Alley-gates and domestic burglary: Findings from a longitudinal study in urban South Wales

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Abstract
The introduction of Crime Prevention Through Environmental design (CPTED) initiatives such as alley-gating is now widespread across the United Kingdom (UK), and has become part of the urban landscape. For practitioners and policy makers alike, erecting steel gates at entrances to alleys is seen as a major initiative for reducing domestic burglary. In particular, in the current climate of economic austerity, such apparently cost-effective measures may seem more attractive to policy makers and planners alike as they struggle to maintain public confidence in the criminal justice system and reduce levels of criminality. This paper examines one such alley-gate initiative at Cadoc, Barry, South Wales, based on 10 years of data collection, and considers the long-term impact upon recorded domestic burglary. It also probes local community perceptions of the gates in tackling the problem of crime.

Keywords
Alley-gates, domestic burglary reduction, urban space and crime

Introduction
Alley-gating has gained widespread popularity across urban Britain, and has gained additional momentum with a recent publication by the College of Policing (College of Policing, 2016) in their ‘What Works’ category on their website.
This meta-analysis of alley-gating across the country suggests that, taken together, alley-gating has been an appropriate and cost-effective burglary reduction measure.

Historically, this approach to crime prevention has apparently gained widespread popularity and credibility within local communities, the police and local authorities. For example, legislation in the Welsh Assembly in 2007 introduced a more streamlined way by which planners and local authorities within Wales were able to introduce such schemes (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007).

The increase in the use of such initiatives was also given a dramatic boost by the then Labour government’s funding injection during the summer of 2005 via the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and the introduction of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act of the same year. It is still being actively promoted in both large and small urban areas throughout the UK. Indeed, funding for alley-gate schemes across the country is varied and diverse. For example, funding can be obtained from lottery funds and local authority funds, but one of the primary aims of such funding is to support both regeneration and the cohesiveness of communities. In the current economic climate, such crime prevention measures must seem attractive due to their cost-effectiveness, supported by the College of Policing’s recent findings. Whilst exact figures for particular crimes are difficult to calculate, the average cost of a domestic burglary, which includes costs incurred such as the police and the contribution of the criminal justice system has been estimated at around £2,300 per burglary (Brand and Price, 2000) with these figures being adjusted by insurance companies in 2012 based upon claims and pay-outs with an addition of approximately an extra £225 per burglary claim (Kollewe, 2012).

By comparison, the average cost of one alley-gate, whilst it varies due to size, manufacturer, composition and material utilised, appears to be between £2,500 and £3,000, which includes ongoing maintenance costs.

Further, the current economic climate has meant that many community safety partnerships and local authorities are restructuring their organisations, resulting in the review of pre-existing crime prevention activities, with a renewed emphasis upon the cost/benefits of various crime reduction initiatives.

This article is a commentary on ongoing research being carried out in Cadoc, Barry, South Wales (see Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011). It analyses some of the key findings in relation to domestic burglary, using 10 years of data acquired from annual survey activity in a defined administrative urban area of Barry, South Wales. The insights gained will hopefully serve to inform planners, policy makers, police, academics and the wider community.

**The study area: Cadoc (South Wales)**

The area in question, Cadoc in Barry, South Wales, has a population of 8,434. At the beginning of this research the area was known as Cadoxton, but since that time it has assumed the political ward name of Cadoc to avoid confusion with a similar named ward in South Wales.

Cadoc is an area that prospered in former industrial days when the port of Barry was an extremely busy facility handling international cargoes. Since the demise of the docks, however, many areas of the town including Cadoc have visibly deteriorated. The housing
stock reflects on the whole the industrial heritage of the area, with over 41% being whole houses, primarily of a terraced design. This figure is 10% higher than for the whole of Wales and 12% higher than for the rest of this local authority area. Further, the mix of household tenure provides an interesting contrast when compared with the rest of Wales. This is illustrated in Table 1 below.

 Whilst Cadoc has below the national average for owner occupiers, it contains a greater proportion of those who are owner-occupiers with a financial interest in their homes. This may indicate a heightened sense of ownership, investment and commitment to both their property and their immediate surroundings.

