



Contents

Pennsylvania Architect/Summer 1991

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3 Editor's Letter

4 PSA News

5 Architects and Archetypes

6 Stepping Back Into Silence

Churches and Associated Buildings

8 Saint James African Methodist Episcopal Church

12 Church of the Assumption

14 Mt. Irenaeus Chapel

18 Immaculate Conception Church and Parish Hall

22 Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church

24 Church of the Nativity of Christ

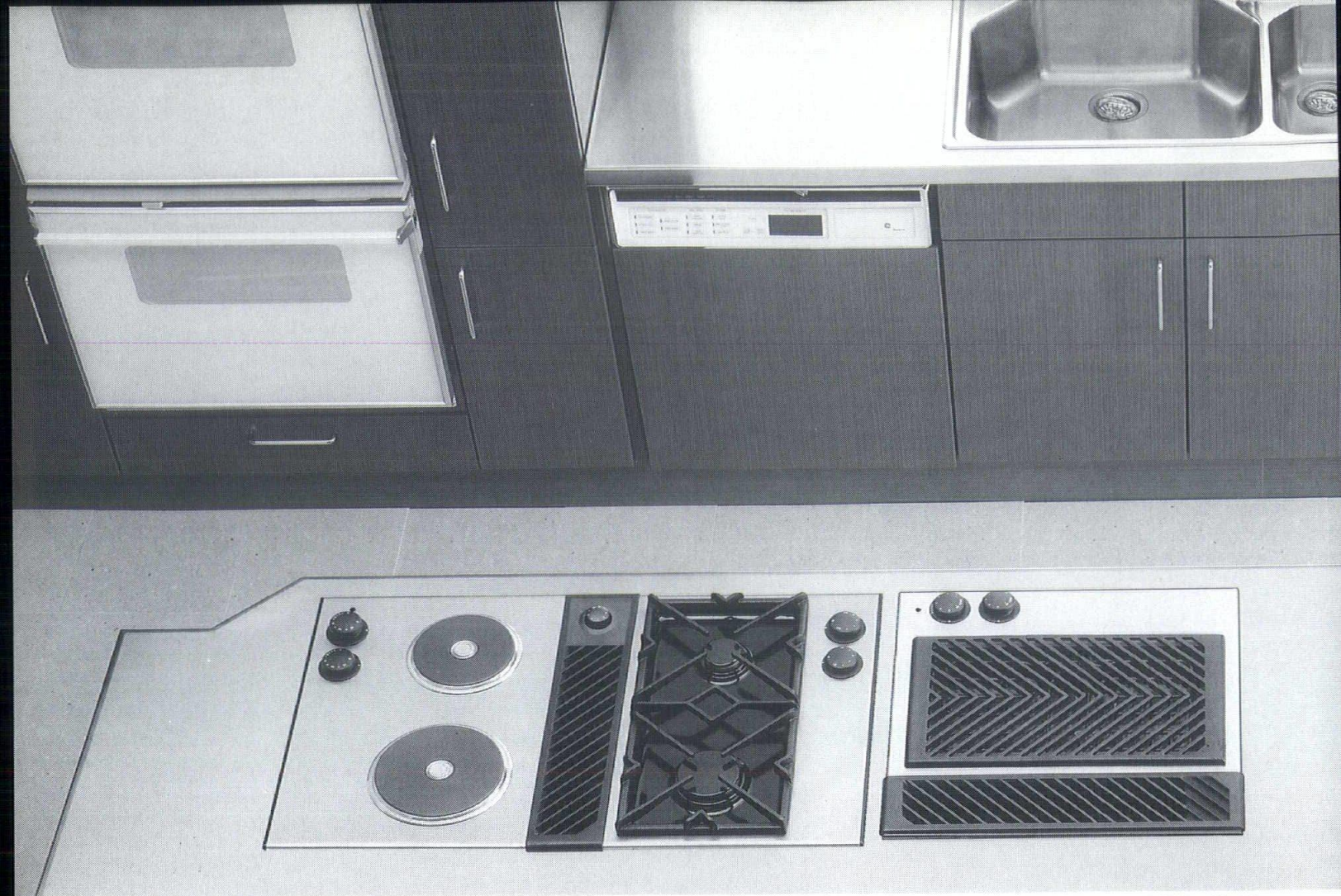
27 Middle Pennsylvania Chapter Awards

28 Central Pennsylvania Chapter Awards

About the Cover

After a devastating fire in 1986, specific forms of both art and architecture, a hallmark of Orthodox churches, have been integrated into the Church of the Nativity of Christ. The complete story of this project can be found on page 24.

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The Editor's Letter

When the Editorial Board decided to feature the architecture of churches we knew it had to be a bit risky. We had no idea of what to expect in the number of submissions we would receive. As it turned out, choosing this particular theme offered many of the firms that had never been published before an opportunity to be published.

The church presents a unique design problem or rather a combination of issues not encountered in most other work. The architect is confronted with the expression of spirituality and the resultant spatial configuration which is in conflict with the usual considerations of energy consumption, alternative uses, accessibility and cost containment. It is always an interesting challenge.

While I have been anticipating the Louis Kahn retrospective exhibit, *IN THE REALM OF ARCHITECTURE*, due to open in Philadelphia in the fall, it has been on the periphery of my attention. Beth Sulit's article has moved it to the center and my expectancy is high. While it was only 17 years ago that he died, the shifts in design philosophy make it seem to have been in another age. We can count ourselves privileged to have been his contemporaries, studied under his guidance and witnessed the acceptance of his work and ideas. Many of us will always carry a word, phrase or lecture and consciously or not, apply it to our everyday task.

Of course I cannot let the opportunity pass to congratulate Susan Maxman on her election to first vice president and president-elect of the American Institute of Architects. Once again one of our own has made it to the top of her profession as recognized by her fellow practitioners. Much has been said about the significance of this particular election to which I can add little except to say that I have worked with Susan on the PSA Board and as a client. I have the highest regard for her. The Institute has chosen well and we look forward to a significant administration. Again, congratulations and best wishes from the staff and Editorial Board of the Pennsylvania Society of Architects.

John A. Fatula, A.I.A.
Editor

The Pennsylvania Architect

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The 1991 Pennsylvania Society
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Because of an oversight, the photographer of the St. Paul's Church project that appeared on pages 14 and 15 of the Spring, 1991 issue was omitted. That photographer's name is Charles Callaghan. The editors apologize for this oversight.

Pittsburgh Architectural Firm Honored by New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

On June 4, L.P. Perfido Associates, a Pittsburgh architectural firm, received a Landmarks Preservation Commission Award from the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission for the restoration of 575 Broadway. The Award was presented in the Rotunda of City Hall to Leonard Perfido, AIA and Alan Weiskopf, AIA by Mayor David N. Dinkins and Laurie Beckelman, the Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

575 Broadway is a six-story brick and stone commercial loft building with cast iron storefronts located within the Soho Cast Iron Historic District in New York City. The building fronts on Broadway, Prince and Mercer Streets and was constructed in 1881-82 for John Jacob Astor III on the site of the Astor family's original estate.

The \$12,000,000 development by New York developer Steven V. Blumenthal involved the historic restoration of all facades and a comprehensive renovation of the building's interior for office and art gallery occupancy above the first floor and retail and gallery uses on the first floor and below.

The Guggenheim Museum has leased several floors of the building for offices and downtown exhibit space.

Hayes Large Suckling Fruth & Wedge Architects has been named to the Altoona-Blair County Hall of Fame. The firm was founded in Altoona in 1922.

The AIA Elects Its First Woman President-Elect



For the first time in its 134-year history, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has chosen a woman to be its president. Philadelphia architect Susan A. Maxman, FAIA, was elected 1992 first vice president/president-elect of the AIA at its 123rd national convention in Washington, D. C.

Maxman, currently a vice president of the AIA, will assume her new office in December 1991 and become the AIA's president one year later. The Institute's 1991 first vice president, W. Cecil Steward, FAIA, Lincoln, Nebraska, will succeed C. James Lawler, FAIA, West Hartford, Connecticut, as president this December.

"Election of the AIA's first woman president is a milestone in our 134-year history," said AIA Executive Vice President/CEO James P. Cramer, Hon. AIA. "This selection reflects the fact that women are increasingly taking active leadership roles in the Institute and the profession. This is an exciting and historic moment for architects everywhere."

"I feel very honored to be selected to serve the AIA as its first woman president," said Maxman. "I hope to effectively represent all of our members."

Participation of women in the profession has increased significantly in recent years. Women constituted about 8.5 percent of the AIA's 1990

membership—4,714 out of 55,458. In 1975, only one percent of the 24,144 members were women. In recent findings, women made up 26.5 percent of architecture students enrolled in accredited bachelor's degree programs, and 34.8 percent of those in master's degree programs.

Maxman currently chairs the AIA Membership Commission and serves on the Membership Futures Task Force that is seeking to make the AIA "vital, essential and indispensable" in the year 2000 and beyond to all architects, their associates and their allies. In February she chaired the AIA's 1991 Grassroots leadership training conference. Maxman is also a member of the 1991 Planning Committee, the ARCHITECTURE magazine board and The American Architectural Foundation's Board of Regents.

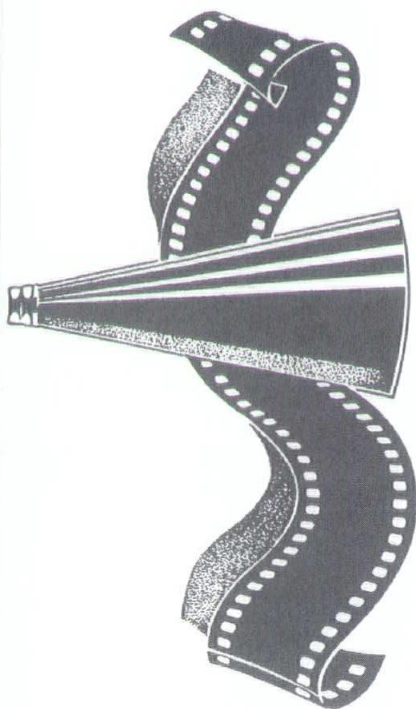
The AIA's new president-elect has represented Pennsylvania on the AIA Board of Directors and has chaired the Public Affairs Commission. She served as president of the Pennsylvania Society of Architects in 1987.

Her 12-person firm, Susan Maxman Architects, won a 1991 AIA Honor Award for Camp Tweedale Winterized Cabin Complex, Lower Oxford Township, Pennsylvania.

The architectural firm of **Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates** has been presented a DCOTA Design Award for the design of its own Fort Myers, Florida office. The firm was also awarded high honors in *Research & Development* magazine's 1991 Laboratory of the Year Competition for the design of the Biomedical Science Tower. □

Architects and Archetypes

What we have here is a failure to communicate.



She steps onto the elevator; and it begins its swift climb up the exterior of the gleaming edifice. She strains to catch her breath in her rush toward the sky. The majestic panorama of New York City unfolds at her feet. The music swells. Her chest swells. She swoons. Grabbing a rail to steady herself, she looks skyward. A figure looms overhead. It is Gary Cooper, standing at the peak of the tallest building in the world, a building which, he and he alone, created. Braced against the gale-force winds that whip here, so high above the city, Cooper peers fearlessly over the edge at the woman rising to meet him. A trace of a smile forms at the edge of his lips.

THE END

This is the final scene in *The Fountainhead*, a movie unlike any other you've seen. For this reason: its hero is an architect.

The Fountainhead is adapted from the Ayn Rand novel of the same name, but the screenplay waters down Rand's neo-Nietzschean vision. The result is a simplistic morality tale in which Howard Roark, idealist and architect, risks it all—his career, his art, his integrity and the woman he loves—as he squares off against Big Business. A popular movie theme, but the problem is that Howard Roark is not the kind of hero, and certainly not the Gary Cooper, that the audience expected to see in 1949.

Cooper is angry, unbending, domineering—a sort of Dale Carnegie poster child—a mono-megalomaniacal know-it-all who blows up his own building project rather than allow “public-housing bureaucrats” to mess with his Modernist vision. This was too unsettling for Gary Cooper fans, who were expecting more of the Lou Gehrig/Sgt. York approach.

And they expressed their disappointment at the box office. The film—described as “the most bizarre movie in Cooper's filmography”—bombed. A Screenland critic said: “If you like deep thinking, hidden meanings, plus pure modern architecture, the *Fountainhead* is something for which you have been waiting a long time.”

Well, we have been waiting a long time, and not for deep thinking and hidden meanings. What this country needs is a good, solid movie about an architect. *The Fountainhead* wasn't it. We're still waiting.

