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Disparity of resident ontological security and sense of place between two neighbourhoods in Newcastle upon Tyne

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Student's signature

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1. Abstract

This thesis intends to explore the links between the processes of demolition and construction in urban spaces, and the sense of community and ontological security between the residents of two neighbourhoods of Newcastle upon Tyne, a city in the north-east of England. The comparison between the architectural histories of these neighbourhoods, Heaton and Shieldfield, demonstrates profound inequalities, driven by decades of urban development and "regeneration", i.e. the exploitation and reshaping of public spaces in favour of the flow of international capital to the detriment of residents, as seen across the country and the world. Through surveys, interviews and focus groups, qualitative and quantitative analysis come together to examine the sense of community and belonging among residents of both neighbourhoods, as well as to understand their perceptions regarding the lack of social housing and different needs in the study areas. The research begins by comparing the architectural styles found in Heaton - primarily long streets of terraced brick houses from the early 1900s - and in Shieldfield. The latter shows a very different picture: from the 1930s, the neighbourhood has undergone waves of demolition and reconstruction of the residential buildings, resulting in a heavily fragmented area, without services, local businesses, or sufficient investment for residents. Here we find a mix of brutalism, older houses, and high-rise blocks, all with a higher

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percentage of social housing than in Heaton. The reputation of this neighbourhood has consequently influenced the attraction of businesses and capital, unlike Heaton, which instead receives high investment, leading the gentrified neighbourhood to be described as "a bubble of diversity and acceptance", despite the persistence of poverty among some residents. This thesis aims to identify specific sites at risk of demolition according to residents' perceptions, mainly in Shieldfield, where a continuation of the ongoing processes is expected, and to build an approach to protect and reclaim buildings important to the community. The hypothesis that there is a profound difference in senses of community and place between the two neighbourhoods is supported by the data, and offers a path to overcome these harmful processes, towards a city built genuinely for residents.

2. Extended Summary

Questa tesi intende esplorare i legami fra i processi di demolizione e costruzione negli spazi e il senso di comunitá nei residenti di due quartieri confinanti di Newcastle upon Tyne, Regno Unito. Il confronto tra le storie architettoniche di questi quartieri, Heaton e Shieldfield, dimostra diseguaglianze profonde, guidate da decenni di sviluppo urbano e da una presunta "rigenerazione", ossia lo sfruttamento e rimodellamento degli spazi pubblici seguendo logiche e regole del mercato internazionale, a scapito dei residenti. La tesi misura l'impatto della demolizione sulle comunitá residenti in questi quartieri, e confronta i diversi significati attribuiti a questo processo rispetto alla percezione del senso di luogo. La ricerca si basa sull'idea di sicurezza ontologica, la garanzia che il proprio stile di vita continuerá senza incertezze, e la dinamica tra questo presupposto di continuità, e lo stato degli edifici e delle case del quartiere in cui si vive, rispetto al processo in corso della rigenerazione urbana.

L'analisi spaziale mostra che gli ambienti architettonici dei quartieri sono altamente diversificati. In particolare Heaton é caratterizzato da una stabilità nella presenza di abitazioni ed edifici che non é possibile riscontrare a Shieldfield, quartiere esposto a numerosi progetti di demolizione e ricostruizione negli ultimi decenni.

Lo studio é stato condotto attraverso la realizzazione di un sondaggio, distribuito principalmente a mano, ma con possibilità di accesso anche online, per comprendere le diverse percezioni tra i residenti dei due quartieri rispetto alle demolizioni e alla comunitá, come luogo dove sentirsi sicuri, orgogliosi, con spazi in cui lavorare, mangiare, sedersi, far giocare i bambini. I risultati indicano un livello di dipendenza dal quartiere – la misura in cui i residenti hanno accesso a strutture e servizi – piú basso a Shieldfield che a Heaton, mentre l'orgoglio rispetto allo spazio risulta il medesimo in entrambi quartieri. Interviste semi-strutturate sono state poi utilizzate per approfondire la storia locale, l'architettura, gli investimenti della

municipalità, i cambiamenti del quartiere e la voce collettiva – da queste é emerso un senso di sicurezza ontologica molto piú forte a Heaton, dove i residenti sentono di avere facilmente accesso ad un confronto con la municipalità di fronte all'emersione di nuove problematiche. A Shieldfield, al contrario, la costruzione di numerosi edifici per l'alloggio si studenti universitari, avvenuta senza previa discussione o consultazione con i residenti, ha portato ad un generale indebolimento del senso di comunitá e di luogo, ma ha rappresentato anche una problematica comune intorno a cui riunirsi per rafforzare la voce collettiva, processo avvenuto grazie alla creazione di Dwellbeing Shieldfield, una cooperativa di residenti.

A conclusione della ricerca, é stato organizzato un focus group con un gruppo di residenti di Shieldfield per avviare una discussione intorno ai luoghi identificati dagli intervistati come vulnerabili a future demolizioni, al fine di individuare potenziali soluzioni che consentano di usufruire di questi edifici per il bene comune.

Tra le conclusioni emerse dallo studio, si evidenzia l'importanza di una voce collettiva, nutrita dal rapporto con la municipalità e dalla sicurezza ontologica. Di fronte a fenomeni di diffusa e crescente privatizzazione, inflazione e crisi degli affitti, a Heaton, i residenti sentono di avere i mezzi per esprimere le loro esigenze, mezzi che al contrario non si trovano a Shieldfield, un quartiere più isolato. Esplorando questa disparitá, questo studio intende contribuire alla formazione di una voce collettiva per gli abitanti di Shieldfield, che sappia dare importanza alla storia locale e agli edifici rimanenti. Per questo motivo, si intende proseguire nel prossimo futuro il percorso avviato con questa ricerca nei quartieri interessati, attraverso un incontro di restituzione dei risultati ai residenti e la realizzazione di un fascicolo di divulgazione, che possano contribuire ad una sempre maggiore aggregazione e a catalizzare la discussione pubblica intorno alle tematiche di sviluppo e benessere locale.

3. Preface

This study examines the role of demolition within the *sense of place* of residents in a neighbourhood, and the implications of demolition, or the perceived threat thereof, upon *ontological security*. By comparing the subjective experiences of residents in two neighbourhoods on the same city, each with different traditions of building use, we can identify the role of the built environment in shaping ontological security at a time of great urban upheaval and architectural turnover. Despite mounting evidence that renovation, refurbishment and retrofitting are viable choices for bringing empty, derelict or emissions-heavy buildings into sustainable use, municipalities and developers tend heavily towards demolition and reconstruction as the standard method for addressing buildings coming to the end of their lifespans. This has intensely damaging effects on the communities that live in these spaces and

in a highly unequal housing market with limited distribution and supply, and for the environment – without progressive change in building use and community decision-making, the needs of residents will not be appropriately met though socially and environmentally sustainable ways, and profit-seeking behaviour will continue to dominate.

Current building practices emphasise demolition and reconstruction, a traumatic experience for many residents of the original building, and for those living nearby. Community ties built up over decades can be destroyed instantly, and significant levels of material waste and energy emissions are produced by this process. Under the intensive pressure of the current UK housing crisis, any construction development that does not build socially affordable housing is somewhat responsible for the financialisation of the existing housing stock, rising house prices forcing the most vulnerable into precarity. When new homes are built, another extremely energy-intensive process, the nature of private construction often results in costs too high for the most vulnerable, and when homes are demolished, or commercial space is built instead, then the effects of housing scarcity become more and more intense. Too often, socially affordable homes are replaced with luxury apartments or commercial space, or fields of new-build, supposedly carbon-neutral homes, inaccessible to the poorest in society. As investment - both global and domestic - floods into the UK housing market, local communities are excluded from decision-making in their own areas, and thus the urban landscape is made and remade according to profitability, without regard for the opinions of the residents themselves.

This study compares two neighbourhoods in Newcastle upon Tyne – the first is Heaton, a neighbourhood with very little historical levels of demolition, and more common practices of building re-use, with the second being Shieldfield, a neighbourhood once very visually similar but since exposed to high rates of demolition and reconstruction, resulting in a much more heterogenous building stock. The purpose of the research is to understand if the perceived threat of demolition is different between residents of these neighbourhoods, and if this has significance for the ontological security and sense of place for these residents, representing their relationships with the space in both the present and future. The implication of this is that the intense social impact of demolition and reconstruction is not taken into account in current construction trends, and that a more social and humane system would focus on the more environmentally and economically sustainable methods of renovation and retrofitting according to the wishes of residents, taking account of the collective voice of the area. Community ownership of land and buildings appears as the potential for resolving these tensions in building use, challenging the top-down, often place-neutral approach of the highly centralised construction industry.

4. Introduction

The ongoing housing crisis is permeating British cities, with prices buoyed by the refusal of either the public or private sector to increase the stock of genuinely affordable homes, and by the increasing centralisation of ownership of existing stock by banks, letting agencies and landlords. A tangle of social problems – underinvestment in construction, overinvestment in financial speculation, unwillingness to adopt or subsidise environmentally sustainable practices, and ideological opposition to increasing state welfare – have weaved themselves into a Gordian Knot that the government insists can be undone with a single slice – construction. With roughly 250,000 new households formed every year, the countryside outside of all major cities is being paved over with row after row of new-build homes (on which the developers are not required to pay VAT, Value Added Tax) (Bell Holmström 2024). But what is sacrificed for this approach? How sustainable is mass construction of detached single-family houses, a sprawling suburbia far from employment sites or public transport, while inner city residential areas become increasingly unaffordable? With land prices rising in often historic and beloved sites, demolition of older buildings for the construction of luxury apartments and modern offices takes on new social relevance. The housing market has grown in such a way that 261,000 homes across the UK have been left vacant for over 12 months – when including short vacancy periods, short-term lets, and second homes, the number of empty homes in the UK reaches 1 million. Another 170,000 vacant business and commercial properties offer the potential to be transformed into hundreds of thousands of more housing units, without the costs of initial demolition for reconstruction (Bell Holmström 2024). In areas of high housing demand, therefore, prices are rising dramatically, while investment, both private and public, consistently refuses to support communities in less profitable and marketable areas. This localised and surgical approach results in extreme inequality that makes itself evident through the built environment.

The focus of the study is Newcastle upon Tyne, the largest city in the North-East of England and the main hub of the Tyneside conurbation. Newcastle, and the whole Tyneside area grew significantly during the Industrial Revolution – the invention of the steam train, the vast coal supplies, and the massive contributions to shipbuilding, drove the economic growth and rural-to-urban migration that drove the construction of neighbourhoods outside the historic centre, including two adjacent neighbourhoods that provide the study area for this research, Shieldfield and Heaton. Until the 1930s, these spaces were fairly similar, primarily repeating streets of terraced brick houses, a common sight in northern British industrial cities. But after slum clearance demolition in the interwar period cut out great parts of Shieldfield, following by a successive wave of demolition in the 1950s, their paths diverged. While Heaton streets

remained largely unchanged, save for the construction of two tower blocks close to the railway, and the demolition of the local train station, Shieldfield was exposed to a piecemeal reconstruction project by the postwar modernist agenda. Over the 1960s and 1970s, concrete volumes, tower blocks, and green spaces appeared, and over the 2000s, renewed interest in urban renewal and changing trends in housing investment brought the numerous purpose build student accommodation blocks that currently dominate Shieldfield. Extreme transformations in the built environment outside of the control of residents have brought the neighbourhood into contact with a very different from of development than the gentrification of Heaton.

In 2017, in response to such construction trends, Dwellbeing Shieldfield (hereafter "Dwellbeing") formed as an art-based research project into the effects of studentification and underinvestment in resident facilities in the area, and has since grown into a community group that works to build resident ownership and take back control over spaces that have been dominated by planning decisions made from outside the community. The profitability of short-term housing and luxury student apartments, with services and facilities for long-term residents left without sufficient maintenance, has led to community fragmentation and a resulting plethora of social issues. Following the research of Hannah Marsden and other researchers at Dwellbeing, this study seeks to use the experiences of residents in these contexts to draw larger conclusions about urban policy and local development practices.

The conversation around building use in meeting housing needs is a complex one, drawing in issues of environmental sustainability, built heritage, community resilience, and profitability. Given research by Anne Power, Architects for Social Housing, Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, and Action on Empty Homes, there has been a developed case for moving away from continuous demolition and reconstruction, with retrofitting, renovation and refurbishment of vacant, derelict and unused spaces in British cities. The impact of demolition on public health, on the environment and carbon emissions, and as a factor of economic development and waste have been argued powerfully, and must only overcome the political unwillingness to change the status quo to be able to make sweeping improvements in urban development. The focus of this study however is the resident perspective, and the social psychological effect of a built environment warping and fluctuating according to plans that fail to give local people a real influence in shaping decision making in their community. The study looks at the short- and long-term effects of residential demolition and construction based on financial speculation instead of social need, the ways that different probabilities of future demolition, as are found in Shieldfield over Heaton, affect the sense of place of residents, in the wider context of ontological security. There is widespread residential dissatisfaction with current construction trends, and the reluctance of developers or local councils to invest in social housing or

affordable housing only exacerbates the housing crisis that dominates the causes of poverty in Britain today. By arguing for urban development to be taken in a direction more in line with the psychological needs of residents, fulfilling statistical requirements in terms of housing units and newly formed households, as well as providing secure and safe homes, the study aims to tie immaterial financial forces to material conditions in a post-industrial city, where resources are consistently used for profit-seeking over the needs of the community.

5. Research questions and objectives

The study works under the understanding that high building turnover has a negative effect on the sense of place and ontological security of the residents *when the choice is not entirely their own* – as seen in cases of eviction, being "priced out" of a neighbourhood, or loss of home through disasters. With regards to the context of a small inner-urban neighbourhood with high rates of building turnover compared to other neighbourhoods nearby, it also holds the understanding that residents are excluded from local decision-making processes, and the space would look markedly different had their perspectives been driving the developments.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. To what extent is the significance of demolition different for the residents of Heaton and of Shieldfield?

2. How far can demolition be said to influence the sense of place for the residents, in the context of ontological security?

The focus of the data to be collected is thus on subjective perceptions and experiences, both personal and communal.

The research objectives are to be:

1. Attempt to discern a difference between communal perceptions of demolition between the residents of Heaton and of Shieldfield

2. Explore public perceptions around the likelihood of future demolition

3. Identify communal and grassroots approaches to more democratic decisions around building use in high-turnover areas

A focus on surveys, interviews, and focus groups facilitate the collection and analysis of data oriented around the impact of urban decision-making at the most intimate and personal level. These are the voices least represented in the spatial politics of the neighbourhoods, and most in need of being heard.

6. Theoretical frame and literature review

6.1 Sense of place

The term "sense of place" has arrived to us from a somewhat torturous journey through academia. Stemming from studies in behavioural and environmental psychology in the 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis was on self-identity, and its relationship with the environment. Proshanksy lays out a theory of place identity as a "subidentity" of the self, a constituent part of the self that can be studies discretely, through which the myriad of lived experiences around a body are filtered, consciously and unconsciously, into a place identity (Proshansky 1978). Stokols and Schumaker go on to attempt to construct a theory of sense of place within environmental cognition, contrasting the apparent simplicity and controllability of microenvironmental stimuli, with the vast arrays of data coming from the architectural, geographic, and sociocultural environment (Stokols and Schumaker 1981). Entrikin links these internal and external experiences, describing place as "filtered through the language of collective narratives and public discourses that continually blend spatial scales and move between relatively centred and relative decentred perspectives" (Entrikin 1997, p.43). Thus the term "sense of place" spans many disciplines, has been applied in both retroactive to predictive studies, and has taken on many definitions.

Within the understanding of place as a psychological concept, two schools of thought present themselves – the phenomenological approach, and the social psychology approach.

The concept of place, the immediate and ultimate stimuli that surround the body and mind, is such a totalising one, such a constant multifaceted construction and reconstruction of what an individual experiences, that phenomenologists argue that one cannot separate one aspect from another. This holistic approach to place and sense of place, one that acknowledges the interconnectedness of experiences surround a human, resists measurement and classification (Seamon 2013).

Within social psychology however, there is a willingness to deconstruct sense of place into discrete constituents, dependent on variables, and subject to hypothesis testing (Steadman 2016). Certainly the nature of academic publishing, favouring replicable methodologies testing variables, has played some part in the dominance of this second school of thought. Nonetheless, research by Stedman (2016), Nanzer (2004), and Tester (2011) show that research using the social psychology approach, while there are likely to be speculations, generalisations and inaccuracies, still provides valuable insights into the differences between demographics and their relationship to place. These studies rely on surveys, with question formats in ordinal scales like the Likert model prevailing. Collecting many responses allows researchers to build up a

model of the collective sense of place, as interpreted by the masses, with the potential for interviews to go deeper into the themes that appear as a result.

This research tends towards the social psychology approach, in making direct comparisons between the sense of place of two distinct samples to test hypotheses and draw conclusions regarding specific variables. However, the study makes no claim to measure and quantify an objective value representing "sense of place" or its constituent conceptual elements – the results from this study are only glimpses into the lived experiences of the residents in question, and the myriad of unobservable variables that influence a holistic sense of place are certainly unquantifiable. Correlations are identified, but to attribute an objective and algebraic truth to these findings would be an exaggeration of the capacity of the study to identify contributing factors.

Within the social psychology approach to sense of place, greater resolution and precision of studies can be found through the targeting of the study on specific aspects within sense of place, the component elements interfacing between different behavioural and emotional patterns, and the environment.

Vaske and Kobrin (2001) in a study of environmentally responsible behaviour, declare sense of place as comprised of two elements, *place identity*, signifying emotional attachments, and *place dependence*, the more functional aspect of the territory to meet practical needs. This multidimensional approach to the different components is taken further with Jorgensen et al, whose empirical framework included the two aforementioned elements, as well as *place attachment* (Jorgensen et al. 2001). For them, *place identity* is linked more to the space as a reflection of the community and viceversa, the extent to which the identity of the individual can be expressed and reaffirmed in the space - *place attachment* for Jorgensen and Stedman then takes the role of emotional connection, as with Shamai and Ilatov (2005) who take on the same empirical framework. As identified by Domingues et al. 2021, this framework, which moves away from the dominance of the concept of *place attachment* and instead valorises also other components, is more suited to residential studies, as opposed to studies of tourists or visitors (Domingues et al. 2021).

Within the push for quantifiable and measurable components within sense of place, the importance of time as a factor becomes apparent. Masour (2023 p. 10)) notes the relevance of "the cultural and historical context in urban environments over different spatial scales, temporal layers and the changing perspectives and experiences of those who occupy and engage with these spaces," while Nelson et al (2020) underlines the process of meaning accumulation, sense of place building up over time. We cannot assume that this accumulation occurs linearly and teleologically – it is possible that residents could "fall out of love" with an area, as the built

environment and community changes over time. Few studies are designed to take into account a negative sense of place, but Shamai and Ilatov attempt to do so using unidimensional and bipolar approaches, intentionally wording questions to allow for a wide range of responses (Shamai and Ilatov 2005). To investigate changes over time however, from positive to negative or even fluctuating between the two poles, semi-structured interviews and focus groups appear as the most applicable tool, given the complexity of the discussions required that would be difficult and confusing to translate into a survey form.

Due to the highly subjective nature of the research in question, the voices of the subjects are thus the most valuable resource we have. In this sense, surveys, interviews, and focus groups, are used regularly in measuring sense of place, and its composite elements – place identity, place attachment, and place dependence (Stedman 2016; Shamai and Ilatov 2005; Tester 2011). The methodological aspect that displays the highest variability is the space-time bounds of these subjective examinations – in the sense of time-series as opposed to cross-sectional data, as "individuals become part of their neighbourhood rather than merely residing there", and furthermore as whether the study focuses on a specific building, a street, a neighbourhood, a city, or even a whole state (Mansour 2023, p.20). Comparative studies are not uncommon in this field, and thus there exist precedents for the form of research undertaken in this study (Nanzer 2004).

6.2 Urban regeneration

Urban regeneration as regards Britain, is an incredibly broad academic field, encompassing the entire political spectrum. Trends can still be identified however, that illuminate the environment in which the study takes place.

After the 1973 OPEC crisis, Thatcherite privatisation and the move to international finance and services as the primary industry of the UK, Northern cities like Newcastle have been subject to intense changes. With the end of the "golden age" of capitalism, the effects of post-industrial unemployment became shockingly obvious. To revitalise the economy, privatisation was embraced by academia and the British government pushing the neoliberal agenda into the foreground of policy and society (Gamble 1988). Private sector property development fixed itself at the heart of urban regeneration during this period, and has not let go since (Healy 1991; Gallent 2019). David Harvey has documented the extreme mobility of capital, and the effects this has on the rents that can be extracted – the processes through which local characteristics can be steamrolled in the name of international finance have been central to the power hierarchies that today dominate urban development. (Harvey 1985).

In generic economic terms, urban regeneration comes described in two camps, neoliberalism and neo-Marxism, the former addressing competition and free markets, while justifying massive state-sponsored monopolies like energy companies, and the latter criticising mass accumulation and pushing for regulated markets (Lovering 2007). Edward Glaeser celebrates the achievements of urbanisation on public health and equality of opportunity, declaring that fewer regulations make companies freer to innovate (Glaeser 2011).

An understanding was reached around the millennium that the promises of neoliberalism had not been met – poverty was growing around the world, including urban centres in developed economies (Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Davis 2006). With the role of central government massively weakened by privatisation, urban regeneration policies looked to new forms of power to attempt to recover. In this climate, encouraged by shifts in international finance and lending, and the increasing power of multinational corporations, foundations and NGOs, the theory of governance, decision-making occurring from the interplay between these forces, rather than of government, central control by the democratic authority, took hold of national and urban policy (Rhodes 1997).

The culture industry and the "creative class" has been enthusiastically embraced by British urban economies, undertaking a rebranding campaign to attract investment, attention, and tourism, both national and international. Florida (2002) discusses the "creative class" as a force for regeneration, and cities like Newcastle present exemplar sites for the emergence of this field. Benneworth (2008 p.90) emphasises the importance of the "knowledge economy" as driven by the University of Newcastle, which he argues is perfectly positioned to address issues of mass unemployment, unused infrastructure, and negative perceptions of the city by both insiders and outsiders.

With the decline of the role of the state in such matters, the fall of social housing over this period has been a crushing one – the role it represents in society, in supporting the most vulnerable and as an investment in society, has been attacked thoroughly from all sides, resulting in the much weakened form it presents today, one still vital for the vulnerable of urban society (Coleman 1985; Hanley 2007; Boughton 2018). It is in literature critical of the capitalist processes that we find this analysis, writers adjacent to neo-Marxism. Mass privatisation and financialisation of housing has decimated the amount of social housing available to people in need, replaced instead with luxury, gentrified, or "affordable" (a term now denoting housing only slightly below the average market price, unaffordable to the majority of the population) homes (Marcuse and Madden 2016). Marcuse emphasise the financialisation of housing as the driver of financial exploitation of the working class, and Gallent goes on to explore potential solutions based on changing construction trends and financial models (Marcuse and Madden

2016; Gallent 2019). Architects for Social Housing make the most insightful analyses, examining the practicalities of improving and perpetuating existing stocks of social housing though environmentally and socially sustainable methods, meeting the needs of residents through a socialist architecture that resists profit-seeking pressures.

> "A socialist architecture is one that engages with the totality of its social, economic and environmental contexts, and is, because of this, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. A socialist architecture is produced by and for those who do and will inhabit it, not as a commodity for those who want to buy and sell it. A socialist architecture is one that meets the housing and civic needs of its citizens. A socialist architecture is never produced for profit, but in order to meet these needs. It's value, therefore, is always its use-value as housing or other asset of community value, never it's exchange value as property." (Architects for Social Housing 2019 p.25).

The work by Architects for Social Housing is thus central to this study, in critically examining the urban processes around vulnerable residents, with the knowledge that frameworks exist to resist them.

Studentification, the phenomenon of high numbers of university student renters migrating into specific cities and specific neighbourhoods, has taken on a new significance in the light of these housing changes. Studentification entered academic discourse in the early 2000s and has only grown since then, with concentrations of monoculture, both socially and architecturally, displaying longer-term effects (Smith, 2002, 2004; Smith & Holt, 2007). Closely linked to the financial crash, student housing offered a safe investment for banks and multinationals following the collapse of the mortgage and security market, and thus over the 2000s to 2020s we see closely intertwined threads of studentification initially as a social issue, and connected to emphasising HMOs in specific neighbourhoods, moving then to gentrification with the rise of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) (Sage et. al. 2013). This inflow of transient residents into urban spaces, often directed by planning policies that encouraged the building of PBSA in specific areas, comes at the expense of longer-term residents, in terms of services, rental prices, and neighbourhood atmosphere, all of which impact the sense of place (Smith & Holt, 2007; Smith et al. 2014). Newcastle offers a striking example of various forms in which the residential population of the city has had to come to terms with high-density student populations.

An important term in modern urbanism is placemaking, an aspect closely tied to the themes in this study. Placemaking originated in the mid-1970s, but has grown in support as the need to reassert the independence of the space in the face of growing pressure from international finance (and those that seek to attract it) to architecturally homogenise sites (Jelenski 2018; Redaelli

2016; Strydom et. al. 2018). It has since appeared as a buzzword in urban studies, with a wide range of definitions, and has been used simultaneously to push for progressive change towards reducing inequality, and to justify projects that explicitly favour such inequality. Amirzadeh and Sharifi (2024) attempt to group the myriads of subcategories of digital placemaking, strategic placemaking, resilient placemaking, heritage placemaking, augmented placemaking and more, under the definition of "the idea of transforming ordinary spaces into vibrant, engaging, and meaningful places that resonate with people." The diversity of situations that placemaking becomes applies to limits its effectiveness as a progressive tool for urban regeneration, and Architects for Social Housing decry it as a term used in place of "social cleansing" when powerful business interests take precedence over residents (Architects for Social Housing 2021 p. 18).

Connected to early themes of placemaking and recent decades have also seen prominence given to participation and participatory planning as a tool within urban regeneration, and as a process to build consensus among actors, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Since the 1970s urbanism has engaged with public participation in this way, but like placemaking it has grown and fractured in recent decades (Amado 1970; Forester 1999). In engaging with communities and sharing power, it has been seen as vital to a sense of community, and in bringing local actors closer to making decisions about their heritage (Biondi et al. 2020; Li et al. 2020). The consensus-building process builds on Habermas' ideas of communication for public good, but the true extent of the communication is dependent on those in power to allow other actors into this space, resulting in a clear and often restrictive power dynamic (Habermas 1981; Webler et al. 2001). Reliance on skilled facilitators to manage the diverging interests of those brought together in the participatory processes, as well as a slower, more expensive decision-making process for developers and local authorities, has limited the extent to which participation is encouraged in urban developments, but it remains a powerful tool when properly wielded (Carvalho 2019).

6.3 Building use

The question of the revitalisation of buildings coming to the end of their life cycle, be the cause structural failures, lack of use, or inefficiency, has taken on new relevance in the last two decades. With decreasing public funds alongside increasingly important climate emissions commitments, older discussions about resident resistance to demolition and the public health issues with living both in older buildings, and amongst demolitions, come weighed against sustainable construction methods. Throughout history, the re-use of buildings has been a constant factor in urban settlements, out of respect for the site or necessity of resources, but the

process developed a new face under the logic of Modernist architecture. Newly developed reinforced concrete allowed for an optimism in construction for the future, a timeless architecture free of cultural or historical detailing (Ripamonti 2022). Van Den Broek's 1930s home designed to be used differently at night to during the day, a trend continued by Mart Starm and Rem Koolhaas (Leupen et al. 2005). The carcass dwelling emerged as a Modernist form, using loadbearing columns to "liberate" the walls from any fixed position, encouraged re-use, a process Herman Hertzberger termed "polyvalence" (Leupen et al. 2005). Polyvalent architecture called for flexibility, for forward-looking ideas of the elements of a building and the processes in which they were placed, the idea that "a building is not something you finish, a building is something you start" (Leupen et al. 2005). Across the 1960s however, emphasis on mass housing through Brutalist and high-rise forms took precedent; "the desire for flexibility led to the construction of "programmatically natural and characterless" buildings. Hence, flexibility became synonymous with blandness and the word subsequently disappeared from the architect's vocabulary" (Kashkooli et al. 2010). Polyvalent architecture came at a time where building developments were highly controlled by strong nation-states, using the language of a strict managerialist bureaucracy, but has been revived in recent years under "time-based architecture". This revival resists central planning, and presents a more open and democratic face.

> "We have been educated in a tradition that was ignorant of the uses of levels in urban form. Mass housing in which inhabitants cannot influence the layout of their dwelling is part of that ignorance. Our present interest in time-based building seeks a remedy to the rigidity and uniformity that comes from excessive vertical control." (Leupen et al. 2005 p.50).

These concepts have given strength to deconstruction and circular economy movements, to cutting-edge architectural developments, but are largely absent from mainstream construction and housing policy. The principles of polyvalent and time-based architecture have great potential for environmentally and socially sustainable urban spaces, and must be placed in the context of modern construction trends to be effectively utilised.

The key point in this debate originates with Anne Power's 2008 article "Does demolition or refurbishment of old and inefficient homes help to increase our environmental, social and economic viability?", one of the first mainstream academic works to seriously question whether new-build homes were always more environmentally friendly than the emissions savings gained through renovation and refurbishment, and whether the economic costs of demolition could be reduced through limiting the practice (Power 2008). The nature of the question is highly localised, depending on the age, quality, reputation, use, and accessibility of the building stock,

but the general field of literature can be divided into the economic question, the public health question, the environmental question, and the question of resident perspectives (Tiesdell et al 1996; Architects for Social Housing 2019).

The economic question of building use typically seeks to extract the most profit from the space, but the literature disagrees widely on how to achieve this. Vacant land, brownfield sites, are heavily criticised for their role in depressing house prices, despite the roles they can play in social terms as spaces outside the market for subversive art and politics (Nguyen 2005; Vom Hofe et al. 2019; Goldstein et al. 2001; Németh and Langhorst 2014). As regards existing buildings, Kaczmarek exemplifies an enthusiastic willingness to demolish found across mainstream urban development studies, presenting demolition as "an integral component of urban growth" stimulating other industries, particularly manufacturing (Kaczmarek 2019). Yet convincing arguments for much more limited demolition practices are found from other schools of thought – circular economics would give much higher value to the retention of material, spaces, and units (Purchase 2021; Papastamoulis 2021). Deconstruction, or selective demolition – the construction of a building in such a way that the elements can be removed and reworked into new arrangements rather than demolished, reduced the waste of the process immensely – thus appears in the terminology here (Thomsen 2011). When deconstruction is not built into the design however, as noted by Coelho and De Brito, the added costs to the workers in terms of recovery, sorting, and transport of material make the process less economically viable on a large scale (Coelho and De Brito 2011).

