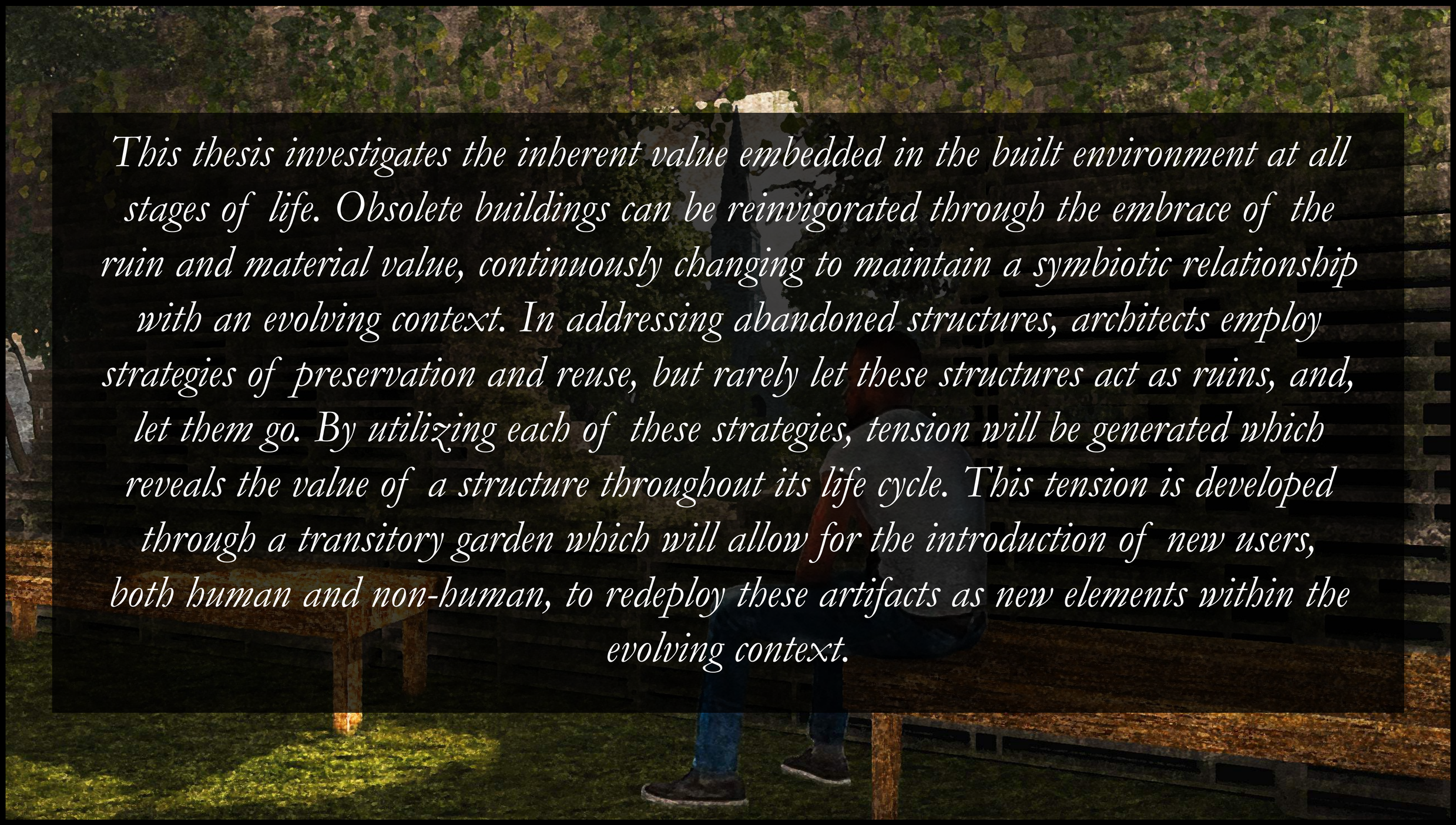
Rising to Ruin



This thesis investigates the inherent value embedded in the built environment at all stages of life. Obsolete buildings can be reinvigorated through the embrace of the ruin and material value, continuously changing to maintain a symbiotic relationship with an evolving context. In addressing abandoned structures, architects employ strategies of preservation and reuse, but rarely let these structures act as ruins, and, let them go. By utilizing each of these strategies, tension will be generated which reveals the value of a structure throughout its life cycle. This tension is developed through a transitory garden which will allow for the introduction of new users, both human and non-human, to redeploy these artifacts as new elements within the evolving context.

Thesis Prep

Much of the contention was derived from precedent analysis and previous work which addresses temporal landscapes and memory. These image arrays assemble ruins which sit along a spectrum between preservation and deterioration. The arrays then create a visual guide to the strategies and applications of the ruin in preservation, deterioration, and programmatic use, as well as using the ruin as symbol and icon.

Intact Ruin

Intact ruins represent ruins which have been left to decay yet have been able to successfully assimilate to the surrounding context.

Franciscan Monastery Church

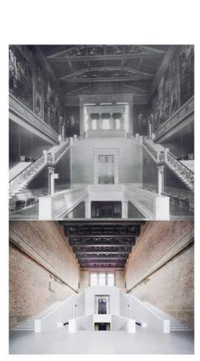
Reconstructed Ruin

Reconstructed ruins represent ruins which have undergone intervention for the purpose of emphasizing the project as a historical/contextual ruin.

ChristChurch Proposal

Renovated Ruin

Renovated ruins represent ruins which have been intervened for the purpose of modernizing or reappropriating program.



Neues Museum

Vilanova de la Barca

Abandon Ruin

Ruins fallen to the raveges of time and neglect offer an exploration of the ecology of the ruin and the power of nature to overcome.

George Rochford's Estate
Belvedere, Ireland

Chateau De La Mothe
Chandeniers, France

St. Etienne-le-vieux
St. Etienne, France

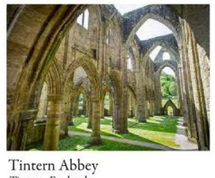
Ruin in Use

After ruins have been recovered by human intervention, they offer unique spaces of relection and contemplation on oneself and time.

