

# *The Kingston, Ontario Penitentiary and Moral Architecture*

by C. J. TAYLOR\*

The expression of the purpose, for which every building is erected, is the first and most essential beauty; and should be obvious from its architecture, altogether independently of any particular style; in the same manner as the reasons for things, are altogether independent of the language in which they are conveyed. As in literary compositions, no beauty of language can ever compensate for poverty of sense; so, in architectural composition, no beauty of style can ever compensate for the want of expression of purpose. Every reasonable mind must feel this; for, as we have said before, the foundation of all true and permanent beauty is utility.

— J. C. LOUDON (1833).

The grey stone walls of the Kingston Penitentiary enclose about nine acres on a point of land jutting into Hatters Bay in the old village of Portsmouth. Today, "the big house" serves as a receiving centre for prisoners entering the federal penitentiary system; many of its buildings stand vacant, scarred by prisoner disturbances over the last quarter-century. Its architecture, hidden from public view by the high walls and mystery of a penal institution, has not attracted much study, yet here lies the key to a former glory. When planned in 1832, the Kingston Penitentiary was to be the largest public building in Upper Canada, pre-dating other large institutional buildings such as asylums and colleges. The original design devised a complex of structures on a massive scale which allowed for planned expansion well into the nineteenth century. As prison architecture the penitentiary was, when first planned with its cruciform plan, dome, and elaborate interior arrangement, one of the more advanced prison designs in the world, more sophisticated than the American penitentiary buildings at Auburn and Sing Sing, institutions which has inspired its creation. It remained impressive for decades afterward, attracting many visitors and comment in popular journals.<sup>1</sup>

Just as remarkable as the design itself are the ideas which promoted the Kingston Penitentiary and justified its expense: the penitentiary was created in response to particular concerns for the more rational punishment of deviant behaviour as well as a response to more general concerns about disorder in society. The design reflected these interests by incorporating particular ideas about the proper treatment of prisoners and more

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Charles DICKENS, *American Notes* (London: Oxford, 1957), p. 207; *Canadian Illustrated News* (Montreal), 25 Sept. 1875, p. 195.

general ideas about order and morality. The result was "moral architecture," a concept with which the originators of the penitentiary were familiar and which gave the particular and general concerns about penal reform and society architectural expression. In order to appreciate how this was done it is first necessary to know something of the events leading up to and the ideas behind the penitentiary's construction. It will then be possible to understand the original design in the context of these concerns. The result will be an appreciation of the Kingston Penitentiary as an expression of Upper Canadian thought and feeling.

The basic history of the penitentiary is well-documented and the details of its origin are readily available.<sup>2</sup> The idea of a provincial penitentiary was first presented to the Upper Canada House of Assembly by the member from Frontenac, Hugh C. Thompson, in 1826.<sup>3</sup> Although a committee was appointed to look into the matter, the idea was let drop and nothing further happened until 1831. By this time Thompson had visited, among other institutions, the Bridewell at Glasgow and the Auburn Penitentiary in New York State. When Thompson re-introduced the motion to look into the matter, he was made chairman of a committee to "consider the propriety of establishing a penitentiary within this province" in January 1831.<sup>4</sup> By February the report was complete. It recommended the building of a penitentiary for five negative reasons: the death penalty was not being executed for crimes less than murder, fines were unjust, local gaols were bad because they lumped young offenders together with seasoned criminals, corporal punishment was improper and degrading, and banishment was unenforceable and often no punishment at all. For Thompson, the virtue of a penitentiary was that "a penitentiary, as its name imparts, should be a place to lead a man to repent of his sins and amend his life, and if it has that effect, so much the better, as the cause of religion gains by it, but it is quite enough for the purposes of the public if the punishment is so terrible that the dread of a repetition of it deters him from crime, or his description of it, others."<sup>5</sup> Prior to Thompson's suggestion, gaols had been considered places either for holding prisoners for trial or as a means of punishment. The originality of the penitentiary idea was that it believed

<sup>2</sup> Rainer BAEHRE, "The Origins of the Penitentiary System in Upper Canada," *Ontario History*, LXIX, 3 (Sept. 1977); J. BEATTIE, *Attitudes Towards Crime and Punishment in Upper Canada, 1830-1850: A Documentary Study* (Toronto: Centre of Criminology, 1977); J. Gerald BELLOMO, "Upper Canadian Attitudes towards Crime and Punishment (1832-1851)," *Ontario History*, LXIV, 1 (March 1972); J. EDMISON, "The History of Kingston Penitentiary," *Historic Kingston*, 3 (1954).

<sup>3</sup> PROVINCE OF UPPER CANADA, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Journal, 1826* (York: King's Printer, 1827), p. 3. Thompson was the editor of Kingston's *Upper Canada Herald* as well as being a politician. His public life is treated by H. Pearson GUNDY, "Hugh C. Thompson: Editor, Publisher, and Politician, 1791-1834," in *To Preserve and Defend, Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century*, Gerald TULCHINSKY, ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976): 203-22.

<sup>4</sup> PROVINCE OF UPPER CANADA, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Journal, 1831* (York: King's Printer, 1831), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> PROVINCE OF UPPER CANADA, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Appendix to the Journal, 1831* (York: King's Printer, 1831), p. 211 (hereafter cited as *Report, 1831*).

that the criminal could be reformed by separation from his formerly vicious environment and imposing on him a routine of hard labour. Thompson recommended Kingston as the site of the provincial penitentiary because of the presence there of large quantities of stone for quarrying by the convicts and the British garrison which could provide extra security if needed.

The Report of 1831 led to the acceptance by the House of Assembly of the principle of a penitentiary. Two commissioners were appointed the following year to procure appropriate plans for its building:<sup>6</sup> Hugh Thompson and another Kingston member, John Macaulay.<sup>7</sup> They began their search early that same year.

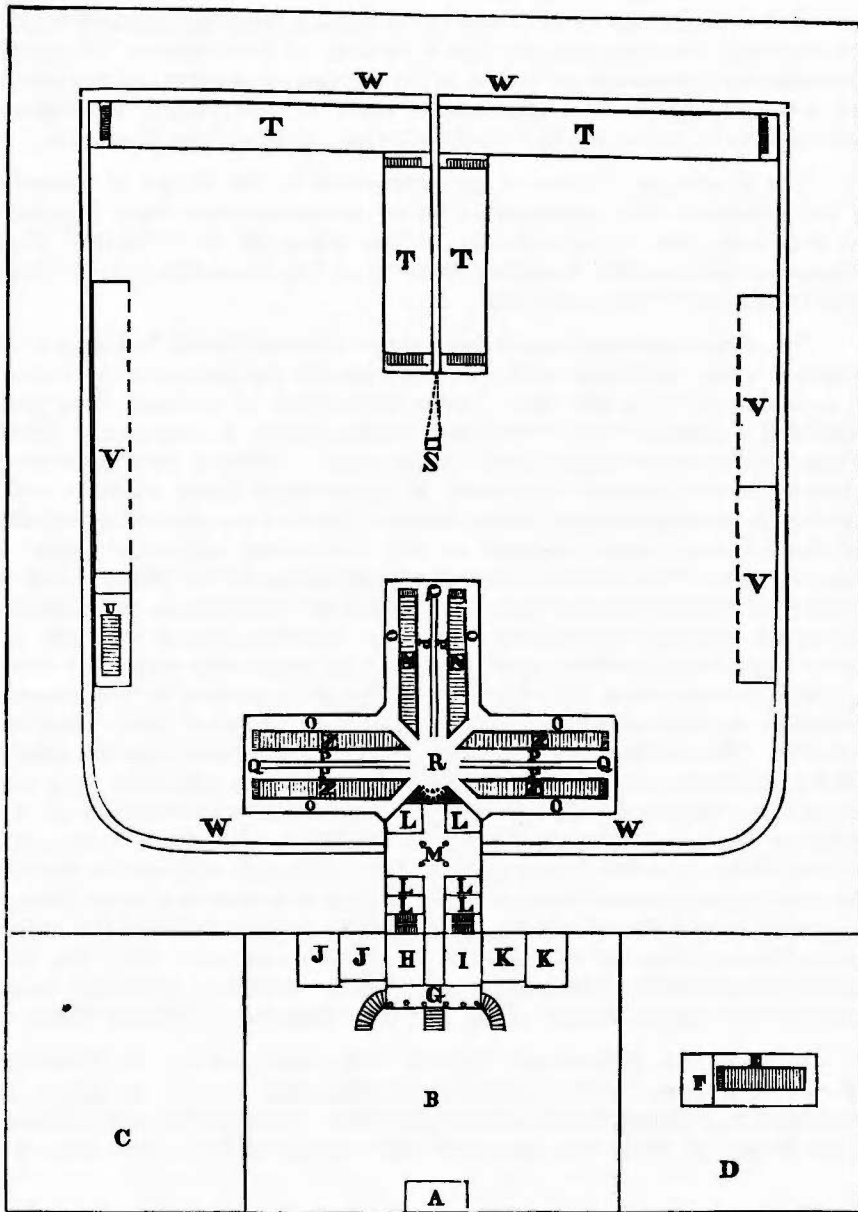
The commissioners toured part of the eastern United States in June, to gather plans, estimates and other information pertaining to the running of a penitentiary. In all, they visited institutions at Auburn, Sing Sing, Blackwell's Island, New York, and Weathersfield, Connecticut.<sup>8</sup> These prisons were all managed on the congregate or Auburn system whereby prisoners were confined separately at night while being made to work together in absolute silence during the day. Meals were also taken together but the prisoners were arranged so that they could not see the faces of those opposite. The commissioners were prevented by the cholera epidemic from visiting the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, an institution run on an alternate method known as the separate system whereby prisoners were kept in solitary confinement at all times even when they worked. Both systems were described in the Report presented by the commissioners to the legislature in 1832 as well as the features of their respective buildings. The penitentiary at Auburn had in 1820 developed the idea of cell blocks where units of cells were arranged in tiers separated by a central gallery. The distinguishing feature of the Eastern Penitentiary as described in the report was its radial plan where lines of single storey cells radiated from a central inspection rotunda. Although different in application, both systems were based on the principle of a strict discipline through hard work and enforced silence. Both prison designs stressed the importance of supervision and isolating the prisoners in individual cells. The 1832 Report recommended the Auburn system and attached a preferred design drawn by the deputy keeper of the Auburn penitentiary, William Powers.

