

**Catherine Helen Spence
Memorial Scholarship 2010/11**

**Women and children
in Prisons :
Accommodation Study**

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B Arch (Hons) A.I.A.



In September 2009 I was awarded the Catherine Helen Spence Memorial Scholarship, which allowed me to undertake a review and study tour of various Women's Correctional Facilities across Australia and the world.

The facilities I visited were chosen for varying reasons, some of which related to logistics, hence this review is by no means exhaustive, and the observations are limited to those jurisdictions I was granted access to.

I would like to thank the following people for the support and guidance I have received from them over the past 2 years, and over the course of my career.

Thank you to Mr Bruce Farquhar, Mr Brian Post, Mr Charles Tomas, Dr John Paget, Dr Elizabeth Grant, Professor Graham Brawn, Mr David Brown, Ms Loretta Reynolds, Ms Nicki Stewart, and to my work colleagues Sue, Mary, Diana and Michael, my mother Patricia, and my partner Neil.

Also thank you to the people who gave me their time and input at the various facilities I visited, in particular Ms Tamara Rowden, Ms Margaret Roy, Ms Jennifer Flett, Ms Joy Thompson and Mr Claus Wenzel Tornøe, all of whom showed me hospitality and kindness beyond what was required.

I would also like to thank Mr Peter Severin (CEO of SA DCS) for his assistance in gaining access to facilities overseas and in Australia, and I sincerely hope this report will be of use to SA Corrections as it plans for the future.

To the committee of the Catherine Helen Spence Memorial Scholarship, I extend my sincere gratitude at being given this opportunity, and I commend them for the time they commit to nurturing the legacy of the remarkable woman, Catherine Helen Spence.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing influence of my late father, Robert Paddick, who instilled in his daughter an appreciation of the value of the written word, and of considered discussion and dialogue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anna Paddick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

August 2011

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Women and Children in Prisons

"An Accommodation Study"

Introduction

In Australia it is current government policy in all States to allow certain female prisoners to keep their children with them in prison during their sentences. The maximum age of the children and the specific profile of the mother varies from state to state but the intent and philosophy is the same – that in certain situations it is the 'best' option for both mother and child. Whether it is in the best interests of the child is generally determined by a recognised independent children's authority, through an assessment process.

This report does not discuss or question this position in detail. There is a brief summary of some supporting arguments and studies that do so, and this will hopefully direct the reader to further areas of research and discussion.

Instead I examine how mothers and children are accommodated within a correctional environment both in Australia and in other countries around the world, with a particular focus on the architecture of each facility I visited during the duration of my scholarship.

I also highlight the ways in which relationships between mothers and children can be maintained if cohabitation within the correctional facility is not possible i.e. in the instance of older children, or where a mother's or child's particular circumstances do not allow it to occur.

The current Standard Guidelines for Corrections, 2004 in Australia state:

Children Residing in Prison

- 2.53 If the Administering Department provides for children and infants to reside with their primary care giver in prison, comprehensive and well structured policies and programmes should be developed where the interests of the children are paramount.*
- 2.54 Children and infants should be allowed to reside with their primary care giver in prison only after the Administering Department is satisfied that it is in the best interest of the child/ren to do so and there is no mechanism for the primary care giver to complete her/his sentence in the community (for example via home detention).*
- 2.55 The accommodation for primary care givers and their children should, wherever possible be domestic rather than custodial.*
- 2.56 While prisoners are responsible for the care of their children living in the prison, the Administering Department should take reasonable steps to ensure a safe environment for children.*

With regards to maintaining family ties the Guidelines state:

- 3.20 Contact between prisoners and the community should be encouraged in recognition of the important role families and communities have in assisting the reintegration of prisoners back to the community upon release and the advantages to be gained from reducing the isolation of prisons and prisoners from the community.*
- 3.21 Prisoners should be encouraged and where practicable, assisted to develop and maintain their family ties and relationships through visits to the prisoner by family and friends and through the controlled use of telephones and letters.*
- 3.30 Where possible, prisons should provide for visitors to take refreshments in the company of prisoners and for suitable play facilities, equipment and toys to be made available for visiting children.*

It is a well documented and distressing fact that indigenous women are over represented in the Australian prison system. ABS Statistics from 2002 indicate that Indigenous women are more than 20 times more likely than non-indigenous women to be imprisoned.¹ It is my understanding that a comparable situation exists in

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 4102.0 – Australian Social Trends, 2004.

Canada, and there are similar over represented minority groups in the other countries I visited as part of this research. I have deliberately chosen not to highlight these specific groups and their particular unique needs and situations, simply because I believe it requires considerably more time and attention than I am able to offer, and I am conscious of not wanting to trivialise this very complex issue. I do have one example of a Canadian facility that caters specifically for First Nation women, my discussion of which, touches very briefly on the specific needs of this particular group of indigenous women.

Similarly, I do not explore in detail the option of children being accommodated with their fathers in prison. This is not because I have any philosophical objection to this, but because currently in Australia it is not considered viable. The facilities I visited in Denmark, give some insight into the particular challenges of a policy which supports mixed gender prisons.

The comments that I make regarding the importance of facilities and programs for children visiting their mothers in prison apply equally to fathers in male correctional facilities.

The report provides a description of each facility visited as part of my research. Some of these descriptions include comment on other broader aspects of the facility that I consider are valuable examples of good practice, in comparison to South Australian facilities and operations.

The Broad Argument in favour of Prison based mother and child programs

It is my personal belief that in the majority of cases, it is in the best interests of the mother, the child and the broader community if family links are maintained throughout the incarceration period. One way of maintaining family ties is where possible, ensure that children are not separated from their mothers, and if this is not possible, encourage regular contact with children.

It is generally accepted, if family ties are maintained throughout a prison sentence then the likelihood of recidivism decreases. Research in the United Kingdom² supports this. Similarly in its report into Prison Nursery Programs, the US based Women's Prison Association established that recidivism rates of those prisoners involved in well funded nursery programs were lower than otherwise.³ In the 2009 Western Australian Department for Corrective Services document - Women's Way Forward - Strategic Plan for Women 2009 – 2012, significant emphasis is placed on the importance of maintaining of family ties and building successful relationships throughout a woman's incarceration. One of the measures they use to achieve their Second Key outcome; that "re-offending is reduced", is to track -

- *The number of women who receive contact visits with their families*
- *The number of women who are accessing day visits with their children,*
- *The number of women who are accessing overnight stays with their children*
- *The number of women accessing video visits with families.*

In the NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service Briefing Paper #15/06 "Reducing the risk of Recidivism", the author Tania Drabsch lists family support as being one of a number of factors. Interestingly she also notes, *"Stability, not having to move and staying out of prison were found to be associated with staying with parents and other close family. Women generally experienced more difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation and were more likely to return to prison than men.....the female subjects of the study....experienced greater social disadvantage than the men as opposed to being caught up in more serious crime, yet it was the women who were more likely to return to prison"*.

Very little research appears to exist on the children who have resided in prison with their mothers.

I was able to source one scientific longitudinal study, which looked at a sample of mothers and children from two prison nursery programs in the United States.⁴ Its final conclusion reads, *"Incarcerated women serving time in a prison nursery with their infants use the experience to create a sense of self as a parent and to develop parental strengths. The infants in one such nursery achieved developmental milestones appropriate for age during the first year of life."*

Studies in Britain indicate that the children of incarcerated parents are themselves in a very high risk group. Alarming figures indicate that these children are up to 3 times more likely than their peers to commit antisocial or delinquent behaviour, have mental health problems, and to become offenders themselves.⁵

An Australian study in 2006, by Rosemary Sheehan, Department of Social Work Monash University, Victoria, supports this view in a local context.

Her study looked at 156 children who were before the Melbourne Childrens Court on a child Protection matter. The children all had one or both parents imprisoned or on remand, or one or both parents previously in prison. 52% of the cases involved children between the ages of birth and 5 years (which is the age group most commonly accepted into prison nursery and mother/baby programs) and predominantly the cases were before the court because of physical harm and emotional abuse. Court records available to the study gave little detail of the nature of the crimes of the parents, but the author felt it was clear that drug related offences and associated crimes were the principle reason why the mothers of these children were in prison.

² Ministry of Justice, Research Summary 5, factors linked to re-offending (2008) p6. M of J, London

³ Women's Prison Association, Mothers, Infants and Imprisonment, A National look at Prison Nurseries and Community-based Alternatives. (May 2009) p5, Institute on Women and Criminal Justice, New York

⁴ "Maternal and Child Outcomes of a Prison Nursery Program" Byrne,M http://www.nursing.columbia.edu/byrne/prison_nursery.html

⁵ SCIE (2008) Children's and families research guide 11 : Children of Prisoners – maintaining family ties. SCIE, London

Ms Sheehan writes in her discussion,

*“The children who were the focus of this study were doubly disadvantaged: first by their need for child protection, and second by their parents offending behaviour and periods of imprisonment. The impact is profound as demonstrated by the social, educational and behavioural difficulties that were noted about the children in the court reports. The lives of the children in this study were greatly affected by their parents offending behaviours, their substance abuse, mental health problems and family violence....The loss of family relationships, lack of stability and continuity of care, and neglect of developmental needs directly contributed to the problems outlined above, increasing children’s vulnerability to longer-term health and mental health problems as well as poor education and social outcomes.”*⁶

The link between parental crime, and future offending behaviour by the child is discussed further by David Farrington and Brandon Welsh in their book “Saving Children from a Life of Crime: Early Risk Factors and Effective Interventions”. The authors devote a number of pages to discussion and review of the various studies that have indicated this connection. They also discuss at length the other family factors that are strong predictors of offending behaviour citing various studies that suggest that poor parental supervision, parental rejection of children, low parental involvement with children, parental conflict and antisocial parents, low intelligence and educational attainment, and separation from a parent are all significant factors.⁷

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that in the years between 1995 and 2002 there was a 58% increase in the imprisonment rate for women in Australia. Of those approximately 60% had children aged less than 16 years. The median aggregate sentence length increased from 18 months to 24 months in that time.⁸ In 2010, Women constituted 7% of the overall prison population in Australia – about 2200 people. [Australian Bureau of Statistics 4512.0 Corrective Services Australia, June 2010.]

Recidivism rates vary from state to state, but the average rates for women in ABS data collected in 2008 indicates the average for Australia is around 40%. The SA average is 35.6%.⁹

So what does this research and these figures suggest in the context of this report?

- There is a link between maintaining family ties throughout a prison sentence and reducing the likelihood of re-offending,
- There is a demonstrated link between the offending behaviour of a parent and the likelihood of a child going on to re-offend
- Children of prisoners are in a very high risk group and need to be given special consideration.
- It is a growing problem – if there are more women going to prison, and of those women up to 60% have children under 16, then the number of children affected is also increasing.
- Women are still going to prison for relatively short sentences and the majority of female prisoner are classed as minimum to medium security. Figures provided by SA DCS for June 2010 show the average sentence length at 48 months, and the population comprising 16% high security, 63% medium security and 21% low security.
- Because of the relatively small numbers of female prisoners in comparison to male prisoners, it follows that there are fewer women’s prisons available, hence women are often required to move away from their homes and family networks.

In addition to this there is another factor that I believe supports the need for Residential Mother and Baby programs. It is not supported by research or scholarly articles but I saw its effects many times during my visits to correctional facilities last year. This is the impetus towards change and renewal given by the experience of caring for one’s newborn child.

⁶ Sheehan .R (2010) Parental Imprisonment and Child Protection: A Study of Children presented to the Melbourne Childrens Court. Australian Social Work Vol 63, No.2 June 2010.pp 174, 175.

⁷ Farrington, D and Welsh, B (2007) Saving Children from a life of Crime: Early Risk factors and effective interventions” Oxford University Press 2007. p 55

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 4102.0 – Australian Social Trends. Crime and Justice: Women in Prison, 2004.

⁹ Australian Institute of Criminology – Recidivism Rates July 2010

Parent Infant Family Australia (PIFA), an independent not for profit organisation that offers services to incarcerated mothers in NSW Correctional facilities, write on their website,

“All parents, including women in gaol, experience the birth of a child as a time of new beginnings, of hope for the future and connection to a bigger picture. For this reason, pregnancy and early parenting can be seen as a window of opportunity for parents to begin to recover from past traumas and make positive changes in their lives. PIFA’s group will facilitates women’s emotional adjustments during early parenting and helps them gain confidence and experience satisfaction in their parenting role.”¹⁰

These words acknowledge the positive contribution to rehabilitation that parenting can provide to offenders. The innate mothering instinct, when unclouded by alcohol and drugs, and other negative influences, may ignite for the first time in a woman, and become the impetus to change offending habits.

Two stories from women I met on my research trip reinforce this view.

At the Washington State Correctional Centre for Women I spoke to a young mother who was cradling her beautiful toddler in her arms. She talked at length about her experiences in the Residential Nursery program there, and mentioned how T-, the child she was holding, was her 4th child. I asked her about her other children and whether they visited her at WSCC, and with head bowed, she said her 14 year old son was in a juvenile facility so could not visit her but her other 2 children did. She then recounted how she could not remember anything much about her first 3 children as babies because of her alcohol and drug abuse problems. With T-, she was amazed at how wonderful motherhood was and how exciting it was to see his first steps and hear his first words. Her face shone like any first time mother’s does when she talks of her baby.

In Scotland at the Cornton Vale Facility I met an older mother who had a long history of offending, but at this point had reached a stage in her sentence that allowed her to live in self care housing outside the main prison fence, with her little girl J-. Conditions of her sentence meant she was able to take J- to nursery in the local village, but was not able to go anywhere else on the journey. Breaking these rules even once, would mean that she would have to return back into the main prison accommodation and given that J- was now too old to live with her there, she would lose her. I was told that recently she had been asked by a former partner to meet at the local pub on one of these outings, but her answer was an unequivocal no – the price was simply too high.

I acknowledge that some might baulk at the idea of “using” children to help rehabilitate their mothers. But if it can be shown that it is also in the best interests of the child to remain with their mother, in appropriate accommodation, then I suggest that the negative connotations are outweighed by the increased potential for positive outcomes.

¹⁰ <http://www.pifa.org.au/foundation/projects/support%20for%20women%20and%20children%20in%20prison>

THE FACILITIES

Australian Facilities

Adelaide Women's Prison SA
Boronia Pre Release Centre WA
Emu Plains Correctional Facility NSW
Dilwynnia Womens Correctional Facility NSW
Alexander Machonchie Centre ACT

Overseas Facilities

Manukau Women's Correctional Centre, New Zealand
Wellington Women's Prison, New Zealand
Christchurch Women's Prison, New Zealand

HMP Bronzefield, England
HMP Peterborough, England
HMP Cornton Vale Women's Prison, Scotland

Hinseberg Prison, Sweden
Engelsberg Hostel and Family House, Denmark
Horserad Prison, Denmark
Ringe Prison, Denmark

Joliette Women's Correctional Centre, Canada
Ochimaw Ochi Healing Lodge, Canada

Washington State Women's Correction Facility, USA

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide Women's Prison

Northfield, South Australia



Figure 1. Google earth aerial view of the Adelaide Women's Prison.

The Adelaide Women's Prison (AWP) was built in the 1960's and is located in the outer metropolitan suburb of Northfield. It is South Australia's main female prison and has capacity to accommodate 148 high, medium and low security female prisoners, the majority of which are medium security rating (as per SA DCS figures at June 2010). Because of the high security portion of its population, AWP has a high security weldmesh perimeter, which utilises razor tape in some areas.

The main accommodation block at the AWP is the original "figure 8" masonry building, with traditional wings of cells. This building houses mainstream prisoners of all security levels. The accommodation is antiquated in many instances and it is difficult to maintain separation of particular groups due to pressure of increasing prisoner numbers.

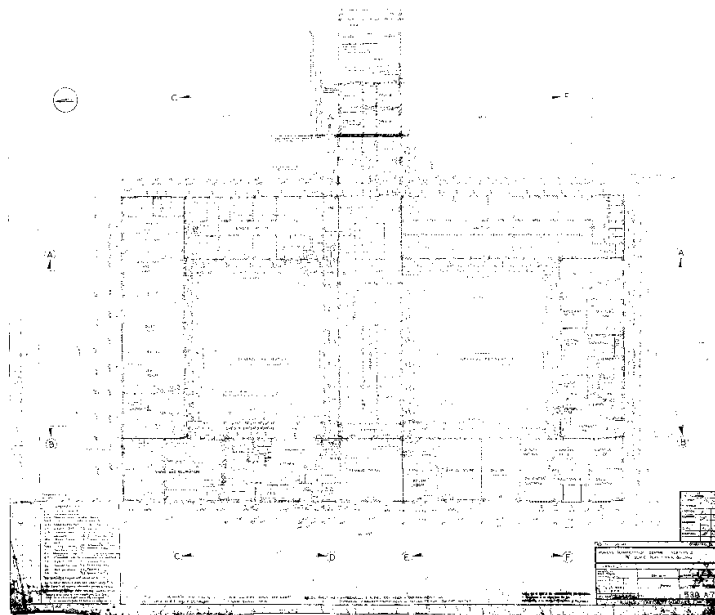


Figure 2. Original floor plan of the Main building at AWP designed in the 1960's and still used for accommodation.

There is also a more recently constructed “Living Skills Unit” which accommodates low security prisoners reaching the end of their sentence, in residential style living units.

In addition to this there is a cluster of older residential living units on the Northfield site, which are currently used for the men’s Pre-Release program.

In the 90’s the AWP ran a mother and baby program using 2 of the current Pre Release cottages. The houses were modified to make them “baby friendly” – in a similar way to how you would child proof your own home with corner protectors, GPO guards, safety gates etc.

The program was considered to be forward thinking and innovative, and over the years had visitors from interstate and overseas.

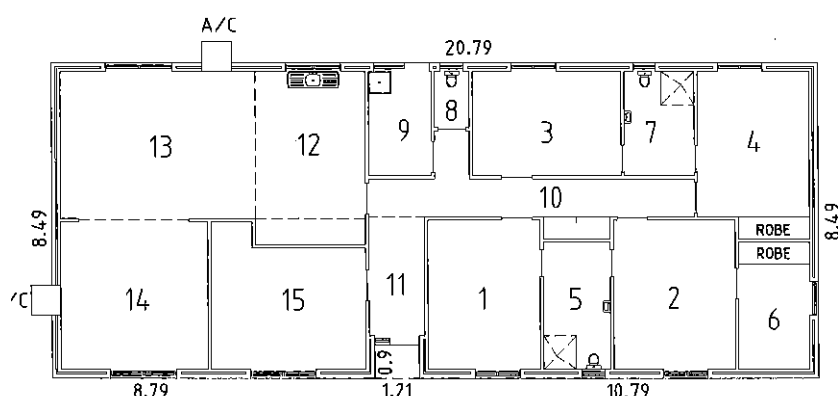


Figure 3. Floor plan of one of the original cottages used in the 90’s for the Mother and Baby program.

In order to be eligible for the program prisoners had to be classified as low security, and were also then assessed for low, medium or high risk, taking into account drug use, anger and violence issues and parenting history. The AWP worked very closely with Families SA to ensure that the program would be in the best interests of the child and would not put the child at risk.

The prisoner was required to enter into an agreement with the Prison which outlined the required expectations, one of which was to remain drug free.

A Parenting Program was available to all prisoners, complementing the mother and baby program, and from the age of 6 months, external Child Care facilities were able to be accessed. Health care was sourced externally, as the Prison Health Services were not able to treat the children.

Sue Dalla Santa, General Manager of the AWP during that period, remembers that Child and Family Health Services were concerned about mothers being with their infant 24/7 with no opportunities for respite. Whilst the intention was to normalise the environment for the mothers and babies, there was obviously no opportunity to go for a walk to the park, or visit a library or playgroup, as would occur in the community. Other willing prisoners who also fitted the security and risk ratings were also able to reside in the mother baby units, to provide support and respite to the mothers. However these women were also inevitably on a work program so were often unavailable, and certainly often tired at the end of a working day. Sue remembers typical ‘share house’ disputes occurring, as well as parenting disagreements, protectiveness and discipline concerns, and noise issues. Regardless of these problems, she considered the program was highly successful and was disappointed to see it close down due to lack of funding and pressure on bed space. She recalled a child of 3½, who remembers her time living at AWP, and another 2 year old who played games with the surveillance cameras, suggesting that even such young children were not totally oblivious to their surroundings.

Sandra Russell, the current General Manager at AWP advised me that there are currently no facilities available to accommodate children and their mothers at AWP, either for overnight stays, or full time. The department simply “does not provide” these facilities. Young children are allowed to be brought in by carers to spend time

with their mothers, and these visits are generally carried out in the current visiting area, but separately from the general visits. If a mother wishes to breast feed her baby, then this is encouraged by the prison, with regular visits being allowed, and by providing opportunities to express breast milk, but this requires a significant commitment by both mother and carer, and Sandra recalled that it has only succeeded on rare occasions.

Sandra made mention of the fact that examples of committed parenting such as this, are taken into account when early release is considered.

The current visits area at the AWP is quite small and has not been designed to consider use by small children and toddlers. It has a small outdoor area but this positioned adjacent to the main fence and there is no play equipment or lawn area to play on.

The entry into the prison is very daunting and forbidding – a large weld-mesh fence with razor tape, with an intercom to gain access through an automatic gate, which is beside the large sliding vehicle gates.

Access to the AWP by public transport is relatively convenient with bus stops close by on Grand Junction Road, and it is a short 20minute car drive from the CBD of Adelaide. Parking is not ideal with limited spaces available, but it is close to the entrance.

So, currently in South Australia, there are no women's correctional centres for that have appropriate facilities to accommodate children with their mothers.

In the 2009 SA Correctional Services Department document "Design Guidelines for Prisons" by Bruce Farquhar, considerable emphasis is placed on the particular unique design needs of women prisoners. It makes direct reference to children both visiting the prison and being housed within the prison, and includes descriptions of the designated Residential Living Units being used to accommodate Mothers and Babies.¹

In 2009 the South Australian Government withdrew funding for a new Men's and Women's Prison Facility. Instead the government is now spending significant funds at the Adelaide Women's Prison, and various other sites, but to my knowledge there are no plans to provide any accommodation suitable for mother baby accommodation.

The question has to be asked of the South Australian Government – why is this the case?

Summary

The Adelaide Women's Prison suffers from lack of funding and a decaying building stock. It has evolved over time rather than having a considered holistic design and hence is constantly fighting against antiquated layouts and planning that is not appropriate to today's corrections philosophies.

For Mothers and Children

Positives

- The location of the AWP means it is easily accessible by public transport.

Negatives

- Facilities for children to live with their mothers on site are simply not provided. The Living Skills Units could be used to run a mother and baby program but are not.
- Prison contains all security levels hence the entry, the perimeter, the structure is "hard".
- Visits area is not designed to enhance the experience of the visitor, hence provides no additional encouragement to return.

¹ Farquhar, B (2009) "Design Guidelines for Prisons". p 11-13, 99.

The New Men's and Women's Prison Facility – what was planned?

Until the project was cancelled in late 2009, the intention by the South Australian Government was to provide a new combined Men's and Women's Prison Facility, that would allow the AWP to be closed down. The new facility was to be located opposite the current Mobilong Medium Security Prison in Murray Bridge. It was to have a single secure perimeter and single combined entry point where full drug and explosives scanning, metal detection and biometric registration would occur every time anyone entered the prison.

The brief for the Women's prison shows the intention was to provide accommodation for mothers and babies, with a number of the briefed Residential Living Units having particular requirements to cater for them.

The relevant points from the DCS design brief were:

(a) There must be separation of the living spaces designed to accommodate women with their children from those without children. This separation must be defined by the location of the support unit.

(b) Bedrooms must be fitted with domestic style fixed furniture including desk, bed, storage unit, and floors must be carpeted.

(e) The front door must lead to a porch (that can be secured), path to the street.

(f) Back doors must lead to a veranda, shaded pergola, back yard with cloths line and Child proof fence for units catering for mothers and babies.

(h) Separate shower (and bath's in mother and Child units), toilet and hand basins in vanity unit located in an enclave.

(i) Living area with soft furnishing, carpeted flooring, television, sound system, window dressings etc.

(j) Kitchen, including double bowl stainless steel sink, stove with exhaust hood, refrigerator, food preparation bench, pantry cupboard, storage for cooking utensils, cutlery, crockery etc. and area for the securing of knives.

(k) Laundry with trough, washing machine, dryer, iron, etc.

(l) A single low profile support unit must separate the duplexes with mothers and Children from the remaining four duplexes.

(n) The support unit must have a Children's Sleepover annex in which a Child or Children can stay over night with their mother. This area must include the following:

(i) lounge/kitchenette room furnished with lounge and dining area, television, digital video player;

(ii) the kitchenette must have a sink, bar fridge, three burner hot plate, microwave oven and toaster oven;

(iii) main meals must be prepared in the mothers normal living unit;

(iv) bathroom which contains bath base shower, toilet and washbasin; and

(v) a veranda leading to an outdoor fenced courtyard partially covered with paved and grassed area and sandpit.

The brief also makes mention of facilities for children when outlining the requirements for the visits area itself.

(v) a standard visit for female Prisoners housed in the Residential Living Units may be held in an area in which is more relaxed and without fixed furniture;

(ix) a play area will be required in the open visits area, inside, in which small Children may be entertained with toys, books, television, etc., under the supervision of their parents or voluntary helpers.

(c) Children's play equipment internal and external:

(i) an external covered play area for Children must be provided which meets all occupational health, safety and welfare guidelines; and

(ii) the ability for master antenna television viewing must also be incorporated.

From this brief it is clear that DCS intended to accommodate children on the site, and has also considered the needs of children visiting their parents in prison, both in general visiting situations and overnight or extended stays.

The residential living units were to be located within the main perimeter, meaning that all children visiting would have to go through a full contraband screening process every time they came to visit. Access to external providers – childcare, health services, playgroup – would be more difficult due to the high security nature of the main perimeter.

The location at Murray Bridge – over an hours commute from metro Adelaide with no regular public transport - would make regular family visits quite arduous, unless the families lived locally.

AUSTRALIA

Boronia Pre Release Centre

Perth, Western Australia



Figure 1. Google Earth view of the Boronia Facility in suburban Perth.

“ Woman Centred: A Woman Centred approach must be from a woman’s perspective or worldview. Its origins must come from a view of women’s needs, their issues, preoccupations and ways of learning about, seeing and experiencing the world.”

Government of WA, Department of Corrective Services – “Where we are now.”

In Western Australia, it would appear that the Government is taking a proactive approach to reducing the increasing number of women entering the prison system. In its own words *“the Department has moved away from treating them as ‘prisoners who happen to be women’ to acknowledging their special needs”*. Those words taken from the WA Government’s Strategic Plan for Women 2009 – 2012, suggest that the approach has changed to a Woman Centred one which embraces family and children, and acknowledges the mothering role that up to 60% of female prisoners have.

Boronia Women’s Pre-Release Centre is located in Perth suburb of Bentley, and provides minimum security accommodation for 70 low security female offenders.

It opened in 2004, and the impetus behind it was the desire by the then WA Attorney General, Jim McGinty to put into practice what he and other Justice officials saw on a fact finding mission overseas, and to create a world’s best practice women’s correctional facility.¹

Over 4 years of planning was required to bring the project to reality. Christine Ginbey, the team leader and one of the driving forces behind Boronia, acknowledged in my discussions with her that this amount of time made available, the fact that she was working with a department that had such a strong vision, and that they were given a ‘greenfields’ suburban site, were all significant factors in the success of the project.

¹ Towards best Practice in Women’s Corrections: The Western Australian Low Security Prison for Women, Joanna Salomone. DoJ, WA.

Christine and her team undertook significant community consultation and held public meetings, commissioned a profile of women in prison and spoke to women prisoners at that time.²

They commissioned architects who were specifically non correctional architects, and showed them examples of what they wanted and what they knew worked well. Examples were taken from other child focussed buildings – the entrance area to a zoo, Heathcote interactive playground in WA, linear parks – to ensure that the architects would consider a child’s perspective in the design.

The result is a unique facility that is unlike any other I saw in my 18 months of research. On approach you feel as if you are entering a community or council building. The suburban location and density means there is no hint of the fences or layout of the facility as you approach, unlike most other correctional facilities which are generally located in wide open spaces.

The front reception area has a distinctly non institutional feel, and unusually, is also the prisoner reception point. Many of the staff are dressed in casual clothes, and those who are in uniform do not use the standard issue corrections garb, but a slightly less authoritarian khaki version which does not display their rank. The residents (not referred to as prisoners) wear a choice of standard issue clothes around the centre, but also have access to other “civvies” should they be going out into the community.



Figure 2. The front reception counter at Boronia, where women entering the facility are received, as well as visitors.

Staff at Boronia are “hand picked” to use Jan Allen’s words. This is seen as an integral part of Boronia’s success. There is a blend of male and female staff with a preferred ratio of about 40:60 for operational staff and 50:50 in the senior officer ranks. When staff are applying to work at Boronia they participate in role play scenarios at their interviews to help determine if they have the appropriate skills and philosophies. Often a social work background rather than a corrections background is an advantage and also clear empathy and understanding of the female resident’s typical history of disadvantage. A significant emphasis is placed on case management which allows staff to better understand the specific needs of each resident as well as their families. The staff I spoke to at Boronia openly expressed their belief in the philosophies adopted, and were all incredibly spirited and positive about their roles.

The grounds of Boronia are quite beautiful. The emphasis on landscaping is strong, and the result is a site that is lush, green and well cared for, and provides texture and variety to the terrain, giving residents choices and pleasant experiences at every turn. Pride of place is evident, and choices of public, semi-private and private spaces are provided throughout the site.

The architecture is simple and non institutional and the overall planning of the site is clear and simple.

² Department of Corrective Services. Profile of Female Offenders under Community and Custodial Supervision in Queensland. Women’s Policy Unit. Queensland Government. 2000



Figure 3 View to one of the common buildings on the Boronia site.

The perimeter of the centre consists of a tennis court fence with a microphonic detection system. Community consultation determined that this was an acceptable option, and enabled the community to see in, and the residents to see out, thus reducing the “us and them” feeling of many correctional facilities.

The security on the site consists of CCTV surveillance using low light sensitive cameras, and monitoring is from a 24/7 control room. The vegetation does mean that clear lines of sight must be compromised but this was not seen to be an issue by staff, and the positives of such beautiful grounds would appear to outweigh any disadvantages.

The houses are ‘locked down’ at night, and are able to be electronically scanned if required. Significant emphasis is placed on Dynamic Security – that is, staff knowing what is going on and understanding the individuals that live on the site.



Figure 4. The landscaping leading around the residential area of Boronia.



Figure 5. An example of the landscaping around the Boronia site.

