

Stage 2 Research Project – 2014

RPA

RPB

School Assessment Cover Sheet for

➤ Assessment Type 2: Research Outcome

SACE Registration Number:

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Research Question: How does the architecture of the Adelaide Remand Centre affect the behaviour of the prisoners? _____

_____ **word count** _____
(for written only)

“How does the architecture of the Adelaide Remand Centre affect the behaviour of its prisoners?”

Introduction

Architecture, the product of designing and constructing buildings, has the ability to affect behaviour,² most fascinatingly so when applied to the prison environment. This report identifies the ways in which the architecture of the Adelaide Remand Centre (ARC) in Adelaide, South Australia, affects its prisoners' behaviour using a variety of sources, including interviews with ARC staff (including the General Manager and Manager of Accommodation), an architect specialising in security architecture and a forensic psychologist. Additionally, surveys were completed by ARC prisoners, field work involving a tour of the ARC was conducted and secondary research was used, including the 'Final report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on Adelaide Remand Centre (Currie Street)' and internet research.

Effects of cell design

The ARC, built in 1986 and designed by Mr D Harrison,³ is a high-rise facility housing 267 male prisoners in single and double cells.⁴ Cells have the greatest impact on behaviour, as this is where prisoners spend the most time.

Cell size significantly impacts on behaviour, “Confined spaces limit physical movement...may negatively influence mood, and in turn behaviour.”⁵ ARC cells range in size from 6m × 7.2m to 14m × 7.2m⁶ with ceilings approximately 2.44m high.⁷ These spaces are equipped with a stainless steel toilet, shower, sink and bed (bunk for double cells), a television and a desk.⁸ Each cell has a window so natural light is accessible, however many on the lower levels only have access to filtered light due to shade cloths that cover the yards.⁹ Research has found that the presence of a window “favourably affects an individual's perception of him or herself: it makes the individual “feel better.””¹⁰

² Thompson, B 1980 *Prison Design and Prisoner Behaviour: Philosophy, Architecture, and violence*, pdf, accessed 25 February 2013, <<http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Krancer%20Barbara%20A.pdf?oberlin1316531267>>.

³ South Australia. Parliament. Standing Committee on Public Works, 1984, *Works on Adelaide Remand Centre (Currie Street)*, Government Printer, Adelaide.

⁴ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁵ Forensic psychologist, name withheld, 2013, interview conducted by author, 18 March.

⁶ South Australia. Parliament. Standing Committee on Public Works, 1984, *Works on Adelaide Remand Centre (Currie Street)*, Government Printer, Adelaide.

⁷ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March

⁸ Dean, P 2013, Supervisor at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁹ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

¹⁰ Thompson, B 1980 *Prison Design and Prisoner Behaviour: Philosophy, Architecture, and violence*, pdf, accessed 25 February 2013, <<http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Krancer%20Barbara%20A.pdf?oberlin1316531267>>.

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Prisoners predominately see single cells as being ideal. Figure 1 displays the results when prisoners were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement "Individual cells should be used whenever there is the slightest possibility of having them."¹¹

