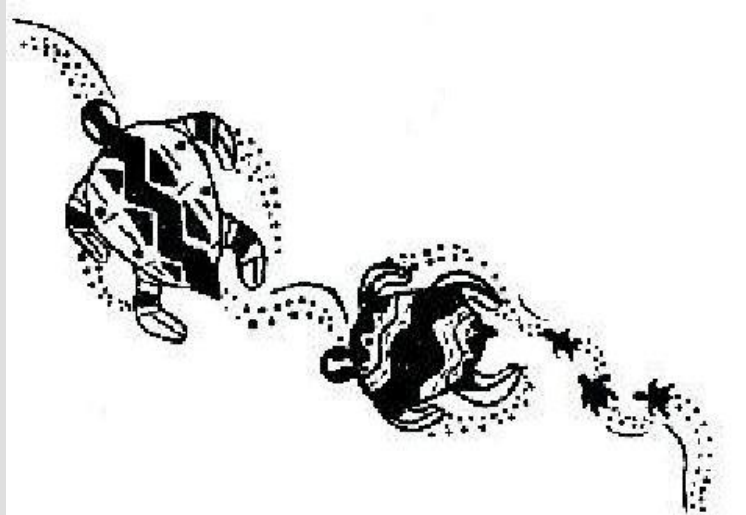


Taking the Initiative:



The Aboriginal Housing Company's Community Safety Plans for the Redevelopment of the Block, Redfern

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Introduction

Community Safety is a key issue in the Redfern area. Particularly on the 'Block',ⁱ high levels of crime and drug related crime has stripped this Aboriginal community of identity and culture. It has discouraged interaction and respect between groups and individuals in the community as well as interaction and harmony between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The result of relentless crime and drug problems has also shattered the very fabric of this community. The Block has become the 'new Kings Cross' in terms of being a well known site for extensive trading and use of illicit drugs. The surrounding open space and abandoned buildings are degraded with discarded needles and other detritus.

On the Block, there are a number of diverse causes or factors underlying criminal and drug activity involving a wide range of immediate and long term social factors. Some of these relate to family violence and neglect, difficulties in school, poor and inadequate housing, and social disadvantage. Others relate to specific environmental conditions which lead to greater opportunities to commit certain types of crimes, such as the presence of darkened lanes and alleyways, abandoned buildings, and a threatening entrance to the Block. Generally, the literature on crime prevention can be broken



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down into two broad categories: those which focus on social crime prevention, and those which stress opportunity reduction measures.ⁱⁱ Social crime prevention approaches are usually centered on the underlying cause of crime, which are seen as stemming from economic circumstances (e.g., unemployment) social inequality (e.g. poverty) and cultural disadvantage (e.g. racism and ethnic difference).ⁱⁱⁱ Opportunity reduction approaches tend to concentrate on reducing the situational, physical or environmental opportunities for crime employing strategies such as CPTED. This paper will look at the issues relating specifically to the social and physical implications on the Block.

This paper is based on and contains extracts from the Aboriginal Housing Company's (AHC) Draft Community Safety Report (2004).^{iv} The Community Safety Report has emerged from the AHC Redfern Community Social Plan^v and is an integral part of a series of planning strategies advising the redevelopment of the Block. Prepared by AHC Social Planning Consultant, Angela Pitts and AHC Project Manager, Peter Valilis, the AHC Community Safety Report identifies crime prevention initiatives and strategies specific to this urban Aboriginal neighbourhood, and provides a working document upon which to build a safer community. The Report has also acted as a set of guidelines and a checklist for architects, planners and builders to ensure the most effective and efficient way of designing a safe environment by responding to the high levels of crime in the Redfern area.

The AHC Community Safety Report constitutes the first time an Aboriginal housing organisation has addressed crime and its relationship to an urban Aboriginal environment. It also applies a systematic problem solving approach to Indigenous community safety planning. As a result of this report, a specialised set of design recommendations and implementation guidelines based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles aimed at Aboriginal urban communities have been developed and applied to the final housing design options for the redevelopment of the Block.

Social & Physical Implications

Social Implications

The social implications of the physical environment of the Block have made community safety planning in the Redfern Aboriginal community very challenging. Although the AHC Community Social Plan helped launched the process of evaluation there is an unresolved need for a long-term assessment of the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in this urban area.

There is a high concentration of social disadvantage within Aboriginal communities. Major socioeconomic indicators reveal that most Aborigines live a life with fewer assets, less income, less regular and permanent work, fewer educational qualifications and lower quality of housing. Many of these problems are commonly associated with poverty. The social disadvantage in Aboriginal communities nationally is also reflective of the problems in the Redfern Aboriginal community.

