

Architectural Security – Designing Out Crime



If you have been considering a new home build or significant renovation of your property then it is likely that you will begin to seek the expert direction of architects, planners, builders and your insurance broker. Unfortunately it is during these construction projects that many homeowners overlook or underestimate the importance of installing comprehensive security solutions which, if installed during this initial renovation process, can function almost invisibly and harmonise with the proposed architectural design of the property.

In fact, many homeowners are reluctant to consider installing these security systems due to their unsightly nature. However, it is during the early design stages of your building project where it can prove instrumental to arrange a consultation with a reputable security company. By doing so, you can successfully integrate a highly proficient security system within the fabric of your property that will complement the architectural characteristics and proposed lines of your grand design.

Speak to your broker during your planning so they can advise on your security upgrades and ensure they meet insurance requirements.

Areas to consider:

Doors

When homeowners begin to consider the security of their property, doors are usually the first point of entry which they will think about. Criminals usually only attempt to force entry through a front door if they are reckless or confident that no-one is present to witness the attack. As a rule, when considering the security of your property's doors you should invest in multi-point locking systems. These doors will be locked in at least three places once the key has been turned thereby making them infinitely more difficult to force open than single locked doors. Depending upon your individual preferences you can purchase these security rated doors with a vast array of additional safeguards; from basic models with solid wooden cores to more advanced fixtures with ballistic properties.

Windows

From a security perspective, glass will always be the weakest material within your property which in turn identifies your windows and glass doors as vulnerable points of entry for criminals. Unfortunately if you own a listed building then this danger can be exacerbated due to the fragility of the single pane glass that is often found in sash windows. Although these

types of windows cannot be replaced without considerable applications, you can laminate the inside of these fixtures with invisible yet resilient security laminate film which will prevent the glass from breaking. Even if a criminal were to shatter the glass, they would have to cut through this film with a knife which would take time, cause noise and arouse suspicion.

Similarly to windows, glass doors can be lined with polycarbonate lined glass sheets which are impervious to knives. Moreover, you can also install several window locks and bolts to the glass fixtures throughout your home in order to limit their opening to a few inches. By doing so, you can keep your home cool and ventilated throughout warmer seasons whilst simultaneously preventing opportunistic thieves from entering your property.

Gardens

Your garden spaces are vital in protecting the environment between your home and public property. You should endeavour to landscape your garden to minimise the amount of shadowed areas at night and covered spaces during the day. From the lighting features you install to the shrubs and trees you plant, every aspect of your garden should be considered from a security perspective. For this reason it is advisable to consult with a professional landscape gardener who can help to balance the natural atmosphere and sanctuary of your garden with its multi-purpose security capabilities.

Lighting deterrents

Intruders will primarily target isolated properties with secluded alleyways, pathways or garden spaces that they can use to enter your home undetected. To deter these types of opportunistic criminals you should ensure that the ambient lighting surrounding your home distributes a steady flow of light across your property. This simple yet highly effective process will enable you to see as much of your land as possible and easily detect any potential intruders. Bear in mind that if you have installed CCTV cameras throughout your property then you will need to tailor your lighting features to support the infra-red functions of these cameras.

Neighbours

Neighbours can serve as vital extra sets of eyes on your land. Even though your privacy is paramount, the informal surveillance of neighbours can deter burglars. Consequently, you should always consider how much of your property will be visible to your neighbours when you are designing the layout of your property and updating its security systems.

En-suite safe rooms

En-suite rooms can make ideal safe rooms because they often lack external windows and are located in close proximity to your family's bedrooms so they can be quickly reached in the event of a home invasion. You can reinforce your safe room by adding steel mesh behind marine ply and then plastering these walls to mask their security upgrades. Additionally, you can further improve the security of your safe room by replacing the door with a solid core or security rated door with dead bolts at the top and storing a fully charged pay-as-you-go mobile phone within your safe room with which to call the authorities if your home is invaded.

Multiple safes

It is strongly recommended that you install at least three safes within your home; one in your bedroom for everyday use, one that is hidden in a remote area of your property for infrequently used valuables, and one in the living room as a 'duress safe' that stores a small amount of money and jewellery that can be easily replaced. By owning a 'duress safe', you will be able to direct intruders towards this safe in the event that your home is invaded and they will take these inconsequential valuables rather than your most prized possessions that are stored in your hidden safe.

Integrated technical detection systems

Given advancements in hacking it is highly advised that you hardwire your home's intruder detection systems and CCTV devices wherever possible. Furthermore, if you are extensively renovating your property or constructing a new build then you should strive to integrate your fire alarm installer with your burglar alarm installer. This way, you can ensure that your home security systems are compatible with the latest video analytics and technological innovations as well as ensuring that they operate to the best of their ability in order to detect the presence of intruders and alert your attention towards potential hazards.

Pay close attention to detail

As any architect will be sure to tell you, your security enhancements do not have to detract from the aesthetics of your home. Irrespective of your individual stylistic preferences or the scale of your renovation project, security enhancements can always be adapted to blend in with the interior and exterior design finishes of your home. Even if your property is a listed building, by consulting with your architect and security company you can implement a broad spectrum of security solutions and technological innovations which will safeguard your home against potential threats whilst simultaneously complementing the majesty of your property.

Article written by Blackstone Consultancy, private security specialists providing individuals and companies with bespoke, discreet and vigilant security arrangements. [blackstoneconsultancy.com](https://www.blackstoneconsultancy.com)

Speak with your insurance broker to find out more about insurance implications when making security upgrades to your home.

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