

TWENTY WAYS HOME

1.
TWENTY WAYS HOME
FACULTY DESIGN SUBMISSION
ACSA 2026 ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION AWARDS

2026 ACSA EDUCATION AWARDS - FACULTY DESIGN
SUBMISSION ID #4903

IMAGE: "Airocean" Dymaxion Map, R. Buckminster Fuller + Shoji Sadao, 1954

A home is the foundation of everyone's consciousness, for it enables us to recognize the world.

- Vilem Flusser, Home and Homelessness





We are constantly arriving; the innumerable circumstances are forever culminating in this glance, this meeting, this collision, this conversation, like pieces in a kaleidoscope forever coming into focus...

- Rebecca Solnit, *Arrival Gatas*

TWENTY WAYS HOME

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PROJECT ABSTRACT

This adaptive reuse project reimagines a former church as a multi-building complex for a social services organization that supports refugees and immigrants in the resettlement process. It includes two types of design work: a strategic plan for the entire site, featuring a new landscape and accessory structures, and small interior interventions into the church's historic fabric to transform it into a non-denominational sanctuary – a temporary home away from home.

The project explores issues of displacement as they are associated with a historically significant building and a new program that supports an emerging community seeking basic human needs and rights as its members find their place in a new world. In this context, adaptive reuse is seen through the wider lens of adaptation writ large. The design takes up alternatives to the binary conceptual framework of “old” and “new” that form the basis of the traditional playbook of adaptive reuse practices. It uses design techniques that take as their starting point the leftovers, aftermaths, and side-effects of displacement. Based upon broken-world thinking, such a design approach aims to demonstrate how an expanded repertoire of creative practices and imaginative paradigms can transform traditional ideas of architecture's object-hood, permanence, and value.

The design aims to enact transformative change with modest means. It does this in twenty diverse ways that are values-based, resourceful, and understated...each one intended as a modest act of making and re-making home.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

DISPLACEMENTS

This social impact design envisions a **transitional home for a vulnerable community** of people impacted by a humanitarian crisis. The project is for a not-for-profit social services organization that supports local immigrants and refugees who have been displaced from their home countries because of war, persecution, or violence. Their mission is to assist these people as they work to rebuild their lives in a new country. The design is conceptually framed by the intersection of two contemporary societal changes – **an increase in global migration and a decline in organized religion in the US.**

The architectural implications of these dynamics – the need for basic shelter/services for people displaced from their home(land), on the one hand, and houses of worship that have lost their original use, on the other - is at the center of the project's design. Its objective is to reimagine a local “ghost” church as global gateway that is welcoming, inclusive, and safe.

RESOURCEFULNESS

The new campus is envisioned as a place with a non-institutional character that is informal but dignified.

Located in Albany, NY, the site is in a suburban residential neighborhood one block away from a medium-density urban commercial district. The site design reorganizes the existing outdoors spaces as a **series of enclosed, interconnected gardens that redefine the character of the place as a “cloistered” sanctuary.** The design combines 2 existing lots to create a new landscape between the existing buildings that is open, flexible, and secure. The existing grounds are reshaped as **an artificial topography of 3 primary activity zones**, with 2 slopes up and 1 terrace down that provide direct access to the buildings at multiple levels. Using a “cut + fill” technique, **this new ground is constructed using 100% recycled earth fill excavated directly from the site** and reconfigured to create unique activity pockets and flexible indoor-outdoor relationships.

ADAPTATIONS

The adaptive reuse strategy aims to re-align the existing buildings to the client's mission through a **strategic series of repairs, alterations, additions, and subtractions.**

The primary structure on the property is a former Methodist church listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It consists of two wings – a sanctuary and parish hall. Through a **series of small interior building cuts**, key portions of the church's historic fabric are opened to improve flow and functionality. In addition to basic repairs and upgrades, the design work is focused on converting the original sanctuary into a non-denominational, multi-purpose space for community meetings, educational events, and public performances. A core design goal is to adapt the building's historical significance as a landmarked structure to the contemporary cultural context of global migration. To this end, the existing religious iconography and ecclesiastical architecture are de-centered and placed into dialog with new materials, geometry, and references that are multi-cultural and non-hierarchical. The church altar is replaced by a flexible stage, the existing church pews are recycled as built-in millwork elements, and the pipe organ chamber is converted into a multifaith quiet room. **Building cuts made to the exterior shell** include a new skylight that transforms the former chancel area into an open “skyroom” and a basement-level entry that connects a new community room to an exterior amphitheater. This new indoor-outdoor connection is coupled with a similar alteration to the existing 2-story parsonage on the other side of the site to form a **new semi-enclosed, multi-level “cloister”.** Here, a portion of the building's rear entry is replaced with the addition of a new canopy structure that reorients the youth center directly towards the new center of the campus...

...a local commons for a global community to call home for a while.