Look at it this way. We can spot a cop at fifty yards, even an undercover cop. We know lawyers are crafty, and that doctors play golf. We know newspaper reporters are nosey and TV reporters are nosey but have bigger hair.

How do we know all these things? Because we've seen the movie.

From *Beverly Hills Cop* and Perry Mason and Ben Casey and *Wall Street* and *An Officer and a Gentleman* and thousands of other cinematic sources, we know what it means to be a career officer or stand-up comic; we know everything we need to know about people who practice medicine, law, law enforcement, journalism, and business; we know how they look and talk and think and act, and we have a pretty good idea how they do their jobs.

After a lifetime of soaking up Hollywood's hits, the average person could, with a bit of encouragement and daring, fake a simple appendectomy, cross-examine a murder witness, or stake out a crack house.

continues on page 30

Stepping Back Into Silence

With a Major Retrospective on Louis Kahn

By: Beth Kephart Sulit

Kahn's buildings, the very distillation of the twentieth century's later years, are primitive too, but they are wholly devoid of gesture, as if beyond that, or of a different breed. Their violence is latent, potential, precisely because they do not gesture or seem to strike any attitude at all. They are above all built. Their elements—always elemental, heavy—are assembled in solemn, load-bearing masses. Their joints are serious affairs, like the knees of kouroi, but have the articulation of beings not in human form. Their body is Platonic, abstractly geometric in the essential shapes of circle, square, and triangle translated into matter, as if literally frozen into mute musical chords. They shape spaces heavy with light, like the first light ever loosed on the world, daggers of light, blossoms of light, suns and moons. They are silent.

Vincent Scully
Introduction

Louis I. Kahn: In The Realm of Architecture

Something happens to the English language when it is directed at the works of Louis Kahn. Prose adopts the cadence of verse. Traditional building parts—walls, windows, doors—are assigned new names to convey a higher meaning. Words lift up from the page in rhythms. Inevitably, there is silence.

Of course, no one ever came closer to the truth of Louis Kahn than the man himself, whose words on a page read three-dimensionally. Here, for example, is Kahn defending the spirit of a building:

"When a building is being built, there is an impatience to bring it into being. Not a blade of grass can grow near this activity. Look at the building after it is built. Each part that was built with so much anxiety and joy and willingness to proceed tries to say when you're

using the building, Let me tell you how I was made. Nobody is listening because the building is now satisfying need. The desire in its making is not evident. As time passes, when it is a ruin, the spirit of its making comes back. It welcomes foliage that entwines and conceals. Everyone who passes can hear the story it wants to tell about its making. It is no longer in servitude; the spirit is back." (What Will Be Has Always Been: The Words of Louis I. Kahn, page 186)

Given the far-flung siting of Kahn's architectural constructs—Fort Worth, TX; Fort Wayne, IN; Dhaka, Bangladesh; La Jolla, CA; New Haven; and Philadelphia, to name a few locales—scattered words, photographs, and drawings have, until now, served as the essential transmitters of Kahn's works, the closest the great percentage of us have been able to get to the real thing.

Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture, a new retrospective organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and premiering at the Philadelphia Museum of Art between October 20, 1991 and January 5, 1992, is designed to change all that. Explains Sherri Geldin, MOCA, LA's associate director: "By what strokes of imagination did Kahn arrive at his unique potion of architectural alchemy? This exhibition and its accompanying publication are attempts to address this question and to explore and illuminate the nature of his genius."

Billed as the first major retrospective devoted to the work of Louis Kahn, the exhibit relies on 125 drawings, 48 models (some of which measure six-foot square), 125

Title: Richards Medical Research Building and Biology Building, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

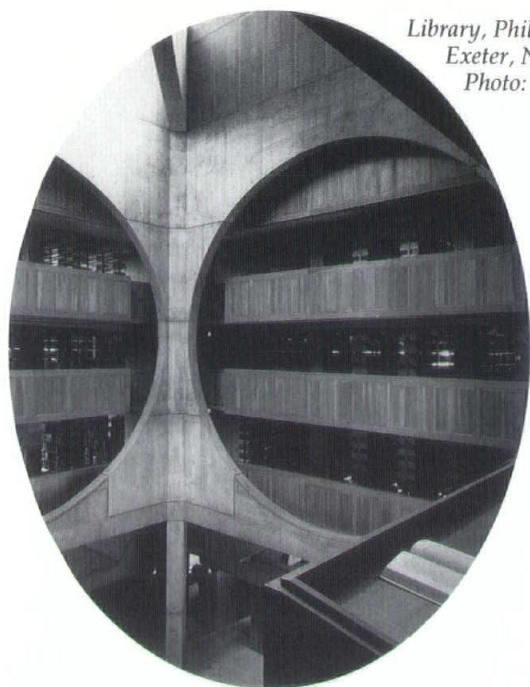
Artist: Louis I. Kahn (b. Estonia, 1901-1974)

Date: 1957-1965

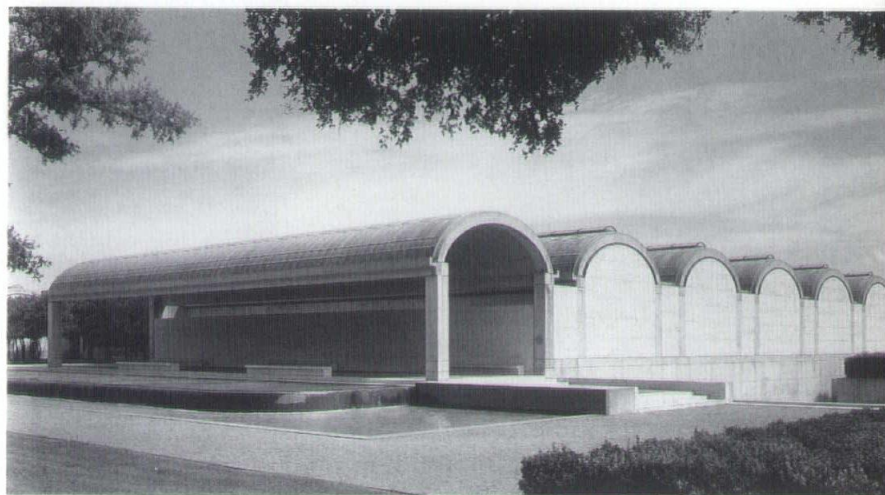
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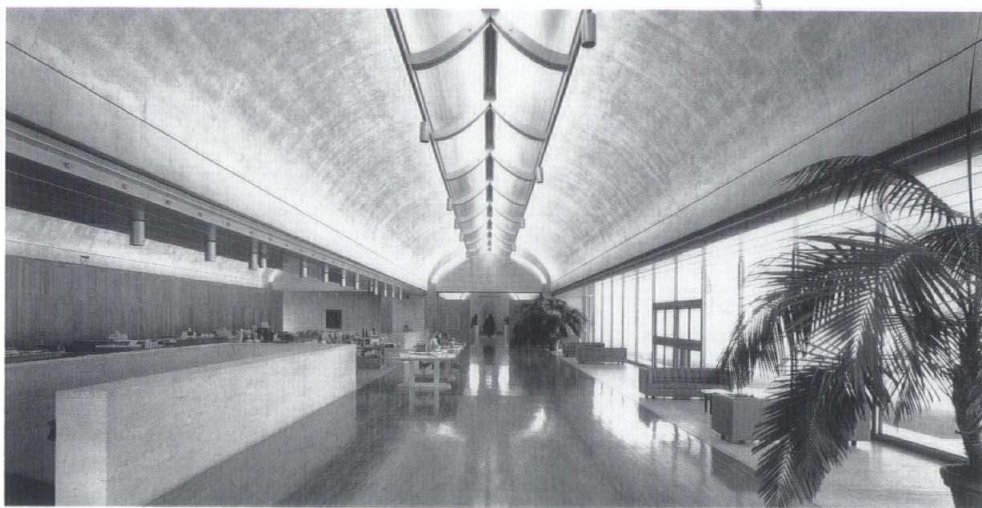




*Library, Phillips Exeter Academy (interior)
Exeter, NH 1965-1972
Photo: Grant Mudford*



*Kimball Art Museum
Fort Worth, TX 1966-1972
Photo: Grant Mudford*



of Pennsylvania, and Julia Moore Converse, who directs The Architectural Archives at the University of Pennsylvania; the scholarship of all three are well-represented in the catalogue and show.

"Making Kahn's archives accessible to scholars has been a long-standing goal of ours for quite some time," says Brownlee, a co-curator and principal author, who arrived at Penn in the early 1980s. "After Julia arrived and began to get the archives into shape, we reckoned that our responsibility was to mount a retrospective devoted to Kahn's work. We talked to a number of museums without success until, some four years ago, we learned that the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, was both enthusiastic about the prospect and well-equipped to deal with the financial responsibilities."

The exhibit moves participants through six phases in Kahn's career. The first section, "Adventures of Unexplored Places," begins at the beginning, with a look back on

Designed by Arata Isozaki, the installation takes its cues from the Mikveh Israel Synagogue in Philadelphia, a project that occupied Kahn between 1961 and 1972, but was never built. Isozaki's design calls for a system of semicircular walls of varying thicknesses and heights arranged in "ruinlike fashion," a technique that, it is hoped, will infuse those who are new to Kahn's work with a fuller comprehension of his mastery.

Close to ten years of study and preparation went into the making of *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture*. Closest to its heart, perhaps, are David Brownlee and David DeLong, both of the University

Title: Kimball Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX (interior)

Artist: Louis I. Kahn (Estonian, 1901-1974)

Date: 1966-1972

Credit Line: Grant Mudford

Photo By: Grant Mudford

photographs, videos and archival material to shed light on 56 of Kahn's public buildings and projects. A 448-page catalogue incorporating scholarly essays, an in-depth examination of several major buildings, sketches and photographs accompanies the show. The exhibit will travel to Paris, New York, Gunma, Japan, Los Angeles, Fort Worth and Columbus, Ohio, after leaving Philadelphia.

continues on page 32

Saint James African Methodist Episcopal Church

Location: Erie, Pennsylvania

Architect: Crowner/King Architects

Contractor: Odyssey Builders, Inc

Founded in 1874, St. James AME Church has served the spiritual as well as the social needs of Erie's black community for 117 years.

In 1983, due to the age and flood damaged structural condition of the original church building, Rev. Jon Goshay began to investigate moving to another existing church building.

However, a suitable alternative facility was difficult to find due to location, cost or design.

An inner-city site was located just several blocks from the old church and the property was made available from the Erie Redevelopment Authority. In 1985 a committee was

established to plan a new church facility.

