……

(Day) (Month) (Year)

Abstract

The limited capacity of on-campus university provided student housing has created a niche for the private sector to fill the gap and provide additional housing for students at institutions of higher education and training in South Africa. Braamfontein, with its large student population, is an example of a neighbourhood that boasts a significant number of private student dwellings that house students in learning institutions that are situated within the precinct and within the broader Johannesburg context. The focus of this research centres on exploring the perceptions of students regarding the quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein, as well as assessing whether private student housing in the precinct meets and fulfils the requirements outlined in the policy for the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities in South Africa.

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Chapter One

Introducing the Research: Private Student Housing

1.1) Preamble

For those students who are fortunate enough to have the means to study further after their secondary schooling career, being accepted for their chosen degree programme is but one of the factors they need to concern themselves with in trying to achieve success at university. Students, particularly those studying in geographies that are away from home, are tasked with finding a place to stay in the new city or town that they are studying in, preferably within a close proximity to their university campus. While this type of residence is often temporary, it acts as a home away from home for students where they spend most of their time during the schooling year and sometimes during scheduled breaks depending on their distance from home; financial abilities; and various academic commitments. Student housing in South Africa is generally provided for by the respective tertiary institutions as well as by the private sector. There are various types of student housing in the South African context, including on-campus and off-campus accommodation in the form of residence halls, shared flats, studio and bachelor apartments, dormitory style residences, student diggz, shared houses (communes) and inner city walk-ups.

It is widely accepted that home provides a sense of identity, security and a point of orientation in relation to the chaos that characterises the world (Khozaei et al, 2011). For students living in student housing away from home, living in a residence is likely to differ from how they live in their respective households. This requires students to adapt and employ various coping mechanisms to ensure that their new environments are conducive to learning and enriching their study performance while they are at institutions of higher education and training. From the literature pertaining to private student housing, it has become evident that there is a gap in research regarding the housing preferences of students and their real needs, particularly in the South African context. Jinadu (2001) categorizes the psychological, physiological, facility and security requirements as four of the most important qualitative needs that measure the adequacy and habitability of student housing. In international studies, it

was found that students look for housing typologies with more of a residential design that resemble more home-like accommodations (Bekurs, 2017). Whether this is the case in South Africa cannot be concluded as student housing preferences are not well documented. Other measures such as healthy, safe and sanitary student housing conditions have also been identified as necessary to harness the educational, cultural and recreational needs of students (Alaka et al, 2012).

Reduced financial support from the state and increasing student intakes at universities in South Africa has meant that student accommodation provided by universities is scarce (Rubin, ND). Since many students live outside of the areas where tertiary institutions are located, they naturally require accommodation that is close to their learning institutions. This contributes to the high demand for student housing that universities have not been able to accommodate fully. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training, only 18% of student housing needs are provided for by institutions of higher education (Rubin, ND). In order to increase the supply of student housing, the private sector is playing a major role in securing off-campus private student housing. Given this brief background, this research thus seeks to explore the quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein, as well as user perceptions of these dwellings through qualitative case study methods of analysis and research.

1.2) Problem Statement and Research Aim

The limited capacity of university provided student housing has resulted in private developers finding a profitable niche in the student housing market (Radebe, 2013). This has also been the case in the Braamfontein precinct (Radebe, 2013). Following the Fees Must Fall protests of 2015, issues relating to the affordability of tertiary education as well as the livelihoods of students at university campuses across the country came under scrutiny, raising a lot of questions about the South African Higher Education system in general (Msila, 2016).

As the price of tertiary education within the country continues to rise, so does the price of private student housing in respective university precincts, Braamfontein included. This increase in rental prices has in some cases not always been accompanied by an improvement in general quality and living conditions within this

type of housing market (Department of Higher Education and Training (2011), bringing into question issues related to the quality and affordability of private student accommodation and its effects on the students who live within these various dwellings.

The Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities of September 2011 states that the housing of students at university campuses is broader than just the basic provision of beds and is primarily about establishing living, learning and social communities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). This report established that there are varying standards for housing university students across the higher education sector in South Africa, a significant proportion of which was found to be sub-standard.

This research thus seeks to engage the student population living in private student housing within Braamfontein about their general living conditions within these private buildings. It aims to assess the quality of private student housing using some of the physical infrastructure criteria outlined by the Department of Higher Education and Training in the *Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities* as well as through user perceptions. Alongside the quality analysis, this report will further explore perceptions about the affordability of private student housing within the Braamfontein precinct.

1.3) Research Rationale

As South African Universities continue to admit more students into the gates of higher learning, the provision of safe, affordable, quality and convenient student housing becomes increasingly important in ensuring the academic success of these students within various institutions across the country. While there is a decent array of literature on private student housing in countries such as the United Kingdom, there is a clear gap in literature on private student housing in South Africa and user perceptions about this housing typology. Not much research has gone into investigating user perceptions on private student housing, particularly with regards to the quality of the residences as well as whether or not the private sector is providing student housing that is affordable and conducive to a positive and healthy study environment.

The *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities* of 2011 confirmed that there are major backlogs in the provision of student housing, with students reported to be living in atrocious and sub-standard environments in some instances (Department of Higher education and Training, 2011). While private suppliers of student housing are playing an increasing role in filling the gap that exists in the provision of student housing, the report has found that this type of student housing is often unregulated, thus allowing for the extensive exploitation of students and exposure to numerous and varied levels of risk (Department of Higher education and Training, 2011).

Braamfontein, by virtue of it housing a number of tertiary institutions, is a prime example of a neighbourhood that has an extensive student population. The history of the area, as will be explored in subsequent sections of this report, is rich and alludes to various configurations of the precinct throughout the ages. Many of the students residing within the precinct, as a result of the limited capacity of university provided accommodation, reside within the private student dwellings in and around the area. This research seeks to contribute to creating a better understanding of private student housing within the South African context by investigating the quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein as well as its user perceptions. This precinct has been chosen as a result of its large clustering of private student housing and because of its large student population.

This report will shine a light on the role of the private sector in meeting a growing social need within society, analysed from the perspective of the users who the service is being provided for. Beyond just being a study of private student housing, the report will explore the dichotomy that is often said to exist between private and public interests, exploring whether the public need is adequately catered for by private suppliers.

Given the context within which the precinct exists, this research will also prove useful in possible future studies relating to the price and quality of private student housing in relation to the broader development and configuration of Braamfontein into a consumption space, and what implications this then has on the dominant student population and their place within the precinct.

1.4) Research Questions and Sub-questions

From the previous section, we can deduce that the main research question for this study is:

What are the perceptions of the student population regarding the quality and affordability of private student housing currently in Braamfontein?

- How do students experience the current location of private student housing? (Current location being Braamfontein)
- Do the different facilities, services and amenities that are available within student dwellings or that are accessible to students affect their perceptions of the quality and pricing of student housing?
- Does private student housing in Braamfontein fully cater to the needs of its users?
- Is private student housing in Braamfontein affordable?
- Does private student housing in Braamfontein meet and fulfil the physical infrastructure specifications set out in the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities in South Africa?

1.5) Understanding Context: An Overview of Braamfontein



Figure 1: The Eland Monument, Braamfontein, Johannesburg (Ncame, 2015)

The Precinct of Braamfontein, originally a farm known as Braamfontein Township, was established in 1886 as an area that was used to accommodate the influx of workers in Johannesburg, as well as for other working purposes (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005). Originally, the area was expansive and included the physical territories of Parktown, Melville, Greenside, Roosevelt Park as well as Northcliff (Burocco, 2011). In the early 1950's, Braamfontein was described as a low-income area for the white working class that was made up of semi-detached cottages, small flats, cheap hotels as well as canteens (Beavon, 2004). Towards the mid 1950's, two initiatives were implemented that altered the nature of the precinct in a positive way, namely the relocation of the seat of the City of Johannesburg from the Johannesburg CBD to Braamfontein Hill and the rezoning of land in the area to commercial rights and development (Burocco, 2011). These initiatives resulted in the attraction of big companies such as Eskom into the Braamfontein precinct, increasing the total office space and buildings within the area.

In the period stretching from the early 1980's to the early 2000's, Braamfontein experienced a general decline, following that of the Johannesburg CBD at around the same time (Burocco, 2011). During this period, the area was characterised by increased urban decay, resulting in the "white flight" from the inner city that saw many businesses and institutions relocating to more affluent areas such as Sandton and Melrose. In 2002, planning for the Braamfontein Regeneration Project that was spear-headed by the City of Johannesburg Municipality began and was implemented in 2004 (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005). Under this project, Braamfontein underwent regeneration to improve its overall look, feel and environment as it had become rundown and untidy in the decade prior. The area is also sometimes described as "the epitome of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) revitalisation efforts" (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005). Partnerships between the JDA and other public and private stakeholders have seen millions of rands invested into Braamfontein with the intent of promoting commercial interests in the area (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005). While the project has been described as successful by many stakeholders within the precinct, others feel that Braamfontein still has a long way to go to fully achieve the goals of its regeneration project.

Since the mid 2000's, the area has evolved and changed into a precinct that is primarily used for commercial, recreational, residential and education purposes. It offers executive-style apartments that are targeted mainly at the new middle creative class within the inner city, as well as accommodation catering primarily to the area's large student population. Wits University, along with its partners in government, business and industry have also been active stakeholders in the transformation of the area. On the 1st of September 2016 they launched the Wits Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct in Braamfontein (Tshimologong, 2016). This was described as "Johannesburg's newest high tech address in the vibrant inner city" and is for the incubation of start-ups; the commercialisation of research; and the development of high-level digital skills for working professionals, students and unemployed youth (Tshimologong, 2016).

The residents of Braamfontein, for the most part, reflect the general multi-cultural breakdown of South African Society (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005). The area remains the fourth-largest node for office space in Johannesburg and is home to a number of multinational corporations that are based in South Africa (Burocco,

2011). Braamfontein also houses the Constitutional Court; the Nelson Mandela Bridge; the Johannesburg Theatre complex; the Wits Origin Centre and Planetarium; as well as the University of the Witwatersrand, along with a number of other institutions of higher learning such as Rosebank City College. It is clear to see that Braamfontein has transformed from its early configurations and has become a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood that attracts people from many different parts of the city for work, school, play and a number of other activities.

1.6) Methodological Approach

The research methods employed in conducting this study and the challenges faced in the collection of data, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this report.

This research report represents a qualitative case study situated within the context of the Braamfontein precinct. The study seeks to explore and better understand student perceptions of the quality and affordability of private student housing within the said precinct. The research has also used some aspects of a national policy, *The Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing at Public Universities in South Africa* to better understand and gauge what "standard quality" means in the South African context with regards to the physical infrastructure requirements for both on and off-campus student housing. Data collection was primarily carried out through semi-structured interviews and the completion of a quality criteria checklist that was derived from the above-mentioned national student housing policy.

The primary themes that have been chosen for investigation and research in this research report are: the physical infrastructure requirements that affect the quality of student housing in general (derived from the national policy); user perceptions of quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein; and the experiences of students regarding the current location of their private student dwellings within Braamfontein).

1.7) Thesis Outline

This research report is organised into six chapters. The first chapter was an introduction to the research as well as a contextualisation of the physical setting in which the research was focused and in which data was gathered. This chapter also highlighted the main research question along with its sub-questions that are answered in subsequent sections of this report.

The second chapter represents a review of the literature pertaining to student housing, both locally and internationally under the following themes: The provision of student housing by the private sector; housing satisfaction and preferences for students; the affordability of private student housing; and the Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing at South African Public Universities.

The third chapter discusses the research design, process and methods employed in conducting the study, as well as the limitations experienced during the process of data collection and recording.

The fourth and fifth chapters represent the findings that were gathered from the field work conducted with student informants in the Braamfontein precinct. These findings primarily relate to student perceptions of the quality and affordability of their private student dwellings, as well as the compliance of these dwellings to national standards set out in the policy for the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities in South Africa.

The sixth and final chapter serves as a conclusion for the entire report. It summarises the main findings of the research by answering the main research question along with its sub-questions. It also provides recommendations for how private student housing in Braamfontein can better suit student needs and preferences; how this type of accommodation can be made more affordable for students; as well as how the dwellings can better comply with national minimum norms and standards.

Chapter Two

Student Housing: A Review of the Literature

2.1) Introduction

Literature relating to private student housing in South Africa is scarce as this seems to be a topic that has not been researched extensively in the past. This literature gap has consequently prompted this literature review to draw from sources that are mainly contextualized in the geographies of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In trying to better understand and theoretically unpack the research topic, the literature reviewed seeks to shed light on 4 main themes, namely: the complexities that characterize issues relating to the quality and affordability of student housing; the involvement of the private sector in providing this accommodation; the preferences of students regarding their places of residence; and state responses to issues of quality, affordability, and the creation of living environments that are of a satisfactory standard and that are conducive to academic success.

This literature review draws from a number of different sources, and has been located in the following thematic areas:

- The provision of student housing by the private sector;
- Housing satisfaction and preferences for students;
- The affordability of private student housing; and
- The Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing at South African Public Universities

2.2) The Provision of Student Housing by the Private Sector

Institutions of higher learning in South Africa are located mainly in cities and metropolitan areas. This has resulted in a large proportion of students moving away from their childhood homes to take up their studies in other areas and regions of the country upon completing their secondary education. The moving away of students from home for study purposes is not a phenomenon that is unique to South Africa as

it can be observed in other contexts all over the world (Allinson, 2006). As student populations within urban agglomerations continue to rise, increased pressure is placed on the city's ability to absorb these young urban dwellers in accommodation that is usually convenient to their study location (Allinson, 2006). The limited capacity of on-campus accommodation has meant that colleges and universities around the world are increasingly relying on the private market to meet the demand for student housing needs as it is increasingly apparent that demand greatly outstrips supply (Bekurs, 2007). The University of British Columbia has been documented to have the greatest capacity for housing students in on-campus accommodation in Canada, with a bed-space of 28% for its fulltime students (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). While this is significantly better than the 7.4% bed-space at the University of Calgary, it still reinforces the reality of the limited capacity of on-campus accommodation and why the role of the private sector becomes important in creating alternative housing for students (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). The Eurostudent report of 2011 outlined some key findings regarding what influences where students live:

- Students who are older were described as being more likely to live away from their homes.
- Accommodation in the form of student halls was usually the cheapest and was the most likely to be subsidised.
- The size of the urban location where the tertiary institution is located has some influence on the housing type students choose as students studying in big cities are more likely to live with their parents than students in small cities. This was attributed to the relatively higher cost of living and housing in larger urban areas.
- The majority of students from poor socio-economic backgrounds did not live at home and were less likely than those students from higher income families to live in a hall of residence (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011).

As a result of the limited literature on student housing in the South African context, statistics such as the ones outlined above are not yet available. Drawing from the international case, however, it can be assumed that since Johannesburg is a large metropolitan area as well, a lot of the students studying in the city still live at home

with their parents for the same reasons outlined above. While some students continue to live at home during their time university, the supply of both and-and-off campus student housing cannot keep up with the demand (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). In South Africa, it has been reported that the overall bed-space in on-campus accommodation stands at 20.01%, meaning that current student accommodation is only enough to house almost one-fifth of the country's total student population (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). This limited capacity of on-campus housing is said to be attributable to a lack of sufficient financing. The scarcity of funds at universities in South Africa has had an impact on housing construction within university campuses, as limited funds have left higher learning institutions unable to fund the creation and construction of new student housing to meet the ever growing demand (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011).

It is against this backdrop of scarcity that private investors have found a gap in the student housing market. Research conducted in the UK has revealed that a considerable proportion of landlords and private agencies had and continue to buy property with the specific intention of renting it out to students in response to growing student numbers and the fairly high returns student rents offer (Jones et al, 2000). In the case of Johannesburg, the increase in the demand for student accommodation has been extremely beneficial for private property investors, particularly because the majority of students in private accommodation are funded through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), administered by the various universities across the country (Radebe, 2013). It has been estimated that the major student property investor, South Point, caters to over 90% of students who are beneficiaries of this scheme (Radebe, 2013).

Delgadillo and Erickson (2006) observed that the saturation of student tenants in the private market has caused the price of student housing to rise, allowing even the most inattentive developers to fill up their buildings and apartments. According to (Jones et al, 2002), the student housing market comprises what may be termed "a niche market". This term, as defined by the authors, refers to "a market in which supply has become adapted to meet the needs of a specific, specialised group, and displays a reluctance to meet demand from another source." (Jones et al, 2002: 292). This type of market is described to display particular characteristics in terms of

its intensive concentration, property type, type of landlord and the overall resilience of the market (Jones et al, 2002). Consequently, these factors mean that renting out to a student population is considerably different from renting out to other types of tenants. The niche market for students is also described as particularly robust by (Jones et al, 2000), stating that during periods of general decline in the private housing sector, students fare well in competition for property and that renting out to students often remained flexible. Factors such as these continue to make the student housing market an attractive one for private developers and investors, reducing the responsibility of student housing provision on higher learning institutions.