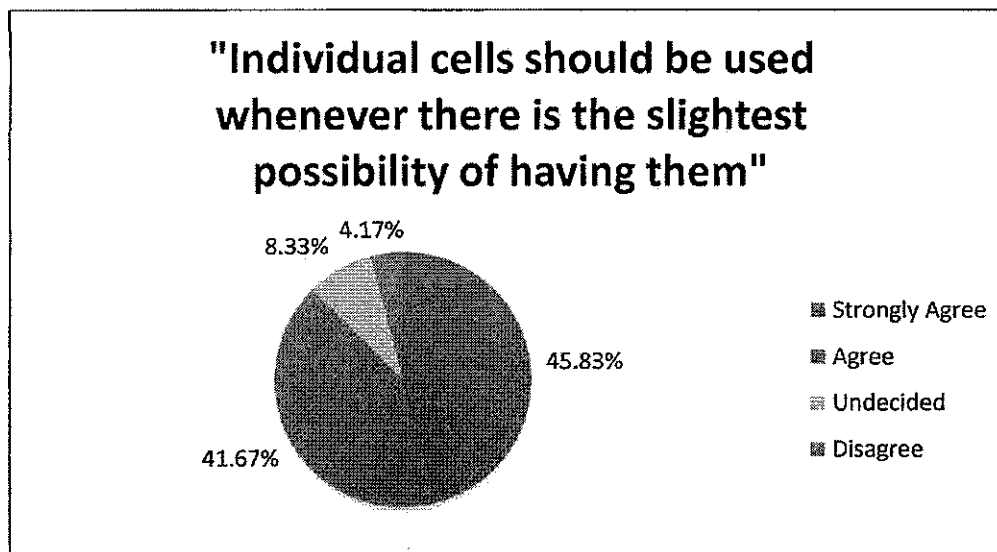


Figure 1.¹²

Prisoners deprived of privacy may adapt by "...withdrawing socially...or, by exhibiting overtly aggressive behaviour."¹³ Long periods of solitude, however, can result in sensory deprivation, "Sensory deprivation (through minimalistic and uninteresting architecture) may have a further negative impact on mood and behaviour..."¹⁴

Some prisoners prefer double cells as they can socialise after lock-down,¹⁵ however, they are also useful "...when a particular is vulnerable, lonely, or experiencing difficulty coping with prison."¹⁶ This is only effective if no conflict exists between cell-mates.¹⁷ An example of this was highlighted in the survey, "Should have a personal light for each bunk...top fluoro causes arguments..."¹⁸ Sarah Paddick, an architect specialising in security architecture, agrees that double cells provide

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Adelaide Remand Centre prisoners, names withheld, 2013, results from question 5 of survey conducted by author, 27 March.

¹³ Thompson, B 1980 *Prison Design and Prisoner Behaviour: Philosophy, Architecture, and violence*, pdf, accessed 25 February 2013, <<http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Krancer%20Barbara%20A.pdf?oberlin1316531267>>.

¹⁴ Forensic psychologist, name withheld, 2013, interview conducted by author, 18 March.

¹⁵ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

¹⁶ Forensic psychologist, name withheld, 2013, interview conducted by author, 18 March.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoner, name withheld, 2013, survey conducted by author, 27 March.

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companionship but doubts prisoners will be “thrown in with someone [they’re] comfortable with.”¹⁹ According to Stephen Raggatt, ARC General Manager, “...when prisoners just come into custody, if you put them with a buddy they’ve got someone to talk to, talk through their issues.”²⁰ However, he acknowledged that “...you lose a lot of dignity sharing a cell...there’s one toilet and one shower in the cell with no partitions...”²¹ Additionally, multiple occupancy accommodation often results in physical violence, “The larger the group of individuals condensed into a setting, the greater the unavoidability of social interaction, which may lead to stress...In prison, this stress is frequently manifested as physical violence.”²²

Effects of the design of communal areas

ARC cells are arranged in units throughout the building, with each housing around 46 prisoners.²³ Most units have a mezzanine level and all have a communal area where prisoners can prepare breakfast, socialise, and make phone calls.²⁴

