

Townhouse Survey Report

**A survey of households living in modern infill housing
in Christchurch City**



Elizabeth Plew
Monitoring and Research Team
January 2001
Technical Report 01/1
File No. PP/SU/1/1

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INTRODUCTION

Infill occurs when new development takes place within an existing suburb of older houses. It includes one or more new townhouses built behind, in front of or beside an existing older house. It also includes developments of two or more townhouses where the original older house has been demolished. Infill townhouses are built on cross-lease sections or small (subdivided) freehold sections.

In 1999, the Christchurch City Council decided to conduct some research examining the factors and motivations influencing people who choose to live in infill development in the City.

The two objectives of this research were:

- To find out why people in Christchurch are choosing to live in modern townhouses in infill-type development.
- Whether infill housing meets their housing needs.

WHY WAS THIS STUDY NECESSARY?

During the review of the City Plan (leading up to the Amended City Plan in May, 1999) there was considerable public debate about residential housing development, in particular the effects of urban consolidation on housing choice. This discussion was about the perceived lack of available residential vacant land

and the increase in infill type development.

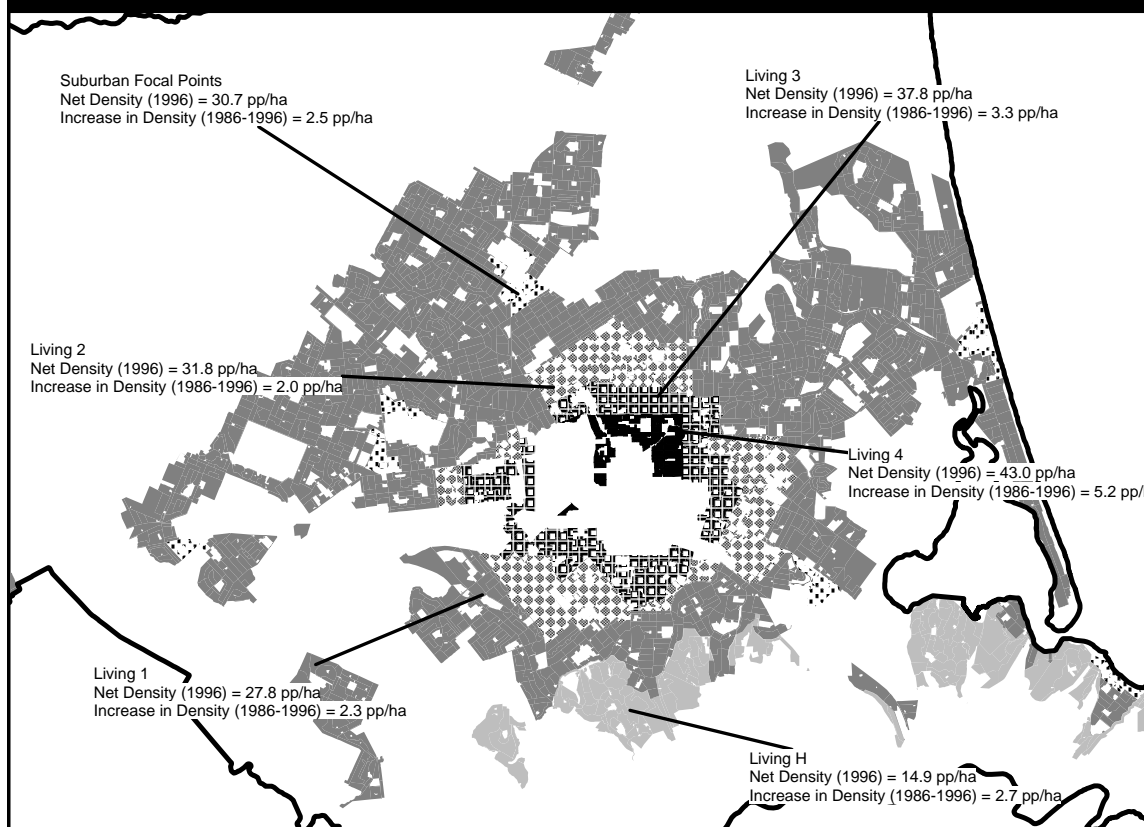
One side of the debate argued that the large increase in infill housing development during this period was because of a lack of new, or 'greenfield' residential land. The limited range of new properties was driving up prices of sections and houses in new subdivisions and people were moving into infill type development not by choice but because of price and supply constraints.

The other side of the debate focused on the necessity of providing a range of housing styles – from new subdivisions to infill development. Living on a small infill section was seen as a lifestyle choice. The people living in these houses chose them because they did not have the time or inclination to maintain a large property. The ageing population and the trend of declining household sizes were used as evidence that not everyone required a house on a large section.

TRENDS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Examining some of the trends in urban growth within Christchurch in the past decade presents these key arguments in more depth. It also highlights the significance of the research in providing quantifiable information about City residents' attitudes towards infill housing.

Figure 1. Population Density by Zone, 1996



INTRODUCTION

The 1995 Notified City Plan promoted the City Council’s objective of *urban consolidation*: “...not necessarily...containment of the City within its present urban boundaries, but...a compact pattern of urban development, in contrast to isolated and dispersed patterns of urban growth into what are currently rural areas” (Vol 2, 6/4). This objective had emerged out of extensive analysis of the economic costs and environmental implications of alternative urban forms, and was intended to clearly signal to the community that this type of urban development was the most desirable for the City.

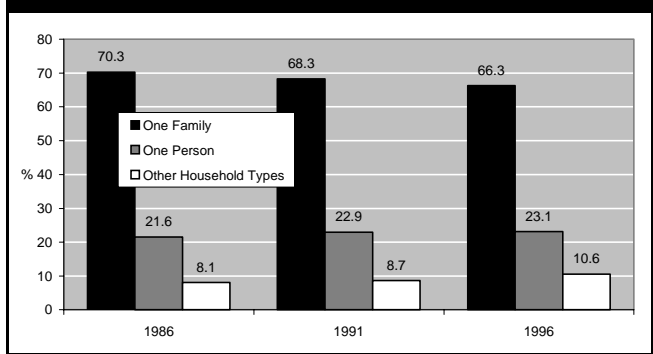
But urban consolidation was not a new policy, more the continuation of an existing trend. During the ten year period from 1986 to 1996, city-wide residential density increased by 9.9% or 2.5 people per hectare, partly a reflection of containment policies in the former Canterbury Regional Planning Scheme. The rate of increase varied by zone, encouraging higher density building development within the inner city living zones, while still allowing for some peripheral development (Figure 1).

Household Type and Size

One trend that has encouraged urban consolidation is the changing demographic profile of the population within the City. As with national trends, both the nature and size of households in the City have altered over the past 10-15 years. While the majority of households in the City comprise one family, the proportion of this household type has decreased from 70.2 per cent in 1986 to 66.3 per cent in 1996 (Figure 2). In contrast, there has been a small percentage increase in some other household types, such as multiple family and single person households.

These changes reflect increases in the migration of Asian families (who are twice as likely as New Zealand families to share their homes); an increase in the number of elderly (especially women) choosing to live alone; and more divorces/separations and later

Figure 2. Household Type, 1986-1996



marriages also increasing the number of single person and non-family households.

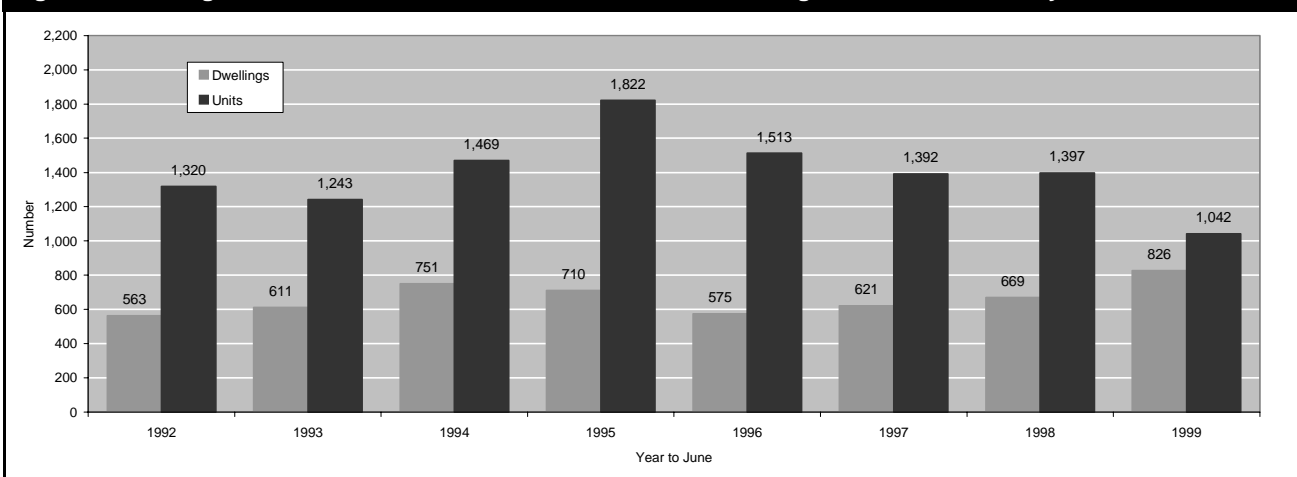
Household size is another demographic that has been changing. Influenced by the same trends affecting household types (more single/non family households) average household occupancy has declined from 3.1 in 1976 to an all time low of 2.6 in 1996. This alone can place pressure on existing housing and residential land stocks, with a growing population requiring more housing (with less people per dwelling) and smaller sections.

Building Consents

Building consent records provide an insight into how the City’s residential environment is developing. The most significant housing trend to emerge in the 1990’s was the rapid growth in the construction of units or apartments within the City.

Between July 1991 and June 1999 building consents issued for units accounted for two thirds of all residential construction within the City (see Figure 3). During this time, 11,198 building consents were issued for units compared with 5,326 for separate dwellings. The trend in building consents issued for the 1991 to 1999 period showed a peak in the 1995 year, with around 2,500 consents. Since then, the trend has returned to around 2,000 building consents issued for residential properties each year. The in-

Figure 3. Building Consents Issued for Residential Units and Dwellings in Christchurch City, 1992-1999



INTRODUCTION

crease during 1995 was partly attributable to public uncertainty prior to notification of the City Plan. Some developers and homebuilders probably obtained building consents in advance of possible City Plan rule changes.

Since 1995 there has been an increase in the number of building consents issued for dwellings, while the number of consents for units has decreased. By 1999 the number of consents for dwellings was around 44 per cent of the total. This decline may have been caused by a reduction in the number of easily subdividable properties available and/or changing attitudes to infill development.

The relative difference between greenfield development and redevelopment of existing sites is less pronounced, but of more relevance to the infill debate. For the period between July 1991 and June 1999, development was evenly distributed between new and redeveloped sites. At the beginning of the 1990's, 60 per cent of building consents issued were for development on new sites. This proportion decreased to around 40 per cent between 1994 to 1997 (when infill development dominated) and then increased to 57 per cent in 1999.

Unit development has affected much of the City, although most is concentrated in the inner suburbs. One third of the Area Units in the City have had more than 100 building consents issued for new units in the period between July 1991 and June 1999 (Figure

4). Two Area Units, Avon Loop in the Central City (not in the survey sample – see the Methodology section) and Riccarton, had over 400 building consents issued for units. Much of the unit development has taken place in the residential area immediately surrounding the Central City (mostly L2-L3 zones) and in the north-western suburbs (mostly L1). Development has also occurred in the outer suburbs of Sumner, North Beach and Belfast.

Vacant Residential Land

Vacant residential land was another part of the debate, and consists of those areas of the City zoned for residential development but not currently built on.

Submissions were made during the City Plan hearings about the perceived lack of available vacant residential land for development. In the fifteen year period from 1985 to 1999, the amount of vacant residential land in the City dropped from over 1,500 hectares to under 1,000 hectares (see Figure 5). Towards the mid to late 1990's it began to limit the choice and scope of development in the City. Over 40 per cent of the total residential vacant land available in the City was on the Port Hills, aggravating the shortage of sections on the flat.

In May 1999 the amendments to the notified City Plan rezoned an additional 665 hectares of non-urban land to residential, with a further 465 hectares of rezoned land being appealed or under a deferred Council decision (the land to be released for urban

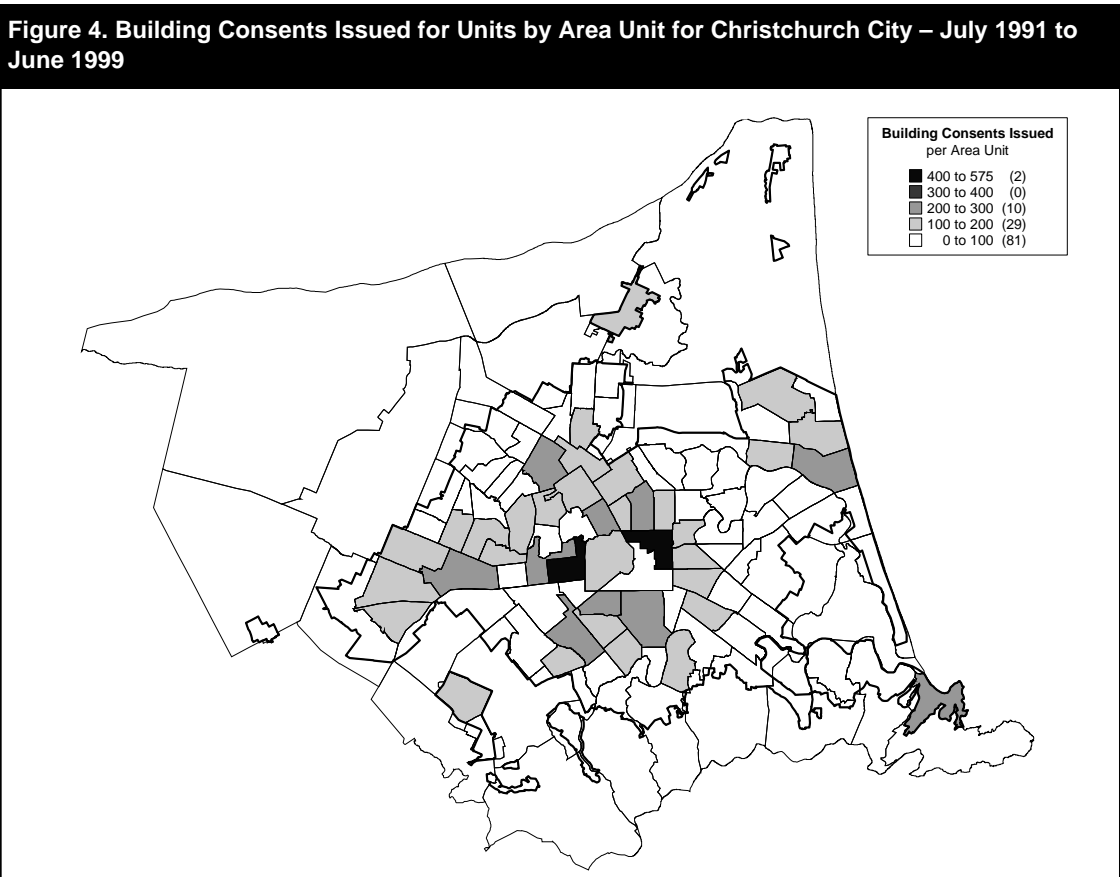
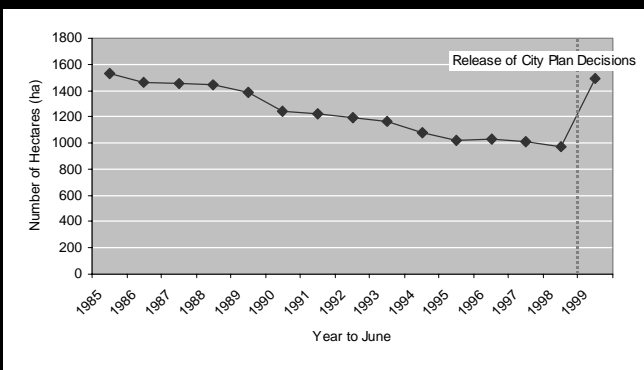


Figure 5. Amount of Vacant Residential Land in Christchurch City, 1985-1999



use at a later date). This decreased the proportion of land available for development on the Port Hills to around thirty per cent of the total vacant residential land in the City, and opened up large areas in Halswell and Belfast for urban growth.

THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

All of these issues – City Plan objectives, vacant residential land, building consent trends and changing household structures were valid concerns raised by submitters. But the Council needed more information, in particular from residents in infill housing, about whether it was their preferred housing choice and if this type of development suited their needs. While submissions to the City Plan provided anecdotal evidence, more substantial research was necessary to increase public knowledge of infill residents attitudes and opinions about the housing they lived in.

From this framework the two key elements of the research were identified: to find out why people were choosing to live in recent infill development; and whether infill housing was meeting their housing needs. Once these objectives had been established, the next step was to define an appropriate methodology for the research.

METHODOLOGY

The research needed a methodology that would meet the specified objectives by collecting information from residents of infill development, while limiting resource and labour costs. The study also had to be accurate and capable of having detailed analysis performed on the results. In this case, a postal survey was agreed on as the most appropriate method of collecting this information. A mail-out questionnaire is a relatively inexpensive method of surveying a large number of people and allows a range of questions to be asked.

Telephone and face to face surveys were considered but were decided against (even though they were likely to have a higher response rate), as they tend to be more labour and cost intensive. Telephone surveys would have also required identifying the telephone numbers of townhouse residents which would have been difficult.

IDENTIFYING THE SURVEY PARAMETERS

The population units for the survey were defined as townhouses which had a building consent issued for construction between January 1994 and January 1999¹, located within Living 1, 2 and 3 zones (suburban residential) as identified in the Notified Christchurch City Plan, 1995.

A townhouse was defined as follows:

- A dwelling or unit built on a cross-lease or freehold section less than 500m².
- Developments consisting of six or less units on an existing site.

Residential areas on the Port Hills (Living Hills zones) and in the Central City (Living 4, 5 and CC zones) were excluded as these areas have different development styles and issues. They also have significantly different population densities.

All building consent records issued between January 1994 and January 1999 were searched in the Council's Building Consents database. Nearly 4,500 building consents were identified as meeting the specified criteria.

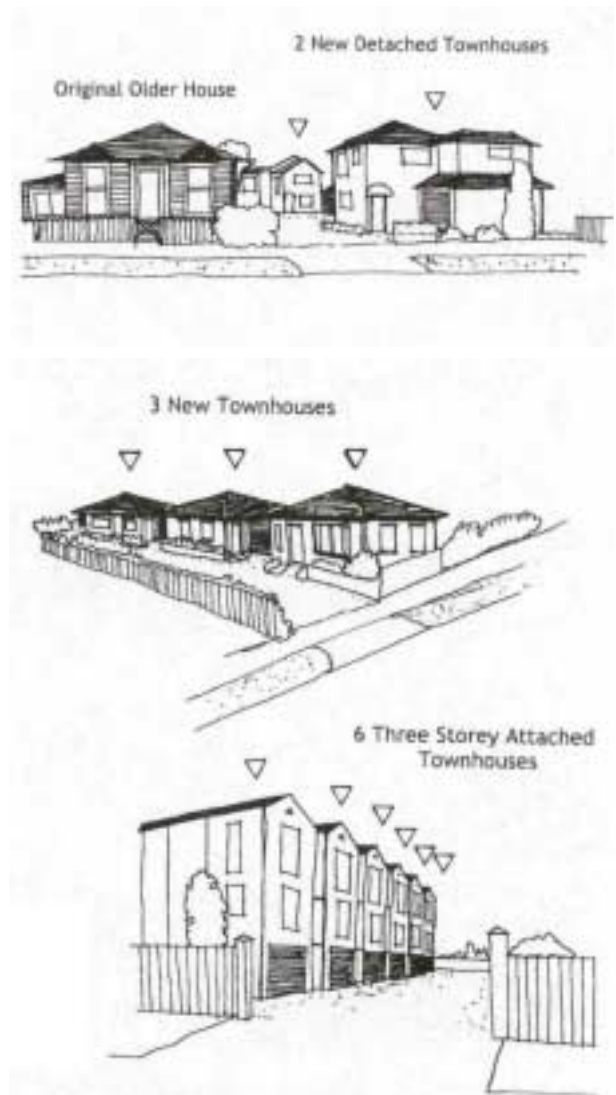
QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A census, or survey of the total population had been chosen as the survey method. Therefore question-

¹ The period from 1994 to 1998 was selected to include those people living in modern townhouses which have been influenced by the Notified Christchurch City Plan. The upper limit of January 1999 was chosen to avoid sending surveys out to houses which had not yet been built.

naires were sent to all of the townhouses identified in the building consent records as meeting the criteria. One person from each household was then asked to complete the survey. To randomise the process an adult in the household involved in the choice of buying, renting or building the townhouse who had the next birthday was required to complete the questionnaire.

To meet the twofold objectives of the research, the questions asked of respondents needed to cover a range of information. Because it was unknown how accurate the addresses extracted from the building consents were, the questionnaire needed to identify and exclude within the first few questions those who had received a copy but were not eligible to fill it in. To do this, Part A on the front page asked the reader whether their townhouse was like one of four sketches (shown below).





A question then asked if the reader's home and section generally looked like any of the townhouse developments indicated above. If they replied Yes, the survey directed them over the page to Part B, which provided a further written definition of a townhouse and led them onto the rest of the questions. If they answered No, that their house did not look like any in the picture, they were filtered down to the next question. This question asked if they lived immediately in front of, beside or behind the type of townhouse development illustrated above, to which they could reply yes or no. If yes, they were asked for the street address of that townhouse or townhouses. The aim of this question was to identify incorrect addresses and hopefully work out the house in the area the survey should have gone to so that a copy of the survey could be sent to them.

Part B was the main body of the questionnaire divided into 5 sections, described below.

Section 1: Where people lived previously

- Where people lived (within the City or outside of it) before moving to a townhouse
- The type and tenure of accommodation they lived in immediately prior to moving to their townhouse
- The age of the dwelling and section size of their previous home

Section 2: Information about their townhouse

- Number of bedrooms
- Number of storeys
- Stand alone or attached dwelling
- What they like most and least about their townhouse

Section 3: Information about the development of the townhouse site

- Number of houses built on the site at the same time, and satisfaction with them
- Whether the original older house was still on the site

Section 4: Factors in looking for their townhouse

- Whether the respondent had a specific location in mind
- Factors that influenced location (what was in the

- area that they wanted to be close to)
- Satisfaction with location
- Whether they specifically wanted a townhouse when planning to move, and if not the type of house they did want
- Satisfaction with the type of house
- Satisfaction with the size of house
- Whether they wanted a home on a back section, if they ended up on one, and satisfaction
- Whether they wanted a small section (<500m²) and why, or if they didn't, why they ended up on one
- Satisfaction with size of outdoor area
- Satisfaction with housing choice when looking for their current home
- Were there features they wanted that they didn't get, and why didn't they get them

Section 5: Property and demographic questions

- Ownership
- Only home owners answered:*
 - ⇒ Whether they are first home owners
 - ⇒ Current government valuation (1998)
 - ⇒ Built or bought townhouse and why
- All respondents answered:*
 - Whether the owner lives in the house
 - How long the respondent has lived there
 - How much longer they think they will live there
 - Age and gender of respondent
 - Number of household occupants and their ages
 - Household composition
 - Sources of income
 - Occupations of salary and wage earners

After the design of the questionnaire had been worked out, a pilot survey was completed by Council staff and their partners known to live in townhouses, to try to pick up errors or misunderstandings with the questions.

SURVEY TIMELINE	
9th Sept 1999	Surveys first mailed out to 4,500 households.
10th-24th Sept	Surveys returned unopened or with Part A answered, are re-addressed and resent.
24th Sept	First reminder letter mailed out.
1st Oct	Final reminder issued with an other copy of the survey.
14th Oct	End date for survey. Over 2,000 questionnaires have been returned.

Feb 2000 Brochure with initial findings sent out to respondents.

SURVEY ERRORS

IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET POPULATION

The research attempted to survey every townhouse in the defined target population. In other words a census was carried out. However, as in all surveys, there were problems associated with locating the population which included issues with postal addresses and questionnaire design. These influenced the response rates for the survey.

Incorrect Addresses

Mailing addresses for the surveys were based on building consent information. If the consent didn't specify otherwise, it was assumed that the street numbers had been divided into 52 and 52A (for example), with the old house taking the number 52 and the new house becoming 52A.

Within a day or so of sending out the first copy of the survey, over 100 envelopes had been sent back, incorrectly addressed. Obviously, while 98% of consents had followed the addressing system we used (old house being 52 and the new house being 52A), the rest were exceptions to the rule.

Another problem was if the townhouse was situated on the corner of two streets. Instead of being part of the street the consent had been issued for, their mailing address was for the other street. This also applied when significant subdivision in an area resulted in a new street, rather than referencing the old one listed in the building consent. Most of these errors were corrected by looking at the latest cadastral layer in one of the Council's geographic information systems (Visual Query), to find the new address. Then a copy of the questionnaire would be sent to the correct address.

Questionnaire Layout

A different problem from having the incorrect address was with the questionnaires that had reached a house, but Part A of the questionnaire was misunderstood. Part A was intended to identify and exclude those survey forms which had been sent to houses that were not townhouses (eg the original older house on the site rather than the new one). It quickly became evident that there were several problems with this approach. The main one was that people misinterpreted the sketches – not recognising them to be only an *example* of townhouse development. They reasoned that if their townhouse was not exactly like one in the picture, they were not eligible to complete the rest of the survey. As a result, some people who should have filled in the survey sent it

back, answering Part A only. This became obvious when double-checking the records to make sure the address was correct, and also through a large number of calls from respondents questioning their eligibility. Their questions often related to the fact that "My house does not look like the one in the picture" - for example, instead of the original older house being at the front (as in the picture), it was at the back. If an eligible household did call the Council they were advised to fill in the questionnaire.

Another problem was in answering the first question of Part A. Some people answered Yes to their home and section generally looking like any of the townhouse developments pictured, then ignored the instruction to turn over the page and continue answering the rest of the questionnaire. Instead, they assumed that they should answer the next question, and in doing so, reached the bottom of the page where it said End of Questionnaire, and returned the survey even though they should have filled it out. There is an unknown number who were eligible but completed only Part A.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

In any written survey, one area of possible error is the questionnaire design. The type of questions that are asked, the wording and the layout can all affect the respondents' answers. In the design of the questionnaire there was a significant element of peer review as well as a pilot survey to try to remove any problems.

In spite of the extensive design process, there were several questions in the final questionnaire that may have given misleading results. It is important that any analysis of these questions is used with caution.

Site Development

One of the questions on site development was: "How many new townhouses were built on this site around the same time as yours?" While most people seemed able to give a clear answer, some respondents who gave an answer in the "Other" category were clearly not sure what a site was or could not tell. This was the case particularly if several adjacent sites had had their old houses removed, the sections subdivided and built on around the same time. Someone buying the property after several years might assume that the original property was larger than it had been.

House Features

A question that unintentionally directed people's answers was the one about house features: "What features did you want when planning to buy, rent or build that your townhouse doesn't have?" The question gave a prompt below, "ie double garage, larger section, ensuite, bath, two toilets etc" and these became some of the most frequently listed features, suggesting that respondents thought about these

METHODOLOGY

features because the survey question prompted them to do so.

Occupations

A question about occupation also caused some confusion: "What is the occupation of the salary and wage earners in your household?" The previous question had asked the respondent to identify the main source of income in the household, eg wages/salaries; superannuation; investments etc. Some respondents then seemed to assume that the next question asked what they earned, rather than their occupation. Some gave their income, others refused to answer. The question in this instance should probably have been phrased better, it may have been clearer if the word 'job' had been used instead of 'occupation', or if emphasis had been given to the word 'occupation' (italicised or bolded).

Respondents

While the research aimed to get information from townhouse residents about their attitudes to townhouse living, townhouses meeting the specified criteria were used as the survey population in order to target the respondent group. Although only one person from each townhouse was surveyed, it was assumed that their views were representative of the household. To do that, the questionnaire required the person who was completing the survey to have been involved in the choice of buying, renting or building their townhouse.

DATA PROCESSING

Data processing errors are another area that can cause bias. The questionnaire data was entered into a Microsoft Access database by experienced data entry operators. Regular data checking was carried out throughout the process, to ensure errors were kept to a minimum. Extensive data checking was also carried out in the analysis phase. For example, part way through the initial analysis of the data, it became clear that 40 blank surveys had been entered. These records were removed and the data re-analysed.

RESPONSE RATES

Increasing Response Rates

When a mail-out survey was selected as the method we were aware that it would have a lower response rate than other methods. Despite this disadvantage mail-out surveys are recognised as an effective and cheap method of data collection. To increase the response rate two reminder letters, the second including a new copy of the survey, were sent out with respondents having six weeks in total to answer the survey. A prize draw was included as an incentive to answer the survey, offered to all respondents including those who only completed Part A. A press release was issued as well, with The Press and other local newspapers writing articles about the survey. There are proba-

bly many reasons why people didn't reply to the survey. Some of them could be:

- Too busy
- Couldn't be bothered
- Didn't like the Council
- Fed up with survey companies and telemarketers
- Not interested in the topic
- On holiday
- Forgot to fill it out until it was too late

Location Analysis

The main issue of whether the rate of non-response biases the results is 'are the people who didn't respond significantly different to the people that did?' Some analysis was done using information collected from the building consent records on City areas and zoning for all households. The data for all households eligible to complete the survey was compared with respondents. This information gave some idea of how well the respondents reflected the total group, in terms of their location in the City. Further research would be necessary (for example, a post-enumeration survey of non-respondents) in order to quantify in more detail how representative the respondent group are of the total population living in infill housing.

