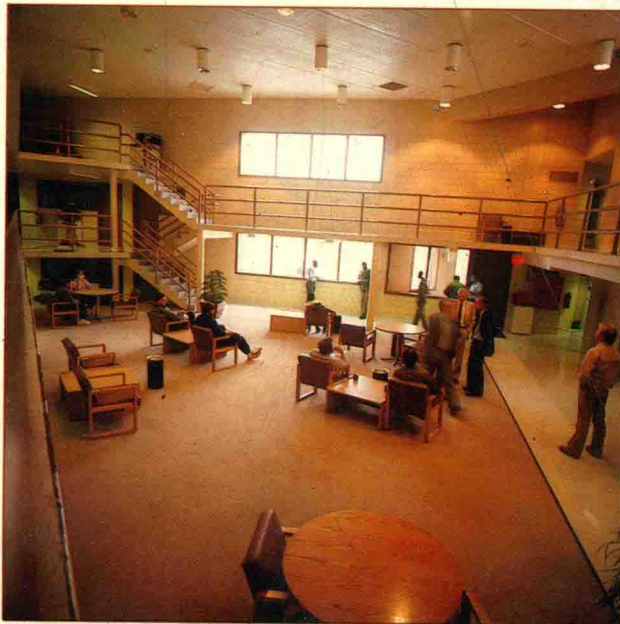
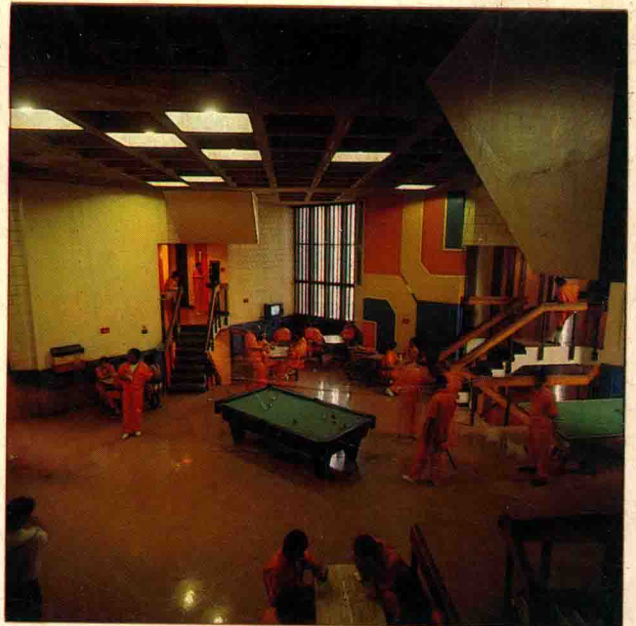


NEW DIRECTIONS IN PRISON DESIGN



**REPORT OF A HOME OFFICE
WORKING PARTY ON AMERICAN
NEW GENERATION PRISONS**

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HOME OFFICE

**NEW DIRECTIONS
IN PRISON DESIGN**

Report of a Home Office
Study of New Generation
Prisons in the USA

London Her Majesty's Stationery Office

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The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, MP

My predecessor, Leon Brittan, commissioned this study of recent developments in prison design and management in the USA last year in order that we might benefit from international experience about the relationship between prison design and the way that prisons function.

The Government has over the past few years taken a series of important initiatives, and committed substantial resources, aimed at the improvement and expansion of the prison system in England and Wales. I hope that this report will stimulate further public and professional interest in this area and will serve as the basis for wide-ranging discussion of the fundamental issues of the future direction of prison design and management.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1984 the Report* of the Control Review Committee drew attention to recent developments in the design and management of prisons in the United States of America, and subsequently the Home Secretary directed that a detailed appraisal of these developments should be carried out. A Working Group of officials of the Home Office and Property Services Agency, chaired by the Director of Regimes and Services in the Prison Department was set up in September 1984 to undertake this study.

Terms of Reference and Membership

The Working Group was set the following terms of reference:

"To examine and evaluate current United States concepts of prison design with a view to considering any lessons to be learned in relation to the design of establishments in England and Wales, particularly those used to accommodate prisoners in the higher security classifications."

The membership of the Working Group is set out at Annex A.

