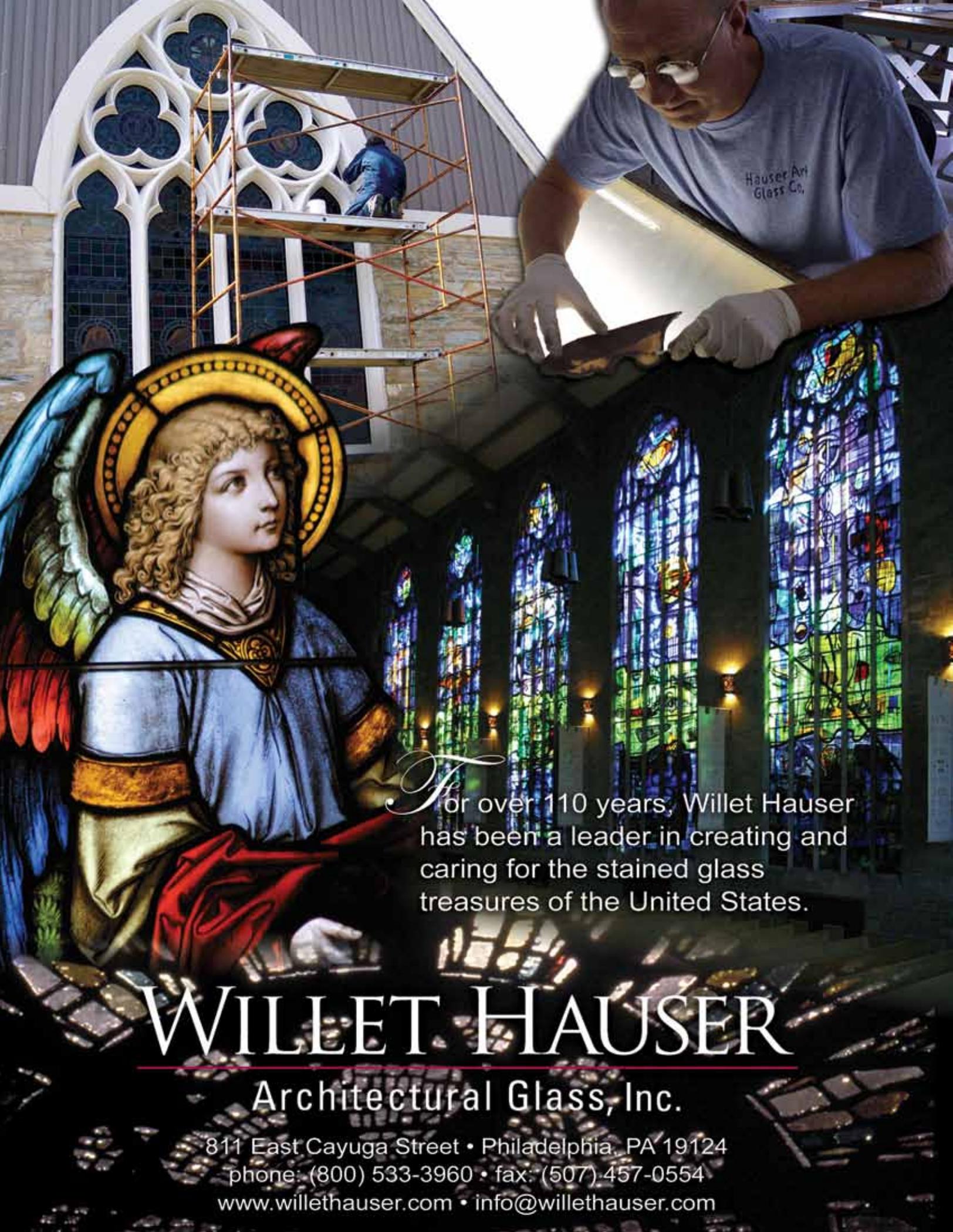




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RELIGION, ART AND ARCHITECTURE  
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Photo: Michael Moran/OTTO

ON THE COVER:

West-facing porch of the Won Dharma Center's Meditation Hall. (article begins on page 9).

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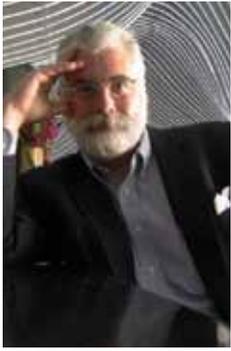
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NEXT ISSUE:
A potpourri of
articles on the best
in religious art and
architecture.





## THE “S” WORD

EDITOR’S PAGE \* MICHAEL J. CROSBIE

A few weeks ago I was invited to make some remarks at a gathering at Cornell University’s New York City Center to open an evening panel discussion by architects and academicians on “Space, the Sacred, and the Imagination.” The event being held was partly to celebrate two recently published books, *The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture* (reviewed in this issue on page 33), and *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture* (which will be reviewed in the next issue of *Faith & Form*). My brief remarks focused on the desire to experience a sense of the sacred in our lives through architecture and art; and on the idea that that this yearning is at the core of the human condition, whether one believes in God or not. This hunger for the sacred seems to have risen to a pang, as evidenced by a proposal made by the philosopher Alain de Botton in his new book, *Religion for Atheists*, to build a series of temples for atheists on sites across the United Kingdom. The first, a “Temple to Perspective,” a black monolith of 151 feet, would be constructed in the City of London’s financial district. Botton’s argument is that awe-inspiring architecture should not be just for believers; atheists should have their own architectural monuments, erected to glorify their belief in nonbelief.

The panel quickly veered away from a discussion of the sacred in architecture, and instead was recast as a desire for architecture that is “immeasurable,” “ineffable,” “oceanic,” “possessing absence,” a “void,” or a “vanishing point.” It seemed that most of the panelists

were uncomfortable with the very word “sacred,” freighted as it is with the requirement of belief – something quite outside the control of the architect. One panelist commented that this discussion was a more profound assessment of transcendent architecture because it did not engage in the “purely instrumental, functional aspects” of sacred space.

It appeared that most of the panelists were much more comfortable speculating on a secular sacred architecture, abstract and safe, than on one that demands human engagement to make it sacred. Only one panelist, Anne Rieselbach of the New York Architectural League, dared to use the “S” word to question whether architects can indeed create a space that makes religious enlightenment possible – one shaped by liturgical needs that serves a religious belief system. She even ventured the possibility that a space cannot be sacred in itself, that it is only through its setting as a place of gathering for worship, contemplation, prayer, meditation, or fellowship that architecture can become sacred. It is the very instrumental nature of architecture, its functional aspect, that helps to call forth the sacred.

The palpable discomfort of many architects, artists, and academicians in using the “S” word could be a symptom of their own disbelief or uncertainty. But an attempt to disengage the act of belief, of coming together as a community of believers, from the space in which that gathering happens – *why* it happens – keeps architecture and art at a safe distance from the immeasurable, the ineffable, and the mysterious. This is why De Botton’s program for temples for atheists doesn’t make much sense, either. The worship of architecture and art is secondary to their roles as midwives of the sacred. Awe is in belief. 

MICHAEL J. CROSBIE IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *FAITH & FORM* AND CAN BE REACHED BY EMAIL AT [MCROSBIE@FAITHANDFORM.COM](mailto:MCROSBIE@FAITHANDFORM.COM)



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# The Campus Chapel: A Brief History

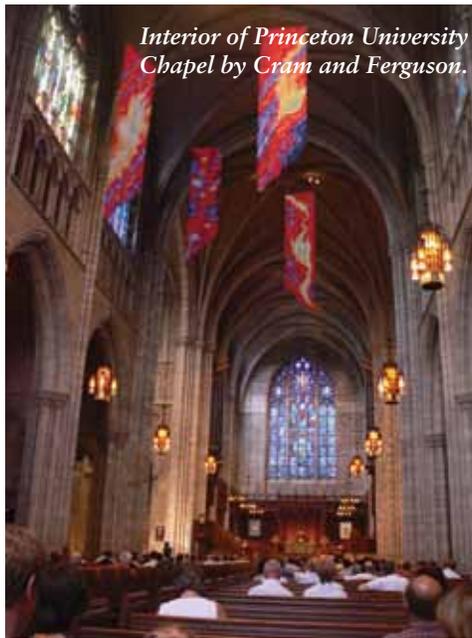
By Margaret M. Grubiak

CHAPELS AND RELIGIOUS CENTERS ON college, university, monastic, and secondary school campuses have a long and remarkable history in the United States. As the sites of worship services, alumni weddings, memorials, funerals, and everyday reflection and prayer, these places of worship and spirituality have played, and continue to play, important roles in their communities.

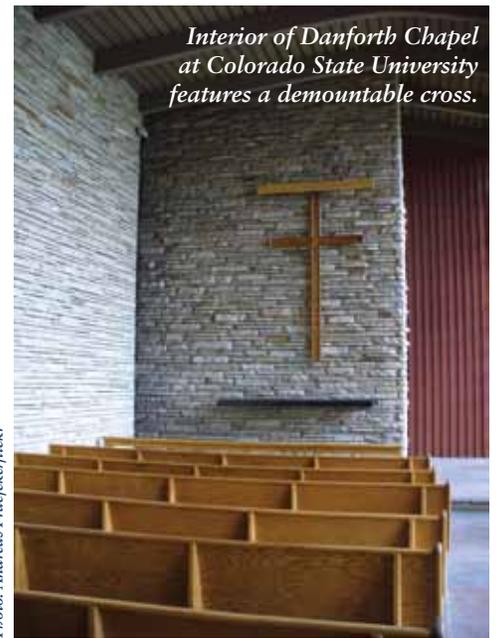
Yet while these chapels foster the spiritual lives of those who use them, the chapel as a cultural symbol and a marker of institutional mission has changed markedly in the past 50 years. The case of the college and university chapel is especially clear. The place of spirituality and worship on the college campus now operates as a token of religious expression—available for those who wish to worship, contemplate, and find solace, but well outside the contemporary mission of American higher education. The chapel is a relic of a religious past and a mirror of a quite changed religious present.

Until the mid-20th century, religion was an endemic part of the American college and university. Many American colleges were founded by religious denominations: Harvard was originally Unitarian; Yale, Congregational; Brown, Baptist; The College of William & Mary, Anglican; Princeton, closely aligned with the Presbyterian Church. Mandatory services, both daily and on Sundays, were a long-standing tradition on many campuses, even public campuses, and did not end wholesale until the 1960s. As college and university enrollment expanded, so did the college chapel. Worship services were often held in a room in the college main hall, but by the early-19th century institutions constructed increasingly larger stand-alone worship spaces. By the post-Civil War years, the chapel had indeed come into its own. Religion on campus appeared central and strong.

However, by the late 19th and early-20th centuries, the centrality of religion on the campus came under question. American



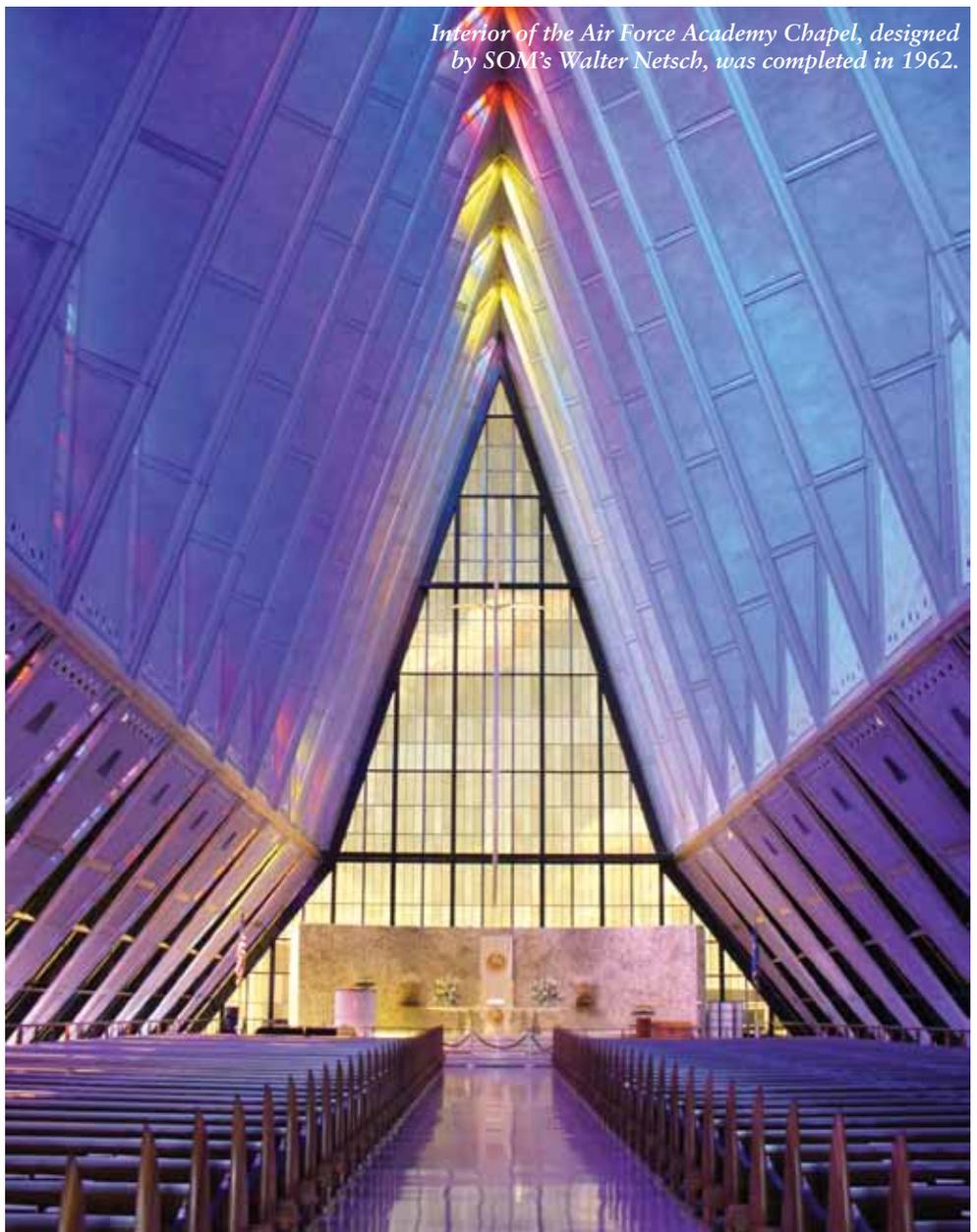
*Interior of Princeton University Chapel by Cram and Ferguson.*



*Interior of Danforth Chapel at Colorado State University features a demountable cross.*

Photo: Andreas Praefcke/flickr

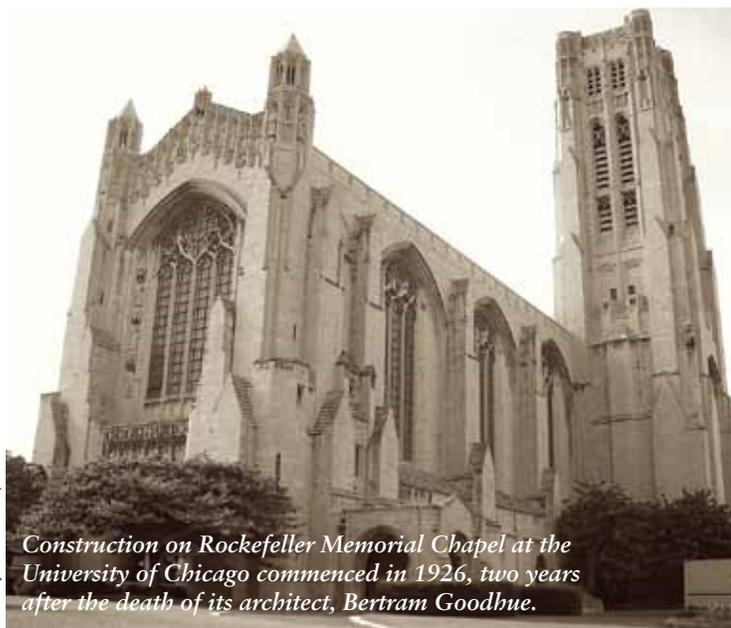
Photo: Margaret Grubiak



*Interior of the Air Force Academy Chapel, designed by SOM's Walter Netsch, was completed in 1962.*

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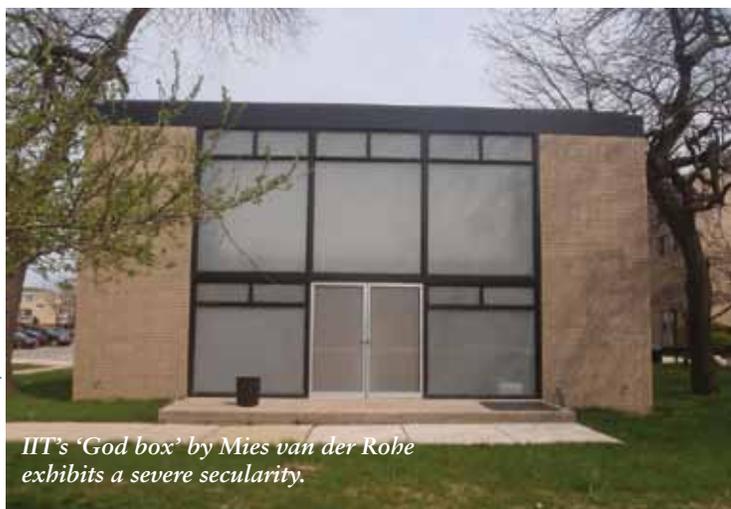
*Construction on Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago commenced in 1926, two years after the death of its architect, Bertram Goodhue.*

Photo: kathia shieh/flickr



*Eero Saarinen's Kresge Chapel at MIT of 1955 signaled a trend toward smaller campus chapels.*

Photo: PinkMoose/flickr



*IIT's 'God box' by Mies van der Rohe exhibits a severe secularity.*

universities began to distance themselves from their founding religious denominations. Presidents and faculty were no longer necessarily clergy. The mission of the university moved away from the training of ministers, and theology was displaced from the curriculum. Most important, the German ideal of research became the new cornerstone of the modern university, replacing religion as the centerpiece of intellectual inquiry and method. A student revolution against mandatory

chapel policies was also under way, and protests against compulsory chapel were successful. Harvard was the first to end its policy in 1886, and both Yale and the University of Chicago ended their required services in the 1920s. In both the mission of the university and in its everyday life, religion's influence decreased.

