

Annex 16 – COPS: CRIME OPPORTUNITY PROFILING OF STREETS

A practical and developing guide to help identify and deal with crime opportunity generators in the street environment

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Co-authors

Steve Kong
Mark Whitworth
Neil Henson

Other main contributors

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Contacts

It is intended to update this guide periodically, especially to include new solutions to the same or new problems. The author would very much like to hear from you and to include your contributions. Please email Calvin Beckford at calvinbeckford@btconnect.com or write to him at ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd, 25 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0EX.

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Professionals who may find this guide helpful include:

POLICE	Crime prevention design advisers / architectural liaison officers Crime prevention / reduction officers Police officers and police staff engaged in problem solving
COUNCIL	Planning officers Highways officers Building control officers Town centre managers Street environment sections Drug action teams Rough sleeping units Parks and leisure departments Housing departments
OTHERS	Architects Crime researchers Designers Housing associations

PART ONE What is Crime Opportunity Profiling?

Offender and victim profiling have been used widely in the past and have established great successes in both preventing and solving crime. Crime Opportunity Profiling of Streets (COPS) approaches the problems of crime and disorder from the opportunity side of the crime triangle.

Crime Opportunity Profiling is a systematic and detailed study of a street and the built environment interfaces with the street in commercial districts, which suffer from street crime and other problems associated with the consequences of a drug market. A Crime Opportunity Profile (COP) identifies a whole raft of built environment features that offer opportunities to commit crime or generate fear of crime and also features that provide sites for drug taking and drug dealing and other anti-social behaviour.

Importantly, a COP report suggests practical solutions to the problems identified using situational crime prevention techniques and crime prevention through environmental design practices. The delivery of the solutions relies heavily on the willingness of the problem owners to do something about them and the support of multi-agency partnerships committed to the process and to that end must be seen as an essential part of an overall strategy to prevent street crime and disorder.

This process of crime opportunity profiling, which has been described as 'coalface analysis', was first carried out in the London Borough of Camden by the Crime Prevention Design Adviser in King's Cross in the summer of 1997. This was to primarily understand the micro geographical distribution of street drinkers' favourite haunts and the drug users' most used sites for taking drugs. It was from this profile, which unveiled the connection between street crime and the built opportunities in the street that the process developed. Of course, there are other guides to 'street auditing', but none that have considered the problems in such depth or attempted to suggest solutions to the problems. In Camden, from where most of this work has emanated, COPS has worked well, but it is for the reader to decide if this process is for them, and if it is then it can only be improved upon by submitting their own findings and solutions so that this best practice can be shared.

The strength of Crime Opportunity Profiling

The main strength of Crime Opportunity Profiling of Streets (COPS) is its relative simplicity and practicality and, ultimately, its ability to catalyse strong working relationships with a wide range of partners if such a relationship is not already in place. The report is analogous to a medical for each street, whereby a whole catalogue of problems requiring treatment will be identified. The simple remedies can be carried out straightaway and more long term cures can be developed for the more complicated 'diseases'. The report can be accessed and updated easily and once all the solutions have been put in place all that will be required is a periodic check-up to ensure that the solution is still working.

Importantly, once the list of problems has been identified and a report completed, it can rest with a number of local authority departments and sections, such as Planning, Building Control, Highways and Licensing. By doing this the report can be referred to by the Local Authority when dealing with, for example, an application for planning or licensing. In this way the Local Authority can show that it is delivering its obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. (The UK Crime and Disorder Act places an equal responsibility upon the police and the local authority to prevent crime, the fear of crime and disorder.) Reference to the COP is particularly helpful and valuable if 'planning gain' is being negotiated with a planning applicant or conditions are being considered under a planning or licensing application.

In practice the council officer should be able to 'thumb through' the latest COP for the streets in the immediate area of the application to see what needs doing and what needs some financial support. Invariably the applicant, who knows that some contribution or condition is to be expected, will be keen to support the officer's ambition as there will be a direct benefit for the applicant in terms of a cleaner built environment with less opportunity for crime.

A COP can also provide a lead in an anti-drugs initiative, which nowadays invariably includes an environment improvement objective. The report can then inform the strategy for dealing with a crime hotspot and will provide easily measurable performance targets and outcomes.

Typically more than 75% of the problems identified in a COP involve the local authority either directly or indirectly. For a COP to be effective it is best to have a partnership commitment and funding for the improvements up front. However, even if there is no current partnership commitment or funding a COP can actually be used as the catalyst for action.

COPS is now an established methodology, which though first developed and used in Camden, has since been applied in several London Boroughs including Ealing, Islington, Westminster and Hillingdon.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that Crime Opportunity Profiling of Streets is not only an exemplar of proactive crime and disorder reduction, but also a realistic process which is likely to create working

relationships with the local authority and others that will endure long after the initiative has been completed.

A planning officer's perspective

The following observations have been provided by Mark Whitworth, who at the time of the initial crime opportunity profiles was a senior planner at Camden Council.

COPS strategic development

Whilst it is not suggested that COPS is a panacea to street-based crime, it is an essential and integral part of a strategic approach to reducing the problems, which has proved successful in Camden when used in this context. In the wider context, partnerships between policing, health and environment are the key contributory factors in reducing crime.

COPS clearly falls within the built environment and very much at the baseline mapping stage of an area-based crime reduction programme. Essentially, several key activities will fall within baseline mapping:

- Project management strategy
- Public perception survey
- Hard crime statistics (See *Upfront analysis* later in this report)
- Street survey/pedestrian movement survey
- GIS mapping and not least,
- COPS

In any perceived crime hotspot, it is suggested that all of the above should be carried out before any clear strategies are developed for a town centre or crime hotspot. It is this level of baseline information that will determine the scale of any particular problems and form the basis for future partnership discussions and strategies to eradicate them.

Once this information is collated and mapped, then the second stage of the process can begin. This is termed 'Partnership Consultation' and generally includes all of the stakeholders, who will either be the end users or providers of services in and around the area you are concerned with. It is envisaged that a stakeholder management strategy will need to be developed and should include:

- Focus group meetings (key residents/business reps)
- Hard to reach groups (young people/minority groups)
- Police
- Health, primary care trusts, treatment providers
- Drug action teams
- Estate managers
- Local service providers
- Statutory undertakers such as British Telecom
- Hostel providers
- Analysts, lessons learnt

This list is not exhaustive and particular areas may require a different emphasis, but generally the above represents most interests. The last item is essential. All the views and outcomes need to be assessed and included in a final response to taking a strategy forward. If you are to engage with the stakeholders, they need to feel that their contribution is appreciated and listened to, even if those comments are not being taken forward. In the experience of Camden Council and Police it is the stakeholders who are keys to any successful regeneration of a crime-ridden area, as it is their empowerment that will reclaim an area back from the criminal or anti-social element.

A baseline, consultation report should be produced and circulated. Generally, if this report is being produced by or for a government agency etc. it will need to have recommendations and be approved by a board or committee to fund the COPS proposals and other initiatives.

Once the strategy and implementation programme have been approved, a clear strategy for keeping stakeholders engaged should be produced, funding sources secured and management protocols developed.

Finally, with any physical improvements, a clear maintenance strategy will be required with partner organisations to ensure there are no surprises for those left to maintain the improvements you are about to make. Generally, these service and maintenance providers will be part of your stakeholder group, but this emphasis on maintenance is necessary as it is so often an afterthought of many projects.

The mechanics of Crime Opportunity Profiling

As COPS is designed to survey areas of high crime and disorder it is assumed that crime analysis has already taken place and that this information is readily available to the Crime Prevention Design Adviser (CPDA) or other person (profiler) who is to carry out the survey. It is advisable however to speak with the Police Crime Analyst to ensure that the data is still valid and that recent trends are taken into account. The analysis findings (see below) should be supplemented by an initial visit with the local beat (police) officer in order that the profiler has a thorough understanding of the area's problems. It is also likely that the profiling will uncover problem areas that hitherto were not known about. It will be appropriate, and often necessary to meet with local resident and business groups to inform them about your forthcoming work and also to obtain valuable additional information about the area.

The findings of the profiling are recorded in a report together with digital photographs. (See the following page for an example of how a report page from a COP might look). Terry Cocks, the CPDA at Camden (see contacts) is currently creating a macro enabled report template, which may well be the way forward for this process. Remember though it is the digital photograph, the image, which is the most impacting aspect of a COP. The images are the evidence of misuse and it is the image that the readers of the report will remember. The importance of the image cannot be stressed enough.

The information recorded on a COP report page should include:

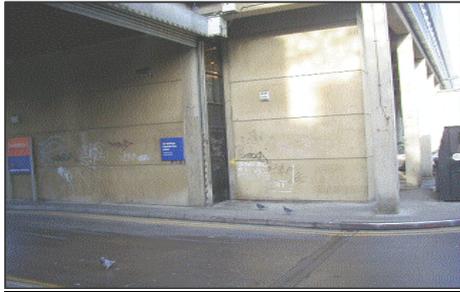
- An introduction, which includes the analysis of the problems to be found in the area (further information about analysis is given in the next section).
- A map of the profiled area
- A general description and 'general view' digital photograph of each street in the profiled area.
- The precise location of the problem(s) in the street, and the date found
- A description of the actual or potential problem
- A digital photographs(s) of the problem
- Details of the sufferer of the problem
- Details of the owner of the problem
- Brief recommendations on how to deal with the problem (see Part Three)
- Details of the person(s) or organisation(s) who can pursue and solve the problem
- Details of places that might suffer deflection (although these will be identified during the profiling)
- A copy of the full report of recommendations to the problem owner and/or the pursuer of the solution.
- The date on which the problem was dealt with.

An example of how a page in a COP report might appear

Opportunity Street, Copton, London WC16 3PN

Location

Entrance to Fred's Supermarket Car Park, 23-27 Opportunity Street, London WC16 3PN



Specific problem(s)

Drug use, street drinking, graffiti, inappropriate loitering, urination, littering, fear.

17 July 2003. This car park entrance is situated below an office block occupied by solicitors Smith Brown & Taylor at 23A Opportunity Street. Due to the shelter the underpass provides it is common to find street drinkers and drug users loitering here. The wall also attracts a great deal of graffiti. The council's Street Environment Services pick up an average of 25 needles/syringes a week from this place. It is also used as a toilet. The roller shutter, which was brought down at night when the supermarket closed was damaged several years ago and was not repaired. The entrance is 150m from Copton Town Tube Station, a place where the same drug users and street drinkers congregate.

Sufferer(s) of the problem(s)

Members of the public passing by on the footway (to the left of the picture), Employees of Smith Brown and Taylor (Tel 0320 773 6007), Customers of Fred's Supermarket, Fred's Supermarket staff (Tel 0320 773 6431), Street Environment employees (0330 901 9000).

Owner(s) of the problem(s)

Fred's Supermarket (Tel 0320 773 6431) – the freeholders.

Brief recommendation(s)

Clean off graffiti and apply either glazed anti-graffiti coating or sacrificial anti-graffiti coating – and maintain. Street Wardens to carry out periodic checks. Repair Roller Shutter and reposition at front of entrance to remove the recess and use at night. Repave the narrow (unused) footway with pyramidal block paving to deter loitering during the day. Fred's Supermarket Security Officers to be more active in moving loiterers on. Possibly install CCTV camera, subject to discussion with manager of supermarket. Repair lighting.

Deflection possibilities

There is a deeply recessed emergency exit door serving 41 Opportunity Street about 20m north. Drug users could also spend more time hanging around outside the station.

Relevant reports and actions

See reference COP/copton0032 for full report to Fred's Supermarket and other correspondence. The police CPDA has met all parties at a meeting and Fred's Supermarket has agreed to carry out the work. Fred's is seeking £2,000 towards the work (total estimated is £7500) from the COP fund, which has been agreed.

Work completion date

Estimated completion date, subject to planning permission March 1st 2004.

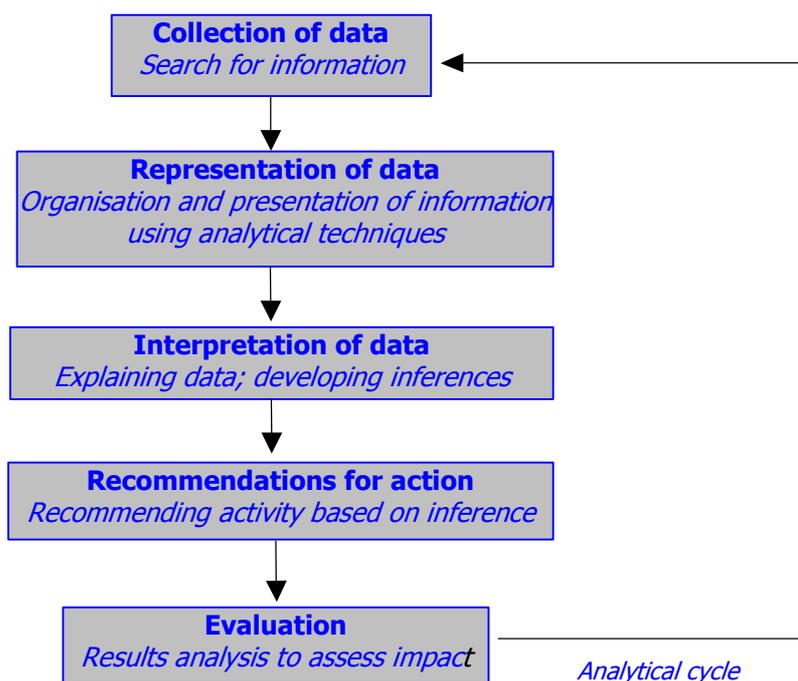
Check up

Upfront analysis

This information has been prepared by Steve Kong, Senior Crime Analyst at Camden Borough Police HQ.

This section of the document aims to offer some guidance on how to collect and organise information in a way that assists decision making on where to implement intervention and draw conclusions from monitoring. Rather than be overly prescriptive and complicated this section has been written more as a guide to an analytical process. There are many processes available, such as 'SARA' (Scanning, Analysing, Responding and Scanning); however for this document I have based it on the Analytical Process devised by Dr Nina Cope, Analytical Lead, Metropolitan Police Service.

Analytical process



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Why collect and analyse data?

How do you know where to carry out a Crime Opportunity Profile Survey? Which streets or areas do you choose? Even if a particular crime ridden street is identified, what part of the street is conducive to crime opportunities? Having an idea of where crime problems exist may focus attention to the streets where there are many more incidents than the average for a given area. This is sometimes known as a 'hotspot'. Once a decision has been made to profile an area, it would be logical to have a basic understanding of the crime and disorder problems. Knowing nothing about existing crime problems will make problem solving difficult, relying solely on past knowledge and experience of crimes that may occur in certain situations. Furthermore, not knowing what you are going to measure will make it impossible to come up with informed decisions on whether a particular intervention had an effect. Here is a summary of why it is important to collect and analyse data when conducting a COP:

- To provide an insight into crime and disorder problems in particular areas
- Assist in the prioritising of problems in any given area
- Highlight prevention opportunities
- To provide a mechanism to objectively monitor intervention, so informed judgements can be made on whether the prevention opportunity has the desired outcome
- Learn from mistakes and identify best practice

Sources of data

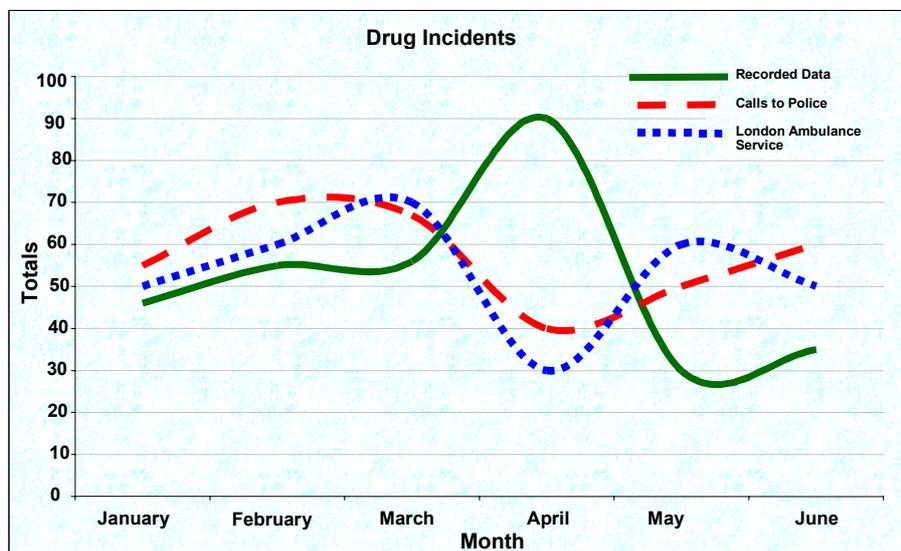
Crime and Disorder data can be collected from various sources, the most common being police recorded statistics. It is likely that if you are conducting a COP you have been told of particular crime problems in an area where crime and disorder exist. Many suburban areas for example have crime problems, particularly in locations where the convergence of potential victims and likely offenders come together in areas where opportunity for crime is high, such as a shopping quarter. It is important to think carefully about what it is being measured. This is important so that when you come to evaluate the effect of intervention there is a better chance of relating this to the actual mechanism put in place. That is to say, it would take different types of intervention to prevent different types of crime. A COP conducted in area with high levels of motor vehicle theft is likely to be different to an area suffering from drug crime, i.e. the intervention of one may not suit another.