LOCAL CHURCH AS GLOBAL GATEWAY

TOWARDS AN ARCHITECTURE OF DISPLACEMENT, ADAPTATION, + RESOURCEFULNESS



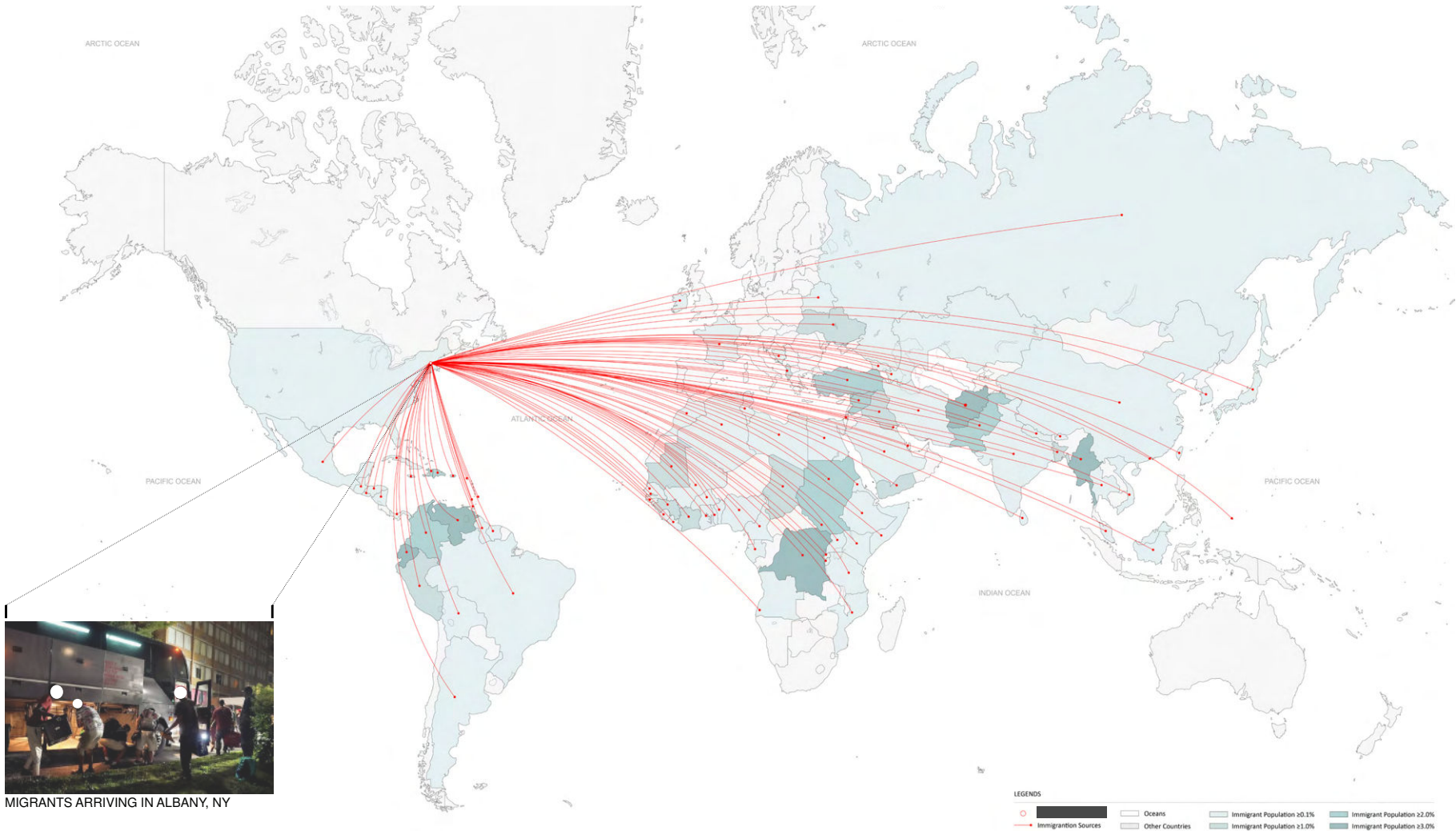
EXISTING SITE WITH RAMP



VIEW OF NEW CAMPUS FROM PLAYGROUND

HOME LANDS

MAPPING OF GLOBAL MIGRATION FLOWS TO SITE



MIGRANTS ARRIVING IN ALBANY, NY

LIST OF HOME COUNTRIES / TERRITORIES

ARRIVALS TO [] SINCE APRIL 2022

Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Brazil	Cuba	Ethiopia	India	Grenada	Japan	Malaysia	Nepal	Qatar	South Africa	Taiwan	Uganda
Albania	Barbados	Burkina Faso	Democratic Republic of Congo	Federated States of Micronesia	Indonesia	Guatemala	Kenya	Mali	Nicaragua	Russia	South Korea	Tanzania	Ukraine
Algeria	Belarus	Burundi	Dominican Republic	France	Iran	Guinea	Kuwait	Mauritania	Nigeria	Rwanda	South Sudan	Thailand	United States
Angola	Benin	Cameroon	Ecuador	Gabon	Iraq	Guinea-Bissau	Lebanon	Mexico	Pakistan	Saudi Arabia	Sri Lanka	Togo	Venezuela
Anguilla	Bhutan	Chad	Egypt	Gambia	Ireland	Guyana	Liberia	Morocco	Panama	Senegal	Sudan	Trinidad and Tobago	Vietnam
Argentina	Bolivia	China	El Salvador	Georgia	Ivory Coast	Haiti	Libya	Mozambique	Peru	Sierra Leone	Suriname	Tunisia	
Azerbaijan	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Colombia	Eritrea	Ghana	Jamaica	Honduras	Macau	Myanmar (Burma)	Puerto Rico	Somalia	Syria	Turkey	Yemen

GHOST CHURCHES

MAPPING VACANCY AND DEMOLITION OF LOCAL CHURCHES



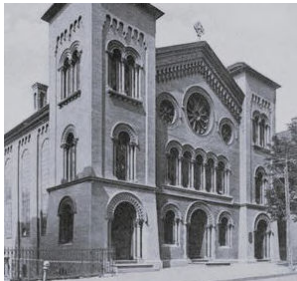
● St. John's Roman Catholic Church



● Trinity Episcopal Church



● First Methodist Church / Trinity Church



● St. Paul's Episcopal Church



● St. Joseph's Church / 38 Ten Broeck St.