From the perspective of the student population, living in private student housing that is situated outside the confines of university campuses has both advantages and disadvantages. The National Multi Housing Council (NMHC) of the United States has stated that a large proportion of students prefer to live off-campus because of the cost, space and freedom from university rules (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). In a survey that was conducted at a Canadian university, however, 43% of students living in off-campus accommodation admitted that they would live on-campus at university residences if they could, as some cited that the distance of their housing means that they cannot fully participate in campus life (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). In the same survey, approximately three quarters of those students living in on-campus accommodation emphasised the many academic and social benefits of on-campus living, with many indicating that they would stay put, even if they had the option to live off-campus (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011).

2.3) Housing Satisfaction and Preferences for Students

Housing satisfaction and preferences are subjective and depend on a number of personal factors such as different phases of life, social and cultural background, financial situation, expectations and even on the architectural characteristics of a building (Eikemo and Thomsen 2010). The study of these is thus qualitative and will deliver varying results based on the profile of the sample that has been chosen. Students' personal preferences for certain levels of quality, amenities and services greatly over-determine the kind of housing they choose to reside in (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). As the nature of higher education has evolved

over time, so have the prerequisites for student housing provided by tertiary institutions and the private sector. Unlike the generations of students who came before them, the students of the millennial generation have been perceived to have higher expectations for their student housing typologies. As a result of students and the youth being the pioneers of the latest social trends and being the primary target market for advertisers looking to promote anything new and up-to-date, their expectations and their aspirations are congruently high (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). Copeland et al (2010) identify six trends in campus housing that affect preference, namely: luxury, privacy, privatisation, live and learn, safety and security and Go Green. These authors further go on to highlight how there is an increasing interest in student housing with more amenities than the basic ones that have been historically provided for both on and off university campuses. A survey done on students from the University of British Columbia emphasised that students placed a large importance on their chosen housing being within a close proximity to shops, recreational activities and services (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011).

Another perspective is outlined in a quantitative study about general housing satisfaction carried out in Trondheim, Norway by (Eikemo and Thomsen, 2010). This study emphasized the following five aspects: 1) type of tenancy/ownership; 2) the impact of demographic variables; 3) housing location; 4) different housing characteristics and 5) Individual facilities such as the kitchen and/or bathroom. The survey data from this study indicated that the most significant variables for student residential satisfaction were first, the type of tenancy/ownership; second was the quality of different housing characteristics; and third was the location of the housing in question in relation to the university campus. Individual facilities and demographic variables did not seem to have any noteworthy effect on housing satisfaction.

Drawing from the literature, an early assumption can be made that students generally prefer to stay in locations that are closer to their areas of study (Delagadillo and Erickson, 2006). This assumption could also be made in the case of Braamfontein, given that a large proportion of the students living in the area are students at institutions such as the University of the Witwatersrand, Rosebank College as well as Damelin College, just to name a few. Those students who live in Braamfontein but study in other precincts generally do so when there is convenient

and affordable transportation for them to navigate to and from school, a good example being students from the University of Johannesburg.

Technological advancements have also added an extra layer to the types of services and amenities that students want to access in their dwelling spaces. Factors such as study and work spaces with ample internet access and laundry facilities with adequate machinery within residences are paramount to how students live within and experience their student housing. This is evident in the case of South African student housing as the Department of Higher Education and Training has stipulated these requirements as prerequisites in *"The Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities".*

2.4) Affordability of Private Student Housing

The issue of private student housing affordability is not well documented in both local and international literature. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that students live in a range of different types of student housing and pay varying rates for rent and various other living expenses. Student populations are also made up of individuals from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, which thus makes the issue of affordability relative and varied. As a result, it makes it difficult to determine a figure that can be characterised as a threshold for what is considered as affordable. A case that has been explored in some detail is that of student housing affordability in Amsterdam. Amsterdam is considered to be one of the most popular cities in the Netherlands to reside in, which explains the rise in the number of students living in various types of accommodations across the city (Bosma, 2014). As a result of this continuing trend of rising student numbers, the city has been experiencing a rather large shortage in student housing. This shortage has been making student housing unaffordable within the city as rents have increased exponentially (Bosma, 2014).

The issue of housing affordability in general has some useful insights that could possibly apply for the case of student housing as well. Assessments of housing needs normally consider three important dimensions, namely: 1) physical adequacy; 2) affordability and 3) overcrowding, with affordability being the most widespread housing problem facing households (Bogdon and Can, 1997). Problems relating to affordability are increasingly prevalent amongst those individuals with the lowest incomes, as they face more serious affordability constraints than those with higher incomes (Bogdon and Can, 1997). These authors further go on to mention that

housing affordability measures quantify the extent of inconsistency between current housing expenditures of households and what they are expected to spend given their consumption needs. This measure becomes difficult to quantify for students as they represent a segment of the population that is unemployed and mainly relies on the incomes and expenditures of their parents, guardians or financial sponsors. Many students are also funded by various public and private institutions that set varying ceilings for the amount of money they are willing to pay towards the accommodation needs of students (Radebe, 2013). This also makes it difficult to measure affordability, as some external funders are willing to pay more than others; based on the magnitude of the organisation as well as the extent of the funds they have at their disposal to fund students in institutions of higher learning.

In South Africa, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was introduced as a funding mechanism to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds who wanted to receive a tertiary education but could not afford to pay university and accommodation fees (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011).

Students funded through NSFAS at institutions such as the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town are allocated a maximum amount of R19 000 and R20 400 respectively per year for accommodation (Radebe, 2013). According to the developers providing this accommodation, securing decent living conditions at this average price with ever rising maintenance costs for the lower end of the income earning segment of the market is starting to become near the impossible (Radebe, 2013). The dilemma that developers such as South Point face is attempting to provide adequate housing for poor students whilst the demand for student housing continues to rise and push up prices. It is predicted that as private student housing costs continue to rise, poorer students will increasingly find themselves in tough competition with those who can afford to pay for the rising cost of student accommodation (Radebe, 2013). Marius Minne, the CEO of South Point Properties, has argued that the funds allocated by NSFAS for student accommodation are inconsistent and not enough.

In a briefing on the report and recommendations of the Ministerial Committee, the Department of Higher Education and Training (2012) noted that the socio-economic background of students from disadvantaged areas meant that they lacked accommodation and mobility. The report further stated that the rising price of student

accommodation both on and off campus was leading students to rent sub-standard accommodation that was largely inadequate, not maintained and in an overall bad condition.

2.5) The Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing at Public Universities

Most developed countries have long-standing policy and regulatory frameworks for student housing for both on and off-campus typologies. In South Africa, such a policy had not existed until the draft policy on student housing at public universities was released in 2013, meaning that issues relating to student housing in the country had been largely unregulated and not well monitored. The Higher Education Act and the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa did not stipulate any regulations on student housing (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). The first time student housing became an important aspect of the discourse on national higher education was in April 2010 when the physical quality of both on and off-campus student accommodation was criticised at the Stakeholder Summit on Higher Education Transformation (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). *The Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing at Public Universities in South Africa* (hereinafter referred to as the Policy) is a new policy signed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, which came into effect at the end of September 2015 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015a). This new Policy applies to all public universities and private sector housing providers that have been accredited by respective universities and must be applied in the planning of new student housing and the refurbishment of existing student housing where practical and possible (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015a). The Policy was developed following a report that was compiled by a ministerial committee that conducted a nationwide review of student housing in South Africa, with the findings highlighting the existence of widely varying standards of student housing, as well as a number of issues such as sub-standard living conditions, a lack of sufficient food and nutrition for large numbers of students living in university residences as well as a severe shortage of accommodation for students who live with disabilities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015a). This review also highlighted and emphasised that student housing is not just about the provision of accommodation but also about establishing living, learning and social

communities for students at various institutions of higher education and training in order to ensure success and prosperity in their academic endeavours (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

Drawing from the findings of the review, the objective of the Policy is to regulate the provision of on-and-off campus student housing at South Africa's public universities in order to ensure that student occupants are provided with housing that is fit for purpose and of a reasonable quality, and that allows them to enjoy a living environment that promotes and encourages academic prosperity (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). The Policy focuses on various aspects of student housing that impact the student population and their possible success at their respective institutions of higher education and training. These include physical infrastructure; health and safety; furnishings and fittings; construction, repairs and maintenance; student well-being and support; student housing governance and management; and financial control and management of student housing (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

2.6) Conceptual Framework and Definitions

From the literature that has been reviewed, the key terms that will shape the research as well as how it is conducted are: Private student housing; Quality; Affordability; and Housing satisfaction and student preferences.

2.6.1) Private Student Housing

For the purposes of this research, private student housing refers to student accommodation that is not directly provided by specific higher learning institutions but that is provided for by private individuals, foundations and corporations (Bekurs, 2007). This includes various typologies of student housing such as off-campus dormitory style accommodation, residence halls with shared amenities and off-campus apartments and flats that are characterised by both shared and individual amenities. With regards to this research, private student housing also includes those buildings that cater to both students and other types of tenants such as young working professionals, families and older middle class people within the Braamfontein precinct.

2.6.2) Quality

As outlined by the Department of Higher Education and Training in *The Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities*, Quality of private student housing has been assessed and determined according to four main factors, namely: physical infrastructure; social spaces; health and safety; and services within the private student dwelling. The qualitative data collected from informants has related to these four factors and has gathered their perceptions and their lived experiences of their private student dwellings.

2.6.3) Affordability

As has been previously mentioned, affordability measures quantify the extent of inconsistency between current housing expenditures of households and what they are expected to spend given their consumption needs (Bogdon and Can, 1997). As a result of this research being concerned with user perceptions of the quality and affordability of private student housing, affordability will be determined according to what students currently pay in rent and whether or not they perceive this amount to be reasonable and affordable based on their socio-economic backgrounds as well as their personal assessments of the quality of their dwellings. Consequently, the concept of affordability will be subjective within this research.

2.6.4) Housing Satisfaction and Student Preferences

Student preferences can be defined as those factors that determine the expectations of students with regards to their places of accommodation. They also determine how students experience various private student dwellings and how well they thrive within these environments. Student preferences also shape the way in which students view their places of residence, and whether or not they perceive them to be affordable and of an adequate quality.

Represented below are the main concepts that have been identified as being the measurable variables within the study. The main aim of the conceptual framework diagram is to illustrate the relationship that exists between these variables.

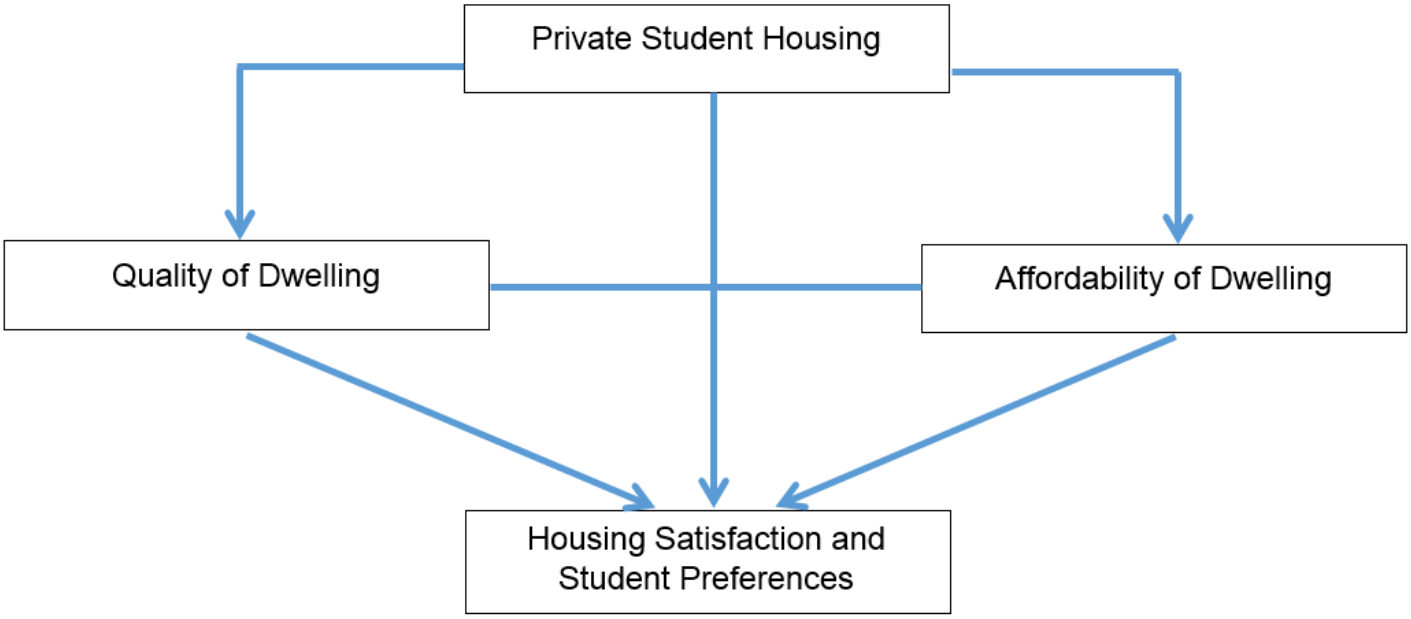


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

The diagram above has taken the concepts that emerged from the literature review and has graphically shown the possible relationships that exist between them. This diagram serves as the initial hypothesis for the research and assumes a number of things, namely: a direct relationship between the provision of student housing by the private sector and the housing satisfaction and preferences of students; an initial assumption that the quality and affordability of student dwellings are important factors in the provision of private student housing; and lastly, a direct relationship between the quality and the affordability of the dwelling and the housing satisfaction and preferences of students.

2.7) Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this section of the report has provided an overview of the body of writing that is relevant for this research. The gap in literature that exists with regards to student housing in South Africa is a cause for great concern as student accommodation is a key factor in the overall learning experience as well as the performance of students academically at institutions of higher education and training. From the international cases of student housing that have been explored, this

literature review has drawn parallels and sought out aspects that are equally relevant for the South African case. It is clear that the issue of student housing, particularly relating to that provided by the private sector, is nuanced and complex, especially in the context of the turmoil that has characterised higher education in this country in the last few years. The subsequent chapters of this report will thus explore the methodology employed in carrying out the research, as well as document the findings from the fieldwork that was conducted in attempting to answer the research questions and sub-questions.

Chapter Three

Research Design, Process and Methods

3.1) Introduction

In attempting to gather and understand the perceptions of the student population regarding the quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein, this research adopted a *qualitative case study* approach. This method is defined as one that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter and jack, 2008). In this case, the phenomenon was student perceptions of the quality and affordability of private student housing, with the context being that of Braamfontein. Data for this research report was collected through semi-structured interviews from a sample of 15 students living in 13 private student housing buildings within the Braamfontein precinct, and also utilised some of the physical infrastructure standards outlined in *The Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities* in establishing a benchmark against which the quality of the student accommodation was gauged, in addition to the user perceptions gathered.

3.2) The Context in which the Research Has Emerged

Having lived in the Braamfontein precinct for a period of close to four years, the issue of both on and off-campus student housing has been something that has been of interest to me for quite some time. Before commencing my first year of study in 2013, one of my main concerns about coming to university was the thought of struggling to find accommodation in a new city that was hundreds of kilometres away from home. Fortunately for me, I did not struggle at all and ended up securing a place in an on-campus university provided residence that I have stayed at for the whole duration of my studies at university.

While my housing situation has been relatively easy, I observed that many of my peers who lived in off-campus private student housing did not always have it as easy as I did where securing accommodation was concerned. Many of the people I went to school with have lived in different places within the Braamfontein precinct throughout their university careers and their various reasons for changing accommodations piqued my interest. From the many social interactions with

students living in off-campus accommodation, it became evident that the two primary reasons why many of them decided to move were the price of rent and the physical configuration of the accommodation. As some progressed through the different years of university, their preferences regarding student housing changed from what they may initially have been in first year. Other reasons for their moving included proximity to their particular university campus, the nature of the immediate environment around the accommodation and the type of learning environment created by the accommodation, just to name a few. It is against this background and within this context that the desire to probe more deeply into this topic arose.

3.3) Study Population and Area

This study, as has been mentioned previously, is situated within the Braamfontein precinct, north of the traditional Johannesburg CBD. The informants of this study are students that reside within Braamfontein and that are studying at tertiary institutions in and around Johannesburg. This study does not include students who commute to Braamfontein on a daily basis for educational purposes. It is primarily focused on those who reside within the area full time in off-campus private student housing.



Figure 3: Location of the Study Area, Braamfontein Johannesburg

Source: Google Maps

Braamfontein Precinct Boundary

3.4) Data Collection

Given that the nature of the research is a qualitative case study, the methodology employed in data collection has demonstrated an approach that is also qualitative. Creswell (2009) describes the qualitative research model as one that seeks to understand a certain social situation, group, role, event or interaction. The author further goes on to describe it as an investigative process that involves the researcher unpacking a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object that is being studied. The primary methods of data collection that were employed during the field work aspect of the research were semi-structured interviews that were audio-recorded, as well as a quality criteria checklist that was derived from the physical infrastructure standards outlined in *The Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities.*

The research is primarily centred on gathering the perceptions of the student population regarding the quality and affordability of private student housing currently in Braamfontein. In addition to these user perceptions, the quality criteria checklist provided a benchmark standard of what is considered to be adequate quality, as according to the national standards and framework set by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The data relating to the quality of student housing was collected through semi structured interviews with 15 students living within 13 private student housing buildings in the Braamfontein precinct. Selective criteria derived from the physical infrastructure standards outlined in *The Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities* was also used as a means of data collection within the research process. Informants filled the checklist out with me as the researcher, dealing mainly with the physical configuration and design of the respective private student dwellings as well as the specific areas of Braamfontein they are located within (See Appendix A for the full checklist).

