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Family units to address the stigma of hostel life?
A case study of Sethokga Hostel

Shereen Tumelo Moloto

November 2015

Submitted to the School of Architecture and Planning, the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the University of The Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning

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Johannesburg, 2015

Declaration

In submitting this research report I (Shereen Tumelo Moloto), declare that the contents contained in this report unless otherwise indicated in the text, are my own unaided work.

This report is submitted to the School of Architecture and Planning, in partial fulfilment of a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning. The contents of this report have not been submitted before to any other institution/university or for any other degree/qualification.

.....

(Signature of candidate)

.....day of ..... year.....

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To everyone that contributed to this study I am truly grateful.

To the two women closest and dearest to my heart, my mom and grandmother you have both been such a blessing and your zealous attitudes and support have been invaluable *le mohau wa modimo*. To my family my dad, my aunt, my brother Kwena and cousins Koena, Mohau le Phuti, your support through this time kept me positive and encouraged, I love you all and thank you. Thank you to all my friends more especially to Ayanda for your love and support always.

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To think too long about doing a thing often becomes its undoing – Eva young

Preamble

This study emanates as a result of two main contributing factors; the first being somewhat retrospective and the second being of academic interest and inquisitiveness. Both will hopefully contribute to a study that will make a meaningful contribution to broader scholarly literature and learning.

I grew up living fairly close to a hostel. I had walked past this particular hostel (Sethokga) on numerous occasions; in fact more times than I can recall but I had never set foot in a hostel until quite recently. It was not because I was told not to go into the hostel or cautioned not to mingle with those residing in the hostel, but there was always this strange feeling of unease and uncertainty that presented itself in the lofty, dim, grungy facade of this place. There was in myself, however, I curiousness about the hostel not just because of how it looked, that is the extensive and obvious outward appearance of wear and tear but the ingenuous wondering of how this place functioned. Who lived there, how did they live there and so I rather naively wondered why anyone would chose to live 'in that place'. What was also always curious was how the hostel seemed to be remote from the township which surrounded it.

Some ten years later after many years that this hostel had been out of sight and for the most part out of mind, I was in the neighbourhood and noticed these more appealing apartment-like structures that appeared to be replacing the old structures and with a great deal of inquisitiveness and some courage I set to inquire on this. The abstract below confers some of my own sentiments, that of the few published studies on hostels most of the focus has been on hostels in Johannesburg and Cape Town (Dyiki, interview 2015). Hence, the fact that the case study for this study was situated in an area that is quite literally and somewhat figuratively 'close to home' provided personal eagerness and allure about this study and an opportunity to confront this oversight.

> *" ... by an accident of research the hostels in Cape Town have been under a far more intense sociological gaze than those on the East Rand ... Given the sudden prominence of the inner city hostels in the Transvaal war, we have been forced to recognise and attempt to overcome this oversight; of the few published studies on the hostels in the Transvaal most focus on Johannesburg and are essentially descriptive" (Segal, 1991:5).*

While I have always been curious about where and how people live and their experiences and reality in the places they reside, hostels have always intrigued me. This particular focus on hostels also emanates as a result of a particular frustration within my standing as a scholar with what has continually appeared, to me that is, to be this sort of overstretched, overemphasis and preoccupation by our post-1994 government with shanty towns. This is not to say that I think shanty towns are not a significant area of concern, characterised by some of the worst living conditions and rightfully so deserve concerted attention and decisive remedial measures. According to Segal (1991) much like hostel dwellers the residents of shanty's form part of the South African populace who have been amongst the most severely exploited and disadvantaged (Segal, 1991).

In focusing on hostels, as a euphemism for single-sex labour compounds, one is confronted with a similarly momentous and multifaceted circumstance. As hostels were and largely still continue to be very much part of the housing crisis in the country and so this research report will endeavour to cast some light on hostels to contextualise hostels, the hostel conversion approach and the associated stigma of hostel live within a contemporary South African context.

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List of acronyms

ANC: African National Congress

Cllr: Councillor

CRU: Community Residential Units

DoHS: Department of Human Settlements

EMM: Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality

GPDHS: Gauteng Provincial Department of Human Settlement

HRP: Hostel Redevelopment Programme

IDP: Integrated Development Plan

IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party

MSDF: Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework

PWV: Pretoria – Witwatersrand – Vereeniging

RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme

SDF: Spatial Development Framework

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

USN: Urban Sector Network

Overview of structure of the research report

Chapter one

Chapter one will essentially introduce the research report. The aim of this chapter is as follows: highlight the objective of the study, provide a background to the study and also discuss the rationale and problem statement. In addition to detailing the research question, the significance of this study and the research methodology will also be reviewed.

Coincidently this research report is written and takes place at a time where there has been somewhat of a 'hype of activity' around hostels and much talk on the subject, particularly of late where 'refocused measures' by government in terms of policy framework(s) to redevelop/convert hostels into family units have dominated several media platforms. With the prevailing question being: "What is/continues to be the role of hostels in contemporary South Africa?" Although this study will not in effect actively seek to answer that particular question, it presents a valuable premise for this study: "*Family units to address the stigma of hostel life?*"

Chapter two

The main aim of this chapter is to contextualise hostel to position the study within an expanded theoretical framework. The main chapter will in part argue that hostels have largely remained as urban enclaves typically remote from the urban fabric and that the rigid structures of regulation and control, which were imposed on hostel dwellers, have perpetuated a complex state of affairs. The literature review section which details some of the key concepts, theories, ideas and arguments on the topic will elaborate further on this.

Chapter three

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive description of the study area and so it is in this chapter that the local as well as municipal context of the study area will altogether be considered. The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a sort of 'feel' of Sethokga hostel and its present-day circumstance. It will attempt to articulate to the reader the authors own experience and account of the study area

in an effort to provide the reader with a well-versed narrative of the multifaceted nature of the hostel and the complex reality in which its residents endure.

Chapter four

The South African state's approach to hostel redevelopment / conversion is discussed. It is argued that the Hostel Redevelopment Programme and the Community Residential Units Programme have been the 'champions' of hostel redevelopment / conversion. Chapter four discusses a number of state policy and approaches addressing 'the hostel issue'. Ahead of this, however, the evolution of the hostel redevelopment / conversion approach is examined, which dates back to the earliest (soon after 1994) efforts by the South African government to remedy the ills of the hostel system.

Chapter five

Chapter five examines the Sethokga hostel conversion project and seeks to unpack the conceptualisation of the project. This chapter reflects and draws extensively on the findings of the field work and the invaluable insights offered by the key informants. The main components of the hostel conversion project are examined and the vision of Sethokga personified by the hostel conversion project is presented in chapter five.

Chapter six

Chapter six concludes the study. It presents a review and reflection of the study and a summary of the aim and objectives. It examines the limitations of the study and lastly attempts to answer the question: "So what does this mean for the urban and regional planning profession and for planners?"

Chapter one: Introductory chapter

Introduction

In the wake of the political transition in South Africa in 1994 and for some time preceding this time frame violence, squalor, overcrowding and socio-political strife had long become characteristic of some of the features associated with hostels and the stigma of hostel life (Thurman, 1997). Due to its history as systematically disempowered, yet, politically vocal enclaves, we have come to know or perhaps be familiar with hostels as highly contentious and antagonistic environments, with a burdened local identity (Ramphele, 1993; Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010).

The stigma of hostel life constitutes among a host of conditions, an innate reality where the residents of hostels inhibit isolated, destitute and unbecoming spaces (Segal, 1991). Built as single-sex labour compounds to accommodate African migrant labourers for the duration of their stay in South Africa's white urban areas, hostels occupy a unique position within the country's physical and mental landscape (Thurman, 1997). As sojourners in South Africa's white urban areas, the law constructed a 'legal' person called a labourer who was 'authorised' to temporarily reside in the urban space but had to retreat to their rural quarters once their 'service' had been concluded (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). Thus to draw attention to the unkindness of their living conditions many hostel dwellers have continued for the better part of South Africa's democracy to 'choose' physical violence as a tool perceived to best serve and afford some attention to their troubles (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005).

Within the context of this research report the term hostel/s widely refer to single-sex dormitory style labour compounds, which emerged in South Africa under the apartheid system and ideology of separate development (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). The ideology of separate development and the resultant influx control policies were a distinctive trait of the government of a particular juncture in the country's history - a government that as part of its mandate held to discourage the permanent settlement of the African populace in urban areas (Ramphele, 1993). This further translated itself in the government's refusal to plan and consent to any sort of 'meaningful' investment into areas designated for the *other* who were primarily located in the townships on the periphery of the urban terrain (Ramphele, 1993).

Badly designed, poorly built and suffering many years of neglect, hostels were primarily designed for the containment of labour and not for the comfort of hostel dwellers (Thurman, 1997). Conceivably the hostel system socialised its inhabitants into an undignified and callous condition which has in some respect persisted and has unfortunately not wholly been reconciled (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). In hostels that were male occupied, hostel dwellers were regarded as '*men of four worlds*' which referred to their present and existing life within the hostel, the surrounding township(s), places of work and their rural homes (Segal, 1991). The hostel system made it impossible for hostel dwellers to live in the hostel with their families i.e. wives / husbands/ partners / children (Segal, 1991). This consequence is particularly important to note at this early stage in the report because of the wisdom and context it adds as the study progresses.

Coincidently this research is written and takes place at a time where there has been somewhat of a 'hype of activity' around hostels and much talk on the subject, particularly of late where 'refocused measures' by government in terms of policy framework(s) to redevelop/convert hostels into family units have dominated several media platforms. Undoubtedly the prevailing question has been: "What is / should be the role of hostels in contemporary South Africa?" The current Minister of Human Settlements has said that "*hostels no longer have a place within South Africa's demo*cratically reconfigured state and so the state needs to get rid of hostels" (Sisulu, 2015). However, in a nation such as South Africa, efforts towards transition are ambiguous, complex and can often be marked by violence (Mosoetsa, 2011).

According to Thurman (1997) of an estimated 604 000 hostel beds around the country in the late 1990s accommodated whole families, relatively close to urban centres. Furthermore Thurman argues that hostels present both a significant challenge and an opportunity for government, NGOs, developers and hostel dwellers themselves. High density housing stock stood to gain a considerably large supply of low income, (Thurman, 1997). Even while a large number of hostel redevelopment/conversion projects continue to be riddled with tension and difficulty the prospect(s) for change and reform that they offer cannot simply be dismissed.

This study seeks to examine the conceptualisation of a hostel conversion project, to develop an informed understanding of the defining features and characteristics of this particular hostel conversion project. It examines what is and what has been the nature of engagement and dialogue between the various stakeholders involved and discusses the insights they were able to offer to this study. In 2015, 21 years into South

Africa's democracy, we have to wonder what is needed to make amends and offset the dishonour of hostel life.

1.1. Background to the study

We have to understand what the hostel system did was to 'accommodate' the African populace in single-sex labour compounds (Segal, 1991). Upon their arrival their presence in urban areas was constrained as they were met with strict rules and restrictions (Ramphele, 1993). In turn, social relations were severally volatile and ambiguous under the hostel system as hostel dwellers were constrained in their ability to interact in certain or in their own chosen ways (Thurman, 1997). There have been a number of authors who have noted that the notion of family was partly if not entirely redefined under this system (Ramphele, 1993). Hostels were designed with little or no thought given of human comfort, security and interaction and many are still in appalling, neglected and overcrowded conditions (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). For many people, hostels represent a bitter and hopeless reminder of the past while for others they are a well prized and affordable shelter in an environment of serve homelessness (Thurman, 1997).

Accordingly soon after 1994 South Africa's democratic government made some attempt to convert hostels into environments suitable for family life; although the extent of this has not entirely been clear (DoHS, 2015). This was met with hostility, violence and unwillingness by some hostel dwellers particularly those in the Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vereeniging (PWV) region to have their hostels converted/redeveloped into family units (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010). The violence that had become synonymous with hostel life became an overwhelming impediment that proved difficult to overcome (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). Ramphele (1993) notes that the idea of an unambiguous, constant and unrestricted presence of women and children in the hostel seemed to be a point of contention for some of the men who had far too long become accustomed to living 'alone' as men. Some expressed unwillingness while others found it a struggle to comprehend or endorse this change that seemed far too unfamiliar and a challenge to come to grips with (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010).

Thus in hostels where hostel conversion projects have since taken-off, the general attitudes, perceptions and reception of the projects have in some respects continued to be negative and unwelcomed. Scepticism, tension and hostility add to the already complex nature of the hostel conversion projects (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho,

2010). Hostels are still largely spaces confronted with deep social injustices (i.e. poor living conditions, a lack of privacy, overcrowded) and are an insult to the dignity of their occupants in several ways, as both spatially limited and socio-economically limiting spaces (Ramphele, 1993). The limits imposed by hostels onto hostel dwellers have persisted in protracting unkindness and a distorted conception of the fundamental purpose of housing. Hostels remain as an unfortunate symbol of a former government's refusal and failure to acknowledge the personhood (*the position and quality of being an individual or having feelings, perspectives, integrity and human characteristics, needs and wants)* of the men and women they housed (Ramphele, 1993).

1.2. Rationale

Arguably hostel conversion projects and particularly the conceptualisation of these projects is still a relatively under-researched field. Based on my efforts to find published work on the subject, and even though there have been a number of hostels across the country which have undergone or are undergoing hostel conversion, this remains a rather neglected study field.

Hostels within their historic make-up were for the most part premised on fairly uniform ideals, arrangements and gender configurations. The demographic setting within some hostels across the country have since become a lot more fluid and departed from their former mandatory construct (as strictly single-sex spaces). In what were predominantly male occupied hostels, women and children have since moved into some of those hostels.

Sethokga hostel, which will serve as the case study for this research, is a hostel that is still predominantly male occupied but is undergoing hostel conversion to convert the hostel into family units. I believe that the fact that the hostel is still predominantly male occupied presents an intriguing dimension to this study on hostel conversion and efforts to grapple with the research question.

1.3. Problem statement

In the case of Sethokga hostel, a hostel conversion project is underway, but it is not clear what has sparked such a conversion and to what extent it is driven by the available policies or assessments of needs or what attempt has been made to meet these needs. Subsequently what would the conversion of a predominantly male

dominated hostel, rife with historically inherent conditions, necessitate? Therefore, how has the conversion project grasped the experience of men within such a hostel and how has it grasped the concept of family life.

1.4. Research question

How has the Sethokga hostel conversion to family units been conceptualised, and based upon the conceptualised ideas, does it address the stigma of hostel life and it what way(s) does it do this?

Sub-questions:

- What led to the decision to convert this particular hostel into family units?
- Conceptually, what does the project entail? What is the broad aim and vision of the project? What is the expected output and anticipated benefit of the project?
- How has the project understood the needs and challenges of the residents and in turn set to address those needs and challenges?
- In what way(s) have the residents of the hostel been involved in the project?
- What has been the experience of project implementation to date?

1.5. The significance of the study - positioning the study relative to existing academic literature

The significance of this research report lies in what I believe is a gap in the scope of work covered over the years on hostels, particularly on hostel conversion projects. Based on my efforts to find published work on the subject, questions around what these projects entail, their implications, relevance and impact, remain unanswered. In the work I have managed to access so far, this particular aspect around the conceptualisation of hostel conversion projects has somewhat been neglected and not extensively researched. Therefore, there needs to be more inquiry and study conducted into the mechanisms, implications and character of hostel conversion projects.

As documented by Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) there are vast and intricate layers of engagement, communication, participation and even discontentment

involved in hostel conversion projects. For instance, the legitimacy around where decision-making lies and which avenues are or should be available to voice concerns, have been some of the challenges relating to hostel conversion and have added to the already complex nature of these projects.

There is most certainly room for a study to examine the conceptualisation of a hostel conversion project and probe this idea that family units could serve as an adequate tool for the apt reform of hostels as many of us have come to know them, associate with them or even disassociate from them.

1.6. Aim and objectives of the research

The main aim of this research report is to examine the rationale of the Sethokga hostel conversion project and how the project has been conceptualised.

Objectives:

- To examine the rationale of the Sethokga hostel conversion project.
- To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the hostel conversion approach relative to the socio-economic and political context of the hostel.
- To explore the possibility and potential of family units as a viable tool to addressing the stigma of hostel life.
- To examine how the project has understood the needs and challenges of the residents and in turn set to address those needs and challenges.
- To examine the specific spatial focus of the project.

1.7. Research methodology

1.7.1. Type of research

The methodology used in the study is a qualitative approach to research and semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary means of data collection. Additionally, the data collection process involved the use of a variety of sources which ranged from books, journal articles, newspaper articles and online media platforms in the form of articles and radio podcasts.

According to Cresswell (2009), this particular method to research (a qualitative method) entails among other things the use of horizontal dialogue, conversation and the exchange of ideas between the interviewer and the interviewees (Cresswell, 2009). Key informants were identified on the basis of their knowledge of and/or involvement in the Sethokga hostel conversion project and the following individuals were interviewed:

1st interviewee: Mr Vincent Shibambo, resident engineer with LTE consulting (the company facilitating the construction and administration of the project). Interview conducted 14th August 2015 at the project site. The interview took place in the boardroom of the project site offices.

2nd interviewee: Mr Jabu Mthethwa, housing officer from the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. Interview conducted 17th August 2015 the interview took place in Mr Mthethwa's office at the council offices in the Kempton Park CBD area.

3rd interviewee: ANC Ward 4 Tembisa Ward Councillor, Cllr Mohlapamaswi. Interview conducted 18th August 2015 in the ward councillor's office at the ward councillors chambers situated adjacent to the project site offices, within the vicinity of the hostel.

4th interviewee: Mr Lufefe Sololo, Ward 4 Tembisa Economic Development Rep (Mr Sololo sits on the ward committee that advises the ward councillor). Interview conducted 18th of August 2015 at Sethokga hostel.

5th interviewee: Mr Sisa Majikijela, official from the Gauteng Provincial Department of Human Settlements, Mr Majikijela is the current project manager of the Sethokga hostel conversion project. Interview conducted 19th of August 2015 in the boardroom of the project site offices.

6th interviewee: Mr Malibongwe Dyiki, who was a resident of a hostel in Cape Town in the early 1980s. He then became a community representative in later years and then moved on to be a government official facilitating hostel redevelopments in the Western Cape. He has written and published on hostels and has also participated in policy discussions on the Hostel Redevelopment Programme. Interview was done on the 7th of September 2015 at the Housing Development Agency's head office in Killarney Johannesburg where he is currently working as the Programme Manager for the mining towns programme.

7th interviewee: Simba Bako, architect with Liefa Architects (appointed by LTE consulting, Liefa Architects were responsible for the design of the family units).

Interview conducted on the 9th of September 2015 at LTE House in Sunninghill Johannesburg.

1.7.2. What kind of information is needed?

The kind of information that was needed was information which contextualised the study area within its broader local and municipal context. Pre-existing data particularly demographic and statistical data on the hostel and its surroundings, Ekurhuleni's Integrated Development Plan, the Metro's Spatial Development Framework and information that would give an overview of the geographic, social economic and possibly even the political context of the study area is needed. Moreover, project reports, studies, memorandums or minutes and state policy on hostel conversion would also be useful.

1.7.3. Collecting data

In collecting data there were a number of methods and tools that were used, which involved moments of *ad hoc* discussion and deliberation around the topic. What was invigorating and always thrilling was people's interest and curiosity regarding this study. The impromptu encounter(s) with people who were open and ready to share their point of views and experience(s) honestly made the data collection process that much easier.

