

TRANSFORMATION OF AN INSTITUTION:

The Design of a Catholic Church for Boston's South End

Elizabeth M. Beliveau

B.S.A.D.
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts
June 1984

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
June 1988

© Elizabeth M. Beliveau 1988

The author hereby grants to M.I.T.
permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly
copies of this thesis document in whole or in part.

Signature of author _____

Elizabeth M. Beliveau
Department of Architecture
May 6, 1988

Certified by _____

William L. Porter
Professor of Architecture and Planning
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by _____

William Q. Hubbard
Chairman
Departmental Committee for Graduate Students

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

JUN 3 1988

LIBRARIES

Rotch

**Transformation of an Institution:
The Design of a Catholic Church for Boston's South End**

by Elizabeth M. Beliveau

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 6, 1988
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture.

ABSTRACT

Architecture can influence or be influenced by its environment. Because this is so, buildings often reflect the beliefs, understandings, or prejudices of a society. Architecture can also help to shape society's understanding of the institutions it houses. The traditional forms of the Catholic Church in this country have followed society's expectations of this facility. To date, there have been few significant challenges to this image. Through the transformation of this historic and often inappropriate form, the architecture can begin to influence both the Church's understanding of itself and its environs, and society's impression of this community.

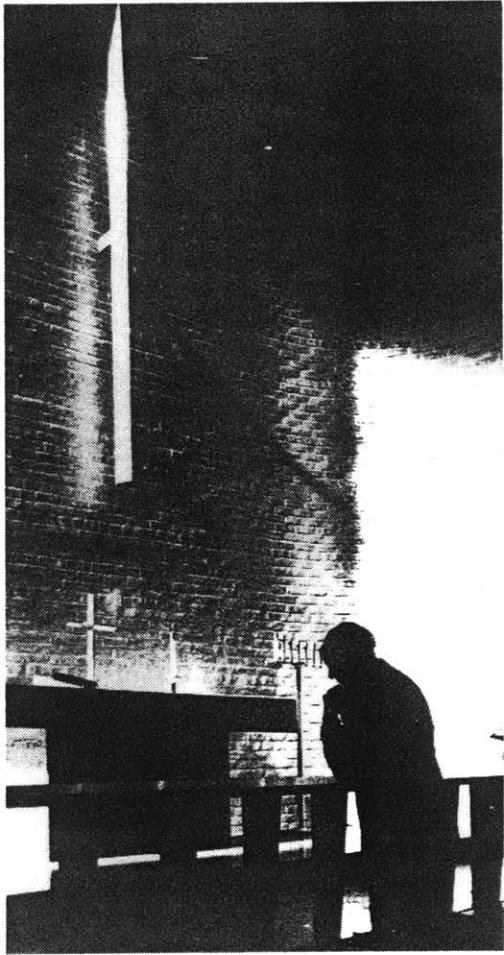
This thesis is an exploration into such a transformation. Through both research and design, the traditional image of the Church is evaluated and challenged. The search for a new image, one more appropriate to both the original intentions of the Church and the modern environments in which it operates, is attempted, and a preliminary design is proposed.

Thesis Advisor: William L. Porter
Title: Professor of Architecture and Planning

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of

Dale Bruce VanLaningham.





Preface

My interests in this area stem from a quarter century of being immersed, in varying degrees, in the Catholic Church. Some of my earliest memories are of going to church on Sunday, listening to the priest intone the Mass, staring meekly at the overwhelming structures in which my family worshipped.

As I got older, and my exposure to and understanding of Catholicism grew, my life seemed completely enmeshed by this religion. Most of what I was taught seemed correct (and, in any case, irrefutable), and I was not yet burdened with the contradictions which abounded around me.

It was only when I went to college, and was surrounded by "non-Catholics" (heretofore a strange anomaly), that some of the problems with my religion became evident. The isolation, apathy, and discontent of my fellow Catholics was suddenly obvious. The Church, it appeared, was sending out the appropriate moral messages, it was simply that the examples were not always there as proof of the correctness and importance of these messages. The community which is the Church seemed actually a group of individuals situated together once a week out of obligation rather than mutual concern.

There are certainly many reasons why this is the case in some American churches today. This thesis does not claim that architecture is the solution to this complex problem; it simply suggests that directions such as the one proposed could help the Church to understand and reaffirm its true purpose. As an architect, I do believe that buildings can nurture and influence people. I do, also, recall my timidity as a young child in an overbearing Gothic church, which spoke neither of my life, my beliefs, nor its relation to the community gathered within or the society functioning around it. This work is a suggestion that perhaps these connections could and should be made.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Preface	7
1. Introduction	11
2. The Spirit Behind the Church	21
3. The Evolution of Church Form	35
4. Design Intentions	53
5. The Search for an Appropriate Form	67
6. An Evaluation of the Transformed Institution	83
Notes	139
Bibliography	141

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

"Man builds towns so that the towns shall build his sons...the outward is always reacting again on the inward, so that the concrete becomes a mold for the spiritual."

Lethaby

The Catholic Church in the United States is presently undergoing one of the most difficult phases of its existence. The Church has not only been unable to negotiate its position in American society, it has also lost its stronghold in the lives of many of its parishioners. Although these problems are certainly the result of many factors encompassing spiritual, political, social, and legal issues, part of the problem may be that the image which the Church presents to its own members and to the general public through its physical presence is inappropriate or misleading.

Catholic churches in this country usually convey a strong image in their domain: an image of dominance, of tradition, of distinction and separation from local surroundings. While any institution benefits from a clear image for society to grasp, the implications of these church buildings are not necessarily consistent with the intentions of the Church. In fact, such characterizations can often undermine the true purposes and attitudes of this institution.

This thesis explores the transformation of this image, in the hopes of arriving at a more relevant and appropriate form for this institution. In considering this task, the advice of Louis Kahn seems applicable:

"...it is good for the mind to go back to the beginning of any established human activity to its most wonderful moment. For in that moment lies the whole of its spirit and resourcefulness, from which for present needs we must constantly draw our inspiration. We make our institutions great by giving them, in the architecture we offer them, our sense of this inspiration."¹

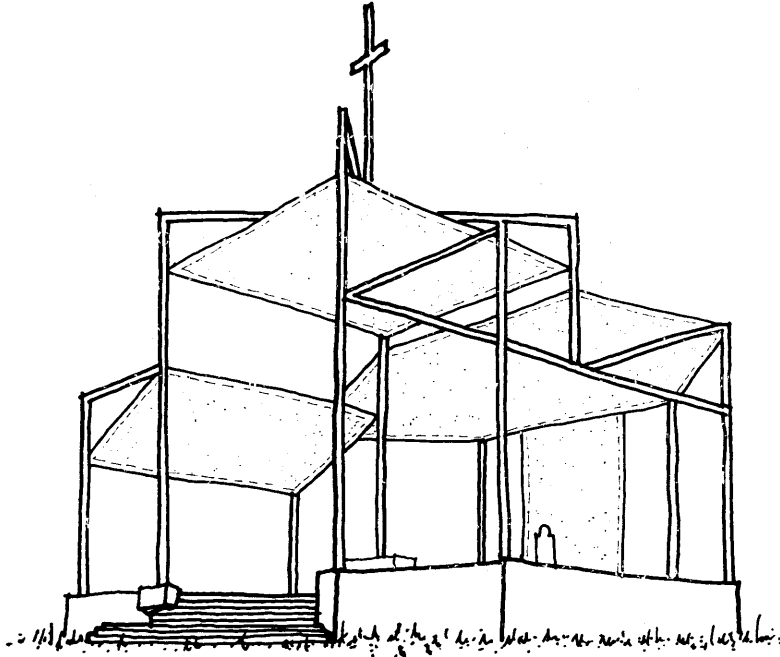


Figure 1.1

Pavilion for Pope John Paul II, Boston Common, Massachusetts. Architect: Glaser - DeCastro Associates. Christianity is not tied to a specific place or form, but rather to the beliefs and attitudes of the people involved.

The secondary concern of this thesis (after the revitalization of the Church through the discovery of an appropriate form), is the care for those individuals who fall through the cracks in our governmental systems. While there are many social agencies which recognize the need for more extensive services, there is often simply not funding nor manpower to realize them. The argument here is that a spirit of charity and community concern is created and fostered by the Church; it seems unfortunate that we are not able to put these sentiments to productive use in our societies. It would seem that the Church, having the manpower and the motivation to serve the community, could begin to fulfill some of these local needs without gaining worrisome control or undue influence in local society. There is a middle ground in which the Church can strengthen its position and reaffirm its intentions without threatening church-state individuality. As Peter Berger maintains, "...if a policy furthers a legitimate secular purpose it is a matter of legal indifference whether or not that policy employs religious institutions".²

In his analysis of mediating institutions, Berger observed the amazing significance of religion in the lives of the American people. He asserts that "on any given Sunday there are probably more people in churches than the total number of people who attend professional sports events in a whole year...there are close to 500,000 local churches and synagogues voluntarily supported by the American people."³ The support and dedication shown to a religious institution are resources which could be utilized to further public programs with similar ideas and goals.

America's religious institutions are intermediate social groups - small communities. The function of any community is both to respond to the needs of its individual members and to operate as a group having a "collective influence on its environment."⁴ Healthy, thriving communities are obvious

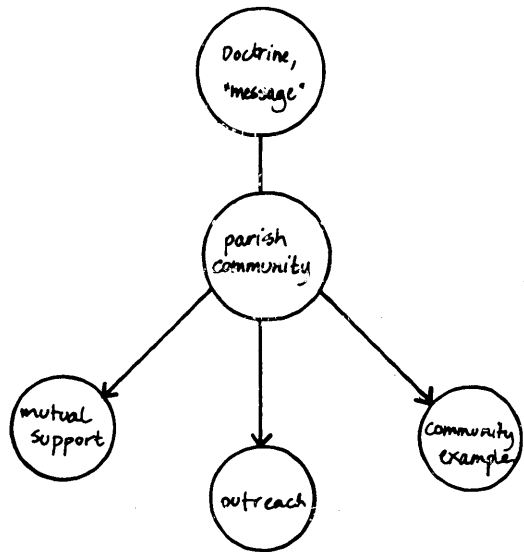
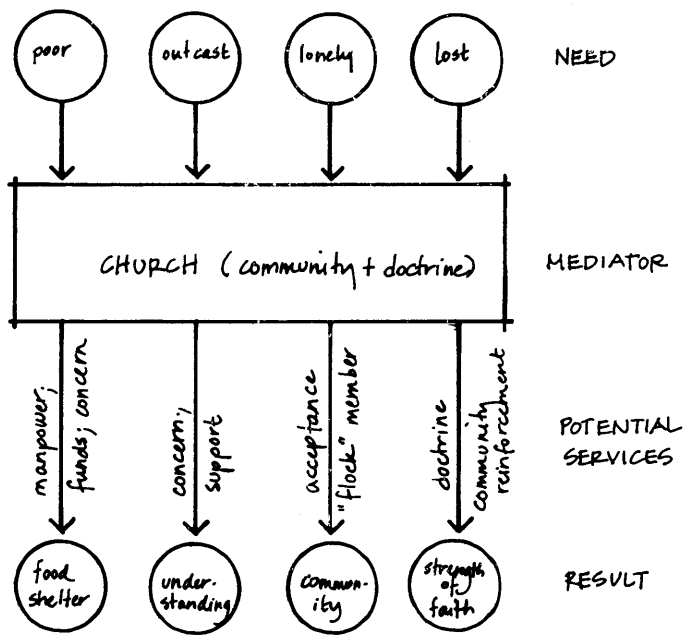


Figure 1.2
 Early diagrams indicating potential role of Church in local communities.



through their continual growth and evolution. Exclusivity and isolation are traits which are in direct opposition to the concept of community. As Scott Peck explains in his evaluation of community dynamics, "The words 'communicate' and 'community', although verb and noun, come from the same root. The principles of good communication are the basic principles of community building."⁵ A new and more involved role for the Church would result in greater fulfillment for its parishioners as well as more effective and extensive social programs in local neighborhoods.

By diminishing the outreach of religious groups in this country we have not only seriously weakened these structures but we have also lost a significant opportunity. Reestablishing links between religious institutions and the larger society would improve the health of both communities and seems critical to the prosperous future of both.

This thesis will explore its topic through two parts. The first will be an attempt to understand the "inspiration" behind the Catholic Church. This will involve a brief review of the teachings and doctrines which are the basis of the Church, particularly as they inform the primary role of the Church in relation to its members and to local environments.

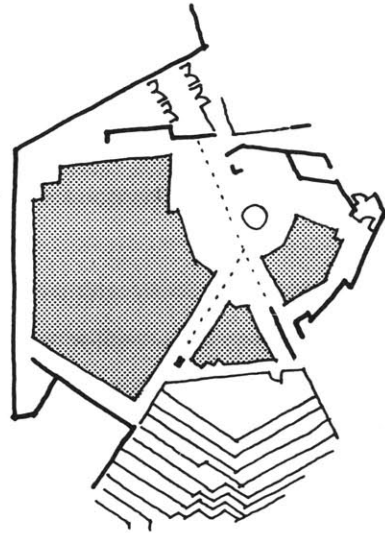
To understand how architecture has played a role in the developing image of the Catholic Church, a brief formal history is presented. Specific attention is paid to how the intentions of the Church were made explicit in its form, and the subsequent impact these forms had on society's use and understanding of this institution.

Through these analyses of the Church, those qualities which are primary to the goals of this community are documented and presented as a basis for the second stage, that of the design of a new church. This facility will attempt to reconnect the physical appearance of the Church with its



Figure 1.3
Typical South End street scene; the homeless are very apparent in this area.

Figure 1.4
Catholic Church in Vettelschoss, Germany. Architect: Justus Dahinden. This multi-purpose form allows for a variety of communal activities and group sizes.



stated ideology.

The message of the Church, transmitted in part through its architecture, is clarified and strengthened through the evaluations and transformations which follow. The proposed design, it is hoped, signifies a return to the Church's original intentions rather than a radical departure.

Chapter Two

THE SPIRIT BEHIND THE CHURCH

*Is not religion all deeds and all reflection?
And that which is neither deed nor reflection,
but a wonder and a surprise ever springing in the soul,
even while hands hew the stone or tend the loom?*

*Who can spread his hours before him, saying,
"This for God and this for myself;
this for my soul, and this other for my body?"*

Your daily life is your temple and your religion.

Kahlil Gibran

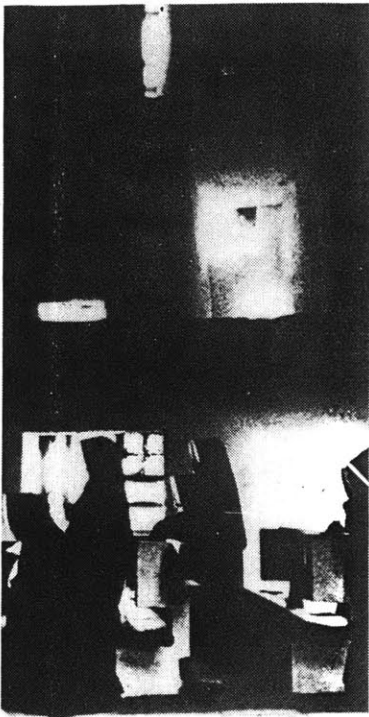
This thesis attempts to link the basic purposes of the Catholic Church with its physical image. To do so, it is important to establish and substantiate those intentions which will be highlighted in this process. A careful reading of the New Testament reveals fundamental principles which embody the true spirit of Christianity and served to instill inspiration and commitment in the early worshippers.

Perhaps one of the most powerful messages which Christ gave to His disciples occurred at the Last Supper, the original gathering on which contemporary Catholic masses are modeled:

*I give you a new commandment:
love one another;
just as I have loved you,
you must also love one another.
By this love you have for one another,
everyone will know that you are my disciples.
John 13: 34-35*

It was at this gathering that Christ revealed that He would sacrifice His body and blood, His humanity, so that mankind would be offered the promise of eternal life. He asked His apostles to continue this ritual, to gather with others to recall His sacrifice and to celebrate the hope it offered them. This celebration of the Eucharist, in fact the whole experience of the Catholic mass, is a tangible means of strengthening Christ's teachings and remains an important opportunity for communal support and exchange.

Christ's final teachings, like those He had performed for the three years prior to His death, emphasize concern for others, mutual love and respect. These ideals are offered as the basis for the truly Christian life, a life which will ultimately lead to earthly happiness and eternal salvation.



The institution which we call Church is actually a community of people , often referred to in Scriptures as "the mystical body of Christ". St. Paul characterizes this group:

"For as the body is one and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body: so are we in Christ...And if one member suffer any thing, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it."

1 Corinthians 12: 2-31

The dedication that existed among early Church members truly illustrated the power of Christ's teachings. A passage from the Acts of the Apostles describes one of these groups:

"The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything was held in common. None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money from them. It was then distributed to any members who might be in need."

Acts of the Apostles 4:: 32-35

These people came together to help each other, to share mutual beliefs, to perform common rituals, to offer services to the surrounding community, and through these acts to deepen their understanding of Christ's teachings. "The Church as the Mystical Body fulfills its spiritual life and its historical calling through human, visible modes of operation"⁶, through living fellowship and the immediacy of personal contact.

Besides the mutual concern and support which this community offered, there are several other qualities which are important to mention in order to more clearly understand this sect. Christ intended His followers to be



examples for their fellow men to observe. Through this observation would come an understanding and appreciation of Christian motives, and in this way the Church would prosper and grow. As Jesus told His disciples:

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glory your Father in Heaven."

Matthew 5: 13-16

The relationships experienced in the formal gatherings of this community establish patterns of interaction which should operate in all aspects of this community's life; in so doing they would create models for the larger community. Evangelism, in the context of Catholicism, happens through example. "The Church's responsibility in the city... calls for a visible demonstration of what the Church is saying in its doctrine and pointing to in its service. It is 'hope made visible', a kind of living picture of the character and composition of the true city of man for which the Church strives."⁷

The doctrines of the Church, as defined through Christ's teachings, also underline outreach as a basic obligation of this community. A main focus of the Church is outside itself, to the larger community. Christ advised:

"The King will say to them: 'I was hungry and you gave me drink; naked and you clothed me; in prison and you came to see me. I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.'"

Matthew 25: 35-40

Figure 2.1
St. Stephanus, Bernhausen, Germany.
Architect: Reinhard Gieselmann. Dramatic
openings behind altar create an important
connection with the street beyond.



The sentiments created by Christianity, therefore, are not diminished but transformed and strengthened by connection to the public realm. It is through these crucial connections that the base community, the Church, is empowered.

Further study of the tenets of Christianity affirm this connection between the Church and the secular society. The Incarnation, a belief which is fundamental to Catholicism, illustrates the critical union of the spiritual with the earthly through the tremendous occurrence of God made man in Christ. Christ, through His very existence, unmistakably fused the sacred with the secular.

This union is emphasized in many of the rites which distinguish the Catholic community. Transubstantiation, the uniquely Catholic and understandably radical belief that the bread and wine offered at the Mass are literally transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, is an important example of the sacred and secular unity initiated by Christ. "The material is not simply an encountered fact but a necessary means to a spiritual end." Ordinary objects and everyday experiences are believed to be "portals to the transcendent".⁸

For many years, great thinkers have pondered this Christian concept of the unity of sacred and secular. The philosopher Hegel struggled to define the complementary roles played by religious or "sacred" impulses and mundane or "secular" impulses. He felt that Christianity reached its goals only by becoming the source and inspiration for everyday activities, by instilling its inherent moral values in the total lives of its followers. The strength and purpose of religion, maintained Hegel, is "woven into the very fabric of human life", and finds expression in the union of its spiritual force with all branches of



Figure 2.2

Seven Churches Area, Mykonos, Greece. These churches are continuous with the scale and materials of the surrounding residential fabric. Continuities rather than distinctions are established.

human existence. The failure of Christianity, he continues, is its current inability to link religion and secular life, its hesitance in developing a system which incorporates the social environments in which humans operate. "The mature Hegel hoped...to restore the union of religious and secular life by developing an understanding of the divine as immanent in history and ultimately present in the activity of the human spirit, so that the celebration of God's creative presence could also be the act of man defining his own world."⁹

Many others have concurred with Hegel on this theory that sacred and secular impulses are in fact inextricably fused; one makes no sense without the other to define it. In fact, the word religion is taken from the Latin "religio", which means "to bind or fasten up", and implies the process of linking several elements into one.¹⁰ Religion is defined to be an integrating force in human life; it is only through the fusion of religious faith and social endeavors that humanity realizes its greatest potentials. As William James contends, "Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life is, in the final analysis, the end of religion...The love of life, at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse."¹¹

Christianity's ultimate capability is that of integrator. It is clear that a Catholic life, ideally, is an integrated life. This potential can only achieve realization if the beliefs and values generated by this religion are meaningfully linked with the many other aspects of human life. There can be no compartmentalization for a true Catholic; no areas of life in which the beliefs and values instilled by Christ have no relevance or influence.¹² To treat religion as distinct from the rest of life is to misunderstand and weaken its fundamental purpose. Though there is much of religion which is highly personal and unable to translate directly into words or acts, there is also much

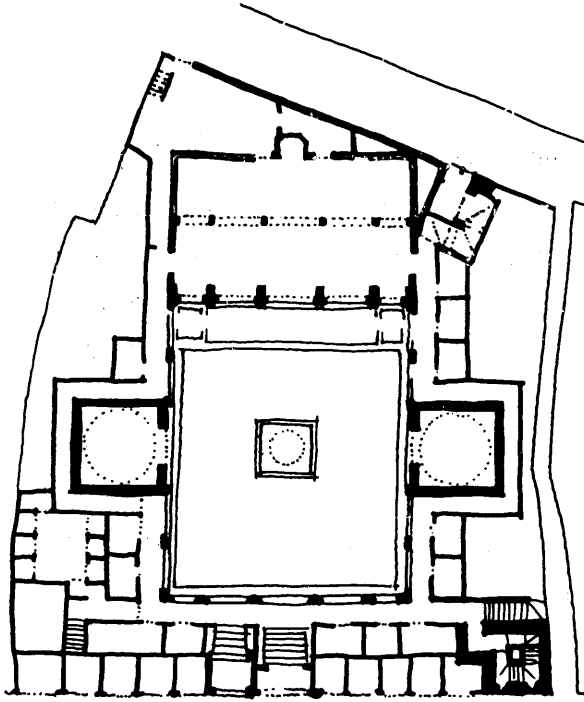


Figure 2.3
Bou Inaniya Mosque, Fez, Morocco. Plan showing layering of spaces from most sacred (interior worship space) to most secular (street-fronting shops). These distinct uses, in this culture, are melded into one structure. They are not seen as contradictory but rather as complimentary functions.

which can be expressed in tangible ways in contemporary societies. It is through just such expression that Catholicism is strengthened and propagated.

This brief investigation into the underlying principles of Catholicism is helpful to understand the ideal role of the Church in modern society. It can now be defined as a unique community - a community recognizable by the concern and support shared among its members; a community with critical extensions into the secular life around it; a group which serves as an example for others and acts as a unifier or integrator in the lives of its members. Defined as such, the mediating role of the Church becomes apparent. The Church acts as a mediator on many levels: the expected role of mediator between an individual and his God, as well as the less acknowledged mediation between an individual and society, between different groups in the larger community, and between individuals at the most personal level.

Chapter Three

THE EVOLUTION OF CHURCH FORM

'What dost thou call the Church?'

'Why', said he, 'that which you call the steeple house.'

Then I asked him, 'whether Christ shed His blood for the steeple house; and purchased and sanctified the steeple house with His blood? And seeing the Church is Christ's bride and wife, and that He is the head of the Church, dost thou think the steeple house is Christ's wife and bride, and that He is the head of that old house, or His people?'

'No', said he, 'Christ is the head of the people, and they are the Church.'

'Then', said I, 'but you have given the title, Church, which belonged to the people, to an old house, and you have taught people to believe so.'

George Fox

The primary activity around which the Church is formed is the celebration of the Eucharist. This celebration is a recreation of the Last Supper at which Christ gave up His body and blood for His followers, epitomizing the love He felt for all mankind.

Christ asked that His disciples continue this ritual to remember the sacrifice He endured and to celebrate the hope it offered humanity. It is the interest of this thesis to evaluate the formal, physical manifestations of these meetings.

