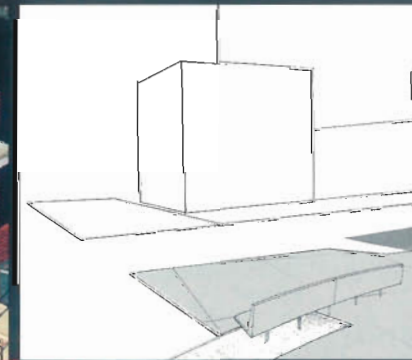
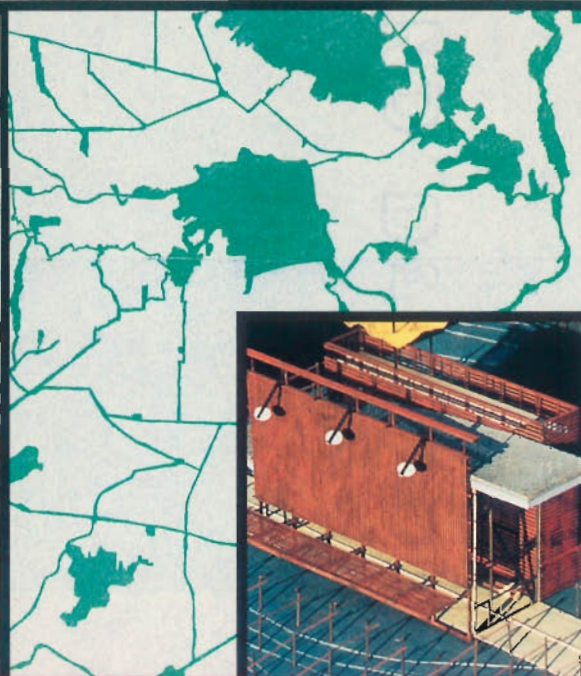
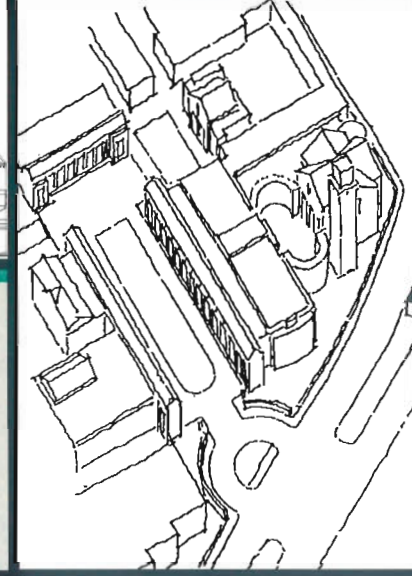
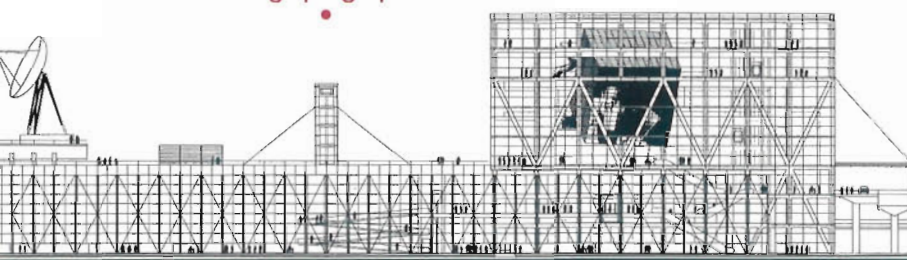
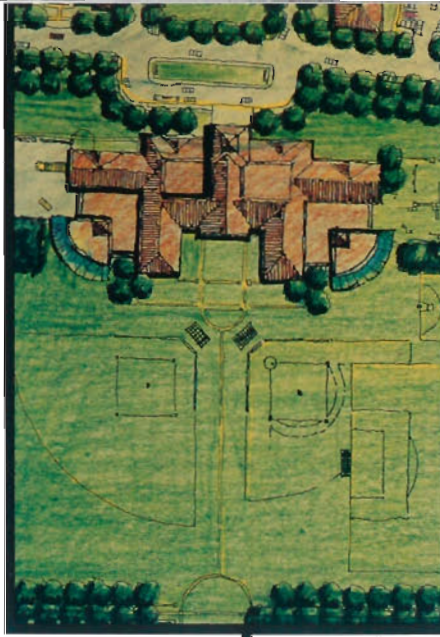