There was a considerable amount of time spent on examining literature, books, articles (both academic and media sources), sources on the internet and journals. Collecting data also involved examining similar programmes and projects on hostel conversion/redevelopment, so collecting desktop data and consulting library sources was an invaluable part of collecting data.

1.7.4. Sampling

The study sample is important for any research. The choice between qualitative, quantitative or even the consideration of using a mixed methods approach should be determined by the research question and not decided subjectively. In grappling with the research question it seemed most appropriate for the purpose of this study to make use of a qualitative approach. It was believed that a qualitative approach

would provide the necessary framework to respond to the research question and address the aim and objectives of the study. In answering the 'how' and 'why' questions that the study would pose, a qualitative approach would engage in a sort of comprehensive exploration of the many-sided and possibly complex dynamics of the Sethokga hostel conversion project. For this reason a qualitative interview-centred approach was used (Marshall, 1996).

Marshall (1996) argues that there are three broad methods commonly used in selecting a study sample that is convenience, judgement and theoretical sampling techniques. Convenience sampling involves the most accessible person(s), it is the least time consuming, requires the least effort and financing. Judgement sampling, also referred to as purposeful sampling, is according to Marshall (1996) the most widely used sampling technique. With judgement sampling the researcher purposefully and actively selects a sample that would best respond to their research question and in principle convenience is set aside. While theoretical sampling involves a process of selection of a sample that is mainly driven by and rooted in a theoretical position, the sample is selected to examine or elaborate a particular theory (Marshall, 1996).

For the purpose of this study, the judgemental sampling technique was used and this entailed the active and purposeful selection of what Marshall refers to as 'subjects' with particular expertise i.e. key informants. The sample selection was based on my prior experience and practical knowledge of the study area. The limitation however was that there were quite a number of elaborate and contentious issues at play which within the limits of this study could not be explored at length on account of time constraints and the particular focus of this study.

1.7.5. Ethical considerations

As a young female scholar entering into a rather conflicted, 'tough' and culturally-laden environment, I was faced with what was an apparent concern for safety and so, on my trips to the hostel I was always accompanied by my father or a friend.

Initially my intention was to interview some of the hostel residents but the sensitivities around the harshness of their living conditions were highlighted as a possible area of vulnerability and the spate of xenophobia attacks particularly in and around hostels suggested reconsideration. As a researcher I ensured that the participants were all

well aware and informed that their participation was voluntary and they were at liberty to withdraw their involvement at any stage. The interviewees were informed of the choice to remain anonymous if they wished and that the information they shared would be used to develop this research report. Thus my ethical obligation as a researcher was to ensure that I did minimal harm and unintentional damage through my research, that I conducted myself responsibly and professionally at all times, and that I reported accurately what I found, including unforeseen and even negative findings.

1.8. Conclusion

Hostels consolidated the migrant labour system. They served not only to control the number of black labour residing in urban areas but also to manage its behaviour. As hostels were designed to be unattractive and uncomfortable, many comparisons have been made between hostels and institutions such as army barracks and prisons.

There is a window of opportunity in promoting hostel conversion but injecting resources into previously marginalised communities have resulted and is resulting in conflict, local power struggles and competition for those resources (Thurman, 1997). The next chapter will discuss the theoretical backdrop of this study and elaborate on key concepts, theories, ideas and arguments that have been of particular relevance to unpacking the research question.

Chapter two: Theoretical backdrop

2. Introduction

It is imperative at this point to contextualise the term hostel/s so as to clearly illustrate what is meant by it. This section of the report will contextualise the term hostel/s and it will examine key concepts, theories, ideas and arguments that are of particular relevance to the study.

Furthermore chapter two argues that hostels have largely remained as urban enclaves typically remote from the urban fabric (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010). It argues that the rigid structures of regulation and control that were imposed upon the former inhabitants of hostels were essentially just one part of a multi-faceted and disconcerting circumstance that has continued to live on within a large number of hostels (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2012). This view that hostels operated and in some respect continue to operate under a complex set of circumstances is shared and supported by the work of authors such as Segal (1991), Ramphele (1993), Goldblatt and Meintjes(1996), Thurman (1997), Pienaar and Crofton (2005), Dyiki (2006), Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, (2010). Subsequently some of their work will be used to unpack the research question and draw on certain aspects that resonate with the case study. The following abridged abstract describes some of the complexities around hostels and the views captured in the work of some of the authors mentioned above.

According to Segal (1991) hostel life and the regulations imposed upon hostel dwellers made it extremely difficult to maintain family life, that is, men would leave their families in the rural areas for long periods of time to find work in the city. Ramphele (1993) notes that the families of the men would then became reliant for their survival upon the remittance of the men. Mapetla (2005) makes a compelling argument that suggests that within contemporary society men are traditionally, culturally and even spiritually still regarded as the head, the protector and provider of their families; even as the lines delineating the roles of men and women within contemporary society have become faint and more fluid. Arguably, hostels still exist within a highly complex setting (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2012).

2.1. Contextualising hostels

Generally hostels were badly designed, poorly built and many have been suffering years of neglect (Thurman, 1997). Hostels were primarily built to accommodate African migrant workers for the containment of their labour over the duration of their stay in what were demarcated as South Africa's white urban areas (Thurman, 1997). There are notably three types of hostels namely; public sector, private sector and grey sector hostels (Ramphele, 1993).

Public sector hostels are hostels that were built and managed by provincial or local authorities and mainly accommodated workers across a range of sectors (Ramphele, 1993). Private sector hostels were built by private sector enterprise to house private sector labourers who would mainly be working in the factories and mines (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). Grey sector hostels were built on public sector-owned land by the private sector, under some form of contractual agreement with a government authority (provincial or local) but were largely managed and controlled by private sector employers (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). Public and grey sector hostels were generally situated in the townships (Thurman, 1997). However, when they were planned these hostels were generally located on the outskirts of the cities but with increased urban growth they now relatively tend to be more centrally situated (Thurman, 1997).

Ramphele (1993) argued that each hostel had a distinct form and quality about it. Elements of tribalism, certain customs, systems of belief and association, dimensions of conflict and conflict resolution were not homogeneous across all hostels (Ramphele, 1993). The type of work that the migrant labourers did across the sectors they worked was often rudimentary. It ranged from unskilled to very basic semi-skilled work and it was quite labour intensive, in return for meagre earnings (Ramphele, 1993).

Historically, hostels were characterised by two main geographic classifications firstly, hostels in the backdrop of an urban context (i.e. also referring to inner city hostels) and secondly hostels in the areas around mines (Segal, 1991). According to Segal (1991) urban context hostels had a more diffused grouping of hostel dwellers than their mining counterparts (Segal, 1991). Hostels in urban context developed broader and somewhat complex relations with the outside community. This contrasted with the extreme isolation of hostel dwellers in hostels around the mines. Therefore hostels in the urban context were to a lesser extent conceived to be 'more open' and 'less strictly controlled'. However, both were essentially sites of control and exploitation

with clearly marked physical boundaries in form of high walls and fences, with single and restricted entry and exit points (Segal, 1991).

Hostels in urban areas had government bureaucracies responsible for their management and maintenance as opposed to a single employer/company (Segal, 1991). Moreover hostels in the urban context accommodated a wider and more diverse range of workers who did not necessarily work for the same employer/company or have uniform working hours or shifts. In urban hostels ethnicity was not the official organiser of hostel dwellers as men from different backgrounds and homelands would and could share rooms (Ramphele, 1993). Lastly and perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of the two, was the fact that hostels in urban areas were not under the extensive force of 'total control' as was the experience of mining hostel dwellers (Segal, 1991; Ramphele, 1993; Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010).

According to Pienaar and Crofton (2005), public sector hostels accommodated the largest number of hostel dwellers. Overall the quality of living environment of hostels was generally poor but this was particularly bad in public sector hostels (Ramphele, 1993). Additionally the administrative processes and management of public sector hostels was under dire strain as no clear records of those that lived in the hostels or those entering and exiting the hostel were kept (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). Ramphele (1993) notes that although private sector hostels were considered to be better managed and maintained. The general state of *all* hostels whether public or privately owned was largely characterised by poor living conditions, a lack of privacy, the sharing of very limited spaces, a distressed local context and overcrowded conditions (Ramphele, 1993). Pienaar and Crofton (2005) further note that around the early 1980s hostel residents simply started to withdraw from payment of rentals and thus the maintenance of the hostels grew even thinner and steadily non-existent. Public sector hostels grew especially financially and politically unmanageable (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005).

2.2. Key concepts, theories, ideas and arguments

To unpack the research question and contextualise the study within a broader theoretical framework, this section of the report will discuss and draw on a number of concepts, theories, ideas and arguments.

2.2.1. The historic model of hostels the conceptualisation of the hostel system

In grappling with the historic model of the hostel system this section of the report will discuss two main themes. The conceptualisation of the hostel system and migration / migrant labour as conceived under the hostel system. It illustrates the effect hostels have had on shaping the lives and experiences of their inhabitants in unique and complex ways (Thurman, 1997).

South Africa is a country marked by a legacy of systematic discrimination and the deliberate disempowerment of a 'category' of its population (Thurman, 1997). Hostels were established, supported and perpetuated by methodical policy frameworks and brute controls to discourage the permanent settlement of the in historically 'white areas' (Segal, 1991). Thurman (1997) argues that hostels occupy a unique position in the country's physical and mental landscape. They are symbolic of three centuries of systematic racial discrimination.

Seemingly ignited by and originating in the mining industry in the nineteenth century, the construction of hostels reached a peak during the 1960s and 1970s in the period that has been referred to as the "grand apartheid" years (Thurman, 1997). They were built as single-sex dormitory compounds to accommodate African migrant labourers as sojourners in what were delineated as white urban areas (Ramphele, 1993). In hostels which were intended strictly for male migrant labourers' job-seeking by African women was criminalised and a deliberate policy not to provide family housing was pursued (Ramphele, 1993).

Common to hostels was the blurring and hostility of the boundaries between the hostel dwellers place(s) of work and their living spaces (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005). In turn some authors have argued that hostels in some sense functioned as a 'total institution'. According to Segal (1991) and Ramphele (1993) geographically many hostels were isolated and situated literally at the edges of urban areas and society in general. They were primarily designed for the containment of labour and not for human comfort, safety or enrichment (Thurman, 1997). The heavy-handedness of the hostel system imposed a cunning inferiority complex, a sense of no escape, yet, quite interestingly a later unwillingness and indifference to change (Ramphele, 1993). The unwillingness to change or perhaps the difficulty in comprehending any such change was and is still arguably evidenced in the reluctance of some hostel dwellers to have their hostel converted into family units (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010).

Ramphele (1993) and Segal (1991) make a rather compelling argument and share the view that the behaviour and conduct of some of the hostel dwellers against

having their hostel converted into family units, is indicative of similar behaviour and actions displayed by long-term prisoners and people contained in barracks. They argue that a substantial number of long-term inmates would in some instances display great unwillingness and some difficulty to the prospect of re-entering society, after being socialised into a total institution, *a reformatory* (Ramphele, 1993 and Segal, 1991). According to a text by Statistics South Africa (2001), an institution can be defined as a communal place of residence for persons with common characteristics (Statistics South Africa Census Concepts and Definitions 2001). One could then argue that one of the common characteristics shared by many hostels was the migrant labourer status attributed to them (Dyiki, 2006).

2.2.2. Migration and the notion of migrant labour / labourers as conceived under the hostel system

Castles and Miller (2008) argues that all through time and space, individuals and families have been migrating and doing so for a number of reasons. Universally the migration 'phenomenon' was and has been as a result of varying factors and in response to certain causes and events such as demographic growth, environmental changes, development vs. underdevelopment and the seeking of 'better' opportunities (Castles and Miller, 2008). Others have turned to migration to seek jobs often located or perceived to be concentrated in larger urban centres (Collinson and Adazu, 2006; Castles and Miller 2008).

Migration can occur as a voluntary or forced process. This study is particularly interested in the event of migration that becomes forced migration when the circumstances of individuals and families leave them little or no choice but to pursue 'hope' away from their native home-base (Castles and Miller 2008). Arguably this was characteristic of the hostel model. Hostels enabled mines and later other industries to suppose and cause that hostel dwellers had homes in rural areas (Collinson, 2006). Seemingly the rural populace was the 'desired' workforce ushered into the city and mines and exploited as labourers for the development of the urban-based economy (Thurman, 1997).

According to Thurman (1997) the residents of hostels were typically considered as rural, traditionalists and 'dangerous' outsiders by the residents of townships which surrounded the hostel. Their physical as well as social isolation meant that they often retained strong links with their rural home-base (Segal, 1991). This involved the

periodic movement of individual household members between the hostel and their rural homes (Thurman, 1997). The rural/urban linkages which were subsequently fashioned became a distinguishing feature of not just hostel dwellers but the black African populace and as a part of their experience of urban life (Collinson and Adazu, 2006). The costly urban world was thus considered by many as merely a place of work (Segal, 1991 and Ramphele, 1993).

This type of migration - also often referred to as 'circular' or 'oscillating' migration - became characteristic of a sort of temporary sentiment to life and living in the city (Dyiki, 2006). Additionally the events of circular migration presented certain household dynamics and challenges in maintaining the often faint links between the migrant and the households / family left behind (Collionson, 2006; Ramphele, 1993). Conceivably hostel dwellers have for a long time had a common rural orientation (Segal, 1991). "It has been repeatedly demonstrated that migrants do not leave behind the countryside in their journey to the city" and this rural consciousness has remained central to the migrant labour population (Segal, 1991: 9).

Within contemporary society, the concept of 'the new economies of labour migration' has emerged as an alternative position and argues that migration can be and has become a household strategy (Collinson and Adazu, 2006). According to Collinson and Adazu (2006) within their analysis of contemporary migration patterns, migration has now largely become something that is purposefully chosen by members of a household / family. This phenomenon involves the temporary migration of some individuals within the household / family in pursuit of opportunities towards the collective betterment of the family / household or even their broader community (Collinson and Adazu, 2006). Under this model of migration, family and community networks are considered to play an important and supporting role in facilitating migration between urban-based and village-based households / families (Collinson and Adazu, 2006). What is then required of the migrant is thathe/she reciprocate the initial support offered by his/her household / family / community as received in his/her rural-base (Collinson and Adazu, 2006).

While in some respect migration is becoming a 'longed-for' process and somewhat of a deliberate choice, on the other hand adverse circumstances force families / households to partake in this process as a means of survival (Collinson and Adazu, 2006). The ability of migrants to maintain both an urban and rural residence in whatever context i.e. historic or contemporary continues to present a social, geographic and economically complex state of affairs (Pienaar and Crofton (2005).

2.2.3. The notion of bedhold

The context of hostels designed to be uncomfortable and uninviting, the closest likeness to 'home' or 'tenure' was in the form of a bed. Every aspect of life and survival in hostels revolved around a bed (Ramphele, 1993). According to Ramphele (1993) this in turn perpetuated a circumstance of 'clientelism' and blurred the lines of patronage when it came to the exchanging of the membership of beds and when beds were to be allocated or reallocated (Ramphele, 1993). The ill-defined and fluid relationship of patronage between bed-holders would in some respect function like and resemble households (Ramphele, 1993; Segal, 1991; Mosoetsa, 2011).

In some sense bed-holders assumed an intermediary role and served an informal function as 'landlords', thus as proprietors of the bedhold (Ramphele, 1993). Hostel dwellers became 'bed-holders' rather than 'house-holders' in the urban space (Segal, 1991). It became unduly problematic that the bed was the only space over which they could have any measure of control. It after all distorted the perceptions hostel dwellers developed of themselves in relation to their environment, constraining them to varying degrees (Ramphele, 1993). Ramphele (1993) argues that the limits set by physical space in hostels also defined in very clear terms the inside versus the outside, security versus insecurity, family versus non-family and urban versus rural. She further argues that one's very identify in the hostel and their 'legal existence' in the urban space depended on their attachment to a bed (Ramphele, 1993). According to Ramphele (1993) the bed acted as a sort of mediator, thus 'a go-between' the hostel dwellers and the rest of society to which they remain somewhat disconnected and possibly indifferent (Ramphele, 1993).

2.2.4. The stigma of hostel life

The stigma of hostel life gave a rather conspicuous meaning to 'black urban life' and their experience(s) of life in urban areas (Ramphele, 1993). Hostels were badly designed, poorly built and many suffer years of neglect (Thurman, 1997). There have been a number of authors who have argued that hostel dwellers suffered a great injustice to their humanity, their perception of self, constrained relations with others and a constant struggle to maintain family networks with their often rural-base (Goldblatt and Mentjies, 1996).

The living conditions in hostels have been expressed in basic terms as shocking, disgusting, inhumane, cruel and intolerable by both scholars and residents of hostels (Thurman, 1997). Hostel accommodation is undesirable both aesthetically and conceptually and there are a number of common features which characterise most hostels; a lack of privacy, overcrowded and poor living conditions, very limited space and a serious state of disrepair (Ramphele, 1993). Failing to delineate private, personal space the purpose of hostels was to ensure a compliant labour force (Segal, 1991).

According to Ramphele (1993) hostels represent physical space that is not only limited but is also limiting. Ramphele makes a distinction between the circumstance and living arrangements of hostel dwellers and township residents. Arguing that although physical overcrowding of sleeping accommodation between the two (hostel dwellers and township residents) many not be much different in terms of the ratio of people to rooms/beds (Ramphele, 1993). For township residents it is most likely that they would be sharing these limited facilities with kin or friends rather than complete strangers (Ramphele, 1993). Within the context of hostels some men / women may adapt too well to living in single-sex hostels and would find change too difficult to cope with (Ramphele, 1993).

2.2.5. Family versus household configurations

The terms family and household are not necessarily synonymous. According to the Department of Social Development (2012), "a household comprises of either (i) a single person who makes provision(s) for his/her food or other essentials for living or (ii) a group of at least two or more people living together who make common provision for their food and other essentials" (White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2012: 11). Moreover the Department notes that a household can contain a family yet the members of the household are not always necessarily a family, further remarking that "a household performs the functions of providing a place of dwelling and the sharing of resources and these functions can be performed among people who are related by blood or people without any such relationship" (White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2012: 11). This distinction of family and household configurations is useful to this study for two main reasons (a) as it has been suggested that one of the broad aims of the hostel conversion approach is to introduce / facilitate 'family life' and to inject a family quality into these historically single-sex environments. (b) Is it then supposed by the Sethokga hostel conversion project that the household configurations in the hostel are at present existing wholly in the absence of family configurations?

It is important to be mindful of the fact that with time, households have become more complex and family structures more diffused (Mosoetsa, 2011). Hostel dwellers through years of living under space constraints and in single-sex accommodation have developed certain ideologies, practices and habits (Thurman, 1997). Arguably the hostel system redefined and reshaped family and household configurations and constructed a complex social setting (Ramphele, 1993). Within the context of male occupied hostels, relationships among men are characterised by hierarchy and Ramphele (1993) notes that this is legitimised by 'tradition' and is based on age differences. The older men are more likely to occupy positions of authority and be regarded as the 'heads' of the household and in authority to organise the affairs of the household. Whereas the younger men would be cast in the role of attending to duties considered 'typical' to women and that is the upkeep of the household i.e. cleaning, cooking. In this 'man's world' tradition and age regulate the day-to-day function of the household (Ramphele, 1993). The links between the men and the families they had / have left behind has arguably become increasingly scant and incoherent (Grieger, *et al* 2013). With the blurring of their 'binding' reciprocal obligations and support, the conception of family life was redefined and put under considerable strain as a result of migrant labour laws and the criminalisation of job-seeking activity in urban areas of their rural wives / partners (Segal, 1991).