On the Block, major issues of concern are health related problems associated with poor housing conditions, substance and drug abuse and the overall poor wellbeing. A



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great economic burden is placed on Indigenous families compounded by high childhood dependency, high transient visitor rates, and high rates of adult unemployment. In the Redfern Aboriginal community these stresses are some of the major factors contributing to such problems as domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, truancy and diminished parental responsibilities.

Further compounding the social problems is the absence of a 'sense of place' defined as a situation where people value their neighbourhood for a variety of qualities and are prepared to commit their future. As a result, the climate on the Block is such that there appears little or no remnants of a positive community left. Instead a destructive drug culture has taken hold, and the only cohesiveness within the community that has endured seems to revolve around protecting the drug industry. The effect of this has been the systematic destruction of the spirit of the community.

The high level of drug and criminal activity in the area suggests an organised criminal element. These criminals have a vested financial interest in maintaining the status quo in the area and thus exert a strong influence on the community, both through intimidation and financial inducement. Further, the Aboriginal youth living in this area are in grave danger of being targeted to become the next general of drug dealers and/or drug users.

A number of young people in the area and their friends (aged under 15) are now heavily involved in substance abuse and crime and are the main perpetrators of vandalism and general anti-social behaviour.^{vi}

The AHC Community Social Plan^{vii} revealed some of the key social and cultural issues affecting the community in the area. They are identified as follows:

Key Social and Cultural Issues

- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Violent crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- Drug and alcohol related crime.
- Transients contributing to homelessness.
- Drop-ins introducing a disruptive criminal element.
- Health problems and the effects on wellbeing.
- Substandard and unsuitable housing.
- Dysfunctional Aboriginal families and the Stolen Generation.
- The need for greater access to Aboriginal services and facilities.
- The need for children and youth recreation areas and services.
- Community safety issues.
- Lack of rubbish removal and a sense of neglect.
- Lack of coordination of services in the area.
- A need for greater focus on services for children and youth.



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- Cultural misunderstandings, rifts in the community and distrust.
- Lack of respect.
- Indicators of social disadvantage including:
 - a) Family stress.
 - b) Low-income, unemployment and lack of skills.
 - c) Criminal convictions.
 - d) Sexual assault and child abuse.

Physical Implications

The following factors have created the poor living conditions and safety problems that contribute to the Block's susceptibility to crime:

Key Factors Contributing to Crime

- An inappropriate and poorly maintained urban environment.
- Unhealthy and dilapidated occupied housing.
- Boarded up abandoned houses that are used as shooting galleries.
- Drug dealing houses.
- Large tracks of vacant unused open spaces.
- Lanes/alleyways used for shooting up and drug dealing.
- The Health Dept's needle distribution bus.
- Isolation due to geographic barriers like the railway tracks and industrial factories.
- Absence of appropriate lighting and natural surveillance.

The use of violence by drug addicts needing a fix is a constant threat to residents, local children, students and people using Redfern railway station. Bag snatching is prevalent in the area, with the Block acting as a refuge to criminals. The perpetrators snatch bags from people coming and leaving Redfern railway station and then run into the Block finding refuge in the lanes, in the drug houses or just among the various people hanging out on the vacant land. The boarded up houses are also used as places to store stolen goods. Given this situation, environmental design can play an important role in improving this environment, by reducing the opportunities for crime in the on the Block.

Crime Overview

On the Block and the surrounding area there are increasingly high levels of street offences. As discussed above, among these include: drug dealing, shooting up drugs in public spaces, binge drinking and subsequent disorderly behavior, car vandalism, and bag snatching. Since 1999 there has been an overall increase in major offences such as Stealing Offences within the Redfern Area. The majority of Stealing Offences



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in the Redfern area is almost double that of Waterloo, South Sydney LGA, and Greater Sydney.^{viii}

There is a major problem within the immediate vicinity of the Redfern Railway Station in relation to Robbery and Steal from Person Offences. These offences often take form of bag snatches, or stealing handbags and other items from cars stopped at traffic lights. Police estimate that about sixty percent of these offences occur within a fifty-metre radius of the Redfern Railway Station (Redfern Station is adjacent to the Block).^{ix} Information from Redfern Police suggests that offenders who typically carry out these offences are seeking small amounts of quick cash in order to score their next drug purchase.

