

THE IPSWICH STATIONS
a landscape way of the cross

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ABSTRACT

A translation of the Jerusalem pilgrimage site of the Via Dolorosa (the path followed by Christ over the course of his Passion), the Stations of the Cross is a vitally important practice, a frequent subject of art and design, and a prevailing landscape type of the Roman Catholic Church. While individual sets of Stations have been written about from the perspective of art and architectural history, virtually no critical attention has been paid to the subject from a landscape architecture perspective. This lacuna is at odds with the nature of the Stations as a religious rite: a translation of the Via Dolorosa from one place to another, the Stations are a discrete landscape phenomenon—a consistent configuration of elements in space intended to replicate a specific landscape experience. Historically, the fundamental structure of this sacred landscape has been entirely linear: a series of fourteen focal points separated by paths. The aesthetic interpretation of those points constitutes the chief stylistic innovation of the Stations over the centuries, but the underlying conception of space has not been recognized. The advent of Modernism in landscape architecture radically upended designers' understanding of landscape space, while modernist revolutions in sacred art, architecture, and American Catholicism similarly reframed expectations demanded of designed sacred spaces. After outlining a set of principals defining a modernist conception of the Stations of the Cross, this project uses a research-through-designing process to create a proposal for a Stations of the Cross garden at the Notre Dame Spirituality Center in Ipswich, MA. The end products, a site-scaled design and a thorough documentation of the design process, speak to the potential of research-through-designing strategies as a means of translating abstract interdisciplinary concepts into the on-the-ground language of landscape.

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More power to those who have begun to encourage an interest in our immediate past! [...] Most important perhaps is the conviction that creative art has a firmer foundation when based on the accumulation of acquired knowledge rather than on intuitiveness alone.

—*Christopher Tunnard, foreword to Gardens in the Modern Landscape, 1948*

Till now it was believed that time and space existed by themselves, even if there was nothing else—no sun, no earth, no stars—while now we know that time and space are not the vessel for the universe, but could not exist if there were no contents, namely, no sun, earth and other celestial bodies.

—*Albert Einstein, description of relativity for the Times, 1920*

How beautiful is the hand! How much it can do and how beautiful its function!

—*Rudolf Schwarz, "The Foundation" from The Church Incarnate*

PREFACE

When I was in elementary school in the 1990s, I looked forward to the moment on Good Fridays when my name would be called over the PA system for early dismissal.

More than just the exceptionalist fantasy of being freed from class a half hour before my non-Catholic peers, it was the discordant mystery and the utter seriousness of sitting with my mother in the church at three in the afternoon, in the alternating blocks of shadow and colored sunlight from the stained-glass windows, which captivated me. The undecorated church was vast and quiet, the congregation scant, the space to the left of the sanctuary, where the confusion of guitars and tambourines that played music on Sundays, was vacant. And then in the midst of this great, shadowed stillness, Fr. Lawrence Wetterholm began his journey around the nave, rehearsing with the chanting congregation the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. It was, and is, for me the most profoundly mystical and glorious day of the Catholic liturgical year.

I am not alone in this connection to the pious exercise of the Stations (or Way) of the Cross: “Of all the pious exercises connected with the veneration of the Cross, none is more popular among the faithful than the Via Crucis.”¹ Nevertheless, when I began my inquiry for this project in the winter of 2014/2015, it quickly became apparent that the state of the literature did not reflect this popularity. While literature describing the devotional practice of the Stations was available, any discussion of the designed artifacts of the Stations—the way in which they are represented in or out of doors—was conspicuously absent. The lack of writing on the subject is astounding: the Stations of the Cross is a vitally important practice, a frequent subject of art and design, and a prevailing landscape typology of the Roman Catholic Church, but virtually no critical attention has been paid to the subject from a design perspective. What little aesthetic discussion exists in the literature is from an art history perspective, and does not address the objecthood of the Stations or the experience of the faithful while following them.

At the same time, as I examined more and more photographs and descriptions of outdoor Stations of the Cross, I was also struck by the monotony of the genre. The fourteen Stations of the Cross are typically represented by simple numbers, painted scenes, reliefs, or sculptures, distributed around the nave or aisles of the church or scattered about the grounds. While innovation in church design has yielded celebrated and controversial permutations of Catholic churches (Corbusier’s Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, France; Gottfried Böhm’s Brutalist Pilgrimage Church in Neviges, Germany; and more recently, Massimiliano & Doriana Fuksas’s Church in Foligno, Italy), no Way of the Cross landscape appears to have intentionally engaged with the developments in formal or spatial theory of the past hundred years.²

1 Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines, Vatican Website, December 2001, sec. 131, accessed January 25, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html.

2 The stations have, however, received treatment in the visual arts, both as objects of church ornament and as independent works of art.

Interpretations of the Way of the Cross—perhaps the most spatially-complex of Catholic rites, offering the greatest potential for interaction with the landscape—have stagnated, often repeated by rote but never rethought.

Even costly American examples of Stations of the Cross, such as those at the Basilica of St. Mary Star of the Sea in Key West or the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Santa Fe, are composed of little more than winding paths dotted with benches and sculptures in half-hearted neoclassical or contemporary (respectively) modes. The loss is the Church’s; while these spaces are adequate for the task at hand, the full potential of the Way of the Cross as a Catholic landscape typology remains untapped.

In order to tap that potential, this project makes the claim that the Stations of the Cross may be understood as a discrete landscape phenomenon, and therefore within the scope of the theories, interpretive tools, and strategies of the landscape architect. Viewed from this perspective for the first time, we see that the underlying spatial structure of the Stations has not changed, from the very earliest built examples of the ritual into the twenty-first century. The structure remains even in the face of the immense cultural shift of modernism, which redirected the fundamental relationship of the individual to society, space, the self, and the divine. The question is begged: can a new conceptual model of the Stations of the Cross, based on a modernist worldview, create a fundamentally new experience of the rite?

As an answer to that question, this project proposes a design for a landscape Stations of the Cross generated through a research-through-designing strategy. Having established the contexts of Roman Catholic practice, cultural modernism as it was manifested in Catholicism, sacred art and architecture, and landscape architecture, and the geospatial context of the site, the project moves through stages of information-gathering and several phases of concept and site development, resulting in two final products: a master plan and set of drawings proposing the Ipswich Stations, and a documented design process which elucidates the choices resulting in the final plan.

I. ESTABLISHING CONTEXTS

This project is, at its heart, a process of analysis and synthesis.

Because this work draws a great deal of complex information from various fields and then distills it into an on-the-ground design, this chapter establishes the bounds of that inquiry and presents the pertinent information gathered from each field. This information forms the context in which the design decisions relating to the built nature of the Stations of the Cross is made. Beginning with an overview of the Stations of the Cross as a Catholic practice and a landscape phenomenon, the chapter moves to a discussion of the cultural context of modernism and the physical conditions of the site.

This chapter makes two arguments: that the Stations of the Cross, as a design subject, may be understood as a discrete landscape phenomenon and is therefore subject to discussion in terms of landscape architecture; and that, when the principles of design modernism are rigorously applied to the design of a Stations of the Cross in the landscape, they will yield a set of Stations with unique devotional impact.

This is a problem which can only be fully addressed through design—in this case, the process of making changes to the form and composition of a landscape towards the creation of a garden to be experienced at the human scale. To do otherwise—to remain in the realm of theory or to work solely in diagrams or generic schemas—would neglect the most basic and elementary medium of the landscape architect: the landscape itself. The crux of this project is the expression of the ideas of modernism through a definite landscape program. This design problem is situated at the intersection of three broad contexts, which must be accounted for if the problem is to be addressed with authenticity and credibility: the **theological and doctrinal** context of the Stations of the Cross, the **theoretical** context of modernism in landscape architecture, and the **geospatial** context of the project's site. The status of design-as-research within the academic circles of landscape architecture remains poorly defined, and thus an object of some contention. However, Lenzholzer et al. (2013) outline four approaches to what they term “research-through-designing”:

(post)positivist, based on the natural sciences and relating to physical questions of environment, technologies, and function;

constructivist, focusing on cultural values, experiential qualities, and human beliefs;

advocacy/participatory, aimed at provoking change in sociopolitical contexts; and

pragmatic, which synthesizes elements from the preceding approaches.

My work is squarely within the constructivist camp, described by the authors as a research process which generates knowledge in the form of new constructs or systems grounded in theoretical,

cultural, and geographical contexts.¹ The “new construct” I propose is a Stations of the Cross experienced in the dimension of the landscape, the product of an applied understanding of a modernist sense of space, self, and the divine. The contexts which, when layered, generate this new concept, are the theological, theoretical, and geospatial contexts listed above.

In this chapter, I describe the first stage (which I call “Establishing Contexts”) of the design process I established for a landscape Stations of the Cross. In this first stage, a great quantity of complex abstract information on the subjects of landscape architecture, sacred art and architecture, design modernism, Roman Catholic religious practice, and the geophysical nature of the site at the Notre Dame Spirituality Center was compiled, sorted through, and organized according to the role that the information would play in the design process. The resulting bodies of gathered information constitute the contexts of the project; the role of those contexts within the design process may be described by a question addressed by the contextual information:

Stations of the Cross: What is the essential nature of the thing to be built?

Modernism: What accumulation of qualities makes a piece of art, a built place, or an idea “modernist”?

Notre Dame Spirituality Center: What constraints and opportunities are imposed by the site? How can a Stations of the Cross be situated in this landscape? That is, how might a Stations of the Cross in this location be distinct from other Stations of the Cross?

For purposes of clarity, the answers to these questions (as derived from the literature review and site analysis) were formulated as design constructs—guiding strategies or tools which allow those abstract principles to be applied to a real-world design project. Those design constructs are as follows:

¹ Sandra Lenzholzer, Ingrid Duchhart, Jusuck Koh, “‘Research-through-designing’ in landscape architecture,” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 113(2013), 120-123.

Stations of the Cross: A narrative arc outlining the emotional drama of Christ's Passion

Modernism in landscape architecture, sacred art and architecture, and American Roman Catholicism: A list of qualities describing a modernist Stations of the Cross

Notre Dame Spirituality Center site: A set of photographs and descriptive maps outlining constraints and opportunities on site

Framing the information within these direct terms sets up a clear path forward: as a designer, I am given the basic structure of the thing being built, I have a sense of what it ought to look and feel like, and I understand the existing conditions to which I will make changes. As much as possible, the concepts are intended to give cues to concrete on-paper decision making within the design process. Their principal aim is to illuminate how the shapes represented in the final design were conceived in response to (and informed by) the intersection of several epistemological concepts. In this regard, the constructs may serve as criteria for future readers of the project to evaluate its success.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE

The Cross is the word through which God has responded to evil in the world.

—Pope Francis¹

The gamut of Catholic practice is exceedingly broad—an unsurprising state of affairs in a religion that traces its lineage back over two millennia and claims an estimated 1.2 billion faithful on six continents.² It would be a daunting (if not impossible) task to document every exercise by which Catholics

practice their faith, but we may generally categorize a Catholic rite as either pertaining to the Liturgy or to popular piety.

In broadly ecumenical terms, liturgy is defined as “a rite or body of rites prescribed for public worship,”³ but this definition fails to capture the primacy of the Liturgy within the scope of Catholic practice. Mass, or the sacrament of the Eucharist, is comprised of the Liturgy of the Word (readings from scripture) and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the system of prayers and rites surrounding the administration of bread and wine, transubstantiated as Christ's body and blood). Pope St. John Paul II characterized the Liturgy as “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed...and the fount from which all her power flows.”⁴

The formulae by which these rites are performed are, despite variations in tone and style on the part of priests and congregations, uniform in their essentials, requirements, and structure. Mass (as the sacrament of the Eucharist) is one of the seven sacraments, the means by which the divine gift of grace is produced,⁵ and is therefore “necessary to life in Christ.”⁶

If the strength of the Liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church “is its objective character,” the strength of the Church herself, arguably, is in subjectivity. Within the confines of belief and doctrine as laid out by the Holy See, practitioners are allowed and encouraged to cultivate personal relationships with the Trinity, Mary, and the Saints through a wide range of “paraliturgical and devotional services celebrated in common.”⁷ These types of services are termed “popular piety” or “popular religiosity” by the Vatican, and the associated rituals “pious exercises”:

1 Francis, “Way of the Cross at the Colosseum: Address of Pope Francis,” Vatican Website, March 29, 2013, accessed January 28, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130329_via-crucis-colosseo.html.

2 Evyatar Marienberg, *Catholicism Today: An Introduction to the Contemporary Catholic Church* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 4. N.B.: this figure considers as Catholic anybody who has been baptized or joined the Catholic Church later in life and has not been excommunicated or publicly renounced their faith.

3 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, New ed., s.v. “liturgy.”

4 Popular Piety and the Liturgy, sec. 1.

5 Marienberg, *Catholicism Today*, 96.

6 Popular Piety and the Liturgy, sec. 11.

7 Rev. Neil R. Joy, S. T. L., introduction to *Encyclopedia of Catholic Devotions and Practices* by Ann Ball (Huntingdon, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.), 10-11.

those public or private expressions of Christian piety which, although not part of the Liturgy, are considered to be in harmony with the spirit, norms, and rhythms of the Liturgy. Moreover, such pious exercises are inspired to some degree by the Liturgy and lead the Christian people to the Liturgy.⁸

The purpose of pious exercises is twofold: to enhance spiritual development in a particular area of faith, and to “lead” the faithful back to the Liturgy as the central mystery of the Church. Pious exercises most commonly take the form of “devotional practices,” described as:

[...] various external practices (e.g. prayers, hymns, observances attached to particular times or places, insignia, medals, habits or customs). Animated by an attitude of faith, such external practices manifest the particular relationship of the faithful with the Divine Persons, or the Blessed Virgin Mary in her privileges of grace and those of her titles which express them, or with the Saints in their configuration with Christ or in their role in the Church’s life.⁹

In Catholic terms, therefore, we might understand the Stations of the Cross as a pious exercise of devotion to the Cross of Christ—that is, a way of meditating on the mysterious redemption of humankind through Christ’s suffering and death. Proper completion of the Stations of the Cross earns for the faithful a plenary indulgence (“the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sin whose guilt has already been forgiven”¹⁰), a common “reward” of devotional practices. However, the precedence of the Liturgy over any devotional practice is without question.¹¹ As a devotional practice, the Stations of the Cross falls within the domain of popular piety—but because the overall intention of devotional practice is to develop the relationship of the faithful with the Liturgy, a brief explanation of the Stations of the Cross themselves is necessary.

8 Popular Piety and the Liturgy, sec. 7.

9 *Ibid.*, sec. 8.

10 Ann Ball, *Encyclopedia of Catholic Devotions and Practices* (Huntingdon, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.), 262.

11 Joy, introduction, 11-12.

History and Practice of the Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross are external to the Liturgy—they are not required practice but instead allow the faithful the chance to experience and express their own faith (i.e. their understanding of themselves in relation to the Catholic worldview) by retracing the steps of Christ during the hours before his death. Meditation and prayer over those events, in their entirety known as the Passion of Christ, have changed in the two millennia that have elapsed, but from its earliest conception the core of the rite has been the veneration of the sacred landscape through which Christ moved in his final hours.

History

Devotional attachment to the Via Dolorosa¹² (the final path taken by Christ to his execution—from his betrayal and arrest in Gethsemane, a garden or estate on the Mount of Olives, to Golgotha, a barren hill outside Jerusalem where he was crucified and died) began almost immediately after his death, according to some traditions.¹³ It is likely that many sites of important events in Christ’s Passion (e.g. the site of his crucifixion and tomb, now the Church of the Holy Sepulcher) were strongly fixed in local memory, and pilgrims like the Galician Lady Egeria came from across the Mediterranean to visit the holy sites. Egeria’s is the earliest (c. 380) written account describing a European’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land; by all accounts, interest only grew in the years to come.¹⁴ The events commemorated by these early pilgrims were entirely based on events from the Gospel narratives of Christ’s last hours or other sections of the Old and New Testaments.¹⁵ By the fifth and sixth centuries, Egeria’s self-organized tour

12 The term Via Dolorosa (“way of sorrow”) refers solely to the original route followed by Christ in Jerusalem, and not to the reproductions of that route.

13 In his invaluable book *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of their History and Devotional Purpose* (London: Burns and Oates, 1914), Fr. Herbert Thurston, S. J., tells of a medieval legend wherein Mary, Christ’s mother, “[spent] her last days upon earth in traversing again and again the scenes of the Passion of her Divine Son,” but goes on to state that no reliable pre-medieval record of this scene exists (3).