There is a specific Families/Communities coordinator at Boronia which highlights the importance placed on maintaining and nurturing family ties. The visits and family centre is central to the site and is a relaxed and open space with a landscaped outdoor area. A kitchen run by the residents serves healthy food options to visitors. The kitchen and 'café' provide very strong employment pathways for the women, and are complimented by the other healthy eating and cooking programs that are in place. The café provides a 'hands on' training area for the centre's Barista Training course. The ambience is relaxed and comfortable. It is an area where a child would feel safe and comfortable and where families would be keen to stay for a reasonable length of time.



Figure 6. The visits area at Boronia.



Figure 7. The outdoor area of the visiting building at Boronia.



Figure 8. Children's play equipment on the deck of the visits centre.



Figure 9. The food options available for sale in the visits centre at Boronia, prepared by the inmates in the main kitchen.

All the accommodation is in residential living units accommodating up to 5 women. There are 12 units which have been constructed to regular government housing standards but with slightly increased robustness. They are all the same design but different paint colours have been used to differentiate one from the next. The units are clustered in a garden setting with particular emphasis being placed on normalisation, with small front yards, porches and letterboxes.



Figure 10. The residential living units at Boronia.

3 of the units have been specifically designed to accommodate mothers and their children – 2 mothers per unit, and all other units could be used for mothers with children if need be. The specific mother child units are

at the end of the group of houses, and they open out onto a small playground that is enclosed by a child safety fence. Jan Allen suggested that considerably more mother/child units should have been planned for - enough to accommodate 12 mothers rather than just 6. When I visited there were 9 children living on the site of various ages, and about 20 coming for extended overnight stays. These extended stay older children were simply accommodated on roll out trundle beds in their mother's rooms.

Jan felt that not enough consideration had been given to the recreation needs of these older children, and suggested a sports area, and BBQ facility could have been included in the design. The particular difficulties and challenges of parenting teenagers are a reality for many of the residents at the Centre.



Figure 11. The children's playground outside the living units allocated to mothers with younger children.



Figure 12. A example of the veranda space and garden at the front of the living unit, providing a sense of separation and privacy from the "street".

All the houses have full kitchens thus the women are completely self care, preparing their own food for themselves and their children. The site has its own supermarket which is run by the residents providing a good employment pathway. Residents are provided with a set budget gained from their “employment” and purchase food from the supermarket. The foods are classified into categories with restrictions placed on how much you can purchase of each type, complimenting the healthy eating education programs that are in place.



Figure 13. Some of the products available in the on-site supermarket at Boronia, run by the residents.

The other buildings on the site house the education facilities and medical centre. In the centre of the lawned area that runs down the middle of the site, a circular Spiritual Centre stands, an attractive and interesting structure providing a quiet meditative environment that is used by all.



Figure 14 External view of the Spiritual Centre



Figure 15. The entry door into the Spiritual Centre

The site has a large produce garden and greenhouse area, which supports a horticultural training course, providing another useful job pathway for the women. The produce garden provides fresh fruit and vegetables

for use by the residents and has helped bring overall costs down, in addition to providing gainful employment and skills in Horticulture and Nursery Gardening.



Figure 16. The produce garden at the bottom of the Boronia site.

Residents pot and nurture a range of plants which they then sell out to the community to raise funds for charity, as part reparation for their crimes to society. As well as the plants, craft that the residents have made over the year is put up for sale at a yearly fete, where the doors of the centre are opened to the community, which in itself serves to assist in breaking down barriers and prejudice.



Figure 17. Seedlings in the nursery at Boronia.

When I visited Boronia, the superintendent Ms Jan Allen (who was one of the original team members who worked on the design and planning) made it clear to me that they did not consider that they ran a “mother baby program” at the Centre. Her attitude was that if you were taking a woman centred approach, then children **must** form part of the solution. At Boronia, depending on the circumstances, children are able to remain with their mothers up until age 4, with flexibility in this limit if it is deemed to be appropriate. Older children up to age 12 are permitted to have weekend stays with their mothers, but it was acknowledged that as children get older it is more difficult to provide activities for them that will keep them engaged. Mothers have access to external care providers to provide them with respite, and health care providers for their children. The centre has its own vehicle and takes the children to childcare and doctors visits as required. The suburban setting means work placements are easier to get too, and the centre is more easily accessible by family and friends.

For many female prisoners who have been accommodated at either Bandyup or Nyandi, the move to Boronia is very stressful. To move from a highly institutionalised environment where you are given very few choices and hence very few responsibilities, the life at Boronia can seem like hard work in comparison. I believe this says more about the pitfalls of the former than the negatives of the latter option.

From a financial perspective— the cost per resident at Boronia is not the cheapest in WA Corrections nor is it the most expensive.

The telling numbers relate to recidivism. Prior to Boronia being opened the majority of female prisoners were accommodated at Bandyup, with another facility Nyandi, a former youth detention centre, housing low security prisoners in what were considered to be fairly inappropriate facilities particularly for mothers and children. At the time overall recidivism rates for female prisoners were in the order of 65%. Since opening Boronia now achieves a recidivism rate of 14 -16%.

Despite its reasonable cost and positive recidivism reduction results, Boronia still fights to stay open. Politically, a suburban prison, that does not look like a prison, and does not appear to be punishing its residents, provides good fodder for opposition parties at election time. Hopefully the political will that saw Boronia built, will continue to allow it to remain open, and provide a benchmark for Women’s Correctional facilities in Australia and probably world wide.

Summary

The Boronia Pre Release Facility is by far the best example of a low security Women’s Correctional Facility that I saw in my research tour. It is well designed, from a “woman centred” perspective, and it is supported by excellent programs and education opportunities.

For Mothers and Children

Positives

- Location is excellent, easily accessible by public transport, and in a typical ordinary suburb of Perth. Access to childcare and health services is easy and convenient.
- Living is very normalised in ordinary houses and the play facilities for smaller children are excellent.
- Entry into the centre and visits area is non confrontational and pleasant. The visits area itself is an attractive and pleasant space to be in and the adjacent outdoor areas provide ample room for small children to play.
- Staff wear low key correctional uniforms, and staff are carefully picked to enhance the caring philosophy of the centre.
- There is a specific Families/Communities coordinator staff position.

Negatives

- Limited activities available for older children visiting their mother.
-

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales – NSW Corrective Services

Emu Plains Correction Centre - Jacaranda Cottages
Dillwynia Correctional Centre

In NSW there are a number of options for mothers to maintain contact with their children throughout their custodial sentence. A Mothers and Children Program established in December 1996 provides 3 options for mothers wishing to maintain an active parenting role throughout their custodial sentence. The Fulltime Residential Program is run in the Jacaranda Cottages at Emu Plains Correctional Centre, and also at the Parramatta Transitional Centre. It allows for children from birth up to school age to reside with their mother, as long as the mother meets a range of eligibility criteria relating to her security and risk rating, the nature of her crime, and her previous care arrangement with her child.

The Occasional Residential Program provides children up to age 12 to have extended stays with their mother – overnight, weekends and school holidays - either at Jacaranda Cottages or Parramatta Transitional Centre.

Jacaranda Cottages

The Jacaranda Cottages are located outside the main fence of the Emu Plains Correctional Centre. Emu Plains is a low Security Facility for Women and is located about 60km to the west of Sydney CBD. Train services are available to Emu Plains Station but from there it is a 15 - 20 minute walk or 5 minute taxi ride to the facility.



Figure 1. Google Earth aerial view of the Emu Plains Correctional Centre, with Jacaranda cottages to the top left.

As you can see from the aerial shot above, the facility is isolated in farming land, and the roadway to the Cottages takes you past the main security perimeter of the Emu Plains Correctional Centre.

The entry to the Jacaranda Cottages is adjacent to a low rise residential scale building, and is through a gateway in a 1500mm high safety 'pool' fence with some perimeter lighting and possibly some external electronic detection.

You are not searched when you enter the Jacaranda Cottages facility. Because the perimeter is so 'soft', and in principle, escape and the smuggling in of contraband so simple – by throwing it over the fence – there is no real point to subjecting people entering to rigid searches. There is a zero tolerance to drug use – residents are submitted to regular urinalysis testing, and there are strict rules with regards to behaviour within the Cottages facility. If rules or expectations are broken, then the result is a return into a higher security facility, a loss of privileges and certainly no access to the Mother and Baby program.

As you enter the facility you can see straight through to the cluster of houses that are the 'Jacaranda Cottages'; weatherboard clad, traditional looking residences, grouped around a central green space.



Figure 2. Aerial view of Jacaranda Cottages.

The houses are elevated slightly from the ground and have decks with verandas all around with a 1000mm balustrade. All windows and external doors are fitted with full security screens which do detract from the pleasant look of the homes. All the decks look out onto the central 'park' area which is dotted with some trees and has paved pathways that children can use to ride bikes around.



Figure 3. View from the top of the site, looking over the central green space and down to the cottages.



Figure 4. A typical Jacaranda Cottage.

There are 8 cottages each accommodating up to 5 women, and in each cottage there are 2 slightly larger rooms used by mothers and children.

Children are allowed to stay with their mothers in the Fulltime Program up to age 5, and for Occasional Visits up to age 12. Smaller children sleep in a cot in next to their mother and older children have a trundle bed in their mother's room.

Each house has a bath combined with the laundry and 2 other separate showers and toilets. The houses are a standard and simple design.

The houses are fully self care with kitchens and laundry facilities. The kitchen areas are 'out of bounds' for small children with a gate at the entry and all handles mounted out of reach of toddler's hands.



Figure 5. A typical common kitchen and dining area in one of the cottages. Note the gated kitchen.

The other women living in the cottages provide respite care to the mothers, and have to comply with the same security checks and risk ratings to be eligible to live in the Cottages.

When I visited the facility there were a range of children living there, from newborns to toddlers. Deborah Gaynor, one of the coordinators of the Mother and Baby Program at Jacaranda Cottages, indicated to me that between 6 – 10 full time residential children was the norm, and that the 40 person capacity of the cottages was about right for the social dynamics.

This number of children allows meaningful activities to be organised within the facility. Each Wednesday an external provider comes in to run a 'playgroup', and every couple of months a 'Sing and Grow' program is offered by external providers. The children are also able to form friendship groups within the facility, as well as through their pre-school attendance.

2 community nurses attend the cottages weekly to undertake regular health checks on the children and address any concerns the mothers may have. Whilst the mother's health needs are met by Justice Health, they will not provide care for the children.

The children can access local preschool facilities in the community, often with their mothers doing the drop-off and pickup. Many of the residents leave the facility to study or do work placements.

Considerable support is given to the mothers by the community. In particular Parent Infant Family Australia provides a Prison Support Program - a weekly therapeutic parenting group held at Jacaranda, which is compulsory to for all mothers to attend. PIFA also continues its support of these women for up to 6 months after they have returned to the community.¹



Figure 6. The covered children's play area in the centre of the green central space.

Both staff and residents at Jacaranda Cottages wear casual clothes not uniforms. The staff are a mixture of correctional and social workers, and gender balance is not seen as an issue with the officers, as there is always female support staff on site. There are no hard and fast rules about staff engaging with the children – contact is not encouraged, but is also not prohibited. Correctional staff do have to undertake specific training courses to work in the Cottages, but are not involved in caring tasks – these are done by the social worker staff.

The farmland location is used by the Centre to establish work opportunities for the women, as well as experiences for the children. Collecting the eggs from the chickens is a regular activity for children, as are 'Dairy walks' and harvesting from the market gardens.

¹ <http://www.pifa.org.au/foundation/projects/support%20for%20women%20and%20children%20in%20prison>

Summary

Jacaranda Cottages is one of the few dedicated and separate Mother/Child facilities in Australia. This means its focus is on the mother child relationships and lifestyle. The result is a facility, that whilst it is simple is extremely effective in achieving its aims.

For Mothers and Children

Positives

- Its location outside the main security perimeter of Emu Plains gives it a separate “non correctional” identity which can be important as children become older and talk about where they live. It also makes access to and from the centre simple.
- Its normalised living approach.
- Access to outdoor activities for children – bike track, dairy walks, collecting the eggs, market gardening.
- The numbers of children mean group activities can be arranged and be viable, and also that children can form bonds and relationships with other children of their age within the facility. Similarly mothers can provide support to each other.

Negatives

- Relatively difficult to access by public transport.

Dillwynia Correctional Centre

I chose to visit the Dillwynia Correctional Centre despite the fact it does not have residential accommodation for mothers and babies, because I had heard a number of people within SA Corrections speak of it in very favourable terms.

Dillwynia Correctional Centre is a custom designed women's correctional facility housing medium to minimum security, sentenced and non sentenced female prisoners with a capacity of up to 200. Opened approximately 8 years ago it is the main facility in NSW for remand and sentenced women and is part of the John Maroney Correctional Complex, which also has minimum and medium security facilities for men. Women with significant alcohol and drug abuse problems, or acute mental health issues are not accommodated at Dillwynia.

Children are not able to live with their mothers at Dillwynia, but significant emphasis is placed on the maintenance and support of the mother child relationship.

The John Maroney Complex is located 5kms south of Windsor, which is about an hours drive out of Sydney CBD. There are rail and bus access available but these vary from day to day. Dillwynia offers a once per day pickup service on days when public transport from the railway station is not available, acknowledging the importance of family visits to the centre.



Figure 7. A Google Earth aerial view of Dillwynia, with the John Maroney Correctional Centre visibly in the bottom right corner.

The design of the facility is campus style and it is obvious that a considerable amount of effort has been put into the architecture and planning. An effective strategy to minimise the impact of the entry point has been to use the entry building as part of the perimeter, meaning that there is no need to address the secure perimeter that is so often confronting and intimidating.



Figure 8. The front entry to Dillwynia with the gatehouse building as part of the perimeter.



Figure 9. A view of the gatehouse building from within the facility.

As a result the entrance to the prison is not threatening with a basic walk through metal detector the only physical screening, and this low key atmosphere continues as you progress further into the facility. The intention appears to be to create a calming environment through thoughtful landscaping and architecture, and by minimising the use of harsh barriers and security equipment. The secure perimeter is mesh fence panels with no razor tape and discreet electronic detection with a minimal sterile zone.

The emphasis is on normalised living and responsibility through cottage style accommodation and a structured day of work, education and programs.

The use of landscaping is another impressive feature of Dillwynia. I walked through one delightful garden area where the garden beds were in the shape of aboriginal totems. Throughout the grounds there are numerous opportunities to experience contemplation and serenity. The landscaping is also used to subtly block vision from one area to another and take the emphasis away from the secure perimeter. The grounds maintenance is then a work and study opportunity for the inmates, providing skills in horticulture as well as associated business skills. This group has established worm farms and also recycling programs for the Centre and employs 20 inmates.

Other industries and education opportunities available to the women are

- Food services
- Hygiene - cleaning
- Buy-ups. Dillwynia manages the canteen buys and distribution for the other correctional facilities in the area.
- Telemarketing
- Gloria Jeans partnership
- Greyhound Adoption program (GAP) employs 3-6 inmates
- Ground and Centre Maintenance
- Logistics/Textiles
- Wildlife Care Centre
- Works Release with local employers in the community.

There is also considerable emphasis on post release work opportunities with links with potential employers in the community.

In most instances there are TAFE courses that are aligned with the various industries at the Centre.



Figure 10. A view across the grounds of Dillwynia.

The accommodation at Dillwynia is of 3 types separated by landscaping features and some fencing. These 3 levels provide a clear basis of a hierarchy of privileges. The main external perimeter provides the required level of security for the protection of community, hence within this perimeter, accommodation choices can be determined through case management considering -

- Program participation
- Employment

- Association issues
- Observed behaviour
- Supervision needs

The highest security level is within units with 10 cells per unit and a central living and kitchen area. The cells are quite small with toilet facilities inside, but have a good sized operable window and hence are light and airy. There is some use of timber and the fittings are relatively 'soft'. (NB. these cells are not "safe" cells i.e. they have not been designed to eliminate ligature points.)

The next security level is in open living style cottages with shared bathroom facilities, and communal living areas. There is a good use of outdoor space with open decks and an area for use by smokers or as a "sleepout".

Outside the main perimeter there is a separately fenced area for the Independent Living Units. The perimeter is a lower barrier that has an external detection system designed to keep intruders away. There are three 10 bed houses with their own kitchen, dining and laundry facilities and shared bathroom areas, and from here the women can leave on work or education programs.

There is one other quite unique accommodation unit at Dillwynia that is best described with this excerpt from the Centre's own Overview document. It gives some insight into the flexible and innovative approach of the centre and of NSW Corrections in the providing for females within the system.

"A new accommodation unit has opened in the Wildlife Care Centre which houses 3 inmates. Currently there is 1 full time employed inmate housed there, employed in the capacity of Caretaker (of the Wildlife Care Centre). This position is a funded works release position and the occupant carries out all duties of caretaker on a paid basis. This initiative has the endorsement of the Commissioner and is fully supported by Dillwynia staff and management. The accommodation unit is completely independent to the Dillwynia Correctional Centre and the current occupant lives in this unit as she would in the community. She has independent facilities such as laundry, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom etc. and phone communications are via the Dillwynia Control Room. It is envisaged that further down the track the unit will accommodate 3 inmates."

The Correctional staff at Dillwynia wear quite confronting uniforms – baseball caps, boots – which is somewhat at odds with the overall feel of the centre. The inmates also wear prison issue clothing – a choice of either green or maroon tracksuits.

Mothers and Children at Dillwynia

Dillwynia has a number of initiatives that focus on the importance of maintaining a parenting role for the mothers who are incarcerated there. Shari Martin, the current General Manager at Dillwynia indicated that she believed around 80% of the women at Dillwynia were mothers.

A program called Mothering at a Distance (MAAD) has been extremely successful and in 2009 received additional funding to continue for a further 5 years after reporting indicated positive outcomes. The recently released Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) document - 'Good Practice in Women's Prisons – A literature review' - refers to the MAAD program, noting that,

"The key findings of the evaluation were that self-reported outcomes were positive for participants and facilitators and that the program was successful in helping some women to:

- *recognise their child as an individual;*
- *manage their feelings of guilt and loss resulting from separation from their child;*
- *recognise their strengths and weaknesses in relation to parenting;*
- *enhance and maintain their relationship with their children through improved communication;*

- *increase their confidence in looking after their children;*
- *increase their awareness about their needs and their children's needs; and*
- *increase their feeling of worth as a parent”²*

Dillwynia also provides opportunities for mothers to have a video link-up with their children, allowing them regular contact to assist with homework or just keep in touch with their child's day to day activities.

Shine for Kids is a specific children's day that occurs within the prison, where children of prisoners are able to spend the day doing activities organised by the Dillwynia community.

On Tuesdays, a number of external welfare groups (both government and independent) bring children to visit their mothers – “the baby run”.

The visits area at Dillwynia has been designed to consider the needs and comfort of those visiting. The journey to visit reception from the main entry, takes you through attractively landscaped grounds and past very non institutional buildings.

The visit reception area is more like an airport lounge, and from there you go through an attractive courtyard space with beautiful planting into the visit area proper.



Figure 11. A view through the visits centre of Dillwynia, with the Gloria Jeans Coffee bar at the far end.

As you can see from the photo, the furniture is not fixed and there are indoor and outdoor play areas for children. The room is light and airy with attractive views to outside landscaped areas. There is a Gloria Jeans coffee bar in the visits area, which provides work opportunities for inmates, as well as giving the visits area a very relaxed and non institutional feel.

² Australian Institute of Criminology 2011, 'Good Practice in Women's Prisons – A literature review' pp 59-60

Summary

From a design perspective Dillwynia Correctional Centre is an excellent women's correctional centre for medium and minimum security prisoners. This is then supported by high quality and diverse programs and education opportunities.

For Mothers and Children

Positives

- Entry to the centre is very non confrontational – using the entry building as the perimeter at that point.
- Path to visits has been designed to avoid confronting and institutional views and has considered the amenity of the visitor.
- Simple and non invasive screening process for visitors.
- Consideration and value has been placed on making the Centre attractive, both in its architecture and its landscaping.
- High importance placed on the mother child relationship – MAAD program, video link-ups, “the baby run”, the overall visiting process.

Negatives

- Location and access to public transport is not ideal.
- Staff uniforms are quite aggressive, possibly sending a negative message to a child.

AUSTRALIA

The Alexander Machonochie Centre

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory



Figure 1. Google earth aerial view of the ACM.

The Alexander Machonochie Centre (ACM) was the first correctional facility to be built in the ACT. Prior to its construction in 2005, offenders sentenced in the ACT were sent to NSW for their incarceration.

In October 2004, the ACT Human Rights Act, 2004 became law and it was at this time that the decision had been made to construct a prison for ACT.

As such, the prison design, by Queensland architectural firm Codd Stenders, attempted to be shaped by basic Human Rights Principles. The prison is a combined male and female facility that caters for all security levels, and both sentenced and remand offenders. It has a single gatehouse that forms part of the secure perimeter and it is located on the Monaro Highway some 20 minutes drive from Canberra CBD.

Named after the man who was Private Secretary to the Lieutenant –Governor of Van Diemens land in 1837, and who later became responsible for the Norfolk Island penal colony, the Alexander Machonochie Centre appears to endeavour to draw inspiration from his principles of reform over punishment. Alexander Machonochie also had a strong view on the value of responsibility and self determination.

“Alexander Maconochie wanted to shift the focus of penology from punishment to reform. He argued that punishment on its own was a socially empty act without checks built into it, and saw no sense in punishing a criminal for his past without training him with incentives for his future. He argued that sentences should be indefinite - the convicts would have to earn a certain number of ‘marks’, or credits for good behaviour and hard work, before they were released. They would buy their way out of prison with these marks. To buy, they must save. Hence the length of his sentence was, within limits, up to the convict himself. Marks could be exchanged for either goods or time. The prisoner could buy “luxuries” with his marks from the gaol administration – extra food, tobacco, clothing etc. Maconochie believed his Marks System would be objective. Ideally, the convict would pay for everything beyond a diet of bread and water with the marks he earned.

He argued:

“The fate of every man should be placed unreservedly in his own hands...there should be no favour anywhere.”¹

¹ <http://www.cs.act.gov.au/page/view/859/title/why-alexander-maconochie>

citing, Morris, N. 2002 Maconochie's Gentlemen Oxford University Press, Inc. New York.

In his 2008 thesis, *Human Rights and Prison Architecture, The Alexander Machonochie Centre from Conception through Construction*, Dr John Paget explored the full story and thinking behind this project, and gives considerable insight into prison design overall and how it has evolved.

With regards to women in prison Dr Paget writes;

"The architecture of a women's prison must evidence an understanding of the experience of women in their families and communities and how the prison might respond to their unmet needs. In particular, architecture can assist in minimising the intrusion of the state into the control by women of their abused bodies and ensure that they are not marginalised by their small numbers in their access to services. Finally, prison architecture must respond to the reality that, in general, women prisoners do not escape and while they may damage furniture and fittings, they tend not to attack structures...This suggests that less robust buildings will be adequate for securely accommodating women prisoners and the more oppressive symbols of incarceration, such as razor tape, need not be installed."

And on women and children, drawing on South Australian Bruce Farquhar's words and insight,

"Where appropriate, accommodation needs to make provision for women, as primary carers, to have a child (or children) with them in custody, where that arrangement is determined by authorities, other than corrective services, to be in the best interests of the child. Architectural responses to this policy issue may also include space for "sleepovers" during weekends or school holidays by non-resident children. Care should be taken in locating a unit in which a child may be accommodated as it should not be assumed that all women prisoners will welcome a child in their midst or that the child will be safe in their company. The provision of baths in the ablution areas of accommodation for women prisoners is recommended, not only for the well-being and hygiene needs of women, but also to assist with caring for babies or small children. For children who are visiting their mothers in prison, the overall architecture needs to establish visual links between the visiting areas and the accommodation units so that 'the mother can point out where she lives, removing some of the mystery and fear' (Farquhar 2006)."

In the male section of the Centre there are a series of different types of accommodation that can be used to separate prisoners of different needs levels, but also be used as an incentive for good behaviour and responsibility.

"Cottages were constructed within the Centre to provide an accommodation option to which prisoners could aspire, based on improved behaviour or particular needs. The cottages enable prisoners to interact in a "group house" style environment, developing social skills such as cooking, cleaning and successful social interaction with others, all of which will be needed on their release."²

² <http://www.cs.act.gov.au/page/view/859/title/why-alexander-maconochie>



Figure 2. The women's section of ACM with 3 different living units of varying security levels.

The women's accommodation is separated from the male accommodation although there is a single entry point to the centre that serves both the male and female areas.

The facility provides accommodation for all security levels of female prisoners, who are all accommodated together in an open campus style layout in cottage accommodation. There are 3 living units, each of slightly different security levels, the highest of which has secure bedroom "cell like" accommodation for high needs prisoners but still within a cottage. Unlike the men's accommodation, there is no separation between the cottages, hence it is difficult to manage the different groups of women. Because all accommodation is cottage style as opposed to cell block, there is not as much opportunity to use the accommodation as an incentive or reward as there is in the men's side of the facility.

The overall prison population in ACT is quite small (the capacity of ACM is 300, 25 of those women) and at the time of my visit there were only 9 female prisoners living there, and no mothers and children. Because of these small numbers it is quite difficult to run a wide range of programmes for the women, and certainly the low numbers of children means that opportunities for organised group activities and play are limited.

The staff I spoke to when I visited AMC, all spoke of the difficulties of managing the different groups of prisoners – protectees, remandees, high risk etc – in the open campus design. This difficulty only increases when a child is added to the equation.

The policy in ACT allows for children up to age 4 to live with their mothers during their sentence.



Figure 3. One of the higher security accommodation units at ACM.

Whilst the layouts of the cottages are relatively residential the feel is still quite institutional, with steel doors, blockwork walls and detention type fittings. Considerable effort has gone into the detailing of the windows and doors in an effort to “lighten” them visually, and move away from the typical prison aesthetic. Even so whilst the furniture is soft, the architecture is still quite hard. The language of the buildings is not typically residential although it is of domestic scale, and is undoubtedly “good” design in the sense of ESD principles, detailing and construction.

However, it is hard to imagine that the women living in the cottages would feel they were in a “home”.



Figure 4. The high security accommodation unit at ACM.



Figure 5. The living area in the high security living unit.

There is a shared living and kitchen area, but I was advised when I was there that all food preparation equipment was being removed from the cottages due to a violent incident that had occurred. I am uncertain

as to whether this was going to occur in all the cottages or just the one where the problem had arisen. Certainly if it was all the cottages then the implication for child caring would be significant.



Figure 6. The central kitchen in one of the Accommodation unit.

The lowest security cottage has one place that is designated as a mother/child space, with a small room off the mother's bedroom and a bath in the wet area. The Centre was in the process of creating a fenced outdoor play area off this cottage, but it was really just a chainwire fence sectioning off a small patch of grass.



Figure 7. The secure outdoor space of the accommodation unit.

The cottages have a small veranda space but it is secured by heavy bars hence does not really connect with the outside.

As you can see from the aerial photograph the Centre has little or no landscaping to soften the impact of the high security perimeter. Literally at every turn you are confronted by a view to the perimeter which whilst it does not utilise razor tape is still quite forbidding.

The lack of any planting means there are no areas for separation or retreat in the outdoors. The grounds themselves do not seem well maintained, and where evidence of effort has occurred it seems ad hoc.



Figure 8. View across from the central unit to the low security accommodation unit, which has the Mother Baby bedroom.

The visits area at AMC which is used by both the male and female prisoners has a very pleasant atmosphere and a delightful playground for small children. The seating is not fixed and there is a barista coffee area which adds to the casual and relaxed feel.

AMC do not offer overnight stays or long day visits to parents with children.

Children under 18 who enter the facility are not registered on the biometric system. The entry process includes a roto-turn metal detection unit, bag x-ray unit, and a single entry person control booth with biometrics.

There is another visits area in the women's centre but apparently this does is not well utilised. It also has a small outdoor area for children.



Figure 9. The outdoor visits space in the women's centre.

AMC also has 2 family visit rooms, that have a small bed, toilet and kitchen area with a small outdoor courtyard. They can be used by a family for up to 3 hour visits, but in reality tend to be used for conjugal visits by minimum security prisoners.

Summary

The Alexander Machonochie Centre was founded on strong principle of Human Rights and a clear understanding of the different needs of female prisoners. The information and discussion in Dr John Paget's thesis make it very clear as to what the intentions were during planning and design.

For whatever reason I believe the outcomes have not matched the original intent, most particularly in the area of the incarceration of women and in the strength of their family relationships.

For Mothers and Children

Positives

- Location is relatively accessible with public transport available, ample parking, and proximity to city centre.
- The visit area is welcoming and relaxed with good facilities for smaller children.

Negatives

- Because the female accommodation is not completely separated into security levels, separation is difficult, hence limitations are immediately placed on any mother /child arrangements. For example – they are behind the main secure perimeter even though they are minimum security.
- The size of the facility and the limited numbers means programs and group activities for children are limited, and mothers do not necessarily benefit from being part of a larger group of other mothers.
- The cottages have a very institutional feel, and do not reflect community living in any way. For older children i.e. those attending playgroup, this may be noticed.
- The lack of landscaping and layout of the centre mean that the high security perimeter is always in view.
- The lack of landscaping and planting results in a very sterile and barren environment for prisoners, their children and for staff.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Prison System

Auckland Women's Correctional Facility

Arohata Women's Prison

Christchurch Women's Correctional Facility

The New Zealand Prison system has many similarities to our system in Australia, employing a range of alternative sentencing options from custodial sentences to community detention and supervision. In recent times NZ has built a number of new facilities, an example of which is the Auckland Women's Corrections Centre which combines all security classifications in the same prison.

In September 2010 there were a total of 8747 remand and sentenced prisoners in the NZ Prison system of which 558 were women, and they were accommodated across the 3 major female prisons in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Figures on the NZ Corrections website show that rate of women entering the prison system is increasing in comparison to men.

As in Australia, indigenous women are over represented in the NZ prison system, at a rate of almost 3 times that of non indigenous women, and with Australia, the incidence of violent crime amongst female offenders is also increasing.¹ In the most recent census available (2003) it is noted that 35% of female prisoners had children in their care at the time of their sentencing. Over 50% of the imprisoned women had sentences ranging between 6 months and 5 years.²

New Zealand brought in legislation in 2002 that allowed women to have their babies live with them during their sentences, up to the age of 9 months i.e. before they can walk. Minimum/ low security prisoners were the only categories of prisoners eligible to apply, as is the case in the majority of the other countries I visited, apart from Denmark.

In 2008, the Greens MP, Ms Sue Bradford succeeded in gaining an amendment to the Corrections Act, to increase the age restriction to 2 years by introducing a private members bill to Parliament.