AREA ANALYSIS

When the mailing list was first set up using building consent records to identify addresses, other information was also collected from the database. This information included the zone the property was in, the area of the City, and the number of units in the development. Using this information, 3,916 addresses were surveyed, with 3,888 valid addresses then mapped (Figure 6). The remaining 28 had questionnaires that were invalid for various reasons. Of this total, 2,078 completed valid questionnaires were received. The following analysis by zone, area and number of townhouses is presented to quantify how well the respondents represented the targeted households in terms of location.

ZONE ANALYSIS

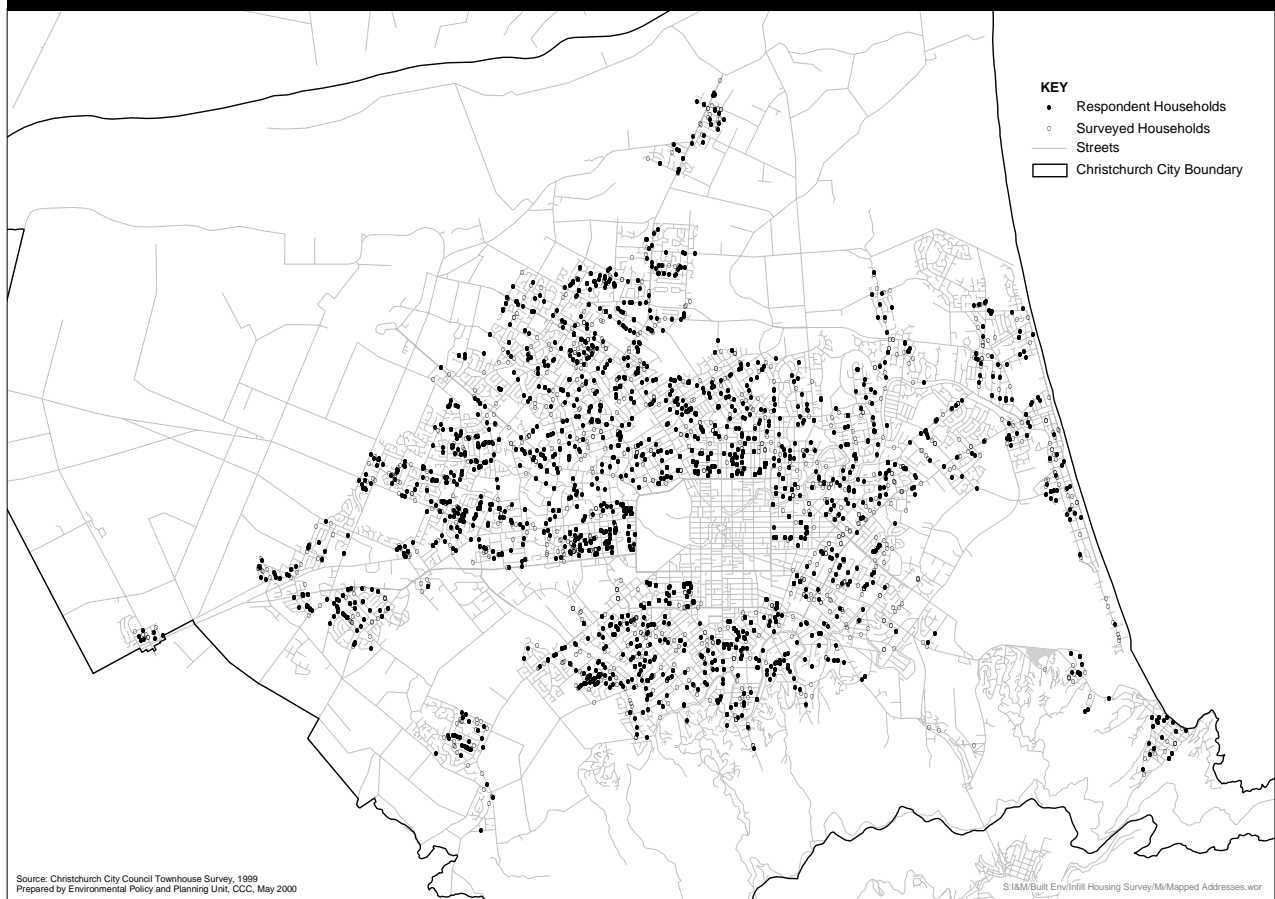
The zone analysis looked at the numbers of those surveyed by zone compared with those who responded. There were 2,308 households surveyed in the Living 1 zone, reflecting the fact that the majority of infill development has occurred in this zone (Table 1). A further 668 were in the Living 2 zone and 912 in Living 3. Of the survey respondents, 1,298 came from the Living 1 zone, 346 from Living 2 and 434 from Living 3.

Table 1. Zones by Surveyed Households and Respondent Households

Zone	Surveyed Popn	% of Surveyed Popn by Zone	Respondents	% of Respondents by Zone
Living 1	2,308	59.4	1,298	62.5
Living 2	668	17.2	346	16.7
Living 3	912	23.5	434	20.9
Total	3,888	100.0	2,078	100.0

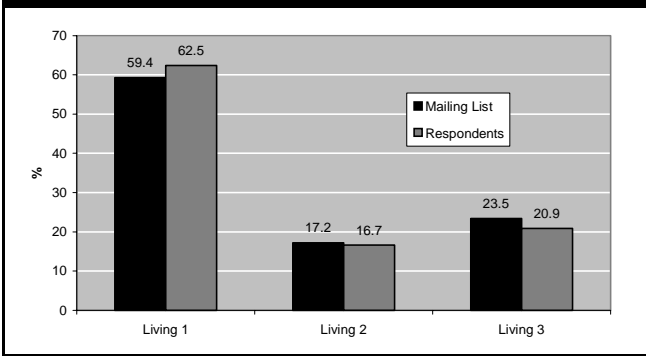
Table 1 and Figure 1 show the results of the initial zone analysis. Around 60% of the surveyed households were within the Living 1 zone, with 17% and 23% from Living 2 and 3 respectively. The proportions of respondents by zone were fairly consistent (+/- 3%) with these percentages. Figure 7 (over page) highlights the similarities for each zone.

Figure 6. Surveyed Households and Respondent Households



AREA ANALYSIS

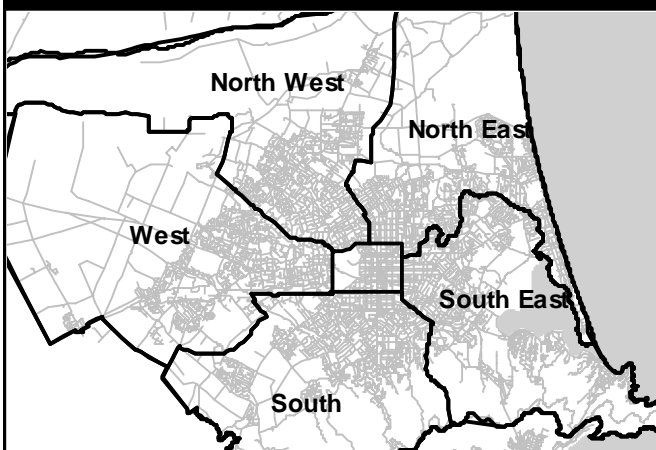
Figure 7. Percentage of Surveyed Households and Respondent Households by Zone



AREA ANALYSIS

Some analysis was also carried out by broadly defined locations in the City – North West, North East, South East, South and West (Figure 6). Again, this helped to clarify the spread of infill development

Figure 8. City Areas



across the City and proportions of respondents.

Table 2 shows that a reasonably even spread of responses was received from all areas of the City. Difference between the proportion of households sur-

Table 2. Area by the Surveyed Population and Respondent Households

Area	Surveyed Popn	% of Surveyed Popn by Location	Respondents	% of Respondents by Location
North East	703	18.1	378	18.2
North West	876	22.5	505	24.3
South	787	20.2	409	19.7
South East	543	14.0	231	11.1
West	979	25.2	555	26.7
Total	3,888	100.0	2,078	100.0

veyed and the responses was again, like the location analysis, within +/- 3%.

ANALYSIS OF NUMBER OF TOWNHOUSES

The number of new units in a development was also recorded from the original building consents. Over fifty per cent of all units in the surveyed population were single, or stand alone dwellings (Table 3). A slightly higher proportion of responses was received from this group. Other proportions were all quite similar except for responses from those living in four and six unit developments, which were slightly lower.

Table 3. Number of Townhouses by the Surveyed Households and Respondent Households

Number of Units	Surveyed Households	% of Surveyed Households by No. of Townhouses	Respondents	% of Respondents by No. of Townhouses
One	2012	51.7	1099	52.9
Two	695	17.8	386	18.6
Three	356	9.2	193	9.3
Four	342	8.8	163	7.8
Five	238	6.1	126	6.1
Six	245	6.3	111	5.3
Total	3,888	100.0	2,078	100.0

Considering the large number of households and the range of developments covered, it is significant that the proportions of people across the groups were fairly well represented. Although the error from non-respondents cannot be quantified, this analysis goes some way towards verifying that a reasonably representative range of survey responses were received.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE

Of the 4,435 questionnaires initially mailed out, 297 were returned unopened as a result of incorrect addressing. Of this number, 99 had their correct address identified and were resent. The remaining 198 could not have their address identified, or had not yet been built. There were 386 questionnaires returned with only Part A completed, of which 103 were re-addressed and resent to correct addresses.

At the final count, 2,078 questionnaires were valid and had completed Part B, giving a 53% response rate to the final 3,954 questionnaires sent to eligible households. Such a response rate is considered high for a mail out survey.

Considering that the scope of the research was to survey all the eligible households (an exercise seldom carried out in any research project) the fact that over half responded (over 2,000 households) is significant. As a result, this study has provided valuable and previously unrecorded statistical information about a large proportion of this population, their motivations for living in infill housing and whether this type of development is meeting their housing needs.

SURVEY RESULTS

The main body of the questionnaire was divided into five parts and the results are presented in that order. The first part asked where the respondent had lived previously and the type of house they lived in. Part two asked questions about the townhouse – number of bedrooms, number of storeys, and what people liked most and least about their townhouse. The third part was about the type of townhouse development: the number of houses on a site, and if the original older house was still there. Part four examined factors that motivated people to live in a townhouse such as location, type of house, size and features. The fifth and final part asked a range of demographic questions to help build a profile of respondents.

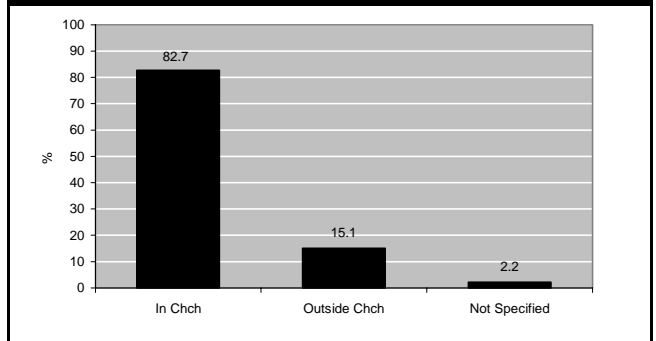
These are key findings only. Further analysis could be carried out for specific purposes.

PART 1: WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVED PREVIOUSLY

Where Respondents Lived Previously

The majority of respondents (82.7%) lived elsewhere in Christchurch before moving into their townhouse (Figure 9).

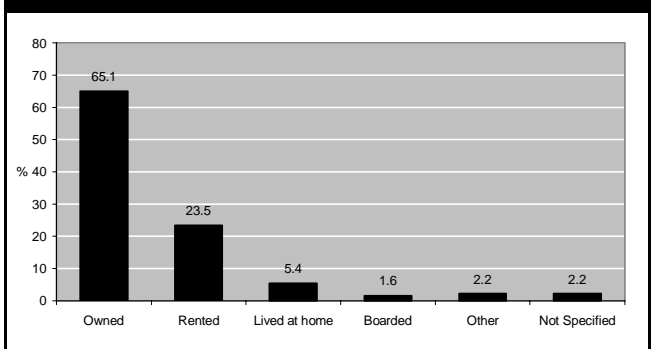
Figure 9. Where Respondents Lived Previously



Previous Accommodation Type

A large proportion of respondents owned their previous home (65.1%), with renting the next most common form of accommodation (23.5%) (Figure 10).

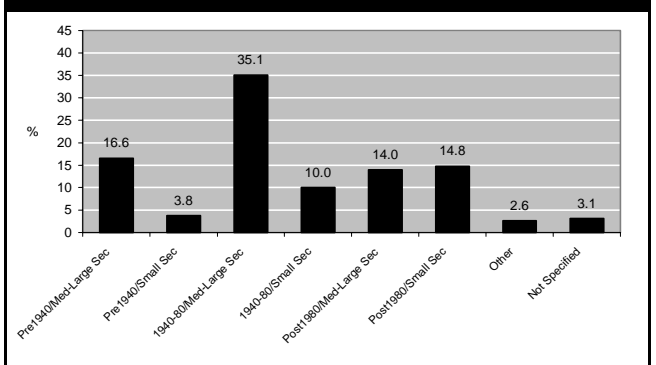
Figure 10. Previous Accommodation Type



Type of House and Section Previously

Figure 11 shows that thirty-five per cent of all respondents lived in a house or unit built between 1940-1980 on a large section (greater than 500m²). The next largest group of respondents previously lived in an older house or unit (pre 1940) on a section of 500m² or more (16.6%).

Figure 11. Type of House and Section Previously¹



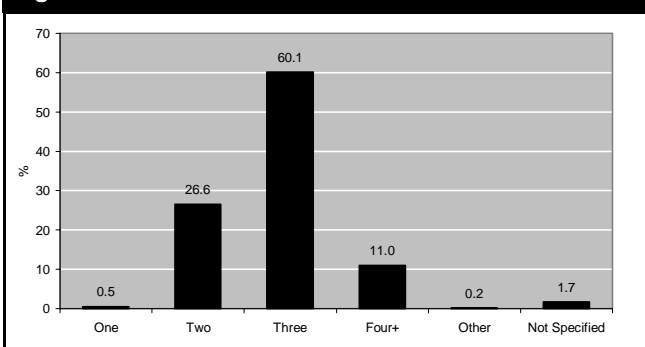
¹ A **Medium to Large** section was specified as 500m² or more, while a **Small** section was smaller than 500m².

PART 2: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CURRENT TOWNHOUSE

Number of Bedrooms

Sixty per cent of the townhouses surveyed had three bedrooms, and a further twenty six per cent had two bedrooms (Figure 12). Nearly all the rest (11%) had four or more bedrooms.

