

The Divine and the Profane

Church and Community House

Diploma by Einar Elton



Two neighbouring congregations in the eastern outskirts of Trondheim, Ranheim and Charlottenlund are in need of new churches.

One is too small and not flexible enough, the other is too big and not flexible enough as well as falling apart. One is listed and will be kept, the other will be demolished.

Instead of building two separate churches they have decided to investigate the possibility of building one together.

Previous page:

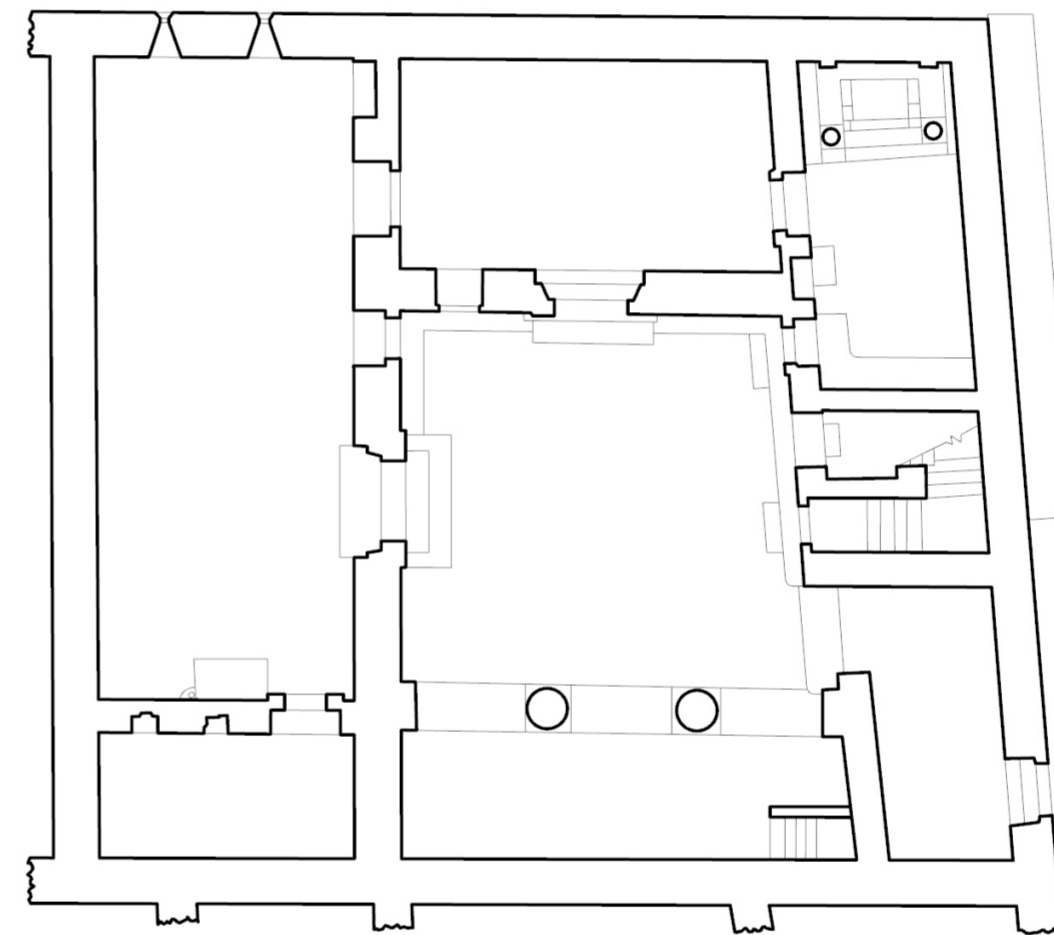
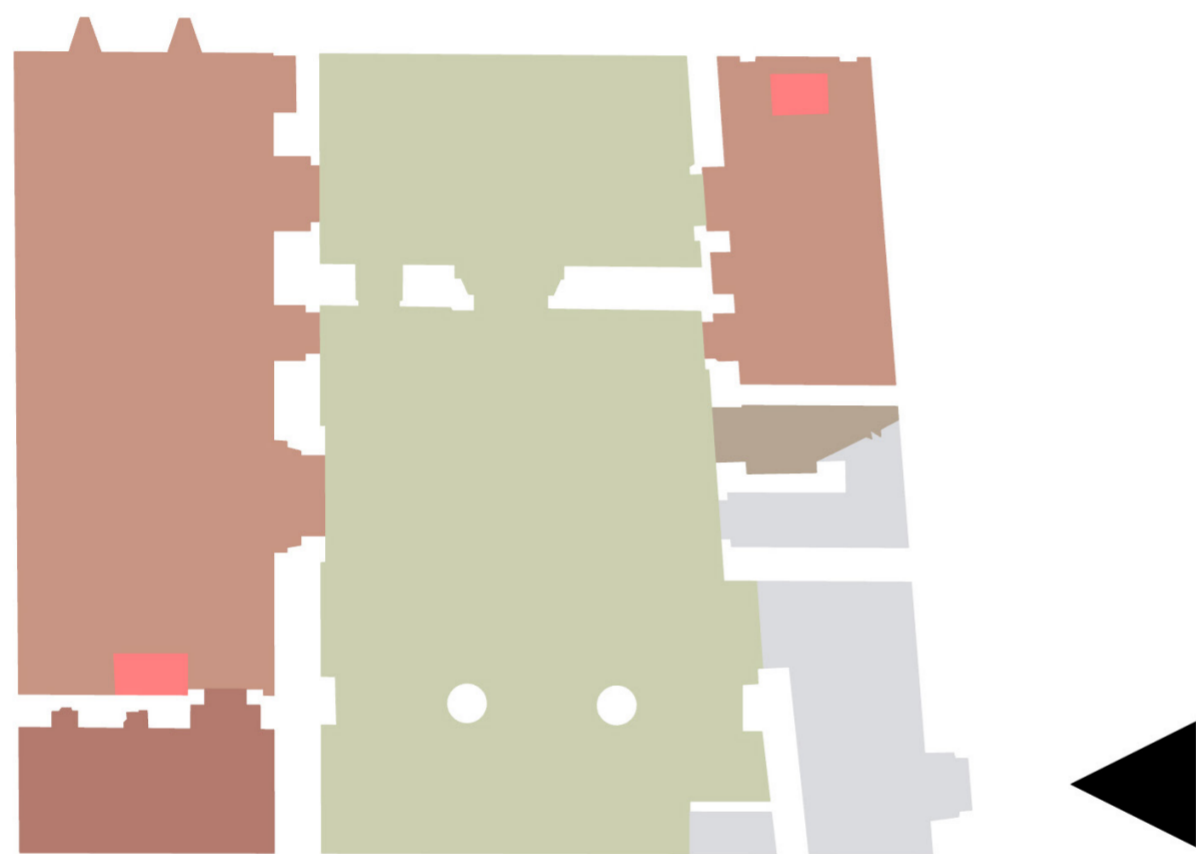
Ranheim to the east, Charlottenlund to the west. Project site in the middle.

The old churches and the new proposal are marked in darker shade.

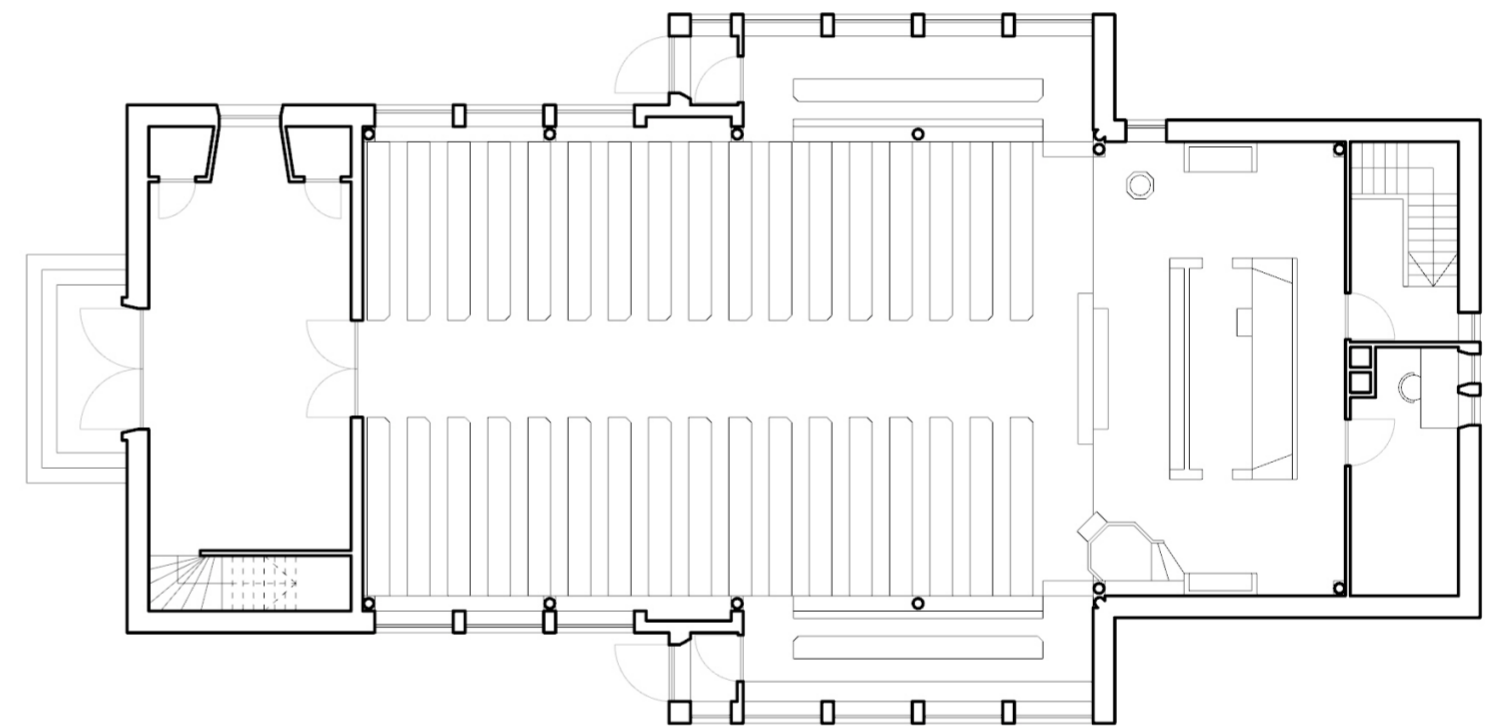
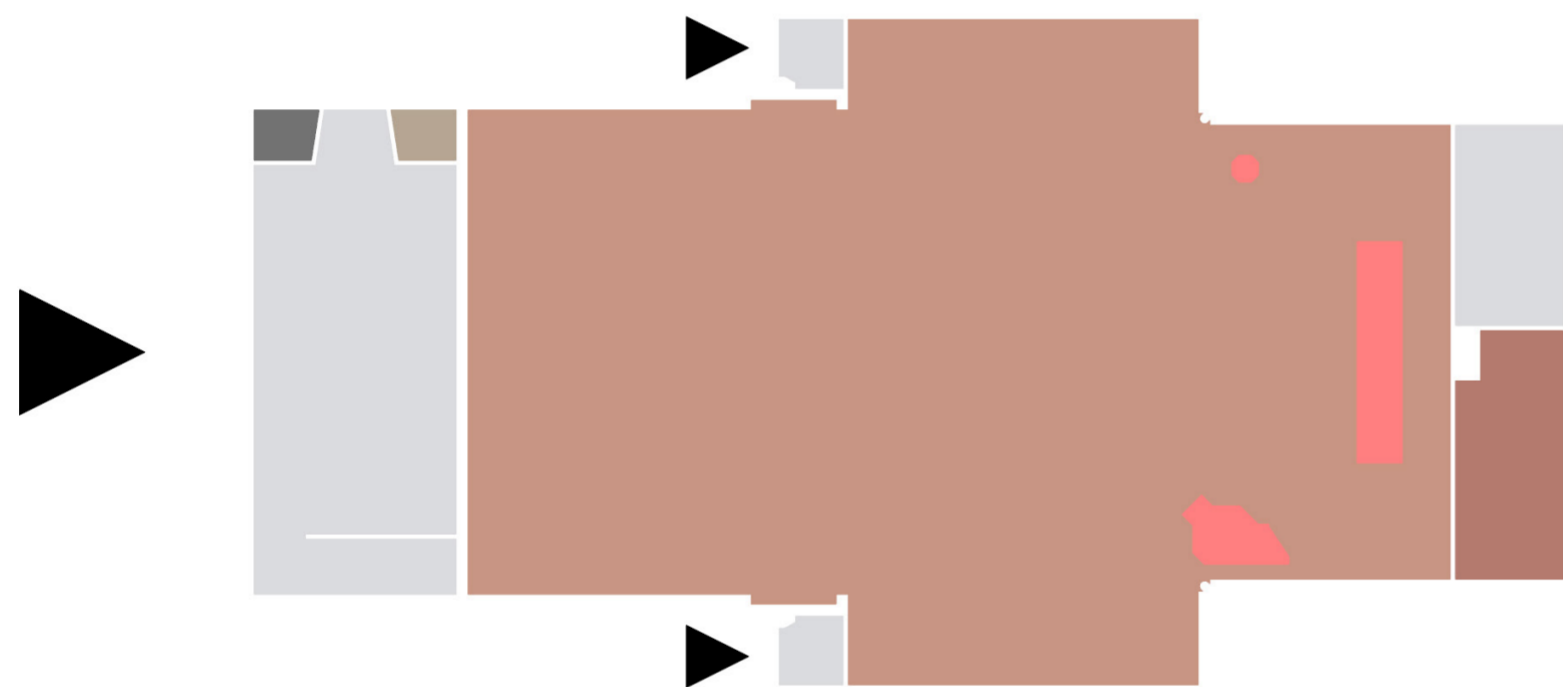
I started doing case studies of different churches, both churches I admire, and churches I critique. I also studied the existing churches.

I specifically looked at the plan, and the programmatic division of functions, mainly religious and profane space, and the sequence of the spaces.

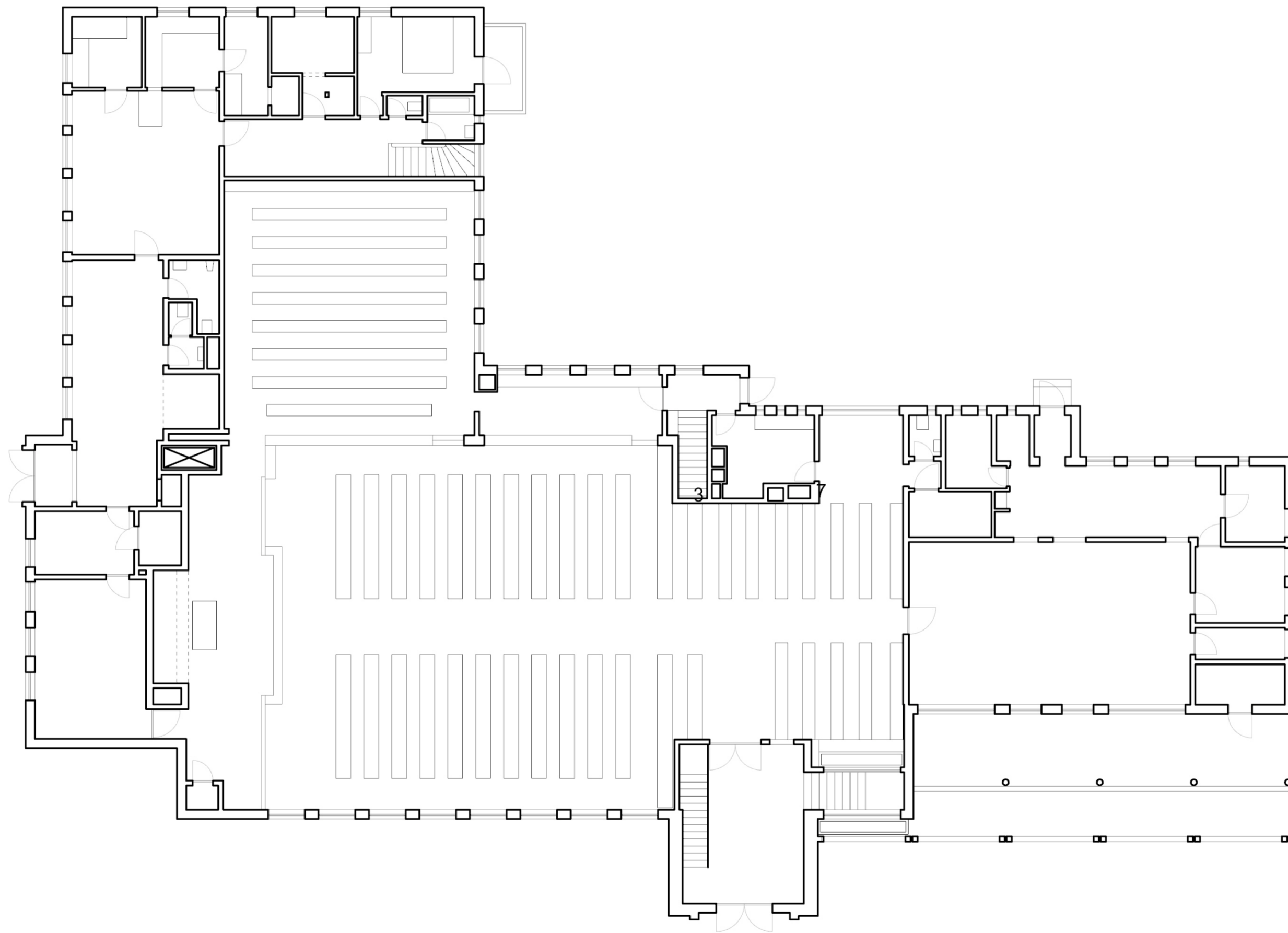
Following are a few of the case studies.



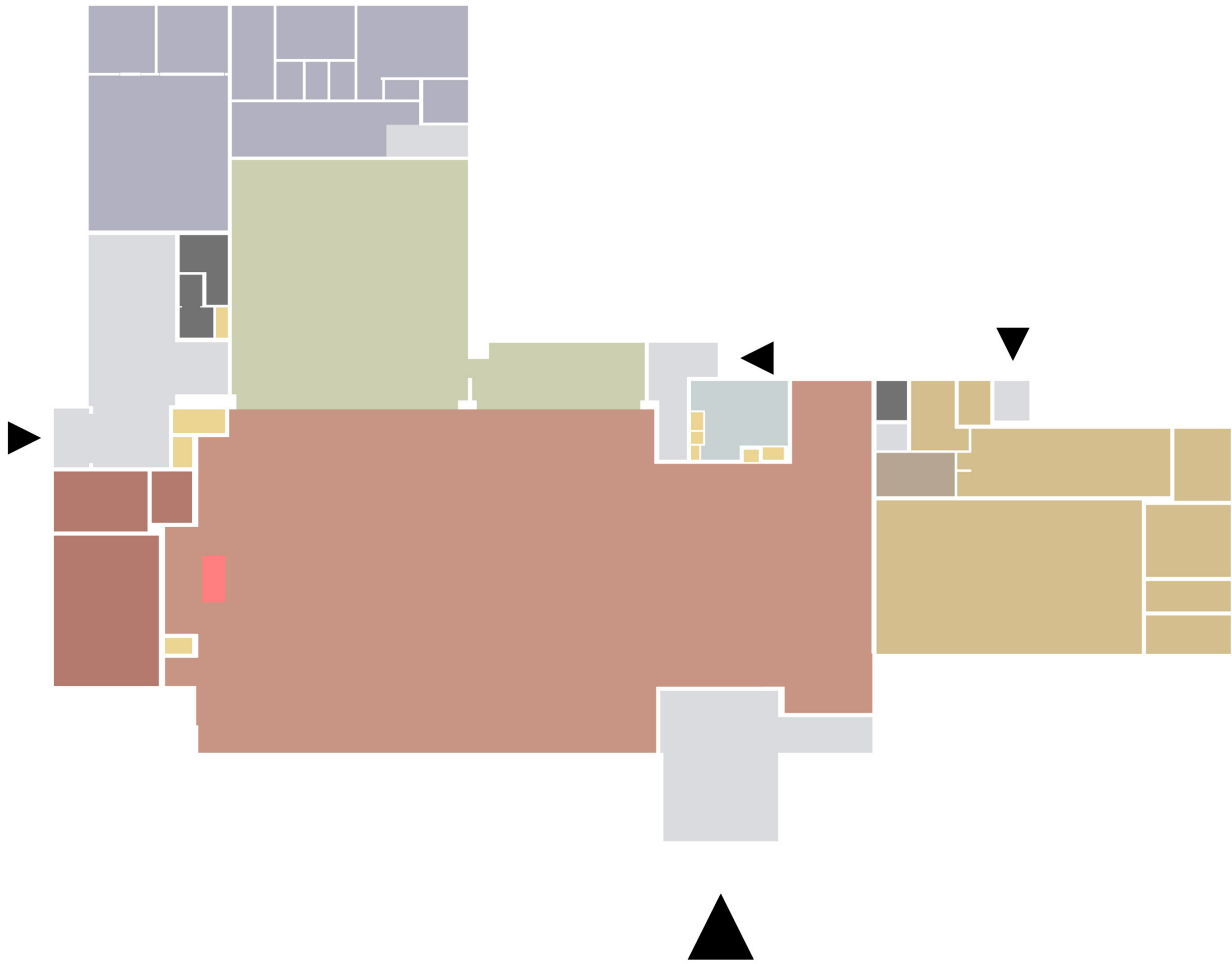
House church in Dura Europos. The oldest known church building, a remodelled Roman villa. Organized around a communal courtyard.

