United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Peter's Church

other names/site number

name of related multiple property listing

Location

street & number 619 Lexington Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town New York ☐ vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10022

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

_x_ national ___ statewide _x_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [x] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / religious facility (church)
RECREATION & CULTURE / theater (playhouse) / museum (gallery)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / religious facility (church)
RECREATION & CULTURE / theater (playhouse) / museum (gallery)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Not visible
walls: STONE/Caledonia granite; GLASS; METAL/aluminum
roof: STONE/Caledonia granite
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

St. Peter's Church is located at 619 Lexington Avenue, on the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and 54th Street in Manhattan, New York County, New York. The property is situated in the Midtown East neighborhood, which is bounded by 59th Street to the north, 5th Avenue to the west, 40th Street to the south, and 3rd Avenue to the east. Midtown East is a prominent commercial and business district distinguished by the presence of several significant modern office towers including Lever House, the Seagram Building, the Lipstick Building, and the MetLife Building. The district is also home to notable landmarks such as the Chrysler Building, Grand Central Terminal, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Central Synagogue, and St. Bartholomew's Church (Figure 1). The streets bounding the property are lined in high-rise office buildings with commercial retail space at the street level. These are clad primarily in glass and metal, although some brick masonry facades are present.

St. Peter's is one of three interlocking buildings that comprise the Citicorp Center Complex, the others being Citicorp Center Tower (now 601 Lexington) and a stepped 6-story market building. The tower and market building occupy the eastern two-thirds of the block. St. Peter's sits at the northwest corner and is adjoined by a sunken street-level plaza at the southwest corner (Figure 2). The church can be distinguished from the tower and market building by its granite façade. The complex is classified as a condominium, originally divided into three separate units. The church is described as tax block 1308 and lot 1002. St. Peter's is approximately 63'-0" tall from the curb to the top of its roof. Because of its unique form and the open plaza space surrounding it, the church stands apart from the surrounding high-rise buildings despite its relatively small scale. The church also contains the Nevelson Chapel– a permanent public art installation– and a black box theater.

The Citicorp Center complex was designed by Hugh Stubbins Associates, with Emery Roth and Sons serving as the local associate architect. The church's exterior is modern, with a monumental approach to form and material that distinguishes it from the rest of the complex and reflects Stubbins' Bauhaus influences. The minimalist modern interiors were designed by Lella and Massimo Vignelli of Vignelli Associates. The chapel was designed by Louise Nevelson, an artist known for abstract sculpture influenced by collage and Cubism. Design of the new church commenced in 1973, and a groundbreaking ceremony featuring a live jazz performance was held in 1974 (Figure 15). Construction began in 1975 and was completed in 1977 (Figure 51). Citicorp Center, including St. Peter's Church, was designated as a New York City Landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2016. Although the church remains tenuously interconnected with the Citicorp complex, the nomination and boundary focus only on the church itself, reflecting the separation of use, level of artistic design, and areas of significance. The church has been carefully maintained and retains integrity despite significant changes to the rest of the complex.

Narrative Description

Exterior

The Citicorp Center complex is bounded by 54th Street to the north, Lexington Avenue to the west, 53rd Street to the south, and 3rd Avenue to the east. The entire complex is modern in design and built at the same time, but the three buildings comprising Citicorp Center each have a distinctive character and function (Figure 52). At street level, the sanctuary of St. Peter's stands apart from the rest of the complex because of its sculptural form and granite facade. A single-story volume housing the church narthex and offices interlocks with the terraced market building, which fronts the majority of 54th and 53rd streets and maintains a congruous experience with the surrounding city blocks. Citicorp Tower floats above these, lifted skyward by four massive super columns. While there were originally interior connections between the church and market building, these were removed between 2005 and 2007 due to security concerns following the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The three buildings now function completely independently and have their own secured entrances. The three buildings share a single loading dock located at the middle of the block along 54th Street, which is also what connects the church to the market building.

Citicorp Tower, Market Building, and Privately Owned Public Spaces

Citicorp Center Tower, standing at fifty-nine stories (or 915 feet), is distinguished by its iconic sloped top and innovative floating design (Figure 2). It was the world's eighth-tallest building at the time of its construction, the fifth-tallest building in New York City, and the first building in New York to employ a tuned mass damper in its structural system.[1] Its design reflects the influence of the International Style on corporate American architecture, characterized by minimalism, flat surfaces, and rectilinear forms. The stream-lined facade is clad in bands of reflective glass separated by flush anodized aluminum spandrel panels. The entire tower is elevated thirteen stories above street level by a series of four super columns centered on the north, south, east, and west facades and installed flush with the tower base. The super columns and underside of the tower are also clad in aluminum panels (Figure 53). A fifth aluminum-paneled volume containing a bank of twenty double-deck elevators rises at the center of the tower. The rigorous application of flush detailing and aluminum lends Citicorp a monolithic appearance that sets it apart from other nearby modern towers designed in the International Style, including the Seagram Building and Lever House whose mullions are much more clearly expressed (Figure 84, 85). The tower has dedicated entrances on Lexington Avenue directly to the north of the sunken plaza and on 53rd Street directly to the east of the plaza.

The market building is also designed in the International Style. It is clad in reflective glass and glass-faced aluminum spandrel panels, differentiating its facade from the tower's. It has a unique terraced design, beginning at one story above street level on the west side and stepping up to six stories on the east side. The upper four floors are office suites. The bottom three floors, including a subterranean level opening onto the plaza, are dedicated to commercial retail and dining. These levels house two privately owned public spaces: an atrium and a through-block arcade, which were gut renovated and reopened in 2023. The market building has dedicated street-level entrances at the centers of 53rd Street and 54th Street. A dedicated entrance for the upper office floors is located at the southwest corner of 54th Street and 3rd Avenue.

The complex's third privately owned public space is a sunken plaza located one level below the street, with direct access to the Lexington Ave/53rd Street subway station. The stepped plaza was originally designed by Masao Kinoshita and Stuart Dawson of Sasaki and featured granite pavers and a Brutalist fountain (Figure 54). The plaza was completely renovated by Gensler from 2017-2023, and no original fabric remains (Photo 08). A cascading stair connects the street level to the plaza's upper level, which is on grade with the market building's atrium. St. Peter's sanctuary can be accessed from the north end of the plaza, and the subway concourse from the south end.

St. Peter's Church

St. Peter's Church's iconic sanctuary has a distinctive sculptural form clad in large format Caledonia granite panels. The underlying structure is a steel frame (Figure 16). It is square in plan and oriented parallel to the street grid. The square is extruded to a cube in elevation, and the northwest and southeast corners are dramatically sheared, giving the church its recognizable appearance (Photo 02). One could infer a potential relationship to the sloped roof of the Citicorp Center Tower, but no documentation exists to support this. The otherwise solid granite block is split in half by a monumental skylight running the full length of the sanctuary. Different meanings and interpretations have been ascribed to the form– head pastor Rev. Ralph Peterson compared it to both "the rock on which Jesus declared he'd build his church" and a "split rock" open to the community; architectural critic Paul Goldberger likened it to a "great granite tent sitting beneath the Citicorp Tower;"[2] and the architect Hugh Stubbins frequently described it as two hands held up in prayer. The church holds the busy intersection of Lexington and 54th Street while also mediating sectionally between the street level and sunken plaza, giving St. Peter's a striking public presence.

The south edge of the west facade folds in where the skylight wraps down, forming a recessed entrance facing Lexington Avenue with a dramatic view into the sanctuary (Photo 01). A granite block sits above the glass door. It is affixed with metal pin letters that read "Saint Peter's Church." This door opens to a small vestibule and breezeway overlooking the sanctuary below. To the left of the door, a low granite planter seat wraps the base of the west and north facades. The planter holds a bronze cross by Italian artist Arnaldo Pomodoro, which was installed in 1982. While it was originally installed adjacent to the Lexington Avenue door (Figure 55), the cross was relocated to the corner facing the intersection of Lexington and 54th Street in 2008. A square window behind the cross gives passers-by a view of the church's organ (Photo 10).

[1] Peter W. Bernstein, "Pastor Peterson Makes a Deal with Citicorp," *Fortune*, November 1977, 140; Public Affairs Department, First National City Corp, "Citicorp Center to Feature 46-Story Tower Resing on Platform 112 Feet High," July 24, 1973, St. Peter's Church Archive.
[2] Paul Goldberger, "No Taint of Materialism in Church Design at Bank Center," *New York Times*, December 5, 1977, 48.

The skylight wraps back down at the eastern edge of the sanctuary's north facade, facing 54th Street. To the left, it is joined by a single-story volume containing the narthex and church offices (Photo 03). A recessed vertical window opening to the Nevelson Chapel creates separation between the narthex volume and the sculptural sanctuary. The north facade is clad in granite paneling, and a second set of metal pin letters announce the church's name, while an oak cross designed by Vignelli Associates is located inside the entrance door (Photo 04, 07). Stubbins introduced an aluminum fascia at the top of the facade to integrate it visually with the market building. At its eastern edge, this volume interlocks with the market building but is differentiated visually by a granite base.

The southern facade faces the plaza. A glass and aluminum entrance system provides direct entry and views into the sanctuary. The metal pin letters are repeated above this entrance, as is the oak Vignelli cross on the interior (Photo 09).

Monumental form and tactile material expression instill the church with a unique identity, reinforcing the congregation's desire that the building should be "a counterthrust to the glossy and glassy opulence of Park Avenue, the discordant noise and commercialism of Lexington".[3] The church's exterior could be classified as Brutalist, standing in contrast to the rest of the complex. The use of monochromatic stone to create a monolithic, minimalist structure is characteristic of Brutalist architecture. The church's sculptural quality and joyful exuberance could also be influenced by Neo-Expressionism, although its strict rectilinearity is not typical of the style. It can be compared to the nearby former Whitney Museum of American Art, designed by Marcel Breuer in 1968, which also applies granite paneling to a sculptural rectilinear massing and is generally classified as Brutalist (Figure 86).

Interior

The church's upper story, which houses the narthex, church offices, and the Nevelson Chapel, has entrances on both Lexington Avenue to the west and 54th Street to the north. The lower story is occupied by the main sanctuary and gathering hall, a kitchen, bathrooms, and a small meeting room. There is an entrance into the sanctuary at this level from the sunken plaza to the south that extends along Lexington Avenue to 53rd Street with direct connection to the Lexington/53rd Street subway station. In addition, there is a cellar level containing a black box theater, music practice room, the sacristy, and offices (Figures 3, 4, 5).

Narthex

The church has two entrances at street level. The 54th Street entrance is the most used and opens directly into the north side of the Narthex. The walls are gypsum painted in an off-white tone with oak baseboards. The floors are finished in beige carpeting. The ceilings are white gypsum to match the walls and feature a grid of recessed can lights. Overall, the palette is warm and inviting, and the room functions as both the church's primary public entrance and as a gallery with rotating exhibitions curated by St. Peter's Arts and Architecture Conservancy. The Narthex is obliquely shaped in plan. An angled wall to the right of the entrance serves as the primary gallery wall, accentuated by adjustable track lighting (Photo 11). A cross-shaped oak reception desk designed by Vignelli Associates sits in the center of the space. To the left, a wood door marks the church offices, and an elevator services the plaza and cellar levels (Photo 12). At the southern end of the room, glazing provides views of a planter. A grand sculptural staircase connects down to the Living Room on the plaza level. The stair has carpeted treads and oak railings supported by cruciform steel posts (Photo 13, 14). Originally, there was a glass door to the Market Building adjacent to the stair. This door was infilled with sheetrock as described in greater detail below (Figure 56). On the western side of the room, one set of oak doors demarcates the entry to the Nevelson Chapel. The other set opens to a breezeway overlooking the Sanctuary, which terminates at the Lexington Avenue entrance (Photo 15). A square window at the breezeway originally provided a view to the street level plaza and entrance to the Citicorp Tower. This portion of the plaza was enclosed in 2008, and the window now looks into the tower entrance vestibule.

Living Room

The Living Room is an open, flexible space that feels like an extension of the Narthex. The beige carpeting and recessed can lighting from the Narthex are continued, but the ceiling in this space is 2'x2' white lay-in acoustical tile (Photo 16). The west wall, which confronts you as you descend the stair from the Narthex, is a series of double doors painted in Super Warm Red, a medium red-orange Pantone color used frequently in Vignelli designs. This wall can be opened entirely to connect the Living Room and Sanctuary. Six large circular columns finished in white match the columns ringing the

[3] Development Task Force, *Life at the Intersection* (St. Peter's Church, 1971) 2.

Sanctuary, establishing visual continuity between the two rooms. The north wall opposite the stair is used for rotating art exhibitions, lit by an adjustable track lighting system. To the east, a thick oak-paneled wall conceals the view to the kitchen and provides storage (Photo 17). A corridor leads to the bathrooms, mechanical rooms, and a small meeting room.

At the southern end of the room, an illuminated glass and aluminum storefront system separates the church from the market building. This was installed in 2005-2006, replacing the original door and clear glazing that provided views and access between the two buildings. A ramp running parallel to this wall provides accessible entry to the Sanctuary. It features a glass railing inscribed with donor names.

Sanctuary

In keeping with the Vignellis' design aesthetic, the sanctuary is intentionally spare, but it maintains a warmth and softness through its material expression. The walls and ceiling are finished in a lightly textured sand-colored plaster. The seating, altar, and organ are solid red oak butcher block. The floor is finished in Caledonia granite pavers to match the building's exterior cladding and original plaza pavers.

The sunken plaza is the primary entrance to the Sanctuary. On entry from the plaza, a partial height wall bearing an oak Vignelli cross conceals the view of the seating area and altar. The stepped granite baptismal font is visible and pulls you into the space (Figure 35, Photo 18). On passing the font, the skylight comes into view, rising vertically to trace the full height of the sculptural space (Photo 19). The room is ringed by stepped amphitheater-style seating in oak, rotated at a 45-degree angle to align with the skylight, which becomes the backdrop for the altar in its most typical configuration (Photo 23, 29). The ceiling is finished in a slatted oak screen that improves the Sanctuary's acoustical performance and conceals a steel maintenance catwalk, which is accessed via a sculptural spiral stair over the Lexington Avenue entrance (Photo 21, 27).

Moveable pews in the center are oak, with natural linen back cushions and brightly colored seat cushions stitched by members of the congregation. The seat cushions' geometric pattern– designed by the Vignellis in nine variations of vibrant pink, red, green, orange, purple, and blue Paternayan yarn– is inspired by the stained-glass windows of Gothic cathedrals.[4] Formally, the pews are a Modern reinterpretation of the stalls traditionally found in New England churches (Photo 28). The altar platform and pulpit are also moveable elements, allowing the Sanctuary to be reconfigured for different types of services and events (Photo 20, 24). Other Vignelli-designed furnishings include the presider chairs, offertory boxes, book racks, and liturgical silverware (Photos 30, 31, 32, 33).

The organ, located at the northwest corner, was designed by the Vignellis in collaboration with Klais Orgelblau of Bonn, Germany. The Vignellis' design for the organ's console, bench, and case integrate seamlessly into the sanctuary, matching its other wood furnishings (Photo 25, 26). It bridges visually between the stepped wood seating and slatted wood ceiling while anchoring the otherwise flexible space with an air of permanency. Much effort went into configuring the organ pipes to fit within the Vignellis' square case and the visual appearance and alignments of the pipe mouths. It is visible to passersby through a window at the northwest corner opening to Lexington Avenue.

Erol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd (Nevelson Chapel)

The Erol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd, most commonly referred to as the Nevelson Chapel, is a permanent public art installation by Louise Nevelson located on the church's street level and accessed through the Narthex (Photo 34, 35, 36). The chapel contains a series of six wall and ceiling-based assemblages painted in white, which Nevelson associated with the pale light of dawn, joy, and "marriage with the world."[5] Beginning at the west wall and moving clockwise, works in the chapel include *Sky Vestment* (Photo 37), *Three Columns - Trinity* (Photo 38), *Cross of the Good Shepherd* (Photo 38), *Frieze of the Apostles* (Photo 40), *Cross of the Resurrection* (Photo 41), and *Grapes and Wheat Lintel* (Photo 42). A vertical window to the left and skylight above the altar fill the room with natural light throughout the day. The wall behind the altar bears a small candleholder, also by Nevelson, and a marble dedication plaque.

Unlike the rest of the church, the chapel features recessed white baseboards and whitewashed oak flooring per Nevelson's specification. Furnishings, including pews and a small altar also in whitewashed oak, were designed by Lella

[4] Vignelli Associates, notes, *Vignelli Archives*, Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Rochester Institute of Technology.
[5] Laurie Lisle, Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life (Summit Books, 1990), 189.

and Massimo Vignelli and positioned by Nevelson (Photo 43, 44). She approached the arrangement of objects in space as a form of choreography, influenced by her early study of dance. The sculptural reliefs are evenly illuminated, reflecting a diaphanous white light back into the room and establishing a distinct atmosphere. The pews are angled toward a center aisle. On sitting, this shift away from an axial focus on the altar pulls the viewer's gaze toward the wall opposite them, initiating a visual dance that allows the space to unfold slowly and transform over the course of subsequent visits. Nevelson also collaborated with the fashion designer Arnold Scaasi on the chasuble for priests to wear in the chapel (Figure 57).

While the individual sculptures are abstract, they bear the influence of Christian symbolism– the twelve boxes that structure the *Frieze of the Apostles*, for example. Many of these specific references were developed in conversation with Peterson, who developed a lasting friendship with the artist. Inspired by the congregation's vision, Nevelson hoped the chapel would be a space for people to come and "find [their] true being, [their] truer self."[6]

Lower Level

The east side of the cellar level is dedicated to music and the performing arts. The elevator and stair coming down from the Narthex open into a small anteroom that serves the black box theater, a recital room, and a jazz rehearsal room (Figure 58). The west side of the cellar level houses support spaces including the sacristy, offices, and storage. The floor is a split level with the east side sitting roughly 3' lower than the west side.

Closing Connections Within the Complex

Between 2005 and 2007, the glass doors that originally connected the church to Citicorp Center at the street and plaza levels were removed due to security concerns following the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. In the narthex at street level, the opening to the left of the grand stair was infilled to match the adjacent gypsum walls. In the Living Room at plaza level, the doors were part of a larger clear glass and aluminum wall system. A solid partition finished in sheetrock was constructed on the Citicorp Center side of the glass. On the St. Peter's side, the doors were replaced with fixed glass panels consistent with the rest of the wall. A translucent film was applied to the glass, and lighting was installed behind it to provide ambient illumination. While this had minimal direct impact on the design and feeling of St. Peter's Church, this change undermined the overarching design of the complex as a whole by severing the free flow of circulation between the church, office tower, and market building. It was the first step in a series of renovations to the Citicorp complex aimed at separating access to and circulation between the three buildings. The renovation followed acquisition of the two office units in the condominium by Boston Properties and Allied Partners in 2001.

Other Significant Alterations

Boston Properties became the sole owner of the office units and majority stakeholder in the condominium in 2006. In 2008, they completed a project to further solidify the separation of entrances to the office tower, market building, and church through the construction of two new aluminum and glass entrances. The additions were designed by KlingStubbins, the design firm formed through the merger of Kling-Lindquist Partnership and Hugh Stubbins Associates in 2007. A portion of the street level plaza to the south of St. Peter's was enclosed, providing a dedicated secure entrance to the elevator bank serving the office tower (Figure 59, Photo 08). The glazing for the new vestibule is joined by spider fittings, and the vertical supports and ceiling system are pulled back from the glass, giving the facade a floating appearance more in keeping with the nearby Fifth Avenue Apple Store, opened in 2006, than the rest of Citicorp Center with its recognizable aluminum panel and glass banding. This minimal approach to the detailing of the new facade was intended to reduce the visual impact of the addition. The original granite cladding, planter, and glazing at St. Peter's south facade were not modified and remain visible through the glassy enclosure. A new entrance vestibule was also added on the north side of St. Peter's (Figures 60, 61; Photo 03, 04). The purpose of this addition was to make the church's 54th Street entrance accessible by installing a chair lift. Again, the original granite cladding and aluminum panels of St. Peter's facade were preserved and remain visible. The granite stairs, metal railings, and granite-clad walls to either side of the entry door have been removed. Unlike the enclosure to the south, the cladding system for the new north entrance matches the original aluminum and glass storefront designed by Hugh Stubbins Associates. The new flooring and stairs inside the vestibule are finished in granite, and the doors have been replaced at their original location (Photo 05, 06).

[6] *Louise Nevelson Papers*, circa 1903-1982, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 29.

In 2018, St. Peter's began an extensive effort to restore the chapel and conserve Nevelson's sculptures, which had been damaged by the repeated application of restoration paint per Nevelson's instructions. The restoration paint reacted poorly with the original paint, resulting in tenting and streaking. Through collaboration between chemists at MoMA, Pratt Institute, Nevelson's assistant Diana MacKown, and conservators from Objects Conservation Studio, a process was developed to remove the restoration paint and conserve Nevelson's original paint surface.

Simultaneously, in 2019 a team led by Kostow Greenwood Architects undertook architectural restoration of the Nevelson Chapel as needed to appropriately condition the space for the artwork. The work included installation of a new mechanical system for improved humidity control, LED lighting to alleviate the heat produced by the original incandescent fixtures, patching and repairing of the walls and ceiling, and replacement of the chapel's fixed window and skylight to match the materiality and appearance of the original. Removals of existing building fabric were minimal, and design decisions were tailored toward maintaining the chapel's visual character while simultaneously reducing the risk of future damage to Nevelson's wood sculptures through increased humidity and temperature control. Original linear bar grilles located at the perimeter of the space blew air directly onto the artwork. These were removed, and a new linear slot diffuser has been installed at the edge of the skylight opening over the altar. The new light fixtures match the originals in quantity, location, and appearance, except for four fixtures located over the altar, which were relocated to accommodate the new linear diffuser. These were replaced with a series of track heads concealed on the inside wall of the skylight. The original recessed sprinkler heads have been replaced with contemporary concealed sprinkler heads, achieving Nevelson's original intention of a clean and undisrupted white ceiling plane. The new mechanical unit serving the chapel is concealed above the ceiling of the adjacent office.

During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, St. Peter's Church and the Nevelson Chapel were closed to help protect the public they serve. The newly installed HVAC system experienced a failure that led to a humidity spike inside the chapel. The failure went undetected for some time since the building was in very limited use. Nevelson opted to use a fire-retardant white paint for the chapel sculptures, and under prolonged exposure to high humidity it began to blister and peel away from the wooden substrate. Under the guidance of conservators Martha Singer and Jean Dommermuth, restoration of Nevelson's work is once again nearing completion. One of the most significant findings revealed during the conservation work is that the sculptures' wood substrates are in excellent condition, and damage has been limited to the paint layer. The conservation effort has included extensive scientific testing of the chemical reaction between Nevelson's original paint and the wood substrate that will inform conservation of other Nevelson works in the future.

A devastating water main break in 2021 led to flooding in the sanctuary and cellar level of St. Peter's. Rapid dehumidification was pursued to prevent mold and further damage to the space. However, this strained the wood furnishings, particularly the Klais organ, necessitating emergency restoration completed in 2022. The sanctuary restoration was led by preservation architect Angela Wolf Scott of MacDonald and Mack Architects in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The basis for restoration was the 1977 Vignelli design as it was originally built. The wood risers were removed so the granite flooring could be cleaned. The risers were then carefully cleaned, repaired, and reinstalled. The aluminum and glass storefront entrance from the plaza was damaged by hydrostatic pressure from water collecting outside, and the damaged portion of the system was replaced to match the original system with details reviewed and approved by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Restoration of the Klais organ was more complex.[7] The finely-tuned instrument needed to be completely taken apart so that each individual piece could be inspected for damage. Representatives from St. Peter's worked in collaboration with C.B. Fisk, based in Gloucester, MA, to evaluate, restore, and reassemble the instrument. Klais's original design for the organ took advantage of new developments in mechanical action. However, this technology has advanced considerably since 1977, and the restoration presented an opportunity to adjust the organ stops to fulfill the needs of St. Peter's ongoing music programming. Dr. Balint Karosi, lead cantor and organist for the congregation, founded the Bach Collegium at St. Peter's in 2017. Working with Fisk, he helped develop a plan to add Thuringian voices to the Klais, which would support authentic re-creations of Bach's music for worshippers. In addition, upgrades were made to the organ's key action. Specifically, the original warped wooden trackers were replaced with carbon fiber, and the felt-bushed bearings were replaced with polyethylene. These material replacements will help prevent wear on other organ components and ensure that the instrument is in top condition for decades to come. The Vignelli-designed organ console, bench, and case

[7] David Pike, "The Klais-Fisk organ at Saint Peter's Church, New York City," *The Diaspon* 150, No. 2 (2024): 18-20, https://www.thediapason.com/content/cover-feature-klais-fisk-organ-saint-peters-church-new-york-city

were restored to match the original in exacting detail, including the visual configuration of the pipes and pipe mouths.[8]

Flooding at the cellar level containing the black box theater was significant, requiring a full renovation which is currently underway. This level, envisioned as a "Center for Community Arts and Culture," has been redesigned by MQ Architecture and will support expanded arts programming while restoring the beloved theater to its original condition. The design aims to harmonize the lower-level art and community spaces with the Vignelli's design for the sanctuary. Further, it hearkens back to Stubbins' original plans to locate a larger iteration of the black box theater at the center of the west side of the lower level, directly below the Sanctuary (Figure 23). This was abandoned due to the cost of excavation to achieve the necessary height.

Concurrent with the 2022 sanctuary restoration project, the sanctuary's iconic aluminum and glass skylight was replaced, and the exterior granite cladding was cleaned and re-caulked. This work was not directly related to the water main break but had been deferred for some time. The new skylight matches the appearance and materiality of the original but has improved thermal performance and an integral drainage system to prevent leaks. The roof drains were also replaced in place to avoid future water damage to the interior.

Integrity

Despite alterations, St. Peter's Church has outstanding historic integrity and possesses the aspects characteristic of Modernism specific to the International Style and Vignelli Canon that contribute to its significance. St. Peter's was built during and in response to Midtown Manhattan's transition from a residential to a business district. Openness to commuters and visitors on their lunch breaks was central to the design and programming of the complex as a whole. This is characteristic of broader trends in corporate modern architecture following the International Style, which sought to integrate open space and public amenities at the base of relatively compact towers as at the Seagram Building and Lever House. The church's location is unchanged, and its setting within the Citicorp complex remains largely intact. While the connections between St. Peter's and the market building have been closed, the church maintains a highly public presence along Lexington and 54th Streets and at the plaza, where it is still possible to walk right off the subway and into the sanctuary without going up to the street.

In terms of design and materials, both the church building and its key interior spaces– including the Sanctuary, Narthex, Living Room, Nevelson Chapel, and the black box theater– retain their original spatial organization, proportion, scale, ornamentation, and materials. Technological upgrades, such as new audio-visual equipment in the Sanctuary, changes to the Klais organ's stops and bearings, and the mechanical and lighting work in the Nevelson Chapel, have all been carefully integrated without visual impact or change to the original design intent. An exception is the unfortunate addition of the illuminated glass panels at the south wall of the Living Room, which are not in keeping with Vignelli Associates' aesthetic palette. The closure of the doorways between the church and market building also constitutes a significant change to Hugh Stubbins Associates' design for the complex as a whole. However, the removal of these doors had a negligible impact on the spatial relationships most important to the design of the church itself– specifically, the free flow of space between the Narthex, Living Room, Sanctuary, and sunken plaza.

Significant materials defining the character of the building are the Caledonia granite exterior cladding and sanctuary flooring, textured plaster on the sanctuary walls, Super Warm Red paint separating the Narthex and Sanctuary, and oak furnishings and carpentry throughout the building. These materials are substantially intact, and at locations where they have been restored or portions of the oak have been replaced, work has been done following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The workmanship of the built fabric within the Sanctuary is of particular importance, as it reflects the synthesis of the Vignellis' interior design for St. Peter's with the furniture design work they are widely recognized for. Notable characteristics are the absence of both applied ornament and visible fasteners. No changes have been made to the detailing and joinery of the pews, stepped seating, organ, altar, and other furnishings.

[8] David Pike, "The Klais-Fisk organ at Saint Peter's Church, New York City," *The Diaspon* 150, No. 2 (2024): 18-20, https://www.thediapason.com/content/cover-feature-klais-fisk-organ-saint-peters-church-new-york-city.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [x] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ART

Period of Significance

1974 - 1977

Significant Dates

1974

1977

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Hugh Stubbins Associates (architect)

Emery Roth & Sons

Vignelli Associates (architectural interior)

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance is 1974 to 1977. It begins with groundbreaking for the new building in April 1974 and extends to 1977, the year construction was completed.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
Although the church is owned by a religious institution and used for religious purposes, the nomination recognizes the building for its architectural and artistic significance.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

St. Peter's Church, built in 1977, is an exceptionally significant work of late-twentieth-century Modern architecture. The church is significant under **Criterion C** in the areas of *Art* and *Architecture* and meets **Criteria Consideration A**. St. Peter's holds national significance as one of the most distinctive intact examples in the United States of a church designed in the International Style during the period following Vatican II. Its architectural design reflects broader shifts in ecumenical theology–it was designed to be a Modern church capable of speaking to Modern people in the visual language of their own time, breaking away from historic trends and traditional motifs in the ecclesiastical design.

Further, it is a masterwork of architecture, interior design, and art. Hugh Stubbins, the church's architect, played a central role in the proliferation of the International Style in the United States both through his nationally recognized architectural practice and in his role as Chair of the Department of Architecture at Harvard University. St. Peter's stands out in Hugh Stubbins Associates' portfolio as the only worship facility designed by the office. It is also an integral part of the Citicorp Center complex, which remains one of HSA's most significant architectural contributions.