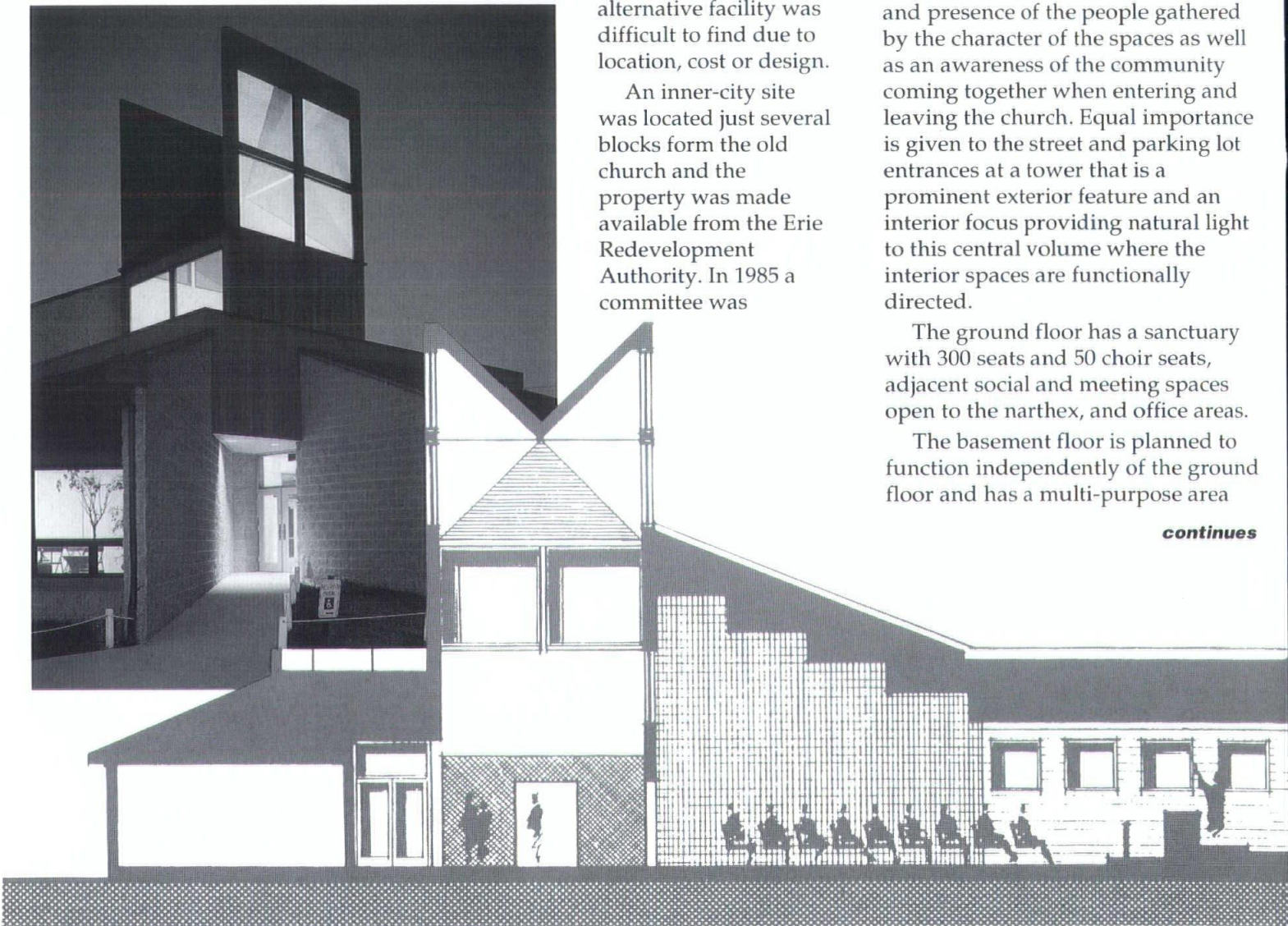
The intent of the planning and design process was not so much to emulate the features and appearance of a traditional church, but to design a building that would be a focal image of community involvement.

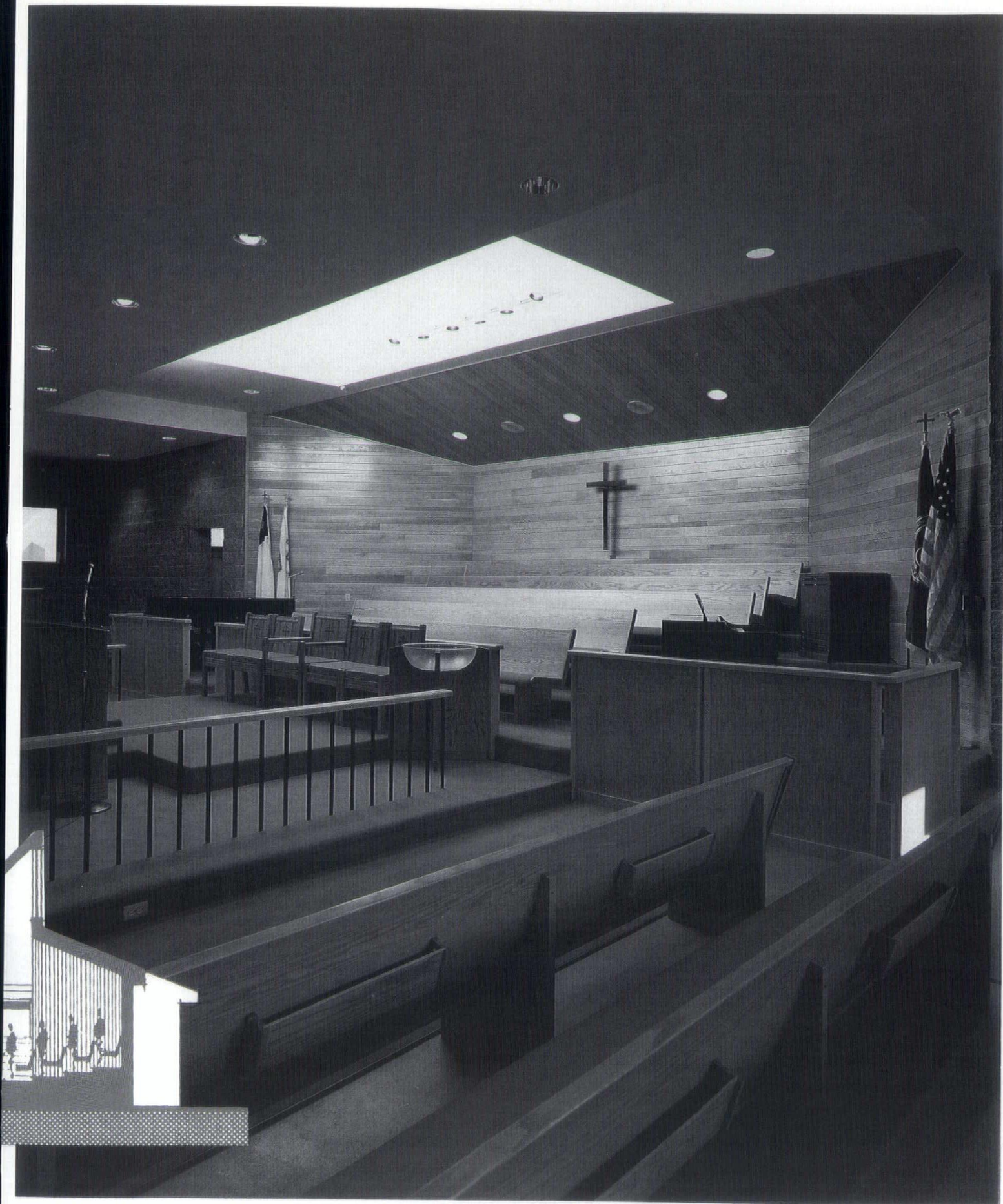
The Pastor and the committee wished to emphasize the importance and presence of the people gathered by the character of the spaces as well as an awareness of the community coming together when entering and leaving the church. Equal importance is given to the street and parking lot entrances at a tower that is a prominent exterior feature and an interior focus providing natural light to this central volume where the interior spaces are functionally directed.

The ground floor has a sanctuary with 300 seats and 50 choir seats, adjacent social and meeting spaces open to the narthex, and office areas.

The basement floor is planned to function independently of the ground floor and has a multi-purpose area

continues







Photography by: John Landry

seating 500 at tables, a commercial kitchen, classrooms, immersion baptistry, choir room and archives. These areas are used on a daily basis by the Black Family Institute, offering breakfast, lunch and "latchkey" programs for neighborhood elementary school children.

The facility was completed in July, 1987 at a total cost of \$673,000. The weekend dedication ceremonies included a community procession from the old church to the new. □

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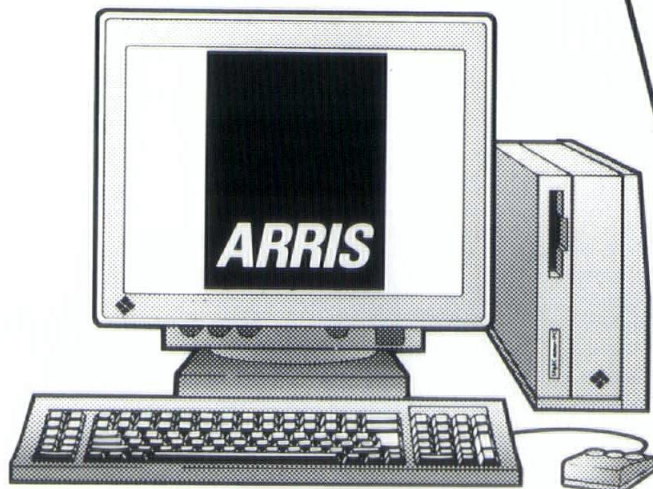
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Church of the Assumption

Location: Atco, New Jersey

Architect: Dagit Saylor Architects

Contractor: John J. Donnelly, Inc.

The program consisted of designing a 500-seat, 11,236-square-foot Roman Catholic parish church that also included a daily chapel, vestry and reconciliation rooms.

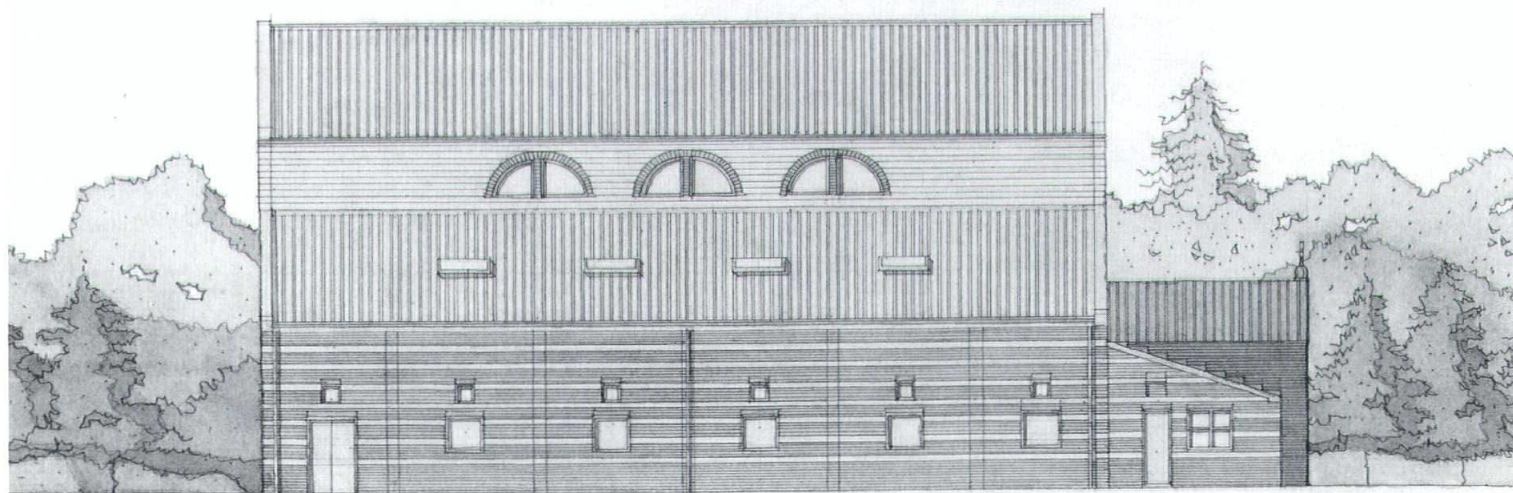
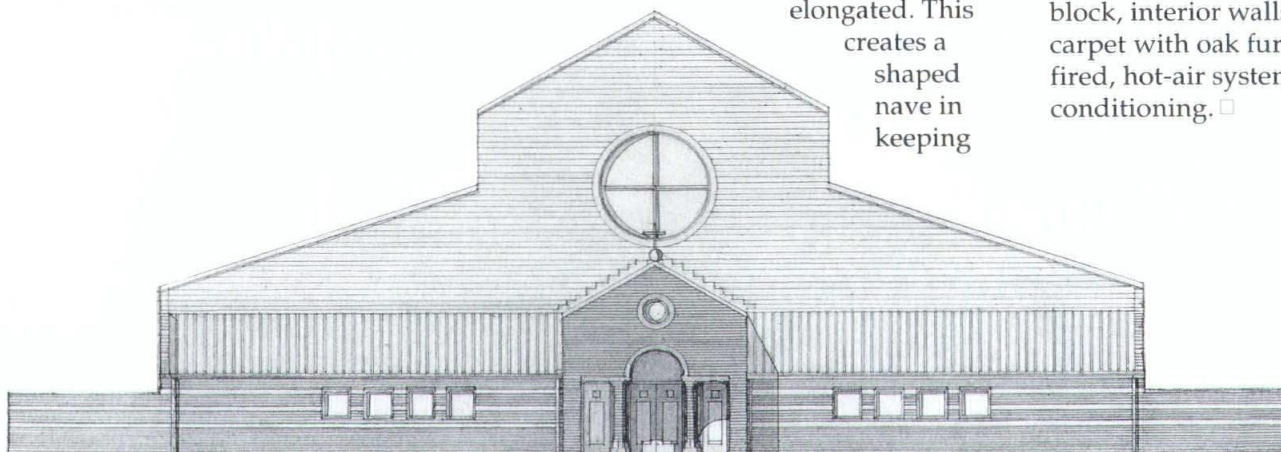
The solution to this challenge sited the church back from its access road with a driveway that is used for drop offs only. The parking area is reserved to the side so that the church sits unencumbered by automobiles.