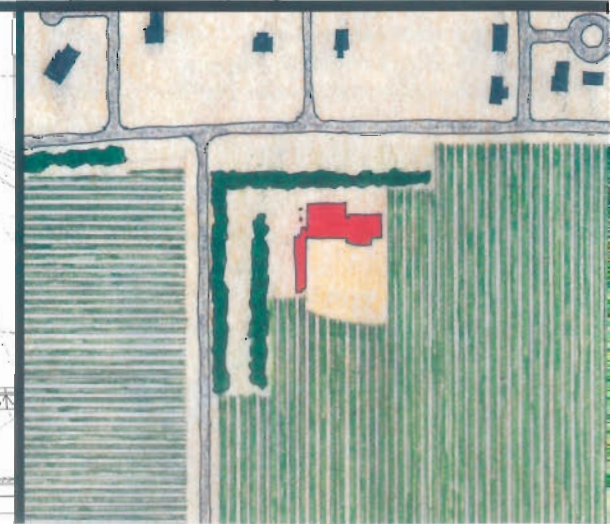
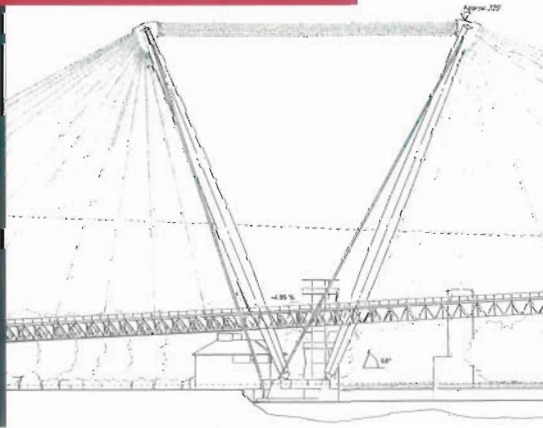
P/A

PROGRESSIVE
ARCHITECTURE

01:94



41st Annual P/A Awards



Citation

Ontario Bible Church

Michael Underhill, David Heymann, and Laura J. Miller, Architects

Project: Ontario Bible Church and BILD Ministry Complex, Ames, Iowa.

Site: a six-acre corner lot in a large cornfield, with working farms to the east and west and tract houses to the north.

Program: sanctuary for 600 with kitchen for conferences and parish gatherings, eight classrooms, library, office and meeting space.

Solution: The site plan and building take cues from the farm buildings typical of Iowa. Like most settlements on the edge of a cornfield, this one will have a hedgerow of trees to buffer the wind on the north and west sides, parallel to the two wings of the church. Gently sloping roofs will cover the sanctuary, classrooms, and offices, arranged to create a protected lawn, which could become a courtyard when the church expands in years to come. In the meantime, the building will be a landmark on the edge of the cornfields, designed in the spirit of Asplund and Aalto – felicitous references, given the large number of parishioners of Scandinavian descent.

The nondenominational evangelical parish considers its communal role as important as liturgical worship. Accordingly, the sanctuary doubles as a hall for seminars and socials. At the congregation's request, the architects looked beyond traditional church types for models to emulate. They focused on the parish's convocational nature, and found design inspiration in the agrarian vernacular.

Construction systems: Given a tight budget, the architects opted for the simplest of structural systems: a rigid steel frame with a manu-



SITE PLAN

N ↑

IOWA LANDSCAPE

Michael Underhill

factured steel wall system and ground-face concrete block. Sunscreen and canopy louvers will be naturally weathered oak; the interior will be finished in concrete block, gypsum board, and maple plywood paneling. In the sanctuary, the south row of columns will be rotated so that the ceiling will seem warped.

