CUTTING CRIME WITH URBAN DESIGN

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New forms of technical security appear each year. This is an autonomous security robot now patrols properties.
Security target hardening at a Brazilian bank locks the tellers away from customers in a bullet proof fish tank – target hardening was never part of the original CPTED program.
So-called “homeless reduction technologies”, like these UK seating spikes, do little more than displace the homeless to someone else’s front door … there is a better way
So what is CPTED?

CPTED has been around since the 1960s. Founded through her book Death and Life of Great American Cities by writer Jane Jacobs, and Defensible Space by Oscar Newman, later forms of CPTED divided into two categories.

Today CPTED is a prevention tool, an urban design strategy and - with the advent of SafeGrowth - a new system for urban planning.
Reduce physical crime opportunities

Modify the physical environment

Create a sense of territorial control

BUT - people must feel something for the place or for each other
Reduce crime motives & build social cohesion (collective efficacy)

Targeted social programming

People learn how to feel something for their place & each other
Here a Toronto corner store owner realized after installing bars to deter burglaries, that there was a better way to generate positive community activity at her store, thereby making it unattractive to burglars and robbers.
She opened her store up as a neighborhood gathering place for barbeques and social activities. This increased the sense of “cohesion and neighborliness” by local residents.
By opening up her store walls to local artists, she not only built a relationship with residents but also reinforced positive motivations so that locals would take informal “territorial ownership” of her property and keep an eye during evening hours.
Alleyways are another urban land use prone to crime and fear, particularly poorly maintained laneways with no lighting and no people.
In this redeveloped Denver alleyway urban designers changed the layout, size and width to open up sightlines and allow for other legitimate activities, while still providing enough space for trash pickups.
Architects created sitting areas and porches at the rears of homes to allow informal gathering and better natural surveillance by residents.
In this SafeGrowth training example, local residents decided to construct their own community garden to encourage positive social activities on the street.
By locating a community garden at the end of a high risk laneway, a positive activity generator helps deter potential thefts and crime.
In a Burnaby, British Columbia example, an annual CPTED class that I conducted back in the 1990s used this shopping mall and underneath parking lot as a site visit case study. Eventually mall owners redesigned the stairway to the parking lot with glass glazing to open sightlines and improved natural surveillance.
Within the parking lot, designers used white lighting and light color pavement treatment to demarcate an exit so patrons could find their way safely. Evenly spaced yellow sodium lighting lit the lot. Today that sodium lighting is being replaced in many places with lower cost, and brighter, white LED lighting.
At the underground entrance to the parking lot designer used glass glazing around the entire entry platform so patrons could view out into the parking lot before entering the lot.
In Milwaukee, SafeGrowth class members identified abandoned lots as a land use that attracts unwanted activity, drug dealing and litter.
One CPTED response to abandoned lots is community gardens. They are not only an effective activity generator that deter crime, but they create what 2nd Generation CPTED calls social cohesion (what sociologists call collective efficacy).
CASE STUDY: In 2000, in north Toronto’s infamous “Jane/Finch” corridor, our SafeGrowth team was asked to use 1st Generation CPTED, 2nd Generation CPTED, and community-building strategies – what later became known as the SafeGrowth Planning Model.

The San Romanoway apartments are located in Toronto’s infamous Jane-Finch Corridor.
Among Canada’s highest crime neighborhoods
Gangs, drugs, shootings, violence, fear
Research included qualitative and quantitative data analysis. We taught resident mothers survey methods and they helped collect data. We recommended social cohesion by establishing a community association to develop programs and improve quality of life. The San Romanoway Revitalization Association was the result.
Initial programming was all 2nd Generation CPTED. It included music programs and the construction of an on-site recording studio so local rappers could refine their skills and offer their work for professional sales.
The local Odeon Theatre Corporation donated Canada’s first apartment theatre to the San Romanoway apartments. This helped build pride and a much needed recreational service for residents.
The summer tennis camps success at San Romanoway spread throughout the city. Years later tennis superstar Serena Williams opened the camp with local children.
Violent crime ↓ 35% - 49%
Property crime ↓ 13% - 20%
Fear ↓ 20% - 30%
Participation with neighbors ↑ 17% - 32%

Victimization survey and quality of life data collected in 2002, 2004 and 2006
A decade later the community building, CPTED 1, CPTED 2, and social cohesion strategies continue.

Turning a rundown highrise into a community hub

San Romanoway is a success story on how highrises with high crime — and vacancy — can be reactivated to value families and community.

By ISABEL TEOTONIO Staff Reporter
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The international portal for advanced CPTED training and research around the world is the International CPTED Association - ICA.
www.cpted.net

The non-profit, International CPTED Association also coordinates the only professionally acknowledged CPTED accreditation program for those interested in qualified certification.
The POPCenter has published a CPTED Guidebook for officers at http://www.popcenter.org/tools/pdfs/cpted.pdf
The SafeGrowth planning model is the latest development in CPTED. It employs 1st and 2nd Generation CPTED, but in a more holistic fashion onto neighborhood development. It is coordinated by AlterNation LLC (www.alternation.ca).