

# AN ALEPH BET OF SYNAGOGUES



idea about community



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OF SYNAGOGUES



idea about community

AN ALEPH BET  
OF SYNAGOGUES

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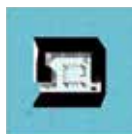


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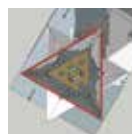
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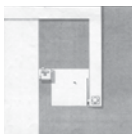
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AN ALEPH BET  
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KUF



2017



SAMECH



RESH



2018



AYIN



2014



LAMED



2013



HET



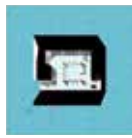
1983



DALET



SHIN



2020



PEH



2016



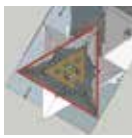
MEM



2009



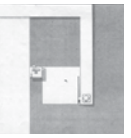
YUD



1990



VAV



1978



BAYT



TAF



2020



TZADIK



2016



NUN



2015



KAF



1994



ZION



1980



GIMEL

????



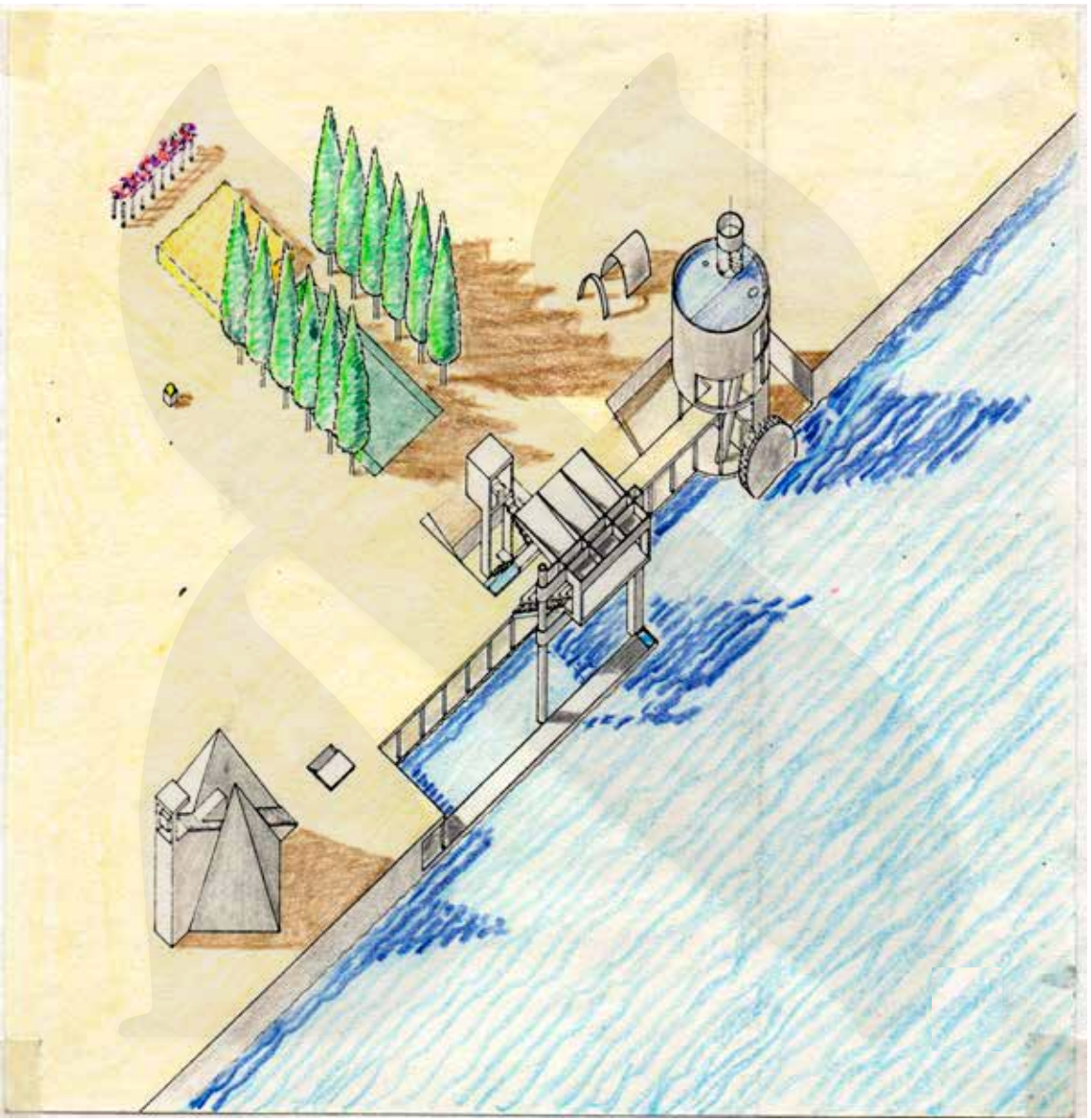


### Synagogue Aleph

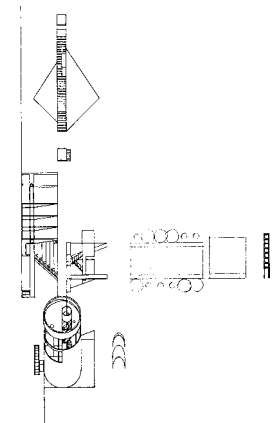
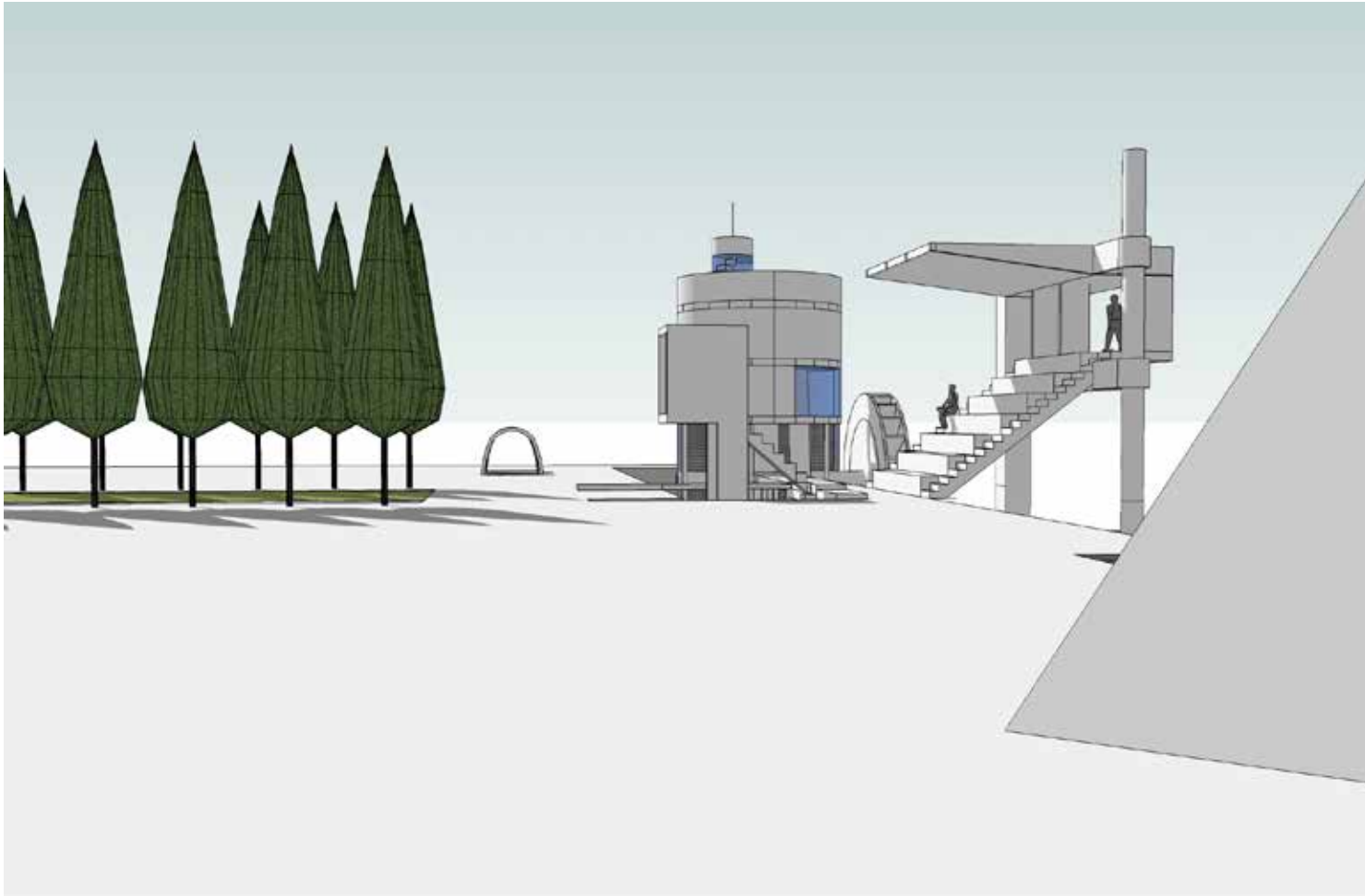
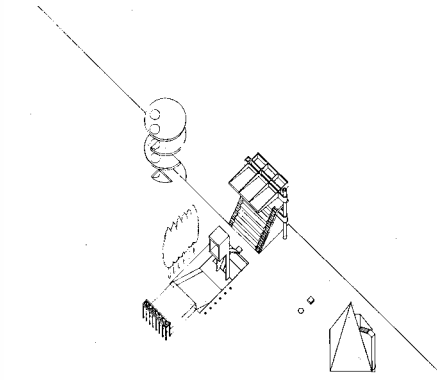
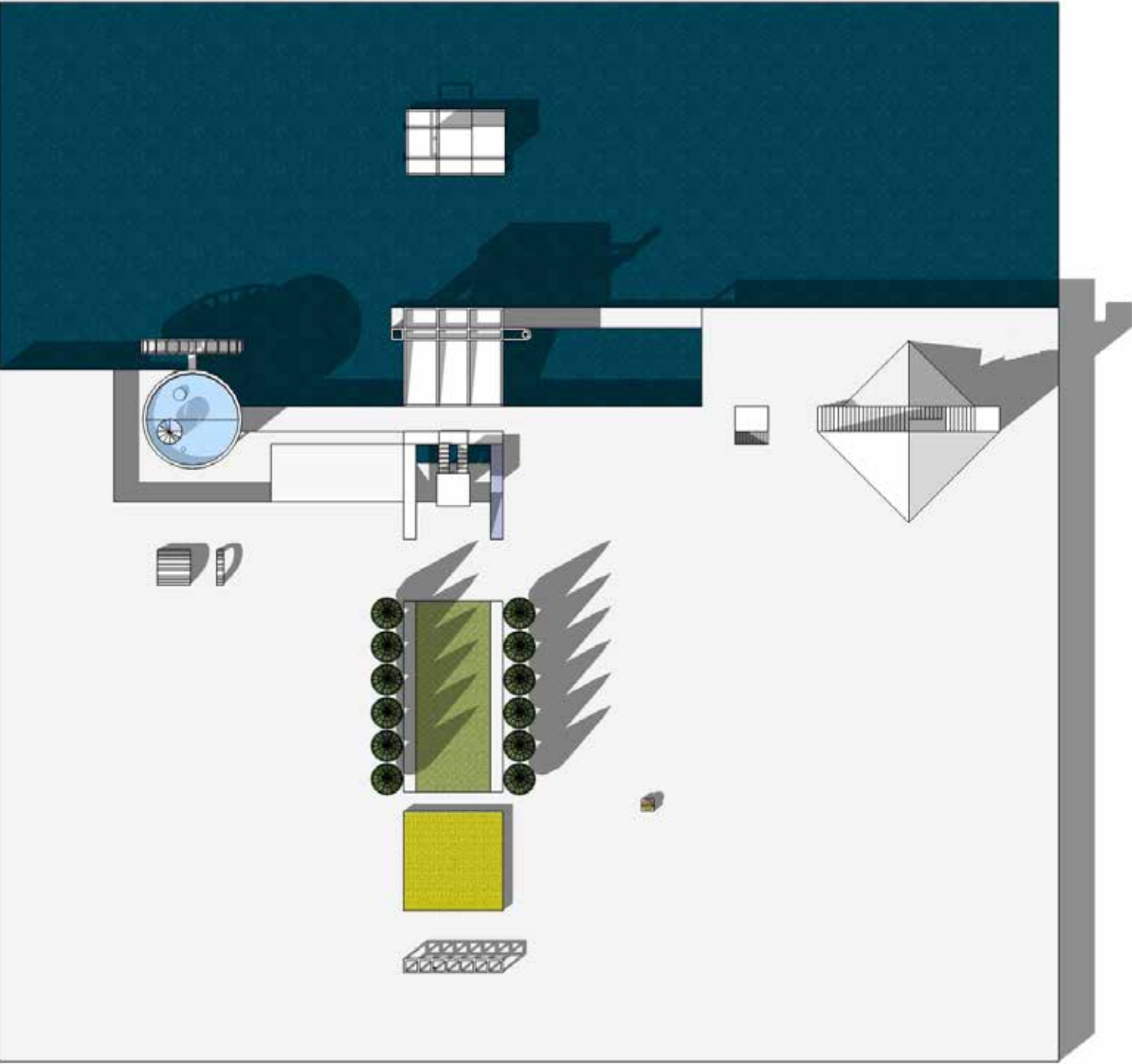
A traditional program for *Torah* (Five Books of Moses), *Bimah*, (reading lectern), seating, and *Talmud* (Commentaries) is provided for a congregation of 49 people. The roof of the cylindrical school includes observatory, antenna, and solar still. Below is the classroom and below that the library. Grade level permits public meetings, while the lower river level houses digital archives as well as sheltered harbor for boats transporting families. A small pool of water below the Bimah carries a reader’s voice to the congregation.

The site, a southern bank of a westward flowing river, is relatively uncultivated, perhaps still barren. Dimensions are an integration of Le Corbusier’s Modulor and American standard 8’ construction system, using a 25’ - 5½” module. The pyramid is masonry, Bimah and seating are steel and wood, and the school is reinforced concrete and glass. There is a parabolic tent for the carpenter. The plan provides for the traditional symbolism of the synagogue, including 18 column bays, 2 pillars recalling Solomon’s temple, and proper location for ritual according to orientation and time of day. The changeless nature of the Law contrasts with an ever-shifting body of its interpretation. This juxtaposition of absolute and relative provides the theme through which solid land and flowing water, wilderness and cultivation, and duration and tempo contend. Against these dualities are several sets of three including pyramid, cube, and cylinder; carving assemblage, and extrusion; block, sinew, and composite; and monument, vessel, and gnomon.

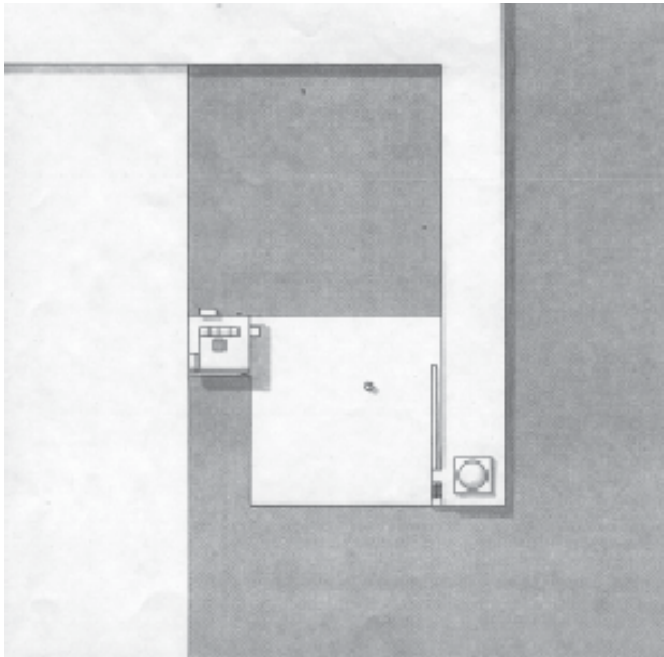
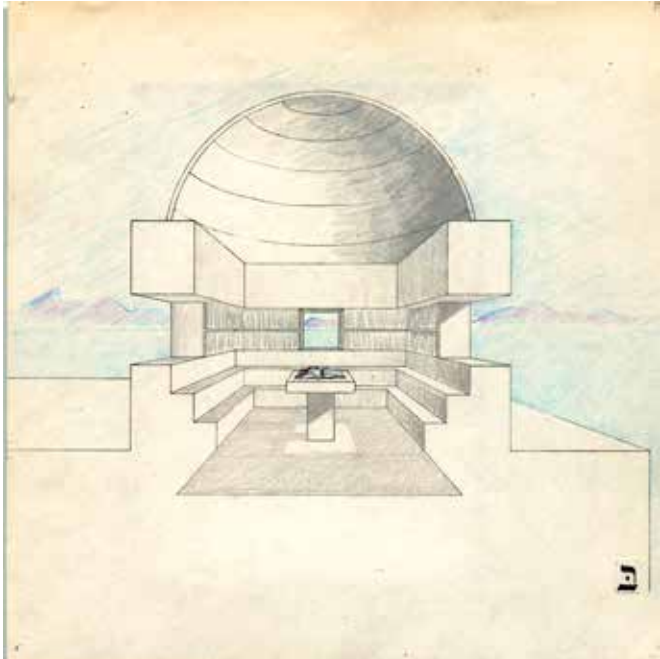
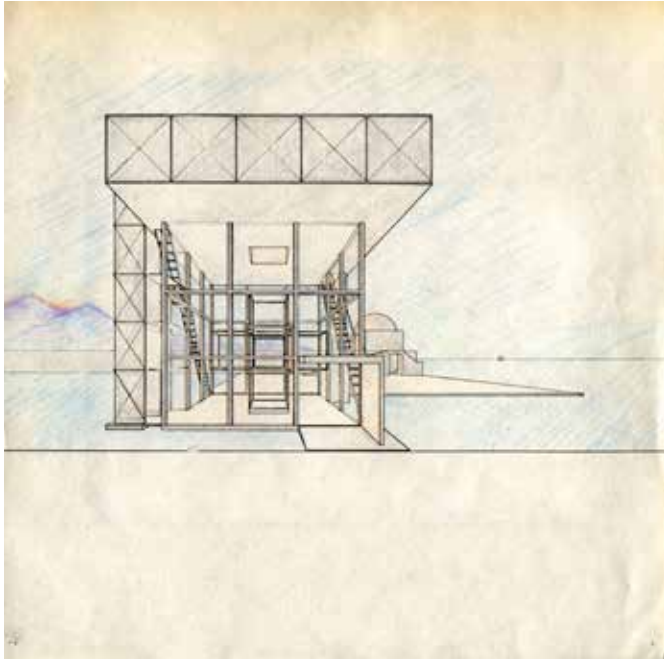
A water wheel powers the computer and an Archimedean Screw to lift river water to the solar still where the condensate is allowed to return to the river. Thus may the river purify itself. Process calculations determine sizing of these elements. Open-air seating is sheltered from precipitation by its cantilevered parasol and warmed by radiant heating pipes embedded in the underside of the incline. The small central *Bimah* cube is only six steps above the lowest level of the congregation, as required by Law. It is rebuilt every Jubilee Year from the lumber of the next ready tree in the grove of 12 cedars, like the *Ise* Shrine in Japan. The school roof platform and the acme of the pyramid become a celestial calendar. An arbor provides seven bays for grapes and wine. The lawn is grazing land for dairy cattle, while the beehive produces honey.



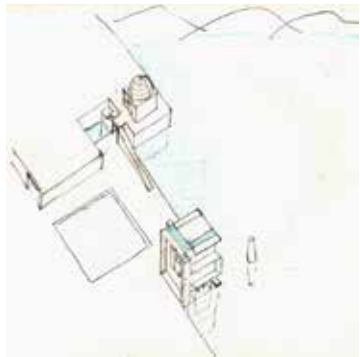








During the period of the technical papers, Freud was guided in his thinking about repression and resistance by conceiving of the mind in terms of a spatial arrangement of the unconscious and conscious states. In the “Introductory Lectures,” proposing a “crude” metaphor, he asks the student to imagine a large entrance hall that opens onto a small drawing room. In the large hall (of the unconscious), mental impulses “jostle one another” as they try to get past the guard who stands on the threshold of the drawing room, which Freud named the preconscious. The fate of most of these impulses is to be immediately repelled by the guard or, should they slip by him and get into the drawing room, to be dragged back. (The latter are the repressed unconscious thoughts.) The few impulses that are allowed into the drawing room are not yet conscious, and may or not become so, depending on whether or not they “succeed in catching the eye of consciousness.” Freud located this “eye” at the far end of the pre-conscious drawing room. The significant border relationship in regard to repression and resistance was not the one between the preconscious and the conscious but the one between the preconscious and the unconscious. This “topographic model of the mind was derived from Freud’s concept of how dreams are formed, and it remains at the heart of psychoanalysis. “The property of being conscious or not is in the last resort our one beacon light in the darkness of depth psychology,” Freud wrote in 1923 in “The Ego and the Id.”

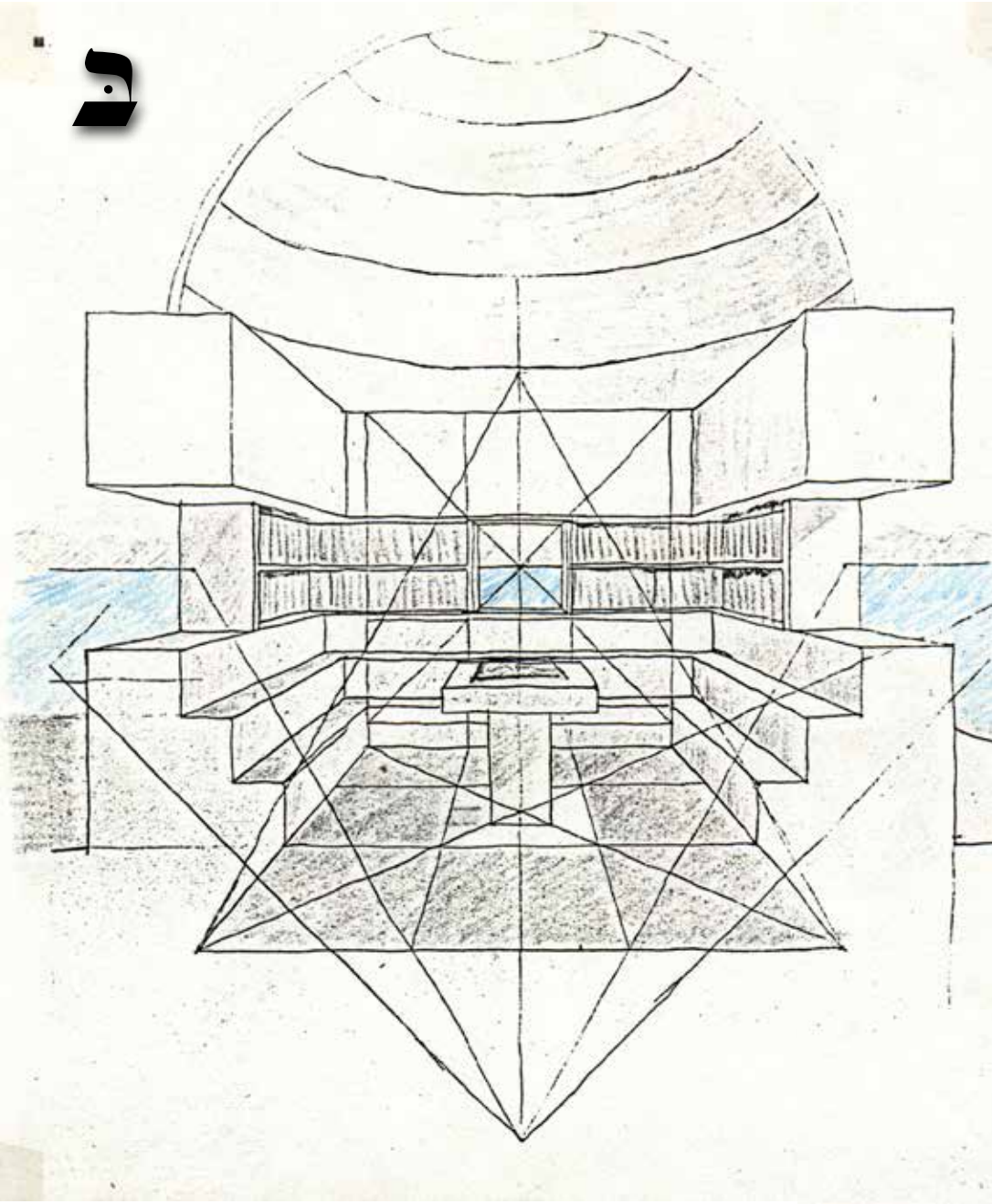


## Synagogue Bayt

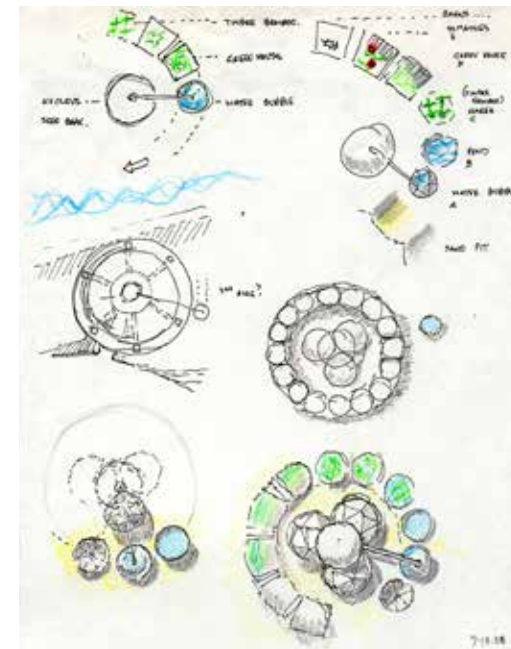
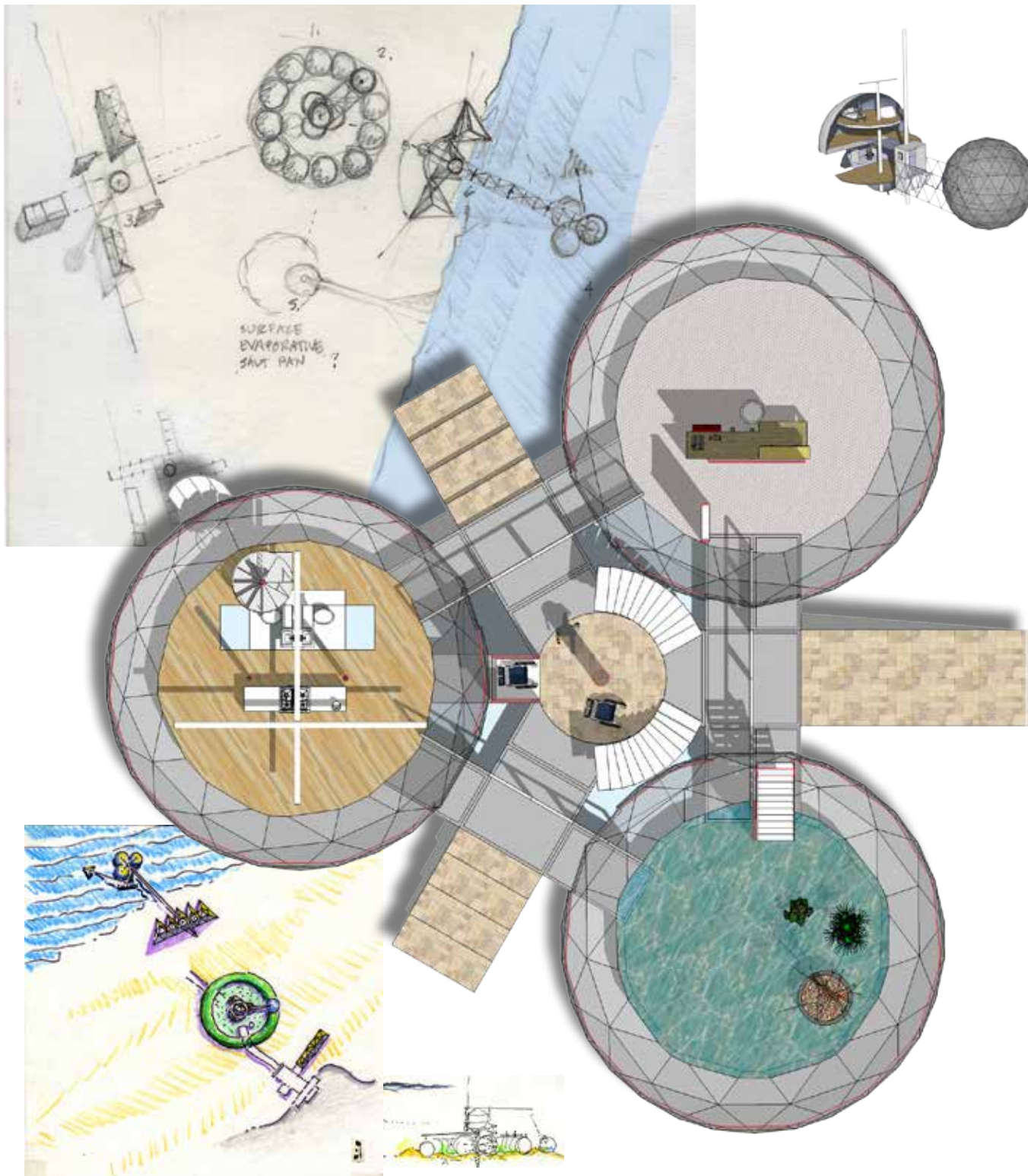
Bayt, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, also means “house.” That this reference to architecture should be so close to the origin of this ancient language but not yet the most important consideration in life I find a humane and satisfying outlook on my profession. Hebrew letters, the medium of the divine revelations on Mount Sinai, are often bestowed with complete and unique personalities. The ability to name things to identify their individuality, is considered by Judaism to be one of man’s most holy attributes.

