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Imagining Suburbia: The Imaginative Production of Traditional and Post-Suburban Forms in Auckland

Cameron William Thomas Johnson

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Abstract

Auckland's suburbs are undergoing a range of changes. From an emphasis on a wider variety of transport options, to the rise of denser, more diverse forms of housing, these changes have been fuelled by growing concerns about the viability and desirability of traditional suburbia. In many ways, these changes resonate with recent literature on post-suburbanisation, a growing body of commentary describing the increasingly diversified nature of suburban forms and functions (Wu & Phelps, 2008; Charmes and Keil, 2015; Phelps, 2015). Rather than proclaiming the end of the suburbs, this thesis treats post-suburbanisation as a multiplication of suburban spaces beyond the traditional low density, dormitory suburbs of the post-War era. In order to do this, the thesis moves beyond the common material framing of post-suburbanisation, which focuses on its economic dimensions (Dear, 2004; Phelps & Wu, 2011), and focuses on the role and character of imaginative practices in the production of traditional and post-suburban space. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the 'production of space' as an analytical framework, the thesis traces how Auckland's suburbs have been imaginatively positioned and problematised in debates about the city's development. The thesis traces the historical development of Auckland's suburbs and, in particular, the central Auckland suburb Three Kings, to demonstrate how a range of imaginaries have been central to the production of traditional and post-suburban space. Following this historical account, the thesis focuses on contemporary developments in Three Kings to reveal how imaginative practices are implicated in the promotion of, and resistance to, suburban change at the local level. Based on this analysis, it is shown that imaginative practices are intertwined in the production of traditional and post-suburban space across multiple spatial and temporal scales, materialising locally in lived experiences. In doing so, the thesis reveals how post-suburbanisation does not mark an end to traditional suburbia but rather a multiplication and hybridisation of 'the suburb' that is shaped by historical processes as well as competing contemporary discourses about urban futures.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Suburban Change

Located in the Inner-Auckland suburb of Three Kings, Liston Village is a 25 detached unit community that was established in 1982 by the Archbishop Liston Memorial Foundation to accommodate individuals aged over 60 on lower incomes. The residents in the community have a 'licence to live', meaning while they don't actually own the dwellings, they have a right to stay in the village for as long as they choose (Segedin, 2010). However, after years of discussion, the village is facing the looming threat of demolition after Auckland Council agreed to acquire the land over a period of years from the Auckland Catholic Diocese in 2010, in a hope to extend Monte Cecelia Park (Lynn, 2016a). For Auckland Council, extending Monte Cecelia park is part of a broader plan to equip the area with amenities to service its growing population (Our Auckland, 2016). With the rise of denser forms of development, such as apartments and terraced housing, being used to accommodate this growth, the council has recognised the need for more quality open space as access to individual private backyards gradually declines. For Auckland Council, the expansion of Monte Cecelia park is seen as an efficient way to provide increased quality open space to meet the needs of a changing city. This is particularly true, given the park's extensive history, home to the Pah Homestead that was built in 1879 which was "one of Auckland's largest and finest homes" (Our Auckland, 2016) as seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Source: Author's own (2016). Monte Cecelia Park and Pah Homestead

However, there has been strong resistance to the council's plans. Grey Power, an advocacy organisation promoting the welfare of citizens aged 50 years and over, has given its support to the village, explaining that a third of Aucklanders are over 50 years of age and that many people struggle to find accommodation in retirement. Support for the community to remain was reiterated in a report commissioned by the area's Local Board, the Puketapapa Local Board, in 2015, which highlighted the lack of social housing options for the elderly in the area—directly citing Liston Village as one of few examples in the area (Lynn, 2015a). Michael Wood, a former member of the local board and now member of parliament representing the surrounding Mt Roskill electorate, explained that removing the village would have serious implications in the current context of Auckland's housing affordability crisis, and removing it would risk forcing existing seniors in the village to leave the community (Lynn, 2015a). Since the Local Puketapapa Board gave its support to the community in 2010, it has hired an engineering and design consultancy firm which has subsequently proposed nine alternative options to partially preserve or redevelop the complex. However, Auckland Council explained the funding was through development contributions for open space in the area, requiring any changes to plans for expanding the park to be refunded by a completely different set of development contributions from the council. The Liston Village example illustrates the growing emphasis being put on servicing increasingly dense forms of housing in the area. It also illustrates the different types of citizens and suburban lifestyles being accommodated and excluded from Auckland's suburbs. In short, the contests over Liston Village crystallises many of the pressures, perspectives and priorities that are changing Auckland's suburbs.

The changes occurring in Auckland's suburbs resonate with research literature on "post-suburbanisation" (Wu & Phelps, 2008; Charmes and Keil, 2015). In the last few decades, many have noted that the suburbs have become something much more difficult to "understand, use or plan" (Barnett, 1992: 94). Terms like 'post-suburbia' have emerged in an attempt to capture this transformation, describing the increasingly diversified nature of suburban forms and functions (Phelps, 2015). Rather than proclaiming the end of the suburbs, this thesis treats post-suburbanisation as a multiplication of suburban spaces beyond the 'traditional' low density, dormitory suburbs of the post-War era. In urban studies, post-suburbanisation is commonly framed in economic terms, with debates and discourses generally documenting its material dimensions at the expense of an understanding of the imaginative practices that pre-figure these material changes (Dear, 2004; Phelps & Wu, 2011a, 2011b; Charmes & Keil, 2015). This thesis seeks to bridge the gap between the material and the imaginative by exploring the role of imaginative practices in the realisation of post-suburban forms.

1.2 Research Context

In order to make sense of these changes in a situated way, this research project uses a case study of the central Auckland suburb Three Kings. Three Kings is a suburb of central Auckland located about 6km from Auckland's inner city. It is built around the *Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta* volcano, commonly known as Big King, and is home to an ethnically diverse population of about 5,000 residents. As a relatively established suburb undergoing significant change, a focus on Three Kings allows for insights into the imaginative practices associated with post-suburbanisation. Exploring its historical and current practices of development provides a situated way to explore the variety of ways in which imaginaries work across spatial and temporal scales to prefigure and co-constitute different kinds of suburban space.

One of the most pressing issues in Three Kings that speaks to some of these changes occurring in the suburb is the development of the Three Kings quarry. As Auckland's deepest quarry, the site is the second largest brownfield development location on the Auckland Isthmus. For this reason, the site has been widely discussed by the developers, the council and central government as a prime opportunity to increase the supply of housing in Auckland along a main arterial route (Mt Eden Road). Led by Fletcher Living, the proposed development includes 11, 10 storey apartment blocks along the quarry face overlooking a range of medium and high density typologies below. When completed, Fletcher Living's development would create an additional 1200 to 1500 residences in the suburb worth an estimated \$1.2billion NZD. As a significant development which would home a fifth of the current population in Three Kings in a range medium to high density housing types, there has been a range of opposition to Fletcher Living's proposal from the community.

In order to make sense of these changes in Three Kings and Auckland more broadly, the research uses a range of methodological approaches, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis.

1.3 Research Aims

The project aims to understand the role and character of imaginative practices in the production of traditional and post-suburban spaces in Auckland.

It has three core objectives:

To conceptualise imaginative practices and their relationship the production of suburban spaces.

To investigate how the suburbs have been imaginatively positioned and problematised in debates about Auckland's development.

To assess the ways in which imaginative practices are implicated in the promotion of, and resistance to, suburban change at the local level, through the example of Three Kings.

1.4 Thesis Overview

This thesis proceeds in the following way. Chapter 2 reviews literature from the field of urban studies to outline how imaginaries are a crucial element in the development process. It introduces the Lefebvrian Approach to analysis the research uses to set up an understanding of how imaginative practices feature in the production of space. Drawing on a range of key empirical examples throughout the history of traditional suburbanisation, it takes this framework to outline how imaginative practices feature in the production of traditional and post-suburban space. It has importance for explaining how traditional and now post-suburban forms are related to imaginative practices which have created certain development pathways for cities. Chapter 3 introduces the methodological approach. It discusses the specific techniques used to collect and analyse the data used and also details some of the ethical considerations of this research. Chapter 4 examines the role played by imaginaries in enabling the rise of Auckland's traditional and, later, post-suburban spaces. Drawing on empirical examples throughout Auckland's history, it discusses how, at different historical junctures, imaginaries have coalesced around four overlapping and interconnected themes that have shaped development trajectories in Auckland. In the suburban era, these themes were sanitation and family, yet in the post-suburban era, emphasis has shifted to themes of sustainability and population growth. Chapter 5 traces the articulation of those themes at the local level with a discussion of the suburban history of

Three Kings. Chapter 6 then moves to the contemporary context of Three Kings, focusing on the promotion of and resistance to post-suburbanisation. Highlighting imaginative contests around the issues of transport, housing and environment, the chapter reveals how imaginative practices work at this smaller scale to produce space in different kinds of ways. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the conceptual and empirical contributions of the thesis. In particular, it discusses how post-suburbanisation is not a split or transition gradually monopolising traditional suburbia but rather a proliferation of suburban spaces and the experiences they instil. It reinforces this by discussing the way in which imaginative practices have made post-suburbanisation in Auckland highly contested and influenced by a series of long standing historical processes that articulate at different scales.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the past few decades, there has been considerable commentary on the transformation of the suburbs into something much more difficult to “understand, use or plan” (Barnett, 1992: 94). In the field of urban studies, terms like ‘post-suburbia’ have emerged in an attempt to capture this transformation. Describing the increasingly diversified nature of suburban forms and functions (Phelps, 2015), post-suburbanisation is commonly framed in terms of economic determinants such as changing consumer tastes and property market dynamics (Bruegmann, 2005). While its material dimensions are well documented, there is little understanding of the roles that imaginative practices play in the production of post-suburban spaces. In order to bridge this gap, I draw on Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of *the production of space* to explore how post-suburbanisation is the product of a co-constitutive interplay of both imaginative and material dimensions. From this approach, consumer tastes and property market dynamics can be understood as the product of the co-constitutive interplay of material and imaginative practices. This chapter connects literature on imaginative practices with Lefebvrian understandings of space, before introducing the literature around suburbia and post-suburbia.

2.2 Imaginative Practices

Derek Gregory is widely recognised for having developed Edward Said’s writings on the notion of imaginative geographies as “representations of space [that] are entangled with relations of power” (Gregory, 1995: 474). These imaginative geographies are underpinned by a range of imaginative practices which help to both produce and legitimise these understandings of space in various sorts of ways (Gregory *et al.*, 2011). Imaginative geographies have received growing attention in urban studies since the ‘cultural turn’ which has made apparent the limitations of an overly materialist and economic understanding of urban processes and experiences (Jackson, 2000; Philo, 2000). These limitations relate to the way in which these understandings have a tendency to juxtapose an abstract or unreal notion of imaginaries against the ‘concreteness’ of the material world, distinguishing and differentiating between two separate worlds. In this regard, its proponents have emphasised the need

to pay more attention to immaterial and imaginative dimensions of urbanisation and urban life and revise the relationship they have with the material (Latham and McCormack, 2004). Instead of treating each as distinct and separate, Latham and McCormack (2004) have emphasised the importance of recognising the complex and innately connected relationship between the material and imaginative. This more nuanced approach demands the apparent stability or ‘concreteness’ of material objects be replaced by an understanding which emphasises their innately complex realities, animated and held together by processes of the immaterial. By re-knowing the material and immaterial as interdependent and interconnected phenomena, Latham and McCormack (2004) outline the importance of a widened understanding of the material which includes the multitude of imaginative forces that enable matter to come to being.

In relation to suburbia, this adjustment reframes and reimagines bricks, mortar and the other material foundations of suburban life as not simply ‘brute matter’ but rather the product of “a particular aggregate organisation of processes and energy” (Latham & McCormack, 2004: 705). As Mackenzie (2002: 47) neatly frames it, “the brick is a domain in which different realities have been transduced or mediated”. From the automobiles we use to complete our daily activities to the relative separation between home and work in traditional suburbs, the way in which we experience suburbia has been the product of the co-constitutive interplay of both imaginative and material dimensions. In this regard, differentiating the ‘real’ from the ‘unreal’ must not then be contingent on a split between material and immaterial processes. From this point of departure, my research treats the imaginative work through which urban space is produced not only as real as the so called material conditions of its production, but actually a central component of it.

One of the key thinkers for advancing an understanding of urban space as both material and imaginative is the French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (see 1968, 1976, 1991, 1995). His work has been important for revising the long-held presumption that things *are in space* by instead focusing on what he described as *the production of space*, a broader epistemological and ontological shift from *object* to *activity*. This theorisation of space emphasises the importance of acknowledging and attending to the *generative* realities of space, its active and creative components. At this fundamental level, a Lefebvrian Approach to space enables attention to be directed to *productive, lively and generative practices*.

A central component of Lefebvre’s thinking is that he conceives of space as constituted by perception, symbolism and imagination. While distinguishable, for Lefebvre these components are inseparable and necessarily interact in the production of space. Through this framework, Lefebvre constructs a history of space that is characterised by “the always incomplete imposition of modern, abstract space

(commodified and bureaucratised space) over concrete space (the space of everyday life and experience)” (McCann, 1999: 169). Instead of being a mental abstraction, Lefebvre insists abstract space has a very real social existence, becoming “concrete and qualitative in different buildings, places, activities, and modes of social intercourse over and through space” (Merrifield, 1993).

A key feature of Lefebvre’s understanding of *space as produced* is his connection of different modalities of space through a triad of *representations of space*; *representational space*; and *spatial practices* (Merrifield, 1993) (see figure 2). These modalities are known, respectively, as ‘conceived’, ‘perceived’ and ‘lived’ dimensions of space. For Lefebvre, all three modalities interact in a trialectical way, drawing attention to “the manner in which they come together as a conflictual process of creation, as a process of *producing*” (Merrifield, 1993: 523). Importantly, this understanding links imagined and physical spaces because it underlines the way in which, in three different yet connected ways, all must interact for space to change and be produced. Space, as a ‘material product’, is thus explained by Lefebvre (1991: 33) as a kind of *present* space, a moment engrossed in a multifaceted lively process which “embraces a multitude of intersection”. In this sense, it is Lefebvre’s “ability to link representation and imagination with the physical spaces of cities and to emphasise the dialectical relationship between identity [or meaning] and urban space” (McCann, 1999: 168) that I want to draw from in my analysis of post-suburbia. Before discussing the contours of post-suburban space, I briefly outline the three modalities of space proposed by Lefebvre.

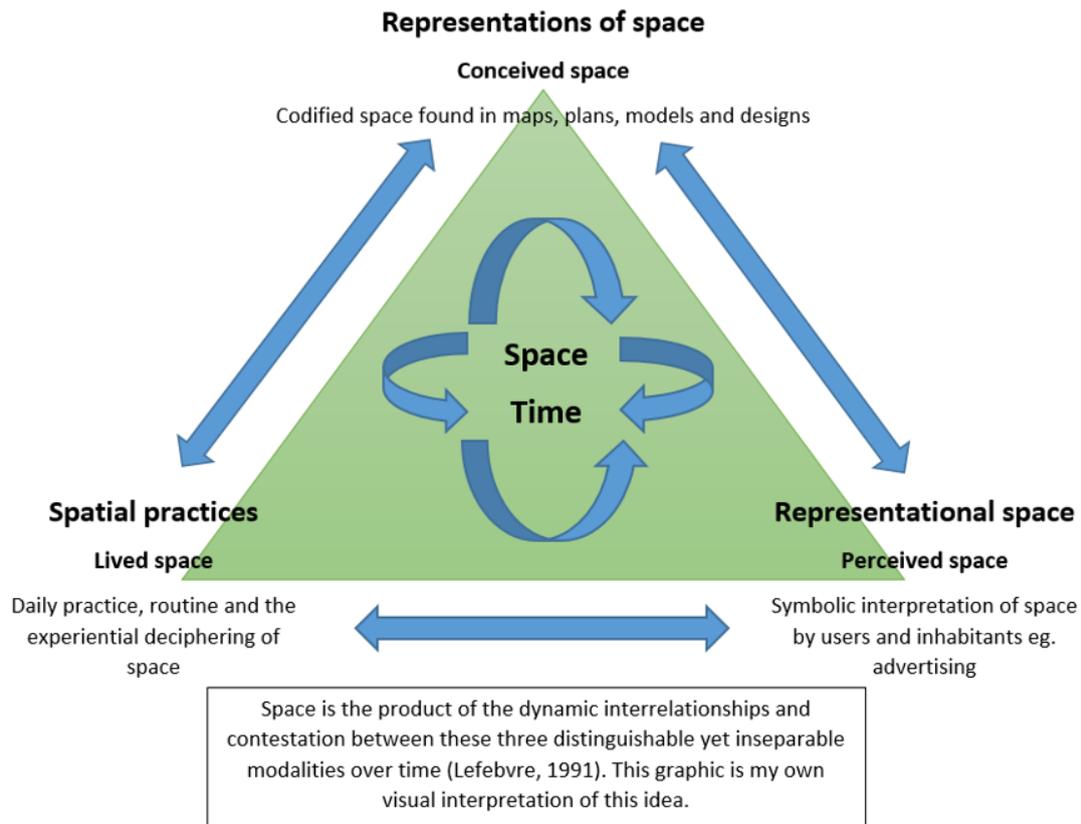


Figure 2. Source: Author's own (2016). A representation of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad.

2.2.1 Representations of Space

The highest order of these modalities is *representations of space* or conceived space. Conceived space is where space is discursively framed and codified abstractly. It seeks to order and shape the world in an abstract way, hence producing abstract space (Lefebvre, 1991). Plans, designs and other codifications of space categorise and order space. These codifications are never lived as they are designed but this does not reduce their power. Because conceived space is “tied to relations of production and to the order which those relations impose”, it is inevitably connected “to knowledge, to signs, to codes and to ‘frontal’ relations” (Lefebvre, 1991: 33). In other words, conceived spaces are spaces of control: they involve dominating imaginative practices that tend to involve elite social groups and agents of state power.

A definitive feature underpinning the dominance of conceived space and the abstract understandings of spaces they produce are their homogenous, often ahistorical natures. Abstract space is, for Lefebvre, *the* modern form of space; “a social space in which difference and distinction are continually eroded by the commodification of space” (Allen & Pryke, 1994: 457). In this sense, the prevalence of

abstract imaginations of spaces today is symptomatic of what Lefebvre saw as the ways in which everyday life is increasingly confronted by an overly formalised, commodified and abstract existence. Like the meticulously planned homogenous suburban subdivision, conceived space can enact a uniform, overly rationalised and almost technocratic experience of everyday life. For Lefebvre, the goal of abstract space is thus to homogenise imaginations of space, to “repress the diversity of space in order to convey a singular image” (Allen & Pryke, 1994: 459). Because of its ability to abstract and overlay the experiences of lived space, conceived space can work to reduce differences between spaces, transforming and diminishing the nuance of everyday experiences of space into homogenous and ahistorical forms.

For this reason, in conceived space, the suburb can be understood through various spatial codings. From school reputation and ratings to land zoning regulations that separate different activities, conceived space imagines the suburb as an entity that can be read and deciphered formally in abstract space. This dynamic illustrates the ways in which abstract space is bound up with practices of power. Rather than any given or presupposed form, abstract, conceived space actively produces and secures space as coherent, uniform and devoid of difference.

2.2.2 Representational Space

Representational space or perceived space stems from visualisation and imagination. It is the space where the world is perceived through the symbols and images of its ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 33). Because of its affective nature (what Lefebvre describes as an affective kernel), perceived space is where desire is conditioned, thus requiring time to ferment. Through the mixing of time and lived experience, artists, writers and other cultural producers imbue space with meaning by describing the lived spaces they inhabit (Lefebvre, 1991: 41- 43). The poet, for example, “gives a voice to a way of living (loving, feeling, thinking, taking pleasure, or suffering)” (Lefebvre, 1991: 224).

The generation and reproduction of desire is a central pillar through which perceived space contributes toward the imaginative production of space. Accordingly, unlike conceived space, their only products are symbolic works, although Lefebvre (1991) is clear that this does not reduce their power. Indeed, the imaginative labour within perceived space has important implications for understandings of the suburbs. From the imaginative labour achieved by an artist’s rendering of a proposed development to the views and perspectives communicated in media publications and reality TV shows such as *Location, Location, Location*, perceived space is the space where more everyday

imaginaries of space are constructed and where we make sense of the spaces we move through. For the form and functions of suburban spaces, this is of great importance because at the heart of suburban cultures are morphing images and ideas about the way in which we understand and relate to our living environments. Advertising and the work of real estate agents are critical components of this process. Through advertising, real-estate agents don't simply sell houses but rather ascribe spaces with value such that "locality is created.... at the level of meaning" (Eyles, 1987: 102). By using enticing imagery and evocative text, real-estate advertising establishes and reinforces meanings about suburbs by putting relative emphasis on particular built and environmental features to differentiate space. From the allure of big, private backyards to privileged access to particular education or environmental amenities, through advertising, the suburbs are imbued with thematic strategies of make-believe and pastiche which elevate them as signifiers of broader lifestyles (Eyles, 1987). This meaning is also constructed at a variety of scales, from individual houses to broader meanings about particular suburbs themselves. Many of these claims relate to aspirations connected to the American dream or, for New Zealand, more specifically the 'quarter acre dream'—an assortment of ideas which, among other things, privileges private homeownership as the only tenable form of housing tenure (Perkins & Thorns, 1999).

Perceived space is necessarily entangled with and inseparable from the imaginings produced in conceived space. In its abstract codification of space for example, practices of conceived space like land zoning regulations work to colonise and project particular imaginaries of space which feed into the understandings emanating from perceived space. These feedbacks are typically positive and constructive insofar as they can work together towards a particular end. Through this interaction, spatial textures are modified, such as when, for instance, popular discourse in the early 20th century tarnished the inner city with disease and immorality and led to codifications of the suburbs in particular kinds of ways. However, the interaction between conceived and perceived space can also be adversarial and in conflict. Nicholas Fyfe (1997), for example, employed Lefebvre's spatial framework to make sense of the ways in which Glasgow's postwar modernisation was the product of the generative, conflictual process of creation between conceived and perceived space. Drawing on Lefebvre's conceptualisation of poets as 'lyrical sociologists' of sorts, his analysis points to the ways in which poems encompassing reactions both for and against the Glasgow Council's masterplan or codification of space. In what Lefebvre terms contradictions of space, these spatial tensions reveal the ways in which certain spaces embody a clash of social interests. Through their own perceptions of the space they inhabit, current or even external, potential future users of space form challenges to or subversions of the dominant coding of space (Allen & Pryke, 1994: 454).

2.2.3 Spatial Practices

For Lefebvre, *spatial practices*, otherwise known as lived or experiential space, are the livings and doings of everyday life. Patterns, performance and repetition, what Lefebvre refers to as rhythms, are of central importance here. As Lefebvre suggests, “what we *live* are rhythms, rhythms experienced subjectively” (1991: 206). Lived space thus relates to people’s experience of their everyday world. Through our interactions with one another and the spaces we inhabit, lived spaces ‘secrete’ their own social spaces that circumscribe both conceived and perceived space in a multitude of ways. From those global physical and virtual networks which code and connect spaces and their inhabitants across the world right down to the routine commute to work which endows space with meaning, these secretions taking the form of patterns, networks and routes work to connect Lefebvre’s triad through ensuring lived, conceived and perceived spaces coexist and produce space in a dialectical unity (Merrifield, 1993).

In regard to the suburbs, we might then argue that everyday life and norms in suburbanising areas (lived space) are filled with daily practices that are themselves also interlinked with imaginative geographies (both perceived and conceived space). The widely established literature on suburbanisms which describe the distinct ways of suburban life fit here (Walks, 2012). By attending to the different yet distinct experiences associated with suburban, the literature on suburbanisms implicitly explores lived space by recognising the importance of specific movements, patterns and rhythms linking spaces of work, residence and recreation to the production of suburban ways of life (Ekers *et al.*, 2012). As spaces are produced and take their literal shape through the daily routine of ‘users’, the generational experience of suburbia has clearly established its ideas at the centre of common imaginaries.

Like conceived and perceived space, lived space is powerful because by helping to secure and maintain images or ideas about place, they simultaneously limit alternative interpretations of future possibilities. Thus like the social spaces which constitute them, lived space presents another avenue to explore the practices of power. Attending to the ways in which lived space enables “the acquired connotations and symbolic meanings of sites [to] succeed, overlay and disrupt one another” once again beckons the ways in which space is, on all fronts, an innately imaginative affair under endless construction (Allen & Pryke, 1994: 457). As the environments we inhabit on a daily basis change, the power of lived space is such that the meanings and images once grounding these spaces can be quickly erased and difficult to reach without the aid of pictures or other representations. In this way, *spatial practices* are of critical importance to the imaginative production of spaces because by framing the

way we conceive and perceive our environments, they can limit or be used to advance particular futures while also marginalising others.