The church's interior is one of only two intact total environments in the United States by the world-renowned designers Massimo and Lella Vignelli, and it is a particularly excellent example of the Vignelli Canon of design. Vignelli Associates was responsible for designing the church interiors, furnishings, and graphic program. St. Peter's embodies the Vignellis' "design is one" philosophy, conveying a perfectly tuned cohesion and elegance across all aspects of the project, from the atmosphere of the space, to the detailing of the woodwork and silver, to the church bulletins and letterhead. Fully functioning and impeccably preserved total artistic environments of this depth and caliber by a single designer are incredibly rare.

The Nevelson Chapel is an iconic example of acclaimed sculptor Louise Nevelson's white work and her only extant total environment. The chapel is one of only three permanent installations in Nevelson's archetypal medium of wood, and it is the only one of the three that constitutes a total artistic environment approximating the installations she created for gallery exhibitions during her lifetime.

St. Peter's also holds local significance in New York City. It represents the type of corporate development intended by the 1961 Zoning Resolution's incentive bonus system, serving as a model for humanist urban development in the Modern period. It is particularly outstanding because of the condominium agreement and the control this legal structure gave St. Peter's over the physical design of their church building and its position in cultivating public programming within the Citicorp complex.

It is exceptionally important locally for its role in fostering the advancement of Modern sacred art in New York City, and for making such art accessible to a wider public. The architecture of St. Peter's was shaped by and for New York City's arts community, providing a ground for novel interventions in the visual arts, jazz, and theater. St. Peter's attracted many of New York's most vibrant artistic minds during the period it was built, including Louise Nevelson, Elaine and Willem De Kooning, Annalee Newman, Edward Albee, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Duke Ellington, Kurt Vonnegut, and John Updike.

The period of significance is 1974 to 1977. It begins with groundbreaking for the new building in April 1974 and extends to 1977, the year construction was completed.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Searching for a Spiritual Home[9]

The congregation of St. Peter's was founded in 1862 by German Lutherans as a satellite congregation from St. Matthew's, the oldest Lutheran church in New York. They began worshipping together in a small loft above a grocery store at Lexington Avenue and 49th Street. In 1871, they bought their first permanent worhip space– a former Presbyterian church building on 46th Street, which they subsequently sold for construction of Grand Central Terminal (Figure 6). The congregation used the funds from the sale in 1905 to build a new church at 619 Lexington Avenue, designed by J.G. Michel in the Gothic Revival style, which was popular for church buildings in New York at the time (Figure 7, 8). St. Peter's

[9] Mildred A. Westerman, *History of St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Manhattan* (St. Peter's Church, 1970).

also purchased the brownstones at 132 and 134 54th Street, which would become the parish house (Figure 9, 10). The congregation's history is bound up in the zoning changes and real estate transactions that defined the development of Midtown Manhattan, culminating in the construction of their new church building in 1977.

Development of Midtown in the 1950s & 1960s[10]

The postwar period saw a series of rapid changes in Manhattan. Following destruction of the Second and Third Avenue elevated railways, tenement housing was replaced with more expensive apartment housing, pricing out former residents. Concurrently, the emerging neoliberal model embraced by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC) under chairman James Felt, who served from 1956-1963, leveraged growing interest in corporate social responsibility to seize on private investment for large urban renewal projects, and it deferred responsibility for the provision and maintenance of public space from the state to private corporations, like First National City Bank. To this end, the 1961 Zoning Resolution emphasized targeted densification and the creation of public space through the introduction of the incentive zoning system, in which developers are granted additional floor area in exchange for the provision of privately owned public spaces (POPS) on or adjacent to their property. This emergent approach to urban planning was heavily influenced by the International Style and popularity of street level plaza spaces like those at Lever House (1952), the Seagram Building (1958), and the Union Carbide Building (1960)– all designed under the 1916 Zoning Resolution, which stated that setbacks were not required for buildings with a maximum of 25% lot coverage. The new incentive bonus system made ambitious projects like Citicorp Center– which leveraged provision of a sunken plaza, atrium, and through-block arcade to add additional floors to the office tower– feasible from both a zoning and financing standpoint. The CPC's strategy for encouraging development in Midtown was successful, and low-rise residential buildings throughout the neighborhood were demolished to make way for the significantly larger office buildings permitted under the new zoning. Many houses of worship left Midtown during this period, as their members were displaced by demolition and rising rents. The congregation of St. Peter's, which once numbered over one thousand members, had dwindled to around four hundred.[11] Despite this, the remaining members of the congregation determined not only to continue worshipping at their current location, but also to use this moment of neighborhood transition to "become a caring heart in the middle of Manhattan."[12]

This was the context in which First National City Bank (FNCB) decided to pursue consolidation of the entire city block bounded by Lexington Avenue, 54th Street, 3rd Avenue, and 53rd Street for construction of their new corporate headquarters. The parcel at the corner owned by St. Peter's was one of the last acquired and arguably the most important given its significant frontage on Lexington (Figure 11). The congregation recognized this as a valuable opportunity to leverage FNCB's financial backing to their benefit. Their Gothic Revival building was aging and needed major costly repairs. Led by their ambitious young pastor, Rev. Ralph Peterson (Figure 12), the congregation voted to enter a condominium agreement with the bank. They merged their adjacent zoning lots and transferred the church's air rights for construction of the office tower. However, their agreement shrewdly stipulated that the bank must build a new worship space for them at the site of their existing church and that it should remain separate and distinct from the tower. This did not prevent two early design proposals to embed the church in the top floor of the office tower or to integrate it into the base of the market building as a street level storefront, both swiftly rejected by the church's architectural design committee.[13]

Houses of worship in New York have a long history of selling their air rights to cover the costs of deferred building maintenance, again dating back to changes in the 1961 Zoning Resolution, which allows the transfer of development rights within a zoning lot. While St. Peter's was among the first to use this strategy as a means to avoid relocating, the practice has become increasingly common. St. Thomas Church, Trinity Church, and Union Theological Seminary sold their air rights for the construction of market-rate residential towers. JPMorgan Chase acquired the air rights of two protected New York City landmarks in 2018—St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church—so they could demolish their headquarters in the Union Carbide building and construct a new 70-story supertall tower in its place. In each instance, the churches used the money from the sales to pay for repairs to their historic buildings. They had no long-term stake in the developments that subsequently used their transferred air rights to change the face of the city. However, the relationship between St. Peter's Church and FNCB was unique. In 1977, art critic Lila Harnett described it

[10] Caitlin Watson, "A Place for All People: Louise Nevelson's Chapel of the Good Shepherd," *Religions* 13, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020099.
[11] Peter W. Bernstein, "Pastor Peterson Makes a Deal with Citicorp," *Fortune*, November 1977, 141.
[12] Development Task Force, *Life at the Intersection* (St. Peter's Church, 1971) 11.
[13] John D. Witvliet and Elizabeth Steele Halstead, "Transfiguring Liturgy and Design at St. Peter's," in *Religion and Art in the Heart of Modern Manhattan*, ed. Aaron Rosen (Ashgate Publishing, 2016), 74.

as "the nation's first divine condominium."[14] The condominium agreement enabled St. Peter's to move beyond simply renovating their former building or relocating to start anew. They were able to remain active participants in decisions about the site's shared public spaces and to envision a new worship space that clearly reflected their values and mission as a congregation without being displaced. "We are a living, growing, changing congregation, with deep roots in the past, and a firm belief that man and his divinity, nature and humanity, must not be overwhelmed as Midtown develops into a massive mosaic of high rise towers".[15] The project was widely viewed as a promising new model for humanist urban development, leading to St. Peter's selection to host the First National Conference on Urban Design in 1978.

A Pioneering Vision for Life at the Intersection

Rebuilding St. Peter's Church was first and foremost an opportunity to create a new facility that both communicated and facilitated Rev. Peterson's progressive ideas about what a modern church should be and how it should relate to modern people through the visual, musical, and performing arts of their own time. These guiding principles are expressed in the congregation's document *Life at the Intersection*, which calls for "a striking image of a new and personal urban vitality".[16] An article titled "A New Ministry Rises from the Rubble," published by the *New York Daily News* in 1974, featured an image of Rev. Peterson sitting atop the wreckage of the old church building and gazing into the future (Figure 13). Peterson's vision for the congregation and its new building was influenced by ecumenical theology, the work of the National Council of Churches of Christ's Commission on Art, and the growing success of St. Peter's nascent jazz and art programs.

Rev. Peterson was deeply committed to the relationship between religion and the arts, and he encouraged the congregation to seek ways to leverage the physical space of the church to bring art into public experience. This orientation directly reflected a push toward greater ecumenism among both Catholic and Protestant theologians in the years surrounding the Second Vatican Council. As early as the 1940s to 1950s, theologians began to take note of a cultural crisis stemming, in their view, from the schism between sacred and modern art. This group included Nathan A. Scott Jr., W.H. Auden, Paul Tillich, and Marie-Alain Couturier, all of whom spent time in New York in the 1940s during the Second World War. Couturier, in particular, made notable advancements through his commissions of artists and architects including Henri Matisse, Fernand Leger, and Le Corbusier for churches in France, ultimately inspiring the commission of Rothko Chapel in Houston, TX.[17] He argued that the commodified art and architecture commissioned by the Catholic church in the 19th and early 20th centuries was not capable of communicating to a modern people or moving them to faith, and that the master artists of the day should be engaged in creating modern sacred art.

The National Council of Churches of Christ (NCC), founded in 1950, also played a critical role in advancing ecumenical ideals and shaping the changing relationship between faith communities and the arts. The council's Commission on Art was chaired by Alfred Barr, founding director of the Museum of Modern Art. The Commission operated within the Department on Worship and the Arts. Influential figures including Eero Saarinen, Robert Shaw, Thornton Wilder, and W.H. Auden served on Commissions in their respective fields. Rev. Peterson served as the NCC's Executive Director of the Department of Ministry, Vocation, and Pastoral Services from 1962 until his appointment at St. Peter's in 1966. While there, he worked closely with the Department of Worship and the Arts, where he came into contact with Joseph Sittler, who had replaced Barr as chair of the Commission on Art in 1963.[18] Their relationship would prove consequential for St. Peter's eventual architectural and artistic program.

Rev. Peterson cites that his vision for St. Peter's mission was inspired by Sittler, "who saw that it was important for ministry to bring together artistic and faith communities who are often estranged".[19] Peterson had the word "Lutheran" removed from the signage of the old Gothic Revival building and initiated innovative new types of worship services, including noontime theater and Jazz Vespers, to encourage musicians, office workers, and worshipers of all

[14] Lila Harnett, "Louise Nevelson's World," *Cue Magazine*, December 1977.
[15] Development Task Force, *Life at the Intersection* (St. Peter's Church, 1971), 1-2.
[16] *Life at the Intersection*, 1-2.
[17] Caitlin Watson, "Common Ground: The Rothko Chapel and Architectural Activism," in *Crossings Between the Proximate and the Remote* (Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, 2017).
[18] Marvin Halverson, "Department of Worship and the Arts," *The Christian Scholar* 40, No. 4, 1957, 345–52, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41177044.
[19] Ralph E. Peterson and Amy Levin Weiss, "A Living Room Chat," in *Religion and Art in the Heart of Modern Manhattan*, ed. Aaron Rosen (Ashgate Publishing, 2016), 12.

denominations to visit.[20] Sittler and Peterson both advocated for the arts as "fundamental expressions of meaning and value in the world."[21] This echoes Couturier's earlier pronouncements on modern art, including the position that art as a creative gesture is inherently a divine expression and is not bound by an artist's denominational identity. Thus, a Jewish woman like Louise Nevelson could produce art that would resonate with both a Lutheran congregation and the larger public. When asked why Nevelson was selected for the chapel commission, Rev. Peterson simply responded, "Because she is the greatest living American sculptor. That's all that really matters."[22] He also lists Rabbi Abraham Heschel, Krister Stendahl, Aidan Kavanagh, Henri Nouwen, John Cook, William Lazareth, and the total artistic environments of the Bauhaus movement as key influences on his vision for the congregation, which had a direct and meaningful impact on both the decision to stay in Midtown and the design of their new church building.[23]

Evolution of the Design

Rev. Peterson and his congregation had a bold vision for the new St. Peter's, and as soon as the sale of the old church was approved, they began working to realize it. In 1970, they hired Edward Larrabee Barnes to design the new church, and his influence is present in the architectural and programmatic concerns raised in *Life at the Intersection*. However, FNCB ultimately selected Hugh Stubbins Associates to design the Citicorp Complex, and Barnes was released after a brief period of attempted collaboration. Stubbins took over design of the church, and plans were approved by the design task force in March 1974. Vignelli Associates were hired in June of the same year to design both the church's graphics program and its interiors. Through a collaborative and iterative process, a design for the new building emerged that fulfilled the congregation's aspirations– a "counterthrust to glossy and glassy opulence", a "distinctive landmark," a "fresh expression that speaks to the needs of our times," and a "space that will be used in new ways as well as traditional ones" (Figure 14).[24]

Hugh Stubbins Associates

Hugh Stubbins (1912-2006) studied architecture at Georgia Tech and Harvard University (Figure 17). While at Harvard, he studied under Walter Gropius, the pioneering founder of the Bauhaus School. Gropius invited Stubbins to join the faculty at Harvard in 1940, where he became close with fellow faculty members Alvar Aalto and Marcel Breuer. He became Chair of the Department of Architecture when Gropius resigned in 1952 and remained in the position until 1972. Stubbins founded the Boston-based architecture firm Hugh Stubbins Associates in the early 1950s and employed several of his Harvard students, including I.M. Pei, Robert Geddes, Philip Johnson, Sarah and Chip Harkness, and Paul Rudolph. The office got its start doing residential work but moved on to larger projects following their design for the Berlin Congress Hall (1957). HSA was recognized with the American Institute of Architects Firm Award in 1969. The firm is most noted for the Boston Federal Reserve Building (1977), Citicorp Center (1977), the Singapore Treasury Building (1986), and the Yokohama Landmark Tower (1993).

Peter Woytuk (1928-1974) was vice president for design and a director of the firm. He led the design of St. Peter's up until his untimely death in May 1974, only months after final schematics were approved by the congregation (Figure 18). Woytuk studied under Stubbins at Harvard, where he received numerous design awards and accolades. W. Easley Hamner, another Stubbins-era Harvard graduate, took on the role of project lead through the church's construction (Figure 19).

HSA worked with Emery Roth & Sons as a local associate architect, a role they also played on the Pan Am Building (1963) and World Trade Center (1973).

"A Counterthrust"

In 1973, the St. Peter's congregation's design task force and Hugh Stubbins Associates were struggling to come to agreement on a design. Stubbins had been developing a scheme that fully integrated the Narthex and Living Room into the base of the low-rise market building and failed to provide the direct entrance from Lexington Avenue that the congregation desired. At the plaza level, the sanctuary was fully detached and expressed as a crystalline glass lantern

[20] Peter W. Bernstein, "Pastor Peterson Makes a Deal with Citicorp," *Fortune*, November 1977.
[21] Mark Sumner Harvey, "Jazz Ministry in Manhattan: The Shepherd, the Night Flock, and the First Church of Jazz," in *Religion and Art in the Heart of Modern Manhattan*, ed. Aaron Rosen (Ashgate Publishing, 2016), 161.
[22] Barbaralee Diamonstein, "Louise Nevelson: 'It takes a lot to tango'" *ARTnews*, May 1979, 72.
[23] Peterson and Weiss, "A Living Room Chat."
[24] Development Task Force, *Life at the Intersection* (St. Peter's Church, 1971).

(Figures 21, 22, 24, 25). The sanctuary was oriented so that the tower was prominently visible, floating above it (Figure 26). The Living Room was depicted as a multi-height space lit from above and filled with trees and hanging plants, much in the language of the Stubbins-designed atrium in the market building (Figure 27, 28).

The congregation was entirely dissatisfied with the lantern scheme. They had been clear that they wanted their new church to be a "counterthrust" to the commercialism and glass towers dominating the neighborhood, and they felt that this design blended too much with the tower and market building. Greg Gallina, chairman of the design task force, recalled, "If the bank's surface was smooth and shiny, we would be rough."[25] Just before Christmas in 1973, Rev. Peterson informed Stubbins they had two weeks to come up with a new design that reflected St. Peter's vision, or the church would begin searching for a new architect. Stubbins purportedly sketched the current design on the back of a napkin during a flight from Atlanta to Boston, which was drawn up and presented to the design task force (Figures 29, 30, 31, 32, 33). Except for modifications by Vignelli Associates to the interiors, this scheme was built almost exactly as presented.

The original lantern scheme exemplified the principles of the International Style as presented in Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson's 1932 MoMA exhibition and catalog, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1992*, which introduced the term for the first time. These are 1) architecture as volume created through thin planes or surfaces rather than solid mass, 2) regularity in the facade over classical symmetry, and 3) the absence of applied ornament.[26] The lantern scheme presented a clear example of architecture as volume. Sheets of glass were used to define a sculptural interior. Stubbins applied the same approach to the granite scheme, with the sanctuary's exterior form being a clear and perceptible expression of the interior volume. The absence of ornament and symmetry also carry across both designs. Further, the interwoven interior spaces and connection between interior and exterior emblematic of the International Style's open plan are defining characteristics of St. Peter's, where one could enter from Lexington Avenue and pass uninterrupted through the Narthex Gallery, Living Room, Sanctuary, and out into the sunken plaza. This interweaving was reinforced by the provision of views between these spaces and the continuity of granite as wall and floor finish visible within each.

While the Stubbins design always included a sculptural approach to the sanctuary's form, the shift in materiality from glass and aluminum to granite came from the congregation's insistence on a distinct visual identity. As a result, St. Peter's stands out within Stubbins' design work of this period, which had otherwise shifted to rigorously sleek, streamlined massing and materiality as evidenced by both the Citicorp Tower and the Boston Federal Reserve Building. It is also the only worship space designed by the firm. However, several notable Stubbins libraries led by Peter Woytuk can be compared to the final church design. The Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine (1965) houses one of the country's largest collections of medical books. The limestone clad library is Brutalist in its massing and in the expression of its structural system and programmatic elements on its facade (Figure 87). Glazing is also deployed in a similar way to St. Peter's, accentuating the expression of volumes and introducing light to the interior with careful precision, and the building is organized around a central sculptural stair. The Countway Library has been called a predecessor to Louis Kahn's Exeter Library. The subterranean design for the Nathan M. Pusey Library at Harvard (1973) also prefigures the approach to the sub-grade gathering spaces at St. Peter's, although the similarities were more prominent in the lantern scheme (Figure 88, 89).

St. Peter's can also be understood within the context of other churches in the United States designed by prominent architects in the International Style in the period surrounding Vatican II, which aimed to use art and architecture to express a truly modern spirituality. In particular, the Abbey Church of Saint John designed by Marcel Breuer (1961) was, according to Abbot Baldwin who oversaw the project, an attempt to "cast our ideals in forms which will be valid for centuries to come" and incorporated stained glass designed by the artist Josef Albers.[27] Another relevant example is the Rothko Chapel by Philip Johnson (1971). While Johnson's original design was abandoned at Rothko's request, Johnson's approach to volume as expressed by the central skylight bears striking similarity to St. Peter's sanctuary (Figure 90). It is no coincidence that these Modern churches were designed by the same group of architects who came together at Harvard during Walter Gropius's tenure. St. Peter's Church's position within this lineage contributes to its national significance as an exemplar of the International Style in ecclesiastical design.

[25] Bernstein, "Pastor Peterson Makes a Deal with Citicorp," 146.
[26] Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr. and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (Norton and Company Inc., 1932).
[27] "The Saint John's Abbey and University Church", Saint John's Abbey, https://saintjohnsabbey.org/church.

Notable examples of newly constructed modern worship spaces in New York that emerged contemporaneously with St. Peter's are the Civic Center Synagogue (Figure 91) in Tribeca designed in the Neo-Expressionist style by William N. Breger (1967), which was constructed after the congregation's original synagogue was seized by eminent domain for construction of the Jacob Javits Federal Office Building, and the Holy Family Catholic Church (Figure 92) across from the United Nations designed in the Brutalist style by George J. Sole (1965), following demolition of the congregation's former church for construction of Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza.[28] Both share the sculptural expressiveness of St. Peter's exterior. Holy Family is particularly relevant because it, like St. Peter's, was intentionally designed to reflect the spirit of post-Vatican II ecumenism through the incorporation of modern art and design. Like St. Peter's, it features a windowless granite facade, and its stained glass and other furnishings were designed by contemporary artists including Jordi Bonet and Frederick Shrady. However, neither building approaches the unique cohesion of ecumenical vision with the highest caliber of modern art and architecture as represented at St. Peter's.

Vignelli Associates

While Hugh Stubbins Associates is responsible for the church's iconic form, the Vignellis imbued it with its character. In addition to St. Peter's graphic program and the church interiors, the Vignellis designed all of the liturgical furnishings and artifacts for the sanctuary. This includes the clergy chairs, prayer books, processional cross and candles, Paschal candle, votive holders, ciborium, chalice, cruet, thurible, and incense boat, making for a true *gesamtkunstwerk* (Photo 30, 31, 32, 33).

Lella (1934-2016) and Massimo Vignelli (1931-2014) were Italian designers known for their minimal aesthetic and strict adherence to Modernism (Figure 20). Their work spanned the design field, ranging from graphic design and branding to architectural interiors and industrial design. They founded Vignelli Associates in 1971, with offices in the Seagram Building. Notable works include brand identities for American Airlines, Bloomingdale's department store, and Knoll International; the National Park Service's Unigrid System; and signage and maps for the New York City Subway. Among numerous accolades, the Vignellis were recognized with the Compasso d'Oro award (1964) for Hellerware, a line of stacking dinnerware, and the AIGA Gold Medal (1983) for their lasting contributions to design. They were recognized with a Cultural Medallion installed at St. Peter's Church by the Historic Landmarks Preservation Center.

Lella was a registered architect– noteworthy because in 1970 only around 1% of registered architects were women.[29] Although their design process was fully collaborative, she played an important role in developing all three-dimensional Vignelli work. This point is underscored in *Designed by: Lella Vignelli*, a book Massimo compiled to ensure that Lella's contribution to their shared practice was fully documented and recognized.

Because the majority of their architectural designs were corporate office interiors, showrooms, and exhibitions which are inherently temporary, St. Peter's is one of only two fully intact architectural works by Vignelli Associates. The other is the Vignelli Center for Design Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology, completed in 2010, where their archives are held. As an academic building, it lacks the robust integrated program and latent meaning inherent to the church.

"The Cosmos and the Womb"

In *Life at the Intersection*, the congregation articulated that their new sanctuary should "have a feeling that is both open and personal, a sense of both 'the cosmos and the womb,' not a mirror into our past but a window into our future." They wanted it to be flexible, able to "accommodate large and small groups, jazz and traditional services, movable symbols, movable icons, all kinds of free movement. No fixed altar."[30] The Vignellis' design responded directly to the congregation's desire for flexibility while deftly employing the core tenets of the Vignelli canon to create a space that is elegant and timeless.

In *Vignelli Canon*, Massimo writes, "Very often people think that Design is a particular style. Nothing could be more wrong! Design is a discipline."[31] The design of St. Peter's, with its reliance on simplicity, boldness, and pure geometric form, is an

[28] David W. Dunlap, From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship, (Columbia University Press, 2004).
[29] "Status of Women in the Architectural Profession," American Institute of Architects Task Force Report, February, 1975, 8.
[30] Development Task Force, *Life at the Intersection* (St. Peter's Church, 1971).
[31] Massimo Vignelli, *The Vignelli Canon* (Lars Muller Publishers, 2010, 22.

exacting implementation of the Vignellis' unique discipline. Massimo lays out three aspects of design that undergird all Vignelli work: semantics, or the articulation of a clear meaning or reason for being in every detail; syntactics, or the overarching organizational system that brings consistency to a design; and pragmatics, or the ability of the work to communicate and be understood. Massimo also lists several markers of good design that can be readily applied to St. Peter's: discipline, appropriateness, ambiguity, "design is one," visual power, intellectual elegance, and timelessness.

The key to St. Peter's syntactics is the grid. For the Vignellis, grids are an essential part of any design. The grid organizes content, provides consistency, gives an orderly look, and projects intellectual elegance. The Vignellis felt that a highly flexible space like the Sanctuary needed a legible syntax. To this end, the grid needed to be oriented in alignment with the Sanctuary's defining architectural feature– the skylight. Stubbins had arranged the Sanctuary plan on axis with the entrance, however the Vignellis shifted it 45 degrees to align with the grid and skylight (Figure 34). According to Massimo, "My main aim has been to convey to the plan the same dramatic orientation that the light shaft, which bisects the building, gives to the space. Consequently, the plan is oriented on a 45-degree angle in relationship to the main entrance from the sunken plaza. The resulting plan is a square with the sides stepping up toward the corners of the building."[32] The impact of this reorganization is evident in subsequent renderings of the space (Figure 36, 37). Radiating from the skylight, the grid becomes an invisible force within the space. The Sanctuary pews, altar, altar platform, and pulpit are all modular and movable. As long as the furniture is arranged on the grid, it will appear orderly and proportional, allowing the space to meet the requirements of any program (Figure 38). The scale of these pieces relative to each other and the space was carefully modulated to achieve a feeling of appropriateness, instilling movable elements like the pews and altar with a simultaneous feeling of permanence. The Vignellis took pleasure in this sort of ambiguity in their design work.

The use of color was also an important consideration. The palette centers natural materials and neutral colors: sandy beige walls, light oak butcher block, granite floors, natural linen for the clergy chairs and pew back cushions, and beige carpeting throughout the Living Room and Narthex. The colorful seat cushions introduce an unexpected contrast that reveals their semantic root– looking down into the Sanctuary from street level, the cushions wash the space in color and mimic the effect of light shining through stained glass. The Vignellis studied dozens of combinations of color and pattern before arriving at the present design (Figure 39). Vignelli furniture is always finished in solid fabrics and colors or natural materials like marble, so this development of a pattern, designed by Lella, for the cushions at St. Peter's is particularly unique.

The church's organ is significant on several levels. St. Peter's is the first Klais organ to be open to the public in the United States, and it is a rare example of a Modern architect-designed organ. Other U.S. examples are more contemporary, including Frank Gehry's design for the Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2003 and Moshe Safdie's design for the Kauffman Center in 2011. Klais Orgelblau celebrates collaboration with artists and architects on the design of their organs, and this is exemplified through their work with the Vignellis. The initial Klais proposal was entirely incongruous with the Vignellis' sanctuary design. It featured a staggered cabinet with curvilinear elements in both plan and elevation (Figure 40). Massimo traveled to Bonn, Germany, to meet with the artisans at Klais, and together they developed a new design appropriate for the space and imbued with visual power (Figure 41, 42, 43).

In sum, St. Peter's is best understood through the Vignelli axiom "design is one." This stems from Adolf Loos' pronouncement that an Architect should be able to design everything "from the spoon to the city." At St. Peter's, this was essential in fulfilling the congregation's desire that the design have a sense of both the cosmos and the womb. There is total consistency across the design from the way the major elements come together around the skylight and down to the smallest detail, reinforced by the implementation of the grid. This was achievable because the Vignellis were given total control over every element. From the church's graphic program (Figure 44), to the arrangement of elements in the sanctuary, to the silverware and other liturgical artifacts (Figure 45), the Vignellis maintain a consistent visual language that unifies even the most disparate elements. One example of this is the Tree of Lights votive holder (Figure 46). This style of votive holder is common in Scandinavia. The St. Peter's tree is inspired by a Byzantine design adapted to the grid, resulting in a dynamic dimensional cross (Figure 47). This type of intact total environment is exceedingly rare. St. Peter's was, in fact, so meaningful to them that Lella and Massimo chose to be interred there– in urns of their own design, of course (Figure 48, 49, 50).

[32] *The Key,* St. Peter's Church, April 1975.

Louise Nevelson and the Nevelson Chapel[33]

Louise Nevelson (1899-1988) was one of the most significant American sculptors of the twentieth century, achieving a level of prominence within her lifetime that was generally denied to female artists (Figure 73). Her work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the National Gallery. Among other awards and recognitions, she received the American Institute of Architects' Medal for Artistic Contributions to the Art of Architecture in 1977 and was presented the National Medal of Art by Ronald Reagan in 1985. She was recognized with a Cultural Medallion installed at St. Peter's Church by the Historic Landmarks Preservation Center. Her artistic practice involved collecting wooden fragments from the streets of New York– ranging from discarded packing crates to pieces of furniture and architectural elements like balusters and moldings– and giving them new life as large wall assemblages and free-standing sculptures painted in solid black, white, or gold.

When Pace Gallery approached architect Easley Hamner to inquire whether Citicorp would be interested in commissioning a public artwork from one of their artists, he instead referred them to St. Peter's (Figure 74, 75). Together with the congregation, Rev. Peterson conceived of an ecumenical chapel that would serve as a public space for prayer and meditation—a place where, in Nevelson's words, "even the casual observer would be caused to contemplate that which no one can know."[34] Hamner recommended Louise Nevelson from among Pace's artists to design the chapel, and Peterson quickly agreed. He was familiar with her work and recalls, "I knew she could create an oasis in the middle of the city—mysticism in the midst of New York's forest of skyscrapers."[35] The chapel, which seats 28, is gracefully simple, finished primarily in white, and adorned with expansive Nevelson assemblages. Most significantly, it is open to all and designed to fill the real need for accessible quiet space in Midtown.

