

**The Prison Landscape:  
Redefining Built Form to Support Rehabilitation**

by

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## **Abstract**

Correctional institutions of the Canadian Correctional Services have been developed to maximize efficiency in security, control, circulation, cost, and use of resources. Often this utilitarian and functionalist approach fails to consider the human experience side of this landscape, and has negative effects on the stated goals of these facilities: rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation provides a platform for offenders to rebuild essential life skills and self-sufficiency to successfully reintegrate with society. With declining crime rates, increasing prison populations and high recidivism rates, it suggests that perhaps the current model is an easy, but not effective response to crime.

Through analyzing Cowansville Institution, a medium-security federal facility, near Montreal, Canada, this thesis aims to develop a set of design guidelines for updating the existing prison landscape to better meet the goals of rehabilitation through methods of normative design and encouraging relationships within and beyond the walls, while maintaining user safety.



## Acknowledgements

Finishing this thesis during COVID Quarantine almost felt like a strange experiment, experiencing isolation while thinking about incarceration. I'd like to start by thanking my "solitary confinement" team.

Steve, thank you for your constant encouragement and unique perspectives with both of us walking blindly into the topic of prisons.

Adelina, your expertise in criminology and specifically the major health and accessibility issues experienced in CSC was a constant reminder of how important it is to tackle this issue. Especially in understanding how different disciplines need to work together to come to a solution.

To Cameron from the Canadian Penitentiary Museum, for all your help tracking down resources within a very secure field. I know who to call if I ever want to plan a prison break.

Thank you to my architecture families along the way, it is inspiring to have got to work alongside so many unique and impressive individuals. Special thanks to Jamie Leer and Laura Keays for help in the final thesis stretch.

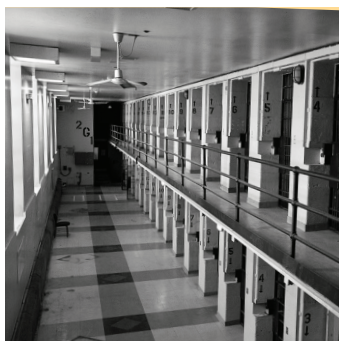
To my virtual office members, Willow, Justin, Karen, and Meghan, I don't think I would have been able to finish this in quarantine without you. To my friends outside of architecture, thanks for getting excited about my world despite not fully understanding it.

And finally thank you to my amazing real family for not only being a constant stream of support, but for putting up with my thesis mess taking over our entire dining room during lockdown.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### A Silent Topic

The general “out of sight, out of mind” approach to our incarcerated population makes it easy to ignore the system’s variety of issues. If someone has committed a crime, we seek justice; we hope they learn their lesson. Using a holding cell to soothe or satisfy our need for justice lets society feel safe during the sentence. It is a short-term fix when the focus should be preparing for the inevitable release, and the long-term issues require more attention. From available stats, Canadian crime rates hit a 45-year all-time low, but our population in mass incarceration has hit an all-time high (Statistics Canada 2018). Although we expect criminals to learn their lesson, the need for retribution relies on outdated infrastructure that arguably does not support, if not acts against, any form of healing.



The cellblock of Canada’s first prison, Kingston Penitentiary, that operated from 1834-2013. (Hagberg 2016)

The combination of using prison as a response to a vast collection of offences, the hesitancy to use alternative options to incarceration and the high recidivism rate in Canada has caused a strain on our system. Some abolitionists argue we should get rid of prisons altogether. Of the many proposals of alternative means to incarceration, 69% were in favour of expanding alternatives to nonviolent criminals, and only 25% believed that keeping criminals behind bars saves money in the long term. An American public opinion survey in 2012 showed that many people had lost faith in several of the mass incarceration policies (Public Opinion Strategies and Mellman Group 2012). However, knowing that prison is not going to disappear overnight, there needs to be a solution in the meantime that makes our correctional services better. It would require a combination of disciplines



Residence hallway in Halden Prison in Norway. (HLM Arkitektur 2010)

to develop a holistic reform of the system. Change cannot rely on architectural interventions alone, but this thesis explores opportunities for architecture to encourage or support a more successful carceral environment. At best, it can provide a space that supports the rehabilitation process and offer a humane environment for staff and inmates to live and work.

### Using Architecture to Start a Conversation

The Government of Canada identifies that certain factors are associated with risk of re-offending, these include anti-social attitudes, family/marital issues, education/employment struggles, financial hardships, lack of pro-social leisure activities or substance abuse (Hanson 2009). It's important to understand while addressing these issues that each individual is unique, and requires slightly different attention. These factors show that criminal activity is often rooted to poor support whether that be social, financial, mental, etc., and less about criminals being inherently bad or evil. →So, is punishment the answer? If the infrastructure isn't to punish but support, what does that look like?



The relationship of human to built form, power and time in the standard model with strict methods of discipline and punishment.

By looking at a typical medium security federal facility, such as Cowansville Institution in Quebec, the infrastructure can be analyzed as a microcosm of the whole, and design guidelines can be developed to encourage socialization, autonomy, and general wellbeing while maintaining a certain level of security to keep all users safe.

Chapter 2 takes looks at key influential points of the past, present and potential future of incarceration that have or can shape the Canadian Correctional Services. The European and American models set precedent for the Canadian decisions over the years, from a philosophy of punishment to rehabilitation. The four eras of Canada's history of incarceration is outlined and holds it in contrast to progressive models that have developed elsewhere.

Chapter 3 looks more closely at the components of a carceral landscape on an individual site scale. What defines a prison what is rehabilitation, and how can the former be redefined to better support the latter? This generic overview can provide an outline for the methodology.

Chapter 4 shows how the design principles can be applied directly to an example site, Cowansville Institution. It alters the existing infrastructure to improve social connection, developing skills of autonomy and incorporating normative design to improve well-being moving from the urban scale, to site, building, room and detail scale.

## Chapter 2: Rehabilitation in Incarceration

### Current State of the Carceral Landscape

There is nothing in Canadian Law that says a prison environment can be different in any way from the average living environment outside of prison. The punishment is to come from being removed from society, not from living in an austere environment. In fact, one could argue that given current Canadian Law, the prison system is on the brink of breaking the law, because conditions inside many prisons certainly do not mirror average conditions outside prisons: they are much lower. (Plecas 1986, 4)

### Goals of the Correctional Services Canada

The Correctional Services Canada (CSC) mandate states they intend on meeting or exceeding the following standards:

- protect the community;
- provide opportunities and direction to help offenders prepare for their return as useful citizens to the community;
- provide safe and humane treatment for inmates until their legal release, to affirm the dignities and rights of individuals;
- provide an environment where staff, visitors, and inmates are free of psychological or physical abuse;
- foster healthy relationships among staff and inmates;
- offer inmates an appropriate level of mental, medical and dental care;
- expeditiously process all persons throughout the system and ensure prompt, lawful admission and discharge;
- create an aware and supportive public;



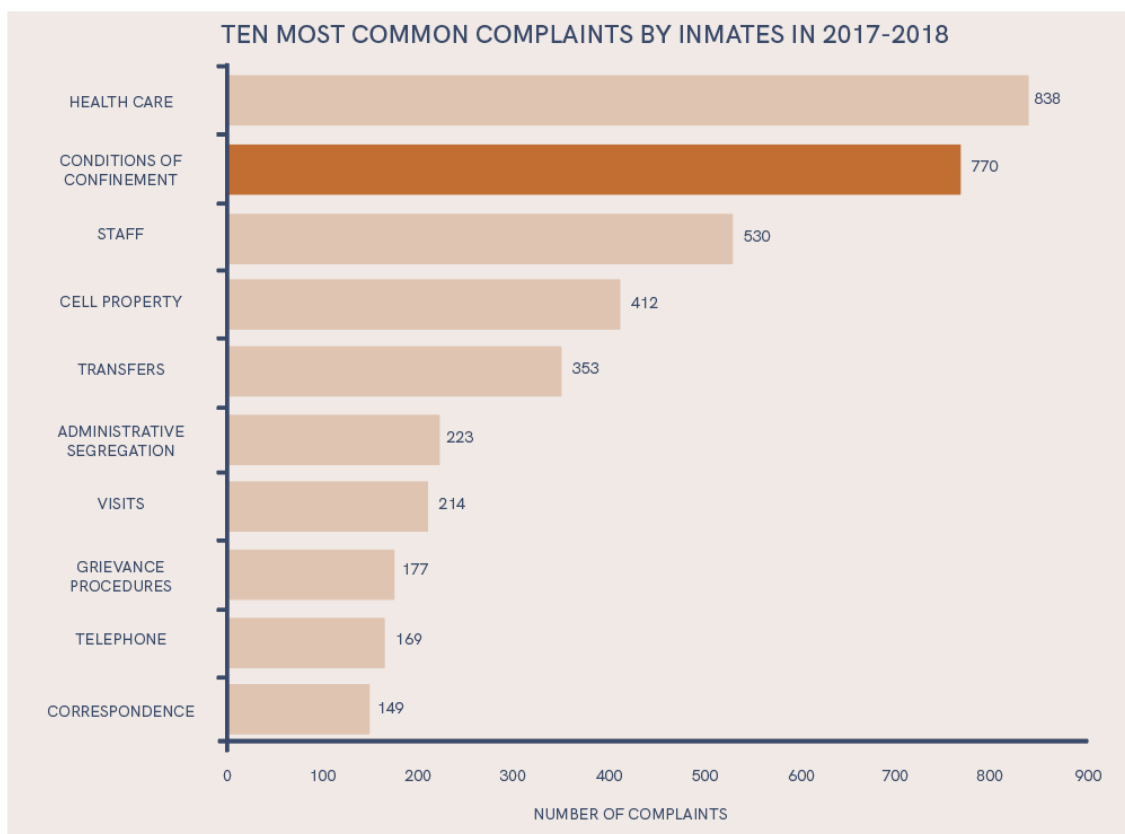
Medium Security prison at Collins Bay Institution. (Hagberg 2016)

- contribute to the further development of a just, effective and human Criminal Justice System;
- do the above as effectively as possible

The above mandate implies good intention, and on paper suggests an environment of rehabilitation. However, in practice, many factors get in the way of the successful practice of these goals. The architecture of our prisons should reflect our attitude towards crime and punishment.

### Issues within Canadian Correctional Services

In the 2018 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview, the second most received complaint was about conditions of confinement, right after access to health care

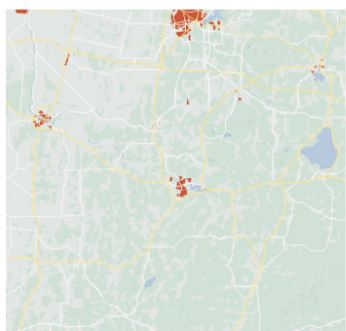


Inmate complaints tell a lot about the faults in the system; reduced access to health care and improper living conditions should be a serious red flags for a government run program (data from Public Opinion Strategies and Mellman Group 2018)

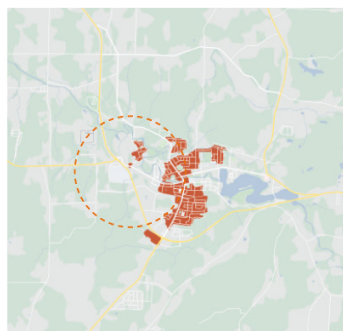
(Public Safety Canada 2018). In many ways, updated infrastructure would not only directly respond to the complaints about conditions but could mitigate some of the other complaints.

### ***Isolation***

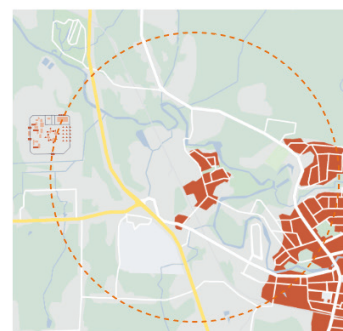
The location of institutions is generally remote, with one central access point and is setback more than 1000 feet from the main road (Krasnow 1998). The isolation adds a layer of security, and because the institutions' layouts require a substantial amount of space, but dramatically reduces access to the community, including visitor and staff commute times, and access to various legal or emergency services. In renovating existing facilities, little can be done about their established locations, so the focus is instead on connecting the site to the community through new integrated infrastructure, destination programming, and new lines of communication.



isolated city



isolated from city



isolated in landscape

The location of Cowansville Institution is typical of medium-security prisons in that it is affiliated with; but on the outskirts of, a small remote town. (Base map from Google Maps)

### ***Punitive Practices***

It is common for guards to respond to misconduct through punitive practices rather than incentive-based ones. Arbitrary lockdowns, removal of privileges, and access to





Isolation on a different scale.

“How inmates are treated while incarcerated has a lot to do with how they will treat others after they are released. If you give them real opportunities to increase their education and to grow emotionally and spiritually, they stand a much better chance of thriving in society” (Krueger 2018)

services are common ways to punish prisoners who act out of line. Administrative segregation is used to deal with overcrowding or with behaviour that the staff is not equipped to deal with, including mental illness or physical disability behaviour. Staff training is an administrative matter, but architectural interventions can help redefine the spaces in which prisoners are confined. In December 2019, Bill C-83 passed to replace solitary confinement with newly coined structured intervention units (SIUs) (Casavant and Charron-Tousignant 2019). It is a step toward recognizing the inhumane practice of solitary confinement, but the practice of forced isolation seems to be an avoidance tactic for addressing real issues.

### ***Institutional Approach***

The Canadian Correctional Services is a vast network, with many institutions to consider, with many individuals housed in each one. The implementation of security, control, and structured programming builds a life that does not reflect life on the outside. Getting told what to do when and how to do it strips prisoners of self-identity and autonomy. In many cases, especially in higher securities, daily tasks are dealt with at an institutional level such as cooking, cleaning, scheduling, and time management. The programming offers limited opportunity for customization, and some individuals spend so long in this format that they forget how to function outside the prison environment. The implementation of normative design methods reintroduces familiar practices both in built form and overall site use. It promotes more social interaction and access to resources for growth while maintaining security through enhancing surveillance methods and transparency.



### ***Overcrowding***

Millhaven Penitentiary was initially proposed to replace Canada's first prison constructed in 1834, Kingston Penitentiary. When Millhaven opened in 1971, Kingston did not close for another 42 years. When it finally shut its doors, the transfer of prisoners caused a dangerous overcrowding situation that was supposed to be temporary. However, seven years later, 60% of rooms were still double-bunked. This is an extreme example of overcrowding, and the Canadian Correctional Services released a report showing the decline in double-bunking rates, from 20% in 2012-13 to only 5% of prisoners double-bunked in 2017-2018 (Government of Canada 2018). With the new SIU model, some prisoner advocates worry about the housing of prisoners who are a risk to themselves or others as well as the potential spike in double-bunking. This example shows the hesitancy for CCS to close facilities when a new facility opens.

Even without double-bunking, older facilities typically have a high capacity in the cell blocks. Overcrowding in prisons has been linked to higher rates of violence and increased levels of misconduct (Bureau of Prisons, 2012). Higher populations result in waitlists for vocational and educational opportunities, support programming, health care, and skews the prisoner-to-staff ratios. The staff are put at higher risk with larger crowds and can cause job stress, burnout and decreased job satisfaction. Burnout leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of ineffectiveness, which directly relates to the way they interact with prisoners (Keinan & Malach-Pines 2007). Providing a platform that allows staff to be more involved with prisoners on a personal level empowers them to embrace more substantial roles as human service workers and proactively reduces violence.

### ***Outdated and Cold Environments***

Between 1995 and 2005, the CSC built five institutions for women and four federal run Healing Lodge, but have built no new federal facilities for men in over 30 years. Although they receive maintenance, and some have had renovations, there are still many facilities that could use a progressive renovation. Typically institutions are built, finished and furnished with durable materials for longevity and security reasons. The material palette of bare, reinforced concrete walls, tile or linoleum flooring, and metal used for doors, gates, and furniture create a cold, harsh environment. The combination of open-concept spaces and the hard materiality causes issues with acoustics and privacy. Many new or updated institutions implement direct security measures, of staff co-existing with inmates, rather than the traditional indirect surveillance that keeps the user groups separated. Implementing this method needs to be paired with the breakdown of power within the existing social hierarchy and oppressive environment as it is based on trust and comfort between guard and prisoner.

### ***Mental and Physical Health***

The Correctional Services Canada is responsible for providing roughly 15,000 federal prisoners with “essential health care” that “conform(s) to professionally accepted standards,” according to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (Government of Canada 1992). However, access and quality varies throughout the entire system and do not measure up to the standard set for the public (Miller 2013, 249). The environmental conditions and burdens of prison have negative effects

### ***Population Census***

According to the 2018 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview, 25% of the in-custody offender population is 50 or older. 50 is used as the age of seniority because Correctional Service Canada established that the health problems of an incarcerated offender are equivalent to someone 15 years older within the public realm (Correctional Services Canada 2018). The older population has more health care and accessibility considerations that are not always met. The way the mind and body changes with age, the risk of re-offending lowers as prisoners enter the later stages of life. Long sentences and the constant threat of extending the sentence make it hard to stay hopeful, and therefore the drive to make life changes diminishes. However, as an architectural response, comfort, service proximity and considering modes of travel within the landscape can help some of the issues faced by older offenders.

### **Role of Architecture**

The risk of re-offending is high when the programming is ineffective in preparing prisoners for release, and cultivating someone to get trapped in the system becomes extremely costly. The average annual prisoner expenditures for federal correctional services in Canada amounted to \$116,473 in the 2016-2017 year, the higher the security level, the more expensive the prisoner (Fransson, Giofrè, and Johnsen 2018). This average is more than it would cost to send someone to a top-flight university to fulfill a degree. Mass incarceration is a significant expenditure. Rather than trying to alter the programming to improve its success rate and re-evaluate opportunities in parole, the CSC makes budget cuts

in other areas. Cost-saving efforts include hiring freezes, staff cuts, reducing staff pay or benefits, reducing prisoner programs, closing facilities, removing expansion plans, and double-bunking rooms – all aspects that make facilities worse for the users. By exploring the main problems with carceral environments and understanding the components of rehabilitation through an architectural lens, the hope is to redefine the narrative for the incarcerated population.

A recent study by Mary Colavita, a practicing psychiatrist in an American facility, listed two theories about how behaviour can be directly responsive to someone's environment. Firstly, there is deprivation theory; this is the idea that when a prisoner experiences a restrictive environment, particular basic needs may go unsatisfied, and they may adapt to the situation by satisfying needs via maladaptive behaviours. Secondly, situational theory states that architectural and social determinants can impact one's perception of one's experience (safety, available resources, relationships) and the likelihood of engaging in violence (Colavita 2018).

