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# LESSONS FROM LISSON GREEN: AN EVALUATION OF WALKWAY DEMOLITION ON A BRITISH HOUSING ESTATE

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by  
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**Abstract:** *Apreviously unpublished 1986 evaluation of walkway demolition on a London public housing estate is re-presented. It compares popularly reported views that the removal of walkways reduced crime with the police crime record for the estate. No general crime reduction took place as was claimed. However, closer examination of time series data revealed some significant changes in crime patterns. Good historical information about events occurring on the estate made it possible to understand the reasons behind these changes. The main effect was in reducing robbery and purse snatches. This was not primarily caused by the demolition of walkways but by earlier design changes. Lessons for future evaluations are identified.*

## BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

A characteristic feature of much British medium-rise high-density public housing built in the 1960s and 1970s was the overhead walkway system (see Figure 1). The concept of "streets in the air" seems to have derived from the ideas of the famous French architect Le Corbusier in his Utopian vision of the *Ville Radieuse*. Instead of housing blocks being isolated from each other, they were connected by a network of walkways and corridors on several levels or decks above ground. This enabled pedestrians to move around the estate without the need to return to ground level.

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**Figure 1: Part of the Overhead Walkway System on the Lisson Green Estate, London**



By the mid 1980s, these walkway systems had become associated with many of the problems of run down public-sector housing. In particular, they were being blamed for increasing crime, and for residents' and visitors' fear of being attacked.

In her book *Utopia on Trial*, Alice Coleman (1985) listed walkway systems as one of the main conditions allowing incivilities and crime to develop in housing schemes. She described them as one of the "ringleaders of the anti-social design gang" (p. 80). She found that a number of other "bad" design features, such as a large number of apartments per entrance and variables to do with pedestrian access, were associated with the presence of overhead walkways.

Coleman (1985) summed up her view of walkways as follows:

All these things add up to the undesirability of anthill designs riddled with walkways, passages between exits, lifts, staircases and ramps. Fortunately, however, the worst excesses of all these variables can be cut by a single solution: the removal of overhead walkways (p. 67).

These comments should not be dismissed as merely the overstated views of an academic geographer. Her ideas were taken up enthusiastically by a number of politicians in Britain. The following extract from *The London Standard* (Friday, January 17, 1986) illustrates the strength of feeling. Mrs. Kirwan, the chair of Westminster City Council's housing committee, was reported to have said: "We have to remove or block these walkways. They are a design disaster and lead to mugging and other crimes. They can be dark and fearsome places to go. Often tenants won't use them at night for fear of mugging."

Mrs. Kirwan went on to say:

The walkways on some estates in Southwark and Haringey were used by rioters as they fought with police. At the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham, where P.C. Blakelock was killed, police were bombarded by missiles thrown from walkways. And at a smaller riot in Peckham police refused to venture into a Southwark Council estate for fear of having petrol bombs dropped on them from the walkways.

By the end of 1985, a research team, led by the author, decided to explore the effects of walkway removal on crime, and set about finding a suitable example for evaluation. At the time, the Westminster City Council was removing walkways on its Mozart Estate. It was clearly too early to evaluate walkway removal on that estate as demolition was still in progress. However, it was discovered that seven walkways had been removed on the nearby Lisson Green Estate in 1982, three years earlier, and this seemed an ideal time to assess the effects.

The Lisson Green Estate was being held up as an example of what could be achieved by removing walkways. Mrs. Kirwan publicly claimed that crime on the Lisson Green Estate had been "drastically cut" as a direct result of the removal of walkways. The member of parliament for the area, Kenneth Baker MP, said that the structural changes at Lisson Green had reduced crime on the estate. He took credit for this improvement, saying he had been a pioneer in the field of "creative demolition" (*Architects' Journal*, March 26, 1986). Under the headline "End of walkways cuts crime," a national newspaper claimed that crime and vandalism on the estate had been reduced by 50% after the walkways were removed.

## THE LISSON GREEN ESTATE

Our first task in the evaluation was to find out more about what had happened on the estate. Experience of previous evaluations had led us to recognize the danger of attributing changes in crime patterns to the one intervention that was the focus of the evaluation. It might have been that other changes had more significant effects than the removal of seven walkways.

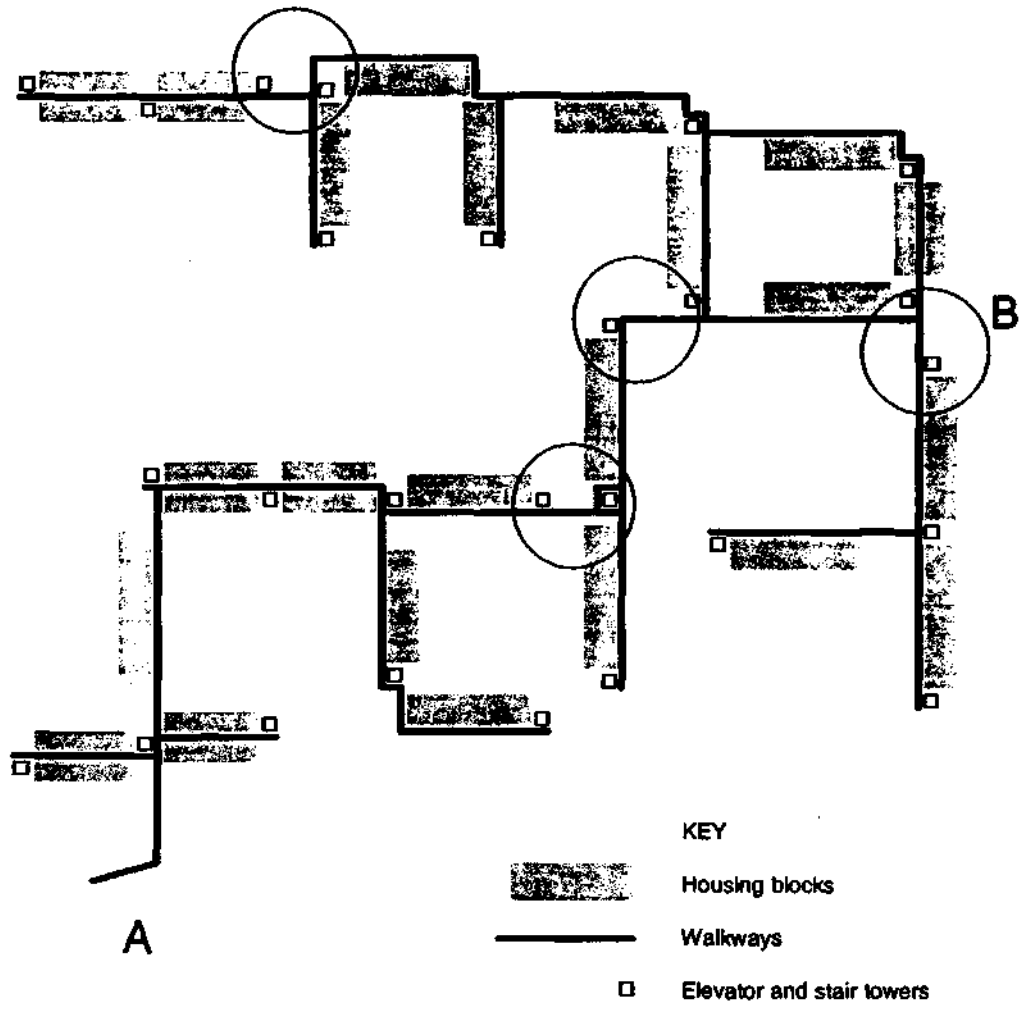
The most obvious source of information of changes on the estate was the estate management team. Therefore, contact was made with officials from the City Council's housing department and the estate management office. They were willing to help with the evaluation, but it proved difficult to find precise information about earlier changes on the estate. Officials were aware of the demolition of the walkways, but they could not provide precise dates when work had been done.

