

Safe Housing Estates

Suggestions for crime prevention in renovation programmes



The Danish Crime Prevention Council



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Preface

When renovation work is about to start on a housing estate, it may be a good idea to look at the same time into the possibility of making the estate a safer, more secure place to live and be in, and of reducing any crime with simple, physical improvements. It may not cost anything extra. On the other hand, it will require a little more thought in the planning process. The residents can, for example, be drawn into the process, and suggestions for improving the area and increasing security can be heard. This brochure covers a series of such measures that can be pointed out, measures that have been tried with success on Danish public housing estates during renovation. These renovation programmes, which included physical improvements to 173 housing estates, have been closely followed by the Building Research Institute of Denmark.

As senior researcher, the architect who has written this brochure was responsible for registration before and after the physical improvements. An important subsidiary goal of the renovation programmes was the pre-

vention of crime including vandalism, violence and gang crime. Major importance was attached to improving social conditions but physical improvements were also considered important, and here the largest part of the funds granted to the renovation programmes was used. In addition, the work has been followed by the Environmental Planning Committee of the Crime Prevention Council.

The Crime Prevention Council has earlier given good advice on security in connection with the building of completely new housing estates (in the leaflet "Crime Prevention in the Planning of Housing").

Our wish is that crime prevention is already considered when renovation programmes are planned – both to prevent crime and also to enable residents to feel that their housing estates are safe and secure. We hope the new brochure "Safe Housing Estates" will inspire housing estates that face both small and large-scale physical improvements.

*Oluf Christensen
Chairman of the Environmental
Planning Committee*



What types of crime can be reduced on housing estates?

- burglary
- car theft
- theft from cars
- theft from lumber-rooms and the like
- violence and robbery
- rape
- criminal damage / vandalism
- arson



Grass areas of no use to anyone can be transformed into vegetable gardens, which signify responsibility and a “possessive” attitude towards the garden. But the flight of steps can make it easier for a thief to gain access to the ground floor flat. This problem can be solved with technical safeguards such as infra-red sensors that cause a lamp to light up in the flat when someone is on the balcony.

Introduction

Physical improvements can in themselves contribute to reducing crime on a housing estate. On many occasions simple improvements can hinder crime and vandalism taking place, and at the same time people’s insecurity about the area can be lessened. It is important to distinguish between the risk of crime and insecurity. The risk of burglary and violence is actually quite low – and statistically falling – but nevertheless a housing estate can still be regarded as unsafe, which may affect people’s desire to live there. It can lead to many people moving out of the area and thus result in an unstable social climate. No housing estate can tolerate such a situation and therefore this alone provides good reason for improving the conditions.

It is reasonable to suppose that a sense of insecurity is greater in areas that need to be renovated than in areas that are pleasant and well-maintained.

Involve the residents

It is of crucial importance that residents are actively consulted when decisions are made on what should be done in the area. Not only do residents know best what the problems

are, but conditions also come to light in residents’ meetings that could not be found by other means.

Residents’ meetings also contribute to establishing and maintaining well-functioning social networks, the existence of which is an important condition for security in the neighbourhood.

Responsibility for the area

There are limits to what can be done with estates when they are renovated, but certain obvious defects can be changed.

The task consists of extending the concept of HOME as far as possible into the public area. It must be shown that people take an interest in the buildings, that the area has a look of tidiness and supervision, that the residents are happy to live there and that crime is not tolerated.

There is not very much Danish research on what influence the physical improvement of housing has on crime, so the good advice presented in this brochure is more the result of experience, observation and “common sense” than of certain knowledge.

However, abroad – particularly in the USA – a considerable amount of research has been done, which with a degree of caution can be transferred to Danish circumstances. It should be noted that local conditions such as



road systems play an essential role, but also circumstances like the composition of residents, income etc are relevant.

Many circumstances contribute to making an area vulnerable to crime:

- very large, poorly planned housing estates
- anonymous character
- unclear situation regarding who owns / is responsible for the different areas
- absence of persons who can intervene
- insufficient view over recreational areas, car parks and paths
- strangers have easy access
- “suitable” locations for crime
- easy victims

Two strategies

The Crime Prevention Council generally works with **two ways** of preventing crime:

- methods that make it difficult to commit crime
- methods that affect the behaviour of individuals or groups of people.

1) Making it difficult

In relation to a housing estate, it can be said of **the first method of prevention** that the more residents are interested in the area and accept responsibility for it in different ways, the more difficult it is for an offender to carry out a crime. There will simply be various psychological and physical barriers, which will have to be overcome before people can commit crimes. Behind the specific instructions in this brochure there are five main elements that make it difficult for an offender:

- That there are as many “protective eyes” (“Street watchers”) as possible, i.e. residents at home, people on paths and populated areas for most of the day and night.
- That joint responsibility for the housing estate can arise, i.e. there are good physical facilities outside and inside for the common use of all age groups, socially well-planned housing units – and the opportunity to make a difference to the immediate environment.