When this has been decided it might be worth thinking about the ideal information for measurement then research around this to see what is available. It might be better for example to measure alcohol related assaults by ambulance calls to injuries relating to alcohol rather than police recorded crime that do not actually categorise alcohol related assaults any differently to any other assault, thus you do not know which are alcohol related. It is also much better to collect information from a range of sources and measure these in similar ways, over time. One dataset should not therefore be relied upon, as most datasets have inconsistencies and errors that could skew measurement. For example, to monitor the rise and fall of drug crimes, you may want to consider the following:

- **Police recorded crime data** – These monitor those people arrested for drugs offences.
- **Calls to the police** – This monitors the number of calls from the public about a drugs disturbance
- **Police officers and other relevant practitioners, such as crime analysts** – Anecdotal information from knowledgeable sources can be invaluable. They may hold intelligence on drug markets in particular areas.
- **Self-reporting surveys** – Surveys provide some of the best measurement, particularly of under reported and under recorded crimes of which drug offences are a good example.
- **Ambulance Service** – Holds information on drug overdoses
- **Drug action team** – Often holds precise information about the locations of where drug paraphernalia has been recovered and therefore where drug user sites are located.
- **Council street environment services** – Often holds detailed information about locations of drug paraphernalia.
- **Building caretakers** – Sometimes holds information about locations of drug paraphernalia.

When you have this information you might want to compare each one to identify similar patterns in the data. A chart illustration below demonstrates this. As you can see, other than the month of April there are similar trends for each dataset, thus providing confidence in the levels of drug activity. In April there are significant drops for calls to the police and ambulance service, while a large increase in recorded crime.

When combining these data sources it provides confidence in similar trends while highlighting other patterns within the data. The most likely reason for the opposite trends in drug increases in recorded drug crime while experiencing a drop in calls to the police and ambulance service is a policing operation to curb drug activity. This would lead to an increase in arrests, thus increase in recording drug activity



and a reduction in calls to the police and the ambulance service, because most drug users/dealers in this period have been arrested.

When you have identified the available data, you need to have an idea of how good the data is (accuracy, reliability, quantity etc). You may even want to assign a grading via a matrix, for example:

Data Source	Accuracy	Reliability
Recorded Crime	Data problems with accurate recording of crime details	Only 30% of Recorded Crime data is available but this is the most accurate
Calls to the Police	Analysis suggests that only 50% of drug related calls are actually drug related and that nearly 80% of people do not actually report a drug incident	Incorrect interpretation. The category recorded in relation to calls to the Police may not necessary reflect the actual incident e.g. smoking cannabis when actually just smoking a cigarette
Knowledgeable sources	Many police officers and analysts generally have a good idea what is going on, however this needs to be tested	Police Officers and other relevant practitioners such as Crime Analysts. Ad hoc information that does not necessary complete the picture
Self-reporting surveys	Concerns of leading questions	People may not be willing to be honest about drug taking and other incriminating offences.
Ambulance Service	Data problems with accurate recording of crime details	Ambulance drug overdose data does not necessarily mean that these are for people who have overdosed on heroin in the street, it could represent someone trying to commit suicide with aspirin

It is important to know what the data means so that you can justify any statements made about it. For example, an initiative to tackle robberies in King's Cross London resulted in the conclusion that the original data collected – police recorded crime – included many reported crimes that did not actually occur due to misinformation. It later turned out that the area 'known' as a robbery hotspot was in fact a place where a drugs and sex market operated where individuals would go to purchase drugs and/or sex, handing over money and not getting the illegal service they paid for. Many would then report to the police that they had been 'robbed' when in actual fact they were committing an illegal act in the first place.

Collecting data

When collecting crime data remember to use the '5 W's and the H' as described below.

What (the problem, e.g. drugs): Much of the 'What' has been described in the sources section above. Again, it is important if you can, not to rely on one dataset for comparative purposes.

Where: The location is one of three elements needed for a crime to take place, the other two being a victim and offender. The location of crime in relation to where the victim and offender merge is a necessity for a COP. Without knowing this you would not know where to implement intervention.

When: The temporal factors of crime are extremely important. Different times of the day, on different days of the week have different types of incidents, seeing different types of victims and offenders. For example, much of youth crime usually occurs between 3pm and 6pm, the times young people are on their way home from school, while alcohol related assaults usually occur between midnight and 2am Fridays and Saturdays after the pubs and bars close.

How a crime takes place is important because the method by which a criminal commits his crime will have a bearing on what intervention you put in place after conducting your COPS. Recess doors for example have been seen to encourage drug taking in a particularly strong drug market, but only those conducive to drug taking, i.e. dry convenient locations not regularly and legitimately used, with suitable lighting.

Who: Most people commit crime at sometime in their lives, only a few continue these into lengthy careers and only few individuals are repeatedly victimised. An understanding of who these people are will provide understanding of the larger context of the crime, i.e. who are they, where are they travelling from and to and identify vulnerable groups of people. A COPS intervention will rely on the psychology of victims and offenders, thus an understanding of them is crucial.

Why: The 'why' in the context of COPS will focus on opportunity being the single most important cause of crime. It is essential that where possible an understanding of why certain actions are taken like

committing crime be known. Unless you have this understanding, then it is difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of a particular intervention. For example, for many years Pentonville Road in King's Cross was rife with drug dealing, resulting in acquisitive crimes such as robbery. The area was under regeneration and the section of Pentonville Road was littered with derelict premises and recessed doors conducive to drug taking and dealing. Many police operations were undertaken to curb the problem. However, it was only when a regeneration project introduced hoarding along the street that a significant effect was seen, displacing the problems to another street no more than 50 metres away. The reason 'why', was probably due to this environmental change, because the street width was reduced, recess doors and access to the empty buildings was taken away, thus making offenders more visible to police and CCTV cameras.

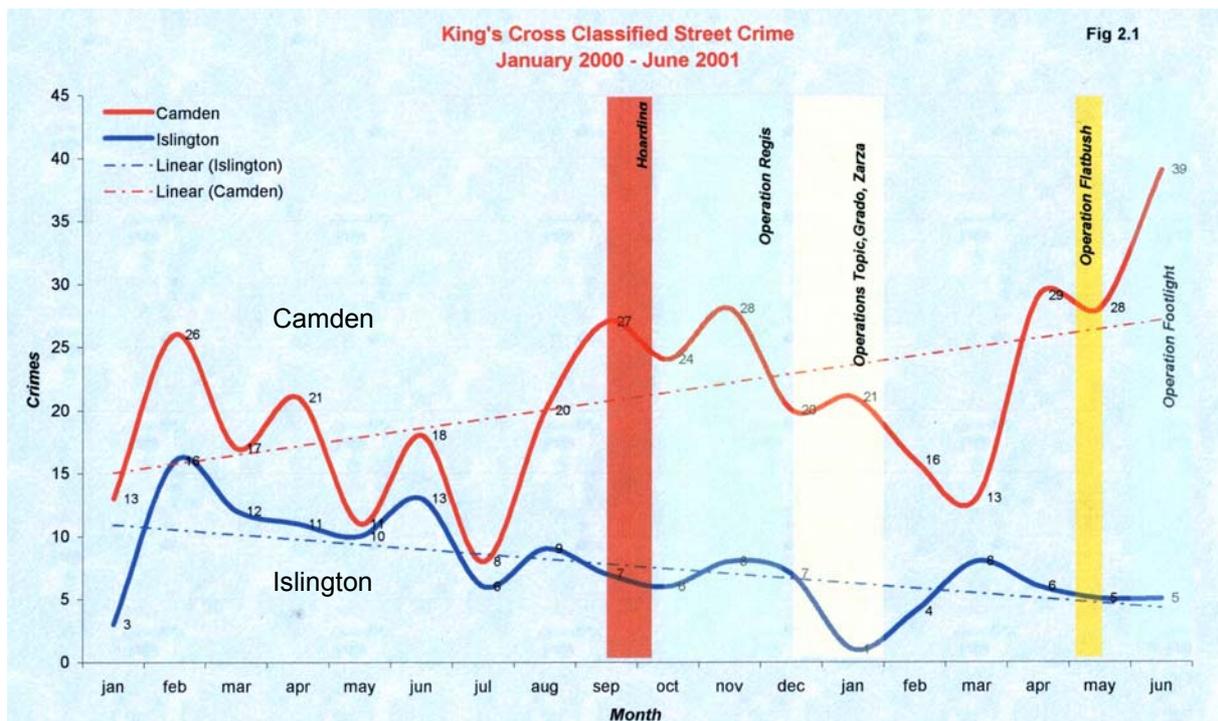
Only by gathering information in each of these areas will the representation of the data for interpretations aid the detailed crime opportunity profile of the street.

Representing and interpreting the data

There is no panacea for data interpretation; it is usually based on informed judgement about the context of the situation and the information you have. By representing the data in an organised way you will facilitate interpretation. The data needs to be explored and organised so that an understanding of what the data says can be made and communicated to others. For example, charts, maps and tables need to be created to understand the '5 W's and H'. That is to say, trend charts can assist with what the problem is and to what extent, maps can assist with where, day and time charts illustrate when, subject profiles can show who and an Excel spreadsheet, detailing different methods, can provide the how. A combination of these will assist in concluding why.

A good example of how information over time can be presented can be seen from the chart on below. This chart illustrates the rise and fall of street crime (robbery of the person and theft person snatch) in King's Cross from January 2000 to June 2001.

There are two trend lines reflecting the monthly rise and fall of street crime of the two adjoining boroughs, Camden and Islington, which come together in the core of King's Cross. The reason for the separation is the divide of two council districts covering the same area, thus two separate areas for data collection. By displaying the rise and fall in King's Cross with street crime split between the two boroughs we can demonstrate that the overall Camden trend is increasing over this period while the overall trend for Islington is falling. It is notable however, that the opposite trends, i.e. Camden increase and Islington decrease, did not begin to take effect until around August 2000, whilst prior to that a similar pattern can be seen. The mostly likely explanation for this is the displacement of crime from the Islington streets over the divide into Camden. The reason for this displacement is likely to be

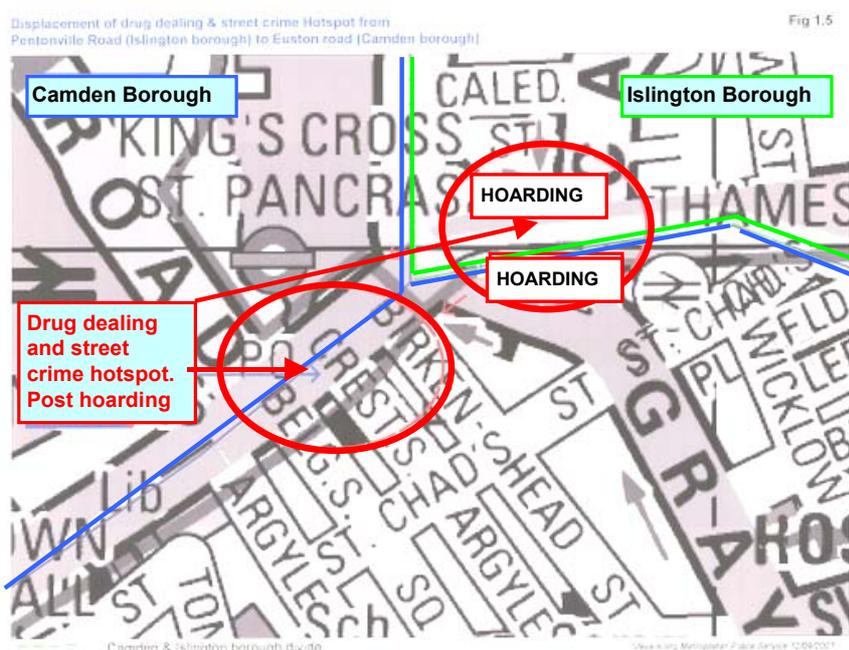


the introduction of hoarding along Pentonville Road, the street where many street crime offences took

place in Islington. An illustration of this can be seen in the map below, which is an extremely useful presentation tool.

Although the full picture of street crime in King’s Cross was not represented in these two charts (other work was completed around the ‘5 Ws and H’), these charts played a significant part in the conclusion of why there was a rise in street crime in Camden and fall in Islington. The significant change within the regularity of street crime in King’s Cross was the hoarding, which acted as the mechanism for change in trends. This is important because it highlights that a built environment change had a significant impact in changing street crime in King’s Cross, most likely due to the fact that the street width was reduced, recess doors removed and access to buildings denied, thus making offenders more visible to police and CCTV cameras. With this knowledge you could attempt to replicate this process in a different context, knowing that the likelihood of being seen can significantly reduce or displace street crime.

A demonstration of how to apply thoughts about the best intervention to the problem that exists can be seen with the two examples below. The first continues the King’s Cross problem, whilst the second offers a different setting of how lighting reduces crime. This method is based on realistic evaluation looking at the context and mechanisms of leveraging crime opportunities (Pawson and Tilley, *Realistic evaluation*, London, Sage.1997).



Mechanism	Context	Outcome	Adaptation
Visibility – an offender seen or apprehended	The need for someone to intervene or the possibility of intervention from the use of CCTV cameras. This is enhanced by the introduction of hoarding, which will reduce the available hiding places and reduce the width of the street. There is a significant link between the street crime, drugs and sex market in King’s Cross	Reduced opportunity in street crime leading to crime reduction or displacement. The drugs market is likely to reduce in this area or displace	Displacement to another area
Visibility – an offender seen or apprehended	The need for someone to intervene – thoughtful consideration to improving lighting location, e.g. if there is no natural surveillance then improved lighting is unlikely to reduce crime	Reduce crime – what types, or consider fear of crime	How things change over time – reduced social interaction

Finally, it is important to know how you will regularly get the data you need, thus a need to put in place systems to facilitate this. For example, service level agreements with the data owner should be a consideration so that you know what you are getting, from whom, in what format, and when. For crime researchers who are not part of the police service the gathering of the police crime data can sometimes be frustrated by the constraints of the Data Protection Act. Clearly, this matter has to be resolved at the tendering stage of any contract as upfront data and analysis to understand the problems is a prerequisite for the more detailed crime opportunity profiling of the individual streets.

Crime and disorder issues considered by a COP

A COP report will typically identify and advise the removal or alteration of anything in the street or in the building interfaces that encourage or provide opportunities for the following crime types and disorder:

Drug dealing	Drug taking	Begging	Theft
Theft from the person	Robbery	Footway obstruction	Graffiti
Fly posting	Littering	Inappropriate loitering	Prostitution
Rough sleeping			

Problems that are common to a drug market

As anyone embarking upon a COP will soon discover there will be a wide range of problems that are common throughout the commercial district located drug market. Below is a table of the problems identified during the profiling of 59 streets in the Camden Ward of Bloomsbury during a cross border anti-drugs project with Westminster known as 'Lilac'. Similar problems have been registered during COPs conducted in King's Cross, Camden High Street and Holborn.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED DURING THE LILAC PROJECT

Misused recessed doors	About half are emergency exit doors	51
Stickers on street furniture	Mainly on lamp columns and bollards.	30
Graffiti	On public and private property	26
Street furniture problems	Repairs to, removal of, and requests for additional	16
Development site security	Visits to sites to advise re drug use problems	12
Landscaping	Includes tree pruning and major projects re drug user sites	11
Rear yards and parking areas	Preventing access to them	11
Litter	Concerns collection, obstruction and use by drug users	10
Access to light wells	Mainly involving street side gates and railing	9
Phone boxes	Removal, relocation, reorientation, cleaning, sealing etc	7
Street lighting	Broken street lights and request for additional	6
Alleyway and street closures	Requests for licensed gating at night	5
Perimeter fencing	Includes repairs to and new fencing	5
Building security	Better locks, grilles etc.	4
Bill posters	Requests for their removal	4
Footway obstructions	Requests for their removal	3
Shrub and tree pruning	To improve lighting and surveillance	3
Planning applications	Chasing up applications noted during walkabouts	3
CCTV	Advice given re coverage and image quality	2
Shop front improvements	Grilles, shutters etc.	2
Shoplifting	Shoplifting by drug users	2
Access control	Repairs to	2
Planting boxes	Hiding drugs therein	2
Car parks	Requests to upgrade to Secured Car Park standard	2
Storage of food	Being stolen by drug users	2
Broken windows	Request to repair	1
	Total	231

What can be done about these problems and who can help?