Malicious Damage is also higher in the Redfern area in comparison to South Sydney LGA and Greater Sydney.^x In Redfern, there are high levels of car vandalism, property damage and graffiti. The primary criminal offenders are the bored youth in the area. Youth boredom associated with lack of employment opportunities, a sense of hopelessness for the future and the lack of youth services and activities in the area are seen as major reasons for the high crime rates.

Assault Offences are also higher in the Redfern area in comparison to South Sydney LGA and Greater Sydney, As discussed earlier, Redfern has a considerable problem with Steal from Person offences and in particular bag snatches. This fact tends to suggest that many of the incidents reported as assault may have started out as stealing offences that involved some sort of struggle or violence towards the victim. If this is the case, then the problem with bag snatching type offences is clearly an even more serious crime than the statistics alone suggest. Also, the Assault Offences statistics (which include sexual assault and offences) indicate a great need for domestic violence services, and family intervention and support services in the area.

A more detailed crime profile can be found in the AHC Community Safety Report, and the Draft Redfern-Waterloo Community Safety Plan, November 2003.^{xi} which analyses the extent and nature of crime in the area.

Elements & Objectives For A Safer Community

Although there are no quick solutions to the problems of safety and crime on the Block, the AHC's objectives to develop and maintain a safe community depends on more than just the reduction of crime. A safer and stronger community must have the following elements and objectives present in its fundamental internal structure:

Community Elements & Objectives

- All its members must have full participation in community decisions.
- True self determination must be achieved.
- All human rights are respected.
- People live free of persecution and discrimination.
- No one is restricted in their use of local public spaces by fear or any risks posed to their health and safety.



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- All people are welcome.
- Opportunities are free flowing in and out of the community.
- Children are free to live and develop in a loving safe environment.

Also, a safer community must have strong external foundations. These require the involvement of a number of agencies or 'whole-of-government' solutions to long-term community safety planning. A combination of these internal and external elements working on long-term community problem solving will achieve positive results.

The AHC Community Safety Report investigates how CPTED principles are applied to the redevelopment process and assesses the role environmental design plays in preventing crime and creating safer communities. Together with other community safety principles, including social crime prevention approaches, early intervention strategies, community strengthening activities, and educational improvement programs, the AHC redevelopment process can form holistic solutions for these problems.

Although the benefits of a well-planned design may be somewhat intangible, they can have a positive effect on social behaviour, crime prevention, as well as the perceptions of safety.^{xii} With regard to the redevelopment of the Block, good urban planning and design in the initial stages of the planning process stands alone as an important factor in creating a safer environment and reducing the opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour.

Furthermore, diverse communities of mixed housing/land uses and social and education mixes are likely to be safer and more attractive places in which to live, work and socialise as well as increasing the range and variety of people using spaces at different times of the day and night. With the close vicinity of the University of Sydney, the Redfern Railway Station, and the various Aboriginal organisations, services and activity in the area, the potential to achieve a safer community is remarkably apparent.

Community Safety Workshops and Community Consultations

The AHC Community Safety Report incorporates the results and findings of various community consultations and meetings that have taken place since 1999. In November 2001, the AHC management held planning workshops with various community and government organisations, residents and stakeholders to discuss solutions to some of the pressing social problems on the Block and the surrounding area. These included Aboriginal representatives from such organisations as the Aboriginal Medical Service, Department of Community Services, Aboriginal Legal Service, Redfern Police, Juvenile Justice and NSW Premier's Department as well as concerned neighbours and residents. The report incorporates the findings of the Community Safety Planning workshops and the Public Domain Planning sessions.

During the initial preparation of the Community Social Plan (in 1999), extensive consultations, interviews and community meetings in the area were being conducted by Sarkissian Associates Planners for the redevelopment of the Wilson Brothers Site



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adjacent the Block on Caroline Street.^{xiii} Concurrently, Marrickville Council and South Sydney Council conducted a number of community consultations as part of a social and community service needs analysis to assist with the development of their respective Municipal Social Plans.^{xiv} Results of these consultations were also incorporated in the AHC Community Safety Report.

The Report incorporates the results of informal interviews conducted by the AHC staff with the Block tenants in order to augment the information available on the crime, drugs and safety concerns of the community. It also incorporates information from the various meetings with the Redfern Police and the NSW Police Commission, the Aboriginal Medical Service, the University of Sydney, and the NSW Premiers Department to name a few. Thus, the current views expressed by the community and the various organisations are reflected in this report.