The church takes its shape from the early Christian basilica form but is square rather than elongated. This creates a shaped nave in keeping

with the desire for a more intimate seating arrangement.

The baptismal font is located at the entrance to the chapel as a symbol of invitation. The altar and sanctuary are designed as part of the main room but accentuated above with the arched shapes. The resurrected Christ and the tabernacle are recessed in the double wall behind the altar.

The type of construction and building systems used include: steel frame, masonry exterior walls of brick combined with split faced block, interior walls of drywall, carpet with oak furnishings, gas-fired, hot-air system and air conditioning. □





Photography by: Tom Crane

Mt. Irenaeus Chapel

Location: Friendship, New York

Architect: Kingsland Scott Bauer Havekotte

Contractor: Lucho Skandar

Located in the wooded foothills of Southwestern New York, the chapel overlooks the main clearing of Mt. Irenaeus. A dirt road leads from the valley below through the forest to the heart of this rural setting. The Common House, the first visible structure at Mt. Irenaeus, establishes the unassuming character inherent in all its buildings. Hermitages, one of which is seen across the meadow, provide shelter for a wide cross section of people who come to spend some quiet time and share in the spirit of this place.

The property was purchased in affiliation with St. Bonaventure University and its Campus Ministry

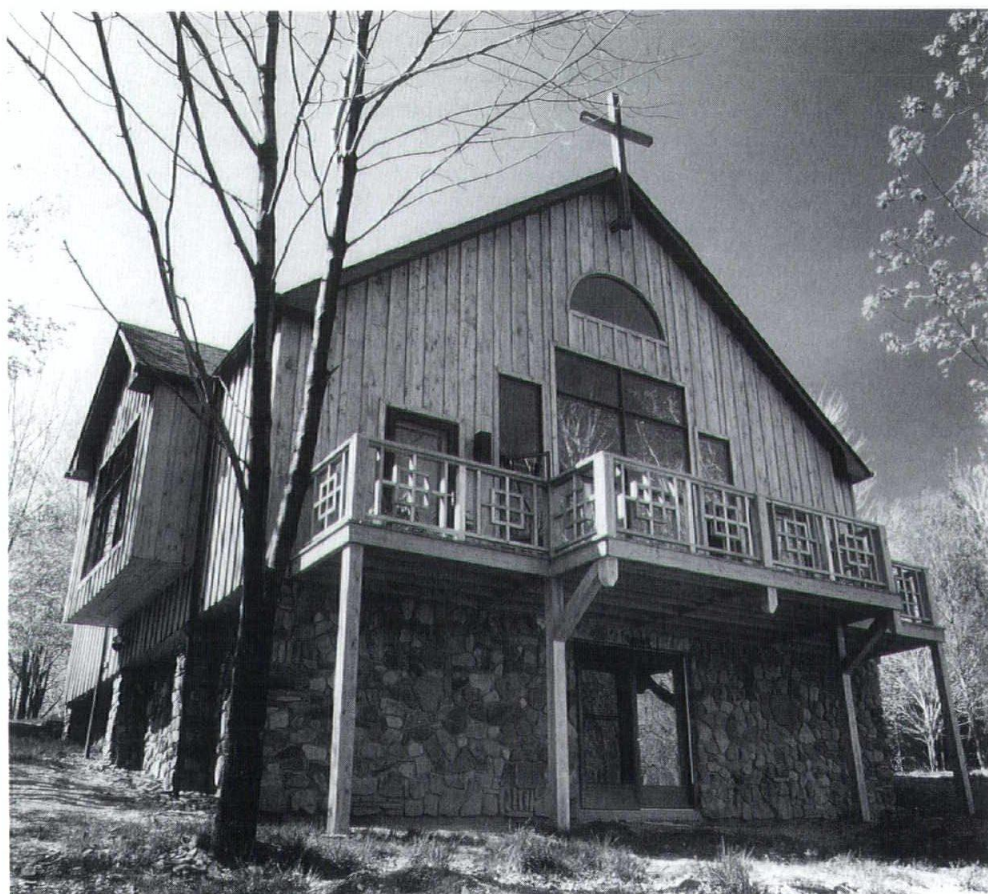
as a place to rejuvenate the spirit of students and faculty. The Brothers who live here encourage their guests "to come alive to their surroundings."

The first view of the chapel occurs from a walking path which leads people up the hill from the Common House. The path circles the building providing views from several vantage points. One of the most powerful occurs near the bottom where the chapel can be seen across a flowering meadow nestled in the woods with its cross silhouetted on the blue sky. After winding through the trees the path ends near the building. The final connective is made by crossing a bridge-like deck that separates the chapel from the landscape.

From the beginning, the architectural character for the chapel was summarized in three powerful words—integrity, beauty and simplicity. Expanding on this, the client talked about the structure as integrative and reflective of other elements, central but not dominant.

Key design concepts grew from this expression. The center is an idea, not an object. Around the center is a collection of activities and experiences—the Blessed Sacrament, the setting of the retreat center, arrival, personal reflection space and community worship. The nine-square plan represents the ideal more simply than a circle. The porch completes the symmetry. The timber frame construction reinforces the relationships of spaces and informs the users of functional intent.

The basic materials and colors for the exterior reflected those currently used at the mountain retreat. The



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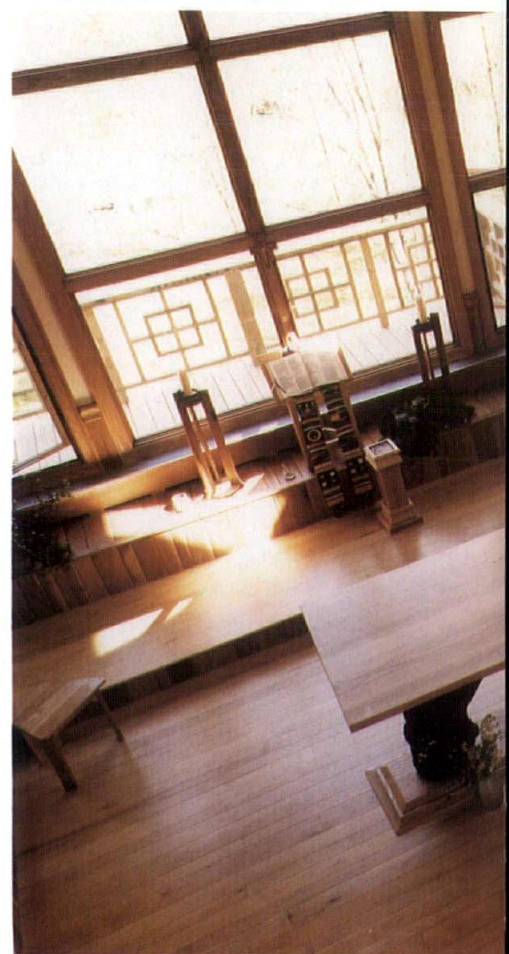




interior became the resting place for the maple, oak and cherry hardwood lumber cut mostly from local trees.

The bridge from the landscape is important because it illustrates the break between building and site. The dominant character is a natural setting—the woods, the valley, the wildlife. The porch allows people to step outside again, pause and address the surroundings. The chapel is placed in the topography as a man-made object. It is a shrine in the wilderness, a point of communion in the great outdoors. The Franciscan brothers fittingly named the chapel “Holy Peace.” □

Photography by: Carl Marginson





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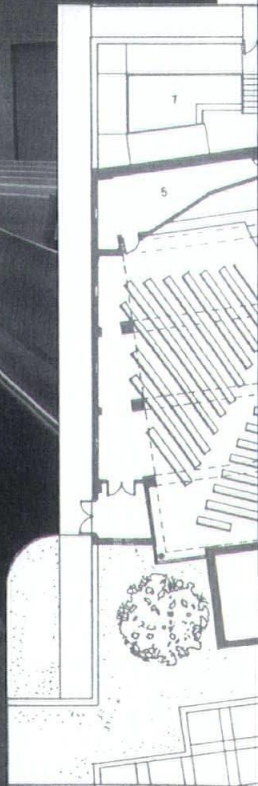
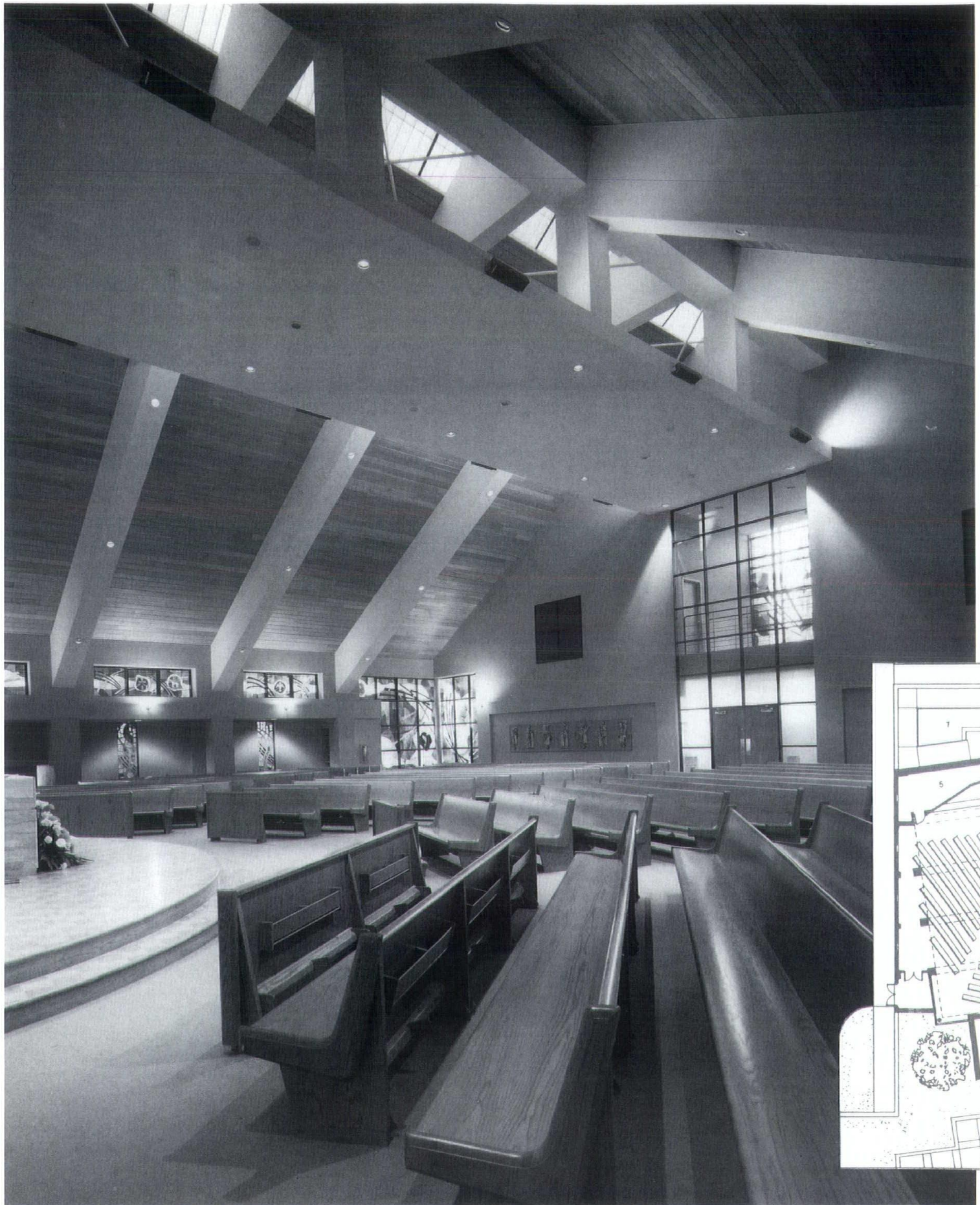
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Immaculate Conception Church and Parish Hall

Location: Scranton, Pennsylvania

Architect: Leung Hemmler Camayd, Architects

Contractor: Fiorini Construction Co.

The congregation of Immaculate Conception Church in Scranton had outgrown its building which had been constructed as an unadorned, temporary structure at the turn of the century. Realizing that the church could no longer meet the liturgical and social needs of contemporary parish life, the church committee decided to build anew at the same location.

The committee wanted the new church to be more than a mere building, and charged the architect with designing an open, inviting "parish living room." The comprehensive plan was to include spaces for a 500-seat main worship area, a smaller day chapel, parish offices, educational classrooms, large group meeting spaces and a social hall.