Church architecture actually has no history in these original gatherings. The Church, the community of people living their lives based on the examples of Christ, was not originally an institution identifiable with any specific structures. The earliest Church groups were true to Christ's assertion that the people and not the buildings were important:

*"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that
the Spirit of God dwells in you?"*
1 Corinthians 3: 16

The beginnings of a specific church form actually occurred several hundred years after the conception of the Church. Initially, since the gathering of the followers of Christ focused on the Eucharist, these celebrations occurred in the house of one of the worshippers, typically in the dining room at the family table. The distinction between daily life and religious beliefs simply did not exist, either in doctrine or in practice. The traditional family dwelling was instead transformed by the beliefs of the inhabitants - special meaning was given to common rituals and places.¹³

As Christianity became more widespread, and as the initial fear of persecution or alienation decreased, the desire and need for specific

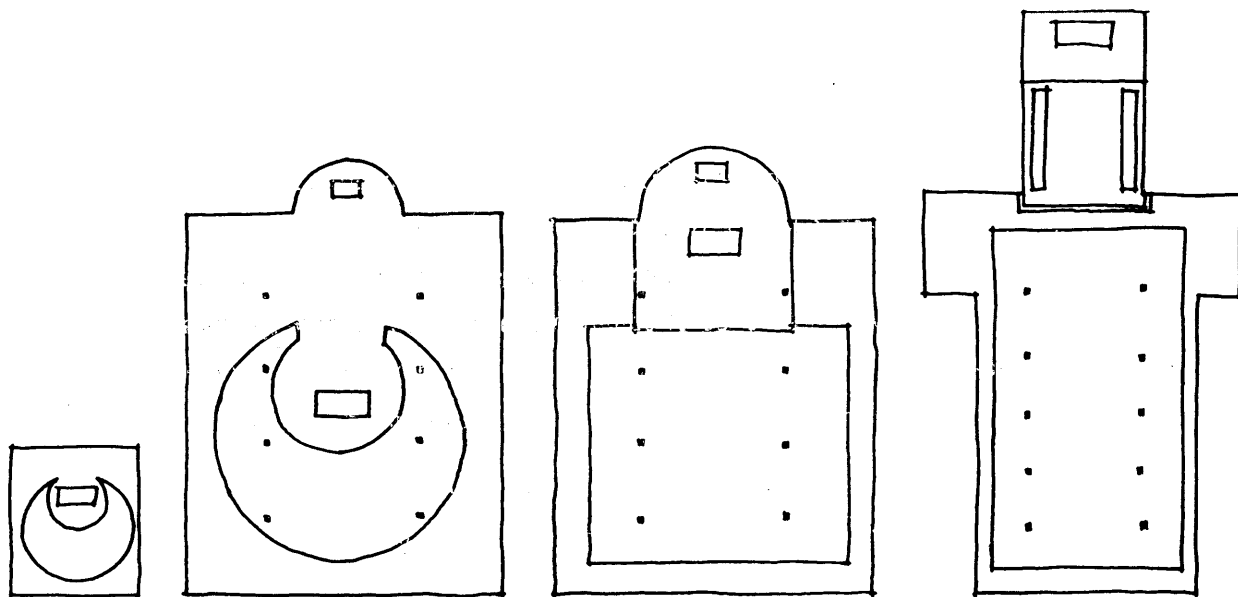


Figure 3.1
The changing form of the church throughout the centuries. (after Sovik)

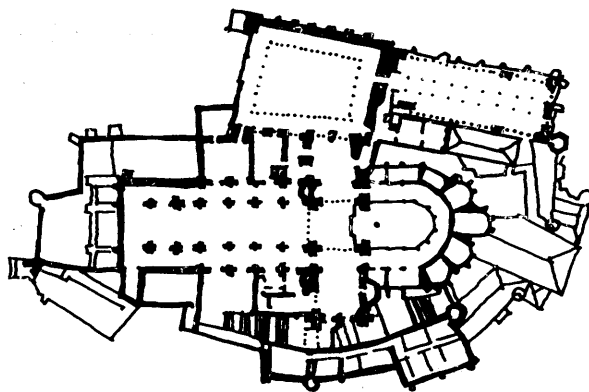


Figure 3.2
Mont St. Michel, France. The sanctuary space is completely enmeshed in the surrounding secular spaces.

gathering spaces for this community arose. The earliest built churches responded to the basic requirements for this special community gathering. The altar (usually a simple table) was the focus of an ordinary room with dimensions which allowed for congregating close to each other and this focus. There were no unique or sacred qualities to this place. What made it a sacred space was the sense of common concern and personal inspiration which the celebration of the mass instilled in its participants. The union of people with common beliefs and values transformed ordinary spaces:

*"For where two or more are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."
Matthew 18: 20*

The feeling of mutual responsibility and concern which these gatherings created in the earliest church-goers ultimately influenced the form of the church. The Church expanded in size and scope, and grew to involve several other activities; primarily spaces for incubation (healing) and shelter for travellers. The form responded to the total lifestyle which was being embraced by this community, and was patterned after the basilicas (places of civic assembly) rather than the shrines or temples associated with the more specific function of worship. These churches evolved into virtual centers for Christian life. Eventually plays, community meetings, dances, and games, along with other activities, came to be included in the scope of church activities. "The church was a home away from home, where people could sleep, eat, live, drink, play, act, and meet. It was part and parcel of everyday life; it was there to be used and used it was."¹⁴

The evolution and growth of the church's physical form and social involvements continued at a steady pace for several hundred years. This



Figure 3.3
Camillo Sitte's figure-ground studies showing the relationship of European churches to their public squares. The church was simply one element which, in combination with residential and commercial uses, contributed to the life of these public spaces.

progress was halted at the start of the Middle Ages, and was the result of several factors. The first influential change which occurred during this period was the conversion of Constantine, ruler of the Roman Empire, to Christianity. This was followed by a ruling which proclaimed Christianity the official religion of the Empire.

This seemingly positive move actually had regrettable consequences for the Church. The widespread conversion which resulted from this edict meant that not only was personal motivation sometimes absent from Church members, but many were not even offered the most fundamental, understanding of their new religion.

Perhaps even more harmful than the ignorance of the parish community was the radical change this period saw in the Church leaders. The new Church / state partnership offered much power to the clergy, and the Church became a political pawn, often seeing its true intentions sacrificed to satisfy the political greed of its leaders. The creation of specific and often spectacular church forms began, an affirmation of the new power wielded by the Church.

During this era, the Church was transformed to meet the conceptions of the secular rulers, whose interpretation of this community's role was significantly different and more limited than that envisioned by Christ. As the misconceptions initiated during this period increased; the chasm between the sacred and the secular world widened. As these narrow Medieval attitudes became widespread, the role of the Church diminished. Medieval philosophers understood the world to be "the domain of evil"; as such, the renunciation of this world was considered necessary to attain and maintain a Christian life. Medieval ecclesiastics consequently fought any secular use of churches, ostensibly protecting these structures from being tainted by evil.¹⁵

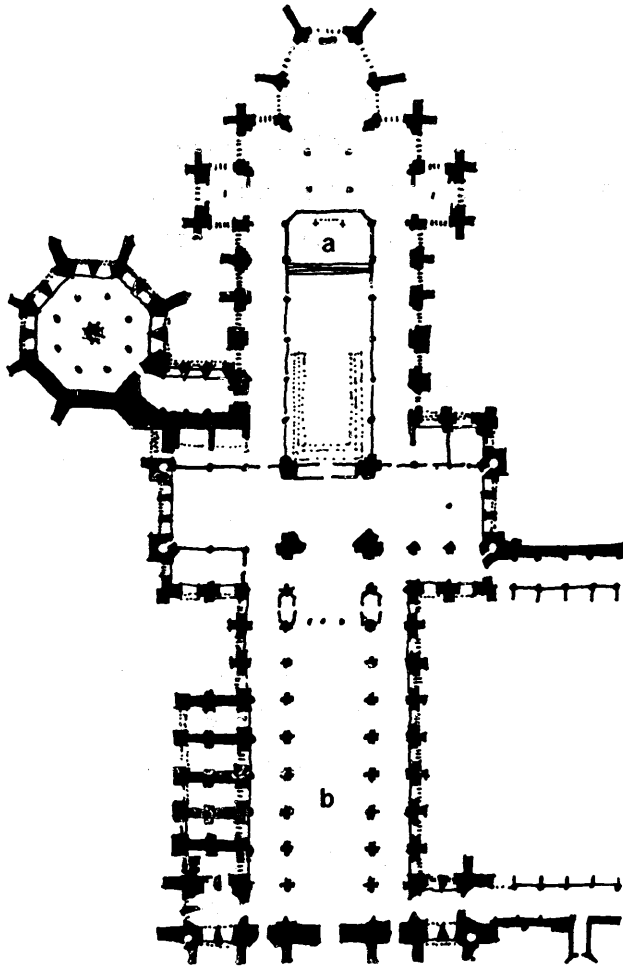


Figure 3.4
Wells Cathedral, Great Britain. The exaggerated form of this church shows the extreme separation of the congregation (occupying the nave - b) from the altar (a) which evolved from Medieval reinterpretations of church form.

These new and ardent attitudes had a very potent and unfortunately a very lasting effect on the architecture of the church. Not only were all "secular" activities banished from the church building, but the composition of the worship space began to change. Rather than a circular, inclusive spatial arrangement, the sanctuary began to take on a linear form, separating the congregation from the altar and creating distinct zones and unique relationships. Throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance and Gothic periods and beyond, this diagram became more and more exaggerated. Eventually, the community (occupying the nave) was separated from the altar by the transept arms of the church, the choir screen, the choir, and the altar rail. The dimensions of these spaces grew, and the connection between the congregation and the Eucharist became quite tenuous. An individual's sense of involvement and importance in the celebration of the Mass, and the relationship of this gathering to the rest of his life, became increasingly remote.

The distinction that arose from these developments, that of specifically "sacred" spaces as different from ordinary "secular" spaces, was a new concept which was contradictory to the essential messages of Jesus. The original form of the mass, that of a common meal among friends, initiated a continuity between the religious and secular facets of life which was destroyed under Medieval concepts. The Church was initiated by Christ to be a place in which the mutual support and coherence of the community is fostered, in which each individual plays a positive rather than a passive role. It is because of this type of environment that the fundamental beliefs of Christianity are allowed to develop and be made tangible. It is exactly this phenomenon which is prevented or stifled because of the Medieval reconsideration of the church's function, and the resulting reinterpretation of

Figure 3.5
Maria Regina, Fellbach, Germany. Architect: Klaus Franz. The form of this church indicates a return to the early inclusive church forms.

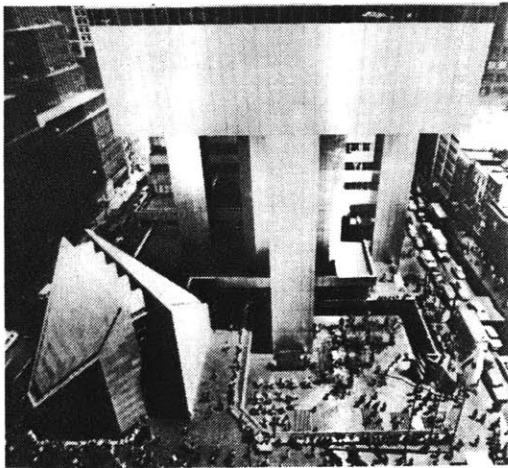
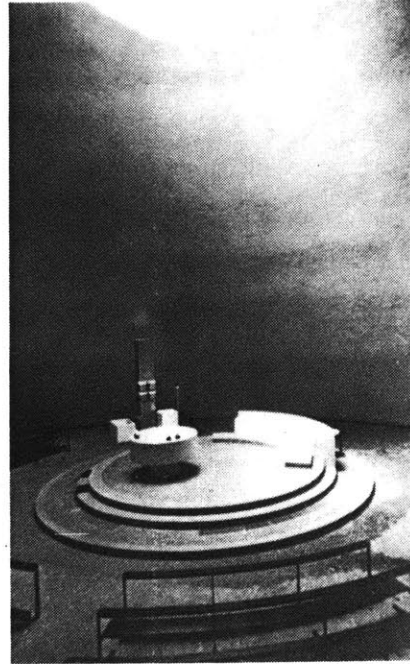


Figure 3.6
St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Citicorp Center, New York City. Architect : Hugh Stubbins. This chapel, struggling to find its position in the overwhelming cityscape, uses the Citicorp office tower as a symbolic steeple marking its presence.

the church form. "Because the universal ethical inspiration of Jesus had been weakened, the growth of the sect into a church could not preserve the communal love of its infancy: sharing of goods disappeared, human equality was alienated to the next world, and the love feast of companions at the Last Supper became objectified into a dogmatic mystery."¹⁶

The Medieval interpretation of the church which spread throughout Europe in the succeeding centuries was transplanted to the United States with little trepidation on the part of ecclesiasts, parishioners, or architects. Despite what people heard or understood in the teachings of Jesus and His apostles, the role of religion in their lives maintained a removed and mysterious quality. The intended social nature of the Church was distorted and the original meaning of the rituals and sacraments was largely lost.¹⁷

Though this situation is still true for the majority of our churches today, there are a few churches which, at least through their architecture, have challenged this precedent. These are useful to observe as starting points for the design work of this thesis.

One such church is a Christian complex designed by Jorn Utzon in Bagsvaerd, outside of Copenhagen. Bagsvaerd Church successfully challenges many of the traditional images associated with the Church. Utzon directly confronts the issue of the relationship between the mundane and the holy. He carefully articulates each of these ideas, yet the overall impression is one of serenity, unity, and equilibrium.

The exterior of the church, in which Utzon articulates the modern and ordinary aspects of this institution, is constructed of a light industrial technology: concrete frames with prefabricated panel infills. This envelope speaks of the mundane - the distractions of the surrounding streets, the financial constraints involved in any construction process, the necessity of

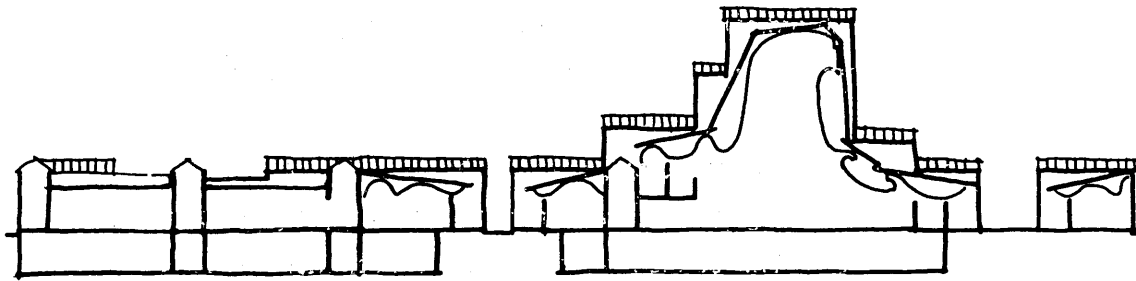
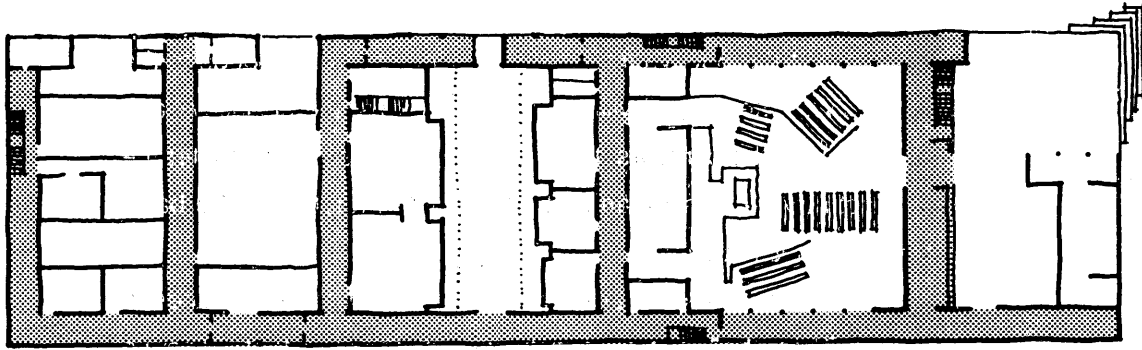


Figure 3.7
Bagsvaerd Church, Denmark. Architect: Jorn Utzon. a) Plan showing the extensive corridor space in this complex. b) Section illustrating distinct rendering of interior (sacred) and exterior (secular) forms.

the inward orientation due to the severity of Denmark's climate.

The interior of the Bagsvaerd Church, conversely, corresponds to the image of the "holy". The soft, curvilinear concrete forms, the distinctive and exciting light quality in the corridors, the extensive use of screens to filter the light in the sanctuary, all convey an inspirational interpretation of the basic qualities of such an institution.

Interestingly, the corridors are "among the most beautiful spaces in the church".¹⁸ These hallways are punctuated with the rhythmical concrete frames and are filled with light from the overhead skylights. The lightly colored wood panelling which lines the walls increases the soft and inviting quality of this space. In studying a plan, the corridor space would appear to be extensive or even redundant, but the architect seems to be highlighting that space in which ordinary human interaction occurs. By creating such a pleasant environment, Utzon encourages and potentially prolongs these chance meetings.

The distinct formal codes employed for the rendering of the secular and the sacred in the Bagsvaerd Church are related in a unique and thought-provoking manner. The connection between the two, their necessary interdependence, is conveyed in much of this construction. The thin, curvilinear, concrete ceilings, which in normal scenarios would be suspended from the structure above, actually becomes the structure off of which the exterior form is propped. It is as if the action occurring within this space, the gathering of this community, lends an extraordinary strength to its environment. At other points, the enclosure and the structure are integrated, as in the hallways where the presence of the structural concrete frames creates much of their sensory impact. It is here that Utzon melds the sacred and secular, creating a subtle transition between the two extremes.

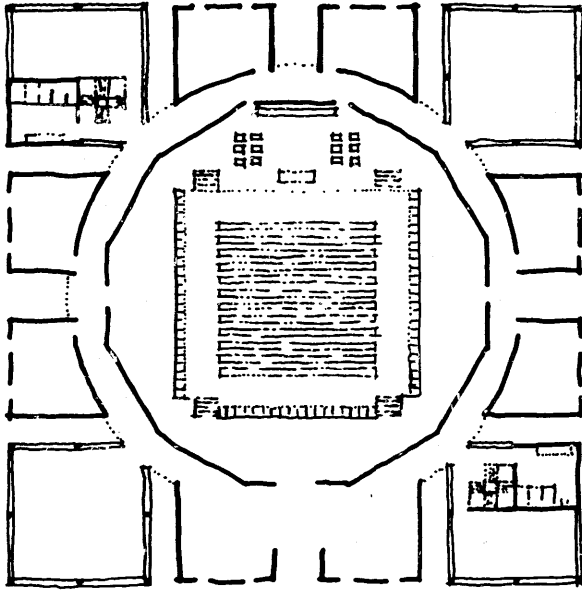


Figure 3.8
Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York.
Architect: Louis Kahn. Preliminary scheme
showing hierarchy of pieces and organizing
capability of central worship space.

This total fusion of these contradictory elements reveals Utzon's conviction that equilibrium is created "where the mundane meets the holy, the defined meets the boundless, the rectangle meets the curve..."¹⁹ His church acknowledges these two extremes of human existence, and calls them one.

Another facility which successfully transforms the traditional church type is Louis Kahn's Unitarian Church in Rochester, New York. For this institution, Kahn developed a diagram which clearly conveyed the dynamics of this community. The worship space is construed as the "heart" of this complex, the integrator of all other activities, and is simply and logically placed in the center of the building. The sanctuary circulation surrounds the worship space, and around this is general (public) circulation. The outermost ring contains the more diverse functions of classrooms, offices, and meeting rooms.

This complex has an almost concentric and noticeably hierarchical order, its most important element being the sanctuary. The image here, however, is not one of dominance but rather involvement and connection. There is a critical layering to this institution, and from all areas one senses the presence of the worship space. The entire complex seems to be the "church", the different spaces merely different aspects of this unified facility. In considering the design of another project, Kahn described its central worship space in terms which seem applicable to the Rochester Church:

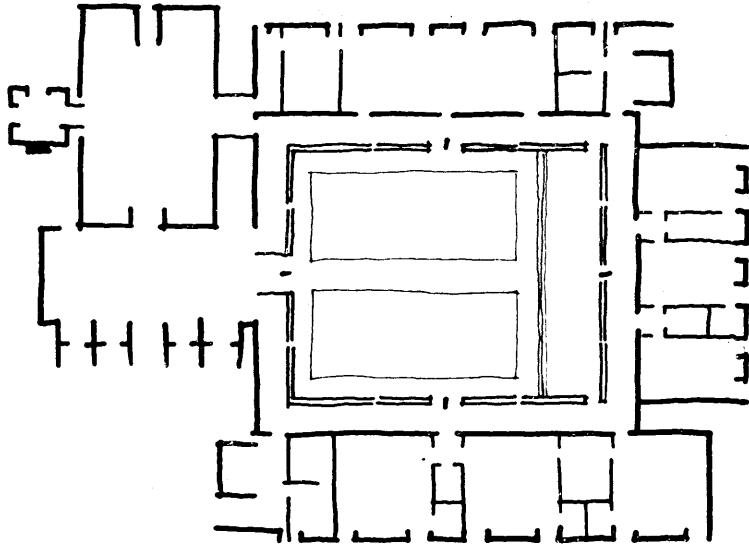


Figure 3.9

Final plan of Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York. Architect: Louis Kahn. The worship space is still the most important element in this complex but it no longer has such control over the form and use of surrounding spaces. They are now allowed to assume their own sizes and positions, and can vary in their relationship with the sanctuary.

"The chapel has a central space which for the moment we won't describe; around it is an ambulatory for those who don't want to enter. Outside the ambulatory is an arcade for those not in the ambulatory; the arcade overlooks a garden for those not in the arcade. The garden has a low wall for those who don't enter and merely wink at the chapel."²⁰

Kahn's sense of this sacred space - as important and central yet inviting to outsiders and involved in varying degrees in the life around it, is clearly evident in the Rochester design. The traditional expressions of dominance, power, and separation seen in most churches are refuted through this design. In this project, significant connections are established between the sanctuary and the everyday life of this community. Because of this, this building initiates a reconsideration of the role of the Church in the lives of the people in the congregation, and potentially sparks a new understanding of this religious community in its larger context.

Through this brief analysis of church architecture, from its earliest structures through its more traditional forms and culminating in recent interpretations of this building type, it is hoped that a base is established from which an informed design process can proceed.

Chapter Four

DESIGN INTENTIONS

"The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become."

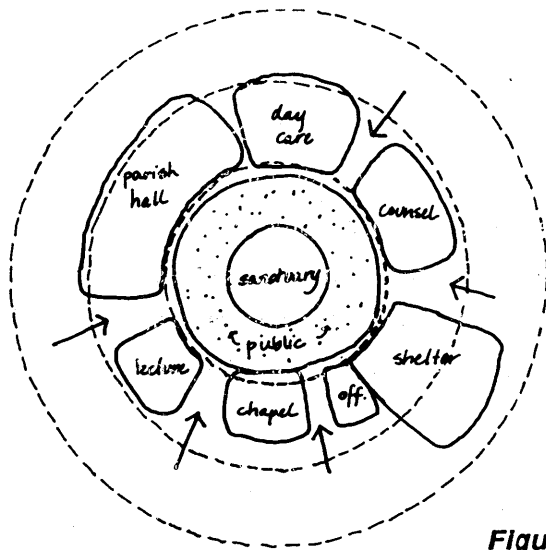
Charles Dubois

Based on the previous study, a new form for the Catholic Church seems necessary. The basic purposes of this organization, rather than being undermined by its architecture, should be encouraged and made evident through its formal characteristics.

✓ | The determination of program, site, and character of this new Church can be outlined through a reinterpretation of the previous analyses. Since the primary goal of this institution is love and support of fellow men, the program should include services which address the needs of the parishioners as well as the local communities. Such elements as a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, day care services and counseling facilities are all appropriate to such a complex.

More important than the provision of specific programmatic needs, however, is the creation of various situations within this complex where positive interaction can occur among its many users. A range of opportunities from formal gatherings to chance meetings and even hesitant exchanges should be considered in the creation of this new form. Much of this facility should be of a very public and inviting nature, capable of fostering the level of energy and interaction desired.

The sense of social concern and responsibility which is the basis of Christianity should be initiated and nurtured by the environment of this institution. This implies a design which invokes a sense of belonging in all those who use this complex, even for its most secular or seemingly unrelated activities. This may perhaps be achieved through a layering of the use spaces which allows connection with the Church without conscious commitment (as in Kahn's description of the passerby "winking" at the chapel). The teenager using the building as a cross-block shortcut should



- sanctuary as "heart"
- many approaches
- layering of spaces
- unity
- permeability

Figure 4.1
Initial concept diagram. The sanctuary is the heart of this complex; various uses are layered around it. Critical permeability of this institution is obvious even at this early stage.

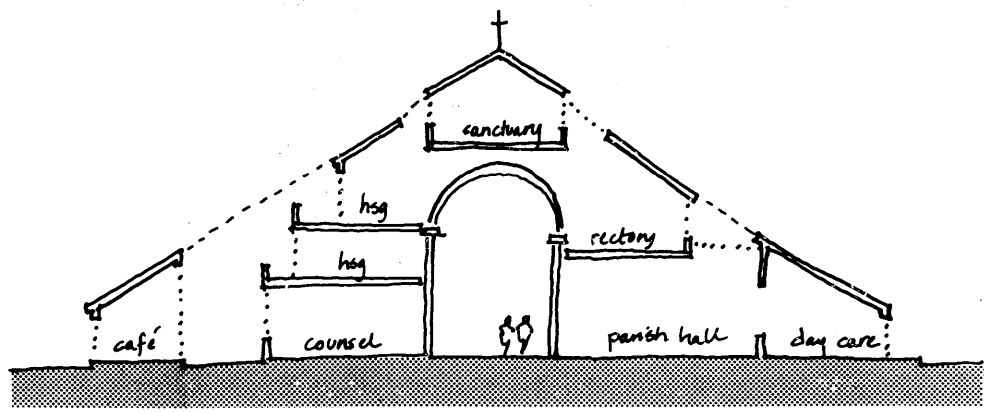


Figure 4.2
Initial conceptual section, showing desired unity of complex, permeability on the public level, and inherent hierarchy of this institution.

feel as welcome as the pregnant young woman using the Birthright counselors, who should feel as welcome as the Sunday churchgoer. The inviting or inclusive aspects of the Church should be greatly emphasized here. This should be an institution where many things come together: disparate functions, distinct purposes, various concerns. But because these various uses are realized and activated by local people, this becomes an institution in which, most importantly, ideas, problems, responsibilities, and solutions are shared.

