

# Designing Scandinavian high security architecture since 1944



ALEX POULSEN ARKITEKTER

## Reader's Guide

This publication presents the studio of Alex Poulsen Architects' specialty in Scandinavian correctional facilities.

Through the presentation of the most significant security projects designed or consulted by Alex Poulsen Architects, the reader will be guided through how the studio works, thinks and implements humanity in these architectural projects.

All illustrations, pictures and visualisations without credits are produced by Alex Poulsen Architects - others will be credited appropriately in the attached illustration text.

'APA' - in this publication - is an abbreviation for the name Alex Poulsen Architects.

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## Content

### About Alex Poulsen Architects

- 4 Our Passion
- 5 The Story
- 7 How We Work

### Projects of Alex Poulsen Architects

- 9 Sdr. Omme Prison *Denmark*
- 15 Ringe Prison *Denmark*
- 19 Gjilan Detention Center *Kosovo*
- 23 Jyderup Women's Prison *Denmark*
- 27 Psychiatric Center Ballerup *Denmark*
- 29 Storstrøm Prison *Denmark*
- 33 Nuuk Prison *Greenland*
- 35 Skopje Prison *Macedonia*
- 36 Sarajevo Prison *Bosnia*
- 37 Hólmsheiði Prison *Iceland*
- 41 Enner Mark Prison *Denmark*



# Our Passion at Alex Poulsen Architects

**Alex Poulsen Architects** are specialized in planning complex buildings and environments with high security demands. In fact, planning and designing humane prisons is our passion and heritage.

Since our design studio was established in 1944, APA has been a recognized partner and advisor for a large number of public and private institutions.

APA has solved projects, such as extensive new constructions, conversions and renovations, both in Denmark and internationally.

We advise clients within our area of competence, where we possess special knowledge that creates value for the client as well as the society around us.

Our approach to architecture stems from the Danish architectural tradition, considering function, quality and spaciousness as basic parameters.

Our focus is to identify and meet our clients demands while striving to challenge ourselves at every project.

*To the left:  
Nuuk Police Station  
Detailing between buildings.*

# The Story of Alex Poulsen Architects

1944

Denmark  
Alex Poulsen Architects are founded.

1955

Denmark  
Alex Poulsen is appointed as the supervising architect of the Ministry of Justice.

A new generation continues the legacy

2006 ..... 2009 ..... 2010 ..... 2012 ..... 2013 ..... 2014 ..... 2015 ..... 2017 ..... 2020 ..... 2022 ..... 2023



Denmark  
**Enner Mark Prison**

Client Consultancy Service



Denmark  
**Storstrøm Prison**

Client Consultancy Service



Iceland  
**Holmsheidi Prison**

Lead Consultancy Service and Schematic- & Design Proposal



Denmark  
**Forensic Psychiatry Center Sanct Hans**

Client Consultancy Service

Denmark  
**Forensic Psychiatry Center Glostrup**

Lead Consultancy Service



Denmark  
**CPH Airport Finger E**

Client Consultancy Service



Denmark  
**Eastern High Court, Denmark**

Specialist Consultant: Flows

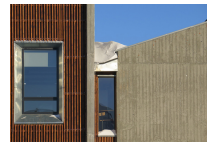
Denmark  
**The Danish Courts Administration**

Client Consultancy Service and Safety Review



Denmark  
**Jyderup Woman's Prison**

Lead Consultancy Service



Greenland  
**Police Station Nuuk**

Lead Consultancy Service



Denmark  
**Psychiatric Center Ballerup**

Lead Consultancy Service



Denmark  
**Forensic Psychiatry and Securement Center Slagelse**

Client Consultancy Service

Denmark  
**Ringe Prison**

Lead Consultancy Service

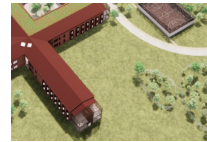


Denmark  
**Sønder Omme Prison**

Lead Consultancy Service

Denmark  
**Detention Center Slagelse**

Lead Consultancy Service



*We are specialists within high security facilities based on Scandinavian correctional principles and Danish design tradition.*

Picture credits:  
Enner Mark Prison:  
Credits: Friis & Moltke Architects.

Storstrøm Prison:  
Credits: Torben Eskerod.

Holmsheidi Prison:  
Credits: Fangelismålastofnun ríkisins.

CPH Airport Finger E:  
Credits: Vilhelm Lauritzen Architects.

The F. P. C. Sanct Hans  
Credits: Unknown.

