

11.0 Designing Out Crime



11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 The prevention of crime and the enhancement of community safety are an essential component of sustainable design. This section provides an overview of the practical ways in which a development can be designed in order to reduce the opportunity for crime and fear of crime. Recognised standards that have been shown to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour can be found in *The Safer Places*²³ and *Secured by Design*²⁴ initiative, and it is recommended that more detailed advice is sought from these sources. In addition, pre-application advice should be sought from South Wales Police Crime Prevention Design Advisors²⁵.

11.2 Layout

11.2.1 The urban structure of a development plays a key role in creating a safe environment. The layout design of new developments should seek to:

- Minimise the number of building sides exposed to the public realm;
- Maximise the number of active frontages, which provide natural surveillance, without

compromising the privacy of residents;

- Create a regular movement framework that directs people and vehicles on to a small number of principal routes; and
- Create defensible spaces, such as private and communal gardens that can only be accessed from the surrounding building.

11.2.2 The use of a perimeter block layout is a good way of achieving the above. Cul-de-sac developments can also produce secure environments provided they are short and straight. Problems can, however, arise when cul-de-sacs are joined by networks of footpaths that are irregularly used.

11.3 Access and Routes

11.3.1 Whilst internal permeability and connections to adjacent street networks is an important aspect of creating sustainable communities, it is also important to avoid ill-conceived connections that increase vulnerability to or facilitate crime. In general, new developments should avoid superfluous and overly secluded access points and routes.

11.3.2 Routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles

²³ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister/Home Office. 2004. *Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention* (Tonbridge, Thomas Telford Publishing).

²⁴ www.securedbydesign.com

²⁵ Relevant planning applications include: residential developments comprising of 10 or more dwellings; commercial, office, industrial, retail or leisure developments with a floor space of 1000 square metres or more; development involving new neighbourhood or district community facilities; car parking schemes with more than 50 spaces, or built to achieve the Park Mark Award; and any other development that could have a significant impact on future crime and general community safety.

should, in most cases, be accommodated on streets and not be segregated. Where segregated footpaths and cycleways are necessary, the following principles should be adhered to:

- Routes should only be provided if they are likely to be well used;
- Active frontages should overlook the routes;
- Routes should be of a generous width and have a suitable landscape setting to avoid creating narrow corridors that can feel threatening;
- Routes should be lit in built up areas;
- Good visibility should be maintained along the route and sharp changes in direction should be avoided; and
- Routes to the rear of buildings should be avoided.

11.3.3 Where the routing of footpaths and cycleways to the rear of buildings is unavoidable, it is beneficial to plant a substantial buffer between the property boundary and the footpath/cycleway margins. Access points to the rear of buildings should be controlled by security measures, such as lockable gates.

11.4 Public Spaces

11.4.1 New developments should aim to provide well defined and purposeful public spaces. Public spaces which meet the needs of the community will be used more frequently and limit opportunities for crime. Unnecessary and ambiguous space should be avoided. In an urban setting, public spaces should be overlooked from buildings and/or traffic routes (see Figure 11.1)



Figure 11.1 A well defined children's playground, overlooked by residential properties at Woodland Walk, Ynysfach.

11.4.2 The management and maintenance of public open space is an important factor in the creation of safer places. Without on-going cleaning and up-keep, places quickly become untidy and unattractive, reducing the likelihood that it is used by the community and increasing the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour. Long-term management and maintenance arrangements should therefore be considered at an early stage in the planning process, with ownership responsibilities and resources clearly identified.

11.4.3 Community stewardship can help ensure that amenities respond to local needs, dissuade vandalism and reduce management costs. Nurturing stewardship requires a genuine feeling of local ownership and control. To realise these benefits active community participation from a diverse range of community members should be facilitated during the design, ongoing management and maintenance of the public space.

11.5 Boundaries

11.5.1 It is essential that new developments provide a clear distinction between public, semi-private/communal and private space. Boundary treatments are a key element in defining the ownership of space and the creation of defensible spaces.

11.5.2 Private spaces, particularly to the side and rear of properties, which adjoin public land, need to be secured by high fences and landscape that actively impede access. Where landscape is the preferred option, thorny and prickly species should be considered as these are particularly effective in protecting properties. In all situations, it is beneficial if the boundary treatment is visually permeable to enable surveillance and avoid providing places for offenders to hide.

11.5.3 Lower barriers, hedges and bushes can be used to effectively define the public/private divide. Where the use of barriers is inappropriate, space can be defined through changes in paving and surface texture/colour, such as open plan gardens in modern residential schemes.

11.6 Parking

11.6.1 For residential development, parking should be provided close to and visible from the owner's home. The most secure place to park a vehicle is in the home's garage or driveway. On-street parking is the next best option provided the vehicle is suitably overlooked. Parking courtyards can also be acceptable as long as they are adequately overlooked, small in size and close to the owner's home. A single, gated, narrow entrance will also make vehicle crime more difficult.

11.7 Lighting

11.7.1 Appropriate lighting increases the opportunity for surveillance, suggests that an area is well managed, reduces the fear of crime and in certain circumstances reduces the incidence of crime. The selected lighting source should be sensitive to the needs of local residents and users. It should improve security whilst minimising glare and respecting residents' privacy. In order to avoid vandalism, the design of lighting and the positioning of lighting fixtures and columns should be robust and secure.

11.7.2 Places that do not require access at night can be left unlit in order to discourage the presence of victims and potential offenders. Security lighting can be used to alert others of unauthorised access.