

The Security of Public Places: Identifying Principles and Practice for an Integrated Public Realm

Security interventions in public places can disrupt community connections and enjoyment of these places if poorly designed. This research project is exploring the value in integrating security into urban design and placemaking practices to ensure a more positive, safe, and secure outcome for communities.

Why the study is relevant:

- The threat of crime and terrorism in our public places continues to evolve.
- The way in which we design public places to be safe and secure from crime and terrorism could be better integrated, as currently security professionals are often only brought into the design of these places later in the process.
- Importantly, public places are designed for the public to use, and yet the public has limited say in how these places are protected. Further, some members of the community can actually feel unsafe if security is poorly planned, resulting in public places becoming sterile and unattractive to visitors. There is an opportunity to bring the local community into the design process for the security and safety of public places to refine the planning process to avoid these poor outcomes.
- This inclusion of the community, and the breaking down of design silos between experts could result in safer public places that support community cohesion.

What we are doing:

- A group concept mapping activity with experts from the design, engineering, planning, architecture, and security professions to determine what experts think make public places safe and secure from crime and terrorism.
- An online survey, to collect the public's opinion on what makes them feel safe and secure in public places.
- Interviews with experts to respond to the different disciplinary views on security, and the public expectations and responses to what makes them feel safe and secure.

What we aim to achieve:

- With the data from these concept maps, surveys, and interviews, we are seeking to understand what the more important design features are to make public places safe without 'over protecting' or excluding people by making them feel unwelcome.
- Through the research, we are aiming to create design and planning guidance for the industry and for government planning and development authorities.