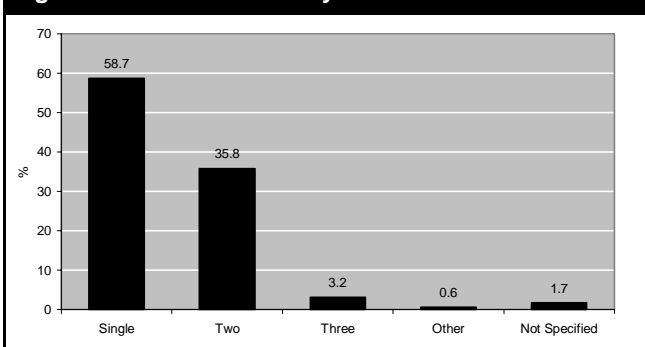
Figure 12. Number of Bedrooms



Number of Storeys

A large proportion of the townhouses surveyed (56.7%) had a single storey (Figure 13). Next most frequent were two storey dwellings (35.8%). Very few dwellings were three storeys high.

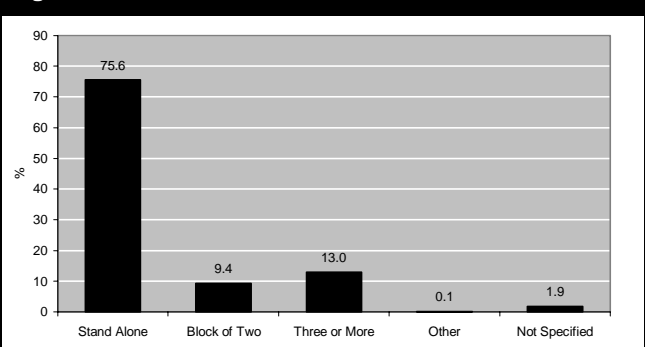
Figure 13. Number of Storeys



Townhouse Stand Alone or Attached

The majority of townhouses were stand alone (75.6%) (Figure 14) with only 22.4% of those surveyed living in attached units of two or more².

Figure 14. Townhouse Stand Alone or Attached

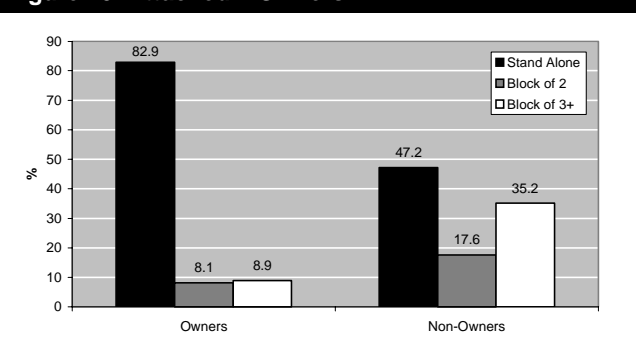


² 'Block of two' (or more) was defined as townhouses sharing a wall, including those joined by a garage.

When a three-way analysis was carried out for Number of bedrooms x Stand alone or attached x Number of storeys (analysis not shown), the largest proportion of townhouses (34.7%) were three-bedroom, stand-alone with a single storey. Next most common were two-bedroom/stand-alone/single-storey townhouses (14.9%) and three-bedroom/stand-alone/two-storey (13.2%).

Cross-tabulating stand alone and attached townhouses by owners (Figure 15), nearly 83% of owners lived in stand alone townhouses. The remaining 17% were split fairly evenly between those living in a block of two and those in blocks of three or more. In contrast, just over fifty per cent of non-owners lived in attached dwellings.

Figure 15. Attached x Owners^{3 4}



Like Most/Least About Townhouse

Two open ended questions asked respondents what they liked the most and least about their townhouses, with respondents able to give more than one answer

Table 4. Like Most About Townhouse⁵

The <i>low maintenance aspect</i> – a new house and section tend to be easy to look after.	35%
<i>That the house is small, or compact</i> – again, it makes the property easy to manage.	24%
<i>That the house has been well designed</i> – new houses tend to be built out of better materials and have features like double glazing and under-floor heating that make them more comfortable and easy to live in.	21%
<i>Warmth</i> – new houses often have good insulation, and are designed to catch the sun, releasing heat slowly.	20%
<i>Other</i> eg. The location of their townhouse	18%
Privacy	16%
A sunny house	15%

³ 'Owners' included those who indicated that they owned the house and lived in it.

⁴ Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 186.3, df = 2, p-value<0.0005.

⁵ Results are given as a percentage of the 1,905 people who answered this question. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

RESULTS

(Tables 4 and 5). There were more positive responses (1,905) than negative ones (1,464). These comments highlighted the pros and cons of townhouse living early on in this analysis.

What many respondents liked was that new townhouses proved to be low maintenance and easy care (35% of respondents), with small house size also a preference (24%). Other popular themes were that houses had been well-designed with modern features to make them comfortable to live in (21%); and that their new house was warm (20%).

While small house size was a bonus for some, others saw it as a disadvantage (Table 5), with 26 per cent of respondents indicating that it was one of the things they liked least about their home. Another negative was the close proximity to others that townhouse living brought, with 14 per cent citing a resulting lack of privacy. Twelve per cent also named shared driveways as an issue, due to problems with neighbours, and twelve per cent said that the house had been badly designed or not finished.

Table 5. Like Least About Townhouse⁶

<i>The house or section was too small, they didn't have much outdoor space or particular rooms in the house were not big enough.</i>	26%
<i>A lack of privacy – neighbours were too close, they could hear or see them.</i>	14%
<i>Shared driveways, as increased traffic and parking in the drive caused problems with neighbours.</i>	12%
<i>Townhouse badly designed or not finished.</i>	12%
<i>Other eg. Noise</i>	6%
<i>Limited parking space</i>	6%
<i>Problem neighbours</i>	4%

PART 3: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR TOWNHOUSE

This part of the questionnaire attempted to determine whether the nature of development influenced residents' satisfaction with townhouse living.

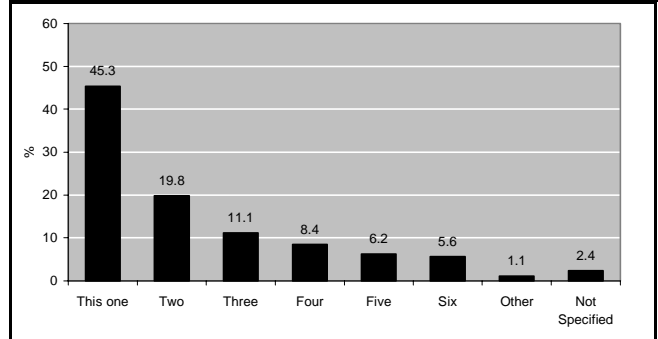
Developments ranged from a single house built on a property next to an existing older house, to multi-unit developments of up to six houses.

⁶Results are given as a percentage of the 1,464 people who answered this question. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

Number of Townhouses Built & Satisfaction

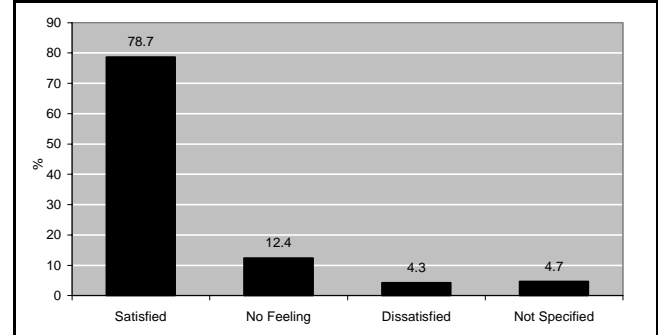
Just one townhouse was built on the original site in 45% of cases, with a further 20% having two townhouses built on the site (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Number of New Townhouses Built on the Site⁷



Nearly 79% of respondents were satisfied with the number of townhouses built on the original site (Figure 17). Of those who were satisfied and gave reasons (914 respondents), the most popular reason for satisfaction was that there was still plenty of space and their section was still a good size. Respondents also felt that their section had remained private in spite of the increase in housing density. In contrast, the small number of respondents who were dissatisfied with the number of townhouses on the site (72 people) mentioned a lack of space as the main reason for their dissatisfaction. Noise and lack of privacy were also highlighted.

Figure 17. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the number of houses on this site?



The majority of residents were satisfied with the number of houses on their site. But an analysis of satisfaction by the number of houses built showed that satisfaction levels declined as the number of houses built increased (Table 6). However the exception to this trend was two houses on a site, which showed little difference in satisfaction levels compared with those which had just one house built on the site.

⁷Most people seemed to have answered this question correctly, however the details of site development were probably not known by all respondents, particularly if they bought the house some time after construction.

Table 6. Number of townhouses x Satisfaction with number built⁸

Number Built	Satisfied	No Feeling	Dissatisfied
This One	89.2	8.1	2.7
Two	89.4	7.9	2.7
Three	78.2	16.6	5.2
Four	70.7	17.2	12.1
Five	64.1	25.0	10.9
Six	56.0	37.9	6.0

Table 7 explains this finding, showing that the original older house was still on the site in ninety-five per cent of cases where one new house was built. Two thirds of sites with two houses no longer had the old house there as well, potentially providing an environment similar to or better than those retaining the original house.

Table 7. Number of townhouses x Original house Still There⁹

Number Built	House Still There %	House Not There %
One	95.3	4.7
Two	32.7	67.3
Three or More	9.8	90.2

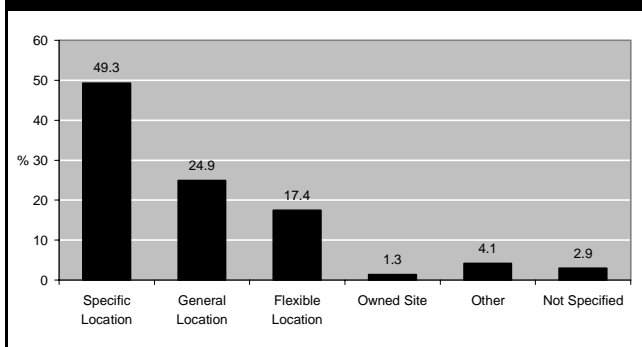
PART 4: QUESTIONS ABOUT LOOKING FOR YOUR CURRENT HOME

This part of the survey attempted to determine the choices respondents made when looking for their current home.

Location

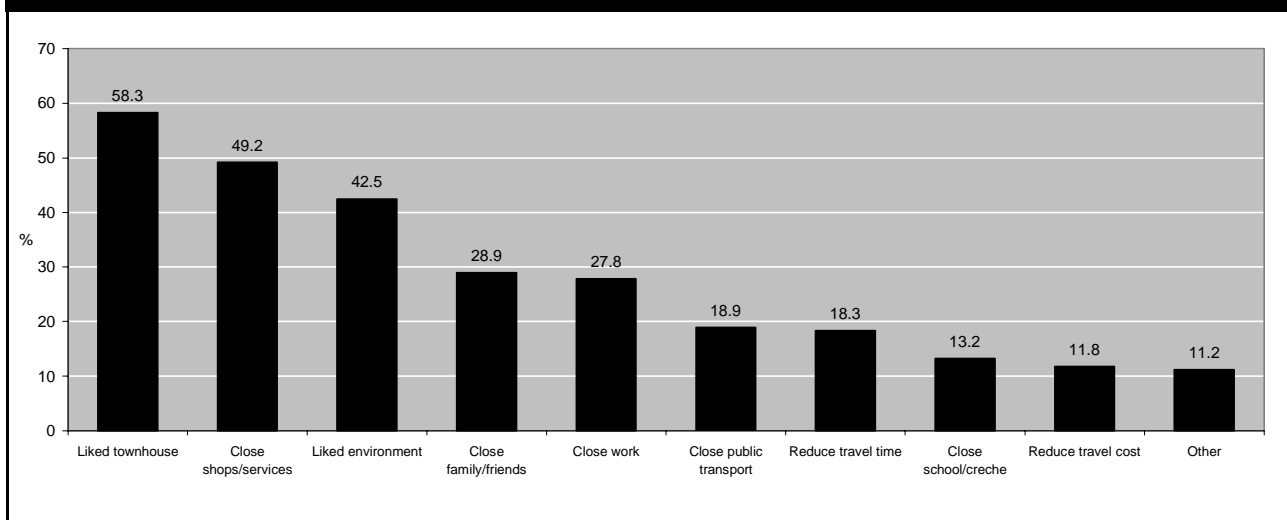
Almost half of the respondents wanted to move to a specific location (ie. within a particular suburb or school zone) when looking for their townhouse (Figure 19). A further 25% were looking in a general location (ie. within south or north Christchurch), while 17% were flexible about the location.

Figure 19. Preferred Location in Christchurch



Respondents were then asked why they chose to live in their location from a list of reasons (Figure 20). The most common reason (59%) was that they liked their townhouse. Other popular reasons included being close to shops and services (49%) and liking the local environment (43%). Around thirty percent of respondents also saw being close to family and friends and close to work as influencing their choice of location, and twenty percent liked being close to public transport and reduced travelling time as factors.

Figure 20. Why Location Was Chosen¹⁰



⁸ Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 170.2, df = 10, p-value<0.0005.

⁹ Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 1136.1, df = 5, p-value<0.0005.

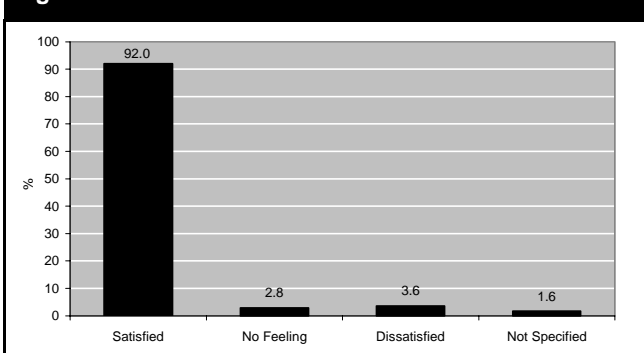
¹⁰ Results are given as a percentage of the 2,078 people who answered this question. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

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Satisfaction With Location

Most respondents (92%) were happy with the location of their townhouse within the City (Figure 21). Many of the comments from satisfied respondents reflected the reasons why they had chosen the location initially (see Figure 20), in particular being close to various amenities and services. Another common theme for satisfied respondents was liking the neighbourhood or suburb they were living in, feeling that it was a good area. Of the 61 dissatisfied respondents who commented, over one third mentioned that they did not like the area they were living in. Several other specific complaints related to pollution (smog, bad smells) and crime (burglaries, graffiti and vandalism).

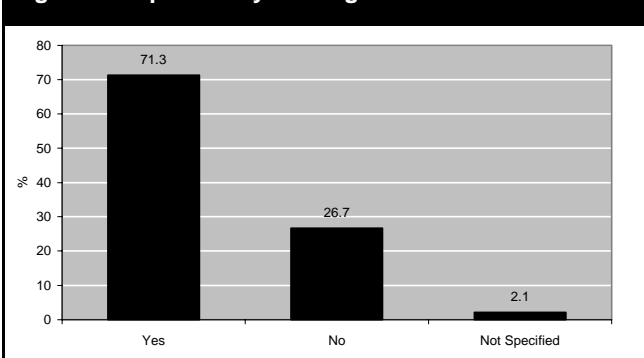
Figure 21. Satisfaction With Location of Townhouse



Looking For A Townhouse

Respondents were asked whether they were specifically looking for a townhouse to buy, rent or build (Figure 22). Over 71% indicated that they wanted to live in a townhouse.

