

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

BURGLARY

Burglary figures have been increasing from the lowest recorded twelve month figure of 93 at the end of October 1998, and are now up to 115. An analysis of these burglaries shows clearly that most of them occurred:

- in houses being renovated where builders failed to secure the premises adequately at the end of their working day resulting in their own tools being stolen or newly installed kitchens and other fitted furniture being removed;
- from garages and garden sheds which were insecure;
- during the recent hot weather, from insecure houses - 'via open front door', 'via the rear open door', 'via open rear window', and so on;
- from the homes of recently arrived new residents who appear to have many other priorities than security and crime prevention;
- from houses which have not got alarms;

An article in the Times of 7 June 1999 stated that a Home Office report predicted an increase in property crime of up to 40 per cent within the next three years. However, on the Suburb, there is no need for residents to fear such an increase provided they continue to take sensible precautions, the most important of which are probably:

- to have an 'intruder' alarm system fitted and maintained by a responsible security firm - and then to set it whenever the house is unoccupied, even for a short time;
- to have a free security survey carried out by the police Crime Prevention Officer (PC Peter Hayward, tel: 733 5092) to ensure the house is secure in all

aspects - and then to carry out all his recommendations;

- to make sure the house looks, and sounds, occupied (for instance with lights that come on and a radio playing) whenever it is unoccupied;
- to secure all doors and windows whenever not being personally used or supervised.

VEHICLE CRIME

Vehicle crime has declined slightly over this last year, the majority being:

- 'the unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle' (Solution - fit TRACKER to more expensive cars, or a mechanical immobiliser to less expensive cars.)
- the 'theft from a motor vehicle' of the radio/cassette/CD etc, system

(Solution - remove it from the vehicle or have a car with a split system incorporated into the fascia which cannot be removed.)

- the 'theft from a motor vehicle' of other items on display

(Solution - don't leave possessions where they can be seen.)

Mobile phones, in particular, are now being left on view and stolen more and more frequently.

SPECIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH INSURANCE

Over the years we have been able to arrange special house, and house contents, insurances for people in recognised Neighbourhood Watches, with the result that many are paying premiums at least 30 per cent less than those not covered by Neighbourhood Watch.

However, these special schemes are only valid for householders within a neighbourhood Watch area. In some cases - for various reasons but generally apathy - Neighbourhood Watches have had to be closed down, and people have been informed that they should let their insurers know that they are no longer in Neighbourhood Watch and therefore no longer covered by special Neighbourhood Watch insurance.

It is suspected that some people have failed to do this perhaps in the mistaken belief that, if they keep quiet about it, their insurers will be none the wiser and that they will still be covered. But this is not so and, in the event of their having to make a claim, they may well find that their insurance is void and that they are no longer entitled to have their claim honoured.

PETER LOYD



"HE'S A GOOD DETERRENT, BUT HE WILL CHEW UP THE SHOPPING!"

Consam's guidance on sighting alarms and lights

The RA's Conservation and Amenities Committee (Consam) has produced the following note on the sighting of burglar alarms and security lights. It will be issued in future with 'Design Guidance', which is published jointly by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and the London Borough of Barnet to provide advice on building and alterations for residents of the Suburb.

It is recognised that burglar alarms on the exterior of Suburb houses should have an appropriate degree of visibility, but care should be taken to ensure that they are not unduly prominent and/or out of keeping with the appearance of the houses on which they are installed. In general it is preferable for them to be positioned under the eaves or alongside a vertical or horizontal detail like a drainpipe or window, rather than on an expanse of rendering or brickwork or in the centre of a gable end. Contrasting colours, for example red alarms on white rendering, can be discordant, as can bold graphics on alarm casings.

There are good examples on the Suburb of alarms which have been installed sensitively but visibly (a) on side walls so that they do not detract from the appearance of frontages, or (b) in colours which are in harmony with the walls on which they are located (for example, plain white alarms on a white background), or (c) with discreet graphics or no graphics at all. Care of this kind can help to preserve the appearance of Suburb houses while catering for security needs.

Security lights should, as far as possible illuminated only areas of possible intrusion into the houses on which they are installed, or areas to which access is required which would otherwise be so poorly lit that they might be hazardous for residents or visitors. Security lights should be directed in such a way that disturbance to other residents is avoided. The use of traditional lamps rather than modern high-powered lighting can be effective for security purposes while preserving a relatively peaceful and comfortable after-dark environment as one of the attractions of the Suburb.

Hampstead Scientific's Centenary

The Hampstead Scientific Society has issued 'Hampstead Science 1899 - 1999'. Full of interesting facts about varied subjects of scientific and natural history plus stories and pictures of the 100 years of the Society's existence, it contains 85 pages including colour pages.

