"Why does no-one ask us our opinion?

I don't become incapable of intelligent observations just because I've come to prison."

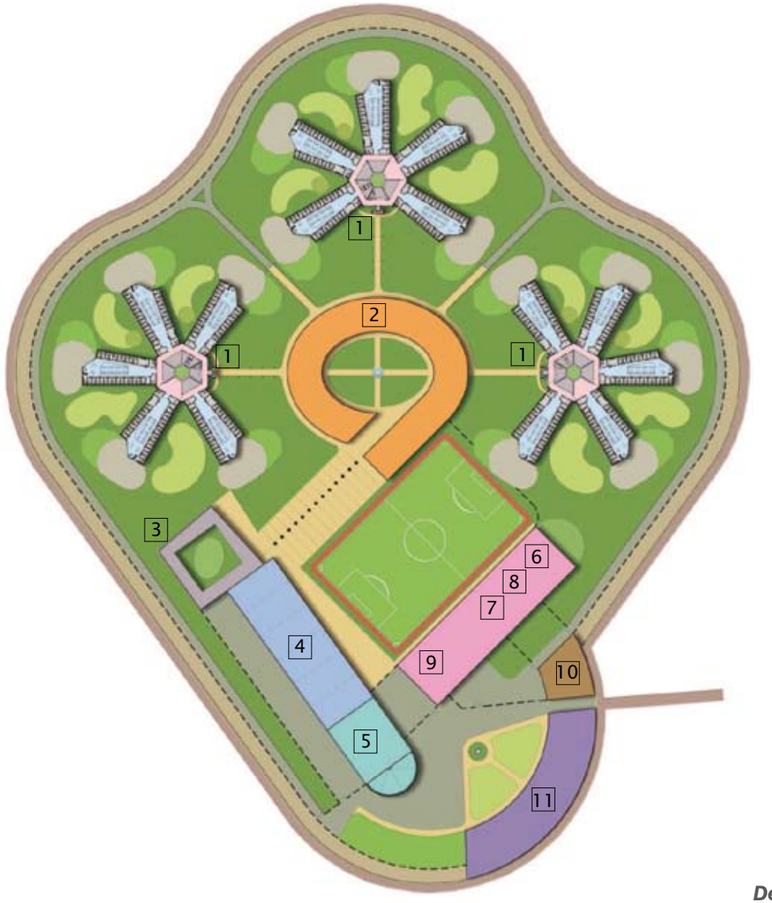
Inmate, HMP Gartree

The Creative Prison

Inside the Architecture: The role of consultation

© Rideout 2007

Seven Pathways Prison (900+ inmates) © Peter Mellor
Managing Offenders - Reducing Re-Offending



1. **House Units**
   Internal courtyards.
   Dispersed Education & Group Room, Out reach
   Primary Care around Therapeutic Activity Space
   2 level for 300 Offenders in groups of 60
   4 level for 600 Offenders in groups of 60

2. **Learning Resource Centre**
   Job Seeker Library Information, copy
   Physical Education Care
   Cognitive & Special Needs Programs

3. **Re - Orientation Unit**
   Offending Behaviour Unit with Group and Education Activity

4. **Vocational Training & Industries**

5. **Central Kitchen**
   Training Kitchen & Staff Facility

6. **Health Care Centre**
   Out- Patient
   In-Patient
   Health Education

7. **Visits & Family Visits**
   Video Court

8. **Program Managers**
   Key Worker including In-Reach Mental Health

9. **Reception**

10. **Entry Building**

11. **Administration**

Designed by Peter Mellor as an interpretation of the principles of the Creative Prison (The Creative Prison; Creative Thinking within the Prison Estate, Rideout, 2006)

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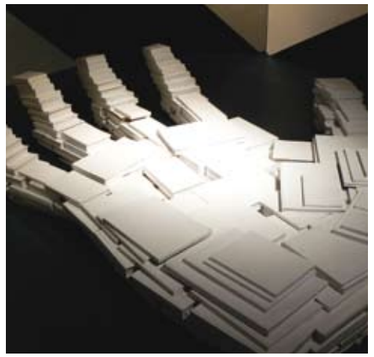
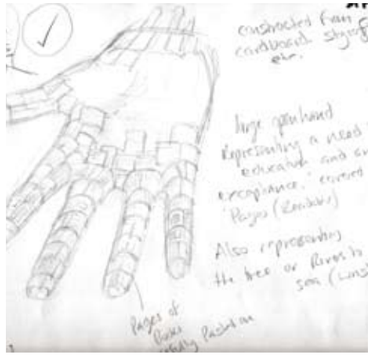




Foreword

The Creative Prison: Inside the Architecture is an inspirational initiative. I warmly congratulate all those involved, and especially Chris Johnston and Saul Hewish whose vision this is. At the time of the riots in our prison system which led to the Strangeways Inquiry I was very conscious that the setting in which a prisoner is detained could effect the conduct of those imprisoned, and the Report had a most valuable contribution on this subject which never received the attention it should. Alas after a short period of optimism when it seemed my recommendations were being successfully implemented, the Prison Service was once again overwhelmed by overcrowding so the progress that was achieved across the prison estate as a whole ground to a halt. Unfortunately since then we have become stranded in a cul-de-sac.

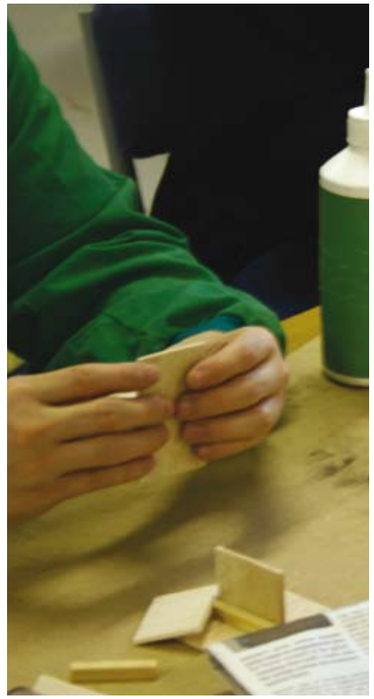
Fortunately, it is beginning to be appreciated there must be another way if we are to be provide the public with protection against the shocking rate of re-offending to which they are entitled. We need a new beginning and where better to start than with the buildings in which prisoners are incarcerated. We all, including prisoners, react to the setting in which we live. It can have a negative or positive effect. The Creative Prison publications illustrate what can be achieved by a positive setting. If offenders' attitudes are to be changed, as they must be if prisons are going to be effective, then we should start with the environment in which this is to happen. This must itself be positive both for prisoners and those who work in prisons. The Creative Prison: Inside the Architecture provides the way this can be done. I earnestly hope its message is heard and implemented.

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Woolf

Introduction

'Over the last 30 years, the design of prisons has been dominated by political reaction to the phenomenal rise in crime which resulted in dramatic increases in prison population. In such circumstances, housing the convicted and remand occupants in a secure environment has taken precedence over other thinking and experimentation. During this period when there was no real consensus of agreement, even in one country, of the balance of purpose of incarceration, the accepted design process by which form follows function has been little in evidence. Successful containment of the prisoner continued to be an all important political response to public opinion. Creating a civilized and humane prison environment, dedicated not only to security, but to education, reform and rehabilitation of offenders demands a consistent approach in imaginative thinking and constructive dialogue by prison officialdom and architects.'

