

## 12. Safety and Security

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Part one of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan recognises that the plan does not satisfy the entire Borough's detailed planning needs and further work is required in some areas. An environmental guideline on Safety and Security is one area that has been identified. This document has been produced to provide detailed guidance for all development proposals to incorporate reduced opportunities for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour and to reduce the fear of crime within the Borough of Dacorum. This document complements and amplifies the provision of the development plan policies and, in particular, reference should be made to it in terms of policy 9 (Quality of Development) and Appendix 3 (Layout and Design of Residential Areas) and 4 (Layout and Design of Employment Areas). It is to be regarded as supplementary planning guidance.
- 1.2 The aim is to introduce the concept of incorporating suitable crime prevention measures at the design stage of new developments. All developers should aim to achieve attractive, well used, sustainable environments which create a feeling of safety.
- 1.3 Owners and occupiers of existing buildings are also encouraged to introduce crime prevention measures, where appropriate and practical, to improve the safety and security of the existing environment.
- 1.4 This guideline is not intended to encourage developers to adopt a fortress like approach, it seeks to highlight design opportunities that are environmentally pleasing to create an attractive environment for people to live and encourages visitors to the area.

## **2. POLICY BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Government Guidance points to the planning system having a significant role in producing an attractive, well managed environment that can help to reduce the level of criminal activity in an area and promote an overall feeling of safety.

### **Circular 5/94- Designing out Crime**

- 2.2 This circular recognises that crime prevention needs to be incorporated at the outset of the planning process. Crime prevention is defined as 'capable of being a material consideration when planning applications are being considered'. The approach to be adopted should be sufficiently flexible to allow solutions to remain sensitive to local circumstances and should be designed to meet specific security needs location by location to identify 'trouble spots'. There should be a balanced approach to design which attempts to merge the visual quality of a development with the need for crime prevention.
- 2.3 Desolate, sterile and featureless surroundings can provoke feelings of hostility, anonymity and alienation and where possible should be avoided through effective environmental design. The planning system can produce attractive and well-managed environments that help to discourage anti-social behaviour.
- 2.4 This circular aims to encourage local plans to establish principles for the design, layout and landscaping of new residential or commercial development, (these should aim to reassure the public by making crime more difficult to commit, increasing the risk of detection and provide people with a safer, more secure environment). Principles may include deterrent effects of good design, layout and lighting. Large single use developments that are sparsely populated at particular times of the day should be avoided.

### **Circular 1/84- Crime prevention**

- 2.5 This circular emphasises that an effective policy towards crime prevention should take into account the active support of the community. It requires close co-ordination between the police and local agencies, preventive measures should reflect local characteristics and be focused on particular types of crime, and management, design or changes in the environment reduce opportunities for crime.
- 2.6 All involved in planning and provisions of services need to take into account the scope for preventing crime in day to day activities and crime activity should be monitored to take into account where it is occurring.
- 2.7 Improving levels of street lighting in places where crime and the fear of crime is prevalent.

- 2.8 Larger scale good housing estate design can enable residents more easily to keep an eye on their homes and neighbourhoods. By encouraging community spirit residents are more willing and able to prevent crime.
- 2.9 Crime prevention needs to be made a significant and integral goal of public policy, recognisable as necessity. We should not have to think about incorporating crime prevention measures, it should become automatic.

### **PPG1- General Policies and Principles**

- 2.10 In considering the design of proposed new developments, local planning authorities, developers and designers should take into account the advice contained in DOE Circular 5/94. In doing so, the approach adopted should be sufficiently flexible to allow solutions to remain sensitive to local circumstances.

### **PPG3- Housing**

- 2.11 Local planning authorities should adopt policies which promote designs and layouts which are safe and take into account of public health, crime prevention and community safety considerations; and, avoid inflexible planning standards and reduce road widths, traffic speeds and promote safer environments for pedestrians.

### **PPG6- Town Centre and Retail Development**

- 2.12 Mixed-use developments and housing within town centres are encouraged. A mixture of small businesses, houses and offices in or near town centres and the occupation of flats above shops, can increase activity and therefore personal safety.
- 2.13 To ensure the health of the town centre there needs to be a perception of safety and awareness of crime, including views and information on safety and security.