- That there are good clear views over the area and visibility i.e. clear views from the housing over outdoor areas and car parks, visibility in stairways, few hiding places, and good lighting.
- That the surroundings are maintained and kept clean.
- That the buildings are secured with closing / locking systems and that there are few escape routes for any possible criminal offenders.

2) Affecting behaviour

Concerning the second method of prevention, experience has shown that good opportunities for development of the residents (e.g. sports facilities) promote responsibility towards the residents and the estate. Many of the changes can have an affect on the actual crime. In addition they will contribute to residents and visitors feeling more secure being in the area.

This brochure is built up so you move from the entrance to the building inside to each housing unit and then outside into the public areas. At one end the limit is reached at the front door of the individual housing unit, and at the other end the brochure finishes at the entrance to local shops, institutions and the public road system.

The brochure gives suggestions for improvements on several levels, so inspiration can be found for both modest improvements and large-scale rebuilding in housing renovation. At the end of the brochure there is a list of useful titles where you can read more about crime prevention in the planning of housing.



Many hiding places give an insecure environment

Important facilities

- Good development opportunities for all age groups – including sports
- Good meeting places for residents
- Regional cultural institutions, that can attract people both from the estate and from outside, can enhance the reputation of the area in the town.



The Stairway



All front doors should be fitted with door viewers, and in families with children extra viewers should be fitted at child height.

If the stairway is decorated, residents feel more responsibility for it.

Lighting

Lighting in the stairway is important for promoting a feeling of security. If the lighting is cold and so positioned that it leaves visitors' faces in shadow, the stairway itself gives a sense of unease.

Suggestions for improvements

The lighting should be positioned so it is directed straight downwards and should be fitted outside each front door so that persons standing at the door are clearly visible. The light source should emit warm tones and give light to all corners of the stairway.

Decoration etc

The majority of stairways are very impersonal and regarded simply as places you have to go through in order to get "home". If stairways are not kept clean and tidy, it can lead to graffiti and other kinds of vandalism. If, on the other hand, the opportunity is given to decorate the stairways, the residents can be given a greater sense of belonging and with that a greater sense of satisfaction in living there.

Suggestions for improvements

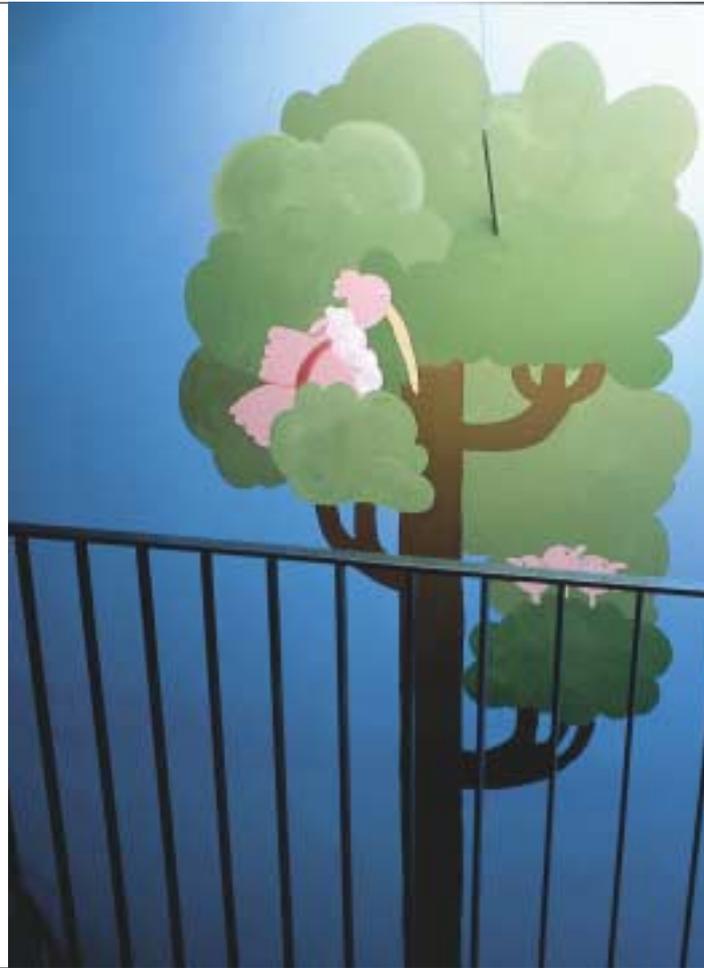
Residents should be able to place plants, notice boards, posters and such like in the stairway, which can show that the residents know each other.