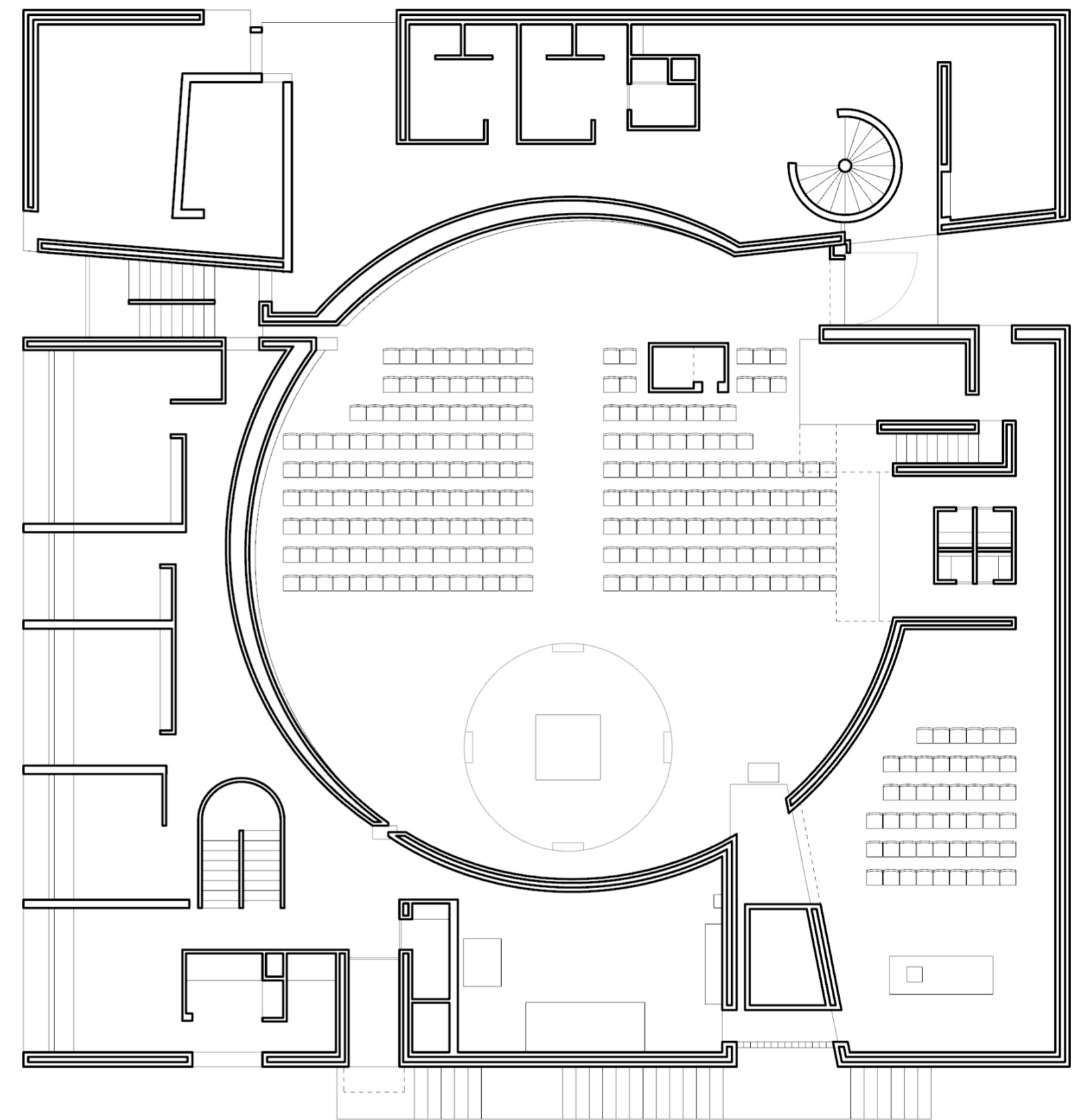
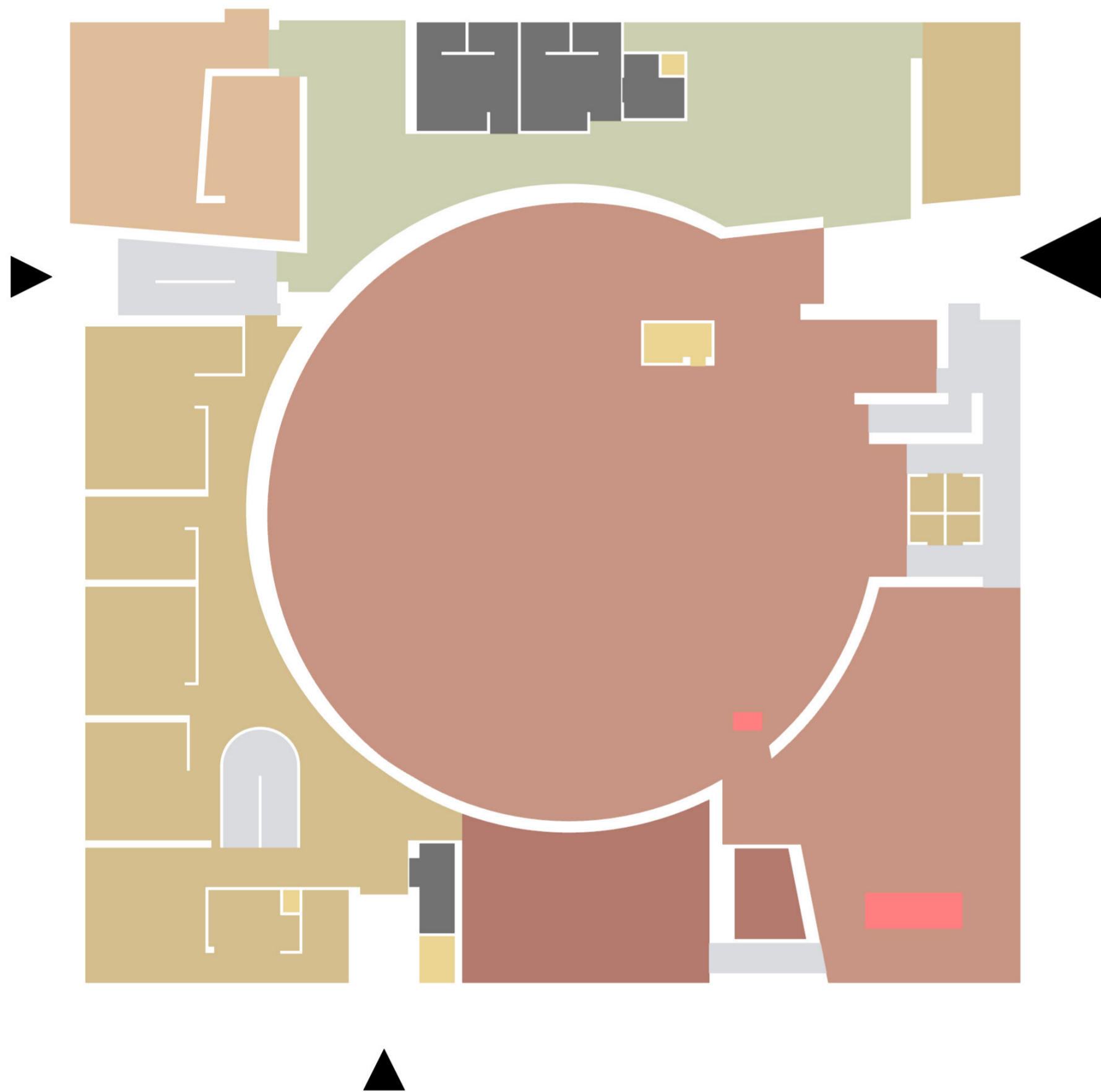


Ranheim church from 1933 is listed and in good condition. However it is too small for larger ceremonies or service, not flexible due to the fixed furniture and it has no community spaces for gatherings. It is still popular for weddings and funerals.



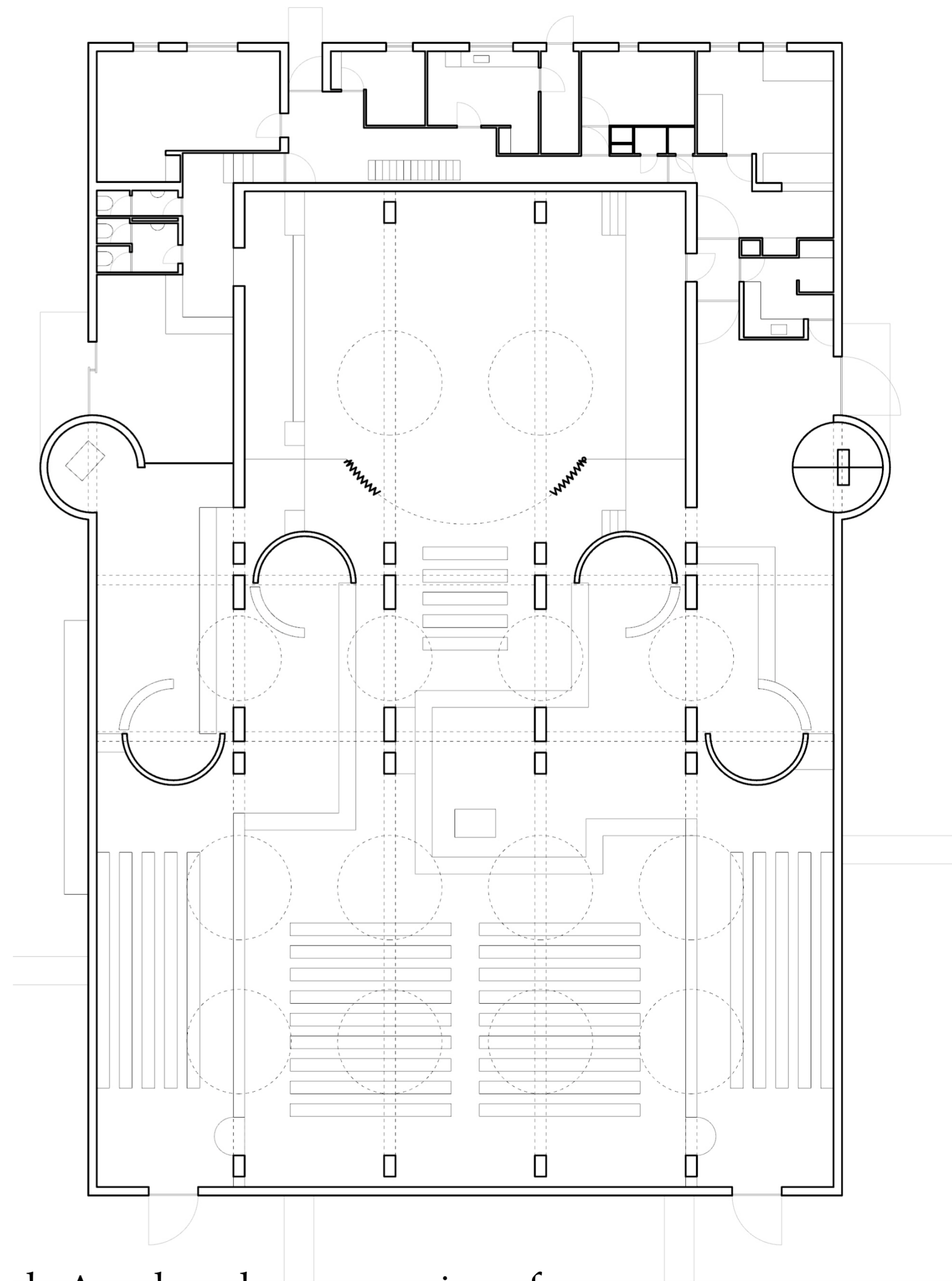
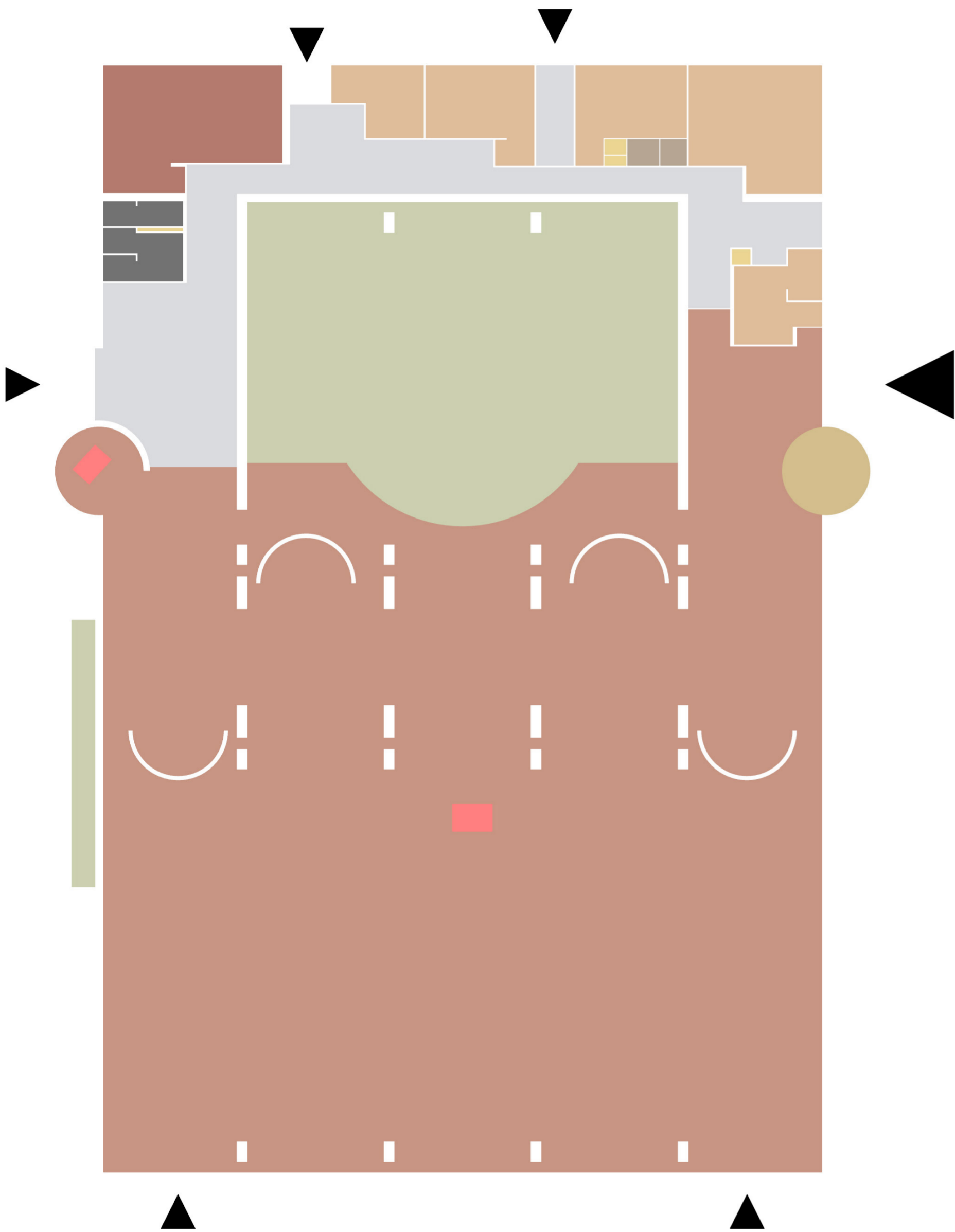
Charlottenlund church from 1976 is too complicated for its own good. While many rooms are empty, they don't have the spaces they actually need. The building is falling apart and because of how it is built it would be more expensive to remodel than to build something new.



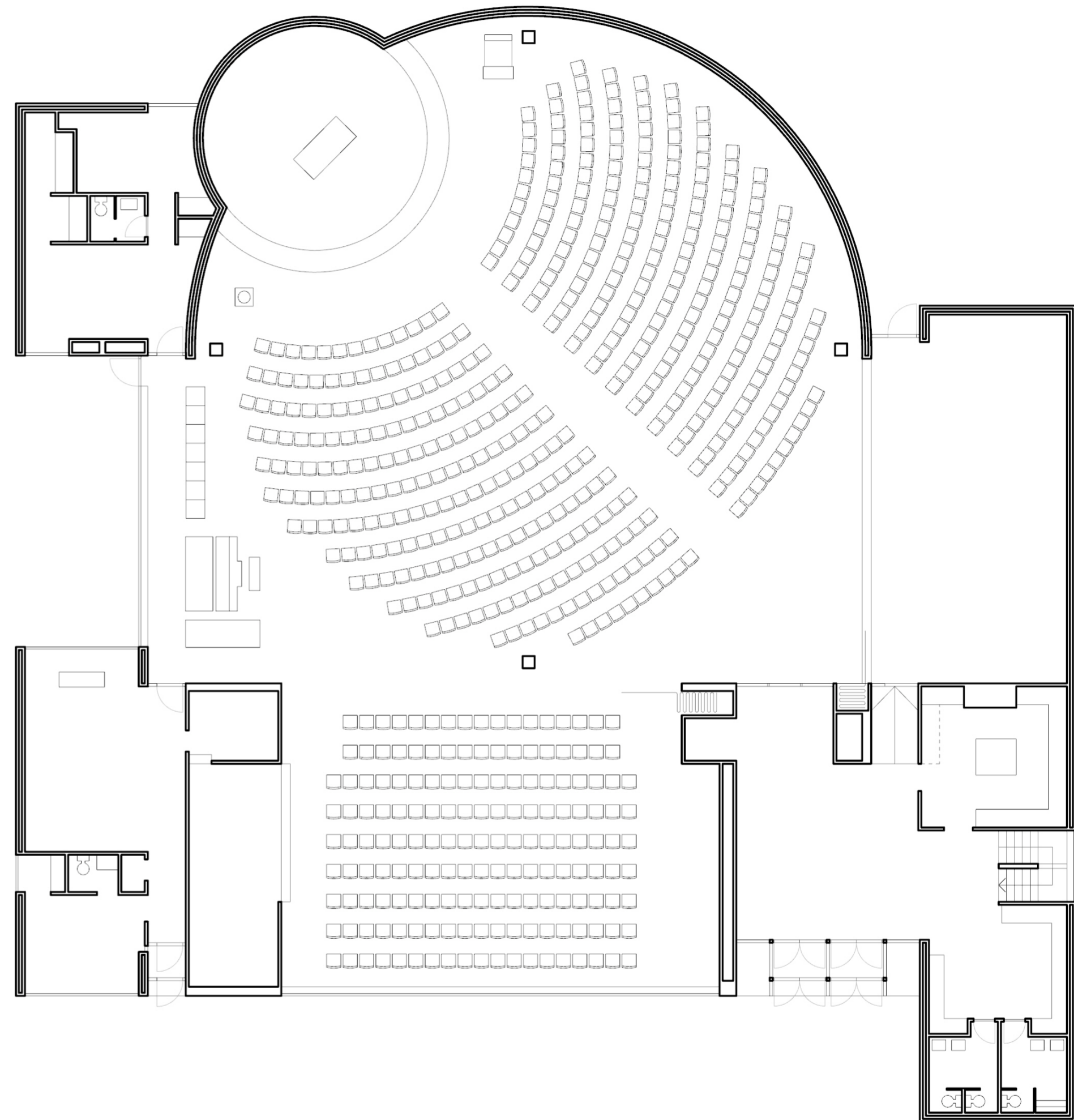
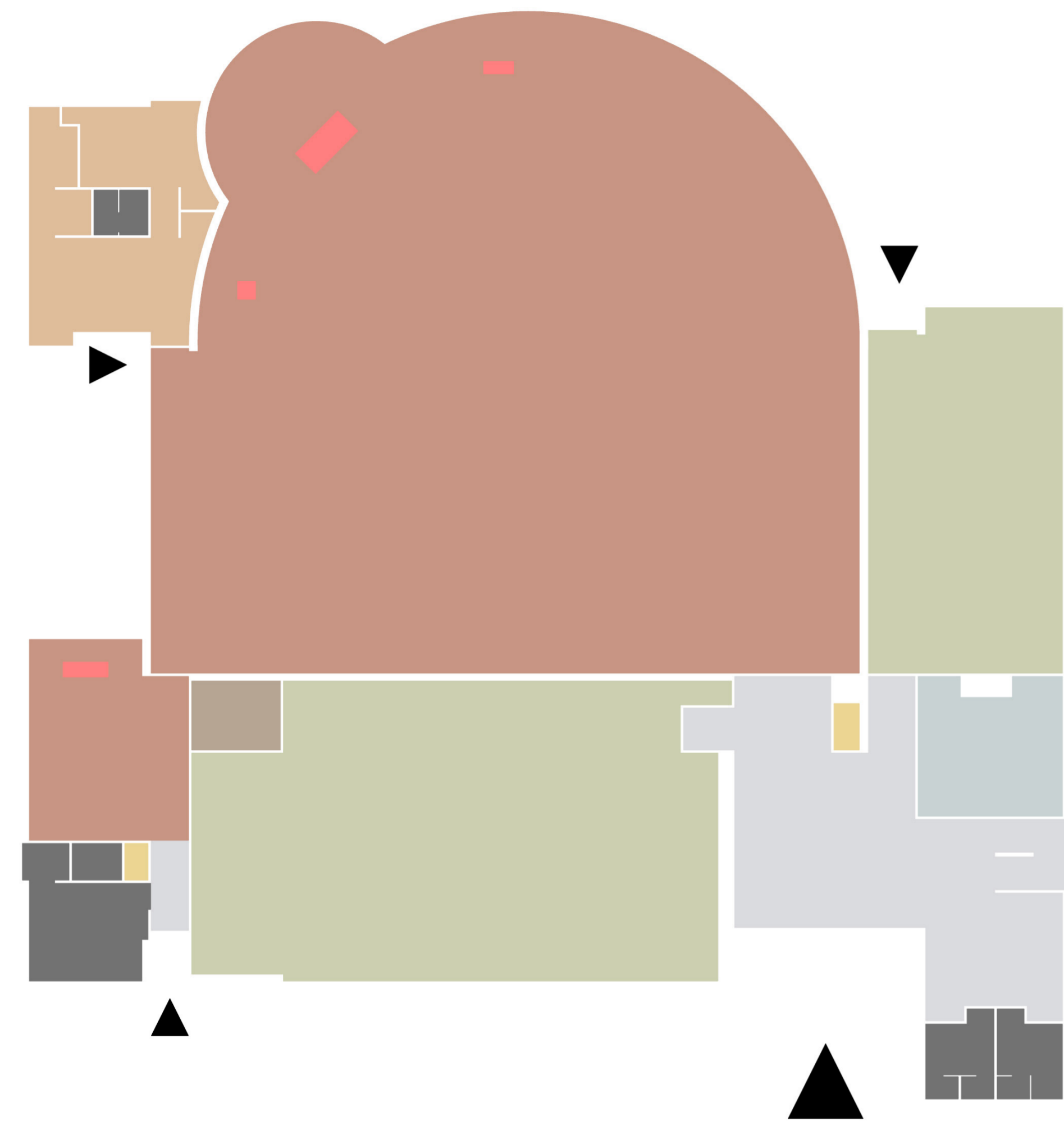


St. Hallvards Church from 1966. The church space is surrounded by all functions, imposing its round shape into every other space.

