Abstract: Institutional architecture is built to monitor and separate these individuals from the public. The initial goal is to repair and prepare them for reentry. However, society treats correctional institutions as places to punish, not to treat. The living conditions of these individuals have not been altered for a long time and some are still considered inhumane. With poor interior environments due to overcrowding from mass incarceration inside correctional institutions, inmates are unable to rehabilitate and prepare themselves for reentry. Moreover, available rehabilitation programs do not heal them from all the psychological effects that the space has on the users. With no value seen by the society, only small patchwork fixes are being applied to outdated facilities, preventing them from fulfilling their proper function.

The goal of this thesis project is to create a design prototype of a correctional facility to approach a new standard or model of the justice system that emphasizes rehabilitation and reconciliation. The project approaches rehabilitation in a very different way from what our American justice system has. The prototyped correctional facility is designed to be located in a rural setting outside the urban area in the state of California. The facility shall be built for male inmates who were convicted of nonviolent crimes.

The project demonstrates various strategies that meet basic human needs and provide the right environment for rehabilitation. The layout of the facility mimics a typical design of a college campus while showing the importance of exterior programs. Residential housing’s design is similar to shared apartments. Basic amenities are provided in order to encourage inmates to care for themselves similar to living in a normalized environment. The facility also considers the use of materials, finishes, and furniture in the interior environment. The idea is to utilize normal materials, normal light fixtures, and domestic furnishings to create a trusting and positive environment for recovery.

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