I spent part of the summer of 1974 living and working at Degania Aleph, the first kibbutz ever established in Israel. This pioneer collective community, founded in 1904, borders both Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Gallilee) and the Jordan River. I often swam in both in the same day. Nearby Tiberias still flourishes. Its vernacular dwellings are whitewashed masonry covered by shallow domes. One small courtyard opened to a promontory supporting a single 15’ square building. A low reading lectern sat in the center of its only room. Each wall was covered with bookshelves. Centered in each of the walls a window opened directly onto the lake. Boats, lake, and the mountains of the Golan Heights beyond became stories of their own, equal to the material on the shelves. Simultaneously, the books seemed to spring to life in the midst of the room. Here I understood how a house of study and prayer is a true window to the world and how the world is only truly revealed through enlightened awareness. I try here to clarify, intensify, and celebrate the emotions and feelings I experienced in this place.

The program is a pond, plaza, and two buildings. Lake water enters pond through an inlet beneath a gateway building. Adding salt can generate electricity through electrolytic layering, a technique pioneered in Israel at the Dead Sea. This *Alphabet* building is the place for public events, like weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, and special services. Its space frame roof provides accommodations for visitors. In the distant *Book* building elders meet daily to study Law and apply it to the everyday affairs of life. In this small space, letters dwell in books, whole and integrated thoughts and ideas. In the gateway, ecstatic celebrations may take place, and the Hebrew letters are visible, although obscure, not as parts of stories, but as unique elements in themselves. Thus one can find in the crossed diagonal stairs, Aleph, in the cantilevered gate bridge at the entry, Bayt...





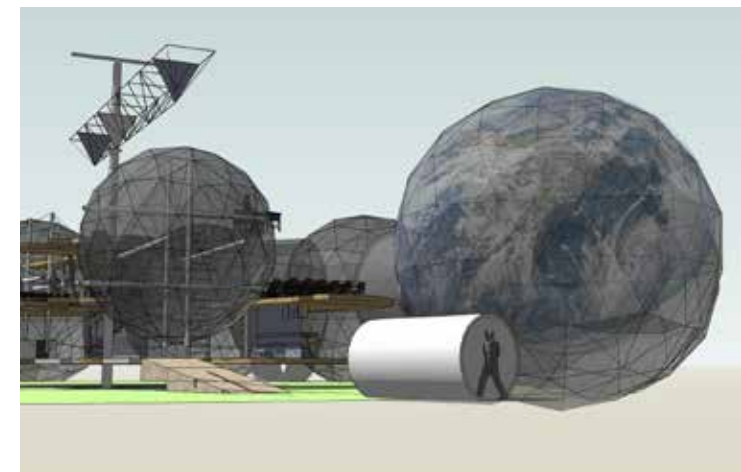
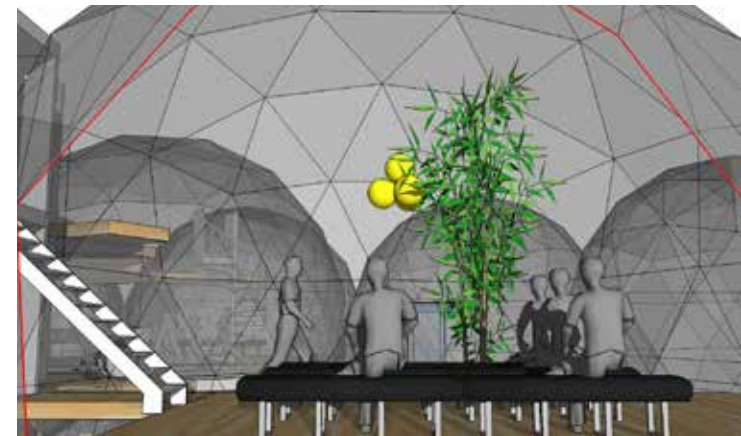
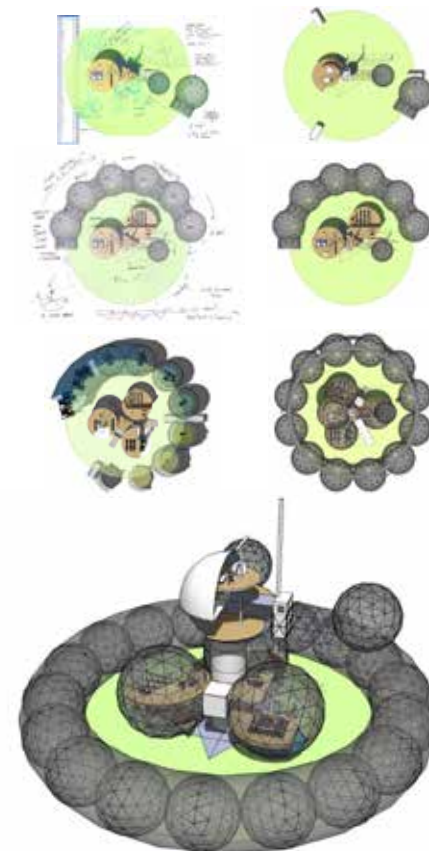
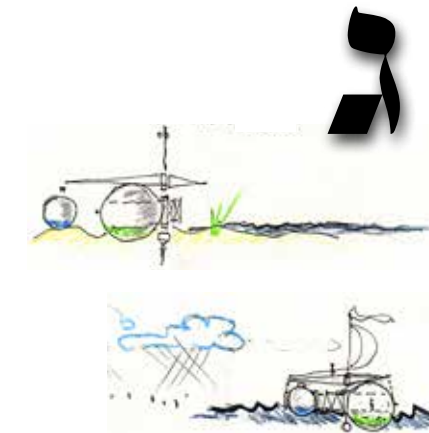


## Synagogue Gimel

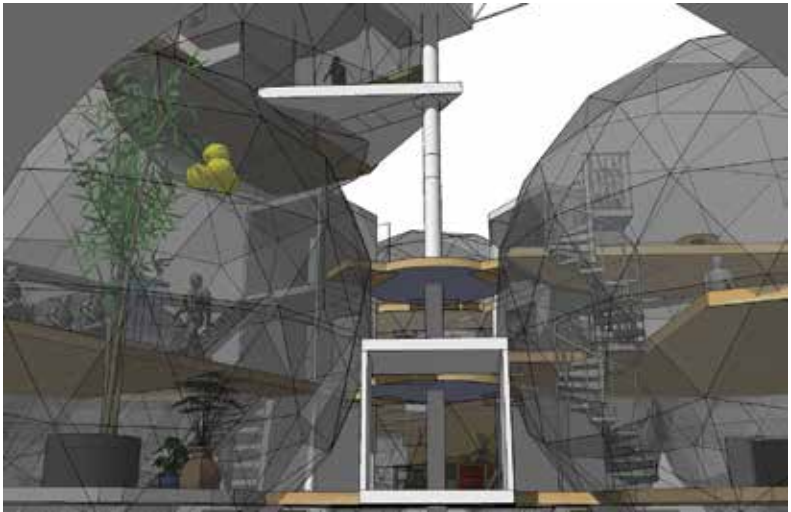
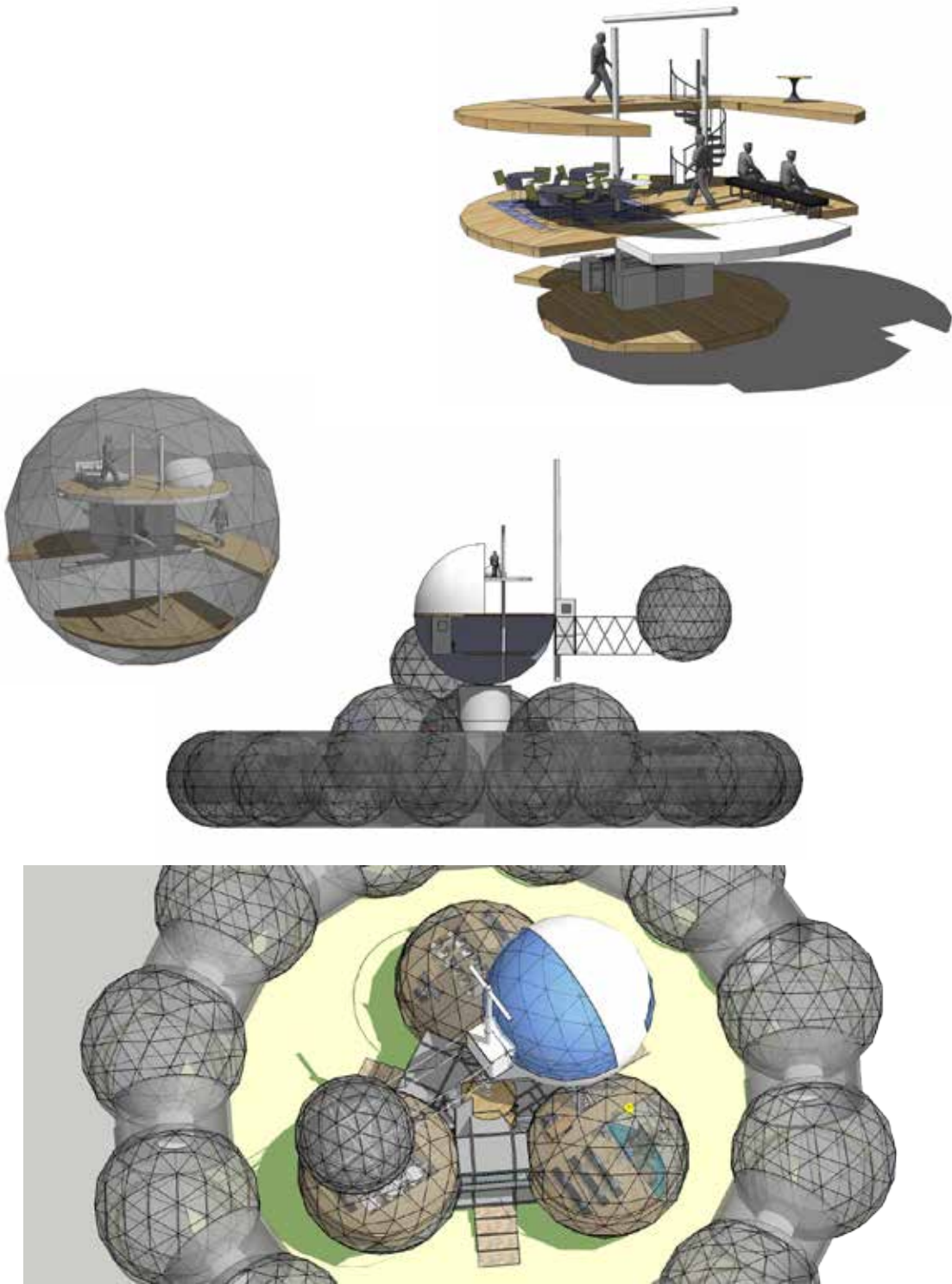
The third Hebrew letter Gimel is derived from the camel—the ship of the desert. Once when world crisis appeared inevitable. I thought of Noah's Ark, of humanity's survival from the ruins of an ecological catastrophe, the Flood. At the end of the Ark's forty days and nights afloat, perhaps it first landed on a beach on the slopes of Mount Ararat. Grinding ocean waves create sandy beach where the sea ends and terra firma begins. So the arid desert of seaside sand is still a sign of hope, a gift of land for human settlement.

How could Noah have had room for two of "every living thing of all flesh" in an Ark? Add redwoods and wooly mammoths to African and Indian elephants and room soon runs out. If the Ark were an ocean going "seed-pod" gene bank, terrestrial life could survive environmental catastrophe. The post-Flood beached seed-pod can deploy its resources to refructify the land. In Judaism, the Torah (Five Books of Moses) is the "seed-pod" while the Talmud, Mishna, and contemporary debates are the flowering of the vine.

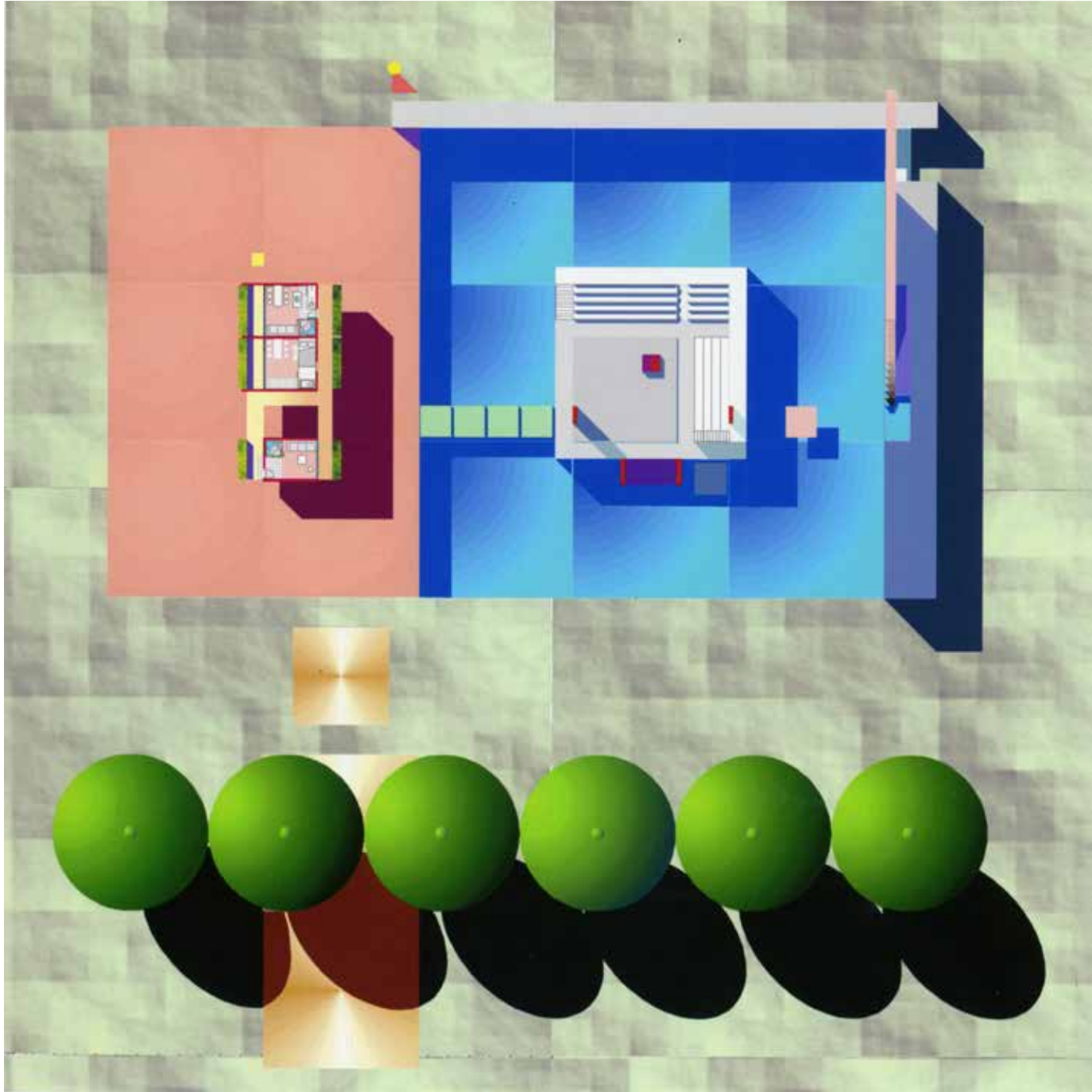
Synagogue Gimel is a phased construction. The ocean-going vessel includes genetic stock, crew quarters, and the Ark of the Torah and other essential ritual elements of Judaism. Pregnant in this first phase, it lands in dunes where it gives birth to the first cell of the torus. This bubble hydrosphere transforms the sandy microclimate into an agricultural soil to support human life. Timber bamboo seedlings mature into structural material for the next cells in the ring. As each cell grows becomes a greenhouse, it grows vegetables for people and pasture grasses for grazing. While the torus is completed, the central cell is triplicated into spaces for school, sanctuary, and celebrations. Finally the nucleus replicates the original ocean-going Life-boat, sitting above the other three, in anticipation of any next Flood. A tetrahedral breakwater shelters the torus and anchors an energy producing tidal pump. It can also support a *Ner Tamid* eternal lighthouse. Offshore winds drive electric current through suspended cables to precipitate metals from sea water, a system extensively developed by the architect Wolf Hilbertz. These generate structural elements for reinforcing the breakwater wall, which can become a barrier reef. Further inland an octetrahedral solar furnace transforms silicate sand into glass for the greenhouses.



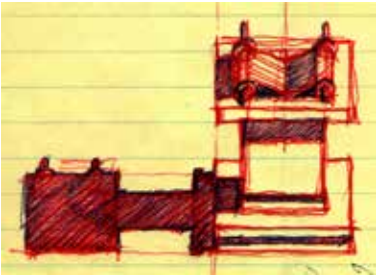








*At a remarkable meeting of the City Council of Glen Cove Long Island in the days immediately following the crash of an Avianca Airline jet in nearby Mill Neck, the Mayor of Glen Cove presented emergency Rescue Squad members with citations for their prompt and heroic emergency aid services to the survivors of this tragic crash. At this same meeting however, the Mayor was intransigent about refusing any kind of assistance to the Hispanic day workers who congregated along the streets of the City. This occurred despite strong vocal protests from the large Hispanic population both within the community and in the entire surrounding region of Nassau County. The evident hypocrisy prompted one member of the audience to observe “It seems as if the only way you can be Hispanic and welcome in Glen Cove is to fall flaming from the sky!”*

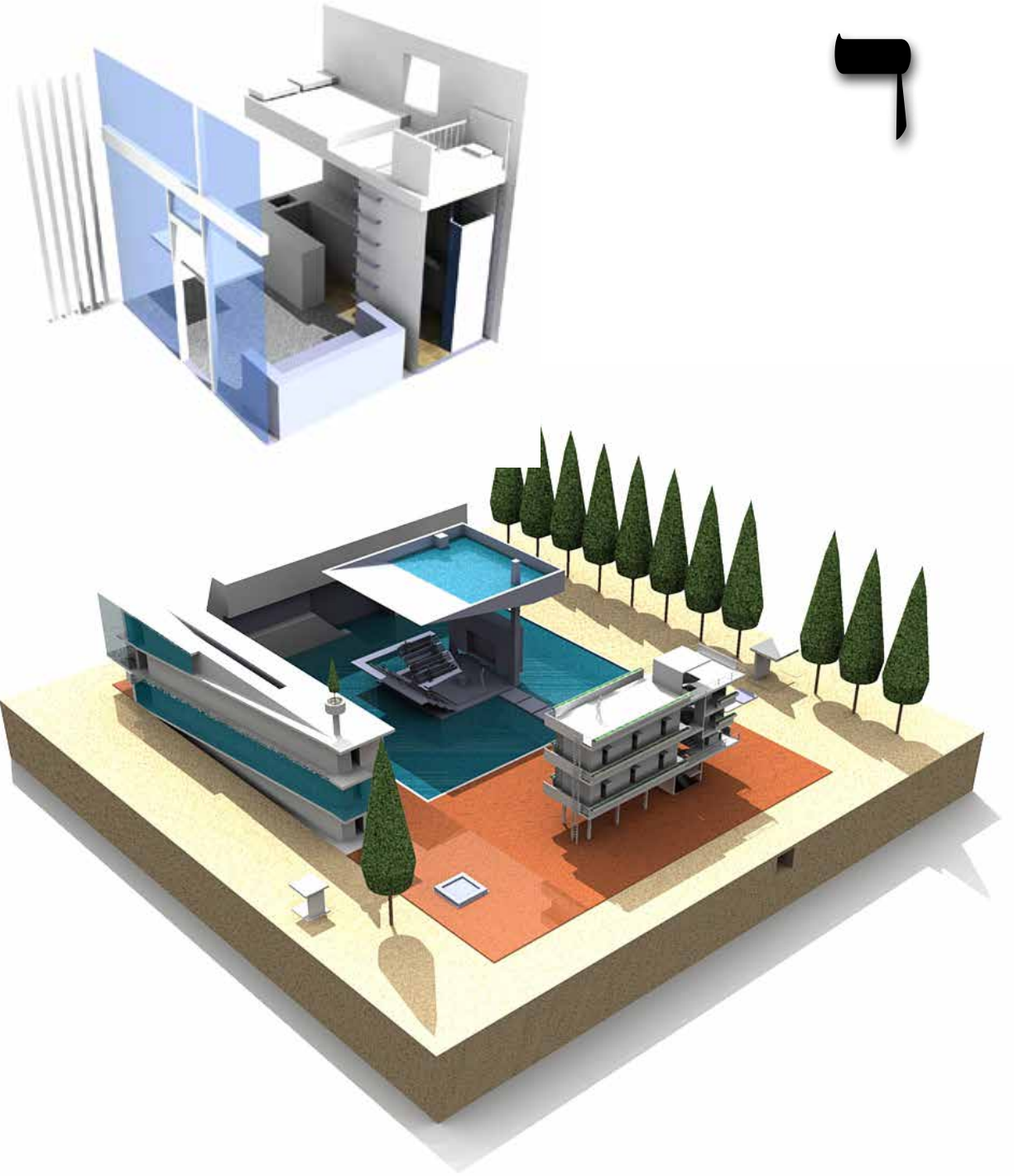


## Synagogue Dalet

Dalet, the fourth Hebrew letter, also signifies Door. During a town meeting I thought of rejected Latino refugees in contrast to the complacency of fat cat protected suburbanites-- themselves descendants of immigrants. “I lift my lamp beside the golden door” wrote Emma Lazarus of the Statue of Liberty. A social responsibility every holy person now faces is to consider and act on the plight of our human brothers and sisters who have no homes, no shelter at all. Until the last homeless person finds repose, we shall always have refugees.

Synagogue Dalet includes not only the ritual elements of *Bi-mah*, Ark of the *Torah (Aron ha Kodesh)*, Eternal Light (*Ner Tamid*) and seating for the worshippers, but also homes for six refugee families and a caretaker’s apartment. The congregants are aware that these refugees must feel at home and need help to move on to more permanent settlements. Worshippers cannot enter or leave the sanctuary without walking past and beneath the homes of the refugees elevated above them. It is easy to make a space for a family in a 16’ cube but almost impossible to fit them comfortably in a single 8’ cube. The architectural challenge here is to provide reasonably comfortable temporary lodgings for a family of four in a 12’ cube. Each of these apartments includes bathroom with shower, galley kitchen, day bed sofa, table and chairs, and balcony. The loft above provides sleeping space for parents and an infant’s crib. While tight, these dwellings are meant to restore the dignity of family life for people whose most recent homes simply no longer exist.

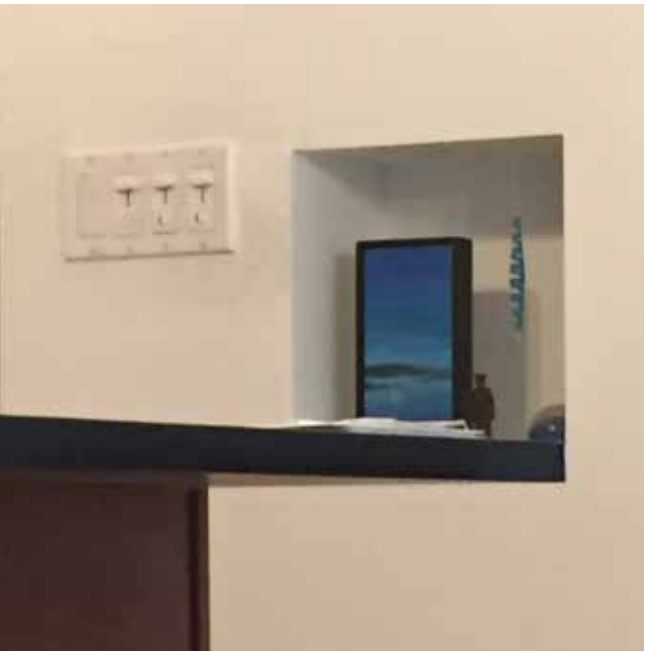
The site is a man-made oasis south of the equator in the Australian Outback, where rain is heaven’s rare gift to an arid land. The swimming pool collects rainwater, and pumps it to the overhead canopy to make sheets of aerated falling water on hot summer days. A raft provides dry crossing to the promised land of the grotto in the solar wall to the north. A written Dalet forms a right angle. Three mutually perpendicular folds define a cube of volume. A Dalet of columns and canopy is evident when entering the sanctuary. The stairs and tunnel to the chamber below form another. The third, formed is evident in plan when west is up. The lab’s rehumidifier maintains a moist microclimate around the pool and prepares flora for re-vegetating the desert. Australia’s policy of “fight or flight” during recent monster wildfires make the sanctuary an ideal if ironic refuge for local populations.











Synagogue HEY!

Synagogue HEY!! goes here.



Street access wanders up a 1:12 ramp from dry concrete around a pyramid to a fountain and waterfall oasis at the main entry, a drawbridge that can be closed for security. Wheel chair entry to the central elevator is easy and barrier free. Manhattan's street grid runs close to 60° northeast to southwest, so VAV's rotated plan creates a ritually correct eastern orientation for the Ark in New York City. It could be located on 88th Street between Broadway and West End Avenue, which happens to be the location of B'nai Jeshurun, the oldest Reform Synagogue in America. An alternate history, perhaps.





Synagogue HEY!

THE LIGHT!!  
THE FAMILY!!

MAKE HOME  
FIND HOME

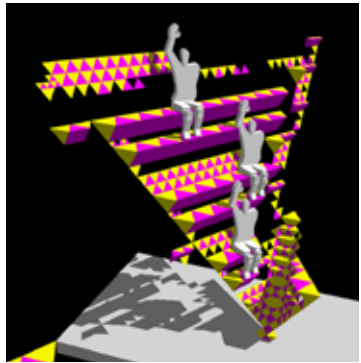
TO LIFE  
L'CHAIM!

KOL B'SEDER  
ALL IN ORDER....

