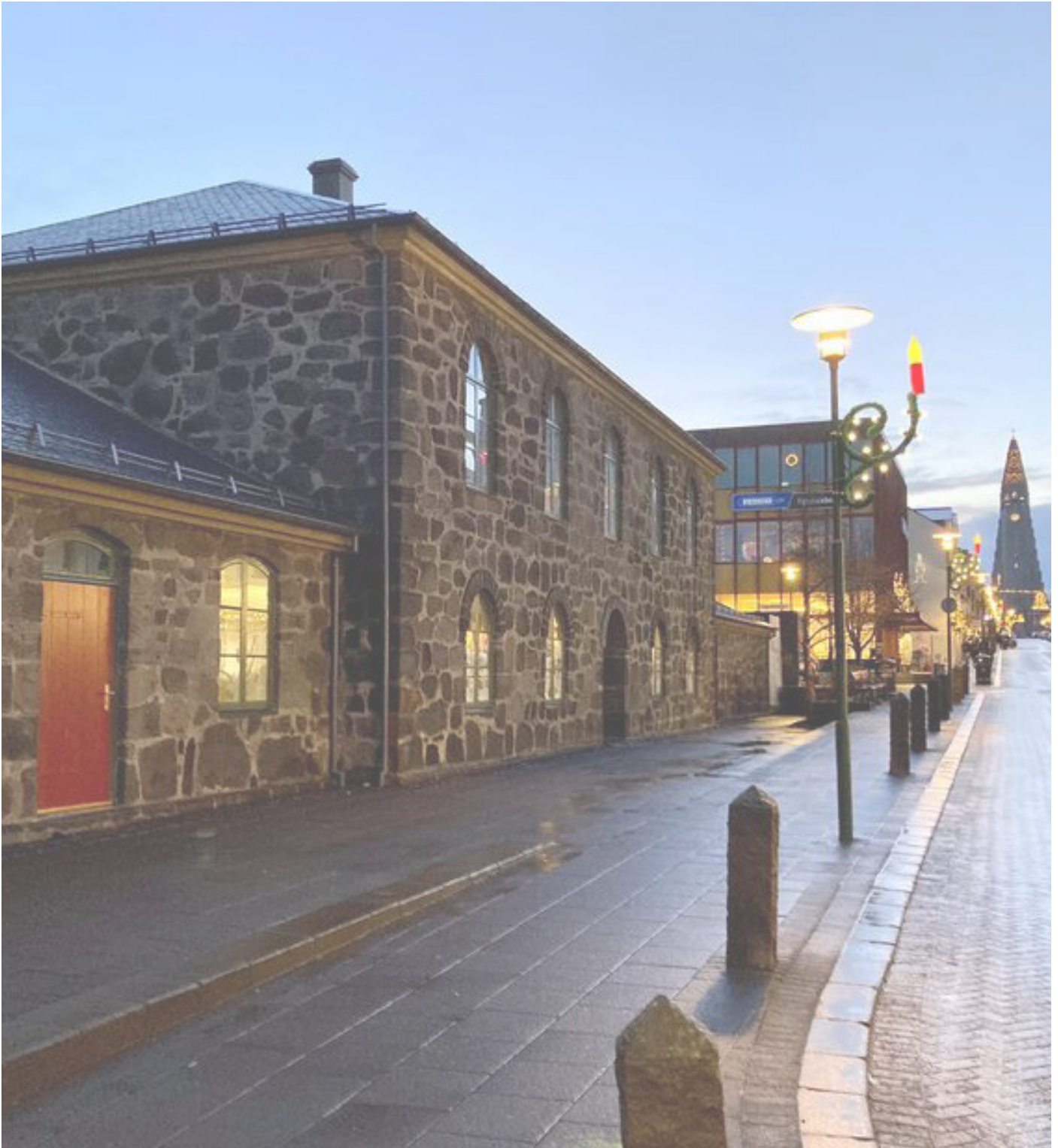


Analyse og Værdisætning

Analyse og værdisætning: Hegningarhúsið



Hegningarhúsið (my own photo).

Introduction

Hegningarúsið or “Steinninn” (“the stone”) as it is often called by people in Iceland has been prominent in the cityscape since its construction in 1872. It holds a special place due to various reasons. Its construction material and appearance are unique. Visible, minimally carved rocks in the walls and stone arches over the windows are part of its distinctive character. The building served as a town hall, accommodating the municipal government, and it also housed both the country’s courts, the city council, and the supreme court. However, its most significant and long-standing role was as the city’s and the country’s prison.

As a prison, Hegningarúsið became outdated around 1927, and at that time, discussions began on the necessity of building a new prison and discontinuing the use of the current building. By 1980, it was believed that the time had come, and preparations were made to redefine the purpose of the building. The building was surveyed, detailed drawings were made, and a historical analysis of the building’s past was written.¹³

However, several decades passed before the building ceased to be used as a prison, and during that time, it received only minimal maintenance. In 2015, the Minister of the State appointed a working group to make recommendations regarding the future use of the building, as construction of a new prison in Hólmsheiði was well underway, and it was considered feasible to discontinue the use of the building. The working group concluded that it should be a priority to preserve it for its architectural value, that the building should remain in public ownership, and that it would be desirable to have public activities there.²⁷

Finally, in 2016, the prison was fully closed. The management of the building was transferred to the State Properties (Ríkiseignir), which began preparations for its restoration.

The building was protected as a national monument under the Cultural Heritage Act in 1972 (Þjóðarminjalögin). It was decided to collaborate between State Properties and the Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland in preparing for the restoration.

In the 19th century, significant changes occurred in Western societies. Altered modes of production brought about a revolution in almost all aspects of society, and the Enlightenment, among other things, aimed to improve the welfare of the majority.

During this period, there was a complete transformation in everything related to prisons and punishment. Philosophers and social reformers began to discuss prison issues, and humanitarian perspectives shaped the policy-making process. Increasing attention was focused on how to design prisons and the prison environment in a way that would positively shape the inmates, making them better individuals. Rehabilitation became more important than punishment.



Front facade (my own photo).



The main door (my own photo).



View from the building to Hallgrímskirkja (my own photo).

From these ideas emerged the concept of a model prison where the building and its entire structure would embody the most progressive ideas about rehabilitation and the transformation of prisoners. In the mid-19th century, two main approaches prevailed in this regard, and most prisons built in Western countries at the time adopted one of these approaches.

The decision to build a prison in Reykjavík around 1870 is best understood in the context of these changes and the debates they sparked. The prevailing political circumstances in the country also influenced the execution of the project.

Here, we aim to place the building in the context of the aforementioned developments and shed light on its formation and origin.

