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KATHRYN E. HUNT

“Architecture can only progress meaningfully through an accumulated tradition, one that balances both reforming and preserving elements in expression.”

-Juhani Pallasmaa, Melancholy and Time

CHANGING HABITS: a think tank for Catholic women religious

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CHANGING HABITS

a think tank for Catholic women religious



1 CHAPTER ONE

introduction

“[Tradition] involves, in the first place, the historical sense... and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presences. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timelessness as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.”⁵

-T.S. Eliot

“The locus of meaning resides neither in the building itself (a physical object) nor in the mind of the beholder (a human subject), but rather in the negotiation or the interactive relation that subsumes both building and beholder-- in the ritual-architectural event in which buildings and human participants alike are involved. Meaning is not a condition or quality of the building, of the thing itself; meaning arises from situations. The meaning of a building, then, must always be a meaning for some specific one at some specific time in some specific space.”

-Lindsay Jones, Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture

Many religious and lay people alike are not only open to accepting change within Catholicism, but also crave a more open-minded and accepting shift in Church teachings. Although this desire for tolerance has been voiced, the main body of the papacy is stubbornly holding onto a tradition that, in many ways, does not fit the contemporary views of society. This thesis is an architectural response to this change. It studies how shifting views of women religious (nuns and sisters) and Catholics can be integrated into the rich existing history of the Catholic church creating a more tolerant place for social and spiritual exchange.

Part think tank, part headquarters, part social, and part political, this thesis exemplifies the evolving position of the church in today's fluctuating society. The design focuses on developing spatial relationships based on scales of interaction (public to private, large groups to the individual), on accommodating various user groups (both religious and lay), as well as emphasizing the materiality of light to enhance the experience of program, screen activities and illuminate spaces.

Themes of tradition and contemporaneity are ingrained within the issues between the Church hierarchy and the women religious. The dichotomy of old and new is also evident in the relationship between doctrinal teachings of the church and beliefs more in line with changing society today. These motifs are also present architecturally in the proposed adaptive reuse of an existing structure.

The tense and ambiguous position of women in the Church has been a design driver for this thesis. It, furthermore, begs the question of how women religious are responding to the need to be both socially responsibly and doctrinally correct. The reaction to the Vatican's recent Doctrinal Assessment represented by the media often focuses on protests supporting nuns and lambasting the male hierarchical church leadership. Although there has been much public support for the role of women religious in society today, the reality of the situation is

that these women have devoted their lives to something in which they believe deeply. They are trying to move past this hurdle by withdrawing from public, quietly contemplating their position, and focusing within so as to formulate a thoughtful response to share openly when the appropriate time presents itself.

This thesis captures the ambiguous spirit of women religious today by way of architectural design by allowing multiple spaces for this communication between these women, the leaders of the Church, and society. The spaces within the building can be closed off while the nuns meet in private. There are areas for individual reflection and spiritual repose, as well as the opportunity to literally change the building's street presence when the time has come to amplify their position.

2 CHAPTER TWO

conceptual themes

“To believe in God is impossible; not to believe in Him is absurd.”

-Voltaire

“Modernism does not occur because tradition is abandoned, but rather because a sort of ironic interpretation of it, or distortion.”

-Gianni Vattimo

TRADITION AND CONTEMPORANEITY

“Architectural meaning is based on the human existential condition and the historicity of memory and experience. Consequently, meaning cannot be invented; it can only be rediscovered and rearticulated.”

-Juhani Pallasmaa, An Archipelago of Authenticity

The accelerating secularization of the world, especially the United States, is a statistical challenge that has been plaguing the Catholic church for decades. Secularism in this case is defined as any movement in society directed away from otherworldliness to life on earth. As one architectural historian puts it,

Christianity is weakening, and there seems to be no collective creed that can function any longer as a social glue that unites the whole society...This is concretized by the waning importance of churches in western culture. Even if cities are growing, fewer are being built. There is discussion about how to use empty churches for other purposes. Churches are becoming less important to the urban structure than museums, banks, of even cafés. The city itself and the individual buildings no longer seem to be dependent on a religious context.²⁰

Although Christianity might be dwindling, it is not that religion is disappearing but rather that it seems to be changing its character. Some anthropologists and theologians claim that the secularization of America is due in part to a shift away from collective religious institutions towards privatized religious or spiritual organizations instead. They see it this movement towards secularism as “a deinstitutionalization of religious creed and thought.”²⁰

The idea that Christianity is waning is countered by others who believe that there is currently a renewed global interest in the role of religion in the world. Mark Lilla, a history professor at

Columbia University points out that,

We find it incomprehensible that theological ideas still inflame the minds of men, stirring up messianic passions that leave societies in ruin. We assumed that this was no longer possible, that human beings had learned to separate religious questions from political ones, that fanaticism was dead. We were wrong. ²

Arguably, a reappraisal of religion or, at the very least, an attempt to include these studies within the constraints of modern society, would not only produce more comprehensive fields of study, but would strengthen the conversation on all fronts. Religion and architecture, for example, have been researched and reported on in depth individually; however, their confluence is crucial to uncovering the importance of religious thought on architectural theory. As Juhani Pallasmaa puts it, “architecture can only progress meaningfully through an accumulated tradition, one that balances both reforming and preserving elements in expression.”⁴ This progression he calls for requires “slowness...for architecture to re-connect itself with the source of silent knowledge found to be accumulated in history and tradition and to be re-rooted in culture.”⁵

Religious architecture took a back seat with the rise of rationalism and secularism brought along with Modernist movement. A recent resurgence of questioning religious thought at a global scale offers architecture today the opportunity to respond to the “secularizing impulses of modernity” ² and adds much needed commentary to the world of contemporary architectural and theological theory. In regard to the role architecture plays in this revival of religious thinking, Pallasmaa states that, “the mental function of architecture is to enrich, articulate, and strengthen our relation with the world, and ultimately, our awareness of ourselves.” ⁴ Pallasmaa goes further to say “architecture is the direct expression of existence, of human presence in the world.” ⁴ In the same way that the Bible is full of parables meant to teach followers how to live a Christian life, he also points out that architecture structures our experience of reality just as myths and stories do. ⁴

German architecture critic Heinrich Klotz coined the term “second modernity” in order to separate contemporary architecture from modernism as well as to describe a kind of architecture that stands above and withstands the rapid change of styles in the recent past.¹⁴ He singles out Danish architecture and minimalism as two examples of second modernism, both of which are linked to phenomenology, which he claims is one of the most important trends in contemporary architecture.¹⁴ He further heralds the value of architecture “deeply involved in an effort to...accept and express [the] contemporary situation – even the trivial, chaotic, grim, and ugly parts of it...From the almost nothingness of forms emerges some kind of spiritual presence.”¹⁴ Regarding minimalism, Klotz comments on the reduction of figure and the separation from literal meaning as key to adding spiritual value to a space. The Shakers, for instance, are praised for their timeless aesthetic transcendence and remain a society in which the significance of aesthetic phenomena still occupies a central spot in culture, spirituality, and community.

THE EVERYDAY SACRED AND THE SACRED EVERYDAY

“[Sacred] architecture provides distinctive experiences of time-not only the time of ritual occasions, but the long histories of interactions between people and their specially built sacred environments.”

-Lawrence Sullivan, The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture

For many women religious, there is no divide between daily and sacred life.

In the same vein as Pallasmaa’s belief in the indivisible relationship between spirit and space, the theme of the 1986 LCWR assembly, uncovering the holy, focused on ways to “find and reveal God in every reality we encounter: ourselves, others, the events and situations of life; it summons us to reverence what is holy and to transform what is not.”²⁰

A sacred space is more than just somewhere to celebrate Mass, get married, pray, or baptize a child. An emotional presence and visceral connection to the past grows each time people gather together to worship. In the same vein that the age-old rituals of the Church are kept alive by human acts of faith, the resulting spaces rely on intangible emotional connections to something 'other', which does not inhabit spaces we interact with in a secular manner. The religious work of Sigurd Lewerentz, for instance, offers a much-needed connection with what Pallasmaa refers to as 'deep time':

[Lewerentz's] works obtain their unique emotive power from images of matter which speak of opaque depth and mystery, dimness and shadow, metaphysical enigma and death. Death turns into a mirror image of life; Lewerentz enables us to see ourselves dead without fear, and placed in the continuum of timeless duration, the 'womb of time', to use an expression of Shakespeare's from Othello. ⁶

In a similar way as the Mass celebrates an invisible and mysterious belief, Pallasmaa notes that, "architecture is always the home of spirits, the dwelling place of metaphysical beings," ⁵ and furthermore, that, "the richness of a work lies in the vitality of the images it arouses." ⁵ In other words, an inner, secret language exists in religious spaces -- a secret language, which relies upon faithful participation of the individual. The power of sacred spaces is an enigma; the effects are unexplainable but palpable.

THE SOUTHERN GOTHIC SHORT STORY

"It seems to me that all good stories are about conversion, about a character's changing... The action of grace changes a character... All my stories are about the action of grace on a character."

-Flannery O'Connor

The short stories of Flannery O'Connor serve as another way to interpret the sacredness of

the everyday and motifs found in O'Connor's stories can easily be translated to architecture. The themes most often seen throughout her body of work include the transformation from the ordinary into the extraordinary, the body, the role of the individual in conversion experiences, and grace. For O'Connor, just as for the tens of thousands of Catholic sisters and nuns in America, there is no divide between daily life and religious life once one accepts the word of God and begins living as a Christian.

O'Connor was fascinated by the role of redemption, forgiveness, and grace on ordinary people. Her short stories paint seemingly mundane yet vivid pictures of commonplace people partaking in everyday activities yet in each instance, there is an intense moment of revelation in which a character is changed forever by a certain experience. Although not all of these incidents are overtly Catholic, there are undeniably spiritual transformations at the center of her stories.

The morphing of the profane into the sacred and the ordinary into the extraordinary can very easily be compared to the architectural experience of entering a holy place. Juhani Pallasmaa writes that, "the mental function of architecture is to enrich, articulate, and strengthen our relation with the world and, ultimately, our awareness of ourselves...architecture needs to invigorate and heighten sensory experience".⁴ The built environment has the capacity to structure the individual's emotional and spiritual response to a space. Along these same lines, the importance of liminality in holy places is key to understanding their effect. From the Latin root, *-līmin*, meaning threshold, liminality is defined as "the transitional period or phase of a rite of passage,"²² but can also imply a physical sense of space. In this way, it is a term easily applied to the transformative aspects of religious architecture.

The Catholic understanding of incarnation has similar liminal characteristics. In addition, however, the term incarnate not only references a quality of materiality as experienced

physically in space, but more specifically as a quality of materiality as experienced through the spiritual transformation of the ordinary.

Another reoccurring motif in O'Connor's short stories is the role of the body. This theme correlates with her real life devotion to the Catholic beliefs surrounding the Eucharist. Architecturally, a phenomenological approach to design also emphasizes the importance of the human body. Ashley Montagu, an anthropologist, points out that "[the skin] is the oldest and most sensitive of our organs; our first medium of communication, and our most efficient protector...Touch is the parent of our eyes, ears, nose, and mouth." ⁷ Pallasmaa further elaborates of the role played by the body when he says, "architecture is a direct expression of existence, of human presence in the world, in the sense that architecture is largely based of a language of the body." ⁴ In other words, the way we as humans physically interact with a space is crucial to our understanding of it, our appreciation of it, and our interpretation of it.

Yet another common motif in O'Connor's short stories is the significance of the individual experience, which adds another dimension to the scales of space in this thesis. Most of the conversion experiences are deeply personal and often noticeable only to the person undergoing the change. Although for this character it seems that the world is turning upside down, everyone around them continues to go about their daily activities perceiving nothing unusual at all. The incredibly private moments of transformation for O'Connor's characters can be likened to the architectural effect of buildings on the individual. This is easily aligned with a phenomenological approach, as it is the experience of the individual that is central to the interpretation and experience of an architectural event as well.

3 CHAPTER THREE

a theoretical framework

“The fundamental question of architecture is existential: how does a human being experience his or her existence in this world? The task of architecture is to make us experience our existence with deeper significance and purpose; architecture assists us to know and remember our identity.”

-Juhani Pallasmaa, Tradition and Modernity

In the light of the Vatican's Doctrinal Assessment, many women religious have called for a still, contemplative moment in which they can reflect on their role within the hierarchy of the church and meditate on how that role might change in the near future. Theoretically, the architectural quality of these spaces for reflection draw from a rich history of phenomenology, hermeneutics, hapticity, and color theory.

PHENOMENOLOGY

The phenomenology of architecture seeks the inner language of building. It is not the proportions, geometries, style, or construction of a building that truly matters, rather the phenomena that are “appealing directly to the consciousness experiencing it, through architectural feeling.”⁸ This emphasis on experiential qualities focuses on engaging the human body with architecture in a way that uses all the senses. In the past, a visual digestion of architecture has reigned supreme and, as a result, form became more of a driver than action. This shift is quite problematic because, as Pallasmaa puts it, “architecture is fundamentally an art of actions, not forms.”¹² The way one interacts physically and tactically with architecture is far more important than the way they see it. Australian architect Glenn Murcutt famously refers to “the –ings of things” in order to remind himself and others of the crucial active role humans play within the architectural design process.¹²

HERMENEUTICS

Although action is indeed stressed in phenomenological theory, hermeneutics, the grandfather of phenomenology, further emphasizes the slowness and quietness also significant in architecture.³ Hermeneutical reflection is crisis driven and is often triggered by encounters with something unknown or not totally understood. The word itself stems from the Greek

word *hermeneuein*, meaning to interpret or understand.²³ During the Eighteenth century, the word was often used to describe a person with the ability to relate extremely well with others and who was able to intuitively understand tacit, implicitly expressed things.²⁴ Also described as “the disciplined exercise of the imagination,” hermeneutics acts as a lens through which things begin to undergo a transformation. As one theorist puts it, “distant meanings are brought close, seemingly absurd begins to “make sense” the strange becomes familiar, and bridges arise between the once and the now.”²⁴ Rudolf Schwartz refers to it as a “resplendent emptiness”¹⁶, Pallasmaa calls it “an independent sensory and mental state”¹¹ and Annie Dillard writes,

The silence is all there is. It is the alpha and the omega. It's God's brooding over the face of the waters; it is the blended note of the ten thousand things, the whine of wings. You take a step in the right direction to pray to this silence and even to address the prayer to “World”. Distinctions blur. Quit your tents. Pray without ceasing.²²

The call for silence is not necessarily a literal one, but perhaps more of a spiritual one, a characteristic of a space that allows one to stop, take it all in, and feel at ease in a place. To some, “great architecture also evokes silence. Experiencing a building is not only a matter of looking at its spaces, forms, and surfaces- it is also a matter of listening to its characteristic, unique silence.”¹¹ For sacred spaces, this muteness serves not only to separate the religious experience from the hustle and bustle of everyday life ‘on the outside’ or ‘in the real world’, but also as a blank canvas for one to experience the healing power of slowing down and reflecting..

HAPTICITY

Yet another pertinent topic in architecture is Hapticity, which focuses on touch and the role of the skin. Also closely aligned with phenomenology and hermeneutics, haptic designs

emphasize the potential of texture and tactility.⁷ A slow, intimate interaction with architecture is necessary, as movement through space requires a heightening of tactile sensibilities and a detaching of more visual references. Materiality becomes the principle conveyor of architectural experience in this case. Pallasma often refers to “the eyes of the skin” in many theoretical works proclaiming the prominent sense of touch in architecture.⁹

COLOR

“Our response to color is total; it influences us both psychologically and physiologically.”

-Frank and Rudolf Mahrke

A study of color was an important aspect of research for this thesis. In Catholicism and religion in general, color has significant meaning throughout history, scripture, and practice. Many color theorists have continually assessed and analyzed the effect of color on humans, the perception of environments, and cultural associations with various hues. In their research on color in the man-made environment, Frank and Rudolf Mahrke break the significance of color into hue effects, associations, character, and symbolism. They begin by stating, “Color is not the property of object, space, or surfaces; it is the sensation caused by certain qualities of light that the eye recognizes and the brain interprets. Therefore, light and color are inseparable.” Furthermore, they emphasize the fact that, “color, which is created by light, is therefore a form of energy, and this energy affects the body function as it influences mind and emotion...Our response to color is total; it influences us both psychologically and physiologically.” In this way, it is worthwhile considering the affects that particular colors can have on the individual.

The color red is an exciting, stimulating hue. It is positively associated with passion, fervidity, activity, strength and warmth. Negatively, it is linked to aggression, rage, intensity, ferocity,

and bloodiness. This hue is considered the most dominant of all and often grabs our attention, overruling all other colors. Symbolically, red means fire, life, and strength, but its aggressive, masculine nature can also be linked to war, combat, dominance, and rebellion.

The color Yellow is the happiest of all hues. It is cheerful and light hearted in nature and associated with sun, radiance, vitality, and high spirits. It radiates warmth, cheerfulness, and inspiration. Negatively, however, it can be considered egocentric and glaring. Symbolically, this color signifies enlightenment, both mental and spiritual, as well as expansion, sunlight, and communication.

The color orange is exciting, stimulating, and cheering. This color is positively associated with joy, life, energy, and sociability. Mellow and less primitive than red, orange has virtually no negative cultural or emotional aspects. It is warm and luminous, exudes a livable charm, and the reflection of it enhances almost every skin tone.

