

The effect of Compartmentalisation on ASB reduction in Secured by Design developments

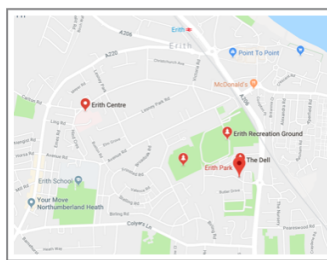
By Victoria Elisabeth Ellis

Compartmentalisation has recently been introduced to target anti-social behaviour (ASB) in housing developments that are vulnerable to this type of crime as a result of unrestricted access to flat buildings.

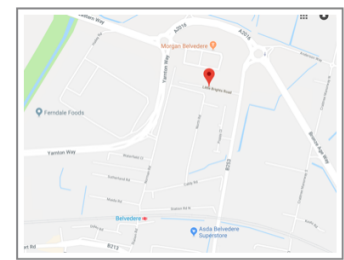
Following the successes of SBD in reducing household burglary incidents in Nottingham City Homes between 2008 and 2009, similar results have been projected for compartmentalisation on ASB in SBD housing estates. The aim of the project was therefore to evaluate whether and/or the extent to which compartmentalisation has had an effect on reducing ASB in SBD housing estates. To do so, telephone interviews were conducted with residents from Erith Park and Belvedere Park, with Safer Neighbourhood Team Officers, estate managers of Belvedere Park Erith Park.

Erith Park was entirely redeveloped from the 1960s and recently completed. The site is (almost) fully compartmentalised, and has achieved SBD accreditation to Gold Standard. Belvedere Park was constructed in 2014, and is not compartmentalised nor SBD.

Figure 1: Maps of Erith Park and Belvedere Park



Erith Park Estate - Larner Road - DA8 3RD



Belvedere Park - Little Brights Road - DA17 6BF

Project findings:

A. Benefits of compartmentalisation:

- Residents in Erith Park did not witness any ASB incidents; every resident in Belvedere Park witnessed ASB.
- Compartmentalisation was effective in reducing ASB in Erith Park —> this was apparent when comparing ASB levels in compartmentalised blocks of flats with a non-compartmentalised block i.e nuisance behaviour/running through blocks making noise.
- Compartmentalisation reduces permeability through developments which ensures that other residents located in different parts of the building are not affected by ASB —> for example, should a problem family reside in a property, their ASB will be restricted to others on the same floor only.
- Residents who own their property or properties have a better understanding of the purpose of compartmentalisation than those who don't due to their vested interest in their personal safety —> compartmentalisation enhances territoriality which decreases tolerance for ASB.

- Compartmentalisation has considerably contributed to overall community safety —> all residents in Erith Park felt safe as a result of compartmentalisation.
- Compartmentalisation does not appear to have a negative affect on the interaction residents have with their neighbours —> interaction has also been minimal between residents and estate managers (in Erith Park) as the security measure has helped to reduce ASB incidents, meaning residents have not filed complaints about ASB nor against any lack of security in their building.

B. Limitations to compartmentalisation:

- Due to the diversity of ASB types, compartmentalisation is only able to target and reduce specific ASB incidents, i.e ASB inside flat buildings on ground floors, in stairwells and in lifts —> most of the ASB reported by residents (from either estate) took place outside of the buildings themselves, in carparks, or in residents' flats and balconies.
- Participants appeared to agree with the 25 flat regulation¹ but most residents and the Regeneration Contracts Manager of Erith Park believed that, irrespective of the number of flats in a building, all flats should be compartmentalised —> some residents proposed that a building with a few flats - between three to five - should be compartmentalised, regardless of whether the estate was SBD or not.
- Compartmentalisation could *potentially* affect the ability for residents to build relationships with their neighbours however this was not evidential.

Recommendations:

- Simple but effective security measures should be implemented alongside compartmentalisation to reduce and/or prevent different types of ASB. These include:
 - Physical security: 'real barriers', street lighting, cobblestone roads, secured electronic gates with fob access and benches in outside areas to enhance natural surveillance (see Wood, 1960; Jeffrey, 1971; Newman, 1973).
 - Personal security: residential social media platforms allowing residents to report ASB incidents in their estate, and increased surveillance on behalf of police officers, concierges and estate managers.
- The 25 flat regulation should be further assessed to maximise the benefits of compartmentalisation in both SBD estates and non-SBD estates, and should be adapted depending on the design of the buildings concerned.
- A dataset on [police.co.uk](https://www.police.co.uk) (for example) on ASB incidents in the housing estates considered and in all residential areas would allow for a comprehensive review of such incidents and thus improve the assessment of compartmentalisation on ASB reduction.

¹ SBD regulation stating that only a building with 25 flats or more should be compartmentalised.