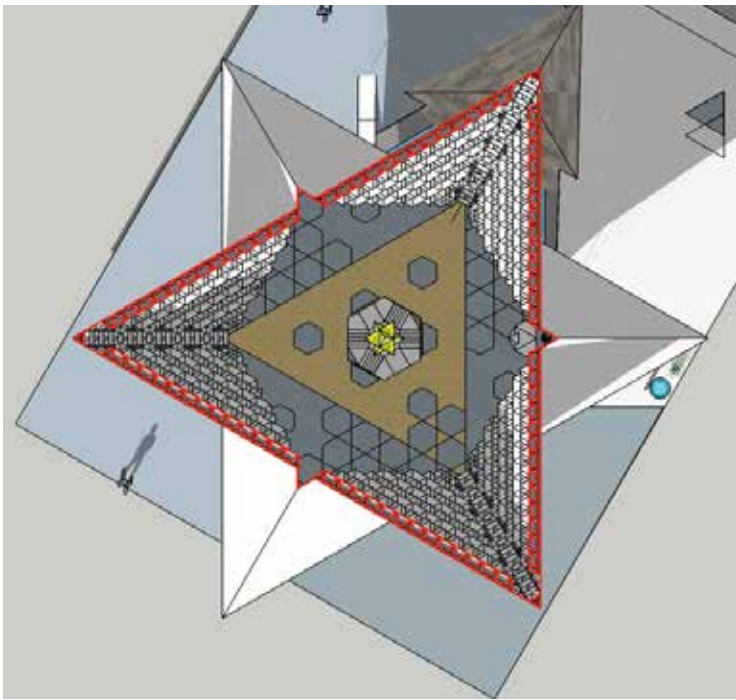
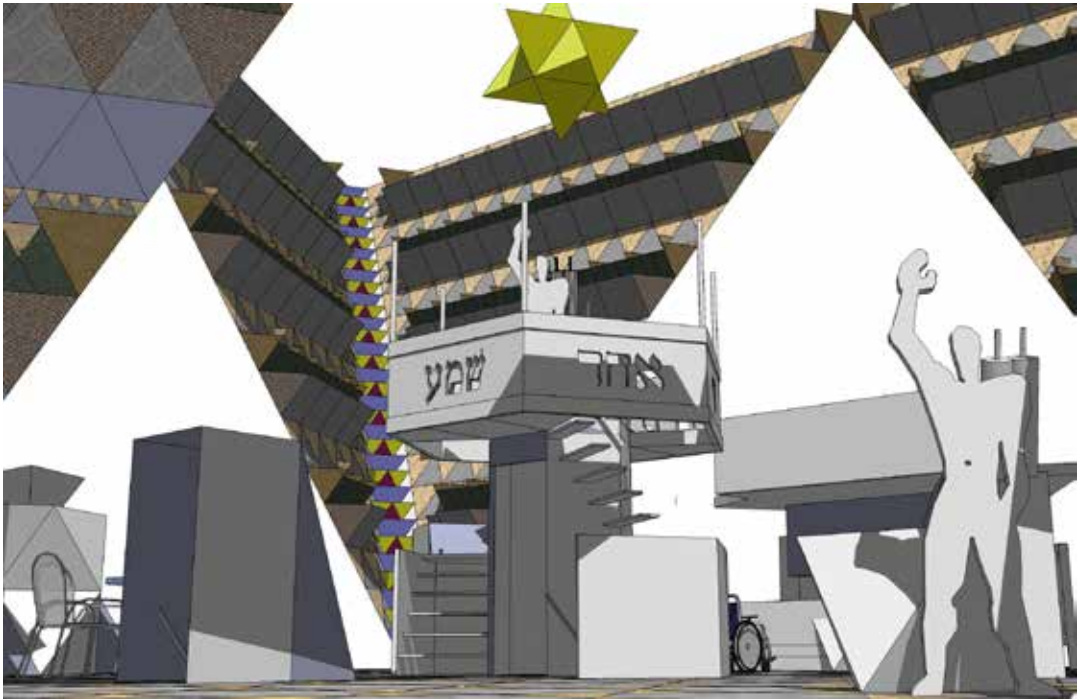
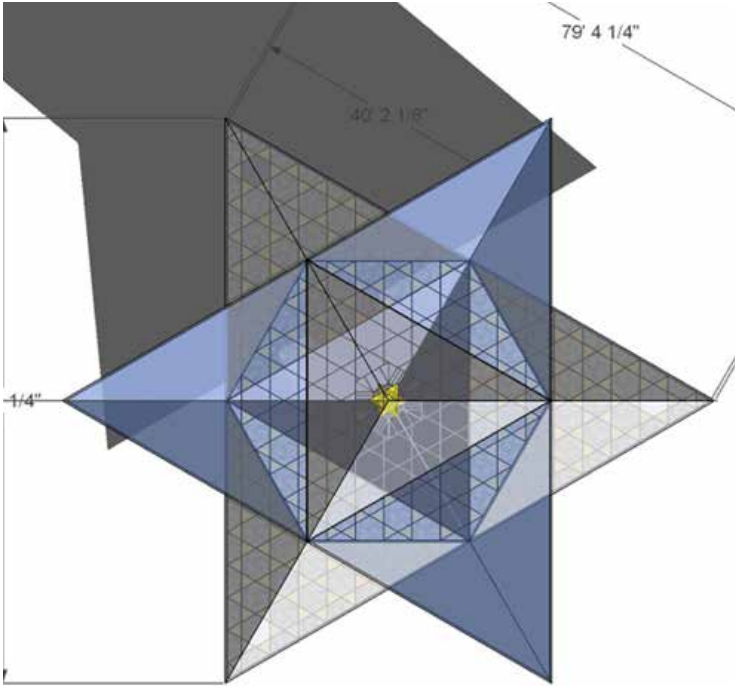
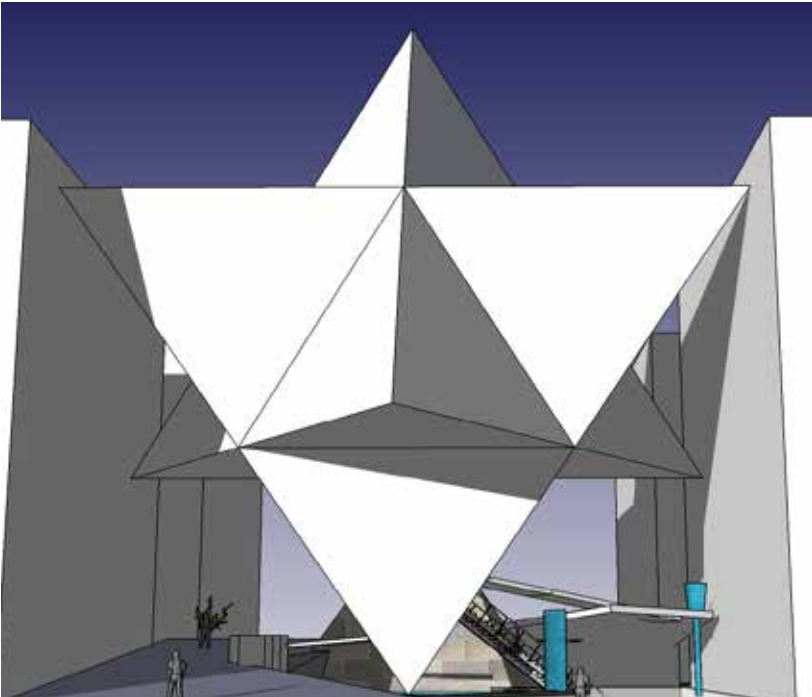
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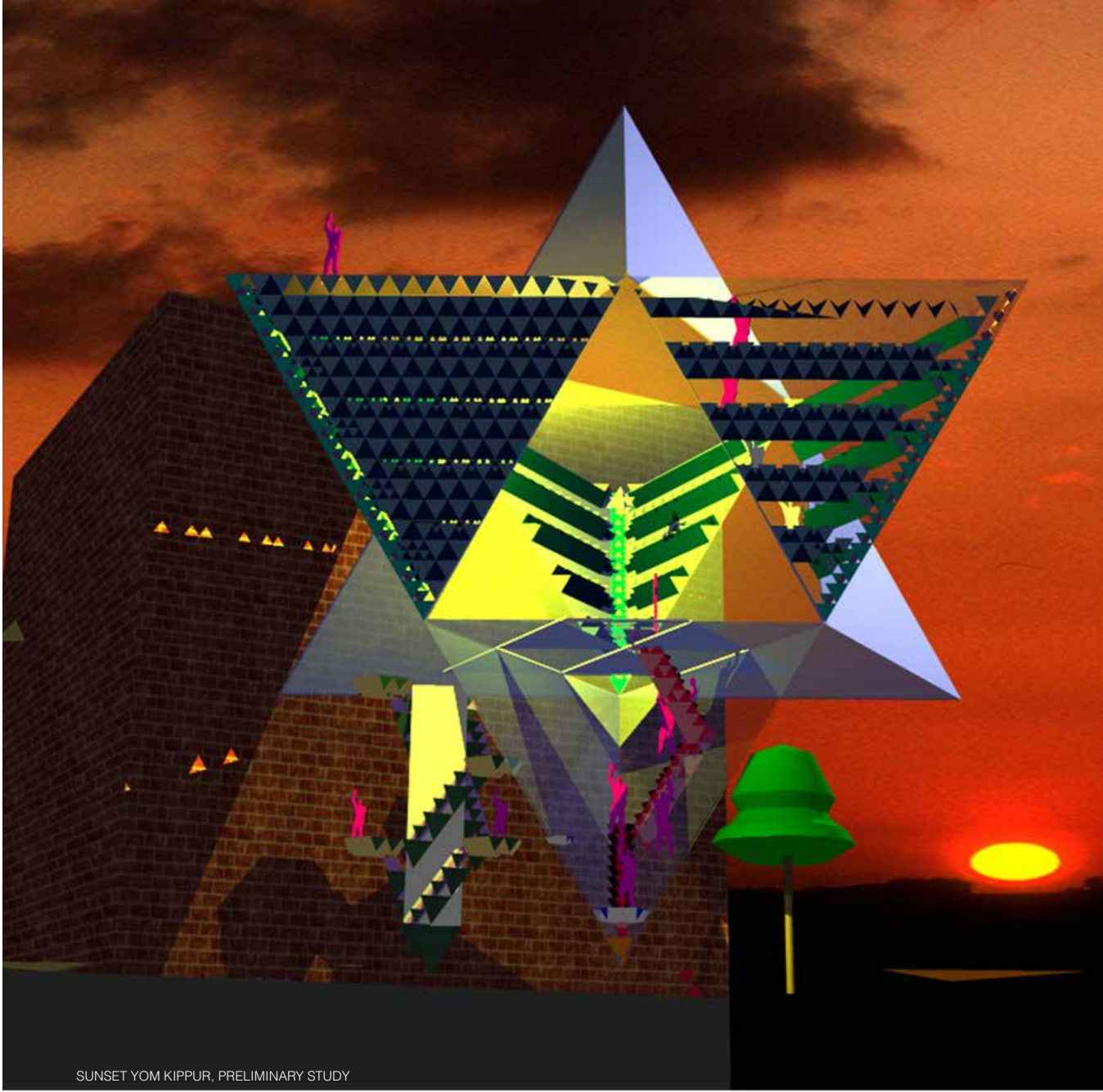




**VAV**







SUNSET YOM KIPPUR, PRELIMINARY STUDY

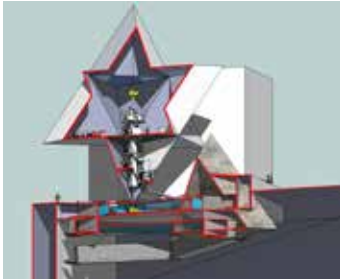
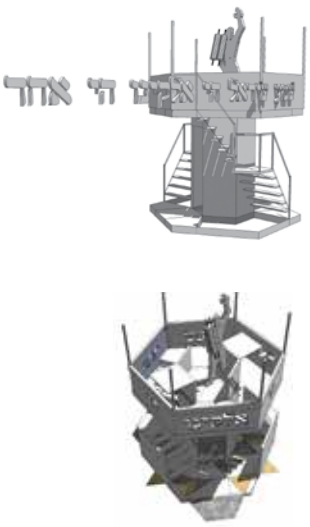


## Synagogue VAV

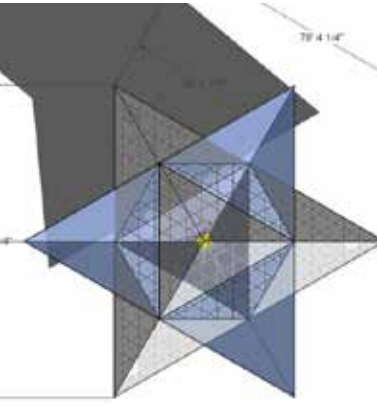
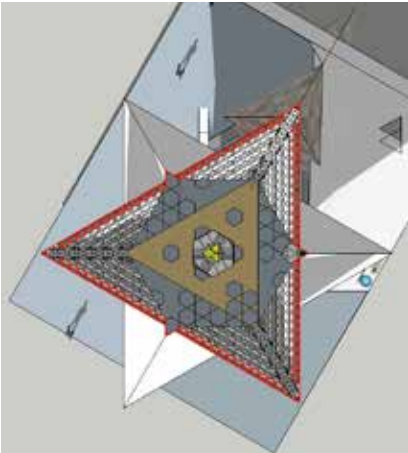
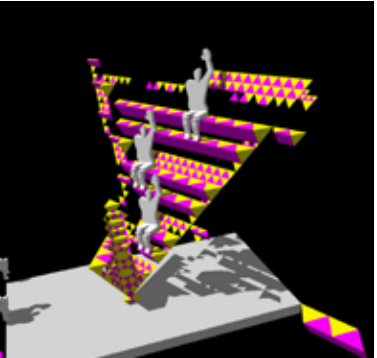
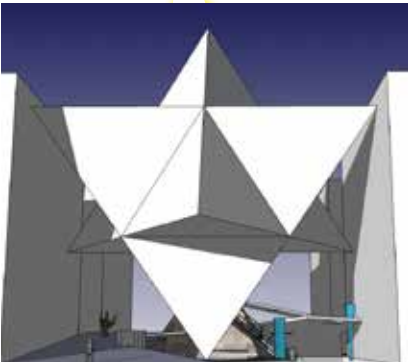
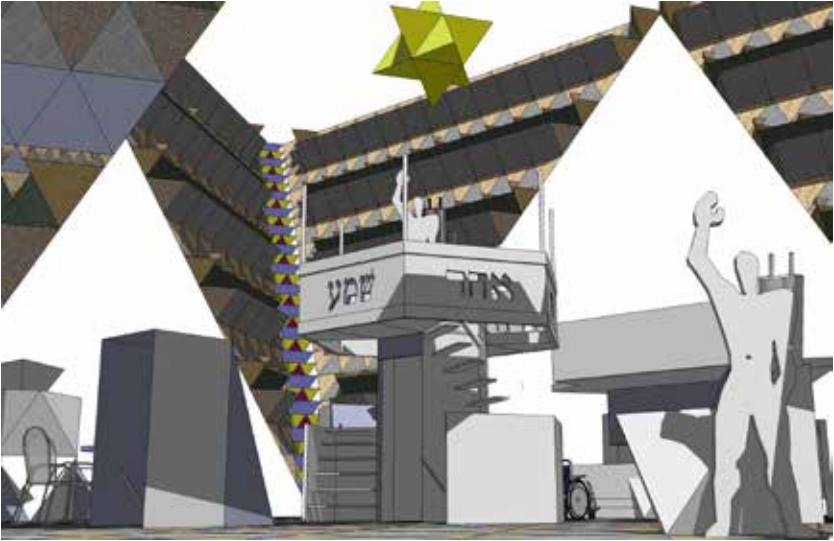
Synagogue VAV is a synthesis, both literal and figurative. The Hebrew letter VAV is a ligature, meaning AND, strongly suggestive for community space that binds generations together. Its geometry is a simple intersection of two inverted 80-foot tetrahedrons. One of the five Platonic solids, a tetrahedron is composed of four equilateral triangles meeting at equal solid angles. It cannot closepack, the way cubes fill space. But with its dual, the octahedron, another Platonic solid, it is completely space filling. The frame, all triangles, is rigid. Party bearing walls support the whole at the star's 4 contact points. The structure does not touch the ground.

Inside a multipurpose central space provides focus for three major areas of synagogue activity-- prayer, study, and celebration. The upward pointing tetrahedron provides one for each of these 3 activities. The eastern lobe contains the *Aron Ha Kodesh* and *Bimah* that supports the *Torah* during prayer services. The southwest streetside lobe holds conference and study facilities, including a digital workstation, an apotheosis of the *Talmud*, where now through electronic communication all the affairs of the world accessible for commentary and illumination. The third northwest lobe provides kitchen, bathrooms, showers, and a sleeping loft above, for life cycle and social functions like weddings and bar mitzvahs. The downward tetrahedron creates six skylit triangular sloping walls with built-in cushions and footing, and stairs at their intersections. Each provides seating for 24 people, making 12 places for each of the Twelve Tribes. Inside a double helix stair an elevator rises through floor hatches like a service lift on a city sidewalk. Exterior photovoltaic collectors power the *Ner Tamid*, a stellated octahedron located at the precise center of the project. The six candlesticks of the High Holiday platform combine with the *Ner Tamid* directly above to reconcile the original seven-branched *Menorah* of the Temple with the peripatetic Eternal Light of a synagogue.

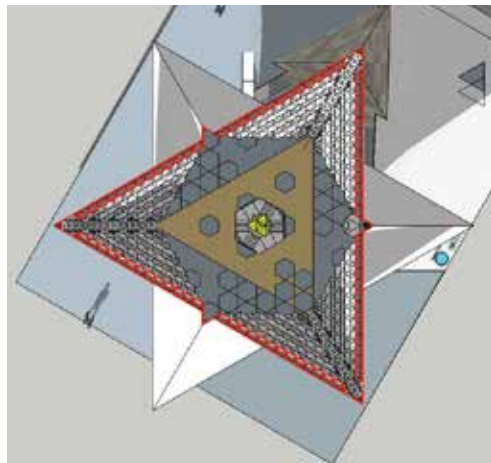
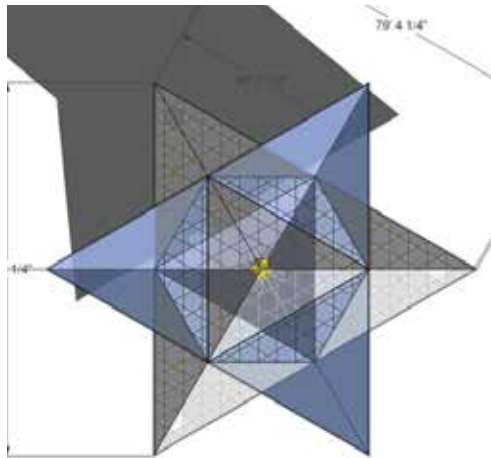
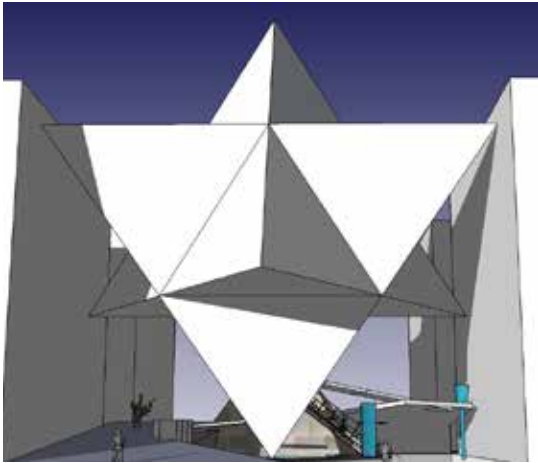
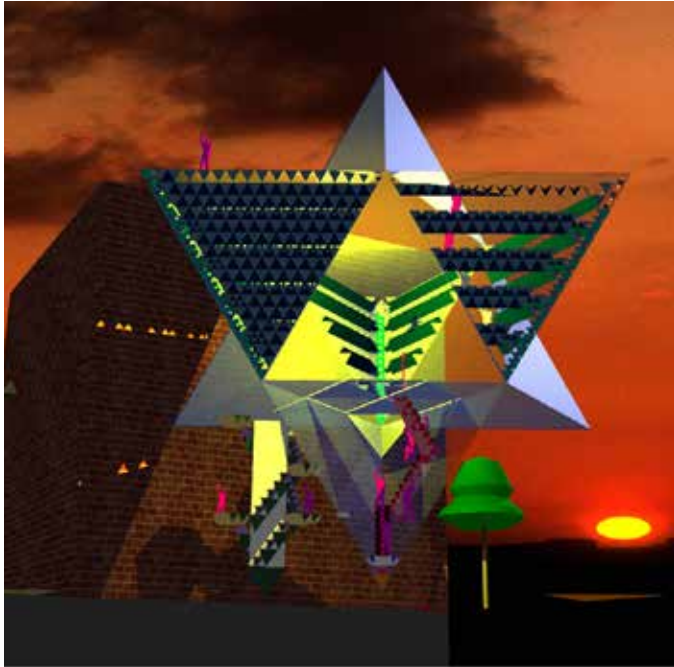
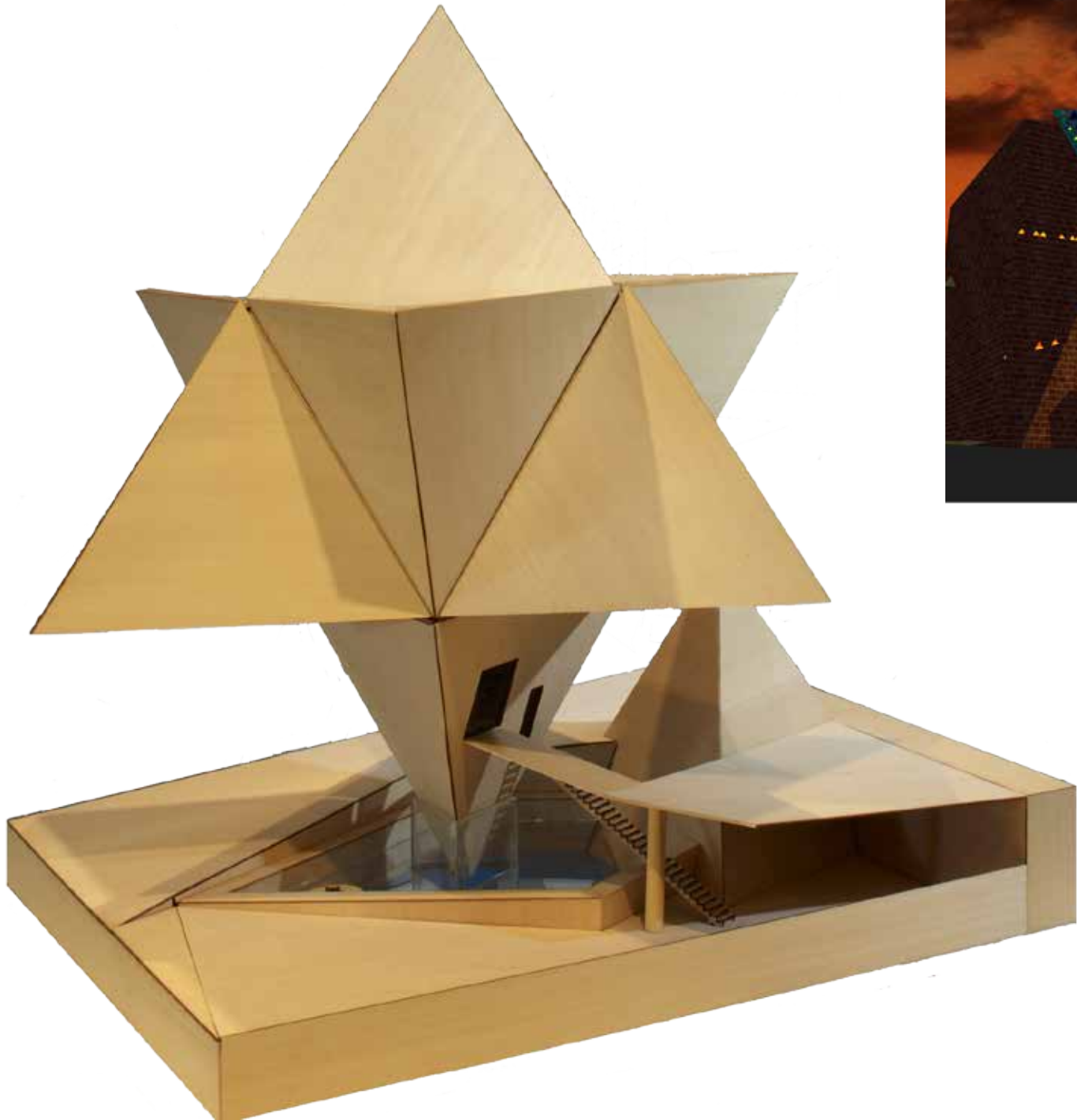
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This geometry isn't easy to visualize. Sketching a perspective from a vanishing point in a triangular space is a challenge! It made sense to explore designing this space through computer aided digital means. It was this project that led me to discover the elegance and precision of Sketch-Up. For the first time in a half-century search I have found the means to make and think and edit directly in the medium of space. I believe this anticipated the emerging popular global culture of spacial ideas.