In both family and household configurations, shared obligations and mutual support takes many forms (Mapetla, 2005). The family structure is perceived to be the 'commander' and regulator of the activities and conduct of the individual members. The family structure has been set apart from a household in that a household is more of a residential unit where related and/or none-related individuals in a sense '*eat from the same pot*' (Mosoetsa, 2011). In some cases the individuals and members of a household provide themselves jointly with food and/or other essentials, however, a household can also consist of a person who lives alone. The distinguishing feature is that a family configuration consists of people / individuals who have a blood-kin connection and this can include immediate and extended relatives but the same does not necessarily always hold true for household configurations (Mosoetsa, 2011; Mapetla, 2005; Statistics South Africa Census Concepts and Definitions, 2001).

2.2.6. Gender relations, considering the aspect of men and housing

South Africa can still somewhat be regarded as a traditionally patrilineal society, where land and property are traced through the male lineage, where upon marriage

a woman is required to leave her native home to reside with her husband at his home (Mapetla, 2005). This system has been more inclined to empower men (Ziehl, 2001). Subsequently within contemporary society and within the 'new politics of gender relations' property and land ownership have since become a highly contentious subject. Therefore the issue of housing is quite a significant one and warrants some reflection, particularly the aspect of men and housing (Mapetla, 2005).

Gender roles have steadily been changing and are increasingly becoming ill-defined (Ziehl, 2001). So how can or rather how should housing projects and interventions such as hostel conversion projects be more gender sensitive, inclusive, representative and reflective of the changing gender roles both in a social and spatial sense? Gender considerations regarding housing and housing projects need to be mindful of the innate differentiation between men and women and their not always uniform needs and interaction(s) with space (Mapetla, 2005). The often male bias when it comes to access to housing might just further be perpetuated through hostel conversion projects. The question here is then: does this new conception of a reconfigured living environment in the form of family units make provision(s) towards addressing any of the housing-related gender biases? What do these projects consider important in terms of gender issues, if at all, how have these issues been factored into the projects?

Gender and housing related theory has often argued strongest the case of women in their inability to access housing, land, the law and related funding (Ziehl, 2001). The issues of gender relations and access to housing have become increasingly topical (Mosoetsa, 2011). Women's rights, access to the law, resources and social amenities have been areas which have gained a significant amount of traction in both policy and academic circles owing to historically discriminatory laws (Mosoetsa, 2011, Mapetla, 2005). However, in South Africa and perhaps this is true for many other societies, traditionally, culturally and even spiritually men are still to a significant extent regarded as the head of household, the foremost provider for their families (Mapetla, 2005).

Within the context of hostels, migrant labour laws, which also made it a point that the remuneration of its African labour workforce was as horrendous as the conditions they lived in, shaped a particular aspect of men's relation to housing in the urban context and their experiences (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). In a study conducted by Segal (1991) a group of men living in a hostel were interviewed to give their account of life in the hostel. According to Segal (1991) it became apparent that the men tolerated the hostel because they felt humiliated by even the thought of losing their roles as the

provider for their family. Some men suggested that they could and would not bring their wives or children to the hostel for even a brief visit (Segal, 1991). In their minds they were better off alone in the city/mine because the burden of their own survival was already enormous (Segal, 1991).

2.2.7. State formation, nation building and bureaucracy

Large sections of the South African state have continued to be institutionally ineffective, unsustainable and dysfunctional (Chipkin and Meny-Gibert, 2011). Post-1994 efforts towards nation-building and state formation in the country have taken many forms; a unitary state, the inauguration of a new president of the Republic of South Africa and the promulgation of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic(Barnet, 1999). Furthermore, the ideals of nation building and state formation would attempt to diffuse into a sound and convergent form, what was once opposite and adverse (von Holdt, 2010).

The housing deficit in the country was and has continued to be one of the greatest challenges facing the government, particularly the inadequate provision and access to housing for the black majority who had been rendered destitute and occupying dreadful accommodation (Thurman, 1997). In what could better be regarded as temporary disaster relief areas than housing suitable for any human to call 'home' (Ramphele, 1993). Post-apartheid bureaucratic inefficiency, class formation, redundant budgetary rituals, antagonistic attitudes towards public service vocation and authority has greatly stifled service delivery imperatives i.e. social housing provision (von Holdt, 2010). Undoubtedly the role of policy towards addressing issues such as housing and service delivery is a significant one (Chipkin and Meny-Gibert, 2011); this will be discussed further in chapter four.

2.2.8. The role and significance of community / public participation in hostel conversion to family unit's projects

Public participation in any context is a complex and at times a contentious exercise. Academic literature on community / public participation tends to presuppose an experience or existence of informal, unambiguous or authentic relations in community participation processes (Mdunyelwa, 2015). This particularly in housing related projects and programmes with the assumption that if all the stakeholders involved are consulted the process of participation is likely to yield positive results and success (Greenberg and Mathoho, 2010). In South Africa the notion of public /

community participation has gained popularity as a democratic practice essential for development and nation-building (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010).

The work of Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010), in their research project entitled "*A Case Study of participation in the City Deep Hostel Redevelopment*" suggests that there are more complex and less diffused forces at play. According to Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) the central question often becomes when and at what point can one say people have effectively or meaningfully participated? This question is especially relevant and significance to hostel conversion projects and to efforts to re-configure hostels as 'family units, suitable for family life' (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010). According to state policy the hostel conversion / redevelopment approach is and has been a nation-wide intervention, initiated by the post-1994 government to redevelop / convert hostels in efforts to de-stigmatise these historically-laden spaces (Dyiki, 2006). Moreover, the current Minister of Human Settlement has of late stated on a number of media platforms the hostel conversion approach also seeks to rehabilitate these historically single-sex migrant labour compounds into family apartments/units to promote a family-oriented setting (Sisulu, 2015). According to a 2001 text by Statistics South Africa "*converted or upgraded hostels should be treated in the same way as a block of flats, and each unit considered as a separate housing unit*" (Statistics South Africa Census,2001; 3).

The importance and usefulness of public / community participation in hostel conversion projects have been a widely and overly debated topic. However, this does not wholly take away from the fact that there are many and varied obstacles and challenges when it comes to the actual practice and experience of participation on the ground (Greenberg and Mathoho, 2010). Even while the political and socio-economic contexts of every project are varied with different structures and the coordination of stakeholders take on different forms (Mdunyelwa, 2015). Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) argue that participation has often become a political process riddled in processes of negotiation and rampant differences of opinion coupled with a mix of personal and/or political ambitions (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho, 2010).

Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) in their study of the City Deep Hostel Redevelopment Project outlined a number of issues which the project encountered, before, during and after the hotel redevelopment project there included:

Before the redevelopment process:
Managing change while also trying to mitigate violence, the unauthorised occupation of tenants wanting to gain the benefits of the redevelopment project and the allocation of units (as a contentious challenge) were cited as challenges encountered before the hostel redevelopment process (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho 2010).

During the process:
Challenges around the design of the units (limitations and constraints with respect to skills, time and finances), the issue of labour, the provision of public and social facilities/ services (i.e. crèches, play areas for the children) were cited as being encountered during the hostel redevelopment process (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho 2010).

Issues after the project:
Tariff rates (with electricity as one of the biggest concerns) along with the disagreement and discontentment around rental payments, were cited as the challenges which were encountered post the hostel redevelopment process. A central question and concern that arose focused on whether the hostel did not just became a renovated workers' hostel or if it actually did change into actual family units (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho 2010).

With the study area for this research in mind, I am left wondering if the issues identified by Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) are unique to the City Deep context/project or are they to some extent representative and reverberate to the broader challenges and limitations of hostel conversion projects across the country? Certainly there is some value to participation when it comes to hostel conversion / redevelopment but the process of participation particularly within the context of hostels as politically and socio-economically volatile environments will most likely be confronted by sturdy issues of inherent sensitivities and nuances (Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho 2010). This is what Mdunyelwa (2015) decisively refers to as binary cultural, political and social structures, alluding to the sentiment that some hostel dwellers are in some respect men and women of two minds, set free from the physical shackles of oppression yet still sadly unable and ill-equipped to live and transform their thinking well beyond that (Mdunyelwa, 2015).

2.3. Conclusion

Typically the body of work that exists on hostels is unambiguously and largely concentrated on the historically-laden context of hostels. It especially articulates issues of violent conflict and tension within hostels and their surrounding areas. Conflict situations are often captioned as *hostel versus township 'wars'*. There is an important political backdrop to this, which relates to the rural/ urban links made mention of in this chapter.

Furthermore, the poor living conditions of hostels, the inadequate provision of services and social amenities should be considered. The loss of family life and the sense that hostels pose as limited spaces, which is a negative reflection on to dignity of its inhabitants, are some of elements associated with the stigma of hostel life (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2012; Ramphele, 1993). This has to quite a significant extent remained a present-day and associated reality of the hostel setting and has posed vast challenges to hostel conversion / redevelopment projects.

This chapter has argued that the landscape of hostels has by and large remained complex, at times perplexing and highly contentious. As a resultant, the wicked consequences of the hostel system have been many and varied but *all* of which warrant due attention. The theoretical backdrop on hostels has been useful in developing themes that resonate with the case study, Sethokga hostel. Of particular relevance to the case study will be role and significance of community / public participation in the Sethokga hostel conversion project. Highlighting some of the issues encountered before and during the project, as the project has not yet been completed. Certain aspects of the discussion on key concepts, theories, arguments and ideas and how they resonate with the case study will be explored further. Particularly the notion of bedhold, the aspect of men and housing, the stigma of hostel life and the resultant consequences of the hostel system will be critically discussed in chapter five which examines the Sethokga hostel conversion project.

Chapter three: Introducing Sethokga hostel

3. Introduction

In addition to the study area, this chapter will in greater detail describe and locate Sethokga hostel. It examines its local as well as municipal context and presents a visual narrative of the hostel. The aim of the visual narrative is to provide the reader with a 'sense' of the physical setting of the hostel, thus to provide the reader with a visual depiction of the multifaceted circumstance of the hostel and the complex challenges in which its residents endure. Chapter three largely seeks to provide the reader with an impression of the context in which the Sethokga hostel conversion project is taking place.

3.1. Sethokga hostel *(synopsis of the status quo)*

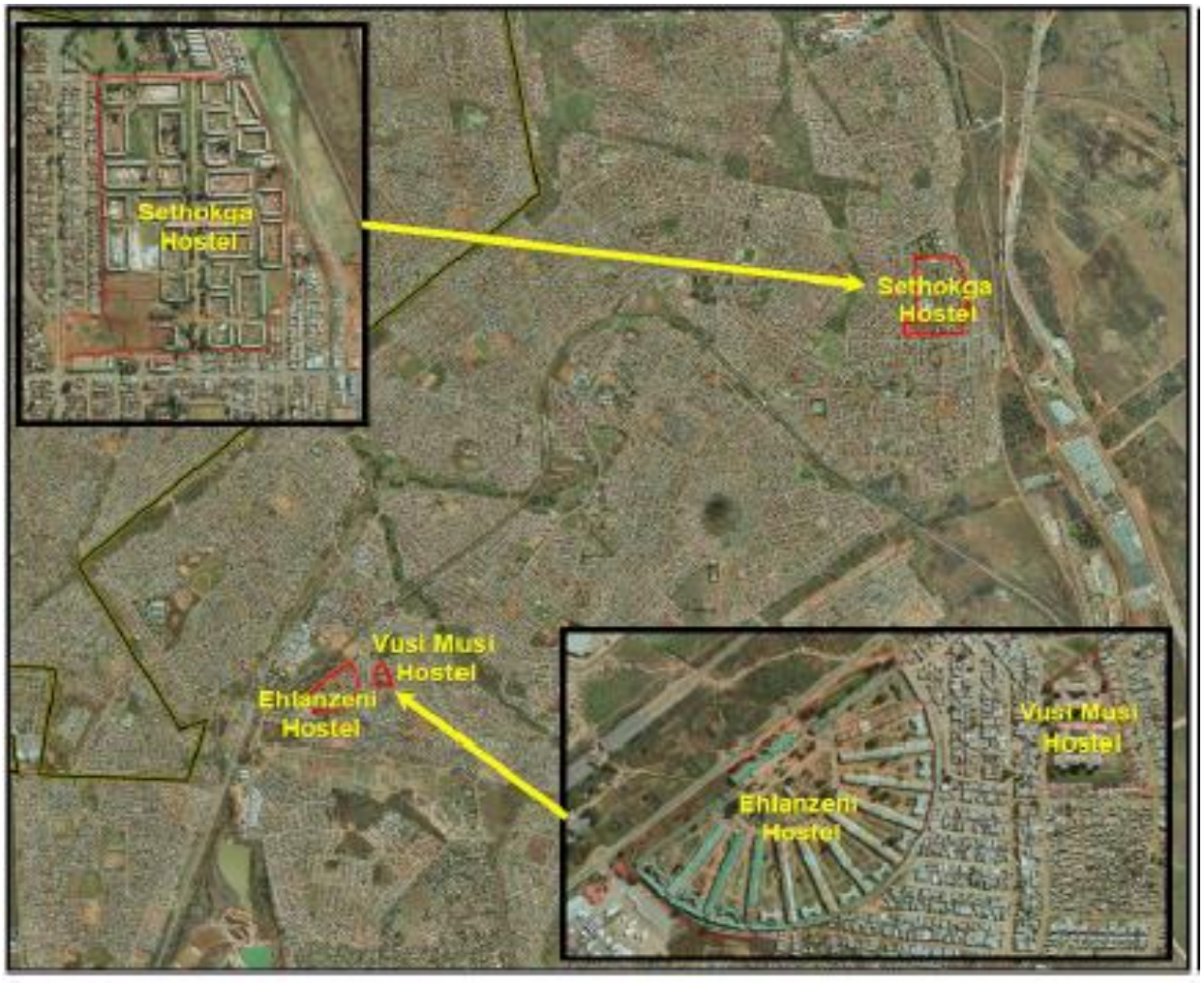
In the period between 1890 and the late 1920s, Ekurhuleni *(at the time referred to as the East Rand region of the Transvaal Province)* experienced increased numbers of black male workers/migrants. This was as a result of a surge in the gold mining sector which took place on the Witwatersrand gold reefs (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2012). According to Bonner and Nieftagodien (2012) of the 15 000 workers that were employed in the sector some 5 000 worked in what is now called the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. With time the number of workers in the Ekurhuleni area continued to rise considerably, most of who were oscillating migrants who were either accommodated in labour compounds such as hostels or shanty settlements in townships across Ekurhuleni such as Tembisa, Duduza, Tsakane, Kwa-Thema and so forth (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2012).

Bonner and Nieftagodien (2012) also argue that for most of the period of the booming mining sector in the Witwatersrand reef to well into the country's democratic dispensation, political contention in hostels had long been a common feature throughout the region. As a consequence, hostels and a number of the townships in Ekurhuleni have somewhat continued to exist within a circumstance of deep-seated antagonistic political and socio-economic conditions (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2012).

Sethokga hostel is one of the largest hostels in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan region, according to the Sethokga Hostel Mixed Typology Market Analysis Study, in 2014 there

were approximately 12 120 residents living in the hostel (Demacon, 2014). Of that roughly 4 000 have since the beginning of the Sethokga hostel conversion project been relocated or reallocated within other blocks in the hostel to make way for the construction of the family units (Demacon, 2014). Some of the relocations of residents have been to alternative sites outside the hostel to either Enhlanzeni hostel or Vusimuzi hostel both situated in the Tembisa area (Demacon, 2014).Interestingly Enhlanzeni as well as Vusimizi hostels are also experiencing issues of overcrowding, poor living conditions and similar socio-economic conditions to Sethokga. Moreover neither Enhlanzeni nor Vusimuzi hostel have or are undergoing upgrading / conversion. It was not clear in the Sethokga Hostel Mixed Typology Market Analysis Study what the reasons for relocating the residents of Sethokga to these hostels were.

Map 1: Map depicting the relocation sites of the Sethokga residents to Enhlanzeni hostel and Vusimuzi hostel



Source: Demacon, 2014

3.1.1 Geographic description of the study

Sethokga hostel was built in 1980 and much like other hostels across the country the Sethokga hostel was badly designed, poorly built and has been suffering years of neglect. Sethokga hostel is a public sector type hostel and is owned by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. Sethokga was built to accommodate male migrant labourers from a range of industries (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). Similar to numerous other hostels, men could live in the hostel so long as they had work in industries but wives / partners and families were prohibited from residence (Thurman, 1997). They were entitled only to short-term visiting permits. Regular and violent raids which were carried out by authorities during the day and at night would rigorously enforce these regulations to chase away, arrest or bus back the wives / partners and families of the men back to the homelands (Thurman, 1997).

According to the ward councillor, Cllr Mohlapamaswi, initially the hostel accommodated a 'mixture' of residents, black men across all tribes and ethnicities but he recalls the change that occurred in the 1990s in response to political shifts. He recalls that: "*after the release of Mandela and when they started preaching 'this thing of democracy' that the divisions happened according to who was Zulu or Xhosa or Pedi or Venda …*" (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015). Below the ward councillor explains what he saw as some of the factors that led to what is currently the strong predominance of Pedi and Xhosa speaking men living in the hostel suggesting that: *"There were mixed feeling when talks were rife concerning negotiations that could lead to possible elections, because the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) was rejecting such a notion. At the time it was a situation of the Zulu's terrorizing the Xhosa's because Mandela was Xhosa and standing with the white man. The Zulu's did not like such an idea, which caused a divide among the Zulu and Xhosa. This led to conflict between the Xhosa and the Zulu. There was fighting everywhere in the country, and you found some Pedis, Venda and Tsonga's ran away from certain hostels because they were being chased out and some landed up in Sethokga* (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015). The points made by Cllr Mohlapamaswi flag some interesting points for instance that this hostel in some respect played the role of a place of refuge and might affect how residents view it.

Sethokga hostel is situated on approximately 22 hectares of land and consists of 29 U-shaped single and two storey dormitories but mainly consists of the two storey walk-up dormitories (Demacon, 2014). The hostel lies on medium dolomitic soil, despite this, it has been said and reported that over the years this has not had a significant impact

on much of the structural qualities of the hostel (Pienaar and Crofton, 2005). The structural sturdiness of the hostel is said to have been mitigated through precautions such as drainage and the assembly of 'well' positioned pavements (Demacon 2014).

According to the ward councillor there are a few women and children living in the hostel, although it is not quite clear how many. They are, however, not recognised as 'legitimate' residence of Sethokga (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015). Arguably a number of the hostel redevelopment / conversion projects that have taken place across the country have been as a response to the prevailing presence of women and children who had come to live in the hostel. The fact that this hostel has remained predominantly male occupied presents a number contextual dimensions to the hostel conversion project. This will be explored in chapter five which will examine the conceptualisation of the hostel conversion project.

According to Thurman (1997), it is not uncommon in hostels for up to three families to live in one room measuring 20 square metres. Such rooms were designed to accommodate two to three workers or even up to twenty people to share a sink, a shower and toilet (Thurman, 1997). Yet, 'whole' families i.e. husbands, wives, children or extended families have not moved into Sethokga. Overcrowding remains a concern and privacy is scarce in the hostel (Demacon, 2014). The dormitories have very limited physical space and little room for manoeuvre. The typical floor plan of a hostel is provided on the next page and depicts the rigid, rudimentary and restrained design of the hostel compound. Sethokga hostel has identical floor plans and elevations.