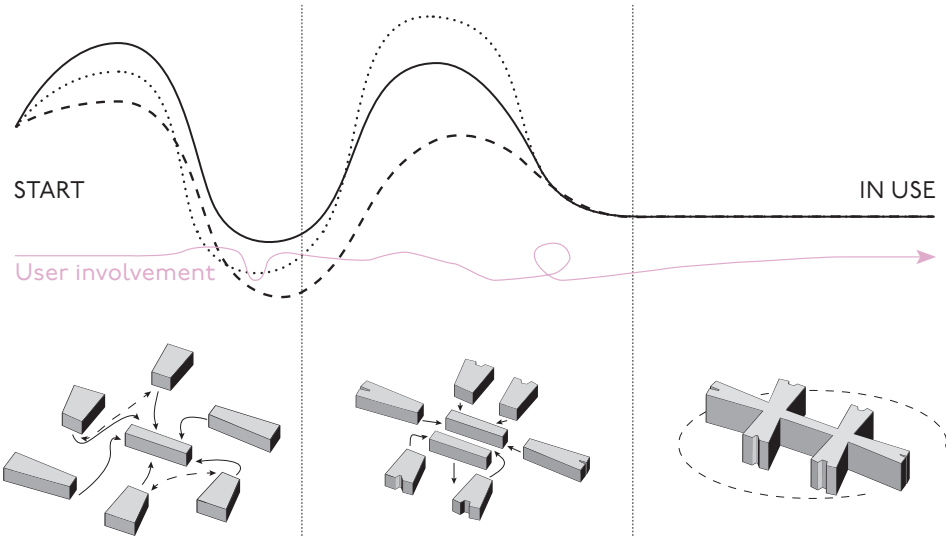
Eastern High Court:  
Credits: Martin Toft Burchadi Bendtsen.

The Danish Courts Administration:  
Søren Nielsen.

Psychiatric Center Ballerup:  
Credits: Jon Nordstrøm.

F. P and Securement Center Slagelse  
Credits: Skraafoto.dk

# How We Work at Alex Poulsen Architects



## Programming

The phase of programming consists of a long list of analysis and dialogues with the client to discover, gather and create focus upon demands and wishes of the project.

Through extensive research and continuous dialogue, we summarize the specific demands and visualize these in basic schematic designs.

## Design

During the design phase, we develop the program into a coherent design. We pair the development with visual and spatial aspects and create early visualizations of how building and room volumes can be perceived.

We maintain a consistent dialogue with the municipality in order to collect a building permit. Lastly, we create the bidding project.

Technical considerations are as well implemented to create integrated design solutions. Additionally, a construction proposal is created in collaboration with engineers.

## Execution

During the execution phase, before the project can be put into use, the project is monitored through close dialogue with the client.

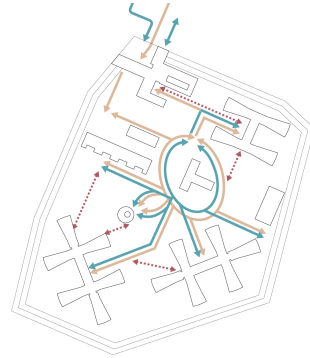
With the chosen contractor, we help with administrating and monitoring the construction of the project.

*We strive to engage creatively and consciously with the world around us. Through inventive, inclusive and original projects, we aim to participate with and give back to society.*

*We incorporate high security requirements in all project phases.*

# Sdr. Omme Prison

Area: 20.000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 200  
Project year: 2021 - 2023  
Construction: 2023 - 2025



## Denmark

Sdr. Omme Prison is a closed prison with a capacity of 200 inmates. The prison will be constructed adjacent to an existing open prison, built in 1933, which currently has a capacity for 222 inmates.

With this project, the Danish Prison and Probation Service wants to set the standard for future prison projects - reinforcing their current strategy and correctional principles - by providing motivation, support and financially sound solutions that reinforce healthier prison environments.

The project is planned and designed, considering the minimization of operation, maintenance and personnel costs through the design and its construction methods. The design and layout of the prison ensures a healthy working environment for the employees, while supporting the development and maintenance of relationships between staff and inmates - a crucial part of the prison's dynamic security.

The design and layout ensure flexibility for the client, accommodating future changes in requirements and needs as well as expansion possibilities.

APA is the lead consultant and architect on the project, through all phases: design, project and construction. The prison is expected to be completed in 2025.

Logistics — orange line  
Person flow — blue line  
Security routes — red dashed line

*On this page:*  
Diagram of the different flow patterns in the masterplan of the prison.

*To the right:*  
1st illustration  
The main entrance to the prison.

*2nd illustration*  
Aerial view of the prison's masterplan.





In the Sdr. Omme prison design, each cell wing includes two cell wards. This prevents inmates of different wards to communicate with each other, while enabling the officers to see down the wards' corridor from the guard area. This spatial composition accommodates the visibility of a secured courtyard at the end of each cell ward.



*From left to right:  
1st photo  
The spades used for  
breaking ground  
for the first time.*

*2nd illustration  
Prison ward guards  
back office.*

*3rd illustration  
Prison ward guards  
front office.*



**From left to right:**  
**1st illustration**  
 Prison cell and furniture.

**2nd illustration**  
 One of the prison's  
 workshop areas.

**3rd illustration**  
 The secured courtyards  
 in the detention buildings'  
 prison wards.

**4th illustration**  
 Sports hall.

**5th illustration**  
 Recreational building.

**6th illustration**  
 Workshop building with  
 secured courtyards.

The penalty system of Scandinavia relies on its strong values regarding rehabilitation. Therefore, the Danish Prison and Probation Service focuses on creating environments where each inmate can feel a sense of fulfillment in their serving time.