The Colloseum
Rome, Itally

Sudeley Castle Ruin Garden
Gloucestershire, England

St. Dunstan's in the East
London, England



Tintern Abbey
Tintern, England

Ruin as Subject

As a Subject of artistic work and inspiration, Ruins serve as an image of provocation on the temporal nature of human existence within the scope of time

Marius Granet
Interior of The Colloseum of Rome

J Warwick Smith
Interior of The Colloseum of Rome

Etching of Rome
Giovanni Battista Pirinase

Joseph Mallard William Turner
Tintern Abbey in Ruin

Artificial Ruin

As an ornament, the artificial ruin develops a picturesque aesthetic and imprints a historical narritive onto a new landscape

Abbey Folly
Belvedere, Ireland

Roman Ruin Folly
Vienna, Austria

Gothic Ruin
Frogmore, England

Roman Ruin
Windsor, England

Imagining Ruin

As an imaginary or narrative device, the ruin becomes the focus of an alternative existence, capturing the familiar in an unexpected and unfamiliar way.

J Soanne
Bank of England Rotunda in Ruin

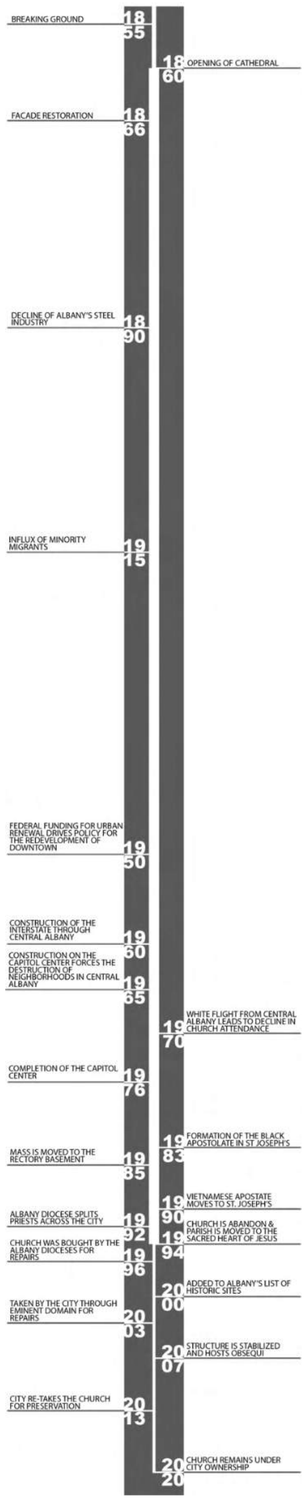
J Soanne
Bank of England in Ruin

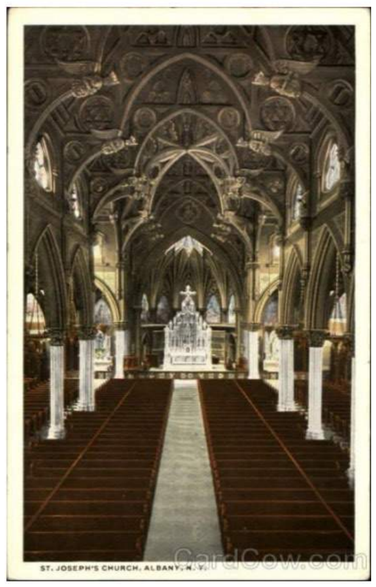
Robert Herbert
Louvre in Ruin

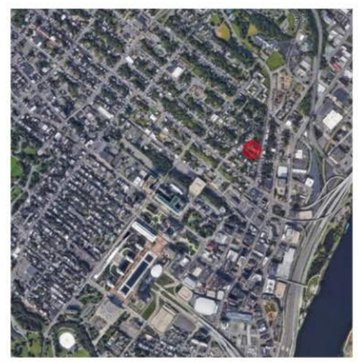
Statue of Liberty Ruin
Planet of The Apes

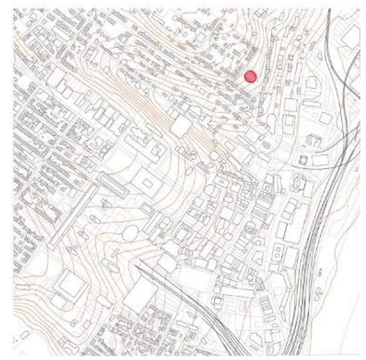
Saint Joesph's Cathedral

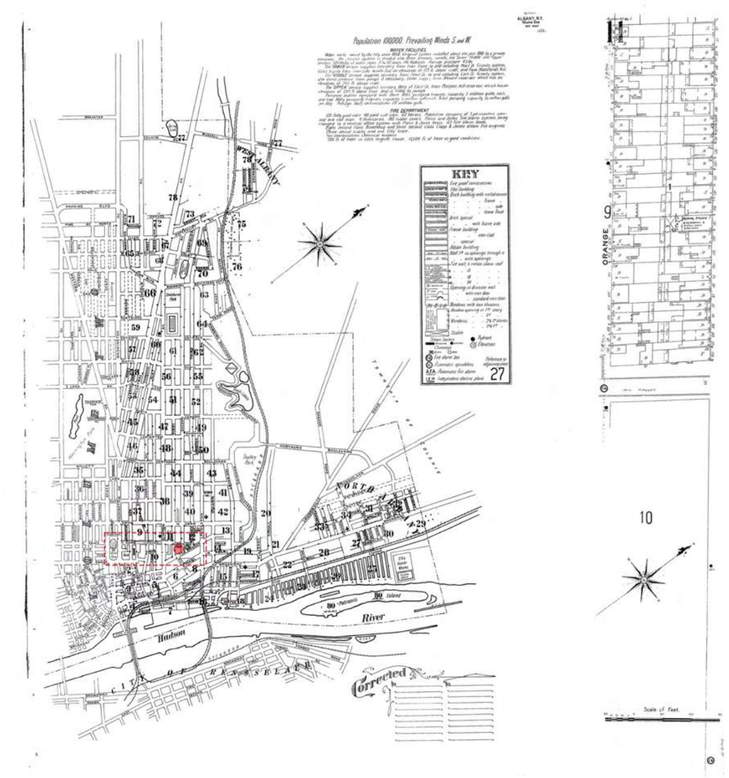
Saint Joseph's Cathedral in Albany will be used for this investigation on the spectrum contending preservation and deterioration. St Joseph's was chosen both for its location within the community and for its loss of significance over time. The church once stood as an attraction for development but is now lost in abandonment. And today, the scarce density of the park, which it sits in, allows room for intervention on the site.