When the building itself is of significant historical value to the area, literature focuses more on the potential values of bringing it back into usage, most notably when it occupies valuable land close to the centre of the city, and these studies emphasise the economic savings that present themselves in the reuse of existing spaces as opposed to fresh construction – "Nowadays, when the pressure on infrastructures is evident and resources are decreasing, European cities, hit by the economic crisis, have ceased their outward expansion and turned back toward their forgotten centres," (Cherchi 2015). This trend appears most often in the conversion of empty spaces into residences, be they social housing, student housing, or luxury homes (Cascone 2018). Depending on the timescale envisioned, and whether social and environmental costs are factored into the economic discussion, there is scope to argue that given the higher costs attributed to demolition and reconstruction, the only way to build affordable homes with rent at social levels is to do so through the use of almost entirely existing structures – anything else is an unnecessary cost that is then shifted to the tenant. Focusing on social housing estates, Architects for Social Housing are the leading experts in this field, publishing multiple reports,

lectures and case studies on the potential savings in this field, in the name of securing affordable homes for vulnerable tenants (Architects for Social Housing 2017, 2019, 2021).

> "Maintenance, refurbishment, re-use, improvement of and addition to existing housing and communal amenities must be the default option for all estate regeneration and new housing schemes. The socially destructive, environmentally unsustainable and economically privatising orthodoxy of demolition and redevelopment must become a thing of the past" (Architects for Social Housing 2019 p.30).

For Architects for Social Housing, a group whose work forms the theoretical framework of this study, the emphasis in practice of most local authorities and developers of full demolition and reconstruction with every development is based on profit-seeking without the best interests of the tenants, particularly with regards to social housing. Thus while it does not appear reflected in British practice, there exists a strong and developed body of economic literature critical of the viability of demolition.

In terms of public health, buildings near or at the end of their lifespan are evaluated in two general approaches, that of living standards for residents in unsuitable buildings, and that of living standards for people in the vicinity of demolitions. A common justification for demolition is the unsuitability of the current conditions of the homes, an act of "confronting substandard housing," (Krieger 2002). Kvik et al. find direct reductions in emergency department visits with the demolition of vacant buildings, without an impact on crime, while Beck et al. emphasise the association with overcrowded high-density homes with youth hospital visits (Kvik et al. 2022; Beck et al. 2002). Furthermore, mental health improvements from leaving such housing conditions, both voluntarily and through displacement due to the demolition of the former buildings, are identified (Chin 2018; Leventhal 2003). While Egan et al. identified no change in physical health as a result of demolition, health deterioration can also be attributed to the demolition process, foremost in terms of dust particles and particulates (Egan et al. 2013; Dorevitch et al. 2006; Azarmi and Kumar 2016). Engineering techniques are recommended, in terms of water spraying and erecting wind barriers, as preventative methods (Dorevitch et al. 2006; Azarmi and Kumar 2016). While the nature of the literature is evidently excluded from making larger policy recommendation on building use, there presents an opportunity to alleviate both forms of health risk through the limiting of demolition while also improving building conditions.

Environmental concerns have become significantly more prominent recently, given that the build environment makes up 25% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions (Environmental Audit Committee 2022). In terms of demolition waste, the mass quantity of processed material that must be addressed has been an environmental question since the 1980s (Tränkler et al. 1996).

Modern discussions of selective demolition and deconstruction can show that given the process of material recovery, traditional demolition, when the waste is appropriately treated and processed, is in many cases more environmentally efficient than selective demolition, other than in energetic terms (Pantini and Rigamonti 2020). Coelho and De Brito give an explanation however, finding that if the selective demolition is superficial – "'soft-stripping'', or the removal of non-structural elements for recycling, followed by a traditional demolition of all other materials and their removal to a landfill," - then there is no difference in environmental impact with traditional demolition, but deep recovery of structural elements for recycle and reuse, by trained specialists, can have a considerable impact (Coelho et al. 2011). The environmental efficacy of deconstruction is thus highly dependent on the commitment of the developer and construction company.

Core to the discussion of demolition are the potential energy savings that come with refurbishment and retrofitting, in lieu of full reconstruction. Dubois and Allacker insist that the only savings possible with retrofitting are superficial and moderate, while new-build homes have greater capacity to integrate modern emissions-reducing technology and materials, but Bates et al. emphasise the great potentials that retrofitting can have in high-rise towers, given the scale with which modifications can be made applying to many homes. (Dubois and Allacker 2015; Bates et al. 2012). Added insulation, sustainable energy sources, and improved window fittings are the typical modifications found in these examples, securing the absence of heat loss from the housing unit, and ensuring that sustainable energy is used for heating and electricity (Bates et al. 2012). When the entire process of construction, material sourcing and production, transport and labour, and material processing of a building is taken into account, the full life cycle, then the arguments for reuse of spaces and retrofitting become much stronger (Architects for Social Housing 2021).

The perspective of residents within the debates on building use is largely reactive – the residents respond to decisions made by the local or national authority, the developer, or the architecture firm. Terminology used in the narrative can be of central importance, with resistance emphasising the potential to "preserve" a space, rather than to demolish or upgrade (Hammami and Uzer 2018). Studies observe the potential benefits from relocation when focusing on those that are displaced due to demolition, and alternatively, the assertion of place identity within those that refuse to do so, or lament having done so (Goetz 2016; Manzo 2008). These studies have a close affinity with social psychology, and can be said to stem from Marc Fried's *Grieving for a Lost Home,* a landmark study into the role spatial identity in the grief felt by displaced families (Fried 1970). Lefcoe notes in 1975 that "as recently as a decade ago, it was possible to construct an urban renewal project demolishing thousands of apartments at once with little or

no organised protest. Today it cannot be done," and certainly there is now a developed framework for the resistance against demolition (Lefcoe 1975 p.2). Resistance movements typically focus on the heritage of the space, emphasising the architectural value – historically, this demolition of cultural spaces and memorials has borne a violent agenda, sometimes to the extent of cultural genocide through the eradication of material history (Bevan 2006; Üngör 2015). The cultural and social importance of the space can also be used as the argument upon which resistance sits, closely linked to the social connects and the sense of place of the residents, who often decry a lack of participation in the decision-making process (Bach 2019; Architects for Social Housing 2019; Goetz 2016).

Architects for Social Housing, in their 2018 study *The Costs of Estate Regeneration*, examine the financial arguments for demolition of council estates, in the context of the wider housing crisis and extreme profit-seeking of financial speculation. In ASH's analysis, any construction following demolition, termed "regeneration", always results in the need to maximise profits.

> "The cost of demolition, compensation for leaseholders and tenants, and the construction of new-build dwellings, is so high in today's housing market that the resulting redevelopment will overwhelmingly be composed of properties for private sale, with a hugely reduced number of homes for social rent, increased rental and service charges for existing council tenants, and enormously increased sale prices and reduced tenancy rights for leaseholders."

Demolition, as one weapon in the arsenal of the property developer, is thus a tool to exploit the territory. They reported that:

> "There are many ways in which to breakdown the enormous number of elements that go into a new development, but in round numbers the cost of materials and construction alone come to £212,000 per dwelling. This might come as a shock to most people, who will rightly ask why it suddenly costs so much to build a home. Well, it's not because the cost of timber and concrete has gone up, that's for sure; or because the new developments are built to higher standards – as the list of complaints from residents in estate redevelopments shows. Rather, it's because the profits being made by developers from the UK housing crisis are so high – with the four biggest UK building companies increasing their pre-tax profits eightfold in the past six years alone – that builders can charge equivalent profit margins from them." (Architects for Social Housing 2018 p.22)

Arguments for the inevitability of demolition often surface regarding the building reaching "the end of their natural lifespan", around 60 years. ASH instead redirect this accusation away from buildings themselves, which are typically well-built and durable, given the right maintenance, and towards:

"the lifespan of a building's components and their inter-relation in the design and construction of the blocks. It doesn't mean that those … can't be maintained and refurbished, with the out-of-date elements replaced and improved. The notion of a fixed lifespan to reinforced concrete buildings is one of the more fantastical myths peddled by the implementers and beneficiaries of the estate regeneration programme, but does not stand up to professional scrutiny as a reason for demolishing them." (Architects for Social Housing 2018 p.30)

ASH note the importance of maintenance, not just a lack of it, but maintenance executed poorly and in damaging ways – mould and damp inside homes as a result of newly fitted windows without ventilation, for example. Ultimately, ASH look to a realistic and resident-oriented approach to urban design and community development, and identify the mainstream demolition and reconstruction process as antithetical to that, as this study does. The potentials of community ownership were also identified by ASH as a tool to reclaim spaces for place-based bottom-up purposes.

"Councils, or the communities they've sold out, can circumvent Government legislation and raise the funds to build these infill homes: through loans against future income; through setting up a Community Land Trust, a Community Interest Company or a Housing Co-operative; through a Joint Management Organisation; through the Right to Transfer; even through Special Purpose Vehicles, if the council is willing to explore these options, rather than continue to be the willing instrument of property developers." (Architects for Social Housing 2018 p.56)

As a method of directly reaching the needs and will of the residents of a territory, community ownership – when undertaken with guidance, support, resources and connections – emerges as the next step.

The diversity of literature regarding demolition and building use is thus evident, spanning environmental and medical studies, psychology and history, urbanism and economics, reflective of the central role the home as a constructed space plays in society, and the impact of decisions made in this field. Due to the restrictions of resources, the study will focus on the perspective of the residents in the study areas, and thus the social psychology and urbanism factors play the largest role in the framework, but coherent and thorough environmental, medical, and economic studies are fundamental to responsible decision making about buildings at the end of their lifespans.

6.4 Ontological security

Under transient relationships to place, the upheaval of urban regeneration and related changing uses of buildings, ontological security appears as a crucial aspect of resident life. Giddens defines ontological security as the 'confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of their social and material environments of action' (Giddens, 1990, p. 92) – a psychological term intimately connected to the built environment. Ontological security is the assurance of an enduring and lasting feeling of protection, in the form of a space or a community that functions as "a coping mechanism against existential anxiety" and the threat of impermanence. It is through ontological security that the home takes on the significance of safety, a reliable space, a 'protective cocoon' (Giddens, 1991, p. 40) as a form of defence against negative transformations and loss.

The term, while originating in psychological discourse and examining the individual under stress, has since become used more commonly with regards to states and international relations (Brent 2008). In the 21st century, ontological security has become a term referring to the state of security fought for by nation states, navigating dilemmatic conflicts in a game-theory manner (Mitzen 2006; Kinnval et al. 2020; Kinnval et al 2018). While there may be benefits in analysing a Hobbesian state of nature, and valorising the behaviour of nation states as they vie for reaching a point of security, the term is designed for individual behaviour under more existential questions, and is better suited for this context.

Giddens' definition, as opposed to that of Saunders, who sees ontological security as fairly comparable between the modern and pre-modern worlds, includes the caveat that "unlike pre-modern worlds, where ontological security was sustained by the routine of face-to-face interaction within the kinship system, ontological security in the modern world is fragile and tenuous in nature." Increased levels of stress and insecurity in modern urban industrial life threaten the ontological security of individuals, and as such input is required to guarantee it (Depuis et al. 1998). Hiscock et al. (2001) state that "any sense of stability, continuity and confidence in the achievement of self-realisation is shaken and made less certain in the contemporary circumstances which now prevail over many communities, towns and cities," and the extreme inequality within modern urban developments, which target different geographic areas in a mosaic of segregated processes, only strengthens this instability (Hiscock et al. 2001 p.52). Modern planning policies valorise growth above all others, "hailing restlessness as a positive virtue," and with residents often excluded from planning decisions that affect their buildings, the question of ontological security is intimately linked to sense of place and to changes in building use (Beauregard 1996).

A number of studies have applied ontological security to the topic of housing, and to the distinction between renting and homeownership – mixed results do not confirm or deny the presence of greater ontological security for homeowners as a general rule, but offers useful contributions to understanding ontological security in mixed-tenure areas, and precarious neighbourhoods. Saunders declares that "the home is where people are offstage, free from surveillance, in control of their immediate environment. It is their castle. It is where they feel they belong," and as such, greater security is felt by those who own, rather than rent, their home (Saunders 1989 p.180). Hiscock et al. however find that tenure is not the most useful indicator of ontological instability, and that renters, especially social renters, are often assumed to be living in deprivation and poverty – while there is reduced risk of losing one's home as a homeowner, it is more useful to look at the area, such as job security, migration patterns, and the wider character of the neighbourhood, to ascertain the ontological security within residents (Hiscock et al. 2001). In a study of homeownership in Australia, Colic-Peisker et al. find a "weakening of marriage, family and local communities as sources of identity and ontological security, while assets, income and consumption have become more prominent in defining who we are and how we feel," (Colic-Peisker et al. 2015 p. 170). Homeownership is linked to lower asset-precarity, greater resources with which one can secure oneself in a space, protected from ontological threats such as eviction – using ontological security as a measure of precarity and vulnerability within changing urban environments can thus give us the tools to understand urban development from the resident perspective (Colic-Peisker et al. 2015).

Grenville's argument that conversation and preservation movements are driven by a desire for ontological security is crucial here – "social dislocation is exacerbated by the absence or loss of familiar buildings—to be distressed is unpleasant, but to be distressed and lost in unfamiliar surroundings is worse," (Grenville 2007). For Grenville, opposition to development and demolition is an expression of the need to retain familiar spaces "as a bulwark against a transient and untrustworthy external world." The impact that the built environment has on our interpretation of place, on the activities and communities that can form, the patterns of behaviour that are encouraged or discouraged, mean that in times of stress and insecurity, resistance to architectural change rises. In a study of two Yorkshire cities, Grenville finds that "the fact that the theory of ontological security/insecurity can be applied to places "as if" they were individuals helps us both to explain apparently counter-intuitive decisions", as a large city pushes for growth at the expense of the historic centre, and a smaller city emphasises its existing museum over creating new jobs (Grenville 2015). "In societies that have been subject to rapid or violent change," a lack of control over the space will only add to the insecurity felt by residents. Manzo et al. tell us that "moving three times is like having your house on fire once",

that forced displacement, or the threat of such from impending demolition, is severely distressing to residents and can destroy their sense of place (Manzo et al. 2008). In any intervention seeking to improve, or even take into account, resident satisfaction and sense of community, this level of individual psychology and sense of security is vital to progressive housing policies.

Sylvia Wilson sums this up with a speech against demolition –

> "No one, unless you have been, or are involved personally with a proposed Compulsory Purchase Order, will ever understand the streak of fear or gut wrenching despair that runs through your veins on reading a letter from a Council saying that your home is "not decent" to live in and is about to be taken away from you against your will. That under the Housing Act, your local authority tells you that your home is "unfit for human habitation" on the grounds that the slates may be "slipped or tabbed" your "backyard wall is leaning" that you need "new windows and doors" and because of those things, (which are so easily replaceable under an Urban Renewal Area (URA) or the old fashioned, now non-existent Grant System) your home will be compulsorily taken away from you…!" (Wilson 2012 p.30)

Ontological security, a constantly changing relationship with space and identity, thus presents itself as the temporal link that connects the changing environment of urban regeneration and transformation of building usage, with the resident perspective as processed into sense of place. Understanding the vulnerability of residents within areas targeted with regeneration, sense of place can provide an indicator of ontological security, an attachment to a space and a trust that it will endure, specifically a space that offers an emotional bond that reaffirms one's identity.

6.5 Conclusion

From a review of the literature, therefore, we find a number of studies that touch on themes in this research work, but few that connect them thoroughly in a constructive manner. In terms of analysing the urban landscape and understanding power relationships in this sense, David Harvey provides a crucial role in examining the nature of international finance in local building practices, but his analysis is most useful in outlining the power dynamics in which this study is set, rather than detailed studies. Anne Power makes a strong case for rethinking building use policies, but does not critically examine the role of residents in housing policy. Jane Grenville connects ontological security to the changing built environment, but only in the sense of formal conservation, not of more common demolition practices that affect residents. It is largely in the work of Architects for Social Housing that we find the academic connections necessary for this

study – the importance of housing in relation to urban processes, and the importance of security for residents in decision-making power over their spaces. These works inform this study, and shape the framework that it works with. There is space to use the methods tried and tested by wider literature on sense of place, to explore the ontological security of residents in the face of processes that show no indication of stopping.

This work thus functions to contribute to current debates over building use by emphasising the importance of the resident perspective, and of protecting the ontological security of inhabitants of housing, who live under a number of pressures only worsened by building practices. If profit is not the only motivation within urban policy, then decision-making can be expanded in a more democratic manner to reflect the voices of the more vulnerable groups in our society.

7. Methodology

The focus of the study is on two neighbourhoods of Newcastle upon Tyne, Shieldfield and Heaton, with data taken from June and July of 2024.
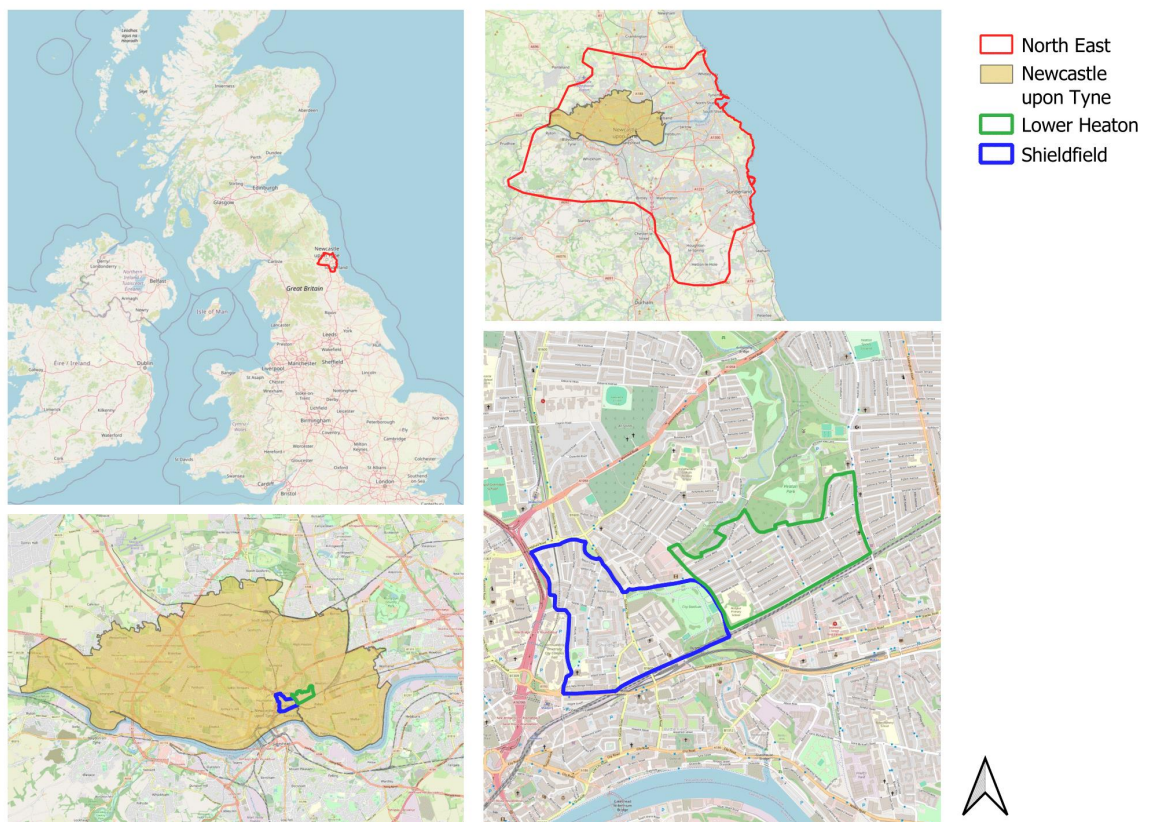

Figure 1

Given the financial limitations of the Department and the study, the study area was chosen based on immediate surroundings and conditions – this familiarity with the surroundings then

facilitated the decision to focus on resident perspectives, given the capacity of the researcher to engage with the community as a resident, rather than as an outsider.

Shieldfield is considerably smaller than Heaton, and thus the lower part of the neighbourhood, hereafter referred to as Heaton, as distinct from Heaton proper, will be taken as the comparison group to Shieldfield. The demographic differences between the neighbourhoods are striking – homeownership in Heaton is 45.2% compared to 17.7% in Shieldfield, while the percentage of homes that are socially rented is 11. 1% in Heaton, and 42.8% in Shieldfield (Census Data, 2024). A significant proportion of the non-homeowning population of Shieldfield is accounted for by the student population – the vicinity of Shieldfield to Northumbria University, as well as low land prices and the perceived stability of PBSA investment after the 2008 financial crash, gave rise to mass construction of private PBSA developments in Shieldfield – from 2011-2015, the neighbourhood experienced a 467% rise in student numbers (Heslop et al. 2022). Currently, the student population makes up two thirds of Shieldfield (67.6%) compared to less than a quarter in Heaton (23.9%) (Census Data, 2024).

The border of Heaton and Shieldfield represents one of the frontiers of housing development in Newcastle, two eras of construction and habitation meeting face-to-face. From Office of National Statistics (ONS) data, we see the encounter between much older and much younger buildings at the border of Heaton and Shieldfield.

For the purposes of the research, the adult resident populations of Heaton and Shieldfield are taken as the research population, with a sample taken from this through survey distribution, which then functions as the route through which residents are selected for interviews and focus groups.

For a 90% confidence rate level at a 5% margin of error, with the cumulative population of Heaton and Shieldfield at roughly 4000, the desired number of responses was 255. The 90% rate, with a z-score of 1.29, was selected over the 95% rate, which would have required more responses than would be capable of obtaining with the resources to hand. A combination of door-knocking, online advertisement and snowball sampling was employed to maximise response rate, with the survey distributed in the form of a physical printed survey in a plastic wallet, for the completed survey to be left outside the home and collected at a later date. An online version of the survey was also distributed across various local online spaces, to reach more residents and support the necessary response rate. Receptive interview participants were also requested to share the survey, and it was posted in several WhatsApp group chat for specific streets, as well as the newsletter for Dwellbeing Shieldfield. Regarding this method of distribution, Steele et al. note that "the technique appears most appropriate for small and densely-settled places, those where addressing systems (reflected both on sampling frames and

in the field) are clear, where resources are available to supplement sampling frames, and where residents are conducive to visitors", and given the importance of a human face, to develop trust and engagement, this doorknocking and drop-off method was selected as the primary form of distribution (Steele et al. 2001 p.240). Dillman (1991) further makes note of the value that can be gained from exposure to local conditions when undertaking territorially-bounded data collection, and thus the physical survey became evident as the most appropriate for such a topic (Dillman 1991).

Given the role of Dwellbeing Shieldfield as a group of residents working for collective improvements, with transparency and sensitivity, a short conversation with each recipient was also involved, to ensure they were aware of the purposes of the survey and the possibilities of engagement. The researcher was informed by residents of the pervasive culture among students at the local universities to view Shieldfield as a study area, with multiple household surveys distributed in the past, so with Dwellbeing Shieldfield, the researcher was careful to maintain a human face and a transparent and empowering approach.

The purpose of the study is to engage with sense of place and ontological security, following the social psychology approach identified by Stedman (2016). This is a complicated issue, requiring the careful and sensitive treatment of participants – Barker notes that "obviously, sense of place is one of the most abstract and illusive concepts . . . understanding what creates a true sense of place . . . is a complex task" (Barker 1979 p.162). The concepts of place attachment, place dependence, place identity, and ontological security, require examination in their own rights, to build a clearer picture of at which point the experiences of Heaton and Shieldfield residents diverge. Nonetheless, to reiterate the point made by Seaman (2013), a precise and accurate scientific measurement is impossible, and to focus on quantifying such deeply personal experiences is a misplaced use of energy – there must come a point at which the researcher accepts that anecdotal evidence is the closest they can come to that which they study.

Relph advises to study sense of place "by examining the links between place and the phenomenological foundations of geography," and thus an acceptance of the unquantifiable, the impressionistic and the subjective, is necessary for engaging with residents in such a study (Relph 1976 p.4). Hawkins and Maurer acknowledge the limitations of quantitative analysis in such environments - "when these experiences occurred, participants might have been under heavy stress; their memories may be fallible or their perceptions skewed … the importance of these findings is the sense that participants make of their experiences rather than the actual facts of a particular event" (Hawkins and Maurer 2011 p. 150).

Following an example set by Hiscock et al, combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a consecutive manner allows to select candidates specifically for the in-depth interviews, based on the characteristics and responses from the household survey, strengthening the qualitative analysis through maintaining diversity and balance in the viewpoints presented (Hiscock et. al. 2001). This was also followed for the focus group. A focus group was chosen as a complementary method of research collection to engage more deeply with the themes identified in the interviews, to reach "a depth of understanding as the back and forth exchange of ideas in the group encourages exploration of areas of agreement and disagreement that enrich the resultant focus group results" (Baum 2021 p.87)

Spatial and historical data were gathered in the formative stages of the study, and from this, the specific research questions were chosen, deemed most appropriate for the context. The possibility of demolition in the area was identified based on geospatial analysis of vicinity to the historic centre, house values, building age, brownfield sites, and deprivation indicators, while historical analysis of previous initiatives and projects by Newcastle City Council and various housing developers also indicates the higher likelihood of Shieldfield as a future site of demolition and redevelopment, processes which rarely value the perspective of the resident.

The field data created through the initial survey, the in-depth interviews, and the focus groups, were collected over June-July of 2024.

Care has been taken to make the work reliable and credible – since the objective is to explore differences in perceptions between two groups of residents, the emphasis has been upon ensuring that such residents feel encouraged to express their emotions and thoughts in safe and welcoming spaces, where their genuine perceptions can be articulated. As a resident of the first of the two neighbourhoods, and working with a group of residents of the second, a level of familiarity with the participants was generated which facilitated this, strengthening the reliability of the data. Using questions guided by geospatial and historical analysis of the sites, valuable insights have been obtained which make strong contributions to understandings of sense of place and ontological security in the light of debates on building use and urban development.

Ethical considerations were primarily around the treatment of residents – particularly in Shieldfield, there is a tendency of students to disrespect residents, or to treat them as "guinea pigs". By clear wording of the possibility of this study to bring up traumatic or disturbing memories or fears in the participants, and empathetic and sensitive treatment of their words, the main issue that Dwellbeing Shieldfield had regarding ethical considerations was addressed – that residents would be collectively encouraged to fear imminent demolition without a way to direct these feelings to something productive. Thus, the focus groups were oriented towards

collective solutions and consensus-building with the view towards positive perspectives on the issue – building preservation, community ownership, participative urban decision-making.

8. Delimitations, limitations, assumptions

The study is predicated on popular engagement by the resident populations of both neighbourhoods in comparable numbers, ultimately outside of the control of the research. However, by maintaining clear and accessible language in all aspects of communication, ensuring anonymity of responses, and choosing the most accessible forms of data collection – physical survey drop-off and recollection – a strong attempt has been made to encourage participation and engagement. Without funding from the University, the financial restrictions of the research were the ultimate limitation on what could be achieved – printing costs, time spent distributing surveys, lack of incentives for participants, all limited what could have been achieved. The support of Dwellbeing Shieldfield, therefore, was invaluable in assisting in the distribution and organisation of the data collection, particularly in the hiring of a space for the focus groups to take place in, and in lending a trustworthy and respectable backing to the research which surely assisted in encouraging popular participation.

The participants were chosen for interviews based on specific traits and responses identified from the survey, thus establishing a modicum of control. During interviews, specific questions were chosen to inquire into sensitive topics without provoking distressing emotions. Public places were chosen as the locations for the interviews, except for neighbours local to the researcher that felt comfortable entering the home of the researcher for the purposes of the interview, with a café always proposed to them as a potential alternative. The participants were chosen for the focus groups based on similar criteria as those of the interviews, ensuring a diversity of perspectives. During the focus group, risk of dominant personalities overshadowing others was managed through group work and dividing the participants into pairs for a proportion of the time, with careful facilitation to give equal weight to the opinions expressed.

Unexpected topics that arose through conversations between participants was a risk that was prepared for. The conflict and friction that can occur as a result of bringing diverse perspectives together over large issues were addressed by focusing the group discussions towards more positive and constructive topics, using the more familiar environment of the in-depth interview as the space to discuss more potentially negative aspects of demolition. The location was guaranteed through the collaboration with Dwellbeing Shieldfield early on in the research process, which removed a large part of the uncertainty about the feasibility of such an event, which would have been difficult to perform without their support.

The nature of the subjects in question – sense of place, ontological security, subjective perceptions – resist formalised quantitative measurement, and so even with clear descriptions and definitions employed throughout the participant process, there was still space for misunderstanding, confusion, and misrepresentation. Care was thus been taken to use accessible language, to focus on recognisable sites and groups, and to be as transparent as possible about the nature and aims of the research with the view to prime respondents for the most appropriate mindset from which to discuss their feelings and perceptions.

9. Identity statement

A point to note before the presentation of the fieldwork is that of the identity of the researcher. Identity, in this case also called "positionality," "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" and is thus relevant for a work closely tied to the personal motivations and feelings of the researcher (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013 p.71)

The themes that appear most prominent in the study are certainly dependent in part upon which information the participants were willing to share, believed the researcher would understand and appreciate, and the subjectivity of interpreting a neighbourhood, the character and psychology of a space, are thus closely tied to positional influences. Holmes (2020) notes that very little research in the social or educational field is or can be value-free, and that the awareness of the researcher as a "biased interpreter" of knowledge and data is fundamental to the social sciences.

Kusow (2003 p.596) notes that "ontologically, the insider perspective is usually referred to as an *emic* account while the outsider perspective as an *etic* one," and as such there is a strong emphasis on the etic approach, particularly in the interviews, given the translations of Geordie (local to Newcastle and the North East of England) terminology and grammar into English for the international reader. While an etic position assumes that "objective knowledge relies on the degree to which researchers can detach themselves from the prejudices of the social groups they study," the researcher acknowledge a range of characteristics regarding myself that affect the research data and the conclusions. The researcher is a 24-year-old typically-abled man, and therefore was easily able to move around the area without hindrance to access to the spaces. Being white and cisgender also confer a level of significant privilege that contributed to the data collection. While being a native speaker of English could have contributed to a level of distance from the non-native speakers that were encountered during data collection, being a local of the area allowed the researcher to understand both the local dialect and the highly localised geography that was discussed in interviews. Being familiar with the streets in

question, without map references required, facilitated the natural flow of conversation regarding specific sites around and outside the neighbourhoods.

The study is not an ethnographical one, but as a resident of Heaton, the researcher must draw attention to these factors that influence the human relations involved in the data collection, factors essential for understanding the respondents, and for future replication.

10. Presentation of the research

10.1 Initial survey

The survey begins with asking participants to identify which age group and gender they identify themselves with – these are important for then ensuring that participants selected for in-depth interviews and focus groups are reflective of more diverse viewpoints that had these characteristics been unknown. Household composition is then examined with a selection of answers. To add to these base characteristics, race and household income would have been highly applicable in understanding the distribution of perspectives among respondents, but it was decided that these questions could be perceived as too invasive and inappropriate for people to answer, and so they were ultimately rejected during the survey construction process.