In relation, Sdr. Omme Prison consists of a number of buildings primarily programmed to create "a normal everyday" for the inmates.

The prison includes room for work (to ensure employment), for recreational purposes and for training activities - considering the operational structures of the prison, which includes gate, visitation, accommodation and supporting buildings.





# Ringe Prison

Existing build: 1976  
Area: 8.800 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 90

New extension: 4.050 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 50-100  
Project year: 2019 - 2022  
Construction: 2022 - 2024

## Denmark

Ringe Prison is Denmark's only closed prison for inmates sentenced to deportation.

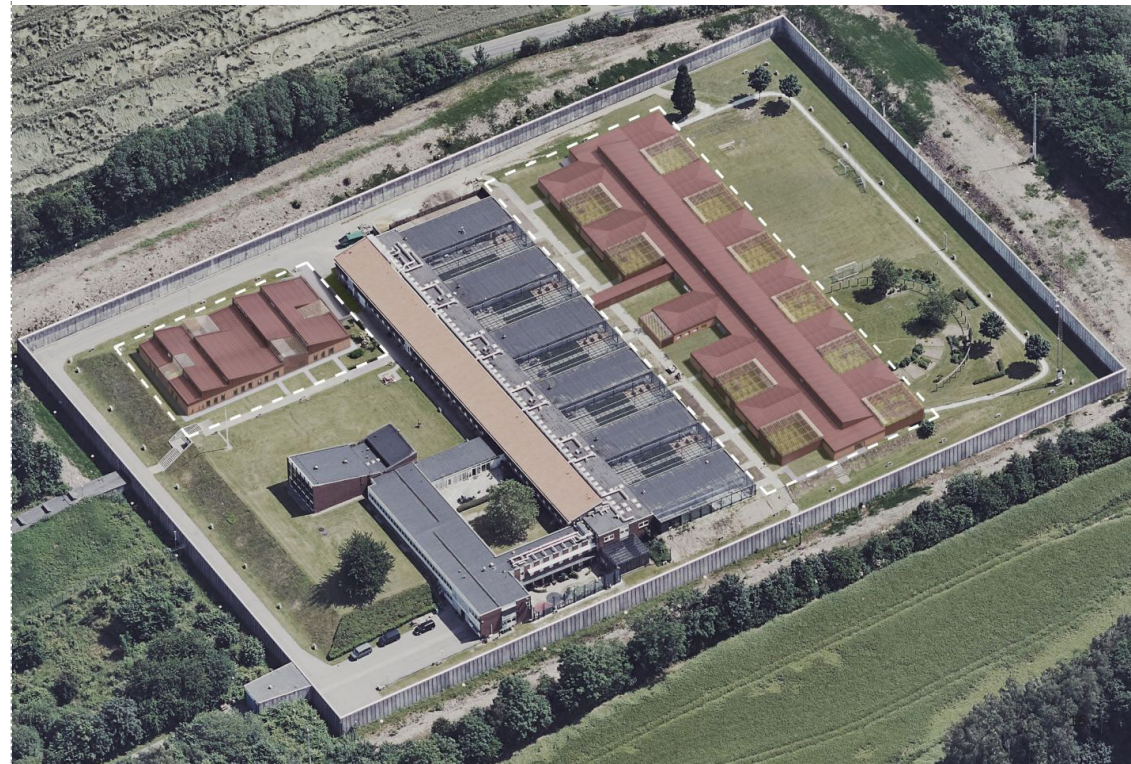
Ringe Prison was built in the mid-1970s as a modern prison in terms of architecture and correctional principles. The original prison was planned and designed by Alex Poulsen Arkitekter, and the current expansion is inspired by the prison's existing architecture, infrastructure and staffing principles. A cornerstone of the project is a new accommodation building, designed with a main corridor from which the individual departments stem from.

As a part of the current expansion project, central functions in the existing prison are being rebuilt and new secured outdoor areas are being built. In addition, the existing main building will be significantly remodeled - primarily administration areas and other support functions to ensure logistics and safety.

In addition to the accommodation building, a new workshop building will be built to ensure employment for the additional inmates.

This expansion project will provide capacity for up to 100 inmates, doubling the capacity of the prison by 2024.

APA is the lead consultant and architect on the project, in all phases: design, project and construction. The prison is expected to be completed in 2024.



*To the right:  
1st illustration  
The façade and  
its composition.*

*2nd illustration  
Aerial view of the  
existing building  
and the new  
prison buildings.*

*From right to left:  
1st illustration  
Inmate's shared  
living area in the  
new prison building.*

*2nd illustration  
Prison cell.*

*3rd photo  
The coloured  
concrete element.*



Based on the original thoughts of the architecture of the prison - a college-like building structure with high social value - APA prepared the new extensions with modern knowledge regarding high security combined with a comfortable atmosphere.

