



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
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DATE June 30, 2006

RE: CPTED Audit (Ottawa Housing Corporation)
1201 to 1281 Ledbury Avenue
2070 to 2085 Banff Street

Date of Audit: November 29, 2005

Persons Present: Students from Algonquin College – Police Foundation
Mr. Brian Duffy , Melanie O'Rourke -Ottawa Housing
representatives
Cst. Lenworth Vaz –Ottawa Police Service

Thank you for inviting me to perform a CPTED audit on November 29, 2005. CPTED is offered by the Ottawa Police Service as a public service as part of its crime prevention strategy. CPTED is an acronym for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The essence of CPTED is the making of a building safe by its design. CPTED focuses on surveillance, access control and territorial reinforcement of given locations to reduce the opportunity for crime.

The comments put forward in this letter are suggestions only. There is no onus to comply, but the implications of a failure to comply should be reviewed by your legal representative. Due to the unpredictable nature of crime, full implementation of these suggestions will not guarantee that crime will not occur in or around your building. Please be advised that the focus of officers conducting a CPTED audit is crime prevention. The officers are trained in crime prevention techniques, but not the enforcement of property standards, fire regulations or other such regulations and by-laws. Any concerns you may have with respect to these issues must be addressed to the appropriate authorities.

General Overview

Criminal Activities in and around the Ottawa Housing Community has increased over the past number of years. The tenants who reside in these areas have been communicating both perceived and real fears and apprehension of becoming victims of crime.

Ottawa housing has four communities located in the south end of Ottawa. All four share the same similar.

Issues

- Members of Gangs residing in Community (L.B.C)
- Drug Dealing
- Loitering in unauthorized areas
- Vandalism (dilapidated play & sports structures)
- Maintenance of Property (Ownership)
- Poor lighting

On Tuesday, November 29, 2005 our CPTED audit group conducted an audit of the Banff/ Ledbury community at their request. Unfortunately due to the heavy rainfall that day, a large majority of the residents stayed indoors. Nevertheless, the inclement weather did not dampen the spirit of the auditors. The CPTED audit group came across a number of issues, which need to be addressed, and we have included some possible solution to the problems we observed.

Defensible space

To achieve maximum control an area is first divided into smaller, clearly defined areas or zones. These zones become the focal points for the application of the various CPTED elements.

Under the defensible space guidelines, all areas are designated as either public, semi-private or private. This designation defines the acceptable use of each zone and determines who has a right to occupy it under certain circumstances.

Public Zones – These areas are generally open to anyone and are the least secure of the three zones.

Semi-Private Zone – These areas create a buffer between public and private zone and/or serve as common use spaces, such as interior courtyards. They are accessible to public, but are set off from the public zone. This separation is accomplished with design features that establish definite transitional boundaries between the zones.



Foot Path at the rear of 1281-F Ledbury Ave. As you can observe, The Private residence to the right separates their property from others using a chain link fence with no opening. This proves to be a very effective way to identify ownership and usage.

ACCESS ISSUES- NO BOUNDRIES



Rear of 1221 A-H & 1217 A-H Ledbury Avenue. Even though each yard is defended by a 4 foot chain link fence, there is no access control and criminal activity takes place on a regular basis.

ACCESS ISSUES - NO BOUNDRIES



Rear between 1235 (A-E) Ledbury Ave & 2070 (A-E) Banff St.

The entire Ottawa Housing Development share the same characteristics. There are numerous pathways that lead to areas that offers no natural surveillance. The pictures above clearly identify and illustrate the need to create a buffer zone that clearly defines boundaries, private from semi-private to public areas.

Recommendation: Pathways that run behind the rear of a home should only be accessible by the legitimate user, being the rents/occupiers. Option one the removal of fences all together, blocking access to the back to the rear and creating usable green space. This would greatly reduced unauthorized entry, would create better surveillance of the area and encourage the residents to interact positively with each other.

Surveillance:

Surveillance is the principal weapon in the protection of a defensible space. Criminals are least likely to act when there is a high risk of their actions being witnessed. Environments in which legitimated occupants can exercise a high degree of visual control increase the likelihood of criminal acts being observed and reported.

Informal Surveillance. Opportunity for informal or natural surveillance occurs as a direct result of architectural design. Design that minimize visual obstacles and eliminate places of concealment for potential assailants offer the most protection against crime. These open designs also encourage use of the environment, as people feel safer when they can easily see and be seen.

The architectural Design of the past it has created areas within the complex, which makes it increasingly difficult to provide Informal/Natural Surveillance.