Figure 22. Specifically looking for a Townhouse



Preferred Type of House

The 27% of respondents who had not been looking for a townhouse were then asked what type of house they were looking for (Table 8). A new, or modern house was mentioned the most (24%), with a large home, or one larger than their current home ranking next highest (18%). A low maintenance, easy care property also rated quite well (18%). A large proportion of respondents comments were assigned to the Other category (49%). This was due to the wide range of things people were looking for in their

search for a house. Some of them were quite specific features, like a double garage or bath, or referred to the section size or garden rather than discussing the type of house that was preferred. These comments suggest that people didn't necessarily have a specific house type in mind, rather they wanted a house with certain features to meet their needs.

Table 8. Preferred Type of House¹¹

New, or modern, near new	23.9
Large, or larger than current home	18.1
Low maintenance, easy care property	17.7
Price factor (ie one in price range/ a bargain)	12.8
Villa	12.0
Family oriented home	11.3
Specific number of bedrooms	7.4
Small, or smaller than current home	4.3
Other	48.9

Analysing whether people specifically wanted a townhouse by satisfaction with their townhouse also confirmed this, with 91% of respondents who had not specifically intended to buy, rent or build a townhouse recording satisfaction with their current home (Table 9).

Table 9. Specifically looking for a Townhouse x Satisfaction with Type of House¹²

Wanted townhouse	Satisfied	No Feeling	Dissatisfied
Yes	97.4	1.2	1.5
No	91.1	5.2	3.7

Satisfaction With Type of House

Over 92% of respondents said they were satisfied with living in a townhouse (Figure 23). Of the respondents who gave reasons, many commented about what they liked or disliked about their house rather than how the type of house met their needs. Over a quarter of respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with their townhouse mentioned that their home was 'easy care' or 'low maintenance'. Other comments highlighted that their houses were 'warm' or 'well-insulated'; 'modern' or 'new'; and that the house met their needs or suited their requirements.

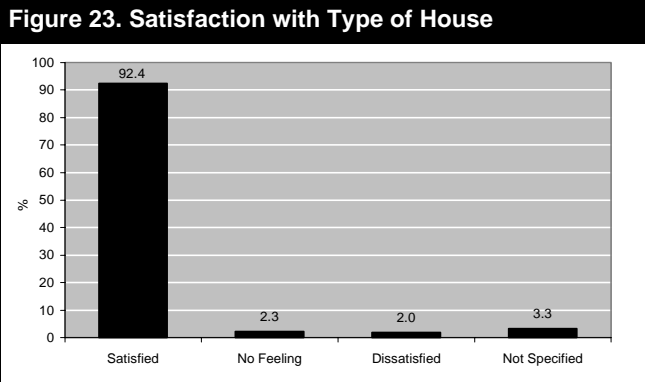
Only two per cent of respondents were dissatisfied

¹¹ Results are given as a percentage of the 485 people who answered this question. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

¹² Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 83.3, df = 2, p-value < 0.0005.

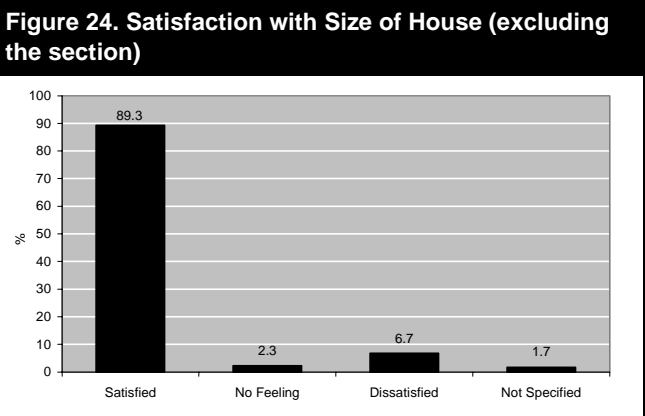
RESULTS

with the type of house. Reasons for dissatisfaction included the house being small or cramped, and badly built. Only one respondent mentioned that they would have preferred to live in a villa rather than a townhouse but there were “none available at the time”.



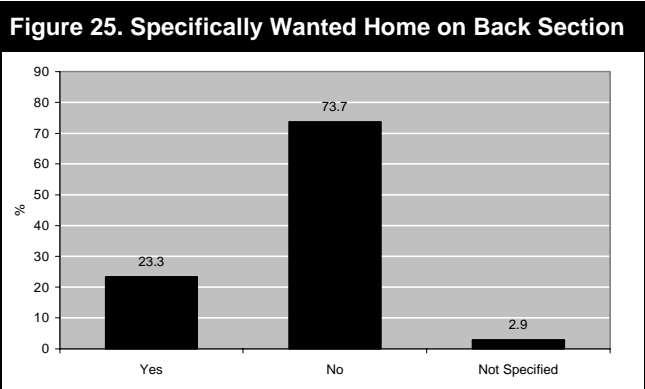
Satisfaction With Size of Townhouse

As in previous satisfaction questions, the majority of respondents (89%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the size of their townhouse (not including the section) (Figure 24). Satisfied respondents comments ranged from “plenty of room”, “spacious” and “a good size” to “compact”, “big enough” and “it meets my/our needs”. The main comment of dissatisfied respondents was that their townhouse was too small.



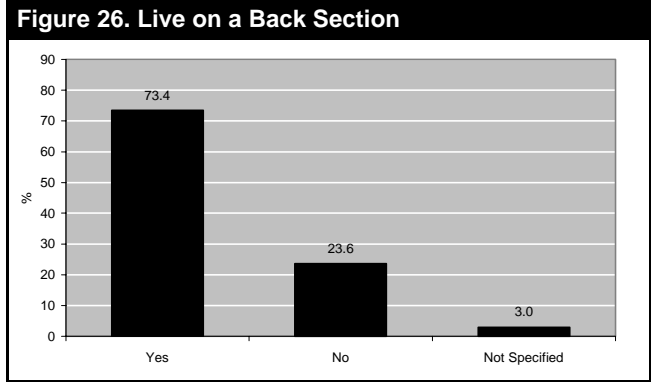
Back Sections

The majority of respondents (73.7%) did not plan to buy, rent or build their townhouse on a back section

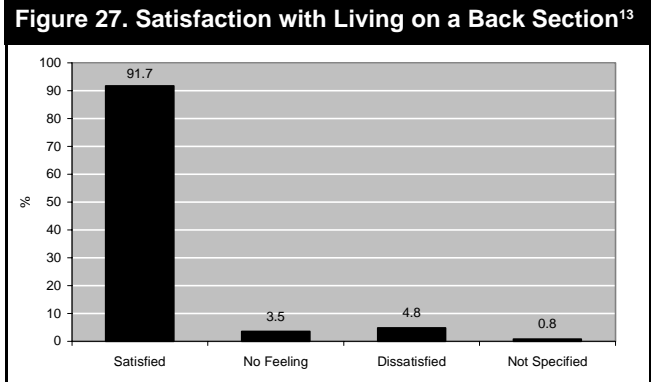


(with at least one house between them and the street) (Figure 25).

However, nearly the same proportion of respondents (73.4%, or 1,525 people) said that they were now living on a back section (Figure 26).



Of those respondents who live on a back section, nearly 92% were satisfied (Figure 27). The most common reason for high satisfaction levels was that residents found the property to be quiet or peaceful, or “not noisy” - particularly with regard to traffic or street noise. Feeling secure or safe due to not being easily seen or accessed from the street was also highlighted. Issues for dissatisfied respondents included problems with their shared driveway, and a feeling of isolation accompanied by fears for the security of the property.



Breaking down the satisfaction levels of people living on back sections into whether they originally wanted a back section or not (Table 10) shows that even

Table 10. Wanted back section x Satisfaction with living on a back section¹³

	Satisfied	No Feeling	Dissatisfied
Wanted back section	97.0	1.2	1.8
Didn't want back section	89.4	4.6	6.0

¹³ Results for this question only include those who indicated in the previous question that they live on a back section. Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 42.9, df = 2, p-value<0.0005.

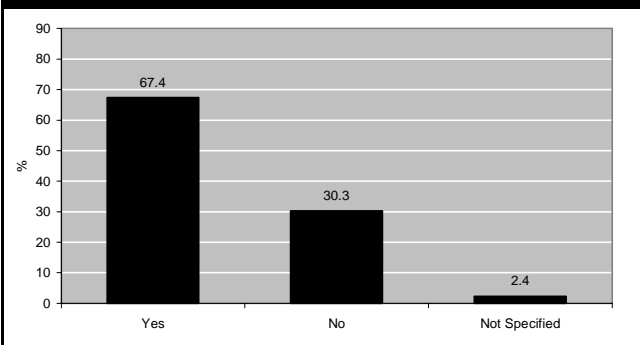
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among those who didn't intend to live on a back section, satisfaction levels are very high (89%). However, satisfaction for those who wanted to live on one initially was higher still (97%).

Section Size

A large proportion of respondents (67%) were looking for a section smaller than 500m² (Figure 28). Thirty percent did not want a section that small.

Figure 28. Specifically Wanted Home on Small Section (ie less than 500m²)



Respondents who indicated that they wanted a small section were then asked why. Their responses were coded into categories (Table 11). The highest rating category or respondents (59%) said they were specifically looking for a home on a small section because they wanted a low maintenance, or easy care section. Nearly 30% said that a change in personal circumstances had influenced their choice to look for a small section. This change generally implied no longer being able to meet the demands of a large section. Getting older was the most common change of circumstances mentioned, but others included ill health or being widowed or disabled. The two other main categories covered people no longer wanting to care for their garden and to have more "free time" - time to do things other than section maintenance.

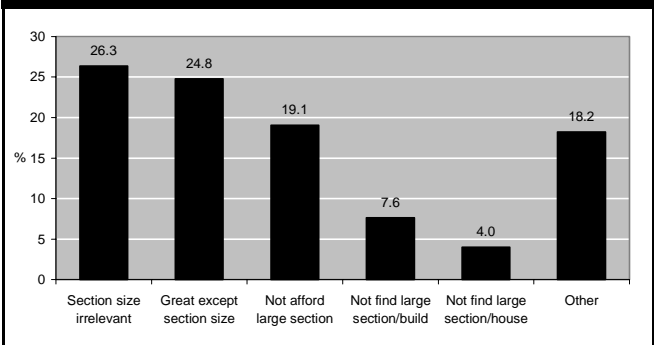
Table 11. Why Specifically Looking for a Home on a Small Section¹⁴

Wanted a low maintenance, easy care property	59.0
With a change in personal circumstances (old age/ill health/widowed/disabled)	28.7
Because of the garden – did not want to spend time developing it, or did not like gardening	24.4
To have more time to do things other than maintain the property	21.2
Previous section was large, wanted a change	4.8
Other	9.2

¹⁴Results are given as a percentage of the 1,199 people who answered this question. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

The next question asked the 577 respondents who were not specifically looking for a house on a small section why they had moved to one (Figure 29). Of this group, 26% said they had chosen their property for factors other than section size, in other words, the section size had been irrelevant when deciding to buy rent or build their current home. A further 25% said that everything about the house was what they wanted, except for the size of the section. Not being able to afford to buy a larger section to build on was also a factor for 19% of respondents.

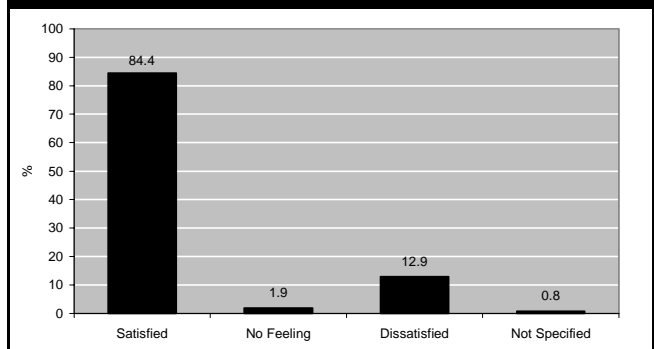
Figure 29. Why Choose Townhouse on a Small Section?



Satisfaction With Size of Outdoor Area

Nearly 85% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the size of their outdoor area – including their driveway, garden and/or courtyard, service areas and any balconies (Figure 30). Comments from this group indicated that they were happy with driveway arrangements and garden size. However, out of the series of satisfaction questions asked about their current house, this one had the highest proportion of dissatisfied respondents (13%). Issues for them included shared or small driveways, not much parking space and not as much lawn area as they would have liked.

Figure 30. Satisfaction with Size of Outdoor Area



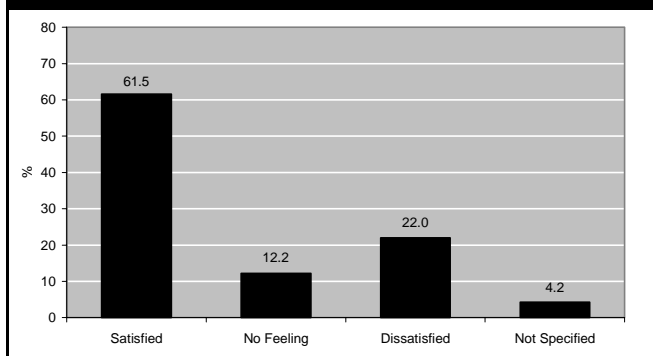
Housing Choice

Respondents had mixed feelings about the choice of housing types available in their price range when looking for a property to buy, rent or build (Figure 31). Over 60% of people were satisfied with the

RESULTS

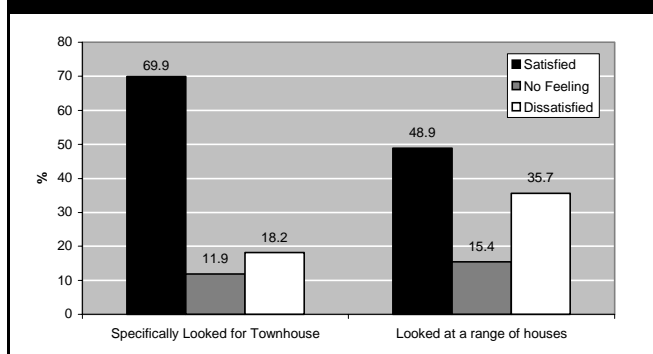
range of choices, with 22% being dissatisfied.

Figure 31. Satisfaction with Choice of Housing Types in Price or Rental Range



Respondents satisfaction levels were then examined in relation to whether they had specifically wanted a townhouse when looking for a property to buy, rent or build on (Figure 32). There was a noticeable difference in the types of comments being made by those who had looked at a range of houses, and those who had specifically been looking at townhouses when buying, renting or building a home.