The data relating to the affordability of student housing in Braamfontein was also collected through semi-structured interviews with the same sample that has been previously mentioned.

3.5) Data Collection and Sampling Techniques

The Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing at Public Universities has been obtained online at http://www.wsu.ac.za/waltersisulu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Government-Gazette-Min-Standards-Norms-for-Student-Accommodation.pdf . The criterion that has been drawn from this document for the purposes of this research is:

3.5.1) **Physical Infrastructure**

- Sites of residences/student housing
- Design of residences [Relating to single and double rooms; room furniture and equipment; room amenities, ablution and shower facilities, kitchen amenities and telephone and alarm bells within the residence]

3.5.2) **Social Spaces within the Residence**

- Large common/meeting rooms
- Study rooms
- Other appropriate spaces

3.5.3) **Health and Safety**

- Fire safety
- Security Staff
- Cleaning and Maintenance

3.5.4) **Services**

- Wi-Fi/Internet access

The semi-structured interviews and criteria-based quality checklist were conducted with research informants in mutually agreed-upon locations where the informants felt the most comfortable to be interviewed by me as the researcher. These locations included public spaces within Braamfontein, as well as places on the Wits University campus for those informants who were students here. The interviews were recorded using a cellular device upon receiving consent from the informant and were also recorded in a written format by me as the researcher.

As a result of the limited scope and time that was available to conduct this research, 13 private student housing properties were included in the study. The informants that made up the sample were chosen completely at random, based on their willingness to participate as the interviews were fairly long, with the longest one taking approximately 45 minutes. Choosing the informants at random also consequently resulted in the 13 private student dwellings that made up the sample being selected completely at random as well. The only requirements and prerequisites that were expected of the informants were that they be students studying at a tertiary institution within and around Johannesburg and that they reside in private student housing in Braamfontein.

3.6) Ethical Considerations

As a result of this research being qualitative in its nature, a few ethical considerations were taken into account given that the study involved directly interacting and engaging with human subjects (Creswell, 2009). I as the researcher had an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants. I also had a responsibility to the informants and their dwelling spaces in respect of the following:

3.6.1) Confidentiality

The process of collecting data from human subjects and from privately occupied spaces was approached delicately and cautiously. The identities of the informants forming part of the study were concealed, as well as the names of the specific private housing dwellings that they occupy within Braamfontein. This was done to ensure that various individuals and property developers are not directly painted in a compromising way, or depicted in a way that they may find slanderous or offensive, or that may have negative repercussions for them and I, as the researcher, in the future. The aim of the research is to explore user perceptions of the quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein in general, without being too specific about the private developers themselves.

3.6.2) Informant Participation

Participation in the research by the informants was completely voluntary and no subjects were coerced or forced to participate against their will. I, as the researcher,

articulated to the informants beforehand the nature of the study and what I hoped to achieve from the insights that they offered me, so that they could choose to pull out should they have not wanted to participate. The study did not be deal with any sensitive or vulnerable groups of people, just a sample of the student population within Braamfontein who were all above the age of 18 years old.

3.6.3) Ethical Clearance to Collect Data/Conduct Fieldwork

An application to the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Architecture and Planning was handed in on the 22nd of June 2016, detailing the nature of the research as well as the details of the interaction with human subjects. Full ethics clearance to conduct the field work with the student population for this research was granted on the 18th of July 2016. The Ethics Clearance certificate is attached as appendix A. Another application that was submitted was to the Wits University Deputy Registrar and was sent in on the 22nd of July as it required that ethics clearance be obtained from the School in question first. This application was submitted in order to receive permission to interview students at the University of the Witwatersrand for the research. As was the case with the ethics clearance application, it also detailed the nature of the research as well as the details of the interaction with human subjects. This permission and clearance was granted by the Deputy Registrar on the 27th of July 2016. The permission letter is also in appendix B, along with the interview questions posed to the informants (appendix C) and the participation information sheet (appendix D).

3.7) Challenges Experienced During Data Collection/Field Work

Before going out into the field to collect the data that was needed for the research, I had planned on gathering a bigger sample of students to form part of the study. I had initially wanted to conduct between 20 and 25 interviews, with the sample of informants being represented by both male and female students. After conducting my first interview with the first informant, it became evident that the qualitative, semi-structured nature of the interview questions resulted in the interviews taking much longer to conduct than I had initially anticipated as the researcher. The shortest interview was approximately 25 minutes, with the longest one being approximately 45 minutes. As a result of the lengthy duration of each interview, it became difficult to find students who were willing to meaningfully participate in the research as many of

them were not up to doing an interview that could potentially take anywhere between 20 and 45 minutes. Given that the fieldwork was conducted mostly during the week, at times where I was likely to find large numbers of students, this also meant that many students were preoccupied at this time with classes, assignments or social interactions with their peers and their friends. This made it increasingly difficult to find research informants, especially those who were willing to engage fully in the interview process and give in-depth, detailed and descriptive answers. As a result of this, after consultation with the research supervisor, the decision was made to reduce the sample size to 15 informants as access to students along with their availability and willingness to participate in the research proved more challenging than initially anticipated. The sample of informants that has been collected still has a good balance of both male and female informants as it comprises of 7 male students and 8 female students. The 15 interviews that were conducted were very informative and provided some deep insights into the research topic, reinforcing the validity of reducing the sample size and how it has in no way hampered the study.

Another challenge encountered during the collection of data was the way in which the informants felt that they could relate to me as the researcher. As part of my fieldwork procedure, I introduced myself to the informants by stating my name, the university I study at, my year of study as well as an overview of the research topic and the nature of the overall study. Following this introduction, many of the informants seemed almost intimidated by the information I was relaying to them, particularly with regards to the fact that I was an Honours student. Many of the informants were in the process of completing their undergraduate degrees, which made them nervous to participate in a postgraduate research report as they felt as though there were high expectations in terms of the calibre of the answers they were supposed to give. At this point, it became important for me as the researcher to show them that I was very relatable and that I was also just a student completing an assignment in that situation. I made sure to approach them in a very friendly and relaxed manner, and I conducted the interviews in a way that was more conversational than academic. The use of the audio recording device also meant that the conversation flowed more easily as I did not have to pause too long to write, as I was only jotting down the main elements of what they were relaying to me. The elaborations and the conversations in between were captured by the sound

recordings, which allowed me to refer back to them in the compiling of the research findings.

Chapter Four

Evaluating Private Student Housing: User Perceptions of the Quality and Affordability of Private Student Housing in Braamfontein

4.1) Introduction

The private sector is a key stakeholder in the provision of student housing in South Africa. The provision of adequate and durable accommodation for students is an issue of high priority at many of the higher education institutions throughout the country (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). Following the ongoing discourse in the country about the Fees Must Fall Movement, issues surrounding the general affordability of higher education in the country came into the spotlight towards the end of the 2015 academic year. While the movement is primarily centred on achieving free, quality and decolonised education at South African universities, it has also highlighted general income disparities between the haves and the have nots in our society, raising concerns about general affordability when it comes to securing a tertiary education in the country. Having noted the limited capacity of on-campus University provided student housing in a preceding chapter, it becomes important to analyse whether or not students are satisfied with the quality of housing that is alternatively provided by private developers, and whether this housing is affordable for them.

This chapter of the research report primarily embodies the data collected and interpreted from the fieldwork that was conducted with the student population living within private student dwellings in the Braamfontein precinct. This chapter will relay the findings of the research with regards to student perceptions of the quality and affordability of their privately owned dwellings, and will also examine whether or not private student housing in Braamfontein is in line with national norms and standards.

As has been mentioned in a previous chapter, the data collected for this research report was taken from a sample of 15 students living in 13 private student housing buildings within the Braamfontein precinct. Of the 13 private student dwellings that made up this study, two student housing typologies were observed, namely: 5

privately owned off-campus residence halls and 8 privately owned off-campus flats/apartments.

The findings relayed in this chapter were directly derived from the interviews done with the 15 research informants. Using the answers recorded from the interviews, the data (as seen in subsequent sections of this chapter) was presented by topics that directly responded to the research question and sub-questions.

4.2) Exploring the Geographic Context of Private Student Housing: User Perceptions of Braamfontein as a Neighbourhood for Students

The selection of Braamfontein as the physical setting for this research was motivated primarily by the fact that there is an obvious clustering of tertiary institutions within the precinct. Consequently, this has led to the presence of a large student population occupying the area in various types of private student housing and some off-campus university provided accommodation. The experiences of students with regards to whether or not Braamfontein is an ideal place to live is thus important in studying their general housing satisfaction as this contributes to their overall view of their immediate environment and how they experience the private student dwellings that they occupy. From the sample of students that made up this research report, it became evident that students within Braamfontein have different and sometimes contradictory views on how they view the precinct and how it works for them as young adults. This chapter will examine the general perceptions of students living in private housing regarding the Braamfontein precinct as well as how they experience it. This analysis will be undertaken under broad themes relating to the clustering of various services, institutions and services within Braamfontein; the issue of safety within the precinct; as well as the character of the area as a consumption space.

4.2.1) Clustering of Tertiary Institutions, Services and Activities

Braamfontein is a neighbourhood that is characterised by a wide variety of land uses, institutions, services and social activities. The neighbourhood has transformed into a renewed living, working and educational space that has also become a place of consumption and production (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005). Drawing from the sample of students used in this report, it became evident that students appreciate how everything they could possibly need is clustered and concentrated within the precinct. This includes essential services such as public transport and healthcare; as

well as supermarkets where they can purchase their groceries; retail outlets for clothing; fast food outlets for eating out; and entertainment and recreational spaces such as night clubs, bars, galleries, coffee shops and restaurants where they can relax and enjoy themselves. It was almost unanimous from the informants that Braamfontein is an exciting neighbourhood for students as it offers a variety of different activities that they can engage in and that also create a great community for students to live and thrive within. One respondent within the sample did not share these views about Braamfontein, however, as he described himself as an introvert who prefers to keep to himself. For him, Braamfontein as a neighbourhood is too crowded and busy, and is not the most ideal place to live, even though the learning institution he attends is located within the precinct. He highlighted that moving and navigating around the precinct was often difficult, particularly during the week, as the numbers of students constantly moving around the area are extremely overwhelming for him. However, he did go on to further say that he would not move away from the precinct if he was given the opportunity as the proximity to school and the convenience of living in Braamfontein outweighed his dislike of the area.

The thirteen informants from the sample who study within the precinct stressed that the convenience of studying and living in the same place was something that they deemed as being a determining factor in where they chose to live, thus making Braamfontein their first choice in finding a place to stay in Johannesburg.

4.2.2) Safety in Braamfontein

One of the aims of the Braamfontein Regeneration Project of 2004 was to re-create the area into a vibrant and well-managed safe space that could accommodate a range of new activities, uses as well as people (Rebelo, 2003). Safety within the precinct emerged as an issue of importance for the students in the area as many of them expressed that it affects their general movement as well as how they access certain spaces and activities in the neighbourhood.

From the fieldwork, it was gathered that the majority of the students interviewed for this study generally feel safe within the precinct, even when they are sometimes mandated to navigate it at night. Whether it be them coming back from studying from their various learning institutions late at night, or whether it be them walking to or from the various evening activities available in Braamfontein, they felt safe and

comfortable within the neighbourhood. Out of the 15 informants, 11 shared the view that Braamfontein was a safe space. It should be noted that all of the 7 males who made up the study viewed the precinct as safe, while only four out of 8 of the female sample of felt the same.

There are two main reasons why students perceived the precinct as safe. Firstly, the security guards that are present within the area both during the day and the night contribute to the feeling of safety that students have. These guards are placed strategically all around the precinct and also act as personal escorts for those students who might be scared to walk alone, particularly at night. A participant of the research living in Braamfontein but studying at the University of Johannesburg also highlighted how the precinct is much safer than other student precincts such as Auckland Park and Doornfontein. While living in Braamfontein means that he has to rely on university provided shuttles to navigate to and from school, the safety that the precinct provides makes for a worthy trade-off. Secondly, the busy and vibrant nature of the precinct makes students feel safe as they always feel as though someone has eyes on them, whether it be the petrol attendants at the Total Garage located at the corner of Bertha and De Korte Street or other people walking around at various times of the day and night. This general feeling of safety also contributes to students feeling safe within their individual private student dwellings.

These feelings of safety and security were not shared across the board, however, as 4 out of the 15 informants expressed that the precinct itself is not safe and that they felt very vulnerable walking around the streets, especially at night. Incidents of being mugged, robbed and held at gunpoint as well as being “scammed” by thieves inside clothing stores are just a few of the incidents that have been reported as being very common within the area, with many of these taking place during the day in broad daylight. It was also stated that there are areas of Braamfontein that do not have proper and working street lights, making them dark and unsafe to walk along alone. The big trees that are situated around the Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo House on 40 De Korte Street also create large, shaded environments that contribute to making the area unsafe both during the day and night. It is interesting to observe that the 4 students who expressed that the neighbourhood is not safe are female students. One of these informants who lives in Orlando, Soweto even mentioned how she feels safer when she is at home than when she is in Braamfontein.

From these findings, we can thus conclude that safety within the precinct is experienced differently by the student population. From the sample, it is evident that male students are more at ease navigating through the precinct than their female counterparts who often feel threatened and uneasy within the space. It must also be mentioned that the physical location of these students' private dwellings also affects how safe they perceive the precinct to be. Generally, those who said the precinct was safe lived in private student housing that is within the more busy and vibrant areas of Braamfontein such as along Jorrissen Street. The students who viewed the precinct as unsafe generally reside in areas that are on the fringes of Braamfontein, such as the part of Juta Street that borders the M1 road. The decreased vibrancy and lack of adequate street lighting of areas such as this within the precinct means that students often feel vulnerable walking alone and are at an increased risk of being victims of petty crimes and theft.

4.2.3) Braamfontein as a consumption space

At the time of the implementation of the Braamfontein Regeneration Project in 2004, many inner city neighbourhoods were also set to undergo a series of urban rejuvenation programmes that aimed to restore the Johannesburg inner city to thrive as it once did in the past (Burocco, 2011). Once these projects started, the private sector saw an opportunity to reoccupy the inner city through a series of developments that were underlined by the desire to construct creative urban spaces that would bring a particular income bracket back into the inner city (Burocco, 2011). Such was the case in Braamfontein. Private developers such as Play Braamfontein have been instrumental in recommodifying the precinct to suit a particular type of urban dweller in Johannesburg. This has resulted in the evolution of Braamfontein into a consumption space that has made it popular for people from all over Johannesburg. The nature of the precinct, particularly on weekends, is very vibrant and becomes a party environment because of spaces such as the Neighbourgoods Market and Kitcheners Pub on De Korte Street.

In the context of Braamfontein as a consumption space, students have largely embedded themselves in the culture and activities in the area. Out of the 15 informants, 13 described Braamfontein culture as being exciting and great. Students generally feel as though the environment is ideal for unwinding on the weekends,

meeting new people and having fun. One of the participants contrasted the area to a student hub in her hometown of Pretoria, Hatfield, stating that the precinct had more culture and depth and more interesting activities to engage in. Students also feel that as Braamfontein continues to develop and evolve as a neighbourhood, it becomes a generally cleaner and healthier environment to live within. They described the streets and the general neighbourhood as being clean and pristine, and added that the street art that can be seen in some areas of the precinct contributes to creating a better urban façade and aesthetic, especially when compared to the neighbouring inner city of Johannesburg.

While the vibrant nature of Braamfontein is perceived as a positive attribute of the area by the students, it has also been highlighted to be disadvantageous at times. While the atmosphere is exciting and lively, students sometimes tend to feel as though that very aspect makes it hard to devote time to and fully concentrate on their academic endeavours. One of the participants within the study highlighted that it is often difficult to study in his building during the weekend because the immediate area surrounding it becomes very noisy and crowded with people. The particular student dwelling that he occupies is situated within mainstream Braamfontein along De Korte and Biccard Street, some of the busiest streets within the precinct on weekdays and weekends. As the social and recreational popularity of Braamfontein continues to increase, there is an influx of people from all over the city into the neighbourhood. One of the research participants highlighted how although this is great and makes the area a lively place to live within, many of the social activities that are based in Braamfontein are not specifically targeted at the students. She noted how there are a myriad of interesting things to partake in that are often too expensive for the average student to afford. This view was shared by two other male participants who noted that while the Braamfontein area is primarily made up of the student population, many of the activities and recreational spaces that are offered in the precinct are not targeted at students but at working people who mainly make up the upper middle class. One participant even went as far as deeming Braamfontein as “the new Maboneng” based on its attractiveness to the “yuppies” of Johannesburg. This view is echoed by (Donaldson and Fenn, 2005) as they state that the commodification of Braamfontein and the involvement of the private sector in development has created unequal spaces of consumption that do not always

necessarily cater for the needs of the residents of the precinct, but instead focus on the particular organisation's needs.

