ARCHITECTURE & FAITH
[ creating space for the sacred experience ]

light
organization and procession
symbolism
materials
connection to context
manifestation of the sacred
volume proportions
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Thank you!

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[ creating space for the sacred experience ]
Worshipers of a religion have a need to connect with their deity within the chaos of the world. Buildings provide a place of worship in which worshipers can escape business, the everyday, stress, pain, noise, and loss sense of identity while turning it in to peace, control, harmony, strength, and happiness. How can the design of a worship space aid in having a sacred experience? There are architectural elements that will help in the design of a place of worship: organization, procession, volume, proportions, manifestation of the sacred, light, materials, connections to context, and symbolism.

Church, for many people, is a place to retreat from the everyday world to worship their God. Where is the everyday world more profane than in a chaotic urban setting? This is why the selected site is in Chicago's downtown, where the challenge of finding and creating a sacred oasis within the hustle and bustle is very difficult. There are many people in downtown, but not many churches in relation to the number of people. This will be of Presbyterian denomination, more specifically a part of The Presbyterian Church in America (P.C.A.). The building is designed with the values and beliefs of the worshipers in mind. It is also designed in response to the context and society of downtown Chicago. However, the chief objective was to explore how architecture can generate a sacred experience.
Each one of us has a need to feel significant, have a sense of meaning, and order in our lives. As Eliade says in *The Sacred and the Profane*, “human beings cannot live in chaos.” (34) Many people have certain beliefs, thoughts, and ideas about what they feel are important. Religion is the answer for many people. Different religions usually have space where they can worship, pray, talk, and teach. Buildings of these religions can aid in the experience of the believers. It is the experience you have in those spaces that is sacred. How can architecture create spaces for the sacred experience? Certain characteristics of buildings that can be analyzed are: organization and procession of space, volume and proportions, manifestation of the sacred, light and materials, connections to context, and symbolism. Together, these elements can be considered in design to give the user a sacred experience of a space.
Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane.” (Eliaude 11) Architecture can create spaces in which people will have this experience and help make the experience more potent by thoughtfully distancing itself from “profane” environments, as seen by the lobby (white box) of the Kennedy Library (upper right). In this way a person can connect with the deity they are worshiping better. It heightens the awareness of the worshiper, setting up the frame of mind for worship of the deity.

It is critical to look at the hierarchy, location, and procession within a building. The most sacred space of a building is usually located at the center. This denotes the significance and point of reference for the rest of the building and the culture as a whole. Eliaude agrees: “holy sites and sanctuaries are believed to be situated at the center.” (39) Sacred space at the center gives orientation and meaning, “sacred space makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity, to ‘found the world’ and to live in a real sense.” (Eliaude 23) Without a place of an orientation people would not be able to function. These reasons are why the lobby of Kennedy Library is at the Center (upper right). This is why people create sanctuaries; “place is made by the circle of people...for the time of the service; a centre is created.” (Maguire 8) The sacred is the center of our lives.
Places of worship exist within the real, profane, world. There are little pockets of the sacred found all over the world. This does not create a problem with the sacred being the center of life. Eliade states, “sacred space...has an entirely different structure...admits of an infinite number of breaks and hence is capable of an infinite number of communications with the transcendent.” (57) So it is not uncommon to find more than one sacred space within one building. For example, look at the wall found in Ronchamp Chapel, each window creates its own sacred space within the wall (above). People can have a sacred experience anywhere they have access to their deity.

The procession of spaces from the profane world to the sacred is an essential act of preparing one for worship, for the sacred experience. It signifies the importance of what will be experienced at the end of the journey. An act of cleansing, shedding the everyday world before one enters the space. The voyage acts as a threshold of departure from the profane and into the sanctified; “the threshold that separates the two spaces also indicates the distance between two modes of being, the profane and the religious.” (Eliade 25) This is why there is a long journey into the meditation pavilion (left). To have a truly sacred experience many steps may be needed to break someone from their everyday life.

