

BELOVED

THE
LIFE
OF
A
FAMILY
IN
THE
CITY
OF
NEW
YORK



**Beloved: The Architectural Tectonics of
Faith-Based Relationships**

By: Tyler Blanton

Final Study - M.ARCH Second Year

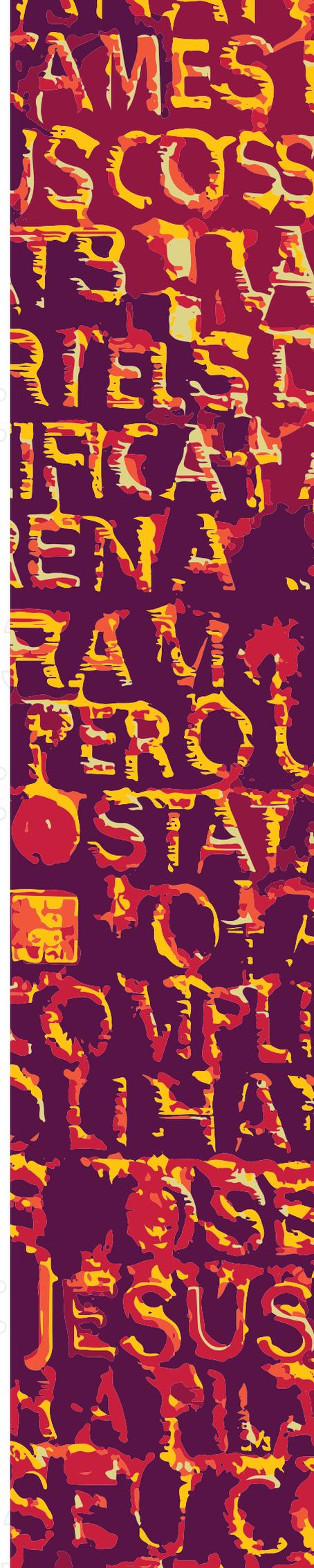
Texas A&M University - Department of Architecture

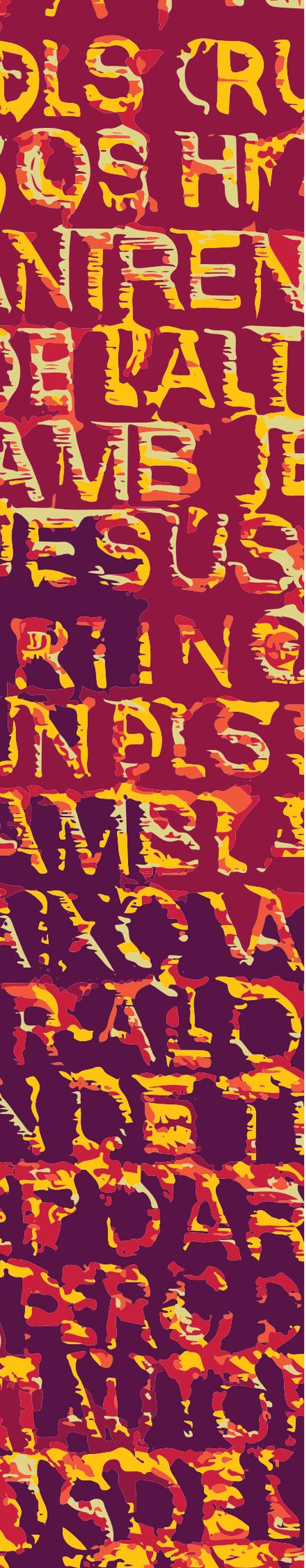
To God, my family, and Camilla...

thank you.

The accomplishments I have experienced over these past six years were made possible by your love and support. Thank you to my committee, studio professor, and my peers for sharing this past year with me. Thank you Father Above for the many opportunities You have bestowed on my life. My gratitude is neverending.

project contributors





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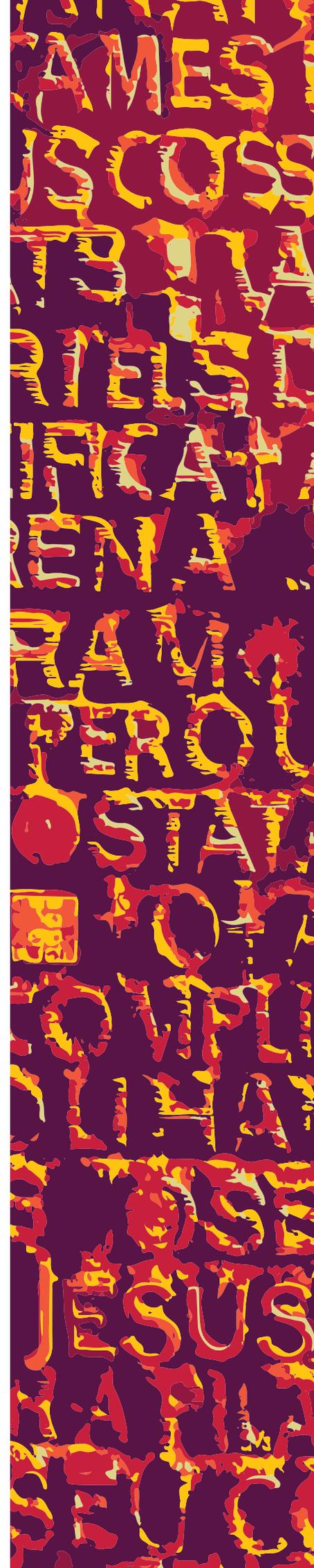
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The Architectural Tectonics of Faith-Based Relationships

In the beginning, Christ ordained the church to be a people who endure together under one common belief in the sovereignty of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It was God's intent for people to be intimately connected to Him via a network of spiritually rich relationships amongst each other (1 John 1:7; Ephesians 4:2-6). Today, faith is often generalized as a private, isolated endeavor to relate oneself towards a favorable morality defined by religious doctrine. Christianity is not a private matter; however, it is a personal one (Anyabwile, T. M. (2008). Secular forces have seeped into the practice of communities of faith, which has caused spiritual immaturity. Too often do faith-based relationships fail to reach the depth of which they are called because they develop in places designed to congregate people without nurturing the physical and spiritual need of interpersonal intimacy. Furthermore, "it is the Gospel that saves... (Romans 1:16), and it is the gospel that will sustain and motivate[the church] in the their daily lives (Anyabwile, T. M. (2008). The built manifestation of faith-based relationships should reflect that simple idea. The Church, as a group of people who account for each other's well-being: physical, mental, and spiritual: has an inherent obligation to make itself available to the community as people driven by their convictions, acting on their intentions as commonly as they state them.





Imperfection

- 1) A fault, blemish, or undesirable feature
- 2) The state of being faulty or incomplete.

Imperfection is a trait we all share. In fact, imperfection is the only way the church could have ever existed in the first place. For Christians, limitations, whether marked by lack of talent, character, or strength, are actually things to rejoice in. It is in the realization of one's limits that there manifests a need for loving relationships. While many may be hesitant to acknowledge their weaknesses, being in community with people that share a common understanding of the foundational imperfection of humanity serves as a bonding agent that allows them to build honest relationships upon humility and self-sacrifice. Where one may experience weakness, a "strand of three chords is not easily broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Humans were designed with the need to congregate and connect with one another; they have a biological predisposition to seek meaningful relationships.

It's humorous sometimes to think that the entire Bible could be summed up into two simple commands: "love God with all your heart, soul, and strength... and love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). The duality in that statement is so pointed; how many people today could say that they have perfected the practice of either one? How many could say they even love themselves perfectly? The Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31), is poised to appease people's need to be built up, loved, and engaged in meaningful ways via the sharing of love and faith in Christ. It is no wonder after studying the Bible why so many find solace within its' bindings. They mirror themselves within the pages, and bear witness to their reflections of dependency seen in the heroes of the Gospels. Through reading about Paul, Luke, Mary, Rachel, or David they are comforted by the inherent consistency of God's Grace. As broken individuals, the church thrives on hope vested in the grace of God.

This project explores how the gospels sustain within themselves the potential to manifest built environments, which are equipped to aid in the formation of quality relationships amongst church-goers and their immediate community. The historical context of traditional church design will provide a basis of information to allow for the comparison between scripture and humanity's traditional presentation of faith-based architecture. Architecture wields the capacity to answer the needs of church communities due to its shared values of truth, honor, and humanity. These values and how they are utilized will be further expounded upon later in the text. For now, the object of the next sections will be to distinguish the two main camps of the modern-day church: the church as community and the church as institution.

THE CHURCH consists of **ALL** who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation and is the spiritual body of Christ. This includes all the redeemed of the ages, believers from among all peoples from **every tribe, tongue, and nation.**

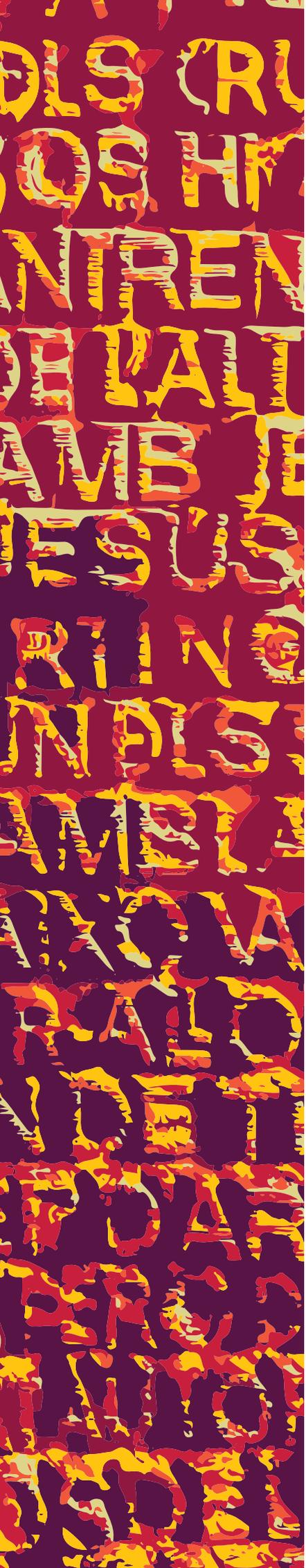
The primary purpose of the Church is to worship God and glorify Him by building up believers and effectively **reaching the world with the gospel of Christ.**

We believe that Christ is the King, the High Priest, and a Holy Prophet of the church (Acts 3:22-23; Hebrews 4:14; 8:1). God ordained the ministry of the local church to include taking the gospel of **Jesus Christ to a lost world** and thereby accomplish His redemptive purposes among all peoples.

The local congregation is a **gathering of believers** who are associated by the New Covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Spirit; observe the ordinances of Christ; are governed by His laws; and exercise the gifts, rights, and privileges within them **by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit.**

Matthew, chapter 16, lays the foundation for the Christian Church. There is doctrinal discourse around this text between Catholicism and Protestantism. While, this discourse does not disqualify either from salvation, the split does show us a clear distinction in how the church has become both institution and community. To reestablish community hierarchically over institution addressing what manifested the church in the first place is of paramount importance. Matthew 16 does just that. This encounter between Jesus and Simon Peter, demonstrates saving grace through the profession and acceptance that Christ is God manifest in human form on Earth, present to be the perfect sacrifice to save humanity from condemnation. The belief in this truth, amongst others, constitutes what the church is in essence; a people bound by a common faith in Jesus Christ.

The Church is a people. People with complex and vivid identities. People with dreams... with fears... with doubts... When one looks at the church, not as a place, but as an opportunity for people to find peace, architecture wields the capacity to foster a place of tranquility. When they see the church as an opportunity to form lasting connections, architecture wields the capacity to relegate space which allows individuals to feel comfortable while they are positioned in vulnerability. The church is a conduit from which God's love is shown and shared. Extant of Christian groups is a vertical and horizontal duality, meaning that the vertical relationship with God is inseparable from the horizontal relationship with one's fellow man. In the case of Declaration Church, the architectural responses are a directed effort towards the nurturing of these faith-based relationships at the smallest scale. One-on-One relationships require vulnerability and trust, and the spaces where people confide in one another should anticipate those postures of vulnerability. This project breaks down the church into a scale of varied experiences. It constitutes a sharp turn from typical religious architecture in which God is to be feared to providing a vernacular conscious and scripture-centric space in which God is to be honored.



Interior of St. Peter's Basilica from the Nave. See people for scale.



The basilica's influence on Christian architecture applies an institutional order of hierarchy. It utilizes long, processional elements (nave, aisle and transept) to represent the crucifix and develop stages of faith within the church. A long journey from the entrance to the altar is representative of a Christian's life of faith to be walked in humility and perseverance. This promotes an idea that salvation is earned through good-works, which is a common misconception of Christianity and a notion not supported by the Bible.

Altar

Transept

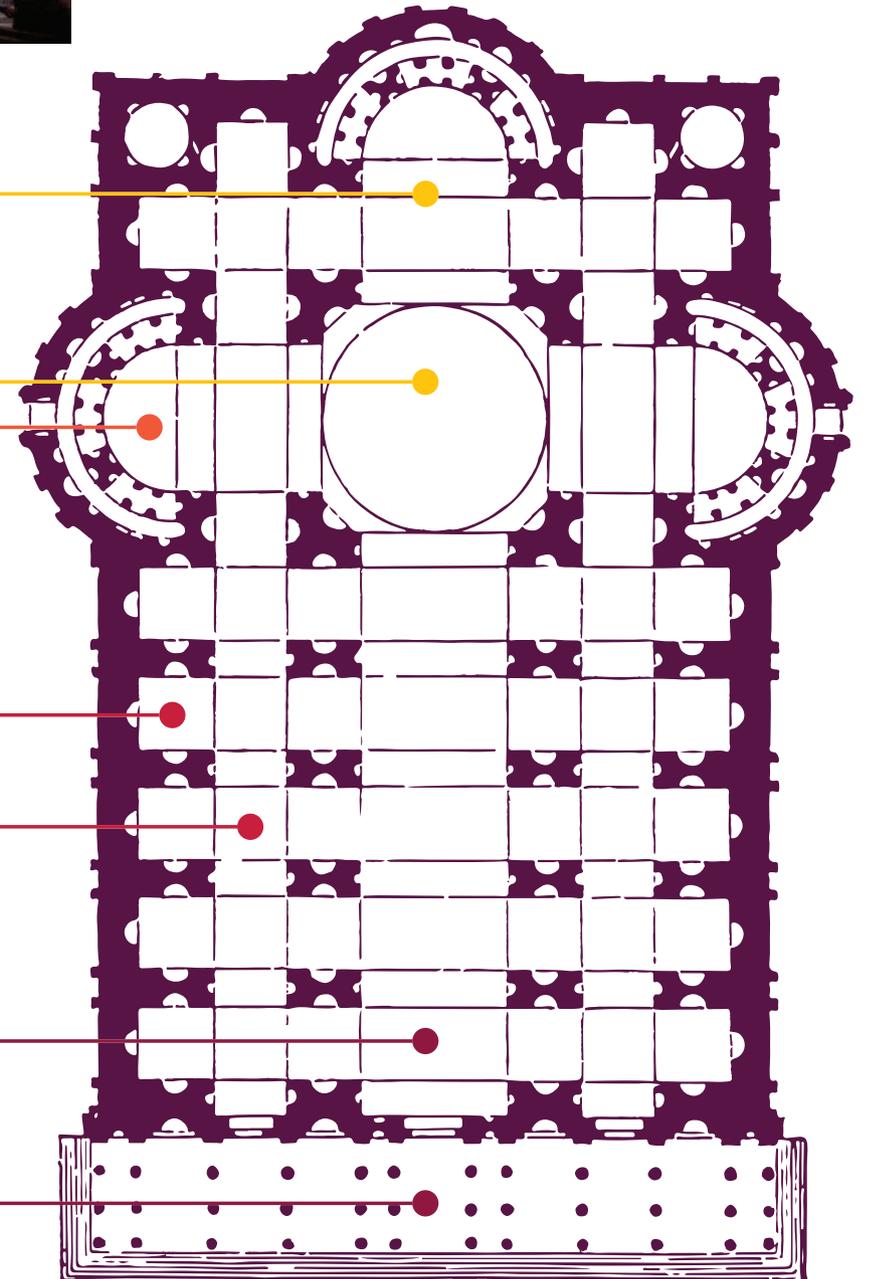
Apse

Chapel

Aisle

Nave

Narthex



St. Peter's Basilica - Floor Plan

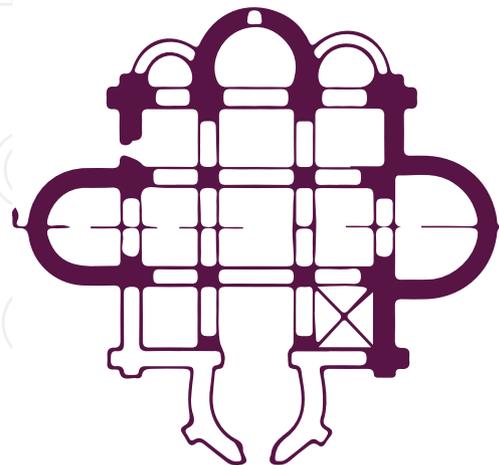
The Church as Community

According to Matthew 18: 20, Jesus says, "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." Essentially this is a foundational ideal that the church is a series of engaged relationships between God, the individual, and their social circles. The resulting vertical and horizontal engagements support the evangelistic nature of the faith; as God strengthens the bonds within one's faith community, one is called to share the joy of their faith and love with others. As iron sharpens iron, so does one man sharpen another (Proverbs 27:17). For almost three centuries after Jesus' death and resurrection, the early Christian Church was subject to "official persecution" and forced to evangelize via, "underground meetings" and secret services, all the while sharpening each other's faith (Moffett, M., Fazio, M. W., & Wodehouse, L. (2004). Christians across the Empire spread this faith despite the danger it put them in. The forcible pressure put on Christians in this time resulted in the galvanization of those practicing the religion; individuals who often were imprisoned or killed for their beliefs. The humble beginnings of Christ and His followers speak volumes for how the church should approach erecting houses of worship.

Oratory:

A small chapel, especially for private worship

An Oratory is a small room meant for individual or group prayer. Today it is more commonly referred to as a chapel. These typologies emphasize minimalist expressions to create tranquil spaces in which one may engage deeply with the divine. Architects who design these spaces use basic architectural toolkits to unburden individuals and prepare them to encounter the divine. They do so with honest materials, appropriate scale, and introduction of natural light. Using doctrine to specifically address each of these allows the designer to distance themselves from feelings and root the experience in truth derivative of the faith itself, which makes the space a reflection of the doctrine it has emerged from. What is so powerful about chapels is it provides the ability for one to become unburdened. As Peter Zumthor would say, they are "places of reflection; a space to breathe."

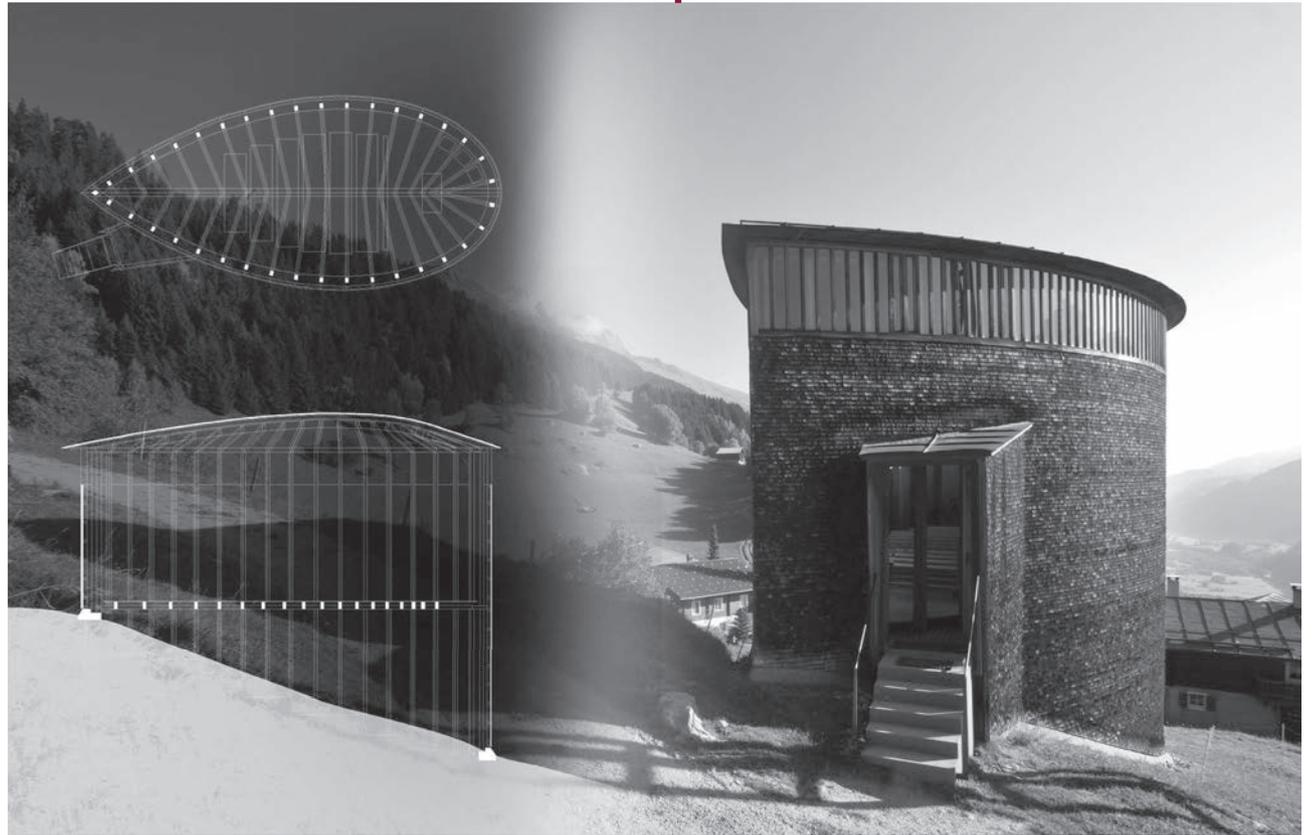


The Oratory of Theodulf of Orleans



Saint Benedict Chapel: Peter Zumthor

The chapel contrasts values represented in the basilica by using human scale, natural materiality, and the warmth of natural light to emphasize the worshiper's experience. It allows the space to act as an intimate setting for prayer, song, and small group gatherings, which emphasizes the participatory role Christians are commanded to have in one another's life-long walk of faith.