The project is about ensuring access to basic needs, including standard practices of design that support wellbeing, and provide a space that supports informal socialization and surveillance. Many of the proposed solutions involve a discursive practice of place. Some of the design moves seem apparent or overly familiar, but that makes a point to how neglected the carceral landscape is. Analyzing the living conditions through an architectural lens triggers many red flags of human habitation, and shift often mimics that of communal living or campus dwelling.

## **Role of Users**

Pure functionalism and the visual statement of intimidation have driven the design of correctional facilities, which thinks of the users as mere cogs in an efficient machine rather than as people experiencing a space. Beginning to reshape the narrative must consider the user's interaction with each other and their interactions with space. The roles have been defined in three ways, first with a generic label, secondly concerning Michel Foucault's idea of human power dynamics (Foucault 1975) and finally concerning the Space Syntax model, which defines their relationship to space (Hanson and Hillier 1984).

### ***The Public / Standard / Strangers***

These users are considered the baseline where the other groups are drawn. The public exists in the outside world, and unless directly related by a friend or family member behind bars, it is often unaware of the specifics of the judicial system. On occasion, they can enter the borders of an institution as a visitor to a prisoner, but they can only occupy the site very shallowly. Maintaining relationships through community engagement can reduce public anxiety and misconception to prisoner threat, encourage prisoner participation in programming and alleviate the ostracized sense that prisoners feel about release. The design of the spaces accessible to the public, especially the main visitation space, should consider the variety of visitors in age, gender and relationship type infiltrating an otherwise male-dominated territory.

***The Professionals / Gauge / Secondary Inhabitants***

This user group structures and gauges modern life through the lens of Human Sciences, as defined by Foucault (1975). Those who work in psychiatry, criminology, sociology, psychology, and medicine act together to create a regime of power and describe human behaviour in terms of norms. Not only are they the ones that ultimately decide who a criminal is, but they are huge players in the healing process. Providing ample comfortable, safe spaces for accessing physical and mental health services, addiction recovery services, financial and legal help, and social work services is crucial for the rehabilitative process.

In the current structure of operation, they have limited control over their movement through the carceral landscape and are not always readily available to inmates.

***The Guards / Equalizers / Primary Inhabitants***

Utilizing the infrastructure, this group uses surveillance and control to have enforced the regulations and daily structure within the carceral landscape. Ultimately, these staff members respond situations with force and authority. Through the 18-21 week training, correctional officers learn about law and policy, use of firearms, chemical and inflammatory agents, fire safety, self defense and arrest techniques, use of batons as a defensive technique, suicide prevention and methods of intervention as outlined in the CSC Hiring Process (CSC 2019). The focus of the training is in physical and weaponized responses. Although safety is a number one concern when working with a group of people that can be considered dangerous, there seems to be a misalignment in the training in areas that can positively affect the trajectory of prisoner rehabilitation. Offenders have a

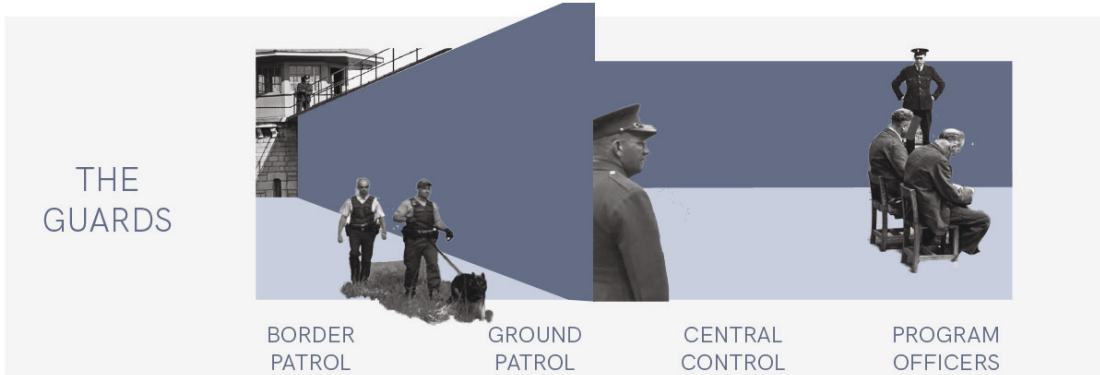
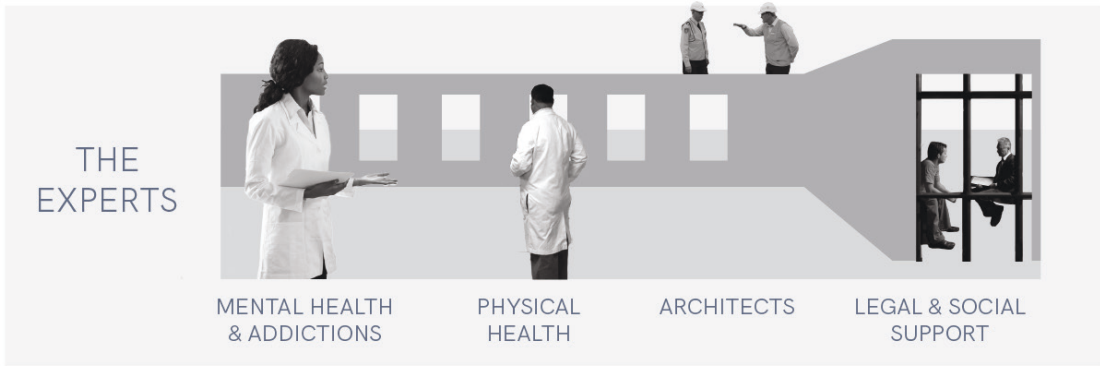
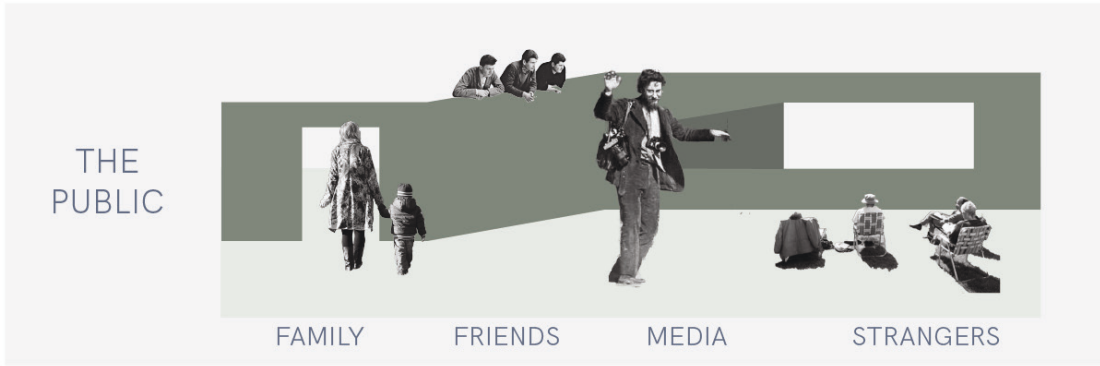
complicated collection characteristics, which often includes struggles with mental or physical health and drug abuse. Force or punishment shouldn't be the automatic response to all situations. Even without internal ghosts, does a human really deserve to be corraled with brawn?

The safer the built infrastructure is, the more comfortable and conducive it is for building informal relationships, the more correctional officers can feel involved in the process. Not to say the infrastructure alone can change the dynamic, the training needs to shift as well to help break down the hierarchy. Guards have overall control of their own and the other users' movement through the carceral landscape. In the ideal scenario, the Experts would either become the prominent group to associate with inmates or the two groups would merge to be one, in the sense that guards should be trained in psychiatry, criminology, sociology, psychology, and medicine to appropriately respond on a compassionate level, rather than an assertive one.

### ***The Inmate / Variance / Visitors***

The most critical group in this thesis are those who stray from the decided societal norm. They are sentenced to correctional services to keep the rest of the community safe and ultimately for the individual to be corrected. The isolation physically and mentally of criminals has allowed society to feel disconnected from the carceral population and with that lack necessary concern with the issues posed by carceral conditions. The rehabilitation process is hindered by that dissociation.

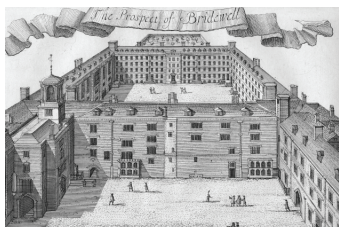
These users experience the most restriction and control, and experience the lifestyle most unfamiliar. They have less independence, less privacy and often a loss of identity.



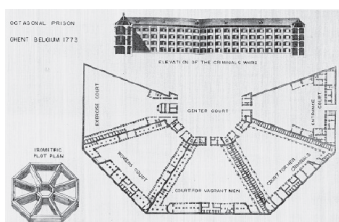
Within each category, there are subcategories of users that have their own needs and expectations when interacting with other users and the environment.



With living among other criminals, there is a pressure to showcase a particular personality, the pressure to embrace criminal values, and with that often experience threats to personal safety. Ties from the outside are strained as contact with friends and family is significantly reduced. The structured schedule and constant security mean that they are continually being watched, evaluated and thinking about how their actions affect their release. There are many triggers of frustration, anxiety, and stress with minimal choice in being able to escape (Johnson, 1987).



Bridewell Palace in London was converted into a prison and hospital (Strype, 1720)



Maison de Force, plan of completed construction compared to projected axonometric (Middleton, 1993)

In addition to feeling pressure to act a certain way and undergo certain stressors during the sentence, Foucault believes that there is another level to the criminal – a Deviant, a term that describes someone permanently stuck with below the norm standards as a result of being put through the carceral system. Serving time for extended periods causes individuals to become institutionalized and face many difficulties upon release. Recidivism is difficult to calculate in Canada with the different tiers of governance and the inconsistencies with definitions of the word. It ranges from 14% to 57%, in one report from CSC, depending on the conditions (CSC 2003). Regardless, the potential to re-offend is high and the problem might not be the offenders, but the faulty support system provided.

## Past Influences

### A Short History of Discipline and Punishment

The Canadian carceral landscape is defined by a previously evolving model, starting in Europe with America taking the lead in the 19th Century. Public demand dictated a new form or philosophy requesting for more humane conditions,

often provoked by the publication of a written document that revealed the state of prisons.

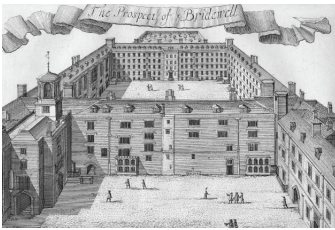
### ***Capital Punishment***



A prisoner on display in town square pillory. (Armytage, n.d.)

Before using buildings for long term captivity, corporal and capital punishment were inflicted on public display. Physical harm was an efficient and inexpensive method of punishment, partially to bring justice to the crime committed but also to keep society in line by deterring the audience from disobeying the order of power. It was a single event that involved all user groups at once. The decision was dictated by the power, distributed by the equalizer (either an executioner or torturer), witnessed by the public and experienced by the criminal.

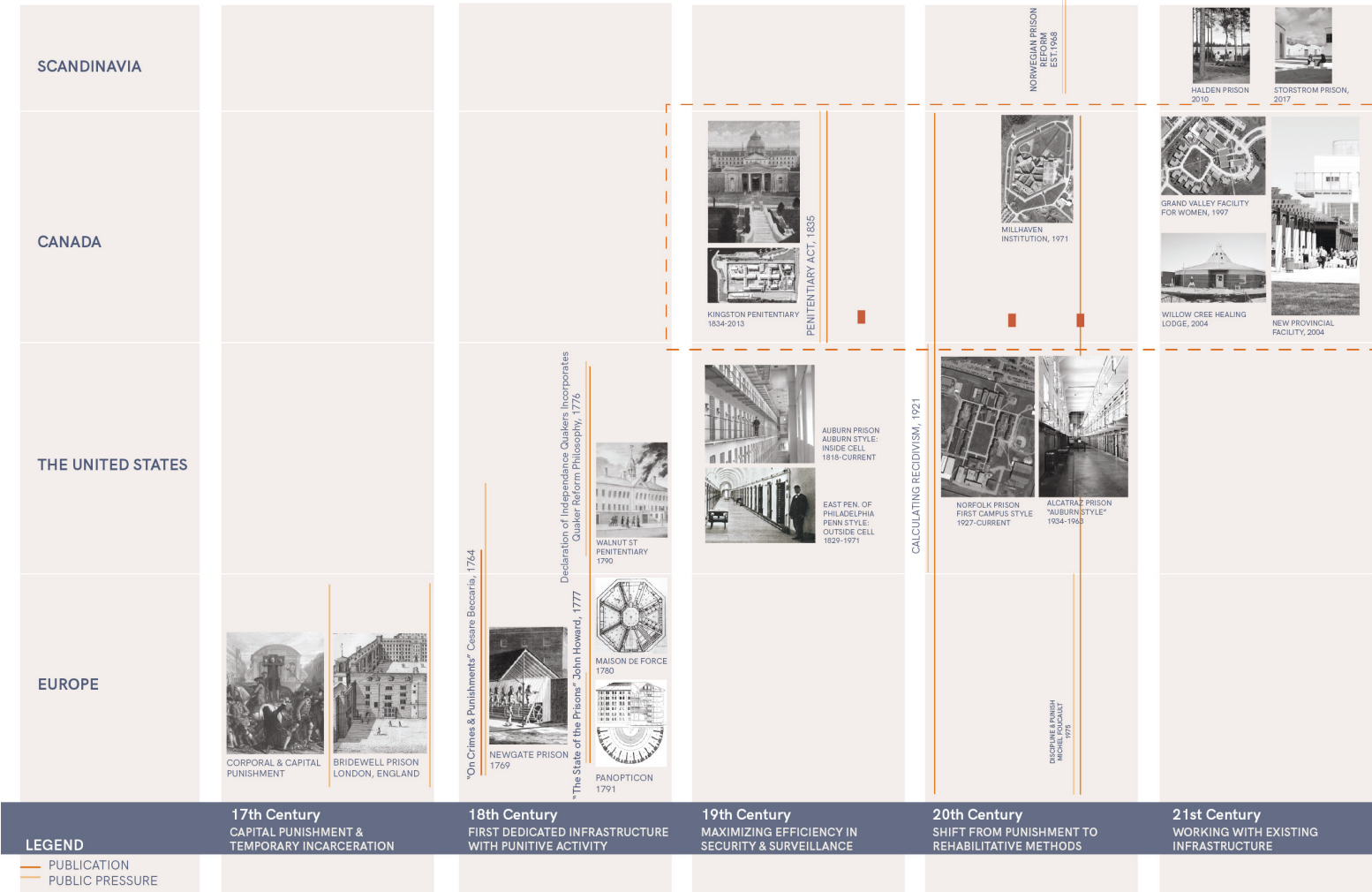
### ***Early European Influences***



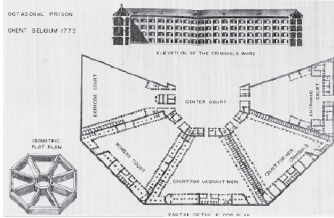
Bridewell Palace in London was converted into a prison and hospital (Strype, 1720)

Before specific buildings for incarceration, people were held captive in large, single rooms of existing buildings regardless of age, gender, or health condition. They were first held before their public trial and eventually kept long term as punishment itself. Cesare Beccaria released *On Crimes and Punishments* in 1764, advocating for a reform of the criminal law system and became the founding work in the field of penology (Markus 1993). The demand for separate infrastructure resulted in the first form. The courtyard model had individual cells that looked onto a central courtyard, housing an altar, to remind prisoners that their sins were always under God's scrutiny.

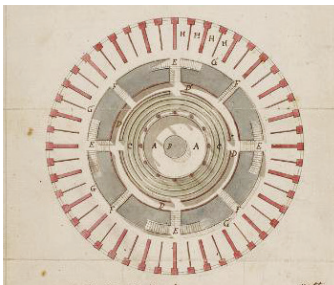
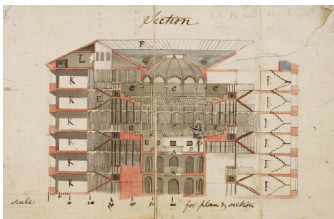
"The State of Prisons" was published in 1777 by John Howard, having visited several hundred prisons in Europe, making the public aware of overcrowding and obsolete conditions in the physical facilities. The Maison de Force in



Through the history of incarceration there has been a reformation of carceral environments usually provoked by publications revealing inhumane conditions and followed by public pressure to improve.



Maison de Force, plan of completed construction compared to projected axonometric (Middleton, 1993)



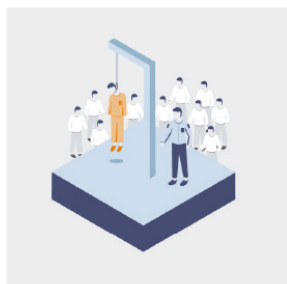
Willey Reveley's drawings based on Bentham's Panopticon theory (Furlong 2015)

Ghent Belgium, completed in 1780, was the first facility built to adopt characteristics similar to present-day models in terms of surveillance, circulation, cellblock design, prisoner categorization and hard labour relegated to residents as a form of punishment (di Gennaro 1975). The courtyard model evolved; its inward-facing design used the exterior walls of the building as its means of security. However, as more programming and, therefore, site circulation was introduced, exterior walls were built around the perimeter of the site.

The Panopticon is a well-known model in the architecture world that proposed the highest level of efficiency by providing a space where one guard could observe all prisoners at the same time; the eye of the unknown. It was a concept developed by philosopher and theorist Jeremy Bentham. He believed prisoners would regulate their behaviour since they could not tell when they were being watched, and therefore, they were motivated to act as if watched at all times. The literal design of this was rarely actualized and was unsuccessful if it was as it was impossible to operate with so few staff members and no sorting of prisoners. Although the model failed as a whole, the ideas of surveillance influenced later models (Markus 1993).