It is modestly priced at £5. Copies are available from David St. George, Astronomy Committee, 8 Asmunds Hill, NW11 6ET, tel 455 0540.

Information cards containing details of forthcoming lectures are also available from the above address.

The Trust, windows and double glazing

In any building the windows are a most important feature of its appearance and give life to the elevations. We refer to a windowless wall as being 'blind' and the position and shape of windows and doors can make a building look austere, friendly, informal, haphazard or downright slovenly.

Unfortunately under general Planning Law (outside the Suburb) the alteration of windows is 'permitted development' (meaning that permission is not necessary) and we have all seen the way lovely Victorian terraces have been destroyed by the introduction of only a few modern windows of completely style. We would none of us wish to see that same kind of thing happen in the Suburb.

ANY ALTERATION NEEDS TRUST APPROVAL

To restate what should be well known, any alteration to the doors or windows, no matter whether they are at the front or the rear, requires an application to the Trust for approval. Almost all of them will require consent from the London Borough of Barnet also by virtue of the Article 4 Direction which is enforced throughout the Conservation Area.

Different areas of the Suburb have houses with different types of window, each characteristic of the period and of the area. Each is capable of improvement in a way which does not affect the appearance.

Many of the earlier houses have traditional double-hung sliding sash windows, always on the Suburb divided into small panes of glass. This window is an English invention and a very good one too. Nothing projects to interfere with the hang of the curtains or for you to bump your head into. The sash slides in a groove so there are two checks against draughts. The beads are removable and replaceable so that the window can be tightened up after it wears. This is one of the great virtues of timber windows; they can be repaired so readily. Using modern glues it is even possible to splice in replacement sections of wood and make

badly decayed frames as good as new. The timber used in these old windows is often of very high quality and unlikely to decay unless neglected.

VERY SUBTLY DESIGNED

Another early window is the wooden casement, sometimes divided into small panes and sometimes with larger glass sizes. In the Suburb these windows were very subtly designed to keep constant glass sizes or glass proportions.

Many of the earlier houses also used heavy timber frames with leaded lights set in and with iron casements for the opening lights. Where these have been well maintained the effect is very beautiful indeed. The individual pieces of glass in leaded lights are all set at slightly different angles and give a sparkle to the window which 'stuck-on' lead strips can never produce. By now some of the old wrought casement frames are in a bad way. New ones can be made and fitted in the original style but in some circumstances the Trust may agree to the substitution of a slightly different frame. These were always painted black originally and should not be painted white.

At a later period in the Suburb, the 'Crittall' standard steel window was used, particularly by the architects of the Modern Movement. These windows have horizontal glazing bars and often curved bay windows. Standard steel windows with small panes were also used ('cottage casements'). Unfortunately these windows were generally not galvanised and by now are often rusty, ill fitting because of rust and layers of paint and generally not of an acceptable modern standard. The householder in this situation is often told that these windows are no longer made and that his only course is to change to a different type of window. This is quite untrue. Steel windows made to 'imperial' sizes have always been available and are now even more widely available. The windows made now are always hot dip galvanised which overcomes the rust problem. They can also be factory painted

with long life paint which overcomes the problem of paint build up. In fact the modern steel window is a first class and very economical product.

WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE TRUST TOWARDS DOUBLE GLAZING?

It is obvious that anything which involves the replacement of the window frame by something different will not be approved by the Trust. However, if one is having to replace timber windows it may be possible, though not necessarily economical, to use a slightly deeper rebate to accept double glass units. Apart from this the Trust indicates that, in general, it will only accept a secondary double glazing system.

MAIN HEAT LOSS IS NOT THROUGH WINDOWS

However, on a more positive side the Trust, points out that in the typical house the main heat loss is through the ceiling and roof. Therefore the first step in conserving heat must be to insulate the roof. Secondly, where a house has cavity walls, the next step to take is to insulate the cavity. Taking action on windows comes next but most heat loss occurs because of draughts. These are stopped by good secondary double glazing, but can also be stopped by a good weatherstripping system of which there are numerous types available.

The fashion for replacement windows with double glazing is based upon high-pressure salesmanship in a very competitive industry. As a result exaggerated claims are made and scorn is poured upon other materials and this gives a very distorted view of the true situation. It is almost always cheaper and simpler to repair than to replace. Timber when impregnated with preservative does not rot. Steel when galvanised does not rust. Both can be weatherstripped. The message from the Trust is to repair where possible. Where this is not possible, replace like with like. In this way the essential and characteristic appearance of the houses and of the Suburb are maintained.

HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

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