



# **Defensible Space - Crime Prevention Through Urban Design (Architectural Design for Residential Security in Our Cities)**

*Oscar Newman*

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Concern over high crime rates and deteriorating inner-city neighborhoods has reawakened interest in Defensible Space, architect Oscar Newman's groundbreaking physical design approach to crime prevention. Defensible Space theory encompasses a wide range of planning and design strategies that focus attention on reassigning the perceived ownership of residential space. Newman argues that when common spaces associated with highrise housing—such as community rooms and outdoor grounds—lack clear owners or are open to too many users, residents cannot assert responsibility for their safety and maintenance, and these places are left vulnerable to crime and vandalism. Newman advocates recreating a sense of ownership in these spaces by dividing and "assigning them to individuals and small groups to use and control as their own private areas." Once residents reestablish control of their environment, "the criminal is isolated because his turf is removed," writes Newman.

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