The waning importance of religion sounded a warning bell for those university presidents and leaders, including a cadre of university architects, who still fervently believed in the project of religion within American higher education. A largely liberal Protestant leadership held on to the ideal that education must include a student's spiritual and moral formation. These leaders also adhered to the English Oxbridge "whole man" theory of education, which sought to return the focus to the undergraduate and to cultivate the whole person—intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Through the 1920s and '30s, liberal Protestant leaders used architecture to reassert religion's centrality on campus in three principal ways. Just as religion's influence was under threat, its architectural image was at its strongest.

First, chapels in the early-20th century became literal billboards to advertise religion's enduring significance to the university. In the 1920s, the Harvard Board of College Preachers claimed that the 19th-century Appleton Chapel's smaller size, at 850 seats, on Harvard Yard limited "its invitation to the number it can accommodate." They claimed that the university "advertises by the size of this chapel" the number it expected to attend worship, and they garnered enough support to construct the new, 1,200-seat Harvard University Memorial Church, designed by Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch & Abbott in 1931. The enormous 2,000-seat chapels at Princeton and the University of Chicago also suggested that religion held an assured presence on campus, even as other forces called that into question.

Second, university leaders made an emotional appeal to religious worship. In the 1920s, architect Ralph Adams Cram with partner Frank Ferguson based the Princeton University Chapel, in their words, on the religious architecture of the "14th century in England," a far cry from the austere construction of Protestant meeting houses focused solely on the spoken word. Their Anglo-Catholic cathedral drew its power in evoking emotions from its traditional stained glass, high fan-vaulted ceiling, and associated ritual. One Princeton undergraduate found the architecture highly effective: "It must be admitted," he said, "that the sensuous impressions to be gotten from the Chapel and all that surrounds it will be more influential in elevating the spiritual being of the average undergraduate than any doctrines which may be expounded therein." While it is true that choice to build chapels in the collegiate Gothic style also played on non-religious associations with Oxford and Cambridge, many traditionally Protestant universities turned again and again to the Gothic-Catholic imagery in spite of the theological dissonance to attract students back to worship.

Third, university leaders and architects imbued nonreligious structures with religious meaning. At Yale, architect James Gamble Rogers created a library that was a virtual cathedral in his Sterling Memorial Library of 1932. The entrance hall of the library was a nave space with the card catalog placed in the side aisles. Visitors checked out books at the circulation desk-cum-altar under the guise of the Alma Mater altarpiece, whose figure made a direct allusion to the Virgin Mary. At the University of Pittsburgh, Charles Klauder's Cathedral of Learning from 1937 used pointed arch windows, trefoils and quatrefoils, and tracery on a 42-story, Art Deco classroom skyscraper to confer a religious significance to learning. The Cathedral of Learning and the Sterling Memorial Library represented a new typology for a religious and spiritual center.

The buildings by Rogers and Klauder were an attempt to recast religion for the modern university, but placing religion in the background,

allowing multiple interpretations of its symbolism, was a double-edged sword. As much as university leaders and architects undertook measures such as large scale, emotional appeal, and religious metaphors to convey an image of religion's strength and persistent influence, their efforts failed to make religion as integral to the university mission as it had been in the 19th century. Religion could and would remain on campus, but in reduced form.

Following World War II, religion on university and college campuses looked markedly different thanks in large part to the influence of Modernism. But stylistic choice was not the only major distinguishing factor. A new sensitivity to other faith traditions also inspired a new era of ecumenical worship spaces. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's much-lauded Air Force Academy Chapel of 1962 was perhaps the closest throwback to the immense interwar chapels, but its inclusion of a Catholic Chapel and a Jewish worship space—albeit located in the lower level—suggested a shift in accommodating religions. Eero Saarinen's Massachusetts Institute of Technology Chapel of 1955 was also sensitive to different faith traditions. Saarinen re-crafted a New England meeting house on the common and used nonspecific symbols to create, in the words of Martin Marty, "holy emptiness" and a "cave for withdrawal." Importantly, Saarinen's chapel also speaks to a shift in size. While MIT specifically wanted to construct a chapel to remind its students of the responsibility of science to society following the dropping of the atomic bomb, the MIT administration did not see religion as a common, large-scale community exercise. The practice of religion was to be individual, largely private, and respectful of multiple faith traditions. The chapel seats only about 75 worshippers, a trend toward smaller sizes in college and university chapels that would dominate the post-war period.

This focus on small-scale, non-denominational chapels is borne out in a number of post-war college chapels. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's chapel at the Illinois Institute of Technology (1949-52), a non-denominational chapel notably sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, looks nothing like a traditional chapel. With no steeple, no external indication of a religious identity, the building is known in student parlance as the "God box." The Danforth Chapel campaign in the 1950s on public colleges and universities across the U.S. also championed Modern expressions for worship spaces seating no more than about 50 people. James M. Hunter's Danforth Chapel at Colorado State University exhibits a small, single-volume worship space—whose cross can be covered up—accessible but also set apart. On campus in the 1940s and 1950s, religion was transformed into a smaller, individual, meditative, and non-denominational event. Religion was present within higher education but no longer held a central role.

Even as religion's centrality on the American campus waned in the 20th century, religion and spirituality remains in alternate and still vital forms. Following the 1960s, religion's focus shifted to religious denominations' own buildings—Catholic Newman Centers, Methodist Wesley Centers, Episcopal Canterbury Fellowship Centers, and Jewish Hillels—on the campus periphery. College and university chapels continue to host services and ceremonies pivotal to those who experience them. Religion has not left the campus wholesale by any measure, yet it has changed from its once institutionally central role. 

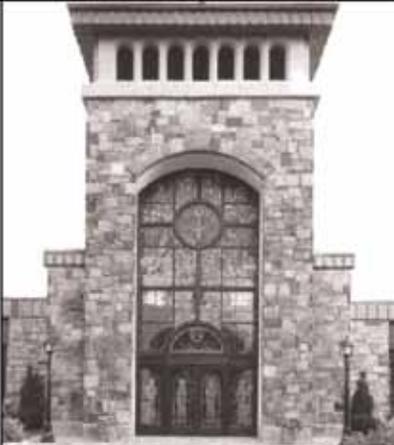
MARGARET M. GRUBIAK, PH.D., IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AT VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY. SHE SPECIALIZES IN 19TH- AND 20TH-CENTURY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE AND IS CURRENTLY WRITING A BOOK ON THE RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS.



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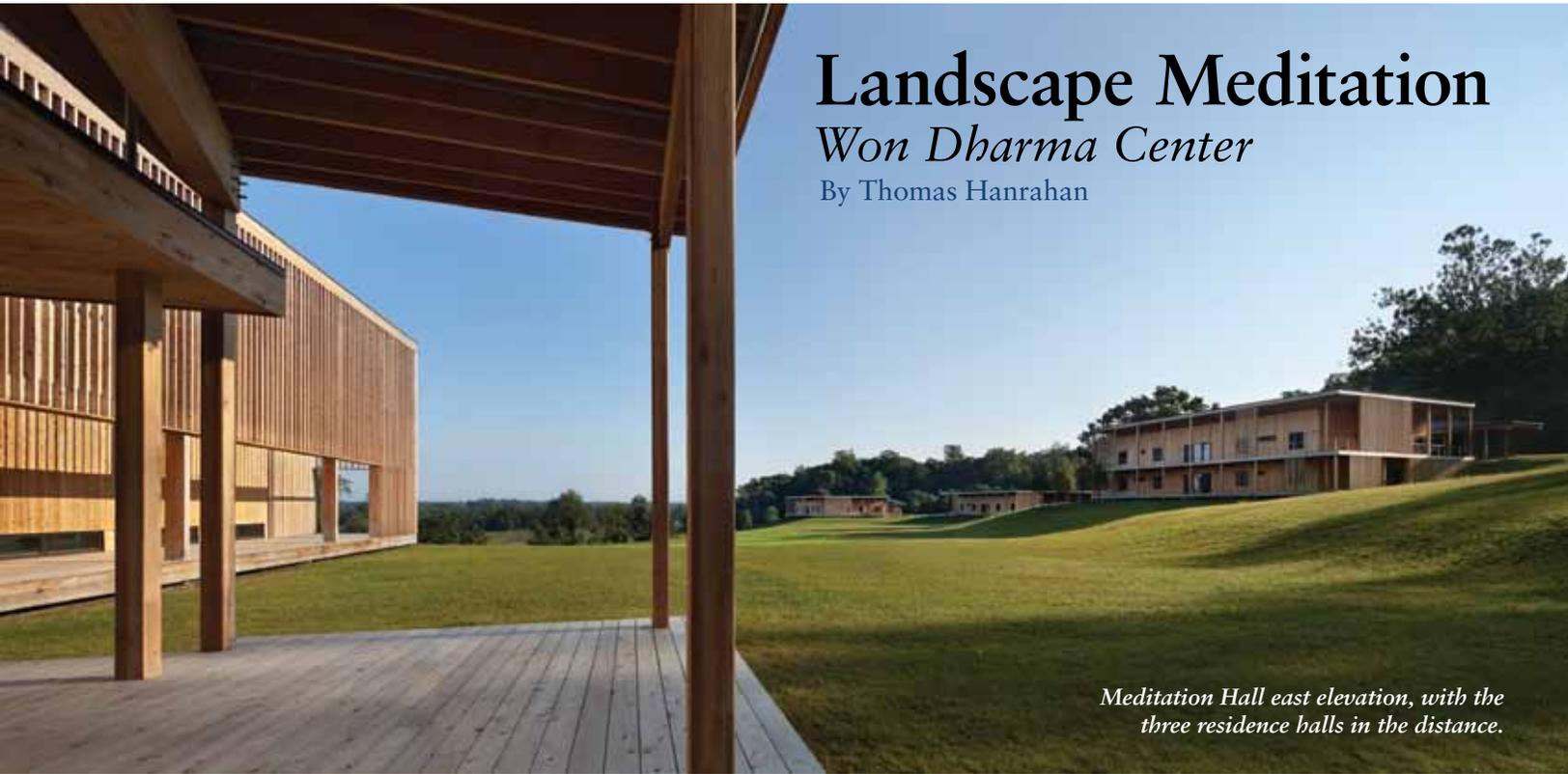


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# Landscape Meditation

## Won Dharma Center

By Thomas Hanrahan



*Meditation Hall east elevation, with the three residence halls in the distance.*

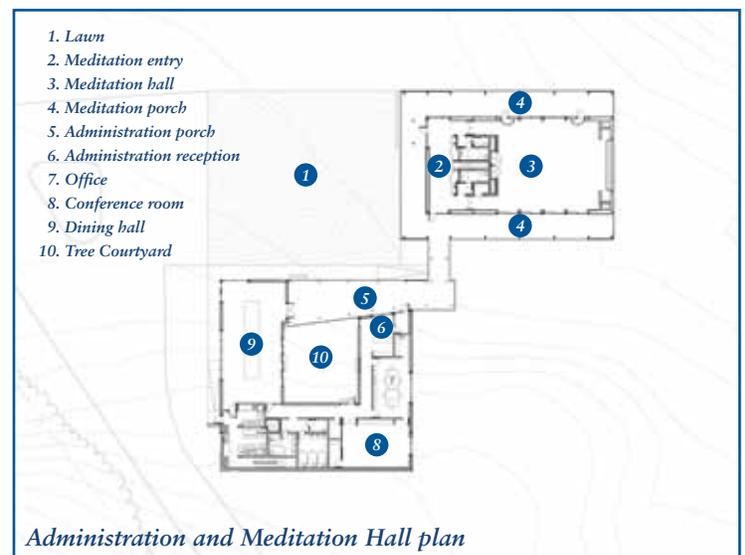
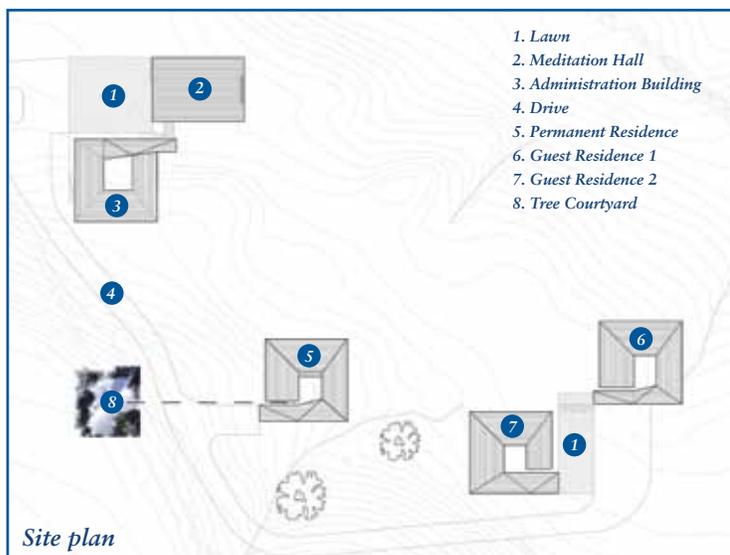
Photo: Michael Moran/OTTO

THE WON DHARMA CENTER is a 30,000-square-foot meditation and spiritual retreat in Claverack, New York for a Korean Buddhist sect that emphasizes balance in daily life with a focus on nature. The retreat site is a 500-acre property on a hill with views west to the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains. The buildings for the retreat — including permanent and guest residences, an administration building, and a meditation hall — are sited as far as possible from the rural highway Route 23 to the south. The buildings are oriented west toward views of the Catskill Mountains, and south to maximize natural light.

The mission of the center is to create a place where the complexities and struggles of daily life are secondary to a meditative experience, and untouched nature is seen as an idealized state where human activity recedes in importance. Architecture is understood as a threshold to this vision of unspoiled natural beauty, while the preservation of the

natural environment itself is equally important, assuming an ethical significance both in terms of design and the day-to-day practices at the Center. Virtually every aspect of the project was designed by us with these two ideas in mind: architecture as a threshold to nature and the preservation and appreciation of the surrounding natural landscapes as an expression of the Won Center's values. The clients requested that as many natural materials as possible be used in harmony with the rural character of the region, and as a reflection of the center's mission and its emphasis on ecological design.

The symbol of the Buddhist organization is an open circle, suggesting in conceptual terms a void without absence and infinite return, and the buildings, in turn, are organized around the formal concepts of the open frame and spiral. The open frame is associated with meditation and the Meditation Hall, the focus of the retreat experience. The spiral





*Entry vestibule of Meditation Hall.*



*Meditation Hall and Administration building, with their connective porches, which frame views.*



*Guest residence halls, fitted with photovoltaic arrays.*

form is used in the design of the buildings for daily activities, but also suggests the practice of walking meditation. The spiral buildings have public corridors that return upon themselves and form a courtyard with a view to the Catskills that encourage reflection. Walking meditation outside the buildings include paths that link the retreat buildings into the site's 350-acre nature preserve.

The five buildings of the center are organized on the site around a series of outdoor spaces of various sizes and experiences. The spaces between the buildings are large landscapes while intimate, meditative courtyards comprise the center of the four spiral buildings. The buildings are placed upon the site relative to each other in an informal, clustered arrangement on the west-facing hillside in the manner of tree and rock clusters commonly found in the Hudson River region. The buildings also

have outdoor spaces in the form of screened porches that invoke this image of tree clusters while also providing wood-screened outdoor porches for meeting and quiet reflection. The interior spaces are designed explicitly as thresholds to both these porches and the landscapes beyond with a design language based upon the experience of natural light, wooden surfaces on floors, and walls and framed views to the west.