The "comfortable atmosphere" is an instrument for the resocialization of the inmates.



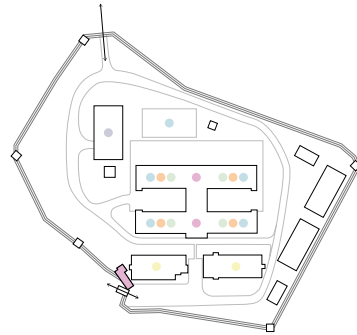
Additionally, the new expansion of the prison is created with great integrity and understanding of materials. Architecturally, the project for new construction takes its point of departure from the existing building mass - in relation to color and material selection.

Up-to-date, sustainable, robust and secured solutions have been selected through careful consideration to create structures that are accordant to a modern and secured institution.



# Gjilan Detention Center

Inmates: 300  
Project year: 2021 - ongoing  
Operational: 2025



## Kosovo

The Gjilan Detention Center is located in Kosovo in the Balkans region of Europe. It was built following American inspiration. The intention is to adapt the prison to reflect Danish incarceration conditions and Scandinavian standards, where possible.

The number of inmates in Danish prisons has increased significantly in the recent years. As a result, the Danish government wishes to enter into a cooperation agreement with the Kosovar government to lease the Gjilan Detention Center in Kosovo, creating capacity for approximately 300 inmates sentenced to deportation.

In 2017, the Danish Prison and Probation Service anticipated an occupancy rate of 96 percent of inmates, as expressed in the Multi-Year Agreement (2017), which has increased to over 103 percent in 2021. This high occupancy rate puts significant pressure on the existing institutions and can contribute to increased levels of conflict among the inmates and between staff and inmates. Therefore, there is a great need for additional capacity, including capacity for inmates sentenced to deportation.

Since 2021, APA has been the technical leasing advisor for the Danish Prison and Probation Service on this project. The studio have prepared comprehensive and illustrative specification of requirements that details an extensive transformation of the Gjilan Detention Center.

- Resocialization ●
- Close relationships ●
- Dynamic security ●
- Leisure activities ●
- Self-management ●
- Education ●

*On this page:*  
Diagram showing the concept of implementing Scandinavian facilities in the existing structures.

*To the right:*  
Photo of the existing lookout posts which will be put out of use.

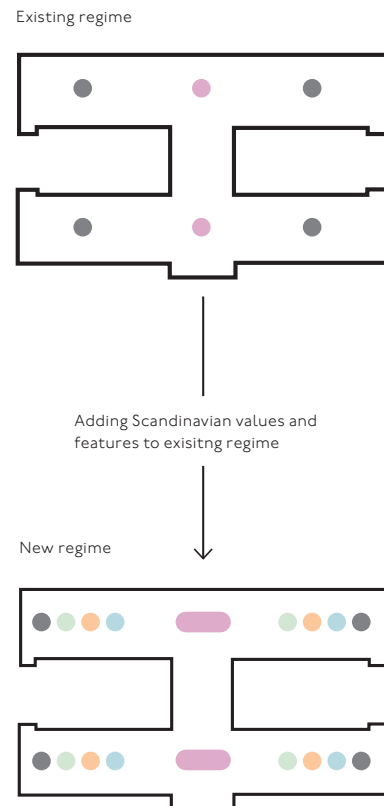


*With our studio's unique composition of competences and nearly 80 years of market experience, Alex Poulsen Architects is capable of solving complex architectural tasks involving extraordinary demands for security and functionality.*

**1st picture**  
One of the existing prison cells. Toilet facilities and inventory are to be upgraded.

**2nd illustration**  
Diagram of the intended functional concept of the implementation of Scandinavian structures.

- Cells ●
- Self-management ●
- Leisure activities ●
- Resocialization facilities ●
- Dynamic security ●



When the prison is reconstructed, the transformation will include entirely new features that will improve incarceration conditions.

The functions aim to support rehabilitation and self-management, leisure activities, opportunities for obtaining new skills in the prison's new workshops, and significantly improved visiting facilities.

The concept of security in the prison will also be transformed, with an emphasis on strengthening dynamic security between inmates and prison staff.

# Jyderup Women's Prison

New build: 450 m<sup>2</sup>  
Rebuild: 1.100 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 143 (women only)  
Project year: 2018 - 2020  
Construction: 2020 - 2021

## Denmark

Jyderup prison is the first female-only prison in Denmark.

The women's prison was inaugurated in 2021. The project has been realized by a combination of new construction, extension and remodeling of the existing prison.

The prison consists of three typologies: detention, closed prison and open prison. During the planning and design phases, the studio focused on ensuring that the prison's operation and security is maintained throughout the construction period, while the prison was gradually converted into a women's prison. The distribution of the three typologies required a careful analysis of the prison's logistics and security in order to ensure that the individual buildings are arranged, sectioned and secured both physically and electronically.

