PLANNING CONTESTED GROUND: PLACE, VOICE & GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING. A CASE STUDY ON THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY HOUSING

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ABSTRACT

This research is about planning and governance relating to people in place and the challenges for local government in reconciling differing community interests in contests over land use. Victorian state government policy imperatives require local government to encourage community participation and cohesion and to promote urban consolidation by supporting medium density and affordable housing. Paradoxically, resident backlash to the urban consolidation agenda is increasing community division. The research explores these themes through a case study of the governance processes in a collaborative effort to develop Woodstock community housing in Balaclava, a gentrifying neighbourhood in inner-urban Melbourne, Australia. The development is typical of projects which ignite community opposition and challenge local government’s role in dealing with contested land uses. The analysis of the governance process was undertaken using qualitative research methods which included in depth interviews with project proponents and objectors and the analysis of secondary data including council and local media reports and policy documents. The collaborative planning theory of Patsy Healey provided an assessment framework for the Woodstock governance process focussing on the stakeholders, planning discourses and planning practices. The research demonstrates the limitations of governance theories in addressing competing interests by providing insights into the nature and dynamics of community conflict and NIMBY reactions around planning issues. The research findings show that the regulatory governance processes adopted for the development of Woodstock were not conducive to reconciling conflicting interests. The fixed rules for engagement mandated by state legislation left no room for genuine dialogue and mutual learning. The processes assumed that objectors would respond in a rational way to issues about which they felt passionate such as irrational threats to their homes and neighbourhood. In conclusion other means of engaging with objectors and their issues are elaborated. It is also shown that deliberative and inclusive governance processes will not necessarily produce outcomes compatible with the principles of social justice.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that –

(i) The thesis comprises only my original work,

(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) The thesis is 22,000 words in length, inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of tables, maps, appendices, and bibliography.

Signed by ______________________

Date __________
I wish to acknowledge a number of people who assisted with this research. My supervisor Professor Paul Smyth of the Centre for Public Policy and Brotherhood of St Laurence was always supportive and encouraging and provided the necessary critical feedback on my work. Dr Carolyn Whitzman, from the school of Architecture, Planning and Building, adopted me as a member of her post graduate student group and acted as my mentor. Carolyn convinced me that this research was worthwhile. Sue West from the McCaughey Institute read through the final draft and provided encouragement and valuable feedback. The research participants deserve a special mention, the residents, many of whom found revisiting the Woodstock experience painful, but nevertheless were able to provide some valuable ideas on how the process might be improved. Staff and councillors at Port Phillip Council, from the Port Phillip Housing Association and the project architect and artist all gave freely of their time and ideas. Gary Spivak, the Housing Development Officer at Port Phillip provided invaluable assistance in accessing the substantial amount of documentation of the project. Gary’s archival skills are very impressive. Finally, my husband, Gerry Morris deserves a special mention for his encouragement, empathy and much appreciated support particularly in the final stages of the research.
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# GLOSSARY

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRAIDA</td>
<td>Balaclava Residents against Inappropriate Development and Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPP</td>
<td>Community Alliance of Port Phillip (formerly Turn the Tide). A group of community activists who had a key role in setting the Port Phillip Council’s agenda for community housing and supporting candidates committed to a social justice agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Housing</td>
<td>Community housing is distinct from state government managed public housing and refers to affordable housing which is managed by a community organization, which can include local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>City of Port Phillip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIPs</td>
<td>Deliberative Inclusive Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>Department of Infrastructure. The Victorian State government department responsible for strategic planning, housing and the administration of the Victorian Planning Scheme until Nov 2007. These responsibilities were transferred to the Planning and Local Government Branch of the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (VDPC) from Nov 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPPF</td>
<td>Local Planning Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LULU</td>
<td>Locally Unwanted Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGS</td>
<td>McGauran, Gianni, Soon- Woodstock project architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>Municipal Strategic Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIMBY</td>
<td>Not In My Back Yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVIVO</td>
<td>A research software program available under license from QSR International which enables the grouping of data under key themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPC</td>
<td>Port Phillip Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPHA</td>
<td>Port Phillip Community Housing Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Social Housing Innovations Program (2001-2005). A Victorian government program which aimed to expand social housing through community housing and develop innovative housing models to enhance the sustainability of the community housing sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCAT</td>
<td>Victorian Civil Administration Tribunal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPPs</td>
<td>Victorian Planning Provisions</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the governance processes underpinning a collaborative effort to develop community housing in the suburb of Balaclava, a gentrifying neighbourhood in inner-urban Melbourne, Australia. The development of Woodstock rooming house, the case study chosen for analysis, is typical of projects which challenge local government when dealing with controversial land use issues. The rooming house proposal ignited considerable local community opposition. The study demonstrates how place becomes a domain in which social values are asserted and contested and allows us to explore the challenges for local government in resolving competing interests in planning contested ground.

Research Context and purpose

The research is set against the backdrop of Victorian state government policies which specify two imperatives for local government: first, to promote community cohesion (Considine 2005a), and second, to plan for a more compact, sustainable and fairer city (Department of Sustainability & Environment 2005). Yet the paradox is that when these policies are implemented, particularly those promoting urban consolidation and affordable housing; the result is often community fragmentation and divisiveness, as community members resist change.

As a consequence of this problem, local governments are challenged in their attempts to resolve competing claims about land use in their municipalities. Contest over new development will often be aggressive in areas where housing density is increasing, as is the case in the inner urban areas of Melbourne. In resolving competing claims, most local governments have historically governed in favour of articulate citizens and ratepayers, or business associations, all of which have resources and access to local government decision-making (Hillier 2003; Innes and Booher 2004). Local government is now required to govern on behalf of the ‘whole community’, and to be strategic in the way it operates. The Victorian Local Government Act (1989), Part 1 Section 4, states that one of the
functions of local government is to provide ‘governance and leadership for the local community through advocacy, decision making and action’ and one of the roles of local government is ‘acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making;’ (§3D (2) a). Clearly the idea of governing on behalf of the ‘whole community’ is challenging because of both definitional and representational problems. This study analyses the governance process for establishing Woodstock rooming house, and asks how far this process was inclusive of all interests in the community.

Woodstock rooming house is a 31-bed rooming house accommodating disadvantaged low income people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. It was established through a partnership between Port Phillip Council (PPC) the Victorian State Government, and the Port Phillip Community Housing Association (PPHA). Woodstock opened in July 2006, the 17th project in the PPC’s Community Housing Strategy (City of Port Phillip 1997). The development was built on a council-owned open car park behind the Balaclava shopping centre. Balaclava is one of five ‘activity’ centres in Port Phillip nominated for growth in the State government planning blueprint, *Melbourne 2030* (Department of Sustainability & Environment 2005). The project took six years from initial concept to completion, spanning the years 2000 to 2006. The governance process in key phases within this time frame will be examined. The PPC resolved to proceed with the project in 2003, in spite of considerable opposition from neighbouring residents and business owners.

The PPC is also the largest provider of community housing in local government in Australia. Over the last 21 years it has established around 390 community housing units, housing approximately 460 people within the city. Although this is a small amount, it reflects the limited income raising capacity of Australian local government compared to state and federal governments. Local government receives three percent of national tax revenue, derived from property rates, its primary source of income (Tuckey 2002).
The aim of the study is to examine local government’s role in governing contested ground; focussing on how the ‘community’ is represented and engaged in place planning and how conflicting interests are resolved.

**Thesis Outline**

Chapter 2 canvasses the theoretical and governance frameworks informing this enquiry and reviews similar research. Following a review of theories of governance, with a focus on place, the analysis of this case study is informed by the ‘new institutionalist’ perspective of Patsy Healey (Healey 2005). Healey provides a promising lens through which to look at how a ‘collaborative’ approach can combine a social theory about place and time in examining the dynamics of urban change, with a policy theory about the governance of those dynamics. Healey’s framework emphasises the power of agency in episodes of governance, the power of networks, discourses and practices over time, and in place, and the power of embedded governance cultures (Healey 2003). The challenges in working with the community in the planning of contested space will be explored with reference to research on not in my backyard (NIMBY) responses to locally unwanted land uses (LULU) (Piat 2000; Cowan 2003; Hillier 2003; Schively 2007).

Chapter 3 outlines the research strategy and methods. Following the approach of Yin (2003), a single case study was analysed incorporating multiple sources of evidence including: a literature review, an analysis of secondary documentation (review of public records and media) and key informant interviews. These semi-structured interviews were with some of the key actors involved, including Port Phillip councillors, PPC and PPHA staff members, consultants (project architect and artist) neighbouring residents and business owners. The author was able to observe some of the planning and consultation processes in this case. As Becker (1992) observes participant observation or ethnographic research places a strong value on deep connections and ‘thick’ descriptions (Becker 1992). A post occupancy survey, particularly focusing on nearby resident and trader responses to Woodstock, undertaken by PPHA in August 2007 was also reviewed. When connecting the case study findings to
the theoretical propositions the research makes analytic rather than statistical links. The case study thereby provides an exemplary case from which specific findings may be applied to comparable situations of community opposition in other neighbourhoods.

Chapter 4 examines the social, spatial and governance context in which the particular case was located and Chapters 5 and 6 present the research findings about the governance processes for Woodstock and the extent to which resident opposition reflected typical responses identified in the literature about NIMBY responses. Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the research findings in the context of Healey’s framework for transforming governance and the empirical research and critique on NIMBY. Chapter 8 draws conclusions about the implications of the research for improving governance processes and identifies areas for further action and research.

**The value of this research**

There is little research on governance which recognises and engages with conflicting agendas and social needs in regard to place representations and experiences. Whilst arguments exist for the value of diversity and inclusion, there are few studies which explore how competing priorities are resolved and whether all groups within the community are being heard.

There are also gaps in knowledge about the influence of perceptions in NIMBY responses and methods to address these responses (Schively 2007). There are few Australian case studies which research community responses to contested land uses and the implications for governance and community engagement (Alves 2007) and there are no Australian studies on resident attitudes to community housing or research on local opposition to community housing. This is surprising given the demonstrated need for community housing, the prevalence of resident opposition, the costs of the appeals process and the consequent delays in community housing provision.
This research will be useful for local government planners and elected representatives and also for those interested in neighbourhood renewal and engagement, those concerned with spatial planning and management, developers of social (public and community) housing, public health professionals, environmental planners, people working in community development; and all those shaping policies for local and regional social and environmental sustainability who are interested in new forms of inclusive and deliberative governance.
2. GOVERNANCE FOR PEOPLE IN PLACE: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The focus of this enquiry is planning and governance relating to people in place and how local government manages competing agendas about land use. This chapter explores the theories which have informed the research, beginning with a general overview of the shifting governance landscape, before focusing specifically on place based governance approaches. Theories of social exclusion and deliberative democracy are examined using Victorian examples of place-based and joined-up government programs to address locational disadvantage. The review of governance approaches concludes with an exploration of new institutional theory, as developed by British land use planning academic Patsy Healey. This perspective proposes a form of governance which as well as considering people in place, provides some tools for assessing the Woodstock governance process (Healey 1997; Healey 2003). While these theories are helpful for considering broader questions about ‘good’ or ‘inclusive’ governance they don’t fully address the challenge to governance in planning contested ground. To address this limitation, the final section of the chapter reviews some empirical research on community responses to locally unwanted land uses.

The shifting governance landscape

The use of the concept of governance signifies ‘a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing’ (Rhodes 1996:652). The term governance is used in a variety of ways and its meaning is contested. Stoker (1998) identifies a number of complementary aspects of governance which are summarised in the following propositions;

- Includes a set of institutions and actors drawn from within and outside government
- Boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues are blurred
- Power dependence between institutions involved in collective action
Governance consists of autonomous self-governing networks.

Government’s role is to steer and resource getting things done, not to command or demand (Stoker 1998:18).

In Stoker’s view, this idea of governance is more effective in describing the multi-layers and partners in the governance process than is the concept of government which only involves the state.

The governance landscape has experienced substantial shifts over the last 30 years, reflecting shifts in positions about the primacy of the state, the private sector (or market) and civil society. Disillusionment with the failure of the interventionist welfare state as well as the market to solve social disadvantage has led to so called ‘Third Way’ approaches. The Third way, as it is being played out in British New Labour public policy, is concerned to find a middle course between the welfare state approach, and the neo-liberal free market approach. Here a combination of market and civil society partnerships is promoted as a way of achieving better community outcomes. In this way, the Third Way approach elevates the role of civil society and self-help as the way forward for disadvantaged communities, within the context of the market, and often a diminishing role for the state (Giddens 1999). As in many Third Way approaches, a great deal of responsibility falls to the community and civil society to resolve issues that can only be truly addressed at a broader structural level where there is a significant role for the state (Levitas 2004; Amin 2005).

A review of local government management literature describes a transition from the providing, to the contracting, to the enabling state, where local government works in partnership with others to address issues and deliver services. Similarly, planning theory has seen a shift from rational analytic approaches to more interactive, deliberative and collaborative modes. Governance approaches now recognise diversity, conflict and instability where previously they saw homogeneity and stability as normal. Shifts are also occurring between levels of government, the community and private sector so that partnering and network approaches are becoming commonplace. Government is increasingly re-
organising and planning on a place basis, and looking at the integration of social, economic and environmental factors rather than operating through functional hierarchies and silos (Healey 1997).

The more recent shifts from ‘New Public Management’ to ‘New Governance’ are articulated by Reddel in his theoretical framework for understanding state-civil society relations. The elements of each approach are identified Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From ‘New Public Management’ to a ‘New Governance’</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Public Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Focus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical — Focus on Outcomes and Outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Interest is ‘owned’ by Executive and Bureaucracy based on consumer choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation, Agreement and Confrontation based on the ‘Contract’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Expertise based on Performance Assessment and the Monitoring of Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic and Expert Structures with representation of directly affected interests</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from Ian Marsh (1995:237) Beyond the Two Party System.

© National Council of the Institute of Public Administration, Australia 2002

Figure 1 From new public management to new governance approaches

(Reddell 2002 :59)

New Public Management approaches are informed by neo liberal, economic rationalist political philosophies and New Governance approaches by inclusive and communitarian philosophies, and by the need for a holistic response to economic, environmental, social and cultural issues. It remains to be seen whether the New Governance approaches can operate effectively in a climate where neo liberal philosophies continue to prevail. According to Reddel (2006) ‘a neo liberal agenda based on principles of public choice theory and competition through purchasing and contracting appears hegemonic but sits alongside strategies to increase social capital and build community capacity through networks and partnerships’ (Reddell 2006:3).
Considine (2001) enlarges on the dualism of ‘New Public Management’ and ‘New Governance’ approaches in his articulation of four ‘ideal-type’ realisations of public institutions and the role of bureaucracy in the overall system of state-society governance. These are procedural, corporate, market and network governance types. The central elements of each are outlined in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four governance types</th>
<th>Source of rationality</th>
<th>Form of control</th>
<th>Primary virtue</th>
<th>Service delivery focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural governance</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Universal Treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate governance</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Plans</td>
<td>Goal-driven</td>
<td>Targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market governance</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Cost-driven</td>
<td>Prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network governance</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Co-production</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Brokerage</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Figure 2  Governance Types** *(Considine 2001:24)*

For Considine, networks are based on partnerships, collaboration and interdependencies and contrast with the command and control, market exchange and traditional bureaucratic instruments (Considine 2001). Considine’s market and corporate governance frameworks approximate Reddell’s concept of New Public Management, and his view of network governance is very similar to Reddell’s concept of New Governance. Considine concludes that network governance provides a new paradigm in public administration and organisation theory by providing the means to tackle problems in a multidimensional and locally flexible way. Despite the contested meanings and different histories of the concept of network governance, Considine identifies some commonly agreed conditions for defining collaborative advantage through network governance. These are:

- ‘Local character-partnerships and joint actions will reflect specific histories of place and communities
- Agency collaboration - networks will join public and private agencies in shared ventures.
Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government

- Institutional change - new governance will produce new institutional sites and instruments, eg partnerships, pacts and coalitions.
- Democratic culture – actions will be inclusive of different groups and interests and will generate new identity positions.’ (Considine 2005:11).

The New Governance framework of Reddell (2002) and this later work of Considine (2005) on network governance propose a local or place based infrastructure which is of particular relevance to this research. The concept of associational governance takes this further by promoting policies to address spatial disadvantage. Using evaluations of Queensland government place based policies targeting locational disadvantage, Smyth et al (2004) suggest that these new place based approaches, combining economic, social and environmental considerations have been influenced by discourses about social exclusion and new regionalism. They propose a new model which combines these discourses, describing it as ‘associational governance’ which involves

‘the reconfiguration of state-community and market relations, promoting citizen participation and improved local community outcomes’, characterised by ‘multi sector partnerships, various forms of community engagement’ and ‘networked modes of governance’ (Smyth, Reddell et al. 2004:606).

This governance in place model necessitates examination of social exclusion and citizen participation in more detail.

Social exclusion, representation and participation in place.

The concept of social exclusion has emerged over the last fifteen years to provide a more comprehensive view of social disadvantage than that which is provided through measurements of financial poverty alone. The strengths of a social exclusion analysis are thought to lie in its ‘multidimensional approach, dynamic rather than static analysis… focus on community and spatial… individual and family resources… and the considerations of relational as well as distributional aspects of disadvantage’ (Smyth, Reddell et al. 2004) The interest for this thesis is in how the concept had been employed in both British and Australian government policy to address the spatial dimensions of social
exclusion and as a basis for urban renewal programs targeted at disadvantaged areas (Jones and Smyth 1999; Watt 2000; Arthurson 2003; Klein 2004; Social Exclusion Unit 2004; Davies 2005).

Amin (2005) takes issue with the Third Way’s redefinition of social exclusion and spatial inequality as a problem of local origin, and the extent to which citizen participation is promoted for highly instrumental ends. His concern is that Third Way approaches assume the existence of a ‘multi-headed, but consensual, political community with localized concerns (:618)’. As Amin points out a community never comes with a common set of interests, and local programs are ‘assailed by a politics of uneven voice, social manipulation, conflicting interest, and power imbalance; a politics that regularly compromises the needs of the socially excluded and marginalized (:624). He recommends the public sphere be capable of supporting multiple publics, and enhancing the ‘capabilities, voice, rights and presence of the excluded and marginalized, in a way that Iris Marion Young calls “differentiated solidarity” which seeks to develop solidarity through negotiation of difference (:627)’. Finally Amin advocates for an agonistic democracy, an alternative to communitarianism or multiculturalism which emphasises the potentially positive aspects of political conflict rather than papering over differences by unachievable consensus. He proposes ‘active citizenship without strings, built around many imaginative pragmatic efforts to empower the disempowered in a public culture that accepts agonism as the norm’ (Amin 2005:628).