The Auburn penitentiary system had been known to Thompson before the Report of 1831 and it is possible that Powers discussed the planning of a penitentiary with him at that time. Certainly the plans included in the Report of 1832 were produced fully conceived in a short time. It is

<sup>6</sup> PROVINCE OF UPPER CANADA, *Laws and Statutes* (York: King's Printer, 1832), 2 William IV, cap. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Politician and former publisher of the *Kingston Chronicle*; Macaulay's public life is described by S. F. WISE, "John Macaulay: Tory off All Seasons," in *To Preserve and Defend, Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century*: 185-202.

<sup>8</sup> *Appendix to the Journal, 1832-1833*, "Report of the Commissioners appointed by an Act of the last Session of the Provincial Legislature, for the purpose of obtaining Plans and Estimates of a penitentiary, to be erected in this province" (York: King's Printer, 1833) (hereafter cited as *Report*, 1832), p. 26.



**NEW PENITENTIARY IN KINGSTON, UPPER CANADA.**

A, lodge; b, entrance court; c, Warden's garden; d, Female Prison yard; e, Female Prison; f, kitchen, with work room above; g, portico; h, Warden's office; i, Clerk's office; j, j, Warden's house; k, k, Deputy Warden's house; l, l, store rooms; m, keeper's hall; o, o, area in rear of cells eight feet wide; p, p, do. in front, 8 feet wide; q, q, Inspector's avenue; r, centre of rotunda; s, vault; t, t, t, t, Workshops; u, u, cells for lunatics; v, v, lumber sheds; w, w, Inspector's avenue from keeper's hall.

Scale 130 feet to an inch.

**Figure 1. PLAN OF THE KINGSTON PENITENTIARY, 1836**  
 (From *Reports of the Prison Discipline Society of Boston*, vol. 6, p. 889).

also apparent from the Report of 1832, that Powers had some influence on the minds of the commissioners, his design and ideas were accepted without criticism by them. The design was central to the Report of 1832 and to the subsequent development of the penitentiary, so before the ideas behind it can be discussed its essential parts must be examined.

Although the original drawings have been lost, Powers' description of these plans in the Report of 1832<sup>9</sup> as well as amendments which appeared in the Report of the following year have survived.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the annual report of the Boston Prison Discipline Society published in 1836 reproduced a plan which is probably a facsimile of one of Powers' drawings (figure 1). These, taken along with Powers' notes and contemporary newspaper accounts permit a fairly accurate reproduction of what the plans looked like. Figure 1, situated with south at the top, shows the configuration of the main building, workshop to the south, female prison to the northwest, and surrounding grounds. The cruciform shape of the main building utilized the principle of the radial plan noticed in the Eastern Penitentiary and had four wings each ninety feet long. The main entrance is at the end of the north wing, described by Powers as having Grecian Doric columns. Inside this wing there is a main entrance hall flanked by living quarters for the keepers. Originally it was intended to have a flanking building containing kitchen and dining hall for the prisoners with a hospital above but the 1833 revisions placed these facilities in the north wing of the main building. The other three wings were each to contain 270 cells. Figure 2 shows the south wing, which was built under Powers' direction, as it appeared in the 1880s. The axis for the four wings formed a rotunda forty-six feet in diameter, designated by the letter 'R' in figure 1. It was to provide access to the wings and contained additional cells. It also functioned as a centre for inspection both within and without the walls. This was topped by a large dome providing light and ventilation to the building as well as forming an aesthetic anchor to the external design. This effect can be seen from the 1919 air photo which shows the actual plan as it came to be built (figure 3).

The workshop building situated to the south of the main building is shown in figure 1 as being 'T' shaped, but Powers' commentary described it as being "on the same plan" as the main building, implying a cruciform shape.<sup>11</sup> As figure 3 shows the workshops to have been built to this latter plan, it can be assumed that the plan of the workshop shown in figure 1 is a temporary building which existed before the erection of a permanent structure in 1845. Both buildings would have housed shops for blacksmithing, carpentry, tailoring and shoemaking as well as a rope walk, a long narrow area for prisoners to walk while twisting strands of hemp into rope. Powers describes his shop building as having a corridor

<sup>9</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> UPPER CANADA, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Appendix to the Journal, 1833-34* (Toronto: King's Printer, 1834), "Report of the Commissioners appointed to superintend the erection of the Provincial Penitentiary ...," p. 101 ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 39.