/The distinction between sacred and secular should be blurred by this facility. Since religion is primarily intended to be fused with all aspects of human life, this Church should be so contrived./ This desire, in turn, indicates a design in which all of the discrete functions somehow operate in a unified way. The extremes of sacred and secular space would perhaps be evident, but the range of spaces between could imply either use. The transformation of these spaces, for sacred or secular functions, would occur primarily through the intentions of the users.

Outreach is primary for the fulfillment of the Catholic community. Not only should this building symbolically extend into the surrounding areas, but local neighborhoods should also reach into this facility./ This implies a significant permeability to this complex. Similarly, since the Church is intended to be a model community from which non-Christians come to understand Christ's messages, this complex should begin to draw in the local community, allowing numerous opportunities for the activities of the parish (both worship and related functions) to be observed.

Site

The site chosen to explore the plausibility of such a complex is in Boston's South End. It is a triangular plot of land, roughly 300 feet by 300 feet by 400 feet (approximately 45,000 square feet in area). The borders of

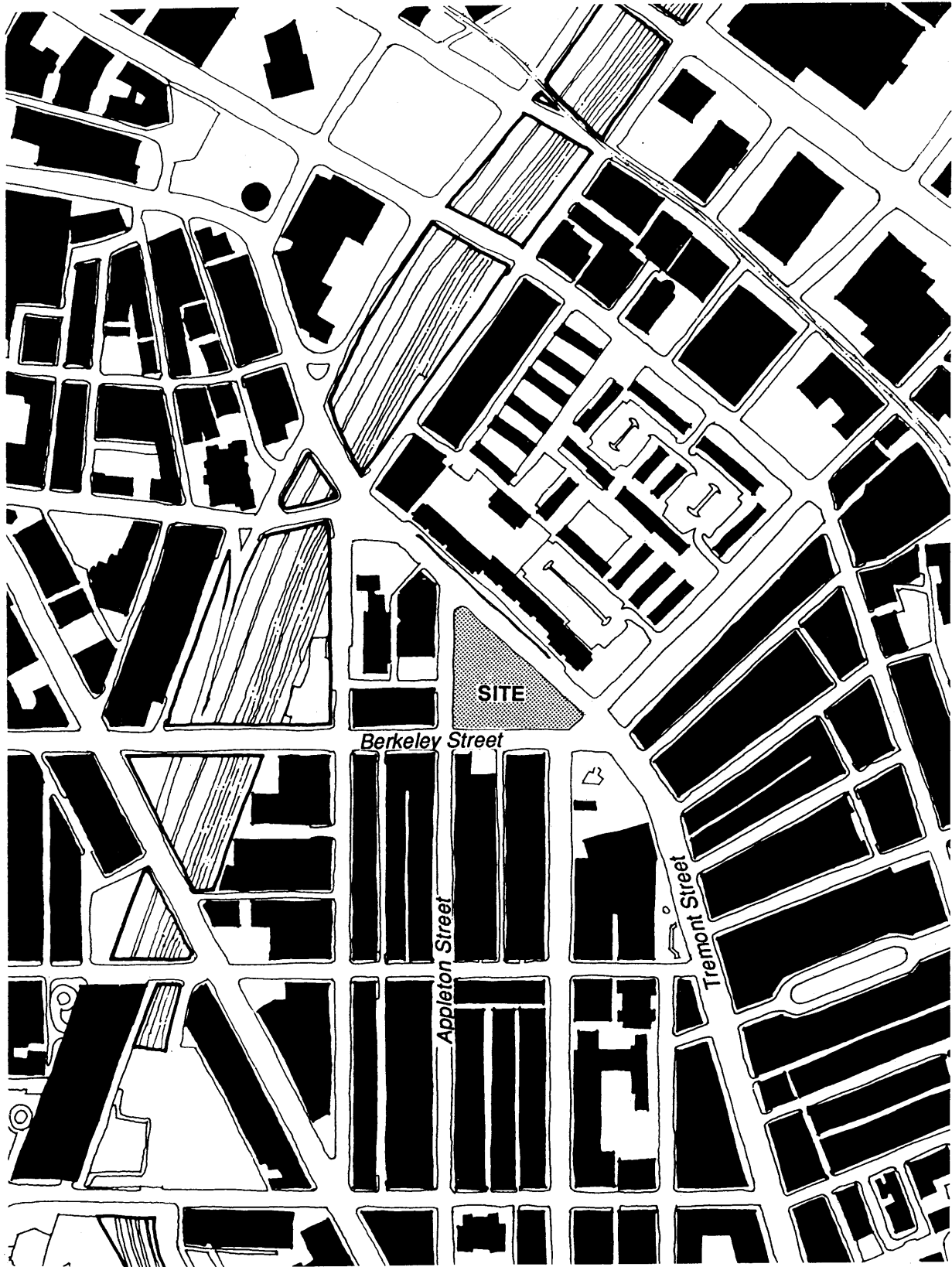


FIGURE - GROUND SITE PLAN



North

Figure 4.3
View of residential Appleton Street.

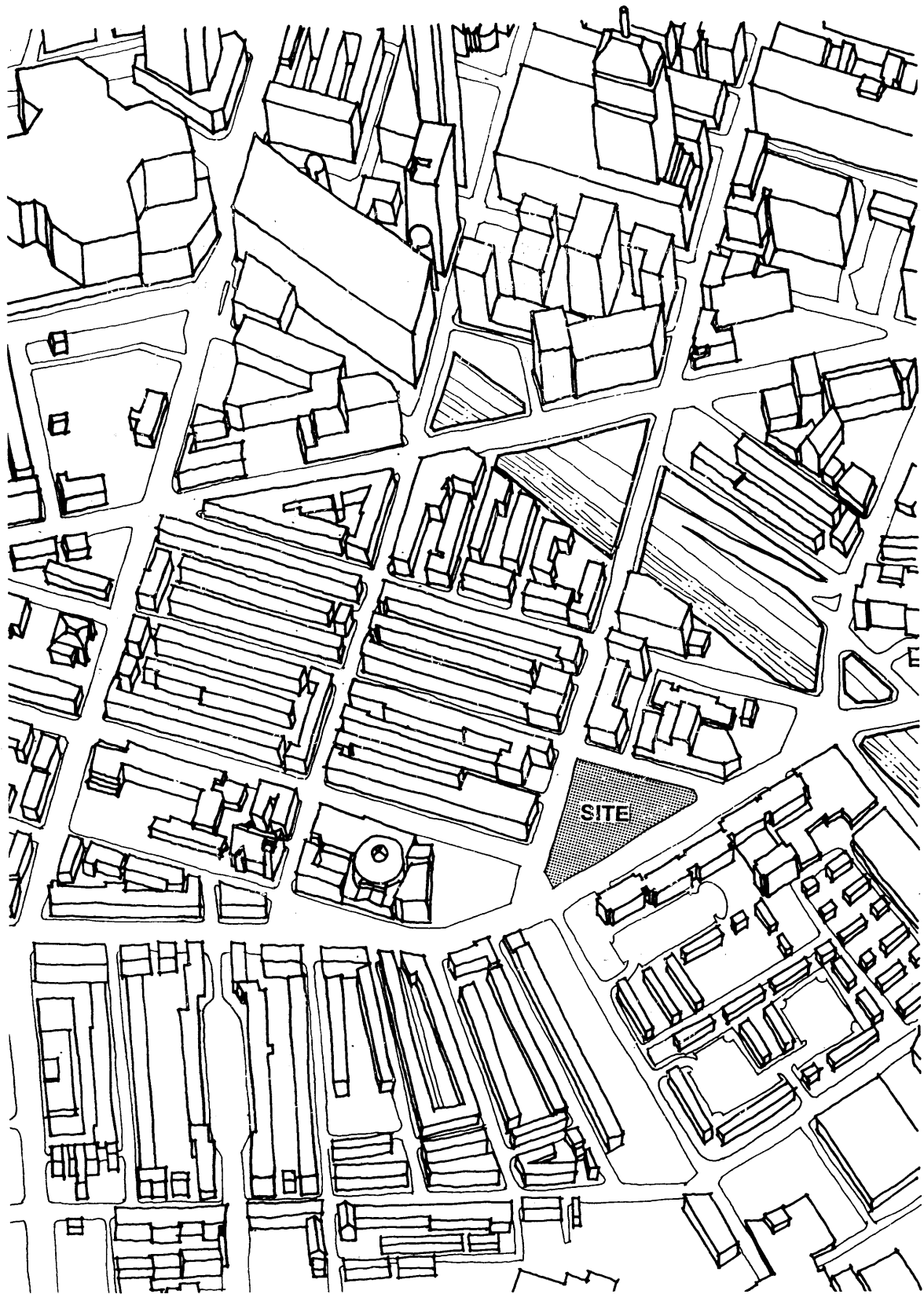


Figure 4.4
View of Castle Square low income housing.



Figure 4.5
View across Tremont Street into Chinatown.





SITE AXONOMETRIC



North

this site are Appleton Street to the north, Berkeley Street to the west, and Tremont Street along the southeast edge.

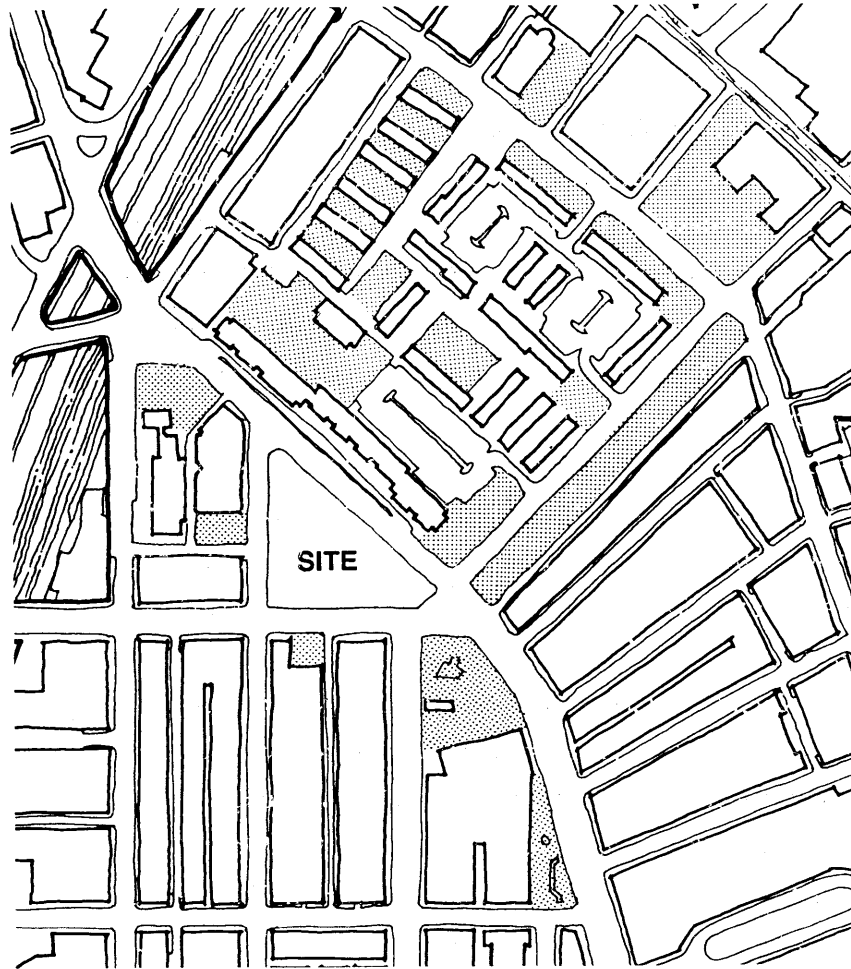
The general area of this site is separated from Chinatown and the theatre district by the Massachusetts Turnpike. Although the Turnpike is a major intervention which irretrievably bisects these areas, there are several similarities which link the two.

Probably the most obvious common problem is the lack of any coherent street pattern. The Theatre District is bombarded along its borders by the street grids of the Back Bay, the South End, and the downtown shopping area. The general locale of the proposed site occurs on the border of this district; it is just remote enough to escape the South End grid which is formed by Columbus Avenue north of the site. The edges of the site caught by Berkeley and Appleton Streets are connected to the Back Bay grid; this corner is the final termination of that pattern in the South End.

West of the proposed site exists an incredibly homogeneous, repetitive building pattern (that of three and four story brick row houses). These structures often have restaurants or boutiques on their ground floors, and the residential units above are occupied by a fairly upscale community, rather homogeneous in race and age.

The immediate vicinity of this site shows more similarity to the Theatre District prototype of mixed building scales and myriad treatments of open space than to the rigorous South End pattern.

There is an unusually large amount of open space adjacent to this triangular plot. Tremont Street, along both its edges, is bordered by open areas of varying sizes. The Cyclodrome block (just south of the proposed site) has two open spaces: the first, a very specifically designed small front plaza for the Boston Center for the Arts; the other a much larger abandoned



SITE PLAN SHOWING OPEN SPACES



North

plot, complete with the ruins of a burned out gas station.

Just to the north of the site, along Tremont and fronting the Mass Pike, sits an Animal Rescue Hospital. This site also reserves a small piece of land as a sitting park, with views of the highway and the Theatre District.

Directly east of the site, across Tremont Street, is a large development called Castle Square. This development leaves only a small sitting area open along Tremont Street. However, once the large, seven-story street facade is penetrated (through dark, uninviting two-story openings), open spaces abound, rather large and desolate, typically used as parking lots by the residents. The occupants of the large building are low income, elderly tenants, while the low rise housing beyond this is low income family housing, comprising approximately one-third Black, one-third Hispanic, and one-third Chinese occupants (due to its proximity to Chinatown). The units accommodate a variety of family situations, ranging in size from studio to three bedroom apartments.

Just south of Castle Square, diagonally across Tremont from the proposed site, is a large parcel of land, approximately 60 feet wide by 750 feet long, which is completely vacant, overgrown, and filled with rubbish.

The proposed site itself, presently the location of the Franklin Institute Technical School, also has a small open space along Tremont. This area is unique from the others, however, in that it is raised approximately three feet above street level, creating (in combination with its enclosing walls) a visual barrier from the street.

As mentioned earlier, the building scales in the immediate vicinity vary greatly, particularly in contrast to the consistent South End residential district directly adjacent. While Castle Square maintains the approximate height of this nearby area, the elderly complex between Castle Square and the site is



Figure 4.6
View down Appleton Street toward Tremont Street (proposed site at right).



Figure 4.7
View of elderly housing complex from Appleton Street.



Figure 4.8
View down Berkeley Street showing the Prudential Building in the Back Bay.

seven stories high, completely blocking the two neighborhoods. The Franklin Institute is predominantly a five-story complex, while the animal shelter, one block north, is a low lying, one-story building.

This particular site (assuming the razing of the school), seemed appropriate to this thesis for several reasons. The most apparent argument is that this particular location experiences many discontinuities, both social and physical, which could potentially be repaired through the introduction of this facility. This Church, besides creating physical connections between the various neighborhoods, could also offer programs and services which would bring these people together. The Church's role as an integrator would be truly tested in this location.

The establishment of these intentions offers a base from which to explore and ultimately evaluate the proposed design. The complex needs of such an institution, along with the particular peculiarities of the chosen site, initiated a design process fraught with false starts and foiled attempts at the realization of this project. The problems encountered, and some of the reasons for them, will be discussed in the following chapter as a basis for evaluating the final design.

Chapter Five

THE SEARCH FOR AN APPROPRIATE FORM

"The character of the Eucharistic Hall ought to be such that a flock of sheep could be driven through it without their seeming too much out of place."

E.A. Sovik

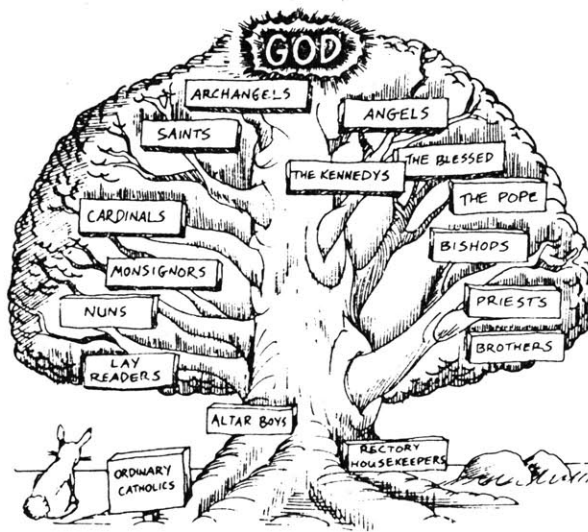
Initially, in considering this facility, many analogies came to mind. I considered the sanctuary to be like a tree trunk; the branches being the various functions performed by this center, the leaves the people involved. Many distinct parts involved, but still a recognizable unity. This tree analogy also implied, to me, the branching out of this local center into the surrounding community.

Upon further thought, I decided that the sanctuary is a heart, pumping vital life (through its teachings and examples) into both the members of the parish and the local community. The image of something pulsing and very alive appealed greatly to me.

Eventually, I realized that there were subtle but critical corrections to be made in both of these analogues. I was falling into the very trap I had set out to avoid - thinking of the place as the "Church" rather than the community involved in this complex.

This realization called for a reconsideration of my sanctuary images. The sanctuary is critical for nurturing this community, for guiding their actions, but it is not the only force at work. It does not operate independently of the people, whereas the people can and should operate free of any particular location. I began to think of the sanctuary, the space where these people come together to worship and reaffirm their goals; as a cool, refreshing well of spring water: revitalizing, crucial to the health of this community.

The development of the program sparked other images. As I added to the list those things which I not only felt were needed by the local community but which I also hoped would initiate interaction, I came up with a program of very diverse and often opposing elements. The juxtaposition of secular functions with the traditional religious elements, though something I firmly



believe in, initially presented a complicated diagramming problem. I began much thought and reading on the issues involved in this juxtaposition. Many people have given extensive thought to this relationship, often concluding that the sacred and secular are not only compatible but are mutually defining - one is necessary to understand the other. I was taken with the concept that the two were actually aspects of the same whole.

In considering this concept, it soon became clear that the proposed institution should be a unity. The true problem became, therefore, the fusing of the religious pieces into an otherwise secular community center. Formally, this required a prominent link between the disparate pieces. There are several ways of achieving this, many of which were tested. The most significant attempts involved the idea of an enclosing wall as a strong unifying element. This wall was termed an "inhabitable wall", and carried some depth to it, often fifteen or eighteen feet. This zone could then be carved out for uses from either the exterior or interior of the facility, creating a range of inside and outside zones along the edges of the site. This idea was ultimately abandoned because of the hard and impermeable edge it seemed to convey to its surrounds, and because of the difficult geometric problem it now enclosed.

As is obvious in some of my early sketches, the design was not always true to the intentions. I had much difficulty breaking away from the traditional images of the Church, and I found myself recreating these large, removed, quite traditional forms for the worship space. Twenty-five years of inhabiting these structures seems to have created a lasting impression that is difficult to leave behind.

The site, at the same time, was determinedly thwarting many of my intentions through its difficult geometry. The dimension of the site at its

INHABITABLE WALL

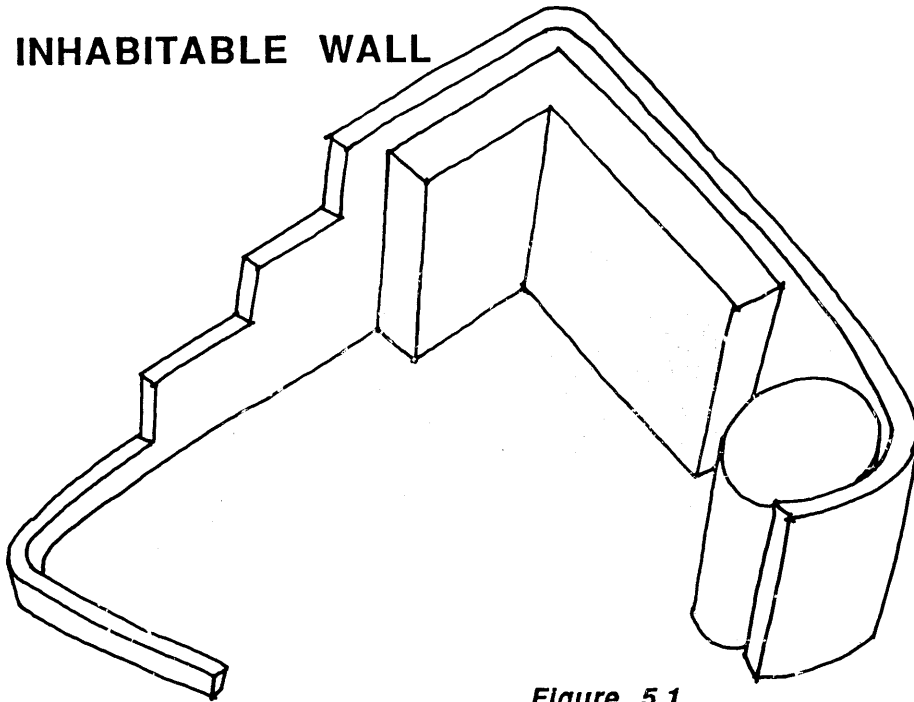


Figure 5.1
Early diagram showing wrapping wall which encloses and unifies the disparate elements.

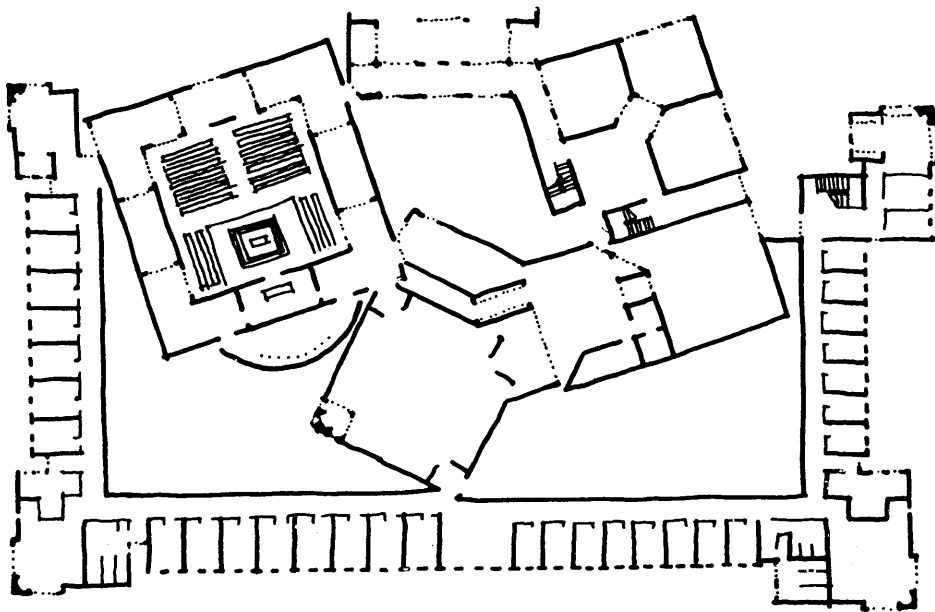


Figure 5.2
Convent for the Dominican Sisters, Media, Pennsylvania. Architect: Louis Kahn. A "habitable" wall surrounds the larger elements and lends order and coherence to an otherwise free geometric arrangement.

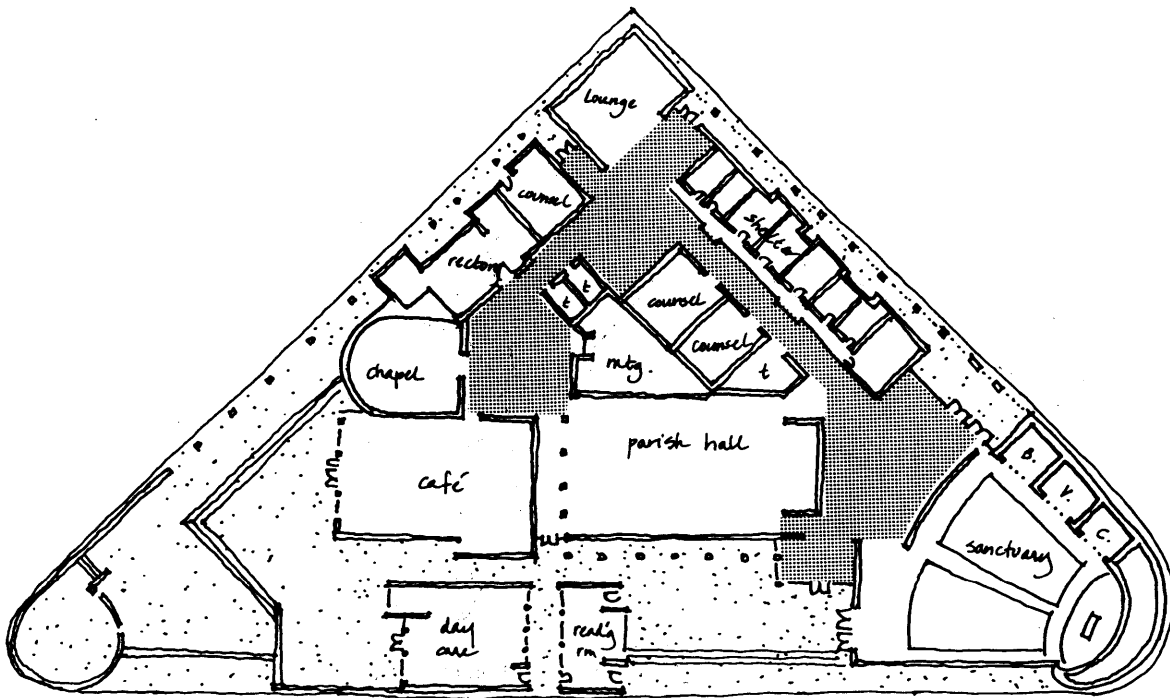
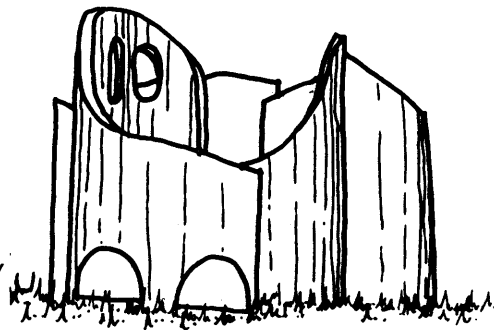


Figure 5.3
Early scheme showing habitable wall zone which initiates at the altar and surrounds the entire complex.