Schedule: The land for the church was donated to the parish, which is raising funds for construction. Groundbreaking is a couple of years away.

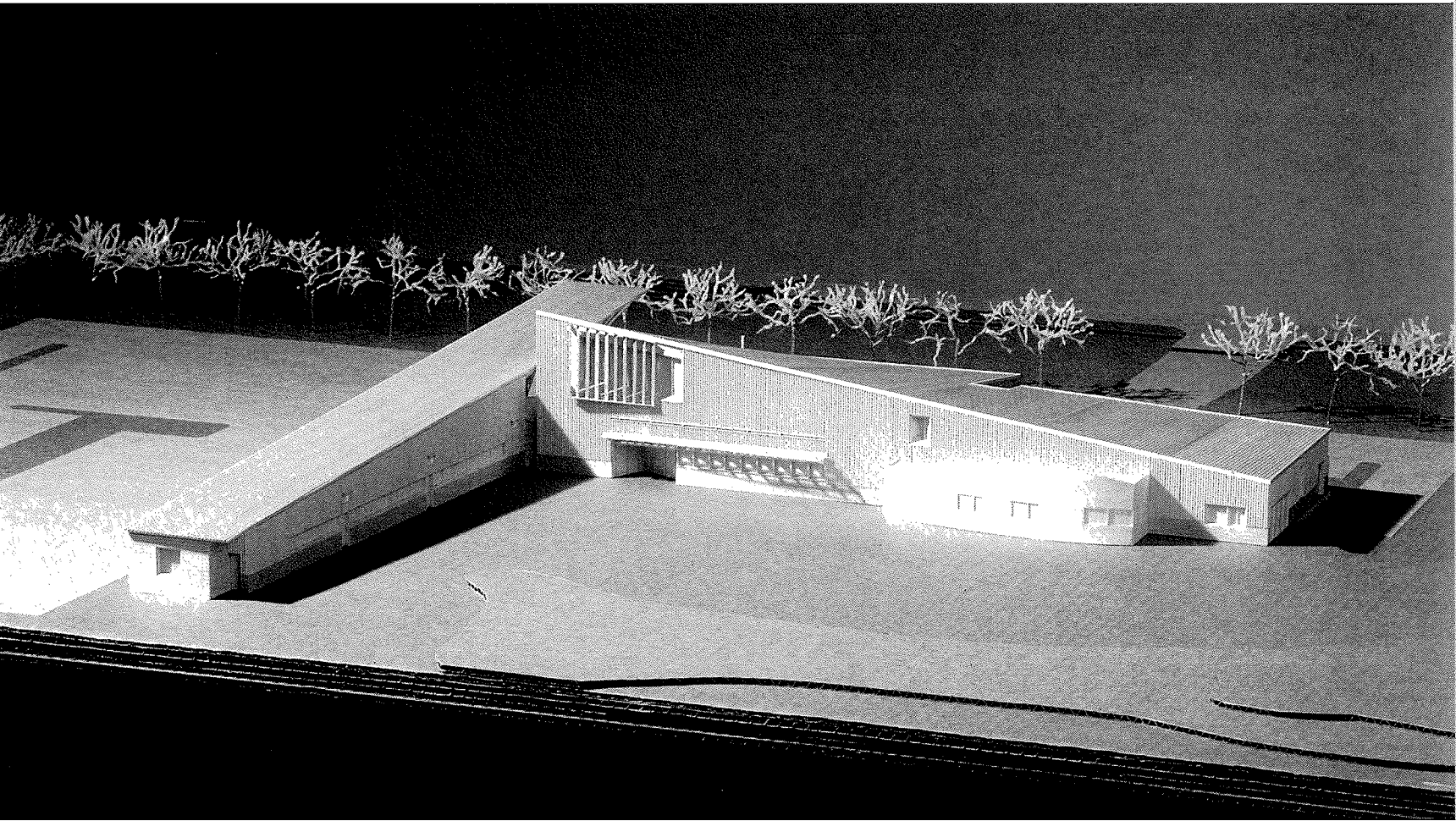
Architects: Michael Underhill, David Heymann, and Laura J. Miller, Architects, Tempe, Arizona (Michael Underhill, designer and principal in charge; David Heymann, designer; Laura J. Miller, designer; Douglas Brimhall and Byron Blattel, assistants).