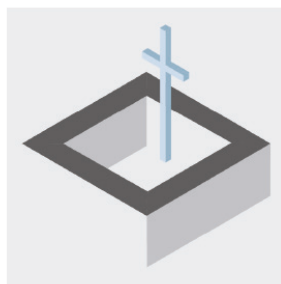
### ***American Influence***

The late 18th Century was when America took the lead in developing the prison model. Dr. Benjamin Rusk, a leader in American Enlightenment, and the Quakers were foundations for a correctional reform movement that preached rehabilitation. They advocated for increased education and work opportunities, less violence, and improved prison conditions. However, with the preached philosophy came



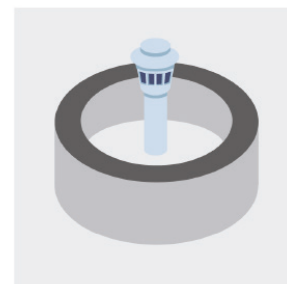
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

**Punishment:** Physical harm and public shame  
**Discipline:** deterrence through fear of harm  
**Efficiency:** one off response to crime, visible to the public



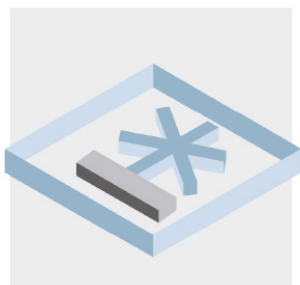
COURTYARD MODEL

**Punishment:** deprivation of liberty, individual isolation, poor living conditions  
**Discipline:** Reminder of religious standards  
**Efficiency:** “more humane” response over torture



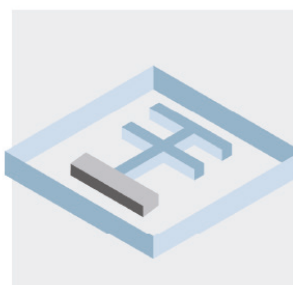
PANOPTICON

**Punishment:** deprivation of liberty, individual isolation, poor living conditions  
**Discipline:** permanent unverified visibility  
**Efficiency:** more prisoners, less staff required



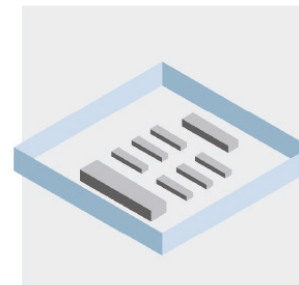
RADIAL MODEL

**Punishment:** deprivation of liberty, relationship of users controlled  
**Discipline:** technical transformation of individuals through labour and calculation against the norm, regulation of time  
**Efficiency:** prisoners sorted by security need, workshop and hospital work in favour of institution



TELEPHONE POLE

**Punishment:** deprivation of liberty, relationship of users controlled  
**Discipline:** technical transformation of individuals through labour and calculation against the norm, regulation of time  
**Efficiency:** prisoners sorted by security need, workshop and hospital work in favour of institution



CAMPUS MODEL

**Punishment:** deprivation of liberty, individual isolation, poor living conditions  
**Discipline:** intention of catered rehabilitation, regulation of time and life, individual goals set (rather than calculated norm)  
**Efficiency:** Strength of border allows for more lenient security, skills built lower recidivism

Basic evolution of prison building type keeping up with expectations of punishment, discipline and efficiency. The blue highlights the main function of security.

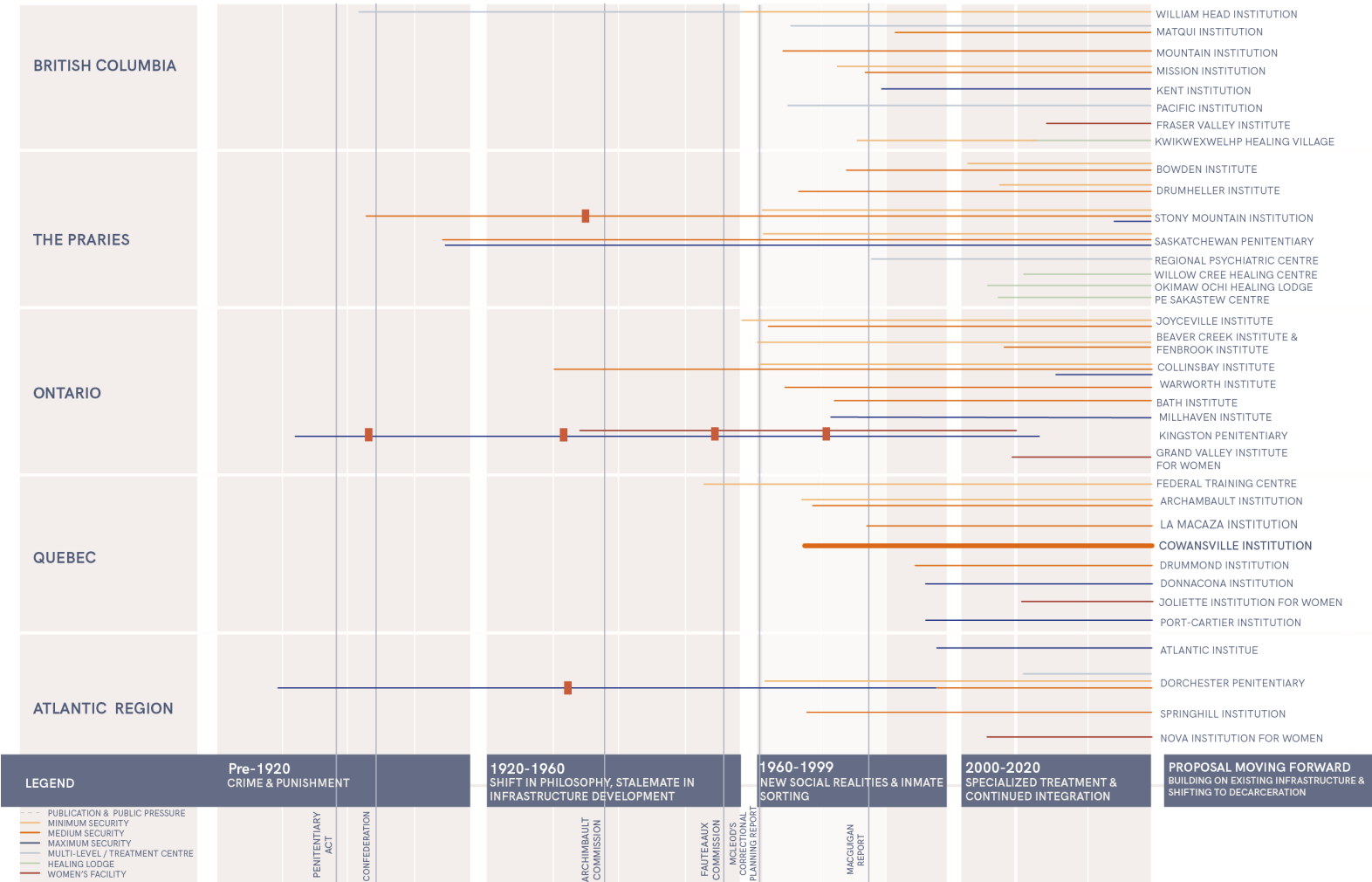


minimal design direction, which resulted in problems of crowding, illness and political influences. Regardless, their idea of prison as a workhouse for reform rather than just incarceration – the Penitentiary - was included in the Declaration of Independence and adapted from there on (di Gennaro 1975).

The Radial model and the telephone model were examples of widely used prototypes that were influenced by the new penitentiary idea. There were competing interior layouts for this combination. The Pennsylvania model originated the “outside cell” versus the Auburn or Sing Sing Model with the “inside cell.” The former model, adopted mostly in Europe, kept prisoners in solitary confinement all hours of the day – work was completed in their cell, and each supplied with their own small exercise yard and a window that faced the outside. The latter had solitary confinement at night, with prisoners marched to meal halls or workshops on fixed schedules throughout the day, with activities done in complete silence. Auburn was the more attractive model to the USA because the construction was cheaper, and the workshops were more productive than individual work – which meant the facilities could churn out a profit (di Gennaro 1975).

### **The Evolution of the Canadian Carceral Landscape**

The history of Canada’s correctional system can be broken down into four eras of evolution, each influenced by world events, inmate or public outrage and changing penal philosophies.



A majority of facilities operating in Canada today were built within a 15 year time period. Most are medium or mixed security facilities (data from Correctional Services Canada, 2020).

### ***Crime and Punishment (pre 1920)***

The first prison, Kingston Penitentiary was built and operating in 1834 under British and French colonial settlement before Canada was officially a country and is a facility that has been pivotal in the evolving practice of Canadian incarceration. Based on the evolved model inspired by the Quaker's, the idea that an offender could be "penitent" with forced labour, confinement at night and silence at all times. Several similar fortress-style, maximum security facilities were built across the country, some of them still operating today. When Henry Smith, the warden of Kingston Penitentiary, was fired, an investigation opened into the state of prisons (Correctional Services Canada 2018).

### ***Shift in Philosophy, Stalemate in Infrastructure Development (1920-1960)***

The Great Depression led to a rise in crime and pushed the capacity on these fortress style penitentiaries. Through the 1930s, several riots broke out, which drew public attention to the deteriorating conditions. The Archambault Commission developed the first report to emphasize crime prevention and offender rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the momentum from this report came to a halt with the outbreak of World War II. Offenders were sent off to serve, and the prison workforce shifted their production to support the forces. Crime rates spiked again following the war, rebuilding on the previous strain. A significant riot at Kingston broke out in 1954 and drew attention again to poor conditions. The government investigate the system, and through the Fauteux Commission, they decided it was time to create a new type of facility with integrated programming that targeted the reshaping of behaviour, attitudes and habits of prisoners. A new mix of specialized professionals was added to the





kp cell interior



"inside cell" corridor



morning routine



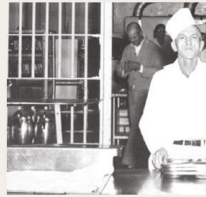
kingston pen control tower



experience of kp from the outside



walking the cellblock streets



collecting lunch from the kitchen



lunch time



border security



new arrivals



lined up for lunch



class time



free time in the rec yard



socializing in free time



entrance to the site

The fortress style prisons in Canada during the first two eras were under strict rule, with forced labour and enforced silence. The prisoner felt the weight of incarceration and isolation.

rehabilitation model, including psychiatry, social work, and psychology. At the end of this era, ten new penitentiaries across the country were commissioned.

### ***New Social Realities (1960-1999)***

With this new approach to rehabilitation, reintegration became another keyword in the judicial circuit. Collins Bay Institution introduced the first gradual release program, which allowed prisoners to work outside the institution in the day and return in the evenings. Resources were being directed towards the new facilities and introducing programming; the old facilities were feeling neglected. Another riot at Kingston Penitentiary in 1971 again started a conversation in the public and profession about offender rights. This discussion introduced offender classification and facility security distinctions to create a tiered system for environments to suit the seriousness of offences better. Women's needs and issues such as mental illness and substance abuse began to be addressed.

This time frame also saw many support organizations turn their attention to supporting ex-convicts. The Salvation Army and the Catholic church were the first to offer refuge, and through the 1960s and 1970s, many halfway houses opened. The support after the sentence became a staple for reintegration, understanding that providing a comfortable transition reduced the risk of re-offending.

### ***Specialized Treatment and Continued Integration (2000 - present)***

Since 1995, the only entirely new facilities built have been ones specifically for women or Healing Lodges for rehabilitation geared to Aboriginal offenders. Many facilities have had expansions to increase capacity, and undergo



entrance to covered walkway



covered walkway internal gates



visitation control room



key count



main control hub



classroom



health care facilities



warehouse



amenity exterior space



chapel / open culture space



cellblock a



cellblock hallway



cell view #01



cell view #02



communal cellblock washroom

Shots of Cowansville as a representation of the third era wave of institutions. Visually institutional with the intention of improving socialization and skill building.

regular maintenance. Previous developments considered the conditions of the sentence and the reintegration. However, new research in this final era was geared toward preventative measures, understanding the economic and social factors that lead to offending. More can be done with the three stages of offenders. Building new facilities would only encourage a higher capacity within the system.

## **Moving Forward with Incarceration**

### **Decarceration, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration**

It is essential to recognize that when thinking about incarceration, it is not just about the time spent incarcerated. Within the judicial system, there should be the question of whether people are getting the right support before resorting to imprisonment. Criminal justice is a direct response to how we understand wrongful behaviour, where we once thought of the offender as evil, we can now see the degree to which human action is influenced by circumstances rather than will. Many alternatives could provide support to ensure an individual does not re-offend without having them removed from society, especially when it comes to non-violent crimes, and they are not a threat to safety. In areas we still see fit to resort to incarceration, facilities need to fulfill their role of helping prisoners help themselves by providing the right programming and environment. The distinction is that rehabilitation will not happen through involuntary treatment or calculated punishment, but it must be voluntary and collaborative.

The whole sentence should focus on reintegration, so having a familiar routine and maintaining a connection with the outside world is paramount. Support should not be cut off once the sentence is up, having a slow transition from

being wholly reliant on the institution to be self-supporting on the outside.

In all three stages, the support comes down to autonomy and connection to the community.

### **References for Prison Reform**

Around the time that medium security prisons were formed, a number of prisoners rights activists and other support groups were formed. A number of church groups shifted on a provincial basis at first to form what we know today as the John Howard Society, after John Howard the prison reformer of the 18th century. Officially formed Canada wide in 1962, it was a volunteer program that advocated for better conditions in prisons and also helped those re-entering society find housing, clothing and employment. Many of the ideals of this project are in line with the values and principles of the John Howard Society of Canada, with heavy focus on a restorative justice model and connection to the community (John Howard Society of Canada, n.d). In reviewing effective, just and humane responses to criminal activity, the ideal investment should be in community programming for preventative measures, but if prisons are to remain, this project attempts provide the response that compliments the belief that all people have the right to live in a safe society, and all people have the potential to become responsible citizens.

The goals of prison reform are often operational and social and architecture is an important, but often disconnected layer. In attempt to reflect the values in the built environment, this project also introduces the relationship between environmental design and human behaviour and space syntax concepts for social and security development.

## **Examples of Progressive Incarceration**

Each country has its approach and philosophy around criminal justice. There are many similarities in the elements of the carceral landscape and with that many of the same issues. However, looking at places like Italy, Norway, or Denmark, they have taken more drastic steps in pushing new rehabilitation methods.

### ***Italy***

Rebibbia Prison, in a neighbourhood outside Rome, Italy, is located in the middle of an urban context. Although the centrality is often unwanted, it has managed to become part of the neighbourhood identity. As if the prison's very prominent existence has forced a direct connection between the inside and outside. There is a network of outside organizations that have integrated support services that address education, professional and cultural training, mental support, and accommodations in day centres. Interior programming provides an opportunity for the public to engage with personalized projects, such as theatre performances that have been produced and performed by the prisoners. These shared energies and resources produce a level of transparency, quality and active social connection between the two worlds.

### ***Scandinavia***

In as early as 1970, the Norwegian Association for Criminal Reform began to make a difference in the Scandinavian justice system – it helped pioneer the shift from punitive to restorative. Forced labour and juvenile delinquency centers were abolished, and productive educational and vocational training set up prisoners with skills to use once they were





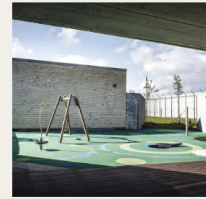
Drumheller addition



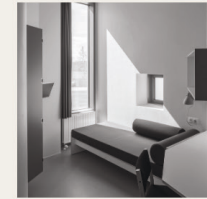
dining hall



passive space



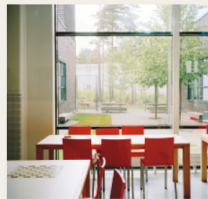
visitation space



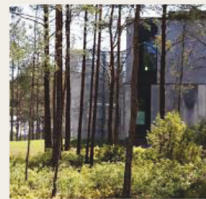
cell



Bowden addition



visibility between spaces



landscape



cellblock kitchen



cultural space



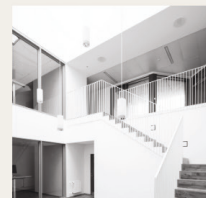
Collinsbay addition



supermarket



communal space



central circulation

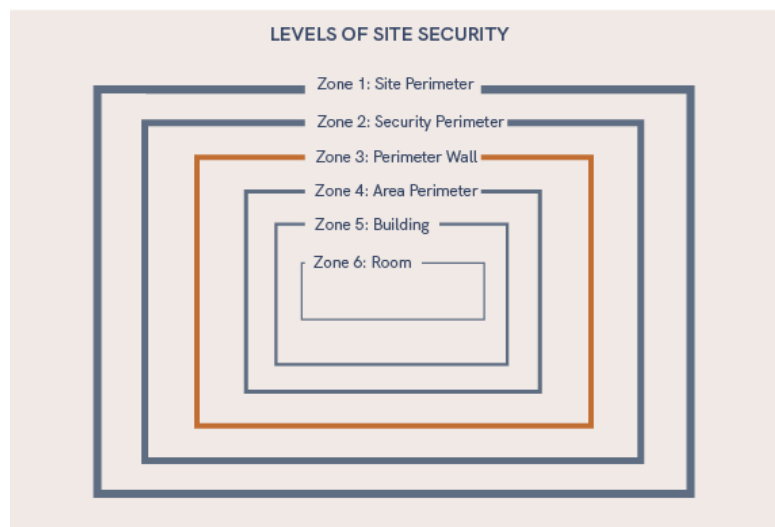


rec yard

The first column shows recent additions to Canadian facilities, although new, still remain institutional. The remainder of photos are from Halden Prison in Denmark and Storstrom Prison in Norway, with visual language unfamiliar to that of prisons.

released. Harsh living conditions were re-evaluated, and medical care was altered to be more supportive of both physical and mental health complications. In 1975, Norway's recidivism rate was at 91 percent, and 40 years after the restructuring, the facilities are under capacity. The country has one of the lowest rates in the world at 20 percent.

In 2018, a compilation of studies under the title of *Prison, Architecture, and Humans* was released, it appropriately reviews the necessary relationships between environment and users in order to achieve rehabilitation and was a reference for many decisions in this project (Fransson, Giofrè, and Johnsen 2018). As simple as looking at how we can improve the existing typology. The Norwegian model takes the Campus type and runs under the assumption that strength in the external border of the site can allow for more lenient internal security measures. Although scheduling and rules are still in place, residents have more control over their movement and therefore more control over their sense of self.



North American models strive for the highest security of all of the above zones. But if the perimeter wall is highly secure, it keeps the public safe and allows for more internal freedom.