Figure 5.4
St. Mary's Church, Red Deer, Alberta. A continuous wall wraps the baptistry and sanctuary of this complex, opening only to allow worshippers into the sacred space within.



GEOMETRIC EXPLORATIONS

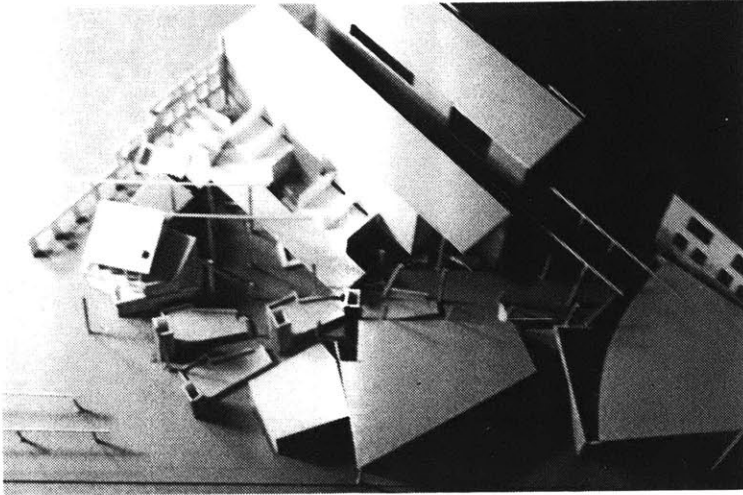


Figure 5.5
Midterm model showing unresolved "crashing" of two site geometries.

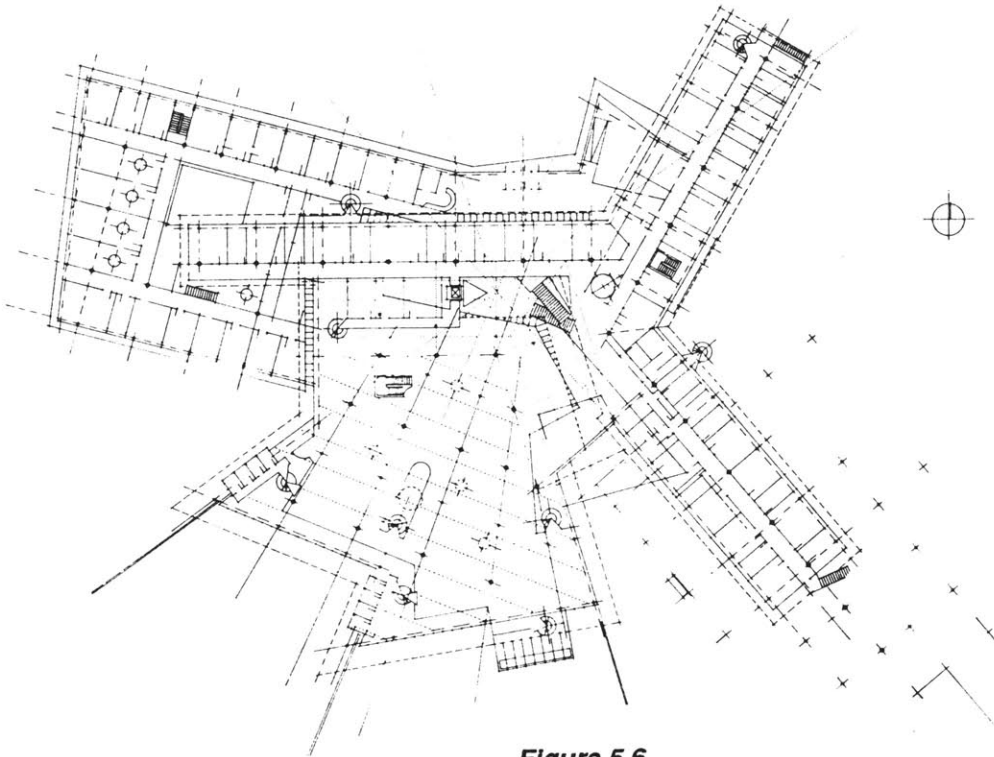


Figure 5.6
Library Building of the Catholic University, Eichstatt, Germany. Architect: Gunter Behnisch. A free geometric form is controlled through a continuous reference back to the central lobby space.

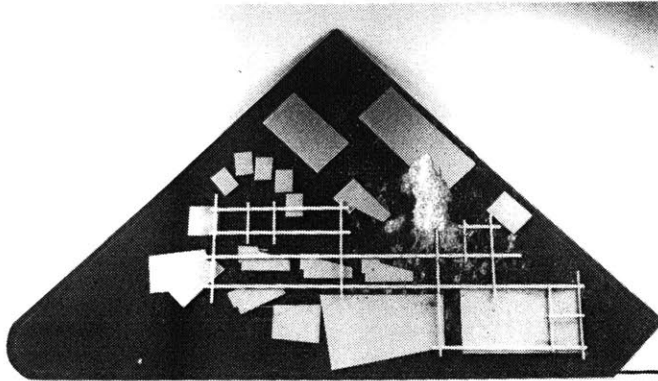


Figure 5.7
*Midterm plan showing unresolved geometries
within ordered structural grid.*

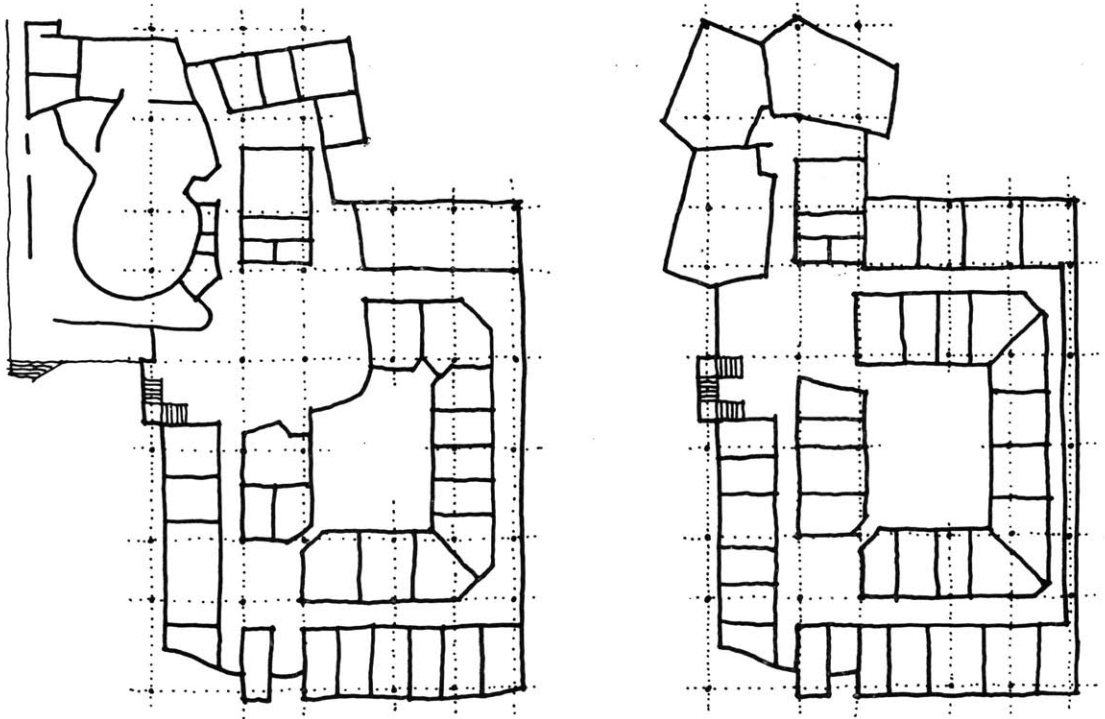


Figure 5.8
*Administration Building of the Lutheran Church,
Stuttgart, Germany. Architect: Gunter Behnisch.
Free geometric forms are controlled by the
continuous structural grid.*

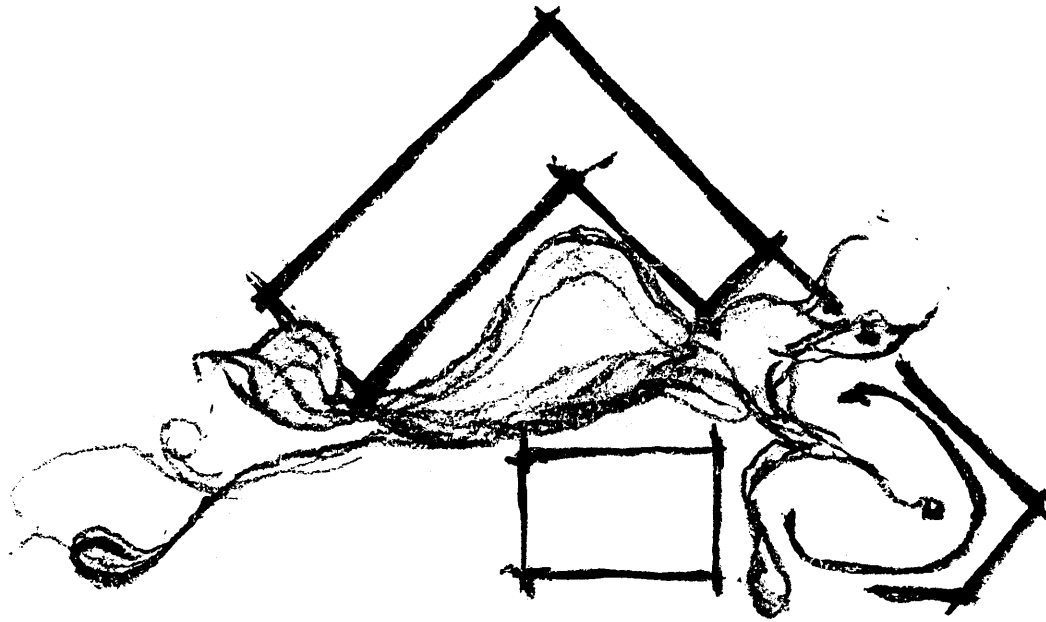


Figure 5.9
Initial charcoal sketch, indicating that the life of this institution finds its source in the sanctuary, expands in the public space to involve the entire complex, and spills out of the building to incorporate the surrounding communities.

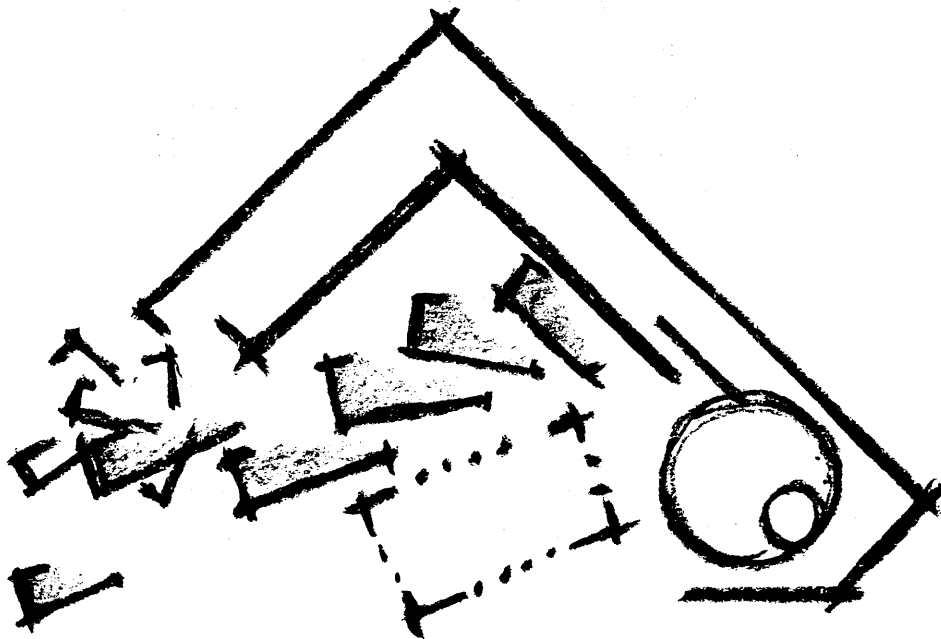


Figure 5.10
Charcoal sketch showing free form of interior public space. The movement in this complex is outward, from the corner sanctuary (the source of the spirit of this place), to the public front plaza and beyond to the larger community.

widest point was difficult to negotiate without creating an extremely large open front court (a move which was evaluated to be a weak response to the large housing complex across Tremont). In addition, the two grids, the grid initiated by Tremont Street and the Back Bay grid continued by Appleton and Berkeley Streets, merged at my site and demanded some sort of resolution.

My early work shows my struggle to involve both geometries in the realization of this building. I felt that to truly address all the local neighborhoods involved, I would have to front their respective streets, dealing in a traditional manner with the three street edges. Again, to do this forced a resolution of these directions within the facility, a problem which multiplied as it developed.

The issue of how to create the desired spirit of this place was a continual problem. I was fulfilling the programmatic requirements in my work, but there seemed to be no dynamism to any of the schemes. The breakthrough came following a series of very loose charcoal sketches in which the center of the site, (which at this point was the center of the building), became an open, public space, filled with activity and connections up and across. This area, and not the sanctuary, fostered the interaction of the users. Because the "heart" was now out of the worship space, everyone involved in this complex contributed to its sense of community.

The problem at this point was that there were very few programmatic pieces which could sustain this level of publicness. Those that could were examined more closely to evaluate their potential. The most logical piece for this central space was the soup kitchen. Previously, I had considered it to be a large room, filled with the typical dining hall tables, assuming a very practical layout. This situation, however, was not at all conducive to the interaction I sought. In bringing the soup kitchen out into this central space, and making it

PUBLIC ZONE DEFINITION

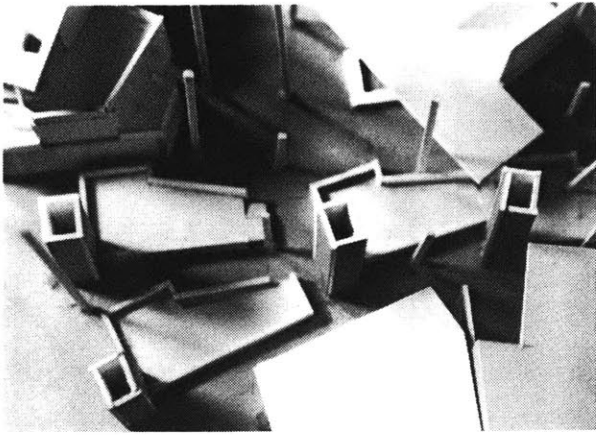


Figure 5.11
View of midterm model showing loosely arranged eating tiers in public space.

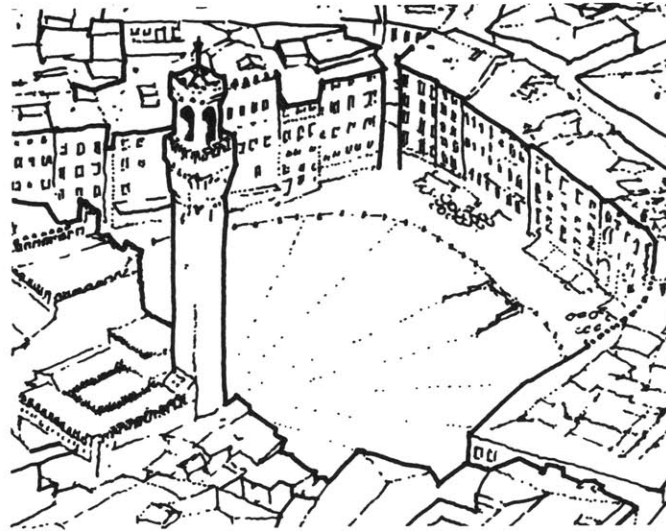


Figure 5.12
Plan and overhead view of Campo, Siena, Italy. The figural center of this Tuscan hill town is completely permeable yet maintains a sense of enclosure and containment. The public space in the new Church complex should aspire to such qualities.

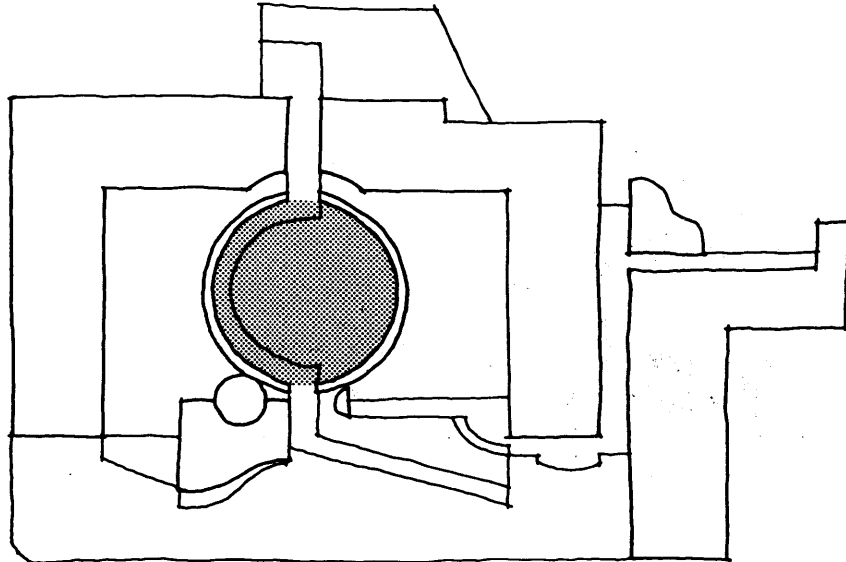


Figure 5.13
 Museum, Stuttgart, Germany. Architect: James Stirling. Stirling purposefully shapes the exterior sculpture garden and penetrates it with the circulation system to assure a space with the life and character he envisions.

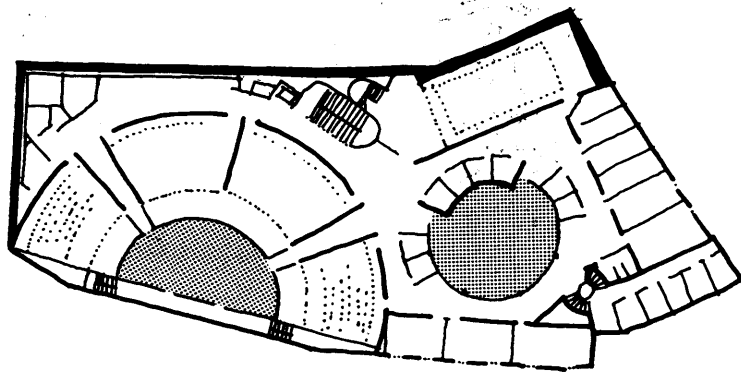


Figure 5.14
 School of Education, Urbino, Italy. Architect: Giancarlo de Carlo. Figural public spaces are created (both indoor and outdoor) which order this complex and establish a constant reference to orient the user.

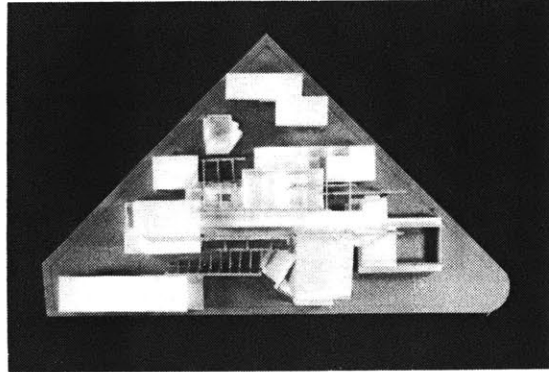


Figure 5.15
Study model showing light wells over public zone, defined by two interior courtyards.

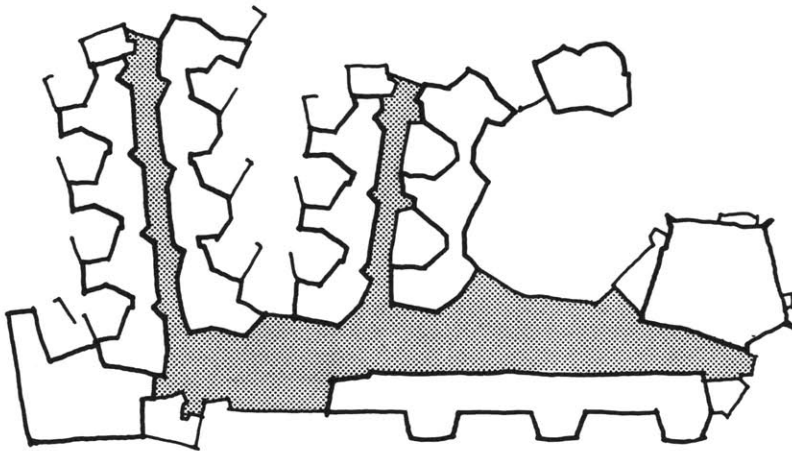


Figure 5.16
*Geschwister Scholl School, Lunen, Germany.
Architect: Hans Scharoun. Repetitive, use-determined shapes are used to define the varied public zone.*

much more of a cafe/cafeteria, the main space was activated and the potential for mixing was increased. The creation of smaller eating zones, perhaps even several eating tiers, would allow people to eat among the homeless or the clergy or the day care monitors without having to specifically address any group. The hope is that this situation, while allowing for some minimal separation, would, through repeated exposure, eventually stimulate interaction. The desire is to encourage rather than force the possibility of community building.

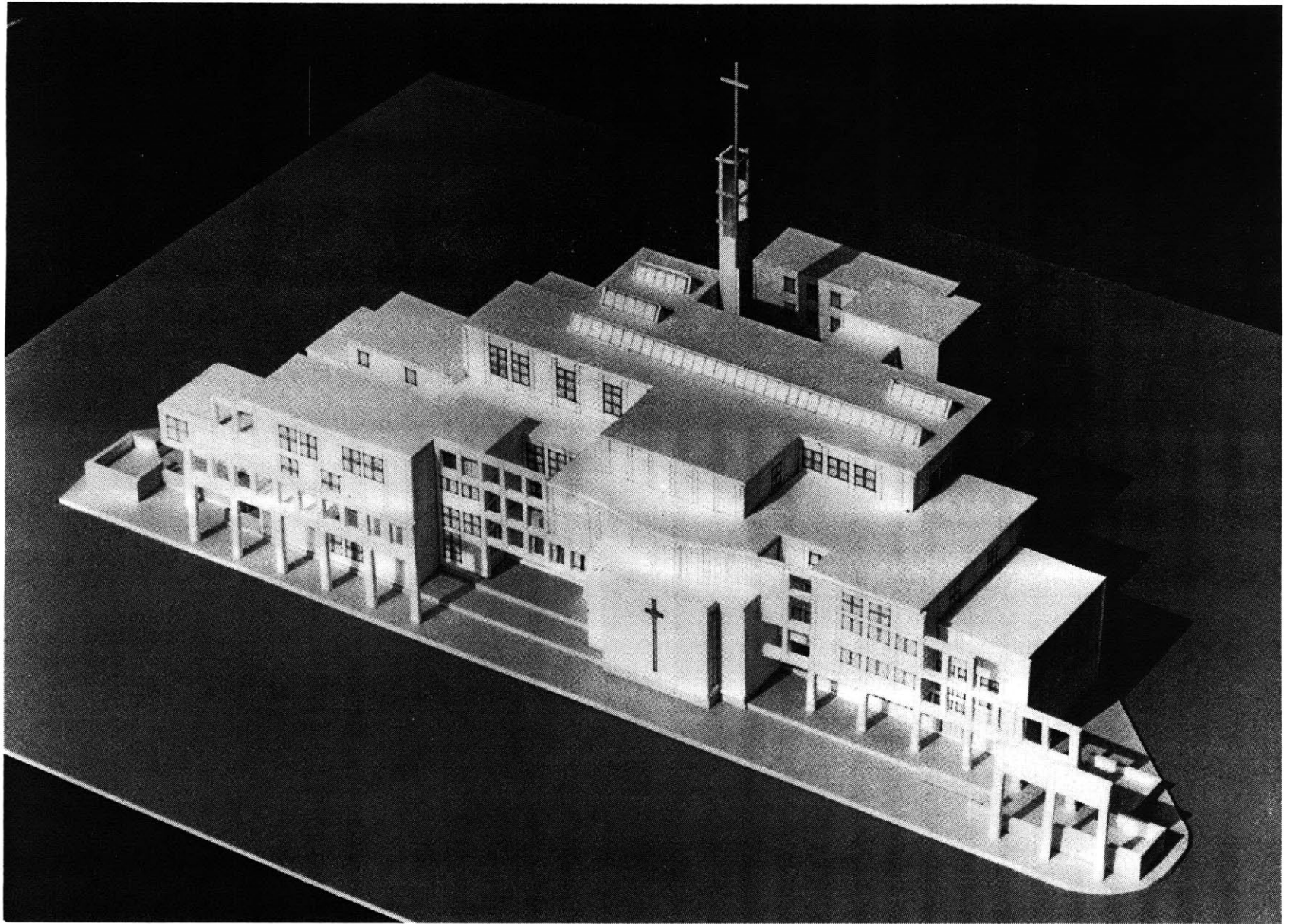
Another problem which continually complicated the issue was that the site, while meeting the implied requirements for location and situation, was simply too large for the program as initially envisioned. The earlier design work struggled to match the scales evident in the surrounding neighborhoods. Since the program was small, this desire caused the building to sit amidst a variety of exterior spaces, many of which were as weak as the abandoned lot across Berkeley Street. Eventually, the program was increased to create a greater mass with which to work.