14 *Ibid.*, 11.

15 *Ibid.*, 4-6.

of Jerusalem had become a ritualized procession between the holy places associated with Christ's Passion, known as the *via sacra*.¹⁶

As the Middle Ages dawned, the Passion became a keen focus of popular piety. Interest in visiting the sites of the *Via Dolorosa* increased accordingly, but the heavy cost and plentiful dangers of traveling abroad precluded many from making the pilgrimage.¹⁷ Guidebooks written by pilgrims who succeeded in getting to (and returning from) Jerusalem reproduced the distances between the "stations" along the *Via Dolorosa*, in order that European readers could mark out and walk the Way of the Cross at home.¹⁸ From the fifteenth century onwards, the popular devotions of the Seven Falls (memorializing seven falls of Christ as he carried the cross), the "way of sorrows," and the "stations of Christ," fused and evolved into the exercise of the Stations of the Cross Catholics follow today.^{19,20}

It is not the goal of this paper to produce a detailed history of the Stations of the Cross; Jesuit scholar Herbert Thurston has covered the ancient history up to the early twentieth century with great attention to detail. Rather, the brief summary of the Stations' evolution provided above shows, in the context of this project, the intense connection to the landscape of Christ's Passion that the Stations represent, and the way in which their configuration has depended entirely on the cultural conditions of the faithful longing to walk in Christ's footsteps.

Practice

The current format of the Way of the Cross celebrated today—fourteen stations which translate the sacred landscape of Christ's Passion into a common sequence—was first recorded in Spain in the

sixteenth century²¹ and was widely promoted in the eighteenth century by St. Leonard of Port Maurice before being codified and indulgenced by Pope Clement XII in 1731.²² In this format, the holy sites are rendered as "stations," points in space indicating precise events, between which the minister or the solitary devotee walks. The Vatican offers two possible variations of the rite, which are somewhat misleadingly labeled. The "traditional" Stations are those which have been in the most consistent use since the eighteenth century and constitute the majority of Stations around the world. As first led by Pope St. John Paul II in 1991, the "biblical" Stations of the Cross omits those events without a foundation in Scripture (the three falls of Jesus, the meetings with his Mother and Veronica) and replaces them with events drawn from the Gospel Passion narratives (the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal and judgement, Jesus' scourging, the conversations with the good thief and with his Mother and the Disciple).^{23, 24, 25}

The newer, biblical Stations are not intended to invalidate the older, traditional Stations or to provide a more "accurate" narrative, but rather to shift the devotion of practitioners to other events within the pageant of the Passion.²⁶ Thurston, writing in 1914, well before the establishment of the biblical Stations, reminds us that the role of the Stations is as "aids and means to devotion, but not its final cause"; the events have "a certain relative truth" within the context of the Passion and Christ's teachings that transcends their factuality.²⁷ A comparison of these two variants is outlined in Figure 1.1.

16 Piero Marini, "The Way of the Cross," Vatican Website, accessed January 28, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/documents/ns_lit_doc_via-crucis_en.html.

17 Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross*, 2, 44.

18 Ibid., 82.

19 Ibid., 62.

20 Marini, "The Way of the Cross."

21 Ibid.

22 Ball, *Encyclopedia*, 604-605; the verb "to indulgence" means to acknowledge the ability of a certain devotion or activity to grant plenary indulgences to the successful practitioner.

23 Marini, "The Way of the Cross."

24 Ball, *Encyclopedia*, 604.

25 Sequence laid out by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) ("Scriptural Stations of the Cross," USCCB Website, accessed January 28, 2017, <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/stations-of-the-cross/scriptural-stations-of-the-cross.cfm>), based on John Paul II's 1991 model.

26 Ibid.

27 Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross*, 136-138.

Station	Traditional Stations of the Cross	Biblical (Scriptural) Stations of the Cross
I	Jesus is condemned	Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
II	Jesus takes up his Cross	Jesus, betrayed by Judas, is arrested
III	Jesus falls for the first time on the way to Calvary	Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin
IV	Jesus meets Mary, his Mother	Jesus is denied by Peter
V	Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his Cross	Jesus is judged by Pilate
VI	Veronica wipes Jesus' face with a veil	Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns
VII	Jesus falls the second time	Jesus bears the Cross
VIII	Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem	Jesus is helped by Simon the Cyrenian to carry the Cross
IX	Jesus falls the third time	Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
X	Jesus is stripped of his clothes	Jesus is crucified
XI	Jesus is nailed to the Cross	Jesus promises his kingdom to the Good Thief
XII	Jesus dies on the Cross	Jesus speaks to his Mother and the Disciple
XIII	Jesus' body is removed from the Cross	Jesus dies on the Cross
XIV	Jesus is buried	Jesus is placed in the tomb

Figure 1.1: The traditional and biblical Stations of the Cross

Regardless of which version is followed, the structure of the pious exercise of the Stations of the Cross is consistent. The devotion may be followed by individuals or by large crowds, adhering to the same structure. Individuals will themselves walk from station to station; in the case of group practice in restricted spaces (i.e. indoors), the minister (priest, deacon, layperson) leading the exercise is the only one to move while the crowd stays stationary. Though the exercise is particularly suited to Good Friday (the Friday of Easter Weekend, when Christ was supposedly executed), the Stations may be followed at any point in the liturgical year. The rite commences with an antiphon (a short piece of sacred text, either sung or recited²⁸); as each station is approached, the Adoramus is recited:

Minister: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because, by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.²⁹

There are hundreds of texts written by clergymen and laypersons alike which are meant to guide the practitioner through the Stations; most of these texts involve a reading from the Gospel narratives of the Passion, read by the minister, and a reflection, read in unison by the congregation. A verse of the *Stabat Mater*, a 13th-century Catholic hymn reflecting on the sorrow of Jesus' mother Mary, is often chanted

28 Peter M. J. Stravinskias, *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia* (Huntingdon, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1998) 84.

29 In its original Latin (*Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi; quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundi*) the antiphon has been a standard part of the Good Friday liturgy since before the time of St. Francis of Assisi. In Michael Martin, "Adoramus te," *Thesaurus precum latinorum*, 2016, accessed March 29, 2017, <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Filius/Adoramus.html>.



Figure 1.2: Conceptual diagram of a segment of the Stations of the Cross

by practitioners between stations. The exercise ends with a closing prayer offered by the minister.³⁰

The Landscape of the Stations

The preceding summary of the history and current form of the Way of the Cross serves to illustrate a central tenet of this paper: that the Stations—the translation of a series of points on the surface of the earth from one location to another—may be understood not only as a rite in a theological context, but also as a discrete landscape phenomenon. The argument relies on the inclusive but precise definition offered by J. B. Jackson: landscape is “a composition of man-made or man-modified spaces to serve as infrastructure or background for our collective experience.”³¹ In Jackson’s terms, the Stations of the Cross are a ritualistic infrastructure by which the collective experience of retracing the holy sites of Christ’s Passion may be enacted. They are nothing less than the (re)creation of sacred landscape space, be it a set of crosses on a mountain

path, a string of numerals painted along the nave of a church, or even words printed on the page.

A Way of the Cross Landscape Typology

The metaphysical landscape of the Stations of the Cross has been represented and built in an untold number of ways over the course of the Stations’ two-thousand-year development. However, the underlying framework of the Stations—the structure of the landscape—remains the same. Essentially, the landscape is composed by a sequence of points and lines. Whether the Stations are fixed to the walls of a church or scattered as sculptures throughout a landscaped outdoor space, the experience of the landscape of the Stations is a deliberate procession along one route with fourteen predetermined stops along the way (Fig. 1.2).

The variation between different manifestations of the Way of the Cross lies mostly in the way that the individual stations themselves are represented. These representations operate at a given point along a spectrum, from abstract to figural, which roughly corresponds to the dimensionality of the representation. I propose the following descriptive outline of the three main types of Stations of the Cross: numerical (one-dimensional), illustrative (two-dimensional), and sculptural (three-dimensional) (Fig. 1.3):

30 USCCB, “Scriptural Stations of the Cross.”

31 John Brinkerhoff Jackson, “The Word Itself,” *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 305.

Type	Dimension	Abstraction	Characterization
Numerical	1 (a point in space)	Very abstract	The events and character of the station are established entirely by the text accompanying the ritual
Illustrative	2 (a flat illustration)	Abstract	The pictorial representation of the station may be evocative but is confined to a single point in space and a single perspective
Sculptural	3 (an object in space)	Less abstract	The event described in the station, represented in sculpture, becomes part of the physical world in which the observer moves; perspective and approach may change, but the scene is still a replication, fixed in time and space

Figure 1.3: Representational typology of Stations of the Cross

Numerical: The simplest and most abstracted representations of the Stations. These are the bare bones of the rite, using only a number or a simple cross³² to indicate the stations and presupposing the use of a written text as an aid to meditation (Fig. 1.4). Both the biblical and traditional Ways of the Cross can be followed interchangeably using a numerical Stations of the Cross, due to the non-specific nature of the stations themselves (which only indicate the presence of a station and, perhaps, its number within the sequence).

Illustrative: This term refers to any pictorial representation of the Stations rendered in two dimensions and bounded in space (stained glass windows, paintings, plaques, and bas-relief being especially popular, Fig. 1.5). While they may oftentimes be found outdoors, illustrative and numerical stations are the prevalent means of representing the Stations within a church (presumably because they fit along the walls, neither obstructing the view of the congregation nor taking up valuable interior space). Because they illustrate specific events, these Ways of the Cross adhere to either the biblical or (more likely) the traditional stations, thereby restricting the practice of the faithful to a single order.

Sculptural: Due to the requirements imposed by their size, sculptural Stations of the Cross are typically found out of doors. The least abstract of the typologies, they represent the events of the Passion at a human scale, allowing the faithful to relate to the station as an event within their own geographical sphere, rather than a reproduction of an

event that occurred in a faraway place and time (Fig. 1.6). Like the illustrative type, sculptural Ways of the Cross represent a specific sequence (biblical or traditional) of stations.

None of these methods of representation is empirically more or less suitable than the others; rather, the method usually corresponds to the financial and spatial resources of the client. Each represents a time-tested means of translating the landscape of Christ's Passion in a manner accessible to the faithful around the world.

To undertake the design of a Way of the Cross, regardless of which type it falls under, is to undertake, conceptually, the design of a landscape. It follows, then, that the design of a Stations of the Cross, at any scale and in any location, would benefit from engagement with the currents of thought that are at work in the larger practice of landscape architecture. However, no scholarly attention, as far as this research has revealed, has treated the Stations of the Cross as a landscape element or examined any specific Stations of the Cross through a landscape architectural lens. Analysis of built Stations of the Cross in the landscape is similarly lacking. Indeed, while the relationship of Catholic faith and values to our terrestrial home has been explored by scholars and religious thinkers since the dawn of the faith, no attention has apparently been given to a Catholic sense of place in the landscape. As a point of comparison, the question of what makes good Catholic churches, in light of modernist architecture, is a debate that has been carrying on for over a century.³³

A simple explanation of this oversight may be that gardens and landscapes are simply not seen as an integral, quotidian aspect of Catholic practice in the same way that church buildings are. However, the Stations of the Cross are ubiquitous ornaments of most church interiors and are frequently found outdoors, either accompanying shrines or on

32 As with any typology that claims to explain a body of knowledge, there are, in many cases, blurred lines which exist between types. The Monastery of Christ in the Desert, a Benedictine monastery in New Mexico, uses only wooden crosses but indicates, through short passages on plaques accompanying each station, the nature of the events of that station. More representational than a numeral, but less so than an illustration. The purpose of the typology is to give an overview of the range of methods by which the Stations have been represented by past artists—and to demonstrate, by extension, the opportunity to explore other expressions.

33 This debate is still keenly felt by scholars, architects, and parishioners alike. In the United States, a recent resurgence in traditional building styles and the response of modernist architects has been discussed by Denis McNamara in "A Decade of New Classicism: The Flowering of Traditional Church Architecture," *Sacred Architecture* 21(2012), 18-24.



property directly adjacent to church buildings. Yet none of these has entered the landscape architectural canon, none has furthered the shared knowledge of the field. By the same token, it appears that a landscape architectural theory-driven approach to the design of a landscape Way of the Cross has never been undertaken (at the very least, it has certainly not been documented).³⁴

Defining the Stations of the Cross as the translation of a landscape allows designers to address this shortcoming, reframing the complex trappings of Catholic ritual as a set of spatial requirements to be accounted for in the design of a landscape space. Just as importantly, if understood as a landscape, the Stations become a subject of inquiry within the field of landscape architecture. Viewed from the perspective of a contemporary landscape architect, the possibility of a fourth type—a landscape Stations of the Cross, experienced in the four dimensions of the physical landscape—emerges. Thus positioned, the Stations may be understood and analyzed according to the rich body of landscape architecture theory and criticism—a corpus of knowledge which includes, by proxy, the history and theory of architecture as well as art. How such a Way of the Cross—a *landscape* Way of the Cross—might be conceived and executed constitutes the chief object of inquiry of this project.

While individual sets of Stations have been written about from the perspective of art history (or even,

34 This is not to say that there are not beautiful and important iterations of the Stations of the Cross designed by conscientious and talented landscape architects, merely that these designs have not demonstrably engaged with the dramatic change in conceptions of space and selfhood outlined by thinkers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Left: The three types of Stations of the Cross; from the top:

Figure 1.4: Numerical: Chapel of the Holy Cross, Sedona, AZ; artist unknown, 1956; photo credit Lolita Guevarra, www.lolitaguevarra.com, 2015.

Figure 1.5: Illustrative: Stairway of Prayer, Mother Cabrini Shrine, Golden, CO; artist Italian, unknown, c. 1954; photo credit Carol M. Highsmith, Gates Frontiers Fund Colorado Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress.

Figure 1.6: Sculptural: San Luis, CO; Huberto Maestas, sculptor, 1990s; photo credit Denver Post, 2010.

as decorative objects within a church building, of architecture), the analysis has remained in the realm of aesthetics, the style of the representation of the scenes from the Passion. The substance of the Stations—their composition in space, the experience of the faithful as they physically move through the sequence—remains largely, if not completely, unexplored. The landscape architecture lens permits (in fact, requires) exactly this kind of inquiry.

MODERNISM

If we examine the Stations of the Cross from the standpoint of a contemporary landscape architect or architectural historian, we are confronted with many permutations of an ancient practice, the fundamental representation of which has changed little over the thousand or so years of its development. Of course, as discussed above, the practical details of the rite have consistently evolved, the most recent example being John Paul II's creation of the biblical stations in 1991 (although almost 30 years ago, a relatively recent event in the Church's long memory). As the rite changed, the infrastructure it requires changed with it, to be sure, but only superficially. There is little difference between Adam Krafft's celebrated sequence of carvings in Nuremburg, Germany, of the Seven Falls of Christ, sculpted sometime before 1490 (Fig. 1.7), and the Gib Singleton Stations of the Cross installed in 2010 at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Santa Fe, New Mexico (Fig. 1.8).³⁵ The events commemorated (seven falls vs. the variety of events in the Stations), the formulae of the rite, and the style of the art may be different, but the basic pattern of the ritualistic infrastructure remains the same: a sequence of objects arranged along a path.

This configuration makes obvious logical sense. A pilgrim visiting Jerusalem would similarly seek out the scenes of Christ's Passion along the winding city streets—a series of points in spaces connected by a path. Standing as proof of this configuration's efficacy is its longevity. If the Stations are one of the most popular Catholic devotional practices and all Stations are configured in the same way, we might surmise that this structure is appropriate

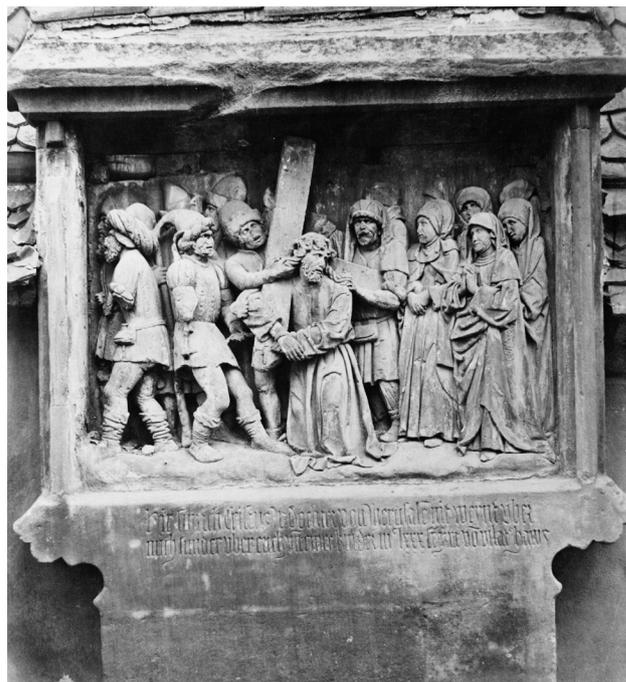


Figure 1.7: Adam Krafft, Kreuzweg, Nuremberg, Germany, c. 1490; Library of Congress.