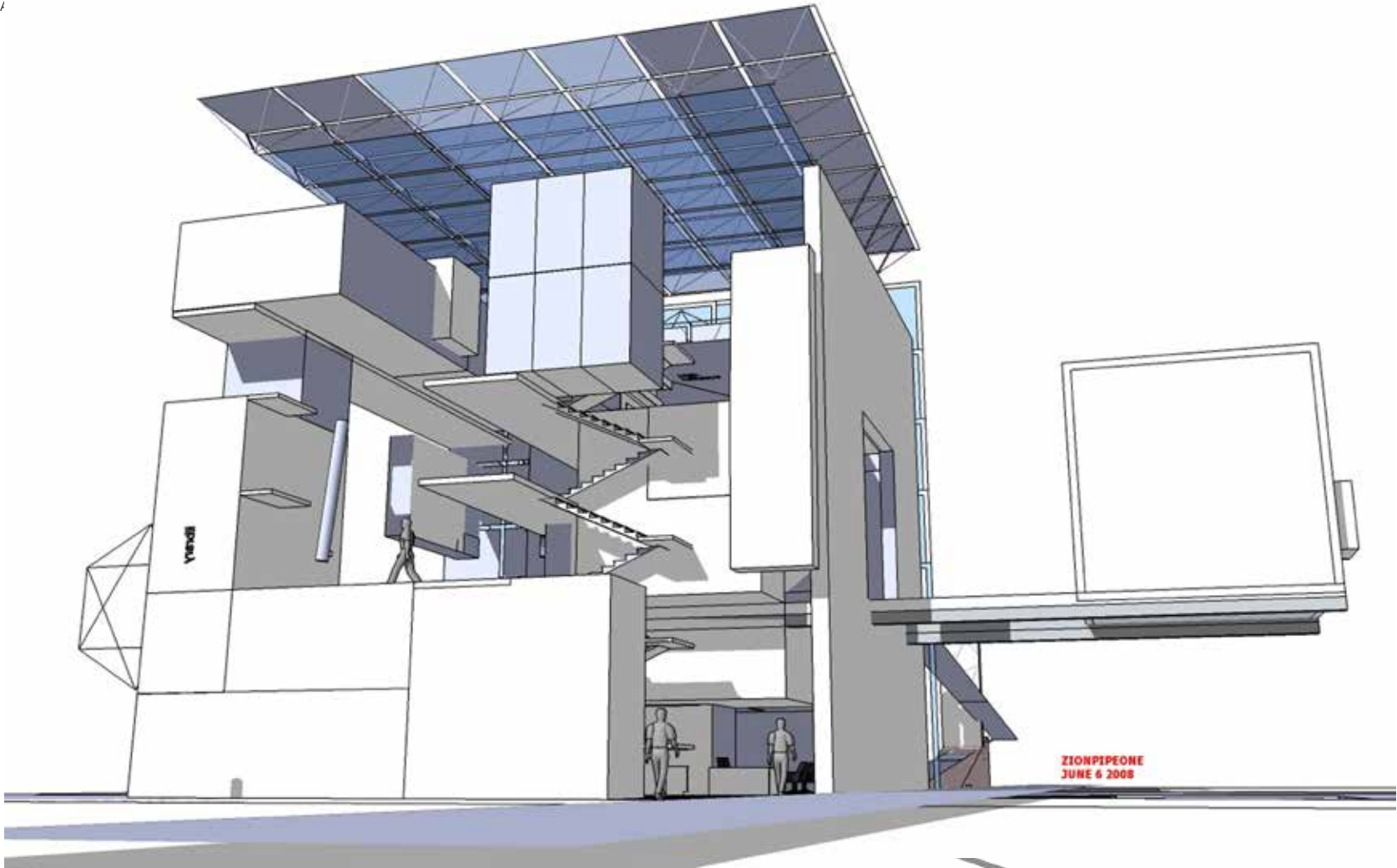


VAV

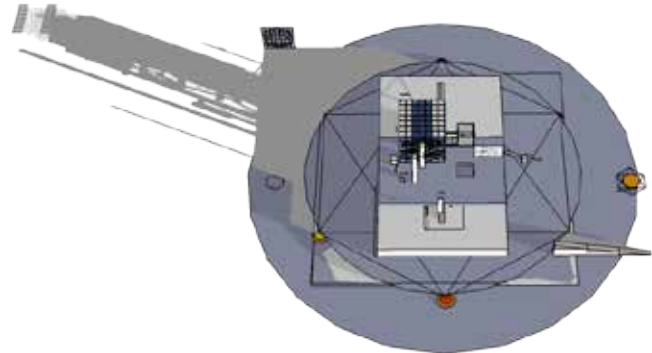




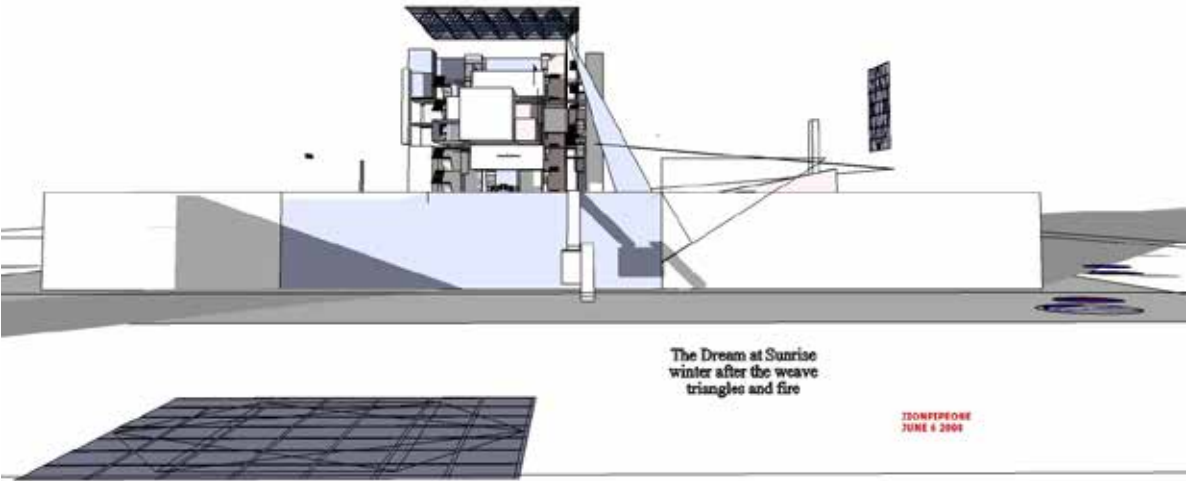
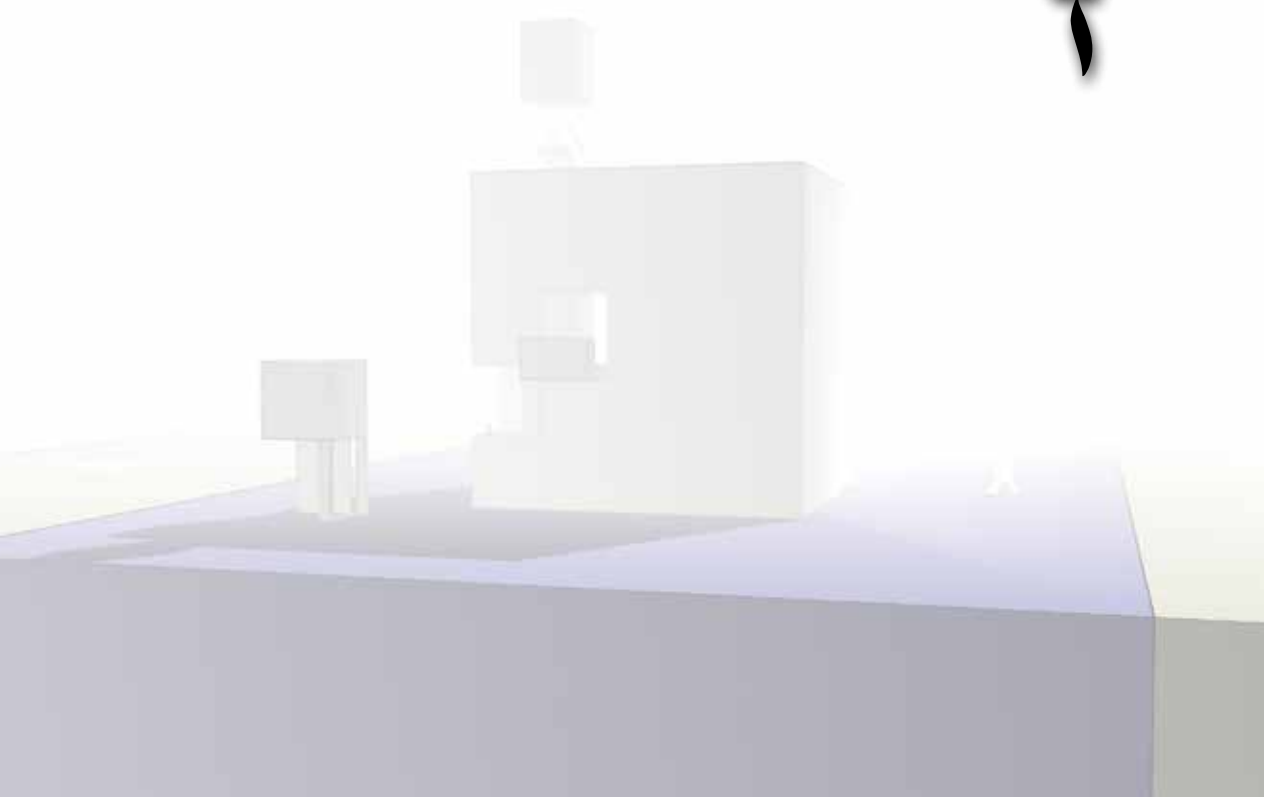
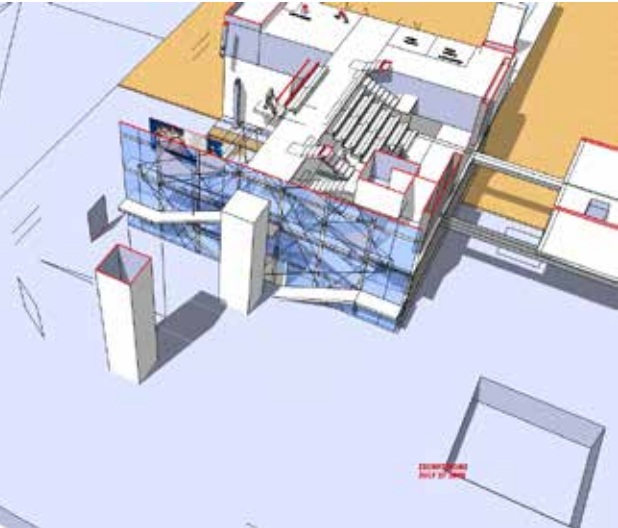
Synagogue ZION



FIRST LIGHT ~ 0 TO 20  
HAND HEART MIND ~ 20 TO 40  
PROJECTION ~ ZERO TO 60



ZIONPIPEONE  
JULY 27 2008

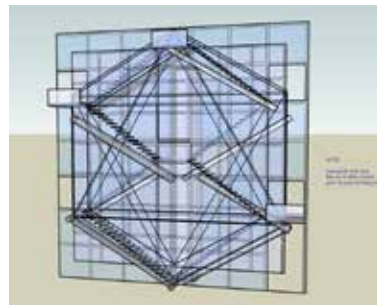
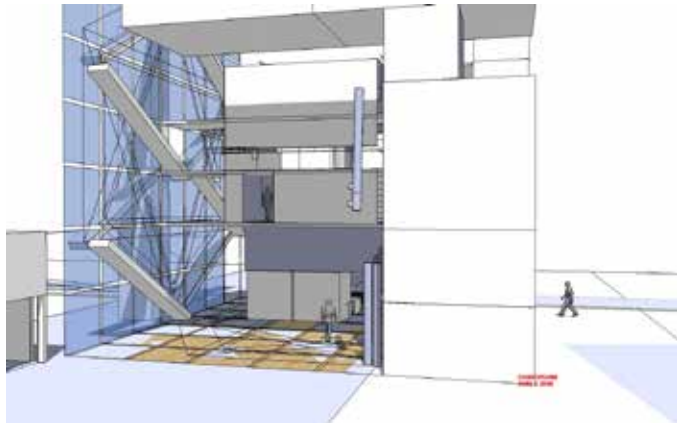
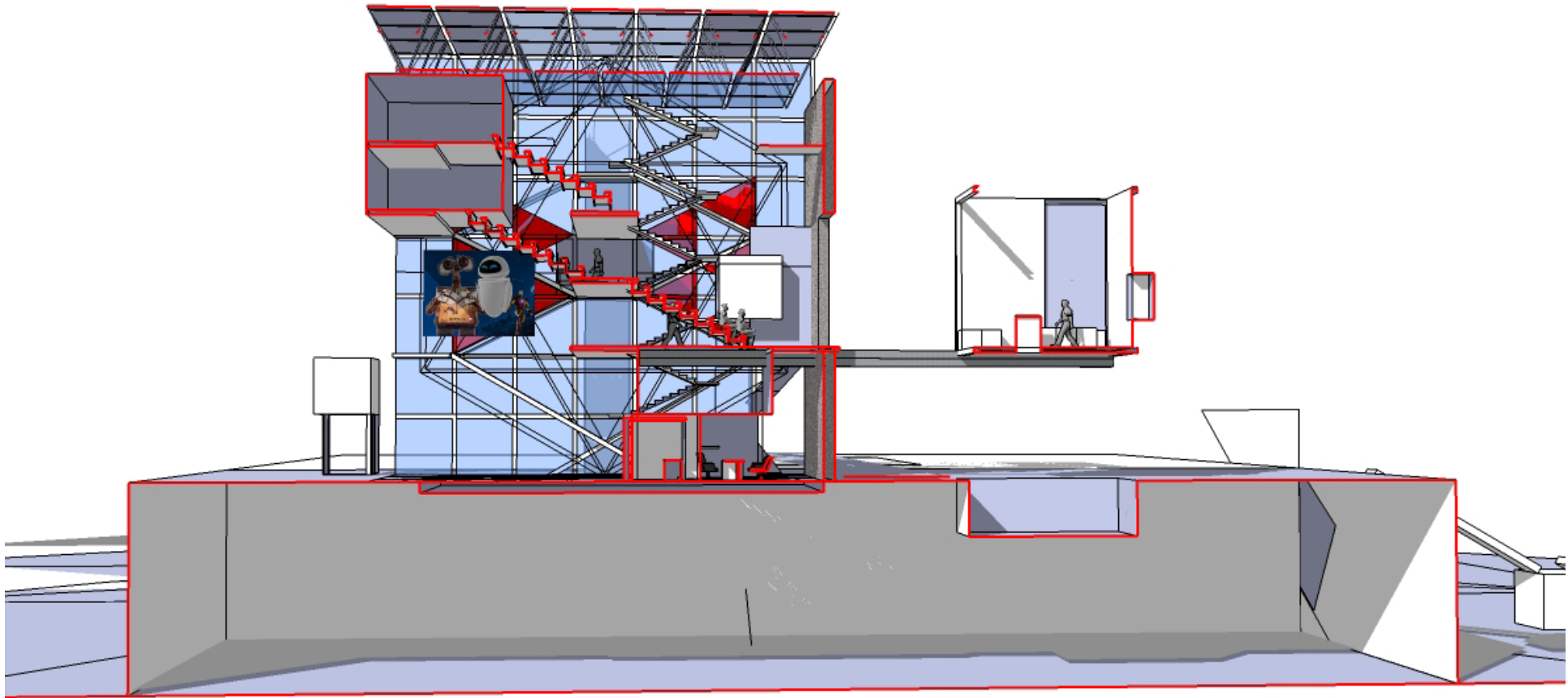
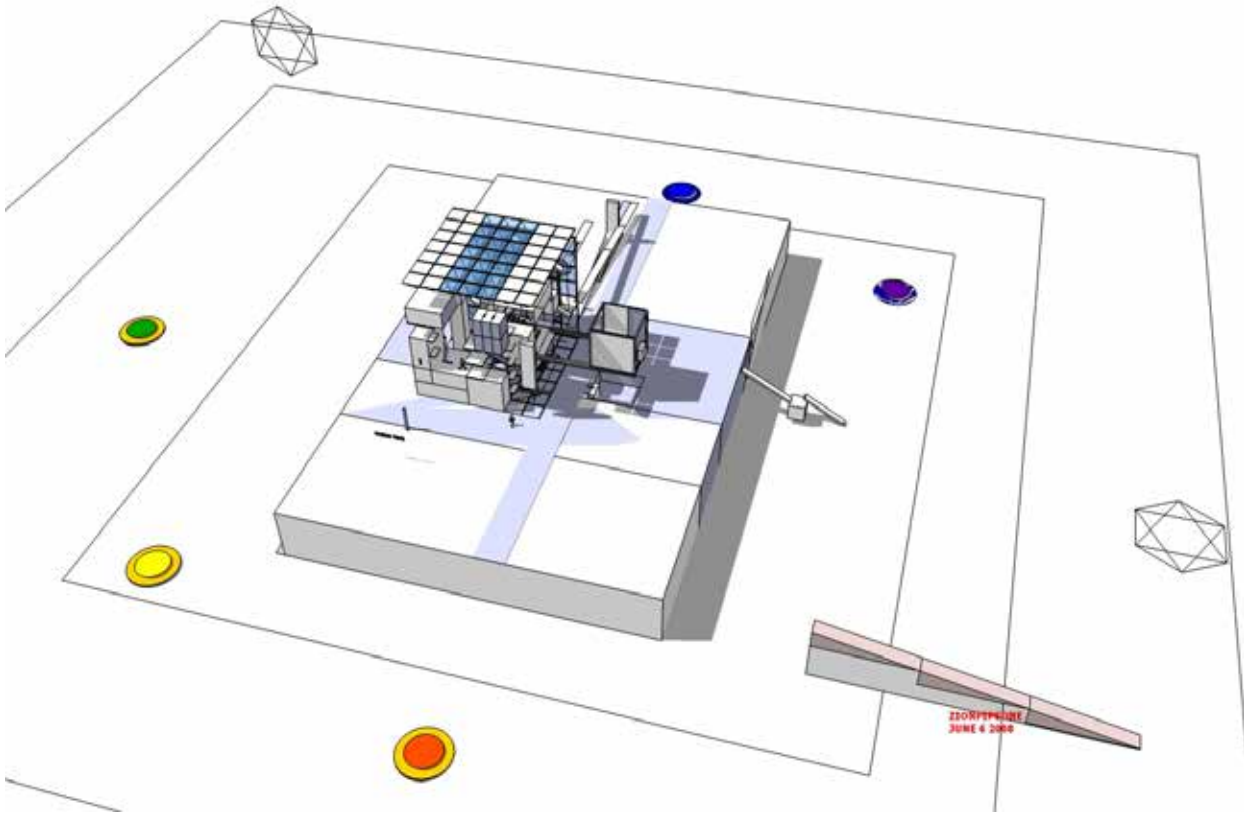
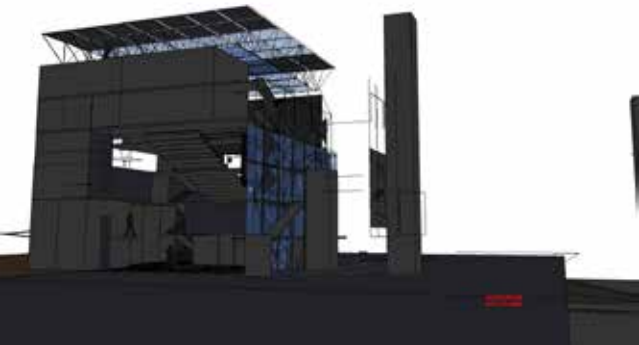
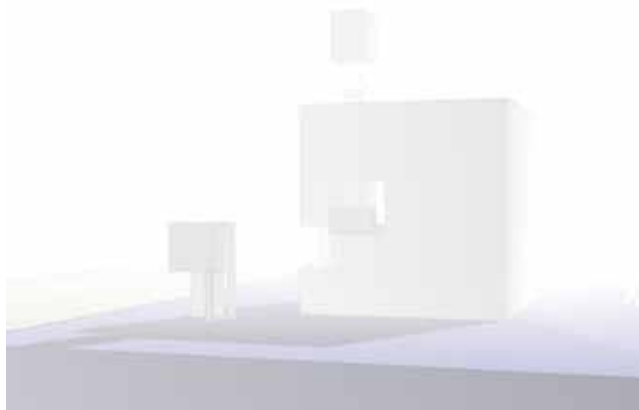


The Dream at Sunrise  
winter after the weave  
triangles and fire

ZIONPIPEONE  
JUNE 6 2008

Street access wanders up a 1:12 ramp from dry concrete around a pyramid to a fountain and waterfall oasis at the main entry, a drawbridge that can be closed for security. Wheel chair entry to the central elevator is easy and barrier free. Manhattan's street grid runs close to 60° northeast to southwest, so VAV's rotated plan creates a ritually correct eastern orientation for the Ark in New York City. It could be located on 88th Street between Broadway and West End Avenue, which happens to be the location of B'nai Jeshurun, the oldest Reform Synagogue in America. An alternate history, perhaps.





ZIONPIPEONE  
JULY 24 2008



# SYNAGOGUE HET



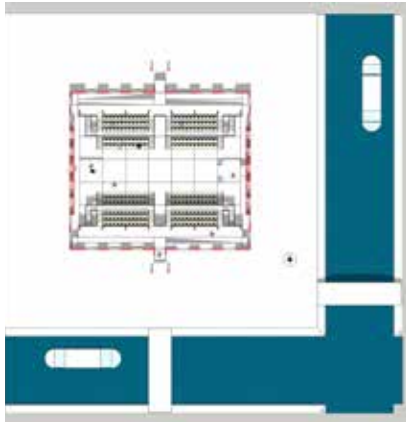
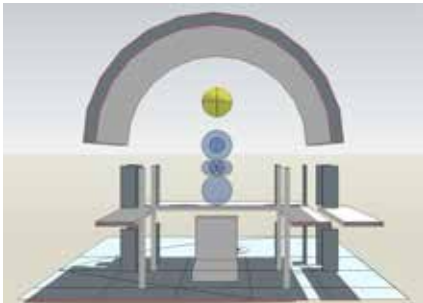
## Synagogue Het Tet Yud

When I learned to recite the Hebrew alephbet, the middle three letters Het Tet Yud were spoken in a rush, like elemenohpee in the English alphabet. Het signifies life, Tet, the good, and Yud, the hand. Their combinations are suggestive for architecture. They might comprise a series of 3 interrelated projects: Your Synagogue, My Synagogue, Our Synagogue. Yours is what “you” want, what the world expects, the Tradition! of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Mine will be what “I” want, the place I feel most in tune with this Holy Universe. Ours may become a synthesis and commentary on the other two.

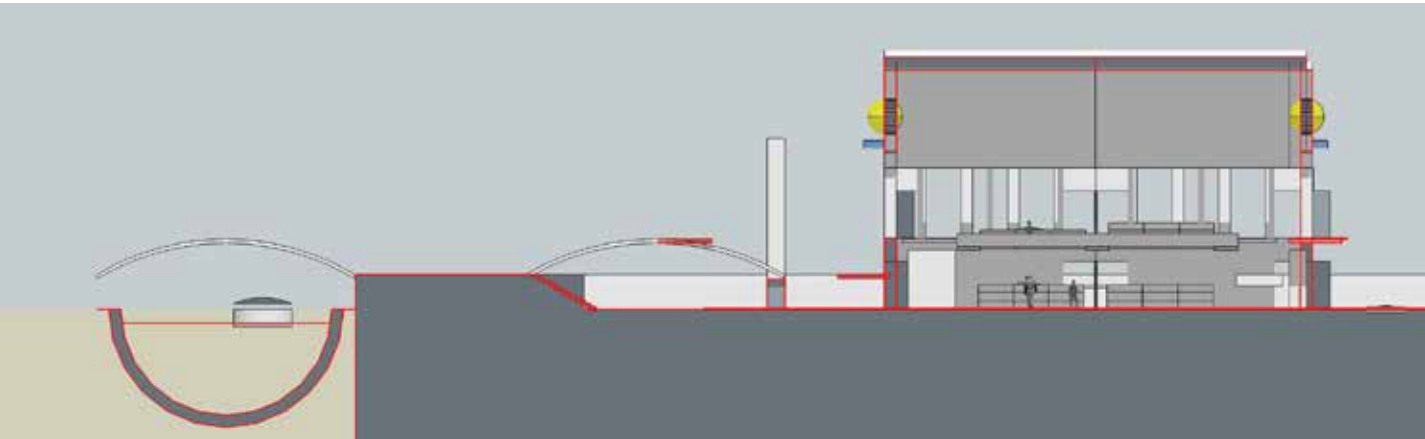
It is easy to believe in a benevolent Divinity when all is right with the world. In Super Bowl post game shows, we often hear praise of The Lord from winning team members. I wonder how that same Lord fares in the losers’ locker room. I have never felt more blessed, where the world around me so completely supported my inner aspirations, as I did during a 2009 residency at The MacDowell Colony. “Thank god I’m *here*” was my first thought every time I awoke in Adams, my splendid and spacious studio at MacDowell, clearly the best fit for My Synagogue. So I carefully documented and modeled Adams in SketchUp 3D software. Photos of work on studio walls became equivalent surfaces in the digital model. In Adams my mind was both in focus and in flux. Deep study came in slow time, even stop time; work got done yet the clock did not change! Thoughts were flying— and landing. Shadowed models pop off the surface of the page, yet also drop deeply into nested self-reference with their own ghostly interiors.

Walking to my studio one morning, I wondered what kind of concert hall would fit the works of composer Alvin Singleton, a fellow colonist whose music ranges from cerebral to sensuous, from concerto to discotheque. After a quick freehand sketch, I translated that passing whim into full-fledged architecture in less than a day. The classic central plan sustains concert stage and seating across a dance hall with 3 tiers of nightclub *boîtes* facing a wide dance ramp. Balcony access resolves the syncopation of the 8 and 12 foot vertical intervals. Corners contain fire stairs and services. For one person to go from rough sketch to finished design in a single day is an astonishing development in the history of architecture. While long experience facilitated rapid decisions, digital technology resolved the Idea to high precision and clarity. But what truly brought the work to quick fruition was the sacred magical spacetime of MacDowell itself.

