

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

1. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) has been described in the following way: “the physical environment can be manipulated to produce behavioural effects that will reduce the incidence and fear of crime, thereby improving the quality of life” (Crowe, T. (2000) CPTED Concepts and Strategies, in **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: Applications of Architectural Design and Space Management Concepts**, Butterworth-Heinemann, pages 34-35).
2. Some key aspects of CPTED include:
 - a. “The physical environment can prevent offences by blocking opportunities for crime or can make crimes more difficult by creating obstacles or barriers to targets”
 - b. “The physical environment can impede the behaviour of offenders by eliminating places for concealment and convenient escape routes”
 - c. “The physical environment can change residents’ behaviour to increase the likelihood that offenders will be observed, deterred or apprehended”
 - d. “The physical environment can be structured or used by citizens to reduce crime through a number of mechanisms, including surveillance enhancement, social control, and social interaction and social cohesion among residents” (Rosenbaum, D. P., Lurigio, A.J. and Davis, R. C. (1998) **The Prevention of Crime: Social and Situational Strategies**, West/Wadsworth, Belmont, pages 125-6).
3. Key first generation CPTED concepts include:
 - a. **Access control** is a design concept directed primarily at decreasing crime opportunity. It seeks to attract, channel or restrict the movement of people through landscaping, barriers and personnel. Organised (guards), mechanical (locks), natural (spatial definition) access control measures can be adopted.
 - b. **Territorial reinforcement** - physical design can create or extend a sphere of influence so that users develop a sense of proprietorship. Territorial reinforcement can be achieved through:
 - Design that encourages people to gather in public space and to feel some responsibility for its use and condition
 - Design with clear transitions and boundaries between public and private space

- Clear design cues on who is to use the space and what it is used for
- c. **Natural surveillance** is a design concept directed primarily at keeping intruders / offenders under observation. This can be achieved by maximising sightlines, lighting, and the removal of barriers and hiding spots, and can be organised (police patrol), mechanical (lighting) or natural (windows).
 - d. **Space management** is linked to the principle of territorial reinforcement. Space management ensures that space is appropriately utilised and well cared for. Examples include: activity coordination, site cleanliness, rapid repair, removal or refurbishment of decayed physical elements.
4. First generation CPTED has been critiqued by various theorists. Some of the criticisms include the following:
 - a. “Terms such as ‘defensible space’, ‘natural surveillance’ and ‘symbolic barriers’ are liberally used by specialists ... as though they were proven scientific techniques” (Shaftoe, H. and Read, T. (2005) ‘Planning out crime: the appliance of science or an act of faith?’ in Tilley, N. (ed) **Handbook of Crime Prevention and Community Safety**, Willan Publishing, page 248)
 - b. “There is much common sense in a ‘designing out crime’ approach, but also a danger of overstating its impact and slipping into a design determinist philosophy, whereby people are seen as automatons whose behaviour is entirely conditioned by the environment they find themselves in” (Shaftoe and Read, 2005: 250)
 5. These and other criticisms of first generation CPTED have resulted in the emergence of second generation CPTED, which includes four new strategies – the four Cs:
 - a. Social cohesion (participation in local events, self-directed community problem-solving, friendship networks)
 - b. Connectivity (transport facilities, networks with outside agencies)
 - c. Community culture (gender and minority equality strategies, special places, festivals)
 - d. Threshold capacity (human scale, land use density, maximum diversity) (Saville, G. and Cleveland, G. (2008) ‘Second-generation CPTED – the rise and fall of opportunity theory’, in Atlas, R. **21st Century Security and CPTED**, CRC Press, pages 81-84)

6. Second-generation CPTED encourages consideration of variables at the neighbourhood level. Similarly, the Brantinghams' have identified critical dynamics operating at this level in their crime pattern theory. This theory draws attention to:

- a. **Nodes:** settings such as homes, schools, workplaces, shopping or strip malls, and entertainment areas. They provide particular crime opportunities and risks. A node that favours one type of crime might not favour another, but specific risks differ greatly among nodes.
- b. **Paths:** leading from one node to another, also offering crime opportunities and risks. Not only do paths conduct more people per square foot – hence providing offenders, targets and guardians – but paths lead people to nodes that might involve them, one way or another, in crime.
- c. **Edges:** places where two local areas touch. **Crime is often most risky here.** At the edges of an area, outsiders can intrude quickly and then leave without being stopped or even noticed. For example, college students might find their cars broken into when they park at the edge of campus. Or those who can only find parking at the edge of a high-crime area suffer greater property or even person risk.
(Brantingham, P.L. and Brantingham, P. J. (1981) (eds) **Environmental Criminology**, Waveland Press, Illinois)

7. Guidelines introduced in NSW now require a formal crime risk assessment for any development that is likely (in the council's opinion) to create a risk of crime. Examples would include:

- a. a **new/refurbished shopping centre or transport interchange**
- b. a **large scale residential development** (more than 20 new dwellings), or
- c. the **development or re-development of a mall or other public place**, including the installation of new street furniture.

A crime risk assessment is a systematic evaluation of the potential for crime in an area. It provides an indication of both the likely magnitude of crime and likely crime type. The consideration of these dimensions (crime amount and type) will determine the choice and appropriate mix of CPTED strategies. (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (2001) **Crime prevention and the assessment of development applications – Guidelines under section 79c of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**, Sydney -

http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/9390/duapguide_s79c.pdf)