● Emmaus United Methodist Church



● St. Paul's Lutheran Church



● First Lutheran Church



● Church of the Holy Innocents



● St. Peter's Episcopal Church



● Elijah Missionary Baptist Church



● Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church

MAP OF GHOST CHURCHES IN ALBANY, NY



INDEX OF GHOST CHURCHES

● DEMOLISHED

- Church of the Assumption
- Elijah Missionary Baptist Church
- First Congregational Church (1795, 1866)
- First Methodist Church/Trinity Church
- Holy Cross Church
- St. Patrick Episcopal Church
- St. Patrick Chapel

- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church (1)
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church (2)
- St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church
- Trinity Episcopal Church

○ ACTIVE

● VACANT/ABANDONED

- Betney Lutheran Church
- German United Methodist Church
- Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church
- Christian Ministries Church
- Church of the Holy Innocents
- First Methodist Episcopal Church
- First Lutheran Church
- Macedonia Church—God in Christ

- Metropolitan New Life Church
- New Jerusalem Home of the Saved
- St. John's Roman Catholic Church
- St. Joseph's Church
- Third Reformed Church
- Trinity Methodist Episcopal
- Victory Christian Church

URBAN BLOCK: VOIDS + ISLANDS

EXISTING CONDITIONS + PROPOSED SITE PLAN

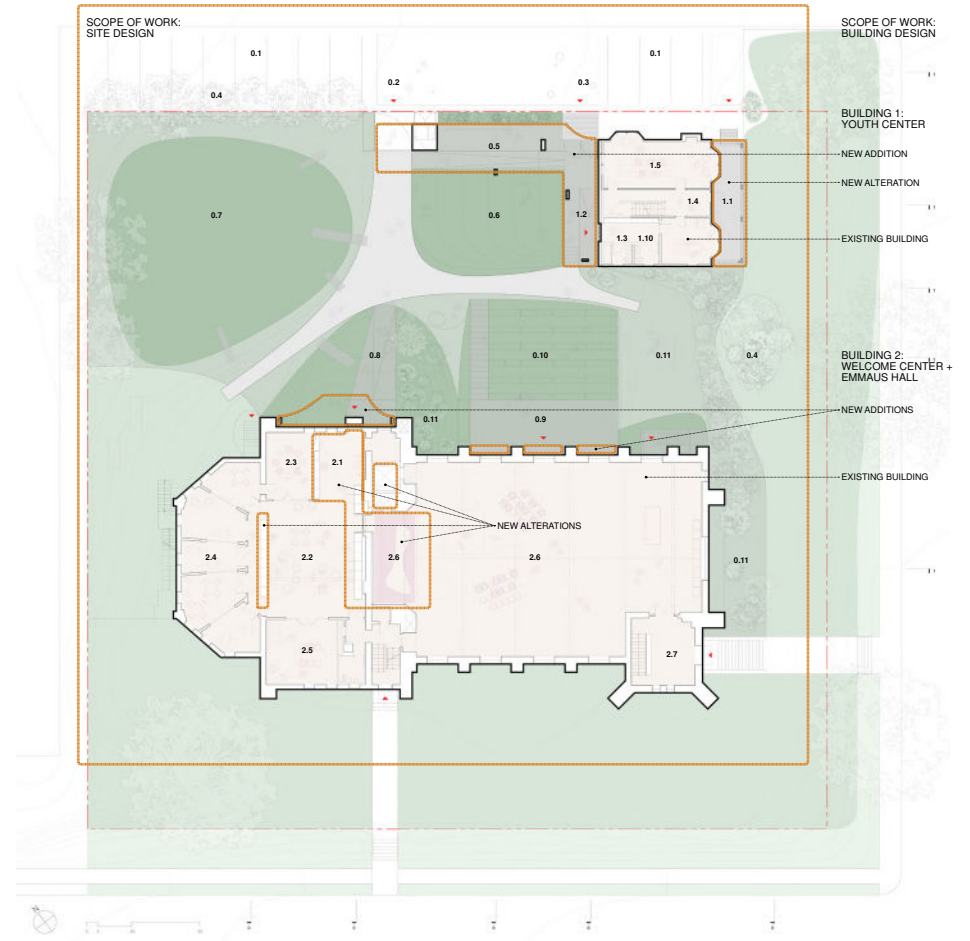
PHOTOS OF EXISTING SITE



EXISTING SITE CONTEXT

PROGRAM KEY

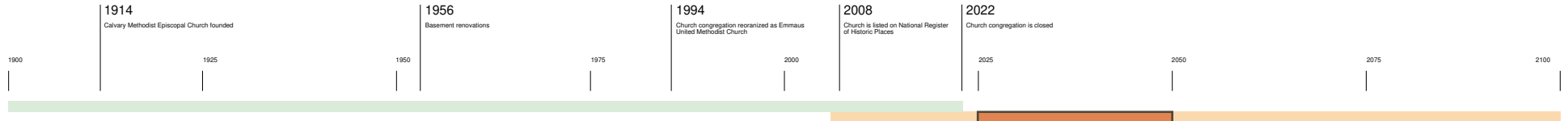
SITE	BUILDING 1: YOUTH CENTER	BUILDING 2: WELCOME CENTER + EMMAUS HALL
0.1 SITE PARKING	1.1 PORCH 1 (EXISTING / ENCLOSED)	2.1 ENTRY / RECEPTION
0.2 SITE ENTRY 1	1.2 PORCH 2 (NEW / OPEN AIR)	2.2 LOUNGE
0.3 SITE ENTRY 2	1.3 ENTRY	2.3 OFFICE
0.4 SITE BUFFER	1.4 HALL	2.4 MEETING ROOM
0.5 ENTRY PAVILION	1.5 CLASSROOM 1	2.5 LIBRARY
0.6 COMMONS	1.6 CLASSROOM 2	2.6 MULTI-PURPOSE HALL
0.7 PLAYGROUND	1.7 CLASSROOM 3	2.7 TOWER
0.8 UPPER TERRACE	1.8 CLASSROOM 3	2.8 COMMUNITY ROOM
0.9 LOWER TERRACE	1.9 OFFICE	2.9 KITCHEN
0.10 AMPITHEATER	1.10 BATHROOM	2.10 BATHROOM
0.11 GARDEN	1.11 STORAGE	2.11 STORAGE



