

# Designing Out Crime





# Designing Out Crime

This guide is one of a series of leaflets that will provide information and advice on the services offered by the Directorate of Development and Renewal. In addition the Directorate offers a wide range of other services from Building Control, Access to Employment, Inward Investment and Major Projects including Transport Infrastructure. Housing services are also now part of Development and Renewal. For an introduction to these services please access the Council's website (address on back of leaflet). This guide covers the following:

1. How natural surveillance can help.
2. Balance between public and private space.
3. Building design, form and use.
4. Parking.
5. Open Spaces, Landscaping & Boundary Treatments.
6. Reducing crime with CCTV.
7. Further information.

This guide explains how crime prevention measures can be incorporated into proposals. Well-designed buildings can help to reduce anti-social behaviour, maximise safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime. Studies have shown that the design of buildings can influence crime levels. Designing security into a project need not increase costs and can work out cheaper in the long term. By reducing the vulnerability of people and property to crime, these measures can improve people's quality of life.

The Council works closely with the Metropolitan Police and other organisations to make the Borough a safer place to live, work and visit. The Council is committed to crime prevention and regards designing out crime to be an important part of its planning function.

## 1. How Natural Surveillance Can Help

People and property visible from occupied buildings and busy streets are less vulnerable than those out of sight. The fear of crime can also be reduced in places where there are people passing by and activity taking place. Ways of encouraging natural surveillance include the orientation of entrances and windows to encourage surveillance and self-policing over footpaths and other public areas together with good lighting.



## 2. Balance Between Public and Private Space

Public and private spaces should be clearly defined to deter intruders from stepping into private areas. Public and private spaces can be separated by low walls, changes in surfacing materials, or other symbolic entrance features. Door entry systems can also create areas of defensible space in multi-occupancy blocks to restrict illegal entry.

It is important to ensure this does not lead to a fortress approach, as this can be unattractive and result in an oppressive environment for residents and pedestrians, thereby increasing the fear of crime. Consideration should also be given to the entitlement of resident's quality of life and the balance between public and private space.



## 3. Building Design, Form and Use

In terms of land use, a mix of uses can be beneficial to crime prevention. A combination of commercial and residential uses is more likely to keep premises constantly occupied, making for better surveillance. However, it is important that entrance and surfacing arrangements for each of these does not compromise the security of the whole building, with each use having its own defensible space.

In addition to the general points set out above, there are particular instances where the built form can be designed to reduce the opportunity for crime. Points to consider include:

- removing climbing opportunities by looking at the location of drainpipes, balconies and design of gates/fencing/walls.
- looking at the location of flat roofs, entrance roofs and canopies that might allow access to upper floor windows.
- protecting rear entrances and access to these locations/areas.
- ensuring there are no dead spaces where people could loiter unseen.



## 4. Parking

Car parks should be designed for both vehicle and personal safety, being well lit, having clear lines of sight and avoiding places which could provide opportunities for concealment. Mirrors, light-coloured wall finishes, and good floor to ceiling heights can all help to create a safe car park and one that feels safe to be in.

It can also be beneficial if car parking areas are overlooked by the dwellings they serve so that criminal activity cannot take place unobserved.



## 5. Open Spaces, Landscaping & Boundary Treatments

Open spaces should be designed for maximum surveillance to encourage their use with pedestrian routes being carefully designed to ensure safety and convenience. It is important to have good overall levels of lighting and clear sign posting. Again overlooking of areas can reduce crime and result in less vandalism.

Landscaping itself can be a useful crime prevention tool. Careful placing of suitable plants can reduce the opportunities for concealment or vandalism and help define public and private spaces. Equally, bad landscaping proposals can obscure views and create hiding places.

Boundary treatments should be looked at on a site-by-site basis, but should avoid tunnel effects created by long expanses of blank walls. To the rear and side of properties, sturdy fencing or brick walls to a suitable height can help deter intruders. A landscape buffer, for example with thorny or prickly shrubs, can help to deter unauthorised entry as well as reducing opportunities for graffiti.



## 6. Reducing Crime with CCTV

Closed circuit television (CCTV) is a common response to crime prevention. However, this is not a substitute for good design and should only be used to complement other measures such as natural surveillance and continuous occupation of building and spaces.

Well-designed buildings and spaces will help ensure that our built environment is not contributing to anti-social behaviour. Ensuring safer, cleaner streets is also essential to improving quality of life for people in the Borough, which helps to create the sense of a cared for, safer place.

# For translation phone:



Albanian	Për përkthim, telefono:	Lithuanian	Vertimui, skambinkite:
Amharic	አባቱን አንዲተረጎምልህ ብትኝ ይህን ስልክ ይውል	Malayalam	പരിഭാഷക്കായി വിളിക്കുക
Arabic	: للترجمة ، اتصل:	Polish	Po tłumaczenie, zadzwoń pod:
Bengali/ Sylheti	অনুবাদের জন্য টেলিফোন করুন :	Portuguese	Para tradução, telefone:
Chinese	如欲索取翻譯，請致電：	Punjabi	ਤਰਜਮੇ ਲਈ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ:
Croatian/ Serbian	Za prijevod, nazovite:	Russian	Для перевода, позвоните под номер:
Czech	Pro překlad volejte:	Somali	Wixii turjumid ah, wac:
Farsi	: برای ترجمه با تلفن زیر تماس بگیرید:	Spanish	Para traducción, telefonée:
French	Pour obtenir une traduction, veuillez appeler :	Swahili	Piga namba hii ili upate makaratasi yaliyotafsiriwa:
Greek	Για μετάφραση, τηλεφωνήστε	Turkish	Tercüme için, Telefon
Gujarati	તરજૂમા માટે ફોન કરો:	Twi	Se won te brofo na wo pe mboa, fre me
Hindi	अनुवाद के लिए फोन करें:	Urdu	: ترجمے کیلئے فون کریں:
Japanese	翻訳に関する電話は :	Vietnamese	Muốn bản phiên dịch, gọi số:
Kurdish	: تەلیفون بو تە رجومه	Yoruba	Fun itumọ ede, ẹ pẹwa si ẹrọ-ibanisọrọ yi:

## 020 7364 5009

Also for large print, audio or braille

## 7. Further Information

The Council encourages and welcomes discussions with all members of the community and business and can provide further detailed guidance by contacting 020 7364 5009.

Further details are available in the Council's supplementary planning guidance entitled Designing Out Crime - Parts 1 & 2, available to download at:

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/planning/downloads/pdfs/designoutcrime1.pdf](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/planning/downloads/pdfs/designoutcrime1.pdf)

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/planning/downloads/pdfs/designoutcrime2.pdf](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/planning/downloads/pdfs/designoutcrime2.pdf)

Alternatively you may wish to visit the Council's website [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) for further information. The Council also supports the principle of Secured by Design, a scheme run by the Police. Details can be found on [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com) along with contact information of Architectural Liaison Police Officers.



2005-2006  
Promoting Racial Equality  
Getting Closer to Communities  
2004-2005  
Supporting Social Care Workers  
2003-2004  
Community Cohesion



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

