

Security And Crime Prevention

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Adopted 22nd April 2003

Cheltenham Borough Council

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This guidance relates to policy CP 4 in the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft (2004).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Security and personal safety are matters that are generally taken for granted, but crime and the fear of crime has a significant impact on the way we live. Careful design of the built environment can reduce opportunities for crime and improve feelings of safety.
- 2.2 The aim of this Supplementary Planning Guidance is to set out the design principles to be employed, which together with a balanced and sensitive design approach will significantly reduce the opportunity for crime and antisocial behaviour and reduce the fear of crime. This guidance considers the environment of the whole neighbourhood and not just that of new developments within it. The Council is committed to integrating new developments into the wider community and this guidance therefore stresses the importance of well designed linkages between new and existing housing areas, and encourages good surveillance over the main streets and paths between housing areas as well as those within them. Developers will be expected to adhere to the Council's enhanced standards in order to obtain planning permission, although exceptions will be considered where there are other overriding planning reasons for a departure from this guidance.
- 2.3 This guidance also sets out planning obligations which may be sought by the Borough Council in association with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer to overcome concerns regarding security and the prevention of crime within new developments.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

Government policy

- 3.1 The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) strengthened the role of the Police and local authorities in tackling crime, disorder and anti social behaviour. Section 17 of the Act places a statutory duty on these organisations to exercise their functions with regard to the likely effect on levels of crime and disorder. This enhanced role is supported by Circular 5/94, which sets out that crime prevention can be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan

- 3.2 Policy CP 4, Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft states:

“Development will be permitted only where it would:

- (c) make adequate provision for security and the prevention of crime and disorder; and**
- (b) not, by nature of its size, location, layout or design to give rise to crime or the significant fear of crime or endanger public safety.”**

Secured by design

- 3.3 Secured by Design is a national Police initiative endorsed by the Home Office which seeks to reduce the opportunity for crime and anti social behaviour and reduce the fear of crime in all forms of development, particularly affordable housing. The use of Secured by Design and established Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles can in conjunction with other design and planning requirements enhance quality of life issues and contribute positively to sustainability.
- 3.4 The Housing Corporation includes Secured by Design standards within its Scheme Development Standards and recommends achieving Secured by Design Accreditation. This is achieved by employing the advice of the local police architectural liaison officer at the earliest possible stage in the design process.

4 SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 When considering development proposals the Borough Council will require developers to illustrate that security and crime prevention has been considered at the outset of proposals, taking into account three guiding principles:
- (i) **Surveillance** - Creating conditions where there will always be 'eyes' on the street, on spaces around buildings and on open spaces. This casual supervision can be by residents looking from houses or passers by. It can deter criminal and antisocial activity by the expectation of being seen and undesirable activities discovered.
 - (ii) **Access control** - Clarifying the distinction between public and private realms: this is important if people are to be aware of where they can go at all times of the day and night and where they can go by invitation of the owner only. Ensuring control of access to the private domain is robust and that access to the semi -private domain (between fully public and private) is clearly defined and supervised is fundamental to this principle.
 - (iii) **Ownership** - Strengthening the sense of ownership and encouraging people to feel a sense of responsibility towards their neighbourhood, their street, their open spaces and their own homes reduces crime and supports sustainable communities. Ownership is created where there is clear understanding of expected behaviour and social rules supported by a clearly understood environment. People are more likely to challenge and report criminal activities and anti-social behaviour in these circumstances.

5 DESIGN GUIDANCE

General

- 5.1 This supplementary planning guidance should be read in conjunction with Cheltenham's draft Urban Design Framework, and supplementary planning guidance, *Amenity Space*, and *Play Space in Residential Development*, and *Sustainable Developments*.

Layout

- Public and private areas should be well observed through overlooking and natural surveillance by people in their homes or work places and by passers by. This may be achieved by buildings 'facing' the most public side (roads and public open spaces) and private areas (rear gardens and private communal areas) backing onto other buildings or secure private land.

- Routes through development should seek to maximise use in order to provide natural surveillance.
- The ownership of open spaces should be clearly defined. Space that is not clearly either part of the public or private realm or where ownership is unclear often leads to the space becoming neglected or used for the 'wrong' purpose.
- Developments should ideally have a mix of dwelling types, thereby attracting a mixture of people with a variety of life styles. This can increase the likelihood of some residents being at home at any given time of the day providing continuing natural surveillance.
- Where appropriate developments should incorporate mixed uses, providing surveillance throughout the day.
- Developments should provide a mixture of street types, including through routes and short cul-de-sacs. A layout that combines small cul-de-sacs set within perimeter blocks provides a choice of residential settings and optimum safe routes. This helps establish settled communities by providing settings to suit all age groups and lifestyles together. In developments with a mixture of street types, the cul-de-sacs feed activity and movement along the through routes, maximising surveillance on those roads. Small-scale cul-de-sacs have less movement but develop a sense of ownership, because residents recognise each other and have reason to notice others.

