

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: INSTALLATION OF CCTV EQUIPMENT ON BUILDINGS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 CCTV Cameras are an increasingly common feature of the modern streetscape. Many installations cover town centres, or parts of them, while other more localised systems provide security surveillance around a particular building or site.

1.2 This supplementary planning guidance (SPG) offers good practice advice to applicants ordering, designing, supplying or installing security systems and CCTV equipment at locations in West Lothian. It explains the council's planning policies, what needs to be considered when the installation is being designed, when applications are required and how to make them.

1.3 The benefits of installing modern security cameras are widely recognised and many businesses, including the council, have installed CCTV equipment. However, it is important to ensure that CCTV equipment is well designed and located carefully. If not, it can be unattractive and harm the appearance of the building to which it is fixed, or the wider area. Striking a balance between the rights of property owners to protect their property and the protection of architectural quality of its buildings, and the streetscape in general, can sometimes be difficult.

1.4 As systems have evolved camera sizes have reduced, but installations still risk creating 'clutter' in the streetscape if they are not designed sensitively. Although many smaller scale installations do not require a planning application, some do, and this supplementary planning guidance sets out the controls which the council will require to ensure the sensitive design and installation of systems. Where a planning application is not required developers are encouraged to recognise the SPG as good practice and comply with the requirements when installing system.

2.0 What will the council take in to account when considering proposals ?

2.1 West Lothian Council expects all new installations to be designed to respect the architectural design of the building to which it is fixed. When carefully located, and well installed, security cameras can be fixed to most buildings successfully and will not detract from the appearance of the building, or its surrounding area.

2.2 Where planning permission is required, the council will consider the impact of the installation on the character, appearance or amenities of the building or area. If the site is also in a conservation area, the council must also consider whether the proposals would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of that area. The size, colour and appearance of the equipment, the way it is installed and the location will be carefully considered in all cases.

2.3 If the proposals affect a listed building, the council has to pay attention to the impact the proposal will have upon the particular importance of the building itself. Listed building consent will normally be granted where the installation does not detract from the building's special architectural or historic interest. However, it follows that where the installation does detract from the listed building, alterations to the proposal will be sought or the proposal will be resisted.

2.4 When the installation of security cameras forms part of a range of security measures, the whole of the scheme should be considered at the same time. Similarly, developers and their architects are encouraged to provide for the security needs of future occupiers when designing a new building. This approach reduces the problem of equipment being added on a piecemeal basis at a later stage. The council will require confirmation that these matters have been considered prior to approving any proposal.

2.5 Discussion with CCTV specialists at an appropriate stage in the design process will reduce potential problems later and should save time and expense. Early consultation with Planning Services will also assist with ensuring that any necessary consents are obtained before installation commences.

2.6 If several areas need to be covered by one system it may, in some cases, be better to consider the installation of several smaller, individual cameras. These can provide a better visual solution than a camera that is motorised and has a larger bracket so that it can be moved to pan and tilt.

2.7 Locations for equipment should be chosen to ensure that the effect it has on the building's appearance is minimised from all viewpoints. Sometimes the best place will be on the building's upper storeys where cameras are less noticeable, or within recesses where they can be partially hidden from view while still providing effective surveillance of the building and its surrounds.

2.8 Another solution might be to locate the camera at a higher level on an adjoining building that overlooks the surveillance area. There are examples where reciprocal arrangements have been made and this approach is supported where it results in a reduction in the number or size of cameras required.

2.9 Where it appears to the council that cameras could be more sensitively located on a building it will require confirmation that these locations have been considered and the reason for them being rejected will have to be evidenced to the council prior to any consent being granted.

2.10 Where cameras are proposed for general street surveillance, applicants and installers are encouraged to discuss them with Planning Services and, where appropriate, Lothian & Borders Police, and occupiers of adjoining buildings. This should result in a mutually agreed scheme and avoid unnecessary duplication of cameras doing the same job.

2.11 There are many alternative systems available and careful thought should be given to the size and quantity of the equipment proposed. Before making any decisions, applicants should have regard to the following points:

1. a smaller camera and fixings will have less effect on the appearance of the building;
2. associated equipment will have a cumulative and potentially harmful impact on the appearance of a building or area and should, therefore, be minimised as far as is possible;
3. where possible installations should avoid the need for infra-red or other lighting units;
4. long cable runs across the façade of a building can be unsightly. Wherever possible, cables should be run into the building directly behind the camera installation;

5. cables should not run across features such as cornices or other architectural decoration. Where cables run across the face of the building, care should be taken to remove cables from view through the use of recesses in the building design;
6. painting the equipment to match the background building material is encouraged to reduce the effect it has upon the building's appearance;
7. while it is not a planning consideration, the quality of the images produced by any system should be considered, and applicants should satisfy themselves that any system is fit for purpose prior to installation; and
8. all other regulatory requirements, including any licensing requirements, have been addressed.

2.12 Any application for planning permission or listed building consent should be accompanied by a statement confirming that these matters have been fully considered and addressed.

2.13 Applicants are encourage to contact Planning Services before making any major decisions that will affect the potential size, appearance or location of proposed security cameras and related equipment. Equipment should not be installed without checking first whether or not planning permission and/or listed building consent need to be applied for.

3.0 When is an application for consent required ?

3.1 In most cases the installation, alteration or replacement of a CCTV camera will not require an application for planning permission. The term 'camera' includes its housing, pan and tilt mechanism, infra-red illuminator, receiver, mountings and brackets.

3.2 A planning application will only be required where:

- (a) the building or structure the camera is installed on is in a conservation area;
- (b) the dimensions of the camera including its housing exceed 75 centimetres by 25 centimetres by 25 centimetres;
- (c) any part of the camera would, when installed, altered or replaced, be less than 250 centimetres above ground level;
- (d) any part of the camera would, when installed, altered or replaced, protrude from the surface of the building or structure by more than one metre when measured from the surface of the building or structure;
- (e) any part of the camera would, when installed, altered or replaced, be in contact with the surface of the building or structure at a point which is more than one metre from any other point of contact;
- (f) any part of the camera would be less than 10 metres from any part of another camera installed on the same building or structure;
- (g) where there would be more than four cameras on the same side of the building or structure; or
- (h) where there would be more than 16 cameras on the same building or structure.

3.3 The following restrictions also apply in order that a planning application is not required:

- (a) the camera shall, so far as practicable, be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building or structure on which it is situated;

- (b) the camera shall be removed as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for security purposes; and
- (c) the field of vision of the camera shall, so far as practicable, not extend beyond the boundaries of the land upon which the building or structure is erected or of any area which adjoins that land and to which the public have access.

3.4 Listed building consent will be required where proposed CCTV equipment would affect the character of a building listed for its special architectural or historic interest.

4.0 Further Information and Contact Details

4.1 Early consultation with Planning Services is encouraged for all developments within West Lothian.

4.2 For further information or specific advice please contact:

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