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THE STUDENT IN RESIDENCE:
AN ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION AND
DISSATISFACTION WITH RESIDENCE LIFE AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF NATAL'S DURBAN CAMPUS
BRIEF REPORT ON TWO FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

Valerie Møller
Roger D J Allen

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BRIEF REPORT ON TWO FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

Valerie Møller
Roger D J Allen

With the assistance of the 1984 Postgraduate Diploma
and Honours Students in Applied Social Science

Centre for Applied Social Sciences
University of Natal
Durban

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The University of Natal houses some 945 students in nine halls of residence on the Durban campus and over 1000 students in 4 residences on the Pietermaritzburg campus. The aim is to provide resident students with good conditions for living and studying. The University has seen fit to periodically review the residence situation in order to ensure that the University halls continue to serve this purpose under changing circumstances.

In 1976 a survey evaluation of the residence situation on both campuses was undertaken by the Centre on behalf of the University. A report on the findings of this study was compiled by the Director of the Centre in 1977¹⁾.

Further follow-up evaluation studies of the Durban residence situation were undertaken in conjunction with the resident students in 1977, and more recently in 1984. This report is an attempt to set out the major findings of the evaluation exercises and to identify those aspects of residence life which may warrant particular attention on the part of the University planners.

The major brief of the 1977 evaluation exercise was to explore the "person-environment fit" in the older and newer University halls which are built according to different design concepts. The 1977 inquiry revealed some unexpected results which did not conform with popular thinking on campus but generally supported the position taken by environmental experts.

The 1984 evaluation updated the previous research and shed further light on consistencies and inconsistencies between the student residents' needs and their living environment. In particular, the updated study revealed the need for University Halls to provide the

1) L. Schlemmer, *The Student in Residence : An Analysis of Factors Associated with Student Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Residence Life at the University of Natal*, Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, March 1977.

opportunity structure for resident students to participate fully in the many dimensions of a changing society during their brief sojourn in the University halls on campus.

* * * * *

The authors wish to thank many of their friends and colleagues on the Durban campus for their assistance in collecting background information on the halls of residence and carrying out the survey on site. A special vote of thanks goes to the wardens of the University residences, and to colleagues in the Student and Public Affairs Departments, the School of Architecture, and the Department of Surveying and Mapping. The co-operation and assistance of the many resident students who participated in the group discussions is greatly appreciated.

The assistance of the post-graduate students in the Centre who collaborated in the 1984 survey is gratefully acknowledged: Selby Dlamini, Tumeka Matanzima, Sibusiso Ngcoya, Richard Philips, Robin Richards, Alan van Zuydam-Reynolds, and Jeffrey Zingel. Mr van Zuydam-Reynolds also assisted with extra tasks in the survey process.

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Valerie Møller Senior Research Fellow
Roger D.J. Allen Research Fellow

Centre for Applied Social Sciences
October 1984

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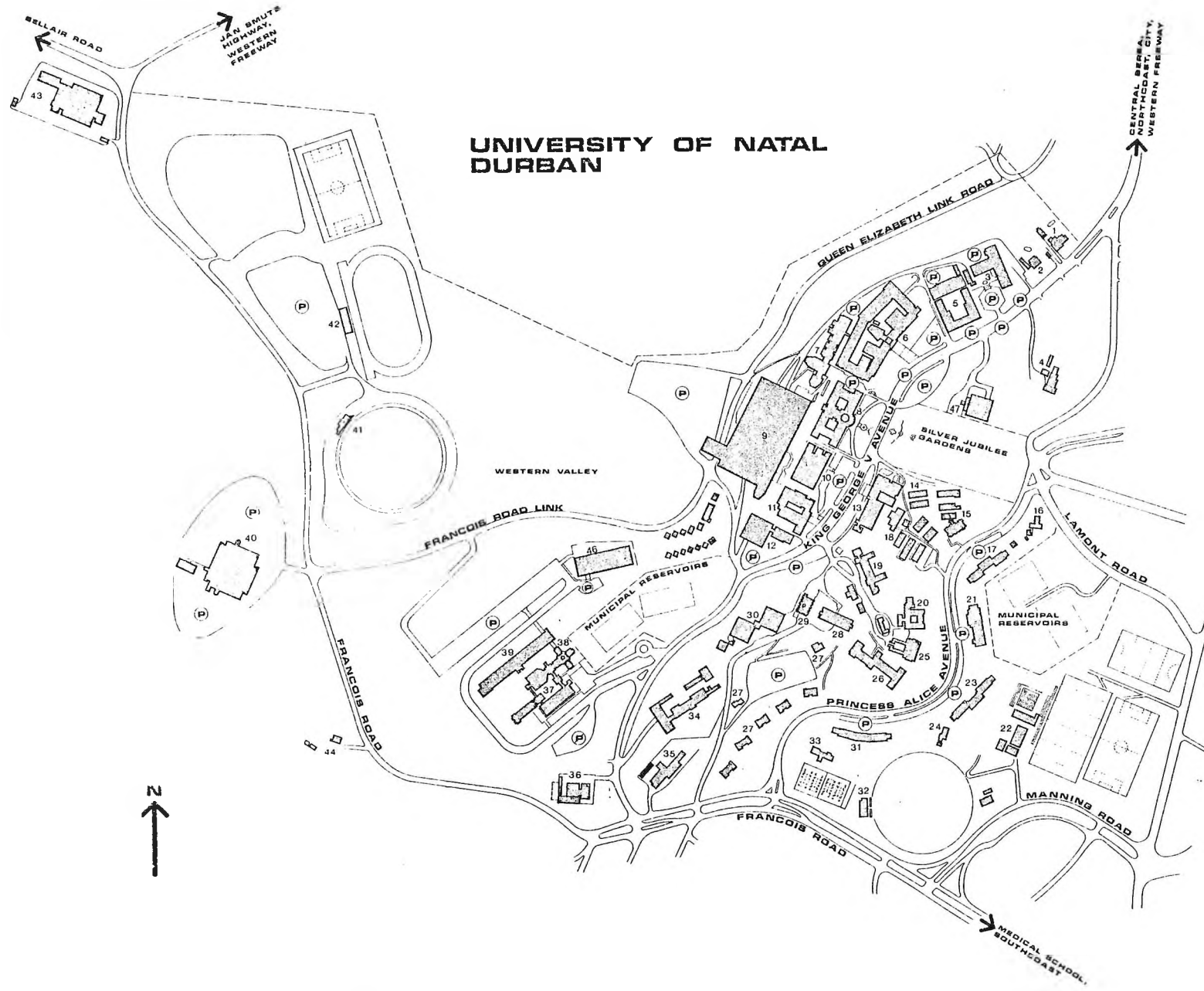
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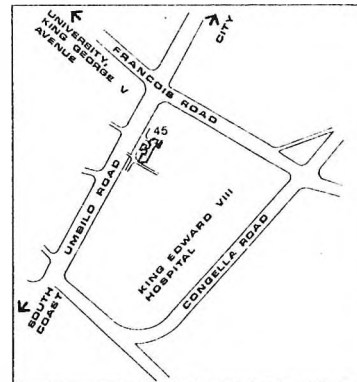
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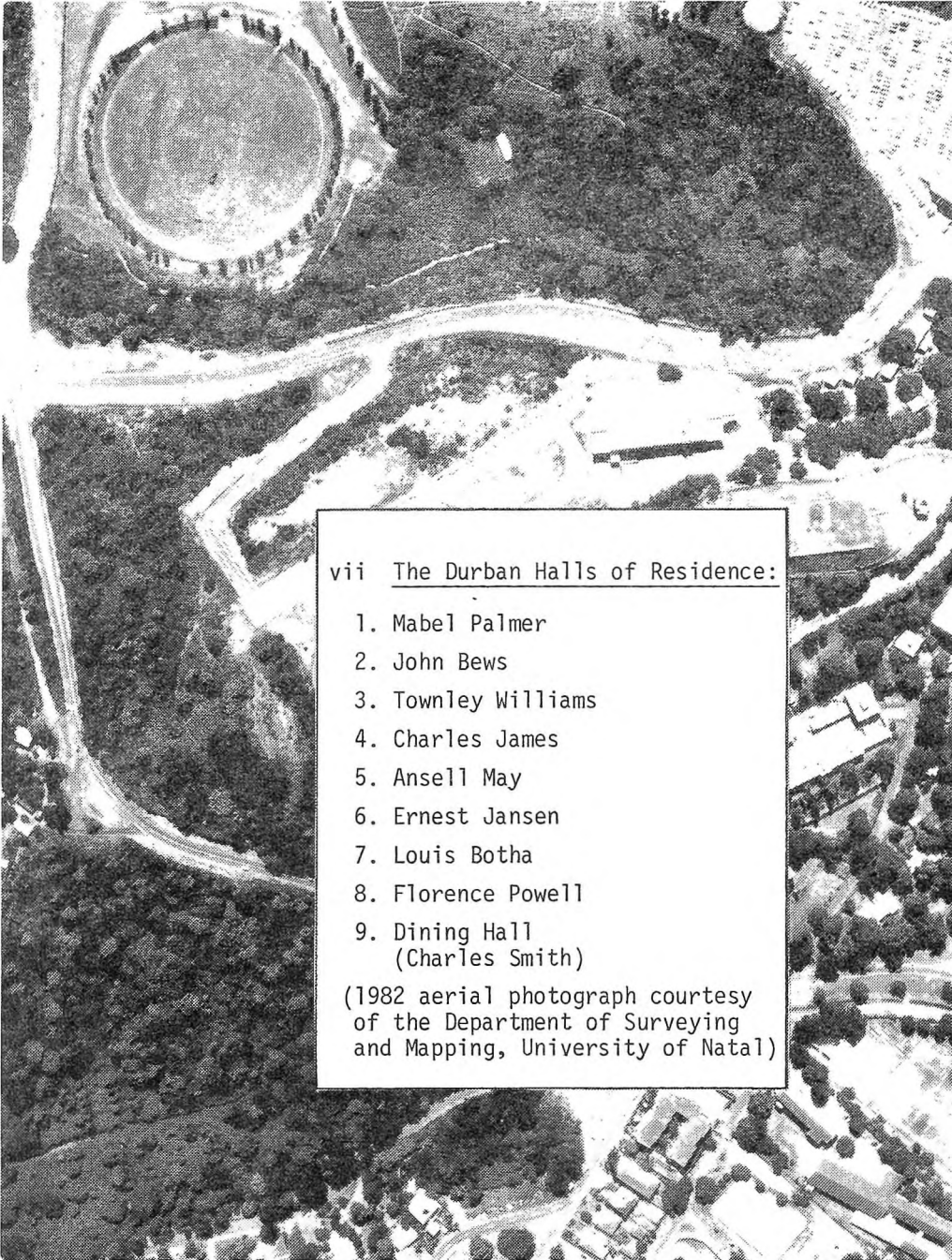
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- P Parking
 P Staff Parking
- 1 School of Music
 - 2 Registrar's Residence
 - 3 Administration Building
 - 4 Campbell House
 - 5 Durban Centenary Building
 - 6 Memorial Tower Building/Main Library
 - 7 T. B. Davie Lecture Theatre
 - 8 Howard College
 - 9 Denis Bhopstone Building
 - 10 Electrical Engineering Building
 - 11 Chemistry Building
 - 12 Chemical Engineering Building
 - 13 Students Union
 - 14 Music Practice Rooms
 - 15 Department of Speech and Drama
 - 16 Superintendent's Residence
 - 17 Florence Powell Hall
 - 18 Department of Surveying
 - 19 Townley Williams Hall
 - 20 Charles James Hall
 - 21 Jubilee Hall
 - 22 Swimming Pool and Squash Courts
 - 23 Louis Botha Hall
 - 24 Warden's Residence
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 - 26 Ansell May Hall
 - 27 Staff Houses
 - 28 John Snows Hall
 - 29 G. C. Scully Hall/University Club
 - 30 Mabel Palmer Hall
 - 31 Ernst Jensen Hall
 - 32 Hammond Field Cricket Pavilion
 - 33 Y. M. C. A. Student Centre
 - 34 Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
 - 35 Sugar Milling Research Institute
 - 36 Applied Chemistry Building/Food Corpn Bldg
 - 37 Physics Mathematics Building
 - 38 Science Lecture Theatres
 - 39 George Campbell Biology Building
 - 40 University Sports Centre/Squash Courts
 - 41 Cricket Oval Clubhouse
 - 42 Athletic Track Grandstand
 - 43 Central Services and Stores
 - 44 Gardens Section
 - 45 Medical School (Inset)
 - 46 New Mechanical Engineering Building
 - 47 The Elizabeth Swinton Theatre