(Partridge, 2000)



The background to this document lies in the consultation conducted by Rideout (Creative Arts and Rehabilitation) with staff and prisoners at HMP Gartree, involving the architect Will Alsop in 2005-6[1]. This consultation project, The Creative Prison, was prompted by a growing recognition of the importance of prison design and architecture in the light of escalating prison numbers and the legacy of our current institutions. Serious questions have been raised about the ability of these buildings to effectively serve the evolving objectives of the Prison Service.

Currently, these are defined as;

- to hold prisoners securely
- to reduce the risk of prisoners re-offending
- to provide safe and well-ordered establishments in which we treat prisoners humanely, decently and lawfully.

In securing these objectives the Prison Service aims to *'deal fairly, openly and humanely with prisoners.... encourage prisoners to address offending behaviour and respect others.... value and support each other's contribution..'* *(Prison Service Statement of Purpose, 2003)*

The extent to which the Service achieves these aims is obviously contingent on a wide range of factors, one of which must be prison design and architecture. As it was reported here in a study commissioned by the Prison Service in 1997,

'There can be little doubt that what is possible in any prison–whether in terms of security, control or regime delivery–is highly dependent upon the physical constraints of the buildings themselves, often with direct consequences for staffing levels and the provision of 'purposeful activities'.'

(Bottomley et al, 1997)

1 Detailed information on this work is contained in the companion document, The Creative Prison: Creative Thinking within the Prison Estate.

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This document puts forward the case that if prison design is to effectively achieve the aims of the Prison Service and NOMS (National Offender Management Service), it must now begin to substantially engage in a process of consultation with staff and prisoners regarding the design issues associated with both the extension of existing prisons and the commissioning and building of new ones. It considers the arguments in favour of consultation along with some proposals as to how it might be achieved, while recognising the potential difficulties of such a practice becoming embedded within the process of prison building. It acknowledges the current overcrowding crisis while arguing that this situation cannot be used as an excuse to give up on best practice. The document by no means aims to be the last word on the subject. Our hope is to stimulate further reflection and encourage more wide-ranging and comprehensive discussions than are possible here.

A. A Point of Comparison: the Health Service

It would appear that the Health Service is already considerably advanced in its recognition of the importance of building design, and in recent years has been acting on it in ways that may be useful as a reference point when considering prisons. After all, hospitals, like prisons, are large institutions with a duty of care. This extract from a 2005 report by CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) summarises several of the arguments in favour of good design:

Design makes a difference – contributions to health outcomes

The justification for investing in design can be shown in health and financial terms by a substantial weight of empirical evidence. Several research projects in recent years have looked at the effect of the immediate environment on patients in hospitals. A study lead by Professor Bryan Lawson at Sheffield University published in 2003 compared new and older accommodation in two hospitals, one in a general medical ward, and the other in a mental health facility. The old and new wards housed the same type of patients and were staffed by the same people so the study was able to examine patients' reaction to their environment. The research found that the new buildings appeared to have a significant positive effect:

- *Reduction by 14% of treatment times in the mental heath sector*
- *Significant reduction in the number of serious cases of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour in the mental health wards*
- *21% reduction in non-operative patient treatment times in the general medical wards*
- *76.5% of patients in the new accommodation thought their environment had helped their recovery compared to 53.5% in the old wards*
- *Patients rated their treatment and the staff themselves higher in the new buildings.*

Design makes a difference - what nurses say

The benefits to staff of a therapeutic environment are also becoming more and more evident. CABE's Healthy Hospitals Campaign questioned health professionals about the quality of their built environment and reported the following:

- *91% of all nurses – and 100% of Directors of Nursing – believe that a well-designed environment is significantly related to patient recovery rates*
- *87% of nurses say that working in a well-designed hospital would help them to do their job better*
- *90% of Directors of Nursing say that patients behave better towards staff in well-designed wards and rooms. 74% of Nurse Managers and 64% of Staff Registered Nurses also agree with this statement*
- *90% of nurses – and 100% of Directors of Nursing and Nurse Consultants – agree that a poorly designed hospital contributes significantly to increased stress levels*
- *79% of nurses believe that the design of a hospital makes a difference to staff morale*

(Statistics from the CABE/ICM study Attitudes Towards Hospitals, August 2003)

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It is arguable that staff in prisons would be no less likely to champion the benefits of good design. Prison staff might even be anticipated to value good design more highly, given the involuntary conditions surrounding their charges. As evidenced in the research conducted by Rideout at HMP Gartree (Rideout, 2006) it is clear that prison architecture fundamentally informs a range of key aspects of prison life, especially the relationships between staff and prisoners and the extent to which staff can effectively carry out their work. Further to this, given the current evidence around mental health issues in prison, suggesting that up to three quarters of inmates have a mental health issue (Prison Reform Trust, 2006), the environment has to be considered a significant factor in the aggrandisation or amelioration of these conditions. In the same Rideout study as mentioned, for example, the issue of noise became crucial – and was evidently a factor in informing how well the prison achieved the ability of prisoners to concentrate on their studies. It was brought home to us how the inmates so much preferred the 'old design' of the house blocks simply because of the noise factor comparisons. In the new blocks, noise 'bled' in ways that made concentration on in-cell reading and writing, difficult. Such an observation must be considered critical in terms of assessing how well a prison is succeeding in improving offenders chances of rehabilitation.

The Centre for Health Design has reported on this issue of noise in hospitals. The report details problems that would be found replicated in prisons:

> *'Hospitals are extremely noisy, and noise levels in most hospitals far exceed recommended guidelines. The high ambient noise levels, as well as peak noise levels in hospitals, have serious impacts on patient and staff outcomes ranging from sleep loss and elevated blood pressure among patients to emotional exhaustion and burnout among staff. Poorly designed acoustical environments can pose a serious threat to patient confidentiality if private conversations between patients and staff or between staff members can be overheard by unintended listeners. At the same time, a poor acoustical environment impedes effective communication between patients and staff and between staff members by rendering speech and auditory signals less intelligible or detectable.'*
>
> *(Joseph & Ulrich, 2007)*

It is not unreasonable to suggest that prisons and hospitals may often house individuals who but for bad luck or bad judgement might well be inhabiting the other institution. They will likely meet similar problems in both places.

If best practice in design is important therefore, how has the Health Service gone about achieving it? Increasingly in recent years, through the means of consultation. In this speech in 2001, the Health Secretary regarded this aspect of new architecture a fundamental tenet:

> *"Design must now be an important and vital feature of this biggest ever NHS hospital building programme - to enhance quality, to embrace patient recovery and to deliver a powerful message about the importance of health and health services to our country. I believe that involving staff in this way from the outset in the designing the new hospital is central to designing-in improved quality of care. The involvement of staff in designing new hospital buildings has already delivered some important improvements for patients. Research shows that well designed hospital environments can have a real impact on patient recovery and welfare. The size and scale of the hospital building -its layout, lighting and landscape - all impact on the condition of the patient."*
>
> *(Alan Milburn, Health Secretary, 2001)*

It is now widely recognised within health service contexts that the views of patients and their relatives offer a valuable resource when it comes to the issue of design.