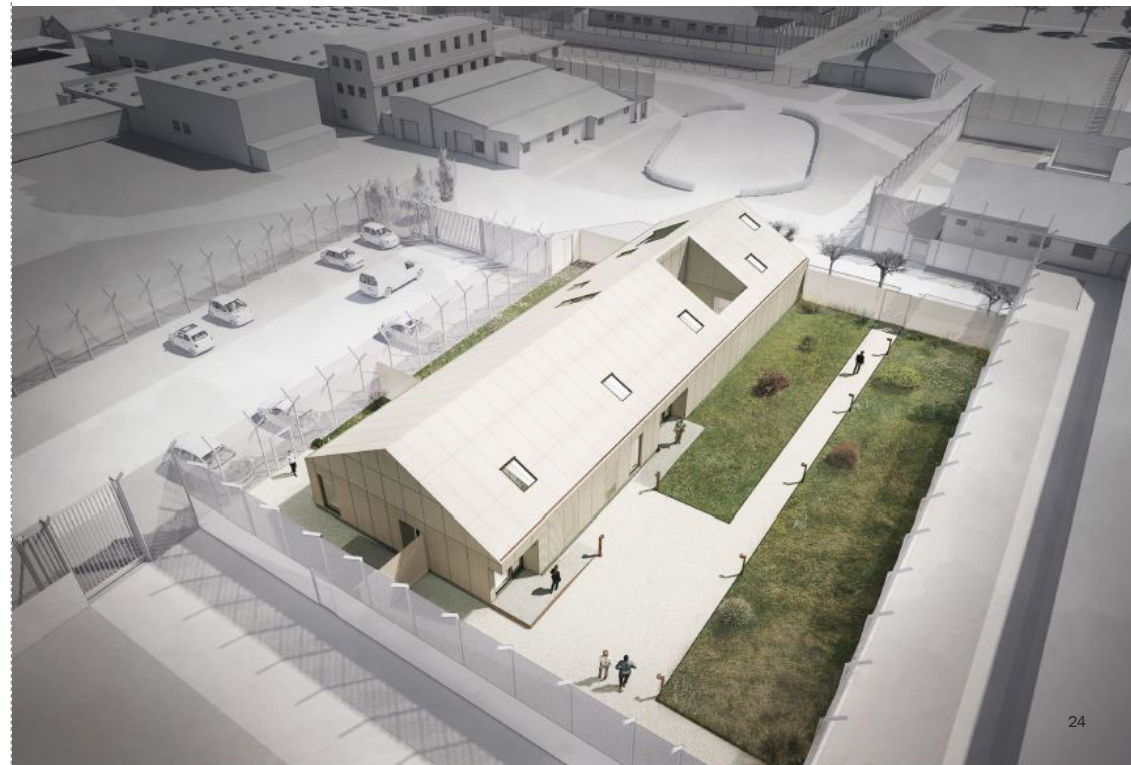
A crucial part of the project was to design and build a new visitor's building with the intent of supporting and maintaining the inmates' relationship with their families.

APA was the lead consultant and architect on the project in all phases: design, project, and construction.

The construction was completed in 2021.

*To the right:  
1st photo  
Jyderup Prison with a new  
secured courtyard  
in the center.  
Credits: Kriminalforsorgen.*

*2nd illustration  
Aerial view of the new  
visitor's building.*





*From left to right:  
1st illustration  
Entrance to the new  
visitor's building.*



*2nd photo  
Entrance to the new  
secured courtyard.*

*3rd photo  
The new secured  
courtyard's facade  
material and pattern.*

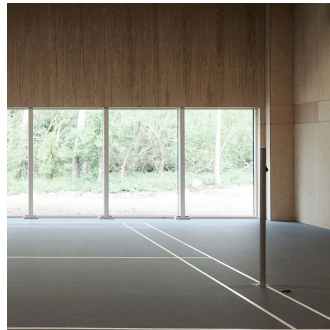
In the new extension, family- and visitor facilities, as well as visitor apartments with access to outdoor areas, are provided. The new main guard area and visitor building will be the focal point of the entire prison.

With the new materials and structures, the prison as a whole will be lifted aesthetically. The intention is to create a more welcoming arrival to the prison, improving the experience for inmates, staff and visitors.



# Psychiatric Center Ballerup

Area: 1.700 m<sup>2</sup>  
Patients: 16  
Project year: 2014 - 2015  
Construction: 2015 - 2016



## Denmark

Psychiatric Center Ballerup is a closed 24-hour intensive care unit, funded by the Psychiatric department within the capital region of Denmark.

The project includes a new 24-hour intensive care unit integrated into the hilly landscape. The scheme is laid out on one floor with 16 patient rooms, their common facilities and a shared activity hall, placed around a large, beautiful, closed and secured courtyard.

The architecture consciously and gently uses design, form and robust materials - such as brick, glass, light and warm wood - to create safe, stimulating and treatment-optimal environments for the users.

