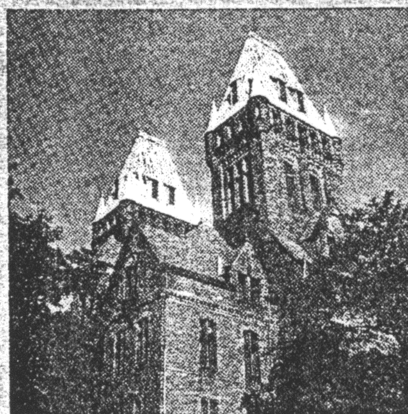
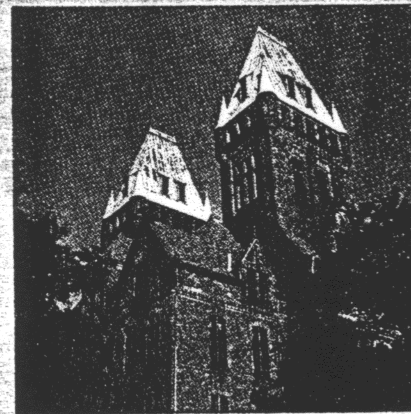
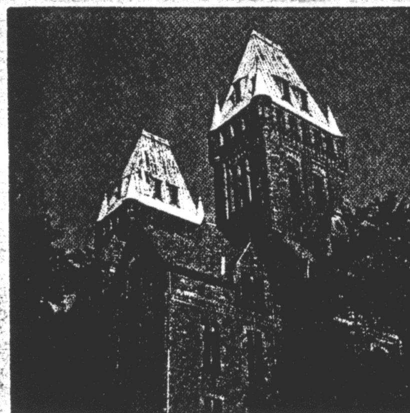
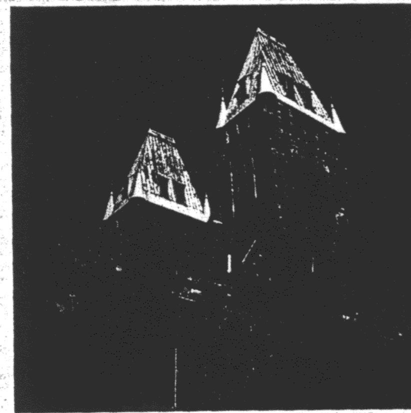
Changing Places: ReMaking Institutional Buildings

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The Hangman's New Clothes: Three Histories of Prison Reuse

David J.T. Vanderburgh

Introduction

> *Every true man's apparel fits your thief. If it be too little for your thief, your true man thinks it big enough. If it be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it is little enough. So every true man's apparel fits your thief.*
>
> Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure,* IV.2.40

After over twenty years as "the world's most expensive and best-watched single-occupancy dungeon"[1] Berlin's Spandau Prison was torn down in the fall of 1987. Within two weeks of the death of Rudolph Hess, the prison's sole inmate, the four-power Allied Prison Command ordered its demolition and workers began taking the buildings apart.

The action closed a short but important chapter in prison history. Since 1947, Spandau had held a very small group of very well-known prisoners, the principal surviving Nazi defendants of the Nuremberg Trials. The group dwindled steadily until, in 1966, Hess was left alone with the guards. Despite controversial attempts to have him released on humanitarian grounds, Hess remained, largely at the Soviets' insistence. His suicide in August of 1987 finally put an end to a sentence that some felt had become meaningless.

The Allies had planned for some time to move out of the buildings of Spandau, but had held off for Hess to finish his term. Mean-

while, the prison was becoming something of a shrine for neo-Nazis. Spandau should have been a positive symbol for the Allied powers—and it was, in a way, for the Soviets, whose reasons in keeping Hess there were eminently symbolic. Yet as Hess's term dragged on, Spandau was becoming an embarrassment; even, paradoxically, a symbol of Nazism itself. As a focus of racist extremism, with associations that were ambiguous at best, the prison almost had to be destroyed. Its destruction was an act of cultural catharsis.

Why begin a discussion of prison reuse with a case of demolition? First, and perhaps most importantly, because I think we need to expand the limits of what we consider to be "reuse." Reuse of institutional buildings is a serious challenge to conventional thinking, and as long as the image of what is possible remains in the domain of sandblasted brick, loft conversions, and Main Street U.S.A., there won't be much hope for creative solutions. Every change of use can be seen as a chance to change history—a welcome opportunity, in some cases.

Another reason to begin with Spandau is that it takes us straight to the heart of the ambiguities and contradictions of the prison as a social project. The story of an ordinary, medium-sized late-19th century building that acquired a sudden importance, only to be destroyed overnight, is an allegory for the history of the prison in the modern era.

Two competing strains of thought—on the one hand, that any building would do for society's rejects; on the other, that only the most specialized of architectures could contain them—run through the development of the purpose-built prison. The irony of lavish spending for society's most offensive members is especially evident in Spandau's case. But there has always been the problem of deciding precisely what rights the criminal has forfeited through his or her misdeeds, and how much effort, if any, to expend toward reformation (certainly there was little thought of reforming Spandau's late residents). And prisons themselves have come alternately to represent both soft-hearted humanitarianism and the most perfect cruelty.

Shakespeare's hangman from "Measure for Measure," quoted in the epigraph, states the problem succinctly. His reference to the question of what "suits" a criminal[2]—"Every true man's apparel fits your thief"—draws a neat parallel to the troubling practice of "clothing" criminals in stone and iron. Even if the average citizen, "your true man," thinks anything at all "big enough" (i.e. good enough) for the thief, the thief himself may find even a generous garment "little enough," or consider himself deserving of it. This is the paradox: we are concerned that the "apparel" fit the "thief," but not be more generous than he deserves. But it is not simply a question of what the thief deserves. If, ultimately, the purpose of punishment is to reclaim the thief, to make him a "true man," then he must eventually wear the "apparel" of the true man, which is necessarily better than "too little." Spandau, in its last years, was literally "too big" for Hess, though he found it "little enough," and finally "too little."