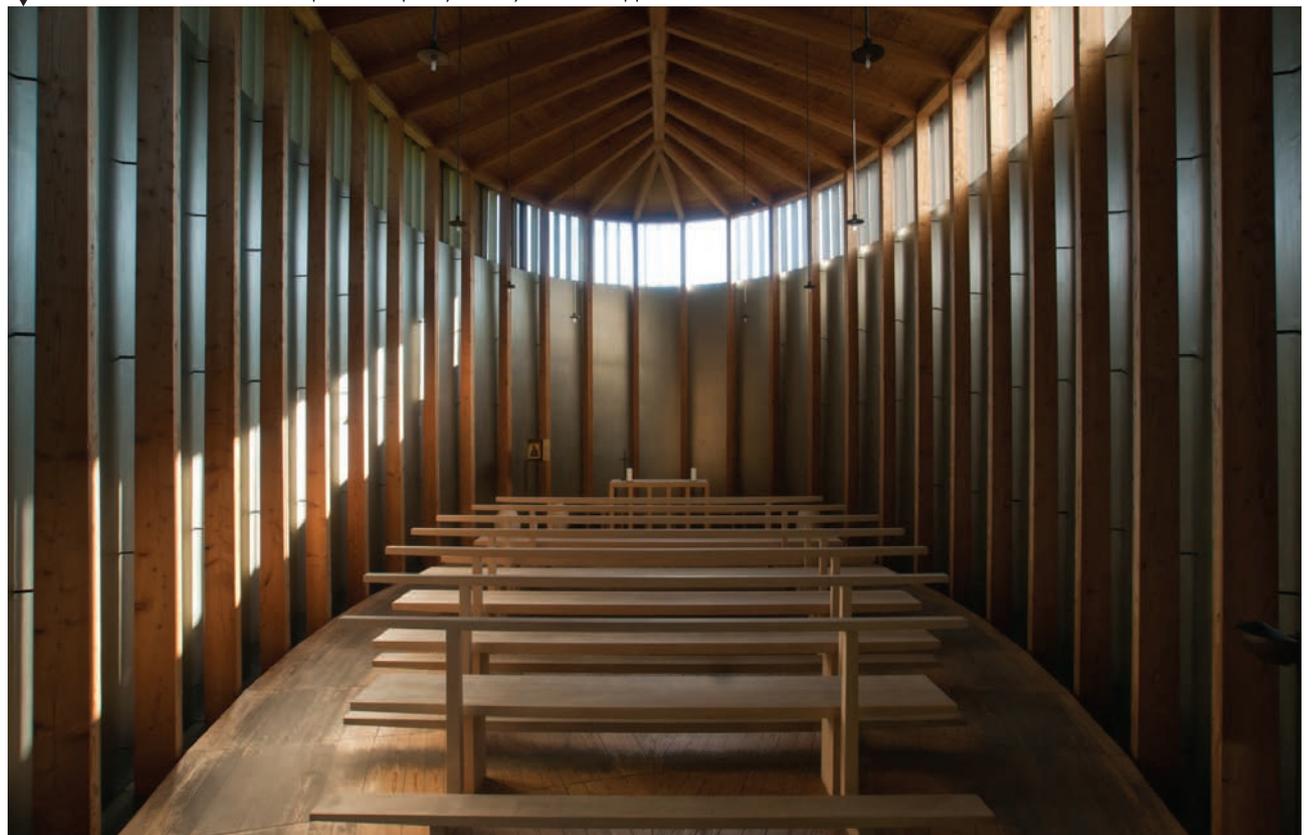
▲ Saint Benedict Chapel - Sumvitg, Switzerland. Completed 1988.

These characteristics of space and architecture are the primary vehicles we will use to produce the character of Declaration Church; a lively, young, community-driven, and Gospel-centered ministry.

Materials: Wood, Glass, Brick

"...The design was inspired but the image of the Mother Church: security, softness, dignity, composure, concentration; a place of reflection, space to breathe."
- Peter Zumthor

▼ Interior of Saint Benedict Chapel - Occupancy: twenty-one worshippers







declaration church

Declaration Church is a five-year-old ministry in the BCS area. Currently, they rent space from Alder's Gate Methodist Church, off of Highway 6, on Sunday evenings. It is a long-term goal of the ministry to acquire their own, permanent space. Therefore, the church and its ministry provide an invaluable source of information and hefty dose of reality for the project. They are a non-denominational church, which saw its origins reflected in the history of the church. "On January 12, 2014, a small group of people began meeting weekly in the home of Russell and Susan Gray to pursue the Lord together and gather vision for Declaration Church" (Declaration Church, 2019).



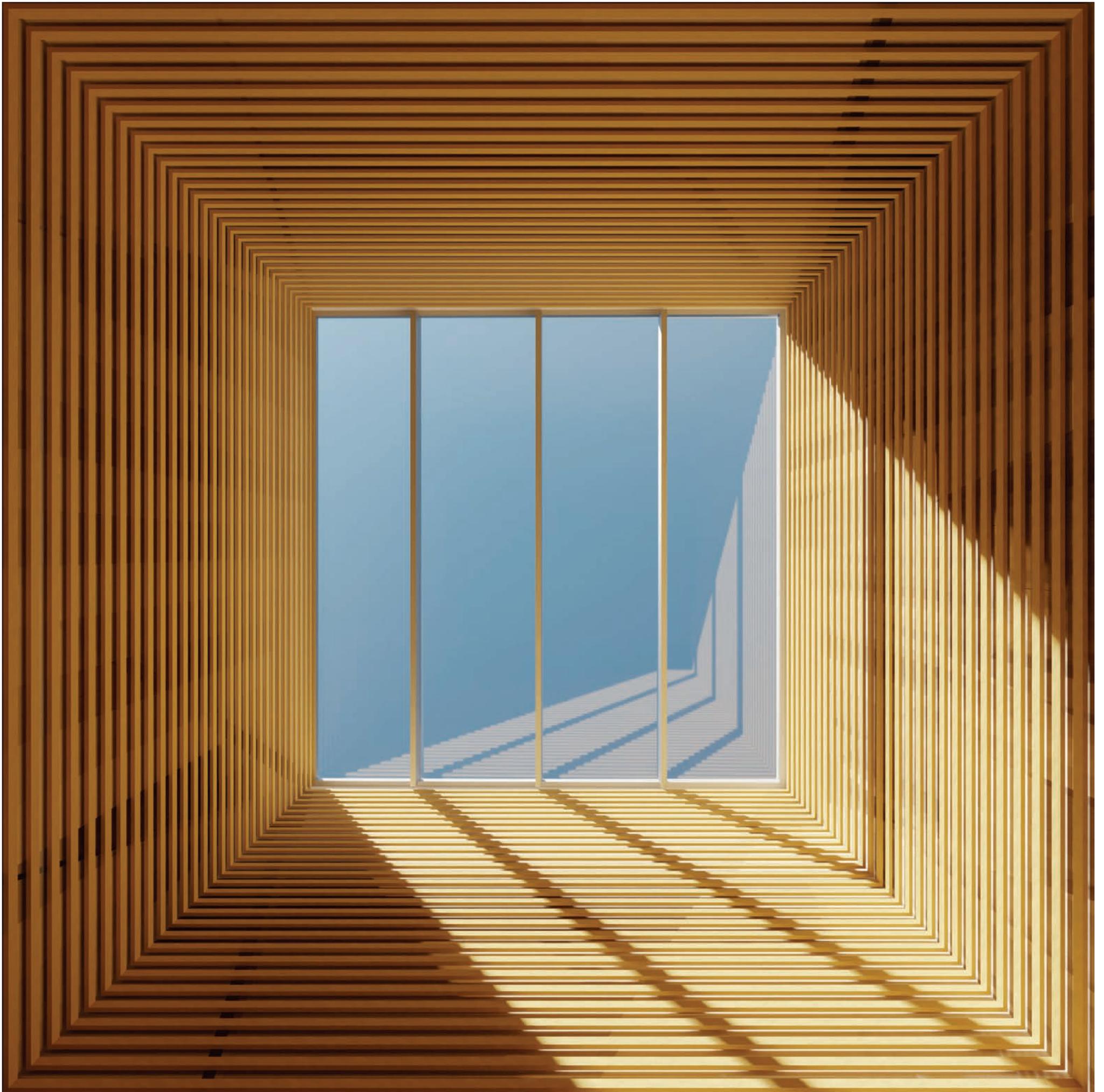
▲ Night render of the main entrance to Declaration Church facing Holleman Dr.

During discussions with the Senior Pastor, Blake Chilton, a common thread of the conversation revolved around the issue of spiritual understanding and maturity amongst the Body of Christ. To paraphrase, the inability of modern ministries to connect individuals within the larger context of their congregation is a primary issue facing the modern church. Thousands of people flow in and out of church doors every Sunday without being meaningfully engaged in long-lasting, and life-giving relationships with neither God nor one other. The proceeding project is a step towards a more productive conversation about how to mobilize the Gospel via architectural techniques to address the needs of the ministry and represent the church biblically in a local context. The following sections elucidate what can be done architecturally to facilitate these findings.



▲ Interior render of community small group towers, cafe, and youth ministry.

When selecting the site for Declaration Church, criteria were created based on the issues we find in the modern church. It is well-known that there are many denominations of the Christianity. For the most part character discrepancies have to do with common practices, such as, taking the sacraments, praying, confession, accountability etc. These differences, while providing a rich theological premise for conversation, are not the issues we are talking about. There are social issues within the modern church that clearly reflect an imperfect understanding of the faith. Some issues include, but are not limited to: lack of diversity, spiritual immaturity, and abuse of authority. If a church is to be an effective tool in reaching those in need, then the church must be an example of moral stability, welcoming to every kind of people, and, above all, safe from physical harm or abuse.



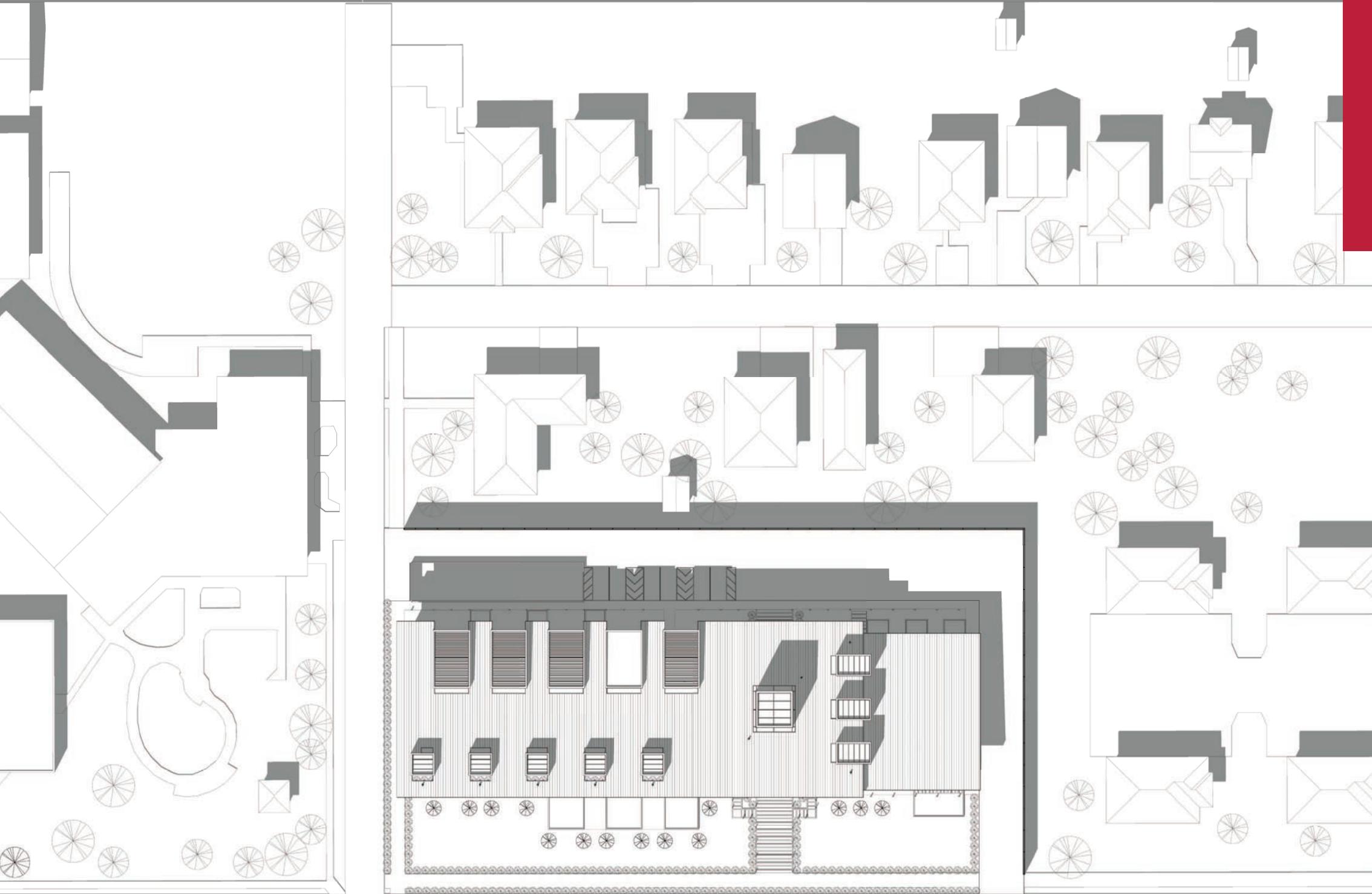
▲ Vertical perspective of inside the lobby landmark tower.





site

The BCS community is rich in diversity. This makes Bryan-College Station an area abundant with opportunities to connect people of differing cultures and backgrounds. Revelations 7:9 shows that the people of God are comprised of people from all nations, races, creeds and colors. Proposing a project that is inaccessible to one or more of these ethnicities disregards one of the cornerstone ideals of the Bible. Accessibility is a multifaceted term that spans a breadth of benefits propagated by site selection. First, being in close proximity to local entities and other community assets allows the ministry to build partnerships with the municipality and local business owners. Next, the placement of the site on a major roadway makes the ministry visible and easily recognizable from the streetscape, while rooting it in the identification of the area. Lastly, the site should be nested within the community it seeks to serve, surrounded by a diverse demographic spanning age, race, and socio-economic status.





MIXED

RESIDENT

STUDENT

Map of demographic distribution between renters, owners and students. ▲





RENT AND RESIDENT

EDWARD ST

FAIRVIEW AVE

ELEANOR ST

LINCOLN REC CENTER

HOLLEMAN DRIVE

HISTORIC AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

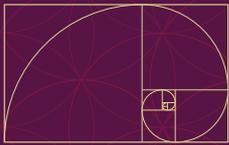
▲ Site analysis: Emphasizes the location off of a major roadway, close proximity of community assets and potential for racial/age diversity.

Factors Driving Ministry



To be known... To make known... To be grown...

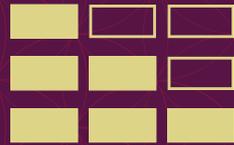
Factors Driving Design



Proportion



Light/Shadow



Material



The Satellite

The Community

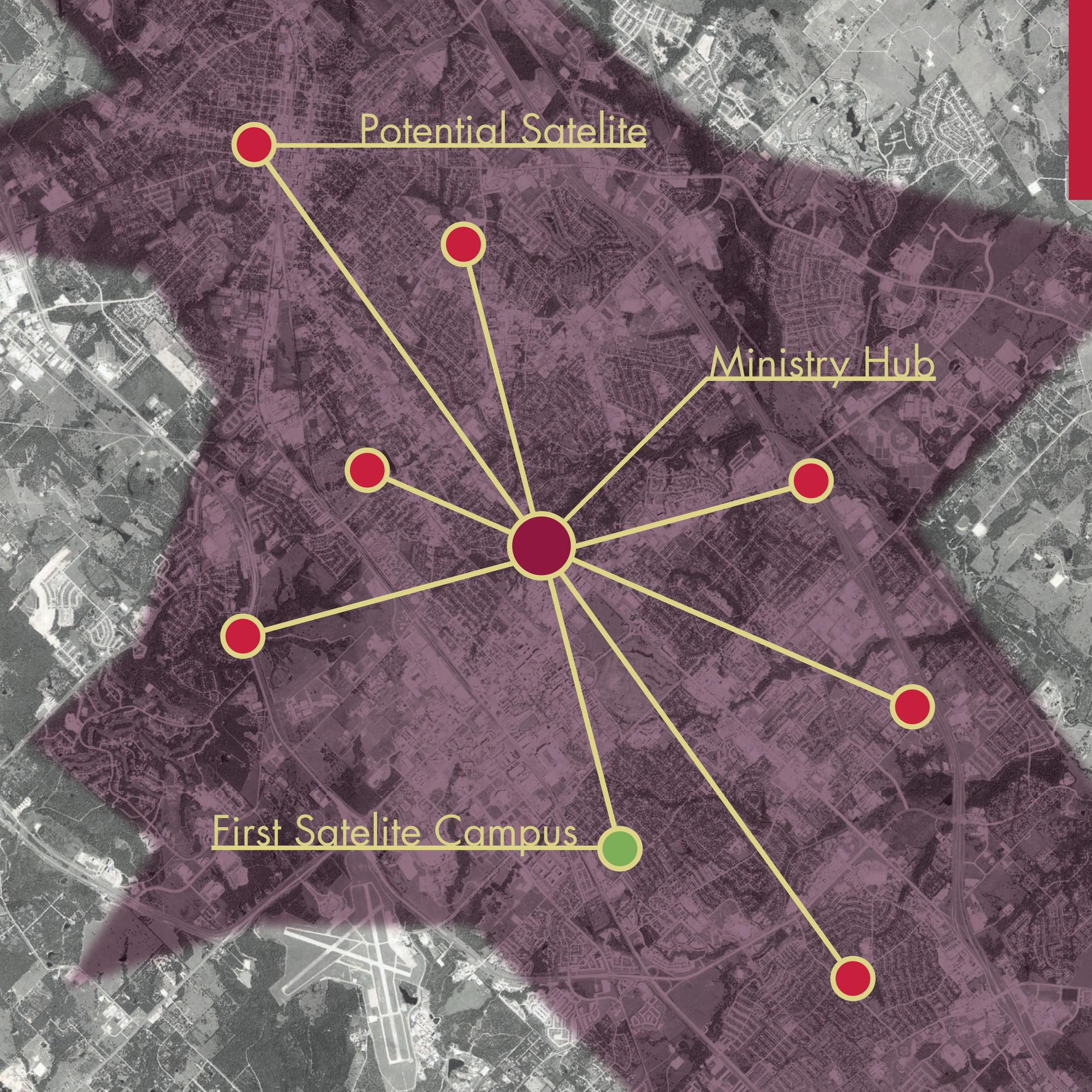
The Hub



Prophetic Mitosis

This term refers to an entity, the church, which is able to focus cumulative resources and redistribute energy, like a cell, to replicate its services and experiences so that the community may be united under one, common bond of faith.





Potential Satelite

Ministry Hub

First Satelite Campus

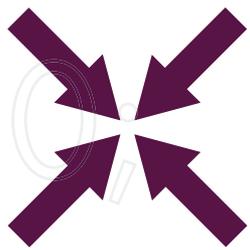




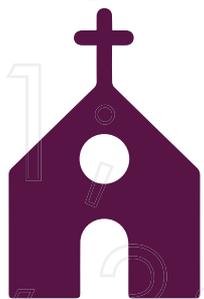
challenges

The particular site in question on the corner of Holleman Dr. and Eleanor St. presents an opportunity to address the goals above, but not without its challenges. The site is small, only measuring 200'x350', and shares property lines on the north and east with single/multi-family homes. To keep from shading the neighbors' backyard, the city has implemented an ordinance that designates a 2:1 ratio for cast shadows. This means that for every one foot of vertical rise the run allotted is two feet. The sidewalks are to have at least five feet of buffer from street to pavement, and another five for the walk itself. Finally, a place of worship is an A-3 building typology. This designation dictates that for every three seats present in the worship space, there needs to be one parking space. With an auditorium of 300 seats a parking lot with 100 spaces is required. These restrictions dwindle the buildable portion of the site substantially and if the project is to be successful, the zoning requirements will need to be careful and creatively considered to delegate a quality design outcome.

goals



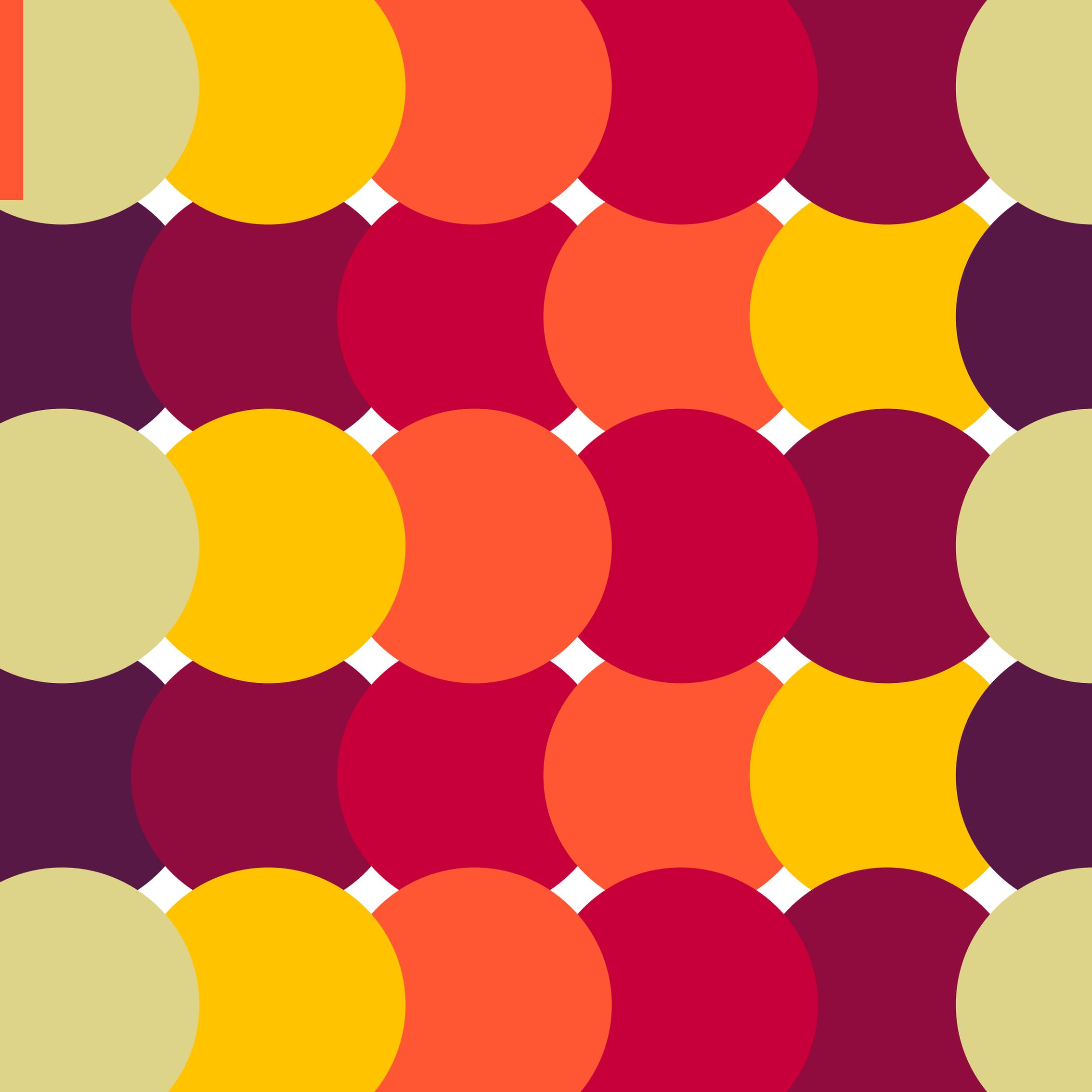
Re-concentrate the focus of Christian architecture on the scriptures, enabling the Gospel to create a contextual and experiential environment that fosters the formation of relationships among the congregation.