This main section of this guide, Part Three, looks at each of the typical problems that will be encountered during crime opportunity profiling of a commercial street, which may suffer from the consequences of an active drug market. Each problem is followed by help and advice and, where available, a reference to where additional help might be obtained. Some problems will appear very minor in nature. For example, a single graffiti tag on one doorway would not normally be of major concern, but if this is repeated on a series of doors all along the street the overall effect can be quite disturbing and perhaps suggest that a certain level of disorder is tolerated. Removal of the graffiti may require the full services of partners in the local authority.

You may, of course, identify a problem (for which there is no developed solution) that is not included in this guide or you may have developed an alternative or more effective solution for the problems that are

covered. If this is the case then it is for you to identify and develop an effective solution and to ensure that it is added to this guide (See contacts on second page). The profiler should be aware that there may be conflicting but valid requirements for the street that might prevent some of the proposed alterations.

Some general aims

Before moving on to specific solutions for specific problems it is worth considering some general advice aimed at creating a street that feels safe and is safer to use. It is suggested that the first part of a Crime Opportunity Profile report includes some or all of the following general aims, listed in no particular order of priority.

- There should be a general aim to maximise the level of natural visibility or surveillance by improving sight lines from and into the buildings and open land on either side of the street and importantly by improvement of sight lines for pedestrians so that they may clearly see the way ahead.
- Improvements to the street lighting (where it is below the relevant British or European Standard) should be carried out and light spill from shop and office windows should be encouraged. Intrinsic to this aim is the discouragement of visually solid security roller shutters and visually obstructive posters and window displays in shops and offices that feature for soft target robberies, such as off licences, newsagents and sub post offices.
- The removal of street clutter is important as this will reduce pinch points and remove some areas used for inappropriate loitering. If directional signage for pedestrians can be improved (and good pedestrian signage can help to create an identity and better image for an area) at the same time then it is likely that both measures will help to improve pedestrian flow. Bear in mind that theft person is more difficult when the target is moving.
- Regular removal of graffiti, bill posters and stickers from building surfaces and street furniture and the regular washing of footways will help hugely to cleanse the area and reduce the fear of crime often associated with a filthy shopping street.
- Improved street management in general and more regular waste food and litter collections, especially of the materials used by rough sleepers and drug users, such as cardboard, will help to deter drug users.
- Enforcing existing licensing and planning conditions and byelaws, especially those relating to waste collection and footway obstruction would help to create a cleaner and less obstructed high street.
- Removing misused recesses will take away one of the most commonly abused features of any building.
- Encourage the introduction of fencing and or access control to prevent trespass into private car parks and rear yards.
- Work with your Local Authority's Community Safety Officers and or 'community safety' Planning Officers to obtain funding to support some of the required improvements and to design out crime.

The drug user's needs

As many of you will be conducting Crime Opportunity Profiling in drug market areas, and in order to help recognise the environmental features they exploit it is worth considering the drug users' needs. The work carried out during the Lilac Project in the West End of London seemed to indicate that all or most of the following needs in the table below had to be satisfied before drug use became endemic in an area.

Drug user needs

A sheltered or isolated place with light to loiter without disturbance
 A nearby place to sleep at night
 A place to urinate and defecate
 A place to hide their drugs
 Association with other drug users
 Shops and people to steal from to finance their habit
 A place to sit and beg and large numbers of persons to beg from
 Access to cheap fast food and drink
 Low chance of arrest
 Public transport

Most, but not all, drug users take their drugs out of sight of the general public. It is difficult sometimes to know whether the drug user goes to a 'quiet' place to take drugs for fear of being identified and or arrested or simply because they actually require shelter and freedom from disturbance to carry out the act. The fact remains, however, that the majority of discarded drug paraphernalia tends to be found in 'out-of-the-way' places and not in the middle of a busy shopping street. Of course, the

preparation of some drugs requires heat, which is usually provided by a cigarette lighter. It therefore follows that when the weather is inclement the user will seek shelter from the elements. Conversely, if the weather is fine the user will only require a place that is free from disturbance.

Normally, a good level of light is required, particularly when the drug is to be injected. Obviously, artificial light is only an issue during the night or if the shelter is itself relatively dark. A good example of a much used drug user site in the Lilac Project area was an underground car park where one would find most of the discarded needles on the sheltered vehicle ramps directly below the fluorescent lamps. Access controlled gates now protect the access ramps and the car park no longer suffers the problems.

Freedom from disturbance is also important, because a degree of concentration is required by the user to ensure that the drug is prepared and administered correctly. Disturbance during preparation can lead to complications requiring urgent medical assistance. If the user is on their own and has found a place where people seldom go then an interruption at the critical moment could lead to serious illness or even death.

The drug litter left behind by some users presents a very serious health hazard to the public and there have been cases of both adults and children being pierced by needles. Blood, urine, excrement and used condoms are found at many of these user sites, all of which can spread disease to the public.

Common sheltered drug user sites include:

Recessed doorways	Basement light wells	Underground car parks
Pedestrian subways	Behind Paladin bins	Building sites
Behind skips	Door cases and porticos	Public toilets including 'superloos'
Derelict buildings	Telephone boxes	Restaurant, pub and shop toilets

Common isolated drug user sites include:

Narrow underused streets, particularly at night
 Back streets that tend to serve the rears of commercial premises
 Alleyways, both public and private
 Insecure rear service yards and car parks to commercial premises
 Public gardens

The components of a drug market

Before considering how designing out crime and a COP report can contribute towards controlling a drug market it is first useful to examine the component parts of the drug market. The author is very grateful to Police Sergeant Neil Henson (formerly of Camden Police Problem Solving Team) for the following extracts.

Identifying the components of a drugs market

Research by the Camden Borough Problem Solving Team into the various drugs markets has identified nine separate components that constitute a drugs market, be it fixed or mobile. It is fully accepted that there may be other components and there is the opportunity to develop this list as appropriate. The purpose of separating the market into its constituent elements is two fold:

- to identify what are the basis of each factor and
- to devise tactics to reverse or negate each one.

It is apparent that previous enforcement attempts to tackle only one or two elements of a drugs market (e.g. suppliers) in isolation has only limited long-term impact as the markets are established with the ability to replace those arrested or otherwise removed.

Long-term success against either a fixed or mobile drug market can only be achieved by a co-ordinated approach to tackle each factor as appropriate.

The component parts of a drugs market that have been identified are as follows:

1. Meeting place Where the contact and/or transactions takes place
2. Communication How those involved in the drugs market communicate
3. Transport How those in the drugs market get to and from the market
4. Suppliers Those involved in the supply of drugs
5. Storage Where the drugs are stored within the market
6. Customers Those who buy drugs within the market
7. User sites The places where users ingest the drugs they have purchased
8. Accommodation Where those involved in the market reside
9. Morale The confidence level of those involved in the market

Component 1 – Meeting Place

The 'meeting place' is the location where any transaction in the drug market takes place. The geographic location normally dictates whether the problem is the responsibility of the police unit or local authority.

What it is	The location where any transaction within the local drug market takes place
Who is involved	Any person involved in the transaction, including for example suppliers, customers, couriers, cashiers and observers
Where it operates	Meeting places can be divided into two distinct categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fixed – traditionally meeting places were easily identifiable sites, well established and widely publicised • mobile – the mobile market has now evolved, based around a number of favoured locations, which is highly manoeuvrable
Why it is important	In order for a transaction to occur, there is a need for a meeting to take place where the goods or money are exchanged for drugs
How it operates	The process involved depend upon the type of market in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a fixed market is based around an identifiable site where customers attend in expectation of purchasing drugs. The actual transaction process has developed into a complicated and protracted network designed to frustrate any enforcement activity. This can normally mean that there is a chain involved, whereby a customer is met by one person, money is handed to another and drugs are collected from another person or site. • a mobile market depends upon customers being gathered by various means and then being directed to a supplier, or those acting on his/her behalf, at a place either chosen at random or used out of habit.
When it operates	At all times and fluctuates only by the vagaries of the supply chain

Component 2 – Communication

Communication holds a drugs market together, linking customers with suppliers, and includes tactics to thwart enforcement action.

What it is	The means by which anyone involved in the illicit drug supply chain communicates with another
Who is involved	Any person involved in the illicit drug supply chain, including for example suppliers, customers, couriers and observers
Where it operates	Wherever the market exists
Why it is important	An effective communication system is a prerequisite for a mobile market, which can resist intervention activity and develop the customer base.
How it operates	The main means of communication are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobile telephone, particularly 'pay-as-you-go' handsets • hand signals and • audible warnings
When it operates	Timings depend upon the market itself but include hand signals directing customers when they arrive, warning signals on the approach of police officers and other arrangements by telephone.

Component 3 – Transport

Transport is wider than the physical means by which those involved in the drugs market use to get to the point of sale and includes an assessment of why certain routes were chosen and others ignored.

What it is	Within the illicit drugs market, the term transport is defined as the movement of the people, the drugs and the property involved
Who is involved	Any person involved in the illicit drug supply chain, including for example suppliers, customers, couriers and observers
Where it operates	Wherever anyone involved is
Why it is important	The essence of a drugs market is that a transaction must take place at some time; this strand is involved with the infrastructure and movement of any person or item within that market

How it operates	The means of transportation are varied and include public transport (e.g. overland rail, underground, buses, licensed and unlicensed cabs), private transport (e.g. hire cars, personal vehicles, bicycle) and by foot (e.g. public streets, tunnels, alleyways, underpasses, canal towpaths)
When it operates	At all times and fluctuates only by availability of the transport

Component 4 – Suppliers

The suppliers are those people who actually provide the drugs within the market as a retailer (e.g. the dealers and their associates).

What it is	Those people involved in the supply of controlled drugs, including those who bring the drugs into the local area and those who perpetuate the market itself
Who is involved	There are a variety of drugs networks supporting the markets; these range from international organisations with their roots in other countries, to more localised networks or criminal gangs
Where it operates	The suppliers are core to two sorts of market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fixed – operating from easily identifiable sites, often protected by a protracted mechanisms for supply involving a variety of personnel • mobile – flexible approach dependant upon sophisticated communication systems
Why it is important	The suppliers provide the drugs that are actually transacted within the market
How it operates	Drugs are brought into the UK, and refined as appropriate, before being distributed through a sophisticated network to the customer via the suppliers. At present at a local level the supplier dictates how the market operates, as with any retail operation. Most markets are robust enough to replace any individual removed from trading as a result of personal injury or arrest.
When it operates	At all times and fluctuates only by the vagaries of the supply chain

Component 5 – Storage

The supplier (retailer) receives drugs, normally in bulk, from an external source (wholesaler) and must store it prior to it being sold on to the customer. This could be the only stage when the dealer has the drugs under their direct control, which could be vital for evidence.

What it is	Storage is defined as both where the drugs are hidden once they have been delivered to the market but prior to them being sold and also places used by the users to hide their recent purchases.
Who is involved	Due to the fact that the dealer controls the nature of the local market, it is he or she who decides upon the storage mechanism
Where it operates	Storage of drugs depends upon the market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fixed market – likely to be secreted close to the dealer but far enough way to prevent any immediately recognisable evidential link • mobile market – likely to be retained on the person or in close proximity of the dealer, primarily their car
Why it is important	Storage ensures a steady, consistent and regular supply of drugs to the market
How it operates	Drugs are hidden prior to selling in a variety of locations subject to the ingenuity of individual dealers, which can be roughly grouped into three sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the person – this varies from small amounts held in the mouth, to more sizeable quantities secreted in other bodily orifices • in accommodation – either residential or business premises • in cars – either parked up or hidden therein, especially in support of a mobile market • close by in an appropriate location such as suspended from railings, hidden in walls, buried in the soil, behind a loose brick or under paving
When it operates	At all times as dictated by the suppliers

Component 6 – Customers

Drug markets exist to supply customers. Customers are treated as one type yet they come from diverse backgrounds with different reasons for entering the market.

What it is	The customers are the people who actually purchase the drugs.
Who is involved	There are three distinct groups within the markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those that commit crime in order to fund their purchases • those involved as sex workers • those who self fund their purchases
Where it operates	Customers operate wherever the market is in existence, both fixed and mobile
Why it is important	Customers sustain the market
How it operates	The three groupings of customer operate in different ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those who commit crime to fund their purchases (e.g. theft, robbery, telephone kiosks, parking meters) use cash and/or acquired goods (e.g. mobile phones, computer chips, stolen property) to exchange for drugs • those involved as sex workers use either their own money (e.g. acquired through their activities) or cash provided by their clients to purchase drugs; the clients often chose this method because they can be more confident in the quality of the drugs as the dealer will be known to the sex worker (e.g. as acquaintance or pimp) • those who self fund may live ostensibly respectable lives and travel to the market from their places or work
When it operates	The times involved depend upon the customer grouping; the sex workers and those involved in crime operate throughout the day and night whilst the self funded customers tend to restrict their activities to the working day and evening

Component 7 – User sites

This component focuses on where the drugs are being used rather than how.

What it is	The locations where customers prepare and take their recently purchased drugs
Who is involved	The end user and anyone sharing their drugs
Where it operates	A variety of places both private and public, open or covered, used by the customers, either by preference or necessity
Why it is important	Users having purchased controlled drugs require a place immediately accessible to take them in order to minimise the chance of arrest for possession and to protect their purchases from other users. In addition there are other safety issues raised by user sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety of users – danger of overdose in a secluded location without access to medical support • safety of public – threats posed by discarded needles, swabs, paraphernalia, faeces, condoms etc
How it operates	The users require sufficient time without interruption (e.g. by police or others) to prepare their drugs and to administer them to themselves or each other. With a fixed market, the main priority was to purchase the drugs and then go to a known location to consume them. With a mobile market, the priority is to identify an opportune location close to the purchase which has led to more blatant drug misuse in previously untroubled areas.
When it operates	At all times and fluctuates only by the vagaries of the supply chain

Component 8 – Accommodation

This element examines where those involved in the drugs market reside, be it legally or illegally.

What it is	Places that provide shelter for those involved in the drug markets
Who is involved	Any person involved in the illicit drug supply chain, including for example suppliers, customers, couriers and observers

Where it operates	Any accommodation used by those shown above, which can be divided into two distinct groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> legitimately occupied by a person involved, either directly or indirectly, in the drug market Illegal occupation of either buildings or land (e.g. squats or cardboard city)
Why it is important	Accommodation is a supporting factor for people who operate within the market
How it operates	Dealers pro-actively target vulnerable people who have legitimate accommodation, normally provided by the local authority or social landlords. These occupants may be coerced by a variety of means, including intimidation or the benefits of the market. Illegal occupations occur when premises or land are left vacant, or where such activity is tolerated.
When it operates	Accommodation is needed at all times

Component 9 – Morale

Morale is a governing factor in sustaining a drugs market and in deciding where the market will be. It is simple retail logic to assume that there is no point in having goods for sale if it is unlikely that there will be any customers wishing to buy such goods; similarly customers will only travel in search of goods if it is likely that the goods they require will be found there.

What it is	This is defined as the confidence of those involved in the local supply of controlled drugs
Who is involved	Any person involved in the illicit drug supply chain, including for example suppliers, customers, couriers and observers
Where it operates	Morale is both a group dynamic and an individual perception of circumstances and applies wherever that individual is
Why it is important	If there is confidence within the drugs market then the market will grow.
How it operates	The issues that impact upon the confidence of those involved in a drugs market are many and varied and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the likelihood of police intervention the proliferation of dealers the availability of customers the threat of rivalry between suppliers the consistency of drug quality the likelihood of being deceived about the items purchased
When it operates	Morale operates at all times

PART TWO General observations

Sleeping on the street

The homeless and some drug users will seek out the numerous places in an area that will afford them some degree of night shelter. These places are typically similar to the sheltered drug user sites and the drier and warmer they are the more likely they will be used. Places used for rough sleeping in the areas studied included public and private car parks, basement light wells and recessed doorways.

Removing or denying access to the drug user sites will probably remove the sleeping places at the same time. If there is one it is advisable to speak with your council's rough sleeping unit for advice and to establish the availability of hostel beds in the area. In Camden regular counts are made of the rough sleepers and when found they are advised where they can find shelter for the night. It is a combination of removing inappropriate sleeping places and providing official night shelters that has worked in Camden.



Hiding places for drugs

Because drug users fear being arrested in possession of controlled drugs or robbed of them by another user some will hide any extra drugs until they need them. The drugs are usually supplied in cling film, and occasionally foil and sometimes further wrapped in chewing gum silver paper in the belief that this will prevent police dogs finding them. The wraps are very small and are easily hidden in a variety of places. Sometimes their positions are marked with silver paper sticking up through the earth and, to protect their drug from discovery, a few users have placed needles in the ground to injure the 'thief'.