These problems are presented as a preface to the evaluation of the final scheme, in the hopes of illuminating some of the final design decisions. The building which resulted from this process is perhaps better understood in the light of this background work.

Chapter Six

AN EVALUATION OF THE TRANSFORMED INSTITUTION

*"A work should raise a question...Potentiality is
infinitely more important than what is done."
Louis Kahn*



MODEL - GENERAL VIEW

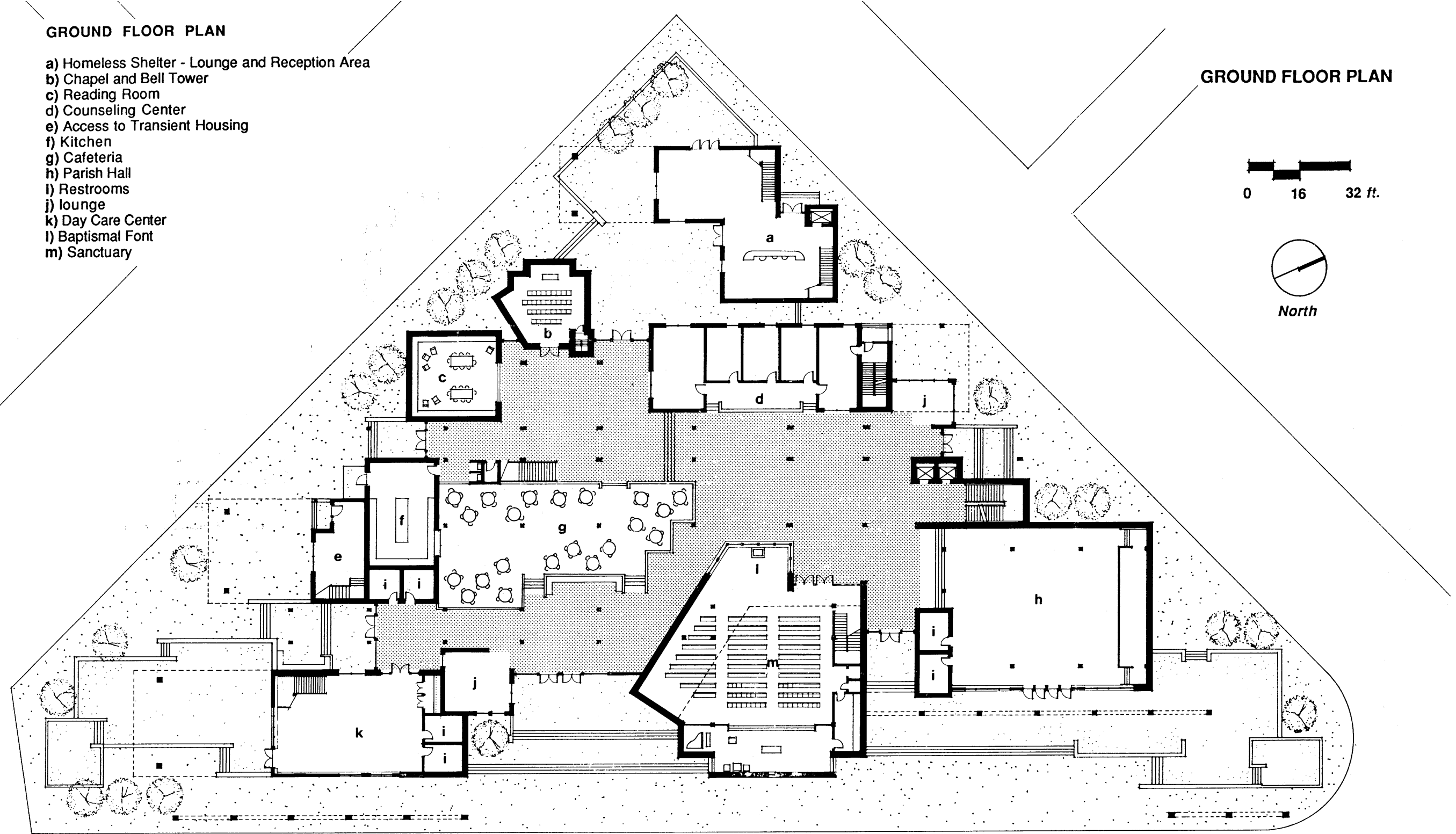
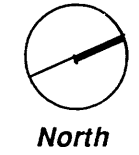
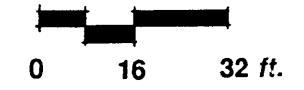
Program

Sanctuary (including upper tiers)	6200 sq. ft.
Small Chapel	600 sq. ft.
Baptismal Font	250 sq. ft.
Vestry	200 sq. ft.
Rectory	3000 sq. ft.
Office and Storage	600 sq. ft.
Parish Hall	3500 sq. ft.
Classrooms (6)	5400 sq. ft.
Counseling Center	1800 sq. ft.
Cafeteria	2600 sq. ft.
Kitchen	750 sq. ft.
Transient Housing	6200 sq. ft.
Homeless Shelter	10000 sq. ft.
Day Care Facility	5700 sq. ft.
Meeting Rooms / Lecture Spaces	6000 sq. ft.
Lounges	1600 sq. ft.
Office Space	900 sq. ft.
Reading Room	900 sq. ft.
Utilities, Mechanical Spaces	2600 sq. ft.
Informal Meeting Space	1000 sq. ft.
Auditorium	4100 sq. ft.
<hr/>	
Total Square Footage	63, 150 sq. ft.
(With allowance for circulation)	70,000 sq. ft.+

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

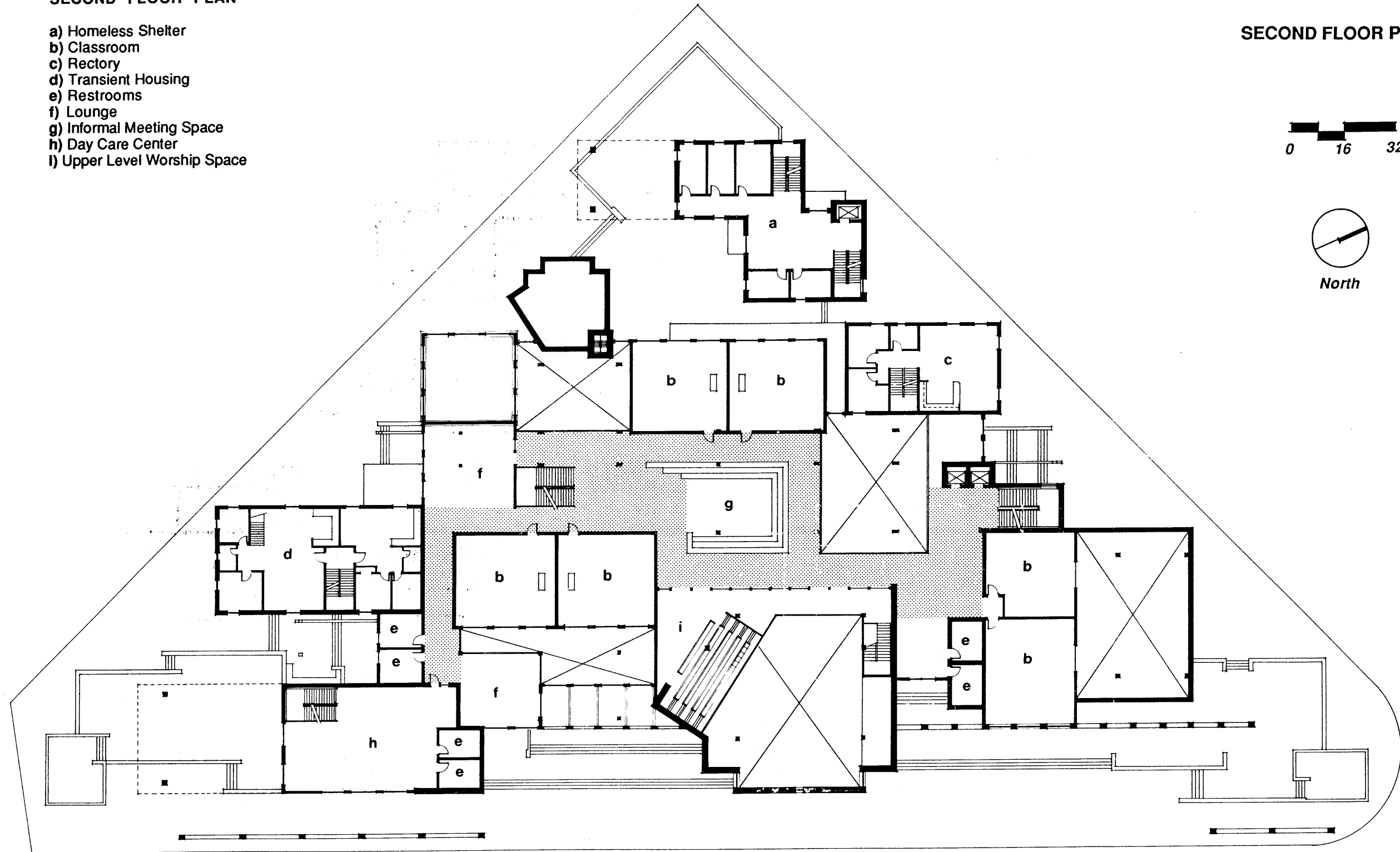
- a) Homeless Shelter - Lounge and Reception Area
- b) Chapel and Bell Tower
- c) Reading Room
- d) Counseling Center
- e) Access to Transient Housing
- f) Kitchen
- g) Cafeteria
- h) Parish Hall
- i) Restrooms
- j) lounge
- k) Day Care Center
- l) Baptismal Font
- m) Sanctuary

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

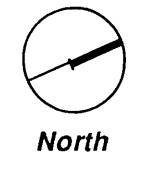
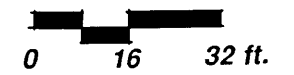


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- a) Homeless Shelter
- b) Classroom
- c) Rectory
- d) Transient Housing
- e) Restrooms
- f) Lounge
- g) Informal Meeting Space
- h) Day Care Center
- i) Upper Level Worship Space

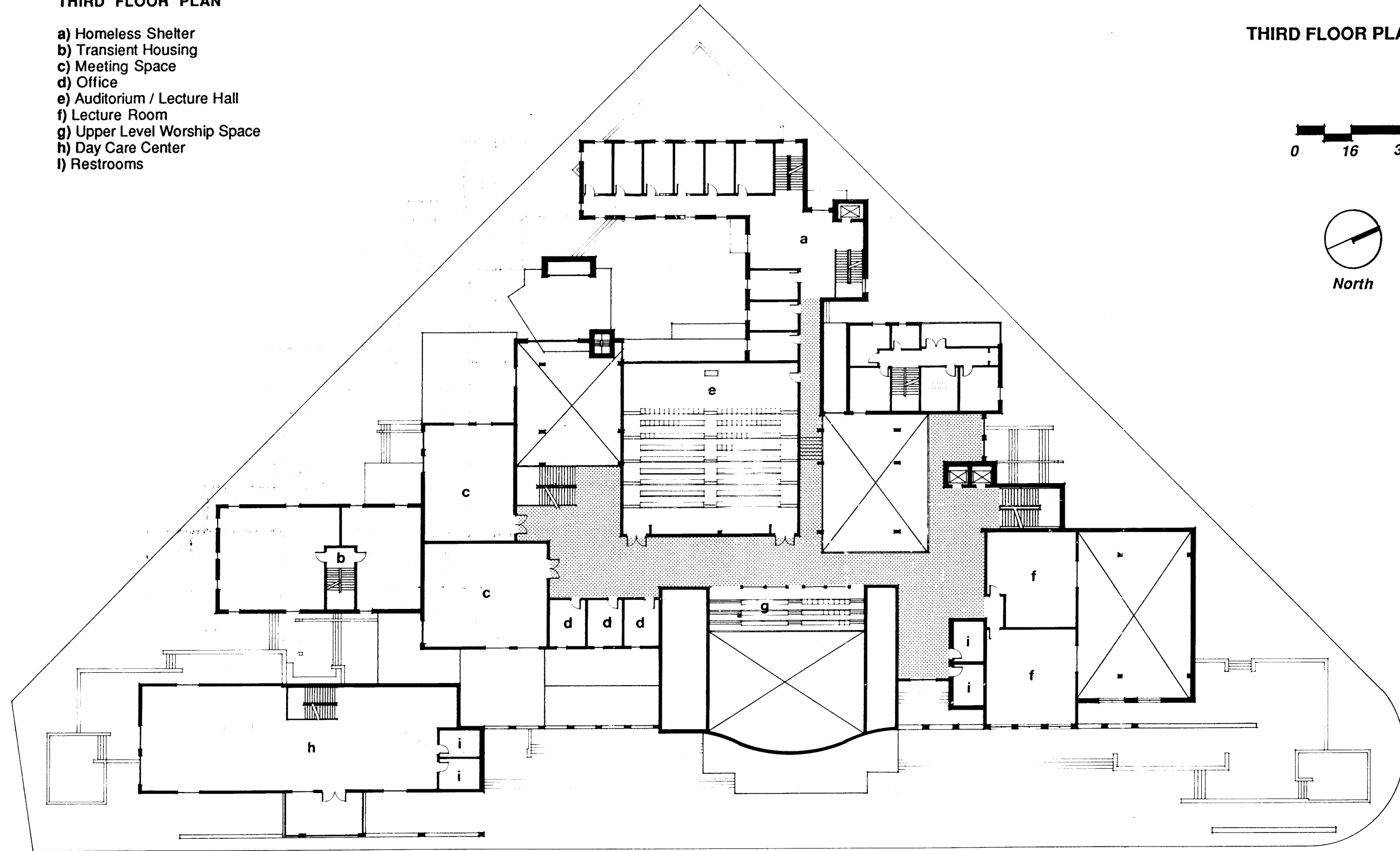


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

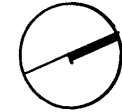
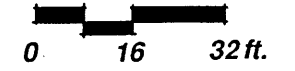


THIRD FLOOR PLAN

- a) Homeless Shelter
- b) Transient Housing
- c) Meeting Space
- d) Office
- e) Auditorium / Lecture Hall
- f) Lecture Room
- g) Upper Level Worship Space
- h) Day Care Center
- i) Restrooms



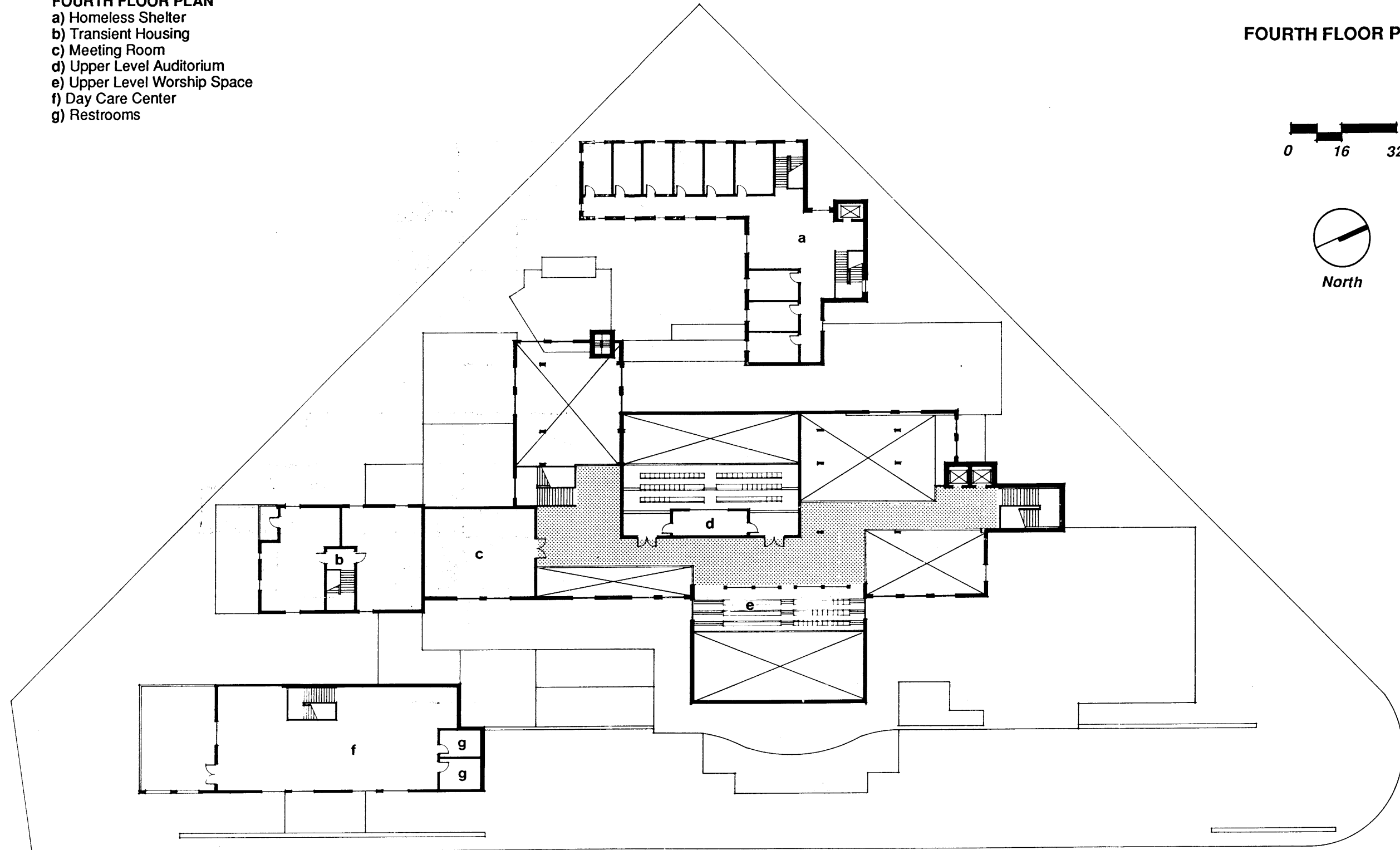
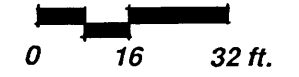
THIRD FLOOR PLAN



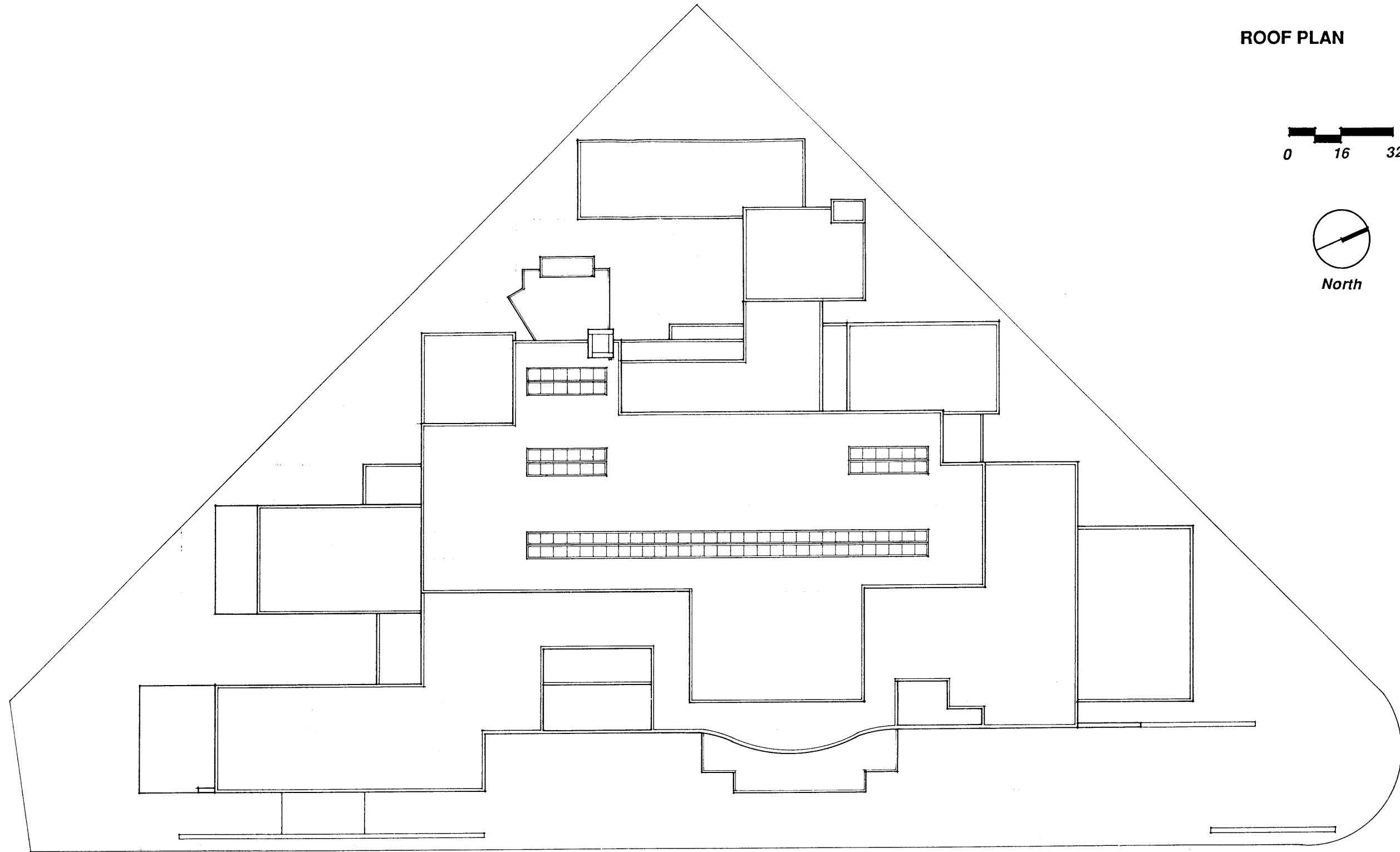
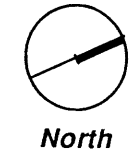
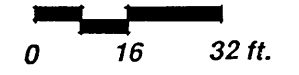
North

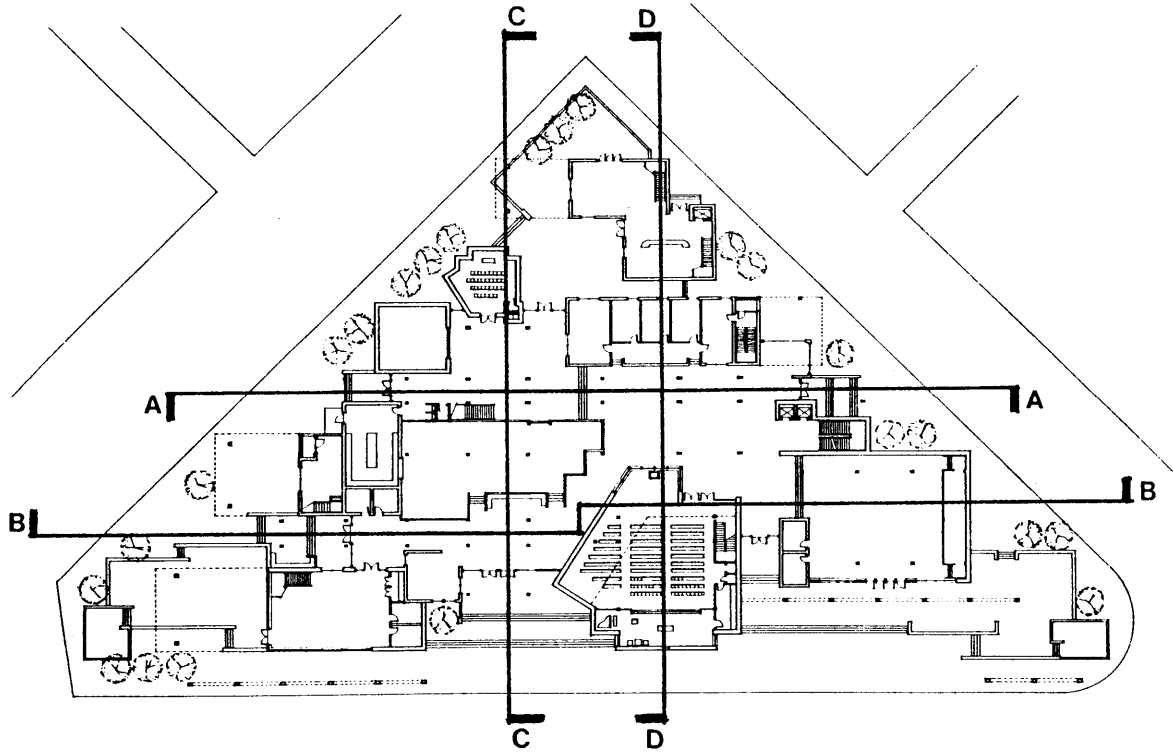
- FOURTH FLOOR PLAN**
 a) Homeless Shelter
 b) Transient Housing
 c) Meeting Room
 d) Upper Level Auditorium
 e) Upper Level Worship Space
 f) Day Care Center
 g) Restrooms