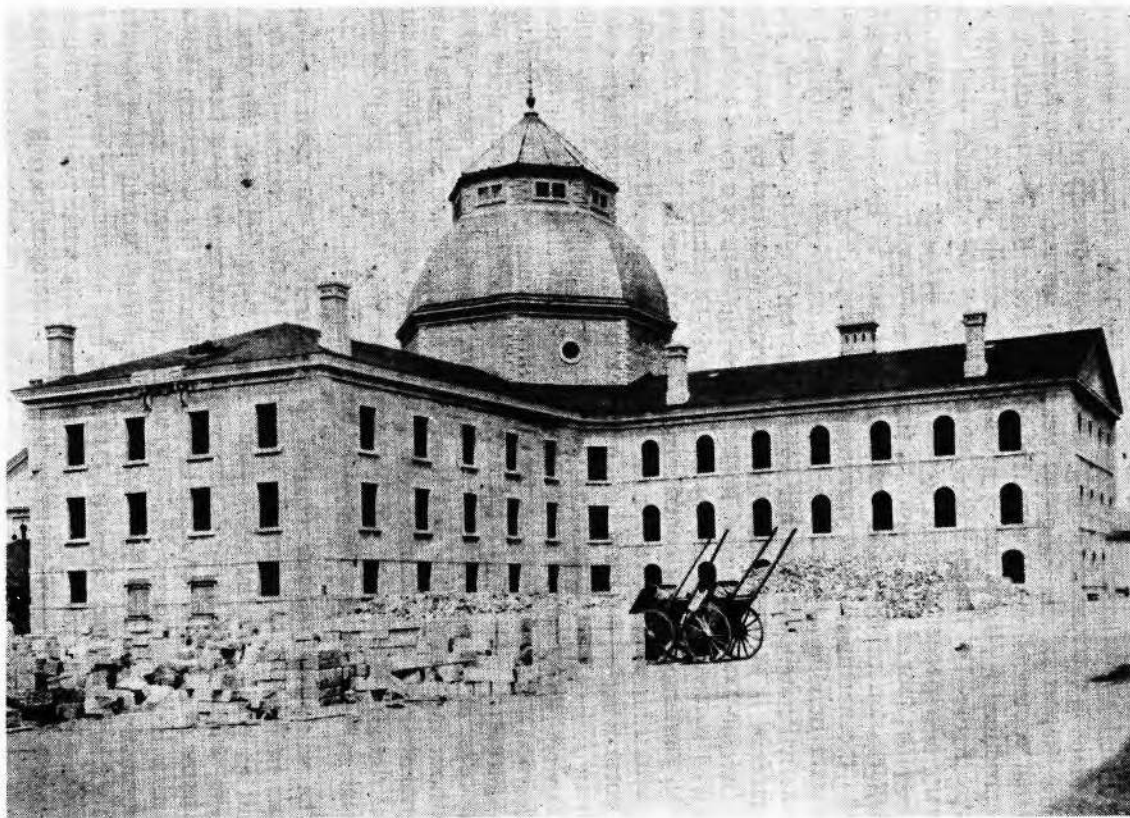


Figure 2. SOUTH WING, KINGSTON PENITENTIARY, CA. 1880.  
(Queen's University Archives).



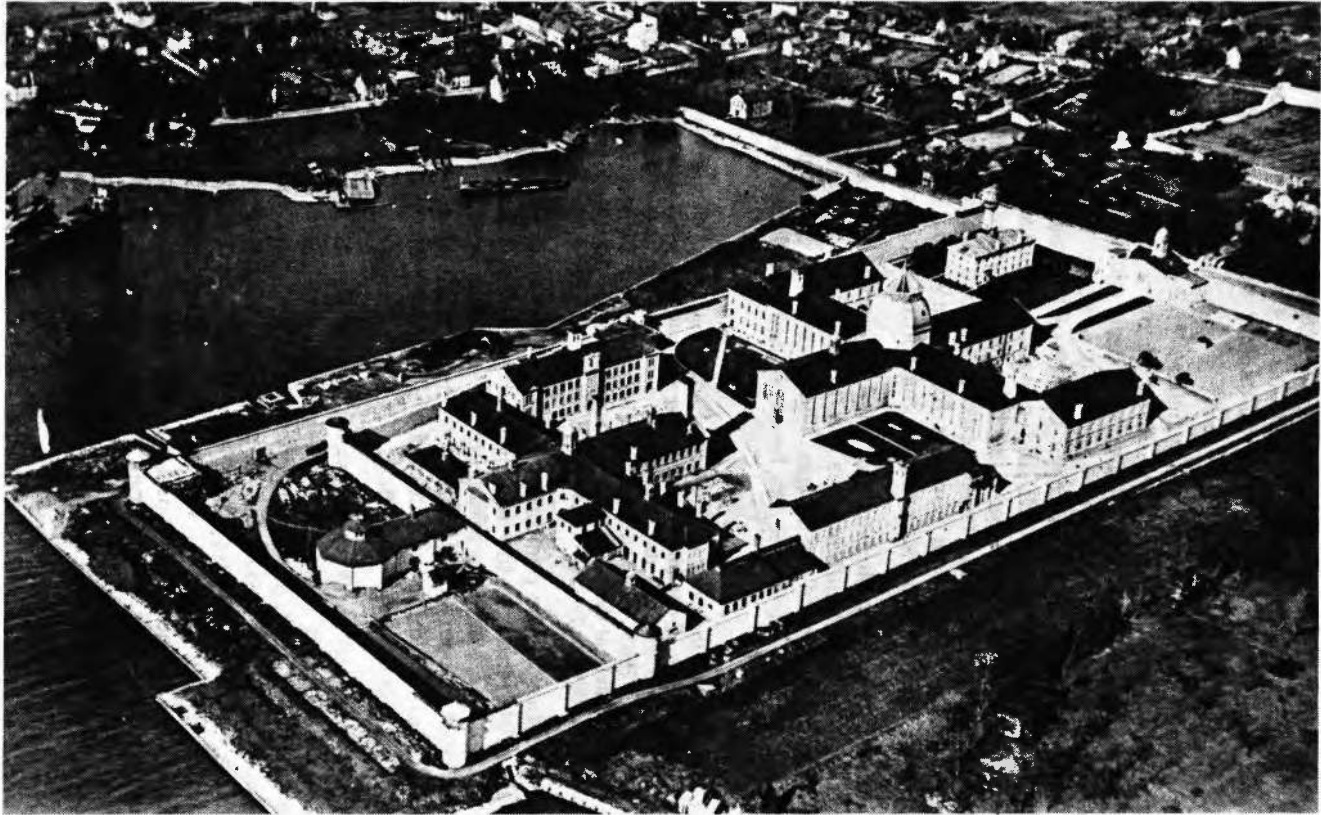


Figure 3. "PENITENTIARY, KINGSTON, ONTARIO, TAKEN FROM AN AEROPLANE, CA. 1919"  
(Public Archives of Canada, National Photography Collection, PA-39472).

around its perimeter for the guards to watch the prisoners undetected in the work areas. The workshops were linked to the main building by a main avenue, called the "inspector's avenue" in figure 1. The female prison, shown as letter 'E' in the same illustration, was set apart in a corner of the grounds and was designed to be completely self-sufficient having its own workshops, eating facilities and yard.

The general impression given by figures 1, 2 and 3 is one of order and symmetry. The main building, designed on a massive scale, with its cruciform shape and central dome, is neo-classical in mode, its arms neatly organizing the surrounding space. In a sense this symmetry reflects the almost mathematical interior design of the main building which was based on the individual cell and expanded outward by multiples: in the south, east and west wings the cells were organized in blocks of five tiers, each tier containing twenty-two cells; two blocks arranged side by side and surrounded by a corridor formed a wing: three cell block wings plus the service wing surrounded the rotunda to form the building.

The cell block principle was modelled on similar arrangements at the Auburn and Sing Sing penitentiaries but in an improved fashion that reflected the functionalism of the design. The over-riding concern of the penitentiary for Powers was silence, as he explained in a letter to Thompson and Macaulay.

You are aware that the particularly excellent and distinguishing characteristic of the Auburn system is non-intercourse among the convicts, while at the same time, they are employed by day, in active useful labor. This is the grand foundation on which rests the whole fabric of prison discipline. The security of the convicts, the safety of the keepers, the profits of labor, the hope of reformation, all depend on this one feature of the system.<sup>12</sup>

It was the function of the penitentiary design according to Powers to promote silence by isolating the inmate and providing for his undetected surveillance: "therefore, any arrangements that can be made to facilitate *inspection*, must be considered as improvements of no small importance."<sup>13</sup> It was this criterion, along with concerns for security and sanitation, that governed the execution of the plan.

Entry to the cell block wings was gained from the outside through a double set of doors at the end of each wing, described as being "very thick, studded with nails, and strongly fastened with bars and locks, within and without."<sup>14</sup> Once inside the three-storey wing the prisoners were organized into one of the two parallel cell blocks. These blocks, designated by the letter 'N' in figure 1, were five tiers high, separated from the exterior walls by a space of two and one half feet. Facing inward the cells were reached by means of galleries running along each tier, designated by the letter 'P' on figure 1. Each cell had a grilled door which opened onto the gallery. At the rear of each was a small window which provided

<sup>12</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Chronicle and Gazette* (Kingston), 6 Sept. 1834.



for the circulation of air inward from the outer area between the cell block and the exterior wall. Each cell was two and one half feet wide and nine feet long<sup>15</sup> and was probably furnished only with a cot that folded down from the wall and filled most of the space. Clearly the intended function was for the inmate to sleep, contemplate and perhaps study the Bible. The cells at the Auburn penitentiary were three and one half feet by seven but Powers saw the longer cells in his design as being superior for they provided more useful space for the prisoner while the narrowness permitted compression of the cells to facilitate surveillance.