The key question that follows is to clarify which of the two neighbourhoods, Heaton or Shieldfield, the respondent is a resident of, and from which follows questions into how long they have lived in that neighbourhood, how long they have lived in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne, and which form of accommodation they live in. The importance of time in forming attachments and identities is a continuous point across the literature on sense of place, and also builds an important foundation in ontological security. While tenure cannot be said to be a clear indicator of specific perceptions around the built environment, it is a useful tool to ensure a diversity of viewpoints among in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Likert scales are used to rank levels of agreement with statements given in the survey, with 3 representing a neutral response, 1 representing strongly disagree, and 5 representing strongly agree. In the analysis of this data, the middle, neutral value, is indicated, with variations around this, either positive or negative understood from this.

Place identity is then examined, with three questions utilising Likert scale items of five statuses, "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", "strongly agree". To ensure clarity of responses, the written terms were chosen in place of numerical values. Place identity is then measured as a summation of the responses to the statements "I know a lot about the history of my neighbourhood", "I feel like the neighbourhood reflects the community here", and "I feel that my lifestyle is accepted here". The choice of wording "I feel…" to begin the second two questions was made to emphasise the role of subjective perception in the respondents' answers.

The scale for place identity thus ranges from 3 to 15. Questions were chosen based on identifying a correspondence between the perceived character of the neighbourhood, and the self-defined character of the respondent – as Mansour et al. (2023) describes, "the intricate interplay between individuals and their surrounding environments, wherein each exerts formative influences upon the other's identity." The model of summing multiple Likert scale items together to measure concepts regarding sense of place was taken from Tester et al. but with modified questions and weighting of the various concepts.

Place attachment is measured through the summing of six Likert scale items, continuing the "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", "strongly agree" format. The initial statement "When I'm in my neighbourhood I feel" maintains the focus on emotional perceptions, and is followed by six statements – "I'm in a place that is my home", "I'm in a place that holds a lot of meaning to me", "I'm in a place where I belong", "I'm in a place I'd miss if I had to leave", "I'm in a place I am proud of", and "I'm in a place that's important to me." These are intended to focus on the emotional aspect of sense of place, the "affective bond or link between people and specific places" that demolition is a direct threat to.

By following these sections with the simple "would you rather stay in your neighbourhood, or leave?", with space to explain their answer, the participant is primed to give an emotion-based answer to the question.

Place dependence, the capacity for the place in question to serve someone's needs and goals, to support them in their affairs, is the third constituent part of sense of place, and is measured through two parts. The first asks if the participant has received any of the following forms of assistance from a neighbour or friend, or if they have given it – "advice, encouragement or moral support", "babysitting or childcare", "transportation, errands or shopping", or "housework, yard work, repairs, or other work around the house". The second part employs the summing of seven Likert scale items, asking how satisfyingly the neighbourhood offers spaces for shopping, work, earing, drinking, meeting people, to play (for children) and to be creative. The two parts are weighted equally.

By weighting the three constituent parts of sense of place, a sense of the relationship that the individual has with their neighbourhood can be, roughly, judged.

The next section looks at perspectives on demolition, initially, of control. Two Likert scale items, judging the agreement with "I feel consulted on decisions made about demolition in my area", and "there are spaces to express my feelings about urban development" are intended to provoke interest in engaging more with the project and with local community groups like Dwellbeing Shieldfield, and together measure the level of control people feel over this issue

The issue of likelihood of demolition is the summation of three Likert scale items – "buildings on my street are more likely to be refurbished than demolished", "demolition is not likely to happen to my building", and "demolition is not likely to happen in my area". With a range from 3 to 15, there is a higher anticipated score expected from the Shieldfield residents.

Finally, the concept of resilience, of duration, which is key to the understanding of ontological security, is examined. Three Likert scale items are summed, "demolition of some of the older buildings would not impact the community here", "demolition of some of the newer buildings would not impact the community here", and "this is a resilient community that would continue regardless of some demolitions." Certain aspects are left ambiguous, such as the specific sites and buildings in question, but the question is around emotional reaction and so a level of vagueness is maintained to allow the respondent to picture whichever sites would come to their mind.

All of these questions, taken together, come to form an indicator termed "security from demolition", in the sense that individuals are involved in decision making, that demolition is unlikely, and that even if it were to happen, the community would not be affected.

10.2 Interviews

20 semi-structured interviews were carried out at a range of locations, primarily the local cafes of Heaton Perk and the Forum Café, but also at the Biscuit Factory, the Newbridge Project, and the house of the researcher. The audio of these interviews was recorded, and discussions focused on themes of memory, local history, local buildings, community, demolition, and collective voice, looking primarily at past trends and examinations of the present. These conversations varied significantly between respondents. Shieldfield and Heaton residents made up equal numbers, 10 and 10, of the participants. Interview participants were anonymised and assigned reference names giving their neighbourhood of residence, or in the instance of small business owners, their neighbourhood of work. One resident of Battlefield, a small neighbourhood to the south of Shieldfield, was included based on their connections to Shieldfield and insights into the borders involved in the inter-neighbourhood politics of the area.

10.3 Focus Group

The focus group was held for one hour and fifteen minutes in the Forum Café, and contained a number of stages to guide the discussion. The space was chosen thanks to the support of Dwellbeing in renting the venue, and the location was highly appropriate, in the centre of Shieldfield, with a range of historical photographs of the area forming a display on one wall.

Initially, the needs of the area were discussed, after recognising that the opinions represented in the participants were not fully representative of the neighbourhood. Using post-it notes, stuck onto one large piece of paper, participants were encouraged to identify "needs" of the space, not just of individuals or of buildings, but of the whole community.

The next phases of the discussion were focused on specific sites that had been identified in the interviews as places vulnerable to urban transformation, likely in the form of demolition. As pointed out by the participants, the actual likelihood of demolition in these cases cannot be guaranteed, being dependent on many factors that cannot be known at this point. Ambiguous plans for development, low municipal budgets, oversaturation of student housing and a shortage of resident housing, gave the participants cause to question the possibility of demolition in Shieldfield. This study indicates that while demolition is possible, and should not be ruled out, a factor of considerable importance remains the *perception* of future demolition, regardless of the actual occurrence. The understanding of locals that a space is temporary and impermanent limits the confidence that one can build in a future lifestyle that includes this space. Lack of belief in the endurance of an important building, even one's own home, represents an instability of sense of place that can best be understood through ontological security.

The sites chosen were the PBSA blocks at Portland Green and the Shield, and the Shieldfield Centre, including also Stoddart House and Shieldfield House. Interview respondents who indicated these spaces often confused the names for these buildings, and appeared to see little distinction between one PBSA block and the next, Stoddart House and the Shieldfield Centre. This has implications for the sense of place identity expressed by respondents, when sites become homogenous and undifferentiated. Focus group participants spent fifteen minutes, in pairs, focusing on each site, using post-it notes to stick suggestions onto the images of the buildings. These suggestions were to be short-term modifications of the spaces to meet the needs previously identified, methods of adapting the buildings in ways to serve the community, that explicitly ruled out demolition. From these restrictions, the conversations about spatial use moved towards ownership and access.

Ultimately, these steps were followed by a final summary discussion to share insights and suggestions for the future. More focus groups, examining other sites and including other participants, would be extremely fruitful, but were not possible, due to time and resources of the researcher. This focus group only included participants from Shieldfield - to undertake similar focus groups in Heaton would be preferable, but it was judged more beneficial to undertake one with Shieldfield residents given the much higher potential of demolition in this area, thus granting more priority to communally-formed proposals for building use.

11. Spatial analysis

Accompanying the fieldwork into perceptions and expectations of residents, spatial analysis is required to elucidate the structural forces at work in this environment, and understand the nature of Shieldfield as a border site, a merging of centre and periphery, a frontier of capital and development. This analysis uses QGIS to represent official statistical data through the resolution of Super Lower Output Area (SLOA), the more precise unit of national statistical measurement. While Heaton is comfortably represented by this unit, Shieldfield is instead divided by two very different SLOAs, that which includes Byker, and that which includes Sandyford, neighbourhoods with very different characteristics, land prices, reputations, and histories. As such, these two aspects must be kept in mind when drawing conclusions from such analysis, which is nonetheless helpful for understanding city-wide trends that affect construction and demolition in the study areas.

11. 1 House prices

Thomsen et al. tell us that in residential demolition, key factors in encouraging demolition are the land and house prices. In cases of heavy concentration of low-value homes, we would expect to see renovation work, regeneration projects and demolition work, like the infamous Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder projects in Scotswood and Walker, two neighbourhoods of Newcastle, in 2002, scheduling 6600 low value dwellings for demolition under the "Going for Growth" policy (Park and Sohn 2013). "Going for Growth" explicitly focused on replacing certain forms of accommodation with more typically middle-class homes, "'rebalancing' the population of unpopular neighbourhoods through an engineered gentrification process." (Cameron 2006 p.9).

Mean house prices by Super Lower Output Area

House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSAs)
HPSSA Dataset 47: Mean price paid for residential properties by LSOA (Office for National Statistics) 2022
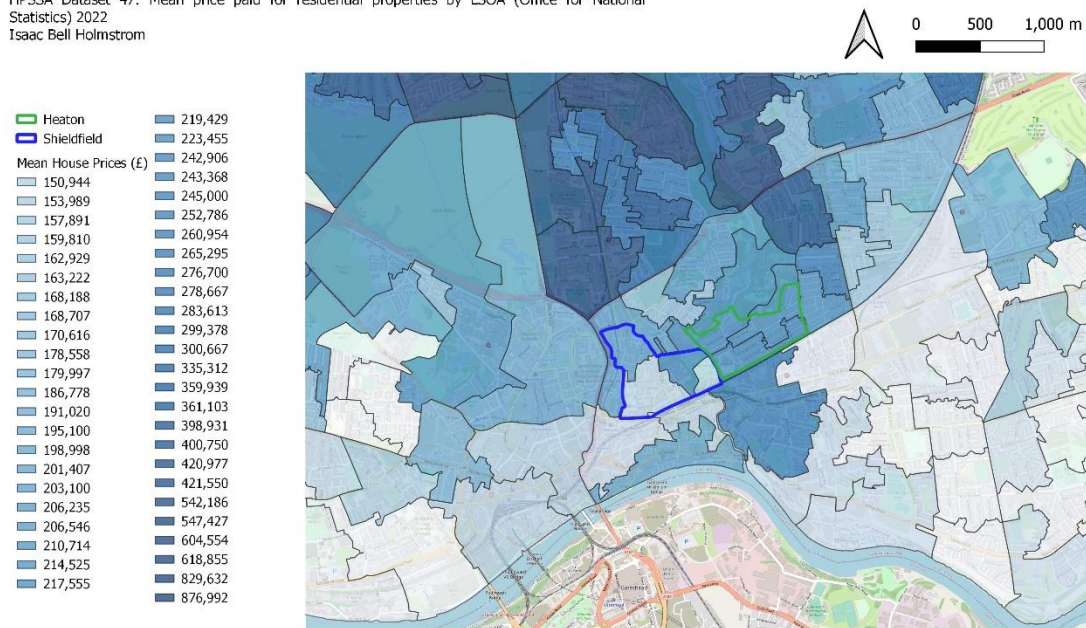Isaac Bell Holmstrom

	Mean House Prices (£)	
Heaton		219,429
Shieldfield		223,455
		242,906
150,944		243,368
153,989		245,000
157,891		252,786
159,810		260,954
162,929		265,295
163,222		276,700
168,188		278,667
168,707		283,613
170,616		299,378
178,558		300,667
179,997		335,312
186,778		359,939
191,020		361,103
195,100		398,931
198,998		400,750
201,407		420,977
203,100		421,550
206,235		542,186
206,546		547,427
210,714		604,554
214,525		618,855
217,555		829,632
		876,992

Figure 2

By taking a view of the SLOAs by mean house price in 2022, we see that the darker area of Heaton is part of a wider group of SLOAs with similar prices, creating an arc around the centre, dividing the much lower prices found in the east from those much higher in the north. The juxtaposition of Shieldfield and Heaton is clear, it forms a sharp dividing line that isolates the small area just to the east of the city centre as one of notably low prices, a somewhat anomalous discovery but one explained by the historical understanding of Shieldfield's development.

11.2 Building age

Building age is a contentious indicator of vulnerability to demolition, and must be examined alongside tenure and building form. As Cherchi notes, the architectural heritage that is found in older buildings, artistic styles and contributions to a city that must be protected, preserved for the future, is a powerful tool for resisting demolition (Cherchi 2015). But this form of conservation is closely tied to aesthetics – age can alternatively be cited as a factor in favour of demolition, with older buildings no longer serving the purposes of the area, demolition becoming a form of "surgery as a result of which infected tissue is removed to help the organism, in our case a city, to recover." (Kaczmarek 2019).

Average construction date of buildings by Super Lower Output Area

Isaac Bell Holmstrom, Office for National Statistics and Valuation Office Agency - Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.
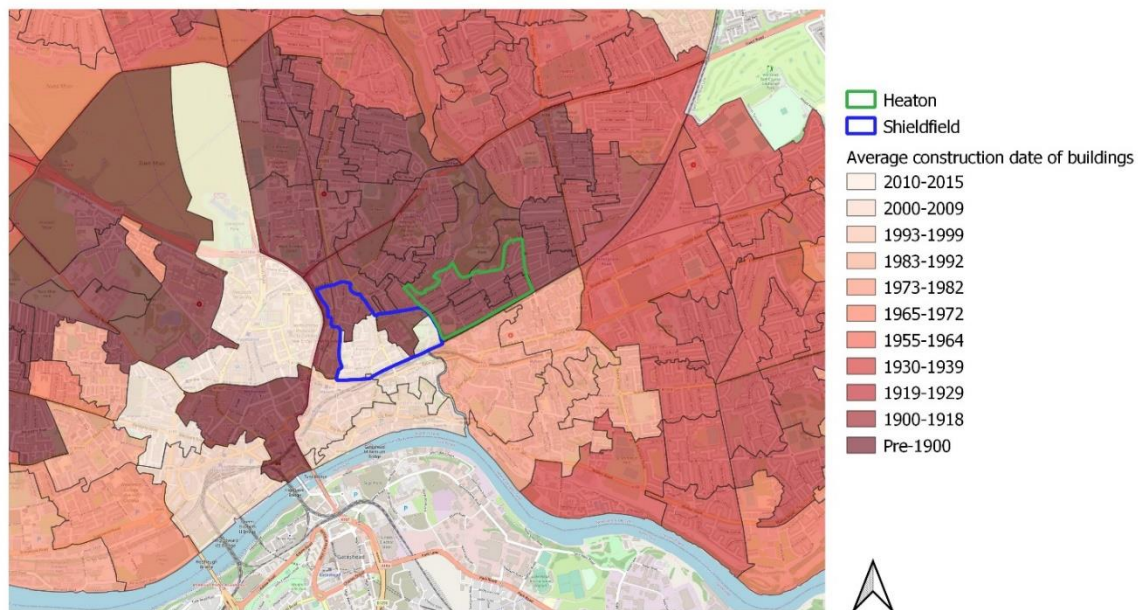
Figure 3

An examination of the average construction dates of the buildings in SLOAs in Newcastle recalls the dynamics of the previous map, but in striking intensity. Where the majority of homes in Heaton, and Jesmond to the north, are historic terraced streets built for miners and their families, the relative newness of the buildings found in Shieldfield are comparable to the city centre, where almost constant building turnover results in shopping centres, offices and restaurants. Based on the changes to Shieldfield over the last decades, (Heslop et al. 2023) we can understand the high turnover of buildings as an unstable process, one that likely anticipates further development.

11.3 Brownfield sites

Understanding the current geography of urban development in the city is a necessary step to consider future possibilities. As such, a map of the brownfield sites registered on the City Council Brownfield Register can offer insights into the distribution of construction and development in the city. A brownfield site does not signify active development, only a space of land that has been cleared, without an indication of the length of time that the space has been left vacant, but is still useful in understanding where Heaton and Shieldfield sit within larger trends.

Brownfield Sites

Isaac Bell Holmstrom, Newcastle City Council "Newcastle Brownfield
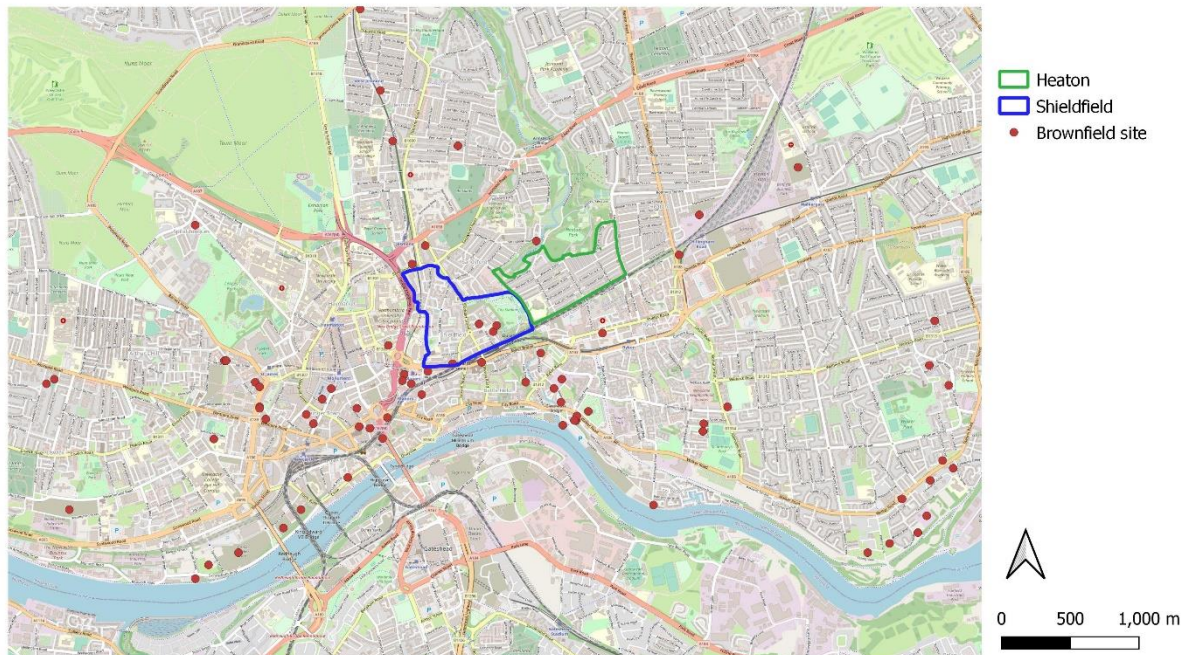Land Register" December 2023

Figure 4

The most obvious trend that can be taken from this map is the consistent sequence of brownfield sites following the River Tyne, fitting with the concept of the "waterfront" as a widely accepted element in urban regeneration, a site of economic activity that contributes to the competitive attractiveness of a city (Falk 2002). The curve of the sequence of brownfield diverges from the river as it reaches the city centre, and returns to the water passing straight through Shieldfield, a testament to its centrality to regeneration possibilities and vulnerability to investment. Heaton, on the other hand, is left out of this sequence, and while this does not indicate a lack of development, renovation, business turnover and economic activity, it does reveal a lack of abandoned sites, of empty spaces. The empty space is a fascinating aspect of urban development, "it can be said that unused terrains and buildings are necessary for urban renovation. In these empty lots the city reinvents itself; they are playgrounds of urbanistic innovation and cultural breeding grounds." (Nefs 2006 p.50). While they can represent possibility, and the ambiguity of the future use of the space can be a positive attribute, power dynamics and landownership arrive to complicate the matter. When a space such as Shieldfield is discussed, with strong histories both of local community artwork projects as well as capital-intense land exploitation by multinational investment, the ownership of the space is contested. The ambiguity of these spaces represent significant potential for different groups, but their interests do not necessarily overlap.
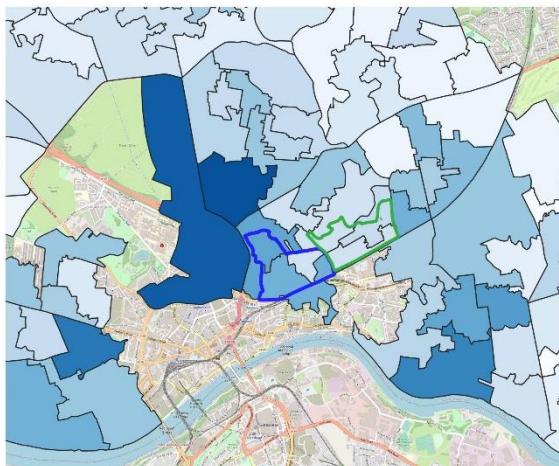
11.4 Vacancies and Second Homes

The limitations of the data are made most clear through the examination of vacancies, a typical indicator of empty homes vulnerable to demolition, and second homes, an indicator associated with high levels of wealth and of land prices. Vacant homes are the subject of numerous critical reports seeking to revive these spaces to meet the needs of the growing housing crisis, and residential vacancies, linked to low house prices and derelict properties, are typically, like the 17 student accommodation buildings in Castle Leazes in Newcastle, and the Crowhall Towers high-rise blocks in Gateshead, scheduled for demolition (Roy and Holland 2024; Gateshead Council 2023).
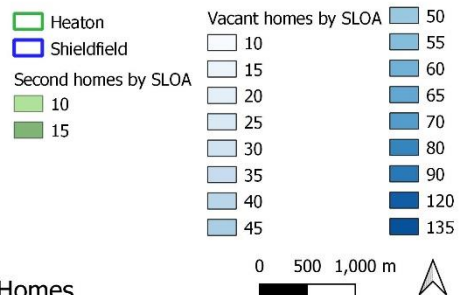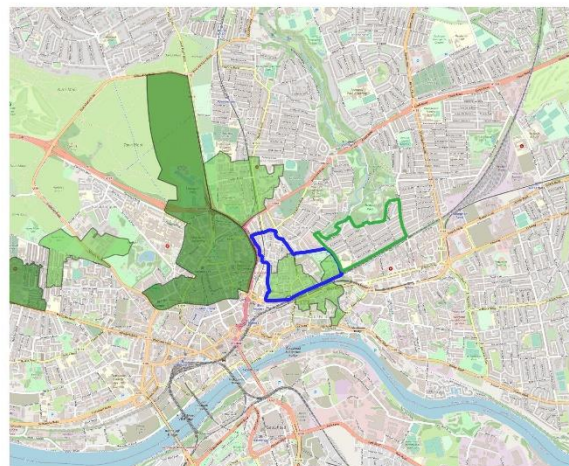
Figure 5

The spatial analysis however, posits Shieldfield as containing relatively high levels of vacancies, while simultaneous being one of the few SLOAs in the city containing second homes. This can be understood as a reflection of the impact of the sheer quantity of student housing that dominates the area – high-density blocks of PBSA result in large numbers of housing units with specific forms of tenure, vacant for the majority of the summer holidays, and registered as a second address for the student residents. The presence of this quantity of PBSA thus seriously limits the extent to which vacancies, a highly useful indicator of sites vulnerable to demolition, can be utilised here. Freedom of Information requests to the City

Council were unsuccessful in obtaining more detailed information that could account for the presence of PBSA in vacancy data.

11.5 Conclusions

Analysis of the urban geography supports the hypothesis that perceptions of urban development and regeneration, in the form of demolition and construction, will differ between residents of Heaton and of Shieldfield. The forms of housing, the prices, and the histories, reflect a gap that exposes the impact of private investment and urban development on a space. Shieldfield sits at the frontier of these forces of development, an area close to the centre but with low house prices, with a strong history of fresh construction, juxtaposed with a far more stable environment found in Heaton. This analysis forms the landscape in which the interviews are situated, and provides some background into the forces at work in Newcastle and elsewhere.

12. Survey results

12.01 Neighbourhood

Of 34 responses, 9 residents were from Shieldfield, and 25 were from Heaton.

12.02 Gender

19 respondents identified as female, 10 as male, and 5 did not answer.

12.03 Age

Analysis of the 33 responses for age indicate a trimodal distribution around the 45-54, 55-64, and 74+ marks with one respondent declining to answer.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	3	9. 1
25-34	4	12. 1
35-44	5	15.2
45-54	6	18.2
55-64	6	18.2
65-74	3	9. 1
74+	6	18.2

12.04 Tenure

Tenure is massively skewed towards homeownership, with no responses from people living in student accommodation.

Tenure	Frequency	Percentage

Flat, social rent	3	8.8
Flat, private rent	2	5.9
Student accommodation	0	0.0
Flat, bought	4	12.0
House, private rent	2	6.0
House, bought	22	65.0
Other	1	3.0

12.05 Residence

Measured as years having lived in the neighbourhood, either Heaton or Shieldfield, there is a mean of 16.2 and a median of 15.5, but a histogram shows the distribution to favour the much newer residents. The minimum value is 0.5, with the maximum as 45.

Histogram of Residence
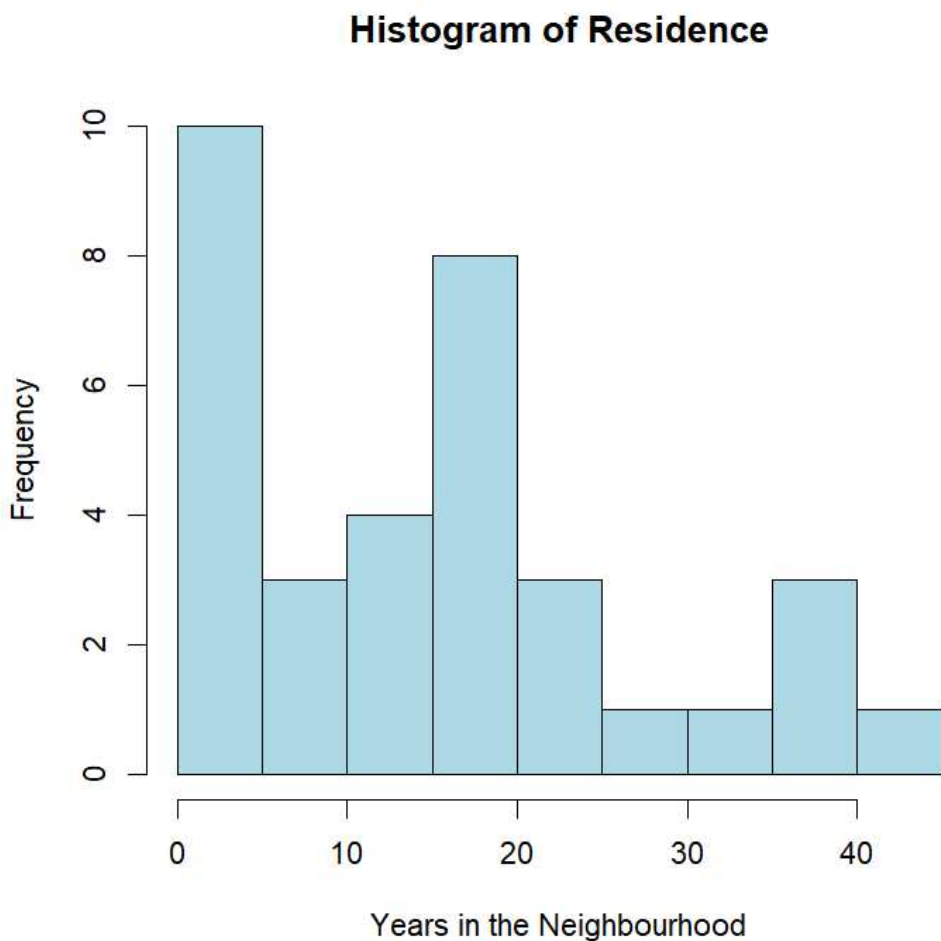
Figure 6

12.06 Place Identity

With a maximum potential value of 15, and an entirely neutral value of 9, the responses for both neighbourhoods are positive with little variation. A minor difference of the mean (11.3 for Heaton, and 10.8 for Shieldfield) is negligible.
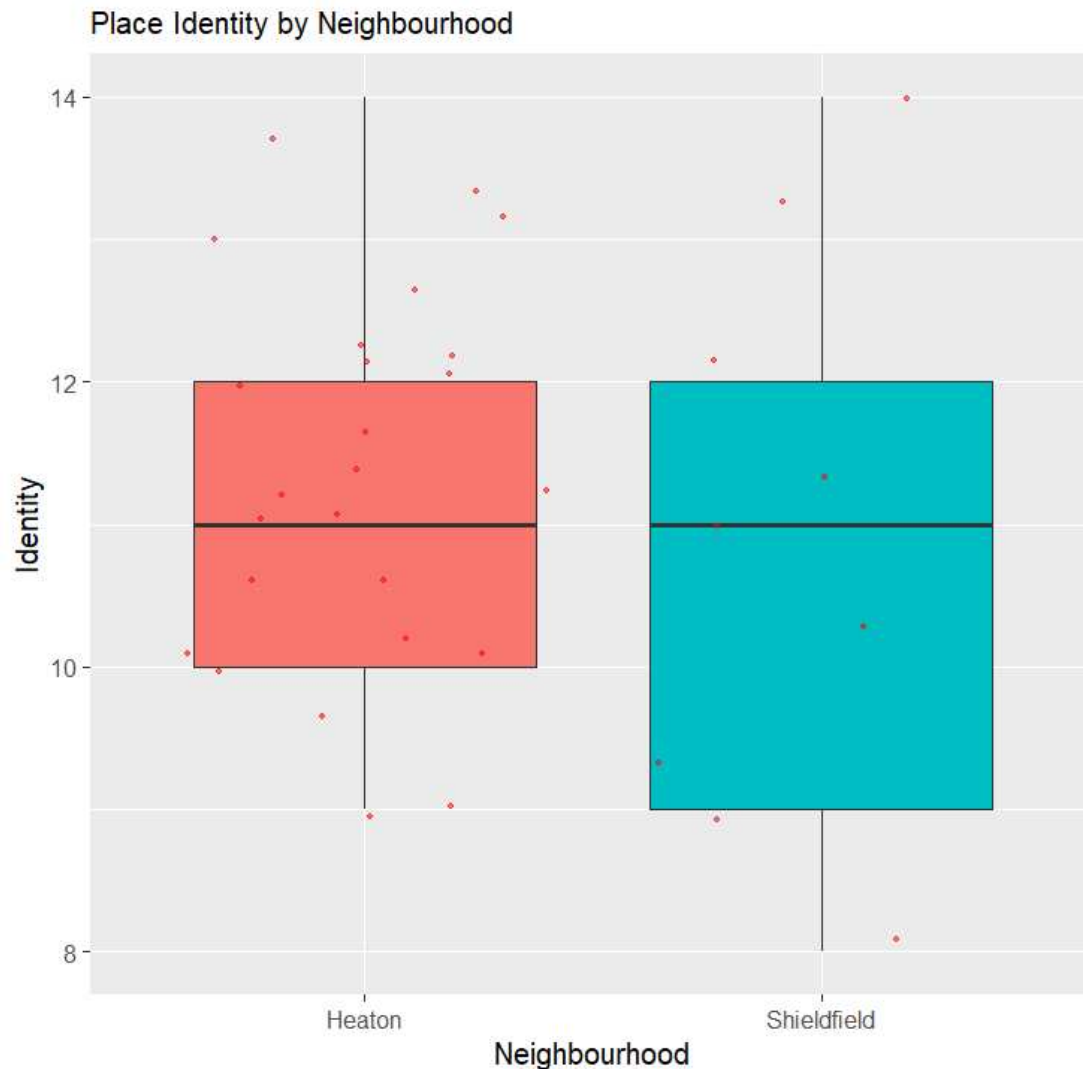
Figure 7