Nevelson was delighted by the chapel commission. Although her family was Jewish, Nevelson's spirituality was expansive, and she was concerned with creating spaces that would foster a sense of experiential belonging. She said, "The chapel's name and denomination are Lutheran, but I like to think that the spirit and the soul are part of everyone."[36] As a close friend of Mark Rothko, she had visited his studio while he was working on the murals for the Rothko Chapel, and she understood her own work as being situated within this lineage. Nevelson deeply understood Rev. Peterson's vision for St. Peter's, which is likely why they developed such a quick and lasting friendship (Figure 76). According to Nevelson, "New York is a city of collage. It has all kinds of people, all kinds of races, all kinds of religion in it."[37] In her design for the chapel, she "wanted to break the boundaries of regimented religion to provide an environment that is evocative of another place. A place of the mind. A place of the senses" where people could "have harmony on their lunch hours."[38]

The chapel is particularly significant within the larger context of Nevelson's work. Beginning with her 1958 exhibition *Moon Garden + One* at Grand Central Moderns, Nevelson was primarily concerned with the creation of atmospheres (Figure 77). This insistence on the work of art as atmosphere was bound up in her understanding of metaphysics, influenced by painter Hans Hofmann's concept of the fourth dimension. Nevelson sought to pull the fourth dimension into perceptible experience in a drawing together of the body and the spirit. She wrote, "My total conscious search in life has been for a new seeing, a new image, a new insight. This search not only includes the object, but the in-between place; the dawns and the dusks… the places between land and sea."[39] *Moon Garden + One* was widely acclaimed when it opened. In the period leading up to the exhibition, Nevelson had begun receiving recognition for her black sculptures. With *Moon Garden*, these pieces took on new scale and filled the floor and walls of the gallery, making it nearly impossible to perceive any one piece individually. The windows were covered, and the space was filled with dim blue light, adding to the enveloping nature of the work. Art critic Hilton Kramer wrote, "In her most recent exhibition in January, nearly every conceivable demand was made on the gallery space. It was entirely transformed into a continuous sculptural enclosure."[40] She had moved a step beyond the infinitely expansive canvases of the abstract expressionists to give viewers an actual space they could occupy.[41]

[33] Caitlin Watson, "A Place for All People."
[34] Laurie Wilson, Louise Nevelson: Light and Shadow (Thames & Hudson, 2016), 367.
[35] Peterson and Weiss, "A Living Room Chat," 14.
[36] Barbaralee Diamonstein, "The White Chapel'" *Ladies Home Journal*, 94 (1977).
[37] Wilson, *Louise Nevelson: Light and Shadow*, 373.
[38] Wilson, *Louise Nevelson: Light and Shadow*, 366.
[39] *Louise Nevelson Papers*, circa 1903-1982, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[40] Elyse Deeb Speaks "Experiencing Louise Nevelson's Moon Garden," *American Art*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2007), 99.
[41] Ibid, 96-108.

Color was very important to Nevelson. Early in her career, she worked primarily in black, which she associated with dusk and shadow. She observed, "If you paint a thing black or you paint a thing white, it takes on a whole different dimension. The white and the black invited different forms. The tones, the weights, are different."[42] She associated white with the pale light of dawn, joy, and marriage with the world. Her first white environment was *Dawn's Wedding Feast* for the "Sixteen Americans" exhibition curated by Dorothy C. Miller at the Museum of Modern Art in 1959 (Figure 78). Later, she began working in gold. Her first gold environment was created for the entrance room to the American Pavilion at the 31st Venice Biennale in 1962. She associated gold with the shining sun, splendor, and earthly abundance, and she was interested in its reflective quality. She presented two maquettes for the chapel to Rev. Peterson– one in gold with a deep blue floor and the other in white– before they settled on the white (Figure 79, 80).

In the 1970s, Nevelson began working on large public sculptures made of steel and fabricated at Lippincott Studio in New Haven, CT. The first of these was the cor-ten *Atmosphere and Environment X* commissioned by Princeton University (1969). By 1970, Nevelson was already 71 years old. In working on these large steel pieces with the artisans at Lippincott, she found it easiest to create smaller maquettes for the metalworkers to reference. This practice translated into her wood sculpture of the time.[43] While the maquettes still contained some found material, the pieces used in the final work were often fabricated, as is the case with the chapel sculptures. The result was a shift to cleaner, intentionally crafted, and repetitive forms. The chapel is, in this regard, a beautiful representation of Nevelson's late work.

The steel sculptures, by their nature, existed as objects within plazas or other open outdoor spaces. However, Nevelson still craved the opportunity to create a permanent environment. She reflected, "I was hoping, of course, that *Dawn's Wedding Feast* would be kept as a permanent installation in a museum or big concern. That someone would have the vision to buy the entire environment and perhaps enclose it, for instance, on a roof within a glass house and open to the public as a total environment. I would have almost been willing to give it away at the time in order to place it permanently."[44] Besides the chapel, Nevelson has only two permanent installations in wood. The first, *White Flame of the Six Million* (1970) is a bimah wall commissioned by Temple Beth-El in Great Neck, NY (Figure 81). This piece is a single wall rather than a total environment. The second is *Bicentennial Dawn* (1976), an installation at the Federal Courthouse in Philadelphia, PA (Figure 82). The work consists of three groupings of columns arranged on plinths in a hallway running along the building's glass facade. While *Bicentennial Dawn* captures the immersive quality of Nevelson's gallery installations, she tellingly blanked out the surrounding walls and floor in gold foil for a series of lithographs she made of the piece (Figure 83). Nevelson Chapel remains unique in the level of complete control she had in creating a total permanent artistic environment, from finishes to furnishings.

A Space for Contemporary Artistic Expression

St. Peter's robust visual art, dance, and theater programs had a dramatic influence on the church's design. Elaine de Kooning curated a gallery in the parish hall of the old St. Peter's Church, a practice which she continued for fifty years and carried into the new Narthex and Living Room galleries. As a result, the Narthex needed to have a prominent location at street level so that the gallery could have a true public-facing presence. It is not typical in ecclesiastic design for a narthex and sanctuary to be split across separate levels as they are at St. Peter's. This need to have a clear public presence for the gallery at street level and the sanctuary at the plaza level, coupled with the church's desire to have many overlapping programs running simultaneously, presented a unique design challenge that resulted in the plan put forward by Hugh Stubbins Associates. Exhibitions are still put on in the Narthex today, overseen by the church's Art and Architecture Conservancy. The inclusion of a black box theater on the lower level is also atypical in church design. Originally known as St. Peter's Gate, the theater has been in continuous operation beginning with a production of *Elephant Man* at its opening.

Jazz ministry had a significant influence on the need for flexibility in the Vignelli design. Pastor John Garcia Gensel was officially appointed as the first Pastor to the Jazz Community by the Lutheran Board of American Missions in 1965 (Figure 62). Among jazz musicians he had a different title– "the Shepherd of the Night Flock," bestowed on him by Duke Ellington. His pioneering ministry found its first permanent home at the "old" St. Peter's church in 1966. Gensel was deeply involved

[42] Louise Nevelson, *Dawns and Dusks: Taped Conversations with Diana MacKown* (Scribner, 1976), 144.
[43] Wilson, *Louise Nevelson: Light and Shadow*.
[44] Nevelson, *Dawns and Dusks*, 144.

with and respected by members of New York's jazz community, and he officiated the funerals of both Billy Strayhorn and John Coltrane at old St. Peter's. His presence brought key members of the community, including Ruth Ellington, into the congregation. As a result, St. Peter's Jazz Vespers and All Nite Soul programs were host to some of the most significant performers of the time, including the Ollie Shearer Quartet, the Howard McGhee Jazz Ministry Band, the Joe Newman Quartet, Eubie Blake and the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, Honi Coles and the Copacetics, and many others. St. Peter's was the center of a vital jazz scene that invited musicians to come together with joy and exuberance to offer their music up in prayerful celebration free from liturgical constraints.[45] This meant that the Sanctuary needed to be able to accommodate much more than a traditional Lutheran Mass, a challenge the Vignellis solved admirably through their implementation of the grid (Figure 63, 64). In addition, the seamless connection Stubbins created between the sanctuary and plaza supports programs like Jazz in the Plaza that blur the physical boundaries between these spaces and facilitate engagement with a broader public (Figure 65).

Beginning with the Nevelson Chapel, the church has commissioned significant artworks including Arnaldo Pomodoro's *Chiodo e croce* (1982), Willem de Kooning's *Untitled (Triptych)* altarpiece (1985) currently held by the Saint Louis Art Museum, Kiki Smith's *Processional Cross* (1992), a temporary site-specific installation of Dale Chihuly's *Persian Window* (1994), and the short-term display of Mark Pilato's *Ascent* (2001) (Figures 66, 67, 68, 69). The Vignelli-designed silverware is another form of artistic commission. Produced by San Lorenzo group, a modernist silver shop in Milan, it employs a silver-working technique developed by their workshop in which the silver is scored in a deep, irregular linear pattern, amplifying its light-reflecting qualities. Beyond this, the Vignellis' flexible grid lends itself to temporary interventions within the Sanctuary, which have included the Boots on the Ground Memorial, Good Friday Liturgy of the Cross, and an installation of peace cranes hung from the ceiling (Figures 70, 71, 72). Notable dancers from New York City dance companies have also staged site-specific performances in the Sanctuary, drawing on the congregation's connections including Ruth Meyer and Merce Cunningham.

Figures linked to the congregation include playwright Edward Albee; composer John Cage; Annalee Newman, wife of the artist Barnett Newman; Jane and John Dillenberger, noted historians of art and theology; Eloise Spaeth, an art collector, writer, patron, and wife of Whitney Museum vice president Otto Spaeth; and writers Kurt Vonnegut and John Updike, who both contributed texts for the new building's dedication. According to Rev. Amandus Derr, head pastor following Peterson's retirement, the St. Peter's congregation is "committed to conserving, preserving, exhibiting, acquiring and, most importantly, *using* great art in order to 'creatively shape life' for all who enter this building… Art, architecture, and design are as deeply woven into the fabric of St. Peter's life and mission as liturgy, community, justice, education, and service."[46]

[45] Harvey, "Jazz Ministry in Manhattan."
[46] Amandus J. Derr, "Foreword," *Religion and Art in the Heart of Modern Manhattan*, ed. Aaron Rosen (Ashgate Publishing, 2016).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.36
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 40.758736 Longitude: -73.970388
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Although the Citicorp complex is comprised of three interlocking buildings: St. Peter's Church, Citicorp Tower, and the Market Building, the nomination boundary was selected to encompass the footprint of the church building only, ending at the demising walls defining the Church's condominium unit and tax lot. While openings in these walls originally provided circulation between the Church and Market Building, they have since been closed.

1:12,000
0 500 1000 ft

St. Peter's Church

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Mapped 04/04/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

1:1,200
0 50 100 ft

Nomination Boundary (0.36 ac)

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

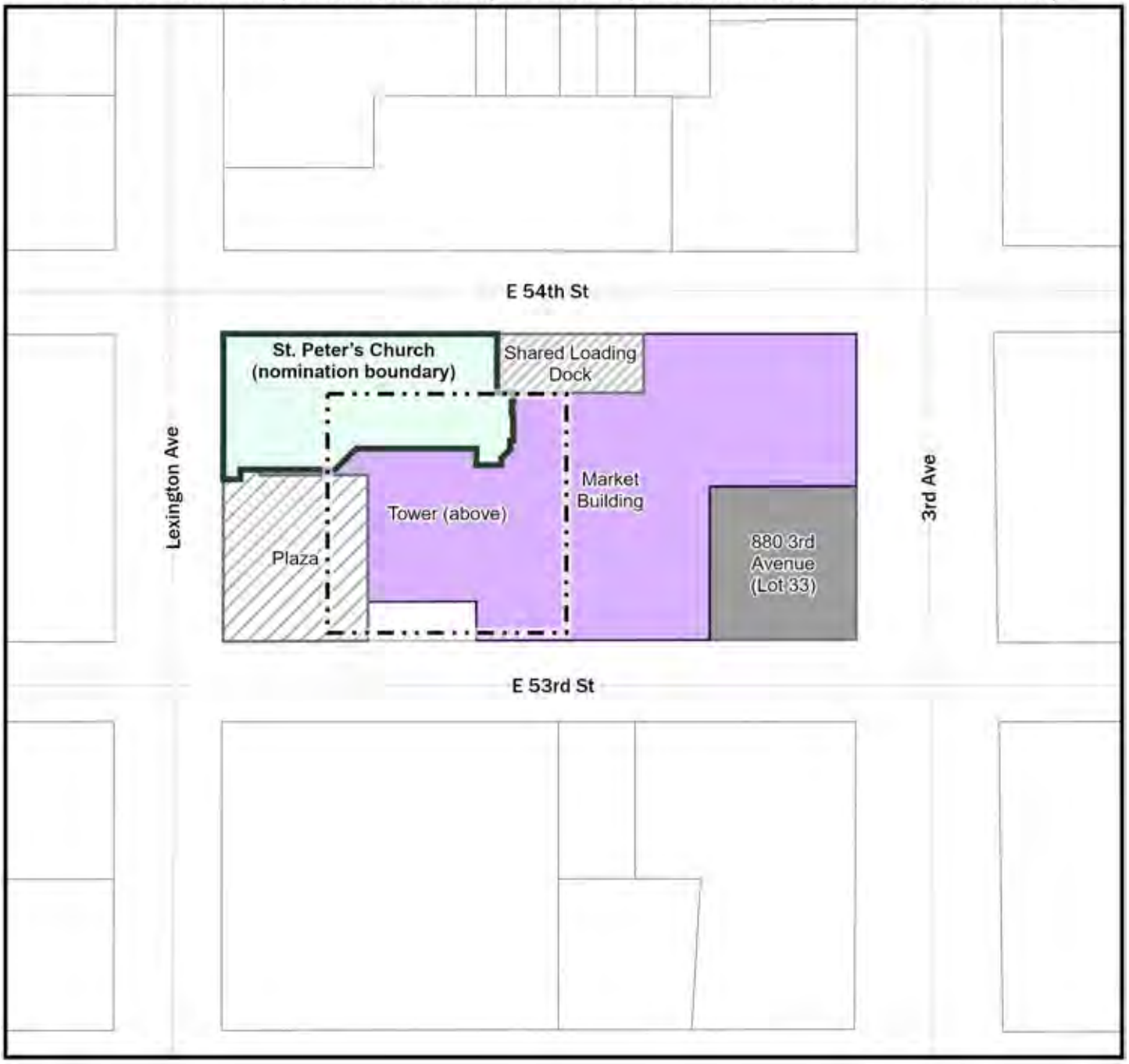
New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2018

Mapped 04/04/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO


E 55th St
Lat: 40.758736
Lon: -73.970388
Lexington Ave
E 54th St
Block 1308,
Lot 7501
E 53rd St
3rd Ave
E 52nd St
1:1,200
0 50 100 ft
Nomination Boundary (0.36 ac)
Tax Parcels
New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation
Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N
MAPPLUTO Parcel Year: 2025
Mapped 04/04/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Detail of Block 1308, Lots 7501 and 33

Note: The extent of each component of Lot 7501 varies by floor level. The representation of the components is simplified on this map.



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Nomination Boundary

New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

MAPPLUTO Parcel Year: 2025

Mapped 04/04/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

11. Form Prepared By

DRAFT – St. Peter's Church New York, NY
County and State

name/title Caitlin Watson / Senior Project Architect (edited by Jeff Iovannone, PhD, NYSHPO)
organization Aanda Architects date
street & number 32 Court Street, #207 telephone
city or town Brooklyn state NY zip code 11201
e-mail cw@aandaarch.com

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: St. Peter's Church

City or Vicinity: New York

County: New York State: NY

Photographer: Caitlin Watson

Date Photographed: 2018-2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0044: Lexington Avenue elevation, looking east.
0002 of 0044: View from corner of Lexington Ave and 54th Street, looking southeast.
0003 of 0044: 54th Street elevation of Narthex wing, looking south.
0004 of 0044: 54th Street entrance.
0005 of 0044: Interior of 54th Street vestibule addition.
0006 of 0044: Glass doors at 54th Street entrance.
0007 of 0044: Oak Vignelli cross at 54th Street entrance.
0008 of 0044: Plaza elevation with sunken plaza in foreground, looking north.
0009 of 0044: Glass entrance system at Sanctuary entry from plaza.
0010 of 0044: Arnaldo Pomodoro Cross with window looking into Klais organ beyond.
0011 of 0044: Narthex gallery wall, looking north.
0012 of 0044: Narthex looking south.
0013 of 0044: Narthex and sculptural stair to Living Room, looking northwest.
0014 of 0044: Detail of stair railing.
0015 of 0044: Breezeway view toward door to Narthex, looking east.
0016 of 0044: Living Room, looking south.
0017 of 0044: Living Room, looking northeast.
0018 of 0044: Baptismal font in Sanctuary.
0019 of 0044: Sanctuary, looking northeast.
0020 of 0044: Sanctuary, looking northwest.
0021 of 0044: Sanctuary view from altar, looking southwest.
0022 of 0044: Sanctuary view from organ, looking southeast.
0023 of 0044: Sanctuary view from baptismal font, looking north.
0024 of 0044: Reconfigured altar arrangement.
0025 of 0044: Detail of organ case.
0026 of 0044: Detail of organ console.
0027 of 0044: Sanctuary ceiling.
0028 of 0044: Moveable pews with polychrome seat cushions.
0029 of 0044: Detail of stepped seating.
0030 of 0044: Modular oak offertory and sacrament boxes.

0031 of 0044: Book rack.
0032 of 0044: Presider chairs.
0033 of 0044: Silverware – candles, pitcher, chalice, ciborium, plate.
0034 of 0044: Nevelson Chapel, looking north.
0035 of 0044: Entrance to Nevelson Chapel, looking southwest.
0036 of 0044: Nevelson Chapel altar and skylight, looking northeast.
0037 of 0044: *Sky Vestment*.
0038 of 0044: *Three Columns – Trinity.*
0039 of 0044: *Cross of the Good Shepherd.*
0040 of 0044: *Frieze of the Apostles.*
0041 of 0044: *Cross of the Resurrection*.
0042 of 0044: *Grapes and Wheat Lintel.*
0043 of 0044: Nevelson Chapel pews.
0044 of 0044: Nevelson Chapel altar.

Figure 1: Site Map, aanda architects, 2025

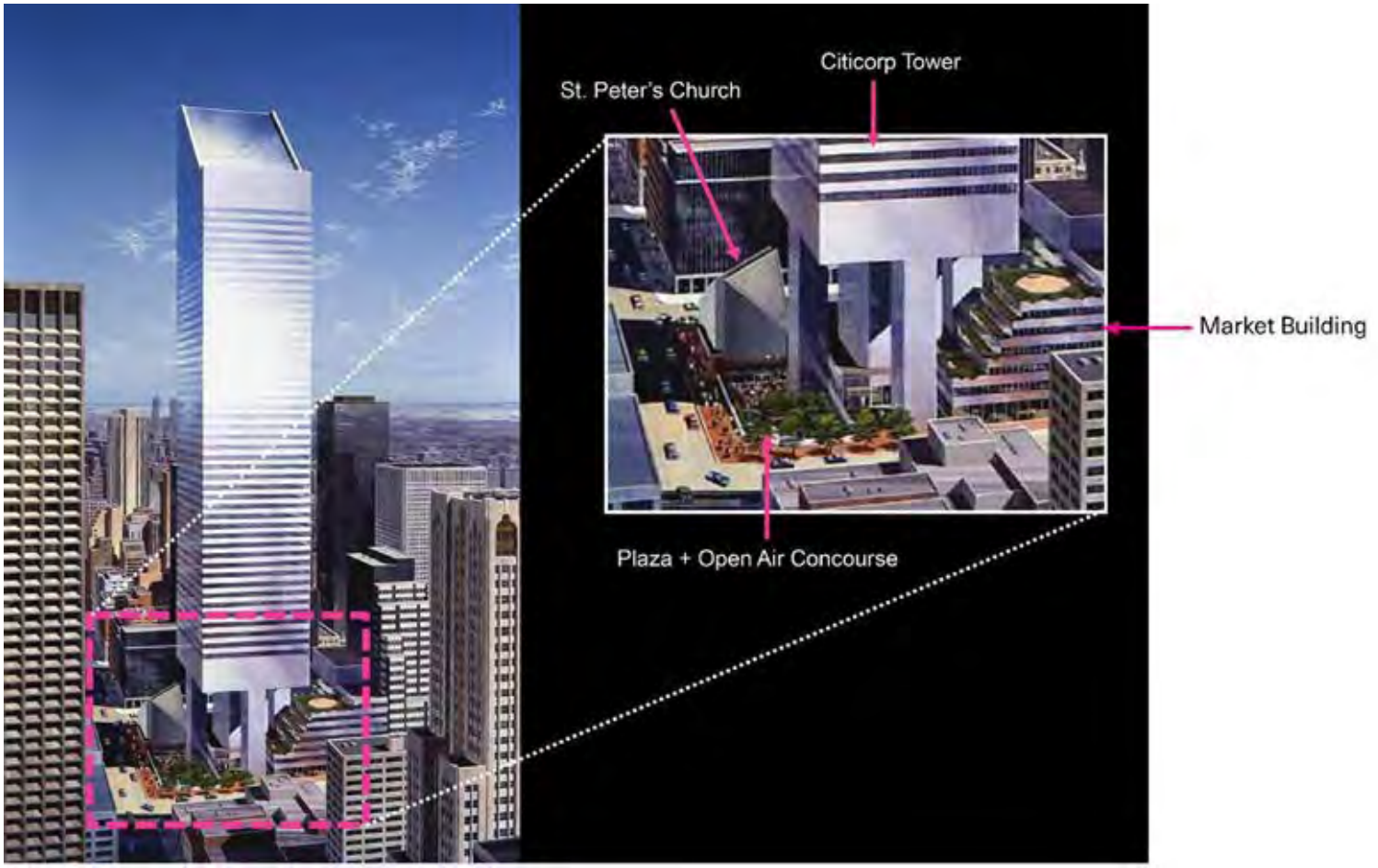


Figure 2: Rendering of Citicorp Center complex, Hugh Stubbins Associates, 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

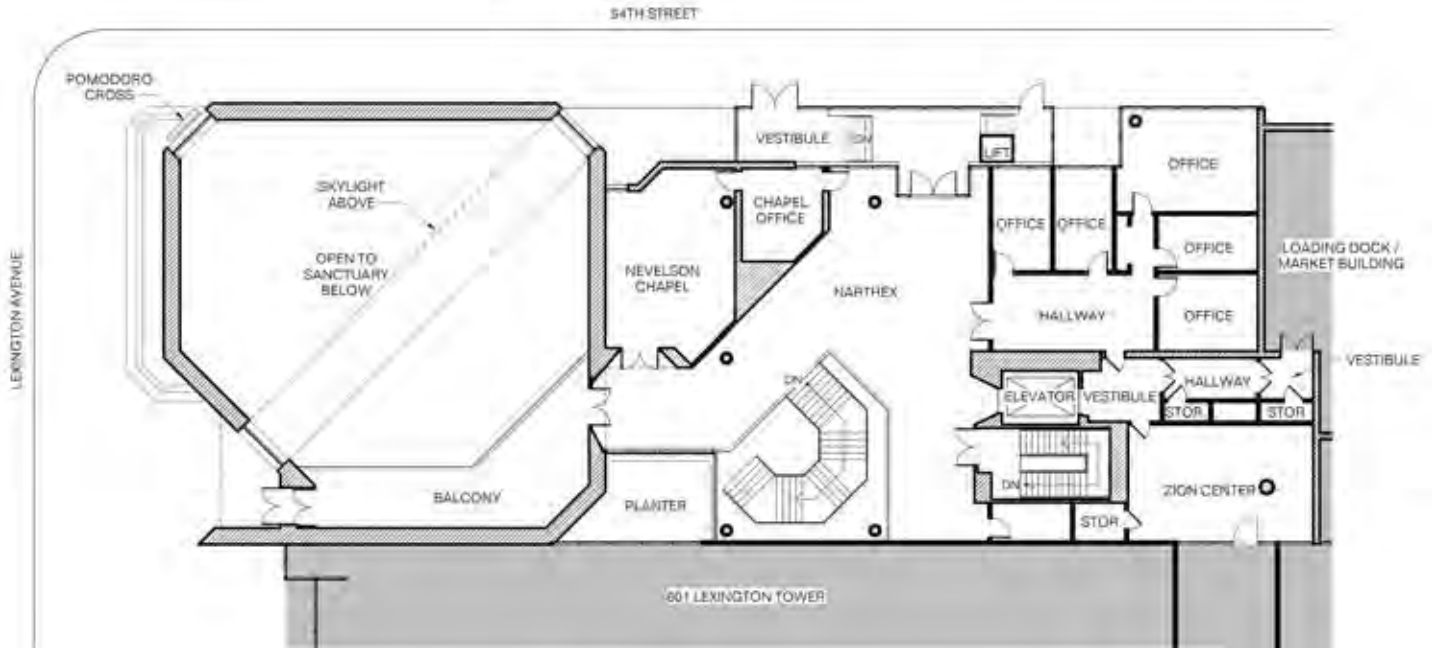


Figure 3: Street Level Plan, aanda architects 2025

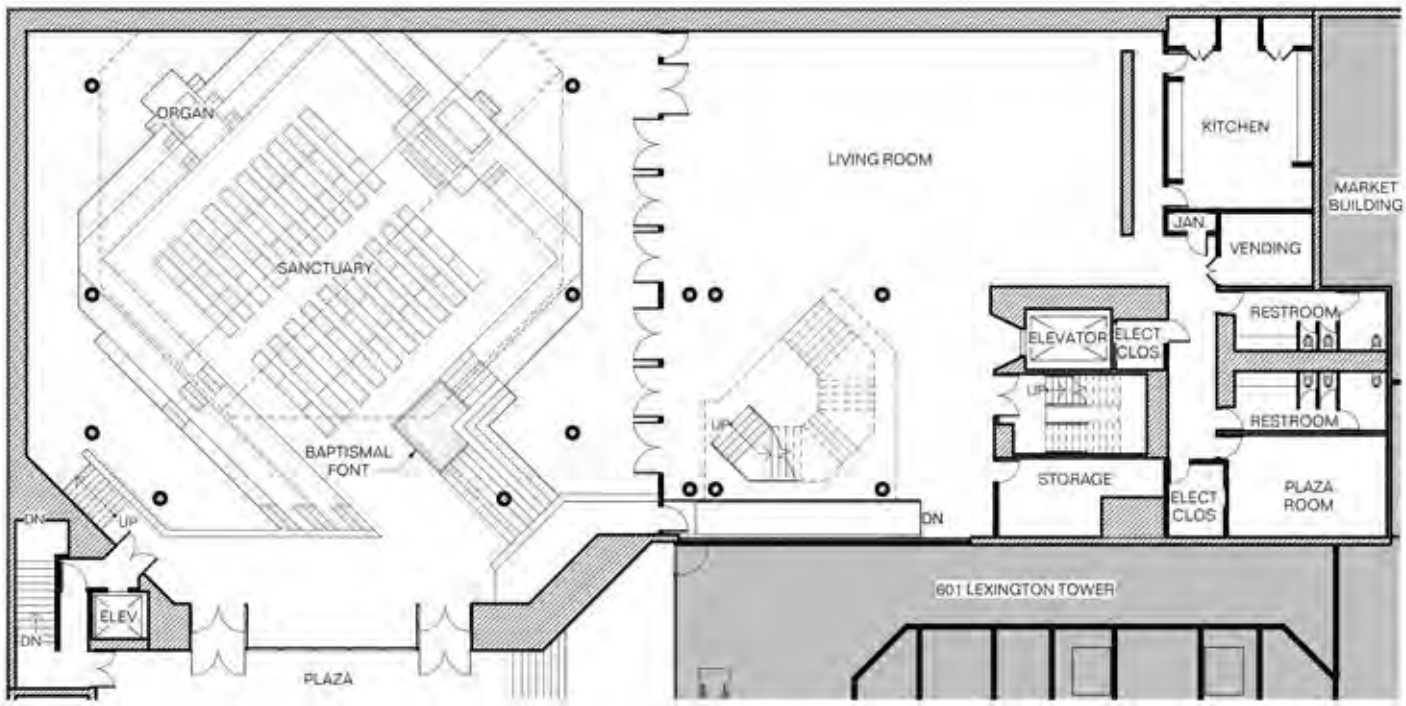


Figure 4: Plaza Level Plan, aanda architects 2025

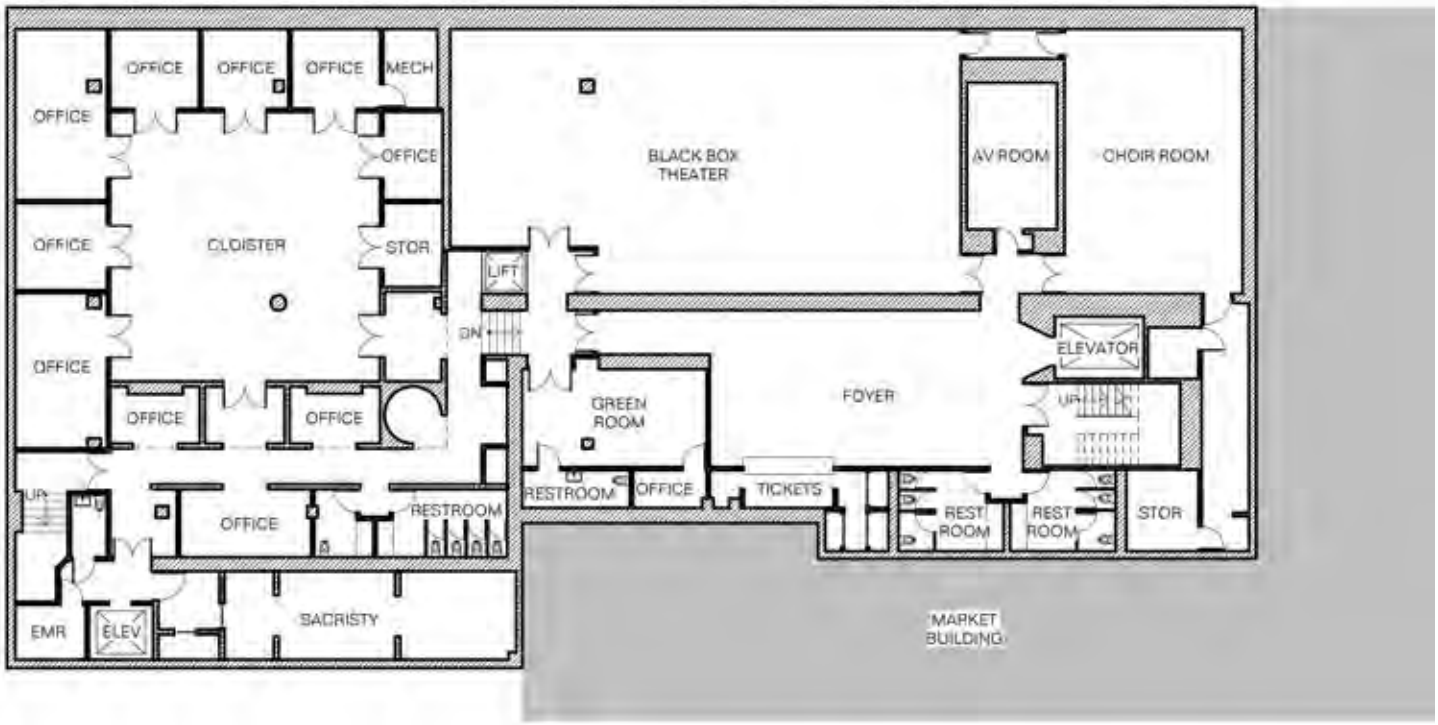


Figure 5: Cellar Level Plan, aanda architects 2025

Figure 6: St. Peter's Church, original building at 46th Street and Lexington Avenue, 1904; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