³⁵ Thurston, *Stations of the Cross*, 63.



Figure 1.8: Gib Singleton, *Stations of the Cross*, 2010, on loan from the Private Collection of Tia; photo credit "Steppin' out of the Box," <http://sum6221.wordpress.com>.

for the purpose: the significant moments of Christ's Passion are presented such that the practitioner may observe the event depicted, meditate, pray, and chant as she moves to the next one. The physical structure of most Stations of the Cross, in that way, adequately meets the needs of the spiritual practice.

Herein lies the problem: the very notion of "adequacy" is deeply at odds with the central ideology of modernism. The adherents of the movement, across the humanities, sciences, and human society generally, prized progress over most other virtues—not progress for the sake of progress, but as a cultural response to the changing condition of human existence brought on by the machine age. In their reevaluation of accepted modes of artistic representation and self-expression, modernists around the world strove, in their multifarious ways, to reconcile the freedoms and interests of the individual with the incredible potential of collective power through technology and industry.³⁶ Faced with this overwhelming dichotomy (and spurred by perhaps the most rapid succession of dramatic changes seen by the human race in its entire history), the modernists sought nothing less than a new language, a new aesthetics, a new means of structuring, understanding, and interfacing with the new world. It is tempting to view a painting, read a poem, or walk through a landscape created during this period and to call out an amorphous form, a narrative, or a Henry Moore sculpture on a plinth and say, "here is modernism." More than facile, this type of response limits modernism to a purely aesthetic phenomenon, rather than the radical revision of the individual's relation to the human universe those aesthetic decisions embody.

The goal of this project is not modernist pastiche, but rather to reconsider the Stations of the Cross in light of the modernists' ideas about space, faith, the landscape, and above all the individual. As such, the project identifies certain conditions of modernism as it was manifested in the Roman Catholic Church (particularly in America), sacred art and architecture, and landscape architecture, and produces a design for a Stations of the Cross landscape that responds to those conditions. It is not an attempt to design a

³⁶ Christopher Crouch, *Modernism in Art, Design & Architecture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 5-6.

Stations of the Cross garden in a modernist style; neither do I, as the designer of the project, style myself a modernist or have any illusions on the subject. The historicist bent of the project situates me where I am: somewhere in the yet-to-be-defined period after the postmodernists, a vantage point which allows the historicist perspective this project takes. Beginning my career in the early twenty-first century, I cannot produce anything else, due to my own temporality.

But in that case, why modernism? Why look to the middle of the previous century, to designs produced nearly a century ago, for ideas to reinvigorate a landscape type that I myself admitted was already hidebound by historical convention? Why not bring the principles of my own age—ecological design, inclusivity and accessibility, or even parametric computer-driven design—to bear in the design? These may be three very different questions, but the answers are part and parcel of the same idea. There are three principal reasons that I chose the ideas of modernism for this project:

Many of the ideas of modernism are still relevant today. We are, of course, not modernists today, or even postmodernists, but the ideological legacy of the mid-twentieth century is alive and well. While the hindsight of our age encourages us to see, for example, the hubris in the great technophilic follies of the midcentury, the use of cutting-edge technology in landscape architecture continues to spur major developments made by contemporary designers. Perhaps most importantly, the understanding of space as the medium of landscape architecture—arguably the prevailing mindset among contemporary designers—is a distinctly modernist concept, and one that is missing, as I have posited, from the design of most Stations of the Cross. Similarly, the current Catholic understanding of the relationship of the individual to the Church and to God is the direct product of Vatican II and the *aggiornamento* of the Church. It bears repeating that modernism was more than an aesthetic trend; it represented a profound change on a socio-cultural level that we are still reacting to in the present day. If today we are to pursue an ecological or a historicist approach to landscape architecture, we do so based on a modernist understanding of inhabited and useful space, not a Beaux-Arts or Romantic conception of

what is desirable and good in a landscape. In that respect...

*Landscape architecture ought to be part of the art of its time.*³⁷ This maxim from Peter Walker does not hold true for most Stations of the Cross landscapes. As a collection of objects in the landscape meant to be observed and to evoke reactions, most built examples of Stations of the Cross have more in common with Romantic pleasure grounds and Victorian collections than they do with any modernist sense of how a human being experiences a place. In a landscape type whose purpose is to translate the spiritual experience of one place to another, disengagement with a contemporary understanding of space is a critical flaw. Artworks and designed spaces have no “resonance” with their intended audience without situating themselves within the greater cultural milieu. Anything less than this type of intense engagement robs the thing to be created of its potential impact.³⁸ The advanced age and long history of the rite, to say nothing of its association with the infamously conservative Roman Catholic Church, is no excuse. Sacred art and architecture received considerable attention from some of the premier modernist artists and designers, from Matisse to Corbusier; particularly germane to this project is the work of the German architect Rudolf Schwarz, who explicitly bridged the gap between modernist spacemaking and the design of sacred architecture. Even the Church herself responded to the new world of modernism by reshaping the relationship of the individual to the Church and, by extension, to God himself. Modernism had an incredibly long grasp; to that end...

Modernism is a well-documented cultural phenomenon within the fields this project draws upon. Because of its extensive impacts on western society, modernism is a well-trodden subject among critics, academics, historians, and designers. And because the phenomenon was on the level of international human culture, it is possible to make very legible connections between the component parts of this project, from landscape architecture

37 Peter Walker and Yoji Sasaki, “‘Landscape as Art’: A Conversation with Peter Walker and Yoji Sasaki,” *Process* 85(1989), 32.

38 Crouch, *Modernism*, 1.

to sacred art to the Catholic Church. There is, in Pope John XXIII's push for *aggiornamento*, the same underlying cultural impulse behind Fr. Marie-Alain Couturier's review *L'Art Sacré* and Garrett Eckbo's *Landscape for Living*.

We may therefore speak of an *aggiornamento* of the Stations of the Cross without irony and, if we are careful, without risk of an historicist design approach. As stated above, I did not set out to design a modernist Stations of the Cross, but to critically reevaluate the Stations of the Cross as a landscape type, just as Schwarz reevaluated the built edifice of the church and as Eckbo reevaluated the residential garden. The modernists, of course, were able to develop these changes within the sociocultural context of the twentieth century—that is, within their own time. As a twenty-first century designer and researcher, I am not situated within the period, but I do have the benefit of over a half-century of accumulated critical thought to guide my design decision-making process. Perhaps this is the principal difference between their design process and my own. The modernists designed to rectify problems and inadequacies that they had identified in previous work; because of the out-of-date nature of my design subject, I am designing towards a similar end, but with the added insight of scholarship explaining how the modernists reacted to those inadequacies and reshaped the world in accordance with their own (often clearly stated) views.

The remainder of this section briefly outlines the principal themes of modernism as they appeared in three fields: the Roman Catholic Church (particularly in the United States), sacred art and architecture, and landscape architecture. These broad themes are then condensed and combined into a list of principles describing my conception of a landscape Stations of the Cross responding to the cultural condition of modern existence, providing a clear statement of the modernist context drawn upon during the project's research-through-designing process.

Modernism in the Roman Catholic Church

Modernism³⁹ is a particularly thorny word within the Roman Catholic Church and cannot be used generally or lightly. In a theological sense, it is perhaps most straightforward not to define Catholic Modernism, but to describe what has come to be called the Catholic Modernist crisis. Beginning in earnest around 1890 to 1914, Modernist Catholic theologians, scholars, philosophers, historians, and critics (frequently but not exclusively members of the clergy) were part of a growing trend in Catholic thought which posited that Scripture and Church dogma can and should be read from a historicist and secularist viewpoint, rather than from the neo-scholastic ("Thomist") perspective which prevailed at the time.⁴⁰ The general intellectual threads of these arguments were gathered up, summarized, and roundly rejected by Pope Pius X's 1907 encyclical *Pascendi domici gregis*, which described the Modernist movement as "the synthesis of all heresies." In the view of the Holy See, the inevitable and unavoidable result of this type of inquiry was worse even than Protestantism: total rejection of Church authority and embrace of a skeptical agnosticism.⁴¹ The movement was severely shaken by the issuing of *Pascendi* and the attendant persecution of leading Modernists; prominent priests Alfred Loisy, George Tyrell, and Friedrich von Hügel—who disagreed with the papacy's characterization of their "movement" and its "tenets"—were excommunicated for their opinions. The debate is strongly felt among Catholics even today, and the label "Modernist" remains for some a badge of honor, for others a slander.

39 In this paper, I follow the Merriam-Webster's example, using an initial capital letter to refer specifically to Roman Catholic Modernism and Modernists, reserving the lowercase "modernism" for the overall cultural movement.

40 Darrell Jodock, "Introduction I: the Modernist crisis," *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3. Oddly enough, the ideas of these scholars were not organized or codified in any perceivable way until the issuing of *Pascendi*, which presented the ideas as a codified doctrine. Alfred Loisy called the pope's summarization "a fantasy of the theological imagination" (2).

41 Bernard Gaudreau, *Le péril intérieur de l'Église*, quoted in C. J. T. Talar, "'The Synthesis of All Heresies'—100 Years On," *Theological Studies* 68(2007): 494.

I make no claim to align my design for a Stations of the Cross with either the Modernists or the Anti-Modernists; to do so would invoke a layer of complexity this project does not require. Though Catholic Modernism has remained an important point of theological contention within the Church, the crisis did not result in any apparent changes in practice or mindset for the those of the faithful who were not also amateur theologians.

That earthshaking change arrived in the 1960s in the form of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). Called by Pope St. John XXIII, the Council consisted of a gathering of the world's bishops in the autumn of four consecutive years, from 1962-1965,

...to let [the bishops] educate each other as to the true role of the Church in a suffering, morally confused world, two-thirds of it poverty-stricken amid unprecedented plenty in the rest, living in fear of thermonuclear warfare and total destruction, and seemingly unable to disentangle itself from the mess.⁴²

There is no way of knowing to what extent ideas promulgated by the original Catholic Modernists prompted John XXIII to call Vatican II or influenced the decisions made there, but it is abundantly clear that both movements were driven by the goal of reconciling an ancient establishment with a new way of life—"prepar[ing] the unchanging Church to meet the challenges of the vastly changed world."⁴³ John XXIII used the term *aggiornamento*, which may variously signify "modernization," "adaptation," or "a bringing up to date," to embody his vision of bringing the Church into the modern world.⁴⁴

Due to its central role within the life of the Church, both the Catholic Modernists and the progressive factions of Vatican II turned their critical eye on the liturgy and holy writ. Despite this similarity, the two movements operated on different scales: while

42 Xavier Rynne, *Vatican Council II* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), quoted in Timothy Kelly, *The Transformation of American Catholicism: The Pittsburgh Laity and the Second Vatican Council, 1950-1972* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 166.

43 Kelly, *Transformation of American Catholicism*, 165.

44 *Ibid.*, 167.

the Catholic Modernists' focus was on historicism and historical scholarship, *aggiornamento* was concerned with liturgical renewal and ecumenism.⁴⁵ One was based on theological discourse, and the other addressed the experience of Catholic faith with the lives of the faithful. To this end were Vatican II's most dramatic changes: priests turned to face the congregation and spoke in the vernacular, not Latin; laypersons were encouraged to read the Bible in order to develop personal attachment to Scripture, and to participate more fully in the mass and in the life of the Church; and mass was allowed to be celebrated in a variety of styles, as deemed necessary by the priest in charge to most fully engage his parishioners.⁴⁶ The purpose of all of these changes was encapsulated in the encyclical *Sacrosanctum concilium*, issued by Pope Paul VI in 1963 (John had died earlier that year) as no less than the rapprochement and involvement of the faithful with the word of God:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit...⁴⁷

This statement encapsulates the principal theme of Catholic modernism: a greater emphasis on the experience of the individual as a part of the larger body of the Church, in terms of both active participation and personal relationship with the Scriptures.

The consequences of these changes have, in fact, already been touched upon in this paper. John Paul II's creation of the biblical (i.e. scriptural) Stations of the Cross is decidedly situated within the theological legacy of Vatican II. If we take Vatican II as one half of how modernism was manifested in the Catholic Church, the biblical stations are entirely modernist in nature: they attempt to reconcile the man of

45 Talar, "Synthesis," 512.

46 Colleen McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 76, 79-85.

47 Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum concilium* [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], Vatican website, December 4, 1963, accessed May 9, 2017, sec. 14.

faith with his religion in an increasingly crazed and secular world by using an exercise of popular piety as an opportunity to bring the faithful back to the scriptures—to God’s word, the source of their faith.

In no small part, the success (and popularity) of Vatican II’s reformers, compared to the conservatives, was thanks to their embrace of their contemporary cultural context. Their willingness to interface with mass media and use it as a tool to spread information cast them in a favorable light with the faithful, and their ideas were popular. Their progressive stance eventually brought them around to a reconsideration of the physical structure of their buildings and the function of their sacred arts—an intense discussion which had been ongoing since the turn of the century.

Modernism in sacred art and architecture

By the time of the sweeping changes made to the Church from 1962-65, the cultural problem of modernism had already inspired significant innovation and controversy in Roman Catholic sacred art and architecture. If the concept of modernism describes a rethinking of the fundamental relationship between the individual and society at large (as Christopher Crouch posits), there is perhaps no arena in the Catholic world where that change was more visibly evident than in the built infrastructure of the Church and in the artistic representation of that relationship.

Modernism, especially within the fields of art and architecture, is generally understood as entailing the “resolute rejection of a sacramental view of reality and of anthropomorphic connections with the divinity.”⁴⁸ In the sacred art and design world, the ramifications of this condition were especially obvious: after a centuries-long tradition of church building and art created by the foremost masters of their crafts, by the end of the nineteenth century the Church had become distanced from the cutting edge of art. Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, the French Dominican priest Marie-Alain Couturier identified several causes (the rapid evolutionary pace of the arts since 1850, “the decline

of real, not bookish, culture in ecclesiastical circles” and insisted that the result (at least in France) was a clergy-sanctioned patronage of “hucksters” and the incompetent, willful backwardness of the academic artists.

One of the most influential agents of change within twentieth-century sacred art and architecture, Couturier proffered a simple determination, “Great men for great works,” embodying his belief that as a “matter of principle,” the clergy are responsible for securing the greatest artists and designers of the time to complete works of a sacred nature.⁴⁹ Couturier was a champion of “the very simple idea that to keep Christian art alive, every generation must appeal to the masters of living art.”⁵⁰ Through his contacts in the French art world, he organized the commissions of what are now considered some of France’s greatest modernist sacred buildings: Le Corbusier’s Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp (1954); Henri Matisse’s layout and decoration of the Vence Chapel (1951); the collaborative decoration of the chapel of Notre-Dame de Toute Grace du Plateau d’Assy (1950); and the Église du Sacré-Coeur at Audincourt (1951) (Figs. 1.9-1.12).

Couturier was of the opinion that the exact nature of the faith of these great artists was of little consequence, basing his confidence in the “profound analogy... between the inspiration of the mystics and that of heroes and great artists.”⁵¹ His opinions herein dovetail with Mircea Eliade’s view that, while “the great majority of artists do not seem to have ‘faith’ in the traditional sense of the word,” the sacred exists in an unrecognizable subconscious language within the works of the great modernist artists. Eliade posits that the modernist artists’ progressive abandonment of form and volume—their descent “into the interior of substance” was nevertheless undertaken in an attempt to gain some insight into the deepest truths and mysteries of the universe.⁵²

49 Marie-Alain Couturier, “To the Great Men, the Great Works,” in *Sacred Art*, ed. Dominique de Menil and Pie Duployé, tr. Granger Ryan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 34-35.

50 Couturier, “What Assy Teaches Us,” in *Sacred Art*, 52.

51 Couturier, “To the Great Men,” 36.

52 Mircea Eliade, “The Sacred and the Modern Artist,” in *The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture*,

48 Gustavo Benavides, “Modernity,” in *The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture: A Reader*, ed. Renata J. Hejduk and Jim Williamson (New York: Routledge, 2011), 262.