Statistical data and information were attained from South Sydney Council and the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project Community Safety Working Group. The Group has been meeting since July 2002 to develop a Community Safety Plan for the Redfern/Waterloo area.^{xv} Information and data have been collated from the following organisations: Redfern Police, NSW and local Crime Prevention Officers, Department of Housing, Probation & Parole, Department of Education, Central Sydney Area Health, REPIDU, Domestic Violence and the Aboriginal Housing Company.

The Report also analyses previous and current Community Safety Audits prepared by the Redfern Police and South Sydney Council to determine the victims as well as the perpetrators of criminal activity. This information was analysed and evaluated and the findings are documented in the AHC Community Safety report.

Since the initial preparation of the Community Social Plan in 1999, extensive consultations, workshops and community meetings in the Redfern area have been conducted on community safety. Key issues were identified and a number of suggestions were made. Following are summaries on some of the workshops and consultations taken place.

Consultations with the South Sydney Aboriginal Community

A 1999 survey of Aboriginal people in South Sydney identified crime and safety as two of the most important issues in the area.^{xvi} The community is extremely concerned about the high level of crime and risk to personal safety. In the survey, respondents were asked to comment on the levels of crime and perceived unsafe nature of the area. The reasons for crime are:

- **Youth boredom**, associated with lack of employment opportunities and a sense of hopelessness for the future, was seen as a major reason for high levels of crime. The youth were seen as the primary criminal offenders.
- **Drug and alcohol abuse** was also closely associated with crime, violence and harassment. Some respondents felt that drug abuse in the area is contributing to the fears about personal safety. Some felt that the problem was so deeply entrenched that it was insurmountable.



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- **High-density housing and low incomes** were also contributing to fears about personal safety and poverty.

A number of suggestions for improving safety were offered by the community:

- More police/street patrols
- Tackle drug problem
- More security around public housing and generally
- Personal alarms
- Street lights
- More youth programs/places for young people
- Neighborhood watch/SAFE houses

In community consultations conducted for the Wilson's Brothers Site redevelopment in 1998 and 1999 (which is adjacent to the AHC's properties), drugs and crime (including violence and assaults) were of great concern. Some participants described the area as 'severely socially traumatised', and that there was a strong call to address the issue of drug dealing in the area.^{xvii}

Redfern Community Safety Audit

In May 2002, a community safety audit was conducted by the Redfern Police.^{xviii} The audit area incorporated the Block and surrounding area. Its primary purpose was to identify and evaluate safety and security related risk for the protection of people and property from the threat of internal and external exposure and anti-social behavior by:

- Discouraging opportunities for physical violence;
- Minimising the opportunities for crime against property;
- Improving community partnerships between citizens, police, council and other agencies;
- Providing feedback to planners and management;
- Reducing urban decay;
- Rejuvenating community pride and cohesion.

The Community Safety Audit Team members identified a number of key issues and was summarised as follows:^{xix}

Substance Abuse

The area has a reputation for substance abuse, in particular drug abuse. This can be clearly seen by the number of discarded syringes throughout the area and is considered by the local community as a major health concern. A needle bus is used to distribute clean syringes to people in the area. However, information suggests that the majority of people, using this service are not from the local area and may be attracted by the bus itself.



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Families

Members of the audit team expressed their concerns about families that live in the area that are involved in substance abuse. This problem has caused break down in the family unity, with young people often becoming involved in anti-social or criminal behavior due to the lack of supervision by parents. Members of the community are concerned about the families and young people becoming increasingly involved in substance abuse and the repercussions it is having on the community, which is becoming more divided.

Transients

Members of the audit team also indicated that there are a number of transients that have moved into the area to either deal or use drugs. Some of these transients have been classified as homeless when in effect they have accommodation in other parts of Sydney or New South Wales. These people will often bunk in abandoned buildings or around public or private buildings in the area. They often contribute to the 'negative image' the area has been given.

Lighting

Street lighting throughout the area is generally of a sodium type (yellow) light, which may be suitable for road lighting but provides little benefit to pedestrians.

General Maintenance

Parks, streets and the general area needs to be maintained in order to reduce the 'negative image' and increase community pride within the area.

Surveillance

There was very little surveillance of public areas within the audit area. With this in mind, residents need to be encouraged to open up the fronts of their homes in order that they can see onto the streets. Most people involved in criminal behavior do not like to have their activities monitored.