"This Bill amends the Corrections Act 2004 to provide every child under 24 months of age whose mother is imprisoned is entitled to be accommodated in the prison in which his or her mother is imprisoned, provided certain conditions are met, for the purpose of being cared for and breastfed by his or her mother.

It further amends the Corrections Act 2004 to provide that prisons in which female prisoners are imprisoned be required to have appropriate facilities for the accommodation of children aged under 24 months, that the children of imprisoned mothers who are accommodated in prison and being breastfed are given sufficient opportunity to be breastfed, and to ensure that imprisoned mothers of children accommodated in prison enter into parenting agreements, including a reciprocal obligation to receive parenting education.

...The 2-year period a child can be accommodated in a prison with his or her imprisoned mother proposed in this Bill is based on the World Health Organisation's adoption of the World Health Assembly's resolution regarding the appropriate period for continuation breastfeeding.

*The Bill recognises that many mothers who are imprisoned have limited, if any, parenting skills, and requires mothers wishing to have their young children accommodated with them in prison to enter into a parenting agreement, including an obligation to care for their child and a reciprocal obligation to both be provided with and participate in parenting education."*³

My brief reading of the NZ Parliament Hansard debate in July 2007⁴ seems to indicate that support for the Bill was widespread across all parties, and that it resulted in a broader discussion about women in prison in general.

¹ <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/research/risk-assessment-of-recidivism-of-violent-sexual-female-offenders/a-profile-of-violent-and-sexual-female-offenders.html>

² <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/research/census-of-prison-inmates-and-home-detainees/census-of-prison-inmates-and-home-detainees-2003.html>

³ Corrections (Mothers with Babies) Amendment Bill. Members Bill, Sue Bradford, 2008

⁴ Corrections (Mothers with Babies) Amendment Bill — Second Reading [Volume:643;Page:13352]

Thus, at the time of my visit to New Zealand the Corrections Department were in the process of putting these new requirements into place, and endeavouring to understand the implications of going from accommodating infants i.e. immobile babies, to housing toddlers who run and jump.

I spoke to Bronwyn Miller and Amanda Davidson of NZ Corrections, both of whom felt the new legislation was positive and in the best interests of the child. They felt that it also gave the prison administration the opportunity to ensure that the children were having all the required early health checks and immunisations. We discussed the need for a separate bedroom for the older child – this is what was being planned as a minimum in NZ – and I indicated this was not seen as necessary in other facilities I had visited. Both women felt that this was important given it was an older child. We also discussed the more detailed issues of design that become critical when considering toddlers. i.e height of light switches, power outlets and door handles, access to kitchen cupboards, thermostats to hot water taps, provision of a bath etc. which were all elements that NZ Corrections had not given much thought to at this early stage.

It will be interesting to see how this new legislation is managed over the next few years and the changes that will need to occur at the various women's facilities.

The Auckland Women's Correctional Facility ("Manukau")

Manukau, Auckland

The first prison I visited was the new facility in Auckland, in the suburb of Manukau which is about a half hours drive from central Auckland and is accessible on public transport routes although not easily.

Designed by the well regarded correctional architecture firm Perumal Pedavoli and opened in 2006, the prison is undoubtedly a good example of modern prison design. From the aerial shot you can see it has been located on a large greenfields site with space allocated for expansion and also the construction of other correctional facilities. Its current capacity is 330 women ranging in security classification from maximum security to minimum.



Figure 1. Google Earth aerial view of Manukau.

Upon entering the carpark to Auckland Women's Correctional Facility you are confronted by a backdrop of the main fence making the initial impression quite imposing. Camera poles are obvious and the perimeter weldmesh fence is extremely confronting with an electric top and inner microphonic cable on a barbed wire lower fence.

The Entry Building to Auckland Women's Correctional Facility is relatively non confrontational and sits as part of the perimeter. The entrance area has quite a commercial feeling, dominated by large reception counter and

waiting area with a bank of lockers and some lounges. The large glazed doors leading out towards the visits area look towards a landscaped space that gives a very non institutional feel. The staff at the reception counter are not in uniform and the manner is reminiscent of a modern doctors surgery. Upon leaving the entry building, you enter into a pleasant courtyard space with attractive landscaping and planting. The secure line of the prison is then crossed through a walk through metal detector and bag x-ray, and interlocked security doors, but no drug detection. Even so, the fixtures and fittings are relatively “soft”.

The basic design of the centre sees the various security levels separated as much as possible by the buildings, as opposed to internal fences. The curved spine on the site created by the shared services buildings separates maximum security from medium and gives a simple order to the design. This also serves as a pedestrian path through the site, which has been landscaped and softened.



Figure 2. A view down the curved spine of the centre.



Figure 3. An example of some of the more successful landscaping on the site.

Prisoners reaching the end of their sentence are accommodated in the self care units located at one end of this curved spine at the beginning of the site.

This is also where the specific mother and baby accommodation is provided. At the time of my visit 2 additional self care units for mother and babies were to be provided in the open space to the left of the current cluster units as shown in the aerial photo below.

It is a privilege to be in the area and the women realise this – if they make a mistake they are out immediately and will not be given a second chance. New prisoners entering the area are made aware by the residents of the “rules” and the importance of “towing the line”.



Figure 4. A Google Earth aerial view of the independent living units at Manukau.

The secure perimeter of the site is confronting and brutal. Whilst it has no razor tape, it has highly visible camera poles, a wide sterile zone and as you can see, is directly visible from the self care unit cluster of houses. It combines both physical and electronic security requiring a full sterile zone, cameras and lighting.



Figure 5 & 5a. The high security perimeter at Manukau with energised fence, sterile zone and microwave detection.

Because the independent living area is located within the main secure perimeter it bears the brunt of a full high security fence line, in close proximity to its central outdoor space.

The independent living units accommodate four women per house, and these women are responsible for their own cooking, laundry and cleaning. All the women who live in this area are fully employed in one of the various industries at the Centre. At the time of my visit there were three mothers and babies at the Auckland facility and the general consensus by both staff and other prisoners was that this served to “soften” the prison community.

The living units are arranged like a street, with 2 rows facing each other across a central “road” or pathway. Unfortunately, one row of houses faces the wrong way, with their back doors facing the “street”. This may be for climatic reasons - due to each house being exactly the same design it does not allow it to be mirrored to suit the streetscape without compromising its ability to utilise passive solar heating. Either way, it defeats the attempt to normalise the cluster of houses and is disappointing from a design and functional perspective.

The landscaping, which is maintained by the women, is sparse to say the least, which is in contrast to some rather beautifully planted areas elsewhere in the facility. This detracts from the ‘streetscape’ aesthetic and the general amenity of the area – perhaps the newness of the facility is the reason, and more planting is planned in the future.

Women in the self care units prepare their own food. Every Thursday they prepare a shopping list based on their budget and on the Friday one of the women from each house is taken out shopping for the house.



Figure 6. The independent living units at Manukau.



Figure 7. The living units on the opposite side of the “street”.

Each unit is aesthetically the same, and whilst its scale is residential, the significant use of corrugated steel sheet cladding and skillion roofs results in a collection of buildings that do not appear “traditionally” residential. Whilst there is a veranda and paved porch area at the front of each house, there is no real privacy,

or separation from the 'street' and predominance of lawn suggests that landscaping and planting will not result in this occurring over time.

The interiors of the units make good use of natural finishes which give them warmth and texture. Soft domestic style furniture and fittings, and an abundance of natural light give the interiors a very pleasant atmosphere.



Figure 8. The kitchen area in the independent living units.



Figure 9. The common living space in the independent living units.



Figures 10 & 10a. The common living in areas in the independent living units.

Currently babies sleep in the rooms with their mothers in porta cots. As you can see from the image below, the rooms are quite generous in size compared to other sites I visited. In the new proposed accommodation, the intention is to provide a second small room for mothers with toddlers, giving the child their own sleeping space. Whether this arrangement can be sustained in times when beds are in short supply will be interesting to see.



Figure 11. A typical bedroom for a mother and child in the independent living units.

The women are free to move around the other general areas of the prison – they have free access to the medical area, the education centre etc. and are responsible for managing their own appointments etc. The library is a decent size with a good collection of books, and there is a separate computer teaching area. The medical centre is extremely well set up – very similar to a conventional medical centre. It has a dual entrance to cater for prisoners from the more secure area, but another centre is being built to cater for these women as numbers are increasing. At the time of my visit the existing low security units were being converted to double bunks to deal with issues of capacity.

Staff are not allowed to have physical contact with the children but they do interact. Other prisoners do bond with the babies, but are also wary of the pain of separation when they have to leave. This will be exacerbated when children are allowed to remain until 2 years.

The staff I spoke to felt that the babies “softened” the feel of the area and generally there were no problems associated with them being there. Sometimes younger mums were criticised by some of the older women, but more often the other women provided real support.

The separation at 9 months is obviously a very traumatic time for staff and other inmates, if the mother still has some time of her sentence to serve.

In general, the staff I spoke to were apprehensive about older children being accommodated at the Centre. Presently there is a policy in place that does not allow staff to handle the babies. Whilst this is relatively simple to adhere to when a baby is immobile in a pram, when presented with a bouncy smiling toddler who rushes up for a hug, or falls over and needs to be picked up, staff will be hard pressed to abide by this policy.

Similarly, kitchens and wet areas will need to be child proofed for toddlers, and different play areas provided that allow for greater movement and gross motor skill development for older children.

Summary

The Auckland Women’s Correctional Centre has many interesting and clever design features, and benefits from being a purpose built women’s centre, hence not having to compete as part of a male facility. Its architecture is well considered, stylish and modern, and its location in suburban Auckland means it is relatively simple to access for families.

Positives for mothers and children

- The entrance is quite soft and non confrontational, apart from the car-park and view to main perimeter.
- The independent living units are well designed and provide an attractive and pleasant living environment.
- Increasing the age limit to 2 years to allow mothers to breastfeed, and incorporating parenting education into the programs.

Negatives

- The independent living units are within the high security main perimeter, and this brutal fence-line is directly visible from the central outdoor spaces.
 - The impact of separating a child from its mother at age 2 will be extremely traumatic.
 - Opportunities for outdoor play are limited and not provided in any formal sense.
 - Little emphasis has been placed on the landscaping around the independent living units, missing an opportunity to soften the area and enhance a ‘domestic’ feel.
-

Arohata Women's Prison

Wellington

Arohata Women's Prison named after the Maori words for "the bridge", indicating its role as a bridge between past offending and a return to life back in the community, is a facility that caters for around 150 female prisoners ranging in security classification from minimum to high medium.



Figure 12. Google Earth aerial view of Arohata Women's Prison. The independent living units are the red roofed cluster of buildings in the top left of the photo.

Arohata is located about 20 minutes drive from Wellington CBD and is accessible by public transport. Originally a women's borstal in 1944, then a juvenile facility in 1981, it was converted back to a women's prison in 1987. Unsurprisingly, given its age and history, it is a collection of different building styles and a rabbit warren of fences and barriers. The single entrance point to the main prison is through the weldmesh, razor topped perimeter, via a gate and sallyport, thus making it very confronting and unwelcoming. Fortunately the self care units, where mothers and children reside are separate and outside this main perimeter.



Figure 13. Google Earth view of the independent living units at Arohata.

Over the course of my tour of Arohata main prison I saw traditional style cell blocks with dormitory wings, more modern quite high security accommodation with heavy duty doors with hatches and safe cells, double level cell block accommodation and also the ubiquitous ‘transportable’ cell units now permanent as is often the case.



Figure 14. One of the traditional cell blocks at Arohata



Figure 15. The more modern high security cell block at Arohata.



Figure 16. Toilet and shower facilities in the high security accommodation unit.



Figure 17. A cell in the high security accommodation unit.



Figure 18. High security cell doors in one of the newer facilities at Arohata.



Figure 19. An example of the older dormitory style accommodation at Arohata.



Figure 20. Cell accommodation using “shipping containers” – a solution that is currently being implemented in South Australia.



Figure 21. A cell in the shipping container accommodation.



Figure 22. The shipping containers are fitted out as cells and linked by covered ways.

One thing immediately apparent to me at Arohata, was the policy of allowing personal casual clothing for the female prisoners – not prison uniform. This is the opposite to the policy in Australia and the majority of the other countries I visited. Most of the people in NZ Corrections whom I spoke to were supportive of it – whilst there are some problems with wearing of “gang colours” and brand names leading to selling and stealing of garments, in general it was seen to be a positive choice for the inmates.

The visits area at Arohata is a typical visiting space with fixed chairs and tables in a large open space. There are no real play opportunities for children within the visits area, and whilst it is bright and airy, it lacks warmth and holds little of interest for a child.



Figure 23. The visiting area at Arohata.

A separate 'baby bonding room' was provided off to one side of visits which had a pleasant light feel to it with direct access to a landscaped outdoor area. This unit is theoretically available to mothers with children under 9 months, and can be used on a daily basis for up to 12 hours a day, to allow mother child bonding to occur. This type of access requires considerable assistance and determination from a number of parties, including the mother, and the external carer who brings the child to the mother on a regular basis.



Figure 24. The baby bonding room at Arohata.

Arohata runs the typical women's prisons industries of Laundry, Sewing, Cooking and Cleaning, as well as some grounds keeping duties, although on the day I visited, groundsmen were doing the mowing around the prison. Leisure activities are limited with some volleyball courts in some of the accommodation outdoor spaces, but Arohata does boast the only prison swimming pool in NZ.

The Self Care units at Arohata sit on a separate section of the site outside the main perimeter fence. A road to the units follows the main perimeter fenceline, so you never lose sight of where you really are.



Figure 25. The high security perimeter of the main facility at Arohata, running alongside the road leading down to the independent living units.

The Units are secured behind a 4m high mesh fence with lighting, microphonics and cameras. Given the security rating of the area this seemed somewhat excessive security – an opinion that was echoed by others I spoke to. Sadly this fence detracted significantly from the cluster of houses, which sit on an attractive sloping site with beautiful outlooks across the valley. The cost of the fence would have been significant due to the incline of the site.



Figure 26. The secure perimeter around the independent living units.

The 4 independent living units are dotted down the sloping site, and one of them has 2 larger mother and baby rooms. The architecture is domestic and simple and suits the sloping site. The units each have 4 bedrooms with shared living, dining and laundry facilities. The furnishings are soft and domestic, and the design of the units is open and light.

Open balconies look out over the site, but again this is marred by the ugly and dominating perimeter. Currently Arohata only accommodates babies up to 9 months, but with the new legislation may have toddlers, something that will require some changes to the accommodation from a safety perspective. But conversely the site will provide a wonderful play area for small children, full of variety and challenges.

The governor of the site, Ms Sue Neera, felt apprehensive about having older children at Arohata, indicating the risks of the sloping site, and the increased safety measures that would be required. Her preference was to have babies up to 6 months only, and also only if the mother was leaving at that point too.



Figure 27. The roadway leading into the cluster of buildings that form the independent living section of the prison.



Figure 28. One of the 4 independent living units at Arohata.



Figure 29. Looking down the site to the two lower units and the valley beyond



Figure 30. One of the units sited adjacent to the imposing secure perimeter.



Figure 31 & 31a. Bedrooms in the independent living units.



Figure 32. The kitchen area in the centre of one of the units.



Figure 33. The balcony at the rear of the unit, looking out over the valley.

There is a common area for the living units, that is used for counselling and programs. Some of the women living in the units go out to work, and previously the women did their own food shopping, but this had changed and now staff were doing the shopping for them. Apparently there had also been vegetable gardens established on the site, not surprising given the amount of useable land, but the staff running these programs had since left and the gardens had lapsed.

I spoke to one of the women living in the units, who goes out of the prison to work, doing a shift between 3pm and 12pm. We spoke of the implications of having small children living in the units and the effect it would have on the other occupants. She was very positive about the program and being a mother of older children herself, felt it provided good results for all involved. She was not concerned about living with small children but acknowledged that her own experience as a mother perhaps made her more tolerant.



Figure 34. The entrance to the common building.



Figure 35. The common room facility.

Summary

Arohata is an old style facility that utilises the worst of low cost prisoner accommodation to supplement the current older buildings. The independent living units are an exception to this, but the choice to install a high security perimeter is disappointing.

Positives for Mothers and Children

- It is located quite close to the main city centre of Wellington and is accessible by public transport.
- There is a separate 'baby bonding' area with an external deck, separate from the main visiting area, which provides a pleasant private space for mothers with small children visiting.
- The independent living Units provide domestic style facilities in which to nurture a child, not located behind the main perimeter.
- The landscape provides wonderful opportunities for exciting play for a small child, if balanced with safety concerns.
- Programs that allow women to leave the site for work encourage normalisation for an older child with opportunities to access external childcare.

Negative

- The high security perimeter around the Independent living units negates many of the positives of the site. It appears to be an "overkill" reaction that was expensive and impractical.
 - For children visiting their mothers in the main prison, the entry point is intimidating and confronting by virtue of the gatehouse being behind the perimeter.
-

The Christchurch Women's Correctional Facility

Christchurch



Figure 36. Google Earth aerial view of the Christchurch Women's Prison.

Christchurch Women's Prison is located about 35 minutes drive from Christchurch CBD but it does not appear to be easily accessible by public transport. It is located in open farming land, and as you can see from the aerial shot above, the site is generous and there is significant room for expansion. It is currently the only women's facility on the South Island, and was opened in 1974. The Christchurch Men's Prison is located about 5 minutes away on a similar open site.

The facility houses around 140 women from low to high security hence the secure perimeter is quite severe and brutal. It has a combination of different types of accommodation, from high security cell blocks, dormitory style buildings, and independent domestic style living units.

The gatehouse is set back from the line of the main perimeter so first contact is with the weldmesh barrier gate and intercom, which makes the entry process quite confronting and difficult.



Figure 37. The main entrance gate into the Christchurch Women's Prison.



Figure 38. The view from the foyer of the gatehouse building out to the entry gate.

The gatehouse facility itself is a newer building (built in 2008) and has a modern commercial feel. The staff member at the entry point is a uniformed guard sitting behind a glass screen but communication is relatively easy, and the screening process is a simple walk through metal detector. From the entry point it is possible to see straight through to the visits area, which was included as part of the gatehouse redevelopment in 2008. Generous use of full height glass has created spaces that are open and allow the user to easily orientate themselves within the linked buildings.



Figure 39. The screening area in the gatehouse.



Figure 40. The view from the screening area over to the visit centre.

The visits area is a very appealing space with significant amounts of glass, clean modern lines, and attractive mix of finishes and colours. The staff are openly proud of the space, and are positive about the effect it has on the mood of the users.

The folded plywood chairs to the normally quite ugly fixed visit tables, are a welcome design feature, that softens what is usually a quite harsh element. The use of curved circular steel sections also adds to this thoughtful design. The use of timber seats in prisons is often shunned due to its perceived low strength, but the staff at Christchurch have reported no breakages to date.



Figure 41. The recently built visits centre at Christchurch Women's Prison.



Figure 42. The use of plywood seats and curved steel sections softens the area.



Figure 43. High ceilings and large expanses of glass within the new visits centre.

Disappointingly, consideration for visiting children is limited with only a small play space provided with little thought for activities or supervision. Access to outdoor play is not provided although there are views to outdoor courtyard areas.



Figure 44. The disappointing children's play area in the visits centre.

There is a separate baby bonding room that provides private facilities for mothers with children to spend extended periods of time with their baby. Local volunteer groups do a "baby run" to the prison, collecting babies from their external carers and bringing them in to the prison on regular basis to facilitate bonding with their mother. There is access to a small outside courtyard space, and also basic cooking facilities, and baby change area.



Figure 45. The baby bonding room at Christchurch Women's Prison.



Figure 46. The toilet and change table area in the baby bonding room.



Figure 47. The kitchenette in the baby bonding room.

Christchurch Women's Prison is a mixture of old and new buildings, typical of a prison that has evolved over its almost 40 year life. This evolution means the layout is a little haphazard, but in general the facility is in good condition and has many good elements. The use of a prisoner painting gang, means that all the areas I visited including the older buildings, looked fresh and new, due to a regular maintenance and painting program, that also provides a true work pathway for its participants. Whilst this is a small element, it can have a significant impact on the overall atmosphere of a facility. Similarly the grounds were neat and well kept, maintained by a prisoner garden maintenance team.



Figure 48. A freshly painted hallway in one of the older buildings on the site.



Figure 49. Attractive and well maintained areas of landscaping at the Prison.



Figure 50. One of the older dormitory style accommodation blocks on the site.

In addition to the painting and grounds maintenance teams, the prison provides the other typical female activities as “work” for the inmates, with up to 2/3 of prisoners actively working. Kitchen work, a sewing room and cleaning, all provide employment for the women, and are managed by CIE (Corrections Industry Employment). This work enables the women to earn credits under the National Qualification Framework, allowing them to work towards a qualification throughout their sentence. There is also a “release to work” program that allows low security prisoners to do work in the community.

By virtue of the Rainbow Warrior bombing in 1985 and the subsequent imprisonment of Frenchwoman Dominique Prieur at Christchurch Women’s Prison, there is a full size gymnasium on the site, funded by the French Government of the time, when it learned that the Prison had no proper exercise area for Ms Prieur to use during her sentence.



Figure 51. The gymnasium at the Prison funded by the French Government.

The prison provides 4 main types of programs for the women – motivational, cognitive behavioural, employment and education, and reintegrative. One of the latter is a parenting program that acknowledges the importance of success in parenting and relationships as a way to reduce re-offending.

This is supported by the Independent Living Units on the site, that provide the women with a domestic style, normalised living environment, allowing them to re-learn, or learn for the first time, the basic life skills such as cooking, budgeting, and also the experience of living with other people. Access to these units is only available to 'low risk' prisoners and is seen as a privilege. Their day is still a structured one, and lockdown is at 8.45pm. Women who are part of the 'release to work' program live in these units. The units are located within the main perimeter, which was seen as a plus by the Prison Manager Mr Wayne McKnight, who felt that this provided simpler access to services, medical and visit facilities.



Figure 52. Google Earth aerial view of the independent living units.



Figure 53. The cluster of independent living units. The dark coloured unit in the foreground is one of those built in 1996.

Initially 4 living units were built at the prison in 1996 – they are the darker roofed buildings at the top of the aerial photo - with 5 new units being added some years later. This section of the prison is separated from the remainder of the prison by both buildings and a dividing fence. Sadly it is in close proximity to the main perimeter, providing a grim backdrop to the cluster of neat 'houses'.



Figure 54. Two of the older units.



Figure 55. The cluster of newer independent living units built at the site.



Figure 56. The entry and veranda to one of the newer units.

All the units are of lightweight construction with a distinctly domestic style, and are arranged in a cluster rather than a streetscape. The newer units are raised up off the ground by about a metre, a simple but clever design element that gives a sense of privacy and separation from the 'public' spaces around the buildings. In a prison where so often it is impossible to get visual privacy, a small element like this can provide a subtle but significant sense of separation and serve to give a person a heightened sense and control of their personal space.

The units are furnished with simple domestic fittings and utilise a range of materials and colours that add warmth to the spaces.

As a group the women work out a shopping list for the house, and each Sunday one of the women goes with a staff member to shop for the group.

There is currently no secure out door play areas that would be suitable for small toddlers. Wayne McKnight indicated they were considering using pool type fencing to delineate secure play areas off the designated Mother Baby units, and I sensed that the change in legislation to toddlers, was making everyone a little apprehensive. The plan was to extend two of the current living units to make slightly larger rooms.

Some concerns had been voiced about integrating small children in with the working women, and also about putting a number of mothers and babies into a single unit. A past situation where 4 sets of mothers and babies were housed in a single unit caused considerable unrest and stress for all.

At the time of my visit there was only one mother and baby living at the prison.

If problems do occur in the independent living units a meeting is called of all the residents to endeavour to work through the problem. The women are encouraged to solve issues as a group, but if no resolution is found people will be moved out until an alternative unit place becomes available.



Figure 57. The kitchen and living area in one of the units.

I had the opportunity to sit and speak at length with a number of staff members as I wrote up my notes in the lunch room after my tour with the general manager. As well as some correctional staff there were a number of volunteers who worked with the mothers at the prison.

All the women spoke very positively about the philosophy of mothers and babies being kept together throughout a mother's sentence – and these were all people who worked at the coalface, dealing with the realities on a day to day basis. Prison management obviously see the importance of maintaining family ties and have put in place procedures and practices that endeavour to assist the women to do this.

Summary

The Christchurch Women's Prison was an impressive facility even though much of its building stock is older. The new elements are well designed, and the independent living units are well located on the site, even though they remain within the main secure perimeter.

Broader planning elements let the prison down – the position of the gatehouse within the secure perimeter as opposed to forming part of the secure perimeter means that it is impossible to 'soften' the entry process.

The prison appears well organised and maintained, and this is evident in the condition of the older buildings and the pride taken in the newer facilities.

Positives for Mothers and Babies

- The independent living units, particularly the newer units, provide a pleasant domestic environment for a small child. The raised porch at the entry to each unit provides a safe semi private space, but still visible and able to be monitored by staff.
- The visits area is visible from the main gatehouse entry point, reducing possible anxiety for a child entering the facility.
- Time and effort has been put into making the new visits area a pleasant and appealing space.

Negatives

- The gatehouse sits behind the main perimeter which means the initial entry to the facility is quite intimidating and impersonal, particularly to a child, but also to adults.
 - The independent living units are close to the main perimeter which is a razor topped mesh fence that is brutal and confronting.
 - The visits area does not provide good play opportunities for children.
 - The facility is not easily accessible by public transport.
-

ENGLAND

Ministry of Justice

HMP Bronzefield
HMP Peterborough

When I contacted the UK Ministry of Justice requesting I be allowed to visit some of their women's prison facilities I found it quite difficult to access the right chain of authority. As a result, I used personal contacts to gain access to 2 of England's privately run prisons.

Sodexo¹ is an international Rehabilitative Justice Service provider and is responsible for running two of England's main women's prisons – HMP Bronzefield, in London, and HMP Peterborough. The latter is a dual male and female prison.

As stated on the main Sodexo website -

Sodexo not only takes on the roles of running the facility but also takes responsibility for rehabilitation and programs.

To support its clients, the Group designs and implements service solutions aimed at:

- improving the living conditions of detainees,*
- contributing to the safety, smooth functioning and public image of prisons,*
- providing real opportunities for prisoner rehabilitation and re-entry into society *.*

** Reinsertion program results: recidivism rate reduced by as much as 50% according to a British study.*

In addition to providing traditional foodservices, support services and managing facilities, Sodexo also has developed an expertise in helping prisoners prepare for their return to mainstream society. In providing training and apprenticeships and assistance in finding jobs and housing and opening bank accounts, the chances for successful resettlement are maximized. Detainees are able to build a new future and prisons take on a new dimension.²

Of the 141 prisons in England 11 are privately run, and 14 are for women.

The map on the following page gives a snapshot of just how many correctional facilities there are across England and Wales. The women's facilities are relatively evenly spread across the country.

7 of these women's prisons have Mother and Baby Units, only one of which is in an "open" prison, or low security facility, at HMP Askham Grange.³

Both Bronzefield and Peterborough were constructed under the Public Private Partnership model as purpose built facilities, hence are virtually the same design, with the main difference being Peterborough has a male section. Both prisons also accommodate young offenders.

Fortunately I was able to take photographs in Peterborough although not at Bronzefield.

The Mother and Baby Program is also very similar on both sites, and the design of the Mother Baby Unit is virtually the same.

A broad overview of the Mother and Baby program is as follows. This summarised information is taken from the Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service – "All about Mother and Baby Units", which is a handbook prepared for prisoners who are wishing to apply for access to the units.

All of the Mother and Baby units can take babies up to the age of 18 months, with some flexibility existing to cater for women reaching the end of their sentence close to when their baby turns 2. Holloway can only have babies to the age of 9 months. Both Bronzefield and Peterborough have space for 12 mothers as does Eastwood, whilst Holloway has space for 13, Styall for 11, New Hall for 9 and Askham Grange for 10, making a total of 79 places. I understand that all the sites can cater for at least one set of twins.

¹ formerly Kalyx <http://uk.sodexo.com/uk/en/solutions/on-site/justice/services.asp>

² http://www.sodexo.com/group_en/activities/food-facilities-management-services/correctional-services/home/home.asp

³ http://fondationinternationalepenaletpenitentiaire.org/Site/documents/Stavern/16_Stavern_Report%20England%20and%20Wales.pdf

Mothers do not have to be reaching the end of their sentence in order to be eligible to enter the units – it appears each application is assessed on its merits and a variety of different factors are considered. Women of all security levels can apply – it is not restricted to minimum or medium security inmates.

The broad conditions for assessment are -

- It is in the best interests of the baby
- There is a place available
- Social Services support the application
- There is a strong likelihood the mother will continue to care for the baby after release.
- The mother's ability to care for her child is not impaired by poor health or legal reasons.
- The mother provides urine samples that test negative for illicit drugs
- The mother is willing to sign a compact that may be tailored to meet her specific needs.
- The mother consents to her baby being searched from time to time.
- The mother is willing to participate in the daily regime of the prison and undertake identified targets in her custody/sentence plan.
- The mother is able to demonstrate behaviours and attitudes which are not detrimental to the safety and well being of other unit residents, or the good order and discipline of the unit.

The applications are assessed by a group of people including Social Services representatives, the Prison Governor or Baby Unit manager, a social worker and probation officer, and also any other specialists deemed relevant. The Governor of the prison will make the final decision.

When the woman enters the Unit they are required to draw up a Child Care plan that also considers what will happen when the baby leaves the Unit.

Mothers are able to have 8 weeks off work and classes after the birth of their child, after which they are required to recommence classes and programs. The child will be cared for in the Unit child care centre.

All basic items and food are provided by the prison, but mothers are expected to provide their own personal equipment. Items are able to be sent in for the babies from the community. Each unit will have its own specific list of what is acceptable, but in general terms anything that is age appropriate for the child is acceptable within reason.

Babies are allowed to go out of the prison and this is encouraged, in order to spend time with relatives and friends, or undertake activities. The baby may be searched on return, with the mother undressing and dressing the baby herself.

Policy regarding whether family can visit the Unit varies from prison to prison.

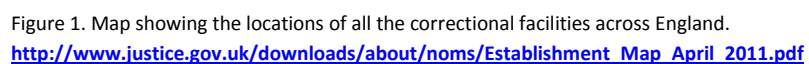
All normal regular health checks and immunisations are done within the Prison by visiting Health providers.

If a mother tests positive for illicit drugs she may be removed from the Unit, and would have to re-apply to return. Similarly if they are found to be distributing illicit drugs they may be removed from the Unit.

Mothers who are UK citizens are able to claim Child Care Benefit, and are encouraged to use this on items for their baby. In some instances they may be required to contribute to the cost of food and supplies.

Mothers who are on opiate substance maintenance programs, i.e. methadone, are not precluded from being on the Unit.