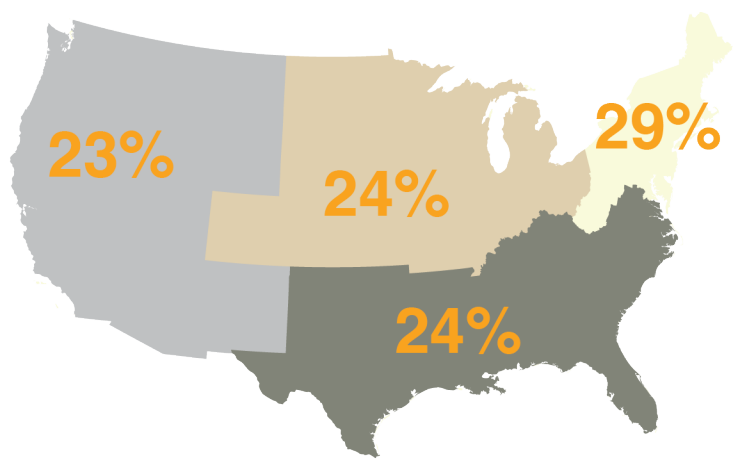
4 CHAPTER FOUR

framing the issues

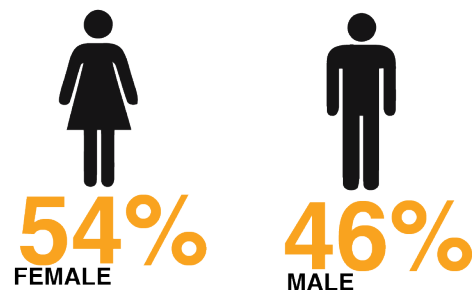
“Understanding is always a cultural act; the process of understanding is the cultural situation of humankind, for the struggle to understand is the work of imagination, a uniquely human mode of labor. One’s own self-understanding suffers change in the process of understanding.”⁸

-Lawrence E. Sullivan, 1988

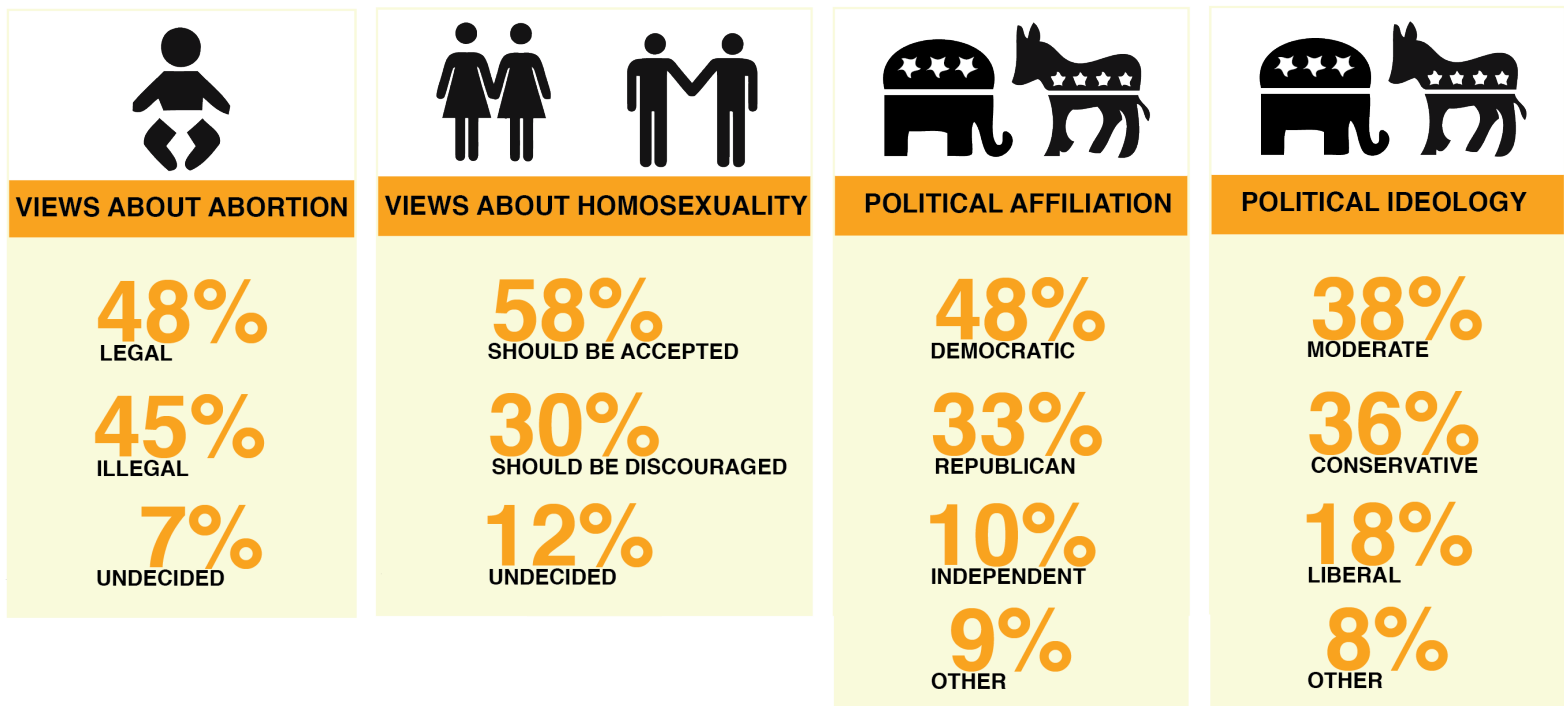
CATHOLIC INFOGRAPHICS



REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF CATHOLIC POPULATION

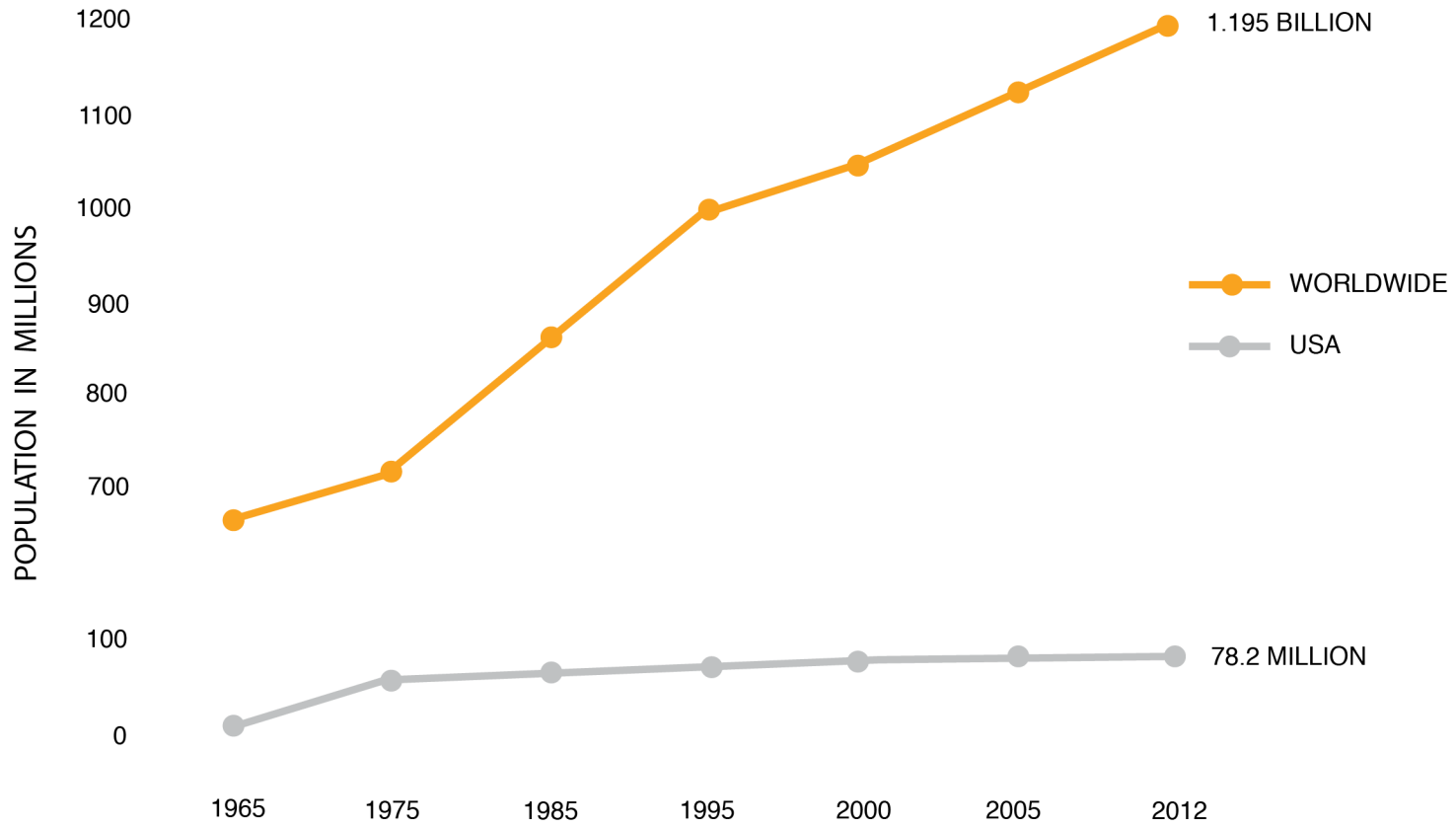


FIGURES 1-2:
These infographics record the demographic breakdown of Catholics in the United States.

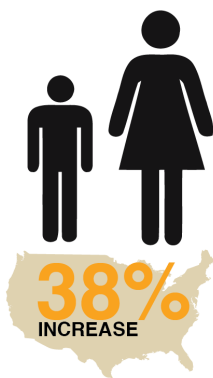
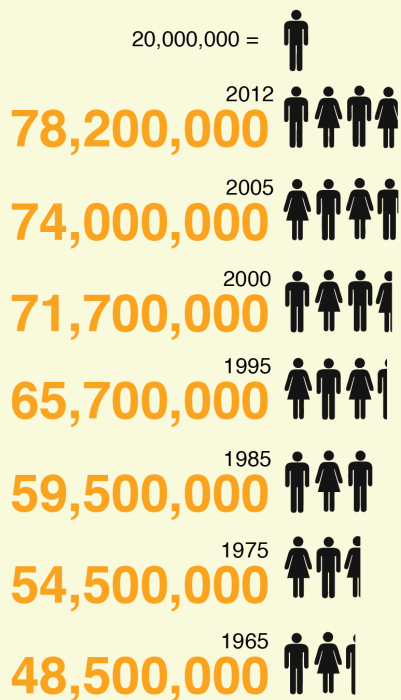


FIGURES 3-6 :
 These infographics indicate the current views of practicing Catholics.

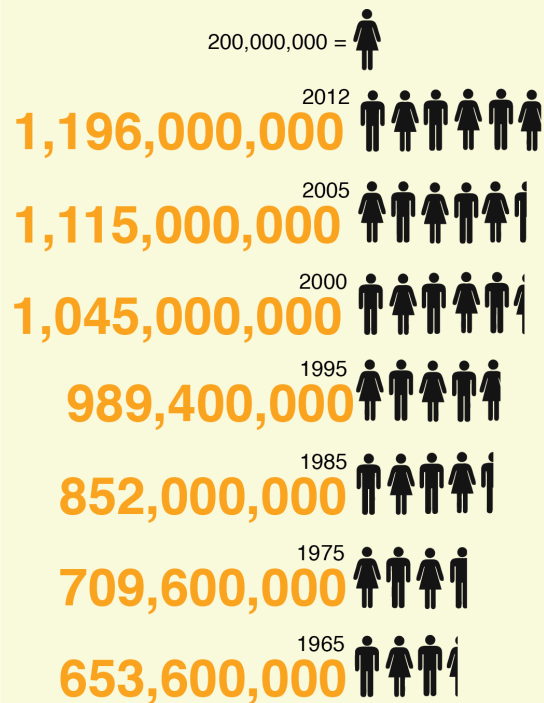
COMPARISON OF USA AND WORLD POPULATIONS OF CATHOLICS



USA POPULATION OF CATHOLICS

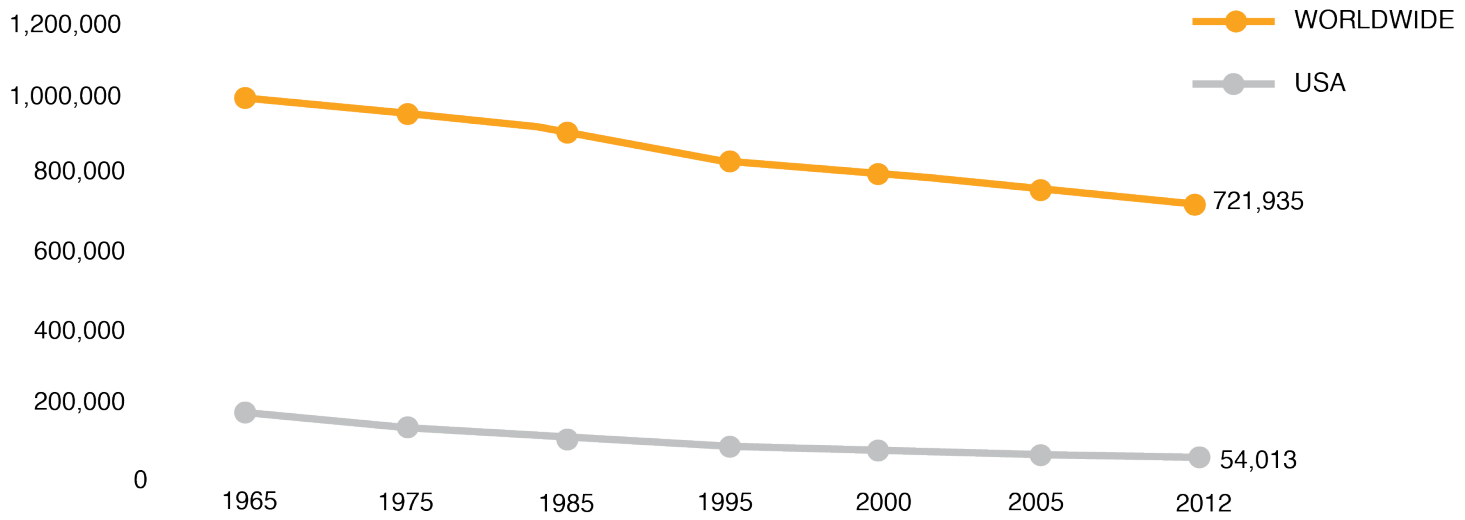


WORLD POPULATION OF CATHOLICS

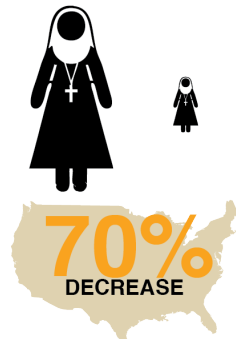
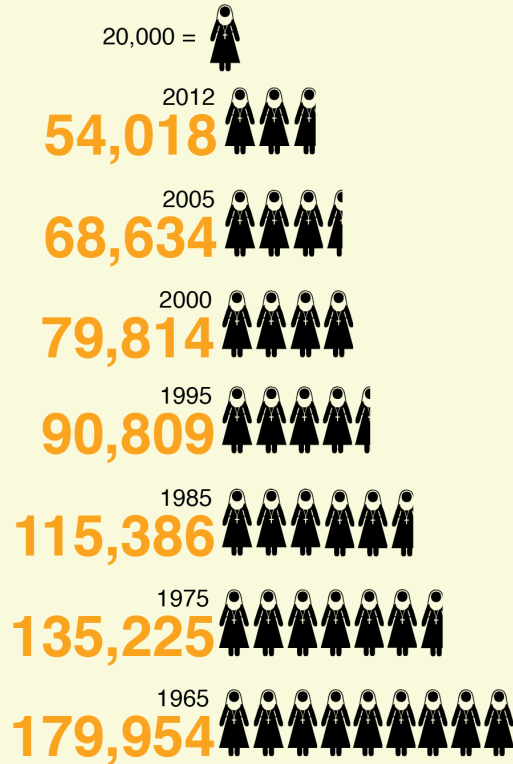


FIGURES 7-9: These infographics illustrate a steady increase in the population of Catholics in the United States and the world.