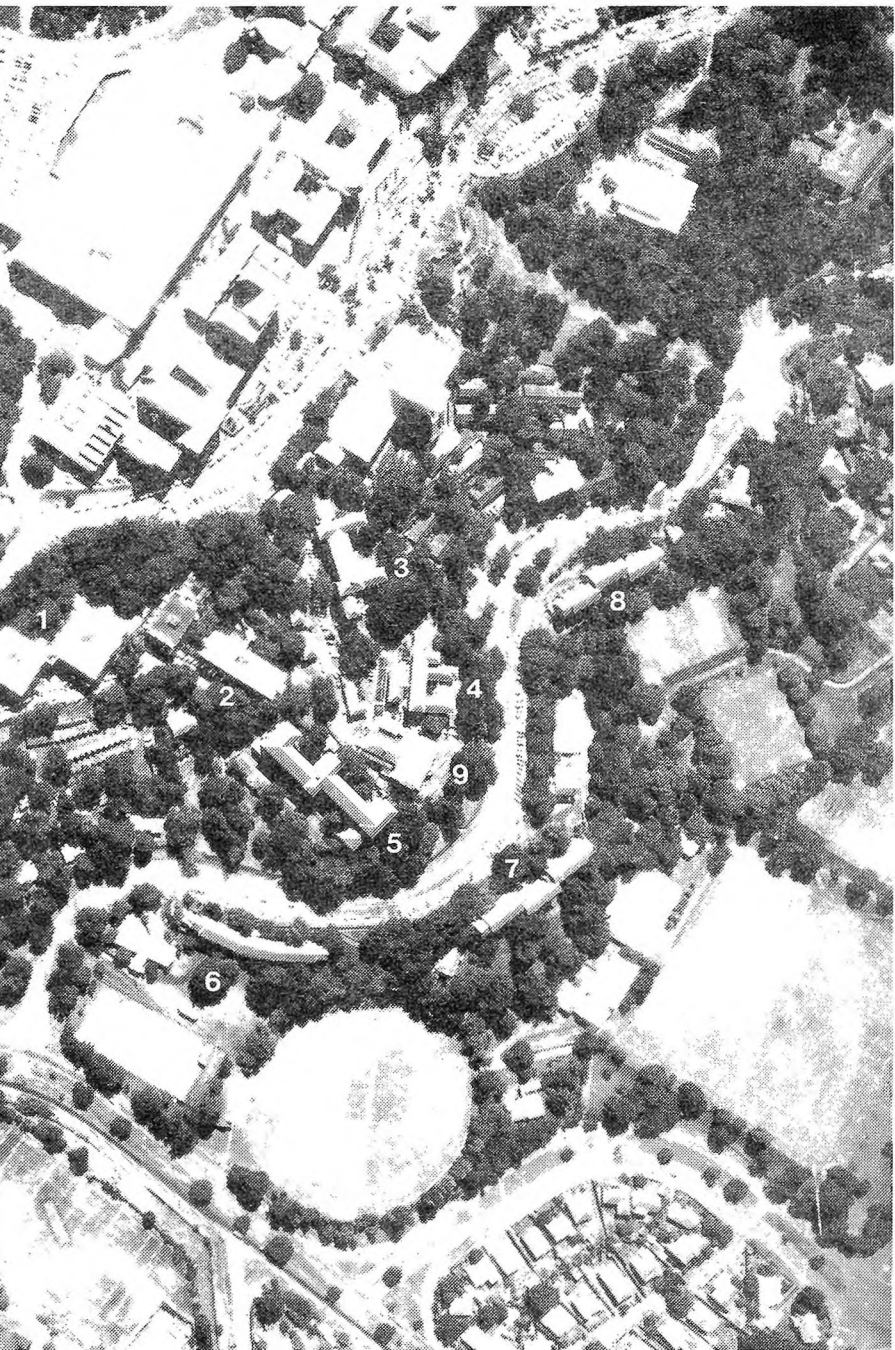
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1. Mabel Palmer
2. John Bews
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7. Louis Botha
8. Florence Powell
9. Dining Hall
(Charles Smith)

(1982 aerial photograph courtesy
of the Department of Surveying
and Mapping, University of Natal)





(viii)

This view of the Durban halls of residence taken in the early 1960s shows the contrasting design concepts represented on campus. The report makes an analytic distinction between the "courtyard" (eg Charles James, centre) and the "corridor" (eg Ernest Jansen, bottom left) design. Only the "older" halls of residence had been erected at the time this photograph was taken, but the sites had already been cleared for the "modern" Mabel Palmer and John Bews Halls. - Note that in the mid-sixties there is little evidence of traffic. In 1984 resident students are capable of controlling noise levels within their residences but are increasingly exposed to traffic noise from outside which is beyond their control. (Photograph courtesy of the *Natal Mercury*)



Resident students on the Durban campus are privileged to live in halls surrounded by lush vegetation. Many of the study bedrooms command a splendid view of the harbour. Prominent in the foreground are from left to right the twin structures of Mabel Palmer Hall (1), John Bews Hall (2), and Ansell May Hall (3). (Photograph courtesy of the University of Natal's Public Affairs Department).

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In August 1975 the Council of the University of Natal resolved that a study be undertaken by a research design group of the long-term residential requirements of students in respect of amenities, social structure and related matters. Among other aims the research design group intended to identify the design and amenity needs regarding student residences on the Durban, Wentworth and Pietermaritzburg campuses and to relate such needs to the role of residences and residence life in the University community. For reasons of expediency an investigation was only undertaken on the Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses.

This investigation included a mailed self-administered questionnaire survey undertaken in 1976 in all halls of residence on the Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses. This extensive survey was followed up later in that year by a smaller focussed study based on personal intensive interviews. The follow-up study involved a subsample of students in residence.

A summary evaluation of the findings of these inquiries was tabled early in the following year in a report compiled by Professor Schlemmer entitled: The Student in Residence: An Analysis of Factors associated with Student Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Residence Life at the University of Natal - Summary Report, March 1977. (This report and the corresponding investigation are referred to as the 1977 report and 1976 investigation, respectively.)

1.1. Review of the 1977 report on satisfaction in student residences

A review of some of the salient points made in the 1977 report is given here by way of background information for readers who are not familiar with the findings of the baseline study.

The 1976 investigation was based on the assumption that students' degree of satisfaction with residence life would relate to their

general morale and also to their intentions to remain in or move out of residence to alternative accommodation. A focal issue was the identification of the major factors, satisfactions and grievances, which would influence residential satisfaction and general morale. The desire to stay in or move out of residence was taken as a strong indication of residential satisfaction.

Initially, a very wide range of factors assumed to affect residential satisfaction was scrutinized. Both physical design features as well as social organisation aspects were included in the list of factors to be explored in the study. Based on past research experience, it was hypothesised that non-physical aspects of residence life would play the more important role in shaping students' attitudes towards life in residence. However, physical aspects would indirectly affect residential satisfaction in that they would constrain or facilitate administrative-organisational facets of residence life to a greater or lesser degree. Secondly, it was also argued that from a planning point of view it would be essential to assess the effects of physical design features - either singly or in concert with non-physical aspects, on residential satisfaction and social satisfaction. For this reason attention was paid to the inter-relationship between physical design and social characteristics of halls of residence.

Regarding general satisfaction with residence life and the desire to leave or stay on in residence, it was observed that the predisposition to drop-out was only partly related to dissatisfaction with residence life. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of students predisposed to leaving were dissatisfied with residence life. The level of satisfaction with residence life also varied according to residence, a point we shall return to later.

Broadly speaking the survey findings suggested that feelings of overall satisfaction with residence life embraced perceptions of being at home and feeling free and at ease among friends. Conversely, dissatisfaction with residence life appeared to be related to perceptions

of crowding, restriction, and depressing surroundings. These negative perceptions contained both spatial and organisational connotations. The report on these findings notes that satisfaction and dissatisfaction with residence life tended to correlate with items reflecting atmosphere rather than practical aspects. This pattern suggested that general satisfaction was a morale factor, which would be subjective in nature and difficult to define concisely. In broad terms satisfactory residence life would most likely give rise to feelings of living in a friendly and socially supportive environment which is also conducive to studying. These results are suggestive that the ideal residence situation is one which fosters the self-confidence of students enabling them to perform well in their academic and social lives.

By contrast, survey results revealed that intentions to leave or stay in residence appeared to be related to a larger number of items and also to a variety of practical considerations, including physical design, convenience, and cost factors.

In sum, satisfaction with residence life appeared to be a projection of subjective feeling tones whereas dissatisfaction could be attributed to a number of more specific objectively circumscribed grievance factors.

A regression analysis was undertaken in order to classify the large number of survey stimuli into clusters of factors which were statistically closely related to three major indicators of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with residence life. The broad results of the 1976 analysis are presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1.Factors associated with residence satisfaction/dissatisfaction (1976)Positive emphasis:Negative emphasis:1. General satisfaction with residence lifeSatisfaction:

- General satisfaction with university life
- Trustworthy, supportive friends
- Enjoyment of freedom of residence life

Dissatisfaction:

- Perceptions of crowding in residences
- Need for more varied food

2. Present desire to stay in/leave residenceStay:

- Appreciation of residence spirit
- Practical place to live in

Leave:

- Residence life too restricting
- Residence life too uniform
- Need for direct access to rooms from outside
- Little value for money

3. Future intention to stay in/leave residence

- Practical place to live in
- Good atmosphere for study
- Appreciation of residence spirit

- Residence life too uniform
- Feelings of being too old for residence life

Although the results of the multiple regression analysis were disappointing in terms of the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained, they nevertheless revealed a consistent picture of contrasting attitudes towards life in residence. Whereas the satisfied

student in residence is adaptive to the requirements of residence life and also derives personal benefits from this environment, the dissatisfied student cannot come to terms with the physical and social constraints of life in residence which in turn is seen to limit personal development. Once again, the importance of social factors was highlighted in this interpretation of the survey findings.

Responses elicited to open-ended questions posed in the questionnaire study and to the personal interviews confirmed the significance of social factors, such as perceptions of privacy and personal freedom, in shaping attitudes toward residence life. Students identified three typical reaction patterns which were associated with weak commitment to living in residence and dissatisfaction with residence life:

- a) Negative attitudes toward routine and formal organisational arrangements and rules in residence, and dislike of residence group norms and conventions.
- b) Desire for independence, personal responsibility, and autonomy.
- c) Lack of privacy, claustrophobia associated with life in residence.

The 1977 report also identified student groups in residence which were at risk of not achieving satisfaction from residence accommodation. The description of these groups will not be repeated here. Suffice it to note that while very substantial proportions of highly discontented resident students were older and more senior people, the relationship between age and seniority on the one hand, and discontent with residence life on the other, was not consistently linear.¹⁾

1) In the 1977 and 1984 follow-up studies, the impression was gained that the novelty of residence life "wore off" after some time. Moreover, the older, more mature resident students had learnt - possibly as part of their student training, to be more critical, and were therefore in a better position to conceptualise grievances and evaluate their residential circumstances.

The 1977 report further identified the specific frustrations, problems and grievances encountered in residence life. Tentative lists of grievances were compiled from the responses elicited in the questionnaire survey and the personal interviews to questions probing sources of irritations and problems, and required changes. It is important to note that a rank-ordering of items would not be meaningful as grievances are for the most part context-specific (that is, interviewees were required to review items in the light of the circumstances of their particular residence). The author of the 1977 report comments that the respondents generally assumed a responsible attitude toward endorsing stimulus items provided in this exercise.

The major grievances are reproduced here mainly to give the reader a feel for the type of specific concern, which were focal issues in 1976. The lists will also provide a basis of comparison with which to assess shifts in emphases in the results of the follow-up studies of residence life reported on later.

Specific grievances prominent among students in residence in 1976:
(Stimuli provided)

- More varied food
- Rooms for private parties and gatherings
- Tastier or better quality food
- Better late night transport from town
- Better parking facilities
- Freedom to come and go at all times

Negative features of residences in 1976 (Spontaneous mention, personal interviews)

- Noise and crowding-related issues
- Formal rules and routine organisational aspects
- Lack of privacy
- Specific complaints regarding design and physical aspects
- Domestic services (eg laundry service, telephone facilities).

Changes and improvements most urgently needed in 1976:

(Stimuli provided)

- More colourful decor or colour schemes
- A number of small cosy lounges
- More packing and cupboard space in rooms
- More peace and quiet for study

Improvements required: (Spontaneous mention, questionnaire survey)

- Provide larger-sized rooms
- Provide better carpets and curtaining
- Make improvements to the paintwork - colour scheme, maintenance
- Improve on the institution-like design and atmosphere of residences
- Brighten cheerless corridors
- Increase the number and improve the quality of common rooms
- Provide for fewer and more flexible rules and regulations
- Provide better meal service with less queuing
- Provide additional and better serviced ablution facilities
- Provide better noise insulation
- Solve problems with intercom
- Provide better telephone facilities and message service
- Improve laundry services
- Solve problems related to the House Committee system

The items listed cover a wide range of specific problems and grievances. Some of the problems listed above relate to physical design and can only be resolved with major financial outlays. Other problems pertaining to decor and organisational aspects stand a better chance of being attended to and indeed may have been partially resolved in the period elapsed since 1977. Yet other types of grievances, such as food issues, which the author of the 1977 report regards as peripheral to the area of study, may be recurrent in most institutions providing board and lodging.

The most important point to note here, the 1977 report emphasises, is that the variety of grievances and problems may not only be a reflection of the incapability of the residences to provide suitable accommodation for live-in students. University residences typically cater for a socially heterogeneous set of residents whose needs are also divergent. Thus, it should come as no surprise that not all needs are equally satisfied in the student residences. It is also important to note that many of the references to minor irritations and problems, and the suggestions for change were offered by way of constructive criticism from otherwise satisfied residents.

On the basis of these specific dissatisfiers and satisfiers the 1977 report identified some 15 constructed types of students in residence whose needs and basic reactions to residence life were sufficiently distinctive to warrant separate identification. We shall not enumerate these residence-orientation types here but refer the reader to the original report. By way of a summary evaluation the author of the 1977 report draws up in broad outline a mock-up of a students' residence which incorporates the majority of these diverse needs as abstract design features. Of course, the translation of these recommendations into a physical structure is left to the ingenuity of the architect-planner. In conclusion, the author conceded that the 1976 survey had produced a fair number of specific insights into detailed aspects of residence design desired or needed by students, however, the fact remained that students would always be difficult to plan for.

In broad terms then, the 1977 analysis pointed towards a type of residence design which incorporates privacy and independent living-space which nonetheless retains easy access to residence life generally and to common facilities. The appreciation of residence "spirit" underlines the need to retain the opportunity for communal involvement of students in residence life and activity. However, the reduction of noise and disturbance is also important, claims the author of the report.

1.1.1 Further questions and additional tasks

The 1977 report identified three further questions of importance which remained to be discussed.

