

Hostile Architecture; The art of keeping the public out of public spaces

Hostile architecture is a design that has been more prevalent recently within New York. It's a design intended to ensure public safety. However observers say it's "inhumane and primarily affects the homeless".

Hostile/Defensive architecture is a problem that New Yorkers see everyday yet it hides in plain sight. It goes unnoticed by most because of how inconspicuous it can be. You've probably just never noticed. After seeing the examples provided in this photo essay you will start to take notice of hostile architecture. You may even find it in your neighborhood.

This is just one of many examples of hostile architecture.



This piece of architecture was found at Marcy avenue. The photo was taken by Louis Rossmann, a technician who is a content creator on youtube.

In this photo, a train grate was covered with warped steel coming above ground by two and a half feet, alongside the protruding beams sticking out. The homeless population tends to sleep on top of train grates because of the heat they produce. The homeless use this to stay warm in harsh winter conditions. The warped steel prevents people from sleeping or sitting on the grate, this forces homeless people to find new locations where they can survive the winter.

If that seems new to you, here is one that is the most common here in New York.



George Etheredge took this photo for The New York Times. Although there is no listed location, this piece of hostile architecture is so common you could find it almost anywhere in New York.

If you have ever seen these spikes, you might have asked yourself why they are there and what they are used for. The spikes on top of the railing prevent people from sitting on them. This type of architecture doesn't just affect the homeless, rather the lives of all New Yorkers who are trying to sit and rest. It is viewed by many as an inconvenience

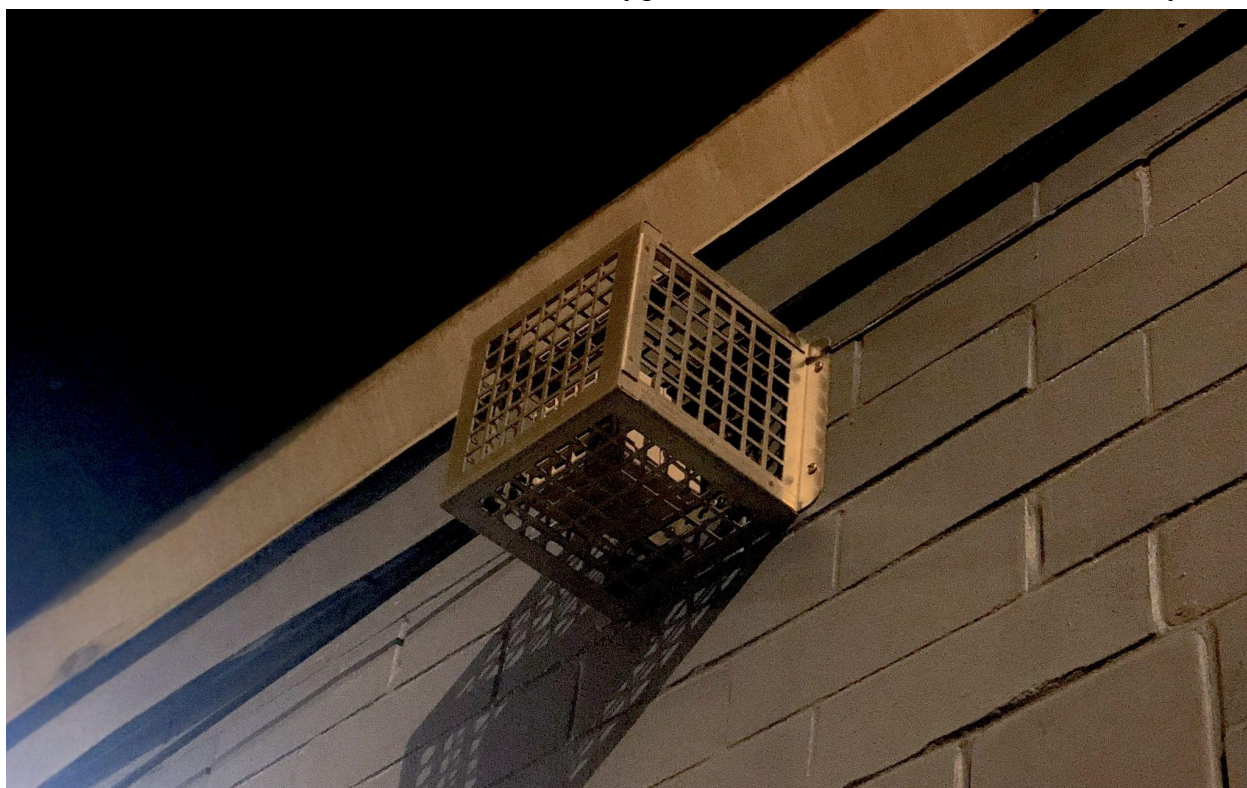
rather than a contributing piece of architecture. This is a very popular amongst architects and takes on many forms.

This piece of architecture was found on East 96th Street



They serve the same purpose as the railing. Spikes are one of the most common pieces of hostile architecture because of how effective they are. It's one of the best ways to keep people off the architecture. While they are one of the best ways to deter people they are also dangerous to people with disabilities, such as the blind. There have been scenarios where people have fallen on these spikes and have been injured.

While most hostile architecture uses structures others deterrents use sound. This device was found in Markward Playground which is located in New Jersey



This device is called the mosquito, its purpose is to use sound to deter people away from areas. It produces a high frequency that people in young age groups can hear, they are mostly found near stores and in most public areas. The device's main focus is to prevent groups of young people from congregating for extended amounts of time in public areas. This can also affect some homeless people who meet that age criteria, if you're homeless under the age threshold trying to find an area to rest you now have to be wary of the mosquito device.

Many individuals believe this device not to be necessary as they are inconvenient and disturb the public. If this type of defensive architecture continues, who knows what's next to deter "loitering". In some European countries they started to use sprinklers to deter individuals which is very dangerous. Imagine if you're homeless trying to survive the winter, then get sprayed with water. This will increase the chance of receiving hypothermia.

Another common attribute in these public places that are against the homeless are seen in public benches.



Most benches have armrests or dividers on them. While many see this as just an armrest another purpose it serves is to prevent people from sleeping on it. As you can see in the picture, homeless people have to sleep on floors due to the dividers. Notice how the so called armrests are not even elevated to hold your arms up. This just goes to show how these so-called armrests really only target homelessness.

When you dive into the subject of hostile architecture you start to see the injustices homeless people face. They are also an inconvenience to the general public. Most of the architecture listed does more harm than good.

The spikes for example are meant to prevent people from sitting or sleeping in areas but in reality are seen as inconveniences by many and make homeless people's lives a lot harder. If hostile architecture continues like this it won't be long before the people who are forced to live on the streets have nowhere to seek shelter and survive harsh conditions. This could lead to the death of many homeless people. If we don't start to seriously think about this hostile architecture, it might become more of a danger than an inconvenience. Today it spikes, tomorrow who knows what will be next. Instead of

putting funding toward the architecture we should redirect it into building new homeless shelters.

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