### **PPG12- Development Plans**

- 2.14 Local Planning authorities, in preparing development plans should consider the relationship of planning policies and proposals to social needs and problems.
- 2.15 Social consideration will be relevant in looking at measures for crime prevention (including urban design).
- 2.16 Paragraph 5.49 also confirms that planning authorities should have regard to social considerations including crime prevention in policy formulation.

### **3. COMMUNITY SAFETY IN DACORUM**

#### **Crime around the Borough**

- 3.1 Crime levels in Dacorum during 2002 and 2003 were well below the national average and the borough had the fourth lowest level of crime in Hertfordshire. The average recorded crime figure for Dacorum is 20.4 per 1,000 population. The national average figure is 28.2 per 1,000.
- 3.2 Crime prevention is most effective when it is site specific. Where a higher incidence of criminal activity takes place, a more stringent approach to crime prevention should be adopted. Four wards account for over 50% of all crime incidences in Dacorum. They are in Hemel Hempstead Central (Town Centre and Jarman Park), Highfield and St Pauls, Grove Hill and Bennetts End. While crime prevention measures should be incorporated into all development proposals, some areas require increased attention.

#### **Dacorum Community Safety Partnership Strategy**

- 3.3 This was established to recognise that local organisations need to work together to tackle crime and safety issues to achieve a permanent improvement to the community's quality of life and reducing the fear of crime. Making Dacorum safer means working hard to build the confidence of those who live and work in the Borough of their personal safety and security.

## **4. CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Fear of Crime**

- 4.1 The fear of crime can often be as disruptive, and is often a greater problem than the crimes themselves. Reasons for planning out crime and creating a safer environment is to reduce the opportunities for criminal behaviour to take place, however it is also to create an attractive and well maintained environment which is inviting for all to use.
- 4.2 People shy away from areas where they feel exposed, vulnerable and generally unsafe, and they will then often become deserted and be the prime location for misuse and criminal activity. Therefore creating an environment that allows people to be able to visit and walk through without fear will increase the number of people visiting and limit opportunities for crime, improving the quality of life.
- 4.3 This can all be achieved through good design that is most effective at the onset of design planning. Demonstrating that a public space is owned, cared for and maintained can reduce the fear of crime occurring. This is achieved by reducing litter and graffiti, and giving a clear signal that an environment is “under control” (i.e. managed and cared for) and help is not far away.

### **Defensible Space**

- 4.4 Developers, where possible, should create an environment which encourages a greater degree of influence exercised by an individual over an area. The more private an area becomes the greater the perceived safety of the area, and the less welcoming it is for criminal activity to take place.
- 4.5 The environment is divided into clearly defined zones, which are either private, semi-private, semi-public or public. Private zones are areas of restricted entry such as rear gardens of individual properties. Semi-private zones create a buffer between public and private areas, which are under the control of an occupant but are visually or physically accessible, for example front gardens and courtyards. These areas are quite often an important part of the street/urban scene. Semi-public zones are under the control of or within the area of responsibility of a specific group of occupants and accessible to the public, for example, commercial estates and communal car parks. Public Zones are open to everyone, and the public have access by right, for example footpaths or open space.
- 4.6 These four different zones determine the degree of control and management over the area and developers should aim to design in maximum control. Public spaces, which have unclear boundaries and ownership, are more prone to criminal activity.