The first referred to the question of the desirability of mixed sex accommodation. The 1977 analysis discovered that far more students had a strong preference in favour of mixed sex accommodation than against it, the ratio being approximately 3:1. However, it was felt that the presence of a group of mainly women opponents to this idea advised caution on this point. It was concluded that the question of mixed sex accommodation should be reviewed periodically.

The second point referred to the question of the possible separation of first year from more senior students. Only a small minority of the residence student body (some 10-13%) favoured such a separation in 1977. However, older students, the more serious, and the noise-conscious individuals expressed a relatively strong need for this type of separation. Moreover, the basic design concept emerging from the 1977 analysis which involved maximising independence and autonomy also suggested a need for some form of differential accommodation according to seniority.

The third point referred to greater flexibility in the centralised eating arrangements. Although the dominant preference was for self-service arrangements at flexible times which would minimise queuing time, small groups made up predominantly of women, expressed the need for limited self-catering facilities.

In its concluding chapter the 1977 report makes reference to a further step in the analysis of the research material which is beyond the scope of the summary report. The 1977 report attempted only to recommend design options in broad perspectives. A further step would entail the analysis of the requirements, preferences, and frustrations of students in each of the existing residences in the light of specific features of each residence's design and its location.

2. THE FOLLOW-UP STUDIES UNDERTAKEN IN 1977 AND 1984 : METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The follow-up studies conducted in the residences addressed the residual issues and tasks which were beyond the scope of the analysis reported on in 1977. Two further studies were undertaken in 1977 and 1984, respectively, with slightly different emphases in mind. A brief characterisation of the nature of the two studies follows.

2.1 The 1977 follow-up study

In the course of 1977 a researcher in the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, who is also one of the authors of this report, undertook the first follow-up study in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg residences. We shall be concerned only with the results of the Durban study here because there is no trend data available for the Pietermaritzburg residences to date.

The fieldwork was undertaken in mid-year, at a time of year when all resident students could be expected to be thoroughly familiar with residence life. The field notes were complete by September 1977.

The 1977 fieldworker adopted the following survey method. The profile of each individual residence hall was compiled on the basis of the results obtained in the 1976 residence survey. Each residence profile consisted of three groups of features/issues:

- 1) Features residents seriously thought their building should have:
(The 1976 survey included 14 items under this heading).
- 2) Possible changes and improvements:
(The 1976 survey asked for a rating of 42 such items and asked for a specification and rating of items overlooked).
- 3) Descriptive phrases summing up life and feelings in residence over the past two months:
(The 1976 survey asked for an endorsement of the most applicable descriptions in a list of 36 items).

The profile of a specific residence consisted of a listing of a small number of features and issues which had received relatively prominent mention in this hall of residence in contrast to all the other residences. Informal group interviews were then conducted in the residence in question with a cross-section of the resident students, with a view to seeking further information on individual features of the profile of their residence. In some instances explanations were sought by direct observation.

In each residence the fieldworker attempted to size up the social ecology and give an impression of the general feel of the place. The 1977 fieldworker was an experienced and competent researcher and therefore well-suited to carry out the task of participant observation in the residences.

2.2 The 1984 follow-up study

The second follow-up study was undertaken some seven years later. This time the study was devised as a class project for the students attending a course in social research methods in the Centre for Applied Social Sciences. The course participants were all post-graduate diploma and honours level students. The fieldwork was again conducted in mid-year during May-July 1984. The student researchers were well briefed in class before undertaking their task. In the field the students worked in three teams of two persons each. Each team collected information in three of the total of nine halls of residence on the Durban campus. The teams adopted the following approach to interviewing. In each residence they invited a cross-section of students to participate in an informal small group discussion. As a rule, the students were approached in the residence common area and the group interviews were also conducted there. One of the fieldworkers assumed the role of discussion leader and introduced a number of topics which had been specified beforehand, while the second member of the field team recorded the results of the discussion. A field report was prepared for each hall of residence. Each report contained the results of the group discussion as well

as further information and insights gained from observations made in the field.

The group discussions were conducted according to an interview guideline prepared in advance in class. The guideline served mainly as a checklist of the items to be covered in the group discussions. This standard approach was adopted in order to facilitate the comparison of results across residences. However, the field teams were also encouraged to pursue any leads which emerged during the group discussions which might prove to be germane to the study.

The following topics were scheduled for discussion in the group interviews conducted in 1984:

- General and residence-specific factors which contribute towards satisfaction and dissatisfaction with residence life.
- Changes and improvements required.
- Grievances related to administrative/organisational aspects of residence life, in particular an assessment of the acceptability of house rules.
- Morale and residence "spirit", and grievances related to social aspects of residence life.
- A probe into the popularity rating of the residences and residence reputations.
- A probe into integration issues:
the salience of sex-integrated accommodation and attitudes toward racially-integrated residences.

The topics included a number of subtle and possibly also sensitive issues which required great skill on the part of the interviewers facilitating the group discussions. In contrast to the 1977 fieldworker, the 1984 student interviewers for the most part lacked extensive training and experience in interviewing. However, what they lacked in skill they made up for in terms of the dedication and interest which they applied to their task. More often than not, factors which lay beyond the interviewers' control determined whether the group discussions yielded good results or not. Generally, the interviews which were conducted at times when there were few competing distractions tended to yield a more serious, less superficial discussion of the research topics. However, in some

residences it proved more difficult to find a semi-private common room area in which to conduct a group discussion. Ironically, residence-specific design features may have affected the results of the follow-up studies even in the data-collection stage.

3. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

When studying the residence-specific grievances and satisfactions the assumption was made that attitudes toward residence life may differ to a certain degree between men and women residents. More important for the task at hand, a crude distinction was made between the older, more conventionally designed halls of residence and the newer halls of residence which are built according to more modern design principles. A dominant feature of the older buildings is the long corridor from which the students' rooms lead off. The three residences of the "modern" period and the oldest residence on the Durban campus feature open or closed courtyards around which the students' rooms are arranged in tiers. Thus, a major analytic distinction can be made between "corridor" and courtyard" residences for purposes of this study. At the outset of the study it was assumed that this distinction in design, in conjunction with the different residential requirements of men and women students, would account for a large proportion of the variance in the results obtained in the surveys. Furthermore, the location of the residence on campus represents an additional factor which may influence the grievance structure of individual residences. An overview of these factors is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Overview of residence characteristics

Halls of residence	Approx. date of erection	Size: number students	Style	Major design feature	Location in relation to Princess Alice Ave.	Residents
Charles James	1948	63	"conventional"	open courtyard	above	women
Ansell May	1952	164	"conventional"	corridor	above	men
Townley Williams	1957	105	"conventional"	corridor	above	men
Ernest Jansen	mid 60's	102	"conventional"	corridor	below	men
Louis Botha	mid 60's	130	"conventional"	corridor	below	men
Florence Powell	mid 60's	73	"conventional"	corridor	below	men
John Bews	late 60's	102	"modern"	closed courtyard	above	women
Mabel Palmer (women)	1968	95	"modern"	closed courtyard	above	women
Mabel Palmer (men)	1968	95	"modern"	closed courtyard	above	men

4. THE RESEARCH SETTING : THE SOCIAL CLIMATE IN 1976/77 AND 1984

When comparing the 1976/77 and 1984 findings it will be essential to bear in mind the different conditions and circumstances affecting students in residence at the two dates which might also impinge on student morale and general satisfaction with residence life on campus.

The initial survey in 1976 was undertaken at a time when discontent in the student residences was commonly thought to be high. A dramatic drop in the intake of students wishing to live in residence on campus was anticipated. The 1976 survey was commissioned to assess the level of discontent and to identify the sources of dissatisfaction in order to make recommendations for future planning. Included in the initial brief was also the need to establish the extent and type of influence which physical design factors exerted on students in residence.

By 1984 the situation has changed remarkably. Waiting lists exist for vacancies in University of Natal residences, so that a shortage rather than an oversupply of rooms is anticipated in future. The residence option is gaining in popularity as is evident from the following information supplied to prospective students enrolling in 1984.

"Obtaining a place in residence should be regarded as a privilege and not a right; competition for places is very keen and it is not usually possible to accept all applicants, whether senior students or school leavers. Those whose University or school examination results do not secure them a place at the beginning of the year are placed on a waiting list and offered places if vacancies occur. Vacancies are filled immediately, even late in the year, and there has not been an empty room for more than a few days during the term in any of the residences, since 1981." (University of Natal, Durban Halls of Residence Information).

According to the Senior Warden (personal communication) the rate of students returning to residence over consecutive years is also well over 90 percent. In 1984, a place in residence is obtained on the basis of merit, and the high academic standard achieved by resident students is noteworthy:

"Resident students have a good record of academic success. In all of the years 1980 to 1983 between 200 and 240 resident students obtained first class passes in one or more subjects. In 1983 when 24% of resident students obtained at least one first, every residence out-performed the non-resident students, 14% of whom obtained firsts, and resident students out-performed non-resident students in every Faculty.

First year resident students have also done well. More than 19% of first year resident students have obtained at least one first each year since 1981. This again compares favourably with the achievements of non-resident students, 9% of whom obtained first class passes in 1983." (University of Natal, Durban Halls of Residence Information).

Given the contrasting social climate of 1977 and 1984 one might expect the resident students of 1984 to be more academically motivated than their 1976/77 counterparts, and the morale in residence to be generally higher in 1984 than in 1977.

At the same time consideration must be given to the fact that the physical circumstances in which resident students live on campus are almost identical in 1977 and 1984. Independently of each other the fieldworkers of both periods compiled impressionistic sketches of the residence environments which were remarkably similar; in some instances uncannily similar - as if time had stood still.

For readers who are not familiar with the Durban residences, a selection of these sketches is reproduced here. The aim is to create a feel for the residence environment which will render more meaningful the discussion to follow of the possible relationships between design and morale.

5. THE PHYSICAL SETTING - IMPRESSIONS FROM THE FIELDWORKERS' NOTEBOOKS

Excerpts are taken from the field notes compiled in 1977 and 1984 to describe the nine residences on the Durban campus. We shall follow the analytic distinction made earlier and commence with the residences built according to the more conventional design idiom and move on to the newer more modern-looking residences.

5.1 The "conventional" residence designs

5.1.1 Charles James Hall (women's residence)

1977 field notes:

Exterior: A pleasant enough setting, though a little close on some sides to other buildings e.g. Townley Williams Hall, the dining hall.

Interior: There is a problem of gloom, and elderly decor, in parts of the building, but spatially this is actually quite a pleasant building. Rooms, halls and corridors are large and spacious, if gloomy. The bedrooms are large: This building seems to have caught the advantages of a quadrangular arrangement (unity, interaction, identify) without apparently culling the disadvantages too badly. They say there is little noise problem. They all in fact feel known to each other without feeling crowded. The quad is light and open to the sky. The rooms are easily seen into from across the quad. There is variety in the design and parts of the building, and relatively numerous gathering places are available: junior common room, senior common room, foyer/common room, large roof sun-deck, the quad. However, for various reasons these places are regarded as socially almost redundant.

5.1.2 Florence Powell Hall (men's residence)

1977 field notes:

The setting of the residence is very pleasant with trees, lawns, a quiet roadway¹). The approach, the entrance door, and the general exterior of the building are pleasant, mellow. The entrance and foyer feel pleasant enough, and are spacious, but pretty bare.

The internal feel of the place is elderly, almost shabby, but clean and orderly. Interior walls are mainly white or pale. There are few dark brick surfaces. The whole place is small - there are no distant or remote-feeling wings. (There are few baths. The showers are not very attractive but clean).

There are two public communal rooms: a small common room, and a very cosy, well decorated pub (the "beer club") which is not open to first

1) This last aspect has changed considerably since 1977. The road is much busier in 1984.

year students. The only common room¹⁾ is rather insufficient for the various functions it tries to perform (lounge, thoroughfare to garden, games room). It is too small to be the sole lounge. There are no "private" corners to it. It is right next to the foyer. It gets virtually no peace, except when the entire residence is quiet.

Of the three residences on the lower road (Florence Powell, Louis Botha, Ernest Jansen) this one is the smallest in size and population. In most other respects, however, it is comparable to the others, as they are all built to the same basic design out of the same basic modules. Apart from the small common room, Florence Powell's small size is advantageous : a sense of community seems to be possible²⁾ and outside a massive, institutional look is avoided. As the smallest of the three, it has the most pleasant feel.

Of the people: These boys are confident, easy-going types, kept busy by their studies. Problematic architectural/design features do not produce any deep or latent psychological effect, apparently - rather a fairly tolerant and superficial irritation at, say, the small size of the rooms.

5.1.3 Louis Botha Hall (men's residence)

1984 field notes:

Louis Botha Men's residence is the largest of the three residences, all older ones, situated on this part of the campus. It is located below the Princess Alice Avenue thoroughfare through campus, adjacent to the students' Young Mens' Christian Association and Ernest Jansen Hall on the one side, and Jubilee Hall on the other. Immediately below the residence are the University Eastern Campus Sports Fields which include the squash courts, swimming pool, tennis courts and playing fields.

The building is divided into two larger wings of four floors each, with a central block dividing the two. Each floor on these two wings has ten single bedrooms leading off it, served by an ablution facility comprising toilets, a urinal and three individual showers. The floors are all of brown linoleum, and the walls are painted with cream enamel.

Leading off the entrance foyer there are two public telephones which serve for both incoming and outgoing calls. There is a message book located at this point, and an intercom facility to summon people to the foyer to receive visitors and take incoming calls.

Also leading off the foyer is a common room for students, furnished with a number of vinyl-covered easy chairs, and a television set for the use of all residents. The *Daily News* and the *Natal Mercury* are received daily and placed here for the perusal of all residents. The foyer also contains a roll of all residents, accompanied by a photograph, room number, and details of course of study for each. Next to it are two notice-boards, one for official notices and one for general student use.

1) In the 1976 survey response the small lounge was identified as a problem area.