## **Chapter 3: Elements of the Car-ceral Landscape**

### **Project Scope**

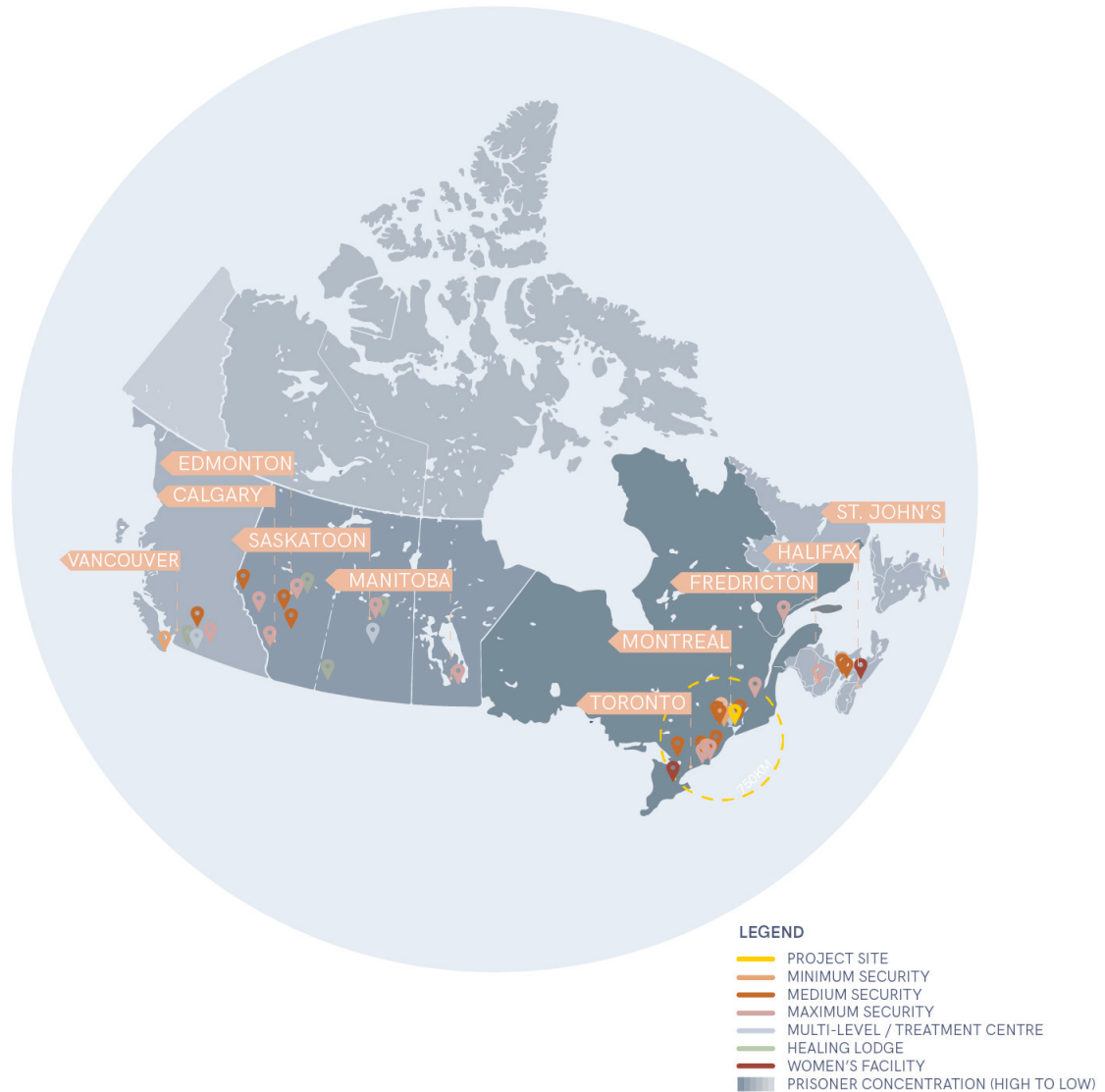
#### **Identifying a Focus in Scale**

There is a considerable amount of infrastructure involved in the Canadian judicial system. Even with incarceration facilities, there are provincially run jails and detention centres for those in remand and sentences that are under two years. There is some overlap in issues with infrastructure, but provincial facilities, especially with variance in the provincial protocol, have their unique situations that are different from federally run facilities. Federal facilities are for serving sentences of two years or more. Within that, inmates are sorted, not based on crime, but based on evaluated risk and incentive to participate in programming, with the opportunity to transfer with visible progress made.

#### **Identifying a Focus in Security**

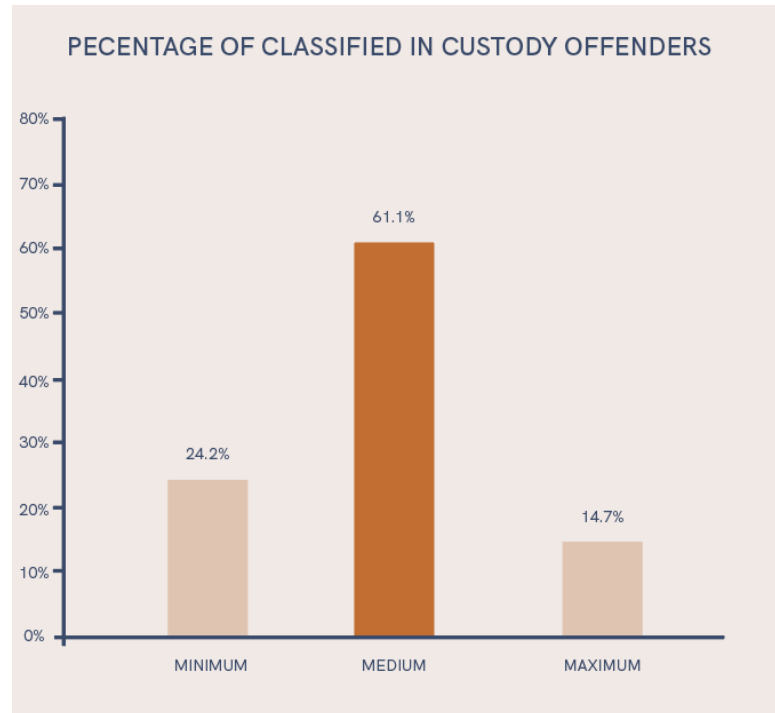
I have decided to focus specifically on the Federal run medium-security facilities. The CSC network has two distinctly operating levels that deal with different offenders. The Provincial facilities are for sentences two years or less and the shorter sentences pose their own set of issues. By choosing to focus on federal facilities with longer sentences served, there is enough time to build a sense of community and exposure to services to see meaningful engagement and change.

Within the Federal level, offenders are separated into minimum, medium and maximum security levels, not necessarily based on crime committed but based on risk and



The network of different security federal facilities across Canada. The selected site, shown in yellow, exists near a high density of other security levels. It is in a province with one of the highest prisoner populations.

willingness to participate in programming. Medium security represents the middle ground of inmates that could either participate or refuse help and are at the risk level where they may be compliant with rules. However, there is still enough of a danger that security should still be central in the design. The architecture of the different security levels has similarities when it comes to security practices, but at varying levels of control of inmate movement through time and space. Minimum security levels tend to lean more towards



The most people would be affected with addressing medium security facilities. (data from Public Safety Canada 2018)

a campus model, and operate, to a certain extent, as a campus would. Some practices, such as flexible movement and allowing for more self sufficiency can be borrowed for medium security. The infrastructure for maximum security relies more on the radial model, and restricts movement on the site as much as possible. The middle ground of medium security can create a baseline that could further be adjusted to be applied or altered to fit the needs of the other security levels. This choice will also reach and benefit the largest population since the majority of in-custody offenders are classified as a medium-security risk.

Within medium security, there is the effectiveness of studying one prison as a representation of the whole because all medium-security facilities were built within a 15 year time period. Space Syntax theory thinks of building types in a phenotype, or physical form, and genotype, or internal

concepts, way. The penal philosophy of the time remained similar across the country which means the medium security prison genotype stays true, even with some variance in form, or phenotype, the root of the issues can come tackling the genotype to influence changes in the phenotype.

### **Identifying a Focus in Built Form**

I would also like to recognize the decision to renovate an existing facility rather than propose an entirely new type. Too many crimes are punished through incarceration, and those sentenced are often kept in the system much longer than they should be. In recognizing we can reduce the prison population either through alternatives to incarceration or through shorter sentences, I would not want to expand the system capacity by building new infrastructure. As seen in the past, as the example with Millhaven built to replace Kingston, the CCS is hesitant to phase out old institutions. It is costly and hard on the administration to open and shut down facilities. Because of their remote locations and specific security structuring, these facilities are undesirable for any other programming besides what they were built for – this speaks to the building life cycle and sustainability. The extreme functionalism provides a solid base since the layout of the facility favours efficient circulation and surveillance. Rather than starting from scratch, attention to detail can focus on finding ways to maintain that efficiency while shifting to a more normative and comfortable environment.

More alternatives to incarceration and successful rehabilitation programs mean fewer people admitted and re-admitted will reduce the overall strain on the system and strengthening the attention to individual prisoners. So, suggesting smaller prison capacities means less initial

impact and more initial investment, but in theory, it will yield long-term benefits. With smaller populations on a site and small groupings within that, the programming and services can be more focused and attainable.

### **Shift from Punitive to Rehabilitative**

In tackling a renovation, some things cannot be changed through architecture alone, such as location and long-standing prison social norms. However, there are ways to redefine space to encourage a different narrative or behaviour. It is challenging to analyze behaviour directly related to specific design choices, but it is at least arguable that high design quality can have a more positive effect.

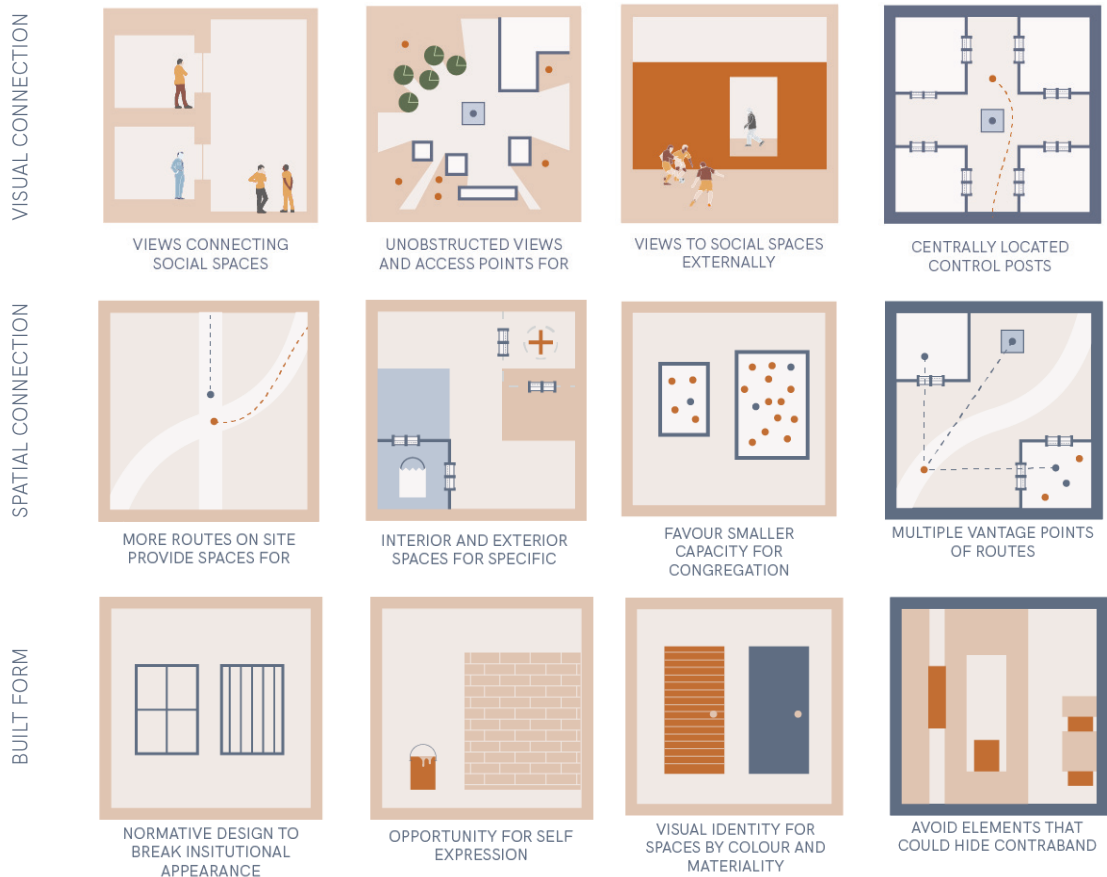
### **Security, Socialization, Autonomy and Well-being**

In order to keep the design moves focused, the programmatic intentions are broken down into four main categories: security, socialization, autonomy and well-being.

Security has always been the focus of keeping the public, staff and inmates safe from each other and themselves. With too much focus on security, the form can suffer from being bare and visually intimidating. A significant part of the challenge with this overhaul is how security levels can be maintained while introducing more trust and respect to prisoners within the landscape. In order to do so, things like additions to buildings and placement of landscaping must be done in a way that visibility is maintained.

Next priority, if people can feel safe in their surroundings, encouraging socialization between all user groups allows inmates to feel connected to an internal and external community. Increased level of familiarity with neighbours and guards builds a sense of responsibility and accountability,

## SOCIALIZATION

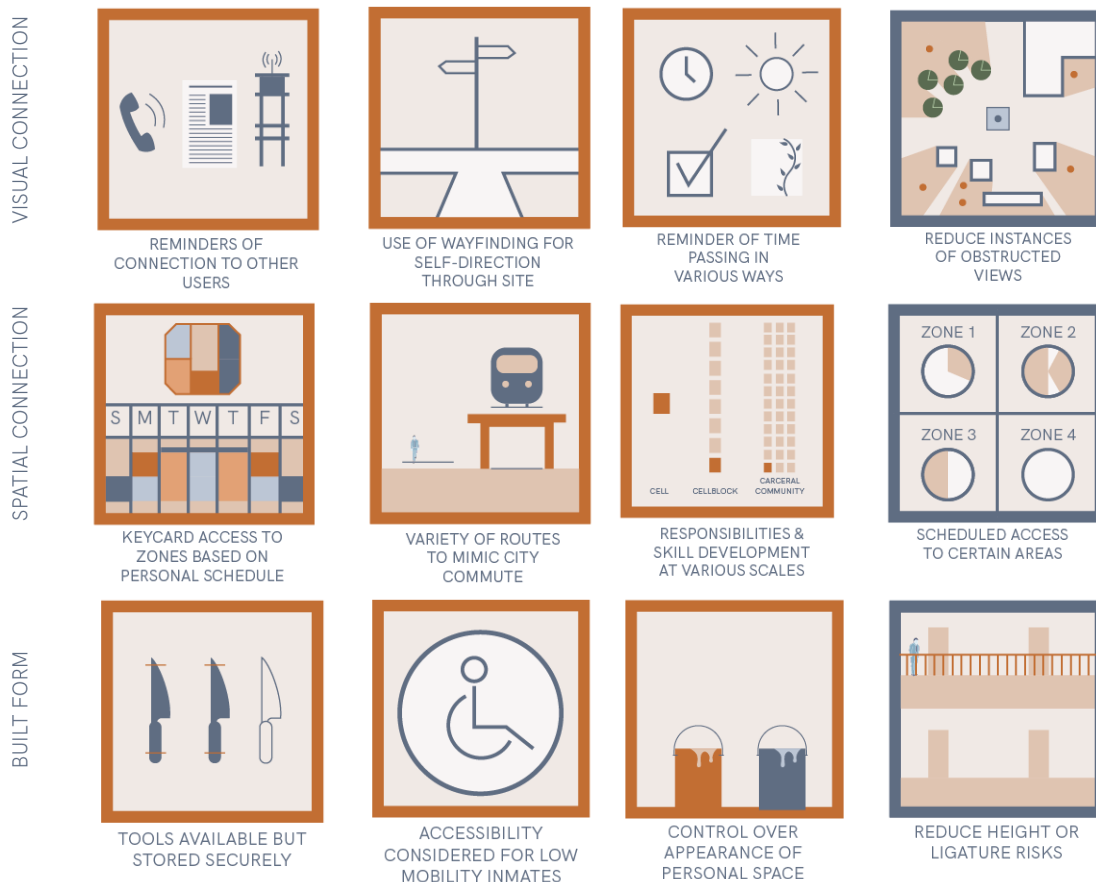


Diagrams of design moves that can be implemented to encourage socialization through visual connection, spatial connection and built form. They connect people to each other, their environment while maintaining a level of safety.

which adds to the safety without the theatrics of a power dynamic or resistance to it. Providing a more familiar environment through methods of normative design over institutional can alleviate the typical expectations of inmate behaviour.

Often offenders spend so long in prison that they become institutionalized. The regimented scheduling, served food, and shift in expected responsibilities makes them unprepared for self care on a day to day basis. The low wages, lack of social and economic support, and little assistance after release makes self support challenging. There are specific

## AUTONOMY & RE-INTEGRATION

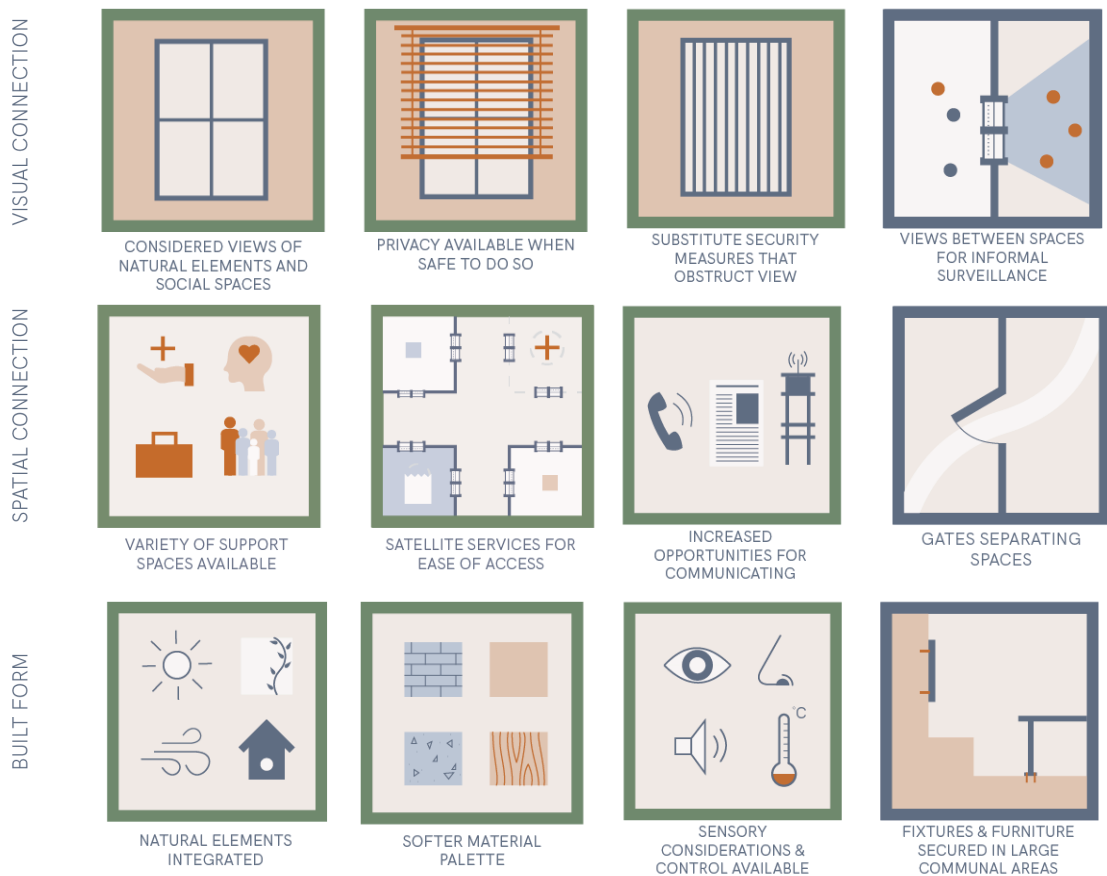


Diagrams of design moves that can be implemented to encourage autonomy and preparing prisoners for inevitable re-integration through visual connection, spatial connection and built form. It sets methods of self-sufficiency, trust and skill building.

roles inmates can play within the carceral community that could translate to skills beyond the sentence.