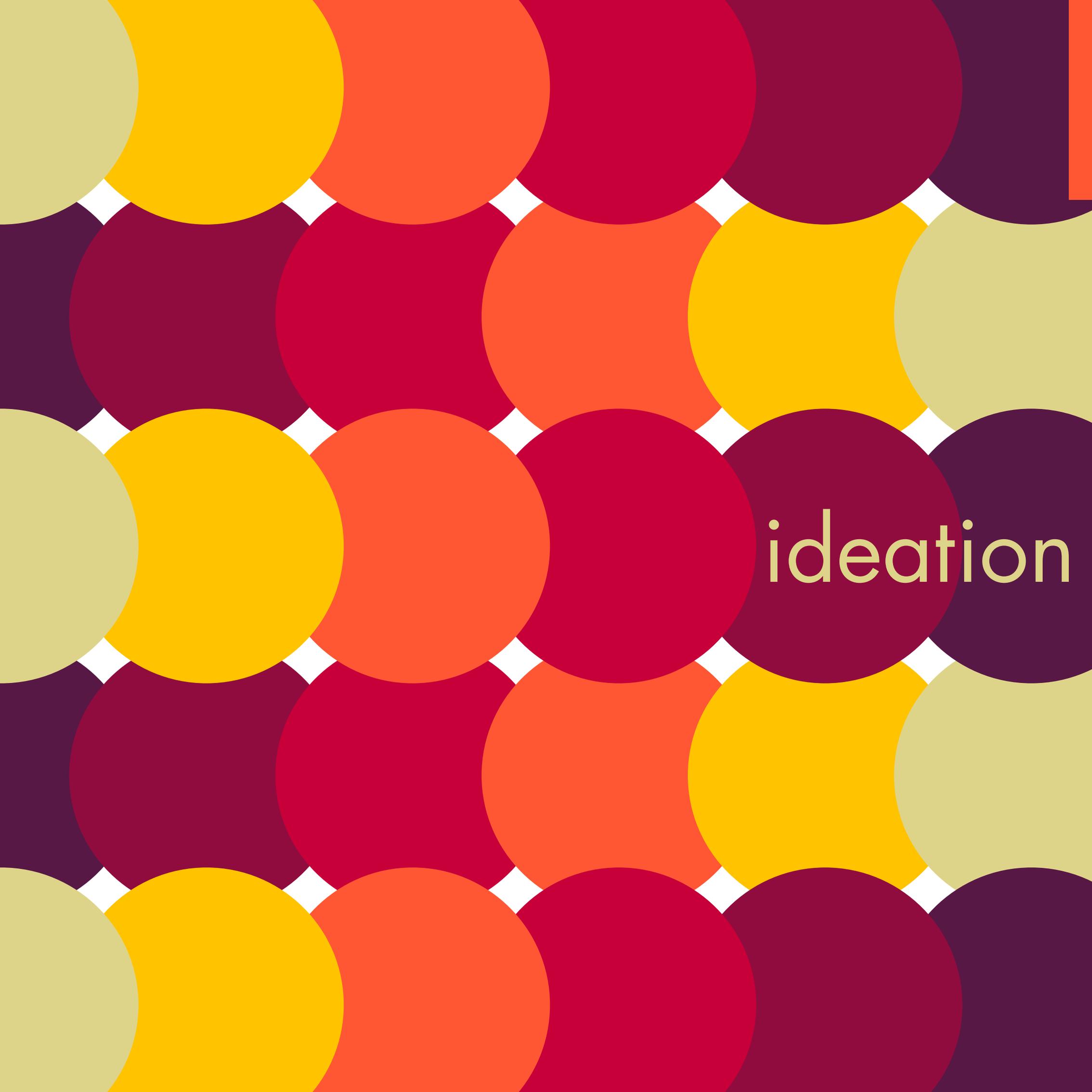


Provide Declaration Church with an architectural language that will equip the ministry with the capability to replicate its architectural experiences and branding respective to the context of a new site.

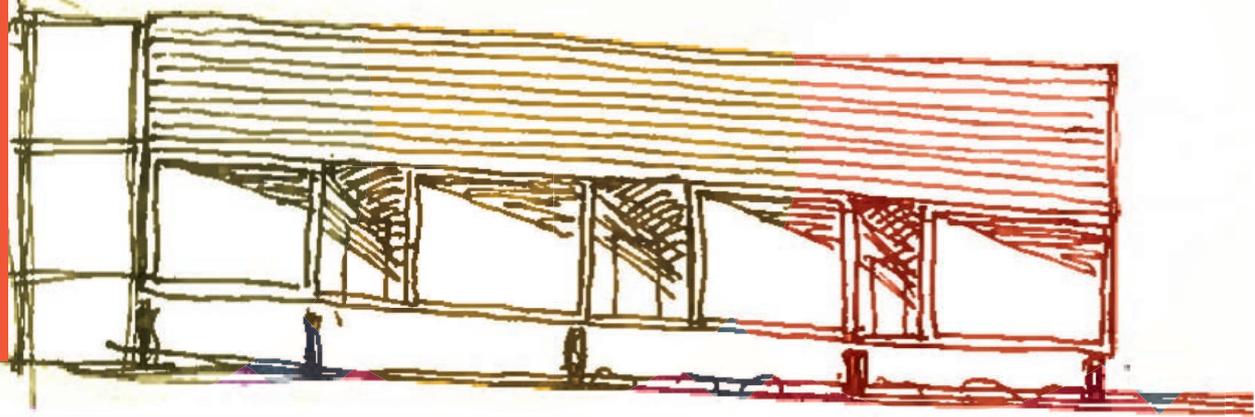


Preserve the balance of built to landscaped features in order to fluctuate the variability of experiences, providing the congregation with multiple scales of opportunity to build relationships.



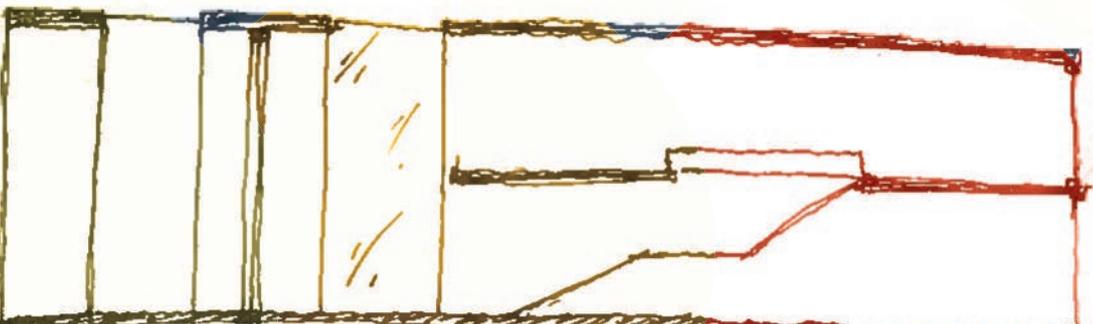
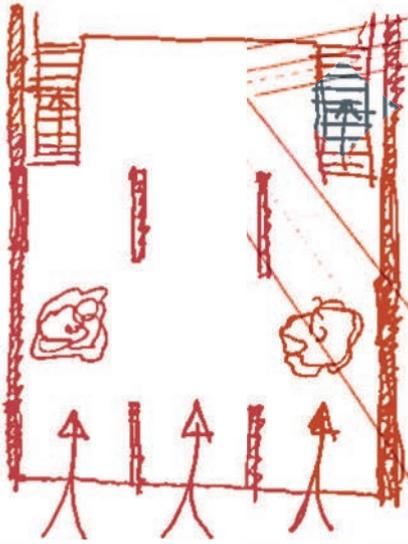
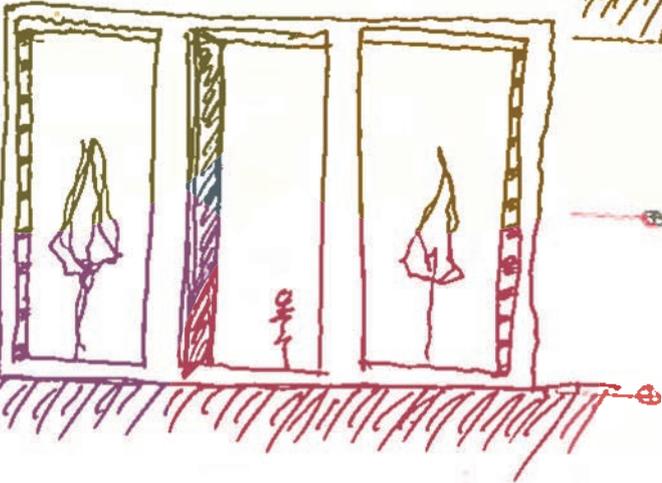
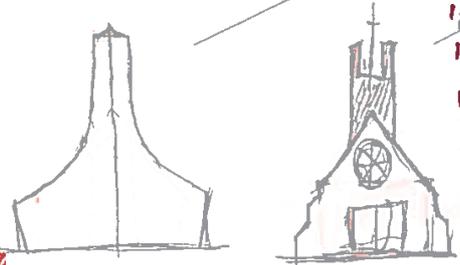
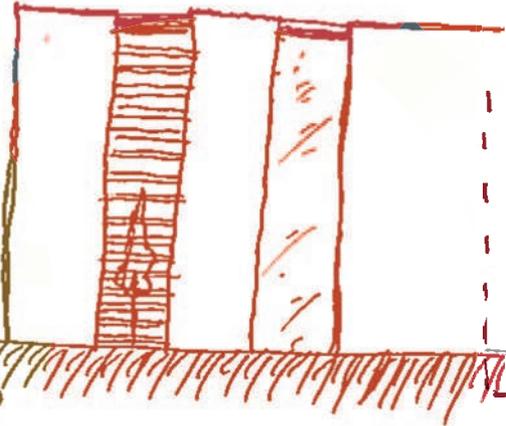
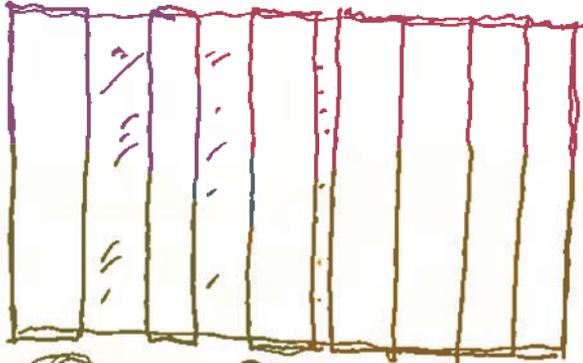


ideation



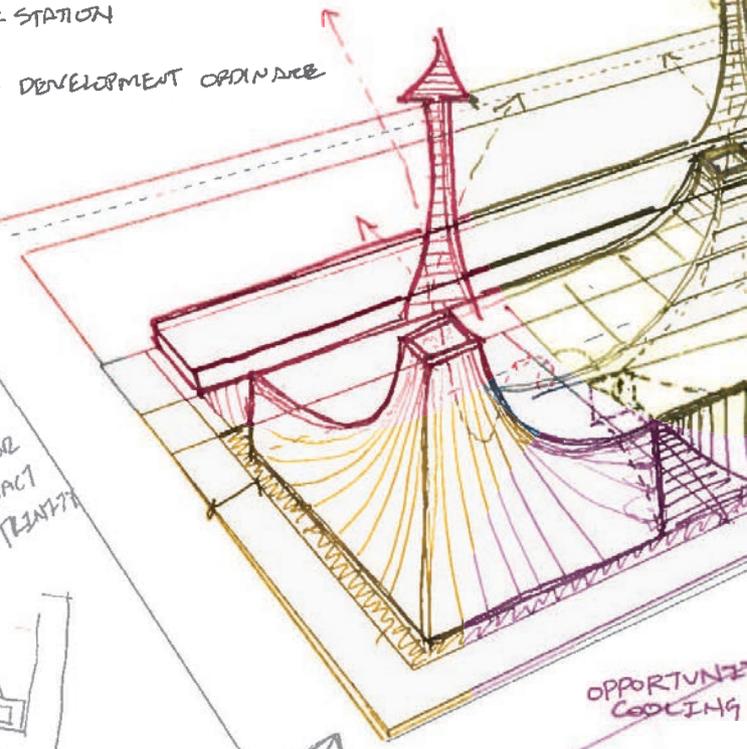
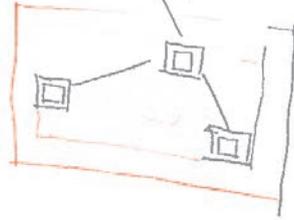
ART & ARCHITECTURE

09/10/18



COLLEGE STATION
UDO
UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

ADD THIRD
ELEMENT FOR
ABSTRACT
OF TREATY

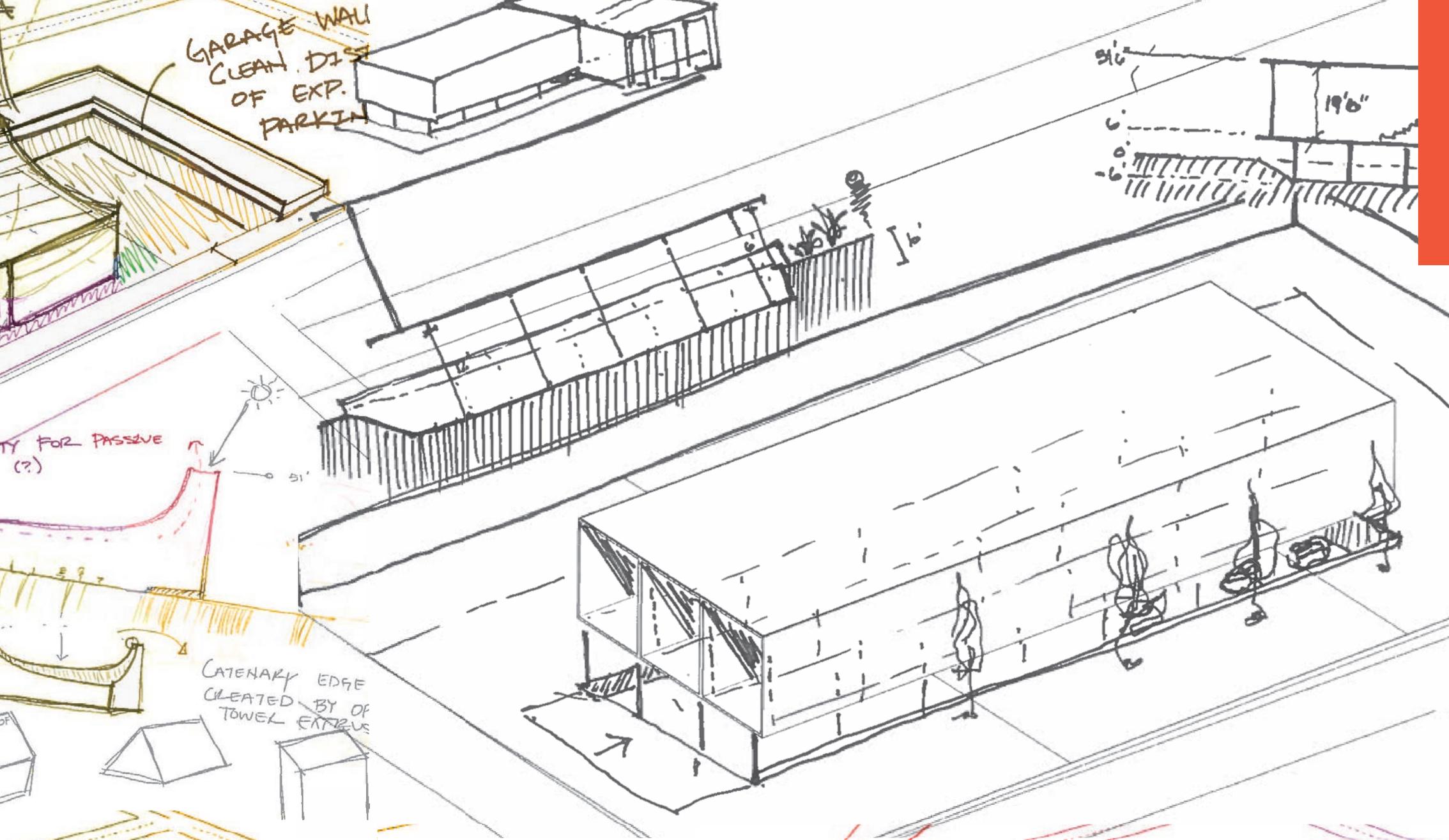


OPPORTUNITY
COOLING

VERTICALITY

RIDGED ROOF

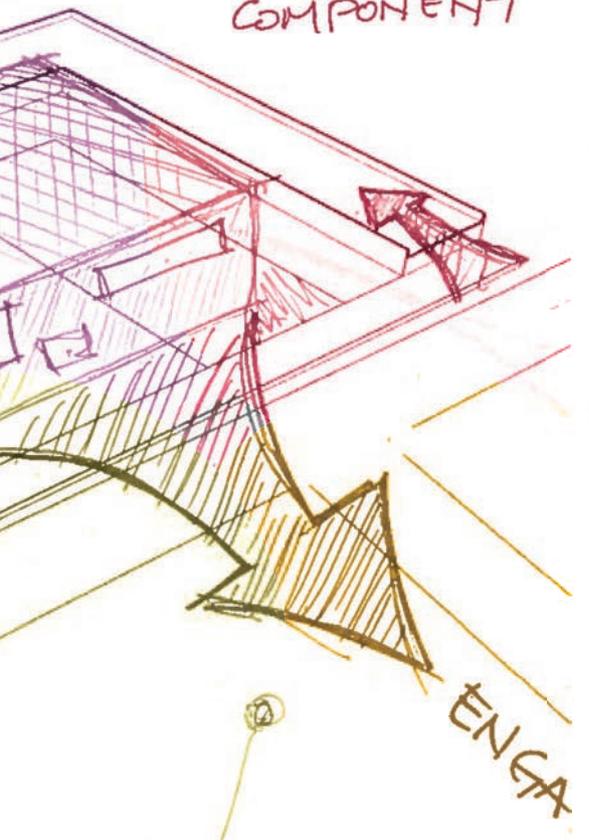
INVITE



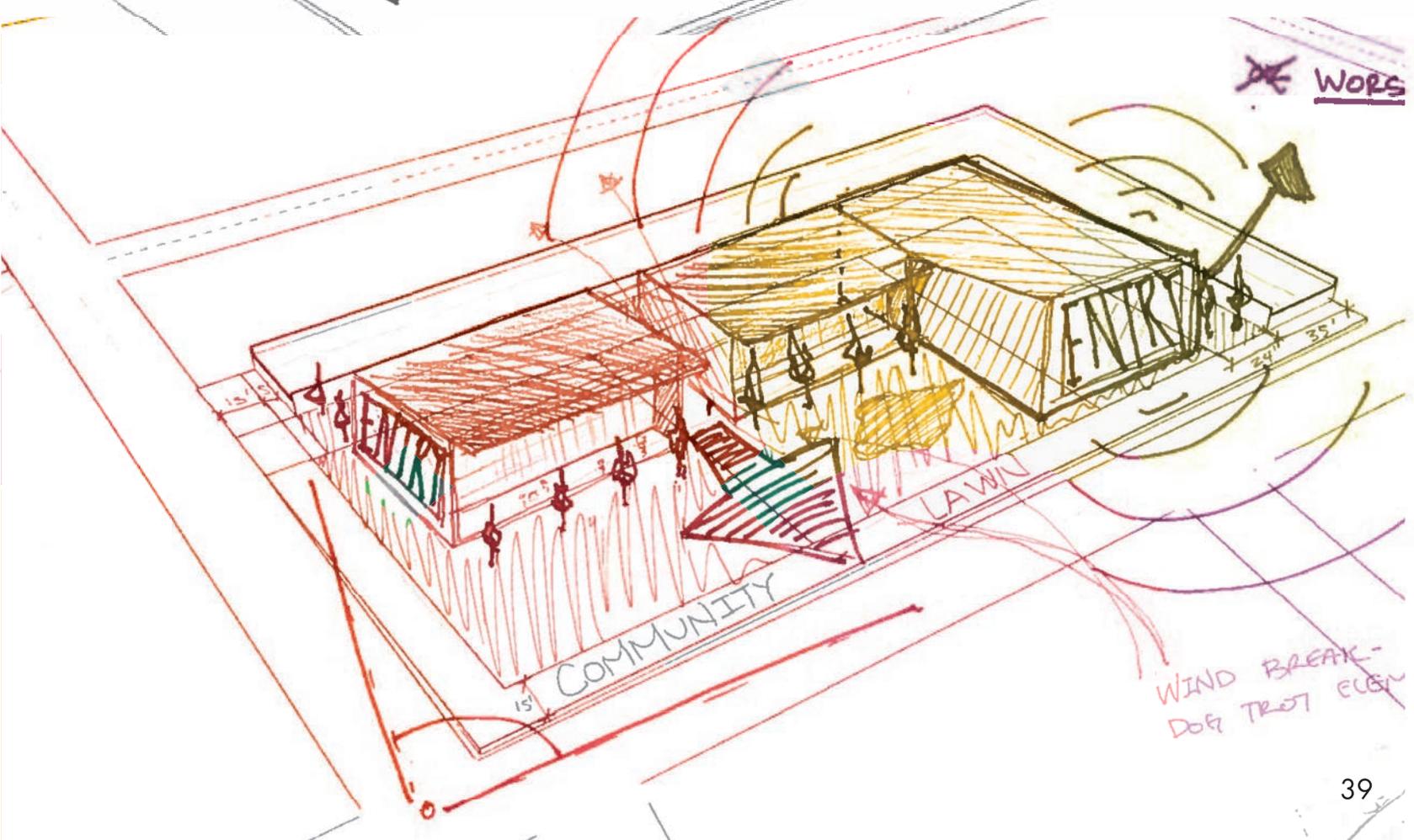
TY FOR PASSIVE (?)