2) This finding which emerged in the 1977 group discussion is reconfirmed in the 1984 follow-up study.

1977 field notes:

This building in colour, flavour and design and setting resembles Ernest Jansen and Florence Powell. It is pleasant enough but it is much larger than, say Florence Powell. Longer rows of windows and an extra floor give it a distinctly massive, institutional look.

The longer corridors inside feel cramped. But more communal leisure spaces are available: a common room, a senior common room, and the beer club. There is a small but pleasant verandah upstairs. However, the efficiency and pleasantness of these spaces is no greater than in Florence Powell or Ernest Jansen. Moreover, while communal spaces are, in effect, virtually no different, the population in this building is double that of Florence Powell. Thus, the general feel of crowding is greater. Generally speaking, these residences are all a bit drab and colourless. The walls are painted a sickly yellow.

5.1.4 Ernest Jansen Hall (men's residence)1984 field notes:

Ernest Jansen is located furthest of all residences from lecture theatres, the communal dining hall, and the students' union. However, closeness to sports facilities and transport stops to town compensate somewhat.

The building is one of the older residences of conventional design. A small entrance hall leads off to passages to rooms on the left and the right, and a stairwell leads to levels two and three. Opposite the hall is a lounge/reception room. Passages lead to the students' rooms; storerooms cum laundries are poorly located inbetween.

On the third floor is a small students' beer/social club. The outlook is very pleasant - south-east facing rooms overlook the main cricket field and rooms facing the main campus look out on grassy banks, well-covered with trees.

1977 field notes:

Ernest Jansen is virtually identical to Florence Powell residence, except larger - in particular the corridors are longer (and look much darker, gloomier). It too only has one common room, though slightly larger: a cavernous, unc cosy, exposed-feeling place with very old armchairs rather formally arranged in lines. Residents said that although many people may gather in it, they tend to be there as isolates - pursuing solitary activities such as reading the newspaper. Small intimate groups do not form for, for example, friendly relaxed conversation. This latter kind of meeting has to take place in the rooms, which are tiny, or in the "beer club", which is for third year students only. So, there is only one common room, and even it is inadequate.

The setting and exterior of the building is pleasant with trees and lawns. Most sports facilities are directly adjacent. The front is possibly a little too close to the embankment leading up to the road. Ground-floor rooms on the front side thus get a claustal view of the nearby bank and less light.

5.1.5 Townley Williams Hall (men's residence)

1977 field notes:

This building, with the possible exception of Charles James Hall¹⁾ is the most interesting and varied layout on the Durban campus.

- Some rooms are on short, cul-de-sac wings.
- Some rooms are on both sides of corridors with a staircase at each end.
- The cul-de-sac wings are on mezzanine levels.
- Some rooms are in very small groups sharing a small entrance room (still unused!).
- Short corridors have rooms along one side only.
- Rooms on one wing look into a courtyard, but those on the other face out. Both rows face east downhill.
- Double rooms are much larger but not always shared.
- Conversely three basement rooms are pretty undesirable.
- As well as the "house president's flat", there are the customary larger and better rooms reserved for members of the house committee.

Acting to neutralise these good features are:

- The gloomy and dated decor of the building.
- The cramped siting of the building, which is close to three other buildings and has a busy driveway/carpark/pedestrian thoroughfare running right beside it.

5.1.6 Ansell May Hall (men's residence)

1984 field notes:

This is the largest residence on campus, housing 163 male students in single study bedrooms.

The building is a conventional institution as far as its design is concerned: There are four floors, each having two wings comprising 20 bedrooms. There are, in addition, nine flatlets for senior students. With the exception of the central common room, all the walls are painted with cream enamel, and the floors of brown linoleum give the place a dingy air. The interior walls of each bedroom are of varnished face brick.

Each corridor of twenty rooms is served by a bathroom, which has eight communal showers and three baths. Each room has a handbasin and a cold water tap.

There is a central common room containing a television set, and a notice board.

1) The oldest residence on campus, one of the three women's residences.

1977 field notes:

The building is dark but spacious. Large and institutional-looking and forbidding (the darkness) too. Somewhat hemmed in by trees and other buildings. - Inside less cramped than other residences. - But dark and unlit on very long corridors.

Virtually devoid of any aesthetic content, or indeed of any attempts at decorations, with exception of naked pin-ups - a few posters of racing cars and beer ads are also in evidence¹⁾ Some rooms are almost wall-papered thus with bosoms.

The main common room: Of all the forlorn, public-looking common rooms in the residences, Ansell May has one of the better ones. It is well-furnished in the sense that there is enough furniture to fill the room. And although the common room is a thoroughfare to a main door, the groupings of the furniture serve to regionalise the larger room - a slight step toward cosiness. Nevertheless, it apparently remains by and large a room for watching television and reading newspapers. Apparently useage of this room has increased significantly since some improvements were made.

5.2 The "modern" residence designs5.2.1 Mabel Palmer Halls (men's and women's residences)

- The exterior is actually attractive and interesting, - set in a pleasant environment of lawns and trees. Views on one side are fine, looking downhill, but the other side looks onto the embankment (1977 field notes).

- The outlook from the residence is pleasant due to the fact that the residence is surrounded by grassy banks, trees and shrubs (1984 field report, 1st team of fieldworkers).

- Mabel Palmer Residence is characterised by a modern and innovative design (1984, 1st team).

- The building is a modern cast-concrete structure constructed according to a design devised for American prisoners²⁾ (1984, 2nd team).

- Men and women students live within this residence but live in separate areas within the building. Access between the men's and women's section is through interleading doors and corridors. The interior design of the building is of an 'open plan' nature, the most marked feature being the concrete drainage tunnel extending from the roof of the courtyard to the floor below (1984, 1st team).

1) The researchers observed that posters (of various subjects!) were still a striking feature of the rooms in 1984.

2) Here the fieldworkers are rendering the description of the Mabel Palmer design concept popular among resident students.

- The residence has four floors arranged around a central volume, which forms a quadrangle onto which the rooms on the bottom floor lead. This area is used as a general recreational one ¹⁾ (1984, 2nd team).
- The 'open' plan design makes most corridors and rooms visible from all positions in the building (1984 1st team).
- The quadrangle design, being so small, gives a focussed centralised orientation to residents' perception of the place and each other (1977).
- On the women's side: Some aspects of the interiors are pleasant in appearance . . . rooms and common rooms are clean and modern-looking, well-lit by huge windows. Carpets everywhere in the shell, including in the stairways ²⁾ (1977).
- The common room is equipped with easy chairs and a bar-counter from which the house committee operate a sherry-bar for residents and their guests ³⁾ (1984 2nd team).
- On the men's side: The common room is pleasant, modern and well-lit in spite of local complaints about its concrete ceilings ⁴⁾ (1977).
- The remainder of the block is virtually identical to Mabel Palmer (women). If anything, the central "well"/quad is even duller, as it lacks even plants ⁵⁾ (1977).

5.2.2 John Bews Hall (women's residence)

1977 field report:

John Bews Hall is in layout clearly the most similar building to Mabel Palmer Hall - it is an elongated but very similar "enclosed quad" design. The same inward looking, uniform, public echoing, well-like effect is achieved. A feeling, inter alia, of maximum possible "population density" prevails. (Just as Mabel Palmer can be seen as one huge stair-well, so may John Bews be seen as a pair of huge stair-wells).

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- 1) The researchers found little evidence of this being a recreational area. They observed that the area was used mainly for circulation and coincidental interaction. The quad features attractive brick-paving and flowerbeds with green plants and shrubs.
 - 2) Beginning to show signs of wear in 1984.
 - 3) The sherry-bar was not operational in 1977.
 - 4) In 1984, Mabel Palmer men recommended the walls be painted to relieve the drabness of the common room.
 - 5) A 1984 visit by the researchers confirmed this impression. The area beneath the stairs in the courtyard served as storage space for canoes. The only decorative element was the brightly coloured towels put out to dry on the balustrades of the galleries around the quad, resulting in a "garland" effect.

Judged by the high levels of tension and "restriction" indicated by the profile, the interactional effects (on women) of the John Bews layout closely resembles the interaction and effects of the Mabel Palmer layout. Visually, the John Bews interior is definitely superior because:

- 1) common rooms are focal rather than peripheral as in Mabel Palmer
- 2) the matron has apparently gone to great lengths to decorate throughout with paintings, plants and batiks;
- 3) balustrades and bannisters are pine, not concrete
- 4) more light to penetrate;

but acoustically and socially it must be almost equivalent in effect to the Mabel Palmer interior layout.

1984 field report:

Seen from the outside, John Bews (women's) residence has a modern clean looking design. On entering the building one passes into a lobby area. The administrative offices lead off the lobby on the right hand side. Towards the back of the lobby is an entrance to the main lounge or communal area where students are able to meet. Facing the entrance to the building is a stairwell leading to the upper and lower floors of the residence. The building comprises of four floors (three floors above the lobby area and one below the lobby area).

Special features of the building include the before-mentioned modern clean looking design of the building; small recreation type rooms can also be found on each floor. The residence also has a special laundry facility with tumble driers available for the students to wash and dry their clothes.

6. THE FINDINGS

The material collected in the follow-up studies is of a qualitative nature and tends to be largely descriptive. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to summarize the results of these sensitive probes in terms of a number of salient themes and issues which emerged in the discussions with the resident students. No pretensions are made as regards complete coverage of all the issues explored by the researchers and raised by the students. The discussion of specific topics is merely intended to shed light on the obviously complex interrelationships existing between the physical environmental and social-organisational factors of residence life, and the students' perceptions of satisfaction and their personal experience of general well-being. Many of the observations made in 1977 appear to be as valid today as they were some seven years ago and are included in the report without special reference to the date of observation. However, where different circumstances are thought to have affected students' perceptions of their residence situation, comments are made to this effect. Themes and topics are frequently interwoven, therefore repetitions and some overlap in the discussion of the data cannot be avoided. We must appeal to the reader's patience.

6.1 Satisfaction with residence life

In reply to a general probe into the satisfaction derived from residence life, respondents named some three factors: social integration, convenience, and opportunities to study efficiently, as chief motivations for living in residence. A discussion of these satisfiers follows:

6.1.1 Social contacts, social integration: Residence life in general is considered attractive in that it provides students with opportunities to meet and make friends with people of similar interests and belief systems. Resident students felt they were in an excellent position to participate actively in social functions, cultural events, and sporting activities on campus. As one student put it, resident students

felt more involved in and fully integrated into university life. They felt they were "*part of the whole system*". As one Charles James woman student explained: "*You miss out on something if you are not in res*". According to a 1976 finding emergent from the questionnaire survey, students who were satisfied with residence life were also more inclined than others to feel satisfied with university life in general. This 1976 survey finding was reconfirmed in the 1984 discussions with resident students.

6.1.2 Convenience: According to the 1984 group discussions, resident students, in contrast to oppidanis, were spared the trouble and cost of commuting and "*don't have to get up early*" as one student put it. The attractiveness of individual halls of residence was often assessed in terms of distance to major landmarks on campus: to the lecture halls, the library, the students' union, the central dining hall which serves all halls of residence, and the sports and recreation facilities. In some instances students tended to associate the popularity of their residence with its physical proximity to the lecture theatres at the top of the slope on which the halls of residence are situated or to the sports fields at the bottom. In terms of the location factor, the students living in the three residences below Princess Alice Avenue tended to feel slightly more deprived than others, because they had to "climb the hill" in order to participate in most campus activities. However, in some cases it was thought that the lower residences' proximity to the sports fields compensated for their distance to other central services and facilities. Nevertheless, students living in the lower halls of residence who made use of the facilities in the new sports complex on Francois Road tended to feel more deprived than their counterparts living in the halls situated higher up the hill. A case in point were the Florence Powell students. According to these considerations, "half way up" and half way down" might be the most convenient location for a residence. Ansell May meets this criterion and according to a 1977 informant is also the most practical place to live on campus.

6.1.3 Good environment for studying: The residence environment is conducive to studying according to the opinions voiced in most of the 1984 group discussions. A good "work atmosphere" prevails as one Louis Botha student expressed it. A code of mutual assistance exists among resident students. Resident students typically help each other with their studies and pool resources and information. The interviewees reported that there was always someone at hand to assist with the problems encountered in one's academic work. This supportive environment is particularly appreciated at examination times. Mutual assistance with studies appears to be closely associated with the notion of friendliness and camaraderie which seemed to make residence life particularly attractive to the students participating in the discussion groups. Particular reference was made by one discussion group (Mabel Palmer men 1984) to the house tutor¹⁾ system which appeared to be popular. Knowing that they can depend upon tutoring and assistance from classmates appeared to instil confidence in some of the resident students interviewed in 1984. Reference to the good record of academic achievement of resident students was cited with pride to the 1984 fieldworkers in another instance. Thus, it would appear that resident students feel motivated to achieve in their studies and also confident of doing so on the basis of their residence environment rather than fearful of falling short of the high academic standards expected of resident students in more recent years.

The academic achievements of student residents appeared to contribute to the reputation of particular halls of residence, more so in 1977 than in 1984, as might be expected given the less distinctive emphasis of admission to residences on the basis of academic merit in the first instance. For example, in 1977 Florence Powell men described themselves as serious hardworking students. Sports were not taken as seriously in their hall of residence as in others and Florence Powell men were not regarded as good social mixers. However, they appeared to be extremely proud of their academic achievement. Similarly, Townley

1) *"A House Tutor system is operated in the residences. Under this system senior resident students are appointed by the University to give assistance where needed, in certain subjects, to younger students in the evenings or at weekends"* (University of Natal, Durban Halls of Residence Information).

Williams in 1977 was known to accommodate mainly quiet, studious young men, in particular engineering students, which contributed to its favourable image as the "gentlemen's res". In 1984 this positive image persisted and the Townley Williams environment was considered particularly conducive to serious studying. Along similar lines Charles James women students replied in 1984 that their hall of residence was very popular because it was conducive to studying. Similarly, in the 1976 survey the Charles James residence achieved lower than average scores on the item: need for "more peace and quiet in residence".

