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ABSTRACT

The Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) concept suggests that natural surveillance, natural access control, and territoriality can be effectively applied to schools and surrounding environments to provide safety for students and teachers. This document presents the essential concepts of the CPTED and examines how the main office within a school can serve as the critical component in safe school design. A CPTED principle suggests that a well designed office should serve as the guardian at the gate, with excellent surveillance outside and inside the school, especially up and down hallways, the entry area, parking lots, drop off areas, and playing fields. Progressively higher levels of security design for the main entry and office areas are diagramed providing benefits and disadvantages of each. (Contains 16 references.) (GR)

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

SCHOOL CPTED BASICS

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Summary

CPTED concepts of natural surveillance, natural access control and territoriality should be integrated into initial school architectural p Metal detectors can be located inside the first set of double doors. If detectors are triggered the second set of doors won't open until released by office staff. Pass-through windows into office allow visitors to empty pockets (similar to an airport.) lans or when improving existing sites. A firmly maintained awareness of the intended function of the school -- teaching -- can help avoid turning a school into a prison. With 19-35% of school-related fatalities occurring outdoors, off-campus, 35-45% occurring outdoors, on campus, and 30-35% occurring inside school buildings, security concerns should remain broad in scope. A well placed, well designed office should serve as the guardian at the gate, with excellent surveillance outside and inside the school, especially up and down hallways, the entry area, parking lots, drop off areas and playing fields.

CPTED Concepts

Essential CPTED components 'natural surveillance, natural access control and territoriality'. can be effectively applied to schools and surrounding environments. Research has helped to identify particular locations as most prone to school-related violence. By focusing CPTED concepts in those areas, improvements are more likely to be both cost-efficient and effective. The areas of greatest concern include:

- streets and sidewalks between school and home.
- parking lots, pick up and drop off areas, and school bus stops.
- hallways and stairwells.

School administrators, citizen groups and board members may find CPTED concepts more directly applicable if posed as follows:

1. Can students travel to and from school without encountering risks or obstacles? (E.g. Are you aware of incidents that have occurred, involving traffic conflicts, environmental hazards, and criminal activity or menacing behavior?)

2. Can office staff see intruders approaching the building at any given time without taking extraordinary measures? (If the intruders cannot be seen in time to take corrective action this is an opportunity lost.)

3. Does the school have the ability to stop unwelcome visitors, such as armed students or menacing adults, from simply choosing to enter the school? (Even if staff can see intruders approaching or entering, can they do anything to stop them?)

4. Do staff members have natural surveillance of activity inside the school, without having to step into the hallway, through a set of double doors or around a corner? (Hallways and stairwells may be preferred locations for assaults partly because they are out of view of staff.)

5. Can you rapidly lock down the school, with students protected in individual classrooms, in case an armed subject has entered the building? (Are there working communication devices readily available?)

6. Is it true that there is no location at your school that you associate with ongoing problems, such as graffiti, vandalism, bullying, traffic hazards or worse activities?

7. Does the school's overall character and atmosphere, as reflected in what is seen on a daily basis, inspire hope, confidence, appreciation, trust and respect? (As opposed to fear, demoralization, resentment, distrust and hostility)

In the ideal school, the correct answer in each case should be "yes."

A "no" answer indicates a problem that CPTED concepts may be helpful in resolving.

CPTED alone will usually not solve a violence problem. Changed attitudes and behaviors are critical, and can be fostered in the form of security measures, crisis and threat management plans, universal behavior management programs and targeted interventions as specific cases arise. CPTED can, however, make it easier to rein in an environment that is out of control, limiting the amount of time staff members have to spend in security roles, and freeing their time to focus on their primary function: teaching.

Office Design and Safety Concerns

The main office within a school can serve as the critical component in safe school design. Very commonly, schools fall short of their potential in this respect by as much as six out of seven levels:

1. At the lowest security level, the office is hidden deep within the building, allowing no significant surveillance, territoriality or access control.

2. At level 2, the office is located along a main corridor, but has no access control, and very limited natural surveillance into the hall.