In an attempt to locate more precise dates, the research team decided to make a search of back issues of the local weekly newspaper *The Marylebone Mercury*. An estate manager at Lisson Green had mentioned the extensive press coverage given to the estate, and since a complete microfiche record was available at the Marylebone Public Library, it was a comparatively easy task to track down events occurring on the estate. Indeed, the newspaper turned out to be a rich source of information about the estate, and notes were made from a review of five years back issues from 1981-1985.

It was also possible to talk to a reporter on the paper who had taken a special interest in the estate over the years, and who helped form a clear picture of the problems and changes over the five-year period.

The estate has been built from 1972 to 1975. It contains nearly 1,500 apartments in 23 medium-rise six-story blocks. Originally, all blocks were connected by a walkway system at two levels on the 3rd and 5th levels (see Figure 1). One newspaper cutting described the walkways as "an almost uninterrupted run of three-quarters of a mile from one end of the estate to the other" (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Walkway System on the Lisson Green Estate Showing the Four Locations Where the Demolition of Walkway Bridges was Proposed**



By the time the evaluation was made, the estate had experienced many of the problems common to large, rundown housing estates in Britain. Examples reported in the local newspaper included: unruly children; problems of rubbish disposal; a spate of muggings; concern about asbestos in the building fabric; inadequate heating; blocked sewers; leaking roofs; problems with elevators; Tenants' Association squabbles; speeding cars on estate roads; congested parking; drugs; and concern over the structural safety of the apartment blocks.

The City Council had responded to many of these problems. A great deal of money had been spent tackling the rubbish disposal problem, overhauling the heating system, removing walkways, installing entry phones and removing the asbestos from inside apartments. The opening of a full-time estate office to deal with management and maintenance problems was considered a particular achievement.

### **The Removal of Walkways**

Walkways were first identified as a problem by the newspaper when a front-page headline read "Skaters and cyclist turn estate into hell" (June 5, 1981). Kids were riding bicycles, skateboards and even motorcycles along the walkways and generally being a nuisance. Residents had suggested the installation of entry phones, which could be fitted to enclosed sections of the walkway system where it passed through the central corridor of some blocks. They had also suggested blocking off or removing sections of the walkway system. The housing department of the City Council responded by saying that walkway removal was too costly, but they did promise to install some entry phones on the estate.

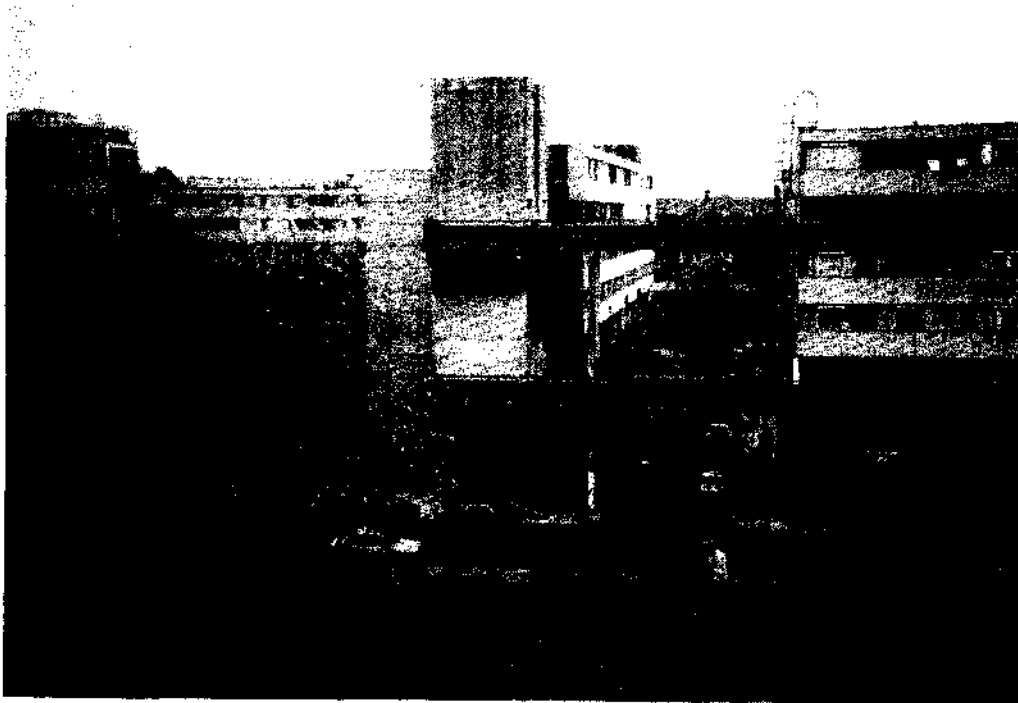
At the same time, mugging was developing into a serious issue, as reported by *The Marylebone Mercury*. The newspaper ran a special campaign in July 1981 highlighting the problem. The estate was described as a place "where elderly live in fear," the blocks were described as "diabolical hell holes," and the newspaper urged the City Council to "close those muggers alleys."