The table below identifies just some of the wide variety of places the drug user finds to hide their drugs. Unfortunately, innocent people going about their normal business and employees can and do get injured. It is vitally important for employers to include the possibility of accidental needle piercing when carrying out risk assessments for health and safety. It is also wise for owners and managers of property that is known to be frequented by drug users to inform staff and occupants about the potential dangers. In some cases where it has not been possible to prevent access into public spaces, such as a public garden, the local authority has provided 'sharps boxes' for the disposal of used needles. In these circumstances it is equally important for the sharps containers to be securely anchored as, despite all the warnings to the contrary, it is common for these containers to be taken, broken open and the needles re-used.

Health warning

Some drug users have been known to tie used needles into trees and shrubs in public parks with the deliberate intention of injuring council workers and police officers going about their duty.

Commonly used places to hide drugs

- Mortar beds in walls
- Gaps between paving stones
- Flowerbeds in public gardens
- In plant pots and hanging baskets
- On high up ledges
- In the accumulated dust at the bases of shop fronts
- In cigarette packets and similar almost never-collected rubbish

In chronically affected areas we could be dealing with a very serious health hazard. It is obviously not possible or desirable to remove people's hanging baskets or plant pots, but it is possible to ensure that the streets are clean and that the never-collected rubbish is collected. An extremely high level of maintenance and repair is required and this is exactly what has been delivered by Camden Council, through the services of the Boulevard Project. Streets have been re-lit and repaved and street clutter removed. Graffiti and fly posters have been cleaned away and footways washed down. Indeed, much of what has been achieved through the crime

opportunity profiling in Camden was only possible because of the Boulevard Project and the relationship between the police and the local council.

Most of the collection and disposal of hazardous wastes such as used needles and other drug paraphernalia is carried out by the Local Authority. In Camden the majority of drug debris is handled by the

specialist team set up by the Boulevard Project. In addition to this the Housing Department and Parks and Leisure Services have their own disposal arrangements. Usefully, the locations of the needle pick-ups are recorded and the information passed to the police.

Association with other drug users

Many drug users associate with others of the same ilk. This is probably related to the fact that they offer each other support, share common sleeping places (and sometimes needles) and buy drugs from the same dealers at the same meeting places at the same time.

In Central London these association places tend to be in the streets and gardens close to the Main and Underground Railway Stations. Suitable places for association tend to be similar to the drug user sites, but also include public benches in streets, especially where the footway is wide and the benches are set back from the pedestrian desire lines.

In this photographic example the concrete bench, which was also used by street drinkers to the exclusion of the general public is set well back from the preferred pedestrian track. An approach was made to the local council to have the bench removed and at the same time it was also requested that the resultant empty corner was treated in such a way as to deter loitering. The use of small granite blocks set into sloping concrete has proved very effective at keeping the inappropriate loitering at bay.



Bench used almost exclusively by drug users and street drinkers



The bench was removed and the small concrete blocks set into sloping concrete have successfully deterred loitering

A number of parks seem to attract drug users, but normally only at specific places in the park lacking surveillance from the street or in parks that lack regular and formal supervision. Because of the presence of drug users the local people avoid using these places. This is an understandable reaction, but one that further aggravates the problem through the unwitting acknowledgement of the drug user's defensible space.

Failure to remove or deter drug users from these places has a very negative impact upon bone fide use. Once an open space loses its legitimate visitors it becomes even more attractive to the drug user and street drinker. Often the open space has become so badly littered with drug paraphernalia that it has had to be closed for cleaning and refurbishment before the public can be encouraged to use it again.

Places to sit and beg

Most of the begging experienced in the study areas was passive in nature whereby the drug user would simply sit to the back of a busily used footway with a cup on display. Observations have shown that, in spite of popular claims to the contrary, very few members of the public actually give money. However, sufficient numbers do and it is not uncommon for beggars to raise in excess of £100 a day. This level of fund raising is sufficient to keep the drug user well supplied and the non drug using beggar out of employment. Such is the level of begging in the West End of London that the Local Authority in Camden has introduced an 'alternative giving programme' to encourage those people who want to help the beggars to help the caring organisations instead. Posters are being displayed close to the places where the beggars regularly sit, such as next to automatic telling machines. At the time of writing it is not yet known how this will affect the volume of begging. However, the alternative giving programme is being introduced alongside a more rigid enforcement programme, whereby beggars will be moved on or arrested if they refuse to move.

Passive beggars tend to frequent the busiest footways and especially locations that are close to station entrances and busy road junctions where the pedestrian traffic is busiest and slowest. This suggests that the Boulevard Project's (a Camden Council highway improvement initiative) work to remove footway obstruction and generally improve the highways will adversely affect the beggar's income.

On occasion a drug user or drinker will approach a pedestrian and ask for money to buy food, but this is the exception rather than the norm. It would be interesting to know why some people give money to beggars. Do they feel threatened? Do they feel uneasy? Do they understand that the giving of money to a drug user or drinker will help to maintain the beggar's lifestyle? If they were aware of this would they still give? And if it can be established that they would not then, perhaps, the authorities should consider informing the public about the downside of giving. The only guidance currently given to the public is that given by the operators of the London Underground. Public announcements clearly inform the public not to give money to beggars operating on the trains. Possible downsides of discouraging the giving to beggars might be an increase in theft from shops and restaurants. There might also be an increase in aggravated and 'in your face' begging and more incidents of robbery and theft from the person. This is a challenging problem and one which would benefit from further research so that practitioners would know the best response.

PART THREE Solutions for problems

In this part of the guide you will find reference to the following built environment features in the street or on the building interfaces with the street that may be causing problems. Some have fully developed suggested solutions (which can still be added to in time), others have solutions that are developing and would benefit from additional input from practitioners and, finally, there are some problems where solutions are still awaited. In addition there may also be some common problems found in your streets that are not listed here and the author would be very pleased to receive from you both a description of the problem with digital photographs and your developed or developing solution.

General problems	Solution
1. Recessed doorways	Developed
2. Porticos	Developed
3. Basement light wells	Developed
4. Public and private car parks	Developed
5. Toilets and street urination	Developing
6. Fly posting and stickers	Developed
7. Graffiti	Developing
8. Alleyways	Developed
9. Building site hoardings	Developing
10. Shop windows	Developing
11. Automatic telling machines	Developing
12. Parks and gardens	Developing
13. Refuse collection	Developing

Street furniture problems	Solution
14. Public seating	Developing
15. Informal seating	Developing
16. Monuments	Developing
17. Lamp posts and sign posts	Developing
18. Bus shelters	Developing
19. Bollards	Developing
20. Telephone kiosks	Developed
21. Cycle racks	Undeveloped
22. Street litter bins	Undeveloped
23. Free newspaper containers	Undeveloped
24. Plant containers	Developing
25. Royal Mail letter boxes	Undeveloped

Problem 1. Recessed doorways

Developed solution



Rough sleeper's cardboard box bedding left in a deeply recessed shop entrance

The recessed door, be it an emergency exit or an entrance, has been the scene of just about every type of crime and disorder imaginable. For most people living and working in inner cities our experience of them conjures up images of rough sleepers, street drinkers, drug users and prostitutes and a myriad of often disgusting deposits – used hypodermic syringes, bodily wastes, etc. Often they become the resting places for wind-blown litter, which sometimes has provided the fuel for the arsonist. Occasionally, office workers arriving for work have had to step over the recumbent guest from the night before and residents have had to wait for a drug deal to be



At the top of these steps is an emergency exit door from a hotel. A rough sleeper who sleeps on the landing often blocks the door. Hotel staff regularly remove needles from the landing and steps as well as the rough sleeper.

completed before they can get into their home.

Recessed doors also offer opportunities for the burglar who can hide in the recess while forcing open the door. Prostitutes and their clients use them in some areas leaving behind deposits that have to be cleaned away by others in the morning. Recesses can sometimes generate fear simply because they are places that cannot be looked into. Many might agree that the pedestrian walking along a street at night

should be able to clearly see the way ahead and recessed doorways and other obstructions to vision, such as bus shelter advertising panels and banks of telephone kiosks can all add up to a *street that scares*.

Many would argue, including the author, that recessed doors actually *cause* crime and anti-social behaviour to occur and that their removal will remove this attendant opportunity. And remember, without opportunity you cannot have a crime.

“There is no single cause of crime that is sufficient to guarantee its occurrence: yet opportunity above all others is necessary and therefore has as much or more claim to being a root cause.” (Opportunity makes the thief – practical theory for crime prevention. Home Office Police Research Series Paper 98 by Marcus Felson and Ronald V. Clarke)

Having pointed out the obvious problems associated with recesses we should not lose sight of the fact that outward opening doors are difficult to force inwards and therefore can help to reduce opportunity for burglary. The difficulty is caused by the doorstops, which can be up to 25mm thick making forced entry extremely hard. The ideal solution then is a non-recessed outward opening door and it is this ideal that should be achieved wherever possible.



This entrance door to a block of residential flats in King's Cross opens inwards and is therefore flush with the building line

Dealing with recessed doorways is complicated and readers in the UK are advised to obtain a copy of the author's guide known as 'The Recessed Pest'. This can be downloaded as a PDF from the Home Office website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk

In many cases recessed doorways can be brought forward, providing due regard is given to the requirements of other legislation and regulation. A close working relationship with your Local Authority Building Control and Highways Officers and the local Fire Brigade's Fire Safety Officers will help immensely.

The problems at their worst

If you are unfortunate enough to live or work in an area inhabited by drug users and dealers you will probably be seeing the very worst abuse of the recessed door. In 2001 a survey of 57 streets used by drug users in a part of the West End of London identified 163 drug user and rough sleeping sites. These ranged from insecure rear yards and car parks through to telephone boxes and alleyways. The most commonly used place however was the recessed door, accounting for more than 30% of the sites identified*. Drug users and street dwellers in general find recessed doorways attractive because they provide a modicum of shelter from the elements. As previously mentioned, a good level of light can be an advantage to the drug user, particularly if the drug is to be injected. It is important to know this because increasing the light levels in a recess may actually make things worse not better.

* Lilac Project: Environment – Street Assessments and Tasks (internal report) Calvin Beckford 2000



This deeply recessed door shows evidence of all types of misuse from rough sleeping and drug use to graffiti – some of which is in blood. Note too the bollard, which is intended to stop motor vehicles from blocking the exit.

Why are my doors recessed? – The Regulations

In simple terms many of the doors in the building in which you live or work are used as a means of escape from a fire or for any other emergency when the building has to be evacuated. Most of these doors will open outwards in the direction of escape so that if someone should fall in front of the doors on the way out or a large number of people arrive at the doors at the same time the escaping people will not obstruct the way out. If the doors were to open inwards in these situations injury or loss of life could result.

There are a number of door types to be considered and these include emergency exit doors (sometimes incorrectly referred to as 'fire doors'), entrance doors, delivery doors, entrances to car parks and yard gates.

Emergency exit doors can be either single or double leaf, are often fitted with crash bars or pads, and normally open outwards. Entrance doors are usually included as an alternative means of escape from a building and in some cases open in both directions.

The number of emergency exit doors and their direction of opening (including the entrance door) are determined by the building type, its use and size and the number of persons expected to use the premises and the doors. Even some sliding and revolving doors can be designated as emergency exit doors and are sometimes designed to break open outwards if force is applied.

Floor space factor

The precise number of emergency exit doors and their opening direction are governed by your country's Fire and or Building Regulations. In the UK the number of doors required is calculated using the 'Floor Space Factor', which is different depending on the use of the building. For example, night clubs normally require a greater number of emergency exits than a standard office building because there are likely to be a greater number of people in the building in one place, some of which could be worse for drink. Ironically some of the worst abused recessed doors are those around night clubs and other licensed premises – buildings that tend to have more of them!

The opening direction of an emergency exit door

In the UK the opening direction of fire doors is governed by the DETR publication *Approved Document B* of the Building Regulations 2000 (Now the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister www.odpm.gov.uk). Paragraph 6.14 advises that where reasonably practical all doors **should** open in the direction of escape and **should** always do so if the number of persons that might be expected to use the door is more than 60, or where there is a very high risk of fire. Implied in this advice is that if it is anticipated that 60 or less people are to use the door and there is not a very high risk of fire it **could** open inwards.

In respect to the anticipated number of users of an emergency exit door it is important to note that when there is more than one escape route the largest exit is usually discounted. Therefore, it is not just a matter of dividing the occupants of a building by the number of doorways. Paragraphs 4.19 and 5.11 of *Approved Document B* explain these matters in more detail.

Premises licensed for entertainment

It is important to note that in the UK additional rules apply to premises that are licensed for entertainment, such as clubs, cinemas and theatres. This set of rules, known as the Technical Regulations, insist on outward opening doors in all such licensed buildings regardless of their capacity. In effect, the Technical Regulations take the place of the Building Regulation requirements for doors in these types of buildings and you will therefore need the additional approval of the Licensing Section of the Council before making alterations to any door. The Building Control Officer should tell you about this.

At the time of writing a new national set of model regulations has been published but not yet formally adopted by all the country's Local Authorities

Case Study: A small pub with a liquor licence has inward opening doors approved by the London Fire Brigade under the liquor licence. The owners apply for an entertainment licence and the Council Licensing Section makes them re-hang all the doors so they can open outwards. The assumption is that the risk is greater in a building that has an entertainment licence.

Private forecourts

In most instances the footway outside a building is owned and maintained by the local council's Highways Department. On occasion and often found where a building is recessed back from the general building line, the part of the footway immediately outside the building may be owned by the freeholders of the property. This is often referred to as the 'forecourt' and is normally marked by a change of footway surface material. Even though a door could open out onto this private forecourt, thus removing the recess, safety considerations normally result in these doors being recessed as well. Regulation 4, Requirement M2 of the Building Regulations deals with this scenario, which in effect acknowledges the problems faced by blind or partially sighted



The private forecourt in front of these doors could enable these emergency exit doors to be brought forward.

pedestrians who would not be able to differentiate between the private forecourt and the footway and could walk in front of the door opening.

The Highways Act

The local council's Highways Authority has a duty to protect the public from injury whilst using the public highway and to prevent its obstruction. Indeed there is a specific Highways Act offence of opening any "door, gate or bar" onto the public highway. It is for these sound reasons why emergency exit doors (and some entrance doors) are recessed so that when opening outwards they do not open onto the public footway where they might cause obstruction or injury to pedestrians. In addition to this, because the doors are recessed, they will still be able to open even if an irresponsible driver has parked their vehicle on the footway and is obstructing the exit.

Comment: When starting to read through the suggested solutions below keep in mind the problem of vehicles obstructing emergency exit doors, which is especially troublesome where there is a private forecourt. The author suggests the use of clear signage at least and, if there is sufficient room on the private forecourt, some additional bollards to keep cars away from the exit. Speak to the Building Control or Highways Officer about what might be done to reduce the problem.

Steps outside the exit door

If there is more than one step outside the emergency exit door or the single step is greater than 150mm in height it may not be possible to move the doors forward. This is because the change of floor level might cause a trip hazard that could affect the means of escape. However, if the steps can be built outwards or replaced with a ramp or the footway raised to reduce the step height or create a level threshold the alteration may be possible.

The council's duty to prevent crime

At the present time, the Building Regulations and the Highways Act do not take into account the need to prevent crime. This is not surprising, as these regulations and legislation were never intended to do so – crime prevention has never been regulated for. To some extent this has now changed and the change has been brought about by the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Section 17 – (1) of the Crime and Disorder Act says: *"Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area."*

This means that when, for example, a Planning Officer is dealing with a planning application for a new building, the officer must consider the implication for crime and disorder. This consideration will not just be for the building itself, but also for the effect of the development in the wider area. A similar position exists with an application to the Building Control Officer to ensure compliance with the building regulations, because the regulations that relate to emergency exit doors now have to be considered together with the crime risks associated with them.

It is, of course, accepted that the need to provide a safe means of exit from a building in an emergency will often outweigh the crime opportunities that these regulations may unwittingly create. However, this does not mean that alternative and acceptable compromises cannot be found. In a drug market scenario, a recessed outward opening door might be obstructed by a drug user sitting or sleeping in it or by bedding material left in the recess. What is important is that the crime opportunity has been considered and that the decision about where to position a door and its direction of opening has been considered in this light.

The building manager's responsibilities

The owner of a building has a legal responsibility to keep fire exits free from obstruction when the building is occupied. By definition this responsibility includes the removal of persons sleeping or sitting in a recess in front of an emergency escape door as well as the removal of obstructions on the inside of the door. In addition to this, the owner must also take reasonable steps to prevent people from using any part of the premises to take drugs (Section 8, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971), and this includes a recess. Added to this burden will be Health and Safety Legislation and the Occupier's Liability Act 1984. Both would place responsibilities upon management to ensure that doors do not open in a manner that might cause injury to people in the immediate vicinity and that the building and the grounds upon which it stands are safe for all people to use.

