



Tailored To Ensure -



- The Most Normal Daily Life Possible





In terms of location, design and interior, Halden Prison has been designed to reflect life outside its walls as an important tool during inmates' sentences.

Halden Prison is built on the crest of a hill surrounded by woods. Typical of the site are the three elongated hills running north to south. The middle hill divides the site into two main levels with a difference in height of approx. 8-10 metres.

The site is characterised by its existing pine woods with smooth rocks and heather forming its base. This was considered a valuable starting point for the development of a prison facility, alongside the requirements and limitations that apply to such a facility.

Integrating the original elements

The goal throughout the process has been to preserve and integrate the original landscape and vegetation into the prison facility. Topography and existing vegetation therefore forms the basis for the location of the buildings and design of outdoor spaces.

The landscape - natural and processed - is incorporated as an important part of daily life in the prison.

The overall objectives were:

- To preserve the existing vegetation and terrain
- To use local materials
- To create a varied facility that stimulates use and physical activity



- To create surroundings that provide varying sensory experiences over time
- To create a facility with a sufficient degree of security and good oversight

Good meeting places

The outdoor spaces are designed to create good meeting places and outdoor

living areas, as well as creating the necessary distance and barriers for unwanted communications and visibility.

Trees and terrain shape their own spaces within the facility and are important as natural contrasts to the large volume of buildings.

The trees also perform an important function as vertical elements in an environment otherwise dominated by the horizontal lineage of the prison wall.

The large natural area in the centre is, with one exception, untouched by all forms of technical intervention.

The natural landscape around the buildings change with the seasons and creates an awareness of the passing of time. The natural forest vegetation is supplemented with some smaller planted areas containing bushes and perennials chosen to

emphasise the changing of the seasons through foliage, flowering, fruit and autumn colours.

Small oases

The administration and welfare buildings are located on the flattest part of the site. The existing terrain and vegetation between the buildings has been retained as much as is possible. There has been an emphasis on creating good, varied outdoor spaces adjacent to the buildings.

Some of the garden rooms are only visible from inside and are not accessible. This is why they are designed as small oases with extensive use of vegetation.

Facilitating outdoor play

The gardens by the visitor centre and family visiting room facilitate outdoor play and provide space for families. Their design and contents have been chosen taking into consideration that they should be a little different to other outdoor areas encountered by children.

The fruit garden and kitchen garden are centrally located in the facility. The fruit garden contains different fruit trees, and the kitchen

garden is set up to cultivate various plants.

The sports park is adjacent to the activity centre and is set up for sporting activity and outdoor gatherings. The sports park is bordered by the wooded hill to the east.

The outdoor area beside section C is designed in accordance with the principles of universal design, as the section includes two cells that are adapted for inmates with special needs.

Hard and soft

The project's intention and main initiative is based on two mutually dependent contradictions: hard and soft.

Hard represents the deprivation of freedom that occurs during a sentence, while the soft represents the goal of rehabilitation. This is reflected in the main initiative and the position of the buildings.

The division of the site in two has provided guidance for the facility's main focus and architectural differentiation. The bulk of the institution, the administrative functions and the highest-security units are gathered together in one system connected to the main gate and sports park on the lower, marshy level.

Everyday movements

The architectural response to these goals has been, amongst other things, to divide the building stock so that inmates' movements during the course of the day reflect - as much as is possible - our everyday movements through the home, school, workplace and leisure activities.

Symmetry and axial order are avoided because this often creates associations with subjugation of the individual.

The facility is divided into 'public' and 'private' functions with different modes of expression. It has been the intention that the prison's 350 employees should feel that they are in a different zone when not mixing with inmates.

Exterior

The facility's exterior, situated in the lush wooded area, is clean and precise in its expression. Dark brick walls, galvanised steel and timber are used consciously to create a precise facility with beautiful dimensions and distribution of windows.

The complex has the appearance of a modern prison facility.

The chosen materials have a nuanced character with textures and colour breaks, which together with the impact of daylight on the material ensure the buildings have a shifting character throughout the day and year.

There was also a goal to construct the buildings 'into the natural landscape'. The colour palette of the materials is inspired by the pink granite of Halden, the brown-pink hue of the pine trunks and the moss-clad forest floor. Grey-pink bricks have been used.

Interior

There has been a lot of emphasis on the design of the interior, and for the first time in a Nordic context, an interior designer has been used for the furnishing of a prison.