12.07 Place Attachment

With a maximum potential value of 30, and an entirely neutral value of 18, a slightly more evident distinction is identified towards Heaton as displaying a stronger expression of Place Attachment

Place Attachment by Neighbourhood
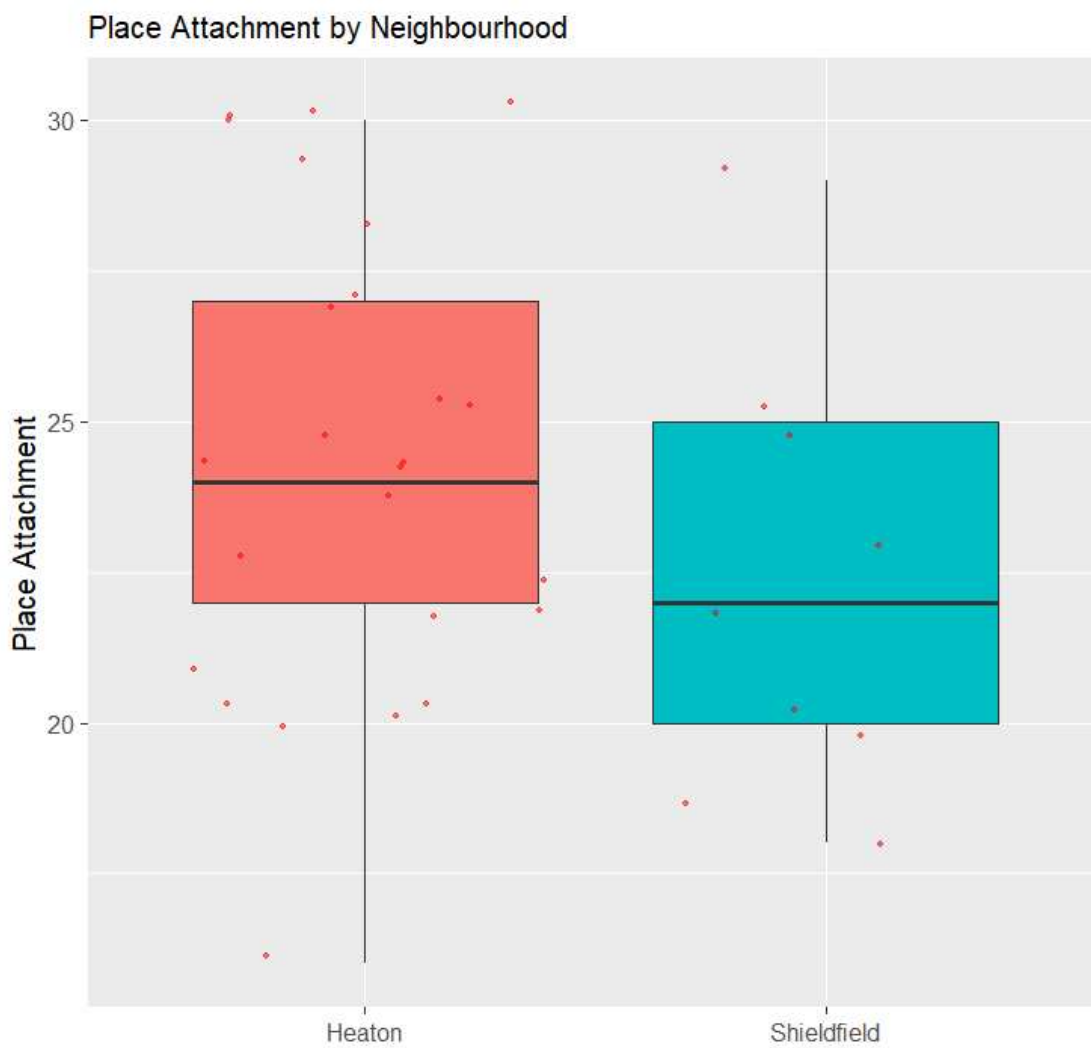
Figure 8

12.08 Place Dependence

Places to drink, work, and do shopping are the most evident in favouring Heaton, while places to be creative are instead more recognised in Shieldfield. For each individual question, 5 represents the maximum potential value, and 3 represents a neutral answer.

Figure 9

Figure 10

Places to Do My Shopping

Figure 11

Places to Be Creative
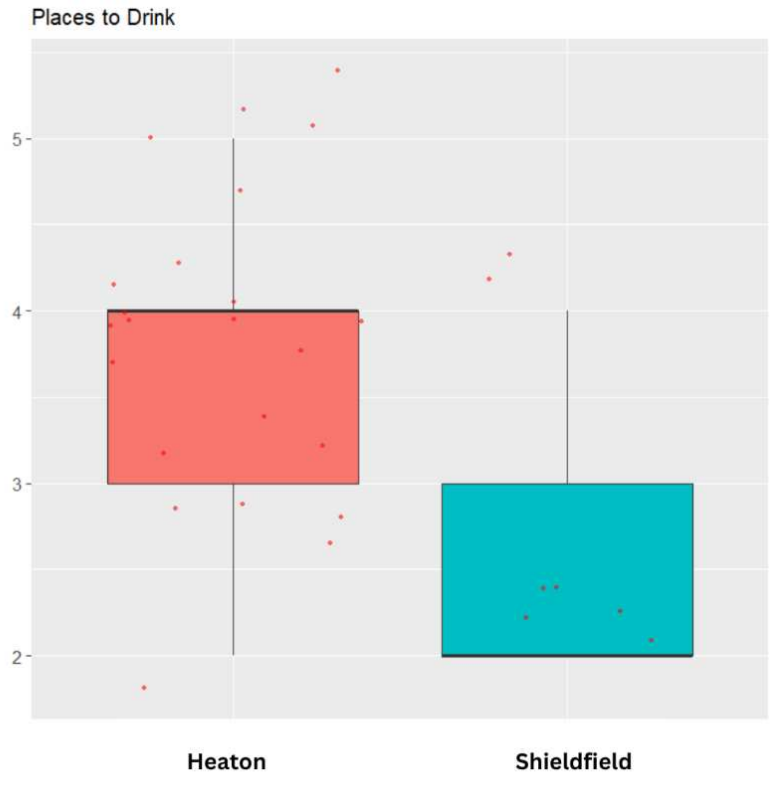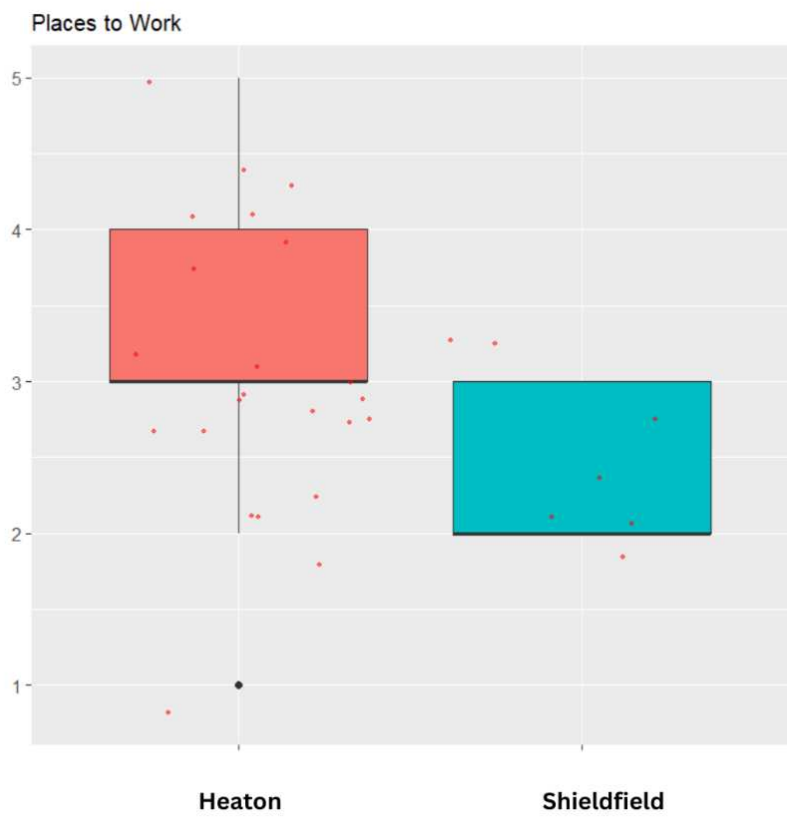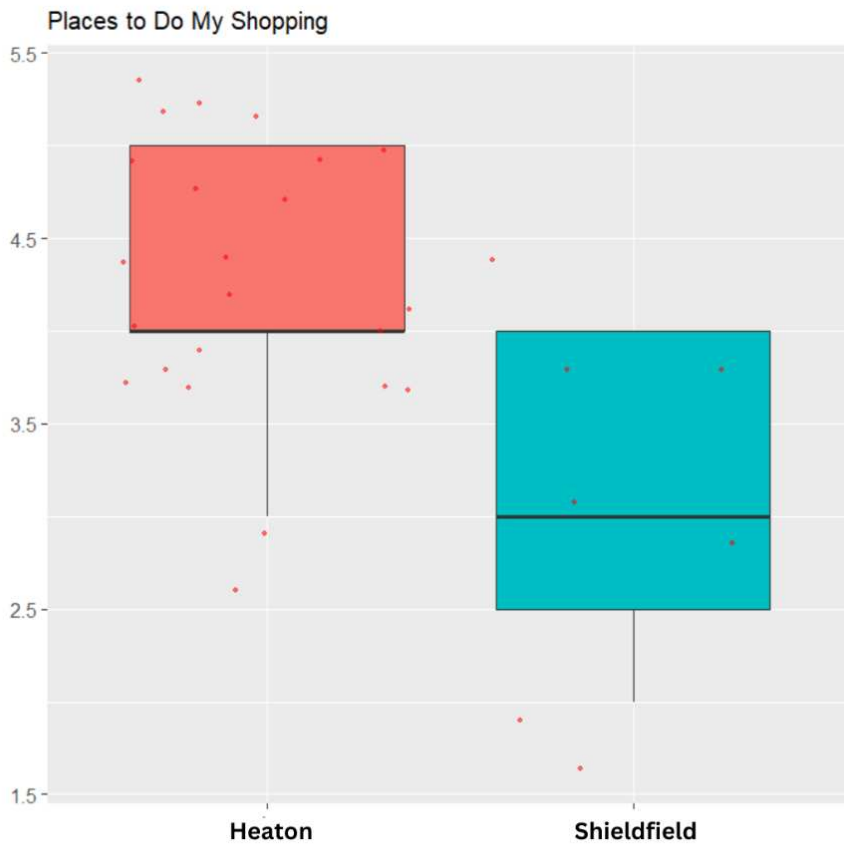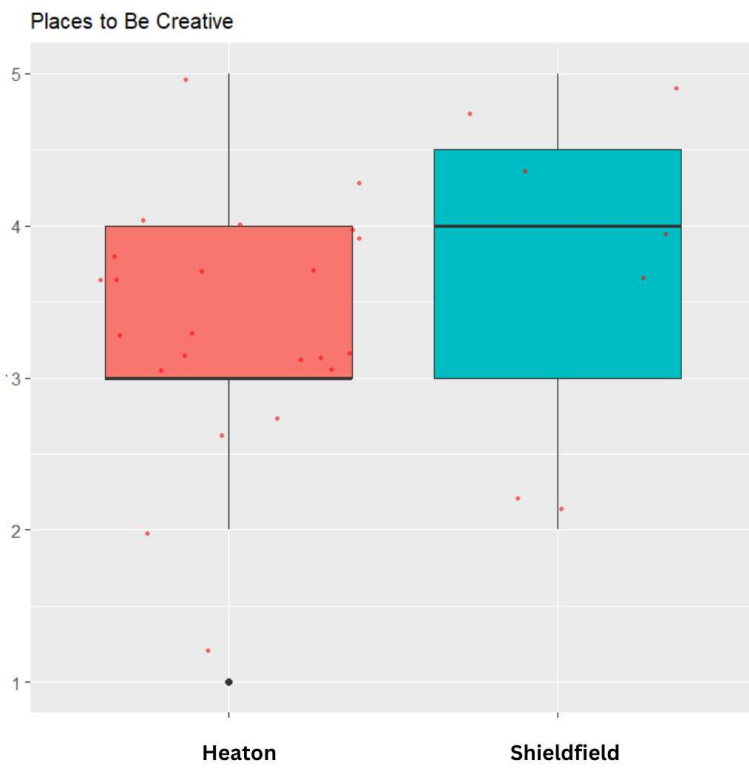
Figure 12

Ultimately, Place Dependence, with an overall maximum potential value of 30 and an entirely neutral answer of 18, gives Heaton a mean of 26.6 and Shieldfield that of 22.3.
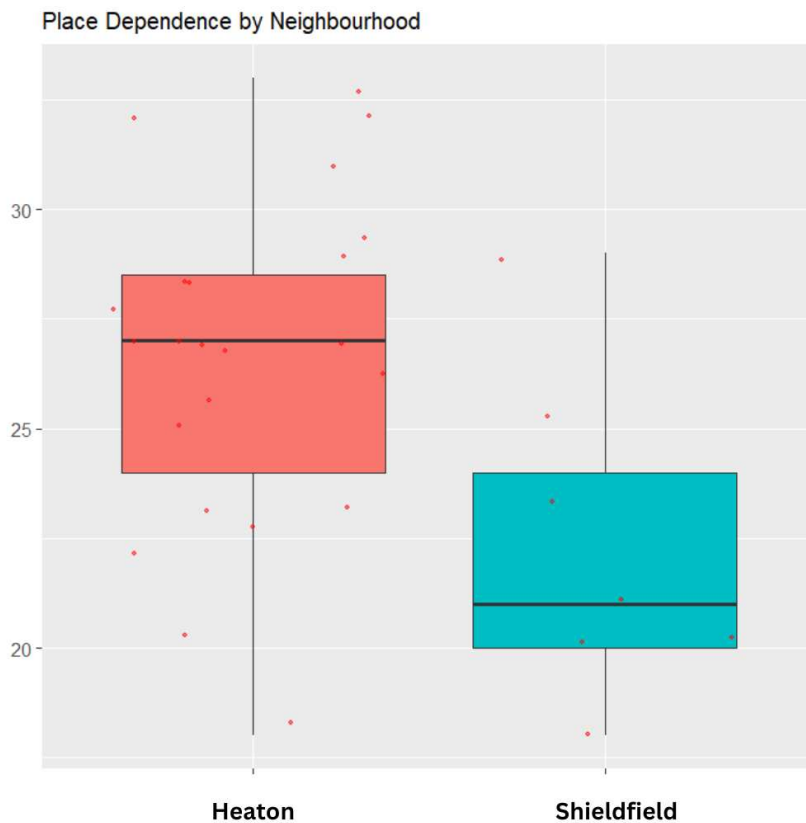
Figure 13

12.09 Demolition

Taking the measure "Security from Demolition", with a maximum potential value of 40, we see only a slight favouring towards Heaton, with a mean of 25.5 compared to Shieldfield's 24.5. In specific questions however, more light can be shed on the disparity between neighbourhoods. Likelihood of demolition in the area is a strong example of this.
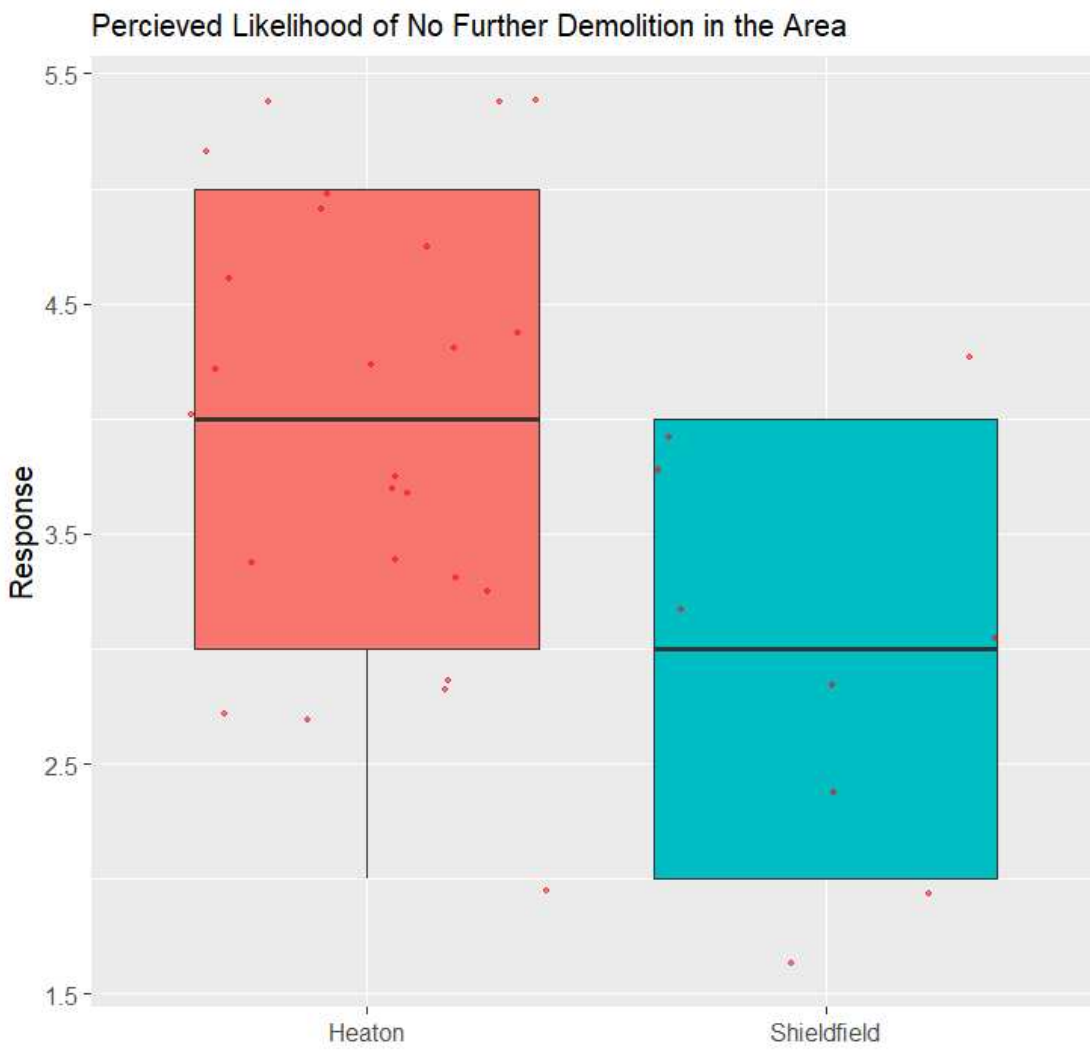
Figure 14

Another disparity identified is the impact on the community of the demolition of "older" or "newer" buildings.

Demolition of Older Buildings Would not Impact the Community

Figure 15

Demolition of Newer Buildings Would not Impact the Community
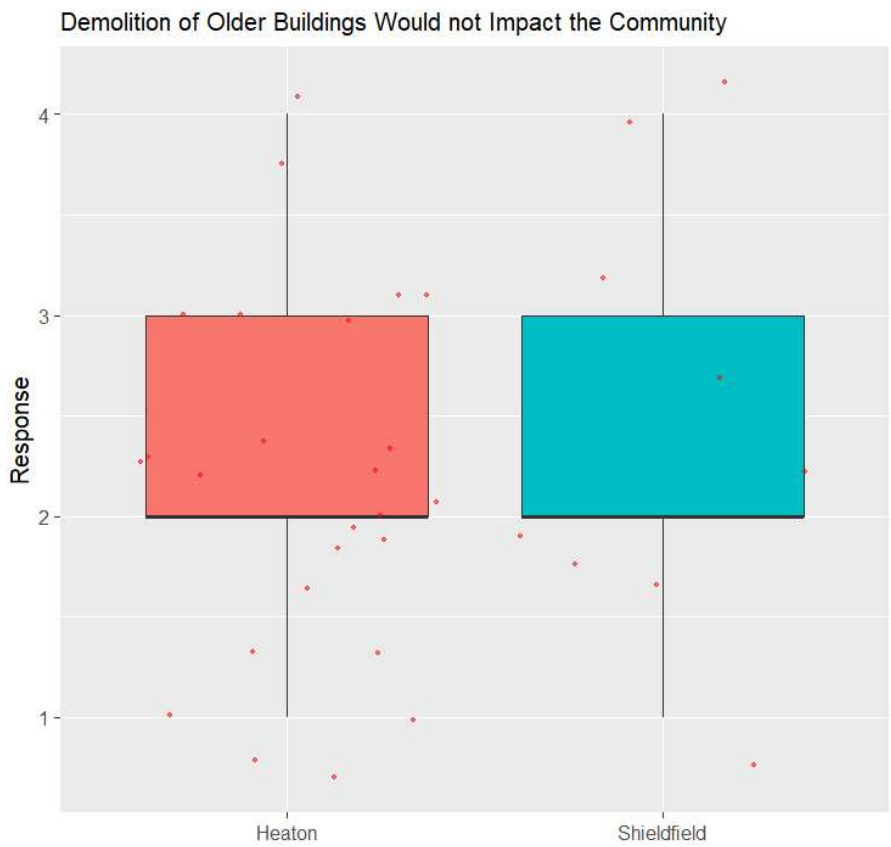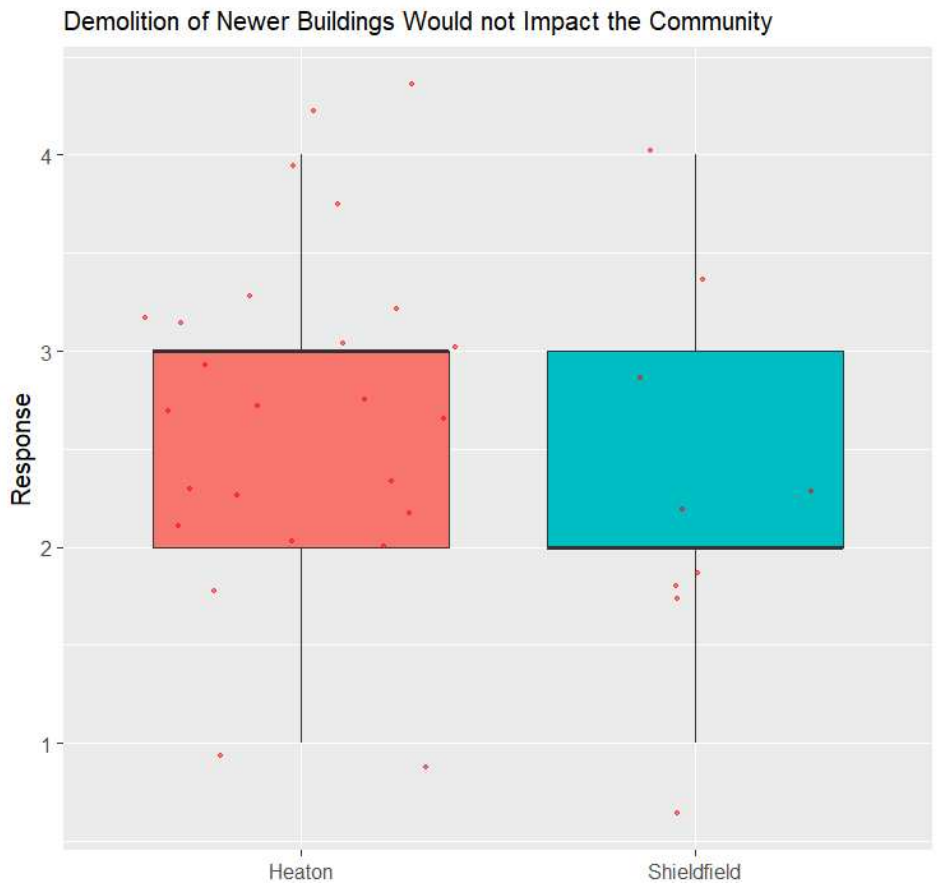
Figure 16

12.10 Analysis

The limitations of the sample size cannot be overstated, but conclusions still make themselves known despite this. There is an obvious dominance of homeowners in the survey respondent pool, most likely skewed by the dominance of respondents from Heaton as compared to Shieldfield. 17.7% of Shieldfield residents own their home compared to 26.9% in Heaton, while social renting and private renting are the two largest categories in each, forms of tenure which are significantly underrepresented in the results. In terms of years spent in the neighbourhood and gender, there is little risk of skewed results, but the prevalence of respondents from Heaton is somewhat mitigated by the continuous separation of results by neighbourhood, limiting dominance of Heaton residents' perspectives. There is a low proportion of young people in the survey, with the modes of the "Age" question at the over-50 mark. Younger people, especially those who live in PBSA, who may be more inclined to move away from their neighbourhoods, are an important perspective to consider in these studies, and this must be acknowledged before any evaluation.

Place Identity was shown to be strong in both neighbourhoods, taking into account history, community and lifestyle. Place Attachment, a measure of pride, belonging, contentedness, also showed only minor disparity between the neighbourhoods, with none of the constituent questions offering anything other than a slightly lower value for respondents in Shieldfield than in Heaton.

The difference is primarily in more material conditions – Place Dependence looks at the facilities available in the space, and in terms of spaces to drink, to work, and to shop, Heaton provides significantly more opportunities for its residents. In terms of places to be creative, while the term is vague enough to include wide interpretations of the meaning, the noted superiority of Shieldfield in providing such spaces is one to be aware of, potentially linked to the opportunities afforded by Dwellbeing Shieldfield, the Newbridge Project, Shieldfield Art Works, and the Biscuit Factory – all arts-based organisations that operate in Shieldfield. Overall, the disparity in Place Dependence has implications for investment and urban planning, which would indicate a limited access to specific typologies of spaces for residents in Shieldfield.

The measures surrounding demolition offer some interesting points that will be revisited later in the study. The idea that there will be further demolition in one's own neighbourhood is an important one, lending an uncertainty to the stability of the urban environment, the familiarity of one's lifestyle and surroundings. The markedly lower responses from residents of Shieldfield suggests a lack of confidence in the space, a vulnerability to future urban regeneration works, an important theme in the evaluation of ontological security. When looking with higher

resolution at the typologies of buildings that could be vulnerable, there is a consensus found in both neighbourhoods that demolition of "older" buildings, another intentionally subjective term, would impact the community. This was to be expected, given the value attributed to older buildings, while the more neutral answer of Heaton residents towards the demolition of newer buildings, in the face of Shieldfield residents continuing to indicate that this would impact the community, is worth exploring. This is not a resounding enthusiasm for the demolition of the new, by any means, but it does indicate a willingness to allow the demolition of newer buildings. When a much higher proportion of Shieldfield residents live in newer buildings compared to Heaton, their responses carry very different implications.

Ultimately, the survey is only an indication of points to study further – the statistical insignificance of the results prevent the data from giving conclusive answers to the research questions. Points to examine are, however:

1. Place Dependence and investment in facilities,
2. The potential of future demolition in one's own neighbourhood, and
3. The value given to older and newer buildings.

13. Interview results

13.1 Heaton

To the extent that Heaton residents perceive a character to their own neighbourhood, there is a reasonable level of homogeneity in their perceptions of the area. There is a sense of Heaton as a bounded area, and the study area of South Heaton specifically as a bounded community within the neighbourhood itself, with a divide formed not just from urban geography but from social class, reflected in and strengthened by the presence of the primary school.

13.1.1 "Demarcated"

The sense of community that was explored was not an identical geographic fit with the formal neighbourhood in question, but the borders of those neighbourhoods remained noticeably manifest in the perceptions of residents. Distinct areas within Heaton were identified as making up a territorial community, with the demarcations of the urban geography as the borders. These borders identified around Heaton by the initial site analysis were confirmed by the interviews, which offered a number of perspectives on the divisions present in urban landscape.

Heaton 1 noted: *"I think there's a very clear border with Byker, obviously because of the railway line. I think there's quite a clear border with Shieldfield because of the Stadium. So there's actual markers in the landscape. If you were heading towards Sandyford there's the depot, and if you're headed to High Heaton there's the Coast Road. And then there's Iris Brickfield and Benfield Road. It's very demarcated by its transport system."*

These divisions are reflected again in building typology – Heaton 5 said: *"Yes definitely, for one there's the railway line, as soon as you this way and turn right, then you have the high-rise buildings. And on Heaton Road, there's the organic shop, that kind of thing, then as soon as you go over the railway again it completely turns into a different character, then there is this particular bit [South Heaton], and there's a bit of a mix, and you have Chillingham Road, which has a lot more students in that direction. And the City Stadium before you get to the housing estate in Shieldfield"*

When asked about the community found in Heaton, Heaton 1 replied:

"The sense of community probably goes even smaller than that, to certain roads and areas and places where people send their children to school. Yeah, and your local shop. This bit where we all live [South Heaton] is more of a community. And the bit across Chillingham Road where all the kids go to Chillingham Primary School, I think that's more of a separate community. …. If you go over to the far side of Chillingham Road over towards Benfield, it's really quiet down there. Yes, probably has a different sense of community than we have here because we're right in the thick of it, and everybody wants to pass through. So I think yeah, your sense of community is smaller than the place."

The lifestyles facilitated through living in the vicinity of a certain school or thoroughfare have a significant effect on the interplay between space and behaviour – regarding a row of pedestrianised streets (Fig. 17) , Heaton 5 said:

"I think especially these little streets here, we're not included, we're just at the end of it, but it's kind of a safe haven for the residents here, that creates some sort of barrier. [My daughter] learned how to ride a bike on here, but I wouldn't just sit around here or draw chalk on those streets because I feel like they don't belong to me, it's a long path but we're outside of it. That space does belong to the houses that are here which, it's not true, but it is. There's obviously been quite a lot of effort into making them look very beautiful and inviting, and hence I think that even more so makes me feel like I can't use that space, these houses here, they have the right to them. The barrier, you don't feel like it is open, I think this row of streets very much defines how I understand this area."