When the history of Hegningarhúsið is examined in depth, it becomes clear that it embodies revolutionary societal changes from the wider world that extended their influence to this country, although circumstances dictated that they would manifest in unique ways here.¹⁴

Historical analysis

Royal decree on the building of prisons in Iceland

In 1866, a committee was appointed to assess the implementation of Danish penal laws in Iceland, focusing on abolishing floggings and determining alternative punishments. The committee recommended adopting the Danish laws unchanged and building prison houses in Reykjavík, Stykkishólmur, and Akureyri. They proposed separate sections for male and female prisoners, including a house of punishment alongside the county prison. In 1871, a royal decree was issued, specifying the construction of a house of punishment and prisons in Reykjavík for crimes committed in Iceland.

Until then, people had not been sentenced to short-term hard labor for more than two years, except for floggings for minor offenses. Now, short-term hard labor was to be imposed instead of floggings, and the committee pointed out that the cost of transporting prisoners to Danish prisons would significantly increase with the introduction of the new penal laws. According to the committee, it was likely that if Icelandic criminals served their sentences in Iceland, it would better deter others from engaging in criminal activities. In their opinion, there were cases in Iceland where the public even considered imprisonment in Denmark as a relief and desirable, as the offender might have learned something during their stay there that would further their criminal career.¹⁵

The committee's intention was to complete the construction of the prisons when the penal laws came into effect. The government presented a draft penal law to parliament in 1867, but the issue of prison construction was not addressed simultaneously.



Front window with art installation portraying previous prisoners (my own photo).



One of the back doors (my own photo).



Another one of the back doors with stairs (my own photo).



Magnús Ólafsson's photograph from around the turn of the century 1900. The oldest photograph known of the building (Iceland's National Archives).



Looking northeast from Bergstaða Street to the prison building shortly before 1920 (Iceland's National Archives).

The Parliament agreed to enact the draft into law but requested further discussions on prison construction and associated costs. The revised draft became law in 1869, with the provision that punishments would continue as before until prisons and execution houses were built. In response to parliament's request, the government presented a draft decree in 1869 for the construction of prisons and an execution house in Iceland, addressing the need for local facilities. The decree emphasized the cost of transporting prisoners to Danish execution houses.

A proposal was made regarding the construction of a prison building. One suggestion was to build a single-story building with cells for male and female inmates, workshops, infirmaries, administrative space, and accommodations for guards. Another suggestion was a two-story building with the same layout on the ground floor and administrative offices and court space on the upper floor, allowing for ceremonial events. The county governor suggested the idea in a letter to the Ministry of Justice in 1870. The government did not express its opinion on the proposal, but it was noted that a single-story prison would allow for easier expansion if needed, and using it for festive occasions would disrupt the seriousness of the prison environment. The Parliament appointed a committee to examine the draft, and some minor changes were made. Ultimately, prisons were to be built only in districts with fixed sheriff residences and important trading posts. The directive for construction was issued in 1871, specifying prisons in Reykjavík, Stykkishólmur, Ísafjörður, Akureyri, Húsavík, and Eskifjörður.

The plot for the prison building in Reykjavík

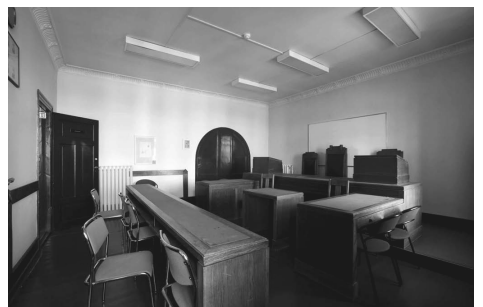
In a letter dated March 4, 1871, the Ministry of Justice informed the county governor that construction of a prison in Reykjavík would begin soon. The governor was asked to find a suitable location and estimate the cost of the plot. On April 22, the construction committee determined the site for the courthouse. The chosen plot was located in Arnarhólsholt and additional land was purchased from Rannveig. The governor expected the building to be made of gray stone, with ample raw material nearby. The location outside the city along the main road was deemed suitable for a prison. Water supply was a concern, but a well could be dug on the plot. The foundation was found to be stable.

Sketches of the building with and without the court house

On August 11, 1871, the Ministry of Justice sent drawings of a prison and courthouse to Governor Hilmar Finsen, designed by Klentz. The governor proposed expanding the project to include the High Court and city council, but Klentz's cost estimate was deemed too high. The governor suggested cost reduction measures, which were rejected by the city council. The governor emphasized the need for improved housing and suggested negotiating lower costs or hiring skilled workers. He proposed housing the institutions within the prison building and criticized Klentz's design. The governor disagreed with Klentz's plans and



The oldest photo from the building's prison cells that have been found are from the 1930s. In the beginning, all the interiors and furniture were nailed down. The beds were so-called folding benches that were attached to the wall with hinges and folded down when in use (Iceland's National Archives).



The town hall with the furniture (my own photo).