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN



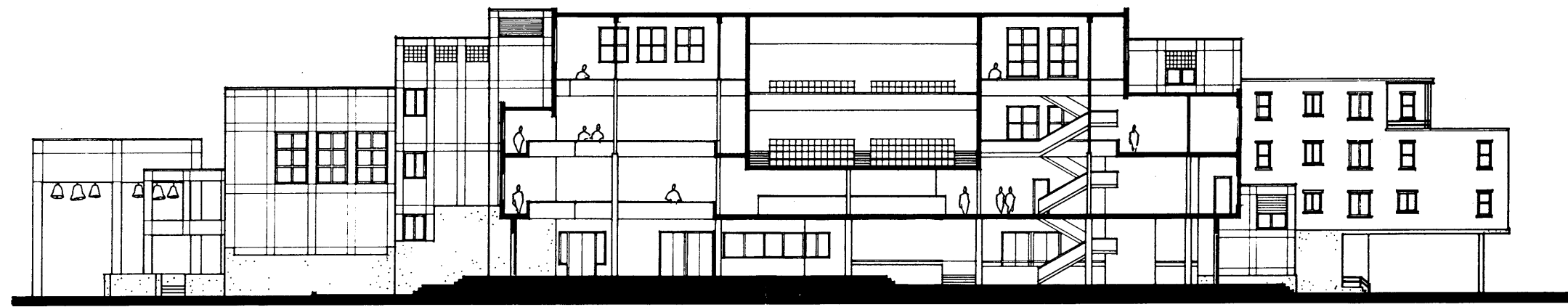
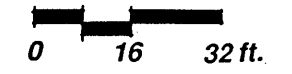
ROOF PLAN



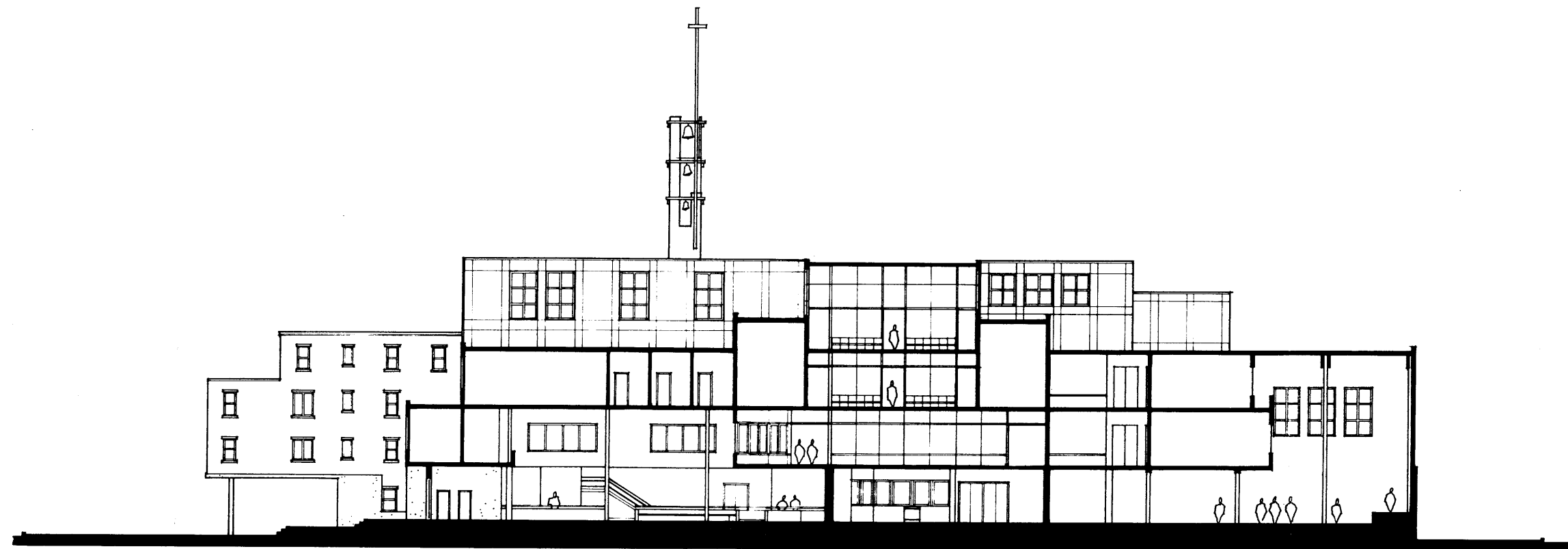
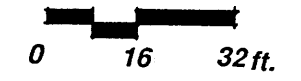


Section Locations

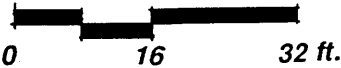
LONGITUDINAL SECTION A - A



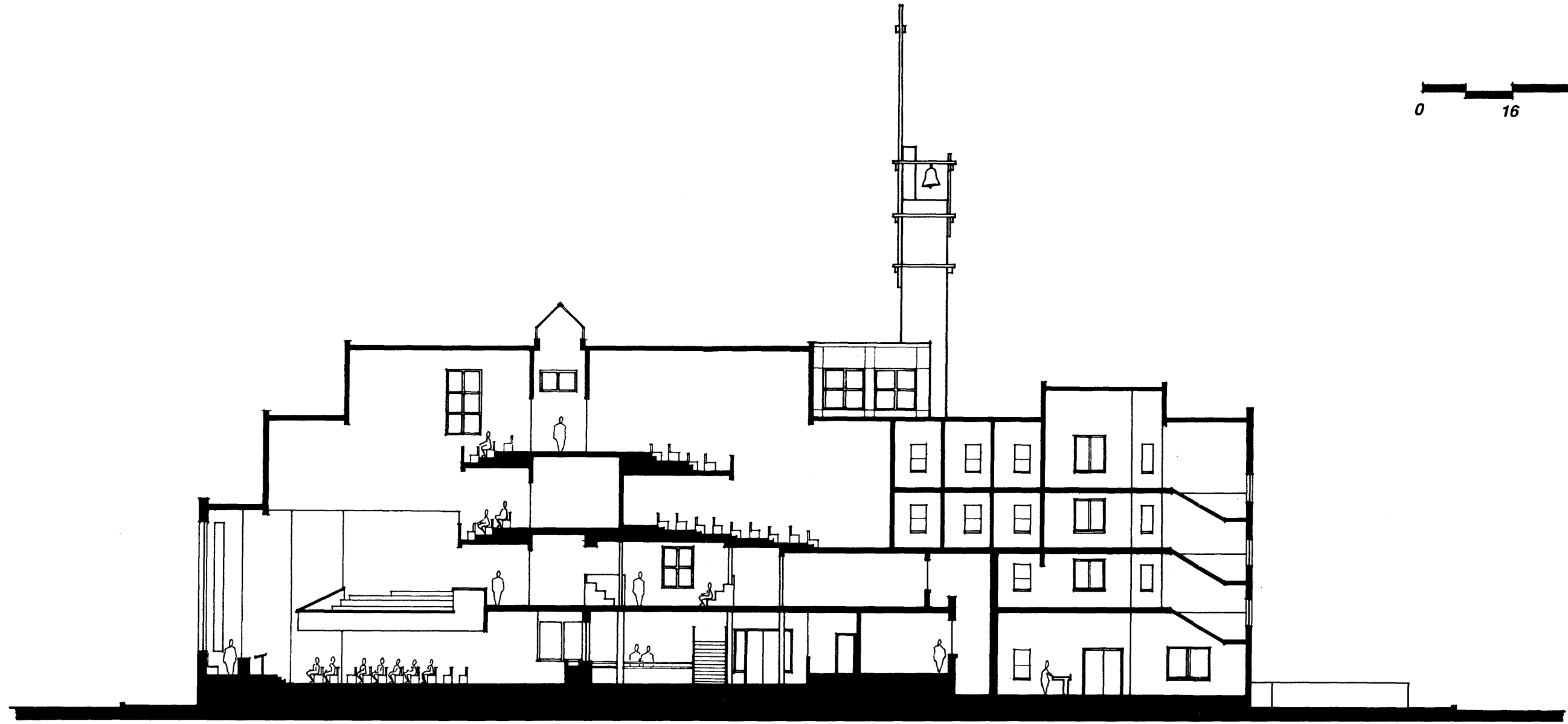
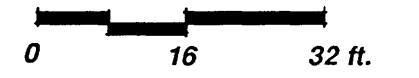
LONGITUDINAL SECTION B - B



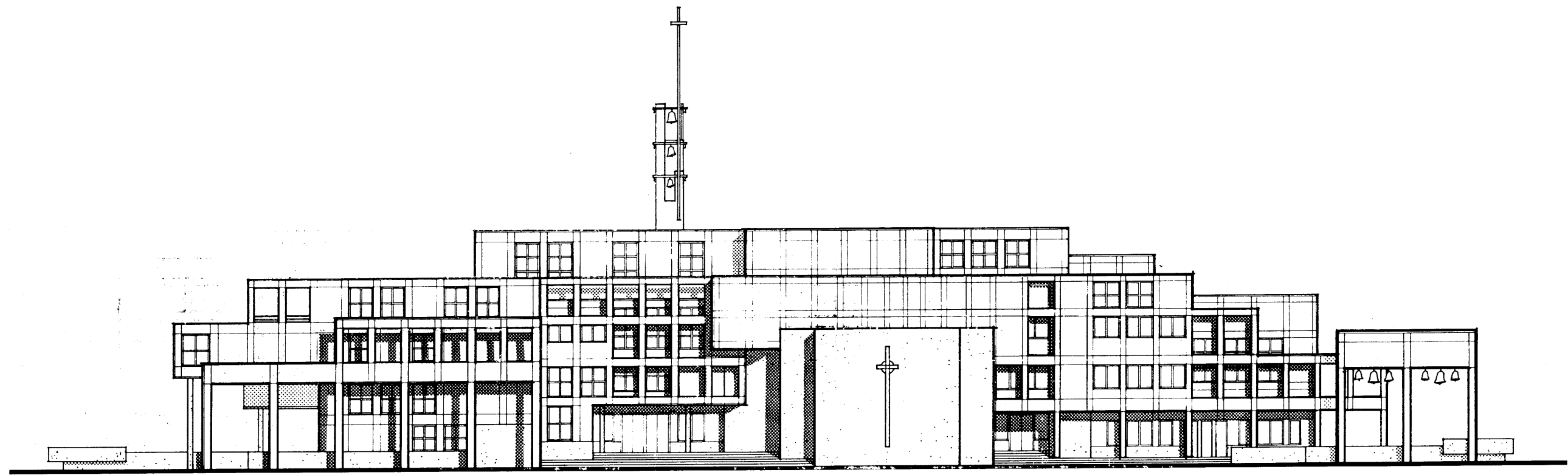
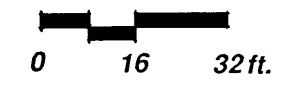
TRANSVERSE SECTION C - C



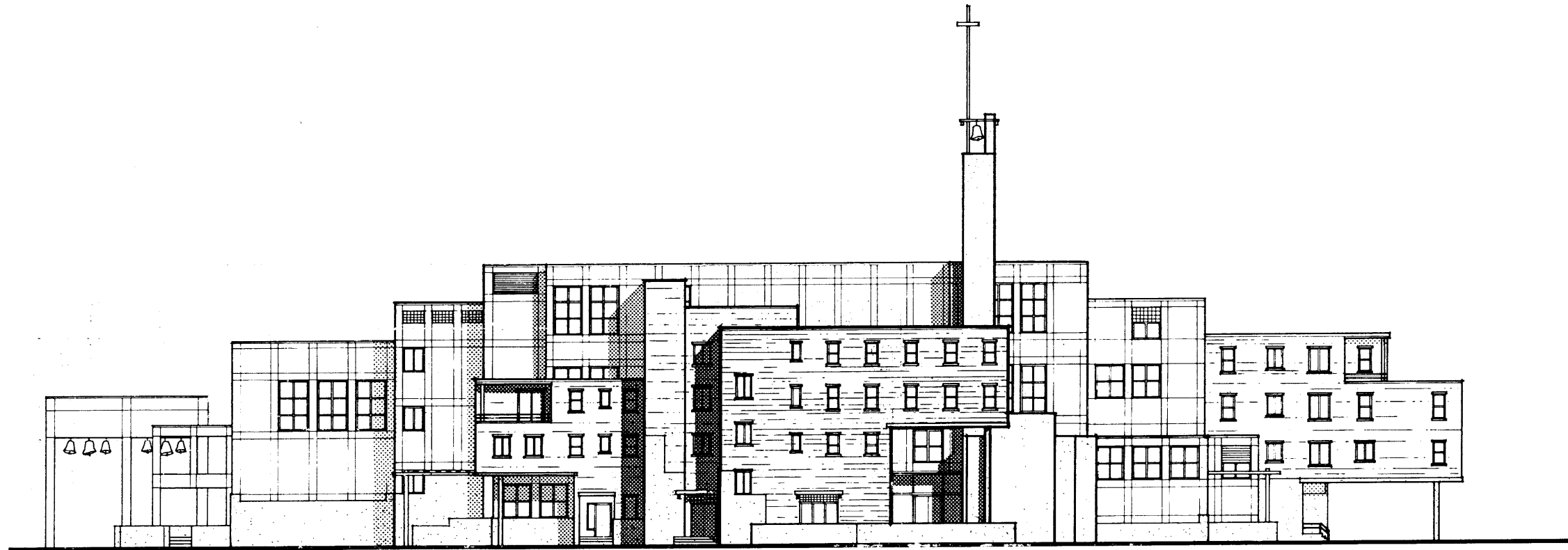
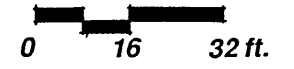
TRANSVERSE SECTION D - D



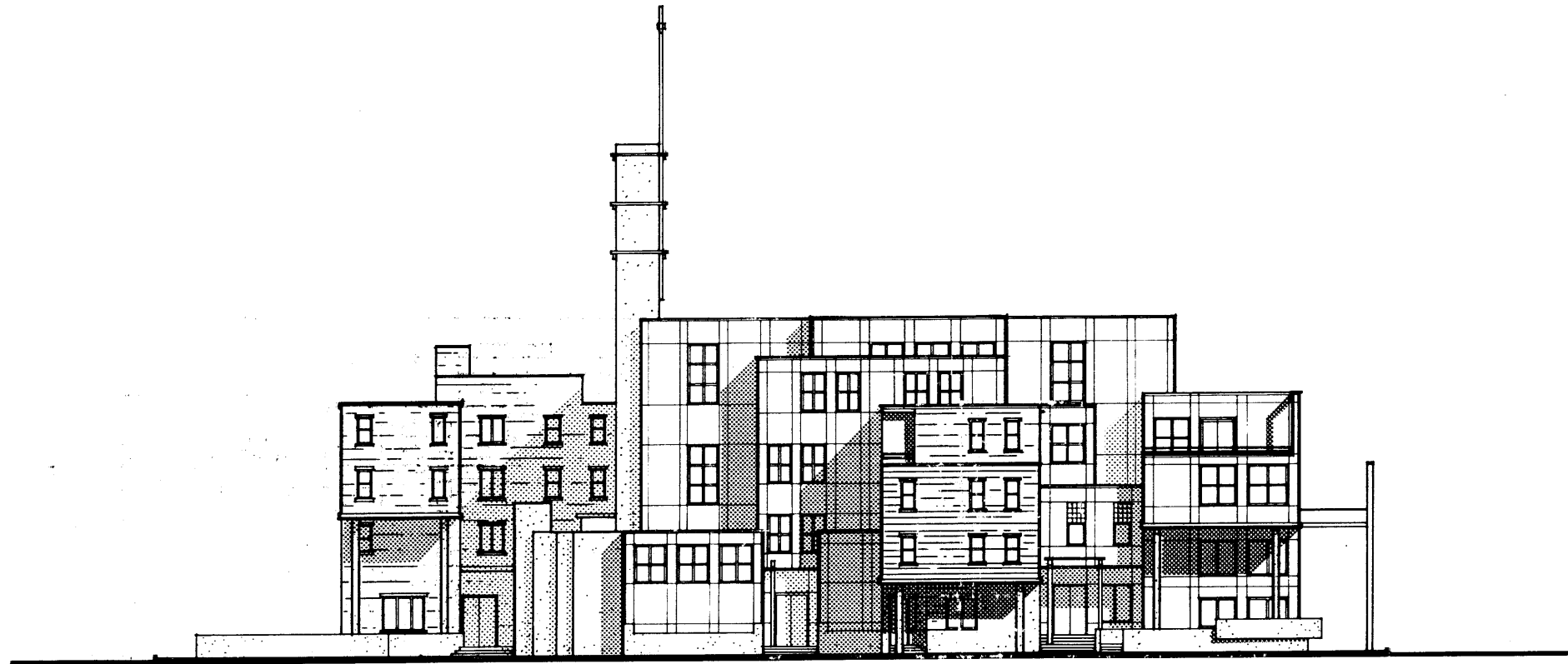
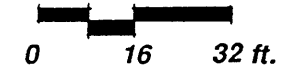
TREMONT STREET (FRONT)
ELEVATION



BACK ELEVATION (CORNER
APPLETON - BERKELEY)



**BERKELEY STREET (SIDE)
ELEVATION**



The final scheme is discussed in the following chapter and is compared to the desired qualities set forth for this institution. There are, admittedly, some areas in which the scheme falls short, but there are certainly others where it meets its intended goals. The importance of such a work, I believe, is in the possibilities it offers rather than the stumbling blocks it encounters.

The most obvious primary decision made in this design is the orientation of the entire facility along the Tremont Street grid. There are several reasons for this decision. The most significant reason is that this building is ultimately a public facility, a fact which carries with it some implications in regard to the choice of orientation. As a public structure, the building should primarily address the main thoroughfare of Tremont Street. It should also have a clear and ordered presence on the street. These factors weighted the decision to establish a building grid along Tremont Street; the deciding issues were the fact that the use of a consistent internal organization helped to order a very diverse and often cumbersome program, and the realization that, on a larger scale, this orientation would more closely link the communities being addressed in this project. By crossing the barrier of Tremont Street with the grid used in the Castle Square development, this new facility would bridge Tremont and reference Castle Square in the context of the residential row house areas along Appleton and Berkeley Streets.

The only pieces that break out of this grid are the two religious elements: the main worship space and the smaller chapel structure. Taking clues from some of Aalto's work in Finland, these pieces are inextricably linked with the structure of this complex but begin to break free along one edge and thereby assume a language of their own. They are not isolated from this complex, but assume a greater importance than the other pieces

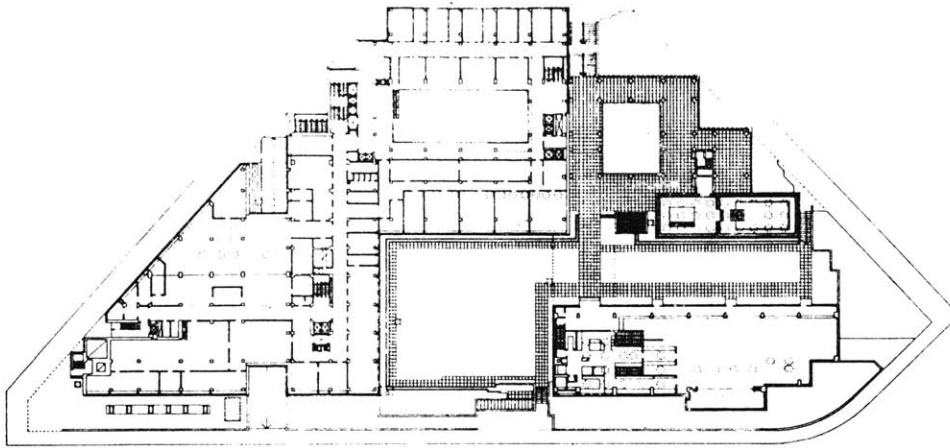


Figure 6.1
*National Pensions Building, Helsinki, Finland.
Architect: Alvar Aalto. This reference offers a
suggestion that a triangular site can be resolved
through the introduction of an orthogonal grid.*

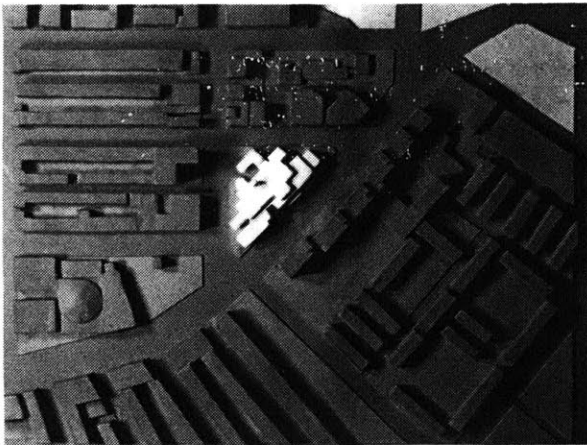


Figure 6.2
Site model showing insert of proposed complex.

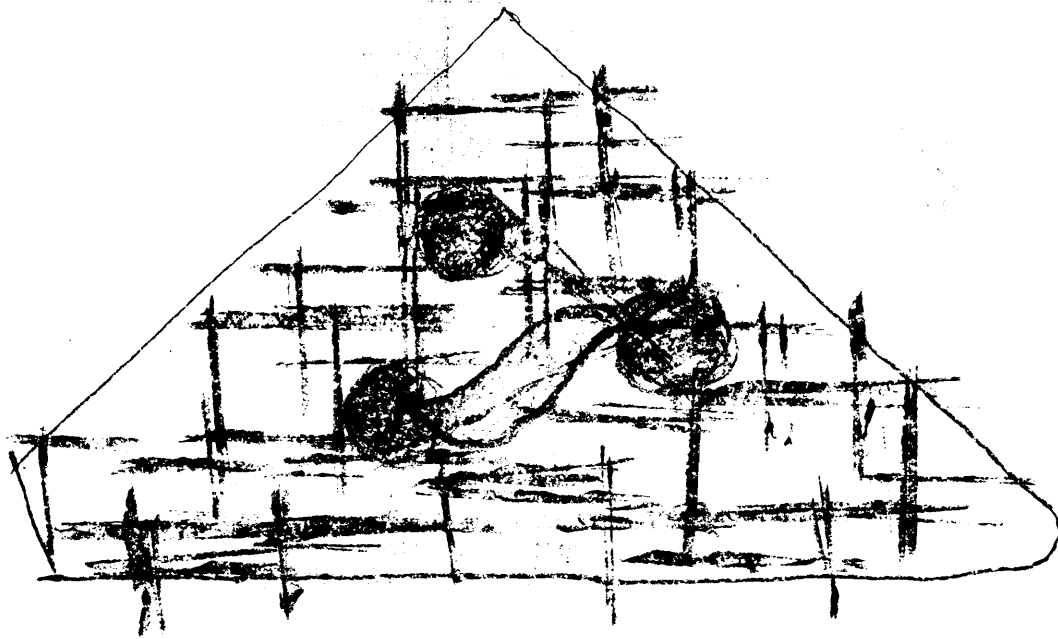


Figure 6.3
Early charcoal sketch showing introduction of Tremont Street grid. The diagonal relationship between public nodes appears, and the use of the cafe piece to link these nodes is suggested.

Figure 6.4
Existing condition, South End. Shaded areas indicate buildings of similar orientation. Tremont Street divides the area around the proposed site, leaving Castle Square as an island, unrelated to the South End, the Back Bay, or Chinatown.