A unified vision of landscape and architecture begins with the sequence through the site. The first point of access takes visitors through a stone entrance gate. Retreat visitors are encouraged to leave their cars at the parking lot, located approximately 500 feet south of the meditation hall, and walk to the center along a winding path under the tree line. The first view of the retreat compound from the path is the grass lawn in front of the administration

building and adjoining Meditation Hall. Upon arrival, the view of the Meditation Hall acts as a public gate to the retreat experience. The 3,000-square-foot Meditation Hall is a precise, rectangular void and a lightweight frame to the natural surroundings. Its wood structure is exposed on three sides to form entrance and viewing porches, while the interior offers views of the mountains from the meditation space. The administration building is linked to the Meditation Hall by a series of porches designed to accommodate formal walking from administration to meditation. These two buildings and their porches frame the outdoor lawn with views of the Catskills.

The other buildings include the residential buildings for guests and permanent residents. The designs of the residential buildings and the administration building refer to centuries-old grass-roofed Korean farm-houses. The



*View of the site, with guest residence in distance, and permanent residence in foreground.*



*Meditation hall interior, with windows that frame views of the distance.*

roof shapes of each of these buildings transform in section around a spiral organization, from a simple slope in section to a complex triangulated geometry at the entrance porches. The internal organization of each courtyard building supports silent walking meditation around the inner courtyards and adjacent outdoor porches and spaces. The courtyards provide passive cooling, allowing cross ventilation. Like the Meditation Hall, all of the courtyard buildings are deeply shaded to the west and south to allow natural day-lighting without excessive heat gain. The permanent residence building is exclusively for retired ministers, and provides lodging for 24 members of the organization. The two guest residences provide lodging for up to 80 retreat visitors. Rooms are simply and elegantly furnished with specially designed furniture made from plywood and oak complementing the

architectural design. All interior lights are low-voltage fluorescent or LED, while exterior lights are solar-powered fluorescent low lighting, with zero light pollution.

Locally harvested eastern cedar is used for the structural system of glue-lam beams and solid posts and framing members. The buildings are clad in cedar boards, and the porch decks are made from cedar planks. The interior floors are oak, and the wood walls are a combination of oak and pine. The entire complex is designed as a net zero-carbon footprint project. The architects designed a heating and cooling system that includes geo-thermal wells, a photovoltaic array, solar thermal roof panels, and a central bio-mass boiler. The Won Buddhists have committed to harvesting only fallen trees from their nature reserve as fuel for the boiler, resulting in a zero-carbon footprint for the heat system. The buildings

employ state-of-the-art construction systems, including spray-foam insulation, low-e glass insulated windows, and a radiant in-floor heating system to minimize energy costs for year-round occupancy. 

THOMAS HANRAHAN IS A FOUNDING PARTNER OF hMA IN NEW YORK CITY, AND WAS THE PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT FOR THE WON DHARMA CENTER. TOGETHER WITH VICTORIA MEYERS, BOTH PARTNERS CONCEPTUALIZE AND DESIGN ALL hMA PROJECTS DURING THE INITIAL PHASES, WHILE THE PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT OVERSEES PARTICULAR PROJECTS THROUGH COMPLETION.

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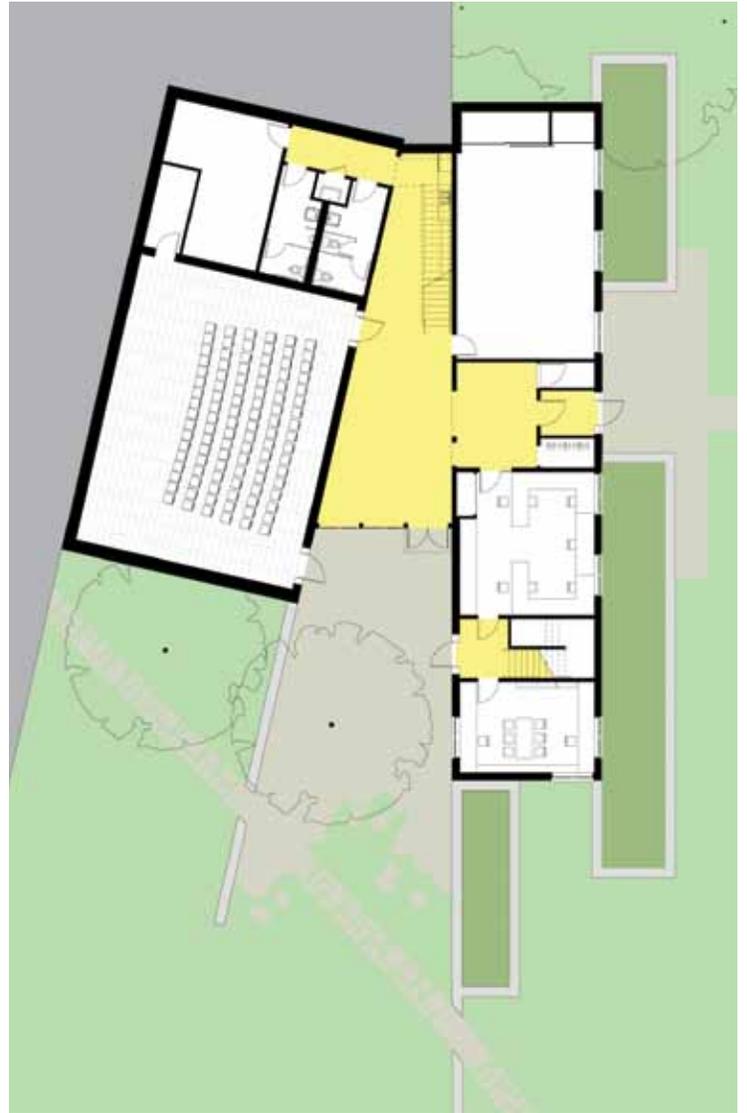
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# Thinking About Campus

## *The Zen Mountain Monastery*

By Frances Halsband, FAIA

College campuses with accretions of creativity, tradition, change — enduring sites with long histories—are environments rich in design opportunities. What are the essential characteristics of such places, dense with meaning and association? How does spatial organization encourage the formation of community? Creating a master plan for the Zen Mountain Monastery and designing its new Sangha House allowed us to test campus place-making theories in the context of a spiritual community.



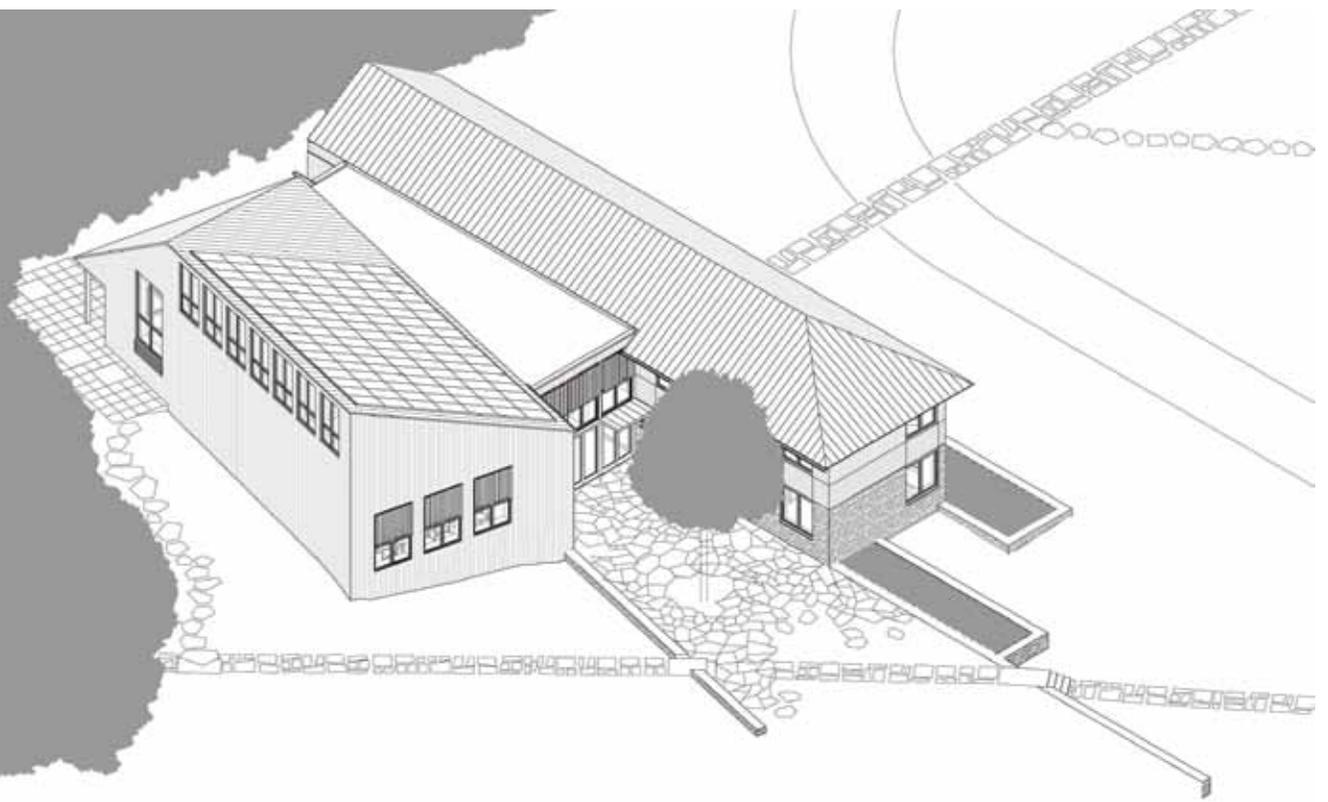
### THE SITE

Founded in 1980, the Zen Mountain Monastery in Mt. Tremper, New York, is the home of the Mountains and Rivers Order, a Zen training and retreat center with a resident community of monks and lay trainees. The founding abbot, John Daido Looi, chose a place (or perhaps he would say the place chose him) in the Catskill Mountains, 230 acres with a beautiful stone Main House built in 1938 as Camp Wapanachki Catholic Retreat House.

The Main House dominates the landscape. Constructed of bluestone and oak harvested on the site, its rooflines echo the mountain ridges. The wide west front hugs the ground, with stone steps spiraling down to heavy oak entrance doors. The Main House welcomes and contains the community. Alone at the edge of the meadow, it is a place for meditation and meals, also for offices and sleeping rooms.

The meadow is a circle of tall grasses at the heart of the community. Gardens and fruit trees mark the far edge of the circle. A stone walk traverses the meadow and enters the woods, moving up the slope to the monks' cabins, buried deep in the forest. The ruin of an old swimming pool cuts into the hillside, excavated dirt piled around, a scar on the landscape.

For a decade, the monks had wished to build a new Sangha House to shelter a hall of the arts, with space for exhibition and performance. Many activities presently in the Main House would move to the new building, providing more breathing room and space for new programs. The design challenge was to integrate this new structure into the site in a way that would reinforce the experience of monastery life.



#### THE PLAN

Understanding the monastery as a campus for a spiritual community was the essential starting point. Like a college, the monastery is a community of individuals brought together for a common purpose. Like a campus, the monastery is defined by green spaces, which are in turn defined by buildings. Place is experienced as a sequence of outdoor rooms: spaces that invite meditation and reflection, other spaces that welcome activities. As a campus should be, a monastery is a place where people are privileged over vehicles. Pathways are primary; roadways and parking are kept to the periphery.

Defining the spaces of the monastery sets the plan for future generations of buildings on the site. The master plan organizes the monastery into two defined spaces surrounded by forest. An entrance court is bounded by a low stone wall to the south, and the long stone wall of the Sangha House to the north. The Main House is a commanding presence at the head of the court. Forest walls and the entrance drive that traces the edges of the court form other boundaries. Parking will be hidden in the forest, with planted drainage swales separating rows of cars. The entrance court will be a place for informal gatherings of visitors and monks, with ball games and outdoor events centered on the amphitheater.

Beyond the entrance court is the round meadow, a more private place. The Sangha House is located to define the entrance court,

form the edge of the meadow, and align with the path to the monks' cabins. It will occupy the site of the swimming pool ruin, restoring and reclaiming this desecrated landscape. This one building shares in defining the three zones of entrance court, meadow, and forest.

#### SANGHA HOUSE

The building is composed of three elements: a long, narrow two-story bar of visitor and communal facilities, the tall performance hall, and a central two-story circulation and exhibition space.

Each element of the building program is located in relation to adjacencies of use and in harmony with surrounding landscapes. The lines of movement through the building connect the daily life of the monastery to adjacent landscapes. Siting the Dragon Hall in the hillside makes possible a building with two ground floors. Visitors enter at the lower level, across the entrance court from the parking, and monks can enter from above, walking down the stone path from their cabins.

The long, narrow two-story element forms the north side of the entrance court. The ground level includes entry, reception area, body-practice room, offices, and the monastery store. The reception area welcomes guests of the monastery, opening out to the entry court and into the exhibition hall. The upper level, accessed directly from the stone path, includes a library and a media center, an art studio, showers, and a laundry for the monks.

The central circulation and exhibition space opens to a sculpture garden and a terrace for viewing the mountain to the west and the forest and woodland stream to the east.

The hall of the arts, nestled into the hillside, fills the space of the old swimming pool. This performance hall will accommodate 100 people, is spanned with wood trusses, and receives filtered daylight from west windows and north-facing skylights. The building will be of timber and native bluestone. It is designed to minimize reliance on fossil fuels. Exterior walls will be super insulated, while window openings will be shaded by louvers. Every interior space is daylit and is naturally ventilated. A solar panel array on the roof of the Hall of the Arts captures the sun's energy and will provide at least 50 percent of the building's energy. Other sources of energy were explored but rejected: wind turbines would have been too noisy for the site and would have intruded on neighbors. Because there is no summer cooling, geo-thermal wells were not found to be cost effective. The project is on track to achieve a LEED rating, a measure of sustainability established by the U.S. Green Building Council. Now under construction, it will be dedicated this summer. To follow construction, visit the monastery's website blog at: [mro.org/dragonhall/category/news/](http://mro.org/dragonhall/category/news/). 

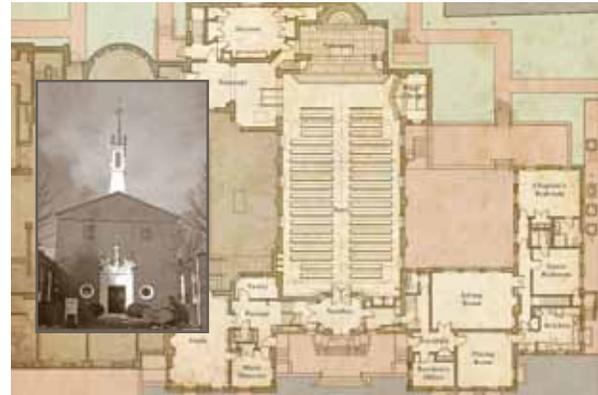
FRANCES HALSBAND IS A PRINCIPAL OF KLIMENT HALSBAND ARCHITECTS, NEW YORK.



*Interior of the restored chapel, with new altar, pulpit, font, revived pews, and resurrected chandeliers.*



*Interior of the chapel with 1970s and '80s changes and absent chandeliers.*



*Plan of chapel within the context of the Catholic Center at Yale. Inset: Exterior of the chapel as it faces Park Street.*

# More is Now More

## *Saint Thomas More Chapel at Yale University*

By George Knight, AIA, and Kyle Dugdale, AIA \* Photographs by Robert Lisak

AN UNASSUMING PRESENCE on one of the quieter streets of downtown New Haven, Connecticut, Saint Thomas More Chapel has been home to Yale's Roman Catholic community for more than 70 years. When the chapel, just two blocks from the heart of Old Campus, was first dedicated in the autumn of 1938, it must have generated something of a stir among those accustomed to more traditional Catholic forms. Designed by William Douglas and the office of Douglas Orr, the chapel sought to temper the gravity of traditional brick masonry with a new openness to space and light, its large, clear cut-glass windows flooding the nave with a brightness that worked its way across the walls through the changing moods of the day. While unusually spare in its overall conception, the interior was enriched with a few carefully calibrated highlights — canopied altar, high pulpit, chandeliers — each handled with imagination and extravagant artistic freedom.

But by the time the chapel had entered its eighth decade, it had lost much of the elegance of its youth. A series of adjustments made in the 1970s to accommodate changes in Catholic

liturgy, compounded with various unfortunate modernizations in the 1980s, had stripped the interior of its coherence and of many of the elements that had served as counterpoints to the austerity of the brickwork. While retaining its overall sense of tranquility, the chapel had lost its moments of brilliance.