## TRADITION



## YOUR SYNAGOGUE MY SYNAGOGUE OUR SYNAGOGUE



אבגדהו  
זחטיכל



SYNAGOGUE  
HET



אבגדהו  
זחטיכל

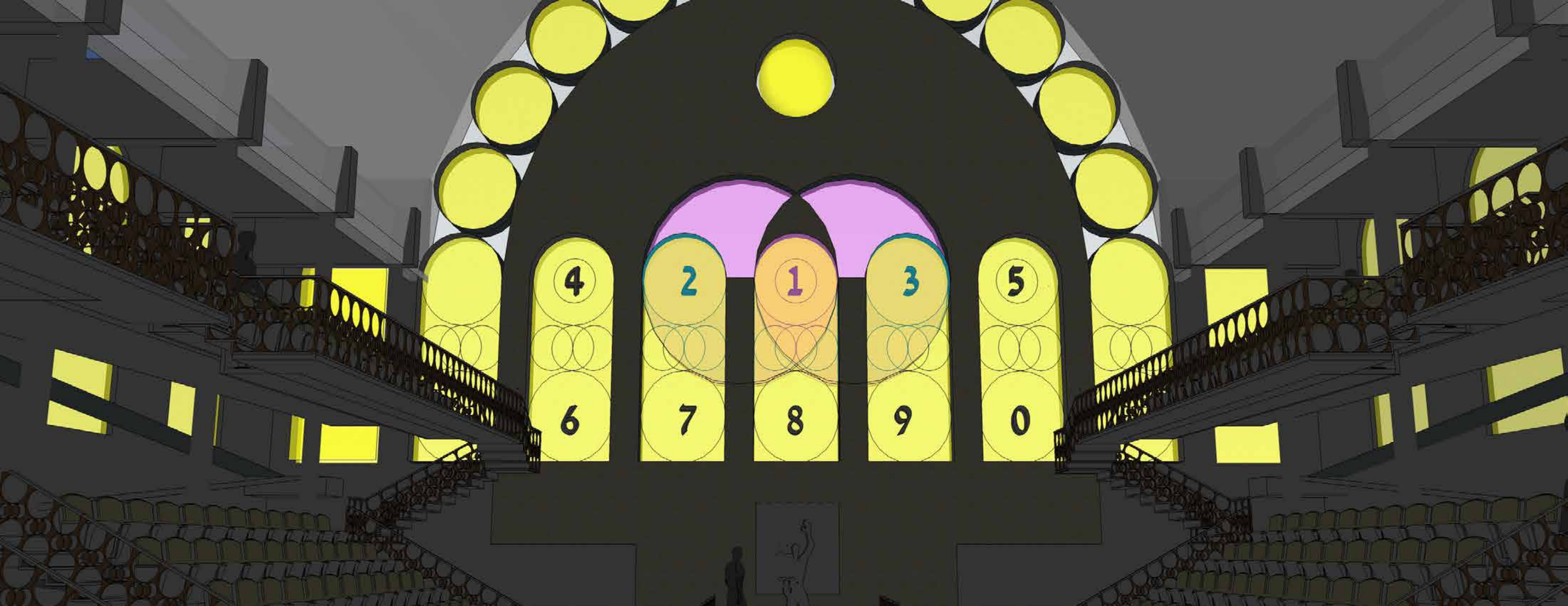
TRADITION



YOUR SYNAGOGUE MY SYNAGOGUE OUR SYNAGOGUE









A CENTER FOR  
MARVIN SINGLETON

PARKING

ROADS

ORLANDO

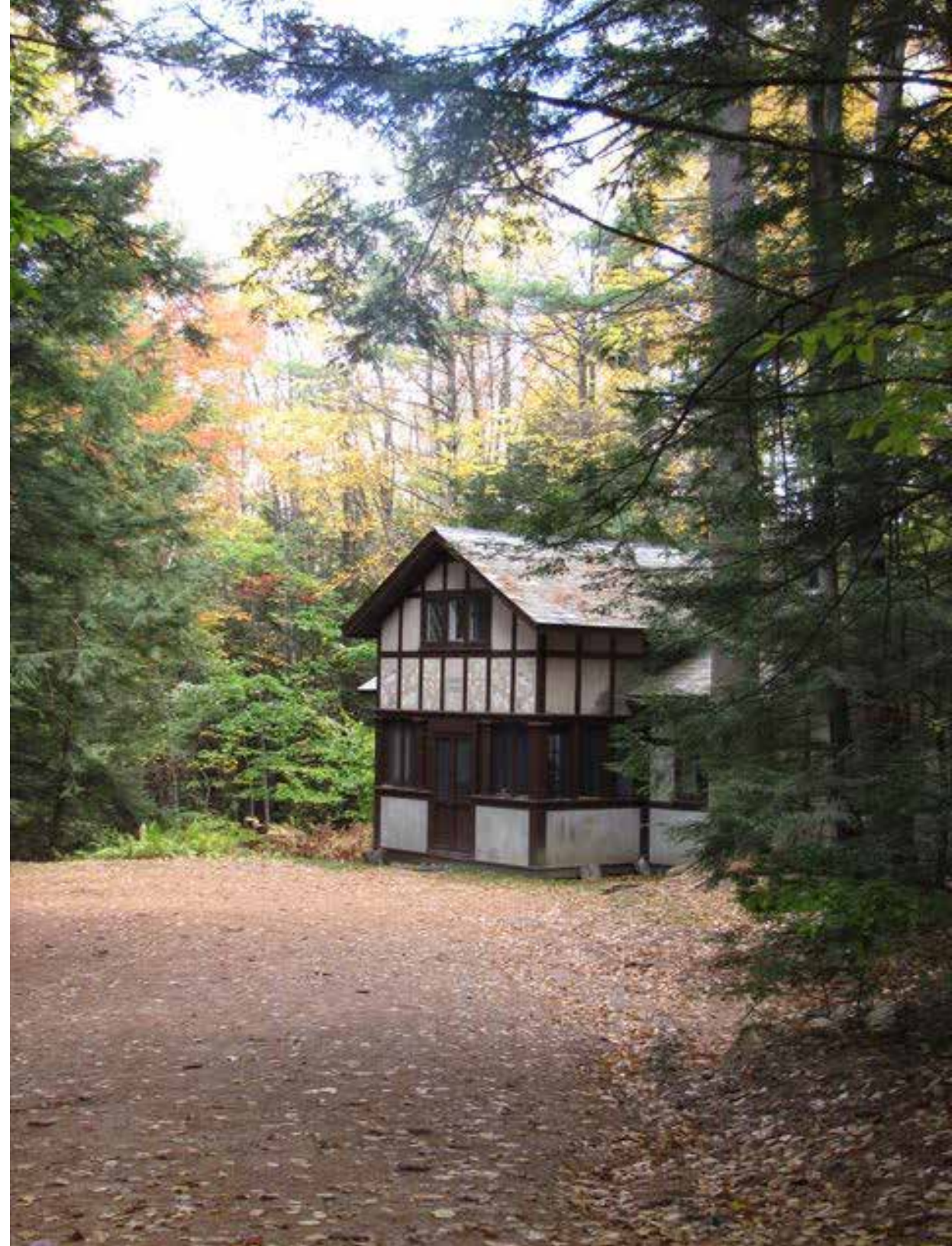
ORLANDO

PARKING

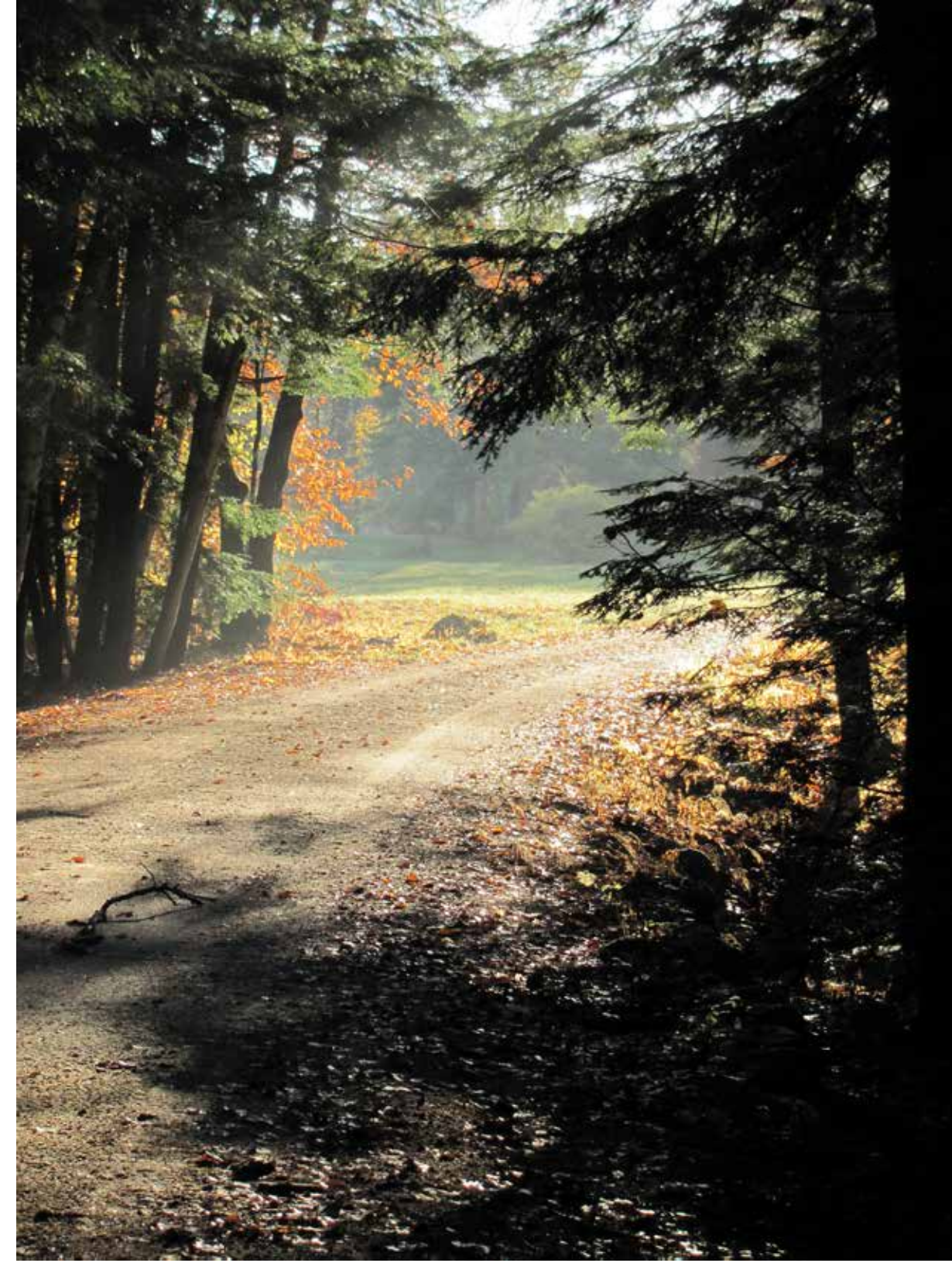
WATER

11.3.09  
ADAMS.

Walking to my studio one morning, I wondered what kind of concert hall would fit the works of composer Alvin Singleton, a fellow colonist whose music ranges from cerebral to sensuous, from concerto to discotheque. After a quick freehand sketch, I translated that passing whim into full-fledged architecture in less than a day. The classic central plan sustains concert stage and seating across a dance hall with 3 tiers of nightclub *boîtes* facing a wide dance ramp. Balcony access resolves the syncopation of the 8 and 12 foot vertical intervals. Corners contain fire stairs and services. For one person to go from rough sketch to finished design in a day is an astonishing development in the history of architecture. While long experience facilitated rapid decisions, digital technology resolved the Idea to high precision and clarity. Just as in 1946, form emerges from solid darkness into timely light, or is it the other way around?



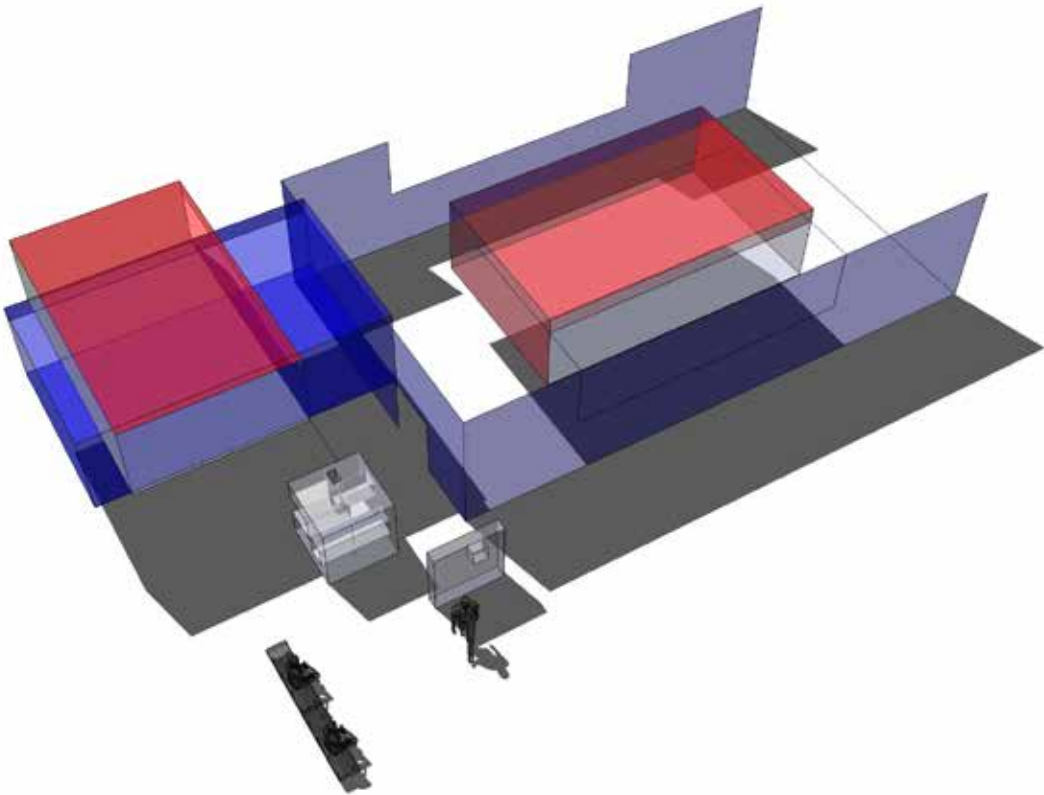
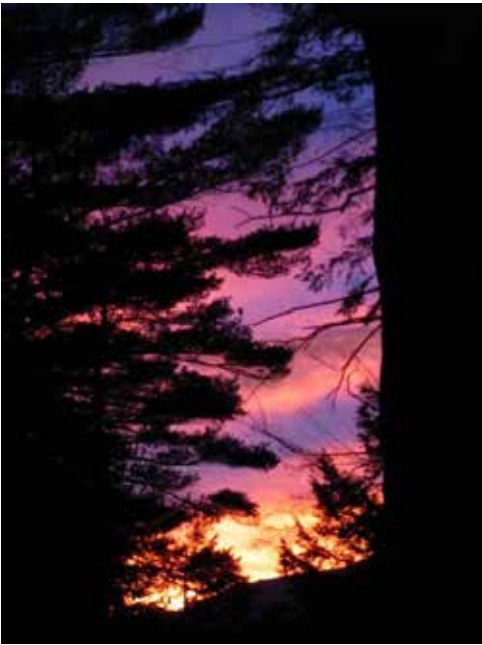
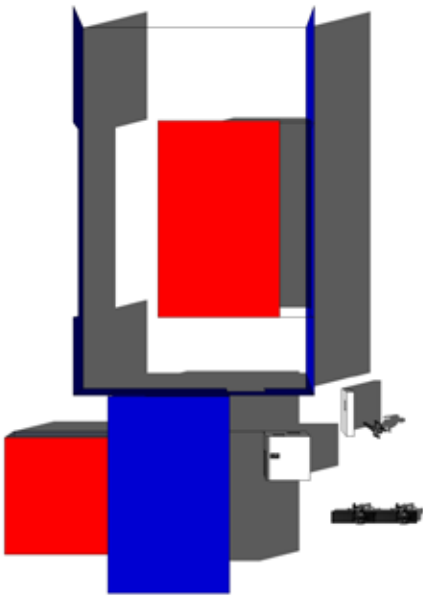






# SYNAGOGUE

# YUD



COMMUNION  
UNISON  
HARMONY  
COMMUNITY  
CONCORD  
EMPATHY  
AGREEMENT  
SYNTHESIS  
COMMUNITY  
???

## COMMUNION

YUD

Yonatan  
Jonathan  
Gift o God

Yad Hand

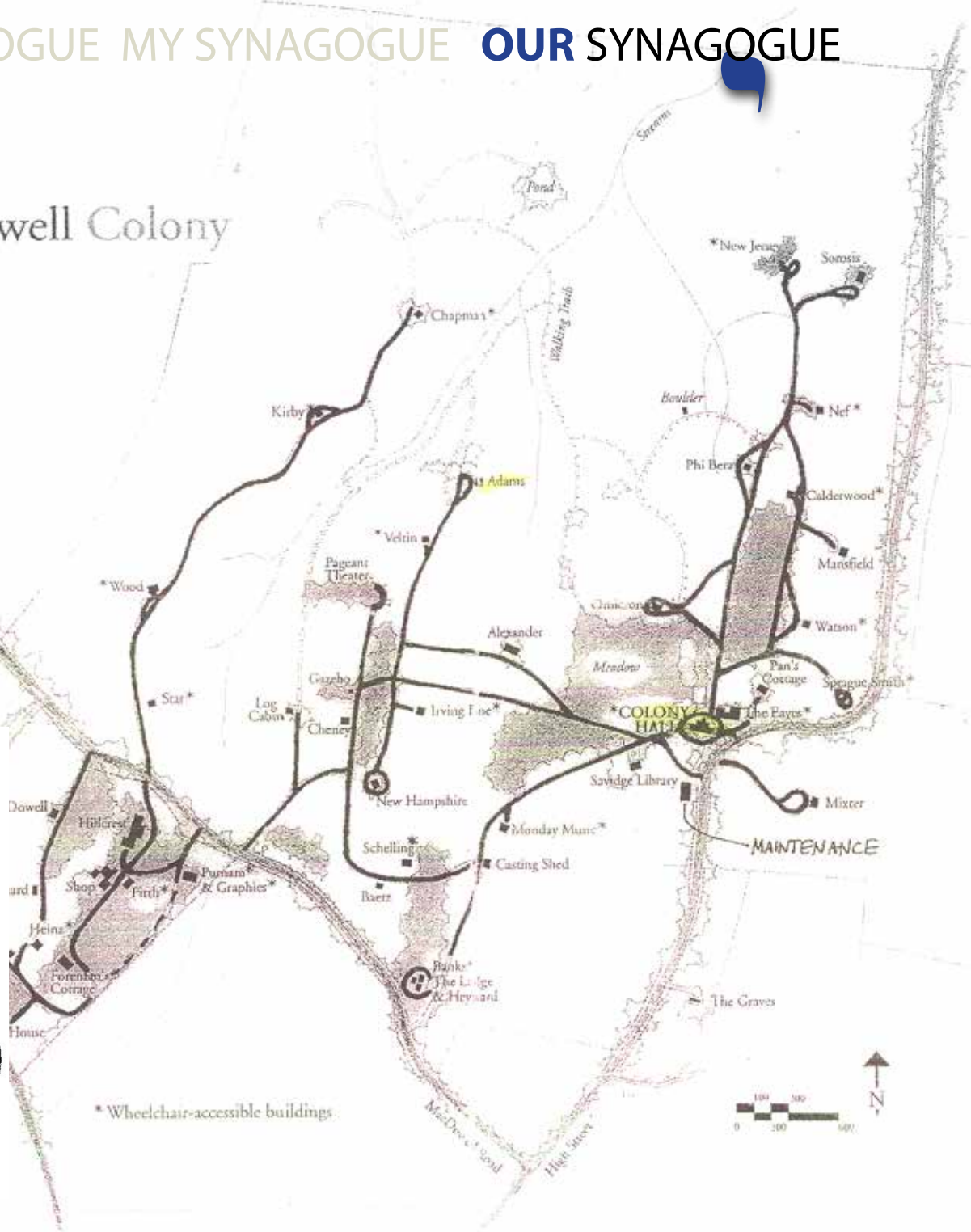
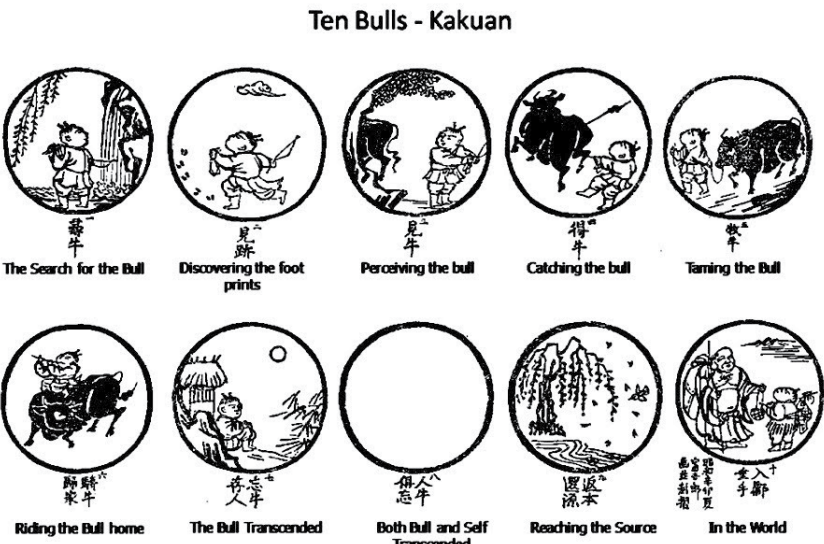
Ricvhard Steve Hand  
Bernice Block

JBF  
gift of god  
block solid  
man of peace

## YOUR SYNAGOGUE MY SYNAGOGUE OUR SYNAGOGUE

### The MacDowell Colony

open fields





# SYNAGOGUE KAF



אבגדהו  
זחטיכל

## THEM AND US

### KAF = CROWN AND HAND

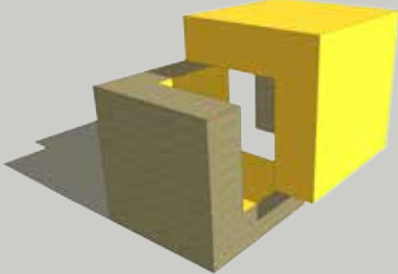
A SYNAGOGUE FOR THEM AND FOR US

**THEY** are the fortunate few, the one per cent. Let's be generous, and give **THEM** ten per cent. Either way, the chances are you are one of **US**.

**FOR THEM:** plenty of room for the 10 to 12 people, including the privileged Rabbi, with comfortable seats near the *bimah* and comfortable seating elsewhere including Le Corbusier's *Gran Confort* and Mies' *de luxe* grand Barcelona Chairs, bathrooms and kitchen cooking wetbar fresh food facilities on every floor, a winter solarium and spa on the upper floor, and not the least a graceful covered platform for access from vehicles at the *port cochere*-- while there is only partial protection for access at US. Entry doors for **THEM** are unmarked and locked. If you don't have the code, or key, or secret guide, (or the right hair color) you won't find them and can't get in. The easiest way is to have your parents show you, when you are a child. Or better, your grandparents. Most of all, the view: arrangement of the elevators favors unlimited view along the vertical surfaces of the glass box between the two volumes, enabling **THEM** to see the sunset to the west and beautiful backlit scenery of the landscape to the north, while for **US** the elevators block these vertical glazing views. In addition, a skylight Crown of Light and Ner Tamid glows directly on **THEM**. This clerestory lighting affords **THEM** continuous unbroken views of the sky, the clouds, and the heavens.

For **THEM** all fittings and appointments are of the highest quality luxury materials and finish. Topaz translucent glazing, deep carpeting, rarest woods, and iridescent gilt surfaces are found throughout.

**FOR US:** the slightly damp and crowded atmosphere of mothers cooking, babies in playpens, noisy classes, and *mikveh*. Fluorescent fixtures provide limited illumination. More than 20 of **US** must fit in the same area as only 10 of **THEM**. On High Holidays even more of **US** are crowded onto additional folding chairs. Some of these are hard to reach, and the footing is precarious. Here the glass ceiling is a Glass Floor and dangerous to cross. The storage for 96 folding chairs is tight, but allows the main floor to be cleared for dances and other special occasions. A *tevah* hovering over **US** during High Holidays allows **THEM** to make a "generous" gesture of equality (separate but equal) at least once a year. Rough wood finishes contrast with yellow paint applied to selected surfaces.



## PROGRAM

### THEM

Kohanim = 10 + 2  
Bimah and Ark  
Upholstered Seating  
Rabbi's Office  
Library-Study  
Catered Food Service  
Dining on each floor  
Wet bars and Lounges  
Luxury wc's  
Massage lounge  
Whirlpool spa  
Sunbath solarium  
Private Entry  
Private Lift

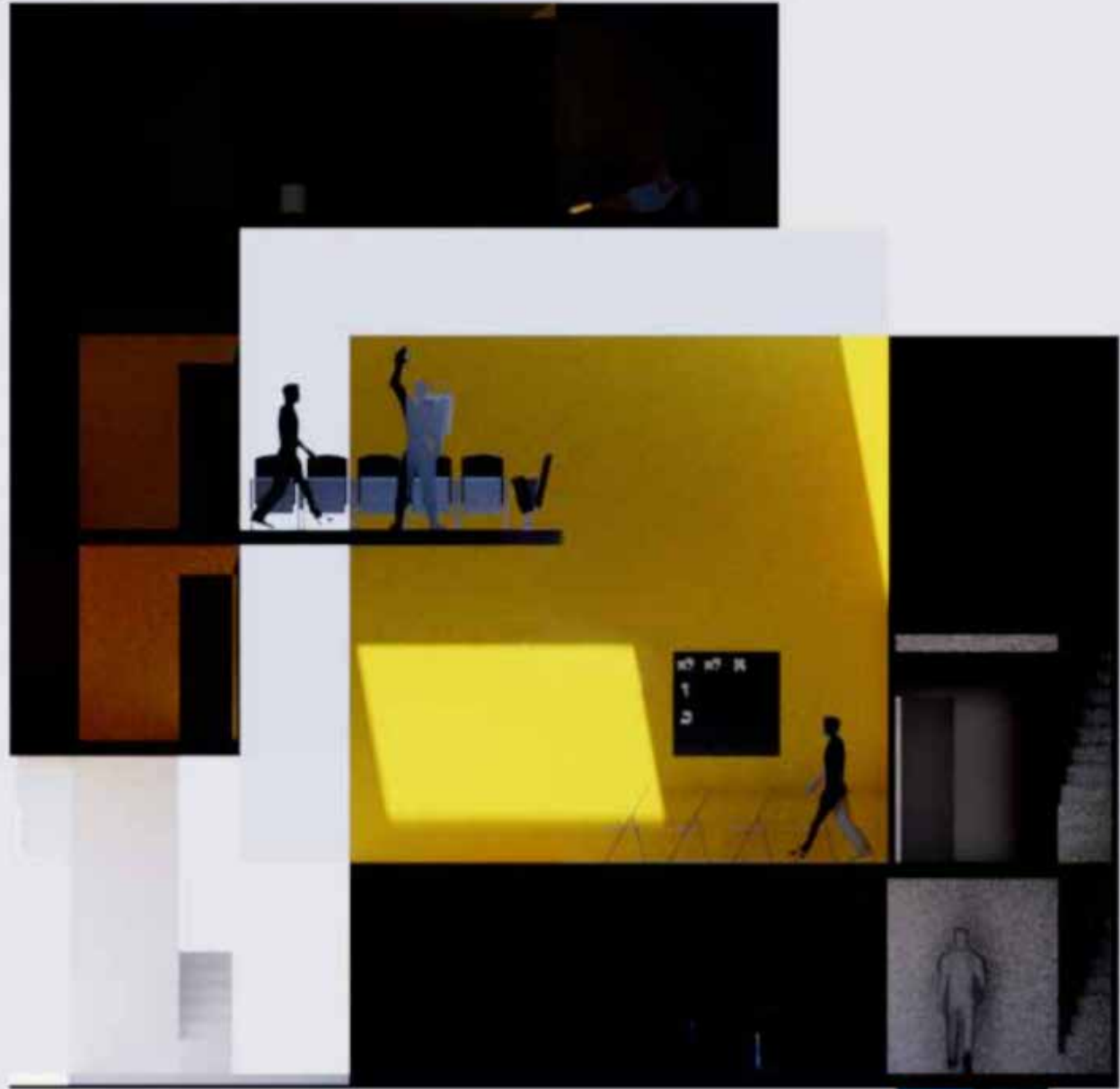
### US

Israel = 90  
playpen  
baby and daycare  
kitchen snacks  
mikveh  
toilet coat closet  
laundry janitor  
classroom  
folding chairs  
service and storage  
cots for workers  
service elevator

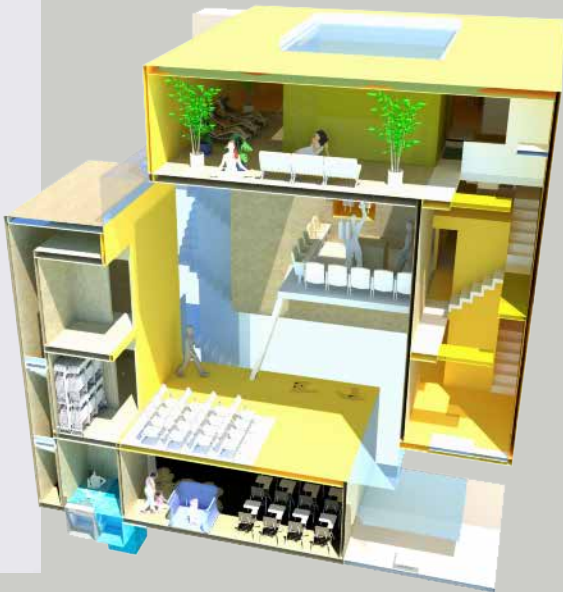


The Ark holds 4 Torah scrolls and is "naturally" located with **THEM**. One Torah is lent to **US** for use on the *Tevah* during the High Holidays and returned to the Ark via the service stairs or elevator, passing through the Rabbi's office for control and security. The holder, before returning to **US**, may be checked for contraband. The Eternal Light, *Ner Tamid*, is the skylight above the Bimah, which is illuminated for **THEM** at night by a halo ring of glowing incandescence powered by photovoltaics on the roof.





Jazz is the culture of America. Duke Ellington



The **CROWN** of King George XII of Georgia took the form of a circlet surmounted by ornaments and eight arches. A globe surmounted by a cross rested on the top of the crown. The crown is made of gold and decorated with 145 diamonds, 58 rubies, 24 emeralds and 16 amethysts-- and the lives of how many miserable and unnecessarily suffering serfs?

Only six steps on **THE LADDER OF SUCCESS** separate US and THEM. A *bimah* may not be more than six steps above the congregation. Thus those who are called upon to take part in the service, will not be elevated above US any more than necessary. Here that rule has been stretched, literally. The rungs are far apart-- it's a steep (and dangerous, no railings) climb to get up there, but hard work and courage is the nature of success-- unless of course you know someone or are related, in which case the doors to THEM will open for you and an easy staircase, even an elevator, may whisk you up to the *Bi-mah*. "No problem, our pleasure" says THEM.

The **TEN COMMANDMENTS** distinguish between privilege (the first 5 commandments) and obligation (the last 5 commandments.) Moses destroyed the first tablets when he descended from Mount Sinai and saw the Children of Israel worshipping the Golden Calf. Like the Rose Windows of the great cathedrals, this version of the Ten Commandments is a wheel-- of fortune.

Le Corbusier called his **OPEN HAND** a sign of "peace and reconciliation. It is open to give and open to receive." No doubt influenced by Gandhi, it represents the exchange of ideas. The Open Hand constructed in the Indian capital of Chandigarh is a democratic symbol of giving, reminding elected representatives that

#### SUBJUGATION

A palm turned downward suggests among other things, subjugation. Placing palm on palm is an act and sign of subjugation, similar to the act of bowing before a king. Kaf as a *verb* means "to subdue" or "coerce." The Torah refers to all productive labor as "the toil of the palms." "The toil of your palms you shall eat, happy are you and goodness is yours."