Mothers who are serving a long sentence have to give up their babies at 6 months of age.



HMP Bronzefield

London

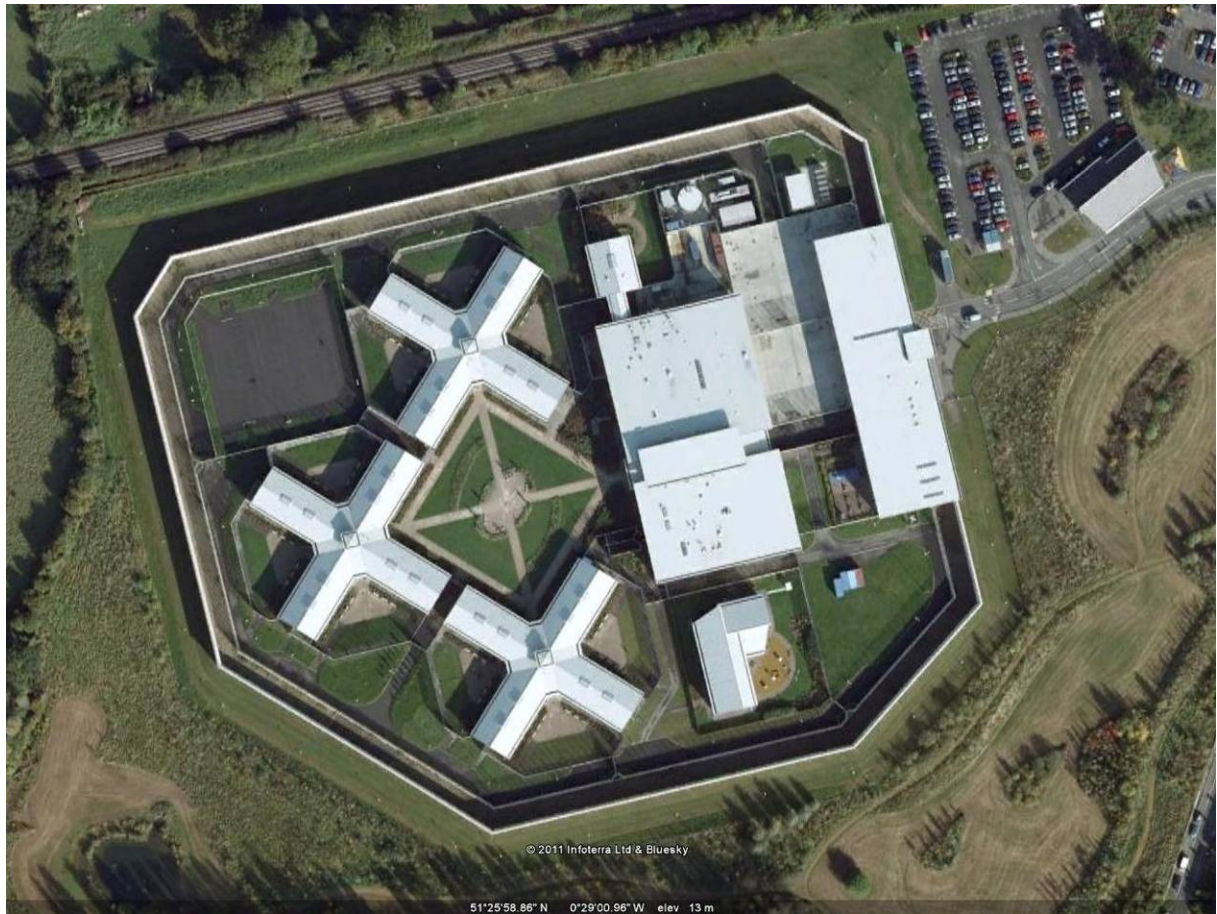


Figure 2. Google Earth map of HMP Bronzefield.



Figure 3. Close up of the purpose designed and built Mother Baby unit at Bronzefield.

HMP Bronzefield is the only purpose built all female facility in the UK, and accommodates 527 prisoners of all different classifications including young female offenders. I was able to travel to the prison from central London relatively easily by public transport, with both bus and train options.

The entrance building to Bronzefield forms part of the secure perimeter, so on arrival you are not confronted by an intimidating perimeter. Having said that, as you approach the Prison from the road, the solid perimeter wall gives the site an unmistakably correctional feel.



Figure 4. The entrance building at Bronzefield (image taken from the Sodexo website <http://uk.sodexo.com>)

There is a visits reception building located in the Carpark which caters for all prisoner visitors. A boom gate controls vehicle access to the main entry building. I entered through the professional visits entry and the entry process I had to undertake was rigorous – biometric registration by iris, photographic verification of identity, and also a pat down body search. Nonetheless, the atmosphere was quite non institutional and the approach extremely professional by the Sodexo staff.

I was given a comprehensive tour of the facility by Julia Hookway, the Children and Families Manager. We entered the main admissions area of the facility where Julia showed me the typical prisoner movement van that would bring an offender from the courts. With individual enclosed seats, and little room to move, it is affectionately dubbed by the prisoners as the “sweat box”. Policy indicates that pregnant women were not be transported in these vans, but there had been instances of it occurring.⁴ In 2010 approximately 25% of the women at Bronzefield were on remand, with about 80% of the sentenced women serving sentences of less than 6 months.⁵

The process on arrival is very structured – women are taken through a series of interviews designed to assess their risk category, health needs, mental state etc. An amnesty box is provided at first entry, and the staff at Bronzefield have attempted to soften the relatively harsh interiors of the area (see photos of Peterborough) with domestic style furniture and brighter colours. The waiting room is not a holding cell, but more like a doctor’s surgery. New arrivals watch a video on the Prison in this space whilst waiting to be admitted.

It is possibly during this initial interview process that staff will discover if the woman has any children. It is not always discovered and potentially there needs to be more rigour in questioning as the identification of this is obviously very important. In his most recent report on Bronzefield, Nicholas Hardwick, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, reiterates the importance of this and suggests a more systematic approach would be of benefit.⁶

If a woman is pregnant when she enters the prison, she will be provided with a ‘Pregnancy and Beyond Support Plan’ which sets out the plan for the months ahead and identifies any issues, goals and actions. The

⁴ http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/Bronzefield_2010.pdf p.19

⁵ http://www.insidetime.org/info-regimes2.asp?nameofprison=HMP_BRONZEFIELD

⁶ http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/Bronzefield_2010.pdf P.83.

prison runs a weekly Pregnancy Group, and has regular scheduled midwife attendance, and has a number of different support mechanisms through both the community and within the prison which it encourages the inmates to make use of. They will also be assigned a specific Pregnancy Support Officer. (Apparently 3 babies have actually been born at Bronzefield – unexpected early arrivals that were successfully managed by the staff on duty).

Similarly if a new inmate has children in her care, the prison will assist in preparing an action plan to ensure that the needs of the children are catered for. This may be an application for a place on the Mother and Baby Unit, or a plan for communication and visits over the mother's sentence.

New inmates are also interviewed by a trusted inmate – a "listener" who has been trained by the Samaritans, a charitable community group. The Listener program is a common initiative across many prisons. They provide a "helpline service" for prisoners and also support within the Prison.

There are also the "nursery nurses" who run and manage the on-site day care centre, who provide advice and support as required.

Prisoners are fingerprinted, photographed and have to provide a urine sample for testing. The prison uses a body scanner for metal detection, which negates the need for intrusive and demeaning strip searches.

The women are able to have hot shower and are also given a hot meal – many of them will have been at court all day, and it may be late in the evening by the time they get to their accommodation. They are also offered a phone call at this point.

The women are provided with a night pack from the property store containing a set of clothes, pyjamas and toiletries, and also offered a £3 goody bag with various other "luxury" items, catering for smokers and non smokers. Inmates are allowed civilian clothing, but no fashion labels are permitted. There is no real restriction on what babies are allowed to bring in – and this can cause storage problems for the prison if mothers go overboard with toys.

The prisoner is then allocated a bed in House Block 1, and from there will be moved to the appropriate House Block over the course of her sentence. Bronzefield has 4 House Blocks for varying levels of prisoner classification, and also has the 12 bed Mother and baby Unit. House Block 4 is a recent addition and caters for Life sentenced women. None of the accommodation is cottage style – all the blocks are multi storey and cell block style. Women have keys to their cells, and staff tend to knock before entering. None of the accommodation is self care – all food comes from the prison kitchen. Women living on the Mother and Baby Unit prepare food for their children but not for themselves which is somewhat puzzling.

Prisoners are given an ID card which they must carry at all times. There is also an "electronic pod" system that women can use that allows them to make canteen buys, check accounts and appointments, from various points around the prison. This has proven to be quite a successful initiative that gives the women more control over their own information and planning, and does not require them to rely on staff providing them with information all the time.



Figure 5. The electronic pod on the wings at Peterborough and Bronzefield, where women can access their information and services.

During my visit I found the atmosphere at Bronzefield to be quite calm and respectful. Staff prisoner communication was relatively formal, with inmates being addressed as Miss Jones, and staff as Sir and Ma'am. The number of male staff outnumbers female at a ratio of about 60:40 which is not considered to be ideal, and this was raised by the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in his most recent report.⁷

As with other sites I visited, finding and keeping good staff is a constant challenge, and in many instances, women's prisons are seen to be more difficult places to work, with a frequent comment from custodial staff being along the lines of, "Men are easier to handle, women bear grudges..."

Over the next few days of their time at the Prison, the "new ladies" do various literacy and numeracy tests, and are assigned a personal case manager. The various external agencies talk to each prisoner and they are also given a virtual tour of the facility. They are shown the gymnasium and library, and on Day 3 are introduced to all the available programs. This is done in a large open space that is set up like a careers centre. The women are shown all that is available and sign up for what interests them or what is required as part of their sentencing arrangements. (see figures 21 and 22 - photographs taken at Peterborough of a similar area)

The visits area at Bronzefield is quite a pleasant space with soft upholstered chairs, its own canteen, and a good outdoor space with seating and play equipment. An automated timing system is used to control visits and guards oversee the sessions from a raised area that is typical of many visiting centres. There is a family visits room that is used for birthday parties, and also a space that can and has been used for weddings.

The Prison regularly holds Family Days and its focus on maintaining family ties is impressive. Initiatives that assist in children writing letters to their parents are in place, email communication is encouraged, and Bronzefield also participates in a scheme called Storybook Mums, which is part of the broader charitable group Storybook Dads.⁸

Prisoners are able to record a CD of themselves reading stories for their children, which is then edited, enhanced and sound effects and music are added. The Storybook Dads website states its charter as,

- To help imprisoned parents throughout the UK to maintain meaningful contact with their children, thereby reducing re-offending and improving outcomes for parent and child.
- To reduce stress and trauma experienced by the children of imprisoned parents.
- To enable imprisoned parents to help with the development of their children's literacy skills.
- To enable prisoners to gain useful skills (e.g. Literacy and computer skills)
- To help imprisoned parents nurture and develop their parenting skills⁹

In its most recent report, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMCIIP) noted of Bronzefield,

"There was a strong focus on helping women maintain contact with their children and families. The mother and baby unit was excellent – the nursery nurses provided compassionate and individual support with a clear emphasis on promoting parental responsibility, the environment was excellent and there were good links with relevant external organisations. Staff commitment was illustrated by the nursery nurses' successful application for funding to transform the nursery garden. A full-time family support worker provided specialist support but staff throughout the prison were aware and supportive of women's domestic situations. Visits were well organised and there were a variety of specialist family days. For a small fee, families could hold children's birthday parties with their mother during family visits. Very vulnerable women we spoke to described the positive impact this provision had on their self-esteem and wellbeing."¹⁰

⁷ http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/Bronzefield_2010.pdf pp.5,12.

⁸ <http://www.storybookdads.co.uk>.

⁹ <http://www.storybookdads.co.uk>.

¹⁰ HMCIIP REPORT Last Inspection by HMCIIP: 13 – 22 October 2010 - Full unannounced inspection
Report Dated: January 2011, Published: 31st March 2011

The Mother and Baby unit is a two storey building, with the bedrooms and bathrooms on the upper floor. Each bedroom has an ensuite with a toilet and basin, and there are a couple of shared bathrooms. There is lift access between floors, and much effort has been made to introduce colour and interest. The architecture has some interesting elements, and the prison have added murals, pinboards with photos of babies, and other artwork. On the ground floor is a fully blown child care centre, staffed by qualified nursery nurses. It is a rather wonderful space, designed with thought and knowledge. (see photos taken at Peterborough). The out door play space, constructed with a community grant, provides varied play opportunities for the different age groups and complements the indoor spaces. The only negative is the play area's proximity to the secure perimeter which towers over it somewhat.

From 6 weeks of age babies start going to the centre, whilst their mothers either work or do programs from 8.30 – 11.45 and 2 – 4pm. Mothers come “home” to have lunch with their babies, which they prepare themselves in the fully equipped communal kitchen. The Babies sleep in cots in their mothers rooms, and one of the bedrooms is slightly larger to accommodate twins.

There is also office space in the Unit and rooms for use by visiting agencies and teaching. Nursery nurses take the babies out into the community for activities, and extended stays are also arranged with other family members.

Nicholas Hardwick, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons noted of the Unit in his most recent report,

The mother and baby unit was an excellent example of holistic and integrated care for pregnant women, mothers and babies. The unit ethos was that pregnant women, mothers and their babies should receive care and attention equivalent to that provided in the community.

Staff were dedicated and the unit manager provided strong professional leadership. The nursery nurses gave excellent support to mothers and cared for children professionally and compassionately. The environment was outstanding and focused on its purpose. There were strong links with community child care organisations, with regular multidisciplinary meetings and visits from social care and health professionals.¹¹

The Independent Monitoring Board for the Prison noted in its 2009/2010 report on Bronzefield,

5.7 MOTHER AND BABY UNIT

The Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) continues to house a high percentage of foreign nationals. It has been redecorated and provides a safe, supportive and pleasant environment for mothers and their babies.

A fine new outdoor play area, funded by a Surrey County Council Early Years grant was completed in July 2010.

The Board commends HMP/YOI Bronzefield for the provision of this excellent facility.”¹²

¹¹ http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/Bronzefield_2010.pdf p.33.

¹² http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/corporate-reports/imb/annual-reports-2010/Bronzefield_2009-2010.pdf

Summary

HMP Bronzefield is an example of a purpose built prison facility that utilises a high density accommodation model. This model is not generally considered to be the best or most appropriate way to house low and medium security female prisoners, with the general consensus moving towards residential style independent living. Having said that, there are many things that this facility obviously does very well.

Positives for Mothers and Babies

- Determined focus on catering for mothers and maintaining family ties. The provision of specific staff positions to manage these aspects, and ensuring that staff are specifically trained to do this well indicate the high priority it is given.
- Access to the Unit is on a case by case basis which ensures that all mothers have the opportunity to apply and be considered, regardless of security classification.
- Excellent connections with outside community provider agencies ensuring babies at Bronzefield remain part of the community health and development systems.
- The custom designed accommodation unit, with an extremely high quality child care area, provides an excellent environment for babies and toddlers.
- Mothers are able to cook for their children in the common kitchen.
- Visiting facilities are child friendly as is the entry process and main entry building.
- The prison has in place a significant number of initiatives in place that support family ties being maintained.

Negatives

- Mothers and babies are not able to live in a residential setting at this facility.
- The residential areas of the Mother and Baby Unit are quite institutional and designed with little consideration for children in contrast to other areas within the Unit.
- Women serving long sentences must give up their babies at 6 months of age. This could halt a breast feeding cycle and bonding period.
- The 18 month restriction is less than is achievable in comparable jurisdictions around the world. Older children are not able to remain with their mothers, and must rely on visiting programs to maintain contact.



Figure 6. Google earth view of HMP Peterborough

HMP Peterborough is about a 3 hour drive from central London depending on traffic conditions. It accommodates both male and female prisoners, and young offenders, of all security ratings. It is a regional resource for the Ministry of Justice and is intended to service a 2 hour drive area around Peterborough.

The women's section of the prison seen at the top of the aerial photograph, follows the same design principles as HMP Bronzefield. By virtue of this being a male and female facility, there are shared central buildings which includes the entry building that forms part of the secure perimeter. As at Bronzefield, this is a solid wall with anti climb cowl, and there is also a second internal layer of mesh fence with razor tape topping, making it a very harsh perimeter.



Figure 7. The entrance Building at Peterborough (image taken from the Sodexo website <http://uk.sodexo.com>)

The entry process was the same as at Bronzefield, with the entry building having a very commercial feel to it and the screening procedures comparable. Once through the entry building we went to the women's side of the facility. My guide was Ms Miranda Biddle, the head of the Women's Prison.

The design and layout of the Prison is based on a central spine building from which the various wings branch off. The building has 2 levels, and the central spine is double height space thus is criss crossed by bridges.

Sadly, due to a suicide attempt from one of these bridges, screens have been installed to the balustrades as a safety measure.

Vegetation has been used to soften the space and this works well, making a rather cold bleak area more hospitable.



Figure 8. The central area of the main building at Peterborough



Figure 9. The second level of the main building with the additional screening installed for safety reasons.



Figure 10. The view down the central space of the main building.

Miranda walked me through the admissions area which was interesting to see as it was the same design as Bronzefield but the feel of the place was much more correctional, with less softening and much harder fittings and fixtures.



Figure 11. The admissions desk is the first point of call within the prison for new arrivals.



Figure 12. One of the waiting rooms in the Admission area of the prison



Figure 13. One of the information rooms in the Admissions area



Figure 14. A "harder" holding area in Admissions.



Figure 15. The main corridor of the Admissions area – the first space the women encounter on entering the prison.



Figure 16. Telephones for use by new prisoners in Admissions.

The clothing area of admissions held quite a large amount of donated clothing for use by new arrivals and prisoners who did not have many personal items. An initiative by the prison was soon to see prisoners offering an alterations services to other women. The intention was to open a small shopfront with change rooms, and by doing so provide some employment pathways for the women in sewing and fashion.

Like Bronzefield, Peterborough has an excellent gymnasium facility, but possibly because the male prison was the main focus in the design and in the purchasing process of the PPP, it appears that the equipment was potentially just as was provided for the men's gym, meaning it was less than ideal for women. The massive banks of free weights were never used. Plans were in place to alter the spaces to be able to offer classes such as yoga, dance and self defence.



Figure 17. The gymnasium facility at Peterborough.



Figure 18. The inappropriate free weights provided for the women, no doubt the same as what was provided in the male prison.

The prison offered various work and employment pathway options one of which was hairdressing, but again the facilities available were not ideal and had obviously been provided without much thought or consideration.



Figure 19. The hairdressing training rooms.

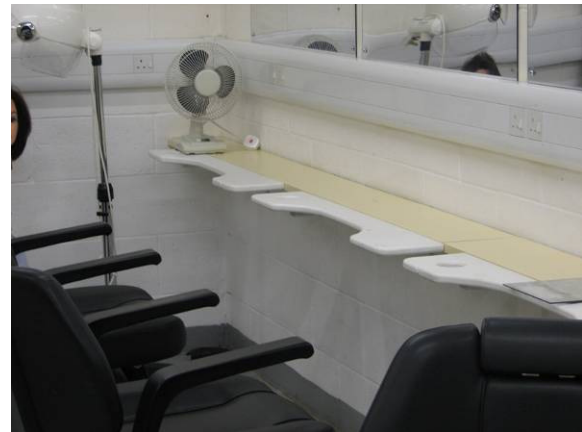


Figure 20. The rather strangely designed setup in the hair dressing room.

The Pathways area of Peterborough was an impressive example of how this aspect can be approached. Set up in a large industrial type space, it felt more a like a community centre than a correctional facility. The clearly laid out area showcased the range of program options available to the women during their sentence – the 9 Pathways. The atmosphere was relaxed and bright, and even though it was set up in a shed like space, it worked well.



Figure 21 and 22. The Pathways.



We then moved on to the Mother Baby Unit. The running of the unit is the same as that at Bronzefield, and the building is exactly the same plan.



Figure 22. Google Earth aerial view of the Mother Baby Unit at Peterborough.

Once past the internal mesh fences that organise traffic between the various buildings (see photo below) the walk through to the unit is attractively landscaped and there are a number of quiet secluded spaces set up in the grounds.



Figure 23. An example of the dividing fences within Peterborough.



Figure 24. The path leading to the Mother Baby Unit.

The unit itself is a bright and modern building, with some nice design touches that give interest to the spaces. Curved walls, circular windows and abundant natural light work to reduce the institutional atmosphere of the building, and the use of colour and addition of artworks and murals is also effective.



Figure 25. A collection of interior shots of the ground floor of Mother Baby Unit.

The Nursery is an extremely well considered and appealing space. Again, in a good use of natural light often not seen in correctional facilities, it has full height glass looking out to the outdoor play area. Curved walls in plan and changes in ceiling levels help to delineate different areas and suggest that considerable thought has gone into this space. It had been designed with children in mind, and it shows.



Figure 26. The Nursery space.



Figure 27. The change table area in the Nursery.



Figure 28. Bright murals around the circular windows in the Nursery.



Figure 29. Chairs for nursing mothers in the Nursery.

The outdoor play space is not as extensive and varied as the one at HMP Bronzefield, but is still a relatively attractive area for toddlers and provides some room for gross motor skill development. As with Bronzefield though, the looming solid wall of the perimeter and the close proximity of razor tape detracts from the space, and if this could be avoided in planning the Mother Baby Units it would be a significant bonus.



Figure 30. A collection of views showing the outdoor play space at Peterborough.



Figure 31. The secure perimeter runs straight past the play area of the Mother Baby Unit.



Figure 32. Part of the the nursery garden.

The community kitchen and laundry in the Mother Baby Unit, allows some semblance of normalised living, by allowing mothers to cook for their babies, and manage their laundering requirements. But the women still get their own meals from the prison kitchen, in what seems a somewhat strange policy.

Given the size of the kitchen provided, it would seem a relatively simple change that would allow these women to purchase and prepare their own food and have the benefits of a more normalised living environment, plus all the life skills this would encourage – budgeting, meal planning, personal nutrition and cooking etc.



Figure 33. Two shots of the shared kitchen for preparation of children's food. The bain marie is used for meals for the women that come from the Prison kitchen.

The second floor of the Mother Baby Unit accommodates the bedrooms for each mother and child, and this space is less appealing and more institutional than the ground floor. A traditional cellblock like layout, albeit with shared bathrooms is disappointing after the interest and variety of the ground floor and nursery area.



Figure 34. The main hall of the accommodation floor on the Mother Baby Unit.



Figure 35. The designated babies bathroom.

Despite efforts by the mothers to brighten up the bathrooms, they are quite bleak and uninspiring, which is a shame as bath time is a real source of play and fun for babies and small children. The lack of natural light into these rooms impacts on their atmosphere significantly.



Figure 36. A typical bedroom on the Mother Baby unit.

The bedrooms are just large enough to accommodate a child's crib and small play area, but otherwise are no different to the other low security bedrooms in the other house blocks. The fittings are domestic in style and the windows provide a good amount of natural light into the rooms.

The visits area of Peterborough is a standard style visiting space, located on the second level of one of the shared building on this male/female site. Staff have endeavoured to make the walk to the space child friendly, using murals and signage, but nothing really hides the institutional nature of the building.



Figure 37. Two views of the journey through the building to reach the visits area.

Its location on the second floor means there is no opportunity to offer outdoor play or seating for children. A play area for toddlers has been set up at one end of the space, but the visits area has not been designed or planned with the interests of visiting children in mind.



Figure 38. The unattractive fixed seating in the visits area.



Figure 39. The children's play area in the visits area.

A family visit room has been set up and again efforts have been made by staff to make it appealing to children of varying ages, but the building itself works against this and as a result it is a fairly bleak space.



Figure 40. The Family visits room.

Summary

My comments regarding HMP Bronzefield apply equally to HMP Peterborough. I believe Peterborough suffers in broad terms from being part of a male prison. From both a design and operational perspective, I believe that better outcomes are delivered for female prisoners if they are in separate purpose built facilities. The subtle differences that exist between Bronzefield and Peterborough, despite their very similar planning, support this belief.

Positives for Mothers and Babies

- Determined focus on catering for mothers and maintaining family ties. The provision of specific staff positions to manage these aspects, and ensuring that staff are specifically trained to do this well indicate the high priority it is given.
- Access to the Unit is on a case by case basis which ensures that all mothers have the opportunity to apply and be considered, regardless of security classification.
- Excellent connections with outside community provider agencies ensuring babies at Peterborough remain part of the community health and development systems.
- The custom designed accommodation unit, with an extremely high quality child care area, provides an excellent environment for babies and toddlers.
- Mothers are able to cook for their children in the common kitchen.

Negatives

- The visiting area of the Prison is not “child friendly” and its location and setting are the main contributors to this.
- The residential areas of the Mother and Baby Unit are quite institutional and designed with little consideration for children in contrast to other areas within this unit.
- Mothers and babies are not able to live in a residential setting at this facility.
- Women serving long sentences must give up their babies at 6 months of age. This could halt a breast feeding cycle and bonding period.
- The 18 month restriction is less than is achievable in comparable jurisdictions around the world. Older children are not able to remain with their mothers, and must rely on visiting programs to maintain contact.

Scotland

Scottish Prison Service

Cornton Vale

Figures for July 2011 indicate that currently women form approximately 4.5% of Scotland overall prison population, or 370 women.¹ 61% of those women indicated that they had children under the age of 16.²

In the March 2010 policy document “SPS Strategy Framework for the Management of Women Offenders in Custody”, provided to me by the SPS, I have highlighted the references to women and children, and those that indicate an understanding and acknowledgement that a “woman centred” approach is important.

VISION: *To provide offender services for women in custody which recognise their particular risks and needs and their pathways into and out of offending; maintaining an appropriate balance between the requirements of custody and care to reduce reoffending and meet our public protection obligations.*

PURPOSE: *This strategy is derived from the recognition and understanding that some of the needs of women offenders are different from those of men. Equality is not equity. Women’s experience is different and their pathways into (and out of) offending differ from those of men. The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) recognises these differences and takes account of these in the way women are managed in prison and in the services offered. The SPS recognises the need to meet the full range of our statutory equality duties including that of equality of outcomes for women.*

STRATEGIC AIMS:

The SPS will provide an individualised and person centred approach which meets the particular needs of women offenders;

The SPS will create a culture which promotes the development of skills which enable positive relationships and fosters the potential of women to change;

The SPS will provide safe and secure prison environments designed for women which balance the need to locate women as close as possible to home with the requirement for specialist facilities to meet complex needs; and

The SPS will manage risk through the provision of interventions that take account of the context of women’s offending including the impact of abuse.

Core principles in the management of women offenders in custody

1. The SPS will adopt a person centred, individualised women centred approach which:

1.1 Acknowledges that equal treatment of men and women in custody does not necessarily result in equal outcomes and that men and women should be treated according to the identified levels of need and risk they present;

1.2 Recognises that women in prison have multiple interconnected needs, often with higher prevalence of problems in areas such as health than men, requiring multidisciplinary assessment and management;

1.3 Develops ways of working with women founded on dignity and respect (as their psychological growth and general well being is strongly influenced by connections and relationships) promoting consistent staff support, particularly at key points of transition to manage relapse;

1.4 Encourages offender case management services specific to the needs of women and intervention with family involvement where this is assessed as appropriate; and

1.5 Links women into local community based services specific to their needs seeking to ensure continuity of care.

2. The SPS will foster skills for positive relationships that:

¹ . <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Publications/ScottishPrisonPopulation.aspx>

² <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Publications/Publication78.aspx>

2.1 Encompass the key issues of family and parenting, and that recognise the welfare needs of families and best interests of the child;

2.2 Promote women's self care as responsible adults and support their empowerment (within the constraints of imprisonment) with the aim of developing their capability to further address issues on release;

2.3 Encourage women to respect their own, and others, rights and responsibilities through the development of knowledge and understanding;

2.4 Encourage women to understand the importance of privacy, personal space and appropriate professional and personal boundaries; and

2.5 Promote dynamic security, reduce bullying and violence and ensure that security and supervision procedures reflect the individual needs of women.

3. The SPS will create a safe, secure, and supportive prison environment designed for women which:

3.1 Locates women as close as possible to home where they have low levels of need/risk and within a specialist facility where they have more complex requirements;

3.2 Has facilities and activities designed to reduce the sense of institutionalisation and promote life skills;

3.3 Provides accommodation specifically dedicated to mothers and their infants, and pregnant women where practicable and offers wider information and guidance to support parenting of their own children;

3.4 Provides interventions and services for women that are age and stage appropriate;

3.5 Places particular emphasis on the different addictions behaviours of women and the relationship between these and their life experiences; and

3.6 Recognises the increased mental health problems, vulnerability and self harming behaviour demonstrated by many women offenders (including personality and eating disorders) and aims to create facilities and interventions which promote positive emotional management skills.

4. The SPS will engender an understanding of women's routes into (and out of) offending that:

4.1 Recognises the impact that abuse, trauma and sexual exploitation has on their behaviour offering specialist support where women have been engaged in prostitution or subjected to domestic abuse and supporting safe disclosure and engagement through interventions tailored to individual need;

4.2 Promotes the benefits of conflict resolution skills for women as alternatives where appropriate to formal disciplinary solutions;

4.3 Focuses on the growing levels of risk and violent behaviour, particularly amongst young women, and the motivation behind this; and

4.4 Supports active engagement and equality of access for women offenders in addressing their offending behaviour and the effect on their victims and families.

OUTCOMES:

Reduced reoffending amongst women;

Better outputs across the range of offender outcomes;

A better experience for women in custody which promotes desistance from offending;

Improved life chances and opportunities for women on release;

Reduced impact of offending on the life experiences of women offenders' children; and

Reduced risk of harmful behaviours to women offenders and their victims.³

Over the course of my visit to Scotland I had the opportunity to speak at length with Mr Ian Whitehead, Operational Executive for the SPS and head of the New Prisons Team. Scotland is currently in the process of planning and delivering a new Prison Facility, HMP Grampian, accommodating 500 prisoners. The intention is

³ <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Publications/Publication187.aspx>

to service the Northern Community Justice Authority Area and the new Prison will replace the current facilities at Peterhead and Aberdeen, both of which are outdated and inadequate.

One of the main objectives has been to create a “community facing prison” that is able to take prisoners from the immediate area, thus having a number of benefits for both prisoners, and the surrounding communities. The outcome of this stance was the decision to build a combined male/female/young offender prison – dubbed by the local press as a “super jail”⁴ that caters for all security levels. This meant that HMP Grampian has been designed with 440 places for men including young males and approx 35 for women including young women.

The planning and design process for this new facility has been a long and involved one commencing in around 2007. The design and planning has been particularly complex given it is a facility that is catering for so many different groups with specific and differing needs.

