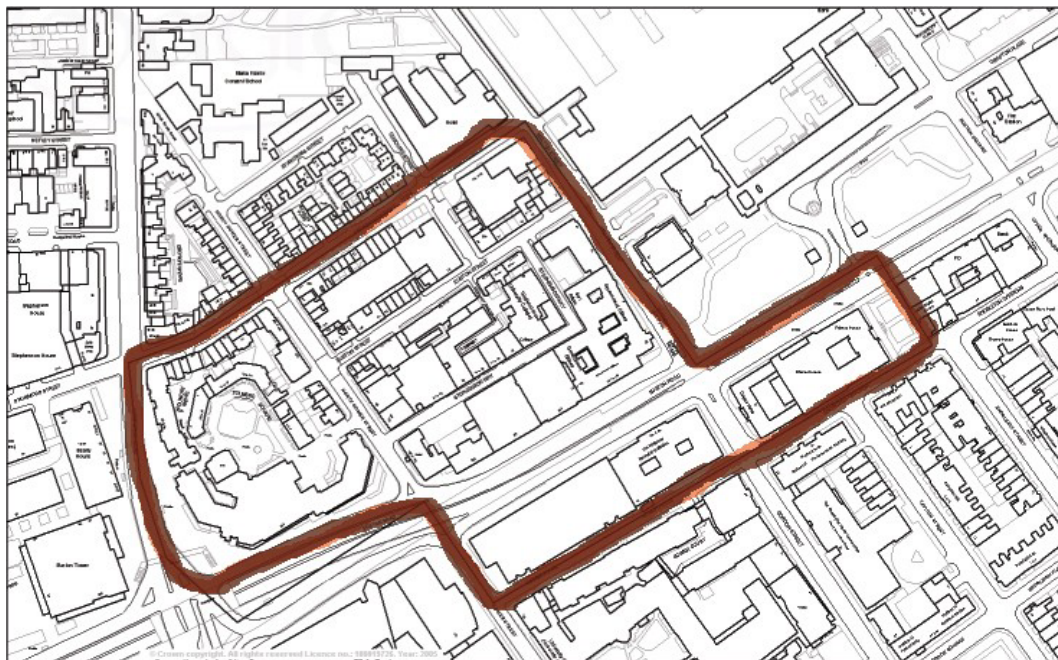


Annex 8 – Case study: first impressions of Camden, London

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Summary of presentation in Athens, Greece, March 2004



- Area within the perimeter outlined has diverse usage including a railway station, 2 underground stations, housing (Local Authority, Registered Social Landlords and private), variety of businesses ranging from large commercial companies to independent shops, hotels, premises owned/leased by the University College London (UCL) etc.



- First we will look at the area outlined that is mainly owned/leased by a charitable institution and incorporates a garden area
- The garden's north side faces onto a busy main road.
- Main access is by a small gate along a pedestrian walkway alongside a building that leads from the main road to the north to a minor road to the south
- All that separates the garden from the main road is a low wall and low railings.
- To the south there is access by a gate to an area where commercial rubbish bins are stored – gate was unlocked



- Several problems highlighted - signs of a bush fire; human defecation; alcohol cans and bottles; drug use; bin area covered in human debris. Poor lighting on pedestrian approach between garden and building.
- Garden generally appeared to be well kept but possibly used on regular basis by undesirables to show this type of deterioration



- Main entrance to building alongside pedestrian walkway has approximately 12 steps up leading to a deep recessed doorway; steps provide seating area
- Gate at top of steps appears to be locked at night but no visible means of locking
- Poor lighting on approach
- CCTV covers entrance but not rest of façade
- Gate leading to steps into a basement was locked although it is a means of escape
- Steps leading up to smaller door provide convenient corner that could be used as a toilet or other form of misuse although it appeared clean at the time.



- One side of the same building faces the busy main road
- Has several flights of steps leading up to deep recesses
- Some steps have wooden doors fitted at the top (presumably closed and locked at night) but still evidence of misuse as shown in the photo below
- Beer cans etc also indicated area is used for seating for possibly 1 or more street drinkers, rough sleepers etc.



- Some steps have low level gates fitted in addition to locked grilles that still enable clear line of sight to the building and have been effective in reducing misuse
- Building was visited twice (2 days apart) – despite signage advising of daily cleaning rubbish that was there on day 1 was still there on day 2



A syringe was found directly below the cleaning signage

- The corner property on the minor road at the southern border of the map has a meeting room to the left of steps leading to main entrance with a recessed doorway
- Basement area pictured below can easily be viewed from steps – at time of photo there was a meeting taking place in the room above.