In the year that followed, the City Council was subjected to some considerable pressure from the local member of parliament, Kenneth Baker, who had just been made Minister of State for Industry and Technology. He pressured for the cleaning up of the estate and the installation of entry phones and removal of walkways. The council had already agreed to entry phones, and had made several attempts to clean

up rubbish on the estate. Finally, in October 1982, the seven walkway bridges were removed at a cost of nearly £100,000.

The locations of this demolition work are shown by means of circles in Figure 2. The walkway system was cut at both walkway levels at four points. The odd number of seven arises because the walkway system at B in Figure 2 was only connected at the lower walkway level. In the three other locations, walkway bridges were removed from the upper and lower walkway levels (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: A Point on the Walkway System Where Walkways Were Removed—Originally There were Bridges at Both Levels Between the Building on the Left and the Lift Tower in the Center of the Photograph**



## Crime Data

The next task was to find out what were the recorded crime problems on the estate. The sources of data were the crime books kept at Paddington Green Police Station. Access to police files was arranged through previous research contacts with the Metropolitan Police.

We had learned from other work that simple "before-and-after" data on a crime prevention intervention was not a reliable way to judge its impact, particularly when other changes were occurring in the period of study. Under these circumstances, it is more revealing to look at the changing pattern of crime over a period.

The effort required to abstract data for an extended period was considerable. It was not possible to use the police computer-based data because the estate boundaries did not coincide with police beat boundaries. In the hope of being fairly economical with research resources, it was decided to restrict crime data for the estate to years 1982, 1983 and 1984. Because the walkway bridges were removed in October 1982, it was hoped that the three years of data would show the levels of crime prior to their removal and the pattern thereafter. It was thought that a period of two years after the demolition was necessary to establish that any change in crime pattern was relatively permanent. Other evaluations had shown that the impact of crime prevention interventions can peak and decay quite quickly (see, for example, Laycock, 1992).

It was not clear which kinds of crime would be most affected by walkways. The local police had based most of their assessment of problem housing estates on the work of their Burglary Analysis Unit, and Lisson Green remained at the top of their list. Mugging had also been referred to on the walkways, but this meant assembling information on "robbery" and "theft from the person." which were recorded in different places, as well as from the "serious crime book" and the "beat crime book." Previous experience of evaluations had shown that auto crime can be a sensitive measure of changes on a housing estate. It was decided that the analysis would need to include all reported crime.

The first surprise which emerged from the data as it was assembled, was that there were very few burglaries from apartments. On the other hand, there were a large number of robberies and snatches at the beginning of 1982. Both these findings raised questions which could only be answered by going back further to see what crime was like on the estate



in 1981 (which were the oldest data available since police records are only kept for five years).

From a cursory analysis of the auto crime data for the four years 1981 • 1984, it seemed that there was a reduction in thefts from cars in the year after the removal of walkways, but that these had begun to increase in 1984. This led us to decide to extend the analysis of auto crime into 1985, and eventually we decided to extend the whole data collection to cover the five-year period. This gradual expansion of the database extended the number of crimes included in the analysis from a first estimate of 500 to a total of 1,340 for the full five years.

### **The Overall Pattern of Crime**

Table 1 presents a classification and analysis of crime on the estate recorded by the police during 1981-1985. The categories are only roughly based on official police crime definitions, but they were thought to be more useful in understanding how crime was affected by removing walkways.

Looking at the overall crime levels, the total numbers of crimes for each of the five years are fairly stable. There is a slight reduction in the 1983 figure, but there is no major reduction following the removal of the walkways during 1982.

The rate of crime per household was also not as large as on some inner-city problem estates. The rate at Lisson Green averaged about 15 crimes per 100 households. Although this was about twice the average for residential areas in Britain (see, for example, Poyner and Webb, 1991:13), it was comparatively moderate for problem housing estates. The annual rate of recorded crime in other inner-city estates had been known to reach 50 crimes per 100 households and more.

It is often argued that reported crime statistics can be biased in favor of high-profile crime prevention initiatives. One possible way this can be done is for the police to reject more reports as "no crimes." For example, reports of theft or damage may, on investigation, be considered no more than accidental losses and damage. Since the reports which were subsequently "no crimed" were also recorded in the police crime books, it was possible to establish the rate at which reports were "no crimed." The table shows a very stable "no crime" rate at about 20%. If anything, the rate decreases after the walkway removal. If the police had been trying to distort the record, albeit subconsciously, the rate might be expected to rise. From

**Table 1. A Classification of Recorded Crime on the  
Lisson Green Estate during 1981-1985**

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Break-ins to apartments	21	5	10	13	11
Other apartment burglary	21	8	10	16	22
Non-residential burglary	13	21	12	24	28
Damage to apartments	27	20	16	16	40
Other estate damage	9	15	13	6	13
Robberies and snatches	33	17	7	7	11
Other assaults	9	8	8	10	4
Theft (non-auto crime)	13	17	23	18	16
Drug offenses (arrests)	0	4	7	4	5
Theft of cars and vans	23	31	16	11	21
Theft from cars and vans	19	51	37	54	41
Other auto crime	15	21	23	25	27
Other crime	8	4	6	7	6
<b>TOTAL ALL RECORDED CRIME</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>CRIMES PER 100 HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>16.6</b>
Reports "No crimed"	54	61	44	48	56
"No crimes" as % of crimes	20%	22%	19%	19%	19%

this and the analysis that follows it is unlikely that the police record was biased to support crime prevention programs on the estate.

Looking in more detail at the various types of crime, there are one or two lines in the table which suggest that some crime reduction has taken place. There is an apparent reduction in break-ins and other burglary of apartments in 1982. More dramatically, there is a large reduction in robberies and snatches in 1982 and 1983. The two other categories to show reductions in 1983 are thefts of and from cars and vans. Each of these is discussed in turn.