The Reason for the Study

The present system of dispersing maximum security (Category A) prisoners among the eight dispersal prisons in England and Wales has operated since 1968. While the system has been effective in ensuring that Category A prisoners are held in secure custody, the control of inmates in the dispersal prisons has presented severe operational problems. Following a number of riots and various disturbances, a committee chaired by the Director of Operational Policy in the Prison Department was tasked with reviewing the maintenance of control in the prison system.

Among the issues which the Control Review Committee considered was the long running debate about whether to disperse or concentrate maximum security prisoners. They noted that the main arguments against concentration included the risk that the regime of a 'fortress' prison, as advocated by Lord Mountbatten in 1966, would become oppressive, and the difficulty of providing any variety of regime within a single prison. The Committee noted that the debate would inevitably end in favour of dispersal so long as it was conducted within the constraints dictated by existing concepts of prison design.

Post war designs of establishments for adult prisoners in England and Wales have in general adopted a 'corridor plan' approach based on a series of cell spurs on a number of floors, with separate communal areas for association and recreation. The house blocks are designed to accommodate substantial numbers of inmates (generally between 90 and 120) all of whom are free to associate as a group unless some or all are confined to their cells. Such designs have proved to be difficult for staff to supervise effectively, and as a result have required higher manning levels than some older designs. They also present a highly institutionalised atmosphere which inhibits constructive contact between staff and inmates, and the narrow cell spurs can easily give rise to 'no go' areas. There has already been some move away from the corridor plan towards more open designs: the houseblocks in three Young Offender establishments (Feltham, Erlestoke and Guys Marsh) reflect design concepts similar to those found in some 'new generation' prisons in the USA, while the new local prisons to be built at Woolwich and Bicester are based on a partial return to the open galleried, living accommodation found in Victorian prisons.

*Managing the Long-Term Prison System, HMSO 1984, ISBN 011 340797 1

THE NEW GENERATION APPROACH

The term 'new generation' does not refer to a specific design of prison building, but is a convenient shorthand for a variety of designs which have been developed in the USA to facilitate new approaches to the management of prisons. The Control Review Committee described the 'new generation' approach, and the advantages which had been claimed for it, in the following terms:

"Under this system fairly small (50 – 100) groups of prisoners are assigned to the care of multi-disciplinary teams of staff to which the maximum possible decision making authority is delegated. Decentralised unit management is claimed to increase contact between staff and inmates, foster better inter-personal relationships, and lead to more knowledgeable decision making as a direct result of

staff dealing with smaller, more permanent groups of inmates.

In furtherance of these management objectives many of the contemporary designs that have been developed in the USA have adopted plans that do away with cell corridors – with all their problems – and instead arrange the cells around a central multi-use area in each unit. Since each cell opens directly onto the central area, staff can observe all the cells without having to move about in a consciously patrolling manner. It is claimed that these designs have been very successful in simultaneously improving surveillance and encouraging control of inmates through the development of good inter-personal relationships."

METHOD OF WORK

The Working Group set out to evaluate these claims both by an examination of the available research material and by visits to selected penal establishments in the USA.

It was discovered that very little in the way of published research information was available in the UK on recent developments in prison design in the USA, or indeed elsewhere. There appears to be a lack of published analytical evaluation in this field, and there is clearly scope for further research on prison design, in particular on the psychological effect of design on inmates and staff, and on the relationship between physical environment and regime philosophies. A list of published work examined by the Working Group is at Annex J.

The Chairman and three members of the Working Group visited eight 'new generation' prisons in the USA in October 1984, and held discussions with the Director and Senior Staff of the US Federal Bureau of Prisons (See Annex D) and with members of the American Correctional Association (see Annex E). A second visit to the USA was made in June 1985 by four other members of the Working Group, who visited three of the 'new generation' prisons seen by the first team and, for comparative purposes, five other Federal institutions of more traditional design. Details of these visits are at Annex B. Members of the Working Group also visited the Youth Custody Centres at Feltham and Erlestoke to compare the design concepts of these establishments with those seen in the USA. Descriptions of these establishments are at Annexes G and H.

THE U.S. PRISONS VISITED

The eight 'new generation' prisons seen in 1984 are described and illustrated in the following section of this report, which attempts to highlight the salient physical features of each prison in order to provide an understanding of the conceptual thinking which is embodied in the 'new generation' approach, and set the scene for the design analysis which is contained in a later section.