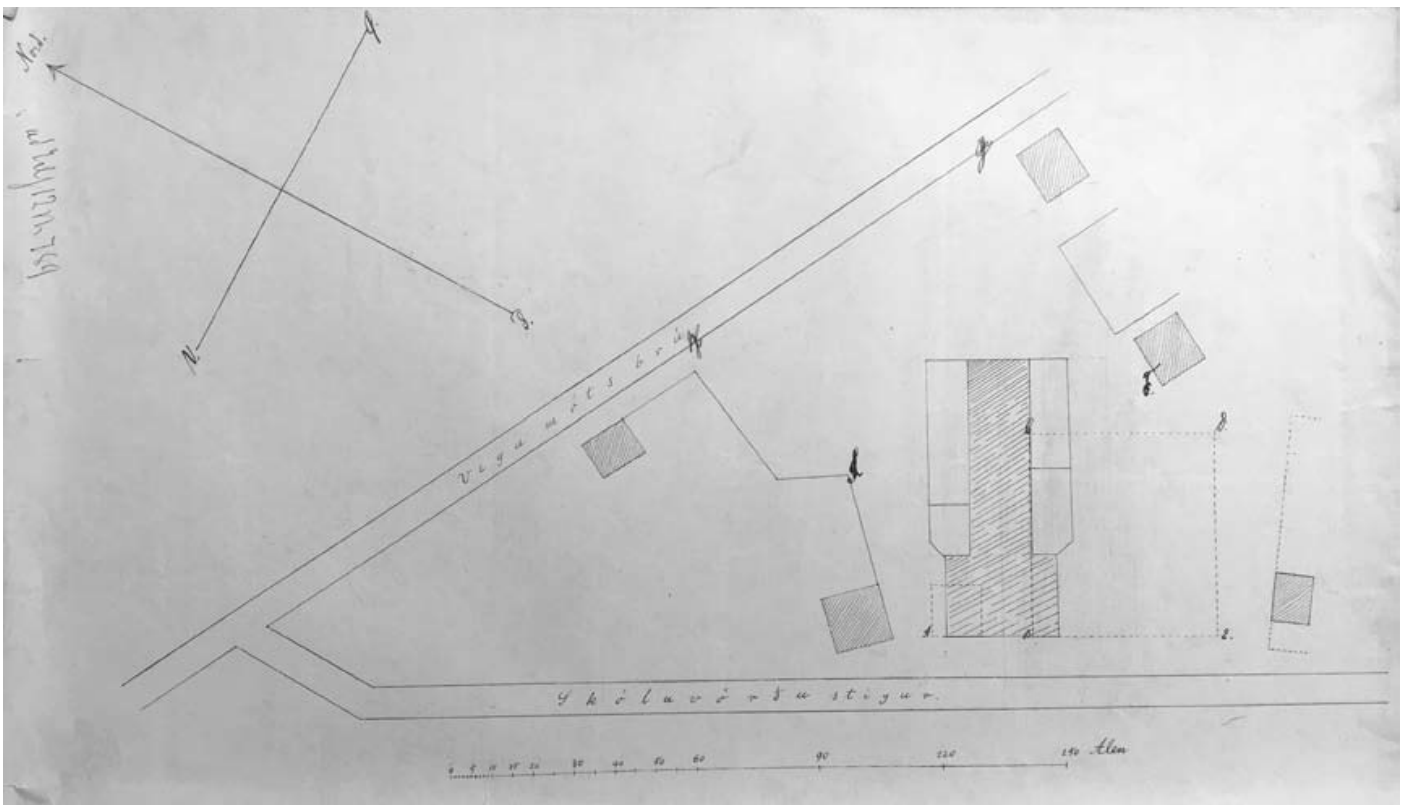
Seen from the northeast across the building and down to the prison yard.



Seen from the southwest to the northeast.



Plandrawing of Reykjavik from 1876. The prison building was newly built. Marked red by me (Iceland's National Archives).



Klantz's proposal rejected by the Governor in Iceland. In it, it was assumed that the house would be in two parts. In the one that was positioned towards Skólavörðustígur, the town hall and courthouse were planned, but the prison was supposed to be there in the back house. A similar arrangement existed in several Danish prisons from the same time (Iceland's National Archives).

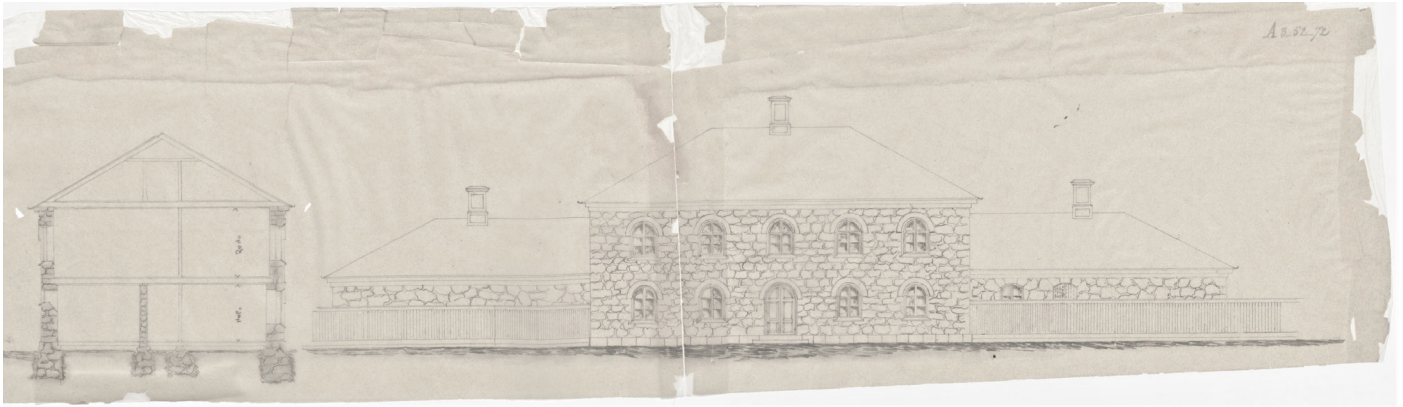
proposed changes to reduce costs. The governor had doubts about Klentz's abilities based on a previous project. He recommended following his own design and involving Danish masons. The governor questioned Klentz's honesty and requested new drawings and cost estimates. The proposal focused on the town hall and council chambers, with suggestions for cost-saving measures and improvements. Winstrup, another Danish architect, provided detailed feedback and recommended changes to various aspects of the design. He supported using basalt stones but differed in the arrangement of corner stones. Winstrup proposed a larger entrance hall and changes to window and door sizes. He suggested using red bricks for arches and cornice. He found Klentz's cost estimate too high and advised revising it. Winstrup emphasized timber work in Copenhagen and shipping finished components to Iceland. The finalized drawings were not sent to Iceland for approval before the contract was signed.²³

Plans for the building executions

While Klentz worked on the final drawings, the governor took charge and made a contract with Lúðvík Alexíusson for the quarrying of stones for the construction. The contract was made in March, 1872, and obligated Lúðvík to deliver 20 cartloads of stone to the construction site during the winter. The stones were to be of two types: foundation stones to be used in the base of the building and partly in the side walls, and lava stones where each stone had two parallel sides. At the construction site, Lúðvík was to unload the stones, separating each type. The price that the governor negotiated to pay Lúðvík for the stones was approximately half of what Klentz had estimated it would cost. This revealed that the district commissioner had been correct in his criticism of Klentz's plan, at least regarding how he thought Klentz's was overbudgeting for his own profit.¹⁹



Original drawings from 1872 (Iceland's National Archives).



Original drawings from 1872 (Iceland's National Archives).

The construction was supposed to be fully completed by May 1, 1873, one year after the signing of the contract. The contract included a description of the intended house to be built. The following is a translation from the contract:

“The central part of the house is two stories high, 28½ alns in length, 18 alns and 6 thumb-widths in width, and reaches a height of 11 alns to the eaves, with two adjoining gables, both one story high, measuring 19 alns and 8 thumb-widths in length and 16 alns wide.