It is in lived space where, through interaction with conceived and perceived space, that we can locate ongoing, yet morphing desires for inhabiting certain kinds of suburban and increasingly post-suburban spaces. From the conceived zoning regulations of local government to the perceived meanings produced by real-estate agents, the daily practices of inhabiting and being in suburban spaces are embedded in and shaped by the imaginaries that produce space in abstract and lived terms. Lived space thus mediates between both conceived and perceived space in a mutually constitutive relationship, shaping and being shaped by individuals' perceptions of space while subject to the conceptualisations of space made by planners and bureaucrats (McCann, 1999: 172). In what follows, I build on this conceptualisation of space in relation to the production of suburban and post-suburban space.

2.3 The Imaginative Production of Suburban Space

Suburbanisation is typically described as “the combination of non-central population and economic growth within urban spatial expansion” (Ekers *et al*, 2012: 407). Within this all-encompassing technical definition lies an extremely diverse array of processes and places that have defined various dimensions of the suburban condition. Although a technical explanation is relevant to understanding the suburbs, it is equally important to attend to the meanings imbued in suburbs and the imaginative work through which they emerged and continue to be shaped by (Teaford, 1997). Certainly, despite the ubiquity of suburbs in English speaking contemporary life, for many the suburbs are less easily defined in geographic or literal terms and instead more discernible as an idea, metaphor or mind-set (Huq, 2013). Over the past few centuries, a range of imaginative positions have been established and developed around such an idea of the suburb (Fishman, 1982). This section deals with the imaginative dimension of suburbia, produced by the likes of planners and architects in conceived space, on one hand, and artists and writers alongside inhabitants in perceived and lived space on the other (Lefebvre, 1991). Taken together, these imaginations have produced the idea of the traditional suburb, a suburban idyll articulated in diverse ways. The first part of this section explores the plans and abstract visions for suburbs. In order to explore these conceived imaginations, I focus on certain key figures that are widely recognised in the disciplines of urban studies, architecture and planning as shaping collective understandings of the suburban form.

2.3.1 Suburban Imaginaries

Ebenzer Howard's now renowned Garden City concept is a salient and lasting example of an early version of suburbia with distinctive imaginative dimensions. In *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902), Howard conceived a model for a system of self-sufficient, low-density towns of 32,000 people connected through an extensive network of agricultural belts. The contours of his vision were firmly located in the particular imaginative and material contexts in which he wrote. For example, the exponentially increasing demand for, and density of, urban environments encroaching on adjacent rural land in this period fed into emerging Evangelical ideals which associated the city with moral corruption (Davison, 2013) and a general perception that life in the city was increasingly unhealthy (Batchelor, 1969). In seeking to correct what he saw was humanity's mounting alienation from nature, Howard's vision sought to reintegrate nature into the design of cities. Aside from initial success with the construction of two garden cities in the United Kingdom, the model's influence spread across the world, inspiring the construction of a number of variations of the model throughout North America, Europe and even New Zealand which continue to shape urban planning today (Clark, 2003: 94).

Frank Lloyd Wright (1935), architect of the Broadacre City, was another figure whose work contributed towards the early suburban idyll. Like Howard, his ideas were a response to the particular material context in which he wrote. In his utopian vision of the city, Wright categorically rejected the centralising tendencies of the early 20th century urbanism by instead valorising decentralisation. Getting to grips with the revolutionary nature of the automobile and how it could transform the American way of life, Wright saw the centralised, dense city as obsolete, in need of open spaces where the automobile could reign supreme. Writing in his 1935 book *The Disappearing City*, Wright imagined the growing importance of gas stations, enabling decentralisation by working as dispersed nodes of distribution, something akin to "life as a gas station" (Novak, 2014). With the aid of modern communication technologies like the telephone, Wright was increasingly critical of the need for the individual to venture into the inner city for employment, commerce and entertainment activities. Instead, his writing, when read chronologically, is emblematic of the imaginations produced by "the Great Depression of the 1930s with the spread of household electricity and new communications technologies, to the post-war techno-utopian ideals of the 1950s, complete with streamlined cars and flying machines" (Novak, 2014).

Better known as Le Corbusier, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris was a Swiss-French architect and urban planner associated with a different idea of the suburb from that of Howard. His work around what he dubbed the Radiant City is similar to Wright's ideas in that it attempted to represent the positive

potential of a low-density urban model in avoiding the problems associated with rapidly densifying inner cities (Fishman, 1982). Emphasising wide roads and a clear separation of buildings and land uses, the logic of the Radiant City was to ensure ample mobility while enhancing green space and air flow (qualities that were seen to prevent the spread of disease). Le Corbusier, Howard and Wright represent three figureheads of the architecture and planning world whose imaginations laid the foundation for the suburban revolution that followed (Fishman, 1982). Le Corbusier's (1964) explication is indicative:

“The cities will be part of the country; I shall live 30 miles from my office in one direction, under a pine tree; my secretary will live 30 miles away from it too, in the other direction, under another pine tree. We shall both have our own car. We shall use up tires, wear out road surfaces and gears, consume oil and gasoline. All of which will necessitate a great deal of work ... enough for all.”

Le Corbusier's vision for the future of urban living displays an uncanny resemblance to the traditional sprawling, auto-centric suburban environments this research concerns. For example, by envisioning cities to be part of the country, Le Corbusier imagines an ever decentralised landscape where the marriage between personal automobile and highway would become a definitive lived practice of the 20th century metropolis.

While widely recognised in the disciplines of urban studies, architecture and planning as shaping collective understandings of the suburban form, the plans of Howard, Wright and Le Corbusier represent just three of a number of influences on the more common, everyday imaginaries held about traditional suburbia. For instance, the representations of suburbia in popular culture are critical nodes in this process (Bueka, 2004). Aside from rational financial decisions, the broader interest suburbs received in the early twentieth century has links to the way in which popular culture constructed the suburbs as desirable. Through popular culture for example, the notion of the nuclear family, characterised by a single generation, heterosexual couple with children, became solidified in white, middle class suburban environments—defining the suburbs as the only adequate place to raise a family (Bueka, 2004).

Set in a suburb called Floral Heights, Sinclair Lewis's popular novel *Babbitt* (1922) illustrates this point (Jurca, 2001). Located in a meticulously plotted suburban subdivision, *Babbitt* depicts the suburban landscape as a kind of utopian antithesis of the inner city, playing into the “typical aspirations and achievements of the middle class in the 1920s” (Jurca, 2001: 44). With the advent of television, shows like *Beverly Hillbillies*, *Happy Days* and *The Brady Bunch* “glorified the single family house as the standard American home, enshrined the low density neighbourhood, and (perhaps not coincidentally)

.... provided an unrelenting negative picture of the city as the haven of crime and violence” (Fishman, 1987: 201-202). Another particularly distinguishable dimension of life the suburban idyll emphasised is the notion one must ‘drive to survive’ (Beuka, 2004). In contrast to the residents of inner cities, the everyday practices of suburbanites in lived space typically depend on the use of an automobile. More than a necessity, driving in the suburbs is often depicted as a rite of passage, captured neatly in Canadian band Arcade Fire’s 2010 album *The Suburbs*: “*In the suburbs, I learned to drive/ and you told me I’d never survive/ grab your mother’s keys we’re leaving*” (cited in Beuka, 2004). By suggesting an escape of sorts from the suburbs, the lyrics also insinuate a bridling against suburban boredom and conformity in perceived space, reiterating the overlapping and inseparable nature of lived and perceived imaginative practices. Indeed, this example clearly reflects the power of the interaction between conceived, perceived and lived space and the way in which they can work together to reinforce particular imaginaries of suburbia. From practices like car culture to iconography like white picket fences and green lawns, perceived and lived space has imbued suburbia with a range of ideas, many of which still persist in our imaginations about the suburbs to this day in popular television serials like *Desperate Housewives* or *Neighbours*.

2.3.2 Suburban Materiality

This section now discusses the material components of traditional suburbanisation. With reference to Lefebvre’s spatial triad, I have so far conceptualised suburban space as the co-constitutive product of both imaginative and material labour. This section now uses this framework in a light touch way to explain how the suburbs have been produced, not as this self-evident entity, but through a particular process where imaginative practices have created certain development pathways for cities over others. In order to do this, this section touches on three key material shifts that have been articulated by the imaginative work I described earlier which have together helped to produce the suburbs. These include the financing of traditional suburbia, the emergence of the personal automobile and the codification of traditional suburbia. While these three material shifts certainly do not speak to everything about suburbanisation in this period, they offer a brief and concise way to understand and situate the rise of traditional suburbanisation as a product of both imaginative and material dynamics.

The financial subsidisation of the suburban home was an important material component of traditional suburbanisation. The emphasis on subsidising the suburban home was largely the result of the effects of an ‘own your own home’ movement which, from the 1920s as the visions of concepts like American

dream began to take hold, successfully worked to re-organise government incentives to favour suburban homeownership. In the USA for example, the Home Owners Land Corporation (HOLC) prioritised the state's financial assistance for suburbanisation such that areas which followed a strictly residential, detached dwelling model were given privileged access to subsidised mortgages below market rates (Popenoe, 1977; Rothblatt & Carr, 1986: 32). In New Zealand, the power of these ideals in the 1920s inspired state lending schemes which allowed workers to borrow up to 95% of the cost of a house (Ferguson, 1994: 85), producing at that point one of the highest rates of homeownership in the world. Alongside an economy with full employment and relatively high real wages, these changes meant, for the middle class, that buying a house in the suburbs became cheaper than renting an apartment in the city (Kenyon, 2004).

However, suburbanisation was also financed in less direct ways. The subsidised uptake of the personal automobile was another key material component underpinning traditional suburbanisation (Weiss, 2002). By breaking the shackles public transport once subjected urban development to, the automobile not only enabled urban development to sprawl out beyond the inner city (Jackson, 1985), but also changed the nature of urban development, replacing the grid form with curvilinear, wide streets and ultimately lowering densities (Hoffman, 1992). The arrival of Henry Ford's Model T in 1909 was a particularly significant moment which marked the beginning of a new mobility paradigm, once limited to a wealthy few, opened to the emerging middle class (Caro, 1974: 144). Its appearance altered the class realities which previously defined life surrounding the inner city, making possible large, low density subdivisions which sprawled far beyond the reach of public transport like trams (Gandy, 2003). Of course, instead of any natural progression, the dominance of the automobile in this period was a product of particular co-constitutive imaginative and material dynamics. For instance, in early 20th century America, growing perceptions of public transport as slow, backward looking technologies of the past helped shape an understanding of the automobile as a modern transport option which embodied the prosperous future (Ascher, 1995). Under these perceptions, public transport became highly regulated, while car manufacturers, like Ford, were given considerable freedom and were actually subsidised via tax breaks (Geels, 2005: 466). As the car became invested with meaning and hope, the problem of growing and increasingly congested cities was naturally answered with auto-centric suburban sprawl, reprioritising and redirecting investment away from public transport and towards infrastructure like roads and highways (Lewis, 2013). In America, the intensity of this process in the 1920s led to a "road building revolution" (Jurca, 2001: 45). Across Europe and in the Antipodes, similar changes in the way governments prioritised infrastructural investment emerged as the automobile spread post WWII. In this regard, the dominance of the automobile as a central component in traditional suburbia was a product of both imaginative and

material dynamics. The way in which changing perceptions of public transport and the automobile itself helped articulate this dominance reflects how material foundations of urban form like infrastructure are “invariably invoked in images, representations and ideologies of urban ‘progress’ by all sorts of actors” (Graham & Marvin, 2001: 12).

The codification of urban space was another key material component which has helped to structure traditional suburban space. As part of the town planning and standardisation movement of the early 20th century, several institutional shifts in this period changed the way urban space and specifically suburbs were zoned. In this period, the rapid rate of urbanisation and development in many cities around the world was such that slum housing emerged, with overcrowding, poverty, and a lack of basic services like running water spreading disease on epidemic levels (Batchelor, 1969). In addition to being unsanitary, these conditions were also responsible for growing perceptions of the inner city as morally corrupt (Davison, 2013). These imaginaries gradually constructed a widely-held view of inner cities as no place for growing families. In juxtaposition to these imaginaries of the inner city, the suburban home was increasingly perceived and ultimately regulated as an alternative urban space, a sanitary environment where a clear separation of work and residence, public and private space would enable families to flourish. Land zoning practices would often operate in tandem with other more localised regulations like covenants and deed restrictions which helped ensure traditional suburbs were restricted to middle or upper class, single family households by setting minimum costs for developments among other things. These restrictions worked to sharply juxtapose the experiences in and understandings of traditional suburbs against the lower cost households of inner cities which were characterised by mixed land uses and smaller, multifamily residences (Jackson, 1985). Importantly, the emergence of land zoning practices in the 19th and early 20th century as response to the dire material conditions of inner cities in this period was articulated or shaped by the imaginaries of the early figureheads described above and the growing everyday imaginaries emphasising the need for clean, strictly residential urban environments that were suitable for growing families (Fishman, 2002). These imaginaries thus helped shape or co-constitute the production of suburban space by producing and legitimising suburbanisation as the response to these conditions. As the regulations worked to limit the form and function of traditional suburban space, they represent important abstract, codifications of suburban space which continue to have important effects over the way traditional suburbs are experienced and imagined. Indeed, they formed a structure which has solidified an understanding of traditional suburbs that still resonates today, as a relatively closed social space that is home to nuclear family units as opposed to the vibrancy and heterogeneity associated with dense inner cities.

2.3.3 Conclusion

This section has discussed some of the material components which have helped constitute and produce traditional suburban space. It has discussed how these three key material components have been articulated by a range of imaginaries or understandings which helped shape the practice, policy and regulation underpinning these changes. The next section continues this framework of analysis to discuss the material and imaginative production of post-suburban space.

2.4 The Imaginative Production of Post-Suburban Space

In the past few decades, a plethora of changes have led urban scholars to discuss the emergence of post-suburban spaces or forms. Beginning in the 1970s, many have noted that the characteristics underpinning traditional suburbs have begun to break down and fracture (Soja, 1986, 1989; Frost & Dingle, 1995; Dear & Dishman, 2002, Dear, 2004). More recently, the term post-suburbia has sought to capture these changes. For Charmes and Keil (2015: 581), the changes characterising this shift to post-suburbia are intricate and multi-faceted, where the “process of de-densification (found in traditional suburbanisation) is partially converted, inverted or subverted into a process that involves densification, complexification and diversification of the suburbanisation process”. Others, like Lucy and Phelps (1997: 260), refer to post-suburbanisation as a “time period which is succeeding the suburban era”, a transformation by which suburbs are becoming “something more than primarily residential areas” (Spoonley *et al.*, 1997), such that our “economically inert, provincial and dormitory-based suburbs” are giving way to the rise of “increasingly active, polynucleated and amorphous suburbs with a less dominant central city” (Essex & Brown, 1997: 260).

Importantly, post-suburbanisation is highly variegated and involves many components. From largely mono-cultural, mono-functional traditional suburbs, post-suburbanisation is diversifying the suburbs in terms of their morphology, demography and land use (Wu & Phelps, 2008). The scholarly accounts of this diversification of urban forms are also multiple. While referenced in this thesis as post suburbia, these changes also feature in other neologisms such as outer cities (Herrington, 1984); exopolis (Soja, 1989); edge cities (Garreau, 1991; Teaford, 1997); flex space (Lehrer, 1994); inverted metropolis (Bloch, 1994); zwischenstadt (Sieverts, 1997); and metroburbia (Knox, 2008). In this regard, the term post-suburbia reflects a rising awareness in urban studies of the pluralised and fragmented nature of

contemporary suburbanisation, describing a process that includes new relations, spaces, functions and politics (Wu & Phelps, 2008). In order to distinguish post-suburban space from traditional suburban space, the remainder of this section elaborates on Charmes and Keil's (2015: 581) definition of post-suburbanisation as relating to the diversification, densification and complexification of the suburbanisation process.

2.4.1 Diversification

Post-suburban spaces involve a diverse array of land uses and residents, distinguishing them from more mono-functional and mono-cultural traditional suburban spaces (Wu & Phelps, 2008; Charmes and Keil, 2015). The suburbs have increasingly become hubs of diverse economic activity and employment (Knox, 2008). As previously residential areas have become mixed with an assortment of economic activity, the imaginaries surrounding them have become increasingly diverse as well (Phelps & Wood, 2011). One poignant example of this is Fishman's (1987: 17) notion of the technoburb, a new settlement space he describes as emphasising a renewed linkage between work and residence which has brought suburbia and its meanings to an end. Technoburbs are an expression of the changing nature of urban economies and how they can operate without the traditional restrictions physical infrastructural requirements once subjected them to. For this reason, what could be understood as technoburbs, like Silicon Valley in California, now hold more than two thirds of US office space (Garreau, 1991). Indeed, while the suburbs were once primarily residential spaces, the rise of ideas which valorise a *work, live, play* synthesis has increasingly introduced a variety of more-than-residential activities into once dormitory suburbs. Another widely cited model exemplifying this is new urbanism. In broad terms, new urbanism emphasises the incorporation of urban ideas and accoutrements into largely suburban developments in order to use space more efficiently for more purposes (Fishman, 1990). By bringing daily activities together, new urbanism enhances the walkability of spaces and stresses the potential of these environments to promote a sense of community, reduce dependence on automobiles and generally integrate the necessities of daily life to maximize the use of space throughout the day (Lynch, 1981; Duany *et al.*, 2000). Accordingly, from the rise of new economic possibilities and arrangements to the growing emphasis on connecting and localising daily life through walkability, the variety of changes embodied by technoburbs and new urbanism are important because they represent some of the earlier ways in which the suburbs began to diversify and thus have influence over the ways we think about post-suburbanisation today.

Beyond the diversity of land uses, post-suburbia involves a diversification of resident populations (Wu & Phelps, 2008; Kling *et al.*, 1995). Including ethnic diversity as well as well age and cultural diversity, these changes have had direct consequences on ways of living in the suburbs. In terms of ethnicity for instance, the emergence of ethnic clusters in suburban areas, what Wei Li (1993) has termed ethnoburbs, exemplifies how the suburbs are becoming increasingly multiracial, multiethnic and multicultural communities. Modarres, for example, remarked that “immigration is redefining and complicating the word suburb”, creating an environment where “...suburbs, old and new, are more likely to become super diverse” (cited in Kurimska & Stephens, 2016). Similarly, the changing balance between employment, residence and recreation under post-suburbanisation is not only working to reduce the distances and associated lifestyles between rich and poor (Teaford, 1997), but also to diversify the temporal rhythms of communities such that they become places of vibrant, diverse interaction throughout the day (Dovey, 2005). Accordingly, in contrast to the parochial imaginaries associated with the suburbs, the increasingly diverse nature of post-suburban spaces is working to redefine them as places of cosmopolitanism, of cultural and socio-economic diversity. Indeed, while the suburbs were once home to similarly minded individuals with similar life experiences, the reality is increasingly the opposite.

2.4.2 Complexification

Post-suburbanisation also involves a complexification of the suburbanisation process (Charmes and Keil, 2015). The first part of this relates to the growing ontological ambiguity of suburbs and their increasingly blurred boundaries. While the radical imaginative and material transformation of space which underpinned the emergence of traditional suburban space in the 20th century meant the suburbs and inner city were clearly differentiated, post-suburbanisation is working to erode these distinctions (Phelps, 2015). Specifically, by reducing the traditional form and functional differences that separate suburbs and inner cities, the influences of post-suburbanisation are creating urban environments that cannot be categorised within the traditional spatial binary between cities and suburbs (Lang, 2003), spurring claims classifications like these are now obsolete, ‘zombie’ categories (Lang & Knox, 2009: 790). In this sense, a central component of post-suburbia’s analytical attraction is its ability to describe the increasingly boundless, un-locatable ontology of suburban space (Phelps & Wood, 2011; Phelps, 2015). This notion of increasingly ambiguous suburbs is emphasised in descriptions of the edge or edgeless city (Lang, 2003). Explicating the continuities between suburbanisation and post-suburbanisation, edgeless cities are definitively boundless, “spread almost

imperceptibly throughout metropolitan areas, filling out central cities, occupying much of space between more concentrated suburban business districts” and are thus not easy to locate (Lang, 2003: 1-2). This boundless nature also means they seldom coincide with existing governmental jurisdictions, instead typically employing homeowner associations and other hybrid, in-between forms of governance (Garreau, 1991). Like Fishman’s (1987) notion of the technoburb, they also tend to “lack any definable borders, a centre or periphery, or clear distinctions between residential, industrial and commercial zones” (Fishman, 1990: 25), a component which has important implications for the next part to this complexification.

The complexification of the suburbs also pertains to the changing ways in which suburbs relate to and depend on inner cities (Phelps and Wu, 2008). Over the past few decades, several scholars have observed the growing importance of non-local political relations, including those of non-local capital (Molotch & Logan 1984) and non-local governmental relations (Gottdiener, 1977) in the operation of suburbs, emphasising how they have been woven into webs of relations that are increasingly decentralised away from the inner cities which they traditionally surround (Phelps & Wood, 2011: 2600). While the solely residential function of suburbs once required them to be integrated with a monocentric city-region, the increasingly multifunctional nature of suburbs today is working to undermine the necessity of particular interaction, for employment, consumption or recreation for example, with larger metropolitan centres (Graham & Martin, 2001). In addition to the dynamics of everyday life, the rise of ever decentralised cities with ambiguous boundaries is also apparent through increasingly decentralised infrastructure (Graham & Martin, 2001). From the growth of community gardens (Kingsley *et al.*, 2009) to the notion of ‘solar suburbs’ (Bouwmeester *et al.*, 2000), the suburbs are increasingly home to practices reversing the traditionally dependent nature of suburbs on other places for all their resources and energy. Accordingly, part of post-suburbanisation involves a complexification and multiplication of the relations defining suburbs, creating polynucleated and amorphous cities that are increasingly unrecognisable from the linear outward growth model of traditional suburbanisation.

2.4.3 Densification

Post-suburban spaces involve an increasingly dense array of building typologies (Charmes and Keil, 2015). While traditional suburban space is defined by homogenous, low-density development, recent decades have seen many suburbs face increasing pressure for denser forms of development, be that

through new development or subdivision, which is diversifying the types of housing and general density of the suburbs. Indeed, from townhouses intermixed alongside villas, to apartment blocks adjacent to bungalows, the densification of suburban space under post-suburbanisation is a gradual process, meaning it also involves and intersects with the wider diversification of suburban space that was touched on above.

Post-suburbia not only entails a shift in morphological forms of the suburb, but also a shift in the political landscape related to these subsequent changes in physical form and social structure. The ways in which suburban densification projects aim to attract particular socio-economic groups form a critical component of this politics. As Max Rousseau (2015) illuminates, attempts at suburban densification are almost always associated as being part of an effort to either upgrade or downgrade an area's socio-economic dynamics. For instance, densification in relatively wealthy suburbs is often perceived by existing residents as a broader threat to current environmental and demographic arrangements. This is contrasted by densification in relatively neglected or lower socio-economic areas which are more or less represented (by its proponents at least) as a means through which the community can be rehabilitated and become attractive to young middle-class households (Rousseau, 2015). This observation speaks to the way in which the politics of suburban densification is inevitably situated in the particular socio-economic dynamics and histories of local contexts which work to privilege a particular imaginary for the future of a suburb, while marginalising others.

The politics of densification is multifaceted and contingent on a variety of factors. Mobilised to both advocate for and resist against the push for density, ideas about the environment are key features in this process (Charmes & Keil, 2015). While living in the suburbs was once conceived as a way in which individuals could get closer to 'nature' and away from the dirt and disease of the inner city (Lupi & Musterd, 2006), the relationship between environmental discourse and the city has since changed. Now, in relation to land and energy intensive suburbia, the compact, multi-functional nature of well-designed inner cities has appropriated the label of environmental sustainability (Charmes & Keil, 2015: 588).

