

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Designing Out Crime

SPG 5 Safety by Design

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In assessing how well applications achieve safety by design, the Council will have particular regard to the following: adopted Haringey Unitary Development Plan (1998) Policy RIM 1.7, Haringey UDP First Deposit Consultation (2003) Policy UD3, and this supplementary guidance.
- 1.2. Supplementary guidance is provided below regarding the following:
- Overlooked spaces
 - Defensible space
 - Alcoves, niches & extensions
 - Pedestrian and cycle routes
 - Lighting
 - Unobscured vegetation
 - Car parking
 - Maintenance
 - Consultation with the police

2. OVERLOOKED SPACES

- 2.1. A critical element in designing out crime is providing for adequate natural surveillance, via easy overlooking. For example, schemes should provide for overlooking onto and from front gardens, commercial frontages, pathways, streets, communal amenity areas and car parking spaces; especially from windows in front elevations. Such overlooking enables surveillance which discourages the types of crime which rely on secluded areas.
- 2.2. Windows of residential premises, at ground floor level fronting the street should be habitable rooms, and if commercial premises, these should be office rooms (i.e. rooms which are more likely to be regularly occupied). Such windows need to be large enough to enable people on the street to feel they are potentially overlooked and therefore should preferably have one dimension of at least 1m (high or wide). Obscured glazing will not be accepted in such locations.
- 2.3. High front walls provide secluded spots and an opportunity for potential criminals to lie in wait or gain access to an empty property unseen by surrounding neighbours or passers-by. Therefore schemes to erect or extend

front boundary walls to a height over 1 m will not normally be granted permission.

- 2.4. Gated developments, similarly, are not an acceptable means of dealing with potential crime or the fear of crime. Such developments, which effectively turn their back on the public domain, may attempt to provide for a safe and secure environment for the occupants but does not provide a safe environment for pedestrians who use the footway outside. The pavement is not easily accessible and sometimes not overlooked either from the property itself. They can therefore add to street crime which would also affect the occupants of the gated property.
- 2.5. In terms of new housing developments, the best form of housing layout to assist crime prevention is perimeter blocks. This is housing which faces the street with secured gardens all facing each other in a rear enclosure.
- 2.6. In addition, a large mix of housing types is helpful in a development as it increases the likelihood of occupation at different times of the day.
- 2.7. In commercial areas, "active" uses such as shops and cafes aid safety by encouraging footfall.

3. **DEFENSIBLE SPACE**

- 3.1. It is important to define public from private space clearly, otherwise confusion over ownership arises which can result in areas becoming neglected and untidy. Defensible space, or transitional space, is a term used to describe an area in front of ground floor, front elevation residential windows which the occupiers see as theirs. This allows physical separation between public and private space, thus affording some privacy to the occupants. Otherwise anyone walking past their front windows can look directly in to their properties. It also enables people who have defensible space to feel "ownership" and responsibility for that land.

4. **ALCOVES AND NICHE**

- 4.1. Streets and footways should offer a high degree of pedestrian visibility and thus have good sight lines so that people can see well in advance.
- 4.2. Secluded alcoves or niches in ground floor street elevations should be avoided, such as brick-built niche in a flank elevation or deep recessed doorways (unless they have a full height gate in front), as they provide opportunities for crime.
- 4.3. Traditional shopfronts which incorporate alcoves should utilise appropriate shutters (see shopfront design section) when the shop is closed so that the alcove does not provide an opportunity for criminal activity. Solid security shutters should be avoided because of they create "dead frontages" (and are also likely targets for graffiti).

- 4.4. Extensions such as porches and rear single storey extensions should be designed where possible to avoid their use for accessing upper floors (for example, by using a pitched roof or non-climbing paint) Porches should have glazed sides to maximise visibility through and behind them.

5. PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTES

- 5.1. Footpaths and cycle paths should be overlooked. Routes should enable a high degree of permeability through an area by offering a finely grained network of clearly defined routes with good long-range visibility. These should provide both the shortest route and alternatives. Routes should be as wide as possible. The route favoured for night time usage should be well lit. Routes should not be obscured by vegetation. (See below)

6. LIGHTING

- 6.1. Adequate lighting needs to be maintained to prevent dark areas. Night time use of routes are best diverted to those with maximum footfall and the main routes should be lit while others should be unlit (in order to encourage people to stick to the main routes).
- 6.2. Care should be taken to avoid any unnecessary glare or light pollution into surrounding premises or the sky. (See also SPG8e: Light Pollution).

7. UNOBSCURED VEGETATION

- 7.1. Vegetation in areas where surveillance is an issue needs to be well planned to enable the environment to benefit from its greenery while at the same time not decreasing safety and security.
- 7.2. Dense shrubberies should be no higher than 1 metre and set back from access routes. Major routes should have a 2-3 metre width of grass or low scrub cover. Species which are prickly can deter their use as hiding places and provide defensive planting (for example, holly, roses, sloe, hawthorn, berberis and pyracantha).
- 7.3. Trees with open branch structures with canopies no lower than two metres high are best to maximise visibility.

8. CAR PARKING

- 8.1. The layout of any car parking area should allow for natural surveillance of pedestrian routes and be overlooked. Recessed areas should be avoided and they should be well lit when dark, without causing any light pollution.

9. MAINTENANCE

- 9.1. Maintenance of private as well as open spaces needs to be assured to avoid such areas becoming neglected. Otherwise despite having being initially

well designed they may become run-down and underused and focal points for people who indulge in crime.

- 9.2. Maintenance can be assisted by the use of good quality robust materials. These should have a pleasing appearance to avoid compromising the need for design of high visual quality.
- 9.3. Large painted surfaces are likely to be subject to graffiti and should be avoided. If any painted surfaces become graffiti prone they could be finished in anti-graffiti paint products.

10. **CONSULTATION WITH THE POLICE**

- 10.1. The Police has two initiatives for encouraging residential and commercial developers to take into account safety and security in both new build and refurbishment schemes. These are the "Secured by Design" and the "Secured Car Parks" initiatives. Developers are encouraged to consult the Metropolitan Police's Architectural Liaison Officer in the early part of the design. Details can also be found on the following website www.securedbydesign.com

Contact Details for information on Police initiatives:

ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd

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Website: <http://www.securedbydesign.com/>

This SPG has been consulted on as part of the Haringey UDP First Deposit Consultation. As such, it is a material consideration in determining planning applications.