Figure 17 A pedestrianised street in Heaton (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

This culture of private seclusion was echoed by Heaton 10, who saw themselves as living outside this atmosphere, in a more open climate with more through traffic, "*which feels a little bit more anonymous*". They noted that the area "*is incredibly chilled, certainly compared to anywhere I work. I know people around here as friends. I know a lot of the bases, in terms of business that I would pop into and say hi. But yeah, there's no pressure to be a member of the neighbourhood, I don't feel an expectation in terms of my behaviours and to be seen to be contributing to my street or my neighbourhood. But if there were particular things that friends or neighbours are involved in, I choose to give a little bit of help, then I can.*"

Heaton 6 perceived borders as a barrier to co-operation and community building. The Byker Wall is large social housing estate in Byker, adjacent to Heaton, and "low traffic" refers to a temporary road closure scheme that proved divisive in residential areas like Heaton.

"Yeah, I am aware of them. So for example. Byker Wall starts just after the railway line, and when we had the low traffic thing going on, everybody was very happy to send the buses down to... the other side of the railway line there. And yes, it is more suitable for buses, and yes, the accommodation is slightly further back from the road there, but I don't think that was an entirely fair. I also am not supportive of closing Heaton Park Road because, again, it's very much benefits certain to people but not others. What it does is drive things down my back alley. So

there's a lot of, you know, people being set against each other or people are setting themselves against each other. As a community, and if you try and have any kind of dialogue with councillors, they are very much "oh, well, that's not my area" because it's on the other side of the road, a different boundary or something and, that means that the Council is not working together."

These boundaries are used by property developers to influence purchasing, Heaton 7 argued.

"The boundaries are very strong, especially the train tracks - I don't care what they say, the housing estate on the other side of the train tracks isn't "East Heaton", it's Byker"

13.1.2 "A bubble"

A collection of class identifiers was described by residents that emphasised how "middle-class" Heaton was, particularly in comparison to its state in the past, and in comparison to adjacent neighbourhoods. Gentrification and rising land values, combined with a strongly left-leaning political climate, has brought a wave of independent shops to the area, and a self-perception of Heaton as a particularly tolerant area.

Heaton 2 was proud of the economic development happening around them – *"They talk about the "death of the high street", but as a high street Heaton Park Road is coming back to what it used to be, with the small independent shops, the 109 (Fig.18), the Block and Bottle … and I think once people change their habits a bit, then they realised it was quite good to stick with that. I'm surprised the Shoe Tree Cafe closed down or whatever it was called last. Heaton Perk is quite well used."*

Figure 18 A popular organic shop in Heaton (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

The lifestyle that is facilitated by the urban geography – namely the walkability, the vicinity to amenities - and the social composition, makes it a very attractive space - *"it's relatively safe, relatively crime free. It's a lovely mixed community, of social housing, private landlords, owner occupiers. There's a large difference of occupations, good local primary schools, nice shopping areas..."* (Heaton 1)

Young professionals and young families moving to the area have likely had an impact on place dependence, and the extent to which individual lifestyles are supported and accepted by the community as a whole.

Heaton 3 recognised a change, but couldn't explain it in terms of demography - *"different sorts of people moving in ... but I don't think it's a class change, it didn't change from working class to middle class or something, things have changed but it's still the same sort of people"*

Heaton 7, when asked if they perceived Heaton as a working class area, responded *"Not in the slightest, maybe it used to be, I don't know, and maybe if there are still any council houses around here then some people would see it differently, but definitely not now, I think its heading towards Jesmond [a nearby neighbourhood], it's like what Jesmond was 20 years ago unfortunately."*

Heaton 1 found a bittersweet sense of disadvantages and advantages to growing up in such an environment – *"I mean it's got a lovely mix of people. And it's very, very accepting, I think. I think it's a bit of a bubble of diversity and acceptance. I really do believe it is a bit of a problem, and I think the kids are here have an advantage of being brought up in a bubble, but also that might put them at a disadvantage... I think the Heaton kids very much stick together, and sort of go through as lifelong friends. I see it with the kids that I used to teach as well. Yeah, I think that it's middle-class loveliness generally... I'm sure like there's a pocket community in Fenham that will be very similar. Very sort of arty, neuro-diverse middle class, outdoorsy, cultural. Yeah, I'm sure there's little pockets all over the place. And I think that everybody will think they're particularly special"*

These processes of formation have not been painless, and they have not brought benefits to all residents equally. Heaton 4 discusses the decline of social housing in the area and its replacement with private rented homes – *"When I first moved here, to a council house, pretty much everyone on my street were council tenants. I was like the new kid on the block, at the time, they were very friendly and helpful, came round to say hello, offer me a cup of sugar you know, I was a single mum with two kids, so they offered a lot of help, which was really nice. And then over the years, I guess it's inevitable, one by one, they all went to care homes or passed on. And the neighbourhood is shifting and changing, they started selling off houses that used to be social housing, and private landlords were buying them up, for the student housing,*

and that process means the destroying the interior, of what used to be a nice family home... So in that respect the area has changed a lot, because they build all these purpose-built places for the student accommodation, and they also started eating into social housing stock, so that pushes people out of the area."

The inequality growing in this process was also identified by Heaton 10. *"In the last five years, and COVID shifted this, house prices have gone up a lot. And the therefore type of cafes, restaurants and stuff, that has also changed. Somewhere was trying to charge me £5 for a poached egg and I've got grey hair now, so I'm able to go "What??"*

It's concerning, in terms of people that have been here for a very long time and yeah, I wonder if the list of places that people can't afford to go to has increased. Not just in terms of everybody's cost of living, but whether there's actually a greater divide going on."

Changes in residences and forms of tenure tending towards homeownership are typically associated with gentrification – rising wealth in the area was noted also by Heaton 5 – *"These kind of homes, especially after the boom in prices, the prices have gone through the roof. The size of these homes makes them really appealing, especially if you want to buy, and for a certain type of people, ... Victorian homes, more spacious than the flats, there is more renovation as well, you always see work being done, new windows being put in, clearly people find them very attractive."(Fig. 19*)

Figure 19 Street decoration (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

In the context of class and privilege, the ontological security of many of the Heaton residents must be mentioned, reflective of the high homeownership rate. "*I'm lucky enough to own my own home and we have pretty stable jobs, so there isn't any risk of eviction, and if something was to happen and I lose my job, my partner's is very secure, we're not going to be on the streets. If you live in council housing though, at any time they could just say "be on your way" and kick you out, I think this kind of thing is really hard, as long as anyone owns the space you live in, they could pull the rug out from under you.*"

13.1.3 "The school was really the place to make friends"

The dominance of the local primary school, Hotspur Primary, is evident from discussions with residents, many of whom are parents of children who attend or attended.

Heaton 1 – "*I think the schools are central to a lot of people's sense of community and certainly in primary schools. Possibly not so much a secondary school, you don't have so much connection with it or connection with other parents. You've made your community around your child, hopefully in primary school. I certainly did, loads of my friends are through my children.*"

This, coupled with the predominance of single mothers in the area around the late 90s and early 2000s, led to the emergence of a specific community centred around motherhood.

Heaton 4 – "*I really liked Hotspur, I made friends from our kids meeting there, when the kids went to Hotspur, I was very involved, I would go down to help out, teaching a bit of English and Maths, but that all changed quite dramatically, when they went off to Heaton Manor [the local secondary school], I felt much more closed off from what went on there.*

The school was really the place to make friends, the other mums there – and there were a few other single mums, and we didn't organise, it just kinda happened spontaneously, so we would meet, you know, and have a coffee or maybe occasionally some wine, the kids would get to socialise and meet each other, and it meant that if anything did happen, or if people went on holiday, or people just needed some time for themselves, we could have the kids stay over. And the kids were happy, they made friends, still friends who are 30 years old now.

This was all through the years while the kids were at Hotspur, so my kids did playgroup there, then nursery there then primary school, then went to Heaton Manor after that. We even went on some camping trips together, we used to get called the Witches of Heaton, and we took that name because some people were a bit intimidated, they used it to refer to us, and we were like, whoa, yeah, we'll take that."

The school is a source of pride for the area, and has a reputation for encouraging more artistic and creative development. Being located at the border of Heaton and the City Stadium, it forms part of the frontier between neighbourhoods, and this was picked up on by Heaton 5.

"The school seems really nice, more based on artistic development which we like, and everything is just a few minutes away – the only thing is that the school will be very middle class I think, there could be mixing which would be great, but I have this idea that it's the Shieldfield kids and the Heaton kids and the school is just in the middle, that people and parents and kids don't really cross over to the other sides, so I don't know how much mixing there would actually be."

13.1.4 Analysis

There are many lifestyles not reflected in those of the participants, many interpretations of Heaton that exist unrecorded, but the understandings above reflect a widely shared interpretation nonetheless. Borders exist as a way of understanding the world, of mentally formalising one's lifestyle and worldview, "producing a sense of orientation and belonging" (Scott 2020 p.80). This idea is linked to the cultural frame, the narrative through which a neighbourhood, understood as a *place*, perceives itself – in the case of Heaton, this is closely tied to the catchment area of the primary school and the lifestyles encouraged through a typically middle-class form of economic development – high demand for housing and independent specialist shops.

Heaton 1: *"When I first moved in, there was old folks on either side. And then they died, and it was bought by landlords. And now some of the landlord houses have gone back to families, there are loads have been selling up. So in the past couple of years we've had a whole host of new families in, young families."*

A certain dominance of one cultural over others was perceived by some residents, such as Heaton 4, who noted:

"In Byker, on Shields Road you get a lot more African shops and Asian shops – I lived in the West End, which was much more multicultural, I really liked being part of a multicultural society, but I found that Heaton was quite white, and so I was more used to those kind of places."

And who went on to observe that:

"I know there are projects here in Heaton, but say for example a couple of weeks ago there was the Heaton Festival, from what I've heard it was a lot of street food, and not necessarily healthy food they were promoting, and I like eating street food too but you have to ask, is this really a positive thing to be doing, it seems to have been for a certain kind of person, a lot of drinking, that kind of culture. And all the new places that open up are always bars, drinking and party culture, there aren't really spaces for other cultures it feels."

Heaton 1 emphasised the liveability of the area, with particular emphasis on the reputation it had gained. *"We've all stayed for a long time. Nobody wants to leave Heaton. My boys don't*

want to leave Heaton, for goodness sakes. They're all very taken with it and we are of course, the third best place to live in the country, it was in the Times, or the Telegraph, we've been declared the third best place to live, because of Heaton Road and all those independent shops.”

A homogeneity of cultural expression is a strong factor in class reproduction, a theme that will be revisited later, but which is implied heavily through the reinforcing of specific lifestyles and spaces. In the light of Heaton 6's observations about municipal borders, the implications this has on service provision across borders. Per Gustafson (2001 p.13) notes that: "A meaningful place must appear as an identifiable, distinguishable territorial unit. Distinction is a basic feature of human cognition ... and is a matter of categorisation, ascription of similarities and differences, and the drawing of boundaries," and the dominance of certain similarities connected so deeply to specific architectural forms and spaces like the school and the high street gives a significant weight to the borders of such a neighbourhood.

13.2 Shieldfield

The understanding among residents of how they define Shieldfield, how they perceive it as a space and its place in the city, is a strong contrast to residents of Heaton.

13.2.1 "Disconnected"

A negative stigma is identified around the area; Shieldfield 1 noted that *"everybody knows that this area is not popular,"* and the extent to which this feeling is rooted in Shieldfield as a bounded and defined site comes from an interplay between isolation and connection. Shieldfield 8 was asked if they perceived the area to be isolated, and replied: *"when that other bridge wasn't there, I think it was, because the other two bridges are a bit tricky to get to. So it was disconnected by the bypass from the city centre,"* and Shieldfield 7 identified useful public transport connections - *"in terms of actual links, for those of us who can walk it's pretty easy to get, to walk to the bus stop in about 10 minutes, or if you want to go further afield to the Metro - if you really can't manage to walk then it's different." (Fig.20)*

A perception of isolation is found in Shieldfield, an isolation that comes from its geographical position, its vicinity to other spaces. One resident of the adjacent neighbourhood, Battlefield, said *"in Battlefield there are no playgrounds, so my kids usually go to Shieldfield to play, I like it more there, you are always bumping into people you know, saying hello, and it's a very central area, good access to shops, not overcrowded."* Its centrality is a double-edged sword, *"it's always just been a place between, where is it? Is it nearly in town, is it an offshoot of Jesmond, is it Sandyford?"* (Shieldfield 7), and local identity must contend with the space being used often as a thoroughfare for pedestrians on their journeys to the city centre. When local artistic projects are presented, this allows for very favourable levels of accessibility –

Shieldfield 1 observed that *"it makes a nice artistic corridor, a few months ago there were the Late Shows, the late night cultural events, after like 8:00 PM, and because my accommodation is in a very central location, I can see it was like the Main Street in Seoul, it was busy. You know, it was really nice to see many people in the neighbourhood."*

The connections to other spaces are a regular aspect of note in respondents perceptions of the community – "it's 10 minutes from, well anywhere – town, the Ouseburn, Byker, I call it the heart of Newcastle. (Shieldfield 10)"

Shieldfield 7 saw this centrality as a limit to fostering community ties. *"As we've all said so many times and heard other people say, even though my it was where I lived, it was very much a place on the way to town, or on the way to Byker where the nearest supermarket was so I didn't really get to know people, didn't know my neighbours particularly. It's so easy just to go into town or go down into the Ouseburn that I didn't feel any particular need to find a community, and it would be nice if there had been one, but I didn't feel any particular lacking."*

With limited amenities and permeable borders with other areas, Shieldfield has become less well-known among the neighbourhoods of the city – from Battlefield *"there's no border with Shieldfield, no, but many people don't know where it is - to local people, you can say "Christchurch, behind the university", but if you say "the City Stadium", even to people at Hotspur, they think you mean St. James' [football stadium]."* (Shieldfield 2).
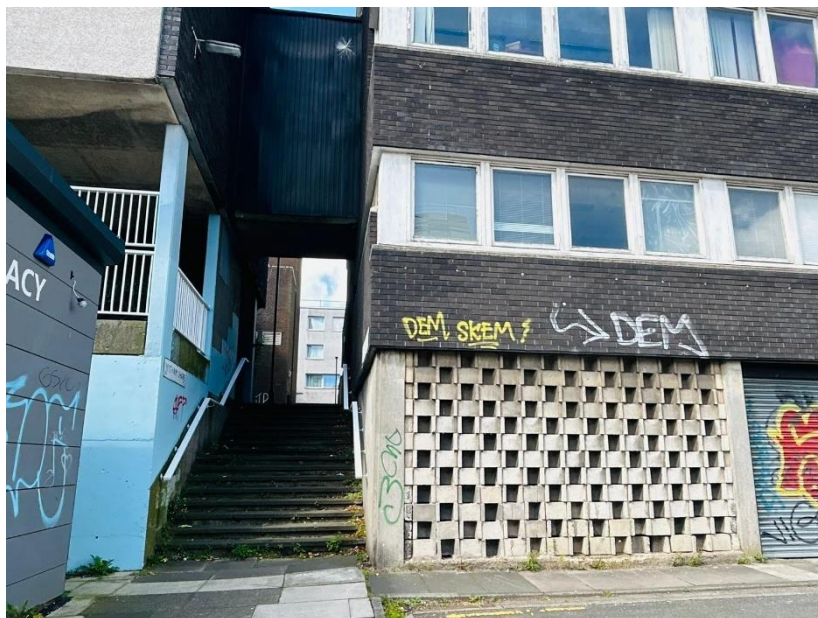
Figure 20 One of the entrances to central Shieldfield (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

Lack of local awareness was observed also in the student population of Shieldfield, *"I don't know if they even see Shieldfield, because even some the local people from Newcastle, you know sometimes they don't know where it is, they don't know the name, even though they are always passing by, only once you reference some of the landmarks here."* (Shieldfield 1).

Isolation and ignorance are seen as fundamental factors of Shieldfield's current condition – Shieldfield 8 said that *"financially, it's been passed over, a place that's not had financial investment for 60 years pretty much, you can see it hasn't changed. ... it does seem to be passed over, by the money and the support, there's been bad press and spurn."* High levels of footfall do not correspond to definition of a community in the same manner as Heaton, attention is not perceived in the same manner. (Fig. 21)

Figure 21 Open car-free public space (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

13.2.2 "Welcoming"

One aspect that is repeated in interviews is the sense of multiculturalism in Shieldfield. "*It's such a mixed community here, there are around 18, 20 languages being spoken here, it's really such a great melting pot, (Fig. 22)*" (Shieldfield 8) and this is linked to how accepting the space is perceived as for new residents. Shieldfield 1 found the atmosphere very open - *"I think it was the warm environments especially for us, like I'm a foreign student, and living abroad first time. I'm from Turkey, so I'm used to having neighbours around, you know, saying hi to each other on the street. It's a common concept in Turkey and especially in residential neighbourhoods. Of course, it's decreasing with the globalisation, so it was nice to feel that, even the piece of that feeling."*

Figure 22 The Shieldfield Cup, a children's sports event (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

They went on to say *"I think residential areas are very summative of a country, of a region, because of the lifestyle – alone but seeing some families with children, I think it's nice to also see international families. So even though you are different, you can easily fit in."*

Shieldfield 2 perceived this atmosphere as well – as a community chef, working with Dwellbeing Shieldfield in a programme to share food from different cultures, **"*I would make them Slovakian food, made in a Slovak way that people don't really do here, and people were so grateful and welcoming - even if not everyone liked my food, people would praise me for it, even months after*."**

Shieldfield 10 saw more opportunities for bringing together different cultures in Shieldfield - "*We could really do with some language classes, it's a very diverse community here and we are close to the hotels where the refugees and asylum seekers live, and so teaching more people English, bringing them together, could really help – some of them are too afraid to go places so they stay inside. There is still racism even here, and so a lot of the refugees feel isolated, that is getting better with the community chefs sharing the food from their countries, from Sudan, from Ethiopia, we can show them that we are open to them."*

13.2.3 "Transitional"

There is a tangible sense of turnover of residents in Shieldfield – Shieldfield 2 noted "*that young people want to leave Shieldfield, they don't really stay.*"

Shieldfield 7 agreed, saying that "*it's a funny mixture here, because there's some families who stay for generations, and then equally it's quite a transitional place as well, not just the students only being here for a short time but also quite a lot of the people who are sort of put in the blocks, for refuge or asylum, they don't necessarily stay that long if they either they're able to go back home, or they find somewhere else, they find a job somewhere else or family somewhere else. And this is just a starting point. I think it must [affect the area], there's quite a lot of people coming and going and not a sense of sort of people being settled, but as a mixture instead.*"

There is a sense that the identity of the area is not full defined, that there is little to attract people into the neighbourhood – this perceived transience of a significant part of the population is an important aspect.

13.2.4 Analysis

The value of borders is called into question when the boundaries imposed on Shieldfield are compared with those of Heaton. Pride for the area is strong in both neighbourhoods, but isolation and separation carry a different significance when the space becomes a pathway, a thoroughfare for reaching other spaces. Heaton has a well-defined identity, recognised throughout the city – Shieldfield 8, when discussing the levels of attention and investment that Shieldfield has received, said "*Heaton, you know, that's where I say God's chosen people live. But I think the meek will inherit.*"

As reflected in the maps observed in the spatial analysis, the most obvious frontier is at Shieldfield's eastern border – there is much more homogeneity and ambiguity about boundaries as regards that of the west. That Shieldfield 2 can move between neighbourhoods without perceiving a border is a testament to the changes that have occurred at the edges of the neighbourhood – large university campus projects of varying styles and typologies have permeated these sites, far unlike the slightly stricter divisions found at the borders of Heaton and its adjacent neighbourhoods.

Place identity, the space as a reflection of the community, is a strong element of the role of Dwellbeing Shieldfield as a co-operative focused on public participation in the public sphere. They currently facilitate the sense of welcome for new residents – Shieldfield 2 emphasised this. "*One of the mums invited me, our children were friends at the school, and they welcomed me in from even across the road, I wasn't sure if I was allowed, and Dwellbeing is so brilliant, they combine different charities and they do all of it for the people – they help the elderly people, the youth – they have such a good youth programme – the artists, they help support people and organise them.*"

More of a sense of transition, issues around isolation and investment, none of these mean that there cannot be bonds as strong as those found in Heaton or elsewhere. Shieldfield 10, coming

from Eastern Europe, and moving to Shieldfield after being made homeless, found a place to belong. "*The neighbours have always been welcoming, they always ask how I'm doing and invite me in for coffee, we help each other with the bins, I really feel like a part of the community – after my mother died, I felt like this is my home now, not Poland.*"

A point of comparison in both Heaton and Shieldfield is the sense of multiculturalism – a homogeneity of lifestyle is certainly found in Heaton, but Heaton 4 noted "*in Shieldfield too, there is a lot more culture developing there, more initiatives than in Heaton, here it's mainly just places to go and drink, you've got so many students, and also lots of families.*" While the sense of unity between different groups of residents may be different between the neighbourhoods, less defined borders seem to relate to a more open space that is home to more diverse communities and cultures.

13.3 Local history

Discussions about the community, the area, and how the built environment has changed over time, necessitate the recognition of the importance of local history in a particular space, and in our study areas, a strong contrast was observed.

13.3.1 "All residential"

While Heaton has always been residential after the constructions of the streets, then the northernmost edge of the city, massive changes have taken place in Shieldfield, with the transition from rural to industrial to residential land building a rich local history.

"It's all residential now but this was all very industrial, like the Quayside and the Ouseburn, all factories and everything was about water access, so the factories, the mills, and poor tenements sprung up around these sites, down in these valleys by the Ouseburn and the Tyne. So the rich built their villas and houses further up the hills, a bit further away from all the activity, in Shieldfield, until John Dobson built nicer houses in Jesmond and they all moved there."

Older parts of the area have been lost however, and the remaining pre-1900s sites that are known to a few residents are seen as a novelty, almost a secret. "*Chester Street, Harrison Place, and Gladstone Terrace are the oldest streets still standing, they're as old as the 1800s. There are even the original cobbles still there, all of this place was cobbled streets but they've been tarmacked over now, you can find those two spots though.*

These were all back-to-backs, but then they found sinkholes around the land that emerged, and this led to a lot of demolition of these back-to-backs, they called them slums, and rebuilt them in the 60s, that's the Shieldfield Centre and the towers…" (Shieldfield 5)

"The stuff they build here wasn't as grand as the Byker Wall but those were similar houses, and they were all demolished, so many streets" (Shieldfield 6)

"... but while they were pulling down these houses, the politicians and planners all became caught up in corruption and scandals, and they were put in prison. But they had plans to tear down Gladstone as well, all the old streets, and this is the only reason they're still standing." (Shieldfield 5)

Historical data on specific streets is available in various sources in the public record, but awareness of local historical data is much more diffuse, at house level, in Heaton.

Heaton 3 knew the street well: *"we looked into the history of some of the previous occupants, I think we've been in longer than anyone else. The first was a guy called Ernie, and he was a signalman on the railway, and he lived here for quite some time. We looked at the Kelly's Directory, you can see who lived in your house. This street in the 20s and 30s, it wasn't quite white-collar work, was like midwives and maybe GPs, like business people wasn't there?"*

Similarly, Heaton 1 when asked about a historical photograph they had of their house, said *"Yeah, my friend Mandy found that at Tynemouth Station. 1907. It's nice isn't it, we still have the original old railings.*

This is the centre of the street, because the stonemason's mark is on the wall outside ... and we're the posh houses, because we have original stone attics, the original stairs well, whereas everybody else who's got an attic has had it converted. And we had a back kitchen with a butler's pantry. So these houses, I think, were doctor's houses and other houses were built for other professions that weren't quite as wealthy, but it was that sort of mixed housing. And I've got all the deeds from the house that tells you who lived here. There was a really interesting article about the massive Tudor looking house on Heaton Park Road at the traffic light, that was the photographers house, he was an innovative photographer doing a particular type of print back in the 1800s, he had that house built for him."

13.3.2 "The clues are getting lost"

Heaton 4 saw local history as a connection to a culture that has been forgotten. *"It's like the Ouseburn, and I love the Ouseburn, but that's gentrification there, a lot of history has been lost and culture has been lost, there's very little acknowledgement of the industrial history, the factories and the pits. Everything here was for the pits, the houses were built for the pit*

There are the circular plaques, those are important, but it's really more arts funding that we need to memorialise and remember these things. I have a friend who did a play about the Corn Laws, when people couldn't get the flour to make bread, to tell that story, make it tangible, it was important stuff but no-one knows about it, and local history is so important, it informs the future, everything is connected.

We aren't doing enough to hold on to that culture, there are such diverse people that come and share their music, their food, their culture, and we could be swapping Geordie songs and Geordie history with them."

Heaton 1 argued that the area had a strong connection to the history and that it was presented in an accessible form. "*I think there's a strong sense of history, I think there's quite a strong historical around here sort of pit disasters and, the History Society, and Chillingham Road Primary School has a museum in it. They can arrange for you to go and see it and see the archives. It's a little landing on the ground floor where there's pictures displays that they've got a massive archive of the school because it's the oldest primary school in the city. And it has the list of those who the young men who have fallen in the war that went to Chillingham Road, and stuff there by the kids. You know more, much more contemporary, but it's very lovely."*

Heaton 5 however, when asked if local history had been made aware to them, having recently moved to the area, said "*No, I don't think so, no, I wouldn't even know where to look for it. Actually I do, well now I do suppose that's one answer to the question, "what's missing?" I do I know, it's a library that would have some local history information, but we've never actually even entered the library on that road, Shields Road (Byker), it doesn't seem very appealing or very attractive, it even seems a bit intimidating."*

In Shieldfield, the focus on local history is linked to the more active assertion of a resident identity in recent years after the construction of PBSA.

Shieldfield 7, when asked about awareness of local history, said "*It's getting more, I think in the last, last little while, I think in the light of the changes, people have sort of made more of an effort. Yeah, there's more awareness of it of it now, especially connecting things up with the Ouseburn."*

For Shieldfield 2, this local history is linked to attention, to appreciation, and the dismissal of it is just another way that the space is ignored. "*The community doesn't know anything about the local history, no-one knows even where to find out any local history, people don't even know where Shieldfield is, local people, you can say "Christchurch, behind the university", but if you say "the stadium", even to people at Hotspur, they think you mean St. James'. There is no interest in the local history, without any boards or information signs, you have to really dig to find it, but younger people just use their phones and only know what is on Wikipedia. It's good we have photos now and can record these places, we have evidence for what they looked like beforehand, but in the Forum Café you can look at these photos and you can't even recognise where they are."*

Shieldfield 5 echoed this lost attention, noting missed opportunities to appreciate the area. "*The historic fort, and a house that King Charles stayed in during the civil war, were at Christchurch,*

and they survived until the 60s but T. Dan Smith took them down – they would have been Grade I listed, would have supported tourism and local history projects, but there is no memory of them, no memorialisation other than a little plaque and one of the high-rises being named King Charles Tower."

Shieldfield 1 noted the connection between loss of buildings and loss of historical awareness:

I think it's getting weaker, losing some evidence of history, like this area was workers houses, there were factories, also down in the Ouseburn, but there is no evidence, no clues to this history. To learn about it, it's not easy to understand, because terrace houses are a very classical thing for an English neighbourhood, so sometimes you may not understand what the actual history is. You can have some guesses, about the buildings, but especially as they start to lose these local shops, I think they were the big clues. Yeah, all of the neighbourhoods are changing, so I think these connections between the clues are getting lost.

Look at this history, you know, you may know there was Pandon Dene, and we don't know about it, there's a highway there now, I didn't know about it until this collaboration with Dwellbeing. Just like the City Stadium was part of the Ouseburn, after being a landfill site it was used for some famous race. Until your search, you don't know about it, I didn't know until I researched about. Except this old housing stock, we don't have anything left, to connect us to history.

Heaton 10 saw great value in local history, and agreed that it ties a community to the area – "*if you're able to tell the story of what was, and describe it through those episodes of change, that helps communities to identify what the epicentre of situation is, but also through that centre, see what the things of greatest value to a community are. I think that helps the community to ground itself in the face of potential uncertainty, but also hopefully gives it a stronger voice as changes are made.*"

13.3.3 Analysis

A strong theme that emerges here is local pride, and the extent to which the stories that a community is built on can be celebrated and remembered. Heaton 4 saw this aspect of culture as underappreciated, one lacking from the public sphere, and while this can be said to be true for both neighbourhoods, there is a clear disparity between them nonetheless. Multiple participants had, framed, historical photographs of their street or their area, very recognisably their area, but as Shieldfield 2 notes, the photographs exhibited in Shieldfield's Forum Café are much harder to identify.

Related to identification, a striking aspect about discussions with older residents is the extent to which Shieldfield was originally much more intimately connected to the Ouseburn. The story of the Ouseburn is a separate one, but while now it is perceived as a gentrified and expensive waterfront area, "*25 years ago… it wouldn't have been seen as a neighbourhood. (Heaton 10)*".

Originally an intensely industrial tributary to the Tyne, the Ouseburn valley, over time, has become more divided from Shieldfield and Heaton, with later developments like the construction of the housing blocks in the 1960s, the infilling of the landfill site into the City Stadium, and the covering of Pandon Dene, the river referenced by Shieldfield 1, serving to separate these areas. Changes on this scale are significant, and have important implications for the development of the current borders of neighbourhoods today, and the identities within them – for locals born in Shieldfield, early memories of a time before such borders will be much harder to connect to a topographically different present. Mansour et al. (2023) note that "the physical and cultural remnants of a city's past, such as its architecture and monuments, play a significant role in shaping its collective memory and, therefore, its identity… how a city's inhabitants remember and interpret past events and experiences contributes to forming urban identity."

Heaton 1 perceives a strong sense that the local history is exhibited, but Heaton 5 on the other hand has no familiarity with this – they have never been told about it, and have not discovered it themselves. What barriers are there to accessing sources of local history that residents can take for granted? As Shieldfield 2 notes, the simple act of possessing historical photographs does not necessarily lead to the celebration and memorialisation of local spaces and history, and Shieldfield 1 talks about "*clues*", hidden indications of the past.

A recent national history campaign in the UK by Historic England calls for nominations of local historical figures and spaces, asking people to suggest local individuals connected to a building, to receive a memorialisation plaque. One of the conditions is that the individual must have been dead for at least 20 years, and the building must still be intact – the paradox lies in the fact that the areas that would most benefit from the memorialisation of local history are those that have undergone intense demolition and loss of those spaces, itself excluding them from meeting the requirements. (Murugesu 2024) Heaton 7 noted "*I like a house with a bit of history*", but the comparison of the impact of living in older, Victorian housing stock, with living in more recent housing estates, on resident psychology, has implications for this study and future research.

There is a perception of a lack of investment in this aspect of community life – local education is linked strongly to *place attachment* and feeling connected to one's area on the level of identity.