St. Peter's Church and Parish House
1925

Figure 7: Exterior of St. Peter's Church and Parish House at 54th St. and Lexington Avenue, 1925; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Interior of the Church after redecoration
1952

Figure 8: Interior of St. Peter's Church at 54th St. and Lexington Avenue, 1952; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

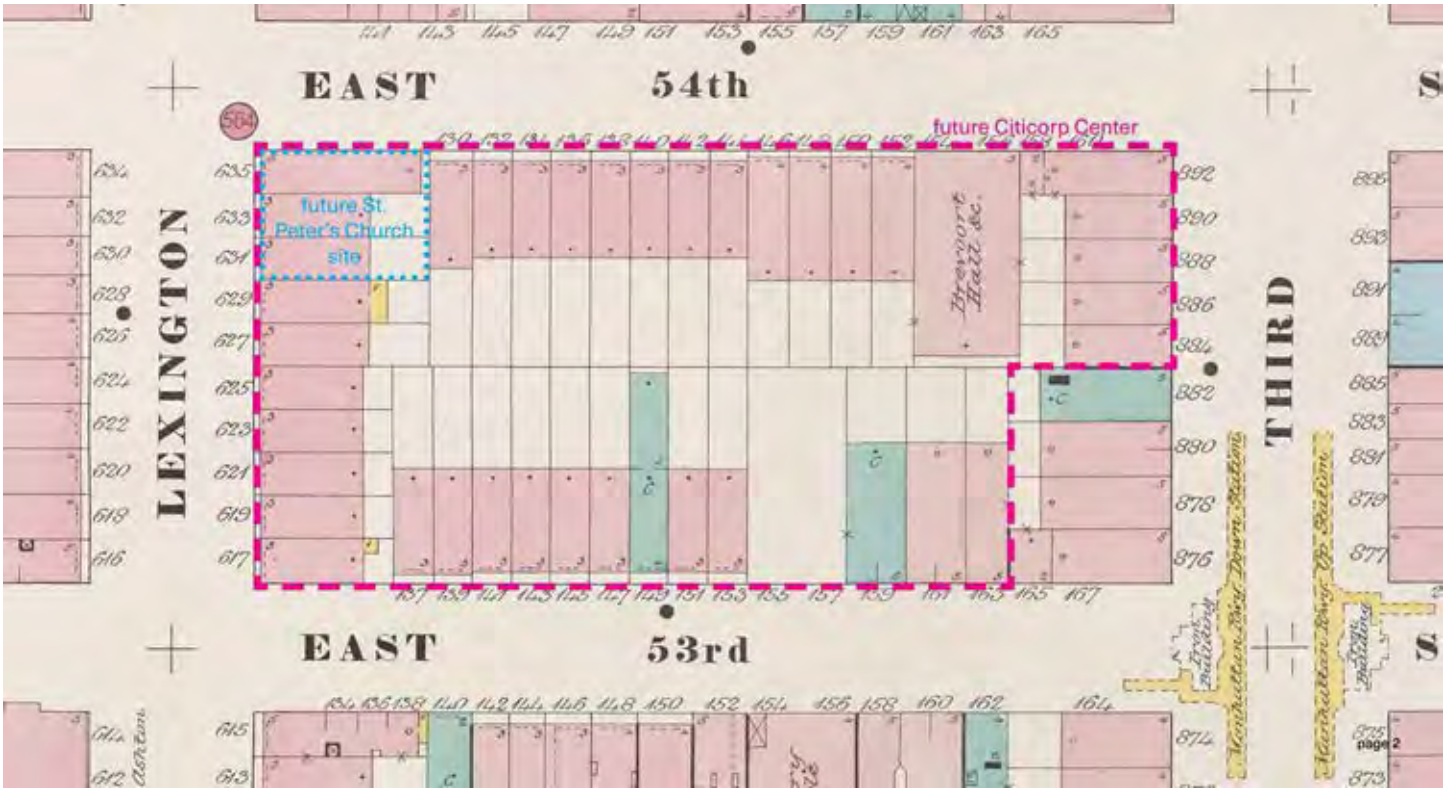


Figure 9: 1892 Sanborn map with site of future Gothic Revival St. Peter's Church building and future Citicorp Center complex marked

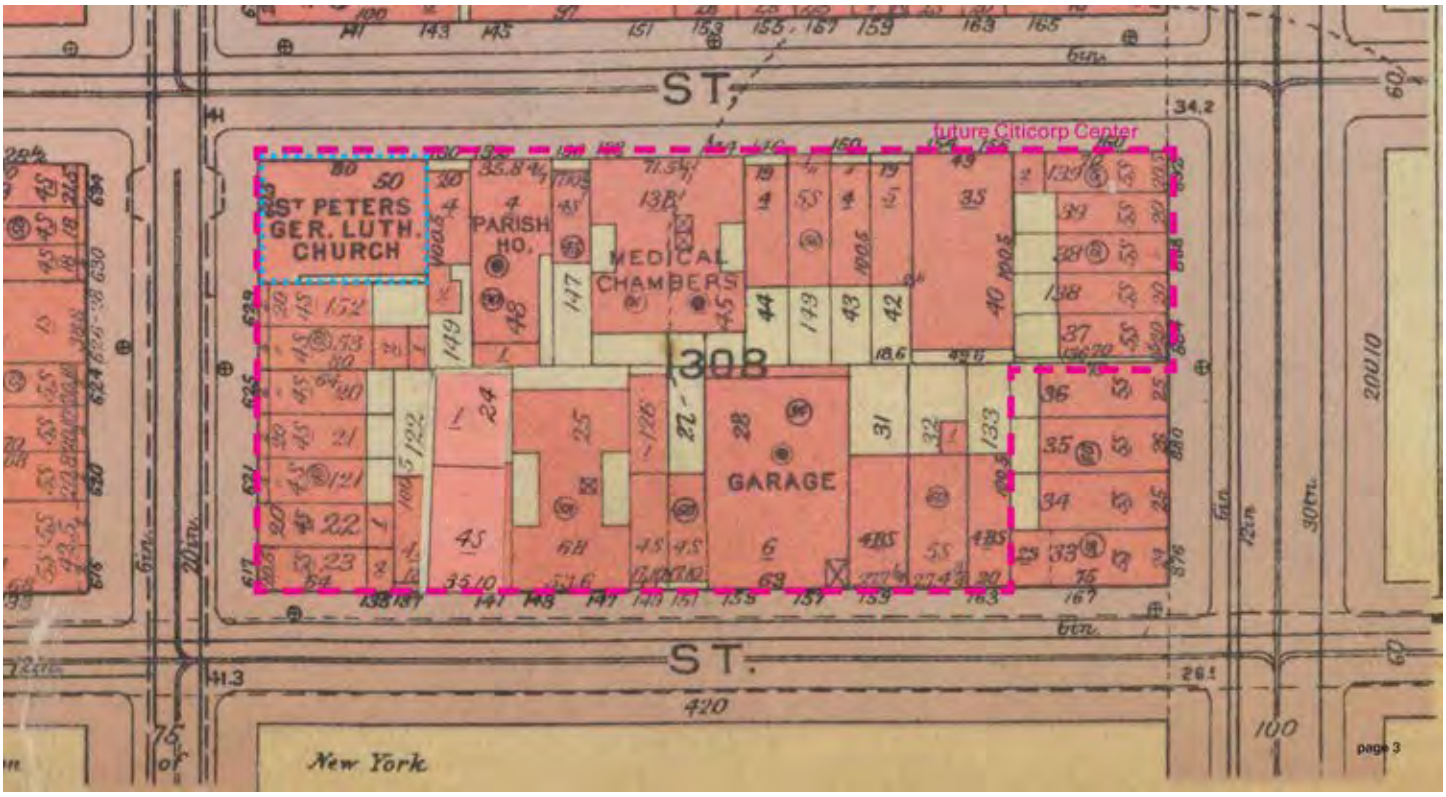


Figure 10: 1955 Bromley map with Gothic Revival St. Peter's Church building and future Citicorp Center complex marked

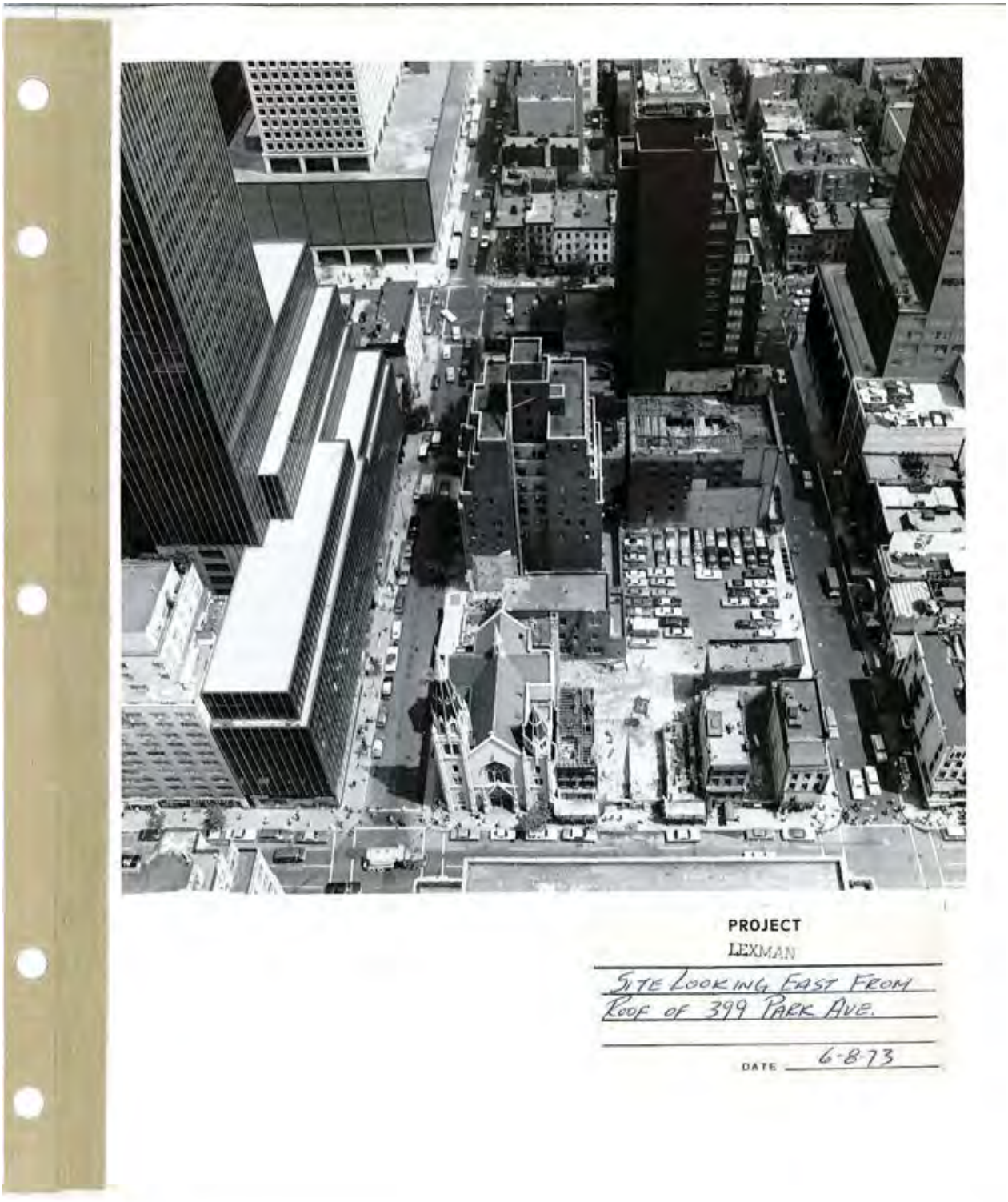
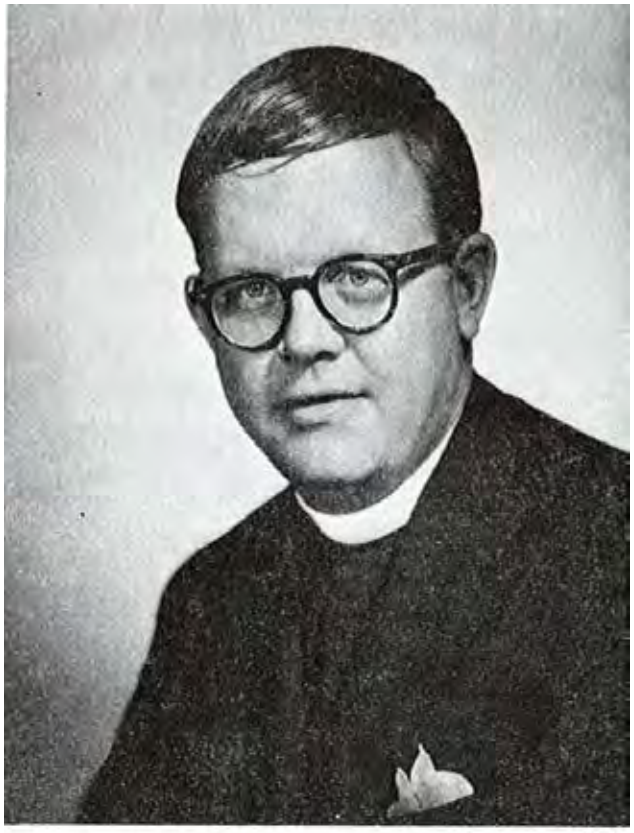


Figure 11: Aerial photo of future Citicorp Center complex site, June 8, 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive



The Reverend
Ralph E. Peterson
B.A., M.A., B.D.
Seventh Pastor 1966 -

Figure 12: Rev. Ralph Peterson; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER ®

New York, N.Y. 10017, Friday, August 16, 1974★

A new ministry rises from the rubble

By KITTY HANSON

On one of the most costly pieces of Manhattan real estate in the heart of the midtown market place, stands an elegant Victorian church, its dark spires dwarfed by neighboring skyscrapers, its open doors welcoming all who pass. Inside, stone pillars rise to the shadowy recesses of arched ceilings, and through opened sections of priceless stained glass windows filter the sounds of the city.

Thirty years ago the neat ranks of red-cushioned pews held hundreds of Sunday worshipers. Today, they number only a few dozen. Like so many other churches in New York City today, it is old and beautiful—and dying.

New York City is not alone. In center cities throughout the United States, the old, established religious institutions are in trouble, financially as well as spiritually. The cost of operation is going up, but memberships are going down. Congregations are growing older and smaller. Neighborhoods are changing.

While the "storefront" movement is growing and the spirit is strong among black and Latin Christians in the city, in the old main line denominations, Sunday school enrollments are falling steadily, and so is the construction of new church facilities. In their efforts to survive, churches are pooling their physical resources, sharing sanctuaries and pastors, merging congregations, tearing down buildings, or going out of business altogether.

One bright spot in this gloomy picture in New York is St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 111 years old, and, since 1902, a familiar landmark at 54th St. and Lexington Ave. Only eight years ago, St. Peter's, too, was dying. In the middle '60s, what had once

The building is gone, but the church lives. The Rev. Ralph E. Peterson buoyantly contemplates the future atop wreckage of St. Peter's Lutheran Church building, to be replaced by nation's first condominium church.

Figure 13: Cover of *New York Daily News* dated August 16, 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

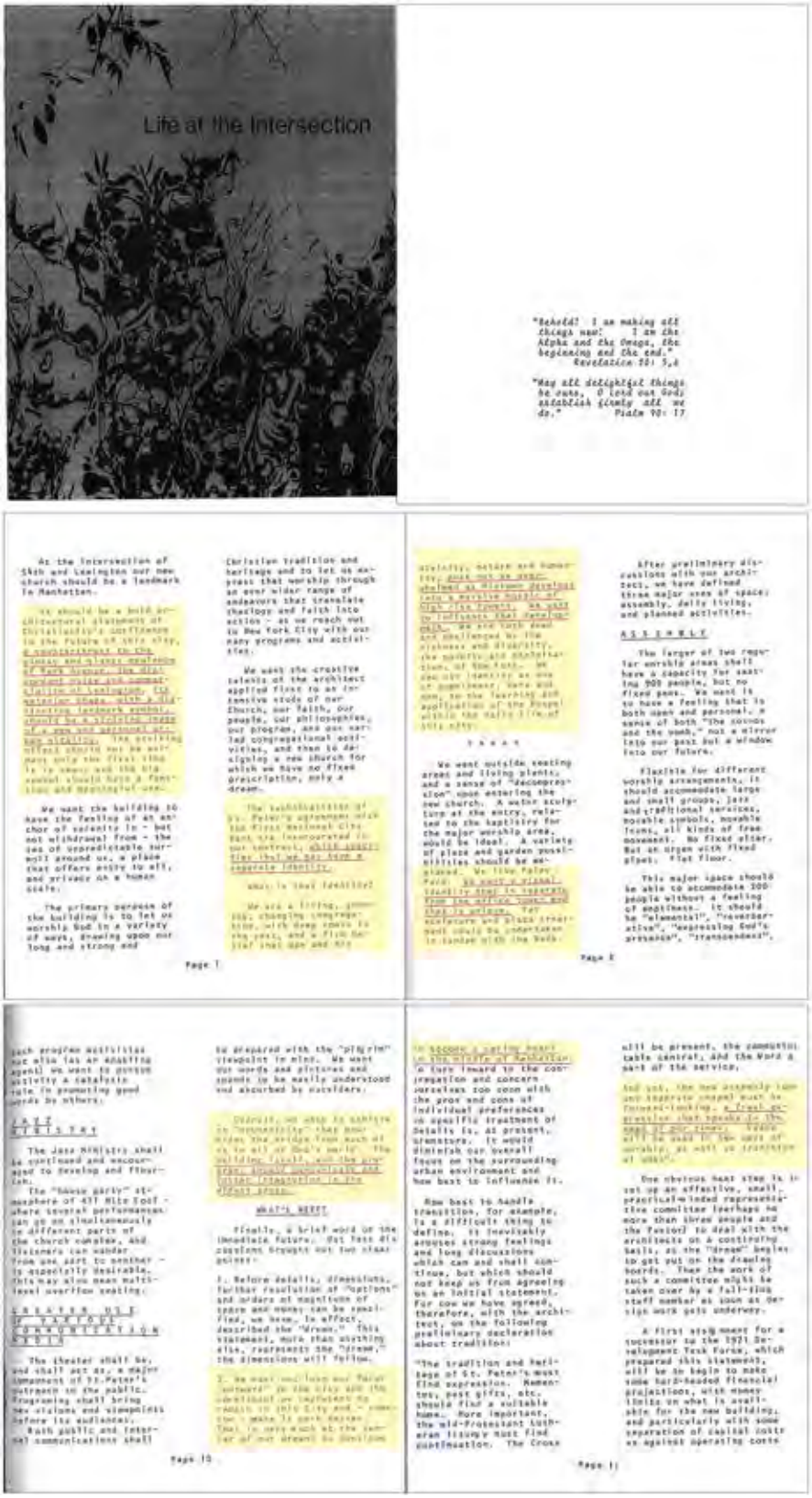


Figure 14: Excerpts from *Life at the Intersection*; source: St. Peter's Church Archive (highlights added by aanda architects)

Figure 15: Citicorp Center Groundbreaking, April 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 16: St. Peter's Church under construction, 1975-76; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 17: Hugh Stubbins in front of Citicorp Center, 1979, photo by Arnold Newman; source: Getty Images

Peter Woytuk, architect, director of Stubbins firm

Associated Press

Services will be private for Peter Woytuk, 46, vice president for design and a director of Hugh Stubbins and Associates, Inc., of Cambridge, who died Wednesday at his home on Indian Hill road, Belmont.

In 1961 he was the recipient of a Project Design Citation from progressive Architecture and received the American Institute of Architect's Ward Scholarship. The following year he was honored with a Harvard University Scholarship and was a finalist in the international competition to select an architect for Boston City Hall.

Mr. Woytuk won third prize in 1964 in national competition for design of the Boston Architectural Center. The next year he was appointed an Arthur W. Wheelwright Fellow in Architecture by Harvard University. His travel-study program included observations in architectural and urban design work in Europe, Russia, India, Nepal and Japan.

Before joining the Stubbins firm in 1961, he was associated with architects in St. Paul, Minn.

He was born in St. Paul, Minn., earned an engineering certificate in 1951 and received his Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1955 from the University of Minnesota. He received his master's degree in Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1962.

Mr. Woytuk was a member of the National

PETER WOYTUK

Architects. He also served on the Boston Society of Architects' Local Committee on Design. He was on the faculty of the Boston Architectural Center since 1965, a guest juror for the 1965 Watkins Fellowship at Rice Univeristy in Houston, Tex. and a juror for the 1968 Rotch Traveling Scholarship in Boston.

In his role as vice president with the Stubbins firm, he made significant contributions in the design of such projects as the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine and the Nathan M. Pusey Library at Harvard; Bowdoin College Senior Center; various buildings at the Rochester Institute of Technology and the graduate Student Housing at MIT.

He leaves his wife, Rhoda A. (Smith); a son, Peter J. Woytuk and two daughters, Jennifer Ann and Stephanie Ann, all of Belmont.

Hal Mohr, 79; filmed first

Figure 18: Peter Woytuk obituary, May 1974; source: *The Boston Globe*

Figure 19: W. Easley Hamner at St. Peter's Church, 2019; source: St. Peter's Archive

Figure 20: Lella Vignelli (left), Massimo Vignelli (center), and Rev. Ralph Peterson (right) at St. Peter's Church, 1977; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

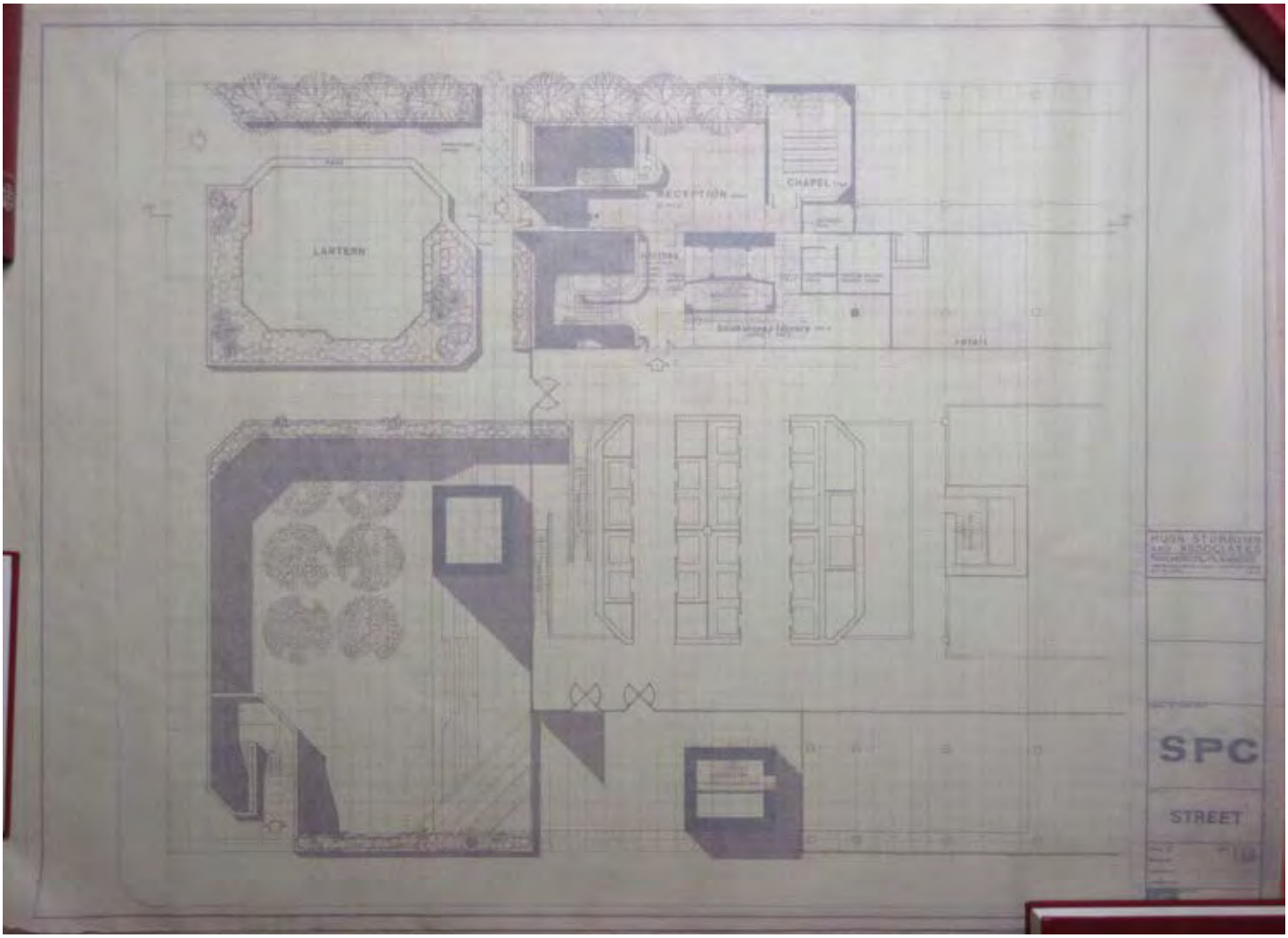


Figure 21: Lantern Scheme, Street Level Plan, Hugh Stubbins Associates, September 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

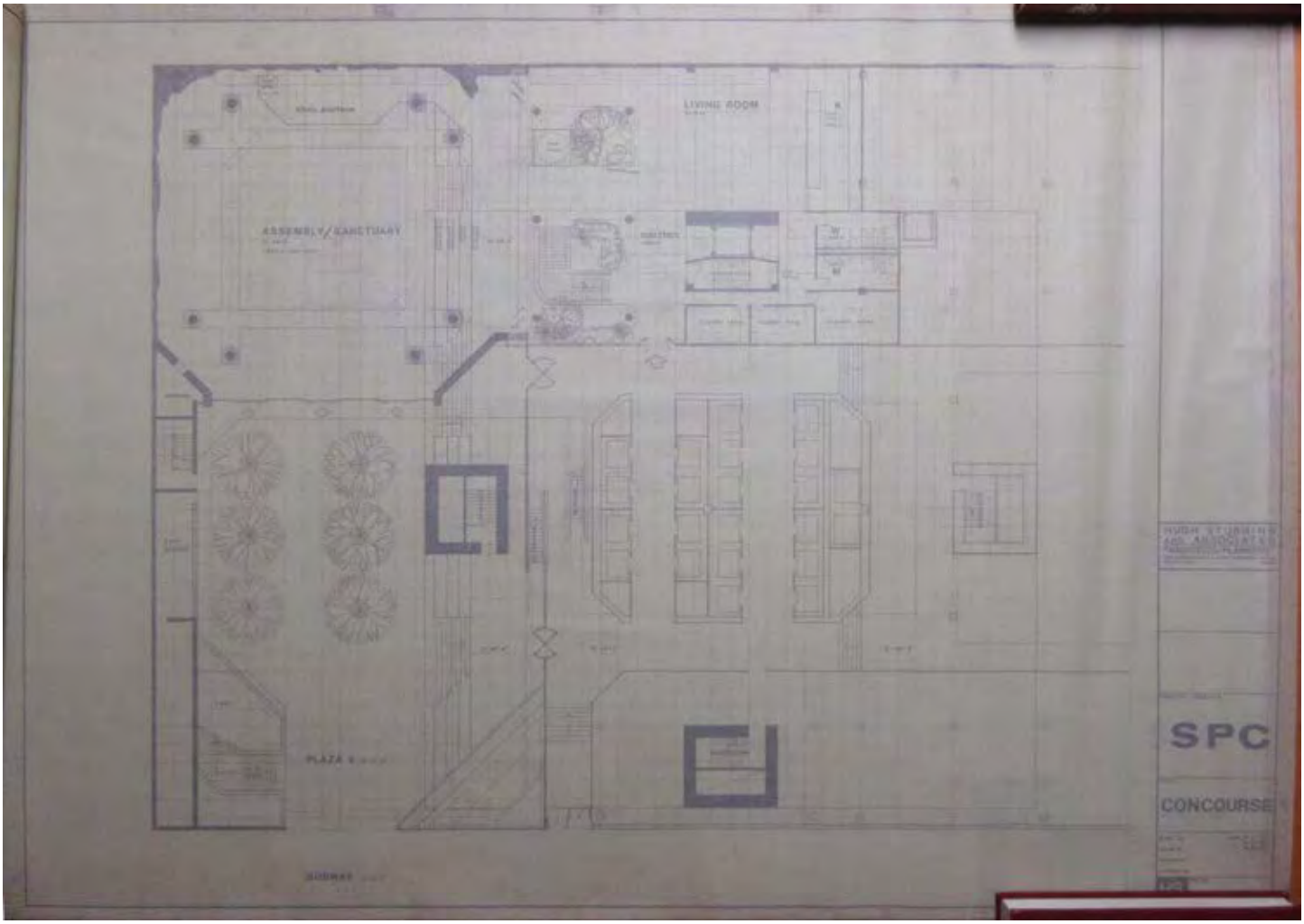


Figure 22: Lantern Scheme, Plaza Level Plan, Hugh Stubbins Associates, September 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