Much has been written on the role of urban densification in the transition to more environmentally sustainable cities. Peter Newman & Jeffrey Kenworthy's (1999) book *Sustainability and cities: overcoming automobile dependence* was first to popularise this idea. Taking daily mobility into consideration, their analysis condemned traditional suburbia's lack of concentrated resources and subsequent distance from daily activities for requiring residents to rely on automobiles for even the simplest task like buying a newspaper (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). As traditional suburban lifestyles ultimately consume more energy, Newman & Kenworthy argued continued suburban sprawl was

counter to environmental sustainability goals, only combatable by an emphasis on more compact, mixed use urban forms. This emphasis on constructing denser, more compact urban environments has been further reiterated over the past few decades as concerns have grown about climate change (Beatley, 2000; Bulkeley & Bestill, 2005). These scholarly imaginaries have filtered into practitioner accounts such as those of many planners and policy makers who argue for the need for cities to pursue 'smart growth', a new method of urban development which valorises denser urban growth, and are widely accepted throughout popular media (Danielson *et al.*, 1999). For example, Grand designs TV personality Kevin McCloud recently explained in an article the way in which Auckland's problems are similar to many of the major cities around the world and it must build denser cities in order to achieve sustainability (Boyle, 2014). The argument that a low density environment is an unsustainable one also extends to the health of suburban dwellers. The belief that *Sprawl Kills*, as the title of Hirschhorn's (2005) book goes, is increasingly prevalent. As he suggests, by subjecting residents to endless traffic jams with little opportunity for exercise, life in the suburbs 'steals your time, health and money' (Hirschhorn, 2005). For some, this belief is such that traditional suburbia now symbolises human greed and an inherently unsustainable way of life (Keil & Whitehead 2012). Post-suburban designs like New Urbanism, which emphasise walkable spaces, exemplify this idea that denser suburbs are the only way towards a healthy, sustainable way of life. Similarly, the range of policy which changes the ways suburbs are zoned reiterates the degree to which environmental ideas in favour of densification have been normalised and have begun to frame the imaginative horizons of plans, policies and visions for future development. The broad range of concerns that this section has briefly explained are used to advocate for densification also reveals the way in which densification is often promoted (at the level of policy making at least) as a means to overcome a range of economic, social and, particularly, environmental issues (Yigitcanlar *et al.*, 2007).

However, the claims around densification have not gone uncontested. Indeed, as a number of recent accounts, like Patrick Troy's book *The perils of urban consolidation* (1996) show us, the idea of density=sustainability has been long questioned. A recent analysis of household energy consumption and transport across a number of residential landscapes revealed the increased long distance mobility exercised by those living in densified neighbourhoods because of the need for a break away from the strain and pollution of a denser everyday life (Holden & Norland's, 2005). Broadly, these approaches are based on a rejection of the presumption that high density is inherently more sustainable –and given dense environments can still be car dominated (Dovey, 2005), in the crudest sense they are right. Nevertheless, others indicate that while urban density does not necessarily translate to lower carbon footprints, the three main drivers of emissions –home size, household income and vehicle ownership –are generally higher in traditional suburban spaces (Sanders, 2014).

Many also consider densification would form a threat to existing environmental systems. This concern stems from the belief that any densification would inevitably expose residents, infrastructure and current ecological systems to unsustainable levels of stress (Echenique *et al.*, 2012). Concerns over loss of green space, increased pollution and the ability for local amenities like schools to cope are among a few of the types of anxieties many raise about suburban densification (Charmes & Keil, 2015). Similarly, broader fears and imaginaries around the loss of privacy, 'neighbourhood character' and the destruction of the streetscape also line the arguments of many against densification initiatives (Woodcock *et al.*, 2012). Importantly, while many of the environmental ideas used to advocate both for and against densification proposals can be legitimate for some, many of those deploying them don't necessarily adhere to such concerns but instead leverage off them to serve ulterior motives (be that growth or the protection of their house values or a particular lifestyle) (Charmes & Keil, 2015).

The economic arguments around densification have also been questioned. One particularly poignant issue defining many densification debates is the cost of housing (Gurran, 2008). As an increasingly pressing issue for many cities like Auckland, the lack of affordable housing and its association with current and projected population growth is one of the leading challenges proponents of more densified suburbs list for its necessity (Touati, 2015). For the politically mobilised groups of homeowners and the community groups that represent them, the prospect of a changing environment diminishing the life style of their suburb inevitably raises concern over the threat to the capital gain accumulating in their property. However, other organisations like the Homeowners & Buyers association of New Zealand (HOBA) take a different view, suggesting any move to rezone land for more intensive development works to actually increase the value of existing properties on the potential value that could be developed with those changes (Slade, 2015). In contrast to the normative assumptions surrounding densification, there are also claims densification is gentrification in disguise and will make homes for existing residents unaffordable (Huxley, 1997; McCrea & Walters, 2012; Cohen, 2014). While densification inevitably provides more housing, when undertaken with the intent to gentrify and provide for a more lucrative market, it can displace existing residents by increasing rates and generally pricing out lower income groups from any chance of participating in the market (Rousseau, 2015).

The dynamics shaping understandings of densification are also varied and multifaceted. Charmes and Keil's (2015: 585) exploration of the politics of densification in France, for example, recognises the role different political histories play in shaping imaginaries of the suburbs and what roles and forms they might take. In other places like the Auckland context that this thesis deals with, the meanings surrounding densification have been strongly associated with aesthetic fears over poor designs (Heslop *et al.*, 2004). Due to a period of a *laissez-faire* approach to governance that, starting from the

1990s, meant developments required little if any regulation from planners (Murphy, 2008), many cities like Auckland were left with inner cities scattered with cramped (as small as 16 square metres) and poorly designed apartment blocks that have tarnished the ability of the cities' inhabitants to imagine densification in other ways (Heslop *et al.*, 2004). While confidence in the possibilities of densification is gradually being restored for many, the rise of heritage, conservation and residents' groups and the wider values they represent rejecting any and all development speaks to the persistence of these concerns. NIMBYism or 'not-in-my-backyard' syndrome is a concept which encapsulates much of what defines many densification debates. Defined as "locally organised campaigns opposing locally unwanted land use, whether industrial, human service facility or new housing" (Hubbard, 2005: 52), the use of NIMBY discourse in (normative) literature and public debate is almost always underpinned by negative connotations (Ruming *et al.*, 2012), with all forms of resistance subject to labels of this kind (Wolsink, 2006). In relation to densifying suburbs, there are countless examples of NIMBYism in the literature. Miles Lewis's (1999) book *Suburban Backlash* traces the ways in which Melbourne's push to become 'the world's most liveable city' has been hampered by wide public dismay for the types of densification the city's decision makers insisted this goal would require. While often an accurate portrayal, by representing and reducing all resistance to the selfish concerns of a group, NIMBYism can blur and deny public debate of a broad range nuanced conversations relating to issues spanning far beyond these common presumptions –ranging from anti-social behaviour to the adequacy of existing infrastructure (Ruming, 2014). By ignoring and denying the nuance of these debates, nimbyism can depoliticise densification, and can reduce it to a 'technical issue' or a natural part of a city's development rather than a particular, politicised way of allocating resources. By revealing the tension between the need for new, more intensive development with the desire to save the character of particular housing, Nimby captures much of what's distinct about post-suburban politics and reiterates the ways in which ideas and images form a central part of the struggles over the production of space.

2.4.4 Conclusion

This section has shown that post-suburbanisation is both complex and multidimensional, involving a densification, complexification and diversification of the suburbanisation process (Charmes & Keil, 2015: 581). It has illustrated how post-suburbanisation refers to a time of multiple suburban forms and functions (Lucy and Philips 1997: 260), a diversification of the suburbanisation process which is making suburbs "something much more difficult to understand, use or plan" (Barnett, 1992: 94). This

section has demonstrated how the rise of increasingly morphologically and functionally dense, diverse and complex suburbs are generating imaginative tensions that are shaping the effects of post-suburbanisation in various kinds of ways. The next section outlines the research methodology employed to trace these changes and situate them in the Auckland context and specific research case study Three Kings.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to better understand the role and character of imaginative practices in the production of traditional and post-suburban forms in Auckland. The chapter begins by introducing the methods of data collection, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis. It discusses their advantages and limitations, and details some of the ethical considerations surrounding the collection of the data. Lastly, the chapter outlines the process used to analyse the data collected through these various approaches, including content analysis and thematic coding.

3.2 Methodology and data collection

This thesis examines the imaginative practices constituting the rise of post-suburban forms in Three Kings and Auckland more broadly. This requires considering how the different actors, practices and processes involved in the production of space are underpinned by imaginative dynamics. This thesis uses a qualitative case study methodology. Three methods of data collection were used within this study. These include interviews, documentary analysis and participant observation. These methods have been employed to capture the imaginative practices defining the changes in Auckland's suburbs across multiple levels, from policy, media and advertising to the personal imaginaries we all have about particular place. This qualitative approach is best suited to fulfilling the aims and objectives of this research because it provides a way to get an in-depth understanding of the meanings and messages embedded in space (Dunn 2010), helping to reveal the different and competing pressures, perspectives and priorities regarding the development of Auckland's suburbs and their future. Once the overall plan for the research and its goals were devised, an ethics application was lodged to the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) and was granted ethics approval on the 28th of June 2016 (Approval # 017600). The research in this thesis focuses on Auckland, with particular attention being paid to the central Auckland suburb of Three Kings. As stated in the thesis introduction, this is a useful case study for this research project because it is a relatively

established suburb undergoing significant change, including the largest recent brownfield development site in Auckland's isthmus which has received a significant amount of political and media attention. Indeed, because it is a relatively established suburb, Three Kings is important because it is an area that formed part of an earlier period of development following WWII when suburban norms were becoming established across Auckland.

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

As individuals play a central role in the making and movement of understandings or imaginaries about space, a total of 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals considered key stakeholders in the development of Three Kings, including representatives from community groups and local governing bodies. The thesis sought the insights of key informants related to Auckland's and Three Kings' development to supplement the collection and analysis of secondary data. As a research method, semi-structured interviews were employed to explore the central role imaginaries play in the claims, understandings and actions of key stakeholders in suburban development in Three Kings. They were also used to "deepen understanding of people's relation to, and shaping of, place", and the way in which the lived experiences of these individuals influenced their positions (Dowling *et al.*, 2016: 680). In order to document a diverse range of perspectives, a number of different participants including designers, politicians and environmentalists were invited to participate. Interviews were carried out between July and November 2016 and were all conducted face-to-face in a mutually convenient place and time. Each interview varied between 30-60 minutes. In accordance with the committee's guidelines, potential participants were initially contacted via email, and if they expressed interest or requested more information, were provided with a participant information sheet (see appendix 1). Before commencing each interview, I briefly gave participants a verbal summary of the project's objectives, described why the insights of the particular participant were valuable and provided an opportunity for participants to ask any questions they had regarding the research and their involvement in it. Interviewees then signed a consent form (see appendix 2) which gave permission for their information to be recorded and used in the research. The consent form also asked participants to specify how they would like to be identified, using their name, job title or a pseudonym. All participants consented to their name and position being used. Interviews were recorded using an electronic audio recorder and were later transcribed. Copies of the transcribed interview were sent to participants who requested them on the consent form, providing an opportunity for feedback and alterations to be made.

| Participant | Role |
|--------------------|---|
| Dick Bellamy | President of the South Epsom Planning Group |
| Harry Doig | Member of the Puketapapa Local Board |
| Niko Elsen | Spokesperson for Generation Zero |
| Michael Wood | (Labour) electoral MP for Mt Roskill |
| Gary Bryant | Sustainable design consultant & resident |
| Morgan Reeve | Auckland council design specialist |

TABLE 1. INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS. SOURCE: AUTHORS OWN (2016)

All interview participants had spent a significant length of time living, working and engaging in discussion about Three Kings and its future development. While a number of these participants had multiple roles and thus drew insights from multiple experiences, in order to maintain transparency in this research, participants were identified only in the capacity in which they were invited to take part in the research. Participants were invited to participate in this research in a handful of ways. Firstly, key stakeholders involved directly in the development of the Three Kings Quarry were contacted by publicly accessible email addresses. Representatives from community groups were contacted in similar ways. Another approach employed was to provide participants at the end of the interview with an opportunity to suggest anyone who might be of interest to this research. Responses from participants were productive and helped secure two further interviews in addition to providing information on a number groups, events and documents related to changes in the area.

The interviews undertaken in this research followed a semi-structured approach for all participants. This style of interview was best suited because it provided a level of flexibility and encouraged conversation between the researcher and the participant (Dunn, 2010). For instance, the initial answers provided by participants allowed me to readjust the subsequent questions in order to follow a more natural, conversational flow. Interview themes varied between participants due to their specified roles.

As a researcher, it is impossible to distance and separate myself from the embodied social differences like ethnicity, age and gender which define my positionality as a researcher (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Hyndman, 2001; Dowling, 2010). For this reason, it is clear my positionality in the interview process as a relatively young student may have influenced the research process in a number of ways. There is a

wide range of international literature that provides evidence that age is a key component of power relations in research interviews (Merriam *et al.*, 2001; Manderson *et al.*, 2006; Pile, 1991). These power relations were most visible in the way in which many participants referred to me as someone of a younger generation which signified a broader position in, and understanding of, the world and what is happening in Auckland's suburbs. Throughout the interview process for instance, a number of participants commonly relayed their answers to me by referencing 'your generation' or 'people of your generation'. This sense that I was part of a particular generation with particular position in and understanding of the world was most evident when I asked participants about the rising cost of housing in Auckland and what that might mean for the future of the suburbs and the role of housing. As I am a relatively young student and part of a generation in Auckland which is currently struggling to afford to buy a home, some participants seemed to feel the need to justify their position as homeowners and 'side with me', as it were, by suggesting my generation has been treated unfairly and action needed to be taken. However, there were also some potentially negative implications of my position as a young student. For instance, this may have influenced the information participants provided me with by potentially garnering different answers from what may have been given to someone older, with more experience or a different title. In this sense, my age and position as a student may have led participants to only give me a limited amount of detail and use a particular set of examples and explanations as opposed to others that might have been given to someone else in a different positionality.

3.2.2 Secondary data

The first source of secondary data this research draws from is media publications. Importantly, media in all formats plays a vital role in the generation of imaginings of urban space (McQuire, 2008). As a particularly prominent topic throughout the research period, the changes occurring within Auckland's suburbs have featured regularly in popular media in Auckland. During the initial stages of data collection, media publications were used to identify key stakeholders, extract relevant quotes and garner a sense of the various positions surrounding the development of Auckland, with specific attention to Three Kings. In relation to interviews, recent media publications regarding the development of the quarry provided useful discussion points that helped shape questions and points of discussion during interviews. The immediate documentation and analysis of policy, court proceedings and broader plans for development were another significant attribute of media publications in the research, reiterating one of the ways in which the imaginative labour this research

concerns overlaps and is intertwined across various types of content. Throughout the entire research period, publications from national, regional and local media outlets were collected and collated into the broader themes which emerged out of the research process. In addition to articles published throughout the research period, archival searches were conducted on The New Zealand Herald, Stuff and Spinoff's websites using key terms such as 'Three Kings' under a search period that was limited to the previous ten years. Additionally, searches of the Newztext data base were conducted using key terms such as 'Three Kings Quarry', 'suburban intensification' and 'the Unitary plan'. A ten-year time frame was specified and the search was limited to those media outlets located in Auckland.

Policy documentation is another source of secondary data this research draws from. A number of different policies and plans for Auckland were analysed for this research. This was in order to get an indication of the different imaginaries at work in different periods shaping its development. This included the Resource Management Act (1991) and the proposal of the Auckland Plan. However, the most significant policy document the research analysed was the Unitary Plan. Released in August 2016, the Unitary Plan forms the overarching regulatory plan for Auckland's future development. While its seven-thousand-pages and largely technical nature means most of the plan is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is nevertheless a fundamental document that captures how we imagine Auckland in the future. For this reason, an analysis of its purpose and imbued imaginaries for the future provides an apt mechanism to explore the normative claims and understandings surrounding the suburbs and what future they may have in Auckland. As examples of conceived, codifications of space, analysis of the Unitary Plan provides a means to examine some of the higher order imaginaries surrounding the development of Three Kings and Auckland more generally.

As this thesis is primarily concerned with the imaginative, the first point of action was to look at the aims of the Unitary Plan. Once this was achieved, the plan's relevance to the research context was then examined, using key terms like 'Three Kings', 'Mt Roskill' and 'Mt Albert Road'. Following this, I then looked at other areas of the plan that were relevant to the proposed changes associated with the research context. For instance, as mixed use zoning was a significant change to the current land zoning within Three Kings, a more detailed analysis of the plan's claims around mixed suburban zones was conducted. Additionally, as media publications translate major policies like the Unitary Plan for public consumption and introduce the ideas surrounding the plans governing future development, a systematic analysis of media publications within the previous five years was conducted. Approaching the Unitary Plan through sources like blogs, media-publications and other secondary analyses generated a rich variety of information. It offered a good way to compartmentalise what is important in the Unitary Plan and provided a way to narrate the plan as not only a technical document that

planners use in technical ways but equally a persuasive, imaginative document that is translated for public consumption to create particular types of imaginings and understandings of the world.

Archival documents are the third and final source of content used in this research. At its best, archival scholarship “is an ongoing, evolving interaction between the scholar and the voices of the past embedded in documents” (Harris, 2001: 332). In this sense, an analysis of archival documentation supplements my use of semi-structured interviews because it provides a mechanism to compare the voices of current stakeholders against those who have gone before, producing a wider, more critical perspective that can better distinguish what’s imaginatively distinctive about today’s suburbanisation (Mayhew, 2003). Indeed, tracing the particular histories of Three Kings is not just important to contextualise the current development, but also because these histories and the imaginaries that feature within them are connected to and thus shed important insight into the future direction of development in the area.

The archival data for this research was collected in a handful of ways. Firstly, as a database for a variety of collections and sources, searches on the Auckland Libraries online database and the Alexander Turnbull library for historic photos were conducted using key terms like ‘Three Kings’, ‘Mt Roskill’ and ‘Mt Eden Road’. This generated a rich variety of material including some of the earliest photos of the area in the 19th century right through to its subsequent waves of development. It also generated a number of pamphlets, posters, cartoons that were used in media publications and to advertise government programmes among other things. Another rich source of information which provided a significant source of archival data was a heritage study of Three Kings conducted in 2015 by Dr Elizabeth Pishief and John Adam. Commissioned by the Local Board of Puketapapa, the detailed nature of the study provided me with a level of collated detail that I would otherwise not be privy to, including original indigenous and colonial land uses and arrangements, extracts detailing real-estate advertisements and a rich history of the areas geology and mana whenua (cultural history).

3.2.3 Participant observation

Throughout 2016, I also attended a number of public meetings and debates held throughout the Three Kings area. By participating in these meetings, I was able to transcribe quotes, take down ethnographic notes and experience events which brought together a concentrated variety of imaginings regarding the future of Three Kings and Auckland more broadly. These experiences also provided an opportunity to further identify, map and informally engage with the key stakeholders shaping and driving change

in Three Kings and Auckland more broadly. Kearns (2010) notes how participant observation is most useful when it supplements other types of data sources. Indeed, the meetings also provided a way to keep up with the changing dynamics of the project, including media coverage, recent proceedings in the court process, and the general concerns surrounding the project across the community and for those key figures involved. While some of this information was not directly used in this research, it nevertheless worked to inform my research and help direct my points of discussion during interviews. My experience at these events influenced this research by deepening my understanding of the issues facing the development of Three Kings that I may not have been otherwise privy to.

3.3 Data analysis

The analysis of the data recorded throughout the research occurred in a handful of ways. Content analysis of the secondary data collected formed a key part of this analysis. Content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004: 18). It was employed in this research to “capture the meanings, emphasis, and themes of messages” (Altheide, 1996: 33, cited in White and Marsh, 2006: 35) and was used to explore the importance of imagination in the understandings of suburbs. Content analysis allowed the research to focus on how imaginaries are used to communicate particular claims and understandings about place. The analysis of texts such as plans, media publication and photos enabled the research to address the ways in which Three Kings has been imagined and imbued with meaning and how this has changed over time. Before analysing the data produced in the interview process, the digital recordings were transcribed, quotes were highlighted and notes about potential themes were taken.

In addition to content analysis, a process of thematic coding was conducted. This was due to the broad nature of the research project, concerned with the imaginaries constituting suburban space which covered a wide variety of material from a range of periods. Thematic coding was selected to categorise and begin to make sense of the various imaginaries featuring in both current and previous periods of development in Auckland. Due to the large amount of data produced in content analysis, the data was synthesised based on key terms and was then categorised alongside various forms of similarly categorised visual representations. From these summaries, key images and ideas relating to claims and understandings regarding the future of the suburbs were identified and related to the relevant research questions. In order to understand the role of imaginaries at different scales, the decision was

made to categorise the data into city wide, historical imaginaries and localised, everyday imaginaries surrounding current development in Three Kings. The historical focus on the development of Auckland and Three Kings identified four key themes which were used to frame the analysis. These included sanitation, family, sustainability and population growth. Three themes emerged out of the localised, more everyday imaginaries in Three Kings and were used to frame the analysis, including transport, housing and the environment.

This structure and these themes were used at the outset to frame three chapters. Firstly, chapter 4 and 5 used the historical lens to focus on the broader imaginaries featuring across Auckland's development and traced how these have shaped the development of Three Kings. They employed the three overlapping and interconnected themes that emerged out of the analysis to illustrate how imaginaries circulating around sanitation, family, sustainability and the environment helped constitute the emergence of traditional and post-suburbanisation in Auckland and Three Kings. Chapter 6 shifted this focus to the everyday, neighbourhood level of development to explore the imaginative conflicts characterising post-suburbanisation in Three Kings by identifying three strands to contemporary ideas that circulate around its development. These include housing, transport and the environment. These themes were used at the outset to frame Chapter 6. Due to the width and breadth of the data collected, this process provided an important opportunity to reduce the data along key themes and begin to not only reflect on objectives of this research (see chapter 1.3) and value of the data, but to also begin considering the different ways to present the findings.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter identified the research design approach employed, expanded on the specific techniques used to collect the data and reflected on some of the ethical considerations of this research. It also detailed the process used to analyse the data collected. Importantly, it revealed why a qualitative, multi-layered approach is best suited to capturing the multi-scalar role and character of imaginaries in the production of suburban space in Auckland and Three Kings. The next chapter introduces and discusses the role played by imaginaries in enabling post-suburbia in Auckland.

Chapter 4: The Historical Production of Suburban Space in Auckland

4.1 Introduction

In previous chapters, I have outlined how imaginaries are a crucial element in urban development processes –insofar as they help constitute what is necessary, appropriate and achievable –and that imaginaries are interwoven with material processes. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the role played by imaginaries in enabling post-suburbia in Auckland. Drawing on empirical examples from Auckland’s history, I discuss how, at different historical junctures, imaginaries have coalesced around four overlapping and interconnected ‘themes’ that have shaped development trajectories in Auckland. In the suburban era, these dimensions were sanitation and family, yet in the post-suburban era, emphasis has shifted to themes of sustainability and population growth. These themes reflect a generally accepted diagnosis of what challenges and changes society is experiencing in particular periods, what needs to be done in this context and what the appropriate role of the state and other actors should be. Accordingly, it is the co-constitutive nature of both imaginative and material practices which produce particular demands for action, creating certain development pathways that produce particular types of suburbs. Importantly, these four different themes represent Auckland-wide urban imaginaries that have had a bearing on Three Kings. From the Lefebvrian perspectives introduced in Chapter 2, it pays particular attention to the conceived imaginations of space, those elite, often state-driven changes in how space has been managed throughout Auckland’s development. However, due to the overlapping and inseparable nature of the modalities, perceived and lived space also feature in this analysis as undercurrents helping to constitute these imaginings.

4.2 Addressing Sanitation in Early Auckland.

Sanitation was one of the first themes to characterise the earliest period of New Zealand's suburbanisation. In colonial settler cities like Auckland, the 19th century was a period of rapid growth and development (Stone, 2001). The arrival of large numbers of new settlers led to the hasty construction of sub-standard 'slum' housing in the areas of Ponsonby and St. Marys Bay as early as 1860 (see Figure 3) (New Zealand Herald, 1864). Featuring in a local paper, the images in figure 3 give some sense of the dire housing conditions in Auckland city during this period.