Volume and proportions of the space also signify the importance, meaning, and function of a sacred space. Mann says,”shapes in specific buildings evoked deep feelings, ancient drives and powerful realization.” (8) Larger spaces are usually gathering spaces and of high importance. It is also important to have personal space, because individual experiences can be just as sacred as communal ones. The reading nooks in the Kennedy Library design provide for this. It can be a time of personal reflection and thought, meaning much more to one’s soul.
The form of a space can also have meaning behind it, whether it is a simple shape or a complex one. Does it make people feel insignificant or big? Does it have a center, or is it asymmetrical? Is there meaning behind the shape? Mann sums it up: “square, circle, triangle and other primary plane shapes and their equivalent solid shapes (cube, sphere, and pyramid) transcend historical, religious, cultural, civilization and social influences—these shapes and their proportions are found in virtually all sacred architecture.” (16) Are primary shapes the only shapes that can be found in “sacred architecture?”

The direction in which spaces are oriented may also have influence on how sacred a space might feel. For example, most if not all Islamic synagogues face towards Mecca, and chancels in Christian churches are oriented eastward. The Cardinal Directions are emphasized in the Meditation Pavilion design to give orientation (above). It is also important how interior spaces are connected to their surrounding context does it; disturb something special, respect it, or ignore the exterior? How does this reflect the experience on the interior?

Light and materials go hand in hand with producing the feeling of sacred space. Light is needed so that materials can be seen, and textures manipulate how light is seen. Together they set the mood of a space. Responses to a space are dramatically altered with a different set of materials and lighting conditions.
In almost any religion light is important both symbolically and physically in the places of worship. There is a mystery to light; people cannot touch light, but they can feel and see it. The quality of light in a space can be manipulated to create intrigue. “Light has been a fundamental part of the faith experience, both as a symbolic representation of the beneficial deity and as a literal representation of faith.” (Roberts 209) Psychologically speaking, people are affected by light subconsciously. Sunlight tends to lift the spirits of many people, and make them more alert. Some religions also integrate light in their theology. Besides allowing people to see, light can be a symbol in itself, an analogy. At night, without sunlight, the quality of artificial light has to be considered. Electrical light can pinpoint important spaces, displays, and objects by making them the center of attention. For example, the lobby at the Kennedy Library would glow at night, emphasizing the central space (above). It can also make ambient lighting levels more controllable. How can considerations of light quality contribute to the making of a sacred experience in architecture?

Materials have an amazing effect on how someone feels in a space. The mood of a place can be changed significantly by the materials. “It is material qualities...that signal that the visitor has entered a special place.” (Roberts 179) Does a sacred space feel cold/warm, solid/weak, heavy/light, pure/impure, bland/rich, transparent/opaque, and smooth or textured? Materials have to be chosen based on what type of feeling a sacred space should have. Should people be comfortable/uncomfortable, in shock or emotionless, safe or unsafe? In the Meditation Pavilion, the central sacred space is surrounded by a strong concrete wall to provide a sense of retreat (left).
Connecting to context is an issue all buildings have to deal with, but for sacred spaces there may be more symbolic reasons. For instance, the context that surrounds the building may or may not parallel what is going on with the inside of the building. It depends on what the beliefs of the religion are to determine what the best course of action is. An example would be a sacred space that looks out into the woods because nature is part of that religion. However, in the same religion in a dense urban context, that space should not connect to the context.

Religions usually have symbolism associated with them. These symbols are linked with a meaning or purpose. “Symbolic architecture is based on principles which extend beyond formal rules, because they tap into the unconscious and mythic layers of being and activate higher spiritual qualities.” (Mann 14) They are used in remembrance of something. Many times these symbols are tacked on a wall or a stand-alone object. How can the building incorporate these symbols into the design of the building? Can symbols be rooted in layout and design, becoming more integrated?

Analyzing elements of architecture, such as these, and exploring their impact on the architectural experience can help a designer create sacred spaces for the worship of a deity. Ideally a user should feel that a certain space is meant to contain worship. Worshipers must feel comfortable and want to worship in a space. How can these separate elements of architecture be designed to produce this goal? Places of worship are important; people need to connect with something higher and bigger than themselves. The search of this thesis investigation is for an architecture to facilitate the worshipers’ connection with their deity.
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
Rafael Moneo
Los Angeles, California