So what might some of these ‘imaginative pragmatic efforts’ look like, and would these be sufficient to constitute a genuine return to an ‘agonistic democracy’ to which Amin aspires? Part of the answer to this is to identify how governance processes include ‘multiple publics’ and particularly those usually excluded from decision making processes. Theories of public participation in governance have come a long way since the seminal work of Sherry Arnstein (1969) who developed a ladder of participation to describe a continuum of citizen participation, commencing with forms that could more effectively be described as ‘manipulation or therapy (or Amin’s ‘instrumental ends’) to ‘citizen control.’
However Arnstein was really more concerned with analysing the outcomes of citizen participation than identifying which citizens participate and on whose behalf. The question for this research is how to reframe the problematic relationship between representative and participatory governance and develop more deliberative approaches capable of dealing with conflicting agendas and interests.

Forester (2004) and Carson (2005) are interested in these more deliberative approaches to citizen participation and engagement. Carson notes the ‘democratic deficit’ in western democracies, with declining trust evident between those governing and the governed. The democratic imperative for Carson is to strengthen governance processes so that citizens can be confident that decision making will be effective. Three interdependent principles are identified for deliberative and inclusive governance processes. These are ‘representativeness, achieved through random selection and designed to attract participants who reflect the wider population, deliberativeness achieved through in depth discussion and dialogue, and influence achieved through contractual arrangements between facilitators, participants and sponsors’ (Carson and Hart 2005 :1). Carson cites Hendriks summary of these principles in Figure 3.

![Deliberative, inclusive processes (adapted Hendriks 2005a)](image)

**Figure 3  Deliberative processes  (Carson and Hart 2005 :3)**

In her review and evaluation of thirty five deliberative, inclusive processes (DIPs) which have been undertaken in Australia over the last few years, Carson concludes that most processes were able to demonstrate representativeness and deliberativeness, but influence was much more difficult to achieve (Carson and Hart 2005). Clearly there are many contextual factors and cultural issues which will affect DIPs but the challenge remains to ensure that these processes
are more influential and can move beyond one-off events to become embedded in mainstream institutional practices.

Forester’s concern is with deliberative approaches which counter the ‘civic dullness’ characterised by many participatory processes. For Forester, participation of citizens means more than having access and much more than having voice. He addresses the practical and theoretical challenges to determine citizens’ interests and those obstacles to learning what interests are actually at stake. He recommends four lines of response to these challenges;

‘framing a process for joint enquiry rather than “deals,” getting stories to break down initial presumptions, raising doubt to clarify questions in order to move beyond initial “hit and run” answers, assuring “time to think” and enlarging the shadow of the future rather than fuelling debate-and these provide, not recipes and easy answers, but practical judgments and guidelines for action in the face of what we might call democratic messiness-if not democratic pathologies of misrepresenting stakeholders’ real interests (Forester 2006:150).

The previous sections have canvassed some of the shifts in theories about governance as they are being played out in the development of public policy in Australia, Nth America and Europe. The problems associated with engaging a diverse citizenry and ensuring their voice is represented in the governance process has also been identified. Referring back to the research objectives, the analysis so far has focussed on governance and ‘voice’, but, with the exception of the social exclusion analysis and associational governance which explores locational disadvantage, the theories reviewed do not directly address the governance of people in place --the focus of the next section.

**Place based planning and ‘joined-up’ approaches**

The focus on place has emerged, or re-emerged, within diverse bodies of literature. This ranges from discourses by cultural geographers, anthropologists and architects (Jacobs 1962; Mitchell 1995; Lippard 1997; Sinatra and Murphy 1999) to concerns with social justice and social inclusion (Smyth, Reddell et al. 2005) to research on the health and economic benefits of neighbourhood social
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cohesion and diversity (Florida 2002; Kawachi and Berkman 2003; Putnam 2003). The benefits and challenges of a place-management approach are frequently explored in Australian public administration literature (Mant 1995; Stewart-Weeks 2000; Mant 2002; Walsh 2002). It is the public administration stream of enquiry that is the focus of this section because of its concern with governance of people in place.

So what is place management? The idea is informed by a range of different ideological underpinnings, including communitarian, competitive market, traditional hierarchical public administration, and redistributive approaches. Place management has been described as a way of

‘looking at (and addressing) complex social, economic and environmental issues, that has some chance of seeing, really seeing, what is happening at the level at which people live their lives and interact in the places and spaces they share in common’ (Stewart-Weeks 2000:4).}

Whilst Stewart-Weeks argues for a type of place management which promotes transformative governance in the way it empowers the local community, and promotes a joined-up approach, little has been said about ways of governing which recognise and engage with conflicting agendas and social needs in regard to place representations and experiences. Whilst many argue for the value of diversity and inclusion there are few studies which explore how competing priorities are resolved and whether all marginalised groups within the community are being heard.

Renewed interest in a place-based approach, both nationally, particularly in Queensland (Sercombe 2000; Smyth, Reddell et al. 2005), and internationally has led the Victorian State Government to adopt a place management approach in developing its most significant social policy to date, A Fairer Victoria. The government is investing in programs such as Neighbourhood Renewal and Community Strengthening and has committed to a more joined up approach to governance in all of its operations (Klein 2004; Wiseman 2006) The state
government requires local government to improve its capacity to engage with
the community and reflect diverse community aspirations in its planning and
service delivery (Considine 2005a). The interim evaluation of the Victorian
Neighbourhood Renewal program provides interesting observations about the
apparent increased community participation and pride in each of the seven
Neighbourhood Renewal sites (Klein 2005). The program created opportunities
for extensive citizen involvement in researching and advising on priority
improvement areas, including innovative ways of engaging and training locals
as researchers and a local steering group or neighbourhood board made up of
40% local residents. A ‘whole-of-government’ senior coordinating group had
been established for each site which was actively involved in the governance of
each project and prepared to commit resources to address priorities identified
by the community (Department of Human Services 2003). The more in-depth
stories about the representativeness and inclusiveness of the process and how
competing priorities were resolved are still to be told.

The Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal programs were based on the New Deal
for Communities and local community partnerships in the UK. Geddes’
evaluation of these programs raised key questions about their democratic
legitimacy and institutional capacity as well as their effectiveness in the context
of a prevailing neo-liberal agenda (Geddes 2006). Given place based
approaches have been operating for less than a decade in Australia, not
surprisingly, there is little in-depth evaluation or analysis of the extent to which
governance arrangements truly represent the heterogeneity of the communities
in which they are located (Lawson and Gleeson 2005). Preliminary analysis
reveals that there are shortcomings in the capacity of local partnerships,
particularly their authority, organisational and professional cultures and
systems, problems in engaging diverse groups, as well as gaps in institutional
modes of discourse, mediating structures and deliberative arrangements (Walsh
2002; Reddell 2004; Boxelaar, Paine et al. 2006; Reddell 2006).

Despite these critiques, these new governance arrangements have the potential
to achieve positive outcomes, particularly in making links between top down
representative democracy and bottom up participatory democracy, serving as a mechanism for enhancing political empowerment and trust (Wiseman 2006). The inherent dangers however are that these new governance forms will undermine both representative and participatory democracy, by only involving an elite group of local actors conducting their business behind closed doors with only limited public and democratic accountability or transparency. It is possible that existing representative government policy making processes will be replaced ‘not by deliberative agonistic democratic debate, but by negotiation among a cross sectoral elite, with an inherent tendency towards a consensual, centrist, “third way” politics’ (Geddes 2006:84). It also needs to be acknowledged that there are limits to the autonomy of the local sphere of governance. It is therefore important that an enabling national and state government policy framework is established which results in local governance arrangements which do exercise influence within the local and state apparatus as well as in resource allocation decisions (Wiseman 2006). Without this, it is highly likely that the result will be citizen disengagement and retreat by the state, where the risks are born by locals, rather than new collaborative governance arrangements which are seen as legitimate, effective, authoritative, democratic, and where the state is actively engaged.

The following section will drill down from this broader analysis of governance approaches through a review of new institutionalism, a theory which focuses on the interconnections between the three key concerns in this enquiry, the governance of people in place. The value of this approach is that it provides a framework for the micro analysis of the governance processes and a basis for evaluating whether the governance episode for Woodstock met criteria for ‘transforming’ governance,

**New Institutionalism: A promising framework for evaluating the governance of people in place**

Considine (2005) is concerned to establish whether new forms of network or collaborative governance are characterised by ‘one night stands’ or capable of changing the ‘architecture of the [governance] system’. This concern is shared
Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government

by British planner and academic Patsy Healey. Collaborative planning as defined by Healey is based on a ‘new institutionalist’ approach to understanding urban and regional change (Healey 1997). New institutionalism emerged as a reaction to the antisocial aspects of social choice theory and individualism. Its proponents are interested in the informal as well as formal arrangements and rules, the role of values, power relations and the interaction of individuals with institutions. New institutionalism is concerned to understand and promote greater participation and engagement between policy actors. Jessop analyses the institutional ensemble, of state, market and civil society (Jessop 1997), ‘comprising a mix of policy, discourse, negotiation and arbitration-based structures required to negotiate the complexity of political, social and economic life’ (Reddell 2006:16). New institutional theory, with its emphasis on structure and agency, is a way of bridging discourses between the structure of governance and the participation of the governed to promote more inclusive and deliberative governance processes which have the capacity to transform current institutional arrangements.

In her work on collaborative planning and governance, Healey (2003) traces the emergence of interest in developing a more strategic role for spatial planning. She explores how social theories of institutionalist sociology (or new institutionalism) and regional economic geography have been important in acknowledging both structure and agency in a relational understanding of social dynamics. She also draws on the communicative approach in planning theory to the design of governance systems and practices, focussing on ways of fostering collaboration, including an ethical commitment to give everyone a voice. This approach captures the notion of planning policy and implementation as active processes of social construction (Healey 2003). Drawing on the work of Habermas and Giddens, in their concern to open up the public realm through open and public debate, Healey argues that we need ‘to make sense together while living differently’ and promote ‘more intercultural dialogue (Healey 1997): 50. Her aim in developing a collaborative approach is to ‘bring together a social theory about space and time of the dynamics of urban region change with a policy theory about the governance of those dynamics’ (Healey 1997): xii.
Despite significant variations among new institutionalists (Lowndes 2001; Jessop 2002), Healey identifies some shared assumptions. By institutions, new institutionalists mean ‘The rules norms and practices which structure areas of social endeavour, not formal organisations. They locate the interplay of specific actors in social processes in the context of the ensemble of norms and discourses which shape the interests actors have. .. new institutionalists focus on interactions not decisions’ (Healy 2003:1982).

New institutionalists are not only interested in authoritative power but in generative power, the power to create new practices and build governance capacity. In her research on urban regeneration partnerships, Healey (2003) examines the institutional relations of governance dynamics and the extent to which they can transform urban governance. Figure 4 outlines the specific dimensions through which to explore these power dynamics, namely the specific episodes of interaction, the power relations embedded in practices and manipulated by strategic actors, the behind the scenes ‘mobilisation of bias’ and the nature of governance processes and cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels and dimensions of governance processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dimension</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific episodes</td>
<td>Actory: key players—positions, roles, strategies and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance processes and ‘mobilisation of bias’</td>
<td>Arena(s): institutional sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ambiences (interactive practices): communicative repertoires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance cultures</td>
<td>Networks and coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholder selection processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourses: framing issues, problems, solutions, interests, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practices: routines and repertoires for acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range of accepted modes of governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range of embedded cultural values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal and informal structures for policing discourses and practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4  Governance processes (Healey 2003 :1983).**

Of interest in this research is Healey’s micro analysis of governance processes and the extent to which innovations can be translated into mainstream practices rather than resulting in the incorporation of new practices which neutralise any threats to established practices. In her quest for improved institutional capacity Healey identifies the importance of rethinking institutional design. Here she
distinguishes between ‘hard infrastructure’ - the current systems of governance where dominant groups have embedded power and ‘soft infrastructure’ - planning practices, with their attention to stakes, arenas, routines, styles and discourses. Healey’s assessment framework for measuring effective governance processes are outlined in Figure 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Networks and coalitions</td>
<td>Connections made to residents in many situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connections made to significant ‘mainstream’ arenas and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder selection processes</td>
<td>Inclusive selection of who gets involved in area committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple ‘voices’ for place accessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourses: framing issues, problems, solutions, interests, etc.</td>
<td>Strong daily life emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diverse experiences of place emphasised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distributive issues/conflicts over priorities recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge resources enriched in range and type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices: routines and repertoires for acting</td>
<td>These are: accessible; diverse; facilitative; transparent; sincere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5  Assessment criteria for governance processes (Healey 2003:1984)

Healey concludes from her extensive research on place based partnership projects, that the best opportunity to transform governance practices is when external forces are promoting similar ideas and practices (Healey 2005). Given current government imperatives to engage all stakeholders in governance, there are real opportunities to develop more inclusive and deliberative approaches in new governance arrangements.

The limitation of the Healey framework is that it doesn’t fully explore the management of conflicting agendas about land use. Using Healey’s definition of planning as ‘managing coexistence in shared space’ as a starting point; Sandercock (2002) explores what it means to manage coexistence in communities of difference. She asserts that the

‘major challenge when xenophobia or intolerance within communities finds expression through the planning system via planning disputes… the (planning) system becomes an outlet for the deep seated fears or anxieties of some residents which makes a constructive response difficult’ (Sandercock 2002:16).
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Sandercock concludes that when planning for cities of difference it is critical to come to terms with the fear of the ‘other’ to find a solution beyond the imposition of exclusionary practices such as spatial policing and segregation (Sandercock 2002). Similarly, Dryzek (2005) draws on Forester’s ideas about moving beyond confrontation and stalemate in deliberative processes involving conflicting values and identities. He suggests that if people can be encouraged to listen to each other’s stories, they may be able to accept each other’s needs, even if they don’t share their values or identity (Dryzek 2005:221). Dryzek also concurs with Sandercock in his view that deliberative approaches can process divisive issues but only when detached from the formal decision making process of the state. Exploratory exchange leading to an appreciation of shared values and a change of views is more likely in more general deliberative forums than in the courts, the legislature or in committees represented in this case study by the formal planning system (Dryzek 2005:223).

So far this chapter has canvassed some of the shifts in governance theories highlighting the New Governance models, including place management or joined up approaches, network and collaborative models, particularly those of the new institutionalists. The Healey framework, focuses on place and voice in planning and provides a basis for analysing and assessing the micro processes of governance in more depth than available through the broader governance theories. However, there are limitations in its capacity to explain and reconcile competing agendas. The final section of this chapter provides greater insight into the dynamics of contests over land use than has been provided through the broader theories on governance presented in the previous sections. The empirical research on the NIMBY phenomena, where the community will often be vociferous in its desire to exclude certain people or developments from their neighbourhood provides some valuable insights in to the profile and concerns of objectors and their fear of the ‘other’ and the implications for governance.
Governance and contested ground

History illustrates that intolerance and exclusion are not new phenomena in the spatial/social organization of cities. At least since the nineteenth century, public space has been documented as ‘a lively and contested domain, where various social groups have been excluded from public places and subjected to political and moral censure’ (Malone 2002:159). As Malone points out, the fragmentation and segmentation of space in terms of legitimate and illegitimate user groups is based on a climate of fear, suspicion, tension and conflict between social groups. The response is often a greater desire to regulate and control public space and for planners to engage in the purification of space where the dominant value system is normalized, and those who don’t conform are excluded (Sibley 1995). Sibley has written extensively on exclusionary practices in public space. He argues that in local conflicts, where a community represents itself as part of the mainstream, and feels threatened by the presence of others who are perceived to be different and ‘other’, it will frequently express its fears and anxieties in stereotypes (Sibley 1995:29). Drawing on Sibley’s ideas, Malone (2002) discusses the social construction of boundaries which separate some groups and individuals from society and render deviant those who are different. These ideas are represented in Figure 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Open spaces</th>
<th>Closed spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of boundary</td>
<td>Weakly defined boundaries</td>
<td>Strongly defined boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value system</td>
<td>Multiple values supported</td>
<td>Dominant values normalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to difference and diversity</td>
<td>Difference and diversity celebrated</td>
<td>Difference and diversity not tolerated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of policing</td>
<td>Policing of boundaries not necessary</td>
<td>Preoccupation with boundary maintenance, high levels of policing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position of public</td>
<td>Public occupy the margin</td>
<td>Public occupy the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of culture</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Monocultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 6  Characteristics of open and closed spaces (Malone 2002:158)
A closed space has strongly defined boundaries, its internal homogeneity and order are valued and there is a concern with boundary maintenance to keep out objects or people who don’t fit into the shared classification (or culture) constructed by the dominant group (the insiders)’ (Malone 2002:158). Malone challenges us to look at building communities of difference and to recognise and affirm different groups and their needs when planning and managing public spaces.

Fear of the ‘other’ and the consequent exclusionary practices identified by Malone and Sibley is frequently an underlying feature of NIMBY responses to ‘locally unwanted land uses’ (LULUs). Studies of these phenomena provide insights into some of the underlying dynamics of what happens when the surrounding community rejects what they see as unwanted land uses in their neighbourhood. NIMBY is generally defined as the opposition by local residents to a development in their neighbourhood that they perceive will jeopardize their quality of life. Locals might agree about the need for the facility, but would prefer it was located somewhere else (Hermansson 2007:24). In her review of the research on NIMBY and LULU phenomena, Schively concludes that these are complex phenomena, with significant variation in the types of facilities (depending on their social, environmental or health impacts); the range of participants and the way the phenomena are described. She argues that NIMBY responses need to be better understood because of their fundamental challenge to governance, particularly for planners who are at the front line, often caught between responding to local opposition, designing inclusive participation processes, assisting the LULU developer, and in some cases challenging proposals (Schively 2007). The review of research on the NIMBY phenomenon which follows provides a useful checklist of issues for thinking about planning contested ground.

