Chapter Seven – Planning and Environmental Issues

"Community Safety is an awareness in people of the ways in which they can work together to contribute to their own and each other's safety and security".

- 43 Year old Redfern resident

7.1 Introduction

There has been increasing awareness in recent times about the role of urban design in addressing crime and promoting community safety. The state of the environment plays an important role in people's perceptions of safety. An environment which is poorly maintained or inappropriately designed may increase people's feelings of safety in an area. In places where there is a high level of interaction amongst people at the neighbourhood level people often feel safer. This level of interaction may well be demonstrated by a dwelling which has open sightlines and building lines close to street level as well as a well manicured nature strip.

Alternatively the fears of some people are exhibited in the types of security which they employ on their home such as high walls, iron bars and the use of barbed wire which may have the adverse effect of taking the sense of neighbourliness out of communities. Such measures may create the impression that the neighbourhood is in a high crime risk area or is more unsafe than it is in reality.

People with criminal intentions are deterred from places where they think they will be singled out. The key to safe urban design will essentially involve combining the social and the physical characteristics of an environment in striking a balance between surveillance, security, acoustic and visual privacy, building character and appearance and a clear delineation between public and private spaces.

7.2 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Crime prevention through environmental design or CPTED is a situational crime prevention strategy that stresses that the design and effective use of the physical environment can reduce the incidence and fear of crime. It is based on the belief that a typical offender will assess a potential victim or location before committing a crime. The design of buildings and spaces therefore presents an opportunity for crime to be reduced by creating the perception that the costs of committing the crime are greater than its benefits. In this regard CPTED seeks to influence the design of buildings and places by:

- Increasing the perception of risk to criminals by increasing the possibility of detection, challenge and capture
- Increasing the effort required to commit crime by increasing the time, energy or resources which need to be expended
- Reducing the potential rewards of crime by minimising, removing or concealing "crime benefits" and
- Removing conditions that create confusion about required norms of behaviour.[53]

There are four basic principles which underpin CPTED and which form the basis of detailed planning guidelines for the design of buildings and spaces. The principles are:

Surveillance – which follows the belief that the attractiveness of crime can be reduced by providing opportunities for effective surveillance, both natural and technical. In short, good surveillance means that people can see what others are doing in the course of their every day activities. People tend to feel safe in public areas when they can easily see and interact with others and would be offenders are often deterred from committing crime in areas with high levels of surveillance.

Access Control – which involves the use of physical and symbolic barriers to attract, channel or restrict the movement of people in order to make it clear where people are permitted to go or not to go. Barriers minimise opportunities for crime and increase the effort required to commit crime. Conversely illegible boundary markers and confusing spatial definition make it easy for criminals to make excuses for being in restricted areas.

Territorial Reinforcement – follows the belief that people usually protect territory that they feel is their own and have a certain respect for the territory of others. Fences, paving, public art, signage, good maintenance and landscaping are some of the ways ownership can be expressed. Identifying intruders is much easier in a well-defined space. Furthermore an area that looks protected gives the impression that greater effort is required to commit a crime. A cared for environment can also reduce the fear of crime.

A community garden in Waterloo encourages activity,
social interaction and a sense of ownership and pride.

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[53] N.S.W. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (now Planning NSW) (2001) Crime Prevention and the Assessment of Development Applications: Guidelines under Section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Space Management – is similar to territorial reinforcement and involves ensuring that space is appropriately utilised and maintained. Space management strategies could also include activity co-ordination, site cleanliness, rapid repair of vandalism, graffiti and lighting and the removal or refurbishment of decaying physical elements.[54]

7.3 The New South Wales Government and CPTED

The State Government through Planning NSW has prepared guidelines as part of broad approach to reducing crime through better design. The Government's strategy includes:

- Guidelines under Section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) to help Councils consider and implement CPTED principles when assessing development applications
- A training program called Safer By Design run by the N.S.W. Police Service that will enable Council planners to understand and apply the principles contained in the Section 79C guidelines
- Working with the Australian Building Codes Board to include crime prevention strategies in the future Building Code of Australia
- Continuing to encourage crime prevention strategies as good urban design principles for example through the publication Better Urban Living, the N.S.W. Model Code and future design based planning controls.[55]

7.4 South Sydney Council and CPTED

Crime prevention and community safety falls under Section 79C of the Environment Planning and Assessment Act. This means that Councils have an obligation to ensure that a development provides safety and security to users and the community. If a development presents a community safety risk these guidelines can be used to justify:

- Modification of the development to minimise the risk of crime and / or
- Refusal of the development on the grounds that crime risk cannot be appropriately minimised.

