

IMAGINE IF THE CITY YOU LIVED IN WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE YOUR DAY TO DAY LIFE MORE UNCOMFORTABLE.*

Anti-homeless architecture

Also known as *hostile architecture* and *defensive architecture* is a form of architecture used to prevent certain behaviors - particularly loitering and sleeping outdoors.

These architectural designs create unsafe spaces and surfaces for the homeless community. As an already marginalized group, the homeless are considered outcasts in society, often ignored and mistreated.



When the city builds an armrest in the middle of a park bench, it says to someone who needed to sleep there, “You are not welcome here.” When the city adds spikes to the cement of an already hard and uncomfortable sidewalk, it says to the person who needed to sit there, “You are not welcome here.” It makes the message rather clear. It does not need words on a sign, only metal and concrete.*

Who is welcome in public space?



Deeper Problem

It is estimated that there are about 150 million people homeless globally, and an estimated 1.6 billion people living without adequate housing, with the numbers still growing. The issue surrounding homelessness is not just a problem for the government to deal with. At its core, homelessness is a socio-political issue, and it requires more than material things to solve. The word homelessness is misleading because it suggests that the only issue there to solve is lack of a home.*

Homeless people need a place where they can seek safety, and that may not always be under a roof. *Architecture at its most core values, [is] the creation of a place. It's important to remind you that architecture doesn't need four walls and a roof.**

The homeless often prefer to seek safety outdoors than in shelters which is why access to public spaces is very important. Public spaces should be inclusive and able to accommodate the homeless community. Sleeping outdoors should not be criminalized. They are people who need public space more than the people who may desire to use it.

HAVE YOU NOTICED?

Common Examples of anti-homeless architecture include:

- Slanted benches, benches with armrests – slanted benches are uncomfortable to sit on, benches with armrests do not allow for people to lie down and rest
- Spikes on the ground – creates unsafe surface areas



It is easy for an issue like this to be overlooked. It's also likely that you may have even become desensitized to the issue of homelessness because it's so common, especially in a busy city like NYC.

Other forms of anti-homeless architecture are installations of sprinklers and bicycle racks in uncommon areas, noise alarms to scare away homeless people from resting, urine proof paint, metal balls on the ground and spiked railings. All these examples may not cause an inconvenience to the common person, but they make life more difficult for someone who is homeless and can even put their life at risk. Please remember that homeless people are humans that deserve respect too and have feelings, being scrutinized when they are out in public is already mentally taxing.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- **INFORM YOURSELF**
Becoming aware about the issue with anti-homeless architecture and homelessness is the first step to bringing upon change
- **SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS**
Local businesses and organizations have initiatives to help the homeless community, from employing them to donating profits
- **DONATE**
Donations of food, clothing and supplies are always appreciated
- **VOLUNTEER**
Please take the time to volunteer and offer your services, help is always needed

DONATE/VOLUNTEER AT:

- ✓ Soup Kitchens
- ✓ Social Service Organizations
- ✓ Food pantries
- ✓ Shelters