### **Burglary of Apartments**

It might be imagined that one effect of breaking up the walkway system would be to discourage access by potential burglars, particularly if they were local youths wandering about the estate in a relatively aimless way. To look more closely at the drop in crime shown in Table 1, the research team examined the monthly pattern of break-ins to see if this could be related to the removal of walkways. Figure 4 shows these data slightly simplified into three-month periods through the five years of crime data.

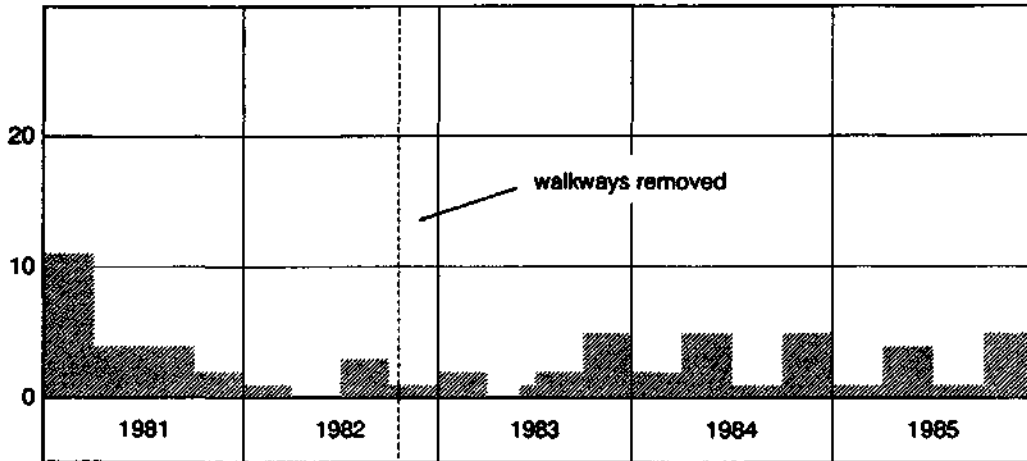
It seems clear from the histogram that the demolition of walkways had no major effect on break-ins to apartments. We could find no explanation for the relatively large number of break-ins for the first quarter of 1981. This peak of activity appears to be due to eight break-ins during March, which could easily have been the work of one active burglar and could not be considered as a significant pattern of crime.

### **Robberies and Snatches**

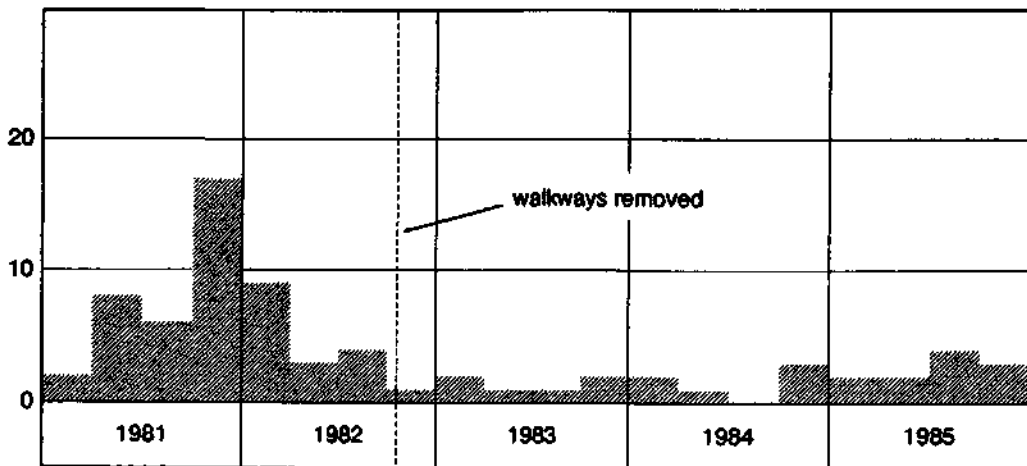
A similar analysis of robberies and snatches, shown in Figure 5, produced a more interesting picture. It showed that the estate certainly suffered from the "spate of muggings" reported in the local newspaper. Although the graph shows the number of incidents fell to a low point immediately after the demolition of walkway bridges, the problem seems to have greatly reduced during the two quarters before demolition began.

The research team sought an explanation for this drop in muggings before demolition. It was then realized that other changes on the estates reported in the local newspaper might be relevant. It was known that some entry phones had been installed in some blocks before the walkway demolition, and so efforts were made to identify which blocks were involved.