> *Throughout healthcare, patients and family members are increasingly recognized as the "experts" about the subjective quality of their experience--what matters, what makes them feel better, and what they need to help them recover, heal, and adapt to significant changes in their lives.'*
>
> *(The Picker Institute, 1998)*

Given that the case for good design in the Prison Service can be similarly made, this inevitably leads on to some further questions, *'What are the direct benefits for the Prison Service in consultation?' 'What is good prison design anyway?'* and more particularly, *'What process is most likely to engender it?'*

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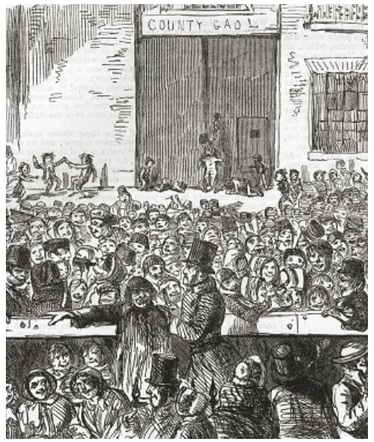

B. The Case for Consultation

Given the principles that NOMS (National Offender Management Service) is putting forward as cornerstones of its policy across all aspects of its work, the failure to consult may be perceived as a failure to deliver on its promise to create a regime in which staff satisfaction is assured and rehabilitation of prisoners considered a priority. During research carried out in development of this paper, it was argued strongly by representatives of NOMS that its 'Seven Pathways' offered both an ideological underpinning for the notion of consultation and a possible framework for its administration. (The scope of the Pathways - Accommodation, Education, Drugs & Alcohol, Health, Finance, Families and Children, and Attitude,Thinking and Behaviour - to provide a template for consultation is provided in Section E.)

Prison staff know how design and organisation of space helps or hinders their daily tasks. They know the routes and the walkways, the doors and the landings and the journeys between all these. They know about the need for sight lines and about their own need to be visible at times and invisible at others. The same is true not just of Prison Officers but of other staff also. Peter Mellor, architect with Capita, records his work on Safer Custody as being especially productive in part because he was granted good access not just to staff administering the Safer Custody suites but to all parties involved in Reception, Health Care and allied activities. In the expansion of HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, it was recognised that the new gym might benefit from having small interview rooms attached so that meetings between visiting legal representatives or other officers could take place with prisoners, without their having to return to cells. But such an idea only arose out of consultation with gym staff.

Nor should it be assumed that prisoners have no role to play. As users of the institution's resources, they are not dissimilar in their role to that of hospital patients, as argued above. Given the stress on the importance of mental health in any process of rehabilitation, the shape, organisation and tone of prison buildings have to impact significantly on the psychology of offenders. It is the prisoners who are best placed, as consumers and users, to comment on these issues. To those who argue that prisoners cannot be trusted to offer opinions of value to any consultation process, it was Rideout's experience at HMP Gartree that prisoners when consulted offered opinions that were characterised more by conservatism and close horizons than irresponsibility or utopianism. Once this patina of cautiousness was broken through, it became apparent that the more thoughtful amongst the prisoners were capable of genuinely insightful contributions.

> *'Although the room is crowded, there is an instant hush when Pete unrolls his designs and spreads them out on the table. As we gather around to get a better look, it's clear that he has worked hard. There is a detailed plan of a building, complete with a central dining area, crèche and chalet apartments and separate watercolours of seemingly carefree people enjoying the space. Pete — a slight and shy man in his 30s — isn't an architect. In fact, the only work available to him pays just £12 a week, for jobs such as making socks or cleaning. Pete is a "lifer" in the high-security Midlands prison HMP Gartree. There is snow on the ground outside but it is warm in the room and there is a playful atmosphere among the seven other inmates scrutinising Pete's ideas. "That's the exact drawing I would have done myself," says Mark, a large shaven-headed man, and everyone laughs.'*
>
> *(Extract from Hurst writing in Building Design, 2005)*

It should be acknowledged that the consultation in the Rideout study was with life-serving prisoners who are recognised to be calmer and more considered in their dealings with staff and visitors. However, contributions from prisoners on different tariffs should not be discounted. After all, rehabilitation itself swings in part on the recognition that prisoners are capable of making sound decisions out of free choice when presented with education and social responsibility, and that those choices will be beneficial in part to the degree to which they have been arrived at through their own, informed choice. This is, after all, the assumption behind the emphasis on cognitive skills-based programmes. Such programmes employ a range of hypothetical or imagined problem-solving questionnaires and puzzles. Yet a real-life puzzle surrounds them, which is ignored. If this hypothesis of offenders capacity for useful and constructive contributions has merit, then their cognitive development and sense of citizenship can only be enhanced by according them some modest status within the conduct of dialogues around prison management. Besides, their recognition that other prisoners will come after them does tend to encourage a sense of responsibility in improving the regime they depart from.

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'There is a mass of evidence that if we get the design right then satisfaction levels improve as do patients' health outcomes and staff productivity.'

http://www.design.dh.gov.uk/ideas

C The Potential Benefits

Before considering how consultation may be managed, it may be valid to summarise the principle benefits:

1. Achieving a Correlation of Form and Function

Architects and planners can directly capitalise on the accumulated knowledge of prison staff and where appropriate prisoners, in defining how the spatial organisation of buildings and the internal design of them can best enhance the day-to-day prison regime. In particular, it can help to identify how form and function may best correlate. It was noticeable in the Creative Prison consultations that both staff and prisoners cited the relationship between the constituencies of staff and prisoners as an area of primary concern. Several of the discussions hinged around the design of the staff offices within the new houseblock. Both staff and prisoners commented on how the design - placing the wing office behind the gate - mitigated against providing prisoners with necessary and appropriate access to staff at a time when they needed to submit applications and other requests. The absence of consultation in this case had apparently led to a design which caused resentment on both sides.

It should be noted that inevitably the prison community will never speak with one voice about how prison design efficacy should be maximised. Nor will these differences of opinion be solely down to the division of the community into prisoners and officers. Different departmental staffs within each prison will invariably hold differing priorities and there is always a danger that the louder voices gain greater influence to the detriment of others whose case is no less valid. It behoves those conducting the consultation to ensure that a balance of competing priorities is achieved within the final recommendations.

2. Developing a Sense of Ownership

Consulting with stakeholders around organisation of space significantly informs not just staff-prisoner relationships and the mechanics of waking, showering, going to classes, eating meals and association. It has the capacity to define the atmosphere of the institution, to hold up a mirror to the occupants in such a way as to reflect back a sense of identity - a notion of who the occupants are considered to be by the authority in the situation. High-walled Victorian buildings were created specifically in order to make the captive occupants feel small, dominated by the architecture and subdued in their spirits - in effect, worthless beings who had no value to society. We have now moved to a point of recognition that if rehabilitation fails, the chances of the prisoner reoffending are high. The prevailing atmosphere should be one that encourages positive reflection, learning and social engagement in the right balance. Above all, it should promote mental health.

Much of this touches on what Alison Liebling has characterised as the 'moral performance' of prison, its ability to harmoniously organise its elements in order to achieve an appropriate regime that is more than the sum of its parts. 'By moral performance we mean those aspects of a prisoner's mainly interpersonal and material treatment that render a term of imprisonment more or less dehumanizing and/or painful.' (Liebling & Arnold, 2004.)

The process of consultation can potentially assist in projecting - almost as it were 'into the building'- the desired values held by staff. There is the possibility of the space being 'owned' to a greater degree by those who necessarily need to assert their moral position over those who may seek to undermine it. The building needs to reflect the moral values of those who would command the right to have those values dominant.