The building's tall facade discreetly acts as an enclosure, obstructing patients from leaving the courtyard. No fences needed.

APA was the lead consultant and architect on the project in all phases: design, project, and construction.

The construction was completed in 2016.

*On this page:*  
Picture of the activity hall.  
Credits: Jon Nordstrøm

*To the right:*  
1st picture  
The courtyard.  
Credits: Jon Nordstrøm

*2nd picture*  
The hallways with window  
sill seating areas.  
Credits: Jon Nordstrøm



# Storstrøm Prison

Area: 32.000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 250  
Project year: 2010 - 2014  
Construction: 2014 - 2017

## Denmark

Storstrøm Prison is Denmark's most modern and secure closed prison. The prison opened in 2017 and has a capacity of approximately 250 inmates.

The prison is organized so that architecture, security and correctional principles work in harmony and reflect a smaller urban community with cell buildings and buildings for workshops, education, church and exercise.

The planning concept ensures that the inmates experience a high level of normalization, perceived as being less institutional, even with prison security as an integral part of the design and architecture.

In addition to the prison's normal cell departments, the prison has a super-maximum secured cell department - the most secure in Denmark.

APA not only prepared the building program in this project's early phases but was also the client advisor during the project design and in all building phases, until its completion.

The construction of the project was finalized in 2017.

*To the right:*

*1st photo*

*View of an outdoor section and privacy wall.*

*Credits: Torben Eskerod.*

*2nd photo*

*Aerial view of the new Storstrøm Prison.*

*Credits: Steen Paulsen.*





The prison wards in Storstrøm Prison, are designed with the intention of creating comfortable accommodation units with four to seven individual prison cells that are connected to a common living area. The common living area consist of a shared living room, kitchen and a secured terrace.



**1st photo**  
Prison cell.  
Credits: Emma Elleby Skov.

**2nd photo**  
Inmate's common living area and prison ward.  
Credits: Emma Elleby Skov.



**1st photo**  
The pattern cast concrete of the walls in the secured courtyards.  
Credits: Torben Eskerod.

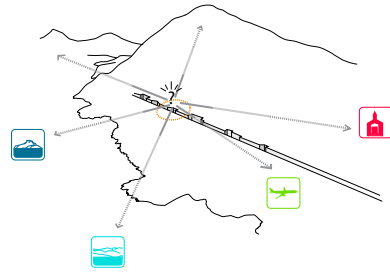
**2nd photo**  
A secured courtyard.  
Credits: Torben Eskerod.

**3rd photo**  
A prison guard's front office.  
Credits: Emma Elleby Skov.



# Nuuk Prison

Area: 7.800 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 250  
Competition year: 2013



## Greenland

In collaboration with Henning Larsen Architects, APA has prepared this competition proposal for a new Institution in Nuuk, Greenland.

In the proposal, the perimeter wall is designed as a circle and its respective functions are placed in an urban-like context. The open part of the prison is located outside the perimeter wall. In the middle are 'shared' functions, spread around a central courtyard. The closed residential section, and its associated functions, are located within the circle's core. The building bodies are rectangular volumes of various sizes, arranged along a central street, in order to optimize the internal functional needs.

The ambition was to create the feeling of living in a village - a 'mini-city' that functions similarly to outside society, with services that can contribute to living a normal life.

The competition was won by Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects in 2013. The prison is built and was put into use in 2019.

