

New Prisons Built as a Partial Response to an Increase in Crime in the Netherlands

The Netherlands have embarked on a major prison construction program, with the 1990s marking the end of this 10-year initiative. The program was designed to accommodate an increasing number of offenders, due in part to an increase in drug-abuse related offences.

The increase in crime and the rejection by Dutch politicians of proposed "double-bunking" compelled correctional authorities to put forth a five-element program to alleviate the problem of overpopulation in its correctional facilities. The program was as follows:

- reopen some correctional institutions to regain capacity;
- reclaim offices used for professional and administrative purposes and convert them into cells;
- create emergency capacities;
- modify and enlarge already existing correctional institutions; and
- build new correctional institutions. This article focuses on the construction of four new correctional institutions, built according to specific regulations established in 1986.

The four correctional institutions studied are similar in that the institutional buildings have an inward-looking design, the maximum capacity is 252 cells and the buildings are assembled around inner courtyards for sports and exercise which ensures automatic peripheral security.

The residential unit concept is at the heart of these new facilities. The institutions are divided into two primary sections, each comprising 120 cells. The two primary sections are divided into two subsections: one subsection contains two residential units (for a total of 48 cells) and the other contains three (for a total of 72 cells). The individual cells are located on two or three tiers, each tier containing a maximum of 24 cells. Each institution includes a special unit to accommodate up to 12 high-security inmates. To enable maximum freedom of movement within the institutions, cells are located on the sides of the buildings, overlooking the courtyards. Leewaden Prison Located on a large site, this three-storey institution for long-term male offenders was constructed in a rectangular shape. The elongated form of the site and the institution allowed for the construction of three separate inner courtyards instead of two, thus providing inmates with two exercise courtyards and one sports courtyard.

The two primary living units are oriented toward the two inner exercise courtyards. Individual cells are furnished with a bed, a chair, a corner table, a desk, shelves and a semi-closed bathroom. For security reasons, cell windows are still equipped with steel bars.

Bright and modern colours were chosen for the interior and exterior of the institution, and long skylights illuminate the passageways in the residential areas. Rotterdam Remand Centre This correctional institution for male offenders was built along a busy canal. The Centre has been nicknamed the "Golden Sphinx" for its impressive gold-tinted external glass walls.

The block-shaped Remand Centre comprises four storeys and has two inner courtyards. One vast internal passageway allows for movement within the institution. As with Leewaden Prison, the colour scheme of the institution's interior is bright and modern. The Centre's height and glass walls allow staff and inmates

to enjoy the view of the outside world over the peripheral walls. Hoogeveen Prison/Remand Centre The entrance to Hoogeveen Prison is architecturally impressive. The facade is designed in the form of a flag fluttering in the wind, complemented by the entrance hall floor painted in the blue, white and red colours of the Dutch national flag.

This correctional complex, which accommodates male offenders serving either a medium- or long-term sentence, bears some resemblance to both Leewaden Prison and Rotterdam Remand Centre as it is rectangular and two to four storeys high. The periphery wall is built of concrete segments which together create a colourful artistic pattern and retain a sense of modernism. Since Hoogeveen Prison does not completely conform to the inward-looking building concept, a double wall was built onto the periphery to close gaps between buildings and to enhance security. Sittard Prison The architectural concept of Sittard Prison is the atrium. The residential areas of this institution are assembled in the shape of a cross and surrounded by a rectangular arrangement of buildings that house the other facilities. The four inner courtyards created by the cross-like design are used for sports and leisure. The buildings do not completely surround the courtyards, however, so a double wall was constructed in some places, as with Hoogeveen Prison, to complete the periphery.

Like the other institutions, the cells are oriented toward the inner courtyards. The cells are arranged in two rows facing one another but, unlike the three other facilities, each row contains 12 rather than 24 cells. Future Construction Work Crime rates are still rising in the Netherlands, and correctional authorities estimate that in the years to come their correctional capacity will have to be increased by at least 1,000 cells. Correctional institutions will have to be constructed along more recent design specifications. These new specifications will establish capacity at 204 cells per institution. The concept of residential units will be retained, and the number of static supervisory positions will be limited where possible.