



**Crime Prevention Practice Paper 1:  
An Overview of CPTED DCPs and Related Council Policies in NSW  
Prepared by: Garner Clancey and Dave Yue Kim Chiu  
February 2011**

## **Introduction**

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is “the proper design and effective use of the built environment” which “can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life” (Crowe, 2000: 46). Key concepts associated with achieving CPTED include: natural surveillance or ‘eyes on the street’ (Jacobs, 1961); territorial reinforcement and access control (Newman, 1972); and space management (Crowe, 2000). In essence, these CPTED concepts seek to increase the activities, surveillance and amenities in public areas, while restricting access to private areas and delineating the transition from public to private spaces. When adopted appropriately, these CPTED concepts can increase the risks and effort of offending, remove the excuses for and reduce the rewards of offending (Cornish and Clarke, 2003), consistent with situational crime prevention theories.

In April 2001, the then NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning released ‘Crime prevention and the assessment of development applications: Guidelines under section 79c of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW)’. Specifically, these eight-page guidelines were designed to help councils to identify crime risks and to minimize opportunities for crime. If a development presents a crime risk, the guidelines can be used to justify the modification or the refusal of the development on the grounds that the crime risk(s) cannot be appropriately minimised.

Following the release of these guidelines, some councils in NSW have embedded CPTED into local planning controls and policy documents. In the main, there have been three main ways that this has been achieved:

1. Including CPTED design advice in Crime Prevention Plans
2. Inclusion of CPTED in general Development Control Plans
3. CPTED DCPs

An Internet search located a number of examples of each of these approaches. The following provides an overview of the key themes emerging from reviewing these different approaches and documents.

### **1. Including CPTED design advice in Crime Prevention Plans**

Many councils in NSW have developed Crime Prevention Plans. These Plans vary in nature and scope, but generally include an overview of crime data and trends in the local government area (LGA); identification of key crime problems; strategies to tackle these crime problems and how these strategies will be evaluated (it should be noted that evaluation is not always included).

Marrickville Council has included references to CPTED design advice in its Crime Prevention Plan. In the report, CPTED is mentioned briefly as one of the many crime prevention strategies. The report makes suggestions about adopting CPTED principles in public space (such as car parks, council facilities and streetscape maintenance) to increase a sense of safety and prevent crime.

## 2. Inclusion of CPTED in general DCPs

DCPs are developed by councils in NSW to guide development within a LGA. In general, a DCP can include raft of different issues such as energy efficiency and waste management, non-residential development (i.e. child care centres and food premises) and residential developments. The length and content of these DCPs may vary depending on the nature and characteristic of the individual LGA. In some instances, CPTED and security issues are embedded in these general DCPs. The following councils have adopted this approach:

- Mascot, 2002
- Blacktown, 2006
- Lithgow City Council, 2006
- Wollongong, 2009
- Hurstville City Council, 2010

In most cases, reference to CPTED and security is limited to a few pages and contain only general design advice. Nevertheless, the Wollongong report has a 24 pages chapter on CPTED.

## 3. CPTED DCPs

Some councils have developed specific DCPs on CPTED. An Internet search in January 2011 identified that the following councils have developed specific CPTED DCPs and a desk-top review of these DCPs revealed some of the following themes.

Council	Year of Publication	Publication Length	Key Themes	Graphics Used
Rockdale	2002	37	Information regarding CPTED is rather detailed in this DCP and a list of definitions is provided. In addition, the report provides guidelines for the making of development applications. CPTED designs are provided. Apart from general designs such as lighting and avoidance of blind corners, specific CPTED designs are introduced in relation to commercial and retail developments, car parks, and public spaces. An appendix also identifies the multiple roles of police in relation to CPTED.	No

