

# New Justice Complex in Michigan Has it All By CN Staff

Photo credit: BKV Group



When it comes to making a complex endeavor look easy, a recently completed project in Mason Mich. may serve as example #1A for 2023.

The new 180,000-square-foot Ingham County Justice Complex consists of the 55th District Court and the Ingham County Sheriff's Office & Jail in a combined new facility on the existing Justice Complex site.

The exterior design presents a classic contemporary design, with access to daylight in each courtroom/hearing room and in all staff areas, and thoughtful spaces for staff collaboration.

The site of the courthouse was planned with optional security perimeter staff, off distances/security, secure staff parking, cameras, lighting, and low landscape plantings applying CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.

Granger Construction partnered with BKV Group to construct the new Ingham County Justice Complex to house the jail along with a Sheriff's Office and District Court. The 99,000-square-foot, 416-bed jail includes 55 special high observation and mental health beds, two recreational rooms, a GED classroom and testing area, five multi-purpose meeting spaces, 22 interview rooms, an intake center with Sallyport, a special medical/mental health clinic as well as a kitchen, laundry room, inmate property storage and a separate release area.

The 40,000-square-foot Sheriff's Office features law enforcement offices, an emergency operations center, two training rooms, evidence storage, a shooting range and other support spaces. The 29,000 square foot 55th District Court includes two courtrooms, one Magistrate courtroom, four holding cells, eight probation offices and a jury assembly room.

Key partners in the project included SteelCell of North America, who designed and fabricated prefabricated cells at their production plant and Pauly Jail Building Company, who installed the prefabricated steel cells in about 12 days.

Correctional News touched base with BKV Group Justice Practice Leader and Partner Henry Pittner for his thoughtful insights on the intriguing project.

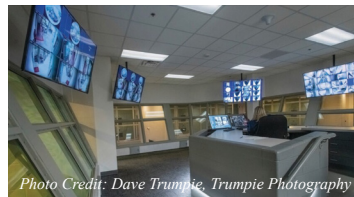


Photo Credit: Dave Trumple, Trumple Photography

## What do you think was the most intriguing challenge of the Ingham County Justice Complex and how did you approach it?

The most intriguing challenge was to develop the project on the small existing site while maintaining operations of the existing facility for the public and staff. With significant site constraints, there were several components that provided significant challenges to maintain existing operations of the Sheriff's office, jail and courthouse while constructing a new building. Challenges included relocation of the existing sanitary and water lines while maintaining full operations of the existing facility; poor soils and high water table; wayfinding and parking for the public on-site during construction; parking for the large construction team; access to the kitchen and loading area; construction layout and movement around the new building in relation to proximity to the existing building; maintaining perimeter security; and reducing the impact of noise, vibration, and dust to the existing facility during construction and to the new facility during demolition of old facility.

Our approach was to work with our close partners on the project - our client (Ingham County), stakeholder groups, and the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) - to phase the project

construction and work through potential solutions to eliminate the challenges identified. The outcome provided a building organization with a single public access point to all three functions of the building for wayfinding and security using a compact vertical building solution that took advantage of the grades within the property available for the building, parking, and stormwater detention requirements.

## What key trends in justice/corrections design do you think the new venue reflects most significantly?

**Housing Separations.** Critical to operations is the ability to separate and properly classify persons in custody in smaller groups. There are two general population housing units of about 180-people each in a total of 15 housing pods and 32 separations. The design of the housing units includes a crow's nest configuration for housing control allowing the front wall of the dayroom adjacent to the corridor to be solid, therefore each of the housing pods and separations are flexible to be male or female depending on the need. The special housing unit has a 36-bed capacity all in single cells and has a total of 10 housing pod separations grouped in 2, 3, 4 and 5 dayroom configurations. The high observation area has five single cells, and two dormitory housing units open to the staff area providing seven separations. AU totaled, there are 49 different separation opportunities throughout the building.

**Open Access to Program Spaces.** The two general population housing pods are entered from the main hallway with each having direct access to the Medical/



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Mental Health Clinic, nine multi-purpose open interview rooms, a non-contact interview room, two classrooms, and indoor-outdoor recreation program spaces on the pathway to the housing units. The concept is to allow persons in custody to move from their assigned housing unit and report to an assigned program or medical space unescorted within the unit, saving staff resources to accomplish other tasks within the unit or the jail. Persons in custody are escorted,

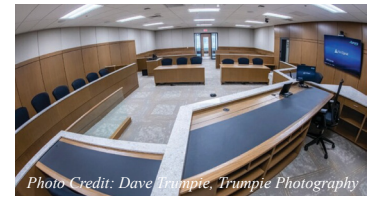


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as they leave the unit, into the main corridor and other portions of the jail.

## What key trends in justice/corrections design do you think the new venue reflects most significantly?

The balance is achieved by separating the functional flows and using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles for the facility and the natural topography to benefit security and safety, while creating a welcoming aesthetic to the public. The exterior design of the building showcases a timeless contemporary design with a high-performance rain-screen envelope that highlights the public spaces of the courthouse, jail entrance, Sheriff's office and Sheriff's training area. A memorial to the fallen is featured as a processional from the central plaza creating a space for contemplation and respect.

Security is achieved through the use of one public parking area leading to a courtyard that identifies public access to the Sheriff's office, jail and courthouse. The CPTED principles of natural surveillance, natural access control, territoriality, and maintenance and management have been incorporated in the design to provide appropriate but unobtrusive security to the public while creating clear separations between activities, outstanding wayfinding, and a comfortable feeling for the public approaching the building. The public side of the building includes having one public parking lot with sidewalks leading to a central exterior plaza that can be seen from staff areas and security (natural surveillance), unobstructive sightlines from the building entrances to the parking and bus drop-off zone (natural access control), and bollards at the handicap parking areas.

Staff security is handled by the orientation of the building and placing staff parking and entrances on the opposite side of the building from the public. The nonpublic portion of the site is secured with a fence and gates, allowing privacy for the operations and safety of the staff.



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