It is indeed unfortunate that the understandable needs of safety regulation, which has caused the recessing of so many outward opening doors has unwittingly created the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour.

For those of you managing buildings in inner cities where crime and anti-social behaviour is often so much greater than elsewhere it would be understandable if you felt that you were in a 'no win' situation. This is why it is important to read and where necessary act upon the advice in this guide. By working in partnership with the police and local authority you can at least show that you have taken your responsibilities seriously and have done all that can be reasonably expected to be done within the restrictions of the present laws.

Comment: In a drug market area of West London, where recessed doors are common, a manager of a Government building has taken his responsibilities very seriously indeed. Each of the emergency exits of this very large office building is covered by a CCTV camera. If a person is seen loitering in the recess the security staff take the immediate necessary action to remove the individual. Unfortunately these arrangements are probably the exception, as the majority of building managers in drug market areas have not taken these precautions and even if they did they would not have the security staff to respond.

PLAN A. Remove the recess by bringing the doors forward

This can normally be achieved in the following circumstances:

- 1. There are 60 or less users of the emergency exit doors, including the entrance door and there is a low risk of fire, allowing them to open inwards (this does not include places licensed for entertainment). Building Regulations Approved Document B 6.14 allows this in some circumstances.**

In some cases inward opening doors are not as secure as outward opening doors (because they can be kicked in). You must then ensure that the inward opening door and its locking provision will satisfy both security and fire safety needs. Reference to your insurers would also be wise. Go to www.securedbydesign.com for details of manufacturers who can supply security enhanced doors, which will also meet with the approval of Building Control for fire safety (British Standards Institution PAS024).

Comment : A crime prevention assessment of a large number of streets in the West End of London found that there were some doors that were unnecessarily recessed (Lilac Project: Environment - Street Assessments. Calvin Beckford and Jim Howard 2000). The majority of these were entrance doors to dwellings above shops, but also included blocks of flats owned by the local authority. After consultation some of these have since been altered to open inwards. As rough sleepers and drug users used these recesses the alteration has removed the anti-social element as well as the obstruction in front of the emergency exit doors.

- 2. There are 60 or less users of the doors, but there is a private forecourt immediately outside the recess allowing the doors to be brought forward and continue to open outwards onto the forecourt. See 3 below for further important guidance.**
- 3. There are more than 60 users of the doors and there is a private forecourt immediately outside the recessed door allowing the door to be brought forward and continue to open outwards onto the forecourt.**

To ensure the safety of pedestrians it is necessary to place structures either side of the door opening arc. Examples of such structures include an area of small cobbles placed either side of the door, together with deflector rails on the walls. Planters, bollards and rails are also used to the same effect of diverting the pedestrian away from the opening arc. This matter is dealt with by regulation 4 Requirement M2 of the Building Regulations.

Although not a requirement under the Building Regulations it is advisable to include a glazed viewing panel in an outward opening door as this will allow the user to see if there is an obstruction (or a pedestrian) on the other side. Camden police advise the use of 7.5mm laminated glass with a small gauge grille fixed behind. These measures will help to prevent the manipulation of the crash bars or other emergency release mechanism by a burglar through the viewing panel. If the door needs to be of a fire and smoke resistant type Building Control will advise you.

- 4. There are more than 60 users of the doors, there is no private forecourt immediately outside of the recessed door, but the footway is very wide, possibly allowing outward opening of the door.**

The Highways Authority has a duty under the Highways Act to protect pedestrians from injury whilst using the footway. At the same time Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (see below) places a duty upon the local authorities to prevent crime and disorder.

In effect this means that Highways, Building Control and Planning Officers have to consider crime and the prevention of crime and disorder when carrying out their respective duties. Unfortunately, Building and Highway Regulations, which require some doors to be recessed, actually create the opportunities for crime to be committed. Bear in mind also that Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 requires the building owner to take reasonable steps to prevent any part of a premises to be used to take controlled drugs. Until such times as the various regulations and laws are amended to take account of these anomalies council officers will do all they can to help within the law.

In consideration of the above the Highways Authority may, in circumstances where the crime problem is acute, allow a door to open over the highway providing the footway is very wide and the structures as described in 3 above are put in place to protect the pedestrian. The photo to the left shows the emergency exit doors from a disused underground railway station. The Highways Authority allowed these outward opening doors to be moved forward, because they were unlikely to be used.



These recessed emergency exit doors were brought forward (see right) as the building they serve currently stands empty awaiting redevelopment

Comment : If the recess you have removed forms the entrance into your building you might want to provide a little shelter from the elements by providing a small roof above the doorway. Before carrying out any work you are advised to contact your local planning department, as you may need planning permission.

PLAN B. Reduce the depth of the recess to a minimum.

1. With reference to Building Control and the Highways Authority ensure that the recess is no deeper than 600mm

The authorities may allow a slight protrusion over the highway on the basis that a particular set of doors will rarely be used anyway. Wall mounted deflectors or other structure may be required. Having achieved this alteration go to PLANS C and D for further advice.

2. With reference to Building Control and the Highways Authority ensure that the recess is no greater than that required for the opening of the door within the recess.

This should be a straightforward alteration, but you will still have to contact the local authority if you move the doors. Having achieved this alteration go to Plans C and D for further advice.

PLAN C. Using shutters and gates

It is important to note that emergency exit doors are only required when the building is occupied. This means that, in some circumstances, it will be possible to bring down shutters or pull across collapsible gates to remove the recess when the building is closed and all members of staff and visitors have left. This is subject to planning permission and building control and consultation with the fire authority. When using shutters or gates across emergency exit doors the fire authorities will want to know how the building manager will ensure that the shutters or gates are opened at the beginning of the day. Cinemas and theatres, which have traditionally chained and padlocked their emergency exit doors at the end of business, have overcome this problem by locating a lock board in the manager's office. If all the padlocks and chains are on the board the manager know that the doors have been unlocked.



This shopkeeper pulls across and locks this concertina grille each night to protect the recess.

details for one of the companies who can supply this product can be found in the appendix.

ACPO CPI Ltd, who manage the police initiative "Secured by Design", recommend that the minimum standard for external doors and shutters is either British Standard Institution's PAS024 or the Loss Prevention Council's LPS1175 grade 2. You are invited to contact Jon Cole through the Secured by Design website for further information.

PLAN D. Maximise formal and informal surveillance of the recess.

If you are unable to remove the recess by moving the doors forward or installing shutters or collapsible gates because the building is occupied throughout the night you can still make alterations that may reduce the misuse of the recess. This is achieved by increasing both formal and informal surveillance of the recess, but unlike the removal of a recess the police cannot offer any guarantees that anti-social behaviour will be reduced. In this context 'formal surveillance' means the visual supervision of the recess by staff and security officers either by patrolling the building and looking through the doors into the recess or watching a CCTV image of the recess. 'Informal surveillance' means looking into the recess by the passing public either from inside the building looking out or when passing by the recess along the street.



In spite of the all round glazing this recessed entrance is misused. There is no CCTV and no security patrolling.

Comment: The 'Clearscape™' Project

In 2000 a project took place in the West End of London known as 'Clearscape™', which involved replacing one emergency exit door in a cinema and a night club with specially made glazed doors. A CCTV camera was located behind each of these doors to monitor the use of the recess. The findings showed less anti-social activity in the monitored recesses when compared to those that had solid doors. The effect of the increased surveillance and the response to the CCTV images by the staff does seem to have increased the miscreant's fear of detection causing them to seek an alternative location.

Measures to be considered

- Deep clean the recess and where necessary make repairs to the walls, ceiling and floor surfaces ensuring that any holes are filled and loose panels are fixed. Drug users often hide their various drug paraphernalia in any handy cavity.
- Paint the walls and ceiling with anti-graffiti paint. This will make it easier to remove any new graffiti and other surface deposits such as blood. Some people have used glazed tiles on the walls instead of paint, but these can be broken and may therefore require additional maintenance. If there is either formal surveillance of the recess, such as CCTV, which will guarantee attendance by a member of staff, or there is a great deal of informal surveillance, such as lots of people walking by, maximise the 'clinical' effect by using a light coloured paint and a bright light.

- Consider replacing the emergency exit door with an all glazed or top half glazed door. It is recommended that the glazing be a thick laminated glass, which is well anchored into the frame. Further security can be achieved by installing a grille behind the glass. You must consult your insurers about this alteration to satisfy them that you have not increased your risk of burglary. Although you should consult Building Control when making alterations to an emergency exit door you should also note that recent changes to Part L of the Building Regulations (April 1st 2002) now require you to seek building control approval when installing a door which has more than 50% glazing. Alternatively, you can use the services of a 'FENSA*' registered installer to carry out the work, which will negate the need to consult Building Control.
- When using a glazed emergency exit door install a closed circuit television camera behind the door positioned to look through the glass into the recess. Activity in the recess can then be monitored, recorded and acted upon by members of staff or security officers. The camera should be visible through the glass so that the person in the recess is aware that he or she is under surveillance. Reinforce this by placing a sign on one of the walls to inform the public that the recess is under surveillance by CCTV and that any misuse will be acted upon. Some people have additionally installed loudspeakers in the recess to tell miscreants to move on. For good quality, non-grainy images the recess should be well lit.
- When using a non-glazed emergency exit door consider installing a closed circuit television camera in one corner of the ceiling. The image may not be quite as good as the one from a camera looking directly through the glass, but the camera will at least detect activity, which can be acted upon. A sign should be placed on the wall to inform the public about the CCTV and a loudspeaker can be installed.
- It is a good idea to install a door viewer into a solid door so that the legitimate building user can look out into the recess before opening the door.

Comment: A business in West London used a novel method to reduce the problems in one of their recessed doorways. They installed 'splash plates' from the floor surface to the wall at an angle of about 45°. These plates did not obstruct the opening of the doors. Allegedly this measure reduced the available surface area for rough sleeping and caused urine to splash back onto the relieving reveller's shoes and trousers. Of course, splash plates made of stainless steel are likely to create noise in addition to wetting one's trousers – perhaps another deterrent!

PLAN E. The future

In January 2002 a planner, an engineer, a fire officer and two police officers sat round a table at an office in the West End to consider a completely new approach to the recessed door problem. Their objective was to design doors that could be positioned at the building line that would not open onto the footway, but would still be acceptable to the fire service as an acceptable means of escape.

As a result of these discussions the engineer designed a door set that, when operated via the crash bars, opened to the side and back into the recess in a similar fashion to the side doors of a London bus. The paper designs were developed into a full size prototype, which was successfully tested at an informal demonstration to police and fire officers. Timing has meant that this document will have gone to print before this prototype door has been fire and security tested and further developed into a product acceptable to the building industry. Time will only tell if this new type of door will succeed.

Finally

Most of the recessed doors that suffer the problems tend to be located in the inner cities close to pubs and clubs and in areas where there is illicit drug use or a generally high level of crime. In addition to this recessed doors in shops, factories and warehouses, no matter where they are located often become the point of access for the burglar because of the cover they provide. The author hopes that designers of new buildings in the cities will consider very carefully the local crime problems and do all they can to reduce the need for recessed doors. It is recommended that the designer contacts either the Crime Prevention service of the local police or council or some other expert prior to planning permission.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the police service places great importance on fire safety and means of escape and that it is generally accepted that many emergency exit doors will have to open outwards. Having said this, the police service has an expectation that the various authorities involved in this matter will appreciate the associated crime risks with recesses and support the applicant as much as they can within the law.

* Fenestration Self-Assessment

Problem 2. Porticoes Developed solution



St Pancras Church in Camden



As can be seen the original railings were set out along the bottom step of St Pancras Church



The steps and shelter in the portico provide a nightly home to rough sleepers

Porticoes are structures consisting of a roof supported on columns, usually forming a porch to a building. In Central London many of these, particularly those attached to church buildings, would have had railings and gates between or in front of the columns to prevent access to the shelter at night. During the last century some of these railings were removed for scrap to assist the war effort and unfortunately have never been replaced. In some inner city locations these places are now seeing the same misuse as the recessed doorway, particularly where the portico is large and deep.

It is hoped that the building owners will one day consider replacing the railings not only to prevent access to the shelter but also to restore the former grandeur of the portico. Organisations such as Heritage may be interested in a proposal to replace the railing and may also be able to assist in some financial way. In this example the church too may have access to funding, both of which could be combined with local or national government funding.

Problem 3. Basement light wells Developed solution

These are very common features to the front of terraced buildings in Central London and other inner cities and they invariably contain staircases leading from emergency escape doors up to the street level. It is not uncommon to find bridge access over the light wells to the entrance doors and shared access around the light wells to the staircases. Because many of the light well steps are used for emergency escape the gates at street level are left unlocked during the day or at all times when the building is occupied.

Drug users find these places attractive because of the shelter and the privacy that some of them offer. Some light wells contain air conditioning equipment and warm air outlets that provide a warm place to shelter in the winter and at night. In the inner cities they are unfortunately used as dustbins and it is not uncommon to find some that are filled with discarded rubbish, which creates a fire risk and a potential home for vermin. This problem has caused some building owners and managers to take draconian actions such as locking the gates, which, of course, may be contrary to the means of escape requirements for the building.

There are several methods to secure light wells against the drug user and other trespasser and each will require the permission and support of the Building Control Officer and or the Fire Safety Officer. Planning permission may also be required.



The drug debris is very apparent in this light well, which is accessed via the steps from the main street above. The light well also introduces an opportunity for burglary, which has been dealt with by barring the windows

Locking the gate

The simplest method of preventing intruders gaining access into a light well, which has an emergency escape stair, is to lock the gate at the top. This will be reasonably effective if the railings and gate are of a climb resistant design. Climb resistance in this scenario would require a railing with a finial top or simple blunted rod extension, sufficient height of around 1.2 metres, and no footholds. The problem with this solution is that if the gate lies at the top of an emergency escape staircase it can only be locked when the building is unoccupied. Therefore this method can normally only be used at night and it will be necessary to ensure that a management system is in place to ensure that the gate is unlocked first thing in the morning.



This 2.2m railing and gate around a light well at the back of an office building have prevented the return of the drug users. A fine steel mesh prevents public side access to the release handle on the back of the gate

You can, however, still lock the gate if there is a fail-safe method to unlock it in an emergency. This is normally achieved by protecting the gate's bolt within a steel box that will prevent manipulation from the street side. Unfortunately this box can then be used as a foothold and so it would be better if the gate could be unlocked automatically from the bottom of the steps. This could be achieved by using an electric deadlock or magnetic lock, which would 'fail open' when the electricity to them is cut. This could happen automatically with the activation of the fire alarm or manually or both by the operation of a switch at the bottom of the steps. However the means of escape is achieved it must satisfy the Fire Safety Officer as ensuring a safe means of escape will always have to come before the trespass problem. Fortunately it is rare that the building manager cannot achieve both of these aims.

Building a cage

Some building managers or owners have built a cage over the top of the steps and exit gate (and sometimes the entire light well) in order that the locking bolt on the gate is protected and that climbing over the railing into the well is prevented. Where such structures have gone into place, they have tended to be at the back or the side of a building. Large cage structures to the front of a building, especially in a conservation area, are seldom allowed by the local authority planners. In this example to the left the shopkeeper has made use of the existing railing and simply added a



hinged lid. At close of business, when the steps up from the basement cease to be a means of escape the shopkeeper simply closes over the lid and engages the padlock.

Grilling



An acceptable way of protecting a light well from trespassers, which incorporates a hinged grille over the emergency exit steps, which can be easily released in an emergency



Installing a grille over the top of a light well, at footway level, which takes account of the need to use an emergency route staircase, is probably the most effective way of dealing with this problem so long as sufficient light can still penetrate the basement areas of the building. The pictures above show such an installation, which includes a hinged, gridded lid over the emergency exit steps. The hinged portion of the grille is operated from the bottom of the steps via a simple lever, which is pushed or pulled by the person coming up the steps. The hinged part is then pulled open by a counter weight, which is released by the lever. The outward opening gate in the fence is bolted, but left unlocked as it serves no security purpose. The advantage of this system is that in many cases it can be installed at the front of a building in a conservation area (as this example shows) as it is not visually impairing to the building or street scene. In addition to this, most of the discarded rubbish can be collected from the top of the grille via the gate and the lighting of the well need only be operated via a detector. The example shown was installed after detailed discussions and agreement with the London Fire Brigade's Safety Officer and the local planning office.

Problem 4. Public and private car parks

Developed solution



An extreme example of drug debris left near a fire exit door in a Central London car park

Insecure public and private car parks and particularly those underground, offer huge opportunity for the drug user not only to take drugs, but also to sleep and congregate with fellow users. Invariably there will be access to out-of-the-way places in the car park such as little used emergency escape staircases and the lower levels of the car park where the car owner would seldom venture. Although the lighting would be poor for the bone fide user it will probably be sufficient for the drug user. An insecure car park within a drug market area can be a major contributory factor in maintaining a drug user population. During the Lilac Project it was estimated that up to 25% of the locally based drug users were using car parks and bear in mind that a place to take drugs is an essential need for the user.