- 15–20 syringes, beer cans etc were easily visible. More syringes likely to be below the other rubbish
- Impact on staff, visitors etc.?
- When visited again 2 days later there had been no attempt to clear the debris
- This was by far the worst basement area found during the case study
- The adjoining basement area is occupied by a children's nursery – impact on parents, children and nursery as a business?

Examples of findings in other parts of the area



- Street lighting will be obscured by tree when in leaf
- Camera placed on a tree – fine in winter but when tree is in leaf camera will be ineffective



Actual light intensity



Light enhanced

- Major construction work, creating almost a tunnel effect; poor lighting even in daylight hours
- Construction worker pictured was on opposite pavement to the photographer showing how narrow the access is



Building at far end of construction work

- Despite metal gate and keypad lock it is still easy to get onto the flat roof and gain access to adjoining building via any open/unlocked windows
- Natural surveillance of area onto roof likely to be poor at night



Light enhanced

- Discarded syringes found in basement area of hospital Accident and Emergency entrance – does not give a good first impression



- This 'square' is primarily residential but incorporates a public house, hair-dressers and newsagents. Four access routes into the square.
- One pedestrian entrance to the square
- (Out of photo)
 - Some attempt at gating although gate is damaged and will not close
 - Fly tipping of domestic waste
 - Used as a toilet area
- Very poor lighting – only 1 light close to gate and none on pedestrian approach shown
- Natural surveillance poor as windows overlooking approach appear to be bathrooms



Second entrance to square

- Building in right foreground has mirror effect, some light spill from the internal staircase
- Building in centre is newsagents with heavy shutters closed at night so no light spill (shutters at rear of premises heavily graffitied)
- Note the brick wall on left



- Brick wall noted above has a recess leading to entrance/exit door to housing above
- From within recess, building with mirrored finish can be used by anyone loitering to view pedestrians approaching without being seen themselves – a mugger's dream!



Within the square

- Shutters of newsagents heavily graffitied.
- Planters outside hairdressers have broken glass placed there and in surrounding foliage indicating owner has experienced some problems.
- Walls surrounding planters are only approximately 0.75 metres high — glass is especially dangerous for children



Local housing estate – poorly lit entrances to some badly designed properties



Actual light intensity



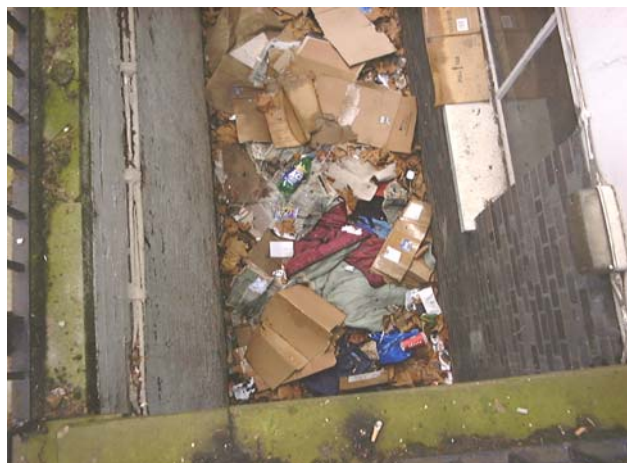
Light enhanced



Actual light intensity

Light enhanced

Camden has many properties with deep basements – many are well maintained with some used by restaurants as additional dining areas. Others are not so well maintained.



- Proliferation of rubbish in basement of property for sale
- 2 broken windows giving access to rough sleepers etc
- Potential fire hazard in dry weather
- Building condition poor, paint peeling off building, generally bringing down the area



- When first visited, the view into the telephone box from the roadside was partly obscured by the advertisement on one side – the view now further obscured by bread baskets
- Signs of use by drug users (evidence included bandage with blood on)
- Display of cards inside advertising sexual services
- Used as a toilet
- The gap between the box and wall and the plant boxes provides potential hiding place for drugs
- Building to the right of photo is a coffee house – poor design features include:
 - Deep recessed doorway at top of steps has no grilles or shutters
 - Recess provides excellent view of immediate area for drug dealers as well as cover for drug abuse, rough sleepers etc.
 - CCTV camera to left of building (not in photo) covers pavement area but not the recess or steps
 - Same man seen several times here during first visit who was most likely a drug dealer
 - Very close proximity of underground station provides excellent escape route with beggars and rough sleepers also positioning themselves outside the station