 Cadoc’s urban fabric appears to have suffered visibly and dramatically due to the economic downturn since 2008. Since the beginning of this research, the area has consistently seen a reduction in the number and state of repair of shops and retail outlets. In particular, both public houses situated at each end of the main street have now closed. However, one of these public houses was recently re-opened as a Tesco Express supermarket, which appears to encourage both local footfall and vehicle travel to its location. Despite this and a new build of town houses in a section of Cadoc during 2006, the area remains predominantly visually run-down and in some areas shows signs of obvious physical decay and shabbiness, although this characteristic is not prevalent throughout the whole of the area. Figure 1 below illustrates an area within Cadoc that shows the problem of casual neglect and litter that projects a negative image of the general area.

 The local authority and crime prevention partnership concerned instigated the alley-gate initiative, which involved the placing of substantial metal gates at the entrances to selected alleyways in an attempt to reduce burglary and prevent anti-social behaviour that was routinely occurring to the rear of the houses. After construction of the alley-gates, only residents and essential service providers continued to have access to this space through the controlled issue of keys. A typical alley-gate in Cadoc can be seen in the Figure 2 below.

 This approach is known as access control and is a basic situational crime prevention technique (Clarke, 1995, 1997; Clarke and Mayhew, 1980). This seeks to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by restricting access to potential targets and creating a heightened perception of risk for potential offenders. The situational approach is grounded in environmental criminology.

### Table 1. A comparison of household tenure in Cadoc and Wales in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household tenure</th>
<th>Cadoc</th>
<th>Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner/Occupier owns outright</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner/Occupier with mortgage</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from local authority</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from a housing association</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from a private landlord</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-specified category</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Census 2011)
Environmental criminology draws on environmental psychology in understanding how perceptions influence crime. Our behaviours are based upon perceptions of signals and messages decoded from various influences of the environmental backcloth in which people function. This backcloth is the broader elements of the cultural, economic, social and physical environment which affects crime. As Cozens (2014) points out, analysing

**Figure 1.** Area of neglect within Cadoc. (Source: The Author)

**Figure 2.** Typical alley-gate in Cadoc. (Source: The Author)

**Environmental criminology**

Environmental criminology draws on environmental psychology in understanding how perceptions influence crime. Our behaviours are based upon perceptions of signals and messages decoded from various influences of the environmental backcloth in which people function. This backcloth is the broader elements of the cultural, economic, social and physical environment which affects crime. As Cozens (2014) points out, analysing
perceptions potentially provides a more fine-grained and micro level of understanding of crime, despite the fact that perception is a complex process. This particular examination of domestic burglary in Cadoc therefore fits neatly into Brantingham and Brantingham’s (1981) definition of it being a micro-analysis that examines specific crime sites, focusing on building types and their placement, landscaping and lighting, interior form and the security hardware. Clarke’s (1995) ideas are that situational crime prevention should represent the micro-level extreme of the environmental perspective, with the key to crime prevention being to focus on very specific categories of crime and to understand their perceived dynamics.

**Defensible space: its creation and maintenance**

In her seminal work, Jane Jacobs (1961) called for the design of a more permeable urban environment to better facilitate public access and opportunities for surveillance, grounded in the assumption that increasing the so-called ‘eyes on the streets’ would act as a deterrent to prospective offenders through what she termed ‘natural policing’. This view encourages public access to improve the control of those who might otherwise commit crime. Newman (1972), however, considered a different design and urban layout which could reduce any ambiguity as to who should be in particular places and who should be responsible for them. Strangers for Newman were seen as a source of danger, not security. This concept of accessibility is therefore linked to the enclosure/encounter debate. The enclosure model (Dovey, 1998) assumes crime to be primarily due to strangers and advocates restricting their access. The encounter model (Dovey, 1998: Hillier and Hanson, 1984) on the other hand promotes permeable streets which are assumed to be safer because they encourage walking, social interaction and increased levels of passive surveillance. The claimed benefits of the encounter model are counteracted, however, by a large body of criminological research showing that the enclosure model offers better reductions in recorded crime (see Cozens, 2014). Defensible space, it would appear, has much support for its continued use. Despite their differences on how urban environments can affect crime, however, both Jacobs and Newman crucially believed that access is related to criminality.