Everything is clearly seperated, yet belong togheter.



The church in the Hague by Aldo van Eyck. Another clear separation of religious and profane space.



Østerås church from 1974. A typical Norwegian "work church" from the last 50 years. Profane spaces acts as extensions to the church space. It is unclear which of the two are more important.

I decided I wanted to find a site that was central to both congregations. The area is undergoing a lot of transformation and a large landowner has just regulated his farm into what will likely become the most densely populated area in the vicinity. Everything has been approved for housing, without any real public functions.

On a neighbouring farm the city has expropriated land for a huge non-religious graveyard, covering the eastern part of Trondheim.

A third farm in the area is owned by a farmers coop. The farm is the oldest in the area, known at least from the 1100s. Today a public kindergarten occupies the main buildings. But the coop still manages the fields and wishes the landscape to remain open both visually and to the public.

I decided to look for a site on the land owned by the co-op and find conditions that I could build upon in order to create something valuable both in terms of the religious and the profane part of the community.

I decided there were three "conditions" I would look into:

Church in the Forest

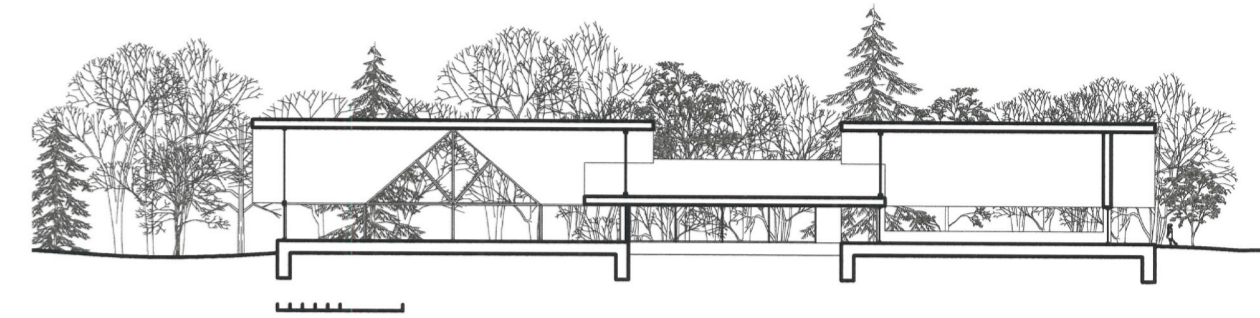
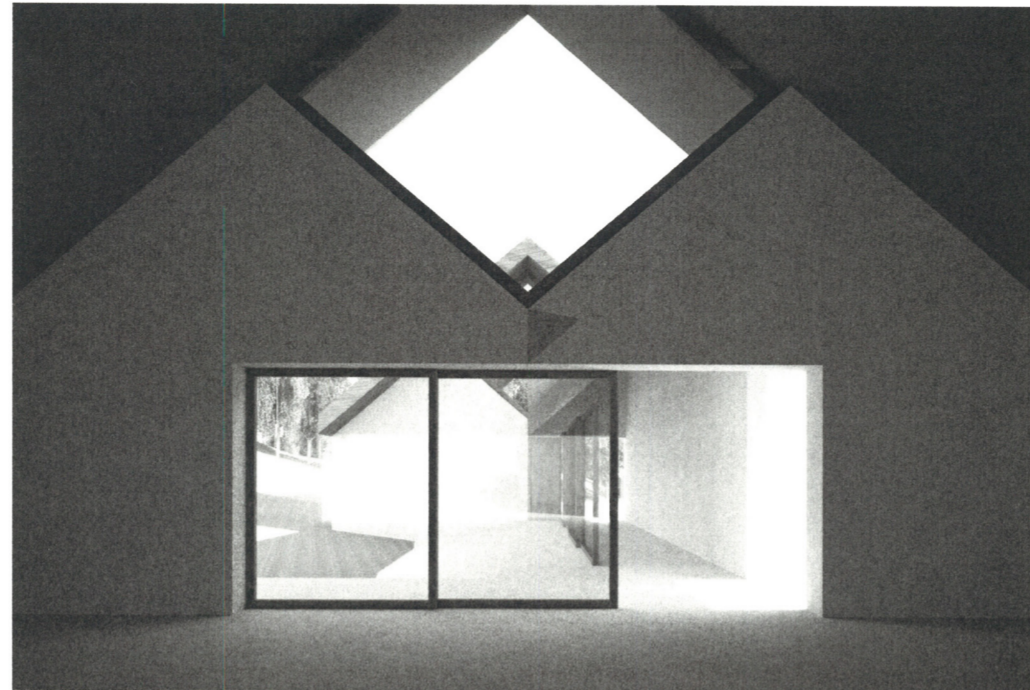
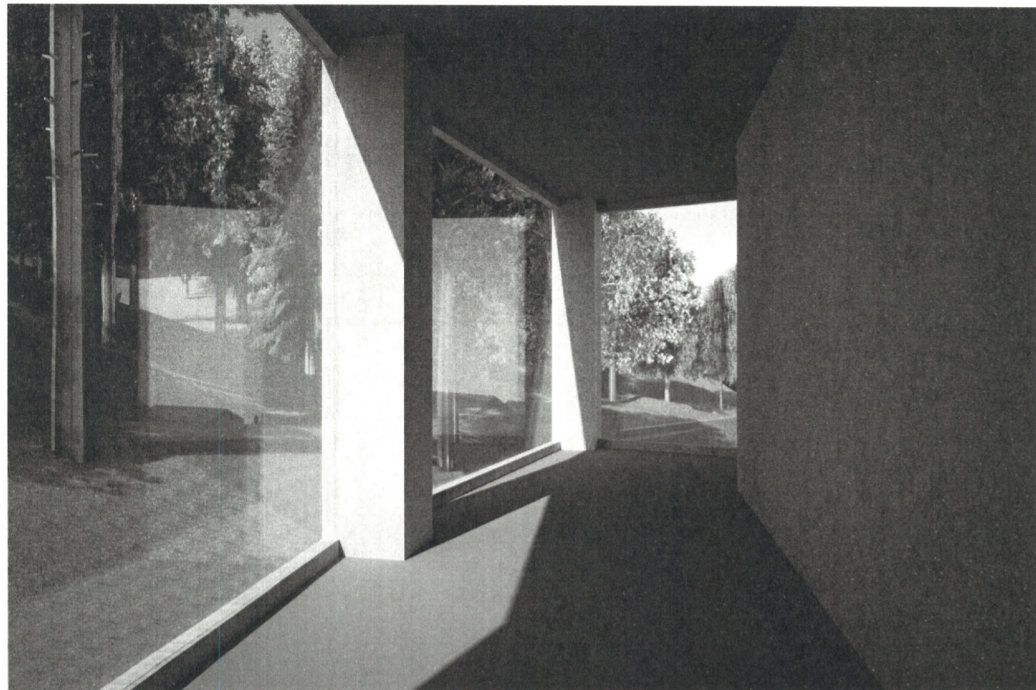
Church in the Field

Church on the Farm

Church in the forest.

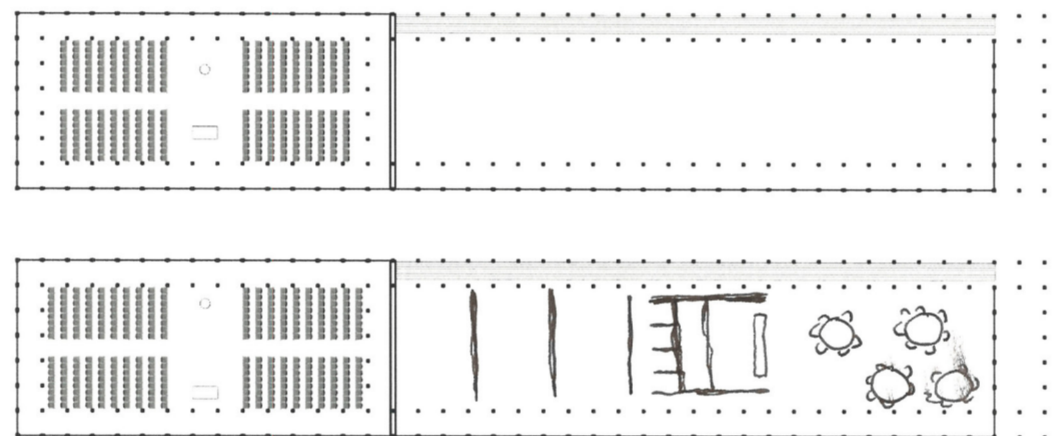
The coops farm, Presthus owns a large forested hill, which is a popular destination. It was given the name Chamonix as a joke during the winter olympics in 1924 as the locals used it for ski jumping exercise.

I started doing my own spacial excercises, trying to find out what a church in the forest could be. Since I knew I wanted to work with a clearer seperation between profane and divine space, I decided to test out a linear division of the themes in this church. It became a study of sequential spaces.



the church in the forest is a linear building.
 A sequence of rooms along a contour line,
 leading from community to nature.
 The church is a one storey building.
 The separations of functions is like
 a gradual path from community house
 to ceremony space.

outside gallery to the east and
 trees. Inside gallery to the west.
 Rooms span from gallery to gallery

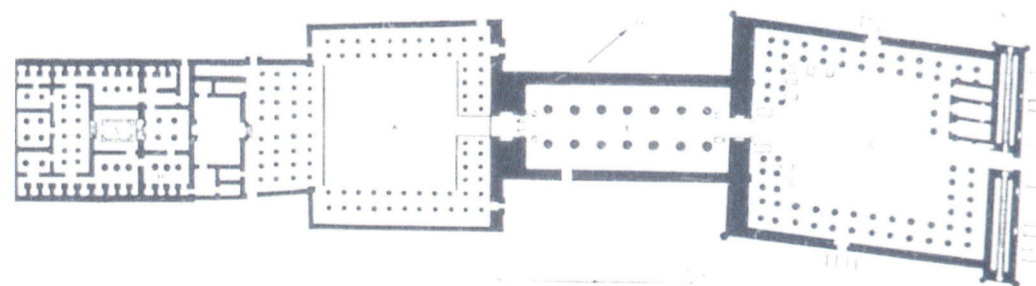


RENDER OF OUTSIDE GALLERY



OUTSIDE GALLERY SPACE CONNECTING
 COMMUNAL ROOMS. CHURCH IN THE END

LUXOR TEMPLE

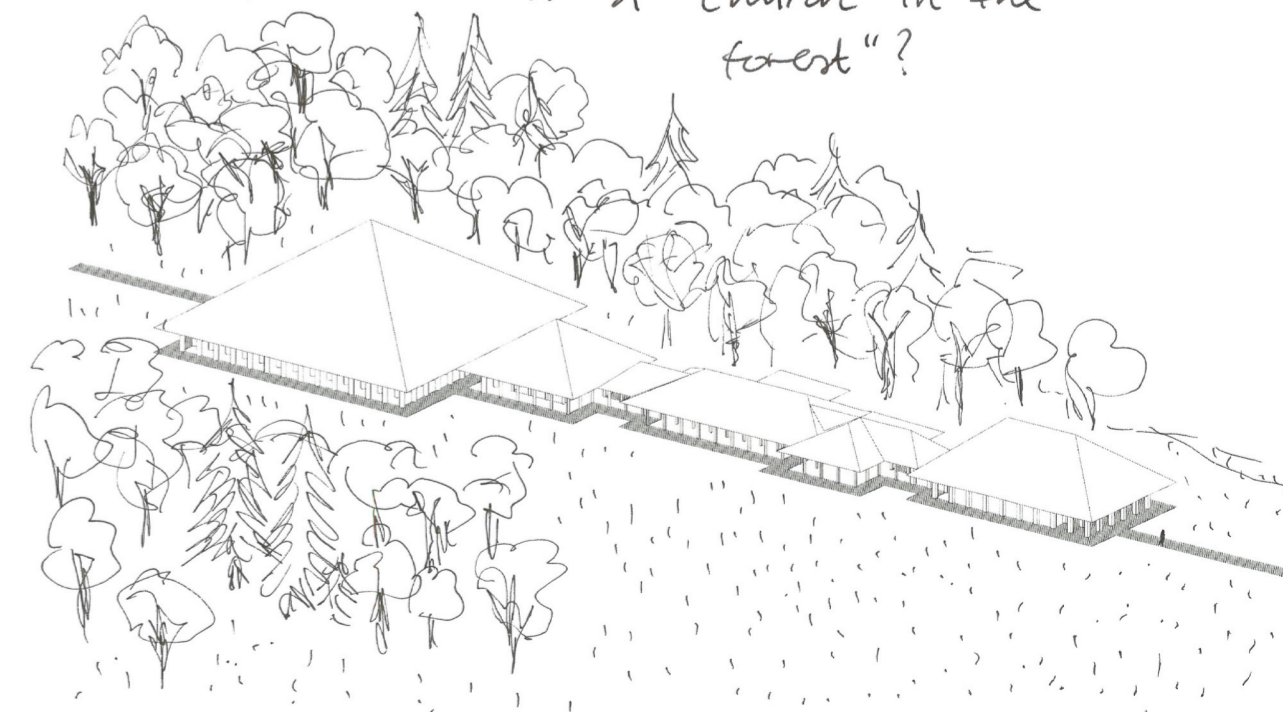


CHURCH IN THE FOREST INSPIRED BY EGYPTIAN TEMPLES?
 ROOMS IN A SEQUENCE THAT GRADUALLY BECOMES MORE
 RELIGIOUS? RHYTHM OF STRUCTURES BASED ON PILARS
 THAT GRADUALLY CHANGE? PILARS ARE THE OUTSIDE GALLERIES?



LIKE A JAPANESE TEMPLE

Would something like this ever
 work as a "church in the
 forest"?

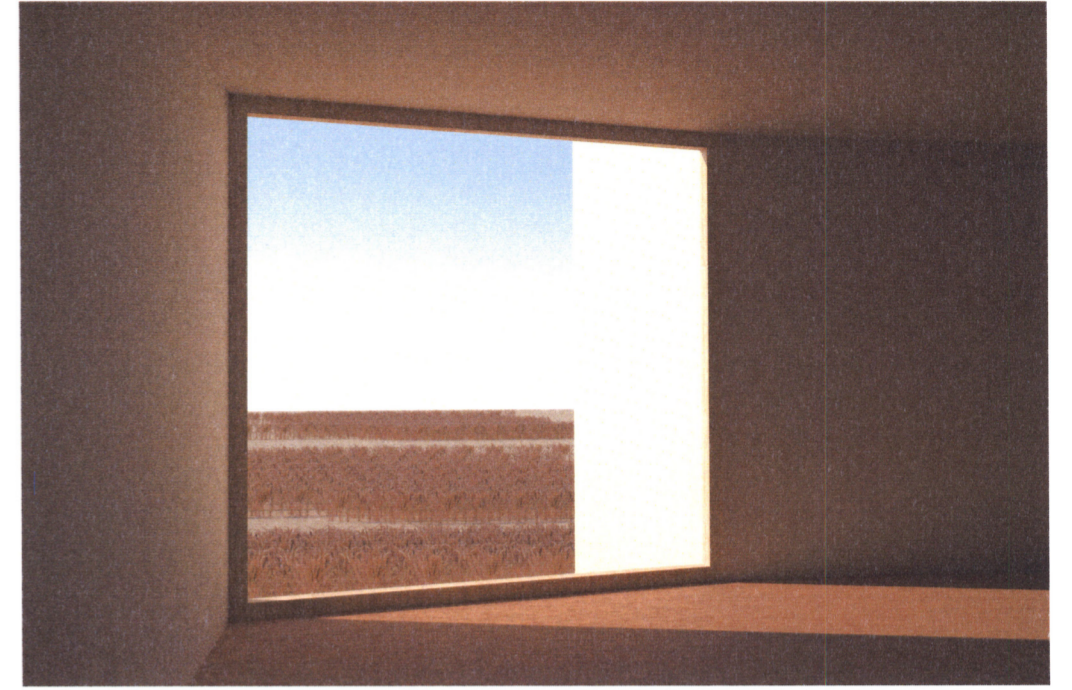
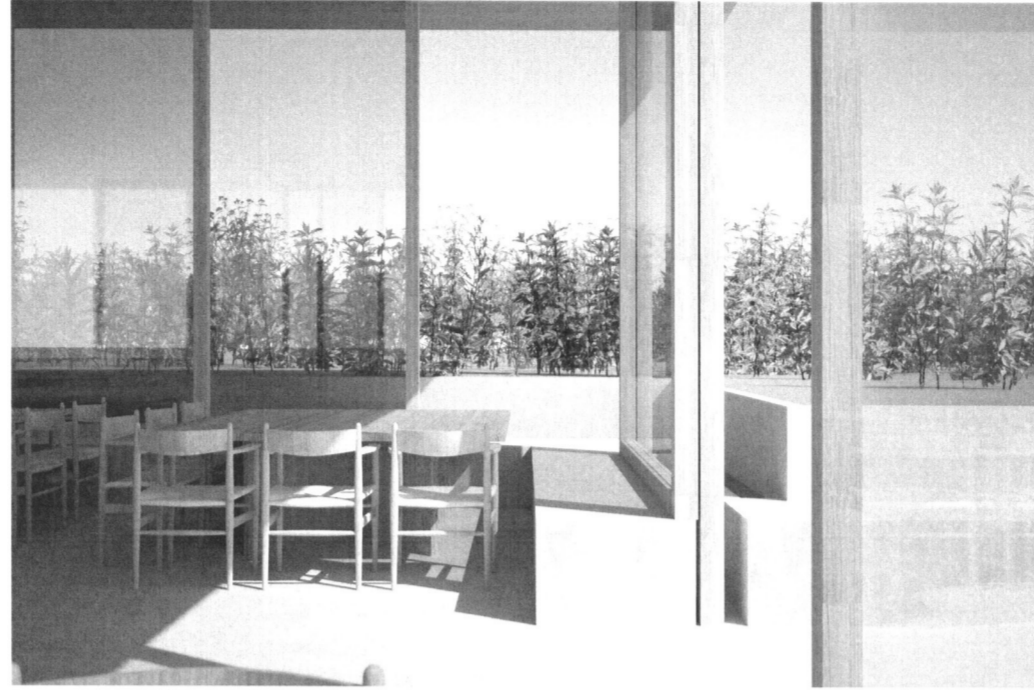


Church in the field.