The prisons discussed in detail in this Report were selected to represent a range of different types of institution, both in terms of use and design concepts. They could, broadly speaking, be divided into three functional types:

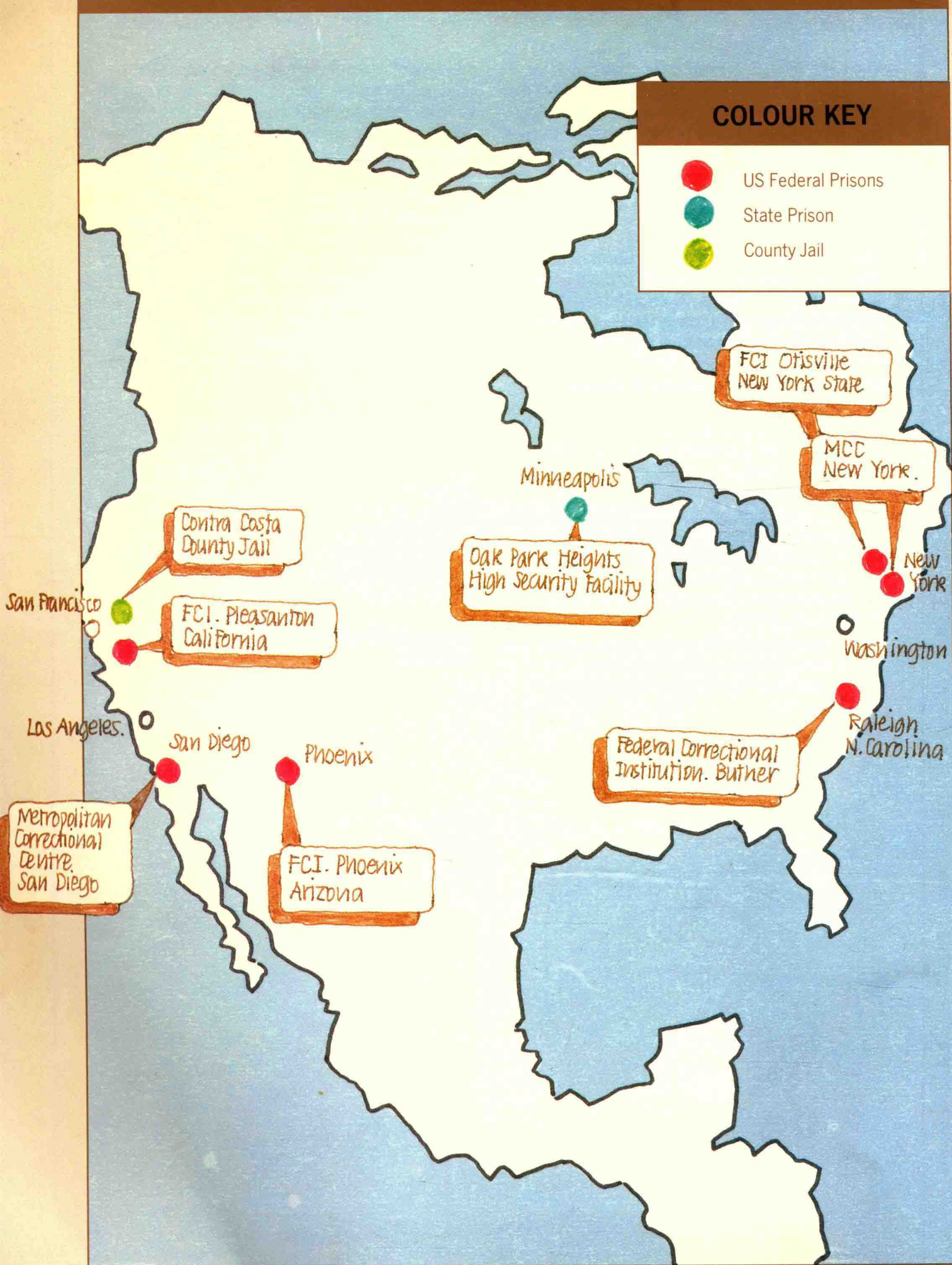
- (a) those housing pre-trial and short-term sentenced prisoners (roughly the equivalent of an English local prison): the Federal Metropolitan Correctional Centres in New York and San Diego, and the County Jail in Contra Costa, California.
- (b) medium to high security establishments (roughly the equivalent of English training and dispersal prisons); the Federal Correctional Institutions at Otisville, New York State; Butner, North Carolina; Pleasanton, California; and Phoenix, Arizona.
- (c) a maximum security prison (of which there is no direct English equivalent): the State Correctional Facility at Oak Park Heights, Minnesota.

