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Why my house?

Exploring offender perspectives on risk and protective factors in residential housing design

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Aims of the research

Joint research with West Yorkshire Police – Force Crime Reduction Officer (Chris Joyce) and Integrated Offender Management Team (Peter Homer).

- Which features of residential housing **attract** and **deter** offenders – in their words?
- What, in their view, are the key **risk factors** in increasing a property's vulnerability to burglary?
- What, in their view, are the key **protective factors** in reducing a property's vulnerability to burglary?
- Do these **confirm** or **refute** what we already know about the principles of CPTED?

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The research

The sample

- Prolific adult burglars currently serving a prison sentence (n=15). Aiming for min of 20.
- Recruited by the Integrated Offender Management Team and Restorative Justice teams across three prisons – Wheelston, Armley, Newhall.
- Willing to engage.
- Post-sentencing to avoid participants engaging for 'bargaining' purposes.

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The research

The interviews

- Face-to-face, in prison.
- Within legal visits (approx. 45 minutes).
- Semi-structured (guided, but open to talk around subject).
- Not recorded.

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The research

- Offender is shown a series of 16 photographs, one at a time - order remains consistent.

*“From what you can see from the photo, can you describe what would **attract** you to this property when selecting a target for burglary”*

*“From what you can see from the photo, can you describe what would **deter** you (put you off) from selecting this property as a target for burglary”*

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Principles of CPTED

Poyner (1983)	Cozens et al (2005)	Armitage (2013)	Eklom et al (2013)	Montoya et al (2014)	Hedayati and Abdullah (2015)
Surveillance	Surveillance	Surveillance	Surveillance	Surveillance	Surveillance
Movement control	Access control	Movement control	Access and connectivity	Access control	Access control
Activity support	Activity support		Activity	Activity support	
Motivational reinforcement					
	Target hardening	Physical security		Target hardening	
	Image	Management and maintenance	Public image	Image maintenance	Maintenance
	Defensible space	Defensible space	Ownership		
	Territoriality			Territoriality	Territoriality
			Structure and spatial layout		

6-1

Principles of CPTED

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Why does it matter? - Informs training, policy and practice

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Why does it matter? - Informs training, policy and practice

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Residential Secured by Design Interactive Guide

Residential Scenarios Please select from the scenarios below

Select a Scenario: [Dropdown]

View of the Scene: [Dropdown]

View: [Dropdown]

- 01 Layout of Walkways/Recreation Routes
- 02 Barriers/Access Points
- 03 Street Lighting
- 04 Mail Delivery
- 05 Communal Areas
- 06 Clinging Jails
- 07 Core Door
- 08 Clinging Jails
- 09 Clinging Security Lighting
- 10 Dwelling Entrances
- 11 Core Flaring
- 12 Windows
- 13 Clinging Jails
- 14 Clinging and Overhanging Balconies
- 15 Landscaping/Planting
- 16 Communal Space



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Why does it matter? - Informs training, policy and practice University of HUDDERSFIELD

7-3

Why does it matter? – Informs research University of HUDDERSFIELD

How I defined CPTED principles

Existing literature/research

Deductive research approach (top)

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This current research

- What do YOU think when you see this image? Image not linked to CPTED factors.
- Is there a pattern in responses?

Inductive research approach (bottom)

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- Research has tended to TEST existing theories (deductive/ top down).
 - "Is high permeability associated with crime? Yes/No"
 - The next study looks at permeability and tests...and so on.
- If we continue to test what we know, how will we challenge assumptions?
 - Will theories ever evolve?
 - Will we amend CPTED based on changing patterns of drug use or *modus operandi*?

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Confirmed a lot of what we already thought

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Corner plot

Yes, this is a prime target cos it's a corner plot. I always burgle houses at the end. It's easier to get in and out and you are less likely to be seen by neighbours.

It's attractive because it's an end property. There are plenty of ways in and out and you only have one neighbour to worry about.

Yes, cos it's a corner plot, you can get in and out with your goods. It's OK cos it's on the edge of a cul-de-sac.

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Cul-de-sac

I wouldn't go further into the cul-de-sac than a corner house because it's too closed and everyone knows each other.

I wouldn't target a house deeper into a cul-de-sac cos you feel trapped and it's difficult if someone challenges you.

On a cul-de-sac, you have to walk back out the way you came in.

What's so bad about culs-de-sac is that people look at you: they turn and look at you

If it's a cul-de-sac it's usually one way in, one way out. You'd be stupid to do a cul-de-sac.

I wouldn't go further into the cul-de-sac. There is no reason to be on a cul-de-sac unless you live there. You aren't going anywhere so you are a stranger. If it's a through road you can just keep walking through. I feel like people know each other and they will see me as a stranger.

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Surveillance

This is a burglar's dream house! The hedge is high and blocks the view from the road. The gate is so high, no-one can see you and the busy road masks any noise that I make.