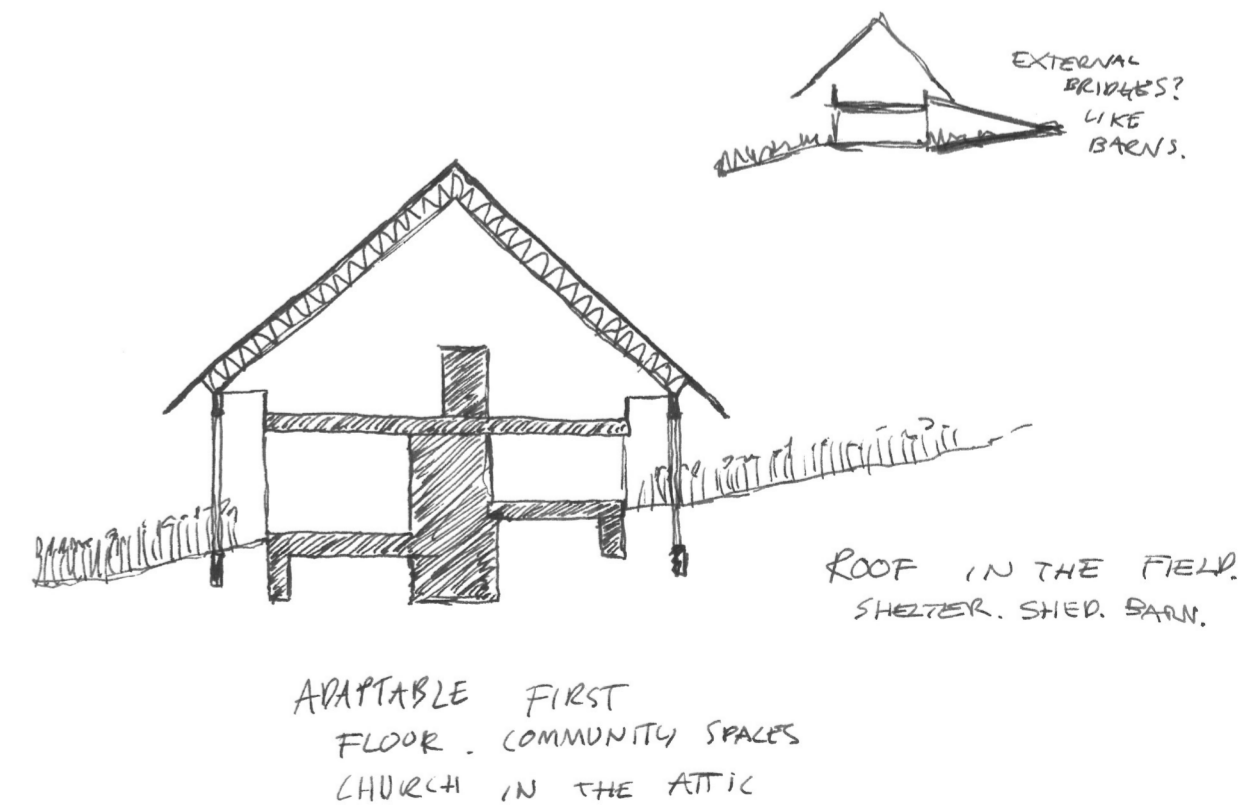
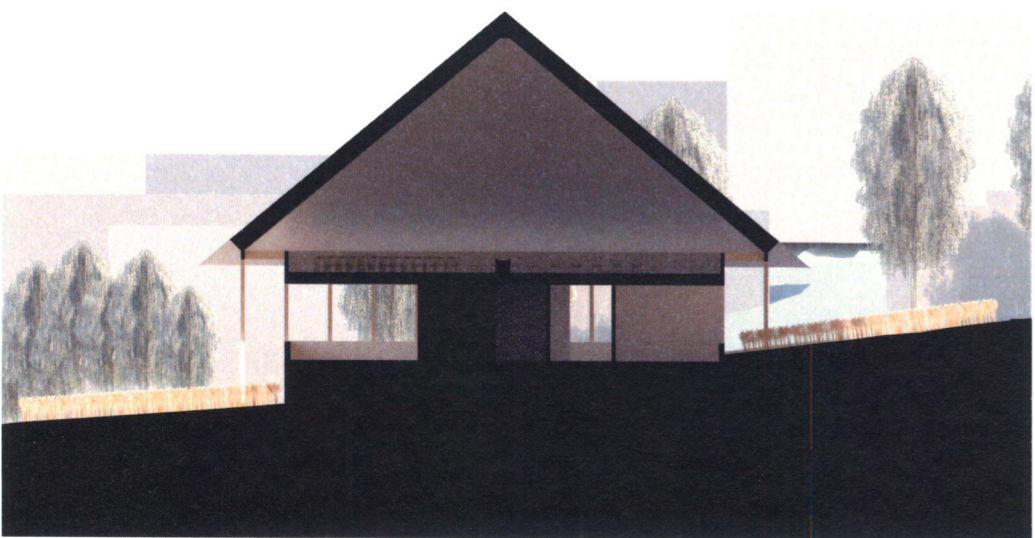
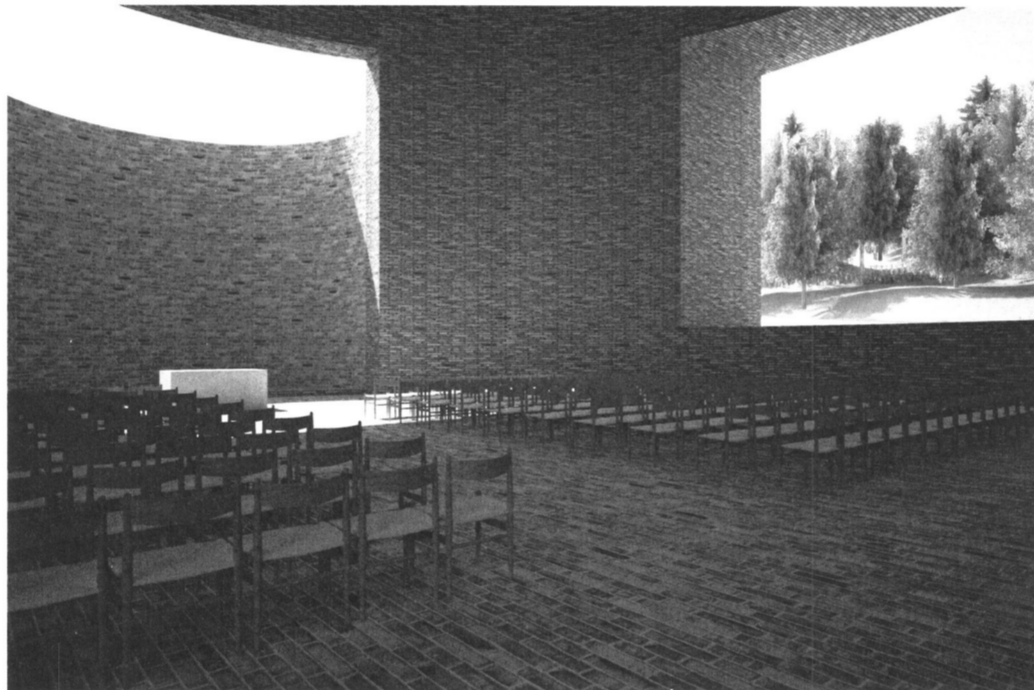
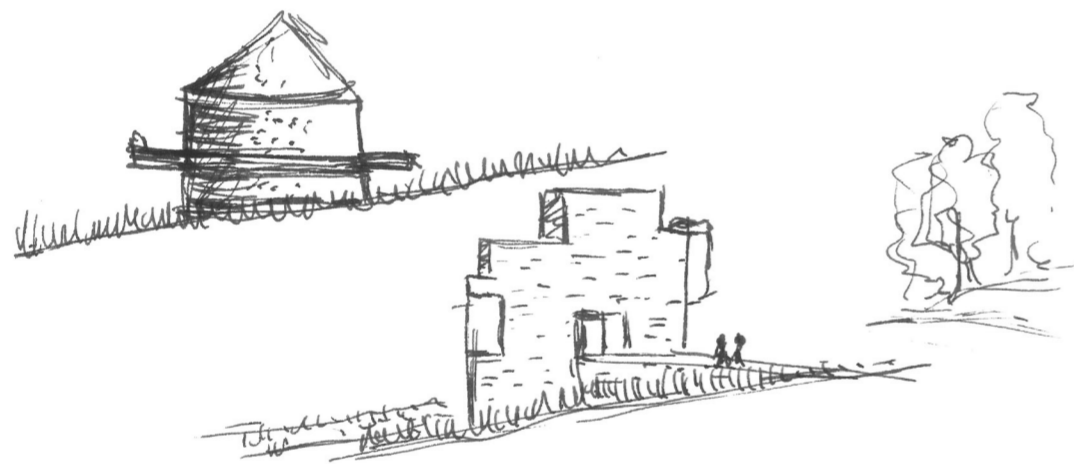
The field quickly struck me as a condition with a lot of symbolic value. In christianity, wheat is a symbol of god's congregation and wheat is widely used. For western civilization in itself, wheat is incredibly important. For me there is something beautiful in cultivation, that I think can be valued by both christians and atheist alike.

I imagined a church in a field. I started with the community spaces, somehow it felt like they had to have the most direct connection to the ground.

I thought it would be a good idea in this study to have the profane and divine spaces divided in section, one over the other.



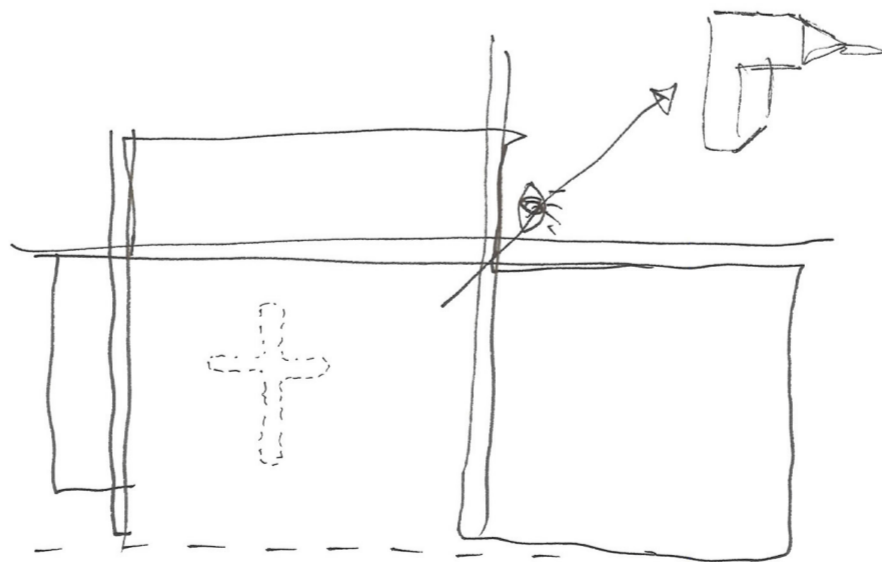
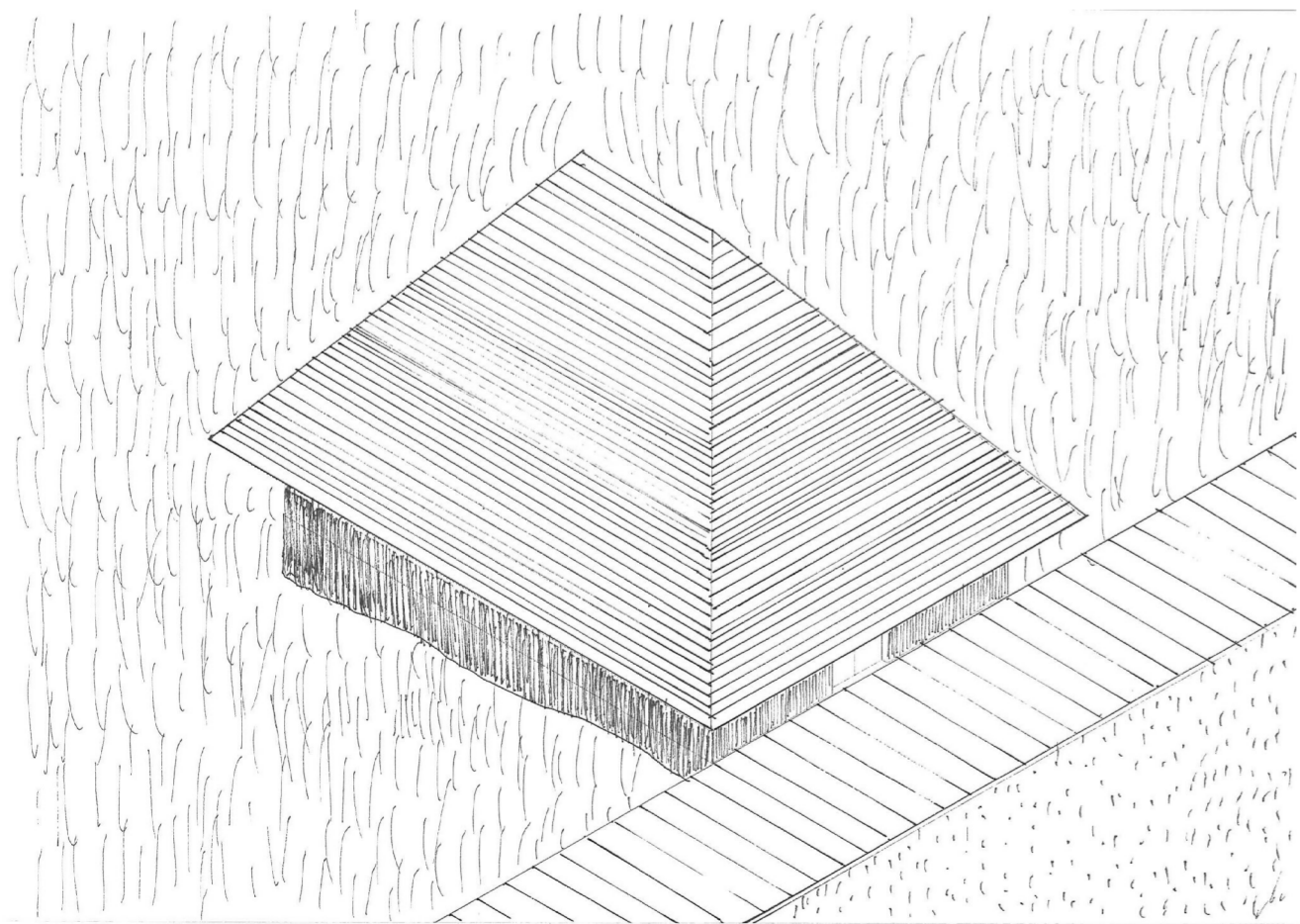
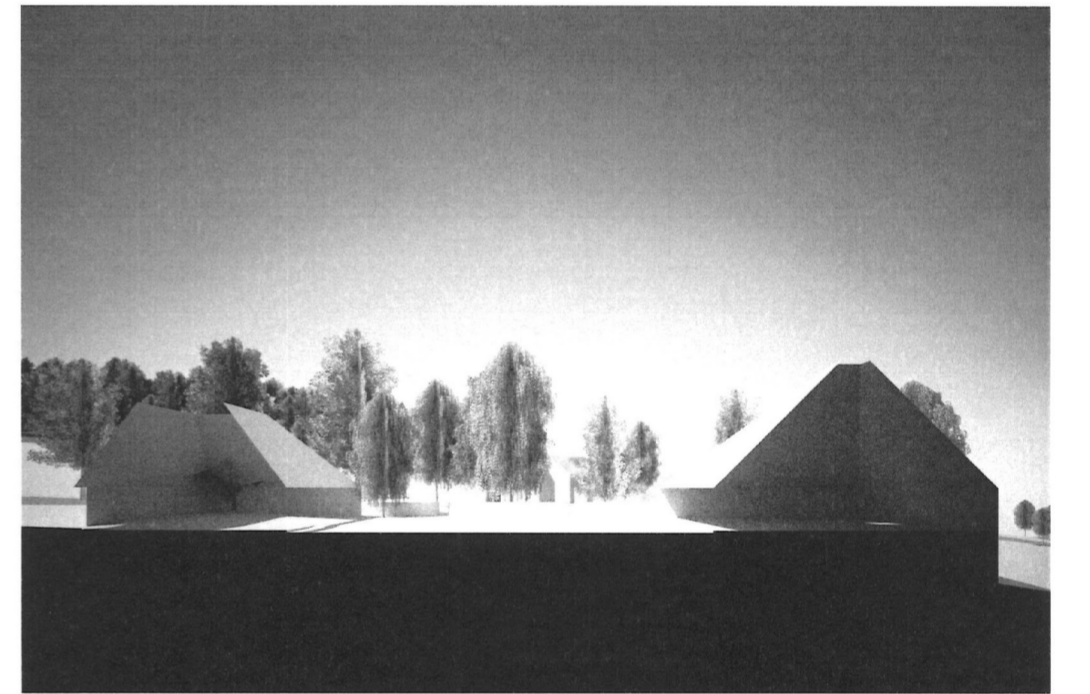
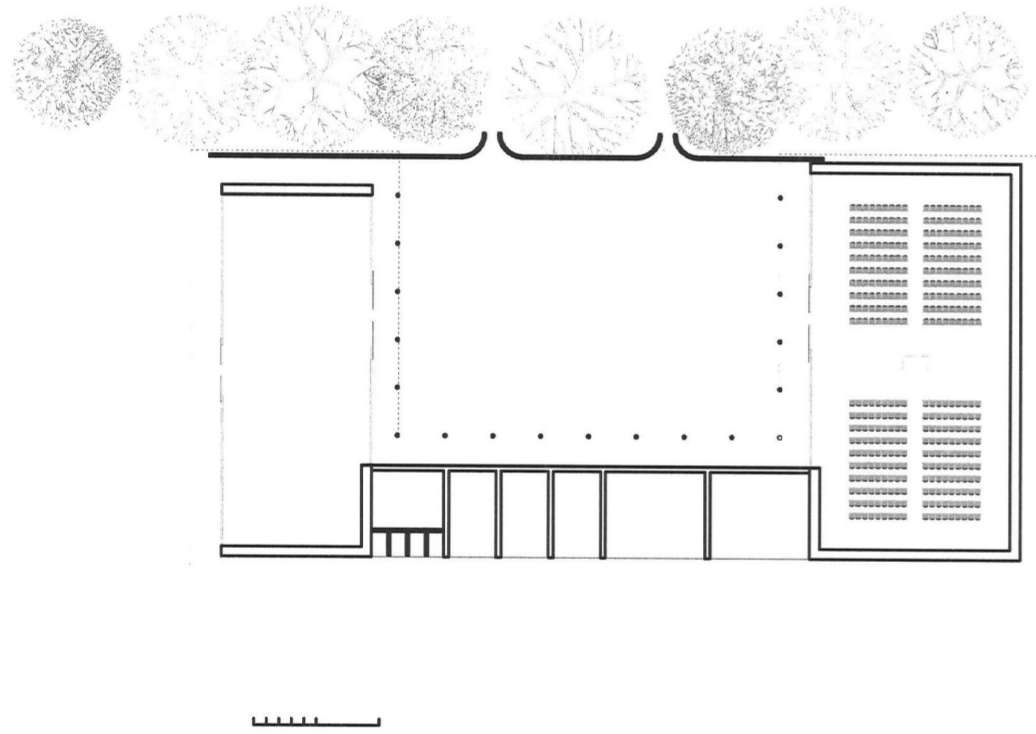
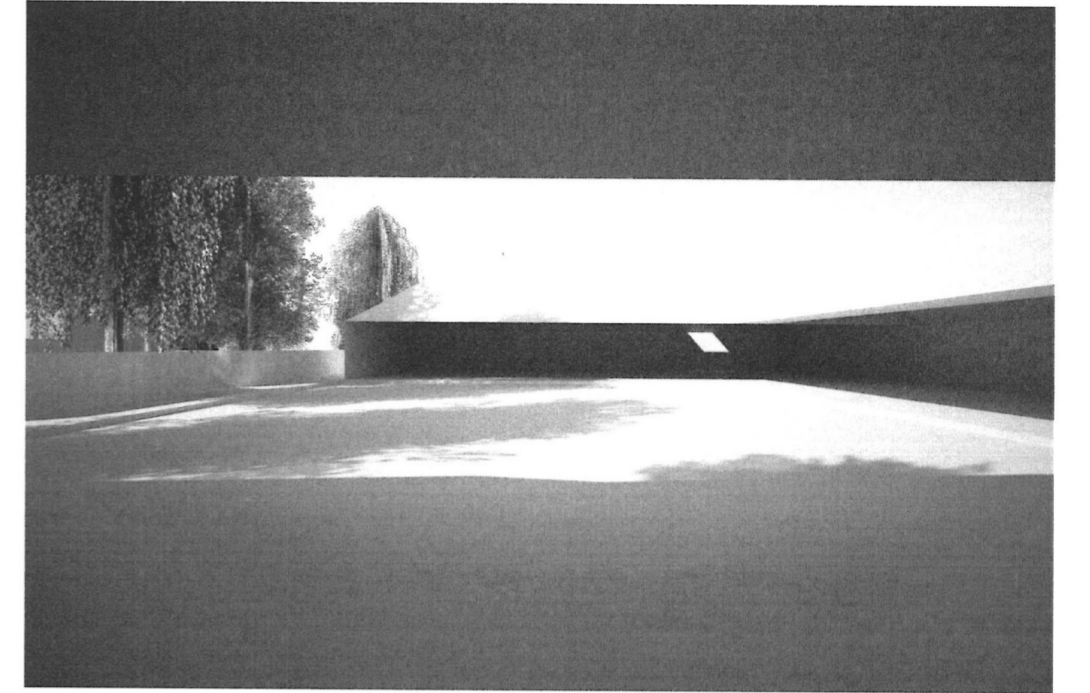
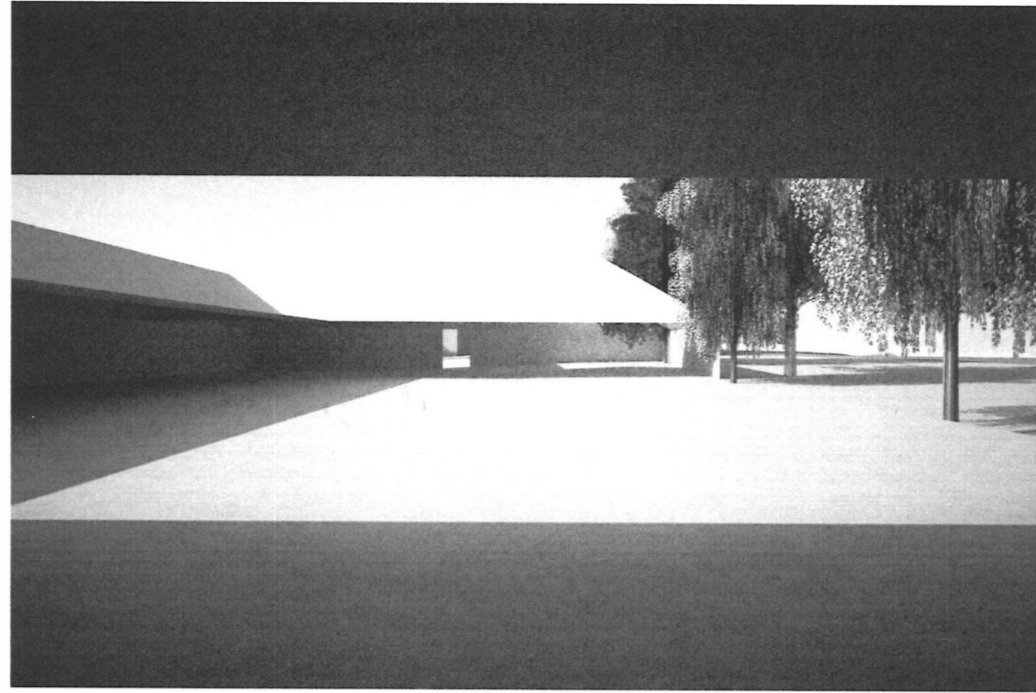
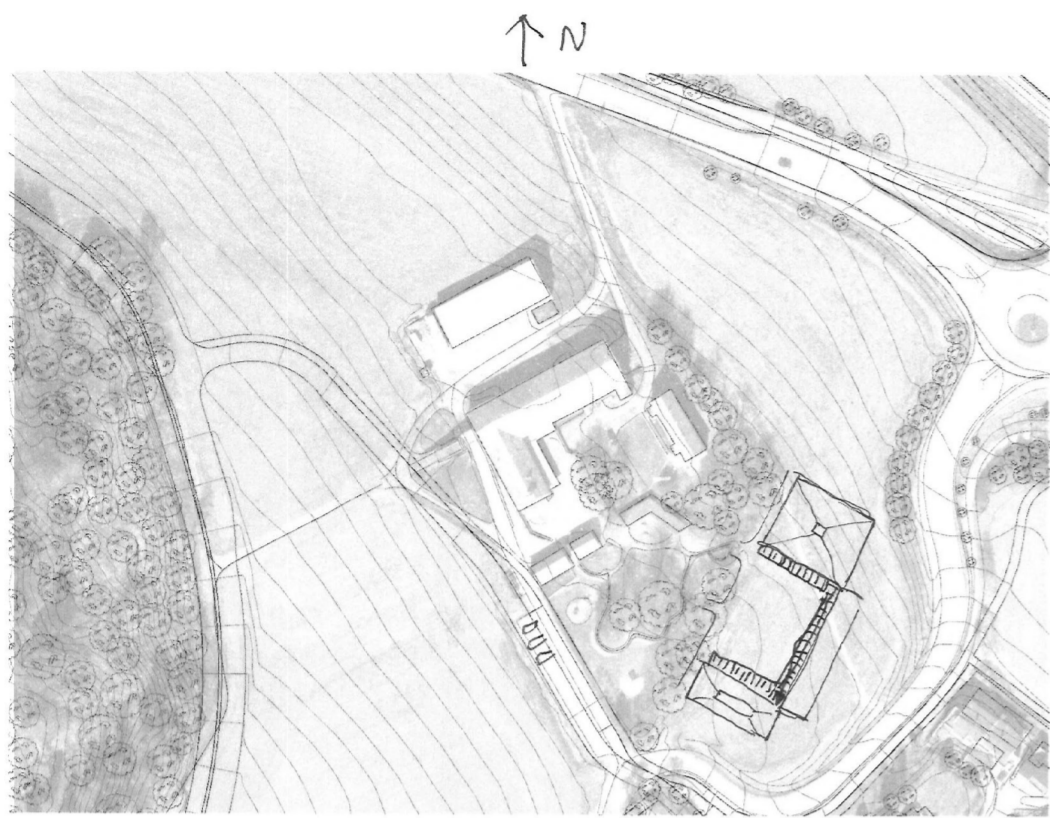
The church in the field needs to be an autonomous building. How do I approach that best?



