

BUSINESS & STAKEHOLDER SURVEY – August 2013

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2.4 Business Survey Methodology

Businesses were included in the survey if the owner ran their business from premises within the Sedlescombe parish boundary, including the owner's residence. The survey was sent to 61 businesses identified as operating within the parish. One business was subsequently identified as having ceased trading and another as operating outside the parish boundary, leaving 59 businesses in total.

Table 1, Businesses in Sedlescombe

Category	Name
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Agriculture	
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1.1	Ackroyd, Footlands Farm, Battle Road, Staplecross TN32 5QU
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1.1	David Blowey, Brede Barn Farm, Brede Lane TN33 OPG
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1.1	Elizabeth Cole/Holford Pitcher, Church Hill Farm, Church Hill, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QP
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1.1	Eric and Janet Rowland, Great Sanders Fruit Farm, Chittleburch Yard, Beech Farm Road
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1.1	Graham Hinde, Swailes Green Farm, Battle Road, Staplecross TN32 5QU
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1.1	John Marland, Lower Jacobs Farm, Brede Lane, Sedlescombe TN33 OPN.
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	Norman Hunt & sons, Waydown Wood/Fruit Farm, New England Lane, Sedlescombe TN33
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1.1	ORP
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1.1	Sharewood Farm, New England Lane, Sedlescombe, TN33 OR
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Agriculture+ (Forestry, Holiday lets, Retail)	
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1.2	Jonathan Vine-Hall, Hurst House, Hurst Lane, Sedlescombe TN33 OPE.
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1.2	Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard, Hawkhurst Road, Cripps Corner, Robertsbridge TN32 5SA
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Art	
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2	A Wynne, Venus Glass Art, 17 Park Shaw, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 OPP
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2	Mark Fisher, The Den, Meadow Lane, Sedlescombe, TN33 ORF
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Business Premises Rentals	
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3	Bridge Garage Workshops, The Street, Sedlescombe TN33 0QB
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3	John Mynard, Sedlescombe Sawmills Ltd, Hawkhurst Road, Staplecross, TN32 5SA
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3	Paul Thomas, Pumphouse Yard, The Green, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QA
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Building Services

- Andrew Gerken, Pumphouse Designs Ltd, Pumphouse Yard, The Green, Sedlescombe,
4 TN33 0QA
- 4 Danny Dennett, DD Construction, Park Shaw, Sedlescombe TN33 OPP
- 4 Heavy Gang Ltd, Bowlings Corner, Marley Lane, Sedlescombe TN33 ORE
- John Grice, Property & Garden Improvements, Little Bushey, Meadow Lane,
4 Sedlescombe, Battle, TN33 ORF.
- Parker & Son Building Services, The Presbytery, The Street, Sedlescombe, Battle, East
4 Sussex, TN33 0QF

Education

- 5 Pestalozzi International Village Trust, Ladybird Lane, Sedlescombe, TN33 OUF.
- 5 Sedlescombe CE Primary School, Brede Ln Sedlescombe, TN33

Equestrian

- 6 Fiona & Trevor Devon, Equestrian Centre, Battle Barn Farm, New Road TN33 ORL
- 6 Petley Wood Equestrian Centre, Petley Farm, Marley Lane, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 ORE
- 6 Steve Roper, Horsmans Shire Horses/Welsh Cobs, Horsmans Farm, New Road TN33 ORL

Health

- Andrea Birtwistle DpodM MCHS HCPC Registered, Catkins Meadow Lane, Sedlescombe,
7 Battle, East Sussex, TN33 ORF
- 7 Andrea Hanagarth, The Yoga School, Midhurst, Hurst Lane, TN33 OPE
- 7 GP Surgery, Brede Lane, Sedlescombe, TN33 OPW.
- 7 Martin Garner, Foot Healthcare, 6 Gorselands, Sedlescombe, Battle, TN33 OPT

Hotels/Pubs

- 8 Brickwall Hotel, The Green, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0QA
- 8 The Queen's Head, The Green, Sedlescombe TN33 0QA

Manufacturing

- 9 Anvil Tubesmiths, Sedlescombe Sawmills, Hawkhurst Road, Staplecross, TN32 5SA

Retail

- 10 Blackbrooks Garden Centre, A21, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 ORJ
- 10 CKL Developments Ltd, Woodcote, Marley Lane Business Park, Battle, TN33 ORE.