Other grievances that students expressed with regards to Braamfontein related to the shortage of green spaces and the presence of the urban poor in the area. The limited number of green open spaces in the area often restricts some students to spending most of their time outside of their tertiary institutions confined indoors in their private student dwellings or within the various consumption spaces that have come to characterise the area. For those students who attend tertiary institutions such as Rosebank College that do not have green spaces within their campuses, this is very frustrating. The presence of homeless people was also something that was identified as a negative trait of the area as students sometimes feel "harassed" by the men and women who beg for food and money on the street every day. While the students expressed their empathy for the poor, they noted how they also come from homes with limited resources and did not always have extra food or money to spare.

4.3) Private Student Housing Typologies in Braamfontein: Lived Experiences, Student Perspectives and Students Preferences

When drawing from the data that was collected from the 15 informants that made up this research, two private housing typologies have been observed in Braamfontein, namely self-catering residence halls and flats/apartments. It became evident in the process of reviewing the findings that each housing typology had its own unique advantages and disadvantages, thus affecting student preferences and needs in both similar and completely different ways. This research report will thus explore both housing typologies by analysing the following: why students chose their particular private student housing typology; user perceptions of the amenities and the services offered within their dwelling places; the advantages and disadvantages of their current living spaces and a review of whether or not private student housing in Braamfontein fully caters to the needs of the students.

4.3.1) Self-catering Residence Halls

Self-catering residence halls are defined as blocks that are made up of a large amount of individual or shared twin rooms with shared bathrooms as well as a shared kitchenette on each building floor (Department of Higher Education and

Training, 2011). From the 13 buildings that have made up this study, 5 of them fall into this type of private student dwelling, housing 6 of the informants who participated within this study. These private residence halls are made up of a mixture of single and double rooms that cater purely for students.

- Why Students Chose This Type of Dwelling

Private student housing in Braamfontein comes in a variety of typologies that are configured in different ways to accommodate varying student needs and preferences. That is why it was imperative for this research to explore why students choose to live in certain types of private housing in order to determine what their needs are and whether or not they are being met in their current dwelling places.

For some of the 6 students living within the 5 self-catering residence halls that made up this study, living in this type of housing typology was not always their choice. One of the informants stated that she did not choose to live in her particular building nor did she want to, but because of circumstances that related to funding she had no other choice. She is one of the students who are recipients of the government provided National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) study loan. As a result of the alliance between NSFAS, tertiary institutions and certain major private student housing providers within the country, she was given a temporary place to stay in one of the buildings pending her NSFAS application status. When NSFAS accepted her application, she could not move to another student dwelling as she and her sponsor (NSFAS) had already signed her tenant contract. According to her, she would not have willingly chosen to stay in this type of housing typology if she was given a choice as she wanted to have her own space as well as the freedom that comes with living in a flat or in an apartment. Another informant also expressed how she started looking for accommodation for the 2016 academic year when classes had already resumed at her university, leaving her with limited dwelling options as all of the on and off-campus accommodation she had wanted to live in were full. One other informant who studies in Sandton stated that rent prices in Braamfontein were cheaper than Sandton, therefore he did not have much flexibility in choosing his accommodation as his parents were already paying exorbitant fees for his studies. The remaining informants chose to live in their particular buildings for a number of reasons such as: their particular buildings being close to their respective university

campuses; they had managed to procure single rooms within these buildings, which was a deciding factor for them as they did not want to share a living space; some of them had lived in their particular buildings in previous years and appreciated the familiarity and how comfortable they felt in the environment; and one informant also appreciated how services such as electricity and water were included in the rent amount and did not have to be bought on a prepaid basis.

- Services, Amenities and General Quality of the Dwelling

The services and amenities offered at various private self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein are similar, but not always the same. Table 1, featured on the next page, represents a summary of the main amenities and services that are available within these buildings, as well as the price charged for rent in order to provide context for the perceptions of the students regarding their private student dwellings and their general living environments.

It should be noted that some of these buildings are owned by the same property developer, while some of them have different owners. The similarities that are observed between the various services and amenities of various buildings are not necessarily an indication that they belong to the same developer. Self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein are configured in similar ways and often offer similar services and amenities.

Building	No. of Floors	Approximate No. of Students per Floor	Type of Room Occupied by Informant	Recreational Common Spaces	Academic Common Spaces	Cleaning Services	Laundry Facilities	Bathroom Facilities Per Floor	Kitchen Facilities Per Floor	Internet Access	Rent Amount per person
1	14	43	Double Room (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	2 x TV Rooms	1 x Study Room	All common areas and general building (NIV) (Mon – Fri)	Laundry Room: 3 x Washing Machines 2 x Tumble Dryers 5 x Washing Lines	7 Basins 5 Showers 5 Lavatories	4 Plates 1 Oven 1 Sink 1 Microwave No Fridge (BYO)	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R3250 [Electricity included in rent amount]
2	11	30	Single Room [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	1 x Games Room 2 x TV Rooms	2 x Study Rooms	All common areas and general building (NIV) (Mon – Sat)	Laundry Room: 1 x Washing Machine 1 x Tumble Dryer	6 Basins 3 Showers 2 Baths 2 Lavatories 2 Urinals	6 Plates 1 Sink No Oven No Microwave (BYO) No Fridge (BYO)	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R3600 [Electricity included in rent amount]
3	6	20	Single Room [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	1 x TV Room (Shares a space with the kitchen)	None	All common areas and general building (NIV) (Mon – Sun)	No Laundry Room and Equipment 1 x Washing Line	4 Basins 4 Showers 3 Lavatories	8 Plates 1 Sink 1 Microwave 1 x Fridge (Also permitted to BYO) No Oven	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R3000 [Electricity included in rent amount]
4	9	40	Double Room (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	1 x Games Room with TV 1 x TV Room	1 x Study Room	All common areas and general building (NIV) (Mon – Sat)	Laundry Room: 1 x Washing Machine 1 x Tumble Dryer	4 Basins 8 Showers 5 Lavatories	10 Plates 3 Sinks No Oven No Microwave (BYO) No Fridge (BYO)	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R3100 [Electricity included in rent amount]
5	5	52	Double Room (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	1 x Games Room 1 x TV Room	1 x Study Room	All common areas and general building (NIV) (Mon – Sun)	Laundry Room: 1 x Washing Machine 1 x Tumble Dryer 2 x Basins 2 x Washing Lines	6 Basins 10 Showers 6 Lavatories	11 Plates 1 Oven 1 Sink 1 Microwave No Fridge (BYO)	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R3100 [Electricity included in rent amount]

Table 1: Summary of Services, Amenities and Rent Prices at Self-catering Residence Halls in Braamfontein

*NIR (Not Individual Rooms)

*BYO (Bring Your Own)

Room Satisfaction and Quality

As can be observed from table 1, students living in self-catering residence live in either a single room that they have to themselves or a double room that is shared by two people. The configuration of all of these rooms is similar, with the dwellings making provision for a standard bed and mattress; a study table; a desk chair; a book shelf and a steel cupboard that is used for clothing and for groceries as well. In the case of a double room, there is two of everything to accommodate both student tenants.

The informants living in single rooms were observed as being generally more satisfied with their overall living conditions than those in double rooms. Informants expressed that having a room all to themselves gave them a greater sense of privacy that allowed them to relax and be comfortable within their own space. This privacy also contributed to them feeling safer within the building as they, along with the cleaning staff, were the only people who had the means to access their rooms. Single rooms were generally observed to be more spacious and they also allowed for a more conducive study environment as tenants did not have the distraction of a roommate to worry about. Those students living in double rooms all expressed how the size of their rooms was problematic as they were not big enough to comfortably accommodate the movement and general living of two people. Students have the freedom to arrange the room furniture in any way that works for them within these dwellings, but still complained about the lack of adequate space, no matter how they tried to re-arrange the furniture. Another issue that was expressed was that of a lack of privacy. Students felt that they could not fully be themselves within shared rooms as they always needed to be aware of the presence of another person. Simple things such as listening to music or having visitors needed to be done in moderation as roommates often needed the room to be quiet so that they may study and complete school work and assignments. As a result of students being assigned roommates by building management that they may have not previously been acquainted with, personality clashes were also an issue that was highlighted as affecting the livelihood and housing satisfaction of students within their dwellings.

The collective sample of students within this residence typology also expressed how the furniture provided by building management was inadequate and did not fully cater to their needs. In all of these buildings, students reported that only being given one steel cupboard for both food and clothes was inadequate as their clothing could not all fit, thus prompting them to keep it in their suitcases which made getting dressed in the morning time consuming and inconvenient. None of these buildings had pin boards as well, resulting in students not having anywhere to put up timetables and pictures as building rules prohibited them from sticking anything on the walls. The walls separating the different rooms were described as being extremely thin as they were made out of dry wall, meaning that noise levels sometimes escalated as even the smallest of sounds in adjacent rooms could be

heard in their respective spaces. The urban views from student room windows also emerged as an important factor in how they experienced the space. A few of the students expressed disdain at their rooms being oriented towards dirty alleyways and semi-abandoned streets as they often witness crimes such as muggings, theft and in one extreme case a stabbing. Those whose buildings are situated along busy streets such as De Korte and Biccard also mentioned that the vibrant natures of these areas sometimes makes it hard to sleep and study, particularly during the weekends.

Communal Recreational Facilities and Academic Spaces

Recreational and academic spaces within self-catering residence halls, as depicted in table 1, mainly comprised of TV rooms, games rooms and study rooms. Of the 6 students from the sample living in residence halls, 4 of them described their use of the TV room as frequent as they watched their daily series there and the occasional movie. However, 2 of the 6 informants did not utilise the TV room at all as they found it too far from their individual rooms and did not like how crowded and full it got. General grievances about recreational spaces within these buildings were that the furniture within them was often worn out and on the verge of breaking. As a result of the many other students who watched TV in the residence, the TV room was also found to be a much contested space where clashes of what to watch occurred frequently, particularly between male and female tenants.

Study rooms within these dwellings were typically situated on the lower ground floors of the buildings, away from the general noise and chaos of the student rooms. Those buildings where provision for these spaces had been made received mixed reviews form tenants about whether they created an environment conducive to studying and whether or not students used them regularly. The informant living in building 1 expressed that because there was only one study room for the entire residence, the space was always full and therefore prompted her to work at her school campus. Other informants who preferred not utilising the study rooms were those who lived in single rooms. They expressed that because they live alone, they are able to work freely within their rooms which proves particularly advantageous in winter as the common study areas are very cold during that time. The informant from building 3, where there is no study room within the residence expressed how this was not a

problem for him because he preferred to study at his school library. The informants from building 4 and 5 were regular users of the residence study rooms and stated how the spaces were very quiet and conducive for studying and completing various course assignments, particularly during the week. A grievance that was expressed by all 6 informants within these buildings was that of the inadequate Wi-Fi connection. Students expressed that 2GB of data a month was not nearly sufficient for them to carry out their school work and work effectively within their residences. The Wi-Fi connections of the dwellings were also said to sometimes be slow and inefficient, resulting in students just choosing to stay at their university campuses as late as they possibly can in order to use internet resources and finish work. It can thus be deduced that recreational and study spaces within these dwellings do not fully meet the needs and preferences of students. They are limited in number, not very comfortable to relax in because of the dilapidated furniture, and not adequately supported by services such as Wi-Fi. One communal facility that students expressed an interest in having in their respective dwellings was a gym.

Communal Bathroom, Ablution and Kitchen Facilities

During the process of interviewing the informants, it became glaringly obvious that the sharing of bathroom and kitchen facilities was the biggest issue of contention amongst student tenants in residence halls. The lack of privacy and the large number of people using these spaces on a daily basis was the primary issue that kept being brought up throughout the interview process.

Communal bathrooms and ablution facilities, as described by most of the informants, were some of the worst spaces to use on a daily basis in residence halls, especially since they represented essential facilities that could not be avoided. With the exception of the informants in buildings 4 and 5, students felt that the number of showers and toilets in their buildings were inadequate for the large numbers of people that live on each floor. In the case of showers, this resulted in long queues in the morning before school that meant that being on time for class was sometimes difficult. The geysers within the buildings were also said to not be able to keep up with the masses of students they served, with the water becoming cold very quickly every day. The limited numbers of toilets also meant that those that did exist were over-used and not always clean, despite them being cleaned once every day. The

issue of cleanliness in the showers was also one that was highlighted. Although the cleaners also cleaned these facilities once a day, the volumes of people using them meant that they got dirty very quickly. The absence of mirrors in individual rooms required students to use those in the bathroom, often resulting in strands of hair being found inside sinks, sometimes causing blockages.

With regards to the communal kitchens, students had mixed perceptions of whether these worked well for them or not. The informants in building 1 and 2 expressed that the kitchen facilities in their buildings were not functional and to their liking. Students in these dwellings complained that the floor kitchens were too small for the numbers of students they were catering for; stove plates were described as old and very slow; the lack of a microwave in building 2 was inconvenient as this meant students had to buy their own, of which many could not afford to; and the kitchens sometimes became extremely dirty because the cleaners cleaned them in the morning every day, and people made them dirty as the day progressed. In building 1, the informant told of how there would often be garbage on the floor as well as food remains on the counter from people preparing their meals and not cleaning up after themselves. The informants in buildings 3, 4 and 5 painted a better image of their kitchen facilities. For the most part, they were satisfied with the sizes of the kitchens as they allowed for multiple people to cook at once; they described the kitchens as being adequately clean as students were able to clean up after themselves on most days and they were happy with the counter-top space available to cook. The only grievance expressed was the inconvenience caused by the lack of a microwave and oven in building 4.While the reviews of kitchen and bathroom spaces were both good and bad, all of the informants expressed that their ideal living space is one where they would not have to share a kitchen and a bathroom with an entire floor, and where they would either be living alone or with one other roommate, as is the case in privately owned flat dwellings.

Cleaning Services, Laundry Facilities and General Building Maintenance

As can be observed from table 1, cleaning services provided by management in all 5 buildings clean the dwellings at least once a day, either 5 or 7 days a week. In all the buildings, the cleaners clean the communal areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, corridors, stairs and lobbies. They also attend to the other general areas within the

buildings and do not clean individual students' rooms. In light of this, students expressed that all of the 5 buildings were clean. The only reason they got dirty was because of students not being able to clean up after themselves, not because the cleaning services were not doing a good enough job. This was especially true in communal spaces such as the kitchens, bathrooms and toilets. With regards to their individual rooms, students were of the opinion that these should also be cleaned by management at least once a week as the buildings did not provide cleaning materials for students to be able to keep their individual spaces clean. The current status quo mandates students to procure this material through their own means.

Laundry facilities were a problem across the whole sample of informants living in this housing typology. The main problem expressed by all the informants was the limited number of laundry machines present in each building in the form of washing machines and dryers. This forced students to sometimes have to find alternative places to do their laundry, as the limited amount of machines meant that they were always in use by other tenants. Of the 6 informants living in this housing typology, the 3 of them that study at Wits University stated that they often do their laundry at the on-campus residences of their friends as these normally have large numbers of washing machines and dryers. Those informants who live in and around Johannesburg, whenever possible, opted to go home every couple of weeks to wash their clothes. This was said, however, to be extremely inconvenient, time-consuming and expensive. In building 3, there was no laundry room at all and students had to once again make their own arrangements when wanting to wash their clothing.

With regards to building maintenance, 4 out of the 5 buildings were described by students as being well maintained and in a good condition. In these 4 buildings, maintenance issues were communicated by students to management through the system of maintenance books. Students wrote down any maintenance issues in these books, citing their room number as well. Response time to these reports was said to be no more than 3 days, unless the issue described required more complex attention. The one building that was described as being poorly maintained (building 1) had the exact same system in place, but had a very long response time. This resulted in many maintenance issues overlapping and stacking up. An example of this is how some of the windows in the bathrooms have been said to have been

broken since June of 2016 and have still not been attended to as yet (September of 2016).

Having explored the perceptions of students in self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein regarding the quality of their dwellings, this report will now explore the same thing as relating to students living in privately owned flats within the precinct.

4.3.2) Private Flats/Apartments

Privately owned off-campus flats are defined as units that comprise of between 2 and 10 single or twin rooms that have their own bathrooms within the unit (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). In Braamfontein, these rooms are configured as single, twin and 3-sharing rooms that also have their own kitchenette within each individual unit. Of the 13 buildings making up this study, 8 fall under this housing typology, housing 9 of the 15 informants.

This housing typology is complex and is characterised by many variations in terms of unit configuration; services and amenities; how utilities are procured; the types of tenants permitted to reside in the building; and whether the unit is furnished, partially furnished or unfurnished. It is strikingly different from self-catering residence halls and has thus been experienced differently by the students living within these various dwellings.

- Why Students Chose This Type of Dwelling

For the students living in privately owned flats in Braamfontein, their choice to live in this housing typology was primarily influenced by their unwillingness to share communal bathrooms, kitchens, study spaces and relaxation areas, as is the case in residence halls. The primary grievances with regards to sharing that were expressed related to cleanliness and the lack of respect amongst tenants for other people using the same facilities. As a result of the flat units having their own bathrooms and kitchens, students felt more comfortable and at home in their buildings as they did not have to share these facilities with a whole floor of other people. Of the 9 informants in these dwellings, 7 had lived in self-catering residence halls within the precinct in previous years. Their experiences at their former residences had, for the most part, been unpleasant thus resulting in the decision to rather live in a flat. Living in a flat, as was expressed by all 9 informants, was said to ensure a greater sense of

privacy and a stronger sense of “home” in the various dwellings. Students expressed that unlike residence halls, private flats allowed for more “adult living” and also enabled them to express themselves fully without having to worry about strict residence rules. This type of housing typology was also chosen by students because of the freedom that it offers in terms of noise control, visitation, sleep overs and personal flat décor.