The Association of Chief Police Officers in the

UK has, for some time, been promoting the Secure Car Park Scheme, now called Safer Car Parking and the adoption of this very high standard has never been more important than in a drug market area. The Crime Opportunity Profiling of the Lilac Project Area in both Camden and Westminster revealed enormous problems with the car parks, especially those that were covered or below ground. The three worst car parks in Camden for drug use, which were surveyed during a COP, shared a set of common design problems. These were:

- An absence of effective access control for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Problematic emergency escape doors and stairs
- A lack of formal and informal surveillance

- Poor lighting levels and low wall and ceiling light reflectance.
- Although not design there was an absence of security patrols.



This vehicle entrance to Bloomsbury Square underground car park includes booms and floor to ceiling security gates. The staffed office is out of picture to the left.

There were other problems, which are all dealt with by the Safer Car Parking Scheme, but the main gain was achieved through the introduction of monitored access control for both vehicles and pedestrians together with improved staff patrols. Further information can be obtained from website: www.securedbydesign.com From this site there are links to the Safer Car Parking Scheme.

During the discussions to improve the car parks a number of measures were considered, which might have had positive effects. These included blocking off places where drug users used to sleep and take their drugs and introducing alarmed emergency escape doors. At the end of the day though, because of means of escape requirements, the only way to deal with the problem was to keep unauthorised people out in the first place. Therefore the council operated

Bloomsbury Square Car Park in Camden introduced very secure access controls for all. In practice, a motorist would drive down the entrance ramp to the boom. At the boom the driver would take a bar coded ticket, which would open the full height barrier gates and lift the boom. Having parked the car the driver would exit via one of two pedestrian routes through an access controlled gate. To get back in, the driver would feed the bar coded ticket into the reader at the pedestrian gate and the gate would open. So effective was the access control and other measures introduced that crime and calls to police fell dramatically turning one of the worst car parks in Camden into the best (see table). Similar measures, including the important monitored access controls, were introduced to a nearby car park operated by a national car-parking company with similar results.



One of two pedestrian access controlled gates from the Bloomsbury Square underground car park, both of which are watched over by CCTV cameras with help points.

Crime and Disorder 12 months before and after the introduction of Secured Car Park Standards to the Bloomsbury Square Car Park in Central London

	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
Calls to Police	142	7
Vehicle Crime	42	3

Many inner city car park entrances are recessed back from the footway so that the car does not stop across the footway or obstruct the highway while the driver opens the gate. This ‘designed in’ recess can then attract the same problems associated with recessed doors. In some circumstances, however, the local council will allow a car park entrance gate or shutter to be installed flush with the building line as long as they are capable of being automatically opened by the driver whilst sitting in the vehicle. This is a fairly straightforward matter for a residential or private office car park where the car movements are limited and the technology required to open the gate can be installed into the car or given to the driver. This does not mean that a similar system cannot be employed in a public car park and should you wish to pursue this idea you are advised to meet with the local police and council and the car park operators on site.



A poor example of an entrance to a private underground car park, which creates a large and unmanageable recess.



Car park entrance before the improvements



The car park entrance after the improvements. Note deliberate use of open gates to retain natural surveillance.



This large recess is often used for urination by drinkers coming back from the bars and clubs in the area.

Another example of a car park that underwent improvements to access was the staff car park at Central St Martins College in Holborn. The ramp leading down to the underground part of the car park was often used by drug users, because it was relatively free from disturbance even during the day and offered dry shelter. The upper level of the car park gave covert access to the rear of the college buildings and presented a burglary risk. Needles were constantly being found along with the usual detritus associated with the drug user. After a series of burglaries the decision was made to introduce a new perimeter and gates together with access controls for both vehicles and pedestrians. How effective this will be only time will tell, but it is clear already that the obvious opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour have been removed. One criticism of the works is the use of plain white rendering of the new walls as the college is located in an area which suffers graffiti.

Problem 5. Toilets and street urination

Developing solution

The list of locations is similar to those already listed under Drug User Sites and it is not uncommon to find human faeces close to discarded needles. But in addition to these there are other, perhaps less obvious places that are commonly used. For example, recesses created by leaving boxes piled up near to the corner of a building and out of sight reversed corners of buildings. During the evening and into the night these sorts of places are also used by revellers, both male and female.

It is true that some areas lack the necessary number of public toilets, but experience seems to show that even when there are sufficient facilities street urination is still carried on. It is possibly because the type of people who do this have consumed too much alcohol and are unable or cannot be bothered to make a detour to the nearest convenience. Indeed it is not that uncommon for a person who has just left the pub to relieve themselves only metres away in some shop doorway!



Local authorities have experimented with a number of automatic toilets with mixed results. Those installed in drug market areas will often be used by drug users and there have been occasions where the doors have been jammed or the facility made inoperable by the sheer number of discarded needles. The City of Westminster has recently installed a new type of automatic toilet, which is stored in the ground during the day and only comes into use at night. In Amsterdam the city council introduced portable urinals that are unloaded off the back of a lorry in the evening and picked up again in the morning.

The traditional enclosed and un-staffed public convenience in a drug market area has not performed well and some local authorities have been forced to close these facilities down. Even a staffed facility in a subway near to Tottenham Court Road Station in Camden had to be closed because of the drug use and threats made to staff by the drug dealers and users.

If there are no public conveniences in an area then this makes street urination even more of a problem. And, of course, the general public lose out as well. It is a vicious circle. Drug users and dealers abuse the public facilities and so they are closed down or removed. This forces everyone, including the drug users to use the shop and restaurant toilets. The private toilet facilities are then fitted with access controls, which in turn forces the drug user and street dweller to use the street. When the shops close in the evening the public have to use facilities in pubs and restaurants and when these close then even the public have used the streets. Denmark Place, off Charing Cross Road, has been described as the 'Yellow River' of the West End.

So what can be done about this problem? How can we provide very necessary public toilets, which will not be abused?

The reader is advised to obtain a copy of *Public conveniences – problem reduction guide* by Colin Cockfield (Staffordshire Police, Architectural Liaison Department, 1998). This guide examines a number of public toilet facilities and provides some very useful advice.

The author suggests that a staffed public toilet could work in a drug market area if carefully designed with all the problems in mind and the following bullet points are intended to guide the designer.



This automatic payment toilet facility was put in place after most of the drug users were moved away from the area

TOILET TIPS FOR THE DESIGNER

1. Place the new convenience above ground and in a prominent busy position
2. Consider a shared male and female entrance to the facility
3. Provide a staff room and ensure that the member of staff can use this room to retreat into for protection in an emergency
4. Install CCTV cameras with warning signs to view the external areas around the convenience and the less private internal areas of the facility such as the wash hand basins and entrance.
5. Ensure that the plumbing and fittings are vandal resistant and installed internally, especially the toilet cisterns.
6. Ensure that there are no flat surfaces available for the preparation of drugs such as window sills and toilet seat covers.
7. Select rough finish, hard wearing surface finishes to further frustrate the drug user.
8. Create a clean and clinical ambience with piped music and ensure that all of the facility is brightly lit throughout the day and night.
9. Consider the use of 'non-locking' doors, which can easily be opened from the outside, but which display the words 'in use' or 'engaged' when the bolt is drawn.
10. Consider the use of a 1300mm door with a 450mm gap beneath, giving a maximum height of 1750mm.*
11. Provide a hook on the back wall of each closet as low down as practical for the hanging of coats and handbags to prevent theft.
12. Consider an access controlled payment gate.

* This type of door is used in many of the Disney theme parks in Florida and usually includes a 20mm gap down the side as well! There is little illegal that you can do in these closets without being seen!

Problem 6. Fly posting and stickers Developed solution



The stippled paint has forced the advertiser to tie the advertisement around the pole. This is less damaging and easy to remove.



Stipple painted telephone cable cabinet

A crime opportunity profile will list each and every occurrence of graffiti and fly posting and try to identify the owner of the surface that has been spoiled. The odd graffiti tags here and there and the occasional sticker or fly poster seen in isolation may not seem to be much of a problem, but when viewed together along one street the combined effect can be most detrimental to the street scene. Graffiti, fly-posters and stickers left in place quickly give the impression to visitors that the area is not really cared for and that a certain level of anti-social behaviour is acceptable to the authorities. Many of the stickers on the street sign pole and on the bollard in the photograph at the above left will carry the name of a band or a brand or advertise a gig or sale at a nearby shop. Clearly, the immediate removal of posters and stickers is important, but can be extremely expensive, costing local authorities in London many hundreds of thousands of pounds each year.

Methods for preventing fly posters and stickers

Treating surfaces to prevent the problem occurring in the first place should be investigated.

In Camden and Westminster and in other inner city areas local authorities have been using a retro applied product, which is often referred to as 'stippled paint'. This product is painted on street furniture such as lamp posts and street side cabinets. This rough finish paint prevents stickers and posters from adhering to the surface and has proved to be very effective. The product is called 'anti fly posting treatment' and the service is available from The Municipal and District Repair Company (MDRC) Tel +44 (0)1202 872526. MDRC can also apply a clear anti-adhesive coating depending upon the problem.

Another method widely used across London to prevent fly posting on temporary hoarding is to fix battens to the face at 45°. This reduces the available surface area for adhesion and should posters be applied makes removal much easier. Experience in the study areas shows that hoardings treated in such a way are seldom used by the fly poster. It is important not to fix the battens horizontally as they can be used as a climbing aid.



The diagonal battens successfully prevent fly posting. However, the hoarding around these site offices for a development nearby have greatly reduced surveillance of the street and into the site.

Problem 7. Graffiti Developing solution

During crime opportunity profiling the finding of graffiti will be commonplace. Probably the most effective way of dealing with this problem is to organise a deep clean of the street using the services of the local authority. This occurred in King's Cross in 1999 where the local authority made available specialist high pressure water cleaning equipment. This was used to remove graffiti and fly posters and a number of the businesses also repainted their shop premises. Many local authorities in the inner cities will already have arrangements in hand through their street environment services for the removal of graffiti from public places and policies to remove racist and other offensive graffiti within 24 hours. The Boulevard Project in Camden is a case in point. The project carries out a regular graffiti removal programme across most of the borough. For a small charge this service can be extended to private property. There is no doubt that the regular removal of graffiti does reduce the amount that reappears. The personal tags in particular, as seen on display in the photograph above, will multiply on a wall very quickly if left unchecked.



This is the rear wall of a café located in public open space not far from Tottenham Court Road. There are plans to rent out space around this wall for extra tables and chairs.

Some local authorities have experimented with graffiti art or murals, especially on gable end walls, perimeter walls and car parks with mixed results. Some have survived very well indeed and others, such as the one in the photograph on the right have suffered attack. If this solution to a problem wall is being planned consider protecting the lower, easily accessible part of the painting with a sacrificial anti-graffiti coating. This can be washed off with the tags using hot water and then reapplied. Alternatively a more permanent hard surface glazed finish can be used, although this will make the wall a little shiny and is not always appropriate for all surfaces.

It is of interest to note how all of the tags in the image below have been applied to either the black painted door or the white painted render as they show more easily against this plain background.

Designers should take note of this effect if they are building or refurbishing a building in an area that is prone to this type of vandalism. Note too the young person sitting on the sill of deeply recessed window. It is this type of design feature that creates the opportunity for loitering and where you get regular loitering you often find graffiti.



At the time of taking this photograph a transparent fence (welded mesh) was being fixed in front of the mural



The only way of dealing with graffiti is to not let it build up. Shopkeepers should, where appropriate, be encouraged to keep a pot of paint and a brush to paint it out as it appears. Local authorities should have access to specialist cleaning equipment or services and building owners and designers should carefully consider their choice of finished surfaces and consider the use of anti-graffiti treatments.

Problem 8. Alleyways Developed solution

This document does not investigate this problem in any detail as there are other sources of information that can be obtained, detailed at the end of this section. However, it is worth considering the problem encountered in this photo on the left below as forward thinking Camden Council used a novel method of temporarily closing this dead end section of a public highway. The problems of drug use and dealing under the arch shown in the photo below and around the corner to the right were quite dreadful and both the police and council were receiving daily calls of complaint. The section of the road behind the robust gates leads to a dead end and only gives access to the backs of offices and a restaurant. With the permission of all those persons who used this road for access the council, using monies from the Lilac Project (as previously mentioned), closed the section of road using a Traffic Regulation Order. This is a temporary order, which only lasts for a year, but it allowed the installation of access controlled gates to go ahead. All persons with access to the offices and the restaurant were provided with fobs to operate the proximity reader to release the gates. The gates can also be released from inside by the pressing of a large green button set some metres back under the arch. This was all done with the approval of the London Fire Brigade. The problems have, of course, gone.

The council also issued a further Traffic Regulation Order to gate the three entrances into Denmark Place in Bloomsbury at night – see photo on the right below. During the day this alley is quite well used by pedestrians to access the business premises along the route. During the night it is a very different matter and this end of the alleyway system is basically a public toilet. During the peak of the drug market this was one of the main places to buy drugs at night. The gates have yet to be installed, but when they are they will be accessed in the same manner as the gates described above.

For further information about gating an alleyway it is suggested that you obtain a PDF copy of The Alleygaters Guide to Gating Alleys from www.crimereduction.gov.uk. To understand more about how a right of way can be extinguished or diverted for the purposes of crime prevention (Section 118B Highways Act) you are advised to go to www.defra.gov.uk



Problem 9. Building site hoardings Developing solution

Hoardings around buildings and building sites can be problematic in two main ways. First, the hoardings often attract fly posting, which is effectively dealt with using battens as shown in the picture (see also Fly Posting and Stickers). Second, they create a barrier to surveillance, not only into the building site, but often in the public domain. At the time of writing this document St Pancras Station and King's Cross Underground Station are undergoing major redevelopment in preparation of the arrival of the first channel tunnel trains at King's Cross. Much of the building site hoarding was going to encroach onto the roads and footways and cause problems for surveillance for pedestrians and for the town centre CCTV. A decision was made early on to have 'half glazed'



hoarding (left photo) to open up blind corners and to introduce vision both into and out of the building sites. Although this was an expensive method the developers could see how this would benefit the pedestrian and equally could see the crime prevention advantage of better views over their building sites.

Some of the hoarding uses a polycarbonate top panel, which is held firmly in a timber frame. This was used where a 'solid' hoarding was required for safety and to some extent noise reduction. In other locations where safety from flying rubble was not such a concern the developer was able to use welded mesh with netting (photo on right). Camden Council now requires these styles of hoarding in places that suffer high levels of street crime and it is suggested that all councils follow suit where appropriate.



Problem 10. Shop windows Developing solution

One of the important objectives of a COP is to maximise mutual supervision of the street from the shops and offices and the shops and offices from the street. This is particularly important at night in a shopping street where we would wish to the maximum the amount of light spill onto the street. Protecting shop and office windows with solid security roller shutters is counter to this objective.

It is perfectly understandable why shopkeepers resort to the solid shutter. In the early 1980s during nationwide disorder solid shutters went up along many 'High Streets' as an understandable response to the wide scale looting experienced in some towns and cities. Southall, in West London is a case in point. Although the worst of the disorder was mainly confined to South Road shutters went up all along Southall Broadway, the main shopping street for fear that their shop windows would be next to be smashed. As one shopkeeper put in shutters so the neighbour followed suit and so on until most of the shops were shuttered. These actions resulted in a number of negative effects. The first was to plunge Southall Broadway into darkness, because the street lighting at the time was only sufficient to top up the light spill from the shop windows. Another was to create a rather dark, hostile and unwelcoming place with a marked reduction in night time activity along the street. Later graffiti started to appear on the cold galvanised shutters and not before long the street became all but deserted at night. Clearly, some of that desertion was due to the disorder that had just taken place, but there is no doubt that the levels of pedestrian activity dropped enormously from what it was. Gradually things have improved. The local



A not so solid shutter in Camden High Street, but still one that creates a hostile appearance.

authority increased the levels of street lighting, some, but not all of the shutters have been replaced with transparent types and shops and cafés are opening later. So activity has returned.

The reason for the long-winded account above is to make it clear that whole scale shuttering of shops is bad crime prevention and we should encourage the alternatives as much as possible.

It is anticipated that most planning authorities in the UK do not allow solid security shutters in shopping streets or other commercial districts, but will allow their use in 'out of the way' places such as industrial estates. Having said that there are still many thousands of solid shutters in commercial districts, some having been installed without planning permission and others installed before planning conditions were

imposed. From time to time some local authorities provide grants for shop front improvements and encourage the removal of these solid shutters. So what are the alternatives? It very much depends on what the building owner is trying to protect. If they want to delay entry into the shop from the front to protect the stock then there are several acceptable compromises. If the building owner simply wants to protect the glass in the window then there are fewer.