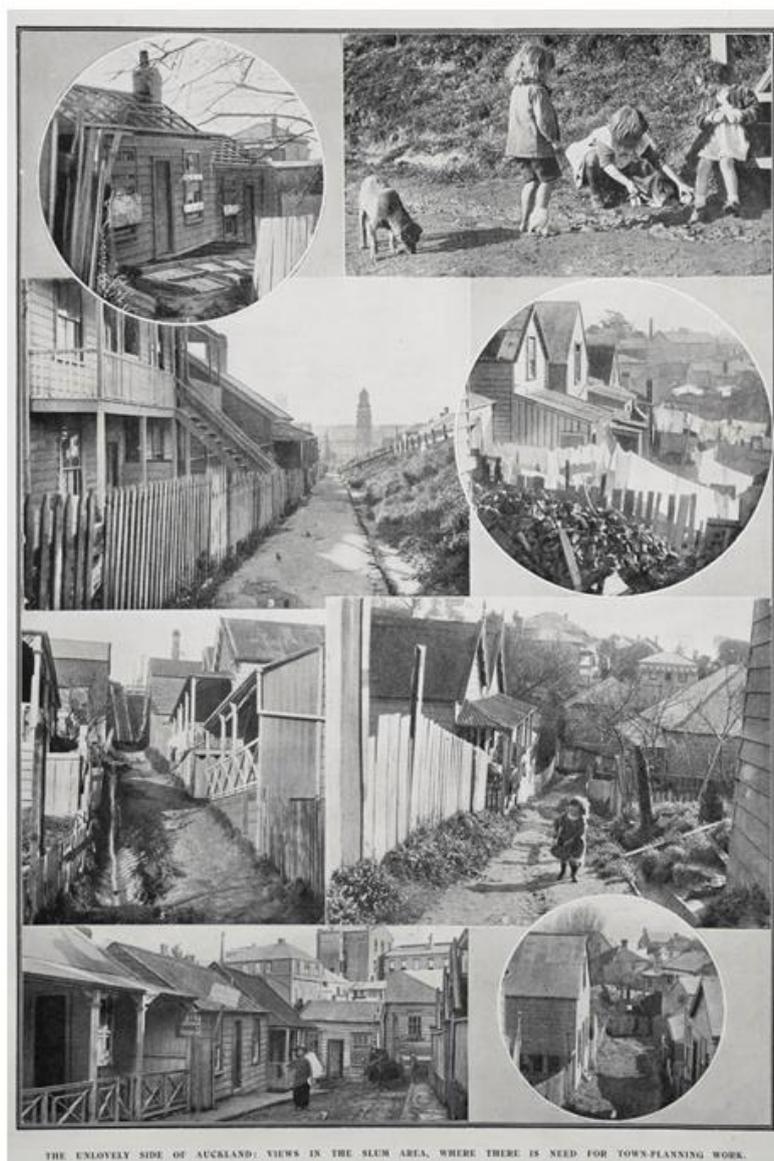


Figure 3. Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19140709-41-1. Slum housing in Auckland City.

Migrants were met with housing conditions similar to or even worse than cities like London that they had left. Mortality rates, the common indicator of living standards in this period, were similar to those in Manchester for example, with diseases like typhoid exploding due to unsanitary conditions (Ferguson, 1994: 20). In 1864 for example, the *New Zealand Herald* attacked “those abominable nets of squalid filth, the rookeries of small houses in the back lanes and slums of the City” (p. 3).

In response to reports of a Bubonic Plague in Australia, the Department of Health was established in 1900 and given the power to demolish any building deemed unsanitary and a risk to public health (Ferguson, 1994: 49). With this significant degree of legislative power, the Department became a key actor in urban development, eradicating large swathes of slum-like development throughout Auckland’s gullies by reiterating the link between housing quality and the spread of disease. The department was also a reaction to the influence of eugenics and environmental determinist ideas in this period (Dow, 1995). Importantly, the nature of these concepts, which asserted that environmental conditions determine people’s characters, positioned the slums of Auckland as the source of the city’s problems, giving scientific justification for the department to remove them (Ferguson, 1994). This new department is thus illustrative of the way in which central government initiatives have been a key force in establishing sanitation as an ideal in response to unsanitary conditions in the inner city. Figure 4 shows the demolition of slum housing in Freeman’s Bay.



Figure 4. Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections Reference 580-1163. Demolishing slums in Freemans Bay.

Town Planners and the broader Town Planning movements (Miller, 2000) were also a significant contributor to this sanitation imaginary and the way in which it emerged in response to particular events. One such event that brought sanitation concerns to a head was the Influenza epidemic in 1918, an event that killed over 1000 people in Auckland within three months (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2012). Poverty, substandard housing and overcrowding were held as the main culprits. Ideas emanating from the 'City Beautiful' movement, a range of civic improvement and beautification societies that advocated for the improvement of towns through parks and open spaces, felled the reaction to this event and the notion of the growing 'problem of the city' (Ferguson, 1994). Figure 5 shows a cartoon from this period which gives a sense of these ideas in the city's common imaginaries.



Figure 5. Source: NZ Truth magazine. 22-03-1919. A cartoon representing the dire housing conditions in Auckland city.

With the influenza epidemic bringing Auckland's housing 'crisis' to the fore of public attention, in 1919 New Zealand held its first Town Planning conference in an attempt to make sense of the city's housing woes. Alongside ideas from the City Beautiful movement, what dominated this conference was Ebenezer Howard's notion of the Garden City (discussed in detail in Chapter 2). Importantly, with sanitation a significant concern, the emphasis on greenery and open space (features that were valorised for their sanitation qualities) made the Garden City concept attractive, sharply juxtaposing

perceptions of the inner city as associated with decay and distinct from nature (Davison, 2013). One conclusion of the conference was to introduce town planning legislation that removed housing and planning issues from bureaucrats and placed it in the hands of planners. In this way, town planners were central to this “apparently apolitical and non-ideological critique of urban problems” which elevated sanitation as a significant concern in this period (Ferguson, 1994: 78). They were pivotal to capturing the broader public concern surrounding events like the 1918 epidemic and channelling it to advocate for suburban imaginaries like the Garden City concept.

The suburbs were created in this period out of an effort to bring a suite of cleansing elements of nature and rurality to urban life (Jackson, 1985). Once again, these were largely predicated on, and a response to, the sanitation concerns associated with dense inner city ‘slums’. As nature became increasingly valorised as a response to urban problems, a compromise emerged that claimed to offer a balance between the spatial efficiency provided by a city while retaining some of the beauty and well-being associated with a rural lifestyle, one based on “a new, tranquil and ordered suburb of detached family homes set in their own ‘piece of nature” (Ferguson, 1994: 26). In other words, the suburbs emerged as a means of incorporating cleansing aspects of nature into urban life. This was done, for instance, by land speculators throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who reshaped the imaginaries of nature and pioneering that dominated early colonial life in New Zealand into a more ordered world of semi-rural, suburban bliss (Ferguson, 1994: 34). While this version “emphasised the pre-eminence and virtue of nature”, these cleansing elements of nature were nevertheless tamed, enclosed and individualised versions behind garden walls (Ferguson, 1994: 26).

Through these types of concerns, a clearer sense of how the city should grow in order to modernise began to emerge. In a 1903 investigation into slum housing throughout central Auckland for instance, a reporter began to imagine what an ideal living situation might be like, consisting of “A house of four rooms with its new coat of paint stands not in the city streets but in a suburb. There is a patch of cultivated flower garden, there is a small asphalted yard” (New Zealand Herald, 1903: 10). By the early 20th century, the suburban home gained status as a haven, full with the “delights of pure air and sunshine” (1994: 34). However, instead of a reaction to the harshness of New Zealand’s environment, this status as a haven emerged because of the “dangers and complexities thought to be inherent in town life” (Ferguson, 1994: 34), with the suburban home offering redemption from the vices and disease of the inner city.

Accordingly, these examples of Auckland’s early history reflect the way in which a set of particular material processes –rapid population growth, sub-standard, overcrowded housing, and disease outbreaks, helped constitute and position concerns around sanitation as a key driver of development

within this period. Importantly, this made imaginaries of early suburbia more persuasive or important than other visions for future development. The examples show how much of the early enthusiasm for suburbanisation in New Zealand was, to a degree, a response to public health concerns that linked the dense conditions of the inner city to the spread of disease.

4.3 Family Life and Suburban Growth

The notion of the family has been a consistent part of suburban imaginaries in New Zealand (Ferguson, 1994). Throughout the 19th century, the family was perceived as the “bastion of social order and individual endeavour”, both the “goal of those who laboured and their reward” (Ferguson, 1994: 35). With the suburbs framed as the clean and healthy alternative to the unsanitary inner city, the suburban home began to take on an identity as a space for family. These were mainly rural visions where the family home “symbolised advancement and opportunity and served as a reward for labour”, a product of an individual’s labour and accumulated capital. As such, this early emphasis on family had strong connections to the imaginaries emanating from and imported by settler colonialism (Ferguson, 1994: 35). Figure 6 illustrates this point. It shows an emigration leaflet from London which used cartoons depicting family life ‘Here’ (in Britain) with a family struggling in London, against the life of an idyllic family life ‘There’ in British colonies like New Zealand.



Figure 6. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library. PUBL-0043-1848-15 Here and there; emigration a remedy, London. A cartoon representing family life in colonies like New Zealand.

Planning controls played a particularly important role in both the construction and materialisation of this imaginative emphasis placed on the family. While there were a number of controls dictating the form and function of suburbs in the early 20th century, including minimum housing standards, a need to protect family friendly suburbs from the perceived ills of the inner city emerged as a key concern in the 1930s and resulted in a number of interventions to achieve this. Part of a broader standardisation movement, in the 1930s the state began to “codify ideas of the suburban family home and contemporary views of urban form and change into a series of modal regulations”, requiring any alternative to the low density, strictly residential suburb to receive special planning permission (Ferguson, 1994: 143). Importantly, proponents of these regulations emphasised the need for suburbs to be as free as possible from ‘incompatible’ land uses like industry, thus requiring planning zones that codified a strict separation of land uses across the city. A more nuanced approach to this regulation of suburbia emerged in later applications of minimum housing standards which, while originally concerned with health and living standards, were gradually shaped to ensure the ‘desirability of urban environments’ more broadly (Hammond, 1938). Any and all alternatives to the single nuclear family household were excluded, with boarding and lodging houses for example moved into older commercial zones. With these changes, the suburbs “came to reflect the priority placed on family housing” (Ferguson, 1994: 149).

Yet, perhaps the most significant contributor to the family theme in this period was the role of the state and specifically the development of state housing. While the dream of owning a home in the suburbs spread in the early 20th century, it was only available to those who could afford to buy their home in the private market. As the gap between urban wage workers in slum-like conditions and the seductive imagery of suburbia promoted by commercial interests widened, the need for government intervention into the housing market became clear (Ferguson, 1994: 34). Before this, government played a relatively indirect role in the material emergence of suburbia. For instance, under the 1923 State Advances Act, the government helped finance the construction of suburban homes by enabling workers to borrow up to 95% of the cost of a home (Schrader, 2005: 30).

While the Liberal government was the first in the world to introduce state homes for workers in 1905, New Zealand’s label as ‘the social laboratory of the world’ is perhaps more closely aligned with the actions of the first Labour government elected in 1935 (Ferguson, 1994). As the public pressure for a solution to dire housing conditions mounted soon after taking office, Labour soon realised a private market alone would not suffice. With the 1936 budget, Housing Minister Walter Nash announced the development of 5,000 privately built state rental houses, establishing the Department of Housing Construction to oversee this and the State Advances Corporation to manage it. This marked the beginning of a scheme which characterised not only this period of development, helping establish

suburbs throughout Auckland, but one that still exists today as a central component of the city's housing development in the form of government led suburban development (Schrader, 2005).

Beyond the material changes it created by actually building houses, the state housing scheme also embodied a degree of imaginative labour which worked to communicate and instil a set of ideas that define this period of government policy. Representing the government's response to those in society who could not afford to buy the dream but could instead rent it, the scheme institutionalised a set of ideas or values that were central to the success of suburbia more broadly. Among these, the state housing scheme instilled access to high quality housing a right of citizenship, "on the same level as the right to education, sanitation, to good and abundant water, to an adequate road system and to a certain amount of medical care" (Firth, *State Housing*: 7). For Labour, the belief in the benefits of the scheme was such that it even promoted public housing in campaign leaflets as more secure for the average family than private housing, which was subject to the forces of private mortgages, as Figure 7 illustrates. Another important component of the State home scheme was its emphasis on the notion of a "house for life", giving those living in state homes some security of tenure by creating programmes which, among other things, allowed tenants to buy their state homes (Gordon, 2015).

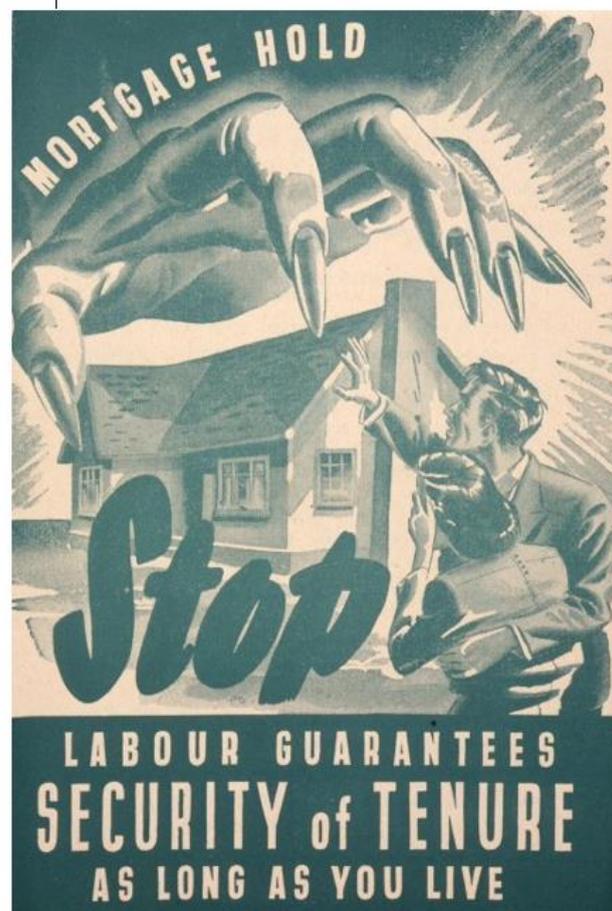


Figure 7. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library. Eph-A-NZ-LABOUR-1946-02. 1946 Labour Party election pamphlet.

In contrast to the wide and diverse understandings of families today, the state housing scheme advanced a very specific version of family: the nuclear family, characterised by a married heterosexual couple with a handful of children. This was visible in the early practices of the scheme. For instance, it was common for Housing Corporation branches to prioritise state houses and financial assistance for private homes to married couples with children, with some even demanding doctor's certificates to prove pregnancy before this practice was banned in 1944 (Ferguson, 1994: 171). Larger families were typically frowned upon, with the common design of two, three and four-bedroom homes meaning they received little if any service from state agencies. In this way, the male wage-earner became the focus of the public financial assistance, based on the presumption that he would be supporting his wife and children. The large body of material written on the concept of a 'wage-earner's welfare state' or a 'bread-winner model of welfare' notes the direct links between occupation and welfare throughout this period in places like New Zealand and Australia (Castles, 1985). The strength of these imaginative links connecting suburbia with nuclear families is also exemplified in the designs for some of the first apartments in Auckland in the 1920s, built with few rooms to service only single people or childless couples (Ferguson, 1994: 38).



Figure 8. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library. Taken by John Dobree Pascoe 1945 ref 1/4-001168-f. A family standing outside their state home at 32 Naenae Road, Lower Hutt.

As a central component of the design and allocation of state homes and financial support, this imaginary emphasising the nuclear family was institutionalised by the Labour Party's policy. Figure 8 shows a typical family in this period standing in one of the first state homes. The family theme and its association to the suburban state house became a strong component of the Labour Party's electoral successes. In response to a proposal from the opposition National Party for the state to provide apartments in the inner city for those needing state assistance, Labour remained committed to the suburban family home. Labour minister Mark Fagan's explication is indicative, arguing:

“that flats do not provide sufficient light or sufficient ventilation, and, generally speaking, they are undesirable for the housing of growing families. I much prefer the method of the Government of building houses in the outer suburbs where a family has some privacy, where the father can have a garden to grow some vegetables and where the children can play, instead of having to play on city streets or remain indoors all day long as they have to when living in flats” (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014).

Importantly, throughout Fagan's explanation is this theme that the nuclear family should be the focus of government attention and the way in which this intersects with the imagination of suburbia as a clean and family friendly environment. Others in government reiterated this claim. For example, John A. Lee, under-secretary for housing, claimed that “the suburban-based municipal housing programs of Sweden were better suited to New Zealand conditions than the tenement schemes under Britain” (Schrader, 2005: 36). Of course, material dynamics also help constitute this decision, with the higher cost of land in or near the central city providing an extra economic incentive for the government's vision to develop state homes in what would become the inner, middle and outer suburbs.

Another way the Labour government's state home scheme contributed toward the family theme and captured the public's imagination was to draw on Howard's notion of Garden Cities. As I have noted, the idea of the Garden City was first popularised at the first Town Planning conference in 1919, a specific event and broader period that I have associated with an emphasis on sanitation. However, when the Labour government later promoted the idea in relation to its state home scheme in the late 1930s, it was done on the basis that the Garden City, or a version of it, would be most suitable for family life in suburbia. Indeed, in contrast to the original garden city's communal emphasis which aimed to break down private and public roles and private and public space, the adoption of the garden city in this period was largely premised on aesthetics. Only 'lip service' was paid to the original communal ideals which were largely reshaped into the notion of 'garden suburbs' that were private, strictly residential communities. Under this revised model, two garden suburbs were constructed, one in Orakei in Auckland and another in Miramar in Wellington.

This section has used empirical examples from Auckland's historical development to make sense of the ways in which the reception of key urban imaginaries –in particular, powerful ideas around sanitation and family –have contributed to the emergence of traditional suburbanisation in Auckland. It has demonstrated that these two themes have been critical dimensions to the emergence of a New Zealand dream associated with suburbia (Ferguson, 1994: 115). The electoral success of the Labour government (1935-1949), in office for 14 years, and importance of the ideas that underpinned those policies in that success says something about the power of these metropolitan imaginaries in this period of Auckland's development. In the next section, I describe how suburban imaginaries in Auckland have been challenged –through notions of sustainability and through responses to population growth –giving rise to post-suburban forms.

4.4 The Sustainability Challenge

Over the past 50 years, there has been mounting international awareness of the environmental implications of low density, auto-dependent suburbanisation that has fractured its hold on development in places like Auckland. For the most part, these concerns began with the effects of the oil crises in the 1970s which worked to raise questions, for a time at least, about the sustainability and viability of the automobile and suburb-centric mode of planning (Dodson & Sipe, 2008). The growing global drive to combat climate change has reiterated this emphasis, highlighting the way in which this concern around the sustainability of suburbanisation is a global imaginary of development which has fed into national and regional scales. The material result of these crises alongside threats of reductions to the global supply of fuel led to panics across auto-centric suburban places like Auckland. One particularly tangible result of the ensuing panic in New Zealand was the introduction of a carless day system in 1979 under the National government led by Robert Muldoon, whereby every owner of a petrol powered private vehicle was required to nominate a day (indicated by a coloured sticker on the windscreen) they would not drive that vehicle (New Zealand History, 2005). Once the immediate oil crisis passed, private automobiles and life in suburbia continued through the 1980s, 90s and into the new millennium, although structural challenges remained. Importantly, changes to the price of fuel in this period and the vulnerability this represented brought with it powerful and unwanted forces into the suburbs as the days of consistently cheap petroleum appeared to be no longer tenable (Dodson & Sipe, 2008: 8).

Mounting awareness of issues like climate change, energy scarcity and species extinction have coalesced alongside these changes to reshape the images, ideas and broader themes directing development in this period. Specifically, it was within this context that suburbia and its reliance on automobiles became synonymous with environmental pollution, contrasted against life in the inner city that was denser with more diversity of land uses. Indeed, under this linkage between the spatial inefficiency of sprawling, service-less suburbs and the deterioration of planetary ecosystems, a sustainability paradigm that posits compact development that intensifies and diversifies land uses has gained increasing sway with urban planners, professionals and policy makers since the 1990s (Elkin *et al.*, 1991). These perspectives have subsequently gradually filtered down into everyday understandings of urban development among wider publics. In the Auckland and New Zealand context, for example, sustainability and calls for changing urban forms are apparent in both popular forms like the suggestions of *Grand Designs* TV personality Kevin McCloud noted in Chapter 2.4.3 and the emergence of relatively powerful local lobby groups like Generation Zero, whose objective is to advocate for solutions that reduce the carbon emissions in New Zealand's cities. Alongside a wider concern about climate change and environmental impacts, these developments reflect the way that throughout the 1990s and in the 2000s sustainability became an increasingly common normative position.

This focus on sustainability is also apparent in a range of policies and plans affecting Auckland. Constituting a wholesale reworking of New Zealand's planning system, the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) was an attempt to reconcile market forces with sustainability concerns (Murphy, 2008). The key focus of the RMA is to sustainably manage the bio-physical environment in the development process (Perkins & Thorns, 2001). While there has been rigorous debate on the adequacy of the Act's environmental protection (Pearce & Kingham, 2008), it has been understood by the majority of New Zealanders as a policy platform for environmentally sustainable development (Memon, 2002). Because of this, the RMA represents a key marker of the rise of sustainability as a central imaginary shaping development in New Zealand (Dixon *et al.*, 1997). It formed the basis on which, "at a regional level, metropolitan areas were required to address the environmental implications of urban growth", causing regional planning authorities to increasingly adopt "policies of urban intensification as a means of ensuring urban sustainability" (Murphy, 2008: 2525). As a key piece of policy that shares broad political support for its emphasis on the need to protect the environment in the development process, it is a key example of the ways in which a sustainability theme emerged in this period as a normative position that served to structure the scope of urban development possibility.

Since the RMA, there has been a range of more localised policies in Auckland that have reiterated and refined its emphasis on sustainability. For example, the Auckland Sustainability Framework was

established in 2007 as a joint project by the then eight local authorities to collaborate towards sustainable development on a regional level (Regional Growth Forum, 2007). Since then and following the amalgamation of local authorities, the conception of the Auckland Plan by the Auckland Council in 2012 represents perhaps the last clear example of proposed legislation where the sustainability theme dominated. While it is a guiding document that has no legislative power, it is indicative of the direction of development the city's local authorities were proposing at this moment for Auckland's future. Within its broader aim to make Auckland the world's 'most liveable city', a key goal of the policy is to facilitate 'sustainable development' in Auckland and to ensure a sustainable environment, including a goal to eliminate all waste to landfill by 2040 (Auckland Council, 2012). A promotional video for the plan made by Auckland Council suggests the city "will play its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions", specifically aiming to reduce the city's emissions 40% by 2040 (Auckland Council, 2012).

The dominance of the sustainability theme within a number of Auckland's critical planning frameworks throughout the 1990s and 2000s has had a number of implications over the direction of Auckland's development. One example of this is the city's re-prioritisation of investment into cycling infrastructure, public transport and retrofitting infrastructure away from auto-centric development. However, perhaps the most significant effect the drive for sustainability has had over the direction of Auckland's development has been to curb the enthusiasm for continued, unencumbered sprawl, redirecting some of this emphasis into urban densification (Auckland Council, 2017). The most contentious of these densification pressures has been on the city's existing suburbs. With the growing influence of movements like New Urbanism that stress the benefits of denser, more diverse suburbs, "the rise of the sustainability imperative has strongly influenced practitioners and decision-makers to craft cities that are good places in terms of achieving sustainability" (Ansell & Thompson-Fawcett, 2008). These changes have also been touted on the basis of their health benefits. Indeed, as the title of Hirschhorn's (2005) book *Sprawl Kills* suggests, traditional suburban environments are perceived as unsustainable not only in terms of their independence from fossil fuels but also in the way in which they promote unhealthy and inactive life styles that negatively contribute towards the community's health and well-being.

Accordingly, these examples of Auckland's recent history reflect the way in which the recent changes the suburbs have been experiencing are the product of the co-constitutive interrelationship between particular imaginative and material dynamics. Together, these dynamics have worked to make imaginaries of denser, more diverse forms of urban development more persuasive or important than the suburban visions which dominated previous development. They show how much of the initial enthusiasm for densification in New Zealand over the past 30 years has been to a degree a response

to environmental sustainability concerns that link the spatial inefficiency of suburbs to the deterioration of the planet.

4.5 The Inevitability of Population Growth

Over the past decade or so, there has been increasing attention placed on Auckland's growing population. In particular, there has been widespread public discussion of a projected 49% population rise for Auckland by 2043 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013a), creating a sense that the city is in dire need of long term investment and vision. This has been compounded by similar commentary on the current growth rates Auckland has experienced over the past few years, having increased since the last Census in 2013 by 2.8% to roughly 1.6 million people (Transport Blog, 2016a). Adding to this sense has been Auckland's increasingly dire shortage of affordable housing (Keown, 2012). In January 2017, Auckland's housing market was ranked the fourth most unaffordable in the world by an annual survey, produced by Demographia, which compares housing prices to incomes in 404 cities or housing markets across the world (O'Meara, 2017). Housing unaffordability has been explained by government and other actors as the product of the city's growing population and subsequent inadequate housing supply, which has positioned the solution as an increase in the supply of housing in Auckland (Keown, 2012). In other words, there has been a broader political project at work here which has used imaginative practices to construct calls for Auckland to grow 'up' in both senses, to not only densify to provide for the future housing needs of the city, but also to mature and follow the sustainable development pathway of modern cities.