Following last year’s Fees Must Fall protests, much of the accommodation in Braamfontein had not made provision for an extended academic year, resulting in students having to make alternative arrangements for where they would stay while finishing up their year-end examinations. This prompted many students who anticipated the occurrence of the protests again in 2016 to seek out accommodation that had a 12-month lease instead of the usual 10-month period that was offered by Braamfontein property developers. In most cases, because private flats accommodate other residents who aren’t necessarily students, private flats allow for longer lease agreements, making them very adaptable to changes in university academic calendars. Lastly, students chose this type of dwelling because of cost. According to the informants, rent prices at the residence halls owned by some prominent property developers within Braamfontein were exorbitant, with flat living being quite cheaper. Students stated that the cost of rent at their flat dwellings was a lot more affordable, with them receiving more value for their money as the living environments in their buildings were also exponentially better. While students acknowledged that private flats often did not have student specific facilities and amenities as was the case with residence halls, they still preferred this type of housing and were willing to trade off the lack of facilities for the other advantages of living in this type of dwelling. This point will be elaborated on in subsequent sections of this research report.

- Services, Amenities and General Quality of the Dwelling

Privately owned flats in Braamfontein are more nuanced and complex than the self-catering residence halls explored in the previous section of this report. Not only are they home to some of the student population within the precinct, but they also house other tenants such as young working professionals, families and older middle class tenants. This has meant that the facilities, amenities and services that they offer are

in some cases different to those observed at self-catering residence halls. It is important to note that in the case of buildings 6 and 8, the individual units/flats within the building are owned by different people and agencies. This means that while the building has a central management, it has a number of different landlords/landladies. Table 2 below, as was the case with table 1, represents a summary of the main

amenities and services that are available within these buildings, as well as the price charged for rent. From this table, an assessment of student preferences regarding the quality of their dwellings has been conducted, much like was done for self-catering residence halls within Braamfontein.

Building	No. of Floors	Type of Flat/Apartment occupied by informant	Recreational Common Spaces	Academic Common Spaces	Cleaning Services	Laundry Facilities	Bathroom Facilities in Individual Unit	Kitchen Facilities in Individual Unit	Internet Access	Rent Amount per person
6	5	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Partially Furnished]	Pool and Braai Area	None	All common areas and general building (NIU) (Mon – Fri)	Private Laundry Service (R30 per load: Wash, dry and fold)	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatories	1 4-Plate stove (With oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (Provided) Fridge (Provided)	No WiFi (Make own alternative arrangements)	R2722.50 [Prepaid Electricity]
7	7	Bachelor Flat (Lives alone) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	TV room, study room and communal kitchen are within the same space (Open plan)	Study Room (Forms part of the TV room and the communal kitchen)	All common areas and general building (Mon-Sun) Individual Units/Flats (Once a week)	No Laundry Room and Equipment (Private Laundry Service) 1 x Washing Line	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 2-Plate stove (BYO) (No oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (Provided) Fridge (Provided)	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R3400 [Electricity included in rent amount]
8	15	One Bedroomed Loft (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Furnished]	Pool and Braai Area Conference Room (Rented out to the public)	None	All common areas and general building (NIU) (Mon – Sun)	Laundry Room: 2 x Washing Machine 2 x Tumble Dryer 4 x Washing Line	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 2-Plate stove (With oven) 1 Microwave (Provided) Fridge (Provided)	No WiFi (Make own alternative arrangements)	R2900 [Prepaid Electricity]
9	17	Bachelor Flat (3-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	1 x TV and games room 1 x Lounge area 1 x Cafeteria	2 x Study Rooms	All common areas and general building (Mon-Sun)	Laundry Room: 3 x Washing Machine 1 x Tumble Dryer	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 4-Plate stove (With oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (Provided)	Wifi: 2GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R2750 [Electricity included in rent
					Individual Units/Flats (Once a week)	1 x Washing Line		Fridge (Provided)		
10	8	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Not Furnished]	None	None	All common areas and general building (NIU) (Mon – Fri)	No Laundry Room and Equipment (Tenants need to bring their own washing machines and laundry essentials)	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 4-Plate stove (With oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (Provided) Fridge (Provided)	No WiFi (Make own alternative arrangements)	R3000 (R2750: Rent + R250: Water) [Prepaid Electricity]
11	6	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Furnished]	1 x Common hall (Used for social events and church activities)	None	All common areas and general building (NIU) (Mon – Fri)	Laundry Room: Taps (Bring own portable basin; no laundry equipment)	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 4-Plate stove (With oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (Provided) Fridge (Provided)	No WiFi (Make own alternative arrangements)	R2500 [Prepaid Electricity]
12	7	Two Bedroomed Flat [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	The rooftop	None	All common areas and general building (NIU) (Mon – Sun)	No Laundry Room and Equipment	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 2-Plate stove (No oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (BYO) Fridge (BYO)	No WiFi (Make own alternative arrangements)	R2500 [Electricity included in rent amount]
13	10	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	None	1 x Study Room	All common areas and general building (NIU) (Mon – Sun)	Laundry Room (1 on each floor): 1 x Concrete basin	1 Basin 1 Shower 1 Lavatory	1 2-Plate stove (No oven) 1 Sink 1 Microwave (Provided)	Wifi: 4GB per month (Included in Total Rent Cost)	R2750 [Electricity included
						1 x Washing line (per floor)		Fridge (Provided)		in rent amount]

Table 2: Summary of Services, Amenities and Rent Prices at Privately Owned Flats in Braamfontein

*NIU (Not Individual Units)

*BYO (Bring Your Own)

Room Satisfaction and Quality

Of the sample of 9 students living in private flats in Braamfontein, 6 live in 2-sharing bachelor flats; 1 in a single bachelor flat; 1 in a 3-sharing bachelor flat and 1 in a 2-bedroomed flat. The rooms within the units are configured in completely different ways, with building 10 (refer to table 2) being the only dwelling where units and rooms are completely unfurnished. Building 6 is partially furnished, meaning that basic furniture such as beds, fridges and stoves are provided by the various landlords/landladies, with tenants having to procure anything else they may need by themselves.

The perceptions of students living in this housing typology regarding their rooms are for the most part very positive. Of the 6 students living in 2-sharing bachelor flats, 5 expressed that their rooms were very spacious, even though they shared the space with one other person (buildings 6, 10, 11 and 13). They expressed that there was ample room to move around, giving both them and their roommates a fair amount of personal space. The one informant living in in a single bachelor flat shared these same views about his room (building 7), as did the informant living in the 2-bedroomed flat (building 12). The one informant living in a 2-sharing bachelor flat who did not share these positive opinions expressed that in her room, the space does not work well for her and her roommate (building 8). She mentioned that the room is too small for two people, so much so that it is not furnished with study desks and chairs as there would be no space to accommodate them. Her and her roommate are thus unable to study in the building and have go to their respective campuses to get school work done. The young lady living in the 3-sharing bachelor flat (building 9) also expressed how living with two other roommates in one room has resulted in a limited amount of space, making it hard to move around comfortably as all three of them have their own study desks and chairs, as well as storage cupboards in the room in addition to their individual beds.

While students were generally satisfied with the configuration of their rooms, it became apparent that a few of the buildings (6, 8, 10 and 11) and some individual landlords/landladies within them did not provide study desks and chairs for their

student tenants. In building 6, the size of the room allowed for the informant and her roommate to purchase these furnishings by themselves, while building 8 and 11 were too small and cramped, therefore unable to fit two study desks and chairs. The informant in building 10 stated how there was ample space for a study desk and chair, but because his flat was not furnished, he would have had to purchase these through his own means, which was something he could not afford.

Communal Recreational Facilities and Academic Spaces

Communal facilities in privately owned flats in Braamfontein are not as common as they are in self-catering residence halls. Since flats allow for an increased amount of privacy by virtue of them not relying on communal cooking and bathroom facilities, they are characterised by a limited number of shared recreational and academic spaces, if any. Some of the communal spaces that do exist within some of these buildings include pool and braai areas, TV rooms, conference halls, rooftop areas and study rooms.

The students in this housing typology, for the most part, do not regularly use the common spaces in their buildings. The informants living in building 6 and 8 do not use the pool and braai area for a number of reasons: in building 6, a number of apartments overlook the pool, making it uncomfortable to swim there as people are always watching from their balconies; being a student also means that having braais is a luxury that students can sometimes not afford; and in building 8, the pool and braai area are almost always full of other people, making it a space that mandates interacting and socialising more than just relaxing, thus deterring some tenants. With regards to the other communal recreational and academic spaces listed in the table, students did not use them because: they prefer to keep to themselves, hence them opting to live in this housing typology; some of the common spaces are for specific purposes that they may not want to partake in (eg. The common hall used for church in building 11); as a result of these flats not specifically being for students only, the dynamic of the dwelling changes into one where not as much socialising between tenants takes place; and also because students prefer studying in their rooms and not in the common spaces created for such. Those who did use the common areas regularly mentioned that they do so because the study rooms were quieter than the room they shared with their roommates (building 9) and because the rooftop was a

great place to smoke and relax on the weekends because of its great view (building 12).

A factor that was of concern to me as the researcher regarding this housing typology was the lack of study rooms and internet services in most of the buildings featured in this report. While it was concerning to me as the researcher, students from the buildings where study facilities were non-existent (building 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12) did not think them to be necessary and expressed no desire to possibly have such facilities in the future. This was because many of them preferred to study at school where they had access to Wi-Fi; they had moved to their respective dwellings precisely because they would not have to share amenities and facilities with a number of people; and because they appreciate the privacy provided by their flats. A grievance that all of them shared (excluding buildings 7 and 9) however, was the lack of internet access within the dwellings. As a result of the buildings not providing any Wi-Fi, they had to make alternative plans that included buying Wi-Fi vouchers at the Total Garage situated at the corner of Bertha and De Korte Street in Braamfontein. This was said to be financially exhausting and very inconvenient.

Bathroom, Ablution and Kitchen Facilities

The choice to live in privately owned flats in Braamfontein, as gathered from the interview process, was primarily driven by the unwillingness of students to share bathrooms, toilets and kitchens, as is the case in self-catering residence halls. As a result, their chosen housing typology had individual bathrooms, toilets and kitchenettes within each unit. From this sample of students, amenities in each unit were only shared between a maximum of three people.

Students living within this housing typology were all satisfied with the quality of their bathrooms and toilets. Many expressed how bathing and getting ready for school in the mornings was made easier by only having to share with one or two other people. The sense of privacy this offered students was refreshing, reinforcing their need to feel like young adults and not just students living in “hostel like” environments. Where kitchen facilities were concerned, students were mostly satisfied with the quality of their self-catering amenities. They described them as being spacious and well equipped; convenient as they could cook at any time without wondering whether they’d have to wait for other people to finish; and having adequate storage

cupboards and counter-top space. While students were satisfied with their kitchens for the most part, there were some issues that some of them had. The informant in building 10 told of how small and cramped the kitchen space he shared with his flatmate was, and that only one of them could cook at a time. The student in building 12 expressed how the building management had initially given him and his flatmate a 4-plate stove with an oven at the beginning of the year, but later took it out and put in a two plate stove with no oven that was often very faulty and dangerous. All the students in buildings that did not have ovens (buildings 7, 12 and 13) also highlighted how this is something they wish they had in their dwellings. Overall, students found these facilities convenient, functional and of a satisfactory quality.

Cleaning Services, Laundry Facilities and General Building Maintenance

From the data collected from informants, it was unanimous that all of their respective dwellings were clean and well taken care of. As was the case with self-catering residence halls, the buildings were cleaned once every day, either between Monday and Friday or Monday and Sunday. With the exception of buildings 7 and 9, cleaners only cleaned the general areas of the buildings and not individual units. Students in these buildings thus had to ensure that their individual units were kept clean and hygienic so as not to compromise the health of other tenants. The general areas in buildings 7 and 9 were also cleaned on a daily basis, with tenants also getting their units cleaned by the cleaners once a week.

Laundry facilities at private flats in Braamfontein were reported as either being inadequate or non-existent in the case of some buildings. Of the 8 dwellings, only 2 had general laundry facilities with washing machines and tumble dryers (buildings 8 and 9); 2 had laundry rooms that only consisted of concrete washing basins (buildings 11 and 13); 2 had no laundry room or equipment at all (buildings 10 and 12); and 2 relied on private laundry services. In the dwellings that had laundry facilities and equipment, students outlined that these were inadequate when one considered the large number of students that they served. They were almost always occupied by someone else, making it difficult for students to do their laundry. Those in the remaining buildings told of how they sometimes had to hand wash their clothes or find other places within Braamfontein to try and do their laundry. One of the informants mentioned how she had to go home to Soweto whenever she wanted to

do her laundry because it was easier and less of a hassle, as she could not always afford the private laundry service offered by her building management. Overall, laundry facilities were a problem in all these buildings and students were not happy with this aspect of their dwellings.

With regards to maintenance and general upkeep, 6 of the 8 buildings within the sample have been described as being well maintained and in a good condition. The channels of communication with regards to issues of building upkeep are often referred to building managers; individual landlords and agencies; and caretakers. The normal response time for maintenance issues is usually not longer than 3 days, depending on the magnitude of the issue. Two buildings within the sample were reported by informants as being in a generally poor condition, namely buildings 7 and 12. Building 7 was said to only prioritise the larger maintenance issues, neglecting the smaller ones which seemed to pile on. In building 12, the informant described building management as being very blasé about building upkeep as the lifts within the dwelling has been broken for the majority of the year.

Overall, students were satisfied with the cleanliness of their buildings, as well as with how issues of maintenance were dealt with. There was major discontentment relating to laundry facilities as many of these buildings either did not have functioning laundry rooms or were mandated to pay a private service whenever they wanted their laundry done.

4.4) User Perceptions of the Affordability of Private Student Housing in Braamfontein

Up until this point, this chapter of the research report has primarily explored the perceptions of students regarding the location of their private student dwellings, as well as their quality with regards to physical infrastructure; social spaces; health and safety; and services offered. This section of the report will now explore student perceptions of the affordability of their dwellings, focusing on the amounts students pay for rent; whether they perceived this amount to be reasonable or not; what their ideal price to pay would be based on the general quality of their dwellings and their socio-economic background; and the reasons and justifications for this. This information has been tabulated in table 3 and 4 below.

4.4.1) Self-Catering Residence Halls

Table 3 represents student perceptions of the affordability of their self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein where rent prices are concerned. It also outlines student perceptions on what they think they ought to be paying based on the quality of their dwellings as well as the general living environment they create.

Building	No. of Floors	Approximate No. of Students per Floor	Type of Room Occupied by Informant	Rent Amount per person	Do Students believe that the Rent Amount Charged is Reasonable ?	Reasoning behind views on affordability	Ideal Price (What students feel they should be paying)	Reasoning Behind Ideal Price (Justification for the price students believe they should be charged)
1	14	43	Double Room (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R3250 [Electricity included in rent amount]	No	- There are student dwellings that charge R2990 for a fully furnished bachelor apartment where amenities (kitchen and bathroom) are not shared, making R3250 for a residence hall unaffordable. - The quality of the facilities and the general building are poor.	R2500	- NSFAS caps the sponsorship fee for accommodation at R2900, so paying R2500 would mean that students aren't made to top up the residence amount and could use the surplus of R400 to purchase food or toiletries. - Considering the quality of the dwelling, R2500 is a fair price.
2	11	30	Single Room [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R3600 [Electricity included in rent amount]	No	- The same room in the same building was R3100 in 2015. The increase of R575 is too high. - The building brand benefits from their monopoly in Braamfontein and overcharge students as a result.	R3000	- Rent increases are too step and they do not necessarily correlate with an improvement in the quality of the dwelling. - R3000 is a fair price considering the general quality of the building.
3	6	20	Single Room [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R3000 [Electricity included in rent amount]	Yes	- R3000 is affordable in Braamfontein considering how expensive other student dwellings in the area are.	R2400	- When taking into account the configuration and quality of the dwelling, R2400 would be an ideal and fair price to pay.
4	9	40	Double Room (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R3100 [Electricity included in rent amount]	No	- The size of the room is too small for a 2-sharing. There is barely enough space for two people to move around comfortably. - University fees are R50000 a year, thus making the steep rent amount a further strain on family finances.	R2500	- R2500 is a fair price considering that the room is a very small 2-sharing. - R2500 is also fair when tenants share bathrooms and kitchens with an entire floor of 40 students.
5	5	52	Double Room (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R3100 [Electricity included in rent amount]	No	- The facilities, services and amenities offered by the building are too basic for the rent amount of R3100.	R2700	- Other self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein charge around R2700 for double rooms, so R3100 is expensive. - The building brand has monopolised Braamfontein, thus charging students exorbitant amounts for rent because they know that students do not have many other options for accommodation.