Floor plan of a typical dormitory compound

Figure 1: Ground Floor Plan

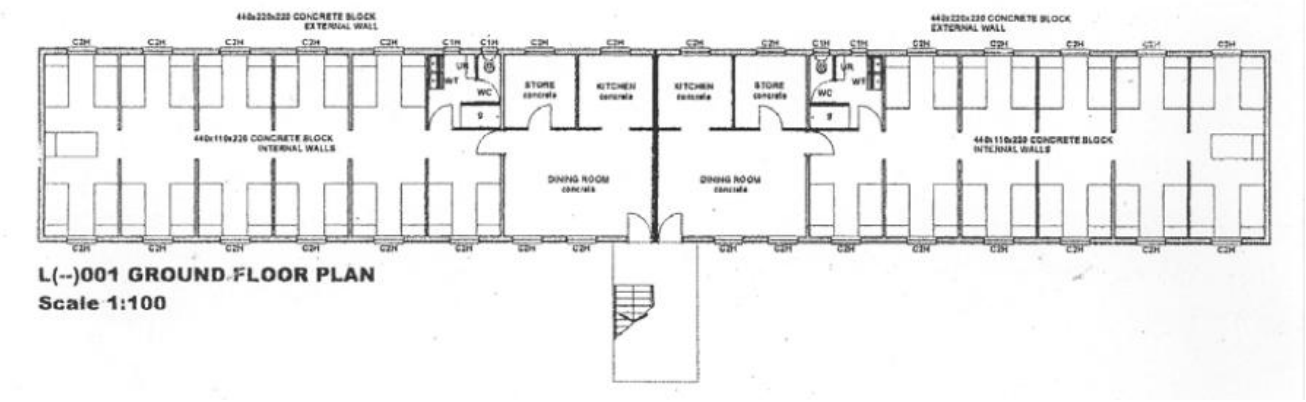


Figure 2: First Floor Plan

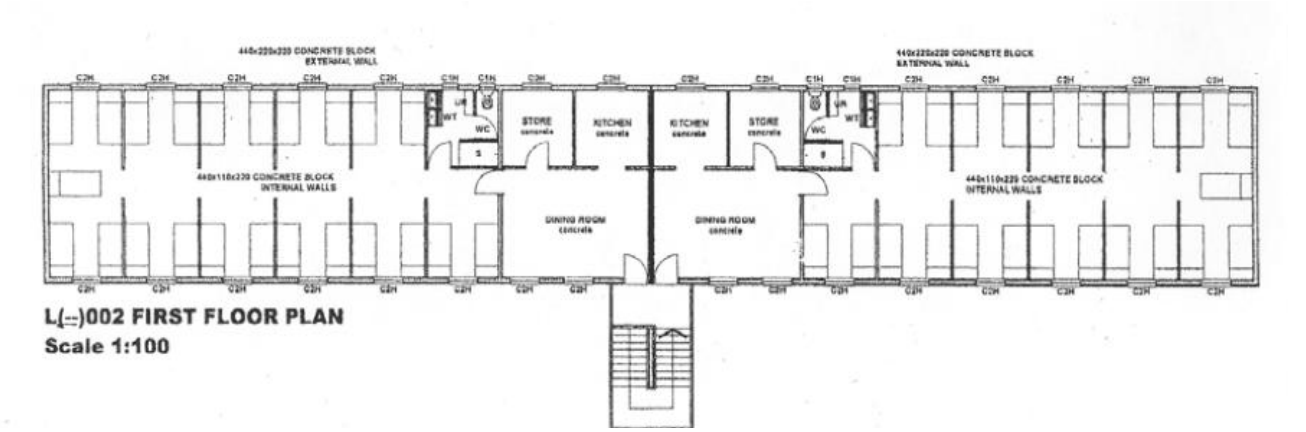
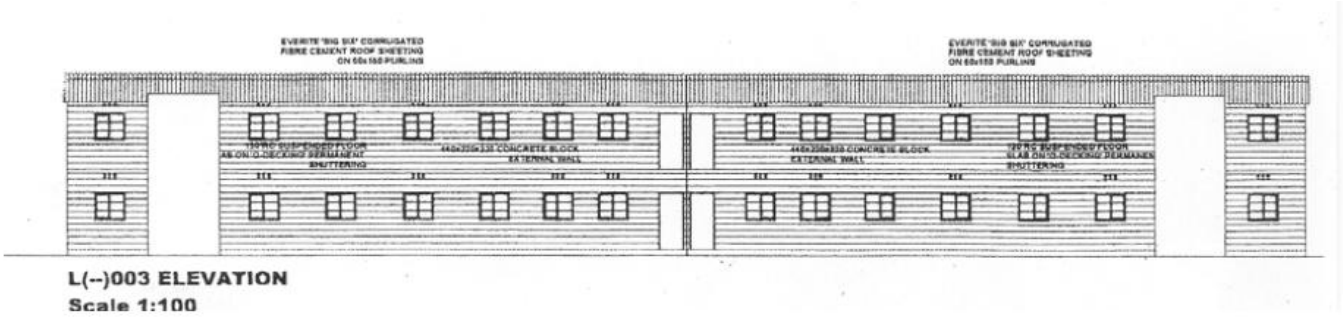


Figure 3 : Elevation

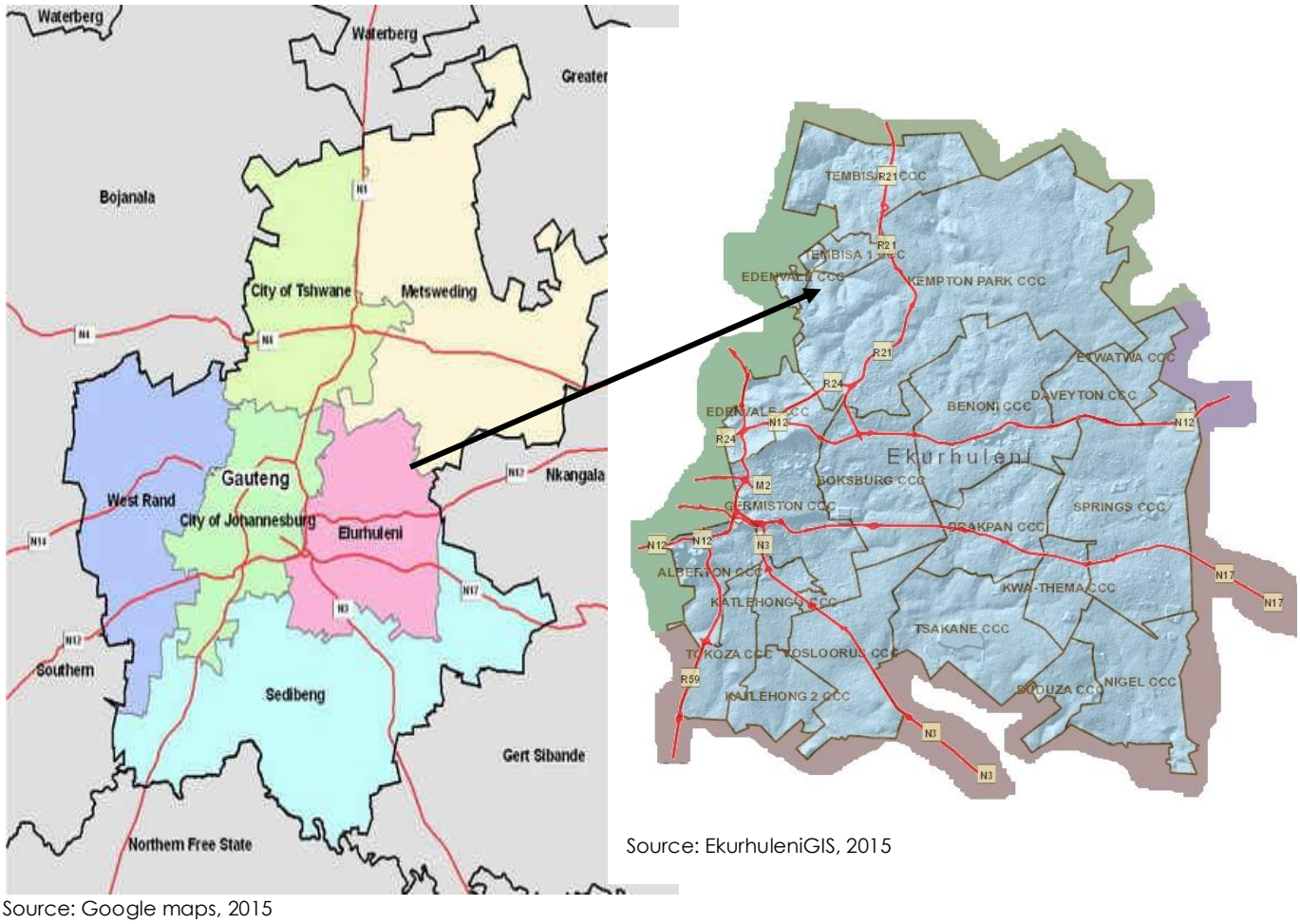


Source: Pienaar and Cloete (2005)

3.1.2. Locality

The hostel is situated in the East Rand region of the Gauteng province within the municipal administrative jurisdiction of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (EMM) in the Kempton Park – Tembisa Customer Care Area. It is located in the north-eastern region, region B, of the EMM in the township of Tembisa and lies to the south of the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and to the east of the City of Johannesburg. Moreover the hostel is lies between the Kempton Park / Pretoria railway link near Oakmoor station, thus a multipurpose and inter-as well as intra-regional public transport node. It is well serviced in terms of public transport and easily accessible from the R21 (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005).

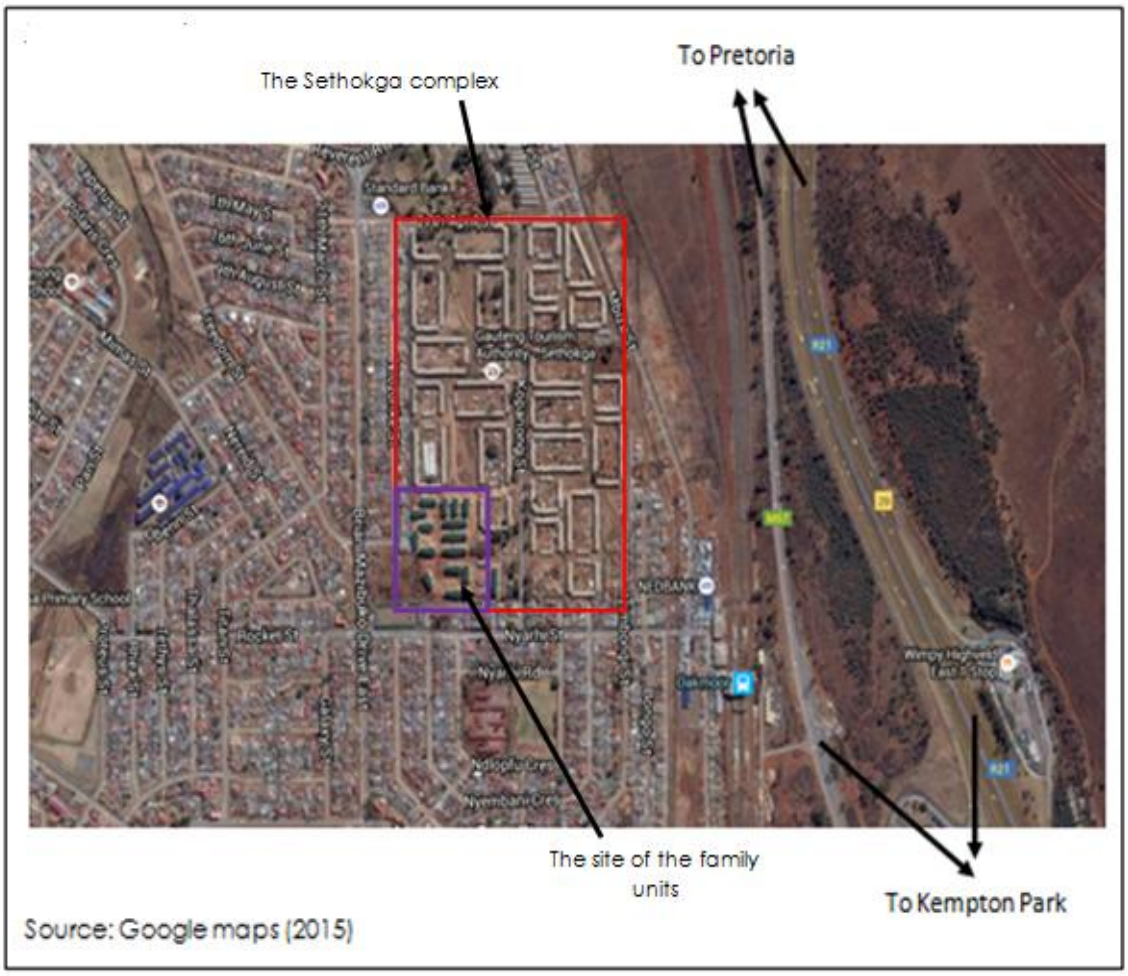
Map 2: Locality map



Source: Google maps, 2015

Source: EkurhuleniGIS, 2015

Map 3: The Sethokga hostel complex



3.1.3. Local and municipal context

Tembisa is one of the largest townships in the metro and it is situated in region A of the EMM towards the north-western end of the municipality. The hostel lies in ward four of the metro, to the east of Midrand and to the west of one of the most affluent suburbs in region A, Glen Marais, along with other high income areas such as Serengeti Golf Estate, Midstream and the suburb of Edenvale (Demacon, 2014).

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the Oakmoor area, Area 19 of the metro's Local Integrated Development Plan (LIDP) was last prepared in 2000. The report contained among its leading aims to establish an integrated framework to guide and facilitate development interventions in the area (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000). It was documented in the report that the SDP would guide the

municipality's decisions in the development and management of the area in a way that the report articulates as follows: by encouraging and setting the framework for private sector investment and initiatives and by seeking to strengthen economic activity in the area through the identification of specific projects and programmes which would kick-start development and lastly working towards improving service delivery (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000). The report reviews the historically context of the area and argues that basically no provision was made for service delivery or the adequate management of land and no consideration of land use imperatives was given. This was the case throughout the Tembisa Township (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000).

Furthermore the report established that the general land-use pattern across most of the township was mainly comprised of residential developments. It was in this 2000 Integrated Development Plan that it was overtly and in retrospect alluded to that Tembisa had been established to function at that time as a dormitory settlement for the neighbouring economic centres of the East Rand region such as Kempton Park, Olifantsfontein and Midrand (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000).

An abstract in 2000 SDF report(SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000 stated the following; that investigations had confirmed that the Sethokga hostel buildings were structurally sound except for some weather proofing of external walls and basic finishes to walls, floors and ceiling. Some repair work to cracks and precautions to pre-empt future cracking may be necessary but the hostel blocks would offer little difficulty in terms of conversion into single and family units. According to the report there seemed to be more problems with engineering services. For example, the internal sewer reticulation was said to be so dilapidated that it may have needed to be replaced entirely. Parts of the water supply network would need to be replaced, fire hydrants installed, electricity supply upgraded and grading of roads and storm-water disposal required substantial attention (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000).

When the completed report was presented in 2000 it set out a case that the municipality was currently negotiating with a non-profit organisation to acquire hostel land and convert the hostel buildings into single and family units and manage such housing stock (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000). It further documented that the 'ultimate' number of dwelling units would be about 1200, with the first phase of development to deliver 500 units. The report suggested that the development would be undertaken by an external organisation and that few planning guidelines

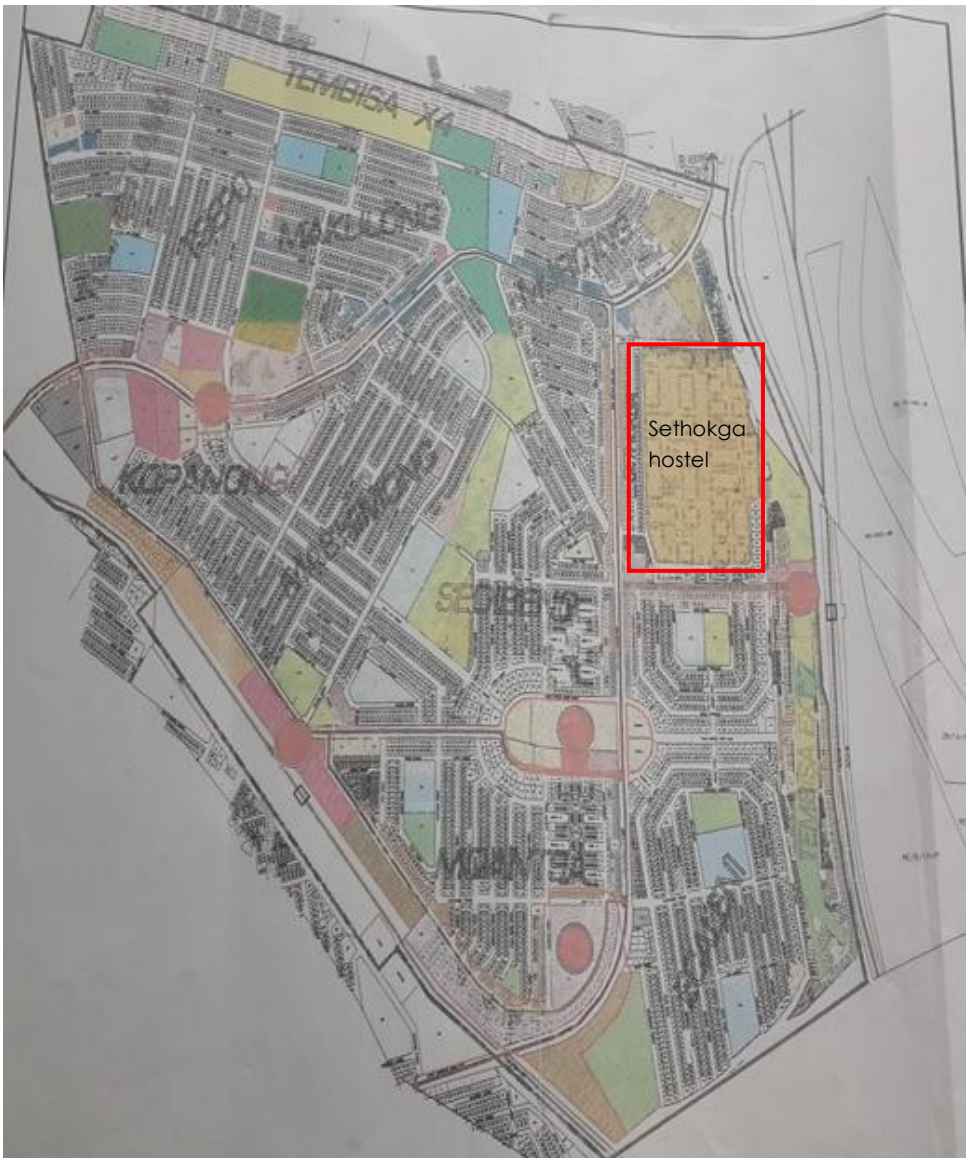
would need to be proposed to harmonize Sethokga hostel residential complex with the rest of the Tembisa Township. In the report it is assumed that the hostel conversion would / should result in a 'security complex' type of housing development and access to the complex would be gained mainly from local distributors such as the extension of Mbiza/Izimbongi Street and Nyarhi Street (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000).