The quality of the prison infrastructure has immediate and long-term consequences for overall safety and well-being. It is already a stressful place to live and work, but the environment can add to this tension. The overcrowding, poor conditions, reduced access to nature, poor lighting, and noise pollution can impact on both mental and physical well-being. Well being requires thought towards all the sense of the space and well as the given control of those senses.

## WELL BEING



Diagrams of design moves that can be implemented to encourage improvement in well being through visual connection, spatial connection and built form. Comfort and safety are essential to achieve, when prisoners can drop their guard and relax, they can more easily focus on goals.

### Visual Connection, Physical Connection and Form

The implementation of security, socialization, autonomy and well-being can be broken down into methods of intervention: visual connection, physical connection and built form. Visual and physical connection has to do with spatial relationships of programmed spaces, circulation, security measures, and landscaping elements. Considering proximity of spaces, for both increased circulation and increased visibility, the chances of user interaction increases, and with that informal socialization and informal security.



Many of the moves suggested for under the built form category may feel like surface level interventions, and can not be done solely without the compliment of the other two practices, but are necessary in improving the comfort and level of success within the space. Interior design moves, such as softer material palettes and better lighting conditions are simple strategies with large impacts.

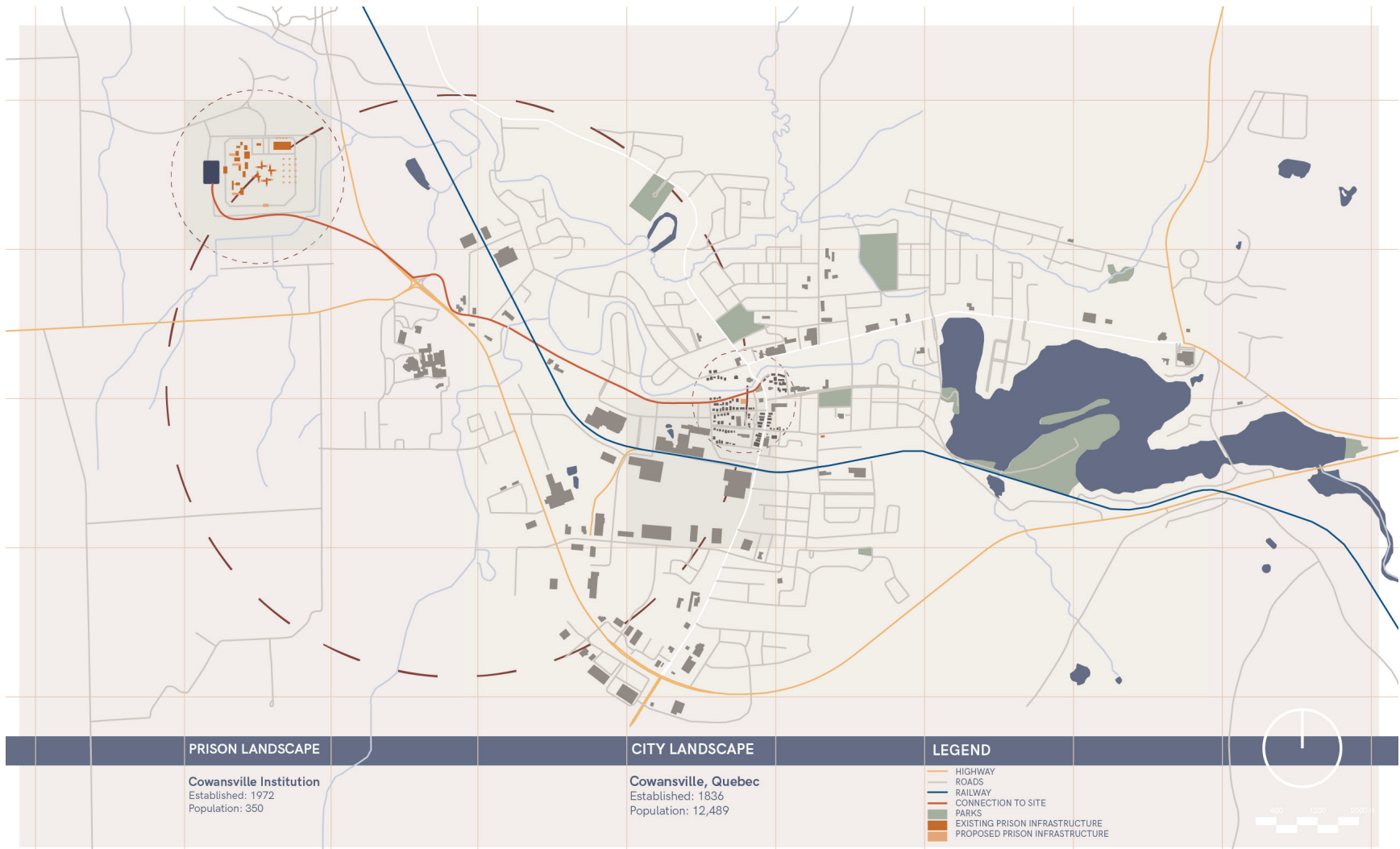
## **Chapter 4: Redefining the Carceral Landscape**

### **Urban Scale**

#### **Connecting to the Urban Environment**

Except for a few federally operated facilities, most are located in remote, rural areas isolated from society. With the choice to renovate an existing facility, the physical location is a significant thing that cannot be changed. Nevertheless, measures can be taken to close the mental separation caused by physical separation. With most medium-security facilities, they neighbour a small town and are, on average, about 11 km from the downtown core. In the case of Cowansville Institution, it is 6 km from Cowansville proper, and 100 km from the nearest city, Montreal. Separated from its host town by a highway, site entrance faces away from the direction of the town.

Located in south-central Quebec, Cowansville has a population of 13,656 as of the 2016 census, and the institution has a rated capacity of 599 inmates. According to the Access to Information legislation, CSC commits to a 1:1 ratio of staff to inmates, a ratio much higher than many other countries. This includes administration, health care workers, programming staff, instructors, maintenance and the correctional officers. Due to the relative seclusion of the town to others, facility staff is part of the community both inside and out. In addition to job creation, the prison may draw friends and family members to visit an inmate. Creating ties between the prison community and the community beyond the walls can break down stigma, encourage



A majority of facilities operating in Canada today were built within a 15 year time period. Most are medium or mixed security facilities (base map from google maps)

smoother transitions after release and creates opportunities for financial, social, and cultural growth.

Changing the accessibility of the site is the first step in bridging the gap. Putting in a new entrance that faces the city shortens the drive through the isolated wooded area to get to the existing entrance by 4.6 km and communicates a different intention of connection. Upon entering the site from the new eastern entrance, visitors, staff, and incoming inmates must drive by an entire length of the site to get to the main gate. This visual connection is otherwise inaccessible. With increased transparency in prison activity, the community can feel like the success of the prisoner's rehabilitation is a success for the whole community.

With a new access point, the now 2 km trek to the downtown core is still challenging to do without access to a vehicle. Most small municipalities do not have public transit, so getting to the site for staff, volunteers or visitors can be restrictive. Offering a regular shuttle system connecting the downtown to the site can make getting to work, visitation or even for incoming or discharged inmates. A secure section can be divided and used for current inmate transportation for the use of conditional temporary release, for travelling to court hearings or meeting with legal services.

There is an opportunity in the abundance of space around the prison perimeter, which is typically only used for border patrol. Offering activities or services that connect inmates with the public would give a reason for those that do not have a direct relation to someone in prison.

### **Re-Integration Support: The Satellite Office**

The existing facility cannot be relocated, but there is an opportunity to create a satellite office within the urban fabric. A small, centrally located facility downtown will create a stepping stone between the inside and the outside world. It can be a meeting place for current inmates to meet with legal representatives before official business, such as court dates and parole hearings. It can also be a place for inmates at the end of their sentence to enter a state of transition, allowing them to move from the isolated carceral landscape to the integrated urban landscape. With that, perhaps a slow removal of restriction rather than it ending abruptly. It can also be a place for recently released inmates who might not have a support system to gain the help they need to restart their lives on the outside. Meeting spaces for social workers, legal representatives, employment staff, financial support, mental and physical health workers, and even assistance with sourcing accommodation are all crucial for that initial stage of release. There may or may not be these resources already available in the town. However, having the CCS offer these services gives comfort to those who are familiar with the institution and perhaps allows them to get continued support from the same support through the transition.

The satellite office should fit into the visual language of the downtown and not appear overly secure as to give the impression of danger. There is a privately run halfway house in Cowansville that offers holistic treatment for mental or substance rehab. However, capacity is low, and services offered are available for those who can afford it.

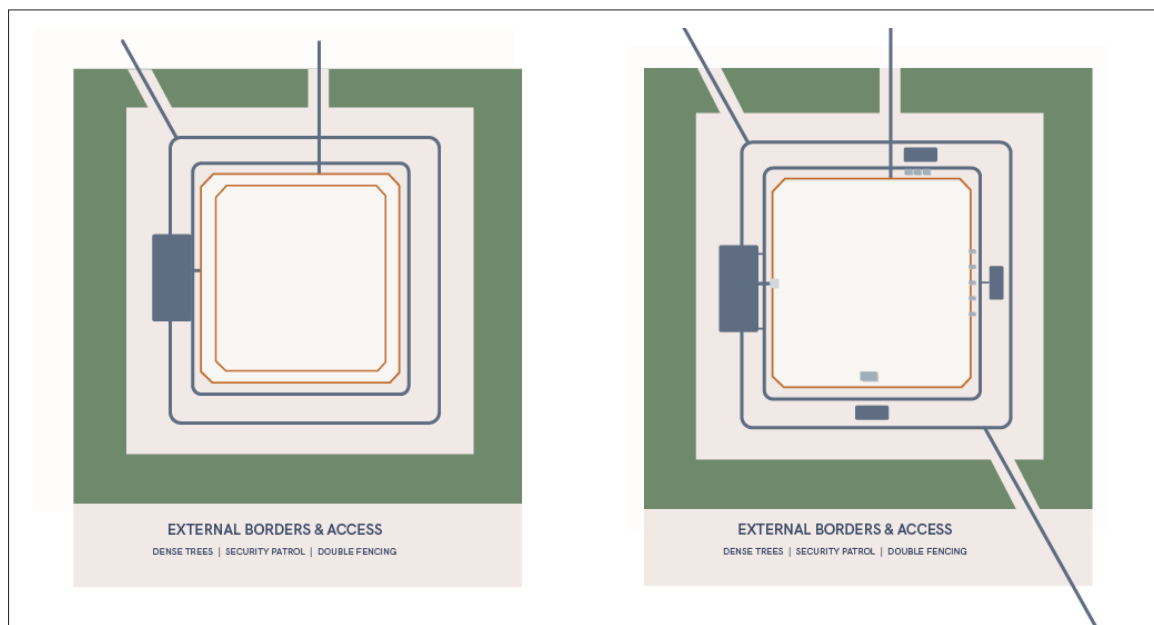
## **Site Scale**

Prisons are, for the most part, remote, closed environments that are difficult to access and challenging to study empirically. They vary widely in how they are structured and how they operate, making broad generalizations about the consequences of imprisonment challenging to formulate. However, the notable features of a closed prison are similar, the perimeter wall, buildings, fences, exercise yards, and paths. They often spread out on a large, relatively flat piece of land. Vegetation, such as lawn and perhaps trees, flowers, rocks and moss, may exist within the perimeter, maybe inside the yards but mostly in the inaccessible spaces between the facilities.

## **External Borders and Access**

The site exists as a series of perimeters, each nesting another layer of security, all designed to be a high level of protection. A hard tree line marks the beginning of the barren landscape around the fenced site perimeter. The distance at Cowansville institution between the end of the forested area and the fencing ranges from 200-300 feet. There are two patrol routes and six guard towers spaces around the perimeter to keep an eye on site activity. These measures are in place on the chance that an inmate manages to penetrate the internal barriers. Currently, a double layer of fencing surrounds the site. Each fence is 20 feet high with an angled overhang, no horizontal supports, and barbed wire looped around the top, all designed to make climbing virtually impossible. Complementary to the form, there are a few ways that technology can detect motion, noise, radio wave interference, or fence deflection that would notify correctional staff about a potential breach

Inspired by the Scandinavian Prisons, if the wall surrounding the site is secure, internal security measures can be more lenient. This means that investing in the perimeter wall to be virtually impermeable, except for its secure gates and sally ports, can benefit interior site design. The wall and front gate provide the users with an impression of the facility. There has to be an appropriate balance between the requirements of security and the adverse consequences of an over-oppressive atmosphere, which could lead to inmates' hostile reactions and negative responses from the public. This can be done by removing symbols of incarceration and shifting to a design that suggests an enclosed but isolated community, with selective views in and out where it is about transparency and connection but not spectacle. Visual breaks must only exist in intentional zones of public and prison interaction. For example, with visitation, views out can ease the visitor from feeling trapped in an unfamiliar environment, and it can provide the inmate with temporary



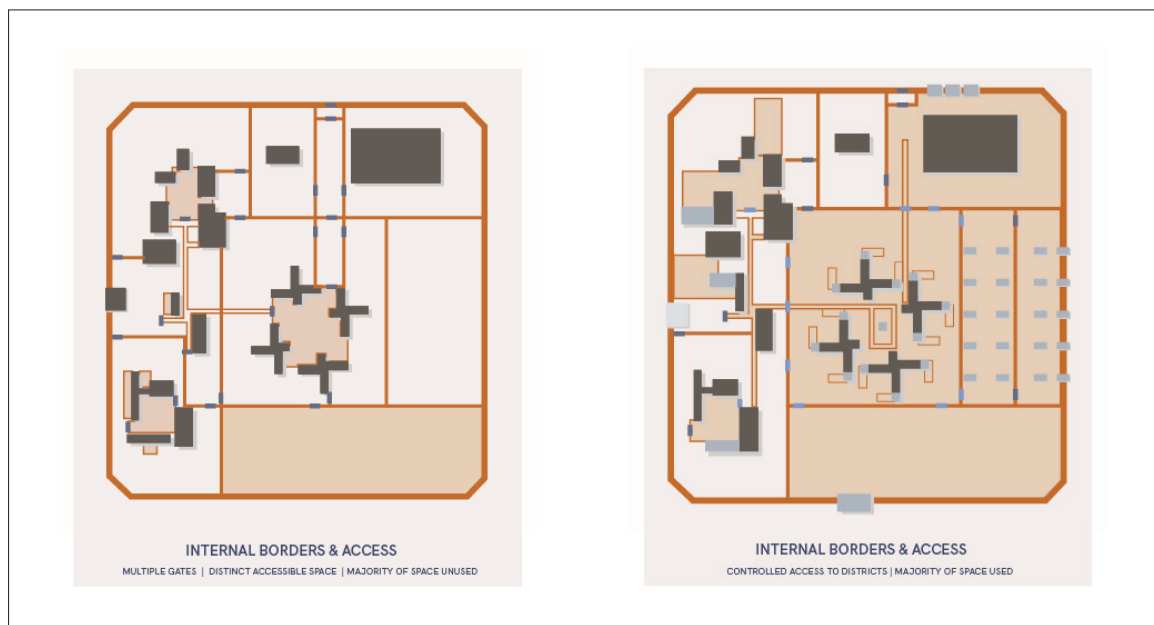
Comparison of borders around site before (left) and after (right) with a new entrance and interaction sites.

access to normalcy with their family by blurring the line of freedom and incarceration. Designed spaces for the public along the perimeter allow for activities to take place without breaking security measures. For example, an outdoor dining area mirrored over the perimeter builds a sense of belonging with those on the outside.

The gate acts as the site's only penetration point, used to process new inmates, as a reception for visitors, and security screening for all users, including guards.

### Internal Borders and Access

Within the 1.9 million square feet of space within the perimeter, there is only about 36% of it is accessible to inmates. The recreation yard is the only spaced designed for inmates to get for outdoor activity and is only available at specific times of the week. The other space is the courtyard space between buildings of similar programming, such as between



Comparison of internal borders and accessible space before (left) and after (right).



the cellblocks, amenities or health services. These courtyard spaces are again, walled for security but not designed or used necessarily as activated exterior spaces. Connecting these courtyard spaces is one structured, covered walkway that controls site movement and forces inmates to pass the main control post located centrally. The remaining space is void and foreign to inmates - either unused as a buffer zone or used for guard patrol or circulation of goods on-site. The site is divided into 23 different fenced areas with different gates restricting access between one area and the next. The gates are typically closed until a radio signal communicates intent to access to the central control tower.

Rather than dividing the site into many multiple small sections, the new proposal thinks about the carceral landscape as a small city. Based on the program layout, the site can be sectioned into larger "districts": business, residential, recreation, cultural, health and visitation. Each section has its various measures in place of supporting the security, socialization, skill-building and well-being of inmates.

With the new district layouts, the intention is to make better use of exterior spaces. Human activity within their environment can be categorized into isolated passive (sitting, reading, sleeping), isolated active (working out alone), socially active (playing games, sports or talking), and circulation. An American study about activity types showed that in the prison environment, isolated activities took up 80% of day time activities, and only 2% was spent socially active. It is not to say that isolated activities should be restricted, but more opportunities for socializing and activity should be available. It is also about considering how the restriction of time and space affects a human's feeling of belonging in an

environment. The “in place” and “out of place” distinction contributes to comfort, community building, and headspace to improve.