Defensible space is now firmly rooted in the context of situational crime prevention, and owes its current impetus and theoretical support to the work of Oscar Newman (1972) and his ideas on urban planning and territoriality. Newman’s ‘defensible space’ is a framework underpinning a range of measures. This includes combining both real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance that in combination bring an environment more under the control of its residents. It is seen as a form of environmental management which can be employed by those responsible for city spaces providing the inhabitants with an enhanced quality of life, while also providing increased security for their families, neighbours and friends.

Newman advocates that two key concepts, namely territoriality and natural surveillance, can in tandem effectively reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Territoriality focuses on the design and layout of property so as to promote a sense of ownership by residents. Natural surveillance involves the design of buildings and their immediate
surroundings so as to maximise the ability of residents to routinely oversee adjacent interior and exterior spaces.

By contrast, public areas of a residential environment devoid of such defensible space parameters can unintentionally facilitate criminal and delinquent/anti-social activity. Fear and uncertainty in such an environment can erode and eventually destroy the inhabitants’ feelings of well-being and security. The consequence of this is that control and management of the built environment takes on a more significant role and has undoubted emotional, operational, psychological and social implications for the residents.

This strategy, using urban layouts and building designs and procedures aimed at impeding access and facilitating greater surveillance, intervisibility and territorial control, is rooted in past experiences that span hundreds of years of urban development. Walls were routinely used to mark the boundaries of the city, and were substantial items, which clearly indicated different roles and responsibilities for those within and without. Those inside had a proprietary sense of belonging. They had a sense of a collective identity and a duty to ensure that within the walls ‘all was well’ and that those who were potential troublemakers were kept outside or at least under observation by those safely within the walls. As Felson (1998) points out, inconvenient access reduces what convenient access produces and that is more crime and a raft of other associated problems and tensions.

The research methodology

A structured interview questionnaire was selected as the appropriate method of obtaining data on the perceptions of residents living within the area under consideration prior to the introduction of the alley-gates. It was designed so that each successive survey would obtain the perceptions of between 70 to 100 individuals resident in the Cadoc area who were randomly selected. The questionnaires were completed ‘face to face’ with respondents who wished to take part in the survey and who lived in the research area. Clearly this sample is not a statistically representative sample of those who reside in the area, but utilised a purposive sampling approach. In this research, a sample was selected annually on the basis of the knowledge of the population of the area by the researcher. In short, the samples were selected on the judgement of the researcher, past experiences of surveys undertaken in Cadoc and the purpose of the study.

This process has been repeated annually since the installation of the gates and the same issues were re-explored with each successive group of respondents. The results were then compared to provide a sense of what individuals within the community thought about the installation of the alley-gates and how this may have affected their perceptions of crime, among a range of other issues. This would shed light on whether or not there was any apparent significant impact upon the official crime statistics for recorded burglaries within the area following the introduction of the alley-gates, and explore community perceptions of domestic burglary.

Apart from the fact that the numbers of recorded crimes in the area are relatively low, there are several reasons why the use of official crime statistics should be treated with caution. For example, not all crimes are reported or become known to the police. This
may be as a result of the victim believing that little would be achieved by reporting the crime or that they are afraid of repercussions from the perpetrator, or are embarrassed by being the victim of such activity. Further, when incidents are reported to the police, there is no guarantee that they will enter the official criminal statistics for the area concerned, because the police may fail to record the incident or may even disbelieve the individual reporting the event. The best that can be said about police recorded crime statistics is that they provide an available and systematic measure of trends for well-recorded crimes and are one useful indicator of police workloads.

The difficulty in establishing the precise effectiveness of the alley-gates in the reduction of criminal activity lies in two main issues. Whilst it is tempting to automatically assume from the official statistics that the gates have dramatically affected a reduction in burglary, there may be other factors at work. For example, seasonal changes in the weather are known to affect levels of specific crimes. In particular, especially when the numbers of crimes are relatively low as is the case in Cadoc, the activities of one individual can have a major impact upon the data under consideration, increasing them through criminal activity or helping to significantly reduce them when incarcerated. Whilst not dismissing the official statistics in relation to burglary entirely, it is argued that a more valuable, insightful and useful appreciation of the impact of the alley-gates lies with measuring the perceptions of the residents and how these may have changed over time.