One of the main propagators of these understandings has been the media. This is partly because of the perceived effect Auckland's population growth is having on a number of areas of its economy. One example of these effects is a shortage of teachers in Auckland, with many new graduates who are unable to afford the cost of housing moving to other regions (Nelson, 2016). These concerns have materialised in an increasing array of central and local government initiatives that have attempted to account for these changes by increasing the supply of housing. A prime example of this is the Housing Accord between the central government and Auckland Council. Enacted in 2013, the Housing Accord was a three-year agreement that responded to the rising cost of housing and its association with Auckland's growing population. It aimed to accelerate increases in housing supply across Auckland city in the interim period before the Unitary Plan became operative (Ministry of Business, Industry and Enterprise, 2017). In other words, over the past few years there has been a refocusing of the broader

sustainability imaginaries challenging suburbia which has positioned concerns about Auckland's current and projected population growth as key imaginaries characterising and shaping current development in Auckland. This imaginative refinement has enabled a range of actors to focus attention on the city's seemingly inadequate housing stock.

Yet, perhaps the most significant example of the powerful ideas communicated by this population growth theme has been in the Unitary Plan, a key policy framework which has been developed explicitly to account for Auckland's growing population. The Unitary Plan is described as the overarching framework guiding Auckland's future development, the rule book for creating the "world's most liveable city" over the next 30 years. Zoning for the development of 422,000 extra houses to accommodate Auckland's projected growth, the plan claims to adopt a 'balanced' approach between extending the urban/rural boundary and enabling more sprawl and increased development within existing suburbs. Incidentally, many of the changes it is introducing involve 'upzoning' traditional suburbs across Auckland to enable more density and diversity of building and activities in the suburbs. Indeed, the plan not only zones for more density but more specifically zones for more flexibility within the development process, enabling developers to build more variety of building types, even on the same site. More broadly, the Mixed House Urban zone, a land zoning category aiming to "increase urban residential character, has increased from 10 to 20% across Auckland and in many places single house zoning has all but gone. This Mixed House Urban Zone is described as providing a "transition in density between the (Mixed Housing Suburban and Terraced Housing and Apartment Building) zones and provides for intensification in accessible locations close to centres, large urban facilities and public transport" (Auckland Council, 2015). In this sense, the zone represents one instance where the differences and distinctions between inner cities and suburbs are being eroded through these zoning changes. From the Lefebvrian perspective introduced in Chapter 2, as a zoning exercise the Unitary Plan and the changes it will implement are a clear example of conceived space. The effect of these planning regulations is to order and codify space via imaginative positions or themes in an abstract way.

One of the most consistent dimensions of discussions of population growth in Auckland over the past decade has been its inevitability. This inevitability has worked in a number of ways via this population growth theme to clear the ground for consent for the development of certain types of urban environments, namely the densification of many Auckland suburbs. Noam Chomsky's (2002) notion of 'manufacturing consent' provides some useful insight into this inevitability and how it may have been constructed in the Auckland context. For Chomsky (2002), it is the primary function of the mass media to mobilise public support for special interests who dominate government and the private sector. By carefully selecting certain topics to focus on, putting relative emphasis and particular framings on

specific issues, filtering bits of information and bounding debates in a certain way, media outlets (among other producers of perceived space) are able to produce particular perceptions of the world, what is happening, and what must be done. By doing this in particular ways, producers of media in the broadest sense are able to essentially manufacture public acceptance of (and thus consent to) particular political projects, creating a sense of inevitability about their progression as unquestionable.

The sense that almost everyone agrees with the inevitability of rapid population rise and accepts its certainty reflects a process that people have come to that has been captured by certain types of imaginings of what's going on in the world and what's going on in Auckland. Like the establishment of suburbs through an emphasis on sanitation and family, the need for urgent responses to population growth is working to galvanise public imagination towards denser, more diverse suburbs. For instance, when local lobby groups like Auckland 2040 questioned the projected 1 million population rise in the next 30 years "as an inevitable fact" (Transport Blog, 2013), they were largely ignored by Auckland Council and mainstream media providers, reflecting one instance where the imaginative labour of this population growth theme worked to limit the conversation to a particular set of points.

As I have noted, discussion around Auckland's growing population projections for the next 30 years have been used widely throughout public commentary on pivotal pieces of legislation like the Unitary Plan. It bases the need for more intensive development on this presumption that the city will inevitably grow by 1 million people by 2040 and hence must act now to double Auckland's feasible housing capacity by 422,000 dwellings (Niall, 2016a). The fact that these projections and associated responses have been largely accepted by Aucklanders, something that would be hard to imagine a decade or so ago, highlights the importance of imaginative dimensions of urban development in driving debates and shaping what is possible in the city. It also reflects one of the ways in which media and its influence over perceived space has been used to construct consent for the development of certain types of denser urban environments in Auckland's suburbs. The support commercial interests have given to the Unitary Plan and the broader concerns about population growth that underpinned it is another way in which this understanding of Auckland's inevitable population rise has been generated. Indeed, some of the loudest voices in Auckland's housing debates over the past few years have been from banks and property investment companies. Having grown and generated significant profits during this period, the broader property investment industry has certainly been a major beneficiary of Auckland's growing house prices and the inevitable population growth imaginaries which have underpinned them. This reality was acknowledged in an article on Westpac Bank's website, which argued Auckland's current and projected population growth and the broader understandings and implications it is having on its housing are of key importance to the industry to "ensure the market remains active" (Thompson, 2014). The real-estate industry is also a key contributor towards this inevitability. On

Barfoot and Thompson's September 2016 commentary on Auckland's property market, Auckland's population growth was reiterated several times as pivotal to the success of the region, its industries and broader economy (Barfoot & Thompson, 2016).

The construction of inevitability in the process of post-suburbanisation is also apparent within the particular approach Auckland takes in relation to the shape of this inevitable growth and how the city should densify. For instance, there are a handful of other visions for a growing Auckland that have received little serious consideration. One particularly unique example of these visions comes from Dushko Bogunovich and Mathew Bradbury of Unitec's Department of Architecture and Landscape Architecture which argues for a completely revised approach to Auckland's development. Their concept calls for a complete re-think of the city by moving away from a traditional city model towards the notion of a city-regional one, a linear city-region with a spine that would connect to various nodes between Whangarei and Hamilton (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2016). Characterised by this "single transport corridor, often accompanied by other cardinal infrastructure", a spine city in Auckland would "enable investment into fast, high-capacity, high-frequency transit", an approach they suggest would mature "the world-renowned qualities of Auckland's superb suburban lifestyle... to the level where Auckland would truly become the 'world's lifestyle capital'" (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2016). Instead of random densification across more established suburbs, they suggest it would make more sense to densify along the spine corridor. Importantly, identifying these alternative visions and how they have been ignored or largely marginalised again reflects the wider set of politics at play within these movements toward post-suburbia in Auckland. Indeed, the fact that the idea of a spine city has essentially been ignored and put aside even by almost all concerned reflects the power the normative positions which dominate Auckland's development, that a city inevitably grows in this particular way and it is unconceivable to think otherwise.

Like the certainty associated with population increase and the particular way the city should adapt to this, a narrative of inevitability has also emerged around the housing market, with growing claims that first-home buyers cannot expect to live in the suburbs as they once did. Over the past few years, there has been a subtle politics at play by a number of different actors in Auckland which has begun to gradually introduce and normalise apartments and terraced housing as a legitimate and entirely appropriate way of living in the city's suburbs. Rather than immediate or rapid introduction of the idea (which would run counter to popular imaginaries of residential life in New Zealand), this notion has been incrementally introduced and represented by a variety of different imaginative practices and practitioners. For instance, government has been a key propagator of this idea, with Prime Minister John Key telling first home buyers in 2014 "to look at buying apartments to get on the property ladder" (Hickey, 2014). These claims are also emanating from groups like the Auckland Property Investors

Association (Auckland Property Investment Association, 2013), warning of a potential reality check ahead for first home buyers who continue to insist on a traditional, detached first home in the suburbs. Indeed, the framing of the debate by this wide range of actors has incrementally produced a perception amongst the population which builds consent to the idea that apartments are a necessary and legitimate option the future of Auckland's suburbs. This is in stark contrast to the consensus in the early 20th century outlined above, where suburban detached homes were definitive of a healthy and family-oriented good life.

One example of this inevitability at work can be found within a new approach some local authorities have employed to understand buyer preferences, *Housing We Choose*. While many buyer preference studies continue to point to the dominance of suburban lifestyles within individual aspirations (see for example Future Intensive: Insight for Auckland Housing report, 2012), often these survey people without any of the (typically economic) constraints that would usually influence where and how individuals choose to live. *Housing We Choose* is an approach originally from Australia which recognises this and takes a different approach, surveying what kinds of housing (whether suburban, apartment living or a range of varieties in between) people prefer under particular constraints, such as their household incomes. *Housing We Choose* is now a standard approach used by Auckland Council to gauge buyer preferences, institutionalising and contributing towards the normativity of this inevitability (Yeoman & Akehurst, 2015). Importantly, what connects all of these relatively disparate processes is the fact that over the past few years, under this theme emphasising current and project population growth, there has been within Auckland a broader set of disaggregated yet structurally organised processes which have worked together to clear the ground for public consent to certain types of urban environments. Once again, this process exemplifies the way in which not only imaginaries are important and help constitute the world, but also that they are intertwined and co-constituted by material conditions which help realise and secure particular development pathways over others.

These examples of Auckland's very recent history reflect the way in which a set of particular material processes, in this context perceptions of a growing population, are working in this moment to make imaginaries of a denser, more diverse form of urban development more persuasive or important than the suburban visions which dominated previous periods of development. They show how much of the recent enthusiasm for densification in New Zealand over the past 10 years has been, to a degree, a response to concerns around population growth that linked the sprawling, spatial inefficiency of suburbs to the scarcity of housing in major cities like Auckland. The result is a new imaginary of the likely future of the city that includes different forms of housing which are at higher densities than traditional suburbia.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter traced the changes in the urban imaginaries producing traditional suburbia and post-suburbia in Auckland. It used a historical lens to discuss the arc of different themes that have emerged and influenced the way Auckland's suburbs have developed over the past one and a half centuries. It has shown how these themes reflect a generally accepted sense of the challenges and changes society is undergoing across a range of historical periods, what was perceived as necessary in these contexts and what the appropriate role of the state and other actors should be. Similarly, it has shown that these themes are not distinct but are interconnected, often featuring simultaneously or overlapping in different capacities across time. Understanding Auckland's suburbanisation experience through the different themes which characterised different periods offers a way to capture and trace the different and changing images and ideas dominating Auckland's development and make sense of the similarities, differences and possible distinctions which now characterise the current movement towards post-suburbia. Another dynamic highlighted in this chapter is the way in which commercial interests have featured throughout the construction and circulation of the various periods of Auckland's development. From the Lefebvrian perspectives introduced in Chapter 2, this chapter focused more on the conceived imaginations producing suburban space, with perceived and lived space featuring as sub-texts helping to structure this evolution. The next chapter continues this focus to situate these historical imaginaries in Three Kings.

Chapter 5: The Historical Production of Suburban Space in Three Kings (Te Tātua a Riukiuta)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the central Auckland suburb of Three Kings. It traces the ways in which its suburbanisation and recent instances of post-suburbanisation reflect manifestations of powerful and received ideas from the arc of different themes that have influenced broader Auckland's development. As a space which has been developed since the early arrival of colonial settlers in Auckland, Three Kings is a case study that makes it possible to unpack how these wider historical themes have been constituted by material dynamics in a situated context. The four different themes that I have outlined in the previous chapter have played out in the historical development of Three Kings as a relative exemplar of Auckland suburbanisation over the past century. Three Kings or *Te Tātua a Riukiuta* is a suburb located approximately 6.5kms from Auckland's inner city that is built around the volcanic cone Big King/*Te Tātua a Riukiuta* (see figure 9). The original maunga (mountain) of *Te Tātua a Riukiuta* is considered Auckland's largest and most complex volcanic system whose eruption 28,500 years ago formed the geological pillars of the landscape (Pishief & Adam, 2015).

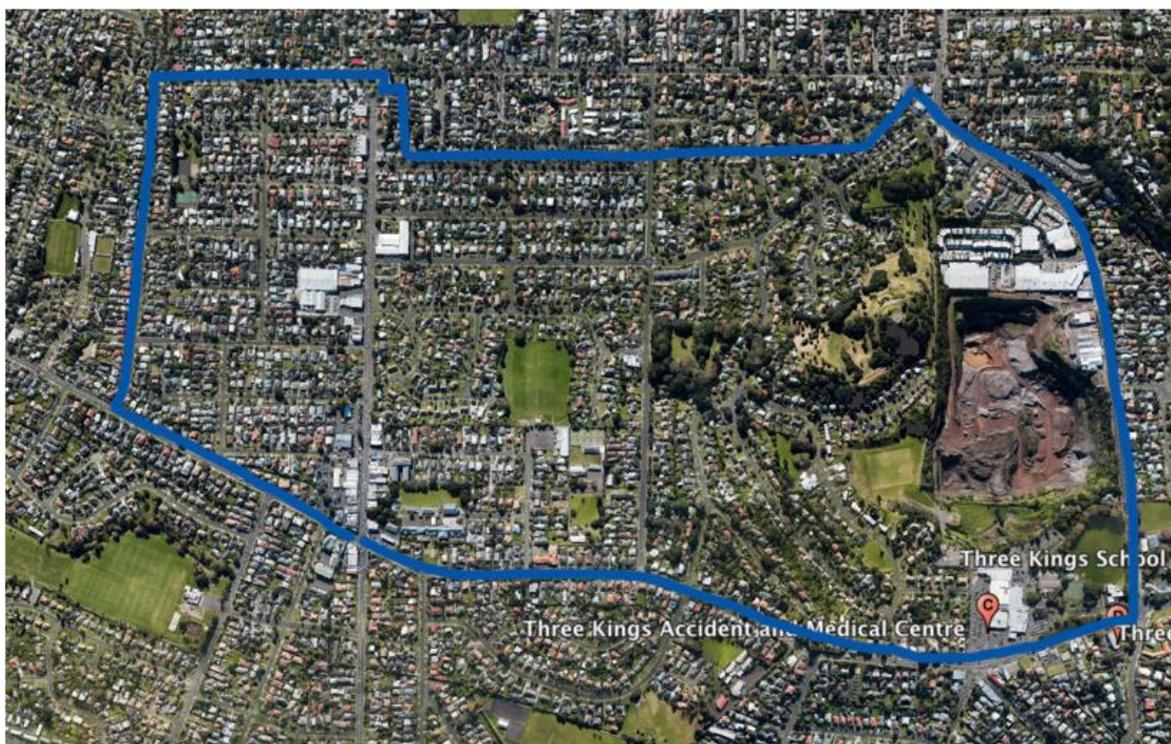


Figure 9. Source: Google Earth (2017). Map of Three Kings Census Area Unit.

Today, Three Kings is a very diverse place. The latest Census information from 2013 indicates that Three Kings is populated by 5,433 people, having increased 2.5% since the 2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b)¹. In contrast to Auckland's 11.5% average, only 8.7% of people in Three Kings are aged over 65. While the most common ethnicity in Three Kings today is European at 47.5%, this is closely followed by higher than average rates of Asian (33.1%) and Pacific peoples (15.7) than Auckland as a whole which are 23.1% and 14.6% respectively (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b). In terms of socio economics, Three Kings is a relatively diverse community, with a number of state homes and residents receiving welfare living in an area where the average property price now exceeds \$1million NZD (Barfoot & Thompson, 2015; Robson, 2016). The most common occupation in Three Kings is professionals and the medium income for residents aged 15 years and older is \$25,600 NZD compared with \$29,600 NZD for Auckland as a whole (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b).

One-family households make up 64.4% of all households in Three Kings, slightly lower than the Auckland average at 69.8%. At 21.2%, Three Kings also has a higher rate of one-person households than the Auckland average of 19%. The rate of homeownership in Three Kings is 47.1%, slightly lower than Auckland's average rate of homeownership at 61.5%². In terms of the local economy, there were 475 businesses located in Three Kings, an increase of 11% since 2006. The most common industry in Three Kings is retail which employs about at 20% of the areas total employee count. This contrasts against Auckland's retail employee count of 9.7% (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b). Despite this current diversity of ethnicity, tenure and broader socio-economics, Three Kings has not always been this way. The next section introduces and explores the history of the research case study suburb, Three Kings. It does this to make sense of how Three Kings has come to where it is today and to trace the way in which the four different themes I have outlined in the previous chapter have played out in the historical development of the central Auckland suburb.

¹ The Three Kings Census Area Unit was used to derive these statistics. This area is indicated on the map in figure 9.

² This will partly reflect the presence of state housing in the area.

5.2 Situating Three Kings Historically

The history of the Three Kings landscape as it is today can be traced back to the eruption of Auckland's largest and most complex volcanic field about 28,500 years ago known as *Te Tātua a Riukiuta* or Three Kings (Hayward *et al.*, 2011). The ash and debris from the volcanic eruption formed a roughly circular formation of rock described as the tuff ring. The site originally consisted of five cones and about a dozen smaller scoria cones sitting inside a large explosion crater, three of which were dominant and now referred to in the area's name (including Highest King, Big King and East King). Today, two of these cones have been quarried away, with only Big King remaining largely because it was owned by the Wesley Mission Trust from 1845 (Hayward *et al.*, 2011). Before quarrying, the entire volcanic formation was filled with traditional Maori formations known terraced *Pā*. Lava caves from the eruption were used as important burial grounds for Maori before the arrival of European settlers, few of which now remain. Despite the dramatic changes to the original landscape, the remnants of the volcanic field in Big King still remain the area's defining cultural and environmental feature. Today, Big King operates as a local dog park and provides a 360-degree view of the city, which can be seen by figure 10.



Figure 10. Source: Author's Own. (2016). View from the summit of Big King facing North.

Like most of *Tamaki-makau-rau* (Auckland), this area was settled by the indigenous Maori as early as 1000 AD and, due to its volcanic topography and fertile soil, was one of the most densely populated areas of pre-European New Zealand (Bulmer, 2002; Stone, 2001: 6,10). Since this period, Auckland has been home to four tribal groups or *iwi* - Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua, Tainui, and Te Arawa. Throughout this period of early occupation, the culture of Maori inhabitants produced particular *lived spaces* which emphasised communal ownership, holistic ecological principles and strong cultural, spiritual and economic connections to land (Higgins, 2010: 3). In particular, Maori culture emphasised communal living, where spaces were given specific purposes like food storage, sleeping and living. As others have shown, this culture is reflected in the design of settlements, with integrated and ordered spaces which included “communal, open space, cooking and food storage, meeting houses, sleeping areas, gardens, rubbish dumps and burial sites” (Rolleston, 2006, cited in, Higgins, 2010: 3). With the arrival of European settlers in the mid-19th century, new understandings of space, underpinned by liberal capitalism, began to emerge and emphasise privatised space, individualism and contractual relations. For Maori, this was problematic, not only for the displacement which it produced, but also in relation to their own cultural practices and particular categorisation of space as toilets and kitchens were moved into the home in the 1920s (Pishief & Adam, 2015).

As more settlers arrived through the 19th century, the landscape began to transform as industries began to emerge and land was annexed and sold. In the 19th century, the main industries operating in Three Kings were predominately primary industries including farming which fed secondary industries like a wooden mill, dairy factory and grain merchants (Pishief & Adam, 2015). However, beginning in the mid-1800s, it was largely the quarrying of *Te Tatu a Riukiuta*/Three Kings that began to dominate not only the industry of Three Kings but to change the landscape more broadly forever. Originally undertaken by a variety of companies, the quarry was bought by Winstone Ltd. (a subsidiary of Fletcher Building) in 1922 and has operated in various capacities since to produce what is now the city's deepest quarry. The rate of quarrying at Three Kings was substantial. One example of this is an account of Tom Grinter, owner of the first service station in Grinter Building (see figure 21), who was reportedly stunned when he looked up from his station to see Mt Eden through a hole where Southern King once stood (Puketapapa Local Board, 2015). By providing a rich source of scoria, the quarry's 150 years in operation has provided the building materials for Auckland's road network—a key aspect of the city's suburbanisation. Figures 11 and 12 give a sense of the scale of the volcanic formation before it was quarried away.

The remaining cone, Big King, was only saved from quarrying because it was owned as part of the Wesley Mission Trust from 1845. In 1927, despite offers to sell the land, the Trust decided to save Big King for the people of Three Kings to enjoy. After it was later part of land sold to the first government for state housing, it finally was gazetted as a reserve in 1949 (Puketapapa Local Board, 2015).

Subdivision of this area was undertaken in a way similar way to the neighbouring areas of Mt Albert and Pt Chevalier, with secondary speculators buying up land to sell to small building firms and individual builders (Ferguson, 1994: 88). While a purely private market, the subdivision of land in this period was largely underpinned by the assurance there would be buyers with state subsidised loans, a dynamic that I have noted was fuelled by the broader drive in this period for clean, family friendly environments. These family and sanitation themes were thus important imaginative undercurrents that added to and secured the profits being made in the early subdivision of land.



Figure 11. Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A4052. Looking south west from the vicinity of Rewa Road showing Three Kings Road, now Mount Eden Road (foreground) and part of Three Kings mountains with Hunters Quarry



Figure 12. Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A4053. Looking west from the vicinity of Rewa Road showing Three Kings Road, now Mount Eden Road (foreground) and part of Three Kings mountains

5.3 The First Signs of Suburbia

Many of the perceptions of the environment in this period, particularly those communicated by advertising, helped fuel the development of Three Kings from a semi-rural district to a suburb of Auckland city. As a space of industry and production, many of these imaginaries related to the function of this space in this period and the benefits the environment afforded to them. Archival records reveal how a number of advertisements in this period drew on the productive capacity of the land to market properties. In a paper from 1861 for instance, Mr. Robert Brent advertised his farm at Three Kings as having “ably owned and cultivated it for many years”. The advertisement describes his farm as 215 acres, with 40 acres in a “state of high cultivation” having drained a swamp in order to reduce it to “useful dimensions” (*Daily Southern Cross*, 1861: 2). Other advertisements reiterated the quality of the soil in the area, well regarded for its “double crops of potatoes as well as heavy crops of cereals” (*Daily Southern Cross*, 1861: 2). The area’s rich volcanic soil also underpinned a fruit nursery in the area, advertised in 1916 as having 10,000 lemon trees as well as nectarine and peach trees (*New*

Zealand Herald, 1916: 2). Importantly, these descriptions of the landscape in this early period played into the broader imaginaries circulating in Auckland that were seeking clean and healthy environments on the outskirts of the city, full of abundance and prosperity (Ferguson, 1994).

Indeed, the rural characteristics and picturesque nature of early colonial Three Kings resonated with the growing romanticism of sanitised environments that contributed towards the early period of suburbanisation in Auckland. Many of the very early developments and small sub-divisions in the area undertaken by private developers were done so in the context of concerns around sanitation and an emerging desire for family friendly urban environments (Ferguson, 1994: 88). One of the earliest plans for urban development in Three Kings that reflects these was the proposition of a garden suburb in 1912. In an article in the then daily *Auckland Star*, a garden suburb in Three Kings was proposed and received serious consideration. It promoted the land as being “of the best volcanic soil”, ideally located between 200 to 400 feet above sea level which made it a prime location for such a proposal. Its position in the middle of the isthmus between the Manukau and Waitamata harbours was also commented on, a convenient location in this period due to the dominance of sea travel and its relative access to both sides of New Zealand. While the proposition never left the design stage, it nevertheless speaks to the presence of these concerns around sanitation and desire for family-friendly environments in this period. It also expresses to the way in which the material environment of Three Kings in this period, with its rich volcanic soils, access to water and ample location between both harbours, helped constitute this particular imaginary in Three Kings by positioning the area as an ideal location for a garden suburb and these wider development themes to come to fruition.

Perhaps the earliest and most significant contributor to the gradual suburbanisation of Three Kings has been the long standing role of the local primary school. Three Kings school was established in 1879 with a roll of 44 students and is now one of the oldest schools in New Zealand on its original site (Puketapapa, 2016: 16). Originally one, single classroom, by 1891, five additional classrooms had been added. Figure 13 shows the school and the few buildings it shared the landscape with in this period. These original classrooms were some of the first buildings in the area, which meant they became one of the central hubs of community life in the area. As an institution symbolising the family, the importance of the school for the community of this early period symbolises the way in which family formed a central pillar which structured life in this early period of Three Kings. A further two more rooms were added during the early 1900s to accommodate the school’s rapidly growing roll (3Kings, 2016). By 1950, the school roll peaked at 642, before the eventual construction of other schools nearby caused the roll to stabilise. In 2016, the school had approximately 550 students (3Kings, 2016).