<b>Canterbury</b>	2003	23	The DCP provides brief information regarding CPTED background/principles and aims/objectives. In addition, definitions are provided at the beginning of the report. Diagrams are used to help illustrate certain designs and how CPTED principles can be easily adopted. Design suggestions cover landscaping, building layouts and entry points (amongst others).	Yes
<b>Penrith<sup>1</sup></b>	2003	28	Detailed information regarding CPTED principles is presented at the beginning of the DCP. Multiple graphics are effectively used to illustrate CPTED designs. In addition, background information is provided in an attempt to explain how each design fits with the CPTED principles. Moreover, readers are informed that other council policies, such as the "Car parking Policy" and the "Penrith Residential Development Control Plan 2000", will need to be considered for particular developments. Finally, the report provides tips to making a development application and includes list of definitions.	Yes
<b>Auburn</b>	2006	5	This is more of a policy statement rather than an actual report. The document contains a brief introduction to CPTED and identifies the commitments from the council about taking CPTED into consideration in development plans.	No
<b>Kempsey</b>	2008	18	This DCP provides brief information regarding CPTED principles and aims/objectives. The DCP makes design suggestions for car parks, lighting, walkways, open spaces, bus shelters and site planning etc. In addition, background information is provided to each of these designs in order to explain how that specific design fits with the CPTED principles.	No

Based on the review of these CPTED DCPs, the following are some general suggestions for constructing a CPTED DCP:

- Understand the target audience (which might include planners, architects and police) and ensure that the document speaks to this audience. Where possible, include images, diagrams and sketches

---

<sup>1</sup> The Penrith CPTED DCP (2003) was embedded into a wider DCP in 2006.

to illustrate design principles. Specific examples can also help to illuminate particular CPTED principles.

- Provide background information about the council and other parties that are involved in the CPTED DCP and outline the development consent processes relevant to the council in question. By providing this explanation, it will be clearer as to how (or if) assessment of crime risks will be considered in the development application process.
- Explain what CPTED is and what it entails. This will provide an educative function and will ensure that there is a common understanding of key terms and principles. A glossary of terms can be help in defining frequently used terms and demystify jargon.

The following are some further suggestions relevant to developing a CPTED DCP.

### *Background Information*

Providing some introductory background information will help to frame the DCP. Background information about the local council, the development application process and the importance of designing out crime are important introductory concepts. Explaining CPTED and key terms will also be critical introductory material.

Below is an example of how you might explain CPTED:

*“Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is based on four design and usage concepts that can reduce incidence and fear of crime and crime-related activity and lead to an improvement in the quality of life for all associated. These four design and usage concepts are namely Natural Surveillance, Access Control, Territorially<sup>2</sup>, and Maintenance.” (Kempsey Shire Council, 2008, p.2).*

Importantly, as the audience might not be expert in or familiar with crime prevention, it would be helpful to provide definitions regarding certain terms. This could either be done by including them in a glossary of terms or with a definition following the term as they are introduced. For instance:

- Natural Surveillance: location and use of design features and activities that create a perception of increased risk of detection for intruders and of increased safety and security for legitimate used
- Access Control: the use of design features that deny offenders access to targes, reduce escape opportunities and guide legitimate users through the environment
- Territorially: the use of physical features designed to express ownership and control the environment and delineate private and semi-private spaces
- Maintenance: ensuring adequate measures are taken to ensure the continued use of space for the intended purpose and increased feelings of safety for users (Kempsey Shire Council, 2008, p.2).

### *Design Guidance*

A central function of a CPTED DCP is to provide design guidance relevant to eliminating or minimise crime risks arising from the built environment. This ideally requires provision of examples of how designs can be modified to eliminate or minimise crime risks. Different approaches have been adopted by the existing CPTED DCPs. For example, the DCP might:

---

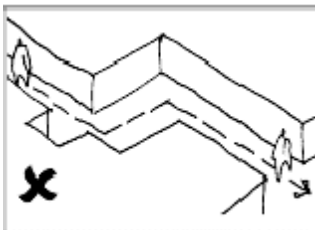
<sup>2</sup> This term is more often referred to as “Territoriality”.