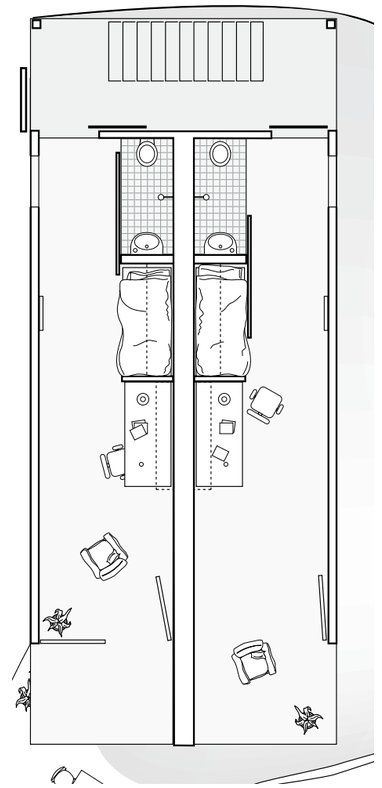
3. Achieving Savings

Consultations engaged in early may help to avoid mistakes that require expensive correction at a later time. In effect, the practice of consultation may save money. In the case of the expansion of HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, a number of recommendations were made to the design of the incoming houseblocks during a process of consultation and negotiations that involved garnering views from staff from Healthcare, the Kitchens, Education, the Gymnasium, Residential and Security. This led to adjustments being made prior to the arrival of the houseblocks. There was a difficulty with the design of the shower cubicles which were 'boxed in' creating a security issue. These designs had to be changed to a 'saloon door' style unit allowing the feet and heads of those using the showers to be observed by officers. There was a further example with the stairwells which needed redesign to remove the 'blind spots' leading to a more effective use of staff. At HMP Gartree during its expansion, mistakes were not corrected early: the toilets were installed without toilet lids, requiring further visits at a later time in order to correct the deficiency. Here the lack of consultation led to increased costs overall. Doubtless many prisons can contribute their own stories in this vein.

4. Ensuring Contingencies

The practice of installing and opening houseblocks prior to the opening of the ancillary service blocks appears to be a feature of many prison expansions. While it is acknowledged that European regulations are a primary cause of this situation, it was expressed to us that there is evidence of insufficient attention being paid to the implications of this time slippage for the governing regime. Were consultation to be a more central part of the process, a shared understanding about agreement over time issues might be the positive result. For example, the fact that temporary buildings have to be ordered and paid for through a separate series of administrative exercises, would appear to suggest that the EPDU (Estates Planning & Development Unit) or its programme managers may not be cognisant on the difficulties this creates for prison staff managing the expansion. Once again, there is a cost issue of the importation of these temporary buildings during the process of refurbishment.

Clearer understanding of the consequences of expansion, especially in the case of (a) the accommodation being used before the other facilities were ready, and (b) the implications for the regime of bringing in temporary accommodation to cover the gap, may be to advantage both in terms of finance and stresses caused to the many staff who are likely to be affected.



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5. Flexibility of Purpose

Should consultation become integrated within the procurement process, there will arguably be greater facility to respond to evolving developments within the world of work outside the prison walls. Should a workshop space be dedicated to a skill set that experiences a decline in demand within society beyond the walls, there is less opportunity for the prison to respond to the changing professional environment. While Rideout was engaged in its consultation with staff and prisoners at HMP Gartree, the business of making and packing socks was still in evidence. While this discontinued during our period there, it was evident to all concerned that this industry was offering little to the prisoners in terms of skill development, being linked to an outmoded idea about simple labour. Furthermore, and crucially, there was insufficient demand in the world outside, even within prison contexts for which the products were directed, to justify the ongoing productivity. The prisoners apparent enthusiasm for the work had little do with the social or industrial value of the work to society, and everything to do with the fact that it offered one of few opportunities to earn money.

D. Relevance of Consultation in the Changing Criminal Justice Context

It's no insight to recognise that a primary concern of contemporary prison building today is speed. This is a time in which news items such as this, from the Guardian, November 5 2006, whether strictly accurate or no, strike us as unsurprising:

> ***'In a sign of its desperation the government has told prison construction companies it will award contracts to any firm that can build a prison by the end of next year. It has also urged prison governors to come up with 'blue sky' thinking to help cope with the crisis.'***

It might be argued that at times when the priority is to build prisons and build prisons fast, there isn't the time to consult. After all, there will be time for that during the next lull. Perhaps so, but there may be some issues to consider before assuming this. Firstly, decisions on design made hastily, inevitably invite the possibility that they may be repented at leisure. The same is true in respect of economic savings; the lowest cost solution is not necessarily the one that gives the best value to NOMS and the Prison Service in the long term. One clear benefit in a fast-moving process is the use of standardisation, which has become a key feature of prison building, in particular the use of the Dow Six houseblocks as created by Caledonian and Interserve. In our limited research, it is evident from the responses of staff working in these buildings that they are enormously preferred to the previous designs. However, it was also expressed to us in confidence that the emphasis on speed may lead to an overlooking of flaws or limitations that may be a feature of these designs. For example, the use of steel throughout the houseblock in question is causing significant problems both of temperature - 'too hot in summer, too cold in winter' - and of sound - 'far more noisy than the old design'. Should there be insufficient prior evaluation of such issues there is a danger that the flaws be replicated and any cost savings lost in the longer term.

In the absence of conformity to anything resembling the former PDBS (Prison Design Briefing System), it is particularly important to have a clear template of priorities to work from (see next section). Similarly, constructors will increasingly be obliged to have reference to the debate around environmental concerns that may be overlooked in a hastened process of building. Another concern expressed by those consulted for this document was that at times of fast decisions, and even at other times, there is a tendency to default to an easy assumption that 'Category B' standards are always applicable irrespective of the particular circumstances of the new buildings. It was argued that reducing re-offending needs to be the consistent priority underpinning all significant decisions regarding new builds, which should not be forsaken under pressure of time and growing prison numbers.

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E. A Potential Benchmark

A range of different modes of consultation might be considered when examining how to approach prison staff and prisoners for input. One consideration is clearly the timing: in the interviews that Rideout conducted with those who have been involved with the process of extending or refurbishing prisons, there emerged a general consensus of the value of consulting early with the key stakeholders, or at least once the broad footprint had been agreed. If this is done, then the consultation forum may be returned to again subsequently as a means to iron out differences of opinion between the different stakeholders that arise.

In the case of extending existing prisons, it is clear who would represent the constituency to consult; prison staff, ancillaries and prisoners. In the case of considering new prisons, it was argued that there would be benefits in approaching a staff group within the closest possible existing model of prison to that planned. Kalyx[2] already makes this procedure routinely when tendering. In other words, to find the prison/s with a similar category and capacity and to explore with staff at this prison, the issue of layout, design and spatial organisation and how current designs were achieving their objectives.

If consultation is to be effective there needs be clarity around what exactly is being consulted on, the subject matter of the exercise. In other words, to address the question, *'What kind of information is required?'* Answering this is a matter of having in mind fundamental understandings about the role of prison and how at a micro-level design and organisation of space can facilitate this role effectively. Clearly the most comprehensive elucidation of these values currently available may be considered to be the 'Seven Pathways' of the National Offender Management Service, mentioned earlier. These offer criteria of achievement against which existing prisons can be monitored and future ones considered.

The 'Seven Pathways', used as a benchmark for all consultation around issues of prison design, whether in advance of the commissioning of a building, during the process of design or in order to evaluate the efficacy of an existing prison, would generate a template of investigation to anchor the consultation.