Powers believed that while the prisoners were at rest in their cells or engaged in labour in the shops they were controlled by the system. While the prisoners were in motion between these two areas of rigid control, filing out in the morning or back at night down the long galleries, the potential for illicit talk or non-directed behaviour was great. The architect partly compensated for this defect by shortening the length of the corridor but mostly by an ingenious idea: the parallel galleries would be separated by an inspection avenue (designated by letter 'Q' on figure 1) whose floors would be staggered between the tiers of cells.

It will be observed, by looking at the drawing, that the space between the two ranges of cells is 20 feet wide — an avenue of three feet in width, through the centre, would leave a space on each side between it and the cells, of eight and a half feet — now by raising the floor of the avenue four feet higher than the floor of the lower tier of cells, a keeper in the avenue could distinctly see, through the apertures above mentioned into *two galleries on each side*....<sup>16</sup>

In order to eliminate the problems that a single keeper would have in supervising a long row of inmates, Powers designed the inspection avenue to have walls between it and the galleries. These would allow the keeper to observe the prisoners through apertures even when they were in their cells but would prevent the prisoners from knowing whether or not they were being watched, giving the impression of continuous surveillance. By having the cell blocks separated from the outside walls and the central inspection avenue by walls and the position of the stories, Powers had essentially designed a five storey structure within a three storey building, thereby organizing the inmates in a completely separate space from that of their keepers.

The interior of the rotunda was lined with tiers of cells encircling an open space five tiers high. As with the cell blocks, access to these cells was by galleries, and a photograph of the interior of the rotunda taken in the 1880s shows the galleries as they would have appeared in the wings as well as the rotunda (figure 4). Facility of inspection was one of the intended functions of the rotunda although visibility down the wings must have been limited. Figure 4 illustrates its potential for watching prisoners as they filed down the stairs and as they assembled in the central area below.

<sup>15</sup> The following year the plan was amended to make the cells eight feet, four inches long. *Report*, 1833, p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 34.

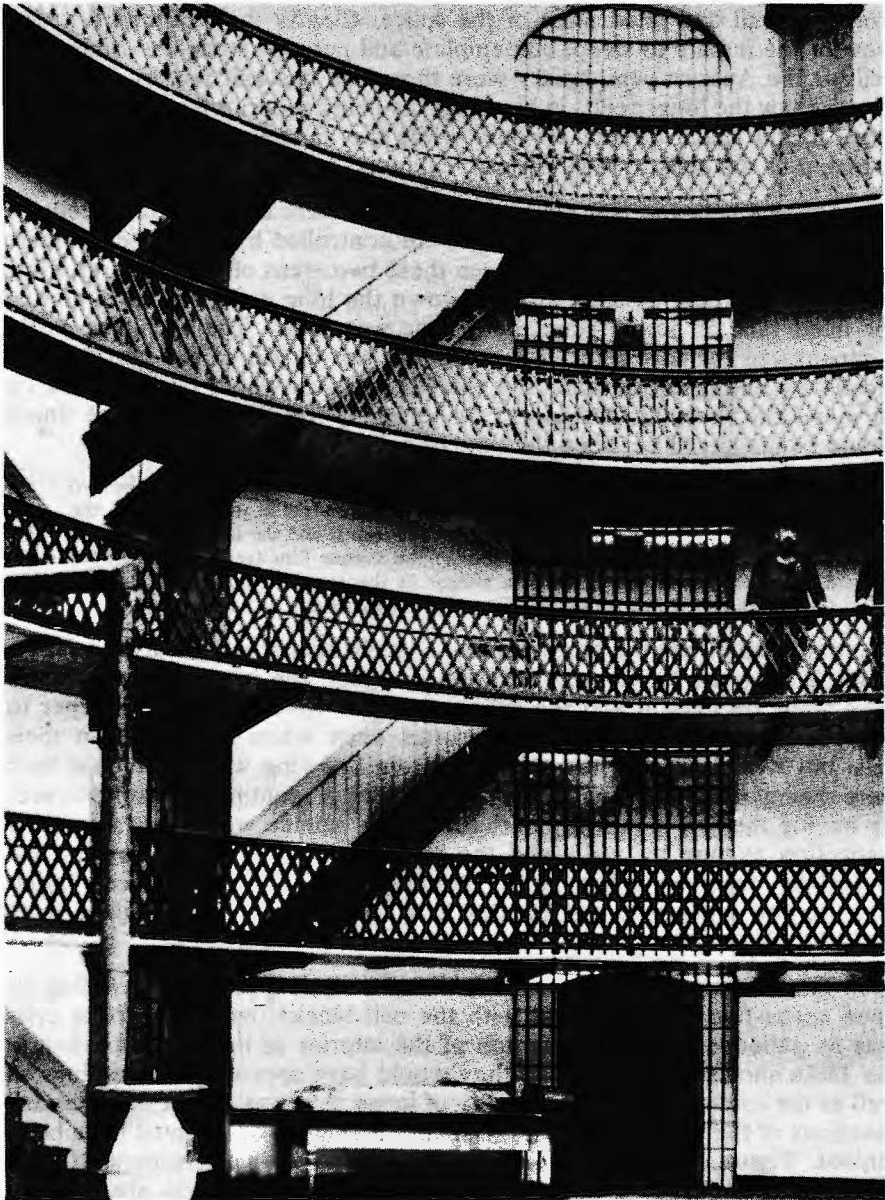


Figure 4. INTERIOR OF ROTUNDA, KINGSTON PENITENTIARY, CA. 1880  
(Queen's University Archives).

Probably it was the *idea* of surveillance and control which was more effectively implemented than the actual function itself.

Powers allowed for the gradual realization of his design as it would be many years before the province required an institution for the incarceration of 800 felons. He proposed that the south wing be built first to meet the immediate needs of Upper Canada, to be followed by the other components as need dictated. On this basis the legislature accepted the plans presented in the 1832 Report and authorized the expenditure of £12,500 to complete the initial phase of construction.<sup>17</sup> Henry Smith was appointed warden and William Powers, was made superintending architect, a position he held until about 1840. John Mills, also from Auburn was appointed master builder but he was replaced in 1834 by the English-trained builder William Coverdale. Coverdale gradually took over from Powers and effected some design changes as can be seen by comparing the fenestration and roof styles between the south and east wings in figure 2.<sup>18</sup> The south wing was finished by about 1836 and in 1839 the north wing was commenced with the main floor intended for the much-needed dining hall and kitchen. The west wing was begun in 1840 and, after the union of the provinces increased the potential number of prisoners, the east wing was commenced in 1842. By 1845 the commissioners had initiated the building of permanent workshops, the female prison and a separate hospital building and overseen the completion of the surrounding stone wall. Some of the features of prison discipline were changed as a result of the report of Charles Duncombe presented to the legislature in 1836 and the Royal Commission of 1849 headed by George Brown, but the Auburn system and Powers' design, although modified, were not replaced until after Confederation.<sup>19</sup>

In the context of the development of the Kingston Penitentiary the Report of 1832, which recommended the Auburn system and presented Powers' plans, is of primary importance and it is to the sources of this document that we must return in order to understand the significance of the institution which it engendered. The prison commissioners Thompson and Macaulay and architect Powers did not derive their ideas solely from a knowledge of the penitentiaries at Auburn and Sing Sing although these were obviously important influences. Rather, their philosophies on penitentiaries relied much on the works of two great champions of prison reform, John Howard and the Boston Prison Discipline Society, and the Report of 1832 is full of references to both.

The earliest of these influences, the Englishman John Howard, had visited many European penitentiaries in the eighteenth century and formed conclusions about the possible reform of prisons in England. Howard was

<sup>17</sup> PROVINCE OF UPPER CANADA, *Laws and Statutes* (York: King's Printer, 1833), 3 William IV, cap. 44. Powers' estimate for the total cost for building the penitentiary came to approximately £55,000.

<sup>18</sup> For Coverdale's career see *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. IX (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 164-65.

<sup>19</sup> Rainer BAEHRE, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

responsible for introducing the idea in Britain and North America that it was possible to reform criminals as well as punish them by a method of incarceration involving a rigid regime of behaviour control. In volume one of his work *Prisons and Lazarettos* entitled *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales*, first published in 1777, Howard proposed the rudiments of what became known as the congregate system arguing the benefits of separate confinement and a highly structured routine as having some moral benefit on inmates.