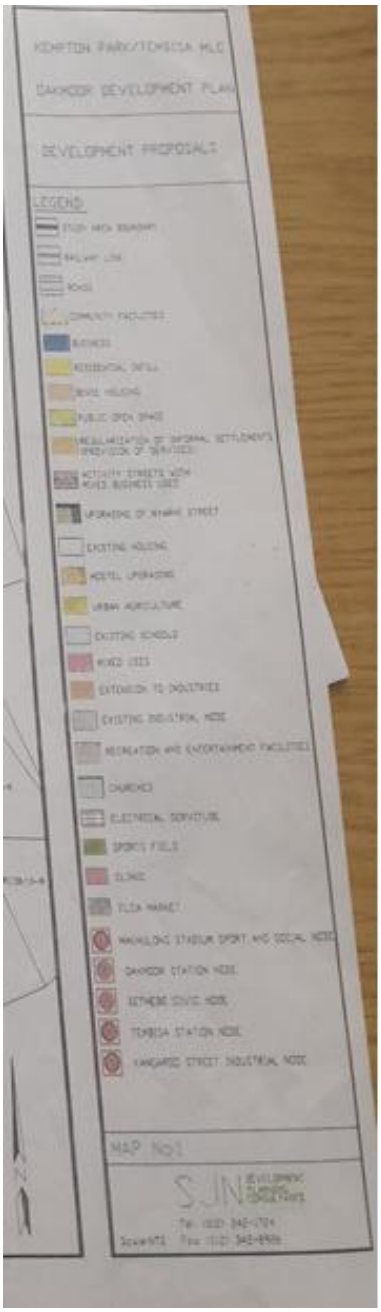
The report argued for change in the household profile of the hostel and this would result in an increased demand for additional social facilities such as schools, crèches, churches, libraries, play area(s) etc. It was found in the report that space intensive (in terms of size) social facilities, e.g. crèches and a multipurpose centre should be encouraged within the complex (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000). Additionally limited retail, specifically corner shops, should be established within the complex. Lastly the report suggested that it was important to align the services in the area with the rest of the EMM and ensure adequate capacity at points where the services connected into the hostel. Roads in particular, were highlighted as important in this regard to ensure continuity and appropriate distribution of traffic movement. What is more the report states that traffic should be discouraged within the new settlement (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000).

The SDF marked the entire Sethokga hostel complex as 'hostel upgrading' married to public open space within the vicinity of the complex, churches, sports fields and mixed use areas were proposed in the SDF (SJN Development Planning Consultants, 2000) .

Map 4: Oakmoor, Area 19 Spatial Development Framework (SDF), 2000

This SDF for the area is quite old and has not been updated since this 2000 plan





The development proposals in the 2000 Oakmoor area19, SDF proposed that Sethokga hostel be Redeveloped into family units. The SDF also proposed mixed use nodal developments within and around the Oakmoor area and proposed additional facilities such as crèches, schools and recreational facilities in certain areas.

Source: SJN Development Planning Consultants: Planning Area 19 Oakmoor Development Plan, Development Proposals Final Report 2000

There are 22 hostels across Ekurhuleni which are spread across six regions in the metro (Demacon, 2014). Region A has two hostels of which one is government owned, region B has three hostels of which government owns two, regions C, D and E hosts one hostel respectively, while region F has sixteen hostels (it is not clear how many are owned by government) (Demacon, 2014).

In terms of social facilities and amenities the study area is situated within a 3km radius from two schools, Rabasotho Combined School and Philena Middle School. It is also within a 2km radius from a healthcare facility - Esselen Park Satellite Clinic - and within a 1km radius from a sporting facility - Esselen Park Sports School of Excellence (Demacon, 2014). The nearest police station is roughly 6km away and a 'generous' number of shopping as well as entertainment centres are found within a 15 to 20km radius of the hostel. The nearest taxi route is less than 100m, with the nearest train stations including the Tembisa, Limindlela and Kaalfontein stations all falling within a 10km radius (Demacon, 2014).

In 2013 the Tembisa economy contributed 8.3% to the overall economy of the EMM whilst Ekurhuleni contributed 25.3% to the overall economy of the Gauteng province in 2013 (Demacon, 2014). Sethokga hostel forms part of the Kempton Park Tembisa precinct and according the Sethokga Hostels Mixed Typology Market Analysis Report it falls within the development context of the Kempton Park Tembisa precinct. It hosts a range of housing typologies supported under various housing programmes (Demacon, 2014), which include but are not limited to Informal Settlement Upgrading programmes and projects, Integrated Residential Development Programmes(s) and Gap Market Housing Units. According to this report there also exists several opportunities for the development of medium to higher density residential developments (Demacon, 2014). The EMMs 2010 Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework suggests that among the several intentions of the metro, the EMM will seek to expand the affordable housing market and that it will seek to accommodate a wider range of the metro's populace by making a range of housing options available for people across different income groupings (Demacon, 2014).

This next section exhibits the 'ambience' of Sethokga hostel as it currently stands. It delves into some detail regarding the current setting of the hostel and takes the reader through the author's experience being in the hostel and 'travelling' through its narrow corridors. It shares my experience of going into this dauntingly male dominated environment, riddled with metaphorical tones of disempowerment, despondency and neglect. All the images displayed here were taken by the author.

3.2. Visual narrative of Sethokga hostel

In terms of its infrastructure the hostel is said to still be somewhat structurally sound (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005). Aesthetically, however, it appears quite old and rundown and leaves a lot to be desired. The neglected state of refuse and rubble removal adds to the wear and tear appearance of the hostel. Each of the blocks that make-up the hostel consists of separate dormitories and entry into each dormitory is gained through a common access point - *a door* - that leads into a communal area with a basic cooking and dining area. There are no ceilings in any of the dormitories. The paint-work both inside and outside has long worn out. In general the hostel appears especially dull and unsightly.

3.2.1 Built form / architecture

Figure 4: **Collage of exterior imagery of the hostel**



The hostel is old and run-down



The adjoining hostel blocks are lined with a number of 'informal' traders



This area that leads into one of the hostel blocks is where a resident displays his goods for selling

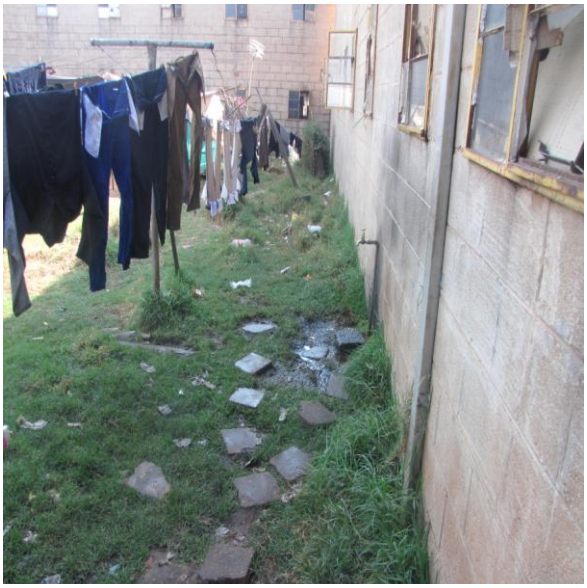




A number of the men have cars which they park in their respective blocks



Walk-up that leads into one of the dorms that is later photographed and shows the condition of the interior of the hostel





The hostel is in an obvious state of neglect and refuse removal is ignored.



I spotted a number of chickens roaming about in the hostel and a small vegetable garden near one of the entrances into a dorm



There is one entry and exit point into most of the blocks in the hostel

Figure 5: **Collage of interior imagery of the hostel**



This is a communal cooking area. It was said that because the stove is so old and has a number of issues the electricity powering the stove is never turned off and so it runs constantly through the day and night time.



The area next to the cooking area is where groceries and other goods are stored for safe-keeping.



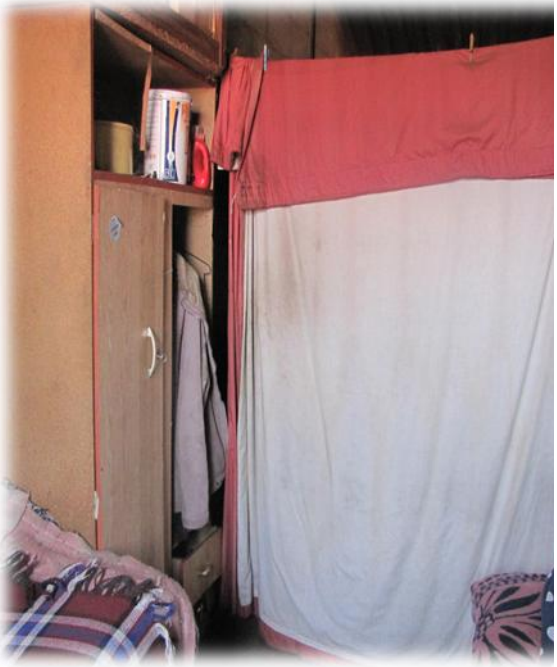
This communal dining area also leads into the rest of the dorm and the place where the hostel dwellers sleep.



None of the dorms have ceilings or any added furnishings (i.e. lighting). The hostel has never been re-painted or renovated since it was built in the early 1980s



This corridor leads into the bedrooms where the men sleep. Sheets and/or curtains lead to what felt like very restricted, distressing and unpleasent living quarters.





The compartments offer very limited room to move around and offer little privacy. There are two beds per compartment with up to three people sharing a bed. The living conditions are as what Ramphele (1993) described as constraining to varying degrees, since it is a physically restricted environment with blurred boundaries of personal / private space. The physical proximity to others offers practically no prospect for privacy or liberty to accommodate visitors.





Figure 6:

3.2.2. Municipal amenities



The entrance (door) leading to the one communal shower and toilet facility. There is one bathroom per dorm.



Communal shower



Communal toilet



Male urinal



Most of the hostel blocks in the hostel have electricity, yet it seems to be offered for free.



Most of the blocks in the hostels have communal indoor as well as outdoor taps with running water, provided without charge.



The municipality does not collect refuse in the hostel so it is up to the hostel residents to dispose of their refuse (it was not clear why the municipality did not collect refuse in the hostel)

Figure 7:

3.2.3. The adjoining area





The council offices are situated adjacent to one of the hostel blocks across the street.





'Informal' activity / trade takes place in and around the hostel.

According to the (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015) entry and access to the hostel are determined by one's ability to negotiate for a bed. Much like what was described by Ramphele (1993), the closest likeness to 'home' or 'tenure' in hostels was in the form of a bed, this persists at Sethokga. To some extent every aspect of life and survival in Sethokga revolves around a bed.

One gains entry into Sethokga through a block chairperson (Sololo, interview 2015). Some of the functions and responsibilities of these block chairperson's is to know what is happening in that particular hostel block. The illustration given by the economic representative for the ward Mr Sololo was that:

> "Whatever which has been happening in a particular block, the chairperson should be aware of it and should call a meeting. Let's say if you are sitting in a block here and you have got a jukebox and you find that you are selling liquor and now they tell you that by 10 o'clock you close down and the music should be off. Then you do not comply with that, the block chairperson will report you to the hostel committee and they will sit and come up with a fine for you if you do not listen even after they fine you they will chase you out of the hostel."

According to Sololo, interview (2015) the block chairpersons maintain peace and order and need to ensure that any conflict is mediated. They are elected by the residents of a given block and are entrusted with their grievances. Ideally they should be first point of contact before anything is to be escalated to the ward councillor i.e. if a pipe bursts and they are without water. This would need to be reported to the EMM by either the block chairperson and if the problem remains unresolved it is then escalated to the ward councillor (Sololo, interview 2015).

3.3. Conclusion

Chapter three has explored a number of elements which model the status quo of the study field. Ironically the conditions in the hostel are not much different to many of the living conditions in the inner city of Johannesburg. Sethokga hostel also resembles many other hostels across the country. The hostel is overcrowded, there is little room to manoeuvre, and there is an obvious lack of privacy. The hostel is a possible health hazard to those who live in it.

This chapter shared some of my own experience of the hostel. My experience consisted out of being in the hostel, taking photographs in and around the hostel and engaging with the living environment. Inside the hostel I was engulfed by its narrow, poorly lit and what felt like stifling corridors. Corridors, divided by curtains and sheets, led into what were very confined sleeping compartments. Beds offer a place of rest, for those who have voluntarily or involuntarily sought refuge in the hostel. Many after all consider the hostels as a 'better' alternative to homelessness. The experience for me was unlike any I have ever felt since the circumstance of my life has provided a certain comfort that was surely challenged in the modest time that I spent at Sethokga. Chapter four examines what has been the states approach to hostel conversion.

Chapter four: The states' approach to hostel conversion

4. Introduction

The discussion in this chapter will reflect and review South African state policy post-1994 that concerns hostels. Chapter four will also critically discuss and describe the fundamentals of what have been considered two of the leading approaches to hostel redevelopment / conversion namely the Hostel Redevelopment Programmes (HRP) and the Community Residential Units (CRU) Programme.

4.1. Defining the hostel conversion approach

There have been a number of state interventions post-1994 that have seemingly been a 'sign' of governments 'desire' to improve the living conditions of not just hostel residents but of a vast majority of South African's who were subjected to poor living conditions (Thurman, 1997). However, for the purpose of this study there will be particular focus on interventions around hostels. In their work Pienaar and Cloete (2005) concur with a few other authors that during post democracy the South African government introduced along with other housing programmes a hostel upgrading / conversion programme aimed primarily at converting hostels into integrated family-oriented developments (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005).

South Africa's housing policy was launched in 1994 and the housing subsidy scheme promised to deliver one million houses in five years (UrbanLankMark, 2011). This would be delivered through a range of subsidy mechanisms (UrbanLankMark, 2011). According to Dyiki , interview(2015) in 1995 or about 1996 a National Hostel Redevelopment Policy was approved and was among one of the primary national housing programmes (Dyiki, interview 2015). To facilitate nation-building and effective state formation it was believed that social programmes such as state funded housing programmes would play a pivotal role in this regard (Netshitenzhe, 2011). Moreover, the nation-building agenda saw the government set the country bold and far-reaching goals and these somewhat became associated with certain policies, ideologies and norms (Netshitenzhe, 2011). However, redundant budgetary rituals, inadequate feasibility studies, weak project evaluation, bureaucratic inefficiency, managing community expectations and political interference have been some of the issues that have held back progress (von Holdt, 2010 and Pienaar, 2010). As a result housing provided by government has often been poorly

located and in some respect it has continued to perpetuate a reality of spatial segregation (Charlton *et al*, 2014).

This next section will describe how the hostel conversion approach has been articulated through state policy, through subsequent grants and schemes.

4.2. State policy, the evolution of the hostel redevelopment / conversion approach

Through the provision of grants and schemes government has made efforts to provide funding for the redevelopment / conversion of hostels. However there has been somewhat of a bias on public sector hostels, as the grants are provided mainly for the redevelopment / conversion of hostels owned by municipalities or provincial government (Department of Human Settlements, 2015). In their work Pienaar and Cloete (2005) provide a synopsis of some of governments' earliest approaches to addressing 'the hostel issue' (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005). This is summarised as follows:

- *The Project-linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for first time home-ownership,*
- *The Peoples Housing Process,*
- *The Institutional Subsidy for Social Housing,*
- *The Public Sector Hostels Redevelopment Programme* (this will be discussed in section 4.2.)
- *The National Housing Norms and Standards for Government Subsidised Housing.*

Arguably the Hostel Redevelopment Programme and the Community Residential Units Programme have been the 'champions' of state efforts to grapple with the vast challenges around hostels, hostel life and the social ills that have become endemic to hostels (Dyiki, 2006). The essence of the approaches listed below was that hostels would be redeveloped / converted to create sustainable, human living conditions. To re-integrated these hostel communities into the surrounding township communities (Pienaar and Cloete 2005).

4.2.1. The Project-linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for first time home-ownership

The Project-linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for first time home-ownership was premised on the notion that Developers, this could also include the municipality, would be able to submit project proposals for the development of housing on stands that were serviced for people who qualified in terms of eligibility criteria e.g. a combined household income of

the beneficiary versus the available subsidy amount provided by the state. Households would then be required to contribute to the development (that is the construction of their house) from their own savings or through what was referred to as 'sweet equity' (providing their own material and labour). Locational and geographic factors would also affect the amount of the subsidy by 2005. Pienaar and Cloete (2005) noted that this subsidy had delivered an approximate 1.3 million homes which were primarily low-cost, free-standing.

In the case of hostels redevelopment one option was that the subsidy could be used to build new free-standing dwellings for individual full title ownership on unused portions of land within hostel complexes. This option would require sub-division of the land as well as the installation of additional service. Under the provisions of the Project-linked Capital Subsidy Scheme another option would be to convert existing dormitories into family apartments that could be sold off to beneficiaries under sectional title. This sectional title is a form of ownership where an individual holds title to a dwelling unit, it can be a free-standing unit, or part of a multi-unit / storey building. The individual owns title together with all the other owners of sectional dwellings on that property an undivided share of the land on which the dwellings are built (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005). However, the challenge was that where existing dormitories were converted and sold under title, the projects would be exposed to a host of problems that sectional title properties generally encountered in low-income areas in the private sector i.e. poor management and maintenance and difficulties in collecting levies and service debts (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005).

4.2.2. The People's Housing Process

The People's Housing Process was reportedly introduced to enable communities particularly those in disadvantaged areas, to participate in the provision of their own housing without the participation, interference or involvement of private developers. However, technical and administrative support and consultation would be offered by Housing Support Organisations which were approved to serve this function (Pienaar and Cloete, 2005). What were termed as facilitation grants would be made available by the government to 'kick-start' the housing projects. The beneficiaries could apply for a grant to pay for the services rendered by the Housing Support Organisation(s) and the housing subsidy would be the same as for what was contained in the Project-linked Capital Subsidy Scheme. According to Pienaar and Cloete (2005) hostel residents could as a community / collective make use of this avenue as a means of obtaining ownership of an improved residence with the assistance of their local authority, a non-governmental

organisation (NGO) or perhaps a cluster of professions who could provide support and administrative assistance as their Housing Support Organisation (Pienaar and Cloete 2005).

4.2.3. The Institutional Subsidy for Social Housing

The Institutional Subsidy for Social Housing was introduced in 1995 and was essentially a variant of the project-linked subsidy provided to non-profit institutions independent of government and registered as legally approved entities. Households earning less than R3500 per month would be provided through this subsidy with subsidised rental housing by these entities. In 1995, when the subsidy was introduced, it carried a once-off capital grant of R16 000 per dwelling but by 2002 the amount had increased to R27 000 as part of the government's aspiration to promote medium density housing. Pienaar and Cloete (2005) note that because the hostel redevelopment programme had been in limbo for several years at the time of their study, the Institutional Subsidy approach had been considered as a viable alternative to accelerate hostel conversion projects. The tenure options under this subsidy it was proposed would include:

- Rental
- Co-operative ownership
- An instalment sale option in the form of a 'rent to buy' practice with a minimum rental period of four years to qualify for the conversion to ownership (Pienaar and Cloete 2005).

