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Just design: Healthy prisons and the architecture of hope

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Abstract
This article develops the notion that institutional places and spaces are layered with meaning and that their architecture and design have a profound psychological and physiological influence on those who live and work within them. Mindful of the intrinsic link between 'beauty' and 'being just', the article explores the potential 'healing' or rehabilitative role of penal aesthetics. As many countries modernise their prison estates, replacing older facilities that are no longer fit-for-purpose with new, more 'efficient' establishments, this article discusses examples of international best (and less good) practice in penal and hospital settings. It reflects on what those who commission and design new prisons might learn from pioneering design initiatives in healthcare environments and asks whether the philosophies underpinning the 'architecture of hope' that Maggie's Cancer Care Centres exemplify could be incorporated into prisons of the future. The article was originally presented as a public lecture in the annual John V Barry memorial lecture series at the University of Melbourne on 24 November 2016.

Keywords
Prisons, architecture, design, political, economy, Maggie's Centres

Introduction: Behavioural atrophy in traditional hospitals and prisons

Prison buildings share many similarities with hospitals. Both tend to be large in scale, densely occupied and are accessible every day, though with temporal and spatial restrictions imposed, to numerous visitors, both professional and ordinary members

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of the public. Both operate around the clock, need to be lit constantly and must ensure that electrical devices, including security alarms and cameras, are active at all times, making them environmental 'toxic hogs' (Jewkes & Moran, 2015; Stohr & Wozniak, 2014, p. 198). But aside from the practicalities of the building types, prisons and hospitals both convey clear messages about the individuals within and how they are expected to behave. In neither setting do most occupants usually have control over egress, and in both, they are infantilised by the fact that they must depend on staff for almost everything that is vital to their existence, which frequently results in 'behavioural atrophy' (cf. Goffman, 1961; Spivack, 1984, p. 31). Being in either hospital or prison can involve physical and psychological crowding and isolation (sometimes simultaneously) and sensory deprivation and overload (also simultaneously). So severe can be the effects of these stressors that serving a long-term custodial sentence has not only been shown to accelerate the ageing process but has been analogously compared to being diagnosed with a chronic or terminal illness (Jewkes, 2005).

But although prisons and hospitals traditionally have shared an ethos of discipline and surveillance that dehumanises their occupants and instils feelings of fear and vulnerability, there has in very recent times evolved a different approach to designing and building healthcare institutions – described by the architectural theorist behind 'Maggie's', a growing non-clinical, cancer care centre network, as an 'architecture of hope' (Jencks, 2015). As the UK and Australia expand and 'modernise' their custodial estates, this article discusses some of the philosophies behind Maggie's Centres to consider the extent to which those who commission, plan and design new prisons could learn from architectural innovation in health settings. Drawing on ongoing international research into the role of prison architects and the effects of custodial design, the article also reflects on the role played by prison architects in the production and reproduction of punitive philosophies and practices.

In what follows, I will draw both on my observations and extended interactions with architects I have worked with, while advising bodies including the UK Ministry of Justice, the New Zealand Department of Corrections, Victoria Corrections in Australia and the Irish Prison Service (IPS), and on an analysis of architect practices' websites. I also draw on extended interviews with 14 architectural professionals who have designed prisons in England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Australia and New Zealand. Of these 14 participants, 7 were interviewed statically (usually at their offices) in a semi-structured format, and the other 7 were each interviewed on two occasions –once static and semi-structured – and then again in a more unstructured way in walked interviews around one of the prisons they had designed. These interviews took place between 2014 and 2016. Six of the 14 have followed up with further communications either in person or by telephone and email. Given the commercial sensitivity of their work, I have anonymised participants. Of the 14 prison architects interviewed, 13 were male and one female. It is beyond the scope of this article to comment on this gender imbalance, but it may be worthy of further investigation. By contrast, the majority of prison landscape gardeners I have met, who are not included in this sample, have been women.

Architecture that harms and the architecture of hope

Within criminological studies, it is well documented that prison architecture is inscribed with meaning (Evans, 1982; Hancock & Jewkes, 2012; Jewkes & Johnston, 2007; Pratt, 2002), but it is generally understood that this meaning derives from state and societal attitudes to convicted offenders. In other words, we can infer from a prison's façade and internal organisation what the particular philosophical stance on punishment was at the time it was commissioned, designed and constructed. Rarely, however, has the individual architect's role in the design of punishment been discussed; not only in the sense of physically creating custodial places and spaces but also the extent to which the architect wittingly or unwittingly produces and reproduces punitive and/or harmful philosophies and practices. Further, and relatedly, there has been relatively little research on how institutional design is actually experienced by prisoners and staff on a day-to-day basis (although see Jewkes, Moran, & Turner, in press).

Criminologists have recently borrowed from geography and organisation studies to describe the 'affective' dimensions of institutional space, the role of aesthetics in deadening or blunting the senses ('*an*-aesthetics') and penal architecture as a technology of disenchantment (see Jewkes & Moran, 2017, for an overview). However, it is in studies of healthcare architecture and environmental psychology that we find some of the most interesting work on the impact of design on those who live and work in institutions. For example, in his classic, 1984 work *Institutional Settings*,[1] Spivack notes that every building, room and space has a 'personality' that makes a statement to its occupants about what the institution, and society at large, thinks about them; a statement which each occupant internalises and acts on accordingly. So, 'hard architecture' (bars on windows, concrete walls, hard-surface floors, drab colours, indestructible and uncomfortable furniture) not only destroys the prisoner's (or patient's) self-esteem and influences the ways in which staff think of and behave towards the people in their custody and care but may also determine certain types of identity and behaviour.

