On reasons for moving into the boomed suburb:

“I mean, we looked at a couple of other places but they were complexes, and I still remember part of the appeal of this was that it was kind of doubly secure because of the boomed area.”

“I’ve heard like two separate places now, where there have been people who had a house in the boomed suburb and moved somewhere else, but like in the boomed suburb. And my mom and I were having a conversation like, why would you do that? If you’re gonna go through the trouble of moving, why are you moving like three houses down? But people do that, people stick around. This place is like, sticky.”

On running in the suburb, a favoured hobby of hers:

“I would drive from here to the other boomed suburb, we would park our cars outside but it was with a big group, so that made me feel better. But when I started running I was running in here, alone, like 4k’s, and there were times that I started going outside the boomed areas and that’s where I would feel uncomfortable. There’s also, I think, cameras kind of on the street in the suburb, and I just used to tell myself that at least if something happened, it would be like, recorded.”

“We have remotes that allow us to just press a button at the boom and the boom opens, as opposed to rolling down your window and waving at the sensor, so we pay for those as well.”

“There’s always been booms on the roads here, for as long as I can remember, it’s not a relatively new thing, everyone knows this is one of these areas.”

“People take issue with the taxi rank, and one of the main roads is just down there, and people always get worried about that, and I think this was like kind of a way to break the access to the rest of the area, it created this buffer.”

On how booms affect daily mobility and routines:

“They do. Um, ya they do. I mean, for me, the only time I interact with them is obviously when I go for runs, but there’s pedestrian entrances at the side that have no physical barrier at all, there might be a bit of foot traffic but you just kind of deal with it. And in terms of daily routines, especially if I don’t have the bunch of keys with the special remote on, what a hassle, roll down my window, do the little wave (jokingly), people don’t know how to use these sensors, everyone wants to touch the button even though it says don’t touch, just wave. So that can be fun, getting annoyed with other people that don’t know how to use it. But not like, it doesn’t kind of make or break my day, just a little moment of frustration. But a lot of the times they like malfunction and they just end up tying them up anyway, the booms. They’ve been doing a lot of maintenance on it lately.”

“Moreso by car. Often the kind of people that are walking, you know there’s a couple of hard runners but there’s normally groups of helpers that work in the area that walk together, because there’s been a lot of incidents with them. People try to kidnap them and stuff. There’s been a woman who got kidnapped just outside the boom gate, this car pulled over and forced her into the car. There’s also been a couple of incidents of people getting mugged, like literally just from the nearest taxi drop off area to here. Me and my helper have a really good relationship and she chats to me about this stuff, and she says ‘No they walk in groups now,’ just until they get to the boomed area at least, cause its safer.”

On what she sees differently by living here:

“I suppose I do. Um, it just … that was the whole appeal as well, moving away from our old house that was stand alone, just there in the naked suburbs. There was always security concerns, we had a couple of incidents at that house. It was a worry for my parents having a lock and go that was vulnerable, so it needed to be in the complex, it was definitely gonna be in a complex. And like I said the boomed area added this like extra layer of comfort and reassurance … but there is this sense of peace that comes with just knowing at least there’s just measures in place.”

“It almost like romanticises it as well, it’s like this is now … it becomes that thing of like, we’re this little community, like there’s physical barriers for this little community. So you walk past and you know your neighbours. It like makes relationships by pushing people out, which is weird. Cause suddenly you’re on the WhatsApp groups with the street, and the way you interact with people within it, that changed for me as well. We never really interacted with our neighbours in the stand-alone house.”

“And existing relationships with people who lived in this area changed too. Cause you know instead of seeing them in other spaces where you’d normally interact, now you’re seeing them when you’re going walking or passing them in the car, now you have chats that are more related to where you’re living. Instead of how your work is going, it’s gonna be like ‘Oh my gosh did you hear what happened on [redacted] Street three days ago?’ or ‘I can’t believe these potholes are getting so bad on our street.’ It changes existing relationships too not just creates new ones.”

On whether she walks more or less:

“More. Especially alone. Any time I wanted go out on the streets back at the old house, you know you had to be accompanied by someone or one of the dogs. I couldn’t just go for a run by myself, I always had to take one of the dogs or wait for mom or dad to come with, or go with a friend or something. Now I can, again it’s not ideal, but everyone is just kind of more reassured that at least I’m just running in the boomed area.”

On whether the suburb is a public space:

“There’s this in-grouping thing that happens as well, so it’s public sure, but you know if people notice someone suspicious driving or walking, it becomes like a, ‘Who’s that?’ “What are they doing?’ We’ll often have people at the gate, we’ll be driving out, and someone’s waiting at the gate, and it’s like ‘Who’s this?’ This doesn’t look like a familiar car or person or whatever. In that way there is that kind of defensiveness and privacy. And it normally always is racially divided in that way.

On animals and environments:

“Very much so. Pets are revered here (laughs). Nearly every single person in this suburb has a dog or a cat. I’m sure that’s a matter of like security for a lot of people as well, but I think it’s just also, yeah. People are generally concerned I think about nature.”

On the best thing about living in the suburb:

“It’s quite a peaceful place in general. Like peace within my house but also just like in the surrounding area. It’s generally very quiet, people are familiar. It feels like there’s space to breathe, in a lot of ways. But it kind of ties-in with how I described it as well, you come here and you can just kind of forget about the outside world, you know.”

On interaction with technology:

“Not often but I mean, you know, somebody will mention if the booms are not working. We use that as a reference point as well, like ‘Oh just by that boom.’

“I remember when I first moved in being very wary of this thing like falling on my car, like I just did not trust the mechanics of this thing, I was a bit nervous.”