- Giving high priority to tidiness and good maintenance (including good paintwork).
- The small corner chairs that were common in blocks of flats from the turn of the century should be introduced into more recent buildings, so people who have difficulty walking can have a rest on the way up.
- In recent years many stairways have been decorated with themes that the residents themselves have either chosen or actually carried out. Here there has been success in extending the sense of "home" to the stairway, with a positive effect on keeping the area clean and tidy.

More glass in the façade

If the renovation budget is sufficient, an extension of the glass area in the stairway should be considered, so before entering the building people can get a view of the whole stairway from outside. This will mean there will be fewer hiding places, and from inside people will be able to see what is going on outside. If there are lifts, these should also be fitted with panes of glass.





Door telephones – intercom

Locked doors into the stairways can be a good measure against break-ins and people who have no business there, but door telephones are then necessary. Many buildings that previously experienced considerable crime have been fitted with door telephones as part of the renovation, and this has remedied many problems. Today door telephones can also be supplied with a TV camera in the control panel.

Talking together

Blocks of flats often promote an anonymous atmosphere among the residents. However a good social climate is of considerable importance for residents and for motivation to keep an eye on each other's homes.

Suggestions for improvements

It is important that the housing management board arranges a meeting for the residents in each stairway at least once a year, so they can get to know each other. The residents should be urged to take part in the meeting, but it is also necessary that residents come because they want to. There should thus be a programme that is able to interest and involve residents. Whether the meeting should cover one stairway at a time, or whether several stairways should be called together is something that must be determined by local conditions. It is decisive for attendance, that the event is advertised in good time.

The stairway can be decorated in many ways: The most important thing is that the residents like it and feel at home.

Poor maintenance and signs of disorder can result in active residents moving away from an estate. Areas with many people moving away can thus end up getting a bad reputation.



The Entrance



The entrance is the "semi-private zone" where casual meetings between residents can take place.

Mail boxes in stairways are often the target of vandalism and break-ins. They would be more secure in an open-sided porch at the front of the building where they could be seen from the flats.



New porch

Generally there is a very sharp border between public and private areas in blocks of flats. It is very important that this sharp border is softened into more varied zones: semi-public and semi-private. The entrance can thus be transformed into a semi-private zone where the residents have a transitional area towards the public space. It has been found that children in particular get a lot of fun out of this place – it's a good place to play.

Suggestions for improvements

If the opportunity arises in the renovation project to build new porches (closed or open-sided), it is important that these places are inviting and friendly. A lot of glass in the facade is important, partly so you can see from

outside what is going on in the porch, and partly so you can look out over the recreational areas from inside. There should also be seats inside and out so children from the stairway can play together under cover near their home. The porch should signify that this is a place where the residents have a certain influence. They are thus able to stamp the place. It should be easy to clear up e.g. there should be shelves for the children's toys and a large waste bin for litter.

You often see doormats used to prop open entrance doors so there is open access to the stairway. Doormats should therefore be fixed so that they cannot be easily removed from their places.

Bicycle and Pram Parking

The area around the entrance is often a disordered place with not enough room for the residents' bicycles, prams and other things. This leaves an impression of indifference to these items, and they are easier to steal or damage. Modern bicycles are expensive and therefore attractive for thieves who often bring special tools to enable them to remove the bicycle.

Suggestions for improvements

Residents should be able to leave their bicycles and prams in a dry, secure place near the entrance. Therefore in a renovation programme, bicycle and pram storage rooms can be made which are secured against break-ins and preferably are on ground level. It is important that the bicycle / pram room is always maintained and orderly, so the residents will want to use it.

Lighting

Good light is of major importance for a feeling of security at the entrance. Good light means warm colour tones and there is enough of it where it is needed. It is not necessarily a question of the amount of light, rather one of the quality of the light in the places where it is required.

Suggestions for improvements

The entrance should be lit up inside and out, so you can easily see if there is anyone nearby. If there is not permanent light in the stairway and porch, placing sensors outside can be recommended so that a light comes in the stairway when anyone approaches.

Cleaning

It is important that the residents of the stairway or block of flats agree on how the stairway, entrance and the area around the entrance can be kept cleaned up and orderly. If there is a mess, this signifies a lack of care and can be an invitation to vandalism, graffiti and more litter.

Suggestions for improvements

The residents should get together to decide on some routine measures that are easy to carry out and administer. The residents can of course pay their way out of this by asking a caretaker to attend to it on a day-to-day basis, but it is better if the residents feel so much responsibility for the stairway that they themselves clean up and keep things orderly.