Figure 32. Satisfaction with Choice of Housing Types available x Specifically Looking for a Townhouse¹⁵



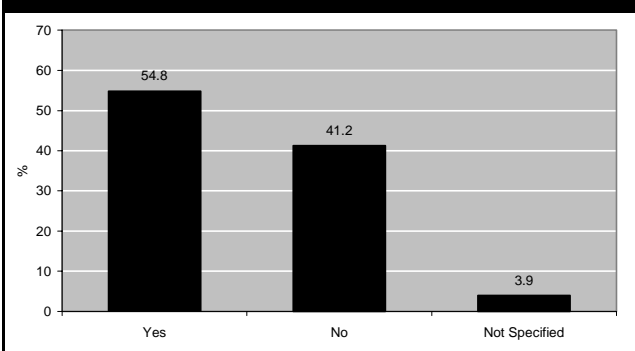
As Figure 32 shows, 18% of those who had specifically been looking for a townhouse were dissatisfied with the choice of housing types in their price or rental range. Of those who had not specifically been looking for a townhouse, 36% were dissatisfied, nearly twice as many. The fact that the two groups were looking across a different range of housing is important to note, as their perception of the market will be different.

House Features

More than half of the respondents (55%) could think of features that they would have liked to have in their home (Figure 33).

However, the question also gave a prompt: *'ie double garage, larger section, ensuite, bath, two toilets etc'* and as these were the features most commonly

Figure 33. Wanted Certain Features But Didn't Get Them



mentioned it raised the possibility that the results were influenced by the suggestions in the questionnaire (Table 12). Other features that respondents would have liked included larger rooms (8.8%) and another bedroom or spare room for an office or study (8.6%). Others viewed the question as a wish list, with features like a pool and a tennis court being mentioned.

Table 12. What features did you want when planning to buy, rent or build that your townhouse doesn't have?¹¹

Double or larger or extra garage	28.4
Larger outdoor area	20.0
Ensuite	17.8
Larger rooms	8.8
Another bedroom (or spare room/office/study)	8.6
Bath	6.8
Two toilets (or an extra toilet)	5.8
More/better storage	4.8
Non open-plan living (separate dining/kitchen/lounge)	4.8
Better insulation/heating (double glazed windows/nightstores/log fires)	3.6
Separate/larger laundry	2.9
Better quality fittings/fixtures/furnishings	2.9
Other	22.8

When the same question was cross-tabulated by whether people bought, rented or built their townhouse, results varied between groups. The answers varied according to tenure type (Figure 34). Fifty-eight per cent of non-owning respondents said that there were features they would have liked that their townhouse didn't have. The proportions of respon-

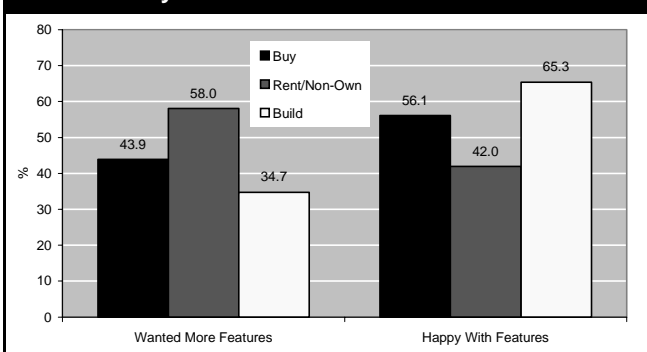
¹⁵ Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 83.3, df = 2, p-value<0.0005.

¹⁶ Results are given as a percentage of the 842 people who answered this question. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

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dents who bought or built their houses and would have liked other features was smaller (43.9% and 34.7% respectively). These figures suggest that the respondents who built their homes were less likely to compromise on the features that they wanted. They would have also had more flexibility in changing or adding features and were probably more aware of financial constraints in choosing which features they could afford.

Figure 34. Features you wanted and didn't get x Buy, rent or build your townhouse



The next question asked the 1,139 people who indicated that they had wanted other features why they didn't buy, rent or build a home with the features they wanted. Again, results were analysed by tenure type in three tables – respondents who bought their house during or after construction; those who rented; and those who built (Tables 13, 14, and 15).

Over 44% of buyers found that the cost or price of features they would have liked limited their choice (Table 13). Twenty percent said that to buy a home they had to compromise on the features they wanted due to other factors (eg to stay within a given price range, or because everything else about the property was what they wanted). Respondents also said that the house of their dreams could not be found or was not available on the market when they were looking

Table 13. Why didn't you buy a home with the other features you wanted?¹⁸

Cost/Price (had to stay within a certain price range)	44.2
Compromise (otherwise satisfied/ pros outweighed cons/ not essential)	20.2
Not available (could not find a house with all these features)	15.4
Location more important than features	11.3
Time (limited time available to look)	6.7
Other	13.3

¹⁸Results are given as a percentage of the 480 people who bought their home and gave reasons. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

(15.4%); that location was seen as more important than features (11.3); and that time had limited their options (6.7%).

Renters (non-owners) had similar issues, with cost rated as the main obstacle in the way of a house with the features they wanted (44%) (Table 14). Seventeen per cent also found availability a problem and 15% had to compromise on their wants and needs with the house they rented. A limited timeframe to search for a house affected over 10% of renters who commented, and location was rated as more important than features by 8.8%.

Table 14. Why didn't you rent a home with the other features you wanted?¹⁹

Cost	44.7
Not available	17.1
Compromise	15.3
Limited timeframe	10.6
Location more important than features	8.8
Other	15.9

For builders, cost was again an issue in determining the features that they could have in their townhouse (Table 15). The other main issues were very different to buyers and renters however. Space constraints was cited as limiting features by nearly 20% of builders who commented. Council regulations associated with the size of the property was the other main limitation that builders faced, with 11% mentioning this

Table 15. Why didn't you build a home with the other features you wanted?²⁰

Cost	46.2
Space constraints (associated with section size)	19.8
Council regulations (associated with section size)	11.3
Other	37.7

as an issue in determining whether they could have the features they wanted. Council regulations cover a range of development specifications such as setbacks, recession planes and site coverage.

Comparing across all three tenure types, similar proportions of respondents found cost was a limitation in gaining the features they wanted. However, those

¹⁹Results are given as a percentage of the 191 people who rented their home and gave reasons. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

²⁰Results are given as a percentage of the 106 people who built their home and gave reasons. As people could provide more than one response, percentages add to more than 100.

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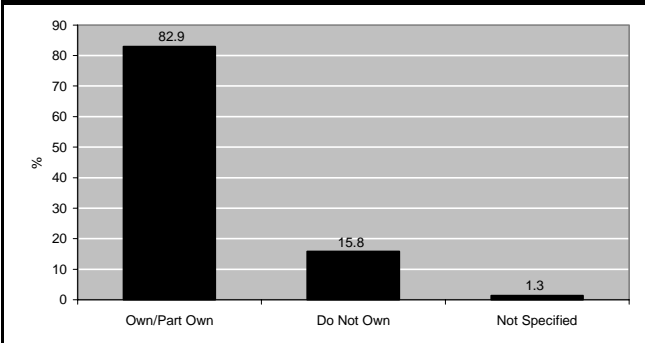
buying or renting found that they had to compromise more based on what was on the market or were subjected to tighter timeframes than those who built their home.

PART 5: FINAL QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU, YOUR HOUSEHOLD AND YOUR HOME

Home Ownership

The majority of respondents (83%) indicated that they owned their home (Figure 35).

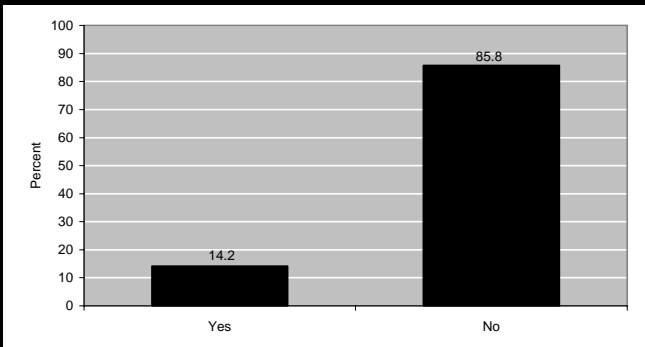
Figure 35. Own or Part Own Townhouse



Owner Live in the House

Recognising that the owner of the property might live in the house but not necessarily have filled in the questionnaire, it was important to ask all respondents whether the owner lived in the townhouse or not. Nearly 84% of all respondent households had the owner living in the house.

Figure 36. First Home Owned



First Home Owned

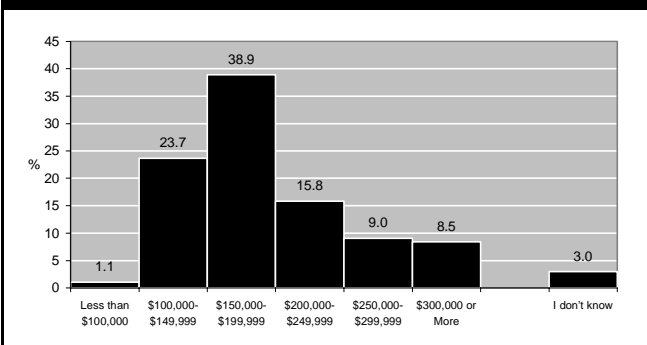
Of those owners, only a small proportion indicated that this was the first home they had owned (14%), with over 85% of respondents being home owners previously (Figure 36).

Current Government Valuation

Owners were then asked what the current government capital valuation was for their townhouse (Figure 37). The largest group of houses (nearly 40%) were valued in the \$150,000-\$199,999 range. Next highest were those in the \$100,000-\$149,999 range (24%). Most of the other townhouses (33%)

were valued in ranges above \$200,000.

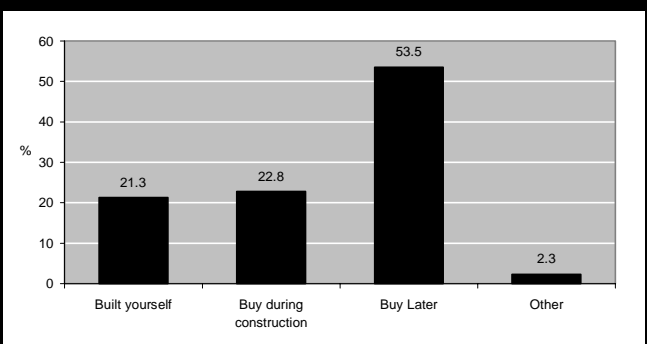
Figure 37. Current (1998) Government Capital Valuation



Build or Buy

The next question asked owners about the development of the property, whether they had built it themselves, bought it during construction, or bought it later (Figure 38). The largest proportion of respondent owners indicated that they bought the house after construction (53%), with the rest fairly evenly split between building it themselves (21.3%) and buying during construction (22.8%).

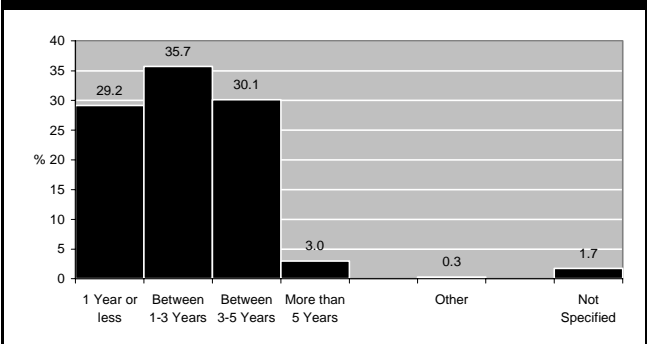
Figure 38. Built the townhouse OR bought the townhouse from the developer before or during construction OR bought the townhouse after construction



Years Living in House

The next two questions aimed to find out about the length of time respondents had been living in their

Figure 40. Years Living in House²¹



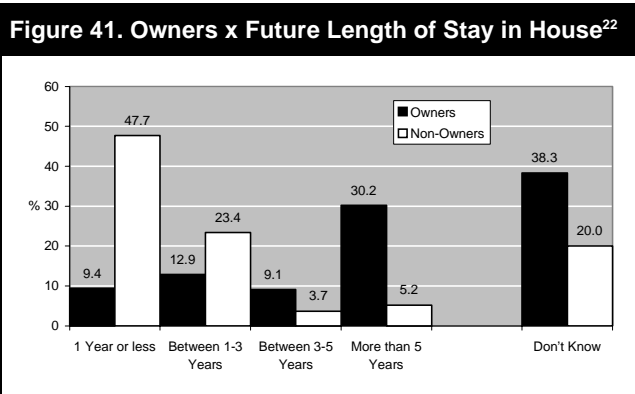
²¹ Survey coverage was of townhouses built since January 1994, meaning that a very small number of respondents had lived in the townhouse for slightly longer than 5 years.

RESULTS

townhouse, and how much longer they saw themselves living there (Figures 40, 41). Most respondents had been living in their townhouse for between 1-3 years (35.7%) although the proportions were fairly evenly spread over the 5 year period.

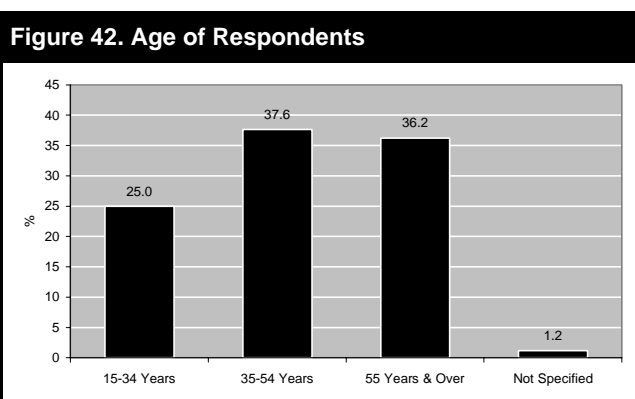
Looking at how long people wanted to live in their townhouse, there was a more complicated picture. The largest group of respondents (nearly 35%), did not know how much longer they would stay in their townhouse. However the next highest proportion (25.6%), saw themselves as living in their townhouse for more than 5 years.

Further analysis revealed differences in length of stay between owners and non-owners (Figure 41), with owners more likely to stay for over five years or to not know how long they would stay there. Of non-owners, the largest group (47%) indicated that they would be likely to stay for only a year or less.



Age and Gender

Nearly three quarters of respondents were aged over 35 (Figure 42). The remaining 25% were aged 15-34 years.



Analysing age by homeowners revealed that most of those who owned their home were older – 80% aged 35 and over, while among renters 56% were in the 15-34 age group (Figure 43).