Figure 13. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 4-5664. Mt Eden Road and Three Kings school in 1920.

As one of the few consistent land uses since the 19th century, the school offers a unique insight into the way in which Auckland's broader urban imaginaries have had a bearing on the development of Three Kings. One example of this is the efforts of the parents of the school's early students to improve the surrounding area's amenities and environment. Aside from investment into community facilities like a library, piano, pool and community garden, these initiatives included regular activities like 'Arbor' days –tree-planting ceremonies conducted throughout the school and surrounding volcanic area which included the whole community (3Kings, 2016). These initiatives are visible today in the school's established tree-scape as figure 14 shows. In this sense, these practices reflect the central role of not only the school, but the importance of family in this area and this period which drove an emphasis on beautifying the environment. As a common occurrence in this period, fairs and carnivals held at the school to fundraise for these activities reiterate this emphasis on family as a key component of life, working to focus attention in the area on the development of the school as an amenity for all to benefit from.



Figure 14. Source: Author's own. (2016). Tree's on the field of Three Kings school.

One of the earliest landmarks in Three Kings which supported the school and still remains as it was built today is the Pump House or Pumping Station shown in its original form in figure 15. The Pump House was established in 1915 by the Mt Roskill Road Board (the predecessor of Mt Roskill Borough that governed the area) to provide a local source of water for Three Kings. It was built from scoria quarried on the site and pumped water from a bore 21m underground, producing 227 million litres per year. It was built as part of a broader waterworks network of pipes connecting the Pump House to the famous reservoir on top of Big King's summit, capable of holding 136,000 litres. The site continued to pump and supply the area's water until a typhoid outbreak in Mt Albert in 1922 and the subsequent panic associated with water borne diseases in this period forced the Pump House in addition to the near-by Mt Roskill pumping station to close (Puketapapa Local Board, 2016: 4). This occurrence provides some direct evidence for the circulation of these broader concerns around sanitation in Three Kings in this early period. Since being de-commissioned, the bore has largely been inactive, however the building was soon transformed into the area's first official community hall which became an important site for local gatherings in this early period. After a number of different uses

including the home of the Auckland Boxing Club in the 1950s, the building is now used by the Auckland City Brass band (see figure 16) (Puketapapa Local Board, 2016: 4).



Figure 15. Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 921-56. Pump House.



Figure 16. Source: Author's own. (2016). Pump House today

Alongside the school, one of the most characteristic early developments in Three Kings is the Ranfurly Veterans' Home. Named after the Governor of New Zealand Lord Ranfurly, Ranfurly Veterans' Home was opened in 1903 to house veterans who fought for the British Empire and as a memorial to the Second Anglo-Boer War. As figure 17 shows, it was originally a relatively grand building funded by Lord Ranfurly's call for public donations, which raised about £8000. After more than a century of modifications and extensions to the original building, in 2011 the Ranfurly Trust agreed to jointly redevelop the site with a private retirement village. This included a refurbishment of the original building and the addition of a 60-bed hospital and retirement village of 170 apartments (Puketapapa



Figure 17. Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 1-W892. A view of Ranfurly Veterans Home in 1905.



Figure 18. Source: Author's own. (2016). View of the new development in front of the original Veterans' Home.

Local Board, 2016: 13). The current progress of the development as of January 2017 is seen in figure 18.

As Auckland's population continued to grow rapidly and other services like tramlines gradually encroached into the area from the CBD, in the early 20th century Three Kings began to move away from its semi-rural character and take shape as a suburb of broader Auckland. The first shop in the area was located on the corner of Three Kings Road (now Mt Eden Road) and Mt Albert Road. It was established in 1903 to serve the Veterans' Home and later became the site of the post office and telephone bureau. The site is now a Women's Suffrage memorial which was established in 2013 to mark the 120th anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand. By 1921, the list of occupants along Three Kings Road (now Mt Eden Road) included W.B. Booth, a nursery man; Herbert Sydney, a linotype operator; Harold E. Forest, a draper; James Thomas, a conductor; Arthur Henry Longley, a driver (*Auckland Directory*, 1921).



Figure 19. Source: Author's own. (2016). Wesley College Monument.

While these services incentivised the construction of various subdivisions by small, private developers, the first large, comprehensively planned suburban development in Three Kings must be attributed to the first state home development in 1939. The site of the development was bought from the Wesleyan College Trust after it moved to Paerata (South Auckland). The Wesley College was an education facility

established in 1848 to service mostly Maori students. It was one of Auckland's earliest religious institutions and is marked today by a monument shown in figure 19, which is thought to be constructed from stone salvaged from the original building. Indeed, as figure 19 highlights, the monument now sits in the middle of this first suburban state housing development. This first housing development was constructed between 1939 and 1940. It formed part of a broader central government response to not only a shortage of adequate housing, but also to give work to the large number of unemployed people after the Depression. The development included 500 detached, suburban homes like the ones visible in figure 20 and was limited to no more than four detached houses per acre. The floors, framing and joinery of the houses were built of locally sourced native timber and the houses were equipped with modern amenities and technologies for the time. A handful of shops were established on the corner of Parau Street and Fearon Avenue during this same period. As figure 20 shows, the houses built in this development are representative of the broader suburban



Figure 20. Source: Author's own. (2016). Typical suburban house in Three Kings.

typology that characterised suburbanisation in Three Kings in this period, defined by largely wooden, detached homes designed for single families.

One of the earliest group of shops in Three Kings which benefitted from this development was situated in the Grinter Building, located between 503 and 507 Mt Albert Road, shown in figure 21. Grinter Building was built by the Grinter brothers who were two particularly prominent early developers in the Three Kings area. It was within this period that rates of automobile ownership began to rise and

the prospect of owning a home in the suburbs increasingly became within reach. Accordingly, as it housed the area's first service station, the Grinter Building and the entrepreneurial leadership of the Grinter brothers contributed significantly towards the suburbanisation of the Three Kings area (Puketapapa Local Board, 2016: 7). Grinter building is now home to a variety of shops, including a tattoo studio, a car mechanics and, until recently, the office of local MP (now elected Mayor of Auckland) Phil Goff.



Figure 21. Source: Author's own. (2016). Grinter Building

Keith Hay was another prominent developer and contributor to Three Kings as it is today. 'Keith the builder', as he was known to locals, established Keith Hay Homes at the age of 21 in 1938 (Keith Hay Homes, 2017). One of his main contributions not only to Three Kings but to broader Auckland's emerging suburbs was to help establish low cost suburban housing initiatives. For instance, Hay was a pioneer of transporting suburban homes on trucks and also contributed significantly towards reducing the cost of building materials by replacing expensive imported and scarce native timbers with native pine (Puketapapa, Local Board, 2016: 7). In addition to enjoying entrepreneurial success, Keith Hay was an extremely successful local politician, acting as the Mayor of Mt Roskill Borough from 1953 to 1974. During this 21-year period, Keith Hay oversaw the continued and rapid development of Three Kings in this period, with the construction of Three Kings Plaza in the 1960s typifying the height of suburbanisation in Three Kings. As such, Keith Hay was another pivotal individual whose ideas and entrepreneurial leadership contributed significantly to the suburbanisation of the broader Mt Roskill

district which transformed it from a semi-rural area into the country's largest borough (Mt Roskill Borough) (Puketapapa, 2016: 7).

As an embodiment of the work of local government in the area, the Mt Roskill Borough Council building is another historic landmark that is part of the story of development in Three Kings. Located on the corner of Mt Albert and Mt Eden Roads, the site was originally earmarked for a number of designs as early as 1911 when the Mt Roskill Road Board proposed the construction of a community hall in honour of King George the V's coronation. However, it was not until 1956, after the Mt Roskill Road Board became the Mt Roskill Borough Council, that a municipal chamber was built and opened by Mayor Keith Hay (Puketapapa Local Board, 2016: 17). While the building was closed in 2012 as a result of weather tightness concerns, a redevelopment of the site beginning in 2016 hopes to restore the original 1956 building to its original glory and reinstate it as the 'home of local government' (Collins, 2016)

Today, one of the visible effects of local and central government in Three Kings has been the establishment of a number of parks and recreational spaces that were predominately reserved during this primary wave of suburbanisation during the early 20th century. These parks were part of the first Labour governments emphasis on providing ample open, green space to service the growing number of state housing developments across suburbs like Three Kings. One of the earliest parks established in Three Kings which exemplifies this emphasis is Arthur S. Richards Memorial Park. The land where the park is located was bought by the Department of Housing and Construction in the 1920s off the Wesley College Trust after the Wesleyan College moved to Paerata. It was earmarked by the Crown as a recreational park to service the first nearby state home development during the 1930s and 40s (Puketapapa Local Board, 2016: 19). It was named to honour Arthur S. Richard, the former Mt Roskill MP whose actions were not only pivotal to the conservation of the park, but to the broader development of Three Kings as a typical suburb of this period. Today, the park is characterised by its collection of various mature native and exotic trees, including Pohutukawa and Norfolk Pine which provide shelter to the park's abundant bird-life.

5.4 Post-suburbanisation in Three Kings

The rise of concerns about the sustainability of suburbs and the implications of current and projected population growth has had a number of effects over the form and function of Three Kings in the past two decades. One of the main effects of these broader themes has been a new focus by local

authorities on diversifying the number of transport modes beyond the automobile. One example of this is the Puketapapa Local Board's emphasis on making the area more walkable and cycle-friendly. This is visible in the mounting investment it has put into creating a network of suburban cycle ways across the suburb, which connect Three Kings to the inner city and other suburbs. While many of these are located on what are considered main arterial roads, like Mt Eden Road, this emphasis has also directed investment into a number of 'greenways'; routes along quieter, suburban streets which offer a slower, less-congested experience which proponents say are important for families and other users (Bike Auckland, 2012). Another example of local authorities' emphasis on diversifying the transport modes of the area is the recent investment in public transport. In 2016, Auckland Transport introduced a fleet of 12 double decker buses along some of the main arterial routes in Auckland (Transport blog, 2016b). One of those routes is along Mt Eden Road which connects Three Kings to the inner city, a move which densified the suburb's public transport through increased passenger capacity. As the buses were largely a response to the overloading of public transport services beyond capacities, this investment was justified by Auckland Transport by the area's growing population and need for transport options beyond the automobile (Transportblog, 2016). It is also important to note how this emphasis on diversifying the transport modes of the area, particularly in relation to the improvements to walking and cycling, have also been underpinned as a means to promote healthy and active life styles that sustain the community's wellbeing (Bike Auckland, 2012).

Another significant effect of the broader rise of sustainability and population growth as themes informing development over the past two decades in Three Kings has been the intensification and diversification of its range of housing. As a major land owner in the city, the changing approach of Housing New Zealand captures the work of these themes across Auckland's development. As I have noted, a number of the properties in Three Kings, particularly those surrounding the volcano, were originally built as state homes from the 1940s. These were typically detached, single-storey suburban homes which were designed for single families, as figure 20 illuminates, and are largely representative of the dominant housing typology in Three Kings. However, over the past 10 years, Housing New Zealand has overseen the redevelopment of many of its houses that were built in this period. Specifically, there are many examples where Housing New Zealand has grouped blocks of three or four suburban state homes, demolished and replaced them with a range of higher density arrangements. As figures 22 and 23 show, these new developments include a mix of town houses and apartment blocks that accommodate a number of additional residents. This denser approach of Housing New Zealand is also evident in the proposed zoning maps it produced for consultation on the Unitary Plan for suburbs including Three Kings, suggesting the organisation could add an additional 39,000 dwellings to the current 30,800 it currently had on the same area of land (Niall, 2016b). These

emerging abstract, technocratic imaginaries of space from Housing New Zealand have thus had an important effect on the nature of housing in Three Kings over recent years.



Figure 22. Source: Author's own. (2016). New Housing New Zealand development



Figure 23. Source: Author's own. Another new Housing New Zealand development

Another place these changes are visible is in what may be the biggest and most comprehensive development since the first state homes, the redevelopment of Three Kings Quarry by Fletcher Living Ltd. Defined loosely by the 'tuff ring', the development area is the Three Kings explosion crater, where land is controlled roughly equally by six parties, including Housing New Zealand, Auckland Council, Department of Conservation/*iwi* (Ngati Whatua) (the reserve land), Antipodean Properties (the current commercial centre), Fletcher Living and private residential owners. However, of the main housing development which includes 21ha of land, Fletcher Living owns 15ha and the Crown 6ha.

The redevelopment is taking place over several stages. The first stage of the development is designated a Special Housing Area (Cawley, 2015). Special Housing Areas are a recent central government initiative aiming to accelerate development by allowing some of the traditional regulations around the building processes to be fast-tracked (Slade, 2016). For this reason, the first stage is already underway and is due for completion mid-2017. The following stages will be progressively completed over the next 5 years (Fletcher Living, 2017a). When completed, the development will house between 2500 and 3500 people in 1200 to 1500 dwellings worth an estimated \$1.2billion NZD. The project has been designed by landscape architect James Lord of Surfacedesign, working alongside Melbourne's DKO architecture and planning group Tattico. Several concepts they have produced for the development give a sense of what life might be like in the development when completed (see figures 24, 25, 26).



Figure 24. Source: DKO Architecture. (2016). Three Kings Concept design.



Figure 25. Source: DKO Architecture. (2016). *Three Kings Concept design.*



Figure 26. Source: DKO Architecture. (2016). *Three Kings Concept design.*

In a report, Tattico emphasised the importance of the development to Auckland as "one of the few brownfields areas remaining on the isthmus and one of only a couple of areas where significant urban intensification can take place on vacant land". The report continues by saying "the unique opportunity of this land ... provides significant benefit and positive effects" (Gibson, 2015). This emphasis on increasing the housing available in Auckland is backed up by Fletcher in several media publications and interviews with reporters, citing their own projections for the future of Auckland which suggest its population will exceed 2.2-2.5 million people in the next 30 years which will require an additional 400,000 dwellings (Meadows, 2015). These claims have also been reiterated by local government.

Former Auckland Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse said she was pleased to see progress on the "most significant brown-fields development in Auckland", reiterating that the "Three Kings development will provide up to 1500 new homes and is exactly the sort of development this city needs and wants. It will provide high quality intensification and will put Auckland firmly on the journey to becoming a compact city." (New Zealand Herald, 2015).

When signs emerged that the quarry was reaching the end of its operation, local commentary grew on the potential options for a new land use that would enrich the community. These included community centres, parks and even a lake (Gibson, 2014a). However, the proposed plans by Fletcher Living have certainly not been universally applauded, particularly given that alternative possibilities included the site becoming an amenity of some sort for community. Much of the concern initially came from a controversial land swap where Fletcher Living would give the council 2.7ha on the quarry floor mainly for two soccer grounds and the council would give Fletcher Living 2.3ha around the western and southern edges of the site to ensure enough open space for the development. With little response or chance of negotiating this exchange, the broader community raised several challenges to the proposal. This ultimately resulted in a dispute at the Environment Court between residents' group Three Kings Community Action (TKCA), South Epsom Planning Group in partnership with the Puketapapa Local Board and Fletcher Living, Auckland Council as well as Environment and Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith. In this sense, the quarry is an interesting example of development in Three Kings and Auckland more broadly where there is conflict of governance interests, with the



Figure 27. Source: Author's own. (2016). Three Kings quarry with Mt Eden Road in the background.

Puketapapa Local Board siding with the community to oppose the Auckland Council and central government.

As part of its submission, Puketapapa Local Board commissioned Richard Reid to help design an alternative plan for the quarry development. Acting chairman of the board Harry Doig said this was because Auckland Council had so far considered only one proposal - a plan by the quarry owners, Fletcher Living and that "being presented with a fairly narrow opportunity that is just one developer's view has not been enough for the board" (Collins, 2015). Richard Reid is one of New Zealand's leading urban designers and has had previous success with alternative plans throughout his career, including avoiding State Highway 20 slicing off part of the Mt Roskill cone and providing an alternative plan to avoid a flyover across the Basin Reserve in Wellington in 2011 (Collins, 2015). His alternative design includes a retail hub, a civic centre and a range of housing options which provides roughly 80% of Fletcher Living's nominated yield (Lynn, 2015b). It does away with the need for the controversial land swap between Fletcher Living and Auckland Council. Importantly, a key point of difference in Reid's design is his proposed filling of the quarry to better integrate the existing community with the development. Figure 27 gives a sense of the depth of the quarry during the research period. This reiterates and incorporates one of the main concerns of the community advocates like the local board regarding the lack of integration and connection with the existing suburb in the Fletcher Living proposal. However, Fletcher Living's Chief Operating Officer for housing Steve Evans explained that existing height limits meant if the quarry was filled, only 500 homes could be built. He told a reporter from the *New Zealand Herald* that Fletcher Living was "using the topography of the quarry to provide density that no one really sees", avoiding the volcanic view shafts that hinder many attempts at high rise development in Auckland suburbs (Collins, S. 2016). Housing Minister Dr Smith reiterated this claim when he said filling in the quarry would mean "delaying the project by about a decade while the old quarry was filled, and building fewer homes that would inevitably be dearer" (Collins, S. 2016). However, as Harry Doig from the local board notes, "integrating the residential development with the retail and making sure there's improved access to the Big King is more of a concern than pure density numbers, regardless of whether it's 3000 or 4000 people" (Gibson, 2014b). Much of the opposition to Fletcher Living's proposal from the community can be distilled down to a broader concern for what they see as a lack of imagination from Fletcher Living's design. As a lone voice from the Auckland Council, supporter of the alternative project Auckland Councillor Cathy Casey has claimed Fletcher Living's proposal looks like a military barracks and the scheme "lacks imagination, has no solar power or water recycling, would create traffic congestion, clog up Mt Eden Rd and does not create good walking links up to the Big King" (Gibson, 2014b).

5.5 Conclusion

The development in Three Kings over the past century demonstrates the ways in which material and imaginative factors come together in the formation of suburbs and the ways in which they have begun to be re-constituted over the past few decades under the rise of new imaginative concerns. Tracing some of the components shaping its gradual evolution gives us some sense of the ways in which, throughout different historical periods of Three Kings, a range of different imaginaries have coalesced around four overlapping and interconnected 'themes' that have shaped its development. For most of the 20th century, these imaginative concerns coalesced around sanitation and the family as part of the material transformation of Three Kings from a semi-rural location on the outskirts of Auckland's inner city, to a very central suburb of Auckland's sprawling metropolis. They show how, in the past few decades, the emphasis of these imaginaries has shifted under growing concerns about the sustainability of suburbanisation and the challenges associated with Auckland's current and projected population growth. Throughout this century and a half of development, these overlapping and interconnected themes have worked in different ways to change the form and function of Three Kings over different historical periods, constructing it as a homogenous, residential suburb and recently moving it towards a space of increasing social and topological diversity.

This chapter used a historical lens to trace the changes in the urban imaginaries producing traditional suburbia and post-suburbia in Three Kings. It has explored how the four themes that I have discussed in the previous chapter represent Auckland wide urban imaginaries that have had a bearing on Three Kings. From the Lefebvrian perspectives introduced in Chapter 2, it continues the previous chapter's focus on the more conceived imaginations that are involved in producing suburban space. In contrast to this focus on the historical urban imaginaries producing traditional and post-suburban forms, the next chapter details the everyday imaginative contestations of suburbia in the neighbourhood that occur as part of a variegated and uneven movement towards post-suburbia in Three Kings.

Chapter 6: Three Kings and Everyday Post-Suburban Possibilities

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters used a historical lens to trace changes in the urban imaginaries producing traditional and post-suburban forms in Auckland and, specifically, Three Kings. These expansive, city and suburb wide imaginative practices have unfolded to structure a terrain of imaginative contestation through which smaller scale, everyday contests around space in Three Kings have begun to play out. This is what this chapter deals with, the everyday imaginative contestations that happen in this variegated and uneven movement towards post-suburbia in Three Kings. The chapter focuses at neighbourhood level in particular, on the imaginative conflicts characterising post-suburbanisation in Three Kings by identifying three strands to contemporary ideas that circulate around suburban developments in Three Kings. These include transport, housing and the environment. Drawing on the Lefebvrian perspectives introduced in Chapter 2, the previous two chapters focused more on the conceived spaces of suburbia, with perceived and lived space featuring as sub-texts helping to structure this evolution. This chapter shifts this emphasis, focusing on the ways in which perceived and lived space are at work at the neighbourhood level in the imaginative production of post-suburban space. The wider conceived imaginaries at play in the previous chapters, particularly those coalescing around the theme of population growth, feature as key overarching dimensions structuring these more proximate political contests. In this sense, this chapter works alongside the previous chapters to form functionally separate perspectives that make sense of the role played by imaginaries in enabling post-suburbanisation in Auckland. The chapter will draw on a selection of examples including the current development of Three Kings quarry and a proposal to bring 'Modern Light Rail' into the area to illustrate the ways in which imaginaries feature in Three Kings today.

6.2 Transport

Transport is a key domain through which the imaginative contests around space and suburban development are playing out in Three Kings. As Chapter 2 noted, the rise of the automobile in the 20th century and the priority it was given over public transport was a key component of suburbanisation in many cities in this period. This is particularly true for Auckland, when the removal of the city's tramways in 1953 and the subsequent re-prioritisation of the city's investment into auto-centric development completely transformed and accelerated suburbanisation in the city (Gunder, 2002; Harris, 2005). Over recent years and under the growing questions auto-centric suburbanisation has faced under concerns around its sustainability, the dominance of the automobile is increasingly being challenged by alternative imaginaries (Sparks, 2012). This section uses two examples to situate these numerous imaginative contests coalescing around transport in Three Kings. It firstly discusses the imaginative practices and contests surrounding the proposal to bring 'Modern Light Rail' into Three Kings. It then goes on to expand on the emphasis Fletcher Living has placed on pedestrianising a major development underway in the Three Kings quarry.

For the past decade or two, there have been several suggestions and investigations into the possibility of establishing a light rail system along main arterial routes like Dominion and Mt Eden Roads into central Auckland suburbs like Three Kings. This proposal was raised again during this research with the support it was given by the Labour candidate for the Mt Roskill electorate by-election which took place on the 3rd of December 2016. Labour's candidate Michael Wood explained that his party's support for the proposal was a response to the area's increasing traffic. At public meetings and debates, Wood was often cheered by audience members after having explained his experience in, and frustration with, the areas growing traffic congestion. According to a recent news publication regarding the plan for 'Modern Light Rail', the area around Three Kings and Mt Roskill more broadly is referred to by Auckland Transport as 'the void' due to its lack of access to the existing mass transit network (Small, 2016). As a member of a party in opposition, Wood was arguably in a better position to give his support to the plan without the pressure to financially justify the mechanics of the plan that his rival in government may have faced. Nevertheless, in contrast to his main rival, Wood was a strong proponent for the need for suburbs in the electorate like Three Kings to diversify their modes of transport and reduce their dependence on automobiles. He explained that 'genuine' transport options in the suburbs were "vitally important given Auckland's growing population" (Michael Wood, interview, November, 2016).

Wood explained what kind of ideal vision he could imagine for the future of transport in suburbs like Three Kings and how this would benefit everyone:

“The kind of transport future that I want to see for everyone in Three Kings isn’t one where people are dependent on just one mode of transport, but one where people have genuine options for how they move around the community. [...] I think this kind of future will benefit everyone in the area, including those who choose to continue using their cars who will see the traffic reduce dramatically” (Michael Wood, interview, November, 2016).

In this sense, Wood’s emphasis on the need for ‘Modern Light Rail’ in suburbs like Three Kings draws on the idea that residents in Auckland’s suburbs need more choices about how they get around the city. Rather than a plan to completely change or monopolise transport modes in the area, Wood’s support for the proposal is about multiplying the possibilities for moving around the city’s suburbs, a move he believes is beneficial to everyone in the suburb, regardless of the choices they make.

By reiterating the need to provide ‘genuine options’ for the community and referring to the lack of vision for this from his opponent, transport was a key domain which Wood used to differentiate himself in the by-election. As the election played out, the issue of the area’s increasingly congested roads became an important topic. The eventual electoral success of Mr Wood, receiving more than double the votes of his main opponent, appears to give some indication of the community’s support for the plan. At this broad level, the importance of the proposal for ‘Modern Light Rail’ and more broadly transport in the campaign discourse speaks to the way in which the reimagining of the suburbs in perceived space interacts with fundamental electoral politics and the three-year election cycle. While on the surface the proposal to establish ‘Modern Light Rail’ and extend it into suburbs like Three Kings would be widely beneficial to the future of the suburb and its residents, many would argue that, with a \$700 million price tag, the proposal has little chance of success in the near future. However, what is interesting about the proposal from Labour’s Michael Wood is the imaginative labour it achieves. By clearly juxtaposing him against his main rivals, the bold imaginaries of the plan start to position Wood and the Labour Party as forward thinking visionaries, with a clear interest in the public good. It reflects how imaginaries around transport being drawn on to achieve particular claims about, for instance, the stake the Labour Party has in the future development of the area. Regardless of whether or not the proposal goes ahead under Wood’s leadership, the reality that Wood won the by-election convincingly appears to give these imaginaries some legitimacy and keeps them in the public domain. It also speaks to the way in which the reimagining of the suburbs in perceived space is happening by a whole host of different actors who are embedded locally but also at regional and national scales and systems. Indeed, while this is a local political issue specific to the electorate of Mt

Roskill, it is also interconnected with how public transport is funded at the national level, with the funding for Wood's proposed 'Modern Light Rail' reliant on both the Auckland Council and central government.



