

Urban Renewal: Crime Risks, Community Benefits?

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There has been considerable urban renewal work across many locations in recent decades. One goal of this work is improving safety and reducing opportunities for crime. This case study considers one such project in northern England.

Characteristics of the Local Neighbourhood

The area typically comprises of terraced housing, commonly found in inner urban areas.

The neighbourhood in which the development is located is considered one of the most deprived in England - ranked as falling within the 3% most deprived nationally. This is based upon the Indices of Multiple Deprivation which aims to identify the most deprived areas by combining seven individual deprivation indicators into a single deprivation score.

The seven indicators include:

- i) income;
- ii) employment;
- iii) health & disability;
- iv) education skills & training;
- v) barriers to housing & services;
- vi) crime and
- vii) living environment.

Owing to high levels of crime, unemployment, social exclusion and poverty, there was a lack of demand for properties in the area. This resulted in the decline of housing prices and high numbers of people seeking to leave the area, ultimately leading to its physical decline. Consequently, the area has been designated a key area for investment and re-development.

The Re-Development

The local authority has engaged a property development company to re-develop the area. The property development company and their architects encountered various constraints. Heritage covenants meant that the terrace facades had to be retained. The poor reputation of the local neighbourhood and the close proximity of high-rise public housing towers meant that there were reputational issues facing the re-development. Property prices had been declining, making it a challenging market to sell the re-developed terraces.

The architects and the property development company wanted to retain key features of the area, while also making it attractive to prospective buyers. They arrived at a number of key design features to achieve these objectives, including:

1. Flipping the living spaces so that bedrooms would be on the ground level and living rooms on the first floor;
2. Reclaiming the alleyways that ran behind the terraces and using it for parking bays;
3. Extending the properties above the parking bay area to provide a shared outdoor area that melded private and semi-private space;
4. Provision of resident access-only parking on the streets between terraces.



Questions:

1. What are some of the challenges for this urban renewal project?

2. Describe the CPTED features incorporated into the re-development that are illustrated in the images?

3. What crime risks or security vulnerabilities exist?

4. What impact might this re-development have on the local area?