Questions relating to each of the Pathways could be constructed. For example:

ACCOMODATION - *To what extent does / will the prison effectively ensure that prisoners are suitably accommodated respecting issues of privacy and taking into account their human rights?*

EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT - *Are the spaces provided for education adequate? Do they take into account the full range of modes of teaching that may be employed? Is there space that can be used for, e.g. acupuncture or movement? Is the space set aside for training able to respond to industrial developments in the world outside?*

2 Kaylx are one of the UK's private prison providers

HEALTH - *Is health catered for adequately to avoid taxiing out inmates to the local hospital for relatively routine treatments?*

DRUGS & ACOHOL - *Are there spaces for drug and alcohol treatment regimes? Do these allow for both group and one-to-one counselling?*

FINANCE, BENEFITS & DEBT - *Is there provision for counselling around issues of finance?*

CHILDREN & FAMILIES - *Is there adequate space for prisoners to inter-relate with family & children and for the fostering of these relationships?*

ATTITUDE, THINKING & BEHAVIOUR - *Is there provision for the development of models of citizenship, through interactive forums in such a way to encourage pro-social thinking and a sense of social responsibility?*

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F. Modes of Consultation

In terms of modes of consultation, that is the processes and procedures to be adopted, Rideout has identified a number that might have application. A mode or format should aim to encompass some *organisational principles*, an indication of *the function of facilitation*, a clear *understanding of what is to be achieved and a process for assimilating the results.*

It was clear from our research that a degree of consultation often currently takes place within an informal context, and arguably this approach has appropriateness in many situations. However, if transferability of research data is considered a priority, which it may be given the need to build on models of best practice, then a degree of orthodoxy and formality in the research process may be required. The modes listed here largely pivot on a more formal approach that involves pre-arranged meetings and predetermined forms of investigation, either involving groups or individuals, and more often than not assuming the formal collection of data. They assume a methodological template rather than simply walking the wings and accumulating anecdotal evidence, useful though that may be on occasion. Several of the examples are drawn from outside a prison building context. It is not necessarily assumed that any format would require to be used in the way it's presented here. These templates are offered as indicative of the kind of consultation practices currently being utilised by architects. Any of these templates would need to be considered against the degree to which it might assist in answering one or both of the two central questions;

> 'To what degree is the existing prison environment assisting or contributing to a reduction in re-offending, and how can we measure the extent to which it is succeeding or failing?'
>
> 'How can we eludicate best practice in respect of existing prison regimes and their ability to reduce reoffending, and successfully reproduce these lessons within new buildings?'

Once the necessity for consultation is accepted, irrespective of the format adopted, it needs be conducted sensitively and appropriately. Prison Dialogues work within the criminal justice system to encourage positive and fluid interactions between prison staff and between prison staff and prisoners. The group argues that facilitating useful dialogue between parties sharing a criminal justice context is often a matter of common sense, o following instinct and being open and non-judgemental when chairing debate. However, their own organisation had formulated what this meant a little more precisely. It meant paying attention to a number of key principles (or 'flags') in facilitating discussions:

VOICE; looking to find authenticity within the contributor
LISTEN; to hear what is being said
RESPECT; acknowledging differences of opinion
SUSPEND; judgement within the process

1. Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

In her book, 'Prisons and their Moral Performance', Alison Liebling sets out some of the key ideas generating what has been termed 'appreciative inquiry'. This model of research tends not to arrive with a close set of predetermined questions, but instead relies significantly on the process of identifying 'best experience'. Here, the questions move outwards from what is recognised as positive in the regime rather than being preoccupied with the ways in which the prison regime is failing. The resulting conversations tend to focus more on the quality experiences and resist getting drawn into a series of negative assertions or complaints. In this extract, she outlines the approach:

> *'We used it in a very limited and exploratory way in Whitemoor, simply as an unusual set of questions. Instead of 'how do you get on with management here?', or 'have you got the resources you need to do y our job?', we asked, 'when do you perform at your best, as a prison officer?'.. We found, through this method, that we could dig deeper into a prison, if we were sensitive to people's achievements as well as to their problems and difficulties.*
>
> *We also adapted the kinds of questions we asked of prisoners, so that we were inviting them to tell us about when life 'worked best' in this prison, or 'if you had one wish for staff-prisoner relationships here, what would it be?' These questions, despite the constraints of prison, solicited creative and energetic answers. The method of AI generated enthusiasm.. Its theoretical claim is that inquiring about best experiences and accomplishments generates energy in the direction of best practice, which can then be used to move the organisation in that direction.'*
>
> *(Liebling & Arnold, 2004)*

Liebling and her colleagues found that this approach tended to generate responses that additionally inter-related different aspects of prison life. It encouraged more wide-ranging, holistic perspectives. Subsequent discussions tended to capture more effectively a sense of the quality of lived experience. Nor should the value of this approach be limited to prison staff. Liebling and her colleagues have used it extensively with prisoners with similar benefit. As noted previously, research within the Health Service around users experience of hospitals has already identified this strategy of targeting 'quality' in research, as being beneficial in terms of improving the effectiveness of hospitals. The Picker Institute, in its report, An Investigation to Determine What Matters has written of how there is a strong need for patients and family members to be considered as perhaps 'truly the only individuals who can tell us... what matters...how patients and their families experience those environments and what it is about them that matters the most.' (Picker Institute, 1998)

In our conversations with Alison Liebling, she suggested that the tone and modus operandi of Appreciative Inquiry would offer an appropriate and insightful tool when considering issues of prison design. As she writes of the AI research conducted at Whitemoor,

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'As a research method, (AI) is participatory, respectful and empowering, and it takes us closer to the 'truth about an organisation' than we have been before. It has a special relevance to the measurement and cultivation of values.'

(Leibling & Arnold, 2004)

'We thought we had found a new way of finding 'the truth about a prison', and we uncovered some previously neglected dimensions in the work of prison officers. Perhaps most important, the participants in the research process found it rewarding, and (unlike some research) emotionally 'safe', and the results relevant and worthy of discussion.'

(Liebling & Arnold, 2004)

The viability of the approach offered an appropriateness for consultations around prison design since the client group is able to draw from their experiences of design that works well and enables the consultants to extend these observations into planning. To a degree, there is a sense within AI that not just the answers but the questions themselves are generated by the chosen client group. For given that it is often the question itself that so significantly determines the scope and character of the answer given - within a research context - it is only fitting that the questions themselves are more democratically arrived at. It is therefore not too far from common sense for a consultant or research to be asking, 'What questions should we be asking when considering issues of prison design?'

2. DQI - Design Quality Indicator

The Design Quality Indicator is a process tool created to evaluate the design quality of buildings. The development of the DQI has been developed with sponsorship from the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry), CABE, Constructing Excellence and the Strategic Forum for Construction and with support from OGC (Office of Government Commerce). It sets out its aim as a means to 'take the guess work out of the whole design process.' By focussing on the needs of the end user, it aims to involve all the stakeholders throughout the process of design and help develop a more sustainable building practice. It also sets out to measure how the improvements measure up along the way.

The value of the DQI, it's asserted, is that is essentially a non-technical means of consultation that can be used by all stakeholders involved in the production and use of buildings. In other words it would be appropriate for staff and prisoners as well as for architects, design firms, contractors and building managers. Its use is rooted in a specific questionnaire that encompasses questions which are relevant at any stage in the development of a building. Further, it can be revisited and re-used throughout the life of the project. Ideally the DQI is used at every key stage of the development. There are four versions of the tool and an online version - DQI Online - that automatically adjusts the questions displayed so they are relevant to the particular phase of the project that is being assessed. The *brief version* allows the project aspirations to be clearly set, addressing the opinions of the stakeholders, and can be used through strategic briefing stages to set priorities and answer questions such as: 'What do we want?' 'Where do we want to spend the money?' *A mid-design version* allows the client and design teams to check whether early aspirations have been met and allows adjustments in focus and quality to be made accordingly. It can be used throughout the design phase while the project can still respond to change. Furthermore, a *'ready for occupation'* version is used immediately before occupation to check whether the brief/original intent has been achieved. Once the building is occupied, an *'in-use version'* is employed in order to receive feedback from the project team and the building users to help make improvements for the next project, and can lead on to more thorough post-occupancy studies.