**Figure 4: Number of Break-Ins to Apartments on the Lisson Green Estate in Each Three-Month Period during 1981-85**



**Figure 5: Number of Robberies and Snatches on the Lisson Green Estate in Each Three-Month Period during 1981-85**



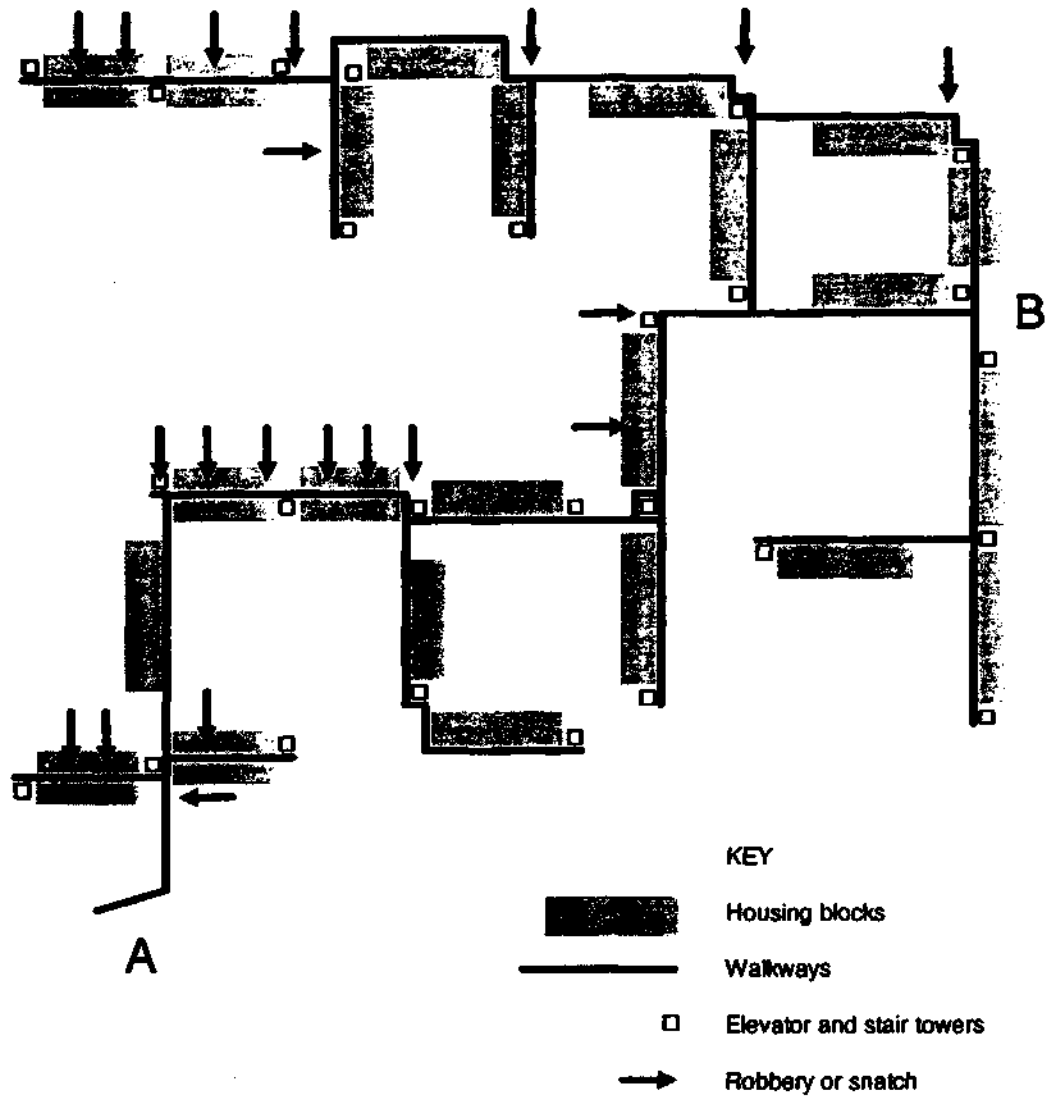
It was discovered from staff at the local estate office that four blocks near the main entry to the walkway system, at point A in Figure 2, were the first to be protected by entry phones. The main pedestrian access to the walkway system is via a ramp from the main street neighboring the estate at point A. Since the main line of the walkway system passed through the central corridors of two of these blocks, it seemed very likely that this would have closed direct access to the walkway system from this main street entrance.

To try to understand the influence of the installation of the entry phones, robberies and snatches that had occurred on the walkways were plotted onto the walkway diagram for three periods of six months: before the entry phones were installed (Figure 6); after installation of the entry phones but before walkway demolition (Figure 7); and after demolition (Figure 8). The results were very clear. Figures 6, 7 and 8 show that nearly all the attacks (shown by arrows) occurred before the first entry phones were fitted. A few (three) occurred in the next six months, and, by the time the seven walkway bridges were down, no more attacks were reported on the walkway system.

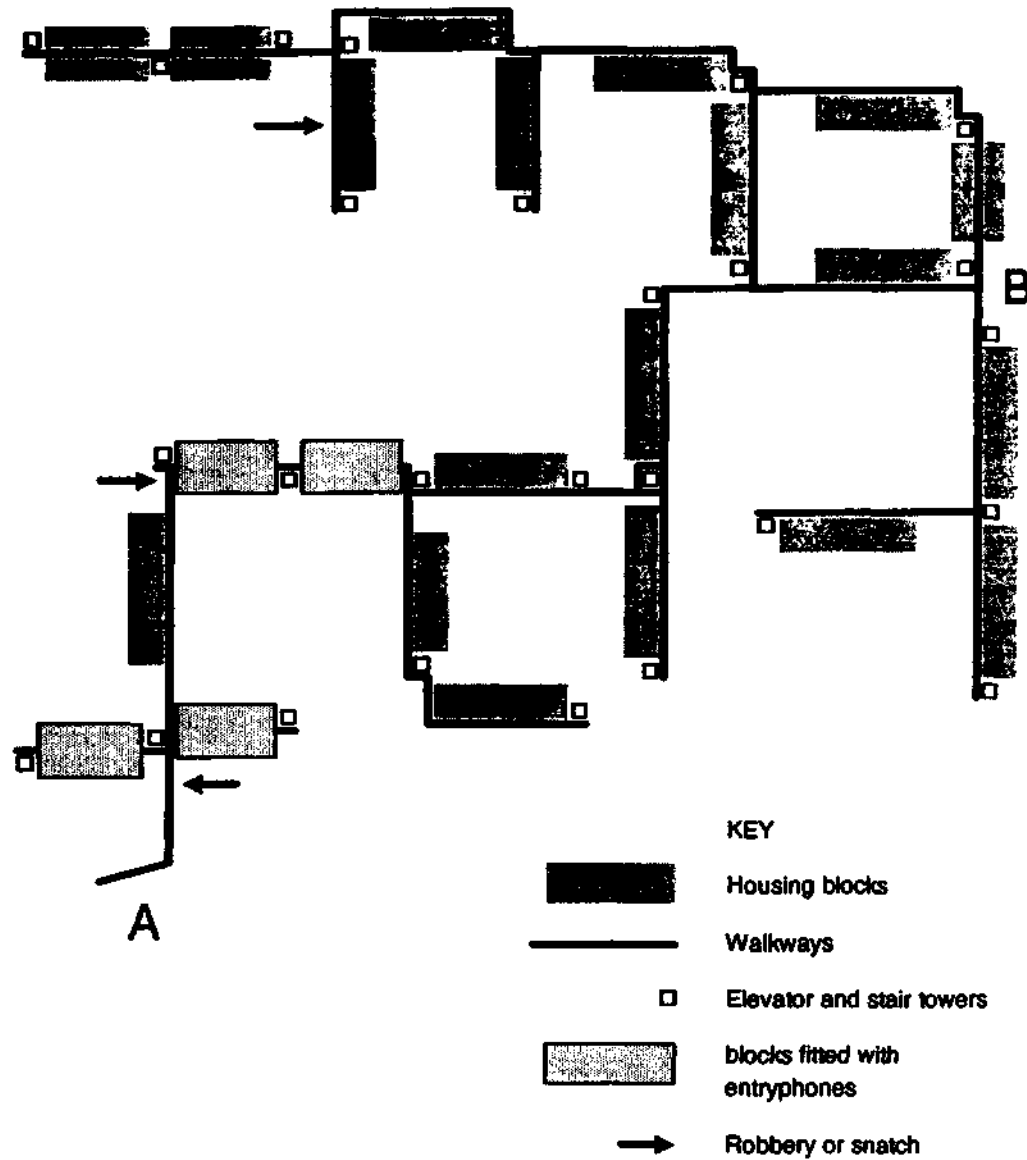
While it is clear that the changes to the walkway system have been successful in removing the problem of attacks, it could be claimed that the removal of walkways played a relatively minor part. Closer examination of the distribution of attacks as shown in Figure 6, before any changes were made, revealed that most of the attacks took place on the parts of the walkway which pass through the central corridors of some blocks. These are the parts of the walkway system which most lacked surveillance. Other parts of the walkway system were either on bridges or in long galleries or balconies along the side of blocks (see again Figure 1).