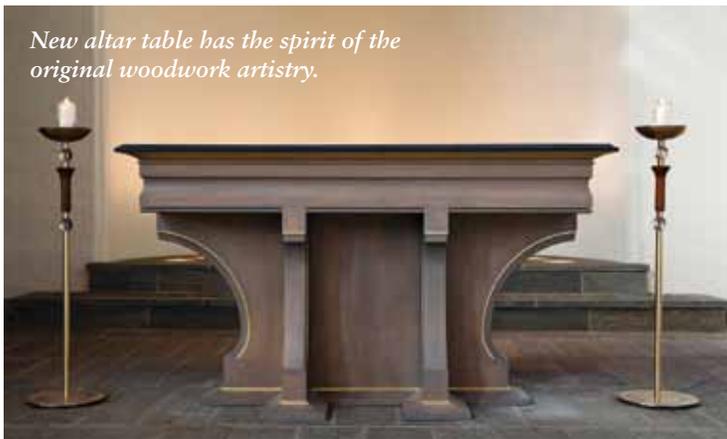
As the chapel's restoration architects, Knight Architects LLC embarked on a three-year comprehensive renovation, drawing on the skills of artists and artisans from Maine to Virginia, and involving artwork conservators, organ restorers, gilders, lighting fabricators, and practitioners of a host of other trades and crafts, led by Petra Construction Corp.

A closely coordinated process of preliminary removals permitted the uncovering and saving of architectural details and dedicatory inscriptions, which had been hidden by earlier renovation. This was followed by a program of careful restoration of surviving original features, extending to cast and painted ornament, statuary, liturgical furniture, and historic light fixtures. The project also provided opportunity for a series of newly designed elements: a new paneled ceiling; a new altar, baptistry,

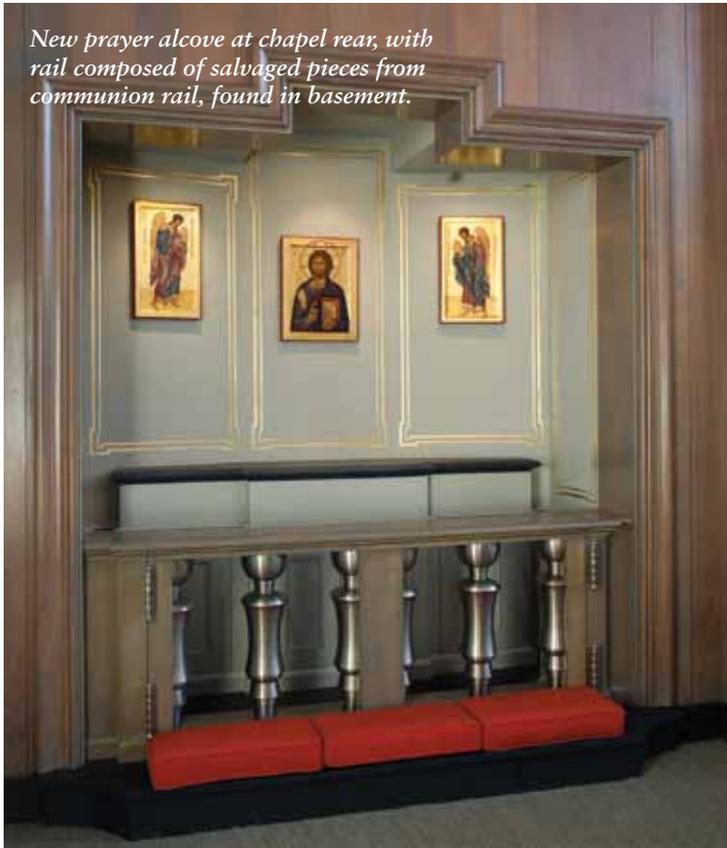
and ambo; a new prayer alcove; and re-imagined pews. Throughout the work Knight Architecture attempted to respect the chapel's original character: a spare, late-classical vocabulary with austerity in its details and a playful touch of modernity in its profiles. And while honoring these aesthetic and programmatic goals, the design team also made a concerted effort to build with sensitivity towards the environment, repurposing existing ductwork to provide ventilation in lieu of air conditioning, providing thermal insulation throughout the main sanctuary space, refinishing and reshaping the wooden planks of existing pews, prioritizing materials drawn from renewable sources, and recycling materials and original finishes throughout.

### STARTING AT THE TOP

The ceiling's deteriorating acoustical tiles were replaced with a new ceiling of plaster and white oak, its articulation reestablishing the rhythm of the space, and its details responding to an intent expressed in the original design but cut from the project as a late-Depression-era austerity measure. An exhaustive series



*New altar table has the spirit of the original woodworking artistry.*



*New prayer alcove at chapel rear, with rail composed of salvaged pieces from communion rail, found in basement.*



*Old pews were revived with refinishing and elegant detailing.*

of trials and mock-ups established the correct wood finishes and calibrated the acoustically reflective plaster to accommodate both music and the spoken word.

Important punctuation points in the chapel's lofty space were its chandeliers. At an unhappy moment in the chapel's more recent history, these extraordinary figments of the 1930s scientific imagination — their glass originally blown by a fabricator of laboratory equipment — had been entirely removed to the chapel's basement, where they spent decades in disarray and disrepair. In an act of faith, the remaining pieces were reassembled, cataloged, reconstructed in brass and copper, burnished to their original glow, and reinstated in their full glory, their curved surfaces refracting rays of light across the painted masonry of the walls.

#### A SANCTUARY REBORN

The project also presented the opportunity to design a new suite of liturgical furniture — altar, baptistry, ambry, and ambo with sounding board — to replace elements dating to the 1970s that had proved foreign to the vocabulary of the chapel. The forms of these new pieces sought to restore focus and to reintroduce those moments of close

attention originally intended to offset the simplicity of the whole. In sympathy with the language of the architecture, their materials and profiles, while classical, embody the freshness and playfulness of the 1930s transitional moment, the juxtaposition of modern planes and baroque curves, of exposed materials and gilded highlights. Designs were developed through sketches, drawings, models, and full-scale mock-ups that required close collaboration between the university community, the architect, and craftspeople at every stage of the work. The baptistry in particular, despite its modest size, was among the project's most complex elements, requiring tight coordination within stringent parameters.

These pieces were complemented by a new prayer alcove at the rear of the chapel, set into the wood-paneled depth of the wall and intended to provide a focus for private devotion. Its hinged wood rail also reintroduced to the chapel the zinc-plated cast brass balusters that originally composed the altar rail but were removed from the sanctuary in post-Vatican II alterations.

These elements represent only a small fraction of the overall restoration effort. Other work included the conservation of damaged ornamental plaster details in a small side chapel, cleaned of decades of accumulated wax and incense. Broken statuary was x-rayed and pinned with surgical precision. An exhaustive series of color studies reestablished the warmth and liveliness of painted detail while maintaining the serenity of the whole. Carved rosette details, references to Thomas More's Tudor crest first employed in the wood paneling of the narthex, were reimagined for use at new profiled oak pew ends, created through the rigorous coordination of hand craftsmanship with digitally controlled fabrication. Gilded detail at a new inset niche over the baptistry continued the chapel's tradition of hand-painted lettering. A specialist provided long-overdue care to the Ark and Dove, votive ship models hanging in the side chapel. And the architect designed new light fixtures for use in the paneled narthex, their polished brass surfaces now beginning to mellow as the chapel embarks on the next chapter of its life. 

GEORGE KNIGHT, AIA, IS A FOUNDING PRINCIPAL OF KNIGHT ARCHITECTURE LLC. FORMERLY A SENIOR ASSOCIATE WITH CESAR PELLI & ASSOCIATES, HE IS A CRITIC AT THE YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE. KYLE DUGDALE, AIA, CURRENTLY A PH.D. CANDIDATE AT THE YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, WAS AN ASSOCIATE AT KNIGHT ARCHITECTURE LLC AND SERVED AS PROJECT ARCHITECT FOR THE SAINT THOMAS MORE CHAPEL AND RESIDENCE RENOVATION PROJECT.

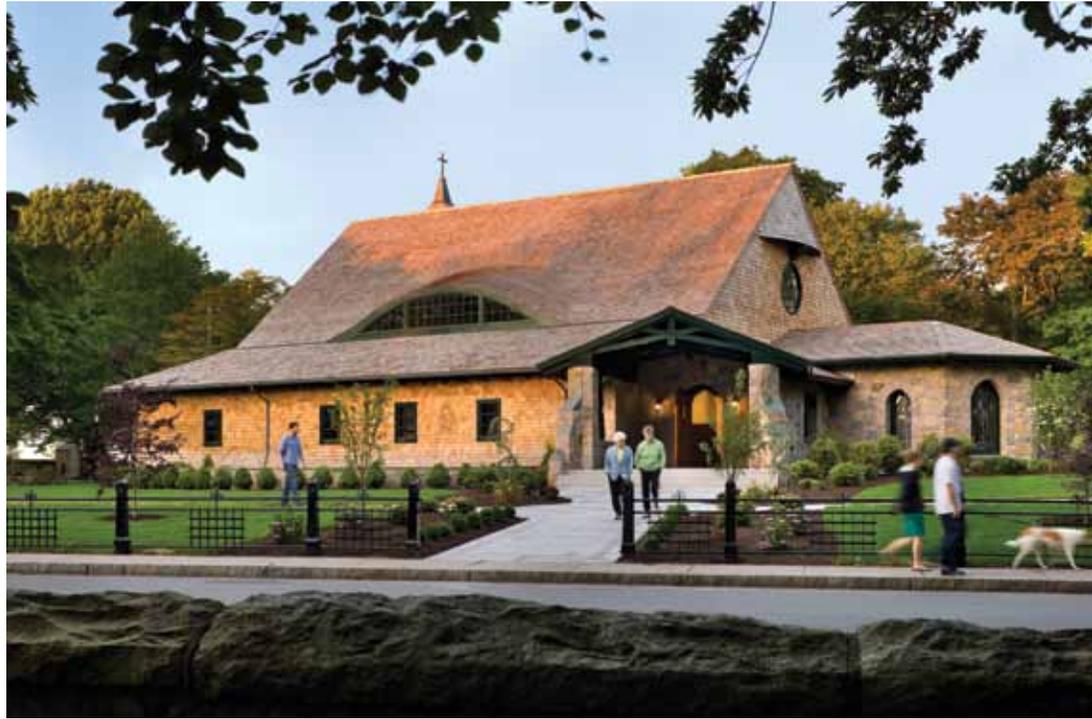
# Chapel For A Queen

## Salve Regina University

By Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA



Photo: Francis Deikonowski/Esto



Site plan with ground level layout.

The chapel from the southwest, as it faces Ochre Point Avenue.

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy and chartered in 1934, Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, first opened its doors in 1947 when the opportunity arose for it to take over one of Newport's great Gilded Age "cottages": the Goelet family's Ochre Court (Richard Morris Hunt, 1891), which today serves as the school's main administration building. Since then Salve has embedded itself in Newport's summer colony, occupying Wakehurst (Charles Eamer Kempe, 1888) and other houses including H.H. Richardson's Watts Sherman House (1876) and Catherine Lorillard Wolfe's Vinland (Peabody & Stearns, 1882). Salve has also built various new buildings, but these have not necessarily reflected their rich architectural setting.

Two strains of Newport architecture characterize the Salve campus: the stylistic eclecticism of the Gilded Age mansions, and the more vernacular, naturalistic houses in what has come to be known as the Shingle Style. For our first contribution to the Salve campus, the Rodgers Recreation Center (2000), we looked to the latter tradition. Designed in response to concerns that the scale of an indoor athletic facility might overwhelm the adjacent residential neighborhood, it accommodates a significant

portion of the facility's program below ground; the above-ground portion is articulated in the manner of the late-19-century Shingle-Style houses that abound in the area, with more than a nod to Charles Follen McKim's Newport Casino (1881).

In 2006, the university invited us back to design a chapel. For more than 60 years Salve got along with a make-do chapel installed in what had been a ballroom in Ochre Court—though the room, with its over-the-top gilded frippery, always seemed at odds with the Sisters of Mercy's mission of aid and education for the poor. Our new chapel, nestled into a small wood at the center of campus, has been designed as the physical representation of the university's spiritual mission, which combines a continuing Catholic tradition with open and ecumenical outreach to people of all faiths.

Set at a campus crossroads, Our Lady of Mercy Chapel is sited to clarify the relationship between Ochre Court and Vinland, establishing an axial relationship with each and thereby reconciling the conflicting geometries of the two estates into a coherent academic precinct. Bluestone walkways connect the chapel to existing patterns of pedestrian traffic; the location of the chapel where these paths

converge from all parts of the campus symbolically embraces people of all faiths, important to a Catholic institution with a diverse student body. A west-facing porch welcomes visitors arriving along Ochre Point Avenue; an east-facing porch receives pedestrians from the campus; both entrances lead into a vestibule outside the main sanctuary. A modest entrance at the building's northeast corner, topped with a small eyebrow canopy, serves the chapel's clergy and staff. The stair tower that links to the Mercy Center for Spiritual Life, which provides a conference room, classrooms, and offices on the basement level, is topped with a belfry and steeple, creating a visual landmark for the chapel bells that gather the Salve community.

The building's picturesque massing and use of natural materials—local granite and cedar shingles—are very much in the tradition of New England country churches, here deployed with a Roman Catholic inflection. The details—low sweeping eaves, attenuated eyebrow dormers, latticework, low stone ledges at the porches—are specific to Newport, and especially to the nearby Shingle-Style buildings by Peabody & Stearns (including the recently restored Hennery of 1885, originally



*The chapel at dusk reveals some of its historic, salvaged windows.*



*Four of the stained glass windows by 19th-century artist John La Farge incorporated into the new chapel.*



*Entry from the east side of the chapel into the pass-through narthex.*



*Sanctuary is bright and airy, with congregational seating around the altar table.*

an outbuilding of the Vinland estate) and by McKim, Mead & White.

The main sanctuary, which accommodates 250 worshipers, is carefully planned to support the specific sacramental functions of a dedicated Roman Catholic chapel: altar, pulpit, and baptismal font, along with accommodation for musical ministry. Plain and straightforward, bathed in natural light from clerestory windows and a high-set south-facing oculus, the white-painted hall is accented with oak wainscoting, beams, and trusses. The gently curving pews echo the arced trusses and, in line with evolving practice, give worshipers a clear view of their fellow parishioners and of those who lead the services.

Across the narthex from the chapel, an interfaith prayer room offers members of the

university's diverse community a sacred space for prayer and quiet reflection. This room is set with five leaded opalescent glass windows by noted late-19th-century artist John La Farge. La Farge originally created these windows, which depict saints surrounded by botanical borders, around 1890 for a chapel and music room at the Newport home of two sisters, the real estate heiresses Mamie and Lina Caldwell, benefactors of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. When their 1850s Italianate house was razed in 1931, the windows were transferred to a Victorian-era convent (now also demolished) in Fall River, Massachusetts. The university acquired the windows in 2004. Four smaller La Farge windows grace an antechamber of the nave.