This is an obvious yes! The high gate, the high fence, the overgrown shrubbery. Also it's an end house so you don't have to watch for neighbours on both sides.

It's closed off, you can't be seen from anywhere, it's a burglar's paradise.

This would be a perfect target. Passers by can't see in so they wouldn't notice you breaking in. The high gate and hedges block the view so no-one can see what is going on inside.

The high hedge would block you from being seen. Burglars dream that one.

This is the type of house I'd go for, nice ivy growing up the side of it, nice hedges, you can't be seen, I would hear the gate go if someone was coming in.

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Footpaths

Pretty perfect that! Straight in and out through the ginnel and you're covered.

Yes, it's easy to get away.

Yes, the footpath helps because you know you can get in and out.

Yes, this is perfect! Easy pickings. I would first walk up and down this footpath. No-one would give me a second glance. Even if I was a tramp walking up and down I wouldn't look out of place – it's a footpath, no-one can question you.

Burglars love paths – you are close to the house, but it's not like a street, you are covered!

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Footpaths

Having ginnels on an estate is great, cos you know the area better than the police, you'll easily lose them. You know the routes!

This is an ideal target for burglars as it's all closed in and lots of corners to hide. You wouldn't get seen with all the ginnels.

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Defensible space

Ahhhhh, private road, I got arrested on one of those.

I wouldn't go up this street it's far too open.

People living here will have a bee in their bonnet. This is a private road for private people. I would feel awkward here. It's all about the bluff and I couldn't pull it off here.

I wouldn't drive into a cul-de-sac it's too open.

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Physical security

Yes, I can tell by looking at the lock that it would be easy to snap.

This would take two seconds to break into. I wouldn't feel observed by the neighbours that look out are bathrooms and kitchens.

This lock can easily be mole-gripped. You can tell because it's thin. The new ones are chunkier.

I would snap the cylinder on the side door – it's a really poor design is that door.

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Challenged some of our thoughts

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High fences

I would give it a shot. The walls are high and no lighting so you wouldn't be seen.

I love solid fences. No-one can see you. Open fences would put me off!

I love high fences, they hide you from view!

The rear fences are high and the fencing is double sided so you can't see through. I'd be attracted to that - you can't be seen once inside.

Yeah - you'd be well hidden once you're in there, solid walls, can't see through the fencing.

The rear fences/walls are high, fencing is double sided too so you can't see through.

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Symbolic barriers

The 'private road' just means they have something to protect, so something to steal.

'Private Road' tells me they've bought their house - it's not council.

The word 'private' makes me think it's an exclusive area and they have more money. That would attract me.

'Private road' suggests this isn't council housing so won't be on benefits.

I'd think 'private road' means they've got coin.

It's a private road, this tells me they've bought houses, no council ones.

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Symbolic barriers

The word 'private' and the rumble strip mean nothing other than you aren't allowed to park your car there.

The 'private' sign would not put me off. In places like this, people think it's safe so they leave their doors and windows open.

What's private about this? I can see everything.

I thought it was a speed bump.

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Management and maintenance

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No, it doesn't look worth breaking into as there would be nothing to take.

No, it's too scruffy there is nothing worth taking.

No, I wouldn't burgle this house. I would try and offer them help! Phone the council and get them some support!

They are scruffy b@stards they aren't going to have owt. Look at the state of that garden.

No - I wouldn't be in that area burgling. I'd go in with nothing and come out with nothing.

Those gardens are dirty and horrible, that'd put people off - you want a nice tidy garden, if you mow your lawn, you care for your house and will have nice things.

No, they would have nothing to steal.

They look methed out. I wouldn't go there.

If the house is well looked after, it tells me they've got money!

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Burglar alarms

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If I smashed the window and the alarm went off I might scuttle away and then come back 10 minutes later to see if anyone had dealt with it.

Looks like ADT with it being a hexagonal box. Sh*t alarms go off and you have 4/5 minutes to have a quick look round. Not the same if they're monitored.

Alarms were a put off, but I used to foam them. I'd buy the sealant stuff, some took 24 hours to set so I'd seal them up during the night and go back the day after. The alarm still goes off but you can't hear them.

An ADT alarm would deter me but not others.

Good alarms like ADT and Yale don't stop when you pull the box off the wall. Others do.

I would break in, go straight to the box and rip it off the wall. If the alarm has already gone off, neighbors would think it's a false alarm.

From my experience alarms just f@cking annoy you if they go off, 8 out of 10 won't bother to do anything about them.

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How long?

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If I want to get into that house I will keep going till I get in.

I would keep trying for up to 30 minutes.

If I was left to my own devices I take as long as is needed to get in. If I was iffy and people might be moving up and down, then I reckon 5 minutes.

I wouldn't stop until I got in.