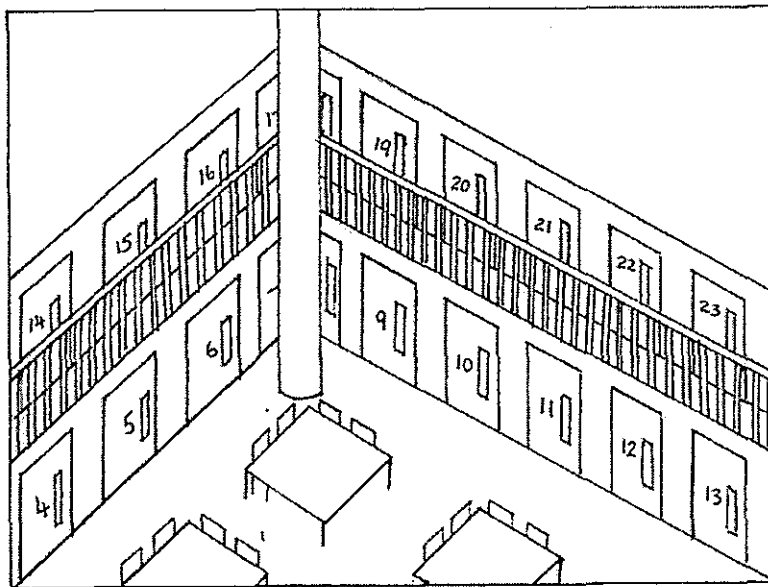


Figure 2. Author’s impression of an ARC unit communal area²⁵

¹⁹ Paddick, S 2013, Totalspace Design Principal, interview conducted by author, 13 March.

²⁰ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

²¹ *ibid*

²² Thompson, B 1980 *Prison Design and Prisoner Behaviour: Philosophy, Architecture, and violence*, pdf, accessed 25 February 2013, <<http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Krancer%20Barbara%20A.pdf?oberlin1316531267>>.

²³ Dean, P 2013, Supervisor at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

²⁴ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

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The design of the units attempts to create an open feeling through the use of the mezzanine, however this can have disastrous results, as prisoners have committed suicide by jumping off them.²⁶ Management considered installing barriers on the mezzanines, however, it was believed that this would have more of a negative impact than the current design, even with its inherent risks.²⁷

Communal areas, often featuring more diverse architecture,²⁸ are places where “prisoners are happier...evidenced by less recorded incidents of negative behaviours, including violent/aggressive behaviour [and] self harm.”²⁹ ARC communal areas include a weights room, squash court, gymnasium with a full-sized basketball court and the ‘Soft Rec’, where prisoners can play computer games and staff hold meetings.³⁰ Mr Raggatt views these areas very positively, particularly the squash court, “if it gets two blokes out there hitting a ball against the wall getting rid of their frustrations it’s fantastic.”³¹

Field observations revealed an absence of vegetation at the ARC.³² The ARC had vegetation previously but removed it as prisoners were “hiding stuff amongst it, like weapons.”³³ Similarly, shade sails cover all but one yard because drugs, mobile phones and weapons were being thrown over the walls.³⁴ Many prisoners believe the lack of vegetation and sunlight needs to change, with comments made such as “Even murals of natural settings would help relaxation, i.e. waterfalls, rainforests, aboriginal art.”³⁵ An example of vegetation used positively can be seen in figure 3 at Halden Prison in Norway, referred to as ‘the most humane prison in the world’.³⁶ Other prisoners expressed their satisfaction with the communal areas, “The gym is a great place for interaction.”³⁷

²⁵ Author’s observation during virtual tour of Adelaide Remand Centre, 22 March 2013.

²⁶ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ Forensic psychologist, name withheld, 2013, interview conducted by author, 18 March.

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

³¹ *ibid*

³² Author’s observation during virtual tour of Adelaide Remand Centre, 22 March 2013.

³³ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoner, name withheld, 2013, survey conducted by author, 27 March.

³⁶ Gentleman, A 2012, ‘Inside Halden, the most humane prison in the world’, *The Guardian*, 18 May, accessed 20 May 2013, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/may/18/halden-most-humane-prison-in-world>>.

³⁷ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoner, name withheld, 2013, survey conducted by author, 27 March.