4.2.4. The National Housing Norms and Standards for Government Subsidised Housing

Under *the National Housing Norms and Standards for Government Subsidised Housing*, the National Housing Code (for subsidised housing) delineates subsidised housing as:

- Permanent residential structures that have security of tenure, both internal and external privacy
- Housing that has portable water, serviced with adequate energy and sanitary facilities

The National Housing Norms and Standards for Government Subsidised Housing were set to give effect to the objectives of the Housing Act, 1997 which came into effect on 1 April

1998. To ensure quality and durable housing products that complied with particular minimum standards (National Housing Report, 2009). For instance dwellings had to have a minimum gross floor area of 30m^2 but this has since been amended (Pienaar and Cloete 2005).

4.2.5. International interest and intervention in the hostel redevelopment / conversion approach in the country

Some international interest has been generated to consider intervention in hostels and efforts to redeveloping/converting hostels. The point of this section is to illustrate that hostels occupied and in some respect have continued to occupy a unique position in the country's physical and mental landscape. They are one of many representations of the physical manifestation of three centuries of systematic racial discrimination and economic exploitation (Thurman, 1997). The consolidation of the migrant labour system through hostels, the poor living conditions of hostels, the dishonour of hostel life and the control they exert on the African populace. Saw hostels gaining the attention of a number of international agencies and authorities who put resources towards and took an interest in reconfiguring the disposition of hostels (Dyiki, interview 2015).

In the period between August 2002 and April 2003 the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) extended its support to community based approaches to housing in South Africa and in turn created a platform where it would have input(s) into South Africa's national housing policy (Urban Sector Network, 2003).

Hostel redevelopment was supported under a grant provision provided by the USAID this had two main objectives. The first was that policy and information dissemination should serve as key objectives and secondly that USAID would have a voice in the facilitation of hostel redevelopments. Initially the grant was meant to run from 23 August 2000 to 30 August 2002 but an extension was requested and the grant extended for the period 1 September 2002 to 30 April 2003 (Urban Sector Network, 2003). Additionally the on-goings of the programme instituted under the grant, were to include the following activities:

- Identifying and conducting research into tenure options and feasible management models for hostels;
- Identifying possible needs and challenges and to then conduct nation-wide research in the hostel sector;
- Facilitating workshops and consolidating policy submissions and to submit research papers to the Department of Housing;

- To publish research papers;
- To conduct mid-term and final evaluation of the programme;
- Conducting information outreaches where the USN (Urban Sector Network) would play an essential role in informing government the private sector as well as communities about the opportunities which could be created through the redevelopment of hostels (Urban Sector Network,2003).

The Urban Sector Network (USN) then proceeded to make specific recommendations on the hostel redevelopment approach. The USN called for the broadening on the scope of the Public Sector Hostels Redevelopment Programme to include all hostels (private and grey sector) and not just public sector hostel. Recommendations were made that the norms and standards for the redeveloped hostels should be developed, along with national guidelines for the management of redeveloped hostels by local authorities. They advocated for stronger support for co-operative housing. The redevelopment of hostels to be approached in an integrated and holistic manner and hostels should not be redeveloped in an isolated manner. The subsidy amount for hostels redevelopment and social facilitation needed to be increased. Lastly that hostels redevelopment should support livelihood strategies and capacity building and training of hostel residents during the redevelopment process was essential (Urban Sector Network, 2003).

The USN proposed a departure from the public sector hostel redevelopment bias of the Hostel Redevelopment plan (Urban Sector Network, 2003).

4.3. The Hostel Redevelopment Programme (HRP)

In principal, the Hostel Redevelopment Programme supported an unambiguous bias in favour of public sector hostels (Dyiki, 2006). Public sector hostels are those hostels owned by either provincial or local authorities that offered accommodation to workers from a range of industries (Thurman, 1997). Grey sector hostels (in which the structures were/are owned by private companies but the land by a provincial or local authority and private sector hostels) did not form part of the Hostel Redevelopment Programme (Dyiki, 2006). The biggest limitation and challenge of the HRP was in its narrow focus on solely the conversion of hostels beds (Thurman, 1997). The aim of the HRP was to provide a subsidy allocation that was based per bed but it was criticised as being impractical and unfeasible and not adequately addressing the issue of housing provision (Dyiki, 2006). Dyiki, interview (2015) believes that the challenge of the HRP was that it was not talking to individuals but rather it was a subsidy given to the state to improve the hostel and the standard of living in the hostel. Since most of the public sector hostels were

managed by the municipalities, the municipalities received the subsidy and the residents of the hostels therefore had very little say in how the subsidy could in effect be used. The other challenge was that grey sector and public sector hostels were not part of the subsidy (Dyiki, interview 2015).

The Hostel Redevelopment Programme was perhaps the earliest strategy conceived by the South African government as a national policy aiming to:

- Promote habitable and humane conditions in hostel conversions,
- Ensure the involvement of hostel residents, the surrounding/neighbouring community and relevant (public/private) authorities and any other entity affected by the project are involved in the decision-making processes,
- Facilitate and promote social integration within hostel communities and the hostels and adjacent communities,
- Put measures in place to accommodate any persons displaced by the hostel conversion project,
- Empower, promote economic development and seeks to be development-oriented

According to Pienaar and Cloete (2005) the Public Sector Hostels Redevelopment Programme was largely based on the premise that this programme would make some provisions for grant funding from the central government towards the conversion or upgrading of hostels particularly public sector or grey-sector hostels. This will be done with the broad aim of the programme to facilitate and create living conditions for residents that are humane and hygienic by providing prospects for housing options that are affordable and sustainable. With tenure options for:

- Rental
- Possible ownership for those at the lower income scale

Upon its conception, a capital subsidy of R16 000 was initially proposed per family or R4 000 per individual. Additionally to be eligible for this programme hostel redevelopment programmes would need to be:

- Planned and implemented in a participative and comprehensive manner with the requirement that interest groups would need to be established.
- Based on socio-economic studies undertaken to determine and consider the needs and affordability aspect of those who would be affected (i.e. stand to benefit from the project)

- Unfailing in ensuring that there is no displacement of residents unless alternative accommodation is provided
- Sustainable with regards to the on-going payments of maintenance and any other related costs
- Purposeful to augment employment opportunities for the hostel residents as well as the locals in the construction and on-going maintenance of the project.

The broad aim of the Hostel Redevelopment Programme (Mdunyelwa, 2015) was to convert these historically male-occupied spaces, which were also subsequently meant for migrant labourers, to family units. But it will be done in such a way to able and capacitate the accommodation of the families of these men. In some way, but perhaps not explicitly stated in the Hostel Redevelopment Programme policy brief, there is an element of urbanisation that is implied. Therefore, it was an attempt to somewhat encourage the men to relocate their families from their rural home-base (Mdunyelwa, 2015).

The shortcomings of the HRP in how it had a restricted focus on hostel beds and somewhat of an oversight on the complexity of the configuration of hostels saw it being replaced by the Community Residential Units Programme (CRU) (Pienaar, 2010). Dyiki, interview (2015) in my interview with him argued that the CRU Programme unlike the HRP contains a lot more detail that was perhaps missed in the HRP. He further suggested that the CRU Programme could be considered somewhat of a 'cost recovery' strategy by government to recoup some of the monies spent on these projects. As the CRU programme has a strong *renta*l housing stock component to it (Dyiki, interview 2015).

4.4. The Community Residential Units Programme (CRU Programme)

The Community Residential Units (CRU) Programme has since replaced the National Hostel Redevelopment Programme. At the time of this study, there are approximately 2000 public hostels across the country with a vast majority of them still needing to be afforded some attention and measures to redevelop them (Demacon, 2014). According to the Policy Framework and Implementation Guidelines for the CRU Programme (2006), *the CRU Programme aims to facilitate the provision of secure and stable rental tenure for lower income persons.* Furthermore stating that the programme seeks to provide a framework for addressing the many and varied forms of existing public sector residential accommodation as the previous approach under the HRP only considered a "per-bed"

approach that proved unfavourable on a number of occasions (CRU Programme Policy Framework, 2006).

The CRU Programme is believed to provide a 'better' suited programme and a coherent framework to assist in dealing with a vast range of public stock which has for the most part been indecisively and incomprehensively dealt with (Demacon, 2014). The CRU Programme targets low income individuals as well as households with an average R 3500 monthly income and who have not been able to find suitable accommodation. According to the CRU Programme in the years leading up to 2006, there was an approximate 45.12% of households nationally which fall within the R0-R800 income groups currently renting and an approximate 40.27%, falling within the R801 – R3200 income groups (CRU Programme Policy Framework, 2006).

The CRU Programme intends to cover the following areas:

a) Public hostels that are owned by Provincial Housing Departments and municipalities.
b) "Grey" hostels which are hostel that have both a public and private ownership component due to historical reasons.
c) Public housing stock that forms part of the "Enhanced Extended Discount Benefit Scheme" but which cannot be transferred to individual ownership and has to be managed as rental accommodation by the public owner.
d) Post-1994 newly developed public residential accommodation owned by provincial housing departments and municipalities.
e) Existing dysfunctional, abandoned, and/or distressed buildings in inner city or township areas that have been taken over by a municipality and funded by housing funds (Department of Human Settlements, 2015).

The CRU programme policy document is quite a laborious document. In general the CRU programme seeks to promote and advance the provision of rental options for lower income groups; facilitate communication and participation of residents throughout the process; provide a variety of rental stock; and provide secure and stable rental stock. This will be done by what the CRU Programme articulates as providing a realistic funding programme (Department of Human Settlements, 2015).

According to the CRU programme, rental stock provided by the programme is to be owned by either a provincial housing department or a municipality. However, this has been a seriously contested position on the part of the individuals and households affected by the programme who want home ownership (Dyiki, interview 2015).

4.5. Conclusion

There have been a number of projects over the past several years which have in part articulated the states aspiration to reconfigure the '*way of life'* in hostels. The Hostel Redevelopment Programme and the Community Residential Units Programme are considered to have been the leading approaches to reconfiguring hostels within the country's broader landscape. Whether hostels have or do not have a place in democratic South Africa is part of what this study is looking to explore.

Chapter five introduces the Sethokga hostel conversion project and in principal seeks to unpack the conceptualisation of the project, while reflecting on the findings of the interviews.

Chapter five: The Sethokga hostel conversion project

5. Introduction

Chapter five will examine the Sethokga hostel conversion project and seek to unpack how the project has been conceptualised. Discussing the main components of the project, its main stakeholders, the project phases, exploring what are its defining characteristics, the broad vision and aim of the project, how the project has understood the needs and challenges of the residents and in turn set to address them, and then also in what way(s) the residents of the hostel have been involved in the project. Furthermore, this chapter will examine what the project considers important in terms of gender issues, what have been some limitations of the project, while it also considers what the anticipated impact and benefit of the project is.

Lastly and in view of the interviews that were conducted, chapter five discusses how the residents of the hostel and the community of Tembisa and greater Ekurhuleni will know that the project has been completed and has been successful. By and large this chapter offers testament of the findings from the field work and reviews the rationale of the Sethokga conversion project. To conclude this chapter, a collage of diagrams and images will be presented, to provide the reader with greater insight(s) into the Sethokga hostel conversion project.

5.1. Outline of the main components of the project

5.1.1 Main stakeholders and their role(s) in the project

There have been a number of stakeholders involved in the Sethokga hostel conversion project, the main stakeholders include:

- The Gauteng Provincial Department of Human Settlement (GPDHS)
- LTE Consulting
- The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality
- The ward councillor and various community committees and leaders
- The Sethokga Hostel residents
- The community of Tembisa

The roles of the stakeholders are summarised as follows. National government is the key funder of the Sethokga hostel conversion project; the funds are transferred to the GPDHS who have to then ensure that the costs of the project are managed. LTE Consulting is a consulting company, appointed by the GPDHS for the oversight and construction of the Sethokga hostel conversion project. They work in collaboration with the EMM (the local authority) and its various departments such as the services department, the energy department, quality assurance etc. However, the GPDHS remains the 'main decision-maker' and 'custodian' of the project, with the lead oversight on the budget and programme/project management. The project manager Mr Sisa Majikijela is the official from the GPDHS that is directly responsible for supervision and coordination of the project. The ward councillor and the various community committees / leaders facilitate avenues of communication and engagement between the officials (from province, the EMM and LTE) with the residents of Sethokga and community. 'As the eyes and ears on the ground' (Majikijela, interview 2015) ideally the ward councillor and various community committees / leaders have an important role to play in ensuring that the Sethokga residents and community will be the *rightful* recipients of the project. The Sethokga hostel residents and broader community have a vested interest in the project because it stands to affect and/or benefit them (Sololo, interview2015)

Once the project is completed with the family units fully constructed (i.e. with furnishings such as trees, plants, parking bays and so forth) and the services installed. The project will be handed over to the EMM for on-going administration, maintenance and the collection of rentals (Shibambo, interview 2015). The Gauteng Provincial Department of Human Settlement in collaboration with the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and LTE Consulting play a key role as facilitates of the conversion of Sethokga hostel into family units (Majikijela, interview 2015).

5.2.2. Project phases

The data regarding the project phases was easily accessible and generously provided by the consulting resident engineer and the architect, providing me with a market analysis study and a few other key documents. The development concept of the hostel conversion project divides the project into three phases and further subdivides each of the phases into two phases, phases A and B (Demacon, 2014).

Initial studies (i.e. pre-feasibility studies) were done in 2008 but the demolition of the first four blocks of the hostel demolished for the current phase 1A only took place in August of 2011 and it was anticipated that phase 1A would be completed and handed over to the

municipality by the end of 2014 but this did not happen (Majikijela, interview 2015). At the time of conducting fieldwork between the months of August and September 2015, it was said that phase 1A was near completion, with just the landscaping, parking and water provision left to completed (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015).

Phase 1A of the project was meant to bring to completion a total of 240 units, accommodating 1 194 people, to provide 69 parking bays (one per four units), a total of 54 one bedroom units, 117 two bedroom units and 69 three bedroom units at an average unit size of 32.4m^2, 47.7m^2 and 58.8m^2 for the one, two and three bedrooms respectively (Demacon, 2014). However, only a total of 222 units have been built and this shortfall was largely attributed to the underlying dolomite geological conditions of the site (Bako and Shibambo, interview 2015).

5.2. The conceptualisation of the Sethokga hostel conversion project

The Sethokga hostel conversion project has been administered under the CRU programme and forms part of a national agenda to convert hostels into family units (Dyiki, interview 2015). The target group under the CRU programme is individuals and households earning between R800 and R3 500 per month who are able to enter what the CRU programme has termed the 'formal private rental and social housing market' (Demacon, 2014).

The new residential units (the family units) are situated on ervan 128 and 5729 of the Sethokga complex within the administrative jurisdiction of the Kempton Park Customer Care Area (CCA), which is the administrative body conducting oversight of development and town planning affairs for the Tembisa and Kempton Park areas (Demacon, 2014). The family units are three storey walk-ups and appear somewhat spacious and far more appealing than the hostel structures. The CRU proposes that bachelors/one bedroom units of 20m^2 to 35m^2 should be allocated at a monthly rental of R270 – R450, a two bedroom unit of 35m^2-45m^2 should be rented at a monthly rental of R450 to R850 and that a three bedroom unit of 45m^2-80m^2 should be rented at a monthly rental of R850 – R1650. Rentals have been and remain a contestation in a number of hostel conversion projects across the country and Sethokga is no different. According to the economic representative for the ward Sololo, interview (2015), the residents of Sethokga hostel are contesting that they want to pay R150 for a one bedroom unit, R200 for a two bedroom unit and R300 for a three bedroom unit.

According to the principles of the CRU programme the ownership of the rental housing stock is to be reserved by either the Gauteng Provincial Department of Human

Settlement (GPDHS) or the EMM. The ownership of the family units can be transferred by the GPDHS to the EMM in line with the Housing Act, no right(s) of ownership can be transferred to tenants (Pienaar, 2010).

The process of the Sethokga hostel conversion has on an administrative and government support level been facilitated through a grant allocation from national government to province (GPDHS). This grant has made provisions for pre-feasibility studies, social/community facilitation, the relocation/reallocation of some residents (within the hostel or to alternative sites to make way for demolition and construction of phase 1A) and the consideration and compensation of construction costs and professional fees (Majikijela, interview 2015). The allocation of the units, determining rental structures, applying indigent relief measures where necessary, rental collection and maintenance as well as the management of the family units are factors determined by the GPDHS and the EMM cooperatively (Sololo, interview 2015). The hostel residents are then at some level consulted and 'encouraged' to participate in this regard (Dyiki, interview 2015). Seemingly throughout project implementation the stakeholders have been kept informed of the status and progress of the project. With respect to notifying the hostel residents and general public, notices are placed in and around the hostel to inform them of meetings and the ward councillor's office take the lead on this (Mthethwa, interview 2015).

There have been a number of community/public meetings that have taken place as the project has progressed. From the fieldwork I was not able to draw on precisely how many meetings had taken place since or precisely when the meetings took place or what was discussed in each of those meetings. Generally the ward councillor said at least once a month a consultative and progress report meeting would take place between the various stakeholders where officials would engage the hostel residents and general public.

According to Majikijela, interview (2015) the ward councillor and the economic rep., the main area of involvement on the part of the hostel residents has been in providing labour. A small percentage of the residents have been involved in the construction-work and some of the clerical work on the project. Their involvement in discussions on the project is said to often be arbitrarily halted by political interference (Sololo, interview 2015). For instance Bako, interview (2015) the architect recalled that on the design of the family units, Liefa Architects, did not talk to the end user i.e. the residents, to ask them what they wanted. Instead a design which was informed by other examples of similar projects was presented to the residents of Sethokga and the general public (Bako, interview 2015). "The design of the hostel was not 'exclusive' to Sethokga and its context" (Bako, interview 2015).

In relation to the size of the hostel and its residents, only a very small percentage of the hostel residents have been employed in the project the December 2013/ January 2014 labour records reported the following:

Table 1

Total workforce	**66**
Females	7
Males	59
Youth	28
Adults	38
Semi-skilled	20
Skilled	22
Disabled	0
General workers	24

Source: LTE Consulting December 2013/ January 2014 Sethokga site, Phase 1A supervisor report

I was fortunate to have attended one of the community meetings that were held at an old community hall within the vicinity of the hostel. This meeting took place on a Saturday, the 15th of August 2015 and it was quite the experience. There was a relatively strong police presence at the meeting. The police kept watch and managed the activities inside and outside the community hall. As there were concerns that the proceedings might get out of hand and a possible tussle between those in attendance might arise. The meeting was chaired by the ward councillor and aside from the residents of Sethokga; in attendance was one official from the GPDHS, an official from the EMM, community leaders and ANC committee members.