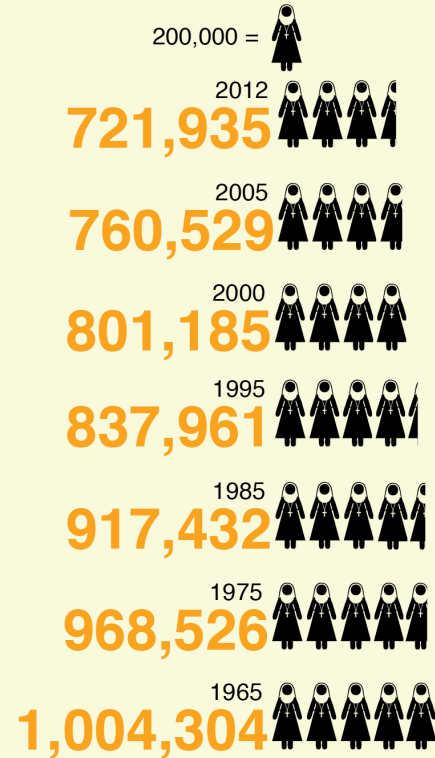
COMPARISON OF USA AND WORLD POPULATIONS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS



USA POPULATION OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

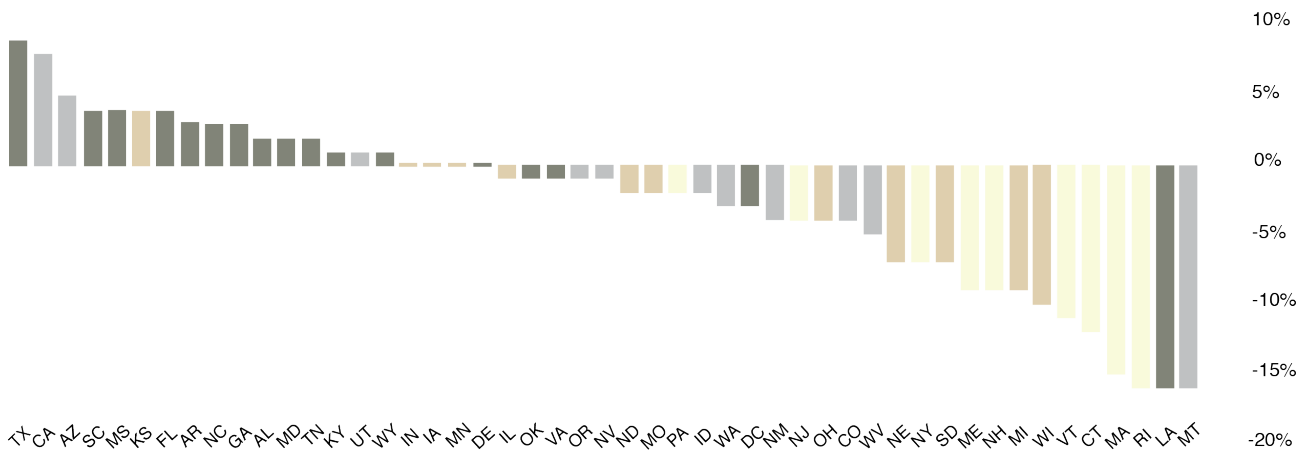


WORLD POPULATION OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

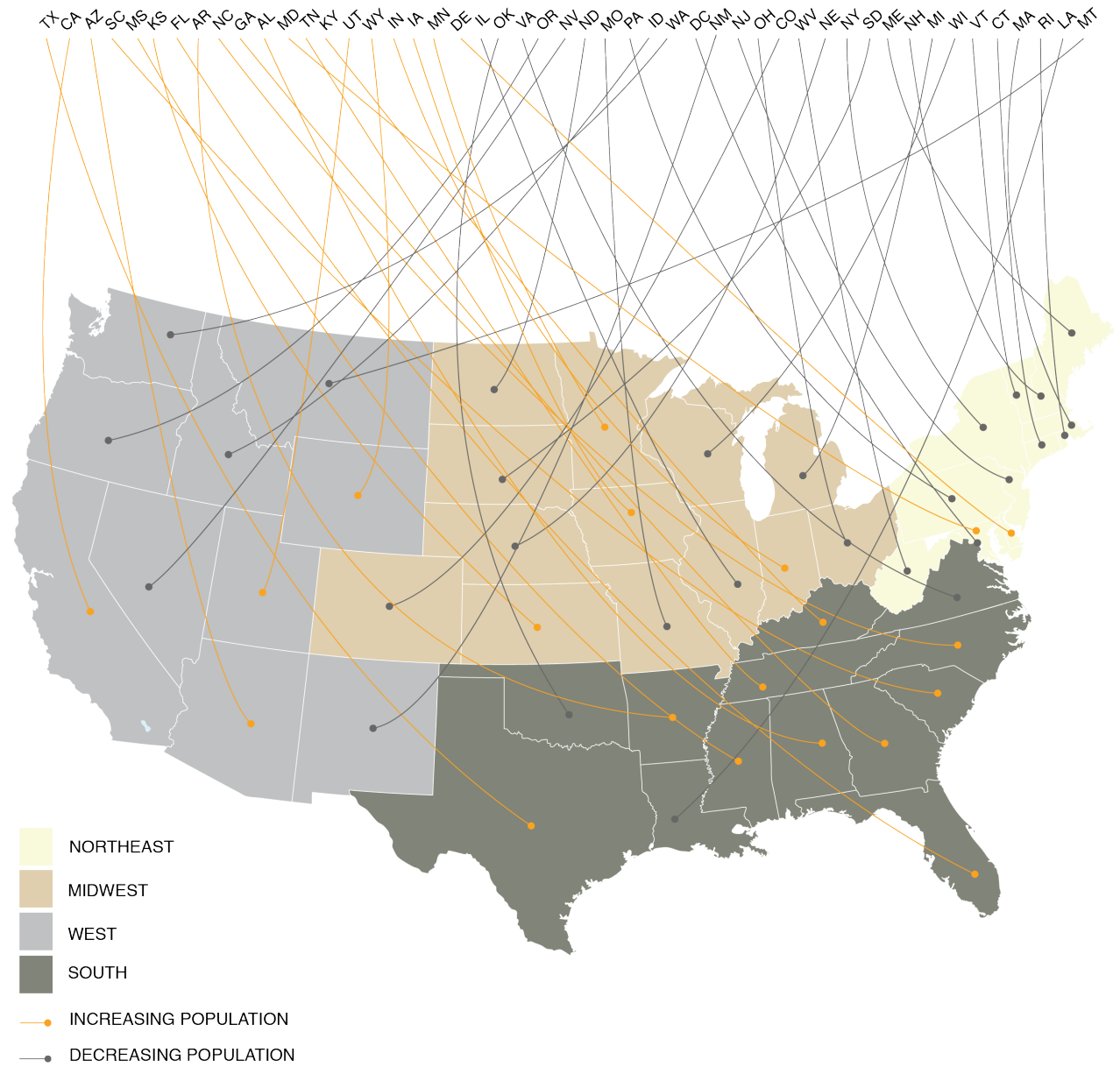


FIGURES 10-12: These infographics illustrate a steady decline in the population of women religious in the United States and the world.

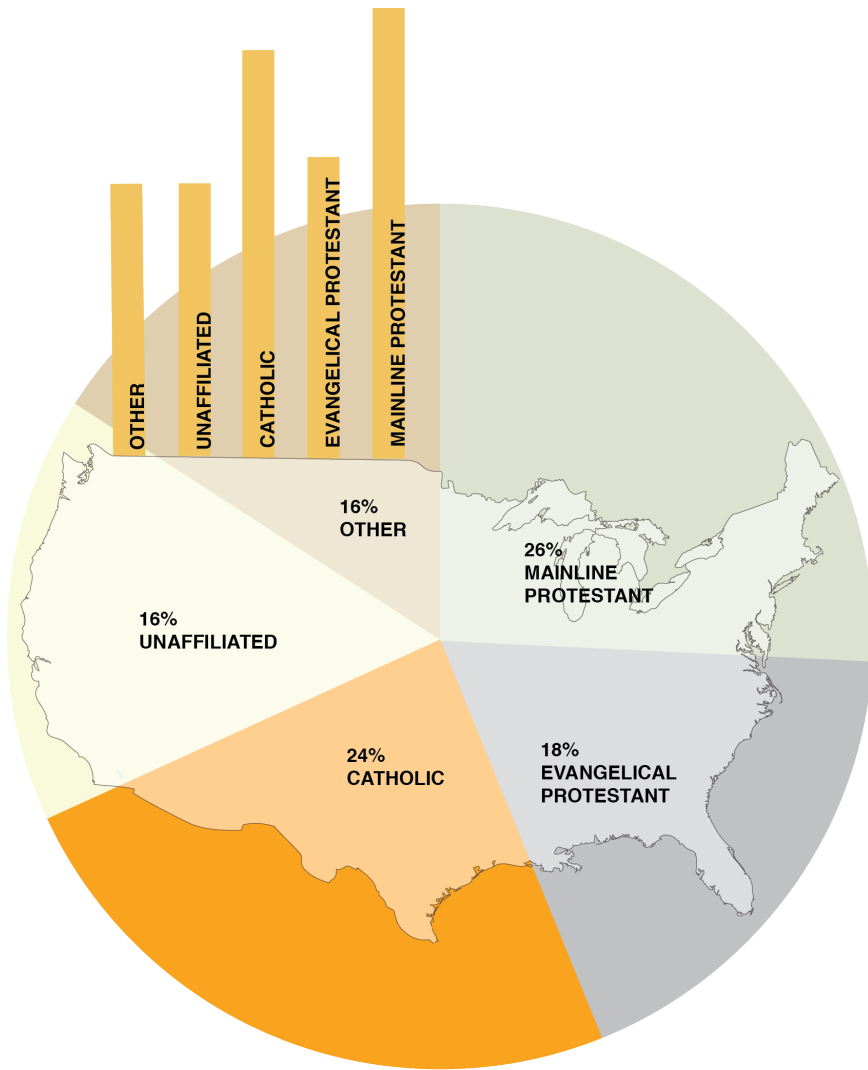
CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE OF CATHOLICS BY STATE BETWEEN 1990 AND 2008



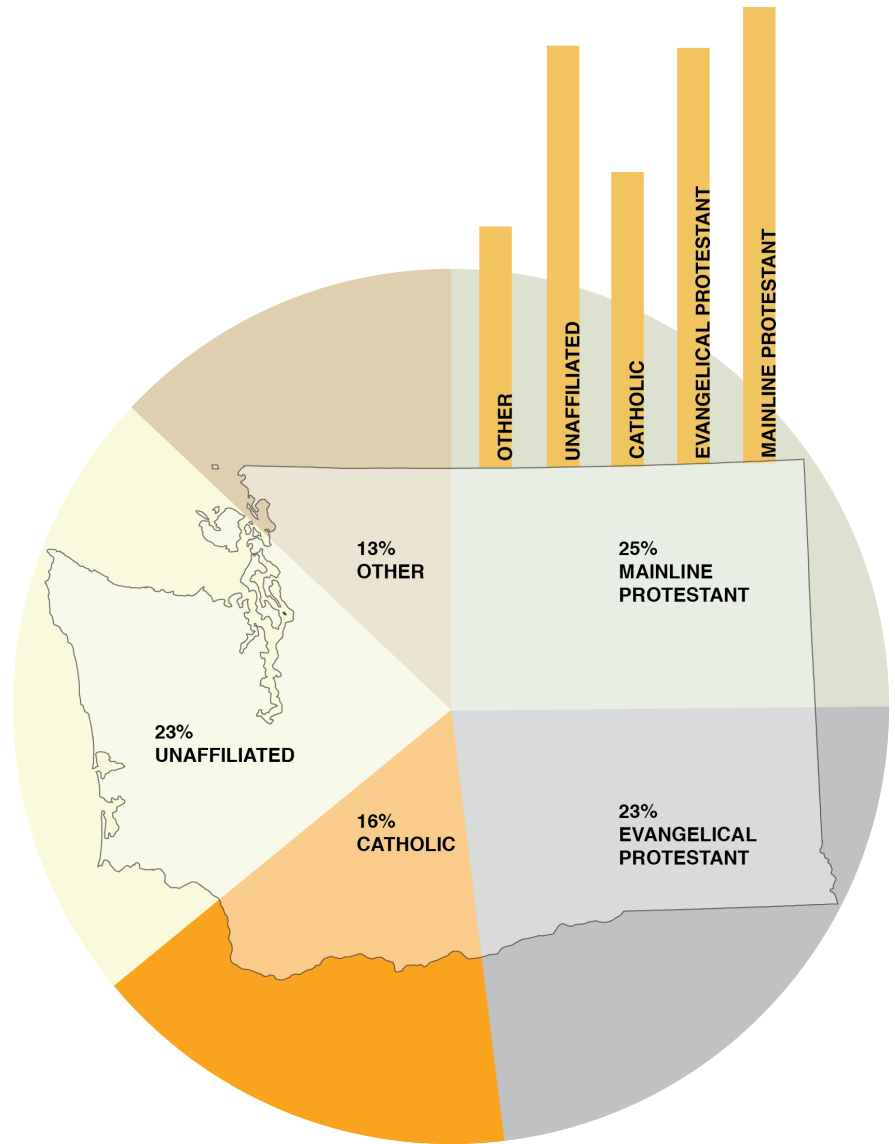
FIGURES 13-14:
This infographic documents changes in Catholic population in America.



DATA FROM THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION SURVEY (ARIS) 2008



BREAKDOWN OF RELIGIONS IN THE UNITED STATES



BREAKDOWN OF RELIGIONS IN WASHINGTON STATE

HISTORY OF THE LCWR

“Architecture...allows us to see and understand the slow processes of history, and to participate in time cycles that surpass the scope of individual life.”⁵

-Juhani Pallasmaa, Melancholy and Time

An association of the leaders from many congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States, today the LCWR consists of more than 1500 members representing over 80 percent of the 57,000 women religious in America.²⁰ At the request of the Vatican’s Congregation for Religious, the Conference of Major Superiors of Women (CMSW) was formed on November 24, 1956 to “promote the spiritual welfare of the women religious of the USA, to insure increasing efficacy in their apostolate, and to foster closer fraternal cooperation with all religious of the United States, the hierarchy, the clergy, and Catholic association.”²⁰ The annual assemblies began in 1965 and until 1971, the CMSW served primarily as a liaison between the American bishops and women religious ensuring the voices of women religious were heard on issues revolving around church revision during the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Following a massive reevaluation of the function of the conference, the CMSW was totally overhauled in 1971. During this time, the national assembly adopted new bylaws and a new name- the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. The Conference shifted its focus towards justice issues and began introducing small workshops to



FIGURE 17



FIGURE 18



FIGURE 19

the annual meetings. A new mission statement redefined the purpose of the conference as follows:

to promote a developing understanding and living of religious life by:

- assisting its members personally and communally to carry out more collaboratively their service of leadership in order to accomplish further the mission of Christ in today's world.
- fostering dialogue and collaboration among religious congregations within the church and in larger society.
- developing models for initiating and strengthening relationships with groups concerned with the needs of society, thereby maximizing the potential of the conference for effecting change.²⁰

At the same time, a splinter group known as Consortium Perfectae Caritatis (CPC) was formed around the concern the new LCWR was “deviating from ‘authentic’ church teaching about the essentials of religious life.”²⁰ As of 1973, there totaled 648 members representing 370 religious communities.²⁰

As the Conference shifted towards social issues and human rights, the views of society came to the forefront as indications of the Church's influence in daily American life. Margaret Brennan, IHM, LCWR President from 1972 to 1973 said,

One danger for us is that we may become legitimators of society's commonly held values. The values we hold and the faith we articulate require strong supportive communities and a degree of apartness from the dominant culture if our life and mission are to be counter-right to society's consumptive style, to its power to alienate and destroy.²⁰

From 1974 through the 1980s, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious concentrated on surveying, studying, and documenting both qualitative and quantitative data on issues concerning the role of women in the Catholic church, human rights of migrant and displaced

people in America, as well as the influence of U.S corporations of poverty in the Third World. As a result of their work the LCWR was granted non-governmental status at the United Nations in 1977.²⁰ During the eighties the Conference formed various think tanks around issues of viability of religious institution in America and leadership in the Church. The LCWR attended the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing raising issues about the Catholic church's place in postmodern society. Doris Gottemoeller, RSM, LCWR President from 1994-1995 spoke at the UN gathering stating,

The renewal of our congregations, accomplished amidst unprecedented changes in culture and world order over the past 30 years, has brought us to a moment where the only questions that matter are profound: What is the mission God asks of religious in this post-modern world? What is the unique contribution of this way of life to the community called church?²⁰

These questions remain pertinent today as issues of human rights still plague the United States as well as the entire world.

Many groundbreaking publications have come from the annual assemblies of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. In 2001 *Women and Jurisdiction* was published.²⁰ This book examines how women in leadership roles within the Catholic church participate in decision making. In 2002, another significant book was published by LCWR member Anne Munley, IHM. *Carriers of the Story: A Leadership Conference of Women Religious Ministry Study* takes a look at the ministries supported by the LCWR throughout the history of the organization.²⁰ A travelling exhibition entitled *Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* chronicles the influence of women religious in the country. The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously approved a resolution in 2010 that, "honors and commends Catholic sisters for their humble service and courageous sacrifice throughout the history of this nation."²⁰

THE VATICAN'S DOCTRINAL ASSESSMENT

"Hope is the patron saint of the art of building."

-Juhani Pallasmaa, An Archipelago of Authenticity

The Vatican's recent Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women religious has elicited much attention to the current condition of the Catholic church and its stance on many of today's most controversial topics. This assessment, which took place over the past 10 years, evaluated the annual assembly in order to review the keynote addresses, publications, and award speeches for doctrinal accuracy. The document claims that the meetings of Leadership Conference of Women Religious reveal,

... serious doctrinal problems which affect many in Consecrated Life. On the doctrinal level, this crisis is characterized by a diminution of the fundamental Christological center and focus of religious consecration which leads, in turn, to a loss of a "constant and lively sense of the Church" among some Religious.¹

These claims came as a shock to many of the dedicated women who have devoted their entire lives to service within the Catholic church.

