



Daniel Washington C2010
Designing Out Crime Officer

Thames Valley Police
Headquarters South
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

28 August 2024

Reference: PL/24/0846

Location: Napier Court, Napier Road, Reading

Dear Mr Burns,

Thank you for consulting Thames Valley Police on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted documents and crime statistics for the area. I have a number of comments to make with regards to designing out crime in relation to the proposed development which I trust can be taken into account as part of any revised plans/additional information submission under of the current application. Some of the comments below could potentially be addressed through the submission of an Access and Security Strategy, which could be conditioned as part of any planning permission.

The following comments are provided to ensure the application meets the requirements of;

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 paragraph 96(b); which states that Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion...
- The National Planning Policy Framework 2023, paragraph 135(f) which states that *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible... and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience"*.
- Local Plan policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, which states that developments will be assessed to ensure that they (inter alia) *"Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion"*
- Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity which states development *"will not cause... unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties in terms of (inter alia) Crime and Safety."*

Access to rear of site

It is noted that the rear (southern) part of the site is proposed to have barrier controlled access/egress for vehicles. This will provide some security from unauthorised vehicle entry into the site. However, the absence of a security gate including a secure entrance for pedestrians or cycles means unrestricted access is provided to the rear of the site for those on foot/bikes. This undermines any proposed access security measures. This is particularly

apparent in relation to the central pocket park, which includes high railings on the northern elevation (with access controlled gates) to avoid unwarranted access, but it is accessible to the rear. Further boundary security measures to avoid unwarranted access by pedestrians and cycles into the rear of the development needs to be considered and further information provided.

Parking

The proposed car parking areas located at the rear of the development all lack natural surveillance at ground floor level. It is therefore even more critical that the access into these areas (as outlined above) is made secure to ensure that access is only provided to residents and authorised visitors. The parking areas should be covered by CCTV, with details of the system submitted as part of an Access and Security Strategy.

It is noted that there are not many car parking spaces, considering the number of residential units proposed. A car parking management plan will therefore be very important in order to avoid conflict or any disputes.

Defensible space and planting

Hedgerows are proposed around the northern side of the building, facing the street, which provides a degree of defensible space for the ground floor apartments fronting the street. Defensible space is important to provide an area of 'stand-off', marking the change of ownership and therefore the acceptable activity that is associated with it, protecting the privacy and security of occupants whilst reducing the potential for neighbourhood disputes.

Defensible spaces are not provided on the southern side of the buildings, where the buildings sit up against the back of the pavement. Whilst the rear of the site is presumably not intended to be a public location (as outlined above), given the number of units within the apartment blocks, there will still be a number of people using these pavements and the ground floor apartments should have appropriate security and privacy, and defensible space provided for those units.

Access Control for Apartments

Further information should be provided (potentially via an Access and Security Strategy, secured via a condition) to outline the proposed access control measures for the proposed scheme. This should include:

- Access control measures for residents and visitors: Unrestricted access to apartment blocks must not be possible, and residential access should be controlled by a two-way audio visual system with remote access controls. No trade buttons should be present.
- Proposals for compartmentation of the building so that residents only have access to parts of the building that they need to, as offenders have the potential to be both external and internal to the development. Secure lobbies should also be extended to each floor to enable effective compartmentation.
- Arrangements for postage and deliveries: Postal services must not have unrestricted access to private communal areas, and mail delivery should be provided within a secure lobby at the entrance to the building, or via "Through the wall" letterboxes. (see further comment on deliveries below)
- Details of CCTV including proposed location of cameras and management.

Access control measures should follow the guidance set out in Secured by Design Homes Guide 2024 (Section 29 provides guidance on access control and additional security requirements for buildings containing multiple dwellings).

It is understood that twin access cores are required for fire safety due to the proposed heights of the buildings. However, this can effectively function as merged cores where permeability is provided through the development, undermining access controls and creating a circular movement within the development which is beneficial to crime and anti-social behaviour. Access controls to ensure that a second core is only available in times of emergency should be considered.

Information has been provided in relation to proposals for deliveries, with a secure parcel store proposed to the rear of the block, accessed via a secure telecom to the front desk. However, it is not clear how the delivery drivers will be identified to make sure they are genuine before gaining access, nor is it clear how delivery drivers will know where the secure parcel store is. Delivery bays provided outside of the security controlled area would enable some deliveries via the main entrance and avoid the need to access the back of the site.

Lighting

I have been unable to find any details regarding the proposed lighting of external areas. Information on external lighting should be provided to ensure the areas around the building are appropriately lit to reduce the fear of crime and considered in relation to the CCTV system that is in place.

The above comments are made on behalf of Thames Valley Police and relate to designing out crime only. I hope that you find these comments of assistance. If you have any queries relating to crime prevention design, please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Washington | Designing Out Crime Officer