Alternatives to solid shutters

- An open brick bond style shutter (similar to the one shown on the previous page) to allow vision into the shop from the street. These days it is more common for shopkeepers to use the powder coated type as they look better and are easier to clean.
- An external roller grille
- An external roller grille with polycarbonate infills, similar to the photograph below, although to keep these looking good they will have to be cleaned along with the windows. This type can attract graffiti, but not as often as the visually solid shutter.
- At the time of writing there is now a new, external, transparent roller shutter available, (manufactured in Amsterdam by Euroll. UK Tel: 0871 208 1080). This shutter comprises 21cm high, 6mm thick full width clear polycarbonate panels set into 30mm aluminium bars. This preserves around 90% vision through the shop window, a vast improvement. This type of shutter is seen all around the centre of Amsterdam, where the local authorities will not allow solid shutters onto a main pedestrian street.
- Some local authorities will not allow any form of external shutter, particularly the case in a conservation area. In these circumstances further alternatives are required, such as these (greatly summarised) that were recommended by Camden Council during a shop front improvement programme in Chilton Street.
 - Reintroduce stall risers
 - Reduce the size of the windows
 - Use laminated glass in place of sheet and toughened glass
 - Consider using security film on the back of sheet glass
 - Install an internal roller grille
 - Do not use glass below 800mm



A number of shopkeepers followed the advice and 60% of the galvanised solid shutters were removed, with no increase in crime.

If recommending shutters and grilles the police preferred standard in the UK is the Loss Prevention Certification Board's LPS1175 level 2. Where a transparent shutter is used the level could be reduced to 1. Obviously the insurance companies will have their own requirements, which will need to be heeded.

Problem 11. Automatic telling machines Developing solution

Automatic Telling Machines (ATMs) have become an important and necessary facility for most of us. Unfortunately there are risks associated with them and their design could probably be improved upon.

The three main problems associated with ATMs, which are often noted during a COP are obstruction of the footway by customers queuing to use the machine, distraction theft (shoulder surfing), and begging.

Footway obstruction

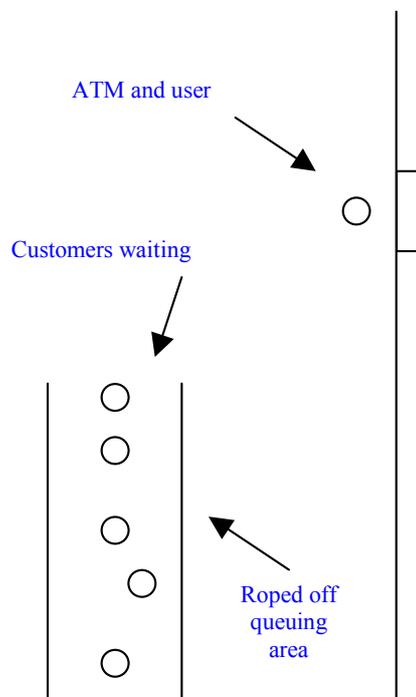
Where ATMs have been placed next to narrow footways there can sometimes be queuing across the footway. In some places this has been a minor problem and not worth pursuing, but in others, where the footfall is high and where there are other facilities that cause congestions, such as newspaper



stands, bus stops and station entrances, the combined effect has been to create pinch points and slow down pedestrian movement. This in turn provides greater opportunity for the pick pockets and snatch thieves

The only solution to these problems has been to encourage queuing along the building line by the use of markings on the footway and signage. In the Chimes shopping centre in Uxbridge, West London, where there have been problems with obstruction at the entrance to one of the shop units, the security staff have set up a roped off queuing area set some 3 metres away from the ATM and running at about 90° (See diagram below). This seems to have worked well and at the same time would seem to reduce the problem of shoulder surfing as described below.

'Shoulder surfing'



Shoulder surfing describes a common method of distraction theft used at ATMs. The method often involves two and sometimes three thieves who stand in and close to a queue of customers waiting to use an ATM. One thief stands a little away from the queue, but close enough to see the PIN being pressed onto the keypad. He may pretend to be making a mobile phone call, but will be recording the PIN onto the phone. A second thief stands behind the customer and may also view the PIN as it is being tapped out. Exact timing is the key to the successful distraction theft and the second thief will drop a £5 note onto the footway in front of the customer at the precise moment before the customer's card is returned by the machine. Just as the customer bends down to pick up the cash (which the second thief has just pointed out to the victim) the second thief takes the card from the machine and makes off, meeting up with the first thief at a nearby ATM. Sometimes a third member of the team may cause an additional distraction or use delaying tactics to confuse the customer who is still waiting at the machine for the return of the card. Meanwhile the thieves will be using the card in the other machine attempting to take out as much money as possible.

Shoulder surfing at one branch in Holborn was so bad that the manager produced warning letters, which were distributed to customers at peak usage times throughout the day!

There are three main factors that work in favour of thieves using this method. The first is the queue which invariably faces onto the machine and provides a thief a legitimate reason for being close to the victim. The second is the lack of 'private' defensible space around the machine and the third concerns the design of the machine, which allows anyone standing close by to see the inputting of the PIN.

All these matters have been discussed with all the major banks in the past, but few changes have taken place. These are the main recommendations:

- Create defensible space around the ATM (see diagram on previous page). The painting of yellow boxes in front of the ATMs seems to have taken off around the UK and there are reports that they have resulted in less theft. The author is unaware of any thorough academic study of the effectiveness of the boxes and the effects on both customer and thief and this would be welcomed. It is suggested that the boxes work by warning the customer of the potential threat (because the space is different) thereby putting the customer more at their guard. The effect also means that the queue may start further back from the ATM thus making it more difficult to see the keypad. The box does not prevent overlooking of the keypad from the side as in the method described above.
- Queuing along the building line. This has been recommended because it is not as easy to see the keypad from the side. This will require further marking of the footway (or forecourt) and signage. It is suggested that this would work better in conjunction with a yellow box. Queuing along building lines is not always possible, especially when the owner of the ATM does not own the building. In the photograph above queuing along the building line would have been straightforward. Unfortunately it was not the police crime prevention officers who advised this bank.
- Reflective surfaces on and around the ATM so that the user can see activity behind.
- Signage on or around the ATM warning of the risks.
- A retro fitted panel positioned in front of the keypad to prevent others seeing the PIN being tapped out. Banks have declined to do this because disabled people, especially those in wheelchairs, would find it difficult to use the machines. The author's suggested answer to this would be a hinged panel that could be moved into and out of place when required.
- Warnings of the risks on the ATMs opening screen, such as "Theft alert, is there someone behind you?"

The siting of new ATMs is invariably a town planning matter and Architectural Liaison Officer's (ALO) protocols with their local planning offices should include reference to applications for new ATMs so that the ALO can comment. It may be possible to attach conditions on the planning permission to consider some of the above recommendations or there may be other factors that would give reason for refusal, such as the location of the ATM in a place where there is already a 'shoulder surfing' problem or in a place where there is little surveillance.

Problem 12. Parks and gardens

Developing solution

Phoenix Gardens – a case study



In an area suffering from the consequences of a drug market parks and gardens will attract a great deal of the problems. This picture to the left of Phoenix Gardens in Bloomsbury was taken at a time when the street based drug use was at its worse. This northern end of the garden had to be shut off to the public, because it was full of needles and human excrement. The sand pit and pond in the same garden had to be filled in, because they too had become dumping places for needles. Unfortunately one child and an adult were both pierced by needles in this garden, a hugely worrying time for them and their families.

The reasons drug users chose this part of the garden to inject was fairly obvious. There was no overlooking from the garden office, which is at the far end of the garden and the garden itself was easy to get into even when it was supposedly secured at night. Lilac, the well funded anti-drugs project was able to help and a number of changes were made based upon the recommendations of the local Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) in the COP report for the area.

The first change was an improvement to the perimeter security so there was a reasonable chance to keep casual intruders out at night. Care was taken to design a railing and gate system which resisted damage and climbing and so footholds were kept to a minimum.

The northern end of the garden which had been closed was overgrown and it was decided to remove most of the vegetation and start again using low growing shrubs and trees with an open branch habit of growth. The northern perimeter of the northern end of the garden was marked with a section of green painted hoarding that had been put there temporarily to prevent the wall of equal height behind being used as a hiding place for drugs and discarded needles. This was removed and the wall behind and around the corner rebuilt to a lower height.



This photograph to the left shows the work in progress to remove the undergrowth. The hoarding that ran along the wall parallel to the red door in the middle of the picture is shown removed with the new wall in place and temporary fencing on top.

This view below of the northern end of Phoenix Gardens shows the new wall, which has now been fitted with a railing that matches the gate and railing shown on the previous page. Note the alleyway running north away from the garden (Flitcroft Street) to the right of the garage door. Flitcroft Street was one of the main drug dealing sites in Bloomsbury due to an almost total lack of surveillance and a choice of three escape routes if detected.

The removal of the hoarding (see below) and wall helped to open up the end of Phoenix Gardens and at the same time introduced surveillance into Flitcroft Street from the flats to the left of the above picture, whose residents were users of the garden. The net result was a new life for Phoenix Gardens and the disappearance of the drug dealing site in Flitcroft Street. This was a sort of 'double whammy' for the drug dealers and users.

The garden is maintained by the local residents using a small grant from the council and other donations. The garden has gone from a place that was at times frankly dangerous to use to what is now one of the top ten places in Central London to eat your sandwiches! (As recommended in 'Time Out' magazine.)

This case study does show that places like this can be turned around given sufficient resources, a caring and enthusiastic community and a willing local council able to act upon the right advice.

In recent years Camden Council have carried out major refurbishment of its many public parks and gardens. They have renewed railings and paths, replaced shrubs and trees and have ensured that the parks can be secured at night. Overgrown shrubs around the perimeters have been removed or thinned out with different lower growing species planted in between. The net result has been the creation of some fantastic open spaces (Russell Square is a case in point) that can be easily looked into from the surrounding streets. No longer are there the hiding places for the drug user and other anti-social elements. These people have been displaced by the legitimate users who are simply enjoying the space.

The keys to prevent misuse of parks and gardens by drug users seem to be:

- Links with the community who live and work around the park to report problems and, in some cases, to help look after it.
- Sometimes, a secure perimeter to prevent casual intrusion, especially when there is drug use





- Correct choice of plant species to either increase surveillance of the park from outside or assist in improving the resistance of a boundary to casual intrusion. That is not to say that larger specimen shrubs and trees cannot be used.
 - Regular maintenance of the plants and litter clearance
 - Regular security patrols (which seem to have taken over from the traditional Park Keeper)
 - The provision of restaurants in the larger parks (if viable) to encourage more legitimate users
 - A design that satisfies the needs of all legitimate park users, whatever their age.
- The use of lights may be appropriate if the park is open after dark, in which case the skills of a lighting designer should be employed to ensure that the lighting does not in itself create dark shadows and glare, which can create opportunities for crime.
 - Clear signage

Problem 13. Refuse collection Developing solution

Where a drug market operates and or there is a problem with rough sleeping it is important for the businesses to comply with the instructions of the Local Council concerning the collection times for refuse. This is because rough sleepers will use cardboard for bedding and drug users will break open waste bags put out by restaurants in search of food. Bear in mind that if drug users can find a source of free food they will be able to spend more on drugs.



This picture is not a negative criticism of the retailer who had put out their refuse at the correct time. The picture is used to demonstrate the availability of bedding for the rough sleeper.

In Camden, planning policy for new restaurants requires that there is a room set aside for the storage of waste food so that it is not put out onto the street where it will encourage vermin. In the experience of Mark Whitworth, Ex Senior Planner at Camden Council, some restaurant operators have converted this waste storage room into an office or food storage area and have then put out the waste food onto the street. Local authorities inform local businesses at what time they can put their waste out for collection. Most follow the rules, but others don't. Therefore a strategy to deal with drug markets and rough sleeping should involve planning regulation enforcement and enforcement by the street environment section.

Refuse cannot always be collected by the council at the most opportune time due

to complaints from residents about the noise. This is the case in Seven Dials in Camden, which sometimes means that refuse is on the street longer than it should be.

Street furniture

This is a somewhat cumbersome heading that is meant to describe all those structures that are fixed into or onto the footways and highways. This short examination considers those structures that are themselves abused or by their presence create the opportunity for crime.

Problem 14. Public seating Developing solution

It is perfectly understandable why a local authority would want to provide a few benches along its highways so that an elderly person can take a rest during shopping or a family can sit awhile whilst waiting for the bus home. In crime hotspots, however, it has tended not to be this type of person who uses the seats. Invariably they have become the gathering point for the street drinker or drug user and have become so misused that the pedestrian thinks more than twice about using the seat should it not be occupied by the aforementioned.

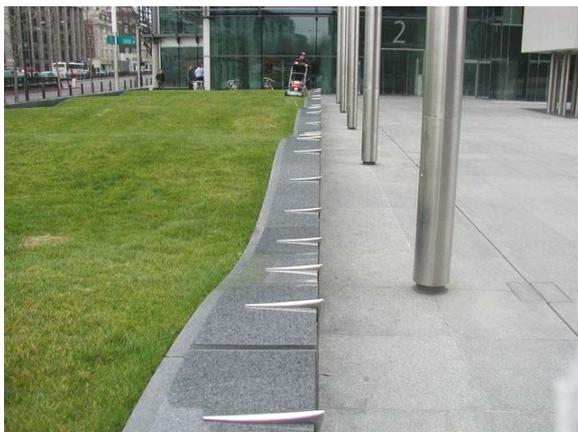
It is of interest to note that at the time of writing some local authorities in London have been actively removing public seats from within hotspot areas as the problems associated with them have outweighed their usefulness to the public. The author is not aware of any large scale study into the use and abuse of public seating, but would refer the reader to www.securedbydesign.com to review the advice in the 'New Homes' document before putting new seating in. In essence this advice suggests that the need for seating is vigorously questioned in the first place and if seating is considered necessary advice is given as to the design and location of the new seating. The advice suggests the use of single, backless, seats to deter congregation and sleeping or even removable seats, which can be taken away during problem times. The Lilac project in Camden and crime opportunity profiling in King's Cross and Camden Town resulted in the removal of most of the public seating, because it was only ever used by the very people that the local resident and business community wanted removed from the area.



Typical example of a much misused public seat in King's Cross, now removed (see resulting treatment of the corner below). Also note the other footway obstructions.



The seat shown in the photograph on the left was removed leaving this much abused corner. The treatment has greatly reduced street urination and inappropriate loitering at this place.



This low wall and lawn is a facility for the office staff from the buildings around. In good weather this garden and others nearby would be used at lunchtimes to sit and eat. Some of the granite topped walls were deliberately designed for sitting, but unfortunately, because the area is accessible to the public there were problems with skateboarders. Apart from deterring the office staff from sitting on the walls, the skateboarders' activity was damaging the polished granite tops. Eventually, and at great cost, these stainless steel fins were set into the granite to deter the skateboarder. The solution worked extremely well.

Problem 15. Informal seating Developing solution



Serrated blade on a low wall outside a fast food restaurant.



Of course, when the street benches are removed there can sometimes be added pressure on the informal seating and loitering places. In an area frequented by those that live on the street anything below about 1.2 metres is fair game and some businesses in the West End of London have taken some fairly drastic measures to prevent this inappropriate loitering as the photographs above clearly demonstrate.

An unusual 'solution' to a loitering problem in Holborn resulted in the installation of hundreds of six-inch high stainless steel rods with rounded tops. This did not stop the rough sleeping in the summer because they were not installed close enough to the window and were eventually removed anyway as they were a serious trip hazard to the general public! They were replaced with transparent roller shutters located between the columns, which are pulled down at night and work very well indeed.



Low spikes placed on a deep windowsill outside a pub.

Problem 16. Monuments Developing solution



Sometimes it is the monument or street side curio that becomes abused through inappropriate loitering and sometimes fairly drastic measures are called for. This photograph depicted a typical street scene in Bloomsbury in 2001 in which two drug users and their dealer are loitering at an early Victorian horse drinking trough. Such was the misuse that the structure was being damaged and working with the council and Heritage it was decided to remove it and relocate it in Princes Circus just to the south.

The triangular shaped open space in Princes Circus was also badly misused by drug users and street drinkers and underwent a complete makeover. Concrete



planters full of beer tins and needles were removed along with several damaged and unusable benches. Telephone boxes were relocated to improve surveillance and a small garden with railings was created. The Victorian horse trough was placed in the garden as a centrepiece and the area has now become a meeting point for people attending the theatre opposite. The railings contain three gates, which are locked back in the open position to allow full access around the garden. The gates can be locked shut in the event that the garden becomes misused, but at the time of writing no problems had occurred. The gap left by the removal of the horse trough has now been filled with a newspaper kiosk, which opens in the evening and so provides very necessary activity in what used to be a place 'owned' by the drug dealers. The reader is reminded that changes came about as a result of a detailed crime opportunity profile that highlighted both locations as being badly misused. Partnership working with a financial commitment from the local authority has created two new places free of inappropriate loitering.