AHC Planning Workshops

In November 2001 the AHC management convened planning workshops with various community and government organisations, residents and other stakeholders. During the community safety workshop, a number of local safety concerns were expressed. The most important issues raised were drug and alcohol abuse, youth boredom and drug-related crime. A number of suggestions for improving community safety were made, they include:

AHC Community Safety Workshop Recommendations

- Empowerment of community members.
- Clear definition of responsibilities (government, police and community).
- Better home safety.
- Youth targeting programs.



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- Applying CPTED principles such as improved street layout, removal of lanes/alleys, increased natural surveillance, better lighting.
- Greater security.
- Guardianships – community control.
- Better police intervention.
- Identify and remove geographic barriers that create isolation.
- Proactive neighbourhood watch – possibly incorporating a ‘safe house’.
- Safe mechanisms for police intervention within the Block.
- Secure and open main entrances into area.
- Design to encourage community interaction e.g. youth, elders, children.
- Creating economic opportunities.
- Better communication mechanisms with all levels of government, NGO’s and community groups.
- Better management.
- Implementing street patrols.
- Identifying what attracts crime to this area.
- Wilson’s Brothers development fitting with the Block development.
- Design ensures there are no undefined spaces.
- Coordinated co-care management programs.
- Better understanding of law/lore/community policing.
- Better role of education services to educate youth not to vandalise.
- Incorporating environmentally ‘friendly’ design.

The Strategic Application Of Cpted & Community Safety Measures

The application of CPTED^{xx} and community safety measures in the AHC Redevelopment Plans for the Block incorporates three sets of interrelated issues dealing with safer communities. These include:

A Safe & Accessible Environment

A Safe Environment reduces the fear and incidence of crime through such measures as increased natural surveillance. The appropriate design of streetscapes supports a density of activity and clear visibility over long distances. Further, mixed land uses and increased aperture of access encourages wider community interaction. This type of design would facilitate micro reconciliation and a variety of activity patterns.

An Accessible Environment ensures that all people have safe access to all public space at all times. The aim is to create safe places for children to play and safe and



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accessible environment for elders. Clear signage, appropriate landscaping, lighting and safe accesses to public transport stops/train station are essential elements.

Community Ownership & Participation

A Community Driven Environment fosters a sense of community ownership and responsibility of public spaces. Community participation leads to increased opportunities for social intra-community interaction, and improves the communities' ability to work together to solve local problems, realise common values, implement informal social controls to reduce crime and increase the community's ability to access services.

A Participatory Environment involves a broad cross-section of people in the active management and use of public spaces (such as entertainment, street performers, market stalls). Mixed land uses also encourages diverse activity and contact between people which in turn enables passive policing and natural surveillance.

Space Management

A Well Managed Environment ensures that public spaces are maintained to a high aesthetic and safe standard, and that the land is used appropriately. Programs including site cleanliness, systematic garbage removal, rapid repair of vandalism and graffiti, and replacement of burned out lighting and broken windows ensures the sustainability of the land as a safe environment for families.

A Sustainable & Secure Environment ensures that public and private spaces are safe and sustainable in the long term. It includes the implementation of target hardening measures such as the use of durable building materials that reduces consumption, waste and pollution. The use of locks, bars, heavy doors and other security devices like whole-community monitored video surveillance are critical to this strategy. The long-term success relies on the monitoring and evaluation systems being implemented continuously.

Designing for a safe and accessible environment

Ensuring that the streets, footpaths, houses, and public space are safe is a pre-eminent requirement of the AHC's redevelopment design and planning decisions. In a paper presented by Professor D. Reed, at the conference Safer Communities: Strategic Directions in Urban Planning held in Melbourne,^{xxi} he points out that a greater understanding of the planning and design principles which improve public safety can lead to:

- Reduced opportunities for crime, and less hostile physical environments;
- An encouragement of community responsibility for natural surveillance; and
- Greatly increased use of public spaces.

Elements which contribute to a safe and accessible environment include: perceptions of safety, visibility and natural surveillance, mixed land uses and activity patterns, access control, and community ownership. This section will look at the application of these elements in relation to the redevelopment of the Block.



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Perceptions of safety

'Fear of crime' literature shows that the extent of the fear of crime in a community is not related to level of crime but to perceptions of danger. It shows that even as crime rates stay steady or fall, the fear of crime can rise. Fear of crime often identifies certain locations and people as dangerous and threatening,

On the Block, there is a climate of fear of crime and violence. There is a tendency for people to avoid venturing into the area. The environment engenders feelings of alienation, hostility, and degradation. The area is known as a no-go zone as drug dealing, shooting-up, drunkenness and criminal activity is prevalent.