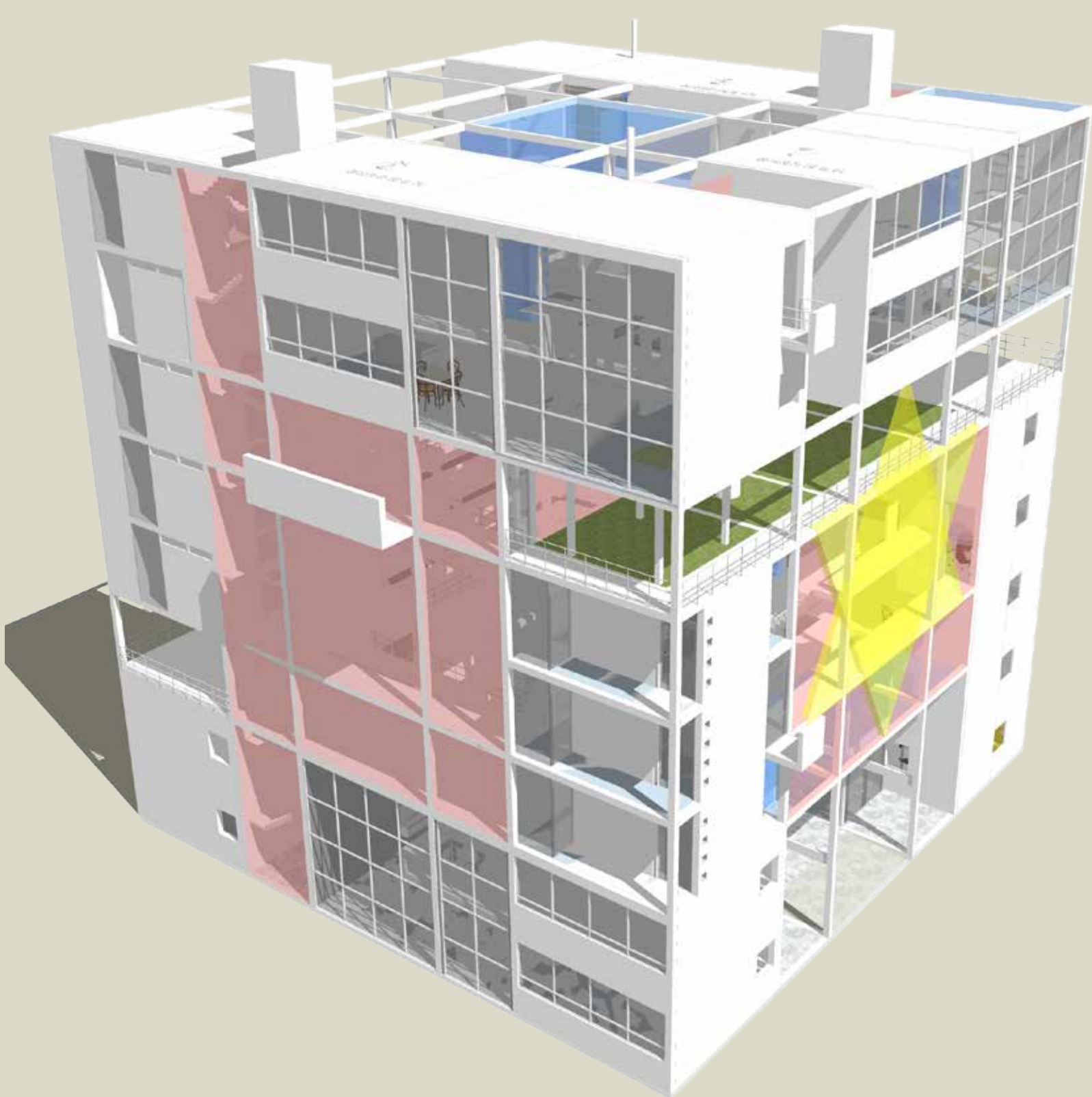
As a negative force, history is full of conflict between nations in struggle over power (the *keter* of the Kaf). Some believe that ultimately this negative, egocentric force will be converted to good when the Messiah will selflessly use the power of the Kaf to "force" all people to abide by the Divine statutes of Torah.

Meantime, we would do well to watch out for the bifurcation of Crown and palm-- of blessing and subjugation, of THEM and US.



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# LAMED VAVNIK LIFELONG LEARNING



BIMAH ON ELEVATOR  
SERVES ALL 6 LEVELS

LAMED is the 12th letter in the Hebrew Aleph-Bet. It is the symbol of teaching and learning and represents aspiration, and contemplation of the heart. The Lamed Vavnik is a Lifelong Learner. The question I discovered, when consulting the commentaries on the Hebrew Letters, and their recursive reference to Lamed and learning (are not the Jews the People of the book?) was:

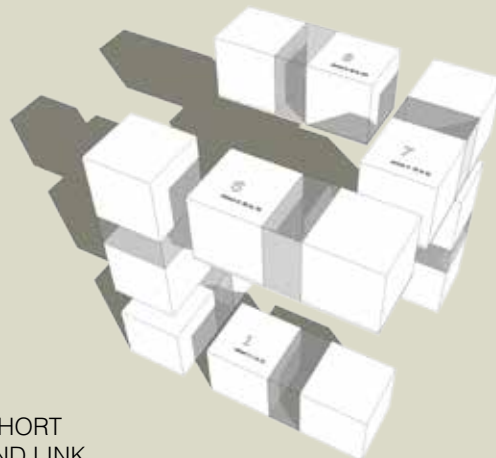
If learning takes place throughout a lifetime, what is the architecture of that learning? This comes before any question of the architecture of any building. And the answer came to me as follows--

What is a life? A series of events marking growth, spiritual, physical intellectual, chronological. And what is the structure of this growth and learning in Judaism? Clearly the first phase of development is completed at Bar or Bat Mltzvah, when a child can say "today I am a man" or today I am a woman." And normally this takes place at age 13. So, the module of an architecture of lifelong learning is a thirteen year span. What might this mean? A series of spaces that accomodate learning in each of the 13-year intervals of a full life. Thus, from 1 to 13 a child goes from infant through pre-K, primary school, and perhaps middle school. Spaces for such activities should include playroom as well as classroom, and places for naps as well as active frolic. How many will use it will determine its (minimum) size. A most fundamental version of that answer could be one girl and one boy for each year, or 13 x 2 children or 26 total in the first cohort. This cohort needs its own "house" to provide at least space for energetic play, quiet resting space, study or class room, and necessary services including storage, bathrooms, even changing tables and laundry.

8 STAGES  
FIRST COHORT:  
BIRTH TO  
BAR MITZVAH

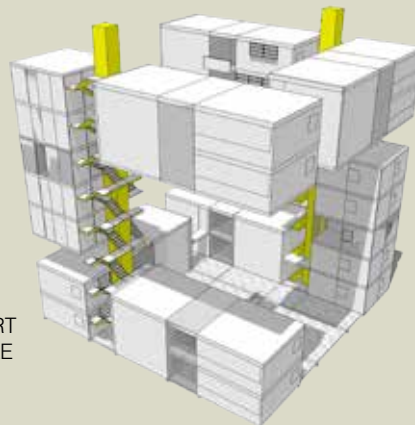
STAGE 1: 1 - 13  
STAGE 2: 14 - 26  
STAGE 3: 27 - 39  
STAGE 4: 40 - 52  
STAGE 5: 53 - 65  
STAGE 6: 66 - 78  
STAGE 7: 79 - 91  
STAGE 8: 92 - 104

EACH HOUSE COHORT  
DOUBLE CUBE AND LINK



ARK FACING EAST  
SUNSET STARTS DAY  
OLDEST FACE WEST

8 COHORTS x 13  
= 104 YEARS  
2 X 13 FOR EACH COHORT  
= 2 X 13 X 8 = 208 PEOPLE



COHORT 1: TO 13  
CLASSROOM  
PLAYROOM  
NURSERY

COHORT 2: TO 26  
SEMINAR LIBRARY  
WORKDESKS

COHORT 3: TO 39  
KITCHEN DINING  
CAFE

WORKSHOP  
TABLESAW LATHE DRILL PRESS  
JOINER-PLANER POTTER'S WHEEL



LOOKING NORTH INTO WEST FACING UPPER GARDEN  
SUNSET VIEW FOR CENTNARIANS



THE OTHER BROTHER

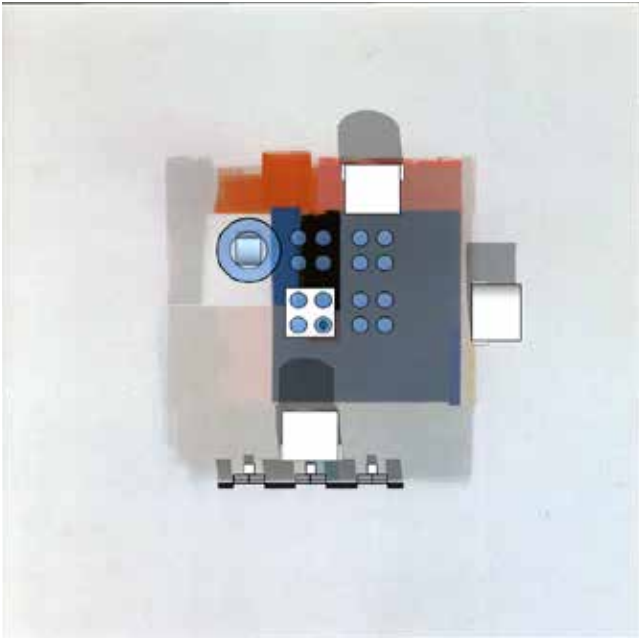
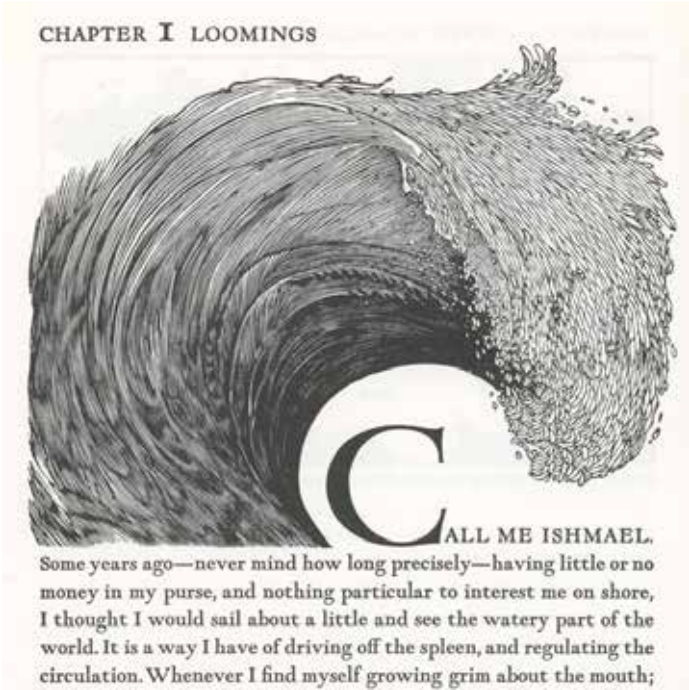
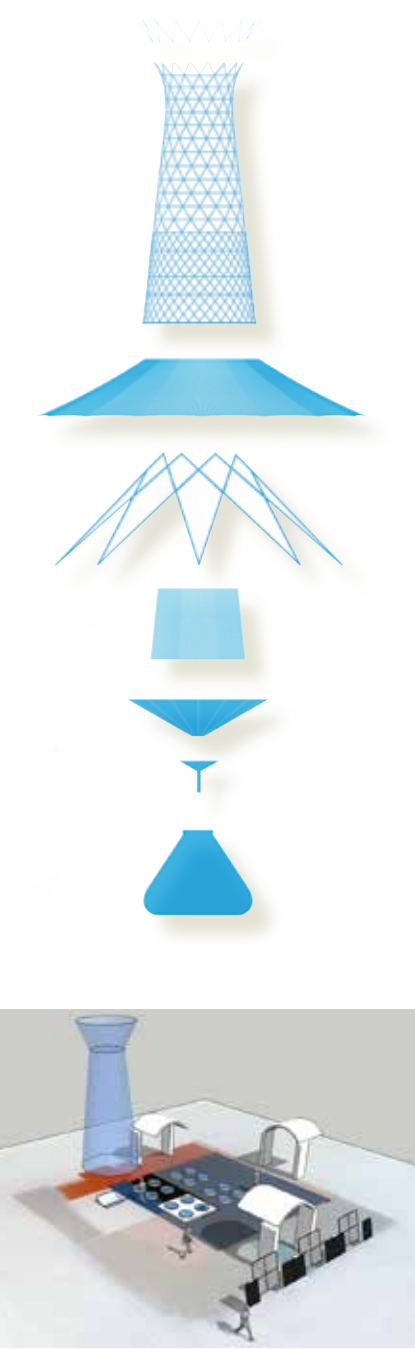
Moses, a descendant of Shem, son of Noah, went east across the Red Sea arriving in Canaan. Ham, **the other brother**. other son of Noah, went west across Nile to North African desert-- hamite Berber etc. The curse of Canaan who was (on) the son of Ham-- yielding the land of Israel to Shem and shemite Semitic Hebrews ....

The Hamites are the desert people. Our relatives cast into the wilderness. *Call me Ishamel.*

In the desert, one can survive by digging hole to suck ground water condensate under clear cover. A pint a quart a gallon. Erect mesh bells to filter moisture from dry air. Arturo Vittori's invention can provide remote villages with more than 25 gallons of clean drinking water a day. Then shelter and storage excess water. Then more holes and mesh, and more people can thrive. Eventually plants return lift water into leaves to provide shade to slow evaporation. At last, a fresh water oasis in the desert. A reason to rejoice.

Meanwhile the other brother. A synagogue of salt water... the sea peoples move south into desert and bring the ocean in a ditch to make a condenser island in a salt water pool.

Finally the two meet.  
Slutsky figure ground color inversion.



synagogue MEM

desert  
ocean  
the beach

ocean into oasis  
desert into oasis



You awake, find yourself head in the sand. Prone. You were lost, wandering in the desert. A storm. You had been exiled ostracized driven out. Scapegoat, sacrificial lamb, goat driven into the wilderness. Azazael. Bezalael. They got the elevator. You got the shaft. You are the Other Brother or the Other Mother. Call you Hagar. Call me Ishmael.

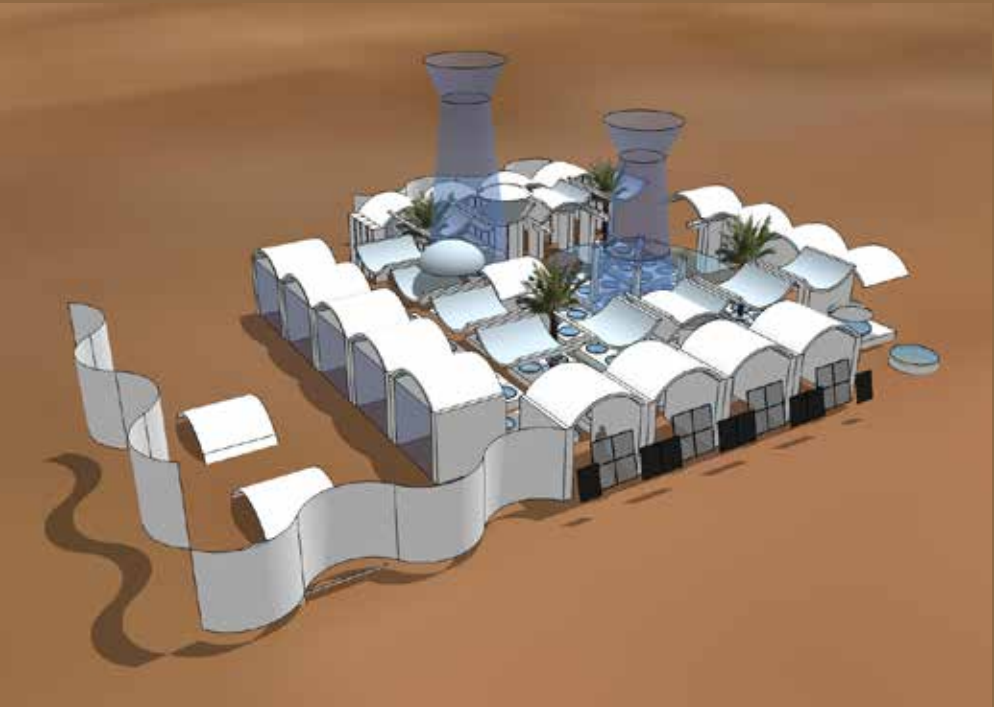
You have a few things. Minimal survival. A an empty plastic bottle, no more water. You have dug ditches. Perhaps you are an archaeologist. Some lightweight tarps-- one is clear plastic, the other black and photovoltaic, another is ultralight mesh. They are "smart materials." They can be cut, and their shapes can be programmed. Also, some trail mix, a pocketful of seeds, a pocket knife, and a trowel/pitouche/folding shovel. Your cell phone. But your water is gone.

Smart tarp strips can coil/fold into origami poles, long, thin, strong. Ishmael was an archer. Arch, a bow.

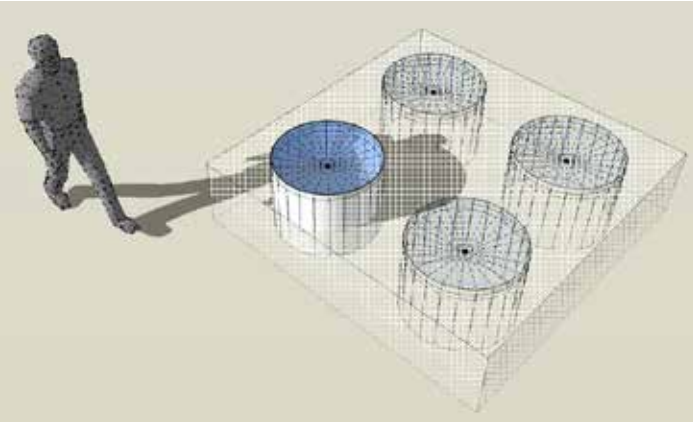
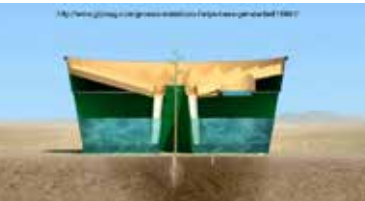
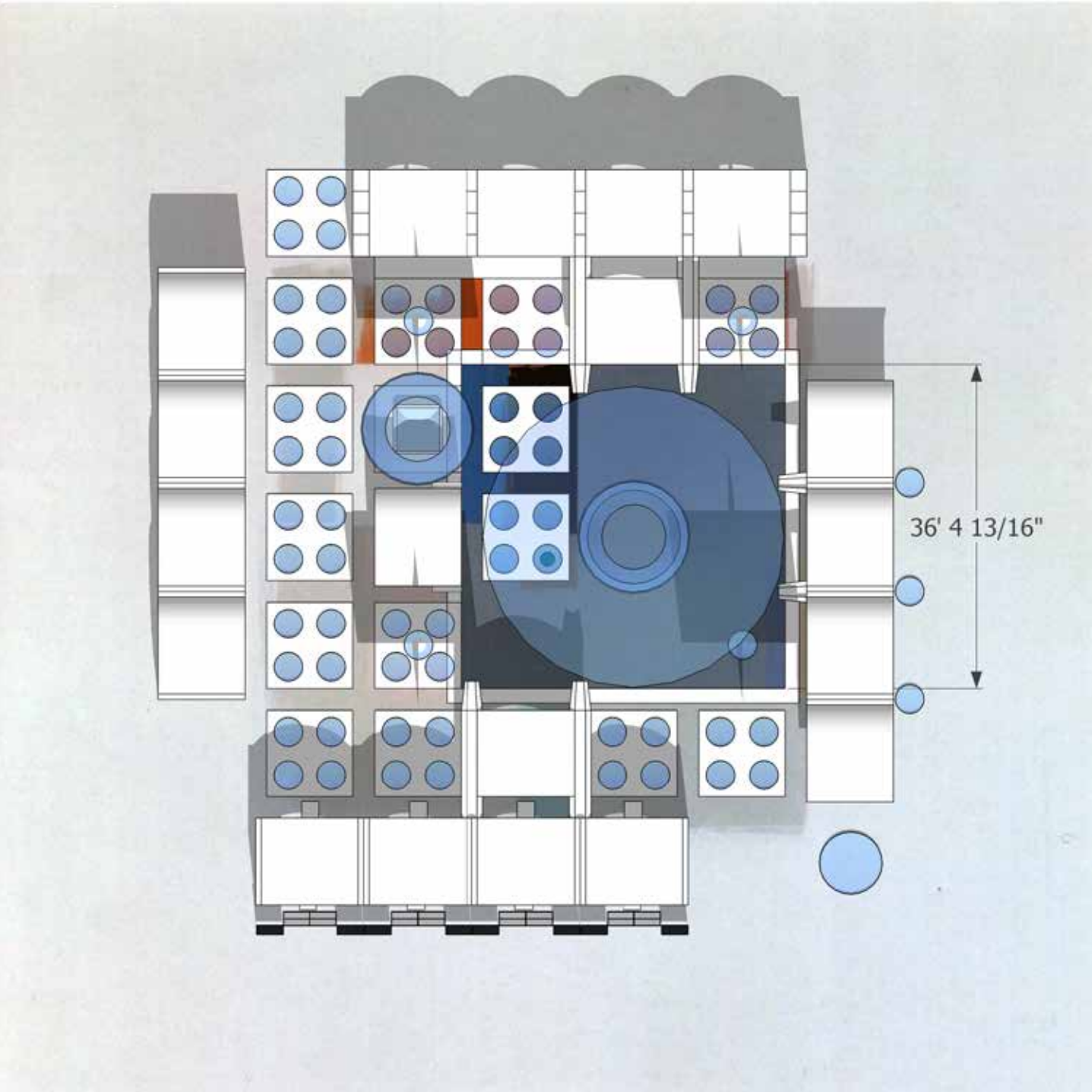
These are dark times. But is there hope? Ishmael in Hebrew means "god listens." In times of tyrants and despots and madmen, aren't we all refugees?











WATER FROM THE SAND

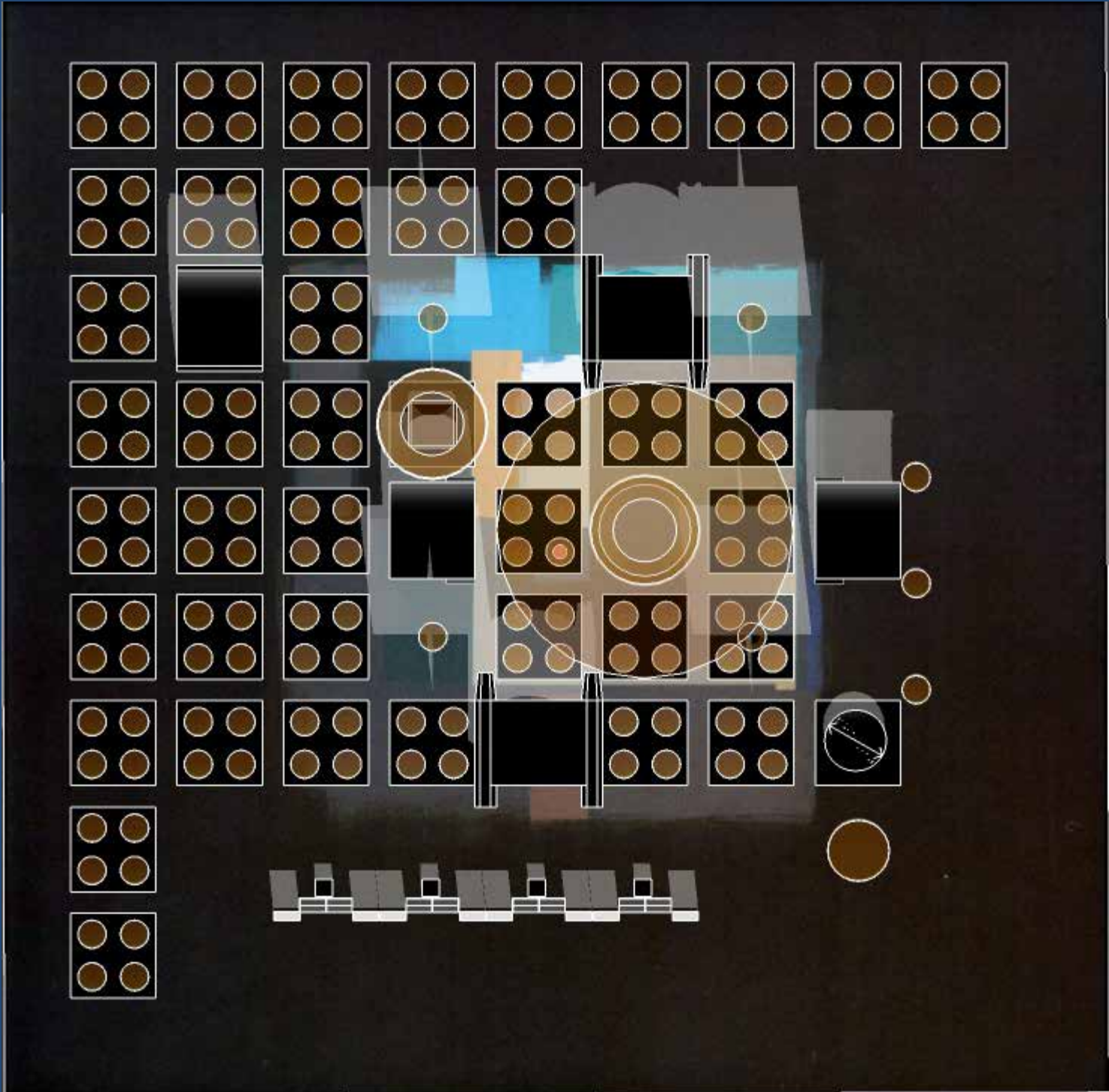
DAY 1 DIG 1 HOLE.  
MAKE 1 QUART/DAY  
= SURVIVAL.

DAY 2 - 4 DIG 3 MORE HOLES.  
4 HOLES IN 4 DAYS.  
MAKES 1 GALLON/DAY  
= THRIVING, ENOUGH  
WATER FOR 1 PERSON.

DIG MORE HOLES.  
40 DAYS = 10 PEOPLE  
= DRINKING WATER FOR A MINYAN  
A HOMEMADE LOCAL FLOOD. **NOAH!**







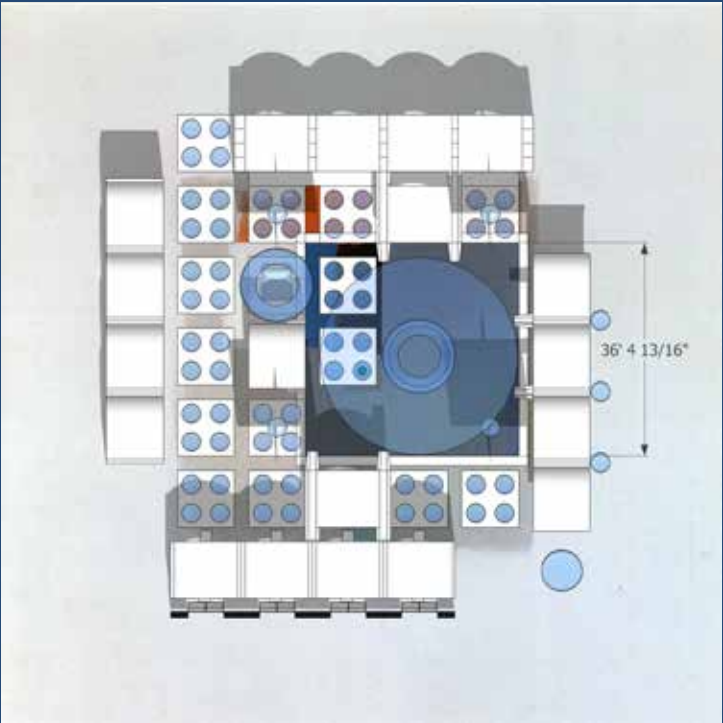
synagogue NUN

desert  
ocean  
the beach

ocean into oasis  
desert into oasis

.....

These are dark times. But is there hope? Ishmael in Hebrew means "god listens." In times of tyrants and despots and madmen, aren't we all refugees?





מלם

OLD NILE

מלם

מלם

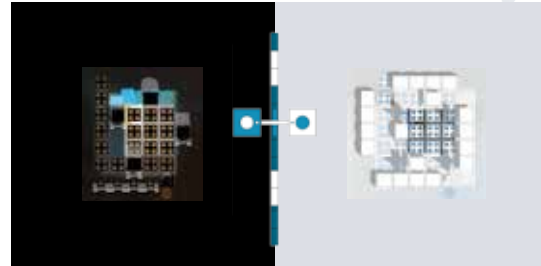
מלם

מלם

מלם

מלם

מלם



NEW NILE

16 people  
10 + 6  
PLAN shows sea  
in shadows (wet)  
add salt pans to  
desalinate sea water

LIKE the SLUTZKY  
MAKE A SPIRAL  
INFINITE GROWTH?

the BLACK is bigger  
and above the center brown  
is it the solar collector  
as well as the shadow  
beneath and behind to the north?  
does it make pure water blue  
to the west from mud blue square  
and light blue to south?