The exterior walls shall be made of foundation stones and lava stones with parallel faces. The foundation stones shall be used in the foundations and the walls of the side gables. The walls of the central part of the house shall be made of lava stones. The walls shall be lime-masonry with cement on the outer joints. The gables, window and door frames shall be intricately carved. The exterior walls of the central part shall be 1 aln and 6 thumb-widths thick on the lower floor, while on the upper floor and the gables, they shall be 1 aln thick. Partition walls on the lower floor shall be 15 thumb-widths thick, made of lime-masonry lava stones, except for the walls in the superintendent's apartment, which shall be made of masonry bonds, like the partition walls on the upper floor. All walls and ceilings shall be plastered and painted, with lime paint in the prison area and oil paint in the municipal area.

The main chimney shall have a 14 thumb-width smoke vent, while the chimneys in the gables shall have 9 thumb-width vents.

The prison area shall have wood-burning stoves. The assembly hall shall have 3 cylinder stoves, and the superintendent's apartment shall have a small stove and a cooking stove in the kitchen.

Over the entire lower floor, there shall be 7 x 8 thumb-width floorboards with an underlay, lath, and a planed floor. In the two-story section of the house, the floors shall be covered, and there shall be a floor above the single-story gables. Over the upper floor, there shall be 7 x 8 thumb-width floorboards with an underlay and lath, and a notched ceiling. Every third board shall be secured with wall anchors. On the lower floor, a suspended floor of

6 x 6 thumb-width floorboards shall be made, resting on joists so that air can circulate underneath.

The roof shall be made of 5 x 5 thumb-width timber and covered with 1 thumb-width notched boards, and it shall be roofed with 16 thumb-width-long slate tiles.

The roof shall have eaves and downspouts.

The main staircase shall be made of 3 thumb-width planks, while the smaller ones shall be made of 2 thumb-width planks. The prison doors, with their fittings, shall be of the highest quality as found in public prisons.

Interior doors shall be made of timber frames of 1½ thumb-width wood, and exterior doors shall have 2 thumb-width frames. All timber for the house shall be of good commercial quality. Boards and planks intended for floors, stairs, and carpentry shall be free of large knots and reasonably aged material. All timber, except for stair steps and kitchen fittings, shall be painted four times with oil paint.

Chimney pots shall be installed on the chimneys.

The prison windows shall comply with the applicable regulations.

All metal fittings related to carpentry work shall be painted with enamel. The window panes shall be made of durable, white glass.

From the superintendent's apartment, there shall be a door leading to the garden, which shall be surrounded by a 3½ aln high timber fence made of 5 x 6 thumb-width posts set into holes in the ground. The fence shall be equipped with pickets”

The building execution

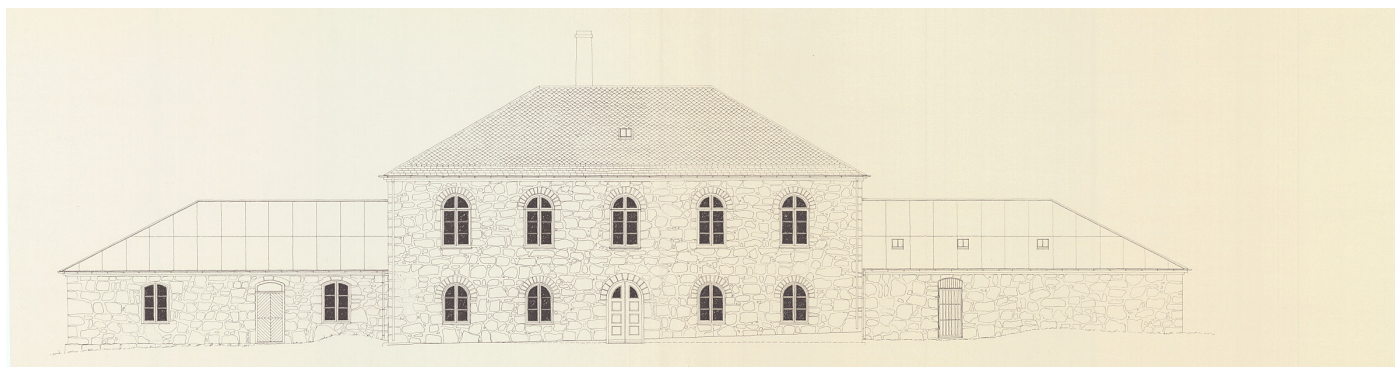
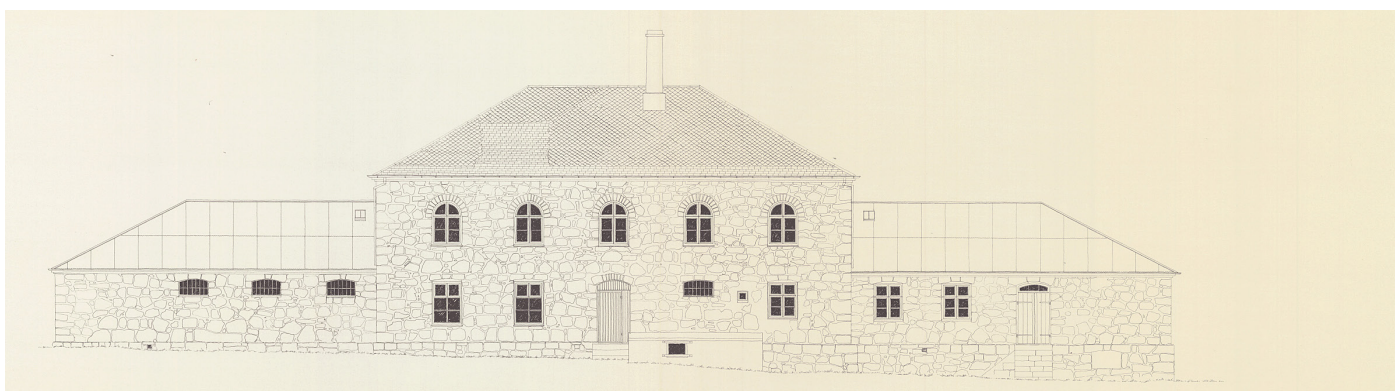
In mid-May 1872, F. Bald, a carpenter appointed by Klentz, arrived in Iceland with Lützern, a mason, to oversee the construction project. Icelandic and Danish craftsmen and workers were involved in the project, including Björn Guðmundsson and Lúðvík Alexíusson. Bald soon realized that the plot had a steeper slope than anticipated, leading to higher foundations on certain sides of the building. He wrote a letter to the town magistrate, requesting compensation for the additional costs caused by the unevenness of the plot. The letter was forwarded to the county governor and then to the relevant department. Bald proposed the construction of a cellar under the western part of the building, replacing the planned laundry house in the yard. The department approved this modification without extra costs. The cellar construction progressed, and in November, after about six months of work, the main structure of the house was completed, awaiting finishing touches and the erection of chambers. It is likely that Bernhöft had during the winter of 1872-1873 or in the spring of 1873 arranged for Icelandic industrial workers to complete the

unfinished work at Hegningarhúsið, which they had been working on the previous summer. There is no indication that Danish industrial workers came to finish the project, and when the handover of the house took place with the legally required inspection and evaluation on May 8th, 1873, Bald was not present. After the inspection and assessment procedure the construction of the house was effectively completed. This makes the construction of the building only a year, which is quite remarkable.¹⁹