6.1.4 In sum, general satisfactions are derived from living in residence which tend to positively influence the general well-being experienced by resident students. These satisfactions are expressed in terms of feelings of belonging, opportunities to make social contacts, and feelings of confidence with respect of academic achievement. The latter is fostered by the mutual support system operating among fellow students and resident tutors.

6.2 Residence reputations

The 1977 and 1984 follow-up studies revealed that residence stereotypes tend to be cast in terms of the personality types of the residents rather than the structural features of the halls of residence. In 1977 the researcher observed that opposite personality types occupied similar classes of buildings. He notes: "Surprisingly the 'typical' resident's demeanor in this residence (Townley Williams) apparently tends to be 'studious' rather than 'rugger bugger' clearly unlike the Ansell May residents (who occupy the most comparable style of Building)" (1977 field notes). Similarly, the atmosphere in residence was perceived in terms of the occupants rather than the place. The Florence Powell men regarded their residence as popular in 1984 because it accommodated "good guys" who were "one family". Friendliness and camaraderie were said to be characteristic of the Charles James and John Bews residences.

Most likely this conception of atmosphere in terms of people rather than place-related attributes accounts for the residents' lack of concern regarding the external appearance of their residences. In 1977, in response to a probe referring to the drab appearance of some of the campus residences a Louis Botha informant reacted "*but people determine the feeling. The intake at freshers week sets the feel of the place*". In reply to a 1984 probe the Florence Powell and the Townley Williams informants stated that they did not consider their surroundings gloomy or depressing in the least. In fact, they remarked that their study bedrooms were light and airy. It is true that many rooms in the residences offer splendid views and a fair share of sunlight. However, not all resident students are privileged in this respect. The survey results suggest that the students' images of their residences based on community rather than locality factors may cushion feelings of dissatisfaction with the shortcomings of their physical environment.

In some cases residence stereotypes were remarkable consistent over the years. Townley Williams was considered to be a quiet place in both 1977 and 1984. By the same token Ernest Jansen men of 1984 indicated that their residence was experiencing problems in shedding the unfavourable image it had acquired from the resident students living there during the period in which the first follow-up study of 1977 undertaken. At that time Ernest Jansen was known to be a "rowdy res".

6.3 Personal competence, feelings of independence

In the 1984 discussions a number of the student groups volunteered that living in residence had facilitated their personal growth. The experience of community, solidarity, and camaraderie was unique and had promoted their understanding and respect for other people. Some students felt they had learnt to be more considerate toward others and generally less selfish. In this connection one student stated that living in residence made one appreciate home better.

Friendships formed while living in residence and the companionship experienced during this phase of life would most probably be cherished long after leaving university. Living in residence also appears to fulfil the social needs of resident students, while assisting them to gain the poise and self-confidence required in order to perform well in social interactions with others.

Both men and women interviewed appreciated the sense of freedom afforded to resident students who live away from their parents and are no longer required to answer to them. Taking responsibility for making their own decisions made them feel adult, said the men in Mabel Palmer.

In the 1976 study the repression of feelings of freedom among resident students was correlated with dissatisfaction with resident life. The 1977 follow-up discovered serious problems with perceptions of freedom and independent living among women students. These problems were reflected in the 1976 survey results. The women had over-emphasised survey items such as the need for more "freedom to come in and go out at all times" and descriptors such as "restricting", "stifling", and "constant interference". We shall return to this point below.

6.4 House rules

In 1977 the follow-up study revealed serious problems with house rules among women students. The profiles of the women's residences based on the 1976 survey findings were characterised by many indicators of dissatisfaction with the physical constraints of residence life. In 1976 the women residents had placed an above-average number of votes for structural changes and improved decor. In the 1977 follow-up study these expressions of dissatisfaction with the physical environment and with specific design features were unmasked as indicators of discontent with the strict application of restrictive house rules.

The conclusion was drawn that the women students were projecting onto their physical environment their feelings of being restricted and hemmed in and not accorded adult status. By most standards, the women's residences would give the appearance of relative freshness and newness, as in the case of Mabel Palmer and John Bews, and gracious living, as in the case of Charles James. They would appear less "institutional" than the men's residences. However, the women of 1976/77 more often than the men tended to describe their residences in terms of the survey stimuli "gloomy and depressing", "stifling", "restricting", "no space to one's self", "tense", and "tension between people". In Charles James, which is an old-style residence, the burglar-bars on the windows ("prison-like"), and the basement rooms which receive little light tended to reinforce the women residents' feelings of being shut in. The women's expressed needs for improved decor in the drab institutional common rooms, and for additional intimate common rooms or cosier corners in the existing ones, were traced to their need to be able to entertain boy friends and visitors in congenial surroundings and reasonable privacy. As one Charles James woman student commented: *"I don't mind the structure of the residence. It's the rules that are primarily restricting"*. Another student in the same residence suggested wide-sweeping changes in the house rules including the recommendation that everyone be given a key, door duties be abolished, and men visitors be allowed into the women's residences at all times.

6.5 The gender factor

6.5.1 The situation in 1976/77: It would appear that women resident students seemed to respond with greater interest to the first 1976 survey and the follow-up studies. This might be attributed to the greater sensitivity with which women in residence generally perceived their physical and social surroundings. In the 1976 survey women's reactions to survey items were certainly more extreme than those of the men. The follow-up study revealed that the women's reactions were a reflection of the dissatisfactions experienced by most women in residence at the time. The expressions of this general sense of dissatisfaction

were openly stated by Mabel Palmer and Charles James women, who appeared to be members of the feminist movement on campus in 1977. "I seem to have met with the radical protestors in these residents", writes the 1977 fieldworker. According to the 1977 field report

"the very serious levels of concern, complaint and dissatisfaction among (Mabel Palmer) residents suggested by their profile (1976 ratings) are confirmed by actual investigation. Perhaps not all the issues on the profile literally apply. Most do, however, and the remainder seem to be oblique expressions of a generally high-pitched state of frustration. My five informants seemed bright, articulate, well-informed, highly conscious of themselves as residents and their situation, unpariochial, and very concerned".

Charles James residents in 1977 were similarly indignant about the strict supervision they were subjected to by matron, warden and the house rules. Said one informant: *"Unfortunately parents like to think their children are restricted in some way. I am more restricted in res than I am at home, and just because I live far enough to have to live in res."* However, the 1977 fieldworker found that the above-average satisfaction scores obtained in the 1976 questionnaire survey were denied by some of the women informants, who appeared to have a vested interest in presenting a highly favourable image of their residence. The 1977 fieldworker writes: "The John Bews profile suggests feelings and frustrations which are very similar to those prevailing in Mabel Palmer (women's residence). But while the Mabel Palmer group of informants cheerfully admit that they are thoroughly fed up with their predicament, the John Bews group earnestly deny that they are unhappy".

It was apparent that women residents in 1977 suffered feelings of deprivation relative to their male counterparts which tended to aggravate their perceptions of their situation. One Charles James woman student said she felt *"restricted by a too rule-ridden system compared with the guys who are completely free to do what they want"*. Another student in the same hall of residence remarked: *"The house rules are suffocating. It's like boarding school, worse even, because we here can see others - the boys, who have their freedom"*.

According to informants the strict house rules and the lack of a suitable venue to entertain their boy friends drove most Charles James girls to pursue their social activities outside their hall of residence. They claimed that the junior common room atmosphere was stultifying, the senior common room gloomy, and the foyer an awkward place to entertain visitors, so most women preferred to "go out to the guys' res". This tendency to escape from the matron's clutches, and the bondage of house rules, and the restricting atmosphere of the residence may have earned Charles James women their poor reputation among other residents in 1977. For example, the Mabel Palmer informant group lightheartedly typecast their colleagues in Charles James as "whores". Charles James students of 1977, by their own admission, were no longer considered the old-fashioned and quiet girls of former years.

These feelings of oppression were notably absent among men in residence in 1977. Ernest Jansen respondents felt students in residence characteristically "enjoyed freedom". There was a significant tendency for the 1976 respondents in the men's residences to consider the terms "restricting" (Townley Williams, Ansell May) and "stifling" (Townley Williams) inappropriate descriptors of residence life. It is perhaps also symptomatic that a Mabel Palmer resident (1977) on the men's side of the building complex remarked: *"If we had these rules (the ones applying to Mabel Palmer women in residence) I'd feel restricted and tied in . . . with the house committee behaving like parents I'd move into digs"*.

6.5.2 The situation in 1984: In 1984 the women in residence perceived their situation in a different light. Satisfaction with residence life appeared to be consistently high among women and men. Feelings of equality between the men's and women's residences may have been enhanced by the introduction of "sherry clubs", the equivalent to the men's beer clubs, in the women's residences. In view of the 1977 findings concerning house rules, the fieldworkers undertaking the

1984 follow-up study were instructed to probe into attitudes toward house rules and their application. In the men's residences only favourable reactions to the house rules were received. The Townley Williams informants commented that in actual fact there were very few rules and they wholeheartedly supported the system of running the residences. Charles James women indicated that the house rules were "fine" while John Bews women would even have preferred a slightly stricter application of rules. The John Bews women felt the rules regarding noise should be tightened up and applied more strictly in their residence. However, the Mabel Palmer women of 1984 who appeared to be generally satisfied with residence life, reacted similarly to their predecessors participating in the 1977 follow-up study in that they stated house rules were too restrictive. They were "quite capable of looking after themselves", the Mabel Palmer women claimed. Comparisons were made with men students who were not subject to the same restrictions. However, it is noteworthy that dissatisfaction was voiced with the rules as such and not with the persons enforcing them, such as the subwarden and the members of the house committee. Given the consistency of the 1977 and 1984 findings regarding the Mabel Palmer women's negative views of house rules, it is tempting to explain their conscious rejection of the authority structure as an expression of their feelings of relative deprivation compared with the men who live in such close proximity on the other side of the building.

6.6 The stratification system in residences

In the 1976 survey Townley Williams residents saw little need for the physical separation of junior and senior students. In the 1977 follow-up study Townley Williams informants confirmed that there was little emphasis on seniority in their residence. The 1984 informants in this residence did not feel restricted in the least by their house rules.

Similarly one might cite the case of Ernest Jansen residents, who in 1977 were not conscious of any rules being imposed upon them in residence. Informants in this residence described themselves as particularly well integrated. The Ernest Jansen men of 1977 were well aware that their rowdy residence might be notorious for its wild parties and drinking. Nevertheless, juniors and seniors were socially well integrated and there was tremendous team spirit. According to the 1977 informants, Ernest Jansen men were exceptionally tolerant of each other in residence. Characteristically, Ernest Jansen men were easy-going and completely uninhibited. For example, they felt free "to swear and clown" in public if they were in the mood.

To sum up, survey results obtained in the 1977 and 1984 follow-up studies are suggestive that morale tends to be especially high in those halls of residence which do not rigidly apply unwritten rules regarding authority structures and privileges.

6.7 The house committee

Each residence has a house committee which consists of a small number of the more senior students who are elected to this office for one year. Independently of each other the fieldworkers conducting the 1977 and 1984 follow-up studies reached similar conclusions regarding the crucial role of the house committee in promoting a sense of community in halls of residence. This was achieved by members of the house committee liaising between residents, attending to the residents' concerns and grievances, and applying house rules sympathetically for the benefit of the entire community. Satisfaction with residence life appeared to be closely related to the skill and conscientiousness with which the members of the house committee carried out their duties. One might expect fluctuations in overall satisfaction with residence life to partially reflect changes in the composition of the house committees in residences on campus from one year to the next.

Indeed, the 1977 follow-up study discovered that a number of the dissatisfactions contained in the 1976 survey had been dissipated following the change of the house committee serving in the previous year. The 1977 fieldworker learnt in discussion with informants that members of the house committee also serve as potential catalysts to happy relations in residence. Commenting on the role of the house committee Louis Botha informants (1977) observed: *"If they concentrate too much on their own studies and only on official duties, res relations will be poor and dull"*. Another student in the same group of informants elaborated on this: *"You need house committee members who get involved with people and are motivating"*. According to the 1977 fieldworker "an image thus emerges of useful house committee members functioning as easy-going but ever-busy public relations men, sensitive to the "socially euphoric" effects of certain aspects of what is known as "res spirit". Their function in this respect is most influential at the start of each year. Once mutual acquaintance, friendliness, respect and co-operation have been established among residents, the house committee may assume a much lower profile".

In 1984 the role of the house committee appears equally important in promoting residence spirit. Writing in 1984 two fieldworkers report on their observations in Mabel Palmer (men's) residence: "The general atmosphere in the residence seemed very positive and morale high. Students were talkative and expressed valuable insights into university life. This positive atmosphere that we picked up might have perhaps been due to a popular and efficient house committee president. A lot of men were present in the corridors and seemed to be mixing well. This all seemed to promote a vital yet spontaneous atmosphere". In John Bews the informants told the interviewers that their residence had elected an efficient house committee which facilitated positive interaction among students. The co-operation between resident students and the house committee was very good.

6.8 Noise factors

Complaints concerning noise intrusion in the halls of residence were received in the initial study as well as in the follow-up studies. The data suggest that a useful distinction can be made between sources of noise internal and external to the halls of residence.

6.8.1 External noise: Three major sources of external noise were identified: Traffic and parking, kitchen and boiler stoking, speech and drama department activities.