This is the principal theme we might take away from an appreciation of modernist sacred art: as in “secular” modern art (an idea Eliade challenges), nonrepresentational and suggestive forms more fully allow the individual to determine their own personal relationship to the content of the art (and, by proxy, to the divine). Couturier relates the statement of an old woman who visited Matisse’s chapel at Vence: “It’s a lot better that the Blessed Virgin has no face, so that each one can see her the way he wants to.”⁵³ Because of its suggestive purpose, sacred art is, perhaps, always somewhat directly representational; where the design of a Stations of the Cross in a modernist context is concerned, the emphasis ought to be on the suggestion of a theme, rather than its direct representation, with the consistent aim of facilitating the individual’s ability to draw connections between themselves, the space they inhabit, and the divine themes they contemplate.

This relationship was of primary concern to modernist architects undertaking the design of Catholic churches and other edifices. These architects faced an incredibly complex challenge. They were supplied with a rich and complex design vocabulary, developed over the previous two millennia by a succession of intensely devout artists and churchmen, whose worldview was ruled, to great extent, by the teachings and dogma of the Catholic Church. Their language of religious architecture corresponded to the particular and ancient construction of the “body of Christ,” an ur-metaphor which described everything from the community of the faithful to the built structure of the church. As we have seen in our discussion of Church modernism, that metaphor—describing the relationship of the masses to God—was no longer adequate for the person of faith living in post-industrial society. By extension, the adequacy of the built form of the church was called into question.

In his 1938 treatise *The Church Incarnate (Vom Bau der Kirche)*, German modernist architect Rudolf Schwarz laid out the task at hand:

To build churches out of that reality which we experience and verify every day; to

123-24.

53 Couturier, “Vence,” in *Sacred Art*, 94.



Figure 1.9: Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut; Ronchamp, France; photo credit Cemal Emden, www.fondationlecorbusier.fr



Figure 1.10: Vence Chapel; Vence, France; photo credit Architectural Review, <https://www.architectural-review.com/rethink/reviews/station-to-station-matisse-chapel-in-vence/8654766.article>



Figure 1.11: Chapel of Notre-Dame de Toute Grace du Plateau d'Assy; Passy, France; photo credit Passy Tourisme, <http://www.passy-mont-blanc.com>



Figure 1.12: Interior, Église du Sacré-Coeur; Audincourt, France; photo credit C. Nardin, <http://www.patrimoine-pays-de-montbeliard.fr/index.php?id=32>

take this our own reality so seriously and to recognize it to be so holy that it may be able to enter in before God. To renew the old teachings concerning sacred work by trying to recognize the body, even as it is real to us today, as creature and as revelation, and by trying to render it so; to reinstitute the body in its dignity and to do our work so well that this body may prove to be “sacred body.” And beyond all this to guard ourselves against repeating the old words when for us no living content is connected with them.⁵⁴

Schwarz provides what is far and away the most thorough and detailed analysis of the built Catholic church written by a modernist architect. Presupposing that the “sacred objectivity” of medieval man’s “great realities”—the concept of the continuity of Christ, the people, and their buildings—was no longer relevant, Schwarz proposed a deceptively simple metaphor to summarize a new approach to church design. If the Church (and the church) is viewed as the body of Christ, then the modernist (or contemporary) architect and churchgoer must bring their revised understanding of the body and the individual to bear in the designed experience of the church building. Through an analysis of the spatial composition of the church in relation to contemporary understandings of the function of the human body and the holy work that architecture, art, and design entail, Schwarz generated a series of six partis diagramming alternative church compositions shaped by a modernist conception of the sacred body of Christ (Fig. 1.13).⁵⁵

From modernist sacred architecture, then, we may extract a general principal of prioritizing contemporary conceptualizations and requirements for the design of sacred space, rather than blindly adhering to an established set of design standards with no connection to contemporary mores or perspectives. Schwarz is quite clearly an architect of his time. While the direct influence of his thought on other architects is up for debate, a more relaxed floorplan (a dramatic oversimplification of his spatial composition strategy) became the hallmark of the

54 Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate*, tr. Cynthia Harris (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1938), 11 (emphasis mine).

55 Ibid., 7-10.

modernist church—especially once the previously stringent infrastructural requirements of the church building were relaxed in the wake of Vatican II (Fig. 1.14). These infrastructural changes, in turn, had a marked influence on parishioners' experience of the place. Perceptions of the church (and the Church) shifted from a place of exclusion, where Protestants and other denominations were denied participation, to a place of inclusion, where angled pews and the removal of the altar rail (to name two innovations of the time) spoke to the community of the Church and the fellowship of the individual within the community

of the faithful.⁵⁶ The built Church was reoriented towards the individual.

Modernism in landscape architecture

To be perfectly blunt, there is no “Catholic landscape architecture” to complement Catholic art or Catholic architecture. We might talk of landscape architecture types more or less unique to Catholic contexts (missions, cloister gardens, urban religious infrastructure like the Stations of the Cross), but as

⁵⁶ McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, 154-55.

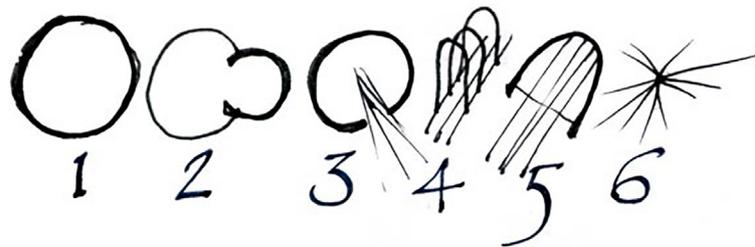


Figure 1.13: Schwarz's six church partis, based on a modernist understanding of the human body; image credit <http://www.geraldrobison.ca/teaching-and-research.php>



Figure 1.14: The modern look: All Saints Parish in Cedar Rapids, IA, designed by local architect Leo Peiffer and opened in 1966; photo credit Rinderknecht Associates, <http://rinderknecht.com/churches/all-saints-parish/>

the introduction of this paper makes clear, these are mostly highly contextualized, isolated examples of land use practices undertaken by Catholic enterprise, and are not spoken of on the generalist scale of Catholic architecture or art.

We may, on the other hand, talk of modernist landscape architecture with relative ease. Within this subject area, I lean heavily on Marc Treib's "Axioms for a Modern Landscape Architecture," which admirably outlines a brief history of modernist landscape architecture, focusing heavily on American design. As in the related fields of art and architecture, the modernist landscape architect was faced with a series of problems and opportunities posed by a rapidly changing world; in America, those problems were principally the need of the landscape architect to respond to the relatively new space of the suburban residential lot, the condition of life in a postindustrial society, and the perceived inadequacy of established styles to fully address those conditions.⁵⁷

Landscape architecture lagged in its embrace of modernism behind architecture and the fine arts; as a result, landscape architects were able to take their cues for design from artists and architects and make changes to suit their own medium (the vegetated landscape). The impetus behind many of the ideas developed by the modernist landscape architect remains much the same as it was for artists and designers: how to create a landscape which prioritized human experience and responded to the conditions and resources of the machine age. Treib provides a set of axioms describing the unifying characteristics of work produced during that period, which lay out the modernist landscape architects' strategies for responding to these conditions.⁵⁸ From Treib's list, I have identified a few principles as pertinent to the task at hand, the design of a contemporary Stations of the Cross. These are:

57 Marc Treib, "Axioms for a Modern Landscape Architecture," in *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 36.

58 These are: denial of historical styles, concern for space rather than pattern, landscapes are for people, destruction of the axis, plants used for individual qualities, integration of house and garden (Treib, "Axioms," 53-59).

the creation of continuous overlapping spaces unrestricted by axial symmetry

the use of vegetation for sculptural and botanical purposes

the prioritization of a human experience in the landscape, and

carte blanche to revise historical styles in a manner more appropriate to the spirit of the times.

These axioms, more than the others, spoke most strongly to the task at hand—the design of a landscape Stations of the Cross.

Modernist principles for a landscape Stations of the Cross

These themes form the basis of a list of design principles synthesized from the preceding discussions of modernism in the Roman Catholic Church, sacred art and architecture, and landscape architecture. The purpose of these principles is to provide a conceptual guide for the design of a Stations of the Cross garden which responds to the cultural condition of modernism. Like the modernist landscape architects, I have looked to strategies and concepts developed by designers and thinkers who came before me to provide insight into how to address the unique design problem at hand. It is not meant to be rigid, absolute, or exclusive, but suggestive. The guidelines are as follows:

Prioritize the experience of the individual in the landscape, but allow for both individual and group observance of the Stations. This very technical requirement is nevertheless at the heart of a modernist Stations of the Cross: an experience determined by the individual, achievable both as a solitary activity and as an active component of the body of the Church.

Forgo representational artworks or concrete representation of any kind. Abstract representation allows the faithful to establish a personal connection with the Stations and dictate the character of their experience. Symbolism, on the other hand, is not out of the question, if it is not too suggestive or hackneyed.

Consider the landscape as “outdoor sculpture,”⁵⁹ marking stations through a series of changing relationships between the observer of the rite and the surrounding landscape. James Rose’s description of the functional sculpture of landscape may be neatly applied to the Stations of the Cross, which has a long tradition of sculptural representation. A string of structural compositions, whose chief medium is the landscape itself, transforms the time-honored three-dimensional sculptural Stations into the desired four-dimensional spatial Stations of the Cross earlier described.

Establish a logic of free-flowing, overlapping spaces to communicate the Stations. Unlike the vast majority of landscapes, the Stations of the Cross is meant to be experienced within a certain period of time, corresponding to the time it takes to complete the formulae of the rite. An overlapping sense of space, in this case, will likely lead to an overlapping sense of time, creating an essentially Cubist paradigm within the landscape as the spaces of the stations, no longer confined to a single point, may be experienced plurally.

Provide adequate opportunity for prayer, reflection, meditation, hymns, and chants. Drawn directly from the Vatican’s description of the devotional practice, this broad provision accounts for an individualized experience of the Stations within the accepted strictures of the rite (see the first guideline).

In establishing the guidelines, I took care that no preference of form, materiality, or aesthetic character be indicated. How those principles are interpreted spatially is addressed in the next section of this paper.

There are certain roles that these principles most emphatically were not intended to (and did not) play. They are not by any means meant as a comprehensive description of modernism or as qualities necessary in any design considered “modernist.” The landscape architects of the modernist period did not have these standards or considerations spelled out for them when they practiced; if they had, my job

at this stage would have been considerably easier. The vast majority of work by modernist landscape architects was also not undertaken with a specifically Catholic audience in mind, so certain principles which deal more particularly with modernist Catholic experience ought not to be expected in secular projects by designers of the period. While the changes that occurred within the Catholic Church in the midcentury were symptomatic, as the literature review relates, of ecumenical and societal changes on a national and global scale, this project is heavily influenced by Catholic thought in particular. It is therefore imperative that these principles address Catholicism—even if most designers of the period did not.

Just as importantly, these guidelines are not meant to be spatially or formally explicit. Their intent is not to prescribe or restrict what types of shapes or styles are imposed upon the ground, but instead speak to a larger sense of how those forms are meant to relate to each other, to the existing terrain, and to the sites’ users. The guidelines encourage the use of nonobjective form as a means of creating, delineating, and organizing space—not the form itself as an end. To prioritize particular forms, as opposed to the reasons those forms were chosen, would result in a pastiche of modernism, a stylistic imitation (which, ironically, would be more Postmodern than modern). This project is an attempt to bring modernist thinking, not simply a modernist style, to the Stations of the Cross. The guidelines I have developed are intended, in the vein of constructivist research-through-designing, to provide a set of conceptual traits which allow the reader to demonstrably trace the influence of modernist thinkers and designers, from abstract ideas to on-the-ground design decisions, on the creation of the Ipswich Stations.

IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

The question raised by this project—can the cultural conditions of modernism be accounted for through the design of a landscape-scale Stations of the Cross?—requires not just a cultural context, but a physical site as well. For the setting of a fourth (spatial) type of the Stations of the Cross, I selected the grounds of the Notre Dame Spirituality Center (NDSC) in my hometown of Ipswich, Massachusetts (Fig. 1.15).

⁵⁹ James Rose, in Treib, “Axioms,” 40.

Because this project explores the design process as much as it does the product of the process, a brief explanation of the selection of the site is in order. Ipswich is a town of around 13,000 people located on the North Shore of Massachusetts, roughly thirty miles from Boston. Still a small town (“never a suburb,” according to the town website), a significant portion of Ipswich’s landmass consists of barrier beach and salt marsh ecosystems. Ipswich’s salt marshes are part of the Great Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the largest continuous stretch of salt marsh in New England, which reaches

from Cape Ann into New Hampshire.⁶⁰ The rest of the town is composed of a small commercial center, low-density rural residential areas, and a rolling postglacial landscape of drumlins, forests, and farms, with several protected historic and natural areas.

From the earliest stages of this project, it has been my intention to focus my work in Ipswich, for largely personal reasons. I have never been reticent about extolling the town’s historic charms and natural resources, and I viewed the master’s project as

⁶⁰ “The Great Marsh,” The Great Marsh Coalition, accessed May 11, 2017, www.greatmarsh.org.

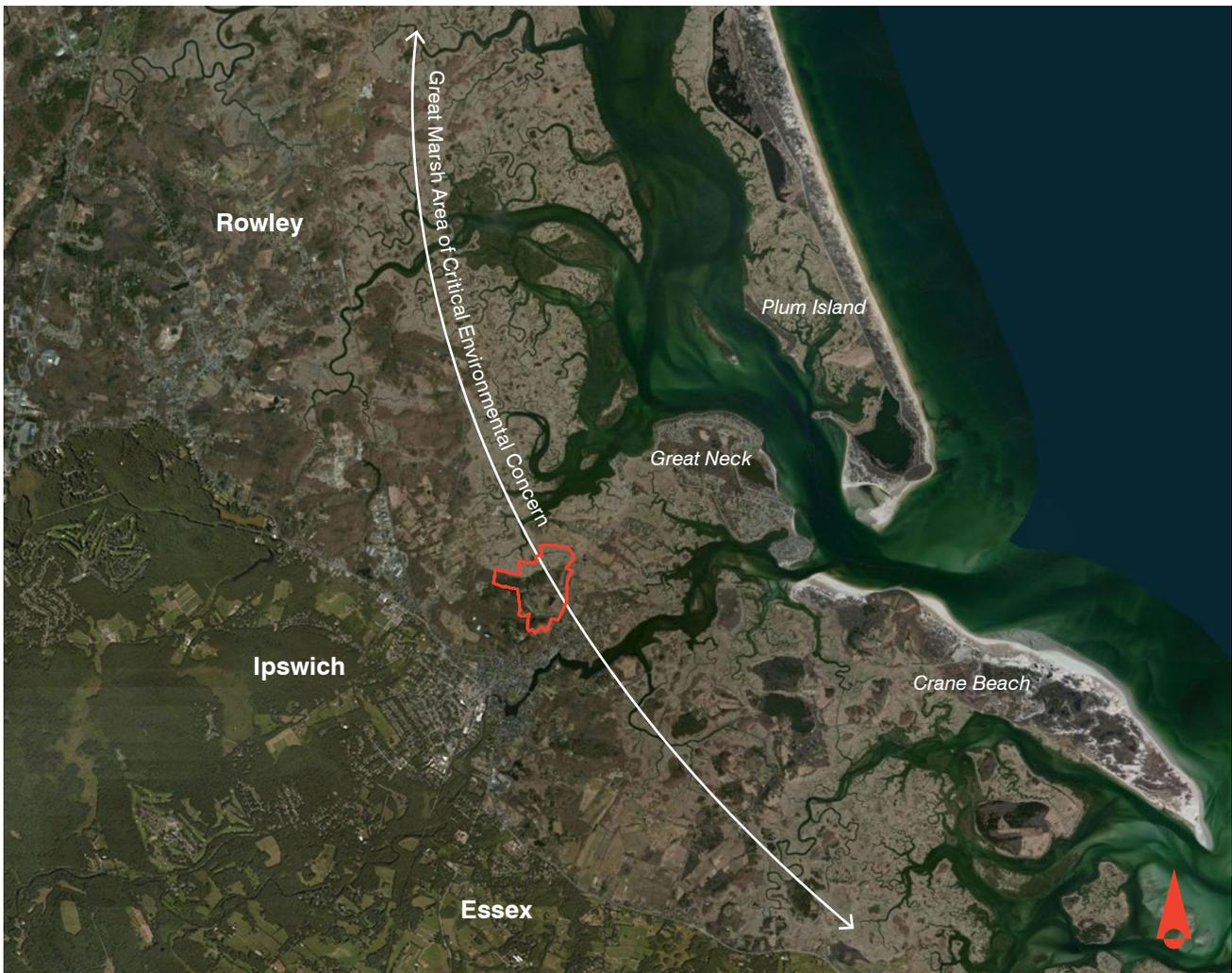


Figure 1.15: The NDSC site in Ipswich, Massachusetts



Figure 1.16: The Notre Dame Spirituality Center, in Ipswich, MA

an opportunity to channel my enthusiasm and thoroughly acquaint myself with some part of my hometown. The first site of intervention I selected was a large patch of salt marsh crossed by Labor-in-Vain (Gould's) Creek, but property ownership within the marsh was so complex that the prospective clients of the project, especially on the desired scale, would have numbered in the scores.⁶¹ The possibility that one, several, or all of these landowners might not want to allow an explicitly religious installation on their property loomed large. My parents, who still live in Ipswich, had recently moved into a new house within close proximity of the NDSC, and my mother had begun attending mass at their chapel instead of at Ipswich's Catholic parish, Our Lady of Hope. At my mother's suggestion (we are apparently never too old to follow our mothers' advice), I turned my attention to the NDSC campus and was pleased to discover, upon locating the property in the town tax lot maps, that it covered a great expanse of mostly undeveloped land (Fig. 1.16). Through coordination with NDSC director Sr. Mary Boretti, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN), and their property manager, Jim McNeilly, I was able to visit and photograph the site.