Indeed, while conventional penal aesthetics such as cage-like interiors, bolted-to-the-floor furniture and vandal-resistant surfaces overtly communicate to prisoners that 'you are animals' and 'you are potential vandals', respectively, even benign aspects of institutional design and décor can play tricks with vulnerable minds. Describing various optical illusions created by institutional corridors and tunnels, Spivack (1984) highlights the deleterious, hallucinatory effects that glare on gloss-painted walls, reflections on glass, contrasting material textures and deceptive finishes (e.g. a wood-grain façade on a metal door) can have on those who are confused, agitated or in mental distress. A built environment without variability can be equally damaging, especially to those who have experienced trauma. Taken to extremes, architectural theorist Charles Jencks believes that an 'antiseptic', 'all white', sensorially depriving environment can stunt the growth of the brain, denying the self the richness of 'stuff' it requires to write its own personality (Jencks, cited in Richards, 2012, p. 129).

We might posit, then, that architecture is a matter of activity; a verb not a noun. '"To architect" is to construct your personality, as well as the building' (Jencks, cited in Richards, 2012, p. 131) and environmental cues help to form narratives of self and identity. One of the limiting factors in contemporary prison design is that architects rarely, if ever, consult with serving prisoners during a prison design process about even

the practicalities of what works in design and what does not, let alone about the extent to which the design of the building(s) they are confined in inhibit or nurture their personalities and self. This is not always the architect's choice: a professional with over 25 years of experience designing prisons in Australia and New Zealand told me:

> We had an ex-prisoner on one of the jobs. He came to all the round-table discussions and he was really enlightening. But it's rare. Whenever I'm taken to a prison, I try to talk to the prisoners, I do my best to take them aside and chat, but the guys in suits tend not to like it or encourage it. Makes them twitchy for some reason [laughing]. (Interviewee 8)

Generally though, architects might be accused of neglecting both personality and body of the eventual occupant of their designed spaces; 'architecture's cosmology is more context orientated … [At best] they orientate towards interactions and flows of people as they inhabit spaces', rather than at individual lived experience (Buse, Nettleton, Martin, & Twigg, 2016, n.p.). This appears to be a particular problem in the design of incarceration. Buse et al. (2016) write about architects' constructions of later life and how they envisage the ageing body when designing residential care homes for the elderly. They found that architects have an empathetic engagement with end users which, while not unproblematic (architects to some extent inevitably position the ageing body within discourses of disease and decline), is nonetheless generally positive and flexible. Older people in society at large are increasingly represented as active and independent consumers of care, and residential care homes reflect the more varied, choice-based decisions at their disposal. But more than this, the architects of care homes were found to be self-referential, drawing on their own experiences (we all anticipate that we will age and become elderly), or those of their relatives (typically, their elderly parents), to imagine the lived bodily experiences of later life and apply these to their designs. Sometimes they moved beyond hypothetically imagining themselves or close relatives as eventual users of their buildings and physically put themselves in the spaces they created, using their bodies to 'emphatically and pragmatically experience settings as they developed' for example, by getting in wheelchairs to move around the building and see how 'wheelchair friendly it is' (Buse et al., 2016, n.p.).

These kinds of techniques undoubtedly 'create a powerful *feel* for bodies' and cultivate strategies of 'empathetic design' based on 'shared vulnerabilities' (ibid.), but they simply do not happen in the milieu of prison design, for perhaps obvious reasons. Not only is empathetic engagement unlikely in prison design because most architectural professionals cannot or do not envisage themselves or their close relatives ending up in custody, but they are inevitably heavily influenced by their previous prison designs, which is one of the reasons that evolution in prison design is so very slow. Old ideas are regurgitated and lack of end user engagement in the design process ensures that lessons are never learned (Jewkes & Moran, 2017). In addition, in popular media and culture, the prison remains imbued with negative representations, and prison architects are no more immune to these imaginings than anyone else. Even if an individual architect could empathise with the eventual occupants of their prison buildings (and one of the most imaginative and inspiring architectural professionals I encountered during my research was someone whose son had spent time in prison), the application of humane, progressive, creative design input may be almost entirely stifled by the brief

given to them – which has been the case with the prisons constructed in the last decade in England and Wales (six 'Physical and Special Security Guides' were described by Interviewees 1 and 2 as their design 'bible').

The consequences of all these inhibitors to empathetic design are that prison spaces are commonly generative of only negative meanings, anchoring the 'prisoner' in discourses of otherness and punitive punishment. If architects exhibit any 'playfulness' (Hancock & Jewkes, 2012) at all, it tends to be with design cues that give a nod to the prisons of the nineteenth century. For example, one architect commented that the design of the railings around the accommodation wings in a new prison in England deliberately resembled an archetypal 'sunburst' design found in many of its Victorian forebears (Interviewee 2). This same architect appeared to have given little or no thought to the individual lived bodies who would inhabit and move through the spaces he had designed.

On the other hand, 'perceiving in the hypothetical mode' (Buse et al., 2016, n.p.) or, to put it another way, how architects configure the eventual user experience of their buildings, can have perverse and tragic consequences. The most extreme example is probably Paul Marvin Rudolph, former Head of Architecture at Yale, who was responsible for the Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center, built in Boston, MA, in the late 1960s. Citing it as a 'notorious example of architecture's power to agitate, confuse and fatally overwhelm',[2] Koh (2010) gives us her interpretation of Rudolph's intent:

> He tried to recreate the hallucinogenic or exaggerated mental and emotional states of the insane with never ending inchoate corridors, a chapel with a dismal atmosphere and macabre twisting stairways, one of which, like an oubliette in a medieval keep, leads nowhere. The building's dramatic structures and subliminal imagery (there is a thinly veiled frog's head looking out from the building's facade) make the Lindemann Center very expressive, but also foreboding and dangerous. With a romanticized view of mental illness, Rudolph made the building 'insane' in the hope that it would sooth those who dwell in it by reflecting the insanity they feel within. Unfortunately, the outcome is not what the architect had hoped for. (p. 148)

The dismal chapel was in fact closed a year after it opened because a patient set fire to himself on the concrete slab altar. A psychiatrist working there claimed the man was simply following his environmental cues because the altar 'looks like a place that should be used for human sacrifice' (quoted in Ledford, 2014).