The effectiveness of the entry phones was not only to block the walkway but also to exclude access to the least supervised parts of the walkway system. These more detailed findings suggest that it was not just the walkway that was the problem, but that parts of it lacked surveillance from neighboring buildings and ground level. It is easy to see when visiting the estate that much of the walkway system can be seen from the windows of surrounding apartments, as well as from elsewhere on the walkway system and from the access roads at ground level.

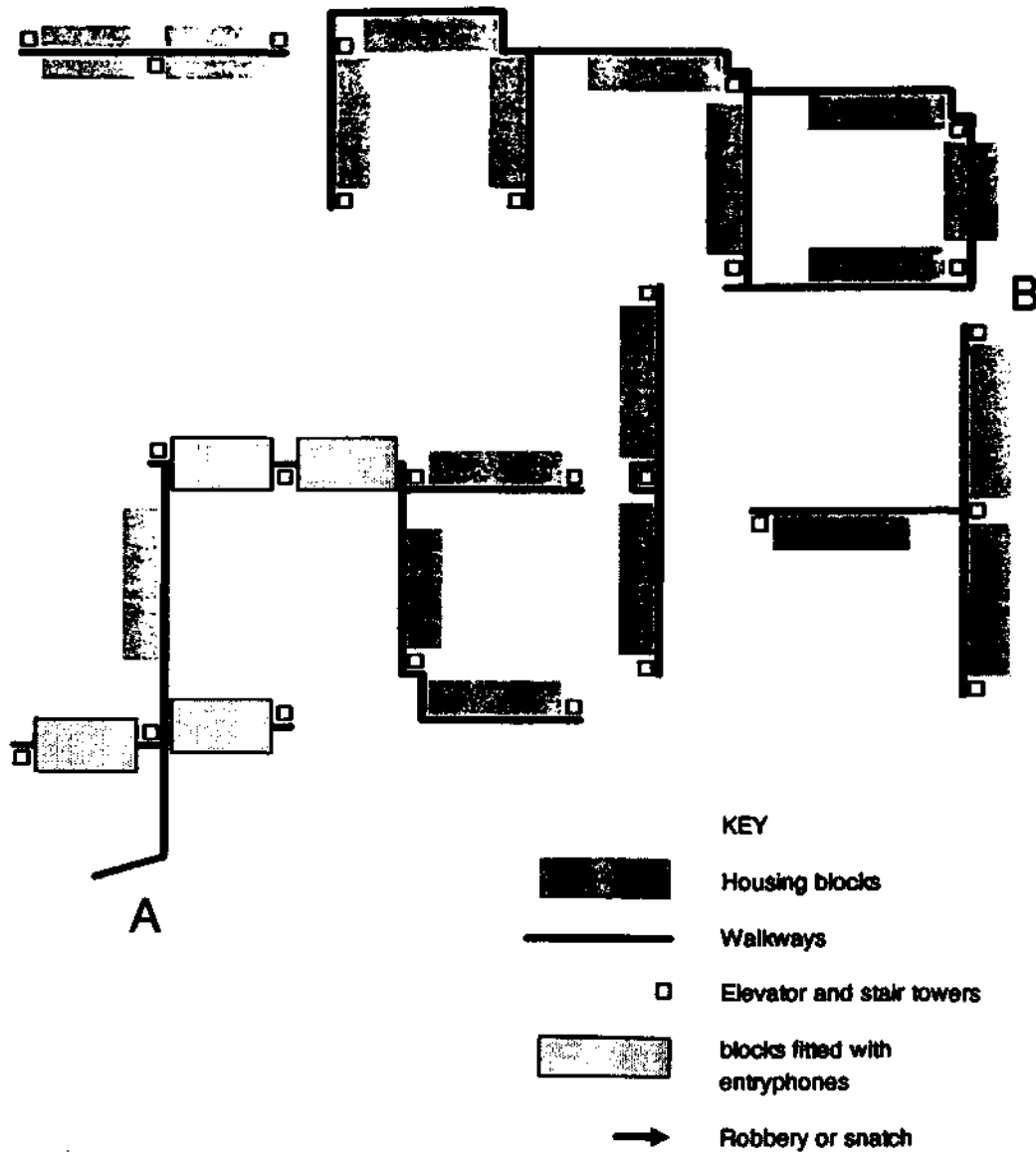
**Figure 6: Locations of Robberies and Snatches on the Walkway System on the Lisson Green Estate in the Six Months Before Changes Were Made**



**Figure 7: Locations of Robberies and Snatches on the Walkway System of the Lisson Green Estate in the Six Months Before Demolition but After the First Four Blocks Were Fitted with Entry Phones**



**Figure 8: Walkway System on the Lisson Green Estate in the Six Months After Demolition—No Robberies and No Snatches Were Reported on the Walkways**





A footnote on the reduction in robberies and snatches might be added. The preoccupation in criminology with the problem of displacement might lead some to assume that the robberies and snatches would be displaced elsewhere. Surely, since it was the walkway system that was blocked, one might expect robberies and snatches to be displaced to the ground level on the estate. In fact, the number of attacks elsewhere on the estate was small and remained at about the same level throughout these changes. In the six months before entry phones were installed, there were six attacks at ground level, in the six months between entry phone installation and the demolition there were four attacks elsewhere, and in the six months after demolition there were three attacks not on the walkways. There is certainly no evidence here to support the displacement theory, but equally no real evidence for a "diffusion of benefits" (Clarke. 1992:25-27).

