FIFTH YEAR DESIGN THESIS

A medium custody prison
for Western North Carolina

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Spring 1965
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Jerzy E. Glowczewski - Critic
Fundamental and far-reaching changes have evolved in the systems of treating and handling of prisoners. The reform movement is well established in the United States taking light from the examples set in Sweden and Brazil. Unfortunately there has been no corresponding evolution in the design of these institutions. At present penal architecture is still in the grip of the medieval philosophy, an environment where security and social punishment is paramount.

Because this philosophy did not succeed in scaring people into compliance with the law, a new approach was sought, and current hopes lie in individualized treatment, where each inmate receives consideration according to his own needs, merits and progress.

It seems that the history of prison architecture has been characterized by too heavy a reliance upon "fashions." We may not need drawing board novelties any more than we need an undue reliance upon standard solutions, but we do need imaginative searching for new ways to solve architectural problems. Prisons built during the nineteenth century were expected to last for centuries, as indicated by cell partitions that were a foot thick and by strong walls of granite. The very solidity of such construction and the basic inflexibility of the older type of layouts have proved a great disadvantage. Correctional philosophy however is in a fluid state. Behind this cliche lurk some of our family quarrels in penology. In all frankness, we must face up to the unpleasant fact that while definite trends in correctional philosophy can be noted, the effectiveness of most of these programs has not yet been established. Honest differences of opinion among penologists reflect differences in training, experience, age and personality. The treatment approach, with its usual ameliorations of prison harshness, currently claims the most articulate and numerous spokesmen. Nevertheless, the architect may not have the satisfaction of being
able to cull out foible and fad from fact, but must instead rely on the best-informed judgments available to him at the time.

Understanding that these best-informed judgments may change, that the character of the inmate population may also change in a generation, the architect must provide a physical plant and plan which possess some flexibility. The prison of 1962 may have to take on some strange functions by 1972. Some of these functions we cannot anticipate. Pre-release housing is a good example of the latter. Already, some prisons provide separate facilities for men about to be released on discharge or parole. There are good psychological and sociological reasons to separate these men from the general inmate population. There are also good reasons that such facilities should be physically less isolated from the outside community. In some European prisons inmates work for private employers in the daytime and return to the prison enclosure at night. Whether such a housing unit is inside or outside the prison proper, serious new administrative and architectural problems appear. Another new or augmented function appears with the increased use of group therapy in its several varieties as well as with more conventional individual interviewing by professional staff. Some ingenuity will be needed to provide such activities with settings that are at the same time informal, attractive and conveniently accessible to prisoners while providing necessary dignity, separation and privacy. It is also probable that more states in the future will adopt the use of conjugal visits. When or if they do, special facilities like those in some South American countries will have to be provided.

It is my purpose to design one specific type of institution, the medium custody prison for tractable, successfully married, felons (20 percent of all prisoners in North Carolina). A classification I have myself created
based on the assumption that within the near future extensive orientation centers will be set up to test newly committed criminals. This will create a new and more efficient classification system which would place criminals in an environment most suited for their rehabilitation.

DESIGN GOALS

To advance an architectural solution that will establish a basis for the breakdown of mass classification and the current "cell block" environment.

To evolve a system of zones and employ the most modern methods of technology so as to lessen the feeling of security.

To introduce a new flexibility into the prison complex so as to let it breathe with new methods of penal treatment.

To create a new public image that will not see the prison as a medieval fortress where a criminal is sent to pay his debt to society.

To utilize the far reaching effects of monthly weekend visits by wives, through the employment of a network of social workers, both in the prison and at home to attack the actual source of the problem.

To create an environment that will, by its very nature, add to the educational and rehabilitation programs of the prison, so as to strengthen the main purpose of prisons that of returning its inmates to society with the willingness to accept the laws set down by our culture.

DESIGN CONCEPT

The service facilities will be grouped into a central core type
arrangement which will be "openly" planned in itself. The following functions will be included:

Dining and Kitchen
Warehouse
School, library and industrial shops
Auditorium
Gymnasium
Commissary
Barber Shop
Chapel

Vocational training shops and the industrial shops will be located within the broad limits of the core, but on the fringes and outside the center of principal circulation.

The administration building will be strategically accessible to the central core but not in its immediate vicinity.

Housing units will be located apart from one another and apart from the central core, but well related to the core in terms of circulation. The units will have many recreational and lounge facilities of their own and they will share in the use of other larger athletic facilities.

Weekend visiting facilities will be totally separate except for mechanical and certain security links.

Preconceived physical solution with no apparent morphological or conceptual bases where is this critical phase of the design process?
AREA REQUIREMENTS

Housing ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 31,250

single rooms, 250 @ 80 sq ft 20,000

Toilet facilities, including showers @ 20 sq ft per man 5,000

Recreation and group therapy rooms @ 20 sq ft per man 5,000

Personal storage @ 5 sq ft per man 1,250

Central Core ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 66,425

Dining and food preparation 13,275

Inmate dining and toilets - 250 men 4,000

Staff dining, 80 people 1,300

Main kitchen 2,000

Bakery 1,600

Scullery 250

Pots and day stores 500

Office for administrator & ass'ts 475

Staff kitchen 450

Inmate lockers 500

Refrigerated areas 1,900

Trash room 300

Warehouse 11,800

General storage 7,500

Hold room 400

Refrigerated storage 2,500

Office for storekeeper & ass't 400

Receiving area 1,000

School 3,150

Administration offices (5 @ 120) 600

Classrooms, 2 @ 400 sq ft and
  2 @ 600 sq ft 2,000

Inmate toilets 100

Staff toilets, M & W 150

General storage 300

Library (8,000 volumes) 4,000

Auditorium (275 seats) 3,550

Seating 2,000

Stage 800

Projection room 150

Lobby & toilets 600

Gymnasium 9,050

Arena 7,600

Equipment storage 400

Dressing room lockers 350

Showers & toilets 500

Instructors office 200
Central Core, continued

Chapel (100 seats)  2,000
Barber shop (6 chairs)  600
Laundry  4,000

Vocational training, industrial shops and maintenance  15,000
8 offices  1,500
drafting and file room  400
training classroom, 3 @ 400 sq ft  1,200
aptitude testing  200
communications shop  200
woodworking shop  2,000
paint shop  1,000
plumbing & sheetmetal shop  2,000
welding & machine shop  3,000
electric shop  2,000
tool storage  500
materials storage  1,000

Supporting facilities  39,290

Administration  4,900
main entry, lobby & related facilities  1,000
wardens suite (2 offices & sec.)  450
business administration facilities (8 offices and sec. pool)  1,900
conference room  300
mail room  300
telephone equipment room  300
inactive records  450
personal lounge & toilets  500

Infirmary  3,430
4 private rooms @ 80  320
2 three man rooms @ 200  400
examination suite  350
minor surgery suite  400
doctors office & lav.  300
nurses station  150
pharmacy  100
storage  250
dentist office & lav.  150
dentist examination (2 chairs)  250
laboratory  120
x-ray  220
heat treatment & whirlpool  150
darkroom  70
waiting room  200

Counseling center  480
4 offices @ 120  480
file room  120
Supporting facilities, continued

Counseling center, cont.
- conference room: 240
- waiting and reception: 200
- toilets, M & W: 200
- testing center: 250

Custodial staff: 2,560
- 8 offices @ 120: 960
- communications center: 300
- locker & toilets: 300

Visiting facilities: 28,400
- 60 efficiency apt. units @ 375: 22,500
- problem center: 240
- movie theater: 1,500
- recreation: 2,000
- commissary: 2,000

The following people have consented to be members of the Advisory Committee:

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