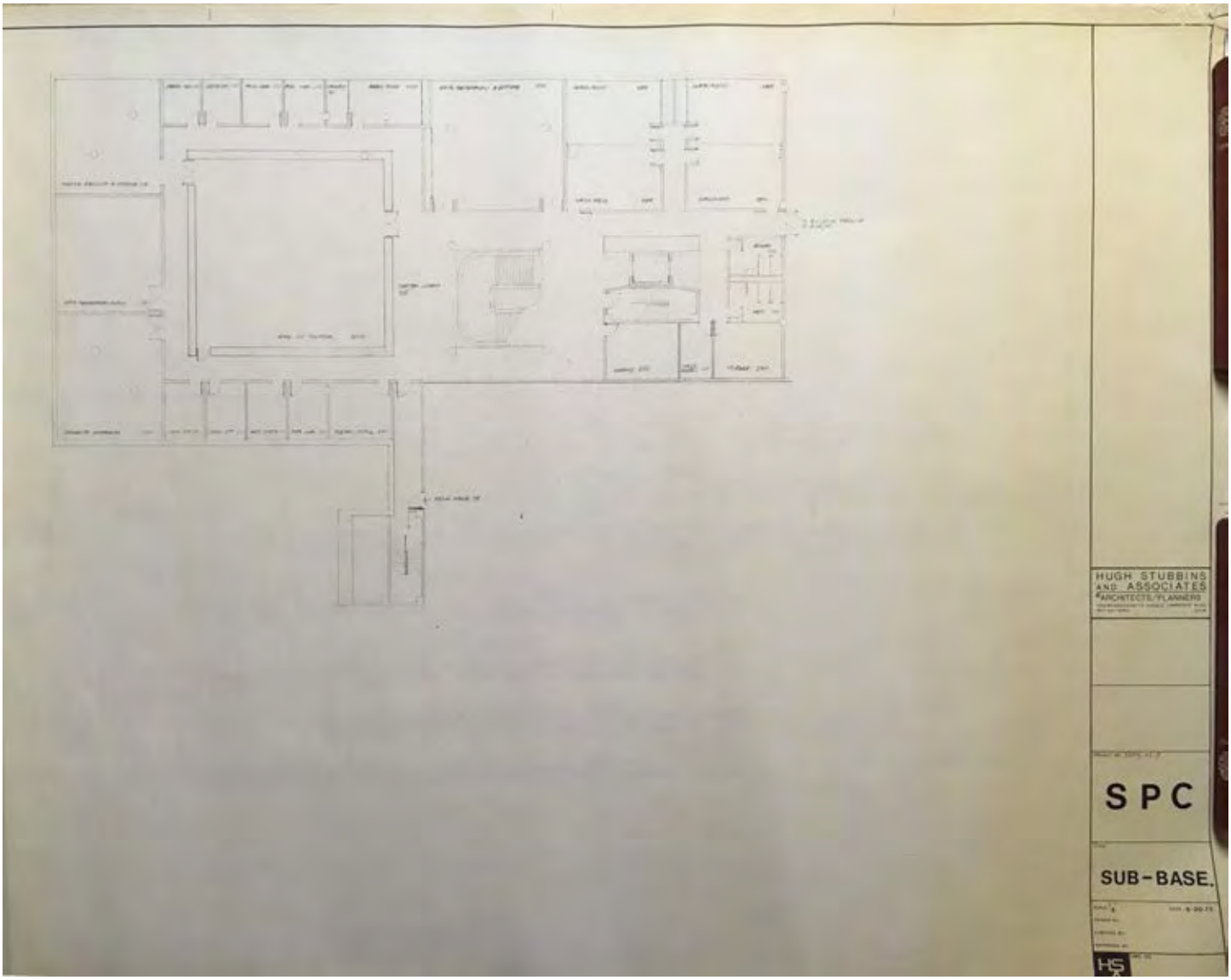


Figure 23: Lantern Scheme, Cellar Level Plan, Hugh Stubbins Associates, September 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

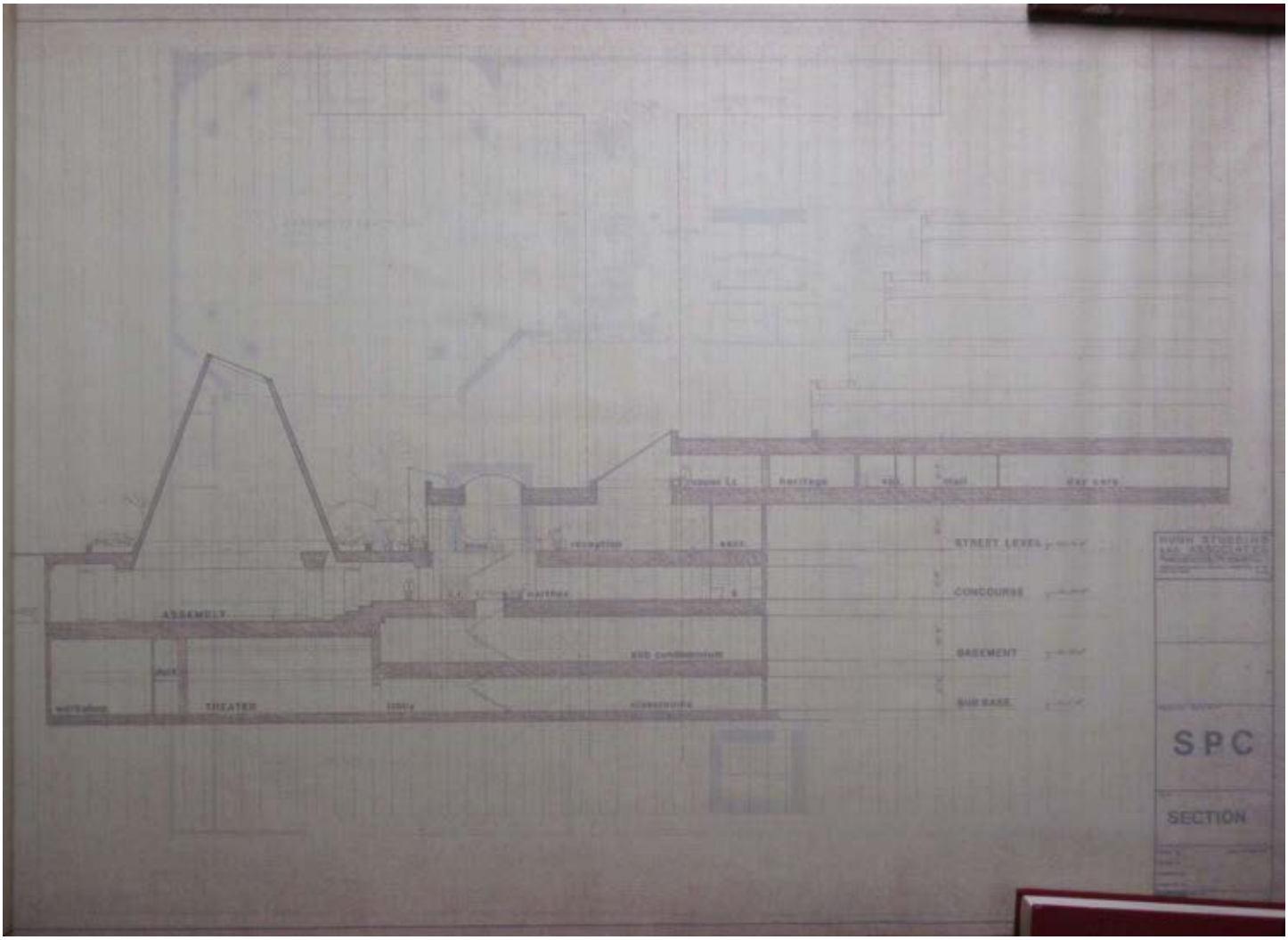


Figure 24: Lantern Scheme, Section facing north, Hugh Stubbins Associates, September 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 25: Lantern Scheme, Rendering at street level looking east, Hugh Stubbins Associates, 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

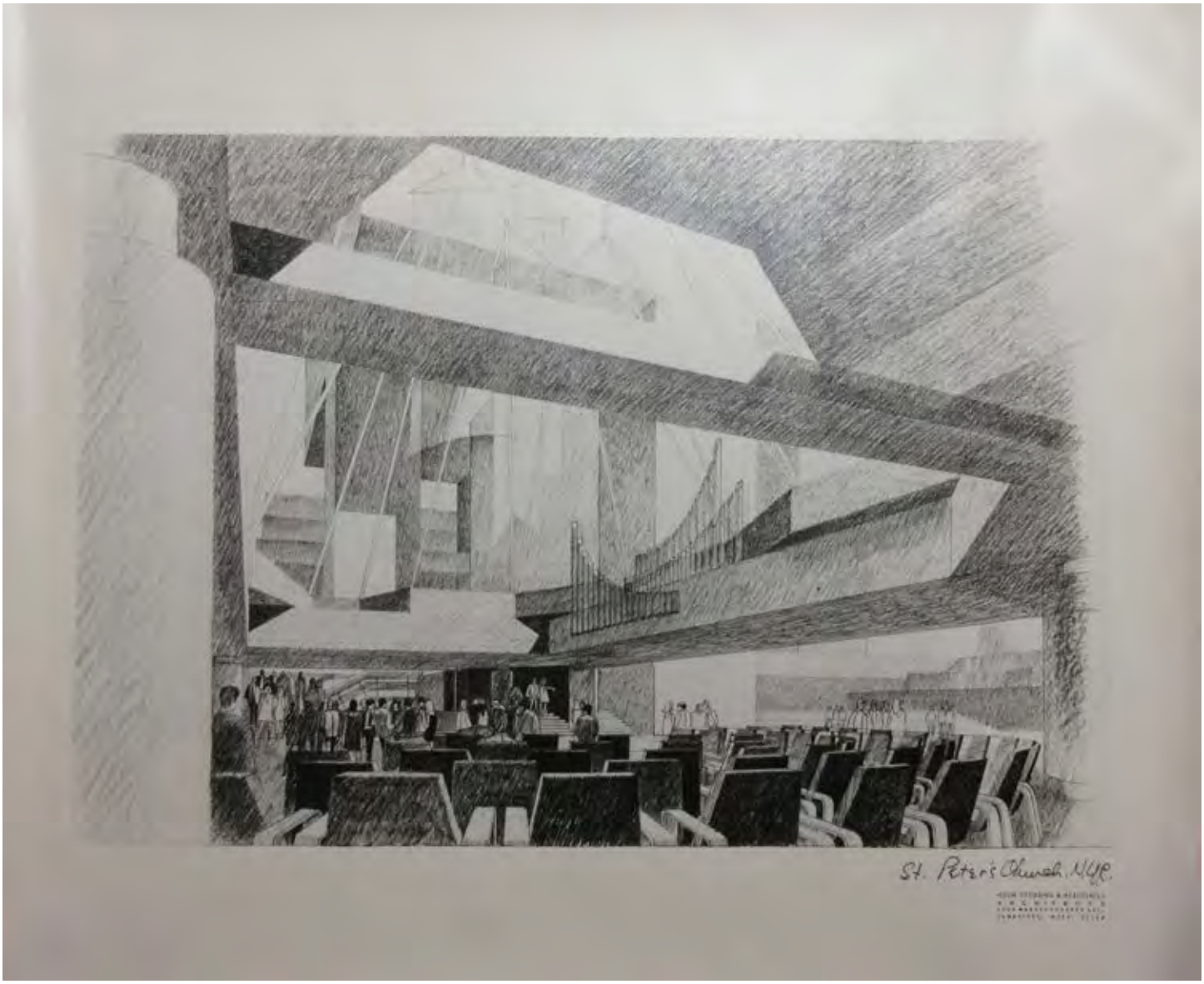


Figure 26: Lantern Scheme, Rendering of Sanctuary looking east, Hugh Stubbins Associates, 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 27: Lantern Scheme, Rendering of Living Room looking south, Hugh Stubbins Associates, 1973; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

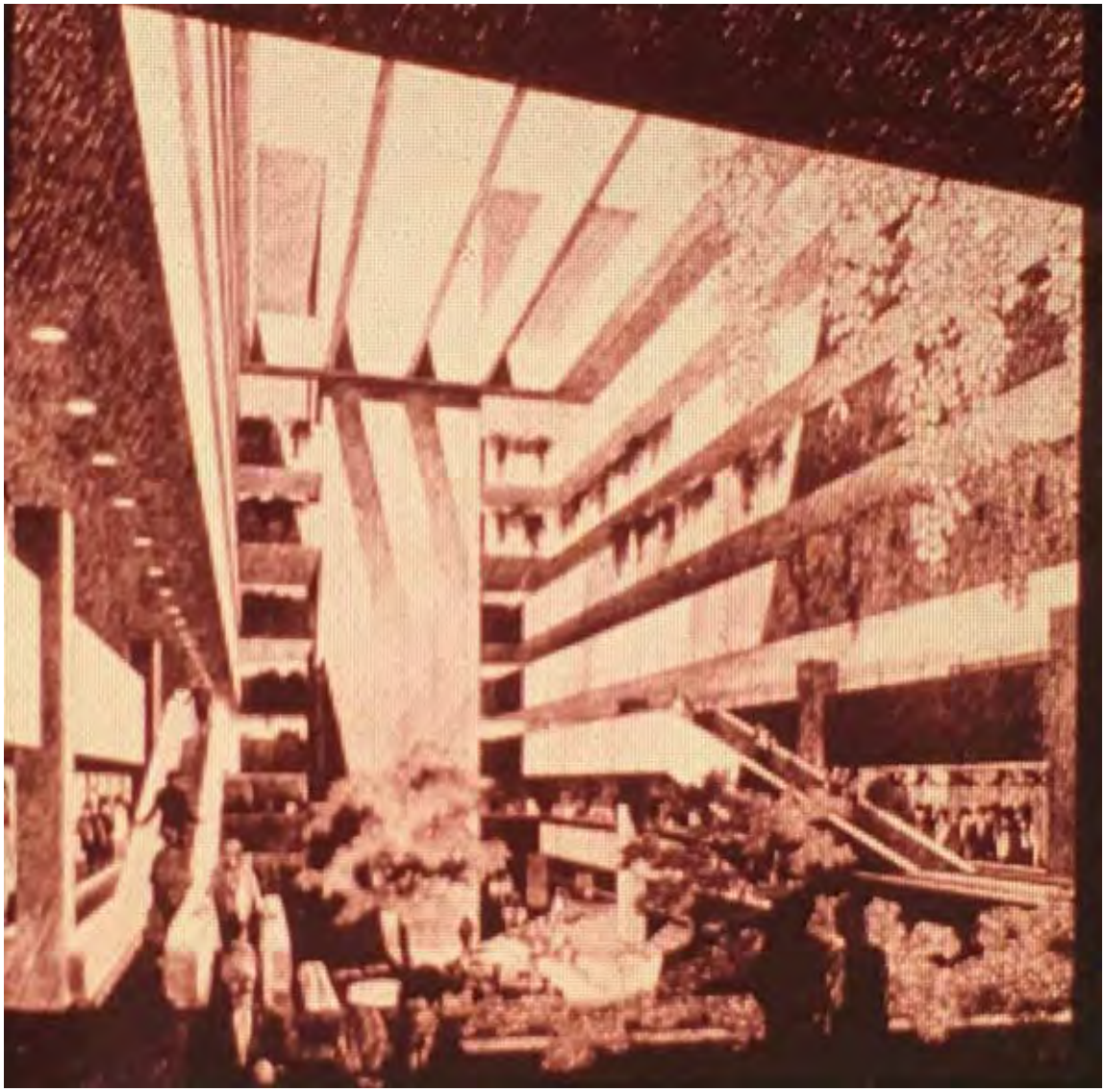


Figure 28: Rendering of Atrium at Citicorp market building, Hugh Stubbins Associates; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

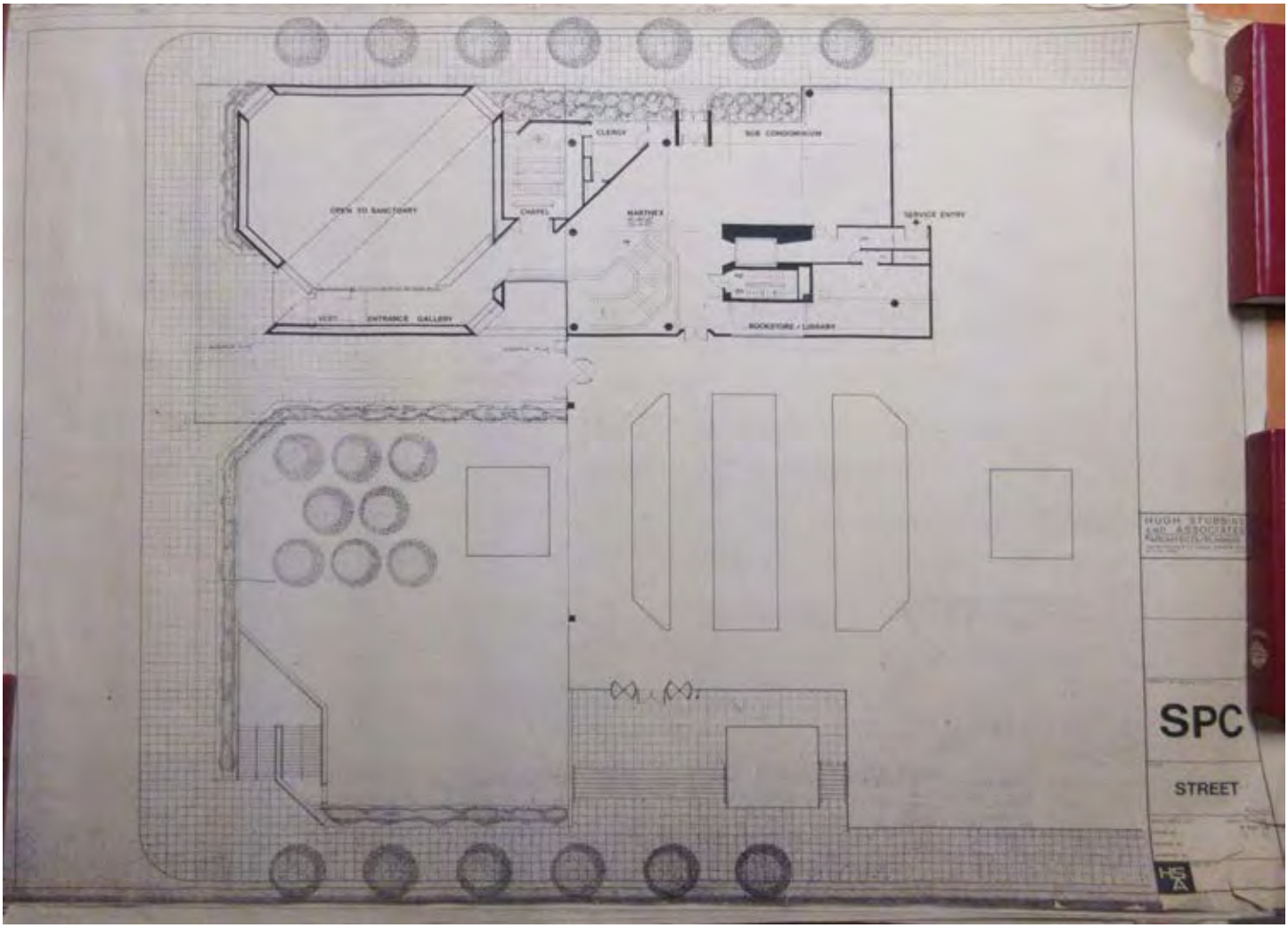


Figure 29: Granite Scheme, Street Level Plan, Hugh Stubbins Associates, May 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

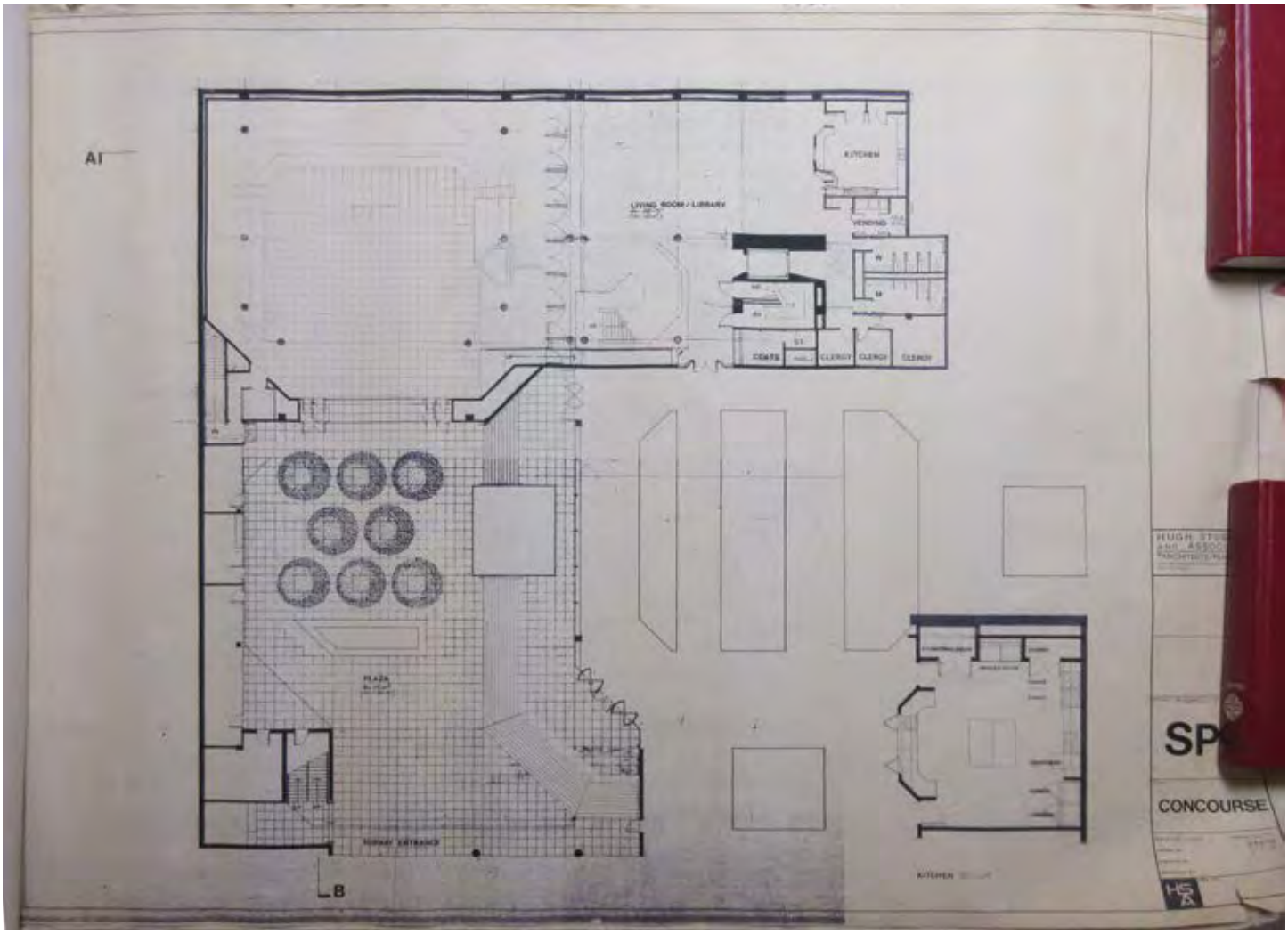


Figure 30: Granite Scheme, Plaza Level Plan, Hugh Stubbins Associates, May 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

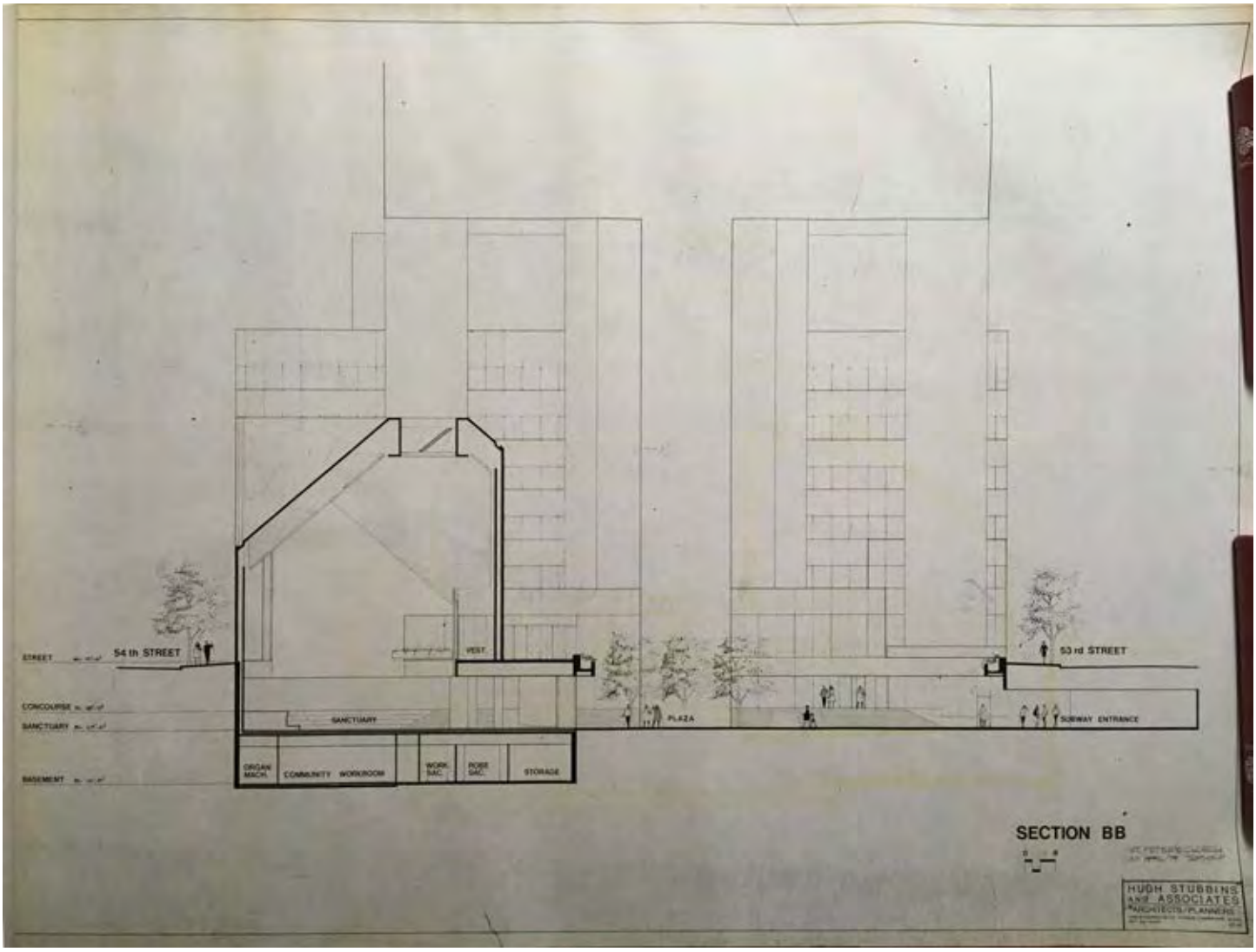


Figure 31: Granite Scheme, Section facing east, Hugh Stubbins Associates, May 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

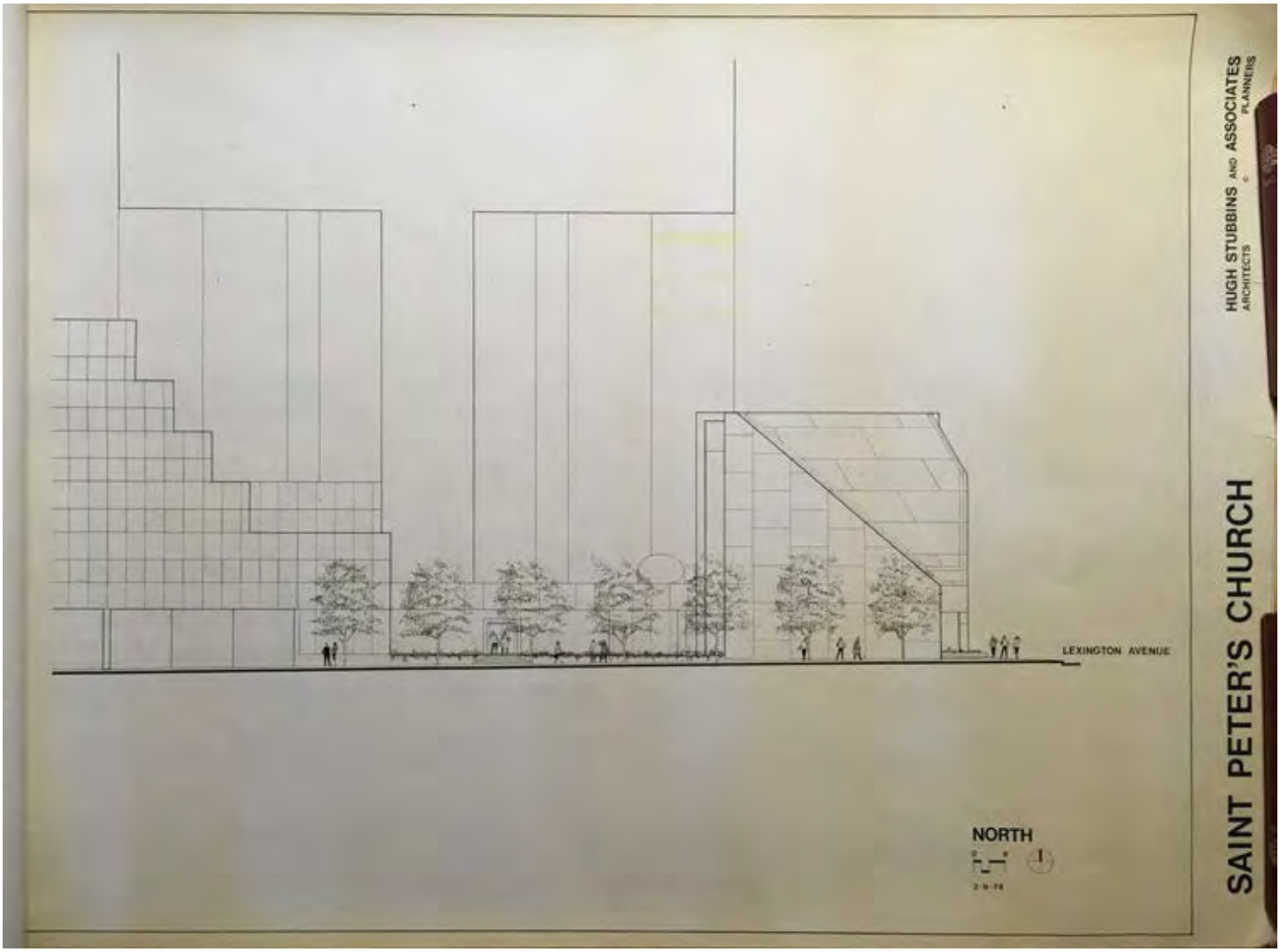


Figure 32: Granite Scheme, 54th Street Elevation, Hugh Stubbins Associates, 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