In addition, the published materials produced for the LCWR, such as the *Occasional Papers* and the *Systems Thinking Handbook*, are described as lacking sufficient doctrinal support. One example given cites a portion of the handbook that questions the central role of the Eucharist in one particular community gathering because it requires an ordained priest, which some sisters found "objectionable¹". Yet another concern was raised as the result of a "prevalence of certain radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith in some of the programs and presentations sponsored by the LCWR."¹

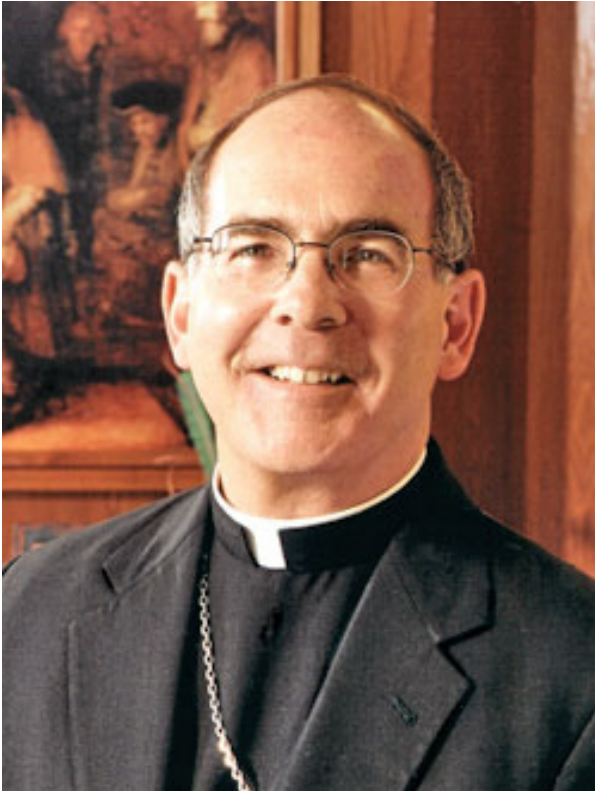
The Doctrinal Assessment calls out three major areas of concern:

- Addresses at LCWR Assemblies
 - “problematic statements and serious theological, even doctrinal errors.”¹
- Policies of Corporate Dissent
 - “protesting Holy See’s actions regarding issues of women’s ordination and approach to ministry to homosexual persons.”¹
 - “sister’s collective take a position not in agreement with the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.”¹
- Radical Feminism
 - “prevalence of certain radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith...including theological interpretations that risk distorting faith... undermine revealed doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the inspiration of Sacred Scriptures.”¹



FIGURE 20

As a result of the Assessment, the Pope has created an Archbishop Delegate comprised of two bishops charged with the task of initiating a five year review process in which the LCWR will be guided through the reform of its annual meetings and publications.¹ One of these delegates is currently the Archbishop of Seattle. This committee has also been given the power to form an Advisory Team of clergy, religious women, and experts to assist in the rectification process. This mandate's role is to:



- “revise LCWR statutes to ensure greater clarity about the scope of the mission and responsibilities of the conference.”¹
- “review LCWR plans and programs:
 - remove *Systems Thinking Handbook* pending revision
 - reform LCWR programs for future Superiors and Formators
 - speakers/presenters will be subject to approval by Delegate.”¹
- “create new LCWR programs for member Congregations for the development of initial and ongoing formation material that provides a deepened understanding of the Church’s doctrine of the faith.”¹
- “review and offer guidance in the application of liturgical norms and texts.”¹
- “review LCWR links with affiliated organizations.”¹

FIGURE 21

REACTION AND RESPONSE

Many people are shocked, stunned, angry and confused by the Vatican's harsh reprimand of the LCWR. Moreover, there is a sense that this recent controversy has created even more polarity between practicing Catholics who abide strictly to traditional church doctrine and those who are ready for accepting change. Some sisters are concerned that the patriarchal hierarchy of the offices which govern the Catholic Church do not allow the opportunity for women, religious or lay, to truly affect change in church teachings. Sister Julie Viera, a member of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary based in Michigan points out the fact that, "our vow of obedience applies to God . . . it doesn't reside in a bishop, a body of bishops or even the pope. For us, that sense of obedience has to do with listening deeply to the call of the spirit."¹⁸ Although there has, indeed, been a huge outcry in support of the women religious and against the male hierarchy in the church, it is important to note that there are also individuals who feel the LCWR has undermined their doctrinal duties by focusing on social issues. These people seem to be less vocal in their position and have not focused on public outcry as much as those supporting the women religious.

The LCWR has outlined what they believe to be the current issues faced by women religious and the Catholic church today in their Call for 2010-2015. In this document they identify the following:

- a need to find balance between traditional teachings and changing realities,
- a struggle with growing diversity within member's views,
- an evolving church with a growing desire for contemplation, balance, and simplicity, and
- an overall hope for dialogue with church leaders and inclusion in its processes.²⁰



FIGURES 22-23

Views of Catholics Leaders

% of Catholics who are satisfied with the leadership of...

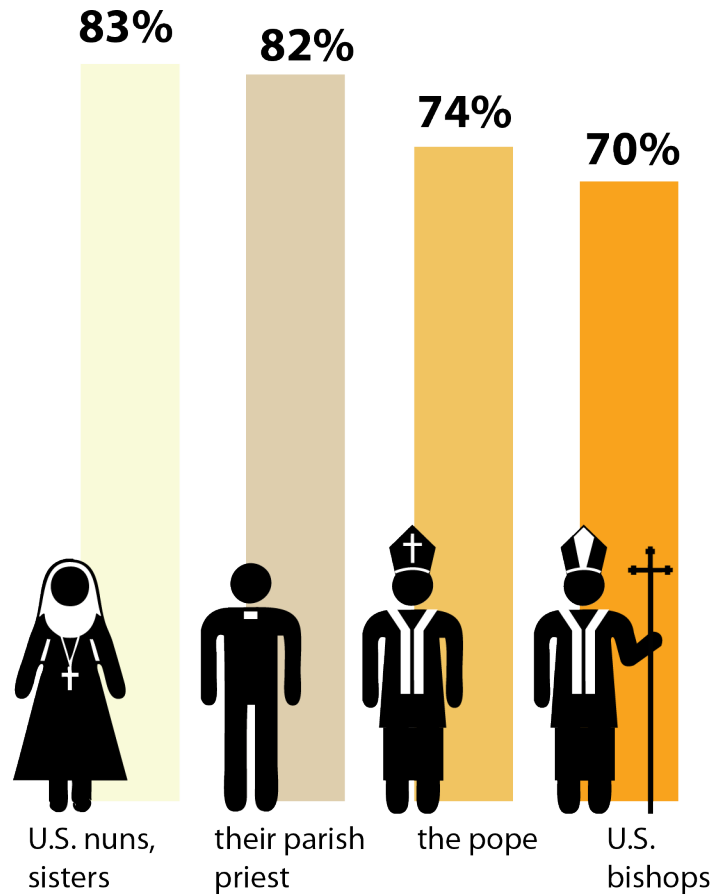


FIGURE 24:
This graph illustrates levels of satisfaction with Church leaders.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

defining the project

“There is no architecture without program, without action, without event.”

-Bernard Tschumi

This thesis is not to be considered an attack against the traditional doctrine of the Catholic church or critique on the role of women within the hierarchy of the church. Instead, it is focused on how the changing views of many practicing Catholics today can become more integrated into the rich existing history of the Church so as to create a more tolerant place for the practice of religious life and discussing the changes of the future. How can a retreat center for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and think tank for all orders of Catholic women religious exemplify the changing position of the Church in today's world?

PROGRAM

The program for the thesis is part think tank, part headquarters, part social, and part political. The design of a retreat center for these women religious in seek of resolution will include residential areas for a rotation of visiting women religious as well as sacred spaces for the various religious rituals that take place daily. A chapel will serve as a quiet spot for the public and women religious to gather their thoughts during this time of flux in the Catholic church. Shared meeting rooms and support spaces for the many Catholic organizations comprising and represented by the LCWR will serve as a permanent location for the events and meetings of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as well as the hub for communication between the women religious and the archdiocese of Seattle.

The incorporation at street level of a new facility housing the FLATCOLOR gallery adds an otherness to the program and serves as a potential mouthpiece for expression not only of local street artists but of the LCWR as well.

FLATCOLOR gallery

exhibition space 1500 sf
mezanine level 500 sf
office (6 employees) 900 sf
total 2900 sf

LCWR facilities

residences (16 rooms) 3200 sf
communal kitchen/living spaces 3000 sf
exterior space 1000 sf
hybrid conference space 1800 sf
auditorium 1800 sf
chapel 1800 sf
library 600 sf
office (10 employees) 1000 sf
total 13200

SHARED facilities

printing press 4500 sf
roof deck 2300 sf
exterior courtyard 1800sf
total 8600

TOTAL 24,700 sf

SITE

“Meaning is not a condition or quality of the building, of the thing itself; meaning arises from situations. The meaning of a building, then, must always be a meaning for some specific one at some specific time in some specific space.”²⁴

The Archdiocese of Seattle, the office of the bishop accountable for the reformation of the LCWR, as well as the Cathedral of St. James, are located just east of I-5. A location near enough to be easily connected to these places is ideal, however it is also appropriate that there be some distance between the new conference center and the church offices. By selecting a site in the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood of downtown Seattle, this separation can be achieved while still remaining close enough to seem connected. In addition, this oldest area of Seattle could greatly benefit from the helpful presence of community programs such as those organized by many orders of women religious. The Pope claims that the sisters and nuns have been focusing too much on social issues rather than traditional church doctrine. This site location will allow them to continue serving the community while also openly discussing their issues with the current state of the church in an uninhibited and productive way.

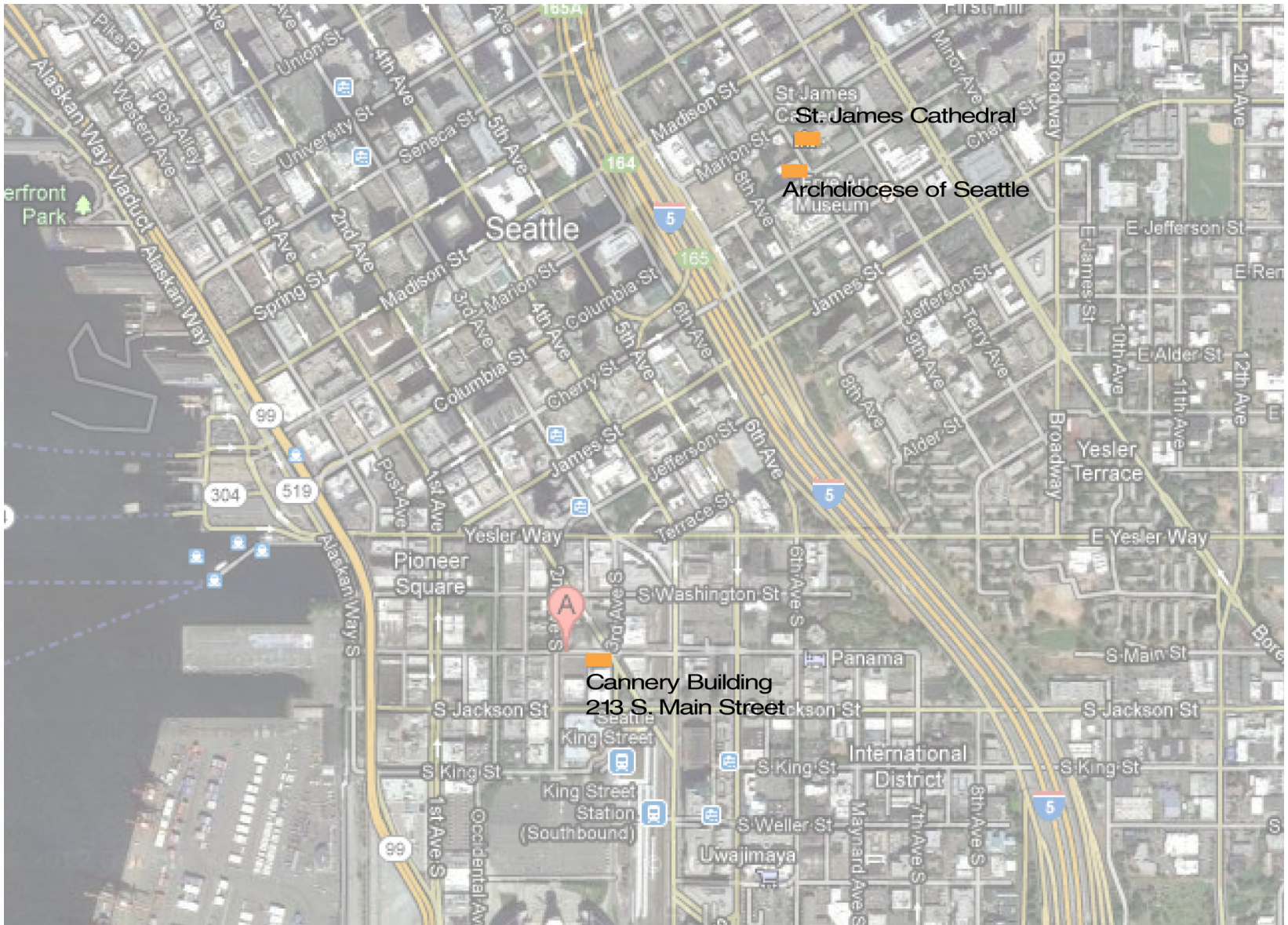


FIGURE 25

The site's proximity to the established network of First Thursday public art events in Pioneer Square also lends a social character to the program. The addition of permanent interior and exterior exhibition spaces for FLATCOLOR gallery will occupy the street level and link the new program further to the surrounding area.



FIGURE 26:
This map indicates
the location of
current galleries
or exhibit spaces
in the Historic
Pioneer Square
Neighborhood.

OLD CANNERY BUILDING

“A building standing empty is not a whole building. It is only a beginning. We cannot understand it until we fill it with people, if only in our imaginations.”

- Anita Abramovits, Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture ²⁴

Rather than proposing an entirely new building, it is more appropriate to add to an existing structure. Not only does this heighten the relationship between old and new, but the juxtaposition of contemporary elements and existing structures echoes the current flux of the Catholic church and the role of women religious within it. It serves as a literal metaphor describing the traditional aspects of the church and the potential contemporary relevance of Catholicism. According to Lawrence Sullivan, an expert on the role of hermeneutics in sacred architecture, “many sacred architectures are more than fossils of past meanings. They continue to be a part of events in historical and social contexts far removed from their long-lost origins. In fact, sacred architectures continue to hold a great allure over time.”¹⁸ In the same vein, “the ruin slows time and grasps the past as a part of the present, as it inserts the present with the past. Optimism is also exhibited when reusing old structures that can be likened to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.”⁷ Given the fact that there are many sites in the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood that are vacant, underutilized, and neglected, the “resurrection” of such a building would not only benefit the area, but also allow the new conference retreat center fit into its surroundings more easily.

The old Cannery at 213 S. Main Street is an historic brick building designed by E.W. Houghton in 1900.¹⁹ It has served multiple roles throughout its existence including the Cascade Laundry Building, the Longshore Union Hall, and the Sportscraft Knitting Company.¹⁹ The original building also included three-stories which were damaged by an earthquake in 1949 and subsequently removed.¹⁹ Today, it is a one-story building located on a prime corner site



FIGURE 27

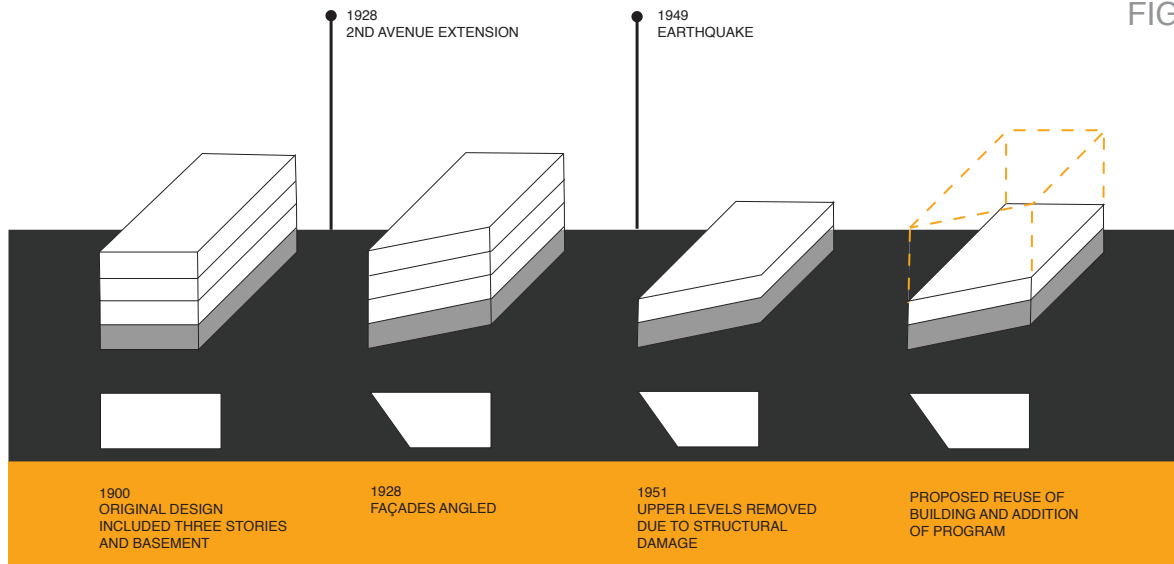


FIGURE 28



FIGURES 29-31:
FLATCOLOR
gallery curenly
uses the exterior
of the building as a
mural wall for local
artists.

and is currently vacant. The two different facades incorporate brick pilasters, transom windows, decorative terracotta detailing and a large arched entry on one side. The remnants of the original three-story block are visible on the adjacent Mottman building to the south.