Clients: Ontario Bible Church Board of Elders and the BILD (Biblical Institute of Leadership Development) International Board of Directors (Don Erickson and Jeff Reed).

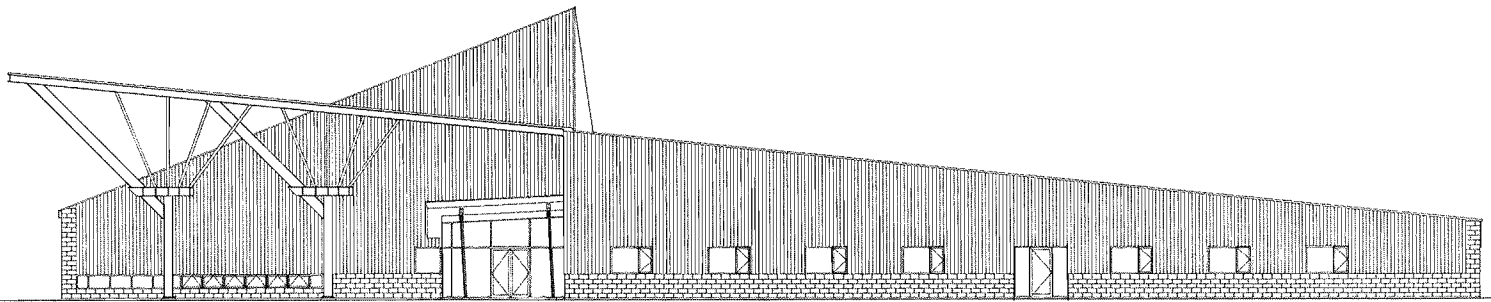
Consultants: James Wilson, P.E., structural engineer; ACI Mechanical

Corporation, mechanical engineers; Clapsaddle-Garber Associates, civil engineers; Stecker-Harmsen, cost estimators; Story Construction, contractor; Varco-Pruden, metal building manufacturer.

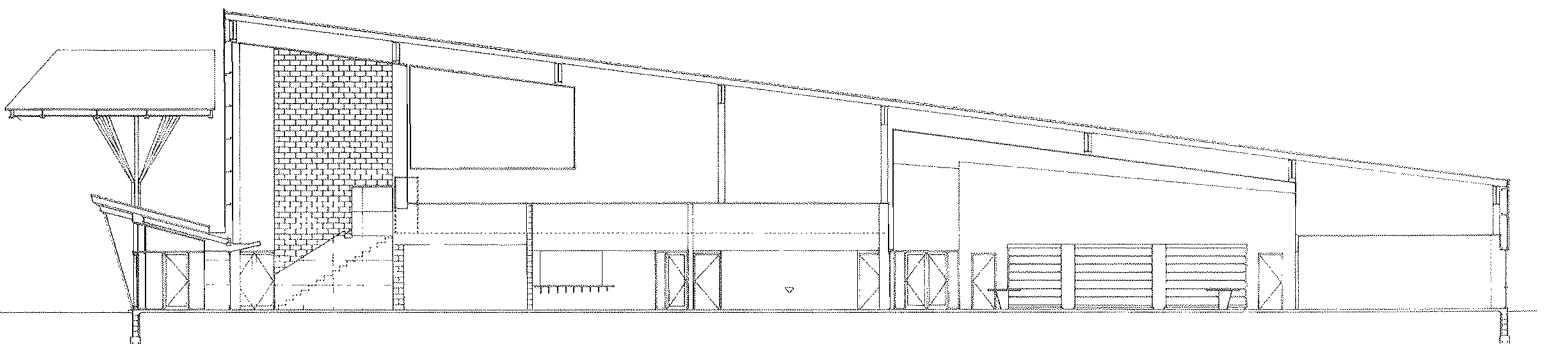
Model photographer: ISU Photo Service.