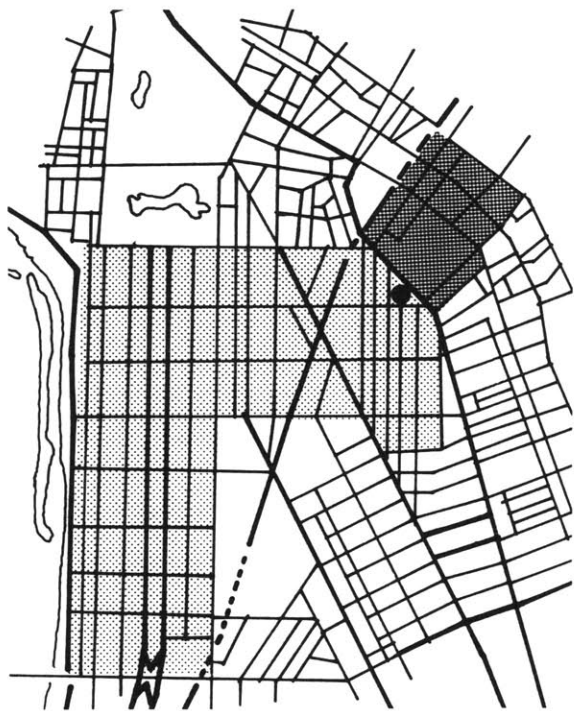
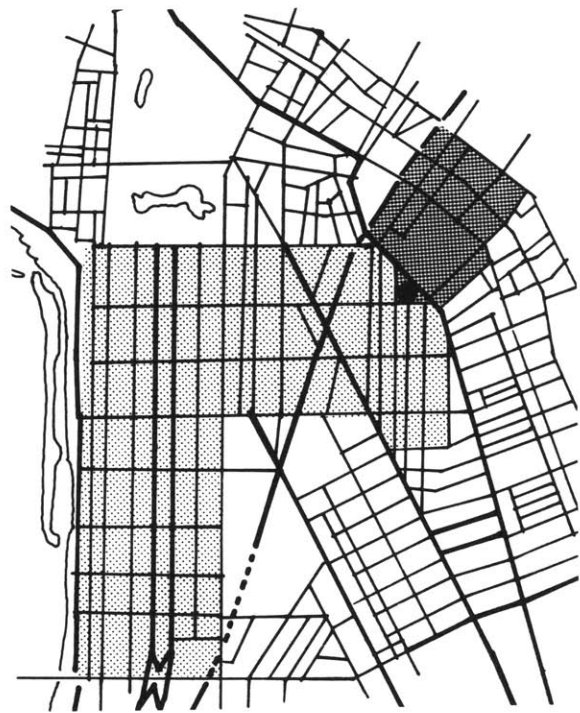


Figure 6.5
Proposed site condition. By introducing the Castle Square grid onto the site, the Tremont Street divider is bridged, and the low income and elderly projects are connected to the Berkeley and Appleton neighborhoods.



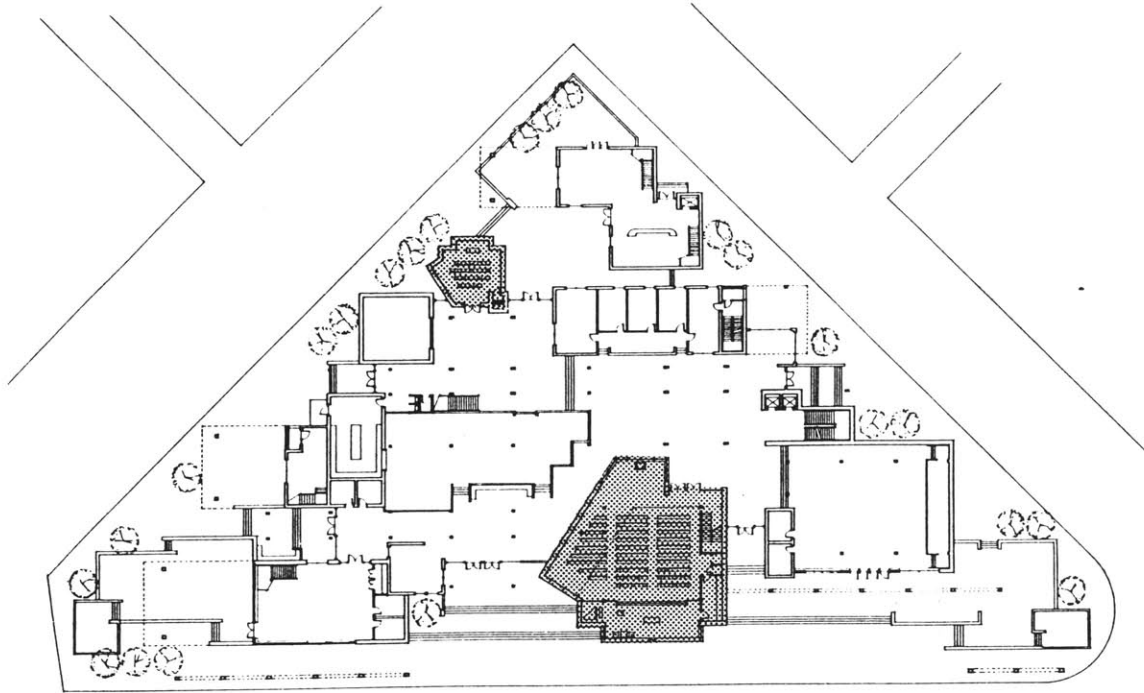
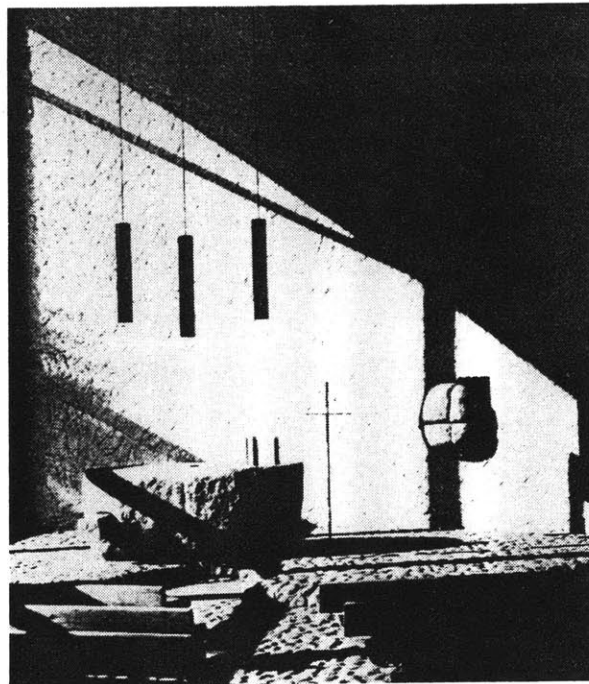


Figure 6.6
Plan showing unique but integrated geometry of the two religious pieces.

Figure 6.7
Chamrousse Ecumenical Center, France. Architect: Pierre Jomain. The altar is portrayed as "mensa" - rooted to the earth; the only permanent element of this church.



and demand acknowledgement by the user. The materials chosen to build these elements further underline their prominence, as will be discussed in more detail later.

An important feature of this design, one which is facilitated through this unexpected geometry, is the level of permeability allowed on the three sides of the block. On Tremont Street, the entries are spacious and perpendicular to the direction of the complex. They are therefore of a formal and very public nature. On both Appleton and Berkeley Streets, because of the interaction of the Tremont geometry with the Back Bay grid, each entry is somewhat secluded from the others. These entries take on a more private and individualized character, and since people enter them parallel to the main building direction, they are of a less formal nature. The many paths into this building encourage penetration and allow the building to be used as a "shortcut" for area residents, an idea which is entirely in keeping with the intentions of this Church.

The circulation at the ground level is organized in a diagonal pattern, connecting the major nodes on the site. The major nodes can be characterized as follows: public entry, main interior courtyard, secondary interior courtyard, and exterior courtyard. The public entry, accessed perpendicularly off of Tremont Street, falls between the two major elements of sanctuary and day care center. The dimensions and strong south light in this area, as well as the hard diagonal wall of the sanctuary, serve to draw people into the building. Once an individual has entered this building, there are three major components to the interior space. The first is the cafeteria, raised on a platform above the circulation path, open and inviting in nature. The other two are the interior courtyards which are simply expansions of the public path which open to three and four story heights, establishing

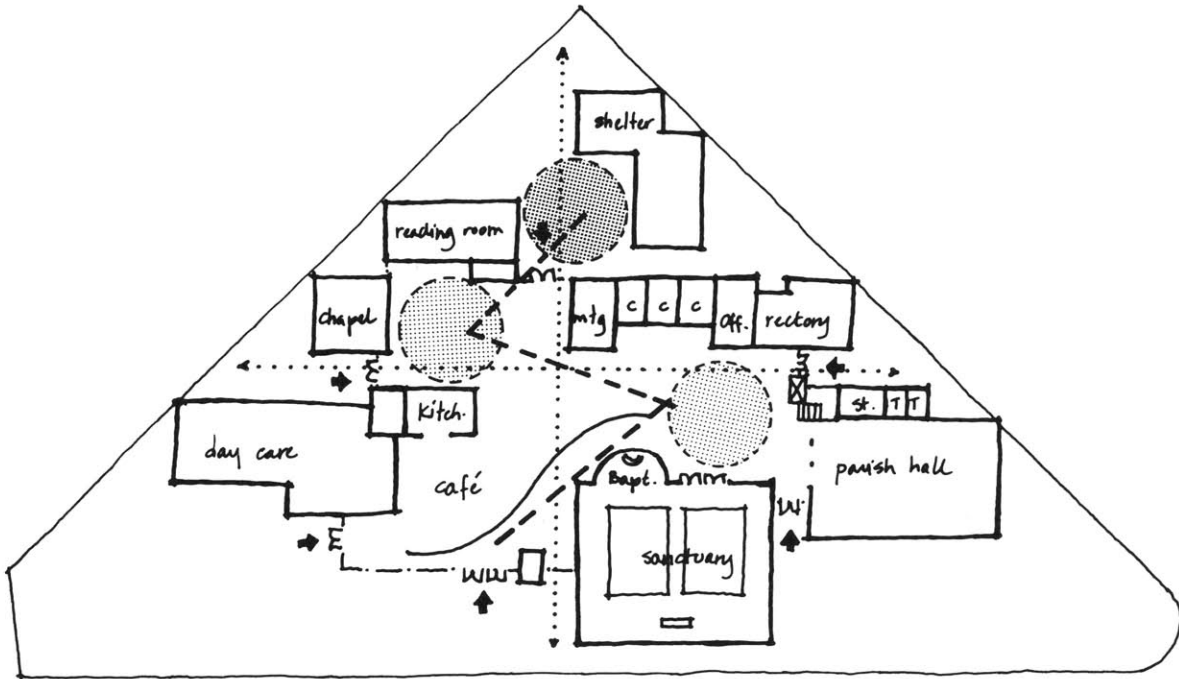
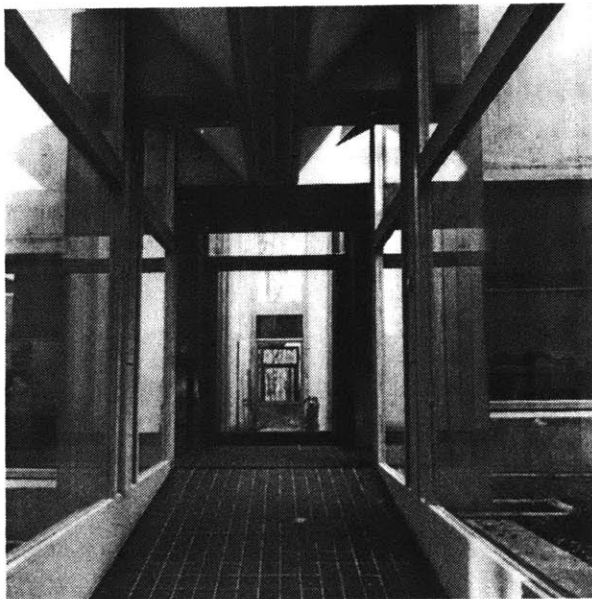


Figure 6.8
 Early development of orthogonal scheme, showing diagonal relationship of public nodes, permeability of complex, and views through building establishing a layering of the various spaces.

Figure 6.9
 View of central spine in the Musée de la Préhistoire, Nemours, France. Architect: Roland Simounet. Views through the building create a powerful layering of spaces and a series of associations with the surrounding landscape.



connections to the activities on the upper levels and receiving pools of light from above. Access from the main entry to these courtyards is in a diagonal motion. This movement system offers different perspectives of this complex and creates an awareness of the many layers and levels involved in such a facility. Each of these inner courtyards has a unique character comprised by the specific functions adjacent to it. The main courtyard is very public, acting as a lobby which services the sanctuary, the parish hall, the counseling center and the cafe. The secondary courtyard is more private: it receives the users of the reading room, the small chapel, and the cafe. From these interior courtyards the progression is either out through one of the side entries or in a further diagonal motion to the back of the site. This diagonal path leads the user to a small exterior courtyard which services the homeless shelter.

An important element of this scheme is the layering of spaces which is possible because of the depth of the site at the center of the triangle. Upon entry into this complex, a visitor is offered views straight through the building, past several different interior functions, and back outside to the street life beyond. This situation is true for five of the six ground floor entries. This layering invites progression through the space and allows for varying levels of commitment of penetration. For example, someone entering one of the minor side entries, perhaps to use the reading room off of the Berkeley Street edge, would experience a visual connection to the chapel, the counseling center, the parish hall, the sanctuary, the cafe, and back outside to Appleton Street opposite or to the courtyard for the homeless shelter to the east. This visual connection would perhaps encourage further involvement in some of these activities.

There are several important components to identify in this proposed building, but it is perhaps best to start at the major piece, the sanctuary.

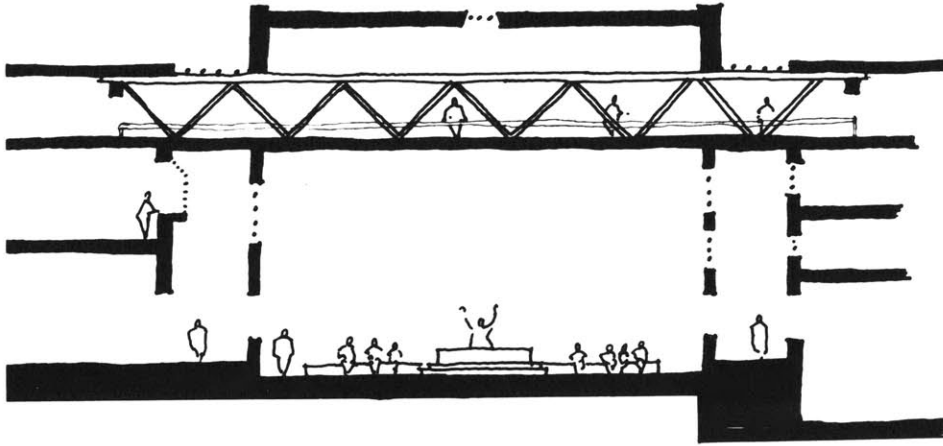
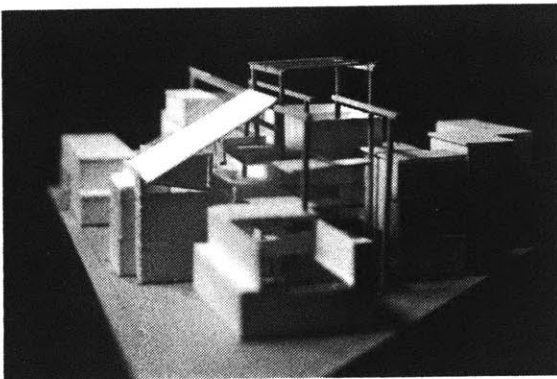


Figure 6.10
Early conceptual section showing visual and physical relationship of entire complex to the sanctuary, even to the point of penetration on an upper level.

Figure 6.11
Study model. Corridor / gallery space is allowed to penetrate the sanctuary on the upper levels.



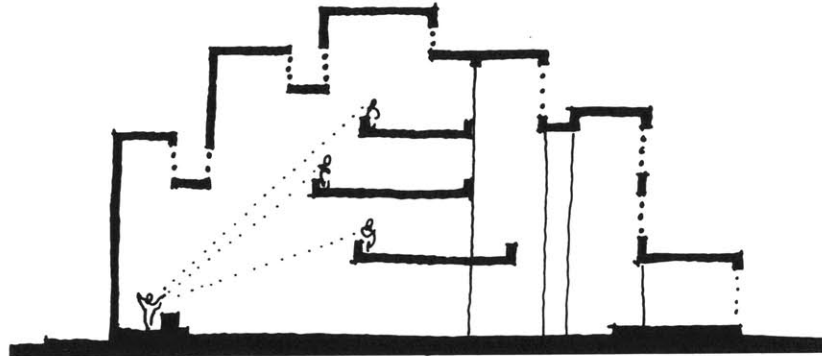
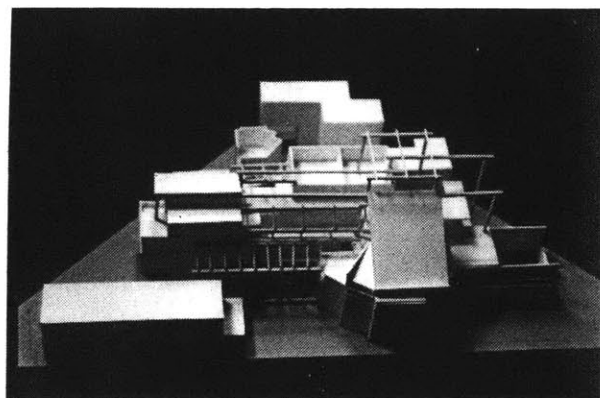


Figure 6.12
Preliminary section showing the integration of the upper levels into the sanctuary space.

Figure 6.13
Study model. Circulation space moves through sanctuary on upper levels, fusing this element into the main structure.



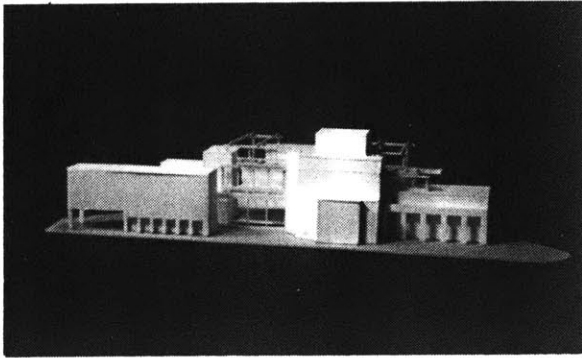


Figure 6.14
Study model showing sanctuary as distinct element along Tremont Street.

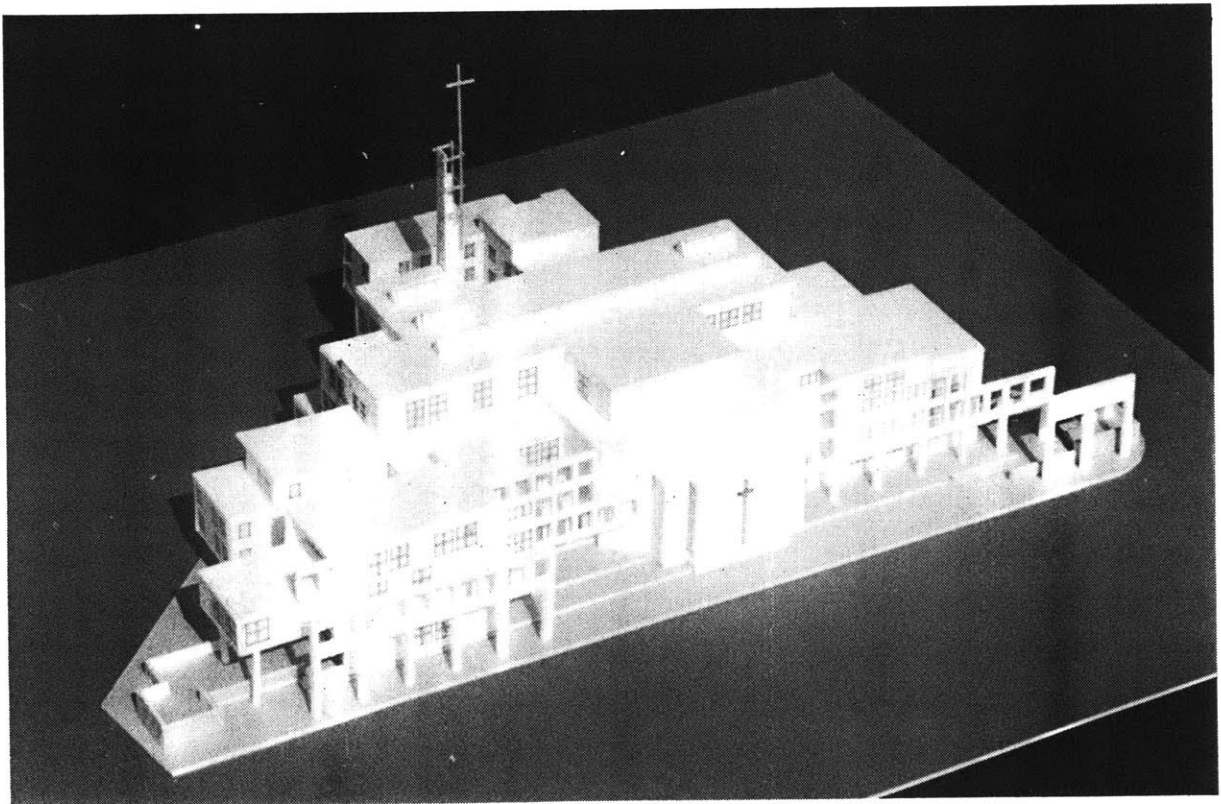


Figure 6.15
Final model showing integration of sanctuary into complex. Continuity rather than distinction is expressed.

Although this piece more than most others varied in design and position throughout the design process, its location here, central and fronting the main artery of Tremont Street, seems appropriate for the new image. The sanctuary itself is an element in direct contact with the street which passersby are encouraged to notice, particularly through the long thin window on its face which invites visual penetration to the action within. The Church is, in the final analysis, a public institution, and it needs to present itself assertively to the city and assume a positive position in the urban fabric.

While the urban presence of this church was considered, the more important issue was the role of the sanctuary within this complex. The intention is that the presence of the worship space is felt throughout this facility in varying degrees, so that all the users of this complex are made aware of its presence without necessarily being decisively involved in its functions. Again, Kahn's description of a passerby "winking" at the chapel comes to mind - subconsciously, at least, the importance of this piece is understood by those who visit this complex. To achieve this goal, the sanctuary is centrally located on the ground level and becomes a rock around which the public circulation system flows. Pushing this intention to its extreme, the sanctuary's presence is acknowledged on all the levels of this complex, with the circulation systems of the upper floors penetrating directly through the sanctuary space, expanding at points to allow for upper level seating. It is Kahn's Rochester diagram made three-dimensional: access to the various uses in this building happens around the central worship space.

One element worthy of note in the interior design of the sanctuary is the baptismal font. Since Baptism is the initiation of an individual into the community of the Church, it seemed important that the location of this piece be indicative of this act. Therefore, the font is placed in the section of the

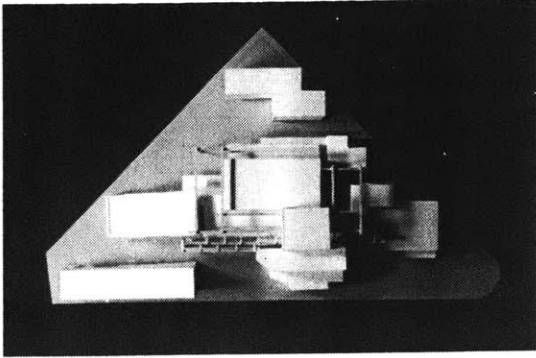
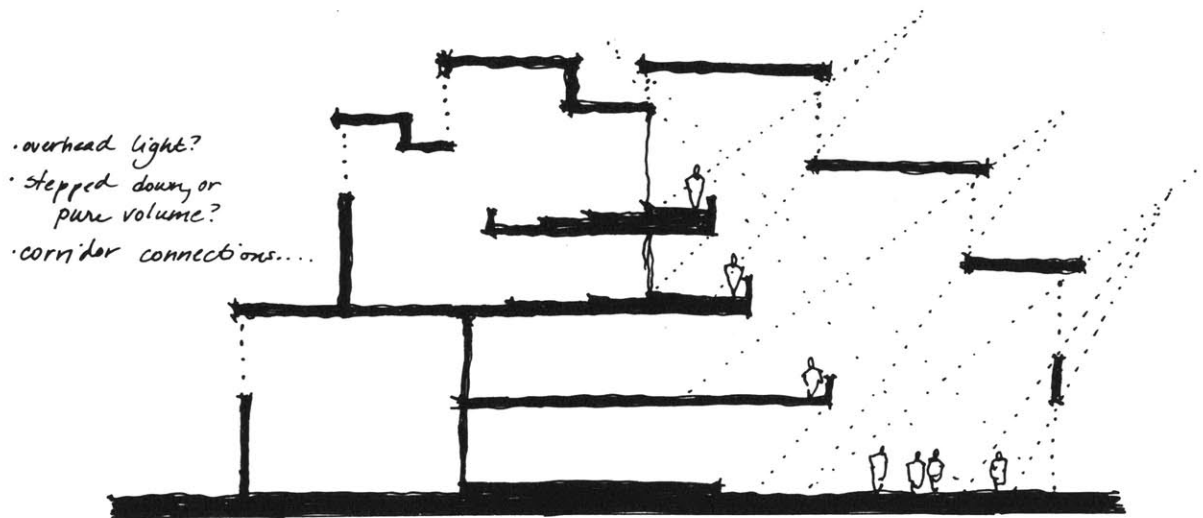


Figure 6.16
Study model. Light openings in roof indicate major public nodes below.

Figure 6.17
Early section study of interior courtyard.



sanctuary which projects out into the main lobby space. This area is enclosed by glass windows, allowing views through to the sacrament taking place. This celebration, which welcomes a new member into the Church, is thereby extended to include the larger community.