Architectural analysis

Building style and construction technology

Klentz, the master carpenter, was responsible for the design of the building, overseeing the creation of drawings and signing his name on them. Other individuals, including Hilmar Finsen, the district commissioner, had influence over the overall layout of the building. Winstrup, the architect, contributed to its exterior appearance and made adjustments to window and door arrangements. Collaboration also took place with officials from the Ministry of Justice and the director of the prison offices in Copenhagen. The building reflects neoclassical characteristics but with some unique features. Winstrup, although not considered one of the most prominent architects of his time, was experienced in his craft and enjoyed trust and respect. Towards the end of his career, he embraced a revivalist approach to his artistic creation, so the neoclassical elements of the building can be attributed to Klentz rather than Winstrup, although the latter provided recommendations on proportions and window sizes. The shape, roofing, window arrangements, and overall design of the



building are representative of neoclassical houses constructed in Copenhagen at the same time. However, Danish traditions were adapted to Icelandic customs in an innovative way.⁹

The initial plans for the prison included a centralized heating system, but it was later changed to scattered stoves for warmth. The town hall and courtrooms had wind-driven fans. The Hegningarhús used old-fashioned stoves, lacked running water, and had outhouses. Initially, oil lamps were used, and later gas lamps were installed. An electric ringing apparatus was added in 1875 for communication. Similar equipment was found in a Danish prison built in 1881. Electricity was emerging during that time.²²

The construction of the building marked a milestone in the use of masonry in Iceland. Cement was first known to be used in the construction of Reykjavík's Cathedral in 1847. However, the significant use of cement began with the construction of the Hegningarhús, where it was used to fill gaps between the outer wall stones. The term "steinsteypa" (concrete) is mentioned in the building specifications, referring to the flooring in the laundry room. Klentz also used masonry in the rural prisons he built.¹⁴

The building materials

The construction material used was Icelandic rocks, although its usage was relatively new at the time. The unique appearance of the building is mainly due to the rocks, despite having limited influence on the building's shape. The building is primarily made of irregularly shaped, rough-textured stones, with a smooth front facade. The foundation consists of denser grayrock (grágrýti), with similar rocks embedded in the walls. The arches above the windows are carved from cut volcanic rocks, while the arch above the main entrance is made of a denser material. Both types of stones are basalt formations resulting from different circumstances, with the more porous volcanic rocks being younger and exhibiting various mineral formations, giving it a hollow and rough texture. The porous volcanic stones has a distinct composition compared to the smoother grayrock (grágrýti).

Most older stone buildings in Iceland, are mostly made of grayrock (grágrýti), and lava rocks that has been carved to create a relatively smooth facade. However, some 19th-century stone houses were built from rubble stone, and one 18th-century house, Hóladómkirkja, was made of sandstone, both of which are easier to carve than volcanic rocks.

Neither rubble stone nor sandstone can be found in the immediate vicinity of Reykjavik, but there is an abundance of basalt stone, including dense basalt and rough volcanic rock.

The building stands out from most other stone buildings in the country due to the use of volcanic rock. It is important to consider the purpose and origin of this innovative choice.



Photos of the stone walls (my own photos).

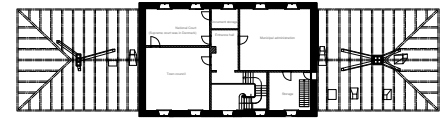
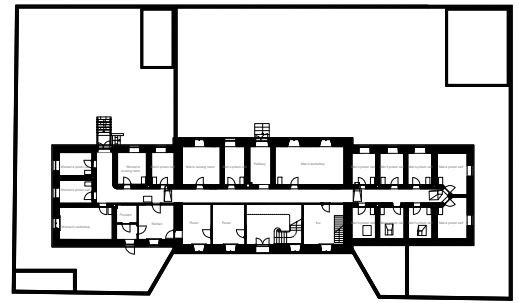
The stone buildings erected by the Danish government in Iceland in the 18th century were constructed using the most accessible and suitable type of stone available at each construction site. Most of them were made of gray stone, except for Hóladómkirkja, which was made of sandstone, and Landakirkja in Vestmannaeyjar, which was made of rubble stone. Basalt stone was expensive to process because it was challenging and time-consuming to carve it into the desired shape. The construction of these houses took a long time and ended up being much more costly than anticipated.

Stone buildings in Iceland, particularly those constructed during the 19th century, were primarily made of gray stone (Grágrýti), which was challenging to shape. However, a few houses were built using basalt or sandstone, which were easier to work with. Stone houses were initially expensive and required imported materials. Over time, stone masonry became more widespread, and stone farms and fully constructed stone houses emerged. Sverrir Runólfsson, a skilled stone mason, played a significant role in promoting stone construction. Stone houses were initially viewed as costlier than timber houses, but Sverrir demonstrated their affordability. The stone masons who built the Hegningarhús followed in his footsteps. The stone houses constructed before 1870 proved their worth but were too expensive to become widespread. However, people had learned to choose suitable stones and build more cost-effective structures. Two types of stones were distinguished from the beginning: foundation stones and volcanic stones with parallel surfaces. Foundation stones referred to irregularly shaped tuff that required shaping for smooth walls but could be used sparingly in the foundations. Volcanic stones with parallel surfaces, such as columnar basalt or layered lava, occurred naturally and provided convenient building materials.

Changes to the building throughout time

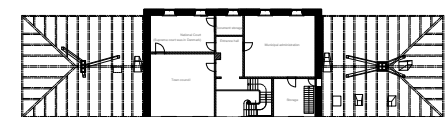
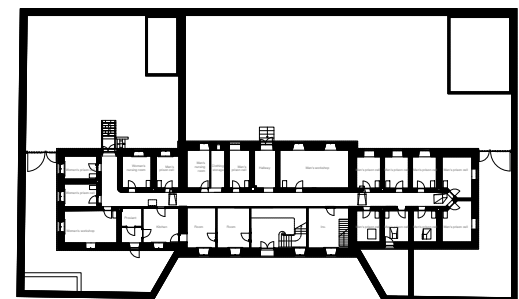
The Hegningarhús has proven to be a reliable structure, although it had long been deemed inadequate as a prison and detention facility when its use finally ceased in 2016. Various minor changes have been made over time to adapt to evolving circumstances and meet new requirements.