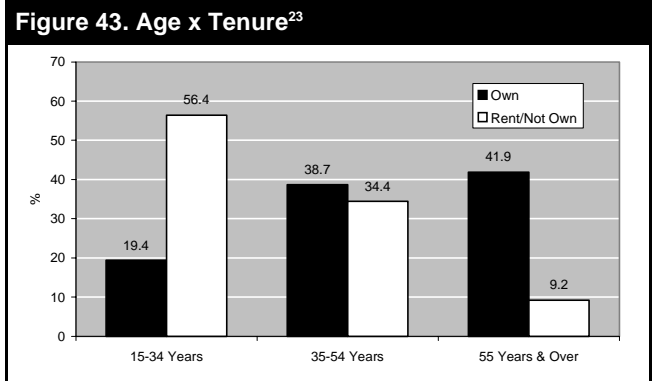
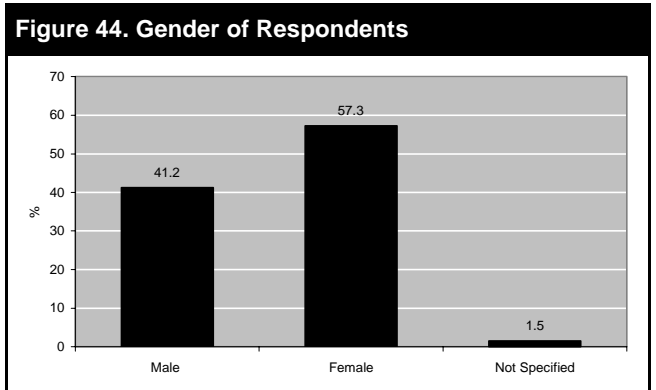
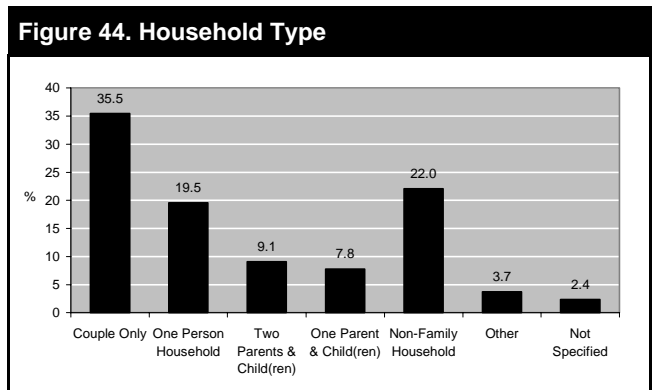


Figure 44 shows that there were more female respondents (57.3%) than males (41.2%).



Household Type

The largest household group were couple only (36%), with non-family households ie flats, (22%) and one person households (20%) being next most common. Nearly 17% of households had one child or more (Figure 44).

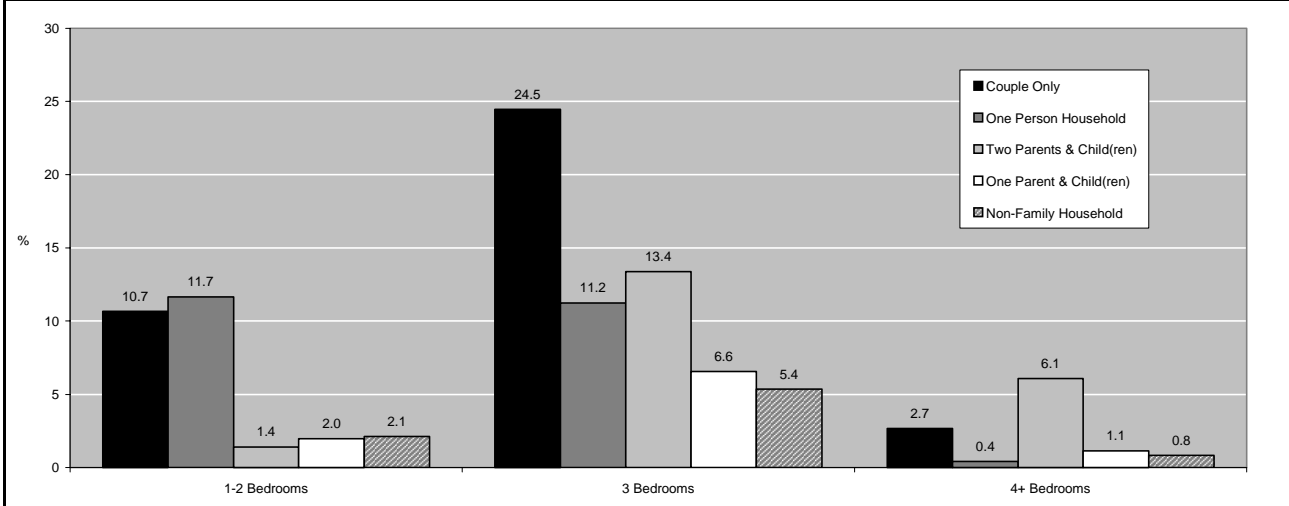


When household type was analysed by the number of bedrooms in the townhouse, there were some noticeable patterns (Figure 45). A quarter of all respondents (25%) were couple only families in 3 bedroom homes. Other household types were fairly evenly spread over the number of bedrooms, although couple only and one person households tended to dominate in one and two bedroom houses, while there

²² Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 377.8, df = 4, p-value<0.0005.

²³ Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 230.3, df = 2, p-value<0.0005.

Figure 45. Household Type x Number of Bedrooms

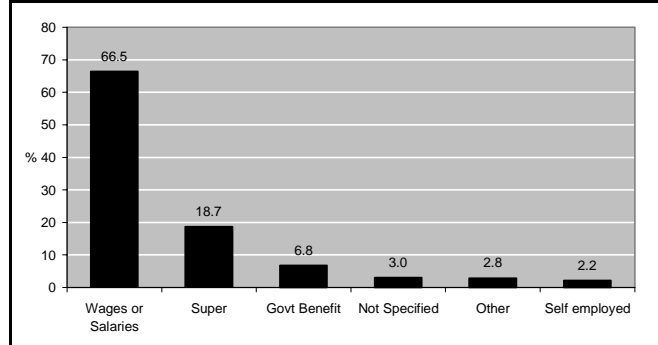


were a number of two parents with children households in townhouses with four bedrooms or more.

Main Source of Income

The majority of respondents (66.5%) indicated that wages or salaries were the main income source for their household (Figure 46). The next highest group (18.7%) said that superannuation, (government or private) provided their main income. Nearly 7% had a government benefit as their main income source.

Figure 46. Main Source of Income

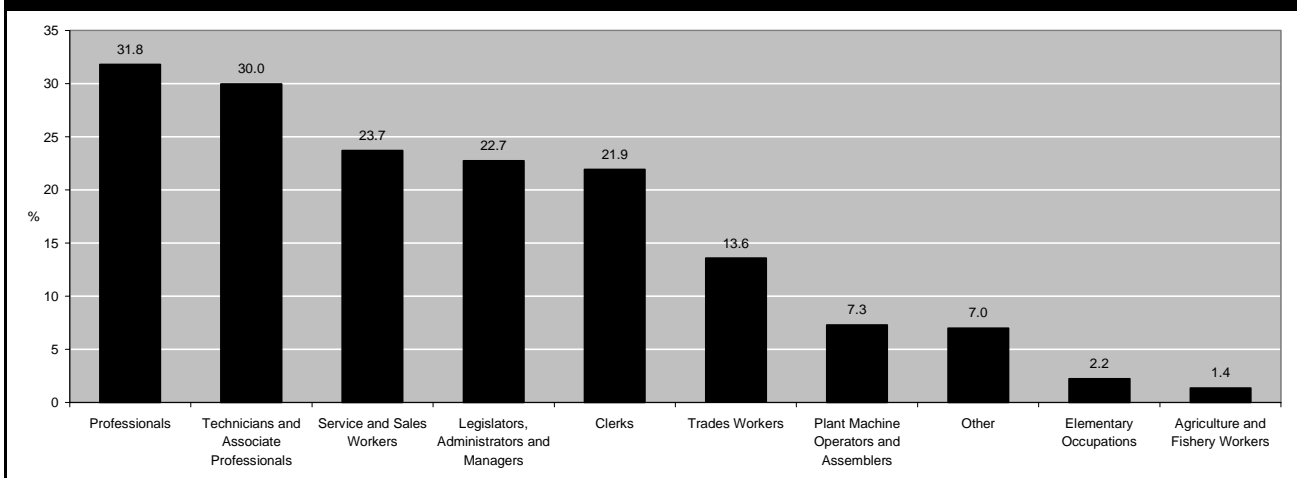


Occupations of Workers in Household

In addition to income, the occupations of the salary and wage earners in the household were also asked (Figure 47). There were 1,381 people who indicated that their main source of income was from wages and salaries. Of this group, 1,245 respondents gave the occupations of the earners in their household (Figure 5.13). Occupations were then coded by the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (1999). The largest number of responses were in the

Professionals (31.8%) and Technicians and Associate Professionals (30%) groups. Next highest were Service and Sales Workers (23.7%), Legislators, Administrators and Managers (22.7%), and Clerks (21.9%). Trades Workers (13.6%) were the only other significant group, with the other categories registering less than 10% of responses.

Figure 47. Occupations of the Salary and Wage Earners in the Household¹⁵



¹⁵ Results are given as a percentage of the 1,245 people who answered this question. As occupations were asked for all household members, percentages add to more than 100.

¹⁶ Pearson Chi-Square statistic: 326.7, df = 8, p-value<0.0005.

DISCUSSION

The following section briefly summarises the survey results and highlights some of the key characteristics of respondents and their households. The discussion of the survey findings then addresses the original research objectives: why people in Christchurch are choosing to live in infill development; and whether infill development is meeting the needs of the people living in it.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- The majority of survey respondents were already living in Christchurch before moving into their townhouse.
- For over half the respondents, their previous house had been built before 1980 and was on a larger section (over 500m²).
- Half of the townhouses surveyed were either two or three bedroom – single storey – stand-alone dwellings.
- Over eighty per cent of respondents said they owned their home.
- Nearly forty per cent of townhouses were valued between \$150,000 and \$200,000.
- Couple-only households were most common (35%), while non-family households (eg flats) and single person households each contributed a further twenty per cent.
- Only fifteen per cent of households had children in them.
- The main source of household income was from wages or salaries (67%), and superannuation (19%).

OBJECTIVE ONE: WHY ARE PEOPLE IN CHRISTCHURCH CHOOSING TO LIVE IN INFILL TYPE DEVELOPMENT?

The reasons why people choose to live in a particular house type and City location are diverse. These decisions are based on a number of factors ranging from intangibles such as personal likes and wants to more tangible reasons such as affordability and access to facilities or services. Much of this decision making can be considered an intuitive process rather than a conscious, quantitative one. A series of questions in the questionnaire (mainly those in Part Four) looked at this issue. The intention was to draw out some of the motivations and influences on people's decisions to choose infill development over other types of housing.

Location

Location is a fairly significant factor in choosing a townhouse. Nearly three-quarters of respondents

had a specific or at least a general location in mind when looking to buy, rent or build a house. Reasons that factored highly included being close to shops and services and liking the local environment (Figure 20). Being close to family and friends and close to work were also mentioned by a reasonable number of respondents. However, of the location factors mentioned, liking the townhouse rated the highest, indicating that people will probably not live in their chosen area unless they can find a house they like. Travel related factors (access to public transport, travel time and travel cost) did not appear to be issues for many respondents in determining the location.

Only a small proportion of respondents (4%) expressed dissatisfaction with the current location of their townhouse. Mostly this group had a negative view of the local environment, with problems such as pollution and crime detracting from the locational advantages of the area.

Price

While over 60% of respondents thought the initial choice of housing in their price range was satisfactory, 22% were dissatisfied. Respondents not specifically looking for a townhouse indicated higher levels of dissatisfaction. For this group looking across a range of housing, there were two options: buy, rent or build a new townhouse on a small section or pay a similar price for a large older house on a large section. The respondents obviously chose the newer, smaller house over the section size. Considering that most households consisted of one or two people choosing a smaller house probably wasn't a big compromise. Dissatisfaction from other respondents (possibly parents with children) showed that they felt there had been a limited choice of housing types in their price range appropriate to their needs.

Preferred Type of House

Approximately 70% of respondents were specifically looking for a townhouse (a small house on a small section) when they were intending to buy, rent or build a home. The twenty-seven per cent that had not were looking for things like a new or modern house, and a large (or larger than previous) home. A low maintenance, easy care property was also a popular consideration.

Dissatisfaction

Part of the intention of this objective was also to examine the issues for those who had chosen to live in infill housing and were dissatisfied. A small proportion of respondents were in this category. Most seemed to have ended up living in infill development due to a lack of choice of other housing types within their price or rental range. Yet it is also important to

DISCUSSION

note that over thirty per cent of respondents had not been specifically looking for a townhouse (a modern house on a small section) when buying, renting or building their home.

This highlights two issues. First, that some of the older housing stock in the City may not be meeting people's housing needs in a price or rental range that is realistic. Second, that infill development in recent years has tended to provide a fairly limited range of housing types. As a result, not all lifestyles and households are being adequately catered for within newly built housing stock. For both of these issues, the Council has a limited influence, providing only the broad framework in which building development occurs with property developers, architects and other market forces determining the final outcome.

This part of the research establishes that location and price play a large role in Christchurch residents choosing to live in infill development. When looking for a house to live in people generally have some idea about the type of house that they want. However, often those ideas are compromised by what people can afford to buy, rent or build. Housing that offers locational advantages and preferred features at an acceptable price can be hard to find, meaning that the final choice of a home often requires a trade off between these factors.

OBJECTIVE TWO: IS INFILL HOUSING MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN IT?

The diverse nature of contemporary living has resulted in the need for a greater variety of housing types than was required in the past. Consequently, there is a niche market for infill type development, but it needs to be designed with modern requirements in mind. Assessing satisfaction with certain aspects of townhouse living was a way of examining the extent to which infill housing met people's needs.

Nearly all the respondents (92%) were happy with their townhouse. The house features they liked were low maintenance, warmth and its newness. A large number had chosen a house that they liked and clearly still felt that way about their home. Of the few respondents who were unhappy, comments mostly related to house design and size.

A high proportion (89%) were satisfied with the size of their house, commenting that it was big enough to meet their needs.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents did not specifically plan to buy, rent or build on a back section, but about the same proportion ended up doing so. Of that group, 92% were satisfied, finding the property to be quiet and private. Those who were dissatisfied

had experienced problems with shared driveways or felt isolated from the rest of the street.

Two thirds of respondents specifically wanted a small section when looking for a property. Small sections were favoured for their manageability and low maintenance, often because people were getting older, or did not want to invest a lot of time caring for a large garden. For a quarter of those who had not specifically intended to have a small section, section size had been irrelevant when choosing their home. Others said the property was great except for the section size (25%), while another group could not afford a larger section (19%).

The size of their outdoor area proved to be satisfactory for 85% of respondents. Generally they were happy with driveway arrangements and garden size. Dissatisfied respondents had issues with shared or small driveways, limited parking areas and not much lawn.

The open-ended "what do you like most/least about your townhouse" questions at the beginning of the survey helped to highlight aspects that made townhouse living a good or bad experience for respondents. There were more positive responses than negative ones. Most of the things people liked were covered in the satisfaction questions:

- low maintenance of the property
- the compact size of the house
- good design
- warmth
- location

Most of the liked-least topics had been raised as well:

- the house and/or section being too small,
- a lack of privacy
- shared driveways
- badly designed/incomplete houses

While some people saw a small house as an advantage, others found it a problem, with particular rooms being too small or restricted outdoor space being the issue. Likewise, while some respondents obviously enjoyed their well-designed house and the modern conveniences it offered, others discovered their home was badly designed or not finished.