Crime on the Block and the fear of violence has also had a significant impact on economic development in this area. For instance, decrease in consumer traffic has driven businesses out, opting for other sites, house values has dropped, buildings have deteriorated, etc.

It is as much the fear of crime as it is the reality of crime that is needed to be addressed in this community, therefore, crime prevention strategies must include aspects that enhance a resident's sense of safety.

Visibility and Natural Surveillance

In order for this community to feel safe, it is vital that they can be seen by others and that they can see clearly around the environment. Natural surveillance is a matter of building and space design that creates a greater capacity for casual observation of public and private areas by users or residents in the course of their normal activities. Visibility is the degree to which an area is made visible by elements such as lighting and uninterrupted sight lines. On the Block visibility and natural surveillance is seriously impeded by the narrow entrance into the area, inappropriate lighting, and the lanes and alleyways. The project design incorporates CPTED principles of good natural surveillance.

Mixing land uses and activity patterns

Natural surveillance can also be achieved by mixing land uses and activity patterns. A mix of activities means that people will be in the streets at all hours. Surveillance is impacted by the extent and type of use of the public domain. This is an important principle for the Block as the area will be safer because there are more people and a diversity of users around at different hours of the day as well as creating diversity in how the public domain is used. In the area, this can be achieved by creating bike and pedestrian walkways connecting the University of Sydney, Redfern Station, and by encouraging businesses and shops on the surrounding streets.

By involving a broad cross-section of people in public spaces and encouraging activity and participation in community and public life is important in achieving community safety. On the Block this can be achieved by integrating the activities of the Wilson Brothers Site and creating more youth orientated activities in the area. Encouraging multi-functional use of spaces will ensure that buildings are used over an extended period of time, thus increasing the potential for natural surveillance. Further, creating a mix of housing types such as student housing and hostels, as well as



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providing housing opportunities across an entire income and economic range will encourage a mix of activities and a diversity of users. The recommended building of an Aboriginal hostel on the Block will also act to alleviate the transient problem of Aboriginal people visiting the area from other areas who are not necessarily homeless but who are sleeping out rough in the area.

Access Control

One element which contributes to natural surveillance is well defined differentiation between public and private space. Physical and symbolic barriers can be used to attract, channel or restrict the movement of people. They minimise opportunities for crime and increase the effort required to commit crime.^{xxii} By clearly defining public and private space, confusion can be avoided about what areas are accessible or not accessible to the public. Therefore, by defining these spaces, it becomes difficult for potential offenders to reach and victimise people and their property. Illegible boundary markers and confusing spatial definition make it easy for offenders to make excuse for being in restricted areas^{xxiii}. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the barriers do not create a hostile environment. Some techniques in the AHC's redevelopment design have been addressed by reducing vacant and undeveloped land which limits areas for criminal activity as well as establishing some form of spatial definition or ownership over greater amounts of land.

Access and Escape Routes

Access and escape routes are accessible to both the offender and the victim. For the offender, access to escape routes are often deliberately chosen and planned well in advance to allow quick escape. For the potential victim, areas of safety that have high levels of natural surveillance and public visibility can act as safe spaces. On the Block, the movement of people is restricted by the narrow entrance from Redfern station into the area. Also, the narrow entrance is dark and intimidating, compounded by the lanes and alleyways which allow quick escape for the offender. Design mechanisms influencing the ease of access and escape through the layout of pedestrian routes and the juxtaposition of different types of space will be incorporated in the redevelopment.

Territorial Reinforcement/Community Ownership

Aboriginal residents in Redfern should be encouraged to assume ownership of their community. Community ownership of public and private spaces encourages responsibility for its use, upkeep and maintenance. People are more likely to gather, enjoy and feel more comfortable in that space, and are more likely to visit public spaces which feel owned and well cared for. This is essentially a case of territorial reinforcement. Territoriality is a sense of ownership of one's living environments where public and private spaces can be designed and managed in ways that encourage users to take responsibility for them through concepts such as 'defensible space'. Spaces are defensible if people are able to exercise control over them.^{xxiv} People's attitude to their surroundings can be increased by the extent to which the physical form and celebration of the spaces relates to their cultural constructs.^{xxv} Further, community ownership increases the potential that people who witness crime



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will respond by reporting it or by attempting to prevent it, thereby, reducing opportunities for crime and increasing the risk to criminals. Recent studies have found that crime rates are lower in local areas with high levels of participation in community-oriented activities.^{xxvi} Studies have also shown that cohesion among residents is linked to lower rates of crime.^{xxvii} On the Block there is little sense of ownership and limited capacity of the residents to effectively take control. Criminals and drug dealers maintain control of the environment and rarely are there attempts to prevent them from operating, Exacerbating the situation are the alienating and badly maintained public spaces and vacant land.