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Figure 3.³⁸

Effects of using architecture to restrict behaviour

Prison architecture not only influences prisoners' behaviour but can "...restrict movements of individuals and their ability to interact with others..."³⁹ For example, units are separated to stop bkie prisoners communicating.⁴⁰ Prisons are "...purpose built to stop prisoners from being able to exit...Doors do not open freely, walls are high and often without windows..."⁴¹ While such restrictions are unavoidable, the ARC has attempted to reduce their impact. A key point brought up by Michael Thompson, Manager of Accommodation, was that there are no barriers between prisoners and prison officers.⁴² The ARC was built this way so that prison officers could build a better rapport with prisoners⁴³ and because it "...makes the officers more accountable for how they are responding and the prisoners are generally more accountable for how they are speaking to the officers..."⁴⁴ Mr Thompson viewed the absence of bars as contributing towards positive behaviour,

³⁸ Isaksen, T 2013, *Prison Yard*, photograph, Time Inc., accessed 20 May 2013, http://img.timeinc.net/time/photoessays/2010/prison_norway/prison15.jpg

³⁹ Shah, R & Kesan, J 2007, *How Architecture Regulates*, pdf, accessed 25 February 2013, <http://www.governingwithcode.org/journal_articles/pdf/How_Architecture_Regulates.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁴¹ Forensic psychologist, name withheld, 2013, interview conducted by author, 18 March.

⁴² Thompson, M 2013, Manager of Accommodation at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ *ibid*

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“...in my belief that is a far better way of doing it.”⁴⁵ Interestingly, one prisoner wrote “Being in the ARC makes it a little easier to accept being in jail due to the view you get compared to Yatala where you’re staring at bars and walls.”⁴⁶

Effects of environmental factors

A number of environmental factors cause acts of aggression, such as high temperatures, air and noise pollution (including cigarette smoke and bad odours) and overcrowding.⁴⁷ When asked about counteractive measures for these conditions, Mr Raggatt recalled that tests were done on air flow in ARC cells and it was found to be adequate,⁴⁸ however, one prisoner who cannot get any fresh air in his cell suggested the following solution, “...should have small holes drilled in windows that we can open and close for fresh air.”⁴⁹ Each cell has a trap door that can be opened,⁵⁰ which helps when the air-conditioning breaks down, “...still reasonably uncomfortable but it certainly makes it better.”⁵¹ Soon to be phased out, prisoners are allowed to smoke in their cells and in the health centre yard,⁵² however, smokers and non-smokers are housed separately.⁵³ Although staff did not comment on noise pollution, one prisoner mentioned that he “Can’t sleep due to echoes and noise...”⁵⁴ From another prisoner’s perspective, high temperatures are an issue, “...on hot days it gets like a sauna...”⁵⁵ Furthermore, prisoners are prevented from changing these conditions. Frustration is “the feeling of tension, anxiety and heightened arousal that results when we are prevented from achieving something...”⁵⁶ and “always leads to aggression.”⁵⁷

Overcrowding can also affect prisoners’ moods; when individuals are forced to interact or remain in close proximity there is “...an enhanced potential for the development of hostile, aggressive

⁴⁵ Thompson, M 2013, Manager of Accommodation at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁴⁶ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoner, name withheld, 2013, survey conducted by author, 27 March.

⁴⁷ Carter, L & Grivas, J 2005, *Psychology for South Australia Stage 1*, 1st edn, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Milton, QLD.

⁴⁸ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁴⁹ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoner, name withheld, 2013, survey conducted by author, 27 March.

⁵⁰ Thompson, M 2013, Manager of Accommodation at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁵³ Charlton, J 2013, Manager of Offender Development at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁵⁴ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoner, name withheld, 2013, survey conducted by author, 27 March.

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ Carter, L & Grivas, J 2005, *Psychology for South Australia Stage 1*, 1st edn, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Milton, QLD.