General hospitals are arguably no less guilty of inflicting further harm on those who are treated within them than psychiatric hospitals. Describing the windowless, neon-lit corridor of Edinburgh's Western General Hospital in which his wife, Maggie Keswick, received her weekly chemotherapy treatment as a form of 'architectural aversion therapy', Charles Jencks suggests that if there is an architecture that helps you survive, it is not to be found in the modern hospital. Keswick herself described the conventional hospital as 'alienating' and said it induced feelings of worthlessness (Martin, 2016). To counter this, Keswick planned with Jencks a blueprint for an alternative space, one room inside the hospital ward in Edinburgh 'with a view on to nature, where one could sit peacefully between bouts of noxious therapy' (Jencks, 2015, p. 7). The blueprint for that one room has since evolved into an architectural brief used to guide the

design of 21 'Maggie's Centres' in the UK and around the world. Interestingly, the brief asks its architects to design buildings that hold qualities of safety and welcome in tension, alongside atmospheric affects that are surprising and thought provoking (Butterfield & Martin, 2016). Imagine if this was the brief given to prison architects.

Although Keswick died of cancer in 1993, the Maggie's Centre network has continued under the direction of her husband and is now a global network of cancer care centres, many of which have been designed by high-profile 'starchitects' such as Frank Gehry, Norman Foster, Rem Koolhaas, Richard Rogers and Zaha Hadid. The centres are all unique and architecturally striking (many are breathtakingly beautiful), but they are linked by design that is defined by inarguably positive qualities: light, space, openness, intimacy, views, connectedness to nature and domestic in space and feeling. In insisting on these commonalities in design, Jencks is not advocating some deterministic equation (or placebo effect) between architecture and health, but he does believe that modernism created a rupture in the long, intimate relationship between architecture and health. 'In a way', he says, 'Maggie's Centres reconnect with this "secret tradition" ... Yes, we need medical environments to cure us, but we also need *to feel like people again*, rather than patients' (Jencks, 2015, p. 7).

The questions this might raise among those interested in whether prison architecture and design can help to deliver rehabilitation (not only academic researchers but also politicians, policymakers, prison managers and even, perhaps, prison architects) are as follows: should we be purposefully designing penal institutions that make individuals feel like people again, rather than prisoners? What would be an architecture of hope for prisoners? Hope of rehabilitation? Hope of getting off drugs and other addictions? Hope of maintaining normal family relationships? Hope of a meaningful future? Hope of simply surviving the experience? Could buildings help to achieve these things? If 'architecture can help to cure cancer', as a newspaper story about Maggie's Centres put it (Rose in the *Guardian*, 6 May 2010), might architecture help to cure crime?

The political economy of prison design

> Once a building has been constructed it... begins to flash out messages about that patient [or prisoner] which are necessarily implicit in the design. (Spivack, 1984, p. 88)

The history of imprisonment in Anglophone nations tells us that the last 50 years have been punctuated by appalling conditions, serious assaults and riots (most notoriously at Attica, New York, in, 1971 where 43 prisoners and staff lost their lives), rising levels of overcrowding, mental illness and drug use and shameful rates of suicide and self-harm. All these problems have combined to create a sense of hopelessness among many at the sheer scale and endurance of the crises affecting our prison facilities. Yet those who procure, commission, plan and design new prisons continue to place no less faith in bricks-and-mortar (or, more commonly now, pre-fabricated concrete) solutions to pressing social problems than did their Victorian forebears, who ensured that the second half of the nineteenth century truly was an age of institutional expansion (Cross & Jewkes, in press). And while various architectural and spatial experiments have been tried in corrections over the intervening years, including campus-style layouts,

podular design, 'new generation' or 'third generation' design (see Grant & Jewkes, 2015, for an overview), they have swiftly been abandoned in favour of a return to Panopticon-style blocks of multiple storeys with long spurs of radially orientated cells around a central observation point. One of the few differences between corrections facilities built today and those of the mid-1800s is that they have increased to 'super-sized' proportions in order to meet growing demand (Jewkes & Moran, 2014).

All too often, then, politicians and policymakers have fallen back on the belief that the heavily surveilled, 'rack 'em and stack 'em' warehousing model is not only the most effective way of maintaining order and control, but that it satisfies public demands for tougher responses to crime, thus garnering votes at election times. Additionally, as the political rhetoric would have it, prisons must punish as well as rehabilitate. Responding to these populist demands in what seems like an astoundingly retrograde move, Corrections Services New South Wales are currently constructing two 'rapid-build prisons' (Macquarie and Hunter Correctional Centres), each holding 400 maximum-security prisoners in dormitory-style accommodation, with two further rapid-builds planned for when suitable sites have been identified. Part of a wider, $3.8 billion expansion programme entailing the design and build of over a dozen new facilities across the state, the plans also include a 1700 bed facility near Grafton in the north of the state which, when completed, will be the largest correctional facility in Australia (see http://www.correctiveservices.justice.nsw.gov.au/new-prisons).