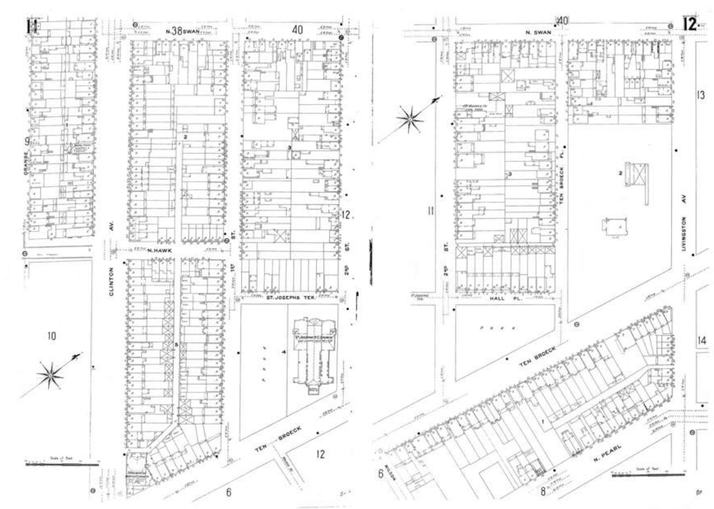










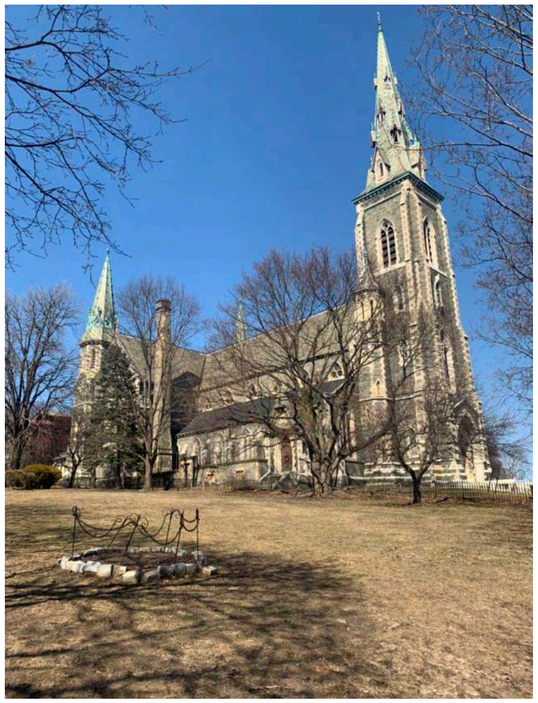


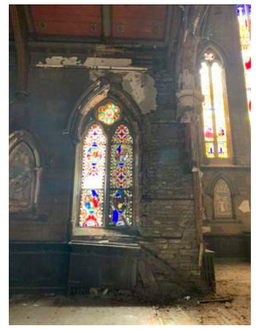
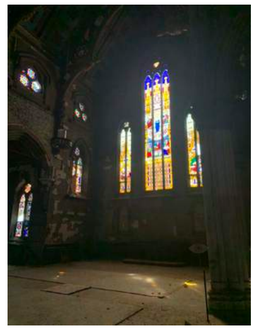
Shown here are images of the church in its current condition. The building is boarded up, and many elements are visibly decaying. This decay has broken down the layers of the building to expose the elements within.

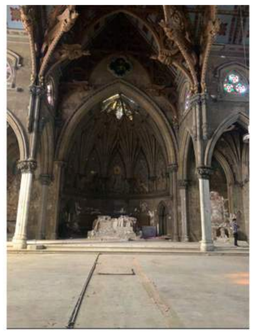
Current Conidtion — 2020

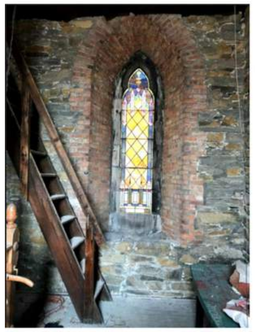
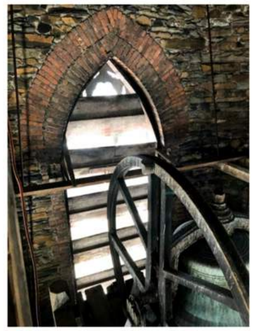
Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044





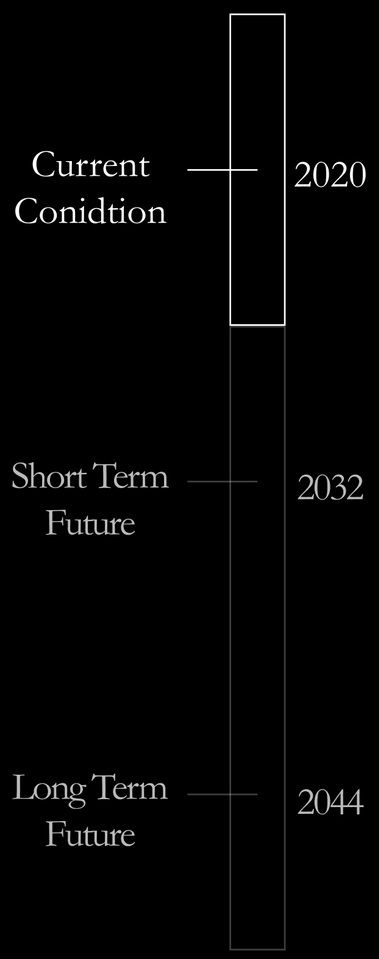
Represented by the red mark, Saint Joseph's is located within Albany, at the intersection of three very distinct neighborhood and a nature preserve. By allowing this preserve to slowly integrate to the urban space, the tension between preservation and deterioration may become intensified. Since the site and much of the surrounding neighborhood has been left in decline, decay will be allowed to accelerate. Buildings which are in use will naturally fight against the decay, while those buildings left abandoned will experience greater decay, and by definition be given a new life. As the preserve over time makes its way closer to the site, Saint Joesphs, not only becomes the intersection of these three neighborhoods but also the intersection of preservation and decay within the broader context of the city.