Church on the farm.

The farm seemed to be the clearest choice if community was most important. Presthus farm is already a landmark in the area. Kids go to kindergarten there. It has a rich history reaching back to the iron age. The name even means Priest-house, suggesting that there might have been a church there along time ago. It is also easily accessed from all directions, many of the old paths leading to it are still used.

I imagined a church on a farm dividing profane and divine spaces into different buildings, the same way different farm functions are seperated into barn, house, granary etc.

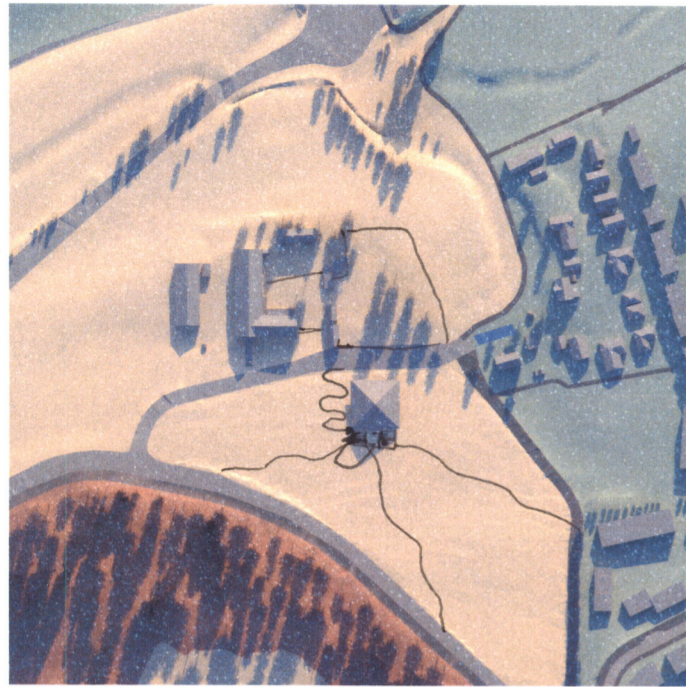


Church in the field. Community house by the street.

I believed most in the church in the field spacially, and in the farm geographically. Eventually I found a site opposite the farm, on a quiet street. The church would be focused in one direction, towards the field, and the community house would be directed the other, towards the farm and the community.

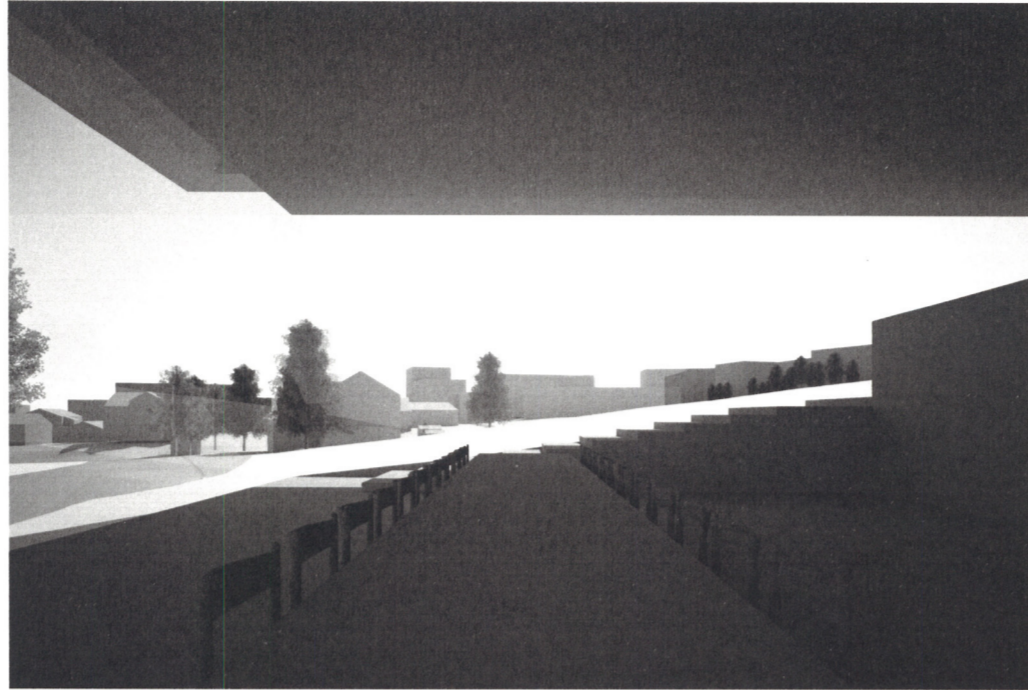
It made sense to me, but it was alot of work to make sense of how it all comes togheter, and how I could make it all clearer.

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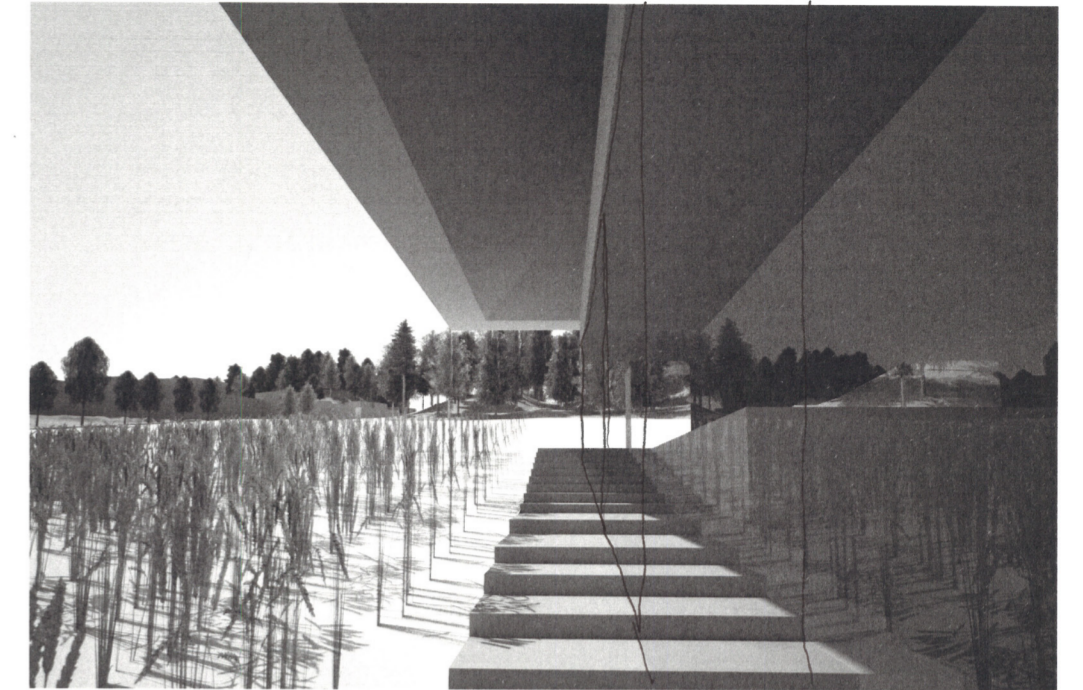


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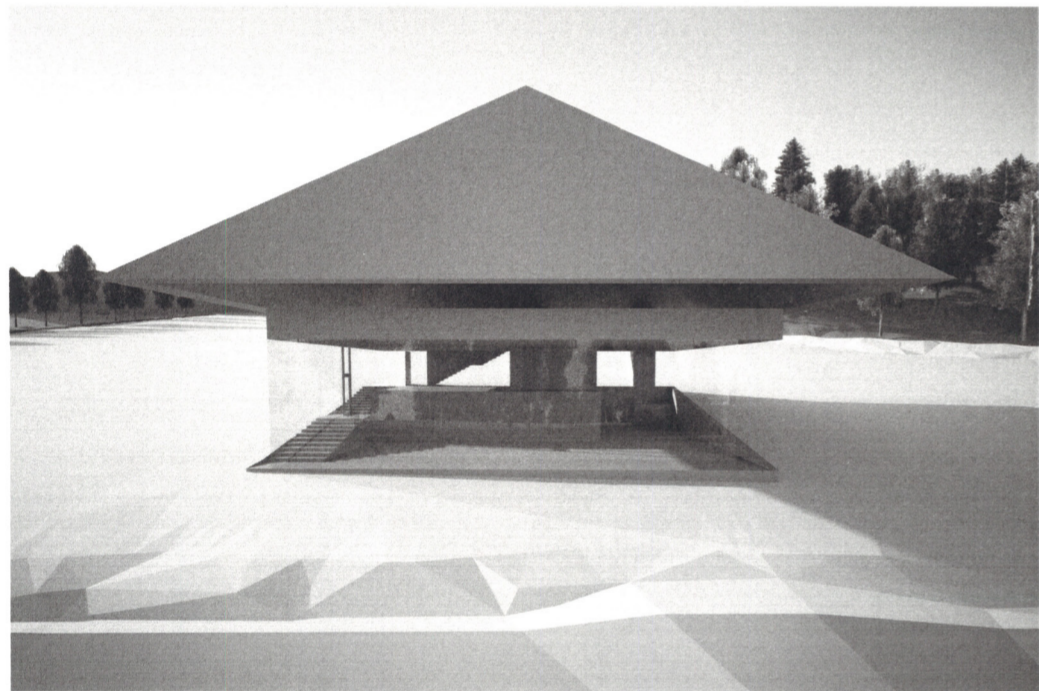
Community space



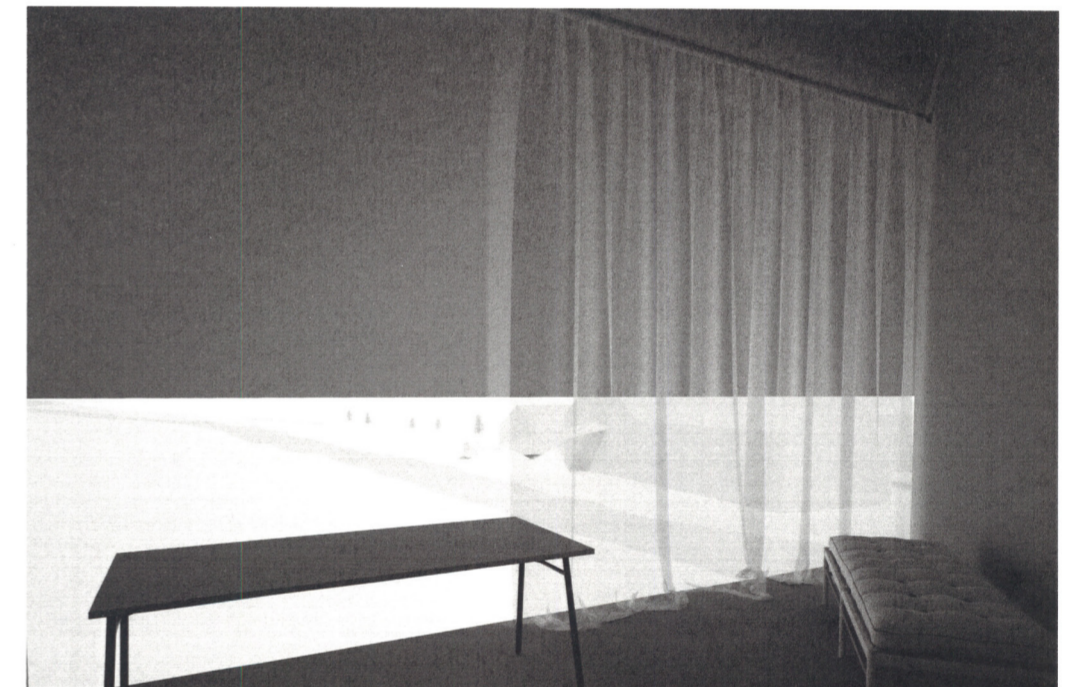
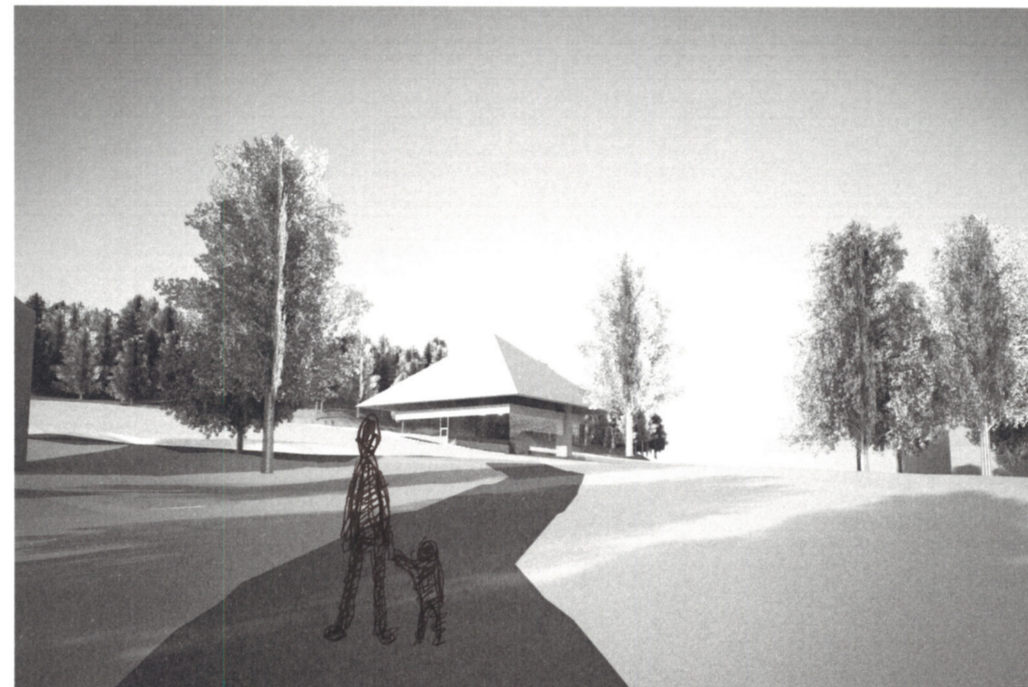
inside & outside stairs



light comes in during winter (february)

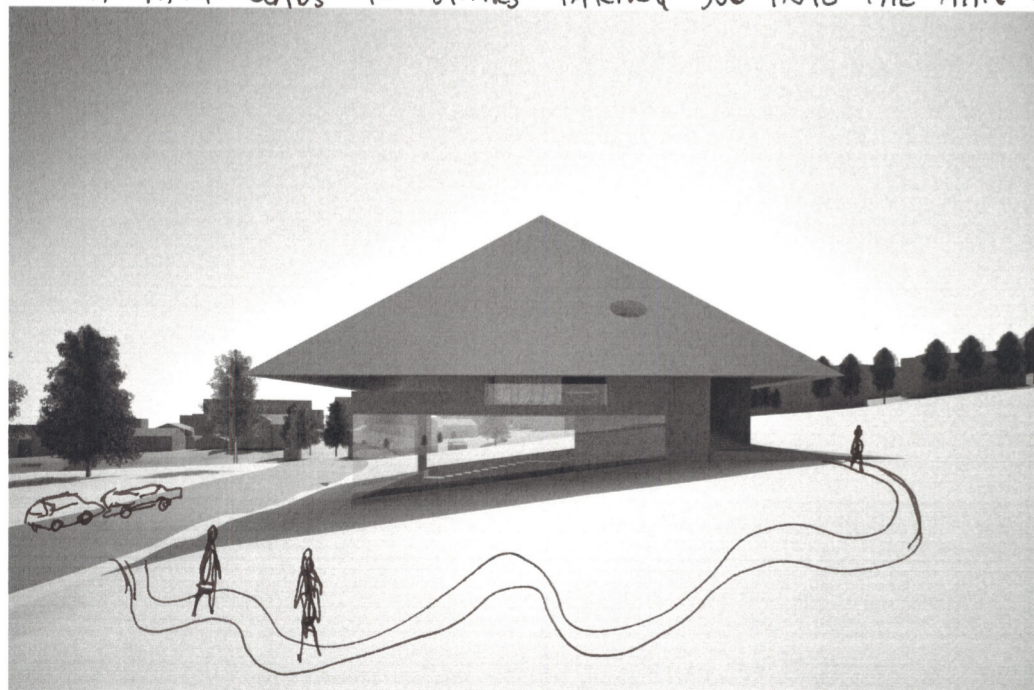


how open should it be?



SACRISTI UNDER THE ROOF. THE BRIDE COULD WATCH AS THE GUESTS ARRIVE.

TWO WAYS TO APPROACH AND ENTER.
A PATH LEADS TO STAIRS TAKING YOU INTO THE ATTIC CHURCH.



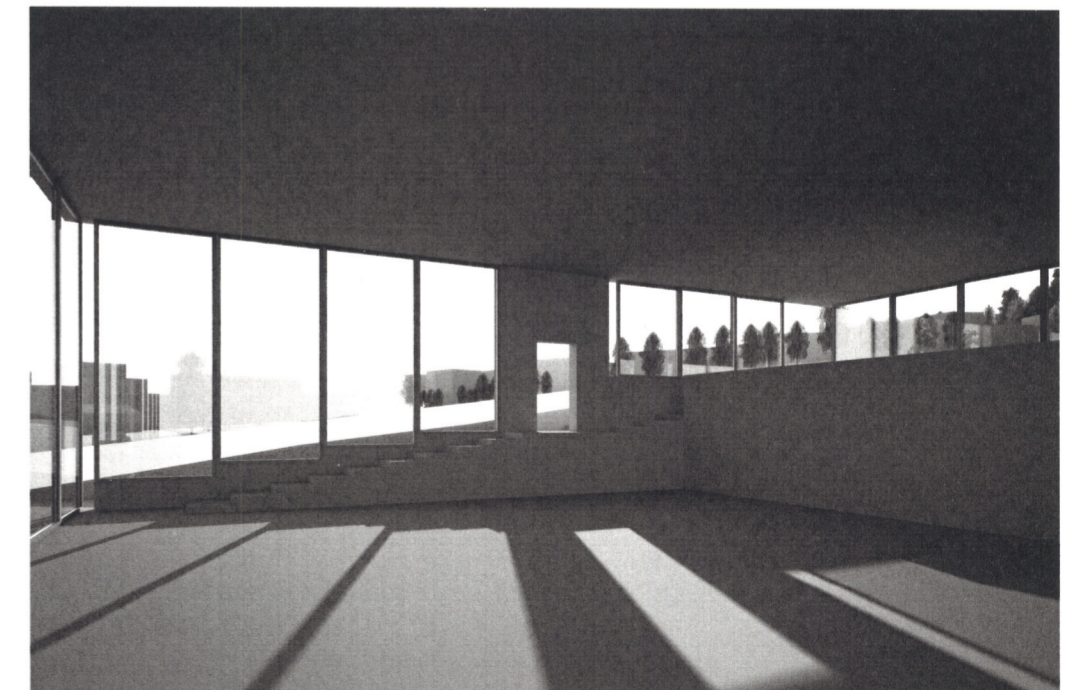
IS STAIRS A VIABLE ENTRANCE IN 2017?
BIG QUESTION

A ROOF IN A FIELD.



THE ROOF MUST "DISCONNECT" ITSELF FROM THE BUILDING BODY? IS IT IMPORTANT THAT THE ROOF FLOATS?