"Critical" Reuse

Spandau has been reused rather definitively. It remains only in rubble and cultural memory. But unlike many other recent cases of monuments destroyed—Penn Station in New York, or the market pavilions of Paris—this one met its ends for reasons other than the lack of a better idea. Normal criteria for preservation simply did not apply to Spandau. Instead, it became the subject of what I will call "critical" reuse.

The term "critical" comes from an essay by Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life," which claims that history is constituted in terms of three possible attitudes toward past events: the "critical," the "monumental," and the "antiquarian."[3] For Nietzsche, "critical" history represents the impulse to edit the text of history, to expunge those elements that we would rather forget. "It is an attempt, as it were, *a posteriori*, to give oneself a past from which one would like to be descended in opposition to the past from which one is descended."[4] Clearly, Spandau had come to represent a past we would like to expunge.

The era of critical prison reuse dates from the year 1789. On July 14 of that year, now celebrated in France as Bastille Day, a mob of revolutionaries stormed the Bastille in Paris, an enormous medieval keep that had become a symbol of monarchy and political repression (Figure 6.1). Prisons had been stormed before, of course. But that first Bastille Day was a watershed for two reasons. First, because its destruction was one of the important acts that ushered in an era in which institutional buildings like prisons were to carry much greater responsibility in themselves: revolutionaries saw the Bastille not only as an instrument, but even as an agent of social control. Secondly, the act of demolition was marked by a blend of symbolism

Figure 6.1 "Citoyens" (*citizens*) *dance on the ruins of the Bastille. 1846.*

and pragmatism that characterizes any critical reuse.

To begin with the second point, the storming of the Bastille was not a purely symbolic act. Hatred of a symbol would not in itself motivate major actions during armed conflict, nor could it sustain laborers through the weeks it took to demolish a huge stone building. When the revolutionaries first penetrated the Bastille, they were expecting to liberate hundreds of fellow freedom-fighters, and to find a cache of arms as well. Their hopes were disappointed, which does not diminish the importance of the act.[5] But without the material impetus provided by those hopes, the act might never have been performed, and Bastille Day would be celebrated under some other name.

More recently, the demolition of Spandau shows the same mixture of motives. The Allies were not simply concerned with the symbolic aura of the prison; it was the threat of extremist agitation, added perhaps to some Allied impatience, that led to its demolition. Even land speculation can be included as a motive: a shopping center is now planned for the site of the old prison.[6] Once a museum of war crimes, now a palace of consumption.

But the main reason for my choice of opening date is that the storming of the Bastille marked the beginning of a new attitude toward institutional architecture in general, and the prison in particular. Between 1760 and 1850, with increasing intensity toward the end of that period, prisons, like hospitals and asylums, became more specialized, invested with more and more direct responsibility for the "cure" of various ills. No longer was the prison merely a representation of justice, like Newgate prison, with its garlands of fetters (Figure 6.2), or Ledoux's famous project for the prison at Aix-en-Provence; it was now to become the *embodiment* of a new reformatory power.[7] Just

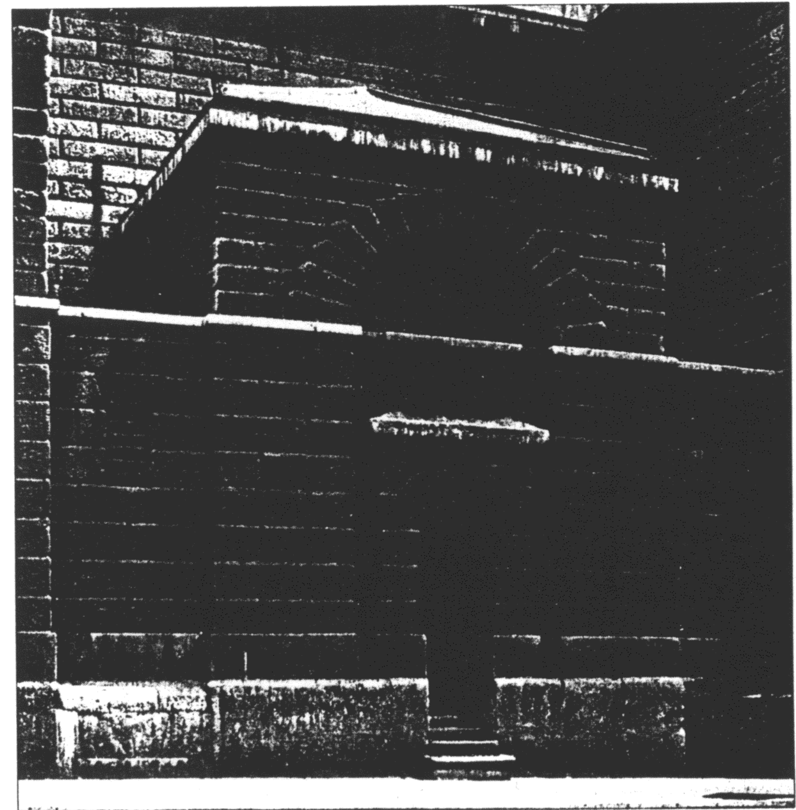

Figure 6.2 *The Debtors' Door. Newgate Prison, London. George Dance the Younger, Architect. Begun 1769, demolished 1902.*

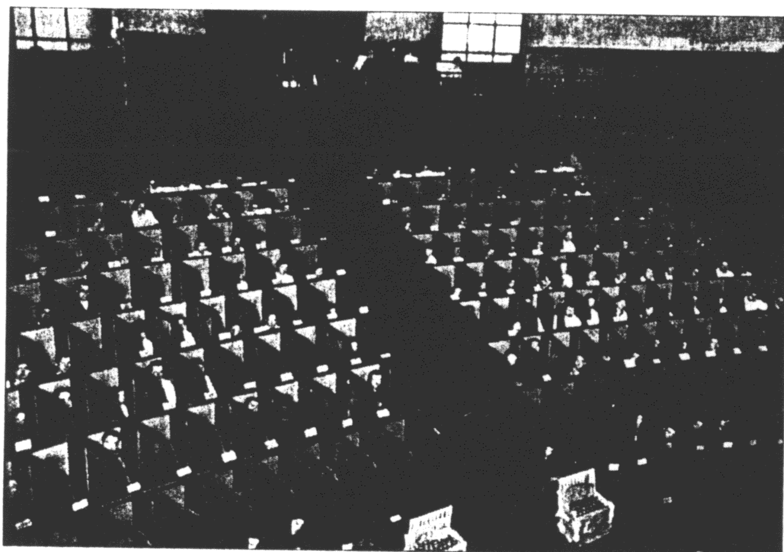

Figure 6.3 *Cellular Chapel. La Petite Roquette Prison, Paris. By Hippolyte Lebas. Begun 1831, demolished 1974.*

as the idea of separation was built into this prison chapel in France (Figure 6.3), each of the reformers' principles found expression in a kind of meticulous engineering that sought to counter every deviant tendency with stone or iron.