If I can see something I want I would spend ages trying to get in. I would even go to the neighbour's gardens and break into their sheds to get tools and come back and keep trying.

On average it could be 20/30 minutes - especially if you know there's money in there.

I would continue to break in for as long as 30 minutes. I would lose track of time.

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Design is not the only influence on decision making

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Moral judgement

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No, I feel bad about burgling anyway, it's a dirty crime, so I wouldn't want to steal from people on benefits.

No, this is a council estate and that's wrong.

No, you don't sh't in your own backyard! This looks like where I grew up.

It's council housing, I would never burgle my own. I also feel bad about the kid's stuff in the garden. That's just not right.

This is council housing and it's not right to burgle a council property.

It's council housing! I have morals! I don't like burgling in areas where they don't have much.

I'd stay away from here, it's the kind of area I grew up in.

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Moral judgement

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No, these are old people's homes. It's a moral issue and people who burgle here are weirdos.

In prison, if they know you have targeted old people, you would be in a wing with nonces.

No. Old people's housing is a no no.

No, these are old people, vulnerable people, supported housing! 90% of people I know would say the same.

I wouldn't entertain this, they are disability houses and cars.

This is blatantly old people's housing and I would not burgle there.

My Nana lives in a bungalow and she means a lot to me. There is no way I'd do a job here. I've been a b'stard but I'd never want to scare an old person. It would break my heart if I thought I had.

No, I would never target old people, my own estate or houses where it's obvious that kids live there.

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Drugs

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If I was bad on drugs, the alarm wouldn't stop me. Nothing would.

You didn't care when you were on drugs, felt invincible.

Being on drugs means you don't pay any attention to the surroundings - you aren't watching or listening for anything.

I was on drugs, I didn't care if I got caught and sometimes I wanted to get caught to get help for the drugs.

On drugs I feel brave, I have no fear.

You do some stuff when you are 'bad' on drugs, you just don't think.

On drugs you just don't care.

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They see what we don't.....we see what they don't

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Their 'judgements'

I'd look for appliances – like if they've got a coffee machine. People without money drink Nescafe, not from a machine... that's unless they bought the machine from a burglar!

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What does this tell us?

- a) Offenders decisions are influenced by design and layout as well as physical security.
- b) Much of this confirms existing CPTED principles.
- c) Some may need to be revised/reconsidered.

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Surveillance

Confirm	Challenge
Risks of being observed/attraction of not being observed were mentioned by all participants.	High rear fences are attractive as they conceal the view.
Corner plots are a prime target – easy to get in/out and less neighbours to consider.	
Wouldn't target houses deep into a cul-de-sac (will be observed/challenged).	
High hedges/shrubbery are attractive as they conceal the view.	
Closed curtains/net curtains are a deterrent as you don't know if you are being observed .	
Participants referred to room type and how this would impact on surveillance.	

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Movement control

Confirm	Challenge
Footpaths help when selecting a target. You have 'permission' to 'root'. You won't be challenged.	Footpaths can be risky. You never know if someone is coming the other way.
Footpaths are appealing, you know how you are getting in and out.	Dead end footpaths are risky - feel 'trapped'.
Houses on main/through roads are a prime target – easy to get away and the noise from the road masks noise.	
Low fences between rear gardens means you can move between properties to select target.	
True culs-de-sac are a deterrent as you have to come out the way you went in.	
True culs-de-sac are a deterrent – you are a stranger with no reason to be there.	
Leaky culs-de-sac/through road attractive as you can observe targets and keep walking if challenged.	

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Confirm	Challenge
Able to identify good/poor quality locks .	Several would keep going for up to 30 mins to get in (if they knew it was worth it). Talked of 'losing track of time'.
Wooden, heavy doors are seen as a deterrent.	Burglar alarms are not a deterrent – unless police monitored alarm. If goes off set themselves' time (4 mins) then leave.
	Mixed view on lighting/motion sensor lighting , most didn't see it as a deterrent.
	High fences are attractive – conceal the offender.
	Bars/high levels of security can portray the message that there is something worth protecting.

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Confirm	Challenge
	The principle that tidy/cared for property conveys message that residents are more likely to intervene was not confirmed by offenders.
	A neat and tidy garden means they care for their house and themselves so will have nice things to steal .
	A messy garden means they have nothing to steal ...not one mentioned that mess equates to unlikely to be challenged.
	What we see as a mess/untidy they often perceived as 'being renovated' so they have money/something to steal.

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Confirm	Challenge
Some participants did refer to certain developments/properties making them feel like a 'outsider' – a closed community	'Private' means private housing – not on benefits so morally acceptable and something to steal.
	'Private' means you can't park there.
	'Private' means they will be lax about their own security.
	A narrowing in road, change in colour and texture doesn't seem to be perceived as a deterrent.

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Thank you

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