- 10 Country Ways Oak Furniture, Little Swailes Green, Swailes Green, Robertsbridge TN32 5QU
- 10 D&B Fencing, Sedlescombe Sawmills, Hawkhurst Road, Staplecross, TN32 5SA
- David Barnes, LWA Bodyshop Ltd, Rear of Bridge Garage, The Street, Sedlescombe TN33
10 OQB
- 10 Ecoflo Garden Irrigation Ltd, Stream Farm, Stream Lane, Sedlescombe TN33 OPB
- John Bewick, Sedlescombe Antiques & Collectables Market, Bridge Garage Flat, The Street,
10 Sedlescombe TN33 0QA
- Just Cambelts Gearboxes & Clutches, Pump House Yard, The Green, Sedlescombe, TN33
10 0QA
- 10 Rand Reclamation, Beanford Farmhouse, New Road, Sedlescombe TN33 ORL
- Security Doors and Windows, Unit 2, Pumphouse Yard, The Green, Sedlescombe, TN33
10 0QA
- 10 Sedlescombe Village Stores Ltd, The Green, Sedlescombe TN33 0QA
- Ultrasafe Fire Suppression, Unit 1 Bowlings Corner, Marley Lane, Battle, East Sussex, TN33
10 ORE

Services

- 11 Clock House Hair & Beauty, The Street, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0QE.
- 11 Daniel Heating Ltd, Bramlea, Balcombe Green, Sedlescombe TN33 0QL
Foreign Language Services. 1 Coach House Cottages Hurst Lane, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0PE
- 11 Jason Monk Plumbing and Heating, 31 Gorselands, Sedlescombe, TN33 OPT.
- 11 Richard Jordan Ltd, Millstones Cottage, The Street, Sedlescombe TN33 0QB

Tourism

- 12 Acorn Chalet/Holiday Let, Churchland Lane, Sedlescombe, Battle TN33 0PF
- 12 Amanda Pollard, Luffs Farm/Holiday Lets, Chapel Hill, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QX.
Apple Cottage and Quince Cottage/Holiday Lets, Lower Marley Farm, New Road, TN33 0RG.
- 12 Castlemans Cottages/Holiday Lets, Hawkhurst Road, Sedlescombe, TN33
- 12 Derek Wright, Kester House B&B, The Street, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QB
- 12 Jane Petkovic, Poppinghole Farm Cottages/Holiday Lets, Poppinghole Lane TN32 5BN
- 12 Meadowside Caravan & Camping Park, Whydown Farm, Crazy Lane TN33 0QT
- 12 W H Cole, /Holiday Let, Spilstead Farm, Stream Lane, Sedlescombe, TN33 0PB

Transport

- 13 Hilary Hannam, Sedlescombe Hire Car, Postboys, The Street, Sedlescombe TN33 0QF
- 13 Town & Country Taxis, Flat 4, The Pollards The Street, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QB

Table 2, Business Type

		Total (responders and non-responders)	
	Type of Business	n	%
1.1	Agriculture	8	13.6
1.2	Agriculture+ (Forestry, Holiday Let, Retail)	2	3.4
2	Art	2	3.4
3	Business premises rentals	3	5.1
4	Building Services	5	8.5
5	Education	2	3.4
6	Equestrian	3	5.1
7	Health	4	6.8
8	Hotels/Pubs	2	3.4
9	Manufacturing	1	1.7
10	Retail	12	20.3
11	Services	5	8.5
12	Tourism	8	13.6
13	Transport	2	3.4
		59	

The majority of businesses in the parish (55.8 %) are involved in retail (20.3%), agriculture (17%) and tourism (13.6%).

Business Locations

39% (n=23) of businesses are located within the Sedlescombe village development boundary (hereinafter referred to as the 'village boundary') and 61% (n=36) outside the boundary.

Questionnaire

The survey comprised 15 questions to gather information on the types of businesses operating from the parish, the number of people employed, whether employers preferred to employ Sedlescombe residents rather than people living outside the parish, their views about the type of housing suitable for employees, plans for business expansion and perceived local barriers to the success of the business.

Survey Data

The data was checked and cleaned, discrepancies resolved, and the results summarised (descriptive statistics).

Respondents

- 39 businesses returned a completed survey (66.1 % response rate).
- These businesses employ a total of 301.5 employees.
- 16 (41.0 %) businesses are located inside the village boundary and 23 (59.0 %) outside.

Non Respondents

- 20 businesses did not return the questionnaire.
- The number of employees has been estimated as a minimum of 1 per business (the owner) in order to give a more representative figure of the total number of people employed by businesses located in the parish: 321.5 employees.
- 7 (35.0 %) businesses are located inside the village boundary and 13 (65.0 %) outside.

Survey Results

Q.1 What is the nature of your organisation?

The types of businesses are described in Table 3.