CATENARY EDGE CREATED BY OF TOWER EXTRUS

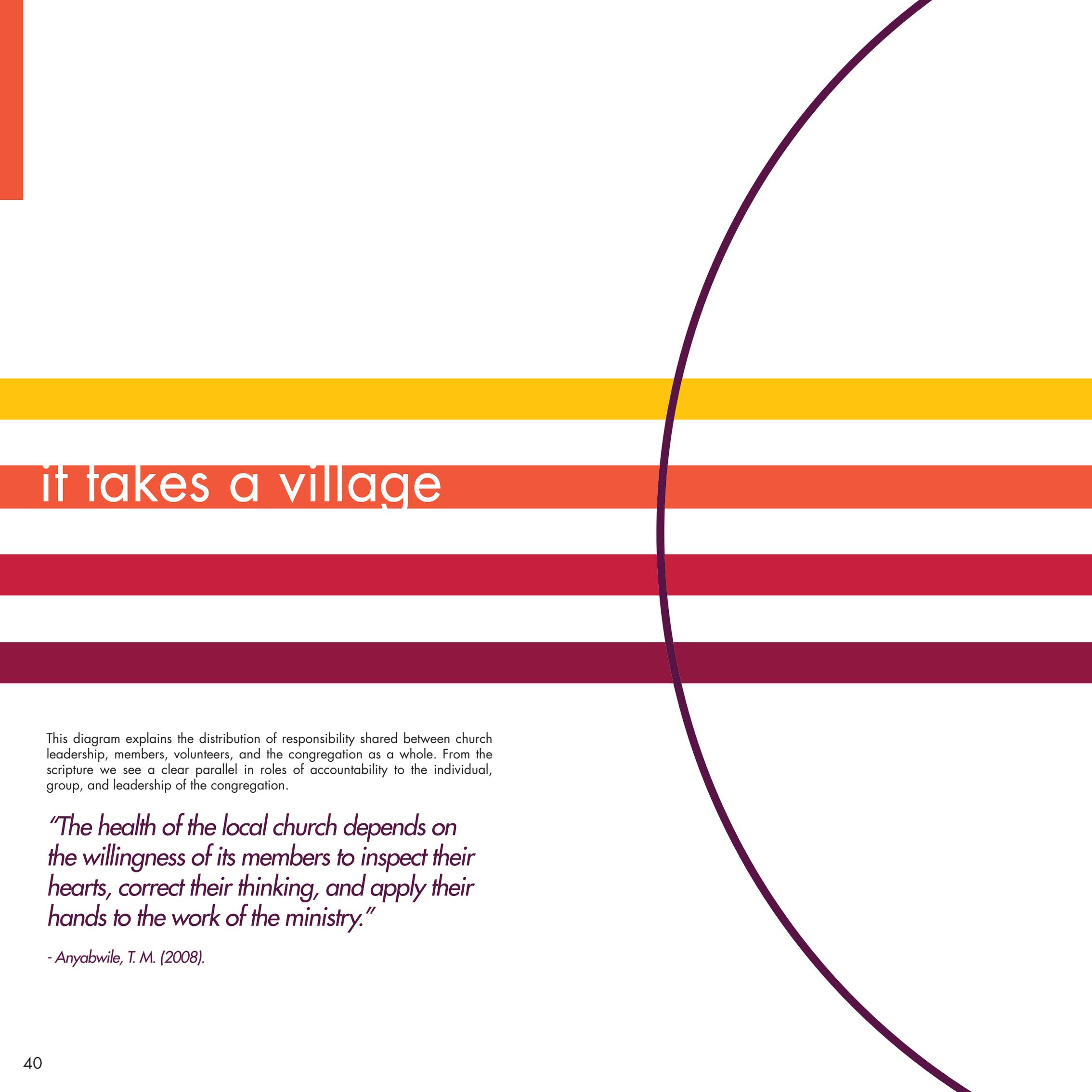
LIGHT PENETRA INTO CENTRAL COMPONENT



ENGA



WIND BREAK-DOE TROT ELEM



it takes a village

This diagram explains the distribution of responsibility shared between church leadership, members, volunteers, and the congregation as a whole. From the scripture we see a clear parallel in roles of accountability to the individual, group, and leadership of the congregation.

“The health of the local church depends on the willingness of its members to inspect their hearts, correct their thinking, and apply their hands to the work of the ministry.”

- Anyabwile, T. M. (2008).

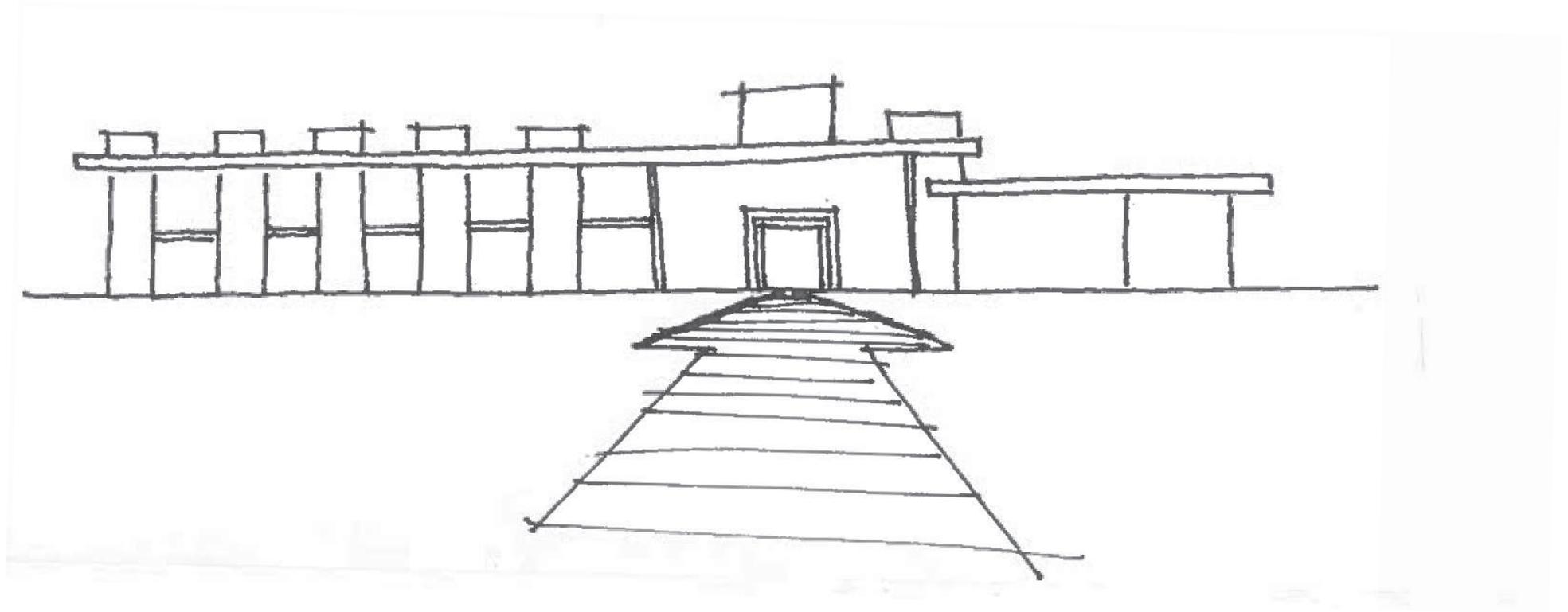
Ministry

Congregation

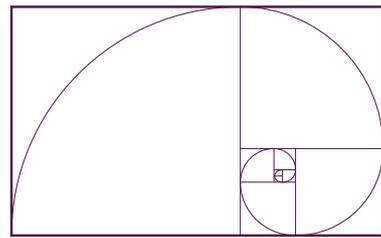
Volunteer

Member

- Outlier
- Other Ministries
- De-Churched, Un-Churched
- Non-Believer
- Volunteers
- Community
- Congregation
- Church Leadership
- Member
- Local Businesses
- Widow, Orphan
- Small Group
- Sick, Needy, Homeless, Hurting
- Individual
- Neighbors



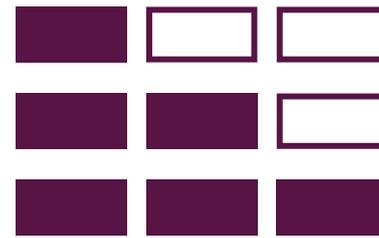
Factors Driving Design



Proportion



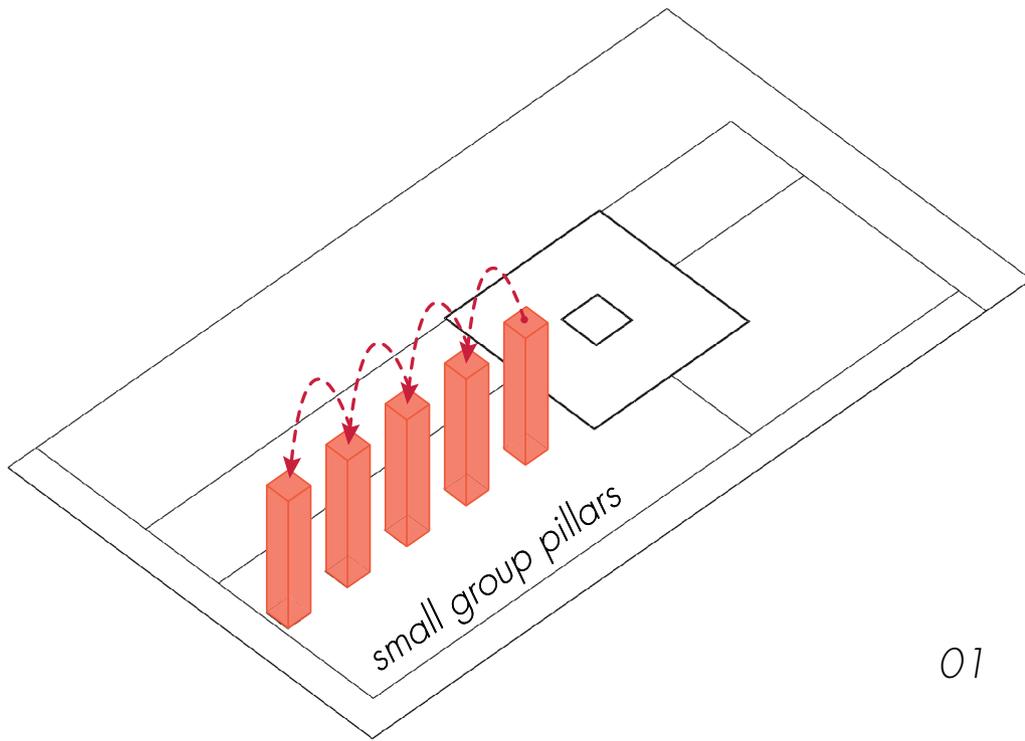
Light/Shadow



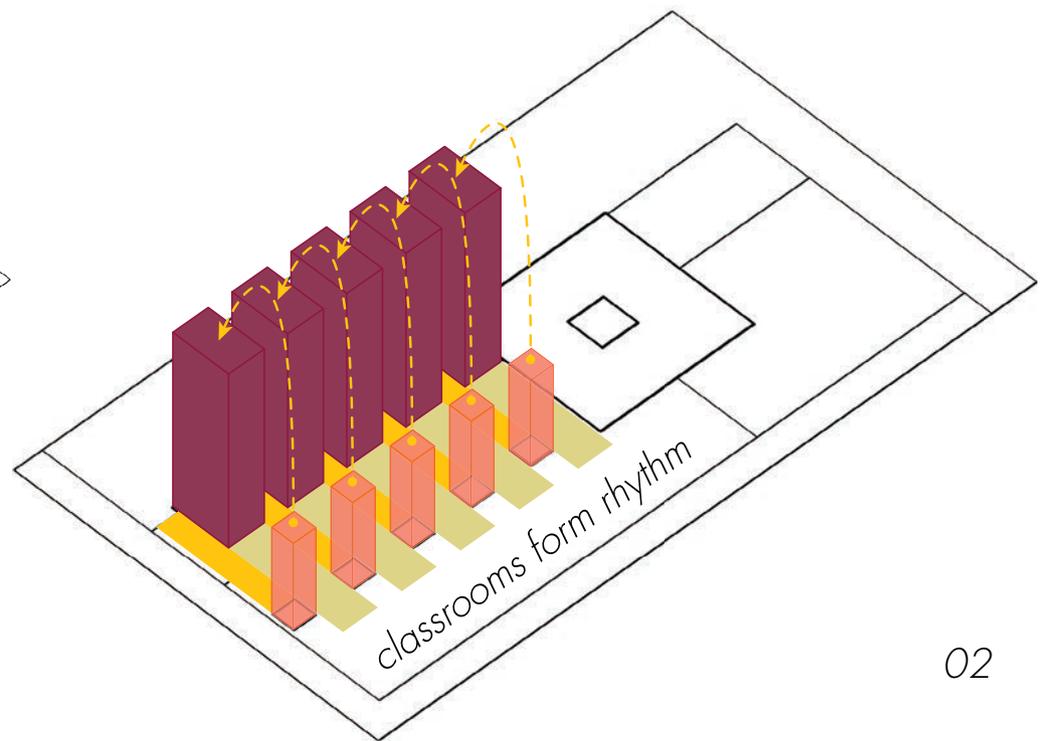
Material

Three principles of architecture work together to create a rhythmic and lively architectural experience. Proportion of space, materiality, and natural light manifest a project rich in character. To punctuate the project's focus on the scriptures, the proportion of each space is set by using the cubit; a biblical unit of measurement that is the length of one's forearm spanning from the elbow to the tip of the middle most finger or approximately 18 inches. The golden section in conjunction with the cubit provides an order that is able to generate spaces of varying heights and widths. (1.5', 3', 7.5', 12', 19.5', 31.5' and so on.)

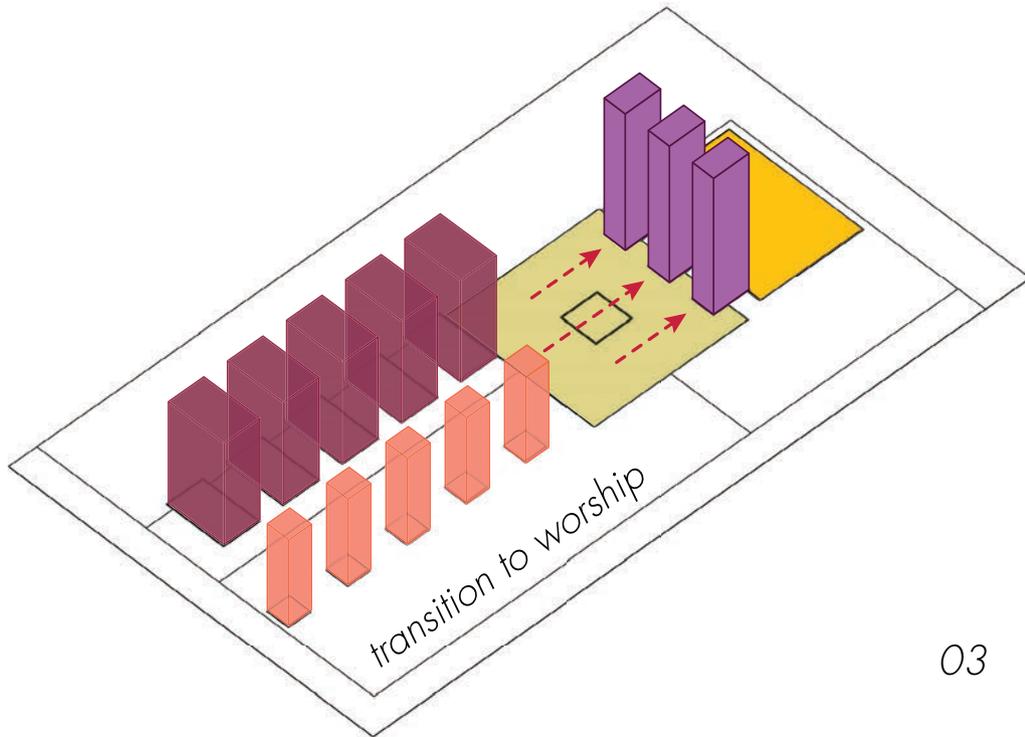
From there the next consideration was how to focus a built project so that it could be effective in building and maintaining quality relationships. The smallest, most intimate form of relationship in the church is the small group. This is a group of 1-4 people who engage with and sharpen one another's faith daily. The love they share for God and each other is the glue that holds the congregation together. Therefore, the ordering system that produces the experience within the church should hinge on the fostering of building these groups up. The small group rooms arrayed along Holleman Dr. form five, evenly spaced towers. As the relationships are built and supported by these rooms same can be said about the architectural and structural integrity of the design.



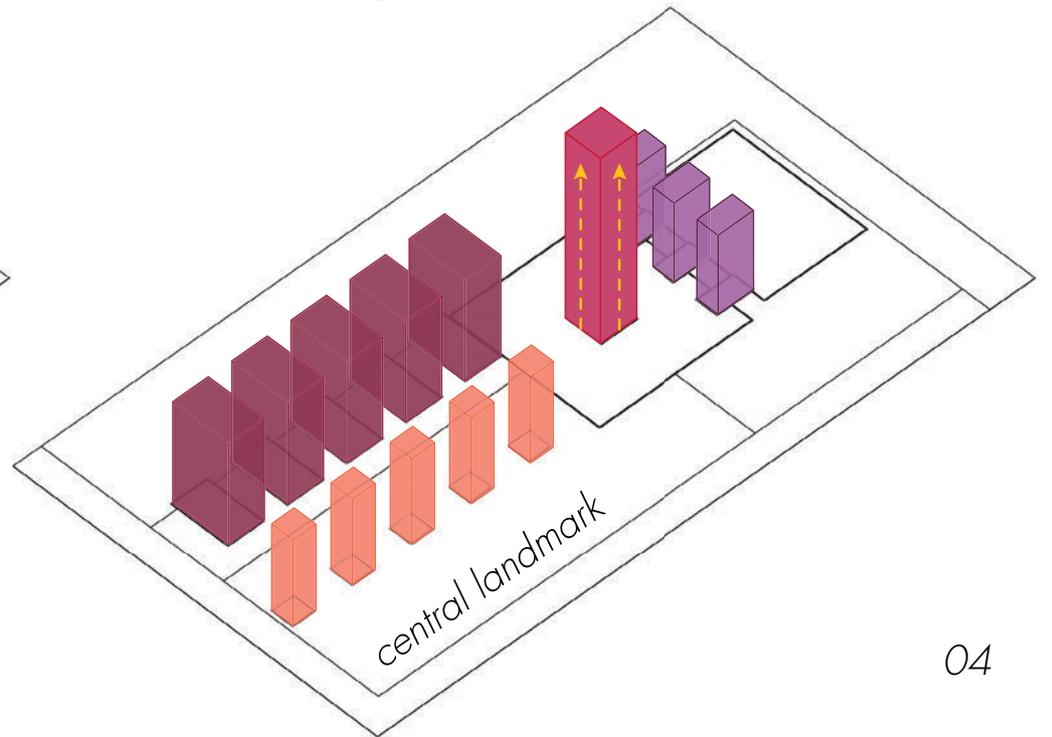
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02



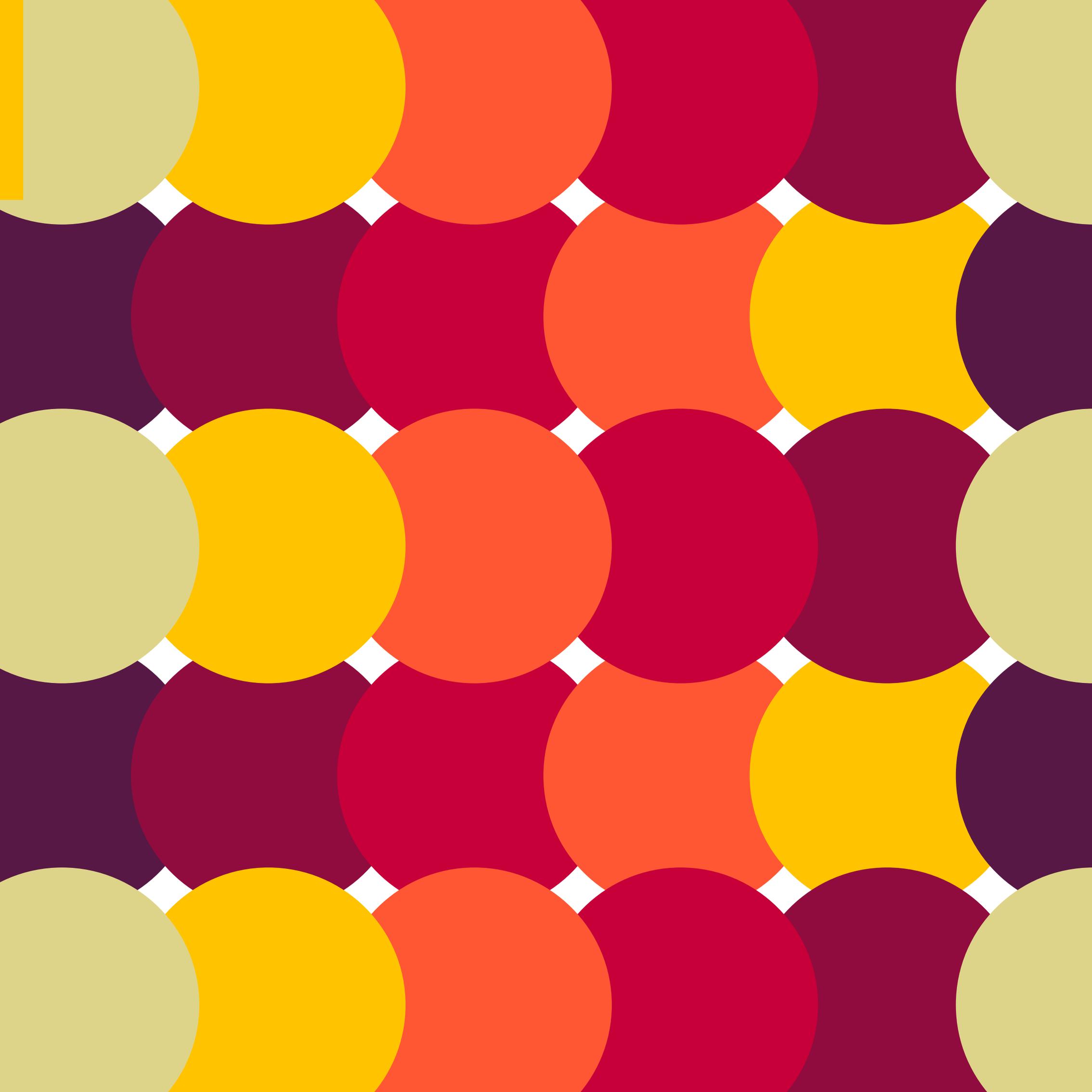
03



04

As the towers create a gridded system of engagement a variety of spaces are formed throughout the project. The character of the small group tower is reflected across the central axis to form the classrooms and youth ministry portions. Furthermore, the rhythmic play of the towers off-center from one another creates an opportunity for further community wide engagement. Interstitial spaces to lounge, study, and work in are comfortably proportioned with public or private flexibilities.