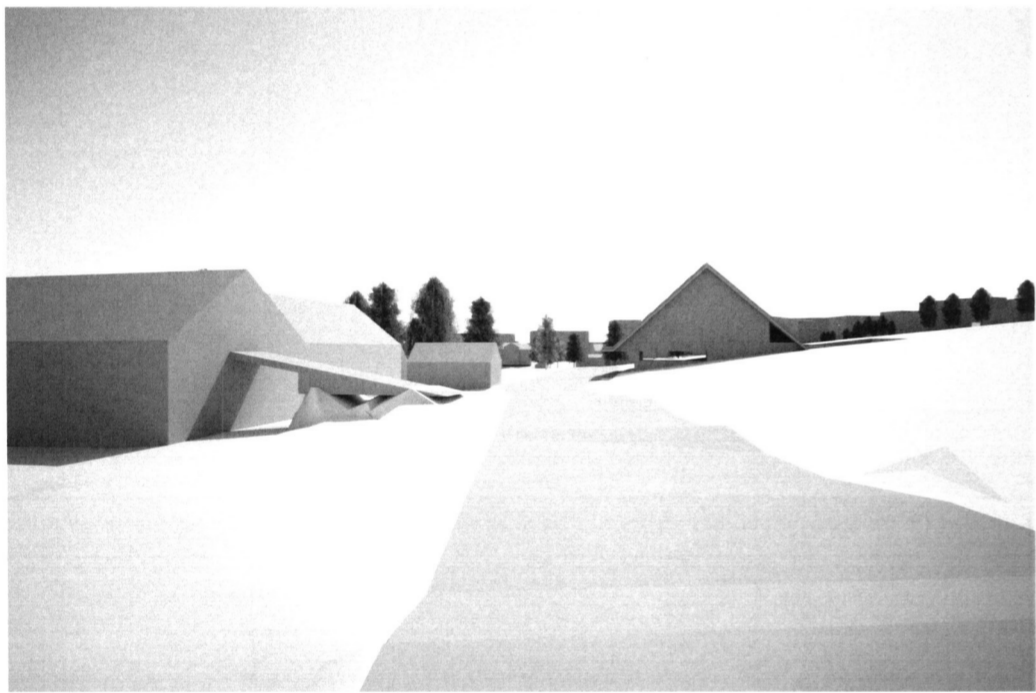
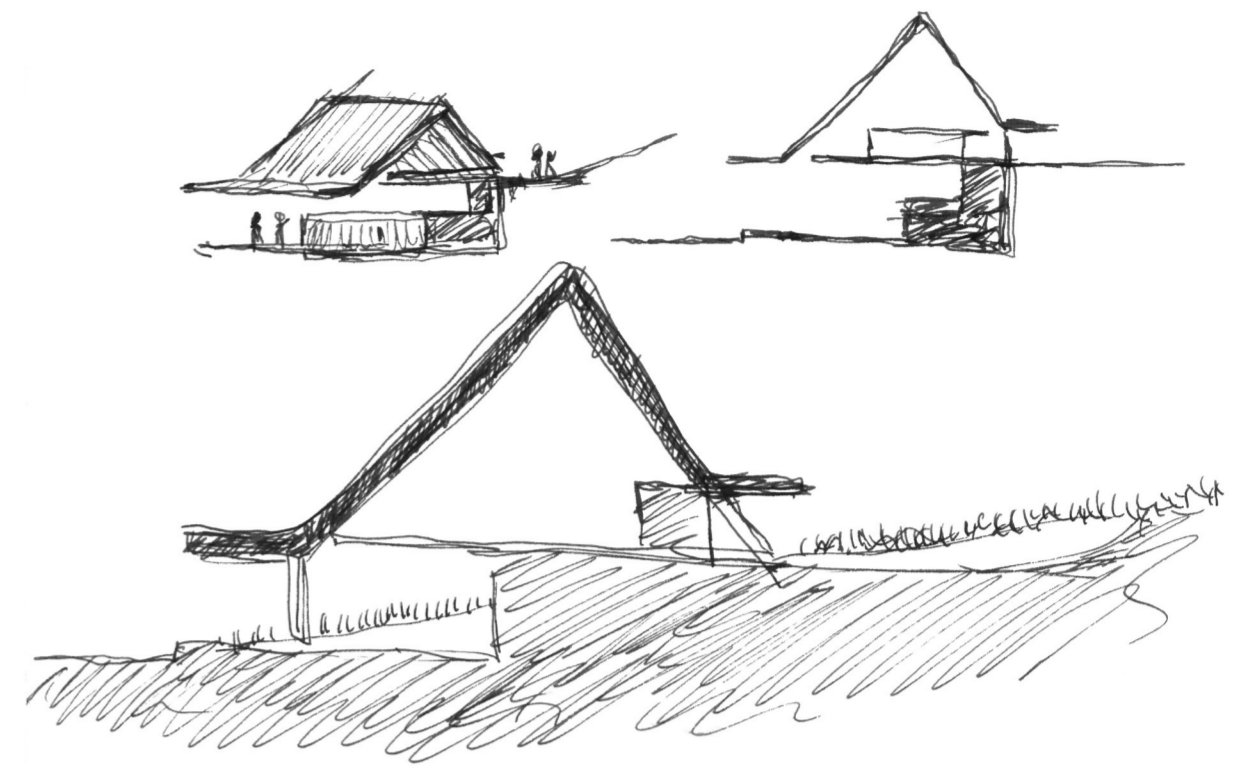
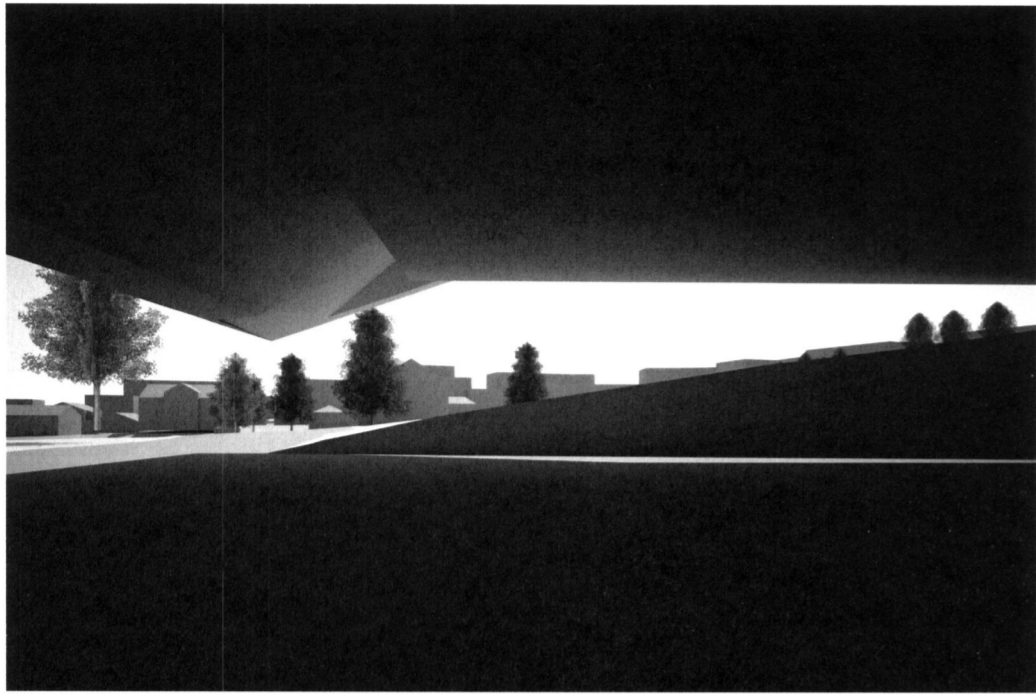
A SPACE IN THE MIDDLE OF EVERYTHING



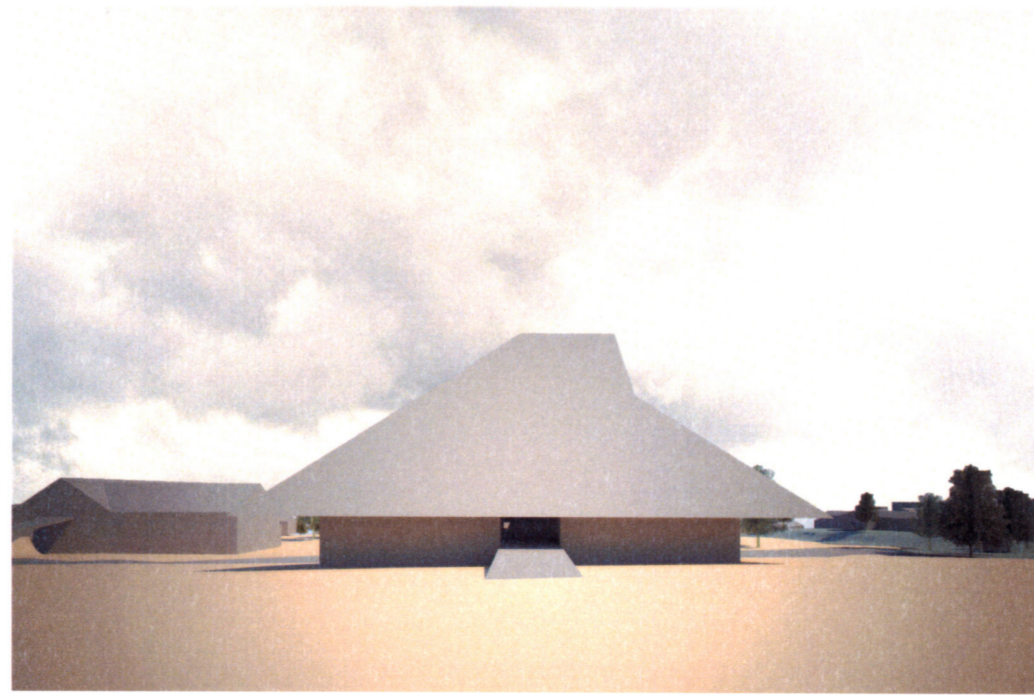
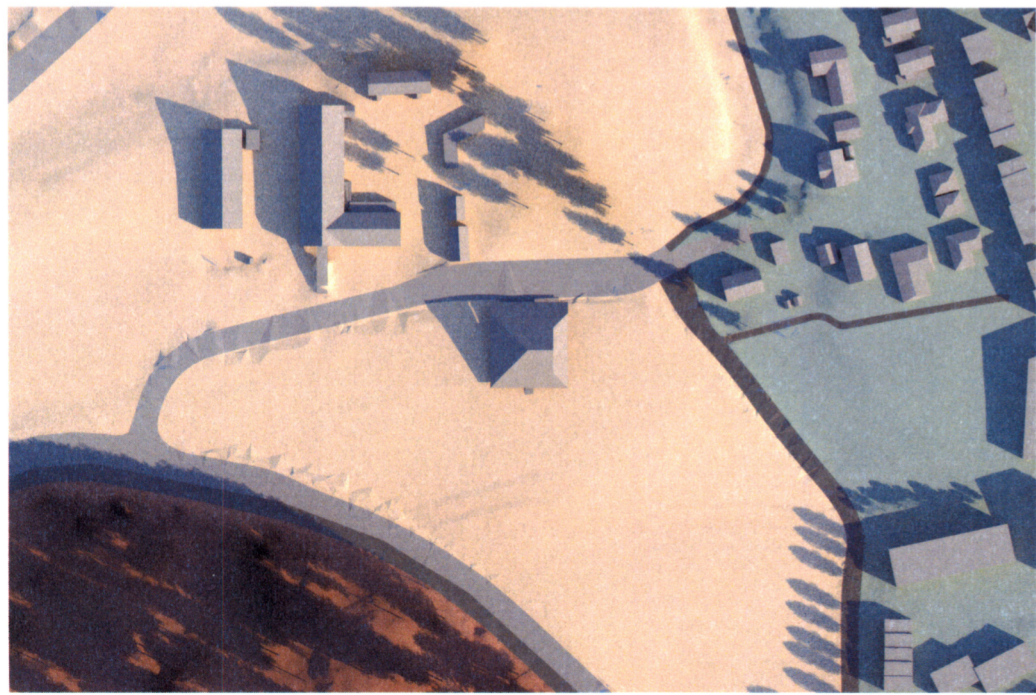
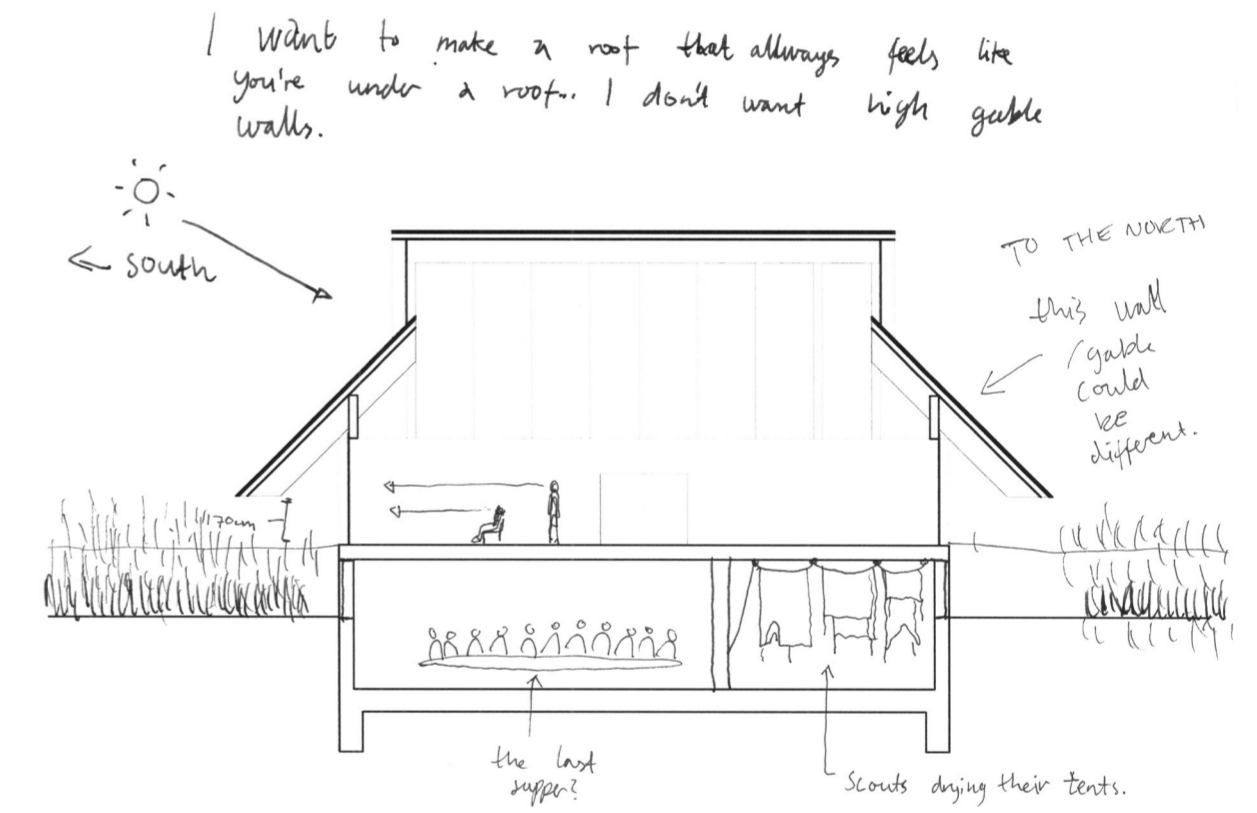
HOW OPEN SHOULD IT BE? (EITHER WAY, NOT THIS TALL...)

As I did my spacial excercises and drawings it became clearer and clearer that the church and the community house was very different. First I wanted to have the church above the field, imagining light flowing up into the space from below bringing with it the colours of the season. I still wanted the community house to be both on the street and in the field, with an outside level at both sides.

It was once I realized that the community house was the street, and that the field was the church that everything became clearer and easier to put togheter.



SACRISTY LOOKS OUT ON THE FIELD



THE ROOF NEEDS A STRUCTURE. SOMETHING RECOGNIZABLE, THAT COMES DOWN. COVERS. PROTECTS.

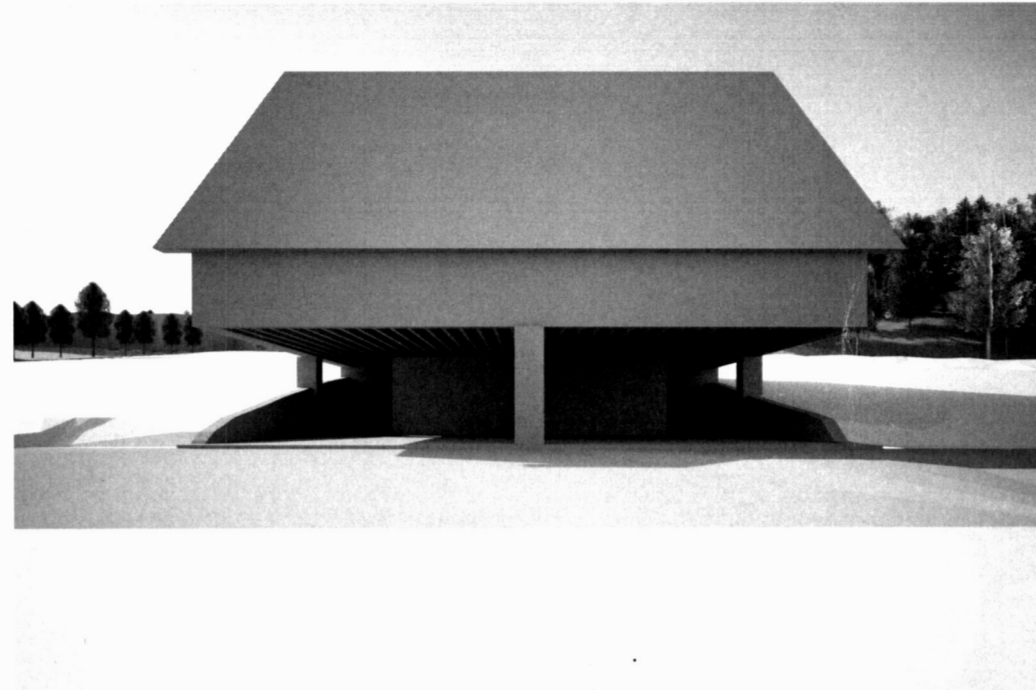


GATHERS EVERYTHING UNDER IT.

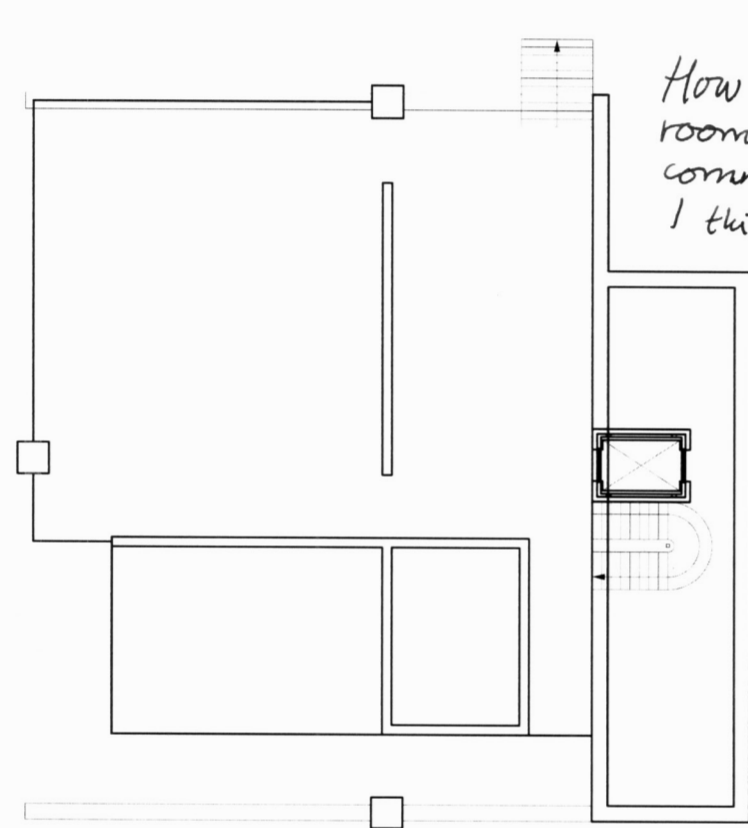
A NEW ROOF. A NEW SPACE.



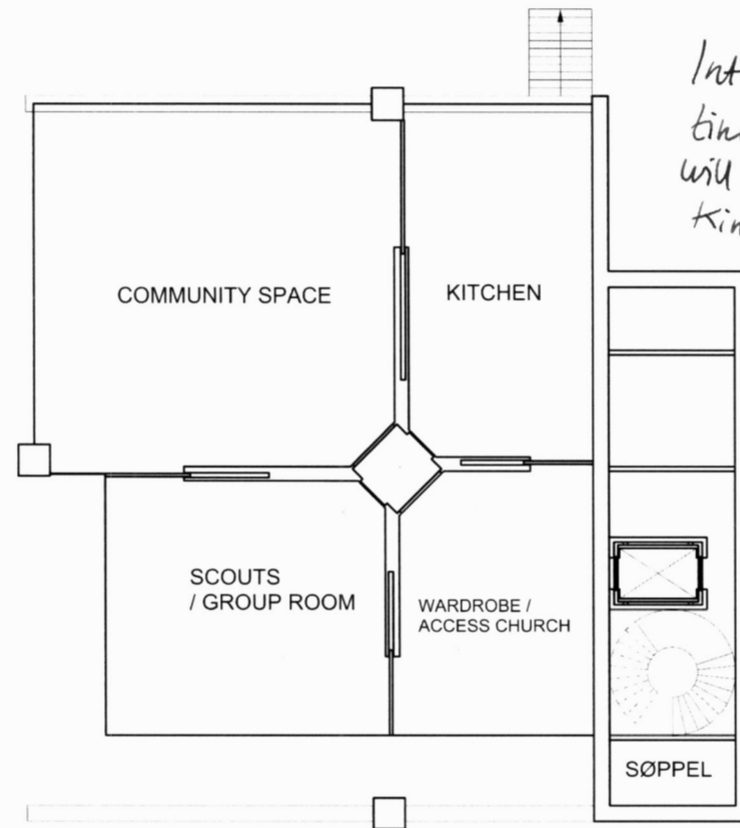
MASSIVE WOOD? RIB CONSTRUCTION?



PERHAPS IT IS BETTER OFF HIDDEN.
ALTHOUGH IT IS NICE IN ITS WAY.

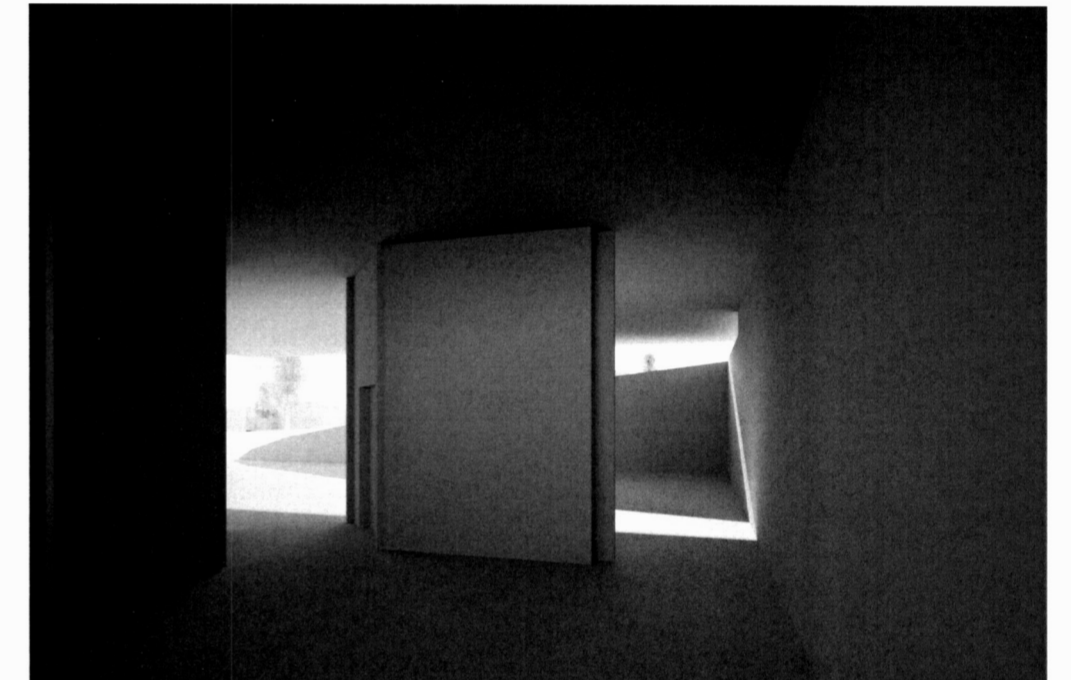


How do I make rooms in the community part?
I think that the plan must be as "open" as possible.
The community house should feel like a pocket along the little road.
I should be very carefull on how I divide that pocket.