Table 3, Business Type

		Total (responders)	
		n	%
1.1	Agriculture	4	10.3
1.2	Agriculture+ (Forestry, Holiday Let, Retail)	2	5.1
2	Art	0	0.0

3	Business premises rentals	3	7.7
4	Building Services	3	7.7
5	Education	2	5.1
6	Equestrian	2	5.1
7	Health	3	7.7
8	Hotels/Pubs	2	5.1
9	Manufacturing	1	2.6
10	Retail	10	25.6
11	Services	2	5.1
12	Tourism	4	10.3
13	Transport	1	2.6
		39	

The businesses that completed and returned the survey were broadly representative of the majority of types of business in the parish, with a similar proportion of retail (25.6%), agriculture (15.4%) and tourism (10.3%).

Q.2 How long has your organisation been established in Sedlescombe?

Years	Organisation (n)	%
< 1	1	2.6
1-5	7	17.9
6-10	10	25.6
11-15	4	10.3
16-20	3	7.7
>20	14	35.9
	39	

20.5% of businesses have been established for less than 5 years and 35.9% for more than 20 years.

Q.3 How many people are employed in the organisation, including you?

Employers and employees

Size of Business Number (n) of employees per business	Employers n (%)	Employees n (%)
1-5	23 (56.4 %)	46 (15.3%)
6-10	9 (23.1%)	70.5 (23.4%)
11-15	2 (5.1%)	27 (9.0%)
16-20	2 (5.1%)	33 (10.9%)
20+	4 (10.3%)	125 (41.5%)
	39	301.5

Most businesses (56.4%) employ between 1-5 people. The majority of employees (41.5%) are employed by businesses employing 20 people or more, and 3 businesses employ 101 people (about 1/3rd each).

Inside Village Boundary

Size of Business Number (n) of employees per business	Employers n (%)	Employees n (%)
1-5	8 (50.0%)	16 (10.8%)
6-10	3 (18.8%)	29 (19.6%)
11-15	2 (12.5%)	27 (18.2%)
16-20	1 (6.3%)	17 (11.5%)
20+	2 (12.5%)	59 (39.9%)
	16	148

Outside Village Boundary

Size of Business Number (n) of employees per business	Employers n (%)	Employees n (%)
1-5	14 (60.9%)	30 (19.5%)
6-10	6 (26.1%)	41.5 (27.0%)
11-15	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
16-20	1 (4.3%)	16 (10.4%)
20+	2 (8.7%)	66 (43.0%)
	23	153.5

About the same number of people are employed outside the village boundary (153.5, 50.9%) compared to those inside the boundary (148, 49.1%).

Q.4 How many of your employees, including yourself, live in Sedlescombe Village, Sedlescombe Parish, outside the parish?

Area of Residence	Employees	%
Sedlescombe Village	69	22.9
Sedlescombe Parish	31	15.4
Elsewhere	201.5	66.8
	301.5	

- *JVH: Interesting the number employed that come from outside Parish vs. our slightly higher unemployment. The problem is not jobs it's skills.*

Q.5 How do you/your employees who live in the village travel to work

24 respondents said they or their employees living in the village either walked to work, travelled by motor vehicle (public bus, community bus, motorbike, car), cycled or lived on the premises.

	Yes	%
On foot	17	44.7
Bicycle	2	5.3
Motor vehicle	12	31.6
Live on premises	3	7.9

Q.6 How do you/your employees who live outside the village travel to work?

28 respondents said they or their employees living outside the village walked to work, cycled or travelled by motor vehicle.

	Yes	%
On foot	10	26.3
Bicycle	1	2.6
Motor vehicle	25	65.8

Q.7 Do you prefer to employ people from Sedlescombe?

		%
Yes	18	46.2
No	10	25.6
Not answered	11	28.2

The majority of employers (46.2 %) said they would prefer to employ people from Sedlescombe. Some of the advantages listed included greater reliability and flexibility about working hours, and a general desire to provide employment for the local community. *'Preferable as supports local community, improved attendance in bad weather, lower carbon footprint, but have not been able to fill post with hours required locally.'* A key factor determining who they employed simply reflected the skill match. *'We employ staff who have qualifications needed regardless of where they reside.'*

Q.8 the last time you employed someone, were you able to fill the position with someone from Sedlescombe?

		%
Yes	14	35.9
No	18	46.2
Not answered	7	17.9

Most employers (46.2 %) had not been able to fill their most recent vacancy with someone from the parish. Significant themes were that no one had applied or that those who had weren't suitably skilled.

Q.9 Do you expect to expand your organisation?

- a. If yes, will you need larger premises?
- b. If yes, do you expect to find suitable premises in or around Sedlescombe?