VIEW OF MODEL FROM THE SOUTHEAST



WEST ELEVATION



SECTION A-A (THROUGH COMMUNITY ROOM AND LIBRARY)

1 20/10mm

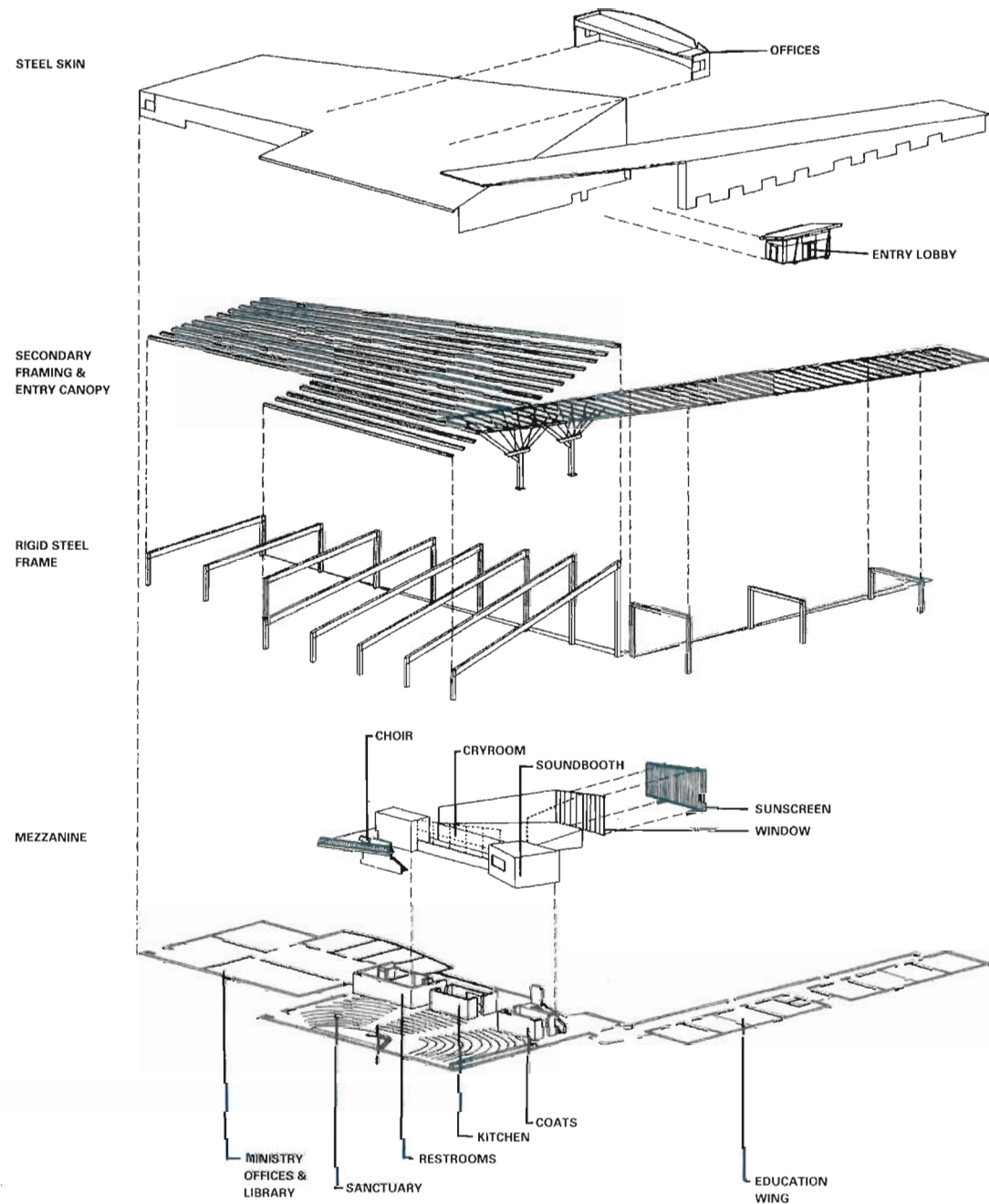
Client Comments

The parishioners were proud to hear the architects praise their utilitarian farm structures, but many were surprised by the design of the church. At first they asked "This isn't going to look like a corn bin, is it?" but they soon grew comfortable with the design. Most consider the complex attractive, unique, and well suited to their three-part program of worship, teaching, and ministry. The neighbors, most of whom don't belong to the church, were invited to comment on the design; their response was surprisingly positive. Like the parishioners, they agree with the architects: the church pays homage to the Modern architecture they have been living with for generations.