The DQI questionnaire is a short, simple, non-technical set of statements that collect the views from all stakeholders by breaking down the potentially complex set of issues around building design into three key areas; *functionality, build quality* and *impact*:

Functionality is concerned with the way in which the building is designed to be useful and is split into *use, access and space*

Build quality relates to the performance of a building fabric and is split into *performance, engineering and construction*

Impact refers to the building's ability to create a sense of place, and to have a positive effect on the local community and environment. It is split into *character and innovation, form and materials, internal environment and urban* and *social integration*

All these different elements are considered within an overall context of finance, time, and environmental resources - issues that are high on the agenda of all building commissioners, financiers and developers. Given the truism that good design quality enables the better deployment of these resources, it is argued that the employment of a trained DQI facilitator, while not undermining the notion of the tool's accessibility, has proved particularly effective in other contexts.

Were such a consultation methodology to become the norm within prison design and construction, it would set up a transferable template that would prove useful for those wishing to acquire evaluative studies of the efficacy of previous designs, when beginning new buildings. It would generate a database of responses from which architects could draw. Training and use of the DQI would be easy to arrange, and there would be a standardisation of application that would make comparative studies relatively easy to achieve.

3. Tools for Consultation (Fluid)

Fluid is an architectural company with an eight-year track record of consultations with communities to generate better designed buildings. The company uses a set of 'tools for consultation', many of which would have relevance when examining how to consult with the prison community. They include several key strategies, some of which will be familiar to architectural practice generally but within Fluid's approach are clearly organised to create an integrated system. The tools were designed for a social context in which open transmission of data is considered desirable, hence any prison-based usage would require modification of this aspect.

'Fluid is an architectural practice that is helping to define a new approach to the generation of urban design. We believe that public consultation, dialogue and participation are central to the design process. New technology and the change in

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traditional methods of working provide opportunities to address social and spatial problems in innovative ways. Fluid is an architectural practice, a think tank, and a research unit, which brings together architects, interior designers, urbanists and academics. We create designs that are exciting, engaging, sustainable and, above all, owned and adopted by the communities for whom they are created.'

www.fluidoffice.com

These are the principal key tools:

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are used at various stages, either to draw out views about particular aspects of proposals or to gather general positive or negative perceptions of the area. Questionnaires may be gathered through a door-to-door survey, or at open days and discussion workshops. The most frequently used format is the Canvass Card.

Canvass Cards

These are pre-printed cards asking individual respondents views about and aspirations for the area. Questions are designed to be engaging and relatively quick to answer so that Canvass Cards are suitable for gathering from passers-by on the street as well as at more formal consultation events. A Polaroid photograph might be taken and attached to card, as well as contact details and demographic information. Completed Canvass Cards are displayed in a Gallery.

Ideas Mapping

A large-scale aerial view of the site is provided at events and participants are invited to add their views and local knowledge using Post-it notes. The ideas map provides a natural focus for consultation events as participants take time to read and respond to read other peoples comments. Ideas mapping can be expanded to include paper so that the map can be used as more of a design tool.

Route Mapping

Participants are asked to draw their routine journeys around the area on a large map and to describe the reasons for their journey. They are also invited to indicate any positive or negative aspects which determined their chosen route, as well as hot-spots, no-go areas and places of personal significance.

Video Vox Pop and Vox Pop Interactive

Video Vox Pop provides a chance for individuals to air their views in a short interview to camera. Responses are then edited to create an interactive digital piece, the Vox Pop Interactive which can be displayed on computers at later consultation events and allows users to see all the opinions expressed.

Moles

Moles are informal events aimed at capturing views from grass roots level. They involve setting up consultation stalls at different points within the area. A series of events allows a dialogue to develop and visualisations of ideas to emerge as well as evident development of designs in response to earlier consultation.

Discussion Workshops

For larger scale projects, Discussion Workshops or Talkshops can be used to provide a forum for more focused discussions of issues and proposals, where representatives of the design team and client organisation are on hand to answer questions.

Interactive Exhibition

An important aspect of any open day or discussion workshop is the interactive where ideas are not only displayed, but where those who attend have an opportunity to feedback on what they see. A typical exhibition will show all the Canvass Cards collected during the process, large boards displaying other consultation material such as Route Mapping and Ideas Mapping.

4. AEDET[3] Evolution

Healthcare building design frequently involves complex concepts that are difficult to measure and evaluate. The AEDET Evolution toolkit evaluates a proposed or existing design by posing a series of clear, non-technical statements, encompassing the three key areas of Impact, Build Quality and Functionality. The toolkit is identified here as offering an alternative strategy to the DQI toolkit while sharing similar aims. The AEDET has become a major influence in other design contexts, assisting Trusts and the NHS in determining and managing their design requirements from initial proposals through to post project evaluation. It forms the key agenda for design reviews, is being used as a benchmarking tool, and forms part of the guidance for ProCure21, PFI, LIFT[4] and conventionally funded schemes.

The toolkit has 3 layers which allow users to create a design evaluation profile, most easily understood as a 'walk-through' process that would be presented on a computer screen:

- The SCORING layer on which you score
- The GUIDANCE layer that gives more detailed help
- The EVIDENCE layer that points to available research evidence

The user is invited to score the different presentations and ideas offered on the screen. As the user fills in the different sections, answering the questions, there is access to both to a help system and to prior research that may inform decision-making. Results are then accumulated until they can be presented back at the end of the process.

3 AEDET – Achieving Excellence Design Evaluation Toolkit
4 NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust

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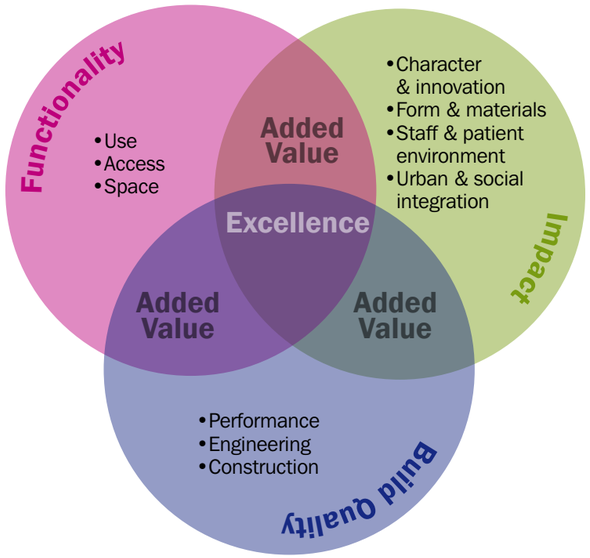
Use of such a toolkit would aid the process of reviewing the design elements within an existing prison, helping to facilitate the planned extension or refurbishment, or planning the building of a similar institution.



5. Charettes

The French word charrette means ‘cart’ and is often used to describe the final, intense work effort expended by art and architecture students to meet a project deadline. This use of the term is said to originate from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, where proctors circulated a cart, or “charrette”, to collect final drawings while students frantically put finishing touches on their work.

The NCI (National Charrette Institute) charrette makes intensity and speed of operation a defining characteristic. It combines this creative, intense work session idea with a collaborative planning process that harnesses the talents and energies of all interested parties to create and support a feasible plan aiming to usher in transformative community change.