3. The level 3 office extends into the hallway, allowing surveillance up and down the hall.

4. At the 4th security level, the office also incorporates surveillance to the outside of the building.

5. At level 5, the entries are adjacent to the office, giving greatly improved surveillance capability to the office staff.

6. At level 6 multiple entry doors are now secured, obliging visitors to enter adjacent to the main entrance. This brings the school to an optimal level of natural surveillance, but access control is still negligible.

7. Only at the 7th level is natural surveillance matched with true access control. Visitors must pass through an entry vestibule, check in at the office, and be buzzed electronically through a second set of doors. Metal detectors can be incorporated into the first set of doors, alerting school staff when more careful examination of visitors is necessary. Natural surveillance firmly encompasses the area outside the main entrance, including parking lots, pick up and drop off areas, the main entry vestibule itself, the primary exit and the school hallways. Access control is in place, and the assertive placement of the main office reinforces territoriality.

These varying levels of security are illustrated in figures 1-7:

Progressively Stronger Security Design Concepts for Main Entry and Office Areas

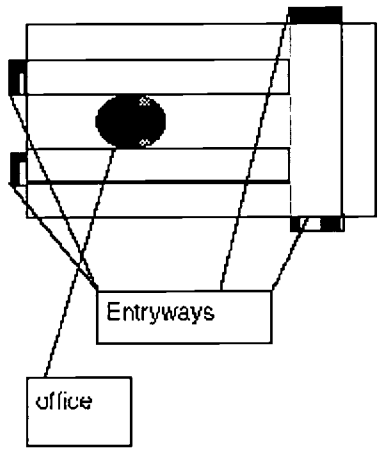

Figure 1.

Lowest security level.

Office is hidden inside building.

No surveillance to outside.

Little or no surveillance inside.

No access control.

Multiple entries.

Visitors who respond to signs directing them to office have permission to roam through entire building while seeking the office.

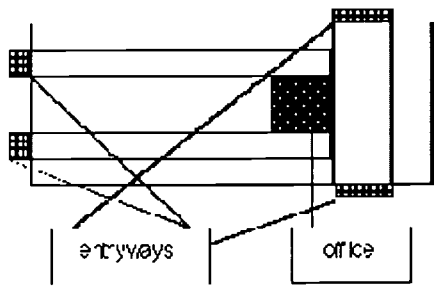

Figure 2.

Office is located along main hallway.

Minimal surveillance inside main hallway limited to area directly adjacent to office.

Multiple entries.

Still no access control.

No surveillance to outside.

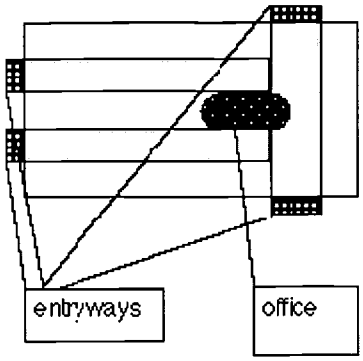

Figure 3.

Office extends into main hallway.

Windows are installed on all sides.

Improved surveillance up and down main hallway, including main entries, but no surveillance up and down additional hallways.

Still no access control.

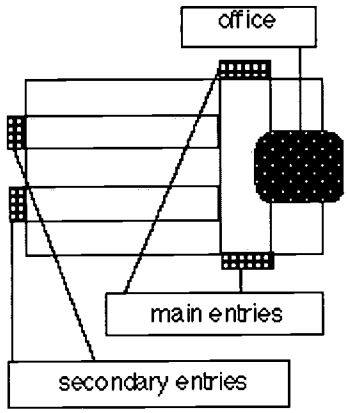

Figure 4.

Office extends into main hallway and includes view to outside.

Improved surveillance inside and out.

Office staff potentially has direct views into all 3 hallways.

Still no access control staff can see some visitors after they enter, but can't prevent them from entering.