Problem 17. Lamp posts and sign posts

Developing solution

It is not uncommon to find footways littered with sign posts and lamp posts to the extent that they sometimes create pinch points to pedestrian movement, something that is not desirable in a street which has a high level of crime. They also provide a plethora of vertical surfaces on which to display stickers and posters.

These metal posts and columns carry CCTV cameras and their signs, lamps, information about parking restrictions, warning signs for drivers such as 'No Entry' and 'One Way' and directional signs placed by both the local authority and the Highways Agency.

Sometimes, as was proved in the Lilac Project area, it is possible to use light columns to display road traffic signs, thus removing the need for an additional post. For this to be effective there must, of course, be co-ordination between the various officers at the council who are responsible for their placement. A crime opportunity profile report should then include references to the overuse of posts, something that is not often considered to be a menace.

At the time of writing, ACPO CPI Ltd, the police body that manages the Secured by Design project (www.securedbydesign.com) and the Loss Prevention Certification Board, a UKAS accredited test house, are working with a lighting manufacturer to develop an attack test standard for lamp columns. The standard includes time based attack tests to see how well a lamp column resists the following types of attack:

- The opening of the inspection door at the bottom of the post to either extract electricity or cut the wires or, as sometimes found in a drug market, to give access to a place to hide drugs
- Whipping, which is where the post is violently swayed back and forth in order to break the lamp. This method of attack has been used in both Camden Town and Acton to put street lights out of action to create cover for various criminal acts.
- Breaking the lamp cover and lamp with various missiles for the same reasons as above.

Problem 18. Bus shelters**Developing solution**

A bus shelter is surely essential for an efficient public transport service and in recent years in London most bus stops have been provided with one. They are expensive to install and maintain and a great deal of this cost has been offset through generating income from advertising. Many of the shelters in Camden and throughout the UK incorporate an illuminated side panel which carries large advertisements that normally face oncoming traffic. Some of these have unfortunately been located in areas with high levels of street crime and have interfered with both informal and formal surveillance of the street and footway.

Even though the shelters are well lit their side panels, which are at 90° to the footway, can prevent the pedestrian seeing along the footway. They

also introduce a hidden corner along the footway and create a place that cannot always be looked into by the operator of a town centre CCTV camera. In King's Cross the police know that drug dealing takes place in the bus shelters because they are a blind spot to the CCTV cameras. In Euston there are police records of purses being stolen from handbags belonging to passengers waiting at the shelters, simply because the panelling creates a tight enclosed space which interferes with natural surveillance.

A further problem with some shelters is the amount of footway they take up. In York Way in King's Cross the shelter takes up about half of the footway causing some pedestrians to walk out into the road to avoid large numbers of passengers waiting at the stop.

The author would argue that in areas with high levels of street crime one would wish to maximise the potential for surveillance and minimise the hiding places and that local planning and highways authorities should sometimes ask for the side panel to be left transparent and the advertising to be placed to the back of the shelter. Another approach might be to only use the bottom half of the side panel and leave the top half transparent. This compromise was proposed to a bus company and an advertising agency who refused to make the changes on the grounds that the illuminated panel is designed to take the standard size advertising poster!

As with any crime prevention advice, any request for change must be supported by evidence of crime and or anti-social behaviour and it is not suggested that alterations would always be required. Requests for change will always be site specific taking local crime risks into consideration.

There is a need to work with the bus companies and official transport bodies and local authorities to look again at these shelters and make alterations where necessary. The example in the photograph above is seen quite often and one wonders to what extent they add to the opportunity for crime.



Note that this shelter occupies almost the entire footway and obliterates most of the line of sight for the pedestrian. In good weather, with customers from the pub occupying the tables, there is very little footway left.

Problem 19. Bollards**Developed solution**

During the crime opportunity profiling in Camden it became apparent that it was an unwitting lack of attention to detail that sometimes led to places and structures being misused. The two different designs of timber bollards are a case in point. Both are in Seven Dials (near Covent Garden) and are used to



separate traffic and pedestrians in a sort of traffic calming scheme. During the peak of the street based drug use activity the flat topped bollard would be used as a table on which to prepare the illicit drug. They were also used as seats by drug users and occasionally a number of drug users would

gather around them. The pyramidal topped bollard, on the other hand, couldn't be used as a table and so didn't attract the same congregation. There is no suggestion here that local authorities should rush out and replace all their flat topped bollards! However, if they are to be replaced in the course of regular maintenance or are being used as part of a new scheme the design should be considered in the light of the type of anti-social behaviour that occurs in the vicinity. The same point can be made for other structures placed in the street, such as cycle racks, waste bins and plant containers. All of these innocuous items can lead to unexpected problems if the nature of disorder and crime in the area is not properly understood.

Problem 20. Telephone boxes Developing solution



Two pairs of Heritage 'listed' telephone boxes located in a pleasant London Square. All of them suffer periodic misuse, theft and criminal damage.

Telephone boxes have always experienced nefarious acts, especially those located within areas that experience high levels of street crime and drug use. Camden Council and Police recently met with the main operators of the telephone kiosks to reach an agreement as to how, through partnership, the police, council and phone box operator could minimise the risks and impact of crime.

In October 2002 an agreed understanding was reached between the police, council and the telephone box operators. An informal protocol was prepared by the author and a Senior Planning Officer, Mark Whitworth of Camden Council and, for the benefit of the reader, it has been reproduced in full below with additional observation and photo-

graphs. It would be useful if there was an agreed national protocol for dealing with troublesome telephone boxes and, perhaps, this day is not too far away.

Informal Protocol between Camden Council and Police and the Operators of Telephone Boxes in the London Borough of Camden 16 October 2002

Introduction

In recent years the London Borough of Camden and London as a whole has experienced an increase in street crime activity. Analysis of the crime data for Camden has shown that this activity is mainly centred on three hotspot areas identified as Camden Town, Bloomsbury and King's Cross, although other parts of the borough do suffer from similar activity to various degrees.

Through various community safety partnerships, the Council and its partners have been working towards a seamless approach to community safety issues. The catalyst for this work has been the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, enacting section 17 – (1), which states:

“Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.”

Effectively this means that in all statutory functions, for which the Council and its partners are responsible, consideration must be given to the prevention of crime, the fear of crime and disorder. This consideration should be applied across all Environment Department services and indeed corporately, which in Camden's case is starting to happen.

With regard to the misuse of telephone boxes, Camden has seen a dramatic increase in complaints about their misuse, which is evidenced by approaches from councillors and letters from the public.

It should be made clear that despite the changes in public phone use with the advent of mobile phones etc, they do provide an essential public service and this paper is seeking ways of ensuring that this service is maintained, while trying to understand, learn about and eradicate the current misuse of many of these boxes.

The current statutory position with phone boxes located on the public highway is as follows: The extent of planning powers officers have in respect of phone boxes is set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). Part 24 relates to development by Telecommunications Code

System Operators. In respect of phone boxes, the Council has 56 days to consider the proposed location of new boxes and whether their siting and appearance raises concerns that require prior approval to be sought. Also, at present, the Council does not have the power to require the removal of adverts attached to the inside of phone boxes. This matter has been raised with the Government (DTLR) and a consultation paper has been produced by the DTLR looking at this issue and they are currently considering responses.

Why have telephone boxes become a problem?

Essentially, telephone boxes are enclosed places that unwittingly provide defensible space for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour to take place. In recent times, in Camden, many of the alternative opportunity sites used for such activity have become less available as the police and council and those responsible for buildings have applied a wide range of security techniques to prevent their misuse. Such measures have included: the application of access control; the closing of rear yards and alleyways; and the camera monitoring of customer toilets and other facilities in clubs, restaurants and bars and, of course the streets.

It is accepted that the majority of telephone boxes were installed at a time when drug misuse was not as prevalent or perceived as such a major problem. However, times have changed and there is an urgent need to develop a protocol between the council, its partners and the telephone operators to deal with the existing problem telephone boxes and the siting and design of the new.

There is a clear need for the Council and the telecommunications industry to understand and agree on what the future holds for telephone boxes. The Council and its partners, and in particular the Police Crime Prevention Design Adviser are keen to assist the industry with the future design of telephone boxes in order to minimise their misuse.

What type of criminal activity and anti-social behaviour is taking place in telephone boxes? What are the problems?

Drug use and drug dealing

This is the most complained about misuse of the boxes. Users looking for a location to take drugs will find the nearest place that offers shelter from the elements and a modicum of light and privacy. Telephone boxes are used by the drug user to contact his or her supplier and, because of the poor visibility into them they are used as a place to deal drugs.

Sex worker's advertising cards and litter



Sex worker's cards proliferate in the hotspot areas. Whilst it is a criminal offence to place these cards in telephone boxes, they are perfect locations for this type of activity. The cards are often stuck to the steel back plate and glazing using 'blue tack' or tucked into gaps between panels. Telephone kiosk operators spend a considerable amount of time and money keeping the kiosks free of this type of material, but such is the organisation of the 'fly carder' that the cards are usually back in the kiosk within 24 hours. More regular cleaning of the kiosks is probably the only answer at this time and operators have ably demonstrated their willingness to increase cleaning intervals, which sends a clear message to the carder that removal on the same day will be a certainty.



These boxes are located on the busy Euston Road, close to Euston Station. The floor of these boxes is strewn with litter including used hypodermic syringes

Drug paraphernalia and drinks containers are often found in telephone boxes, all of which are risks to public health.

Theft from telephone boxes

The telephone coin boxes are susceptible to theft. One method used to steal from them involves the use of the sex worker advertising cards to block the coin reject tray. It follows, therefore, that regular removal of the cards will reduce the opportunity for theft. The losses to the phone box operators can be significant.

Criminal damage

Telephone boxes suffer criminal damage through acts of vandalism and during the course of a theft from the telephone coin box.

Rough sleeping

The older, listed telephone boxes are very occasionally used by rough sleepers.

Urination and defecation

Partly due to the closure of public toilets and the controls introduced by clubs, bars and restaurants, telephone boxes are being used as toilets. This appears to be more prevalent where the telephone box is close to a licensed premises.

Graffiti

Many of the telephone boxes attract graffiti, either penned, sprayed or scratched into the glass. Those boxes, which use polycarbonate as an alternative to glass, seem to suffer a greater amount of scratched graffiti.

Features that encourage and aggravate the problems

Telephone boxes that are listed structures

These boxes are difficult to relocate or alter due to their heritage status. Finding appropriate solutions for these has proved to be problematic.

Orientation of the boxes

By virtue of the orientation of some telephone boxes and or the position of the door opening, some lend themselves to be used inappropriately.

Location and obscurity

Boxes placed in locations that are obscured by shrubbery or some other feature or are poorly overlooked or can only be viewed from certain angles encourage misuse. Those located in drug market areas or near places of entertainment suffer disproportionately.

Visual obstructions and design of telephone kiosks

Banks of telephone boxes create vision barriers by virtue of their 'solid' backs and can encourage inappropriate loitering. The placement of full height advertisements on one of the elevations can lead to the loss of vision into the telephone box and along the footway. Full height advertising posters also hide criminal and anti-social activity taking place in the telephone box.

The design of many of the more modern telephone boxes has been largely dictated by the need to protect the telephone equipment and to provide a sheltered and quiet location from which to make a telephone call. The designer was clearly concerned about misuse, which is why a gap was introduced at the bottom of the kiosk to allow air to circulate and deter loitering and rough sleeping and the resultant effects of such misuse. However, commercial pressure to replace the income lost to mobile phones has reduced these benefits.

Many kiosks in London are now being used as advertising hoardings, which is not surprising given that they are often located in very busy thoroughfares with heavy footfall and large volumes of passing traffic, an action which has resulted in the loss of surveillance, particularly into the box.

Open phones, such as the one shown on the next page suffer fewer problems, but are not as convenient for the bone fide user. It is probably time for the next generation of public telephone boxes and it is hoped that the designers will take note of the need to minimise the opportunity for all types of misuse.



Potential solutions

Clearly, this is for discussion between the Council and its partners and the telephone box operators, but it is possible to suggest a number of matters that will have to be addressed. These include:

1. Solutions for each telephone box problem will be site specific i.e. no one solution will fit all.
2. All new telephone boxes proposed will be referred to the Police Crime Prevention Design Adviser and their location will be considered with due regard to the Council's responsibility under Sec. 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Design issues to be discussed for new boxes will include the avoidance of flat surfaces, visually solid backs and advertising posters and the promotion of greater visibility both into and out of the telephone box.

Formal consultation and discussion will take place with Conservation & Design, Highways and Police Crime Prevention Design regarding British Telecom's type K2 and K4 boxes, which are generally heritage structures.

3. A step-by-step protocol for action by the Telephone Box Operator, the Council and Police to deal with drug use and sex worker cards in phone boxes. This would:
 - Review cleaning intervals of boxes.
 - Bar incoming calls.
 - Remove flat surfaces.
 - Consider the removal of advertising (when considered contributory) or advertise below waist height.
 - Introduce directed Street Warden patrols.
 - Carry out Police operations.
 - Pursue any funding sources to assist the operator in the removal, repositioning or alteration of telephone boxes if applicable.
 - Temporarily and where appropriate remove the door.
 - Alter the orientation of the telephone box.
 - Temporary closure of box
 - Reposition the telephone box nearby, if appropriate.
 - Remove the telephone box.
 - Reduce the number of telephone boxes in clusters or terraces.



Conclusion

As stated within the introduction, telephone boxes provide a necessary public service, despite the problems we face from their illicit use. It should also be re-iterated that the problem is not only one for the telephone box operators to deal with, but also the Council and its partners.

The Council and the Police, through projects such as the Lilac Project and the King's Cross Partnership (KXP), have developed a good working relationship with British Telecom and have achieved many positive changes to telephone boxes within the borough. In order to tackle the current problems associated with telephone boxes there is a clear need to develop this relationship with them and the other telephone box operators.

The purpose of this paper is to seek a way forward in dealing with the problems identified with the current use of telephone boxes and agree a protocol with partners, which will include the telephone box operators, on how we deal with the existing and future problems of this essential service.

At the time of writing this document planning authorities are seeing applications from phone operators to replace some existing phone boxes with a combined phone box and automatic telling machine. In Camden this comes at a time when the council and police have negotiated the removal of some troublesome boxes only to be confronted with another operator wanting to put new ones in. Architectural Liaison Officers have been objecting to many of the proposed sites on crime opportunity grounds, with particular concerns for the users of these machines. Time will see if problems develop and it will be of interest to receive the readers' observations.

Problem 21. Cycle racks Undeveloped solution

The reason for mentioning these innocuous structures is to suggest that they are sometimes located in the wrong place and can unwittingly act as a congregation point for the disorderly, as was experienced in Bloomsbury at the height of the drug market activity. It is important to point out that only a few of them caused problems.

Problem 22. Street litter bins Undeveloped solution

Emptying street litter bins can be a hazardous operation at the best of times, but in a drug market area this can be more so. The author has not developed this problem other than to recommend that the street bins are fixed into place, such as the one in the photograph, (so that they are not thrown at buildings and at people) and that local authorities ensure that those employed to empty them are duly warned of the risks if there is street based drug use in the area.



Problem 23. Free newspaper containers Undeveloped solution



Free newspapers, it seems, come and go, but their containers seem to stay. They are generally free standing and, as in the example in this photograph, are not secured to any structure. The ones that are not used just collect litter and the ones that are used very often end up overturned with their contents blowing down the street. All of them occasionally find themselves through a shop window. The current situation is far from satisfactory and the author would appreciate comment and suggestions from the reader.

Problem 24. Plant containers Developing solution



Plant containers and areas of soft landscaping in a drug market area are often abused by the drug user. Some will hide their drug wraps in them and deposit needles. This can be a very serious matter. The author is not suggesting that planters are removed, but is recommending a much higher level of maintenance and that some thought is given to preventing their use as litter receptacles. This is not just a problem for local authorities. The photograph to the left shows a street side café and planters positioned on a private forecourt set back from the footway. At night when the café closes so the drug users move in and leave their detritus behind. It was suggested that they might consider the erection of a 1.2m railing with lock back gates in order that this forecourt could be protected at night. The advice was not taken up due to lack of funding.



The landscaping shown in the photograph to the left was eventually removed due to a large number of complaints from the shopkeepers to the left (out of picture) Drug users regularly sat on the large granite blocks to take their drugs and left their needles behind. Children would sometimes play amongst the trees while their unknowing parents visited the shops.

Problem 25. Royal Mail letter boxes Undeveloped solution

Approaches were made to the Royal Mail to 'stipple paint' (see Graffiti) some of their letter boxes, which were regularly being targeted by the fly poster and sticker. The correct colour red was available, but the Royal Mail declined to use it.