## Exterior Spaces

### *Active Spaces*

Meaningful engagement with the outdoors is crucial in maintaining physical and mental health. However, it is essential that the recreation yard be composed of various activity types, and be cognizant of the risk of over-stimulating masculinity in the environment. Studies of masculinity and power in prison have given insight into some of the dynamics in the hierarchy among prisoners (Johnsen, 2001; Martos-García et al., 2009; Sabo, 1994, 2001) Solely offering weight lifting and competitive sports stimulates violent behaviour and can exaggerate the focus on appearing intimidating.



Active spaces, previously isolated to the rec yard, offer a place where all user groups come together for activity or entertainment.

Competitive sports can also be a platform for team and relationship building in addition to staying healthy. Sports fields, running tracks, space for yoga, and walking routes are all outdoor activities for large and small groups and different levels of activity.

The more healthy and self-confident prisoners are likely, the higher chance to create relationships and stay away from crime, during and after the sentence.

### ***Passive Spaces***

Even in finding more ways to engage with the exterior space, there will be plenty of spaces left without programming. The in-between spaces, even especially with circulation passing through, should not be ignored. Moving between districts should feel like a commute; it comes down to finding a balance between exciting scenery and being cautious of



Passive, or “in between” spaces should offer a variety of views and activity opportunities as they build a sense of place and with that a sense of belonging.

not obstructing views. Added design elements also improve views from interior spaces. Building façade design, barrier design, hard- and soft-scaping, murals and sculpture, lighting, and any natural features can drastically change the atmosphere of the in-between spaces.

### ***Courtyards***

Currently, the courtyards between shared programming are a way to keep buildings separate while still containing movement. The courtyards are composed of paved footpaths and grass, with one 60' lamppost as a primary source of light at night, and secondary light fixtures mounted to the buildings. There are no instances of foliage, or any other built features in the courtyard. They are unengaged and provide no space to inhabit or socialize; they are simply structured circulation spaces.

There is immense opportunity in these spaces, as seen in the space syntax maps. Much like the security benefit of the central hub seeing all traffic passing between districts, the courtyards could benefit socially through the traffic passing through between buildings. By providing some infrastructure that encourages socialization, things as simple as benches or covered platforms would give a reason for inmates to use this space. The spaces can be made more visually stimulating with better landscaping and facades that either visually reveal programming or even have programs that spill out into the courtyards; it will make the central spaces more enticing to spend time in.

### ***Cultural Spaces***

The topic of cultural and spiritual healing deserves more attention than provided in this study's scope. While

aboriginal Canadians comprise just 3 percent of the country's population, they make up 29 percent of the 2018 admissions into federal facilities (Statistics Canada 2018). There is a farther reach to address the issue of apparent systematic racism than what can be done in a renovation of infrastructure. However, knowing that over-representation exists makes it fair to acknowledge that cultural space needs to be provided through the standardized environment so there can be access to spiritual healing. Healing Lodges allow aboriginal communities to establish and operate facilities under their jurisdiction but funded by the CSC. Since the law passed in 1992, only 68 beds in federally funded Healing Lodges exist across the country, with none in British Columbia, Ontario, the Atlantic or in the North. They focus on cultural teachings and ceremonies as well as contact with elders and children and interaction with nature. This approach is a smaller scale with a holistic philosophy of healing, with community interaction and focusing on the inevitable release proves lower recidivism rates and should set an example for mainstream facilities. The lack of space and lack of funding means that the remaining percentage of aboriginal offenders are put through standardized institutions. There needs to be recognition and offering of culturally appropriate practices and ceremonies.

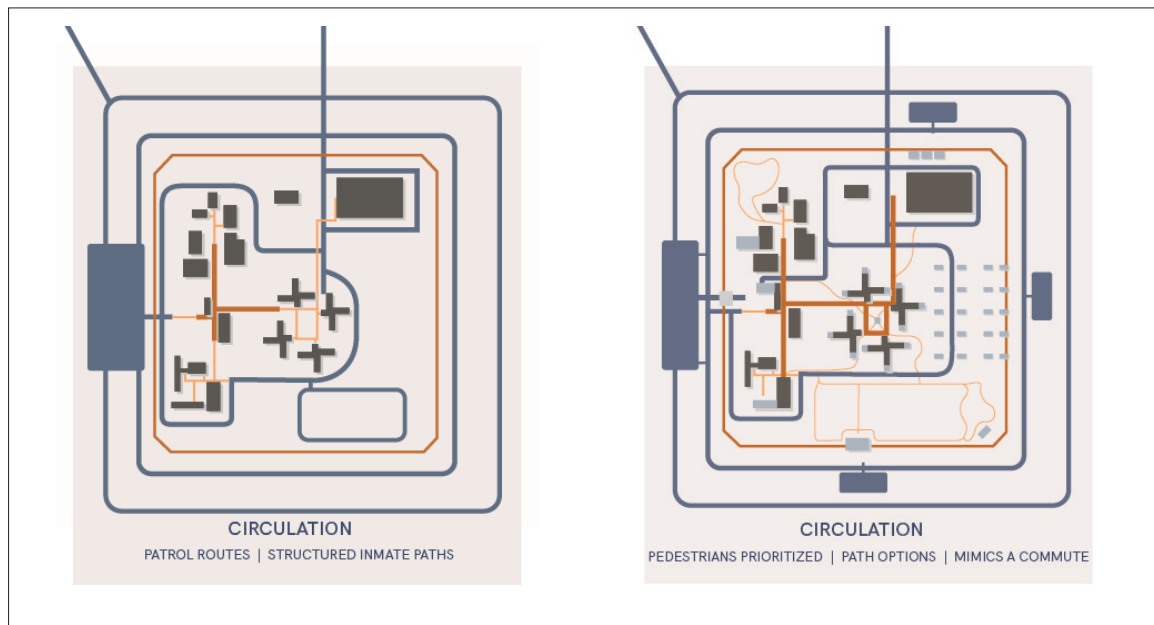
### **Circulation**

The existing circulation on-site supports a rigid control of movement through space and time. The small courtyard spaces of clumped programming are connected by a radial covered walkway about 15 feet wide, with the control hub located centrally. This means all inmates have one predetermined route from point a to point b and can move between buildings without spending much time outside.



The other mode of circulation is mostly accessible by staff for patrol or for circulating goods and services around the site. There are two loops on the outside of the fence, one that follows the outside perimeter of the barren landscape and one that follows around the perimeter of the site border connecting the guard points for shift changes. Within the fence, there is one main loop connecting the different buildings on site, with gates at specific points for security reasons. These routes are 20 feet wide and are mostly used by patrol vehicles for the efficiency of travel.

In the new proposal, the covered walkways will remain and, in some cases, be expanded as a primary circulation route to connect essential programming. These covered walkways must exist to protect commuters from the elements. To give inmates more variety and control in their commute, gentle



Comparison of primary and secondary circulation methods, blue for patrol car use and orange for pedestrian use. The dark orange outlines the covered walkway and introduced tram route.

secondary pathways of about 6 feet wide, enough for two people to walk side by side, they will cut through the site. This will help the “campus” model that most medium-security prisons follow, feel more like a campus. The location of this path will contribute to points of focus for landscaping, and gates connecting districts will have scheduled access for inmates on a keycard basis.

Considering the size of the site and the older or low mobility population in prison, there should be an option for those who cannot manage the long walks, whether it is covered or not. There would be high risks involved with inmate operated vehicles, and relying on staff operated vehicles eliminates self-sufficiency. A small tram system that runs along the top of the covered walkway on a regular schedule mimics collective city life commutes while staying safe and accessible. The raised tram platforms are accessible by stair or elevator at set times and access doors only open upon



View of the three circulation options at the entrance to the amenity district, the covered walkway, the elevated tram, and meandering pathway.

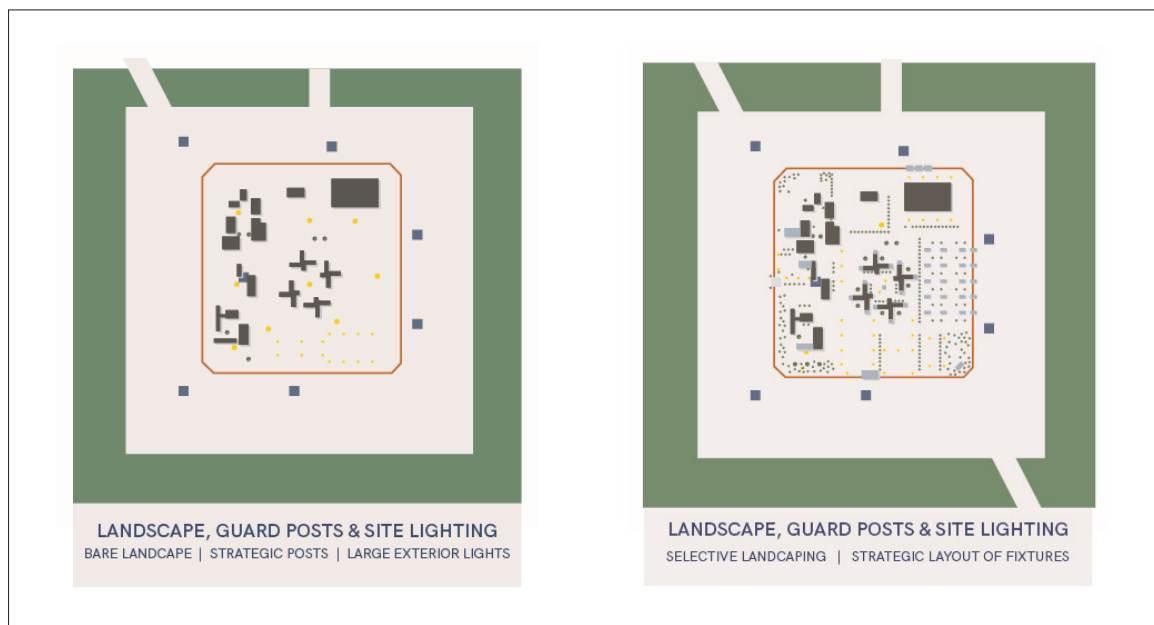
the arrival of the train. The tracks are otherwise blocked and beyond reach for safety reasons.

Space Syntax theory can create a visual map that analyzes the spatial relationship and the social success of connected spaces (Hillier & Hanson 1984). The voids and shapes of built form create a particular map, and then the movement between those spaces can create another type of map.

## Additional Site Features

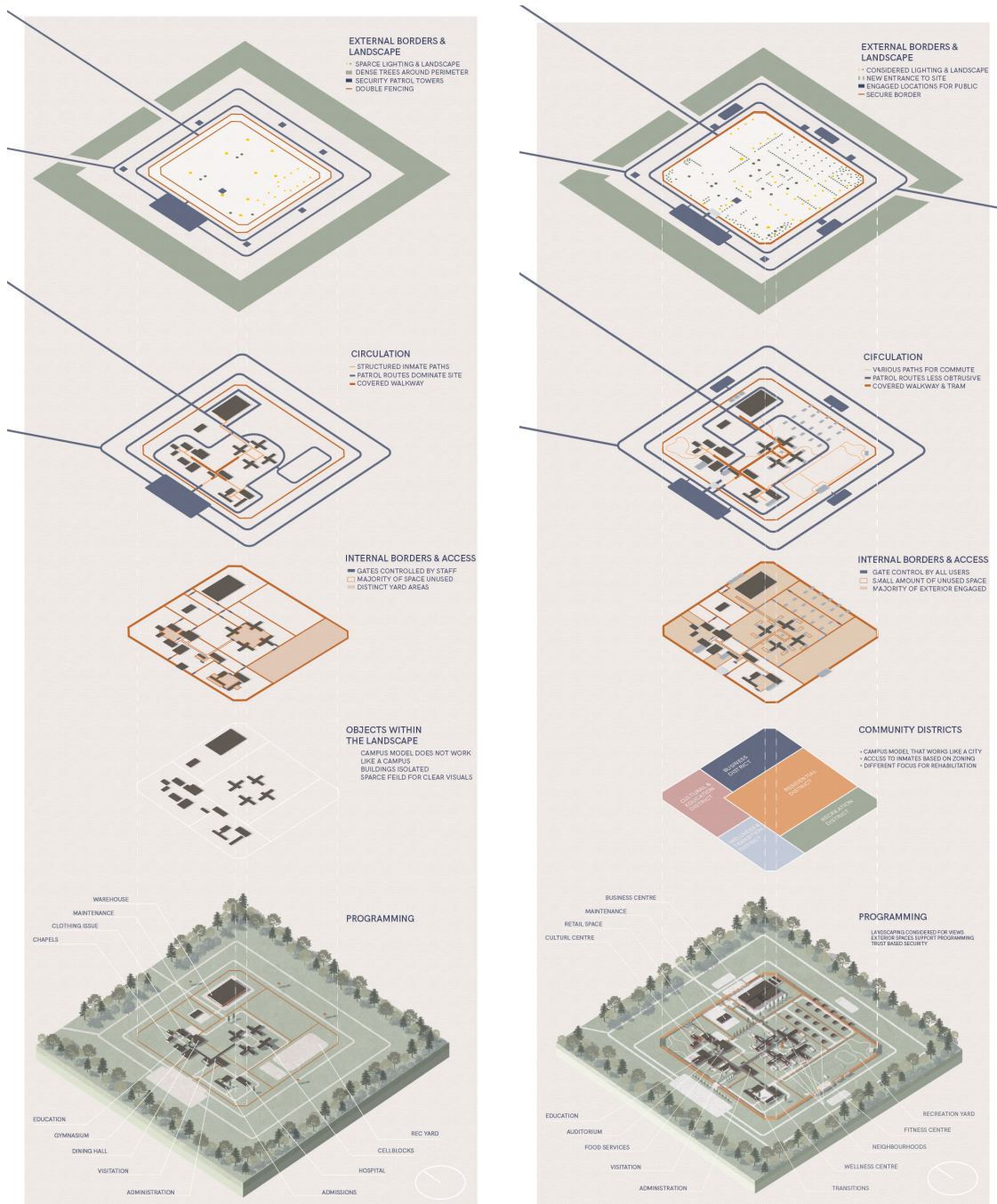
### *Landscaping*

Keeping the landscaping lush is a reminder of life in a typically bleak environment. Beyond favouring grassy areas over paved, natural elements such as seasonal plants and trees connect inmates to natural cycles of time, like watching leaves growing and falling throughout the year. It is easy for the days to feel monotonous, especially where no change is evident in a bare landscape. However, both the visual and



Comparison of site features such as tree, lighting and guard post locations.





Collective comparison of carceral landscape elements, showing the property as built in 1966 (left) and the proposed site with redefined elements (right).

audio qualities of nature reduce stress levels and make the in-between spaces more engaging.

Providing gardens in the residential district or the business district on a larger scale teach prisoners a gentle skill that fosters patience and autonomy.

By adding foliage, the site feels more integrated with the site, compared to the apparent hole in the forest that existed before with the harsh treeline on the outside of the site, and a few trees within. Vines growing on build facades only further support the integration and sense of belonging.

### ***Guard Posts and Lighting***

The guard posts and current 60' lampposts, similar those used to light highways, loom above the building height datum as a reminder of constant visibility. Shifting to human scale surveillance measures and exterior light fixtures support normative design ideals.

### ***Vertical Structures***

Currently, there is a vertical structure in front of the two chapel spaces. Not used for surveillance, it has speakers mounted to it, perhaps for announcements, signally shift changes, or sending out alerts. Most infrastructure on-site is no higher than three stories, which makes this tower visible from everywhere on site. There is something about this visible connection and possible audio connection that can be replicated. Proposed for the centre of the neighbourhoods is a new tower that projects the visibility and communication beyond the walls, building a new level of connection without physical proximity. It has a small program space at the top to house a radio station to share information internally and externally. It can keep inmates updated on activities in the

prison. It changes the dynamic of time by planning for events and feeling up to date with the news, giving inmates things to look forward to and build topical conversation to connect.

### ***Time***

Control of bodies through time and space is the root of discipline. When dictated by the higher power, in this case the staff, the discipline is also a punishment.

To offer that control to prisoners is to grant autonomy. Setting up a system of keycard accessibility between districts, buildings and rooms based on an individual schedule can allow for free movement through site and accountability of location without needing to be guided. Incorporating time throughout the landscape through clocks, natural lighting, and a regular occurrence of events, such as a tram schedule or a lunch bell helps stick to a set schedule and is a reminder of self-control and growth.

On a longer term, as a reminder of a sentence passing, materials that change or age over time and natural cycles keep the landscape growing alongside the prisoners.

### **Building Scale**

There has been a shift in the design of institutional buildings over the last 20 years. Public libraries are good examples of how physical infrastructure has shifted in both program philosophy and built form. They went from exclusive and introspective spaces that serve a specific function to being inclusive and flexible spaces that recognize the impact that built form has social implications and the user's well-being. The existing infrastructure on site was built for their specific programmatic needs, so the question is posed of how can

they go beyond function to consider social implications and user wellbeing?

It is not necessarily just material and lighting changes that will rewrite the narrative of these programs, but improved material and lighting can support changing social dynamics. An inmate that spent time in Halden Prison in Denmark, the “World’s Most Humane Prison,” stated that “choices of colours seem irrelevant when I am locked up in a place without the help I need to deal with my internal demons” and that “location, colour, and furniture are no substitute for the need of humans to feel that they belong, to be accepted, to be recognized and possibly even forgiven.” The architecture can make the physical environment more comfortable. However, with suggestive changes and new spaces designed for programming, there must be matching in the programming provided and a shift in overall behaviour.



Example of a lobby space, where high circulation happens between programming. It creates an opportunity for informal surveillance and with designed spaces for informal socialization.

Intervention level, whether adding a new building, including an addition or merely renovating the interior, is determined by the contribution to the rehabilitation process. All new buildings on site are expressly for connecting to the outside, a new concept to the prison landscape needs a new building type. The recreation centre, conjugal visitation homes and market stalls all require specific treatment to maintain the border's security and are unique in the sense that they have two mirrored spaces with an internal space that supports the program but resists the passage of users or contraband. Any building that requires an addition is a building essential in rehabilitation, including the school, the hospital, visitation and the cellblocks. Being essential, it should be where the most significant investment is, and including more space makes room for more programming or a reinventing of programming. The addition always juts out perpendicular from the existing, creating an exterior courtyard specific to that program. The buildings that are still important for the function of the prison but are secondary to the rehab process (reword) does not require an addition but only an interior upgrade. Within the admission, administration, the dining hall, the chapels, the maintenance building, and the workshop, there is a reworking of circulation, use of specific spaces and modifications to interior design details. The interior design changes, although shown in more detail in individual buildings, are moves to be implemented in all buildings across the board.