It will be interesting to see if the intentions outlined in the Strategy Framework for the Management of Women Offenders in Custody, shown above, are met, given the relative scale of the female component of the proposed facility. In my experience it is difficult to justify time, resources and effort on such a small component of a large project and the particular needs of this small group tend to get overlooked and not given the time and effort they require.

HMP Grampian is due to be opened in 2014.

⁴ <http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/1974916>

Cornton Vale

Stirling, Scotland



Figure 1. Google earth view of Cornton Vale Prison

Cornton Vale Prison is an all female facility built in 1975 and located about 2 miles from the centre of Stirling in open farming land. It is accessible by public transport and can accommodate approximately 375 women. It caters for all security levels, and takes both remanded and sentenced women.

24 places are available in the independent living units which are located outside the fence of the prison with the remainder housed in the 6 accommodation blocks within the main prison.

Cornton Vale has a gatehouse that sits as part of the perimeter hence the front door is a building rather than a gate in a fence. The entrance process is relatively low key, and the entry area has a relatively commercial feel to it. The secure perimeter is a high mesh fence with no razor tape, and there are lower internal mesh fences to segregate the various areas of the prison. The site is laid out on a rather formal grid, the buildings separated by large expanses of lawn and some mature trees.

Cornton Vale is a facility that has evolved over time, and as a result has a mixture of different building types that refer to varying correctional philosophies. The main accommodation blocks are 2 storey, rather grim looking cell block style accommodation. The Mother and Baby accommodation is in one of these older cell blocks. Within the prison babies are allowed to stay until they are 12 months old i.e. are able to walk. If there mother is not suitable to then go and live in the independent living units, then the child must leave. There are 7 places for mothers and babies within the prison, in this dormitory style accommodation. I was not able to see the mother baby unit on my visit – it was being renovated at the time.



Figure 2. The general accommodation blocks at Cornton Vale.

As well as these older style cell blocks there is also a much newer high security facility – the Ross Block, that endeavours to move away from the typical brutal, mezzanine dual storey type cell block most often seen in men’s prisons, by introducing changes in level, angles and some more natural materials, and large windows providing abundant natural light. The glass balcony rails are a welcome design feature, that reduce the harshness of this building type. Even so, it is still a very “hard” facility. It is for women with increased special needs often relating to drug dependency, mental health and violence/abuse issues.



Figure 3. The high security Ross Block at Cornton Vale.



Figure 4. The glazing in the central space of Ross Block looking out to the courtyard.

There were a number of unique programs being run at Cornton Vale that are worth describing due to their immense success on a number of levels.

The first was a card making program that produces cards for sale for both prisoners and staff. Special orders can be accommodated, and the success and quality of the products has required a small shop to be set up. The course teaches decoupage skills as well as design and graphics.



Figure 5. The card making workshop.



Figure 6. The card shop displaying the amazing range of high quality products generated by this program.

The staff member, Carol, who was responsible for setting up the card making program, also had the idea for the second interesting initiative at the prison. She saw a need for a range of cosmetics, toiletries and personal products to be made available to the female prisoners, outside of the standard issue products. A survey was carried out amongst the prisoners which reinforced this view and also gave suggestions of around 1800 different items they would purchase if given the chance. What started as a small range of shampoos and makeup, has grown to a significant range of items that are tremendously popular amongst the women, and in its first 6 months resulted in a 40% reduction in the amount of cigarettes purchased. The demand is such that a shop has been created, managed and run by prisoners, also giving them useful small business and book keeping skills. The women can gain Retail Certificates up to a Supervisor level through this initiative. This scheme, which came about through the drive of a single very inspiring female officer, is now fully supported by the SPS.



Figure 7. The range of products available for purchase at the prison shop.

There is also a bike maintenance and rebuild program at Cornton Vale, that takes bikes from a business in the community. This local business also offers job opportunities for the women on the Release to Work Program and the skills the women gain are recognised with trade certificates.



Figure 8. The bike workshop at Cornton Vale.

In the centre of Cornton Vale is the spiritual Centre – a church. It is in this building that a family area has been created to cater for children coming to visit their mothers. The prison has created positions for 3 Family Contact Officers as they believe the maintenance of family ties and mother child relationships warrants effort and funding. These staff assist prisoners with contacting their families, and arrange visits for them, as well as ensuring the facilities are appropriate for the different ages of the those visiting. Recently the prison has been offered funding for a Child Development officer, who will work with mothers providing “Better Parenting” programs.

The church, as you can see from the photo below, is quite different from the others buildings on the site, and its location on the end of the main spine of the facility, means it is visible almost from first entry, even though it is away from the entrance. This visual cue works well, and would give children an easily recognisable, memorable and easy to find landmark on the prison site – as they head towards ‘their’ space.



Figure 9. The view down the main “street” of Cornton Vale , towards the church.

Off the front foyer of the church is the family room, which provides is a warm and welcoming space for the visiting children.



Figure 10. The foyer area of the Church



Figure 11. The Family Room in the church at Corton Vale.

Surprisingly, the general visits area at Cornton Vale is a smallish lounge type area located in one of the older buildings on site. A makeshift space, it offers little to children visiting their mothers, unlike the Family room.



Figure 12. The visits room at Cornton Vale.

Darlene Skeets, who was the staff member at Cornton Vale responsible for the Mother Baby facilities and Program, took me out to meet a woman who was living with her daughter in one of the “cottages” that sit outside the main fence line.

This cluster of 3 semi detached cottages sit on the roadside, just adjacent to the entrance of the prison. They are referred to as the Cornton Cottages, and the women who live in them are often on release to work programs.



Figure 13. “Corton Cottages”



Figure 14. The front door to one of the cottages.

M- lived inside the secure perimeter of Cornton Vale with her daughter J- up until a couple of months before I met her that day. J- was a delightful little toddler with a cheeky smile, and her joy at seeing Darlene indicated that their relationship was a warm one. The cottage itself was a very simple, two storey home, that at the time was just being used by M- and her daughter.



Figure 15 The kitchen and internal stairwell of one of the Cornton Cottages.



Figure 16. Two views of the exterior spaces of one of the Independent Living Cottages.

Sadly, the back yard of the cottage, looks out onto the main secure perimeter of the prison. The front door addresses the street, in a very normal residential manner, but there is little privacy or separation from the public way.

Courtesy of the Temporary Release Licences that M- has become entitled to, she is able to take J- to the local nursery school each day. She told me that the other parents at the school were most likely not aware that she was an inmate at Cornton Vale, and she expressed concern about how to broach the subject with them, and their possible negative reactions. M- also did the shopping runs for other prisoners, as part of her "work" requirements. The conditions of her release licences are very strict and the consequences are significant – if she breaches them she will return back into the prison, and J- will not be able to stay with her given her age.

Darlene recounted to me that, M- was recently contacted by her boyfriend, requesting she meet him at the local pub on one of her outings. She told Darlene of the request, and Darlene reminded her of the consequences of deviating from the strict conditions of her sentence – that it would mean she would have to return to normal accommodation within the prison, and that J- would not be able to live with her any more. M- apparently made the choice to ignore her boyfriend and continues to live in the Cottages with her daughter.

Summary

The Cornton Vale Prison is a fairly typical example of an older women's Prison facility, that has evolved over time. The Ross Block is a very high security model for women's prison accommodation for women with high needs – an approach to incarceration that is questionable in my opinion and certainly in the opinion of others also.⁵

What is impressive about Cornton Vale, is its commitment to supporting families, and its flexibility in accommodating its mothers and children. It is an example of a Prison where poor facilities have not hindered its commitment to providing good options for Mothers and Children where possible. Similarly, the success and quality of some of the programs offered were as good as any that I saw on my study tour.

Positives for Mothers and Children

- The independent Living Units – the Cornton Cottages, provide a very normalised environment for mother and child, supported by links to the community.
- The 3 Family Support Officers who work with women to maintain their relationships with family throughout their sentences.

Negatives

- The quality of the accommodation at Cornton Vale is poor and lacks natural light, and variety in play areas for children.
- The siting of the cottages backing against the main secure perimeter is unfortunate.

⁵ Ms Kim Pate of the Elizabeth Fry Association is a very passionate advocate of alternative solutions for female offenders. I met with Kim whilst in Canada. More information on her and the associations views can be found at - <http://www.elizabethfry.ca/http://www.elizabethfry.ca/>

SWEDEN

Kriminalvården - the Swedish Prison and Probation Service

Hinseberg Prison

In 2006 there were 711 female prisoners in Sweden forming approximately 7% of all prisoners. Of those it is thought that up to 50% were mothers and 2/3 thirds of those mothers had custody of their children.¹

In addition to Hinseberg Prison, which is the main women's prison accommodating around 300 prisoners, there are 2 other female prisons in Sweden - Färingsö near Stockholm and Ljustadlen to the north. Up until 1999 Sweden had mixed gender prisons, and it is still possible for a woman to be incarcerated in a male prison in extreme circumstances and if she gives her explicit consent.²

Sweden employs a number of alternatives to incarceration including community service and electronic monitoring for sentences less than 3 months.

In Sweden, all female prisoners are classified D, the lowest security rating, whilst only male prisoners are classified C, B and A.

The Swedish Prison Treatment Act of 1974 has 4 core principles to its prison philosophy.

“– imprisonment as last resort, that is, the usual punishment should be a fine or a community sentence, since imprisonment normally has detrimental effects;

– normalization, that is, the same rules concerning social and medical care and other forms of public service should apply to prisoners just as they apply to ordinary citizens;

– vicinity, that is, the prisoner should be placed in prison as close as possible to his or her home town (now considered to be more or less obsolete); and

– co-operation, meaning that all parts of the correctional system (probation service, remand prisons and prisons) should work closely together in individual cases as well as in general.”³

Policy for children

If a prisoner has a child between the ages of 0 and 12 months they are eligible to have the baby with them whilst they serve their sentence, up until the baby turns one. The decision rests with the local Social Welfare groups and the Swedish National Prison and Probation Service and is based on the best interests of the child. Most Swedish prisons have opportunities for regular family visits be it by leave passes or family apartments within or near the prisons.

Hinseberg Prison

Stockholm, Sweden

Hinseberg Prison is a women's only facility about 2 hours drive from Central Stockholm near a small historic town called Örebro. The site of the prison is on the edge of a picturesque lake, and on the day I visited the trees were showing full autumn colours, and the sun was shining.

A castle dating back to 1795 sits on a hill at the top of the site (see the grey roofed building, top right of the picture below), and is used as part of the prison facilities, providing spaces for AA program participants, and also the prison kitchen and staff rooms.

The prison began as an all male high security prison in 1956, then in the 1960's was converted to Sweden's first women's prison.

¹ *International Profile of Women's Prisons, International Centre for Prison Studies, April 2008.*

² Notes on crime and punishment in Sweden and Scandinavia, Hanns von Hofer, www.unafei.or.jp/english/pdf/PDF_rms/no57/57-21.pdf

³ http://fondationinternationalepenaleetpenitentiaire.org/Site/documents/Stavern/29_Stavern_Report%20Sweden.pdf



Figure 1 Google earth aerial view of Hinseberg Prison.

You enter the prison through a small non institutional gatehouse which sits behind the main fence line which is a relatively low security mesh fence. Access is via intercom through the perimeter gate, but staff were very friendly and accommodating when I arrived. Other than taking my passport from me on entry, there was no searching or even any registration of my visit. I was directed to a small waiting area, that only had eight lockers suggesting that visitor numbers were either not particularly high, or that there was not many restrictions on what could be brought in to the prison.

The people I met with at Hinseberg gave me some broad statistics about the women there. 26% of the inmates had a history of prostitution, and 11% had been trafficked to Sweden, whilst over 50% of the women had been victims of abuse. 37 of the prisoners were convicted for drug trafficking, 21 for violent crimes, 12 for murder and 6 for fraud. 12 of the current inmates were from countries other than Sweden. Ignoring sentences less than one year, the average sentence length was 5 years 2 months. Ages of the women at Hinseberg ranged from 18 to 65.

The medical centre- "Bella"- on the site provides visits by psychiatrists and psychologists twice a month as a response to the significant levels of suffering that many of the women have endured.

The prison had an apartment which was used for family visits, and prisoners are encouraged to use these to maintain contact with their families.



Figure 2. A view over the lake from the grounds of Hinseberg.

In 2005 a new accommodation block was built and the 5 existing 1950's dormitory blocks were demolished. The majority of inmates are housed in this new accommodation block, which consists of 10-13 bed wings. Some other prisoners with long term sentences live in another older self care type block at the back of the site. Britt Marie Johansson, the Governor of Hinseberg , explained to me that the women with significant sentences tended to be more settled and easier to manage thus more suited to living apart from the bulk of the prison population.



Figure 3. A view across the gardens to some of the general buildings on the Hinseberg site.



Figure 4. Artworks and seating in the gardens.



Figure 5. The main accommodation block, which accommodates the majority of the prisoners at Hinseberg including any mothers with babies.

In the new building (pictured above), accommodation is in single bed cells each with its own ensuite toilet and shower. As you can see from the next images, the furniture is built in and certainly has a Swedish style – pale timber and simple lines. Each cell has a large window, albeit with steel bars, many of which had beautiful views over the grounds.



Figure 6. A typical cell in the new accommodation building.



Figure 7. The ensuite to the standard cell in the new accommodation building.

Surprisingly, many of the women chose to cover the windows, explaining to me that the view was, “a constant reminder of what I am missing”.



Figure 8. A cell window in the new accommodation building.

All but two of the wings have a share kitchen where the women prepare their own meals. Each wing is given a budget and with the assistance of staff the women are expected to plan their meals over the week. The other two wings are for women who require additional management and have behavioural problems – these women receive meals from the prison kitchen.



Figure 9. The communal kitchen in one of the living wings in the main accommodation building.

Staff spoke of having to deal with power struggles between the women, often relating to food choices. I got the impression that the staff worked very closely with the women, and the attitude between inmates and staff appeared quite relaxed and respectful. The food that I saw on the day of my visit looked fresh, healthy and very plentiful. The women themselves looked calm and relaxed.

An article written in 2005 suggested that there was evidence of significant prisoner hierarchy within the prison population at Hinseberg and a definite “us and them” mentality between prisoners and staff.⁴

“So-called 'Queens' rule the wings and maintain the inmates' codes. Examples of these codes are: do not associate with the staff, do not talk too long with staff, do not be an informer, do not seek treatment programmes, and do not trust anybody. Those who challenge the codes are seen as an informer or traitor, and the culture in the prison was found to be oppressive towards women who want to seek treatment and support from staff.”

At the time of my visit I did not get any sense of this relationship to staff, but amongst the prisoners I met there were certainly a number of younger, very confident women, who one might imagine would hold a certain power within a group.

On the day I was at Hinseberg there was only one mother and baby living there, but apparently last year there had been 12. I saw the mother walking her baby around the grounds in a pram, and was struck how it looked like any mother walking her child in a beautiful park. Mothers have the same type of accommodation as other prisoners, living in one of the self care wings of the main accommodation block. I did not get a real sense of how babies were accommodated as there was only the one child living on site.

Each wing also had a general living and dining area, plus an outdoor courtyard space for smokers. The general feel of the buildings was a strange mixture of soft and hard - steel bars on the windows, coupled with stylish pale timber furniture, plants and colours.



Figure 10. The outdoor terrace adjacent to the common living areas on the accommodation wings.

⁴ Prison cultures and social representations. The case of Hinseberg, a women's prison in Sweden, International Journal of Prisoner Health Volume 1, Issue 2 & 4, 2005, Pages 143 – 161



Figure 11. Steel bars enclosing the terraces on the main accommodation buildings.

Summary

Hinseberg Prison is on a beautiful site and the new main accommodation block allows the majority of women to live in a self care environment that is well designed and modern. It is not a residential setting, but it encourages self care skills and cooperating as part of a community.

Positives and Negatives for Mothers and Children

I was not able to get a real sense of what Hinseberg offered for Mothers and children when I visited there. My basic impression was that whilst it was possible for babies to reside with their mothers up until age 1, there was not much emphasis placed on it. The 12 month limit meant that childcare and nursery services were not relevant, and the general prison accommodation was seen to be suitable for mothers and babies.

DENMARK

The Danish Prison and Probation Service

The Engelsborg Hostel and Engelsborg Family House
Horserød State Prison
Prison Ringe

*"The most predominant and central principle in the field of the (Danish) Prison and Probation Service is the principle of normalization. It states, that "the daily activities of the Prison and Probation Service shall in general, and whenever specific agreements are reached, be related to normal life in the general community". This basic principle is reflected in each and every activity of the service. The actual content of this principle, however, is not a static phenomenon but is object to variations due to the political realities. But it is still the fundamental idea and all developments are compared with or measured against this principle."*¹

The Danish Prison and Probation Service in recent years implemented a number of major policy changes. William Rentzmann, Director-General outlined the changes in his article (quoted above) summarising them as,

"An increased focus on security, such as the Governments' zero-tolerance policy towards drugs, increased use of urine sampling and external physical and technical securing of the institutions (partly as result of the zero-tolerance policy, partly due to new types of prisoners, such as terrorists resourceful and powerful external network) and restrictions in the inmates rights to bring their own property into the prison (to prevent smuggling of drugs, mobile phones et cetera)."
"Increase in efforts to provide treatment"
"Increase in the focus on providing alternatives to imprisonment."
"Increase in the focus on economics and management principles"

The Danish system has implemented and increased access to a number of alternative options for serving a sentence before secure incarceration occurs. Home detention using RFID tagging (Remote Frequency Identification Tagging), half-way houses, training centres and community service orders, all appear to be widely utilised, particularly when the offender has responsibility for a child.

One of the outcomes of this particular policy is that those offenders who do end up serving their sentences within a prison are at the "harder" end of the spectrum. Notwithstanding this, the desire for normalisation means the Danish Prison and Probation Service have as standard, policies across all their prisons that would only apply to low and medium security prisons in Australia. For example, independent living and being responsible for cooking, shopping, laundry etc access to leave to attend family events, and access to extended visits with children, or children living with their parent.

Another unique policy of the Danish Prison and Probation Service that differs significantly to Australia is their choice to have mixed prisons. Men and women are accommodated together in all levels of the prison system. It is seen as another factor in 'normalising' the correctional environment. There are no separate "female" prisons in Denmark, although there are women only accommodation options in a number of them.

Of the 13 prisons in Denmark, 8 are classed as "open", where "open" equates to minimum to medium security, whilst 5 are "closed", being what we would call maximum security. Even in the maximum security prisons, and higher security areas of the open prisons, the emphasis is on 'normalised living'. What we would consider to be a low security prisoner would be sentenced to one of the alternative options noted above.

At the time of my visit there were in the order of 160 female prisoners in the system, making up 3 – 5% of the total prison population.

¹ 'Prison policy, prison regime and prisoners' rights in Denmark' William Rentzmann, Director-General of the Danish Prison and Probation Service

http://www.internationalpenalandpenitentiaryfoundation.org/Site/documents/Stavern/15_Stavern_Report%20Denmark.pdf

In open prisons it is possible for prisoners to choose to live in single sex areas of the prisons. Often women who have been the victims of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse will choose this option. There is also a segregated section of a “closed” prison – HestaVista, for women with severe mental problems - that accommodates up to 10 women. Having said that it, is generally accepted that much of corrections policy and prison design has grown from a male perspective, and it is only now that emphasis is being placed on the specific needs of female prisoners.

It is also seen as a prisoners “right” to be able to have their child live with them in prison. If social services believe that the parents are suitable then they are by law required to be given the opportunity. Hence it is possible to have a child residing in what we would consider to be a maximum security prison with either mother or father, or in some cases mother and father.

At my visit to Prison Ringe – a closed maximum security prison - I was told the case of a couple who are both serving a long sentence for a murder they committed together. In all ways, they are model prisoners, and policy allows them to live together whilst in prison. They already had a child prior to entering prison and whilst serving their sentence had conceived another. This little girl had been living with them in prison for the last 3 years, and from age 1 had been going to day care with a family outside the prison. (Policy allows a mother in prison to have access to 12 months maternity leave, just as is provided in the broader community). Upon reaching age 3 it was decided she could no longer be accommodated in the prison so had recently begun living with her day care family.

I spoke at length to Hannah Hangerup, a member of Danish Prison and Probation Service administration, with a role in the area of women and children. She believed that the government was generally supportive of the issues of children in prisons, and was making efforts to improve the facilities available. It was not seen by government to be the ideal situation though, and wherever possible, alternative non-custodial options are preferred if the offender is a primary care giver to a child.

Hannah agreed that the current framework was based on a “male perspective” and that only recently had funding been gained to provide specifically designed female accommodation and programs. Significant funding and thought is also now being put into issues of children visiting their parents in prisons.

In some of the prisons visits with children can occur in a prisoner’s room, and they tend to be longer and have minimal restrictions placed on them. Funding has been spent to upgrade areas for visiting, with painting, new furniture and toys, with a specialist interior designer being used to advise on the design of the visiting areas. New visiting apartments in closed prisons, where children and families are able to stay for the weekend, were designed with the assistance of a ‘child centred design expert’ appointed by the Government. Specific staff members within the prisons are now appointed to be responsible for the needs of family and children and all staff are made aware of the importance of visits and maintenance of contact. In some of the prisons, Parents Groups are being established, and a committee has been set up to specifically look at the needs of children and families of prisoners, and monitor the wellbeing and interests of the children and the conditions in which the visits occur. Every fortnight prisoners are now eligible to gain leave, to attend family functions.

Other contact with families is encouraged, by way of phone calls and mail, and at Prison Ringe, a closed prison, parents are encouraged and assisted to record bed time stories for their children, which are then sent out to the families. A dedicated hotline for families of prisoners has been established.

It would appear that the Danish Prison and Probation Service place considerable emphasis on the maintenance of family ties throughout a custodial sentence.

It is also interesting to note that the ‘soft’ approach taken by the Danish Prison and Probation Service has resulted in an average recidivism rate in 2009 of 26%.² This includes rates for those serving custodial sentences, home detention and community service. This figure compares very favourably with Australia, which adopts a much ‘harder’ approach in comparison.

In Denmark recidivism rates for those offenders who have served a community sentence was 20% in 2009 and for those under the home curfew detention scheme the rate was 25%.

² taken from the Danish Prison and Probation Service website <http://www.kriminalforsorgen.dk/Default.aspx?ID=684>

The Engelsborg Hostel (or Halfway House)

Copenhagen



Figure 1. The Engelsborg Hostel, main building.

The Engelsborg Hostel is a 'half-way house' that provides accommodation for some offenders to serve their entire sentence, for offenders reaching the end of their sentence, or even those who have finished their sentence but feel they need some continued support to assist them in their rehabilitation.

Located in a middle class suburb of Copenhagen, the hostel sits amongst beautiful houses in green leafy streets. It has no fences and outwardly gives no indication of its nature. The hostel has been open since 1979, and by all accounts receives significant community support. Accommodation is in single rooms, with shared kitchens, laundries, bathroom facilities, dining and living rooms. It is plain and simple accommodation set in beautiful gardens. The staff are social workers, and run various support groups and rehabilitation services to the offenders who live there. There is no overt security, and the accommodation is quite basic and simple – similar to a backpacker hostel. As with the prisons it is open to both male and female offenders. Offenders can be there under varying sentencing conditions, where different types of restrictions are placed on their movement and freedoms. Staff do not wear uniforms, and the overall feeling is relaxed and calm. The surroundings give ample options for quiet retreat and stillness, as well as beautiful views from nearly every window.



Figure 2. The main accommodation block at the Engelsborg Hostel, sited amongst the established gardens.

Those residing at the Hostel are responsible for their own cooking, cleaning and laundry. They have access to a weights room and other leisure equipment, but in essence it is a very simple basic facility. The old building is in relatively good repair and is used for administration and counselling, whilst the later extension that houses the main accommodation wings is almost a traditional “cell block” type design, that has quite spartan individual rooms for the residents.

The kitchen has commercial style equipment and each resident has a secure locker for their supplies and personal equipment.



Figure 3. A typical common living room at Engelsborg



Figure 5. The commercial style shared kitchen at Engelsborg with locker storage for each user.



Figure 4. A typical share dining room at Engelsborg.



Figure 6. Another typical common living area at Engelsborg.

The Engelsborg Family House

Copenhagen

“The Prison Service have to accept their share in the responsibility for the children of prisoners. When we punish the parents the children are affected. We have to look at it as a whole. The consideration for the children should be included to a larger extent in decisions concerning their parents. When one or both parents are sent to jail, authorities must take special care of the child. This means that the Prison Service and the council share a social and legal responsibility here. The children’s future is at stake.

The responsibility therefore rests with both politicians, decision makers, professional, as well as any human being with respect for others. No one wants children to pay the price for their parents being in prison. But this is what is happening – every day. This is not right.

The problems that children of prisoners have must be taken seriously. The children are a crucial piece of the puzzle, which authorities must put in the right place, while considering what serves the child best.”

Kirsten Neimann, head of Engelsborg Halfway House and The Family House 2009.



Figure 7. The play equipment located on the grounds outside the Engelsborg Family House.

The Engelsborg Family House is located on the grounds of the hostel and is a unique facility that acknowledges the damage done to entire families when one of its members is incarcerated. It provides home accommodation for entire families for mainly 4-6 month stays or up to 1 year. When a parent is in the final stages of their sentence or has completed their sentence, they can apply for their family to all come and live in the Family House. Some offenders are able to serve their full sentence there. Whilst at the Family House, group and individual counselling is provided to all members of the family, in an effort to strengthen the family group and give it a better chance of surviving what is a very stressful time. The house can accommodate up to 5 families, with children up to 15 years, and entire family groups are welcome.

It is open to all classification levels of offenders – they must simply want to improve their family situation.

If an offender is found to be using drugs, breaks house rules or simply fails to fully cooperate and take ownership of the responsibilities given to them at both the Hostel and Family House, they can be sent back to a closed prison. Trust between offenders and staff, and within the families themselves is critical to the success of the facility and establishing this trust is a central goal of the counselling provided.

Kirsten Neimann describes The Family House and its aims, in the book she co-edited “Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House”, published in 2009 by the Danish Prison and Probation Service.

“The Family House opened in 2005, as part of the Engelsborg Halfway house, set up by the Prison Service.

The Family House is an offer for inmates who can serve the last part of their sentence here together with their families in small sized flats. The Engelsborg Family House has 5 flats. Here, children aged 0-15, spouses, or partners can live with the person serving a sentence. Since 2008, the staff has included a social worker, and educationalist and two family therapists. Furthermore, psychologists, psychiatrists as well as the regular staff from the Halfway House are attached.

The purpose of The Family House was to focus on the need for the children whilst at the same time helping the families of prisoners improve their relations with each other. The intention, apart from considering the children, was to create a better foundation for avoiding crime in the family. The aim of the Family House was to:

- Establish a separate family unit*
- Create a safe setting for children and parents*
- Offer a comprehensive effort for psycho-socially deprived inmates*
- Provide educational support for the families, the incarcerated parents, and the group of children.”*

I met with Kirsten Neimann when I visited Engelsborg Hostel and was completely impressed and immediately struck by her enthusiasm and passion for what is being achieved at the Family House.

The Family House itself is a simple basic design, using simple standard construction techniques. The accommodation is spartan to say the least, and with potentially 5 families living there, space is limited. All the families share kitchen facilities and are encouraged to eat together and share experiences and provide each other with support.



Figure 8. The shared kitchen in the Family House



Figure 9 One of the children's bedrooms in the Family House.

Within the house there are counselling rooms, and outside there is a playground, plus the families have access to the spacious grounds of the hostel. There are no fences. All the windows look out to the beautiful grounds of the hostel and over the surrounding suburbs, and the rooms have access to abundant natural light and ventilation. Fixtures and fittings are domestic in nature – really no different to any ordinary simple home.

The children who live in the Family House go to the local schools and kindergartens all of which are in walking distance.

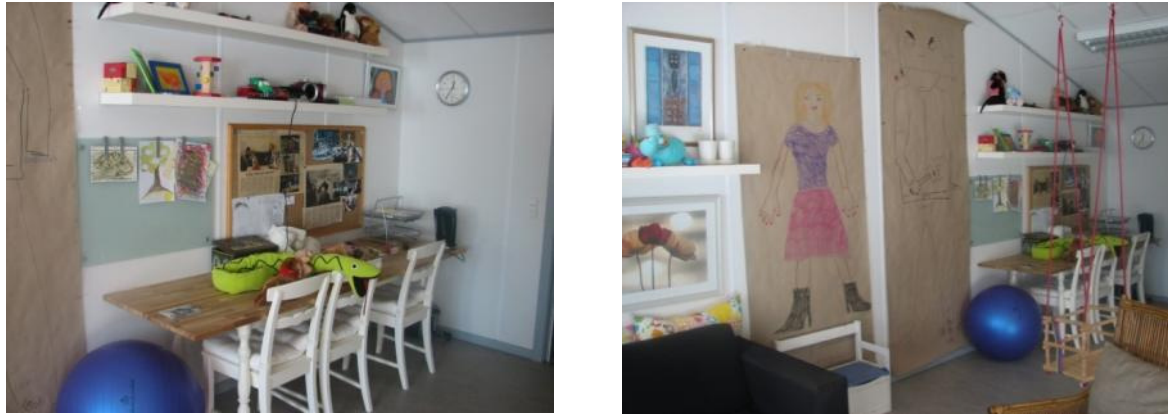


Figure 10. Two shots of one of the counselling room within the Family House.

Staff at the Family House spoke of children from different families forming close relationships borne of their common situations, and also spouses being able to share experiences and provide support.

From the collection of stories in the “Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House.”, it is clear to see that for many the Family House provided an opportunity for offenders to repair their families, and give themselves a better chance for a successful future.

“When I was at in Vridsloselille, I felt like a parked car. I was a number – not a person! At the Engelsborg Halfway House I learned how to return to life. The surroundings allowed me to relax, because the house is designed like a real home. Children thrive in the Family House. They get to play with each other, and we adults take turns in keeping an eye on them. It is the children that bring us closer together.” Bari, former resident in the Family House.
[p.29 “Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House.”]

“the approach was that here (the Family House), there were opportunities for all three of us to get help. Being a parent is a huge responsibility – and you need to do what’s right” Soren.³

The facilities at Engelsborg are a wonderful example of an alternative option for sentencing, that provides better circumstances for children and families.

The Family House acknowledges the damage done to an entire family, and gives weight to the stresses on all when a parent re-enters family life after a prison sentence. It places significant value on the sharing of experiences between families and children in similar situations – the inability or unwillingness to talk of the experiences and difficulties of having parent or spouse in prison, due to feelings of shame, is a common problem amongst families of offenders. The fact that children can feel like they are part of a group, as opposed to having to keep things secret and their feelings hidden, must provide them with enormous relief.

A final word from Kristen Neimann.