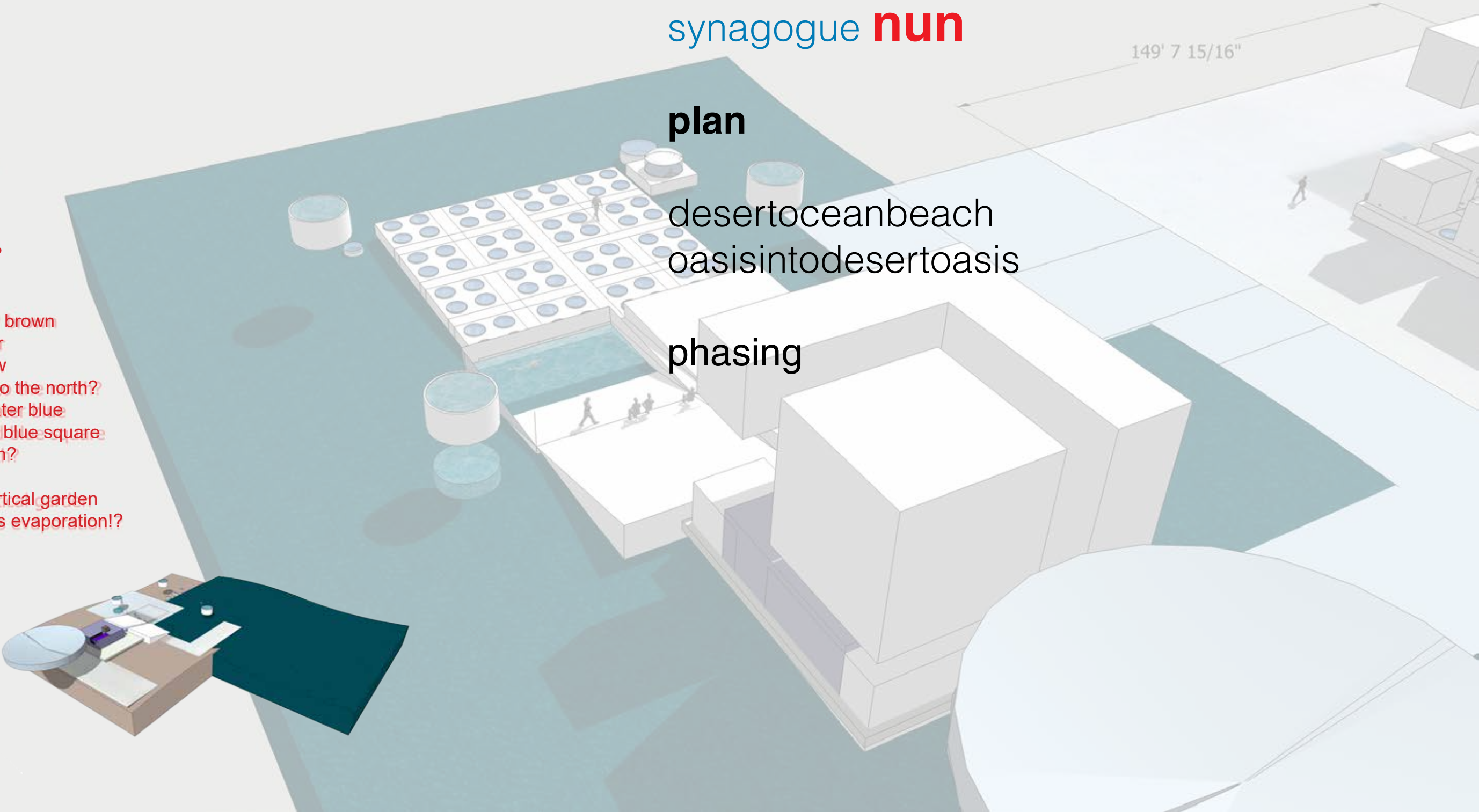
CONVOLUTION!! vertical garden  
that's how oasis stops evaporation!?

synagogue **nun**

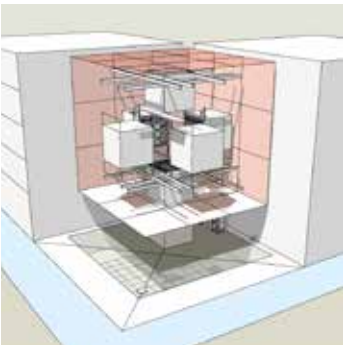
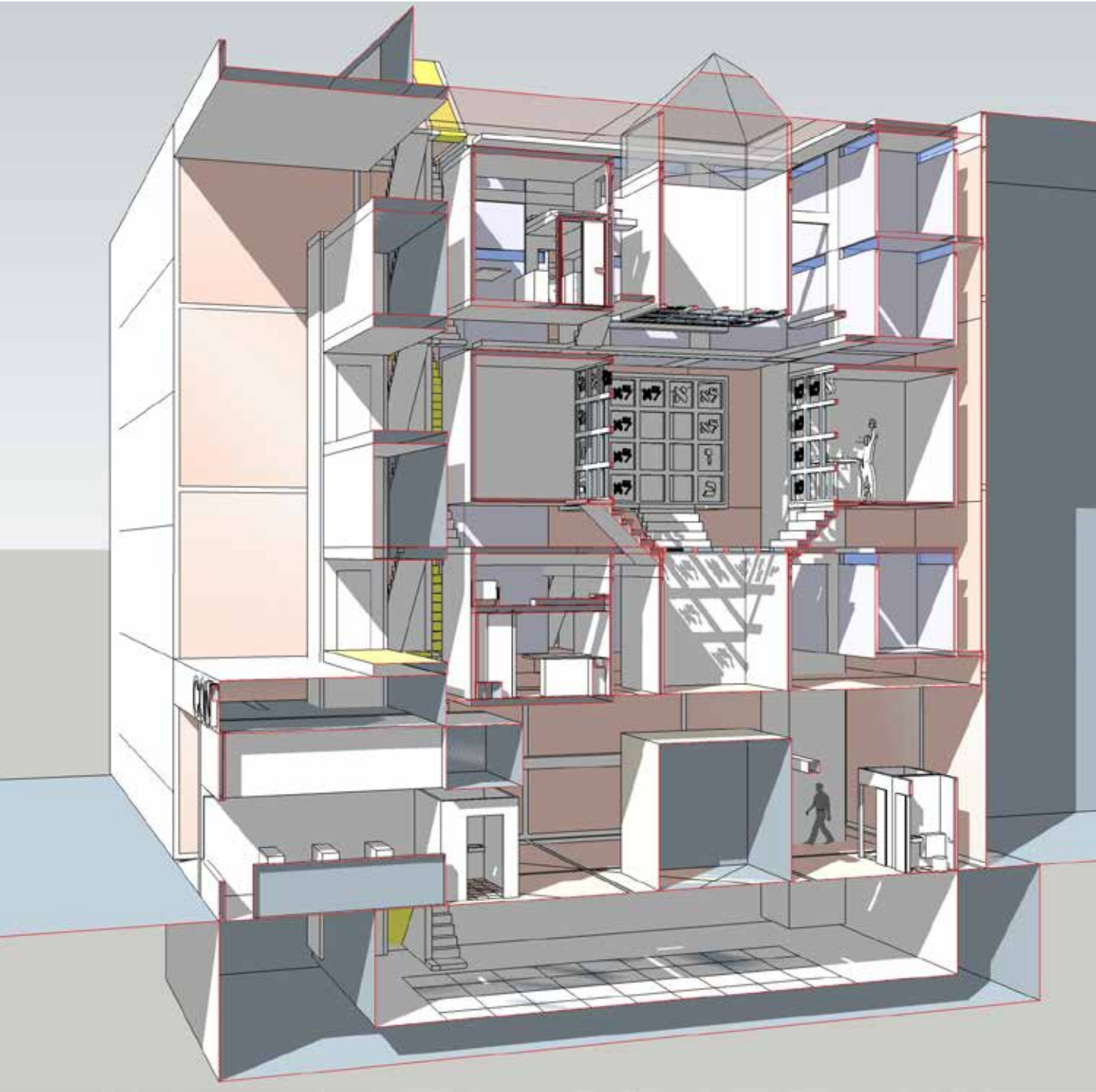
plan

desertoceanbeach  
oasisintodesertoasis

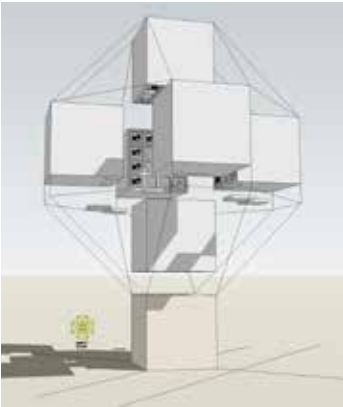
phasing





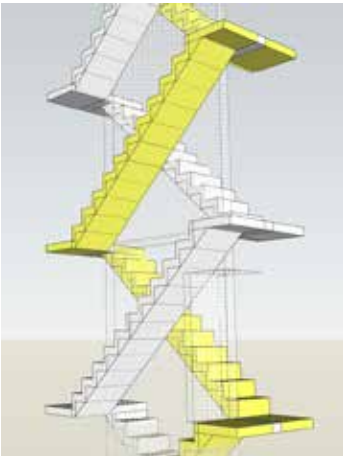


TENSEGRITY TESSERACT SANCTUARY



DOUBLE HELIX STAIRCASE

YELLOW = TENANT PUBLIC ACCESS  
WHITE = REFUGEE CIRCULATION



## Synagogue SAMECH

The question of SANCTUARY in the city

how to hide out  
in the middle of everyone  
how to provide short-term homes  
for those in transit?  
how to give safety and *refuge* to **refugees**??



### BUILDING WITHIN A BUILDING THE HIDER AND THE HIDDEN

Convert an urban corner building with residences over commercial space into a sanctuary. Hollow out the inside, provide separate access by means of alpha helix never interacting staircases with 2 means of egress for each population. Tenants never meet refugees. For profit housing includes 14 small duplex apartments as well as 7 micro housing units.

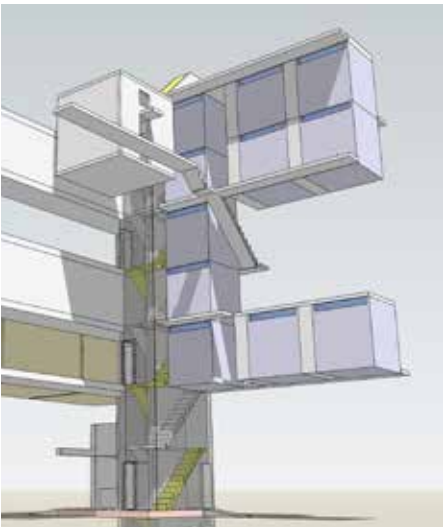
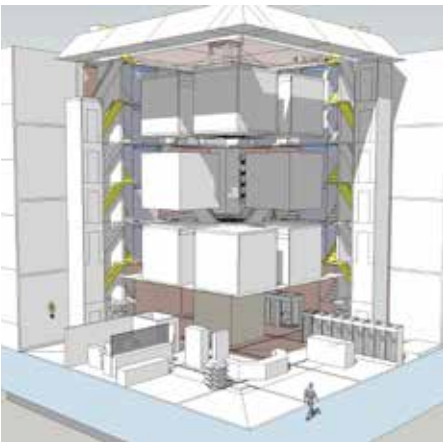
The concierge at the south entry and the shoe repairman to the east both have secret entries to the hidden stairs. They are both in on this modern underground railway.

Inner space has rooms for 44 or more solitary refugees and 6 families, as well as laundry, showers, childcare, infirmary, library and Holy Sanctuary as exploded tesseract tensegrity.

Skylights bring light from the heavens.

Ground floor drug store can provide food and drink to the refugees, through hidden entry backdoors through the freezer(?) at night.

Thus may the broken circle be repaired.  
May the circle be unbroken.





## AYIN

Synagogue AYIN, the next in the series (letter #16, of 22) has begun to take form and is now at about 80% substantial completion.

It is a study of plan/section simultaneity, XYZ tension and compression (IN and OUT) and investigates the locale of a NE/SW running ridgetop above the tree line—

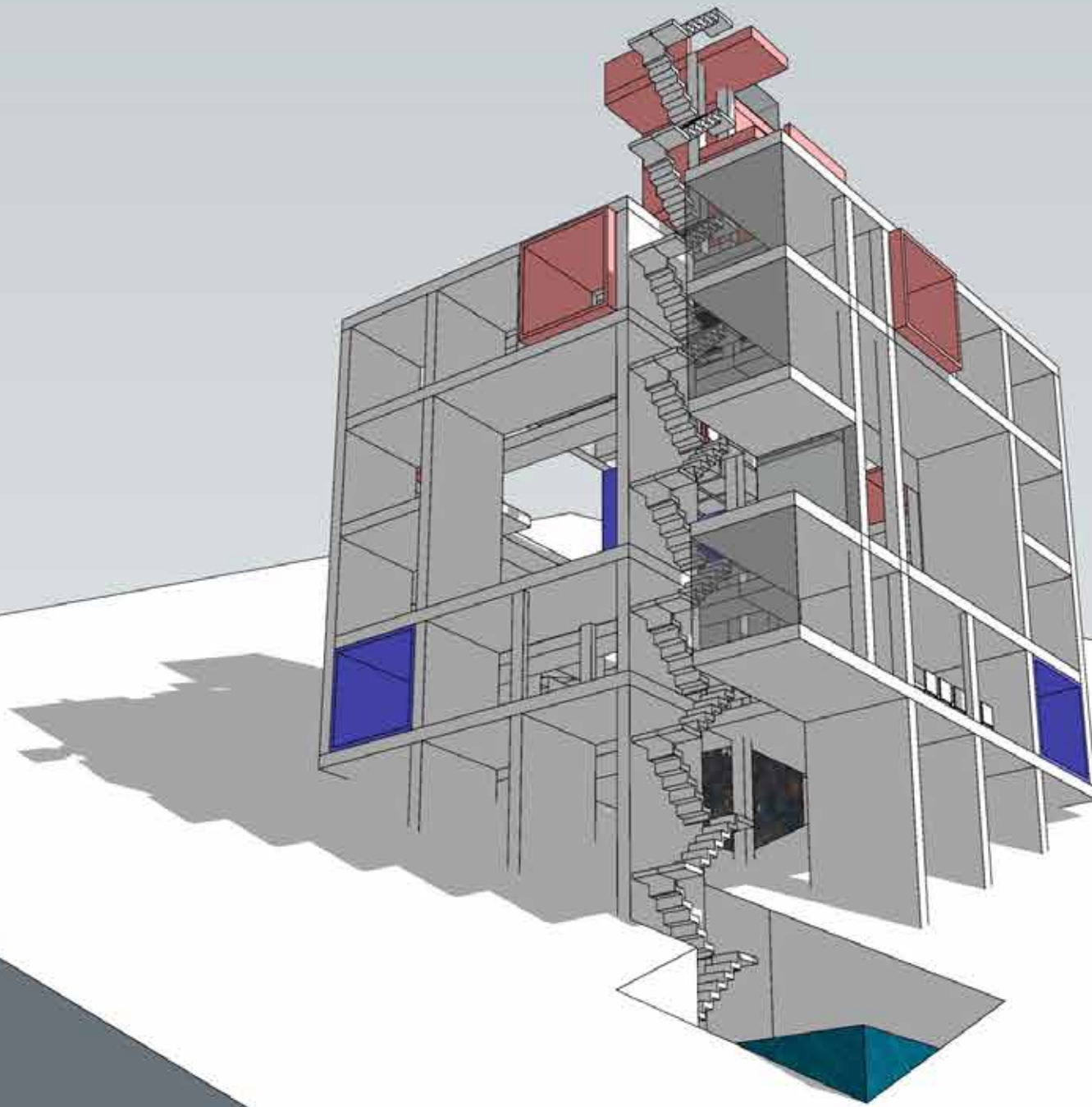
a backpacker's lodge....

the specific form of prayer here is the act of observation, both outward and inward. There are many professions and occupations that depend on this—most obviously meteorology—observation of the weather. But other forms of “weather” observation include... from astronomy up to geology down and hydrology, climatology, biology/zoology/forestry etc. etc.... in between....

the form is the intersection of two 4 x 4 x 4 cubes each of which is therefore originally composed of 64 volumes, but their intersection and subtraction, with other adjustments yields exactly 70 cubes of 8' x 8' x 8' or 512 cu. ft. each. The work is staffed by 12 people. Much like an outpost at the South Pole....

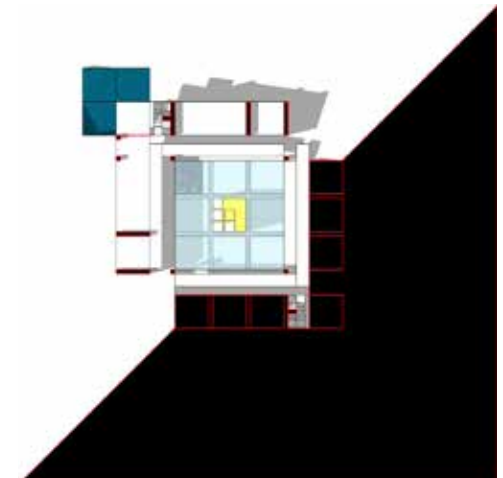
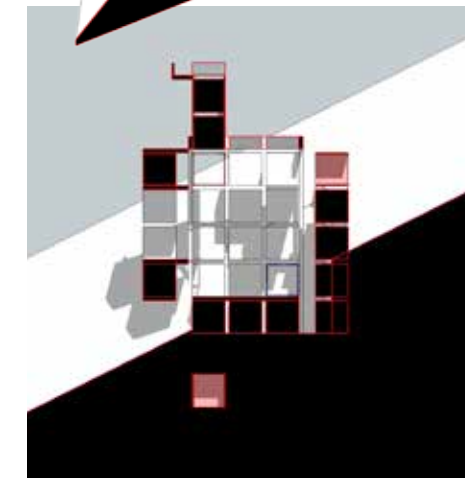
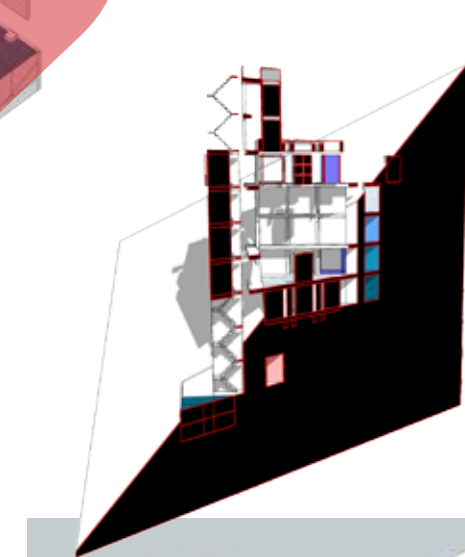
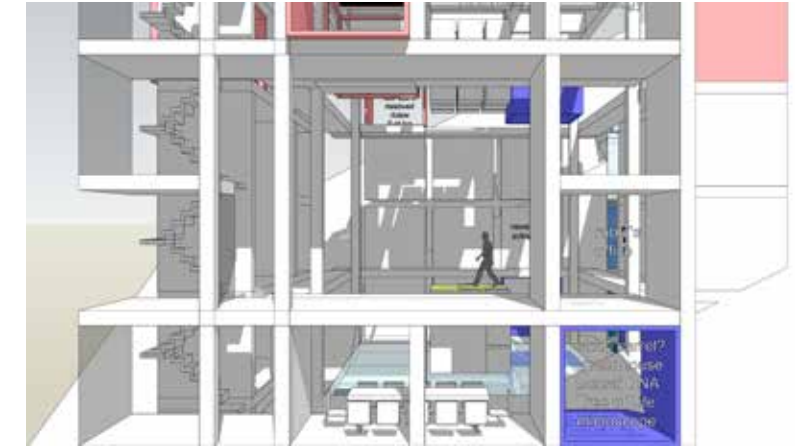
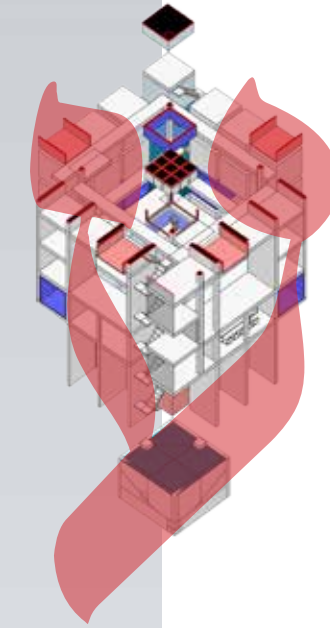
each person may have a specialty, and will also take part in shared activities, like cooking, service and study leading, and so on....

Program: in addition to observation spaces, arranged as sets of in out xyz, there are also offices, sleeping quarters cooking bathing facilities etc....

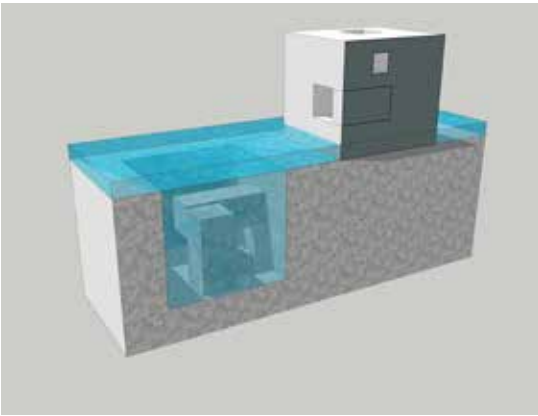
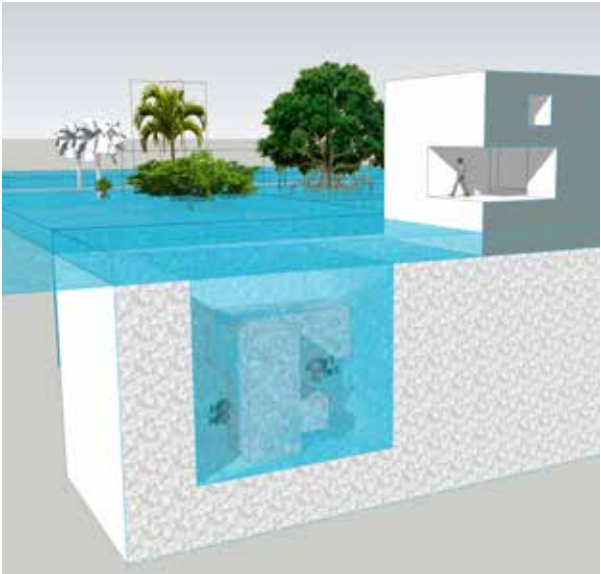
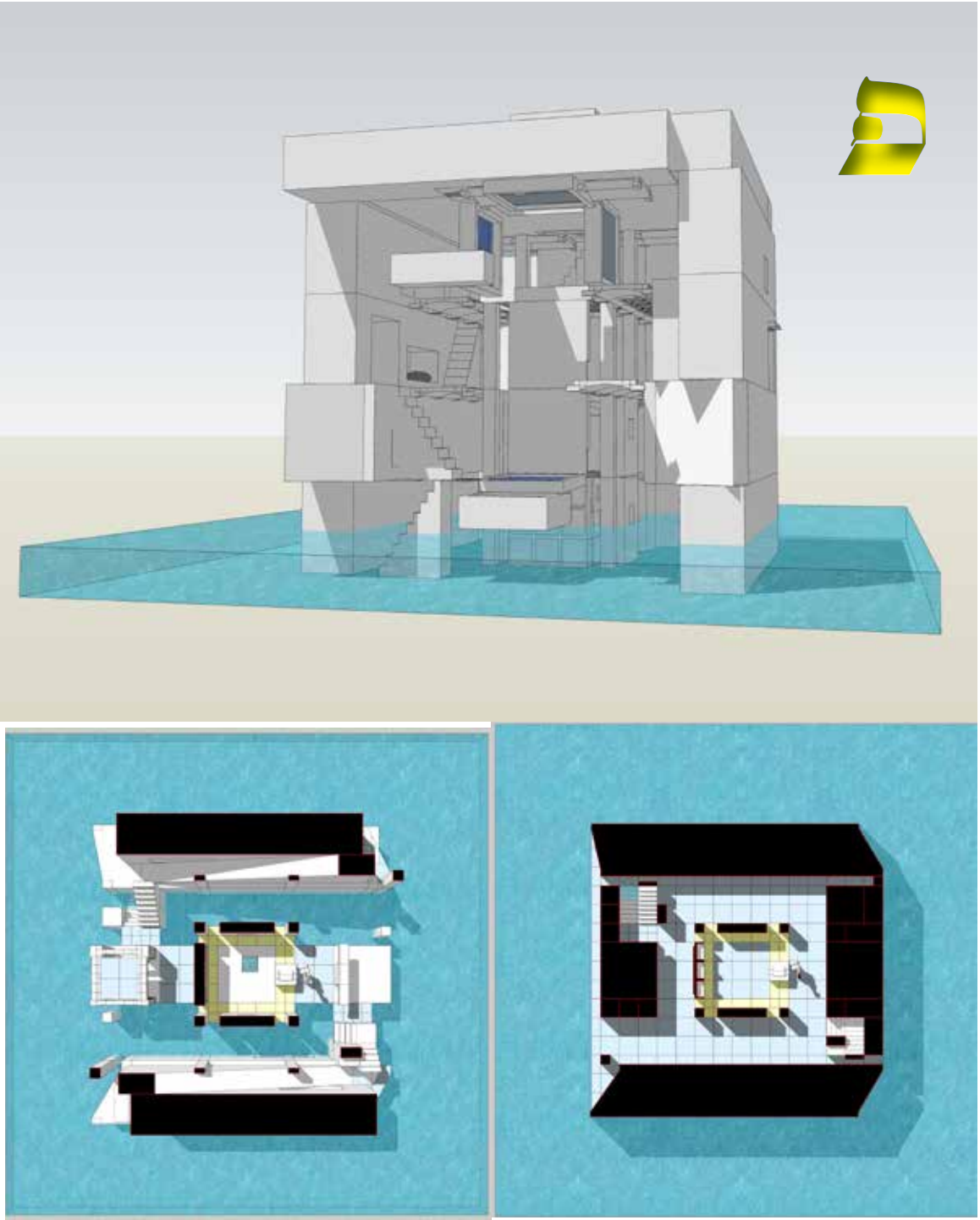
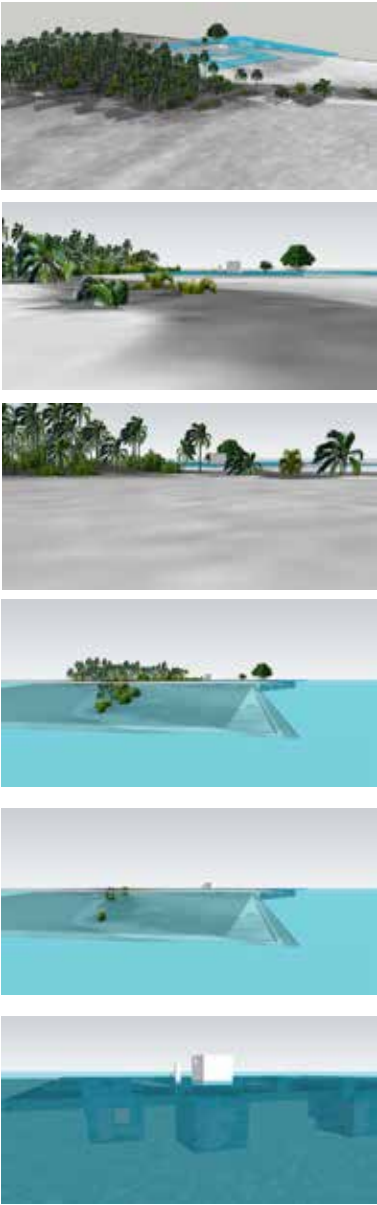
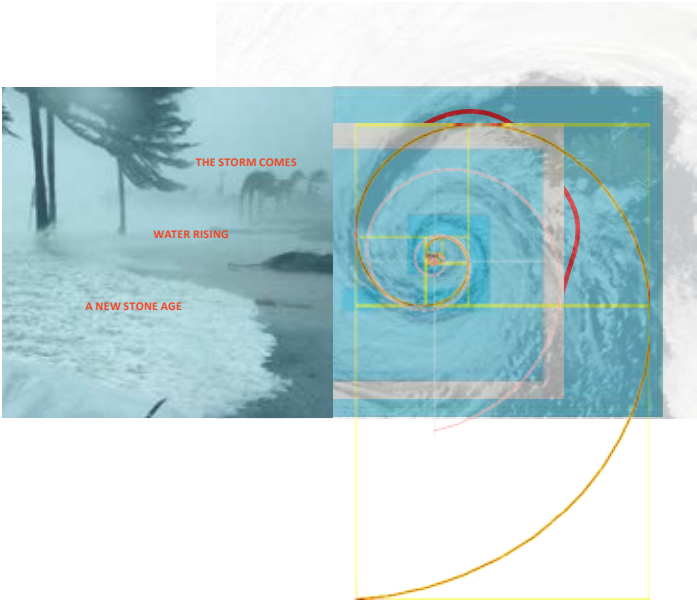
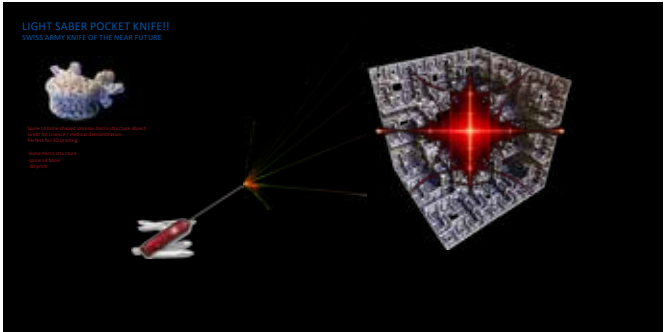


AYIN associated with seeing, is also linked to the FOUNTAIN. The Spring appears above the space, courses through its several levels in a confined interior “waterfall” and then emerges through the Living Machine purification process into a pool carved into the hill below the footings of the structure.

its climate-change (climate repair!!) function is: to use the cool spring water coming out of the intersection of water table and rock to rebuild and expand snow and ice coverage of this upper elevation. By cooling the water in the lower spring pool to the NW of the building, which is the area kept most in shade in the heat of the summer, especially, and to then use the heat-pump at the SE (upper) corner to chill this cool water even more until it freezes, and then put it under the protective insulating blanket of artificial? and natural snow shade device (??) and keep it cool via the heat pump until the cool(er) months return.

