

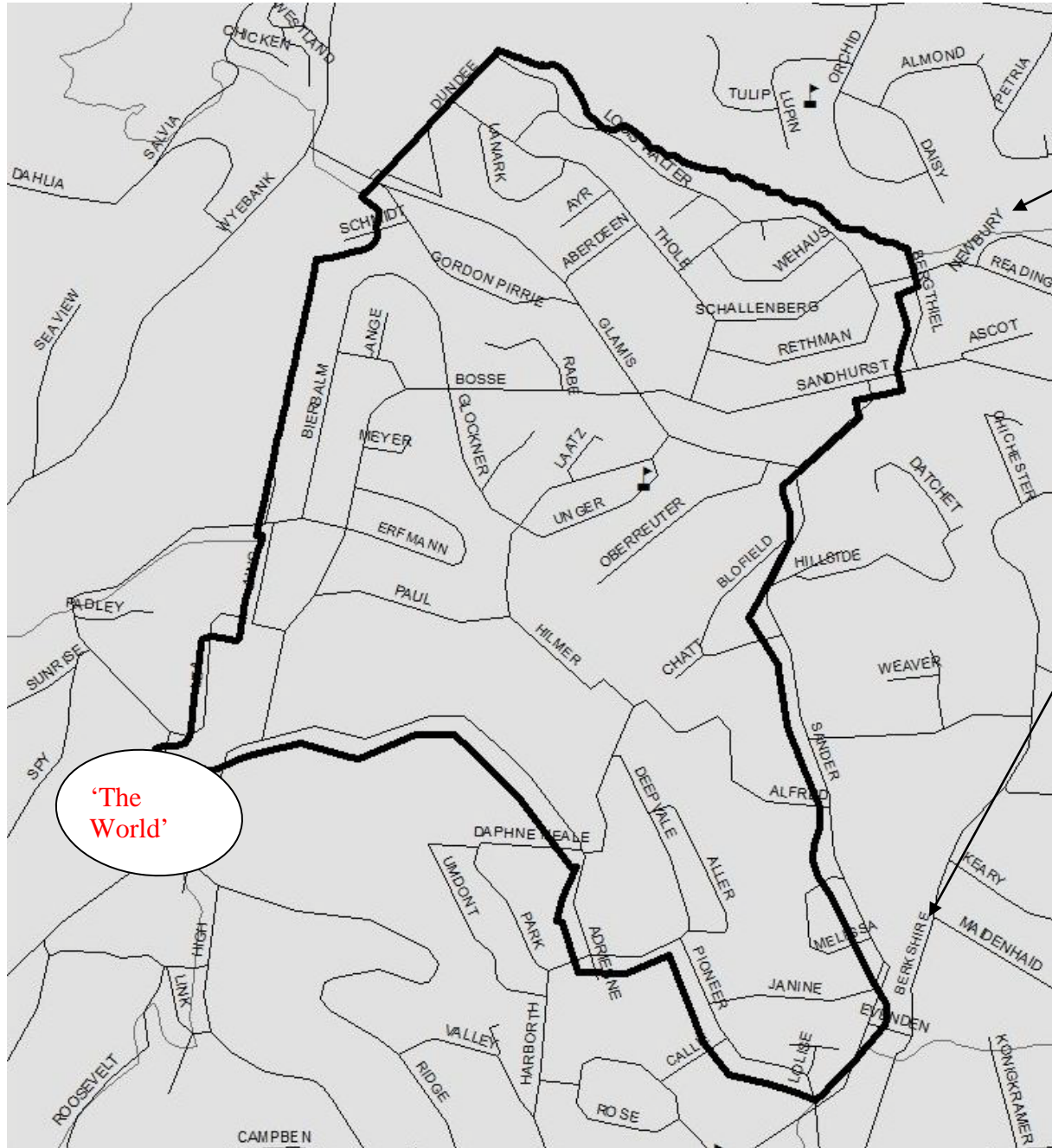
Property Value

Decreases

Integration

Increases

Integration



Newbury road where 25 flats /white house were build

Berkshire road signaling the beginning of 'Buffer Strip'

Regarding the perimeters of New Germany, respondents mentioned that Berkshire road separates New Germany and Claremont (Township). Berkshire, Habborth and Rose roads, which appear outside of the community boundaries in the map above are also considered as part of New Germany by residents. The map does not cover the industrial area which includes New Germany Primary School. When asked about the map, one respondent stated that “boundaries are changed over time”. The information gathered from all interviews show that people have their own impressions of what New Germany is and where its boundaries lie. In general, people define a place as part of New Germany if it utilizes most of the services offered in New Germany.