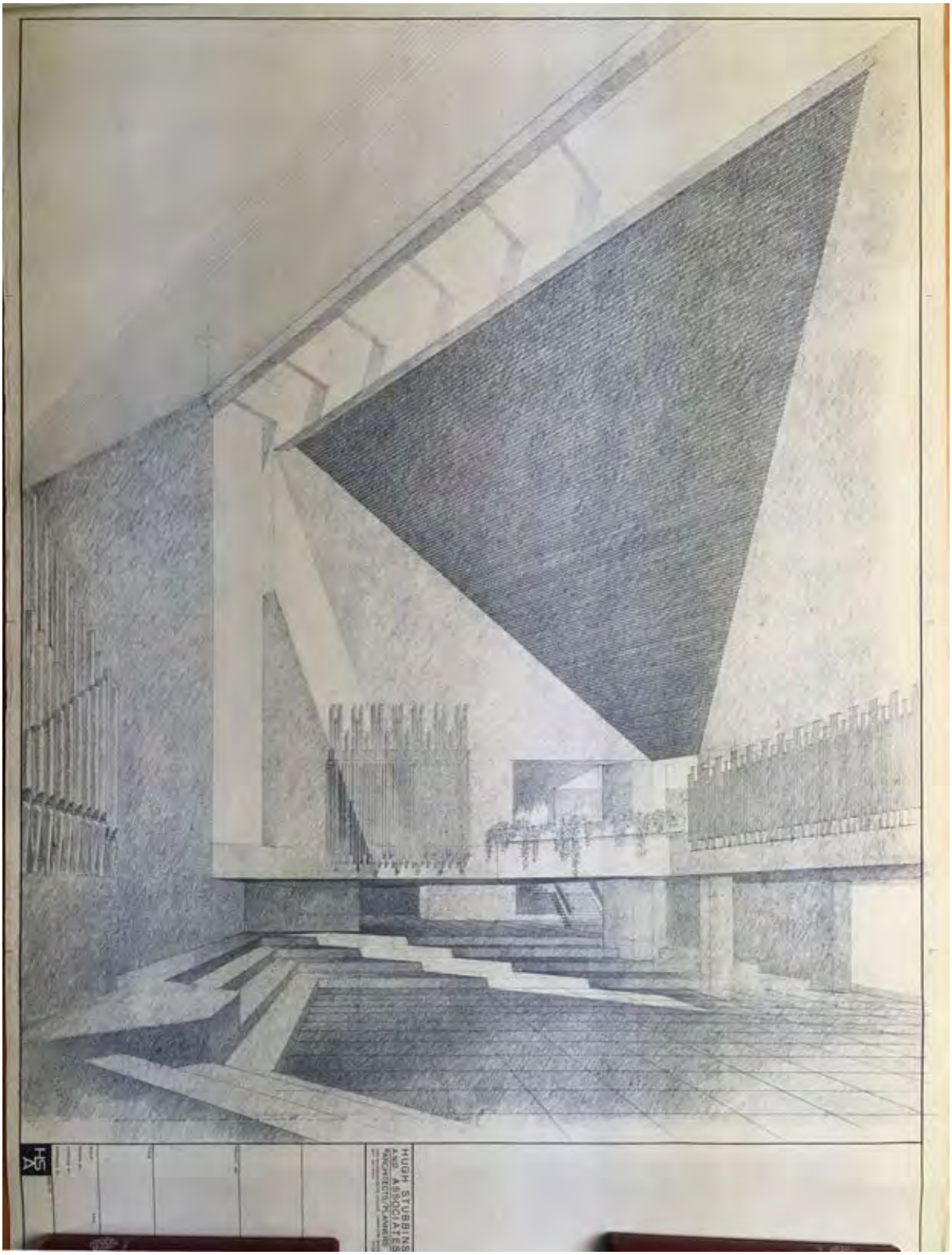
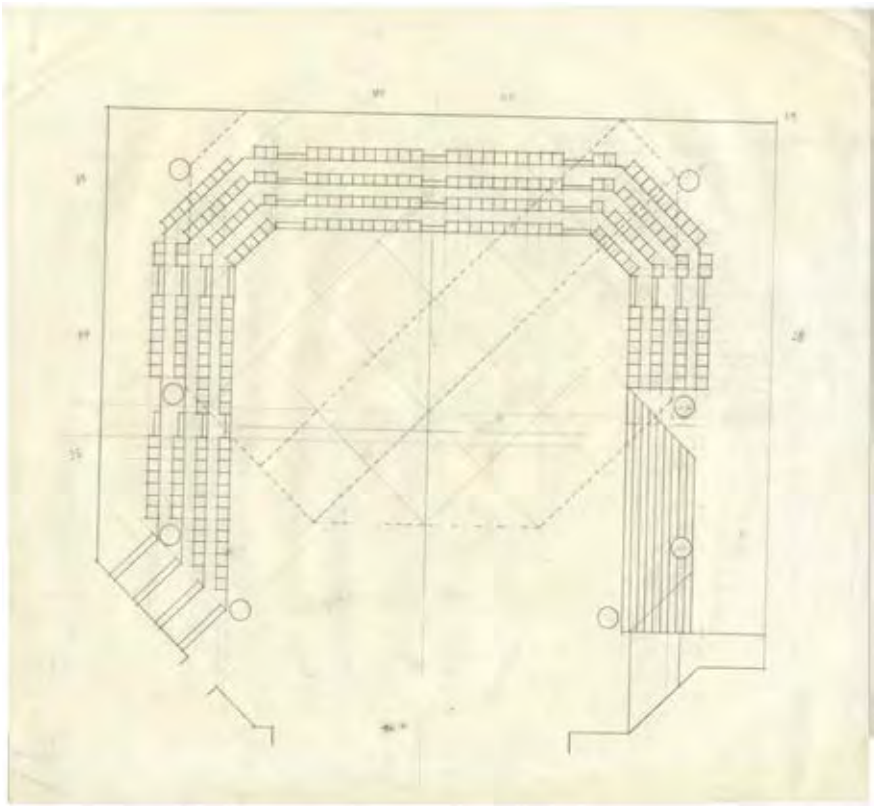


Figure 33: Granite Scheme, Rendering of Sanctuary, Hugh Stubbins Associates, 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive



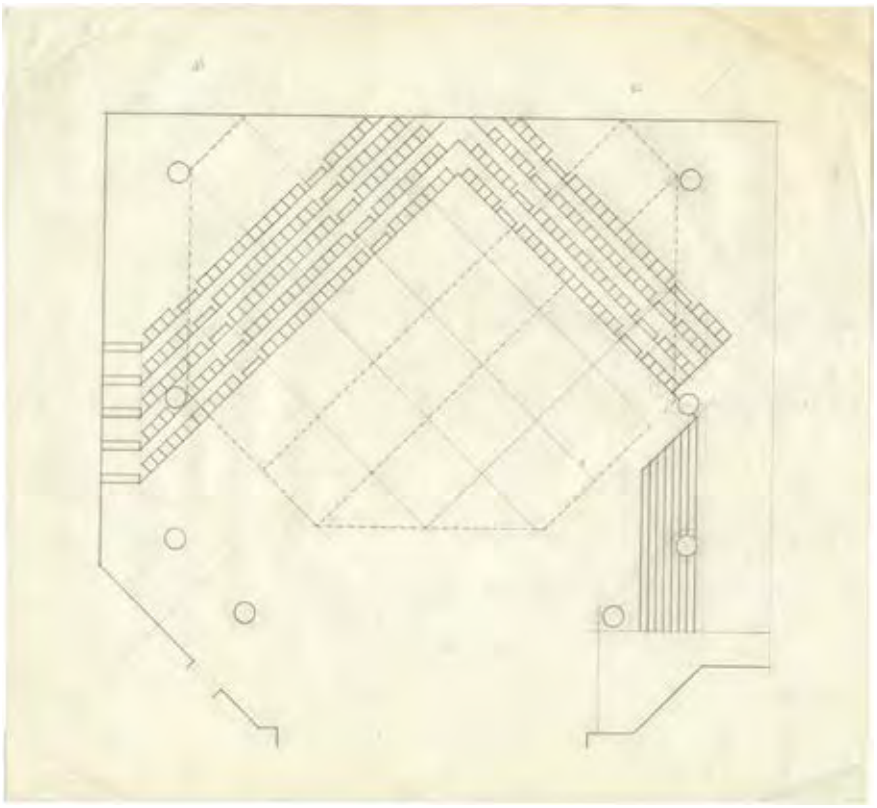


Figure 34: Original Stubbins Sanctuary orientation (top) and Vignelli reorientation (bottom) with grid overlaid; source: Vignelli Center Archive

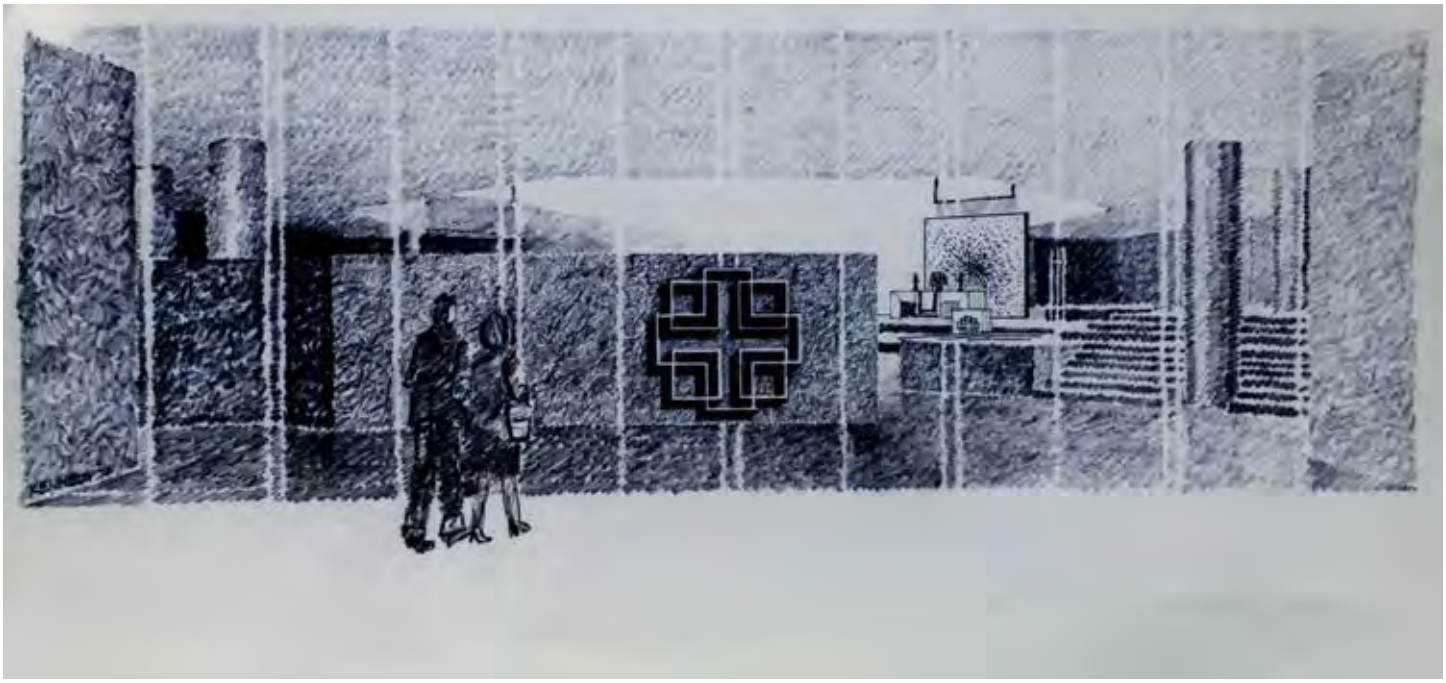


Figure 35: Rendering of plaza entrance, Vignelli Associates; source: Vignelli Center Archive

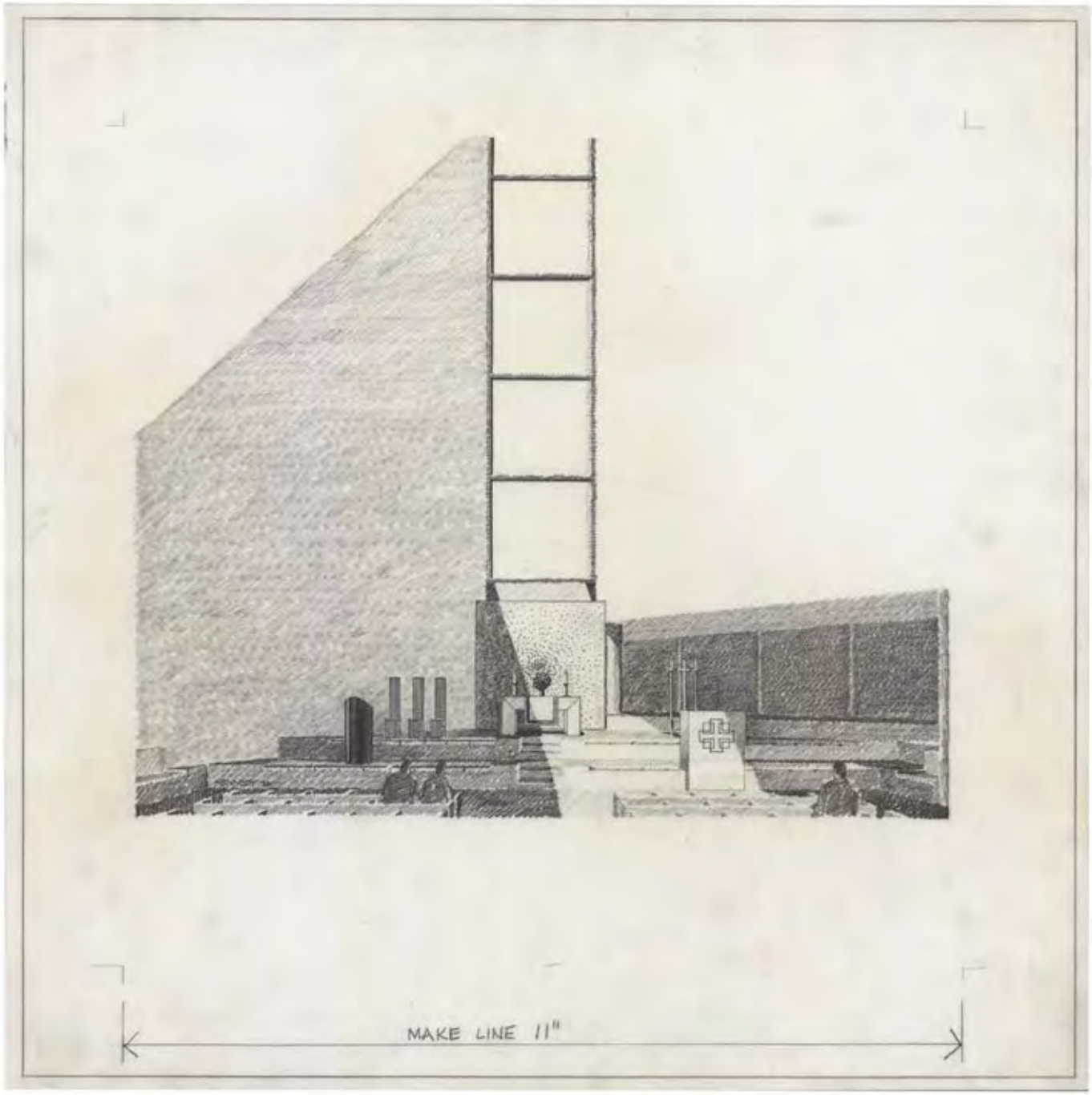


Figure 36: Rendering of Sanctuary facing northeast, Vignelli Associates; source: Vignelli Center Archive

Figure 37: Rendering of Sanctuary facing east, Vignelli Associates; source: Vignelli Center Archive

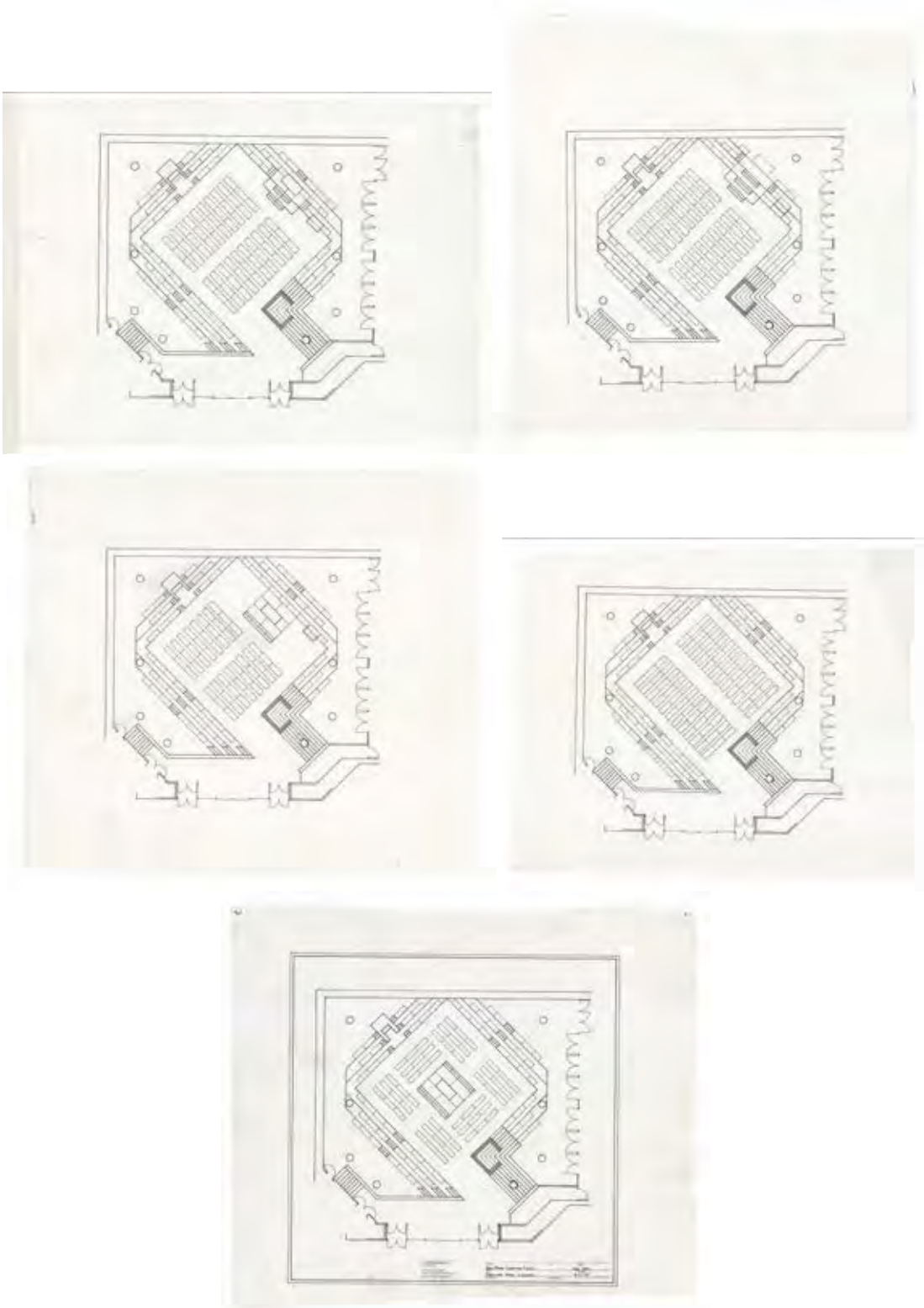


Figure 38: Sanctuary furniture arrangements, Vignelli Associates; source: Vignelli Center Archives

Figure 39: Pew cushion studies, Vignelli Associates; source: Vignelli Center Archives

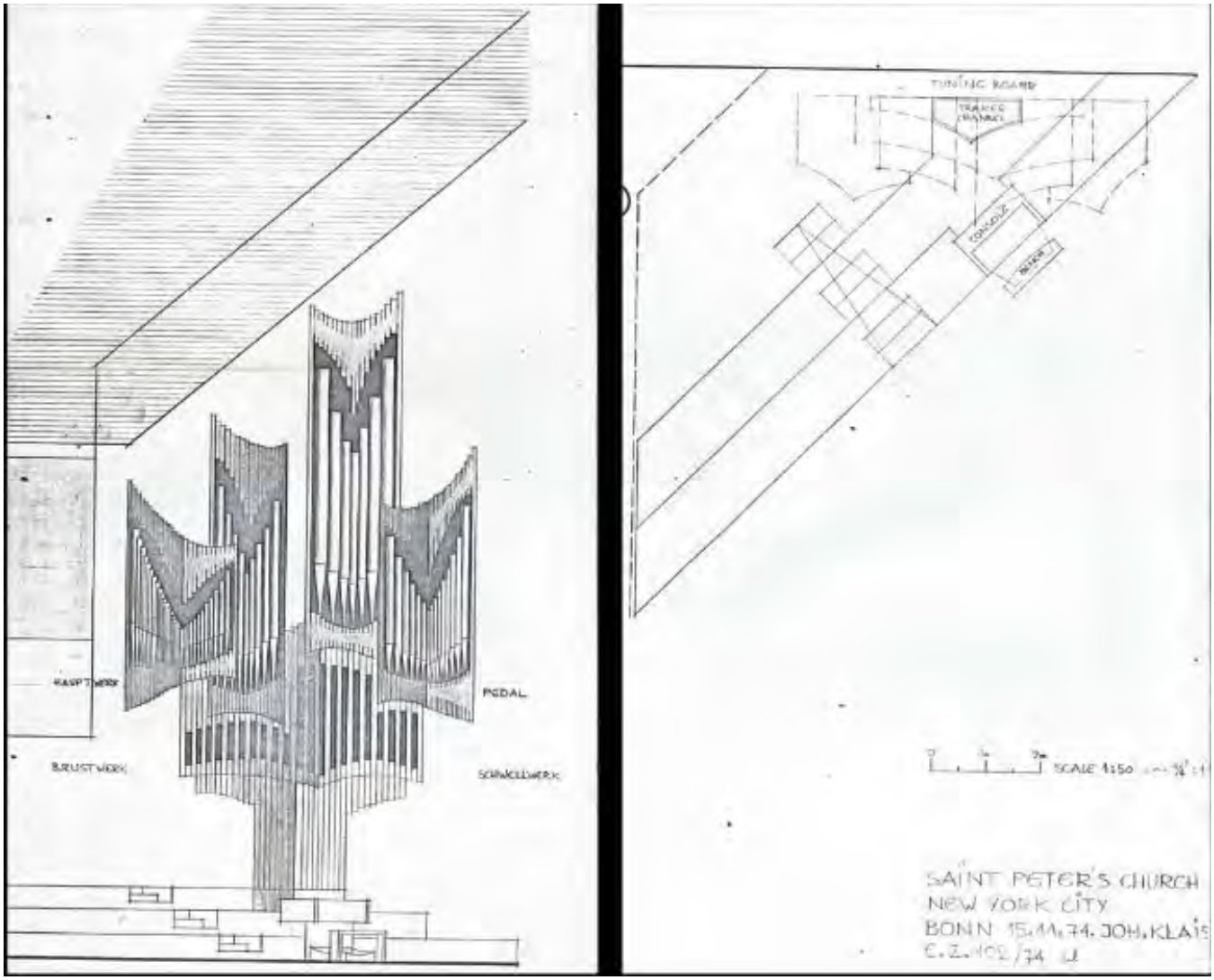


Figure 40: Proposed organ design, Klais Orgelblau, 1974; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

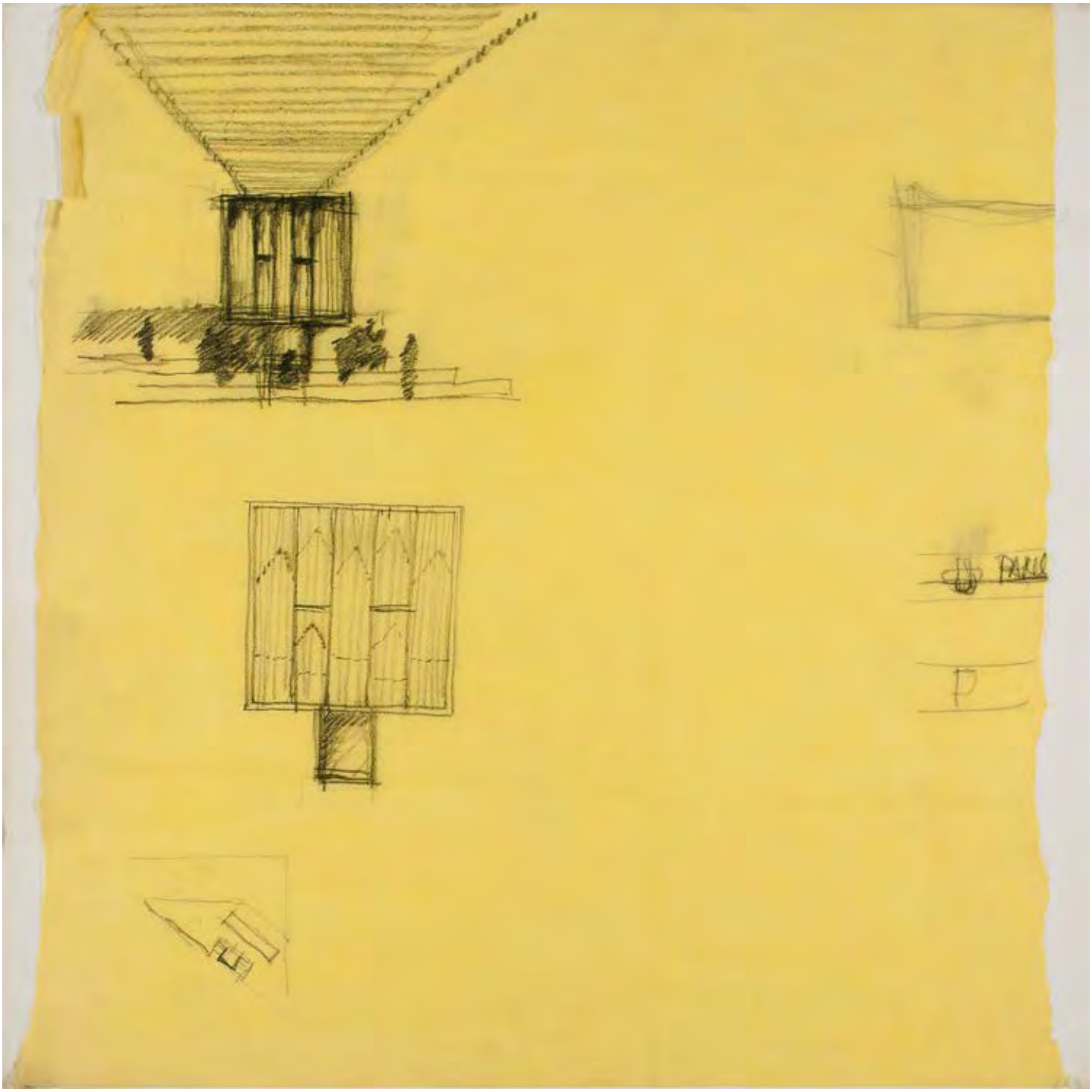


Figure 41: Sketch for Klais organ, Massimo Vignelli; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