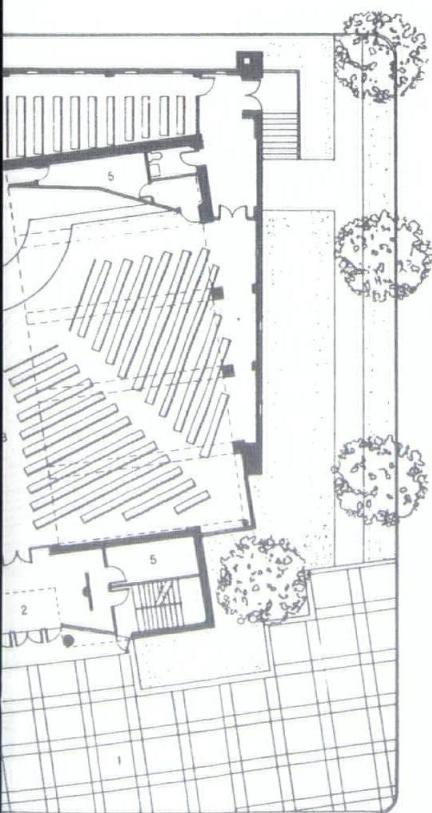
The site is a corner lot in a dense, residential neighborhood, largely developed between 1880 and 1920.

Neighboring houses are substantial, characteristically three stories tall, gable-ended toward the street and constructed of wood, stucco and brick. The Pastor wanted a building that was contemporary and unassuming; the architects decided that the neighborhood demanded a contextual solution and a building that could maintain a presence against a backdrop of large residences and mature trees.

The original church was located toward the center of the block, with the corner open and used for parking. That allowed for siting the new church at the corner, while maintaining use of the old church during construction. The site of the original church is now developed as a landscaped parking area.

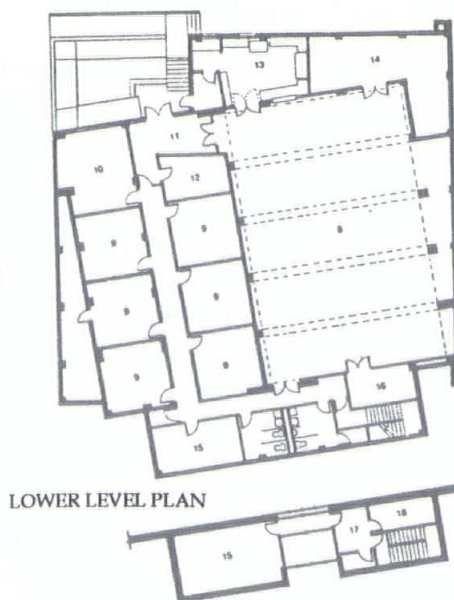
The architects' concept is to house the chapel and ancillary spaces in a one-story brick structure, parallel with the adjacent streets and buildings, that resembles neighboring

garden and privacy walls, with the main volume of the church, gable-ended to the street and angled to better address the corner, rising above. The church, though lower at its periphery and broader than its neighbors, matches adjacent structures in overall height and is reminiscent in shape. The brick walls tie the

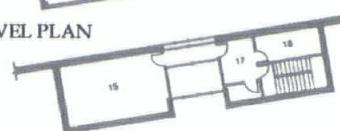


MAIN LEVEL PLAN

- 1 Terrace
- 2 Narthex
- 3 Nave
- 4 Sanctuary
- 5 Sacristy
- 6 Chapel
- 7 Sunken Courtyard
- 8 Hall
- 9 Classroom
- 10 Educational Resources
- 11 Vestibule
- 12 Coatroom
- 13 Kitchen
- 14 Mechanical
- 15 Office
- 16 Storage
- 17 Reception
- 18 Workroom



LOWER LEVEL PLAN



UPPER LEVEL PLAN

continues



Photography by: Otto Baitz

building to its site while its angled face differentiates it.

The design solution presents a nave and main altar area, a narthex, a day chapel, and sacristies and service areas on the main level, comprising some 8,500 square feet. The lower level includes a main parish hall and kitchen, circulation and mechanical systems areas. Religious education is addressed by six classrooms, an educational resources area and offices. The remaining space provides storage.

The main nave is entered through a stained-glass enclosed, two-story narthex. The nave seats 500 worshippers in a semi-circular plan which creates an atmosphere of intimacy to the altar area. An axial center aisle is maintained for wedding processions and other formal liturgical activities.

The nave is a high-volumed, gabled space with a continuous ridge skylight of translucent insulated panels. A suspended ceiling plane below the skylight compresses and strengthens the axis and diffuses and directs the natural light. Ambulatory spaces are low-ceilinged and angle around the central seating area.

The day chapel beyond can be entered from the side street and is a trapezoidal space terminating in an apse and circular soffit. The chapel seats 40.

The main level is finished in tile at entry points, with carpeting in the main nave and day chapel. Walls and beams are gypsum board painted in colors selected to compliment the overall stained glass compositions. The reredos is bricked to match the exterior and supports a wooden, hand-carved risen Christ. The sloped ceiling planes are clad in light-stained cedar.

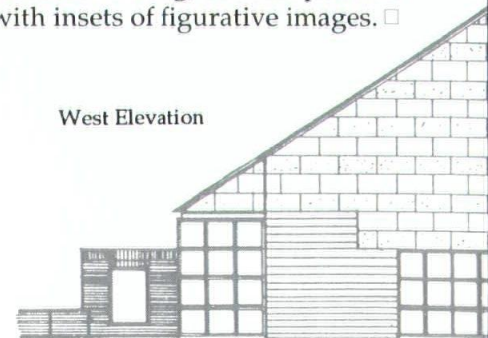
The main entrance also includes a second level on both sides of the narthex. This area of approximately 800 square feet houses offices, a workroom and a reception area.

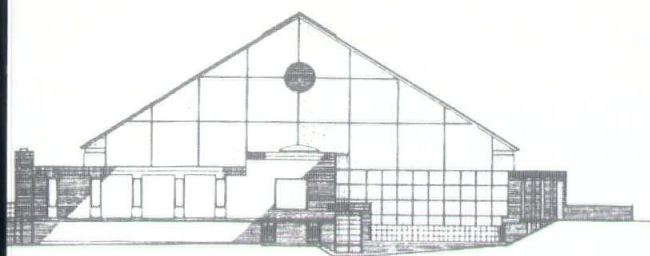
For economy and durability, the finishes chosen for the lower level included patterned VCT flooring with vinyl base, painted CMU walls and suspended acoustical ceilings.

The exterior treatment of the main nave volume is textured, architectural fiberglass shingles, marble-aggregate surface insulation in an overscaled two-tone ashlar pattern for clerestory and upper walls and split-faced block at the lower facade walls.

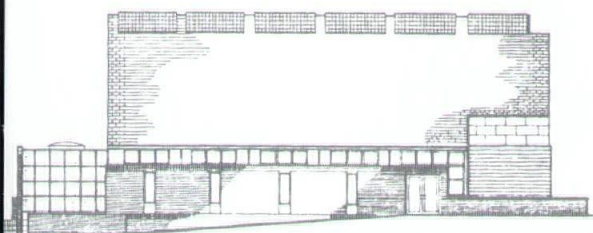
Exterior colors are soft, natural and in close value range. The stained glass features flowing, abstract patterns with insets of figurative images. □

West Elevation

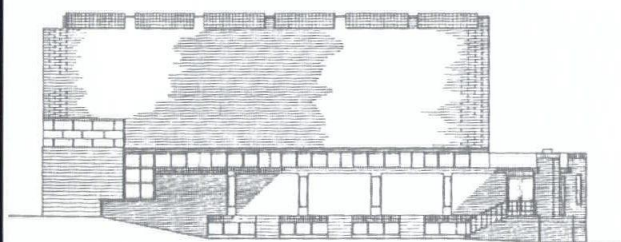




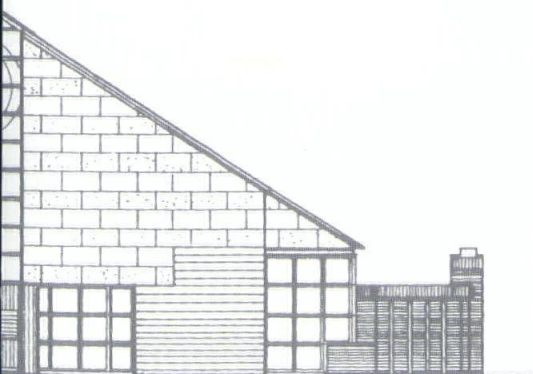
East Elevation



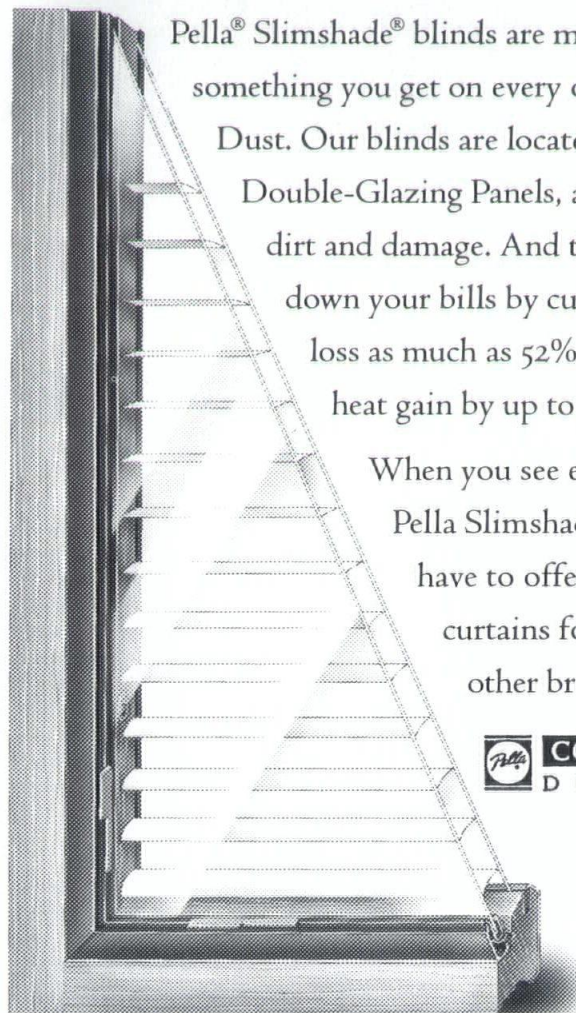
North Elevation



South Elevation



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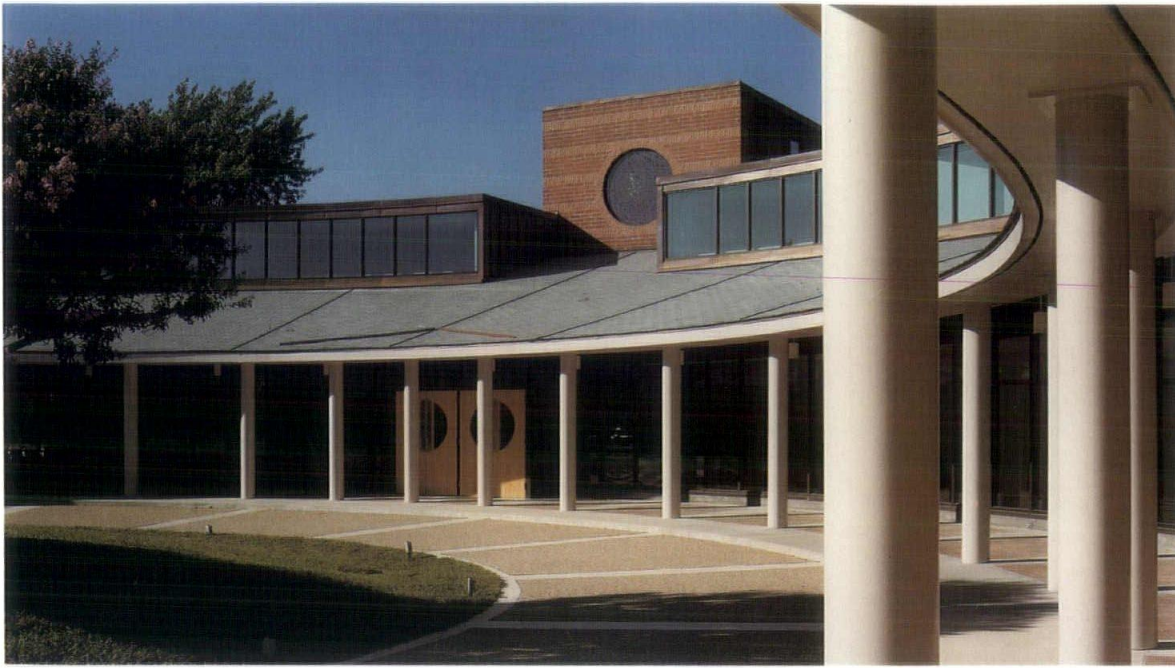
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Photography by: Tom Bernard



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church

Location: Newport News, Virginia

Architect: George Yu Architects

Contractor: Cochran Construction Co

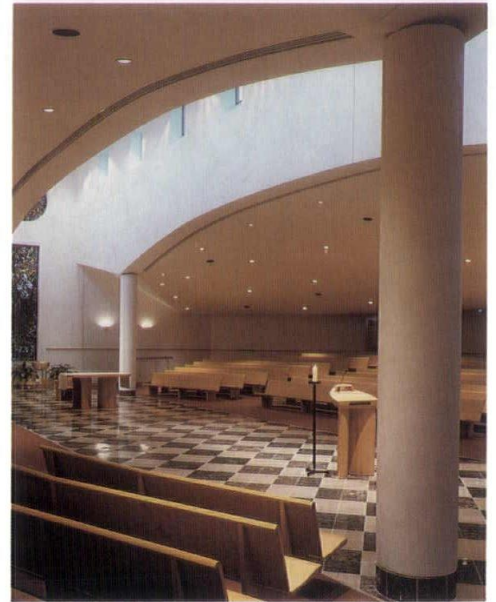
The church's ten-acre campus consisted of an existing elementary school, gymnasium, rectory, convent and administration building. In siting the new church, it was important to maintain a balance between natural and built forms. The use of a loggia/colonnade provide an aesthetic and functional bond, shaping a garden around century old crepe myrtle trees and linking the existing building to the new place of worship.