Transport and parking

- Traffic calming should be provided in housing developments. Traffic calming measures increase safety and security by reducing vehicle speeds. They can also reduce crime through creating a sense of identity and ownership of the street amongst residents. Traffic calming measures should be introduced as a fundamental feature of the road design not as an afterthought. Where appropriate developers should consider application of the Home Zone concept. Feeder roads should be designed to be bus-friendly and to minimise noise disturbance to adjacent residents.
- Detached and semi-detached houses should have parking within the curtilage, visible from at least one clear glazed window and behind a clear boundary, e.g. a low railing and a gate. By providing parking facilities within the private realm and within sight of the house, it is possible to maximise ownership and surveillance over the parking areas.
- On-street parking and parking bays should be directly related to the associated dwellings. Cars should be easily observed from houses by car owners. Ownership and surveillance of parking areas is essential to help avoid them becoming threatening places and reduce the risk of the vehicles being attacked. Differences in surface materials and other distinctions between carriageway and parking zones can enhance the sense of ownership.
- Parking courts are only acceptable in new developments if they are small scale (6-8 spaces) have a single, restricted access controlled by the residents and are not linked by footpaths. Parking courts require clear ownership and good surveillance from their associated dwellings to be successful.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes should be well overlooked and direct, when passing through built-up areas. Hiding places created by blind corners, high shrubs, banks etc. provide opportunities for crime and anti social behaviour and increase the fear of crime. Allowing the user to see the way ahead is clear and that side areas do not offer a threat is a basic

requirement. It should be possible to see from one end of a pedestrian route to the other or see from one junction of the route another. Long routes should be overlooked from house fronts along at least part of their length.

- Surveillance of pedestrian routes can be limited in the winter and in the evening by poor light. This can be improved by good, even lighting, which complies with BS 5489. Even lighting avoids pools of light and shadow and must include areas to the side of the route. All lighting proposed should be appropriate and sympathetic to the local environment.

Access to Private Spaces

- Private space must be defined by a clear and positive boundary. A well-defined front boundary indicating the edge of the street and the start of a private space provides a clear sense of ownership and a clear area of defensible space. All private ground should be accessible from within the property. Communal grounds around blocks of flats should have lockable gates to allow access to residents only. Sometimes it will be preferable to define the space immediately adjacent to ground floor flat windows as small private gardens or terraces exclusive to them.
- Rear gardens should be as secure as possible. Rear private space has less natural surveillance, and hence houses are often broken into from the rear. Preventing access all around the outside of the properties hinders prowlers from being able to assess the likelihood of residents being at home, and provides an additional impediment to rear break-ins.
- Linked alleys serving the rear of terraced housing should be avoided. The alleyway is a feature of Cheltenham terraces, used by residents to access rear gardens from the street. However, the poor surveillance along alleyways means that they become easy escape routes and a focus for criminal activity and should be avoided in new developments. Where alleys are needed, they should be kept short and should be gated off from the public realm, with lockable gates. Security lighting can also play an important role in increasing user safety of alleyways.
- Accesses between terraces should have lockable gates. The gate should be flush with the front of the properties. Providing gates flush with the building line is important to avoid opportunities for people to hide in recesses. The design of gates should take into account the requirements of the Fire Service for emergency access.

Public Open Spaces

- Public open spaces should be easily observed from surrounding dwellings and streets. The front or side of the dwelling should face the open space, giving good views from at least one of the most used habitable rooms.
- Landscaping of public open spaces should not inhibit views of pedestrian routes.
- Open spaces should have a clear function. Spaces with no clear function can become neglected and threatening. They can be a problem for nearby residents, e.g. as a dumping ground, an area attracting drug misuse etc. In these cases alternative uses for all or part of the site may improve security and safety.

Street furniture

- Street furniture such as bus shelters, seating, and public art should not obscure views of users or be positioned so as to encourage conflict or anti social behaviour. If sight lines of pedestrians are restricted by obstructions

their safety is compromised and their fear of crime increases. Groups of people gathered around ill-considered seating could be perceived as a threat.