7.5 Redfern-Waterloo Initiatives

Community Consultation

Consultations with the community revealed that many people were concerned about the state of the environment in Redfern and Waterloo. This information correlated strongly with much of the previous research and other consultations which had taken place in the area. Many respondents commented on the ugly physical appearance of parts of the area particularly around public housing areas. Other issues identified included poor maintenance, poor urban design, vandalism and graffiti. The lack of open spaces where people can gather informally was also frequently mentioned in the consultation process. Many people commented on feeling fearful about going out at night. This is significant in that the all-important sense of

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[54] Ibid
[55] N.S.W. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (now Planning NSW) (2001) Op. Cit.

community is lost when a sufficient number of people recoil from using the built environment.

Community Safety Audits

In August 2002 a series of seven community safety audits were conducted in the Redfern-Waterloo area. The aim of the safety audits was to involve relevant stakeholders in identifying issues in the environment which impact on people's feelings of safety. The safety audits involved representatives from Council, Redfern Police, the Department of Housing, Cityrail, local businesses and residents. Major issues identified included poor lighting, inappropriate landscaping, poor maintenance, graffiti, unsafe needle disposal and lack of street signage. Most of the recommendations from the audit reports have since been implemented. The safety audits were an important initiative as research has found that it is unlikely that communities will respond to partnership initiatives unless they experience some tangible physical upgrades in their day to day living and working environments.[56]

A Useful Numbers Card produced for local residents
from the community safety audits to encourage members
of the community to take responsibility for local concerns.

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[56] Samuels R. and Judd B. (2002) Public Housing Estate Renewal Interventions and the Epidemiology of Victimisation, UNSW

Additional initiatives since carried out between Council, Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project and Redfern Police include lighting upgrades for Redfern, Lawson, Gibbons and Marian Street, underawning lighting along Redfern Street, streetscape works along Redfern Street and Lawson Square, removal of the awning outside the Aboriginal Housing Company, redevelopment of the shared zone between Caroline Lane and Lawson Street and the locking of two gates in Waterloo which has reduced steal from person offences in the area.

RED Strategy

The Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh, Darlington (RED) strategy is one of the major initiatives of the Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project. The RED strategy is a plan to guide the future development of the area and aims to address a number of specific local issues in the Redfern and Waterloo environments including:

- Community Safety
- A sustainable vision for the RED area
- Traffic planning and transport links
- Encouraging commercial and retail activity
- Conservation and heritage
- Parks and streetscape and
- Future development

Some of the possibilities outlined in the RED Strategy which is currently being drafted include a refurbished town centre, a light rail link from Central Station to Sydney University and Broadway, creating a "community hub" at Redfern Station and investigating placing sections of Regent and Gibbons Street underground.

The RED Strategy will also support the Aboriginal Housing Company and the local Aboriginal community in planning the redevelopment of The Block.

7.6 South Sydney Council Planning Documents

Public Domain Plan

South Sydney Council is currently developing a Public Domain Development Control Plan to articulate a single long-term vision for the Local Government Area. The plan will also:

- provide a co-ordinated framework to enable Council, other government authorities and developers to plan and design development and improvement to the public domain

- bring together the agendas expressed in Council's Works Program, Local Area Traffic Management Plans, the Section 94 Program and assorted other tools such as the floor space bonus system and

- to form the basis for a long-term Works Program where opportunities can be identified and addressed in advance at a strategic level and therefore delivered in a co-ordinated and logical manner.