Heaton 10 notes an important aspect of life in Shieldfield before the PBSA was built, one that contrasts with the more nostalgic narrative held by residents. *"All the pubs and the social clubs, even though people tell that story that they were booming and the whole neighbourhood was there, they were all dying on their arses. So again, that sense of local memory. And you will*

find that from people who feel settled, that they would describe a history. And when you ask "when was that?" it's always just beyond their actual memory. Yeah. I would question that history. I think they missed a chapter or two.

Yeah, how much Shieldfield was a utopia of joy? Victim Support used to be based here, I used to volunteer for them, so with some of those towers there, here and down in Battle Hill, we would brief volunteers to be quite quick moving from the outside in, just because of the hypodermic needle drops. It's not like what the community was perfect."

The importance of this form of research into perceptions of local history comes not from a place of accurate record-collection, but in understanding the extent to which people feel confident in relating to their area. A sense of nostalgia can represent a deference to the past in the light of unfavourable current conditions. To miss a social club and to idealise that memory can represent a deep desire for more socialisation, regardless of the success of that specific club.

13.4 Students and "the University"

Both neighbourhoods have high numbers of students, and for many residents, this has a significant impact on their perceptions of the area and their conception of sense of place. While in Heaton this takes the form of shared houses, HMOs, rented to students without a distinction in architectural form or frontage, in Shieldfield the majority of students live in PBSA managed by private developers, for use by both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. For the residents interviewed, no distinction between these institutions was used, both were referred to as "the University".

13.4.1 "Emotional investment"

There is a widespread understanding that students have very few ties to the social environment around them, perceived as a lack of commitment to the neighbourhood itself.

Shieldfield 7 was forgiving of this – "*It's a shame students don't get involved in what's happening in community, but if you are only here for a few months, you're getting to know yourself and the people you live with. It's hard to get involved in some community initiatives. I don't think people complain just because they're students, it's just because there are suddenly people around that can be a little bit noisy, but not usually for long, but again, that's not because they're students. If we've got a group of 10 people walking home after they've been to the pub or a club, and it's 2:00 in the morning it's almost inevitable that there will be noise."*

Heaton 5 also did not perceive an issue with student populations – "*No not really, it seems quite quiet, quite calm, they go by on their e-scooters along the street below our house, on the uneven pavement but other than that we've had no problems."*

Heaton 10, having been a student in Heaton some years ago, understood the mindset of both residents and students – "*It depends I think what you expect, what you transmit in terms of expectations, friendliness, [in our house] we're fairly chilled and when we moved in, we embraced the student lifestyle also.*"

Shieldfield 2 empathised with students wishing to leave the area, citing expensive living conditions in the PBSA and more affordable possibilities in shared HMO homes. "*Young people want to leave Shieldfield, they don't really stay, I guess even with the student loan, the accommodations are too expensive – in Heaton you get many people all sharing a house, if you have a boyfriend or girlfriend then you can get more people in a bed, and you can share the rent between all of them, but in Shieldfield the accommodations are all one bed and I think you can't have more people in the room.*"

Heaton 2 also perceived the student population as being primarily concerned with living standards, but expected them to prefer to live in PBSA – "*Because I think one of the things probably affects me is the custom built student accommodation because I think people students may think, you know, why am I going to live like next door to each other? They think, why live in a big old terraced house when you can go to a lovely flat with broadband in and, you know, I think that's influenced people. They're small places, but we saw one and it had a very nice kitchen, like shared kitchen between six flats. Not like the old halls of residence, I mean I never went to university but my friends did.*"

For Heaton 3, it was preferable to limit the number of students living on a street – "*Yeah, because I know some people when they put the house up for sale, they choose not to sell to student developers or you know, anybody who's making an HMO, and you know we would do that.*" When asked why, they cited several extreme cases of anti-social behaviour: "*In large part they're absolutely fine. But we had that time, that lot of they went and smashed all the flowerpots, they were just out of control, very anti-social, and another time I had to get in touch with the landlord for next door because there was a set of students there and hadn't put the bin bags out all term, and the entire yard was just full. Some of them were burst open, obviously making problems for us and them down at #10. They just dumped them. They just had this almighty pile of rubbish and all the rubbish bags out. And I complained the landlord and he had got a skip, and sent them the charge for the skip.*"

Heaton 3 went on to note that the communal WhatsApp group for their street had allowed them to combat the antisocial behaviour of local students – "*I think our problem with students peaked quite some time ago. We've been really lucky in that sense, it was never horrendous, but it is over. It peaked about 15 years ago. I think the thing is now is like, somebody was having a party on a Tuesday night until 2:00 in the morning. And I think they left in no uncertain terms*

that they're not going to again. Because you know, before if it happened once, you're just an individual, but now we've got the group and, you know, you've got people behind you." Lack of commitment, along with high numbers of students, was a real concern for them – *"there's just so many, and yeah, they didn't have any emotional investment."*

Heaton 4 agreed that students had very little commitment to the space around them – "*Not that I have any problem with students, you know both my children have been to university, but generally they don't really get involved in the community, I've never met a student that would be interested in Dwellbeing, in volunteering, they tend to be very hedonistic, thinking about themselves.*"

The primary issues were noise and litter: "*I know that's just my personal opinion, my experience, but every time new students move in on the street, I always introduce myself, go over and say hello, make them feel welcome, be a good neighbour. I wanted to let them know that sometimes I would also make noise, so it's okay to be loud every now and then, but whenever I've made noise, they make so much more that it's too loud for them to hear me. I have to think a lot about whether I want to say something.*

So in that respect the area has changed a lot, because they built all these purpose-built places for the student accommodation, and they also started eating into social housing stock, so that pushes people out of the area. When they move out, the rubbish they leave, useable stuff that isn't taken by the university, stuff other students or other people could use, bins with a load of duvets in, but then a pot of mouldy yoghurt thrown on top, it's such a simple basic thing about landfill, and it's just an act of laziness, like we're not bothered, instead of caring about their area." Another participant discussing the same issue suggested that this littering could be the work of landlords rather than the students themselves, but the general assumption by residents is that this is the work of students that do not care about their surroundings.

Shieldfield 7 connected this lack of commitment to a reputation perpetuated by the local universities. "*There have been quite a lot of studies run by university students, but about what I'm going to say now, I don't blame the students, I think it's rather lazy professors, that say "oh, let's go and do another study in Shieldfield because it's just on the doorstep" and then, you know, they can tick the box and say that's what they've done, but then we get nothing back from it. It doesn't take very long to fill in most of the surveys, but you sort of think, "oh, here's another survey asking the same questions again, and OK, it's helped you get a good grade - a few others haven't been like that, but too many of them have had no door knocking just another thing came through the letterbox, with no effort to introduce themselves."*

And I think that a lot of us found that a bit tiresome. Oh, very basic questions, like "How long have you lived here for? Have you noticed any changes?" And there was so much tick boxes,

there wasn't an invitation to engage in debate. Just really a way for the students to learn how to how to do a simple questionnaire. What's in that for us?"

13.4.2 "Two distinct areas"

There is an overwhelming sense of segregation between the student populations and the residents, with a select few attempts to integrate these isolated groups.

Crucially, the growing dominance of the PBSA and the student population, without the input of the local residents, was the catalyst for local community projects in Shieldfield, according to Shieldfield 7 – *"I think students being here has had a more positive effect - without the students coming here, and having something for people to live with, something to react against, they probably wouldn't have felt the need of a collective voice and things like this, [Dwellbeing] probably wouldn't be here."*

For Shieldfield 8, a small business owner, all customers were welcome, but greater numbers of student customers were of little consolation given the wider changes in the area – *"There's a lot of student footfall here, that new bridge at the back of Northumbria Uni is a big part of that. So in that way investment in student around here has some benefits, it's this very limited benefit to the flattening of the community hubs and other buildings around for student accommodation here but yeah, there's footfall, and we accommodate all the communities."*

But this sense of conflict, of two separate communities within Shieldfield, is tangible – *"I see two distinct areas, neighbourhoods, between the residential and the student accommodations. We can't even count the accommodation as a residential area, in terms of the lifestyle or the peoples, the residence length, it's not the same. Students are just temporary residency or just maybe leaving after one or two years. (Shieldfield 1)"*

Figure 23 Portland Green, a student "village". Note the (absence of) decoration and frontage. (Author, 2024)

This sense of segregation was extended to the mindset of the students – Shieldfield 1 went on to say *"I think some of these students also feel like that. In terms of the buildings, I think there's a very big difference, there's a big clash in the built environment. (Fig. 23) I'm not sure if it can be decreased with the introduction of like social relationship between the residents and the students, to build some connection with the area, but they will leave eventually, so yeah, I'm not sure."* Shieldfield 10 felt that *"They made Shieldfield a student place, and now we are stuck living between each other, but they just come for a moment then leave, they don't see Shieldfield as a home, they don't see the beauty"*

In Heaton, street-level attempts to integrate the two groups can be successful – despite the anti-social behaviour noted in the past, Heaton 3 said *"I think the with the community garden I think it's encouraged people, we've had some of the student households asking to borrow hedge clippers and stuff."*

Shieldfield 2 recognised that many young people wish to leave the neighbourhood, but hoped to encourage them to say – *"There are always more and more activities starting with Dwellbeing, but we should do more for young people to socialise, maybe camping or music, you could have a concert there on Shieldfield Green, or markets like there just was in the Ouseburn, people paid a lot of money just to get a stall there. The area is full of students, but they still make art that they could sell, they could come and play music or sell their products."* The aim of these proposals was to bring students out of a more segregated environment and show them what the real neighbourhood is like – *"I think students take a community for granted, they don't realise what has gone into making a location into a nice place, all the work behind a community."*

13.4.3 "They just kept building more"

Alongside the sense of segregation, the threat perceived by Shieldfield 7, regarding an issue that the residents could unite over, is one shared among residents, and as such the University is understood as an expanding force that appears to dominate the built environment.

Heaton 6 saw the universities as a fairly opaque institution determined to build – *"I mean the university itself, Northumbria, has a tendency to just demolish and build, I was there the other night. I went to town and they've knocked down some huge blocks, I've no idea what they were. Because you know all the stuff that Newcastle University has built over off the West Road, near Saint James. There's that whole. And it's like they've got half a dozen different architects to design a building, because they're all different. They're all fairly ugly, and they obviously have lots of money. But I don't know what was there beforehand and what they knocked down to fill*

those things. And the People's Kitchen [a homelessness charity] is right there in the middle, yeah, they must be desperate to get their hands on that."

Shieldfield 5 noted that *"the old Warner Bros. cinema in Shieldfield was really popular, but the uni must have made them an offer they couldn't refuse, because they tore it down and now it's the big campus building."* The building in question uses an artistic design with layered cylindrical metal beams covering the façade – *"one of my friends in Vale House [a nearby high-rise] says it can't be any good because they left the scaffolding on."*

The dominance of the PBSA is the most evident form of expansion perceived by the residents – "*when the student housing projects began, it was the re-use of some buildings, and that made sense, to repurpose some abandoned buildings, but one after the other, they just kept building more, until people were surrounded, you could see into their bedrooms, the little view you had turned into just housing blocks. (Shieldfield 3)*"

For Shieldfield 5, the continued investment in PBSA without regard for quality or usage, was the most tangible expansion of the university into Shieldfield, apparently defying logic. "*Land was bought from overseas, offshore money, and all they built were cheap blocks that could easily come down if they had to. There were so many students that they had to change the ward boundaries to accommodate them all, and even still most of the student blocks weren't filled, they just moved people to the fronts to make them seem more inhabited, but they still kept building more."*

Shieldfield 7 saw the dissatisfaction with investment in Shieldfield, coupled with heavy investment in PBSA, as the source of resentment towards the university. *"People blame the students for the pubs going with they're gone, but most of them had gone before students, because I think people have always sort of gravitated towards town or towards the Ouseburn. But I think it's a bit of a shame what hasn't come with the influx of students, it really hasn't brought any income to the area."*

13.4.4 Analysis

The lack of distinction between which university is being referred to further extends to the PBSA – "the blocks" are referred to as an undifferentiated mass of accommodation. There are a number of different property developers involved in these different PBSA projects, and while the architectural forms are similar, there is a level of visual differentiation nonetheless, but this does not translate into any sense of placemaking or identification for external residents with little familiarity with the inner workings.

There is a sustained perception that the actions of the universities in expanding and building are profit-seeking, to the detriment of the area. Shieldfield 6 said that "*building the student accommodations was people just thinking about land and money, not about people - the*

students are not even treated very well in these buildings." The focus is on economic development at the expense of human relationships, choices made not for the good of the space but for extractive economics. When asked about predictions for any future construction, Shieldfield 2 said "*it would be student accommodation, definitely, it's the most profitable for the council. But it doesn't give anything back to the community, maybe it does something for local businesses but students are not so caring, they wouldn't offer to do the shopping for a neighbour*"

Blame is shared among the developers, the universities, and the students themselves, but the students are seen as the most likely to "convert", to find some connection to the territory and engage with the space and the locals. The buildings however, discussed below, are intrusive and almost confrontational, and when coupled with the exploitative atmosphere developed through repetitive and performative research exercises, the feeling of Shieldfield residents as powerless in the face of the universities and developers is clear.

The case is different in Heaton, which lacks PBSA and in which the student population is more integrated into the social fabric, even if only by virtue of living next door to longer-term residents without a concierge service dividing them from the neighbourhood itself. For residents of Heaton, noise and litter are valid concerns, but there seems to have been a noticeable decline in the intensity of this in 2009, the same time that many of the PBSA blocks were being constructed across the border in Shieldfield. When Heaton 3 was asked about the effects of this, they said "*Shieldfield always seemed to have been more of a little community, on like a small level, a tight-knit community. I don't think, from my mind, I don't think that it's been affected by students quite so much.*"

13.5 Developers and the Council

Closely tied together in the perspectives of the participants were the conceptions of property developers, and the local city council. The choices made by these groups, regardless of the perspectives of the residents, have been intensely influential, and in some cases catastrophic – under economic pressure following years of austerity, the council's actions, inscrutable for the majority of the respondents, have been the source of resentment.

Figure 24 Private property in Heaton (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

13.5.1 "It's like it's going backwards"

Lack of investment in public services was one of the most pressing aspects of the participants when asked about their neighbourhood. "*God knows how they keeping anything other than what is statutory*" said Heaton 10, referring to the optional and mandatory division of tasks set to local councils.

Heaton 4 saw the decline of local libraries as a serious issue for local culture, a distressing loss. *"There at the library in Byker, they closed that down and replaced it with the gym, but that had already been there, they just downsized the library and moved it across the road. I don't know what happens upstairs now but at the new library, the choice of books now is pretty narrow. I know you can order books and you can get them in, but then after they closed the Heaton one, you're just left with the City Library, and again, you were never told about this stuff. You have to ask, why don't they care?"(Fig. 24)*

In Shieldfield, with a greater number of social housing than Heaton, the effects of limited public spending is felt intimately – *"In one of the tower blocks, the lift has been out for months now, to feel very much like a prison if you can't get down the stairs, yeah. When I first came here, all the blocks had their own sort of full-time concierge on site. The Council is cost cutting"* (Fig. 25)

Figure 25 Housing at the western edge of Shieldfield (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

This was echoed by Shieldfield 9, who lived in Stoddart House. "*Thousands of pounds have gone into those three towers, but there's not been a penny paid here – the concierge service is always broken, and people get locked out in the rain for hours without their fobs working, you're paying more money on top of rent for a system that isn't there.*" Reports of damp, noise, and contracted maintenance companies that do not finish the job, are all attributed to poor management by the Council. *"It's not the Shieldfield you saw when I moved here."*

For homeowners in Heaton, despite notable positivity regarding the economic development of the area and the small businesses, "*some things have gone though, pharmacies have gone now that Boots closed its stores around here, I think that's the most worrying. It's getting ready bad – there is one on Chillingham Road, and there's one on the corner at Shields Road, but there used to be a lot more in Heaton.*" (Heaton 3) Healthcare and dentistry was also mentioned by Heaton 4, "*in this place it's so hard to find a dentists that will take NHS patients now, it's like it's going backwards.*"

Other forms of privatisation, such as the transfer of the management of the local parks to a private corporation, were upsetting to locals – Heaton 6 noted that "*it was a shame about the library going, and I'm not happy with the way the parks and allotments have managed, I understand why it happened, but I don't think it's working particularly well. Urban Green are now in charge of parks and the allotments, and what they seem to be doing is focusing on ways to try and make money. So they locked up the tennis courts, for example, and you have to book now - the tennis courts to me, we've already paid for those tennis courts, with our taxes. I don't think that's great for the community because that stops all kinds of spontaneous play activity for children.*"

They went on to express a certain confusion at the disparity in public services across neighbourhood borders – *"Road repairs, we're not doing too badly in Heaton. And I mean, that's something else that I'm aware of across the city, it does depend where you live, it's better service in some parts. What drives that? I'm not sure.*"

13.5.2 "It just didn't have any logic"

This confusion is part of a much wider atmosphere of exclusion and obscurity regarding Council decisions and municipal operations. Many respondents argued that these decisions and actions were illogical, confusing, senseless.

Shielfield 8 expressed this uncertainty in terms of the future of the neighbourhood - *"I really don't know what's happening in the Council in the background. Yeah, who knows what they think. Are they thinking let's flatten Shieldfield and start again, or part of Shieldfield and sell the land? I have no idea what's behind those doors in the council. No idea. So whether they see this as a positive community and valuable as it is, and it just needs some investment to make it better, I would hope so, I would hope so because it had the community ripped out, and locked into flats.*"

Changes to the built environment, particularly regarding vacant plots, seemed to have little sense for Shieldfield 5 *"at the corner of Newbridge and Clarence, there was a beautiful Victorian villa but it is now overgrown derelict land, maybe it was being kept vacant for a bit for the tax breaks, but it makes no sense to me"*

A Lidl has been proposed to be built on a space at the border of Shieldfield, but the land has been left empty for 5 years – regardless of potential tax breaks, Shieldfield 4 noted that *"it could have been built five times over in that time"*. The proposal includes housing on top of the store, a source of confusion for residents, and the preparation of the site, involving the felling of a number of blooming cherry trees, was a painful experience for people with little understanding of the process, "*it just didn't have any logic.*"

Shieldfield 1 recognised the need for local initiatives to clarify these processes – "*I think sometimes Dwellbeing plays an important role on that, to make a summary of the system in the UK, make it clear for everyone else, especially for non-native speakers.*" They described the system of scheduled demolition and construction works as an intrusive process with a confusing set of steps necessary to learn more – "*suddenly some construction company comes in, builds all the fences and start to do something and sometimes leaves it, you don't know what's happening. You need to look at the website, and it's not a clear website. You need to find the letter of about the decision, from the Council members, trying to find that document, if that will happen.*" Heaton 6 saw the planning system as opportunist and short-termist, not thought through or properly considered. "*Builders and planners just do what they can get away with in the end. I don't know. It doesn't really make sense.*"

13.5.3 "A power dynamic"

What underlies both the dissatisfaction with cuts to public services and the perceptions of obscurity, lack of communication and lack of transparency, is a highly unequal power dynamic that many residents feel is unproductive.

Shielfield 8 had to deal with the council quite extensively to gain access to a vacant property. "*So when we came here, this was derelict for years, I think for over 10 years. And we couldn't get the Council to let us buy or use it, they're the property owner. They kept saying "someone's going to move in, so-and-so's made an offer", so we kept asking and eventually they said "yeah go on." So I don't know if that was just because they didn't believe that we could actually do it, or what, but that's repeatedly my experience of the Council, it's quite challenging to get engagement, on getting access to vacant property, not just for this one.*"

Revival of vacant and derelict properties was of central importance, and reluctance from the Council to engage with that was seen as exploitative. "*Councils and private landlords too, they can be quite unpleasant, very, actually. And they can threaten to shut us down, close the property, to just sit on it for 30 years until the land values go up, cash in, meanwhile, it's totally undermining the community by being a shuttered premises, doing nothing for those people.*"

They went on to say: "*You know, we've looked at other property on this row of shops too, and didn't manage to get beyond the inquiry to the Council. They gave it to a vape shop instead. Can't quite believe they did that. We've got relationships with lots of different parts of the council, and some of them are absolutely great. But sometimes there can be a bit of a power dynamic going on, and we get threatened, properly threatened. There's no need for that. Just be professional and be consistent and be truthful. That would be a good start.*"

Shieldfield 1 saw a tangible conflict between vulnerable communities and developers, with radically different perceptions of the space, with Shieldfield as the battleground for this tension.

Shieldfield "*gets very much attention by the developers, probably they will try to use every opportunity they can have, in terms of, you know, finding land and developing a new project, and we saw a similar example in the Ouseburn - now people are trying to fight to put a limit on new houses there. So it's a very classical thing, it's not a special thing to Britain, but a very global fashion, I think it's just the area is so close to centre, so it's very vulnerable. Local people having low income, immigrants, asylum seekers, many families with many children. And most of them don't know how to protect their rights.*"

Developers and their opportunism are seen as a real threat, initiating large development processes that are hard to stop. They continued: "*Of course [more visibility] is great, but the issue is finding balance, I want it to be a good thing for the neighbourhood, but sometimes this visibility can be used by developers, it can trigger new building, not good ones, Especially like the Ouseburn, it was a business area, but then lots of artists' studios were introduced, making the area very visible, it's hard to stop that visibility. It's very challenging, after a while the people's power is not enough to stop it or protect it, it's really hard to stop it, once the council makes a decision. There was the development in the Ouseburn, to build a new tower, and the whole city came together to say don't do that, not there. Then they said that they will revise it, but I think they will just take off a few floors, they won't stop it completely.*" This sense of the Ouseburn as an example to learn from, whose community organisation was not able to limit gentrification. "*I'm not sure about the Council's perspective on accepting community organisations, but in the Ouseburn, the Ouseburn Trust has a strong relationship, it's older than Dwellbeing, even just by entering their website you can learn a lot of things about the history, about the events. But I think also they lost their power on the changes in the area after the first housing project started.*"

Heaton 10 saw issues in the fundamental ways that local government perceived communities – "*particularly if we're dealing with change, we need to ask how much the people running those processes, whether they have the skills to understand how communities change, but also whether they've got the foresight glasses, and start to say "we either deal with this now, or create community tensions in the future.*"

With regards to the recent announcements about road closures, they noted that "*I went to the consultation, and yeah, that was really heartening to see, lots of people holding really strong opinions, but being really kind to each other and really trying to understand differences. But it all shows me essentiality like how the Council work managing the process is just a failure to see that conflict is inevitable, and that it's just the energy for change. It's how you manage the energy that makes the difference, I could see opportunity. I would see those potentially contentious moves as being a real opportunity to develop greater understanding. Because if we*

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do that, I think you gain a great sense of unity in a place that understands it has different needs. Those people that have different needs because of a shared sense of locality."

They saw the approach of the municipality towards businesses as overlooking the importance of spaces, even private spaces, that have become central to residents' lives in a neighbourhood. "*A lot of change is motivated, I think around here, by places seen by the Council as private businesses. There's a blurred line, I don't think these things help to be viewed by sector. If you look at the places that have been speaking out about LGBT rights and trying to really pilot what that looks like in physical spaces, then if you look at people at the Cumberland and the Coal Yard (local pubs), that probably do as much as anybody from the community sector. And I don't see them as being fundamentally different. And again if you look then at the enterprise grants that are going around, they're all about new business, not about how we support foundational businesses here. But how do you write the strategy that truly makes that?"*

Shieldfield 8 had a similar approach to rethinking the approach of the Council towards business assets - "*Community asset transfer should be a big part of this, the ownership - we've asked to buy this property and the council keeps saying no, but I think by letting the community own the assets, I think we could own this whole street, why not? We've invested £200,000 into this community, more than the council ever has. Communities can lead and make things a lot better, we should be transferring ownership."*

The extent to which a community has the right to make changes in their area is contested – a group of residents in Heaton recently set up a website with detailed information on the planning system and the local street design to argue for more road closures – Heaton 10 noted that "*I worry about fairness. Because I would argue if the process was designed better, it wouldn't be so necessary for individuals to have to set up these initiatives, use that many resource - just to engage in those discussions, everybody's time is so limited and so finite."*

In thinking towards the future, Shieldfield 8 agreed, pointing out that "*it shouldn't be just the Council anyway. It shouldn't be that sort of power balance, rather than the people being the ones who has it done to them all time, it needs to be a different approach. I live in hope for the officers in the Council more sympathetic to the community perspective."*

Heaton 7 saw the dependence on election cycles and funding as a limit to the efficiency of top-down approaches. "*Instead of this slash and burn approach to starting everything from scratch, we need to be investing in communities, in proper bottom-up approaches, but that means planning on 20, 30 year timelines, long term investment in community building, not just 2-3 year projects to last until the next election cycle."* They argued that communities should have the right to "*autonomy without justification*".

Heaton 10 saw the power dynamic as being ingrained into the perspective of the individuals in the council, but with the hope that a more open attitude could be developed. "*So with that in mind, I also think it's a failure of imagination, and with all local governments I've been to and worked with, there was a feeling that they would describe it as "their place". And I would strongly argue, to people in local government, they are the visitors in other people's places, and they should act as such, so we should to remember to wipe our shoes at the door and offer to wash the pots. Saying we are the Council, this is our turf, is the wrong attitude.*"

13.5.4 Analysis

These processes are intimately linked with the sense of place – a perception of a much more powerful entity, with the capacity to undertake enormous changes in ones neighbourhood without explanation or justification, gives a sense of insecurity that will be discussed more fully below. The vulnerability of local groups or of local individuals, often helpless in the face of the loss of public services, or excluded from conversations about space, is tangible, and an indicator of the lack of trust that residents have in their municipal bodies. The lack of transparency in all these perceptions of the council is reflected in the confusion of the residents, the guesses to try to understand and anticipate future behaviour. Hope for the future is in recognising the assets that are most important to a community, not to a municipality – profit-seeking construction and demolition behaviour from the Universities is ultimately permitted by the Council, and when these profits do not manifest themselves in benefits for the local people, such dissatisfaction is natural. Shieldfield 8 and Heaton 10 both have had extensive dealings with local government, and offered the most proposals for reforming the system to better reflect the lifestyles and needs of the local area. Community ownership, and a recognition of the importance of local valuations of land and space, will be central to the following sections of this study, offering the most potential for meeting the needs of the residents themselves.

13.6 Urban Transformation, Construction, Demolition

The manifestation of the power dynamics seen from the Universities, the Council and the developers, in the built environment, is through demolition and construction, and it is here that we see the impact of such changes on the sense of place and ontological security of the residents.

13.6.1 "Places for people to meet"

In discussions of demolitions, closures, and urban changes within the lifetimes of the respondents, one noticeable theme was the continued loss of social spaces and meeting places. In Heaton, this took the form of the Victoria Library, which was closed and bough by a private dentist.

Heaton 6 felt the loss badly, "*Why that library? I don't know. But it was a lovely building, and it was a multipurpose building, there was the library and then there was also sort of community room…*" and Heaton 2 remembered it fondly, "*there was the old library, occasionally we'd go through and they actually use part of it as the polling booth, so we voted there a couple of times.*"

Heaton 4 protested against the closure – "*we got the kids out and they painted a sheet against it. And, you know, we used to love going there, after school. And also there was a big space that you could hire, we had some meeting there as the Witches of Heaton, I think the Romanians too, there was a big Romanian community, then social services took it over, and I don't know what it is now…*"

Demolition was not publicly debated, but the change of use was seen as an opportunity for the area "*Yeah, it's a shame because there was actually discussions on turning into a restaurant. (Heaton 3)*" Heaton 6 explained the process bitterly - "*They put the building up for sale by auction, and a lot of people were chattering about a community buyout. You could turn it into, you know so many things. And I think we were horrified about how much they sold it for. And I can't remember now what the sum was, but it was the kind of sum of money where you thought, you know, half a dozen people could have got together and put that money together.*"

When Heaton 3 talked about local history, they mentioned that Shieldfield was "*a really, really popular place. Everybody wanted a council house there because of the proximity to town, there was 3 bars and a social club*". Shieldfield 7 explained the loss of this social club as a betrayal by the Council – "*The social club, that was a bit of a grievance. And when there was a bit of discussion about what was going to happen here in terms of building, the bargain was made that, yeah, you can have the student block it so long as you keep the club and they agreed to that. And of course it didn't happen, they pulled it down.*" The space is now used for student accommodation.

When asked what spaces Shieldfield 7 would like to see in their area, they immediately replied with "*More places for people to meet. Like that's difficult because I say that more places for people to meet and there were, OK, there were pubs but still they were some places where people could go.*"

They caveated this point by recognising the limits of the space to meet some of the dreams of other residents - "*It's only a small area, people there should have a library, well the library is 10 minutes away. How many communities this size have their own libraries or their own swimming pools? Not many. We even have our own bakery and two supermarkets, even though they're the most expensive supermarkets there are, but no. In terms of buildings, I don't think so. I don't think I wish there was a Buddhist temple or a beautiful building to bring the tourists.*"

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13.6.2 "To brighten it up a bit"

Within the proposed ideas for reviving the spaces around the areas, there are two main themes – re-use of empty structures, and the greening of urban space.

When discussing vacancies in the PBSA, Heaton 6 said "*I would love to get some kind of squatting group in the city because as I move around the city, I see empty buildings and I think there are so many people who would be very happy to move there and do something.*"

Shieldfield 2 also preferred re-use of existing buildings over fresh construction and demolition – "*There are empty office buildings near these streets, they have been abandoned for a few years, but why can't they turn those into student accommodations? They would be suited to it, I don't understand why they always focus on new constructions.*"

Shieldfield 7 saw an oversupply of students in the area, and hoped to bring some more social value to the space through adapting the tenure system of the PBSA – "*I just sense that there's going to be enough students. There are enough students, maybe for now, but this isn't long term. Long term, there isn't the need for this [PBSA]. And in due course they should return to elderly people's homes – maybe for the infrastructure it would need a few more lifts or adapt things a little. It would be nicer those if students and old people could live together. Yeah, that's one of the problems I think. I don't believe society is designed to be "students live in this box, old people live in this box." Life is much better if we intermingle and learn from each other. And there's some really nice friendships of young people with old people. And it's well known that the grandparent-little child relationship is very important.*"

Shieldfield 1 saw the need for more housing in the area, to balance the proportions of long- and short-term residents. "*Even though it is a very central location, it's very small, so maybe some infill housing could help. I'm not imagining big apartments, and also, you know as it's between the city centre and the student accommodation, the local shops are, you know, in a bit of danger, they're always only can stay open with minimum income, but even, you know, as an observer*

Figure 26 Unused garages, and renovation work to a tower block in Shieldfield (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

and foreign observer, I for example see the importance of having a local pub, and there isn't one in Shieldfield, one of the last ones is being used as student accommodation right now. So yeah, I imagine small housing projects. (Fig. 26) To maybe increase the ratio of families, more families to keep their social life alive in every generation."

