## Anti-Homeless Architecture.

Anti-homeless Architecture refers to the way some space is intentionally occupied with either fixed metal cones or barbed wires or anything that makes the space, that would have been otherwise vacant, unfit for the use by anyone the owner of property deems unfit/unwanted.

## Literary Origin.

For many years urban architecture has aimed to exclude “unwanted” groups from a private or state-owned property. The relatively newly devised subsect of architectural planning has been mentioned and documented in several literary sources over the years (e.g. Blakely and Snyder 1997). An Artist Nils Norman has been capturing what according to him is “Defensive Architecture” since late 90s. His 2001 book The Contemporary Picturesque features pictures of various methods contributing towards “Hostile Architecture”. The renowned and hugely influential scholar Jane Jacobs and the school of “new urbanism” have also been interpreted as opposing defensive architecture on the grounds that it makes the city landscape less diverse and thereby worse for most people (Ederyd and Aneljung 2015, 26).

Methods and Appearance.  
Illustrious examples of this particularly controversial pseudo architecture can be seen in major American cities including Portland, New York, Las Vegas etc., major cities in UK, an occurrence in Mumbai faced major backlash when a facility under use of a major private bank installed metal spikes to deter homeless. The methods indicate that this was not an impulsive decision or a thoughtless retaliation to a provocation, but a carefully structured and state supported practice that gradually gained the support of state through mere ignorance. The kind of lack of consideration for a sect that is planned, looked after and subsidized. The use of water sprinklers at a place a homeless could have made a bed, shows that there are people, willing to bear the expenses of installation and the water used for this purpose. Metal dividers started appearing on state installed benches barring anyone from sleeping on them. Is this a result of careful observation of apparent havoc cause by the “unwanted” community, or a self-satisfying urge to seek assurance of higher standards and hygiene?

Arguments Against.   
1. The world has been ignoring a few basic economic principles for decades now, countless major cities can be personified as a billboard shouting “Homeless aren’t welcome here”. The ideal economics theories suggest that ‘ignoring’ homelessness costs more than actually fixing the issue of homelessness, take into account that homelessness alone costs Canadian economy over $7billion a year.   
2. The concept of Anti-Homeless Architecture, also called Hostile Architecture or ‘Defensive Architecture’, sprang up in countless major cities around the world, adding additional expenses to the humanitarian and capital cost of homelessness just to make life on streets a few times more unbearable for people in need.  
3. The fact that this practice includes use of spikes, barbed wires, metal traps etc. to fend away a specific stratum and for a specific purpose. But what if an elderly, or children steps/falls on the hostile additions to ground or walls by mistake. Will the state/owner take responsibility for such accidents?  
4. There are people who need public spaces more than someone taking a lunch break on a bench. Statistics suggest that a majority of homeless population is a result of failures of governments in providing proper opportunities to the general population or due to aftermath of a natural calamity. What warrants making a certain stratum feel excluded over failures that are not their own. Even if homelessness of a being is on him/herself, does that mean they aren’t welcome in a state functioned by privileged? Is that the future we are heading towards as a global community?   
5. The last but probably the most important objection to defensive planning is that everyone has a right over public spaces.

## Arguments For.

1. The first and foremost argument in support of defensive architecture is simply the notion of ownership. An owner feels, and in some cases rightly so, that the space being rented or bought by him/her should not be of use for anyone else.
2. The cases of vandalism or harm to public or private property warrants the means used take precautions against the unwanted behavior.
3. Many feel unsafe at bus stops or subways when other people are sleeping on benches and where panhandling occurs.

## Solutions.

It is important to note that almost all alternatives to anti-homeless architecture begin with the banning of hostile planning in the first place. And banning of defensive planning in public spaces can be defended in law with several articles that strengthen the right of each individual over public property. Private properties on the other hand can be protected in a more efficient and less hostile way.  
1. Barricading is the best alternative to usage of metal spikes or water sprinklers. If an individual tries to get through fences, he/she can be held for trespassing if the owner wishes to press charges.  
2. State can accommodate the homeless at designated safe spaces, or public property where the needy would not appear as criminals.

## Conclusion.

Defensive architecture which started off as a way to ensure apparent standards have somehow evolved into elaborate ways to make a community feel unwelcome and unwanted. Cases may exist in which defensive architecture negatively affects the well-being of the worst-off, where it is a clear sign of disrespect, and where people’s rights, on the whole, are violated. On the other-hand some specific circumstances may warrant the use of gentle defensive architecture to make the society feel safe as a whole. A city is meaningless if it cannot shelter those in need. Yet, defensive architecture can be justified if the homeless are given other spaces for refuge.