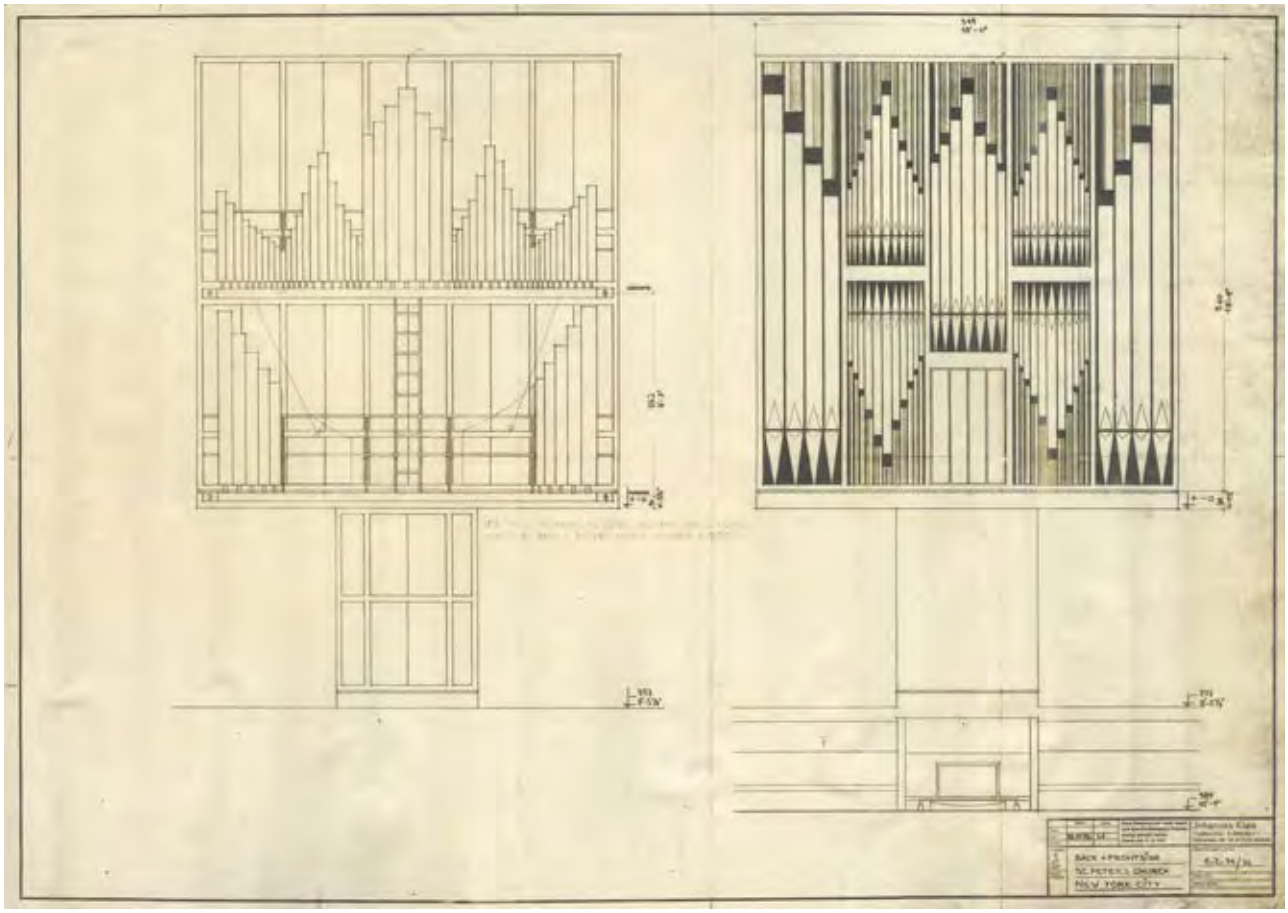
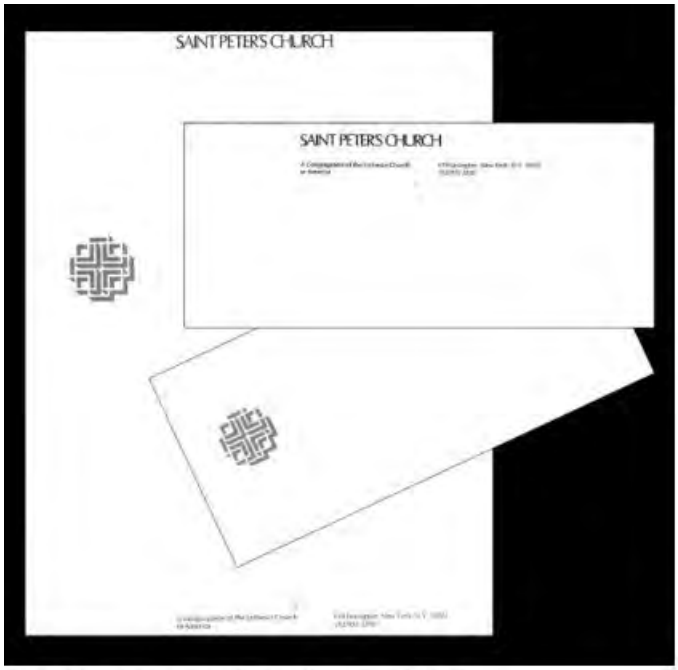


Figure 42: Organ elevations, Klais Orgelblau, 1975; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

Figure 43: Rev. Ralph Peterson in front of organ during installation, photo by Jack Manning for the New York Times, 1977; source: St. Peter's Church Archive



Letterhead and envelope (front and back)

Consecration and dedication invitations, print on vellum

Figure 44: Stationery and invitations using St. Peter's Church graphic program; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 45: San Lorenzo silverware, 1977; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

Figure 46: Tree of Lights, 1977; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

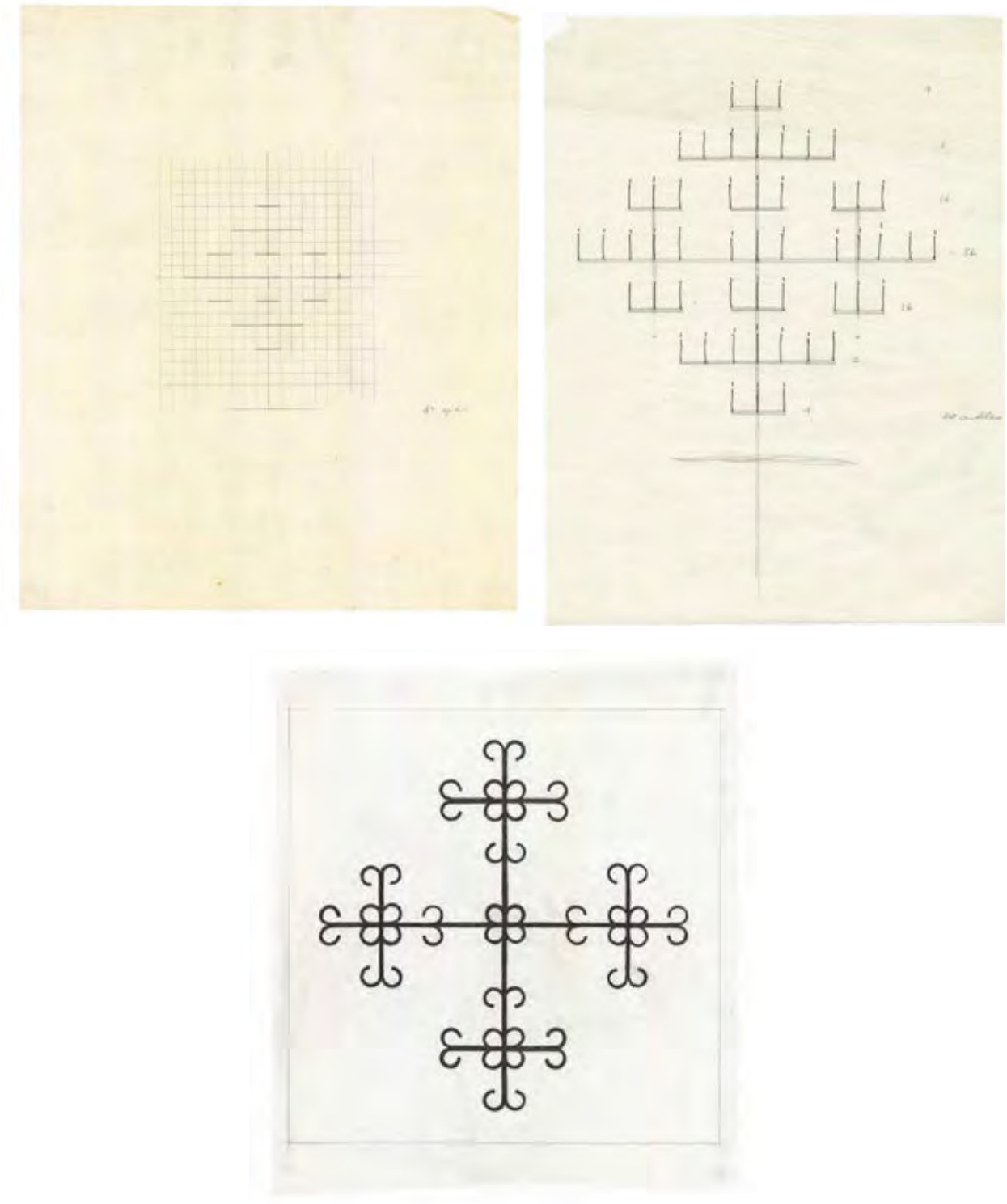


Figure 47: Design drawings for Tree of Lights, Vignelli Associates; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

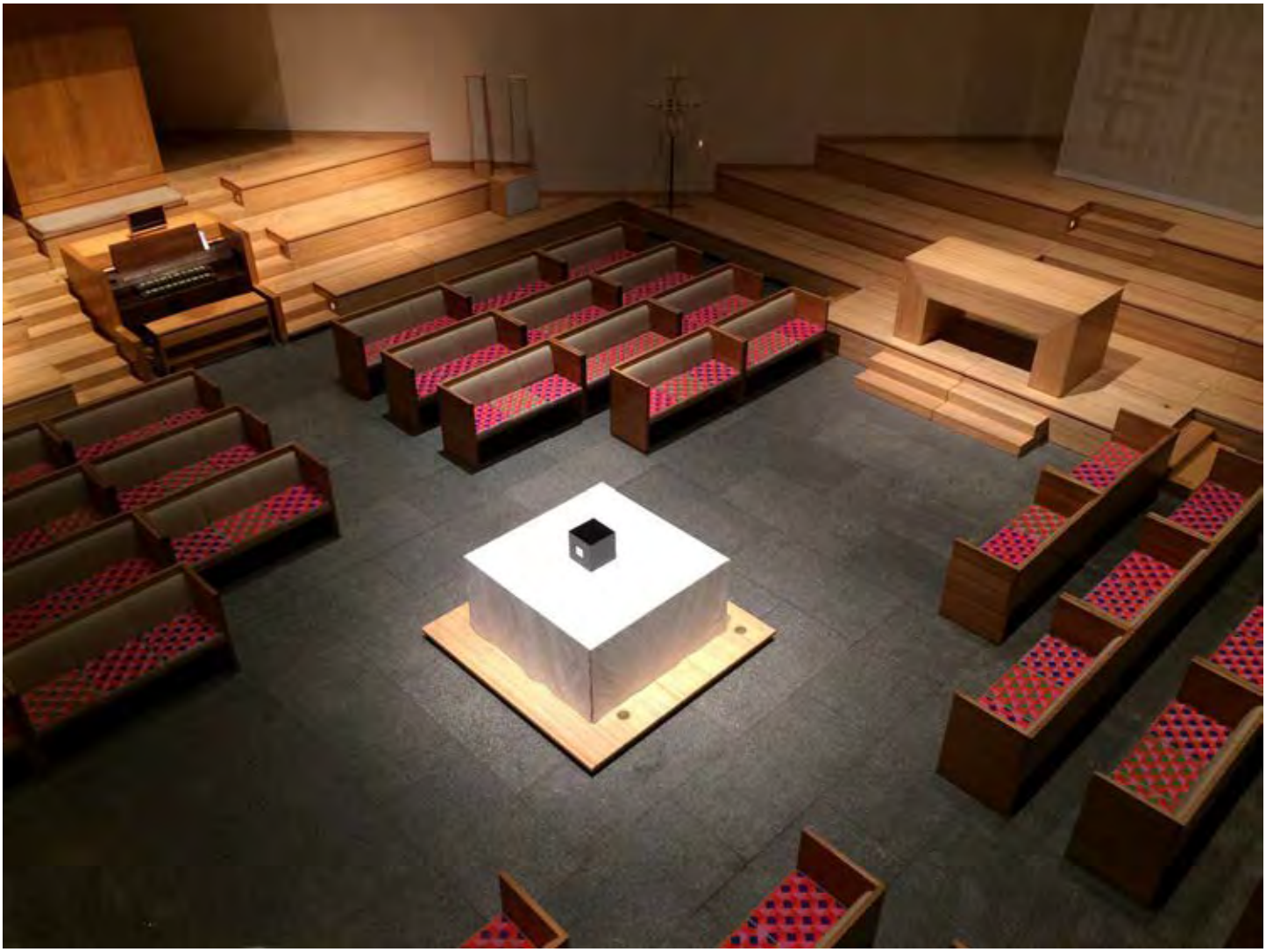


Figure 48: Massimo Vignelli's memorial service, photo by Anne Ghory Goodman, 2013; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 49: Lella Vignelli's memorial service, photo by Roger Remington, 2016; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

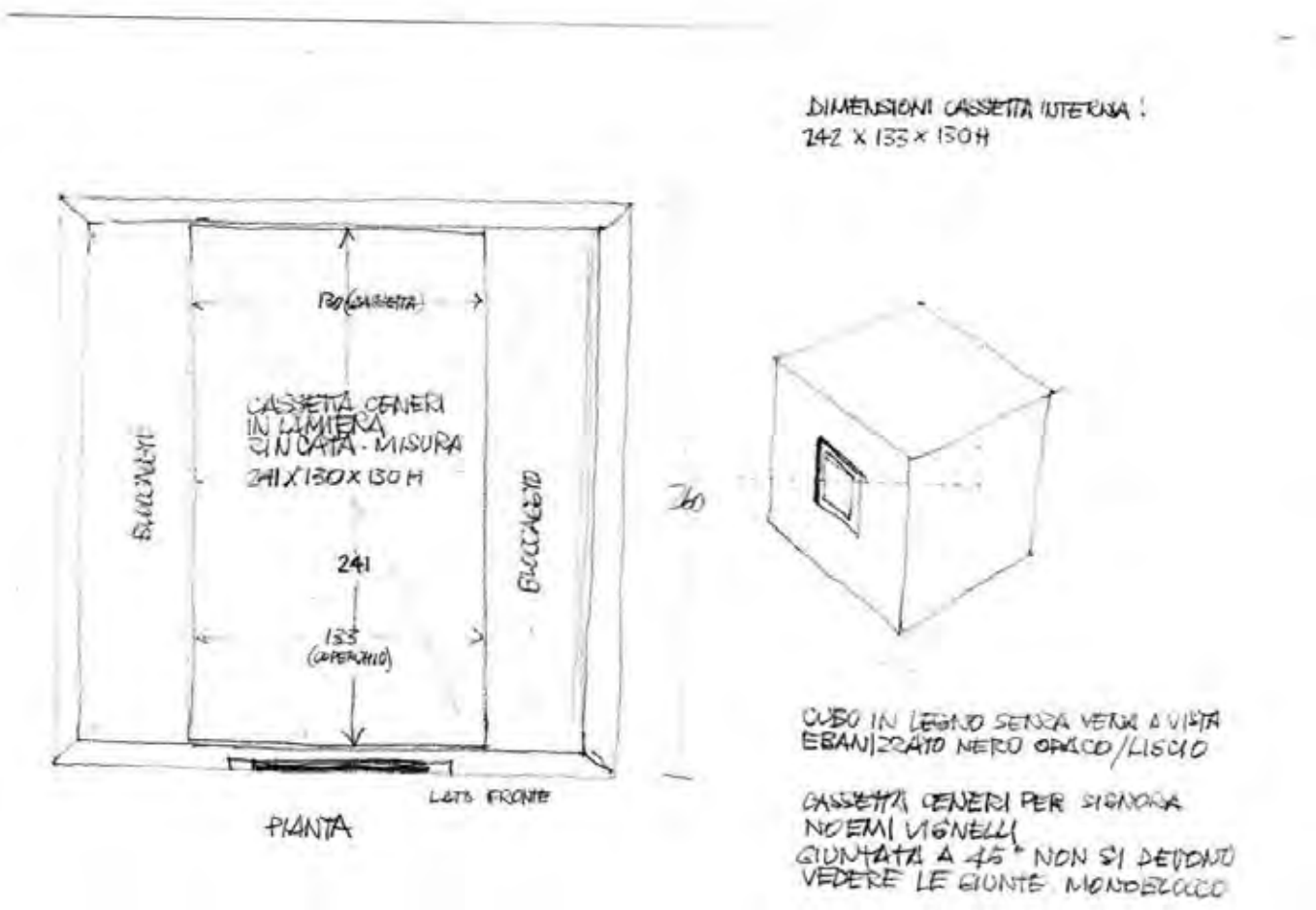


Figure 50: Drawings for Vignelli urn; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

Figure 51: St. Peter's Church opening, December 14, 1977; source: Vignelli Design Center Archive

Figure 52: Citicorp Center, photo by Norman McGrath, 1978

Figure 53: Citicorp Center, 1977; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 54: Citicorp Center plaza, 1978

Figure 55: Original location of Arnaldo Pomodoro Cross; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 56: Construction photo during removal of door between the Narthex and the market building; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 57: Rev. Ralph Petrson in Nevelson Chapel wearing Scassi robe, photo by Jack Manning for the New York Times, 1977; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

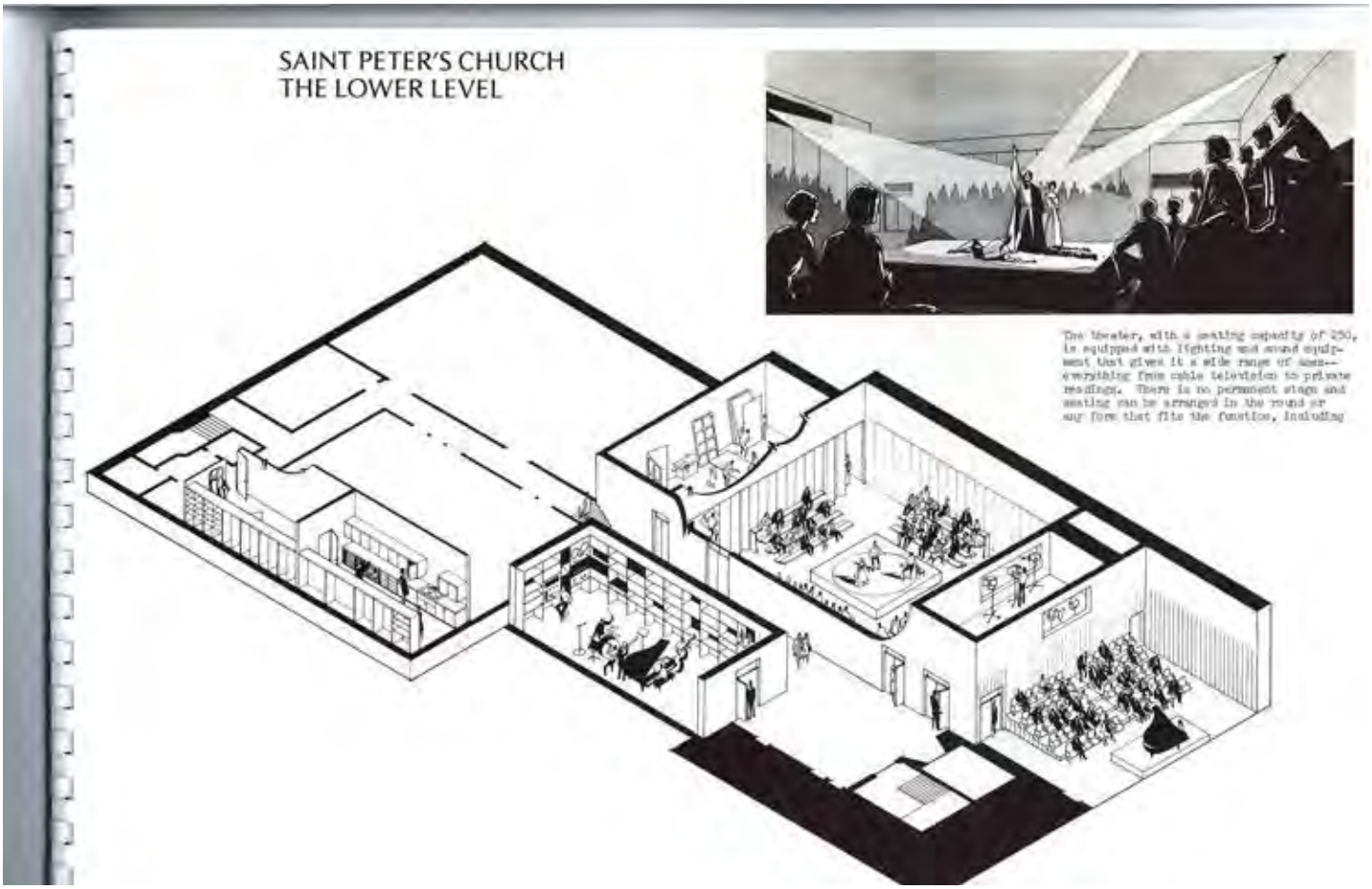


Figure 58: Axonometric view of Lower Level from promotional brochure; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

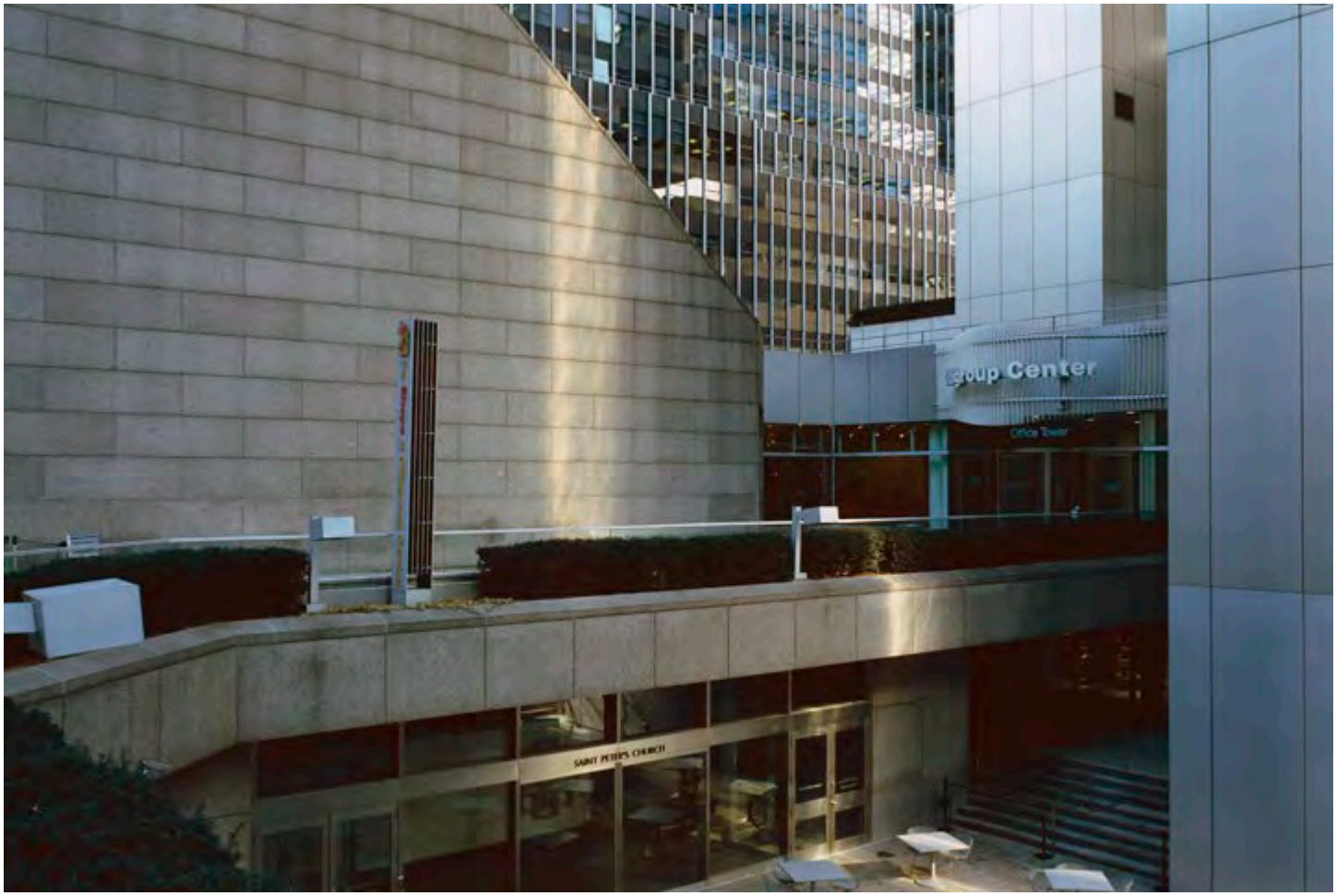


Figure 59: Street level plaza south of St. Peter's Church; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 60: 54th Street Entrance, 2006; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 61: 54th Street Entrance, 2006; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 62: Rev. John Garcia Gensel and Duke Ellington at old St. Peter's; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 63: Billy Taylor and Grady Tate at Jazz Vespers, 1983; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 64: TK Blue and Billy Harper playing at All Nite Soul, photo by Ed Berger, 2011; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 65: Jazz in the Plaza, 2007; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 66: Untitled (Triptych), Willem De Kooning, 1985; source: St. Louise Art Museum, Modern and Contemporary Art Collection

Figure 67: Processional Cross, Kiki Smith, 1992; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 68: Persian Window, Dale Chihuly, 1994; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 69: Ascent, Mark Pilato, 2001; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

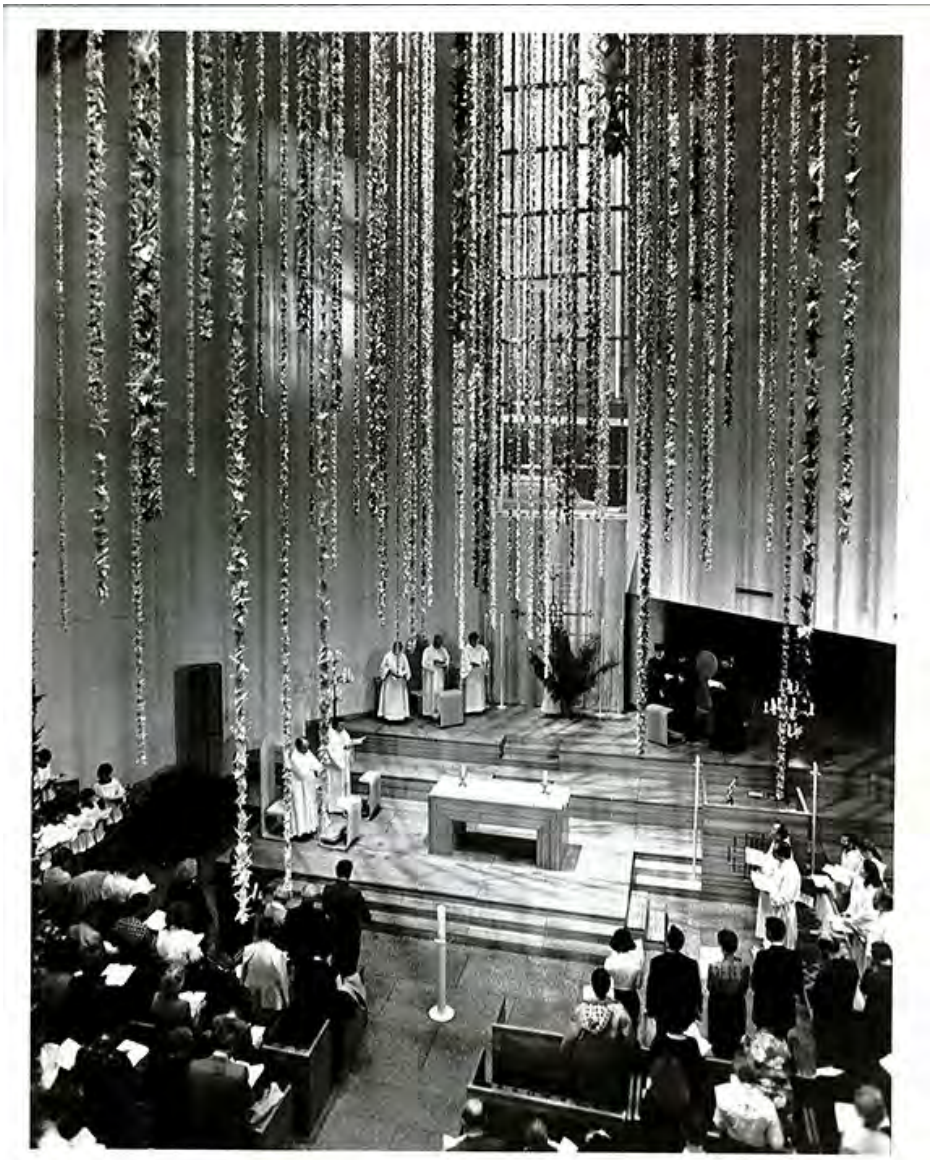


Figure 70: Installation of peace cranes made by school children and presented to the Russian Orthodox communion, 1989; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