Designing attractive and stable family housing, as well as encouraging home ownership on the Block may increase territorial reinforcement. There is a great need to provide new high-quality and affordable family housing. The redevelopment project focuses on the provision of three and four-bedroom housing and units for rental at affordable rates. Further, homeownership may also increase a sense of community ownership. The redevelopment project will also address the potential for a regional trust or building society to access low interest loans for investment in a home ownership program for Indigenous families.

Space Management

Management & Image

The management of public and private spaces is important to community safety and crime prevention. Space management ensures that space is well maintained, attractive and appropriately utilised. The image projected by buildings or public areas has been clearly linked to levels of crime and particular to the fear of crime.^{xxviii} Urban decay and the resultant degradation makes people using these areas feel unsafe.^{xxix} On the Block vacant land is often used as a dumping ground contributing to decay and a negative image of the area. Further, the abandoned and dilapidated buildings also contribute to the overall sense of urban decay. These are both prime conditions for criminal opportunity. Also, graffiti and vandalism lead to the perception of a neglected place. Factors impacting the image of the area and the buildings have been considered in the design.

Sustainable & Secure Environment

To ensure that public and private space is sustainable and secure, crime prevention strategies such as target hardening will be incorporated into the design of the area. Target hardening is the physical strengthening of buildings to reduce the vulnerability of potential targets. Target hardening is often the first solution that occurs to residents and designers because it can physically reduce opportunities for crime.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The management of space will also include the implementation of continuous monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure the sustainability and security of the area. It is important to systematically evaluate and continually assess the outcomes of the redevelopment project in order to measure the successes as well as the failures of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design measures incorporated. A post-



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tenancy evaluation has been developed as part of the redevelopment process. The evaluation will include feedback from relevant stakeholders such as tenants/occupiers, maintenance staff and cleaners, etc.

Implementing CPTED Recommendations

In order for crime prevention measures to be effective it is essential that all CPTED principles work in chorus with other planning instruments. Future design proposals have the greatest chance of success if they adopt an integrated planning approach.

The full range of urban design measures for safer public and private spaces can be initiated by architects, planners and developers with the benefit of contributing to a more sustainable and safe environment. A coordinated layout of roads, public lands and buildings, that pro-actively anticipate potential problems, considered at the initial design stage, will better contribute to more sustainable environments as well as being more cost-effective in the long term.

During the implementation stages urban design measures should be linked to social development and other crime prevention initiatives while crime prevention measures should be locally driven with community participation in all aspects. Social crime prevention and safer design principles must become an integral part of the Redfern Aboriginal culture and all local people interested in a better future and safer living environments.

It is unrealistic though to expect all types of crime to be preventable by the application of CPTED principles alone, however a sound understanding of crime patterns on the Block is essential to addressing preventable crime through particular design responses. Given that crime patterns differ periodically, intervention strategies should consider which problems would be conducive to resolution through design measures and have the greatest impact.

Moreover, government departments at all levels need to work together to ensure that the AHC's redevelopment project is not merely another 'housing project', but that the redevelopment meets all the principles set out in the AHC Community Social Plan.

The following are recommendations to be implemented on the Block, in conjunction with the strategic application of CPTED and the community safety measures outlined in the AHC Community Safety Report.

CPTED Recommendations

1. Increase community awareness, education and community involvement in crime prevention activities.
2. Establish a community-based steering committee to address crime related problems, identify security issues, coordinate the various social agencies and develop ongoing community safety strategies. The group should consist of residents, resident action groups, elected officials, local counsel officers, police, probation and parole services, public transport, community services, local businesses, education services, health services, drug & alcohol services etc.
3. Adopt a whole-of-government approach to address long-term community safety



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planning and community problem solving and improvement.