**Recorded burglary**

Understanding why burglars target specific dwellings is not a precise science. Information obtained from convicted burglars, for example, may be distorted by bravado on the part of the burglar, exaggerating their own decision-making abilities, or even withholding vital information for fear of future repercussions. However, it has been found that burgled dwellings were significantly more likely to be closer to schools, churches, businesses, traffic lights and main roads. This allows burglars to go about their everyday apparently non-criminal activities and in so doing they can casually inspect, evaluate and select the residential sites and ‘weigh’ potential pay-offs in and around these public facilities. They therefore have an opportunity, however brief, to view the properties nearby, gather intelligence, and evaluate a number of potential targets.

However, there is a body of literature that suggests that burglars, when choosing a target, are influenced by issues such as levels of surveillance and occupancy. Cromwell *et al.* (1991) identified three types of cues frequently used by burglars in assessing the risks attached to a particular burglary:

- **visibility** – the extent to which the target building can be seen by passers-by and neighbours;
- **occupancy** – determined by such factors as the presence of a motor vehicle, noise, lights; and
- **accessibility** – including access to the immediate vicinity of the target as well as the absence of locks or burglar alarms.
A further environmental impact that alley-gates may have is on the journey and access to and from a crime, as outlined and discussed by Brantingham and Brantingham (1981) and Rengart (2001) among others. If it is accepted that the journey undertaken in order to allow individuals to perpetrate criminal offences involves three distinct phases, i.e. the origin point (usually home), traversing or bridging space with the objective of locating a search space by passing through areas which are not considered useful for criminal purposes, and the search space itself (where targets are selected), then understanding this pattern of behaviour has powerful and significant implications for analysts of both crime and of urban design.

The characteristics of specific sites that are chosen for crimes have been examined by Bennett and Wright (1984) and Hearnden and Magill (2004). Both of these studies appear to indicate that certain environmental attributes of individual sites significantly influence a burglar’s decision to commit a crime. Whilst individual homeowners can seek to influence their chances of not being burgled by fitting alarms and deploying measures such as movement-sensitive lighting around and about their homes. Additionally, policy makers and local crime reduction partnerships, it is argued, can reinforce this reduction in official crime statistics by implementing wider environmental spatial controls, especially using focused initiatives such as alley-gates.

When discussing particular types of dwellings that are targeted by burglars, the majority of research relies on information gleaned from the British Crime Survey (see for example Nicholas et al., 2005).

It is acknowledged that this information will contain shortcomings, but it does appear that over time it consistently indicates that certain types of housing stock are more vulnerable than others. This is apparent from Table 2 below.

As can be seen above, despite the fact that there is some 10 years’ difference in the publication of the reports, there are elements of consistency regarding the types of dwellings that are subject to burglary.

**The research findings**

In the light of this, alley-gating would appear to be one way of attempting to manipulate a burglar’s decision-making processes and of reducing instances of burglary and theft from particular properties. Terraced houses with significant rear alleys or back access lanes would seem to be potential beneficiaries in such a process of urban redesign. The construction of the alley-gates in Cadoc took place during March 2005. Figure 3 below
It would appear that in the last decade term a distinctive trend showing a reduction of domestic burglary in the Cadoc area can be observed. This result is not unique to the Cadoc initiative, however. Hamilton-Smith and Kent (2005) summarise the findings of three separate evaluations of a national scheme in burglary reduction and concluded that the use of alley-gates has a significant impact upon burglary with a net reduction of 15% in recorded domestic burglary rates. Whilst these results suggest a most encouraging trend, they must be viewed within the general context of recorded domestic burglary data for the whole of England and Wales during the same period. During this time period, nationally there was a downward trend also, as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

This downward trend has been visible for some time. Around 3 in 100 households were victims of domestic burglary in the year ending March 2015. This compares with around 9 in 100 households in the 1995 survey, meaning that households are around three times less likely to be a victim of burglary in 2015 than in 1995. It is widely accepted officially that improvements to domestic security have been an important contributory factor in the reduction seen in domestic burglary offences (Office for National Statistics, 2015).