The design of the sanctuary is inspired by the timeless tradition of the early Christian basilica. The main axis resolves into a clerestory lit centrum, a place for various liturgical rites. The assembly gathers around the centrum to share the celebration of liturgy. The intention was not to create a monumental space but rather to introduce an intimate place sensitive to personal everyday experience as well as spiritual needs.

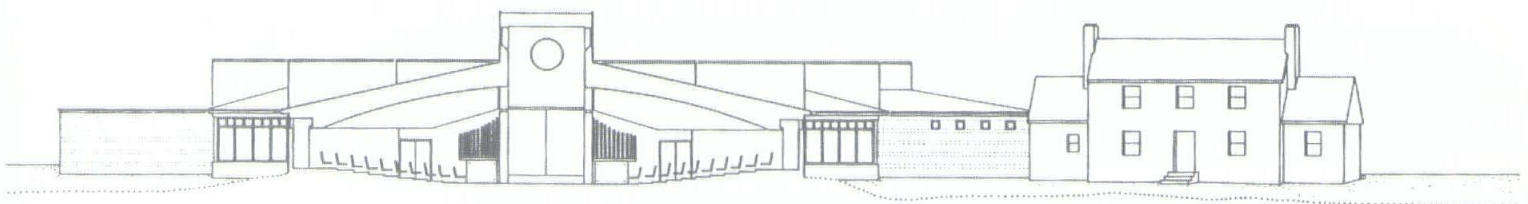
Energy efficiency, accessibility and social concern have affected many

aspects of the building. Of all the elements taken into consideration, the Loggia acts as the spine for this new place of worship and to the existing buildings on site. This colonnade serves a threefold use: 1) a shading device to protect the Gallery from direct southern exposure, therefore reducing the required cooling loads; 2) a shelter from wind, snow and rain for pedestrians, those arriving by auto and especially those who are disabled, and 3) a link to other existing buildings in the complex, and to gather the various social activities of the site to a focused center.

Total floor area of this new building equals 16,000 square feet. The structural system consists of steel frame members with brick masonry walls. Windows are insulating glass in aluminum frames. Interior finishes include plaster walls and ceilings with oak trim. The floor is concrete slab on grade with carpeting throughout with the exception of the



Centrum floor, which is covered with Italian and Tennessee marble tiles. HVAC consists of custom-fabricated air handling units with dual temperature coils, hot water boiler, air cooled chillers and direct expansion split system air conditioning. □



CROSS SECTION (Viewing South)



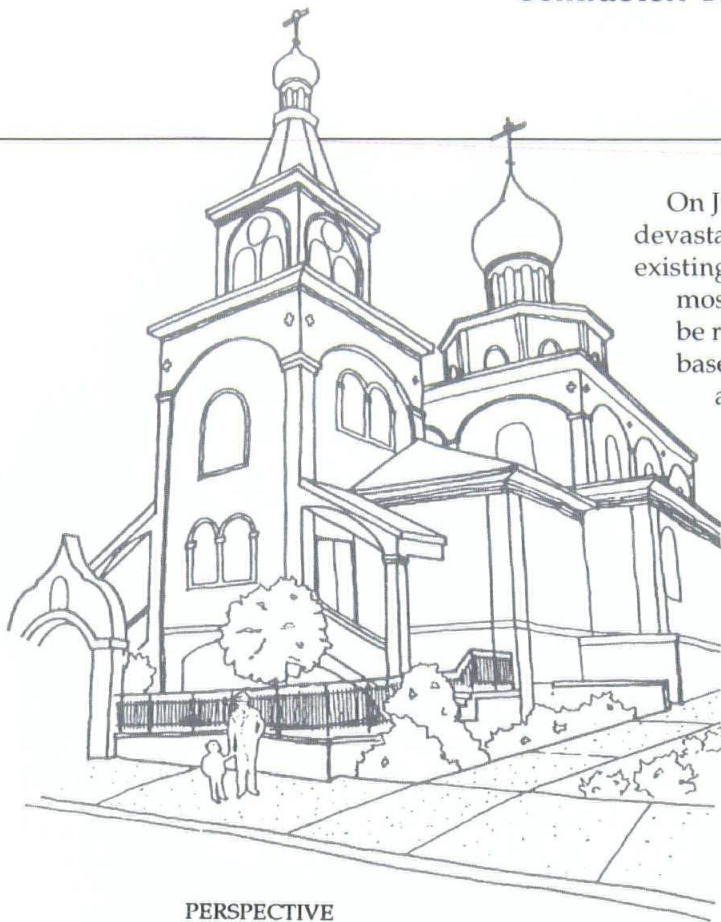
LONGITUDINAL SECTION (Viewing East)

Church of the Nativity of Christ

Location: Erie, Pennsylvania

Architect: Weborg Rectenwald Architects, Inc

Contractor: Building Systems, Inc.



PERSPECTIVE

On July 22, 1986 a devastating fire in the existing church required most of the structure to be razed leaving only the basement, floor structure and sanctuary.

Projected congregational growth demanded a larger facility than the previous church. A cruciform plan was initially desired to conform with traditional orthodox architecture. Due to greatly restrictive site dimensions and a need to achieve maximum worship space, this cruciform

pattern was created through the use of vaulted and flat ceilings in a rectangular-shaped nave.

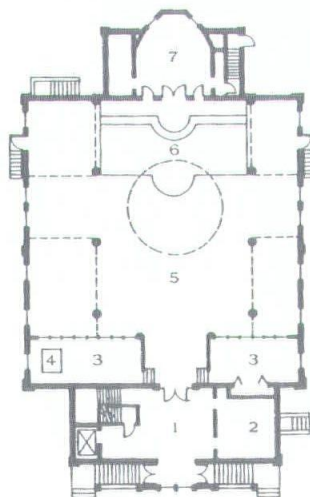
The introduction of natural light is obtained through the use of a centrally-located, 24-foot diameter, 52-foot high dome in the vaulted ceiling. Focusing this light on the ambo area creates the desired dramatic effect, enhanced by low ceilings and dark, stained-glass windows around the perimeter of the nave.

Orthodoxy epitomizes the integration of art and architecture as seen throughout the interior and exterior spaces of the church. The large central dome of the church hovers over the nave area and symbolizes heaven; this symbolism is further enhanced by the addition of a huge mural icon, many times life-size, of Jesus Christ on the interior surface of the dome, vividly reminding the worshippers below of the ever-presence of their Master. The idea of the church being a "heaven on earth" for the people has been continued by the addition of many other mural icons based on the theme of the Nativity of Christ, producing an abundant and multi-colored

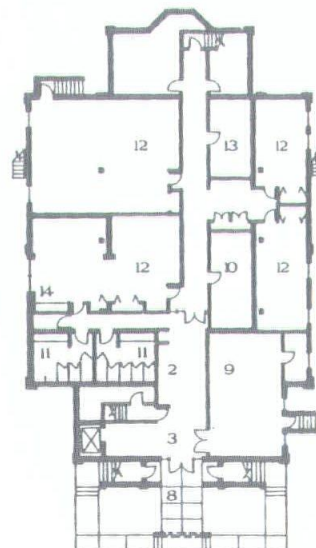
witness of the splendor of the Orthodox faith. (Many of the murals are still to be completed,

continues

- 1 Narthex
- 2 Coats
- 3 Vestibule
- 4 Baptismal Font
- 5 Nave
- 6 Choir
- 7 Sanctuary
- 8 Courtyard
- 9 Funeral Parlor
- 10 Mechanical
- 11 Toilet Room
- 12 Classroom
- 13 Office
- 14 Kitchenette