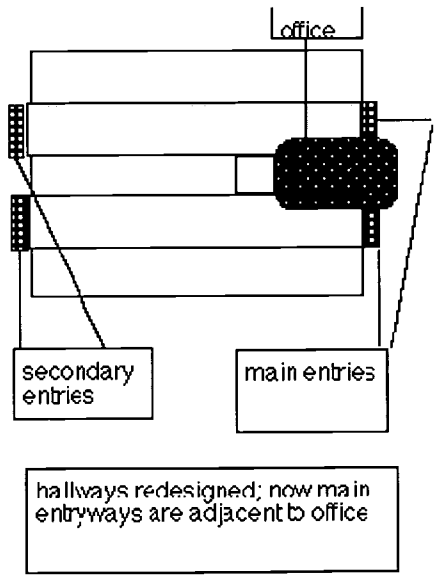

Figure 5.

Entry design now heightens surveillance capability.

Visitors must now pass directly adjacent to the main office while entering or leaving. This strengthens territoriality and positions staff to intervene more directly with an unwelcome visitor.

Extended office design now allows surveillance up and down hallways, into main entry areas, and outside the main entry.

Access control is still lacking.

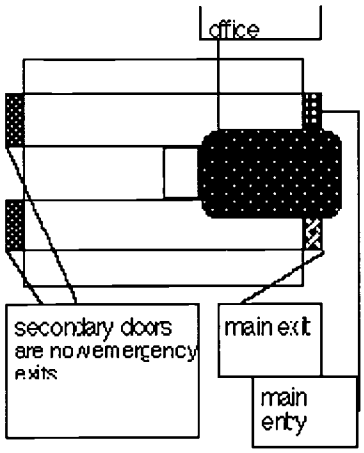

Figure 6.

Multiple entries have now been reduced. Only one door is the main entry, two are fire exits and one is the primary exit.

Surveillance is further improved.

Access control is still lacking.

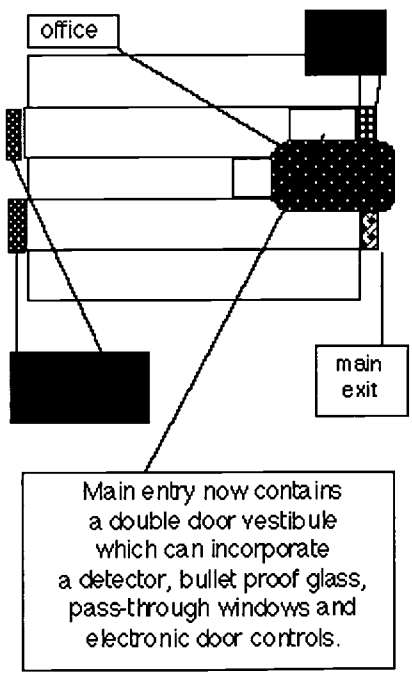

Figure 7.

The main entry door now leads to a double-door decompression chamber/ vestibule.

Visitor access is electronically controllable from the office; at any time, the office staff can electronically control the second set of doors, requiring visitors to check in at a sliding window before further access is allowed.

Emergency exits can be alarmed, and/or annunciators in office can indicate when doors are opened.

Metal detectors can be located inside the first set of double doors. If detectors are triggered the second set of doors won't open until released by office staff. Pass-through windows into office allow visitors to empty pockets (similar to an airport.)

Tod Schneider is a Crime Prevention Specialist for the Eugene, Oregon, Police Department, with particular expertise in the areas of CPTED, Sustainable Crime Prevention and Confrontation Management. He serves as police liaison to, and is an affiliate of, the Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, at the University of Oregon College of Education, is a member of the Patterson Elementary School Effective Behavior Support Team, and is trained in the Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum. Schneider has provided confrontation management seminars for groups as varied as the U.S. Forest Service, Planned Parenthood, Symantec, medical groups and social service agencies. He has taught CPTED seminars for the Oregon chapter of the American Planning Association, the Confederation of School Administrators, and other organizations, and is anticipating the publication of a school safety text through Sopris West publishers within the next few months, along with co-authors Dr. Hill Walker, Dr. Jeff Sprague and Dr. Dan Close of the Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior.

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