The NDSC sits on approximately 174 rolling wooded and swampy acres, stretching between the upland drumlin landscape and the protected area of the salt marsh. Like much of Ipswich (and Massachusetts), the plot was under cultivation, either as woodlot or farm fields, for much of its post-European history. New England had been largely deforested by the European settlers:⁶² an 1893 bird's-eye-view (Fig. 1.17) Ipswich Village depicts a landscape of rolling, grassy hills dotted with trees (Fig. 1.17). By identifying prominent landmarks (the Ipswich River, the hosiery mill in the center of town, the cemetery), we can gain a sense of what the land looked like in the general vicinity of what is now the NDSC. Remnants of fieldstone walls on site speak to a long history of property ownership and Anglo-American land use.

61 For a fascinating meditation on the composition and history of the salt marsh in New England, see "Salt Marshes" in John R. Stilgoe, *Alongshore* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994).

62 William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 108.

Site description

Prior to the twentieth century, the property was known as the Sutton farm, though whether or not a Sutton was the property owner is a mystery.⁶³ In 1908, a summer estate in the style of a Florentine villa was built for the businessman Charles P. Searle by the Boston architectural firm of Kilham and Hopkins. The gardens, in an appropriately Italianate style, were designed by a landscape gardener named Dana Dow.⁶⁴ In a January 14, 2014 post to his blog, *Stories from Ipswich*, town historian Gordon Harris relates that after a series of sales, the property was purchased by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1959. With no apparent use for a neoclassical mansion, the Sisters appealed to the town historical council for permission to demolish the house, which was denied. The house still sits on the property, overgrown and abandoned; I could find no trace of Mr. Dow's Italianate gardens. The large building which houses the nuns' living quarters, a chapel, and administrative offices, consecrated in 1961, is built in the International style common to institutional buildings of the period.

I used two broad methods to determine the character of the landscape at the NDSC: a site visit, which included a conversation with the property manager and photographic documentation, and an analysis using digital tools, which included aerial photographs and GIS information available through the Massachusetts GIS portal.

Site visit

After initial coordination with the staff of the NDSC, I visited the site on a raw and rainy Tuesday in January, in the late morning and early afternoon. After a discussion with the property manager, I observed and photographed the area of the campus surrounding the retreat center's main building. This region of the property includes several small shrines and sculptures placed in the landscape, a cemetery and mausoleum, and the center's existing Stations of

63 In Ipswich, as in much of New England, family or colloquial names may be attached to places long after the property was purchased by others.

64 Mary H. Northend, "A Florentine House," *The House Beautiful*, December 1908, 8-11.

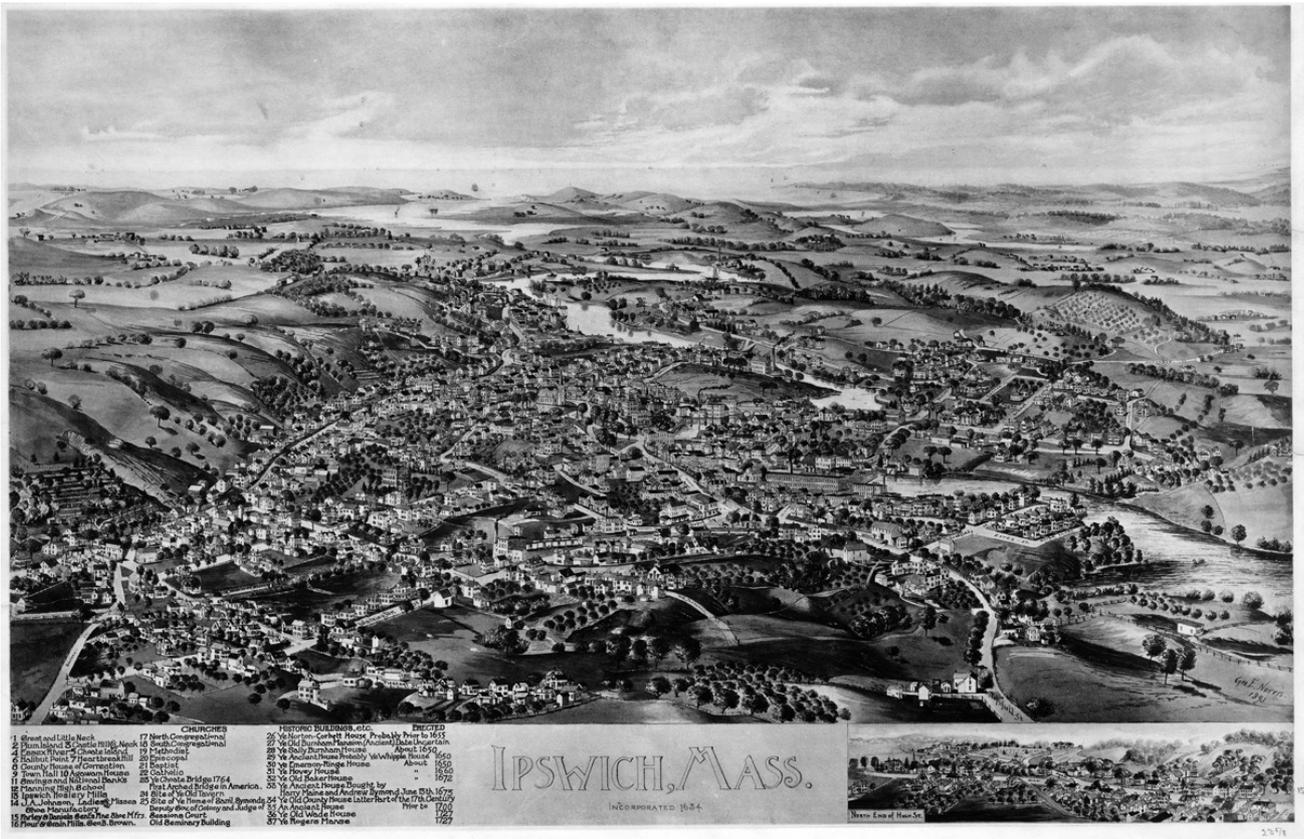


Figure 1.17: Bird's-eye-view map of Ipswich (Brockton, MA: George E. Norris, 1893)

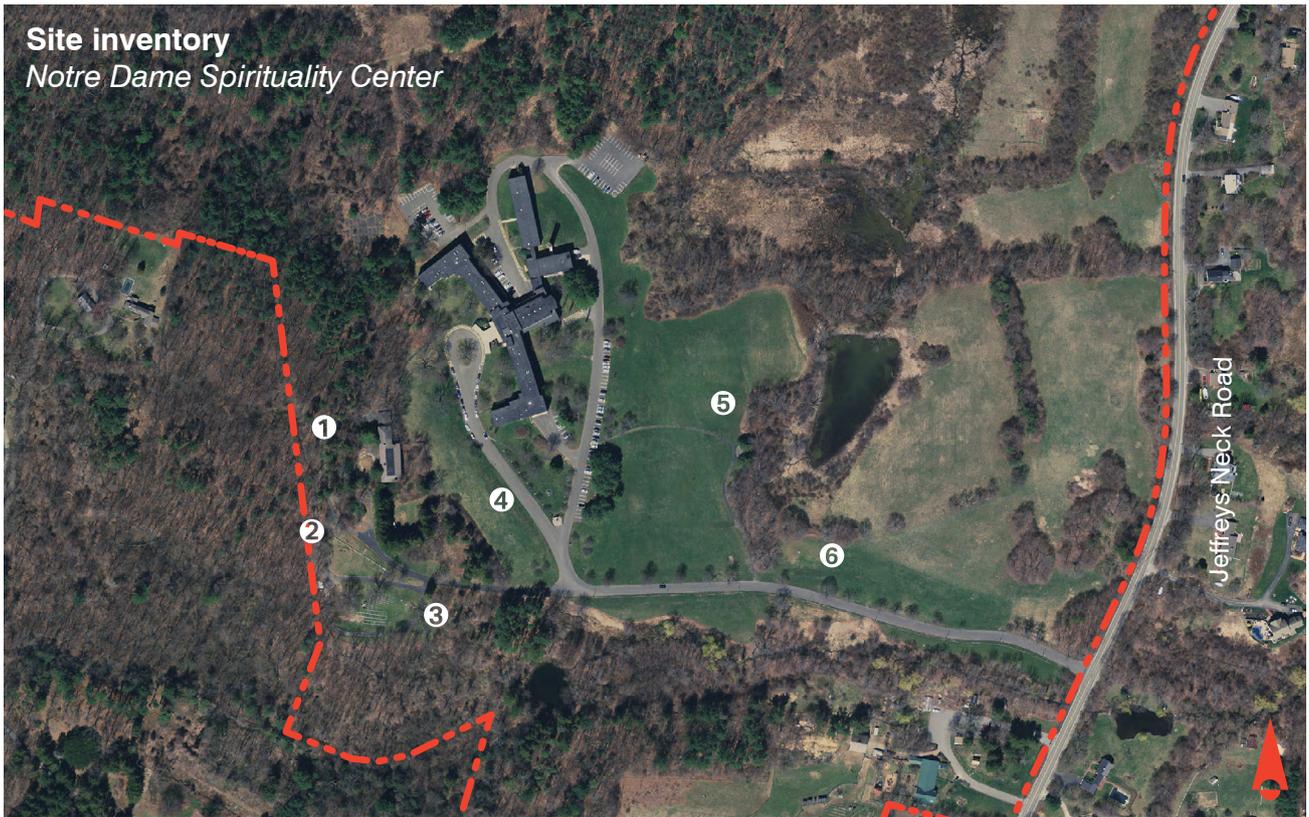
the Cross, as well as the dilapidated Searle mansion (Fig. 1.18).

The area is landscaped in a manner consistent with the building style: broad lawns, clusters of ornamental cherry trees (*Prunus spp.*) and white pines (*Pinus strobus*), and several parking areas. The building is perched on a hillside and capitalizes on the expansive views which had undoubtedly attracted Searle to the site; a broad lawn sweeps down from the center and ends at the edge of the woodlands, ponds, and wetlands that dominate the interior volume of the site. I speculate that the views would have been even more breathtaking in Searle's time, when the largely agricultural landscape surrounding the property would have limited the growth of woodlots and allowed for wider panoramas. Ironically, within the past couple of years, the NDSC has begun leasing a large plot of land on the opposite side of the pond to a local farmer.

At the property manager's suggestion, I next left the main part of the campus and drove further down Jeffreys Neck Road to where a small turnoff and a chained-off path indicate the beginning of a public right-of-way trail running along the ecotone between the upland part of the site and the salt marsh. The path is poorly maintained but winds through wetlands and meadows dotted with low shrubs before skirting along the edge of the oak-pine forest of the higher ground, where it loops back towards the main building before crossing the property line and emerging at the town of Ipswich's wastewater treatment plant. The path offers spectacular views across the marshes which are otherwise blocked from all but the topmost floor of the main building. A selection of photographs taken during my site visit are presented in Appendix A of this document.

Figure 1.18: NDSC inventory of existing cultural elements

Site inventory
Notre Dame Spirituality Center



Digital analysis

For several reasons, the information gained by a visit to the site was not enough to fully grasp the ground conditions of the entire property. Specifically, the total lack of pathways, compounded by my unfamiliarity with the terrain and the wet conditions of that January day, precluded any investigation of the wetlands and woodlands which dominate the interior of the site. GIS information from the state of Massachusetts, including aerial photos and maps of land use/land cover, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, vegetative communities, wetlands, vernal pool sites, existing conservation easements on the property, and contour lines derived from LiDAR data allowed me to develop a more complete understanding of the complex play of systems on site. The overlays created during this phase of the work are presented in Appendix B of this document.

My site visit and digital analysis shaped the eventual design of the Stations of the Cross by limiting the geospatial scope of the intervention and by revealing the experiential opportunities of the site. The prominent main drive and public access trail create natural boundaries at their respective ends of the site, delimiting the central portion of the site as a suitable area for intervention. This area has the added benefit of being quite diverse, in terms of vegetative communities and land cover types, offering a compelling and varied experience within a relatively circumscribed area. The creation of an emotionally and aesthetically dramatic experience, of the landscape on site became one of the driving factors of the design of the Stations.

II. DESIGN PROCESS

Until this point, the so-called “design work” of this project has been in gathering and organizing information from diverse sources.

Having established the contexts, however, focus begins to shift to the design of physical space. In any and all design work, the designers (let’s call them landscape architects) have the responsibility of executing a project that demonstrably responds to their clients’ goals, expectations, sense of morals and taste, and even their whims. Armed with a list of the client’s needs and desires, the landscape architect translates the abstract requirements into a series of changes made to an existing environment. The best landscape architects—those who operate at the highest levels of craft—are those who devise the completest solutions with the most elegance (that is, accomplishing the most purposes through the least means). While the “needs” of the client in my case may be rather more esoteric than those of the average landscape design project, my project does not propose any deviation from this standard manner of working. The needs (a Stations of the Cross landscape that shows the influence of modernism) of the client (myself) are to be met by making changes to existing terrain (the property of the NDSC).

Constructivist research-through-designing is achieved through the layering of contexts. Disparate though their contexts may seem, the design constructs generated in the first stage of the research had certain points of overlap which allowed me to reconcile abstract concepts with physical space. Because the number of possibilities in design is, quite literally, endless, it was important from the outset to limit the scope of the design. By identifying the consistent factors in the design—the non-negotiable, unvarying constants—and determining how they would be translated into a physical form, I provided myself with a broad scaffold upon which to elaborate with more specific decisions and strategies. Of the three broad contexts described, the two constant constraints on the design of the garden were the structure of the rite of the Stations of the Cross and the existing landscape. The guidelines derived from modernism, while based on solid scholarship, are broader in nature, and therefore are open to more interpretation than the topographical reality of the site and the required practical infrastructure for the Stations. Nevertheless, these ideas did influence the development of the strategies, as will be explained shortly. The preliminary results of this layering were two overall design strategies which set the course for subsequent development and refinement of the design: the idea of crossing boundaries in the landscape and the rough layout of a pathway.

Design development

Design is ideally an iterative process. It is rare (and ill advised) that the first pass at a design be taken for the best possible solution; the designer's grasp of the site and its contexts deepens with each successive round of drawings, and the design improves. Constructivist research-through-designing provides for exactly this type of influence on the work. Lenzholzer et al. posit that standard landscape architectural "reflection in action techniques" like doodling, sketching, and modeling are useful ways to ideate and generate forms. The authors also stress the importance of conscientious, unbiased, and thorough documentation of all steps taken.¹ That documentation makes up the principal content of this chapter.

Having established the general design strategies of the path and the crossing of boundaries, I produced three initial concepts which were variously abandoned, combined, reworked, and simplified over the course of four phases of development. Throughout this process, the design constructs and strategies described earlier, as well as the overall design scheme, were adjusted and reworked. By the end of the third phase of design development, two of those design schemes were developed to a level of completion which allowed them to be compared and for a choice to be made between them. Once the final design scheme was selected, the idea was further refined through the drawing process. Through the production of a detailed site plan, sections, and perspectives, the idea was developed down to the level of site details.