Jury Discussion

This year's jury was heartened to cite a good church project, a rarity in the P/A awards program. They were also intrigued by the architects' response to the rural site. William Mitchell said that "This is the corner of a cornfield in Iowa. The scheme does what you do in that kind of context. It makes the windbreak in the right place. It carves out a bit of the corn, quite literally. It makes the space enclosed, just in the hand of the building there." Andres Duany liked the warped roof: "This is a minimal operation that makes it a civic building. It's a very economical move."

Mary McLeod and Christine Killory raised questions about the interior. McLeod said, "We saw no real drawing of the interior. I have trouble with the proportions of the community room and the library, which become both corridors and rooms. In religious buildings you need a real place to gather, not just a linear passage."

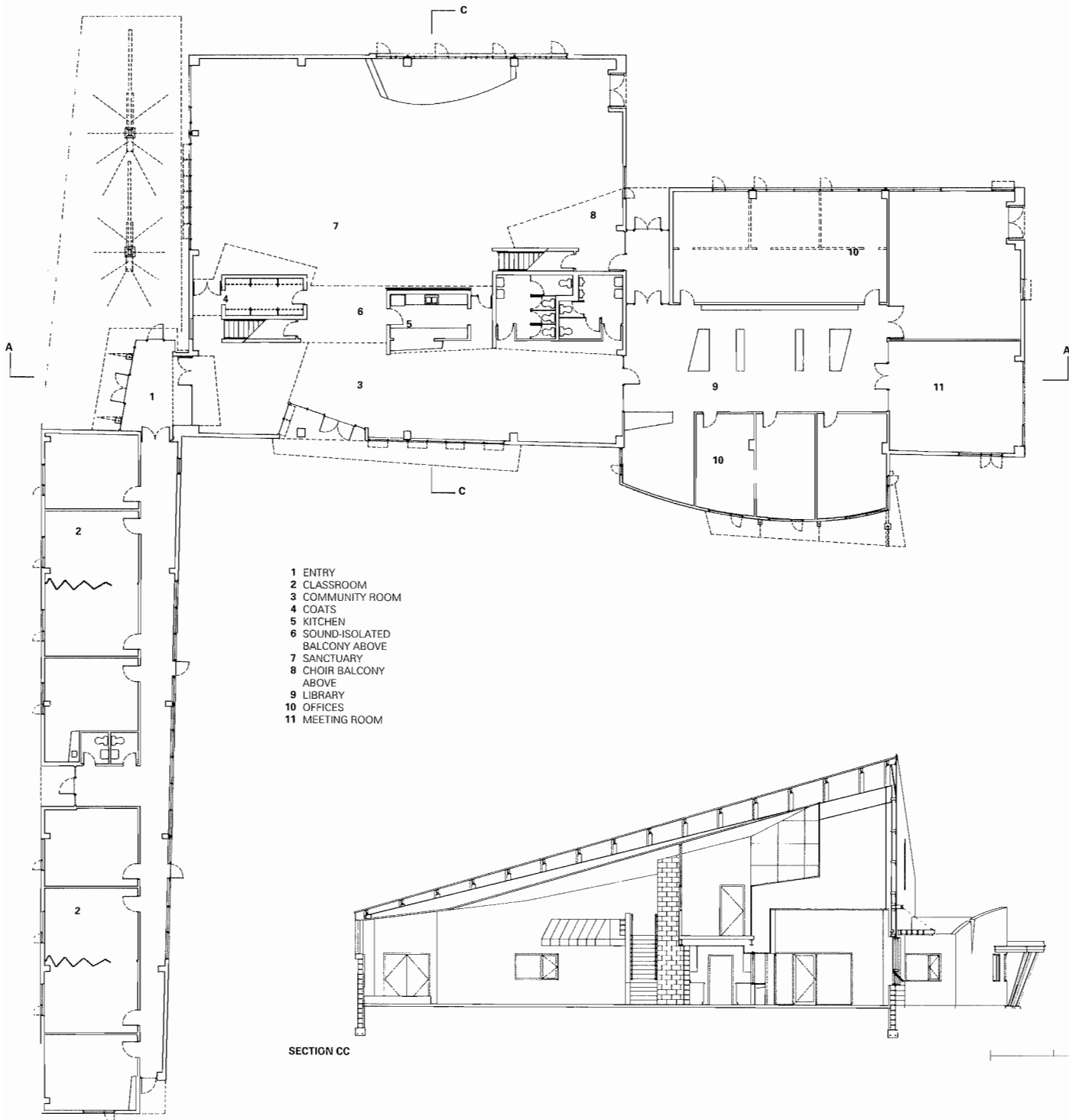


EXPLODED ISOMETRIC OF CHURCH COMPONENTS

Flexibility and the location of the kitchen were points of contention. Sharon Sutton observed, "I feel a very important part for a small church would be a sanctuary that's expandable. There are things that happen on special occasions with a larger crowd than usual, and this doesn't allow for that kind of expandability. Also, putting the kitchen next to the sanctuary is a faux pas that cannot be tolerated; that is where all the noise is going to be. The kitchen

should be with the classrooms." Christine Killory concurred: "The kitchen is in the middle of the building, which seems unnecessary given such a large perimeter." Duany contended that worship is only one use of the sanctuary. "It might be used for all sorts of community gatherings, banquets and so forth, several times a week, in which case the proximity of the kitchen is important." He went on to observe "I like the way this design makes a rural civic build-

