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Caribbean calling

Two postgraduate students from Northumbria University have been invited to the Caribbean to present their research findings and influence planning policy.

PhD student Victoria Gibson and postgraduate researcher Megan McCabe will be speaking at the Caribbean Urban Forum organised by the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) which will be held in Trinidad and Tobago between 13 and 15 March.

Both students are carrying out research into Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), a concept which first came into practice in

the 1970s as a means of designing environments to deter crime.

Victoria, originally from Wideopen, said: “We discovered that, at the moment, there is no holistic crime prevention framework that has been successfully developed by used academia and transferred to professional practice and that’s leading to confusion in the industry world-wide.

“Although using design to deter criminality is a recognised technique, the fact that it’s not used in a standardised way across the built environment translates to a lack of understanding across all disciplines.”

To counter this, the students have recommended a new, over-arching framework which could be adopted by those in the building professions. The new framework seeks to clarify the underlying values and the intended goals of the crime prevention approach and sets out ways in which environments can be designed to “build out crime,” encourage use and develop safety.

Megan, who lives in Consett in Co. Durham, added: “There is a high crime rate in the Caribbean but there is also a lot of urban regeneration going and a desire to deal with crime issues so we hope to be able to demonstrate how to use the framework to encourage a more holistic approach to planning to deter crime. There’s real potential for our research to have a direct impact on their planning process.”

Both students are being sponsored in their postgraduate studies by Concept Building Services (Southern) Ltd whose support has enabled them to attend the conference.

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