There were two separate waves of critical prison reuse during the nineteenth century.[8] The first followed the flowering of a prison reform movement based on the international surveys of John Howard, published in the 1770s and '80s, just before the Bastille Day benchmark. The building of the so-called "reformed" prisons, constructed according to new standards of hygiene and security, often occasioned the demolition of older ones then considered unsalvageable. Great hopes were invested in these new buildings; they were expected to succeed where their filthy, corruption-ridden predecessors had failed. Architecture became securely linked to reform. Destruction of the old buildings and beginning again on a clean slate was the principle, if not always the practice. And just as the old building symbolized the rotten state of unreformed morality (Figure 6.4), the new one became the emblem of health and virtue (Figure 6.5). Small

towns were proud of their prisons, competing with each other on grounds of cleanliness, salubrity, and security.

Naturally, reform was not the only interest being served. The building trades stood to benefit from a prison-building boom, as did the fledgling profession of architecture. As national prison systems began to be laid out all over Europe, it became quite important to have up-to-date buildings, and the money involved must have attracted many who were not otherwise concerned with reform.

But the earlier reformed prisons were soon outdated by a new de-

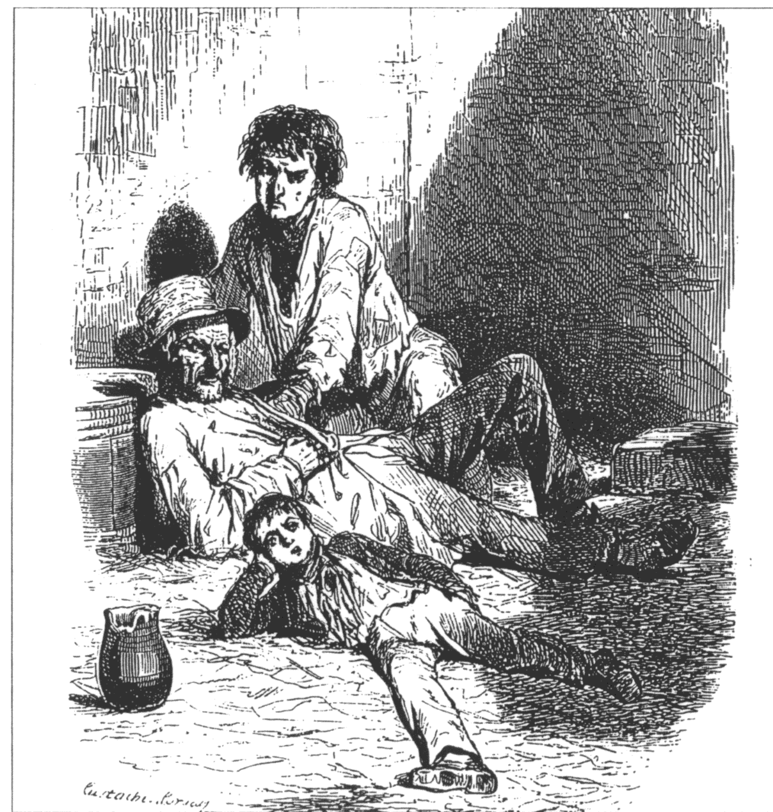

Figure 6.4 *Three of the unreformed prison's inmates. Reformers denounced the mixing of ages, classes, genders, and degrees of criminality, as well as the lack of activity.*

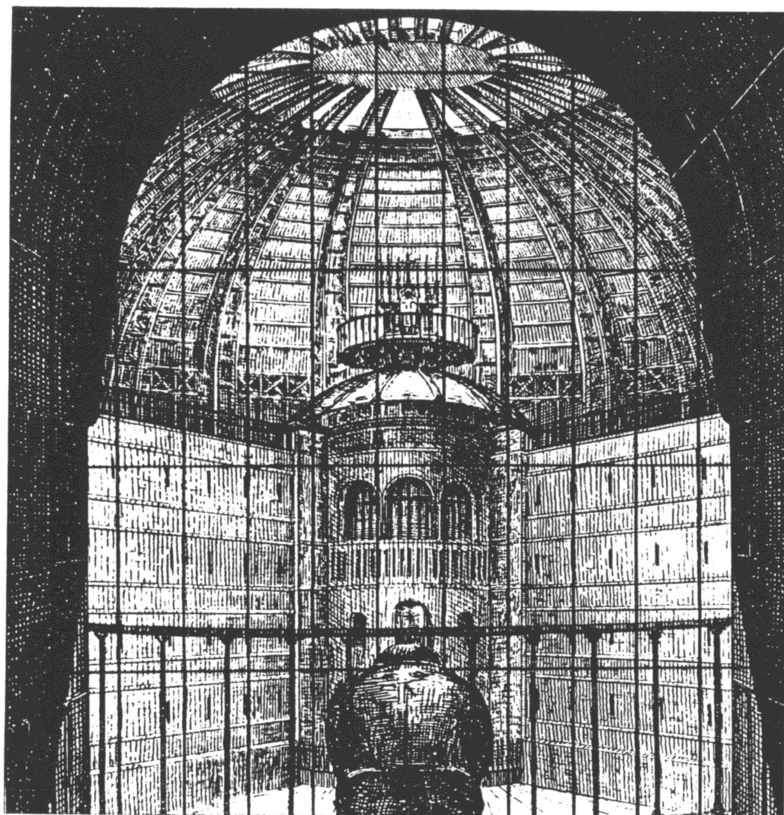

Figure 6.5 *Prisoner's-eye view of an idealized panopticon-type project. The prisoner kneels in prayer, facing a central altar. 1841.*