We are often told that the tools used by the designer have a significant impact on the quality of thought. Early drawing was exclusively in my sketchbook, for conceptual ideas, and on trace paper with pens and pencils, where larger-scale and site-specific, scaled drawing was needed. After further discussion of the final scheme with colleagues and professors, production of the base plan moved into AutoCAD, which allowed for the fine-tuning of alignments and a more sophisticated placement of certain elements of the design. The production of these drawings provided the basis for a discussion of the finished design of the Stations of the Cross landscape (to the extent, permitted by the timeframe and the client of this project, that a "finished" design is possible), as well as a discussion of the constructivist research-through-designing process that this project employed.

By this process, I aimed to distill and synthesize a collection of abstract theoretical ideas into a cohesive design plan meant to become an achievable, built environment—and to do so in a manner which allows those ideas to be traced by the reader of this document in a clear and concrete manner over the course of their development.

The development of those ideas lies at the heart of this project's contribution to knowledge. Is it possible to translate the ideas of a given moment in our shared cultural history out of their time period and into a contemporary design context? And, more importantly, does that translation result in a new kind

¹ Ibid., 123.

of place and a new way to experience an ancient ritual? This chapter represents my attempt to provide coherent answers to those questions.

CONTEXTS AND CONSTRUCTS

Crossing boundaries

If landscapes, as Mark Treib tells us the modernists believed, are primarily for people, this is no doubt doubly true for the allegorical landscape of the Stations of the Cross—a landscape constructed entirely for religious use, existing only within a rite and otherwise illegible on the face of the earth. The landscape at the Notre Dame Spirituality Center, however, is largely inaccessible to the average human visitor; even the public right-of-way trail, flooded in the wetter winter and spring months, offers little actual or visual access to the complex of wetlands, streams, fields, pastures, and woodlands within the center of the property. It is, for the people who inhabit the surrounding world (excepting a maintenance worker or two), a wilderness of the old school, described by William Cronon as those “places on the margins of civilization where it is all too easy to lose oneself in moral confusion and despair.”¹ I don’t mean to exaggerate the awesome frightfulness of this place, which is more pretty than scary; however, this lack of access, in light of its natural beauty and complexity, does delimit conditions that make the site appealing from a modernist standpoint.

Cronon’s evocation of our ancestors’ understanding of wilderness as a place of godless chaos mirrors ideas promulgated in Mircea Eliade’s decidedly modernist *The Sacred and the Profane*. Eliade describes the world inhabited by the religious man as composed of “strong, significant” sacred spaces and structureless, “amorphous” profane spaces.² Applying this (admittedly overly complex) metaphor to the site at hand, I mapped out the existing vegetative communities and landscape features

on site and reasoned that access to the landscape at the heart of the property was restricted by the composition of land covers (Fig. 2.1).

This land could therefore be described as chaotic (that is, lacking an order that allowed general human access). The process of creating individual stations would by necessity entail creating points of order—navigable points of clear significance—within the landscape. As it is the structure of the land cover that poses barriers to access, it is by making changes to that structure that the barrier is overcome. These points of order could be achieved in part by an intersection (a crossing, if you’ll forgive the pun) of the footpath with the boundary. This conception set the groundwork for an overall approach to the site, encouraging perpendicular movement across land cover types (from marsh to forest, for instance) instead of a sidelong approach. Drawn investigations of ways that the boundary could be visually displaced certainly impacted the development of subsequent designs and is especially visible in the final design, where the concept of moving through boundaries is a major component of the landscape experience.

In addition to establishing a general strategy for how to treat the physical conditions on site, the idea of crossing boundaries was gradually streamlined during the early phases of the design process into a more widely applicable principle of an established rhythm and marked interruption. While drafting potential responses to the conditions of the site and the context of the Stations, one of my goals (aligned with my views on elegance in design) was to express the individual stations through the slightest possible interventions. With an aim to accomplishing this goal, I devised a broad strategy of establishing an element with a consistent character to appear throughout the site (the “rhythm”). Stations were to be marked by “interruptions” to the rhythm—a visible disturbance of the normative fabric of the site.

In a sense, this idea was directly inspired by Eliade’s categorization of sacred space; I also drew from my own personal experience of the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. Winding through dense medieval streets, the stations along the Via Dolorosa—those places where the events of the Stations are unofficially agreed to have occurred—are marked only with simple plaques and numerals, where shared human memory has established points of

1 William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 2.

2 Mircea Eliade, “Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred,” *The Sacred and the Profane*, tr. Willard R. Trask (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1987), 20.

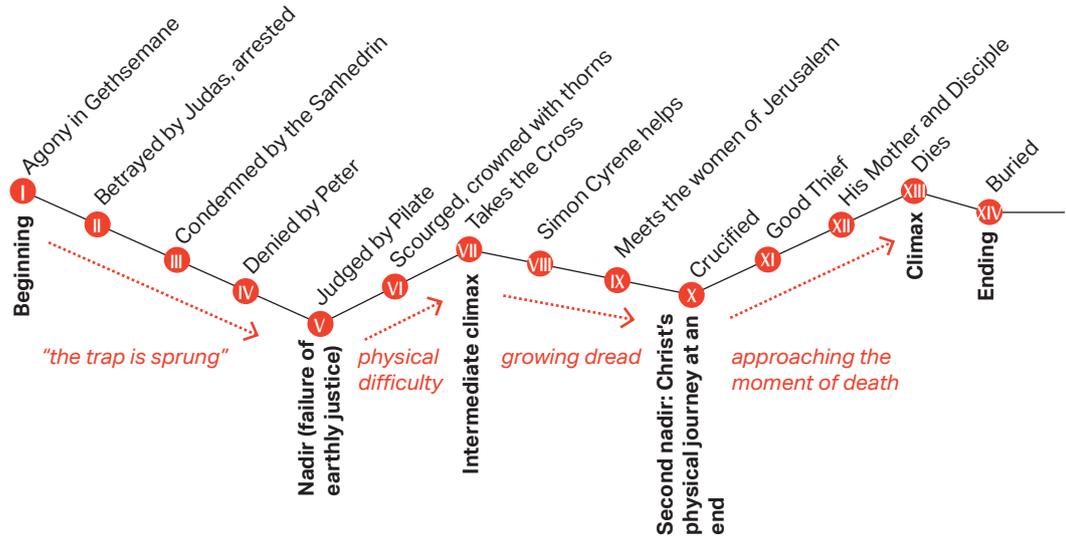


Figure 2.4: Narrative arc of the biblical Stations of the Cross, based on relative topographic elevations of Jerusalem and NDSC



Figure 2.5: A consistent path assures that the landscape is experienced consistently across different design schemes

of the Passion. The first station definitively sited, for example, was XIII (Jesus dies on the Cross), a moment of intense sorrow, mystery, grandeur, and loneliness, which I situated at the crest of the drumlin that lies along the west side of the property, in the middle of a forest of pine, beech, and oak. Once a few such prominent station locations were identified, I was able to site the others and sketch out a route to be followed (Fig. 2.6). This path changed to some degree with each scheme and each iteration of the design, but generally, the placement of the stations and the sequence of moving through the landscape remained fairly constant throughout the rest of the design work.

PHASE I: INITIAL DESIGN SCHEMES

With these strategies laid out, I began the initial development of three schemes, with the goal of bringing them to similar levels of completion, evaluating them according to the information gathered in the early stages of the design process, and choosing the best option for further development and exploration. What followed was a rather messier process that nevertheless resulted in the selection and development of one of the schemes. Initially, I arrived at three schemes: wall, point-line-plane, and grid. This section of the paper traces the evolution of the ideas generated in these early schemes through to the design plan as it was finally drawn.

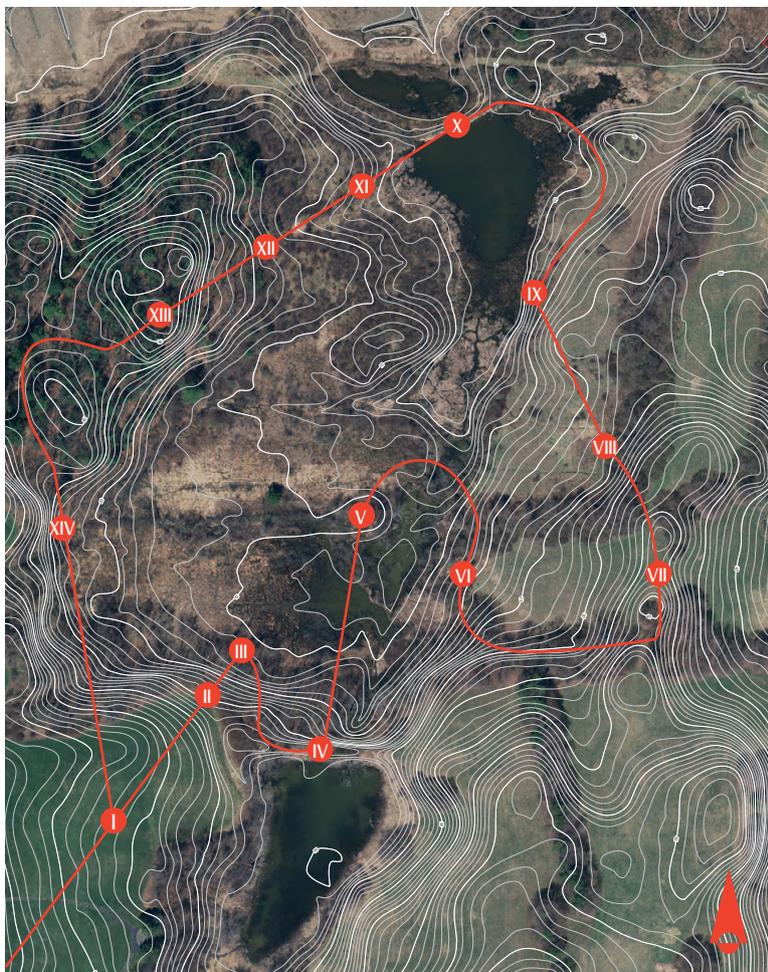


Figure 2.6: The moments of the Passion, represented by Stations, were associated with topographic moments on site



Wall

CONCEPT: The scheme uses the ubiquitous vernacular object of the drystack fieldstone wall to establish a constant element on site. Changes to that element's scale, size, shape, and makeup indicate each station (Fig. 2.7).

STRENGTHS: Considerable attention was given to the spatial "feeling" of each station, and specifically, how to use the constant element of the wall to denote fourteen different sensations. The scheme remains in the realm of the abstract (see weaknesses below), relying on a sense of feeling, rather than the "look" of places represented in the Stations.

WEAKNESSES: While abstract, the approach in this first pass at the wall was far too ham-fisted; the various changes made to the wall supplant the landscape and the stations themselves as focal points.

RESPONSE: Refine the scheme with a focus on greater simplicity and a more limited palette of changes made to the physical character of the wall. Devise a scheme where many different changes are made to the singular element of the wall.

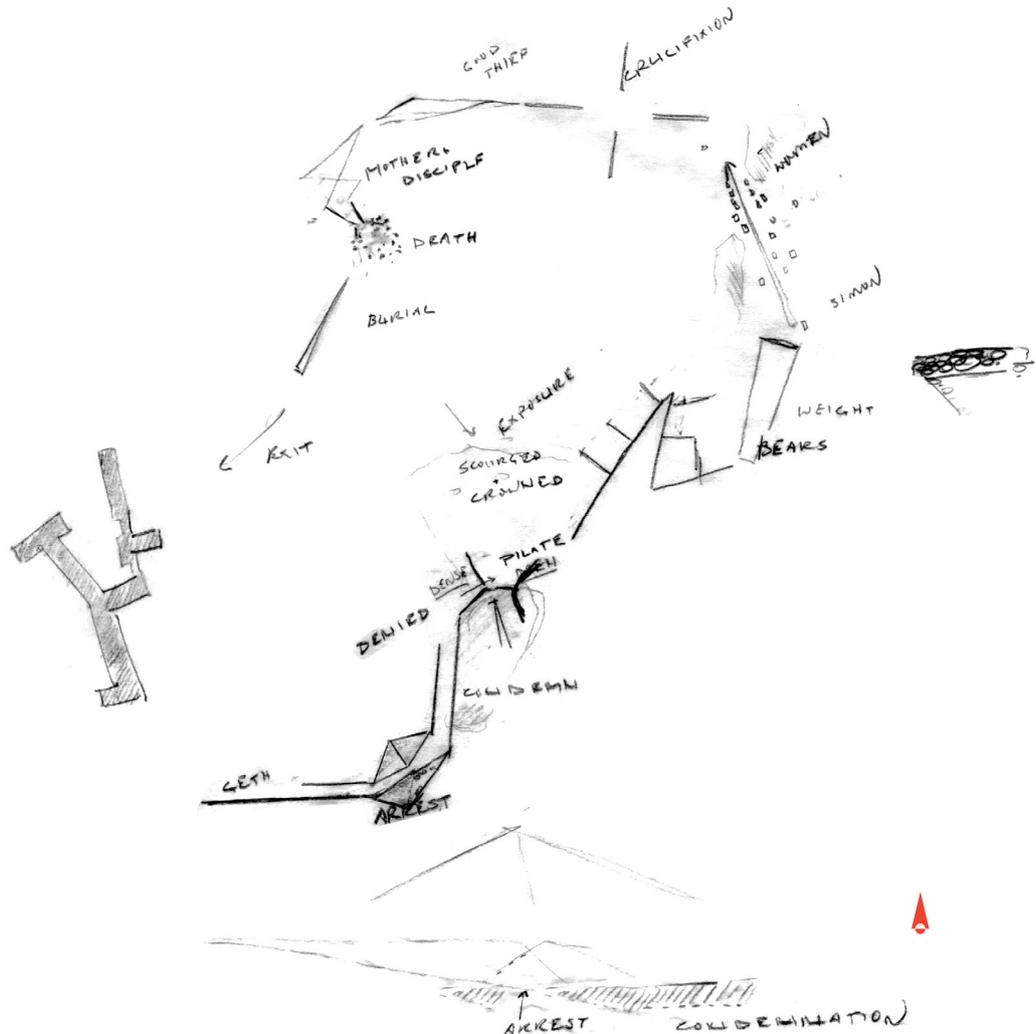


Figure 2.7: Wall, phase I

Point-line-plane

CONCEPT: Taking again the vernacular object of the fieldstone wall, this scheme explores how a constant element may be logically interrupted and accentuated by two elements of a different nature—in this case, small bodies of water and trees. The intention is to create a composition of points, lines, and planes: the nonrepresentational forms of the abstract artist (Fig. 2.8).

STRENGTHS: A compelling concept, rooted in the visual tradition of the constructivist and minimalist painters and sculptors. In that sense, the scheme is also a distant, derivative relative of the painterly landscape designs of Roberto Burle Marx.

WEAKNESSES: Ideologically linked to Burle Marx though it may be, the concept demonstrates neither a sense of logic nor the Brazilian master's painterly skill. Some moments of potential grace are shattered by a lack of cohesive scale, with trees drawn too large and pools imposing too much on the existing landscape. The pools and trees are also desultorily placed, and the walls, once again, are heavy-handed and spasmodic.

RESPONSE: The materiality and place-making logic of this scheme was largely cannibalized by the grid scheme, reconstituted in a less form-driven incarnation in the final design.