The hours of rising, of reading a chapter in the Bible, of prayers, of meals, of work, etc. should all be fixed by the magistrates, and notice of them given by a bell... To reform prisoners, or to make them better as to their morals, should always be the *leading* view in every house of correction, and their earnings should only be a *secondary* object.<sup>20</sup>

This view, which stemmed in part from the idea that criminals were a product of their environment, aimed at artificially creating a morally superior routine.

Howard had influenced the English parliamentarian Sir William Eden and the jurist Sir William Blackstone to push through the Penitentiary Houses Act of 1779. This Act stated in part:

And whereas, if many offenders, convicted of Crimes for which Transportation hath been usually inflicted, were ordered to solitary Imprisonment, accompanied by well-regulated Labour and religious Instruction, it might be the means, under Providence, not only of deterring others from the Commission of the like Crimes, but also of reforming the Individuals, and inuring them to habits of industry...<sup>21</sup>

The Act provided for the appointment of three persons to oversee the construction of new penitentiaries and Howard was subsequently appointed to this commission. Unfortunately the three appointees could not agree on a final decision and after two years of deadlock Howard resigned from the commission. This action effectively delayed prison reform in Britain for many years.<sup>22</sup>

Both Howard's survey of European prisons and his proposals for reform in Britain were cited by Thompson and Macaulay to give credence to their report. They were thus able to provide European precedents to the congregate system described at Auburn.

The mode of punishment by solitary confinement with labour, appears to have been adopted in the Netherlands as early as the year 1770; and at Ghent in particular, the great Philanthropist, Howard, found a penitentiary called the *Maison de Force*, conducted in the year 1776 on the principle of seclusion, each

<sup>20</sup> John HOWARD, *Prisons and Lazarettos*, vol. I: *The State of Prisons in England and Wales*, introduction by Ralph W. ENGLAND (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson and Smith, 1973), p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> GREAT BRITAIN, *Statutes at Large* (London: King's Printer, 1780), 19 George III, cap. 74.

<sup>22</sup> John HOWARD, *op. cit.*, p. xix.

convict occupying a separate cell at night, and the whole of labouring and eating in company but in total silence....<sup>23</sup>

The Report also drew attention to the English Act passed in 1779 which had not as yet borne fruit.<sup>24</sup> The influence of this Act on the legislation of Upper Canada is evidenced by the fact that the Act enabling the management of the Kingston Penitentiary used the above-quoted passage in its preamble.<sup>25</sup>

Even more apparent than Howard in the Report of 1832 is the influence of the Boston Prison Discipline Society whose annual reports were included with the original presentation as well as being cited in the body of the text. "The Commissioners would request special attention to the reports of Gentlemen, chiefly resident at Boston."<sup>26</sup> Founded in 1825 by the Reverend Louis Dwight, the Boston Prison Discipline Society became a major proselytizer of the Auburn system in North America through its chapter organizations and its reports.<sup>27</sup> The principles of the Auburn system, its many applications and the architectural designs compatible with this system were described at length in the pages of the reports. Here prisons built upon the new system were praised and their plans and rules discussed and copied; prisons operated by the old method which lumped inmates together in large rooms were condemned. The society, for example, supported the construction of the Kingston Penitentiary, as figure 1 attests, and recommended the building of a similar institution in Lower Canada.<sup>28</sup> The rival new method used at the Eastern penitentiary in Philadelphia was dismissed as being unproven although its design was viewed with interest and its plan reproduced in the reports.

Rev. Dwight was greatly influenced by John Howard for he saw the penitentiary's ability to reform criminals by correcting the cause of their deviant behaviour. It was the view of the Boston Prison Discipline Society that crime was caused by poor parental discipline, loose living, or intemperance. "Among the causes of crime," wrote Dwight, "the neglect of family government stands next to intemperance: it is in fact, not infrequently the cause of intemperance."<sup>29</sup> Both Howard and Dwight saw the penitentiary's need to re-create a positive environment in which crime was impossible to thrive. To Dwight and the Boston Prison Discipline Society go the credit of spelling out in detail how this could be achieved. Labour and vigilance became the keywords of their philosophy. "In the reformed

<sup>23</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30. "It is indeed full time that England should act truly in the spirit of the Statute passed in the year 1779..."

<sup>25</sup> UPPER CANADA, *Laws and Statutes* (Toronto: King's Printer, 1834), 4 William IV, cap. 37.

<sup>26</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> A summary of the founder's life and the work of the society can be found in the introduction by Albert G. HESS to the *Reports of the Prison Discipline Society of Boston*, vol. 1 (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson and Smith, 1972).

<sup>28</sup> *Reports of the Prison Discipline Society of Boston*, vol. 2, eighth annual report, 1833, p. 740, and ninth annual report, 1834, p. 824.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, fourth annual report, 1829, p. 298.

prisons, where labour has been systematically introduced, and industriously prosecuted, under a vigilant inspection, a vast amount of moral evil has been prevented.”<sup>30</sup> For the Boston gentlemen, the penitentiary introduced a necessary factor into the felon’s hitherto immoral life: disciplined control above.

Both Howard and the American reformers considered the architecture of prisons crucial to their effectiveness. This is why Howard illustrated his book so profusely with European examples and commented on their respective merits, although he did not arrive at a clear design for a penitentiary himself. The Boston Prison Discipline Society also believed that prison design was very much a part of the corrective environment and devoted much space in its *Reports* to the discussion of preferred prison design. Paramount to the American reformers’ ideal prisons were small cells for the separate confinement of prisoners at night coupled with an overall security system for constant supervision. The elements of their model prison — enabling solitary confinement at night and hard work during the day, with regular and strict supervision — they abstracted into a concept which they termed “moral architecture.”

Although the phrase “moral architecture” was coined by the Boston Prison Discipline Society, the principles of its philosophy had been articulated much earlier by the English Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham. Bentham is not mentioned in the Report of 1832 but his influence is implicit, especially in the attached plans. In 1787 Bentham wrote a pamphlet on the design for a building called a Panopticon. The original design was of a circular building with tiers of cells around the perimeter and a central hall with an observation post at the centre (figure 5). The method of discipline described by the Utilitarian was essentially the separate system where prisoners worked and slept alone in their cells. While different in application from the system advocated by the Boston Society and the Kingston commissioners, the chief concern, vigilance, was at the heart of both systems. Bentham wrote of the plan: “The essence of it consists, then, in the *centrality* of the inspector’s situation, combined with the well-known and most effectual contrivances for *seeing without being seen*.”<sup>31</sup> The idea was that even if the prisoners were not actually being observed at every moment, they should be made to think that they were. The Panopticon was a forerunner of Powers’ design in two ways: it introduced the concept of the rotunda, organizing cells around a central observation post; and it emphasized a system of undetected surveillance by designing separate passages for prisoners and keepers, in effect, as a close scrutiny of figure 5 reveals, one building within another. Powers utilized the principles of the central rotunda in the design of his central dome lined with cells. The idea of undetected surveillance was also used by Powers in his design for the observation avenue between the cell blocks.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, fourth annual report, 1829, p. 295.

<sup>31</sup> Jeremy BENTHAM, “Panopticon; or Inspection-House: containing the idea of a new principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment, in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection ...,” *Works*, vol. 4, J. BOWRING, ed. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p. 44.