**On this page:**  
Diagram of the viewpoints  
from the prison and its location.

**To the right:**  
**1st illustration**  
View of the prison's buildings.  
Credits: Henning Larsen Architects.

**2nd illustration**  
Aerial view of the prison's  
masterplan.  
Credits: Henning Larsen Architects.

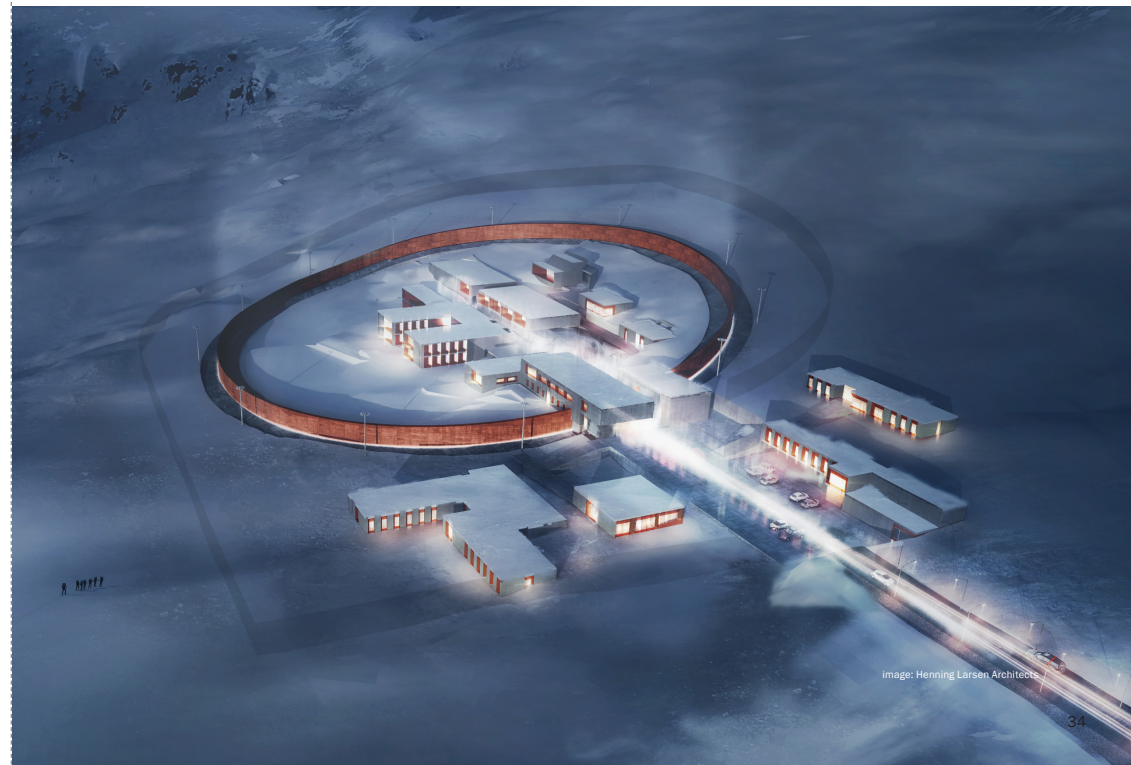
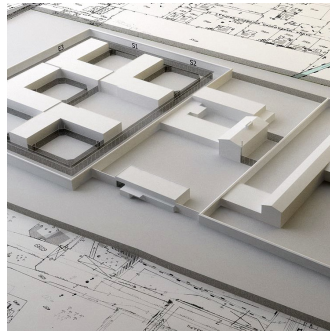


image: Henning Larsen Architects

# Skopje Prison

Area: 75.000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 2500  
Project year: 2011 - 2013  
Construction: 2014 - 2017



## Macedonia

APA performed client consultancy during the construction of four prisons in Macedonia. The project includes rebuilding, renovating and building new facilities for a total of around 2,500 inmates in four prisons in Macedonia: Idrizovo Correctional Facility, Skopje Prison, Kumanovo Prison and Tetovo Juvenile Educational Correctional Facility.

The project's primary purpose is to: improve and update the current conditions, in order to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Prison Rules (Council of Europe, 2005/06); and bring existing buildings up to standard in both operation and maintenance, in order to ensure acceptable living and working conditions for inmates and employees.

The tasks, which were divided into phases, involved advice and assistance to the Macedonian Ministry of Justice regarding renovation and expansion; preparation of a construction program containing design concept; and functional and technical requirements specifications.

Furthermore, APA has acted as a project manager for an international advisory team. The task was carried out in collaboration with COWI / IPF Consortium / Joint Venture, DK.

*Photo*  
The model of  
the masterplan.  
Credits: Unknown.

# Sarajevo Prison

Area: 26.000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 350  
Project year: 2009 - 2011  
Construction: 2014 - 2017



## Bosnia

As support to the Project Implementation Unit under the Bosnian Ministry of Justice, APA was part of the Technical Assistance Team during the planning and construction of a new maximum security prison in East Ilidza, Sarajevo, with a capacity of 350 high-risk inmates.

APA contributed with specific advice, from the initial design phase up to the detailed design phase, focusing on the project's compliance of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Prison Rules (European Prison Rules - Council of Europe, 2005/06).

As senior prison design experts, APA provided - among other things - special advice regarding the operational plan, feasibility report and development of the security concept.

Also, APA provided support for the Project Implementation Unit, actively participating in the Technical Assistance Team in order to review the project during all phases, facilitating workshops as well as preparation of review mission reports for the EU, donors and local authorities.

*Illustration*  
Aerial view of the  
prison's masterplan.  
Credits: Unknown.

# Hólmsheiði Prison

Area: 3.700 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 56  
Project year: 2010  
Construction: 2016

## Iceland

Hólmsheiði Prison was an architectural concept and proposal outlined by APA, as a response to a complex program prepared by the Icelandic government. The prison is located in Hólmsheiði, outside Reykjavík, Iceland.

All the prison's functions are accommodated in a dense and compact building structure, encouraging interaction between employees and inmates. This ensures that all day-to-day operational functions can be maintained, creating a framework for extremely high level of security: both static and dynamic.