⁵⁷ *ibid*

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feelings.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, “small institutions with large prisoner populations where overcrowding becomes an issue often leads to more instances of negative behaviour among prisoners...”⁵⁹ The ARC, designed to accommodate 160 prisoners,⁶⁰ currently accommodates 267.⁶¹ Single cells have therefore been converted to double cells.⁶² Figure 4, displaying the percentages of prisoners who identified each of the previously listed environmental conditions as being present at the ARC, clearly shows overcrowding as the most commonly identified.⁶³

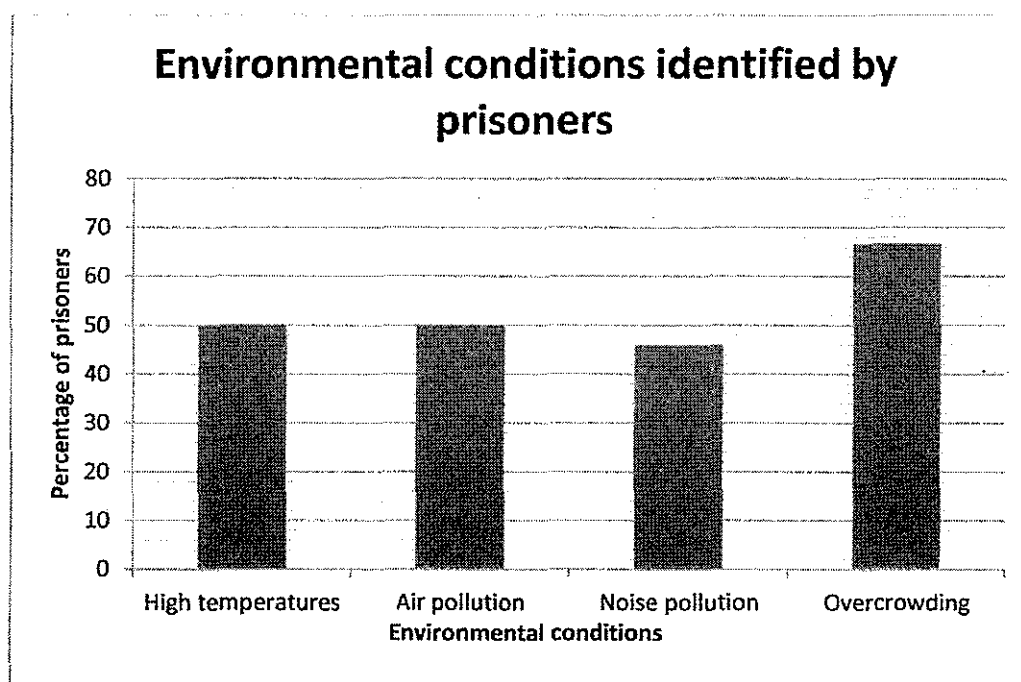


Figure 4.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Thompson, B 1980 *Prison Design and Prisoner Behaviour: Philosophy, Architecture, and violence*, pdf, accessed 25 February 2013, <<http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Krancer%20Barbara%20A.pdf?oberlin1316531267>>.

⁵⁹ Forensic psychologist, name withheld, 2013, interview conducted by author, 18 March.

⁶⁰ South Australia. Parliament. Standing Committee on Public Works, 1984, *Works on Adelaide Remand Centre (Currie Street)*, Government Printer, Adelaide.

⁶¹ Raggatt, S 2013, General Manager at the Adelaide Remand Centre, interview conducted by author, 22 March.

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoners, names withheld, 2013, results from question 7 of survey conducted by author, 27 March.

⁶⁴ Adelaide Remand Centre prisoners, names withheld, 2013, results from question 7 of survey conducted by author, 27 March.

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Conclusion

Using a diverse range of sources, the key architectural features at the ARC, their effects on behaviour and the different ways in which these effects are viewed were identified. In particular, it was found that the size of a prisoner’s cell, its accessibility to natural light and whether it accommodates multiple prisoners can lead to negative behaviour. ARC communal areas predominately affect behaviour by inhibiting access to sunlight and vegetation and allowing prisoners to work off frustrations. Interestingly, the presence of the mezzanine has a positive influence on behaviour when compared to alternative, safer designs, and in an attempt to reduce the impact of behavioural restrictions that the design of the ARC imposes, there are no bars. Environmental factors, most notably overcrowding, were found to significantly increase the potential for negative behaviour.

Word Count: 1499

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Tour of Adelaide Remand Centre

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