

Pudu Prison a prominent landmark in the city



COMMUNITY

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THE 113-year-old Pudu Prison in Jalan Hang Tuah, Kuala Lumpur, is a prominent landmark in the nation's capital city.

The prison, which was built in 1895 by the British colonial administration, had stood the test of time and gone through the crucial eras of the English, Japanese and Emergency in the country.

The prison was built at the then princely sum of \$138,000. Its first governor was Lt-Kol J.A.B. Ellen.

Also known as Pudoh Gaol, most of its building materials were imported from India and Britain.

Its design of an X (cruciform) was copied from the Kandy Prison in Bogambia, Africa. It originally had 240 cells on three floors, but more cells were added over the years.

Its mass kitchen, bathrooms, administrative office, hospital and training centre are located outside the main X-building structure.

The prison's gruesome condemned cell is located at block D where those on death row were prepped before being hanged at the execution room in the same block. Between 1960 and 1993, 180 convicts were hanged there.



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One of the infamous prisoners who served his time at the prison was armed gang leader Bota who was executed by hanging in June 1981.

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A famous saga that took place at the prison was when inmate Jimmy Chua and six other inmates took hostage of Dr Radzi Jaffar and Dr Abdul Aziz in 1985.

When the prison was first opened in 1895, it could only accommodate 600 prisoners but, since 1960, the number has increased gradually.

More prisons cells were added but the number was still insufficient.

In 1985, the prison recorded its highest number of inmates at any one time with 6,550.

This forced the prison authorities to arrange sleeping shifts for the prisoners.

A prominent feature of the prison is the mural painting on its outer walls done by former inmate Khong Yen Chong in the early 1980s.

Stretching out to more than 260m long, the mural used up nearly 2,000 litres of paint.

The painting earned Khong the Guinness Stout Effort Award for “outstanding achievement in his world record work of art”.

The historical prison was closed on Nov 1, 1996, and the land taken over by the Urban Planning Authority (UDA) for development.

All the inmates were then moved to the new Sungai Buloh prison built by the UDA.

In 1997, the Pudu prison was then opened for a short while for public tours of its cells and viewing of its facilities.

Today, a section of the prison building is used as the Jalan Hang Tuah police station.

It is also a detention centre for remanded suspects in the Cheras, Sentul, Dang Wangi and Brickfield districts.

The prison is also used to conduct counselling programmes for problem children with co-operation from the prisons department and the education department.

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