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel could not have

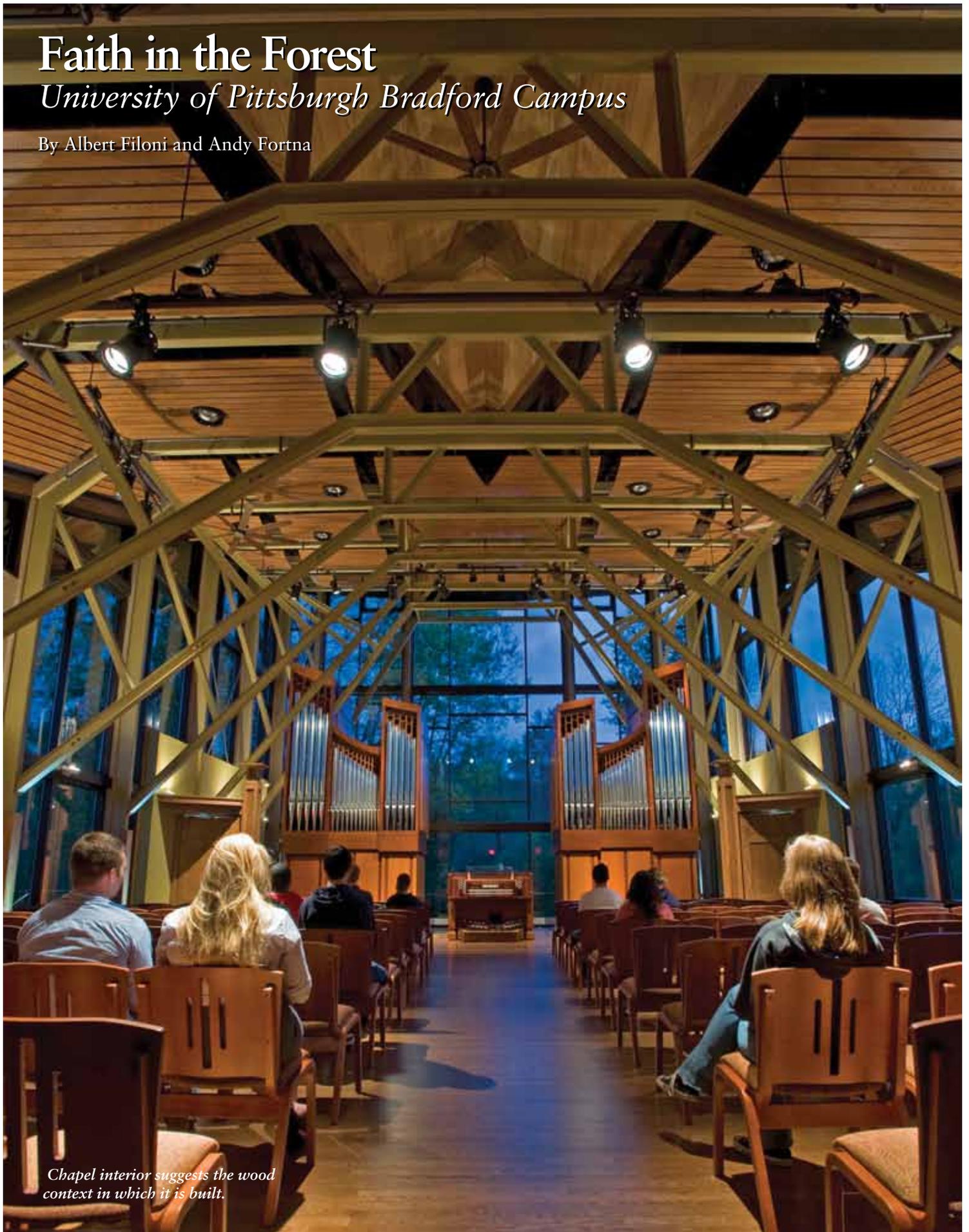
been realized without the leadership of Salve Regina's chancellor, Sister Therese Antone; the university's president, Sister Jane Gerety; and vice president Michael Semenza. My partner Grant Marani led the design effort in my office, ably assisted by Charles Toothill; Richard W. Quinn and Newport Collaborative Architects collaborated on the documentation and construction administration. [FS](#)

ROBERT A.M. STERN IS SENIOR PARTNER OF ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS AND THE DEAN OF THE YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE.

# Faith in the Forest

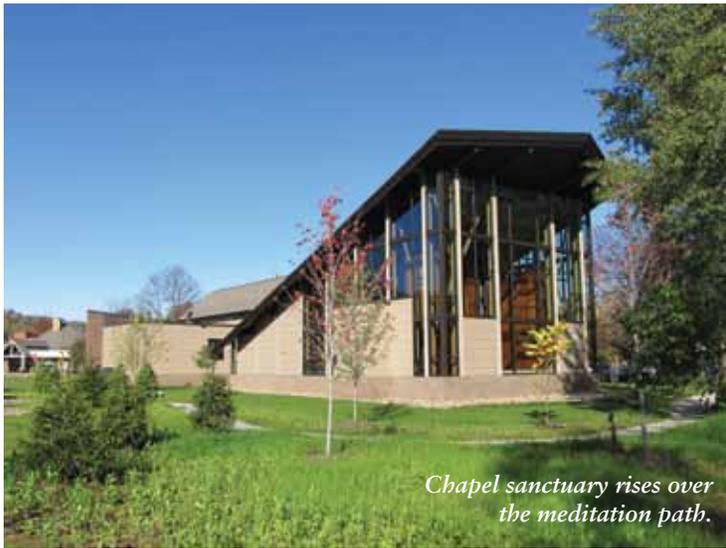
## *University of Pittsburgh Bradford Campus*

By Albert Filoni and Andy Fortna



*Chapel interior suggests the wood context in which it is built.*

Photo: Alan Hancock



*Chapel sanctuary rises over the meditation path.*

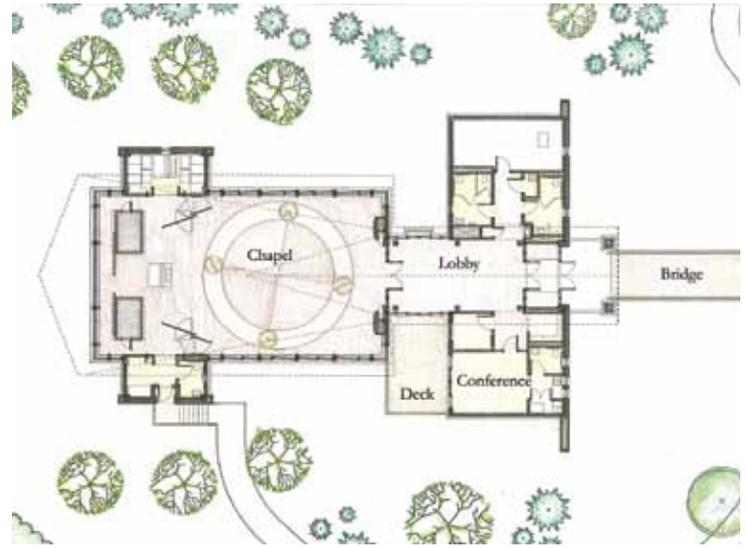


*View of the chapel from the east.*

The most recent addition to the picturesque University of Pittsburgh Bradford Campus, the Harriet B. Wick Chapel, is situated on the doorstep of the Allegheny National Forest and the Allegheny State Park along the Pennsylvania/New York state line. This interfaith chapel provides a tranquil and unique site for religious services, weddings, memorial services, receptions, and small choral and musical performances.

The chapel is intentionally set apart from other university buildings on campus by its location, design, and landscape, all reinforcing its identity as a special place. It is oriented to take full advantage of the views overlooking the indigenous plant life, the surrounding hillsides, and the natural beauty of the adjacent Tunungwant Creek on the east side of the campus. The chapel boasts a high ceiling, hardwood floors, and a pipe organ designed by the Schantz Organ Company of Orrville, Ohio. The timber and steel trussed glass walls provide an abundance of natural light and views of the dynamic natural scenery that are both inspiring and delightful. Adding to the contemplative nature of the facility is a meditation path that meanders through the adjacent trees and landscaping and along the creek.

Embracing a variety of interfaith functions, the 150-seat room has movable seating for flexibility and diversity in services and programs, which include services for particular religious groups, weddings and memorial services for members of the university community, and musical and cultural programs. The chapel is available on a daily basis to faculty, staff, and students for private meditation, personal reflection, and prayer. When there is a need to call the community together for significant moments in the life of the university, the chapel is the place



of assembly. It is also used for instructional purposes for large classes that are too big for existing classrooms.

The chapel building is surrounded by wetland and rainwater retention areas that occasionally experience spring flooding from snow melt. Built on an elevated platform to disrupt water flow as little as possible, the chapel is approached by a low bridge. The bridge spans a wetland area landscaped as a rocky Pennsylvania streambed abundantly planted with the wildflowers commonly seen in the adjacent woodlands and along the roadsides in this part of Pennsylvania.

The entry progression into the chapel leads from the ordinary world of the campus buildings and roadways across the low bridge, and through a massive masonry wall into the timber-trussed raised-ceiling entrance lobby. The lobby gradually opens, with glass on both sides, through a narrow connector and enters the special world of the main gathering space. The roof continues to ascend and open to the tranquility of the wooded landscape and natural environment.

One's communal and meditative experience can be extended by strolling the meditation path around the building through the adjacent wooded area and continuing along the bank of the Tunungwant Creek to the upstream confluence with Marilla Brook. Stone benches are located along the path at various stopping points for quiet contemplation and the observation of nature. Near the chapel are flowering trees and bushes indigenous to the area, including dogwood, mountain laurel, and lilac. Shade trees such as maple and sweetgum have also been added.

The main gathering space uses natural ventilation with windows in low and high positions to promote airflow across the room and passive cooling. Ceiling fans are used for additional air circulation over the seating area. The entrance lobby and gathering space are heated with quiet radiant floor heat. Radiators are used for additional heat in the coldest weather. The windows are shaded by a natural tree stand and by the newly planted shade trees. The building has large overhangs to provide complete shade from the sun in summer.

In addition to the main chapel gathering space, the front portion of the building contains an outdoor deck, a conference room, an office, and restrooms. The lobby, conference room, and outdoor deck, all interconnected, will be used as a large reception and gathering space. 

ALBERT FILONI, PRESIDENT OF MACLACHLAN CORNELIUS & FILONI ARCHITECTS, INC., IN PITTSBURGH, HAS BEEN DESIGNING RELIGIOUS, PERFORMING ARTS, AND OTHER PROJECTS WITH MCF ARCHITECTS FOR 35 YEARS. ANDY FORTNA HAS BEEN PROJECT ARCHITECT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND OTHER PROJECTS AT MCF ARCHITECTS SINCE 2000.

# Home for Hillel

## University of Virginia Hillel Foundation

By Bruce R. Wardell, AIA  
Photographs by Sarah Oehl

In 1949, the Hillel Foundation purchased a home designed by prominent Virginia architect Eugene Bradbury on University Circle in a neighborhood north of the University of Virginia's Rotunda, designed by Thomas Jefferson. For over 50 years the residence functioned as a gathering place and an administrative office for the Hillel Foundation serving the small Jewish population at the university. The population grew significantly, however, as faculty hiring and admission requirements for Jewish candidates liberalized in the 1970s. Participation in the activities and services provided by Hillel followed that growth, and by the early 2000s, the needs of the Jewish community at the university were taxing the original residence: dinner was being served for 120 each Friday night, two weekly services were being held in the living room and study, and special High Holiday services were being relocated to other facilities at the university.

In 2005, it became evident that UVA's Hillel needed larger and more modern facilities. Based on our work on Temple Beth Israel in the historic district of Charlottesville, Hillel asked us to assist them in the process of evaluating their existing facilities, current programs, and future needs. Along with assessing the existing house and property, we organized a series of roundtable discussions with Jewish students and faculty, created a program and a narrative describing the future vision and mission of Hillel, and evaluated alternative sites for a new facility. After an exhaustive search of the surrounding university grounds, we decided that development options for the existing site provided a number of significant benefits, such as continuity with the original location of Hillel, as well as the perception of a home at the university, given the character of the existing house and its surrounding residential neighborhood. In 2007, with the support of a significant group of Hillel alumni, the decision was made to expand the existing facility with a new chapel, dining facilities, kitchen, gathering spaces, and landscape improvements to create the Brody Jewish Center.

The Hillel building committee and representatives of the highly active neighborhood association helped us develop a conceptual design for an expanded facility. The capital campaign to support the construction and operation of the Brody Jewish Center occurred



*View of the new entrance from the east.*



*Lobby space offers natural light and views.*

between the completion of the design and the beginning of construction – a typical arrangement for this type of project. During the capital campaign, unfortunately, the economy took its downturn. This resulted in a significantly smaller amount of financial support for the project. Instead of settling for a value-engineered, austere version of the original design,

we helped the client to “re-envision” the project to create an addition to the surrounding historic neighborhood—an approach enthusiastically supported by the community.

The program more than doubled the existing footprint. One of the most significant challenges was to create an addition that both deferred to the original house and remained



Site Plan



View of the connector from the northeast.

consistent with the scale and texture of the historic neighborhood. Using a black steel-and-glass-clad multipurpose dining hall as mediator, the new chapel responds to the traditional detailing of the existing house. Two white stucco volumes flank the dining hall creating rhythm and texture consistent with the surrounding context while simultaneously

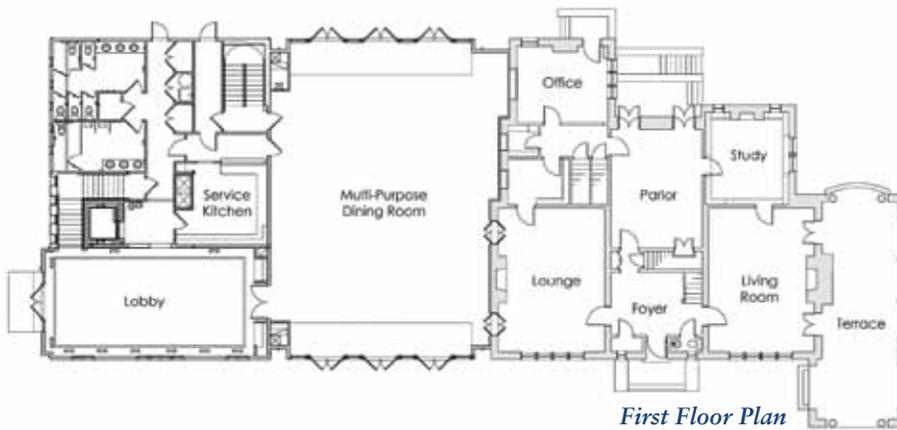
announcing the unique presence of the new gathering spaces.

The Hebraic notion of experiencing the path to discover the sacred becomes a central element in how each participant finds his or her way to the chapel. The chapel itself is located on the second floor, above the entrance and lobby. In contrast to the more linear Christian

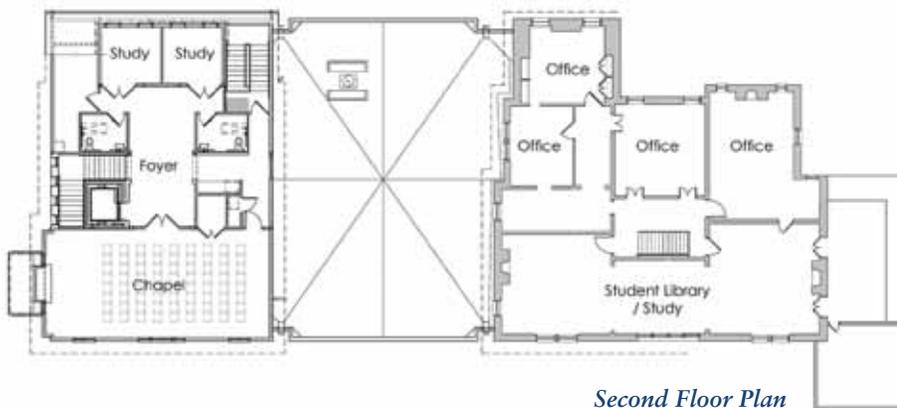
tradition, this path is, rather, a process of finding one's way – turning and climbing stairs, passing windows that recall the journey here while providing light for the steps as one climbs, turning again to join others in the upper lobby, moving into the barrel-vaulted chapel that faces a window overlooking the surrounding neighborhood, and finally (upon turning eastward) being reintroduced to the Torah scrolls--the most important religious component of the facility. The interior location of the Torah is suggested on the exterior of the building by encasing the cabinet in blue ceramic mosaic tile, a feature seen just above the main entrance. The kinesthetic experience of travelling this path is as important as the act of being together in the chapel.

While the Hebraic character of this building is at the core of its configuration, each space is designed to serve both religious and secular functions. New facilities become the setting for the Brody Jewish Center's participation in numerous university and community cultural events: weddings, receptions, lectures for the Virginia Festival of the Book, screenings for a film festival, and gallery space for photographic exhibits. Combining these civic and religious spaces with the elegant residential character of the original Bradbury home provides the variety of settings needed for Jewish students at the University of Virginia to experience the full breadth and richness of their community. 

BRUCE R. WARDELL IS PRINCIPAL OF BRWRCHITECTS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, AND IS ACTIVE IN THE VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE INTERFAITH FORUM ON RELIGION, ART & ARCHITECTURE.