Light quality is the major focal element of this church. It is mostly day lit by huge clerestories that are filled with alabaster. This gives a warm spiritually ambient light that fills the space. It also disconnects the worshipers from the surrounding context because they only experience the exterior through filtered light. It seems so calm and serene, while on the outside there is a major highway right along the site. The crucifix is a major element of the sanctuary and is found within the largest of the alabaster clerestories. It is a strong gesture that shows the reason why worshipers are in that space. It is a good way of interlacing symbolism into a building without simply tacking it on a wall. Worshipers start in a parking lot or street, go through a plaza, through the ambulatory, and into the sanctuary for a long procession of spaces to prepare them for the subsequent experience. The building makes a big statement by manifesting itself out of the expanse of the plaza. Materials are simple, pure, and solid.
The concept behind this chapel is seven colored bottles of light. Exterior light is bounced through colored baffles to create the different “bottles” inside the building. There are very few areas in the building where direct light is allowed in, and if it is the source is kept hidden. Within the sanctuary one can not see the context, once again disconnecting the worshipers from world. However, in this project, there are light and dark areas. Materials are also very important, because the texture applied to the walls makes the light quality more dramatic.

Procession from the plaza, into the entry, and then into the sanctuary seems short and sudden. Volumes and proportions of the design seem to be arbitrary yet comfortable to be in, however the sanctuary is wider than it is deep. The crucifix seems pasted on the wall, but when light comes through the baffle, it becomes a powerful well thought out symbol.
Islamic Center of New York City
S.O.M.
New York, New York

There is a distinct *procession of space* from the gate, through the courtyard, into a small entrance, and then into the large prayer hall in this project. *Proportions* lend themselves to being pure geometric shapes that humble users at human scale. The dome *manifests* itself as something different on top of the rest of the structure to represent something important happening underneath it. *Light* is brought in through translucent clerestories, and artificial light is arranged in a circle hung from the ceiling. *Orientation* to Mecca was important, so the designers took great care in making sure it was correct. Literal *symbolisms* of Islam are used in small scale; however, typical Islamic architecture was used as a symbol but given a more modern basic appearance.
Upon entering the site a user would cross a bridge, travel through a small hallway, and then enter the center temple. This procession brings users on a journey to prepare them for meditation and prayer. The wood structured temple at the center of the site manifests itself by rising out of the smooth water of the pond surrounding it. Proportions are that of a square in plan. A soft glow of light is emitted into the temple filtered by the framework and a translucent material. Materials are warm and oversized. Once inside the only connection to context is through light. Traditional Japanese temple architecture is abstractly symbolized in the architecture.
Beth Sholom Synagogue
Frank Lloyd Wright
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

Before entering, users experience a fountain that symbolizes purity before entering. Inside, the proportions reveal a soaring height. On the exterior the shape of the building represents Mount Sinai and also projects out of the surrounding landscape. Light is emitted through translucent panels producing a soft glow, but not allowing the context to be seen. On the ridges, seven lights symbolize the menorah.
These next two projects were completed in the fall semester of thesis year, and aided in the development of thesis ideas for the final project. Both used the architectural elements discussed in the previous sections (organization, procession of space, volume, proportions, manifestation of the sacred, light, materials, and connections to context). However, some of the elements were more important than others, based on project criteria. For example, form and materials was focused more on in the Meditation Pavilion design than organization of space.
Meditation Pavilion
Design Study
Fall 2005

This project is located on Ball State's campus and is intended for students and employees of the university to think, pray, meditate, read, or just sit in. Form and materials are the major focus. The circle represents the purity of the sacred and concrete represents its strength. Wood slat walls, which are weaker than the concrete circle, symbolize the chaotic context surrounding of the circle. Procession from the sidewalk to the inside takes the user on a journey through the wood slat walls, up the ramp, and through the threshold of the circle. Light during the day is filtered by the branches and leaves of the tree, which connects users with the transcendent, and lights at night emphasize the cardinal directions and the central point.
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In this library, the main sacred space is the lobby, which is why the form of the lobby is a cube. However, there are residual, more private spaces, found around the building. These private spaces are: reading nooks, librarian offices, and other smaller functional spaces.

The reading nooks are successful, because they provide space for personal reflection, but do not disconnect the user from everything else.

Light quality and how it was related to materials was important in this project. In the lobby, alabaster was used instead of glazing to emit a soft glow on the inside during the day and the opposite at night. Lighting in the reading nooks was also used to define private space without using walls.

Once parked the procession begins; where a visitor must travel under a trellis, ascend to the doors, travel through the lobby, into the circulation area, and then find a spot in the nooks to do research.
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The Presbyterian Church in America (P.C.A.) has a firm foundation on the word of God, the Bible, which has supreme authority over any other doctrine that might arise. This is the denomination of Christianity for which this church in downtown Chicago is designed for. It is a place of refuge to find the true meaning of life and to get away from the stress and pain of this world. Office workers in downtown Chicago are under a lot of stress from the daily grind and pursuits. Worshippers of a religion have a need to connect with their deity within the chaos of the world, and buildings provide a place of worship in which they can escape business, the everyday, stress, pain, noise, and loss sense of identity while turning it in to peace, control, harmony, strength, and happiness.