The very fact that 'rapid-build prison' has become part of the lexicon of prison planning is arguably shocking in respect of the human dimensions of incarceration, conjuring up as it does an industrial scale, factory-line production of units in which to foment human misery. But aside from the moral and ethical questions that arise from the emergence of the 'rapid-build prison', its manifestation might be regarded as surprising in practical terms because the design and construction of a prison usually relies on a highly complex framework that brings together an intricate network of individuals, companies, policies and capital, often with competing interests, within a wider nexus of national and local politics (Moran, Turner, & Jewkes, 2016). In many other ways, however, the idea of prisons being developed 'as quickly as possible', showing the team's 'mobility to provide for the client', as Macquarie's construction company and consortium leader, Hansen Yuncken, puts it (see http://www.hansenyuncken.com.au/projects/justice-and-police/) is depressingly predictable. Although tenders are purported to be rewarded on a balance of cost and quality in an effort to secure 'the best bid' (Greve, 2001, p. 270), the 'best' often equates to the quickest and cheapest to construct. In this case in New South Wales (NSW), the whole competitive tendering process took only four weeks, and the successful bidder makes a virtue of the fact that their use of new construction materials and 'value-engineered' (i.e. cheap) solutions has stripped the design back to basics:

> ... the incorporation of multiple forms of build methodologies including offsite prefabricated steel structures, precast concrete structures, cladding, modular buildings (some over 1,000 m^2) and... Dincel [a quick, low-cost construction material] will enable fast production on site. The pre-emptive works have commenced with teams coming up with design and engineering solutions which are deadline driven by the needs of the Department of Justice to

> have the practical completion of the facilities in a very short time frame. (see http://www.hansenyuncken.com.au/projects/justice-and-police/)

The need to build a new facility is, of course, sometimes genuinely urgent, so that prisoners held in establishments that must close because they are no longer operable can be rehoused quickly and with minimal disruption to their sentence planning. NSW's current plans, however, are in response to more macro, populist-political pressures on the system caused by huge surges in numbers of both sentenced and remand prisoners and anticipated further rises over the coming years. As Tonry (2004) has observed, governments decide how much punishment they want, and these decisions are in no simple way related to crime rates, patterns and trends.

There is another economic consideration, however. Like so many jurisdictions, prison planning and construction is being used in NSW as a means of job creation. Demand for the building of prisons to stimulate local economic development and employment is especially prevalent in rural areas with large landmasses but little industry. Cherry and Kunce (2001) found that in the US, policymakers have located correctional facilities in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods partly because there is less 'NIMBY' protest than in prosperous areas and unable to attract private commerce, these communities may be more willing to accept opportunities 'discarded' by others.[3] In these economically lagging neighbourhoods, prisons can be seen as a golden ticket to regeneration. NSW Corrections Minister David Elliott's announcement that 'Australia's largest prison' would create 1100 jobs during construction and another 600 permanent jobs once it opened, injecting $560 million into the local economy (*ABC News*, 2017) is reminiscent of local media reports when Wrexham in North Wales was announced as the 'winner' of the competitive process to get a new 'super-prison' on the site of a former Firestone rubber factory; land that was already owned by the Welsh Government following the end of tyre manufacturing on the site in the 1970s. Many local councillors treated the news as if they had won the lottery, which, in a sense, they had, as the new prison (HMP Berwyn, opened in February 2017) is anticipated to create 1000 jobs and bring £23m a year to the local economy (*BBC News*, 2017).

Correctional facilities cannot, then, be separated from their political economic context. Alongside 'value engineering', the other most commonly iterated phrase among those who commission, procure and design new prisons is 'future-proofing'. In simple terms, this is where a medium-security facility holding those prisoners deemed unlikely to try to escape, is designed and built with all the security paraphernalia and controlling of movement associated with a high-security institution, designed to hold prisoners for whom the potential for escape should be made very difficult; the rationale being that if, at some point in the future, a facility needs to be used to accommodate higher security inmates, there is no need for expensive retro-fitting of situational security apparatus. The ethics and morality of holding prisoners in over-securitised conditions for the level of risk they pose is not a matter of public discussion or debate; in fact, many politicians and other stake-holders congratulate themselves on the contemporary aesthetics of punishment, using phrases like 'modern' and 'fit-for-purpose' (Interviewees 1 and 2) to describe the feelings of order and control that are generated through sensual disengagement and an often-brutal deployment of scale. With their BIM[4] designed spaces, pre-cast structures, unembellished and unfussy edifices, these twenty-first century

prisons are arguably the physical manifestation of the 'new penology' (Feeley & Simon, 1992) and are thus no less carefully scripted than their nineteenth century predecessors.

So what do they say? Are they more than simply an expression of the bureaucratic preoccupation with 'efficiency' (i.e. cost efficiency), 'effectiveness' (effective, i.e. at keeping growing numbers of prisoners securely locked up and the public safe) and economic expediency (a 'profit through punishment' model that shores up declining communities)? Elsewhere I have argued (Jewkes, Slee, & Moran, 2017) that new prisons share many of the qualities identified by Marc Augé (1995) as 'non-places', including a 'chillingly blank' (Hatherley, 2010, p. 11) external visual appearance, an inversion of the usual conventions of accessibility and traversibility of space, and a new vernacular of similitude – the most recently built prisons in England and Wales bear uncanny resemblances to Amazon warehouses (HMPs Oakwood and Berwyn) or cheap, 'no-frills' hotels (HMP Thameside). In the current political climate of financial instability and austerity, penal philosophies are made legible through a multitude of strategies aimed at limiting the capital outlay for new prisons (partly through stripping back design to its most basic elements – 'value engineering') and drastically reducing ongoing operational costs (i.e. through cuts in staffing levels) while incorporating unprecedented technologies of security and risk (one element of which is 'future-proofing').

By the time these profoundly dehumanising strategies are filtered down to the briefs given to architects, they have become masked in euphemistic 'public relations language' that elides their true function and meaning (Allen, 1981, p. 6). In Australia, 'warm and welcoming' is a commonly employed phrase in commissioning documents and is used in relation to the gatehouse, visits centre and even the prisoner entry processing point. But alongside the brief to make prison entry points, 'warm and welcoming' is the requirement that a new prison must 'convey to the public a confidence that they are safe and secure' and an assumption that the public do not want prisons to be 'a dominant structure within their community' (quoted from documents related in personal communications with Interviewee 14). The result is non-descript buildings that, at best, have an aesthetically appealing or reassuring community-facing façade, but that feel remarkably similar to their nineteenth century ancestors the further into the belly of the beast you go. As Spivack (1984, p. 160) sagely counsels, 'How the building looks is of much less lasting importance once you're inside' – especially, we might add, if you are enforced to spend a considerable period of your life in it.