velopment. Penitentiaries, first appearing in the early 19th century, eventually brought about a second wave of critical prison reuse, as the reformed prisons themselves became subject to the same criticisms that brought them into being. Based in part on ideas of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, large sophisticated prototypes were built in Philadelphia (see Dennis Montagna's article on Eastern State Penitentiary in this volume) and London, which were then duplicated all over the world.[9] By the 1840s, in most of Europe, buildings only a few years old were being torn down or remodeled extensively to conform to the ever-more-exacting specifications of a new techni-

cal specialty called "penology." If only a minority were ever completely replaced, the new ideas nevertheless caused widespread re-evaluation of the existing building stock. An important early case of critical prison reuse took place in the 1820s when William Strickland's newly-completed penitentiary at Pittsburgh was demolished because it failed to prevent communication between prisoners. John Haviland, architect of Philadelphia's famous Eastern State Penitentiary was hired to rebuild it according to his own model.[10]

A number of penitentiaries from that era are still in use today; others of them, like Haviland's Philadelphia prototype are sitting vacant, and many have also been critically reused. But an interesting twist in the contemporary story is that the destruction of these large, solidly-built buildings, never an easy job, has now become a matter of considerable cost. In some cases, where the development climate would normally dictate demolition, some prisons still exist because they are too expensive to destroy.[11] Others, like Spandau, continue to be edited, perhaps deservedly, out of the historical text of the city.

"Antiquarian" and "Monumental" Reuse

Transposing Nietzsche's idea of critical history into terms of reuse poses no great problem: the impetus is the need to forget, and its implications for a building are clear. For the other two attitudes that he discusses—his "antiquarian" and "monumental" impulses—the analogy is less straightforward. Because they can be taken to refer directly to material culture, these would seem to lend themselves easily to the present discussion. But it is the very ease of translation that renders the task more delicate.

In identifying and criticizing an antiquarian mindset, Nietzsche uses the antiquarian's appreciation of old objects to symbolize an unwillingness to generate new ideas. In discussing the analogous type of reuse, I cite examples that show a more practical sort of appreciation, one which can in fact be very forward-looking. While Nietzsche's view of the antiquarian includes this possibility, he does not give it the same emphasis.

More serious, but also more illuminating, is the problem of speaking about prisons as monuments. In Nietzsche's time, it might still have been possible to speak of a prison as a monument in the conventional sense, but today it is very difficult to imagine. That there could nevertheless be such a thing as a recent reuse project that

monumentalizes a prison says as much about contemporary notions of monumentality as it does about the prison form itself.

I adopt Nietzsche's terminology partly as a matter of convenience, because his categories fit my examples, but also to explore what part buildings play in the construction of histories. Since one of his concerns in the essay is the use, and potential abuse, of history and historical facts, it is tempting to apply his ideas to objects that are, as buildings are, at once historic and explicitly useful. If, as I have suggested, this gives rise to problems of connotation, it is those same problems that make the comparison worthwhile.

Antiquarian Reuse

Nietzsche's "antiquarian" history is essentially a check on the possible excesses of the other two. The danger of unchecked monumental or critical history is that "the past itself suffers damage: very great portions of the past are forgotten and despised, and flow away like a grey uninterrupted flood, and only single embellished facts stand out as islands. . ."[12] The antiquarian impulse, as its name implies, is to attend to the local, the minutiae that make up that grey flood, and to understand their value from long experience. For the antiquarian historian,

> *The history of his city becomes for him the history of his self; he understands the wall, the turreted gate, the ordinance of the town council, the national festival, like an illustrated diary of his youth and finds himself . . . in all of them.*[13]

This, of the three attitudes, might seem to relate most directly to the concerns of preservation and reuse. It is also the most difficult for Nietzsche to accept. Antiquarian history represents a natural and easily understood need for continuity. But it comes close to what he considers the most dangerous historical tendency—to embalm the past and lose the ability to move forward.

Antiquarian reuse, like Nietzsche's antiquarian history, happens on a small scale, and values what exists without great discrimination. But this acceptance, born of limited means, is unlike that of his schema in that it in no way impedes change—it simply ensures that change will be incremental. Reusing a local prison as something else is a way of incorporating it into the collective memory, and thus

is analogous to local history, but it also has a practical aspect with long roots in the history of the building type. For some towns, as the following examples show, an empty prison is just a certain quantity of available space. And for much of recorded history, most empty prisons have been indistinguishable from most empty houses, inns, or cellars.

Antiquarian reuse of prisons could be said to begin with the decline of feudalism in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As judicial responsibility came to rest more directly with the towns, local government had to take over many functions once fulfilled by the nobility. Thus, when it became necessary to hold accused criminals before trial, it would likely not be done in a building built for that purpose, but in whatever space was available. A church cellar, a gatehouse, a cistern or a tavern might each serve equally well. And when it was not needed as a prison, the town would use it for something else. In this early period, anything could become a prison, a prison could become anything. Since the function of a prison was simply to hold someone, in relatively neutral fashion, it required no very specialized space. The derivation of the word "prison" from the Latin *praehendere* reflects its neutrality, referring simply to its holding or containing function.[14]

As evidence of how casually new uses might be assigned to buildings, Britain's system of workhouses, or "bridewells," received both its name and its first venue from the disused Bridewell Palace, in 1557.[15] In the 1770s and 1780s, when John Howard made his famous surveys, the vast majority of prisons were found in buildings originally intended for other purposes.[16]