The first national survey of attitudes to controversial human services facilities in the US was undertaken in 1990 by the Daniel Yankelovich Group and later analysed by Takahashi & Dear who identified the reasons for local opposition (Takahashi and Dear 1997). This analysis focused on the volatility of attitude
change, the characteristics of regions with rejecting and accepting attitudes as well as the perceived exclusionary nature of respondents. The results indicate the dynamics of community opposition consist of client, community and facility variations influenced by the local context and the spatial location of respondents. The authors identify a continuum of perceived threats based on the target or client group served by the development, resulting in hierarchies of acceptance (See attached Appendix 1). The study concludes that opposing residents are older, home owners, wealthier, better educated and more likely to attend meetings to advocate for their interests (Takahashi and Dear 1997:81).

Whilst Takahashi and Dear’s study of attitudes is significant in demonstrating a hierarchy of acceptance of particular target groups, its limitation is that participants were asked about their attitudes to hypothetical situations. The research of particular relevance to this study was about actual contested proposals, particularly those with a social impact and where there were implications for planning. A review of North American and European research was undertaken on the community response to proposals which provided some kind of community housing, whether for children in care, the homeless or other marginalised target groups. The conclusion from this review was that in spite of the different socio-political and cultural contexts, the demography of opponents shared some key characteristics and concerns with those identified in the Dear and Takahashi study. The concerns primarily were about the inappropriate location and impact on neighbourhood quality and amenity, the type of tenants to be housed and the lack of prior consultation. The following studies outline some additional issues that might be taken into account when managing contests over land use.

Dear (1992) identified 3 phases of locational conflict when researching land use disputes and NIMBY. These followed a 3 stage life cycle; youth, often an irrational and unthinking response; maturity, the rhetoric of opposition becomes more rational and objective more measured voices are heard; and old age, the final and drawn out stage prior to resolution where stamina and staying power are necessary.
Cowen (2003) investigated local opposition to siting community mental health facilities in Scotland. She concluded that public consultation was ‘relatively unproblematic in terms of its function, but the nature of consultation was more elusive’ (Cowan 2003:382). She cited the varying perceptions of what consultation meant; to objectors it meant the right to veto a proposal; for proponents, getting feedback following presentation of their case. Cowan argued that it was important not to impose a set of constraints or rules which don’t make sense to objectors and fail to address their arguments. She stressed the importance of understanding the argumentative context of local opposition and developing appropriate communication strategies based on this understanding.

Piat’s (2000) study in Montreal Canada analysed 3 instances of neighbourhood opposition to group homes. She was particularly interested in resident perceptions and their perspective on becoming a victim. The findings suggested that local residents felt that they had become victims as a result of a perception that they had lost their individual rights, that their homeowners dream had been destroyed and the arrival of the group home had destroyed the fabric of the community (Piat 2000).

Cameron and Crewe’s (2006) study on children’s group homes and NIMBYism in North America was motivated by the need for a body of knowledge to assist local government and planning agencies in the siting of group homes. The researchers were interested to move beyond explanations of NIMBYism as selfish parochialism and irrational, to analyse the conditions giving rise to NIMBYism and possible solutions through strategic planning. Unlike the in depth interviews conducted by Cowan and Piat with a range of actors in a particular planning contest, this research only sought the views of project proponents, 23 administrators of group homes across North America. Homes selected for the study reflected nationwide patterns among children’s homes. The authors wanted to approximate the geographic spread but also the type of host environment (urban, rural or small town), the type of neighbourhood (in
terms of income, population density and land use) and the type of client served. Findings from the study indicated evidence of NIMBYism in the local response with a significant majority of homes experiencing some kind of opposition (Cameron and Crewe 2006). An analysis of the distribution of opposition was inconclusive according to neighbourhood type. However there were some recurring patterns among rejecting neighbourhoods, with the authors identifying affluence and upward mobility being a significant factor in the majority of cases. In more affluent neighbourhoods, rising house prices and concern about property devaluation lead to well resourced opposition campaigns. The few poorer neighbourhoods in the study who objected to the proposal were seen to be ‘embattled’ with a perception that the neighbourhood was already ‘saturated’ with support services (Cameron and Crewe 2006). The authors also identified some recurring patterns among accepting neighbourhoods. Some homes enjoyed a strong social and political position in the host community and therefore their proposals had effective local support. Others were mixed use, diverse neighbourhoods with low property values, or ‘seriously embattled’ neighbourhoods, where people were disinclined to raise any objections. The authors concluded from this research that there were often good results in mitigating opposition by reaching out to the local community and carefully listening and responding to resident concerns as well as undertaking follow-up studies on property values and crime rates (Cameron and Crewe 2006).

This review of research on the NIMBY phenomenon has provided a number of useful insights which can be considered in this case study, in particular the demography and geography of typical opponents, the life cycle of opposition, feelings of being victimised, differential interpretations by the proponent and

1 The concern about property devaluation is a common feature of the NIMBY response despite evidence from a number of studies on community housing that property values are not detrimentally affected. A comprehensive review of these studies concluded that the extent to which property values are lowered depends on a variety of factors including design and management of affordable housing, compatibility between affordable housing and the host neighbourhood, and concentration of affordable housing (Ngyan, M 2005).
objectors about the purpose of consultation and ways in which opposition might be mitigated. The question remains about the impact of the NIMBY response on local government planning and decision making, and the consequent challenges for governance.

Whilst Schively (2007) argues for better understanding of NIMBY responses in order to improve planning methods, Hillier (2003) explores this further with a focus on the populist decision-making frequently arising out of contested claims and the implications for community participation and representative democracy.

‘Elected representatives and planners may find themselves torn between a commitment to civic engagement and community led planning, loyalty to local vote bases and concern not to lose control’ (Hillier 2003:158).

Hillier cautions against planners and elected representatives becoming ‘puppets of populism’ when they bow to a self interested minority who claim to speak on behalf of the majority when rejecting certain developments in their neighbourhood. Hillier refers to Canovan’s account of the most common populist syndrome as the “populism of the little man,” the small proprietor (trader, homeowner) operating in defence of their heartland believing in their unfettered right to private property and distrusting politicians and government (Hillier 2003:160). Hillier refers to the ‘tyranny of the minority’ when local government public participation strategies are dominated by a small but vociferous and well resourced group who claim to be operating in the public interest, which is often at odds with a longer term social justice agenda. Claiming to represent the community the minority opponents will often seek to actively exclude anyone who is different or marginalised, leading to a ‘betrayal of democracy’ (Hillier 2003:162). Hillier concludes that if ‘ethical’ planning practice is legitimised through an appeal to the ‘public interest’ decisions must be justified by substance rather than by process alone (Hillier 2003:164). Hillier’s conclusion concurs with that of Fainstein, Campbell and others who argue that good and fair deliberative processes are not sufficient, there is a
need for a complementary social justice agenda which can also inform final decisions (Fainstein 2005; Campbell and Marshall 2006; Campbell 2006).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has canvassed some of the ideas informing more inclusive governance arrangements which underpin urban renewal and other place based policies and practices. While Considine refers to ‘collaborative advantage through network governance’ Healey advocates ‘transforming urban planning and governance systems and processes via collaboration’. The focus of each approach is slightly different, but both positions provide some promising directions for rethinking governance in ways that promote more inclusive practices and transformative outcomes. The collaborative planning approach of Patsy Healey (informed by new institutional analysis) provides some tools for a micro analysis of the governance process in this case study, and particularly for linking the three themes: the governance of people in place. The empirical research on the North American, Canadian and UK experience of managing contested ground, particularly as it relates to siting human services facilities, has filled in some of the gaps left by the governance literature and has provided insights into the nature and dynamics of community conflicts around land use. This will provide a foundation for analysing the community response in this case study of the development of Woodstock rooming house. This review has provided the background for the development of the specific research questions which will form the basis of this enquiry into the governance of contested ground,
3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction
The previous Chapter provided a review of the literature to assist in the development and refinement of the questions to be addressed in this research. This research is primarily exploratory. The phenomena under investigation do not demonstrate a linear cause-effect type of relationship because of the complexity of the systems, processes and relationships that are being investigated. The research will not be an ‘enquiry from the outside’ which involves the collection of interval data amenable to statistical manipulation, that allow greater confidence in generalisations, as is the case with quantitative research. Qualitative research, the approach used in this study, is an ‘enquiry from the inside’ by gathering ‘thick descriptions’ (Becker 1992) based on the analysis of archival data and in depth conversations with key informants (Allen, Skinner et al. 1991:178). One of the critiques of qualitative research is that it is impressionistic and non verifiable, however these limitations can be overcome with systematic data collection and positively seeking contradictory evidence (Allen, Skinner et al. 1991).

The research questions
The research questions follow from the overall aim of the study, which is to examine local government’s role in planning contested ground; with a focus on how the community is engaged in place planning and how competing interests are resolved. This enquiry explores local government’s role in community housing provision, specifically the development of Woodstock rooming house. The term ‘community housing’ is distinct from state government managed public housing and refers to affordable housing which is managed by a community organization, which can include local government. The term community housing ‘provision’ (rather than ‘supply’ or ‘production’) is used here because it ‘captures the institutional arrangements that are a part of housing production and also moves beyond an explicit market context, placing a greater emphasis on specific social relations’ (Alves 2007:5). The term ‘governance’ is used drawing on Stoker’s definition, indicating a change in the meaning of government,
referring to a new process of governing. ‘Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs are not too much different from government. It is rather a matter of difference in processes’ (Stoker 1998:17).

The levels and dimensions of the governance process for the development of Woodstock rooming house are analysed using Healey’s (2003) framework outlined in the previous Chapter. Questions are raised about why the Woodstock proposal was so contested and therefore so challenging for governance. Neighbourhood opposition to Woodstock will be compared to that found in similar research on resident responses to LULUs described as NIMBY responses. Questions will be posed about whether the planning and governance process worked in the case of Woodstock using Healey’s assessment criteria for ‘transformational governance’ as an evaluation framework (Healey 2003). The findings of this research will be compared with theories and findings derived from relevant national and international studies to provide insights into the explanatory capacity of these theories and will suggest areas for further research and ways of improving governance processes. Whilst the circumstances of this case study are unique, the research aims to develop some conclusions about how local government in general can be more effective in the way it engages with its communities in resolving conflicts over LULUs.

The specific questions to be addressed in the research are;

1. Do the governance processes for the Woodstock Rooming House project, in particular the actors and arenas, the networks and coalitions, stakeholder selection, the discourses and practices meet Healey’s assessment criteria for transforming governance? (Healey 2003).

2. Did opposition to the project typify responses to neighbourhood change, often characterized as NIMBY responses? (Piat 2000; Cowan 2003; Schively 2007)
Case study approach

This research utilises a case study approach as its primary methodology. Rose (1991) characterises the case study as placing ‘the subject’s experiences in their specific social, economic and historical context, not necessarily generalisable, but rather providing a detailed examination of an event which exhibits the operation of a specified theoretical principle’ (Rose 1991:191). The goal of the case study is to expand and generalise theories - i.e. analytical generalisations - rather than to enumerate frequencies - i.e. statistical generalisations (Yin 2003). Yin defines a case study as an ‘empirical enquiry that

‘Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin 2003:13).

Yin identifies three conditions informing all research; the combinations of which enable the choice of one of the five basic research strategies - experiment, survey, archival analysis, history, or case study. The three conditions consist of; the type of research question (who, what, where, when, why or how questions); the extent of control over the events to be studied, and the focus on historical or contemporary events. Yin suggests that if the research asks questions about ‘how’ and ‘why’ events unfolded, if the investigator has no control over the situation under investigation and the study is of a contemporary issue- all of which apply in our research- then the case study is the appropriate research method (Yin 2003:5). For these reasons the case study has been chosen as the primary research method, although archival and survey analysis will also be undertaken.

Type of case study

According to Yin’s classification, this research focuses on a single ‘case’, the development of Woodstock rooming house, in its context, with multiple units of analysis (Yin 2003:40). The case is a representative or typical case where local government is faced with local opposition to an unwanted land use and
as a result will have applicability to other similar ‘cases’ and provide a basis for future investigation.

The multiple units of analysis associated with community housing provision in the Port Phillip Council to be explored in this study comprise the social dimensions (resident responses), spatial dimensions (land use patterns and the actual community housing proposal) and the governance dimensions (Policy and the planning system). Figure 7 provides a thematic overview of the units of analysis.

**Figure 7  Woodstock case study-unit of analysis**

The study examines the relationship between three areas, social dimensions, spatial dimensions and governance processes, and the interaction between the broader structures of provision and the actors in the process; that is, the interaction between structure and agency. New institutional theory, with its emphasis on structure and agency, is one way of bridging discourses between
the nature of ‘governance’ and the participation of the governed and Healey’s framework will be used to analyse this relationship (Healey 2003).

The criteria for the selection of the case study on Woodstock included:
- considerable contest evident
- a locally unwanted land use
- the ‘episode’ occurred within the last six years and is therefore ‘contemporary’
- of general relevance to all local government authorities
- ease of access to information and key informants.

There were many examples of planning contests in Port Phillip that met the criteria for selection as case studies for this research. Examples included the provision of a skate park, which has taken nine years to finally get off the drawing board; or tolerance areas for street sex workers, the subject of ongoing contest (Press and Szechtman 2004). The provision of community housing, and specifically the development of Woodstock rooming house was selected not only because it met all the criteria but because most local governments are challenged by the crisis in affordable housing and particularly the need for community housing. The findings would therefore have more relevance to local government in general.

The Port Phillip Council (PPC) was selected as the case study site because it is typical of many inner urban local governments both in Australia and internationally, facing pressures of gentrification and a decline in affordable housing. The council was interested in working in a more joined-up and inclusive way when planning for and “revitalizing” places across the city. The work at Port Phillip typically involved collaborative and inclusive governance approaches to planning. The council also has a history of tackling difficult issues in innovative ways when addressing some of its intractable or ‘wicked’ social problems (Press 2003; Press and Szechtman 2004).
Data collection methods

A variety of data collection methods were used in order to achieve ‘construct validity’ and reliability. Yin indicates that results will be more valid if multiple sources of evidence are utilised and a chain of evidence is established (Yin 2003:34). The data collection framework is attached as Appendix 2 where sources of evidence are identified for each of the research questions.

The main data collection method was qualitative consisting if in depth semi-structured interviews with the key actors involved in the development of Woodstock, including opposing residents and traders(6), PPC staff(2), Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA) staff(1), project consultants (architect and artist) and elected representatives(2). See Appendix 3 for the interview guide. Participation in the interview was voluntary. Prior to each interview the informant was advised through a plain English statement of the nature of the research and how it would be used (see Appendix 3a). The interviews were all conducted face to face by the researcher and lasted up to sixty minutes. No direct identifying information was used in presenting the findings. In order to preserve confidentiality, resident and business owner respondents were given pseudonyms, while other respondents were identified by their role or job title rather than by name. However informants were advised that given the single case and the small sample, ‘insiders’ may have been able to identify informants.

An investigation of the conceptual issues and research relevant to the study was undertaken through a literature review, outlined in Chapter Two. Analysis of council records provided substantial material to verify interviews and provided contextual background for analysing the case. This material was obtained through Port Phillip council’s planning department and council meeting minutes all of which was publically available. The information included neighbour objections, planning reports, project documentation and drawings, preplanning and planning consultation meeting minutes and reports, as well as the Victorian Civil Administration Tribunal (VCAT) report. A review was also undertaken of local media articles at key stages in the project’s development. Analysis of post-occupancy neighbour survey results provided an opportunity to obtain additional
Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government

Information from a larger group of neighbours to complement the more in-depth key informant interviews.

The researcher was a participant in the development of Woodstock. A former manager of Neighbourhood Development at PPC, the researcher was a member of the Woodstock project steering group and responsible for planning the early community consultations. As the manager responsible for both community housing and community engagement, the tension between providing housing for marginalised members of the community in the face of considerable neighbourhood opposition was particularly acute. This experience provided the motivation to undertake this research in order to explore some of the fundamental issues in managing competing claims and to recommend improvements to governance processes in these highly contested situations.

The researcher is supportive of community housing provision and is committed to deliberative and inclusive governance processes. Whilst these values will inform the perceptions of the process and analysis of the data gathered for the research, the primary concern was not to justify the processes adopted but to learn as much as possible from the key players about their perceptions of the process and how it could have been more effective in addressing the type of conflicts over land use typified by the Woodstock process.

The analysis of data was undertaken using NVIVO - a research software program available under license from QSR International which enables the grouping of data under key themes. The themes included governance, the planning system, NIMBY, understanding of different community interests, and improvement suggestions.

In summary, the research design involved the collection of multiple sources of evidence and establishing a chain of evidence as a means of contributing to what Yin describes as ‘construct validity’ and thereby enhancing the credibility of the research (Yin 2003: 34).
4. THE SOCIAL, SPATIAL AND GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter sets the context for the research, in particular the social, spatial governance aspects underpinning the development of Woodstock rooming house. The social context will be explored through a brief profile of the people in the neighbourhood of Balaclava (in which Woodstock is located) and a history of resident opposition to community housing in Port Phillip. The area is very diverse and there are significant pressures as a result of gentrification which has exacerbated conflicts over land use. The spatial context describes the built form of the local neighbourhood and the Woodstock development itself. The final section will explore the governance dimensions, specifically state and local government policy on community housing and the operation of the state and local planning system which sets the ‘rules’ for how land use is managed.

Social context

Profile of the people in the neighbourhood

The profile of the Balaclava citizen is very diverse. The official City of Port Phillip profile reflects a diverse range of household and incomes, with a small number of families with children (21%), mostly single people age 25-35 (25%), very transient, renting apartments and working within the region (City of Port Phillip 2003). Earlier studies have revealed up to 20% of people living in the neighbourhood are gay and lesbian, the same percentage as for families with children (Saulwick 1993).

Balaclava is an ethnically diverse neighbourhood with 38% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. Residents were born in an array of overseas countries, the main ones being Poland and the former USSR. The majority of residents rent their homes, 47% compared with 37% who own or are purchasing their properties. Balaclava residents have the lowest income levels in Port Phillip, although the percentage of household income less than
$500 per week decreased by 10% between 1996 and 2001, from 38% to 28% and there was a corresponding 10% increase in households earning over $1500 per week, from 9.3% in 1996 to 20% in 2001 (City of Port Phillip 2003). Gentrification is impacting on this neighbourhood as housing prices increase and higher income earners move in.