- Florence Powell residents complained of noise and parking problems related to the activities of the Speech and Drama Department.
- Louis Botha and Ernest Jansen residents were mainly disturbed by traffic and parking noise. An illustration is as follows: Although Louis Botha residence on casual inspection appears to be slightly better protected from traffic noise than the two residences on either side a 1984 informant gave evidence to the contrary: *"Some rooms look out onto the road and cars come and go from the parking lot all night, their lights shine in the windows, and when people have come back from a party or the beachfront and are drunk there is often a lot of hooting"*.
- Charles James women reported that noise levels were tolerable except for the clatter from the kitchen on one side of the building and boiler stoking on the other (1977/1984).
- Mabel Palmer women also mentioned late night parking noise in 1977 but overlooked this point in 1984.
- Townley Williams men made mention of being disturbed by speech and drama activities (1984).

These findings suggest that kitchen and boiler noises have remained constant over the years, while the level of noise emanating from speech and drama activities and through-traffic and parking have increased as a function of the growth and development of the University as a whole.

These findings tentatively indicate a lower tolerance of external noise factors than internal ones, a point we shall return to later. In most cases students in residence had little or no control over this source of noise intrusion. Most sources of external noise are residence-specific and dependent upon the location of the residence in question. Despite their concern residents appeared to adopt an attitude of adaptation rather than protest. Noise levels were in any case not intolerable and limited to particular times of the day, usually early morning and evening/night time. Suggestions for change referred mainly to boiler noises and traffic.

Women students in Charles James requested the installation of an electric geyser to replace the antiquated coal burner.

Students felt incompetent to make clear recommendations as regards traffic noise. Although some of the traffic noise was due to inconsiderateness on the part of fellow students returning to residence late at night as demonstrated in the Louis Botha case cited above, informants were also aware that the future planning of parking facilities, and car and bus routes on campus would seriously affect the lower residences on Princess Alice Avenue, namely Florence Powell, Louis Botha and Ernest Jansen. According to a 1984 field report, fears were expressed by the Ernest Jansen residents that with the impending closure of King George V Avenue major traffic would be diverted past their residence along Princess Alice Avenue.

The conclusion is easily drawn that traffic and parking issues have a direct influence on the well-being of resident students and deserve serious consideration when planning for the University as a whole. It is interesting to note that no mention was made of reducing noise emission from the Speech and Drama Department. It would appear that this type of noise was considered legitimate in spite of its nuisance value.

6.8.2 Internal noise: Noise inside the halls of residence will most likely remain an issue which has to be reviewed constantly. While external noise factors relate mainly to the location of individual halls of residence, disturbances by internal noise factors are clearly related to design factors. However, the relationship is by no means a simple one as shown in Table 6.1.

<u>TABLE 6.1</u>				
<u>Noise complaints by residence and date</u>				
Residence	Type of design	Noise Complaints		
		1976	1977	1984
Florence Powell	corridor			
Louis Botha	corridor		-	+
Ernest Jansen	corridor			
Townley Williams	corridor		-	
Ansell May	corridor		+	
Charles James	open courtyard	- 1	-	
John Bews	closed twin courtyards	+ 2	+	+
Mabel Palmer (men)	closed courtyard	(+)	+	+
Mabel Palmer (women)	closed courtyard	+ 3	+	+
1) Below-average endorsement of survey item calling for "more peace and quiet in residence".				
2) Above-average endorsement of 3 survey items indicating the need for "more peace and quiet for study" and "less noise and disturbance" in the residence in question.				
3) Above-average endorsement of survey items calling for "less noise and disturbance" in residence.				
+ Above-average concern about noise				
- Below-average concern or negation of noise problems				

The closed courtyard appears to be the most problematic design as far as noise is concerned. Even generally satisfied residents admitted that noise travelled in the John Bews and Mabel Palmer residences. In the Mabel Palmer (men) profile the noise problem was not immediately recognisable but emerged in the 1977 follow-up discussion.

The following excerpts from the field notes describe the typical noise problems encountered in the courtyard residences:

- Mabel Palmer (women) 1977 field notes: "The walls between rooms are thin. The noise carries. So do conversations. The noise factor impinges on everyone's privacy. The intercom bellows around the quad. The whole res hears, not just one corridor. The call box is audible in many places."
- Mabel Palmer (men) 1977 field notes: "Noise is really a bad problem and causes much antagonism. One person can literally disturb the whole res by music or even conversation. The beer club has to be very restrained."
- John Bews (women) 1977 field notes: "There is urgent need for quiet. Phone ringing, conversations, calling, feet on stairs, the intercom, the washing machine are audible throughout and echo. There is also the inter-bathroom noise."
- Mabel Palmer (men) 1984 field notes: "Students also felt there were too many distractions and that this was detrimental to their academic work. These distractions included constant visiting by other students, loud music and talking in the corridors¹⁾, etcetera."
- John Bews (women) 1984 field notes: "Generally, the major dissatisfaction with regard to residence life was the constant distractions that occurred throughout the day. Students visiting and disturbing each other. Loud talking in the corridors¹⁾, music playing in adjacent rooms, etcetera. Some students said these distractions had a negative effect on their academic work."

It would appear that of all the residences John Bews might be most affected by internal noise levels. The open plan design is carried to the extreme and the bathrooms on each floor open onto the courtyard through a laundry area.

1) Reference here is to access galleries and ramps in the courtyard.

In 1984 a section of the John Bews courtyard also served as a lounge area which may have aggravated the noise problem. By contrast, the Mabel Palmer courtyards appeared to have no formal common room function in 1977 and 1984. The floors of the twin courtyards in Mabel Palmer were devoid of furniture apart from the potplants in the women's side of the building. "People don't gather in the courtyard, it's public and noisy to others" (1977 field notes). According to 1984 field observations the courtyard on the men's side of Mabel Palmer residence was also used for storage purposes. However, John Bews' exposure to external noise may be minimal in comparison to other residences and this may partially compensate for the internal noise problem. According to the 1977 report it is "relatively mild" and consists only of pedestrian traffic; people who walk past the building on their way to meals.

In the corridor-type residences noise pollution is largely dependent upon the amount of noise generated by the students themselves. For example, Ansell May informants in 1977 described their residence as peaceful not in sound but in interaction. In Ansell May residence the beer club on the top floor was said to be noisy from time to time. Noise emanating from the beer clubs appeared to be a problem in many residences. Beer clubs (and also the John Bew's sherry club in 1984) are typically situated on the upper floors, in the "senior" levels of the hierarchically structured residences.

However, high noise levels appeared to be better contained in the corridor-type residences. For example, in Townley Williams, reputedly a quiet residence, some of the rooms had been sound-proofed with insulating material (1977 field notes). Swing doors between corridors may also help seal off sounds and prevent them from carrying all over the building, as in the case of the Louis Botha and Townley Williams residences. Generally, the older residences, which, with the exception of Charles James, are built to the corridor-design are perceived to be more solidly built than the "modern" residences on campus. With one

exception¹⁾ no complaints were received from residents in the conventionally designed residences regarding thin walls. As one Townley Williams resident put it: *"The wings distribute the noise. Mabel Palmer is like a box, one is exposed to noise. This is concrete and solid, not glass"*.

The findings leave no doubt that there is a marked difference regarding residents' perceptions of noise intrusion in the corridor and open courtyard designs on the one hand and the closed courtyard designs on the other. Residents agreed that the closed courtyards appeared to amplify noise. However, it is equally important to note that the noise issue was only one of the many relatively minor irritants enumerated in 1984 in the closed courtyard residences. Moreover, in the 1984 field reports the noise factor was listed under the heading of "disturbances" by two teams of interviewers working independently in the John Bews and Mabel Palmer (men) residences. Mabel Palmer women referred to noise only incidentally in connection with privacy issues in 1984. Thus, it would appear that noise is seen primarily as a social rather than a design problem by the majority of students in residence. Social problems, including noise-related ones, can, to a certain degree be remedied by the students themselves. For example, in 1984, John Bews women urged that rules regarding noise be tightened up and applied more strictly. As mentioned earlier, it is presumably only when morale is low that resident students tend to project their dissatisfactions and frustrations onto their environmental constraints. Internal noise tended to be seen as an exclusively design-related grievance among the dissatisfied Mabel Palmer women in 1977. However, in the same year, the Mabel Palmer men traced the source of irritation to themselves as well as to the architect who had designed their residence: *"This is the noisiest residence on the whole university and not just because of the design"*.

The social dimension of the noise factor is further illustrated in the residence stereotypes. As mentioned earlier, residence stereotypes tend to be people- rather than building-oriented. Thus, Townley

1) In the 1984 follow-up study, a Louis Botha informant complained of noise carrying through the masonite partition walls dividing rooms which were originally part of a larger dormitory.

Williams in 1977 and 1984 is stereotypically considered a quiet residence while Ernest Jansen and Ansell May tended to be considered rowdy residences in 1977. It is noteworthy that all three of these residences are built to the "corridor" design.

The evidence collected in the follow-up studies suggests that the house committee plays a critical role in controlling noise levels in residences by implementing the house rules designed to regulate noise. Apparently, all residences have "noise hours", and the house committee imposes fines for noise occurring outside of these hours. Informants indicated that they were appreciative of the house committee controlling noise, especially at examination time.

Superficially seen, then, one might expect that the house committees have a more difficult task to control noise factors in the "modern" residences which incorporate a courtyard in their designs. However, if students are co-operative and considerate of others, and one might expect this to be particularly the case with the more motivated resident students of 1984, then noise problems can be overcome despite the constraints of the courtyard design.

6.8.2.1 Specific internal noise factors: intercoms As remarked earlier noise tolerance may vary from one person to the next as was soon discovered by the 1977 fieldworker who reported on Townley Williams Hall as follows: "There is an intercom throughout the building but it can be isolated to each floor. My informant did not report any great dissatisfaction with the noise of the intercom - though hearing it myself I considered it to be noisy and intrusive. In other residences with intercom throughout, the intercom has been considered by residents as a constant nuisance."

In 1984, the major complaint of the residents living in the open-courtyard designs concerned the generally high noise levels to which the intercoms also contributed. Specific grievances in two corridor residences concerned the malfunctioning of the intercom system. In 1984 Florence Powell and Townley Williams residents lodged complaints concerning their intercom systems, which, in their view, needed major revision.

6.9 Other pollution factors

Grievances were also voiced in connection with the coal burners which emitted smoke (Charles James 1977, 1984, and John Bews 1984). Florence Powell residents (1984) complained about the dust from the untarred parking area in front of their residence.

In the case of the coal burners, which were also offensive from an acoustic point of view, the women students suggested the burners be replaced with modern electrical geysers. John Bews women reported that the soot from the coal burners soiled their laundry. Replacing the old boilers with modern geysers would also solve the residents' hot water problem, which was a further issue in the Charles James and John Bews residences in 1984.

6.10. Privacy

Perceptions of crowding and privacy are obviously subjective matters. However, the survey evidence suggested that feelings of privacy and crowding tended to be enhanced by design factors¹⁾. The courtyard design and the provision of small study-bedrooms tended to aggravate feelings of crowding in residence. An inspection of the survey evidence suggests that over the years the Charles James women are the only group which feels relatively privileged as far as crowding is concerned. Charles James is built to an open courtyard design and the rooms are relatively more spacious than those in other residences. It is perhaps telling that it was a Charles James informant who dismissed privacy issues in residence with the remark: "*Privacy is no problem because we don't expect it.*" One might assume that the students in other residences have similarly low levels of expectations regarding privacy in communal living which might be conducive to finding satisfaction with circumstances even less favourable than those in Charles James. To a certain extent the men in residence appeared to be less concerned with crowding and to suffer less than the women from lack of privacy. But then, the majority of men in residence live in corridor-type residences which appear to cater better for privacy needs than the atrium-type residences.

1) J.L. Freedman, *Crowding and Behavior*, San Francisco : W.H. Freeman, 1975.

Feelings of crowding appeared also to be associated with small-sized rooms and an institutionalised or impersonal atmosphere. It is interesting to note that the sharing of bathrooms also tended to amplify feelings of crowding. In terms of these subjective indicators of lack of privacy the Mabel Palmer women fare worst while male residents who are less concerned about their physical environment fare best. In 1977 and 1984 Mabel Palmer women desired private bathrooms.

TABLE 6.2

Reactions to perceptions of overcrowding by residence and date

Positive reactions are listed in upper-case lettering, negative reactions in lower-case lettering.

<u>Residence</u>	<u>1977 follow-up study</u>	<u>1984 follow-up study</u>
Florence Powell	-	-
Louis Botha	-	privacy a problem
Ernest Jansen	small rooms	SMALL ROOMS ACCEPTED
Townley Williams	-	ACCEPTANCE
Ansell May	ACCEPTANCE	Institutionalised atmosphere, no shower privacy, small rooms
Charles James	PRIVACY/SPACE NOT A PROBLEM, (small desks)	ACCEPTANCE
John Bews	no privacy	no privacy
Mabel Palmer (men)	PARTIAL ACCEPTANCE	no privacy
Mabel Palmer (women)	no privacy, small rooms, no bathroom privacy	no privacy, small rooms, no bathroom privacy

Excerpts from the field reports compiled from the follow-up studies illustrate contrasting perceptions of crowding and privacy in residence life. Striking is the difference in the perceptions of the men and women living in the same building, in the case of Mabel Palmer. The case of Ansell May shows that the standard of privacy accepted by the residence complement in 1977 was rejected by the house complement occupying the same building some years later.

The size of study bedrooms:

Mabel Palmer men (1977): *"The rooms are small but nice". "Men are very much less concerned about privacy".*

Mabel Palmer women (1977): *"The rooms are small. In Charles James you can move things about".*

Mabel Palmer (women) 1984 field report: "There is no privacy and rooms are small and impersonal".

Privacy issues:

Ansell May 1977 field report: "People have accepted and adjusted to the general lack of privacy in corridors".

Ansell May 1984 field report: "According to the informants there was too little privacy, the rooms were small and depressing. The corridor system made living arrangements impersonal".