Disorder at the bicycle park is a sign that nobody is taking the area in hand.



Bicycles are expensive; they should be locked up. Preferably behind glass as shown here. Only residents of the stairway should have keys to the storage room. If it is not possible to lock the bicycles away, they should be parked under cover in small units visible from the flats.



The Basement

Basements are often places you go down to only when it is absolutely necessary – and preferably only in the daytime and in company with others. But basements can have many purposes that are of use to residents.



Dull, insecure basements can be converted into active hobby rooms to the delight of all the residents.



Suggestions for improvements

- The ways down to the basement are rebuilt so the entrances are moved to the ground floor with lockable doors to which only the residents have keys.
- Passages going the whole length of the building are broken up into smaller units by doors to which perhaps only the caretaker has keys.
- Lumber-rooms are secured against break-ins with strong locks, partitions and grating.
- To remove the sinister atmosphere of basement rooms, better views in and more light are needed; basement windows should be changed so you can see in to the whole floor area from the outside, and the light should automatically be switch on when anyone steps into the rooms.
- There should not be public access to basement rooms that cannot be seen from the outside.

Instead of this dreary way down to the basement, a vestibule could be made to house prams, bicycles etc, as shown by the sketch.

It would also promote a feeling of security in this passage if it were possible to keep an eye on what was going on from the windows in the gable end of the block.



The forecourt



The forecourt is one of the most important places where the residents of a stairway or a house can meet each other, and it is therefore important that it is suitable for this purpose. It is an advantage if there are seating and play facilities nearby, and each forecourt should have its own design, different from the other forecourts. The residents of each stairway should be able to put their mark on the forecourt.

Suggestions for improvements

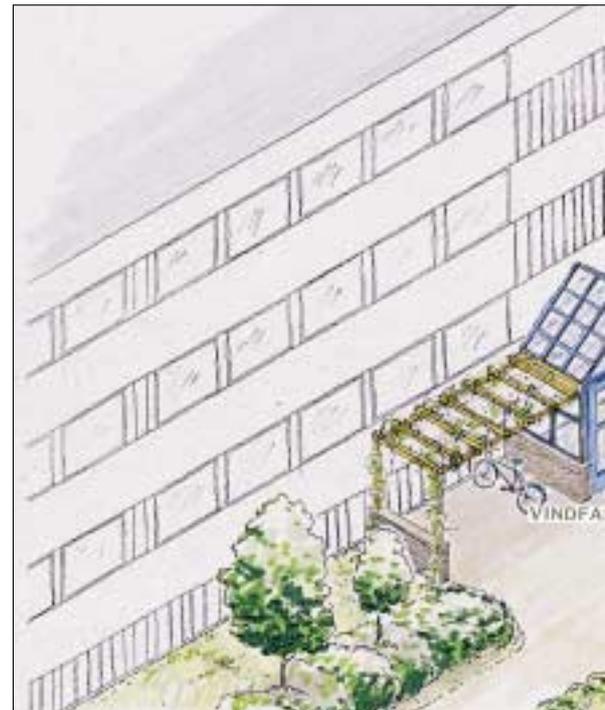
- There should be play facilities for children in different age groups and good seating facilities for adults, including parents of children at play. It is also a good idea to lay out the forecourt so there is a choice between shadow and sunshine.
- There should not be large shrubs or garden furniture that a person could hide behind.
- Low growth planting and friendly and sufficient lighting should be used here. Friendly lighting would be where the fittings are fairly low down, do not dazzle and have a warm light.

The forecourt should be a safe and secure place for children to play





- It is an advantage if people can look down from the flats to the forecourt and the people who have rung the doorbell.
- The forecourt should be demarcated with a border that can be passed relatively easily.
- It is an advantage if emergency vehicles, removal vans and taxis with physically handicapped passengers can drive close up to the entrance.
- If it is not possible to drive right up to the entrance door, a footpath can be made up to the entrance so a taxi driver, for example, can watch his passenger walk right up to the door.



Before the renovation, there was a hard, anonymous area in front of the entrance doors with bicycles parked in the open and no seating or play facilities.

The architect submitted this proposal for change for discussion among the residents.



Here the residents themselves have made this cosy corner, a very popular place.



The result resembles the proposal, but better facilities for bicycles are needed.



Parking

When the car park is situated in front of the buildings, there is a good view of the cars from the flats. But the view is not as interesting as play and seating areas.



Large, deserted car parks can seem insecure, and if they cannot be seen from the flats, the parked cars are exposed to the dangers of theft and vandalism.