Sacred elements must be present within, on, and around the building in order to create a sacred experience. Not only does the building have to provide a sacred experience, but the site has to as well. The whole project provides a place of refuge while portraying the true meaning of life.

The building is designed with the beliefs of P.C.A. in conjunction with the architectural elements that was described earlier; organization, procession of space, volume, proportions, manifestation of the sacred, light, materials, connections to the exterior, and symbolism.

A church is needed in the center of the city because the sacred should be the center and there are few churches in downtown Chicago in relation to the number of people. It allows for more opportunity for outreach and ministry. The hole in the urban fabric will now be filled with something sacred. A contrast will be apparent from the profane buildings to the one that provides space to connect with the sacred.

Other P.C.A. churches were analyzed to form a program of spaces. This sanctuary is to seat about 500 people per service. The other churches were not that big, so the square footages allotted for each program element was increased with respect to the new size.

Sanctuary: 5,000 s.f.
Chapel: 500 s.f.
3 Prayer Rooms: 1,200 s.f.
Nursery: 2,800 s.f.
20 Classrooms: 6,200 s.f.
Offices: 4,000 s.f.
Main
Pastor
Assistant Pastor
Assistant Pastor
Music Director
International office
Youth Director
Library: 2,000 s.f.
Book
AV
Bookstore: 1,800 s.f.
Kitchen: 1,750 s.f.
Restrooms: 2,250 s.f.
Narthex: 1,500 s.f.
Courtyard: *
Total: 31,900 s.f.
SITE CONTEXT
[ creating space for the sacred experience ]

Dearborn and Randolph

State and Randolph

State and Washington

Dearborn and Washington
Block 37 is located in the heart of downtown Chicago and is vacant except for a utility building owned by the power company. The site was cleared in 1989 by Mayor Daley to remove the buildings that were causing an economic burden. Since that time, plans for the site have never been implemented or have never been approved by city officials. It is a hole in the fabric of the tall building blocks of downtown. However, this void creates relief in the center of all this chaos, which would be a great location to find solitude and rest.

State Street borders the site to the east and is heavily trafficked by autos and pedestrians. This combination will provide many visitors for the church and site. Daley Plaza is across Dearborn Street on the western side which draws many visitors throughout the year.

Chicago’s theater district also encompasses Block 37, which brings larger crowds to the area. Not only are there theaters, but a multitude of office and mixed use buildings. Many office employees find solitude and rest during their lunch breaks, and many are now living downtown. Chicago residents are and have been moving back to downtown over the past decade or so. These three groups of people, office workers, residents, and visitors will find peace and rest from their chaotic days in this site, church, and sanctuary.
Site Light

Before placing any of the building on the site, the light quality was analyzed by overlaying the sun position at every hour of daylight for the Winter Solstice, Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, and Autumnal Equinox. A composite of these light patterns was then generated for the entire year. By doing this, the area of the site that receives the most sunlight was revealed. This is where the sanctuary should be placed because that is the most important space in the building for worship, because light is important for the sacred experience. Finally this analysis became important in the layout and placement of the sanctuary. To see more go to “Light”.
Light

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Jesus- John 8:12

Light is the most important aspect of this project. It is used to connect the users with God and to create a spiritual quality of space.

In the sanctuary, light comes from above, below, and through translucent alabaster panels. Skylights are found at the corners of the sanctuary in the roof and also on the floor. These wash light down the white textured walls to make them glow and make the space feel lighter and brighter. The openings in the floor bring reflected light from the pool below into the sanctuary. This creates patterns of light, purity, and the cleansing of sin.

A large skylight runs through the center of the sanctuary to bring light from above (Heaven) and to bring the single source of direct light into the sanctuary. Rays of light can be followed by the worshipers, therefore following Christ. By ripping through the center, it signifies the tearing of the Temple curtain when Christ was crucified.

Alabaster panels emit a warm glow into the space, conveying the warmth and compassion of God. The alabaster comes out of the ground, where man also came from originally, creating a connection to how God made humans.