## **5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES/ METHODS OF CRIME REDUCTION**

### **Natural Surveillance**

- 5.1 All new developments should be designed to maximise the opportunities for natural surveillance.
- 5.2 The objective of natural surveillance is to utilise the observational powers of the occupants of buildings, pedestrians and passing motorists and cyclists. By increasing surveillance over people and property an environment is created within which the [potential] criminal feels uncomfortable and exposed. By feeling vulnerable to detection, anti-social behaviour is discouraged.
- 5.3 Natural surveillance measures can be effectively incorporated into all development proposals and is achieved most effectively if buildings, carparks, roads, footpaths, and areas of open space are well related to each other.
- 5.4 Buildings should be designed to have the maximum opportunities for 'eyes on street', increasing community self-policing. Route ways (cycle routes, pedestrian walkways, and road layouts) and car parks should, where appropriate, be positioned adjacent to buildings. An appropriately positioned route way provides a more appealing means of getting to and from places. Footpaths and roads, which are not in good relation to each other or buildings, can become very isolated and provide limited natural surveillance from surrounding areas.
- 5.5 Development design should avoid inhibiting the potential of natural surveillance. Sight lines should be kept clear; for example spacing in between buildings should be visible so routes feel safe and inviting to use. Boundaries to the front of buildings are to be kept low to encourage increased vision from houses, offices etc. out in to the street. Barriers need to remain permeable.
- 5.6 In all cases where there are attempts to increase the level of natural surveillance, especially within residential areas, regard must be given to privacy. Design should allow the view of other properties or communal space, but must not inhibit the occupiers' privacy.

### **Boundaries**

- 5.7 Boundaries create a barrier between public and private land and should be used to protect defensible space. Boundaries must be clearly defined and can be either physical/real, established through the use of walls, fences and hedging; or psychological/symbolic, achieved by perceived changes in surface materials or colour, rumble strips and other similar devices. Clearly defined boundaries aim to create a feeling of exposure and slight vulnerability, once crossed, if within an area a person should not be by achieving the perception of a private managed space.

- 5.8 Boundaries to the front of buildings should be kept low (no more than 1m) and need to remain permeable to allow natural surveillance from houses, offices etc. out in to the street. Fencing or brick walls, to the height of approximately 1.8 meters should enclose rear boundaries.
- 5.9 Landscaping is an effective means of protecting exposed boundaries while creating an attractive environment.

### **Landscaping**

- 5.10 Landscaping is expected for all development proposals in order to create or maintain an attractive environment. However, it can have both a detrimental and beneficial effect in seeking to create a safe environment. If properly designed it can protect building space and deter access into buildings ensuring callers use only designated routes around the site. Landscaping can protect exposed boundaries by acting as a buffer and a deterrent to vandals and intruders.
- 5.11 Prickly shrubs and thorn hedges should be used in all landscaping schemes to avoid creating potential hiding places for intruders. Landscaping should not exceed 1m so not to impede opportunities for natural surveillance by obscuring doors and windows and must avoid obscuring cars so thieves are hidden from view.

### **Lighting**

- 5.12 Good lighting can reduce the opportunities for criminal activity by:

- (i) Improving visibility:
  - natural surveillance
- (ii) increasing usage of areas:
  - social surveillance; and
- (iii) creating community confidence:
  - civic pride
  - reduce susceptibility

These factors will reduce the fear of crime and improve the whole environment.

- 5.13 Lighting should be used to cover vulnerable areas and potential danger spots; footpaths, secluded roadways, subways and public open spaces should all be well lit. Shops with well lit exteriors and interiors are less likely to be robbed and avoid creating dead frontages.
- 5.14 Lighting however may not always be a deterrent. There needs to be a strict balance between the desire to increase the security of properties and the possible effect that unnecessary obtrusive and glaring light can have. Should avoid excessive, poorly designed and badly aimed lighting, which may have

an adverse effect. Unnecessary glare can create shadowed areas and potential hiding spots. Uniformity is more important than luminance. White light produces greater uniformity and where appropriate should be used.

- 5.15 Glare from excessively bright or poorly aimed lights can cause dazzle, with safety implications for motorists and pedestrians. Lighting should respect the amenity of others. Light spill directly on homes can destroy sense of privacy and interfere with people's ability to sleep. It unnecessarily adds to sky glow. Some lighting apparatus can spoil daytime views.

### **Security Measures**

- 5.16 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) may be appropriate in all places where public surveillance is not possible. By making the public aware it is in place gives a sense of security that someone is close at hand. CCTV is possible on most development without the consent of planning permission, however it will be required for installation on listed buildings. Permission will only be permitted if attached to non-detrimental and visually unobtrusive positions.
- 5.17 In all developments where CCTV is installed, need to ensure the maintenance of the system is properly arranged.