Shieldfield 8 saw a lot of opportunity in the design of the housing estate around Stoddart House and the Shieldfield Centre constructed 1960s. *"The architect had a vision – this view out here. It probably had a while when people were told "don't go here", thinking it is dangerous, but look at it. Its great playground space, there's even a sort of amphitheatre space that's never been used. I think it's the right time to realise the potential of the architect's vision. It's never been realised. The core elements are great, it just it had a bit of a rough start, it could come back. It would be great to brighten it up a bit. Some cosmetic changes to frontages of the buildings, more plants to animate the space more, would be great"*

This visual focus was echoed by Heaton 6, who saw lots of opportunity in artistic design and greening. *"There are ways of beautifying and I would be quite happy with natural beauty. You know, the idea of green space is very important. You read about the people working so hard in places like Colombia or India or China to create green spaces, and we seem to be very simple about it. I think that could be used in a lot of the newer buildings Shieldfield, which are old and have very blank facades."*

Shieldfield 8 proposed infrastructural changes to the space – *"Yeah, I think we could do a lot more environmentally. We could do something interesting with the building frontages. Sure, now there are solar panels on the roof, but there's probably a long way to go environmentally. Why don't we generate electricity and fuel? Why not?"*

Heaton 4 saw strong ties between environmental infrastructure and local community gardening, and closer community bonds. *"I'd really love a communal compost bin at the end of maybe, every three terraces, you know there's really a lot of litter here, so maybe some more education on recycling could be useful. It's increasing, the amount of litter, since I came here, so maybe for people who are able-bodied, we could put some planters around the streets and the back lanes. You know like potatoes are easy, carrots are a bit more trickier and flowers are nice, just imagine just having that kind of space. It's not going to be everyone's cup of tea, but I think a lot of people would enjoy that kind of thing. You see documentaries about people getting shared allotments, people coming together and learning, and maybe if you have someone coming from say Iran, you can tell them what grows in this kind of climate, and maybe they try growing something from back home and you say "ah I didn't know you could grow that", just to encourage these kinds of possibilities."*

13.6.3 "Architectural merit"

Revival of the space, as judged aesthetically, has strong links to demolition – the participants offered mixed opinions on the benefits of preserving or replacing specific buildings.

For Heaton 2, the process of demolition was tool to improve the neighbourhood, to clear up specific areas that were unsightly. "*Where the bingo hall is there, that that street can look a bit messy, you know where Kwiksave is, more demolition there would be alright. That's a bit of a mess there. ...the baths in town, I would be happy to lose them, it's a grim building. It's old, but it's grim. There's that Shieldfield Centre too, it's a bit of a mess. (Fig. 27)*"

Figure 27 The Shieldfield Centre, the frontier of Heaton and Shieldfield (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

Shieldfield 2 lamented the loss of beautiful historic buildings, and feared the aesthetic value of their replacements – "*you get such lovely buildings pulled down, to replace them with modern buildings that don't really fit with the surroundings, they don't match anymore, and I think it's just a matter of time until they match everything together and there won't be any old ones left. Changes just mean demolition of the whole street, just flattening it, and replacing it with the modern buildings that maybe don't look as nice.*"

Shieldfield 7 saw little aesthetic value in the existing buildings of Shieldfield "*They would be nice if they were nicer, but with the best will in the world, Shieldfield isn't a place full of*

beautiful architecture. There are sort of nice things about, but you wouldn't come here to study the beautiful architecture. (Fig 28)"

Use value, however, was seen as more important in these cases, the practical value of a home was more significant in preservation. *"No one can claim that any of the buildings that have gone up in the last 20 years here have long lasting architectural merit, and if they did, there are thousands of almost the same all over the country. Do we have to keep these blocks there because they're unique, and if they're not being used anymore? If they're empty, they could probably come down. If they aren't, then it's different if it's dangerous, either to the people living inside or they might fall on somebody. But I don't think you can let them come down just because it's a little bit unsightly, if people are living there and it's part of the community. Because beautiful buildings don't make it home, they help if you live there. If you're given somewhere nicer than you might look after it better, but doesn't always work that way. (Shieldfield 7)"*

Figure 28 Shieldfield House, 26 storeys tall (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

13.6.4 "They're more vulnerable than others"

The ways in which selective demolitions and urban changes affect different demographics in different ways, some quite intimately, was also a point of note for some residents.

Heaton 6 noted that "*people are much happier to knock down newer buildings, aren't they? So there's a an area of Shieldfield and there used to be like a care home, or a respite home, and I know that because my mother was there and they knocked it down and built housing and maybe there was more need for housing. But I wasn't aware that there was anything wrong with that building. There's a lot more repurposing of buildings and areas, the newer buildings, they're much happier, they're not knocking those down.*" These decisions over which buildings could be lost and which should be preserved was a source of confusion - "*I really don't know whether there was a just a lot of bad building went on in the middle of the 20th century, I don't know but, you know houses from the same era [indicating the building the interview was taking place in], they're leaky and not really built for soundproofing, so I can't imagine that they were any worse.*"

Heaton 7 also identified younger buildings as the only ones that could be at risk of demolition, "*The only place I can imagine would be that block of units where the Star and Shadow is (Fig. 29), because that isn't Victorian terraces anymore.*" These warehouses, architecturally disctinct from the typical brick streets, were built on the landfill site covered in the early 20th century, and were never residential.
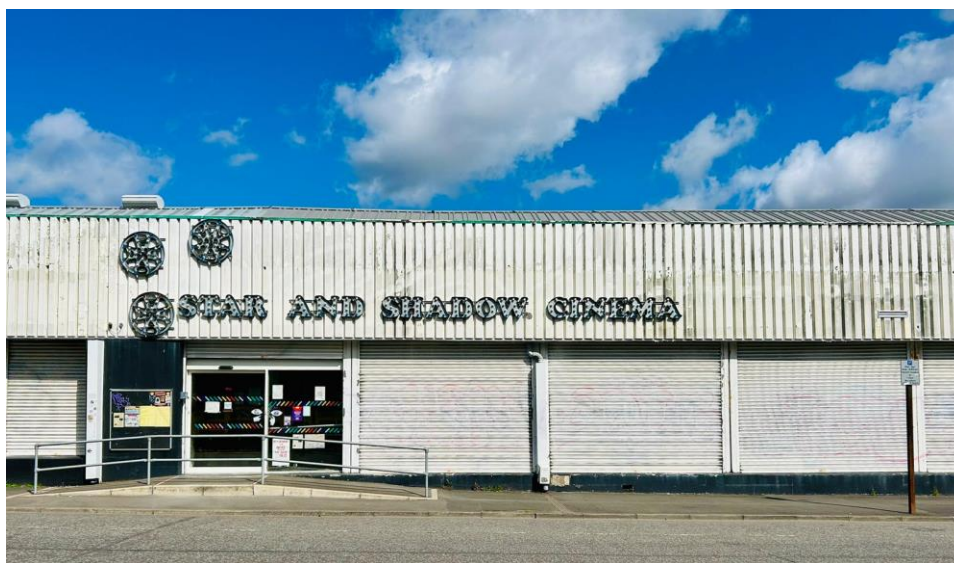
Figure 29 The Star and Shadow Cinema, a volunteer-run anarchist space (Chiara Zannelli 2024)

Heaton 10's perspective on the closure of the Victoria Library expresses the societal disparity in the decisions around urban transformation – "*we clocked when they turn the library into a dental surgery and some flats. But seeing I'd never been in, there was a part of me that, you know, in my brain strongly supports things like libraries and community education spaces, but from a very me perspective, it didn't bother me so much.*"

For Heaton 4, this inequality extended to building luxury apartments – "*You have to think, are there actually people in all those flats? They're so expensive, some people just buy up properties just to have it, just to own property in the UK, its dreadful, and it's also linked to gentrification, to new people coming in and the locals being a bit ignored – and I have no knowledge of any more social housing being built.*"

Shieldfield 1 also proposed more protections for social housing and tenants in the light of the move towards luxury PBSA - "*the regulations of our social housing could be more strong, like in terms of protecting the residents. It shouldn't be that easy to just say, "OK, you have to leave". They're not random residents, they are residents of social housing, so they're more vulnerable than others.*"

13.6.5 "The literal destruction of place"

The impact of demolition on the senses of place of these residents is evident. The social effect of demolition is made up of the loss of a practical space that was used and enjoyed, the relational and social connections that were dependent on that space, and the recognisable and familiar appearance of the neighbourhood, all of which come together to express the relationship between architecture and sense of place.

Shieldfield 9 told us that "*they knocked the heart and soul out of Shieldfield, that's God's honest truth.*" There are "*no pubs, no churches, no nothing*" and the pubs have all been turned into student accommodation, "*intimidating buildings, all tall and grey, it is scary to go there at night.*"

Heaton 10 remembered these demolitions: "*I don't know many of the traditional residents. But I certainly remember having conversations with them as some of the newer developments were happening there. I described that to colleagues in the Council as being similar to topocide. The literal destruction of place. So colleagues talking about regeneration, etcetera, etcetera, I was seeing the community reactions like during earthquakes. Just as literally, you are destroying these spaces. Yeah, but I've seen that around regeneration projects not only across Newcastle but the UK, those tensions, and that lot of that isn't necessarily about the development and more about the process.*"

Heaton 1 had only experienced minor demolitions at the edges of the neighbourhood, but still said "*if they demolished anything in the neighbourhood that's been there for years and has developed into parts of the community, I think it would be a sense of loss. And here, if they knocked the schools down. Or the churches, not that I go to church, but it's the whole area, its got history and value to it. If they decided they were building another tower block, I wouldn't be overly impressed, but if they knocked that tower block down, I've got used to it. I'd be scared what monstrosity they'd put in its place.*"

The impact of demolition on the social memory of a space, on the intimate personal connections between people, was important to Shieldfield 8 - *"what's demolished takes a long time to be rebuilt. The relations, social relations, the comfort you have in the place. A lot of memory comes from physical attributes, memory comes from often seeing someone in your community, so it's quite important for your health to have that sort of database of memory. It helps you orient yourself, helps you remember things when you bump into people readily. So if this all gets disappeared, the re-connections that were built last over the last 5-10 years go again. You can't really replace that very easily. So hopefully we enhance what we have, and but never start again flattening and rebuilding, but I have no idea what the council's thinking is."*

Shieldfield 6 was disappointed in what has been lost from Newcastle's historic architecture – *"so much of the centre and the outskirts were lost, based on ideas of development, you can't live in the past but when you go to other historic cities in the UK, who have kept their old centres, you can see how they have integrated those buildings. In Heaton they managed to hold on to their older houses, there are Tyneside flats too, and a mix of old and new."*

The ease with which a new construction can dominate the memory of a place, and the previous construction can be forgotten, has a role to play in understanding sense of place. When Heaton 3 talked about buildings from the late 1990s, they noted *"you know I just can't ... I can't visualise what was there before. It's probably just the same, you know, Victorian houses, but I can't say for sure."*

Heaton 4 also felt the dominance of modern buildings over social memory, and lamented the loss of important wild and historical spaces. *"Wow, it's strange that isn't it, the thing about demolition is that it's so heartbreaking, then you can forget everything so quickly, everything that used to be there - so one that I've thought about recently was the Ouseburn, those new flats with the workshops underneath, very expensive ones, but what was there before was so wild, in those old arches with the brickwork, and the sunlight used to come so beautifully down with all the wildflowers, old relics of the past, that I thought were lovely part of the Ouseburn. But now these new flats block all that natural light, and you think what the impact has been on that wildlife. And I don't remember every being asked about how I felt about that."*

Shieldfield 7 remembered derelict spaces, a classification of urban territory that has also been reported to negatively affect sense of place (Nefs, 2006). *"I wouldn't know what buildings were there before. To be honest, I don't think there were buildings there, I think most of what they were built on was empty land. One can say "oh, isn't it awful, all these blocks going up?" Well, I don't know what would have been built instead. At least it has something there rather than just empty space. I'm not sure which, I can't remember. But I'm sure some of it wasn't case of pulling down lovely buildings to build these."*

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13.6.6 "Demolition always stays like a question mark"

The ambiguity of future demolition in the area has significant implications for the ontological security felt among residents of Shieldfield – this ambiguity was entirely absent from Heaton, where all that was predicted was "*just renovation,*", and that any significant changes would be "*not in Heaton, it's more stuff at the borders of Heaton that have development. (Heaton 1)*"

Heaton 7 was also certain of the safety of the buildings in Heaton, based on property values of older houses and the reaction it would incite. "*Not likely at all, any demolition here, because of the age of the buildings, and because of the desirability – even if they got gutted, it's not hard to put nice stuff back inside and make it look very modern on the inside and very beautiful on the outside. Unless they were in really bad nick, I don't think there would be any demolition, there'd probably be a kick off.*"

The case is very different in Shieldfield. Shieldfield 4 suggested that some of the PBSA itself could be demolished in the future – "*they're cheap blocks that could easily come down if they had to,*" and compared them to other student accommodation buildings in the city that had recently been scheduled for demolition – "*there is a lot of uncertainty around what happens to these blocks, they could well be temporary.*"

Shieldfield 9 reported rumours of demolition of Stoddart House, which have circulated for decades – "*there were rumours that Northumbria University wants it for student accommodation, but they would have to demolish it because the few private flats here don't do well at all on the market.*"

Shieldfield 2 speculated about the future of demolition, with the Shieldfield Centre, which hosts the Newbridge Project, being an option – "*There is not much old or derelict left in Shieldfield, nothing left to go – there have been talks about Newbridge maybe being pulled down, it is the only big old building I can think of, but there are too many people involved, the doctors, the artists.*" The future contained only more PBSA – "T*here is an abandoned building behind the gate, the student accommodation, which people now use as a car park, maybe they will replace that with another student accommodation.*"

Shieldfield 1 also suggested the Shieldfield Centre, but caveated this by specifying private developers, not the Council. "*I think you know, we heard some gossip about the Shieldfield Centre as the next vulnerable building - I don't think the Council will knock it down by themselves and build any social housing there. I don't think so. Probably they will try to sell it to some developers, and I think the first thing that comes to my mind is just building another student accommodation. Because there are already many, so they can easily do that, it's such a good location for students at Northumbria and Newcastle.*" Following this, "*then all the houses. Because it's a very small neighbourhood, and it's surrounded by highways, from every*

corner it's started to be eaten, by residential units getting more dangerous day by day, especially if they can demolish the Shieldfield Centre. I think the risk will be starting from there."

Heaton 4 felt similarly about the building, and expressed concern – "*So I don't know what's going to happen with the Newbridge Project, ... and you know you can see when you go around the building, it needs a bit of work, but it's such an important building, and that could go. And I think that's a shame, you know they have such a good youth club, and youth clubs are a thing of the past now."*

Shieldfield 1 articulated the impact of the rumours and feeling of uncertainty – "*I think not only homeowners, also the renters, they feel scared of these demolitions, they have questions about it. Because eventually it may affect them. This demolition maybe won't stop at that specific land, that they'll move on, as the housing is very old here.*

All this student accommodation land, they were many houses like those, and they were knocked down and eventually they may do so here too. I think it has a strong negative impact on the psychology of the residents here.

I mean, if you have the right to learn what they will do after demolition, and you are happy with it, it may work. But if this demolition always stays like a question mark, unclear what will happen later... Otherwise you don't know the outcome until the construction finishes, so I think the term demolition always has a negative image because of this process. It's not always a negative thing, but in repeated cycles, it has been, it reinforces this idea."

13.6.7 Analysis

The disparity between Heaton and Shieldfield is evident in the certainty with which Heaton residents reject the possibility of demolition in their area, while at the same time speculating about more taking place in Shieldfield, while the Shieldfield residents live in an atmosphere of ambiguity. Both have suffered the loss of important meeting spaces in the last decades, but with economic regeneration in Heaton encouraging the small cafes and pubs that Shieldfield residents envision, the implications are significant. Blau and Fingerman (2009) argue that "consequential strangers" – small, everyday interactions in the "background" of our lives – are crucial for "our well-being, growth, and day-to-day existence", strengthening our "social embeddedness". Shieldfield 8 saw this as the central mission of their business in the area – "*so much of I would think about as communities has been undermined, destroyed, that interconnectedness between us, to appreciate each other, that we're tolerant of each other, that we recognise that interdependence – because we're between totally dependent as humans – and the mantra of social media and other things is that you're not dependent on anything, you're an isolated being, but that's not how it works. So in here is the network of dependent beings, so*

it's quite a challenge to push back against the dominant mantra that's coming from social media around that, we are all independent, and so rebuilding in that sense, of tolerance and connection, that's what we're trying to do here and think we have, quite well." Rebuilding the human connections that have been affected by previous urban transformation, connected to decades of such changes, takes time. The "*database of memory*" that Shieldfield 8 refers to is highly vulnerable when displacement of residents is a tangible threat, and for many participants, these rumours of further potential displacement perpetuate this *"question mark".* Heaton 10's reference to "*topocide*" conveys the violence of the history of Shieldfield, the violence of demolition, that Heaton 7 says "*would never happen here*".

Grenville (2007) discusses ontological security through the built environment as "a bulwark against a transient and untrustworthy external world," and this transience is felt deeply by Shieldfield residents, with even the major PBSA constructions still seen as somewhat temporary. Beauregard (1996) identifies a culture in modern urban regeneration that focuses on "newness" and "growth", "hailing restlessness as a positive virtue," but there is evidently a sense that this restlessness has been imposed on Shieldfield, with a storm of "*gossip*" and "*rumours*" about future urban transformation, at stark contrast to the more stable perceptions of space in Heaton.

13.7 Collective Voice

In terms of public involvement in discussions over the built environment and expressing the needs of residents, the power of the collective voice was recognised by many participants, who discussed the barriers they felt to this, and recognised Dwellbeing Shieldfield as a powerful example of the value of co-operation.

13.7.1 "We have a view, and it should be listened to"

Shieldfield 8 saw a strong structural impact on the minds of the residents – "It's had no investment, so that's bound to impact the perception of people, they think, you're always going to be passed over." The self-image of residents as having the capacity to act, has been eroded. "*The likelihood that breeds negativity, you're not treated like a human, the base level, what you expect as a tenant, you're not treated that way with your own feelings about where you live and how you interact with them, you're constantly treated - you could call - less than human. What is the base level you expect from society and accommodation? That's not going to help you feel positive, help your children and positive life chances, your self-perception*"

Shieldfield 7 recognised this, and compared it to other neighbourhoods. "*I think a lot of people aren't confident to speak up. We're not in in places like Jesmond and Gosford, and Gosforth has people who are more used to voicing opinions. It's partly about money, but it's not just that.*

It's being able to articulate things or being certain of someone here to do it on people's behalf. Not only more structures, more individuals who feel of able to voice themselves, and feel that their voice is heard."

This confidence is almost a luxury. "*To be able to say "we have rights and we want this and we have a view and it should be listened to, our view and beyond, as a community," that view only comes when certain other basics of life are solved. And you can't do that when you've got too much uncertainty, because your confidence isn't there to do it, might not be able to articulate it and whatever else, so having frameworks that help you feel more confident then grow individually within the community, so that you can express your views and hopefully change the direction of development.* (Shieldfield 8)"

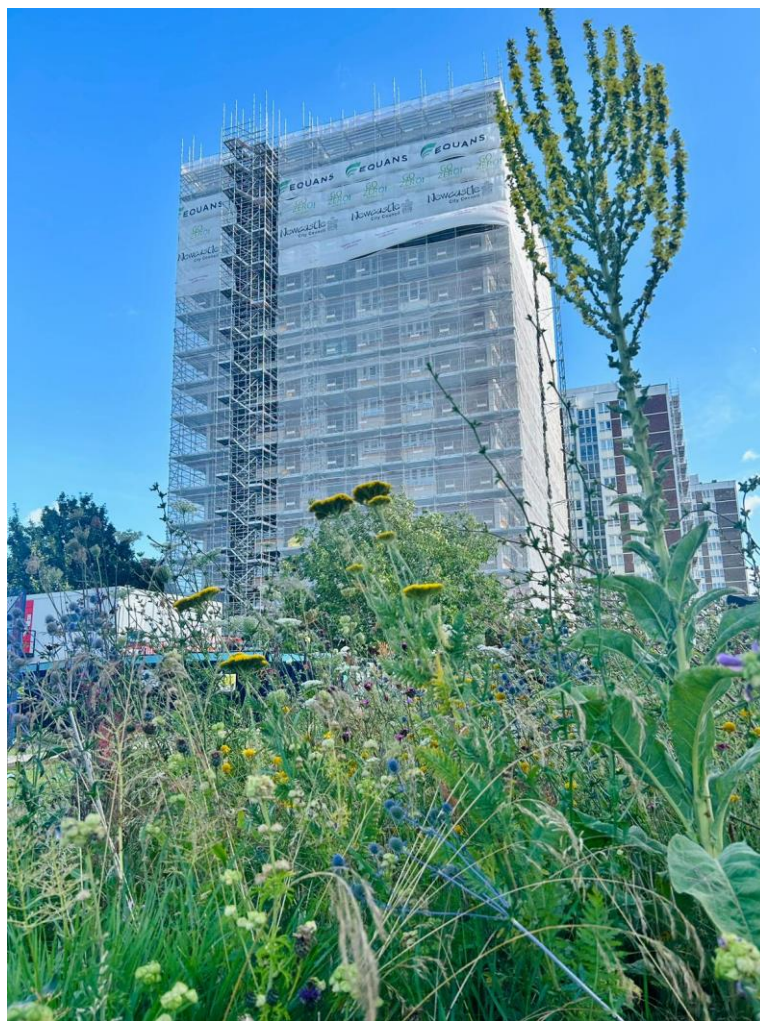Heaton 7 identified this when discussing maintenance of public space. "*People here can kick up a stink to get places maintained, they have the time and wherewithal to do that, they're not on benefits or working three jobs to feed their kids, it's very unequal.*

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If you're used to getting results, to kicking up a fuss and getting things done, you'll go into these meetings with a very different mindset than if you're used to telling the council again and again that the lift is broken without anything happening "

Heaton 10 saw conflict as the catalyst leading to more action from communities that have been systematically excluded from decision-making: *"Look at meetings Jesmond, particularly Gosforth. People are used to having influence over decisions in their life. And some neighbourhoods are so multi-generationally being used to being done to. But actually shifting that is really difficult. When you ask people those kinds of questions, they'll tell you what they're fearful of, and there's such an ingrained sense of disconnect and disempowerment. And I don't know how you gather the energy for some of that to reinvent it. The easiest thing to do is create a fight."*

Shieldfield 7 noted some of the social barriers to participation, agreeing that a fight was required to bring people into the field, with that fight being the wave of PBSA that affected the area. *"It's very nice that people get together and do jolly things. But it's still a place of people who, hit by lot of loneliness, as always, will be in in tower blocks and places where people are put for convenience. The people here hadn't spoken up until some people felt like it was being absorbed. Things were happening which people who lived here didn't have any control over. So I think quite often until something happens for you to fight against, you just get on. There's always going to be some people who moan about everything but there are more constructive stuff happening. The complaining will go on, and there's plenty of people will go on complaining, even though there are the means to do more, have more fun. I think it's a matter of letting people know that you don't need to just moan into the air. Let's talk. Nothing might happen, but a collective voice is usually more powerful."*

Heaton 5 felt excluded from conversations on public space as a result of being a renter, and perceiving the UK as stigmatising this. Transience and investment in the area are linked – *"I do also think there's a there's a barrier that I have in this country - we rent this place, to me, I'm always like "am I'm even entitled to have an opinion on this area?" God knows how long we're going to have our place for, it might well be for quite a long time, but I think the initial barrier like having just moved here, and thinking "I don't know the area around it and we're not the same as everyone else here, those people own those houses." I suppose it relates to the same kind of feeling of entitlement, knowing a public space, but it feels like I'm intruding into someone else's space. And that's a question of property, you know? So I mean in that sense, my feeling of your property and your boundaries extend to a public vote, but I don't feel the same. I don't think I would have that same feeling in Germany, we rent and we rent for years and years. But in the UK it's such a change, you sign a 12 month lease and get on with it and hope*

you can stay on. But it's that kind of barrier, it's never supposed to be a permanent solution. And so how do you invest do in an area if you know this is supposedly temporary anyway? I know there's still a turnover in in people moving in and out, but there's probably sense of permanence. I think that's the case for most people, especially in these streets, they stay."

In Shieldfield, that collective voice that has taken form is the residents co-operative, Dwellbeing Shieldfield, which has strong implications for the future of the area. For Heaton 4, Dwellbeing's public activities were seen as an example – **"***the area itself is just a bit uncared for, you know I would love it if there were those neighbourhood care walkarounds, like in Shieldfield, over here (Fig. 30)."*

For Shieldfield 1, joining Dwellbeing was an important part of community life, particularly in public participation. "*After starting to attend the meetings, and especially community events I started to have a trust relationship, you know, like more of a friendship rather than a formal relationship as a researcher.*

The last year was really good for them and their collaboration between different local organisations. I think it can create a very good effect on the population in general. You know they can use social media easily, also the Council knows about them being a registered organisation now and they have connections now. Teaching people, informing them that they can make claims about their area, that's important. I mean, it's easier to talk about your ideas but you need to make a formal inquiry about it. So there are certain ways to do that, but at every level, the grassroots level, people can do that. So some people should inform them, I think Dwellbeing. Yeah, I think if there will be a negative action here, I'm sure that they will see a big reaction."

Shieldfield 10 had worked with Dwellbeing for some time, and found it inspirational, with its bonds to the community being its strength. "*Dwellbeing has grown like a snowball, so much, and we work with SAW, with Newbridge, we do stuff with the Star and Shadow, there's Forum Café, Big River Bakery - we always collaborate, we never compete. That's where our collective voice is, because everyone can say something, we are always open to people. I don't know who decided that this part of the city would become the student place, but now we are more united and we can actually talk to the council. They should be investing in people, building more homes for actual people, and for refugees. We'll be doing more drop-in meetings to hear more people,*

and that's where we are stronger, the more voices we have the more powerful we are, we are more united. (Fig. 31)"

Shieldfield 7 saw Dwellbeing initially as "*the main sort of meeting place*," and believed it could be an example in urban participation. Before the demolitions, "*there would have been sort of consultation, a label or sticker halfway up lamppost. That's "consultation" here. But if Dwellbeing does nothing else, it can sort of let other places know the processes that can be done to make sure consultation does that right. Well, here I think it might be a bit late now, but it's worth a start, isn't it?"*

13.7.2 Analysis

For residents of Heaton, issues around confidence in self-expression were much more limited, and less multi-generational – in Shieldfield, deeper issues exist that have been shaped by their relationship to the City Council and private developers. In considering the future of the neighbourhood, and the sense of place among the residents of Shieldfield, Dwellbeing has – for many – taken on the role of supporting place identity and attachment, building more ownership among residents and supporting them in the confidence needed to make claims about changes. Having a space for such discussions, building relationships and collaboration with other entities, Dwellbeing offers the opportunity to tackle the issues around sense of place and ontological security that have been threatened in the area for decades.

14. Focus group and analysis

During the first conversation, residents discussed the lack of attention from the Council. When observing the amount of litter seen outside the row of shops in which the event took place, the conversation indicated heavily that the responsibility for maintaining the space - cleaning the streets, repairs and maintenance – was being ignored by the municipality, and thus was assumed by the residents. The psychological impact of this was discussed, the "*ripple effect*" of seeing other residents picking up rubbish – "*but you know these are standard things that we shouldn't have to ask for. They should be done automatically… you can't just complain. You've gotta act. You gotta push back.*"

Another point that was raised was the disconnection between the views of the locals, and that of the Council, comparing the unity, or potential unity, of the neighbourhood, with the lack of trust between municipal and resident-based initiatives. "*Well, I don't know what other conversations are going on [in the Council] … we just don't know, the conversations, there's the political people, there's the officers themselves and who how much they influence each other and who's actually steering the ship. But yeah, if we if we work together with in a with a common voice, across the tenants, or potential tenants, it helps a lot because people know different things … divide and conquer, in one way, you can call it, how when we're together, you can be more powerful.*"

"*There are so many different ways of telling our story, you can paint it and write it and sing it,*" said one participant. One part of this story comes through from the needs expressed by the participants, which were ultimately clustered into themes. One of these was safety – the importance of safe places for children to play, well-lit areas where people can walk late at night, with pedestrians divided from cyclists. Another was environmental maintenance, in the form of taking care of green spaces, of edible plants and flowers, promoting botany and growing among residents with better waste collection and management to keep the spaces clean and liveable. Related to this theme was a promotion of healthy eating, with the row of shops on Wretham Place used for nutritious food promoting local food, with the hope to encourage a local sense of pride in such a food culture.

The most dominant theme was of meeting spaces and promoting a collective voice through such spaces. Mention was made of the loss of Shieldfield's pubs, and so community spaces to make friends and meet new people was of great importance. This was linked to the multicultural community, supporting migrants and refugees in settling down or becoming more confident in the area, and promoting intergenerational activities to build connections between locals and

visitors, old and young. "*Strong sense of collaboration*" was emphasised here, being vocal about the resident-led activities and the potentials of the space.

In the second phase, examining the specific sites, given the tensions between the local population and the university students, discussions around the PBSA considered spatial methods of bringing the two groups into contact. Food was identified as one way to reach this – with young students moving away from home for the first time, learning how to cook for themselves, a community kitchen was proposed as a way to use a part of the existing structure, opening up the space to residents. Dwellbeing's current activities around food – the Community Chefs programme, sharing food from around the world for people in need – fed into this. Another method considered was through tenure – one participant noted that in other student accommodation projects around the world, a mixed-tenure system of students and elderly people has worked well, promoting intergenerational connections and housing the elderly residents that are in need of the more protected and furnished lifestyles that are found in PBSA blocks. The geography of the blocks offered further potentials, of linking the space to the rewilding efforts taking place in the nearby Ouseburn Valley – a "*green corridor*" was proposed. Maintenance was an important point, while changes were not proposed to the facades, the prominence of such highly-maintained PBSA buildings, clashing architecturally and aesthetically with the other residential buildings, make evident the divide in investment and care, traits that were found lacking in the public space used by the locals. This sense of comparison, the stark divide between the two worlds contained within Shieldfield, is a limit to true development, and proposals were all focused on removing these limits, blurring the boundaries, and promoting collaboration.