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

1 HOME, 2 BUILDINGS, 20 WAYS

PROJECT PLANNING + PHASING



TIMELINE

PHASING SEQUENCE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PHASE 1: BUILDINGS / EXTERIOR

REPAIRS + UPGRADES

- 1 **HOLEY HOLES**
SETBACK MONUMENTAL STAINED GLASS WINDOW. CONSIDER REMOVAL AND SALE OF OTHER STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.
- 2 **BRICK BY BRICK**
REPAIR EXTERIOR MASONRY SKILL TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES.
- 3 **COMFORT**
UPGRADE PASSIVE AND ACTIVE HEATING/COOLING SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE INTERIOR COMFORT AND USABILITY.

WAYFINDING + REPROGRAMMING

- 4 **TRADING PLACES**
RELOCATE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS/OFFICES TO PARISH HALL WELCOME CENTER + CLASSROOMS TO PARISH HALL CHILDREN'S CENTER.
- 5 **FACE LIFT**
PAINT THE EXTERIOR OF THE NEW CHILDREN'S CENTER TO CREATE A NEW MISSION-ALIGNED PUBLIC IDENTITY FOR THE COMMUNITY ART PROJECT.
- 6 **BEACON**
PAINT THE CHURCH'S BRICKSTRACK TO CREATE A NEW MISSION-ALIGNED PUBLIC BEACON FOR THE NEW CAMPUS.

PHASE 2: BUILDINGS / INTERIOR

ALTERATIONS + INTERVENTIONS + EVENTS

- 7 **GATHERINGS**
HYPER USE OF SANCTUARY EVENTS, SHORT-TERM RENTAL, ETC.
- 8 **UNLOCK THE CORE**
IMPROVE INTERNAL CIRCULATION BETWEEN SANCTUARY + PARISH HALL THROUGH THE STRATEGIC REMOVAL OF EXISTING ELEMENTS.
- 9 **ALTER ALTAR / LET THERE BE LIGHT**
TRANSFORM FORMER PARISH HALL CENTER INTO FLEXIBLE, NON-CONVENTIONAL SPACE THROUGH THE STRATEGIC REMOVAL OF EXISTING ELEMENTS.
- 10 **A HALL FOR ALL**
TRANSFORM FORMER SANCTUARY INTO FLEXIBLE, NON-CONVENTIONAL SPACE THROUGH THE ADDITION OF SMALL BUILT-IN + MOVABLE INTERVENTIONS.
- 11 **AN UNHIDDEN HUB**
REMOVE UPSPACE BASEMENT LEVEL INTO FLEXIBLE, ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACE WITH NEW KITCHEN AND STORAGE/PARTITION ELEMENTS.
- 12 **ART TOWER**
TRANSFORM BELL TOWER INTO A PUBLIC GALLERY BY REMOVING UNUSED FLOOR LEVELS.
- 13 **ROOM TO GROW**
ORGANIZE CHURCH INTERIORS TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGES OVER TIME, INCLUDING MULTI-USE PROGRAMMING.

PHASE 3: SITE DESIGN

REMOVALS + REGRADING, + REPLANTING

- 14 **NO MORE OBSTRUCTIONS**
REMOVE RAMP + ACCESSORY STRUCTURES.
- 15 **FREESPACE**
ADD GARDENS AS SINGLE INTER-CONNECTED ACTIVITY POCKETS.
- 16 **CUT + FILL TOPOGRAPHY**
MODIFY GROUND SLOPES TO INCREASE CONNECTIVITY AND INCREASE VISIBLE MULTI-LEVEL LANDSCAPE.
- 17 **GARDEN FEATURES**
DIVERSIFY PLANTING AND MATERIAL TEXTURES.

ADDITIONS + ENCLOSURE

- 18 **ENTRY PAVILIONS**
NEW BUILDING ADDITIONS AT EXISTING BUILDINGS.
- 19 **BUFFER**
NEW SECURITY FENCE AND LANDSCAPE BUFFER AT SITE PERIMETER.
- 20 **PARKING**
UPGRADED SITE PARKING WITH INTEGRATED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS POINTS.