The neighbourhood has typically housed and supported a number of low income and marginalised members of the community through the extensive provision of low cost rental accommodation and rooming houses. Rooming houses present a useful measure of gentrification (typically defined as the displacement of low income earners in favour of higher income earners) and one expects to see an increased loss of low cost rooming houses in gentrifying areas. The St Kilda/Balaclava area of Port Phillip has traditionally had the highest concentration of rooming houses of any suburb in Melbourne. Rooming houses in the area peaked in 1954 with 636 houses and Figure 8 shows that by 1984 only 143, or less than a quarter of these, remained. Over the last two decades the rate of closure in the area slowed but nonetheless rooming houses still reduced by almost two thirds so that in 2003 only 50 remain with 1100 beds. These latter losses are particularly significant given the limited numbers remaining.

![Figure 8](image_url)  
*Figure 8 Rooming House numbers/beds St Kilda/ Balaclava 1955-2005 (Aspin 2005)*
**History of resident response to community housing**

Most of the community housing in the City has been provided by PP C in association with the PPHA. According to information provided by PPC’s Housing Development Officer, of the 17 projects undertaken over 22 years (between 1981 and 2003) only 4 or 24% have been contested and taken to the Victorian Civil and Administration Tribunal (VCAT) or its predecessor the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. This number compares with 10% of all planning appeals to VCAT. The appeals were against the following community housing projects

- 1997 Grosvenor-Brunning family housing-Balaclava (minor appeal, the objector wanted large setbacks, and was concerned about car parking impacts. Sole objector’s case dismissed)
- 2001 The Regal rooming house-St Kilda (minor objections re loss of trees, overlooking- sole objector withdrew mid hearing)
- 2001 Albion St rooming house–East St Kilda (first major objections over use particularly. Some VCAT conditions but the project was approved)
- 2003 Woodstock rooming house, Balaclava (largest objection over use, scale, loss of amenity, conflict of interest for council as planning authority and developer, loss of ‘open space’, ‘concerns about use as a rooming house’, impact on car park…VCAT found in project’s favour-no conditions)

Three of the four appeals to VCAT were against community housing in the Balaclava/East St Kilda neighbourhood and the objections have become more substantial over the last five years. The type of neighbourhood in Port Phillip more likely to oppose community housing, until the Woodstock proposal, had a relatively homogenous housing form, was well established, and contained significant heritage areas. The predominant concerns of opposing residents were about perceived risks and impact, especially concerns about loss of amenity (noise, traffic, crowding) aesthetics, use (fear based on stereotypical views about the types of users) and concern about a decline in property values.
Typical opponents were immediate neighbouring property owners, longer term residents, with the resources and knowledge to mount an opposition campaign.

A post occupancy review of Albion St rooming house indicated that residents found the community housing better than expected, had no comments or concerns, and frequently had positive things to say about design and the tenants. Approximately 80% of neighbours opposed the Albion St development during the planning process. A year after the rooming house opened, 80% had no concerns (Port Phillip Housing Association 2002).

The place

The area
The City of Port Phillip, an inner urban bayside municipality, was established in 1994, following the amalgamation of the former cities of St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.

The housing stock in Balaclava is also very diverse and includes larger houses and cottages from the Victorian and Edwardian eras, with a significant stock of flats and apartments from the 1960s and 1970s. Flats are the dominant type of dwelling in Balaclava, making up 55.09% of the total dwelling stock. This is four times the amount of flats in the Melbourne Statistical Division (13.21%). The neighbourhood is one of the most densely settled in the City of Port Phillip (City of Port Phillip 2003).

The area around the Balaclava activity centre, Figure 9, in which Woodstock is located, is a mixed use residential/commercial area as would be expected for a retail and station precinct.
Figure 9  Balaclava neighbourhood with Carlisle St Activity Centre catchment area.

The project

Port Phillip has one of Melbourne’s highest levels of social disadvantage and housing need. The urgent need for social housing is based generally on high concentrations of low income residents, high levels of people with housing stress, many of which lived in single person households, poor levels of rental housing affordability, and low growth levels for social housing. In recent years private rooming house supply has shrunk by 12% per year, eroding what was Melbourne’s highest concentration of private rooming houses. This trend is likely to be ongoing. This will displace rooming house residents who have very low incomes and often high levels of social disadvantage and marginalisation. The Woodstock rooming house proposal represented one of the few opportunities for providing replacement housing for such residents (Spivak 2004:1).

Woodstock rooming house was initially proposed in 2000, part of Phase 1V of CPP’s Community Housing Program (City of Port Phillip 2000:50).
Woodstock was to be developed in the airspace above the council car park on the corner of Woodstock and Marlborough St, Balaclava (Woodstock site) as the first stage of a two stage development proposal which included the redevelopment of the nearby Balaclava station site car park (Station site) for public/private mixed residential/commercial use. Figure 10 provides an aerial view of both sites.

Figure 10  Aerial view Balaclava Development Sites

The Woodstock proposal was for a 30-36 bed rooming house over three levels, utilizing the 24 existing car park spaces with an additional 2 spaces for rooming house tenants. The housing was for single people capable of independent living in a mix of single bedroom with shared communal facilities as well as fully self contained units (Spivak 2002). As a requirement of Victorian state government funding, the housing was expected to house people on low incomes and in housing stress but also to include people with intellectual, psychiatric, physical and sensory disabilities as well as people with substance abuse problems. The building was to comply with all Victorian State (Rescode) and local planning (Port Phillip Planning Scheme) requirements which addressed height, setbacks,
overshadowing and overlooking issues. The Woodstock site is surrounded by single story dwellings as well as three to four story warehouses. Figure 11 is an artist’s impression of the proposed development set within the streetscape.

Figure 11  3D images and views of proposed building. MGS 2001

Figure 12 indicates how the completed Woodstock development relates well to the neighbouring warehouse properties, but its bulk and height dwarfs the single-story workers’ cottages in which most of the objectors live.

Figure 12  Aerial photo of Woodstock and surrounds. John Gollings 2006
Governance

Understanding the governance process, for the development of Woodstock is one of the key concerns of this research. This section provides a brief description of the relevant state and local policy on community housing and the land use planning framework within which local planning decisions are made. These provide the substantive policy components of the governance process for developing Woodstock.

Local/state government policy on community housing

The policy drivers for the provision of housing are extensive and complex. This section focuses only on Victorian state and Port Phillip council policy as it applied to community housing from 2000-2005 (see Appendix 4).

Victorian State government housing policy

Both Victorian and Commonwealth governments are supportive of community housing as the preferred method of delivering social housing. ‘Social Housing’ is a term understood as referring to rental housing programs supported by government initiatives that are designed to assist low and moderate income households access appropriate, secure and affordable housing’ (Bisset 2000): 7. Community housing comprises various forms of rental housing that are owned and/or managed by not for profit community organisations, as opposed to public housing which is owned and managed by the state government. Woodstock rooming house is community housing funded through a partnership between the Victorian government and Port Phillip Council. The funding was provided through the Victorian government’s Social Housing Innovations Program (SHIP). SHIP was launched in 2000 with the aims of expanding social housing through community housing and developing innovative housing models to enhance the sustainability of the community housing sector. It was designed to increase the participation of joint venture partners such as local government. The Victorian government contributed an additional $94 million to SHIP as part of the State-Commonwealth Housing Agreement to expand the community housing component of social housing.
City of Port Phillip housing policy

The legacy for the Port Phillip’s housing policy derived from the former City of St Kilda policy and program on community housing. St.Kilda developed its Municipal Housing Program in 1985. By 1996, 180 community housing units had been established, conferring it the largest local government housing program in Australia. The housing was managed by the St.Kilda Housing Association Inc. which was established by the City of St.Kilda in 1986 to manage Council and joint venture community housing. The program’s emphasis on rental housing for low income residents was influenced by the combined effect of low levels of public housing and the concentration of affordable rental housing both in rooming houses and blocks of flats which were being lost through redevelopment to become expensive rental or private housing (City of Port Phillip 1997:11).

In 1996, the newly elected PPC was keen to reassert a strong housing role and affirm its commitment to community housing. The council adopted the Port Phillip Housing Strategy in 1997. The fundamental purpose of the Port Phillip Housing Strategy was

‘To provide housing diversity which contributes to the maintenance of social diversity, and to achieve this by the provision and facilitation of affordable, accessible and suitable housing which meets the needs of all groups within the community, in particular to those which are disadvantaged within or unable to adequately access the private housing market’ (City of Port Phillip 1997:13).

The council justified this policy based on the following rationale;

‘The Housing Strategy is based on the moral principal to uphold communal values which:

- cherish a compassionate community which assists disadvantaged and vulnerable members to live with dignity;
- support diversity and differences in ethnicity, income, age, housing tenure, household type, sexual orientation and housing type;
- aspire to control the community’s destiny through the ongoing democratic process at various levels of municipal life; and

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recognise that safe, secure, stable and affordable housing are essential elements to peoples’ personal identity, welfare and quality of life’ (City of Port Phillip 1997:13).

As was the case for the City of St Kilda, the council commitment was to the supply not management of its community housing stock. The St Kilda Housing Association continued in its management role but became the Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA) to reflect its focus in managing council’s housing stock across the amalgamated municipality.

Council undertook a review of its Housing Strategy in 2000. The City of Port Phillip Community Housing Program towards 2005, recommended that additional community housing projects be undertaken in partnership with the state government. This document identified the Marlborough St car parks (one of which was the Woodstock site) as potential sites for community housing (City of Port Phillip 2000). This policy document was released for community comment prior to its adoption by council with no local opposition to the proposal to establish community housing in the Balaclava shopping centre car parks. The Balaclava redevelopment proposals were also identified in the council’s annual corporate and budget plan, again with no opposition.

**The Victorian land use planning system**

*Melbourne 2030 - Planning for Sustainable Growth* is the State Government’s ‘blue-print’ for growth and change in Melbourne and provides the strategic context for land use planning in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Two of the ‘Key Directions’ within *Melbourne 2030* provide the context for considering the development of Woodstock. These directions call for

- A more compact city by concentrating new higher density housing development in and around existing activity centres that offer good access to services and transport (Policy 1.3), The Carlisle St Balaclava shopping centre was identified as one of 4 activity centres to be targeted for higher density in Port Phillip.
- A fairer city through an increase in the supply of well-located affordable housing (Policy 6.1)(Department of Sustainability & Environment 2005).
Below this strategic framework is a hierarchy of particular instruments to provide for the planning, regulation and development of land. Urban planning, as set out in the Planning and Environment Act (1987) and associated regulation was at the time of the Woodstock development undertaken by the Minister for Planning via the State-level Department of Infrastructure (DoI) but now managed through the Department of Planning and Community Development (Planning and Environment Act, 1987). Local authorities are charged with preparing and administering planning schemes (Planning and Environment Act, 1987: Sections 9, 13), under the ultimate jurisdiction of the Minister. Plan-making and implementation are ostensibly devolved to local government, but many factors restrict local autonomy. In plan-making, local government in its Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) must follow the state government prepared Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs). Policies such as ResCode, the residential design guide, are subsumed under planning schemes, and are not open to significant modification at the local level. Figure 13 provides a picture of this hierarchy and illustrates the extent to which Municipal Planning schemes are required to reflect State content in all but their Local Planning Policy Framework.

*Figure 13  Structure of a municipal planning scheme (Department of Planning and Community Development 2008)*
The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) is the only source of appeal against planning decisions by municipalities. Even here, VCAT hearings are typically determined in accordance with State objectives in the centrally directed elements of the planning scheme. As a result “Central control is exercised both before and after the fact of a development application: by imposing the rules used by local government to decide; and at VCAT, ensuring that those rules and policies have been followed” (March and Low 2004:49).

The Port Phillip Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) sets out the council’s strategic planning objectives which underpin the land-use and development provisions of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. The MSS has been developed with input from the community, so at this level the outcome can be seen as inclusive of community views. Together with local planning policies, the MSS is a part of the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) in the Planning Scheme and is a statutory component of all planning schemes. The Port Phillip MSS provides the strategic local context for considering projects such as Woodstock. A key issue identified in the MSS is the decline in housing diversity and the importance of retaining a diverse population through the provision of affordable housing (21-03). Elsewhere in the MSS the Council commits to encouraging the development of purpose designed rooming houses close to retail centres and public transport (22-9-1 to 22-09-3) (City of Port Phillip 2000a). As a result proposals such as Woodstock rooming house are in line with council’s strategic planning policy.

March and Low (2004) in their critique of the Victorian planning system observe that

‘The medium of bureaucracy is extensively used in formalized planning procedures. Implementation is reduced to testing of proposals against predetermined standards, categories and processes stipulated by the VPPs. Discourse is allowed only within the bureaucratic opportunities provided, including formal participation exercises such as ‘objections’. Any public input not in line with ‘planning matters’ is ignored’ (March and Low 2004:57).
Accordingly, dissatisfaction with urban development is typically manifest in resident objections during plan implementation. Many concerns in these objections are ignored, as they do not relate to what are defined as ‘planning matters’. The importance of these observations will become evident as we review the statutory planning process for Woodstock.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a context for considering the governance of the development of Woodstock rooming house. It has been established that the neighbourhood is extremely diverse and one of the most disadvantaged in the City of Port Phillip. However, the population profile is gradually changing with gentrification resulting in low income renters being progressively displaced by higher income property owners, exacerbated by the progressive loss of rooming house accommodation. Both CPP and Victorian state planning policy objectives support urban consolidation and affordable housing as a means of maintaining population diversity. The Woodstock rooming house proposal was therefore timely in support of these objectives as one of several community housing projects proposed within the PPC’s Community Housing Strategy. This Strategy was the primary vehicle for ensuring resources were allocated and leveraged for Woodstock. The local (MSS) and state planning (VPP) schemes provide the framework for determining whether the project could proceed. It was concluded that while the PPC administers the planning system, it is the State Government which controls it. Consequently, as the statutory process is managed at the local government level, local objectors are focussed upon local government in this process and are not directly concerned with the broader planning issues that fall within state planning policy, further exacerbating the tension between policy and process. It is this tension which is fundamental to understanding the type of conflict which emerged in the planning and governance of Woodstock.
5. GOVERNANCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOODSTOCK ROOMING HOUSE

Introduction

This chapter analyses the governance processes in the development of Woodstock rooming house from initial project conception, through preplanning and formal statutory planning and appeals processes to the development of the housing on site. The analysis will be based on Healey’s (2003) framework for assessing the effectiveness of the governance processes, and will address the first research question which is:

Did the governance processes for the Woodstock Rooming House project, in particular the actors and arenas, the networks and coalitions, stakeholder selection, the discourses and practices meet Healey’s assessment criteria for transforming governance? (Healey 2003).

Key actors, their interests and arenas of engagement

The key stakeholders featuring in this case involved councillors, council staff, project consultants, the state government VCAT member, as well as people who mobilised in opposition to the project, exclusively neighbouring residents and business owners.

Port Phillip councillors had a clear commitment to the provision of community housing as evidenced by their adoption of the Community Housing Strategy and funding contribution to Woodstock. The Alma ward councillor, in whose ward Woodstock was located, had a particular commitment to the project.

I proposed the use of the at-grade car parks around the Balaclava Activity Centre for the specific purpose of low-cost housing because I could see that this was council land and that with the rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood in and around the remainder of the City of Port Phillip, there was less opportunity to be able to get affordable land and use it for community housing (Alma ward councillor).
The Alma ward councillor was also the mayor at the time when Woodstock was in the pre-planning and statutory planning phases and when opposition to the project was at its peak. The Alma ward councillor/mayor and the Ormond ward councillor were interviewed for the research.

Council staff interviewed consisted of the housing development officer, the statutory planner and the Director City Development. The Housing Development Officer had prepared council’s Community Housing Strategy and first identified Woodstock as a project likely to attract state SHIP funding. Council’s statutory planner’s role was to assess whether the Woodstock proposal met council and state government land use planning requirements and advise council accordingly. The Director City Development had a key role to deliver council’s Community Housing Strategy and deploy staff effectively in achieving this. The Director also chaired the first preplanning consultation with the community.

The project consultants included the project architect and artist, both of whom were interviewed for the research. The project architect had a considerable commitment to the provision of affordable housing, evidenced by his board membership of Melbourne Affordable Housing and publications promoting sustainable and inclusive solutions to urban development (McGauran 2002). The project artist had considerable experience working in place based community projects and was committed to inclusive processes.

The VCAT member’s interest was in determining whether council had operated within State and local land use planning frameworks. The researcher accessed his report dismissing the appeal and recommending the project proceed without conditions (Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal 2004).

The Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA) had an interest in the development of Woodstock as they were to manage the rooming house once it was built. The Chief Executive Officer of PPHA was interviewed for the research. The CEO and members of the PPHA Board were also influential in the Community Alliance of Port Phillip (CAPP,
formerly Turn the Tide) who had a key role in setting the council’s agenda for community housing and supporting candidates committed to a social justice agenda (Aspin 2008 ). Five of the seven Port Phillip councillors at the time were endorsed by CAPP. CAPP later articulated its policy principles for the development of affordable housing in its policy manifesto as the development of ‘Publicly-funded community and public housing, and other policies designed to minimise social exclusion and disadvantage with council playing an active role in the planning, resourcing and provision of affordable housing’ (Community Alliance of Port Phillip 2004).

Neighbouring property and business owners who opposed the development had an interest in maintaining the amenity of the neighbourhood which for various reasons they saw as being threatened by the Woodstock development. Some of these opponents formed the organisation Balaclava Residents against Inappropriate Development and Architecture (BRAIDA) to appeal against the development. The core organizing group was made up members of neighbouring households located next to or opposite Woodstock. The convenor and two of the most active members of BRAIDA were interviewed for this research as well as two residents and one business owner who opposed the development but who were not members of BRAIDA. The researcher also reviewed BRAIDA’s VCAT appeal document (Patkin 2004).

The arenas or institutional sites in which the action took place occurred in formal council managed meetings, pre planning consultation meetings and statutory planning meetings where the ‘rules of engagement’ were prescribed by the council in accord with its standing orders. The standing orders for statutory planning meetings specify a time limit for speakers and don’t allow any discussion with councillors when they are considering an item. The other arenas, to which the author had no access, were the BRAIDA meetings.