- 1) Categorise designs according to each of the four CPTED principles (i.e. natural surveillance, access control, territorially and maintenance). DCPs utilising this approach provide descriptions and examples to illustrate how these CPTED principles can be integrated into various elements of an overall design.
- 2) Provide examples of very specific developments or sub-elements of a development. For example, attention might be given to reducing crime in residential developments, retail outlets, public spaces, transport inter-changes, shopping centres, licensed venues and other common land use or development types. Moreover, a DCP might include information to help with landscaping, lighting, fencing and other sub-elements of an overall development. These elements might be common to different land use or development types. A DCP might also offer advice on dealing with specific facilities, such as ATMs.
- 3) Attention might also be given to strategies that can be employed to tackle common crime types. For example, graffiti and malicious damage to property are common offences that can be actively prevented by using graffiti-resistant paint, green screening, defensive planting, rapid graffiti removal and other techniques.

An example is provided below of how Canterbury City Council has illustrated key design features. This example demonstrates the benefits of sketches.

**Natural Surveillance: Avoiding Blind Corners**

- Avoiding blind corners in pathways, stairwells, hallways and car parks.



**Design Requirements/Suggestions**

- Pathways should be direct. All barriers along pathways should be permeable (see through) including landscaping, fencing, etc.
- Consider the installation of mirrors to allow users to see ahead of them and around corners.
- Install glass panels in stairwells where appropriate.

**Purpose/Explanation**

- “Blind corners” or concealed areas make people feel uneasy and unsafe. Not knowing “what is around the next corner” can discourage genuine users of a space to use and maximise it (Canterbury City Council, 2003, p.6).

## Useful Resources

Designing a CPTED DCP can be informed by reviewing available CPTED DCPs and related documents. Apart from the previously mentioned CPTED DCPs, the following are some design guidelines and resources that might be informative. Please note that the URLs were active at the time of writing.

- The Victorian State Government has released Design Guidelines for Licensed Venues (<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/961f0200404aa7e2ad79fff5f2791d4a/designguidelines.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>). These Guidelines provide general and specific guidance, moving from design principles relevant to areas outside venues to internal areas.
- The Victorian Government has also released the most comprehensive Safer by Design Guidelines in Australia. These Guidelines canvass a wide range of pertinent issues, including: urban structure, activity centres, building design, parks and open spaces, walking and cycling paths, public transport, car park areas, public facilities, lighting and signage. They also provide excellent diagrams and photos to reinforce key messages. ([http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/41231/Safer\\_Design\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/41231/Safer_Design_Guidelines.pdf))
- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) have a wonderful array of design guidelines. One of these is titled, 'Preventing Anti-social Behaviour in Public Spaces'. This short document discusses target hardening and placemaking approaches to the prevention of crime in public places. (<http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/preventing-anti-social-behaviour-in-public-spaces.pdf>)
- The 'Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention' report produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office (England) is also available from the CABE website. This document provides a comprehensive overview of designing out crime practices and principles in the United Kingdom. (<http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/safer-places>)

## References

Canterbury City Council. (2003). **Development Control Plan No.29 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**. Retrieved from <http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/resources/documents/dcp29.pdf>

Cornish, D. B. And Clarke, R. V. (2003) Opportunities, Precipitators and Criminal Decisions: A Reply to Wortley's Critique of Situational Crime Prevention, in Smith, M.J. and Cornish, D.B. (eds) **Theory for Practice in Situational Crime Prevention**, Crime Prevention Studies, Vol. 16. Monsey: Criminal Justice Press.

Crowe, T. (2000) **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design: Applications of Architectural Design and Space Management Concepts**, 2nd Edition. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Jacobs, J. (1961) **The Death and Life of Great American Cities**. New York: Vintage Press.

Kempsey Shire Council (2008). **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Guidelines**. Retrieved from <http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au/pdfsDCPs/CPTED-brochure.pdf>

Newman, O. (1972) **Defensible Space: People and Design in the Violent City**. London: Architectural Press.