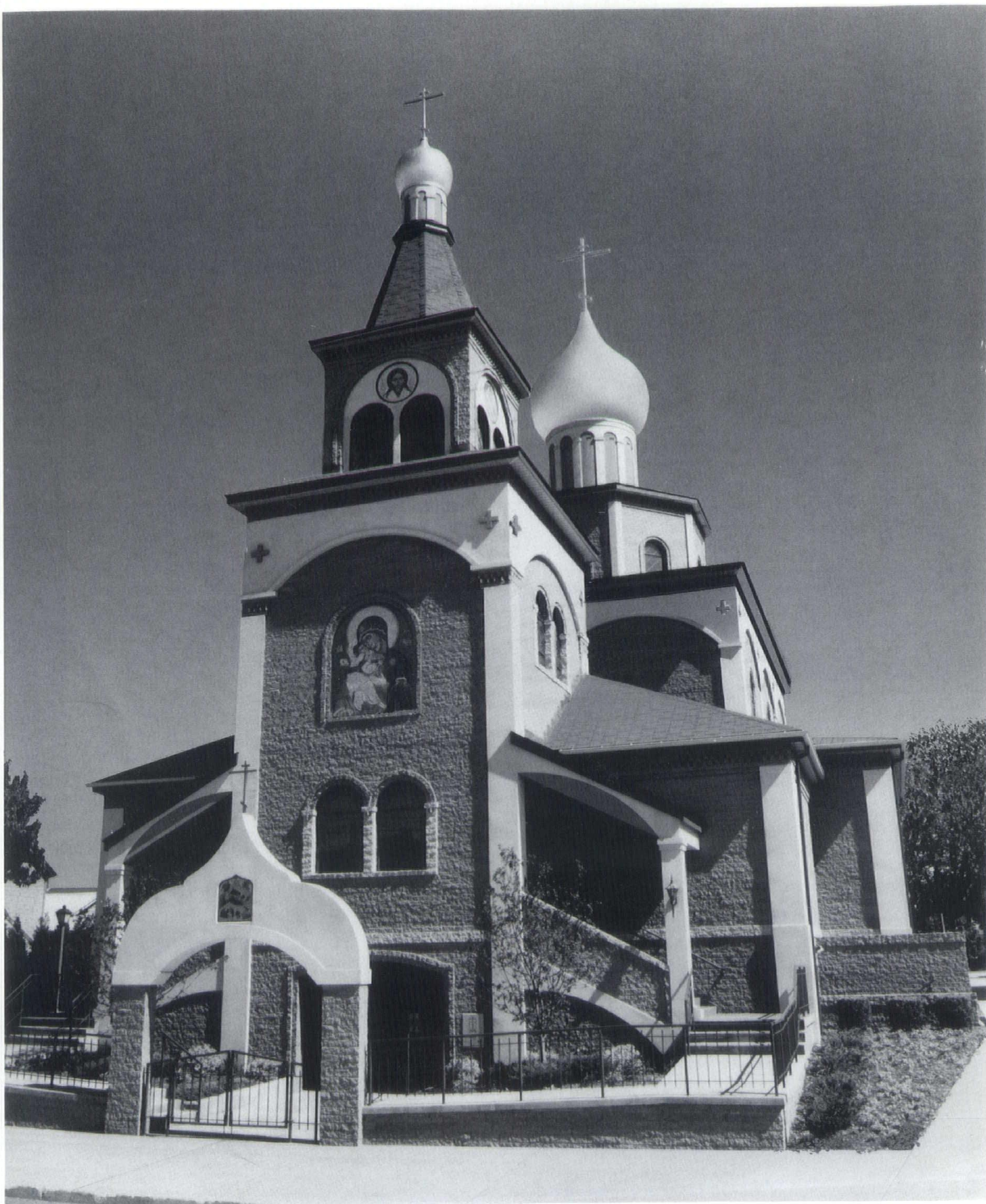


UPPER LEVEL



LOWER LEVEL

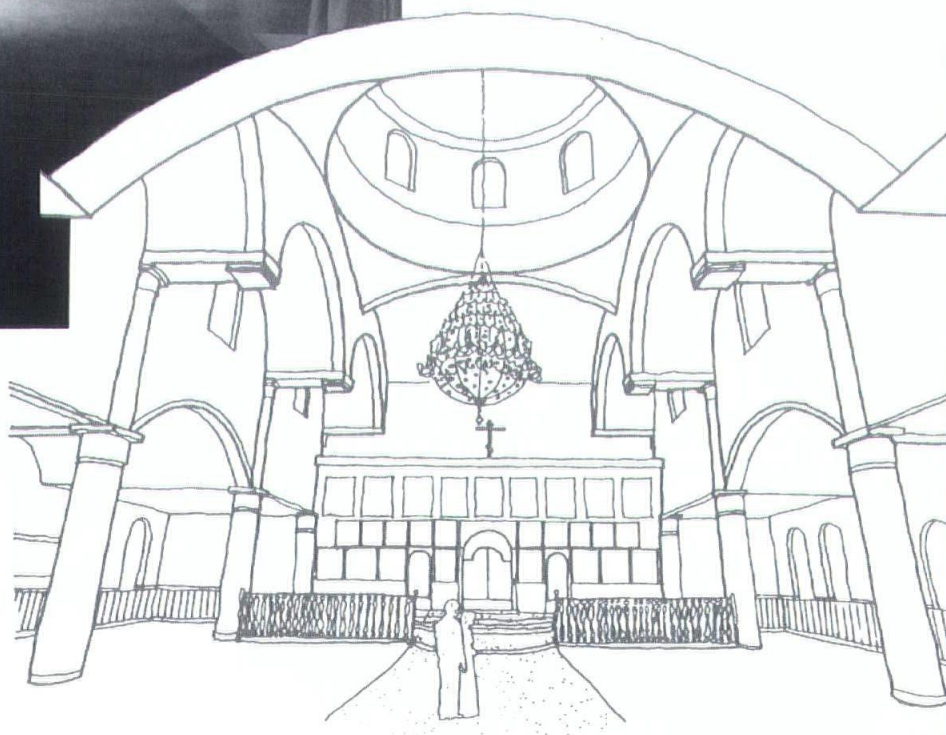
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Photography by: Art Becker

INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



and eventually will completely cover the walls and ceilings.) An iconostasis (traditional icon screen) separates the nave from the sanctuary and icons, some centuries old, are mounted on the wall.

A dual level courtyard area eliminated the existing access and egress problem caused by difficult site grading. The courtyard serves as a transitional space from the secular to a spiritual world enhanced by a large ceramic mosaic icon on the front of the bell tower. Entry into the courtyard is through an archway, complementing interior arches, containing a smaller icon of the Nativity of Christ.

Exterior materials, rusticated brick and an exterior insulation system to simulate stone columns and arches, help to maintain the context of both neighborhood and traditional orthodox architecture. Three gold-leaf onion domes boldly protrude above the surrounding buildings symbolizing the Holy Trinity, the crowning glory of the church. □

Middle Pennsylvania Chapter Awards

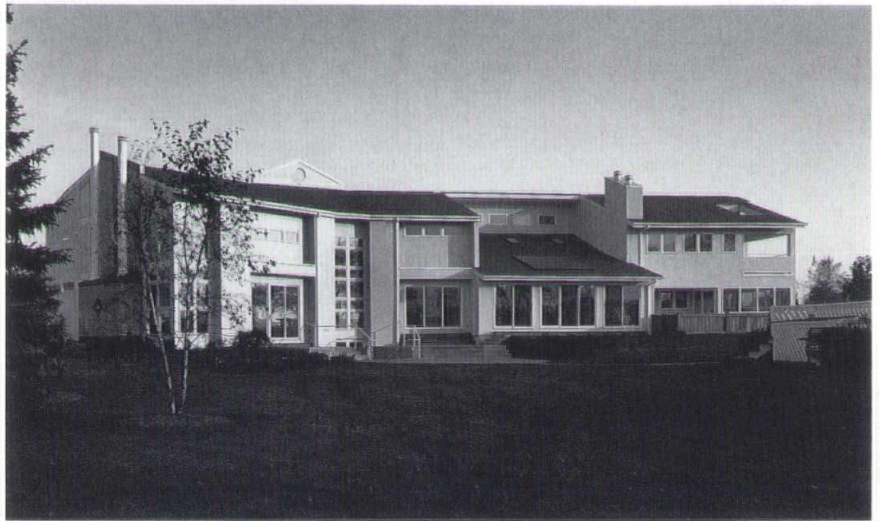


Architect:

Burns-Lucas, Leon, Lucas, Architects
State College, PA

Project:

The Bingham House Port Deposit, Maryland



Architect:

Wiederspahn Krug Architects, State College, PA
Luis H. Summers, AIA, Boulder, Colorado

Project:

Additions and Renovations to the Colkitt Residence, State College, PA

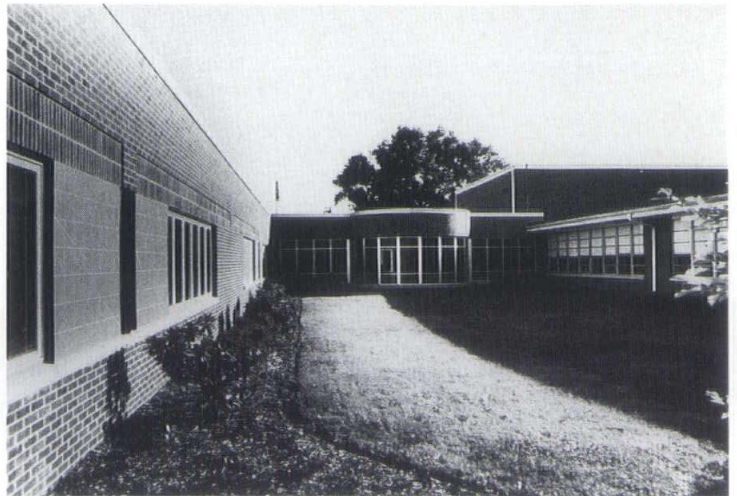


Architect:

Chambless & Associates
Blondheim & Mixon
Montgomery, Alabama, Peter Magyar, Design Consultant

Project:

The Governor Gordon Persons Office Building, Montgomery, AL



Architect:

Hayes, Large, Suckling, Fruth & Wedge, Architects
Altoona, PA

Project:

Additions and Renovations to Franklin Elementary School
Cashtown, Pennsylvania

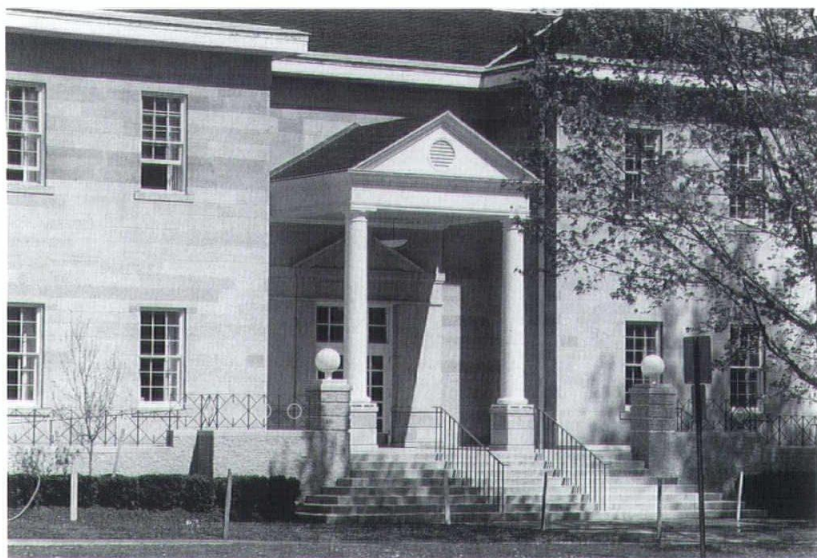
Central Pennsylvania Chapter Awards

Architect:

Nutec Design Associates, Inc.
York, PA

Project:

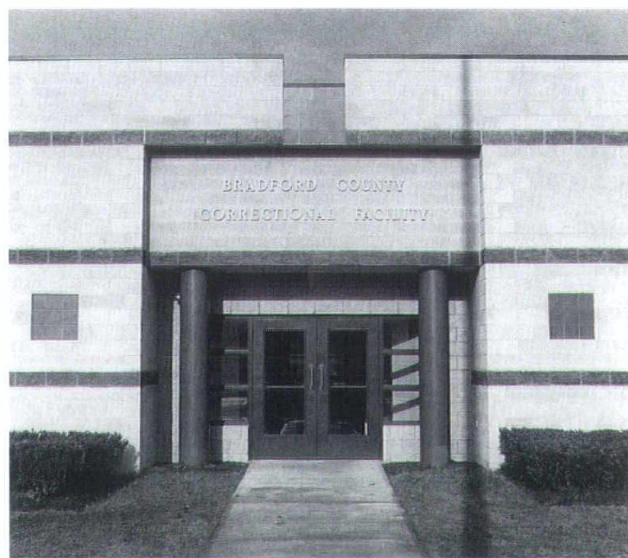
Strand Capitol Performing Arts Center
York, PA

**Architect:**

John M. Kostecky, Jr. & Associates
Wormleysburg, PA

Project:

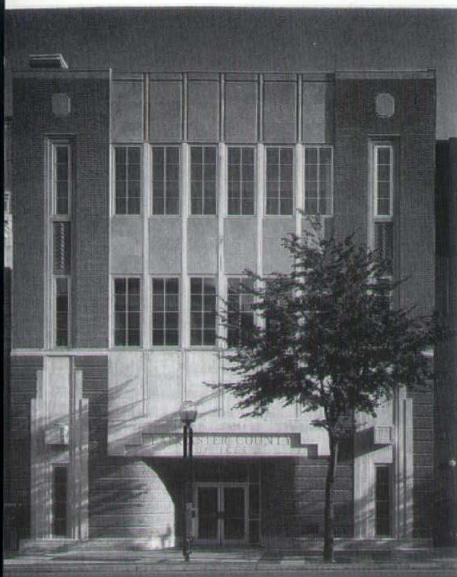
West Portico Addition
Tioga County Courthouse
Wellsboro, PA

**Architect:**

John M. Kostecky, Jr. & Associates
Wormleysburg, PA

Project:

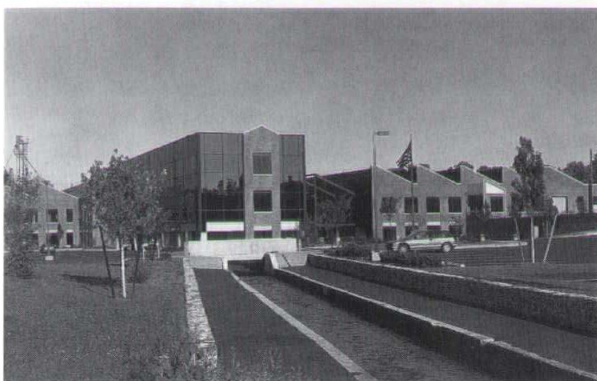
Bradford County Correctional Facility
Troy, PA



Architect:
ASCO Associates, Ltd
Jeff Ludwig, AIA / Andy Kitsinger, AIA
York, PA
Project:
Lancaster County Offices
Lancaster, PA



Architect:
Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Assoc.
Harrisburg, PA
Project:
Juniata County Library
Mifflintown, PA



Architect:
Reese, Lower, Patrick & Scott
Lancaster, PA
Project:
Administrative Offices &
Service Center
Farmers First Bank
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But ask non-architects to design a fast-food outlet or health club or even a simple Greek Revival residence. They wouldn't know where to begin. For that matter, even architects aren't sure how an architect is supposed to behave in public.