All except Phoenix (which was due to open in Summer 1985) had been operating long enough to be tried and tested and for valid conclusions to be drawn from their experience. These prisons clearly represented the 'state of the art' in penal design and for that very reason we thought it appropriate to consider them in detail. They cannot, however, be regarded as representative of the whole range of existing prison provision in the USA. The majority of Federal, State and County facilities are operated in older buildings commonly based on large cell blocks containing internal cell ranges. Furthermore, while the unit management concept is now well established within the Federal system, elsewhere prisons and gaols are commonly operated on more traditional lines.

A list of the individuals with whom the Working Group has had discussions in the course of preparing this report is at Annex C. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance they have given us. In addition we should like to thank the US Federal Bureau of Prisons for their help in arranging our visits to their institutions and for permitting us to use some of their photographs and plans in this report.

The estimated cost of the preparation of this report is £35,000.

LOCATION OF THE EIGHT U.S. PRISONS



DESCRIPTION OF THE EIGHT U.S. PRISONS

SHORT STAY REMAND

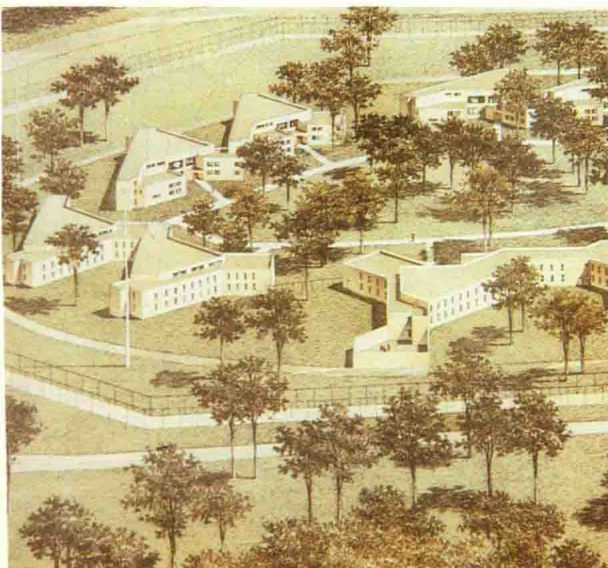
- 1 New York MCC
- 2 San Diego MCC
- 3 Contra Costa County Jail California

MEDIUM TO HIGH SECURITY FCI's

- 4 Otisville NY State
- 5 Butner N. Carolina
- 6 Pleasanton California
- 7 Phoenix Arizona