4. Other strategies could include education of student in crime prevention in local schools and at the University of Sydney.
5. Maintain police activities and improve methods of police intervention (rapid response, pro-active measures, dealing appropriately with known drug dealers/drug houses, etc.)
6. Develop safe mechanisms for police interventions within the Block with community support.
7. Establish social, educational and recreational services for youth, and establish a parental skills development program.
8. Set up a group of properly trained youth workers who act as counsellors to help resolve conflicts and refer people to appropriate services.
9. Set up an informal youth task force to help provide security by acting as a youth monitoring patrol, mediating conflict and promoting safety.
10. Establish community involvement in all aspects of the reconstruction including urban planning, crime prevention/safety, environment and maintenance.
11. Better maintenance and improved cleanliness of site by hiring a caretaker.
12. Better security through community monitoring of streets, public domain and private property.
13. Implementation of home safety and targeting hardening measures.
14. Set up ongoing monitoring and evaluation of crime prevention initiatives and strategies. Also a comprehensive study of the effectiveness of community crime prevention measures should be conducted.
15. Implementation of a public art policy to encourage social interaction, cultural and neighbourhood pride, and self-expression.
16. A more proactive role for education services to steer youth away from disruptive and anti-social behaviour.
17. Work with South Sydney Council on the issue of providing youth-oriented services and activities, recreational, educational and arts programs, at the Wilson's Brothers' site.
18. Discourage welfare type services that will undermine the AHC vision of creating greater self-reliance for Aboriginal people.
19. Liaise closely with the Redfern/Waterloo Strategic Planning Project and State Rail to create an overhead pedestrian plaza through the Block giving immediate access to Redfern Station/Redfern CBD and Central/City. This will create better community access to Redfern and the City and will break the isolation of the Block by generating pedestrian activity.
20. Develop alternative options to Needle Bus such as home rehabilitation/needle distribution visits and needles distributed in the area by workers with backpacks.



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21. Greater awareness of the drug and alcohol services on Pitt Street, Redfern (within 1 km from the Block) such as REPIDU.
22. Greater awareness of Domestic Violence services.
23. Liaise closely with the Aboriginal Medical Service and the various health departments to promote the well being of the community by developing community health programs/outreach-service.
24. Develop better communication mechanisms with all levels of government, NGO's, community groups, etc.
25. Establish a proactive neighbourhood watch - possibly incorporating safe houses and community monitors CCTV surveillance.
26. Establish a community policing program and a community lore/law program.
27. Development of employment and training measures for combating unemployment and poverty among residents and young people.
28. Implement a small business development program for youth groups, women, and street vendors.

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End Notes

- ⁱ The 'Block' is an area enclosed by Eveleigh, Louis, Caroline and Vine Streets in the Redfern area. The land was dedicated for use by Indigenous Australians, and remains under the ownership and management of the Aboriginal Housing Company.
- ⁱⁱ White, R., 1998
- ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*
- ^{iv} Pitts, A & Valilis, P., AHC Community Safety Report, 2004
- ^v Pitts, A., AHC Community Social Plan, 2001-2002, accessed by website www.ahc.org.au
- ^{vi} Pitts, A., AHC Community Social Plan, 2001-2002
- ^{vii} *ibid*
- ^{viii} Pitts, A & Valilis, P., AHC Community Safety Report, 2004
- ^{ix} South Sydney Council, 2002 (RED Community Safety Plan Draft)
- ^x Pitts, A., AHC Community Safety Report, 2003
- ^{xi} South Sydney Council, 2003
- ^{xii} Johnson, G. 1998
- ^{xiii} Pittendrigh, Shrinkfield and Bruce; Sarkissian, W.; Van Ruth, S., et al. 1999 and Sarkissian Associates Planners, et al., 1999.
- ^{xiv} Cultural Perspectives, Pty. Ltd., 1999 & Marrickville Municipal Council, 1999.
- ^{xv} South Sydney Council, 2003
- ^{xvi} Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd. 1999
- ^{xvii} Sarkissian Associates Planners, *et al.*, 1999.
- ^{xviii} Community Safety Audit Redfern, May 2002
- ^{xix} *ibid*
- ^{xx} Note: The AHC Community Safety Report recommends the development of a set of urban design guidelines based on the widely expanding field of community safety literature with a particular emphasis on CPTED. The Community Safety Guidelines have been extracted from a 1998 report titled '*Community Safety Urban Design Guidelines*' prepared by Sarkissian Associates Planners. It is important to emphasise that these guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the strategic application and implementation of CPTED and community safety measures drafted in the AHC Community Safety Report. The suggested planning and design responses will act as a checklist for architects and planners in the master planning stages of the redevelopment.
- ^{xxi} Reed, D. 1998
- ^{xxii} NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 2001
- ^{xxiii} *ibid*
- ^{xxiv} CSIR & ISS, 1997
- ^{xxv} *ibid*
- ^{xxvi} Carcach, C. and Huntley, C. 2002
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- ^{xxix} Carcach, C. and Huntley, C. 2002
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