GRADUATION PLAN

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Studio
Theme ExploreLab
Studio coordinators Robert Nottrot, John Heintz
Argumentation of choice of the studio To elaborate on a personal fascination in the form of a collaborative research (together with Bob de Rijk) and an individual design during a year long graduation project.
Subject Empty prisons in the Netherlands.
Teachers Main Filip Geerts
Research John Heintz
Building Technology Karel Vollers

Title
Title of the graduation project Remnants of reform: Understanding the former prison and its potential

PRODUCT

1. Problem statement
Born out of a need to control (bad) human behaviour and isolate it from society, the prison has an effect that reaches far beyond its architectural boundaries into the social structures of society and its media; we all know what prisons are and what purpose they serve (or at least we think we do). Apart from this public character and its inherent closed off characteristics, the prison also functions as a political instrument, as it “embodies the largest power the state exercises over its citizens in times of peace.” (Morris & Rothman, 1995, p. xiii) It is therefore not surprising that scientist from multiple disciplines such as sociology, penology, anthropology, architecture and law are concerned with the prison system. As an architectural object, we can see the prison as a physical solution to a paradoxical societal problem, namely that incarceration must punish and reform.

It is fair to say that the prison has a central, yet complex role within our society.

Due to financial cutbacks the Dutch government has forced The Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency to close nineteen of their penitentiaries, which suffer from a lack of occupancy, over the next three years. Because the incentive for this masterplan is purely financial, there is little to no consideration of any future for these buildings.

This is specifically problematic, for the inflexible nature of these buildings does not allow for straightforward reuse by means of a new program. We think that due to the overall significance of these prisons, both culturally and architecturally, they deserve to be preserved, without reducing them to a thrill tourism destination. However, this does not imply that they cannot be transformed in one way or another.

For some part, prison architecture is the result of the optimistic idea that imprisonment in a specifically designed building could do good. In the case where these prisons lose their primary function, it is this idea of reform which opens new doors for a positive program for future reuse. Central to our research will therefore be the question:

In what way does prison architecture attempt to reform human behavior?
With the research we will have gained insight in the reformative power of prison architecture. With the design, we want to redirect this power, thus creating a building with a new use, founded on aspects of the old.

2. Goal

Research Goal
It is our intention to create a greater understanding of the relation between the physical prison building on the one hand and the systems of thought that birthed them on the other with a focus on the reformative agenda. For this two time periods become of special importance, they both have a very different take on reform and the resulting prisons are likewise in stark contrast. The first, stretching roughly from 1850 to 1918, was defined by solitary confinement and saw the birth and expansion of the cellular prison. The second, put in law in 1953 and very influential till the late 70’, was characterized by strong belief in re-socialization that had to be organized in highly differentiated groups. By analyzing the literature and a small selection of prison buildings from the corresponding time frames we aim to understand the physical expression of a system of thought aimed at reforming prisoners. Each of us will focus on one of the two time periods enabling us to work on our own but in a complementary fashion. By juxtaposing our results we can gain further insights into the relation between the buildings and their theory.

With this research we aim to understand these prison buildings in the light of both their theory and their reality, as this is necessary to fully appreciate and assess the potential of the prison building for future use.

What are the different theories involved in prison design in the Netherlands?
How do these theories compare?
How are they reflected in the architecture they produce(d)?
How do other similar building programs and their manifestations in architecture compare?

The roles are divided in such a way that Bob de Rijk will research the time period characterized by reform through re-socialization where I will be focusing on reform through solitude.

We want to present the outcome of this research both as a thesis and as an exhibition that showcases the material. We think the exhibition will be a valuable way to communicate the physical components of our research, where the architectural model, together with our analytical drawings can take center stage while being supported and contextualized by text. In the thesis these relations will be inverted. The exhibition is an opportunity to showcase the research to a “wider” audience.

Design goal
With the research we will have gained insight into the reformative power embedded in the prison building. With the design, we want to redirect and or challenge this power, in a positive program that critically responds to the urban and social conditions found at the site.

In order for our designs to continue on the findings of our research, we will each work with a prison from our own time frame. We have chosen PI Het Wolvenplein in Utrecht, as the oldest solitary penitentiary, and PI Overmaz prison in Maastricht as the oldest social penitentiary. Because the two prisons differ in both their architecture and theory, two completely different outcomes are to be expected. By this logic my design goal can be best formulated as follows:

To redesign PI Het Wolvenplein in such a way that it works with and/or challenges the reformative power of the building.

The functional aspect of our design will be informed by our general research and our design research. A first program inspiration would be the inversion of the dynamics of the prison, where it could function not as a place of incarceration, but as place of refuge where one could escape. These possible programs will however be very dependent on their context.
PROCESS

3. Method description

Research
The different aspects of our research ask for different approaches. The clearest way to explain the methodology is to divide it into the chapters of which our thesis will consist:

The first chapter will function as a historical framework and as such rely on an extensive literature study that takes a variety of fields into account (history, penology, critical philosophy, sociology), taking a critical perspective on the emergence of the prison and it’s ‘development’.

The second chapter will be a very concise stipulation of the two different reform agendas envisioned in their respective time frames. Here the method to attaining this material will be by studying primary governmental sources. Each of these periods will be researched in their own respect and in comparison; firstly synchronously presenting two studies followed by a section where the two are compared and analyzed from both viewpoints. This is a crucial part of the method that will continue in the subsequent chapters.