HISTORY

New Germany was developed by German settlers. According to some respondents, New Germany was started by Reverend Posselt when he launched a Lutheran Church missionary in the area in 1848. Nevertheless, other sources suggest that New Germany was founded by Jonas Bergtheil around the same time. The settlers were mostly impoverished Germans who just arrived looking for jobs since conditions were difficult in Germany. These settlers bought the land to plant cotton but later used it for vegetables as it was not suitable for cotton. New Germany was later bought for use as a golf course estate. As time progressed, houses were developed on that land and the area then became an entry point into the housing market for many white people.

CHANGE AND RACIAL INTEGRATION

The transition from apartheid to democracy in the early 1990s resulted in significant changes for New Germany. Previously, the community was reserved for white residents only. As one resident said, “As the government changed people had a choice of where they wanted to stay.” Many non-white residents began to move to New Germany. Prior to the end of apartheid, one resident suggested that the community was about 99% white, however, residents now estimate that the area is more than 60% African. These

demographic changes can be seen for example in the New German Lutheran Church, which had an exclusively German congregation until the 1990s when African people began to move into the area. Today more than 50% of the congregation is black. According to some residents, racial change started even before the end of apartheid in 1994. In one case, an employee in a school recalled that in 1980 he was called by a learner a 'Kaffir.' In response he hit the learner. The white management of the school at that time sided with him and disciplined the learner. The employee said "...there was just judgment" in terms of race. The first black student entered the school in 1993. More recently, demographic shifts are well demonstrated in the schools. New Germany Primary School is a 40 year old school. After about 13 years, it became overcrowded and Lyndhurst Primary school was built. A representative of New Germany Primary School reported that the school now has more than 90% African learners and further stated that "...there has been substantial growth in terms of acceptance". Lyndhurst Primary School is a similar. The school was completely white in 1990. Today there are 715 learners; 18 white, 42 Indian, and 655 African students. Many of these students don't live in New Germany but come from the townships to attend the better schools in the formerly white areas.

For the most part, demographic changes do not appear to have resulted in significant increases in inter-racial interaction but they have also not been met with great animosity. An estate agent suggested that "there is no intensified interaction but also no discrimination exists." He further suggested that social settings such as religious organizations are important sites for potential interaction since "religion promotes racial integration." A religious leader reiterated this point and referred to racial integration in New Germany as an 'organic process', a natural process which was not enforced or facilitated. He believes that "...if we can pray together, we can work together."

Demographic change in New Germany was likely enabled by the area's character as an economically mixed middle class community with affordable housing opportunities. As the end of apartheid allowed Africans to purchase houses throughout the city, many chose New Germany because of the affordability of the area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic activity in New Germany consists of a CBD, industries, and schools in which many residents are employed. Residents tend to be factory workers, nurses, teachers, and a few lecturers. About 30% of New Germany's residents work within the community. Others travel to Pinetown, Durban city, and some to Pietermaritzburg for work.

There are some cases of people operating businesses from their houses in the form of salons, selling airtime and sweets. However, this type of economic activity is rare. The closing of Frame factory has had a significant negative effect on the economy of New Germany. Frame was a textile mill and a major employer in the area but has struggled to compete with cheap imports. However, there is a possibility that Chinese investors may be buying the textile mill through the assistance of Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa. There is no informal economy activity and no new development except in terms of housing. There is little economic activity within the residential area of New Germany.

HOUSING

Historically, New Germany has been an entry point into the housing market for many white people. Since the political transition it has served the same function for an increasingly racially mixed middle class. An estate agent pointed out that people in the area tend to own their property. In general, houses in New Germany are in good standard and consist of standalone bond houses, flats, and RDP houses. The mixture of these different types of houses represents the variety of different economic classes in New Germany.