Table 3: Student Perceptions of the Affordability of their Self-catering Residence Halls in Braamfontein

From table 3, it can be concluded that most of the students who live in self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein do not think that the amount they pay for rent at their dwellings is affordable. The main and recurring reasons for this perception have been highlighted and summarised in the bullet points below:

- Students on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) receive an amount of R2900 for accommodation, mandating them to top up their rent amount should it exceed this maximum sponsorship limit. Students on NSFAS are typically from poor and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, and thus find a lot of the rent prices in self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein expensive and unaffordable.
- Many of the students thought that the amount they were charged for rent was unaffordable when they compared the rent prices of student housing in other areas within Johannesburg and in neighbouring cities to those of Braamfontein. As a result of the high demand for student housing in Braamfontein, students felt that private providers in the area inflated rent prices because they were aware that many students did not have much of a choice or any other convenient alternative areas to live in.
- Students also compared the rent prices of their accommodations to other buildings within the precinct and were able to identify dwellings that they perceived as being of better quality that were a lot cheaper and affordable than the dwellings that they stayed in. A large number of students in self-catering residence halls expressed how they were paying too much money considering that they have shared and communal facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens. The configuration of their dwellings and the size of their rooms (particularly the 2-sharing rooms) was also an issue of concern as they did not think that the rent they were being charged was fair given the living environment offered by some of these buildings.
- Lastly, students in this housing typology expressed that there is one specific building brand/property developer within Braamfontein that has monopolised the student housing market in the area. This developer has several buildings in the area and thus holds a large proportion of the students living in private housing. According to students, this has allowed them to charge significantly

higher rent rates for students despite there being better accommodation within Braamfontein at much cheaper rates. As a result of this brand also having leasing arrangements with various universities across Johannesburg as well as with the NSFAS, they are never short of tenants as students on the NSFAS are automatically placed within their buildings upon receiving the loan.

From the sample of students living in self-catering residence halls, only one student perceived the amount they pay in rent as affordable. The informant from building 3 stated that R3000 per month in rent was affordable in his opinion when considering the generally expensive nature of private student housing in Braamfontein. In the same breath, however, his ideal price to pay per month when considering the configuration of his dwelling and the quality of its facilities and the general building was R2400. He expressed that while he could afford R3000 comfortably, it was not a justified amount given the state the building was in and the living environment it creates for students.

4.4.2) Private Flats/Apartments

As has been done for self-catering residence halls, table 4 below outlines student perceptions of the affordability of their private flats/apartments in Braamfontein where rent prices are concerned.

Building	No. of Floors	Type of Room Occupied by Informant	Rent Amount per person	Do Students believe that the Rent Amount Charged is Reasonable?	Reasoning behind views on affordability (Student Perceptions)	Ideal Price (What students feel they should be paying)	Reasoning Behind Ideal Price (Justification for the price students believe they should be charged)
6	5	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Partially Furnished]	R2722.50 [Prepaid Electricity]	Yes	- Affordable when one considers how high the demand for student housing is in Braamfontein. - Expensive when compared to student housing in some other parts of Johannesburg (eg. The East Rand)	R2500	- This a bachelor flat that is shared by two people, the rent amount should be R2500 for both occupants, thus making the total charge for the entire flat R5000.
7	7	Bachelor Flat (Lives alone) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R3400 [Electricity included in rent amount]	Yes	- Affordable considering that it's a bachelor apartment. - No shared amenities (Bathrooms and kitchen) - There's privacy.	R3000	- While the current price is affordable, it could still be cheaper.
8	15	One Bedroomed Loft (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Furnished]	R2900 [Prepaid Electricity]	Yes	- It is much cheaper than the price paid at the previous place of residence which was a self-catering residence hall with shared amenities	R1500	- Based on the living environment provided by the building, R1500 would be a fair price. - Braamfontein rent prices are just generally expensive, even when the dwellings are average in quality. This building is no different.

(Table continued)

9	17	Bachelor Flat (3-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R2750 [Electricity included in rent amount]	Yes	- There are no amenities that one must share with an entire floor (kitchen and bathroom), amenities are only shared with two other roommates. - The room is fairly spacious when compared to rooms at self-catering residence halls, even though 3 people live in it.	R2000	- There are places within Braamfontein that charge R2500 per person for a shared apartment, so paying R2750 while living in a 3-sharing is not necessarily value for money.
10	8	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Not Furnished]	R3000 (R2750: Rent + R250: Water) [Prepaid Electricity]	No	- Considering how expensive the general standard of living is for a student (school printing costs, clothes and toiletries, food and university fees), a rent amount of R3000 further adds to the financial burden.	R2400	- R2400 would ensure that more of a surplus is left over from the living allowance of R5000 per month provided by parents. This would allow for more financial freedom.
11	6	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students and other occupants] [Furnished]	R2500 [Prepaid Electricity]	Yes	- Considering what other buildings in Braamfontein charge for shared rooms and flats, the rent charged is affordable. - No shared amenities as is the case in self-catering residence halls.	R2500	- The rent charged is reasonable at its current price.
12	7	Two Bedroomed Flat [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R2500 [Electricity included in rent amount]	Yes	- Considering what other buildings in Braamfontein charge for 2-bedroomed flats, the rent charged is affordable - The building is not well maintained and has no WiFi, so the rent charged is fitting for those circumstances.	R2000	- The building is not in a good condition and does not have essential services such as WiFi.
13	10	Bachelor Flat (2-sharing) [Students only dwelling] [Furnished]	R2750 [Electricity included in rent amount]	Yes	- Considering what other buildings in Braamfontein charge, the rent is affordable. - The rent charges of this building are significantly lower than other buildings within the Braamfontein precinct.	R2500	- Considering the overall quality of the dwelling and the living environment, R2500 is a fair price. - When compared to rent prices in Pretoria (home town) Braamfontein dwellings charge students a lot more than they should.

Table 4: Student Perceptions of the Affordability of their privately owned flats in Braamfontein

Looking at table 4, it is evident that students living in private flats/apartments in Braamfontein mostly think that their accommodation is affordable. The main and recurring reasons for this perception have been highlighted and summarised in the bullet points below:

- Students perceived the rent charged for their private flats/apartments to be affordable when they took into account how high the demand for private student housing in Braamfontein was. When they considered how many students wanted and needed accommodation in the area, many were of the opinion that the money they were being charged was reasonable. Despite this reasoning, however, nearly all of the students from the sample placed their ideal rent prices lower than the amount they are actually paying when they considered other factors such as dwelling quality and liveability.

- Comparing the amount students paid towards their accommodation with the rent prices of other buildings within Braamfontein also led students to perceive their dwellings as affordable. A few of them stated that there were buildings in Braamfontein that did not offer half of what they received from their current dwellings in terms of quality and facilities, but charged rent prices that were far more expensive than what they were paying. This resulted in the students feeling that they were getting value for their money and that their rent charges were a bargain of sorts when viewed in that context.
- A lot of the informants living in this student housing typology compared their dwellings to the many self-catering residence halls that were prominent within Braamfontein. A lot of them considered their dwellings more affordable when they compared the amount they were charged at their respective dwellings to the prices charged at self-catering residence halls. They also considered their dwellings affordable when taking into account that they had an increased sense of privacy within their buildings because of them not having shared kitchens and bathrooms that were utilised by anything between 20 and 52 people on a floor. Considering what other students in many other buildings in Braamfontein pay for sub-standard quality accommodation, they expressed that they felt as though they were getting value for their money in their respective buildings.

While these students perceived their accommodation to be affordable and reasonable when looked at from certain perspectives, the ideal prices they recorded as being fair were less than the amount they were paying in reality. This was mainly based on further comparisons to other dwellings within Braamfontein and beyond; the configuration and quality of their dwellings; as well as the environment created by the living spaces they occupied.

Only one informant from the sample of students living in this housing typology expressed that they did not perceive their dwelling to be affordable. The informant in building 10 expressed that his reasoning behind this was that the high nature of the rent amount added an increased financial burden to his parents, who were primarily responsible for paying both his school and housing fees. As a result, this left him with little spending money for the rest of the month, impacting heavily on his quality of life.

4.5) Conclusion: Summary of Research Findings and Relation back to Literature

4.5.1) The Experience of Braamfontein as a Student Neighbourhood

Generally, Students living in Braamfontein viewed the neighbourhood as being convenient in terms of its proximity to tertiary institutions as well as its clustering of various services and activities. Public transport, healthcare, supermarkets, retail stores, fast food outlets and entertainment spaces were among the top services and activities students were grateful to have within the area. This fact was echoed in the literature as a survey done on students at the University of British Columbia also noted how students placed a large importance on their dwellings being within a close proximity to shops, recreational activities and services (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). The configuration of Braamfontein into a consumption space has also largely been welcomed by the student population as they described it as an exciting and vibrant area to live in as a student. The many activities that are available in Braamfontein were described as being ideal for unwinding, particularly on weekends. This gave students the opportunity to participate in many recreational activities that did not prompt them to ever leave the precinct. It was expressed, however, that the neighbourhood can become very loud and noisy at times, with the activities that are offered sometimes being too expensive for students to afford and partake in fully.

Where safety was concerned, a mixed response was observed regarding how safe and secure students felt within the precinct. While the majority of the sample of students viewed Braamfontein as safe, it became evident that feelings of safety within the precinct were more prominent amongst male students than their female counterparts. Many of the females in the sample expressed that they did not feel safe walking around the precinct, especially at night. Braamfontein is well known for petty crimes such as muggings and theft. The presence of security guards on the streets of the precinct both during the day and at night did, however, make some students feel safer. When walking at night, students were able to request the security guards to escort them to their places of residence should they feel unsafe and uneasy.

4.5.2) Student Perceptions: Quality of Self-catering Residence Halls and Private Flats/Apartments

Unlike what was described in the literature by the National Multi Housing Council (NMHC) of the United States, students living in private student housing do not necessarily feel as though they are missing out on campus life by living off-campus. In the case of Braamfontein, most of the buildings featured as part of this research were within a walking distance of respective university campuses, making it easy to walk to and fro. The NMHC did also highlight, however, that students preferred off-campus private accommodation because of the freedom it allowed where rules were concerned, which proved true in the case of Braamfontein, particularly for those students living in private flats. Their decision to live in this housing typology was largely motivated by the sense of freedom it afforded them, as well as how they felt as though they were treated like the adults that they were within these dwellings and not as children.

When gathering student perceptions of the quality of their dwellings, it became evident that they had very high expectations and standards for how they wanted their places of accommodation to be, a fact that was echoed by the literature reviewed as part of the research. As stated by the (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011), the students of the millennial generation have higher expectations for their student housing typologies, attributed mainly to how they are pioneers of the latest social trends and to how they are the primary target market for advertisers looking to promote anything fresh and new. The six trends in campus housing that have been said to affect student preferences, as outlined by (Copeland et al, 2010), are luxury; privatisation; live and learn; safety and security; and go green. In the case of Braamfontein, the first four trends have been increasingly important in how students view their dwellings, with the last trend never once being mentioned in all of the interviews conducted with students. This allows the research to conclude that environmental concerns where student housing is concerned are not a major determining factor for students in Braamfontein when securing their accommodation. From the data collected from the 15 informants, it further became evident that Braamfontein students were more inclined and more appreciative of dwellings where they had their own personal space and amenities and did not have to share with more than one or two people. This is the reason why where quality was concerned,

private flats were generally perceived as being of better quality as students disliked the “hostel-like” nature of self-catering residence halls. Live and learn within the Braamfontein context also greatly affected how students perceived the quality of their dwellings. In self-catering residence halls, students expressed that the shared facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and toilets sometimes made it unpleasant to live in these types of dwellings as the facilities were often inadequate in catering for the large numbers of students they were expected to service. These facilities were further described as being dirty as a result of tenants not cleaning up after themselves; not providing as much privacy as most students would prefer; and not being well maintained and in a good condition. In private flats, the lack of shared bathroom, kitchen and toilet facilities was a major determining factor in the way students seemed to prefer their housing typology over any other. One of the five aspects outlined by (Eikemo and Thomsen, 2010) about general housing satisfaction mentioned how facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms, while they play some role in housing satisfaction, do not have a noteworthy effect on it. In the case of private student housing in Braamfontein, as has been observed, this was completely inaccurate. These facilities greatly determined whether or not students were generally satisfied with the quality of their dwellings. Laundry facilities were of particular concern for both housing typologies in this study as students often struggled to wash their clothes as laundry room equipment and facilities were often inadequate or non-existent in the case of many of the buildings in the research sample. The limited amount of Wi-Fi in self-catering residence Halls and the total lack of it in most private flats also greatly affected whether students were able to work and study in their buildings. The lack of academic spaces such as study rooms in private flats did not seem to bother the students living there, however, as many of them either preferred to work in their individual units or at their respective university campuses where they had access to services and resources such as unlimited Wi-Fi as well as computers.

4.5.3) Student Perceptions: Affordability of Private Student Housing

Braamfontein has been observed as a neighbourhood that has many student housing buildings, alluding to the presence of a niche market for this type of accommodation in the area. As described by (Jones et al, 2002), this type of market is defined as one where the supply has been adapted to meet the needs of a specific

and specialised group. This is exactly the case in Braamfontein where a lot of the residential buildings in the area have been adapted to be able to accommodate students. These dwellings are either exclusively for students or they are for both students and other categories of people.

Students living in private student housing in Braamfontein have expressed how the high demand for this type of housing in the precinct has definitely caused rent prices to rise and become more expensive. This is very consistent with the literature of (Delgadillo and Erickson, 2006) where the authors observed that the saturation of student tenants in the private market has caused the price of student housing to rise. Radebe (2013) has also stated that the rise in the demand for student housing has and will continue to raise rent prices, having adverse effects for poor students.

The students living in self-catering residence halls, for the most part, did not perceive the amounts they were being charged for rent as reasonable. Many expressed that their buildings' facilities; amenities; services; and general living environments did not justify the rent amounts charged by respective management structures. When comparing dwellings in other parts of Johannesburg and within Braamfontein to their own, they did not feel as though they were getting value for money. In private flats, the vast majority of students thought their dwellings to be affordable based on privacy; individual space; unit configuration; facilities, services and amenities; as well as general living environment.

Chapter Five

State Responses to Student Housing in South Africa: Does Private Student Housing in Braamfontein Adhere to the National Minimum Norms and Standards?

5.1) Introduction

The Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing in South Africa, as has been mentioned in a previous chapter, was geared towards regulating the provision of on-and-off campus student housing at South Africa's public universities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). This chapter of the research report will establish whether or not private student housing in Braamfontein adheres to some of the requirements stipulated within this policy under the following headings: sites of residences; design of residences; services; social spaces; health and safety; laundry facilities; self-catering facilities; and room specifications.

The dwelling requirements analysed as part of the study did not include everything stipulated in the Policy on the Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing in South Africa as the policy in its entirety is very robust and beyond the scope and level of this Honours research report. The study extracted some of the basic requirements and stipulations of this policy, particularly relating to physical infrastructure, to analyse whether private student housing in Braamfontein was in line with national standards.

It should be noted that in the case of private flats/apartments, two typologies exist, namely: Mixed housing (those private flats that do not only accommodate students but other categories of people such as families, young working professionals and middle class people) and students only housing (those private flats that are tailored specifically for students and student needs). These two categories within the broad private flats/apartments housing typology are important, in that they determined which types of facilities and services were present within each dwelling in them trying to respond directly to respective user needs.

5.2) Do Self-catering Residence Halls adhere to the National Minimum Norms and Standards?

The table below (table 5) outlines the criteria and the requirements defined in the national policy and compares these to the reality of the 5 self-catering residence halls making up this study in order to assess whether the quality of private student housing in Braamfontein is consistent with national requirements and standards.