*“For many families a stay in the Family House puts life into a new perspective. Many families have been overwhelmed by life and may never have given it any thought what they want from it, where to live, which job to go for, or what their relationship with their children or spouse is like. In the Family House, they are helped to see life from a different angle. This can influence them in making new decisions as to what their life should be like in the future.”*⁴

³ p.90 “Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House.”

⁴ p.29 “Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House

Summary

The Engelsborg Halfway House and The Family House are both unique and special facilities that illustrate the potential for alternative sentencing options available in Denmark. The Halfway House provides non custodial transitional accommodation that eases an offender back into community life, and provides counselling support on site.

The Family House acknowledges the importance of stable family relations in reducing re-offending, and also the damage done to families during a parents or spouses incarceration.

Positives for Parents and Children

- The Family House is located in suburban Copenhagen, within walking distance to local schools and kindergartens.
- It is completely non institutional and residential in style, and the gardens are beautiful.
- There is room for children to move and play, and the benefit of other children to play and interact with given up to 5 families can reside in The Family House at one time.

Negatives

- None.

Horserød State Prison

Helsingør Denmark



Figure 11. Google Earth aerial view of Horserød State Prison.

Horserød State Prison is an open prison or “prison farm” about 40 minutes drive from the centre of Copenhagen. Public transport from Copenhagen is available from the nearest town of Helsingør taking about 90 minutes.

The grounds of the prison are ‘park like’ and forests and farmland lie beyond the tennis court type fences. Apparently the fences were a relatively recent addition in response to people trying to enter the prison rather than problems with inmates escaping.

The prison is a collection of predominantly lightweight timber buildings clad typically in the Scandinavian style of red stained weatherboards.



Figure 12. A view down past some of the shared buildings at Horserød.



Figure 13. An example of the low security fencing on the Horserød site.

Horserød accommodates approximately 240 male and female offenders and one of its dormitory style living units is designated as the Family Unit. If a parent chooses and is deemed appropriate they are able to have their child living with them in this unit up until age 7. Children up to the age of 15 are able to come for weekend stays with their parent. The unit is “drug free” – prisoners must sign an agreement, and are regularly tested if suspected of taking drugs, and if found to be are removed from the unit.

The unit has a shared kitchen, laundry and living areas and accommodates 18 offenders. Children sleep in their parent's rooms in either a cot or trundle bed, although there is one larger space with 2 adjoining bedrooms for a couple with children. Inmates who were a couple prior to entering the facility are also able to live together on this unit.

The accommodation is basic and somewhat like a barracks. The corridors are dark, and the bedrooms small but the Family Unit was clean and tidy, and seemed well looked after.



Figure 14. The shared kitchen in the Family Unit.

An outdoor play area had been constructed off the Family unit with a sandpit, BBQ and cubby to cater for smaller children. Parents were also allowed to take their children for walks in the local forests, and one of the rooms in the Family Unit was being converted into a children's playroom. Parents are allowed leave to take children to family functions and events in the community. Parents are free to take their children to other areas of the prison and mix with other prisoners – the responsibility is left with the parent to decide what is appropriate.



Figure 15. The outdoor play area at the Family Unit.



I spoke to 2 of the men living in the Family Unit, both of whom had children who came to visit them for weekend stays. Both spoke enthusiastically about the weekends – one saying it was, “...just like a big sleep over when all the children are here. One of the dads will get up in the morning and make pancakes for all the kids...”

I also got the impression there was a fair amount of proactive effort made by the parents in the prison, to push for better facilities and activities for the children. Ms Helle Leth, the prison representative who gave me a tour

of the prison, confirmed that prisoners are able to contribute to decisions made about the needs of the children.

Both men spoke with pride about the Family Unit being “drug free” and that the people who lived in there were “people with skills who were happy to take on responsibility”.

We spoke about having women living in the unit – given the disparity in gender numbers at Horserød, often no women lived on the unit – and the consensus was that when a woman lived with them, the men were better behaved and it was a nicer place to be. Similarly when there were children on the unit, both men agreed that the general behaviour and attitude within the unit was better and more civilised.

Later as I walked around with Helle, she described some of the negative aspects for women being accommodated with the men. Problems occurred with sex being used to trade for drugs, cycles of abuse being continued when women came to the prison as victims, and were then subjected to an abuse of power by stronger males. All of these issues meant that it was necessary to provide a separate accommodation area for women whose history, mental state and personality might mean that it was not in their best interests to live in the mixed accommodation.

Later in my visit I walked through another of the Living Units and noticed in the kitchen there were posters of nude women stuck on the wall next to the stove. Pointing them out to Helle, I asked if that was acceptable by prison standards and she firmly indicated it was not and she would be making sure the posters were removed.

A newer accommodation block had been built to provide special care accommodation for women only, and this was giving the prison the opportunity to tailor and run programs specifically for women. Funding had been made available to use some additional buildings on the other side of the road from the main prison, to set up a women’s only area, and run programs designed with the specific needs of women in mind. As Hannah Hangerup had mentioned in my initial discussions – for a long time, all planning had been done from a very male perspective.

This unit has specific counselling areas acknowledging the significant amount of mental problems suffered by the female prisoners.

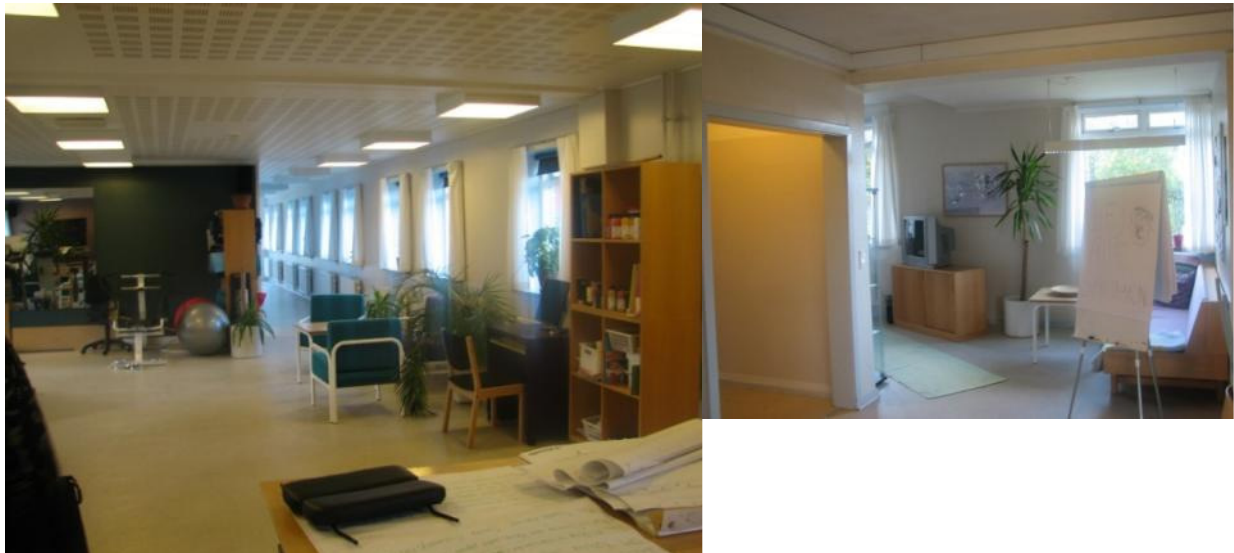


Figure 16. The new accommodation block providing facilities for women with high needs.

The general visits area of the Prison consisted of private rooms and also a small outdoor area that had some basic play equipment for children. Visits in Denmark are private and it is accepted that sexual relations will occur during visits. The visit rooms are thus equipped with a divan type couch, condoms and clean sheets. Prisoners may be searched after visiting to try to control transfer of drugs from visitors into the prison, but in an open prison such as this, it is acknowledged that control of contraband was very difficult.



Figure 18 A private visit room.



Figure 17. The outdoor visits area.

Summary

The Horserød State Prison acknowledges the importance of family relationships by providing the Family Unit. As with all other facilities the emphasis is on normalisation hence children are seen as being part of that process.

For Parents and Children

Positives

- Location is somewhat remote and not easily accessible by public transport, but the surroundings are beautiful and the grounds are spacious.
- Opportunities for families to visit are plentiful and visits can be for longer periods, as well as overnight stays.
- Self-care living allows parents to care for their children.

Negatives

- Limited activities available for older children visiting their parents.
- Accommodation is relatively institutional and mixing with other prisoners is uncontrolled and only monitored by the parents.

State Prison

Søbysøgård.

On the way to visit Prison Ringe my host for my time in Denmark Mr Claus Wenzel Tornøe, Director of International Affairs, Ministry of Justice, took me for a quick detour to see the State Prison Søbysøgård. This is another of Denmark's open prisons, and it is actually an old Manor house built in 1465. It has had 26 private owners from 1465 to 1925, some of whom were nobles. From 1925 Søbysøgård has had "public owners". The Prison and Probation Service has owned Søbysøgård since 1933 as an open prison.



Figure 19. Views of the State Prison Søbysøgård.

Claus remembered doing "work experience" at the prison as a youth, and recalled going fishing at night in the surrounding lakes with one of the prisoners at the time. This type of facility which essentially accommodates what we would probably classify as medium security offenders is completely unlike others I saw in any other country.

As you can see from the photo above, in the distance a children's playground is being constructed on the vast park like prison grounds.

Prison Ringe

Ringe, Denmark

Ringe is a small town of approximately 5500 people on the Danish island of Funen. Prison Ringe is located just out of the town centre and is Denmark's oldest closed prison, accommodating both male and female maximum security prisoners who have committed serious crimes. It was built in the 70's and accommodates up to 86 prisoners. As with the other Danish prisons I visited, the emphasis is on normalization of life for the inmates, even though Prison Ringe is quite obviously a high security facility. Couples are able to live together at Ringe, and sexual relationships between prisoners are accepted if prison staff are confident the couple are in a serious relationship. Prisoners work during the day and are entitled to the same workers entitlements as those in the wider community, including maternity leave.

In his article in the New Statesman June 2006, Nick Pearce, director of Institute for Public Policy Research in the UK wrote,

"Ringe is a small prison, but its ethos is not untypical of Denmark's liberal penal regime. Rooted in the progressive consensus forged by the social-democratic governments of the 20th century, this regime embodies the powerful Nordic combination of strong community and permissive liberalism. Politicians of all parties assent to the basic ideals of a criminal justice system in which prison is reserved for public protection and orientated towards treating people with humanity. Those with mental health problems or addictions get treatment, not punitive justice."



Figure 20. Google Earth aerial view of Prison Ringe.

The prison is bounded by a 5 metre high solid masonry wall with anti climb roll top, and the perimeter is monitored by CCTV and microwave zone detection. The sterile zone is quite narrow, so the buildings are quite close to the perimeter wall. The buildings have a strong 70's aesthetic – it was obviously purpose designed with its creativity, style and quality still evident some 30 years on. Unfortunately I was not allowed to take photographs – I tried to snap some whilst in the carpark and was told in no uncertain terms it was not allowed. The architecture was quite non institutional, but the massive perimeter wall kept reminding you of where you were. The entry process was simple, just a walkthrough metal detector, and the entry area was relatively non confrontational.

The accommodation is a series of wings forming communal living units, where inmates share cooking, laundry and bathroom facilities. Food is purchased from a small on-site super market. Surprisingly, the construction of these wings is what we in Australia would consider to be low security – timber doors, loose furniture, timber framed windows and standard float glass. Inmates can move in and out of the wings unchecked into the courtyards between, where there are no barriers between each courtyard or out into the main yard to which access is limited to certain times. CCTV coverage monitors prisoner movement, and it made quite clear and understood what is off limits at what time.

In the photo below you can see the accommodation wings with the courtyards between. Some had vegetable plots; others had some basic play equipment. The main grounds had large expanses of lawn, with some sporting courts and also an outdoor chess area.

The bedrooms were small and simple but had ample natural light – overall it was quite basic accommodation. Inmates are able to hire televisions to have in their room.

The accommodation buildings do look their age, but were clean and tidy on the day of my visit. Given the relatively low durability of the materials and fixtures and fittings in these maximum security areas, I was amazed by the overall quality of the accommodation.



Figure 21. Google Earth aerial view of the accommodation wings at Prison Ringe.

One of the wings is designated as the family wing, which can house couples, and children. This wing is designated as drug free – as with Horseshold, if you are found to be using drugs you are taken off that wing.

At the time of my visit there were no children living at Ringe. The prison Governor, Ms Bodil Philip remembered a period where 4 children were living in the prison. In her opinion, it made her job harder to have children living there. The prison budget has to absorb costs for nappies, toys and bedding etc, and in some instances in the past pressure had been placed on the prison by parents to provide extra facilities and better accommodation for the children. Social Services pay for the provision of childcare.

She spoke at length about the couple who were currently in Ringe, who were both serving a 16 year sentence for murder. For the past three years their daughter had been living with them. The little girl was conceived and born whilst the parents were in prison. The family lived together in a single room, and Bodil said that additional space was only given to families if there was enough spare accommodation space on the wing. The bedrooms are locked down from 9.15pm until 7am, and there are no toilet facilities within the rooms, just hand-washing facilities and a fridge. It must have been extremely difficult caring for a small baby then a toddler under these conditions. During the day the family had access to the courtyard which does have some play equipment.

This case had received quite a lot of media coverage, and Social Services became involved as the parents had agitated for better facilities and rights for their daughter. At one time they requested a small battery operated

toy for their little girl, and simply to get this for her required an extremely rigorous approval and checking process. When she turned one, she started going to family day care with a local family, as her mother was required to return to work in the prison after her years maternity leave. A taxi came to the prison each day to collect her and she returned in the afternoon, when her parent's working day was over. There were problems when this carer went on holidays, and the parents wanted a say in who would look after the girl during these times.

When the child reached age 3 she was taken from the prison and now lives with the day care family who looked after her from age 1, and is able to visit her parents at Ringe. The couple also have an older daughter who visits them. Originally she was able to visit in the accommodation wing for 4 hours per fortnight, but at 9 years of age, it was felt by other prisoners that she was very noisy and it was agreed the family would have to use the standard visits area. Every fortnight she comes to the family visits room and the family sleep there together.

The parents told their side of the situation in one of the chapters of "Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House", published in 2009 by the Danish Prison and Probation Service.

Reading their story, I was conscious of how ordinary they sounded, and how their concerns about their children and the effects of the situation were what you expect from any caring parents. The circumstances leading up to their crime are a sad sequence of dreadful events that culminated in an horrific event, that saw them each being sentenced to 16 years in a closed prison. The violent nature of the crime that was committed, would in most countries, completely preclude them from any privileges let alone access to their children. The Danish system looked at their abilities as parents and the authorities made the choice to allow them to endeavour to keep their family together throughout their long sentence. Bodil called them "model prisoners" and social services deemed them to be able parents. Even so, Hanne and Kenneth still express concern about their circumstances and whether they have made the right choice for their younger daughter Isabella.

"We have the custody papers, and our skills and behaviour have been rubber-stamped. Still, we feel incapacitated by the system. It is degrading, and it is our children who pay the price every time".

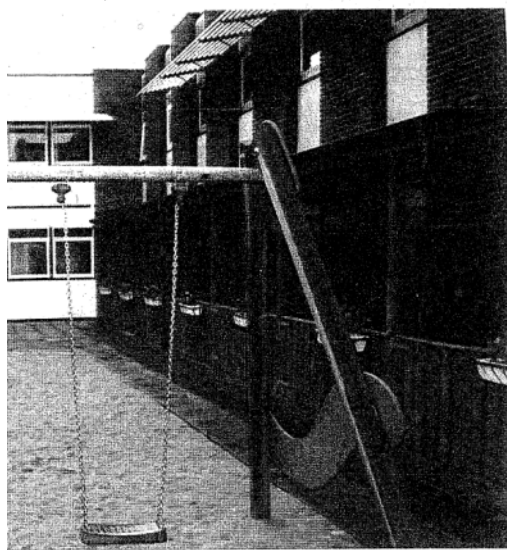
p. 105. "Children of Prisoners – A story about the Engelsborg Family House", published in 2009 by the Danish Prison and Probation Service.

Their older daughter Kirstine, is the one who has been most affected by the sentence of her parents. She was only 2 when Hanne and Kenneth were sentenced, so was unable to live with her parents in the early stages of their sentences where they were accommodated in separate county gaols. By the time Hanne and Kenneth were transferred to Ringe where they could reside together, Kristine was too old to be considered. As a result she was moved between 3 different foster families and endured bullying at school from children who knew of her parents circumstances. At one of her schools the prison arranged for an officer to go to the school and explain about the prison and the situation.

Bodil commented that generally other prisoners were very accepting of children living at Ringe, but in some instances some inmates found it hard to accept the different privileges and standards that applied to parents because of their children, and that this sometimes caused problems for her.

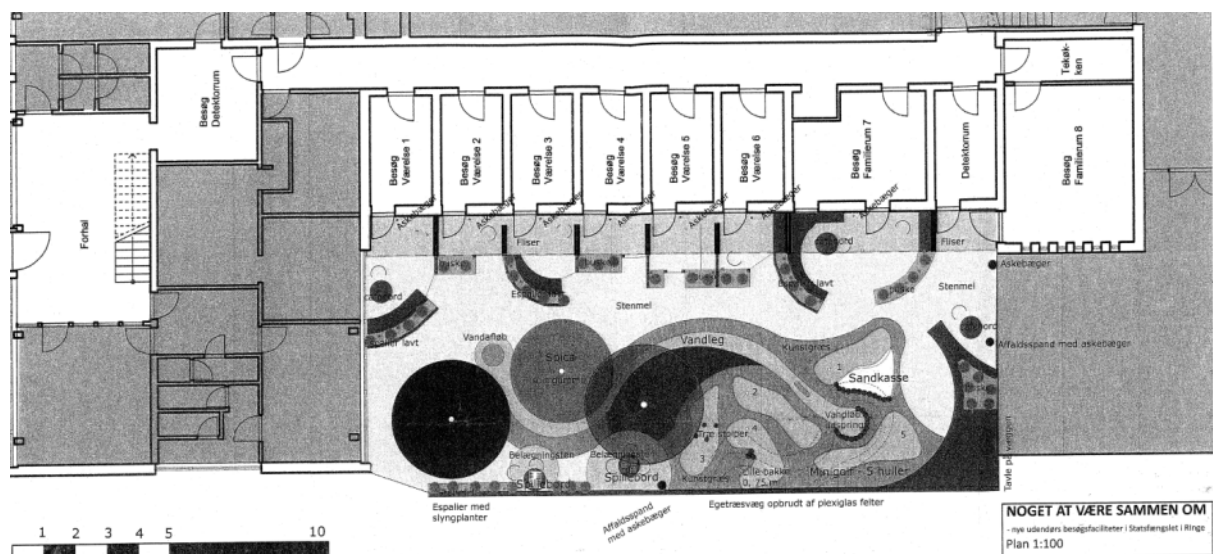
The visits area at Ringe consists of a number of private rooms and also a family room for overnight stays. Visits can occur every weekend for 3 hours in the morning and afternoon and for full days if the space is available. There is an outdoor play area adjacent to the visit rooms which is only for those people visiting with children. The Prison has recently received a private donation to upgrade the outdoor area and engaged a specialist architect to design an interactive playground for children of all ages. Bodil was outwardly enthusiastic about providing an experience at the prison that would engage and interest the children visiting.

She provided me with some images from a document prepared about the project, with some photographs of the current play areas within visiting facilities and the proposed plan.



Caption Translation -

The existing facilities are based on staying with a child at a time with limited activity opportunities for children and adolescents.



Sarah Paddick – Women and children in Prison Accommodation Study 2010 – 2011



Figure 23 Concept Plans and photographs for the visits area provided to me by Bodil Philip, Governor of Prison Ringe.

Summary

Prison Ringe is a fascinating example of how a maximum security prison can be. The prison accommodates people convicted for murder and violent crimes, yet by Australian standards the accommodation is comparable to our low security facilities. Whilst the perimeter is confronting and comparable to our higher security prisons, in many other ways the comparisons end there.

The Danish philosophy of considering parenting in prison to be a right, and not confined only to those of a low security rating as we do in Australia, allows each case to be addressed on its merits, ensuring that worthy parents are not disadvantaged.

For Parents and Children

Positives

- The prison allows children to live with their maximum security classified parents, if the individuals are deemed to be good parents. The seriousness of their crime does not preclude them as it does in **all** other countries I visited.
- The prison persists with facilities that are potentially inadequate for accommodating children, and does not use this as an excuse to deny parents and children the opportunity to live as a family, as occurs in some South Australian facilities.
- The self care facilities give parents the opportunity to cook and care for their family.
- Private family visits are allowed and overnight stays.

- The prison acknowledges the importance of providing good visiting facilities for families and is taking steps to create quality spaces.

Negatives

- The open nature of the facility and potential interaction with other prisoners results in a high risk environment for children and places immense responsibility on the parents to monitor the child.
- The accommodation is not designed to accommodate a family.
- The entrance to the prison through the 5m brick wall and entrance building is extremely confronting.

An observation about the Danish Prison System

I acknowledge that the Danish culture is different to ours, however believe that Australia could learn from their correctional philosophy. In Australia we appear to have political parties trying to out-bid each other as to who is the toughest on crime, rather than developing systems and policies which provide every opportunity for rehabilitation. The Danish enviable recidivism rate demonstrates that their approach is far more effective than ours.

The Danish alternatives to imprisonment, prisoner self catering, family access and accommodation, etc. may not all suit Australians, but there would appear to be room for us adapt many of the concepts, especially those that keep families together.

CANADA

Correctional Service Canada

Joliette Institution

Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Women

In 1990 Correctional Service Canada (CSC) released a landmark document that was to see significant change in how correctional services were provided to female offenders. In response to a terrible phase in the late 80's and early 90's, with 7 female prisoner suicides over a 15 month period in Canadian institutions, a government task force was appointed to create policy that was more responsive to the specific needs of women – a women centred approach. The resulting document “Creating Choices – The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced women”¹ was adopted by Government and as a result of its recommendations, between 1995 and 1997, 5 new regional women's prisons were opened. They were the Edmonton Institution for Women in Alberta, the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Ontario, the Joliette Institution for Women in Quebec, the Nova Institute for Women in Nova Scotia, and the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Women, in Saskatchewan.

“Creating Choices” identified the necessity for the new Corrections philosophy to acknowledge the specific needs of female offenders who are mothers, and made the following comment and recommendations.

From Separation to Connection

How Can the Bonds Between Mothers and Children be Nurtured?

Two out of three federally sentenced women are mothers, who said they had primary responsibility for their children. Many of these women spoke of the intense pain and anxiety caused by the separation from their children and of their sense of powerlessness when their children are placed in foster homes. Federally sentenced women who chose to remain in their home provinces under Exchange of Service Agreements, told researchers they did so primarily to maintain regular contact with their children.

Currently, visiting policies differ from prison to prison. The cost of transportation, the willingness of foster parents to facilitate visits, the cost of telephone calls, are all factors that, despite written policy, greatly affect women's ability to maintain contact. With respect to infants, only two provinces enable women to keep their infants during the critical bonding stage.

The Task Force discussed the issue of mothers and children at length. Following its review of the available literature, the Task Force concluded this complex issue could not be amply dealt with in the time available and that there is no one simple answer or formula. The Task Force recognized that the issue involves others besides the mother, the child and the Correctional Service of Canada. The extended family and child welfare agencies also have a role to play.

The Task Force further agreed that the environment at most of the current facilities for women in Canada is not appropriate for children.

Although the Task Force concluded that this issue deserves further study, it was decided that:

- new facilities must provide a home-like environment and sufficient flexibility to enable a child or children to live with their mother;*
- decisions should be made on an individual basis;*
- the Correctional Service of Canada should be the facilitator in the decision-making process, assisting and supporting the sentenced mother in her negotiations with the applicable child welfare agency.*

The Task Force further decided that where a live-in arrangement is not possible, the Correctional Service of Canada must provide the necessary resources to enable regular and close contact between mothers and children.²

¹ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/toce-eng.shtml>

² <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/toce-eng.shtml>

“Creating Choices – The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced women”

With this as a core principle, each of the regional facilities had a mother child program and facilities that allowed children to stay with their mother full time until the age of 4, and part-time until the age of 12. The cottage style accommodation proposed by the report made this achievable as it encouraged a normalised living environment in a domestic setting. In addition to this each facility was designed with a family visiting cottage for use by families for up to 72 hour private visits.

In CSC's review – "10 year Status Report on Women's Corrections 1996-2006" it was noted that whilst many of the recommendations of Creating Choices had been implemented, there was still much to be done. The Mother and Baby Programs were referred to in the section relating to the implementation for progressive corrections techniques noting,

The Mother-Child Program:

One of the major concerns identified in the 1990 Task Force was the separation of women from their children and families. This was particularly critical given the number of women who have children. The Task Force recommendation, that the women would be allowed to have their children with them in the institution, subject to certain conditions and criteria, was accepted by the Government. The goal of the Mother-Child Program in the regional institutions is to foster positive relationships between mothers and their children; however, the overriding focus and basis for decision-making is the best interests of the child, and the child's participation in the program must be approved by the respective department of social/children's services. Since the national implementation of the Mother-Child Program in 2001, 36 children have participated in the part-time program and 19 children have participated in the full-time program.³

I met with various CSC staff at the beginning of my visit to Canada and the intent of "Creating Choices" was apparent in all we spoke about. The Mother and Baby Programs in the regional facilities are well documented and I was impressed by the level of thought and consideration that had gone into the planning. The impression that I was given was that it was a thriving and successful element of the CSC operations.

We spoke about many of the positive "women centred" design solutions that had been implemented into the planning of the regional facilities.

For example, Initiatives relating to gender balanced staffing, and all female emergency response teams, flexibility in the design of program spaces that allowed for movement and manipulation of spaces, increase in the number of artistic activities offered, greater emphasis on the provision of mental health services – the range of positive issues we discussed was wide and varied.

One thing that had occurred since the implementation of Creating Choices, in response to various security breaches, but that was contrary to the broad principles of the original document, was the inclusion of Secure Units into the regional facilities, to cater for women of higher needs. These units are essentially what could be described as maximum security units or even segregation units.

At Joliette, the site I was to visit, a secure perimeter had also been added since the original design.

"...an 8-foot perimeter fence topped with rolled razor-ribbon wire; a perimeter fence detection system; infra red lights for night-time camera observation; door, window and roof-top alarm systems on offender housing units. The Secure Unit also has its own alarmed fence and cameras to observe offenders when they are in the outdoor exercise yard."⁴

In Creating Choices, the intention was that,

*"The new style facilities will utilize all environmental factors known to promote wellness. These will include natural light, fresh air, colour, space, privacy, and access to land. The design will also incorporate small cottages, independent living areas and **non-intrusive security measures**."⁵ (my emphasis)*

³ http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/wos24/annex_A_4-eng.shtml

⁴ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/media/ntlr/2003/03-04-10-eng.shtml>

⁵ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/choice12e-eng.shtml>

"Creating Choices – The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women", Chapter X1, The Recommended Plan.

In addition to this, in 2008, the criteria for access to the Mother Child program had been changed significantly with the result being that the numbers of eligible women has decreased.

NEWS RELEASE:

Minister Day tightens rules for Mother-Child Program to ensure child protection

OTTAWA, June 27, 2008 < The Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, today announced changes to the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) Mother-Child Program, after having requested a review of the program in February 2008.

"These changes to the program are essential because the safety and security of children needs to always be first and foremost, and no child should ever be inadvertently put at risk when a mother is incarcerated," said Minister Day. "By making these reforms, the program will continue to ensure mother-child relationships are fostered without endangering the safety of a child."

The changes are:

- * Excluding offenders from the program who have been convicted of serious crimes involving violence, children or those of a sexual nature;*
- * Restricting the part-time program to children aged six and under;*
- * Requiring the support of local Child and Family Services before the participation of an offender is approved; and,*
- * Re-evaluating the participation in the program of any offender who refuses to allow her child to be searched for drugs or other contraband before entering an institution*

The Mother-Child Program is unique to the women's institutions. The program allows some women offenders to have access to their children in federal correction facilities in order to foster positive relationships between the mother and the child.

These changes are consistent with the new direction set for the CSC in the Independent Panel Report on federal corrections, particularly the recommendations relating to offender accountability and drugs.⁶

I also met with staff from the Office for the Correctional Investigator (OCI)⁷ – a government body which has as one of its mandates, a review process of CSC policies and procedures which relate to individual complaints.

We discussed concerns they had relating to the provision of the Secure Units and high security perimeters at the regional prisons, and how that 20 years on from Creating Choices it appeared that the vision had been lost and that problems that occurred were being dealt with by increasing security – or more specifically, reducing dynamic security, and increasing levels of physical and electronic security. Ivan Zinger, the Executive Director of OCI, and his staff were passionate in their criticism of the direction being taken by CSC, and this was reiterated in the annual report they released later in the year, making particular mention of the Mother Child Program and also the high security perimeters.

The Mother-Child Program

We also know that the majority of women offenders are mothers, and many are single-parent providers. The regional facilities are typically far removed from an offender's home community and familial contacts and supports. Research and experience tell us that maintaining these contacts and supports is critical to positive reintegration outcomes.

The Mother-Child program was designed in response to these concerns with the intent of fostering and promoting stable mother-child relationships. Mothers who met the eligibility criteria were

⁶ <http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/minister-day-tightens-rules-for-mother-child-program-to-ensure-child-protection-874017.htm>

⁷ <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca>

allowed to keep their newborns and pre-adolescent aged children with them in the facility on a full- or part-time basis.

In June 2008, the Minister of Public Safety announced a number of changes to the mother-child program eligibility criteria. Three policy changes in particular have severely restricted access to the program:

- Exclusion of all women offenders who had been convicted of serious crimes involving violence, children or those of a sexual nature.
- Restrictions in the maximum age of child participants in the part-time program — a decrease from 12 to six years of age.
- Required support by local Child and Family services before an offender's participation could be approved.

Although these changes have yet to be formalized in policy, interim instructions were sent to all regional facilities in July 2008 indicating that they would be effective immediately. Further, all women and babysitters living in mother-child designated houses would be re-assessed according to these criteria on an immediate basis. As just over half of women offenders are serving time for a violent offence, this means that this same portion is also ineligible to participate.

Since the introduction of these changes, the number of part and full-time participants in the program has been reduced by a factor of more than 60%. On any given day, there may not be even one participant in the mother-child program. If we want to enhance the chances of releasing a more responsible person capable of sustaining herself and her dependents in a crime and substance-free lifestyle, then surely it is time to have another look at the eligibility criteria that unnecessarily restrict participation in the mother-child program.⁸

This gave rise to 2 specific recommendations from the OCI (of the total 24 recommendations for 2009-2010) and I have included the official CSC response below each of them.