Clearly the general downward trend in recorded domestic burglary in England and Wales had commenced prior to the widespread introduction of alley-gate initiatives, and in particular before the introduction of the scheme in Cadoc. However, it may be assumed that the use of such initiatives helped to support this downward trend. Whilst not dismissing the data in relation to burglary entirely, it is argued that a more valuable, insightful and useful appreciation of the impact of the alley-gates lies with measuring the perceptions of the residents and how these may have changed through time. Whilst official burglary statistics for both Cadoc and the country have demonstrated a
downward trend in the recorded numbers of such events, perceptions of residents within the communities may reveal a different story. Therefore, residents in Cadoc were asked to identify what they perceived to be a problem within their community on each annual survey. These included the category of burglary. The results can be seen in the Figure 5 below.

**Figure 4.** Recorded domestic burglary, England and Wales 2006–2015. (Source: Office for National Statistics, 2015)

**Figure 5.** Community perceptions of burglary as a problem. (Source: The Author)
Clearly, for the residents of Cadoc, burglary was a perceived problem for the area at the beginning of the alley-gating scheme. However, this perception has steadily increased in the last 10 years until in 2015 22% of respondents perceived burglary to be a particular problem in Cadoc. Why this should be is, of course, open to conjecture, but it could be connected to the introduction of the alley-gate scheme itself. As Lee (2007) points out, security apparently secures our security, and yet we continue to feel insecure the more security we secure, whilst Wortely (1996) suggests that at some point situational crime prevention runs the danger of becoming counterproductive. What is meant by this statement is that people are visually sensitive to the environment, and subsequently we feel more or less safe depending on surrounding physical and social cues. It may be that the presence of the alley-gates themselves, coupled with signs of physical disorder such as damage and litter, has had an adverse effect upon perceptions of crime such as domestic burglary. In addition, domestic burglary is an act that provokes strong feelings within communities, including fear of becoming a victim.

Maguire and Bennett’s study (1982) highlights the impact domestic burglary has on victims, with significant numbers of victims being distressed for long periods. Trauma and trauma-like reactions were thought to have only existed in more serious violent crime against the person, but this work introduced the seriousness and impact that domestic burglary has on individuals and hence communities. Such ideas may also impact upon perceptions of the levels of domestic burglaries.

A further analysis of the 10-year data was undertaken to establish whether the length of time a person lived in the area affected the perception that burglary was a problem in the area. The results can be seen in Figure 6 below.

As can be seen from Figure 6, that the two groups that show most concern are those that have lived in the area between 1–5 years and those who have lived in the area for over 20 years. Individuals apparently learn about the risk of crime in their
neighbourhoods in many ways, including their own experiences, observations of criminal events and description of the experiences of others such as coverage of crime risks in local news media and stories from friends and neighbours. When individuals move into a new neighbourhood, they form an initial assessment of crime risks. Over time individuals adjust their perceptions of crime risk as they obtain new information (Salm and Vollard, 2014). In addition, Salm and Vollard (2014) suggest that the longer an individual lives in a neighbourhood, the higher their perception of the crime rate in that particular neighbourhood. This is what we may be witnessing in the Cadoc area in relation to perceptions of burglary. Those who have lived here less than five years may be experiencing a higher perception of risk than the general population, whilst those who have lived here the longest have their perceptions fuelled by the fact that they are long-term residents.

There is no doubt that gender matters when determining fear of crime levels. In fact, gender is the strongest predictor of one’s fear of crime. It was therefore considered important to see whether the gender of respondents who thought burglary was a problem was significant. The results can be seen in Figure 7 below.

Sixty percent of those residents who thought burglary was a problem in Cadoc were female, which is an important finding. Research suggests that in general, the reason why women fear crime more than men (or at least report this fear) has been the source of much discussion in the literature (Ferraro, 1995; Schafer et al., 2006; Smith and Torstensson, 1997). One of the historical reasons given for this relationship between gender and fear is the physical vulnerability hypothesis. In other words, women feel more vulnerable because they believe they are physiologically weaker than men and do not believe they could protect themselves from a potential attack (Killias and Clerici, 2000; Smith and Torstensson, 1997).