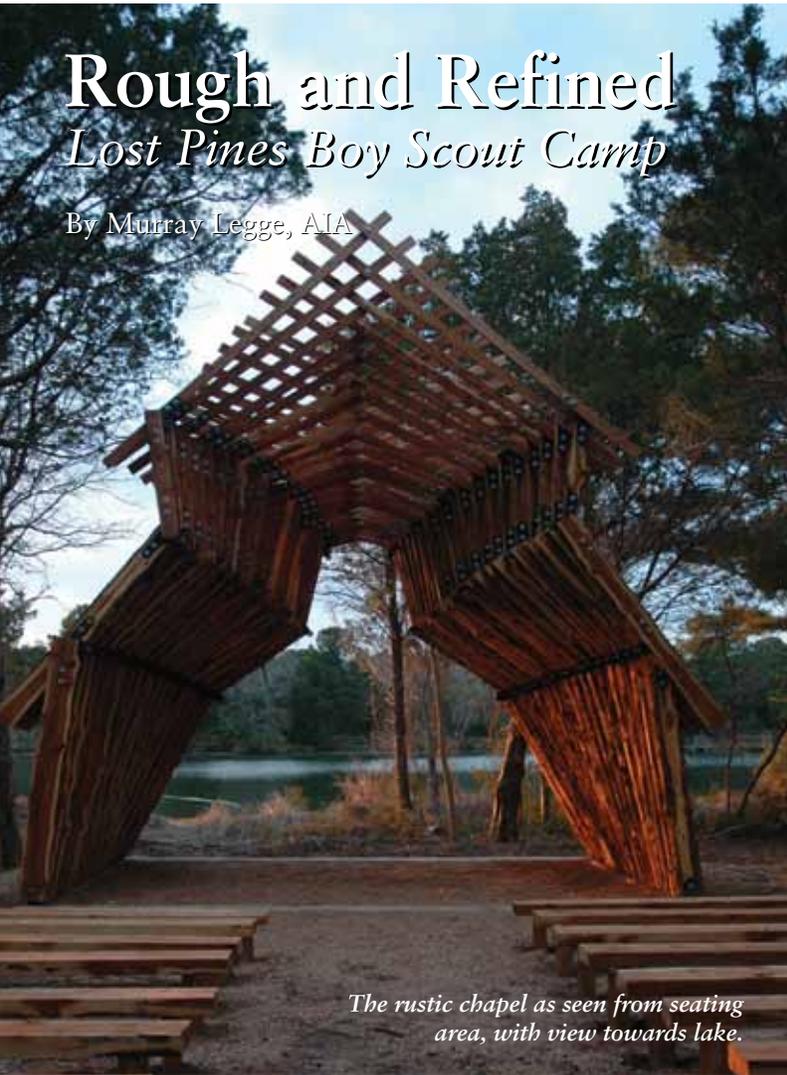
First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

# Rough and Refined Lost Pines Boy Scout Camp

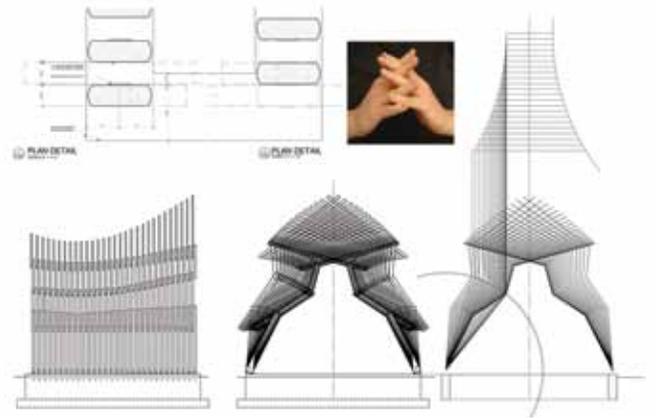
By Murray Legge, AIA



*The rustic chapel as seen from seating area, with view towards lake.*



*Detail of connection plates and cables between the members, which become more finished at the apex.*



*Design concept and drawings of chapel form and details.*

This interfaith chapel is built on a lakeside within the piney forests of Bastrop, Texas, just outside Austin, at the Lost Pines Boy Scout Camp. The open-air structure hosts all manner of religious gatherings: Muslim and Buddhist, Christian and Judaic. Open and accessible, the chapel inspires meditation and reflection. Oriented east-west, the gate-like structure frames a view across the lake of the setting sun, which sets its wooden members aglow.

The precision and simplicity of the frame geometry play off the rustic quality of the sawn lumber. The design process combined both high and low technologies. The chapel design grew out of a computer modeling exercise conducted for architecture students in an advanced design studio at the University of Texas at Austin. The exercise demonstrated how, by repeating a simple combination of basic computer model parts, very complex forms could be generated. As the design developed the computer model became a tool to identify the exact number and size of all wood members, to apply cost data, and to communicate the information to a local saw mill.

The chapel is composed of repeated standard-sawn cedar members that vary in their rustication; members near the ground are rough; members closer to the apex are more finished. The lower 4-by-10-inch members are sawn on two sides from 10-inch-diameter cedar logs. Upper frame elements transition from 4-by-8 inches sawn on two sides, to 3-by-6 inches sawn on four sides, then finally to 2-by-4-inch members sawn on four sides, which cross at the top.

Each of the 22 frames is composed of eight members interconnected with steel plates and bolts, creating rigid moment connections between elements. The frames rotate incrementally, which creates an arc in plan. The frames are bundled together horizontally by two cables in tension. Two horizontal structural arches are then created through the rotational arcing and the tension cables. A friction connection is created between the frames.

The complex steel moment connection plates, typically expensive when cut by hand, were produced through digital methods. A steel fabricator cut the plates, using a computer numerical control (CNC) machine that

reads the electronic data and performs the cuts automatically. This technology allowed the building to be constructed within a tight budget of approximately \$45,000. The contractor's primary role was to assemble a kit of pre-cut parts.

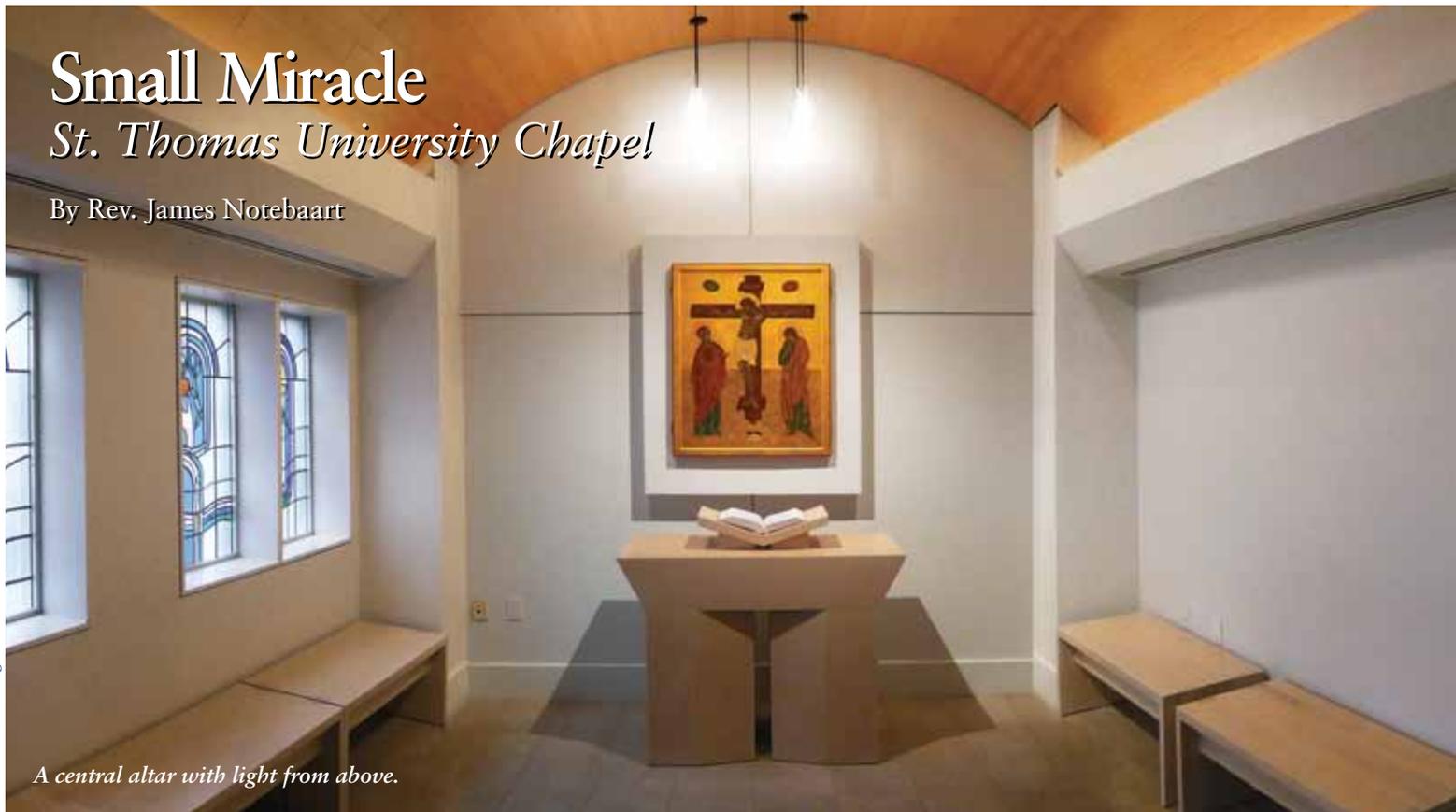
Since the lower members are wide and become narrower toward the top, the upper members do not touch and are free to move and sway in the wind. This movement is unexpected, and when it occurs a connection to the surrounding forest is made. The frame rotation gives the building a fluid quality, linking it to the movement of water in the lake beyond and lending the feeling that it could change or is changing like an opening fan or a hinged toy. This implied mutability links and strengthens the form to its program, that of an interfaith chapel. The chapel accommodates many religious groups, and its changing form reflects that. Since many of the users will be young people, the building's clarity of structure is intended to be an instructional tool to inspire in the scouts an interest in architecture and building. 

MURRAY LEGGE IS PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT OF LZT ARCHITECTS IN AUSTIN, TEXAS.

# Small Miracle

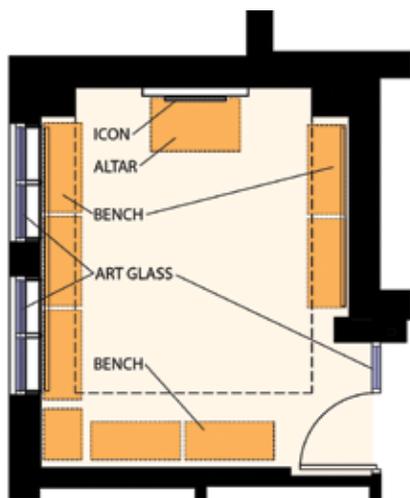
## St. Thomas University Chapel

By Rev. James Notebaart



A central altar with light from above.

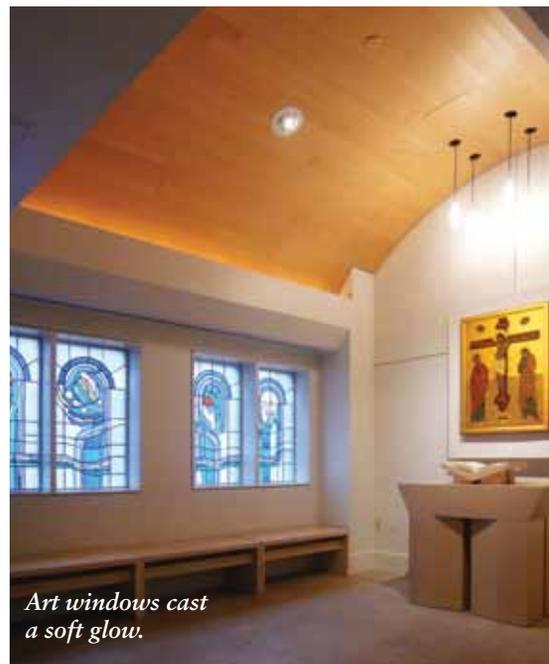
All Photos: Leon Wang



Plan of the new chapel.



Icon distinguishes the space above the altar.



Art windows cast a soft glow.

KOCH COMMONS IS THE CONCOURSE BETWEEN three collegiate residences at Saint Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was the students themselves who requested that a place to pray be incorporated into their living spaces. As a liturgical consultant, I asked Rafferty Rafferty Tollefson Lindeke Architects (RRTL) of St. Paul to assemble a team to create this room with the students' collaboration. An ideal location was identified on the main floor at the intersection of student traffic from the three residence halls. The need for a private, prayerful space to contrast with the university's hectic daily schedule was foremost. This in turn defined the hierarchy of form

and materials that would set the compact, 180-square-foot "pocket" chapel apart.

The existing suspended ceiling was removed and raised to create unique volume within the complex. A barrel vault of oak was installed; the floor was finished with limestone pavers. To create a focal point, artist Nick Markell from Minneapolis was commissioned to write an icon of the crucifixion with lamentation figures. Artist Dieterick Spahn, also from Minneapolis, designed the creation/

redemption art windows to cast a soft glow in the space. The wood benches and altar table (designed by me) complement this simple vaulted chapel. 

REVEREND JAMES NOTEBAART, LITURGICAL DESIGN CONSULTANT FROM ST. PAUL, PREPARED THIS ARTICLE IN CONJUNCTION WITH CRAIG RAFFERTY, A PRINCIPAL OF RAFFERTY RAFFERTY TOLLEFSON LINDEKE ARCHITECTS AND THE 2011 CHAIR OF THE INTERFAITH FORUM ON RELIGION, ART, & ARCHITECTURE (IFRAA) ADVISORY GROUP.



*Overview of the chapel space, looking in the direction of the entries.*

# Crypt Revival

## *Saint Vincent College and Archabbey*

By Kent Suhrbier, AIA \* Photographs by FortyEighty Architecture

The Saint Vincent Archabbey Basilica is the physical and spiritual center of three united communities in Latrobe, Pennsylvania: the Saint Vincent Archabbey and seminary, the basilica parish, and Saint Vincent College. Saint Vincent Archabbey was founded in 1846 and is the oldest Benedictine monastery in the U.S. Saint Vincent College became the first Benedictine college in the country in 1870 and continues to grow as a coeducational college of liberal arts and sciences on a beautiful, 200-acre rural campus.

The renovation of the Lower Church of the basilica was undertaken by the Archabbey to modernize the systems, finishes, and accessibility of an underutilized asset. Public worship services for the student community currently take place in another campus facility built in 2003. This created an opportunity for the renovated Lower Church to remain as a flexible space that accommodates private contemplation, prayer, and services, as well as special events, weddings, and small concerts. Design and liturgical consultant Father Vincent de

Paul Crosby, O.S.B., defined this as a “multi-purpose and very prayerful space.” The unique location and existing natural materials within the space provided an authentic pallet of history and texture that was carefully composed with new finishes, liturgical elements, and artwork to bring the many historical layers together into a single, holistic composition.

Our firm was commissioned to renovate and refurbish the existing Lower Church to improve the aesthetic character of the space, while integrating full accessibility and high-efficiency environmental systems and controls. New areas of ceiling, stairs, accessible lifts, ventilation, and lighting systems were designed to recede and blend as seamlessly as possible into the finished church. Throughout the design process, Father Vincent de Paul worked closely with our team to maintain focus on the warm and contemplative character of the space. The introduction of a new white oak floor provided not only visual warmth, but opportunities to remediate moisture problems at the existing floor, route new

power and wiring, and install recessed lights that both graze the restored masonry piers and sculpt the church’s vaulted ceiling.

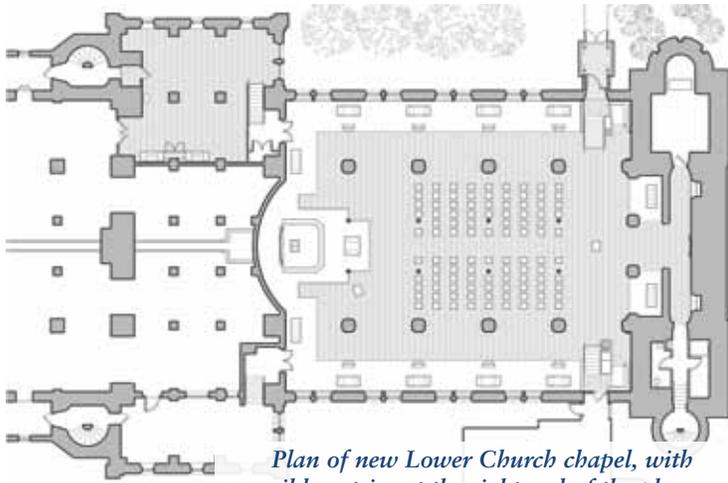
Reusing and repurposing old materials as a sustainable strategy played a prominent role in the design. The new main altar and tabernacle base were both created from the previous altar stone, and these elements were brought forward in the assembly space to a more prominent position between the existing slender cast-iron columns. A new vaulted tester frames the tabernacle and the triptych beyond the main altar. The 24-carat gold leaf applied to the curved surface of the tester provides specific focus featuring a texture that is both compatible with, and in contrast to, the surrounding brick and chiseled stone walls. A new lighting system subtly articulates the space, highlighting the individual side altars and artwork, which contrast with the cool light of the existing art glass windows, and softly lighting the brick columns and vaults with the three central coronae chandeliers. Father Vincent de Paul comments on this space: “Crypts in churches



*Interior of one of two new accessible entries that incorporate integrated elevators.*



*Detail of the altar table, covered by a gold-leafed canopy.*



*Plan of new Lower Church chapel, with accessible entries at the right end of the plan.*



*New accessible covered entry leads to the Lower Church chapel.*

are reminiscent of the womb of the earth and as such are meant to be warm, quiet, and meditative places. The new dramatic accent lighting has been designed to accentuate the crypt's prayerful spirit."