Once more the towers are used to generate a powerful transition point from the main lobby into the worship space. With the rhythm created by the character of these towers and the proportion relating the towers to each other, the church is manifested through the structural representation of human relationships with each other bound by God. Keeping the roof structure to a simple sloped plane allows for the towers to be accentuated in form and material, further emphasizing their organizational importance to relationship growth.





design





Detail in the Act of Worship

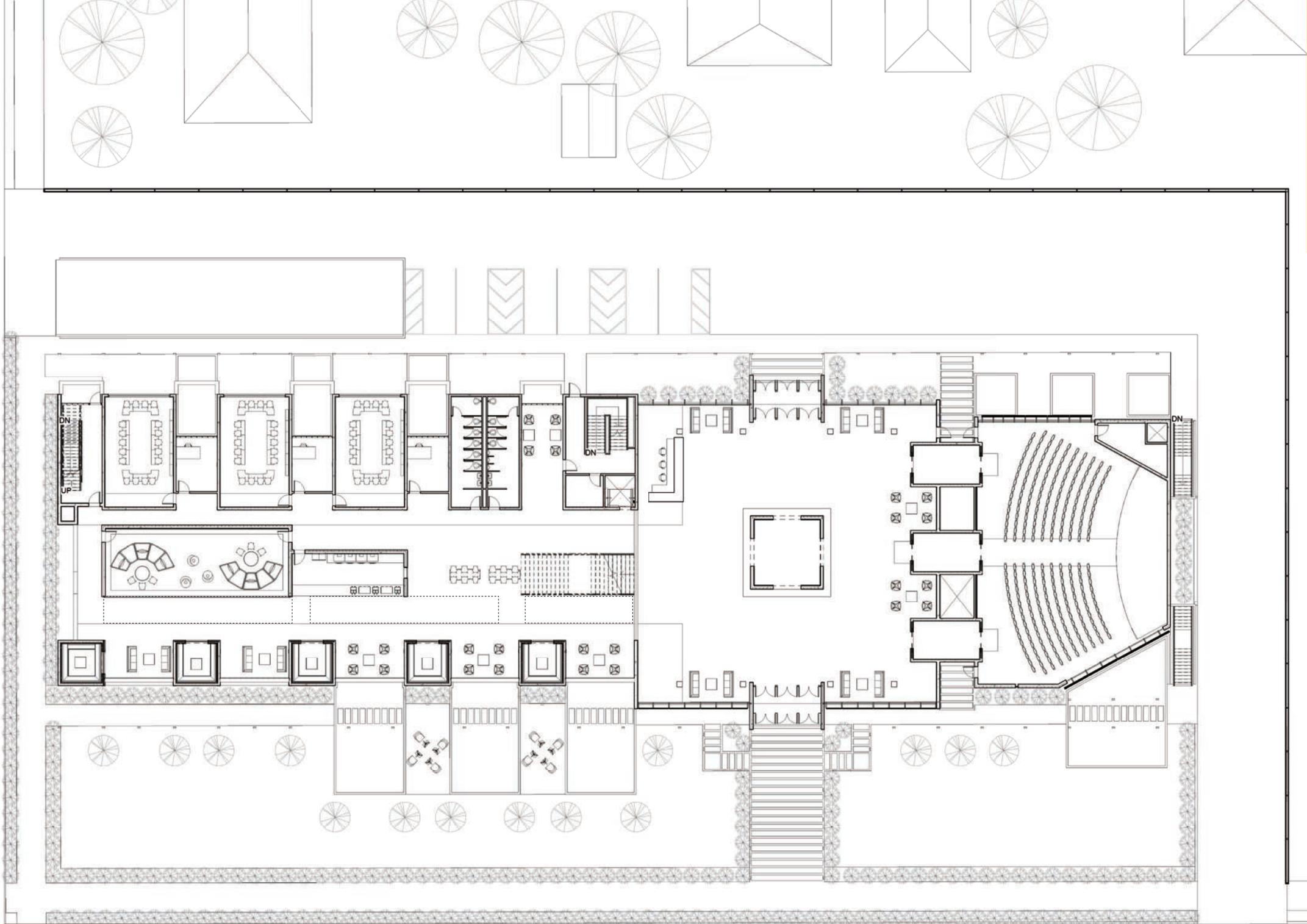
The ministry has, on multiple occasions, been a proponent of diversifying its congregation (Chilton 2019). The idea that the church should be a gathering of a diverse people is something they believe Christians are called to address. This is why the approach and accessibility of the satellite church to a diverse neighborhood is so important. The approach to the church should accommodate those who are less mobile, while being in close enough proximity to others to allow them to walk or bike to services or events throughout the week. A walkable church is a church ready to impact and support its congregation in neighborhoods and homes rather than a large centralized congregation accumulating in a mega facility far removed from those they are trying to reach. Declaration Church wants its people, "in the world, yet not of the world" (Chilton 2019).

The architectural context of the area and state wields profound effects on place. Contextual responses are powerful avenues to relating architecture to a people or idea. As one walks down Holleman Drive, they are attracted to an appropriately scaled building near the boundary of the neighborhood. Materials are familiar and strongly distinguished to create a processional distinction between three main areas: the entrance, the community area, and the sanctuary. The pathway connecting the entrance to the sidewalk along Holleman Drive is the primary point of pedestrian entry. As they stroll down the footpath, the landscaped features begin to reveal themselves. Secondary pathways, which dogleg off the main boulevard, carry the curious connoisseur along into a shaded, outdoor seating area, nested between baptismal pools. There seems to be a generative rhythm within the architecture emanating into the landscape and engendering a powerful relationship between the outdoor and indoor spatial qualities. This rhythm is familiar to the entire building and as one walks around the perimeter, though the forms and voids change, the feeling of rhythmic order is strongly adhered to. The building is in balance with the landscape which makes the processional quality of the building cool, comfortable and enjoyable.





After circling the grounds, a need to see the indoors draws the pedestrian towards the main entrance. Again, as they near the entry they notice the materiality of the entrance and sanctuary are different from that of the rest of the building. The copper enamel paneling distinguishes the key features of the church in a powerful manner. Though the worship area is lower and smaller than the other two portions of the church, the change from a common material to a modern finish distinguishes it as one key component to the facility and is paralleled by the faith as a key to the Christian's lifestyle. In other words, listening to a weekly sermon and singing a few songs is only one element of a lifestyle characterized by faith. It does not constitute Christianity in and of itself, the same way that only having one meal a day doesn't constitute being a healthy individual. The soul needs constant and consistent engagement outside of the sanctuary. The entrances share this same material to draw the pedestrian into the church. As they enter through the nineteen-and-a-half-foot tall vestibule, the large twelve-foot doors, despite their size, swing open with ease. They are greeted once more by the same copper paneling affixed to a large central tower. It acts as a landmark to focus and disperse patrons from the central most location of the project. Natural light floods the space around the entrance and activates the material quality of the concrete, wood and copper to produce a moment of relief; an unburdening of the week's typical anxieties.

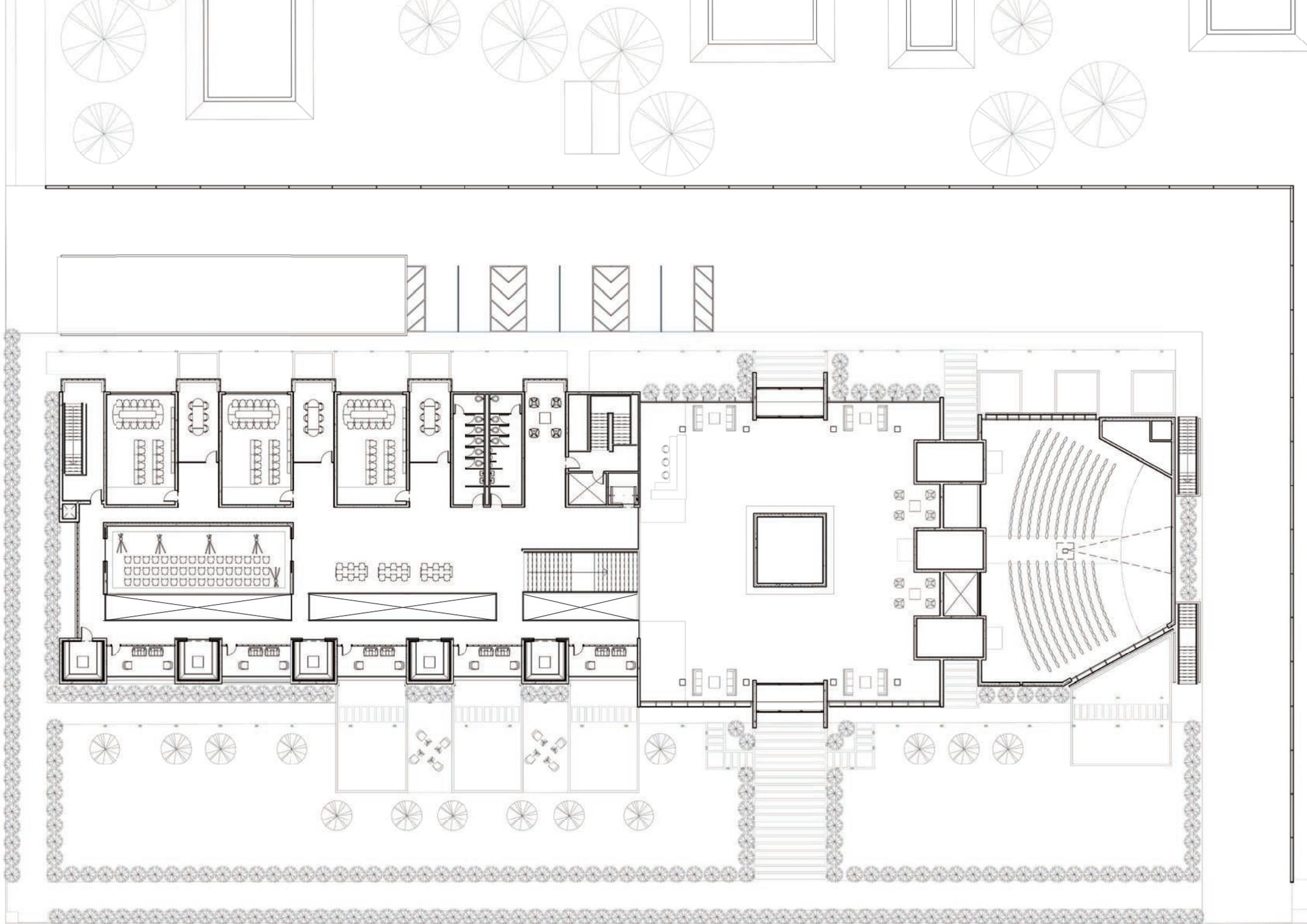


◀ Plan 01



▼ South Elevation: from Holleman Dr.





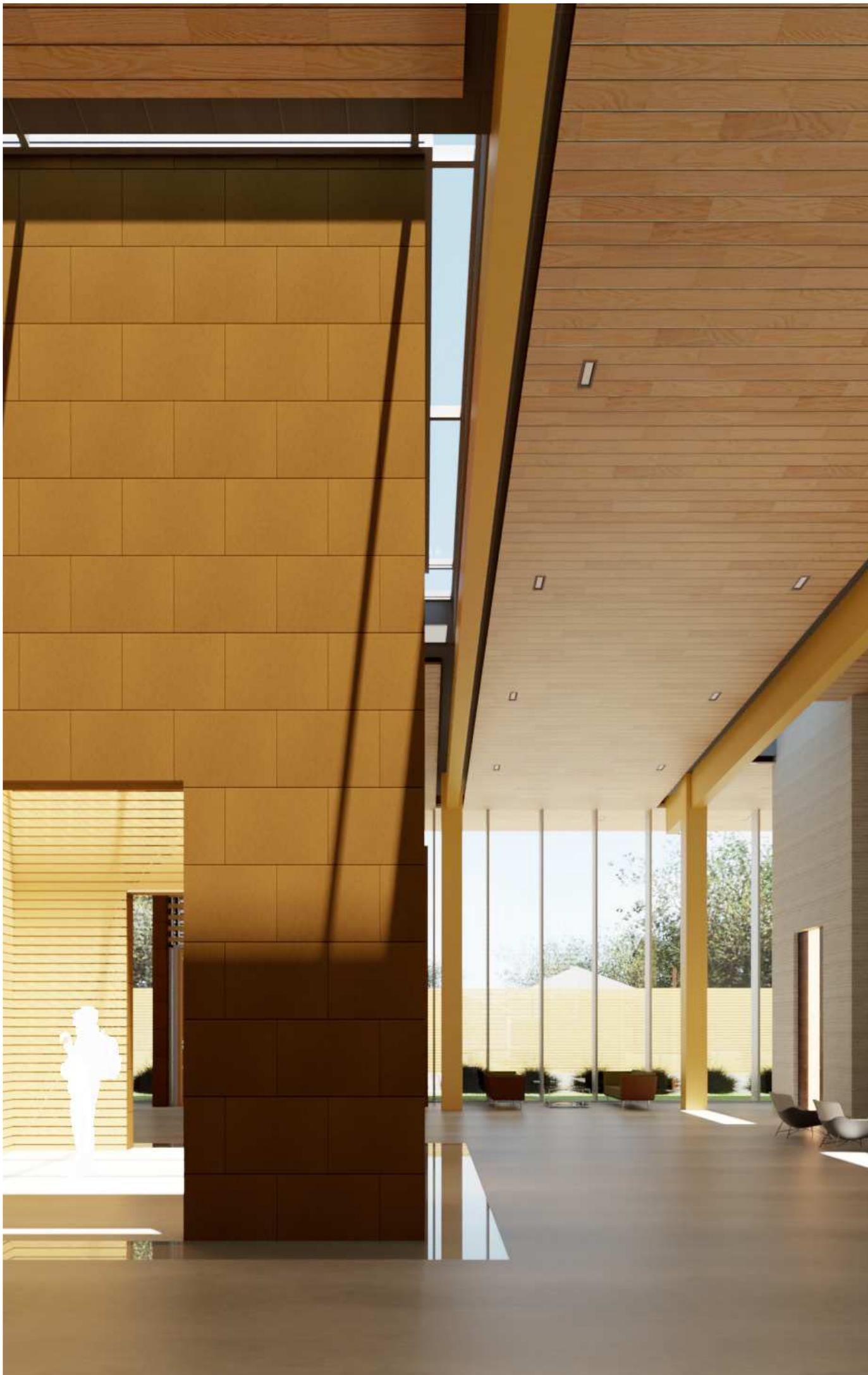
◀ Plan 02



North Elevation: from Holleman Dr. ▼



Once in the lobby, the newcomer is invited to the central landmark. At its center is an unexpected opportunity for revelation; the tower reaches up towards the heavens, lined with oak one-by-fours, and opens up to the sky influencing a momentary feeling of awe. From there they walk back to the reception desk where the ministry's name is embossed on a large concrete face. The volunteers are welcoming others and informing those interested about the weekly meetings and programs, which keep the church body buzzing. As they inquire about the church, a shuttle carrying local elderly and mobility challenged individuals arrive at the secondary entrance on the North side of the building. Volunteers usher them in and seat the elderly on the couches near the entrance to the sanctuary allowing them to interact with the younger members and friends before it is time to hear the message. The smell from the café around the corner fills the church with aromas of fresh coffee and baked goods. The new patron takes a lap around the lobby noticing the utilization of natural stone walls to split the building into its three distinct sections. They look up to the ceiling and notice that the wood structure and ceiling warm the space to contrast the cold concrete towers. The ceiling reflects a similar rhythm as the rest of the building and uses a gridded mesh inlay to break up the panels, thereby, preventing the material from becoming monotonous or overbearing. The tactility of the walls and play of shadow impress images of liveliness within the lobby and draw people throughout the church in an informal procession.



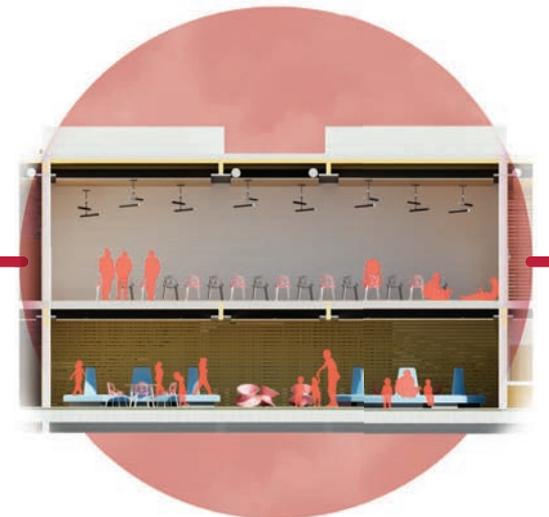
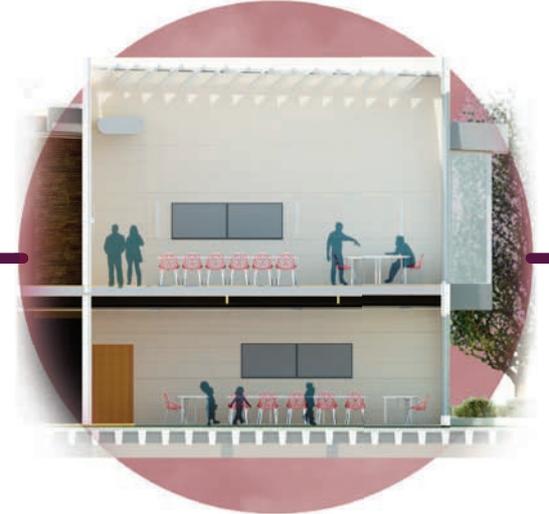
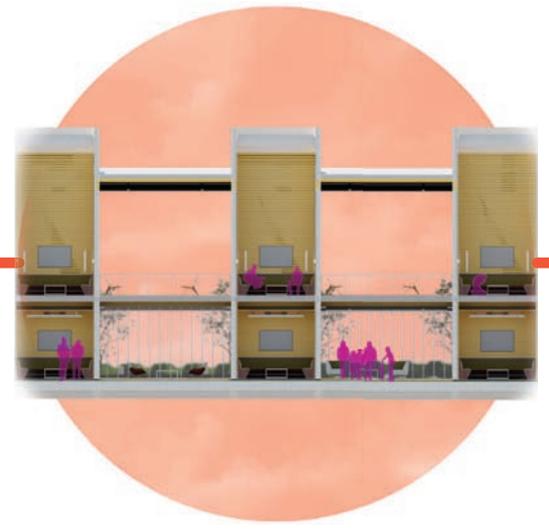
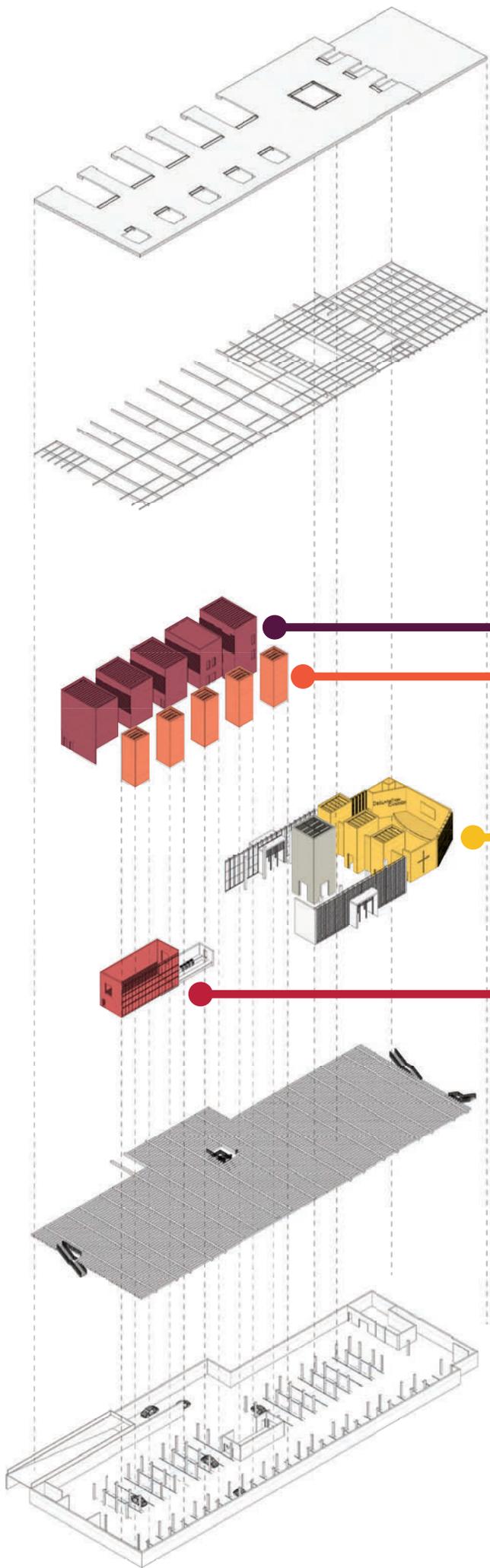
◀ Interior lobby render focus on the lobby landmark and skylight.