23. I recommend that the Service review eligibility restrictions on the Mother-Child program with a view to maximizing safe participation.

CSC response

The eligibility restrictions announced in June 2008 were implemented in order to maximize the safe participation of children in the institutions. These restrictions help to ensure that the well-being of the child is the pre-eminent consideration in all decisions relating to participation in the Mother-Child Program.

24. I recommend that the Service modify perimeter controls in the regional women's facilities to allow minimum security offenders to reside outside the high security fence. In facilities where this is not achievable, I recommend that the Service provide stand-alone accommodations for minimum security women residing in the community.

CSC response

CSC has developed an accommodation strategy to address the needs of its various populations, including women classified as minimum security. The accommodation strategy will form part of CSC's long-term accommodation strategy which will be submitted to Treasury Board no later than March 2011.⁹

A brief web review of current discussion on the CSC's long term accommodation strategy uncovered references to double bunking and temporary accommodation to cope with increasing numbers, due in part it would seem, to the 'tough on crime' political stance of the past few years. This is not dissimilar to the current tone of our own State Government with regards to law and order.

⁸ <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20092010-eng.aspx>

Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator 2009-2010, Section 6 Federally Sentenced Women

⁹ <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20092010-eng.aspx#2.6>

Joliette Institution for Women

Joliette, Quebec



Figure 1. Google earth photo of the Joliette Institution

The Entrance to the Joliette facility is imposing and institutional due to the razor topped perimeter fence. It is easy to see that the fence came as an addition to the original design as it sits clumsily in front of the entry building and cuts through landscaping.



Figure 2. Google Earth street view of the front entrance to Joliette showing the secure perimeter with razor tape topping, lighting and cameras.

Once through the fence line it is possible to see the original design intent of the facility. The entry building itself has a modern commercial feel, with an open reception counter and a relatively welcoming feel.

I was given a tour of the Institution, but unfortunately was not able to bring a camera on site. The campus style design of the site is best appreciated when amongst the living units, some of which look out over the central green zone which has a significant number of large trees and open grassed areas.

Joliette offers various work opportunities to the inmates, but they do seem to be the traditional “women’s work” such as sewing, cooking and cleaning, but also maintenance and gardening. Primary and High school education certificates are offered in the Education programs, and there is a Pottery centre.

I had the opportunity to visit the Secure Unit built in 2003, and it was comparable to other maximum security accommodation I have seen with secure cells, and asphalt exercise yard, and separated guard station. At present it housed 10 women, but I was advised that this capacity was in the process of being doubled. The women are responsible for doing their own laundry, but do not do any cooking. Apparently (but I have been unable to confirm) for a life sentenced inmate, it is mandatory to spend 2 years within a maximum security unit such as this regardless of risk levels or behaviour.

The majority of the accommodation at Joliette is in cottages, or residential accommodation, in line with the original recommendations of the “Creating Choices”.

The living units each accommodate up to 8 women in separate bedrooms with common living, dining and kitchen areas, and shared bathroom facilities.

The plans below show a typical living unit over two levels. Mother and Child accommodation is provided within these standard units with the rooms being slightly larger, and the upstairs bathroom having a full size bath. This does mean that toddlers and mothers carrying infants need to navigate the stairs, which does not seem ideal.



Figure 3. Floor plans of the Cottage accommodation at Joliette provided to me by CSC.

The CSC Facility Standards for Residential Housing, Minimum and Medium Security, state that 25% of the living units will accommodate those participating in the mother/child program. In these designated units, all bedrooms shall be large enough to accommodate a crib or, have an adjoining room with an interconnecting door. The units must also have an indoor play room, but no mention is made of any other design features for the units that may make them more suitable for children ranging in ages from birth to 4. It also implies that all the mothers in the Mother Child Program would be living in the one unit, which if under full capacity would be potentially a very stressful environment.

The day I visited the designated Mother Child unit was empty.

The Mother Child Program was explained to me by Ms Chantale St-Amour, the current Coordinator of the program at Joliette. Interestingly her position is not permanent, and the day that I visited there were no participants in the program or any in the process of applying. Regardless of this, of the 3 current Mother Child Programs in Canada (2 of the Regional Facilities do not run the program) she believed that Joliette was working the best.

The Mother Child Program at Joliette is run as a Department that provides services to the users. Its role is to provide Day Care facilities, and also run the various parenting, counseling and education courses that form the 4 part program.

The spatial requirements for the Facility are clearly set out in the diagram below and you can see that it is typical of a small day care centre.

Mother-Child Program Multi-Level Security

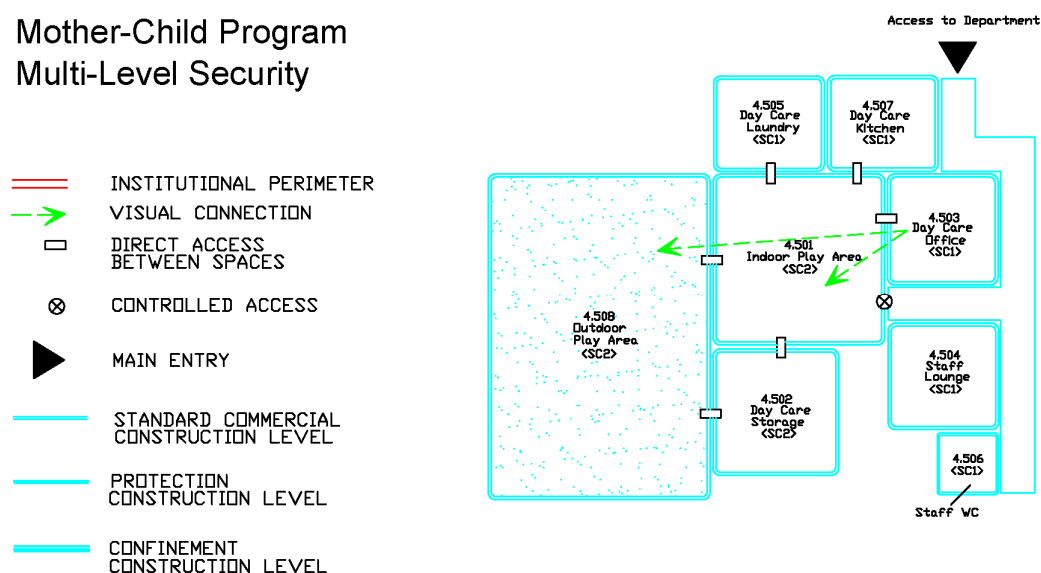


Figure 4. Planning document for Mother and Child program facilities, provided to me by CSC.

At Joliette the Mother Child Program opens out onto an outdoor play area that sits between the main building and the first of the Residential units, which is the one used for Mothers and Children. This provides dual access to this outdoor play space which is fenced off from the main central green zone with a typical pool type fence. Unfortunately, the play area also backs onto the main perimeter fence with its razor tape topping. Apart from this the planning of the area works well, and the day care centre itself was a bright and cheerful place to be on the day I visited.

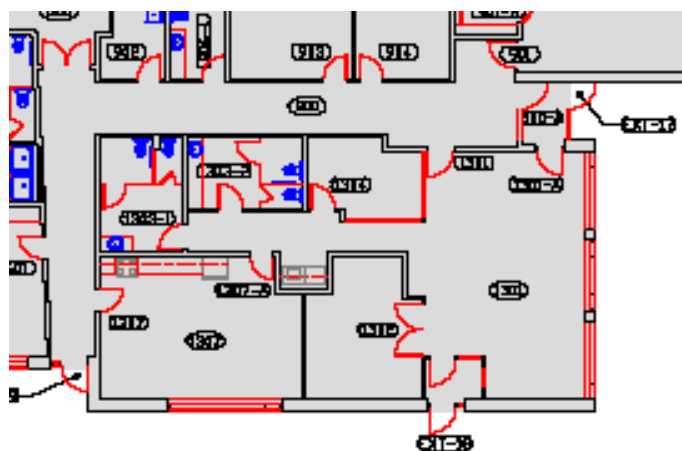


Figure 5. The floor plan of the Mother Child Program facility at Joliette. The outdoor area is to the right side of the plan.

The 4 components of the Mother Child program are as follows.

1. A visiting program for children up to the age of 18. Every Friday for from 10 until 4, and one Saturday a month, the program accommodates children visiting their mothers. Mothers are able to bring food to the centre and cook for their children, and there is space for children to nap. There are opportunities for water play for smaller children and access to the gymnasium is also available for older children.
2. A 12 session course work program, covering such topics as first aid, general parenting skills, and also addressing the specific issues associated with children with incarcerated parents. The topics also cater for women from other nations with different emphasis that recognizes the varying community attitudes. This course has to be completed by all women who wish to provide babysitting to children on the program.
3. For women who have their child living with them, there is a special component of the program that requires Chantale to keep in regular contact with the mother, something which is easily achieved given the close proximity of the Program to the living Unit.
4. The final part covers counseling of both mothers and children involved in the program. This was done in one of the quiet spaces with the Day Care Centre.

In addition to the Mother Child Program, Joliette has a Family visits unit on the site, which is able to be used by families for up to 72 hour visits. It provides a normalized living environment where families can spend an extended period of time together in an ordinary domestic setting.

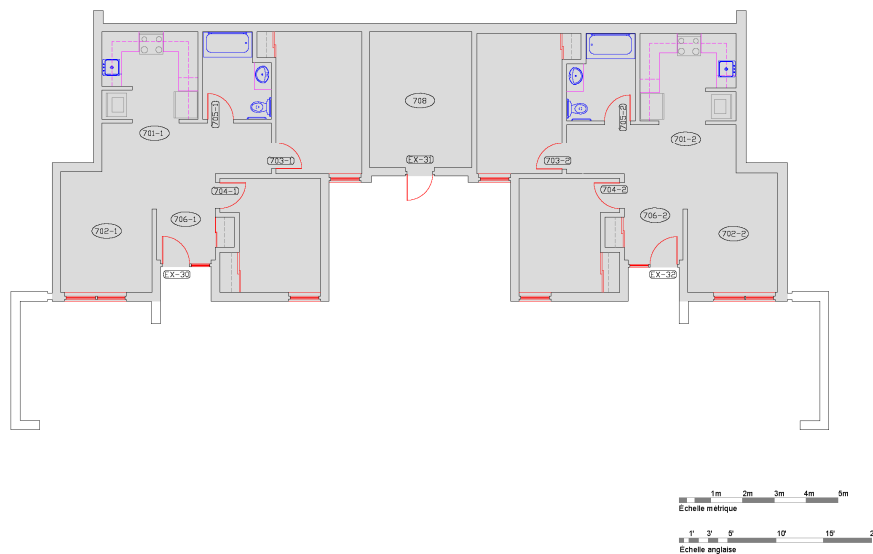


Figure 6. Floor plan of the Family visits unit, provided to me by CSC.

One interesting difference in Canadian institutions, which I was made aware of at Joliette is that for 3 years there has been a smoking ban. By all accounts it considered to be an extremely successful initiative, although a court challenge has meant it has been overturned in some other states, but I understand that in Quebec it remains in place. For children living at the institution, this initiative can only be seen as a positive.

Summary

I find it hard to be positive about the situation I discovered in my discussions with CSC and the OCI, and subsequent visit to Joliette. What I saw and heard during my tour of the Institution reinforced what the staff at the OCI had suggested, and the lack of any participants in the Mother Child Program was equally disheartening. Whilst it is possible to see the early planning philosophies guided by the Creating Choices document in the design of Joliette, the subsequent changes appear to have significantly damaged the original intent.

As is often the case in a design, when the core philosophy is changed, or the foundation principles behind the design are altered, the design becomes unworkable, and alterations and modifications over time as a result of this, simply serve to make things worse.

In its 2006-2007 Annual report the OCI quoted one regional prison inmate as saying to them,

"Sometimes I think it would be better to go back to the old way, you know – where you got nothing, you didn't expect anything. And you got nothing and, you know, that was the way it was."

Positives for Mothers and Children

- The on-site Day Care Centre model appears to be a good way of providing significant support to mothers and their children.
- The outdoor play area between the Day Care Centre and the residential living unit, works well and provides an excellent play space for young children.
- The Mother/Child program considers older children and caters for their different needs.
- The Mother/Child Program acknowledges the need for counseling and support for both mother and child.
- The residential unit accommodation provides the opportunity for normalized living for mother and child.
- The Family Visits unit provides an excellent normalized living environment for families.

Negatives

- The secure perimeter means entry to the facility is intimidating, and the razor tape topped perimeter fence also impacts on the outdoor play area.
 - The current eligibility criteria for the program are making it too difficult to access.
 - The design of the Mother Child Residential living unit is not ideal, and needs a more child centred focus to cater for the particular requirements of small children.
-

Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Women

Nekaneet First Nation Reserve, Saskatchewan

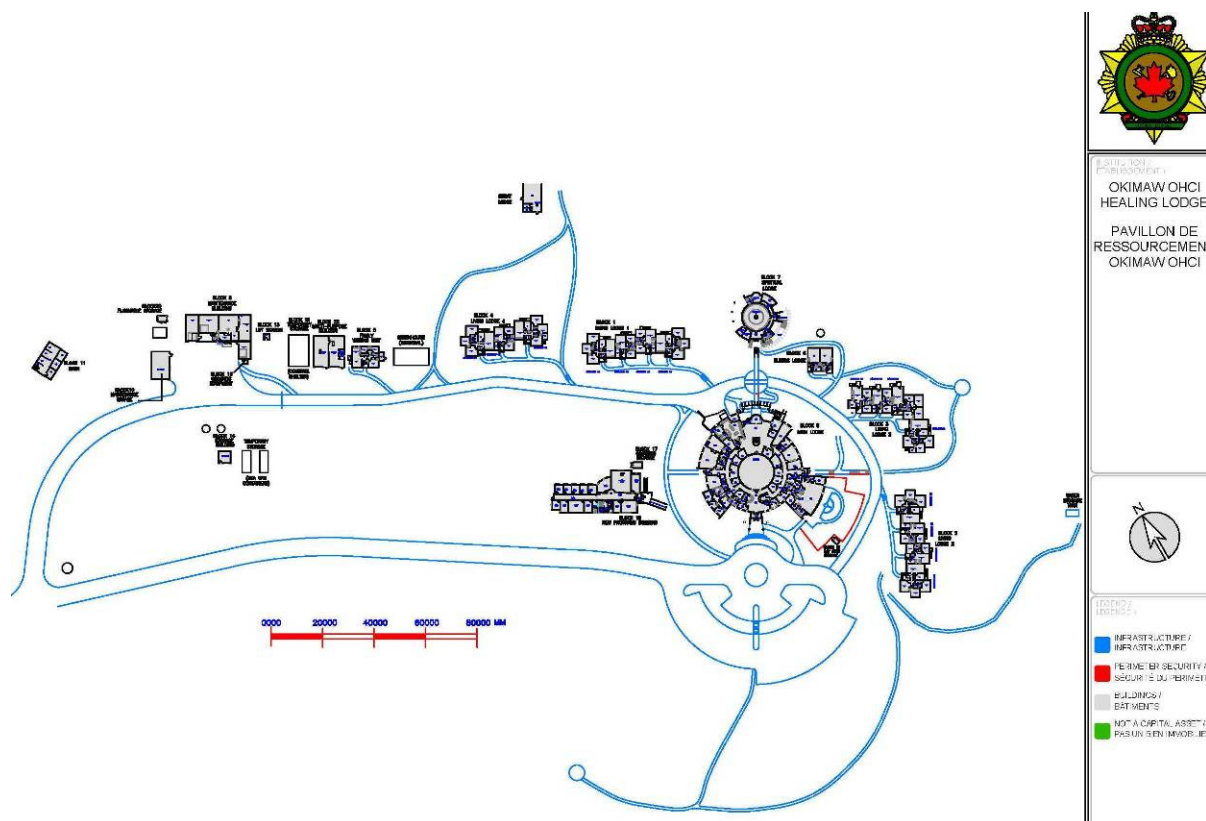


Figure 7. The site plan of the Ochimaw Ohci Healing Lodge, provided to me by CSC.

In Creating Choices the following was set out as a basis for the proposed Healing Lodge facility.

A Healing Lodge will be established in a prairie location. Potential locations must be sought by Aboriginal communities, not the Correctional Service of Canada. The location eventually chosen must be acceptable to both Aboriginal communities and the Correctional Service of Canada. The connection of the Lodge to an Aboriginal community will be essential to its survival. The development of the Lodge will also require the expertise of Aboriginal women whose input will be facilitated through the establishment of an Advisory Council to the Correctional Service of Canada for this initiative. Overall responsibility for programs for Aboriginal women will be given to the Elders Council in each region.

The Lodge will be premised on principles which promote:

- *A safe place for Aboriginal women prisoners;*
- *a caring attitude towards self, family and community*
- *a belief in individualized client-specific planning;*
- *an understanding of the transitory aspects of Aboriginal life;*
- *an appreciation of the healing role of children who are closer to the spirit world;*
- *pride in surviving difficult backgrounds and personal experiences.*¹⁰

¹⁰ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/choice12e-eng.shtml>



Figure 8. An aerial view looking down onto the main administration building at Okimaw Ohci, with the Spiritual Lodge in the foreground.¹¹

The Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Women sits on Nekaneet First Nation Reserve land. There are no fences at the Lodge, just many miles of open prairie. The drive out to the Lodge is on dirt roads, and the first point of entry is a boom gate with an intercom. This marks the perimeter of the facility, and it was also the spot to where staff drove in order to take a cigarette break. On the CSC website the site is described as follows,

"Cypress Hills" is a sacred place. It is to these hills that people come for healing, inspiration, and to hear the voice of their Creator. It is a natural place for restoration of both the body and the spirit.

'Okimaw Ohci' and 'Thunder Breeding Hills' - the 'Cypress Hills' have had several names evincing their power and spiritual importance." Maple Creek/Nekaneet submission Feb 1992

When selecting the location for the first national Aboriginal Healing Lodge, the Planning Committee understood the importance of both land and water to Aboriginal people. The above noted quote was included in the submission by the town of Maple Creek and the Nekaneet First Nation to the federal government. The federal government subsequently accepted these recommendations.

On this land there are rolling meadows, forests, streams, rivers and a multitude of birds and animals. All of these things encourage the residents to appreciate their natural surroundings and provide ample space to contemplate their healing journey.¹²

¹¹ <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dfrp-rbif/pn-nb/00762-eng.aspx?qid=1146886>

¹² http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/fsw13/ohci-eng.shtml#_3_1

The day I visited Okimaw Ohci, my guide and I, Ms Margaret Roy, a project officer with the Regional arm of the CSC, and herself a First Nation woman, arrived in time to attend the Morning Circle at the Lodge. Held in the Spiritual Lodge, all inmates and staff gathered to participate in the morning smudge – a purification ceremony using smoke from the sage herb – and also have the opportunity to welcome and wish the group good morning. The Spiritual Lodge is a circular building with soaring timber structure and central fireplace, filled with aboriginal artwork and craft.



Figure 9. Views of the interior of the Spiritual Lodge.

Aboriginal Elders contracted by CSC spend a week at the Lodge, teaching and counselling, and that morning the current elder gave a talk to the group on alcoholism and drug dependency, speaking of his own personal experiences and those of his family and friends. He spoke in the native language and another elder translated his words to the group after he had finished.

The women were a mixture of ages and not all were aboriginal. It is possible for non indigenous women to apply to serve their sentence at the lodge. There was also a marked difference in the attitudes of the inmates at the morning circle. Some gave the distinct impression they would rather be elsewhere, and performed the morning rituals in a perfunctory manner, whilst others seemed passionate and enthusiastic about what was occurring.

Inmates take it in turns to run the morning smudge, taking on the responsibility of rising early and preparing the sage smoke for a week at a time. The young aboriginal woman who was in control the day I was there, spoke openly about her concerns and what she was going through at the time. Others had the chance to comment and offer advice and counsel to her, and also speak of their own issues.

When the morning circle was complete, I was able to tour the whole facility. One of the long term inmates, Nora, took responsibility for showing me around, and over the course of the day we had the opportunity to speak quite freely. The manner between the staff and the inmates was friendly and respectful at all times and given the staff all wear casual clothes as do the women – in many instances it was difficult to distinguish between the different groups.

The design and layout of Okimaw Ohci is predominantly circular, which as in many cultures is a strong symbol of life and regeneration. The CSC organisational model for the administration of the site refers to this also, and gives some insight into the broad holistic philosophies that underpin the Healing Lodge.

While the Healing Lodge operates according to a standard organizational chart, the philosophical model for the Healing Lodge is represented by the Circle, depicting life in Aboriginal culture as a never-ending spiral of growth.

Beginning with the Inner Circle, Iskwewak are the Aboriginal women incarcerated at the Lodge. They are the centre of the Lodge and of the healing process. It is at this point that the residents make the decision to begin their healing journeys.

The next circle represents the Kikawinaw who actively supports, assists and guides the decisions made by the Iskwewak. She is responsible for the overall direction of services and activities at the Lodge and works, with her staff, to empower Iskwewak to make meaningful and responsible choices.

The third circle represents the Lodge's corporate relationship with the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner for Women and the Regional Deputy Commissioner, Prairies.

The outermost circle represents both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities who support and assist the Lodge with its mandate to reintegrate women offenders at the safest, most appropriate time in their sentence.

The focus of all the above noted relationships is the sharing of expertise and an exchange of learning.¹³

These Cree words used to describe the various leadership roles emphasise the focus on both family and women.

KIKAWINAW	Our Mother	Warden
KIKAWISINAW	Aunt	Team Leader
KIMISINAW	Older Sisters	Primary Workers

The main administration building dominates the site, sitting at the top of the slope and looking down over the other buildings and to the hills beyond. The entry foyer is simple and non confrontational, and looks out into a central green courtyard space where some children's play equipment sits. CCTV dome cameras and some signage are the only real indications that you are in a correctional facility.

¹³ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/fsw13/ohci-eng.shtml# 3 1>

Aboriginal art works and motifs, and craft by the inmates are displayed throughout the Lodge, adding to the atmosphere. There is significant use of natural timber and soaring conical roofs in the architecture of the main buildings. Views out to the landscape are provided at every opportunity. The many references to the Indigenous culture and traditional design add depth to the architecture and no doubt provide meaning and solace beyond my limited western viewpoint.

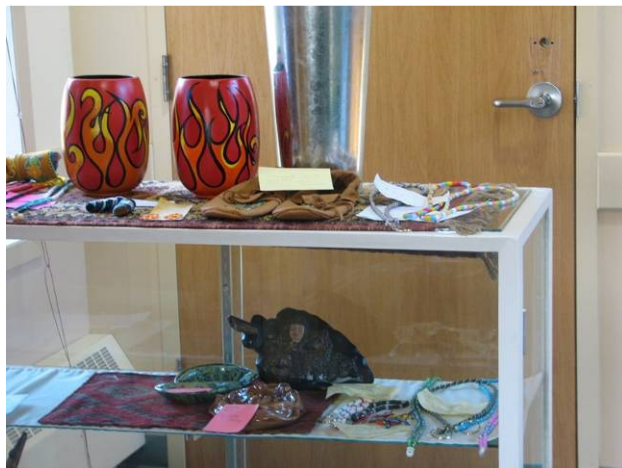


Figure 10. Views in and around the main administration building at Okimaw Ohci.

In this main building there is a central dining/meeting area where most women and staff seemed to gather after morning circle, to have a cup of coffee and get ready for the day. Visits also occur in this communal space, and it looks out over the spiritual lodge and the rest of the site.

Staff and inmates eat their lunch in this dining room, whilst other meals are had in the living units and are prepared by the women. It is a lovely space with wide windows and a balcony looking down onto the Spiritual Lodge and the rest of the site.



Figure 11. The balcony of the dining room, looking out over the hills.



Figure 12. Looking down over the living units.



Figure 13. The maintenance buildings and horse stables at the end of the site.



Figure 14. The spiritual lodge.



Figure 15. A traditional tepee, that had been set up for the upcoming "sweat" at the lodge.

The main building also accommodates the general administration functions (finance, personnel services, and central records), health services, case management, admission and discharge, laundry, hair dressing, library, and originally the day-care centre.

Adjacent to the main building and linked by a bridge, is the Program Building, which houses a gymnasium and weights facility as well as classrooms, arts and crafts areas, and some offices.



Figure 16. The gymnasium in the programs building.



Figure 17. One of the classrooms in the programs building.

There are 8 living units on the site with a capacity for 40 women. There is also a Safe Lodge which is used for new arrivals and also in situations where a level of temporary segregation is required. Each woman has their own bedroom, to which they have a key. The living units have shared kitchen, living, dining and bathroom spaces and are designed to encourage communal living and support the development of life skills.

The units run along a “street” lower down the site and look out onto the woods. Fixtures and fittings are completely domestic in nature, as is the simple architecture of the buildings.



Figure 18. A shared living area in one of the living units.



Figure 19. A view past the entrances to the living units.

Further down the site there are maintenance buildings, including a water treatment plant, fire truck and wood splitter, necessary to support the traditional ceremonies requiring firewood.

At the end of the run of building there is a stable that houses the Nekaneet Horse Program. Horses feature strongly in Cree culture, and this program is run by local members of the Nekaneet First Nation community. Horses are brought to the Lodge and the women are taught to care for them and ride them over a period of weeks. CSC describes the program on its website as follows.

As a holistic program, there are numerous elements to the Horse Program, including grieving, Cree language, circle teachings, ceremonies, and sharing circles. The residents experience their innermost self through the connection to the Horse Spirit. The focus of the program is learning about oneself and others, understanding ceremonies and the connection to language and culture, learning about the spirituality of the Horse, and the integral role of horses in the life of Cree people. Teaching is done using a variety of approaches including the traditional indirect approach of story telling and reflecting on the moral or teaching behind the story. Practical experience of caring for and riding a horse is also provided in the program.¹⁴

The people I spoke to about this program could not have been any more positive or glowing in their praise of it. Staff, inmates and the people who ran the program believe it has significant positive outcomes for the women on many levels. In the past a mare and her foal had been brought to the Lodge, giving the teachers the opportunity to talk about mother/child bonds and care.

¹⁴ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/fsw13/ohci-eng.shtml# ftn5>



Figure 20. Images of the Nekaneet Horse Program at Okimaw Ohci, including a jacket they gave me as a souvenir of my visit.

There are summer and winter sweat lodges at Okimaw Ohci, one of which was being prepared for a ceremony on the day I was there. The building of the sweat lodge is an important part of the ceremony and I was not able to photograph the proceedings. In very basic terms, a sweat is a traditional purification and cleansing ceremony. This brief explanation I found on the web gives some possible insight into the importance of this in the context of the women at Okimaw Ohci.

An atmosphere is created which is often referred to as 'being in the womb of Mother Earth'; it is a place of safety, giving, sharing, receiving, releasing, cleansing and healing...Spiritual sweating cleanses the mind, body, emotions and spirit, contributing to a healthier individual. Through the use of traditional rituals and forms, it assists the individual in achieving balance and peace within themselves as well as with others and their environment. Those who participate in the sweat lodge find themselves rejuvenated and re-energised coming out feeling whole. Today many are searching for their roots and trying to find the connections between themselves, each other and the world around them.¹⁵

When Okimaw Ohci opened in 1995 the Mother Child Program was an important feature of the facility.

In an article written in 1997, the Mother Child Program was spoken of in glowing terms.

The most innovative and unique experiment at the lodge is its mother-child program. Three toddlers have been living full-time with their mothers at the lodge since August, the first program of its kind in North America. The goal of all programs is to achieve "total healing" for the aboriginal women, who constitute a shockingly disproportionate number of federal inmates.¹⁶

When I visited the Healing Lodge in 2010, the Day Care Centre was being used as office space (it was converted in 2005 when staff numbers increased markedly) and there were no children living at the site. The staff at the lodge felt that it was possibly due to the fact that the women tended to be there for shorter sentences and that in order to spend sufficient time doing their own healing and rehabilitation, there was little time left to care for a child.



Figure 21. The former day care centre now being used as office space, and the day care kitchen as staff tea-making.

¹⁵ <http://www.windspirit.co.uk/sweatlodge/sweatlodge.htm>

¹⁶ http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/publications/jah/1997/Power_Spirit_Okinaw.pdf

Justice as Healing A Newsletter on Aboriginal Concepts of Justice

Power in the Spirit: Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge

Native Law Centre • Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter 1997)

Prior to visiting Okimaw Ohci, I had spoken to Clare McNab, Director of Operations, Aboriginal Initiative Directorate at CSC. Clare had worked at the Healing Lodge for 10 years and during that time the Mother Child Program was running successfully. As many as 6 children at a time lived there, attending the day-care centre and living with their mothers in the units. Clare noted that around 40% of the women at the Lodge in those days were serving life sentences, as opposed to the CSC figure for 2010 being 5%.¹⁷ This aligns with the comments made by current staff members - that the more typical sentence length was 4-6 months, and many of the women had already lost custody of their children.

Clare spoke of the strong cultural beliefs of the aboriginal people, that children were closer to the Creator, and how having children at the Lodge changed the environment there, making it quieter, calmer and safer. She also mused as to whether using children to make this change, was the “right” thing to do.

She said, “The current program is so far from what was envisaged (in Creating Choices)”.

Summary

As I did with the Joliette Institution, I left the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge with mixed feelings. So much of what I saw there was inspiring, and the people I spoke to were positive and hopeful, yet the situation for Mothers and Children is bleak. It would appear that the changes in legislation and policy have simply hamstrung the Mother Child Program, to the point where it is no longer possible to justify it continuing.

It is unlikely that the Day-care Centre will ever be re-claimed. Even with the clutter of partitioning and office furniture, you could see what a wonderful place it would have been to care for children. The opportunity for the children to be exposed to the Cree culture, and learn their heritage from elders and other First Nation women, must have been wonderful for those who participated.

Beds allocated for children are now being taken up by increased prisoner numbers due to changes in sentencing laws, meaning it is unlikely that they would be available for children even if pressure to reinvigorate the program occurred.

Where are the indigenous life sentenced women and others with significant sentences now being incarcerated? And what of their children?

But as Jennifer Flett, the impressive young warden at the Healing Lodge said to me as I left, “This is an extremely important place”.

How disappointing that such a special facility cannot be used to help mothers and children.

Positives for Mothers and Children

- Children visiting have the opportunity to be exposed to cultural teachings, and are able to reconnect with the land at Okimaw Ohci. The freedom and openness of the site provides wonderful activities for older children who visit.
- The facility is extremely non confrontational and would be appealing for a child to visit.

Negatives

- The remote nature of the site means that regular visits are difficult.
- The Mother Child Program has effectively stopped.

