

New Custody Standards set in Scotland

On the 3rd of August 2009 a new up-graded custody suite went into service at Fraserburgh in Scotland. It was formally opened by Assistant Chief Constable Colin Menzies and caused a stir in the local press, as well as attracting visits by senior officers from numerous other forces including south of the border. All have praised the up-graded suite and the Grampian force is especially enthusiastic. The up-grade is part of a force-wide strategy to redevelop a number of 'secondary' custody suites into 'primary' ones, so it was not surprising that interested parties gathered.

The subject of all this high praise is a 10-cell Wernick Buildings' permanent modular extension to the existing five cell custody suite at Fraserburgh Police Station. The modular cells were installed in just 5 days, thus answering the exasperating question of how to develop safe, modern facilities, when time and space are critical factors. Our Publisher has previously seen Wernick install their PCflex system at Newbury in Berkshire, where Thames Valley Police solved their temporary custody problems by hiring an eight cell relocatable suite. His pithy comment on returning to the office was, 'They know what they are doing and they don't hang about'.

Basically, after the design is drawn to the satisfaction of the client, the modules are manufactured and fully fitted out in the South Wales factory. When 90% finished, they arrive on a low-loader and are craned very accurately into the space assigned to them. Finishing and commissioning of the pre-installed essential services like CCTV, cell call and affray alarms follow and the new building is finished in only five days. This procedure has been well practiced and is carried-out with 'military precision' by an experienced team.

The modules used at Fraserburgh were to the well proven Lambeth cell design. Wernick, who are ever watchful for potential improvements, redesigned the lavatory because the standard toilet projecting out from the wall has a number of faults. For instance, the gap between the WC pan and the side wall is seen as a potential hazard. Andy King was sure a snug fitting stainless steel corner toilet would do the job far better, but having searched the market without success, he set about designing his own and had the innovative new design made exclusively for Wernick. The new loo fits neatly into a corner, is relatively small but comfortable enough for a large person. We understand that the Home Office has expressed a preference for the use of corner toilets in new suites and are looking to write it into the new Custody Design Guide, so keeping the company at the forefront of



Asst. Chief Constable Colin Menzies with Andy King

custody design.

Another new and unique feature is the integrated shoe locker. Andy King was dissatisfied with current shoe locker solutions, which are built into the top of the service duct door, thus constraining their size and operation. A new door was designed with a much larger and more practical shoe locker.

He divided the main duct door into two sections, 70% at the top, 30% below. There is then a shelf within the service duct with sides and back but no top, which created a shoe locker 700mm wide by 400mm deep; big enough to take the largest boot. As a bonus the open top allows any footwear odour to be contained within the service duct and sucked



Exterior of Fraserburgh Suite



Interior of Fraserburgh Suite



Corner Toilet - Fraserburgh Cell

out by the cell ventilation system, which is also cleverly designed. It includes a heat recovery system, which constantly monitors the CO₂ levels within the building and pre-heats any newly introduced air to help reduce energy costs.

In view of the keen interest shown in Scotland, it may be of interest to people south of the border to note Wernick's work in progress. They are currently manufacturing another hire building, similar to the Newbury eight cell custody suite, but this £500k building is of a much higher specification with CCTV in every cell and a range of new innovative features. It is to be installed at Rugby Police Station on the 27th October and opens less than a week later on the 3rd November. This building has already generated a great deal of interest, with

the Home Office Custody Strategy Group, comprising key personnel from twelve police forces, visiting the South Wales factory to inspect the building during its six week manufacturing period.

A word or two from the customer might be worth adding! This is from Inspector Colin Christie, Inspector of Custody Strategy Group, Grampian Police, who was the project officer for the Fraserburgh job. In a letter to our Editor he said, 'This facility is the first of its kind in Scotland and as an experienced custody officer I am really pleased and firmly believe this is the way forward for all custody needs. The facility is certainly the best in our Force and I strongly believe may be the best in Scotland, but I suppose I would say that!!'. With this new building the opportunity arose to

review all our procedures, policies and staffing and thus completely overhaul the entire system. We now believe we are where we need to be and think the whole project worthwhile and that our experience may be of benefit to others.'

At that point he closed the letter to our Editor with kind regards and signed off. The phrase, 'our experience may be of benefit to others', sounds like an invitation to me. I wonder if Warwickshire Police knows how much attention their new building at Rugby is going to attract.

For more information on these products, please contact: Andy King at Wernick Buildings Ltd. Tel: 01792 321222 secure@wernick.co.uk