▲ Interior lobby render of reception desk.



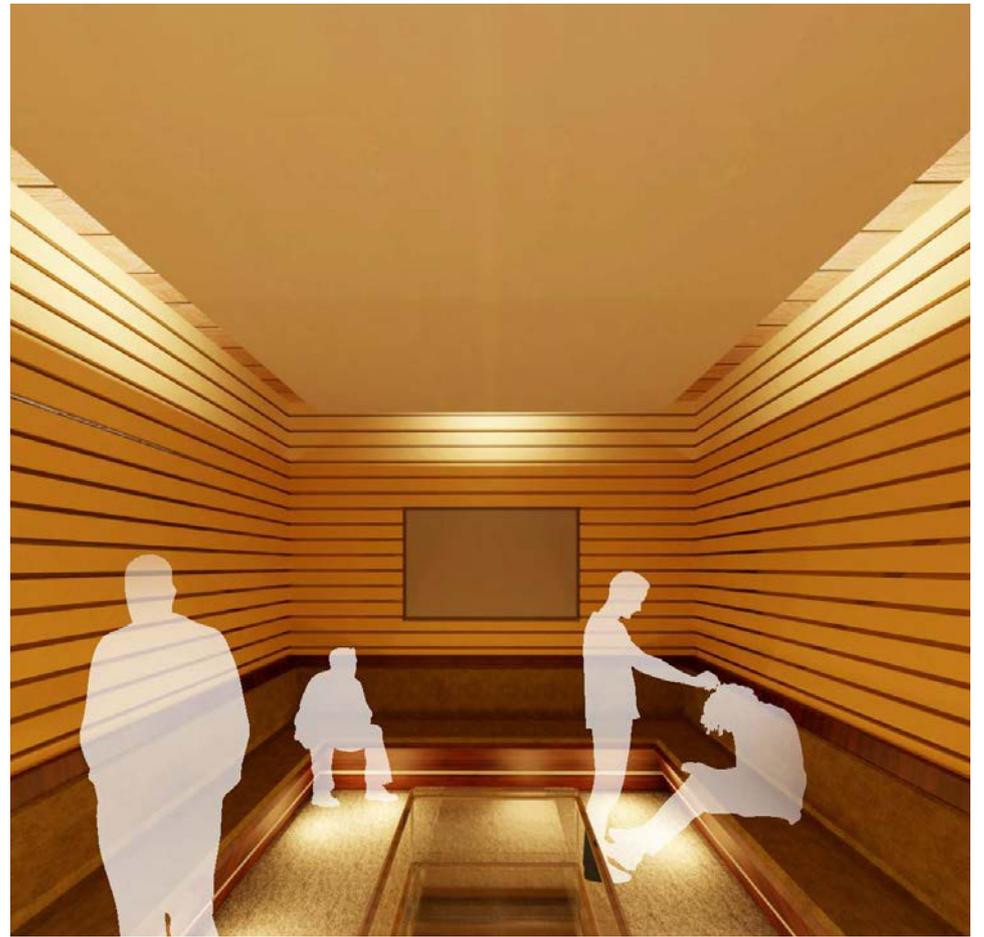
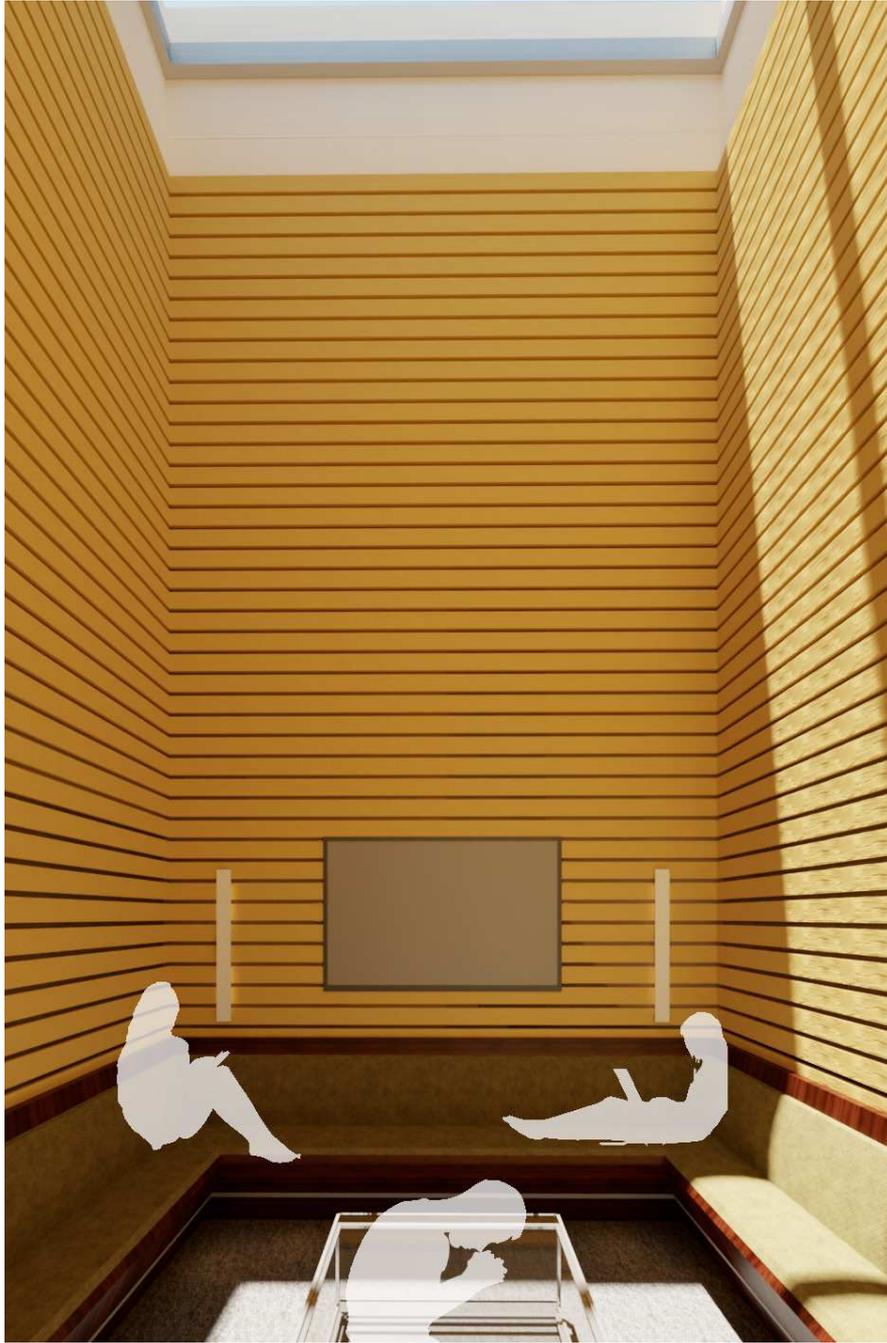




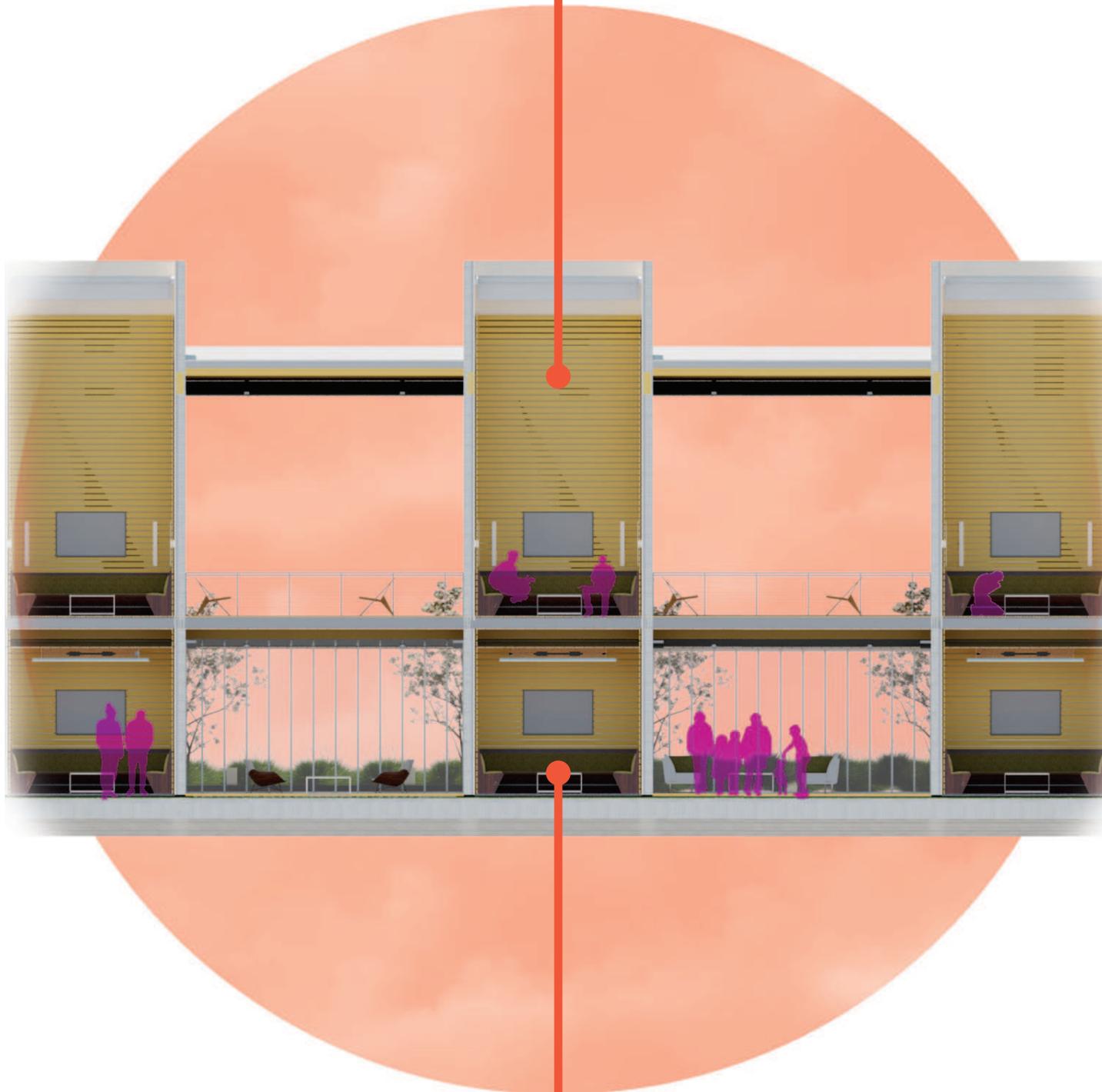


small
group
classroom
youth
ministry
worship

Interior of small group tower at the second floor. The space directs the worshipper's attention upward and experiences a calm, light-filled environment.



Interior of small group tower at the first floor. The space directs the worshipper's attention inward while providing a space to pray away from public settings. (Matthew 6:6)

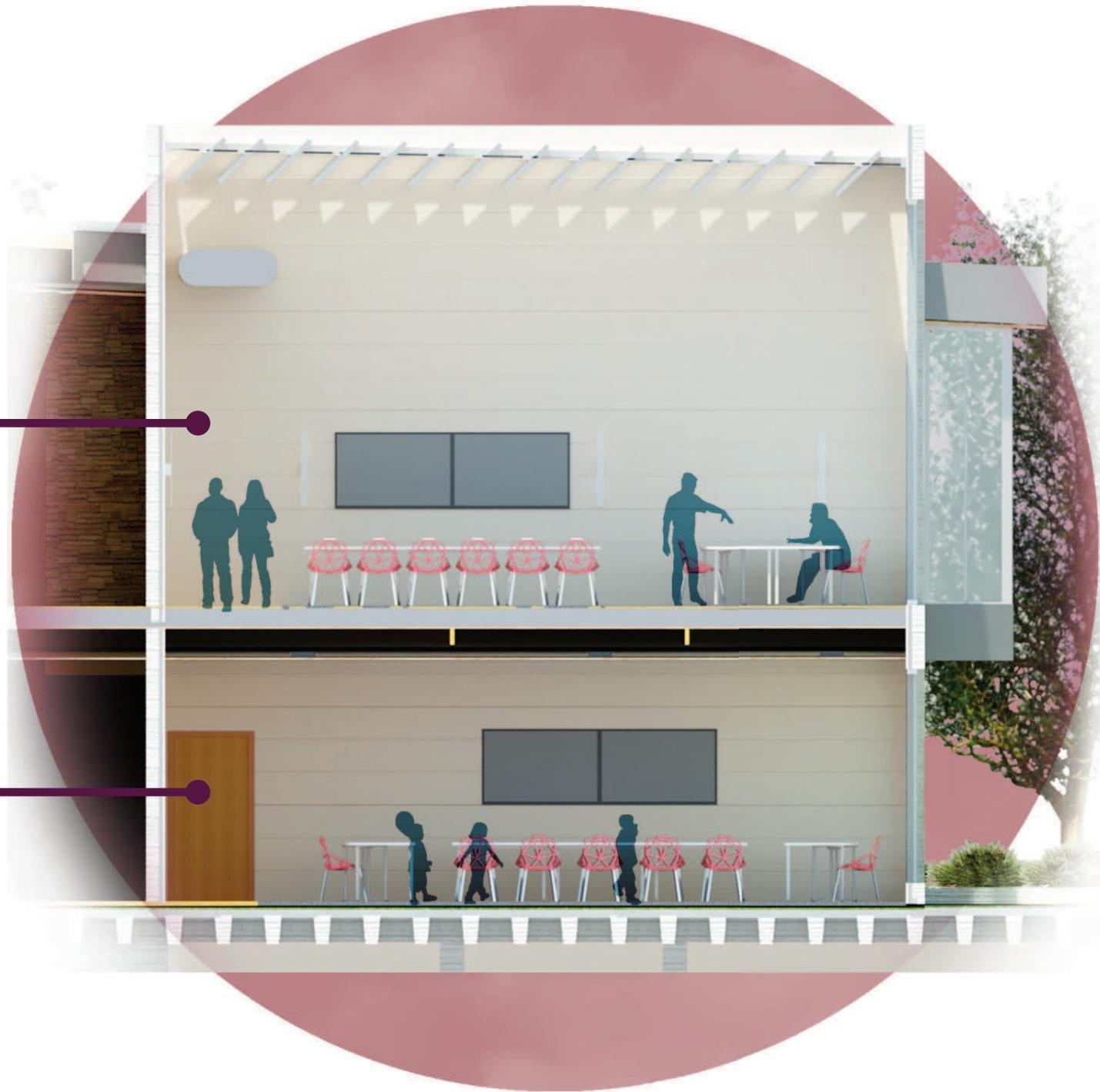


Interior render of second floor classroom area. Plenty of natural light and greenery flood the space to influence creativity and a quality learning.

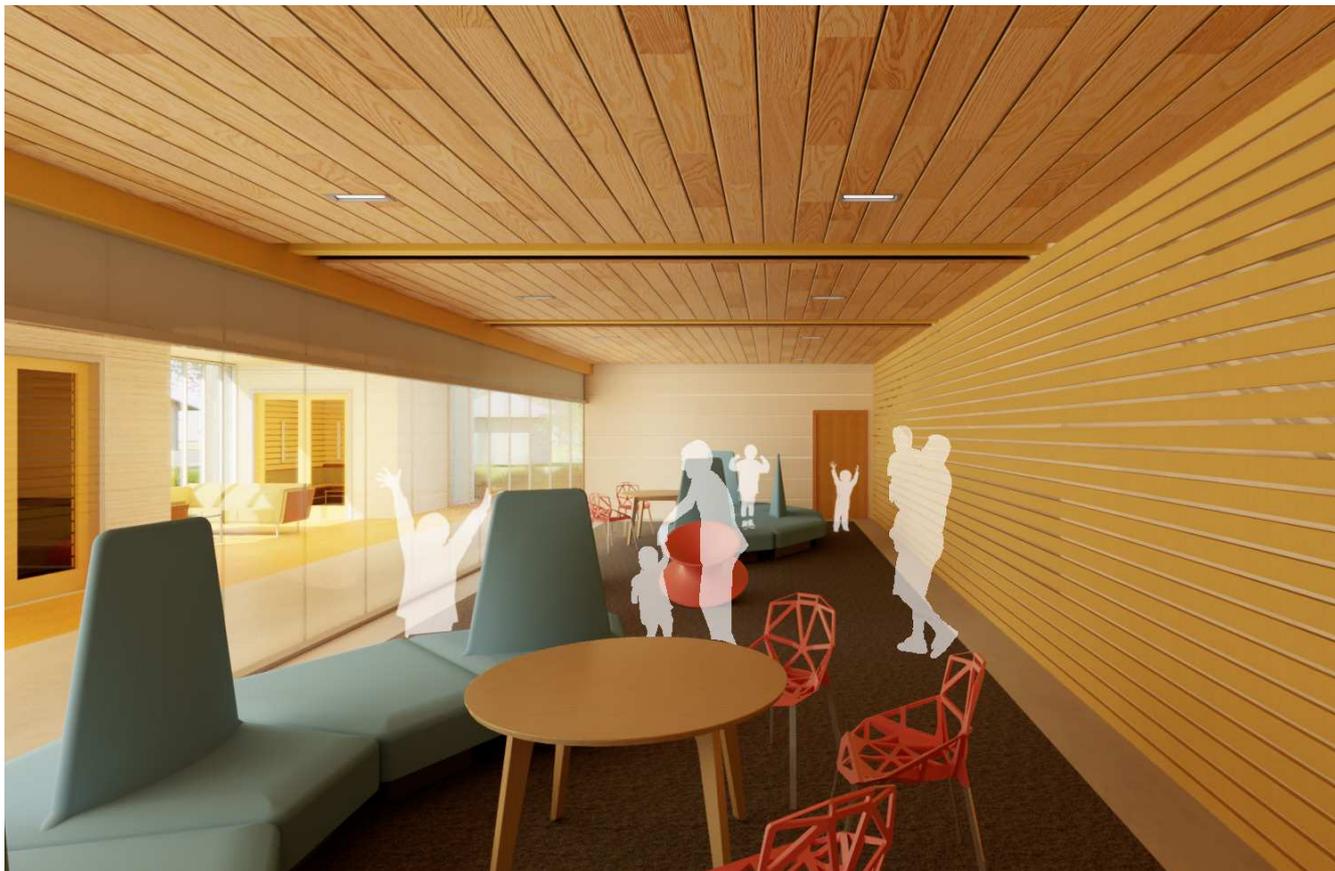


Interior render of first floor classroom. Lower ceilings for younger children and proximity to parents on first floor promotes safety.

classroom

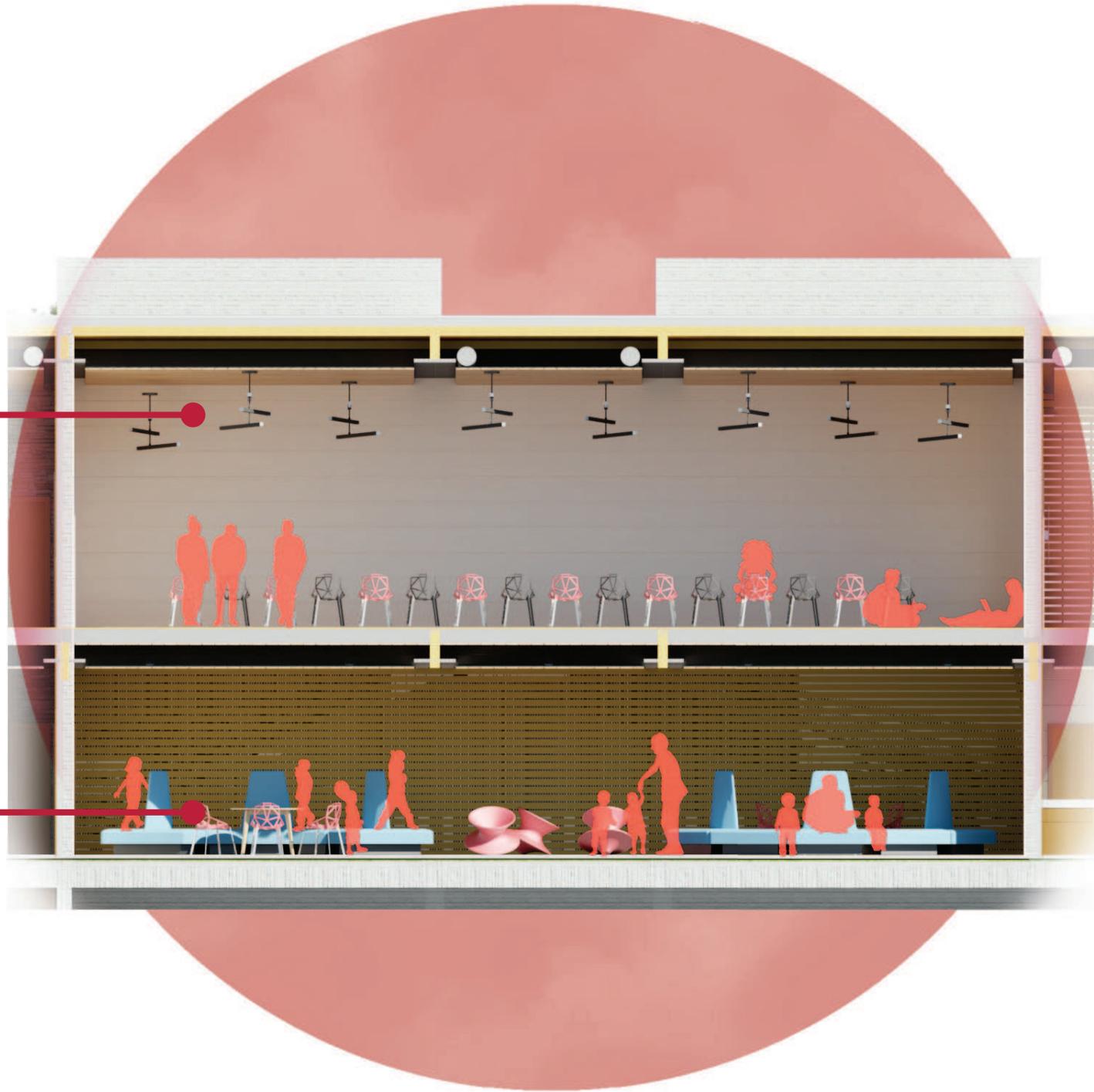


Interior render of youth ministry: second floor.