A good example of antiquarian reuse is the Old Gaol at Abingdon in Oxfordshire, England (Figure 6.6). The Gaol has gone through a series of minor transformations that leave it in use and in place today. Abingdon Bridewell, as it was originally called, was designed and built by Daniel Harris and Jeffrey Wyattville between 1805 and 1811, using convict labor.[17] It was built on a radial plan, with three wings for different types of prisoners converging on a central hub. It never received many prisoners, though, and by 1861 it had been converted to some sort of municipal administrative purpose, and soon after held a mill and grain storage. The building was then abandoned to disuse in the early part of this century, until in 1971 the town decided to make it a cultural and recreational sports center.[18]

This final intervention at Abingdon (Figure 6.7) is more intrusive

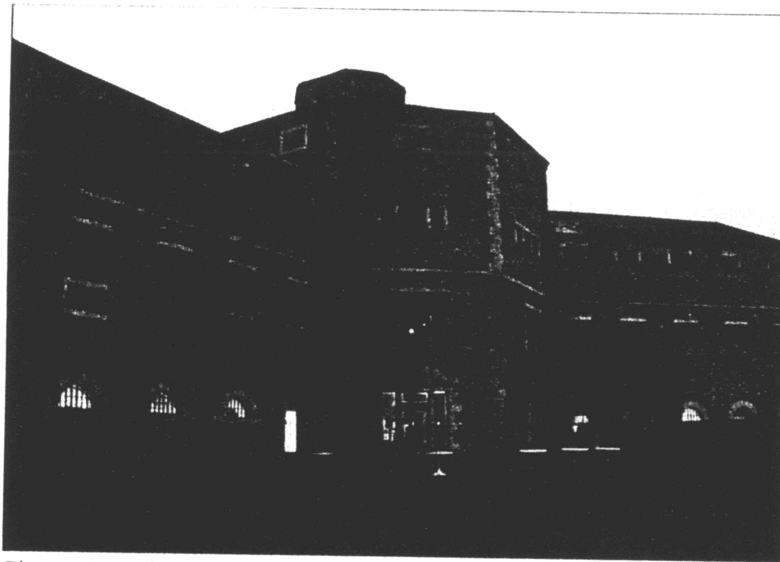

Figure 6.6 *The Old Gaol, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.*

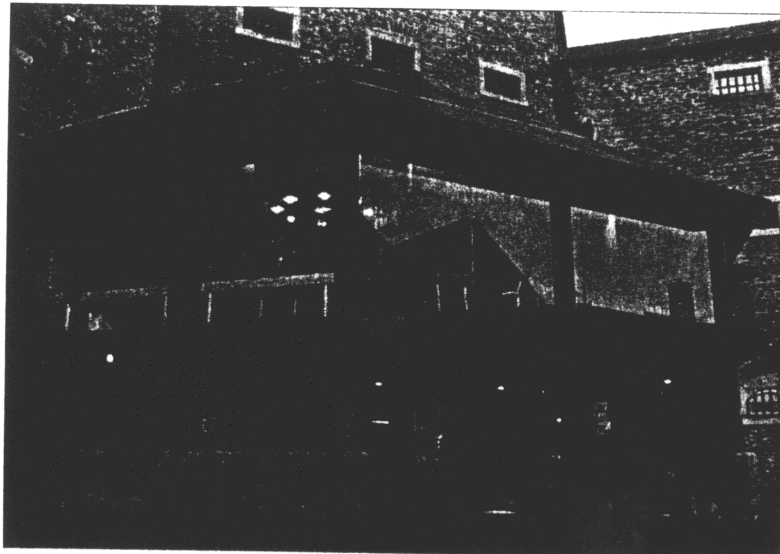

Figure 6.7 *View of the new entrance. The Old Gaol, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.*

than the previous ones. Preserving only the outer walls and the central tower, the scheme required replacement of all floors and most interior walls, with major additions and substantial structural revamping. In fact, the changes to the spatial qualities of the building bring it close to the "monumental" type of reuse, discussed below. But as the last in a series of local, pragmatically motivated changes that had already altered the original building significantly, the project is more continuous than discontinuous with its past.

Another important case of antiquarian prison reuse is the Castle Museum in York, in Yorkshire, England, a reuse of two 18th-century prison buildings as a museum of handicrafts and period furniture. It is appropriate that the museum should be adduced as an example of antiquarian reuse: it was founded in 1935 on the collection of a country doctor named John Kirk, a classic antiquarian in the British tradition.[19]

The earliest building (Figure 6.8), originally called York Castle County Gaol, was completed in 1705, probably by William Wakefield, a local mason. The building would hardly be recognized as a prison, and was highly unusual for its time, with its symmetrical baroque

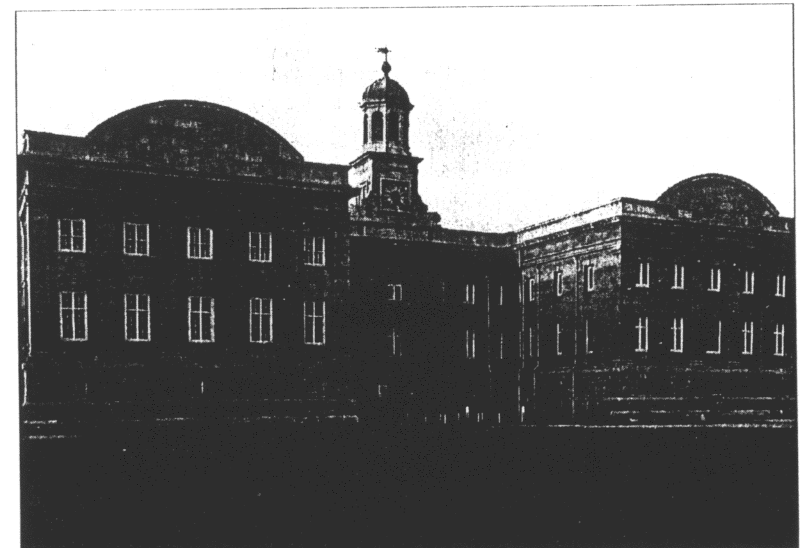

Figure 6.8 *York Castle County Gaol.*

facade and central clock tower. Daniel Defoe described it as "the most stately and complete prison of any in the Kingdom, if not in Europe. . . kept as neat within-side as it is noble without."[20]

The second building, the neo-classical Women's Prison by John Carr, a York architect, was built in 1780 in response to complaints of overcrowding in the original gaol.[21] Both buildings consisted of congregate cells (i.e., cells intended for groups of prisoners, rather than just one or two) on central corridors. The older one originally had an exercise yard in the space between the projecting wings.