Rear of 1225 Ledbury – access point to hydro field



This area is isolated, extremely poor lighting, no surveillance available and access inviting the public to areas where only legitimate users should be allowed.
(Numerous assaults and tenant intimidated by gang activities)

Recommendation: Close of access permanently. The area on the other side of the fence is owned by Ottawa Hydro. The public should not have access to area from Ottawa Housing Property.



Due to the isolation from the public, it is a garbage-dumping site.

Rear of 1235 Ledbury Ave.



GAPS IN FENCE



The fences along the paths ways surrounding the community have gaps built into them in many locations. These exits are frequently used by youths wishing to obtain easy access to the community for the purpose of loitering or “partying” these location are in areas where lighting and visibility are almost nonexistent, making natural surveillance impossible

Recommendation: Controlled access to the rear of units by ways of closing gaps in the perimeter fence. This would greatly reduce / prevent un-authorized access. If exits were required, placing them in areas that would provide natural surveillance of the area. Erecting proper signage and providing educational material to the residence.

Landscaping

Landscaping design, like architectural design, plays a significant role in CPTED. From a surveillance standpoint, landscaping can be critical. Visual corridors can be maintained in open, park-like areas as well as in densely planted areas. As a rule, visual surveillance corridors can be maintained by limiting shrubbery to a maximum height of three feet and trees to a minimum height of six feet at the lowest branches.

During the summer months the foliage along the fence line becomes thick which could pose a potentially be hazard during the night, due to poor lighting.



Recommendation: Encouraging residents to clean up and care for their property might increase the community's general sense of pride through reinforcement, making positive change easier. The second option is to create a green space environment by removing the fence-like enclosure. This would create a less cramped-looking surrounding.



During the night hours many front door and porches are unlit, this creates areas of concealment. While perhaps not a major issue under ordinary circumstances, the overall effect created is one of unease and uncertainty this promotes an uncertain and insecure atmosphere. The presence of adequate, non-disruptive lighting at night could greatly improve the atmosphere of the community, and possibly the safety of residents who frequently use those walkways.

The majority of light posts along the alleyways were either broken or in a state of disrepair. To reduce fear of crime in a community good maintenance of community's lighting is important to maintain a suitable level of natural surveillance. When this is achieved it will greatly reduce the community's anxiety of crime.

Recommendation: By placing porch lights on automatic sensors, the removal of residence control will ensure the lights will always be on.

One solution is to maintain a regular maintenance check of the property. Encourage / provide residents an avenue to report damages. Raising the height of the utility poles that house the lights, to prevent damage from taking place.

Maintenance



Shop – 2073 Banff Street

Ground Maintenance, which is presently sub-contracted to the private sector, should be better supervised. Currently during the winter months, various pathways are covered with either ice or snow. During the summer months the lawn care are inadequate.

Cable Box



A majority of utility boxes, encountered during the course of the audit had been broken open. It should be noted vandalism of cable boxes is a commonplace in this development.

Recommendation: A simple solution would be to relocate boxes to a higher location on wall or a more secure box with better locks as well.

The poor light condition and the lack of natural surveillance increase the opportunity for crime to take place.

Night View of Shed. No lights to illuminate area.



Prominent graffiti was present on the back of the maintenance shed located at 2073 Banff Ave. That area has extremely poor lighting and is concealed by the shed. During the summer months the foliage is thick and dense. At night the parking areas are well lit, however the path/walk way that leads behind the shed is in darkness. The graffiti are tags re-enforcing the presence of youth gang activities.

Recommendation: Relocating of shed, cutting back foliage and limit access to the rear by reducing pathways. The City should partner with Ottawa Hydro, who owns the hydro field that borders the city property. (See attached site plan- beside 1267 Ledbury Ave.) Close access to the rear pathways to the public/close access to the hydro field.

Garbage

Small garbage receptacles throughout the complex would encourage residents and visitors to dispose of their refuse properly. Due to the size of the Ledbury area the garbage bins provide are unsuitable to service this large group of residents. A cleaner tidier environment will create a sense of pride in those who live there.





Recommendation: Ensure they are always secure and enclosed in a fence enclosure. Larger garbage bins or having more garbage pickup days. Smaller garbage receptacles throughout the complex will greatly reduce visual pollution.

The recommendations will greatly enhance the safety of the residents and instill a sense of pride. These efforts along with the recent partnership established through “No communities left behind” will definitely be a step in the right direction.