Interior render of youth ministry: first floor.

youth ministry



Interior render of worship space: See diffusion of light through the sunscreen which creates irregular shadows and a unique experience within the space.



Interior render of worship space: Max occupancy - 278 ▲



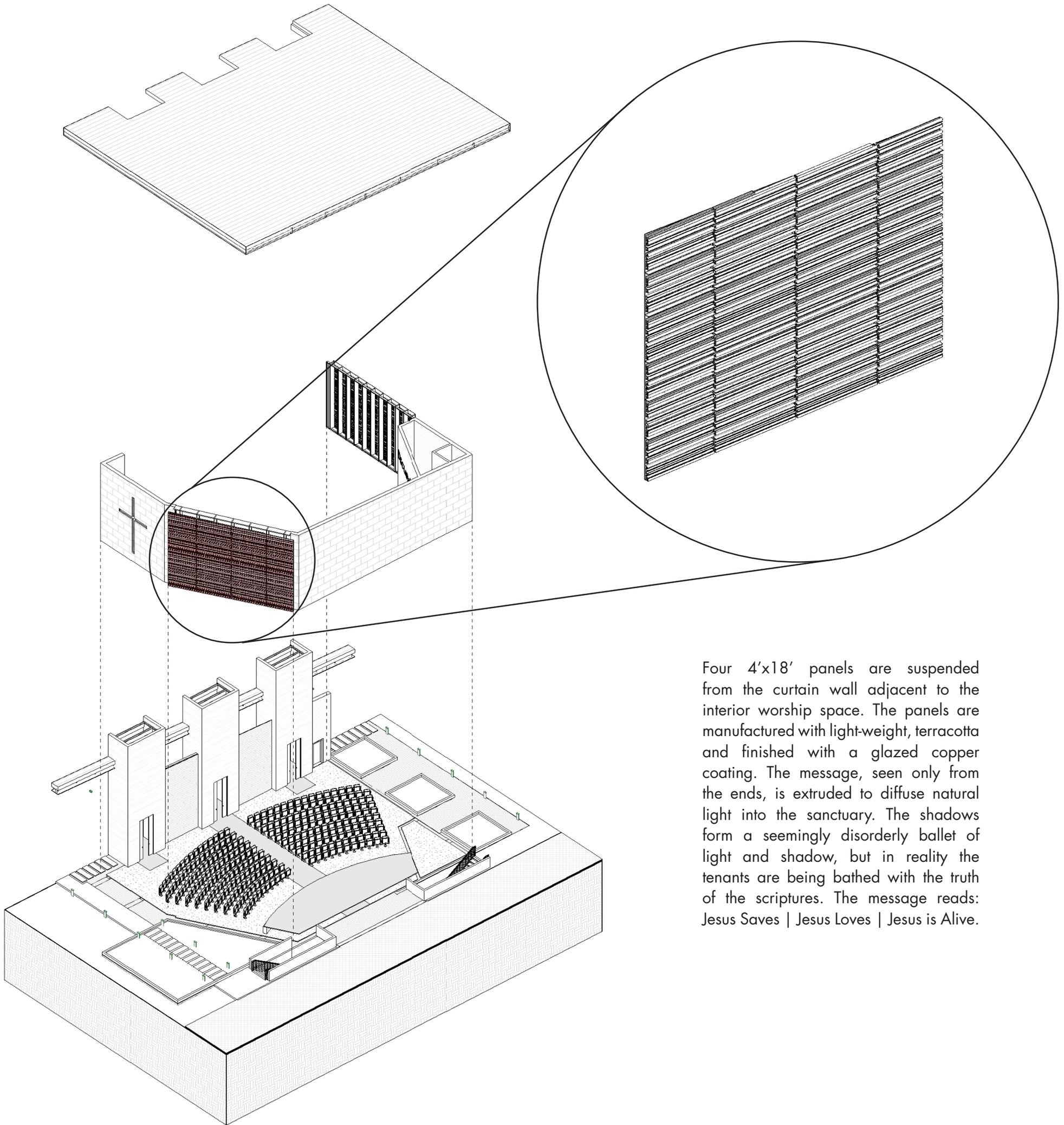
As one walks through the portal into the worship space they are transitioned from an open, friendly area, through one of three tall towers - again open to the sky and full of light - into a dimly lit and quiet space of reflectance. The newcomer feels the space become more intimate, lower ceilings bring everyone around them in tight proximity and the space is dominated by a quiet aura of peace. They start to reflect on the many complications of life and realize that they are in a space where every single person feels and lives similar pressures or anxieties as their own. Having transitioned into a state of reverence the individual takes a seat near the back and takes one last inventory of the space. The stage is low, the layout is simple and the only ornament is the window in the shape of the crucifix on the South side of the sanctuary. Large white painted boards line the walls enclosing the worshippers allowing what little light penetrating the space to reflect and bounce around playfully. A striated screen on the outside of the curtain walls diffuses natural light in an irregular yet familiar pattern. The newcomer reflecting on this suddenly remembers that as they strolled around the grounds earlier, they noticed that the screens were actually made from a series of phrases and extruded to create the fixture. They read: JESUS SAVES | JESUS LOVES | JESUS IS ALIVE. It is yet another moment of awe for them because they realize that the light and shadow patterns produced across the space are bathing the congregation with important truths of the scriptures. The pastor begins to speak and invites everyone to greet each other. The newcomer is welcomed with a smile and invitations to lunch after the service. The lights then dim and the service begins.



Interior lobby render facing sanctuary entrance. ▲



Exterior of Worship Space. Iconography at approachable level. ▲



Four 4'x18' panels are suspended from the curtain wall adjacent to the interior worship space. The panels are manufactured with light-weight, terracotta and finished with a glazed copper coating. The message, seen only from the ends, is extruded to diffuse natural light into the sanctuary. The shadows form a seemingly disorderly ballet of light and shadow, but in reality the tenants are being bathed with the truth of the scriptures. The message reads: Jesus Saves | Jesus Loves | Jesus is Alive.









In one of these rooms the member points out a group of three praying while another is softly sobbing. Something resonates within the newcomer when they witness the congregation's closeness. A sweeping feeling of emotion comes over them and at that moment they need to find a place to speak with their new acquaintance privately. The budding friendship makes its way up the stairs, past families playing games in another seating area, to an outdoor balcony on the second level between the small group towers. It is a quiet place to reflect and converse. Once more the newcomer takes in their surroundings. From the balcony they can see people playing on the path they had walked before the service. As they stand and walk to the railing, they witness a baptism in the pond below them followed by boisterous cheering. Placing a hand on the wall they feel the warmth accumulating on the board-formed concrete and slide it along gently to feel the rough yet honest texture. The newcomer initiates a conversation about faith.

After the service the members usher their new friend back into the lobby area to carry on their conversation. The lobby again booms with lively conversation and laughter; echoes of friendship fill the entire church. Surprisingly no one is leaving right away, in the newcomer's experience patrons would dash out the door as soon as the doxology was sung, back to the regular pace of life. This was different. Lunch is being offered from the café and many people are filtering into the long corridors to sit and break bread together. As they transition past the stone wall along the large stairwell, the members' new friend notices that people are entering into the concrete towers at both levels. The glass door unveils small groups of people approaching each other in prayer and talking about things within the confines of a semi-private setting. One of the members notices their new friend's intrigue and tells them that small groups are the foundational strength of any church and that the architect used these spaces to create the order and structure they stand in now.



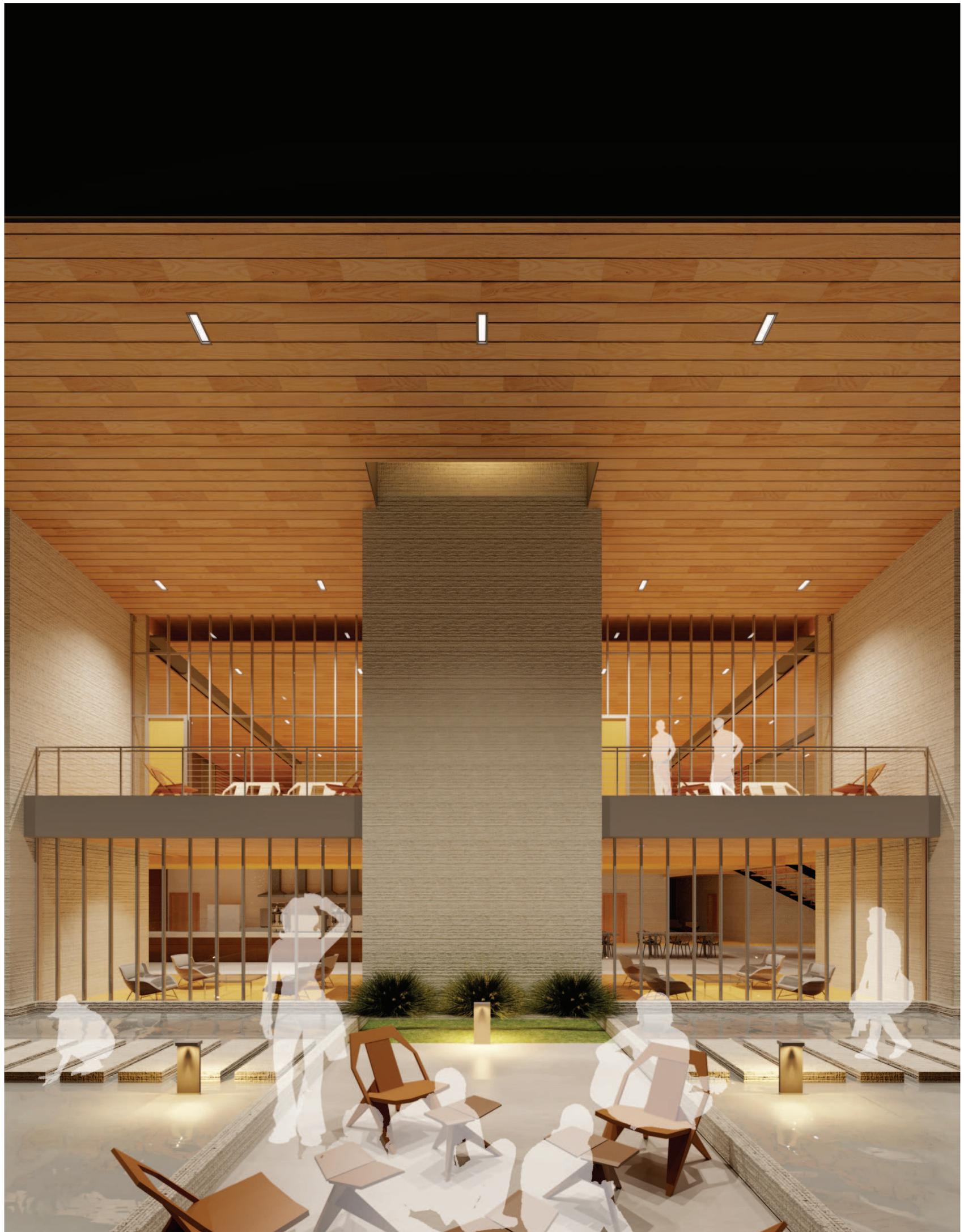


After a brief, honest conversation about the shared relationships and faith the congregation has in God, the members offer to show the rest of the space to their new friend. They walk out onto the indoor balcony and meander along the towers. The members point out the primary and secondary qualities of the small group rooms. The first floor is more cave like, compact to influence a private setting like that reminiscent of Matthew 6:6. (But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.) The second floor is yet another tall, sky-lit area geared toward an airy and bright spatial quality. To the right there is a large box-like structure that spans from the first floor to the ceiling of the second floor. It is the youth ministry and is distinguished from the towers by its material – copper paneling – once more. There is a large curtain wall, which allows parents to watch over their children while keeping them secure in a fun place. The member's new friend likes that there is such an emphasis on safety and transparency within the church. They proceed to the classrooms offset by the rhythm of the small groups to create their own manifestations. The classrooms are large with high-ceilings and an abundance of natural light. The members boast about how different groups use these rooms throughout the week to learn languages and new skills, rent them out for community gatherings and presentations, and utilize their calming nature as a place for groups like AA members and recovering addicts to congregate. The church has become an extension of the community center next door, which invites people to use its spaces at little to no cost.

The new patron of the church has been enamored by the work of God flowing through the ministry. As they finish their meal and get up to leave, the once curious pedestrian feels a pull to become a member. They look up from the lobby and notice the towers yet again. There are skylights along the central faces that wash light down the walls emboldening the texture of the concrete. The materials seem so meticulously placed as to compliment and compound the effects of proportion and light. The newcomer turns to the reception area and asks about membership classes. They receive a pamphlet and a complimentary Bible. There are kids playing on the open-grid paving on the North side of the building now. As the newcomer walks around the grounds again with the other members, they extend an invitation to their weekly small group and bible study. The members share that they meet at the church often to regroup throughout the week and volunteer in the neighborhood. The ministry has programs that allow volunteers to disseminate materials and resources to less fortunate residents who need access to medicine, food, home repair, clothes, or learning supplies in the area.

As a conduit of God's love, the church has been uniquely positioned to impact the neighborhood it resides in. The newcomer, knowing some friends that could use the help, makes a note to share the good news with them. As the new friends come to the front of the building the friends exchange goodbyes in front of the crucifix window. Before they part ways, the newcomer asks why the iconography of the crucifix is only seen in one spot of the church. The member explains that situating the crucifix at the ground level allows them to approach God the Father and leave their burdens at the foot of the cross. It places Christ in the realm of humanity and keeps them from becoming over encumbered with fear of God's immensity. They tell the newcomer that the relationships built here are ones defined by a vertical focus on God and a horizontal focus on relationships, because that is what Christians are called to do; Love God and Love each other.

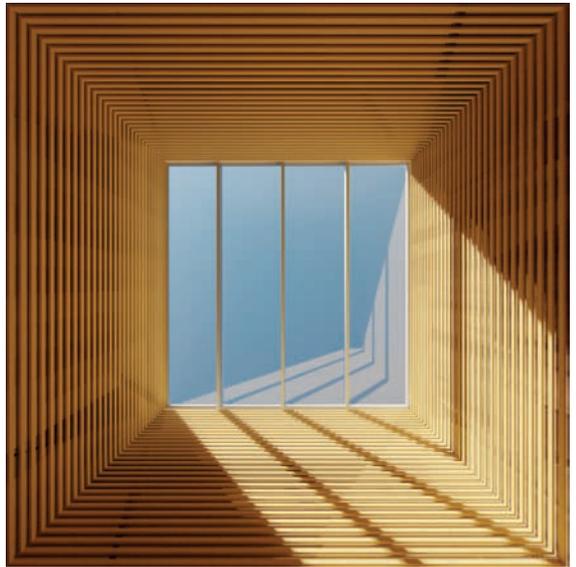
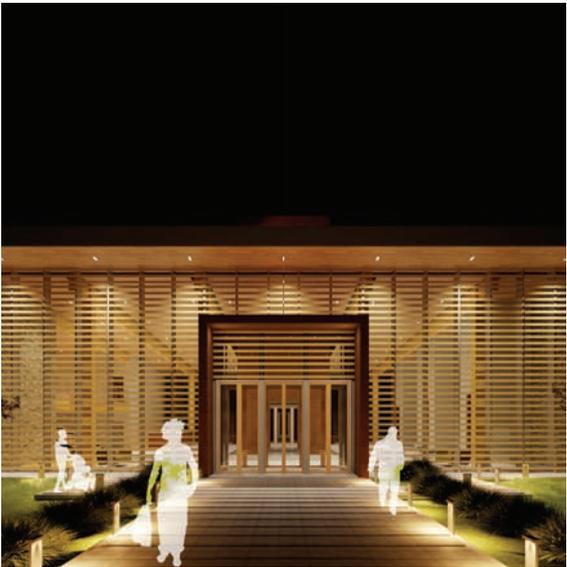
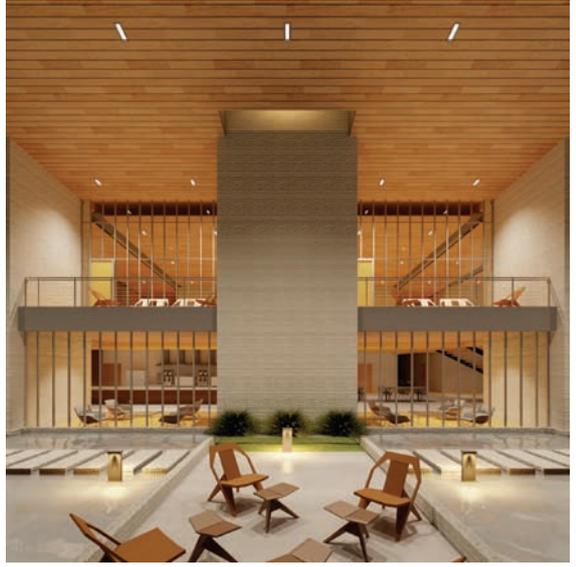
The goals of this project were to re-concentrate the focus of Christian architecture on the scriptures, enabling the Gospel to create a contextual and experiential environment that fosters the formation of relationships among the congregation. Provide Declaration Church with an architectural language that will equip the ministry with the capability to replicate its architectural experiences and branding respective to the context of a new site. Preserve the balance of built to landscaped features in order to fluctuate the variability of experiences, providing the congregation with multiple scales of opportunity to build relationships. Through this process proportion, natural light and materiality have had a profound impact on the formulation of spaces within the church. They constitute rhythm and order, which in turn produces areas that promote comfort, safety, and balance between the different aspects of faith-based lifestyles. Finally, the church has been given an architectural vernacular unique to Bible's doctrine. The worshipper is washed over with the truths of the bible just by stepping onto the grounds of the ministry.







There is peace in places where one may reflect without disturbance (Matthew 6:6). There is healing in confession (James 5:16) and repentance. Accountability amongst brothers and sisters is unburdening (Proverbs 27:17) and catalytic to growth. The Church is not a closet you can climb into to hide away from everything, nor is it a place where people have sewn their lives into flawless tapestries, all it - is - is a network of people who acknowledge their dependence on God and offer up their weakness in worshipful faith. This project is the culmination of the simple idea that a Christian's faith is defined by a two-part truth. Love is an engagement with God that bodes the Christian to love and serve others; it is vertical and horizontal. Love is impartial and unbiased, unconditional and unprejudiced. To love is to sacrifice and sacrifice is something Christ did for all people, not just the religious or morally upright. The Church is a conduit of love and this project seeks to equip the church with an invigorating built environment constructed by relationships characterized by that love.



2:1-31; Colossians 1:18;
Timothy 3:1-15; 4:14; Titus 1:5-9;
Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3
Matthew 16:15-19; Acts 2:41-42,
47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 14:23,27;
15:1-30; 16:5; 20:17-32;
Corinthians 3:16; 7:17; 9:13-14,
12:1-31; Colossians 1:18;
Timothy 3:1-15; 4:14; Titus 1:5-9;
Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3
Matthew 16:15-19; Acts 2:41-42,
47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 14:23,27;
15:1-30; 16:5; 20:17-32.