CRITERIA/REQUIREMENTS Self-catering Residence Halls	Building 1 (Double Room)	Building 2 (Single Room)	Building 3 (Single Room)	Building 4 (Double Room)	Building 5 (Double Room)
Sites of Residences					
▪ Residence within 20km radius of campus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Affordable and Secure transport (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes (Taxi)	N/A
Design of Residences					
▪ 1 basin per 4 students	1 per 6 students	1 per 7 students	1 per 5 students	1 per 10 students	1 per 9 students
▪ 1 shower cubicle per 7 students	1 per 9 students	1 per 10 students	1 per 5 students	1 per 5 students	1 per 5 students
▪ 1 lavatory per 5 students	1 per 9 students	1 per 15 students	1 per 7 students	1 per 8 students	1 per 9 students
▪ Privacy in shower and lavatory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Services					
▪ Wall mounted heater	No	No	No	No	No
▪ Most cost effective access to network: fibre optic and/or wireless	Yes (2GB per month)	Yes (2BG per month)	Yes (2BG per month)	Yes (2BG per month)	Yes (2BG per month)
Social Spaces					
▪ Common rooms/lounges/spaces	No	1 games room	No	No	1 games room
▪ Dedicated group study spaces	1 study room	3 study rooms	No	1 study room	1 study room
▪ Computer spaces	No	No	No	No	No
▪ TV room(s)	2 TV rooms	2 TV rooms	1 TV room	2 TV rooms	1 TV room
Health and Safety					
▪ Fire safety equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Fire safety measures and drills	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
▪ Electricity and gas installation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Cleaning of ablution facilities	Yes (5 days a week)	Yes (7 days a week)	Yes (7 days a week)	Yes (6 days a week)	Yes (7 days a week)
Laundry			[NONE]		
▪ 1 industrial tumble dryer per 25 students	2 dryers for entire building	1 dryer for entire building	No	1 dryer for entire building	1 dryer for entire building
▪ 1 industrial washing machine per 25 students	3 machines for entire building	1 machine for entire building	No	1 machine for entire building	1 machine for entire building
Self- catering Facilities					
▪ Suitable food storage, prep and kitchen space	No (limited space)	No (limited space)	Yes	No (limited space)	Yes
▪ Stove: 1 4-plate stove (with oven per 8 students)	1 4-plate stove with oven per 43 students	6 plates per 30 students (no oven)	8 plates per 20 students (no oven)	10 plates per 40 students (no oven)	11 plates per 52 students (with oven)
▪ Cold storage: min. 320L capacity fridge/freezer combination per 8 students	No	No	1 fridge/freezer combination per 20 students	No	No
▪ Sink: 1 per 15 students	1 per 22 students	1 per 30 students	1 per 10 students	1 per 13 students	1 per 17 students
Room Specifications (x 2 with Double Rooms)	(Double Room: x 2)	(Single Room: x1)	(Single Room: x1)	(Double Room: x 2)	(Double Room: x 2)
▪ Bed and mattress	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Study table	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Desk chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Book shelf	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
▪ Book shelf for cooking equipment	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
▪ Curtains	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Study lamp	No	No	Yes	No	No
▪ Pin board	No	No	No	No	No
▪ Waste-paper bin	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
▪ Bedside table	No	No	No	No	No
Provision for Students with Disabilities (Overall Configuration of Residence)	No	No	No	No	No

Table 5: Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing in South Africa: Self-catering Residence Halls

*Yes = Meets criteria/requirement

*No = Does not meet criteria/requirement

From table 5, it is clear to see that self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein fall short on a lot of the aspects that make up the national policy on the minimum norms and standards of student housing in South Africa. It is important to note that a lot of

the criteria outlined in this table were used as the basis for gathering and analysing student perceptions of the quality of their respective dwellings. Consequently, a lot of insight into the current state and reality of private student housing in Braamfontein, as outlined by table 5 (and the subsequent ones), has already been discussed in the previous chapter.

The areas that these buildings fall short the most where the national minimum norms and standards are concerned are the design of residences; laundry facilities; self-catering facilities and the overall configuration of the residence halls for students with disabilities. In the case of the design of residences, it is clear that bathroom and ablution facilities are inadequate and not compliant with the minimum ratios stipulated by the policy. In cases such as that of building 2, the current ratios are as much as three times the stipulated ratios, as can be seen with the lavatory to student ratio. Laundry facilities are perhaps in the direst situation as none of the buildings came even close to meeting the required standard. Most of these buildings only have a single tumble dryer and a single washing machine for the entire residence, making it almost impossible for these to adequately service everyone, as each dwellings is made up of a fairly large number of students. The self-catering amenities also fall short of the minimum requirements, particularly where the number of stoves; the presence of ovens in the kitchen; the food preparation space; and the provision of fridges for students was concerned. As was expressed in the previous chapter, this had a great impact on the livelihoods of students within their dwellings and how they perceived its overall quality. Room specifications did not deviate too much from the required standards and had most of what was deemed as a prerequisite. The most worrying factor was how none of these self-catering residence halls were physically configured to cater for and be accessible to students with disabilities. In many of these buildings, simple configurations such as wheelchair ramps were non-existent.

Given all of this, this report has thus concluded that self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein do not adhere to the national minimum norms and standards for student housing in South Africa. They fall short in many aspects, thus compromising the overall quality of the respective student dwellings.

5.3) Do Private Flats/Apartments adhere to the National Minimum Norms and Standards?

The tables below (table 6 and 7) represent part 1 and part 2 of the physical reality of the 8 private flats/apartments making up this study in order to assess whether the quality of private flats/apartments in Braamfontein is consistent with national requirements and standards.

CRITERIA/REQUIREMENTS Private Flats/Apartments (Part 1)	**Building 6: Mixed Housing (2-Sharing Bachelor Flat)**	**Building 7: Students Only Housing (Single Bachelor Flat)**	**Building 8: Mixed Housing (2-Sharing Bachelor Flat)**	**Building 9: Students Only Housing (3-Sharing Bachelor Flat)**	**Building 10: Mixed Housing (2-Sharing Bachelor Flat)**
Sites of Residences					
▪ Residence within 20km radius of campus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Affordable and Secure transport (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes (School bus)	N/A
Design of Residences					
▪ 1 basin per 4 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 1 student	1 per 2 students	1 per 3 students	1 per 2 students
▪ 1 shower cubicle per 7 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 1 student	1 per 2 students	1 per 3 students	1 per 2 students
▪ 1 lavatory per 5 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 1 student	1 per 2 students	1 per 3 students	1 per 2 students
▪ Privacy in shower and lavatory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Services					
▪ Wall mounted heater	No	No	No	Yes	No
▪ Most cost effective access to network: fibre optic and/or wireless	No (make own alternative arrangements)	Yes (2BG per month)	No (make own alternative arrangements)	Yes (2BG per month)	No (make own alternative arrangements)
Social Spaces					
▪ Common rooms/lounges/spaces	Pool and braai area	[1 x Joint TV room, study room and communal kitchen)	Pool and braai area	1 Games room	No
▪ Dedicated group study spaces	1 study room		No	1 study room	No
▪ Computer spaces	No		No	No	No
▪ TV room(s)	No (TV in individual unit)		No (TV in individual unit)	2 TV rooms	No (TV in individual unit)
Health and Safety					
▪ Fire safety equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Fire safety measures and drills	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
▪ Electricity and gas installation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Cleaning of ablution facilities	Clean own bathroom	Clean own bathroom	Clean own bathroom	Clean own bathroom	Clean own bathroom
Laundry	[NONE]	[NONE]			[NONE]
▪ 1 industrial tumble dryer per 25 students			2 dryers for entire building	1 dryer for entire building	(Bring your own washing machine; flats are not furnished)
▪ 1 industrial washing machine per 25 students	Private Laundry Service: R30 per load	Private Laundry Service	2 machines for entire building	3 machines for entire building	
Self- catering Facilities					
▪ Suitable food storage, prep and kitchen space	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (limited space)
▪ Stove: 1 4-plate stove (with oven per 8 students	1 4-plate stove per 2 students (with oven)	1 2-plate stove per 1 student (no oven)	1 2-plate stove per 2 students (no oven)	1 4-plate stove per 3 students (with oven)	1 4-plate stove per 2 students (with oven)
▪ Cold storage: min. 320L capacity fridge/freezer combination per 8 students	1 fridge/freezer combination per 2 students	1 fridge/freezer combination per 1 student	1 fridge/freezer combination per 2 students	1 fridge/freezer combination per 3 students	1 fridge/freezer combination per 2 students
▪ Sink: 1 per 15 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 1 student	1 per 2 students	1 per 3 students	1 per 2 students
Room Specifications (x 2 with Double Rooms)	(Double Room: x 2)	(Single Room: x1)	(Double Room: x2)	(Triple Room: x 3)	(Double Room: x 2)
▪ Bed and mattress	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Study table	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
▪ Desk chair	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
▪ Book shelf	No	No	No	No	No
▪ Book shelf for cooking equipment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No
▪ Curtains	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Study lamp	No	Yes	No	No	No
▪ Pin board	No	No	No	No	No
▪ Waste-paper bin	No	No	No	Yes	No
▪ Bedside table	No	No	No	No	No
Provision for Students with Disabilities (Overall Configuration of Residence)	No	No	No	No	No

Table 6: Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing in South Africa: Private Flats/Apartments (Part 1)

*Yes = Meets criteria/requirement

*No = Does not meet criteria/requirement

CRITERIA/REQUIREMENTS Private Flats/Apartments (Part 2)	Building 11: Mixed Housing (2-Sharing Bachelor Flat)	Building 12: Students Only Housing (2-Bedroomed Flat)	Building 13: Students Only Housing (2-Sharing Bachelor Flat)		
Sites of Residences					
▪ Residence within 20km radius of campus	Yes	Yes	Yes		
▪ Affordable and Secure transport (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Design of Residences					
▪ 1 basin per 4 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students		
▪ 1 shower cubicle per 7 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students		
▪ 1 lavatory per 5 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students		
▪ Privacy in shower and lavatory	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Services					
▪ Wall mounted heater	No	No	No		
▪ Most cost effective access to network: fibre optic and/or wireless	No (make own alternative arrangements)	No (make own alternative arrangements)	Yes (4BG per month)		
Social Spaces					
▪ Common rooms/lounges/spaces	1 common hall	No	No		
▪ Dedicated group study spaces	No	No	1 study room		
▪ Computer spaces	No	No	No		
▪ TV room(s)	No (TV in individual unit)	No (TV in individual unit)	No (TV in individual unit)		
Health and Safety					
▪ Fire safety equipment	Yes	No	Yes		
▪ Fire safety measures and drills	Yes	No	Yes		
▪ Electricity and gas installation	Yes	Yes	Yes		
▪ Cleaning of ablution facilities	Clean own bathroom	Clean own bathroom	Clean own bathroom		
Laundry	[NONE]	[NONE]	[NONE]		
▪ 1 industrial tumble dryer per 25 students	No	No			
▪ 1 industrial washing machine per 25 students	No	No	Private Laundry Service		
Self- catering Facilities					
▪ Suitable food storage, prep and kitchen space	Yes	Yes	Yes		
▪ Stove: 1 4-plate stove (with oven per 8 students	1 4-plate stove per 2 students (with oven)	1 2-plate stove per 2 students (no oven)	1 2-plate stove per 2 students (no oven)		
▪ Cold storage: min. 320L capacity fridge/freezer combination per 8 students	1 fridge/freezer combination per 2 students	No	1 fridge/freezer combination per 2 students		
▪ Sink: 1 per 15 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students	1 per 2 students		
Room Specifications (x 2 with Double Rooms)	(Double Room: x 2)	(Single Room: x1)	(Double Room: x2)		
▪ Bed and mattress	Yes	Yes	Yes		
▪ Study table	No	Yes	Yes		
▪ Desk chair	No	Yes	Yes		
▪ Book shelf	No	Yes	No		
▪ Book shelf for cooking equipment	N/A	N/A	N/A		
▪ Curtains	Yes	Yes	Yes		
▪ Study lamp	No	No	No		
▪ Pin board	No	No	No		
▪ Waste-paper bin	No	No	Yes		
▪ Bedside table	No	No	No		
Provision for Students with Disabilities (Overall Configuration of Residence)	No	No	No		

Table 7: Minimum Standards and Norms for Student Housing in South Africa: Private Flats/Apartments (Part 2)

*Yes = Meets criteria/requirement

*No = Does not meet criteria/requirement

After looking at table 6 and table 7, it can be concluded that private flats/apartments in Braamfontein, as was the case with self-catering residence halls, also fall extremely short of the minimum norms and standards outlined in the national policy. What made this housing typology more complicated than self-catering residence halls was the fact that these buildings were not necessarily configured with just students in mind. The vast majority of them were occupied by students and other categories of tenants, resulting in their configuration sometimes being very generic and not targeted specifically at the student population living within them. This accounts for why most of them have not met the national standards.

As a result of private flats/apartments not being characterised by communal facilities that are shared by an entire floor, this housing typology faired very well in the design of residences portion of the national norms and standards. The students living in these dwellings had individual bathrooms within their units, which meant that they shared their bathroom and ablution facilities with one or two other people, depending on the configuration of their individual units. This then meant that the amenities to students' ratios were incredibly low, representing an even higher standard than that outlined in the national student housing policy.

Most of the dwellings featured as part of this study did very poorly in offering their student tenants services such as heating and effective access to network. In almost all of the buildings there were no heaters provided, and the vast majority of these buildings also did not make provision for internet access within their residences. Students were therefore mandated to make alternative plans where this was concerned, with them often opting to buy their own data and Wi-Fi bundles, or just remaining at their respective university campuses to work and use the internet.

As a result of the privacy provided by this housing typology, and because these buildings are not always just configured with students in mind, social spaces in private flats/apartments were very few and in some cases non-existent. Unlike with self-catering residence halls, the dynamic within these buildings was different in that

everyone remained in their allocated space and seldom ever socialised or mingled with other tenants within the building. This resulted in social spaces not being particularly necessary in this housing typology as tenants were able to have things such as their own TV sets in their units should they want to.

National health and safety standards were adhered to fairly well by these buildings, particularly in relation to fire safety measures. The cleaning of ablution facilities was dependent solely on individual tenants as the cleaners within the buildings only cleaned the general areas within the dwelling and not individual units. As was the case with self-catering residence halls, laundry facilities in private flats were also in a very dire situation. Most of the buildings in this sample had no laundry facilities and equipment within their buildings. As a result of these dwellings not being specifically configured for student needs, in unfurnished buildings such as building 10, tenants had to have their own furniture and equipment, including laundry equipment such as washing machines. Some of the other buildings offered private laundry services that were billed per load, while a few others had 1 or two washing machines and tumble dryers for the entire building.

Each individual unit within this housing typology was characterised by its own personal kitchenette and not a communal or shared kitchen facility. As a result of this, kitchen facilities did largely adhere to national standards, with some of the stoves and the lack of ovens in some buildings being the only things that fell short in meeting national standards in some of these buildings. The room specifications in these buildings, however, were far from the desired standard outlined in the national policy. In quite a few of these buildings, students did not have essential student basics such study desks and desk chairs within their rooms. This made it difficult for students to do any academic work at their places of residence as the buildings mostly also did not have any study rooms or facilities. This resulted in students going to their respective campuses to work most of the time, coming back to the dwellings to mainly sleep and eat. Lastly, it was discovered that none of these buildings were tailored to accommodate students with disabilities. As was the case in self-catering residence halls, simple structural adjustments such as ramps did not exist in these buildings, with a few of them also having very faulty lifts.

It can thus be concluded that private flats/apartments in Braamfontein, for the most part, do not adhere to the national minimum norms and standards for student housing in South Africa. In the case of the mixed housing buildings (buildings 6, 8, 10 and 11) this is not surprising as these flats accommodate different types of people and not just students. Consequently, these buildings are not specifically tailored for students and are essentially under no binding obligation to meet national standards. However, buildings 7, 9, 12 and 13 are specifically configured for students and are strictly bound by the policy set out by national government. As a result of how new this policy is, it is not surprising that this housing typology does not meet these standards. For a long time, student housing at South African universities remained unregulated and unmonitored. Now that these standards have been put in place, student housing across the country will have to work on making the necessary and feasible changes to try and be more in line with these criterion in order to ensure that students are living in environments that will ensure academic prosperity and success, as described by the policy.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1) Introduction

This chapter of the report serves to conclude and summate the main findings of the research report by answering the research question and sub-questions. In conducting this research, it became apparent how nuanced and complex private student housing is in the context of Braamfontein and how students' perceptions of quality and affordability were varied and dependent on many personal factors. The assessment of whether private student housing in Braamfontein adheres to national minimum norms and standards was also made difficult by the complexities of the housing typologies discussed in previous chapters, particularly relating to how some accommodations were not configured solely for the habitation of students but other groups of people as well. The conclusion of this chapter includes some recommendations for how private student housing in the precinct can better align with student needs and preferences and how it can better try to comply with the newly formulated policy on student housing in South Africa.

6.2) How do Students Experience the Current Location of Private Student Housing?

When assessing the suitability of Braamfontein as a student neighbourhood, students were generally satisfied with the overall environment Braamfontein created for them. They were appreciative of the convenience that the area afforded them in terms of being close to their learning institutions and the clustering of various services, amenities and activities. The majority of students (mostly males) viewed the precinct as being safe, while some of the female informants felt that the area was unsafe, particularly at night. The vibrant nature of Braamfontein, partly attributable to it being a consumption space was described as being both a "blessing and a curse" as students appreciated the overall environment but complained that it sometimes made it difficult to study, especially during weekends. These experiences of the area in general contributed immensely to how students viewed their overall dwellings and the living environments these buildings created.

6.3) Do the different facilities, services and amenities that are available within student dwellings or that are accessible to students affect their perceptions of the quality and pricing of student housing?

Students in self-catering residence halls admitted to this type of housing typology not being their first choice. Many of them lived in these types of buildings as a result of them being on NSFAS and because of not having any other choice due to other accommodations already being full. Students in private flats, on the contrary, always specifically chose this housing typology as a result of its configuration in terms of bathroom and kitchen facilities and overall personal space.

Generally, students in self-catering residence halls were not satisfied with the quality of their dwellings, particularly with regards to bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities. As a result of these being shared by up to 52 people on each floor, students grievances included issues surrounding cleanliness, the availability of facilities at certain times of the day (bathrooms and kitchens), the very limited capacity of laundry facilities and equipment and the limited nature of privacy and personal space. Students in double rooms also felt that the sizes of their rooms did not allow for easy and comfortable movement for two people, resulting in a living space that was cramped. With regards to social spaces such as TV and study rooms, students used these occasionally but were also not fully satisfied with the limited number of students they could accommodate at a time. The limited internet service that these buildings offered (mostly 2GB of data per month) posed a major problem for students as they did not think this amount to be adequate given how their academic work relied heavily on having access to the internet.

Given these issues, students in this housing typology were not happy with the quality of their dwellings and also felt that the rent charged was not affordable given their quality of life within these buildings. Students were of the opinion that they could pay similar or decreased rent amounts at accommodations that would not require them to share facilities and where they would have more personal space and privacy. In the case of this housing typology, the facilities, services and amenities that students were offered definitely affected their perceptions of the quality and pricing of their private student dwellings.