A NEW COMMONS

EXISTING: PARKING + CHURCH + PARSONAGE
PROPOSED: ENTRY PAVILION + WELCOME CENTER/EMMAUS HALL + CHILDREN'S HOUSE CENTER
PHASE: 20 / 20



EXISTING CHURCH + PARSONAGE



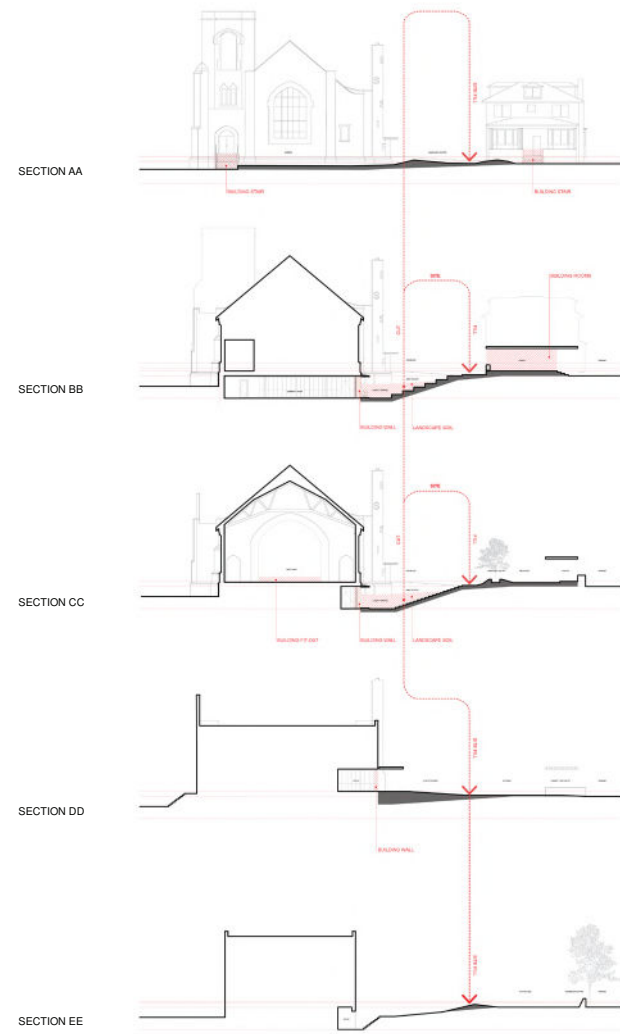
VIEW OF SITE ENTRY / PAVILION FROM PUBLIC STREET

ENCLOSURES: CANOPY, CLOISTER, CUT + FILL

EXISTING: PARKING + CHURCHYARD
PROPOSED: ENTRY PAVILION + WELCOME CENTER/EMMAUS HALL
PHASE: 15-19 / 20



VIEW OF SITE ENTRY



KEY
 ■ AREA OF CUT
 ■ AREA OF FILL
 → REUSE PATHWAY

SECTION DIAGRAMS OF SITE CUT + FILL

CONSTRUCTED GROUND AS FREESPACE

EXISTING: CHURCHYARD
PROPOSED: GARDENS + ENTRY PAVILION
PHASE: 4-5,16,18 / 20



VIEW OF CANOPY + YOUTH CENTER (FORMER PARSONAGE)



VIEW FROM CANOPY OF THE EMMAUS HALL (FORMER CHURCH)

GARDENS FOR GATHERINGS

EXISTING: CHURCHYARD + CHURCH
PROPOSED: OPEN-AIR AMPITHEATER
PHASE: 11,16,18 / 20



EXISTING CHURCHYARD

VIEW OF OPEN-AIR AMPITHEATER + COMMUNITY ROOM ENTRY

A HIDDEN HUB

EXISTING: CHURCH BASEMENT / CAFETERIA
PROPOSED: COMMUNITY ROOM + PUBLIC CAFE
PHASE: 11,16 / 20



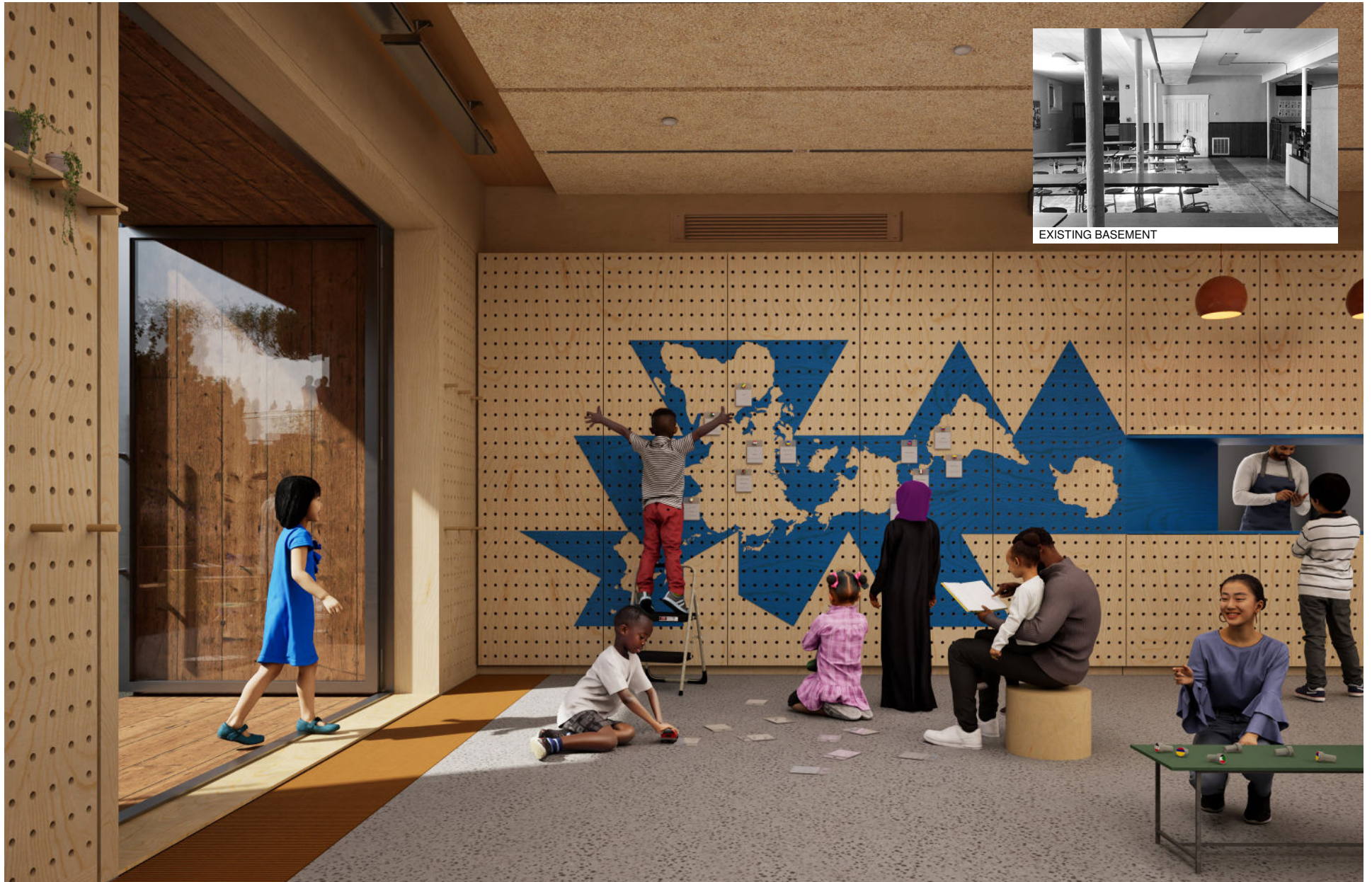
VIEW OF OPEN-AIR AMPITHEATER FROM BASEMENT