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Photos:

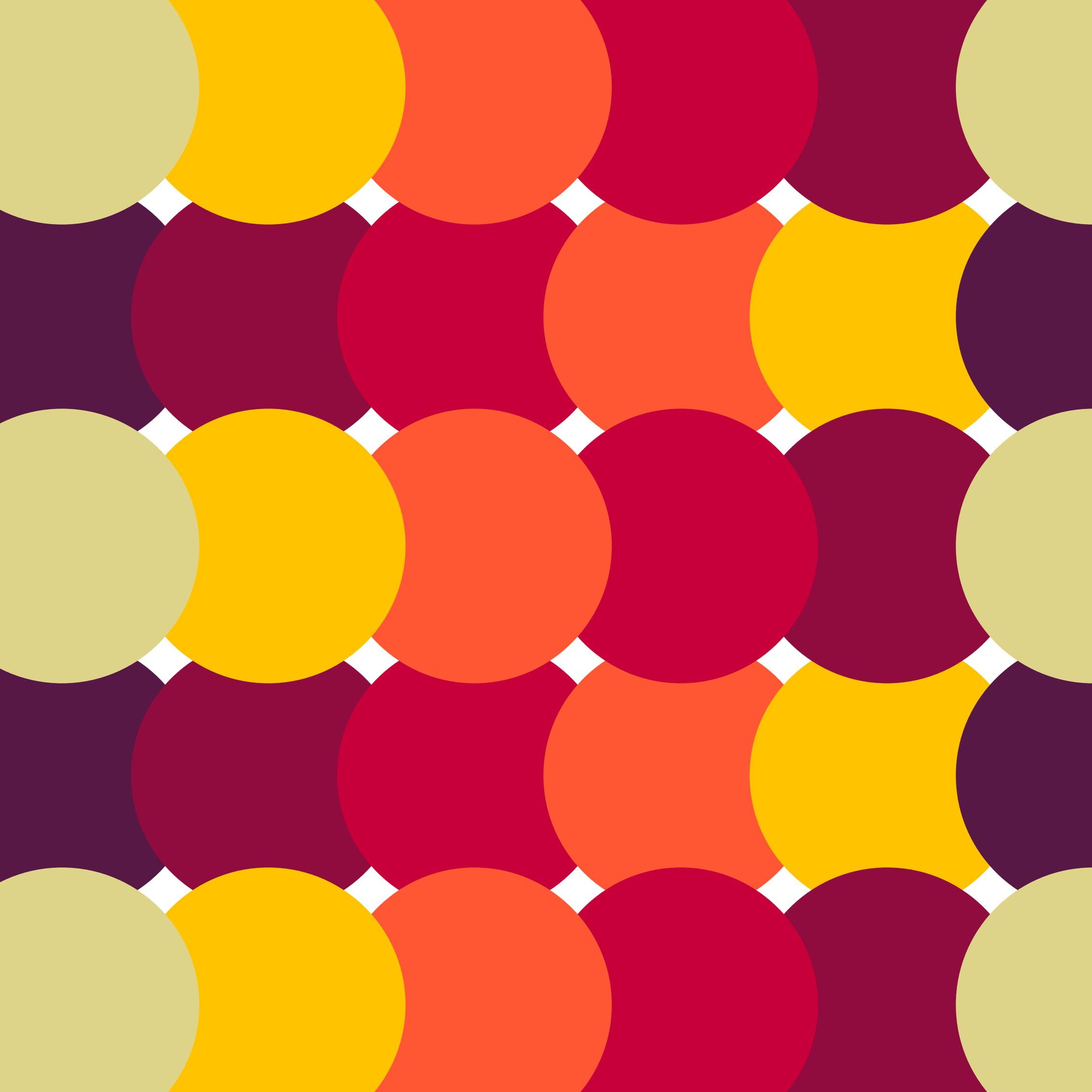
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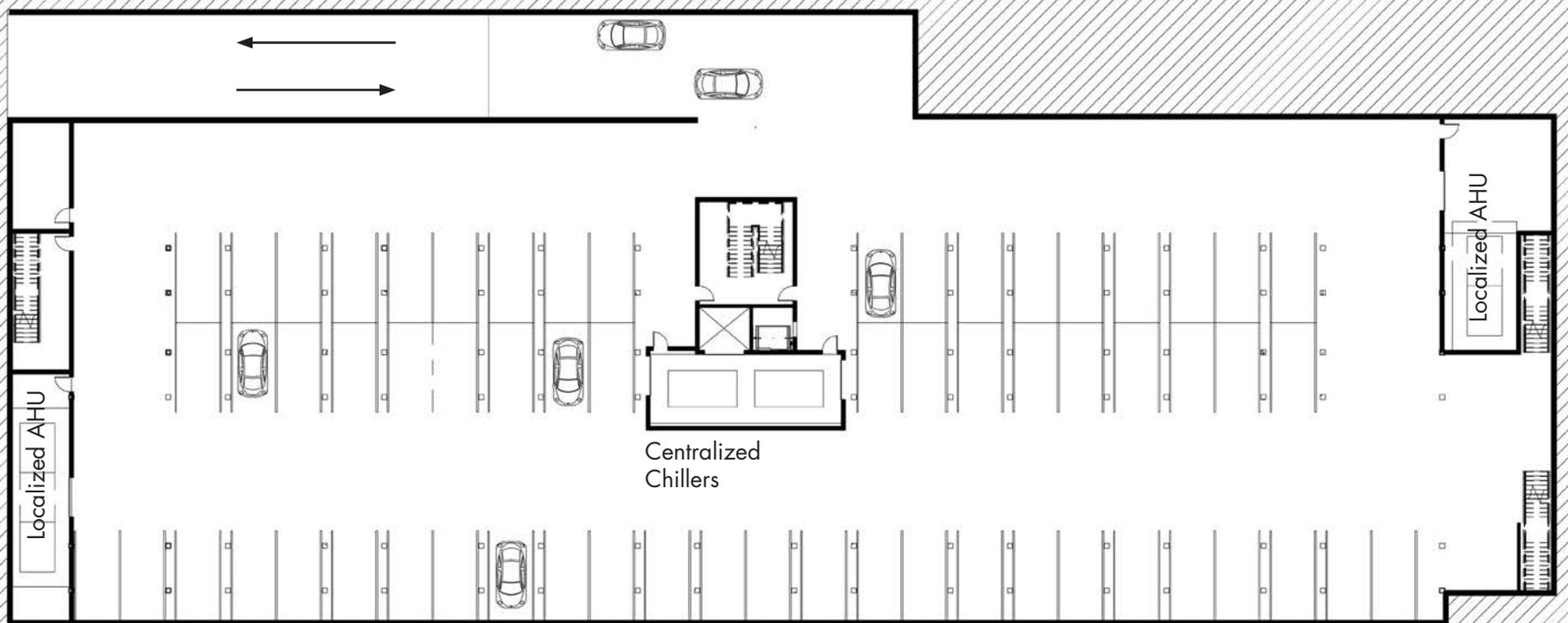
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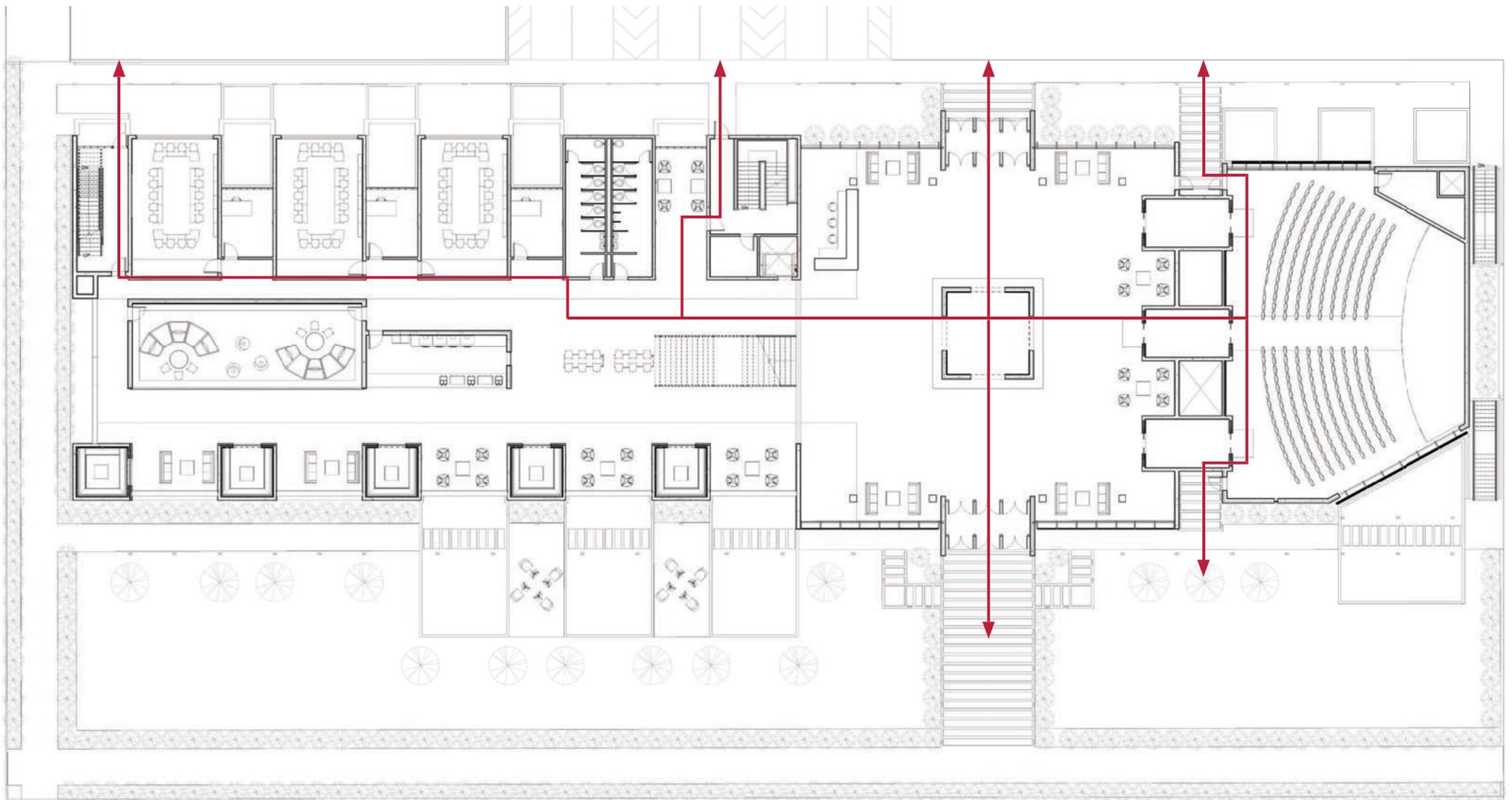


appendix

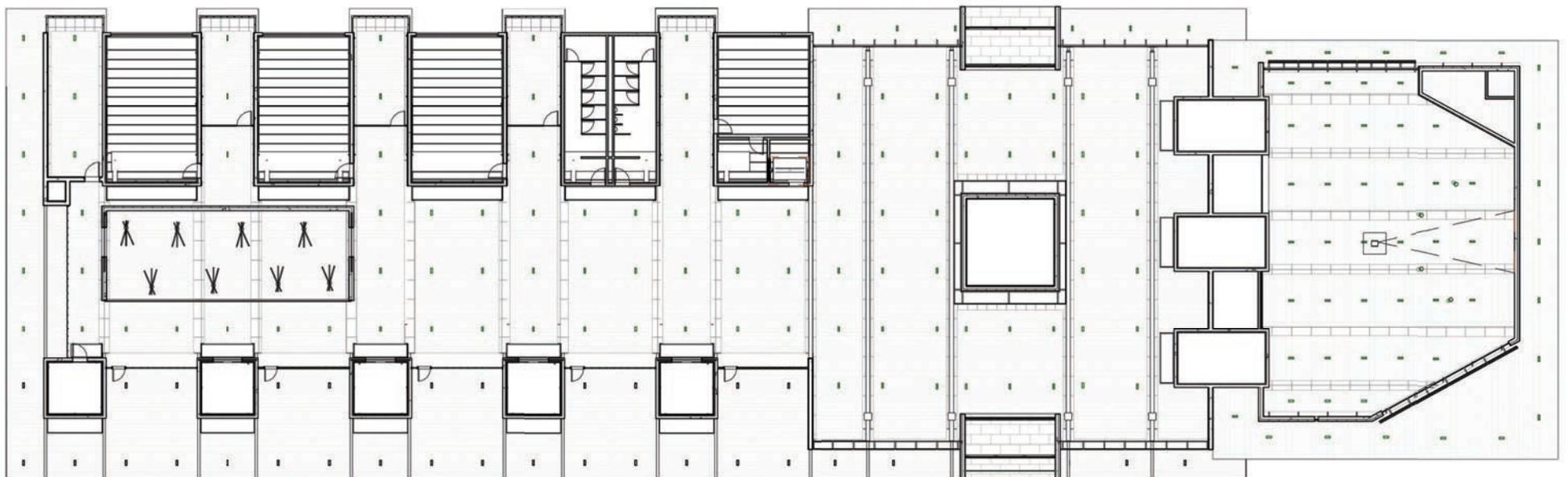


△ Plan 00



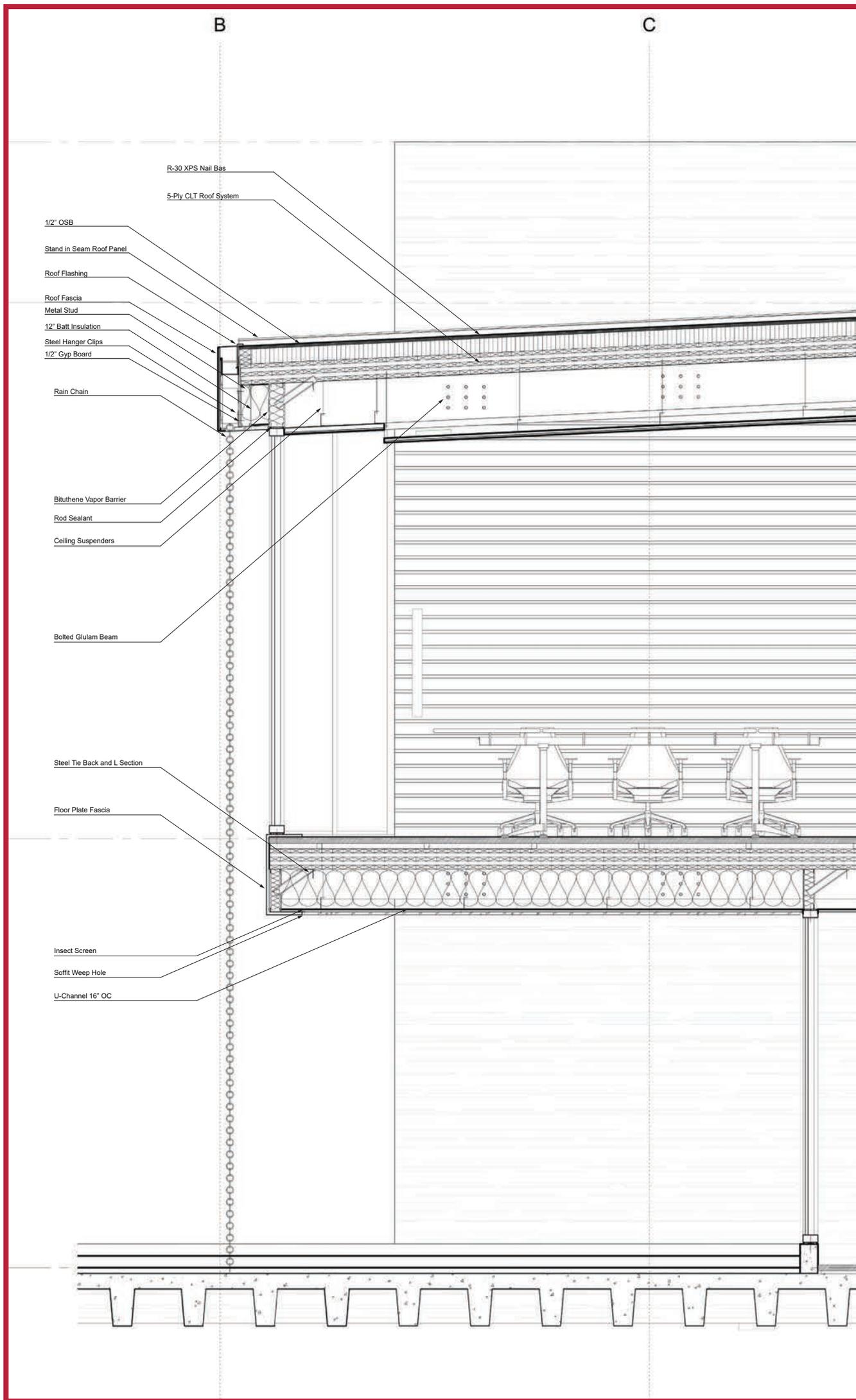


Emergency Egress Plan

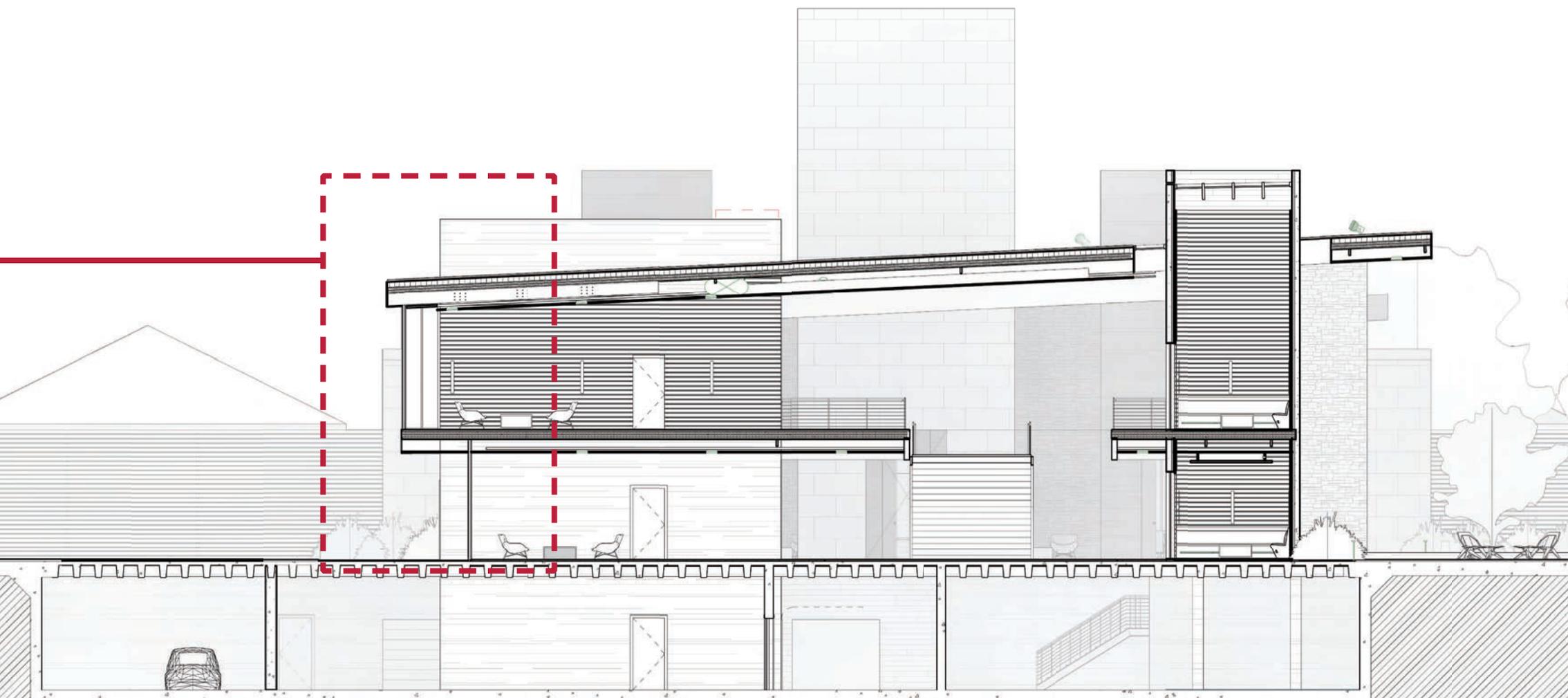
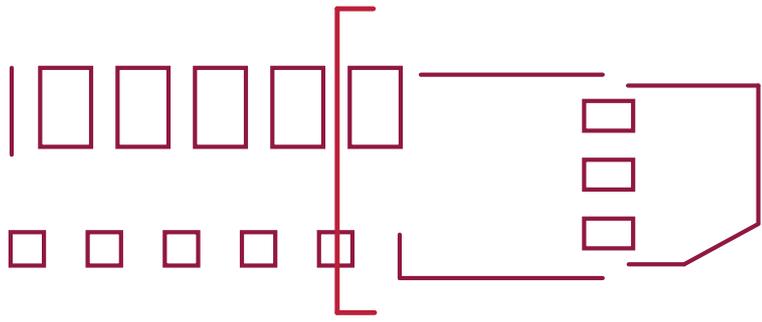


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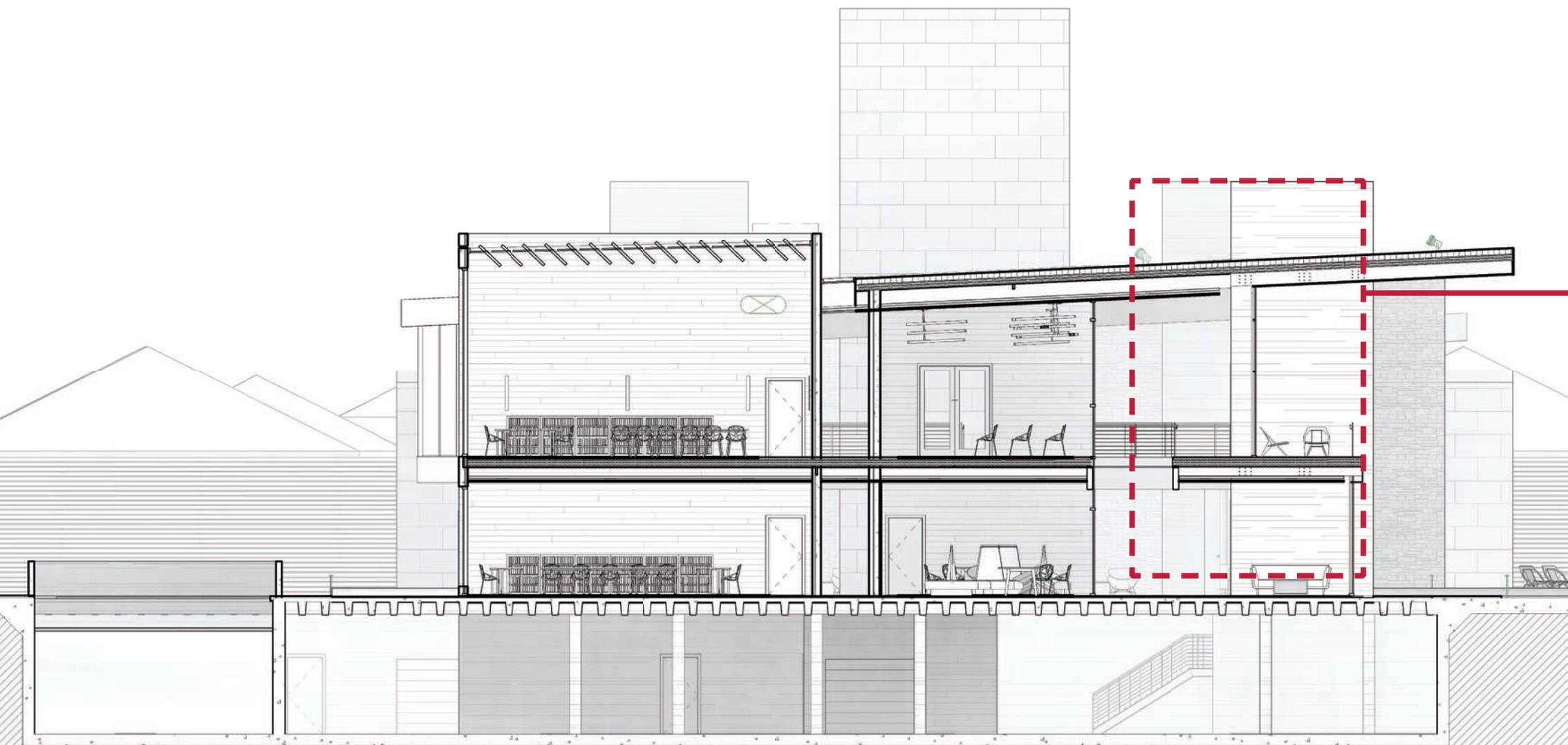
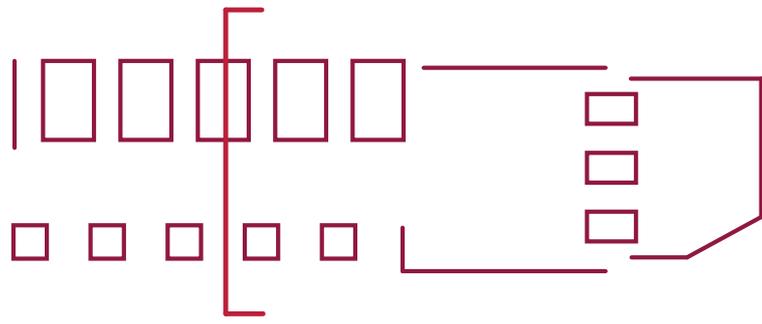




Wall Section 01



Section A



Section B

Wall Section 02