Suggestions for improvements

In order to frustrate the wish to break into cars parked on housing estates, the existing large car parks can be divided into smaller units, easy to see and closer to the entrances so they can be seen from the flats where the car owners themselves live. If necessary they can be supplemented by lockable garages, which are much sought after by motorcyclists in particular.

If it is not possible to divide the large car parks into smaller units, they could perhaps be partitioned with low-growth bushes, so the impression of large, deserted surfaces is broken up. Trees that prevent residents being able to see the parked cars can be pruned, trimmed, pollarded or removed.

Car park lighting should have fittings at a height of 3-4 metres, and the fittings should be screened upwards in order not to dazzle and impair the residents' view of the cars. Cars without number plates should be removed as soon as possible from the area, so they do not give a sign of indifference and provide a temptation to vandals.

Earlier the parked cars formed a long bank between a monotonous pavement and the carriageway. Now the car park has been moved to the other side of the road, and the forecourt has been made more useful for seating, play and bicycle parking.



Internal roads



The internal road system can be improved so that there is only one way into and out of the area, which restricts the escape routes that can be used by any possible criminal offenders. Reorganising traffic with road humps can reduce speed. Good street lighting will also be an advantage here. A big difference in level between the carriageway and other areas, with high kerbs, can promote road safety on the housing estate – there should, however, be small ramps down where pedestrians have to cross the road.



Cars should be able to drive up close to the entrances, but only for short waiting periods.

Possible escape routes can be restricted by making only one way into and out of the estate.



Paths



Many hiding places along paths can give a feeling of insecurity. Open space around the paths gives a clear, broad view.



A number of housing estates – particularly from the 1960s – have road systems where pavements and paths do not intersect with the carriageway on the same level. Often the pedestrians and cyclists are directed under the carriageway through subways, which today are felt to be gloomy and sinister with lots of hiding places. If the paths are also used by mopeds and light, fast scooters, the subways can often be regarded as very unsafe, and many residents choose to cross directly over the carriageways rather than go under them. This is to the detriment of road safety and the general feeling of security in the area. Subways are particularly exposed to graffiti.

Suggestions for improvements

- Security on the path system can be increased by directing pedestrians and cyclists along a few central paths rather than have them dispersed over many paths.

- Mopeds on the paths can be restricted partly by clear prohibition signs, and partly by small, sharp bends that do not hamper pedestrians or cyclists but make riding a moped less attractive.
- Graffiti in subways should be removed regularly, and it could be worthwhile spending money on treating the wall surfaces to make them resistant to graffiti.
- Lighting should be created by light sources that emit a warm light.
- It is a good idea to straighten out the entrances to subways so possibilities for hiding there are restricted.
- If none of these suggestions can get residents to use the paths and subways, the traffic arrangements should be changed. The subways should be closed and replaced by well-lit pedestrian crossings with push button controls.



If pedestrians and cyclists are directed along one path through the buildings, it will be used so much that people will feel secure. It is important that the paths go as directly as possible towards their goals in the neighbourhood, and that you can see a long way ahead on them.

Signposting

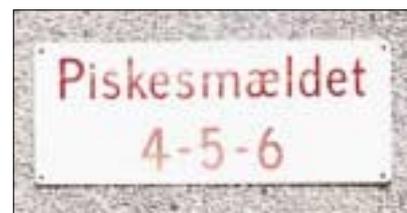


It may be hard to find your way in a housing estate you have not been into before because many estates were planned at a time when town planning models changed fast. The plan can appear logical and easy to understand for the residents, but visitors can have problems with it.

Suggestions for improvements

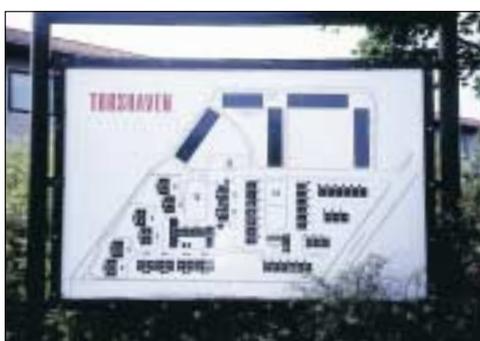
- The renovation programme should include an examination of the signposts on the estate. Where are the communal facilities located and how do you find the house numbers?
- An outline plan of the area would be very useful for visitors. It is a good idea for the outline plan to be produced on material that can resist graffiti and vandalism.
- The outline plan should be easy to find at the main entrance to the estate with large, clearly legible text and numbers and should be lit up at night.

You can signpost the way in many ways – for example with flowers!



