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Maitland City Council
PO Box 220
Maitland NSW 2320

Crime Risk Assessment
5-13 Louth Park Road, South Maitland NSW 2320
Service Station and Takeaway Food and Drink Premises

1   Introduction

The purpose of this report is to identify and assess crime risk associated with the proposed service station and takeaway food and drink premises located 5-13 Louth Park Road, South Maitland NSW 2320 and to identify any design elements of the proposed development that may contribute to opportunities for crime, so that these may be 'designed out' to maximise safety.

2   Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention strategy that focuses on the planning, design and structure of cities and neighbourhoods. It reduces opportunities for crime by using design and place management principles that reduce the likelihood of essential crime ingredients from intersecting in time and space. CPTED aims to influence the design of buildings and places by:

- Increasing the perception of risk to criminals by increasing the possibility of detection, challenge and capture;

- Increasing the effort required to commit crime by increasing the time, energy or resources which need to be expended;

- Reducing the potential rewards of crime by minimising, removing or concealing 'crime benefits'; and

- Removing conditions that create confusion about required norms of behaviour (Department of Planning and Environment, formerly the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 2001).

CPTED employs 4 key strategies. These strategies are surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement and space/activity management.

In accordance with the 4 key strategies, the principals of crime prevention and public safety are addressed in relation to the proposed development in the following pages.

2.1   Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance limits the opportunity for crime by increasing awareness that people can be seen. Potential offenders therefore feel increased scrutiny and limitations on their escape routes.

Good surveillance is achieved by:

a.   Clear sightlines between private and public spaces;

SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd Suite 2B, 125 Bull Street Newcastle West NSW 2302
T: +61 2 4940 0442   **E:** newcastleau@slrconsulting.com
www.slrconsulting.com   ABN 29 001 584 612

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b. Effective lighting of public places; and

c. Landscaping that makes places attractive, but not a place to hide.

The design of the site affords natural surveillance by the strategic placement of physical features and the building to maximise visibility across the car parking and the forecourt area. The specific design elements include:

- Clear sight lines between the site and roadway, allowing maximum visibility and surveillance;

- The maintenance levels for paths of travel comply with AS1680;

- Appropriate day and night lighting to ensure potential problem areas like car parks and corners are well lit; and

- No 'hidden spots' created within the site.

2.2   Natural Access Control

Natural access control limits the opportunity for crime by taking steps to clearly differentiate between public space and private space.

Good access control for the movement of people is achieved by:

a. Landscapes and physical locations that channel and group pedestrians into target areas;

b. Public spaces that attract rather than discourage people from gathering; and

c. Restricted access to internal or high risk areas.

The site has been designed to limit access and control flow by:

- Clear delineation of the property boundary with landscape treatment and fencing;

- Secure access to the service yard; and

- Appropriate lighting and signage.

2.3   Territorial Reinforcement (Community Ownership)

Territorial reinforcement promotes social control through increased definition of space and improved proprietary concern, i.e. it makes the normal user feel safe and makes the potential offender aware of a substantial risk of apprehension or scrutiny. By using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express ownership and define public, semi-public and private space, natural territorial reinforcement occurs.

Community ownership (territorial reinforcement) makes people feel comfortable in a place and is achieved by:

a. A design that encourages people to gather in public spaces;

b. Having a clear transition between boundaries of public and private spaces; and

c. Having clear design cues as to who is to use the space and what it is to be used for.

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The development has been designed to clearly delineate spaces that are for public and private use. This will ensure that any potential intruders will stand out and be easily identified. Elements of territorial reinforcement included in the design and ongoing management of the site include:

- The premises and landscaping will be maintained such that it communicates an alert and active presence occupying the space;

- Clearly defined boundaries of the development; and

- Provision of directional signage that assists in controlling activities and movements throughout the premises (knowing how and where to enter/exit and find assistance can impact on safety).

2.4   Space Management

Space management strategies such as site maintenance, target hardening, and target removal are included in the development.

2.4.1   Maintenance

Management and maintenance are closely linked to a sense of ownership. Good management and maintenance of a place, or property, is often the difference between it seeming safe or unsafe and it being cared for or uncared for. Deterioration indicates less control by the users of a site and indicates a greater tolerance of disorder.

Routine maintenance will be carried out to ensure the property is maintained and to reduce the likelihood of crime or vandalism. Furthermore, robust materials (including graffiti resistant materials) will be used where appropriate. Any vandalism or graffiti will be repaired and removed promptly.

2.4.2   Target Hardening and Removal

Target hardening and removal is the use of 'design out crime' strategies to make it harder for a crime to be committed and reduces the gains of crime. While this is the most long-established and traditional approach to crime prevention, it can create a 'fortress mentality' and imagery whereby users of the development withdraw behind physical barriers and the self-policing capacity of the built environment is damaged. This is effectively working against CPTED strategies that rely on surveillance, territoriality and positive image management.

The proposal includes the use of some physical barriers associated with target hardening; however, the site allows opportunities for natural surveillance from within the building, with clearly defined boundaries, and natural access control. The site design has ensured that there is a safe environment for staff and visitors alike within the site.

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3   Conclusion

The above-mentioned measures have been designed into the proposed service station and take away food and drink development located at 5-13 Louth Park Road, South Maitland NSW 2320 to create an environment that dissuades offenders from committing crimes by manipulating the built environment in which those crimes proceed from or occur.

The proposed development is considered to be consistent with the Department of Planning, and Environment (former Department of Urban Affairs and Planning) Crime Prevention and the Assessment of Development Applications, 2001.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Quinlan (BURP) (NSW Police Safer by Design Course)
Principal – Planning
SLR Consulting