## 6. TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

### Residential Developments

- 6.1 To prevent crime from occurring in residential areas a good layout needs to be established, which increases opportunities for natural surveillance and reduces the chance for criminal activity to take place. Nooks and crannies, potential hiding places and areas of obstructive view all need to be avoided.
- 6.2 **Layout:** Natural security over people and property are enjoyed when properties are well related to each other. Single or small groups of housing built away from other properties are at greater risk because there are more opportunities for committing crimes without being seen. The more compact the area reduces the risk of crime by limiting hiding places, means of entry and potential targets. Rear gardens should back onto each other where possible, however divided by a barrier of approximately 1.8 meters in height to ensure privacy. Further protection is required for rear gardens backing out onto footpaths or open space with additional deterrents such as trellises and thorn hedges.
- 6.3 **Housing design:** Dwellings should be designed so that the main living areas face access roads which can help residents to see visitors and trades people and control access to their premises. Similarly there should be an unobstructed view of neighbouring homes, however with a minimum effect on individual privacy.
- 6.4 **Housing type:** Mixed dwelling types increase the potential for homes to be occupied throughout the day. This allows greater opportunities for natural surveillance to take place, encouraging community interaction and environmental control.
- 6.5 **Access and through routes:** Roads and footpaths should be convenient as well as encouraging natural surveillance of streets by residents and passers by. Access through an estate should be restricted to as few routes as possible.
- 6.6 **Car parking:** Parking should be arranged so vehicles can be kept under general surveillance from neighbouring properties at all times. It should be provided within the curtilage of the dwelling it serves and where this is impracticable, garages or parking spaces should be conveniently located and visible from the dwelling. Flats and houses can be positioned so that they can create courtyard parking, which will both be enclosed and over looked.

### Open Space

- 6.7 Open space is important in itself. It creates a focus for activity and/or meeting. This can help to create stronger communities and benefit the environment.
- 6.8 The design and use of open space between and around buildings are as important as the design of the buildings themselves. Open space, its use and future management must be planned. Poorly designed left over pieces of land

will detract from the quality of the built environment, which in time may become vandalised and abused, leading to diminished safety and security.

- 6.9 Landscaping can provide a buffer between a development and open space. However the landscaping and open space/recreational facilities need to be carefully designed to avoid creating areas screened from public view.
- 6.10 Public space should relate well to the buildings around it. Doors and windows should front on to open space, promoting natural surveillance. Over looked public areas are generally safer and less prone to vandalism. Therefore play areas and smaller open spaces should be situated in prominent and convenient locations that can be over looked from nearby dwellings and well used public places. Small areas of open land should not normally be located to the rear of properties.

### **Town Centres, Local Centres and Shopping Centres**

- 6.11 Most crimes within town and local centres occur after shop closing time when the streets can become deserted. At this time of the day the fear of crime increases and town centres are often avoided. Promoting an evening economy will encourage visitors at all times of the day. The development of a mix of uses, including residential, entertainment, restaurants and public houses, will create a lively, attractive and welcoming environment. The local plan contains policies that encourage a wide and varied range of uses.
- 6.12 By encouraging more residential use and “living over shop” development further promotes usage of the area at all times of the day. These units can then be used for natural surveillance, allowing people to keep an eye on public space, which will make it safer for other users.
- 6.13 Town and local centres should have active street frontages. All doors should open out onto the street. Shop fronts must remain open, discouraging fortress-like security. Roller shutters on shops for security have a detrimental, deadening effect on the appearance of shopping areas and can attract graffiti. Natural surveillance of shop interiors from passers by is prevented. Open grill design is a better alternative where shutters are deemed necessary.
- 6.14 New developments within shopping areas should have security measured as an integral part of the design, not something literally ‘bolted on’ as an after thought. By incorporating good shop design removes the need for external security shutters. Security design could include laminated glass: this hinders entry because of the time taken to break it and the noise involved is a deterrent. Bollards can be used as a deterrent for ram raiders, where this is considered a potential problem.
- 6.15 By greater awareness of CCTV in operation and security systems that provide a rapid response to criminal activity will also encourage people to the area.