“The wip lash”

On certain public housing estates, the names of roads and areas sound unpleasant and can lower the reputation of the estate (the Axe Quarter, Fire Thorn Road, Violence Park and such like). A change of name can be a necessary step in raising the reputation of an estate, but this often involves considerable expenditure on directories, signposts etc.



An example of a clear outline map



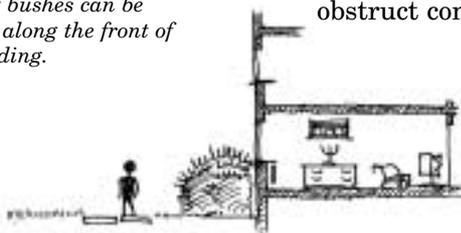
Planting of shrubs, trees etc



A bare area of grass could be made better use of, for example by making vegetable plots.



To prevent people seeing into the ground floor flat, a belt of bushes can be planted along the front of the building.



Apart from the important role of shrubs, trees etc as decoration and to mark the change of seasons, they can also be used for the purpose of creating a sense of security: they can be used partly to promote and partly to obstruct contact on a housing estate.

Suggestions for improvements

- Contact between residents can be *promoted* by planting flowers together with bushes and trees to provide shelter in places around the buildings where it is pleasant to spend some time.
- Contact can be *obstructed* by planting “distance zones”, perhaps of prickly bushes, in a two-metre wide belt between ground floor flats and paths. This makes it difficult to get to open windows, balcony railings



or drain pipes that can be used by cat burglars.

- Examples of prickly bushes include blackberry, fire thorn, hawthorn and barberry. They are not popular where children play and should be avoided in such places.
- To prevent people seeing in to residents and their valuables in ground floor flats, bushes can be left to grow, as shown in the drawing.
- Private gardens belonging to flats on ground floors can give an

impression of care and order with fences and if necessary gates, and these things also create a distance between public areas and the housing.

- New trees can be protected against vandalism by netting or fences.

Vegetable plots laid out in the grass areas.



Wooden fences and evergreen hedges are not very interesting to look at and also create hiding places.

Variation in planting is important for the quality of the forecourt. Even small areas can become significant



Responsibility

Responsibility for maintenance of the individual areas on a housing estate should be well-defined so residents know precisely who they should approach with complaints about damage and the like. In each stair-way there should be information on who to call, including who to call outside the normal office hours for the caretakers.

Follow crime trends

A tip for caretakers who want to guard against crime is to mark all scenes of vandalism and other crimes on a map with pins. They can then see if there is a pattern to the crime or if some places are particularly exposed, and if necessary they can put some measures into action.

It is important for the residents to know the housing employees and feel they can approach them .





Recreational Areas

Good physical facilities that residents want to make use of can in themselves prevent crime and vandalism.

The time for large grassed-over areas is over. What is needed are recreational areas that can be used more actively because generally on many (public) housing estates there are a lot of people home during the day – often as many as half the residents.