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2 In order to provide anonymity to neighbours those interviewed for the research were given a pseudonym. ‘Aemon’, ‘Diane’ and ‘Brendon’ immediate neighbours and BRAIDA members. ‘Rodney’ and ‘Susan’ immediate neighbours but not members of BRAIDA and ‘Sandra’ a neighbouring business owner. Other key informants are identified by their role or job title.
No council or other representatives were invited to or participated in these meetings. Prior to the formation of BRAIDA opposing residents sought funds from council to assist their appeal. This request was refused. The group held fortnightly meetings to plan their appeal to VCAT and conducted several fundraising activities.

**Governance as the mobilisation of bias - networks, stakeholder selection, discourses and practices.**

Having located the key actors and institutional arenas for interaction, the next level of analysis aims to reveal the way ‘bias’ is deliberately mobilized. The mobilisation of bias provides an account of how the governance process for Woodstock played out. As Healey suggests it is where ‘explicit struggles occur over access to the power to frame formal rules and resource flows, and over the ideologies and policy principles which inform this framing work (Healey 2004:94). This perspective reveals the networks and coalitions engaged in the process, identifies how stakeholders are selected and the discourses and planning practices which determine how problems are framed and solutions identified.

The process for developing Woodstock rooming house spanned a time frame of six years, from initial project concept through to final construction. A time line for the project is attached as Appendix 5. Details of the various stages are outlined in the following sections with the primary focus being the informal and formal statutory planning and consultation processes as these enable us to explore in more detail the governance issues in developing the project. The community response will be examined briefly at each stage of the project and is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

**Concept Development**

A steering group made up of council staff (Housing Development Officer, Manager Neighbourhood Development (the researcher) and Director City Development) the Alma ward councillor and consultant architect was established in 2001. The steering group undertook a basic feasibility study to enable the preparation of a funding application to the Victorian State
Government through its SHIP Program for a 35 - bed rooming house on the Woodstock site (Spivak 2003). The project had been listed in council’s Corporate Plan 2001/2 but there had been no direct notification of neighbouring households at this stage. The council’s application for SHIP funding was successful with the Victorian Government committing to funding 75% of the project cost with council making up the additional 25% which included the value of the land contribution for a total final project cost of $4.9m.

PPC had a strong commitment to Woodstock and proposed to meet a number of strategic objectives in developing the proposal, not only to provide affordable housing to maintain population diversity but to redevelop poorly utilized council resources, namely at grade car parks The council also saw the project as a way of promoting best practice in urban design and incorporating integrated art and environmentally sustainable features (Spivak 2002).

As will be evident here the actors involved in the development of Woodstock concept were those with a political, professional and technical commitment to the project. The Woodstock project feasibility study occurred behind closed doors and although the community were informed via statements in the CPP’s annual plan and capital works program there was no direct outreach to neighbours to let them know what was being planned.

**Preplanning community consultations (March 2002- April 2003)**

Following a report in the local media in March 2002 about the allocation of state SHIP funding for the Woodstock rooming house, all property owners in the surrounding neighbourhood were advised of the proposal and invited to a preliminary community consultation to hear about and provide feedback on the development proposal. Letters were distributed to around 1000 households in the neighbourhood. No invitations were issued to prospective Woodstock tenants; it was assumed that their interests would be represented by the PPHA. The consultation was conducted in June 2002 and attended by around 150 residents and local Carlisle St traders. A subsequent meeting was conducted in December 2002 where more detailed designs of the rooming house were
presented. Notes from these meetings identified the critical concerns raised (Spivak 2002a). The researcher observed the June 13th 2002 meeting and all key informants interviewed provided comments on these consultation meetings.

The first community consultation meeting had a carefully planned agenda where the intention was to have several presentations followed by small group facilitated discussion where attendees could raise any concerns or ask questions. Proposed speakers included the project architect who had a very detailed PowerPoint presentation (36 slides) about the design issues and constraints, council’s Housing Development Officer about the rooming house program and the CEO of PPHA about the management of the rooming house. The architect’s detailed presentation included visual images of the neighbourhood which identified unattractive views of the car park and surrounding areas which was a clear source of distress to neighbouring residents. The PowerPoint presentation also contained images of the building envelope as indicated in Figure 14, which was incorrectly interpreted by neighbours as representing the final design.

*Figure 14  Woodstock-proposed building envelope*
The agenda was abandoned early in the meeting as the level of emotion and hostility toward the architect’s presentation was such that speakers could not be heard.

The opposition to the project was emotive and at times hysterical. The information session on the project turned into high farce, a core of residents took the opportunity to vent anger and disapproval and behave as if they were at a football match. It was clear that there would be no middle ground on this matter (Council planner).

The project architect had a more ‘objective’ assessment of the process,

Consultations are often designed with the expectation that people will have a dispassionate view about things they have a vested interest in and are therefore passionate about (project architect).

The objectors’ view of the preliminary community consultation in the view of some of the key informants was typically expressed in the following;

Council was bullying people. They were absolutely bullying people because they had their agenda… And I think that that gave a horrible feeling to the people that they were being bombarded and pushed and it didn’t matter what they felt or what they wanted…… The word “consultation” should be used as consultation for a start. Not telling people what they are going to do. If they’re going to have a consultation meeting which I think they called the first meeting, they should be just communicating to the people getting the whole feeling about the whole situation rather than telling people this is what we’re going to do, and this is the way we’re going to do it and you just sit there and accept it (Susan)

The concerted attempt by attendees to sabotage the planned agenda was an attempt to gain control over a situation in which opponents felt powerless. As the researcher observed, the meeting was dominated by five very angry residents who wanted to express their opposition rather than hear what council or others thought - anyone who had anything positive to say about the proposal
was immediately shouted down. What was of particular concern to opponents was the profile of prospective tenants. The SHIP funding application, which was made available to neighbouring residents prior to the consultation meeting, indicated that the target group of rooming house tenants may include people who had a range of physical and psychiatric disabilities or had substance abuse issues (City of Port Phillip 2001). It was clearly stated at (and prior to) the meeting that people from these groups wouldn’t be excluded but would not necessarily be housed. Opponents had major concerns about the prospect that these type of people could be housed (Spivak 2002a).

Following this initial meeting, those immediate neighbours who later formed BRAIDA doorknocked the neighbourhood to gather support for their opposition campaign. As a result council received a number of proforma responses objecting to the development (key informant interview-Diane). The objections were primarily about the loss of open space and car parking and the use of the site as a rooming house (Spivak 2003).

Summary observations of this stage in terms of Healey’s analytic framework suggest that council initially set the agenda and framework for discussion, the planning discourses and practices, in a way that failed to engage those neighbours who were deeply distressed by the proposal. Council had identified the problem as lack of affordable housing for homeless and marginalized members of the community, but had not engaged the Woodstock neighbours in defining this as a problem. As the researcher observed at the preliminary planning meeting, the presentation of negative visual images of the Woodstock site offended neighbours and technical presentations about the building envelope were misunderstood and further compounded their distress.

Statutory Planning process (May-September 2003)
The planning permit application was advertised extensively (nearly 1000 addresses) including to individuals who provided comment (objections, telephone calls, letters e-mails) prior to lodgement of the application, attendees of the two consultation meetings (13 June 2002 and 4 December 2002) and
households generated from a GIS delineation of a 'community of interest' (a wide area including virtually all commercial properties in Carlisle Street) and residential properties south of Carlisle Street in a larger catchment area than would be normally required by planning processes. In response 25 individual objections and 380 pro-forma objections were received (Schuster 2003).

The objections, described in the statutory planning report to council, were similar to those expressed in the preplanning community consultations, but the comments about use and type of tenants were toned down considerably as objectors learned that these elements would not constitute grounds for refusing an application and would not assist their case (Schuster 2003).

Grounds for objection included

- Parking and traffic concerns: inadequate car parking and provision for visitors, traffic chaos and congestion, restricted pedestrian access along Woodstock Street, inadequate surveillance of the car park causing safety concerns.
- Residential amenity: Overlooking, overshadowing, outlook affected by the building over the car park, thereby removing open space and obstructing views.
- Design: visual bulk, unattractive building, “too big”, “too high”, “overbearing”, does not respect existing or preferred neighbourhood character,
- Density: overdevelopment in a “low-density” area. Excessive site cover. Existing “public open space” will be replaced with a building. Development will cause overcrowding. Excessive number of residents.
- Social: A rooming house will change the “feel of the place”. Concern about the “sociological impact” of lack of support for the tenants (need 24 hour supervision). Concern that the proposal will lead to an increase in crime, adversely affect “families” in the area and reduce property values (Schuster 2003).

Each of these concerns was addressed in the statutory planning report and dismissed in the context of the rules and principles identified in the local
planning scheme and the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP’s). Planning responses included - that expert advice obtained by council indicated that the traffic and parking issues were satisfactorily resolved, that density was not a ground for objection, and property value was not considered a relevant planning consideration, and in any case there was no evidence that it had declined in similar developments. The objection to the proposed use as a rooming house was dismissed in that the proposed use was residential and therefore considered an appropriate one in a residential zone. The report concluded that the proposed use was more consistent with the objectives of the planning scheme than the current car park. The concerns regarding the proposed use and future tenants were acknowledged but considered ‘overstated’.

It is worth noting that the Planning and Environment Act 1987 allows Council to consider the social implications of an application, but that this is to be applied in a positive manner, that is, Council can conclude that the social benefit of a proposal outweighs any negative impacts which Council might otherwise have not accepted, rather than used to prevent a development close to public transport and other amenities such as shopping and community facilities. Accordingly, the social benefits of the proposed use may be considered an over-riding grounds for approving the development outweighing any negative impacts (Schuster 2003).

The process for considering objections to the Woodstock development affirms the conclusions of March and Low (2003) discussed in Chapter 4; that community involvement is permitted only in so far as it relates to a predetermined definition of planning matters outlined in the VPPs. Whilst this is important to enable decisiveness in planning decisions and provides certainty to developers and planning authorities, it has the effect of negating the views of those neighbours who perceive that they will be adversely affected by the development in other ways.

Those interviewed for the research, who had opposed the application, all spoke about the difficulties of the formal planning process. In the first instance they had to learn about how the process worked.
When we established the BRAIDA campaign, we rang two other groups who had organised campaigns against inappropriate development to try and understand what they did and what their process was, which helped us a little (Aemon).

The other concern was the sense that there was insufficient time in the meeting to express their concerns, combined with the feeling they weren’t being listened to anyway:

The other thing that was particularly frustrating was that there was the opportunity to address council one night, to address all the members of council. Cr DG (statutory planning committee chairperson), had agreed with "Aemon (resident spokesperson) that he could have 9 or 12 minutes, because Aemon was going to speak on behalf of all of us (technically every speaker is allowed three minutes). After 3 minutes, the chair rang the bell. Ding ding, and Aemon was like “Well what’s going on? You said I could have 9 minutes – that’s what you agreed”, “No, no, no, not any more, no, finish up (ding) finish up.”, and it’s like “No, you agreed”, “No you’re boring us now” was the response…..I thought. This is futile you know, it was like the decision’s made, so you can sit there and babble on and show us your power point or whatever you want to do, but nothing’s going to change (Diane).

The frustration expressed by this respondent reflects the concerns about the governance process expressed by those interviewed for this research. These were about the time constraints in meetings, the formality of the process and failure to engage in genuine dialogue as well as the lack of empathy of councillors. The experience contributed to feelings of powerlessness expressed by respondents about their capacity to have an impact on the planning ‘rules’ or the outcomes.

In spite of the objections from nearby residents and traders, council unanimously resolved to proceed with the development at the statutory planning meeting in September 2003. The council press release accompanying the decision indicated that council had listened to and taken on board resident concerns about the design of the rooming house, but that the objections based
on use, amenity, traffic, and impact on property values had been dismissed either because they did not constitute planning grounds for dismissal or they were not substantiated. The council’s mayor ‘rejected claims that the rooming house would drag down the neighbourhood’ and described the approval of the rooming house as ‘a positive outcome for the community’ (City of Port Phillip 2002). In justifying the decision to proceed in the face of resistance by neighbours, the Alma ward councillor spoke about governing for the broader ‘community interest.’

Well one of the stakeholders obviously is the community interest. Council had a 10 year Community Plan which asserted a strong commitment to social justice and social equity. One of the main ways of achieving this was through providing affordable housing. The community had signed off on that. We were listening as much to those who were unable to voice their interests, that is, people who were in need of affordable housing, as well as to the decibel democrats (Alma ward councillor).

**VCAT Appeal**

Neighbouring residents and traders resolved to appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) following council approval of the project, citing their disappointment with council’s determination to proceed with the project despite their objections.

“That’s the only avenue open to us, it’s just so disappointing we’re in this position without really being heard at a council level” said neighbour Greg Bentley (Hagan 2003).

At this point, those immediate neighbours most directly affected by the development formalised their opposition through establishing and incorporating the group, Balaclava Residents Against Inappropriate Development and Architecture (BRAIDA) in order to prepare for the VCAT appeal. They held fortnightly meetings and conducted local fund raising events in order to raise funds for a town planning lawyer to prepare the appeal documentation and represent their interests at the Tribunal. In the end they engaged a relatively inexperienced new graduate planning lawyer as this was all they could afford.
And even then what we could afford to pay for what we raised simply wasn’t sufficient to counter the onslaught that we were hit from both council and VCAT, because we walked into VCAT and they had a $6000 a day lawyer sitting there as well as a traffic consultant (Aemon).

The appeal was heard at VCAT in February 2004. The objectors’ grounds for appeal were failure to respond to the neighbourhood character of the area, non-compliance with the Port Phillip Planning Scheme for car park design, loss of amenity for local residents (noise and overlooking) and adverse affect on Carlisle Street traders (Patkin 2004:5). The appeal submission makes no mention of objectors’ concerns about use as a rooming house or impact on property values, as the objectors had learned that these were not valid planning grounds for appeal.

VCAT dismissed the appeal. One of the reasons cited in the Tribunal’s report was of particular concern to residents.

Residents living close to or abutting non-residential zones cannot expect the same level of amenity as residents living in the middle of pristine residential areas...lower standards are both acceptable and realistic in such interface locations. Residents already suffer lower amenity by virtue of their properties being close to the Carlisle Street Activity Centre with its associated congestion, noise and movement of people and vehicles (Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal 2004:5).

The group involved in the appeal generally agreed that it was a David and Goliath situation, with council having access to the necessary resources to win the case. In hindsight some of the interviewees felt the appeal was a waste of effort. Typical responses included the following;

I think we wasted our time and our money to be honest, and from what you’ve said earlier maybe not, but as far as the way we felt as though it went, no, I don’t feel as though it made any difference at all. So from the time we got involved, I would say we made zero difference (Aemon).
Project Completion

The building was officially opened in July 2006, six years after the project was initially conceived, and over four years since residents were informed about the proposed development. The extensive consultation process and appeals process delayed the project completion by about eighteen months to two years. There are still some strong feelings against the development from a few of the original opponents. On the day when the Minister for Housing officially opened Woodstock, the neighbours living opposite mounted protest posters in their front windows (Figure 15).
Figure 15  Woodstock window protest posters

A post occupancy survey of neighbours was undertaken in September 2007, one year after the rooming house opened. Of the 150 surveys distributed there were 34 responses. A small majority of respondents (18 out of 34) indicated that there had not been any problems as a result of the establishment of Woodstock. The main problems/concerns identified by the remaining respondents included; perceived increase in antisocial behaviour and crime, and reduction in personal and family safety; increase in local traffic and parking problems; and a decline in property values. See Appendix 6 for details (Port Phillip Housing Association 2007 ) Whilst it is important not to dismiss these perceptions, none of these concerns could be substantiated by the evidence. Local police indicated that Woodstock had no effect on crime and crime rates have actually fallen (correspondence with officer in charge, St Kilda Police) and property values continue to increase.3 Given that only one tenant has a car; there has been no increase in traffic and parking problems as a result of the development.

3 According to the Australian home price guide report on median property prices, property values in the area continue to rise. Between Sept 2006 and Sept 2007 the increase was 11.9% for houses and 10.9% for units. (www.homepriceguide.com.au)
Conclusion
This chapter has outlined the story of the *Battle for Balaclava* as it was characterised in the local newspaper at the time (Kidd 2004). The process was adversarial from the outset; opposing neighbours felt that the outcome had already been predetermined by council and that there was no opportunity for genuine dialogue. They didn’t feel as if they were listened to and felt powerless in influencing the final outcome. From their point of view the whole process was unfair; weighted in favour of council who had set the agenda and had the resources to ensure that it was realised. From council’s perspective the decision to proceed with the project despite opposition from neighbours was based on a broader ‘community interest’ and the identified need to provide affordable community housing for marginalised community members. In summary, the key problems identified with the governance process were primarily related to the nature of the discourses and planning practices; the formality of procedures and the language used, the top down nature of agenda setting by council and the management of the meetings. The size of the meetings meant little opportunities existed for real engagement with the issues and the planning rules prevented any real consideration of the underlying concerns of residents.
6. UNDERSTANDING THE OPPOSITION

Introduction

While the previous chapter focused on the governance process in the various phases in the development of Woodstock, this chapter is more concerned to understand the nature of local opposition to the project. Here the demography and geography of opposition as well as the reasons given for opposing the project will be examined through an analysis of secondary data including council records, particularly council reports and submissions, as well as the in depth interviews conducted with key informants and community responses to the post occupancy survey.

Characterizing the ‘opposition’

Demography and geography of opposition

The profile of opponents to Woodstock indicates that they are primarily property owning ratepayers, well educated and capable of representing their case (or able to pay professional consultants to do this). Those interviewed for the research were mostly long term home owners as well as one long term business owner. The exception to this was the convenor of BRAIDA “Aemon” who purchased his property in 2003 not knowing that the adjacent site was earmarked for a rooming house.

Those who prepared detailed objections, as opposed to those signing proforma objections all lived within two streets of Woodstock. Those active in BRAIDA were mostly next door neighbours or lived very close to the development.

So there’s those immediate neighbours, I suppose I’d call the real hot heads, then there are those residents that live 50 metres away who were harangued—and traders who were harangued into signing the petition so they would be seen as being supportive of their fellow residents but they’re not as hot…They sign the petition in order to get people off their backs… Then the further you go out in the circle the less concern there is and there’s greater understanding for the policy reasons of why you’re trying to do what you are doing (Alma ward councillor.)
This observation is borne out by the analysis of the geographic distribution of opposition represented in Figure 16.

