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## **Defensible Space Theory**

This writing is about how architecture as environmental design influences the perception of safety in Johannesburg.

Based on research by, CSIR Building and Construction Technology, the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) presents theories that looking into the connection between spatial planning and crime, architectural design and urban, and the use and management of the realised environment. Through these supposed factors it is said certain types of crimes can be reduced.

The basic elements of a crime in this context include a victim/target, an offender and the crime location/environment being opportunity securer/host. Factors that enable a plausible crime location/location for instance is a desolate driveway with overgrown roadside vegetation and poor quality of lighting. With this acknowledgment, it is critical to analyse each situation carefully before implementing an intervention.

The five principles of CPTED are seen to be key in achieving a safer environmental design in that their implementation link into account of the other as mechanism of safety. However, they can either increase or decrease crime opportunities. These principles include, target hardening, image and aesthetics, access and escape routes, territoriality, and finally, surveillance and visibility;

### **Target Hardening**

Common in Johannesburg, reduce the opportunity for crime by alluding away attention and malice attraction. As a design it entails high wall that deprive sight of what takes place on the property. This tool, however, deprives any form of passive surveillance which promotes isolation and less opportunities of receiving help during an invasion.

#### Image and Aesthetics

Designed space that decay overtime due to neglect inflict fear to people and increase number of negative users of the space (i.e offenders). Its is advised to keep these space live and not deserted by introducing human scale and attractive colours. Failure, the space will overgrow vegetation and become a refuge for perpetrators increasing the crime rate in the environment.

#### Access and Escape Routes

Tracts of vacant lands whether with an existing building or not become hot spots for criminal activity as they host favourable features for clear escape. These are the areas found to have overgrown vegetation.

#### Territoriality

This is an effect of clearly defined public and private zone with limited unsafe areas and space configuration legible to the user. Users feel entitlement and are able to identify with the space they work or live. Automatic enforced passive observation takes place here and simultaneously the upkeep and maintenance of the designed environment by its user.

#### Surveillance and Visibility

In sync with territoriality, is about the extent of visual interaction between users and space during their normal activities as the day progresses. The fear of falling a victim of crime by a user in space is influenced by lighting and interrupted lines of sight.

## Conclusion

Justified by the the theories mention above, a design intervention influences the user of the space by granting opportunities of positive or negative intent. A successful environmental design limits the opportunity of malice intent and is easily receives entitlement by its user.