The charrette conventionally involves a process that has the following characteristics:

At least four consecutive days
An open process that includes all interested parties
A collaborative process involving all disciplines in a series of short feedback loops
A process that produces a feasible plan
A generalist, holistic approach

The following key strategies are some of those considered essential to a successful charrette:

Working collaboratively
All interested parties must be involved from the beginning. Having contributed to the planning, participants are in a position both to understand and support a project’s rationale. In a prison context, this would mean staff at different levels as well as selected prisoners.

Designing cross-functionally
A multi-disciplinary team method results in decisions that are realistic every step of the way. The cross-functional process eliminates the need for rework because the design work continually reflects the wisdom of each specialty.

Compressing work sessions
The charrette itself, usually lasting four to seven days, is a series of meetings and design sessions that would traditionally take months to complete. This time compression facilitates creative problem solving by accelerating decision making and reducing unconstructive negotiation tactics. It also encourages people to abandon their usual working patterns and to ‘think outside of the box.’

Communicating in short feedback ‘loops’
During the charrette, design ideas are created based upon a public vision, and presented within hours for further review, critique, and refinement. Regular stakeholder input and reviews quickly build trust in the process. A feedback loop occurs when a design is proposed, reviewed, changed, and re-presented.

Study of both the details and the whole
Lasting agreement is based on a fully informed dialogue, which can only be accomplished by looking at the details and the big picture concurrently. Studies at these two scales also inform each other and reduce the likelihood that a fatal flaw will be overlooked in the plan.

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G. Strategic Management of Consultation

Strategically and chronologically, consultation might take place either

- within the tendering process (for DCMF[5] prisons or for extensions of existing prisons), or
- within the phase of architectural design once contracts have been awarded

Alternatively, consultation might be removed from the process of commissioning entirely and made less vulnerable to pressures around capacity building, and conducted

independently by the Prison Estate - its results passed on to architects and constructors subsequently.

The advantage of the latter means that the practice achieves a degree of independence, is less vulnerable to time pressures and allows for the possibility of progressive and innovative thinking to emerge from the studies. It was clear from our research and discussion with prison professionals that an investment in innovation needed to be made if the Service is not to be forever wedded to architectural principles developed in former times. There needs be a shift, it was argued, from a 'prescriptive environment' to a 'performance environment'. Such a shift – in the form of an independent scrutiny of design options - would also allow for investigation of research material from other countries, in particular France, the U.S.A. and Australia where indications show there are interesting developments in place. (See Section H). With the advent of NOMS, the time has never been better for a reappraisal of options that might lead, for example, to an updated PDBS[6] that could be used flexibly according to context.

Another strategic opportunity lies in the assessments conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. Such inspections might include a formal assessment of the inter-relationship of design and function, the results of which might be included in reports.

To summarise, a number of different potential strategic interventions become apparent in which consultation might;

- take place as a feature of the tendering process
- occur as an element within the design phase
- exist as an process independent of the commissioning process
- exist as part of the process of inspections

5 DCMF refers to Design, Construction, Management and Finance.
6 PDBS –Prison Design Building System – a set of guidelines developed by the Prison Service in the late 80's

If it occurs as an element within the design phase, there remain options as far as the extent of consultation at different points:

- ***at an early stage of the process***, involving consultation with Governors, examining the broad footprint and cost implications along with scope of temporary measures during building works
- ***once the broad footprint is determined***, involving the Senior Management team, looking at the competing requirements of the different departments, best utilisation of existing space and the impact of the building works on day-to-day prison routine
- ***once the broad division of the space is agreed***, involving all levels of staff and possibly prisoners to best implement the principles of best practice at a micro-level of design.

It was argued to the writers of this report that where there was suspicion about its introduction, there was an argument for consultation practice to be introduced incrementally in a way that allowed for its adoption to begin at early stages of processes and move to becoming more integrated at later times.

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H. Tools for Evaluating Prison Design – Some International Models

As far back as 1982, attempts have been made in the US to produce a standardised set of tools for assessing the behavioural effects of prison design (Farbstein & Wener, 1982). This early work concentrated on developing a system for assessing jail environments within, and between, jails with the intent of providing information that would help in the planning and design of new facilities. The tools included a questionnaire to be completed by staff and prisoners which concentrated on the following areas: *space, amenities, convenience, appearance, condition, crowding, privacy, control, safety, temperature and odours, noise, lighting, comparison, security and health.*

The resulting instruments have subsequently been adapted to form the basis of a prison focused post occupancy evaluation procedure (Wener, 1994) and used to evaluate a number of New Generation Jails (eg Wener & Farbstein, 1994). The instruments include an administrative survey, an inmate survey, and a staff survey.

The administrative survey is a lengthy document covering safety and security, surveillance, furnishings and equipment, vandalism, design of space, problem areas such as overcrowding, philosophy and policies, institutional goals, discipline, capacity, staff and inmate interaction, health, and planning.

The inmate survey covers: size of housing unit, contact with staff, safety, satisfaction with jail design, crowding, privacy, lighting, sound, control, appearance, health, upkeep and cleanliness, impact of the jail environment, activities, and user background information. The staff survey covers the same areas with the addition of questions on surveillance, design and construction, intake and receiving, medical areas, visiting, and programme spaces.

Research into the impact of the built prison environment on behaviour.

Unlike within the health field, the number of research studies exploring the impact of the built prison environment is extremely limited. Within those studies that do exist there is a bias towards two key areas: overcrowding and violence. What follows is more an introductory list of prison environment studies rather than a comprehensive literature review.

Overcrowding

Between the 70's and 90's, considerable research was conducted on prison crowding and issues relating to both spatial and social density. Spatial density is defined as the amount of space available per person in a particular housing unit. Social density is defined as the number of individuals sharing a housing unit and is considered the factor which contributes most to the adverse effects of crowding. Work in this area has explored the impact of crowding on increase rates of prisoner illness (McGain, Cox, & Paulus, 1976, 1980, Cox, Paulus, McGain & Karlovac, 1982), higher incidents of psychiatric problems (Paulus, McGain & Cox, 1978), increased likelihood of recidivism (Farrington & Nuttal, 1980), increases in prisoner stress (Cox, McGain & Paulus, 1985, Schaeffer, Baum, Paulus & Gaes, 1988), and varying responses by gender (Dzindolet & Paulus 1993). Other work has been conducted on the relationship between institutional density and infraction rates (Ruback & Carr, 1993). More recently in the UK, the National Audit Office has produced its own report into the potential dangers of overcrowding and impact on rehabilitation. (National Audit Office, 2005).

Violence & Vandalism

A number of researchers have looked at the relationship that situational factors such as architecture and design can have on violence and vandalism within prison. These include the style and nature of cell groupings, (O'Donnell & Edgar, 1996), and the role traditional linear design of older prisons plays in contributing to violence, especially when combined with an indirect staff supervision model (Farbstein & Wener, 1991; Zupan & Menke, 1991). The 'New Generation' philosophy, embodied within the 'direct supervision' approach, has resulted in a growing body of evidence supporting the importance of design in mediating behaviour within prison. Researchers argue that architecture which is designed to be resistant to physical attack conveys a message that prisoners are therefore expected to misbehave. (Resser, 1989; Wener, Frasier & Farbstein, 1993). New generation environments are therefore characterised by furnishings which are designed for 'normal' behaviour as opposed to 'abnormal' behaviour. These will include comfortable furniture and a tile or carpet floor, ample telephones, television sets, and recreation areas. (Wener, Farsier & Farbstein, 1985).