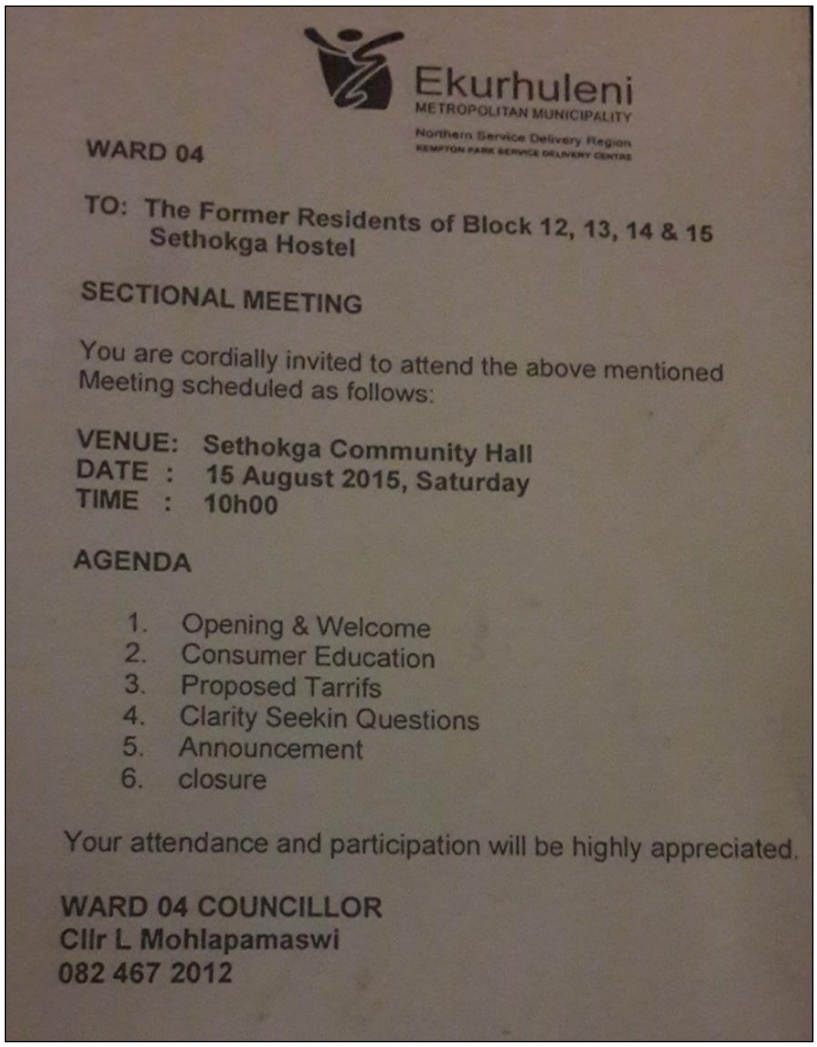
There was an obvious and overwhelming male presence in the meeting, tempers ran high and there was an observable resistance from the residents of Sethokga to the presence of the three females in the meeting. This included me and two female committee members. Several times the meeting was disrupted by shouts and echoes of discontentment questioning what women were doing at a meeting for men, '"they have no place here, they do not even live here" were the words of some of the men. Our presence seemed to really infuriate some of the men. This was similar to what Ramphele (1993), Segal (1991), Thurman (1997) and Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) observed in their work and suggested that even now and within the context of Sethokga that the men in the hostel are still quite at odds with having women as a part of their 'gathering of

men' and possibly even living among them. The demeanour of some of the men in this meeting suggested that they found the presence and role of women in these meetings unneeded. It was evident that these men had become far too accustomed to living 'alone' as men. Ramphele (1993) noted that the idea of an unambiguous, constant and unrestricted presence of women and children in the hostel seemed to be a serious point of contention for some of men. Some men expressed unwillingness while others a struggle to comprehend or endorse this change that seemed overly unfamiliar and challenging to come to grips with (Ramphele, 1993). From my observation in this meeting the same seems to hold true for Sethokga.

The purpose of the meeting was to consult the hostel residents who were identified to be the first recipients / beneficiaries of the allocating of family units to consult them on issues of final rental proposals, allocation processes and status of the project. The invitation for this meeting was apparently only extended to those particular individuals but subsequently the meeting was taken over by those who had objections to the process of allocation, rentals and why the meeting sought to exclude them and divide the residents. Generally the meeting was unruly and the ward councillor as well as the community leaders and committee members struggled to manage the crowd and the rampant tempers in the room.

The agenda for the meeting is provided below to provide the reader with some context and outline of the intension of the meeting. Unfortunately tempers ran especially high in this meeting and in my opinion none of the items on the agenda were successfully addressed.

Figure 8: August 15, community meeting agenda



Ekurhuleni
METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY
Northern Service Delivery Region
KEMPTON PARK SERVICE DELIVERY CENTRE

WARD 04

TO: The Former Residents of Block 12, 13, 14 & 15
Sethokga Hostel

SECTIONAL MEETING

You are cordially invited to attend the above mentioned Meeting scheduled as follows:

VENUE: Sethokga Community Hall
DATE : 15 August 2015, Saturday
TIME : 10h00

AGENDA

1. Opening & Welcome
2. Consumer Education
3. Proposed Tarrifs
4. Clarity Seekin Questions
5. Announcement
6. closure

Your attendance and participation will be highly appreciated.

WARD 04 COUNCILLOR
Cllr L Mohlapamaswi
082 467 2012

Source: Sethokga Community meeting, 2015

5.2.1. Broad vision and aim of the project

The vision and aim of the project was described by the key informants who to some extent unanimously used the following key words: integration, sustainability, community participation, to improve people's lives, restoring honour, addressing the ills of hostel life and bringing families into a safe and secure environment. The housing officer for me captured well the overall sentiments of the key informants when he said: "we are surrounded and have so many companies in Tembisa so clearly you will find let's say a white guy working in the area but then they travel to Kempton Park or some other area outside Tembisa and that is where they live. So it would be nice to see him living in Sethokga. The project is about integration and not just integrating the residents of

Sethokga to the rest of the township but other ways of integration like racial integration. That is what I want to see" (Mthethwa, interview 2015).

Additionally the broad vision and aim of the hostel conversion project, is to instil a culture of payment into not just the hostel but the broader community. "People cannot just keep wanting everything for free, government cannot afford it". The interviewees that expressed this position were: Majikijela, Sololo, Mthethwa, Dyiki, Bako and Shibambo. Seemingly under the CRU programme the project would seek to influence and instil this culture of payment through the rental housing stock focus of the programme. That largely seeks to promote government owned and managed rental housing stock, a departure from the 'free' housing approach (Bako, interview 2015).

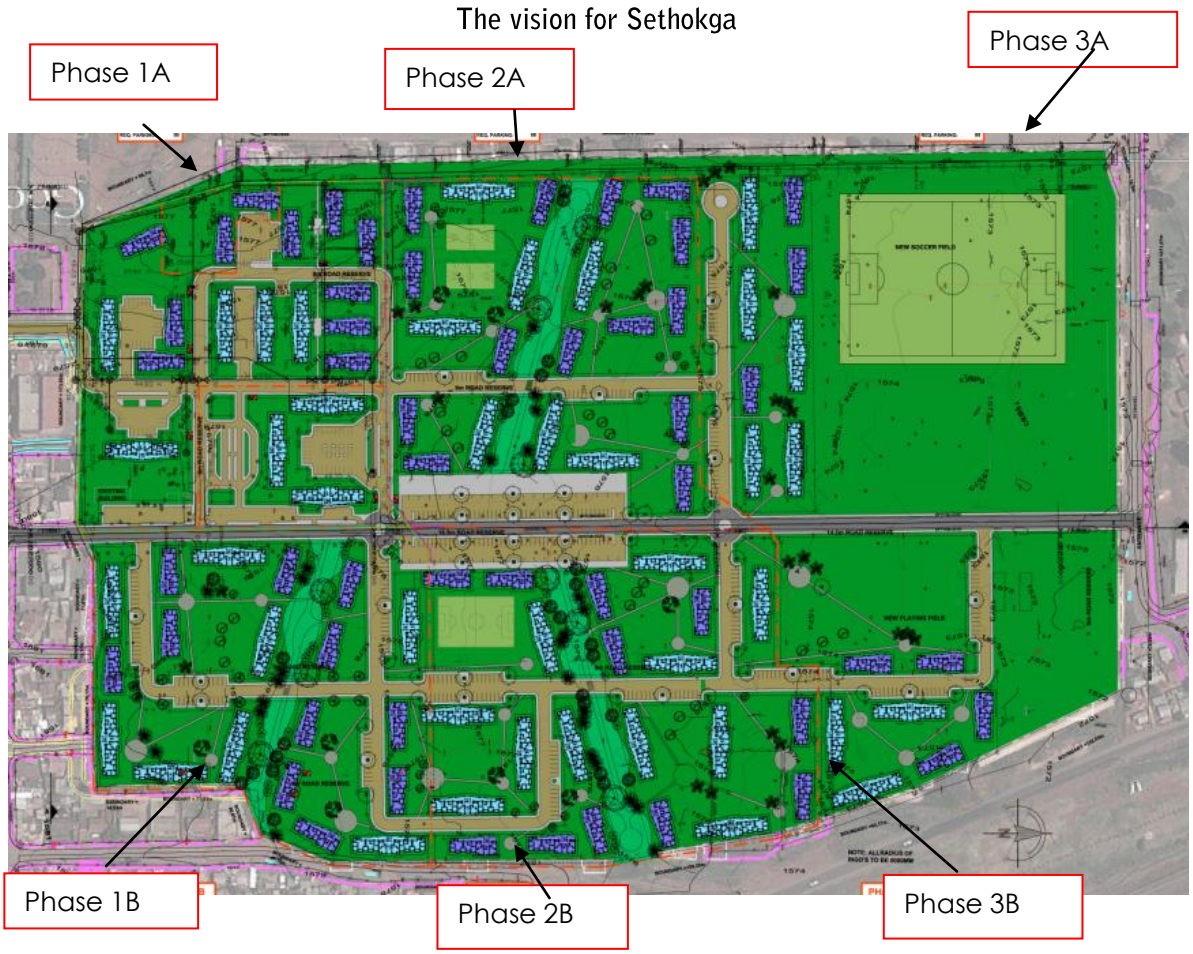


Figure 9: Preliminary layout of the Sethokga development

Source: Liefa Architects, 2015

What was surprising to me was that the family units are not intended to be occupied by current residents only. The idea is that some of the current residents would live elsewhere and when this question was posed to the official from the GPDHS. Majikijela's, interview (2015) response was that the hostel residents who did not qualify in terms of the required criteria for the renting of the units would be allocated RDPs in the neighbouring area of Esselen Park but he could not provide clarity as to how and when this would happen.

The vision of Sethokga that can be seen from the plan provided below is a reconfigured locality. Rehabilitated single-sex compounds into self contained family units furnished with child care facilities, park(s), garden(s), a community centre, recreation facilities and parking areas.

5.2.2. How the project has understood the needs and challenges of the residents and in turn set out to address those needs and challenges

Although the CRU Programme, only sets particular administrative, operational and project facilitation guidelines. Arguably these guidelines do in some respect address a number of the ills associated with hostels, such as the issue of overcrowding, lack of privacy and poor living conditions (Pienaar, 2010). Within Sethokga there are challenges of tribalism, high prevalence of HIV, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, criminality, overcrowding, lack of privacy, possible health hazards, a lack of ablution facilities. The hostel being unsafe for women (especially those who are staying in the hostel illegally) was identified and shared by the key informants as some of the major challenges confronting the hostel. This view was shared by the ward councillor, the housing officer from the EMM, the project manager from the GPDHS, the consulting engineer and the ward's economic representative.

According to the ward councillor, Cllr Mohlapamaswi, the issue of tribalism occurred as a result of what he recalls as a defining political shift: "after the release of Mandela and when they started preaching 'this thing of democracy' that the divisions happened according to who was Zulu or Xhosa or Pedi or Venda …" (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015). Here the ward councillor explains what he saw as some of the factors that led to what is currently the strong predominance of Pedi and Xhosa speaking men living in the hostel suggesting that:

> "They were mixed here when they started talking about negotiations that there must be elections and then the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) was rejecting that and that had nothing to do with membership it was a situation of the warlords the Zulu's terrorizing the Xhosa's because Mandela was Xhosa

and standing with the white man. The Zulu's did not like that so that is where the Zulu and Xhosa divide started and that is when you found that in Sethokga it became predominantly more Xhosa there was fighting and war the Zulu's were chasing people out of their territory at the other hostels. The Xhosa's ran to Sethokga. There was fighting everywhere even here in Sethokga and all over the Pedis, Vendas, Tsonga's they all ran away from those hostels where they were being chased out and they came here" (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015).

It was unclear as to the extent to which the project dealt with any of these challenges and how or if they were factored into the project. The project seems to have a general 'best practice' approach to hostel conversion irrespective of the circumstance of a particular hostel.

5.2.3. What have been some of the limitations of the project?

"The political volatility of the project poses an enormous threat to the successful allocation/letting of the family units" (Majikijela, interview 2015). On the part of the key informants, their continued inability to answer the perhaps not so simple question of what would happen to those who could not afford the monthly rental of the family units. This suggested that the issue of rentals has remained a grey area even as the project heads towards project completion. "We will worry about that when we get there" was the brisk response to my inquiry on this matter. Similar to what was observed by Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010) in the City Deep Redevelopment project Sethokga faces a similar challenge.

Certainly public / community participation in any context is a complex and at times a contentious exercise (Mdunyelwa, 2015). I remain hesitant whether the Sethokga hostel conversion project has been able to 'truly' engage residents and the broader community in a transparent and reciprocal manner. Seemingly affordability will be the determining factor of who will be able to rent a unit. To those who cannot afford it stands to be seen what remedy will be extended to them.

Moreover, the following factors were cited as some of the limitations of the project: the lack of transparency, political interference, an inadequate dissemination of information to residents/community, and the projects failure to respond to what the solution(s) will be for 'non-qualifying' residents who cannot afford the monthly rentals.

5.2.4. How will the residents of the hostel and the community in general know that the project is completed and has been successful?

I wanted to find out from the key informants, particularly those who have been directly involved in the conversion project, what for them would constitute a successful project and how from their point of view the residents and the greater community would know that the project is completed and has been successful/unsuccessful. Overall the leading response was that a project would be successful when the family units are occupied. Some of the interviewees added that the process of allocating the units and resolving the myriad of issues are most certainly likely to cause further delays and will require intricate resolution (i.e. people's unwillingness and other's inability to pay, tension and opposition to paying rentals, opening the letting to tenants who are not hostel residents and so forth).

In summary the thoughts shared by the housing office at the EMM and the ward's economic representative capture in essence the general position held by every one of the key informants.

"For me a complete project will be the units functioning on their own, and then people will be told during a public meeting. We also need to involve the mayor, the MECs and the media. People will be told that it is finished and this is what is going to happen" (Mthethwa, interview 2015). "After it has been completed I want to see 80 percent of the people, who have been staying in the hostel, still residing in the hostel. It must not just be open to whomever. There are people as far as Johannesburg who want to stay here because they see it being comfortable and nice, forgetting we are looking to improve the lives of the current hostel dwellers. There are even those in the township who think that people of the hostel cannot pay so this is not for them" (Sololo, interview 2015).

5.3. Visual narrative of the family units

5.3.1. Architectural designs/plans

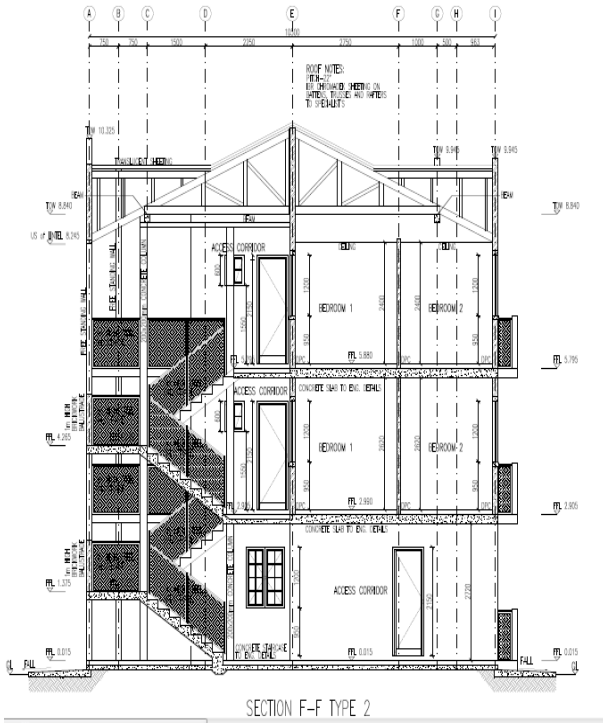
Figure 10: Phase 1 – site development plan



Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

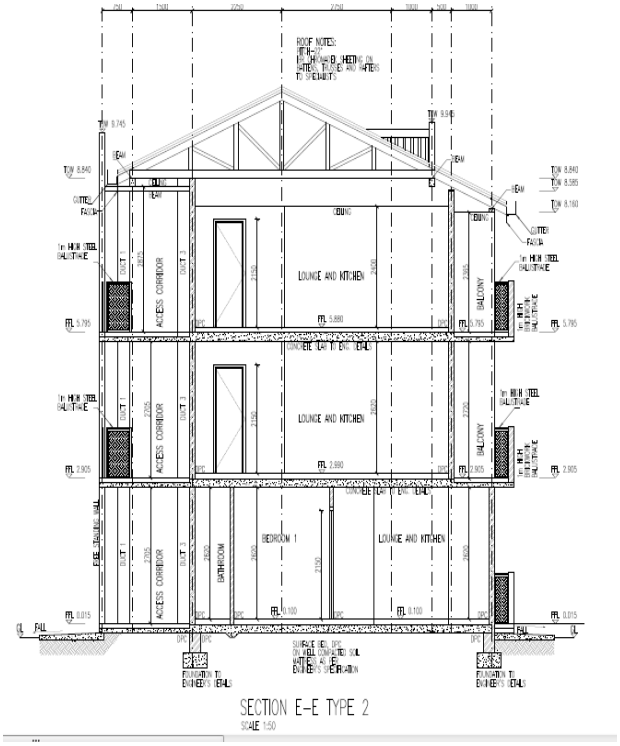
The design of the family units is what the architect referred to as a multi-storey approach. "The three storey walk-ups address the need for housing much better than an RDP would" (Bako, interview 2015). They have an urban apartment-like feel about them but the mundane (uniform) paintwork gives them a distinct government provided social housing feel.