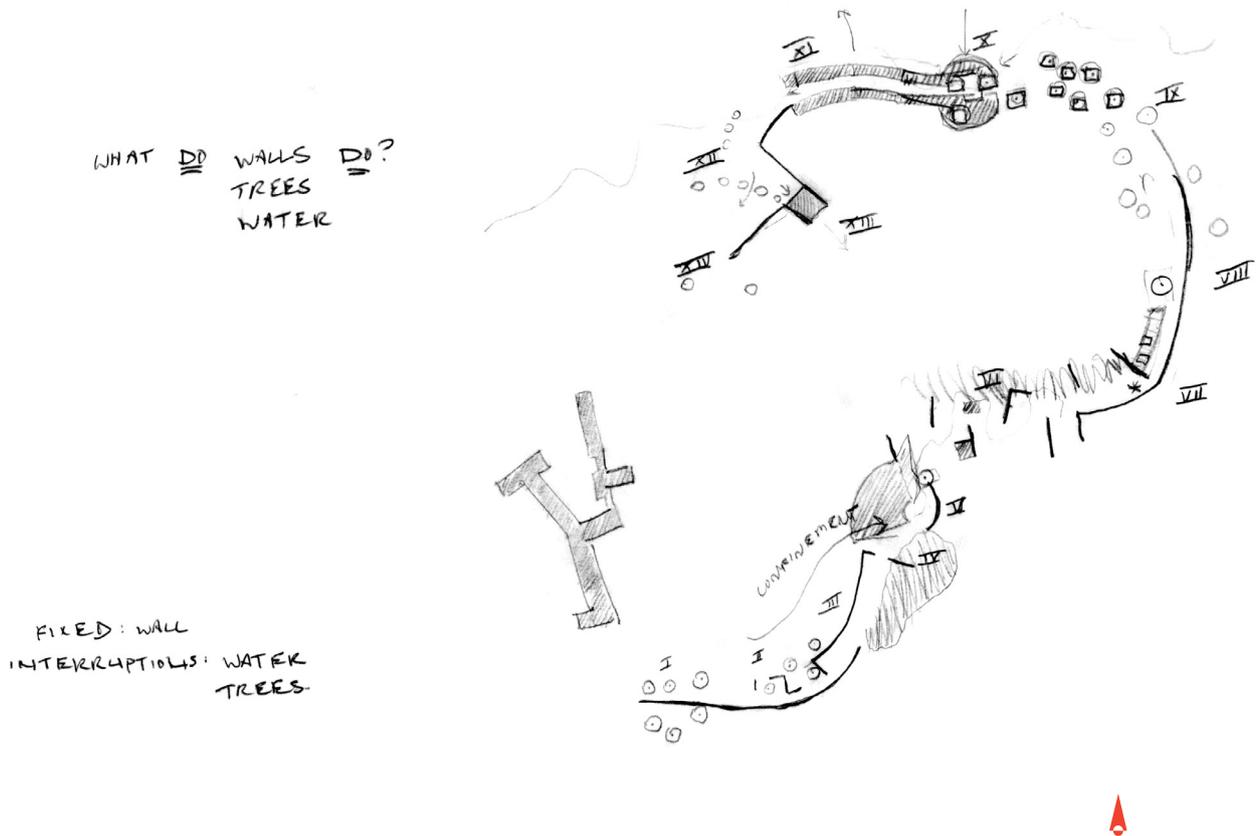


Figure 2.8: *Point-line-plane, phase I*

Grid

CONCEPT: Stations are not manifested by an object (as in the case of the wall in the previous scheme) but by a composition of elements which are connected by sightlines across the landscape. The “place” of each station is marked by the views of the composed elements of other stations as they align in perspective. In this way, the very linear narrative of the Passion is folded over upon itself, allowing thematic connections to be drawn between the tableaux of the stations (Fig. 2.9).

STRENGTHS: Conceptually the most innovative and, by my criteria, the most modernist of the schemes produced at this early stage. More than the other schemes, this set of stations emphasizes a continuity and an overlap of space and temporal sequence. The experience of the practitioner is more

situated within the landscape, and may rely more on the relationship of spaces within the landscape as sculpture, rather than inserting a sculptural object (such as a wall) to represent the stations. The scheme is solidly situated within the fourth, “spatial” category of Stations of the Cross as described in the first chapter of this document.

WEAKNESSES: The grid is far too rigid, imposing an arbitrary order on the landscape which could potentially limit the effectiveness of the scheme. Stations are not optimally placed—they are not able to capitalize on the geospatial drama of the path established in the early stages of design.

RESPONSE: Adjust the locations of the stations to more closely adhere to the path; begin designing the elements which make up each station and allow for legibility across the landscape.

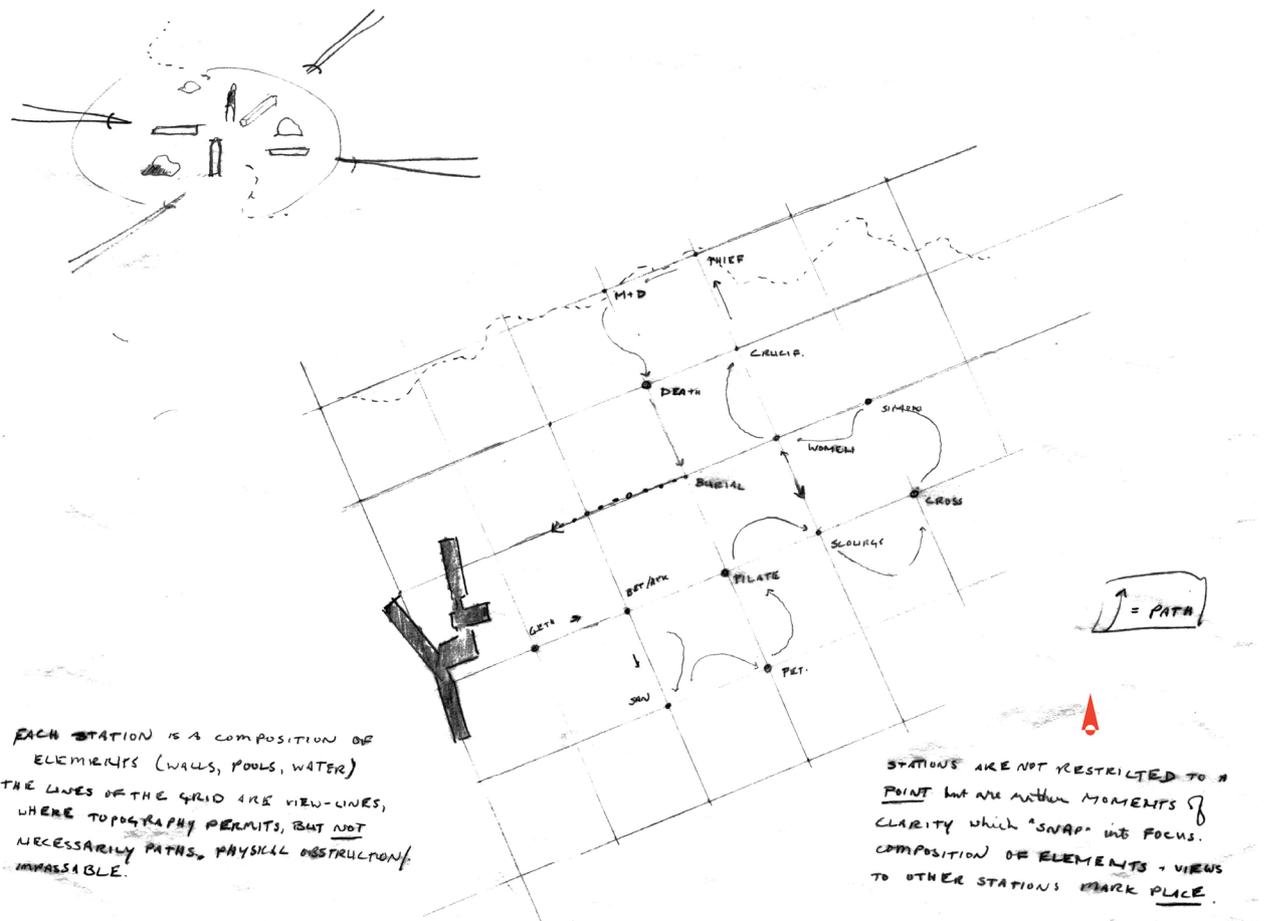


Figure 2.9: Grid, phase I

PHASE II: SECOND PASSES

After the first round of schemes were produced and compared, the watchword became “simplify.” The wall scheme was streamlined into the single object of a wall, the complex field of the grid was reduced to a series of axial connections between stations (precipitating a change in name, from

“Grid” to “Connections”), and the point-line-plane scheme was set aside as too complex and heavy-handed; much of its materiality found its way into the conclusory round of design development after the final scheme was chosen. In general, focus during the design process was on establishing a regularity and logic in each scheme (Fig. 2.10).

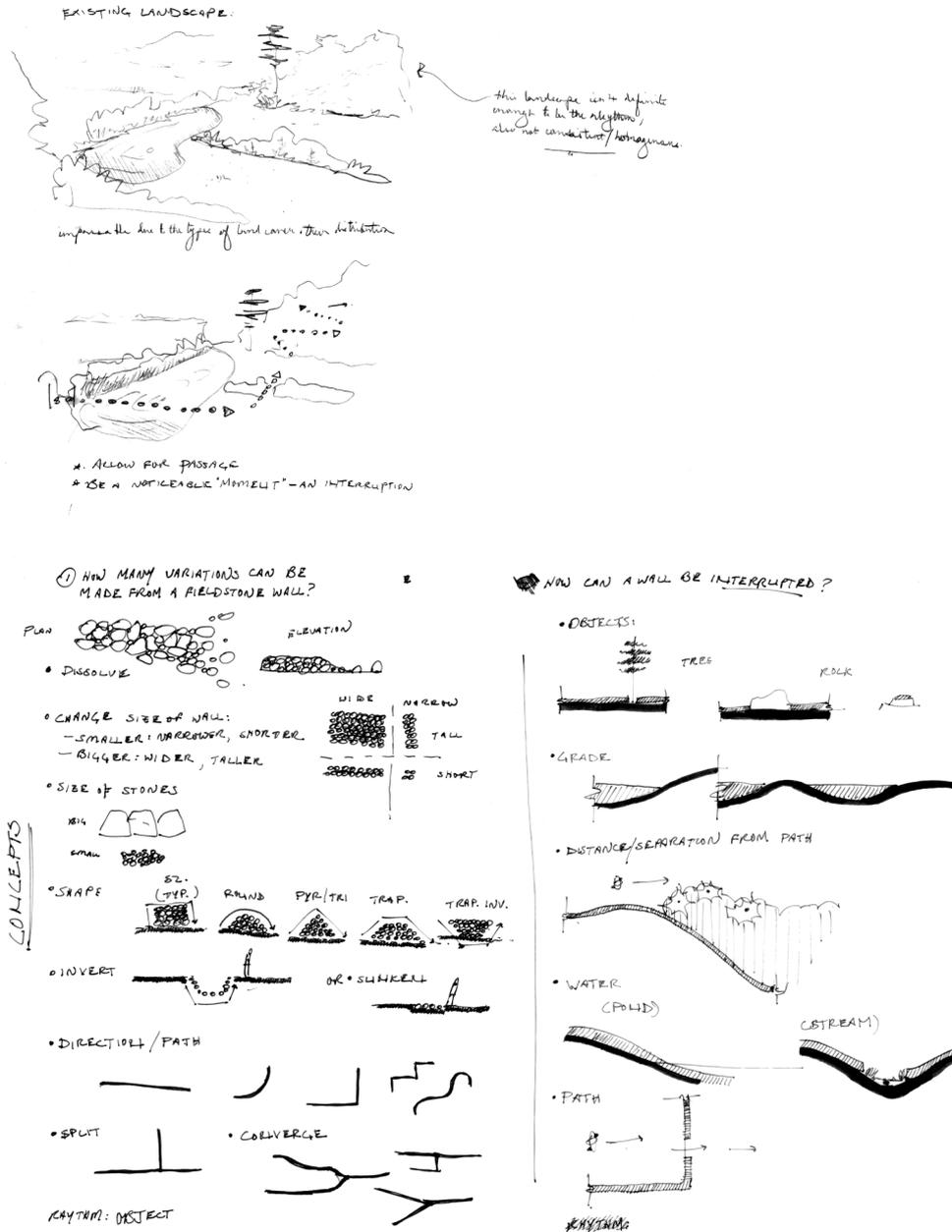


Figure 2.10: Sketching out a more consistent, simplified approach



Wall

CHANGES MADE: Greatly simplified, this scheme uses the wall to highlight the conditions of the groundplane and guide the practitioner through the landscape (Fig. 2.11).

STRENGTHS: Begins to provide consistency of experience by preserving the wall as a wall (instead of infrastructure built of stone, as in the first pass of the scheme).

WEAKNESSES: Once again, too heavy-handed and unfocused. Reminiscent of Andy Goldsworthy, which is not a weakness per se, but focuses too much on the wall as an expression of the Stations of the Cross, rather than as a complement to the existing narrative.

MOVING FORWARD: Execute a design where the wall is a single wall; use the wall as a tool to reveal the dual narratives of the Stations of the Cross and the journey through the site.

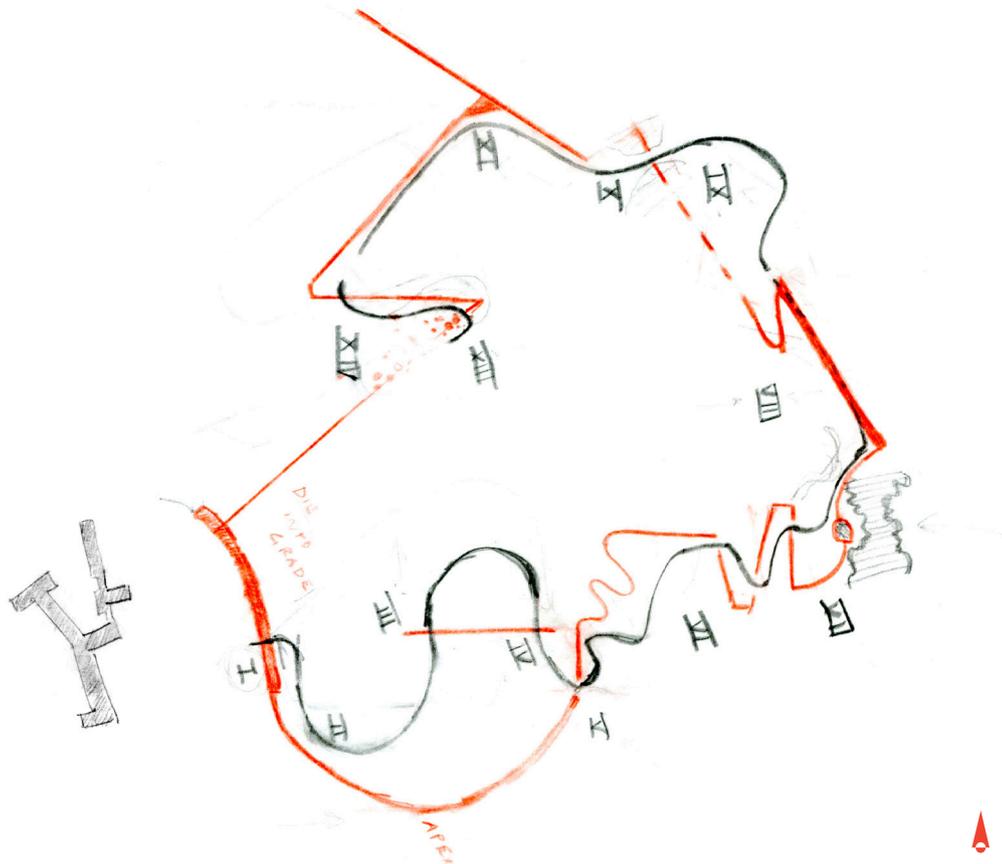


Figure 2.11: Wall, phase II

Connections

CHANGES MADE: No longer arranged on a grid, stations with common themes are connected by axes, either visual, material, or suggestive, which map the ideas across the site. The emphasis is no longer on a grid system, but on axial connections made between stations (Fig. 2.12).

STRENGTHS: A greater cohesion as a composed landscape; stronger thematic links between stations (see weaknesses below) are complemented by freer placement of stations in the landscape, allowing the natural features and drama of the landscape to speak more clearly while preserving the sense of continuity and overlapping time.

WEAKNESSES: The thematic links between stations, while more deliberate in this second pass, are poorly defined (although it was not my intention that they be perfectly defined at this point). Additionally, a lack of design at the scale of the individual stations leaves the actual functionality of the entire concept nebulous.

MOVING FORWARD: Begin design at level of individual stations and axes. How will this idea be articulated?