In the Chapel, light is reflected and bounced around by the pool. This, too, represents purity and the cleansing of sin. Other than the reflected light, only ambient light is present.

The prayer rooms are the darkest “sacred” spaces because they are the most personal. Light comes from one direction, representing God/Christ. It is a space where the individual can pray to God, focus on their relationship with Him, and pray for others. It is the most intimate of “sacred” spaces in the church and where the individual should be most focused.
Light

Various ways of collecting and administering light into the interior were studied. These images were taken on a heliodon with a small surgical camera to capture the characteristics of light using these different methods. In all these studies direct light was applied to the collection surface of the model. The same studies were also tested in a mirror box to test overcast sky conditions.
After experimenting with different light collection methods, different methods were tested on the different concepts of the sanctuary. Lighting conditions were tested for three different times a year: Winter Solstice, the equinoxes, and the Summer Solstice. For each time a year, three different times of day were captured, 8am, 11am, and 4pm. These times were chosen because it would possibly be times that services would be held.
Organization & Procession

“In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Proverbs 3:6

Pedestrians will be entering the building from two sides, State Street and Dearborn Street, which is why the Narthex links the two sides together. It also separates the more sacred spaces of the building, sanctuary, chapel, and prayer rooms, from the other spaces that can be found in other profane buildings.

In order to prepare the users of the sanctuary, they must go on a journey to prepare them for worship, to bring them into a different world. First, they enter the site and travel along the walks leading up to the Narthex entrances. After traveling through the Narthex, they must ascend stairs, pass through the large thick wall’s threshold, pass over water (see site plan), and then through the threshold of the sanctuary. Sacredness should be at the end of the journey. Passing through all these thresholds separates people from their profane lives to give their all to God in worship.
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Organization & Procession

Site Plan

Randolph Street

Dearborn Street

State Street

Washington Street

Narthex

Water

[Diagram showing the layout of the site with labeled streets and key areas.]
Symbolism

Any religious structure is infused with symbolism and such is the case for this church. Symbolism is incorporated into the design of the structure so that it is embedded into the minds of the users. This usage of embedded symbolism is paralleled with literal symbolism to catalyze sacred thoughts of the users. The literal calls attention the sacred, while the embedded symbolism will require some searching and figuring out of the users to make their experience more personal.

There are many symbolisms in, on, and around the sanctuary. A cube is a very pure and bold shape, which represents the wholeness of God, and it appears as if it is floating to show that He is not of this world. This cube is split down the center to remember that Christ took upon the sins of believers unto himself. It is also surrounded by water to represent the cleansing of sin and purity. Wood slats arranged in an abstract weave, when looking in plan form a circle, represents the unity of the Body of Christ (believers). Weaves also characterize how God formed and knit us in our mother's womb.

Since many of the functions found in the classroom wing can be found in secular architecture, this entire portion of the building represents the profane. Its façades even mimic the facades of the buildings that surround the site. These facades have two parts; the lower is of pedestrian scale, while above that the height is emphasized.

Anyone can pray to God in anyplace and at anytime. Therefore, the courtyard is a manifestation of the sacred within the profane. Cantilevers on the exterior walls reference the courtyard, and also contain stained glass to represent hope.

Masonry is used on the exterior of the classroom wing to emphasize that it was built by man, profane. Within this masonry, smaller windows are found to show the energy of the sacred coming through in bursts of light at night on the exterior, and the reverse during the day.

“And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below...”

Acts 2:19
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Symbolism

Great Lawn

Split

Wood Slats

Surrounding Profane

Classroom Wing Facade

Upper Portion

Pedestrian Portion
[creating space for the sacred experience]

Materials

"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."

Psalm 127:1

Material is what the user first sees in any building and it creates a certain mood or feeling of a building or space.

Core Ten Steel is used to sheath the sanctuary because of its strong bold appearance with a reddish warm hue. Qualities of this material are in correlation to the qualities of God. Large concrete panels are used on the wall that separates the sanctuary, chapel, and prayer rooms from the rest of the program to convey strength, purity, and unity. This wall also provides a back drop for the sanctuary from the great lawn. Masonry on the classroom wing shows that this structure is built by man, referencing the surrounding context.
Connection to Context

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

Romans 12:2

In Europe, the Great Cathedrals were built to bring people into a different plane of being, a different world, and to try to connect people with God. This sanctuary tries to do the same because the only connection to the exterior is the sky and one is not able to see the surrounding context from inside the sanctuary. By passing through multiple thresholds, passing through the great wall, and traveling over water, it prepares the worshipers for worship. This process allows them to see that they are leaving one world, that which they are not part of spiritually, and entering a new one. All of this done so that they can concentrate on what is important.
Manifestation of the Sacred

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy.”