Homel & Thompson (2005) state that whilst the empirical data is limited, there is good evidence for reduced levels of violence and vandalism where 'new generation' architectural design and staffing models have been implemented. A key issue emerging from this work is that this approach only works when there is a combination of both environmental design and well trained staff who understand and implement the new generation philosophy (Tartaro, 2006). For the most recent review of the research on the impact of direct supervision design and management readers are directed to Wener (2006).

Whilst there are a number of studies looking at violence in prison we had extreme difficulty in identifying studies exploring the role the built prison environment plays in helping (or hindering) other issues key to rehabilitation such as success within treatment programmes, healthcare, education and vocational achievement, social and interpersonal skills, and maintenance of family ties. These are all areas central to the NOMS agenda and arguably are in need of research. We are aware of groundbreaking new research recently commissioned by the Academy of Architecture for Justice of the American Institute of Architects. Development work is underway on two studies examining the neurological impact of prison. The first will look at how altered visual features within a reception area effect prisoner and staff stress, and the second will explore the environmental correlates of improving prisoner - staff communication. Further information is available in the report by Farbstein and Farling (2007).

'• ***The brain controls our behaviour.***

• ***Genes control the blueprints for the design and structure of the brain.***

• ***The environment can modulate the function of genes.***

• ***Changes in the environment can change the brain.'***

Farbstein & Farling (2007)

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I. Conclusion

The case for consultation is made more easily in a social or institutional context where open access to information and a spirit of voluntarism are the predominant characteristics. It has been assumed in the past that because prisons are largely governed by issues of security and by the withholding of information to the occupants, that consultation around issues of building design can only be problematic and perhaps even counter-productive. The idea that any thinking about construction issues should be shared with prisoners, will likely and very reasonably be greeted with concern. Yet we would argue that while caution may be necessary, it cannot be used as a reason to compromise the urgent need to reassess how improvements to the functioning of the UK's prisons might be made. Nor clearly is it any argument for failing to involve staff at all levels as comprehensively as possible in these deliberations. The establishment of NOMS with its holistic approach to crime, punishment and rehabilitation offers a new set of opportunities for the inter-relating of key aspects of the criminal justice system. While the legacy of the Victorian era clearly weighs heavy as an architectural legacy - and it may be a question at times of taking walls down rather than constructing new ones - there has never been a more urgent case to realise creative, intelligent, far-sighted thinking to establish new architectural ideas for the future. Nor should the present situation regarding capacity building be used as a pretext to disavow all issues regarding the role of consultation for now and evermore.

What has emerged from our research is something of a consensus around the necessity to move into a new phase of prison design which allies the use of architecture – from the utilisation of sports fields to the design of locks on the doors – to the evolving and progressive notions of 'what works' and of how offenders can be changed for the good by their experience of confinement. Prison staff often enter the profession in part because of their commitment to the aims of the Service, a commitment that naturally extends to their willingness to contribute to a holistic understanding of how use of space might best combine with effective supervision and treatment.

Prison staff know only too well the trials of occupying buildings that were constructed to promote a quite different idea about punishment than the one they now believe in. Talking to an officer who has worked in both the old and the new houseblocks in HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, his comment about the old houseblocks was simple: 'Knock them down and start again.' His further comments on the degree and manner of their failure was born of years of experience. His acknowledgement of the virtues of the new blocks was modified by a realistic appraisal of their limitations also. He is but one officer in one prison. There are many of his colleagues, both men and women, who are only too ready to contribute their experiences on the issue of prison design. For as they know only too well, when it all goes wrong and there's misery and complaining on the landings - they are the ones who get the negative feedback. Whereas those who have commissioned and designed the buildings, are by that time already engaged in the next project. It needn't be like this. As the writers of this report, we have been struck by the number of prison professionals who now envisage a time in which the planning, monitoring and post-operative evaluation of prison building design is a consistent responsibility – helping to realise an economically sensible, progressive and efficient Prison Service that really does fulfil the aims of its charter.

It's not as if much of what is in this document is profoundly new. In 1990, the Royal Institute of British Architects was requested by Lord Woolf as part of his report of that time, to research and make recommendations on the architecture and process of design and contruction of Britain's prisons. The RIBA came back with a series of recommendations, few of which appear to have been acted on. Many of them have already been identified as noteworthy and urgent within this report. Can we as a society afford any longer to ignore these issues?

The RIBA observed that:

> ***'There be increased feedback on the performance of prisons. Feedback is still the exception rather than the rule and errors in design are therefore perpetuated;***
>
> ***Input and feedback from the users of new designs be solicited before and after these designs are used;***
>
> ***Architects working on different correctional institutions be encouraged to compare and exchange experiences;***
>
> ***The long-term results of the guidelines in the Prison Design Briefing System of the Home Office, a first step in the improvement of design standards, be examined;***
>
> ***The effects of the design of correctional institutions in the United Kingdom and in other jurisdictions be continuously observed and evaluated;***
>
> ***A more extensive public debate over, and involvement in, the design and management of correctional institutions (i.e., seminars and conferences) be encouraged; and the United Kingdom be encouraged to participate more fully in information exchanges with other jurisdictions.'***
>
> *(Report on Prison Design by the Royal Institute of British Architects for Lord Justice Woolf, RIBA, 1990)*

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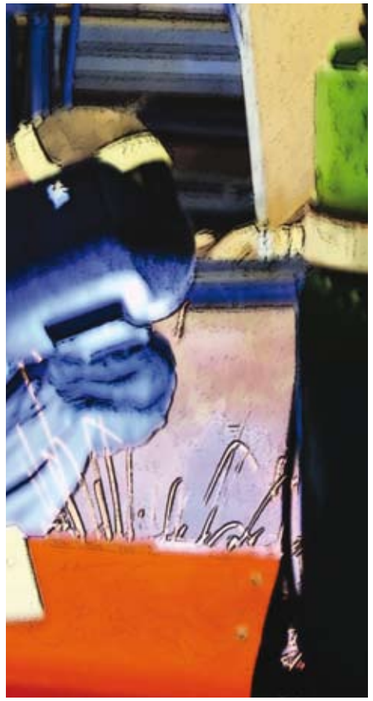

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About Rideout

Rideout was established in 1999 by Saul Hewish and Chris Johnston in order to develop innovative, arts-based approaches to working with prisoners and staff within U.K. prisons. We've retained a special emphasis on working in the Midlands where the company is based.

Rideout's function is to develop and run programmes that explore the impact of criminal behaviour on offenders, their families and others. Primarily this is achieved by working with offenders themselves, exploring with them the causes and consequences of the actions that have led to prison. The programmes themselves vary from the more recreational, usually drama-based activities leading to performance, to programmes that analyse and challenge recurring destructive behaviour. Within the latter, the personal histories of the inmate become the content of the programme. These are discussed and drama methodologies are used to explore the secret archaeology of the behaviour in question: what factors led to the criminal action, could different decisions have been taken? Who suffers? What are the underlying drives?

Underlying all this work is the notion that individuals have the capacity to respond in different ways to pressures from friends, families or environment. It is our assertion that crime is not always an inevitable consequence of personal difficulties. Nor can it be validated as a career option. Other strategies are always available. To access and understand these however, requires the offender to use imagination, to deconstruct and critique what is familiar, and to envision alternative behaviours. The creative and performing arts have a particular appropriateness in offering a language within which these arguments and speculations can take place.

The Creative Prison project takes these investigations into a wider remit, looking not just at the micro-moment of the dialogue between artist and offender, but at the wider architectural context in which these dialogues occur.

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