Regarding the Shieldfield Centre, the question of maintenance again became central to the conversation. The residential building of Shieldfield House has been undergoing heavy renovation, and successive demolition was then seen as highly unlikely. One participant that lived in the building then noted that "*they're spending an awful lot of money doing it up at the minute, I would be very surprised if that was under threat - maybe under threat to be taken over by private developers though, to turn them into super flats.*" This question of ownership was a recurring one, with the tenure of the Newbridge Project, an artistic collective, expiring imminently. The Shieldfield Centre building is currently poorly maintained, with significantly wasteful heat loss, and contains primarily office spaces. For potential other uses, including simply the obtaining of more funding, accommodation was suggested as one use for some of the rooms, to make the whole space more financially viable and eligible for grants and loans. The various uses of the space and its vicinity were discussed, with interesting conclusions – given the steep gradient of the wheelchair ramp from the Stoddart Street entrance to Shieldfield,

it became apparent that some people use the Shieldfield Centre as an access route, using the lift from one entrance to reach the rear, which open up on the main concourse of Wretham Place. More attention was proposed to this use, and the potentials of signposting and making more accessible this function of the building was discussed. Under current ownership, few changes were expected to meet these needs, and community ownership was discussed as a powerful way of facilitating the work of Dwellbeing Shieldfield and numerous other organisations in the area to support residents and make changes to the space. The importance of meeting spaces, of support groups, and of multicultural collaboration, are met to an extent in the Shieldfield Centre as managed by the Newbridge Project, but the potential exists for far greater engagement, should the guarantee exist for their continued tenure. The issues around Council politics and investment would be bypassed through community ownership, allowing more direct routes to use these buildings in ways more in line with residents than with financial speculation.

The final discussion was focused on community activism. Other examples of community ownership were mentioned, and the days of demolition were considered passed. The rumours, and the continued existence of gossip and concern for future demolition, were identified as deep-rooted and restrictive, feelings that could be called traumatic. Primarily however, the environmental and social impact of demolition was not discussed, instead the conversation was more focused on economically viable options, the financial logic behind demolition and land use. The answer to the question of building use lies in ownership, in bringing these buildings closer to the community itself – the top-down approach of construction without meaningful consultation has proven inefficient in the area.
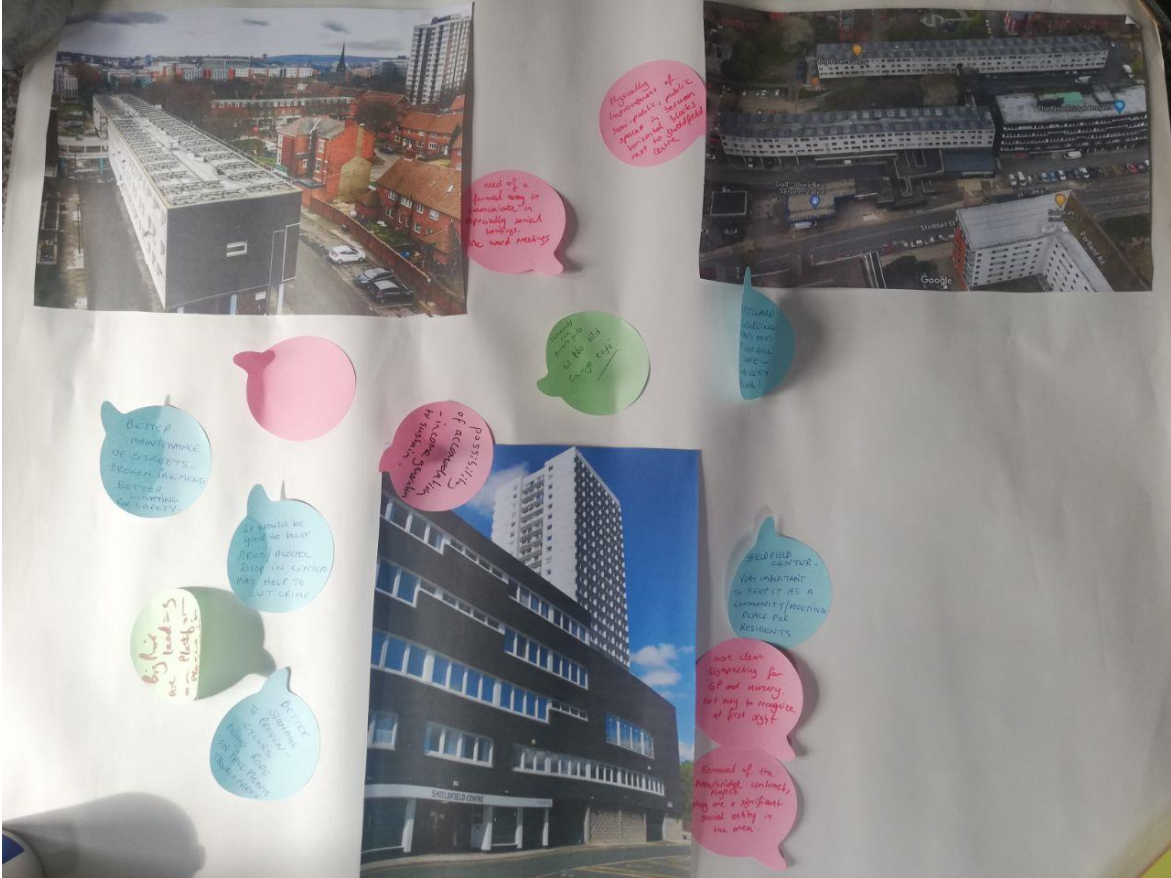
Figure 32 Needs of the area (Author, 2024)

Figure 33 Suggestions for the Shieldfield Centre (Author, 2024)

Figure 34 Suggestions for the PBSA (Author, 2024)

15. Discussion

The methodology of survey, interview and focus group, was chosen to allow a progression of study into the themes that emerged, a deepening of understanding into highly subjective and intimate feelings regarding space and security. The findings support each other in this way, and offer insights into the reactions, responses, consequences and alternatives that emerge from demolition in a neighbourhood.

The modern urban planning system works on short timescales, in terms of funding, project design and construction, but this study highlights the importance of taking local history into account when understanding a community. Ontological security is highly influenced by past experiences with violations of this security, be that in the form of eviction, disaster, or in the case of Shieldfield, mass construction and demolition. It is not a new observation, that communities with more resources, in the form of time, skills, contacts, funding, are more able to engage with the planning system. Likewise, it is well documented that to attribute specific psychological traits to an entire neighbourhood is an act of harmful stereotyping. But the role of confidence in public participation appears here in the disparity between sense of place in

residents of Heaton and of Shieldfield, the assurance that there are certain protections for certain spaces, that changes can be made, and that residents will be prioritised.

Sense of place is strong in each neighbourhood, local pride is persistent. Some threats are shared across boundaries - Heaton has, like Shieldfield, suffered the loss of public services, pharmacies, libraries, and has issues with the student population, linked to public littering and communal spirit. But the repeated theme that, should any developments be proposed that infringe on the lifestyles of the Heaton residents, there would be a strong public backlash, that the Council would not be able to ignore such a backlash, is one that is firmly based in Heaton's conception of itself as an up-and-coming area with a mix of middle-class facilities and working-class history, aesthetically pleasing streets and economic growth. Such a certainty that resident initiatives would be respected by the municipality is not found in Shieldfield.

The question of which neighbourhood should bear the responsibility for the student population will never be resolved if the concept is always portrayed as one monolithic mass being moved and planted in one space. The intensely private architecture of the PBSA blocks, with courtyards, inexpressive facades and reception facilities dividing the public from the residents, division and misunderstanding is actively promoted. This study does not focus on community mediation and integration of student populations, but Shieldfield offers a number of lessons that would be worth learning from. Sage et al. (2014 p.2630) discuss "socio-cultural displacement", wherein "the characteristics of an area become aligned with the values of the social groups moving in, invoking feelings of dispossession among pre-existing populations". It is evident that such a feeling of intimidation by such quantities of student residents, and the corresponding architecture, is manifest in Shieldfield.

Residents in both neighbourhoods have been excluded from conversations of public space and building use. The persistent growth of small local businesses in Heaton, however, contrasts with the new spaces that have appeared in Shieldfield in that same time, namely PBSA, owned by companies based in tax havens and run without an effort to engage with the surroundings. This is not an active threat in Heaton, demolition is not a concern and rarely has an impact on resident life, and thus the commercial construction industry is much less active – instead, ownership changes hands, typically from public to private. In Shieldfield, spatial use has been shaped by offshore investment, by the privatisation of land and the massively impactful commercial construction industry, geared towards profit. This study recommends that offshore investment should be looked at critically as a decider of spatial use, and that community ownership, in both neighbourhoods, offers a way to seriously bring democratic and resident-oriented principles into an increasingly privatised urban space.

These findings confirm the existence of a disparity between the significance of demolition for these two neighbourhoods. Demolition is a tool, used for a specific purpose, but in Heaton the infrequency and the low visibility of this process has kept it far from public discourse, far from scrutiny, while in Shieldfield, residents have been forced to confront the power dynamic inherent in such an approach to space, and the profit-seeking tendency inherent to such large scale works has been made evident. The buildings most vulnerable to demolition play a part in this disparity of significance – preservation movements are shown to favour age, aesthetics, and architectural heritage, over use, criteria which immediately favour Heaton. The weak bonds of an underappreciated and underinvested-in local history awareness in Shieldfield only exacerbates this, limiting the attention and visibility of specific spaces that can be used to protect a site. When such serious transformations in the topography of the area, eliminating the spaces of ones childhood, how can those memories be reconciled with the current state of the city, if ones voice is not expressed and local history is ignored?

Conclusions drawn regarding Heaton are worth discussing – the intense sense of privacy that comes from higher homeownership rates and the continuing gentrification is at the same criticised openly by the middle class of the population, and reinforced by their consumption habits. The role of property values in this is worth investigation in a separate study, but canbe speculated that increasing rates of community ownership, as was discussed regarding the Victoria Library, could be a method of removing such spaces from the private market and returning them to the community, filling a much-missed role of a local meeting space.

The impact of demolition on sense of place is thus made clear through the study, in the erosion of familiar spaces, historic spaces, public spaces, and the uncertainty that comes from living in an area with a reputation for "regeneration". Place dependence specifically, as the capacity for a space to supply an individual with facilities necessary for their lifestyle, is significantly vulnerable in the face of demolition, with the capital-intensive demolition and construction industry reinforcing the profit-seeking function of the newly constructed spaces, far from the needs of the residents themselves. The reminders of division, of lack of investment, of unfamiliar and threatening spaces, that are reported by Shieldfield residents regarding the PBSA, is a far cry from the celebration of historic streets in Heaton. The process of demolition itself was not often discussed, in environmental terms, in noise and visual pollution, but instead it was presented as a tool, one with significant benefits for specific groups, from which the residents of Shieldfield felt wholeheartedly excluded. The research hypotheses are supported, but with nuances that highlight the context within which demolition operated, which spaces are created and which spaces are lost, and who has the right to access these. With highly fragmented and contradictory approaches to growth being encouraged by the city and investors, certain

areas of Newcastle are intensively over-exploited, while others are tragically under-appreciated. By giving more decision-making power to those on ground level, who use the space and would use the future developments, a far more just and humane approach to spatial planning can be achieved – by trusting citizens, by listening to them, by giving them resources and time. The ongoing architectural trauma of Shieldfield, resulting in being seen from within and without as a transient, ever-changing space of exploitation and profit, must change.

While the study is limited in terms of a tight territorial focus and a low level of engagement through the survey phase, the depth reached through a number of interviews with various perspectives across the two neighbourhoods allowed for an underrepresented aspect of urban regeneration to be focused upon. This study is, however, only an indication of the role of demolition in this disparity of ontological security – a deeper ethnography would be required to excavate the depths of public and individual opinion and psychology to be more fully certain of the connection. The examples of Heaton and Shieldfield are, however, similar to many dynamics found in urban neighbourhoods, offering a replicability to the study that would support the valuation of such themes in discussions of urban planning, local history, and architecture. The findings of Architects for Social Housing's study *The Costs of Estate Regeneration* are closely linked to this study, which supports their findings of the intensely extractive and exploitative profit-seeking tendency within the construction and demolition industry, and the potentials of community ownership as way to reclaim spaces under threat. Hiscock et al. (2001) are also supported in the sense of ontological security as tied to both tenure and neighbourhood reputation, with the architectural stability and investment of the area as a whole playing a strong part formation of ontological security at the household unit. Fullilove's contribution to the field of urban psychology, *Root Shock,* looks at urban regeneration from the perspective of grief and loss, touching on many similar themes of stigma, investment, history and collective voice (Fullilove 2004). But by taking a highly localised resolution, potential solutions can be identified at the neighbourhood level. National and regional policy change is required – evidently the influence of a national and highly centralised construction industry, and the flow and attraction of international finance, are significant factors involved. But by listening to the significantly undervalued perspectives of the residents, territorially-based development can be guided by locals, with attention paid to specific buildings, specific views, shops, facilities, the local history, and the local pride. "A building is not something you finish, a building is something you start" claim Leupen et al. (2005), and this ongoing approach to spaces, buildings, communities, uses, is called for if development is to take a holistic approach to sense of place. The socio-cultural displacement perceived by Sage et al. (2014) is relevant

here, but this discussion emphasised the viability of reclaiming this ownership, proving that such a displacement, certainly perceived in the interviews, is not a static or final state.

16. Conclusions

Ultimately, the research questions:

1. To what extent is the significance of demolition different for the residents of Heaton and of Shieldfield?

2. How far can demolition be said to influence the sense of place for the residents, in the context of ontological security?

are answered in part by the study. The first answer regards control – there is an indication that demolition, for the residents of Heaton, is a more controlled process that responds, at least to an extent, to local activism and public outcry. Specific sites are targeted, but should any historic or beloved building be the subject of proposals, there is a shared feeling of confidence that initiatives could speak up and confront the Council and the developers on this issue. In Shieldfield, however, the sheer scale of demolition that the community had to confront, the spaces that were lost, and the extreme disparity in investment between the new constructions and the original urban landscape, have emphasised the exclusion of the residents from any control or ownership over the demolition process. Demolition is a tool of development originating from outside the community, used to benefit people from outside the community, at the expense of the residents themselves, while for the Heaton residents, their needs and wishes were more recognised and acknowledged through the planning and development system.

For the second question, the study only offers an indication, without specific measurements or quantification, but there is evidence that prolonged contact with demolition with such an evident power dynamic as seen in Shieldfield is damaging to the sense of place, and can erode the ontological security of residents in the short- and long-terms. Demolition is not neutral, as seen in the study, but operates on the basis of profit, and thus the privatisation of space and the loss of public accessible services are closely tied to the process. There is no evidence that feeling control over the process of demolition, and seeing direct benefits from it, could strengthen the sense of place in a hypothetical neighbourhood that is not affected by the loss of public services, but if demolition could be brought closer to resident influence and the site was notably damaging to the sense of place, this could be investigated further. Ultimately, demolition is an incredibly harmful process that has embedded itself far from public participation, and firmly within the national and international flow of profit and investment.

Dwellbeing Shieldfield presents itself as a key figure in the reclamation of public ownership and confidence in the space, in bringing communities together and giving strength and authority

to the collective voice that emerges. Any discussion of the reconstruction of community identity in the area must take into account the past and ongoing work of Dwellbeing in listening to and giving voice to the residents, the driving force in building communal confidence in the neighbourhood.

17. Recommendations for the Future

The methodology of this study is replicable, but any future repetition of this form of investigation should operate with a larger research base, perhaps with multiple researchers, producing a work more representative of the area. More importantly, however, the dynamics between the actors on "the other side", being the Council, the developers, and the Universities, have not been investigated or studied – to imagine these as a homogenous bloc, in accordance and cahoots with one another, is highly inappropriate and seriously limits the scope of initiatives to work against these interests and operate from a resident-based platform. Future research would do itself a service by taking a deeper examination of the specific motivations behind these entities, exposing in more detail the harmful practices that they lead to, and facilitating campaigns to restore ontological security and sense of place, and to strengthen the collective voice that is growing in both neighbourhoods. The potentials of engaging with community mediation as a way to bridge the gap percieved between residents and students are strengthened by the opportunities afforded by the space – significantly walkable car-free spaces in Shieldfield could allow for more emphasis on public space and interactions between "consequential strangers". Research and development into community ownership and re-use of buildings, polyvalent spaces that can include a multitude of communities and demographics, would find rich opportunities in Shieldfield, with a wealth of community-driven architectural and urbanistic proposals just waiting to be implemented.

18. Annexes

Annex I – Information Sheet

Information Sheet: "Disparity of resident ontological security and sense of place between two neighbourhoods in Newcastle upon Tyne"

Hi! My name is Isaac Bell Holmstrom, and I'm from Heaton, currently doing some research into the impact of buildings on people's sense of community here in Newcastle.

You are being invited to take part in this research project – please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, and take the time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

The project has two purposes:

1. Contributing to my Masters degree in Local Development at the University of Padua, to be completed by the 30th of August 2024.
2. Contributing to the knowledge base of Dwellbeing Shieldfield, a community group working to improve resident participation in shaping urban life and space.

The project has been designed to understand the differences between how residents in Heaton and Shieldfield think about buildings and demolitions, and how this affects their sense of place and ontological security. "Sense of place" is the way that someone understands their environment, feels at home and feels connected to their environment, and "ontological security" is how safe they feel that they can remain in their home in the future. This is being studied to make a stronger argument for giving control of urban decision-making to residents. You have been chosen because you are a resident of either Heaton or Shieldfield, and you are over 18 years old. These are the only criteria for selection.

It is entirely up to you whether you take part or not, and refusal to take part involves no penalty or loss of benefits which you are otherwise entitled to. You can withdraw from the study at any time before the project completion date of 30th August, just let me know.

You will be asked to complete a household survey, and then – if you wish – to participate in an individual interview and/or a collective focus group. Your contact details will be deleted immediately after the end of the research. The anonymised data would be kept by the University of Padua in the form of the published thesis, and Dwellbeing Shieldfield in the form of data to shape their future actions.

The interview would last around 45 minutes to 1 hour conducted by myself, Isaac Bell Holmstrom – to be held either at a nearby café or in your home, however you prefer. This would be to discuss your personal experiences with the buildings in your area, with how they have changed, and what demolition means to you. The audio of the conversation would be recorded and transcribed. This will be anonymised.

The focus group would last around 1 hour, to be held with around 6 other people in the Forum Café, 26 Wretham Place, Shieldfield, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1XU. This would be to explore different perspectives on local buildings, and to discuss collective solutions to urban issues such as building preservation and community ownership. The audio of the conversation would be recorded and transcribed. This will be anonymised.

These conversations could lead to sensitive issues about eviction, displacement, demolition and loss, which can be upsetting. Please do not feel pressured to discuss anything that upsets you, you can withdraw at any time.

If you are interested in either or both of these options, please contact me below at: If you are interested in either or both of these options, please contact me via Dwellbeing Shieldfield at: info@dwellbeingshieldfield.org.uk

Please mark your email "FAO Isaac Bell Holmstrom"

Annex II – Consent Form

University of Padua Consent form			
Title of Project: "Disparity of resident ontological security and sense of place between two neighbourhoods in Newcastle upon Tyne" Researcher: Isaac Bell Holmström			
			Please tick box
1	I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [date] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.		☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected.		☐
3	I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can, at any time, ask for access to the information I provide and can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.		☐
4	I agree to take part in the above study.		☐
5	I give permission for the transcript of my interview/research to be used for research purposes only (including research publications and reports).		☐
6	I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential. I understand that I have the right to anonymity. I assign copyright of my transcript to Isaac Bell Holmström, who may quote the transcript with strict preservation of anonymity.		☐

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        Participant Name   Date   Signature

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        Researcher   Date   Signature

Annex III – Survey

Age: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 74+
What is your gender?
Who else is in your household? *Live alone/with children/with family/with flatmates/other*
Do you live in: *Heaton/Shieldfield*
How long have you lived in your current neighbourhood?:
How long have you lived in Newcastle upon Tyne?:
Do you live in: *a flat, social rent/ a flat, private rent/ student accommodation/ a flat, bought/ a house, private rent/ a house, bought/ other:*

Place Identity
    (1) I know a lot about the history of my neighbourhood
        [Strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    (2) I feel like the physical neighbourhood reflects the social community here
        [strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    (3) I feel that my lifestyle is accepted here
        [strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]

Place attachment
When I'm in my neighbourhood I feel:
    (1) I'm in a place that is my home
        [strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    (2) I'm in a place that holds a lot of meaning to me
        [strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    (3) I'm in a place where I belong
        [strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    (4) I'm in a place I'd miss if I had to leave
        [strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    (5) I'm in a place I am proud of
        strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree
    (6) I'm in a place that's important to me
        strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree
Would you rather stay in your neighbourhood, or leave? Why?

………
………
……………………………………………………………

Place dependence
    a. In the last 3 months, have you received any of the following help from a neighbour or friend in your vicinity or given it?
    (1) advice, encouragement, or moral support
    (2) babysitting or childcare
    (3) transportation, errands, or shopping

(4) housework, yard work, repairs, or other work around the house?

b. How satisfyingly does your neighbourhood offer:
(1) Places to do my shopping
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(2) Places to work
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
    a. Places to eat
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(3) Places to drink
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(4) Places to meet people
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(5) Places for children to play
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(6) Places to be creative
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]

Demolition

a. Control

(1) I feel consulted on decisions made about demolition in my area
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(2) There are spaces to express my feelings about urban development
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]

b. Likelihood

(1) Buildings on my street are more likely to be refurbished than demolished
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(2) Demolition is not likely to happen to my building
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(3) Demolition is not likely to happen in my area
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]

c. Resilience

(1) Demolition of some of the older buildings would not impact the community here
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(2) Demolition of some of the newer buildings would not impact the community here
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]
(3) This is a resilient community that would continue regardless of some demolitions
[strongly disagree], [disagree], [neutral], [agree], [strongly agree]

Thank you for completing the survey. We would like to invite you take part in an interview or focus group where you can share your views and experience in more detail. If you are interested in either or both of these options, please follow the contact details on the Consent Form.

Annex IV – Flyer distributed in cafes

HAVE YOUR SAY

DO YOU LIVE IN HEATON OR SHIELDFIELD?

Contribute to research to PROTECT local buildings from demolition and STRENGTHEN your community - we want to hear your perspectives on the area!

The survey can be accessed online, but to arrange an interview, email **info@dwellbeingshieldfield.org.uk** and mark your mail "FAO Isaac Bell Holmstrom"

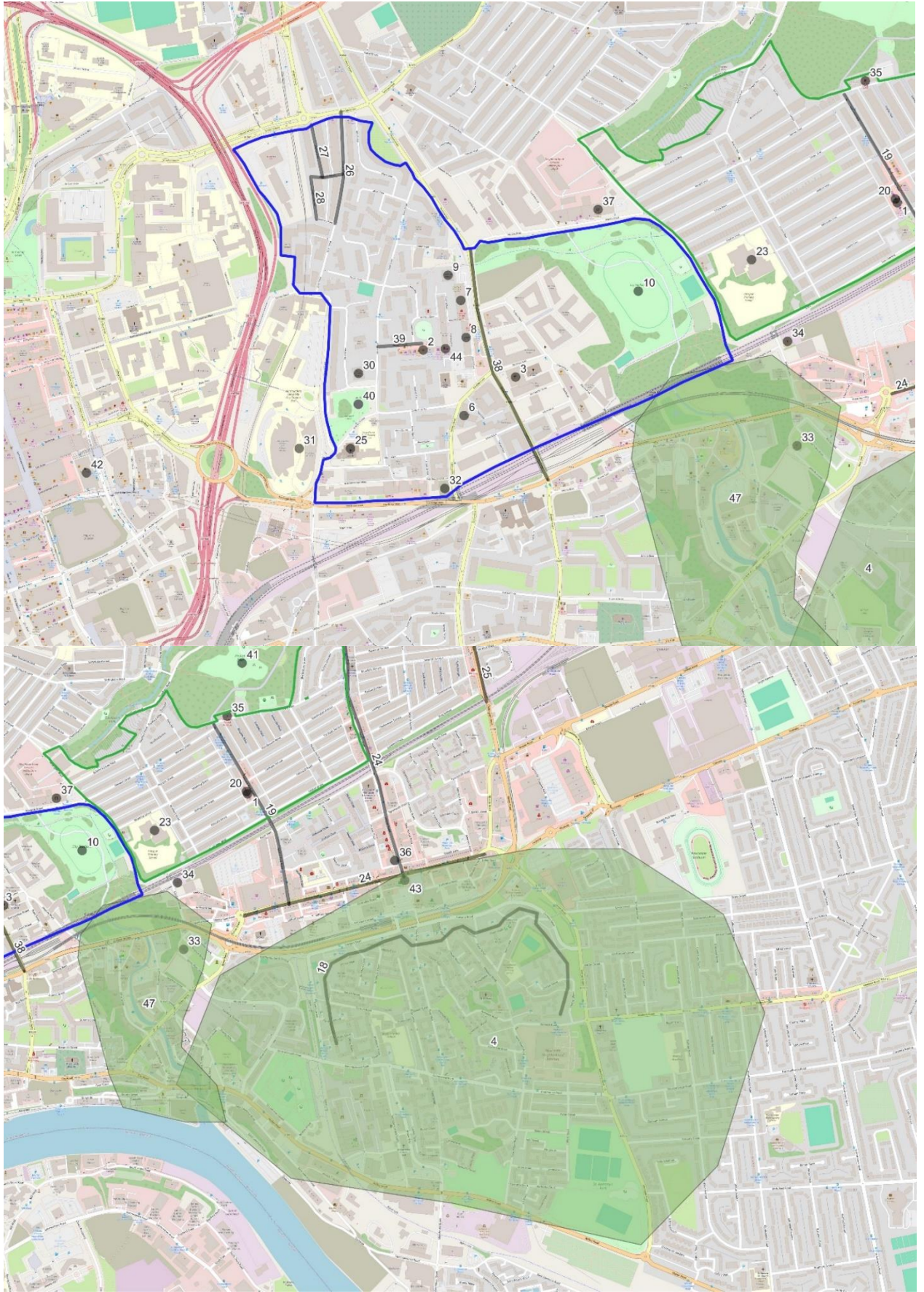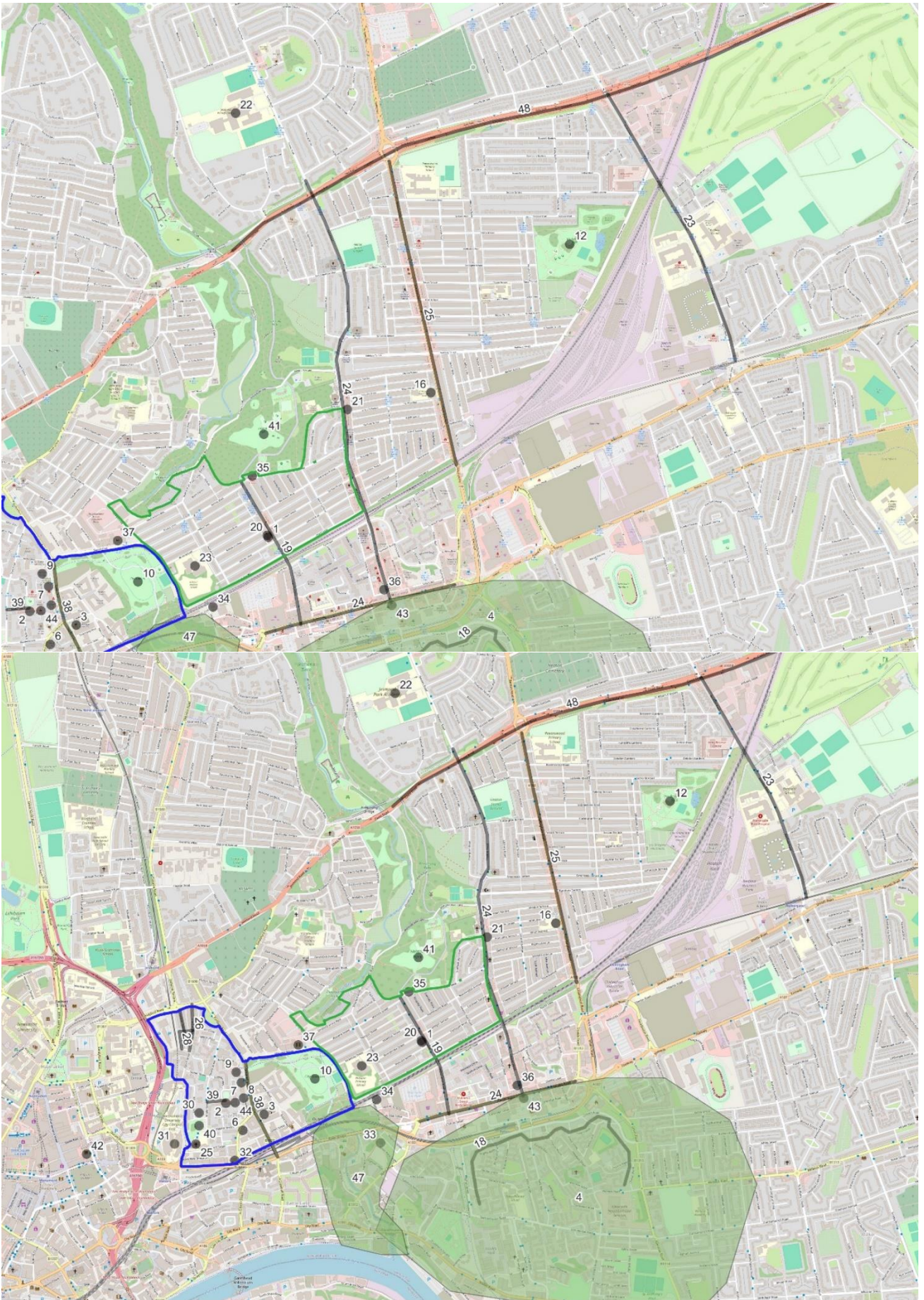**UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA**

Master in Local Development

DWELLBEING SHIELDFIELD

Flourishing together

https://s.surveyplanet.com/c0s6r50n

Annex V – Reference maps

Maps – OpenStreetMap (2024), Isaac Bell Holmström

Legend:

1 – Heaton Perk

2 – Forum Café

3 – Biscuit Factory

4 – Byker

6 – The Shield (PBSA)

7 – Shieldfield Centre

8 – Stoddart House

9 – Shieldfield House

10 – City Stadium

12 – Iris Brickfield

14 – Heaton Road

15 – Chillingham Road

16 - Chillingham Road Primary School

18 – Byker Wall

19 – Heaton Park Road

20 – 109 General Store

21 – The Block and Bottle

22 – Hotspur Primary School

23 – Benfield Road

24 – Shields Road

25 – Christchurch

26 – Chester Street

27 – Harrison Place

28 – Gladstone Terrace

30 – King Charles Tower

31 – Northumbria University building (site of old cinema)

32 – Empty plot at the corner of Newbridge and Clarence

33 – The Cumberland Arms

34 – The Old Coal Yard

35 – Victoria Library

36 – Kwiksave

37 – The Star and Shadow Cinema

38 – Stoddart Street

39 – Wretham Place

40 – Shieldfield Green

41 - Heaton Park

43 – Byker Library

44 – Big River Bakery

47 – Ouseburn

48 – Coast Road

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