More recently, two related explanations have been substantiated in the literature. The first of these hypotheses is called the sexual assault hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that women fear sexual assault and that this fear has a radiating effect on fear for all
crime (Fisher and Sloan, 2003; May, 2001; Warr, 1984, 1985; Wilcox et al., 2006). The
second hypothesis is a socialisation hypothesis that argues women fear crime because
they have been socialised to think that women’s victimisation includes a stranger in a
public place. In addition, women are socialised to believe that men are necessary for
protection (Gardner, 1989; Hollander, 2001; Madriz, 1997; Reid and Konrad, 2004).
Although the sexual assault and the socialisation hypotheses are viewed as independent
of the vulnerability hypothesis, the basic premises of these hypotheses are interwoven.
Women fear sexual assault in part because they do not believe that they can physically
ward off a potential sexual assault. This socialisation, coupled with women’s fear of
sexual assault, partly explains why women believe they are physically and psychologi-
cally vulnerable to crime. The link between age, fear of crime and vulnerability is less
clear. Although studies in the 1980s suggested that elderly people were more afraid of
crime than their counterparts, studies since this time indicate that the relationship
between these variables is more complex (Ferraro and LaGrange, 1987; Killias and
Clerici, 2000; Warr, 1984). The relationship between age and fear of crime is viewed
as curvilinear, so that the young and old fear crime at higher levels than those individuals
in the middle years (May, 2001; Pain, 2000). With regard to vulnerability, the elderly
believe they are at an increased risk because they cannot protect themselves from
criminal victimisation due to declining physical well-being. Recently, studies have
found that men, in particular, notice this decline in later years, which in turn leads to
increases in fear of crime (Beaulieu et al., 2007). As for younger children, Goodey
(1994) found that children who are physically smaller were more likely to view them-
selves as potential victims and therefore have increased fear of crime. May (2001) has
confirmed that physical size causes a shadow of powerlessness for teenage boys which
increases fear of crime among smaller boys. Most recently, Melde (2009) found that
even among adolescents, younger adolescents are more likely to feel vulnerable
to victimisation.

Finally, the role of well-being as a physical vulnerability factor has been discussed in
that it may not be old age that makes individuals feel more vulnerable but medical
conditions associated with old age (Chandola, 2001; McKee and Milner, 2000; Warr,
1984). The few studies focusing on the health/fear of crime link found that objective
health (disability and/or health limitation status) predicts fear of crime, even when
controlling for age (Pain, 1997; Stiles et al., 2003). Recently, studies have suggested
that self-assessed health may predict fear of crime better than actual health (Rader and
Cossman, 2011). Therefore, it is not just disability or limiting illness that matter, but also
whether individuals think that they are healthy. This is especially important when exam-
ing vulnerability because if one thinks one is unhealthy, it can have a real effect on how
vulnerable one thinks one is to potential victimisation.

Conclusions
There appears to be a marked reduction in domestic burglary within the local alley-gate
initiative over the 10-year period of study. This in turn is echoed in the official statistics
for domestic burglary at a national level, so it is clearly problematic to assume that the
alley-gates alone are responsible for this downward trend. However, research would tend
to suggest that the gates will have played some part in controlling access by those who would wish to commit such offences. Despite this, there is a noticeable increased trend in the data which suggests that respondent’s perceived view of domestic burglary is that it is problematic within Cadoc, with this perception apparently growing year on year. In particular, this perception is strongest amongst those who have lived in the area the least number of years as well as those who have lived in the area the longest, whilst female respondents are more likely to perceive that burglary is a problem more than male respondents.

Far from being satisfied with the alleged positive effects of alley-gating, namely recorded domestic burglary reduction, perceptions of the community continue to contain real fear about domestic burglary. Whilst alley-gating appears to offer immediate and relatively straightforward solutions to such crimes, what appears to be happening in the Cadoc area suggests that reality and perception are ‘uneasy bedfellows’, with perceptions possibly having a potent influence upon people’s quality of life. Those responsible for their implementation and use – planners, the police, politicians and the wider community – should carefully consider the ramifications of the findings of this research. Continuing support for communities following installation of such as alley-gates must be inbuilt into any policy if a positive commitment and belief in their effectiveness by the public is to be maintained. Further, community expectations and perceptions must be managed effectively and realistically in tandem with encouragement and further support for greater use of reclaimed spaces if community cohesiveness is to be fostered. This would clearly support any reduced police presence due to the economic restraints being placed upon that organisation, and possibly influence positive images of crime control procedures in the Cadoc area.

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