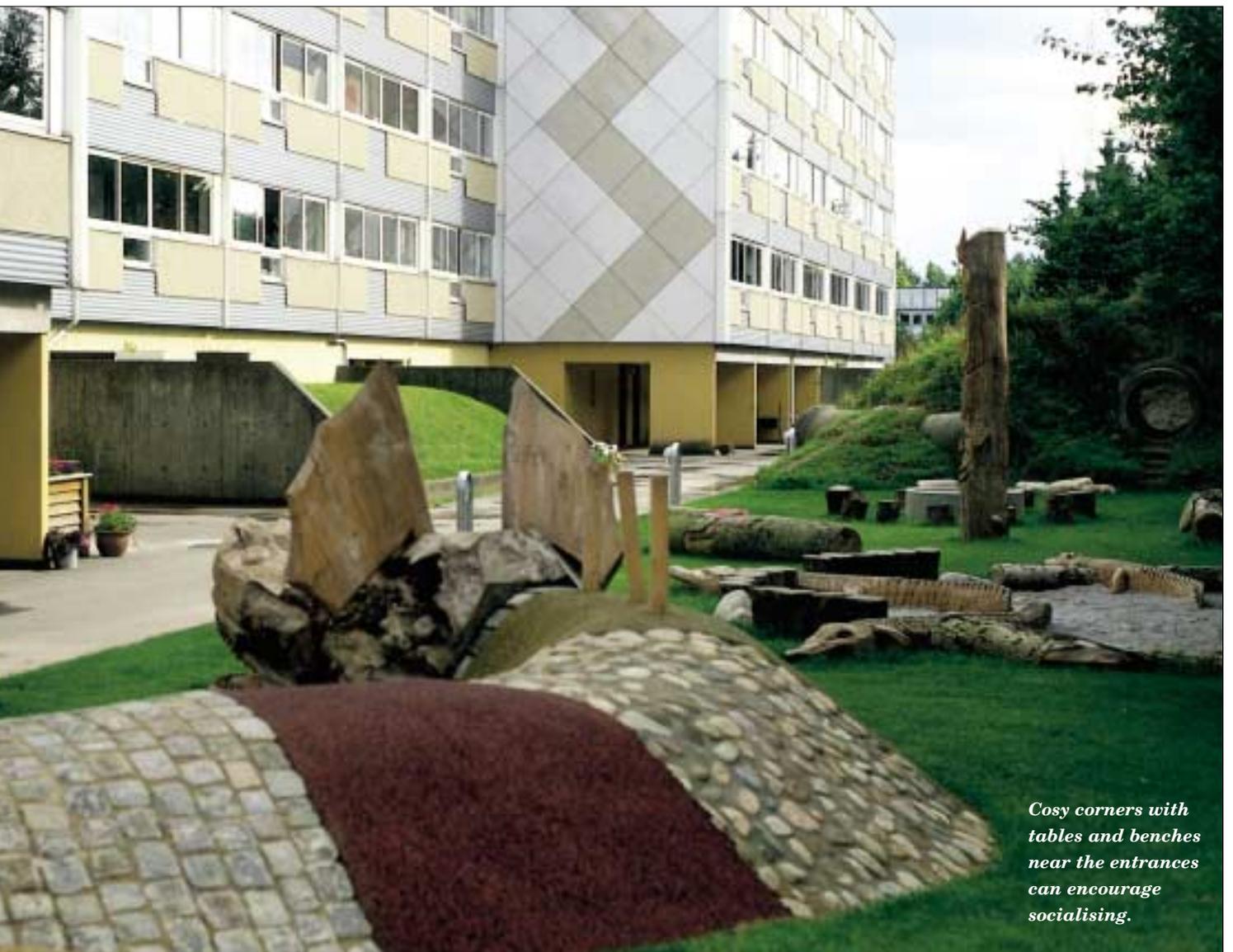
Suggestions for improvements

- The following can be made: vegetable plots, sun traps, barbecue places, and sports grounds and playgrounds for children of different ages.
- When planning the landscape, a rich variety of plant type should be aimed at so residents can mark the change of the seasons. There is something to look at and people will follow life on the estate, so the risk of a thief or other offender being discovered will be much higher.
- Avoid creating hiding places near paths and roads used by residents at night.
- Lighting should be used to light popular places or spaces around the recreational areas so people can be seen in silhouette. It is not necessary for the recreational areas to be bathed in light at night; but there should be light where it is needed.



This pavilion in the middle of the recreational area has been built for barbecues and such like.





Cosy corners with tables and benches near the entrances can encourage socialising.



On this estate a rainwater pond has been reshaped and developed into a very popular recreational area.

The more glass there is in the facade, the greater the chance is of someone looking down and keeping an eye on life in the recreational areas



Large areas of grass have had their day. There are never many people about and they seem rather anonymous. Nowadays people require grass areas to be made use of in more interesting ways for play and socialising.

A group of artists has designed new street furniture and play equipment for this courtyard in Nørrebro in Copenhagen. This has turned what was extremely rundown into an attractive sight for the residents



Division into smaller units



If it is at all possible, it can be a good idea to divide a large housing estate into areas or small housing units. In this way residents can more easily identify themselves with the housing area, take part in influencing the development of the area, take responsibility for it and be capable of disciplining themselves in a natural way.

Suggestions for improvements

- When the division is made, consideration must be taken that each unit is well arranged from a social point of view.
- As far as possible the division should be made following natural borders, for example wide paths, hedges and other planted borders, and the location and function of the buildings.
- The division should preferably be made so a varied composition of accommodation types is achieved and there should be a mixture of rented, co-operative and owner-occupier housing.

- Each unit or small area should have its own individual character. This can be achieved by making changes in the course of paths, planted areas, recreational areas, colour choices, architecture and other things.
- It is of decisive importance that residents are consulted and play a part in the changes. There should be real influence with sums of money put at the disposal of the residents in each area. The money is to be used for developing the area and for social activities that bring the residents together.

Dividing a housing estate into small units makes it easier for residents to feel a greater attachment to the area.

Good places to get together are made use of by immigrant women at quiet times of the day.





Bus Services

If more time could be saved going by public transport than by car, there is a good chance that people would use it more.

The fewer facilities (shops, leisure facilities and institutions) there are on a housing estate, the more important it is for residents to be able to get easily to other estates nearby – and into the town centre so they can take part in the general life of the town.