ing. There are so few of these. People either give up and just buy a Better building or they do something absurd and vulgar. We need models for rural civic buildings."



- 1 ENTRY
- 2 CLASSROOM
- 3 COMMUNITY ROOM
- 4 COATS
- 5 KITCHEN
- 6 SOUND-ISOLATED BALCONY ABOVE
- 7 SANCTUARY
- 8 CHOIR BALCONY ABOVE
- 9 LIBRARY
- 10 OFFICES
- 11 MEETING ROOM

SECTION CC

20/12m

FLOOR PLAN

N ↑ 20/12m



UNDERHILL



HEYMANN



MILLER

Firm Profile

Michael Underhill, David Heymann, and Laura J. Miller, Architects, Tempe, Arizona. Founded 1987; 5 professionals, 2 registered architects. Precursor firm won Houston Chapter AIA Design Award, 1989.

Michael Underhill, AIA, B.Arch., MIT, 1970; MCPUD, Harvard, 1974; Professor and Director, School of Architecture, Arizona State U.

David Heymann, AIA, B.Arch., Cooper Union, 1984; M.Arch., Harvard, 1988; Assistant Professor, U Texas, Austin.

Laura J. Miller, B.Arch., Iowa State, 1981; M.Arch. Harvard, 1988; Visiting Critic, SCI Arch.

This year the P/A editors decided that a change in the ground rules was in order. We wanted to clarify the competition's purpose and structure, and we wanted to broaden the judging criteria beyond form for form's sake.

41st Annual P/A Awards: A Watershed Year

We invited jurors with a diversity of expertise and interests and explained our revised expectations to both jurors and potential entrants. As we hoped, the selection criteria expanded well beyond the formal considerations that have so dominated discussion in recent years.

With a genuinely diverse jury, there was no easy consensus. Only 11 projects were selected for citations, none for awards.

The small group of winners that survived this earnest debate embodies, we feel, some of the vital qualities architecture must have in the future. It represents, in a cross section, the objectives, the sensibilities, the priorities that the profession must adopt for the 1990s.

We congratulate the winners!