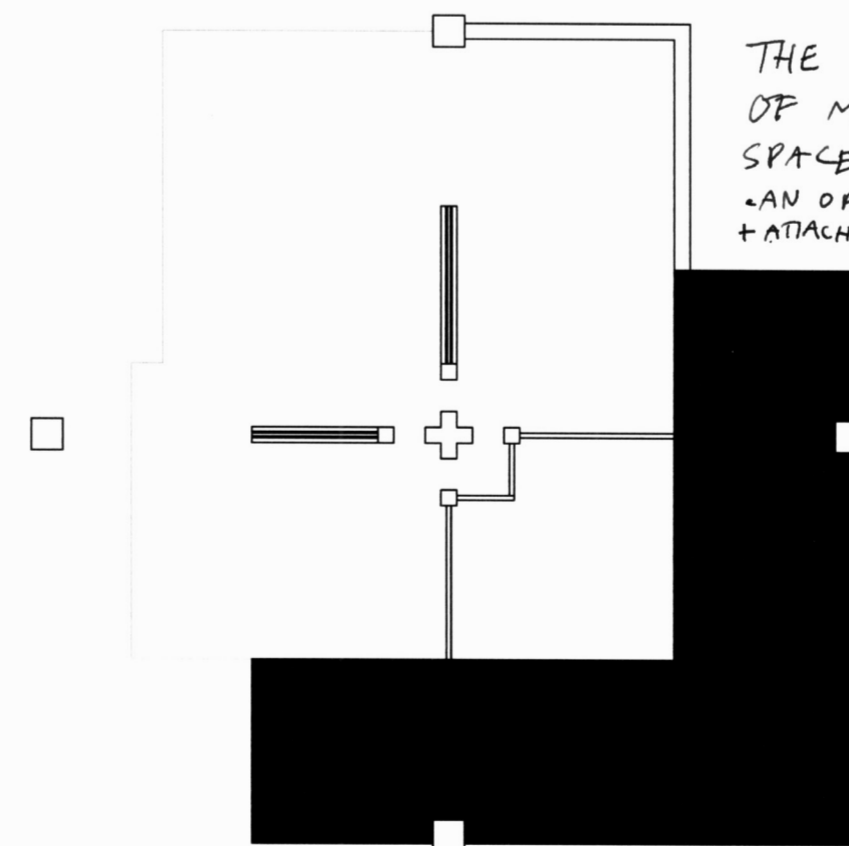


Introducing this tiny center hallway will make any kind of movement possible.
Along the facades, as one continuous space, or through the center when the spaces are separated.

THE OPENNESS OF THE POCKET OF THE STREET IS ACHIEVED THROUGH THIS CENTRAL HALLWAY.

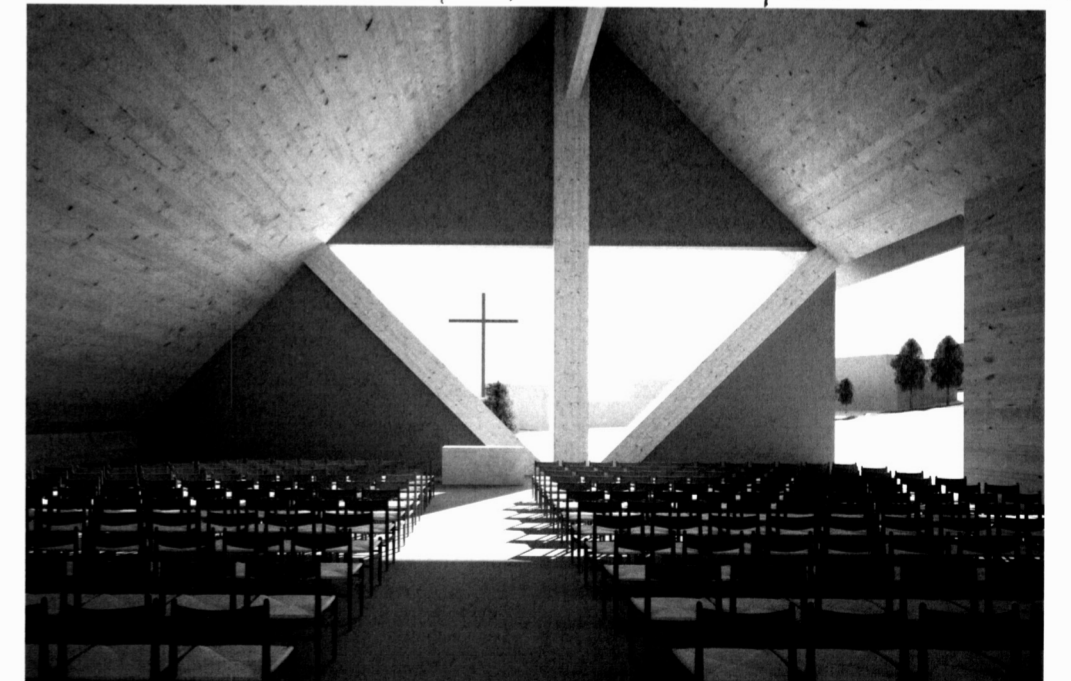


EACH SPACE GLIMPSES INTO THE NEXT.



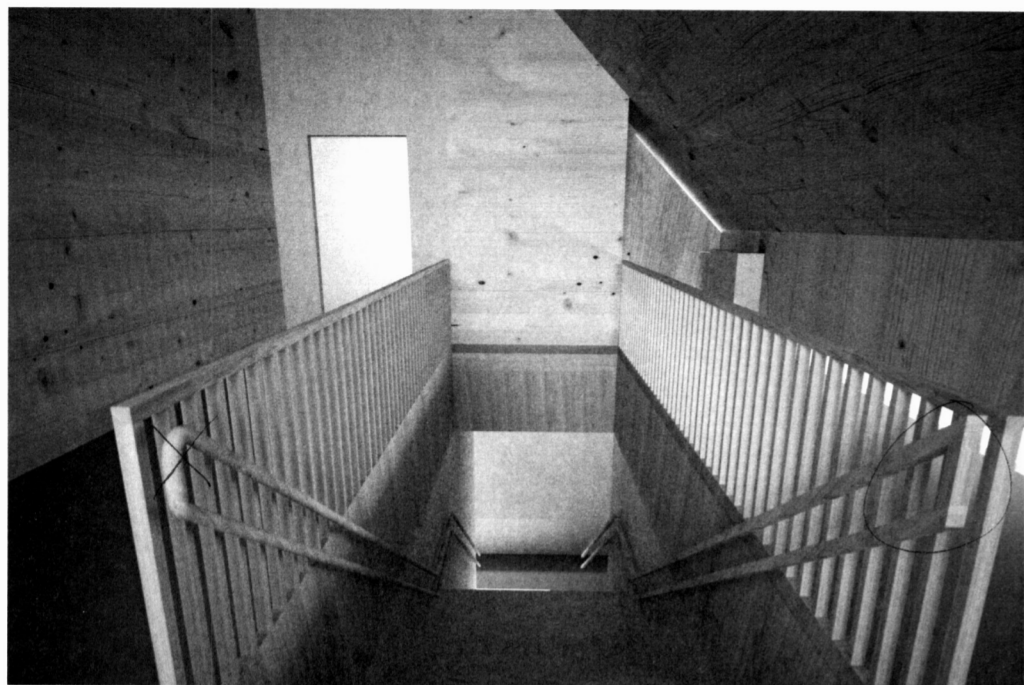
THE STRUGGLE OF MAKING SPACE.
-AN OPEN PLAN + ATTACHED CLOSED FUNCTIONS.

DO I NEED A BEAM ON TOP?
IF SO, Y TURNS TO Y.... ALSO NICE.



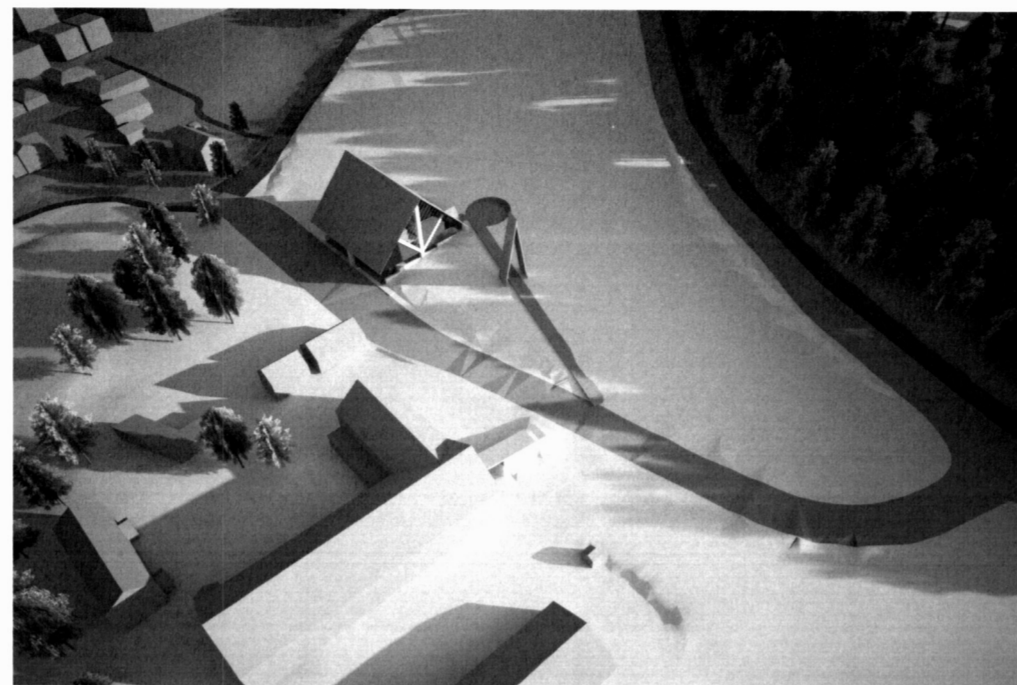
THE CHURCH IN THE FIELD.

NO LONGER A DARK HOLE.



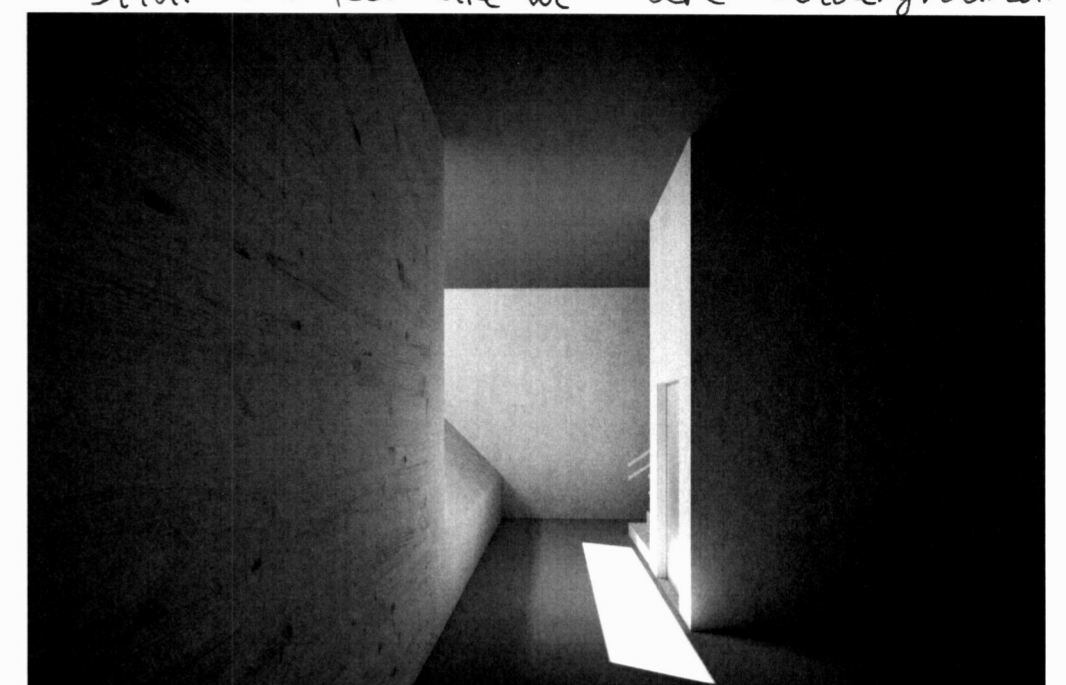
I COULD HAVE DOORS ON THE REPOS,
IF I NEED MORE STORAGE → HALF FLOOR...

The church in the situation



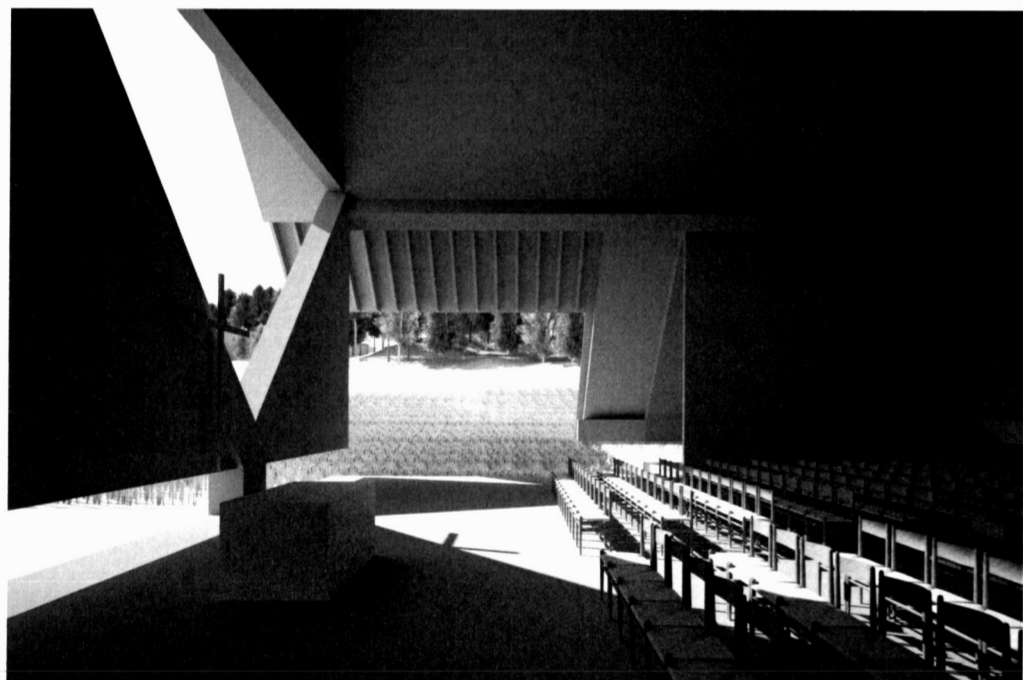
Need to fix: - access ramp / road
- church bell tower. (gate?)
- place outside the church

Here we go. light flows down.
Still. we feel like we are underground.



could this place be move?
Maybe the light well is also a bench?

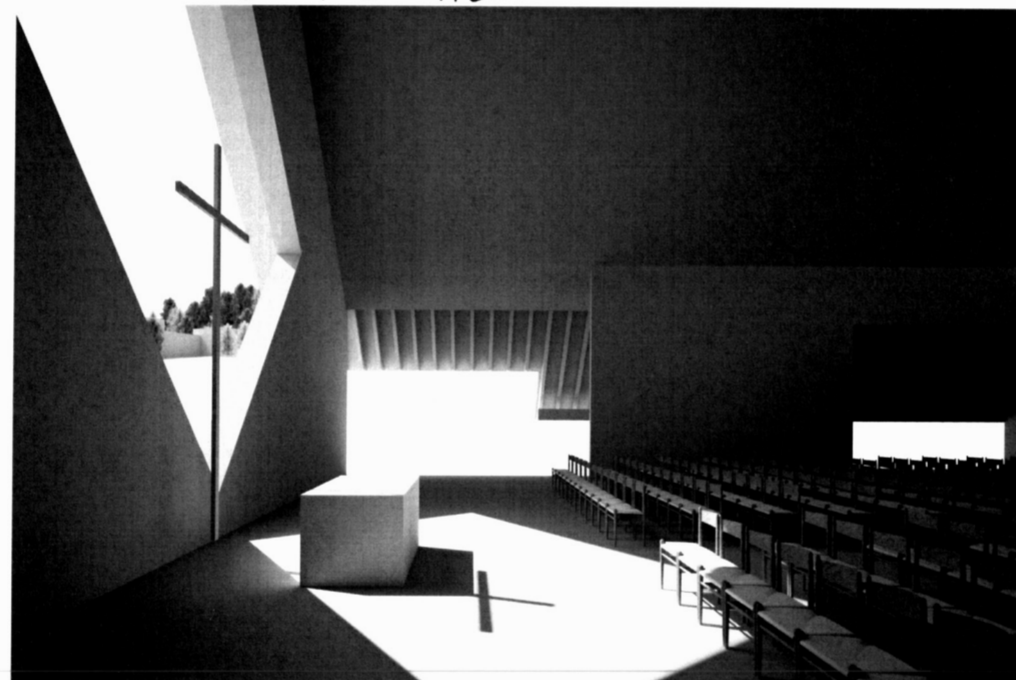
THE WIDER WINDOW IS NICE.
THE VISIBLE CONSTRUCTION IS NICE.



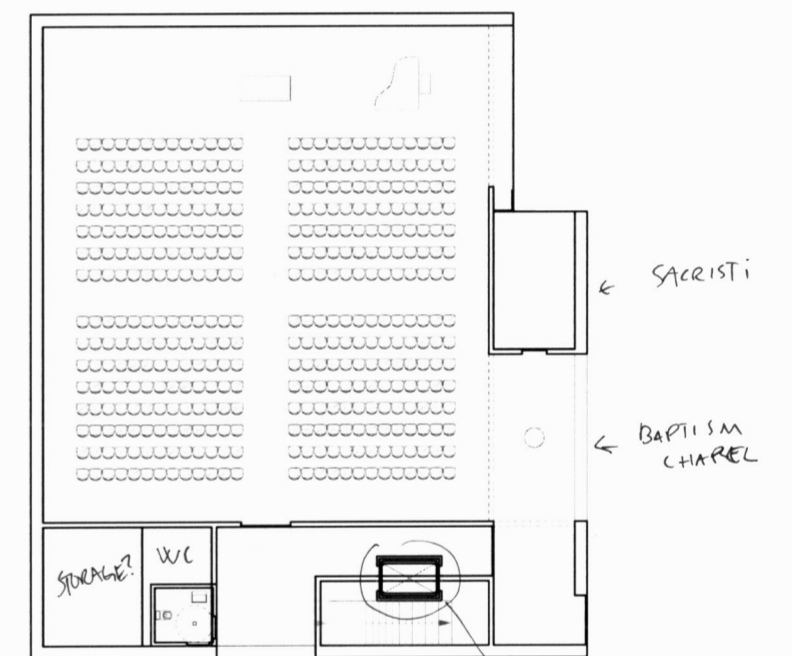
THE PARTITION WALL COULD SLIDE MORE TO
THE LEFT? JUST "50" TO "HIDE" SACRISTI

HOW BIG, AND HOW MANY? (ELEMENTS)

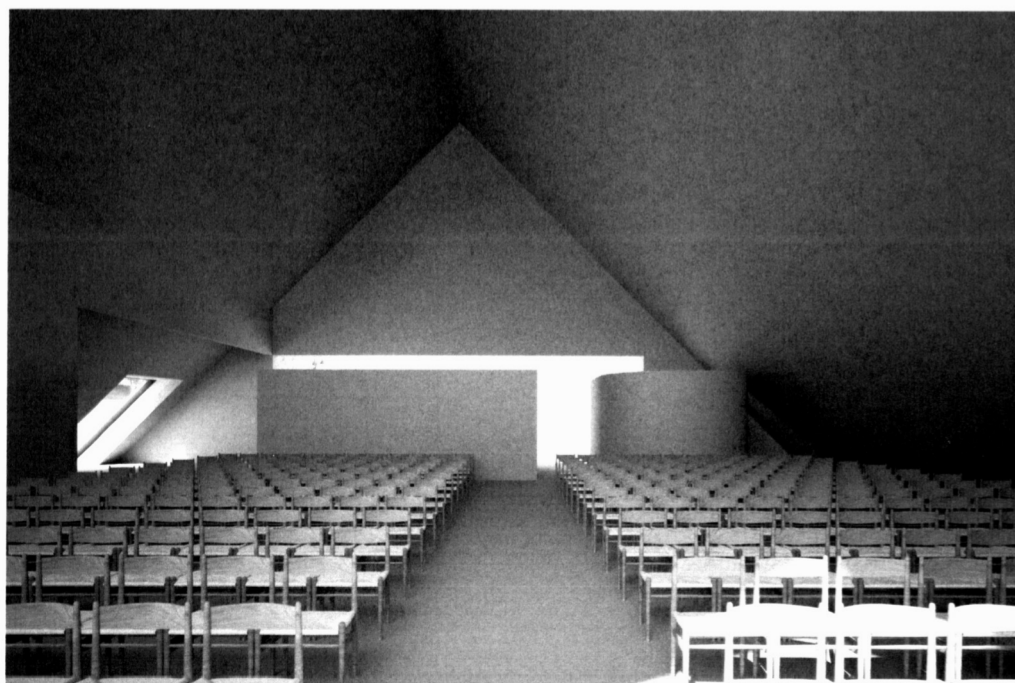
THIS, I DO LIKE. THE CHURCH OPENING MORE
TO THE FIELD.