Students living in private flats were generally more satisfied with the quality of their dwellings, even though some of their buildings sometimes did not have all the facilities that students in self-catering residence halls enjoyed. A number of them highlighted that having their own kitchenettes and bathrooms was one of the best features of their accommodation. The absence of common social and academic spaces did not seem to bother the students in this housing typology. Many of them preferred to either study in their individual units or at their respective university campuses. They also appreciated that this housing typology allowed one to keep to themselves, consequently meaning that they did not mind the lack of spaces such as TV and games rooms. They shared similar grievances to those of students living in self-catering residence halls with regards to laundry facilities and internet access. In many of these buildings, laundry facilities and equipment was non-existent, with students having to either make alternative arrangements regarding where to do their laundry or pay the private laundry services that were present in their dwellings. The lack of internet service in the majority of these buildings was also an issue for students as this mandated them purchase their own internet bundles or alternatively stay on their university premises to complete their academic work.

What was interesting form this sample of students was that despite their private student dwellings not having some of the facilities that were present in self-catering residence halls, they still perceived their dwellings to be of a good quality. For many of them, the benefits of living in this housing typology far outweighed the absence of some facilities and amenities. These benefits included more flexible visitation and sleepover rules; no sanctioning of alcohol and social gatherings; more freedom to be themselves in their own space and no shared and communal facilities, to name a few. This largely positive perception of their residences also led the vast majority of these students to perceive their respective rent amounts as being affordable, particularly when they compared them to other housing typologies that weren't as comfortable as they perceived theirs to be.

In the case of this housing typology, the facilities, services and amenities that students were offered did not necessarily affect their perceptions of the quality and pricing of their private student dwellings. The environment that these dwellings created, along with the freedom they allowed were much more significant in shaping student perceptions.

6.4) Does private student housing in Braamfontein fully cater to the needs of its users?

Drawing from the previous question as well as the findings presented in chapter 4, it can be concluded that private student housing in Braamfontein does not fully cater to the needs of its students. While all of the dwellings making up this study have made provision for basic living facilities, services and amenities, they fell short in aspects such as adequate bathroom and kitchen facilities (in self-catering residence halls); laundry facilities; internet access; room configuration and size; and making provision for students with disabilities. There were also some facilities and services that none of the buildings had that students had highlighted as being necessary for them within their dwellings. These will be mentioned in a subsequent section of the report as part of recommendations.

6.5) Is private student housing in Braamfontein affordable?

The issue of whether or not students perceived private student housing in Braamfontein to be affordable was dependent on the type of housing typology that students occupied. From the findings relayed in chapter 4, it became evident that for the most part, students living in self-catering residence halls did not think that the amount they were paying in rent at their various dwellings was affordable nor reasonable. As has been mentioned previously, this view was primarily based on the nature and quality of dwelling facilities, services and amenities; as well as on comparisons between what students were being charged at their accommodations and what other student dwellings within the Braamfontein precinct were charging students to live there. It was also based on the environment created by these residences as well as the quality of life students experienced while living there.

Most of the students living in private flats/apartments perceived the amount they were being charged for rent to be reasonable. This perception was based mainly on the living environment created by private flats as well as the privacy, freedom and self-expression these types of dwellings offered students. As was the case with students in self-catering residence halls, students living in this housing typology also based their perceptions of affordability on comparisons between the amount they are charged for rent and the amount other dwellings charged their student tenants. From this comparison, it became evident that in most cases, private flats/apartments were cheaper to live in than self-catering residence halls in Braamfontein. While this

housing typology was viewed as being affordable for the most part, students still felt that rent prices could be further decreased so as to accommodate the many students who came from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

6.6) Does private student housing in Braamfontein meet and fulfil the physical Infrastructure specifications set out in the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities in South Africa?

As was mentioned in chapter 5 of the report, private student housing in Braamfontein fell short of some of the standards presented in the national policy on the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities. Self-catering residence halls did not fully comply with the policy mainly where laundry facilities; self-catering facilities; and the overall configuration of residences for students with disabilities were concerned.

Private flats/apartments also fell short of the national standards, particularly in relation to internet access; social and academic spaces; and room configuration in some dwellings. As a result of some of the dwellings within this housing typology not being exclusively for students, they were not specifically tailored and configured with student facilities, services and amenities. As a result of this, they this did not meet and fulfil the specifications set out in the national policy.

6.7) Recommendations

Given the various issues that have surfaced from the data collected from informants, this section of the research report makes recommendations based on the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5. These recommendations centre on how private student housing in Braamfontein can be better configured to suit student preferences and create living spaces that students deem as being of higher quality. The recommendations will also focus on the issue of affordability and how rent prices at private student dwellings can be adjusted so as to make this type of accommodation more accessible to students. Lastly, this report will outline some recommendations on how private student housing in Braamfontein can better meet the standards set out in the national policy on the minimum norms and standards for student housing in South Africa.

6.7.1) Incorporating Student Preferences into the Configuration of Private Student Housing

During the process of collecting data and information from the students who formed a part of this study, it was clear that there are student preferences that have not been incorporated and factored into the way private student housing is configured in Braamfontein. The recommendations listed below are an attempt to capture some of the responses given by students. These recommendations represent how students want their residences to be designed; which facilities and services they would ideally like to be able to enjoy in their private student dwellings; and how they would generally like to be treated and regarded by building management.

- The addition of gym facilities in private student housing.
- Unlimited internet access in the form of uncapped Wi-Fi in residences (Particularly in those private flats/apartments where internet access was not provided at all).
- Increased numbers of study spaces within residences.
- Rules that are more flexible and that allow for more freedom in self-catering residence halls (Especially with regards to visitation and sleep overs).
- The regarding of students as paying adults and customers and not children.
- Laundry, kitchen and bathroom facilities that are adequately equipped and have the capacity to accommodate the large numbers of students living in both self-catering residence halls and private student dwellings in the Braamfontein precinct.
- In the case of private flats/apartments, better room configuration that specifically caters to the needs of students (addition of study desks and chairs; as well as book shelves and pin boards)
- Fewer tenants on each floor in self-catering residence halls to allow for facilities such as communal bathrooms and kitchens to not be under as much pressure and stress as they currently are.

6.7.2) Making Private Student Housing More Affordable for Students

While there were mixed responses regarding the affordability of student housing in Braamfontein, the majority of the students interviewed for this study highlighted that the rent prices in Braamfontein should be reduced and made more affordable for the student population. Even the students in private flats/apartments who had perceived their rent to be affordable and reasonable shared this opinion, stating that while they thought they were getting value for money by residing in their particular dwellings, they would love to ease the financial burden and be charged lower rates for rent.

In light of the above, this report recommends that the current rent prices that students are being charged by their respective dwellings be reviewed critically, taking into account the socio-economic backgrounds of students as well as the generally high standard of living in a metropolitan area such as Johannesburg. This becomes even more important given the relationship and partnership that exists between the NSFAS, various universities and certain residence halls within the Braamfontein precinct. Students should not be charged rent amounts that are higher than what sponsors such as NSFAS are willing to pay as this puts a financial burden on them and their guardians to top up the accommodation amount. The very reason NSFAS exists in South Africa is to fund poor, disadvantaged students. Expecting these very students to then top up a rent amount every month when many of them do not have the means is very counter-productive. The Department of Higher Education and Training should also be involved in this process by acting as a regulator and a monitor of rent prices at student accommodations. This way, private student housing developers can be held accountable for what they charge students, with the state ensuring that both small and large-scale private student housing brands do not become exploitative and retain monopolistic power in areas such as Braamfontein.

6.7.3) Ensuring that Private Student Housing Meets National Standards

Private student housing in Braamfontein has not met and fulfilled national student housing standards and requirements for the most part. Given that this regulatory policy by the Department of Higher Education and Training was only put into place in September of 2015, this is not surprising. Student housing in general had been left largely unregulated in South Africa prior to when this policy was adopted, so meeting these standards for private student housing in Braamfontein will be a gradual process.

In order to phase in these requirements, private student housing developers in Braamfontein must adhere to the following, as outlined in the policy on the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities in South Africa:

- Private student housing developers must submit approved plans and strategies that outline how national minimum norms and standards will be phased in with existing housing stock.
- In the case of existing housing stock, a reasonable and fair time period must be stipulated to allow private developers to meet the minimum standard in terms of the contents of student rooms. This time period will be relative and will depend on the circumstances of each individual building, in consultation with the state. Structural changes such as room sizes will not necessarily be mandated.
- The adherence of private student housing to these minimum norms and standards is a process that will have to be overseen and monitored by respective universities as well before they enter into any agreements with these providers. Universities must also receive approved plans and strategies from these private providers on the phasing in of these minimum norms and standards where existing housing stock is concerned, with failure to do so resulting in de-accreditation of these providers by respective universities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

6.8) Final Remarks

The importance of student housing to the success of students' academic endeavours at tertiary institutions cannot be understated or underestimated. Healthy living environments that are conducive to academic progress are key in ensuring overall success at various learning institutions. The perceptions of students regarding the quality and affordability of their housing typologies becomes important in this regard as they provide insight into the way students experience their student dwellings and into the financial constraints that often affect how they access different types of student housing.

In answering the sub questions that have shaped this study, this report has effectively answered the main question of the research which centred on gathering the perceptions of students regarding the quality and affordability of their private

student housing typologies in Braamfontein. In doing that, this report has brought to the surface issues such as high rental prices; the monopolistic power of certain private student providers in the Braamfontein precinct; the inadequacy of certain aspects of private student housing and the non-compliance of these private dwellings with national minimum norms and standards. It is very evident that private student housing in Braamfontein is becoming increasingly unaffordable while lacking some of the basic facilities, services and amenities that students require to thrive fully in their residence environments.

The recommendations outlined in this report could potentially assist in ensuring that private student housing in Braamfontein is of an adequate standard; that it is not too expensive and inaccessible to a large amount of the student population and that it complies with the newly formulated requirements outlined in the national minimum norms and standards for student housing policy.

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Appendices

[redacted]

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
HUMAN RESERCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE PLANNING

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: SOAP92/24/06/2016

PROJECT TITLE:	Private Student Housing in Braamfontein
INVESTIGATOR/S:	Sikhokele Ncame (Student No. 735201)
SCHOOL:	Architecture and Planning
DEGREE PROGRAMME:	BSc Honours Urban and Regional Planning
DATE CONSIDERED:	18 July 2016
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE:	APPROVED
EXPIRY DATE:	18 July 2017

CHAIRPERSON
(Professor Daniel Irurah)

DATE: 18.07.2016

cc: Supervisor/s: Aly Karam

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATORS

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to endure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature **Date** 22/07/2016

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR

27 July 2016

Mr S Ncame
Student Number 735201

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"Private Student Housing in Braamfontein"

It is hereby confirmed that the enclosed research material has been distributed in accordance with the University's approval procedures for such a project. Please be advised that it is your right to withdraw from participating in the process if you find the contents intrusive, too time-consuming, or inappropriate.

Should the University's internal mailing system be the mechanism whereby this questionnaire has been distributed, this notice serves as proof that permission to use it has been granted.

Students conducting surveys must seek permission in advance from Heads of Schools or individual academics concerned should surveys be conducted during teaching time.

The necessary ethical clearance has been obtained.

Nicolaen Potgieter (Ms)
Deputy Registrar

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Appendix B

Appendix C

Private Student Housing in Braamfontein

Interview Questions

My name is Sikhokele Ncame and I am an Honours student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am working on a research project that is exploring private student housing in Braamfontein and would like for you to participate. The information I collect will only be used for academic purposes but the final document will be made available to the public. This interview is completely anonymous and participation in this research is voluntary. If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions or do not wish to answer, that is fine and we can stop at any time. Will it be possible for me to ask you a few questions, it will not take more than 30 minutes?

I would like to ask you some background questions about yourself:

Which university are you currently studying at?

Which year of study are you currently completing?

Where are you originally from?

How long have you stayed in this particular student housing building?

Who pays your accommodation fees? [Self-funding or Sponsor]

What are your general thoughts on Braamfontein as a neighbourhood? Do you enjoy living here?

Thank you for your responses.

At this point, I would like to ask you some questions about the location of the building you live in:

Is the location of this building ideal for you?

Why did you choose to live here in particular?

What are your general thoughts about where you live? Do you like this building? Why?

How do you get to school/What mode of transport do you use?

Thank you for your responses

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the building you live in:

Does this building have all the facilities and amenities you need as a student? Ie. bathrooms, tv rooms, gym etc.

Do you feel safe in this building? Why?

Does this building provide you with everything you need as a student? Ie. Does it fully cater to your needs and preferences as a student?

Give Examples

Are you able to study in this building? Is the environment here conducive to academic progress?

Do you regularly use the common areas in this building? If yes, which ones? If no, why not?

Is the building clean?

Is the building regularly maintained and in a good condition?

Do you live in a double or a single room?

What are your general thoughts about your room? Do you like it and does it work for you? Why?

How do you access internet within this building? Is internet access affordable and convenient?

What are some of the advantages of living here?

What are some of the disadvantages of living here?

Are the self-catering amenities to your liking?

If you could change anything about this building, what would it be?

If you had the option to move, would you? If yes, where would you move to and why?

What is your idea of the best type of student housing? Provide examples

Thank you for your responses

Now I would like to ask you some questions related to the affordability of living in this building:

How much do you pay in rent per month?

How much money do you spend on food per month?

Do you think this amount is reasonable/affordable? Why?

What would be your ideal price to pay per month, based on what you can afford?

Do you think that you are getting value for money by living here? Ie. Do you think the rent charged is reasonable given the quality of this student dwelling? Why?

Thank you for your responses

Quality Criteria Checklist

[Derived from: *The Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities*]

Criteria	Additional Notes
Sites of Residences	
☐ Dwelling place within a 20km radius of campus ☐ Affordable and secure transport to and from school (if applicable)	
Design of Residences	
☐ 1 basin per 4 students ☐ 1 shower cubicle per 7 students ☐ 1 lavatory per 5 students ☐ Privacy in shower and lavatory (no hall-type amenities)	
Services	
☐ Wall mounted heater ☐ Most cost effective access to network: fibre optic and/or wireless	
Social Spaces	
☐ Common rooms/lounges ☐ Dedicated group study spaces	

- ☐ Computer spaces
- ☐ TV room(s)

Health and Safety

- ☐ Fire safety equipment
- ☐ Fire safety measures and drills
- ☐ Electricity and gas installation
- ☐ Cleaning of ablution facilities at least once a day

Laundry

- ☐ 1 Industrial tumble dryer per 25 students
- ☐ 1 Industrial washing machine per 25 students

Self-catering dwellings

- ☐ Suitable food storage, preparation and kitchen space
- ☐ Stove: 1 four plate stove (with oven) per 8 students
- ☐ Cold storage: min. 320 litre capacity fridge/freezer combination per 8 students
- ☐ Sink: 1 per 15 students
- ☐ Suitable counter-top space
- ☐ Provision for students with disabilities

Single Room Specification [Area >/= $8m^2$]

- ☐ Bed and Mattress
- ☐ Study Table
- ☐ Desk Chair
- ☐ Book Shelf
- ☐ Bookshelf for cooking equipment (self-catering)
- ☐ Curtains
- ☐ Study lamp
- ☐ Pin board
- ☐ Waste-paper bin
- ☐ Bedside Table

Double Room Specification [Area >/= $14m^2$] Max of 2 people

- ☐ Bed and Mattress ×2
- ☐ Study Table ×2
- ☐ Desk Chair ×2
- ☐ Book Shelf ×2
- ☐ Bookshelf for cooking equipment (self-catering) ×2
- ☐ Curtains
- ☐ Study lamp ×2
- ☐ Pin board ×2
- ☐ Waste-paper bin ×2
- ☐ Bedside Table ×2

Appendix D



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Greetings

My name is Sikhokele Ncame and I am part of the BSc Urban and Regional Planning (Hons) student group in the School of Architecture and Planning (SOAP) at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my Honours Research Report, I am exploring the quality and affordability of private student housing in Braamfontein under the supervision and guidance of Professor Aly Karam.

I am inviting you to be a part of this research by aiding me in completing a quality criteria checklist of your dwelling, and by participating in a semi-structured interview of approximately 30 minutes. A suitable time can be arranged between us where we will both be available to collect this data, in a neutral public setting. The semi structured interview will ask you a couple of questions about your background in relation to your schooling career and your personal life. It will then ask questions related to your student dwelling.

You have been selected to participate in this study due to your enrolment as a student in a tertiary institution within Johannesburg, and also because you reside in a private student dwelling within the Braamfontein area. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss. You will receive no payment or other incentives for your participation.

Your participation will be completely anonymous and no identifying information will be requested. Further, any information you share will be kept confidential and can only be accessed by myself. The results of this research will be presented in a Research Report and your identity or views will not be linked to you in the final report. There are also no foreseeable risks associated with your participation. The results of this research will be made available in the form of academic (non-commercial) research reports and presentations. It will also be available electronically.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please feel free to contact me at 735201@students.wits.ac.za or my research supervisor Professor Aly Karam at Aly.karam@wits.ac.za or 011-7177707.

Thank you for your interest.