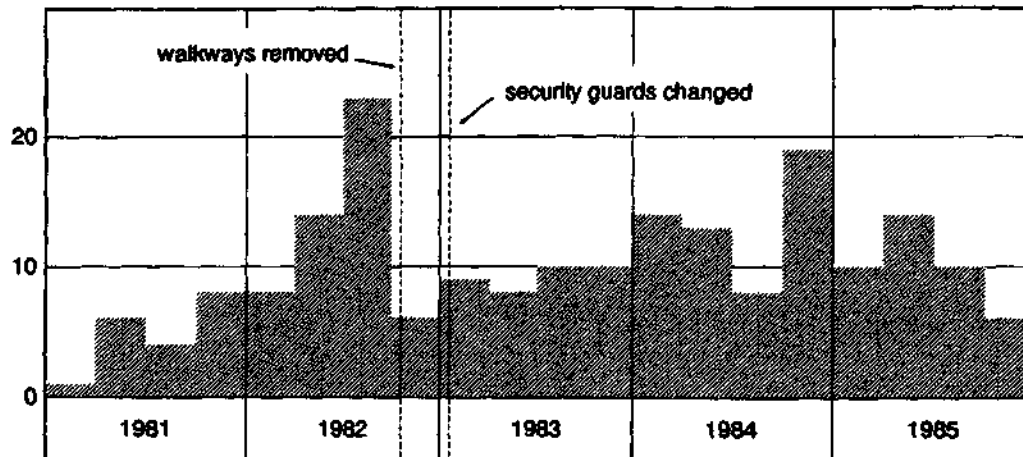
## **Vehicle Crime**

The other two crime categories which needed some further investigation were thefts of and from cars and vans. The histogram for theft from cars and vans, shown in Figure 9, indicates a dramatic reduction in offenses in the quarter during which the walkway demolition took place.

Although this reduction in theft from vehicles looks encouraging to anyone hoping to see benefits from the demolition, it seemed to the research team somewhat surprising that these changes should have such an immediate and significant effect on such thefts. It might have been expected that vehicle crime would not be so strongly influenced by the walkway system since car parking is at ground level. The removal of the walkways would have little effect on access to parking areas.

Enquiries were made of the estate management staff to see if they might know of an alternative explanation for this dramatic change in the pattern of thefts from cars. The estate manager was amused to hear of the research team's finding because it immediately reminded him that during the demolition contract it had been necessary to enforce very stringent parking restrictions on the estate roads. Roadways were blocked off and cars removed if they got in the way. Apart from the disruption of car movement and access, it was clear that far fewer cars were able to park on the estate during the last quarter of 1982.

**Figure 9: Number of Thefts from Cars and Vans on the Lisson Green Estate in Each Three-Month Period during 1981-85**

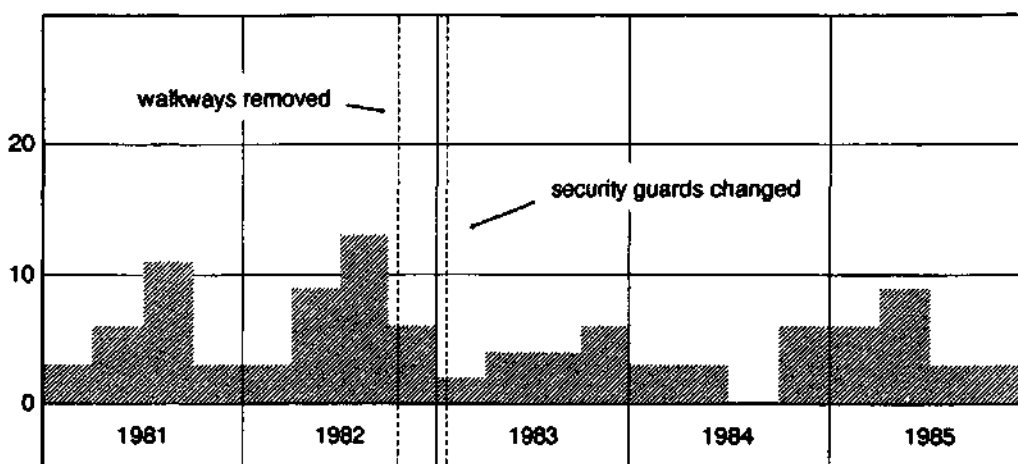


It was clear that such a disruption of parking arrangements and a reduction in the number of cars able to park on the estate could readily account for this change in pattern of theft. However, the pattern of theft of vehicles, presented in Figure 10, shows that the reduction occurs even more strongly in the first quarter of 1983, the quarter after the demolition took place.

Further questioning revealed that shortly after the demolition of walkways the contract for the security guards, who controlled vehicle access to the estate, was changed. Because the estate is close to central London, and particularly close to the business district to the south and east of the nearby Marylebone Station, it had from the start suffered from parking by commuters. To deal with this problem, vehicle access to the estate had been restricted to one entrance at point B on estate layout diagrams. A security point with a kiosk and vehicle barriers had been installed, which is staffed during weekdays by a security guard. In 1982, the City Council

became dissatisfied with the performance of the security guards and a new contractor was brought in.

**Figure 10: Number of Thefts of Cars and Vans on the Lisson Green Estate in Each Three-Month Period during 1981-85**



The new guards began work in January 1983 almost three months after the demolition work. The pattern of theft from vehicles (Figure 9) and the theft of vehicles (Figure 10) during 1982 and 1983 could also be partly attributable to the change in security guards. The outgoing contractor would have been aware of the City Council's intention to end its contract, and this could be part of the reason for the peaks of vehicle crime in the second and third quarters of 1982. It could also be the main reason that vehicle crime remained under some control throughout 1983.

The conclusion from these arguments seemed to be that the dip in vehicle crime following the walkway demolition was the result of both the restriction of parking during demolition work and the introduction of a new security guard contract at the beginning of 1983. It seems much less

likely that the removal of seven walkway bridges had any direct influence on vehicle crime.