VIEW OF COMMUNITY ROOM

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

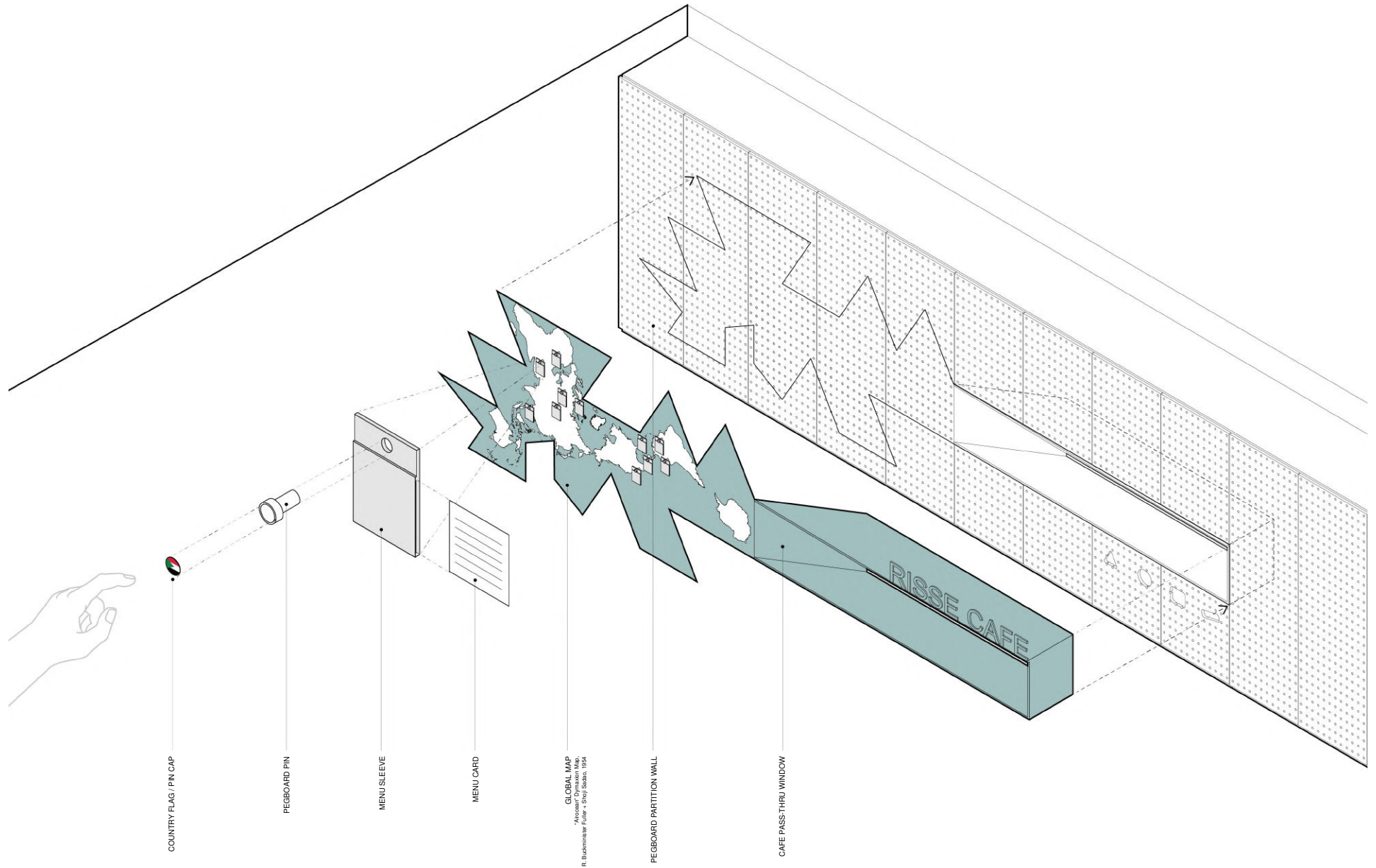
EXISTING: CHURCH BASEMENT / CAFETERIA
PROPOSED: COMMUNITY ROOM + PUBLIC CAFE
PHASE: 11,13 / 20