There are some functions for which the main sanctuary, with its visual and acoustical involvement in the entire complex, would not be appropriate. The small chapel, accessed through the secondary courtyard, fulfills the need for a more traditional worship space. Events of a more intimate nature, such as private prayer and meditation, as well as small weddings or funerals, would occur in this space, which holds about forty or fifty people. This chapel is quite private due to its remote location, its solid concrete walls which block visual or acoustical disturbances from outside, and its rather dark interior broken only by the south light hitting the altar through a clerestory above.

The cafeteria, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, occupies a prominent central position and is open to the surrounding areas. It contributes life and activity to this central space and allows for casual interaction among the diverse users of this complex. It is hoped that through its linear nature and the various corners it has, there will be opportunity for both individuals and large groups to occupy this area and feel a sense of inclusion without feeling entirely open and observed.

The day care center and the parish hall occupy prominent positions on the public street edge. These functions are seen as an attraction for people in the local neighborhoods; as such they are intended to draw users into this complex. The day care center was specifically located on the most prominent corner of the site for several reasons. First, since this corner was intended to be opened up as a public plaza because of its southern exposure and important position, it was felt that the presence of the day care facility would

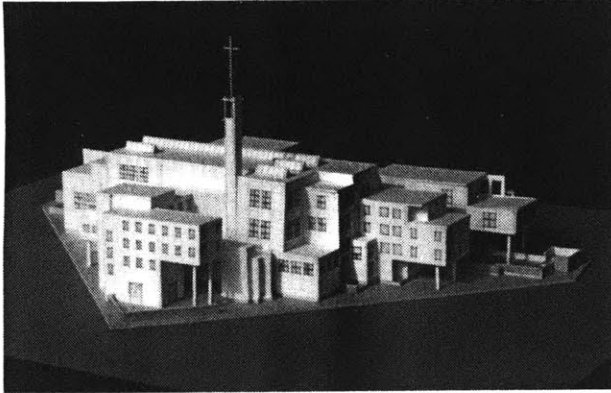


Figure 6.18
View of model from Berkeley side showing chapel and back courtyard.

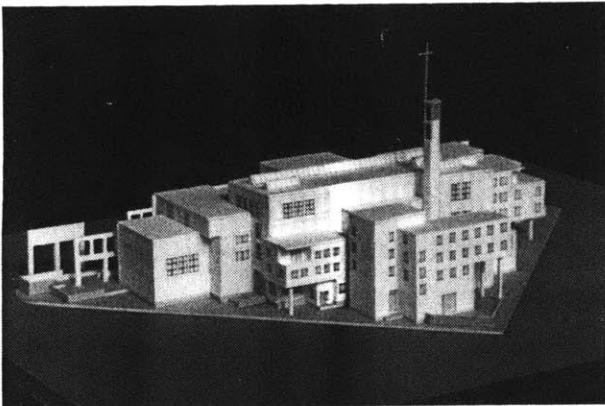
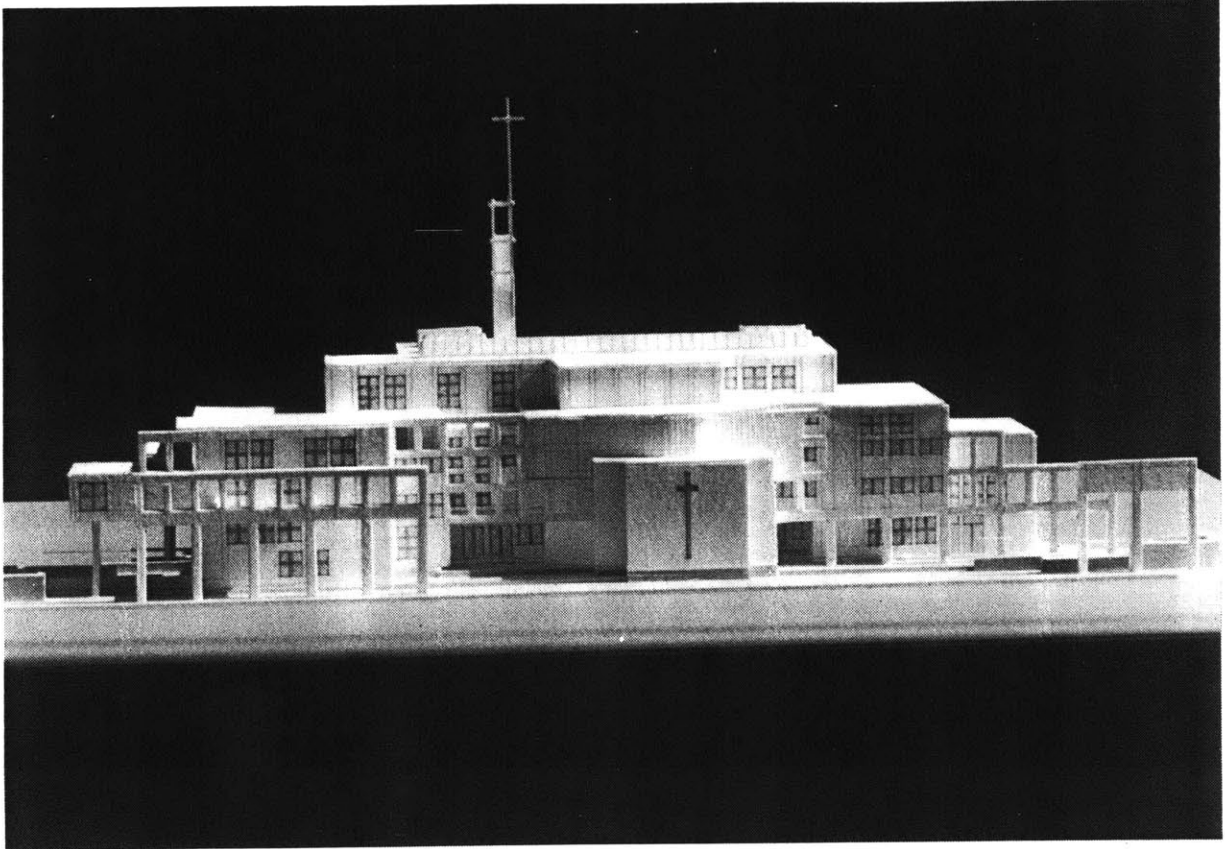


Figure 6.19
View of model from Appleton Street showing shelter and rectory.

activate this plaza and thereby encourage passersby to use it. Also, the day care in this location is visible from all the front rooms of the elderly housing complex across Tremont and helps to promote interest and interaction from that community.

The parish hall, in most Catholic churches, is perhaps the liveliest space offered. This is the setting for bingo games, church bazaars, parish dances and other social functions. In this new facility, the parish hall is intended to house active and varied activities, spilling out onto the front plaza in nice weather, attracting and involving the local residents. In inclement weather, these activities can spill out into the main lobby, visible to the upper levels of this facility. The upper floors hold meeting rooms which sit above the back of the parish hall, and these spaces are also offered visual connection to the activity below.

The ground level houses a counseling center, which is placed nearby the homeless shelter since these people would be most in need of such services. The homeless shelter, which can house between forty and fifty people, is the only structure which is separated from the main complex on the first level. This gives the shelter some privacy while maintaining a visual connection with the Church. On the upper levels, the shelter bridges this separation and is actually allowed access through to the main building. The shelter occupies the northeast corner of the site and is similar in character to the residential streets it faces. The main residential wing of the shelter is raised two stories above the ground to allow visual access from this back corner to the church facility beyond. The shelter has two outdoor spaces associated with it. One space is the yard situated directly on the corner of Berkeley and Appleton Streets, raised about two feet above sidewalk level. As an extension of the lounge on the ground floor of the shelter, this yard is a



MODEL VIEW FROM TREMONT

public space which services residents of the shelter and invites newcomers off the street. The second outdoor space, physically linked with the first, is an exterior courtyard protected from the street by the shelter complex and the main building. This courtyard, with views through the main building and back out to Tremont, is intended to offer opportunities for interaction between the homeless and the other users of this Church.

Related to this shelter is the transient housing facility, accessed off of the ground level on Berkeley close to Tremont Street. This housing is intended to be a step up from the shelter, a result of the interaction of the counseling center with the shelter residents. When the homeless are more stabilized (i.e., jobs have been located or family situations have improved), they would occupy these apartments while amassing enough savings to find their own place of residence. Unlike the shelter with its dormitory style rooms and congregate bath, this transient housing is divided into individual apartments, ranging in size to accommodate various family needs. While this housing is accessed from the ground level, it is actually raised one story (in this case about fifteen feet) above the ground to offer both a front yard to this piece and a continuous pedestrian zone along Berkeley Street.

Like the transient housing, the rectory is accessed at the street level but its actual volume is one story above. All of the residential pieces - the rectory, the shelter, the transient housing - are associated with the more private residential side streets. As will be discussed later, their systems of access and their materials of construction relate to the residential prototypes established in this area.

There are a few features worth noting on the upper levels of this facility. The most important is the already noted fact that the circulation system on all of the upper floors penetrates into the main sanctuary space, offering visual

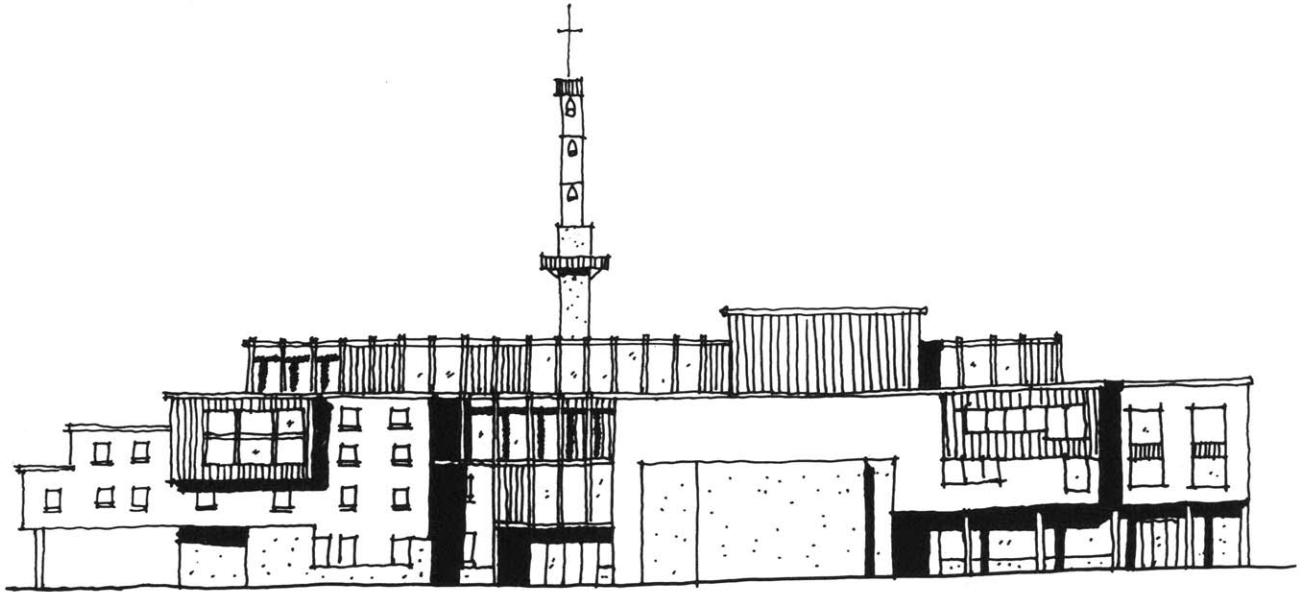
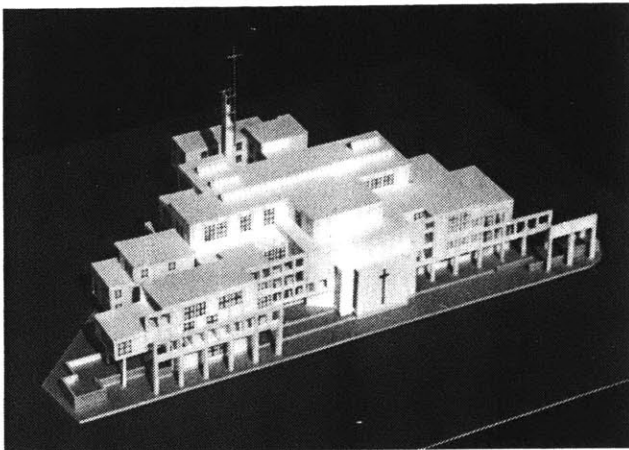


Figure 6.20
Preliminary elevation study showing the use of three materials: metal siding, concrete, and brick.



MODEL VIEW

and acoustical involvement in the Mass below. The second floor comprises the educational component of this Church. It consists of six classrooms, several faculty offices, a student lounge and an informal central meeting space. These classrooms can be used for the instruction of catechism on Sundays but are also ample enough to provide for a small parochial school to operate during the week. At this level, there is a seating tier in the sanctuary which can hold up to sixty students, or approximately two to three average size classes. The intention is that part of a student's education involves an awareness and exposure to the Mass as the primary gathering of the Christian community.

The third and fourth floors of this structure house meeting spaces, offices, and lecture rooms, as well as a two story auditorium space, accessed from both the third and fourth floors, which seats about two hundred and fifty people and can be used for community assembly, lectures, or performances. Through connections are made to the day care center and the homeless shelter on these upper levels, incorporating all activities into the life of this facility.

The choice of materials used for this complex was very deliberate and specific to the intended image. The main structure, housing the more public church facilities, is made up of poured concrete and panelized metal siding. The poured-in-place concrete is predominantly a foundation wall and water table for the building, but it does climb to larger heights in the specific areas of the chapel and the sanctuary. These are thereby differentiated from the other elements, and the desired image is one of strength and permanence.

The panelized metal siding allows for large glazed areas, adding to the public nature of this facility. This siding occasionally breaks free of the building beyond, becoming alternately a free-standing wall and a large screen

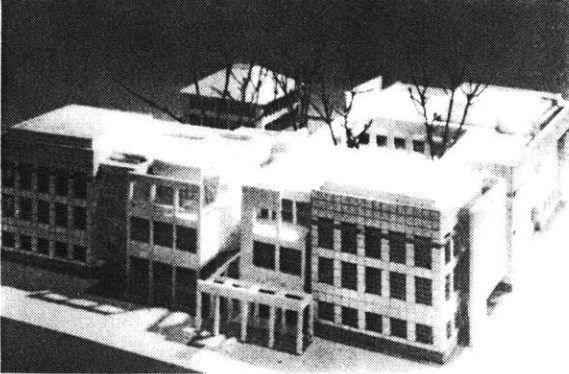
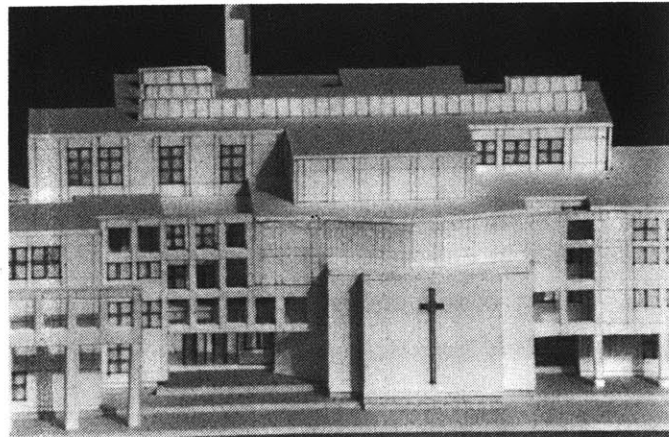


Figure 6.21

Museum in Frankfurt am Main, West Germany. Architect: Richard Meier. Free standing and partially attached screens are used to create a layering of spaces around the building, blurring the distinction between interior and exterior.

Figure 6.22

Detail of Tremont Street facade. Metal siding defines a continuous face to this facility, but varies in nature from solid to transparency to screen.



for the institution. These free standing walls are evident on the Tremont facade, and serve to encourage pedestrian flow into the building and create a sense of inclusion in this complex to even the casual passerby. The screens give a continuity and coherence to the building, and hint at the complex layering of spaces which happens beyond the front wall. The metal siding also curves outward at the third story above the altar space, implying the importance of this area and allowing better views from the upper levels to the ceremony below.

The residential elements of this institution differ in nature from the community pieces. Besides being accessed from the more private side streets, they are also generally of the same height and materials as the surrounding residential buildings. The shelter, transient housing, and rectory are all composed of a brick cavity wall system which allows for the small scale openings required for these private uses. The size and rhythm of the openings is borrowed from the residential context, and the intended treatment of windows and doors is similar: brownstone sills and lintels will ornament the front facade of the residential structures on this site.

The structural system used in this complex further reflects the diverse nature of its myriad components. The main building is framed in a steel column and beam system, with typical longitudinal spans of twenty to thirty feet. The transverse spacing is used to indicate something of the use; the spans narrow to about twelve feet for the circulation path and increase to over twenty-five feet in the interior courtyards. Where the columnar system assumes any significant height (as at the interior courtyards), the typical one-by-one columns become pier-like, their longer dimension occurring parallel to the direction of Tremont Street and emphasizing this movement.

The smaller pieces: the chapel, reading room, and residential buildings,

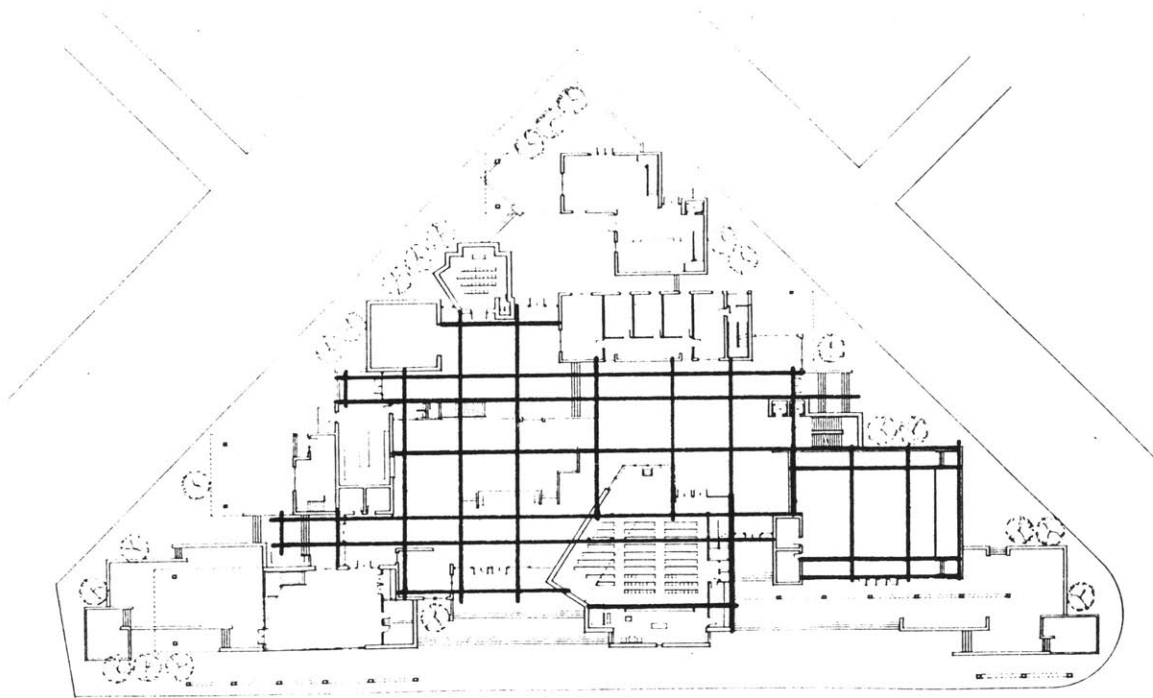
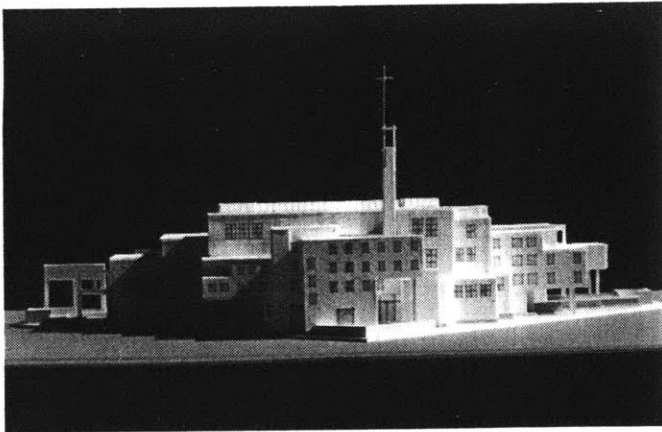


Figure 6.23
Plan showing main structural grid. Housing and smaller pieces use bearing wall systems.



MODEL VIEW

have shorter spans and do not require a sophisticated columnar system; these rely on load bearing walls for their support.

The sanctuary also uses a column and beam system. The grid established in the main complex penetrates the sanctuary space initially, and then transforms to allow the larger spans required for such a space.

The architectural specifics of this complex hopefully enable the true goals of such an institution. The belief is that the building will nurture the spirit of the people in the Church, and facilitate the interaction of this spirit with the many other aspects of their daily lives.

Notes

1. Wurman, p. 261.
2. Berger, p. 28.
3. Berger, p. 26.
4. Geaney, p. 278.
5. Peck, p. 42.
6. Brantl, p. 107.
7. Cox, p. 144.
8. Sovik, p. 64.
9. Gascoigne, p. 57.
10. Smith, p. 141.
11. James, p. 382.
12. Brantl, p. 195.
13. Davies, p. 4-6.
14. Davies, p. 81.
15. Davies, p. 38.
16. Gascoigne, p. 6.
17. Hammond, p. 63.
18. Treib, p. 165.
19. Treib, p. 167.
20. Wurman, p. 125.

Bibliography

- Baum, Gregory. The Credibility of the Church Today. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968.
- Bellah, Robert N. et. al. Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Berger, Peter L. and Richard Neuhaus. To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute of Public Policy Research, 1977.
- Brantl, George, ed. Catholicism. New York: George Braziller, 1962.
- Braunfels, Wolfgang. Monasteries of Western Europe: The Architecture of the Orders. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1972.
- Burns, Jim. Connections: Ways to Discover and Realize Community Potentials. Stroudsburg, PA.: Dowden, Hutchinson, Russ, 1979.
- Christ-Janer, Albert and Mary Foley. Modern Church Architecture. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1962.
- Cox, Harvey. The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965.
- Dahinden, Justus. New Trends in Church Architecture. New York: Universe Books, 1967.
- Davies, J.G. The Secular Use of Church Buildings. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1968.
- Davies, J.G. Temples, Churches, and Mosques: A Guide to the Appreciation of Religious Architecture. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982.
- Ellsberg, Robert, ed. By Little and By Little: Selected Writings of Dorothy Day. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.
- Filthaut, Theodor. Church Architecture and Liturgical Reform. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1972.
- Gascoigne, Robert. Religion, Rationality, and Community: Sacred and Secular in the Thought of Hegel and his Critics. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985.

- Geaney, Dennis J. OSA. Quest for Community: Tomorrow's Parish Today. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1987.
- Gibran, Kahlil. The Prophet. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923.
- Gieselmann, Richard. New Churches. New York: Architecture Book Publishing Co., 1972.
- Hammond, Peter, ed. Towards a Church Architecture. London: The Architecture Press, 1962.
- Handy, Robert T. The Social Gospel in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Hayes, Bartlett. Tradition Becomes Innovation: Modern Religious Architecture in America. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1983.
- James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. New York: New American Library, 1958.
- Jencks, Charles. Le Corbusier and the Tragic View of Architecture. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Jones, Alexander, ed. The Jerusalem Bible. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971.
- Lissitzky-Kuppers, Sophie. El Lissitzky: Life. Letters. Texts. Greenwich, Ct.: New York Graphic Society, Ltd., 1967.
- Lynn, Edwin Charles. Tired Dragons: Adapting Church Architecture to Changing Needs. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.
- Macy, Christine. How Community is Expressed in Place: The Spatial Manifestations of Two Parishes. M.Arch. Thesis, M.I.T., 1985.
- Mazmanian, Arthur B. The Structure of Praise. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.
- Michell, George, ed. Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1978.
- Peck, M. Scott, M.D. The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.
- Piehl, Mel. Breaking Bread: The Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.
- Progressive Architecture. September 1980. Marc Treib: "Clouds of Concrete". Volume 61, No. 9. Pages 165-68.

- Quinn, Patrick. "Drawing on Mt. Athos: The Thousand Year Lesson", in Places: A Quarterly Journal of Architectural Design, Volume 2, Number 1. Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1985.
- Scully, Vincent Jr. Louis I. Kahn. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1962.
- Segundo, Juan L., S.J. The Community Called Church. New York: Orbis Books, 1973.
- Shears, John Knox, ed. Religious Buildings for Today. Washington, D.C.: F.W.Dodge Corporation, 1957.
- Sitte, Camillo. City Planning According to Artistic Principles. London: Phaidon Press, 1965. * *
- Sovik, E.A. Architecture for Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973.
- Threshold: Journal of the School of Architecture, University of Illinois at Chicago. Images and Shadows of Things Divine. New York: Rizzoli, 1982.
- Wurman, Richard Saul. What Will Be Has Always Been: The Words of Louis I. Kahn. New York: Rizzoli, 1986.
- Zevi, Bruno. Sert's Architecture in the Miro Foundation. Barcelona, Spain: Ediciones Poligrafa, 1976.