The Public Domain Development Control Plan is currently in draft form and includes exploring opportunities for streetscape improvements, landscaping, reinforcing pedestrian links, developing cycleways and upgrading open spaces in Redfern and Waterloo. Council has recently embarked on Stage One of the Redfern Street Streetscape Upgrade.

Draft Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP)

The Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (P.A.M.P.) is currently on public exhibition. Two of the main aims / objectives of P.A.M.P. involve improving the safety of pedestrian networks in South Sydney and to facilitate improvement in levels of personal mobility. Several pedestrian linkages in Redfern are identified as "high priority" including Redfern Street and Lawson Street. Although addressing the underlying causes of crime is not an objective of PAMP a number of the strategies outlined in this chapter can substantially contribute to safety and improved perceptions of safety within the Redfern area.

Draft Land Use and Transport Development Control Plan (D.C.P.)

This D.C.P. is currently on public exhibition and contains several provisions that can contribute to improvements in community safety. These include:

- ensuring that car parking areas are safe for pedestrians
- ensuring that all developments make provision for safe and direct pedestrian access to the building or use
- ensuring that transport impact studies consider pedestrian safety and
- improving the quality and safety of pedestrian access to public transport.

Review of Development Control Plan 1997

Council is currently undertaking a major structural review of D.C.P. 1997 to improve useability and clarity of existing controls. Safety and security performance criteria and controls are being incorporated throughout the D.C.P. in relevant sections. This requires that developments are designed to ensure that opportunities for criminal and anti-social behaviour are minimised and that all development incorporates urban design measures to maximise actual and perceived safety. Performance criteria and controls are developed from C.P.T.E.D. principles and expands and refines controls within the current D.C.P. including such matters as natural surveillance, adequate lighting and security.

Draft Late Night Premises Development Control Plan

This D.C.P. is pending exhibition and contains performance criteria and controls for the location and operation of late night premises in South Sydney. The D.C.P. contains controls that can minimise anti-social behaviour that may be associated with late night premises, particularly those premises where alcohol is consumed. One of the aims of the D.C.P. is to enhance community safety without compromising the social and cultural benefits that can arise from late night premises. It includes performance criteria and controls that relate to such matters as increased security provision, trading hours and outside trading. Redfern and Regent Streets are specifically identified within this D.C.P. as streets where late night premises can contribute to reversing decline and activating the public domain.

Draft South Sydney Bicycle Plan

The plan is currently on public exhibition and provides a strategic framework for improving bicycle access and facilities throughout South Sydney. The vision of the South Sydney Bicycle Plan is to develop and facilitate the implementation of a cycling environment with appropriate facilities and treatments to create a network that is convenient, connected and coherent. The safety of potential users underpins much of the strategic framework outlined within this document.

The following strategies have been developed following consultation with the community and other relevant stakeholders with the aim of enhancing the safety and security of the community in public places.

Strategy	Who
7.0 Ensure that CPTED principles are considered in the design of all new and existing dwellings and buildings in the area.	Council
7.1 Ensure relevant staff are trained in Safer By Design principles.	Council, Redfern Police
7.2 Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and the Police for referral of development applications which may need to consider community safety issues.	Council, Redfern Police
7.3 Develop a lighting strategy which is uniform and consistent in the two suburbs including phasing out orange sodium lighting in identified locations through S.S.R.O.C.	S.S.R.O.C., Energy Australia
7.4 Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Police, the Department of Housing and Council to undertake safety audits in the area in response to emerging community safety issues.	Council, Department of Housing, Redfern Police

Strategy	Who
7.5 Continue to implement the recommendations of the Community Safety Audits conducted in late 2002.	Council, Department of Housing, other relevant authorities.
7.6 Develop a strategy for the removal of roller shutter doors from commercial premises to promote window shopping, active street frontages and a positive image of Redfern and Waterloo retail areas.	RED Strategy, Council, Local businesses
7.7 Develop focal points or plazas in the two shopping strips to allow for community performance space and events through the Public Domain Plan.	RED Strategy in partnership with Council

The rapid removal of graffiti can reduce the social "payoff" that people get from having their name or tag displayed.