### **CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHANGES IN CRIME**

The first conclusion is that the evaluation did show that changes to the walkway system had some beneficial effect on crime. However, the effect appears to have been very specific and limited. It appeared to be almost entirely related to robberies and snatches that had been taking place on the walkways, particularly where the walkways were enclosed. Other hoped-for effects, such as on burglary, did not materialize.

The success in reducing robberies and snatches was due to a change in the pattern of use or misuse of the walkways. When the system was complete, it would have been possible for prospective muggers to wander along the full length of the walkways in search of a victim. There would be little to stop this behavior, as the design encouraged anyone to enter from the street via a ramp at point A and walk the whole length of the system and back without appearing suspicious in any way. Once the seven bridges were removed, this pattern of behavior would have become impossible, but even the introduction of the entry phones (as seen in Figure 7) would have made it just as difficult.

A second important conclusion was that by looking at crime data over a long time period, it is possible to explain many of the variations in the pattern of crime in terms of changes in the environment. Providing there is enough information, it should be possible to understand most of the variations in crime. For example, information emerged which may explain the tendency for the overall level of crime on the estate to rise in the fifth year of the study. During 1984 and 1985, the City Council ran a program for the removal of asbestos from inside the apartments. This involved the progressive emptying and renovation of apartments. This was a major program, and while the work was in progress there was an increase in criminal damage to empty apartments, which can be seen in the numbers of crime shown in Table 1.

### **Where Did a 50% Reduction in Crime Come From?**

The evaluation revealed only small changes in crime levels. The reduction in crime was in no way of the order originally claimed in the press reports. It seemed important to find out why this was the case, and why the newspapers had reported such grossly inaccurate information.

During the evaluation work, the research team looked at the police file on the estate. It contained several brief notes on crime figures which, no doubt, had been communicated at various times to the housing department. The City Council had asked the police for crime figures on the Lisson Green Estate. The police were unable to provide figures for the estate because their crime data were calculated for police-beat areas. The beat area containing the estate was considerably larger than the estate itself. However, they did provide some figures for the beat area as a whole.

These police figures do not show a crime reduction. However, in an attempt present a positive message, they do claim a reduced annual rate of increase in crime. The figures on the file were:

1981	379 crimes
1982	538 "
1983	558 "
1984	560 "

What appears to have been done with these figures was to calculate the percentage increase for each year, which produced the following percentages as noted on the file:

81 to 82	up by 42%
82 to 83	up by 27%—this was wrongly calculated; it should have been 3.7%
83 to 84	up by 0.4%

What appears to have happened is that someone had interpreted the change from a 42% increase to a 27% increase as good news, and then described it as reducing the increase in crime by half. Hence someone has ended up quoting a 50% reduction in crime.

To further confuse the popular view, a journalist was reported to have asked a question at a public meeting on crime prevention on a neighboring estate, which was quoted as: "Since a 60% crime reduction had been achieved on Lisson Green, could similar reductions be expected on Mozart?" The figure of 60% was taken for a fact in all subsequent reporting of the issue.

### **LESSONS FOR OTHER EVALUATIONS**

This was not the first evaluation in which the research team had examined crime data over an extended period (see also Poyner and Webb, 1987; and Poyner and Woodall, 1987), but it was perhaps the clearest

demonstration of how crime levels can be influenced by environmental and other changes. It is clear from this kind of study that time-series data are much more sensitive in assessing the effects of crime prevention interventions than the more conventional "before-and-after" studies.

If a "before-and-after" study had been made of vehicle crime on the estate, it would have provided overwhelming evidence to support the idea that walkway removal reduced car crime. Again, an evaluation of the effect on break-ins might have taken 1981 as a "before" condition and 1983 data as an "after" condition. Such a study would indicate a marked improvement, but the evidence of Figure 4 shows that it is very unlikely that the walkway demolition had anything to do with the difference.

A further conclusion can be drawn from such doubts about "before-and-after" comparisons. Many criminologists argue that crime surveys of potential victims give a more accurate indication of crime levels. From this there is a common tendency to disregard police-reported data as unreliable. Of course, doubts can be raised about most sources of data, but if time-series data are necessary for effective evaluations, survey techniques would have to be greatly elaborated to obtain useable data. Not only would this make survey techniques inordinately expensive, but they would become increasingly invasive and no doubt begin to influence criminal behavior on an estate.

A further corollary follows from the use of time-series data. The evaluation shows that much of the effect of walkway improvement came from the introduction of entry phones. As Figure 7 indicates, most of the robberies and snatches on walkways had stopped before the walkways were removed. There seems to be a lesson here. Perhaps all large-scale and expensive proposals for intervention should be carefully monitored before a final decision is made to spend large sums of money. No doubt the City Council's housing committee would have thought twice about embarking on £100,000 expenditure if they had been monitoring crime as in Figure 5 in the months before the demolition contract was let.

Finally, this study demonstrates very clearly the mistake of relying too closely on conventional crime categories. The police were monitoring this estate for its domestic burglary problem, and certainly (as shown in Table 1) there had been some reduction in this offense. But the main effect of changes to the walkway system was to a mixed category of "robbery" and "theft from the person."

There is always a need for researchers to go back, wherever possible, to the original crime reports to identify relevant categories for any partic-

ular study. Unfortunately, this is becoming ever more difficult with the computerization of records, which can impose rigid structures on the classification of crime information.

### A POSTSCRIPT

The overall impression of the findings from this evaluation was that the threat of robberies or purse snatches on the walkways had virtually disappeared. In preparing this rewriting of the original paper, the author revisited the estate and found further evidence that residents' feelings of security along the walkways had continued to increase. Whereas in 1986 the walkways were bleak and uncared-for, in 1993 they were becoming more personalized or territorialized. As can be seen from the photograph in Figure 11, there is now clear evidence that residents feel able to decorate their part of the walkway with planters and hanging baskets.

There are, of course, additional reasons why these improvements may have been made. There has been a continual change in resident population, with a noticeable increase in the proportion of Asian residents. Many of the apartments are now leased rather than rented. Also, now that the cleaning services have been placed with outside contractors, uniformed cleaners can frequently be seen at work on the walkways. All of these developments reemphasize the need for long-term monitoring of change. Perhaps, the reduction in crime was a necessary ingredient in these later improvements.

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**Figure 11: Photograph of a Walkway on the Lisson Green Estate in 1993, About Nine Years After Demolition—There Are Clear Signs of Personalization and Territorialization by Residents**