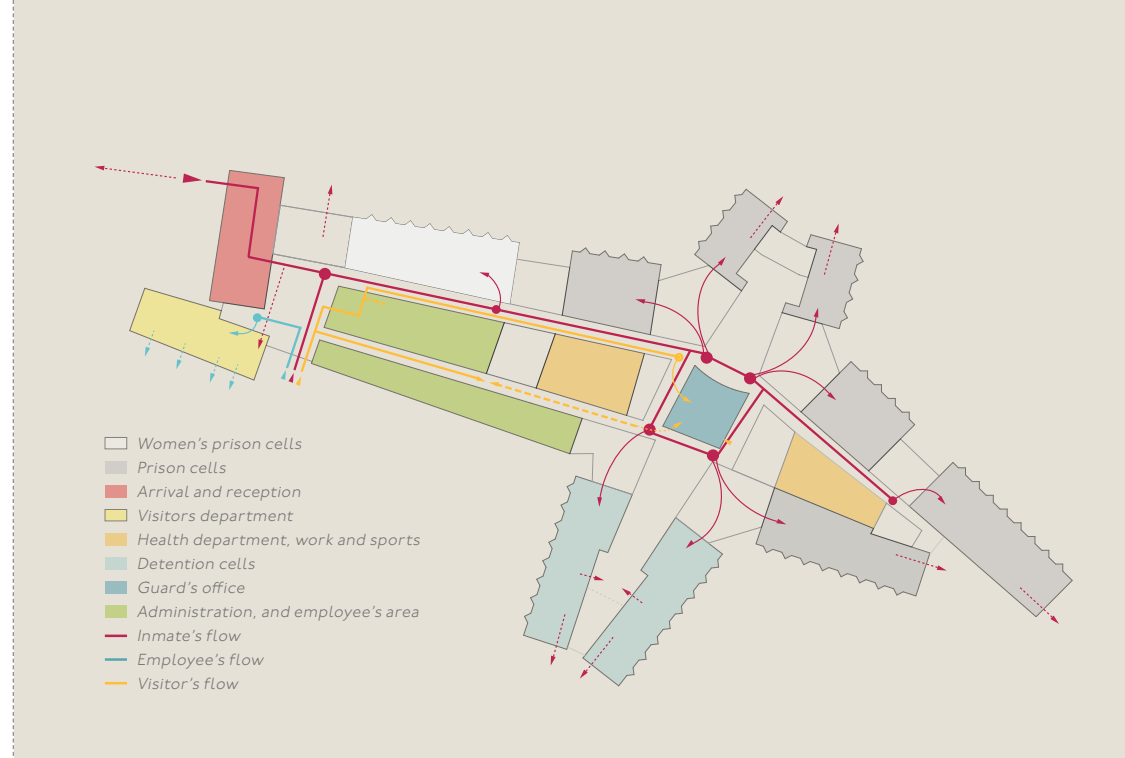
Architecturally, the core of the building has a carefully planned geometry to ensure that there are views of the Icelandic landscape, benefiting all users in the prison. The building is located on the flat plateau of the site, with its four legs, blending into the meandering landscape and terrain.

APA prepared the concept and the schematic design proposal, before the turnkey tender.

The prison opened in 2016.

To the right:  
**1st illustration**  
Diagram of the different flow patterns and functionalities in the prison.

**2nd photo**  
Aerial view of the prison.  
Credits: Fængelsismálastofnun ríkisins, Iceland.





*From left to right:  
1st photo  
The detail between  
window, wall and roof.  
Credits: Arkís Arkitektar,  
Iceland.*

*2nd photo  
The backside of the  
prison cell's windows.  
Credits: Arkís Arkitektar,  
Iceland.*

*3rd photo  
The frontside of the  
prison cell's windows.  
Credits: Arkís Arkitektar,  
Iceland.*



The reoccurring orientation and extrusion of the prison cell windows are created with the intention of framing visually stimulating views, from the prison cells.

Nevertheless, the spatial organization secures that the inmates are prevented from communicating with each other.



# Enner Mark Prison

Area: 2.800 m<sup>2</sup>  
Inmates: 250  
Project year: 2002 - 2004  
Construction: 2004 - 2006

## Denmark

Enner Mark Prison is a state-of-the-art closed prison with a very high-level of security. It was inaugurated in 2006 and is one of Denmark's most modern prisons.

The prison consists of five independent and detached departments with a total capacity of 235 inmates. The prison is planned as a scattered, low-rise landscape of buildings, where the institutional character of the prison is toned down in order to reflect society outside the perimeter wall.

The buildings allow for flexible sectioning, so the inmates can be divided and re-divided when necessary. At the same time, the prison is secured by a surrounding 6-meter tall and 1,400-meter long perimeter wall and 300 surveillance cameras.

APA not only prepared the building program in this project's early phases but also was the client advisor until its completion.

The construction of the prison was finalized in 2006.



*To the right:  
1st photo  
Security fences and  
the prison buildings.  
Credits: Friis & Moltke Architects.*

*2nd photo  
Aerial view of Enner Mark Prison.  
Credits: Friis & Moltke Architects.*

We create  
architecture  
that develops,  
shapes, inspires  
and improves  
our society.



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Ringø Prison Aerial rendering of buildings.