Mabel Palmer men 1984: *"Students on the upper floors look down on the lower floors".*

Mabel Palmer men 1977: *"People worry about it (privacy). It's very difficult to bring a girl home. Many girls prefer to meet in the common room rather than go to a fellow's room".*

In Ansell May the 1984 respondent group appeared to be far more sensitive to environmental issues than their 1976/77 counterparts whose satisfaction may have been based on low levels of expectations. The fieldworker describes the Ansell May informants of 1977 as being: "unimaginative, uncritical, status-quo oriented, slightly defensive, suspicious even". The fieldworker also commented that the informants, "would speak when drawn but volunteered little. They appeared to have seldom considered objectively their own residence way of life. This may partially explain the general satisfaction expressed in the 1976 profile".

In contrast, the 1984 respondent group from Ansell May reacted negatively to the impersonal feel of their residence and also remarked on the lack of privacy in the shower rooms. Ansell May appears to be the only men's residence which has shower rooms with more than two showers per cubicle. This arrangement tends to reinforce the institutional image of the residence.

To sum up, the findings of the follow-up study indicate that privacy is perceived as a problem by most categories of resident students, but some groups are better able to adjust than others. The students exposed to the atrium-living design concept are more likely to experience "objective" intrusions on their sound and visual privacy. Violations of privacy in terms of feelings of crowding appear to be equally great in the corridor-type residences. The 1984 Ansell May reaction to communal living circumstances is a case in point. Students in both types of residence appear to be able to achieve reasonable user satisfaction by accepting design constraints. Students who are particularly sensitive may experience some reduction of their quality of life in residence. However, this is not serious unless morale is already low as in the case of women residents in 1977.

6.11 Social interaction

Opportunities for social interaction is one of the chief factors which attracts students to come to live in residence. Therefore, it is understandable that the students in residence, in collaboration with their house committees, seek to create a sociable atmosphere in their halls of residence. It was discovered that the popularity of a residence was very often a reflection of the friendly feel of the place. The follow-up studies suggested that the size of the residence and its design influence feelings of camaraderie and team spirit. In the 1984 follow-up study, the fieldworkers made specific inquiries into morale and "residence spirit". Residence solidarity did not appear to be particularly noteworthy in the larger corridor-type residences. However, Florence Powell residents, who live in the smallest "corridor" residence, referred to themselves as one big happy family. They attributed their sense of solidarity ("*we stick together*") to the small size of their residence.

Social cohesion appeared to be strong in all the courtyard residences. Charles James women (1984) said their small residence was known for its good residence "spirit". John Bews women reported that team spirit was good in their residence and qualified this statement by saying

that John Bews girls participated in all campus events. The interviewers remarked on high morale, a relaxed atmosphere, and good social interaction in the Mabel Palmer men's and women's residences.

Design factors appear to play a crucial role with regard to residence spirit in the case of the courtyard buildings. It has generally been observed that crowded situations tend to amplify latent feelings of all kinds¹⁾. Thus, feelings of camaraderie as well as feelings of tension and hostility are amplified dependent upon the current attitudes prevailing in the residence. The 1977 fieldworker observed: "Many of the extreme feelings might have been attached to quad-derived problems and to exam anxiety, aggravated by noise and no privacy. The place gets very tense during exams". Therefore, one might conclude that the courtyard design may have intensified the low spirits of the Mabel Palmer women in 1977. By the same token friendly feelings were amplified among John Bews women in 1984.

1977 field notes: "Judging from observations made in the field many public spaces (foyers, common rooms, entrance areas serving several bedrooms), and in particular the courtyards appear to be under-utilised. The Mabel Palmer courtyards are a case in point. In some instances the furnishings do not invite habitation". The 1977 fieldworker's observations regarding the austerity of the common rooms seem also to apply to the 1984 situation. In the 1977 follow-up study the social climate in some residences, notably the women's residences also prevented women from making better use of otherwise well-appointed facilities ("*The atmosphere (in the junior common room) is so stultifying, you talk in whispers, you can't burst out laughing*" (Charles James 1977)). Thus, social and environmental factors in combination effectively hinder optimal use of potentially pleasant communal space and make heavy demands on private space, such as the study-bedrooms, to compensate for under-utilization of other common area.

1) J.L. Freedman, *Crowding and Behavior*, San Francisco: W.H. Freedman, 1975.

The findings of the follow-up studies are suggestive that in residence life lack of privacy and camaraderie are but two sides of the same coin. Whilst students appreciated mutual assistance with studies in residence, they also complained of the tense atmosphere at examination times. Cameraderie comes at a price and perhaps this is most clearly shown in the case of the atrium design which appeared to be notorious for noise amplification but also achieved some quite surprising results in bringing people together. No doubt the architects of the "modern" residences intended to eliminate physical and social distances between students living in John Bews and Mabel Palmer. In this they appear to have been successful.

Two informant groups mentioned lack of privacy and easy interaction in the same breath:

John Bews informant 1977: *"There is no privacy in the whole res. But in the courtyard you meet a lot of people."*

Mabel Palmer (men) 1977: *"People worry about privacy in the courtyard . . . but it means that freshers get to know each other."*

Mabel Palmer (men) 1984 field report: "Surprisingly students cited the "prisonlike" interior as being a major promoter of social interaction and discourse. Corridors¹⁾ were used as meeting places and the "open plan" interior design almost acted as one big common room. The design of the building thereby facilitated socialisation and student interaction."

Despite his original reservations, the 1977 researcher had reached a similar conclusion regarding the Mabel Palmer residences. In his field notes he speculates: "The popular first impression is that it looks prisonlike. Easy interaction could be the only advantage of the quad arrangement."

1) Reference is made to the galleries and ramps in the courtyard.

6.12 Residence size

As we have seen, small numbers tend to enhance the sense of community regardless of the type of design. A general preference was indicated for the smaller hall of residence. Students tended to react to large numbers by adjusting their mental maps of their halls of residence. In the large corridor residences students tended to interact mainly with people living on the same corridor. In the smaller corridor residence students felt they knew everyone in their residence. Even in the closed courtyard residences which appeared to be generally more conducive to social interaction, increasing size tended to depress residential satisfaction.

According to the 1977 fieldworker the John Bews residents, who live in a hall accommodating just over one hundred women felt "there are too many people here for a quad arrangement. Even if the noise problem was solved, there would still be a feeling of density." In contrast, the fieldworker observed:

"The Charles James situation seems to suggest that a quadrangle arrangement works better with smaller numbers of rooms and students in a residence. All feelings of "restriction", "claustrophobia", are said to be rule-derived. Smaller numbers mean that all tend to be acquainted with each other, resulting in better sympathy and co-operation on proximity problems. (1977 field notes).

6.13 Social clubs

Beer clubs, or their equivalent in the women's residences, the sherry clubs, play an important role in the social integration of residences. While the common rooms tend to exude an impersonal, institutionalised atmosphere and cater for individualistic activities, such as watching television or reading the newspaper, much of the social interaction occurs in the students' rooms and the beer clubs. The beer clubs tend to be as intimate and individualistically decorated as the lounges are cold and impersonal. Students go to great trouble to decorate their club rooms. The 1976 survey established a need, especially among the

Mabel Palmer women, for cosier corners in the common rooms which would afford greater intimacy. Mabel Palmer women also desired to establish a beer club in their residence similar to those existing in the men's residences. In most cases the need for more common room facilities appeared to be a reflection of the general malaise existing in the women's residences at this time. In this connection it is interesting to note that in 1984 there are sherry clubs operating in all the women's residences. No doubt these clubs fulfil some of the women's needs for socialising. The sherry club may also serve as a symbol of gender equality in residence life.

In 1984 some residents wished to increase the number of social activities in their residence. Mabel Palmer residence is a case in point. Charles James women wished to have a television set of their own. Apparently this last request has already been fulfilled at the time of writing.

In 1984 Mabel Palmer women and Ansell May men called for more varied inhouse activities apart from the beer and sherry clubs. These two residences also reported transport problems which suggests that the students in these residences are more reliant on residence entertainment facilities than others. However, careful consideration will have to be given to noise factors when increasing entertainment in residences. "A healthy balance must be kept between entertainment and the quietness that students feel strongly about" (Ansell May 1984).

6.14 Decor

In 1977 the majority of the men in residence appeared to be relatively insensitive to the decor in their halls of residence which by most standards would appear to be drab, gloomy, impersonal, and institutional. The fieldworker attributed this attitude to satisfactions based on low levels of expectation concerning the physical environment. Practical environmental issues such as the working order of residence facilities tended to be the only aspect of the physical environment which drew the attention of the male residents of 1977.

An alternative interpretation is that resident students tend to react to the social rather than the physical aspects of their environment. *"You adjust to the gloom"* (Ernest Jansen 1977). The 1977 fieldworker also discovered that residents associated the feel of the residence with the people who inhabited it rather than with place-related factors. The 1977 follow-up study revealed that the item in the 1976 questionnaire, "a good place to come home to" referred to the fellowship of one's co-residents rather than to the cosy decor of one's residence. In general, women tended to more discerning and appreciative of the decor in their residences. In the 1977 study the Mabel Palmer women tended to be more critical of the decor in their hall of residence because they were generally dissatisfied. John Bews residents intimated that they felt more privileged than others in having such a pleasantly furnished place to live in.

In 1984 it was mainly the men who recommended changes in the decor to brighten up their residences.

Louis Botha field report: "It was felt that, generally, there was little that could be done to improve the existing conditions in the residence that would not require a virtually complete restructuring. It was suggested that new and brighter curtains and bedspreads would help brighten up the rooms and that more built-in shelves would solve the problem of inadequate storage space."

Mabel Palmer men 1984 field report: "The men suggest the walls in the common room be painted or panelled to relieve the rather austere and drab image."

6.15 Facilities and convenience factors

In 1977 and 1984 a wide range of dissatisfactions referred to inadequate facilities and conveniences provided in the residences. In some instances the 1984 grievances concerning facilities echoed those of 1977. In other instances, the 1984 grievances were a reflection of the day-to-day living patterns of the 80's. Requests for washing machines and driers, television sets and computers are cases in point.

According to a reliable source these requests are systematically being fulfilled.

Main categories of complaints regarding facilities include:

- laundry facilities (washers, driers, extra clothes lines). Also in the men's residences ("*Sportsmen go through many sets of clothes*").
- More telephones in good working order.
- Improved bathroom facilities.
- Hot water in rooms.
- Increased storage and work space (this issue is discussed under a separate heading, cf 6.13).
- Improved parking and transport. (Including requests for covered parking on a rental basis).
- Games, televisions and computers (housed in separate rooms).
- Kitchenettes or decentralised catering.
- Better desk lighting (Mabel Palmer men 1984), more appropriate lighting in rooms (Townley Williams 1977/1984).

Survey findings are suggestive that inadequate residence facilities represent dissatisfiers which do not necessarily detract from the general satisfaction experienced in residence life. However, in conjunction with other dissatisfactions, the lack of facilities may seriously affect morale.

6.16 Space problems

A wide range of problems are referred to under this heading including the following issues:

- Room size.
- Storage space.
- Work space and the size of the desks provided in the study bedrooms.

With the exception of the rooms in Charles James Hall all residences allocate only very small rooms to the rank-and-file resident students.

Reactions to the size of the study bedrooms were mixed. Some students felt the small rooms were not problematic although they could get cramped at times when many visitors were present. The 1977 fieldworker observed that most socialising occurred in the study bedrooms rather than in the common rooms possibly due to the impersonal and functional atmosphere of the latter. Most likely this pattern persists in 1984.

Most resident students who participated in the follow-up studies were aware that very little could be changed regarding the size of their rooms. However, they suggested that the reorganisation of room space could solve some of their problems. A number of the respondents complained that desktop space was limited and not suitable for the draughting of plans and maps. The researchers observed in 1984 that students in one hall of residence had placed their worktables on stilts and had converted a shelf in the box room into a working area in order to solve this problem. Some of the students complained about the fact that the furniture in the newer residences could not be shifted at all. Requests for more bookshelves and cupboard space were commonplace, especially in the newer residences.

Once again, we find that the majority of the students adapted cheerfully to the spatial constraints of their residence circumstances or used their ingenuity in finding a suitable solution. However, some of the respondents were of the opinion that where the individual study bedrooms could not provide for the students' needs, extra hobby and computer rooms might be considered. The students were particularly concerned about spatial constraints which affected their studies. Therefore, desktop working space and bookshelves deserve serious consideration.

6.17 Food-related issues

Although food issues do not really form part of the study, catering appears to be a sufficiently sensitive issue to warrant some comments. No doubt consensus regarding food is difficult to achieve and flexible

solutions are most appropriate. In 1984, the men in residence were particularly concerned about the quantity of food served ("*sportsmen need more*"), women about the quality ("*the food is fattening*"). Both groups stated they disliked queuing. Dissatisfaction with food issues was particularly acute among Mabel Palmer women in 1984. It might make them wish to leave residence, declared the Mabel Palmer informants.

The decentralisation of catering facilities emerged as a major issue in the 1976 study. It would appear that the issue is still salient in 1984. Although the central dining room is a rallying point which provides a place where students from different residences can meet, queuing for food is also a disincentive for many residents who wish to participate in this social event. Suggestions for change ranged from complete decentralisation along the lines of the Pietermaritzburg campus system, to the provision of additional food outlets, or kitchenettes. In all cases the aim was to achieve greater variation and choice of food, flexible mealtimes with sportsmen in mind, and to avoid queuing.