Figure 28. Source: *Onehunga Community News* (2016). Artist representation of light rail down Dominion Road used by Michael Wood.

One of the main ways Wood communicated his support for this particular vision for the electorate was through an image on a campaign leaflet seen in figure 28. The leaflet explained that “Up until 1953, Auckland had one of the best public transport systems in the world” and that “as Auckland grows ... public transport should be a priority for Council and central government”. It noted that Labour’s support for the plan was part of a broader emphasis of the party to “tackle traffic congestion” and “ensure that our city doesn’t grind to a halt”. As figure 28 shows, the image depicts the busy town centre of Balmoral (a nearby suburb) on Dominion Road overlain with a computer-generated image of what the ‘Modern Light Rail’ system moving through the shops might look like. By situating his leaflet in a popular and widely recognisable local setting, the image presents a powerful attempt to use imaginaries around transport to visualise what life could be like in suburbs throughout the electorate under this plan and Wood’s leadership. As a compelling representation with a strong focus on the long-term future of the area, Wood’s leaflet illustrates how images and understandings of the future are central to shaping understandings and actions about space today which can be drawn from to help achieve particular ends. In an interview with Mr Wood, he explained to me why he favours the notion of ‘Modern Light Rail’ to promote the proposal over the tag line ‘Bring back the Trams’.

“The people who are quite excited by the idea generally fall into two camps. The first are those elderly people in the community like my Grandma for whom the idea of ‘Bringing Back the Trams’ certainly resonates with “[...]”. However, the other, much larger group which this really appeals to are the younger generation, like yourself, who I think are looking for a different way to live and get around in Auckland. I think this has something to do with the experiences many younger people have had with this sort of transport elsewhere in other attractive modern cities. So as a modern and efficient technology, Modern Light Rail is a much better way of communicating this message to the widest possible audience.

Mr Wood’s explanation as to why he decided to stick with ‘Modern Light Rail’ to promote the proposal appears to reflect an appreciation of the of the point made in Chapter 2 that infrastructure of all sorts, particularly transport, is “invariably invoked in images, representations and ideologies of urban ‘progress’” and imaginaries about the futures (Graham & Marvin, 2001: 12). This particular representation seems to be based on a distinction between different generational understandings of space, or in Lefebvre’s terms, between the different meanings produced in lived practices and perceived space. As Chapter 2 noted, the meanings generated in lived space are powerful because by helping to secure and maintain certain perceptions and understandings about place, they can simultaneously work to limit alternative interpretations and ways of living (Lefebvre, 1991). As Wood admitted to me, there is now only a small fraction of society that would still have a clear memory of, and nostalgia for, the extensive tram network that serviced Auckland’s central suburbs up until the early 1950s. His comments recognised that the majority of those who are attracted by new transport options, such as ‘Modern Light Rail’, are likely to be younger, attracted by understandings produced in experiences in other desirable cities like Melbourne. Importantly, his comments recognise the inherent power of the meanings generated in lived space by acknowledging that those generations who have grown up in the era of the automobile are less likely to be able to imagine a new way of moving around the suburbs than younger generations are without the same level attachment. In this sense, there appears to be an understanding that, through the meanings created when experiencing other places and even through the depictions of the ways of life these places are constructed in perceived space, Trams or ‘Modern Light Rail’ have taken on new understandings and imaginaries as a modern technology for modern cities.

Evidence of this broader sentiment for change in the area’s transport modes is also clear in a Generation Zero billboard on Mt Eden road seen in figure 29. As the fading on the bill board indicates, the bill board has been in place for several years. It depicts the hands of a driver handcuffed to a steering wheel, with a text reading ‘Got Choice Bro?’. As a representation of the dependence the area’s residents have on their cars, the billboard is a poignant everyday reminder for the commuters

who use Mt Eden Road of the lack of genuine transport options residents in Three Kings have. By using colloquial language like 'Bro', the billboard seems to correlate with Woods attempt to capture the attention of younger generations who may be more open to the idea of a genuine challenge to the dominance of the automobile.



Figure 30. Source: Authors own. (2016). Generation Zero Billboard with Big King in the background

However, this vision for a modern light rail was also subject to a significant amount of criticism and resistance from the community. Throughout the by-election campaign at several public debates I attended, National's Parmjeet Parmar and her supporters often responded to Wood's proposal for Light Rail by suggesting the plan would only make things worse by adding to the congestion on the roads. LJ Hooker Real Estate Mt Roskill branch Manager Ross Harvey reiterated this sentiment, explaining that the proposal was nothing more than a "childish" attempt to "buy votes". Having worked in the area since 1976, the local businessman said that while he had seen traffic grow in the area, trams weren't the answer, suggesting that they were removed when they were because they "didn't work" (Collins & Small, 2016). As an individual who has experienced decades of automobile dominance in the suburb, the views of the local businessman speak to some of the broader understandings generated in lived space that are shared by many residents in the suburb with similar experiences. The release of 'Auckland's Journey to Work' Census data by the Auckland Council gives

some insight into the rate of automobile use in Three Kings today. In the latest census, 61.7% of trips to work were made by a car, truck, van or company bus in Three Kings, confirming that personal automobiles are still the predominant form of transport in this area as they are in Auckland as a whole (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b). While the metric only measures how people to get work, it nonetheless provides a good indicator of the level of dependence residents in Three Kings have on automobiles for completing their daily activities. In this regard, the contest the proposal received seems to reflect the dominance of the automobile in Three Kings and the influence it has over the imaginaries shaping its development.

Another example which situates the imaginaries coalescing around transport in Three Kings is the emphasis on pedestrianising the community. After 150 years of quarrying, Fletcher Living has proposed a masterplan to create a new community in Three Kings quarry which is over 30m deep below the edge of the quarry at points (Gibson, 2014a). When completed, the Fletcher Living development will include up to 1500 new apartments and terraced houses totalling over \$1.2billion NZD. By proposing an entirely new community and way of suburban living which will significantly increase the population of the suburb, transport has emerged as a key concern surrounding the plan.

The emphasis Fletcher Living has put into pedestrianising its development of the quarry and connecting it to the neighbourhood offers a key way to situate how imaginaries around transport are gradually changing in Three Kings. This emphasis is clear in its promotional material on the development's website, which constructs a particular imaginary of how Fletcher Living's development will transform the area by making it a more walkable community. Under the title 'Fresh air living', the website claims the development is built at the

"Human scale. Pedestrian trials, boardwalks, ramps, stairways and a proposed elevated walkway to *Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta*/Big King enable exploration by foot and reduce the need for motorised transport throughout the area" (Fletcher Living, 2017c).

The images in figures 30 and 31 provide backdrops to the text. The title 'Fresh air living', and emphasis on the walkability of the future community, constructs an image of the development as a clean-living environment, free of the pollution and traffic associated with automobile dominance. Like Wood's support for 'Modern Light Rail', the importance Fletcher Living has placed on pedestrianising the development and connecting it to the existing community has formed part of an emphasis on multiplying and diversifying the transport options in the suburb rather than replacing the existing modes altogether. This emphasis on the need to increase the walkability of Three Kings as a means of diversifying the area's transport is also evident in the alternative design for the quarry by Richard Reid. While it had several concerns about the ability of Fletcher Living's proposed design to achieve this

goal, the alternative plan nevertheless supported its broader effort to make Three Kings more walkable to connect the community.



Figure 30. Source: Fletcher Living (2017b).



Figure 31. Source: Fletcher Living (2017b).

In this regard, this move to pedestrianise Three Kings has been less contested than the proposal to bring modern light rail into suburbs in the area. One possible reason for this is that creating more walkable spaces does not require significant investment in infrastructure. Unlike the more than \$700 million NZD that it would cost the council and central government to bring modern light rail into suburbs like Three Kings, making Fletcher Living’s development and the wider community more walkable would not be reliant on support and significant funding from regional and national

authorities. However, this may also relate to the specific way pedestrianisation is being discussed in this context and the way in which it relates to the dominance of the automobile. While there is support for pedestrianising Three Kings at the neighbourhood level, there is not the same emphasis on the idea of increasing the walkability or other non-vehicular connections with the surrounding suburbs nor the city more broadly. In this sense, the emphasis on pedestrianisation in Three Kings has been more focused at the local scale and increasingly connectivity within the quarry development and the suburb, a move which poses little threat to the dominance of the automobile. The lack of imaginaries promoting more connectivity between urban areas more generally seems to reflect this dominance and the influence it has over the imaginaries shaping Auckland's development. In contrast, it was clear that there was significant opposition to the proposal to bring more substantial public transport options like Modern Light Rail into the suburb.

This dynamic illustrates the way in which the rise of post-suburbanisation in Auckland is not a clearly defined transition or split with traditional suburbanisation but rather a varied and complex product of the effects of a series of historical path dependencies which are embedded in multiple scales. The emphasis on the automobile over the past half century in Auckland has formed a dominance to which any challenge is strongly contested. Because certain types of pedestrianisation can be incorporated and can arguably complement the automobile in localised ways, this example illustrates the way in which certain varieties of post-suburbanisation in the form of more localised moves toward pedestrianisation are possible because they do not challenge the dominance imaginaries like the automobile have over the city's development. In this way, transport and connectivity have become key terrains for contesting appropriate and future oriented urban development in Three Kings.

6.3 Housing

Housing is another key domain through which the imaginative contests around post-suburban space have played out in Three Kings. As Chapter 2 indicated, the detached, private family home has been a central component defining life in the suburbs since it emerged. As a way of structuring life in the suburbs, housing has been a key dimension of imaginaries like sanitation and the family, discussed in the previous chapter, which drove suburbanisation. However, over the past few years there has been a growing range of contests to this dominance that have introduced several changes to the ways in which people are housed and imagine housing in Three Kings. The significant redevelopment of

Ranfurly rest home is a key example of this and the ways in which housing and how it is imagined in Three Kings is changing. Ranfurly is a 60-bed Hospital and retirement village consisting of 170 apartments and represents a significant contrast to the traditional detached, private family housing characterising traditional housing imaginaries in Three Kings. The increasing emphasis placed on the importance of public and communal open space is another dynamic around which these imaginative contests that relate to housing have begun to coalesce. Some of the more unanticipated implications of these imaginative contests coalescing around housing and the emphasis placed on open space are evident in the example introduced in Chapter 1 of the challenges facing the pensioner units at Liston Village in neighbouring Hillsborough. Under increasing pressure from local authorities to provide more open space to service nearby apartments and the growing population in the area, 25 units are at risk of being demolished (Lynn, 2015a). As such, the growth of denser forms of living in the area that don't always provide access to private backyards has worked to create a growing emphasis on providing alternative forms of open space which, in practice, can have unanticipated effects. This section focuses on one example of these imaginative contests coalescing around housing in Three Kings. Specifically,



Figure 32. Source: Author's own. (2016). Fletcher Living Billboard.

it focuses on the effects of Fletcher Living's quarry development on the variety of housing types in Three Kings and the implications this may have on the imaginative practices generated in lived and perceived space.

Since its emergence as a predominately residential suburb of central Auckland, Three Kings has been dominated by detached, single family households. The current Fletcher Living quarry development represents perhaps the first major challenge to this relative homogeneity, introducing a variety of medium to high-density housing options including town houses and apartment blocks, as show by figures 24, 25 and 26 in Chapter 5.4. There are several implications of diversifying the housing options in this community. Fletcher Living used their promotional material to craft a particular image of what implications its development and broader diversification of the housing options in Three Kings will have on the community. On its website for the development, Fletcher Living suggests that “today’s homes need to be designed around modern, hectic lifestyles. Versatility of space and a variety of home styles are key to creating a desirable neighbourhood” (Fletcher Living, 2017a). Under the title “Viva Variety”, another page on its website explains that when the quarry development is completed, “A diverse mix of people and cultures will come together to create an integrated urban community”. It suggests that “with a balanced mix of terraced houses and apartments, the new area will cater to a wide range of life styles and life stages within this bustling community” (Fletcher Living B, 2017). The notion of a ‘bustling community’ and a ‘thriving town centre’ is captured in its development slogan, a ‘Village within a City’, which is displayed on several billboards surrounding the site (see figure 32). The imagery on their website reiterated this claim, depicting young, largely New Zealand/European families and working professionals engaging in a variety of spaces and activity throughout the development (see figure 33). The effect of these various imaginative practices in Fletcher Living’s promotional material is to create an image of the proposed development as a lively, cosmopolitan space full of energy and variety. This theme is accentuated by a range of photos and imagery throughout its website that give an insight into what life might be like in the completed quarry development, full of movement and interaction within the community and the environment around Big King like the ones in figures 30 and 31.

Viewed through a Lefebvrian analytical lens, the advertising material on Fletcher Living’s website represents a key example of the way in which the developers are constructing a particular imaginative framing of what material effects the development will have on the community in lived space. Through its use of glossy pictures depicting a mixed, inclusive community that holds a variety of activity and interaction, the developers use a range of imaginative techniques to construct a powerful imaginary of what life might be like in a future version of Three Kings.

The imaginary crafted by Fletcher Living was also reflected in some of the views of participants interviewed in this research. The attractiveness of the proposed quarry development to younger generations was a common point of note, hinged on this diversification of the housing stock in Three Kings. This was particularly apparent in the views shared by lobby group Generation Zero’s housing

spokesperson Niko Elsen. He discussed the lack of variety Auckland's suburbs have previously had and what implications moves to change this might have on suburbs like Three Kings. He explained that

“previously, Auckland has had a one size fits all approach. Either you lived in a detached house in the suburbs or an apartment in the inner city. We have been really lacking in that middle ground in the past. So one of the things we hope developments like the quarry in Three Kings will offer is a range of housing options that start to fill that gap in between those two binaries”.



Figure 33. Source: Fletcher Living (2017b).

For Elsen, diversifying the area's housing types is an important part of increasing the choices Aucklanders have to live in the city. Rather than a complete transformation of the city's suburban housing from detached suburban dwellings to a widespread set of denser forms, his vision draws on an imaginary of a future suburb where a variety of housing types and ways of life, both old and new, co-exist alongside one another. His vision builds on the idea that younger and even older generations are increasingly seeking more choices in terms of how and where they live, willing to compromise on, for instance, components of traditional suburban life like a backyard or multiple bedrooms for a living environment with access to different amenities. This aspiration for increased variety of housing to service a greater variety of lifestyles and stages was also reiterated by President of the South Epsom Planning Group Dick Bellamy, who explained in an interview I held with him that a good design for the quarry would be one that had *“a range of accommodation styles which would cater to a range of ages and lifestyles in the community”*.

These notions of choice and variety of housing in Three Kings also featured in a number of descriptions interview participants gave me of what an ideal and dystopic future might be for the suburb. For many I interviewed, a mix of different housing types and arrangements is the only option which may allow existing communities to continue to reside in Three Kings in the future. This was particularly true for

Local electorate MP Michael Wood, who imagines that in thirty or forty years' time, Three Kings will be a:

“place where everyone has access to secure, high quality housing of different types and different tenures. There will still be quite a lot of houses sitting on decent sections with a bit of grass behind it but they will be mixed in between a diversity of other housing types “[...]” We’re not going to go from one binary to the other, it’s going to be a continuous process of development. There will be houses as we know them now but there will be a lot more town houses, there will be more apartments, there will be more families who live in them and perhaps start in those forms of housing. It will be an Auckland which retains the tradition of mixed communities which has been particularly important for the development of Mt Roskill. That way you can have kids from rich and poor households going to the same schools together and learning to live together and learning about each other”.

For Wood, rather than any threat to the existing community, variety of housing is part of a broader vision for a future Three Kings where the traditional mix of cultures, ethnicities and socio-economics which has been historically associated with the area remains. By associating it with the ability to enable children of different backgrounds to mix and to learn about one another, it is an imaginary which closely aligns variety of housing with a range of social goals. As such, it illustrates the point made in Chapter 2.4.3 that densification is often imagined as a means to overcome a range of economic, social and particularly environmental issues (Yigitcanlar *et al.*, 2007). Also, by acknowledging that “there will still be quite a lot of houses sitting on decent sections with a bit of grass behind them”, Wood’s vision importantly still includes the potential for life in a traditional suburban home, however, inevitably with less frequency and alongside a range of denser housing types. In this regard, Wood’s emphasis on diversifying the housing in Three Kings crystallises this idea that the future of suburbs like Three Kings will be one with multiple housing types alongside one another, where the suburban dream still exists in its orthodox fashion alongside of alternative and hybridised suburban imaginaries.

However, there were also imaginaries shared by some participants that differed dramatically from the imaginary constructed by Fletcher. One of the most common implications cited by interview participants for the quarry development that both recent local (Gordon, 2015) and international literature (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015) provide evidence for is the incremental displacement of existing communities. Indeed, the potential for Fletcher Living’s development to be a significant step towards the gentrification of Three Kings was something that many interview participants commented on. In particular, Gary Marshal, a local urban design specialist and sustainable community advocate, took time to stress his view that the Three Kings quarry development was essentially ‘*gentrification by*

stealth'. He was concerned about the indirect effects on the houses around the area with more investment and more value in the area inevitably increasing the area's rates and pricing lower socio-economic groups out of the area.

Other participants also stressed the potential indirect effects the development may have over the broader fabric of the community in the years to come. For Harry Doig, Chair of the Local Puketapapa Board, the development signalled a major turning point for Three Kings, a moment signalling *"increased investment and significant changes for the neighbourhood"*. Since the rise of state houses in Three Kings from the 1940s, one of the things that has continued to define the suburb and the broader Mt Roskill electorate has been an imaginary of its relative social and ethnic diversity. Indeed, there remains a range of socio-economic levels throughout Three Kings, with a number of state houses intermixed alongside private dwellings of various types. Many of the participants I interviewed grew up in Three Kings and had a clear image of it as a demographically mixed, inclusive suburb of many varieties. For this reason, the unknown effects Fletcher Living's quarry development will have on the future character of the suburb was a common concern that I encountered throughout the interview process. The concerns of these participants highlights the potential for the types of aesthetic and symbolic ways of gentrification that can occur without necessarily financially displacing existing communities. As research has shown elsewhere (see Atkinson 2003; Davidson, 2009; Davidson & Lees, 2010), development that forms challenges to the phenomenological qualities of an area, like its retail environment, can change who has control and is empowered in the community. Through these kinds of imaginative or symbolic dynamics, places can lose their significance for particular groups. In the Three Kings context, the fact that the quarry development will bring a range of different lifestyles and associated services into the community means that there will be a risk that existing communities will gradually lose their connection to place and sense of identification with it.

The concerns shared by residents have important connections to the imaginaries constructed by Fletcher Living. As noted above, the imaginaries constructed in the development's advertising material draw on imagery of young, largely New Zealand/European families and working professionals engaging in a variety of spaces and activity throughout the development (see figures 30, 31 and 33). These are arguably the desirable subjects of contemporary urbanism, and key actors in gentrification processes as well. Throughout the research process, the lack of connection felt between some members of the existing community and the imagery constructed by Fletcher Living emerged as a common theme. For instance, local urban designer and environmentalist Gary Marshall stressed that the imagery on its website didn't represent the types of communities that existed in Three Kings currently. He explained to me that he personally struggled to imagine himself ever living in the development, suggesting that "you only have to look at their promotional material to see who they

are promoting this development to". These broader imaginaries echo the claims from the literature introduced in Chapter 2.4.3 that moves toward densification in established suburbs is often met by concerns from existing communities that such developments are merely gentrification in disguise and will at the very least work to make homes for existing residents unaffordable (Huxley, 1997; McCrea & Walters, 2012; Cohen, 2014). They point to the way in which, while densification projects like Fletcher Living's quarry development inevitably provide more housing in a particular community, when undertaken with the intent to gentrify and provide for a more lucrative market, they can displace existing residents (Rousseau, 2015).

From a Lefebvrian perspective, the promotional work of Fletchers can be understood as structuring key incremental changes to perceived and lived space that have a number of significant effects. We can understand these changes to the phenomenological characteristics of Three Kings, or the way it is experienced in the everyday, as prefigured by the imaginative work of Fletcher Living in their promotional material –revealing the way in which space is co-constituted by both material and imaginative dynamics. Similarly, the ways in which the material changes of the development will introduce a greater variety of life styles into Three Kings forms significant challenges to the existing spatial practices or lived experiences in Three Kings, creating new understandings of space that will filter through to have a range of material changes in years to come. The imaginaries I have discussed suggest that this could include a less economically diverse community living in a wider variety of housing types. Broadly, this example shows the way in which developers like Fletcher Living play a role in prefiguring the material changes that their developments generate. It gives some insight into how the implications of diverse housing like the gradual displacement of particular communities can occur through a range of imaginative practices that cut across these three modalities to work in different ways across multiple time scales. The different responses of participants to Fletcher Living's representation of the effect of the development on the area's housing illustrates the way in which images and imaginaries resonate in different ways with different individuals.

6.4 Environment

The environment is a key domain through which the imaginative contests around post-suburban space have played out in Three Kings. As Chapter 4 indicated, imaginaries of the clean and family-friendly environment of suburban spaces were key components of their early attraction. As a space that offered more connection to the environment than inner cities, suburbs were traditionally predicated on their environmental benefits. However, with the growing pressure to diversify the types of housing in suburbs like Three Kings as noted above, developments which challenge the particular balance or arrangement traditional suburban spaces have between development and the environment are fuelling a number of imaginative challenges around the future of this relationship.

The environment, for example, is a central component in the imaginative labour at work in the construction of a new 'Heritage Trail' in Three Kings. In 2015, the Puketapapa Local Board established the Three Kings Heritage Trail, an approximately two-hour walk through 16 different sites of historical significance, including Three Kings School, Ranfurly House and Big King (see figures 10, 16 and 19). Each site is accompanied by an information plaque that includes historical photos of the site, information about its history and a QR code that links users to a *Walk Auckland* mobile phone application which provides further information about the site. It was created by the Local Board to "recognise local sites of heritage and cultural significance, and to provide accessible information to the public on the area's fascinating history" (Puketapapa Local Board, 2015). There are a range of potential implications to the addition of a Heritage Trail in Three Kings. As a new way of experiencing the community and its history, the Heritage Trail seems to be an attempt to re-constitute lived spaces for the suburb's inhabitants. In other words, it appears to seek to create new perceptions of Three Kings in perceived and lived space that emphasise the different ways space in Three Kings has been used and valued throughout different periods of its development. Because the trail is designed as a walking tour, it also intersects with and represents another example of the imaginative push for diversification of transport modes that I discussed above. This section focuses on just one example of these imaginative contests coalescing around the environment in Three Kings. Specifically, it focuses on the role Auckland's volcanos play in the imaginative framings and understandings shaping the development in Auckland, with particular attention paid to Big King and its relationship to the quarry development.

Over the past few years, there has been increasing discussion about what role Auckland's volcanoes should play in the city's future. As a field with more than 50 volcanic features, Auckland's volcanic field

is a defining geological pillar around which many of the first Maori and subsequent European settlements were built (Hayward *et al.*, 2011). However, for the past 150 years, the cultural and geological significance of Auckland's volcanoes has largely been ignored. With over a century of quarrying to supply Auckland's development, this is particularly true for the Three Kings volcanic formation. In recent years, there have been a number of debates that, under a variety of competing imaginaries, have reflected on this history to raise questions about what position Auckland's volcanoes will play in the future of the city. This is particularly true in the growing push in recent years to seek UNESCO World Heritage Status for Auckland's volcanic field. This effort first started in 1995 when the Auckland Conservancy listed the goal as a key strategy (Johnston, 2005). Since the Auckland plan identified securing UNESCO World Heritage Status for the city's volcanic field by 2020 as a key goal, the calls for protection have grown and become more consistent, featuring in a number of media discussions surrounding the place of Auckland's volcanoes. From a Lefebvrian perspective, this attempt to achieve world heritage status for Auckland's volcanoes is an example of an attempt to re-imagine Auckland's volcanic field in conceived space as something with immense geological and cultural heritage. Indeed, by categorising Auckland's volcanoes alongside international 'treasures' including Stonehenge and Egypt's Pyramids, the attempt seeks to completely reimagine and reconfigure perceptions of the field, not only in Auckland, but globally as a means of attracting tourists. For many in the area, Big King acts as a marker of local identity, a defining characteristic that differentiates it from other suburbs. The view from its summit can be seen in figure 10 in Chapter 5.2. While it is difficult to speculate what effect the UNESCO status will have over the community, the goal nevertheless represents an attempt to re-define perceptions of the field in an abstract way through changing the way it is codified and made sense of.