		%
Yes	16	41.0
No	13	33.3
Not answered	10	25.6

41.0 % of employers said they intended to expand their business. 50.0 % of these said they would need larger premises and ¾ said they expected to find suitable premises in or around Sedlescombe.

Q.10 What do you see as the main issues affecting your organisation in Sedlescombe?

Employers raised a variety of local issues that they feel negatively impact on their business, including lack of support from residents who preferentially use services outside the parish and a reliance of passing trade (e.g. the village shop and garage), the speed of traffic through the centre of the village which creates noise particularly at night for businesses offering accommodation (e.g. B+B and hotel), along with congestion and parking problems, the lack of public transport hindering staff and visitors, and the slow internet broadband speed.

Q.11 What sort of housing do you think employees in Sedlescombe will need in the future?

Asked to rank the following categories, from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):

- a. Privately owned homes
- b. Socially rented homes*
(*owned and run by Housing Associations)
- c. Part owned Housing Association homes
(occupiers own between 25%-75% then pay a lower rent)
- d. Houses with work space attached, so employees can work from home
- e. Lower cost starter homes
- f. Other (*please write in*)

	Q.11.a Priv Own (n)	Q.11.b Soc Rent (n)	Q.11.c Part Own (n)	Q.11.d Work space (n)	Q.11.e Low Cost (n)
Rank 1	14	5	5	5	17
2	3	1	4	3	9
3	3	4	8	4	1
4	3	8	4	4	1
5	4	6	1	8	0

Scores					
5	70	25	25	25	85
4	12	4	16	12	36
3	9	12	24	12	3
2	6	16	8	8	2
1	4	6	1	8	0
	101	63	74	65	126

Low cost starter homes were ranked 1st priority by the business community, followed by privately owned homes. Socially rented housing, shared ownership and housing with workspace attached were all ranked as 1st priority with equal frequency.

However, inspection of the scored data reveals that while low cost start homes and privately owned homes score remain in first and second place, shared ownership now falls in third place, followed by housing with workspace attached and lastly socially rented housing.

Q.12 What are Sedlescombe's main problems in your view?

Asked to pick the top 3 from the following issues:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Traffic in Brede Lane/The Street | f. Parking in Brede Lane |
| b. Speed of cars through the village | g. Parking on The Street |
| c. Anti-social behaviour | h. Parking outside the shop |
| d. Lack of pavements | i. Other (<i>please write in</i>) |
| e. Lack of street lighting | |

The top 3 issues identified as being the main problems in Sedlescombe were: (1) traffic in Brede Lane/The Street, (2) Speed of cars through the village and (3) Parking outside the village shop.

	Q.12.a Traffic (n)	Q.12.b Speed (n)	Q.12.c Anti Soc (n)	Q.12.d Pavements (n)	Q.12.e Lighting (n)	Q.12.f Brede Park (n)	Q.12.g Street Park (n)	Q.12.h Shop Park (n)
Count	22	19	5	3	4	12	13	17
%	57.9	50.0	13.2	7.9	42.1	31.6	34.2	44.7

Q.13 Would you prefer to see new housing development on Greenfield sites or Brownfield sites?

The vast majority of respondents (81.6%) favoured housing development on brownfield sites. *Opposed to development on greenfield sites 'unless no alternative'.*

Site	Yes		No		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Greenfield	6	15.8	22	57.9	10	26.3
Brownfield	31	81.6	2	5.3	5	13.2

Q.14 What are the main things which inhibit your organisation currently in Sedlescombe?

	n (%)
No issues	8 (20.5%)
Issues	17 (44.7%)
• Traffic (parking, speed)	5 (12.8%)
• Environmental health and planning constraints	3 (7.7%)
• Lack of local support for business	2 (5.1%)
• Inadequate infrastructure support (e.g. clearing snow off roads, reliability of services, public transport)	2 (5.1%)
• Recruitment	1 (2.6%)
• Other/Various (e.g. lack of farmland to buy/rent, more parking bays, recruitment, lack of profitability to develop business)	5 (12.8%)

44.7% of respondents reported a variety of issues that inhibited their business, the most frequently mentioned were traffic-related issues (12.8%) *'The village is lovely but spoilt by so much traffic'*. 20.5% said they experienced no local constraints.

2 businesses said they were unable to maximise profitability due to complaints from residents about associated noise.

Some businesses highlighted the lack of support from local people and recruitment difficulties.

Q.15 Are there any other comments you would like to make?

There were few general comments.

Some businesses recognised the need for development, as long as it takes place in a manner that brings benefit to Sedlescombe.