6.18 The ideal residence situation : one view

A synthesis of a number of recommendations concerning the physical environment in the halls of residence put forward in the above sections is contained in the conception of the ideal residence outlined by the Louis Botha informants of 1984. This informant group consisted mainly of senior students, therefore their views may not be shared by all resident students. Nevertheless, the scenario presented by this resident group aptly portrays the particular needs of the students in residence in the eighties. It is therefore reprinted here in full as reported by the 1984 fieldworker in Louis Botha residence:

"Suggestions for a new residence: It was felt that, at all costs, this should be brighter and, if at all possible, the present corridor-system should be eliminated. There should be more showers and toilets per resident to reduce congestion in the ablution facilities, and there should be a properly equipped laundry, with washing machines, tumble-driers (very important for sportsmen who go through a lot of sports clothes)

and ironing facilities - students could supply their own irons. The idea of clusters of rooms served by a bathroom and kitchenette found great favour when suggested, and to this was added the idea that there should be a general, well-lit, study room with tables and, for the engineers, drawing equipment. It was added that type-writing and wordprocessing equipment should be provided in a separate room. The study rooms should have large work surfaces and "lots of elbow-room". Some felt that beer clubs should not be allowed in the residence, as these were not used by everybody, and should be incorporated in an entertainment complex which would also contain television and indoor sports (tabletennis, snooker) facilities. This should be in a separate building".

6.19 Courtyards versus corridors : students' design preferences

This research obviously raises the question whether students prefer to live in halls of residence built along the lines of one or the other design concept represented on the Durban campus: the rambling corridor design or the more compact courtyard design.

The follow-up studies clearly indicated that neither concept violated the basic needs of the students nor did they fulfil all of their wants. However, the residents tended to be versatile in their approach to living in residence and adjusted to the living circumstances dictated by both design concepts.

As far as specific design preferences were concerned the informant groups all tended to identify with their hall of residence, so that reactions were coloured in any case. Even the generally dissatisfied Mabel Palmer women of 1977 seemed to have a kind of love-hate relationship with their hall of residence. They felt perfectly entitled to find fault with most aspects of their physical environment but would not allow others to criticise their hall of residence. Moreover, attitudes toward the building changed remarkably during the survey period. In 1977 some Mabel Palmer women informants stated they "would rather live in an Ansell May type building."

In 1984 the Mabel Palmer women said they preferred the physical design of their residence to that of the older structures.

The newer buildings were certainly more controversial than the more conventionally designed older ones and therefore one can expect that they attracted more criticism of all sorts. This was certainly the case with Mabel Palmer, which according to popular rumours on campus dating back to the first follow-up study, was designed along the lines of a United States prison.

In some instances it was the finish and the materials rather than the design concept which was the focal point of contention. Mabel Palmer was considered flimsily built and featured a lot of glass unlike the older solid-looking conventionally designed halls of residence.

- Mabel Palmer (women) 1977: *"This building was very cheaply built with very little thought for the residents"*. This point of view was echoed by a Townley Williams student in 1984: *"Mabel Palmer is like a box. It's exposed to noise. This (referring to Townley Williams) is solid, not glass"*.

The 1977 fieldworker, on the basis of his observations also questioned the flexibility of the courtyard design: "There is no room for expansion or further installation of tvs, phones, etcetera. The building is full to capacity" (John Bews field report 1977).

However, the study was not really intended to establish tastes in design but rather to look into "person-environment" relationships. Consensus was achieved among Mabel Palmer and also John Bews residents that the atrium design facilitated social interaction and promoted a sense of belonging. However, even in this respect the courtyard design concept seemed to have some limitations. It could not foster a sense of familiarity among more than a certain number of students, as was discovered in John Bews, where East and West quad girls tended to form subgroups. The closed atrium introduced acoustics problems and amplified disturbance factors and tensions which are usually evident in residences at one time or another. There was also less privacy for the residents

living in the courtyard designs. However, these problems were partially overcome by the strict implementation of the house rules and the self-discipline exercised by the residents themselves.

It would appear that the corridor-design was perhaps more familiar to many students and therefore required less adaptation on the part of students. Only men were living in corridor residences during the survey period. Therefore, women students who appeared to be generally more conscious of their physical surroundings, were not given the opportunity to assess the residence situation in the corridor designs. The 1977 and 1984 follow-up studies did, however, reveal that interaction is more constrained, especially in the larger ones, and that the typical corridor feature is sometimes associated with feelings of crowding, lack of privacy and loss of freedom.

To sum up, in the follow-up studies the general observation was made that students reacted to their environment and shaped it according to their particular needs rather than submitting themselves to the dictate of their environment¹⁾. In this respect, the residential setting proved to be sufficiently malleable to allow students to adapt it to their needs.

The conclusion was drawn that the resident students' grievances and dissatisfactions with their environment did not necessarily indicate the unsuitability of the residence environment. Such an interpretation of resident reactions might be misleading. The findings of the follow-up studies indicate that grievances concerning the physical aspects of the residences are merely correlates rather than causes of student dissatisfaction on the Durban campus.

The proving stone for this supposition was the quasi-natural experiment presented by the Mabel Palmer situation. Two different groups were exposed to identical environmental factors at the same moment in 1976. The one group expressed general satisfaction with its situation while the other expressed the opposite. In the 1977 follow-up study it was

1) cf. H. Gans: "The Potential Environment and the Effective Environment" in H. Gans (ed) *People and Plans*, New York : Basic Books 1968.

found that the negative reactions of the one group were a reflection of the social rather than the design constraints which depressed its quality of life in residence. It was the rule-derived claustrophobic feelings which generated complaints about the design of the Mabel Palmer building. This difference in the reactions of the two groups prompted the 1977 fieldworker to pose the question: "Could this be the supreme proof that the mood and feeling in the residences are primarily derived from social factors rather than design factors?"

6.20 Integration issues

6.20.1 Sex-integrated residences: According to the 1976 survey findings a sizeable proportion of the resident students wished to live in sex-integrated residences. The 1977 follow-up study suggests that this desire may have been prompted by feelings of deprivation among the women students regarding restrictions of their freedom of movement and access to social clubs, etcetera. In 1984 there was general opposition to sex-integrated residences. The general opinion was that this solution would cause unnecessary problems. The Charles James women preferred to exchange visits with men students in residence rather than live in the same building. The John Bews women were strongly opposed to the idea on privacy grounds. "They said they needed the freedom and privacy to do what they wanted and not to have to worry about male students wandering about the corridors and perhaps embarrassing some women students who perhaps had just bathed and were not properly dressed" (John Bews field report, 1984). The Mabel Palmer women preferred the current situation. Sex-integration was really not an issue because they lived in such close proximity to the Mabel Palmer men.

6.20.2 Race-integrated residences: Reactions toward race-integrated residences ranged from slight concern to indifference to positive acceptance with some reservations. Opinions tended to be most divided in the Louis Botha informant group. The resident men

tended to be more conservative than the women who all accepted the idea at least in principle. It is interesting to note that in the majority of the group discussions the students mentioned that a member of another race group was living or had lived with them in residence and this had caused no problems whatsoever. However, concern was voiced that only relatively small numbers of students belonging to other groups should be admitted in the residences and that these people should conform to the existing values and behaviour patterns in the residences. On the other hand, some informants were of the opinion that race-integrated residences were "not such a bad idea" because people would "learn to get along".

7. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the follow-up studies quite clearly demonstrate the capability of resident students to cheerfully adapt to the social and environmental requirements of live-in circumstances in a campus setting. On the basis of the research findings one must surmise that students are predominantly people rather than place-oriented; thus environmental situations and the atmosphere and reputation of the places in which the students live on campus are characteristically described in terms of social dimensions rather than physical structure. The tendency to focus discontent on residence facilities, and conveniences, and administrative matters is very likely borne of the awareness that physical structural constraints cannot easily be modified, while the reorganisation of the working and recreational environment may also achieve the desired results. It was generally observed that the students were relatively casual with regard to their immediate physical surroundings. However where physical factors impinged on their sense of freedom, interfered with the study process, or affected social interaction, all of which are salient values of students in residence, dissatisfactions tended to be more serious.

The major conclusions drawn on the basis of the initial 1976 study appear to be substantiated in the follow-up studies. Overall satisfaction with residence life is largely a matter of morale. It is largely social and personal factors which determine the current well-being of resident students. However, the social-spatial environment tends to amplify the mood of the moment.

In turn it was discovered in the follow-up studies that reactions to residence life in general and to physical environmental factors, in particular, tended to be a reflection of the sense of well-being and morale of the students rather than a response to the physical setting in the halls of residence, as such. Thus, the researchers found more groups of manifestly dissatisfied students on campus in 1977. Their concentration in a particular type of residence design was largely

coincidental. In 1984 the majority of resident students appeared to be generally satisfied with their situation and pockets of dissatisfactions were distributed differently among the halls of residence. In general it appears that physical disadvantages and opportunity structures are divided relatively equally among the residences. Where differences are obvious, one might consider applying positive discrimination principles in the provision of extra communal facilities or communal space as an extension of limited private ones by way of compensation. Embellishment to the existing decor is a further possibility. The students participating in the survey provided a number of useful insights and constructive suggestions in this regard. It is perhaps in this connection that decentralisation issues must be reviewed from time to time.

Two principal concepts of design are represented on the Durban campus and both appear to fulfil the needs of the students. However, physical deterioration and defects due to poor materials and finishes, natural ageing and obsolescence, poor maintenance, not to forget the wear and tear at the hands of students, appeared to somewhat detract from the convenience and comfort provided by the buildings. While students demonstrated their ability to adapt and achieve optimal benefit and satisfaction from living and studying in the conditions dictated by the two basic design options available to resident students, the follow-up studies tended to highlight some few distinctions. It would appear that social interaction which is conducive to academic achievement and personal well-being is greatly facilitated by smaller residences and (but with problematic side effects) by the more compact "introverted" courtyard design. The survey revealed that needs for privacy and quiet are more difficult to meet in courtyard designs. However, the study suggests that, in any case, privacy is reduced in all communal living arrangements and noise intrusion cannot be avoided to a certain degree. However, rights to privacy can be respected and noise contained to the satisfaction of all concerned. This depends on the goodwill and co-operation of the members of the community, precisely the type of attitude which is imperative in the courtyard situation. Perceptions of crowding in rooms

and residences tended to be highly subjective rather than based on the actual spatial dimensions and design factors. The study suggested that here again feelings of crowding were a state of mind which were only loosely associated with physical factors in the sense that, for example, drab institutional decor, cramped study arrangements, lack of storage space, or inadequate meeting places tended to evoke feelings of crowding. Problems with physical factors could to a large extent be compensated for by social skills and consequent social satisfactions. Nevertheless, comparative results suggest that only when the demoralisation of students in residence is acute will these feelings of crowding prompt overt reaction on the part of dissatisfied students, such as leaving residence. However, this does not mean that vague feelings of crowding or similarly diffusely articulated discontents and grievances of otherwise highly motivated resident students should be taken lightly. The resident students were particularly concerned that physical factors should not affect their studies.

The very fact that they were being consulted regarding their residence situation tended to reinforce some informants in their perception that they were privileged to be living in a generally sympathetic and socially supportive environment. Furthermore, students are taught to take critical cognisance of the world in which they live. Therefore, one might consider it healthy that students apply constructive criticism regarding residence living arrangements. In this connection one might see the need for students to participate even more actively than is presently the case, in the development of the residences. That is, students might be invited not only to recommend superficial changes to their residences and be charged with some aspects of the day-to-day running of their residences but might also be given the opportunity to become involved in the longer-term planning of the residential circumstances of students on campus.

In this connection it is important to note that students in residence have little control of environmental factors outside the residence buildings which have nuisance value or pose even more serious

threats to the quality of life in residence. In cases where cheerful acceptance is an inappropriate reaction to environmental problems, resident students might be co-opted to the committees responsible for physical planning on campus as it affects the halls of residence. Co-optation might be envisaged along the lines of the house committees which appear to operate efficiently in adapting the internal environment in the halls of residence to the needs of the users.

This study was partly conceived with a view to inviting resident students to take an active role in the longer-term planning of their physical environment. Many students expressed their interest and concern in the residence tradition. However, a large proportion of the students surveyed in 1977 and a fair number of those interviewed in 1984 appeared to be relatively indifferent to environmental issues. There appears to be some scope here for developing in resident students a sense of appreciation not only of the socio-organisational aspects but also of the physical environmental and aesthetic dimensions of residence life. This might be a task for our colleagues in the School of Architecture. The issues raised in connection with basic residential design concepts in the course of this study tendentially suggest that the education of students in residence may usefully be broadened and enriched to raise awareness of many facets of the living environment. Students might be encouraged to develop the hidden potential in their given environment.

Regarding social innovations in residence life one also senses a certain cautiousness with which the rank-and-file students approach new concepts in living. Residence norms and traditions appear to be well-established and reinforce the atmosphere of social support and solidarity which is perhaps the most important function of campus accommodation. Any innovations and social experiments which might change the established pattern of residence life are mistrusted. This may partially explain the scepticism with which integration issues are viewed. Under the given circumstances, sex-integrated

residences on the Durban campus are considered an unnecessary disruption of the traditional structure of residence life. However, the concept of racially integrated residences is acceptable on condition that black students remain a minority in each hall of residence. Obviously minorities pose less of a threat to the resident way of life. This idea is also consistent with the manner in which freshers are socialised into the residence community. At present the intake of new members is limited to approximately one-fourth or less of the existing resident population in any particular residence. However, this initial reaction to race integration on the part of the resident students is encouraging and suggests that the University can contribute toward improving race relations in this type of social experiment. In this connection, one might suggest that larger numbers of black residents should initially be placed in the courtyard residences which seem to necessitate social cohesion, and are also inhabited by women students who, according to the 1984 follow-up study, tended to feel more positive about multiracial living. One might hope that resident racial minorities would stand a good chance of becoming socially integrated into the courtyard communities where there should be less chance of formation of minority "ghettoes" than in corridor-buildings with remote wings. If successful, this venture in multiracial living might spell encouragement for other resident situations.

Future planning in residences will therefore have to seek a careful balance between honouring the traditions embodied in residence life while also seeking to introduce changes which will vitalise and enrich the experience of living in residence. Halls of residence on the University campus would appear to be the ideal place to encourage students to participate actively and positively in the many exciting aspects of living in the eighties.



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