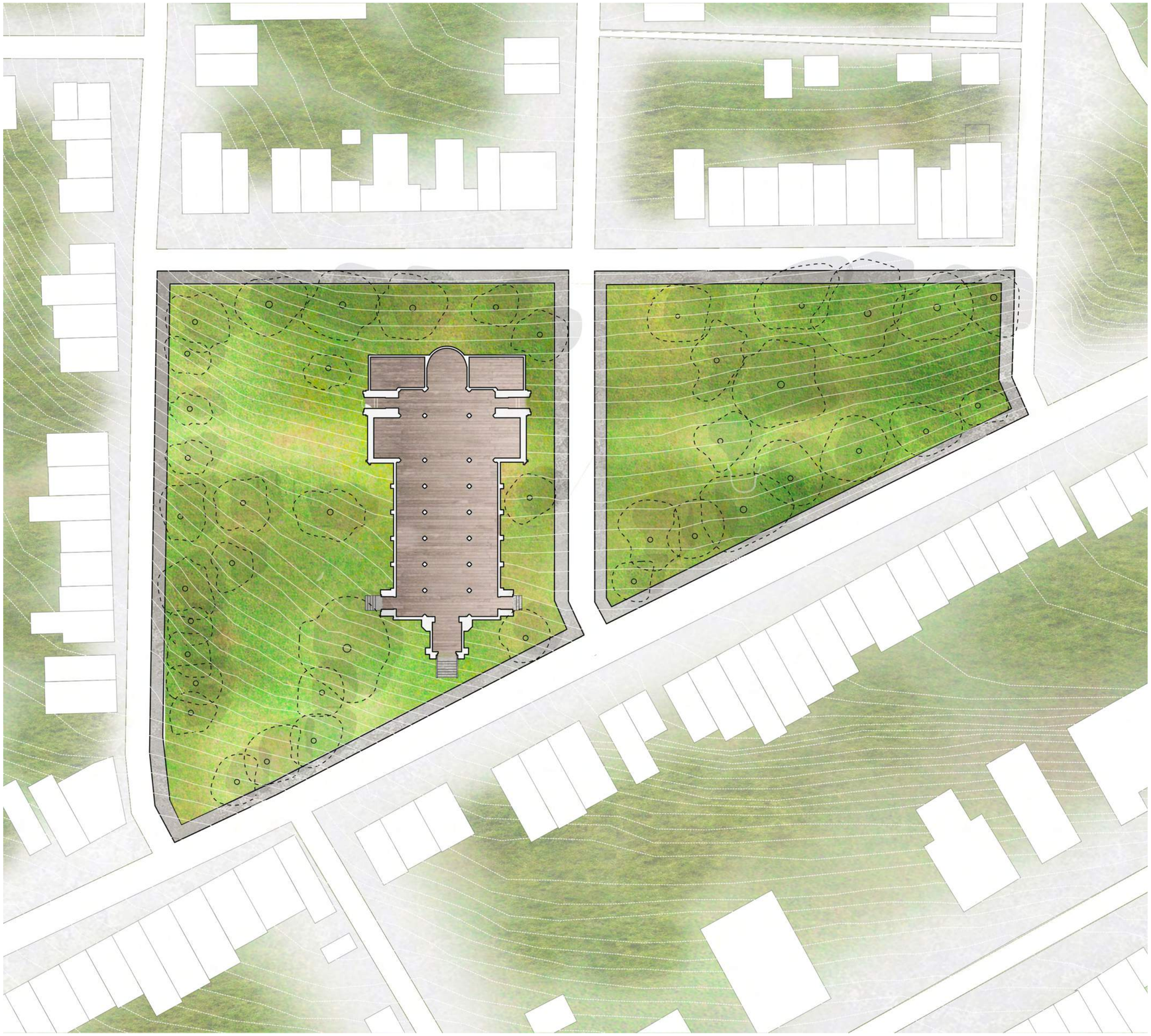
Current Conidtion — 2020

Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044

This plan displays the current conditions of the site and the cathedral's relationship to it. Here, the large site is displayed as unused and disconnected from its context.





This section reflects the plan in representing the existing condition. As seen in the plan and sections, the church sits on a significant location within the community. Although it is currently abandoned and disused, the site provides an ideal location for reintegrating the community with the structure.

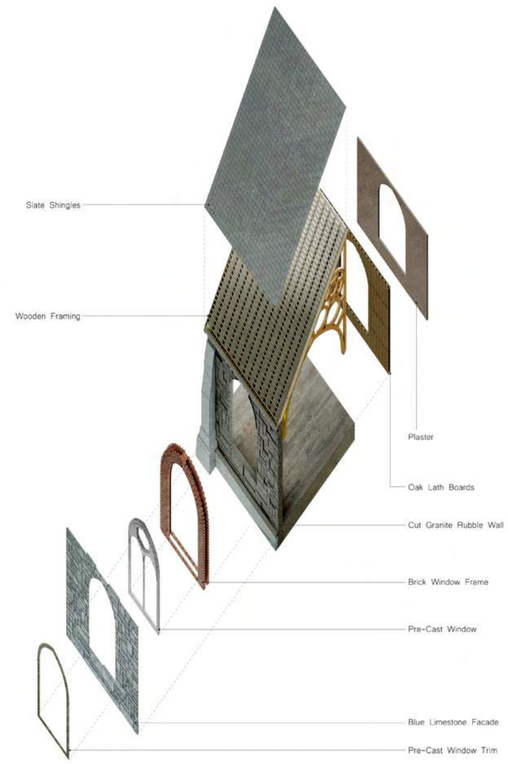
Current Conidtion — 2020

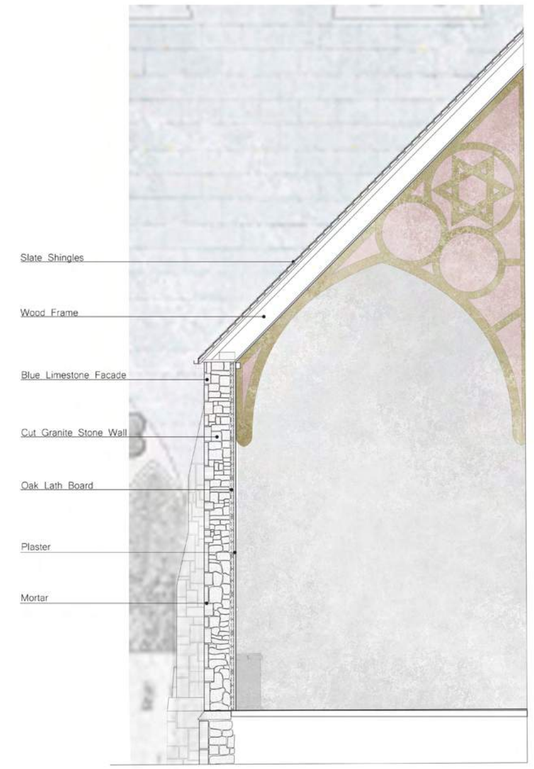
Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044

To project the potential deterioration of the structure, the details of assembly were investigated and then broken up into materials. By understanding the difference in longevity of these materials, the future form of the structure over time can begin to emerge.