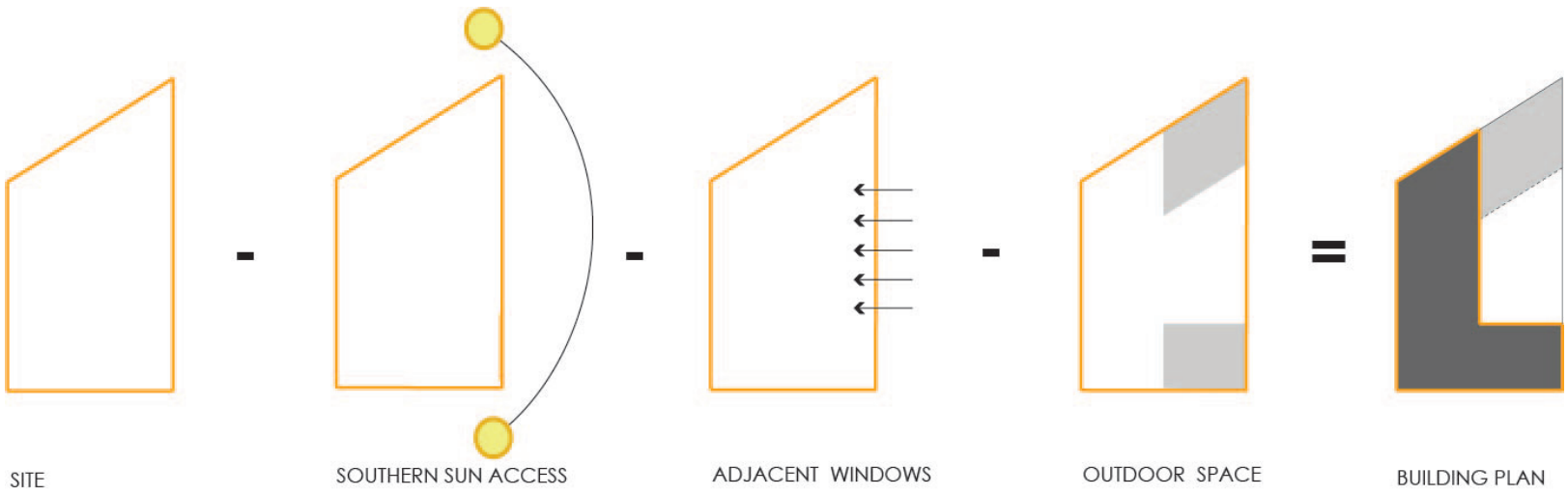
Currently, the large windows are boarded up and the surface of the façade has become the site of vibrant street art, graffiti, concert posters, and flyers. The rich texture accumulated over time acts as a sort of camouflage allowing the building to recede into the surrounding Pioneer Square neighborhood. Although the Church has a long history of constructing places of worship in dense downtown areas, recent design seems to focus on flashy, attention-grabbing forms. A less assuming location will allow a certain sort of anonymity to the design and this quietude will be important as the women religious take time to reflect and formulate discussion on the changing role of women in the church as well as the role of the Catholic church in society today.

6 CHAPTER SIX

the design



FIGURE 32:
street corner view



PRIVATE
spiritual experience

SEMI.PRIVATE
hybrid sharing

PUBLIC
social engagement



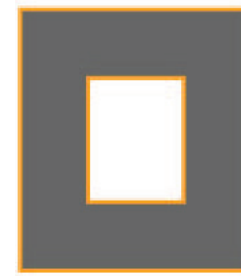
FIGURE 34

THE CLOISTER AND THE COURTYARD

“Marking off an enclosed space sets up a distinction between what lies within and what lies without.”²⁷

The cloister as a religious building typology provides the underlying order for the new architectural addition to the Old Cannery Building. Originally designed to accommodate the daily meditation of monks, the crucial aspects of ambulatory and courtyard emphasize inward focus and individual contemplation.²⁷ Although the program of this thesis does, indeed, include temporary housing for visiting women religious, the traditional focus on the individual experience is not the primary concern. Group discussion and internal dialogue require a variety of spaces and it is in this range of meetings that progress can be made regarding the position of women religious in the Church.

The courtyard links architecture to the heavens. It also provides hybrid gathering spaces and allows visual connections throughout the building. In this case, it acts as a literal container of light, capturing the southern sun and filling the interior of the building with natural light throughout the year.



Traditional cloister

+



Structural division of old cannery building

=



Modified cloister typology



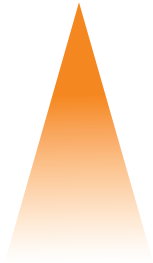
FIGURE 36:
Perspective in the
interior courtyard

MATERIALITY OF LIGHT

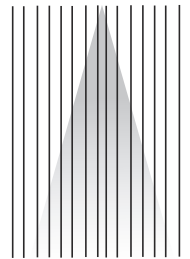
"The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory."

- Isaiah 60:19²⁹

Light is an omnipresent metaphor in Christian scripture. Emphasizing this architectural phenomenon in the design for the new building not only links the physical with spiritual, intangible ideas, but also serves a functional purpose of daylighting interior spaces. Varying qualities of light are called upon to heighten the relationship between public engagement, hybrid sharing, and spiritual experience. Colored light is aligned with spiritual experience, screened light is linked with the recessed hybrid programmatic core, and transparency is associated with the public interface of the building at street level.



SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE
colored light



HYBRID GATHERING
screened light



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
transparent light

FIGURE 37

THE CHARACTER OF COLOR

“Our response to color is total; it influences us both psychologically and physiologically.”²⁸

There is a long-standing tradition of stained glass in spiritual spaces worldwide. In the Gothic age, the use of colored glass represents the light of God able to fill the faithful with everlasting glory. Glass was invented around the third millennium BC; however the use of stained glass in architecture is a primarily Western construct that became a distinguishing spiritual element in Christianity following technical advancements by the Syrians between the seventh and twelfth centuries AD.²⁷ The earliest examples of stained glass in Christianity combine illustrative storytelling with color and light to inspire an emotional, spiritual response from the viewer. Although they often depicted particular biblical events, they were more important as experiential separators of the sacred and the everyday. Their use as elaborate methods of storytelling emerged during the Renaissance Period and not until later did it become fashionable to incorporate stained glass in non-religious buildings.²⁷

The color orange is an appropriate choice for this program in that it incorporates the active passion of red tempered by the communication and wisdom of yellow. Exciting, stimulating, and cheering, this color is positively associated with joy, life, energy, and sociability. Mellow and less primitive than red, orange has virtually no negative cultural or emotional aspects.²⁸ It is warm and luminous, exudes a livable charm, and the reflection of it enhances almost every skin tone. In addition, it is a warm color that pops against the gray palette of Seattle adding much needed sense of warmth and light to the interior spaces of the courtyard.

The incorporation of large colored glass elements in the design harkens back to the traditional Gothic use of color and light in religious spaces to inspire the individual and spiritually illuminate space.



FIGURE 38:
view of chapel interior

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VEIL

Throughout the bible there are myriad instances of faithful individuals shielding and veiling themselves from the Divine Presence. When the Prophet Isaiah wrote about a vision he had of the Lord seated upon a throne and in attendance of his many angels. Each angel had six wings, “with two they veiled their faces, with two they veiled their feet, and with two they hovered aloft.”²⁹ While wandering the desert for 40 years, the Jews created an elaborate tabernacle to carry the Arc of the Covenant Moses received from God on Mount Sinai and further shielded it with a veil of purple, scarlet, and blue silk of the highest quality. Moses encountered the manifested presence of God in the form of a burning bush in the desert and is described in the Old Testament as “covering his face, afraid to look at God.”²⁹

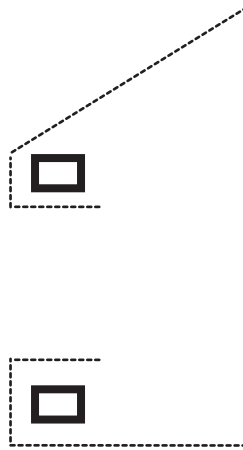
In addition to veiling the person, the role of the veil is also demonstrated in early church architecture and liturgical practice leading up to the Second Vatican Council. In pre-Vatican II churches the altar was often literally screened from the congregation as well as elevated above the main floor level of the rest of the church.³⁰ Women attending mass were also required to wear veils covering their heads as a sign of reverence, subservience, and veneration.³⁰ Although these more literal examples of the role of the veil in the contemporary Catholic church have changed, there remains a rich historical significance to the screen.

The incorporation of various screens heightens the play between visibility and veil. In addition, it focuses attention on the interior space of the new building rather than promoting an extroverted character.

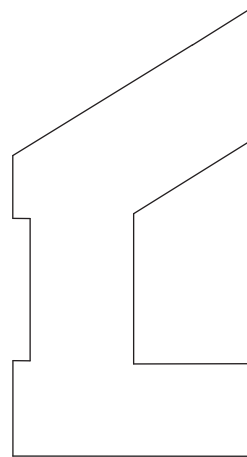
LAYERS OF SCREENS



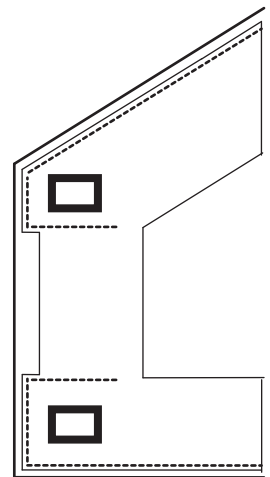
SOLID CORES



INTERIOR SCREENS



BUILDING ENVELOPE



EXTERIOR SCREEN

FIGURE 39

THE ENTRY AS THRESHOLD

*“The glory of Yahweh mounted up from the cherub, and stood over the **threshold** of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Yahweh’s glory.”*

- Ezekiel 10:4²⁹

The existing cannery building is more shell than structure. The role of it within the new building is that of shield and threshold. The fact that it has been there for so long and has changed uses so often also offers it a sort of anonymity. Although the façade is often disguised in a rotating collection of eye-catching street art, it is very easy to disregard the exterior as just another graffiti covered building in a downtown neighborhood. This chameleon-like quality is used as a method of potential expression for both the gallery users and women religious. Acting as a buffer against the urban quality of the surrounding Pioneer Square Neighborhood, the old cannery building is a threshold separating the think tank and gallery spaces from the street while integrally linking them to the gritty character seen throughout the historic area. Crossing this threshold marks an individual transition between different kinds of sacred and social space. Furthermore, the boundary created by moving through old to new separates public from private, inside from outside, sheltered from exposed.



FIGURE 40:
Perspective of
gallery entrance

THE ROLE OF MEETING SPACE

“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together.”

-Zephaniah 2:1²⁹

During the first centuries, Christians did not build churches, rather they met in existing buildings for their religious gatherings. A reaction to the pagan temple, these often clandestine meetings took place in humble, secluded, and secular spaces.²⁷ The emphasis in these places was on prayer, reflection, contemplation, and communal sharing of faith rather than on the lavish environment in which these activities were occurring. As the church grew in popularity and power, various architectural typologies developed and evolved but the importance of a simple spiritual meeting space is one that has been, and continues to be, constantly renewed.

Small, medium, and large scale meeting areas as well as opportunities for structured, impromptu, and individual conversations are provided for within the programmatic layout of the new building. An auditorium seating 100 can function both on the public/gallery and private/religious levels. On the floor above is a large space that can be divided into a series of conference rooms for more structured dialogue. Informal gathering spaces on all floors afford the opportunity for chance encounters and foster less regulated conversations, further stressing the social aspect of the program.

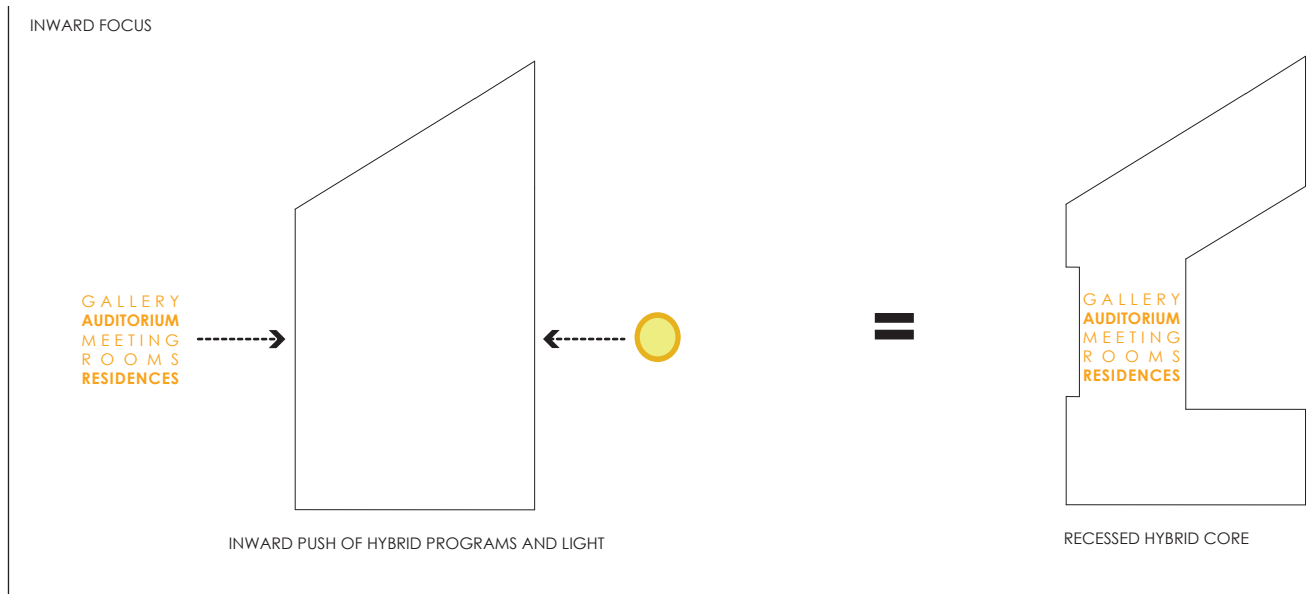


FIGURE 41

THE DWELLING

“In any culture, a dwelling is a visible, material demonstration of an ongoing way of life...the dwelling may embody an order and ethical values that are deemed sacred.”²⁷

The constant yet changing presence of women religious in the building is ensured by the incorporation of 12 temporary residences for visiting women religious. These rooms occupy the upper levels of the building, separating their private nature from the more public character of the spaces below. In addition to individual units, each residential level incorporates a different social function as well. On the first residential floor there is a communal kitchen and dining area, on the floor above is a living room space, and on the uppermost level there is a roof patio. Outside of each pair of residences there are small seating niches to accommodate more intimate conversation. The most personal, private, and secluded spaces are the rooms themselves. Monastic is quality and materiality, each unit has a bath, built in desk, space for a twin bed, and a small balcony. It is within these spaces that the women religious are able to withdraw and be alone. The compact, efficient qualities of these rooms are meant to lend more importance to the communal aspects of the building.

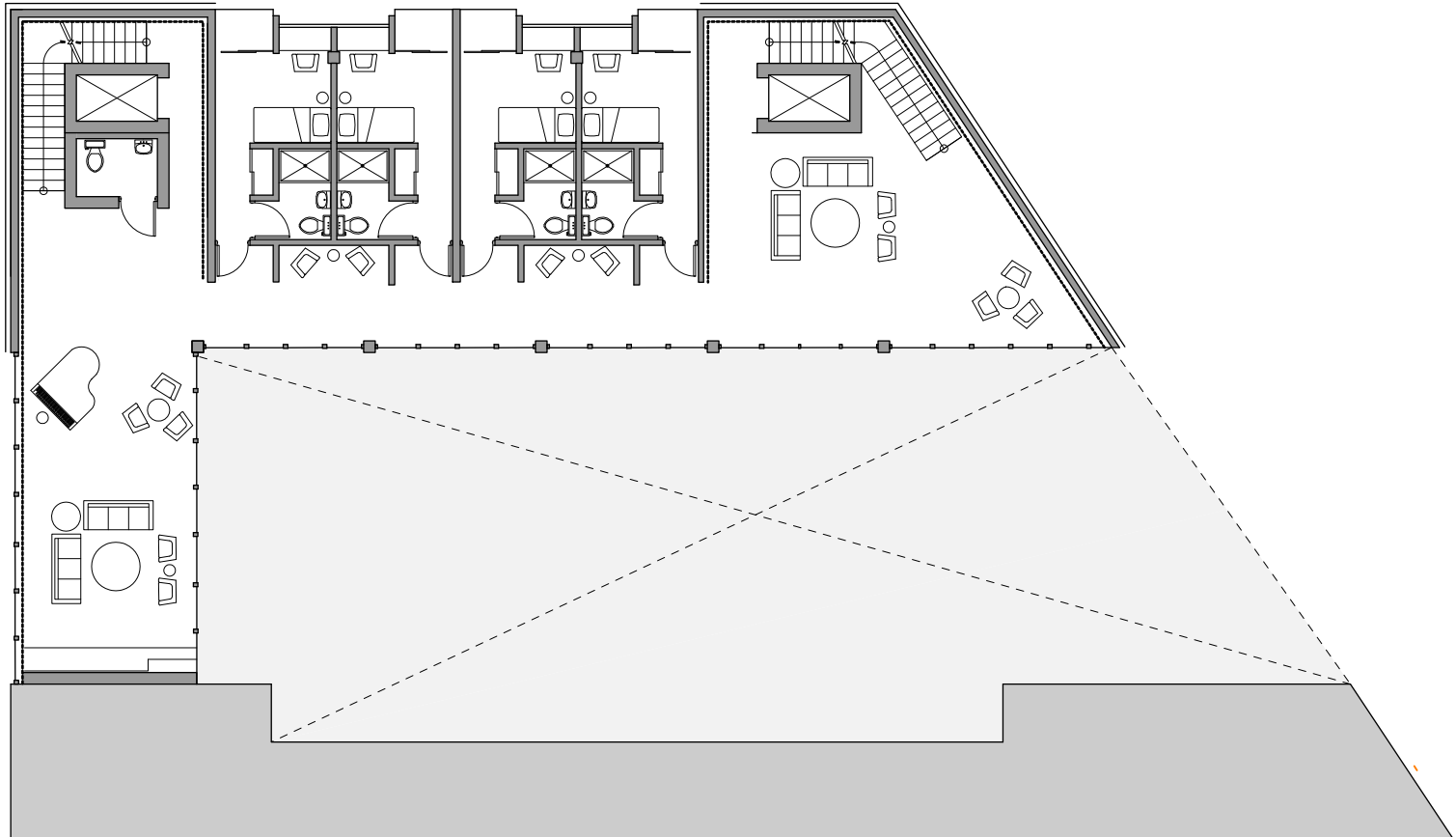


FIGURE 42:
Typical residential plan
1/16" = 1'-0"

7 CHAPTER SEVEN

conclusions

“Temples, mosques, pyramids, and cathedrals, being symbolic, constitute inexhaustible funds of otherness. Religious buildings arise as human creations, but they persist as transforming, life-altering environments. They are at once expressions or and sources of religious experience. They are invariable both “faithful products of the dominant society” and catalysts or “triggers” for change.”