The disjuncture between architects' aims (or vocabulary, at least) and the lived experience of those who inhabit their creations can, then, be vast. The gatehouse of HMP Oakwood, a privately managed (by G4S), medium-security facility in the English Midlands that opened in 2012, was intended to convey 'approachable authority' according to the brief (Interviewees 1 and 2). But Oakwood's first five years of operation have been marked by numerous well-documented problems and controversies including criticism of its design and scale (Jewkes & Moran, 2014) and a damning Inspectorate report in 2014. In his introduction to the HMIP Report (2014), then Chief Inspector Nick Hardwick writes: 'I recommend that Ministers undertake and publish a review of the difficulties Oakwood and other new prisons experienced after they opened, and ensure the lessons learned are factored into plans for the opening of other new establishments' (p. 6). Yet no such Government review was carried out, nor did any independent post-occupancy evaluation take place at Oakwood before the decision was made to replicate

it in North Wales. While the publicly run HMP Berwyn has had a smoother phased opening, both prisons have a capacity of 2106, making them the second largest prisons in Europe, after Fleury-Mérogis in Paris, with 3,800 beds.[5]

Many criminologists view these prison warehouses as a backward step that runs counter to all the knowledge and evidence that has found that smaller institutions nurture humanistic values (e.g. respect, trust and empathy) that are central to forging positive prisoner–staff relationships and successful outcomes. Moreover, being at Oakwood is a strange experience. The prison has an eerie, unsettling quality; a sense of being synthetic, a simulacrum, as if the observer is looking not at a real set of buildings but at a facsimile on a giant plasma screen (Jewkes et al., 2017). There is no landscaping for reasons of cost and security but without plants and trees, there is no wildlife, no birds or insects, which makes for a peculiarly sterile environment. Oakwood's design embodies the political climate of financial instability and austerity in which it was conceived, but the result is a prison that could not feel less healthy or therapeutic, healing or hopeful.

'Architecture cures cancer': Can it cure crime?

Returning briefly to Maggie's Centres and the idea that all social institutions and practices have underlying them a particular concept of the person, should prison architects not purposefully design buildings that help those whose self or personhood is diminished by their circumstances to feel like agentic people with more to their identity than the label 'prisoner'? For prisons, or healthcare settings, or homes for the elderly, to be humanistic, affirmative and generative, they depend on a concept of human persons as beings with depth and complexity, functioning and developing in interaction with other persons and with other living things including plants and animals. We might argue that we can see the effects of negative and positive environmental influences in our capacities to thrive or wither as human beings. As Liebling (2016) comments, following Smith (2010), 'we either flourish, or we become broken'.

Echoing Maggie Keswick's experience of a conventional cancer care ward – a space dictated by the demands of hygiene and efficiency rather than human empathy and warmth, with 'hard, sterile surfaces, bright, white spaces, long corridors and artificial ventilation systems' (Rose, 2010, n.p.), Spivack (1984) observes that 'fear, isolation, and a sense of numbing helplessness characterise hospital experience for the majority of patients' (p. 17). To enter a hospital, he says either as a visitor or a patient is 'to encounter an environment which has no equal in barrenness anywhere in our culture save for the prisoner's cell (ibid.). One of the key reasons for this, he argues, is that institutions (and he is referring primarily to residential institutions) may be described as 'disintegrated' or 'degraded'; they 'lack wholeness – they are incomplete' and because parts of the settings are missing, they cannot adequately support the great range of human behaviours associated with processes of recovery or rehabilitation.

This observation of Spivack – that most institutional environments lack richness and meaning because of their missing parts – speaks to the question of what is, or makes, a person (Smith, 2010). My research has found that there are common basic environmental elements that are near universally desired by people in prison – not as mere preferences but as matters of ontological security. They include a need for privacy; for

socialisation; for warmth when it is cold and for effective ventilation when it is hot; for some freedom of movement outside as well as inside; for regular, high-quality family visits; for meaningful and appropriately paid work/education/activities (including essential transferable skills, e.g. use of digital technologies); the ability to undertake a pastime or hobby beyond those traditionally permitted within custodial settings; facilities to cook one's own food (and perhaps for one's family) at least occasionally and to experience some interaction with nature ('to feel the grass under my feet', 'to not just be able to see a tree, but touch it', are frequently expressed wishes) and, crucially, to have a high degree of choice, autonomy and control over all these fundamental actions. Indeed, the fact that these are some of the environmental aspects that distinguish Maggie's cancer care centres from traditional hospitals (e.g. see Martin, 2016, on the domesticity of Maggie's Centres and Butterfield & Martin, 2016, on the importance of Maggie's architecture and gardens) suggests that these are some of the aspects of life that nourish all human beings, and perhaps especially those who undergo some sort of trauma.

In most prisons in Anglophone nations, these widely desired, environmentally facilitated human needs represent some of the 'missing' elements that make custodial institutions barren environments that break people rather than allowing them to flourish. It is perhaps for this reason that the custodial facility commonly held up as *the* model prison for both its architecture and the regime that the design facilitates (one based on notions of 'respect' and 'trust') is Halden Prison in southern Norway. This famous establishment – the 'World's Poshest Prison' according to the *Daily Mail* (12 May 2010) – is, as one of the designing architects from Eric Møller told me, intended to inspire prisoners and motivate them to lead better lives rather than simply emulate the 'normal' living and working conditions that they might experience in ordinary life (Interviewee 10). Among Halden's unusual (from an Anglophone perspective, at least) design features are as follows: the forest that has been kept largely intact and that encroaches into the prison grounds; the large bar-less windows that are fitted throughout the entire prison; the sophisticated lighting system that mimics natural daylight; the open-plan living/cooking/dining areas that (to this observer, at least) resemble something from the pages of an IKEA catalogue; the comfortable and welcoming Family House, where prisoners can invite their partners and children to stay overnight; a sophisticated music recording studio and a tranquil and visually imaginative multi-faith room which encourages calm reflection as well as more formal religious devotion.[6]