The third chapter will use the theoretical programs of reform created in the previous chapter too analyze a small selection of existing prison buildings. Identifying and critically reflecting on the different elements that make up these prisons, trying to understand their position in regard to the theory; bridging the void between the theoretical program and the inhabited architectural space. Different forms of analysis will be utilized for the research: mapping (morphology, system, spatial, activity/ritual), spatial modeling etc.; the theoretical research will complement and inform these analyses.

The fourth chapter will seek a comparative approach extending beyond the scope of the prison. Using the program distilled in the second chapter, we will look at and compare buildings with similar functional requirements. Taking in this sense a top down approach in trying to understand how theory “crystalizes” in an architectural form.

Design
As said above it is our aim to supplement on and/or challenge the “material” and social conditions of our site. Modifications and continuations of the systems that govern these prisons will be used as stepping-stones towards a reinterpretation of the buildings. In this way the logics of the material and the site will help in finding and proposing a suitable function.

4. Literature and general practical reference
The literature and references are briefly mentioned in the method description above. A complete bibliography for the research will extend beyond the scope of this document. For this reason we have added it as supplement that can be consulted if need be.

REFLECTION

5. Relevance
The societal relevance of the project has been made evident in the problem statement. The research however does also bear relevance in a bigger (architectural) scientific framework. Architects often claim to be able to influence, promote and/or determine human behavior and experience with their architecture, in the Netherlands also referred to as ‘maakbaarheid’. In this discussion the prison is an extreme example of a coercive building, backed by an institution, which aims to achieve certain human behavior and as such the proposed research can be seen as a valuable contribution to this discussion. On an even wider scope the research can be seen in the context of penology and as such it raises questions concerning the morals and inalienable rights the prison represents and ultimately its very existence.
### Maandag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en ontwerp in de vorm van proceeskronkelen en presentatie
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en ontwerp in de vorm van proceeskronkelen en presentatie
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

### Dinsdag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

### Woensdag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

### Donderdag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

### Vrijdag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

### Zaterdag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

### Zondag
- Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en presentatie

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### Reflectie P2
- Onderzoek: Reflectie op onderzoek, exposities en ontwerp
- Onderzoek: Reflectie op onderzoek, exposities en ontwerp

### Onderzoek: Schrijven Introductie en hoofdstuk 1: “Historical Framework”, afschrijven hoofdstuk 2 “Defining Reform”

### Ontwerp: Verdere definities van functie en programmatische onderdelen > ontwerp omgeving, massa & plan

### Onderzoek: Afschrijven hoofdstuk 3 “Analysis of the physical”

### Ontwerp: Uiteenzetten functieverdeling, ontwerpen in ruimtelijke doorsnede

### Onderzoek: Schrijven hoofdstuk 4 “comparative research”

### Ontwerp: Opzet technisch en klimatologisch system, ontwerpen in facade fragment en detail

### Onderzoek: Totale afronding + Curateel plan verder uitwerken

### Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken (proces)tekeningen + modellen + Building Technology - ontwerp terugkoppelen aan onderzoek

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### Reflectie P3
- Onderzoek: Reflectie op onderzoek, exposities en ontwerp
- Onderzoek: Reflectie op onderzoek, exposities en ontwerp

### Onderzoek: Terecht koppelen P3 naar onderzoek en curateel plan > herschrijven waar nodig + verdere uitwerking exposities

### Ontwerp: Terecht koppelen P3 naar onderzoek en curateel plan > herschrijven waar nodig + verdere uitwerking exposities

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### Portrait P4 Week
- Onderzoek: Omzetten tekstueel onderzoek naar te exposeren stukken

### Ontwerp: Terecht koppelen onderzoek naar ontwerp > bepalen definitieve programmaopzet

### Ontwerp: Verdere uitwerking ontwerp op alle schaalniveaus

### Onderzoek: Romte koppelen P4 naar onderzoek en ontwerp > presentatie herschrijven waar nodig + concreet volgen

### Ontwerp: Terecht koppelen P4 naar onderzoek en ontwerp > presentatie herschrijven waar nodig + concreet volgen

### Onderzoek: Verder uitwerken ontwerp op basis van tekortkomingen duidelijk geworden tijdens de P4

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### Reflectie P5 Week
- Onderzoek: Terecht koppelen P5 naar onderzoek en curateel plan > herschrijven waar nodig + verdere uitwerking exposities

### Ontwerp: Terecht koppelen P5 naar onderzoek en curateel plan > herschrijven waar nodig + verdere uitwerking exposities

### Onderzoek: Verder uitwerken ontwerp op basis van tekortkomingen duidelijk geworden tijdens de P5

### Ontwerp: Verder uitwerken ontwerp op basis van tekortkomingen duidelijk geworden tijdens de P5

### Onderzoek: Presentatie klaar maken ontwerp in de vorm van proceeskronkelen en presentatie

### Ontwerp: Presentatie klaar maken onderzoek en ontwerp in de vorm van proceeskronkelen en presentatie

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### Reflectie P6 Week
- Onderzoek: Terecht koppelen P6 naar onderzoek en curateel plan > herschrijven waar nodig + concreet volgen

### Ontwerp: Terecht koppelen P6 naar onderzoek en curateel plan > herschrijven waar nodig + concreet volgen

### Onderzoek: Verder uitwerken ontwerp op basis van tekortkomingen duidelijk geworden tijdens de P6

### Ontwerp: Verder uitwerken ontwerp op basis van tekortkomingen duidelijk geworden tijdens de P6

### Onderzoek: Verder uitwerken ontwerp op basis van tekortkomingen duidelijk geworden tijdens de P6