Some of these things, in particular house size and outdoor space, are generally compromises that people have to make in choosing an infill type development – often a small house on a small section. However, some of the other issues raised such as poor house design and shared driveways, could be examined in relation to current planning processes and regulations.

FUTURE RESEARCH

As a result of the study, it became apparent that the following areas could warrant further investigation:

- Focus groups with respondents to bring out more specific information and clarify issues.
- A post-enumeration survey to identify the population who did not respond to see how well they fit the profile of respondents.
- Specific design issues around infill housing.
- Investigating the impact infill has had on the surrounding area (surveying townhouse neighbours to find out about their attitudes to infill development).

CONCLUSIONS

Infill development is now a significant part of the urban environment in Christchurch. In the past couple of years especially, a lot of urban growth has been in existing suburban areas. This has had an impact on people who live in infill housing, and those living around them. This study set out to look at some of the motivations for those choosing to live in infill, and whether this type of housing development is meeting their housing needs.

There are many reasons why people choose to live within certain parts of the City, and in particular types of housing. In the case of townhouse dwellers, some of their motivations included specific locations that they had in mind, which were influenced by their knowledge and liking of the area's environs and access to facilities. Finding a townhouse they liked was also a big factor in their decisionmaking. Many were also specifically looking for a townhouse, in that they were looking for a small, modern house on a small section. Respondents did not always find that there was much choice of housing in their price or rental range however.

Infill housing seems, on the whole, to be meeting the needs of the people living in it. Satisfaction levels were high with lots of aspects of townhouse life, from the house itself to its size, section size and outdoor area. Those who were dissatisfied possibly had to make too many compromises in their search for a new house in their price range. Better planning controls and an emphasis on good design in future could correct some of the problems raised by respondents.

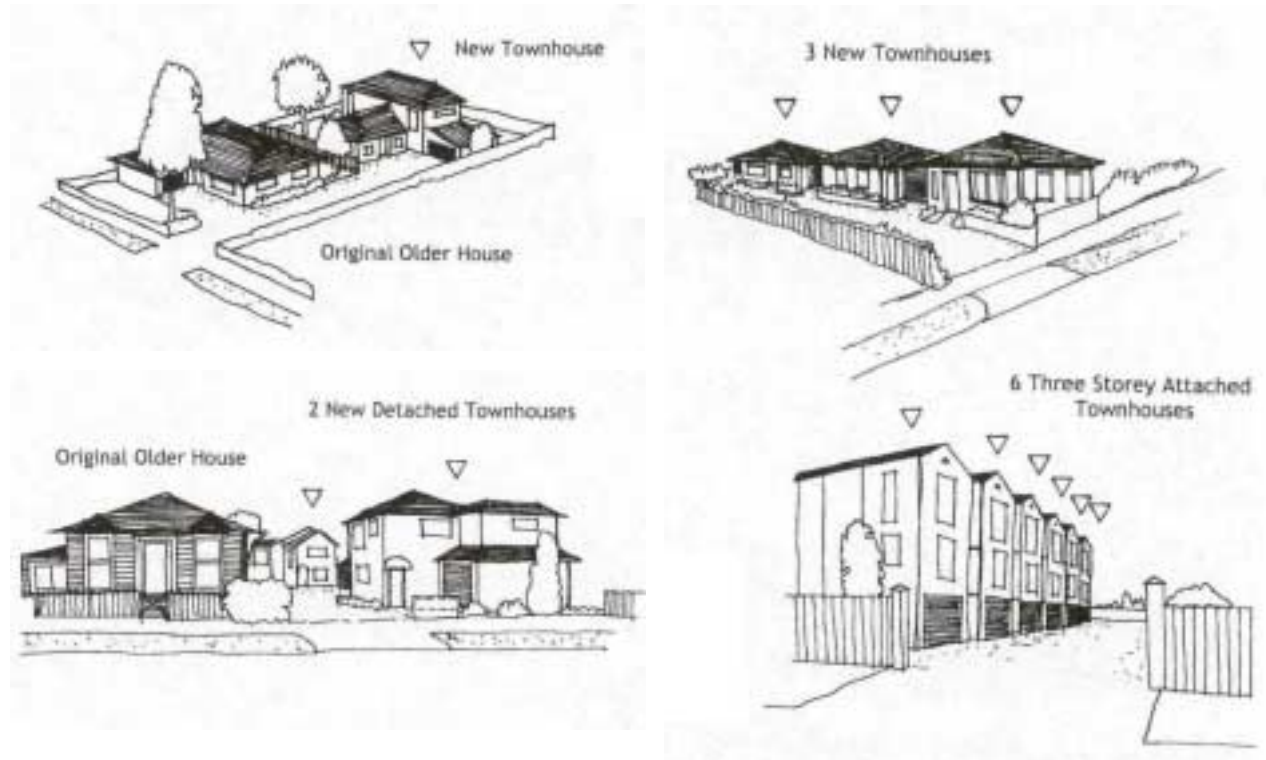
Satisfaction with townhouses and the choice to live in one, is an entirely personal thing. Most respondents living in Christchurch City however, seem to enjoy their townhouse and make the most of its advantages.

APPENDIX 1

Christchurch City Council Townhouse Survey, September 1999

Section A

Please answer all questions by ticking the box or writing in the spaces provided.



1. Does your home and section generally look like any of the townhouse developments above indicated by the ▽? *Don't include the original older house*
 Yes – **Go to Section B Question 1, on the next page**
 No – **Go to Question 2**
2. Do you live immediately in front of, beside or behind the type of townhouse development illustrated above?
 Yes
 No

If yes, what is the street address of that townhouse or townhouses? (We need the address so that we can post them a copy of the survey)

End of Questionnaire. As we are specifically looking to survey people who live in the type of townhouse developments identified above we do not require you to answer any more questions.

We would appreciate it if you would return this questionnaire and the completed entry form in the freepost envelope provided. By doing this you will go into the draw to win a meal for two at the Christchurch Casino or one of 20 family passes to a City Council swimming pool. Thank you for your time.

Section B

For the purposes of this survey we are interested in townhouses built as in-fill development since January 1994. In-fill development occurs within an existing suburb of older houses. It includes one or more new townhouses built behind, in front or beside an existing older house. It also includes developments of two or more townhouses where the original older house has been demolished. In-fill townhouses are built on cross-lease sections or small freehold sections (less than 500m²).

If your house does not fit the description above please answer the questions on the previous page (Section A) and return in the freepost envelope provided.

Part 1: Questions about where you lived previously

1. Where did you live before you moved into this townhouse? (*Select one*)

- I lived in Christchurch. Please specify the suburb _____
- I lived outside of Christchurch. Please specify town/city or country if overseas _____

2. What type of accommodation were you living in immediately before moving into this townhouse? (*Select one*)

- I rented a house, townhouse or unit
- I owned a house, townhouse or unit
- I flatted and paid rent
- I lived at home with my parent(s)
- I boarded (either with a family, in a boarding house, or hostel)
- Other. Please specify _____

3. What type of house were you living in before moving into this townhouse? (*Select one*)

- Older** house/unit (Pre 1940) on **medium to large** section (500m² or more)
- Older** house/unit (Pre 1940) on **smaller** section (less than 500m²)
- Medium aged** house/unit (1940 -1980) on **medium to large** section (500m² or more)
- Medium aged** house/unit (1940-1980) on **smaller** section (less than 500m²)
- Modern** house/townhouse/unit (1980 or newer) on **medium to large** section (500m² or more)
- Modern** house/townhouse/unit (1980 or newer) on **smaller** section (less than 500m²)
- Other. Please specify _____

Part 2: Questions about your current townhouse

4. How many bedrooms does your townhouse have? (*Select one*)

- One bedroom
- Two bedrooms
- Three bedrooms
- Four or more bedrooms
- Other. Please specify _____

5. Is your townhouse (*Select one*)

- Single storey
- Two storey (including the level your garage is on)
- Three storey (including the level your garage is on)
- Above another townhouse
- Other. Please specify _____

6. Is your townhouse (*Select one*)

- Standalone (not attached to any other townhouse)
 In a block of 2 (ie at least one wall is shared between this townhouse and another townhouse, includes those joined by a garage)
 In a block of 3 or more
 Other. Please specify _____

7. What do you like the **most** about your townhouse? _____

8. What do you like the **least** about your townhouse? _____

Part 3: Questions about the development of your townhouse

The following questions relate to the entire original site on which your townhouse has been built. This includes other new townhouses and/or the original older house.

9. How many new townhouses were built on this site around the same time as your townhouse was built? *Include your townhouse but do not include the original older house on this site. (Select one)*

- Only the one I live in
 2 townhouses (including the one I live in)
 3 townhouses (including the one I live in)
 4 townhouses (including the one I live in)
 5 townhouses (including the one I live in)
 6 townhouses (including the one I live in)
 Other. Please specify _____

10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the **number of houses on this site?** (*Select one*)

Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

11. Is the original older house still there? (*This refers to the house that was on this site prior to the new development - Select One*)

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Part 4: Questions about looking for your current home

The following questions relate to the choices you made when you were looking for the home you are now living in. Your section refers to the area of land you have for your exclusive use.

12. Thinking about when you were initially planning to buy, rent or build your current home, what did you want with regard to the location within Christchurch? (*Select one*)

- I/we wanted a specific location (ie within a particular suburb or school zone)
 I/we wanted a very general location (ie within south or north Christchurch)
 I/we were flexible about the location (ie we looked at houses all over Christchurch)
 Other. Please specify _____

13. Why did you choose to live in this location? *(Tick all that apply)*

- To be close to shops, services and facilities
- To be close to work
- To be close to a particular school or child care facility
- To be close to friends or family
- To be close to public transport
- I/we liked the local environment
- To reduce travel times
- To reduce travel costs
- I/we liked the townhouse
- Other. Please specify _____

14. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the **location within Christchurch** of your townhouse?
(Select one)

- Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
-

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

15. Thinking about when you were initially planning to buy, rent or build your current home, did you specifically want a townhouse? *(Select one)*

- Yes – Go to Q17
- No – Go to Q16

16. What type of house were you looking for? e.g. *old villa, large family home etc* _____

17. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the **type of house** you live in? *(Select one)*

- Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
-

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

18. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the **size of your townhouse** not including the section?
(Select one)

- Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
-

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

19. Thinking about when you were initially planning to buy, rent or build your current home, did you specifically want a home on a back section? *(Select one)*

- Yes
- No

20. Do you live on a back section? *There is at least one house between your townhouse and the street.*
(Select one)

- Yes – Go to Q21
- No - Go to Q22

21. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with **living on a back section**? (Select one)

Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

22. Thinking about when you were initially planning to buy, rent or build your current home, did you specifically want a small section? *i.e. Less than 500m²* (Select one)

- Yes – Go to Q23
 No – Go to Q24

23. Why were you specifically looking for a home on a small section? _____

Go to Q 25

24. Townhouses are typically on smaller sections. Why did you move into a townhouse on a small section? (Tick all that apply)

- I/we could not afford to buy, rent or build a house on a larger section
 I/we could not find a larger section with a house that met our needs
 I/we could not find a larger section to build on
 Everything else about the house was what I/we wanted except for the size of the section
 Other. Please Specify _____

25. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the **size of your outdoor area**? *This includes your driveway, garden and/or courtyard, service areas and any balconies.* (Select one)

Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

26. Thinking about when you were initially planning to buy, rent or build your current home, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the **choice of housing types** in your price or rental range? (Select one)

Very Satisfied Satisfied No Feeling Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Please give some reasons for your answer _____

27. Thinking about when you were initially planning to buy, rent or build your current home, were there any features you wanted that this townhouse doesn't have? *i.e. double garage, larger section, ensuite, bath, two toilets etc.* (Select one)

- No, there were no other features that I/we wanted ... Go to Q28
 Yes, there were other features that I/we wanted. Please List _____

Why didn't you buy, rent or build a home with these features? _____

Part 5: Final questions about you, your household and your home

28. Do you own or part own this townhouse? (*Select one*)

- Yes - Go to Q29
 No - Go to Q33

29. Is this the first home you have owned or part owned? (*Select one*)

- Yes
 No

30. What is the current (1998) government capital valuation for your townhouse? *The capital value includes both the land and improvement values – this can be found on the right hand side of your rates notice.* (*Select one*)

- Less than \$100,000
 \$100,000 - \$149,999
 \$150,000 - \$199,999
 \$200,000 - \$249,999
 \$250,000 - \$299,999
 Greater than \$300,000
 I don't know

31. Did you (*Select one*)

- Build this townhouse yourself (ie bought the section and chose the design yourself) – Go to Q32
 Buy this townhouse from the developer before or during construction – Go to Q34
 Buy this townhouse after construction was completed - Go to Q34
 Other. Please specify _____ Go to Q34

32. Why did you build this townhouse, instead of buying a completed one? _____

Go to Q34

33. Does the owner of this townhouse (*Select one*)

- Live in the house
 Live elsewhere

34. How long have you lived in this townhouse? (*Select one*)

- 1 Year or less
 More than 1 year but less than 3 years
 More than 3 years but less than 5 years
 More than 5 Years
 Other, please specify _____

35. How much longer do you expect to live in this townhouse? (*Select one*)

- 1 Year or less
 More than 1 year but less than 3 years
 More than 3 years but less than 5 years
 More than 5 Years
 Don't know

36. How old are you? (*Select one*)

- 0-14 Years
 15-24 Years
 25-34 years
 35-44 Years
 45-54 Years
 55-64 years
 65 years and over

37. Are you (*Select one*)

- Male
 Female

38. How many occupants are there in this house in each of the following age groups? *Please indicate the number of occupants in each age group, including yourself.*

Number of
Occupants
(Include yourself)

- _____ 0-14 Years
_____ 15-24 Years
_____ 25-34 years
_____ 35-44 Years
_____ 45-54 Years
_____ 55-64 years
_____ 65 years and over

39. Which of the following best describes this household (*Select one*)

- Couple without children living with you
 Two parent family with one or more children living with you
 One parent family with one or more children living with you
 Non-family household (ie flatting)
 One person household
 Other (Please specify) _____

40. What are the sources of income for this household (*Tick all that apply*)

- Wages and/or Salaries - Go to Q41
 Government Benefit (excluding Govt Superannuation) - Go to Q42
 Superannuation (Government or Private) - Go to Q42
 Student allowance - Go to Q42
 Other (please specify) _____ - Go to Q42

41. What are the occupations of the salary and wage earners in this household?

42. Do you have any other comments relating to your townhouse, or townhouse living in general? *If you need more space please write on the back of this page.*

End of Questionnaire
Thank you for your time

Have You:

- **Answered all the questions?**
- **Filled out the Entry form?**

Please place the completed survey and entry form in the freepost envelope provided and return to the Christchurch City Council by October 1st 1999