Since Halden opened in 2010, architects in other countries and jurisdictions have followed Norway's lead and built humane, sensuous, architecturally innovative facilities that go well beyond simply avoiding an institutional feel. For example, two high-security prisons I have visited in Catalonia – Puig de les Basses and Mas d'Enric – are fascinating examples of an attempt to put prisoner rehabilitation at the heart of design. Two interesting features of this philosophy (again, from the perspective of England and Wales, where prisoner movement is becoming increasingly curtailed and time alone in cell is being extended in many prisons, partly due to chronic staff shortages), are as follows: (i) that Catalonian prisoners are entrusted to move around relatively large prison sites, with few or no staff escorts (though heavily surveilled by closed-circuit television cameras) and (ii) that 'association' is considered vital to maintaining or learning the socialisation skills necessary to resettle back into the community on release from prison. To these ends, the house blocks and cells are *not* part of the

architects' brief but come as standardised, pre-fabricated, modular units that are approved by the Ministry of Justice (Interviewee 7). Compared to the prison accommodation in many parts of Europe, Catalonian cells are undeniably basic. But the thinking is that they do not need to be overly comfortable because the men and women who occupy them spend little time in them. They go to work or education in the morning, return for lunch in a communal dining room that resembles any other workplace canteen and then return to work or education before eating together again in the evening. Although they can buy personal TV sets if they choose to, the prison service does not provide them, and they are encouraged to watch TV together in rooms provided for that purpose. The value placed on 'normal' communality and socialisation extends to the practice, in these mixed-gendered facilities, of men and women working alongside each other in the classrooms and workshops and training together in the sports hall.

Both Puig de les Basses and Mas d' Enric are striking buildings that have been creatively designed with a particular penal philosophy in mind. The architect responsible for Mas d' Enric said that we must 'claim the prison as an object of critical design and reclaim architecture's role in multiplying possibilities as opposed to limiting them' (Interviewee 7). While this professional inarguably has created a 'signature building' (itself a controversial decision), some architects have gone even further, aiming to produce designs that might be described as sharing Maggie's Centres' belief in the power of beauty in aiding recovery. One example is Danish architects' Schmidt Hammer Lassen's design for a new, 'closed' prison in Greenland. Set within a stunning, rugged landscape, the 'world's most scenic prison', as they have described it, will exploit the 'contrast between the rough and the beautiful':

> The whole idea behind the project is to add qualities to the complex that will enhance rehabilitation and diminish physical and psychological violence… The thought process behind this is that access to nature – watching the clouds, birds, daylight, weather and so on, can aid in rehabilitation. (see http://www.archdaily.com/375056/ny-anstalt-correctional-facility-winning-proposal-schmidt-hammer-lassen-architects/; see Jewkes & Moran, 2017, for further discussion)

Proposals and plans for aesthetically attractive new prisons have not always been successful, however. For example, a Spanish project team from OOIIO Architecture entered a design competition to win the tender for a new women's prison in Iceland but ultimately were not chosen by the judging panel. On their website they state that they explicitly set out:

> to design a prison that doesn't look like a prison, forgetting about dark spaces, small cells, and ugly grey concrete walls… we based the building design on natural light, open spaces, and natural green materials. (see http://plusmood.com/2012/06/female-prison-in-iceland-ooiio-architecture/)

Instead of designing one large building (like a 'typical repressive old prison'), the architects decided to break it into several 'human-scale, connected' pavilions, which would have 'natural light and exterior views, to increase the feeling of freedom'. With a façade

constructed from peat-filled cages, planted with local flowers and grasses, they intended to deliver a building 'that changes with the seasons', making prison life 'less monotonous and more human and natural related' (ibid.). However, the lead architect told me that he feared that this ambitious 'living wall' was the main reason why OOIIO Architecture did not win the design competition because it was deemed 'frivolous, too trivial' by those on the assessment panel (Interviewee 13).

Another prison that was to be more progressive and humane than most but that did not get beyond the architects' drawing board was HMP Inverclyde in Scotland, a women's facility designed by Arup. The plans for Inverclyde were shelved following a sustained campaign by academics, activists and reform groups, who were opposed to a very large prison that would house up to three-quarters of Scotland's female prison population (entailing issues of remoteness to own communities, families, etc.), combined with a fundamental belief that Scotland should be pursuing a policy of decarceration for women. So, Inverclyde was rejected in favour of smaller units that will incorporate some of the forward-thinking design ideas that were brought to the project by the architects and by the Scottish Prison Service's (SPS) Women Offenders project. It has also paved the way for design innovation to be placed at the centre of plans for a new women's prison in Limerick in Ireland, which has (at the time of writing) been put out to competitive tender in a design competition of the type more usually found in northern Europe.[7]

Among the original design aims for Inverclyde was an entry building with the familiar feel of a civic building such as a shopping or sports centre. The prison 'campus' was planned to allow the women to move fairly freely and largely unescorted; in other words, the regime, with its emphasis on a 'working day', was not to be run with the 'worst' prisoners in mind or those with most complex needs (Interviewee 4). Rather, it was felt that plenty of prisoners can be trusted to move unescorted, and the buildings and 'streets' were designed to have as normal a feel as possible. The rooms (not cells) were to feel feminine, with different colour palettes (pale green, lilac, etc.) to denote different units. The rooms made effective use of a small space, with bed, desk/workstation, chair and adequate storage, and large windows with no bars looking onto stunning views of the local landscape. The 'trauma-informed' and 'trauma-sensitive' design was to be all about calm, tranquility and well-being. As the Senior Operational Advisor on the project commented, when I spoke to her in April 2015: 'green paint costs no more than beige paint'.