As reused, the buildings hold a series of period rooms and suites, a heterogeneous collection of British material culture. The congregate cells on the upper floors, which are considerably larger than those that would house a single prisoner, are well-suited to the purpose of displaying furniture. On the ground floor of the older building, the only cells that really look like cells have been used to display implements for various crafts, like blacksmithing and pipemaking. One cell, labeled the "condemned cell," has been left intact, with a display of torture instruments to show the building's previous use.

The York gaols show that building types are not as distinct as one might think. Just as early museums evolved from the galleries of great houses, so the earlier gaol at York would have been derived by its putative designer from the stone manor houses that were more familiar to him. The transition is easy from the *ancien régime* practice of dividing debtors and felons, upper class and lower—a rogues' gallery, if you will—to the 20th-century museological task of separating Edwardian from Jacobean, pre-war from post-war artifacts: in both cases it is an architecture of classification.

It is this ease of transition that makes the Castle Museum an ideal example of antiquarian reuse. While the attraction of the museum is patently sentimental, the use of the structures is clearly based more upon their value as organized space than upon emotional associations to the buildings themselves. Even the name of the museum refers to the nearby Saxon keep rather than the buildings that house it. This provides a distinct contrast to monumental reuse, for which it is just such associations that are the driving force.

Monumental Reuse

Nietzsche describes "monumental" history as being intended to inspire us with the best parts of the past, to encourage heroic action

and self-sacrifice. Monumental history reassures us "that the great which once existed was at least possible once and may well again be possible sometime."[22]

The monumental impulse is an old one, but monumental reuse of prisons is the most recent of the three types. It begins with the 1960s, and the sudden rise of interest in "recycling." The older current of appreciation for more-or-less "upper class" structures was joined during this period by an appreciation of "working class" and utilitarian buildings. Factories, mills, canneries and warehouses, and a few prisons, were converted into a whole new genre of living and work-spaces.

On the face of things, the impulse to "recycle" in this way might seem to belong to antiquarian reuse. But antiquarian reuse is generally a local project, and may involve very little change. Recycling is often undertaken by outsiders "discovering" the buildings for the first time, or by locals with an eye toward gentrification. Recycling puts quotation marks around the building, setting it off from its context in a new way. In short, the building is turned into a kind of monument. Nietzsche's definition of monumental history assumes that it is specific events and personages that are the subjects of monumentalizing activity. Recycled warehouses, or prisons, are clearly not the same, but neither are today's monuments.

J.B. Jackson discusses the modern monument in an essay entitled "The Necessity of Ruins."[23] Describing what he sees as an historical trend toward anonymous monuments, Jackson says of these later types:

> *I think this kind of monument is celebrating a different past, not the past which history books describe, but a vernacular past, a golden age where there are no dates or names, simply a sense of the way it used to be, history as the chronicle of everyday existence.*[24]

Jackson is quite critical of this trend; he sees a "genericizing" of history, à la Disneyland, as the result.[25] Monumental reuse of prisons, however well-intentioned, has sometimes done just that. A common approach is to keep whatever is recognizably high-style or "historic-looking"—for just those reasons Jackson outlines—and destroy the more problematic elements. The irony is that if any parts of the building had real historical importance, those "problematic elements" would likely be among them.

One example of this sort of reuse is Graham Gund's work for Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art around 1973. Beginning with a Romanesque Revival police station, Gund gutted the interior, including all the jail cells, and installed an open, diagonally-organized multilevel exhibition space.[26] The building shell in this case is exploited for its Victorian associations and fine surface detail. It becomes a monument, not to any specific person or event, but to a time when American architects studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, to a generalized past of watercolor renderings and skilled artisans that has started to look rosier the farther away it gets.

The point made, it is equally important to recognize the complexity of any given situation. Monumentalization of the kind discussed here was not the only consideration in the Boston project. For example, it could be argued that the gutting of the building was a kind of critical reuse: perhaps architect and client wanted to do away with the painful memories associated with the jail cells. And some case could be made that the reuse was overall an antiquarian one, in that it was locally-conceived, and modest in the scale of development. Or to return for a moment to the Abingdon project, used above as an example of antiquarian reuse, we find a clear attempt to monumentalize in the inscription on the floor of the entry: "This building, where prisoners once lay fettered in despair, now takes fresh life as a centre for the liberation of the human spirit. . ."[27] The inscription makes no mention that the building had only been used as a prison for about a third of its existence. There are no kind words for the draft animals that had probably also lain "fettered in despair" during the building's tenure as a mill. The inscription is an allusion, not to the specific past of this building, but to the kind of generic past that Jackson describes. This mixture, or balance, of motives is a necessary part of the reuse of prisons. It reflects the contradictory status of the prison as both idea and object.

