

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.