Even in Anglophone nations, then, the prioritisation of creative design in corrections is not unheard of, and design innovation is not confined to the women' prison estate, despite the received (and almost certainly flawed) wisdom that female prisons can or should be more humanely designed than those that house men. For example, an architect based in Brisbane who has designed numerous custodial facilities in Australia and New Zealand told me that, while short-term cost is a key driver, it is not always demanded at the expense of innovation and nor does it necessarily override long-term operational and behavioural gains. He described a prison design project he was involved in North Queensland:

> We actually did the complete opposite there [to 'value engineering']. We brought enough innovation in that we thought this is getting scary now, we're going to get kicked off the job!

> We've added in all this extra work but we think we've added in so much efficiency and so much innovation, and they came along and added like 150 million or something-or-other to the job and said 'Yeah we love it; go ahead. And that was one of those ones where it completely flipped around and we actually value managed the project upwards... but that extra 150 million dollars will pay for itself in no time [with] the efficiencies that we put into that job... brilliant! (Interviewee 8)

He went onto explain that the best way to introduce humanizing elements to the prison environment was to have the operator on board from the start because they were 'looking at their responsibilities over 10 or 25 years'. Describing a private company's role in a new medium-security prison in New Zealand he said:

> They brought a ton of innovation... they were really ballsy with their scheme, which, yeah, a lot of jurisdictions would have been frightened of what they brought [which was] really positive innovation. I did hear some of the proposals from our opposition, which were quite draconian I suppose. They were innovations but probably not the right innovations – they were more about 'stack 'em and rack 'em', which is not what we're about these days. (ibid.)

The same architect explained that, although a proven track record in custodial design is considered an asset when new prison contracts are awarded, newcomers to the sector can be successful, especially in contracts for youth custody facilities, immigration detention centres and 'specialist' prisons catering for particular populations, e.g. aboriginal prisoners, where an innovative, 'non-correctional' approach may be desired. Of course, this was Queensland in 2014. It must be fervently hoped that other Australian states are not now looking to the rapid-build prison expansion programme rolling out in NSW for inspiration.

One final point worth making in relation to progressive prison design relates back to Spivack's (1984) observation that buildings and spatial environments communicate 'meanings' that are read and interpreted by those who occupy and move through them not only by inmates of institutions, whether hospitals, prisons, for that matter residential homes for the elderly, or all manner of other institutions, but also by staff. It is frequently forgotten in the scant literature on prison design that custodial facilities are places of work and that many prison staff spend a greater proportion of their lives in carceral environments than do those serving a custodial sentence. Jencks says of Maggie's Centres:

> In a way, the carers are more important than the patients. Because if the carers are cared for, they turn up, they enjoy it and you create this virtuous circle, this mood in a Maggie's Centre, which is quite amazing. So architecture helps do that because it looks after the carers. (cited in Rose, 2010, n.p.)

The parallels with prison officers and other staff working in prisons are obvious. If prison architects design high-quality facilities for staff – working spaces where they feel safe and able to exercise their power, interpersonal skills and discretion appropriately; airy and pleasant eating and relaxation facilities, preferably with outside areas; sufficient shower and changing facilities for males and females; even adequate parking

spaces, close to their place of work – a prison is more likely to have a happy and motivated workforce who feel invested in and valued as the considerable assets they are. Yet in many prisons in England and Wales (both old and new), staff feel that the provisions made for them are very much a second thought. Staff cafeterias and rest areas are often dark and dingy areas, too small for the numbers they have to accommodate and more often than not, their windows (if they *have* windows) are barred, offering staff in prison no respite from the environment and no opportunity to completely 'tune out' of the prison culture. Shower and changing facilities are mostly inadequate, especially for female officers, and car parking spaces are limited, despite the well-known problems of geographical isolation and poor transport links, which affect staff as much as they do prisoners' visitors.

Concluding thoughts: Is the notion of a 'healthy prison' an oxymoron?

The idea of health-improving or 'healthy' prisons has been in common currency since at least the mid-eighteenth century, when English prison reformer John Howard (1726–1790) was traversing the globe, espousing his vision of reform through purity, cleanliness and good air circulation. A century later, when holes had been filled and interior spaces had become more enclosed and claustrophobic to facilitate the infamous 'separate system' of confinement, the exterior façade of the prison became more expansive and grandiose (Jewkes & Johnston, 2007). As penal policy took a more ostentatious and communicative turn, the ambient power of the prison was inarguable, and it was simply taken for granted that buildings exerted a degree of agency in orchestrating the movements and affective responses of those inhabiting them as well as the behaviour and affective responses of those living in the communities in which they were situated (Jewkes et al., 2017). The 'humming, fortress-like invincibility' (Schept, 2014, p. 200) of a mid-nineteenth century gaol elicits 'layers of questions' about 'the physical and symbolic place of incarceration… and about the role of the state and capital in structuring the future of communities' (ibid.). It is a potent, challenging presence. The contemporary 'non-place' prison barely raises any questions at all except this; do we turn a blind eye to the plight of the confined and to the historical structures of power that support the carceral complex when we diminish the visibility of the buildings that contain them?

More than simply repositories of symbolic power, then, buildings help to enact ideologies through the social practices they enable and encourage. In contemporary penal discourse, the 'healthy prison', with its connotations of care, repair and well-being, is increasingly regarded as a worthy and achievable aspiration; it is, for example, used as an overarching framework for prison inspections in England and Wales. Furthermore, the notion of trauma-informed design is beginning to penetrate discussions of the planned new women's prisons in all jurisdictions of the UK and Ireland. With these new facilities in mind, the design philosophies underpinning Maggie's Centres are undeniably seductive. As a *Guardian* report on the latest 'Maggie's' in Oldham puts it, architecture can be a 'balm for the senses', countering the predominant environmental cues that scream 'YOU ARE ILL… YOU MUST THEREFORE LIVE IN A WORLD

OF UGLINESS' (Moore, 2017). So successful has the project been that the newspaper article lingers on the minutiae of the interiors as well as its 'bigger picture' calmness and tranquillity. Describing a curtain that can be drawn to make a room within a room, the journalist enthuses: 'It's practical, but it's also pure joy. It is like the most beautiful hospital curtain you have ever seen' (Moore, 2017, n.p.).