¹⁷ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/facilit/institutprofiles/okima-eng.shtml>

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Washington Corrections Centre for Women

Gig Harbour, Seattle

In the United State of America at the end of 2009 there were in the order of 1.5 million people under the jurisdiction of state or federal prisons. Of those, some 200 000 were women.¹

The sheer number of women being incarcerated in the USA is so much greater than in Australia, but there are similarities. As in Australia, the percentage of women in prison is increasing. A significant number of these women are mothers, and around 6% of the women are pregnant when they enter prison.

Legislation has recently been passed providing alternative non custodial sentencing options for women who have young children. One of the options includes being directed to undertake intensive parenting programs.

“The Washington Legislature in 2010 approved SSB 6639, a bill supported by the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), that created two alternatives to prison confinement for some nonviolent offenders who have minor children. This bill created a judicial sentencing alternative that will be referred to as the Family & Offender Sentencing Alternative or FOSA and also created a new program of partial confinement for use by the Department that is referred to as the Community Parenting Alternative or CPA.

Research shows children of incarcerated parents are significantly more likely to end up in the criminal justice system themselves. The goal of this program is to help stop that cycle of criminal activity.”²



Figure 1; Google earth view of the Washington Corrections Centre for Women. The lower security units are at the bottom of the picture.

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics 2010, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2316>

² <http://www.doc.wa.gov/community/fosa/default.asp>

The Washing Correctional Centre for Women (WCCW) is located in the picturesque area of Gig Harbour, 10 minutes from Tacoma and an hour from central Seattle. The centre was built in 1971, and is the only major correctional facility for women in Washington State, and over the years has had a number of renovations and new buildings added, making the facility a collection of buildings from different eras and also varying correctional philosophies.

The WCCW has accommodation for minimum and medium security female prisoners, with a population of approximately 850 women, although the designed capacity for the facility is indicated as 738. The ages of the women range between 18 and 87 with an average age of 36.7 years, and in information captured by the administration for an audit in 2008, the security rating range of the inmates was 1 maximum (although later figures showed this was unusual and generally 7 was more typical), 148 close, 211 medium and 476 minimum. In 2008 the average length of incarceration was 15.2 months, 39% of the inmates had been convicted for violent crimes, and the recidivism rates for low risk prisoners was 41% and for high risk was 57%. 63% of the prison population was white.

As you can see from the aerial, the prison is divided into the Low Security area (at the bottom of the picture) and the Medium and High security areas. Accommodation in low security is in dormitory style accommodation whilst medium and maximum are cell block accommodation of varying levels of security.

There is a central plaza area in the higher security area, around which the common buildings are clustered including the kitchen and canteen, and some of the education facilities. Prisoners in the low security areas cross through the dividing barrier to access these areas.

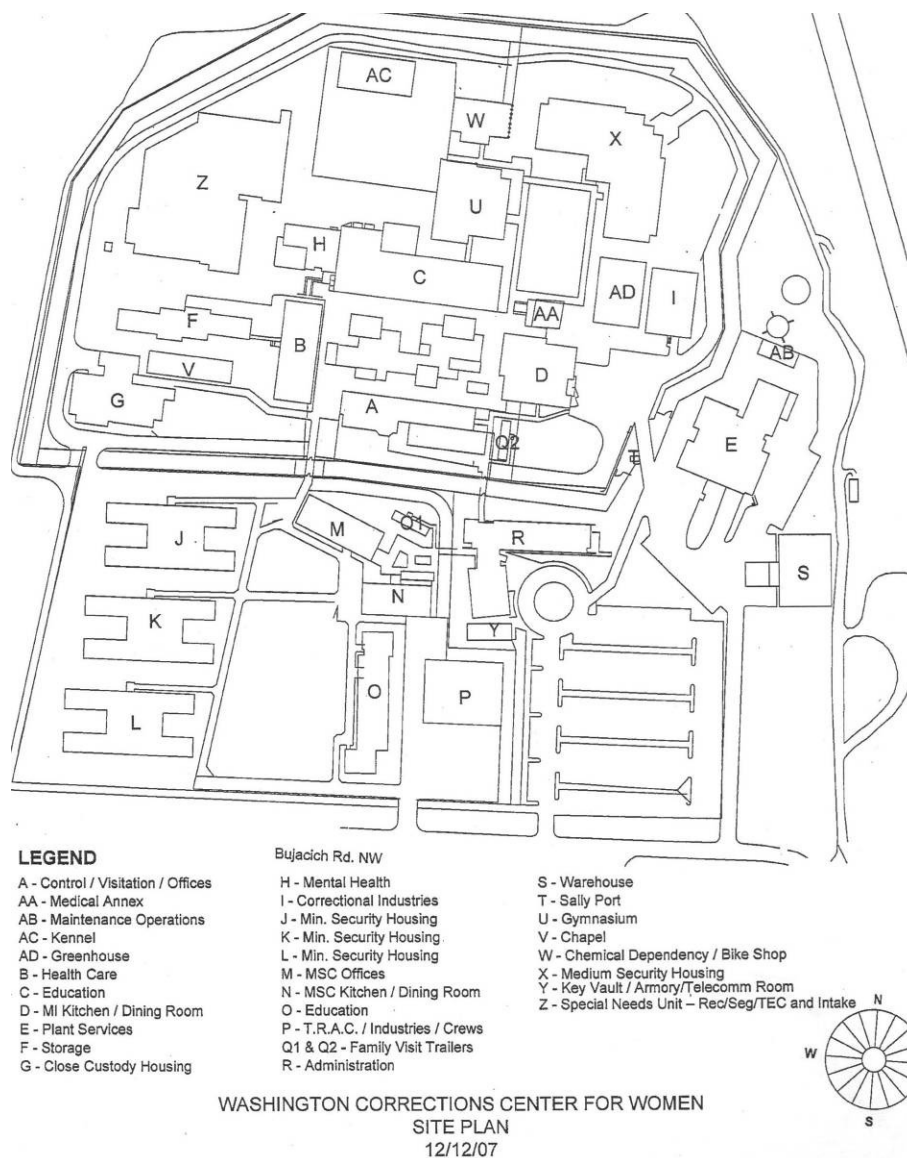


Figure 2. Site plan of WCCW provided to me by staff at the Centre.

When it was originally built in 1971, WCCW had little security fencing, and all the accommodation was dormitory style. Later a full secure perimeter was added – 4 metre high chainmesh with razor tape topping – to address increasing numbers and changes in offender profiles. Over the years, many other buildings have been added including a new minimum security facility, a 102 bed closed custody unit, a 256 bed medium security unit and a special needs unit.

On approaching the WCCW, there can be no doubt that you are at a Correctional Facility. The razor tape on the chain mesh perimeter fence is confronting. Upon entering I had to pass through a metal detector, and all items that I took in were comprehensively searched, as well as my shoes. There is a random staff search procedure in addition to searching of visitors. The correctional staff all wear uniforms and the atmosphere is very institutional and controlled. I was given a comprehensive tour of all areas of the facility by the Assistant Superintendent of Programs, Ms Tamara Rowden.

It cannot be said that WCCW is an attractive facility. There are many different styles of buildings, none of which are particularly memorable or appealing. There is little landscaping apart from the central plaza area which has the feel of a high school quadrangle, and the razor topped weldmesh fence is a constant ugly reminder of where you are.

The WCCW runs a Residential Parenting Program (RPP) which began in 1999. In their information brochure on the Program, WCCW describes it as,

“...the collaboration between a mother, Washing Corrections Centre for Women (WCCW), Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD)/Early Head Start(EHS), Multi-Care and other partners to support the attachment relationship between a mother and her baby.”

Now the subject of a book³ and also a documentary on KBTC Public Television, the RPP or “Purdy” as the WCCW program is known, is seen as a good example of how successful this type of facility and program can be.

Every pregnant woman who enters WCCW is eligible to apply for the RPP. Whilst there are general requirements for eligibility there is also enough flexibility to look at each individual regardless of their crime or sentence. The basic requirements for eligibility are a minimum security custody status, and a sentence length of less than 30 months after the expected birth date of the child. In addition to this, factors such as history of violent crime convictions, past involvement with Child Protective Service, and any other observed behaviours are taken into account in deciding whether the woman can enter the program. In most instances (I was advised probably 95% by Sonia Alley, the Supervisor of RPP) the women are already mothers, so there are very few first time parents on the program. Having said that, for many of them it may be the first time they experience motherhood without the confusion of drug and alcohol addictions and chaotic lifestyles.

At the time of my visit there were 20 mothers enrolled in the RPP with children from a few days old to toddlers.

There are strict expectations of the women who enter the program. An excerpt from the RPP Offender handbook lists them clearly –

1. *Maintain a healthy, safe and clean environment for living. (See attached cleaning schedule and RPP Cleaning memo)*
2. *Active participation in any programming offered by DOC (Dept of Corrections) or EHS (Early Head Start) as assigned by the counsellor.*
3. *Maintain a positive, respectful working relationship with fellow participants and staff.*
4. *Ensure that the child has 24 hour supervision whether the child is with the mom herself or a caregiver and that the mother provides accurate information to the caregiver.*
5. *Offender mother shall be responsible for taking care of child’s physical, emotional and developmental needs.*
6. *Use kitchen to prepare developmentally appropriate foods for the child ONLY.*
7. *Mother maintains enough baby supplies per month and provides the Child Development Centre with adequate supplies.*
8. *Mother appropriately plans for childcare in a timely manner.*

³ “Protective Custody – Within a Prison Nursery” by Cheryl Hanna-Truscott, Blurb 2009

Expectant mothers who are accepted into the program can start living in the RPP unit prior to the birth of their baby, giving them time to adjust to the routines, as well as attend parenting and caregivers programs.

The RPP has access to a community funded program that provides qualified doulas to support expectant mothers before and after the birth of their child. Mothers give birth at the local hospital accompanied by a WCCW officer, and their doula if requested, as well as potentially a partner, or relative who has been cleared by the Visits program Screening requirements.

The costs relating to accommodating the child are funded by Government and do not come directly from the prisons budget.

The RPP is located in J-Unit, which is one of the original dormitory buildings on the site. J-Unit is an H shaped building with 2 wings of bedrooms and the RPP is in one of these wings. In addition to the mothers in the program, designated caregivers live in this wing. These are prisoners who have also applied and are eligible to be in the program. Their role is to baby-sit the children whilst the mother undertake their work, education and programs, and each will have gone through a specific training program before being given this role.



Figure 3. The main central corridor of J-wing.

Each woman has their own bedroom that they share with their baby, in either a cot or trundle bed, and there is just enough room for a nursing chair and small desk.



Figure 4. A typical bedroom in J-wing.



Figure 5. A toddlers cot in one of the bedrooms on J-wing.

Bathroom and laundry facilities are shared and there is a kitchen for the women to use to prepare food for their children. Sadly, these women do not have the opportunity to prepare food for themselves, with all meals being taken in the canteen from the prison kitchen. There is a large playroom, and a nappy change room.



Figure 6. The communal kitchen on J-wing.



Figure 7. The day room on J-wing, used by all the women and their children as a play area.



Figure 8. Children's toys in the playroom.



Figure 9. The change table area.

The J-wing building is basic lightweight construction and is showing its age, but efforts have been made to make it more attractive with murals and brighter wall colours.

Health services for the children are provided externally – a doctor comes to the prison each month to do all the required developmental health checks. The RPP has a direct line to the local hospital to provide advice to mothers and staff as required. In an emergency both mother and child would be taken to the local hospital by correctional staff.

In my discussions with Sonia, we spoke about staff bonding with the children in the RPP, and feeling empathy for the mothers. All custodial staff cycle through rosters in the RPP and Sonia indicated not all were supportive of the program, but in general it was seen to be a calm area to work in. Significant budget cuts to Corrections has seen the RPP put under pressure to justify its viability, adding to tensions amongst staff.

Sonia stressed the need for flexibility in the eligibility for the program – “a grey area” - citing a number of examples where women with more severe crimes who were given a chance became successful participants in the program. She reiterated that being in the program is a privilege, not an entitlement, and all the women know what is expected of them, and what the consequences are of not playing their part.

The WCCW also has 2 family visits apartments that can be used for overnight and weekend visits with family. They are small stand-alone “trailer” houses within the low security area and the medium security area, with kitchen facilities. These trailers provide for visits with offenders and their children, parents, grandchildren, grandparents, domestic partner, brothers, sisters, mother and father in-law, or son and daughter-in-law. Only medium and minimum custody offenders can participate and if the sentence is 5 years or more, they cannot apply until after they have been incarcerated for at least 12 months. Certain defined infractions make them ineligible from ever participating in the Extended Family Visit Program, while other infractions will disqualify them for up to three years.

Offenders must be actively programming and there is a charge of \$5.00 per night for participation. Extended Family Visits’s are limited to 48 hours.

In conjunction with local government education service, the WCCW has a fully operational childcare centre within the prison, staffed by qualified childcare workers. Puget Sound Educational Service District runs an Early Head Start program in the district and is in partnership with WCCW, staffing the childcare centre with trained Early Head Start educators. As described on its website, Early Head Start (EHS),

“...is a federally funded community-based program for low-income families with infants and toddlers and pregnant women. Its mission is simple:

- to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women,*
- to enhance the development of very young children, and*
- to promote healthy family functioning.”⁴*

This Child Development centre is within the confines of the Low Security fence-line and as well as high quality infant and toddler care, provides development screening and assessment, family support and health services, Playgroups and a New Mom’s Group. The EHS staff also come to see the women prior to the birth of their child to help prepare them for what lies ahead. The centre is bound by all general government regulations and requirements for childcare facilities in the community, and is fully government funded. In addition to the services offered by EHS, WCCW also runs a program called Partners in Parenting, designed to give mothers increased skills and confidence in being a parent.

As a parent who utilised community based child care facilities for my own children, my impression was that the centre was extremely high quality with good internal facilities and was staffed with accomplished, experienced and well trained carers. The atmosphere was bright and cheerful, and the children looked happy and relaxed. On the day of my visit the centre had 12 children enrolled although it is licensed to care for up to 16, with Staff agreeing that the ideal number was 8. Whilst the centre was well set up inside, with play equipment, sleep areas, kitchen and change areas, the outdoor space was much less impressive and there were limited outdoor

⁴ <http://www.ehsnrc.org/AboutUs/ehs.htm>

play opportunities for children of any age, just a small gazebo and play-set, fenced off from the prison grounds by a domestic type chainmesh fence. Given the quality of the centre it is surprising that this is seen as acceptable from a regulatory perspective.



Figure 10. A picture of the Early Head Start Child Care centre, taken from the book about the Purdy program.⁵

This child care facility allows the women to work and undertake education and programs whilst they have a child. The Corrections Industries at WCCW is an extremely significant element of prison life and it is required that it be financially self sufficient. The Education programs at WCCW offer certificate level training in many different areas, as well as basic senior schooling certificates.

The TRAC program provides builders labouring skills to its participants. Run in a large warehouse space the women appear to be worked incredibly hard under the supervision of one very motivated woman, who was equally encouraging and terrifying at the same time. The women leave this 16 week course with a certificate that qualifies them for a trade apprenticeship. The success of this program is borne out by the 10% recidivism rate for those who have completed it, and there is a waiting list of women wanting to participate.

Another program I was shown taught the women spatial planning skills on AutoCAD, doing furniture design and layouts for the industries areas in other correctional facilities to construct. Another program worked in conjunction with the Canadian Association for the Blind, translating standard texts into Braille, then printing and converting the text into 3D diagrams.

The Sewing Industry makes all the garments for the prison population, and there is also a quilt making area where women first make a quilt for charity then are able to make one for themselves. Apparently this type of handmade patchwork quilt is much in demand within the local community, hence provides a good employment pathway for its participants. The examples I saw of their work were incredibly detailed and of high quality.

There is a Beauticians program which provides hair cutting and styling services to the prison population.

The horticulture industry grows plants to sell to community and has a large greenhouse and nursery area. There is also a flower arranging course that sells its products to staff and the community.

Possibly the most successful and popular of the WCCW Corrections Industries is their Prison Pet Partnership Program. Here they train dogs taken from pounds and animal rescue, as support dogs for people with disabilities. This area also runs a boarding kennel for local residents, which recently ranked #3 Kennel for price and quality in the area. The kennel also boards cats which they use to help teach the dogs to socialise. Whilst I was being toured around WCCW I often spotted inmates walking dogs through the grounds.

WCCW also has 2 community service crews that assist the local community in various ways, doing cleanups for Local Parks and recreation, assisting charity food suppliers with planting and harvesting, and maintenance and

⁵ "Protective Custody – Within a Prison Nursery" by Cheryl Hanna-Truscott, Blurb 2009.

grounds keeping at various other local facilities. Other jobs “outside the fence” are Canteen Worker, Warehouse Worker and Maintenance Worker.

Jobs within the prison are a range of general labour and specialized jobs.

General labour jobs include Food Service Worker, Unit Janitor/therapy Aide, Unit laundry worker, and Sergeants Crew/Groundskeeper.

Specialized Jobs include Kennel worker/groomer for the Prison Pet Partnership Program, Teachers Aide for Tacoma Community College, Horticulture Program, Recreation Assistant Clerk, Law Library Clerk, Library Clerk, RPP Clerk, Trades related Apprenticeship Coaching, Bike Program Assembler, Braille Program reader, and the College Text on Tape Program.

Summary

My overall impression of WCCW is riddled with contradictions.

The Closed Custody Unit, Segregation and Isolation units for repeat problem offenders is comparable to what I have seen in Australia’s maximum security male prisons. Metal clad cell doors, hard safe cells and CCTV coverage. Some areas of WCCW are as brutal as I have seen. The perimeter with its razor tape topping and grey weldmesh is confronting and ugly. There are no self care areas within the prison, so all food comes from the prison kitchens, which Tamara explained was the only way they could meet the daily per head food allowance set by the government. The architecture and landscaping of the prison is in general uninspiring and unattractive, adding nothing to the atmosphere of the Centre, and probably detracting from it. The clothes that the women are provided with are shapeless and dull, and the correctional staff wear very authoritarian uniforms.

Other aspects of WCCW suggest a considered approach from a women centred perspective and appear to be extremely successful. There is a terrific gym and sports area for the women to use that focuses on the type of fitness activities many women prefer, and a full size volleyball court is also well utilised.

In particular the Industries, Education and Work programs that they run are many and varied and give the women real skills and confidence, with direct pathways back to the workforce and significant reduction in recidivism rates.

The RPP is a wonderful program appears to result in extremely positive outcomes for its participants. The EHS Child Care Centre is an excellent government run facility that complements the RPP and provides equal benefits to those being provided to people in the broader community ensuring that children in prison are not disadvantaged.

It would seem that the significant numbers of women at WCCW allow them to support such a large range of industry, education and work options for the women, and also ensure sufficient numbers of babies to make the RPP viable.

Having said that, WCCW figures from 2008 indicate that overall recidivism rates are not good at 41% for low risk prisoners and 57% for high risk.

Positive for Mothers and Babies

- The RPP is an extremely well run and organised program and the EHS child care centre is an excellent facility to have available on site.
- Each application for the RPP is decided on its merits, as opposed to blanket exclusions.

Negatives for mothers and Babies and Children visiting

- The WCCW is a harsh looking facility, with little thought for aesthetics.
- The Outdoor play areas for children are inadequate.

On the day of my visit I was given the opportunity to have a chat with one of the women in the RPP. The young woman was introduced to me as Miss B- and she was holding her son T-, who was a toddler of around 18

months. She was in J Wing that day because T- was unwell and she was caring for him instead of working or doing her studies.

Miss B- told me her story.

She has 3 other children, of 4 and 5 years old, and a 14 year old boy who is currently incarcerated in Juvenile Detention. She endeavours to communicate with him by phone and letter but acknowledges it is difficult. Her younger children are brought in to visit her by her family. She told me the RPP was "excellent". It has given her budgeting skills, added responsibility, and taught her how to care for T-.

Prior to being sentenced to WCCW for identity fraud, Miss B- was a drug user and had been reported to Child Protection for neglect. She said, "I can't remember my first 3 kids crawling..."

In the RPP she has a nominated carer who looks after T-, as well as utilising the day care to allow her to go to work as a cleaner and undertake her studies. When her sentence is complete in 12 months, T- will be 2 ½, and she hopes to have her HSC.

If she had not been accepted into the RPP T- would have been put into a foster home. She believes her relationship with T- is completely different to all her other children – and to me she came across as a typical young mother delighting in the joys of motherhood.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Location

In order to encourage the maintenance of family ties throughout a mother's sentence, it is critical that access to the facility is as simple as possible. This applies equally for male prisons and Juvenile Detention Centres, but made more critical for Women and Juveniles as there are less likely to be regional facilities available close to their normal place of abode.

Therefore all Correctional Facilities should be located as near as possible to city centres, and on main public transport routes.

Example – Boronia Pre Release Centre for Women.

Type of Facility

The best examples I saw were small, low to medium security facilities, that were not part of a larger high security facility. This allows the perimeter to be much less intimidating and the construction less brutal and there can be more freedom of movement.

Example - Boronia with places for 70 low security women.

Where it is necessary to co-locate with higher security facilities, the Mother and Baby facilities should not be within the main secure perimeter, but kept separate and distinct.

This makes access to external providers easier and visiting simpler and less confronting.

Example – Jacaranda Cottages, NSW, and Arohata Prison NZ.

Higher Security Facilities

If it is the case that Mother and Baby facilities can be allowed for higher security women, and it is not deemed appropriate for them to be outside the main perimeter, then appropriate child care facilities/ day care centres should be provided within the prison. Ideally these should be run in the same manner as external community child care facilities, providing the same educational and developmental checks and support.

Examples – Bronzefield and Peterborough, UK and Washington Correctional Centre for Women, USA.

Women's prisons should **not** be located within male prisons.

The following quotes, (kindly sourced for me by Bruce Farquhar) help to emphasize that the designs of secure facilities for women have significant different requirements to those designed for men.

Joann Morton, Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina College of Criminal Justice is quoted¹ as saying: *"Planning any public facility presents numerous challenges in today's climate of fiscal conservatism and general distrust of anyone associated with government. Designing a workable woman's correctional facilities is further complicated by demands for harsh treatment of any and all offenders and negative societal attitudes towards women who are sentenced to prison. The easy way out is to dust off a set of plans for a male facility, build it without urinals and call it a women's facility. To be effective, the development of women's facilities requires an understanding of the history of the treatment of women offenders and sensitivity to women and their needs in a correctional environment."*

Pat Carlen states there is *"a substantial body of knowledge built up concerning the very specific ways in which women's imprisonment is different to men's, and not merely because women are biologically different to men (although this is one important difference); nor because they have a different role to play in society (although this is another). But also because the social control of women in general is qualitatively different to the social control of men"*². Carlen (p.83) also notes that *"loss of control over place, space and time affects women prisoners' sense of self and personal identity differently to the way the same losses affect men"*.

¹ Corrections Compendium, Vol XXI, Nov 1996 *"Designing for Women: Doing Time Differently"* by Barbara A Nadel

² Pat Carlen *"Sledgehammer- Women's Imprisonment at the Millenium"* 1998 pp. 18-19

These special needs are even more important for mothers with dependent children whether the children are with her in prison; come to visit her there or when she is trying to maintain contact remotely.

Staff

Have **dedicated** staff positions to manage and support Family relationships. Ensure staff have appropriate training for dealing with children and mothers. Gather information early and put together a picture of the family situation.

Example – Cornton Vale Prison, Scotland.

Provide staffing or partnerships with outside agencies to help with securing post-release accommodation and job opportunities with some level of ongoing support for the initial period after release into the community.

Numbers of women and children

The most successful mother and baby programs had sufficient numbers to run specific programs and justify appropriate facilities.

The conditions for eligibility should not be so harsh as to preclude the majority of women, rather the benefits of the programs if done properly should be seen as opportunities for successful outcomes. Cases should be assessed on an individual basis, and all should be eligible to apply.

Example – Canadian system has introduced harsh eligibility requirements that have significantly reduced the number of participants in their programs.

Visiting

Age appropriate recreation facilities should be provided for children – not forgetting older children. If children are to be encouraged to visit then it is important to make it enjoyable. Basketball courts, bike tracks, walking tracks, fus ball tables, pinball machines, table tennis etc.

Example – plans at Ringe Prison, Denmark, Family room at Cornton Vale, Scotland.

Options for extended family visits and weekend and school holiday visits for older children, should have age appropriate activities available, in order to encourage visits to occur.

Example – At Hoorsrød in Denmark parents are allowed to go walking with their children in the local forests.

The screening area should be as uncomplicated as possible and provide views to the outside, potentially back to the Carpark and out to the visits centre itself, to give a child a sense of location within the facility. Children may feel disoriented and cut off from the outside world when they are visiting a prison.

An information area with child age appropriate brochures, information booklets or posters should be provided at the entry point.

The entry into visits should have glazing to either side of the door to ensure again that the child can see what is inside and where they are heading. Conversely, at the end of the visit, consideration should be given to how the mother leaves the space and her child – preferably not disappearing through a solid door and off to an unknown place. It is also beneficial for a child to be able to see where their mother lives so a line of site from visits to the living units is a positive design feature, so a mother can point out to her home to her child. If this is not possible then photographs for children to look at and take with them can demystify this for a child.

Bruce Farquhar of SA Corrections summarises what should be provided in a child friendly visits area.

The focus of the design must be to assist in reinforcing mother/child bonding and therefore provide every opportunity for interaction between the two. This should include indoor and outdoor visiting facilities, play equipment areas, the opportunity for the mother to provide drinks or snacks to her children, an area where a tired child can rest, kindergarten style toilets, baby change facilities etc.³

³ P. 13 “Design Considerations for Women’s Prisons that may Contribute to Positive Social Outcomes”. Bruce Farquhar, Oct 2006. Paper presented at the National Correctional Services Administrators Conference, Female Offenders Forum.



Figure 1. The contrasting visits areas of Boronia (left) and Cornton Vale.

Communication

Provide options for regular communication via Skype type hookups and email to facilitate regular simple daily communication. Parents can touch base routinely each day, to help with homework and or simply say goodnight to their child.

Example – Storybook Mothers program in the UK.

Entry

Ensure the gatehouse or entry building forms part of the secure perimeter so that it is not necessary to confront a harsh fence upon entry.



Figure 2. The contrasting entrance experiences at Christchurch Women's and Dillwynia.

The reception counter itself should be low enough to allow a child to see over, and also cater for the disabled, but deep enough to provide security for those working at it.

Areas for storage of prams and pushers should be provided in the reception area.

Spaces and corridors to visits should be such that families can walk together rather than in single file, or an adult with children holding each hand, and the visits centre should be visible at all times. Use of glass allows children to see what is inside the space they are approaching. Ideally the visits area should be visible from the screening and entry point to give the child confidence to proceed through the space.

Screening areas

If booth screening is required then endeavor to provide a direct line of sight to some play equipment or the visits centre, from the screening area. Even a view to an outside landscaped area, as opposed to blank walls and uncertainty of what lies beyond.

If possible, have an access path that does not require a child to have to access a booth alone.

A child's perspective

Consideration should be given to a child's perspective when designing. For example;

- ensure heights of window sills are suitable for toddlers to see out,
- avoid sharp edges on benches and tabletops, and climbing points on balconies,
- provide floor coverings suitable for crawling children,
- design bathroom facilities that allow bath-time to be used as playtime, and ensure water tempering devices are used for safety
- position light switches, door handles etc. out of reach of toddler hands.
- design outdoor areas that have a range of materials, and a variety of experiences for children of varying ages,
- provide abundant natural light and ventilation, and use colour and variety in all spaces.
- provide alternative options for paths of travel around the facility. This not only is a good strategy for ensuring choices for all female prisoners if faced with confronting situations, but gives children a variety of experiences in their daily routines.
- Provide and design choices for landscaping that can be played in and on.

Accommodation

Accommodation should be provided in residential housing units, that are as close as possible in style to housing within the community. The planning of the units and the layout on the site, should provide a streetscape, with semi-private spaces that allow women and children to retreat if they choose. Landscaping can be used to assist this, and also allow some ability to modify the environment.

Examples – Boronia.

Accommodation should be completely self care so mothers are responsible for healthy food preparation for their children.

Example – Boronia, Arohata

Provision of private space within the units is also critical for nursing mothers. Also sound insulation between sleeping spaces to protect napping babies from external noise, and also others from the sound of a crying child.

Bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate the usual furniture, plus a full size cot, and also a nursing chair. A separate annex type space off the mother's room for her child would be ideal, but in reality the pressure on bed numbers in corrections might mean this is impossible. A separate room will inevitably be used for an additional adult bed.

Consideration should be give to a slightly bigger laundry area, acknowledging increased laundering needs of small children and babies. Similarly larger outdoor clothes hanging space and clothes dryers for winter should be considered.



Figure 3. Two examples of residential units where semi-private space has been achieved, at Christchurch Women's and Boronia.



Figure 4. In contrast, the living units at Manukau provide no privacy at the entry and little or no landscaping to soften the area.

Another general principle in the design of independent living units for women worth noting is –

- Provide bedrooms for 5 women per unit, as this is generally believed to be the optimum number for group accommodation as it “allows for group concession decision making with minimal conflict”.⁴ Have bedrooms for 2 mothers and children within a unit – any more may increase tensions within the house and cause too much disruption.

“Group conflict in independent living units can be further minimized through the internal design, by avoiding the design used in some jurisdictions where bedrooms (Cells) open off the common living area, which limits privacy and the ability to withdraw into your own space. The latest SA independent living unit design splits the bedrooms off short passageways, each side of the Living Space, avoiding long passages and more than three people crossing paths.”

⁴ “Design Considerations for Women’s Prisons that may Contribute to Positive Social Outcomes”. Bruce Farquhar, Oct 2006. Paper presented at the National Correctional Services Administrators Conference, Female Offenders Forum. P.10

CONCLUSION

When I commenced my research on this topic my hope and intention was to create a reference tool that could be used by architects and planners when designing a new correctional facility. Through my own experience as an architect I am aware of the difficulty on larger projects of trying to be an expert on everything – it is simply not possible. In an area such a mother and baby programs which inevitably form such a small part of a larger project, the time allocated is understandably minimal.

What became clear to me over the course of my scholarship, was that without the supporting philosophy and commitment of the government and those that run our correctional facilities, the architecture plays a small part in the success of mother/baby programs. I saw excellent programs being run out of very poor facilities, and I saw excellent facilities that were empty due to a lack of support from the government.

The design guidelines that I have established may well lead towards better mother/baby facilities but without support from Correctional Services and the community, I believe long term measureable success will be difficult to achieve.



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Trained in Architecture at the University of Adelaide, Sarah is one of the founding members and current director of Totalspace Design. Prior to establishing the company in 1993, she was contracted to the Public Buildings Department as a Minor Works Project Architect. Her experience covers a broad spectrum with projects in the commercial, educational and residential fields of architecture. Her particular area of expertise is Correctional Architecture, a unique field that led to her choice of research topic for the Catherine Helen Spence Scholarship.

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