From here, elements would be divided into preserve, reuse, or let go. In deciding what to preserve, the church was analyzed from the city, neighborhood, and building scale. Elements were then chosen based on their relative significance within the scope of memory and image. Then, elements were chosen to be reused or let go, in relation to the juxtaposition of identical elements which are preserved, so as to amplify the tension between preservation and deterioration.



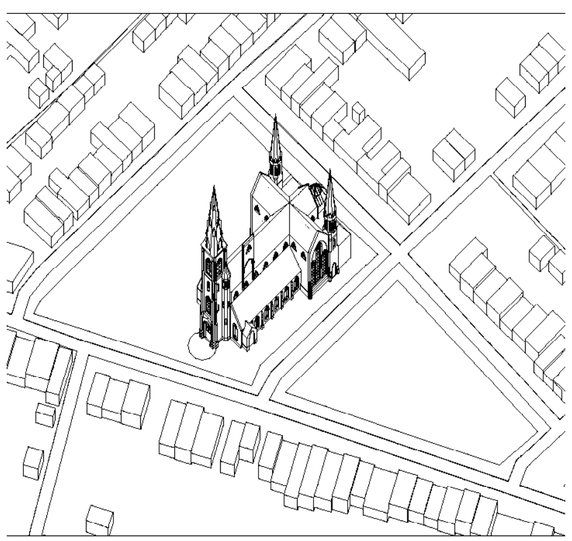


Current Conidtion — 2020

Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044

Preserve



Reuse

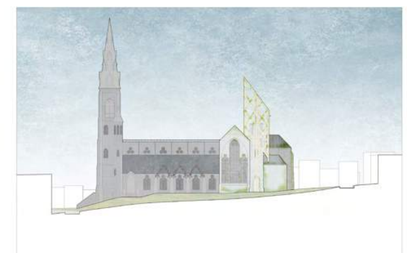
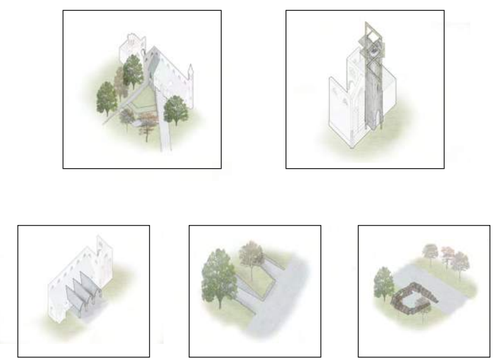
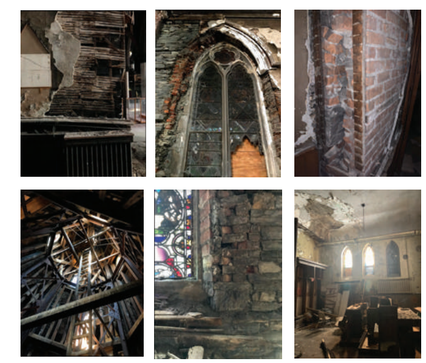
Let Go

This intervention is to be used as a case study that can be applied to various sites and conditions. As such, the matrix was established as a means of organization; strategies for preservation, reuse, and let go are assembled here in relation to icon, material, and landscape.