MAXIMUM SECURITY FACILITY

- 8 Oak Park Heights Minnesota State Correctional Facility



FCI Otisville, NY State

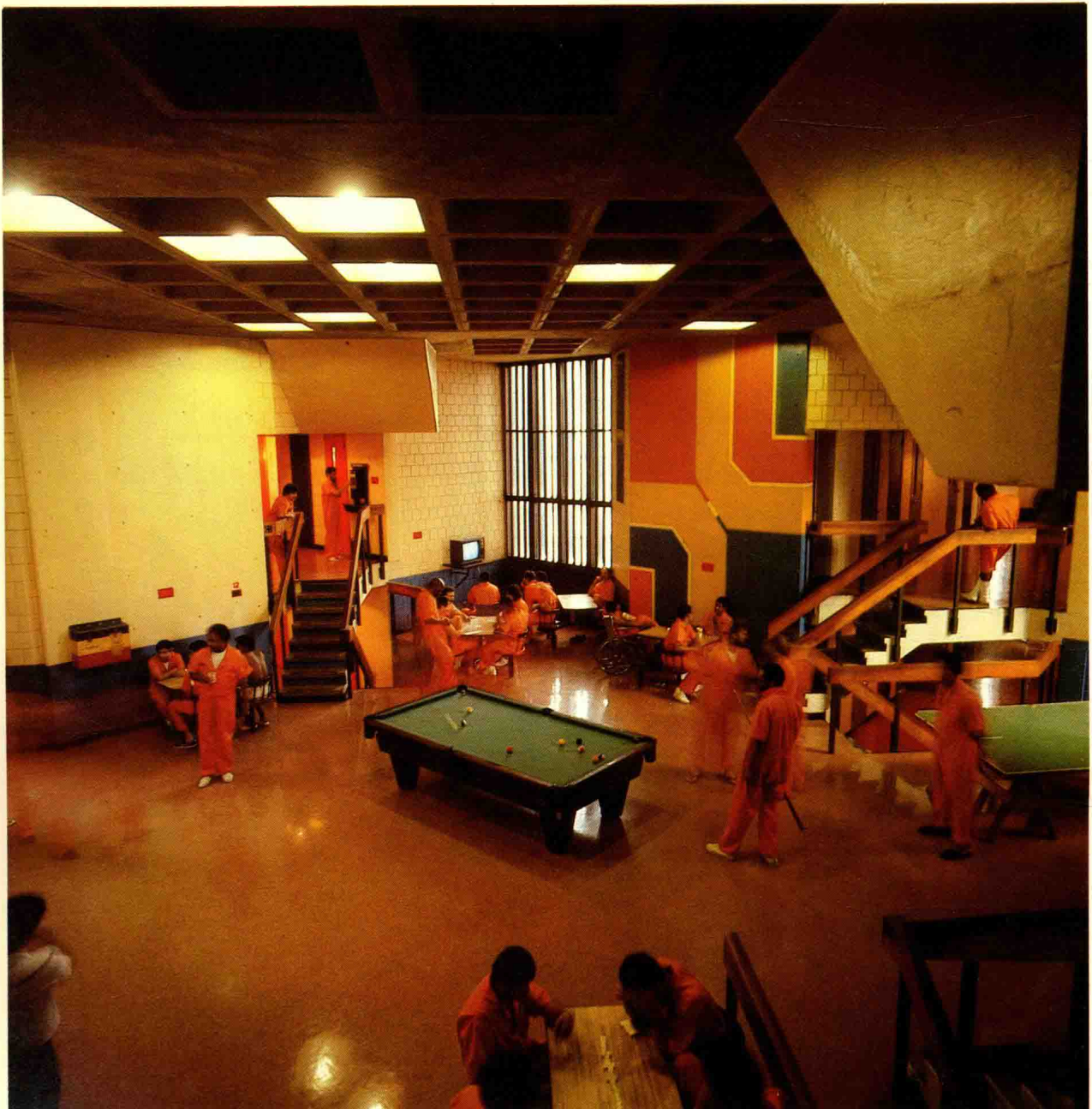


Oak Park Heights, Minnesota

METROPOLITAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE NEW YORK

Date Opened	1975
Type of Prison	Federal. Short stay
Security Level	Administrative Institution, low to high
Population	CNA 360 men, 47 women
October 1984	Actual 737 men, 93 women
	Average sentence: pre-trial 60 days sentenced 120 days
Staff	191. Correctional Officers 91.

STATISTICS



METROPOLITAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE NEW YORK

The Metropolitan Correctional Centre (MCC) – the darker building in the centre of the picture – lies on the edge of New York's Chinatown. It is a 12-storey building on a central city site with high-rise neighbours. This was the first high-rise Metropolitan Correctional Centre to be designed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.



It registers as a conventional piece of New York urban architecture without any of the imagery or symbolism of a prison.

Lying behind the MCC is the City Hall and on the left of the picture is the Municipal Courthouse, into which the MCC has a tunnel link.