VIEW OF COMMUNITY ROOM TOWARDS "ONE ISLAND" MENU-MAP

ONE ISLAND MENU MAP

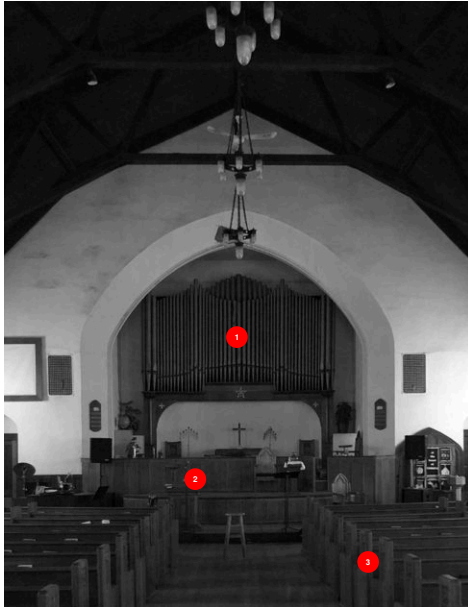
EXISTING: CHURCH BASEMENT / CAFETERIA
PROPOSED: COMMUNITY ROOM + PUBLIC CAFE
PHASE: 11,13 / 20



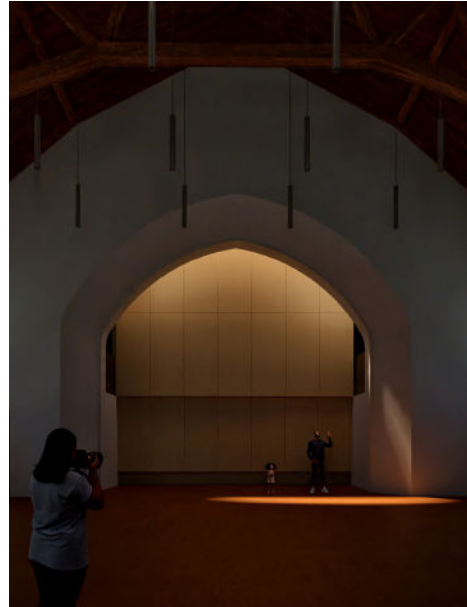
ISOMETRIC OF "ONE ISLAND" MENU-MAP

A HALL FOR ALL

EXISTING: CHURCH / MAIN SANCTUARY
PROPOSED: EMMAUS HALL / MULTI-PURPOSE SPACE
PHASE: 9,10 / 20



EXISTING SANCTUARY



HALL "A" - PERMANENT INTERVENTION (CLOSED)



HALL "B" - PERMANENT INTERVENTION (OPEN)