*A General Idea of a PENITENTIARY PANOPTICON in an Improved, but as yet, (Jan 23<sup>d</sup> 1791), Unfinished State.  
See Postscript References to Plan, Elevation, & Section (being Plates referred to as 3<sup>o</sup> 2).*

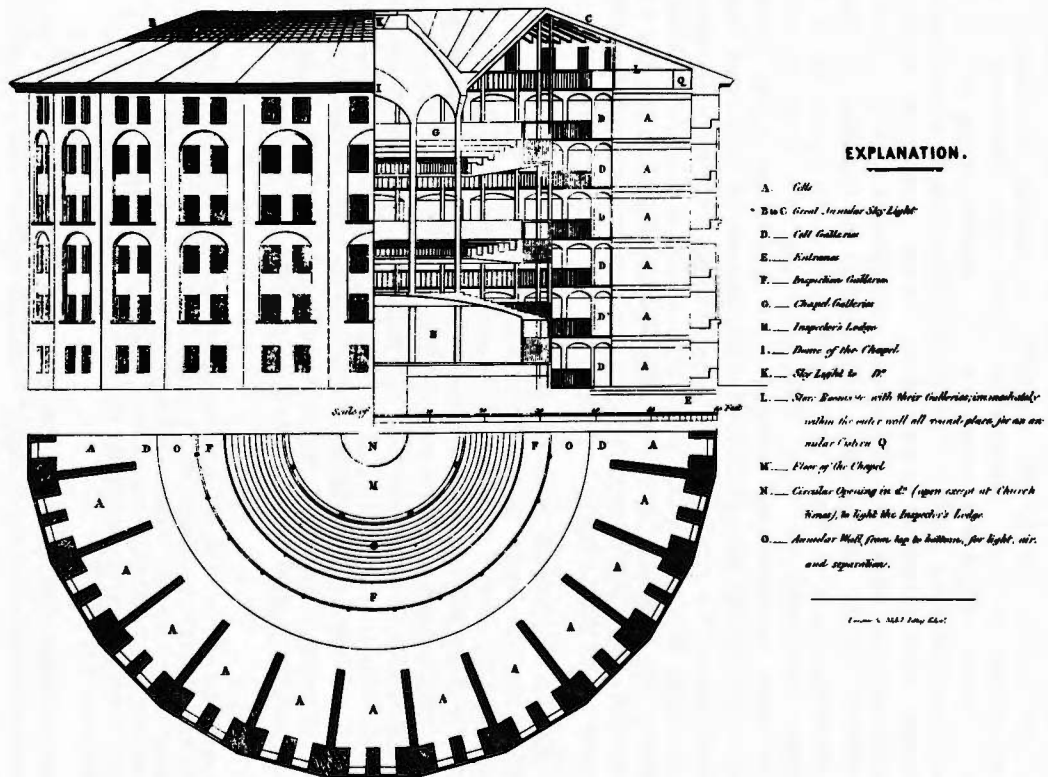


Figure 5. JEREMY BENTHAM'S PANOPTICON  
(From *Works*, vol. 4, J. BOWRING, ed., p. 173).

Specific influences on the establishment of the penitentiary at Kingston then, were that the penitentiary solved problems of justice for as Thompson noted in his Report of 1831: capital punishment was not being consistently carried out for crimes other than murder, banishment was ineffective, flogging was barbaric, and fines inequitable. The potential for reforming the transgressor in the penitentiary was an added bonus. This movement for the reformation of punishment echoed earlier trends and legislation in England and Upper Canada was modelled on English precedents. The particular system of prison management chosen was influenced by the writings of John Howard but more so by the zealous propaganda of the Boston Prison Discipline Society. This system made sense: solitary confinement helped prevent escape, prison labour helped finance the institution and reform the criminal, forced labour and confinement were deterrents to crime. Powers' design was certainly influenced by his intimate knowledge of the penitentiaries at Auburn and Sing Sing, as seen in his use of the cell blocks. The radial plan could have come indirectly from Howard's book but more probably was influenced by the design of the Eastern Penitentiary which had been publicized in the Reports of the Boston Prison Discipline Society. Yet another influence was Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (figure 5) which emphasized the importance of architecture in undetected surveillance. All of these factors are the particular causes for the construction of the Kingston Penitentiary and yet there are deeper more general concerns which motivated its creation.

A clue to the general concerns leading to the establishment of the penitentiary can be found in the universal application which the early reformers saw for prison architecture. It was a simple step for Bentham and later the Boston Prison Discipline Society to effect a broader application of prison architecture than the reformation of criminals. The principle of the Panopticon, allowing constant vigilance, was intended by Bentham to apply not only to prisons but, as he says in the title of his pamphlet on the subject, to "houses of industry, work-houses, poor houses, manufactories, mad-houses, lazarettos, hospitals, and schools." The Panopticon was an example of moral architecture of general application for a universal benefit.

What would you say, if by the gradual adoption and diversified application of this single principle, you should see a new scene of things spread itself over the face of civilized society? — morals reformed, health preserved, industry invigorated, instruction diffused, public burdens lightened, economy seated as it were upon a rock, the gordian knot of the poor-laws not cut but untied — all by a simple idea in architecture.<sup>32</sup>

The Boston Prison Discipline Society also proposed that ideas of prison architecture be applied to other public buildings such as boarding schools, almshouses and seminaries.

If there are principles in architecture, by the observance of which great moral changes can be more easily produced among the most abandoned of our race, are not these principles, with certain modifications, applicable to those persons who are not yet lost to virtue, but prone to evil? If it is found most salutary

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

to place very vicious men alone at night, and give them opportunities for thought, without interruption, is not the principle applicable to others subject to like passions? If old offenders corrupt juvenile delinquents, in buildings so constructed as to make it necessary to lodge them in the same room, will not vicious youths of seventeen, in similar apartments, corrupt innocent boys of eight, or nine? If a night room in a prison containing ten or twenty convicts, presents to an invisible spirit, profaneness, obscenity, histories of past and design for future mischief, and generally contagion in sin, what will be presented in the same spirit, in a night room occupied by five or six unruly apprentices? If females, in prison, crowded together in a room at night, and left to themselves, dishonor their name, is there no tendency to a similar result among factory girls, lodged in the same manner?<sup>33</sup>

The tract goes on to describe a model plan of a boarding school, similar in design to the new wing of the Auburn Penitentiary. It is interesting to note that the Society saw the application of moral architecture particularly relevant for the habitation of the lower ranks of society such as factory girls and apprentices.

While the Boston Prison Discipline Society identified moral architecture as a design that organized its inmates into individual units and then permitted a system of undetected surveillance, there also existed a broader understanding of the moral qualities of architecture. Harmony and order in architectural planning had long been associated with the ideals of classical architecture but by the beginning of the nineteenth century these attributes were thought to affect the people experiencing the design. Timothy Dwight, president of Yale, wrote in 1812 a passage quoted by J.C. Loudon in his widely-read *Encyclopedia of Farm and Village Architecture and Furniture*:

There is a kind of symmetry in the thoughts, feelings, and efforts of the human mind. Its taste, intelligence, affections, and conduct, all so intimately related, that no preconcertion can prevent them from being mutually causes and effects. The first thing powerfully operated on, and, in its term, proportionally operative, is the taste. The perception of beauty and deformity, of refinement and grossness, of decency and vulgarity, or propriety and indecorum, is the first thing which influences man to attempt an escape from a grovelling, brutish character; a character in which morality is effectively chilled, or absolutely frozen. In most persons, this perception is awakened by what may be called the exterior of society, particularly by the mode of building. Uncouth, mean, ragged, dirty houses, constituting the body of any town, will regularly be accompanied by coarse, grovelling manners. The dress, the furniture, the equipage, the mode of living, and the manners, will all correspond with the appearance of the buildings, and will universally be, in every such case, of a vulgar and debased nature.... Of Morals, except in the coarsest form, and that which has the least influence on the heart, they will scarcely have any apprehensions.<sup>34</sup>

The ideal design, then, would impose order on its inhabitants by facilitating separate confinement and surveillance embodying principles of order and harmony which would be imparted to those who contemplated it.

<sup>33</sup> *Reports of the Prison Discipline Society of Boston*, vol. 1, fourth annual report, 1829, p. 289.

<sup>34</sup> Timothy DWIGHT, *Travels in New England and New York*, Barbara Miller SOLOMON, ed., vol. II (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 347. Quoted by J. C. LOUDON, *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1846), p. 3.

By identifying the concept of moral architecture as it was understood by the late eighteenth — and early nineteenth-century prison reformers, we are provided with an important clue to the general concerns surrounding the establishment of penal institutions and the broader function of the new prisons themselves besides the reformation of criminals. The importance of the penitentiary as a corrective to a malignant environment suggests that penitentiary promoters had more general concerns than just the punishment of crime. Studies of nineteenth-century American reformers have pointed to the conservative ideology behind the movement. W. David Lewis and David J. Rothman both argue that the Boston Prison Discipline Society responded to a fear of rapid social change caused by a level of immigration and urbanization which threatened traditional values. Lewis argues that American conservatives looked to established institutions to impose order and conformity on individuals.