**Figure 16  Geography of opposition to Woodstock**

Objecting households in the preplanning stage (Mar 2002-April 2003) are represented in red, supporters in green. One Marlborough St household initially supported the use (the reason cited was that they were volunteers at the St Kilda support agency Sacred Heart Mission) but later signed the proforma letter objecting to the proposal. Those properties marked by an X made a formal planning objection during the statutory planning phase. Immediate neighbours were more intense in their opposition. Out of 114 responses to the Woodstock proposal in the preplanning phase, 29 or 25% of responses came from 6 households. These were either immediate neighbours or residents in the same street, the ‘hot heads’ in the view of the ward councillor. The highest number of
responses (8) came from the most directly affected neighbour, whose property 
shares a boundary wall with Woodstock. The proforma responses were 
primarily from those who lived in the surrounding neighbourhood but could not 
be described as close neighbours of Woodstock. Those who supported the 
proposal for the site as a rooming house generally lived outside the 
neighbourhood altogether, except for one supporter who lived two streets away 
who commented that as former owners of a hostel for low income people they 
supported the proposed rooming house due to the shortage of safe, secure 
housing in the area (Spivak 2003).

At the end of the statutory planning phase, all of the 25 individual objectors 
were from neighbouring households or lived in the immediate vicinity of the 
development. Of the 380 proforma objections only 45 were from the immediate 
neighbourhood identified in Figure 16. The remaining objections were from 
residents of surrounding suburbs or from outside the Port Phillip municipality 
altogether. Those who wrote letters of support for the proposal all lived outside 
the immediate neighbourhood.

**Key concerns**

Of the 114 individual responses received during the preplanning community 
consultation phase the primary concerns were with the consultation process, 
design and density of the rooming house, impact on safety, car parking and 
traffic, and rooming house use and management, in particular, a concern that 
there would not be a 24 hour on site manager. Over half (64) of the respondents 
identified use of the site as a rooming house as their primary concern, often 
describing the undesirable characteristics of the proposed rooming house 
tenants, their effect on the neighbourhood ‘feel’ and the negative impact on 
property values. This is typified in the following objection;

*I'm concerned about the negative impact on property values, the amenity 
impacts on home owners, and crime. The rooming house should be located in 
the outer suburbs. I've worked hard to buy my home, and they have not (Spivak 
2003).*
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Similar concerns were expressed in the formal statutory planning process,

Likely users of the facility may cause antisocial and disruptive behaviour as well as security and health concerns, in an area that is otherwise increasingly occupied by young families (Objector to statutory planning application)

And

I now have real concerns about personal and community safety, with the semi permanent population of the boarding house having no ties to the area. (Objector to statutory planning application)

Opposition to the use as a rooming house was less evident in the statutory planning phase as objectors learned that use was not a valid ground for the rejection of the permit.

Many of the objections to Woodstock reported a lack of trust in council and with the consultation process. In the words of one of the key informants;

We lacked trust in the process that was seen with Woodstock where we all felt pretty railroaded and as though our issues and concerns really weren’t listened to or addressed (Aemon)

Objectors also felt that council didn’t really understand their attachment to their homes, and that councillors were dismissive of their genuine concerns, categorising them NIMBYs.

They (councillors) just didn’t respect us...they need to really understand that it’s people’s homes, and to not just have this view that the people that they are dealing with are gentry or whatever you want, you know, or NIMBYs or whatever, because you know, I think that’s where they need to listen (Diane).

**Intensity and duration of opposition**

As the Woodstock proposal progressed through the various planning stages the numbers present at meetings and the intensity of opposition declined. As described in Chapter 5, the agenda of the first preplanning consultation meeting had to be abandoned as the level of emotion and interjection made
communication impossible. The second preplanning meeting was more subdued but participants still took charge and prevented any presentations being made. The bulk of the time was spent in participant questions and comment but at least discussion in small groups was possible with participant feedback recorded (Spivak 2002b). There were around 150 participants at each of these meetings. The statutory planning meeting proceeded with the required formality, objectors and supporters of the proposal were given the standard 3 minutes to respond to the proposal. Around 25 people attended the meeting for this item, significantly less than for the preplanning consultations (Schuster 2003). The VCAT appeal hearing was attended by only 8 objectors, all members of BRAIDA, represented by their planning lawyer (Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal 2004).

**NIMBY responses to neighbourhood change**

As outlined in Chapter Two, NIMBY responses refer to opposition by locals to any new development that they believe will threaten their quality of life. Whilst opponents might agree on the need for the development they would not raise any objection if it was located elsewhere (Hermansson 2007). All of the Woodstock neighbours interviewed for this research stated they were not against rooming houses, as such, they just didn’t want one located next door. The following are the views of two of the immediate Woodstock neighbours.

*I wasn’t against the concept of rooming houses and I’m not against the concept of it because some people in life are luckier than other people and there are people who do need housing. The use – to me the use was irrelevant – whether it be public housing or jail cells or whatever they wanted to put there. But this site was completely inappropriate… And I thought there may have been better sites around (Rodney)*

*We… of course in a perfect world wouldn’t want to live opposite a rooming house, but it is part and parcel of living in a diverse inner city suburb and we like that aspect of the community, we just didn’t necessarily… we didn’t have a desire to be living directly opposite…but you know, you’re never going to get a decision made if you came out to a community in the street and said ‘Would you like us to put one here?’ You’re not going to get a rational answer or an answer that the community supports community housing. I understand that, I*
understand that but you know, the reaction of people living in the street is well we wish we could stop it and maybe we should have been asked whether there was anywhere else it could have gone (Aemon)

Conclusion

The community that claimed voice in the planning process for Woodstock tended to be a property-owning articulate minority. The Woodstock objectors mostly consisted of immediate neighbours who were persistent in their objections, all the way through to the final appeal to VCAT. All of these were homeowners, older, and primarily professionals with the resources and skills to maintain an opposition campaign. The objections to Woodstock were about the size and bulk of the development and the impact on parking and traffic as well as concerns about the type of person to be housed and the consequent negative impact on community safety and property values. Objectors didn’t trust the process and didn’t believe that council had really listened or taken notice of their concerns. On the whole those interviewed supported community housing and the need for these facilities, they just didn’t believe the site was appropriate.
7. THE GOVERNANCE OF CONTESTED GROUND

This Chapter discusses the research findings in response to the question about the effectiveness of the Woodstock governance process, using Healey’s assessment criteria for transforming governance. As previously discussed there are limitations in Healey’s approach in its failure to address the governance of competing interests. The findings about the NIMBY response to Woodstock are discussed and a comparative analysis of similar research on NIMBY is undertaken in order to determine their implications for the design of governance processes.

Assessing the governance process

The aim of assessing the governance process for Woodstock was to determine how competing agendas may have been addressed more effectively. The following analysis of the findings about the Woodstock governance process, outlined in Chapter 5, will apply the Healey’s three criteria for assessing the transforming potential of governance processes. These criteria are; stakeholder selection, planning discourses and planning practices.

Stakeholder selection

Healey’s assessment framework identifies the importance of connecting to residents in many situations so that multiple voices for place are accessed in the planning process (Healey 2003:1984). Those contacted for the Woodstock consultations consisted of approximately 1000 property owners in the neighbourhood whose contact details were accessed via council’s rates database. No attempt was made to engage future tenants as advocates or to ensure their voices were represented in any of the consultations. Clearly this was a major limitation in approach given that property owners represented no more than 37% of those living in the neighbourhood (City of Port Phillip 2003). Those most vocal in all the consultations were the immediate property owning neighbours whose views did not necessarily reflect the broader community view.
The planning process requires consultation and this is important, but there is no guarantee that those consulted represent the community. The consultation process rarely features those who do not generally have a voice (Project architect).

So how might the community have been more effectively represented? One of the key informants interviewed for the research compared the Woodstock consultation with that for another community housing project in an adjacent neighbourhood.

The major difference with the Argyle St community housing consultation was PPHA pre-selected the tenants for that project, and invited them to come to the public consultation with neighbours. We advised them that they were probably going hear some things about people’s perceptions of them that would be upsetting, but nevertheless, prospective tenants did come, and once you introduced them to the meeting and indicated that they would be moving in, it kind of tempered the language. Neighbours were very much aware that what they might say could be offensive to prospective tenants. It also gave the tenants the opportunity to put their position of struggling on high rents. So it put a face to the unknown of those people moving in and made clear that they were already living in the area. Now you may not be able to do that for a rooming house, but you certainly should be able to have at least half a dozen that would be moving in, or excited about the project, and have them present (CEO-PPHA).

Whilst other stakeholders were present at each of the consultations, representing different interests, including members of church congregations, PPHA and the CAPP all of whom were strong advocates for Woodstock, there was no one who could speak from direct experience of homelessness or provide the ‘face’ of Woodstock tenants and in this way break down the fear of the other that characterized the early objections to the rooming house. The consultation processes did not provide an opportunity for a more deliberative approach to resolving conflicts arising from fear of the ‘other’ because these fears were never adequately addressed nor were prospective tenants present at the consultations to present their view directly. As discussed in the literature
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review in Chapter 2, Sandercock (2002) suggests the collaborative planning approach developed by Healey is limited in its capacity to address conflict. The approach makes an assumption that *rational discourse* (following Habermas) among stakeholders is both appropriate and achievable’ (Sandercock 2002:23). Healey suggests that each of the stakeholders commit to a communicative ethic which requires respectful listening to the other’s point of view, to listen for difference (Healy 1997):266. This requires a level of trust between stakeholders that was never achieved in the Woodstock process. Sandercock suggests that fears and anxieties about the ‘other’ cannot be addressed by ‘rational bureaucratic regulatory methods that are or have been the bread and butter of planning’ and that other methods than Healey’s collaborative planning approach to managing difference need to be explored. She proposes a more ‘therapeutic’ approach where a space is created for ‘speaking the unspeakable, for talk of fear and loathing as well as of hope and transformation’ (Sandercock 2002:24). This approach obviously requires a more in depth conversation between different interests than was ever envisaged for the Woodstock consultations. This is not to say that planners need to become therapists in order to eliminate stereotyping but rather that processes are developed which enable more direct exchange and communication. This could operate at a fairly low key level in the first instance.

*The social agenda is often too complex to ‘sell’ through a community discussion. Opportunities could be provided to see other examples of how rooming houses operate, such as an open day (prior to the consultation meeting) where residents/tenants of similar developments can meet with concerned residents (Project Architect).*

Contact between neighbours and rooming house tenants at an Open Day or other event could have directly addressed the fears of neighbours about the type of people who live in rooming houses and ameliorated the negative stereotyping of rooming house tenants.

There is certainly a view amongst all the key informants that it would have been better to have begun the conversation in a more informal way, with a small
A number of immediate neighbours meeting with representatives of the PPHA and prospective tenants. This kind of contact could also have built trust between PPHA staff (as the future managers of the rooming house) and neighbours, so that neighbours would be more confident that any concerns about the rooming house would be listened to and addressed. Evidence from the study by Cameron and Crewe indicates that reaching out to the host community leads to greater acceptance of group homes by neighbours (Cameron and Crewe 2006:333). A further option suggested by one of the key informants was a Design In. The Design In is a consultation method undertaken at Port Phillip to redesign contested public places where there was a history of resident complaints about people with challenging behaviours frequenting the area. It is a collaborative planning process with representatives from all the relevant stakeholders, including residents, planners and designers but also advocates of those people with challenging behaviours, typically those who have a history of homelessness, drug use or sex work. The process involves in depth conversations between all stakeholders about the kind of design changes that might be implemented and agreements are reached about priorities through a number of facilitated discussions held over several sessions. The Design In is considered an effective way of challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusive community attitudes in the planning of contested public places (Cook 2002; Press 2003). This approach could have been effective in the Woodstock consultation and more in keeping with Sandercock’s proposal to ‘negotiate fears and anxieties’ in ‘managing cities of difference’ (Sandercock 2002:29) or Dryzek’s idea that combatants exchange stories so that their different needs can be understood even if their values cannot be reconciled (Dryzek 2005).

So I think you’ve got to keep having the conversation and keep putting it out there, and yes, it will be difficult and confronting, but I don’t think if you’ve got a different point of view, you should hide it away; that’s not what we’re on about (Director City Development).
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Planning Discourses – framing issues and solutions
The second area for assessment identified by Healey is to determine the nature of planning discourses, in particular how issues are framed and problems and their solutions defined (Healey 2003:1984). The Woodstock proposal was developed by the project steering committee without any real thought given to how neighbours might react. The focus was primarily on the project’s feasibility, the number of housing units that could fit on the site and how the building might conform to the Victorian Planning Provisions in order to obtain a planning permit (Spivak 2002). As Cowan concluded, usually project proponents see consultation as an opportunity to present the facts of their proposal and obtain feedback (Cowan 2003). This was clearly the case in the Woodstock consultation.

We over-planned in the early stages rather than waiting to hear from the neighbours who perceived that they weren’t really listened to because we already had the solutions on the table. We had the solutions already before they understood what the problems were (Alma Ward councillor).

Reflecting on how the conversation could have been framed differently, the Housing Development Officer determined that it would have been better to have started where the community was;

We should have asked ‘what do you like about your neighbourhood, what are your concerns about the development?’ We made assumptions about what people thought about their neighbourhood. Instead of talking at them first, we should have listened, turned the agenda around (Housing Development Officer).

Healey’s assessment criteria ask whether diverse experiences of place are recognized and whether conversations have a strong ‘daily life’ emphasis. The presentations during the consultations used technical language and ideas that were not familiar to most of the objectors.
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Showing people building envelopes without any articulation or any views just didn’t wash. It really angered people. Indeed showing them preliminary plans angered people because they don’t have the skills to read plans and understand what buildings will look like (Alma ward councillor).

The language used in the presentations was necessary for the preparation of the planning permit but was not acceptable to objectors,

We referred to the existing open car park as a ‘broken streetscape’ that Woodstock would ‘repair’. Neighbours described the car park as ‘public open space’. We talked about the Victorian Planning Provisions and the proposal meeting medium density guidelines, and they just couldn’t relate to that. They wanted to tell us how terrible the proposal was, how it was going to destroy the neighbourhood (Director City Development).

This problem of miscommunication between stakeholders was clearly articulated by one of the key informants;

Everyone is in their own little bubble with no way of communicating across the boundaries because people only speak in their own language (Sandra).

In summing up, the formal agenda for each of the consultation meetings was set by council as the project proponent. The substance of the formal presentations reflected the issues which council wanted to represent using language and concepts which didn’t address the real life concerns of those who were objecting to the proposal. The ‘story’ presented was very technical and no attempt was made to find what Hajer (1993) has defined as the ‘discursive key’ which reframes the conversation so that it is more readily understood. Perhaps it would have been better to tell some stories about the situation of homeless people focussing on their needs. This would have provided some context for the provision of community housing. Shortly after Woodstock had been approved at VCAT, the body of a homeless person was discovered at a railway cutting several months after he had died of hypothermia. As one of the key informants remarked;
It would have put a human face on the issue to say that people are dying at railway cuttings for want of a roof over their head and not being noticed. And you saw what the community said about that. They were horrified. Suddenly it was in their face. So if we can involve more people in understanding the context of change in a neighbourhood, then I think it means that these people are going to be less concerned because they've been involved in a wider process (Alma ward councillor)

**Planning Practices: routines and repertoires for acting.**

Healey’s assessment criteria for planning practices require answering questions about whether the practices are ‘accessible, diverse, facilitative, transparent and sincere’(Healey 2003:1984).

The formal statutory planning process had a preset format. This culminated in the council’s statutory planning committee considering a council officer’s planning report which identified how and whether the proposal met planning guidelines, summarised objectors’ views and made recommendations. There was an opportunity for objectors to present their views in person but this was constrained by time limits and there was no opportunity for dialogue with councillors. The meetings were conducted in the council chamber in the Town Hall and the whole process was considered quite intimidating to those who were not familiar with the process. There were two preplanning consultations conducted for Woodstock at the Town Hall where there were opportunities to provide a more accessible format in which diverse views could be presented. Although designed to encourage all those attending to have a say through small group facilitated discussions, each of these meetings began with a formal ‘top down’ presentation by various stakeholders, all representing the project proponents, none of which represented the views of objectors. This generated heated debate from the outset exacerbated by the feeling that council had already determined to proceed with the project, despite what neighbours might say (Spivak 2002a; Spivak 2002b).
I thought we are not here to shape council policy. We are here to accept the decision that has already been made for us. What’s the point of a meeting—what does council want—for us to accept only? So people feel there is no point in going to these meetings because council has already made up its mind (Sandra).

And it was the case that council was very committed to the Woodstock project and wouldn’t have readily abandoned it. Council’s policy commitment to community housing had been established in 1997, and affirmed in 2000 with the adoption of the Community Housing Strategy, in which the original proposal for the Woodstock rooming house had been identified. The Community Housing Strategy had been widely circulated for community comment, but none of the Woodstock objectors had been aware of this. While council proved to be unshakeable in its resolve to proceed with Woodstock, it had a genuine desire to be responsive to resident feedback about the design of the building. As Campbell (2006) suggests the insights gained during consultation should influence the detailed implementation of the project without dissuading proponents of its overall merits. Appendix 7 outlines the design changes made in response to this feedback from neighbours. The researcher provided details of the design changes to those objectors who were interviewed for the research but they all dismissed the changes, indicating that the only way that council could have demonstrated that it had listened is if the project had been abandoned or scaled back considerably. As Cowan concludes objectors see consultation as the right to veto the proposal (Cowan 2003).

Council’s apparent lack of transparency was another issue for objectors.

I think that it may have made a difference to everyone if council had actually been up front with that from day one. You just can’t be consultative around where community housing’s going to go (Aemon).

All of the objectors interviewed for this research would have preferred to have been directly informed of council’s plans for Woodstock when the project was
first mooted and listed in council’s Community Housing Strategy, rather than learning about the project via a story in the local paper eighteen months later;

It’s always the first kick of the ball that’s most important, and that’s where council got it wrong with us not being notified (Diane).

There was also a concern that councillors didn’t demonstrate any empathy in their dismissal of resident concerns and their determination to proceed with the project despite ongoing objections;

It is absolutely important for councillors to show empathy, and to really understand that it is people’s homes that will be affected (Diane)

One of the key informants compared the Woodstock pre-planning consultation process to another in which she had been involved where only the immediate neighbours were involved and the meetings were held in a local facility that was familiar to attendees.

