“Why my house?” – Exploring the influence of residential housing design on burglar decision making.


Abstract

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) has been defined (and redefined) by, amongst others, Crowe (2000), Ekblom (2011) and Armitage (2013). The principles upon which it is based also vary considerably with Poyner (1983) presenting five (surveillance, movement control, activity support and motivational reinforcement), Cozens et al. (2005) presenting seven (defensible space, access control, territoriality, surveillance, target hardening, image and activity support), and Armitage (2013) offering yet another combination of the five principles (physical security, surveillance, movement control, management and maintenance and defensible space). This divergence is not purely a matter of semantics – although this issue is important when transferring policy and practice internationally. The principles upon which CPTED are based have been used to inform planning policy and guidance and also to develop practical applications such as the UK’s Secured by Design scheme. Conscious that these principles have primarily been developed by academics, police and policy-makers and that they have failed to evolve with developments in housing design, security measures, drug use and ultimately offender modus operandi, this chapter aims to help rectify the imbalance. A sample of twenty-two incarcerated prolific burglars were asked to discuss what they perceived to be the risk and protective factors of sixteen images of residential housing. Interviews were unstructured and participants were encouraged to describe the images in their own words. Whilst confirming the importance of a selection of CPTED principles, the findings cast doubt on the importance of others – with obvious practice and policy implications.
The past decade has brought an increasing amount of research and numerous publications on the influence of living conditions on the health of occupants, the evidence base for the complex effects of housing conditions on health is growing (e.g., Lowry, 1991; Ranson, 1991; Ineichen, 1993; Burridge and Ormandy, 1993; Raw and Hamilton, 1995; Fiedler, 1997; Dunn and Hayes, 2000; Fuller-Thomson et. The links between levels of crime and housing design have also been the subject of much discussion and research. As yet there is no conclusive evidence to prove that design is the major factor in creating or solving problems of law and order.

1.3 THE EFFECT OF DESIGN ON CRIME It has been argued that there are three basic elements necessary for a person to commit a crime: ability, opportunity and motive. The provision of building security through design attempts to eliminate or reduce the intruder’s ability and opportunity to commit a crime. Factors influencing the surveillability of the target included. The factors which were identified as exerting the greatest influence on displacement did not relate to ‘reward’ or ‘ease of entry’, but to ‘risk of getting caught’. However, finally the paper highlights the influence of design, the location of main infrastructure and the influence of environmental attributes of the recreational center. View. Show abstract. The resulting defensible space theory identifies design principles that are tangible and can be implemented in actual neighborhoods and for individual houses. Burglar alarms are widely used as a means to try to reduce the risk of domestic burglary. Previous research has suggested that some burglars are deterred by alarms and that they are therefore effective. Using multiple sweeps of the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the research reported here sought to corroborate these findings.