While looking at the renovations, there will be a focus on how the four pillars of the carceral landscape: socialization, autonomy & re-integration, well-being and security. In the same breath as the interior design moves, many of the



intentions showcased in particular situations are not always unique to that context.

### **Materiality**

The sections following this focus on how programs relating to the prison landscape's critical goals should be prefaced with a discussion about interior design practice for both renovated and added spaces. The unique criteria of a high-security living environment create a very different result compared to designing a typical living environment. Materials are often selected for practical, durable, cost-effective reasons and are rarely considered for users' comfort. With security taking priority, the architecture reflects the oppressive attitudes and negatively affects inmate behaviour (Fransson, Giofrè and Johnsen 2018). Materiality goes beyond the finishes of floor, wall, roof - it also encompasses the architecture of sensory input. The use of natural and artificial lighting, acoustic dynamics of a space, and airflow affecting smell and temperature control goes beyond the pure considerations of touch and feel. The material palette of prison are materials we regularly use in public buildings. However, it is to be considered how architecture uses the balance of hard and soft, dark and light, and the particular location of material to create comfort within a space.

The built form provides significant security; the control of movement and safety within spaces relies on the structure to be inescapable. Poured-in-place or precast concrete and concrete masonry units have specific requirements of compressive strength, wall thickness, and reinforcement outlined in the Technical Criteria document (Canadian Correctional Services 2015, 121-126). This substantial building construction is not necessarily a negative approach,

but the criticism comes into the visibility of its strength by keeping building construction minimal. This not only applies to the floor, wall, roof construction, but also all aspects of the design. Doors, windows, gates, hardware and furniture, are all expected to meet and reflect the security requirements, which contribute to the unfamiliar living environment that is the prison.

The details are for meeting security requirements, but there should also be requirements set for meeting comfortable living standards. Adding a layer of gypsum to wall construction to visibly hide the concrete masonry units (CMU), it softens the space, or by considering a custom design for a gate that maintains visibility but strays from the standard heavy bar appearance. The hard, generally open concept of prison spaces is conducive to amplifying noise pollution, by softening surfaces through selected finishes it will help improve the acoustic quality of space. The use of isolating audio systems, sound-absorbing materials (acoustic tiles) and limiting metal on metal contact through the structure, equipment and furnishings reduce noise pollution.

Considerable research has been conducted on the psychological effects of windowless environments; windows are more than just a luxury for the incarcerated. Windows are essential elements for accessing natural light and views out into the prison landscape and beyond. Assemblies can still be secure without needing the physical and visual reinforcement of steel bars.

The use of colour, shapes, materials and variety can provide positive enhancements to the environment and can alleviate the effect of a large-scale institution. Colour can be used to improve site way-finding, guided circulation and safe

movement without the need for additional gates. Picking unique palettes for different spaces can create spatial identity; bright colours should be used in shared programmed areas, and the use of murals on-site – especially murals done by inmates – has shown to have a positive effect on inmate morale (Fransson, Giofrè and Johnsen 2018). Providing artistic platforms allows inmates to express themselves, and contrary to how they are expected to act, it allows them to be vulnerable. There is an expectation of masculine display in prisons, where strength, violence, and dominance are meant to prove oneself, and providing more opportunities for creative outlet can help balance these expectations.

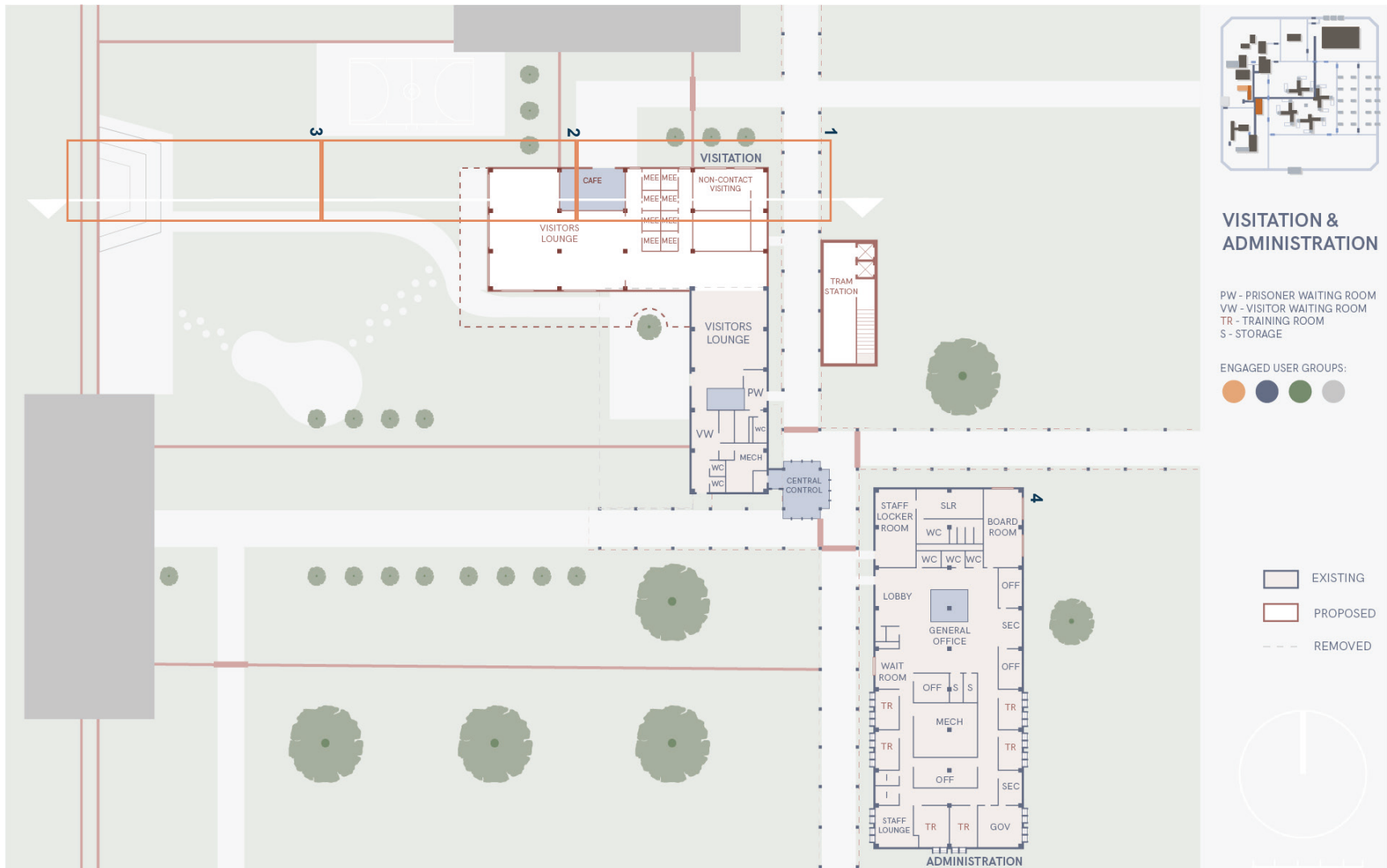
## **Socialization**

### ***Visitation - Connection of the External Community***

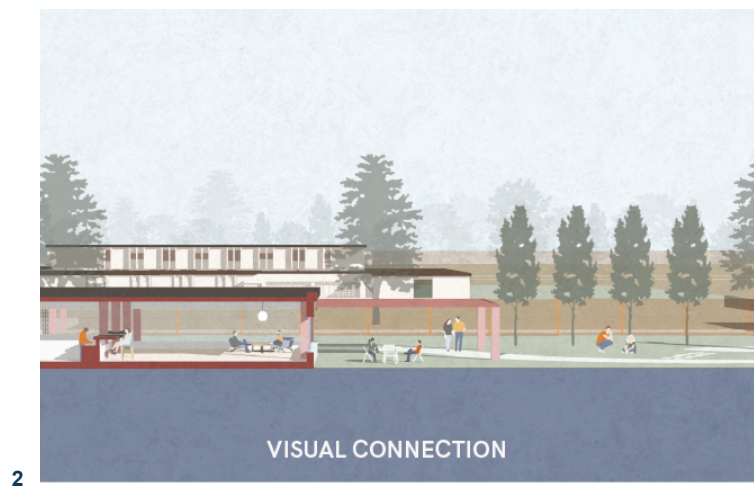
Prison is seen as an isolated program for those sentenced to be there. Visitation is the sole program that allows a connection with familiar members of the public if they come to visit and maintained relationships positively affect inmate rehabilitation and the chance of successful re-integration. To encourage regularly occurring visits, the surroundings should be relaxed, comfortable, and not feel sterile as the institutional feel can invoke tension and a sense of not belonging. Expanding visitation to include a variety of spaces in both activity and scale can imitate normal visiting environments and lessens the obligation for an inmate to feel like they should play the role of the offender but rather the chance to be a father, husband, son, or friend. With those roles considered, spaces should be designed for activities of all relationship types and ages.

There should be a separate section of private meeting rooms for consulting social workers, welfare workers, and





Visitation plan, an addition adds a variety of new visitation spaces including non-contact, small meeting rooms (1) and an open concept lounge (2). The exterior space expands the variety of visiting environments (3). Administration has more on-site training spaces (4).



Visitation section, the variety in visitation spaces needs to be inclusive to all offender restrictions and different dynamics - including consideration to age, gender and relationship types. Non-contact visitation and small meeting rooms (1) give different opportunities compared to the open concept lounge (2) and exterior spaces (3).

non-contact visitation. Non-contact visitation should be re-introduced with a new form from the standard telephone-through-the-glass model. More full rooms with a sitting room layout and sound-permeable glass reduce the institutional feel.

### ***Amenities - Connection of the Internal Community***

The Amenities District provides and opportunity for internal relationships to build based on common interests. It is open most hours of day for the dining hall, course work at the school, hobbies, and cultural practice.

The school is the most important component in the rehabilitation process. More than 70 percent of the people who enter the federal prison system in Canada have less than high school education, but many criminology studies point to the positive effects of education on outcomes for prisoners (Davis 2013). In the 2015 evaluation of its



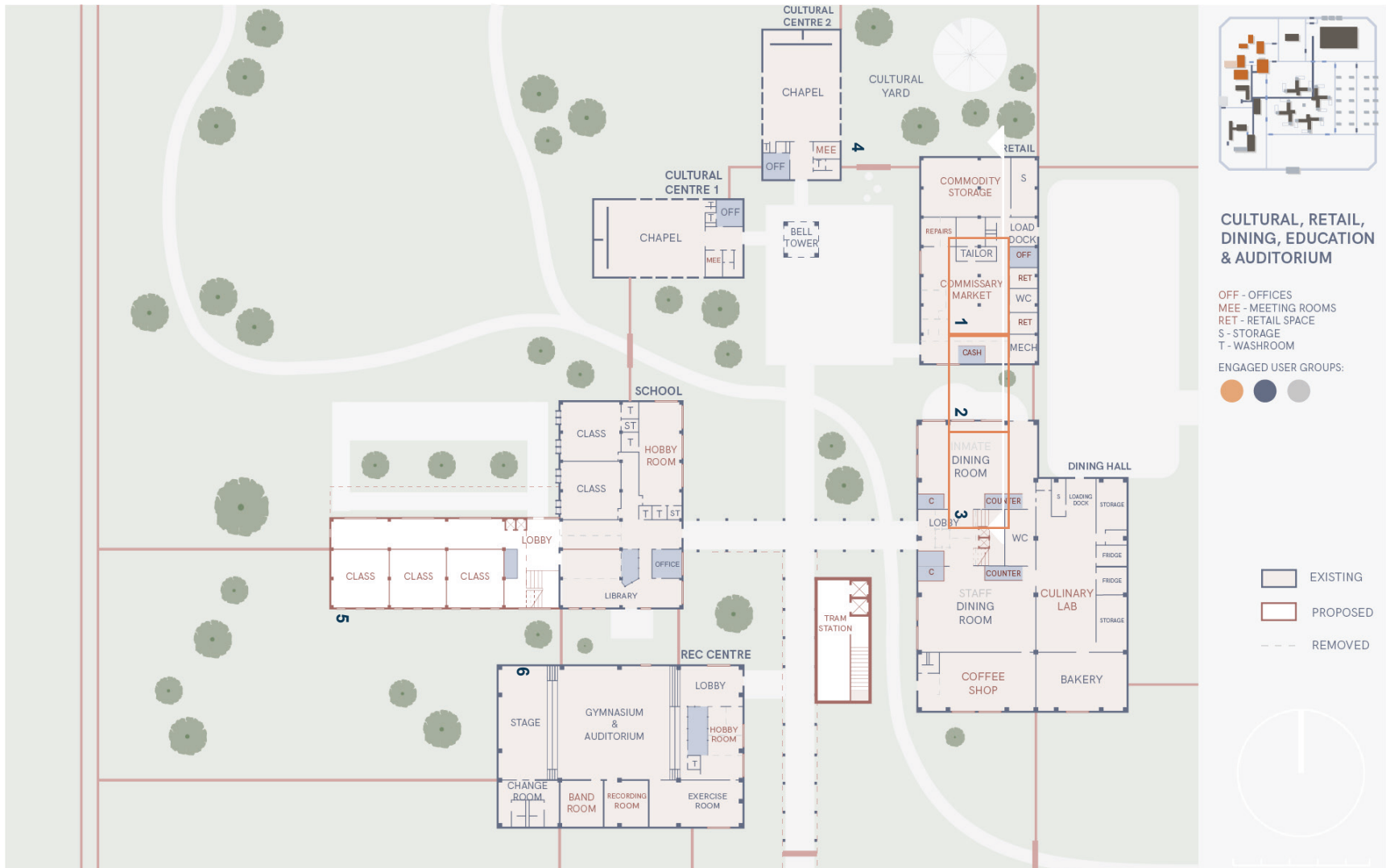
Example of views between programmed and circulation spaces, which increases likelihood of informal surveillance through people passing by.

own education services, the CSC revealed that the only formal education provided in federal prisons consists of basic education or high school completion, and with rare exceptions, there is no longer support provided for post-secondary education (CSC 2015). There are also a variety of learning disabilities and instances of offenders who have a history of unsuccessful schooling (John Howard Society of Canada, 2018). By adding a new wing on the school, it expands the amount of space for the library and not just more programming, but new types of education including collaborative learning and computer labs.

Next in importance, the dining hall, which used to be divided into separate inmate and staff dining, has been opened up to allow for a shared dining experience. Eating around community tables can humanize either user group and the kitchen is operated like a culinary lab for prisoners to learn cooking skills.

The chapel remains open concept with visual connection to the new cultural yard. The yard is exclusive to aboriginal offenders as a means of providing the over representation with a safe place to perform the necessary cultural practices that connects them to their culture and could aid in the healing process. The interior spaces are inclusive to all types of religious and spiritual practice.

Finally, in down time, the auditorium and hobby spaces offer spaces for recreational activities. Theatre, music, ceramics and other art based programs can be a creative outlet for self expression. An American study found a positive correlation between offering a 12 week arts program and improvement in measured areas of time management, social competence, achievement motivation, intellectual flexibility, emotional



Amenity district plan, the market and dining hall (1,2,3) help shift the role of food in the prison. The chapels and cultural yard (4), the school with a new wing of classrooms (5), and the recreation centre (6) all allow for interest based relationships to build.





1



Dining Hall and Commissary Market section, dining and preparing food is an important activity for bringing people together. The dining hall (1) is open to both staff and prisoner use, and offers the opportunity to teach inmates to cook. The commissary market (3) can imitate a retail space for prisoners to run errands and pick up essentials, including food for preparing back in the cellblock.

control, active initiative, and self-confidence (Brewster 2014).

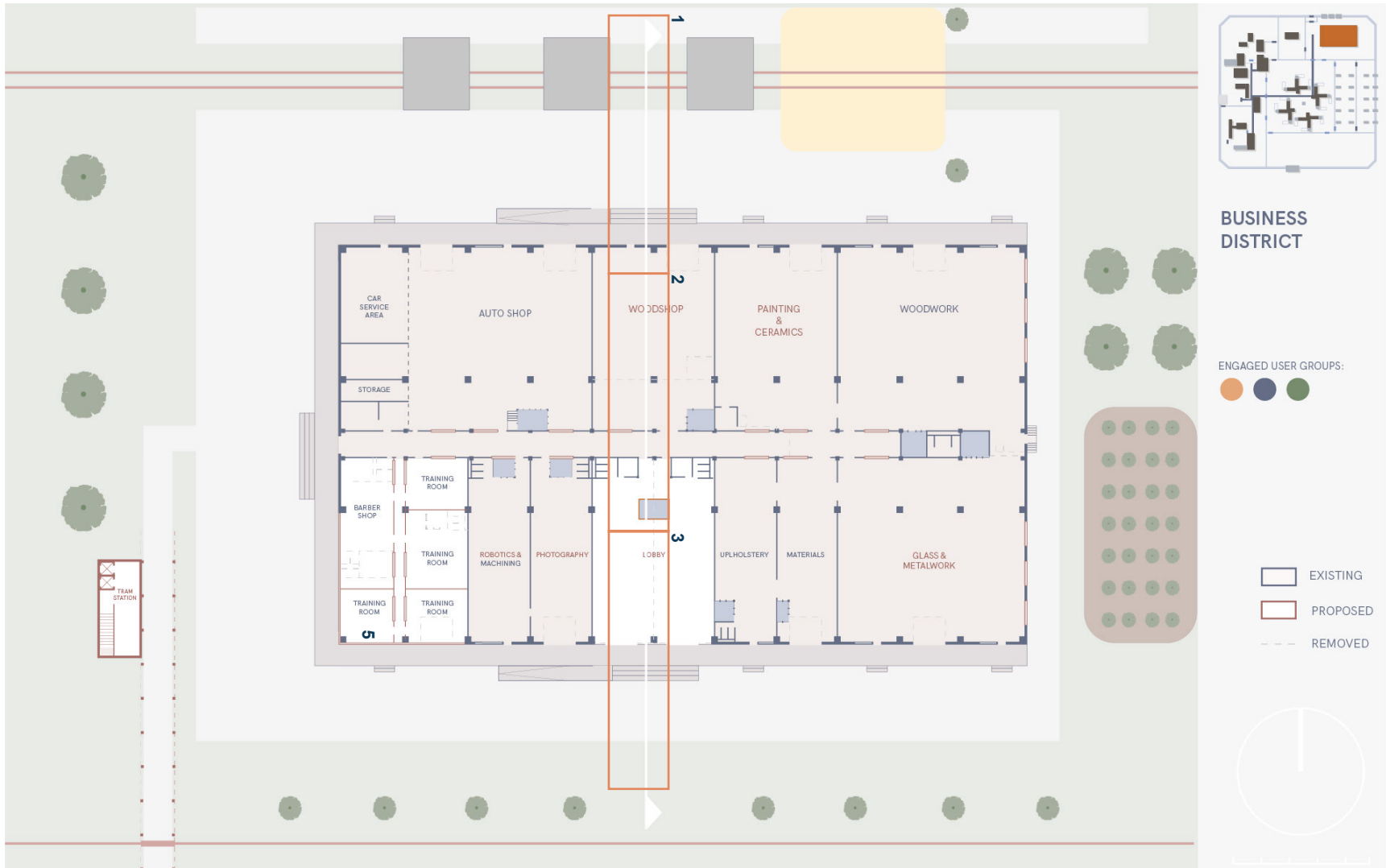
## **Autonomy and Re-Integration**

### ***Workshop - Employable Skills***

Rather than production based spaces being solely about learning trades, the workshop are set up as inmate run entrepreneurial opportunities. CORCAN, the key rehabilitation program of the CSC, focuses on trades based skill building in areas of manufacturing, textiles, construction and services as a means of preparation for release, and even then, it has its problems. These skills are limiting and undermines the ability of inmates to develop. A 2014 report by Public Safety Canada revealed that less than half of federal prisoners got any vocational certifications and of those, only 30% were employed within 15 months of release.