Except for a handful of gratuitous references, moviemakers haven't given us a clue. This is why students are into MBAs and out of math and science. This is why architects' kids don't ask their parents to speak on Career Day. This is why even the lowliest public defender gets a better table than most architects. Because the images of architects that float in our collective unconscious are scrambled and muddy, odd creatures jerry-built from snatches of dialogue and ghostly, half-remembered characterizations.

Look at the flimsy foundation we're stuck with. Everyone knows that Elyse Keaton, the mom of *Family Ties*, is an architect. But the quietly perky Meredith Baxter-Birney portrayal, reminiscent of a glass of warm, carbonated milk, is unlikely to win the hearts and minds of the younger generation.

Or how about *Me and Him* (1989), a film which bounced from theaters to video stores in about four nanoseconds. What's it about? Well, there's this architect, see, and one day, his...well, part of his anatomy...a male part of his anatomy...well, it talks to him. OK, this is breakthrough stuff. But is this the breakthrough for architects we've been waiting for? I don't think so.

Tom Selleck was an architect in *Three Men and a Baby* (1987), and it's possible that the heartthrob hunk could have made the leap from P.I. to architect as hero from this platform. But here again, Tom's efforts at the drawing table were completely subordinated to some nonsense about a baby on the doorstep.

In 1981, Norman Mailer appeared as architect Stanford White in *Ragtime*. Just minutes into the picture, Mailer, drunk and wearing a laurel wreath on his head, is shot point blank in the head, fatally wounding

White, and seriously wounding Mailer's acting career. Needless to say, this cameo did little for architecture.

Paul Newman played an architect in *Towering Inferno* (1974). You'd think that kind of star-power combined with a high-rise in a lead role would result in some kind of powerful architectural statement. Indeed, had there been an Oscar that year for Best Endangered Structure, the high-rise would certainly have walked away with it. But it turns out *Towering Inferno* isn't about architecture. It isn't even about Paul Newman. It's about stuff blowing up.

Which is still better than what goes on in *Strangers When We Meet* (1960). Midway through this potboiler, architect Kirk Douglas is offered a huge amount of money to design a whole city in Hawaii, and he doesn't even tell his wife. Predictably, the couple hits some monster matrimonial potholes down the road—after all, one just doesn't design a whole city and not tell one's wife—and once again, the thought processes of an architect are called into question.

At any rate, the real star of *Strangers When We Meet* turns out to be the rambling, hilltop home Kirk is building for Ernie Kovacs. The house was criticized for its "wooden" acting, but still got better reviews than anyone else in the movie.

Things actually started going awry way back in 1911 with the publication of *Phantom of the Opera*. Erik, the title phantom and misguided monster-with-a-heart-of-gold, sets up housekeeping in the labyrinthine substructure of the Paris Opera House. As conceived by Gaston Leroux, Erik is a sort of Renaissance monster formally trained as a composer, Persian sorcerer, and architect. While Eric may not be the best role model, he is at least a romantic and somewhat sympathetic character despite a penchant for dropping chandeliers on people. At least he doesn't talk to parts of his body, like that architect in *Me and Him*.

But Erik's career as an architect

was doomed. When the *Phantom of the Opera* made the leap from book to screen in countless incarnations through the years, producers chose to ignore his architectural bent in favor of his musical talents. Of course, they left the chandelier in.

Reginald Denny's work as Henry L. Simms is certainly the classiest portrayal of an architect on screen. Simms is architect to Cary Grant and Myrna Loy in *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*. Simms is gracious, dignified, and unflappable, with a pleasant British accent. His mere presence produces a calming effect on loony clients and unscrupulous builders alike. Simms is the guy you'd want to do your house.

Some people will argue that the best role model for an architect was Yul Brynner in *The Ten Commandments* (1956). There is no question that the Brynner character is forceful and dynamic, but most agree that the title Architect/Pharaoh gave Brynner an unfair advantage, and those pyramids would have taken a lot longer if Brynner had been just an architect.

Finally, there's Mike Brady of *The Brady Bunch* (1969-74), our warmest image of an architect.¹ Unfortunately, his portrayal is also symptomatic of the Hollywood non-attitude, another example of an architect sacrificed on the altar of expediency.

Mike Brady is a widower who marries a widow and becomes the father of a typical merged family of the 70s—three boys and three girls. No matter what fate casts before the Bradys, whether trials and tribulations associated with going steady, or family camping, or who gets to use the bathroom first, father Mike is always there. True, we hardly ever got to see him actually working as an architect. But we always knew he was an architect—hardworking, sensible, caring—and that was comforting. Suddenly, however, the idyll ended. The show was canceled, and the stage was set for a typical Hollywood betrayal.

When, after a three-year hiatus the Bradys were resurrected on *The Brady*

Bunch Hour in January 1977, the Bradys are living in a California beachfront condo. The family is starring in its own TV variety show. And, worst of all, Mike Brady has abandoned his career in architecture to manage the family TV fortunes.

It is a tribute to the American viewing public that this metamorphosis from architect to mogul proved unacceptable and unviable. *The Brady Bunch Hour* lasted only a few months.² But the damage had already been done. Millions of American children growing up in the seventies were convinced that the primary function of architecture is to provide a stepping stone to a career in show business.

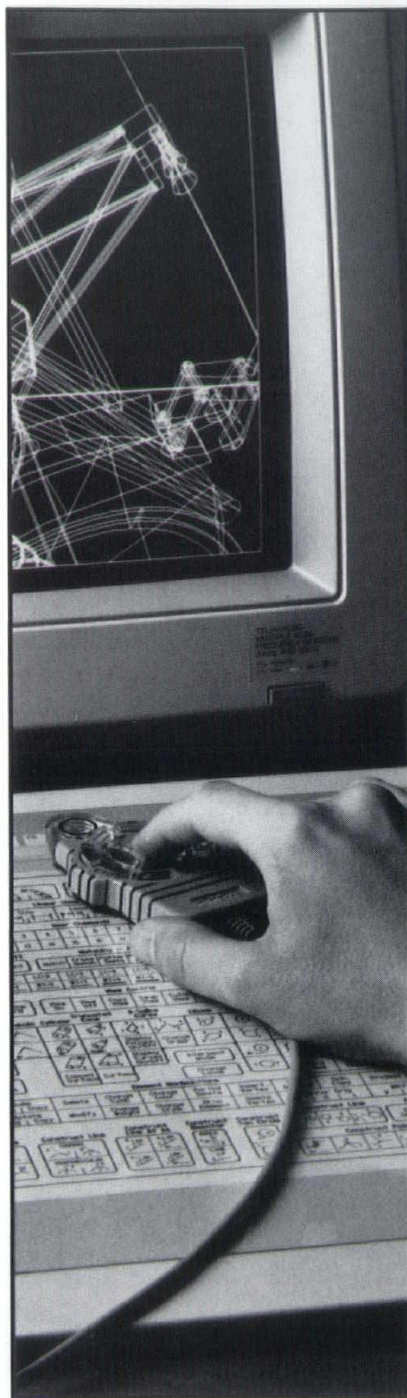
Obviously, if we are ever going to have a positive, unified vision of the architect, it's going to take a blockbuster. And it's not that hard to imagine. How about this: *Building Buddies*, a movie that teams Tom Cruise (as Frank Lloyd Wright) with Tom Hanks (as Buckminster Fuller). There are minor script details that would have to be worked out, like how to present that famous gunfight in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare between the Whites and the Grays. And Hollywood would want to punch up the scenes dealing with Wright's early years, you know, when he was racing stock cars. But if the deal-makers can pull it all together, then we would finally have that silver screen portrayal of architects for which we have been waiting for a long time. □

Footnotes:

¹Steve Douglas (Fred MacMurray), contrary to popular belief, was not an architect on *My Three Sons* (1960-72). Bill Davis (Brian Keith) was not an architect on *Family Affair* (1966-71). Both men played consulting engineers. Douglas specialized in aviation, but Davis made more money, enough to be able to afford Sebastian Cabot as a butler, while the Douglas household only had Bub, who was, after, all, family. When Bub left the show, they claimed he'd taken a trip to Iceland. He hadn't. He was dead.

²While the show lasted only a short time, negative effects haunt us to this day. A group called the Water Follies Swimmers made regular appearances on *The Brady Bunch Hour*, leading to a brief revival of water ballet a la Esther Williams. This phenomenon soon died out, but a mutation has survived in Olympic synchronized swimming as we know it today. The damage done to millions of impressionable young minds is incalculable.

Reprinted from the Summer 1990 issue of *Template: The Magazine of Engineering Systems and Solutions*, published by Xerox Engineering Systems.



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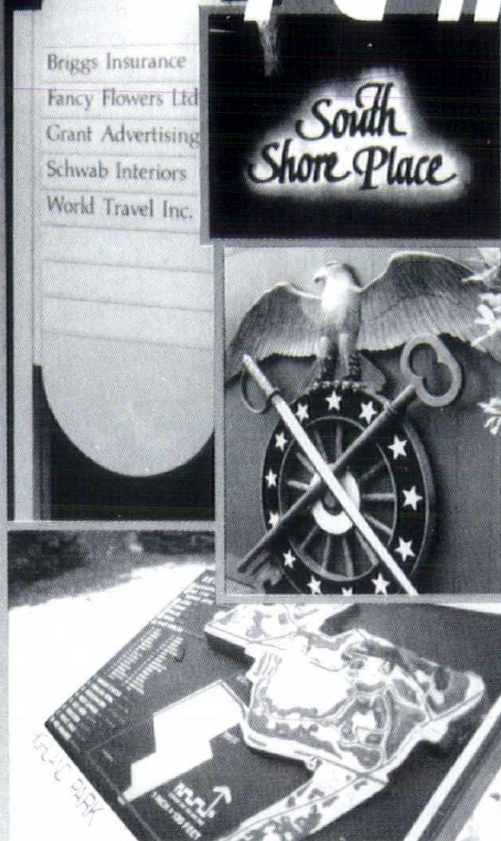
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Stepping Back Into Silence continued

Kahn's Beaux-Arts training at the University of Pennsylvania, his early years as a designer in area offices, his work on the Sesquicentennial Exposition and his schemes for urban Philadelphia.

Section two, "The Mind Opens to Realizations," explores Kahn's evolution into a mature artist, with a look at projects such as the Yale University Art Gallery, the Jewish Community Center and the Alfred Newton Richards Medical Research Building.

The third section, "Assembly ... A Place of Transcendence," focuses on Kahn's religious and governmental institutional structures, such as the Dhaka, Bangladesh project. In section four, "The Houses of Inspirations," Kahn's center of learning and research—the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, CA, and the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, for example—are featured.

"The Forum of the Availabilities," the fifth section, is dedicated to so-called "Designs for Choice," such as the Fine Arts Center, School, and Performing Arts Theater in Fort Wayne, Indiana. "Light, the Giver of All Presences," finally, illuminates Kahn's symbiotic relationship with light, showcasing such works as the Kimbell Art Museum, the Yale Center for British Art and the unbuilt Memorial to the Six Million Jewish Martyrs, designed for New York's Battery Park.

Can the retrospective be influential? Will it enlighten? "We believe the exhibit will speak to two audiences," says Brownlee. "First is the general audience, for whom an architectural exhibit offers the opportunity of discovering architecture itself in a somewhat unexpected place—the art museum. By virtue of the variety of innovative presentation techniques—the use of video, the full-scale model of parts of an unbuilt Kahn project, the models—we believe we will engage the interest of the lay audience."

For the architecturally aware, the retrospective comes, says Brownlee, at an interesting time. "Kahn deserves recognition as the leading figure of post-war architecture. It is time we come to terms with the accomplishments of his generation, time to look again at how parts of post-modernism are rooted in his work."

It is also time, concludes Brownlee, to look ahead to an architecture that, though not yet fulfilled, beckons. "The challenge thrown down by Kahn's work is to create building forms that are at once responsive to the specificities of program and of historical meaning, and at the same time evoke enduring and universal values. His work is, in every sense, perched in an exciting but precarious position between abstraction and narrative, on the one hand, and the specifics of human daily life and the generalities of a universal order, on the other."

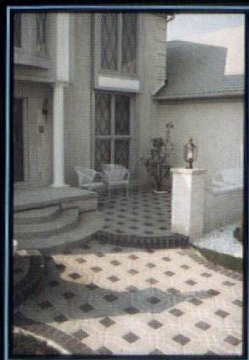
Beth Kephart Sulit is a freelance writer residing in Glenside, Pennsylvania. □

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