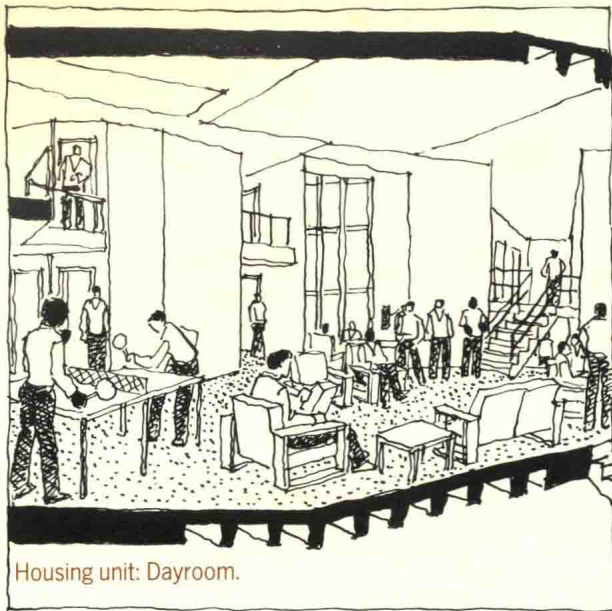


The MCC fronts a busy street with a conventional office-like entrance leading directly off the sidewalk – goods vehicles and deliveries are made via a rear basement entrance or as it is termed 'sallyport'.



METROPOLITAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE NEW YORK

The housing units are virtually self-contained, to keep inmate movement to a minimum and thereby facilitate control. The dayroom contains facilities for indoor recreation and dining. Meals are served from a central kitchen and heated on the unit by microwave ('satellite feeding'). There is sitting and television space in the dayroom together with a separate television room and telephone facilities for inmates.

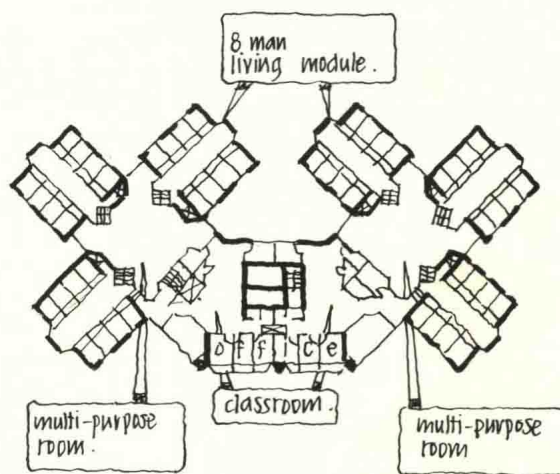


Housing unit: Dayroom.

The double-height ceiling makes the spatial quality of the room more acceptable and there are views from windows into the adjacent city streets. Following escape attempts since the facility was opened, additional security grilles have had to be fitted to the windows.



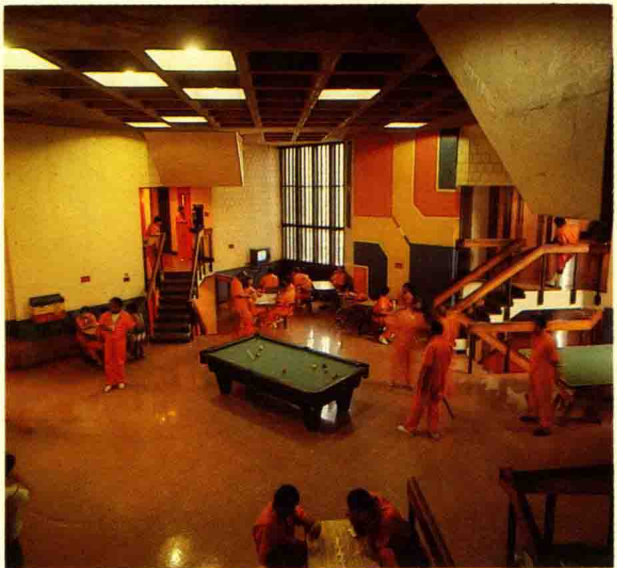
At each dayroom level there are two dedicated housing units which are separated by the central lift core. From three sides of the central dayroom in each housing unit half flight stairs lead up and down to two landings each with eight cells, making a total of 48 cells per housing unit.



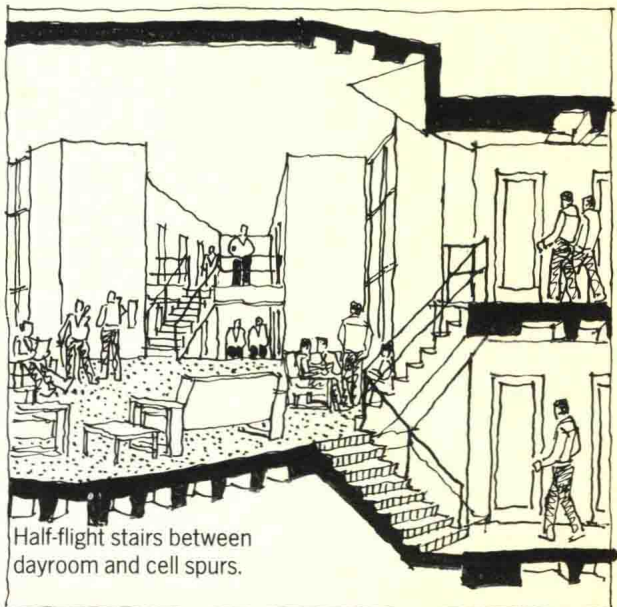
Typical floor plan. MCC New York.

METROPOLITAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE NEW YORK

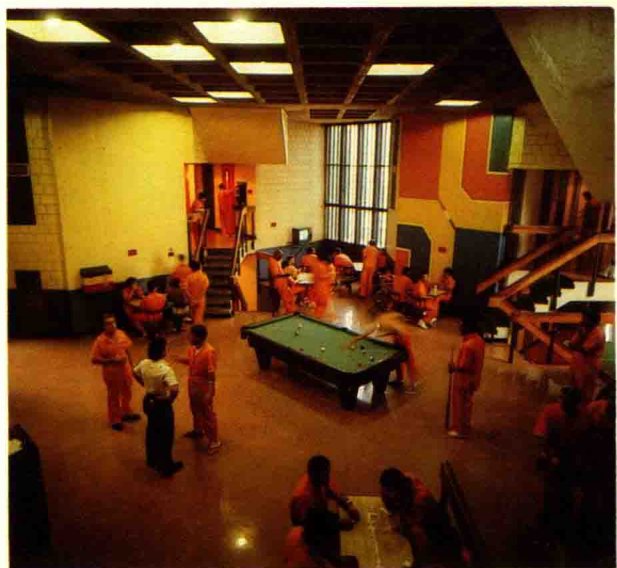
Inmates are assigned to 10 physically separated housing units, each containing around 96 people. The design capacity for a housing unit is 48 so most of the people in the MCC are double-bunked. The overcrowding has imposed some strain on the ancillary facilities of the MCC which were designed for a considerably smaller overall population than is currently accommodated.



The dayrooms are double volume spaces, the equivalent of two storeys in height from which half-flight stairs lead up and down to the landings giving access to the cells.



One correctional officer, with a body alarm, is assigned to each of the 10 housing units. A correctional officer is shown in the picture. The officer has a desk and chair, located on the floor of the dayroom.

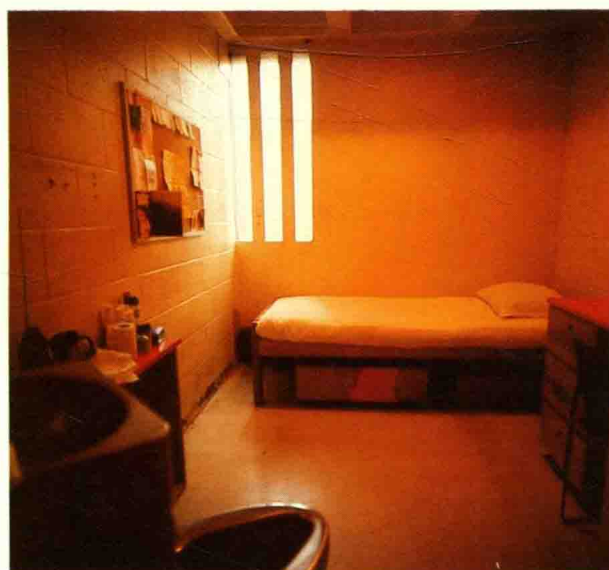


METROPOLITAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE NEW YORK

Cell corridors are short and wide and are thus easy to see down from the dayroom. There is a single shower cubicle for every 8 cells. There are no baths provided in the house-units. (For comparison, the equivalent standard in England and Wales would be for 1 bath and 3 showers per group of 18 cells).



Most of the cells are currently double bunked with earthenware sanitary fittings, unlike this cell which is in the detention/segregation unit. Cell floor areas are similar to the standard for single-cell accommodation with integral sanitation in England and Wales (around 6.8m²).



The sleeping accommodation in two of the housing modules is based on open dormitories rather than cells. These are unpopular with staff and inmates alike.