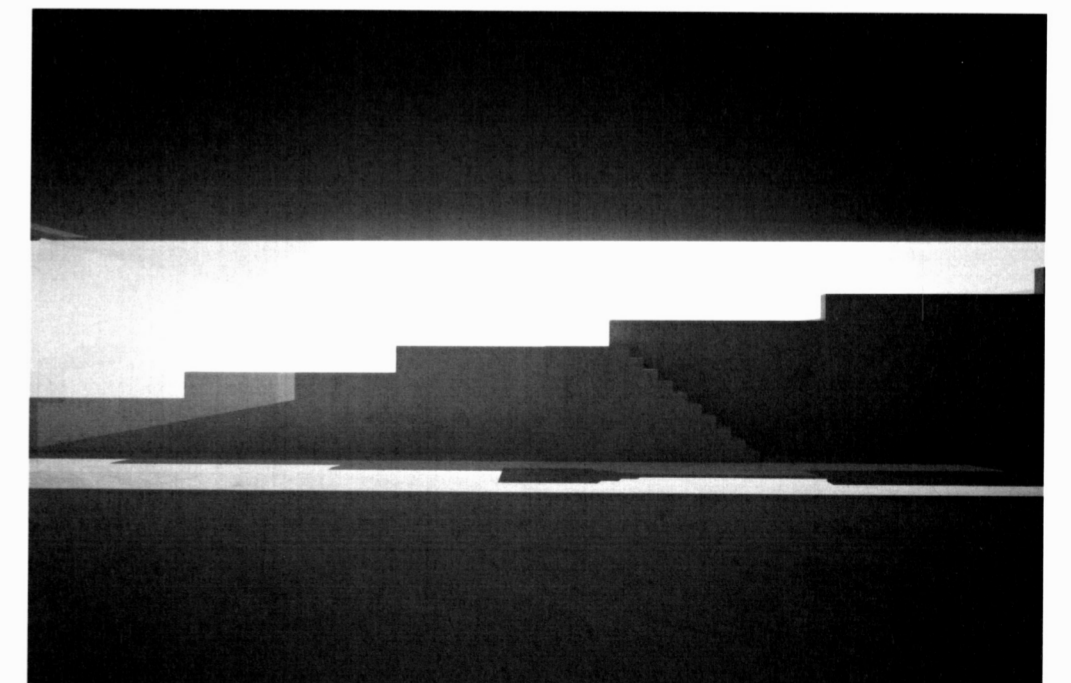
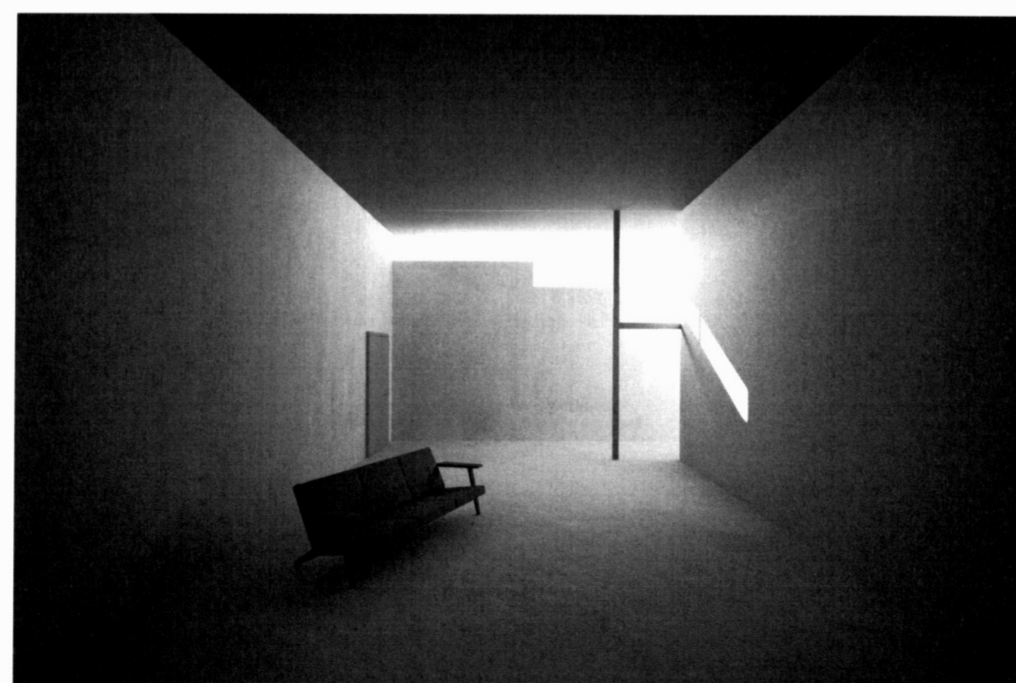
BEHIND THE WALL, UNDER THE ROOF IS THE
SACRISTI. BY THE ENTRANCE NEXT TO IT, A
SMALL BAPTISM CHAPEL.



how could this fit?



I NEED WC + STAIRS + ELEVATOR + WARDROBE +
PREFERABLY STORAGE. ACTUALLY STORAGE
IS DOWNSTAIRS!!!!



From process to project



The Divine and the Profane

Church and Community House

My diploma is a proposal for a new protestant church on the outskirts of Trondheim. The neighbouring congregations of Ranheim and Charlottenlund both need a new church and have decided to build one together.

The site is next to the old farm of Presthus, situated in the middle of a wide open landscape, gently sloping down to the fjord to the north. It is a typical suburban context with small neighbourhoods, highways and railroads dividing what was once an all rural scenery.

The church lies in a slightly sloping field, bordered with a forest in the background on a nearby hill. The existing architecture of the place consists of conventional one-family houses with gardens, lined along the roads.

The architectural expression of the church attempts to establish a dialogue with this quite ordinary local environment, yet architecturally highlighting and strengthening the commonplace architectural elements and typologies, intentionally creating a kind of new vernacular feeling.

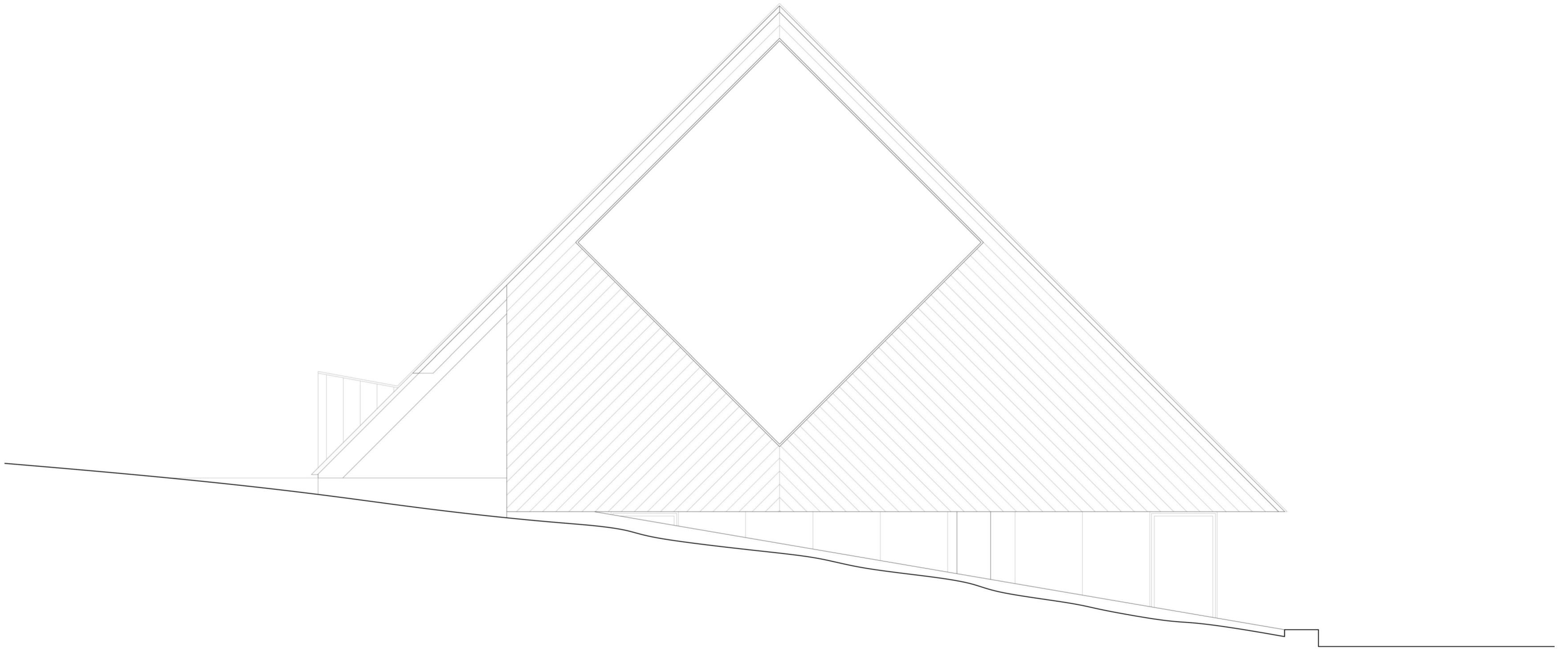
The church consists of a large gable roof with spaces inside. The main space is asymmetrical and the roof merges with the floor on the south side. On the north side of the church space, a wall divides it from smaller spaces, open to the field. The altar wall has an opening to allow the field and sky to reach into the space.

A community house under the church space lies on a quiet street next to the old farm. It is imagined as an extension of the street, a kind of cave dug into the sloping field. Retaining walls follow the terrain, hiding all service spaces in the back. Towards the street, a glass facade exhibits the communal activities to passers-by.

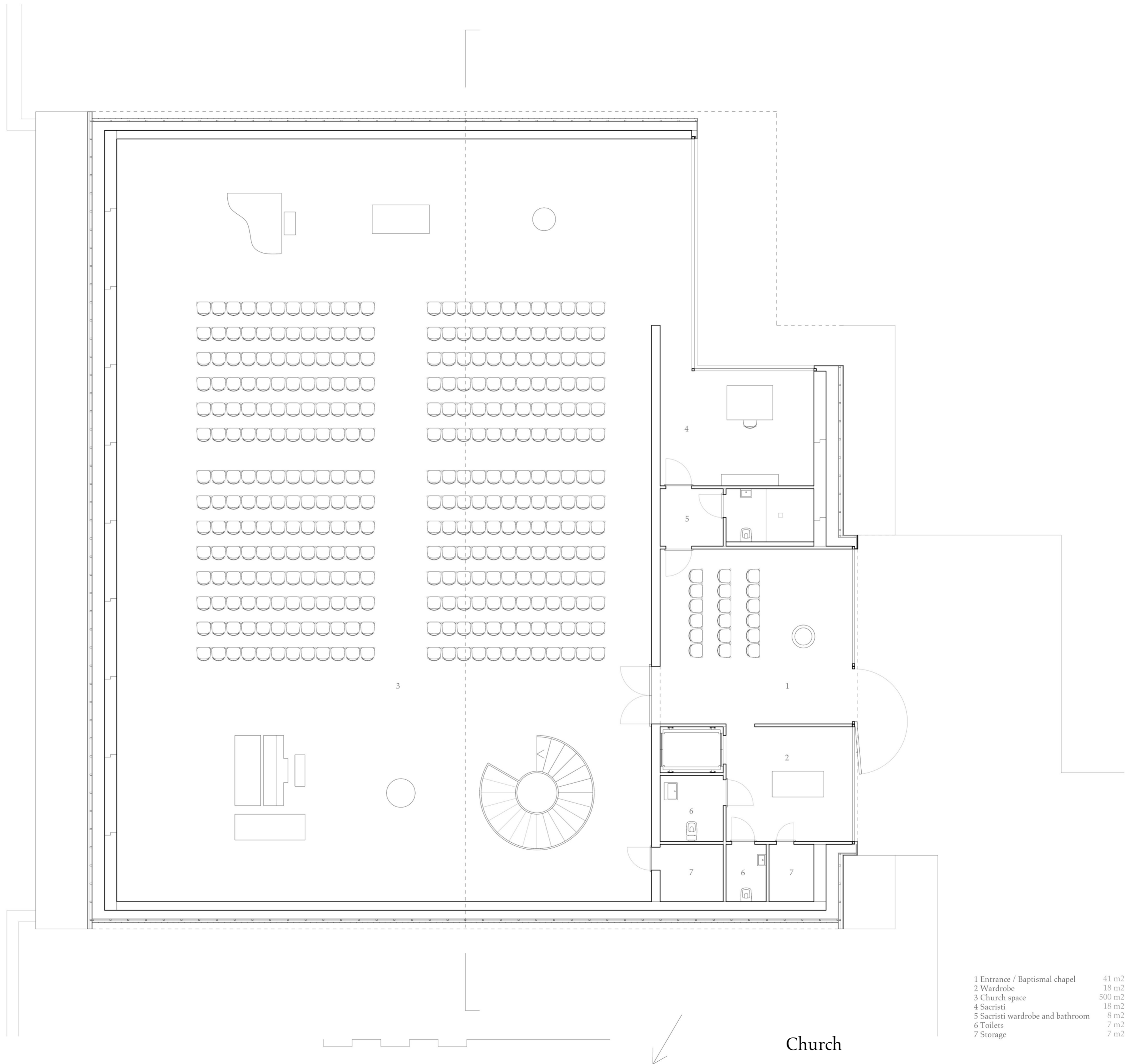
The project explores the architectonic relationship between these two spaces, between religious and profane space, church and community house, within one building volume. It architecturally questions and suggests the way these two spaces could belong to each other and how they can be articulated.





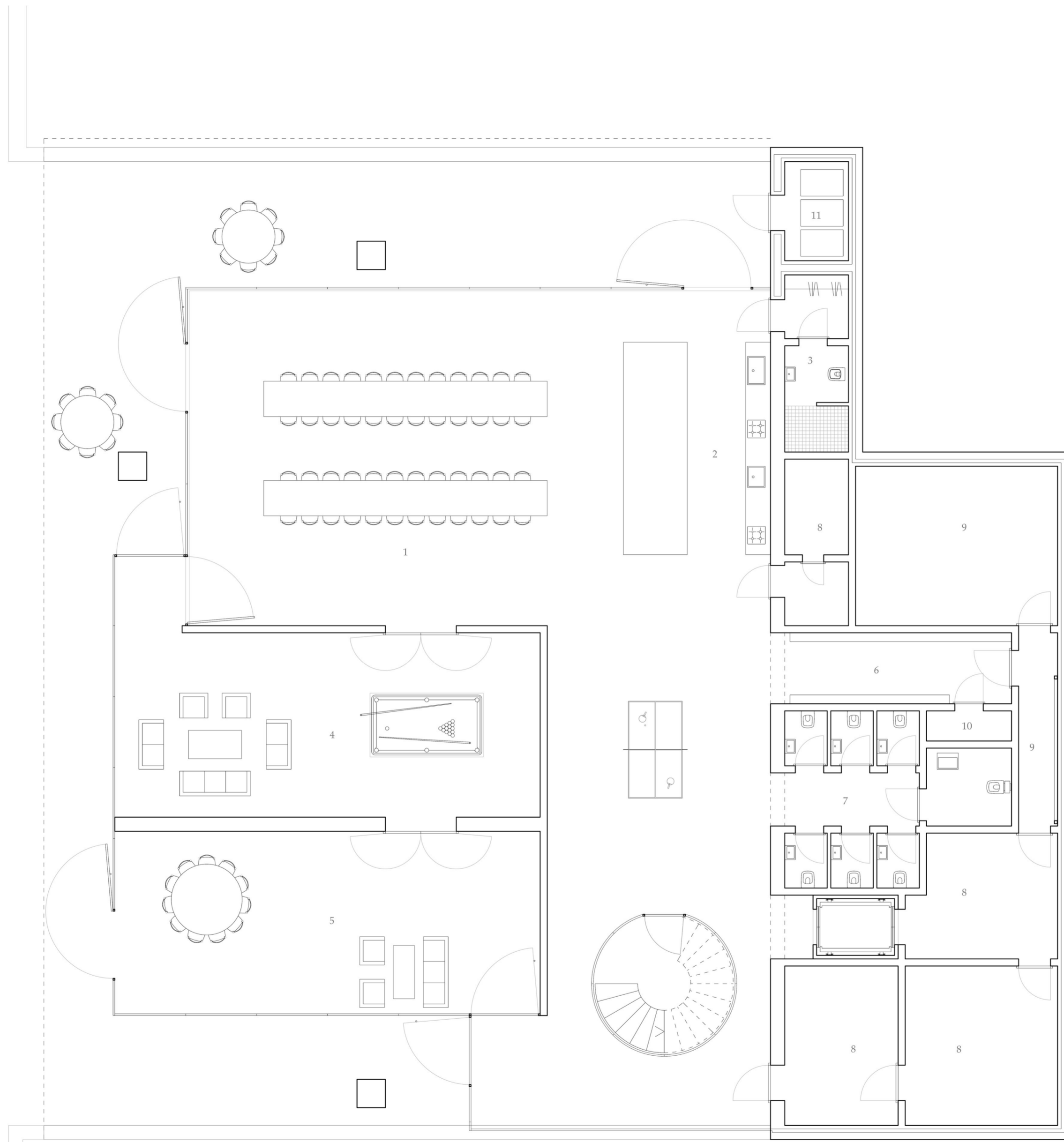


South-East elevation. Slope



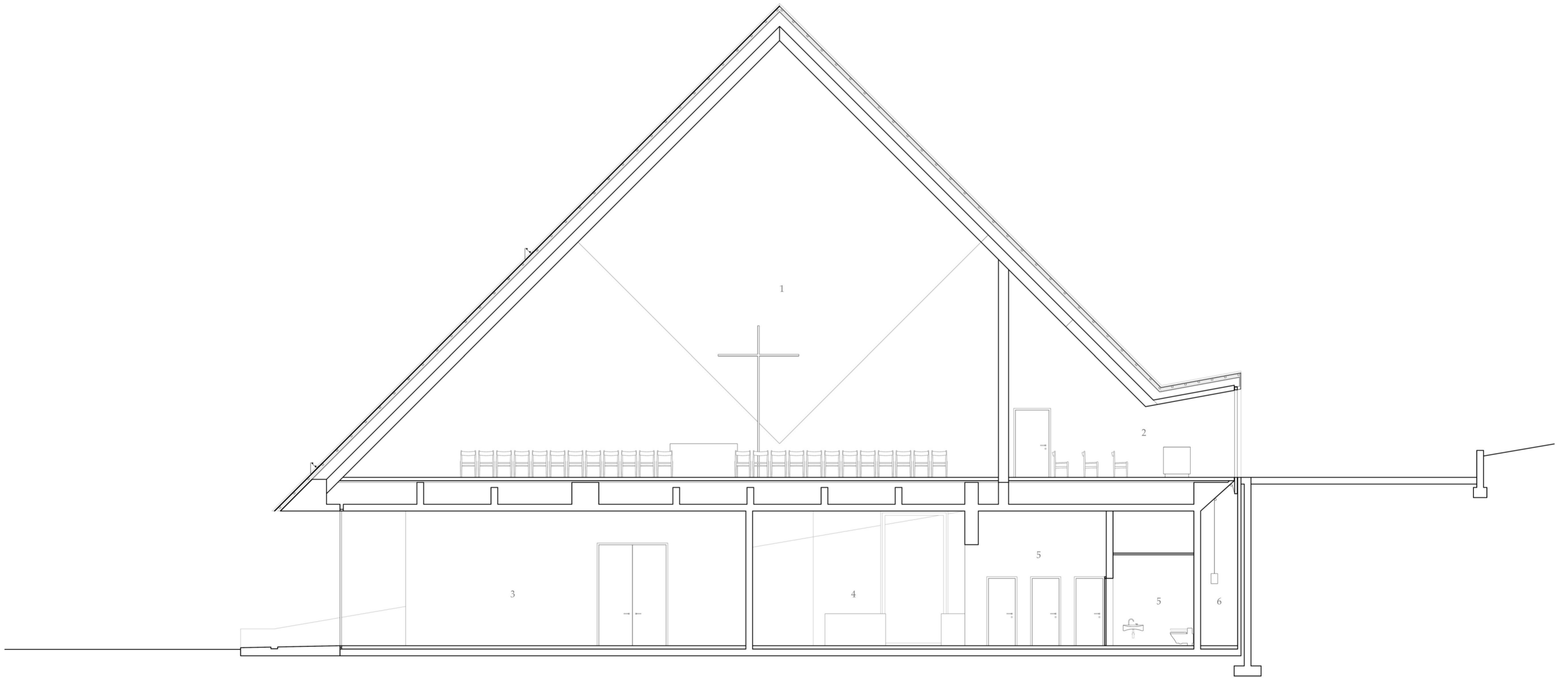
| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Entrance / Baptismal chapel | 41 m ² |
| 2 Wardrobe | 18 m ² |
| 3 Church space | 500 m ² |
| 4 Sacristi | 18 m ² |
| 5 Sacristi wardrobe and bathroom | 8 m ² |
| 6 Toilets | 7 m ² |
| 7 Storage | 7 m ² |

Church



| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Community space | 116 m ² |
| 2 Kitchen | 39 m ² |
| 3 Kitchen staff | 9 m ² |
| 4 Group space / Lounge | 66 m ² |
| 5 Scouts space | 62 m ² |
| 6 Wardrobe | 14 m ² |
| 7 Toilets | 24 m ² |
| 8 Storage | 48 m ² |
| 9 Technical | 32 m ² |
| 10 Wash room | 2 m ² |
| 11 Garbage room | 5 m ² |

Community House



- 1 Church space
- 2 Baptismal chapel
- 3 Group room / lounge
- 4 Hallway
- 5 Toilets
- 6 Technical (window space)