Current Conidtion — 2020

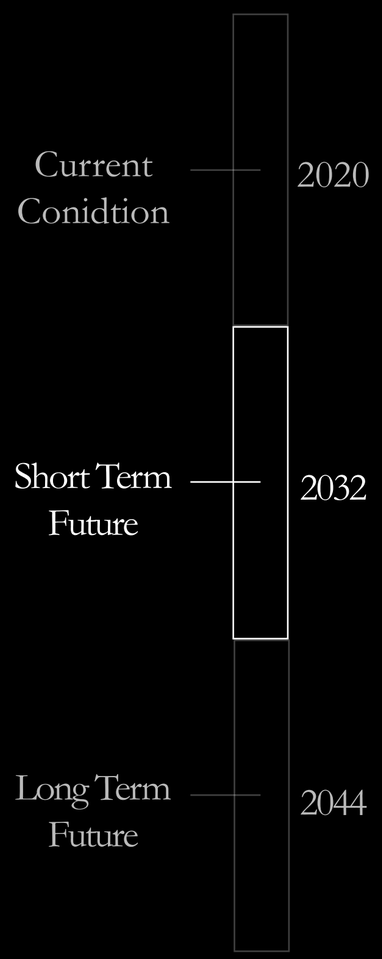
Short Term Future — 2032

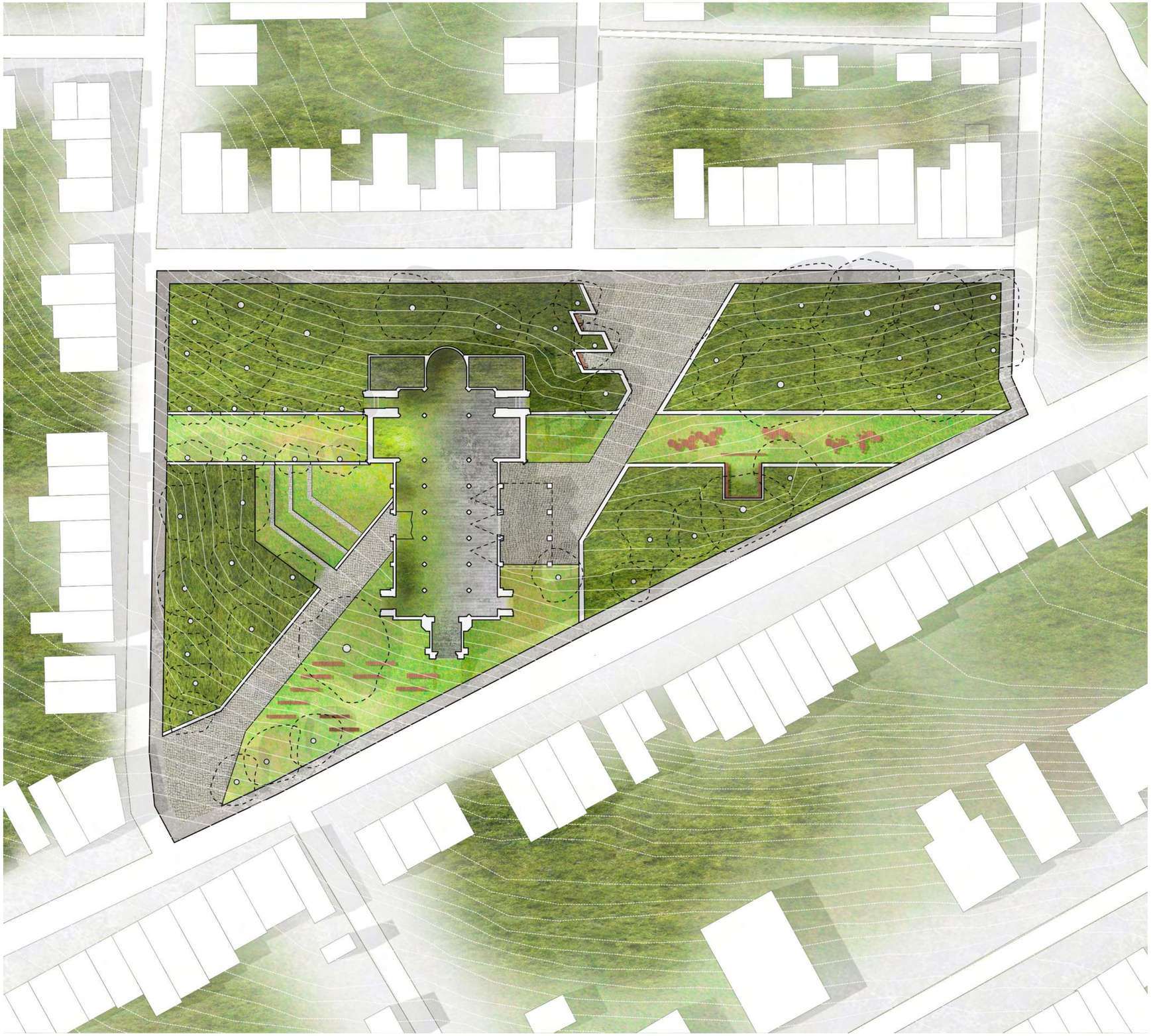
Long Term Future — 2044

	Preserve	Reuse	Let Go
Icon			
Material			
Landscape			

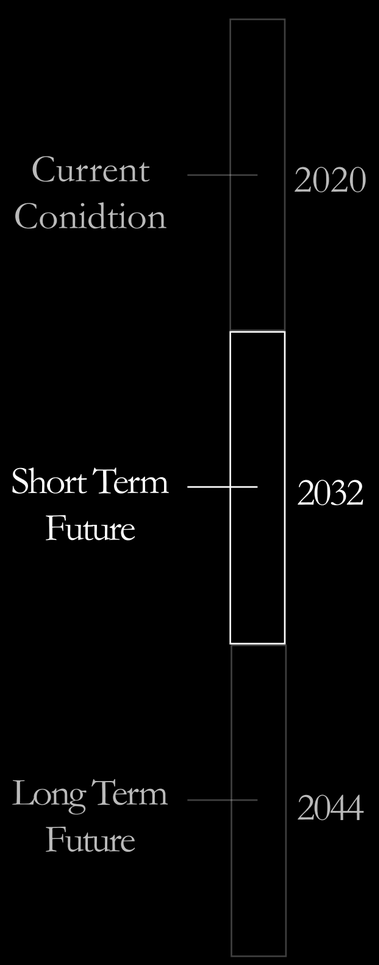
In order to represent the temporal and cyclical nature of this strategy: plans, sections, and collages are all represented along three different time periods: current condition, short-term future, and long-term future. It takes approximately 20-30 years for shrubland to begin to mature into a hardwood forest. Therefore, the plans refer to projected conditions 12 and 24 years into the future.

In this short term plan, the intervention is applied to the site with a continuous path connecting the neighborhood and downtown through the site. Arranged around this path are moments of maintained landscape juxtaposed with areas that are left to foster natural growth and the creation of new habitats for local wildlife. The landscape is organized in relation to the strategies applied to the church.

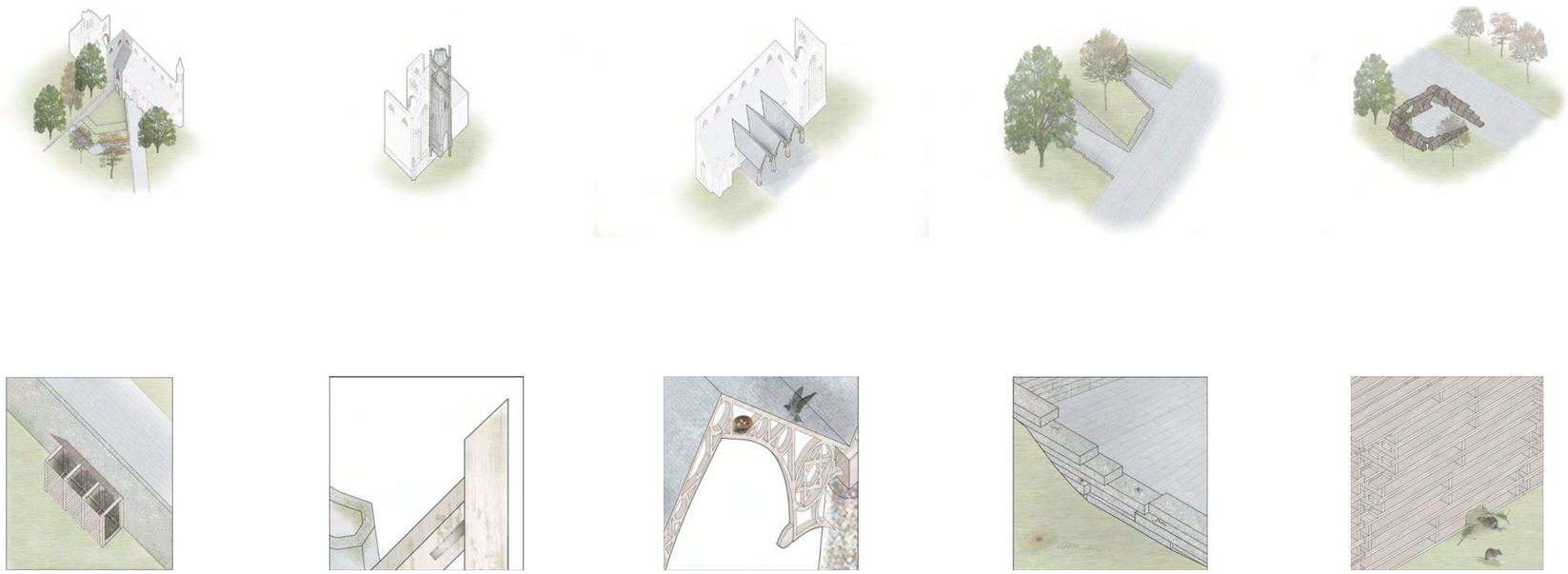




The short term section then reveals many of the reuse strategies. Through the assemblies, different conditions are created throughout the site. An amphitheater provides an open space which steps down to the basement. The wood pavilion then creates a more secluded condition within the site. And jutting out of the church is a canopy allowing for more enclosure. While it is easy to imagine programs in each of these spaces, such as market under the canopy, or performance in the amphitheater, these assemblies are not meant to be strict but each assembly provides for different formal compositions so as to remain flexible and accommodating for future programming.