Suggestions for improvements

The bus stop should be situated in a central place either on or near the housing estate, opposite its main path and preferably near the communal house. Ideally there should be a frequent bus service, including evenings and weekends. Experience has shown that both public and private transport can play a part in reducing crime around thoroughfares.



Communal House

Communal houses are important because they are the places on the housing estate where residents can pursue their hobbies and interests. Residents can get to know one another and create a social network. Most communal houses have assembly rooms that residents can use for large private parties. A communal house that has rooms specifically for the use of young people provides the young with a place to meet so they do not get bored and hang around the buildings in places that cause inconvenience to other residents.

Suggestions for improvements

It is a good idea if the communal house has rooms with facilities that interest young people. A music room and a workshop for the repair and upkeep of mopeds and motorbikes can be popular places in such a house. There will be some noise problems here that need to be solved. Groups with particular interests will possibly be interested in having their own rooms in the communal house, and it is important to try to meet all wishes

for such communal rooms. A communal house can give rise to conflict on a housing estate, and it is therefore recommended that the house be situated so it is easy to keep an eye on it from other buildings in order to limit the risk of break-ins and vandalism, but not so close to other buildings that complaints about noise result. A communal house should always be manned during opening hours, and no visitor should be able to come unnoticed into the house. Many communal houses have a café, which gives the house some life everyday. It is an advantage to have outdoor seating areas around the communal house, which residents can use in the summer.

The communal house can be a place where the old and young from the area meet and so get to know each other. If necessary, the communal house can have an office for housing administration and a small office for the use of the local police, which, in cases of serious problems on the estate, can prolong its opening hours and use the office as a base for patrolling the area at night.



Without communal houses with helpful staff and good activities that can attract marginalized groups, gathering points arise in often quite inconvenient places.

A conspicuous and distinctive communal house in the middle of the estate. Unoccupied basement rooms can also be used after they have been done up and arranged for the purpose.





Graffiti and Vandalism



Large wall or brick surfaces can tempt graffiti painters. An alternative could be to cover them with creepers.

If graffiti is not removed immediately, residents get the impression that their housing estate is an area nobody looks after, and this can result in people wanting to move out of the area. Graffiti is a sign of disorder and lawlessness.

Suggestions for improvements

- Checks of the buildings should be made as necessary, and damage should be repaired in a way that is evident to residents.
- Large wall or brick surfaces that are concealed from public attention and consequently a temptation to graffiti painters can be covered by the planting of creepers or made unattractive to graffiti painters in other ways.



"Happiness is a big white wall."

More life in the area

At certain times of the day a housing estate is felt to be safer than at other times, when the paths and roads may be deserted. This problem is not easy to solve, but traditionally there is less crime in areas where light industry and trade are integrated into the surrounding areas.

Suggestions for improvements

If it is possible to get classrooms in the area for an evening school or courses outside normal hours, it can help in getting more people out and about and in this way reduce the opportunities for crimes to be committed.



This housing estate has been consciously planned as a crime-free area – and it has succeeded. This has been achieved by such things as directing pedestrians and cyclists along roads that can be easily watched over from the flats.



Conclusion

Crime prevention in town planning and housing is first and foremost about creating good environments that are secure, friendly and stimulating. The security aspect should be seen together with the other aspects as a whole – and not as something that forms a contradiction, like gated communities for example i.e. housing estates surrounded by walls, guarded at the entrance and patrolled at night. In both renovation programmes and new building programmes, the

emphasis should be on positive housing efforts, which are of benefit to everyone and promote good and desirable behaviour. Where there is a particular need, initiatives can be taken which are specifically directed towards reducing crime in the area, for example with social efforts or activities for particular groups.



“Safe housing estates” is an obvious point on the agenda, when the housing management board meets.

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www.crimprev.dk

Bo Grönlund:
www.bo.gronlund.homepage.dk

Creating Safer Cities Network:
www.uwe.ac.uk/fbe/commsafe

Secured by Design:
www.securedby-design.com

Home office Crime Prevention Unit:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimprev/cpindex.htm

Cepted Handbook:
www.cpted-watch.com

Crime Prevention Links:
www.nejrs.org/cpwww.htm



Physical improvements on a housing estate can help prevent crime and vandalism. Even small changes can have a major effect so it is worth taking crime prevention into consideration when a housing estate is about to be renovated. The brochure makes a series of suggestions for modest and large-scale improvements that can make housing estates safer places to live and be in.



The Danish Crime Prevention Council

Odinsvej 19, 2. sal
DK-2600 Glostrup
Tel: (+45) 43 44 88 88
Fax: (+45) 33 43 01 39
dkr@crimprev.dk
www.crimprev.dk