These institutions, however, were not enough, they had to be supplemented by a powerful effort to develop within the individual person strong inner controls which would compensate for the wide economic and political freedoms which had been granted him and guarantee that conformity without which no orderly society could exist.<sup>35</sup>

In responding to these general concerns, institutions themselves took on a broader meaning. Rothman points out that the institution — penitentiary or lunatic asylum — would not only control deviant behaviour by imposing order, but serve as a symbol of order and control on the whole society. "The institution would become a laboratory for social improvement. By demonstrating how regularity and discipline transformed the most corrupt persons, it would reawaken the public to these virtues. The penitentiary would promote a new respect for order and authority."<sup>36</sup> Michel Foucault, in a recent book on prisons, arrives at a similar interpretation of Bentham's Panopticon which he describes as a laboratory of power. He argues that the Panopticon was intended to impart principles of behaviour through society by creating a kind of utopia.

Dans la fameuse cage transparente et circulaire, avec sa haute tour, puissante et savante, il est peut-être question pour Bentham de projeter une institution disciplinaire parfaite; mais il s'agit aussi de montrer comment on peut desenferrer les disciplines et les faire fonctionner de façon diffuse, multiple, polyvalente dans le corps social tout entier.<sup>37</sup>

Foucault argues that prisons are much more than places for the incarceration of felons, they symbolize a whole code of values.

Moral architecture as a conservative response to a society whose values were no longer unquestioned — a utopian panacea for real and imagined ills — is an interesting phenomenon in European and American intellectual history, but to what extent was it connected with the Kingdon

<sup>35</sup> W. David LEWIS, *From Newgate to Dannemora, the Rise of the Penitentiary in New York, 1796-1848* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> David J. ROTHMAN, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 107.

<sup>37</sup> Michel FOUCAULT, *Surveiller et Punir, naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 210.

Penitentiary? Before the relationship between the concept of moral architecture and the Kingston Penitentiary can be understood it is first necessary to examine the context of attitudes surrounding the construction of the Upper Canadian institution. We have seen the particular rationale given by the Kingston promoters for the penitentiary and the influence of British and American reformers on the type of prison system they argued for; but the extent to which the prison was a response to general concerns about the nature of society is at first problematic. The argument subordinates, for instance, the obvious reason that the penitentiary was accepted as a solution to rising crime. Therefore, before facily transferring this explanation to Upper Canada, it is necessary to determine just what Upper Canadian concerns were when the idea of the penitentiary was accepted.

It is difficult to ascertain objectively whether or not crime was a problem in Upper Canada. Recent studies have suggested that crime was perceived as such. Gerald Bellomo has written: "In the early 1830s the increase in crime and the overcrowding of the gaols of the province made the construction of the penitentiary a legislative priority."<sup>38</sup> This perception stems from the association of crime with social disorder, a condition generally agreed to have been prevalent in Upper Canada in the 1830s.<sup>39</sup> Crime as an actual problem in this period has been disputed by J.M. Beattie who avers:

Serious crime was not a problem in Canada in the 1830's and 1840's. It was not uncommon for the criminal calendar at the assizes in Upper Canada, for example, to be very light indeed when the court met for its annual session in the various Districts of the Province.<sup>40</sup>

Given the imprecision of available statistics, hard evidence as to the crime rate is lacking.<sup>41</sup> One source that provides an impression of the nature and degree of crime in Upper Canada is the return of convicts in the Kingston Penitentiary provided annually by the penitentiary warden. This return gives the name, district, crime, date of sentence, and length of sentence of each prisoner.<sup>42</sup> From these returns one discovers that between October 1835 and October 1836 the prison received forty-six convicts.<sup>43</sup> The population of Upper Canada in 1833-34 was comprised of 77,471 males over sixteen years of age.<sup>44</sup> In 1838 there were 145 convicts in the penitentiary<sup>45</sup> while the number of males in Upper Canada over the age of sixteen

<sup>38</sup> BELLOMO, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Robert D. WOLFE, "The Myth of the Poor Man's Country: Upper Canadian Attitudes to Immigration, 1830-37" (M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1976), p. 139.

<sup>40</sup> BEATTIE, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of the problems of measuring the rate of crime in nineteenth-century England see the introductory chapter in J.J. TOBIAS, *Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

<sup>42</sup> UPPER CANADA, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Appendix to the Journal, 1836-37*, "Report of the Penitentiary Inspectors," p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Based on returns of districts in UPPER CANADA, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Appendix to the Journal, 1833* (Toronto: King's Printer, 1834), p. 142.

<sup>45</sup> HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Appendix to the Journal, 1839-40*, "Annual Report of the Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary," (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1840), Warden's Report, p. 61.

at this time was 97,326.<sup>46</sup> It is obvious that the rise in the number of convicts does not reflect the overall growth in population. This can be explained by factors such as more convictions carrying penitentiary terms and a greater tendency for district gaols to transfer felons to the Kingston institution. Still the number of convicts in the penitentiary at the end of the decade is small compared to the total adult male population and their crimes were usually not very serious. In 1841 after the south wing was complete and the east and west wings begun, there were still sixty vacant cells.<sup>47</sup>

While actual crime affected a small proportion of the population, perceived crime was of general concern. Here again Beattie is helpful in his conclusions drawn from a study of Upper Canadian newspapers between 1830 and 1850.

[T]here is no doubt that punishment of crime — how it should be dealt with — was a frequent topic of public discussion. And this was principally because crime was regarded not simply as acts of theft or violence, but more broadly as one aspect of a much larger social question. Criminality, indeed, provided evidence of much deeper and more serious evils — evils that threatened the moral and social fabric of the society, and that called for powerful measures of defence.<sup>48</sup>

The way is clear, then, for transferring the broader implications of the penitentiary to Upper Canada.

But what were these “deeper and more serious evils”? My own survey of the Kingston newspapers between 1830 and 1832 as well as other literature for this period found that while there was widespread interest in the building of the penitentiary there was little concern specifically with crime. There was a great concern over a more general sort of disequilibrium. Immorality, idleness, drunkenness and disrespect for social ranks caused obvious anxiety to contemporary writers, who perceived in such disorder a threat to their own values. Susannah Moodie’s reaction to the immigrant peasants throwing off social and moral constraint as they disembarked in the new world in 1832 is an eloquent expression of the fear felt by the upper classes, although Moodie herself was an immigrant.

And here I must observe that our passengers, who were chiefly honest Scotch labourers and mechanics from the vicinity of Edinburgh, and who while on board ship had conducted themselves with the greatest propriety, and appeared the most quiet, orderly set of people in the world, no sooner set foot upon the island than they became infected by the same spirit of insubordination and misrule, and were just as insolent and noisy as the rest.<sup>49</sup>

This kind of scene was unsettling to the higher ranks of Upper Canadian society and often repeated. While the educated Upper Canadian believed

<sup>46</sup> Based on district returns in UPPER CANADA, *Appendix to the Journal, 1838* (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1840), p. 446.

<sup>47</sup> HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Appendix to the Journal, 1840*, vol. I “Report of the Board of Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary,” (Kingston: Queen’s Printer, 1841).

<sup>48</sup> BEATTIE, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Susannah MOODIE, *Roughing it in the Bush* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923), p. 29.



that idleness, riotous behaviour, drunkenness, and licentiousness led to crime, he or she was just as disturbed by this threatening situation in itself.

The reason that this fear of disorder was so profoundly felt by the educated Upper Canadian was because it affected his world view. This world view can only be simply stated here, based on evidence implied in contemporary commentary. While this epistemology was probably only fully perceived by a few, fragments of it were held by many in the higher ranks of Upper Canadian society. In its fullest form this philosophy saw the universe as a rationally ordered system whose parts were interconnected in a rational and harmonious fashion. The underlying principle of the organism was an order and symmetry that connected the lowliest forms with the highest and kept the whole intact. Order was both a moral and a rational principle related to divine and scientific knowledge. By contrast disorder was both irrational and immoral, a threat to universal harmony, worse still it was exportable, a contagion that could soon spread. Rapid change was causing disorder not only in North America at the beginning of the nineteenth century but also in Britain as a result of the industrial revolution.