Psalm 16:11

The sacred manifests itself within the profane world in many locations, forms, and levels, and it is the same for this project.

As a whole, the site is a manifestation of the sacred within the profane. By definition, sacred means being set aside for the worship of a deity, which is what this project is designed for. Its location is within the heart one of the busiest areas in the United States. There is an extreme contrast between the context and the site, the sacred and the profane, which reveals the first level of manifesting the sacred, relation to the surrounding context.

Second, the building manifests itself in relation to its site. The sanctuary seems to erupt out of the ground and floats above it. A depression is caused by this, which gives emphasizes this action. Being roughly the same size in plan, the courtyard and sanctuary relate to each other because they both represent the sacred.

On another level, the sacred seems to manifest in and on the building. For instance, the cantilevers and small punched openings on the classroom wing are smaller representations of the same idea.
Volume & Proportions

"Let them praise your great and awesome name!"

Psalm 66:3

The sanctuary had to be large and pure in order to humble the users of the site and the sanctuary. Pride is one of the most debilitating sins that keep us from serving God. Compared to God, we are small, weak, and unintelligent, so the sanctuary provides this information in its size. The ceiling of the sanctuary is not as tall as it is wide and deep, but on the exterior the walls create a cube. The golden section, which is found in creation, was used to determine this height, because inside, the sanctuary had to be large but not uncomfortable.
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Plans and Sections Key:
1. Sanctuary
2. Narthex
3. Chapel
4. Prayer Rooms
5. Information Desk
6. Restrooms
7. Kitchen
8. Offices
9. Bookstore
10. Library
11. Classroom
12. Nursery
13. Mechanical
14. Storage

Lower Level
PLANS AND SECTIONS KEY:
1. Sanctuary
2. Narthex
3. Chapel
4. Prayer Rooms
5. Information Desk
6. Restrooms
7. Kitchen
8. Offices
9. Bookstore
10. Library
11. Classroom
12. Nursery
13. Mechanical
14. Storage

Second Floor
East/West Section

North/South Section
[ creating space for the sacred experience ]
creating space for the sacred experience
[creating space for the sacred experience] Narthex
creating space for the sacred experience
creating space for the sacred experience
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Paper Room

Final Design Images
[creating space for the sacred experience]
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As with any project, design is never finished, one can continuously change and modify to make it better, and that is the case for this project as well. Overall I am happy with the design. I feel that it would be an oasis within the chaos of downtown Chicago. Some areas would have to be re-thought if design were to continue, mainly the western portion of the Narthex. In general, I wish that I had pushed myself a little harder.

The Narthex works great when someone would enter from the State Street side; however it is another issue when someone enters from the Dearborn side. It is really tight from the doors to the beginning of the stairs. There is just not enough of a journey for these visitors. Another step in the journey needs to happen. Maybe the stairs should be placed closer to the corner of the massive wall. See sketches to the left.

I should have pushed myself a little harder throughout the entire process, and I was probably too rigid with trying different ideas or methods. Even though I had a concept at the beginning of the semester that was completely different in appearance, the general organization remained the same. It essentially had two parts separated by a wall just like the final design. While the second design is much more thought out than the first, maybe I should have explored other options.

The classroom wing could be more flamboyant in my opinion. While it is supposed to symbolize the profane that surrounds it, it should still read as something different than the surrounding, different yet the same. It may read too ordinary when looking at the site as a whole. Maybe it is too sterile. The ideas are strong; I just wish I had more time to inject more energy into the design.

There were many architectural elements that I had to take into account; light, organization and procession, symbolism, materials, connection to context, manifestation of the sacred, and volume and proportions that formed the backbone of my thesis ideas. Each one of these really could have been a thesis project in itself. That is why for the final project I decided to make light the presiding factor above the other elements. Once I figured out light, the others would follow.

It has been a successful project overall, there were many minor changes that should have been made if there was more time of course. Using the architectural elements helped me to stay on track with my reasons for design decisions and brought clarity to the design. I hope that I take what I learned from this thesis into the working world and build upon it.
Works Cited


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Appendix
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First Concept for Final Design