In 1891, there were plans to construct a stone wall around the prison yards to the north of the building, replacing the wooden fence if funds were available. The wall was intended to be 4 ½ alnar (2.8 m) high, with a thickness of one aln (0.63 m) at the bottom and half an aln at the top. However, it took another two years for this plan to be executed. Timber fencing remained around the yards to the east and west, reaching up to the gate pillars. Eventually, this fence was also torn down around 1897, and a stone wall, 2.2 m high, was erected in its place.²⁶ Later on, these stone walls were raised with concrete, with the northern yard wall reaching a height of 4 m. The exact timing of this modification is unclear, but in 1959, the police expressed concerns that



1872

Original plan drawings. The town council and National Court were on the 1st floor, in the rooms towards north. The entrance hall was bigger than it is now. The prison yard was originally divided into a men and women section, with outhouses. The building was heated with ovens that burned mostly peat. The oven was filled with it from the hallways. The walls around the building were made of wood.



1893-97

Wooden fence ripped down and stone walls put up. 2,8m in height, and sometimes later on heightened (after 1959 at least). New window in south-west corner where the women's workshop was originally. New doors on the south side of the east wing where it was once a prison cell with a ceiling window. Originally there had been small cast iron windows in all the prison cells but the women's cells got new windows that were bigger wooden windows, with 6 window panes, and prison bars. A new clothing storage was added to the room that was the men's nursing room with a small window to the south facade.

the wall was too low and insufficiently secure.

In 1948, the southwest corner of the prison yard was cut off due to construction work on Bergstaðastræti. The wall to the west of the building was torn down and reconstructed along new property boundaries.

A new window was added to the south side of the western wing around the turn of the century, where the women's workshop was originally located. Doors were also installed on the south side of the eastern wing, which previously housed a cellblock with roof windows. The original small windows made of cast iron were present on all women's cellblocks but were modified. They were enlarged and replaced with six-pane wooden windows with sashes.

The attic space above the infirmary was converted into a storage room, and a small window was added to its north side.

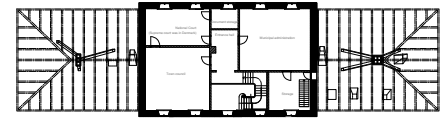
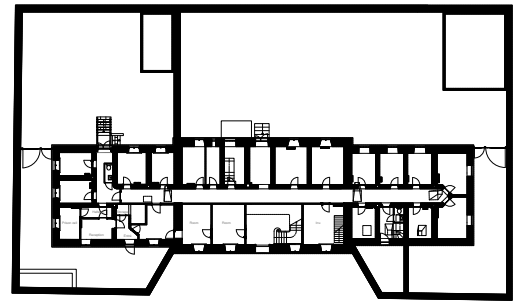
In 1911, a central heating system was installed in the building, replacing the original stoves that had mostly burned down. One cellblock in the middle section of the building was converted into a boiler room, lowering the floor by nearly 2 meters to accommodate the heating equipment. An adjacent coal storage room was excavated, with its floor at the same level as the boiler room. Doors were installed in between, and a concrete, horizontally laid roof covered the coal storage, with a hatch for loading the coal from above.

Likely, the chimney of the eastern wing had been torn down when the boiler room was repurposed, and it's probable that the chimney of the central part of the building was also demolished down to the high ceiling and reconstructed in a different design. Previously, it inclined somewhat on the high ceiling and protruded from the middle of the roof.

Now it was reconstructed vertically and emerged to the west and north of the central building. The chimney of the western wing was not removed until 1950-60.

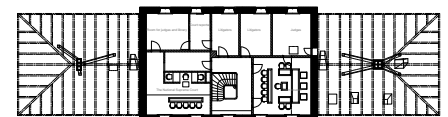
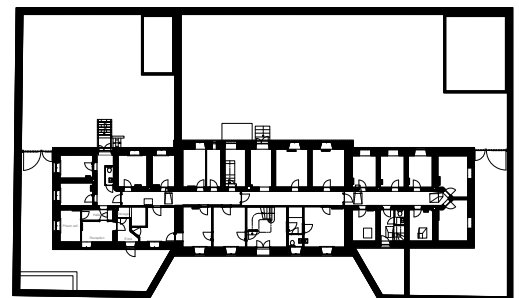
The men's workshop was divided into two parts, both used as cell blocks. The women's workshop was also divided into two sections, one used as a cell block, and the other to receive visitors.

The most significant change occurred around 1920 when the newly established Supreme Court of Iceland was given a place in the Hegningarhús. The room arrangement on the upper floor was rearranged, and a new main staircase replaced the original one. The staircase was turned 180 degrees and made smaller in size. The old staircase had two landings, while the new one had none. The secondary door on both floors was reduced by one window width.



1911

Central heating was added to the building in 1911, instead of the peat driven ovens. One of the prison cells in the middle of the south side was turned into a furnace room. The floor was lowered about 2 meters in that room to fit the central boiler. Outside the room, against the north facade, was built a coal storage that was dug down so that its floor matched the height of the furnace room. There was made a door in between. The men's workshop was divided into two parts that became prison cells. The women's workshop was also divided into two parts, one became a prison cell while the other became a visitation room



1920

The room divisions on the 1st floor changed tremendously when the newly established National Supreme Court moved in. The entré hall got smaller on both floors and a new staircase came instead of the old one, and it was rotated by 90 degrees. The south windows on the 1st floor were enlarged.

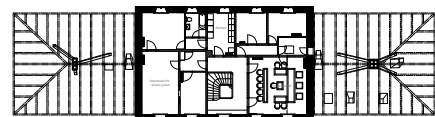
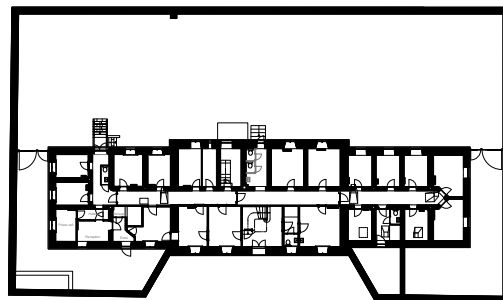
In the western part of the upper floor, the municipal council chamber had been on the right side, with the Supreme Court in a smaller room to the south. Now, the municipal council chamber, which was the largest room in the building, was handed over to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court judges occupied the previous position of the municipal court.