Since 1994 housing prices in New Germany have increased dramatically. One resident argued that "the prices are changing all the time and they are increasing." He emphasized that in the past you could get a house for around R50 000. The prices of the houses has

since increased from about R60 000- R100 000 and up to about R300 000 around 2004-2005. The value of the houses is currently about R600 000.

Since 1994 there have been various housing development projects that have taken place in New Germany. In 1996 a housing project called White house or Newbury housing which consisted of 25 homes was started near Newbury road by a developer who received a tender from a bank. It was finished in 1998. Eventually, ABSA bought the houses since people were not paying their bond after the developer ran off with the deposits from the residents. As a result people had to be evicted. Harmony heights flats was built but was not finished. People were moved to KwaMhlangu housing, a low-cost housing development close to the eastern 'buffer strip' between New Germany and Claremont. The KwaMahlangu developers bought the land and started building the houses slowly.

Informal housing in the area is controlled by the municipality, which has specified the material of building shacks as a semi-solid structure which is semi-permanent. There has been concern among long-term residents that the "...proximity of low-cost housing decreased the value of promising property in New Germany." Respondents generally held the view that RDP houses at Berkshire Road decrease the value of other houses in the community. According to one respondent, New Germany's property value grew the most in the whole of South Africa in 1996, which is evidence that the area is still in demand.

The various types of houses accommodate different economic classes in New Germany. One area, called 'The World' or Padfield Manors is located close to Pinetown and situated around Padfield road. This is an upper class area consisting of entrepreneurs of various races but of a similar class status. One respondent pointed out that "very wealthy people live in Padfield manors." Padfield was previously a part Pinetown but is now incorporated into New Germany as a result of changing demarcations of ward boundaries.

When people move out of New Germany they go to more prestigious areas around Durban such as Umhlanga, Kloof, and Hillcrest. Most of the time, this movement is economically driven. Informants also said that residents were leaving because of concerns over security and violence. One estate agent stated that “whites tend to move away to other countries. Others moved to Umhlanga although there were not many.”

SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In terms of transportation, many people in the area rely on private transportation. A former New Germany political representative pointed out that “public transport in white areas is pretty non-existent.” There is no bus service. Taxis came after 1994 as Africans began to move into the area, however they do not cover all of the areas of New Germany. As a result, children spend long hours after school waiting for transport.

Residents complained that there was a lack of dependable policing and they instead relied on private security. An estate agent emphasized the need for a police station. One respondent mentioned that there is no line of communication between the police and the councilor while others expressed a concern that policing is difficult in the area since it includes the Kloof, Westville, buffer strip thus its coverage is huge and limited by very limited resources (such as police cars). Residents were quick to acknowledge the link between poverty and crime. One informant further clarified that the “cause of crime is not racial but financial and not a result of integration.” Crime is related to the lack of employment and poverty thus it is not about black or white since there are lot of black poor people who are also victims of crime. A church leader stated that “... poor people are the soft target.” A Community Policing Forum (CPF) exists in the area but is not very active. The metro police do assist with traffic regulation at schools.

With regards to services and infrastructure, there is clean water, an operational clinic and a nearby hospital. Electricity and sanitation services are working well. However there are limited retail opportunities and few shopping malls (New Germany residents normally use Pinetown malls). One educator expressed concern that “there is nothing in the area

for children during holidays.” However, another respondent said the area has playgrounds, though they are largely unused, and recreational facilities such as tennis courts have degraded in quality. There is no high school in the area; however, a proposed site has been selected on which to build one. However there has been contention over whether a high school is the appropriate development project for the site. The lack of a high school was identified as a problem by various respondents. With regards to roads, there is a new freeway, which will pass from New Germany to Inanda. Because of concern that this may result in deaths of many children, pedestrian bridges will also be built.

RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

There is a presence of both the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the ANC in the area. Politically, New Germany is described as a place where “nobody worries about anything” and there is only limited political involvement. One community member stated: “I’ve never heard an announcement of a meeting in New Germany and I don’t know who the councilor of New Germany is.” Interaction with government could be improved according to many residents who felt that community based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the ratepayers’ association, and the councilor are not working very well. “I’m still waiting for the Councillor to invite me in a meeting” said one community leader.

Photos of New Germany