-Lindsay Jones, The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture

The components of light, scale, veil, and color come together to serve the needs of the LCWR and FLATCOLOR gallery and illustrate their positions within a changing society. Spatial relationships based on scales of interaction, centered around accommodating religious and social uses, as well as emphasizing the materiality of light enhance the experience of building as a whole.

Upon presenting this thesis the resulting discussion identified the following issues with the design:

- A need to clarify the relationship between old and new,
- A need to reassess the role of the old cannery building and emphasize its veil-like properties over its structural merits; and,
- A need to further accentuate the cloister typology by considering the completion of the form to truly focus the energy of the building inward. elaborate

As is exists currently in the design, the new building is pushed back from the old cannery once the façade changes from old to new. This relationship is underdeveloped. By treating the original façade as another type of screen rather than a structurally integral portion of the entire design, the relationship between old and new is strengthened. Furthermore, by structurally isolating the cannery from the new addition, not only is clarity gained in regards to the interaction of existing and new, but a richness is added as the treatment of the façade becomes a poignant architectural critique of preservation and reuse in contemporary urban environments.

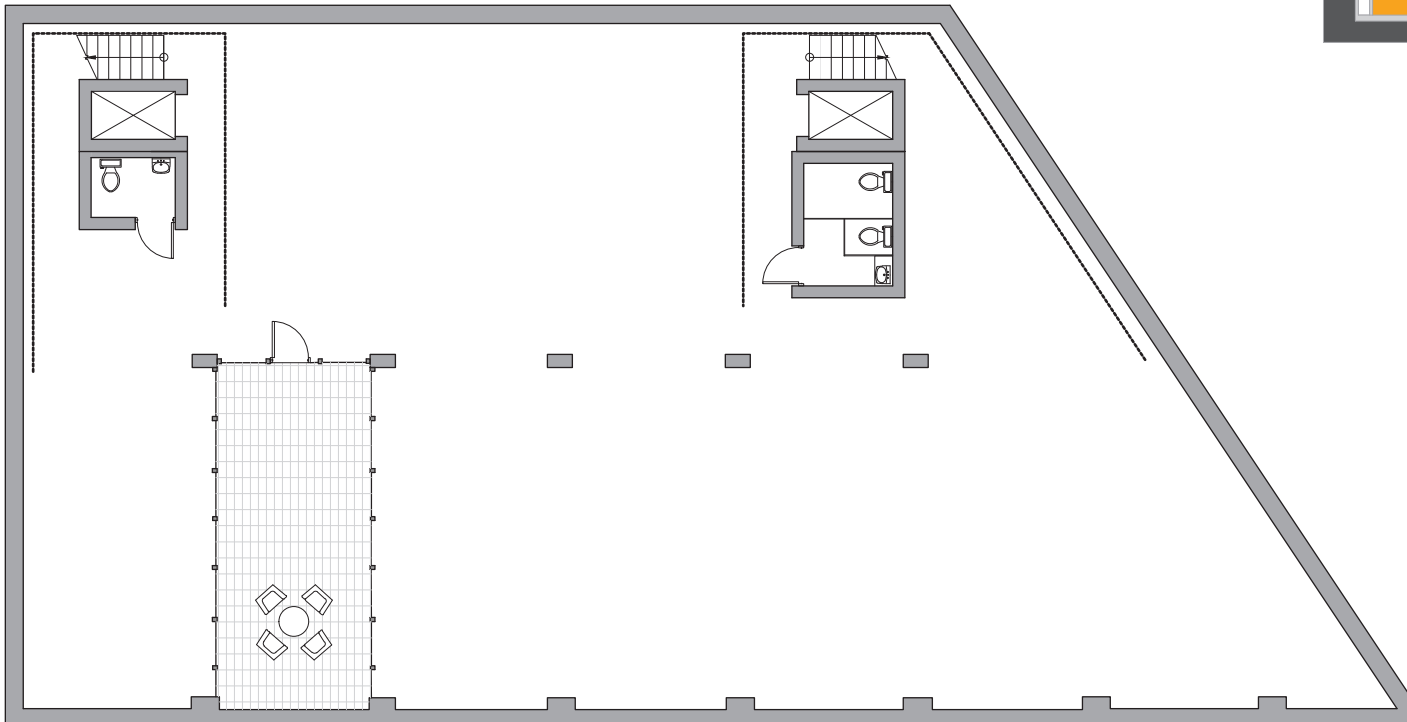
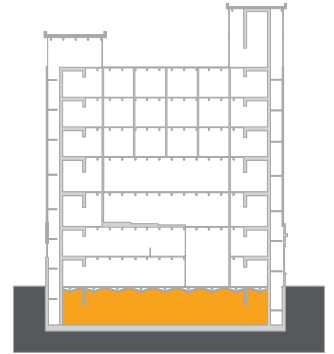
The dissolving of the building at the street edge was an intentional break from the traditional understanding and associations of the cloister. Although used as an initial driver of the design, the program and site condition begs the question of the appropriateness of a cloister-like building in an urban street setting. The internal

focus of the cloister literally shuts the exterior world out from its inhabitants. Even though the program and form of the design suggests the inward focus is the most significant, there remains a need for the LCWR to outwardly express themselves at the appropriate times. A balance could be achieved by emphasizing the cloister-like nature of the conference spaces while allowing the residential portion above to break from the confines of the traditional form.

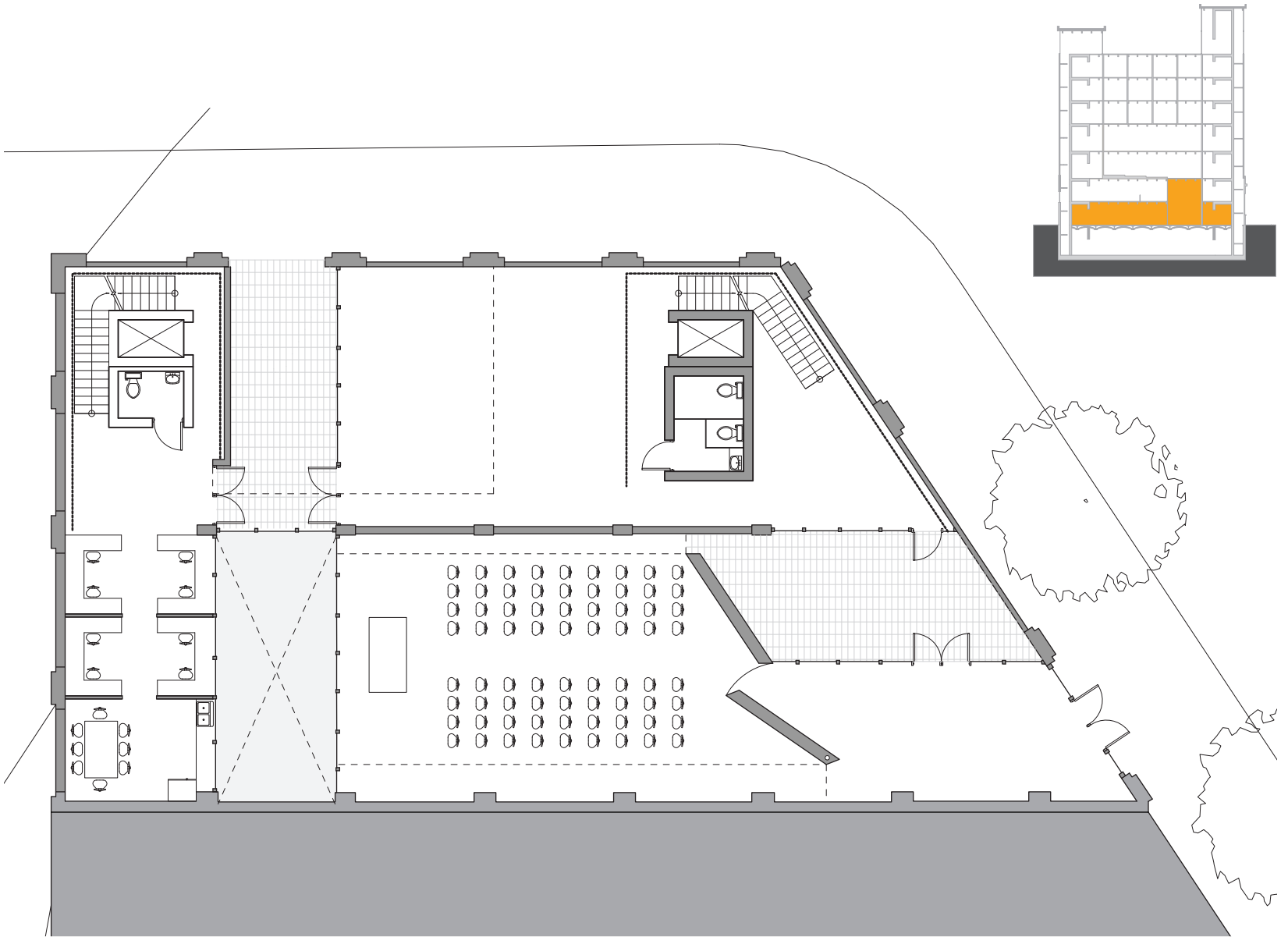
In sum, expressing a physical break between old and new heightens the relationship of the cannery and proposed design. The clarity gained through this separation sets up a strong understanding of the veil-like quality of the changing façade and adds lucidity to the design that was previously missing.

8 APPENDIX

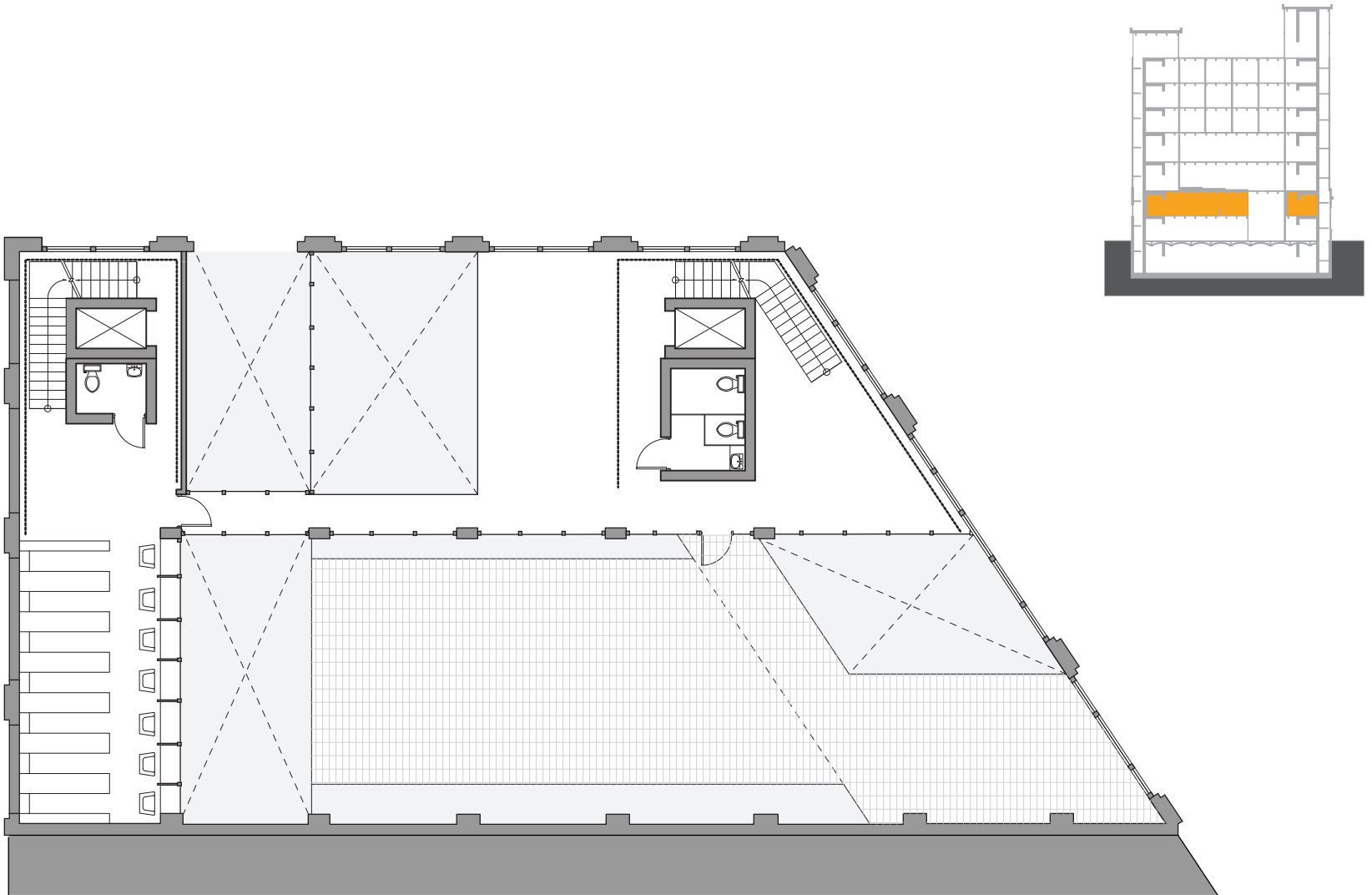
DESIGN DOCUMENTATION OF THINK TANK



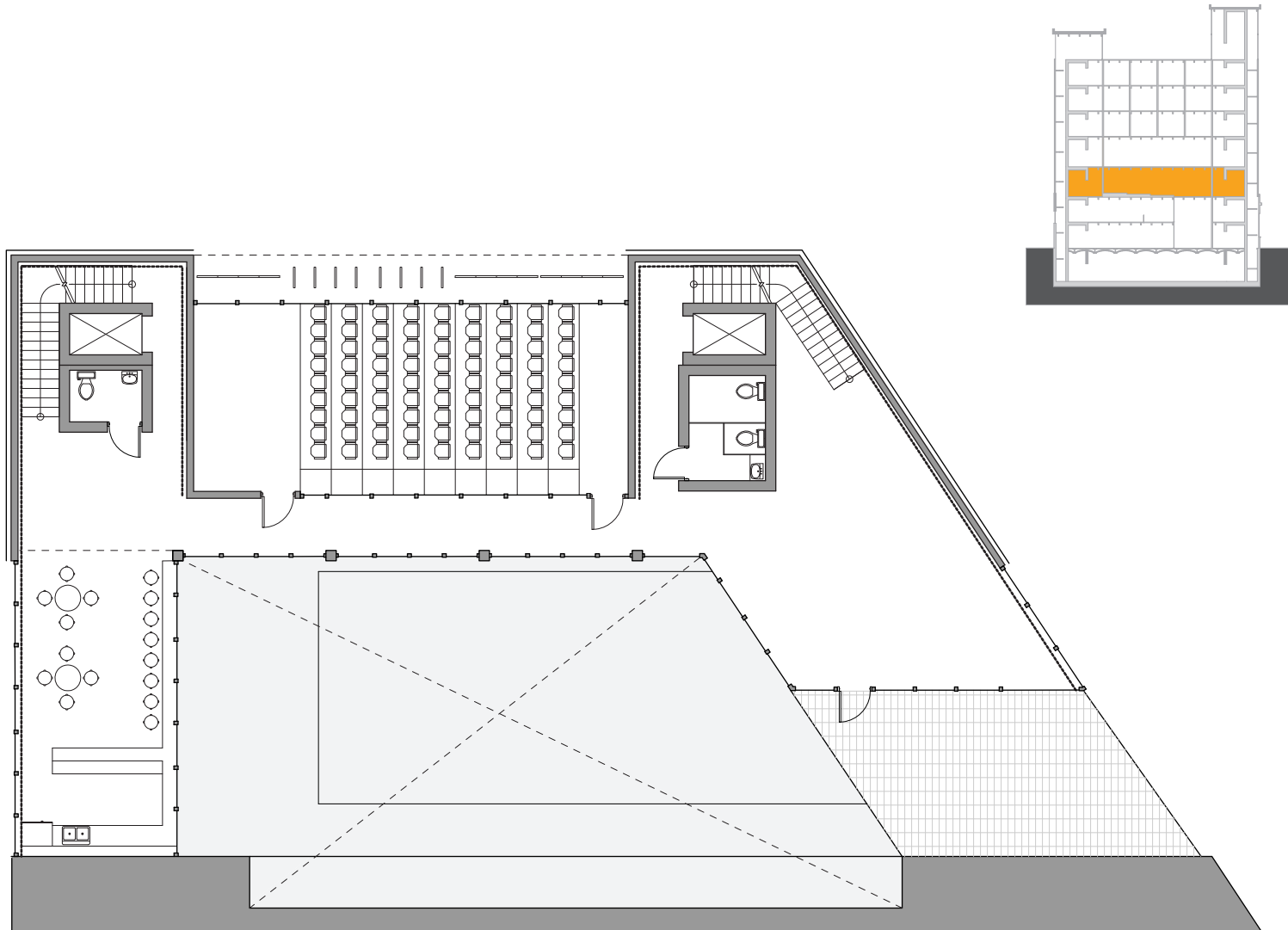
BASEMENT PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



