

Mennonites are a group of Christian Anabaptists whose history stems back from the protestant revolution in the 15th C. There are different kinds of Mennonites who hold slightly different theologies and who accept different degrees of Technology. Usually, a technology is only accepted once it is certain that it will improve their quality of life, not compromise it. The most common characteristics of Mennonites, besides their Christianity, are their strong community orientation. Mennonites are pacifists. They are largely successful in social / peace-making issues. They have a history of applying their hard work and common sense as farmers to reclaim sustainable land in exchange for political freedom.

The Mennonites approached us, "reco" to design a Sustainable Co-housing Community on the Trustees Garden Site in Savannah, GA.

Co-housing communities are collaborative neighborhoods designed to be **united**, but are flexible to the needs of their residents. They emphasize the use of interactive and communal spaces as well as private spaces to build relationships and trust between neighbors which opens up potential for communal green space and countering urban sprawl. They tend to keep cars to the periphery and are by nature sustainable projects.

When beginning the project we first studied the history of the site and its genus loci. The site has a long history of reuse and evolved. It has been many things: an experimental garden, a fort, a gas works, and residential / commercial developments. It is currently a brown-field site with buildings in use around its periphery. In developing the design concept we began with themes of placemaking and reclamation then focusing on the relationship between the **permanent and temporary**.

We incorporated the site's geometry with the nature of the landscape to create our parti.

The parti is applied in a fractal manner from the site to the building to the details. The main buildings are a permanent structural grid of reinforced concrete inside of which flexible more temporary use space structures will be built as required. The relatively permanent buildings are arranged around the most flexible green space, the square and the amphitheater. These spaces are for the general public as well as residents. Residents also have intra-community spaces on green roofs, including an athletic field.

The site engages the urban context. It aligns with the city grid, accepting not fighting Oglethorpe's plan. It especially links itself to the city through its facade. Our design encourages pedestrians to enter road Street would be developed as a welcoming streetscape lined with live oaks and outdoor café and retail space. A land bridge separates noisy Bay Street from the amphitheater and park area. Views are created through the buildings out to the eastern horizon, drawing people to enter the community and take advantage of the unique public spaces. Views are also considered from the major tourist approaches along Factor's Walk. Additionally, the church becomes an "object in the field", the design also incorporates public amenities into its program, including an amphitheater, a school, a clinic, commercial frontage, a public church, and a community outreach center in addition to the housing requirements. Consideration has been given to the vehicle by creating a partially subterranean parking garage, accessed from the east. There is also a car entrance on Bay Street for residents and business owners to share.

The sustainable aspects of the design include photovoltaics and shading on south facing glazing to offset energy consumption, with daylighting harvested from the north. The typical width of use space is 20'-0" which is conducive to ventilation. The relative compactness of the development event fights urban sprawl and creates vast green spaces. Temporary use spaces utilize structural materials from existing structures. The design incorporates green roofs and a drainage pond as water retention strategies.

Manno Simmons

Tilling the land

Barn Raising, Hypostyle Hall

Atlanta Gas Light facilities

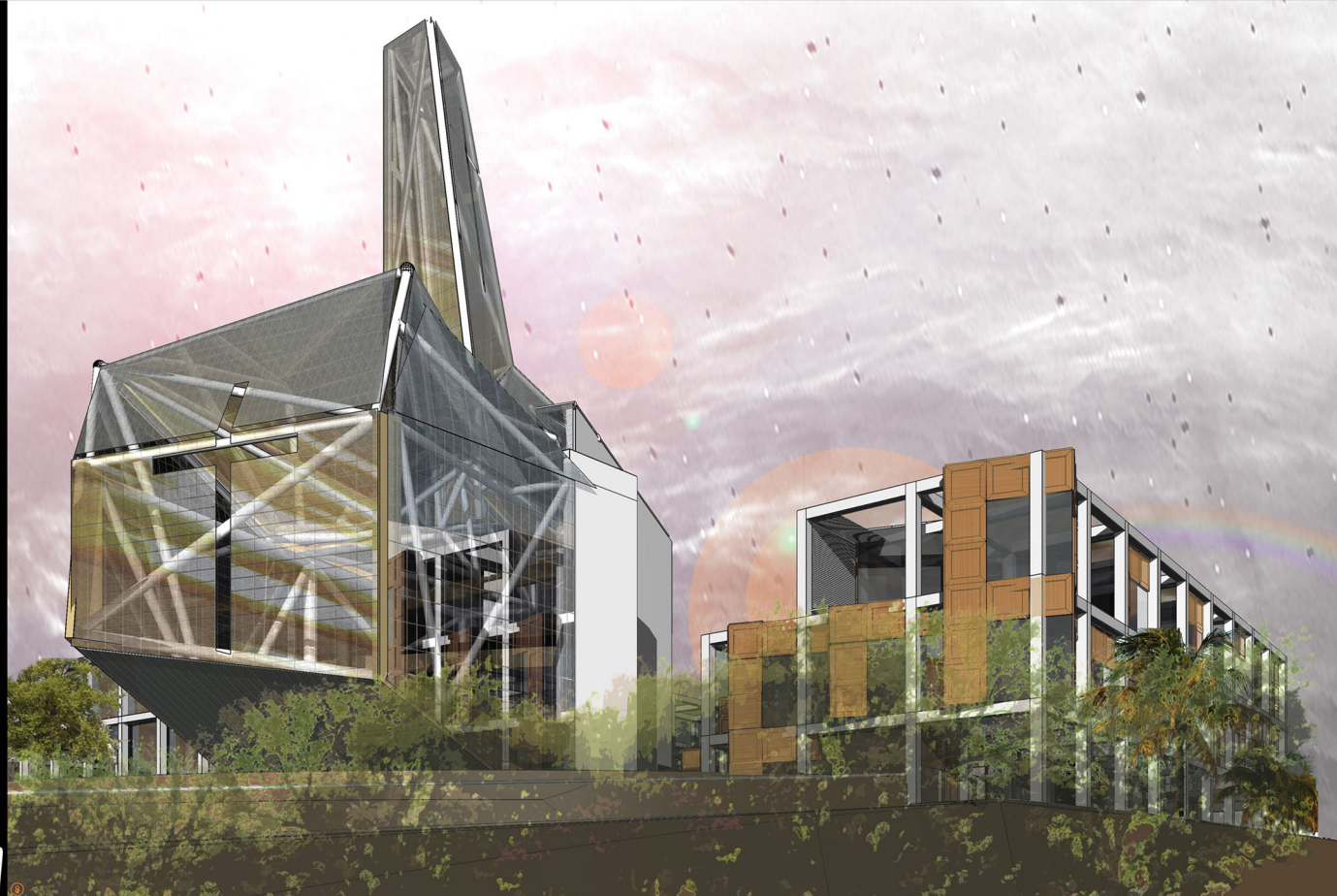
Site Part

Large-scale process sketch

Transcendental Church View

Adjustable shading system

Opaque & Translucent PVs



# SUSTAINABLE CO-HOUSING MENONITE COMMUNITY AT TRUSTEES GARDEN