In the custodial environment too, we have undoubtedly come a long way since U.S. architect Michael Walden of Dworsky Associates confessed that in several prison commissions, clients mandated that 'certain degrees of bleakness (one could argue ugliness) be incorporated' into their design' (cited in Spens, 1994, p. 11). The prison designs highlighted in the previous section share some of this playful design intent and are all undoubtedly well-intentioned attempts to create healthy prisons, in the sense of nurturing positive staff-prisoner relationships, fostering feelings of decency, safety, trust, compassion and respect and attempting to encourage the flourishing of potential, a opposed to the breaking of spirits. They set out to be 'therapeutic' in a holistic sense as well as in specific relation to forensic mental health. Their architects have made concerted efforts to normalise the prison environment, to provide the spatial settings that nurture richness and meaning and to harness the potentially civilizing, rehabilitative role of penal aesthetics in the belief that the beneficent effects of beauty have long been the hallmark of civilisation (Jewkes, 2012; Scarry, 1999). However, as the saying goes, the road to Hell is paved with good intentions and, as retired architect and writer Arthur Allen and others[8] might argue, the idea of a 'healthy prison', with its 'pavilions', 'villages', 'campuses', 'walkways', 'streets' and 'rooms' is anathema. Such euphemistic terminology, as Allen comments, arguably allows the architecture profession to maintain its 'self-centred indifference to moral and ethical issues [that] cannot be defended' (Allen, 1981, pp. 6–7; cf. Moran, Jewkes, & Lorne, in press). Prisons, like all institutional settings, are riven with competing narratives, tensions and contested meanings (Buse et al., 2016).

The topic of 'good' prison design is, then, one that is fraught with political minefields. However, for those who believe that advocating a more progressive prison design agenda is actually about creating 'softer' or 'prettier' prisons or that those of us who research and write about progressive prison design are doing nothing to challenge the institution of the prison itself, I would argue that a focus on designing prison spaces that support rehabilitation and desistance could be a vital component in achieving radical justice reform including de-carceration. In jurisdictions across the world, prisons are designed to be hard, restrictive and ugly, and their design supports a view of the 'prisoner' as dangerous 'others' – why else would these people be put in such a bad environment? However, when a prison communicates positive attributes, the design challenges the cultural stereotype of what a prison is – and through this – who prisoners are, and it becomes considerably harder to hold the view that prisoners 'deserve' to be held in brutal conditions. Taking this a step further if, through design, the idea of housing people in a 'prison' is not significantly different from housing people in a well-designed healthcare centre (of which Maggie's is but one exemplar) or in any other kind of 'normal' social environment, it may not be a huge conceptual leap to connect the prison to notions of justice that can be achieved, while offenders remain in the community (Jewkes & Lulham, 2016; see also SafeInnovations interesting project written up by Shepherd and Lenton's (2016) *The Free Prisoner*).

So, a wide-ranging, public discussion about the purposes and impacts of future prisons, including their design and vision, is long overdue. I hope that this article, and the John V Barry memorial lecture from which it originated, plays a small part in imagining a different, more hopeful, future for our prison estates and for prisoners.

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Notes

1. Although Spivack does not discuss the prison, his analysis of hospitals, psychiatric units, residential care homes for the elderly and play and learning environments for children with special needs is nonetheless relevant to all institutional settings, including incarceration.
2. The Lindemann Center provided the perfect location for the paranoia-inducing 2006 crime film *The Departed* (dir. Martin Scorsese).
3. There is no compelling evidence that prisons really bring such economic prosperity; indeed, Bonds' (2009) analysis focusing on the U.S. states of Idaho, Oregon and Montana, draws attention to the lack of structural economic improvement in persistently poor rural places, and prison facilities' inability to foster economy-wide change. Additionally, the assumption that NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) does not exist in communities who are either too impoverished to care or simply too grateful for the employment opportunities that a new prison might bring, may be wide of the mark. In a study of local reactions to a proposed new prison in Scotland, Armstrong (2012) notes that the local community vehemently opposed it.
4. Building information modelling; a type of computer-aided design.
5. It should be noted, however, that the first governor of Berwyn, Russell Trent, and his senior management team are making concerted efforts to distinguish the prison from Oakwood and from other prisons in England and Wales. Not only are they resisting pressures to fill it to capacity, but the change of language alluded to elsewhere in this article has become a defining feature of Berwyn's culture. Referring to the prison's occupants as 'men', rather than

'offenders' or 'prisoners', 'waiting rooms' rather than 'holding cells', 'communities' rather than 'landings', and 'rooms' not 'cells', they have also embraced technologies such as in-cell telephony and laptops. In short, they have taken principles of 'normality' more usually associated with the small prisons that make up Scandinavian penal systems and implemented them in a 'Titan' prison capable of accommodating 2106 men.

6. Halden is not unproblematic and, during fieldwork conducted in the Summer 2016, many prisoners there reported negative or mixed feelings and experiences, which limitations of space prevent me from going into detail about here, but see Jewkes et al. (in press).
7. Throughout 2016 and 2017, I have been advising the IPS and the architects on their shortlisting framework about the plans for the new Limerick women's prison and have been able to connect key personnel within IPS with their counterparts within the SPS who have project managed Inverclyde and other recent Scottish prisons.
8. Including organisations such as Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility who have persistently called for a boycott of prison design among architect professionals in the US for more than a decade and critical criminologists in the UK who have demanded a moratorium on prison building.

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