We had the meeting in the senior citizens centre, and so it was very low key, and it was in an area that they were very familiar with, and we only contacted neighbours in the immediate street. So it was much smaller, and it was familiar ground and territory. The site (for the community housing) was right opposite us so we could see out the window from this meeting, and we had the prospective tenants there actively contributing to the realisation “Well I’m not coming from another neighbourhood. I’m already here. In fact, I could be living right next door to you now and you don’t know it, and this is going to help me financially to stay within the community that I want to stay in”(CEO PPHA).

The idea of a more focussed discussion with immediate neighbours was affirmed by other key informants typified in the following comment from the convenor of BRAIDA,

I would like to have seen that we as a group were given a one on one closed door discussion with all parties from the council’s perspective present. This way we could get the hearing that we felt that we deserved (Aemon).
In concluding this section a few questions remain. The first question is whether the outcome would have been different in terms of community acceptance of Woodstock had the elements identified in Healey framework been applied in the design of the governance process. There were different views among some of the key informants about this. The statutory planner was the least optimistic about the capacity of the planning system to resolve differences, reflecting Sandercock’s position about the failure of rational bureaucratic regulatory methods to deal with planning conflicts.

There are no new lessons to be learnt here. Planning will always generate some degree of opposition from those most in fear of change and the unknown. To have brought the objectors onside by consultation/information is as unlikely as turning a Carlton supporter into a Collingwood supporter by way of discussion and information. We are talking about individual and fundamentally held beliefs borne of a lifetime, and no process can pretend to have solution to mediating entrenched positions (Council planner).

The remaining key informants were far less cynical, and quite clear that had the initial consultations proceeded differently there would have been less sustained opposition to Woodstock. Even so it is unlikely that the formal statutory planning process, where the ultimate decision to proceed with the project was made, could ever have achieved the kind of deliberative approaches proposed by Healey because the preset ground rules did not allow this. The preplanning consultations provided the real opportunity to manage the process differently, as Dryzek suggests by ‘loosening the connection between the deliberation and decision moments of democracy in a divided society’ (Dryzek 2005:226).

The second question is whether more deliberative methods of the kind suggested by Healey would have necessarily been effective in addressing issues of justice. If Woodstock had been abandoned in response to neighbour objections, as many of the objectors would have preferred, much needed housing for low income and marginalised groups in the community would not have been provided. Objectors may have been appeased and have considered
the process was fair from their perspective but the outcome would not have been beneficial for those in need of community housing. As Hillier (2003) Farnstein (2005) and Campbell (2006) suggest, deliberative processes alone are not sufficient to achieve just and equitable outcomes.

The evaluation of the governance process for Woodstock has revealed its limitations in all 3 elements identified by Healey as critical to effective governance, stakeholder selection, planning discourses and practices. The next question to be addressed is whether the opposition to Woodstock could be characterised as a NIMBY response and how this perspective might inform the governance process.

**The community response as NIMBY?**

The review of the literature undertaken by Schively on NIMBY and community opposition to unwanted land uses concludes that opponents are typically older, home owners and more likely to organize and attend meetings to voice their concerns (Schively 2007:257). The objectors to Woodstock clearly share the same demographic characteristics. They also share the same concerns as those identified in the North American and European research on responses to unwanted human services facilities, specifically concerns about the adverse effects on neighbourhood amenity and property values, about the lack of prior consultation and personal security concerns about the type of tenant to be housed (Dear 1992; Piat 2000; Cowan 2003; Schively 2007). The concerns about use as a rooming house and the type of tenant to be housed at Woodstock reflects Hubbard’s (2007) conclusion that every act of ‘local resistance’ is also (and always) an act of exclusion (Hubbard 2006). Supporting this view, Takahashi (1997) finds that NIMBY responses result from ‘social spatial stigmatization’, where the process of stigmatization of homeless people results from the perception that many of these individuals are mentally unstable and criminal (Takahashi 1997:907). This perception was clearly reflected in the objections about the use of the site as a rooming house, summarised as follows;
There are concerns with the type of people who will live in the rooming house as they will lower the tone of the neighbourhood, increase crime, change the social make up by significantly increasing the proportion of low-income residents (Spivak 2003).

These kinds of objections were expressed by a majority of those who responded to the proposal prior to the formal statutory planning phase. As objectors learned that the use of the site as a rooming house was not a valid planning ground for objection they tended to focus more on concerns about traffic, density and built form, more acceptable statutory planning grounds for objection. Hubbard (2006) determines that this is a common but duplicitous response, where objectors seek to justify their actions in terms of detriment to residential amenity rather than fear of the ‘other’ which is unlikely to be given credence. Even so a number of objections to the proposal during the statutory planning period continued to reflect this kind of stereotyping.

I now have real concerns about personal and community safety, with the semi permanent population of the boarding house having no ties to the area, which is predominantly made up of families with young children. (Objector to statutory planning application)

These objections contained several unsubstantiated assumptions, in particular that rooming house residents will cause disruption and be antisocial, and that the area is predominantly made up of young families who will be threatened by tenants who will have no ties to the area. Many of those opposing the development of Woodstock articulated a monocultural view of the neighbourhood, as comprising families with long term ties to the area, a perception not in accord with the facts outlined in Chapter 4 where it is clear that Balaclava contains a diverse, highly mobile population with a small number of households with children (City of Port Phillip 2003). The objectors also did not acknowledge that selection of future Woodstock tenants was determined by their established ties to the area as well as their need for community housing.
Schively’s review of research on NIMBY phenomena confirmed that ‘lack of trust in government stimulates opposition to proposed facilities’ (Schively 2007:258). The objectors to the Woodstock development frequently cited their concerns that council was not to be trusted, it had not informed them about the proposal when it was first conceived and had not really listened to their objections in resolving to proceed with the development.

The Woodstock process demonstrated the same life cycle of opposition described in Dear’s research i.e. youth: often an irrational and unthinking response; maturity: the rhetoric of opposition becomes more ‘rational’ and ‘objective’, more ‘measured’ voices are heard; and old age: the final and drawn out stage prior to resolution where stamina/staying power is necessary (Dear 1992). At each life cycle stage analysed during the Woodstock planning process the number of objectors diminished, and the responses were more measured and less emotionally charged.

So in answering our second research question about whether the Woodstock objectors reflected a NIMBY response to neighbourhood change, the answer is clearly in the affirmative. The question that remains is whether this categorization is useful in understanding and responding to neighbourhood opposition. The empirical research on the NIMBY phenomena has some pragmatic value in ensuring that local government planners and elected members are well prepared for the intense opposition to controversial land use proposals by neighbours. The research also points to some commonly expressed reasons for opposition which need to be understood. It also suggests that attention be given to immediate neighbours, particularly homeowners within the host community who feel that they have more to lose as a result of their proximity to the particular site and who will be particularly vociferous in their opposition. Piat’s research throws light on the experience expressed by neighbours that they had become a ‘victim’ as a result of a perception that they had lost their individual rights, that their ‘homeowners dream’ had been destroyed, and that establishing the facility had altered ‘the fabric of the
Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government

community’ (Piat 2000). As the project artist suggests, developing a process which takes in to account this emotional response to ‘home’ is necessary.

When you live somewhere you do invest, not just in your own land, you invest emotional things and give it your heart and you want to engage with the community in the future. And in our planning processes I think that you know this is something that needs to be taken into consideration (Project artist).

In the light of these findings, it is important to design a governance process which makes sense to objectors and addresses their underlying fears. As Cowan concludes from her research into the NIMBY response to mental health facilities it is critical to develop communication strategies which reflect the underlying argumentative context of the particular situation (Cowan 2003).

Whilst the findings from the research on NIMBY phenomena have been useful in identifying some of the common features in the demography, location and underlying concerns of opponents, there is a real limitation in how the concept has been applied. NIMBY has often been characterized as representing a moral battle between the rational and civic good as represented by the proponents who wish to locate a needed human services facility, and the objectors who are simply acting out of parochial and irrational self interest (Gibson 2005). This interpretation is a simplification of a complex political process with strategic shortcomings. The polarization between civic and self interest can result in a questioning of the legitimacy of the opposition and a dismissal of the genuine fears and concerns of locals (Burningham 2000; Wolsink 2006). According to Burmingham,

‘avoiding involvement in the activity of attributing NIMBY motives is even more important for those involved in attempts to build local consensus about development...An effective facilitator or mediator needs to ensure that all participants feel that their views are respected and not dismissed as irrelevant or worthless’ (Burmingham 2000 :66).

The inflammatory labelling of objectors as NIMBYs can further exacerbate conflict by disenfranchising the opposition but it may also jeopardize the longer term agenda for the provision of needed local facilities, like community housing.
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As articulated by the project artist;

You don’t necessarily need their (the objectors’) support in order to win, to get the building up because things can be judged at tribunals to be in the community interest and they meet all the criteria then they can go ahead but still the community would feel disenfranchised. But you don’t want to disenfranchise your community. And you don’t want them at the next election swinging to the right and becoming less community minded because they feel like they were rolled on this issue. So sometimes the short term gains as a result of processes which haven’t necessarily always worked appropriately are outweighed by the long term losses in terms of community support for such issues as community housing (Project artist).

On the basis that planning is always contested as a result of the interplay of competing interests, the question becomes how to address the negative stereotyping practiced by those involved. Not just objectors wanting to exclude ‘deviant’ people from the neighbourhood as discussed earlier in this Chapter but by project proponents who simply dismiss objectors’ concerns as NIMBY.

Conclusion

The governance process for Woodstock revealed a number of shortcomings. Those who objected to the proposal were not representative of the community but consisted of a minority of neighbouring homeowners. Prospective rooming house tenants were not included in the process so their views were never articulated publically. This precluded opportunities for breaking down the stereotyping and fear of the ‘other’ which was a basis for much of the opposition to Woodstock. The rational bureaucratic and regulatory features of the governance process were unable to deal with the level of emotion generated by objectors concerned about the negative impact of Woodstock on their neighbourhood and the value of their homes. The planning discourses didn’t therefore respond to the real life issues and concerns of the objectors and relied on overly technical presentations of the issues and solutions. The planning practices were confined to formal council meetings with a preset agenda which was alienating to objectors who lost trust in council’s willingness to listen to or show empathy about their concerns.
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The profile and concerns of the objectors parallel that found in the empirical research on NIMBY responses which suggests that these may be universal phenomenon. This finding has implications for the governance process in these kinds of highly contested situations. In developing communication strategies it will be important to understand the argumentative context of the opposition and prepare for it. Immediate neighbours need to be engaged in small scale informal discussions where their particular concerns can be listened to and addressed. These kinds of discussions should precede formal decision making forums with their fixed rules and procedure acknowledging that dispassionate and rational planning processes are not capable of reconciling conflicting agendas about issues that people feel passionate about. These more informal meetings can provide opportunities for the expression of conflicting views and build a shared understanding of the needs of all stakeholders. At the same time as the NIMBY label is useful in predicting the source of and type of objections it is important to understand that the label alienates objectors and can preclude serious consideration of their concerns which may also jeopardise the long term agenda for achieving wider community acceptance of community housing.
8. CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to explore the challenges for local government in reconciling different community interests in contests over land use. Victorian state government policy imperatives for local government provided a context and impetus for the research. These policy imperatives require local government to encourage community participation and cohesion at the same time as building more sustainable communities through urban consolidation, by supporting medium density and affordable housing. The result has been increasing resident backlash to the urban consolidation agenda with a corresponding deterioration in community cohesion as different community interests clash over what they see as the best outcomes for themselves and the wider community. The story of the Battle for Balaclava has been told as a vehicle for exploring the governance challenges for local government in resolving these competing agendas. The action took place in Balaclava, a very diverse neighbourhood of Port Phillip, subject (like many other inner city neighbourhoods) to the displacement of lower income residents through gentrification. The Port Phillip council had committed considerable resources over the years to building community housing in an attempt to maintain its population diversity. The governance process for developing Woodstock rooming house has been explored in some detail, as it is typical of community housing projects which are increasingly challenged by opposition of local residents. The research aims to identify the nature of the challenges encountered as a basis for reflection on how the governance of these highly contested situations might be more effective. The story has been told through the perspectives of some of the key actors and evaluated in the context of various theories about governance.

Summary of research process

The research proceeded with a literature review to determine how theories of governance could provide insights about the management of competing agendas in local government planning. The term governance was seen as a more effective way of describing the multiple layers and partners in the decision
making process than was the concept of government which only involves the state. The review identified the shifting urban governance landscape corresponding to shifting perspectives about the primacy of the state, the market and civil society, as well as shifts in the development of planning processes from rational analytic to more deliberative and collaborative modes. The more recent emergence of ‘New Governance’ or network governance theories were relevant for their focus on place based collaborative partnerships and inclusive community engagement strategies. However, these theories were considered to be too broad to assist in the micro analysis of the governance processes to be explored in the development of Woodstock. For this purpose, the new institutionalist theory of planning academic Patsy Healey was found to be most relevant to this study. Healey’s theory of collaborative planning provided a detailed framework for the assessment of governance dynamics which informed the first question in this research, the extent to which the actors and arenas, networks and coalitions, stakeholder selection, discourses and practices meet Healey’s assessment criteria for transforming governance? The limitation of Healey’s framework however was that it didn’t fully explore the dynamics of land use conflicts and how competing interests might be reconciled. A review of the empirical research on NIMBY opposition to the siting of human services facilities filled some of the gaps left by Healey and other governance theorists. The challenge to governance from NIMBY responses necessitates a greater understanding of these complex phenomena and has framed the second question in this research; did opposition to the Woodstock project typify NIMBY responses to neighbourhood change?

Building from the literature review, the methodological approach adopted for this research was predominantly qualitative in nature with respect to its main sources of data gathering and analysis, using key informant interviews and analysis of archival data and other secondary sources. Choosing a case study as the research method allowed an in-depth investigation of the more relevant aspects of the governance processes involved in the development of Woodstock. Secondary source material in the form of council policies, reports and local media reports were analysed to build a picture of the social, spatial
Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government

and policy context for understanding the governance process. Interviews were undertaken with several key informants including the project proponents, the councillors and professionals involved in developing the Woodstock rooming house, as well as with objecting neighbours. These responses were then evaluated using the Healey governance assessment framework and the empirical research on NIMBY responses to community facilities. Case study research limits the ability to generalise from the local context, however Port Phillip is typical of diverse inner city communities with increasing gentrification and a decline in housing affordability. Additionally the key informant interviews, although providing in depth perceptions of the governance process, were relatively few in number. Notwithstanding these limitations, the research provides a useful link between existing literature on governance and research on contested land use proposals exploring the NIMBY phenomena. It throws some light on the challenges for local government in planning contested ground and suggests ways of improving the process.

**Key findings**

The key findings identified the competing agendas of the main stakeholders, particularly the project proponents and the neighbouring objectors. The project beneficiaries, that is, prospective rooming house tenants, were not engaged at all, although their interests were primary in council’s decision to proceed with the project. In essence, the outcome in favour of the rooming house was preordained in that council had a commitment to community housing and this particular project long before any of the neighbours were consulted directly. There were fixed rules for engagement set by council in the context of state guidelines with no room for genuine dialogue and mutual learning. The neighbouring objectors felt bullied and disempowered and everyone interviewed agreed that the process was adversarial from the outset. Whilst it was established that the formal statutory planning process was not amenable to change because of its basis in legislation and the fixed rules of procedure, the earlier consultation phase provided an opportunity to engage in real dialogue and exchange which was not realised.
Identifying improvements to the governance of contested ground

Healey’s framework focused attention on the varying repertoires through which relationships between the governance process and community interests are acted out. The framework encouraged a critical questioning about the institutional design of the Woodstock governance processes, in particular questions about the stakeholders to be engaged, discourses about problems and solutions and the analysis of the particular planning practices undertaken.

There were many suggestions made about how the planning and governance process could have been improved, many of which echo the criteria for assessing effective governance identified by Healey. Whilst the formal statutory planning process is subject to state legislation in terms of process and meeting formats, the preplanning consultations have no such preset ground rules. The following recommendations for improving the governance process emerge from the research findings and are discussed under the categories suggested by Healey.

**Stakeholder selection and analysis**

A thorough stakeholder analysis should be undertaken to ensure that all the voices are represented in the consultation process. From this analysis a detailed communications framework can be developed which identifies likely arguments for each stakeholder group and how they might be addressed. It is important to make contact with immediate neighbours early in the process because it is this group who are more likely to object to the proposal. Opportunities need to be provided for them interact directly with prospective rooming house tenants in order to break down the kind of negative stereotyping that exists when there is a fear of the ‘other’.

**Framing issues and solutions**

Opportunities should be provided for people to become more familiar with typical community housing tenants and the operation of community housing. These could include, for example, Open Days at similar facilities or stories told through the local media which put a human face to homelessness and tell of well run and supported community housing programmes. This might assist
objectors to understand the needs of this group and that community housing can be an effective local response to these needs. Instead of leaving objectors to fend for themselves in negotiating the planning system, assist them to understand the statutory planning process, its language and grounds for supporting or rejecting planning permit applications. Building trust and demonstrating empathy about their concerns will be more effective than simply dismissing their objections because they don’t constitute planning grounds for rejecting an application. In order to reach out to the host community the Housing Association could develop a neighbourhood protocol which outlines how they will respond to any legitimate neighbour concerns about tenant behaviour which are impacting on community safety.

**Planning practices**

Discussion between a small group of immediate neighbours and the various other stakeholders (including councillors, council planners, PPHA managers and potential tenants) should be provided in a more informal setting where the agenda is not preset but responds directly to the concerns raised by neighbours. Large public meetings like those for Woodstock don’t enable genuine dialogue and exchange of views and can be easily commandeered by a few activists who create a climate where alternative voices are not heard. It is important to identify the purpose of consultation at the outset and identify whether there are non-negotiable areas for community feedback.