- *'Future development is obviously important for the growth of the village & local business people. As long as the approach to housing etc. is sensitive and balanced ensuring everyone connected with the village is always considered then it is the way to proceed.'*
- *'We understand the need for additional development within the Parish but believe that this can be done in a sensitive way that adds to the distinctiveness of the Village rather than detracting from it.'*

Another business reflected that

- *'Increased housing does not bring skilled workers for agricultural business'.*

Some felt it would be helpful to restrict long stay parking in the village to the village car park, and to reserve the area around The Green to short stay parking to facilitate use of the village shop.

2.5 Other Stakeholders' Methodology

Police

The local police constabulary were sent a brief survey questionnaire, asking what from their point of view were the main problems in Sedlescombe today, what attempts had been made to solve them and whether they were on-going, and what would make the problems solvable or help relieve the problem(s)?

- *Parking around the school and speed are the main problems in the village. Speedwatch has been set up in the village and volunteers have now been trained. Additional patrols at school time and some extra signage will be used. Any additional traffic flow in Brede Lane will increase this problem. Antisocial behaviour is at a very low level.*

They were also asked whether there were any parts of the village that experience worse problems in terms of crime, antisocial behaviour, parking and traffic.

- *The Street is the main issue for speed although reports have been received from residents in Brede Lane of excess speed. The parking issues are mainly around the school and are specific to drop off and pick up times. Antisocial behaviour is generally centred on East View Terrace.*

And whether there were any areas/roads or roads which lead onto other roads would the police suggest avoiding for any new development, or if there were any specific roads or section of roads or feeder roads that should be avoided where new development would exacerbate any current situation?

- *An increase in traffic using the Brede Lane would cause additional issues at school pickup and drop off times.*

The constabulary did not respond to two questions that were not specifically policing matters asking whether from their experience it would be better to have smaller (6) or larger housing developments (up to 50) in Sedlescombe, nor did they respond to a question asking whether they would prefer to see new development attached to the existing village boundary on greenfield sites or on brownfield sites which are close to but not attached to the village boundary.

Estate Agents

Two estate agents were approached who covered Sedlescombe Parish, one covering both sales and rentals and the other specialising in rental properties. Views about future housing development in the Parish were explored with a semi-structured telephone interview. Topics included aspects about the Parish that were attractive to potential renters/buyers, perceived market demand for property, interest in and the impact of new housing development (size of property and density of housing).

1: Sales and Rentals

The estate agent covering sales and rentals said that Sedlescombe was one of the most popular local areas to live in. It had a good reputation and as a larger village was seen as '*a bit more vibrant*' than many. The most important factor influencing market demand was the attractive village environment and the sense of community. For families, the good recreational community facilities (e.g. the sports field) were important. The proximity of good road (A21) and rail connections from nearby Battle were attractive to both commuters and the retired, offering easy accessibility to London and other parts of the UK to visit family and for holidays.

A good mix of different types of housing would all generate interest, from low cost starter homes to larger properties. There was interest from buyers in London and Surrey, some of whom were planning to commute to work and others on retiring. These buyers found higher levels of housing density more acceptable than local buyers, reflecting their experience of greater housing density in the crowded Surrey belt and London areas. As a general rule, the smaller and more select the development, the higher the property price and conversely, the larger the development, the lower the price. There was also interest from investors looking for buy-to-let properties, for short term leases ranging from 6 months to 1 year.

From the estate agent's point of view, the key factors to bear in mind when developing new housing were: (1) the sort of people we're trying to attract to the village, (2) housing in/near the centre of the village for the retired or sheltered accommodation, and (3) properties on the outskirts of the village for families and homes priced at the high end of the market. It was important not to spoil the character of the village with large-scale development, where the limited infrastructure meant this level of housing was not sustainable. He cited the recent large development of sixty-six 2, 3, 4 and 5-bedroom houses by Taylor Wimpey in the village of Buxted, Uckfield (including 19 affordable homes) as an example of how new development can spoil a village environment.

2: Rentals

The estate agent covering rentals said that there was interest in all types of property in Sedlescombe. The level of interest was constrained by the availability of properties for rent.

Sedlescombe was seen as a '*living village*' with residents working nearby, and families were drawn to its many assets including the village hall and playing fields, the primary school with a good reputation, village shop and local pub, and the frequent commuter rail service from Battle to London.

People who were looking to rent typically had just moved to the area with a new job and rented for 1 to 2 years before buying, while those on short term contracts were not interested in buying a property.

In general, smaller scale developments (not large estates) that were sited properly, and were of the right size and type to address rental demand, would generally do very well. Blocks of flats and 2 bedroom houses with a garden were attractive to investors, and there was also a rental market for 3 or 4 (but not 5) bedroom detached houses.