Shown here are a number of the reassemblies. These axons represent, not only how the reassemblies are meant to be open flexible spaces, but also how they can provide for non-human users.



Current Conidtion — 2020

Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044

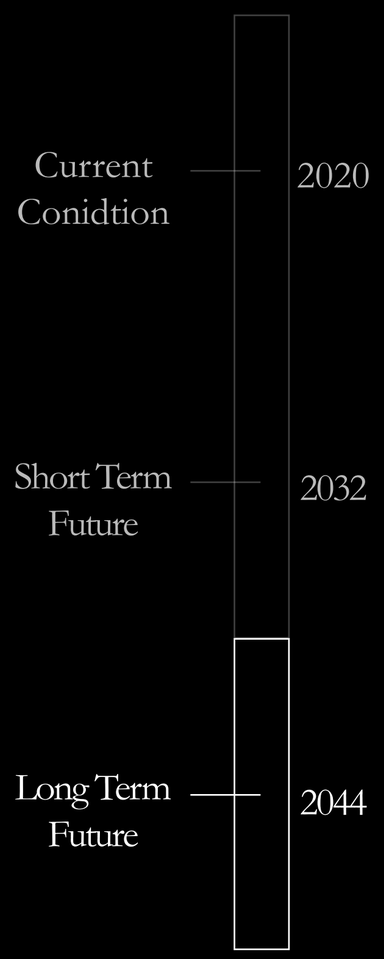
Each of these interventions will change over time, some more so than others. While the amphitheater does not change and continues to be used for compost collection, in order to return nutrients into the successional landscape, other assemblies such as the less durable wood pavilion would undergo significant change, and become overtaken by non-human users. In between these two extremes are the stone assembly and the market canopy, which experience minimal decay, respective of their material properties. And finally, the reassembled tower is built over time.

Current Conidtion — 2020

Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044

The long term plan demonstrates the growth of the decay in contrast to moments of preservation. This juxtaposition can be seen in changes in the landscape as temporary pavilion strategies merge back into the earth and new strategies emerge. Additionally, changes within the church emerge as the tension between preservation and deterioration intensifies.



The long term sections reveal some of the larger assemblies getting completed, while some of the smaller previously completed assemblies begin to decay. Furthermore, vegetation intensifies across the landscape, and areas of the church which are let go, are seen in great decay.

Current Conidtion — 2020

Short Term Future — 2032

Long Term Future — 2044

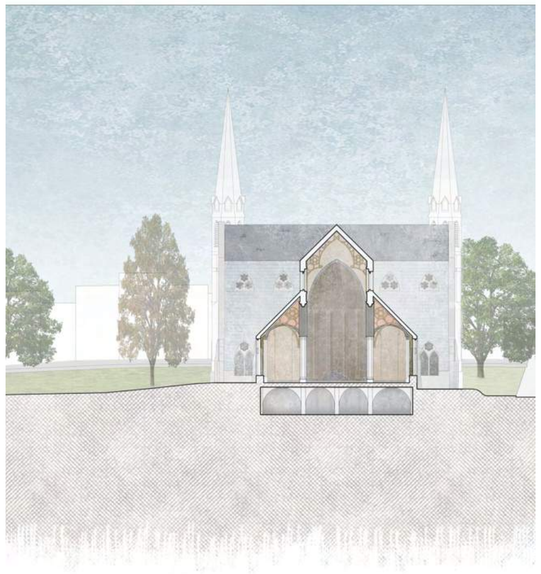
Here are zoomed sections at different periods of time in order to reveal instances of change and reassembly. In the top row, you can see the gradual assembly of the amphitheater, market canopy, and tower. Then in the bottom row, you can see the increase in vegetation over time. Furthermore, the wood assembly gets built in the short term but quickly decays, consistent with its material properties.