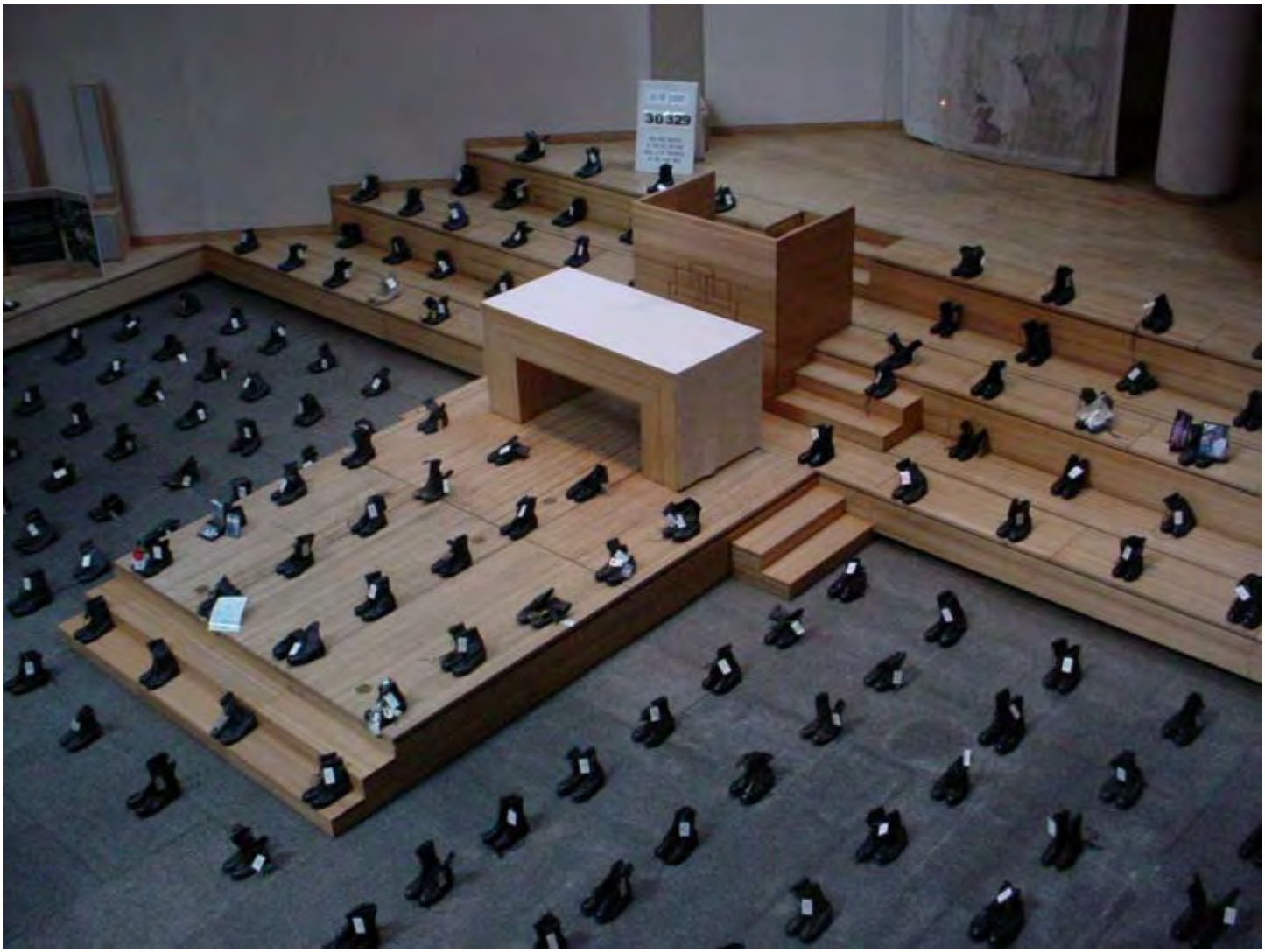


Figure 71: Boots on the Ground Memorial; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Figure 72: Good Friday Liturgy of the Cross service; source: St. Peter's Church Archive

Photo 0001

Photo 0002

Photo 0003

Photo 0004

Photo 0005

Photo 0006

Photo 0007

Photo 0008

Photo 0009

Photo 0010

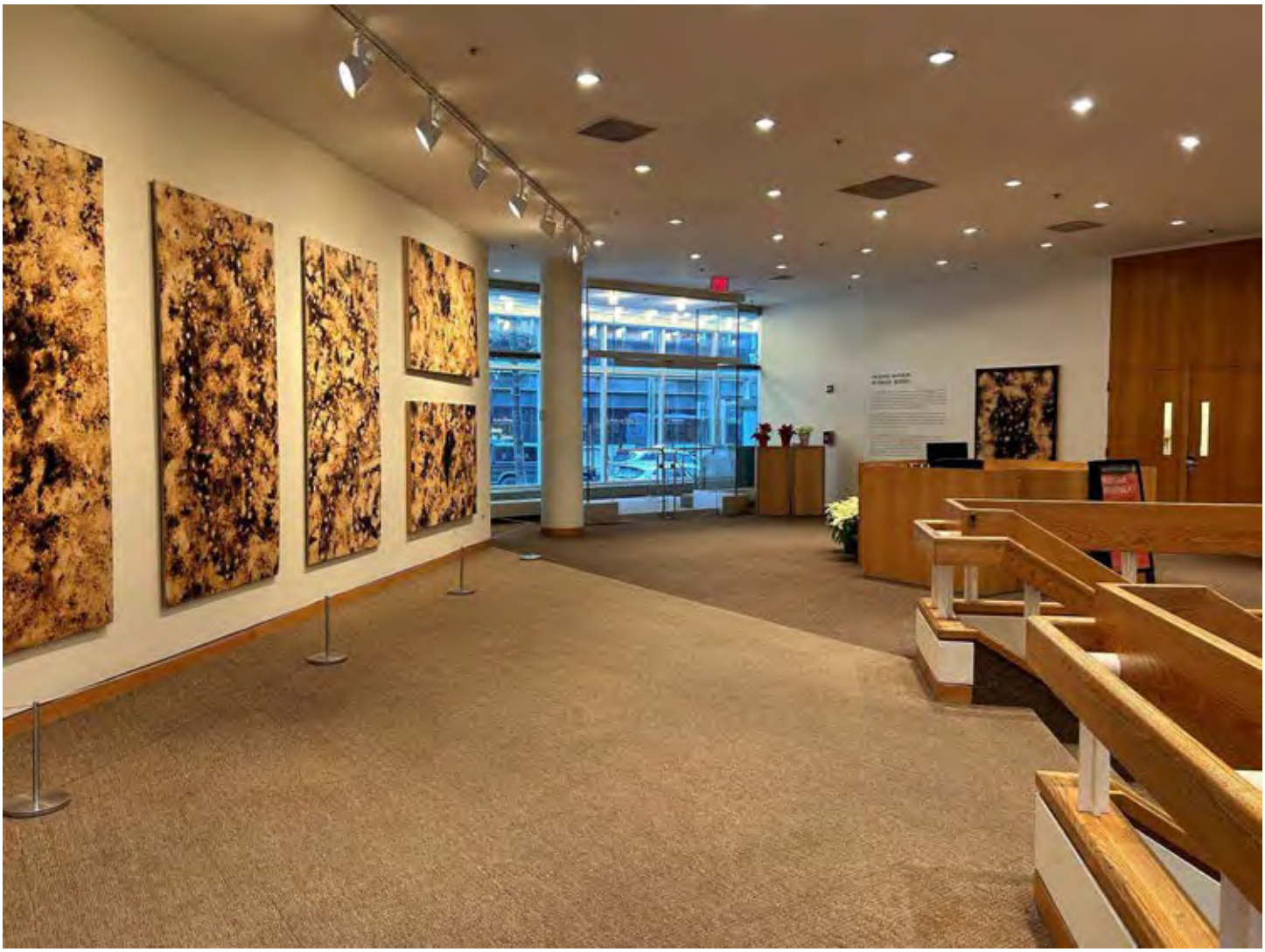


Photo 0011

Photo 0012

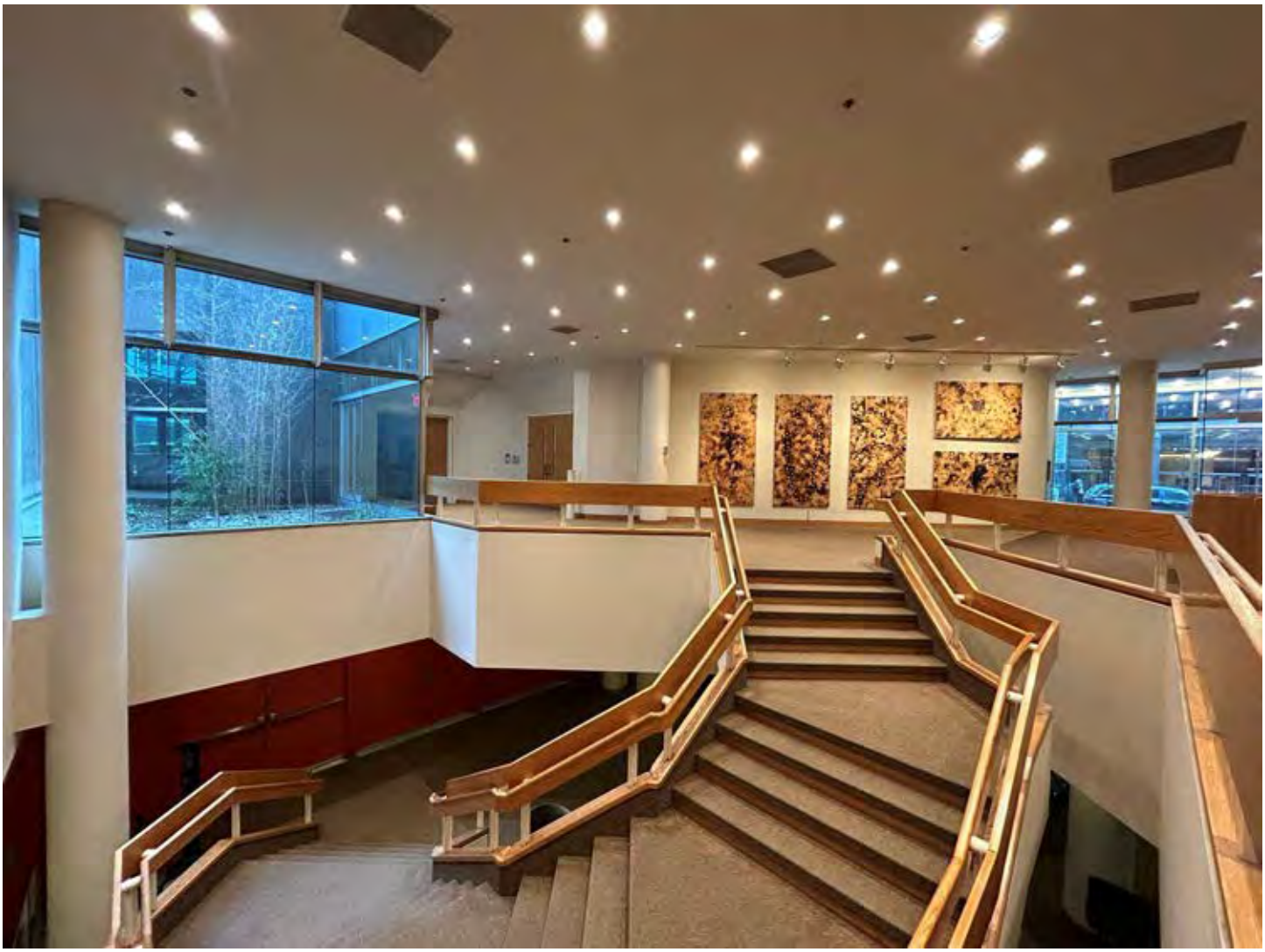


Photo 0013

Photo 0014

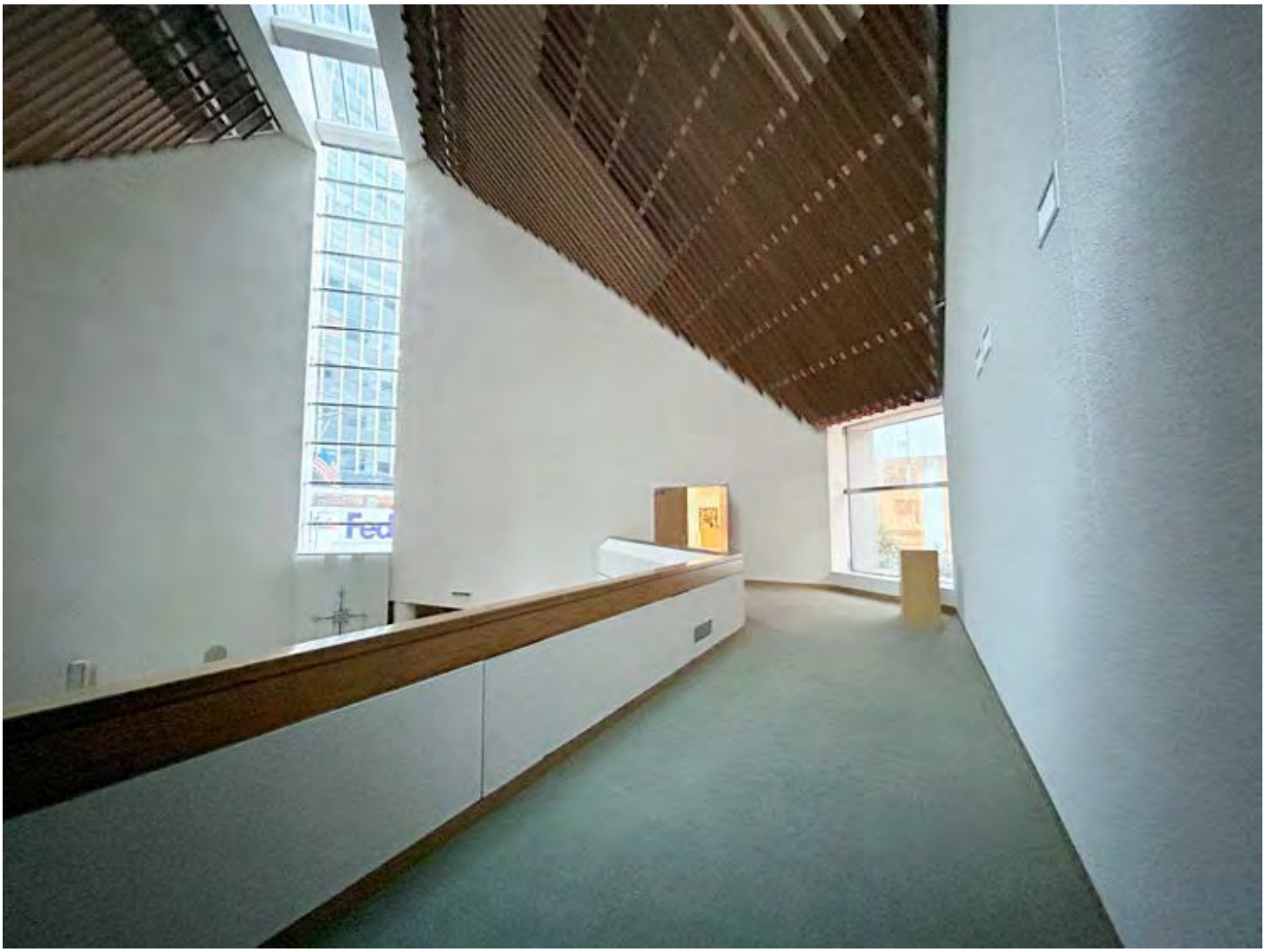


Photo 0015

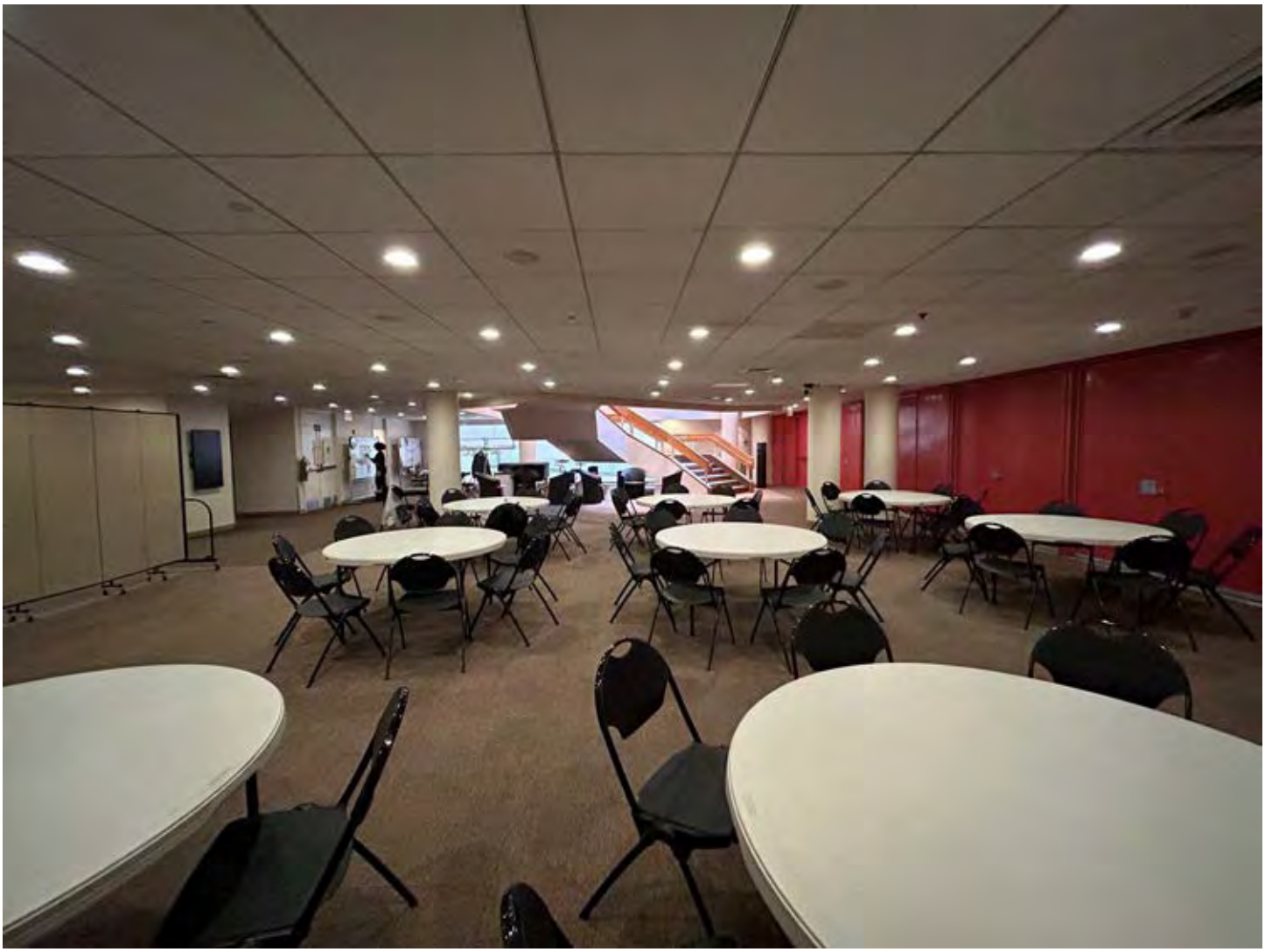


Photo 0016

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Photo 0021

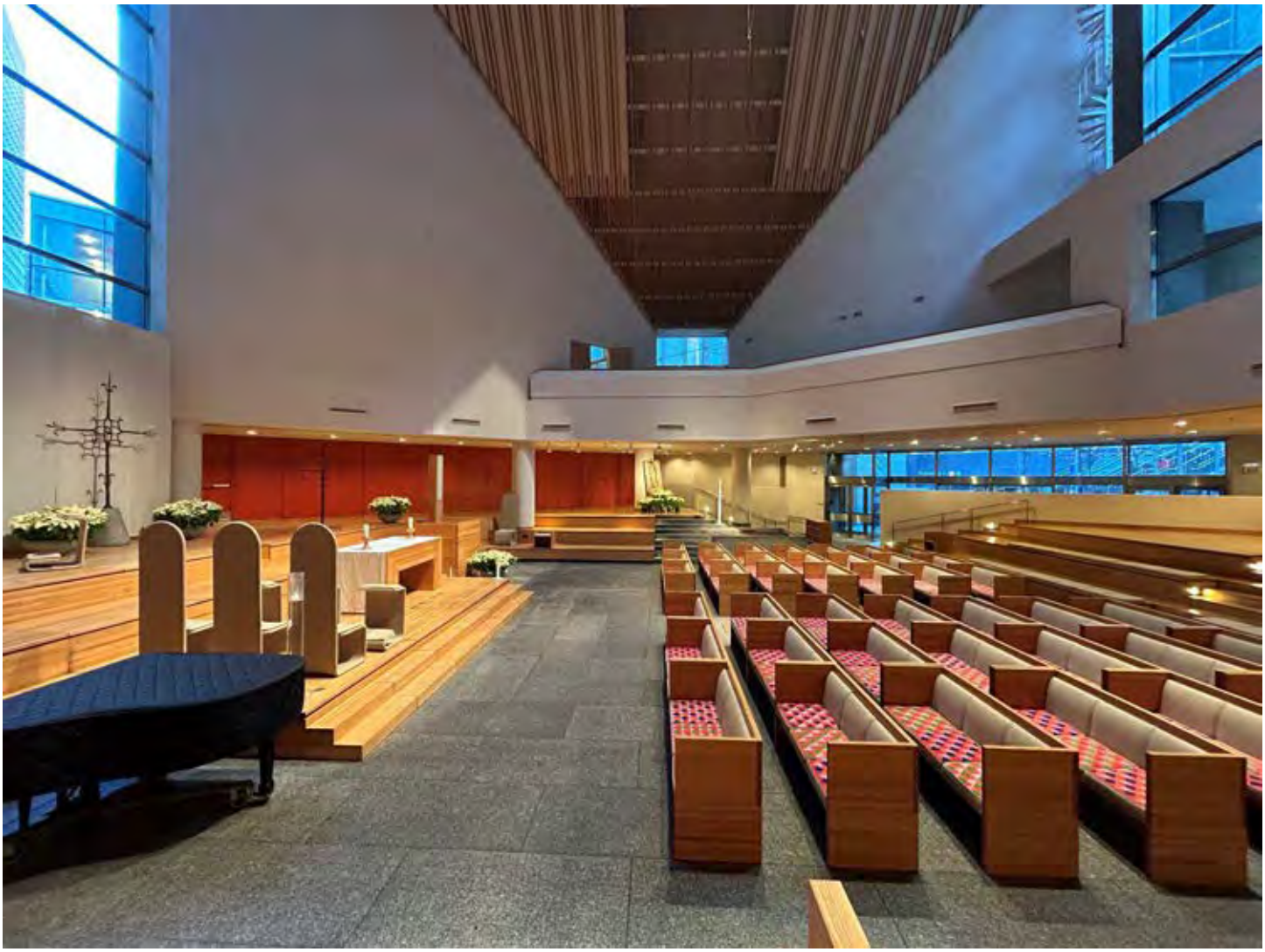

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Photo 0023

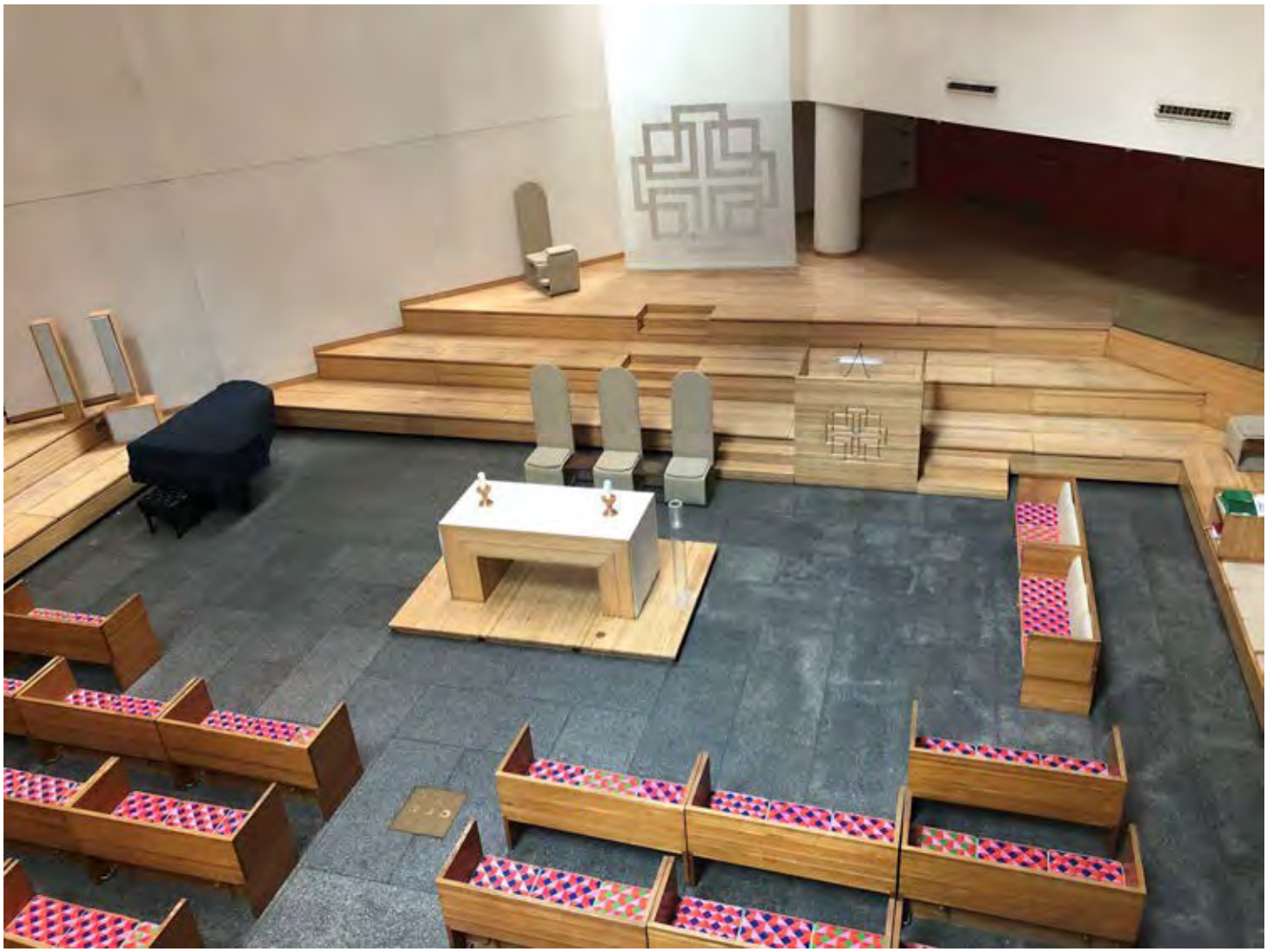

Photo 0024

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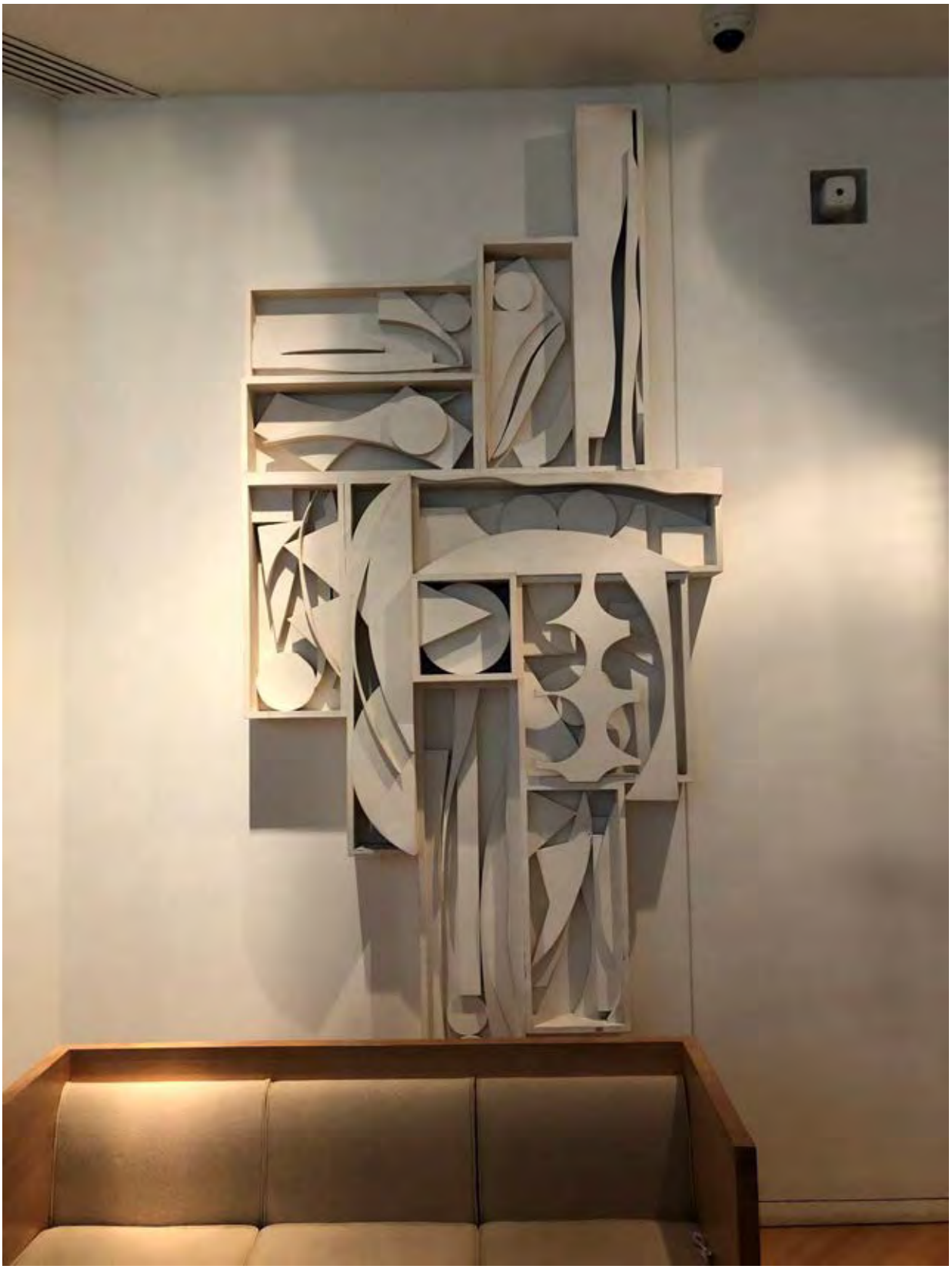

Photo 0041

Photo 0042

Photo 0043

Photo 0044