Functional needs, security and efficiency for employees have been put into focus. Together with the architects, the work has comprised understanding the logistics, the main functions of the rooms and their interdependent relationships.

The facility's interior should help to drive a positive attitude amongst inmates towards learning and motivate them to strive for a new life. Furthermore, employees should experience well-being and a sense of community during tough working days.

Colours and variation

It is long-standing tradition to use subdued, pale green on the walls in prisons. These have a calming and stress-reducing effect. Based on experience, colours improve general well-being and stimulate initiative and joy. Coloured walls are also good for helping people to orientate themselves in large institutions.

The base colour is a neutral grey-white. In addition, 15 impact colours have been selected that are used as contrast colours in various rooms and buildings.

The colours in individual rooms have been chosen to suit the floor coverings, but also based on the psychological impact those colours have on us.

In cells, conversation rooms and group rooms, subdued colours that contribute to a calming atmosphere have been used as is traditional.

In activity rooms and common rooms, fresher and more energetic colours have been used.

Living quarters

The living quarters are located on the upper level in the form of a wreath around the natural recreational area. The buildings merge into the surrounding landscape. The facility is designed to ensure that inmates and employees are met in a friendly rather than authoritarian manner.

This is why there is an emphasis on good relationships, good dimensions, quality materials and firmness in the shapes.



The activity centre

The activity centre is home to various workshops of different sizes, the library and classrooms, and all with outdoor areas in between.

This building complex is divided up so that many smaller groups of inmates can participate in different courses and activities during the course of the day. The activity centre is clad with bricks and the silhouette against the wall is characterised by the wooden beams surrounding the ventilation shafts on the roofs.

The cultural centre

The cultural centre houses the sports hall/cultural hall featuring a stage, weights room and a ceremony room, all of which are organised around a foyer with views of the football pitch to the south. Daylight is taken in along the length of the floor through exercise wall bars.

The ceremony room has load-bearing brick walls where individual bricks have been replaced with glass bricks to allow daylight to enrich the room.

The feature wall to the east has received artistic treatment and the natural landscape on the hill to the east becomes part of the room's interior through the slits on either side of the wall.

Living quarters

The living quarters are located behind the copse on the hill. This is a short walk from the activity building and administrative building to the west. The sections accommodate four units on each floor, with 10-12 inmates per unit. This means there are 84 spaces in each unit.

The layout of the cells and common room ensure good views of the surrounding natural landscape. There are two outdoor spaces, each with an area of approx. 1000 m². One is designed for sporting activities, while the other is more contemplative with a focus on experiencing nature and movement.

The cells are organised around a common room that has daylight from two sides. This gives the daylight and view some latitude in relation to experiences during the course of the day. The common room includes a kitchen/eating area and a living area. The guard room is active adjoining part of the common room.

The cell wings diverge from the common room like arms. The living quarters are identical, but with different views and colours.



Guesthouse

A small detached house built into the south-west slope of the hill, in the middle hill.

It is self-contained with its own garden and has its own identity. The house has a kitchen/living room, bathroom and two bedrooms.

A large sliding door into the garden ensures a strong connection between the inside and outside. The house is clad in untreated larch.



Open section

The open section is located outside the prison walls and is a halfway house to freedom. The two-storey building has space for 12 people and a common room on each floor. Adjoining the section are offices for staff who provide support during the transitional phase.



Halden Prison

- **Architects:** HLM arkitektur AS | Erik Møller arkitekter
- **Interior designer:** Beate Ellingsen AS
- **Landscape architect:** Asplan Viak AS
- **Project period:** 2002 - 2009
- **Area:** 21,000 m² (heated UFA)
- **Gross floor area:** approx. 27,600 m²
- **Site area:** approx. 314,000 m²
- In 2010, Halden Prison was awarded the Østfold Architectural Association's 'Arnstein Arneberg Prize' for outstanding architecture. The prize is awarded annually to a building or facility that stands out as an example of good architecture.
- The prison took second place in the best interior competition at 'Designers Saturday Oslo 2011' - a collaboration between Designers Saturday and the Norwegian Association of Interior Architects and Furniture Designers (NIL), which is held once every two years. The purpose of the prize is to promote interest in 'built interiors'.



Decorative elements

In addition to the main decorations, there is also a need for decorative elements to ensure well-being. Various photo montages in a range of combinations and motifs have been created so that the pictures provide the joy of proximity to plants and animals, offer the chance to learn, guess, remember, compete and exchange experiences and associations.

PS: See the separate article about the extensive art collection in the prison