Fletcher Living has used its promotional material to construct a particular imaginary of what life alongside Big King in the completed development and throughout the broader community might be like. In front of a backdrop of glossy pictures of Big King at sun set, the text on its website begins to generate an image of what role the volcano will play in the development:

“urban design has been carefully considered to incorporate multiple vistas of Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta/Big King. Street level views and improved access will restore Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta/Big King's position as a key feature of Auckland, and by doing so give the site a strong sense of location and connection with the wider community” (Fletcher Living, 2017e).

This text reflects one example of how imaginaries about the environment are being employed by Fletcher Living to make particular claims about the changes it is proposing in the area and the positive effects these will have in the community. By offering specified views of the volcano and increasing

access to it, Fletcher is constructing an image of the future development as one that will be integrated with and enhance the volcano and surrounding natural environment. Indeed, it explains that *“regenerative native bush will extend Big King’s footprint for greater connection between neighbourhood and nature”*, and that *“enhanced pathways will be created to open up Big Kings for recreational access”* (Fletcher Living, 2017e). In this regard, the imaginaries produced by Fletcher that emphasise the need to pedestrianise the environment to make it accessible also intersect with the key imaginings it has employed around transport that were discussed above.

This particular imaginary of a rehabilitated, connected natural environment was certainly visible in many of perceptions of participants I interviewed. Indeed, some of the participants made clear their view that the growth Auckland is experiencing must not be at the expense of the last remaining pieces of our volcanic history. This was particularly true for Michael Wood, the Labour party MP for the Mt Roskill electorate. He explained to me the significance of volcanoes like Big King to the current period of development in Auckland and why he thinks Fletcher Living is not living up to that vision:

“As we densify Auckland we have to do it in a way that is sensitive to things that are really critical to Auckland’s identity and natural environment. And one of those is our volcanic cones. So we have got Big King here which is an outstanding natural feature. Originally we had 4 cones which have been quarried away and have built most of Auckland’s roads so in that sense the community has already given away a lot of its Volcanic heritage and beauty to help Auckland grow. There’s now only one volcanic cone left, Big King, and the Fletcher’s design did not even attempt to include an assessment of how the development would affect the volcanic landscape. And these were reflected in all of their practices, particularly the way in which their apartments are designed to be built hard up against the Flanks of the Maunga instead of allowing some breathing space. You had key aspects of the volcanic landscape, several of the bluffs, lava lakes etc., that were the remnants of the previous cones that will be basically obliterated under the Fletcher plan”.

Wood’s vision for the future of Three Kings builds on the idea of Big King as a centre piece of the suburb which the community must celebrate and own. His criticism of Fletcher Living’s plan to build against the side of Big King draws on the idea that the area’s remaining cultural and geological heritage must be respected by being given space to breath and rehabilitate. Drawing on the sites history of quarrying, Wood’s vision connects this time of change in Three Kings to the need to take a different approach to development which acknowledges the contribution of the volcanic feature by rehabilitating and respecting what remains of it. In other words, Wood’s explanation employs

imaginaries around the environment to help set an agenda that modern development is about being sensitive to the environment and rehabilitating the things that make an area unique.

These concerns were emphasised in the imaginaries constructed by the alternative design commissioned by Richard Reid. This alternative design claims to provide a *“more efficient use of space and an enhanced filling plan”* that *“enables a green buffer to be created against Big King/Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta, protecting the values of the maunga”* (Roskill Community Voice, 2016). For supporters of the plan like Harry Doig, chair of the local board, the alternative plan reflects the hope of the board that *“even though [Auckland] will become a more intensified city, [it] will actually become a city that rehabilitates and improve the spaces that make places like Three Kings great places to live”*. It is this sentiment which has fuelled the community’s concern around the development proposed design to build apartments right up hard against the wall of the quarry and the edge of the volcano. For Fletcher Living, this part of the design is an unavoidable and essential component that will ensure that the development will reach its proposed 1200-1500 terraced houses and apartments. However, for local community groups like Three Kings Community Action, this part of the design disrespects and disintegrates the community from the volcano. Drawing on Lefebvre’s key insights, it is clear that some of the antagonisms around the relationship between the development and the volcano hinge on some key imaginative contests. Revealing the growing clash of social interests around space, these tensions exemplify Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of contradictions of space. Specifically, Fletcher Living’s codified or abstract understanding of the quarry in conceived space which focuses on the need for the development to maximise housing capacity are in tension with the imaginaries of parts of the community in perceived and lived space emphasising the need to respect the area’s remaining environmental features. They show that the environment was not only a key imaginary Fletcher Living employed to construct a positive image of the development, but also a central imaginative tool the community drew from to show their concern for the development and what potential effects it may have in the future.

One of the broader debates around volcanoes that captures the types of imaginative contests described above is around volcanic view shafts. Indeed, the debate around view shafts is one of the most established on-going debates in Auckland surrounding its volcanoes that have played a key role in generating imaginaries in perceived and lived space that we have of them today. Since 1977, Auckland has had a range of viewshafts mandated by planning regulations which work to prohibit particular development (typically in the form of apartment blocks) that obstruct specified view channels (Rudman, 2012). Introduced in 1977, these regulations were the result of years of debate regarding the adequate form and function of Auckland’s volcanoes in the workings of the city (Rudman, 2016). Specifically, the regulations were the result of the community outrage that

surrounded development of the Pine apartments at the base of nearby Mt Eden in the early 1970s. Opponents were galvanised by the erection of the Pine apartment in the leafy street of Mt Eden which was seen to disrupt the iconic profile that volcanoes like Mt Eden constructed for the city's suburbs (Rudman, 2012).

These regulations have since played a significant role in the development of Auckland's suburbs like Three Kings. For the Independent Hearings Panel which was commissioned by the Auckland Council to draft the Unitary Plan, the value viewshafts contribute to the social and cultural wellbeing of the people and communities of Auckland is considered to outweigh the value of potential development forgone due to the height restrictions they impose (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2016). Indeed, it is no accident that residents of Auckland can see popular volcanoes like One Tree Hill and Mt Eden from main arterial routes and highways through the city but rather because of the emphasis policy makers have placed on restricting development around these volcanoes since this period. Indeed, the fact they are visible from countless viewpoints throughout Auckland acts as a daily reminder to the city's residents that they live among a field of dozens of volcanoes. However, since this first wave of regulation, the past 20 years have seen Auckland's invisible network of view shafts undergo a handful of reviews, most recently within the Unitary Plan. A main proponent for their removal are major land owners across the city like Housing New Zealand, a nation-wide, central government organisation responsible for providing housing services to those in need, who claim the regulations are producing a "a potential capacity loss of 1150 units" to their organisation and a further 24,500 to developers city-wide (Rudman, 2015).

Despite these contests, views of Big King were a key component of the imagery constructed by Fletcher Living of the development in its promotional material. Its website explains that "*Designated viewing areas will let residents greet the morning or usher out the evening views to Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill) to the east and Maungawhau (Mt Eden) to the north*" and that "*Key site lines to Big King as well as neighbouring volcanic cones will be preserved*" (Fletcher Living, 2017e).

In this sense, the emphasis Fletcher Living's promotional material places on the views residents will have of the areas volcanos reflects how viewshafts have become part of the ways in which development is structured in suburbs like Three Kings. By stressing the ability of residents to use designated viewing areas to "greet the morning or usher out the evening", Fletcher Living is seeking to embed its proposal within these established sets of ideas about how urban form should relate to geological features in Auckland. This example reflects another instance where Fletcher Living is drawing on these established imaginaries about the environment in Auckland to create an

understanding of its development as one that will be integrated and in tune with the surrounding natural environment.

Volcanic viewshafts can be understood to represent one of the earliest attempts to reimagine Auckland's volcanoes in a kind of abstract, conceived space focused on securing a particular type of urban environment. The challenges Housing New Zealand has made to view shafts in the suburb illustrate the different scales at work in the imaginative debates surrounding the suburb's volcanoes, revealing the way in which these local contests also relate to the ways in which development is conceptualised by a variety of actors working at regional and national scales. Indeed, the more technocratic, abstract imaginaries of groups like theirs in conceived space that focus on the lost housing capacity are at odds with some of the community's every day and symbolic understandings of volcanoes like Big King in perceived and lived space as something unique in the area which must be celebrated. For groups like the Volcanic Cones Society, these attempts to remove or degrade Auckland's network of volcanic view shafts go against the push to achieve UNESCO World Heritage status for the city's volcanic field by 2020 (Hueber, 2012), recognising the potential imaginative implications if the field was gradually obscured. *New Zealand Herald* columnist Brian Rudman's acknowledged the significance of these imaginaries when he asked in a recent opinion piece "*if you can't see the maunga, do they even exist?*" (Rudman, 2012). His comment reiterates the way in which the effects of the abstract codification of space by volcanic view shafts over the past few decades has filtered down through perceived and lived space to position views of the volcanoes as a central feature of life in Auckland's suburbs. In this regard, it is unsurprising that as a central component of the imaginaries residents have about their suburbs, volcanoes like Three Kings are a significant point of contention around which imaginative contests coalesce and help produce changes in the environments of suburbs like Three Kings. In this sense, it is clear that questions regarding how we imagine the city and its relationship to the city's various volcanic fields, from how we view them to how we act and live alongside them, are of critical importance shaping many of the city's plans, policy and practices.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused at neighbourhood level in particular, on the imaginative conflicts characterising post-suburbanisation in Three Kings. It identified and used three strands to contemporary ideas that circulate around suburban developments in Three Kings to discuss and situate the everyday imaginative contestations that happen in this variegated and uneven movement towards post-suburbia. It has supplemented the previous chapter's focus on the conceived spaces of suburbia by emphasising the role of perceived and lived space, forming two functionally separate perspectives that make sense of the role played by imaginaries in enabling post-suburbia in Auckland. It has also supplemented the historical emphasis of the previous two chapters by focusing on the smaller scale, everyday imaginaries characterising post-suburbanisation in Three Kings. In this sense, this chapter has added to understanding of imaginative practices as operating over a range of different temporal and spatial scales to produce space.

It has shown that as a unique feature defining Auckland, its volcanic field is one of the distinct components that makes post-suburbanisation extremely situated and contested. The imaginative dimensions underpinning the role of volcanic view shafts captures some of the ways in which the city's volcanic field is shaping and situating the emergence of post-suburban forms in the city. As an abstract, codification of the city's suburban spaces, volcanic view shafts represent a distinct urban imaginary in Auckland which has had an obvious effect on the material development of the city's suburbs by limiting the heights of buildings in particular areas. By keeping the field in view over the past 40 years, Auckland's volcanic view shafts have helped shape not only the development of the city, but also the everyday experiences in Auckland's suburbs which developers like Fletcher Living now draw on to help construct an image of its own development. However, with the recent rise of concerns around Auckland's 'inevitable' population growth, I have shown how there are also growing imaginative challenges contesting this position from the likes of Housing New Zealand. In this sense, the imaginaries circulating around volcanic view shafts offers one poignant example of the contested and situated character of post-suburbanisation in the city.

The imaginaries circulating around transport in Three Kings also revealed the way in which post-suburbanisation in Auckland is highly contested and dependant on a series of long-standing historical processes articulated at different scales. Specifically, comparing the imaginative contests characterising the proposal for light rail against the emphasis on pedestrianising the suburb provided insight into the effect of one of these long standing historical processes: the dominance of the

automobile. The reception to the emphasis on pedestrianising Three Kings which focused at the local scale to increase connectivity within the suburb contrasts with the visible criticism and contest around the proposal to bring light rail into suburbs like Three Kings, reflecting the different ways each proposal either challenged or potentially complemented the dominance of the automobile. Because certain types of pedestrianisation can be incorporated alongside the automobile in localised ways, this example illustrates the way in which certain varieties of post-suburbanisation are possible because they do not challenge the dominance long standing historical imaginaries like the automobile. It reveals the way in which the historical dominance of the automobile has created a particular imaginative position within particular groups in Auckland which fuels contests to any proposal which challenges this dominance, yet ignores those proposals like localised pedestrianisation that do not. In other words, these dynamics have illustrated that while suburbs like Three Kings are facing numerous changes to their traditional forms and ways of living, the work of these long standing historical imaginaries are working to make these changes distinct from experiences elsewhere.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Key Conclusions

This thesis has explored the role and character of imaginative practices in the emergence of traditional and post-suburban space in Auckland. It has illustrated that imaginaries are a crucial element in the processes of urban development insofar as they help shape what is seen as necessary, appropriate and achievable. The thesis developed a Lefebvrian approach to the production of suburban space, emphasising the co-constitutive interaction of material and imaginative dynamics. It used this approach to demonstrate how imaginative practices featured in a variety of ways in the production of traditional suburban spaces, tracing the way in which they have been co-constituted by a range of imaginaries which have come to fruition under particular material conditions. It explained how the dominance of traditional imaginaries about suburban space is being challenged in a range of ways—under the banner of post-suburbanisation—including possibilities for less automobile use, wider variety of housing, and different kinds of relationships with nature. It detailed how these changes associated with post-suburbanisation involve a range of additions to the suburbanisation process which included a broader densification, diversification and complexification of suburban space. The thesis drew on a range of historical and contemporary secondary sources to understand and situate these changes in the Auckland context. In the suburban era, I argued these changes were characterised by imaginaries around sanitation and family, yet in the post-suburban era, I explained the way in which the viability and desirability of traditional suburbs has become increasingly questioned under the rise of new imaginaries concerning the sustainability of suburbanisation and the ability of it to accommodate Auckland's growing population. By tracing the historical imaginaries which have helped constitute the emergence of traditional and post-suburban space in Auckland and Three Kings, Chapters 4 and 5 used these themes to demonstrate how the suburbs have been imaginatively positioned and problematised in a range of different ways throughout debates about Auckland's development. It supplemented these secondary sources with interviews with key actors in the development of Three Kings to understand how larger historical imaginaries are articulated with more localised imaginaries of space. Shifting from this historical focus to the imaginaries at the local, everyday scale, Chapter 6 drew on this information to reveal the number of ways in which imaginative

practices are implicated in the promotion of, and resistance to, suburban change around transport, housing and the environment at the local level in Three Kings.

7.2 Key Contributions

There are two central issues raised by this thesis. Firstly, the thesis has shown that post-suburbanisation is neither a linear transition from, nor epochal break with, traditional suburbanisation but rather a multiplication and hybridisation of suburban space. Importantly, this understanding contrasts with the tendency in the literature to speak about post-suburbanisation as a standalone, clear cut process that is distinct from traditional suburbanisation (Kling *et al.*, 1995; Teaford, 1997; Soja 2000; Dear, 2004). Instead of arriving or materialising as a distinct, coherent and fully realised 'traditional suburbs' and 'post-suburbs', this thesis has shown that the suburbs have always been in a process of construction, put together by a range of different imaginaries and changing material conditions. In the context of Auckland, the thesis showed how suburban imaginaries have solidified and multiplied under certain conditions like, for instance, concerns about environmental sustainability and, more recently, about population growth. Attending to the everyday imaginaries employed by key figures at the neighbourhood level in Three Kings revealed the character of this hybridisation. For instance, it showed that the idea of the traditional suburban dream plays an enduring role. Indeed, even as post-suburbanisation will become more widespread, it identified how the idea of detached, single-family homes with private backyards will continue to be important under post-suburbia, however, this will be alongside a range of emerging and contrasting residential arrangements. Attending to the everyday imaginaries employed by key figures at the neighbourhood level in Three Kings also demonstrated the continued yet changing role of the automobile in this multiplication and hybridisation of suburban space. It showed how different post-suburban imaginaries have received less contest and subsequently more success than other varieties because of the different ways in which the transport alternatives pose a threat to the established imaginative and material dominance of the automobile in certain spaces. These discrepancies in the ways in which space is changing in Three Kings reveal how post-suburban imaginaries contend with the imaginative and material path dependencies wrought by traditional suburbanisation like the automobile or the traditional suburban home. In this regard, the thesis has revealed the way in which post-suburbanisation involves a multiplication of what suburbia is. Rather than monopolising or replacing traditional suburban space

and ways of life altogether, post-suburbanisation represents a multiplication and hybridisation of suburban space and the meaning of what it is to live in suburbia.

Second, the thesis has shown that post-suburbanisation is dependent on a series of long-standing historical processes that articulate at different temporal and spatial scales. By tracing the development of Auckland over the past century, this research has demonstrated the ways in which material and imaginative practices have shaped the formation of traditional and post-suburban spaces. Using Lefebvre's approach to the production of space, the research revealed how suburban imaginaries emerged out of responses to changes in the material environment, from the dirt and disease associated with the 19th century inner city, to the ecological inefficiencies associated with traditional suburbia. These connections reveal how historical urban imaginaries worked in tandem with the material changes underway to co-constitute and bring traditional and now post-suburban forms to fruition, helping to realise particular development pathways in Auckland over others. The multi-scalar nature of suburban imaginaries was apparent in the context of Three Kings, where local contests around space are shaped by a variety of actors working at both local and national scales. Debates over development in Three Kings have also shown the way in which historical imaginaries are drawn on to construct various understandings of the changes occurring in suburbs like Three Kings today. The thesis has shown why these imaginative practices are important at the local level by revealing how they help structure or constitute a range of material changes that developments can have in the future, like for instance, the gradual literal and symbolic displacement of existing communities. Indeed, the thesis also revealed the way in which particular material changes to an environment can often create long term effects on the ways in which space is understood in perceived and lived space by disrupting the imaginative connections existing communities have with their environments.

In summary, the thesis has provided some insight into the various ways in which imaginative and material dynamics are intertwined in the production of traditional and post-suburban space across multiple spatial and temporal scales that are ultimately articulating locally. The contributions of this thesis have illustrated that imaginative practices are a vitally important, yet underexplored component of the changes occurring in many suburbs in cities like Auckland. Accordingly, this thesis has shown that more attention needs to be paid to the longstanding historical processes that articulate over different scales and situate the effects of post-suburbanisation over the development of cities like Auckland. It demonstrates the need to give more recognition to the role imaginative practices play in the realisation of urban change and the ways in which long standing historical processes feature in the contests around space.

7.3 Future Directions

This thesis has illustrated the role and character of imaginative practices in the production of traditional and post-suburban spaces in Auckland and Three Kings. However, it must be acknowledged that this thesis is only one particular telling of this story and that there are a number of limitations to this approach which must be reflected on. Rather than any grand set of claims about the nature and character of the imaginative production of post-suburban space globally, the contributions of this thesis are highly located in the Auckland and Three Kings context. If the thesis were to focus on a range of different suburbs in Auckland or New Zealand with different histories and in different locations, there may be a number of different imaginative dynamics at work, producing different kinds of post-suburban varieties than this thesis uncovered. The particular reading this thesis offers is also characterised by a strong focus on the historical texts and documentary sources that emerged out the research, one of a number of approaches to this task. For instance, the reading this thesis offers does not draw on the imaginaries of residents through an extensive interview process nor does it explore the changes occurring in Three Kings through a morphological analysis. Nonetheless, the focus on documentary and key informant sources in a specific site like Three Kings are an important starting point for developing more nuanced accounts of post-suburbanisation and the way in which it is entangled in and worked through the material and imaginative dimensions of suburbia

There is considerable scope for further research into the role and character of imaginative practices in the production of traditional and post-suburban space. As a key component of traditional suburbia, the most obvious potential avenue of future enquiry would be a thorough engagement on the changing nature and role of homeownership. This is particularly true for Auckland, where rates of homeownership have gradually declined over the past few decades as the cost of housing has increased (Weir, 2014; Lin, 2015). As a significant challenge to the traditional suburban imaginary, homeownership is likely to play an increasingly important role in the imaginaries shaping future processes of suburbanisation. As this thesis has placed an emphasis on the elite imaginaries of space that are held by key figures embedded in the development process, another potential approach to future research may also include a more detailed examination of the perspectives held by a diverse range of residents in the community. As these higher order, elite imaginaries do not operate in isolation or independently but are filtered through, and reshaped by, the understandings and practices of citizens, there is scope for more detailed research into the way in which these imaginaries feature in the perceived and lived imaginaries of space that residents in suburbs like Three Kings have about the changes occurring in their community. A focus on a wider variety of groups, particularly from

Maori in the Auckland context, may generate further insight into the different imaginaries emanating around transport, housing and the environment in suburbs like Three Kings.

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Appendix 1: Participant Information Statement

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Densifying Auckland's suburbs: An examination of plans, advocacy and resistance in New Lynn and Three Kings

Name of Researcher: Cameron Johnson

Name of Supervisors: Dr Francis Collins & Dr Tom Baker

Researcher Introduction:

I am Cameron Johnson and I am currently completing my Master of Arts degree at the University of Auckland's School of Environment. My supervisors are Dr Francis Collins and Dr Tom Baker.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to know why this research is being conducted and what being a participant in this research will involve. Please take some time to carefully read the following information sheet before deciding whether to participate. Please contact a member of the research team listed at the end of this document if there is anything unclear or if you would like more information.

Project Description

This research project is being conducted as part of my Master of Arts thesis within the School of Environment at the University of Auckland and is supervised by Dr Francis Collins and Dr Tom Baker. The project explores the advocacy for, and resistance to, suburban densification in Auckland through a case studies of Three Kings. There are three main goals for the project. Firstly, it will investigate the ways in which images and ideas about the suburbs are reflected in government and developers' plans and decisions about urban densification. Secondly, it will assess the ways in which these images and ideas are appropriated or resisted by the communities impacted by densification. Thirdly, it will

compare current images and ideas relating to densifying suburbs with those of previous historical periods.

Project Procedures

Your involvement in this research will be through an interview lasting approximately one hour (this can be shortened if you are time constrained). The interview will be conducted at a time and place convenient for you. With your consent, an audio recording of this interview will be made with a digital voice recorder. If you would prefer not to be audio recorded, notes will be taken. Transcripts of the research will be completed by the researcher. In broad terms, the interview will cover issues related to your involvement in, and/or perspective on, densification in Three Kings and Auckland more generally. The interview will focus, in particular, on the ways in which ideas and images of densification initiatives in these areas communicate certain ideas about suburban densification (whether positive, negative or indifferent). The recorded data collected during the interview will be stored on password-protected computers at the University of Auckland, will be accessible to the research team only, and will be kept for a mandated period of six years. Any data recorded on paper form will be secured in a locked compartment in the University of Auckland. After this period of time the computerised data will be permanently deleted and any physical data will be shredded.

Right to withdraw from participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you consent to the interview being recorded, you have the right for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview. For up to a month after the interview, you have the right to edit and/or withdraw part or all of the information that you have provided for this research.

Confidentiality

Any information you provide will be backed up on a secure file in the University of Auckland's server. If you do not want your name and position to be used in the thesis and any subsequent publications, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity for you and those of any other people and organisations mentioned. However, given the small community of practice the research concerns, even if your name and title is not used, there is a chance that your identity will be discernable. Please indicate on the consent form whether you want your name and position to be kept confidential.

Contact details and Approval

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, at the University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON
28/06/16 for three years, Reference Number 017600

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Densifying Auckland's suburbs: An examination of plans, advocacy and resistance in New Lynn and Three Kings

Researchers: Cameron Johnson (Master of Arts candidate), Dr Francis Collins (supervisor), Dr Tom Baker (supervisor)

Contact email address for researcher: cjoh418@aucklanduni.ac.nz

I have read the participant information sheet. I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this research by participating in an interview. I understand that:

- My participation in this research is voluntary.
- I am free to withdraw any data I have provided for up to a month after the interview.
- I am free to withdraw from participation in the interview at any time without giving a reason.
- I consent for the interview to be voice recorded.
- I can ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time, without giving a reason.
- The interview will be transcribed by Cameron Jonson (graduate researcher).
- A transcript will be provided to me within one month of the interview and I will have one month to revise or withdraw data after I receive the transcript and if not it will be assumed I am happy with the content of the interview.
- Copies of the interview recording and transcript will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be deleted.
- The interview recording and transcript will inform an assessed piece of university work and possible subsequent publications, associated seminars and presentations.
- In subsequent publications I wish to be identified as:
 - My name and position
 - A generic job title or description
 - A pseudonym
- I wish do not wish to receive a summary of the results.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact details:

Email:

Address:

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON
28/06/16 for three years, Reference Number 017600