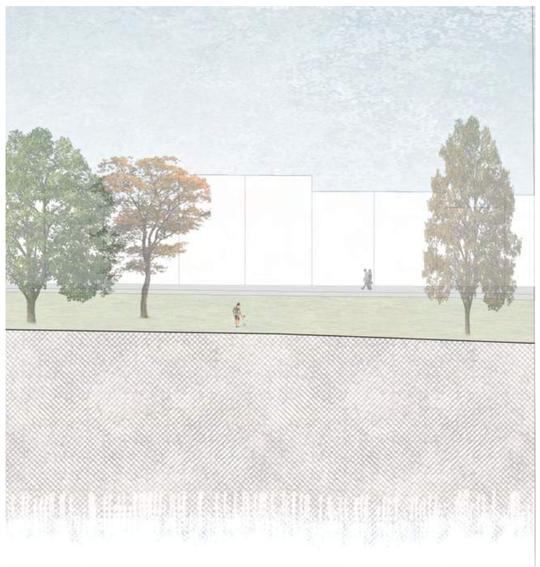
Current Conidtion — 2020

Short Term Future — 2032

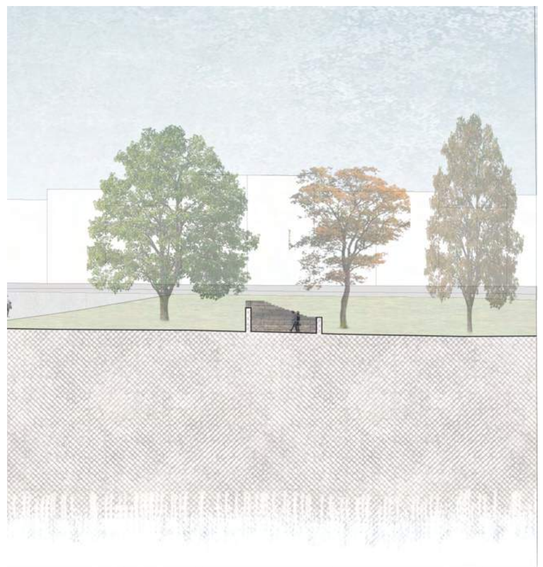
Long Term Future — 2044

Current

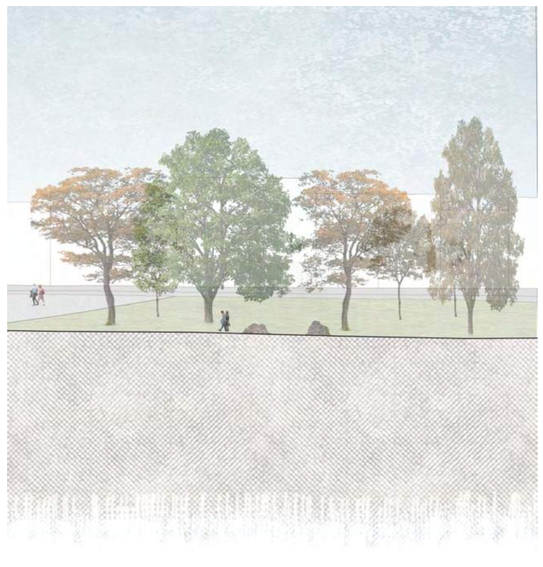
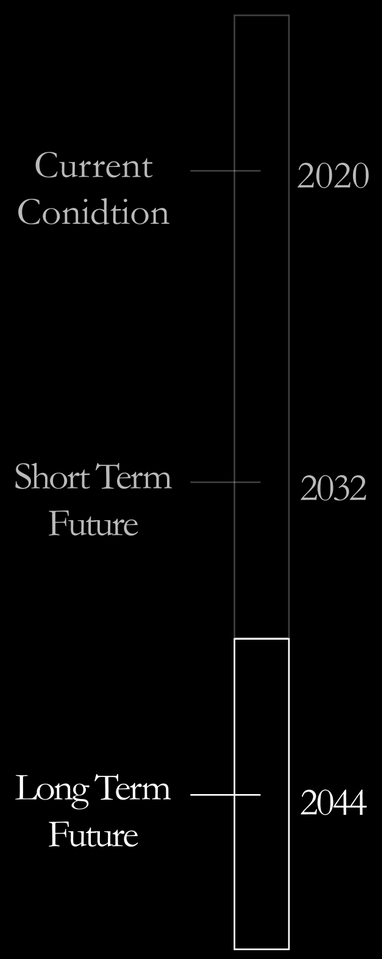
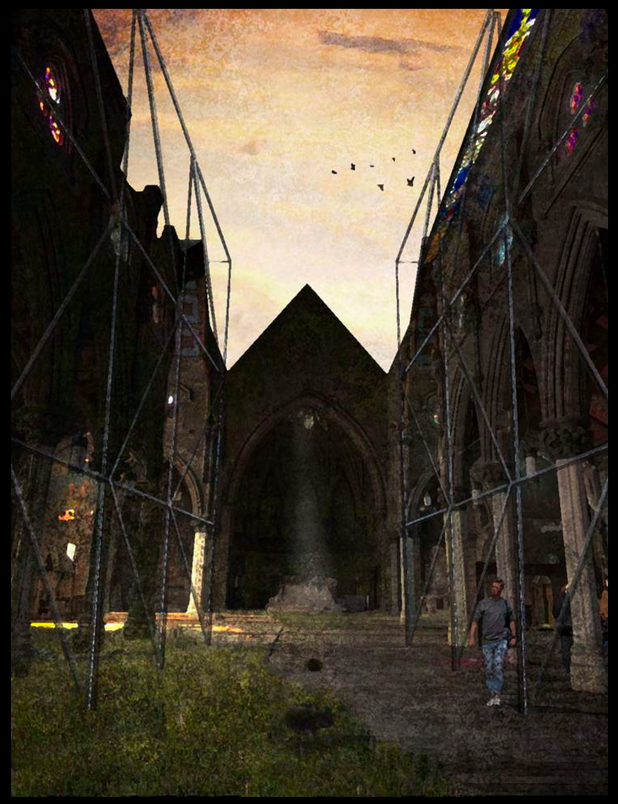
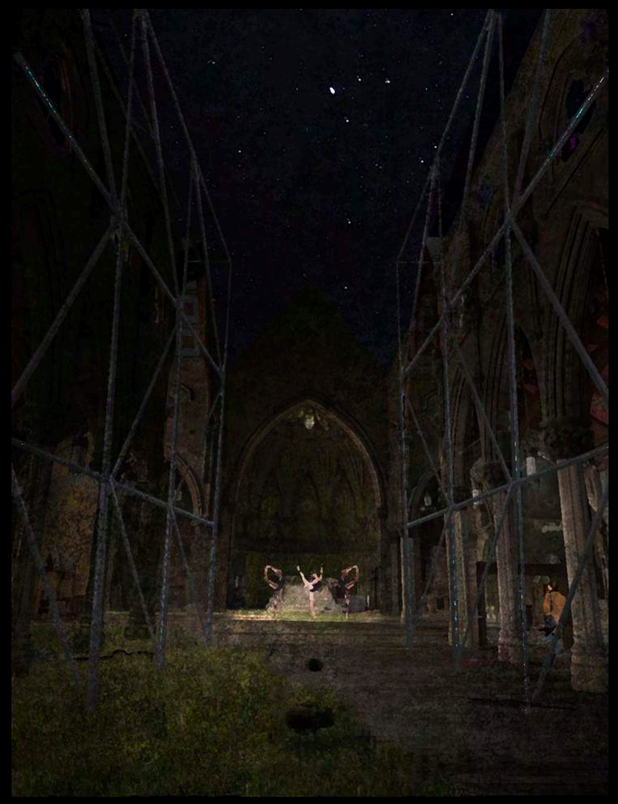




Short Term



Long Term



Over time the various forces on the site will move beyond its confines and into the surrounding community. Through this trend, other abandoned structures are violated and their materials used to construct new spaces within the neighborhood emanating from the church. These new interventions occupy unused and neglected spaces, providing new places for interaction and a network of pedestrian pathways connecting the neighborhood. In addition to the material movement, the intervention at St. Joseph's seeks to support connections between the non-human communities, supporting new growth in plant life and connecting to the local nature preserve.