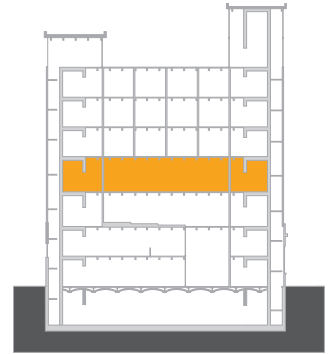
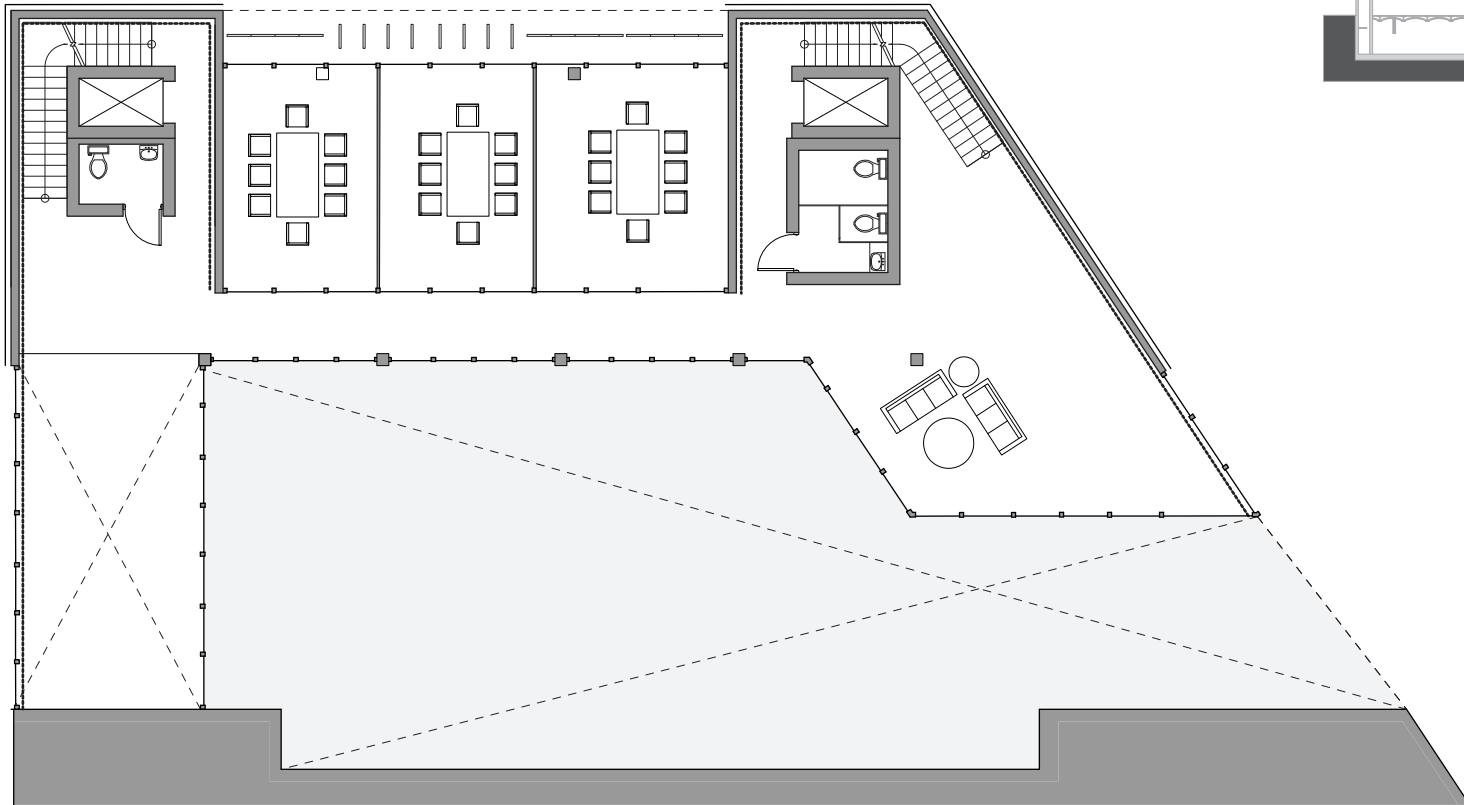
STREET LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



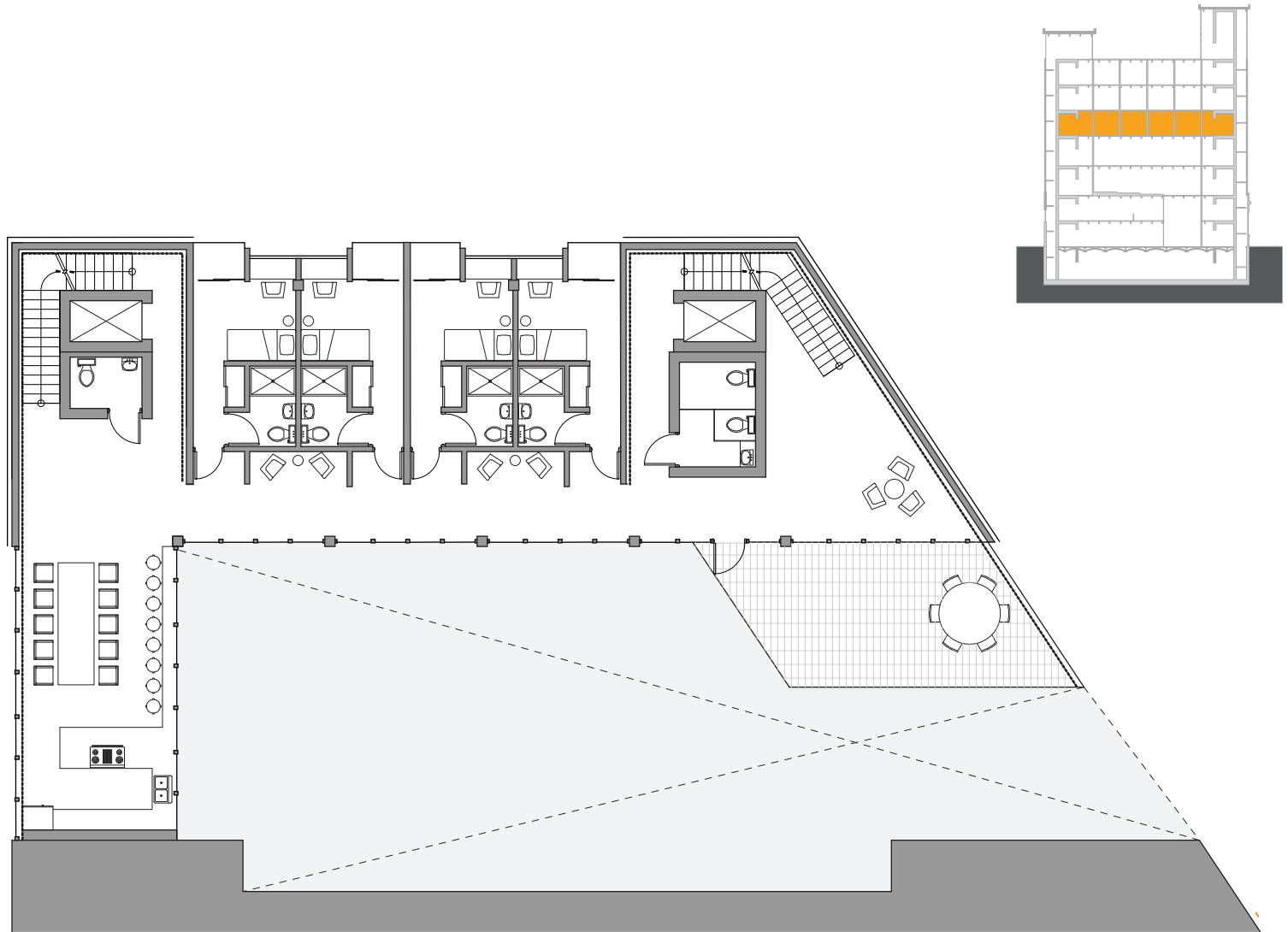
MEZZANINE LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



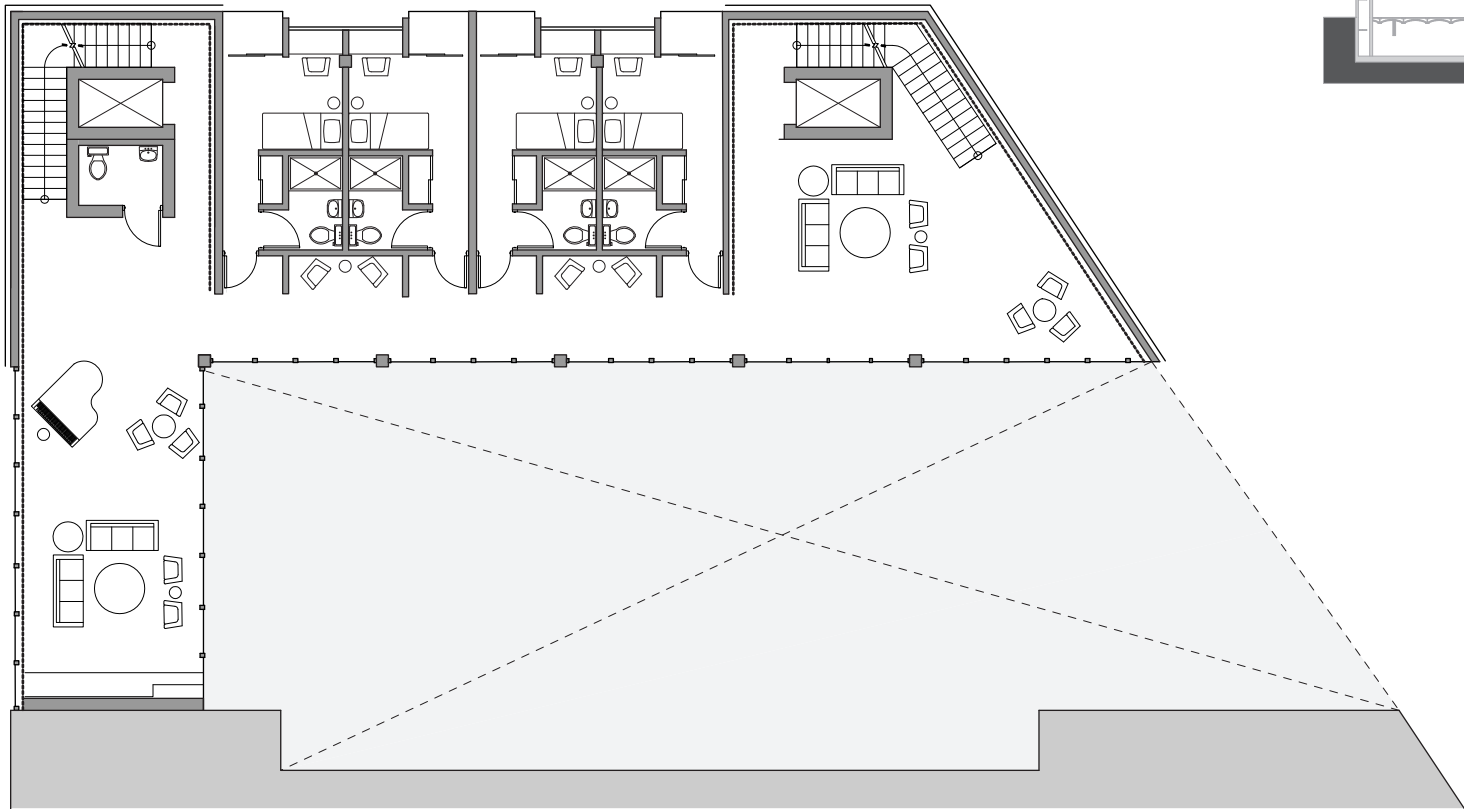
AUDITORIUM LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



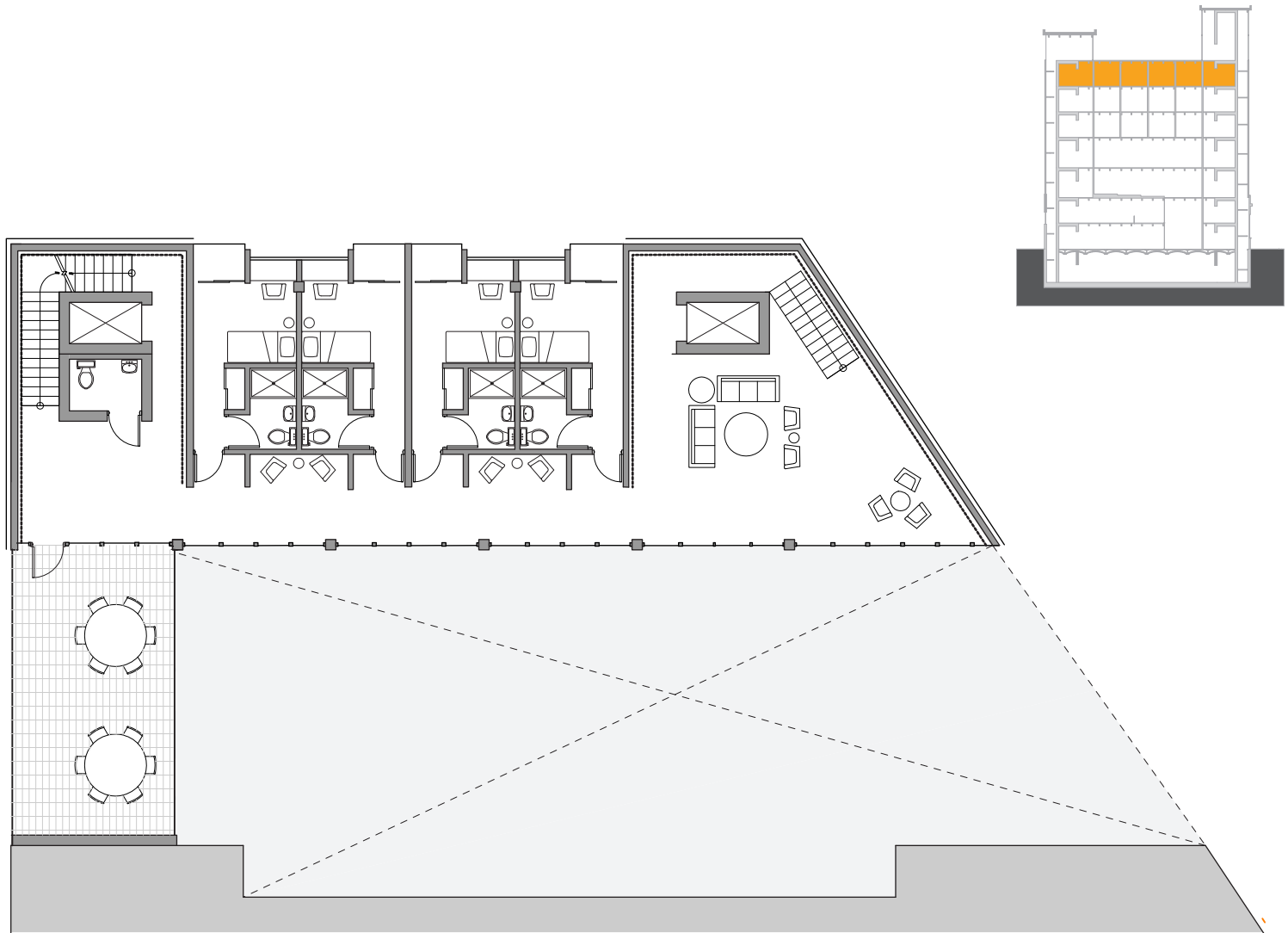
CONFERENCE LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