Figure 11: Architects, Section F – F



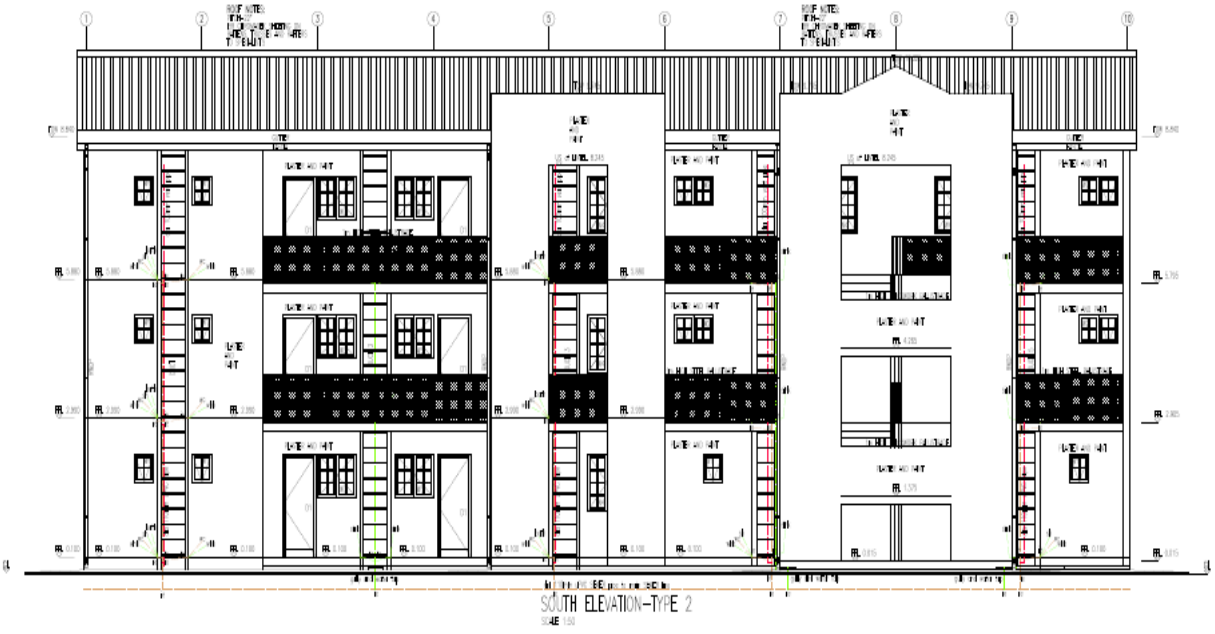
Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

Figure 12: Architects, Section E - E



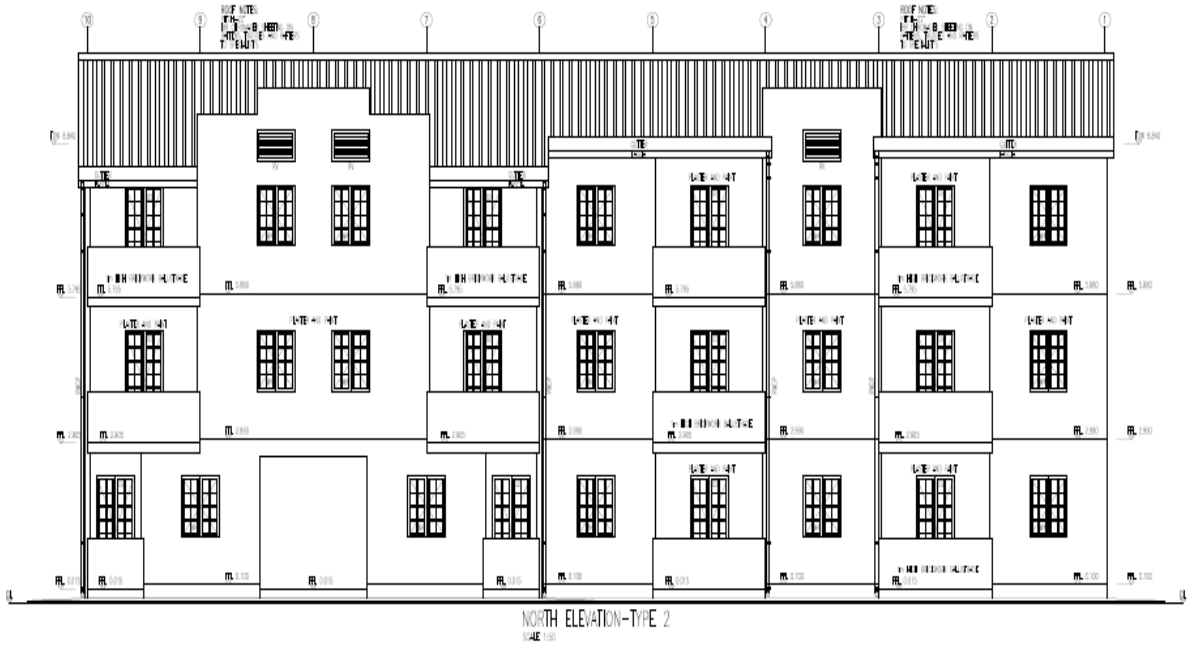
Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

Figure 13: South Elevation



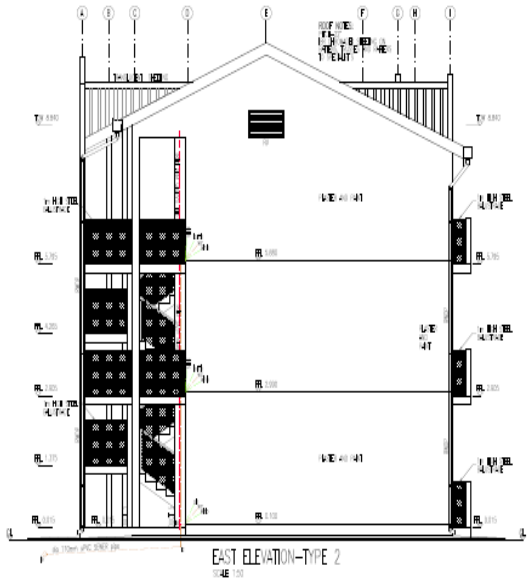
Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

Figure 14: North Elevation



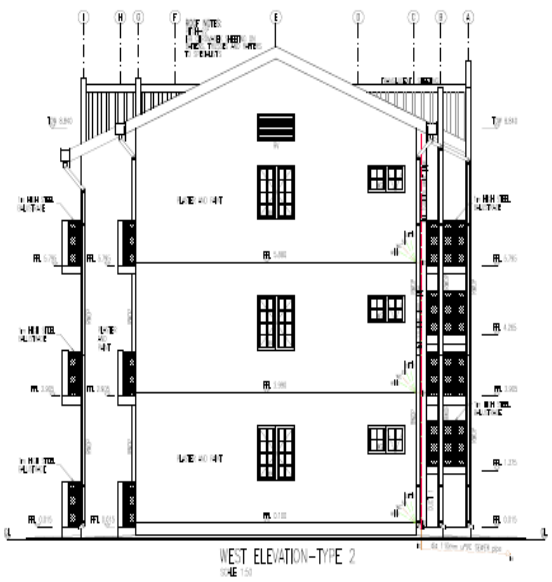
Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

Figure 15: East Elevation



Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

Figure 16: West Elevation



Source: Liefa Architects (2015)

5.3.2. The project site of family units

Figure 17: **Collage of imagery of the project site**



View of the site of the family units from one of the hostel blocks situated adjacent to the construction site across the street.



The Sethokga community hall situated at the entrance to the family units construction site and adjacent to the council offices



Site notice placed at the entrance of the family units construction site.



Construction of the family units commenced in August of 2011



The entrance into the construction site of the family units and the site office which is situtated within the vicinity of the site.





For the most part,the construction of the family units is nearing completetion.

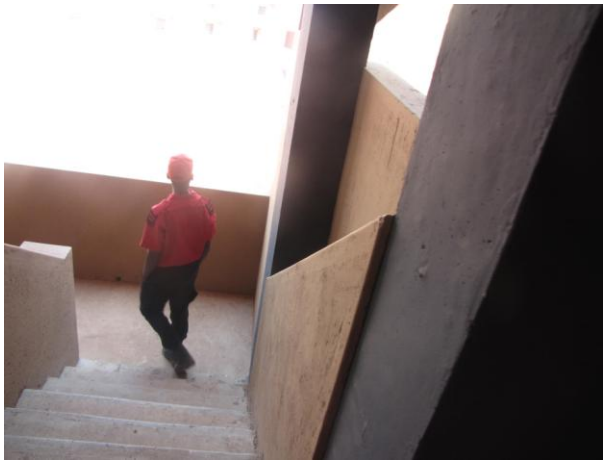


Walking through the site, personally I felt that the family units had a somewhat prominent RDP 'look' about them





Ground floor view



The construction site is 'policed' by the Red Ants (a private security company)around the clock and also a private security company.



Some of the security members seen on site, they insisted I take a picture of them to include in this study.

5.3.3. Inside the Family units

Figure 18: **Collage of imagery of inside one of the three bedroom family units**



Doorway into one of the three bedroom family units, which leads into an open plan dining and kitchen area.



Each unit has its own dining / sitting and kitchen area



Built-in sink and geyser.



The family units offer a number of distinct qualities that the hostel clearly does not have, which include privacy and a dignified living environment/space



Each unit has its bathroom with a built-in toilet, bath and shower.



Shower



Separate and additional toilet as part of the three bedroom family units.



The dining/sitting area and two adjacent bedrooms.



One of the three bedrooms in the family units.



The view from one of the family units (a ground floor three bedroom unit) is onto the ward councillor's offices and the hostel in the distance.

The site of the family units is being guarded by a private security company and members of the Red Ants (a private security company). When asked about this, the official (the project manager overseeing the Sethokga hostel conversion project) from the GPDHS said that this was necessary to ensure that no unauthorised occupations take place. This was also to guard against any possible vandalism or the looting of materials/equipment or the site office (Majikijela, interview 2015).

5.4. Summary of main themes and findings

This study had a number of themes which resonate with the case study. The localised context of Sethokga hostel offered great insights into the current state of hostels as spaces and places that still largely exist within a context of volatility, poor living conditions and complex socio-economic challenges (Thurman, 1997). The historic exploits on hostels revealed and I suppose confirmed that the hostel system was established, supported and perpetuated by methodical policy and controls to discourage the permanent settlement of Africans in urban areas or any intention of relocating their family to urban areas (Segal, 1991). Furthermore within the contemporary South African context this has posed a number of challenges and has been a longstanding reality of a number of hostel dwellers as observed in the work of Benit-Gbaffou and Mathoho (2010).

Sethokga hostel is also one of many hostels that exist within a historically-laden context. The strong prominence of Pedi and Xhosa native speaking men in some respect also speaks to the events of circular migration that are still a lived-reality of the men of Sethokga. This according to the ward councillor has meant that the men have had to maintain ties with their families in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo while most of them live in Sethokga away from their families (Mohlapamaswi, interview 2015). In terms of gender issues, the aspect of men and housing, the hostel conversion project does not adopt a particular stand on this. Seemingly the project makes no effort to appreciate the apparent rural location of the wives / partners, children and families of a vast majority of the men in Sethokga. The idea is that anyone who is able to afford the monthly rental of the family units can sign a lease agreement and rent a unit. However this presents a number of issues and leaves a lot unaccounted for and unanswered, i.e. will the families of the men in the hostels make a transition to join them in the family units. Is this even a possibility for them, what impact would this have on the already stretched social amenities in the area? Arguably, in the case of Sethokga this oversight has been a serious area of contention and has amplified the political volatility of the project.

The heavy-handedness of the hostel system cunningly imposed a sense of no escape, yet, quite interestingly the later unwillingness to change (Ramphele, 1993). The unwillingness to change or perhaps the difficulty in comprehending any such change was and is still arguably evidenced in the reluctance of some hostel dwellers to have their hostel converted into family units (Thurman, 1997).

Among the key findings of the research report is that the 'rental only' tenure option and approach to the hostel conversion project was the biggest challenge and one of the most critical points of contention (Pienaar, 2010). On the one hand the hostel residents are arguing that they cannot afford the proposed rentals, while on the other hand officials are of the opinion that this is in fact untrue and not wholly representative of the attitude(s) of all the hostel residents. Thus a supposed unwillingness to pay and a culture of entitlement was cited by the key informants as the underlying state of affairs and one that posed the biggest threat to the project and in particular how the family units would be allocated.

Although the project is for the most part about converting Sethokga hostel into family units, in principal it is also about redress, integration, improving the living conditions of Sethokga residents, reconfiguring the mental and physical landscape of hostels in contemporary South Africa and introducing children and women into the hostel. Integration was repeatedly cited by the key informants as the main imperative of the study. Political interference and the very particular sensitivities around political allegiance

(keeping in the mind the local elections are fast approaching) are factors that were cited would cause the greatest difficulty in the allocation of the family units.

5.4. Conclusion

Undoubtedly the Sethokga hostel conversion project has a number of components and features to it that are complex, in part ambiguous and would require further and more detailed study. Seemingly the CRU programme is a 'departure' from the Hostel Redevelopment Programme. In part it offers prospects to facilitate the provision of affordable rental tenure for those earning below R3500 while seeking to promote the integration of public/social housing into the broader housing market. Under the administration of the CRU programme one of the leading aims is to facilitate the creation of sustainable public housing assets (Pienaar, 2010). However the CRU programme has been criticised as a framework that is largely operating in a policy environment that is hostile, elaborate and not speaking to the needs of the people on the ground. Furthermore, many see it as solely a hostel upgrading policy, viewed often to be done impromptu in response to local pressures (Pienaar, 2010). To paraphrase Pienaar (2010); the vagueness regarding the roles and responsibilities of the respective provincial department of human settlement and municipalities has not provided much confidence in hostel conversion projects.

Chapter five has examined the Sethokga hostel conversion project and attempted to unpack how the project has been conceptualised. This chapter has identified and outlined the main components of the project, its main stakeholders and what has been their role in the Sethokga hostel conversion project. Discussed were the project phases, a number of critical elements; such as how the project has understood the needs and challenges of the hostel residents. In addition to this chapter five outlined the way(s) in which the residents have been involved in the project, if the project considered anything important in terms of gender issues and if what have these been factored into the project? By and large, chapter five drew extensively on the findings of the fieldwork and made an effort to narrate some of the insights and perspectives shared by the key informants. To conclude the chapter, a collage of diagrams and images were presented to offer the reader a visual narrative of the site of the family units.

Chapter six: Concluding chapter

Chapter six concludes the study. It presents a review and reflection of the study and a summary of the aim and objectives. It examines the limitations of the study and lastly attempts to answer the question: "What does this mean for the urban and regional planning profession and for planners?"

6.1. Review and reflections

This research report consisted of six chapters: chapter one introduced the study; chapter two provided the theoretical backdrop of the study; chapter three introduced the study area (Sethokga hostel); chapter four discussed the evolution of hostel redevelopment / conversion and what has been the states approach to hostel conversion; and chapter five examined the conceptualisation of the Sethokga hostel conversion project.

In chapter one the main point of discussion was the research question, outlining the aim and objectives of the study and the research methodology.

Research question

How has the Sethokga hostel conversion to family units project been conceptualised, in how the project has been conceptualised does it address the stigma of hostel life and it what way(s) does it do this?

Sub-questions:

- What informed the decision to convert this particular hostel into family units?
- Conceptually what does the project entail; what is the broad aim and vision of the project; what is the expected output and anticipated benefit of the project?
- How has the project understood the needs and challenges of the residents and in turn set to address those needs and challenges?
- In what way(s) have the residents of the hostel been involved in the project?
- What has been the experience of project implementation to date?

In chapter one it was also argued that this particular aspect around the conceptualisation of hostel conversion projects had somewhat been neglected and not extensively researched. Therefore, that there needed to be more inquiry and study conducted into the mechanisms, implications and character of hostel conversion projects.

The study's theoretical backdrop was discussed in chapter two. The aim of this was to contextualise the term hostel/s, as to clearly illustrate what is meant by it. In addition to drawing on particular strands of literature, concepts, ideas and arguments that resonated with the study. Chapter two argued that the historically the landscape of hostels has by and large been complex, at times perplexing and highly contentious.

Chapter three introduced Sethokga hostel. It elaborated on the locality of the hostel and its local as well as municipal context. A visual narrative of the hostel was also provided and this captured the current state of the hostel and the conditions in which its residents endure. It was established that ironically the conditions in the hostel are not much different to many of the living conditions in the inner city of Johannesburg. The hostel was badly designed, poorly built and is suffering years of neglect it is in appalling and overcrowded condition.

Chapter four described the evolution of hostel redevelopment / conversion in the country and what has been the states approach to hostel conversion post-1994. This chapter discussed in some detail the Hostel Redevelopment Programme and the Community Residential Units Programme. Arguing that these programmes have to date been the 'forerunners' of the state's approach to addressing 'the hostel issue'.

While in chapter five the conceptualisation of the Sethokga hostel conversion project was examined. Chapter five was the crux of this research report. The discussions in the chapters before it set up the groundwork for a critical exploration of the Sethokga hostel conversion project and for unpacking the research question.

Chapter six concludes this study and seeks to answer the question: "so what does this mean for the urban and regional planning profession and for planners". Since this report was conducted as part of the requirements for the partial fulfilment of an Urban and Regional Planning honours qualification. It is important to address the "so what for planners' question and the value that this report stands to offer to the

planning profession. Firstly let us reflect on what have been some of the limitations of the study.

6.2. Limitations of the study

For the most part this study had a wealth of information and sources to draw from. The insights and wisdom provided by the key informants were invaluable, their willingness and enthusiasm to participate in this study was not something I had anticipated but I remain truly grateful.

Due to certain constraints more especially time constraints and the particular scope / focus of the research report this posed some limitations to the study. In only interviewing and engaging with officials and not with the residents of Sethokga, the voices, opinions and views of the officials told only one side of a many-sided story. How the project affects and has affected the residents? Is this something they want / support and for those who do not, what are some of their reasons for contention? Is circular migration still as prominent a feature within the current context of Sethokga? What is the present-day nature of household configurations in the hostels (is the duty of the older men still to order the actions of the younger men i.e. the cleaning and up keeping of the communal area and other household duties?), what for the residents of Sethokga would constitute a successful project?

Even as this study concludes the side of the hostel residents remains largely untold and unreported. Furthermore the supposed apathy on the part of the hostel residents and the views expressed by the key informants that family units offer the most ideal and best alternative to the residents of Sethokga, could not be explored and interrogated further given the limitations of the scope of the study.

6.3. So what does this mean for the urban and regional planning profession and for planners?

Within contemporary South Africa there have certainly been a vast number of conflicting views held regarding what should be the role and future of hostels (Thurman, 1997). Although academics, policy makers, bureaucrats, developers and the general public have usually been unable to reach longstanding middle-ground on what should be done about hostels. One of the more widely held views is that hostels certainly present a real challenge but also an opportunity. For government,

developers, non-government organisations (NGOs), built environment practitioners and needless to say the residents of hostels themselves (Thurman, 1997).

Planners are frequently cast in the role of performing a balancing act (Campbell, 2006). As a result the adaptability of the planning profession as a coherent and impartial discipline has over the years become rather topical subjects (Campbell, 2006). This has inevitably continued to require new and innovative ways of 'seeing', 'comprehending' and 'doing' things in order to shape and re-shape an inherently divergent and historic-laden urban landscape (Jupp and Inch 2012). In the midst of the shifts in the traditional conception and role of the planning profession as a merely procedural and administrative activity (Harrison and Kahn, 2002), planning is still to a great extent closely tied to government structures (Cornwall, 2002). Therefore within this particular context of government driven intervention, urban planning professionals stand to be instrumental facilitators of development and offer essential expertise and tools towards addressing some of the challenges within our urban landscape (Albert and Kramsch, 1999).

This study observed a range of intertwined urban dynamics i.e. around housing, socio-economic distress, a wavering political climate and the need to be more environmentally conscientious. This necessitates focused attention and much consideration as the political, economic, social and environmental junctures in which planning has come to operate has meant that the profession has become susceptible to external pressures, scrutiny and influence (Campbell and Marshall, 2002).

6.4. Conclusion

South Africa has for a number of years, into democracy, been at a critical time of limited housing supply and a desperate need for housing (Khan and Thurman, 2001). (Pienaar,
2010)**.** Planners have an important role to play in facilitating, coordinating and effecting the reconfiguration of the urban landscape towards improving the setting of inherently socio-economically *ailing* spaces such as hostels (Jupp and Inch 2012).

Hostels have largely remained as spaces that have continued to perpetuate underdevelopment, inequality and disempowerment (Khan and Thurman, 2001). If family units are to wholly address the stigma of hostel life and the convoluted nature

of hostels, to alter the landscape of hostels and define a novel future for hostels and their residents. It is certain that this will require decisive action, collaborative efforts and the wisdom of retrospection.

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