Description of the Supreme Court premises:

Guðjón Samúelsson, the state architect, made a drawing of the layout of the Supreme Court building. The courtroom was located on the southern side with windows facing Skólavörðustígur, and on the northern side, there were three small rooms. To the west was the judges' area, which also served as a library. Next was the room of the court clerk, and to the east was the room of the prosecutor. The courtroom was divided by delicate wrought-iron work, railings, which defined the area of the judge. The judges sat at a long table under the southern wall, facing away from it. The chairs of the judges were large with carved embellishments. To the west of the courtroom, there was a corridor leading from the judges' area to the judges' seats. In front of the judges' table, there were three podiums. The westernmost podium was intended for district judges, in the middle was the podium of the prosecutor with two chairs, and facing the judges was a narrow, tall table where the prosecutors stood when presenting their cases. Next was the podium intended for the defendant, and finally, the podium of the court clerk. All the podiums had gates and sides. The main entrance of the courtroom was on its eastern side, and there was a room for 10-12 people in seats who could observe the court proceedings.¹⁹

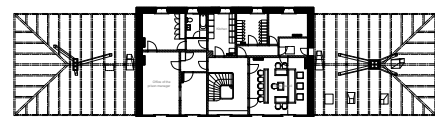
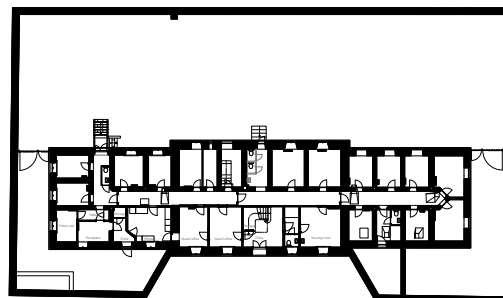
The City Council office was originally located in the northern part of the eastern wing, while a large storage room was situated to the south, and there was a staircase leading from a similarly sized room on the ground floor. Now, the storage room on the upper floor was expanded by a third at the expense of the foyer, and it was given a new space for the city council. This transformation also involved enlarging the windows on the upper floor's southern side. They were significantly raised. The stone arch above the windows was removed and rebuilt slightly higher. This can be seen, among other things, by comparing photographs before and after the change. In 1954, the Supreme Court was relocated to a new building on Lindargata, and an apartment was set up for the caretaker of the house where the Supreme Court had previously been. Later, the apartment was converted into the office of the prison warden.

In 1930, significant improvements were made to the Supreme Court building when Tryggvi Þórhallsson's government took over from Jón Þorláksson's ministry, and Jónas Jónsson from Hrifla became the Minister of Justice. He had decided to convert the Little-Hraun hospital building into a prison or workhouse. Prison-related matters became a political issue for a while, and



1954

After the National Supreme Court moved into a new building on Lindargata in 1954 an apartment for a prison guard was made on the 1st floor and later it was used as an office for the prison.



1973-8

new closets on 1st floor. Change in room layout in west corner of ground floor. Around 1960 the roof tiles were replaced. The main building got new roof tiles that were more square than the original tongue shaped tiles, while the wings got corrugated iron.

Tíminn newspaper published a heavily biased discussion about the house shedding a negative light on it.

Around 1960, the roofing tiles were removed from the side wings, and corrugated iron sheets were installed in their place. All the roof windows, which were originally made of curved cast iron with ornate frames, have been replaced with zinc-coated iron windows in a rectangular shape. The cast iron gutters and downspouts were replaced with thin zinc-coated iron ones. The roofing tiles of the central section have been partially renewed with diamond-shaped slate tiles instead of the original rectangular ones.

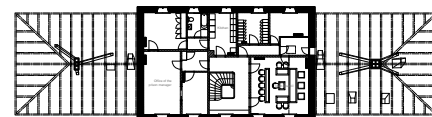
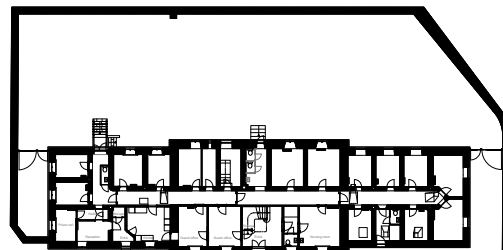
The windows of the cell blocks were all made of small panes of cast iron. Only one such window remains in the building, in the central block. Instead, windows made of diamond-shaped profiled iron were installed. The window frames on the ground floor to the south and the upper floor to the north are likely original. The windows on the southern side of the upper floor date back to around 1920.

Originally, there was timber flooring on the ground floor, but now there is mostly concrete flooring.

Shortly after 1960, renovations were carried out on Skólavörðustígur. The pedestrian walkway alongside the Supreme Court was paved with concrete slabs and raised in height, reaching up to a considerable level above the base of the building's southeast corner. This, of course, affected the appearance of the house and caused damage to the walls and floors inside. In 2002, Skólavörðustígur was redesigned, and the pedestrian walkway was adjusted to better suit the building and lowered. Around the same time, the walls of the prison yard that extended south of the side wings were demolished.

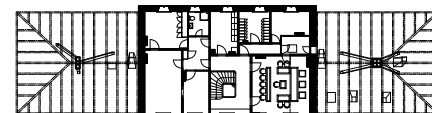
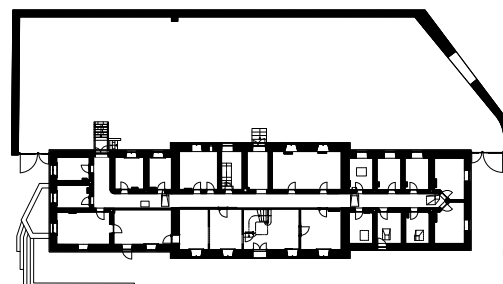
Protection of the building

Around 1960, there were plans to extend Grettisgata in Reykjavik and connect it to Amtmannsstígur to improve traffic flow. Some suggested clearing a path through the city center, but it would require demolishing buildings, including the prison building. Different ideas were proposed, such as relocating or rebuilding the building. Eventually, in 1978, the building was protected under heritage conservation laws. The protection covered the exterior of the building and its entrance with stairs.⁸



2002

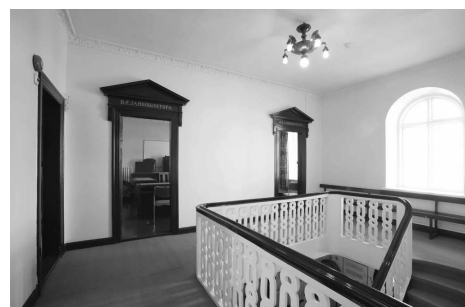
Skólavörðustígurinn was redesigned and in that connection the garden walls around the wings ripped down.