My second example of monumental prison reuse is as unusual in its way as the critical reuse I began with. Alcatraz Island (Figure 6.9) is the site of one of North America's best known prisons. Prisoners of one kind or another were held there during a period of about a hundred years, from the Civil War until 1962, but its most famous period was after 1934, when it became a federal penitentiary for the worst of the worst. Al Capone and "Machine Gun" Kelly were among its inmates, and the island was widely considered to be escape-proof. But a spectacular escape, less than a year before it was closed, pointed

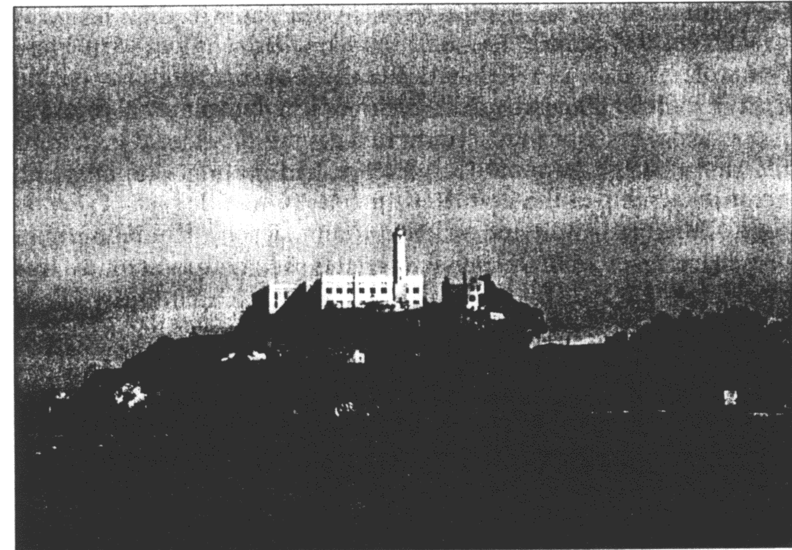

Figure 6.9 *View of Alcatraz Island from San Francisco Bay.*

up the deteriorating condition of the main cellblock, a reinforced concrete building from 1910. The escapees were able to chip their way through the badly spalled concrete in the base of the building, and escaped at least as far as the edge of the island.[28]

After Alcatraz was closed, there was some discussion at the national level of using the island as a site for a monument to the United Nations, but the State Department was nervous about the island's negative associations. Then, when San Francisco officials decided to offer to buy the island from the federal government, they received a flood of fanciful proposals from citizens and developers, ranging from gambling casinos to wildlife sanctuaries.[29] And proposals are still being made. A recent example is the proposal for "The Elysium, Alcatraz Island: a Wholistic Health Spa, Creative Arts and Educational Center."[30] Renderings of "The Elysium" show the island with all present buildings removed, and a scattering of pastel-colored spheres and pyramids replacing them.

Spring of 1987 showed the continued attraction of Alcatraz' gangster-filled past. First was a party in the cellblock, hosted by a prominent San Francisco investment banking company, and estimated to have

cost about $70,000 to arrange—possibly the most anyone has ever paid to get *into* prison.[31] Around the same time, a local San Francisco columnist remarked that Alcatraz ought to become a city-owned casino, thereby alleviating some of the city's budget problems. His proposal did not take into account that gambling is illegal in California, and that the National Park Service had no intention of giving up its ownership of the island. His paper, *The San Francisco Chronicle,* went along with it and solicited sketch designs from a number of area architects, and the public response, if not overwhelming, was diverting.

San Francisco did accept one of the many proposals in 1969, a bid from the Texas millionaire Lamar Hunt that would have cleared the island and developed it commercially. But the public reaction was so negative that the Department of the Interior decided to study the possibility of making it a part of the National Park system. Eventually, in 1972, Alcatraz became part of the new Golden Gate National Recreation Area. But first, another sort of monumental reuse was in the making.

When, in November of 1969, a group of 90 activists landed to claim the island for Native Americans, it was the beginning of a 19-month occupation that brought Alcatraz and the Native American cause to national attention.[32] It was clearly less important to these "reusers" that Alcatraz had been a prison than that it was a prominent and defensible spot. Still, the island's notoriety can only have increased their visibility, and the prison's prominence brought out an ironic parallel to the government's treatment of marginalized peoples. During their stay there, the activists engaged in some critical reuse of their own, burning and vandalizing many of the buildings on the island. The symbolism was not entirely lost on those watching, nor has the record been effaced entirely: traces of the occupation still remain to remind visitors of the Native Americans' attempt to shame the United States into honoring old bargains.

By the early 1980s, the Park Service had stabilized many buildings and the island was receiving hundreds of thousands of visitors a year, but deterioration in the salt air and sun was steady and severe. Meanwhile, the vegetation on Alcatraz, most of which descended from gardens planted by the island's inhabitants, was growing over more and more of the island's surface. In early 1987, the Golden Gate National Park Association decided to create a more detailed master plan, and landscape architect Lawrence Halprin was engaged to begin the

process. As part of his information-gathering process, Halprin arranged a series of workshops with San Francisco Bay Area residents.

The result of these sessions was a sort of consensual mandate to preserve as much as possible of the existing mood of the place—a ruin being taken back by nature—while providing some services that do not now exist on the island. The cellblock was to remain essentially as a museum of itself, with self-guided tours that would provide anecdotal histories of all the famous criminals that had been there. If such a plan goes through, Alcatraz will be a striking example of monumental prison reuse.

But perhaps the most thought-provoking aspect of the Alcatraz project is the irony of its attraction. Good taste or not, in the strict "bottom-line" terms of the tourist business, Alcatraz is hot property. It is now one of the two or three most popular National Park Service sites. Yet it was once the destination least preferred by nearly any American one might have asked. The paradox is similar to that raised at the beginning of this paper. Spandau, which might have been cherished as a symbol of justice, came to be hated as much as its occupants. Alcatraz, whose occupants were nearly as unsavory, is now a major attraction.[33]

A partial explanation for such dramatic reversals of fortune can be found in the circumstances of each case. After understanding the political climate surrounding Spandau at Hess' death, for instance, its critical reuse follows logically. The shape of each project is, in the end, the responsibility of a small number of people working in a specific time and place.[34] But I have also suggested that it is the history of the building type itself that pre-figures its career as a reused object.

In 1874, the year he published "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life" Nietzsche was thirty years old. Prison architecture, too, was out of the hectic years of its adolescence and had reached a plateau. The buildings had been built, but they weren't "working," if that meant preventing crime or recidivism. Many were losing faith in the guiding ideas of reform, and the new wave of enthusiasm around the turn of the century was a long way off. There was a variety of opinion: those inclined to be critical thought the prisons were a shameful mistake. A few considered them monuments to social hygiene. Nietzsche, had he cared to, could have found support for his ideas on history even in the short history of the penitentiary.