The introduction of an accessible entry from the exterior of the basilica required the delicate integration of a transparent vestibule at the side of the basilica. This element was developed as a simple, wood-lined barrel vault supported on four thin round columns, with a zinc-coated copper roof, that together reference the materiality of the basilica and the central columns of the Lower Church. The floor of the

new entry is accented with salvaged stone tile mosaics from the floor of the basilica. Both the large wood entry door and its rusticated door surrounds were crafted from salvaged and repurposed walnut and oak boards found in the crypt storage. The new entry stairs and elevators at each side of the assembly area were incorporated into poured concrete formations that also serve as sculpture pedestals integrated with the existing waxed concrete platforms at the perimeter.

The renovated Lower Church creates a unique space for the Saint Vincent community. It provides a flexible yet dramatic space

in which to meet, worship and pray, with modern comforts in a rich, historic and symbolic context. 

KENT SUHRBIER, A PRINCIPAL OF FORTYEIGHTY ARCHITECTURE IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, TEACHES AT CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY.

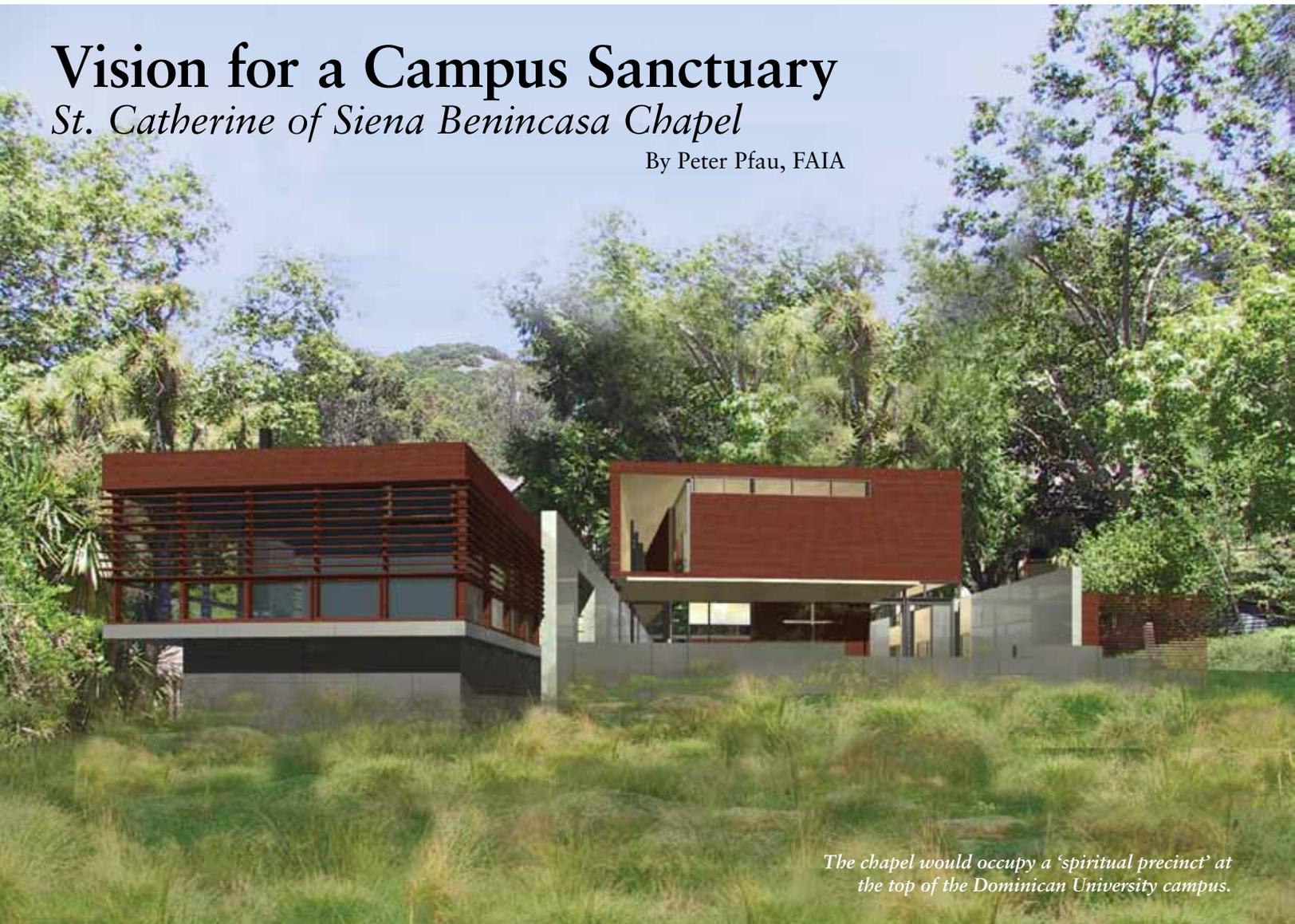
#### PROJECT CREDITS

Architect: FortyEighty Architecture; Design and Liturgical Consultant: Father Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B.; Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing Engineering: BDA Engineering; Structural Engineering: Ivan David Engineers & Associates; Lighting Consultant: Studio i | architectural lighting; General Contractor: Massaro Corporation

# Vision for a Campus Sanctuary

## *St. Catherine of Siena Benincasa Chapel*

By Peter Pfau, FAIA



*The chapel would occupy a 'spiritual precinct' at the top of the Dominican University campus.*



Designing a new chapel for the Dominican University in San Rafael, California, was both a professional challenge and a spiritual journey. Sister Samuel, one-time president of the university and director of the building committee, worked closely with us to create a chapel that would express the principles of being a Dominican in the 21st century. As we learned more about Dominican beliefs, one key point stood out: the essential role of faith and spirituality in educating a whole human being; in other words, how best to balance science and technology with a moral compass. Dominicans believe that you must stimulate both sides of an individual to educate a complete person. Our charge was to reflect that belief in the new sanctuary.

The chapel would occupy a “spiritual precinct” at the top of the 30-acre campus, and would be the beating heart of the university. The walk from the main campus to the sanctuary is like a diminishing sine wave, as



*Interior seating for 120 in an oval layout. An outdoor terrace would hold an additional 400 people.*



*Fenestration in the wall and ceiling would mark varying light patterns with the changing seasons.*

it articulates the 14 Stations of the Cross, the last being the sanctuary itself. This pathway symbolizes the tension between the imperfection of man and the perfection of God. It also expresses a progression from the humdrum of our daily lives to a spiritual state of mind. This tension became the driver for the design of all the liturgical elements, which are conceived as part of an all-inclusive vision for the chapel. At the top of the path, a gathering space offering a view over the campus draws the community together before worship.

From the start, we set aside the traditional symbols of churches (e.g., steeples, pointed roof), for elements that have deeper meaning founded in Catholic intellectual tradition. The building has a wedge-shaped plan, and is defined by two massive *pisé* walls made from earth on the site. These walls cut through the site, deforming the existing topography to create the sanctuary and allow the chapel to tuck into the natural landscape. Inside, the chapel offers seating for 120 in an oval, providing an intimate worship experience; an exterior

terrace provides space for an additional 400 people. Within the chapel, a Zen meditation room looks onto a garden, visible only when one is seated on the floor. Building materials were selected to be tactile, sensual, and visually warm. Alder wood would define the underside of the roof, silk for the kneeling cushions, and custom-fabricated bronze for the doors. The building, with its fenestration in the walls and roof, acts as an instrument for the modulation of light, changing character as it registers the path of the sun and moon during the seasons. A line of windows above the two massive walls makes the roof appear to be floating above the ground; other windows afford views of key site features. Thus, the sanctuary is visually connected to the landscape around it.

To complete the experience, we collaborated with Rod Stevens, the project liturgical consultant, to design the primary elements inside the chapel, including the altar, the presider's chair, and the baptismal fountain. Additional elements, such as a relief of the Virgin Mary, are cast into the massive walls to avoid clutter and to integrate them within the overall design. Again, the idea of converging perfection and imperfection inspired the form of the liturgical elements, thereby creating a unified design combining landscape, architecture, and symbolism. The building, designed to be LEED Gold, demonstrates proper stewardship with a high level of thoughtful, sustainable design practices. The design responds to the native climate with radiant heating, natural ventilation, and locally sourced, sustainable building materials.

Sister Samuel had a compelling vision for the chapel: that it be distinctly Dominican and Catholic while also welcoming to all faiths and inspiring spiritual contemplation among those not normally so inclined. She was already in her 80s when the commission started. Ultimately, at the end of a fulfilling process of deep spiritual inquiry, discussion, and investigation, the chapel design came to express the Dominican ideal of “the simplicity that you can come to only through complexity.”

In 2008, the university unfortunately reallocated funds and the project was replaced with a smaller chapel in a remodeled building. Alas, Sister Samuel didn't live to see the vision of the chapel through. But for us, the experience was the opportunity of a lifetime, one that has since influenced much of our recent work as well as my own spiritual path. 

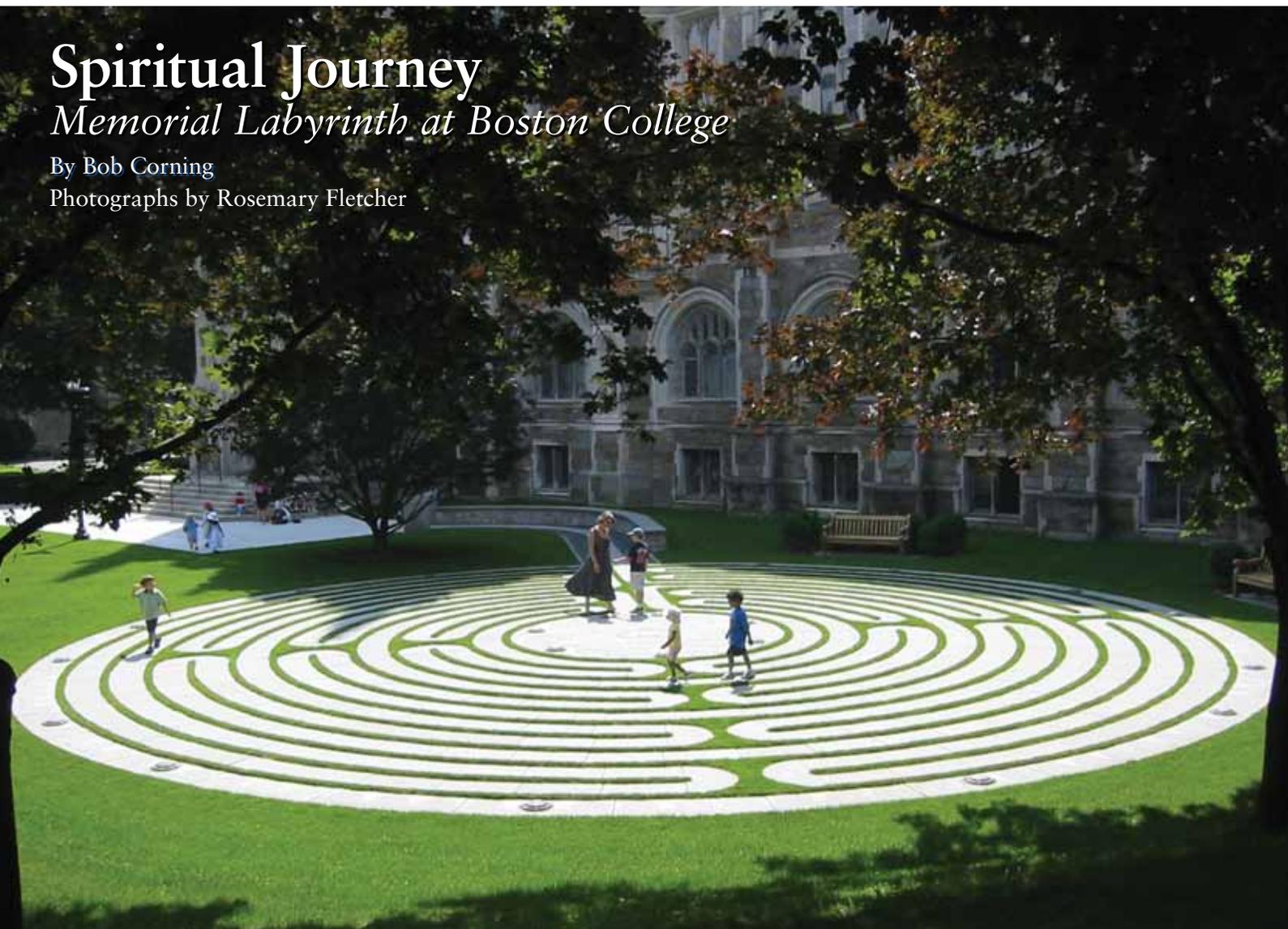
PETER PFAU IS A CO-FOUNDER OF PFAU LONG ARCHITECTURE BASED IN SAN FRANCISCO.

# Spiritual Journey

## Memorial Labyrinth at Boston College

By Bob Corning

Photographs by Rosemary Fletcher



*The labyrinth is an oasis on the campus.*

It is not surprising that Boston College, a Jesuit institution, dedicates many of its campus spaces to worship. But not all of these spaces are explicitly religious—some are reserved for commemoration or simple contemplation, without the prescribed behaviors or expectations sometimes associated with worship settings. The college’s memorial labyrinth is one of those spaces. The labyrinth was constructed primarily to commemorate the 22 Boston College alumni lost in the tragedy of 9/11. But the college encourages students, staff, and visitors to see the space as an opportunity for meditation—to walk its path deliberately, taking in the silence and the surroundings, remembering friends or relatives who have passed away, or treating the experience itself as a form of prayer.

An ancient symbol in many cultures, the labyrinth was adopted in the Middle Ages as a Christian expression of the pilgrimage one

makes to the Kingdom of Heaven. Following concentric circles towards the center, a “pilgrim” finds a solitary, convoluted, quiet path to contemplation of the journey through the divine universe; following the circles back returns the pilgrim to the outside world.

The idea of a labyrinth on campus arose in the fall of 1998, as Professor Rebecca Valette and Pi Delta Phi, the college’s French honor society, undertook a campus-wide project to publicize a medieval French Book of Hours in the Burns Library collection. In conjunction with the display of this illuminated manuscript, Professor Valette suggested creation on the library lawn of a labyrinth similar to the one on the floor of the 13th-century French cathedral at Chartres.

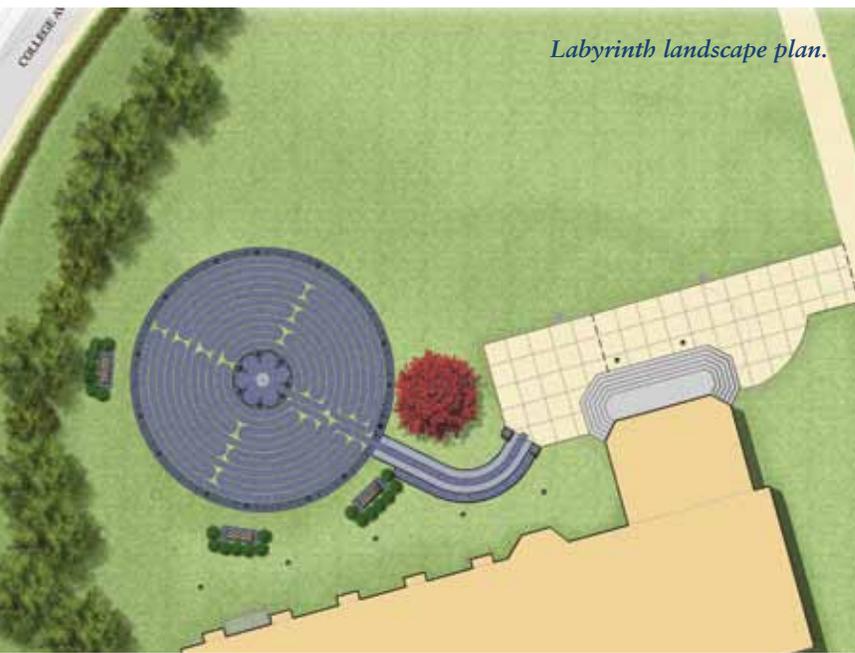
“I had walked a Chartres-style labyrinth in San Francisco at Grace Cathedral and found it to be a very centering and prayerful experience,” says Valette. “I thought it would be

inspirational for students to experience a similar labyrinth at Boston College.”

The labyrinth, painted on the grass by the college’s Athletic Department staff, became a heavily used attraction, but wear and tear on the lawn required eventual resodding for commencement ceremonies in May. Over the next several years the labyrinth was annually repainted in a more remote area of campus.

In the fall of 2000, Valette began urging the administration to install a more permanent labyrinth. Later proposed was the creation of a 9/11 memorial. It was decided to combine the two projects and build a large stone labyrinth in remembrance of lost Boston College alumni.