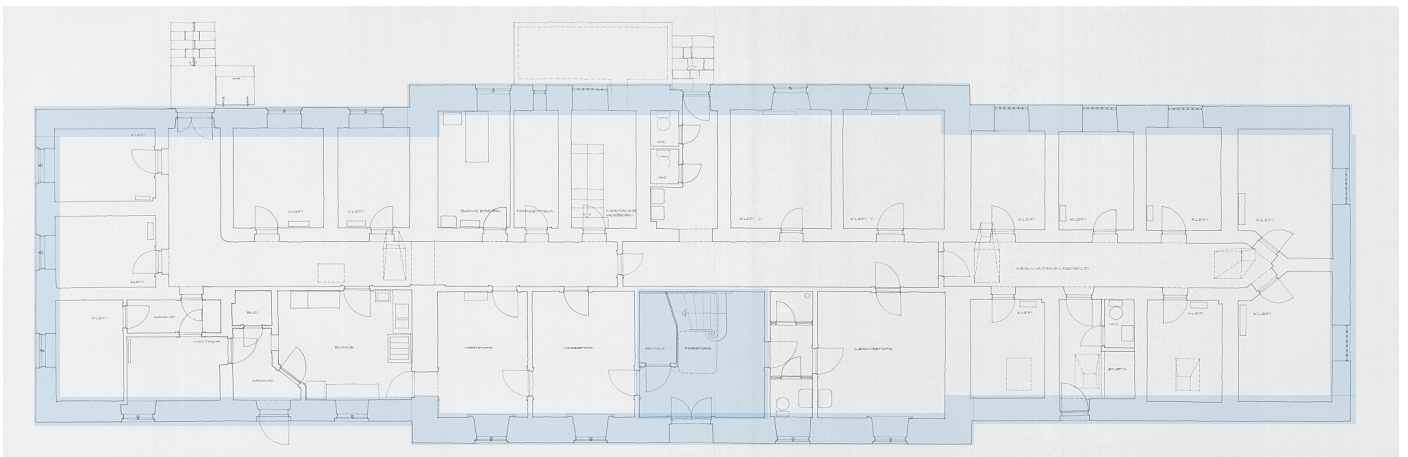
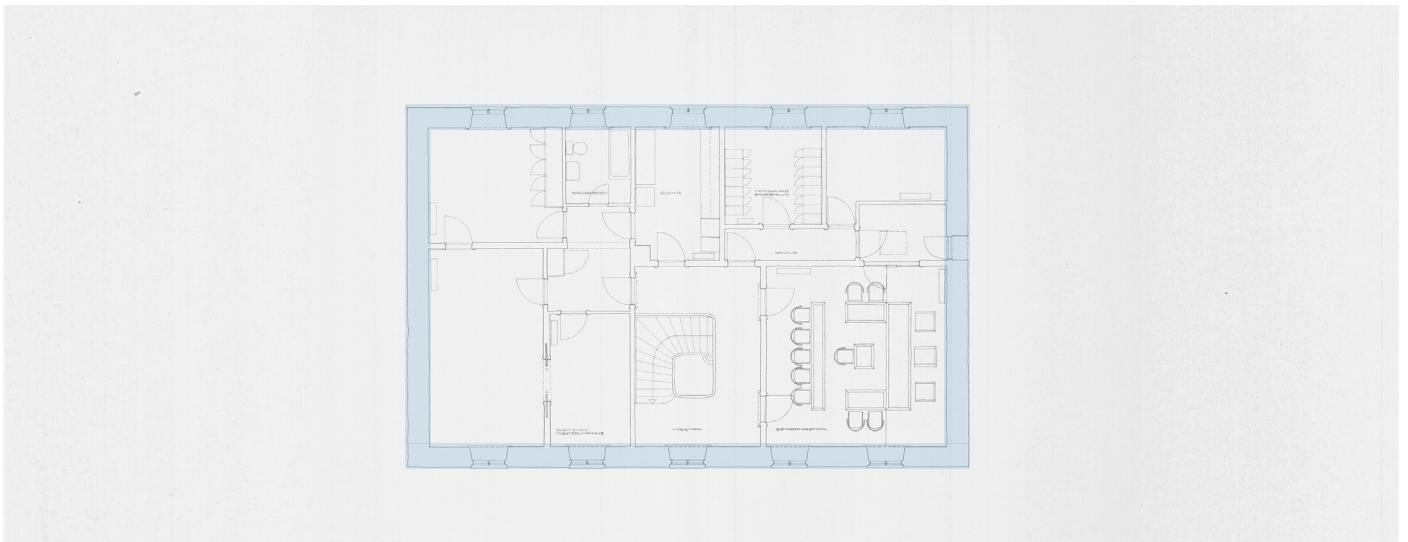
2023

The building is being restored after many decades of negligence. The windows, stone walls and chimneys are being restored. New outdoor stairs were built towards the street. The future usage of the building is uncertain.

Plandrawings through time (my own drawings).



The hall on the upper floor (Iceland's National Archives).



Drawings from 1983, The blue markings mark the parts of the building that is protected (Reykjavik's Archives).

Value statement (Værdisætning)

Value statement (værdisætning)

The building is one of the city's most notable structures, serving as Iceland's oldest prison building. It stands as a prominent landmark in downtown Reykjavík and holds undeniable historical value. The building is impressive, symbolizing justice and protection. The visible Icelandic stones in its walls and stone arches over the windows are incredibly beautiful and unique as construction materials.

Transfirmation attitude (Transformations holding)

The attitude towards transformation is to effectively incorporate a new function into the building while also respecting its preservation, history, and location, so that the historical monument does not lose its cultural and historical value.

Recommendations

- Restoration work on the building is underway, which will fix the current deterioration of the building. For my project I should further examine exactly what work has been done and take it into account when working on my proposals for transformation.
- The transformation should be done in a way that does not damage the protected parts of the building in any way and any additions should be non-permanent so that the building can one day return to its original state. The parts that need to be removed, for example, prison doors or original internal stone walls, should be stored so that they are not damaged, for example in the national museum or in the basement.
- The qualities of the building must be highlighted in a way that fits well with the future function.
- Possible addition/extension must harmonize with the existing building.

Sustainability strategy

It is most sustainable to use the material that is present locally and add as little new material as possible. If new material is to be added, then an effort must be made to find locally produced materials or recycled materials. The materials must also contribute to a healthy and safe indoor environment. Energy improvements should be considered to reduce energy consumption. What needs to be done depends on the suitability of the buildings for after-insulation, and the consideration of Iceland's green geothermal energy and the current energy crisis in Iceland due to the rapid growth of energy consumption.

Conclusion

This 150 year old prison is truly one of a kind and has great historical and architectural value that are worth preserving. The building deserves a well suited function that breathes into it new life. This building, with a rich and storied past should live on in a dignified manner, continuing to serve society.

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