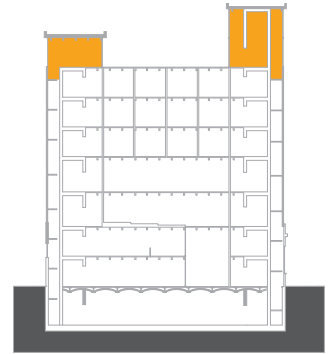
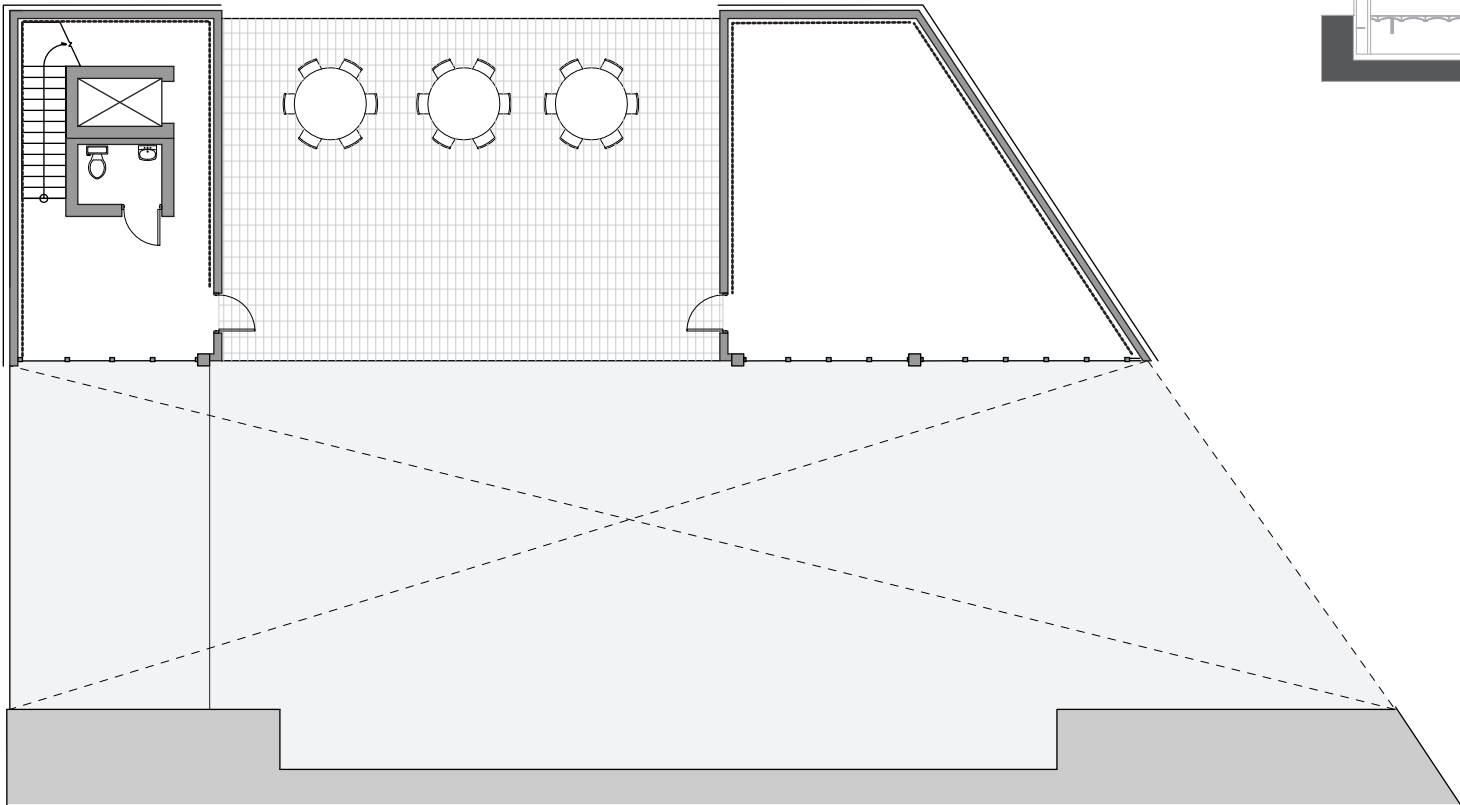
RESIDENTIAL LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



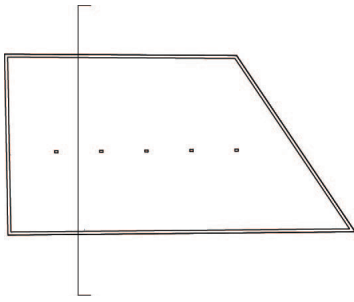
RESIDENTIAL LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



RESIDENTIAL LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"

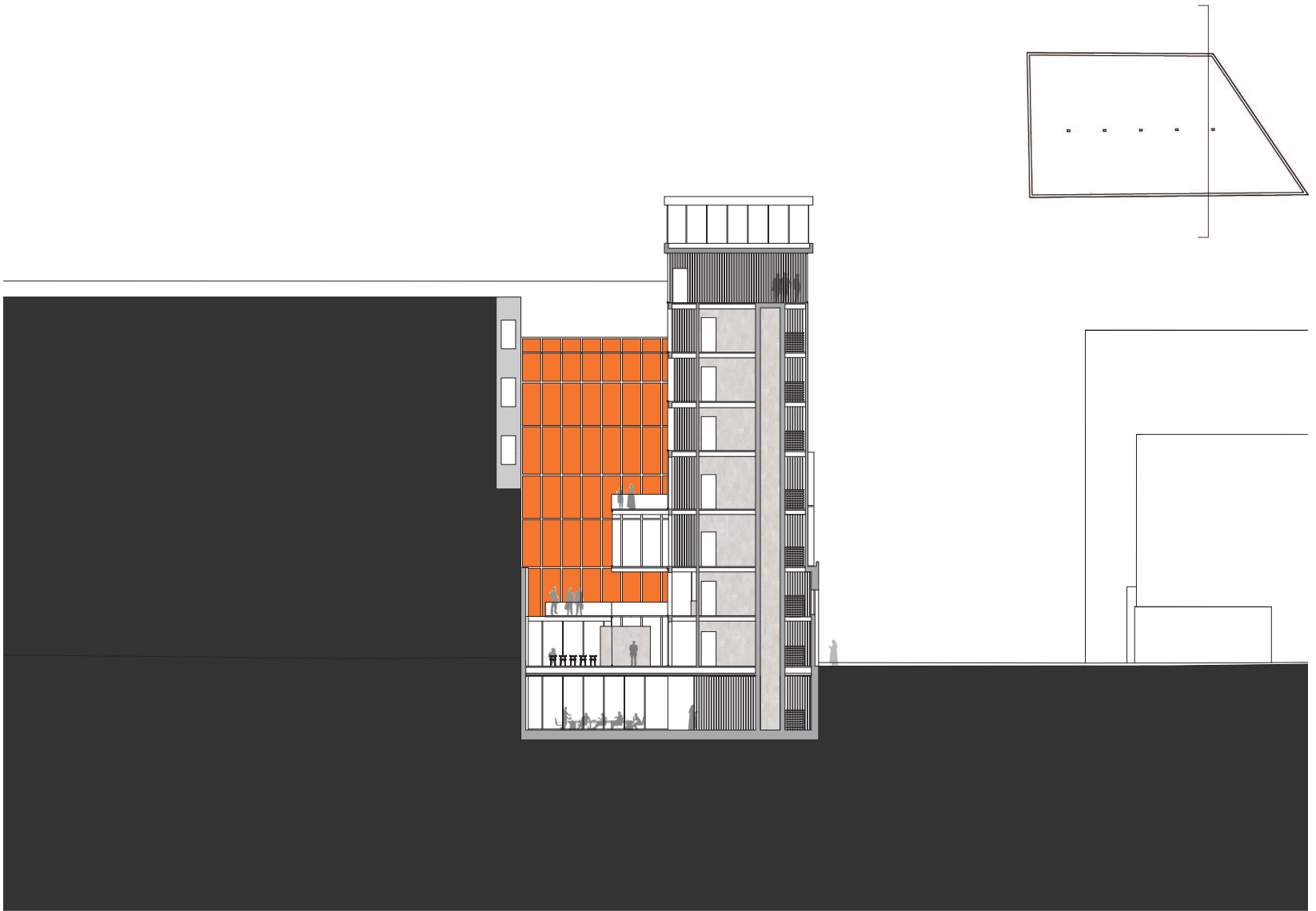


ROOF LEVEL PLAN
1/16"=1'-0"



SECTION THROUGH GALLERY ENTRY

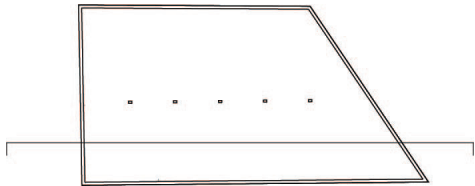
1/32"=1'-0"



SECTION THROUGH CHAPEL
1/32"=1'-0"

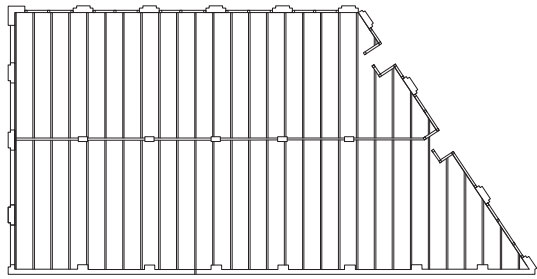


SECTION THROUGH HYBRID CORE
1/32"=1'-0"

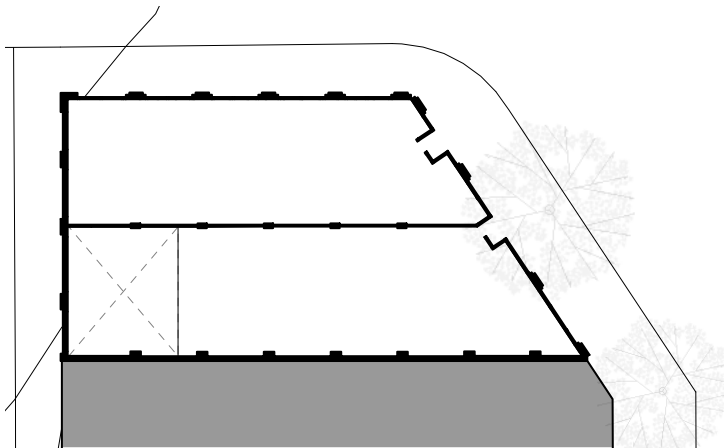


SECTION THROUGH COURTYARD
1/32"=1'-0"

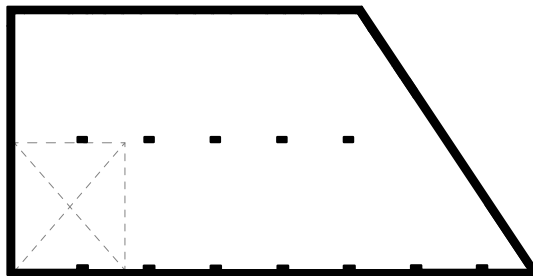
DESIGN DOCUMENTATION OF OLD CANNERY BUILDING



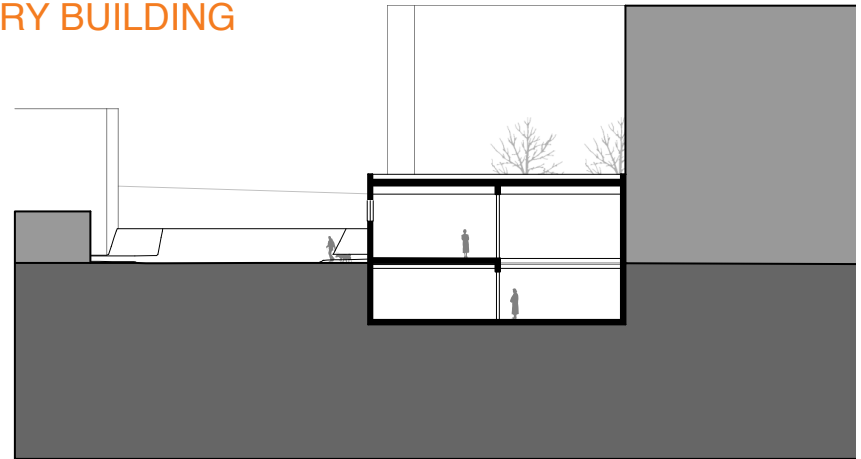
ROOF PLAN



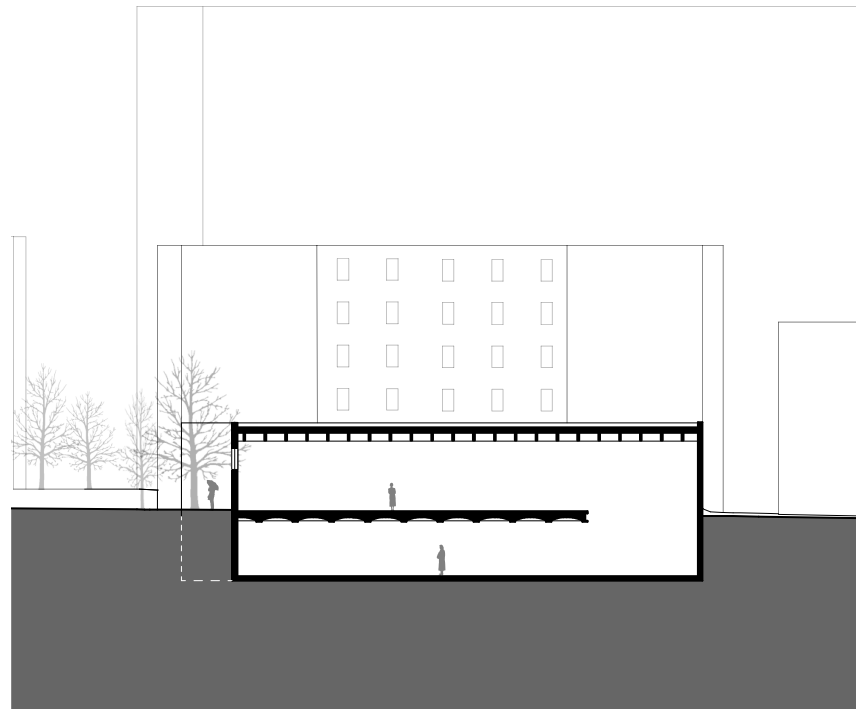
STREET LEVEL PLAN



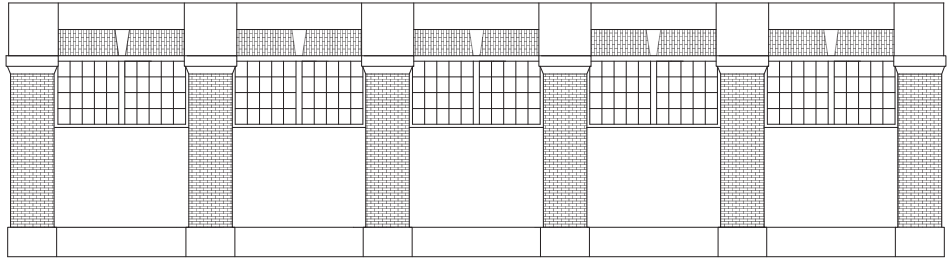
BASEMENT PLAN



TRANVERSE SECTION

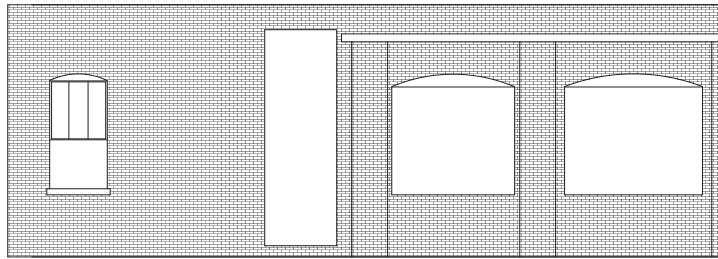


LONGITUDINAL SECTION



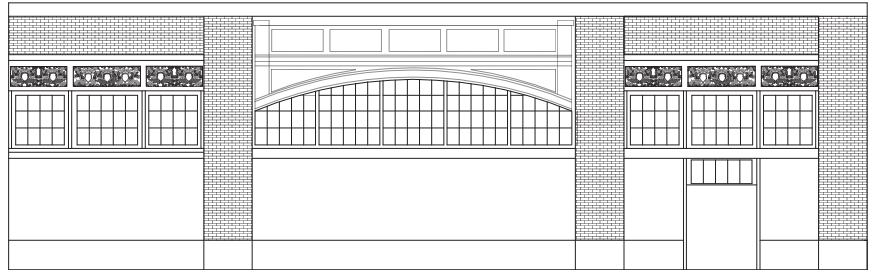
MAIN STREET ELEVATION

1/16" = 1'-0"



ALLEY ELEVATION

1/16" = 1'-0"



2ND AVENUE EXTENSION ELEVATION

1/16" = 1'-0"

LCWR CALL FOR 2012-2015

We recognize,

a world where:

- Major social and global changes create fear, anxiety, confusion, and polarization
- Technology, communication, and information shrink time and distances among peoples
- Inaccessibility to basic resources breeds suffering, oppression and violence
- Increasingly, violence, military force and terrorist activity are used to settle disputes
- Multinational corporations exert control over legitimate governments
- Religion is used to justify political and personal aggression
- Environmental degradation threatens all of God's creation

And where people:

- Long for justice, peace and communion
- Work to achieve the common good
- Hunger for spirituality and meaning
- Claim personal and communal power for change
- Awaken to the wonder of the universe, and the place of humans within it

we belong to a church,

Whose members

- Struggle to love the Church as both graced and sinful
- Strive to balance traditional teachings with changing realities
- Seek to be a more inclusive, welcoming community
- Hunger for spirituality and the full expression of their baptismal call

And whose leaders

- Experience the pressing impact of a rapidly evolving world and universe
- Struggle with growing diversity in members' views, cultures, and religious practices
- Are confronted with their own humanity and sinfulness
- Bear the call to create structures that free the Church for the ways of God's Spirit
- Carry the responsibility of being welcoming, accountable, and inclusive pastors to all God's People

we lead congregations experiencing

- An evolving Church, world and universe
- Major shifts in identity, resources, members, and traditional ministries
- Diversity of cultures, worldviews, and theologies
- Restructuring within and among congregational units
- A growing desire for contemplation, balance, and simplicity
- Need and hope for dialog with Church's leaders and inclusion in its processes
- Emerging forms of religious commitment
- Growing collaboration with the laity
- Deepened appreciation of and commitment to the created world as holy.

CASE STUDIES

“Architecture has an ulterior motive...the thought of creating a paradise ... Each house, each product of architecture that is worthwhile...is an endeavor to show that we want to build an earthly paradise for people.”

-Juhani Pallasmaa, An Archipelago of Authenticity

There are many churches, chapels, and sacred spaces that remain significant places of pilgrimages, prayer, and daily worship. The following buildings have been inspirational in the formation of this thesis:

MATERIALITY OF LIGHT

St. Mark's Church, Sigurd Lewerentz,
St. Peter's Church, Sigurd Lewerentz

RUIN AS VEIL/SHELL

Dovecote Studio, Hawthorn Tompkins
S(ch)austall, FNP Architekten
Artist's studio, Svendborg Architects
Red Hall, Pink Petzinka Architekten

LAYERS OF VISIBILITY

Tautra Mariakloster, Jensen & Skodvi

USE OF COLOR

Notre Dame du Haut Convent, Renzo Piano

PROGRAMMATIC MIXING

North Wall Arts Centre, Hawthorn Tompkins
Kolstrand Building, Graham Baba Architects

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FIGURE 43