The project team decided to return the labyrinth to the Burns lawn beneath the stained glass windows of the cathedral-like Bapst Library. To determine how best to place the labyrinth so that it would not interfere with



*Labyrinth landscape plan.*



*'Lunation ring' with engraved names of alumni and sandblasted scalloped lunation pattern.*



*Seatwall, entry path in stone dust field with bluestone edging, and wood benches.*

the building and its users' patterns, landscape architects used a series of photo simulations to explore various positions, the impact of lighting, and other factors. They settled on a labyrinth that measures 50 feet across and contains 11 concentric circles in a single meandering or "unicursal" path of New England bluestone. Space was intentionally left between the pathways to allow the grass to grow and thus integrate the labyrinth into the surrounding lawn.

Once the placement of the labyrinth was settled, the team began testing various lighting schemes to subtly illuminate the memorial at night. Photo simulations helped conclude that ground-level lighting across the labyrinth projected just the right effect—a quiet and spiritual glow. The lights are encased in horizontal domes along the labyrinth's outer ring, lighting the inscribed names of the 22 BC alumni lost on 9/11. Additional dome lights

encircle the Boston College seal engraved in the center of the labyrinth.

"Every September, many people visit here," says Valette. "For families and friends, the labyrinth is a deeply inspirational memorial. Often flowers are left in the center rosette or are placed next to specific names."

With Valette's assistance, the college has developed a number of guides to encourage people to take full advantage of the spiritual journey the labyrinth can provide, including delineating the five "paths" of the labyrinth: Silence, Image, Memory, Prayer, and Questioning. As such, students, faculty, staff, and visitors alike have been able to use the labyrinth to, as Father Leahy explains, "understand that even in darkness, there is a path on which we can walk. Even in confusion there is grace to guide our journey. And even when we seem to stand most distant from where we began, we can turn yet again toward home,

moving according to the sure compass of God's enduring love."

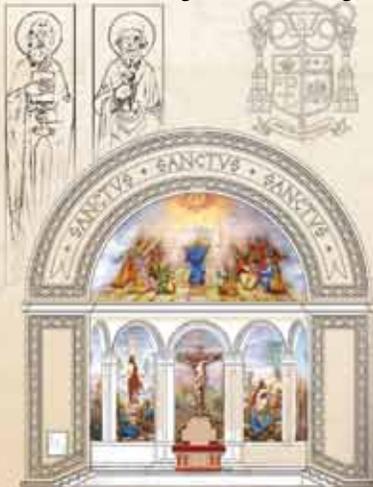
The space, as described by college president Father William P. Leahy in its dedication, was meant to "forever be a place of healing, consolation, and peace." Today it has become a noted feature of the landscape and has helped create a sort of memorial heart of the campus after a Veterans Memorial was constructed nearby. The Veterans Memorial echoes the labyrinth's design, with curving stone walls and names etched in stone to commemorate the deceased. Taken together, and within the historic, Catholic context of the campus, the two memorials give an overpowering impression of sacred solemnity. 

BOB CORNING IS A PRINCIPAL OF THE DESIGN FIRM STANTEC IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS; HE LED THE DESIGN OF BOTH THE LABYRINTH AND THE VETERANS' MEMORIAL AT BOSTON COLLEGE.

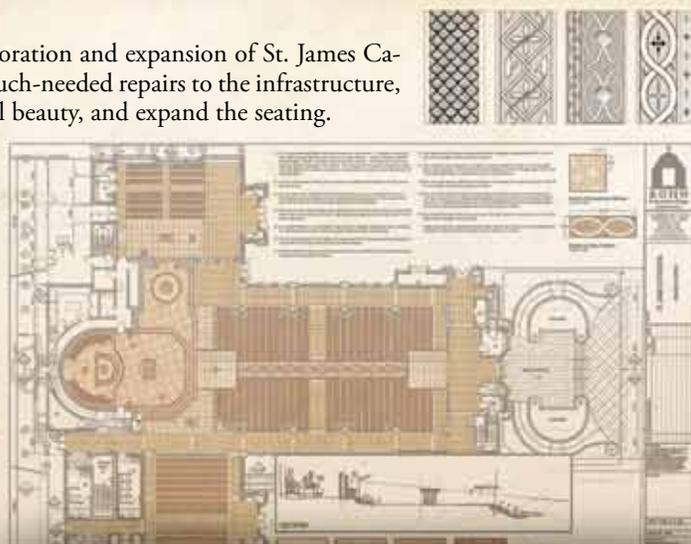
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# NOTES & COMMENTS

## REBUILDING A CATHEDRAL DESTROYED

Notre Dame de l'Assomption Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, collapsed nearly two years ago in the 7.0 earthquake that shook the city and surrounding towns and communities. In mere seconds and in a 25-mile radius with a population of nearly 4 million, countless homes were destroyed, along with a majority of the nation's public buildings, classrooms, and churches. The cathedral, whose roof and upper walls were trucked away last May, is one of the essential structures Haitians must rebuild.

The once elegant and dominant edifice had its beginning in hope and persistence. Construction of Notre Dame began in 1883 as the first poured concrete structure in Haiti, with expectations that it would survive a major seismic shock. Designed by André Ménard, of Nantes, it was completed in 1914 and formally consecrated in 1928. The result--pink and beige coloring over stucco and abundant stained glass--glowed in the brilliant sunsets that frequently illuminate the Bay of Port-au-Prince. The grand Romanesque structure with Coptic spires was an aesthetic and institutional anchor to the *bas de ville* (lower downtown) and to the entire nation.

Rebuilding the cathedral will cost at least \$40 million. We will appeal first to the generosity of Haitians; those in Haiti and throughout the world. We will also welcome contributions from all who desire to join us in raising a house to the glory of God.

The archdiocese proposes to discover the new Notre Dame through an international design competition. Architects the world over are invited to submit boards from which to select, this year, the new



cathedral that we intend to build within a decade. More details about the competition can be found at: [www.ndapap.org](http://www.ndapap.org). The ideal design must engage the future and celebrate life. Still, it must be mindful of the past and memorialize the thousands who died and were injured in the earthquake of January 10, 2010.

—Mgr. Guire Poulard

*The author is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.*

## SAINT JOHN'S

### ARCHITECTURAL ANCESTRY

Where do creative people such as Marcel Breuer, the architect of Saint John's Abbey Church in Collegeville, Minnesota, come up with their ideas? The origin of design ideas remains a mystery to many people; but architects often draw from both the recent and the distant past in order to develop their ideas and design the structures we all inhabit. Marcel Breuer looked to his own work for many of the ideas for the church, having used a similar trapezoidal plan, for example, in his design for the assembly hall at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and for a theater he had designed in 1927 while teaching at the Bauhaus.

Breuer also drew from his colleagues. The General Assembly building of the United Nations has a similarly trapezoidal plan, as did the assembly hall that one of the architects who worked on the U.N., Le Corbusier, designed for the League of Nations in 1927. But the influence may have gone back even further, to the trapezoidal plans of some ancient Greek megarons, which served as gathering and worship spaces.

We see similar Modern and ancient references in the abbey church's bell banner. It echoes the forms and shapes of the chairs that Breuer designed at the Bauhaus. Meanwhile, the idea of a wall tower with bells inserted in it recalls those found in Spanish-American mission churches as well as the bell-tower façades of medieval cathedrals. And the legs and arms of the concrete arch that hold the abbey church bell banner aloft evoke the ceremonial banners of religious processions in the medieval church.

Similar references to the human form occur inside the abbey church, where the huge concrete forms that support the balcony look like giant arms with great, splayed hands raised in supplication. These gigantic supports also recall those in the earliest Romanesque cathedrals, whose stone columns sometimes seem to flex with the inner forces they

contain. Likewise, the pleated sidewalls of the abbey church bring to mind the enormous buttresses of Gothic cathedrals as well as the massive stone monoliths of some of the oldest sites of religious ritual, such as Stonehenge.

The folded roof at the church also draws comparison to some unusual precedents. Its zigzag form brings to mind the repetitive gable-roof structures like the mosque-cathedral at Cordoba, a building whose history spans several centuries and two religions. And therein lie perhaps the most important lessons of the abbey church. Beautifully suited for Christian worship, the church has an ancestry that connects to other religions, to other places, and to some of the very first attempts by humans to build religious space. As such, it reminds us of the larger meaning of what it means to be catholic. That term refers not only to this ancient and now global religion, but also to an all-inclusive sensibility that embraces people across continents and over centuries, a frame of mind that Breuer, whose own life and work spanned several cultures and continents, would have well understood.

—Thomas Fisher

*The author is a professor in the School of Architecture, dean of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, and a Faith & Form editorial board member. This text was delivered at a 50th anniversary celebration of Breuer's abbey church last October.*





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## NOTES & COMMENTS

### BOOK REVIEW: RELIGION AND MODERNISM

*The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture: A Reader*. Edited by Renata Hejduk and Jim Williamson. New York: Routledge 2011, 424 pages, \$49.95.

On what do architects really base their designs? Pure “functionality”? “Creative intuition”? Personal aesthetics and judgment? The hardline realities of economics and the constraints of materials and methods? Social vision? Environmental considerations? The politics of sustainability?

Peeling back the rhetoric of these obvious considerations, we should consider something much more fundamental: a primary world view, a *Weltanschauung*: a theory of how the world is ordered (or not); how the human person acts in the cosmos; what are the relationships between matter and “spirit,” the observable and the intuitive, the measurable and the immeasurable, nature and artifice, the individual and the collective; the meaning of meaning; the proper of role of economics, politics and, yes, religion. This is a matter of cosmology: an essential worldview that considers how the world is ordered (respecting that some architects hold there is no knowable order to the cosmos, or indeed that a *kosmos*, which speaks to the very concept of “order,” doesn’t really exist).

The history of architectural thought is a history of essential worldviews: Vitruvius’ myth of origin of fire, community, language, and the primitive hut; the Pharaonic temples; the Tent of Dwelling; Rome’s imperial architecture; the anagogic vision of Abbot Suger; Renaissance humanism; the various Enlightenment theories of Perrault, Blondel, Woods the Elder, Laugier, and Durand; the theosophy of the De Stijl; Wright’s “organic architecture”; the curious and fruitful convergence of rationalism and mysticism in Le Corbusier; the late-20th-century appeal to Deconstruction theory. Each of these appealed to various historical, religious, natural, sociological, mimetic, rationalist, scientific, or intuitive positions to inform the architecture.

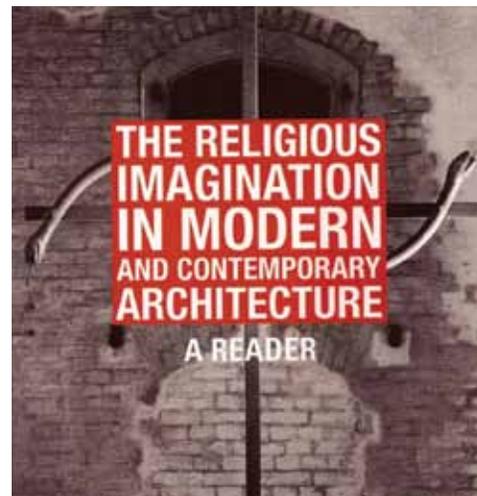
In the last quarter of the 20th century, academics have increasingly turned their attention to the study of these underlying worldviews. Ulrich Conrads, in his seminal *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (1964), collated the foundational documents that have shaped both the past several generations of architects and per force our built

environment. A whole generation of scholars has risen, thanks to the groundbreaking work of Joseph Rykwert and his epigones and colleagues, that seek to frame the contemporary architectural currents in the context of the cultural shifts from the Enlightenment, and to understand the deeper meanings of architecture that preceded the Enlightenment.

The most recent contribution to this general field is *The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture: A Reader*, edited by Renata Hejduk and Jim Williamson. This anthology presents 50 essays, which offer a handy first effort to understanding the power of the religious imagination in the Modernist and secular discipline of architecture that ostensibly eschews religion and its content. The intent and intellectual framework of the book is laid out in the editors’ introductory chapter, “The Apocryphal Project of Modern and Contemporary Architecture.” This chapter is worth carefully reading to understand what the editors intend, and as importantly what they do not intend, in presenting this otherwise somewhat random collection of essays. I say “random” not pejoratively, but rather cognizant of the fact that the Western expressions of religion from the Reformation and Enlightenment onward have been increasingly fragmentary and idiosyncratic. Any attempt to reassemble a coherent picture of “religious imagination” from the chards of post Enlightenment thinking is susceptible to the same fragmentary and idiosyncratic considerations.

The editors carefully stake out their terrain: spending worthwhile time defining their terms of “imagination” and “religion.” While one can certainly disagree with the exact formulations of these definitions, this chapter serves as a touchstone for understanding and appreciating the rationale for who is included in the anthology. It is important to note that this book is not particularly concerned with the question of imagination in contemporary religious architecture, although numerous essays do touch on that, but rather how religion and the religious sensibility informs even contemporary secular architecture.

The editors wisely treat the remaining essays as objectively as possible: not chronologically which might be construed as presuming a thread of thought; not attempting a taxonomy of theory by categorizing the various authors under various “schools”; without betraying any personal biases the editors might hold by



ranking the articles in terms of importance; but rather by simply presenting the essays in alphabetical order of their respective authors. We are therefore free to explore the book and read as our interests draw us to essays by Barragán, Cacciari, Eliade, Pérez-Gómez, Rowe, Rykwert, Schwarz, or Tillich. In that sense it is a true “reader.”

In the interest of full disclosure, my own work is somewhat uncomfortably included in a footnote in the chapter essay from Kieckhefer’s *Theology in Stone* on the work of Rudolf Schwarz. Schwarz is certainly a dominant figure in 20th century Catholic architectural circles, and is aptly included in this collection with an important contribution from his own book, *The Church Incarnate*. Kieckhefer takes vigorous exception to my interpretation of Schwarz’s schema, from my *Architecture in Communion*, wherein I argue that the very idea of trying to develop a whole new iconography of church architecture based on a rather peculiar model of the life of Christ is fraught with problems. Without belaboring the issue, it is noteworthy that Thomas Beeby’s contribution shows Schwarz malleable enough to interpret as if he were advocating Protestantism, which suggests that my concerns are well founded. This will have to remain a matter for future conversations.

An essential part of an architect’s education is to help the student form a worldview that might inform one’s architecture. This collection is a worthwhile contribution to that process.

—Steven Schloeder, AIA

*The reviewer is a Phoenix-based architect, theologian, and author, specializing in Catholic church projects across the U.S., and can be reached at liturgicalenvirons.com.*

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For years my professional portfolio has included providing resources and support for congregations that are engaged in all facets of an architectural project. By far my favorite interactions are those that occur at the very beginning stages of consideration, when questions such as “What do we need to do?” “How do we need to do it?” and “Who are our partners?” are the prevailing priorities. Design trends evolve, but the new building represents institutional culture, houses a community of believers, and embodies the true colors of the congregation.

The best formula for success is a healthy relationship between the architect and the client. It is a professional bond that, at times, has struck me as being unusually close--not surprising given that the foundation of the relationship is mission-driven. The client depends on the architect for professional expertise and aesthetic judgment, but also for the ability to transform the congregation's vision and mission for the future into tangible physical space, interpreting the specific and inherent needs into a structure that is affordable, functional, and beautiful. We know that the relationship between architect and client requires a true meeting of the minds and hearts, trust regarding the expenditure of dollars, and an understanding of congregational dynamics.

Factor in that although a religious institution is a center of prayer, study, and communal gathering, its economic health requires that it be managed with fiscal responsibility. No matter how strong the imperative to keep a wise eye on “the bottom line,” supervision of a sacred institution's assets is a trust, and its leaders, as fiduciaries and stewards of the community's resources, must conduct business with scrupulous ethical integrity.

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which are the lowest expense in any architectural project, are the most subject to negotiation.

In our present competitive market, the necessity for containing costs has created a climate where the architect's fees have become a primary criterion for selection. In the absence of prior building experience (many congregations are first-time clients) and sophisticated knowledge of the full scope of services required, decision-makers often mistake upfront cost-savings as sound financial management.

Architects, in an attempt to remain competitive, submit lower bids, or are being asked to, reflecting minimal service and compromised profit margins. Michael Hauptman, AIA, principal at Brawer & Hauptman Architects in Philadelphia, explains that any project consists of three components: the program (square footage), the quality (level of construction and finishes), and the cost. The client ultimately has control of only two elements. If there are insufficient funds to accommodate the program, the project can take on different dimensions. If quality becomes the issue, solutions should be found in different building materials and details. Cost savings originate in re-thinking the project, not diminishing the architect's services.

What incredible balance must be found between the sacred building and its architect to initiate and maintain a healthy professional relationship! The standards for business integrity are not necessarily higher in a sacred institution, but there is an inherent demand for respect, understanding the value of service and fair and equitable dealings. As Talmud teaches, “All Israel is responsible one for another.” 

THE AUTHOR IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH WOMEN'S RENAISSANCE PROJECT, AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FAITH AND FORM BOARD OF DIRECTORS.



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<b>Architect /</b> Susan Jones Atelier Jones Seattle, WA	<b>Liturgical Designer /</b> Rolf Rohn Rohn & Associates Design Pittsburgh, PA
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