The threat of change and disorder to the natural balance of society is implicit in editorials and comments in the Upper Canadian press. An editorial which appeared in the *Kingston Chronicle* in 1831 on the English Reform Bill then passing through the House of Commons stated:

Above all we hope that this event will bring not only REFORMATION but INFORMATION sufficient to instruct the minds of the people of the extent to which it can be carried with safety; and without placing bounds to human affairs, convince the rational portion of Society that the greatest danger to be apprehended by a Nation would, by the permanence of such a spirit, created by a succession of new and violent minds who would by a supposed increase of knowledge and a certain perpetuity of presumption, change the wholesome and self-purifying efforts of Nature to recover its proper tone and powers, into permanent disorder and disease.<sup>50</sup>

Comparing the body politic to the physical health of the individual is more than a metaphor here, there is a direct correlation implied between order on one level and health on another in the overall structure of the world.

Aberrations in normal behaviour, crime, lunacy, and sickness, were seen as manifestations of disorder, indications that the universe at large was not in harmony. Individual deviancy threatened the social order. Disharmony in the world threatened the individual. With such a world view, great emphasis was placed on conformity. The Rev. H. C. Knight, in a sermon quoted by the *Kingston Herald* in 1833, said: "Actions to be right, must proceed from right motives. Were all classes of the community sober and moral, hospitals and asylums would be almost emptied of their unhappy inmates."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Chronicle* (Kingston), 11 June 1831.

<sup>51</sup> *Herald* (Kingston), 16 Jan. 1833.

If crime itself was not an overwhelming problem in Upper Canada in the early 1830s, there were other signs, especially the cholera epidemic of 1832, that the order of the universe was imbalanced. An address given by the chief Justice in Upper Canada, John Beverley Robinson, to the Grand Jury of the Home District in 1832 illustrates the way in which this world view lumped together social problems as manifestations of a larger disorder:

The increasing population of this province demands attention to all that is connected with public justice and police. The inhabitants of this District alone now number more than 40,000 and to say nothing further of the importance, on ordinary grounds of maintaining the efficacy of the law among so large a body of people, the melancholy events of the last summer [i.e. the cholera epidemic] have placed, in a striking point of view, the indispensable necessity of a due vigilance on the part of the magistracy, and courts of justice in enforcing, as far as the law enables the, the duties of order, cleanliness and sobriety.<sup>52</sup>

This statement would be mystifying without knowing the way in which the Upper Canadian mind interrelated signs of disorder. But accepting this we can see that it was quite plausible to Robinson that the regulation of social order would have an effect on disease.

To the Upper Canadian world view, as exemplified by Moodie and Robinson, institutions were obvious bulwarks against disorder; imparting education, obedience, religion and constraint on the individuals who made up society. The Kingston Penitentiary was the largest institution established in the 1830s and the enthusiasm of its reception can only be explained by the ideals associated with it. In Kingston, especially, these ideals were discussed at length.

Thought was noted how the penitentiary enabled the better administration of justice, more attention and approval was given to the particular method of running the penitentiary and on its promise to modify deviant behaviour. The congregate system imposed habits of industry on the disordered elements of society, and virtues such as hard work, sobriety, and obedience were enforced. John Beverley Robinson observed in 1832:

When a convict finds himself engaged in hard labour within the walls of a prison, and under the compulsion of a legal sentence, it is scarcely possible but his situation must force upon him the obvious and salutary reflection that he had much better have been applying the same exertion in gaining an honest living himself.<sup>53</sup>

In order to impress upon the prisoner the relation between habits forced upon him inside and habits to be followed on the outside, certain aspects of prison life had to be related to life on the outside as well. For this reason it was argued that the prisoner should perform useful work and not merely move a treadmill.<sup>54</sup> Useful work was rational in its productivity and its

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 Oct. 1832.

<sup>53</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> "As instruments of punishment merely, Tread Mills are very effectual; but they are ill adapted to *reform* the offender, the system does not speak to his mind — does not instruct him by moral principles and duties, or in mechanical arts — does not assist him to recover his standing among honest and honourable men, by qualifying him to obtain his living as an honest man." *Herald*, 18 Dec. 1833.

ability to teach a trade. The convict was to work in a group, imitating in a perverse fashion the grouping of shop workers or labourers. To middle class Upper Canadians, the penitentiary was an ideal society.

The idea of the penitentiary was much more than a system of dealing with transgression of the law, it became a projection of the world as it should be. The penitentiary represented a community, although an artificial one, where the old values of obedience by the lower orders to a higher power were implicit. In their 1832 Report, the commissioners wrote:

... at Auburn, Sing Sing & c. we have, as the Boston Society remarks, a beautiful example of what may be done by proper discipline, in a prison well constructed'. Here it is said of officers as well as men, that 'there is a place for every man, and that every man is in his place' — we regard it, they add, 'as a model worthy of the world's imitation'.<sup>55</sup>

The commissioners and the Boston Prison Discipline Society were not just suggesting that all the world have prisons like Auburn and Sing Sing, but were advocating that the world be run on the same principles.

Although the chances of permanently reforming all, or even most, criminals must have seemed slight even to the Kingston enthusiasts of the congregate system, what was generally reassuring was the sight of a model society being forced to behave in an ordered manner. The idealism expressed by the penitentiary greatly impressed Susannah Moodie who visited the Kingston institution about 1850. The reassurance of the society described here contrasts remarkably with her anxious impression of the Scottish and Irish settlers in 1832 quoted above:

I was surprised at the neatness, cleanliness, order and regularity of all the arrangements in the vast building, and still more astonished that forty or fifty strong active looking men, unfettered, with the free use of their limbs, could be controlled by one person, who sat on a tall chair as overseer of each ward. In several instances, particularly in the tailoring and shoemaking department, the overseers were small delicate-looking men; but such is the force of habit, and the want of moral courage which generally accompanies guilt, that a word or a look from these men was sufficient to keep them at work.<sup>56</sup>

Though the guards were armed, it was an important point that the prisoners seemed to be free yet remained constrained and acted just as they were supposed to behave on the outside, respecting authority and working hard. This is a subtle point, but one which the commissioners were well aware of in 1831. In this way not only was the prisoner impressed, but the upper classes of society were as well.

Seen as an ideal microcosmic community, the architecture of the penitentiary assumed a great degree of importance as it had to Howard, Bentham and the Boston Prison Discipline Society. It was necessary that the prison be designed to allow constant close supervision by a minimal staff, allowing order and discipline in a seemingly natural fashion, if possible, like a self-regulating machine. It was the architecture that should

<sup>55</sup> *Report*, 1832, p. 28.

<sup>56</sup> Susannah MOODIE, *Life in the Clearings* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), p. 153.

constrain and organize the inmate rather than the guard. In this way the penitentiary system would seem to embody an abstract moral principle which the inmate was supposed to adhere to when he was released. To support an ideal community, the design had to appear rationally ordered and effectively regulate physical problems such as sanitation, ventilation, and heat. Finally, as the penitentiary was an important symbol of order to the community at large the design had to embody qualities reflecting this function. People had to be able to view the penitentiary and feel reassured or cowed depending on their natural inclinations. It was these factors influencing the design of the penitentiary that made it the most sophisticated piece of architecture in Upper Canada.

At this point we can form some conclusions about why the Kingston Penitentiary was designed the way it was. The penitentiary responded to particular and general concerns: particular concerns about the punishment of crime; general concerns about the state of disorder in the world, resulting from the industrial revolution, urbanization, and immigration and which led to deviant behaviour and disease. The idea of the penitentiary was presented as an answer to both of these concerns through the writings of John Howard, Jeremy Bentham, and the Boston Prison Discipline Society. These antecedents legitimized the idea of an effective mode of punishment as well as a possible method of reforming behaviour. The philosophy of these penologists was based on principles of order, routine, control, hard work, and reflection enforced by strict supervision. Architecture was crucial to implementing this prison discipline that controlled behaviour, theoretically with minimal personal intervention. But, as the philosophy of prison discipline reflected ideals of how societal behaviour, implicit in the penologists' writings was the idea that the prison community could serve as a model for all society. This aspect is quite explicit in Bentham and the Boston Prison Discipline Society with their articulation of the concept of moral architecture. Thus, the solutions provided by the penologists suggested means of dealing with the uncertainties in the world, offering, as they did, a system of rigid control from above for a society where behaviour was no longer certain.

The architecture of the Kingston Penitentiary was an admirable response to the influences which brought about the institution. Planned far in excess of any conceivable needs for the incarceration of prisoners, it was a model society, a laboratory of controlled behaviour, a visible panacea for many of Upper Canada's real or imagined ills.