## Car Parking

- 6.16 **Outdoor Car Parks:** Should be well related to or enclosed by buildings to maximise levels of natural surveillance. A defined perimeter should be created to identify the area as private encouraging visitors to use only designated routes and footpaths. However perimeters must not prevent views which may decrease opportunities for natural surveillance. No foliage or barriers should exceed 1m in height. Urban car parks should have high levels of illumination during darkness. Trees should not mask lighting.
- 6.17 **Enclosed Car Parking:** To create maximum levels of security enclosed car parks should be planned incorporating the following criteria in mind:
- (i) Lighting and use of reflective surfaces
- 6.18 High levels of illumination are required and must avoid shadowed area or pools of darkness - floors, walls and ceilings must be light coloured throughout.
- (ii) Entry and Exits
- 6.19 Access ramps should have rough or uneven surfaces to deter misuse such as skate boarding etc.  
Should be controlled, for example through narrowed entrances, height restriction barriers and use of electronic barriers.
- (iii) Parking Area
- 6.20 Parking spaces should be positioned in straight rows.  
Grills, bars or glazing should be used so people cannot gain access at inappropriate/unsafe places.  
Floors should be separated by materials that allow good natural surveillance.
- (iv) Lifts in multi-storey car parks
- 6.21 Minimum of two lifts, which have an 8 person capacity, should open out into well illuminated and unobstructed landing area, capable of accommodating a large number of people.  
Lifts should be finished with stainless steel maintaining a 2 hour fire stability.
- (v) Stairways
- 6.22 Should be wide with open balustrades allowing good visibility on approach to and from landing areas.  
Wide partially glazed doors, offering a clear view of landings and stairways from parking areas.  
Stairwells and landing opening to the outside of car park areas to be glazed for enhanced natural surveillance. Recesses are to be avoided.

- 6.23 **Additional Security:** Within all car parks an appropriate standard of lighting and where possible the use of CCTV or on site security is required. Entrances and exits should be capable of being secured.

### **Footpaths, Cycle Routes and Subways**

- 6.24 Paths and cycle routes are an important feature to be incorporated into all development proposals to encourage movement and permeability in a neighbourhood. They should be:
- provided where they can be well used, providing fewer opportunities for crime and generally increase safety.
  - overlooked and lit either directly or indirectly
  - short, direct, wide and attractive to use and avoid passing along the rear boundaries. Where rear paths are unavoidable, self closing, lockable gates to restrict their use to residents only should be provided, and
  - where appropriate, combined with roads to achieve surveillance from passing cars as well as pedestrians.
- 6.25 Subways should be designed with wide approaches, good through visibility, good lighting and within view of passing pedestrians and traffic to minimise fear of personal safety.

### **Commercial/ Industrial Estates and Business Parks**

- 6.26 Should have a defined perimeter established through either a physical boundary- hedges, walls or fences, or a psychological barrier achieved by perceived changes in the surface colour, texture or rumble strips etc.
- 6.27 Landscaping must be complementary to the other security features of the development and not obtrude on the natural surveillance, so any unauthorised person is clearly visible. The use of prickly shrubs and thorn hedges can help ensure callers only use designated routes around the site.
- 6.28 Car parking must have good natural surveillance from buildings and must be illuminated during the hours of darkness. An acceptable alternative is to provide secure garaging, either supervised, under lock and key or electronic access control. Underground car parks should be subject to high levels of illumination, and be provided with adequate access control.
- 6.29 It is important that each unit has a clearly defined perimeter and encompasses its own designated parking and loading areas. There is an increased likelihood that the occupants of the unit or by adjoining properties notice unusual vehicles or activity.
- 6.30 The layout should ideally comprise back to back service yards/loading areas with front gates in order to restrict access. When the building is closed the gates can be locked to prevent the undetected use of loading vehicles by intruders at the rear.

- 6.31 The number of service road exits from an industrial estate onto public highways should be kept to a minimum. The roads should be cul-de-sacs and any subsidiary routes from the main service roads should also be cul-de-sacs. Restricting access offers a major deterrent to intruders who seek max mobility.