Building Design

- The planning of rooms and the design of windows should maximise visibility around building frontages particularly from the ground floor.
- Buildings that are located on a corner or on the end of a row should be designed to provide good surveillance on all the public sides of that building. Buildings in such a location should be designed to 'turn the corner' to address each side with a well-designed frontage that includes windows to allow surveillance. In housing layouts careful consideration should be given to corner locations to avoid the compromise of adding a window in an otherwise blank gable.
- Building frontages or secure boundaries adjoining a public area should not provide any recesses for people to hide in. Set backs or gaps between buildings should be closed by a wall or railing, particularly if they adjoin a public footpath.
- Each dwelling should ideally have a private entrance from the street. Where communal entrances are essential they should restrict access to residents only. Communal lobbies, staircases, courtyards, decks etc. may give little opportunity to provide surveillance by residents. If access to these areas is not restricted then the opportunity for crime will increase. Lockable front doors or gates with intercom facilities can help reduce the opportunity for crime.
- Entrances should be easily visible from the street and from adjacent dwellings. This will improve surveillance of front doors by other residents and passers-by. It will also encourage more activity and interaction on the street itself by the residents. The entrance to dwellings should be visible from windows within the dwelling. It is important that residents should be able to see entrances from at least one ground floor and one first floor window. This will enable them to easily identify callers and check the access point if needed. Easy surveillance of doorways will deter burglars.

Extensions and outbuildings

- Design of extensions and outbuildings should not provide hiding places, obscure entrances, or provide easy access to upper floor windows or over boundaries. Bin stores, porches, garages, walls etc. can obscure views of the entrance and could provide hiding places. These need to be carefully designed to maximise visibility. Structures, especially with flat roofs, can provide a step to climb up to upper floor windows or to get over boundaries.

External Structures

Gates

- Gates used to secure alleyways should allow views through, be lockable, and their design should not provide foot and hand grips that can make climbing over them easy. Gates to the side of detached and semi-detached properties that are used to secure the rear gardens should be lockable from the private side of the gate and should be solid to restrict views of the private space. Gates, boundary walls or fences should be of comparable quality. Consideration should also be given to the potential need for emergency escape to a safe place, and access for the Fire Brigade in case of fire.

Bin Stores

- Bins should always be kept in a secure place so that they cannot be used to get access onto or over built structures, or used in burglaries to wheel away the goods that have been stolen. Although wooden louvered doors or bin stores are quite common, they should generally be avoided because there have been a number of instances of arson attack on them. Best practice is to use a metal perforated or mesh sheet on the doors or ventilation panels. These allow ventilation as well as security. Alternatively, on existing schemes a fine mesh fixed securely behind the wooden louvres can improve security.
- Bin stores should be lockable with an integral door lock as opposed to a padlock.

Boundary Wall & Fences

- Front boundaries can best be defined by a low wall, fence, hedge or railings, typically of around 1m in height. They should allow views through or over. Railings are recommended in areas where boundary walls are commonly a target for graffiti.
- Boundary walls that are attached to a home should not be designed to allow easy access into the rear gardens or onto flat roofs. Small sections of railings may be useful at these junctions. On the tops of high walls it is an advantage to use angled copings or railings, as they are hard to climb over. Any recesses required in the construction, walls and railings should be flush faced on the outside and should otherwise be designed to omit any horizontal foot or hand holds.

6 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 6.1 Development of land for housing may generate a need for facilities and/or equipment to provide security and minimise fear of crime in development.
- 6.2 Level of provision and/or contributions sought will be dependent on the size and location of development. Negotiations will inevitably be on a case-by-case basis; based upon the provisions of this supplementary planning guidance, Secured by Design principles, and advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer.

7 SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Pre-application discussion

- 7.1 The Borough Council strongly encourages pre-application discussions in regard to crime and safety with planning officers and the Police Architectural Liaison officer. Early consultation and liaison is beneficial in helping to resolve conflicts and problems prior to submission of any planning application.

8 FURTHER INFORMATION

Relevant legislation

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Guidance

- PPG3 – Housing, Department of Transport Local Government and Regions (2000)
- By design: Better places to live, Department of Transport Local Government and Regions & Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2001)

- By design, Department of the Environment Transport and Regions & Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2000)
- Circular 1/97 Planning Obligations, Department of the Environment (1997)
- Circular 5/94, Designing out crime, Department of the Environment Transport and Regions (1994)
- Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft, Cheltenham Borough Council (2004)
- Tackling vehicle Crime, Crime Concern (1999)
- Designing for security on the National Cycle Network, Sustrans information sheet FF21

Useful Websites

www.planning.odpm.gov.uk

www.cheltenham.gov.uk

www.securedbydesign.com

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