In the same breath as thinking about the carceral environment as a community for social purposes, it can also mirror the city in the sense of having its own economy. The spaces can offer flexibility in use with the different workshops that have existed painting, metal working, wood working, textiles, mechanical with new modernized programming such as robotics, food management, and entrepreneurship. By treating each individual workshop as a small business, inmates can be exposed to money management, time management through self driven production deadlines, and building professional relationships.

The circulation of the building has been re-routed so rather than each workshop having a separate entrance, all traffic must come through a main lobby space. Within the lobby is a main desk, for staff members to be stations for support



Business District plan, where before each workshop was accessed separately, the new lobby (3) forces everyone to pass through on central point. The workshops (2) operate like small businesses (2) to provide goods for the market place accessible to all users (1).





1



2



3

Workshop and Market section, treating the workshop like a small business district where prisoners develop entrepreneurial skills such as handling money, meeting production deadlines and building professional relationships. The businesses can operate in the workshops (2) and sell products to the external community market (1) and the internal carceral community in the building lobby (3).

and security, as well as market stalls for selling prisoner made goods to other users in the carceral community.

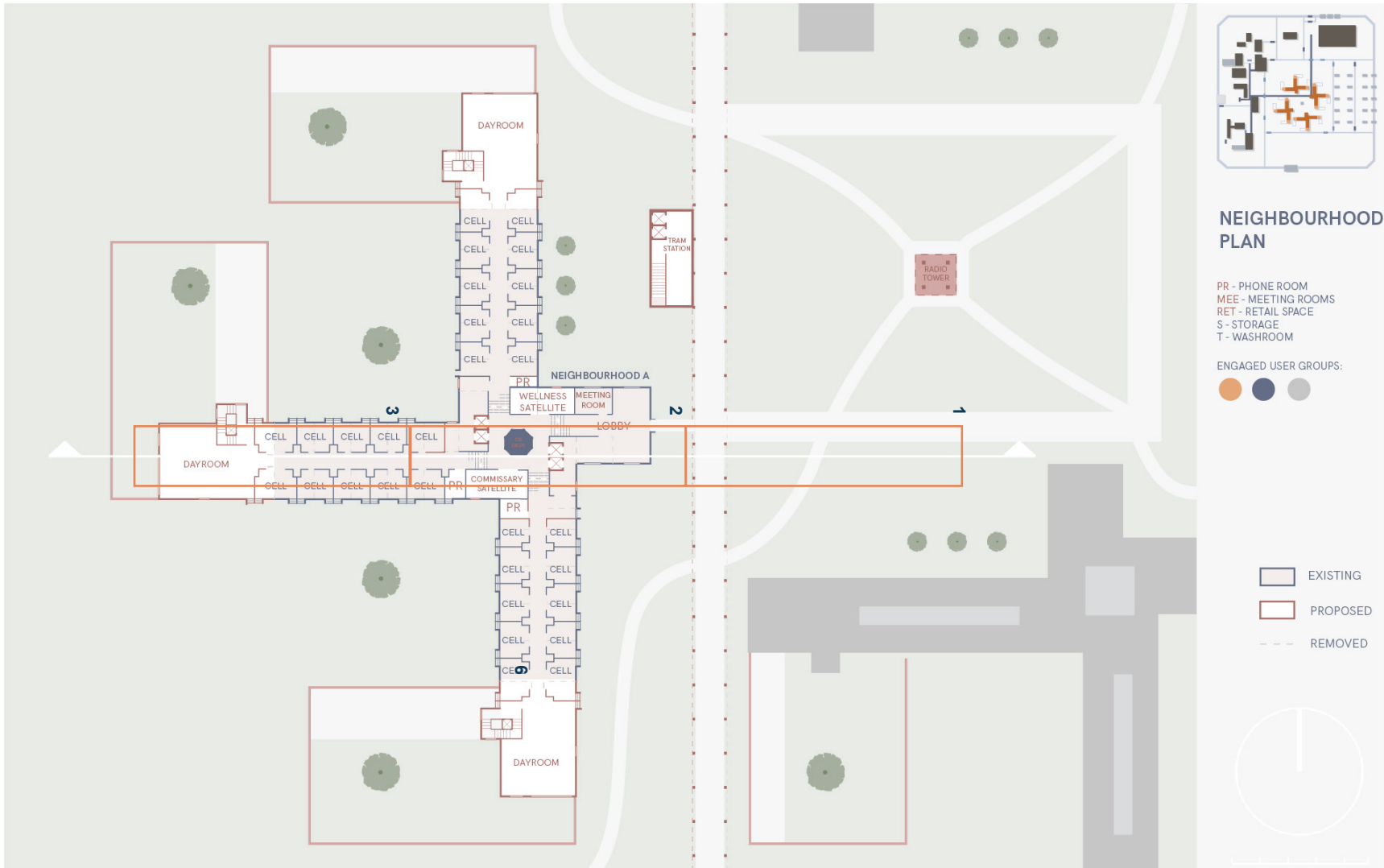
The exterior space, which was previously unengaged, is designed for weekend outdoor markets and has a new outdoor seating area to spend lunch or work breaks. Both of these proposed additions are mirrored on the other side of the site perimeter as a destination spot for the public. The programming does not directly overlap for safety reasons, but the proximity creates a connection and visual access can help break stigmas of prisoners. Taking home products produced in the prison also provides a reminder of their existence within the homes of the outside community.

### ***Cellblocks - Life Skills***

Communities flower in relative isolation (Johnson, 170, 1987). In continuing to build the prison into a city, the cellblocks then represent the neighbourhoods of the city – the wings of the cellblocks become the streets, the cells are the homes. In smaller groups, where there is less uncertainty and risk, one can engage in “higher human needs” than mere survival – including needs for companionship, recognition and for creative outlets.

### ***Neighbourhoods and Identity***

Currently, there are 4 cellblocks on site; each building is connected with fencing to create an enclosed central courtyard. There are two entrances to this courtyard, one to the covered walkway that connects most of the other programming, and a gate that leads to the Workshop. The buildings are monotonous and indistinguishable. Two facades composed of cells face into the courtyard, and the



Cellblock or Neighbourhood plan, the radial plan of the cellblocks can take the benefits of the layout for security reasons as social reasons. Each small wing is provided a new day room (3), the central hub offers satellite services (2), and the outdoor space connects the neighbourhoods(1)



Neighbourhood section, the dayroom (1) has a kitchen, dining space and living space for the wing of 8 inmates to hang out in. Shared and individual responsibilities are encouraged such as cooking and cleaning. The central hub (2) houses commissary and pill pick up spots. The radio tower (3) hosts the prison podcast and a bulletin board for posting updates of community events.

remaining four facades face inaccessible and bare green space.

The location of this district is central in relation to other programs and is also where inmates and finish their day. Paths should be introduced to connect all districts both by foot and by tram. This courtyard in particular acts as the front yards of the neighbourhoods and should be equipped for casual interaction and block parties where all inmates can come together. The centre of this courtyard hosts the radio tower and a bulletin board – the anchor for site information distribution.

By giving each cellblock a unique visual appearance through form and materiality, there can be an identity provided to each neighbourhood and with that a sense of belonging.

### ***Streets and Autonomy***

The existing cellblocks follow a common radial layout, with one monitored entrance that leads into a central security hub before being able to access the spokes of different wings. The cellblocks of Cowansville were designed to have 17 inmates per hallway that share one shower room, and with two floors per wing, there are 32 that share one dayroom. In total there are 96 inmates per cellblock that share three small day rooms. The circulation and shared spaces are all internal with no access to natural lighting. This particular cellblock design has split floors from the centre point – meaning that all hallways are only accessible by a set of stairs, a challenge for aging inmates or ones with low mobility.

With better design practices in communal spaces, the proposal not only provides a more comfortable environment

for inmates but can influence guard behaviour, where they wish to spend more time in communal spaces interacting – control rooms may still be provided to give guards a place to feel like they belong, but should be made small to encourage them not to spend time in them. Direct supervision is favoured wherever possible, as long as it's on a small manageable scale.

In centre of the cellblock, it is important that the central security remains for 24 hour access to a staff member. The lower level contains laundry machines, allowing inmates to hold the responsibility rather than having clothing cleaned at an institutional level. The small, dark dayrooms are replaced by elevators and site service satellite desks. The site service satellite desks are places to organize pick-ups of essentials, such as items from commissary, food to stock the kitchens, mail, prescription pick-up and a small nurse station. The prescription pick up is particularly important for the vulnerable populations. Often morning time slots for free time are short and those who need to pick up prescriptions at the hospital unit sacrifice meal times or in some cases need to travel far distances and wait outside to do so. Access to health care at a small scale is important as well, stat about higher health risks from Adelina books.

At a lower population, staff can recognize every resident and develop personal relationship. By combining two of the small 6'2 x 9' cell into one 13' x 9' cell, the halved capacity is not only more manageable from an administrative point of view but it mitigates the stresses of overcrowding that causes stress and aggression. The division of small autonomous units, between 6 to 15, are stated to have more support and autonomy, as well as less vandalism because it's easy to find the culprit compared to the larger units. The hallway of

cells should be well lit, and can follow the same stream of identity as the exterior of the blocks. If the material choices are unique to each wing, it distinguishes one unit from the next. At the end of each wing, a common space that includes a kitchen to cook for oneself or other inmates in the unit, a space to dine together, and a space to relax together for the unit of 8 provides a space for seemingly normal, but important activities that build connection and normalcy.

## **Wellbeing**

### ***Hospital - Treatment***

The current hospital on site houses prescription pick up, physical health exam rooms, procedural rooms, and 21 beds for housing sick patients or one's going through treatment.

The reliance on segregation units for answering a variety of issues that guards encounter. Removing the existing segregation is a statement in disagreeing with the inhumane practices that have been instilled as acceptable through repeated use.

The new hospital block addition focuses entirely on mental health support. The lower level houses support rooms of different sizes for inmates to seek help,

The second level hosts 20 rooms in recognition that segregation units weren't always used for punitive measures. There are administrative measures, such as holding for transfer, and for protective measures, when an inmate feels at risk or is flagged for being a risk to himself or others. This means rooms should include additional precautions for self-harm such as rounded corners, furniture and fixtures fastened securely to built surfaces, and no chance for ligature.





Admissions and Wellness Centre plan, the admissions and hospital wing needs a bit more security so the exterior space is left enclosed (1). Within that, both exterior spaces (2) and interior (3) are considered for different types of support, with a new wing focusing on mental health.



Admissions and Wellness Centre Section, rather than just being about physical health and new admissions, accessibility, safety, and inclusivity is important in the wellness district. Both to help with a smooth transition into the new environment and to break down the stigma of seeking mental health help.

### ***Cell - A Retreat***

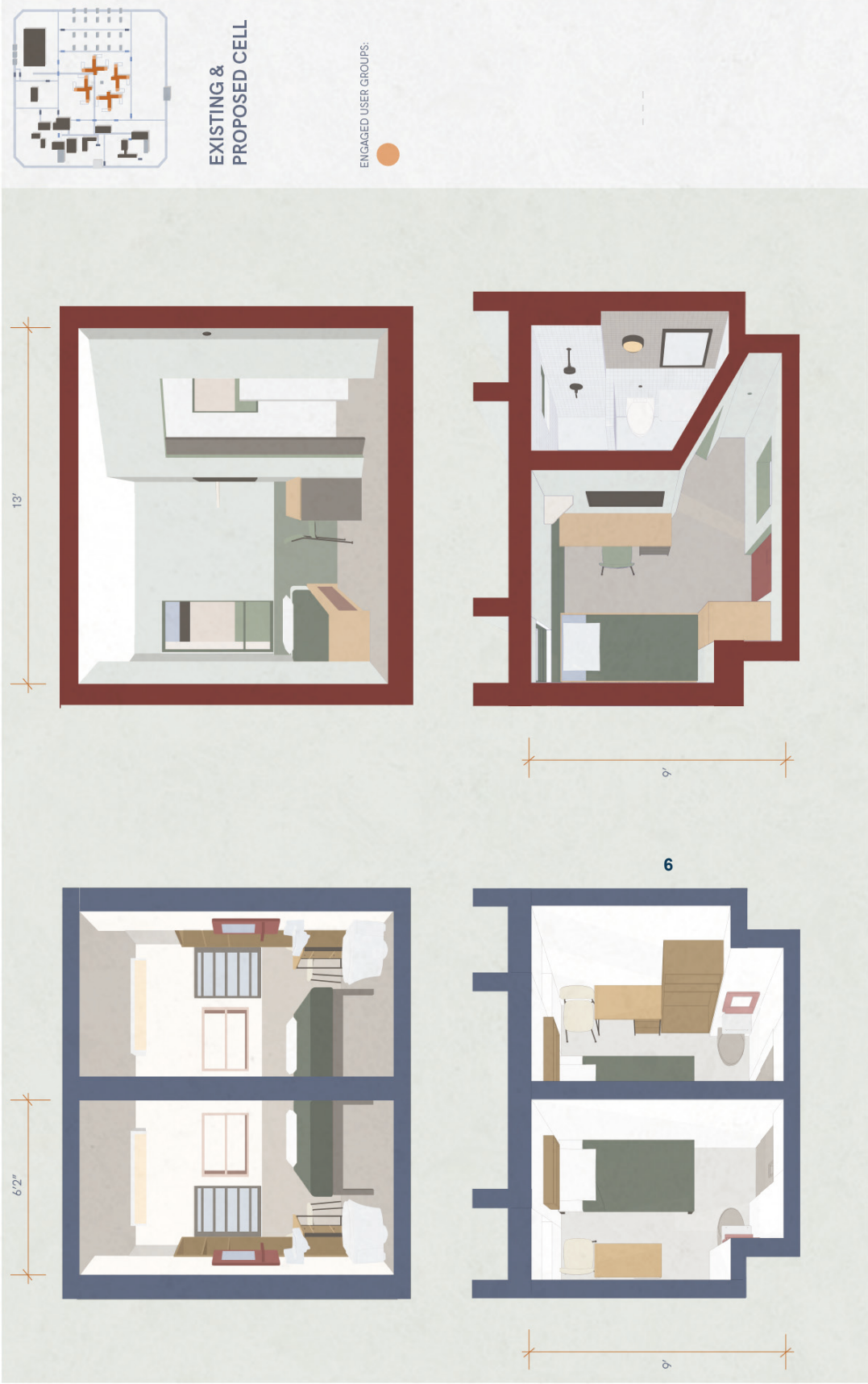
The majority of the prison landscape thus far has considered collective experience, a drastically different approach from the original fortress style prisons which enforced individual experience as much as possible even in group settings. The cell in this model is the one space that is truly for the individual. Isolation doesn't have to be seen as punishment, but rather as a retreat.

The new cell size, of combining two into one, gives enough space for a bed, a desk, a closet, a tv stand and an enclosed bathroom. Previously, it was standard practice to have a toilet and sink exposed in the cell, a dehumanizing way to maintain constant surveillance. Rather now, by combining two small existing cells of 9' x 6'2 to instead a less cramped 9' x 13' room, it allows for a private bathroom and more natural light.



Example of a cell interior with a view into the private bathroom. It has essentially the same components - bed, desk, toilet - but with considerations to comfort rather than just safety.





Cell Plan. Taking two small cramped cells, and merging them into one allows for a more comfortable room with options to customize paint colours and furnishings. The cell should feel more like a retreat than a place to repent.

Privacy and control is introduced through non-ligature style blinds, temperature and light panels, and a door that can be controlled by both staff and individual prisoners. The room also has customization options through painting, textile and finish choices in furniture and furnishings, so similar to branding of the neighbourhoods, the room have a sense of individuality rather than monotony. Alone time is necessary, especially in collective living, so the cell becomes a chance to decompress and recharge after a day of social exposure in a place that feels catered to individual needs and interests.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

With what started off as a general interest in exploring the role of design in ethical scenarios, specifically oppressive environments, has branched into the redefining of an entire system. Correctional Services in Canada has roots in strict discipline and punishment and with such a strong us versus them mentality between the general public and the carceral community, it will continue to operate as such for the time being. There isn't a concrete number for Canada's recidivism rate, which would be a good indicator of how successful the current rehabilitation practices are, but based on understanding of the type of environment and treatment that happens behind bars, it is fair to say that the system can be improved.

That improvement cannot happen solely through architecture, but the infrastructure for a system of this type can benefit in becoming more social, more supportive and more comfortable through its spatial, visual and built form. In its many layers of governance, Correctional Services Canada is slow to adapt change in all aspects despite recognizing its flaws - usually it takes public outrage to see quick ripples in the system. In recent times, there is hope of social justice awakening through the Black Lives Matter Movement and requests to defund or abolish the police, it is difficult not to see the parallels in the themes of those demands and the themes of this project. In the end it comes down to equal treatment, a break down of hierarchy and power, and shifting from force in reinforcement to simply providing better social services.

This proposal dances on the line of realistic and idealistic, and it may not even be the best solution. For many of the

prisoners, especially for those that are non-violent offenses, being locked up might not have even been the appropriate response to seek justice. Prisons might never be able to shake their oppressive role in society, so abolishing them all together might even make sense. But, abolishment is not something that can happen overnight. With this proposal, it becomes a stepping stone in shifting from what prisons represent today, into a rehabilitative approach, that if successful will alleviate the pressure on the whole system and eventually, make the program itself obsolete.



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