**NIMBY responses and neighbourhood change**

The empirical research on NIMBY phenomena provided useful insights into the demography and geography of neighbourhood opposition. It indicated that the Woodstock experience parallels the North American and UK experience of NIMBYism. While the general elements of NIMBYism are likely in any circumstance it is important to understand the local argumentative context, the complexity of likely responses and the problematic nature of consultation. However there is a need to look beyond seeing NIMBY responses as selfish parochialism and irrational; to understand the conditions which give rise to it, and to develop processes which will lead to better planning outcomes. Be
prepared to listen and, without jeopardising the integrity and feasibility of the project, take on board objector concerns in project design.

**Areas for further action and research**

**Community education**

Many of the objections by neighbours arose because of their stereotypical views about rooming houses and rooming house tenants. There is a need for more community education which aims to reduce the stigma attached to community housing tenants. Print and film media need to be developed which present information about community housing, rooming houses and the circumstances of tenants, with a focus on well managed community housing services. Open Days for neighbours need to be organised so that they can see for themselves what rooming houses are like and talk to tenants in order to better understand their needs.

**Further research**

Whilst there is research on attitudes to homelessness (Roberts Research Group 2006), there is nothing in Australia to compare to the Nth American and British surveys on attitudes to the siting of controversial human services facilities. Whilst this type of research would not provide insights about the hot issues- the real life responses to actual contested proposals, it would provide a benchmark with which to measure attitudes over time and determine whether there had been any impact as a result of community education initiatives. It would also be of benefit to conduct research on other local government areas where there has been controversy over community housing, with a focus on the nature of the objectors and their objections and ways in which the governance process was able to address these.

All new community housing should be subject to a post occupancy survey of neighbours, along with crime and property valuation surveys. This will assist in building a body of knowledge with which to inform future host neighbourhoods of the actual impacts of community housing. This may confirm that whatever the actual risks of community housing may be, they are likely to pale in comparison with what opponents imagine they will be.
The last word

The focus of this research has been on developing a better understanding of the governance challenges for local government in planning contested ground. Much of the recent literature on governance acknowledges the importance of engaging the community and identifies the plurality of community interests but it doesn’t really address how conflicting interests might be reconciled in the kind of planning disputes typified by Woodstock. It may be that competing interests can never be reconciled and conflict is ineradicable but this doesn’t mean that the task of improving governance processes and encouraging agonistic debate should be abandoned. Collaborative and deliberative governance processes need to continue so that participants feel they are being listened to and that their concerns are taken into account. The governance process needs to be seen as fair and inclusive. At the same time community interests beyond those of a vocal minority need to be taken into account for the outcome to be considered to be fair and just. This is important because the kind of vocal opposition experienced during the Woodstock process seriously threatens the legitimacy of local government, deters councillors from acting in the broader community interest and can undermine a broader social justice agenda about maintaining diversity and promoting social inclusion. This is more urgent now as homelessness and housing stress are becoming more widespread and because all levels of government need encouragement to play a greater role in promoting more affordable housing.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1  HIERARCHY OF ACCEPTANCE OF HUMAN SERVICES FACILITIES

(Takahashi and Dear 1997: 92)

Based on analysis of a national attitudinal survey undertaken in the USA in 1990.

Most Welcome uses
- School
- Day Care centre
- Nursing home
- Hospital
- Medical Clinic

Mixed reviews
- Group home for mentally retarded
- Homeless shelter
- Alcohol rehab centre
- Drug treatment centre
- Chronic mentally ill facility

Absolutely unwelcome
- Shopping Mall
- Group home (AIDS patients)
- Factory
- Garbage Landfill
- Prison
### APPENDIX 2 WOODSTOCK CASE STUDY-DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Data Collection method(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of governance processes</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature review</td>
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<td>(Healey framework)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify evidence of NIMBY response</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Literature review</td>
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*Healey framework*
APPENDIX 3 SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE WOODSTOCK ROOMING HOUSE

The following questions will be covered following an introductory preamble confirming understanding of the nature and purpose of the research and clarifying the history of the informant’s involvement.

1. Initial awareness and understanding of the proposal, and reactions to it. In particular responses to the purpose of the development (to establish community housing for disadvantaged low income people) and the form/look of the development and whether you believed the development would add to or detract from the area and why?

2. What were your observations of the competing interests involved in the development of Woodstock? Do you think the governance process facilitated the reconciliation of these competing interests?

3. Perceptions of the way the consultation was managed at key stages. Refer to copy of timeline, but particularly;

   - Pre planning consultations
   - Formal statutory planning consultations
   - Planning appeals process at VCAT

   In particular perceptions about written information, conduct of public meetings to discuss the proposal, whether the fora for consultation provided opportunities for active input from everyone affected by the proposal, extent to which ideas presented by participants were translated into the final plans.

4. Reflections on how the process could have been managed differently and in your view more effectively? Draw on other examples you have seen which are informing this position. How might your actions have changed with hindsight?

5. What are the major lessons from Woodstock? What might be the barriers to, and/or opportunities to ensure that future actions reflect these lessons?
Dear

I'm writing to you because of your participation in the process undertaken by the Port Phillip council to establish the Woodstock rooming house in Balaclava. Given your long term interest and involvment with the planning and development of this project, I believe you will have some interesting observations, as well as some ideas about how the consultation and planning process might be improved in the future.

If you are willing to participate, the information you provide will be considered as part of a study into how local government can improve its planning processes, particularly when dealing with competing views about the development of its neighbourhoods. The title of the project is Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government planning. A case study on the development of Woodstock community housing. The research is being undertaken for a post graduate degree in social policy at the University of Melbourne, under the supervision of Professor Paul Smyth, and with the approval of the Human Research Ethics committee.

I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you directly about your observations and ideas. The interview should not take more than an hour of your time and can be made at a time and location which is convenient to you. The interview will be recorded, with your consent, and the transcripts available for you to check. Any report or publication on the outcomes of the research will maintain the confidentiality of your responses along with any other personal details, and any transcripts or other information will be securely stored. However, there are only a small group of people who will be interviewed for the research, so it is possible that people who have been close to the events may be able to guess your identity. My commitment to ensure your anonymity is also subject to legal limitations, such as subpoena, or freedom of information claims.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from it at any time. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project you can contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, at the University of Melbourne, phone 8344 2073.

I would be very appreciative of your willingness to participate in this study. I can be contacted via text message or direct on 0407 104 736 if you have any questions about the research project. I would also like you to indicate whether you are able to assist. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely,

Mandy Press
Post graduate research student
Centre for Public Policy,
Melbourne University
APPENDIX 4  COMMUNITY HOUSING POLICY DRIVERS 2000 – 2003
### APPENDIX 5  TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Woodstock community housing - timeline of key events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1997</td>
<td>Port Phillip Community Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/08/2000</td>
<td>Port Phillip Housing Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec-00</td>
<td>Housing Review - towards 2005</td>
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<td>Aug-01</td>
<td>Balaclava development steering committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/09/2001</td>
<td>Victorian Government calls for tenders for its SHIP program</td>
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<td>30/09/2001</td>
<td>Draft Feasibility completion plan for Balaclava Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/11/2001</td>
<td>Joint Venture application( CPP &amp; PPHA) for SHIP $'s for Woodstock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-02</td>
<td>SHIP funding granted for Woodstock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar-02</td>
<td>Letter to residents advising them of funding for Woodstock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/05/2002</td>
<td>Council Report re Woodstock project, inc community consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/06/2002</td>
<td>pre application community consultation 1- notes from meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/12/2002</td>
<td>Neighbourhood forum- FACT sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/05/2003</td>
<td>Council lodges planning permit for Woodstock</td>
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<tr>
<td>27/07/2003</td>
<td>statutory planning consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/09/2003</td>
<td>Council grants permit for Woodstock</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/2//04</td>
<td>BRAIDA lodges an appeal against the Woodstock development at VCAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/03/2004</td>
<td>VCAT determination to grant the permit as originally granted by council</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/03/2005</td>
<td>Launch of works by Vic Minister for Housing, Candy Broad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul-06</td>
<td>Official opening of Woodstock Community Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept -06</td>
<td>Welcome afternoon tea for neighbours by Woodstock tenants and PPHA</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>Post Occupancy survey proposed</td>
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</tbody>
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Dear Neighbour,

The Port Phillip Housing Association Inc. (PPHA) would like to thank all those who completed and returned the Association’s recent survey regarding Woodstock Community Housing. We very much appreciate your time and considered thoughts regarding the property’s operation and management.

As conveyed earlier, the purpose of the survey was to gain feedback from neighbours on their experiences to date with the project. The survey was hand delivered to all residences in Rosamond, Marlborough and Woodstock St, as well as adjacent traders in Carlisle St.

PPHA has been pleased with the number of survey responses and the preparedness of neighbours to contribute and participate. We note that a small majority of respondents (18 out of 34) indicate that there have not been any problems as a result of the establishment of Woodstock. A detailed summary of survey responses is available from Joy Tansey on 9534 5837 and can be posted to you if you would like this.

The main concerns identified by respondents are outlined below along with our responses.

**Perceived increase in antisocial behaviour and crime, and reduction in personal and family safety.**

Discussions have been held with Victoria Police (St Kilda) and their view is that residents of Woodstock have not caused any problems in the neighbourhood. Any perceived increase in ‘public order’ offences are more likely to be the result of increased activity around licensed premises in neighbouring Carlisle St. Property crime has actually decreased in the
area. We acknowledge that one of our tenants was creating a public disturbance resulting in a smashed front door late last year but we took swift action to address the problem. We encourage residents to report any criminal activity to the police by calling 000. Our residents are equally concerned with any threat to their personal safety and also want to live in a safe and secure neighbourhood.

Increase in local traffic and parking problems. Only one Woodstock resident has a car so it is unlikely that this is having an impact on traffic and parking. The truck which frequently blocks the laneway does not belong to PPHA or its tenants. The concerns about parking around street trees and protective rings and poorly located disabled parking have been referred to Port Phillip Council traffic staff.

Decline in property values. According to the Australian home price guide report on median property prices, property values in the area continue to rise. Between Sept 2006 and Sept 2007 the increase was 11.9% for houses and 10.9% for units. (www.homepriceguide.com.au)

Design. We note that some residents appreciate the design of Woodstock and some hate it! The building has won several National and State awards for its architecture, urban design and landscape architecture.

About the Port Phillip Housing Association. Many respondents had no idea about Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA) PPHA is an independent, not-for-profit community housing organisation. Now operating for more than 20 years, it provides permanent and affordable accommodation for residents of Port Phillip who are experiencing housing stress or who are at risk of homelessness. Our homes are available to local residents over 18 on low to moderate incomes who can live independently. We cater to singles, couples,
families and older people. Woodstock caters for single people in a mix of self contained units and rooms with shared facilities. A tenancy worker is assigned to liaise closely with residents of Woodstock and ensure that everything is operating smoothly. Maintenance problems are quickly attended to by our maintenance crew. More information on PPHA is available on our website www.ppha.org.au, and from the attached brochure. A copy of our 2006/7 annual report is available on request.

**Open Day/ Afternoon tea.**

Thank you for your suggestions for a ‘get together’ between Woodstock and its neighbours. We would love it if you were able to join us on Sunday November 4th at 3pm for afternoon tea. The invitation is attached.

Thank you once again for your time and participation, and we look forward to seeing you at the afternoon tea on November 4th. RSVP essential.

Yours faithfully,

Karen Barnett
Executive Officer
Port Phillip Housing Association Inc.
PORT PHILLIP HOUSING ASSOCIATION INC
WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY HOUSING
NEIGHBOURHOOD SURVEY RESULTS-SEPT 2007

TOTAL SURVEYS DISTRIBUTED = 132
TOTAL SURVEYS RETURNED = 36(27%)

Question 1. How long have you been living at your current address?

Responses: Of the 36 survey responses, years of residency ranged from 8 months to 48 years with the average length of residency being 12 years. 13 respondents from 14-48 years, 12 from 16months-4 years, 6 from 4-10 years, 4 from 8 mo -1yr, 1 not stated.

Question 2. Were you aware of the City of Port Phillip's plans to establish Woodstock in 2001?

Responses: 18 (50 %) YES 18 (50 %) NO

The 18 respondents who answered ‘YES’ to this question, were requested to answer Question 3.

Question 3. At that time, did you have any concerns about the project going ahead?

Responses: 14 (78%) YES 4 (22%) NO

The 14 respondents who answered ‘YES’ to this question, were requested to answer Question 4.

Question 4. What were your concerns at the time? The following lists concerns expressed by some local residents at public consultations. Please tick those concerns that you shared, and include others that are not listed.

Responses: The following relays the concerns at the time, of the 14 survey respondents who answered ‘YES’ to question 3.

- Increased local traffic and parking problems (11)
- Anti-social behaviour (of future residents) (12)
- The ability of PPHA to manage the property (3)
- Increase in crime in the local area (12)
- Decline in property values (7)
- Design and density (7)
- Personal and family safety (8)

Others:
Lack of resident (on-site) manager

**Question 5.** During its time of operation (July 2006 - present), has Woodstock Community Housing impacted negatively on, or caused disruption to you or your family?

**Responses:**

- 16 (47%) **YES**
- 18 (53%) **NO**

Two (2) respondents did not answer this Q.

The 16 respondents who answered ‘YES’ to this question, were requested to answer Question 6.

**Question 6.** **In what ways has Woodstock Community Housing disrupted your amenity or negatively affected you or your family?** Please tick any of the following that apply to your household and include others not listed.

**Responses:**

The following relays the concerns of the 16 survey respondents who answered ‘YES’ to question 5.

- 9 increase in local traffic and parking problems
- 4 decline in property values
- 3 design and density
- 13 anti-social behaviour (from residents of Woodstock)
- 7 increase in crime in the local area
- 8 personal and family safety

**Others:**

- Not enough parking
- Alcohol and drugs circulate around that area
- Lots of people in the car park late at night
- Broken windows in building
- Unscrupulous individuals - a prostitution ring?
- Increase in shoplifting and vandalism on property and surrounds
- Had my car windscreen smashed
- Street too narrow - unsafe for children crossing, poorly located disabled parking.
- More anti social behaviour but can’t attribute this to residents.
- More noise and violence
- Trees cause parking and traffic problems
- I sometimes feel afraid to walk past because of violence on the street, ambulances called, police attending the site.
- An absolute architectural disaster, completely out of character with the Marlborough streetscape. Overshadowing is bad.
Planning contested ground: place voice and governance in local government

- Fire alarms
- smashing of front door
- Disruption to traffic due to steel rings in the roadway.

Question 7.  In what ways, if any, has Woodstock had a positive effect on you and/or your family?
Responses: The following lists all comments made by survey respondents to this question.
- Building looks good
- Better parking
- Improved lighting
- More diverse housing stock
- Appreciate the efforts to provide affordable housing
- Indirect benefit of supporting a more diverse community in the area
- Makes us feel good to know that taxes are spent caring for people who really need it
- Excellent architecture-design has enhanced the streetscape
- Neither positive or negative impact

Question 8.  How would you rate PPHA’s management of Woodstock?
Responses: 4 (13%) Excellent
7 (23%) Very Good
5 (16%) OK
3 (10%) Unsatisfactory
15 (37%) Don’t Know
2 survey respondents did not answer this question.

Question 9.  Do you have any suggestions as to how PPHA’s management practices could be improved or any other comments? If so, please outline these.
Responses: The following lists the suggestions of all survey respondents who replied to this question.
- Nightly security patrols for the prostitution ring in lane between Marlborough and Rosamond St. (resident 35 years)
- Continuous monitoring of community experiences.
- Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
- We do not know how it is managed so unable to offer suggestions.
- No complaints. No suggestions (resident 34 years)
- Invite neighbours for a tour of the facility or have an open day (resident 20 years).
- I don’t believe people with addiction should have tax payers pay for their accommodation in a prime location. It is almost necessary to have some kind of monitoring of these people, or security (retailer-15 years)
- Perhaps a street party to get the residents of the street and community housing together-couldn’t hurt. (resident 1 year)
- There has sometimes been damage to the property and I wasn’t sure how PPHA would be notified but the matters were attended to promptly. The garden beds could do with some better care.
- PPHA must have a caretaker on site to ensure Woodstock residents can integrate with the community at large (resident 15 years)
- Truck blocks laneway.
- I find it interesting that some residents have Foxtel installed in their ‘free’ accommodation, with designer clothing coming in and out of the flats. I wish I could get such free handouts. (resident 6 years)
- Crime and other problems (eg: local traffic issues have neither increased nor decreased in the local area since 2001. (resident 6 years)
- We enjoyed the afternoon tea and any further morning/afternoon tea would be welcome if residents of Woodstock approve. (resident -18 months)
- I walk past it twice a day and never noticed it really (worker)
- We don’t have much rights or legal recourse to theft or vandalism. We have video evidence and have knowledge of individuals who steal from us, but we are told not to press charges as they plead mental instability. I need to have extra staff each day because of my concerns for their safety. It would be great if we could have more prominent police or security presence (retailer 7 years)
- Answer fire calls faster
- Improve lighting in car park and back streets.
- Ugly building and very invasive on the surrounding environment. Community Housing is very important and it is needed close to activity centres. However if we praise the success of one project (eg Woodstock) then local government will interpret this as a license to build more community housing without going through due process. Without due process we will find Balaclava a
ghetto in years to come (resident 2 years, in the area for 30)
- Place a suggestion or incident reporting box for neighbour feedback (resident 2 years)
- Don't know what PPHA is - non profit, government or council funded?
APPENDIX 7 DESIGN CHANGES RESULTING FROM COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Car parking has been set back to allow for vehicle turning in from R.O.W.
- One car parking bay has been lengthened under the stair to allow for trailer truck parking.
- Privacy maintained through screening of windows to prevent overlapping.
- New masonry wall and landscaping to act as buffer to neighbour and reduce noise. The number of cars parking along boundary has been reduced.
- First & second floor balconies to the north east have been reduced in size and planter buffers have been added to prevent overlapping and create a buffer between balcony & No. 36 Marlborough Street.
- New trees to replace existing trees. Will be planted to the east.
- Footpath will not be narrowed.
- Transparent screening to car park.
- Main entry moved to Woodstock Street from Marlborough Street.
- Widening of footpath zone at corner by in excess of 70%.
- Removal of balcony from 1st floor to avoid overlapping into neighbour's window.
- Relocation of communal area away from south west corner to avoid overlapping and noise issues.
- Footpath to be reinstated and cross over to be removed to Woodstock Street.
- Low level planting and fence for screening.
- Development to have its own structural party wall. Existing party wall to remain but not to be used for structural support.
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