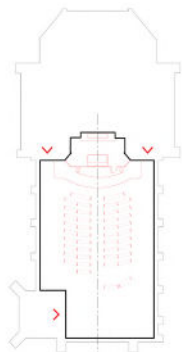


HALL "C" - TEMPORARY INSTALLATION

- 1 PIPE ORGAN
- 2 ALTAR / CHANCEL / CHOIR
- 3 CHURCH PEWS

PLAN LAYOUTS

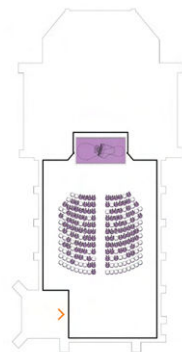
EXISTING CONGREGATION



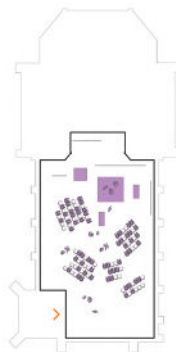
EXISTING CHURCH



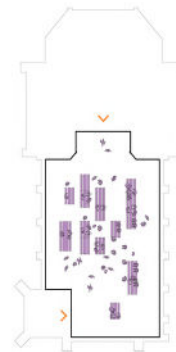
NEW CONFIGURATIONS



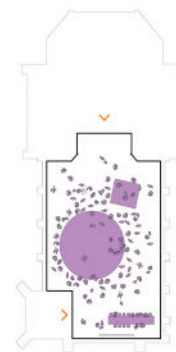
STAGE / PERFORMING ARTS



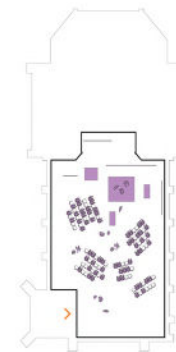
MULTI-STAGE PLATFORMS



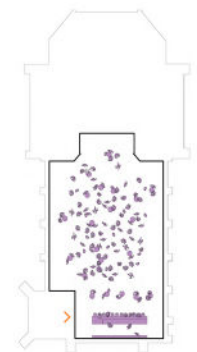
SMALL-GROUP MEET-UPS



ART GALLERY



MULTI-STAGE PLATFORMS

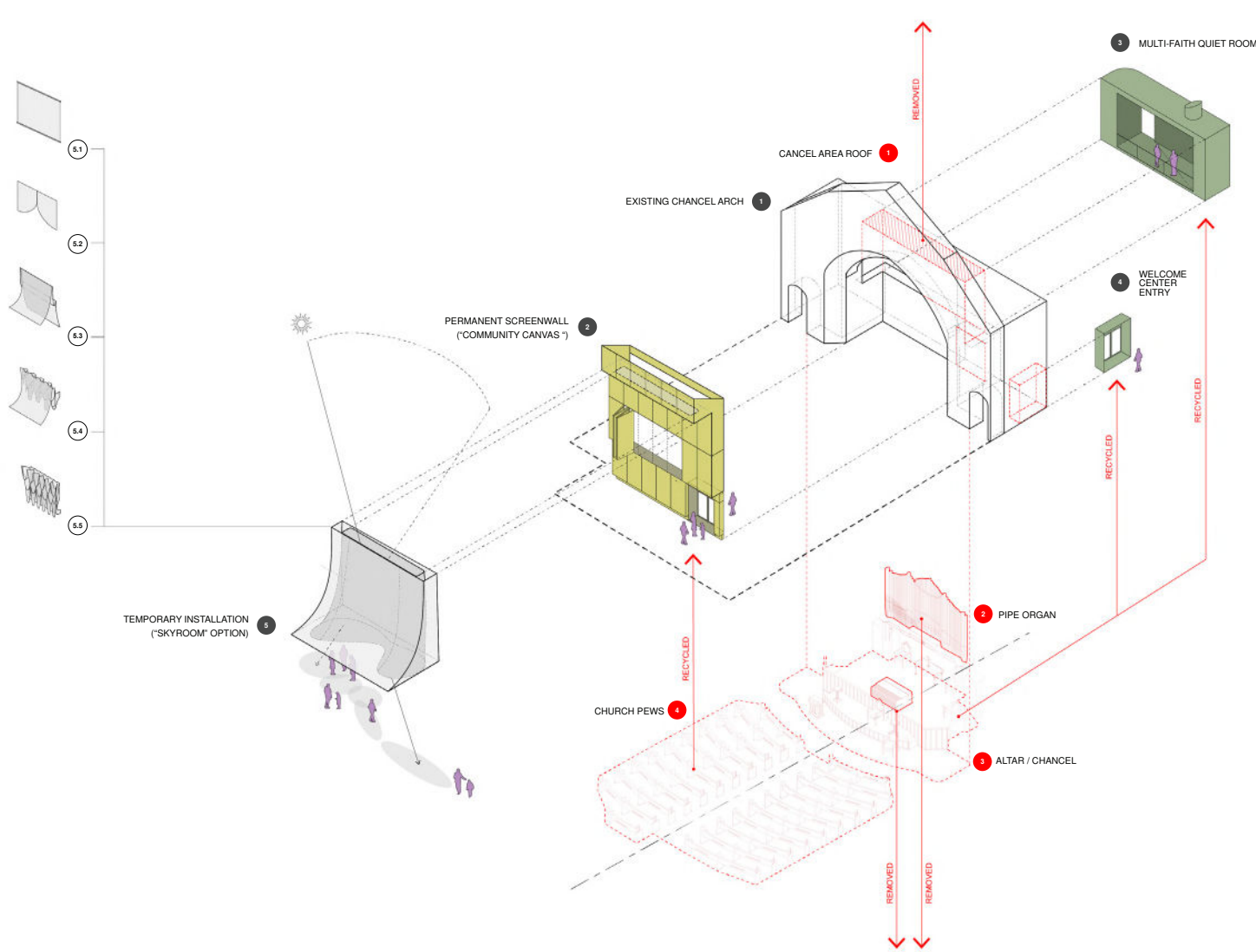


INFORMAL GATHERING

- KEY
- EXISTING ARCHITECTURE
 - PROPOSED ARCHITECTURE
 - INTERIOR

ALTER ALTAR

EXISTING: CHURCH / MAIN SANCTUARY
 PROPOSED: EMMAUS HALL / MULTI-PURPOSE SPACE
 PHASE: 8,9,10 / 20



NEW ALTERATIONS + INTERVENTIONS

EXISTING LITURGICAL ELEMENTS



EXISTING CHANCEL ARCH

- 1 CHANCEL AREA CEILING / ROOF
- 2 PIPE ORGAN / CHAMBER
- 3 ALTAR / CHANCEL
- 4 CHURCH PEWS

KEY
 [Red dashed line] RECYCLED AREA
 [Red arrow] REMOVE ELEMENT

A TRANSITIONAL SANCTUARY

EXISTING: CHURCH / MAIN SANCTUARY
PROPOSED: EMMAUS HALL + SKYROOM
PHASE: 9 / 20



VIEW OF SKYROOM + MULTI-PURPOSE HALL



VIEW OF SKYROOM

CREDITS

TITLE: Twenty Ways Home

LOCATION: [REDACTED] Albany, NY

TYPE: Public Assembly / Community / Educational; Adaptive Reuse + Site Planning

SIZE: Site: 37,200 sf; Buildings: 17,000 sf

DATE: September 2025

PRIMARY AUTHOR:
(NOMINEE): [REDACTED]
Role: Principal in Charge + Lead Designer

CONTRIBUTORS: [REDACTED]
Role: Project Designer + Member

[REDACTED]
Role: Project Team Member

[REDACTED]
Role: Researcher / Documentation + Visioning

FUNDING SOURCES
+ COMPENSATION: This project was undertaken and executed by the nominee's professional design office as pro bono services.

The Principal in Charge donated all time at no cost as part of the office's pro bono services.

A team of two employees (Project Designer + Team members) were paid for their work.

A student ("Researcher") contributed work to this project independently from the office's scope of work. This work was undertaken in an academic context and the student received 1-credit Undergraduate Research Project at [REDACTED]

THANK YOU: This project was initiated by the Board of Directors of [REDACTED]

It is only because of their extraordinary commitment to this organization's mission to support a vulnerable population of people in the name of fundamental human rights and dignity that this project is possible.

Additional support was provided by the School of Architecture at [REDACTED] specifically Dean [REDACTED] and Program Director [REDACTED] in its initial incarnation as an academic design studio.

* Location information is redacted at the request of the client in the interest of maintaining privacy for the community they support.