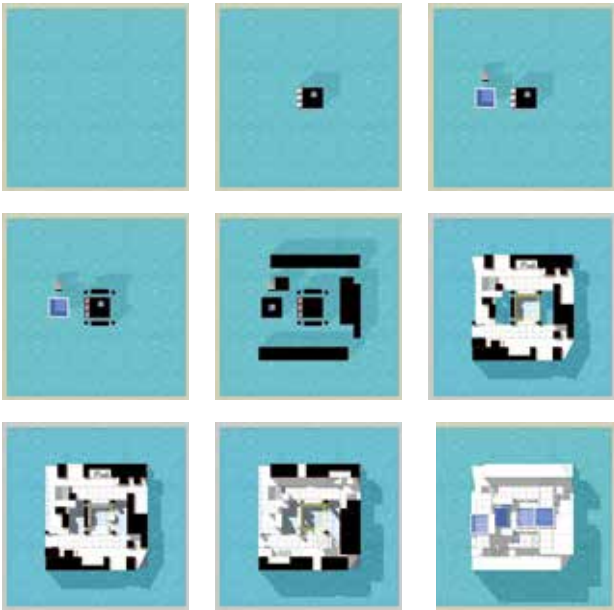




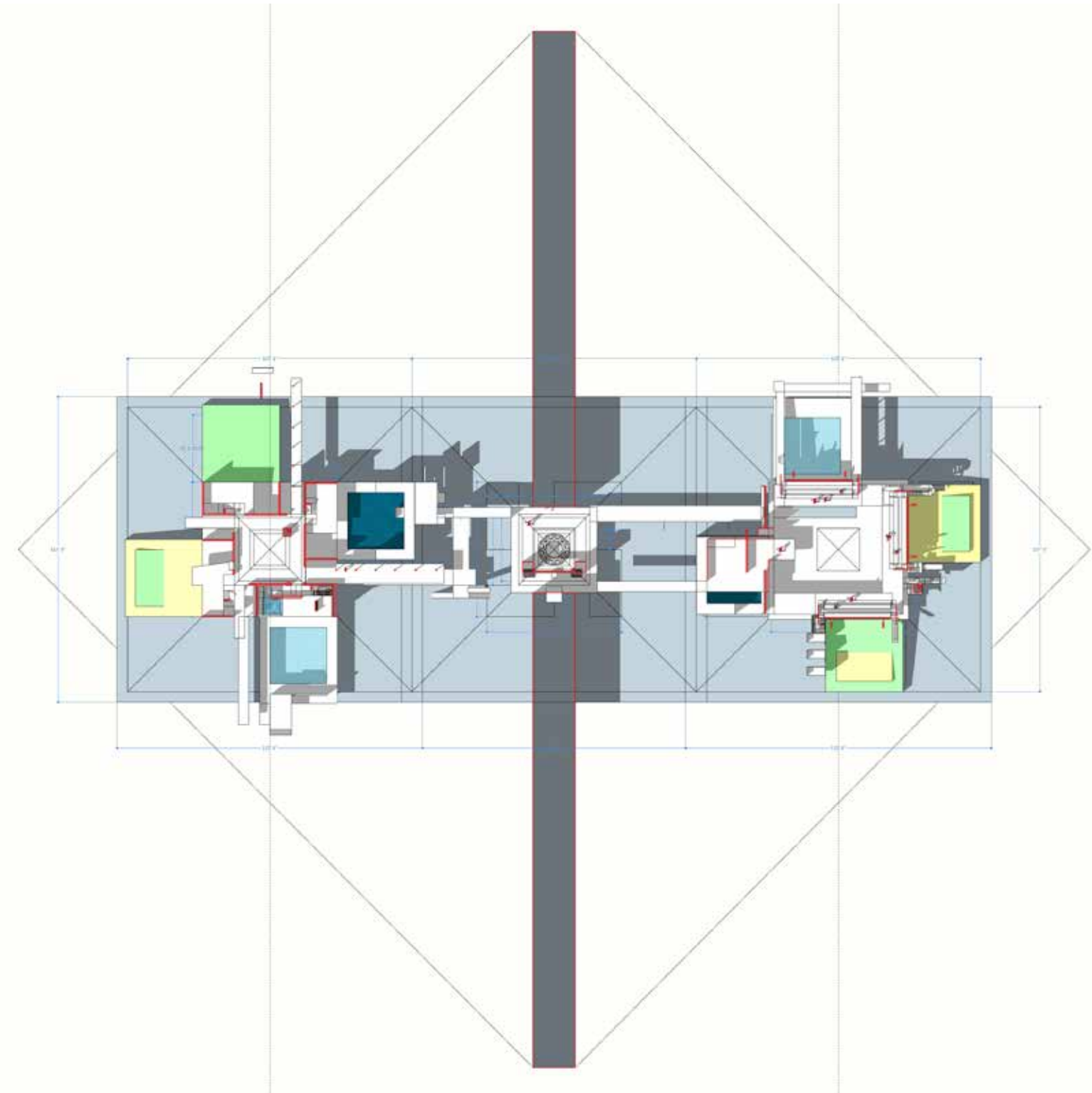
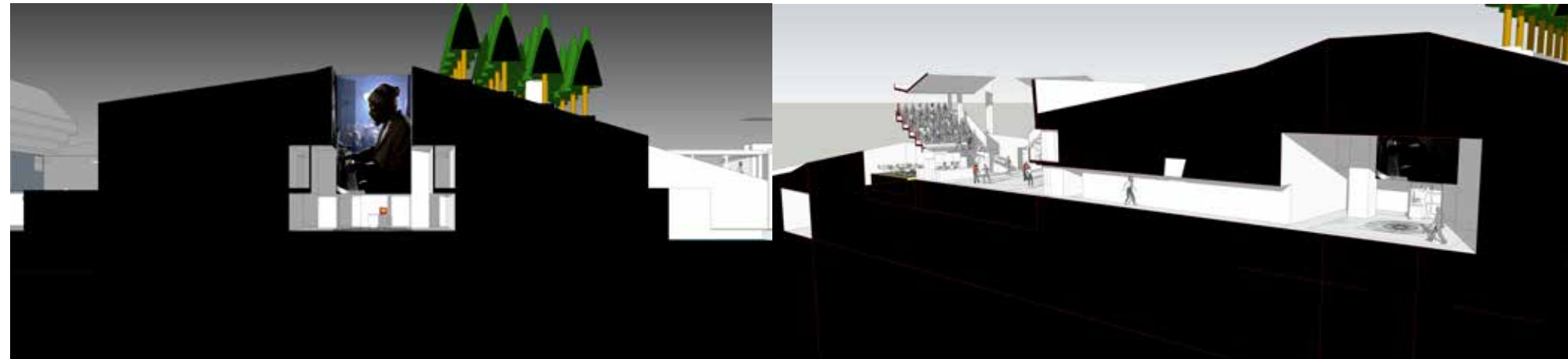


a 36 foot cube!!!! the phi of the square base  
 $36 = 3 \times 12; = 4 \times 8 + 4 = 3 \times 8 + 12 = \dots \dots !! \text{Le Modulor}!!$   
or 31'5" and 50' 10" = Modulor Blue

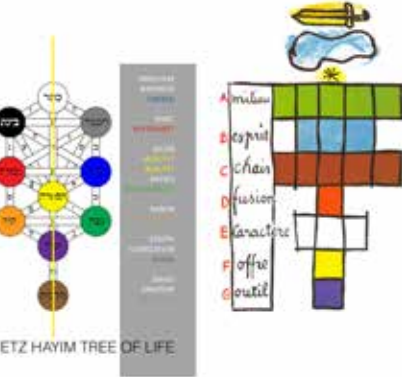
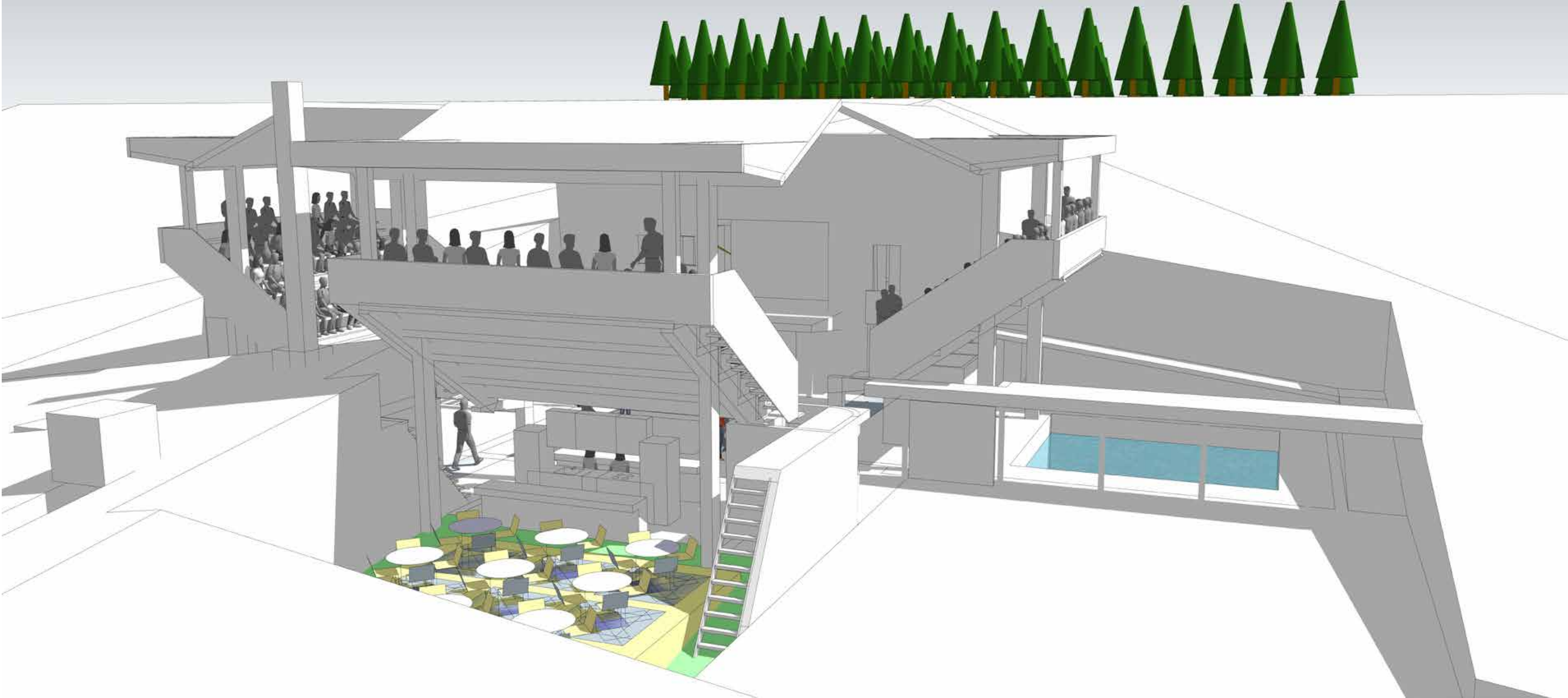
reef is negative of cave (interior of house)





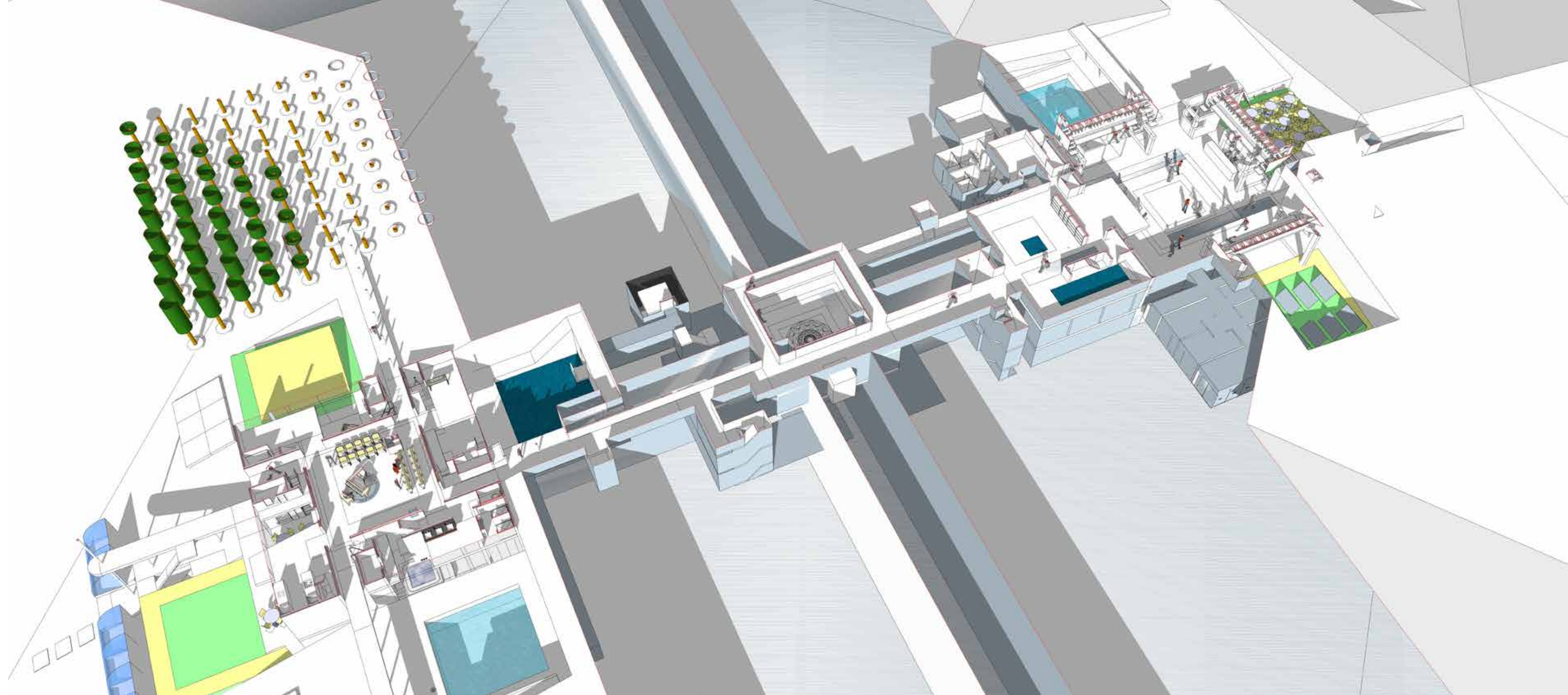




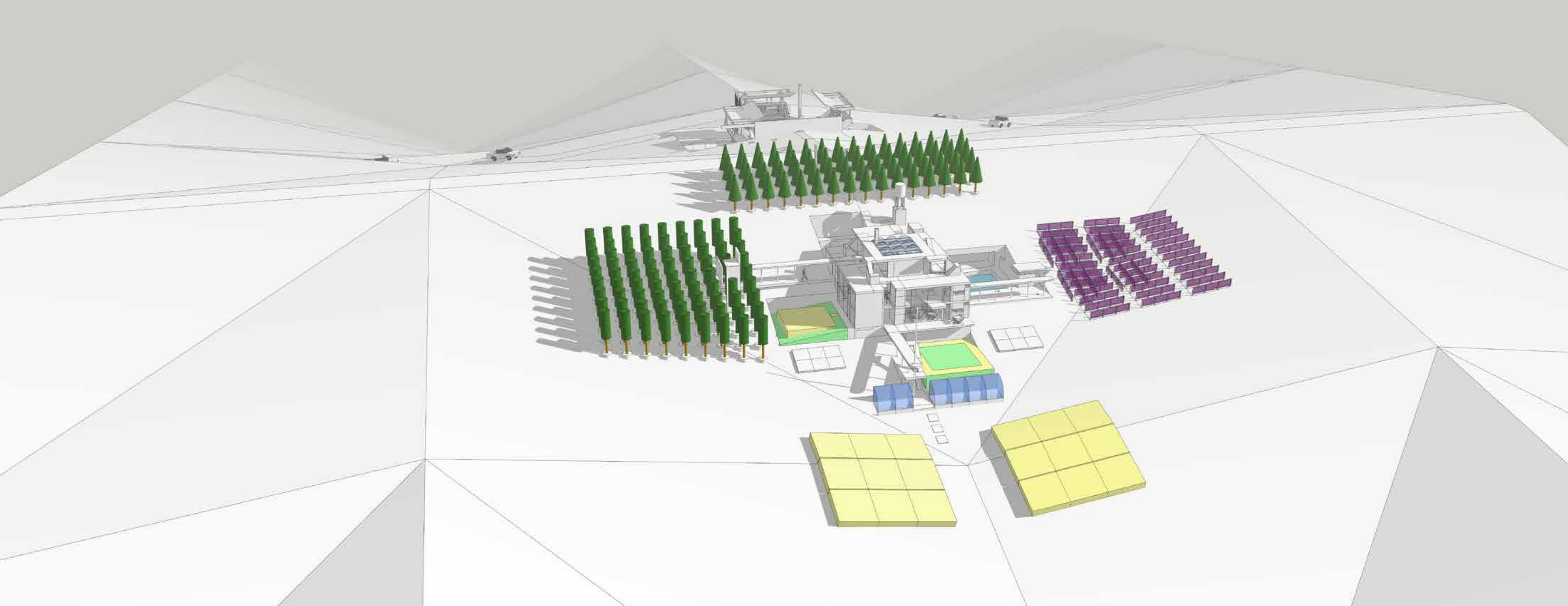


diagrams of the cosmos  
iconostasis (saints)  
etz hayim ein sof (tzadikim)  
poem of the right angle (makers)



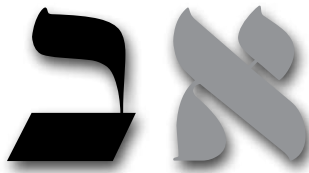






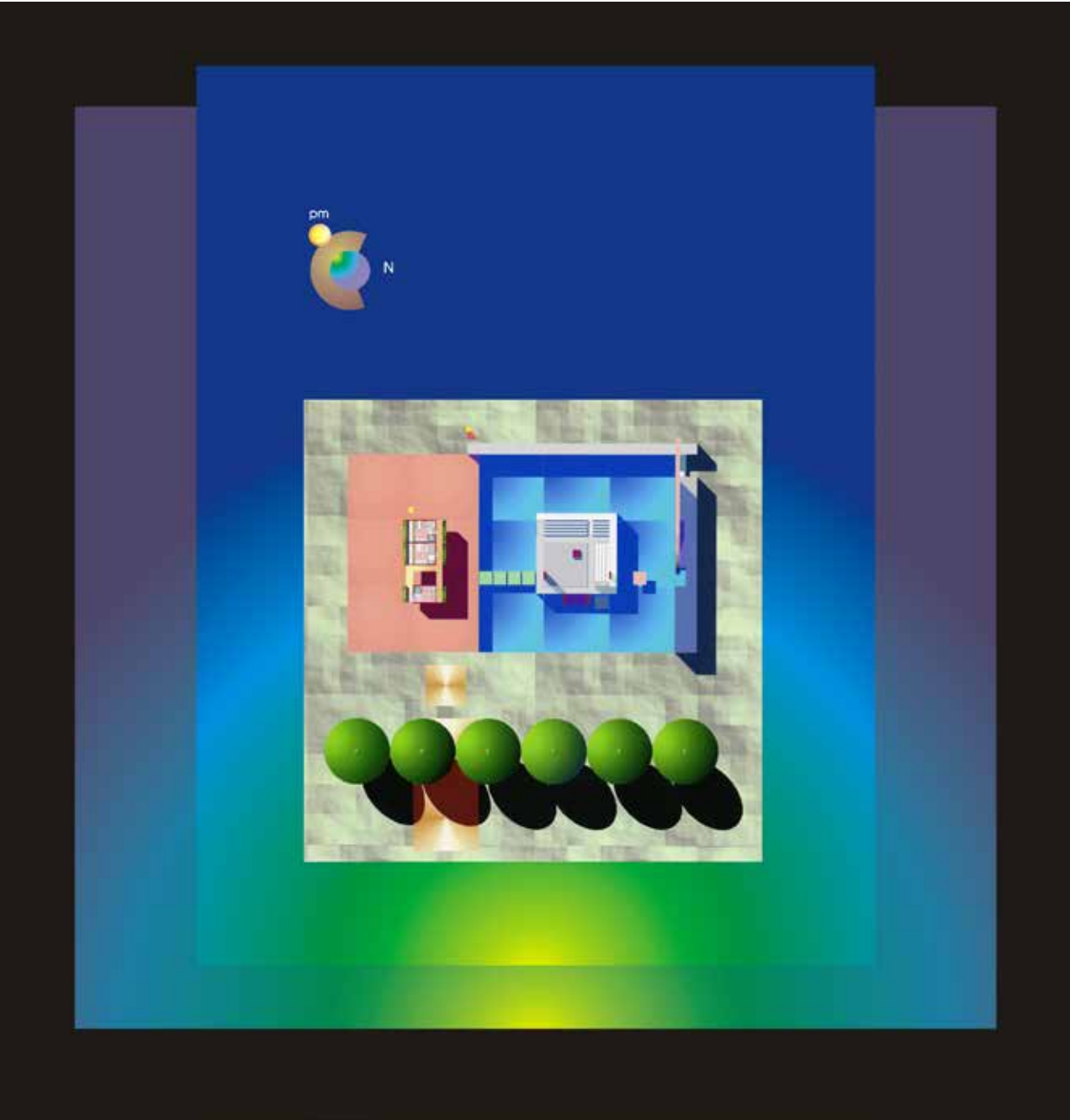


AN ALEPH BET  
OF SYNAGOGUES



idea about community





DALET PRELIMINARY PLAN

IDEA ABOUT SYNAGOGUE  
ARCHITECTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FORMS OF COMMUNITY



*Nothing is transmissible but thought.*  
Le Corbusier

Theoretical researches in architecture often focus on the house, particularly on the single family dwelling. Although designated in professional documents as an architect’s task which requires “consummate skill”, the problem of the house does not directly address certain fundamental issues which are larger than an individual or single family group; issues such as birth, death, marriage, famine, plenty, and so forth. Just as no individual can attend the context of her own birth in full consciousness nor supervise his own burial, some architectural concerns require a consciousness of the world as community. For this reason, my own theoretical plastic researches have over the years concentrated on a building type which for me represents a vital way of thinking and a fertile state of mind. I have studied architectural possibilities in the forms of synagogues, finding that considerations of program, site, plasticity, material, structure, vision, and value have become important to me in a way that continually renews itself. In the questions *how can a synagogue be formed?* and its corollary *What spaces and relations of meaning configure a community?* I have found a friend. Taking a long and deep look into the single concept “synagogue” from different approaches in a variety of media and settings, over and over again, may or may not reveal Idea, but it certainly provides an awareness of Mind.

These studies began over thirty years ago when a student asked the simple and obvious question *Is there a history of synagogue architecture comparable to the history of cathedrals we study in school?* By extension, I wondered about all such building types, including mosques, Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, and the like. They all explore how to consecrate space to enable all aspects of human activity to become significant. An Through such considerations I have begun to find a synthesis in the works of such diverse architects as Kahn, Aalto, and Brunelleschi. In our mobile society, a way to make stations of sustenance, peace, and integration demand the architect’s most compassionate care. Synagogue means a *place for gathering together* and first developed after the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple of Solomon. Unlike that Temple, it requires no priest as intermediary to the divine. Its primary impulse is therefore democratic. Any ten men constitute the true form of synagogue. But this assembly must value a reality beyond the simply material; the Wailing Wall speaks and cries in a way every architect seeks and rarely if ever achieves. The major theme of the synagogue is always *God stands in the midst of the congregation*. Such an admonition may serve to protect us from the error of the Tower of Babel, where a brick became more precious than human life. At the age of 15 I learned this phrase: *Judaism is a way of life which endeavors to transform virtually every human act into a means of communion with God*. I can think of no more clearly comprehensive program and brief for an architect. What follows are not separate projects, but rather elements of an ongoing investigation, the first few in a string of 22 elements and lessons for forming language. I look forward to completing designs for all the Hebrew letters at least once in my lifetime.





## YOM-KIPPUR SELF-PORTRAITS



Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, the culmination of 10 days of prayer and introspection that begins at the start of the New Year on Rosh Hashanah, the Head of the Year. Traditional prayer services include numerous repetitions of the same prayer, and even formalize this iterative practice with something called Additional Service, the Musaf, which essentially repeats the main prayers already just uttered. My creative instincts rebelled at this from an early age, so I sought my own way to engage the spiritual essence of this High Holy Day. Thus, in 1969, as a young recent graduate armed with a Princeton MFA and working for the up and coming architect Richard Meier, yet still briefly living with my parents and commuting with my father to NYC on the LIRR, I found a small mirror on the afternoon of Yom Kippur, and made a self-portrait. That was my first, at the age of 23, and I have made one on every Yom Kippur since. There are now 48. The 3 to the right are selected from these. I do not look at any of the previous studies until I finish that year's self portrait. Then I take them all out and regard the realities they offer. More than once I have been surprised to find that what I thought was a wholly original selection of medium and format was exactly the same as the one done the year before. Although, and perhaps because, this was in direct confrontation with Judaism's iconoclastic tradition, I felt I had to make this drawing as a true act of looking inside myself to seek the Divine presence that lives in us all. It was only after I discovered the Reconstructionist movement that I found a form of Judaism that understood and celebrated the need to creatively reinterpret and perhaps reinvent past practices into a living tradition for our own time.

Still, every year when I face the mirror, pen or pencil or crayon in hand, there is at least one moment when the great chasm comes through the dark light in my eyes.









THE TRADITION OF THEORETICAL ARCHITECTURE

*Nothing is transmissible but thought.*  
Le Corbusier

“Discussion “of....  
Le Doux, Palladio. (and Eisenman on Palladio!!)

Corbu (Radiant City!!) Garnier, Sant’ Elia!! FLW Brooadacre City

Vitruvius? Villard D’ Arnencourt??  
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