A century later, the situation is not dissimilar: if we have a few empty cellblocks, it is not because the purpose they were built for has been answered. There are those who want to tear them down, because of what they represent, and those who want them preserved for the same reason. But in neither case should we indulge in the illusion of having dispensed with them. Perhaps, as the examples of York and Abingdon suggest, good use can be made of the opportunity to understand what links the prison to other building types, and what has made the nineteenth-century models so enduring. In 1975, Michel Foucault asked the rhetorical question: "Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"[35] If his tone seems strident now, it is because we no longer find that resemblance surprising in the least.

Notes

1. Wolfgang Saxon, "Spandau Prison: Hess's Lonely Dungeon," *New York Times,* August 18, 1987, p. 14.
2. . . .and possibly also to the custom of granting to the hangman the clothes of his victim.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life,* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1986 [first published 1874]. It has also been translated as "On the Use and the Abuse. . ." and "On the Use and Disadvantage. . ." For directing me to Nietzsche's essay when this paper was in its early stages, I am indebted to my friend Felicia McCarren.
4. Ibid., p. 22.
5. Claude Quetel, in his *La Bastille: histoire vraie d'une prison legendaire,* Paris, ed. Robert Laffont, 1989, p. 375, writes that the insurgents found only seven prisoners when they finally opened the *cachots.* And many of the arms they found were not the light arms of insurrection, but the heavy cannon of a castle under siege. But Quetel also reaffirms the importance of the act as the true launching point of the Revolution.
6. Saxon, op. cit. According to a US Army tour guide, the center will be a commissary for the British Army; the site falls in the British quarter of Berlin.
7. Of the relatively few sources on prison architecture, the most thorough architectural history is Robin Evans' *The Fabrication of Virtue:*

English Prisons, 1750-1840, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, which is mostly concerned with English prisons. Less distinctly architectural, Michel Foucault's seminal *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison,* New York: Vintage Books, 1979, and Michael Ignatieff's *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850,* New York: Pantheon Books, 1978 are, nevertheless, the most important analyses to date of the genealogy of modern social-purpose architecture.

8. Evans, op. cit.
9. This included, not only Europe, but also South America and Japan. Cf. Norman Johnston, *The Development of Radial Prisons: A Case Study in Cultural Diffusion,* doctoral dissertation in sociology, University of Pennsylvania, 1958.
10. Ibid.
11. Haviland's Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia is one of these. It has been vacant for fifteen years, and one of the real forces for its preservation has been the cost of demolition, which has been estimated as running into the millions of dollars. San Quentin State prison in California, whose main cell block, an early reinforced concrete building, is still in use, is standing on waterfront real estate worth millions. A major impediment to its destruction has been the massiveness of the walls and foundations.
12. Nietzsche, p. 17.
13. Ibid., p. 19.
14. Eric Partridge, *Origins: the Encyclopedia of Words,* New York: Macmillan, 1959.
15. Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
16. Evans, pp. 12-13.
17. Ibid., p. 243.
18. Special issue: "Reconversion" in *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui,* no. 194, Dec. 1977, p. 10.
19. Graham Nicholson, curator, "The Castle Museum York," Cambridgeshire: Balding and Mansell, 1981, p. 2.
20. Ibid., p. 33.
21. Evans, p. 265.
22. Nietzsche, p. 16.
23. J.B. Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics,* Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980, pp. 89-102.

24. Ibid., p. 94-95.
25. He also rejects the contemporary tendency to valorize the ordinary, a position he took up again recently in *Historic Preservation* magazine [Elise Vider, "Who Says It's Not a Landmark?" in *Historic Preservation*, 39:6 Nov./Dec. 1987, p. 57. The article discusses whether a 1950s fast food restaurant should be given landmark status]. Given that he has been a major influence in that very process of rehabilitating the unremarkable, his vehemence is surprising.
26. Barbaralee Diamonstein, *Buildings Reborn: New Uses, Old Places*, New York: Harper and Row, 1978, p. 50.
27. Quote taken from slide in author's collection.
28. James P. Delgado, *Alcatraz Island*, Las Vegas, Nev.: KC Publications, Inc., 1985.
29. Ibid., pp. 36-39.
30. Advertisement in *Open Exchange* magazine, Jan.-March 1987, p. 56.
31. Ruthe Stein, "Dinner and Drinks on the Rock," in *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Tuesday, April 28, 1987, pp. 17 & 19. Some 600 guests were treated, not only to the best in catered cuisine, but to a feast of prison cliches in dramatic vignettes, including brutal prison guards and escaping convicts, all accompanied by the Dick Crest Orchestra playing "Jailhouse Rock" and other theme favorites.
32. Delgado, pp. 42-44.
33. A curious spin-off from the attraction of Alcatraz is the intention of a group associated with the San Quentin State prison to start a museum of the artifacts and memorabilia of that prison, while the prison continues to function. Whether they hope to compete with Alcatraz on some sort of "famous prisons" itinerary for tourists, or to deter schoolchildren from a life of crime is unclear at present.
34. Case study of Philadelphia in this volume will illustrate.
35. Foucault, p. 228.

7 The Good and The Evil: The Preservation of Monuments with a Negative Symbolic Image

Randolph Langenbach

For indeed the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, or in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. . . . It is in that golden stain of time that we are to look for the real light, and color, and preciousness of architecture; and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been entrusted with the fame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess of language and of life.

John Ruskin[1]

Raise the Titanic?

As Robert Ballard and his crew guided their cameras over the deep sea bottom in 1985 in search of the sunken wreck of the *Titanic*, they were crossing through a barrier in both space and time. The great ship, which had disappeared beneath the waves over 60 years ago carrying more than 1,500 people to their deaths, suddenly reappeared in the gloom of the cold deep sea. For over half a century the ship—for all intents and purposes—did not exist. It had been "destroyed." Yet there it was, long after all the other great four-stack ocean liners had gone to the scrap yard, seen across a gap of over half a century.

While the discovery of the wreck rekindled a collective memory of a transforming disaster, it also served to destroy some fantasies. Imagination had refused to acknowledge the possibility that the ship