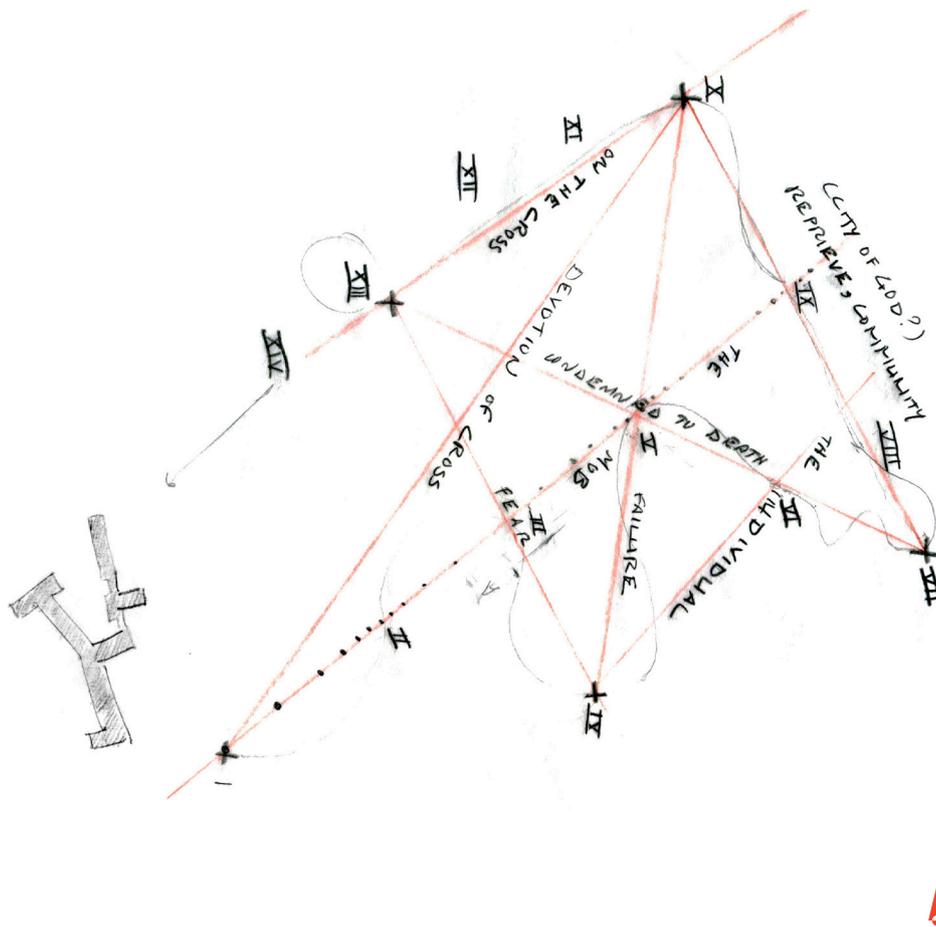


Figure 2.12: Connections, phase II

PHASE III: FINAL SCHEMES

Both designs produced for the final rendition of each scheme are predicated on a hierarchy of experience defined in reviews and discussions of the drawings in the previous two schemes. For the purposes of this project, I decided that the most important experience is that of the narrative of Jesus' Passion, followed by the experience of traversing the landscape at the NDSC. Any interventions proposed are intended to reveal and enhance those experiences, and not to overshadow or replace them. The two following plans received a similar amount of time in development and were rendered in a similar manner, in order that they might be judged by their innate merits, rather than by the manner of their representation.

Wall

In its final form, the wall is a single ribbon, probably of fieldstone, which winds about the site, intersecting with, abandoning, regaining, and becoming a part of the path (Fig. 2.13). At Station VII, Jesus bears the Cross, a large boulder serves as one of two interruptions to its continuity; the other is at Station XIII, Jesus dies on the Cross, where the wall fades into grade at the top of the forested hill and reemerges at the far side.

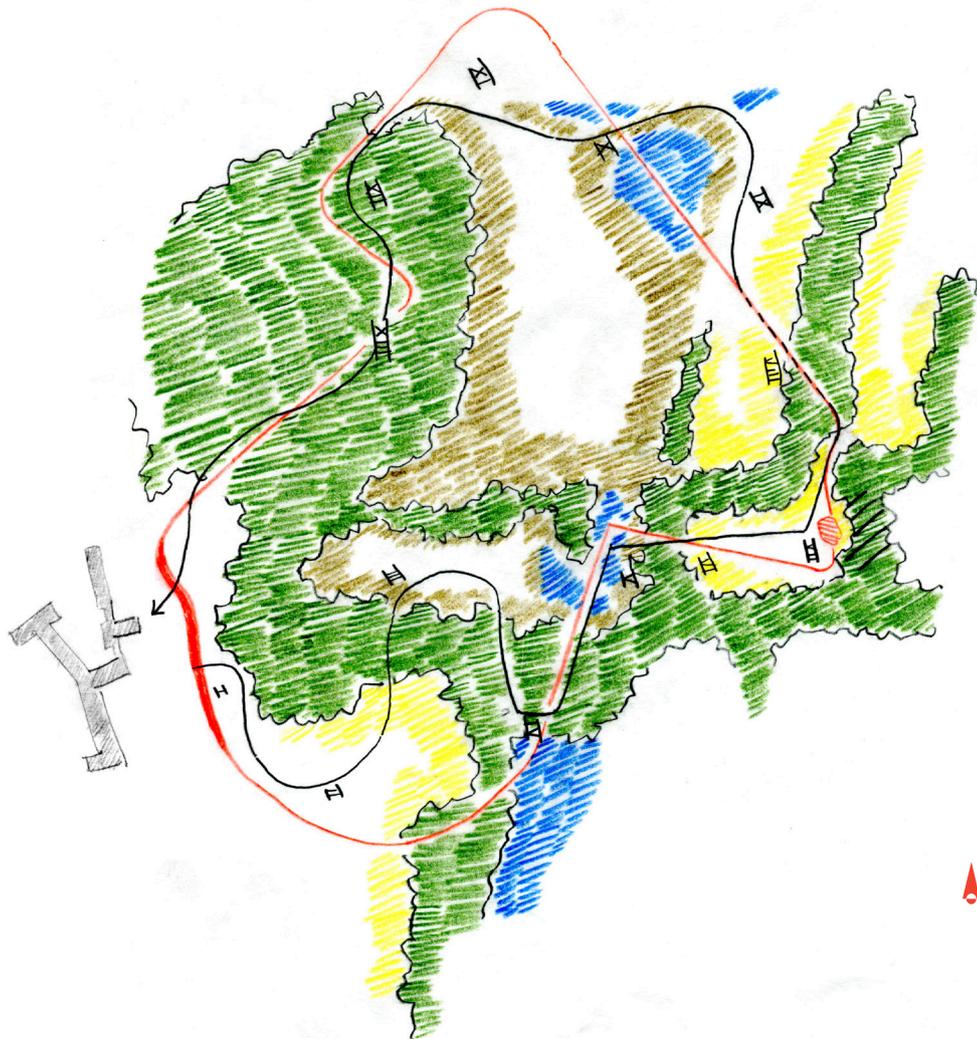


Figure 2.13: Wall, phase III

Connections

Development of the connections scheme between Phases II and III focused on a more purposeful placement of the stations in the landscape (Fig. 2.14).

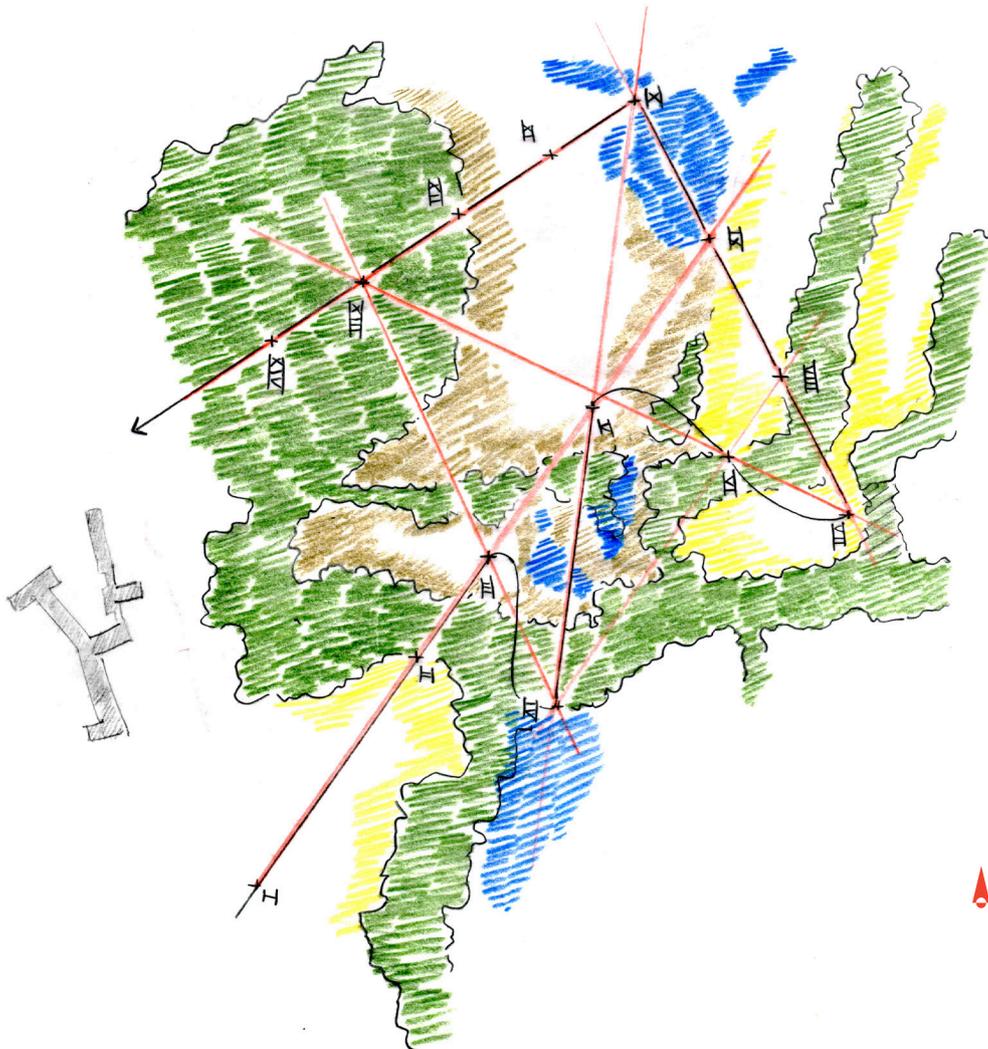


Figure 2.14: Connections, phase III

Making a final selection

Ultimately, while both ideas had merits, I selected the connections scheme for further development based on a few key reasons:

The idea met my criteria for a modernist Stations of the Cross landscape more fully. The wall scheme met many of these criteria, to be sure—a continuous sense of eliding spatial relationships, a nonrepresentational manner of communicating stations—but the idea lacked an emphasis on individual experience. We might ask what an individual's relationship to a wall might be (indeed, that was the question that, to some extent, dictated the way the wall moves through the landscape in relation to the path). The exercise, however, seems a fruitless and halfhearted one when posed in the context of the Stations of the Cross, a practice so charged with meaning that to expect practitioners to interrogate their relationship with a wall would be a little specious and vapid, if not downright disingenuous. There is no call for the cart to be put before the horse, nor for the tail to wag the dog.

Similarly, though it certainly implies a continuity and elision of spaces, *the wall idea does little to challenge the established spatial composition of the Stations.* Although less so than a traditional Stations of the Cross garden, the wall scheme still presents a sequence of stations represented by an object in a landscape (or, more accurately, by changes in the relationship between that object and the landscape). In that regard...

The connections idea had more apparent conceptual interest. Perhaps the most significant unifying characteristic of modernists across disciplines is their prioritization of progress as their principal virtue. The connections idea presents a model of Stations of the Cross that has not been attempted (or at least built) before. In that regard, it presents the more compelling case for a modernist—a complex puzzle to be worked out, whose solution represents a revitalized conception of a hitherto unchallenged mode of sacred landscape.

PHASE IV: FURTHER DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

With a concept selected, the rest of the work of this project became a question of development and representation of the design. For purposes of clarity I have divided the remainder of design development work into two categories, which progressed contemporaneously: development of the thematic connections between stations and the on-the-ground articulation of those connections. Once these two elements were decided upon, the project progressed to representation of the scheme in its final configuration.

Refinement of connections

The connections between stations sketched out in earlier phases of design development were based on my interpretations of the principal themes of the Stations of the Cross and how those themes linked across adjacent and non-adjacent stations. As design development progressed, it became necessary for me to evaluate the thematic connections I had previously highlighted to understand which stations were being connected and by what logic that connection would be made. While the finished product looks similar to the diagram produced for Phase III, this reconsideration had several impacts on exact location of stations and aided considerably in the development of the material articulation of the connections.

I began by creating a table outlining the events depicted in the biblical stations, their major meditative themes, and their thematic connections to other stations (Fig. 2.15).³

³ This table was chiefly informed by the meditations, written by John M. Thavis and Greg Burke, for the Good Friday Stations of the Cross at the Colosseum in Rome, led by Pope St. John Paul II, and presented by the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff (http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/2002/documents/ns_lit_doc_20020329_via-crucis_en.html).

Station	Subject	Actor(s)	Scale of events	Meditation	Links to other stations
I	Jesus is in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane	Jesus	personal	Jesus begins his journey alone; the disciples are asleep (abandonment); doubt	I, II, III, V, VIII (Christ suffers his Passion for the multitudes who betray him and demand his death); IV (we may depend on no one but ourselves and God)
II	Jesus, betrayed by Judas, is arrested	Jesus	social	The wisdom and peace of Christ in the face of earthly calamity and doubt; bitterness and division versus unity	IX (unity as source of strength and comfort; a gang of men versus a gang of women); XII (duty of the disciples of Christ)
III	Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin	Jesus	social	Earthly authority may cause immense suffering and death, depriving the individual of identity, all in the name of justice	VII (heavenly justice as recompense for suffering, oppression, cruelty); XI (salvation for the suffering who acknowledge God's love)
IV	Peter denies Jesus	Peter	interpersonal	"The Rock" has denied Jesus three times out of fear and weeps for his sin; fear and failty among the strongest and best of us	I (anguish does not become fear); V (fear and frailty in the face of the mob); VIII (relationship of the individual to Christ); X (frustration, fear, powerlessness)
V	Jesus is judged by Pilate	Pilate	social	Pilate, swayed by the mob, hands Jesus over to be executed, but claims his own innocence; hypocrisy, weakness in power	IV (fear in the face of the mob); IX (Jesus dies to save the mob that condemned him); X (direct cause of Christ's execution)
VI	Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns	Jesus	personal	Mockery hypocrisy, finding strength to bear sorrow, but abusing others who suffer	III (hypocrisy, injustice); IV, VIII (relationship of the individual to Christ)
VII	Jesus carries the Cross	Jesus	personal	Despite (and because of) his divinity, Jesus takes up the Cross; humility, self-sacrifice, charity and peace	X, XIII (the Cross as the instrument of death and salvation); III, V (true justice in the face of earthly injustice)
VIII	Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the Cross	Simon	interpersonal	Simon, a visitor to Jerusalem, is pressed into helping Jesus carry the Cross; personal strength	IV, VI (relationship of the individual to Christ); IX (unity as a source of strength and comfort)
IX	Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem	women	social	Jesus tells the women to weep not for him, but for themselves and their children; fallibility, pity and forgiveness	V (the mob sways Pilate, but Jesus dies to save the mob); VI, X (Jesus' suffering and death is for the women and children of Jerusalem)
X	Jesus is crucified	Jesus	personal	Through intense physical agony comes the salvation of the world; crucifixion as constant, atemporal as long as suffering exists in the world	IV, V (the death of a man as consequence of individual actions); XI, XII, XIII (continuity of location)
XI	Jesus promises the Kingdom to the Good Thief	the Good Thief	interpersonal	Jesus is flanked by crucified criminals; one asks to be remembered and Jesus promises they will meet in paradise; divine love, mercy, eternal life	III (salvation for the suffering and those who accept God's love); X, XII, XIII (continuity of location)
XII	Jesus on the Cross, his Mother and his Disciple	Mother God, the Disciple	interpersonal	Jesus commends his mother to the care of the "disciple whom he loved"; trust in the wisdom of God	XIII (Jesus' mother must watch him die; continuity of location)
XIII	Jesus dies on the Cross	Jesus	personal	Death as an individual experience; the crux of history	X, XI, XII (continuity of location)
XIV	Jesus is laid in the tomb	the Church	interpersonal	Jesus "rests," but the faithful wait; contemplation of the completeness of the story	I (the accomplishment of what was revealed in Station I to be God's plan for the salvation of humanity)

Figure 2.15: Table of stations and their thematic connections

Attempts to articulate all of these connections, however, proved onerous and confusing. It became increasingly clear that a simpler scheme would be more suitable, in terms of both legibility for visitors and as a design subject. The simplified set of connections is outlined in figure 2.16.

By reducing a complex web of relationships to a simple set of connections, the strength of the essential themes of the devotional practice are highlighted, and the moments where these themes intersect become exactly clear (Fig. 2.17).

Stations	Theme
I, II, III, V, IX	The relationship of the many to Jesus; that is, Christ's role as redeemer of the people that called for his death; his relationship to the Jews, Rome, and (by extraction) our modern world
IV, VI, VIII	The relationship of the individual, for whom he suffered and died, to Jesus—from Peter, his closest friend and disciple who denies him, to Simon Cyrenian, a total stranger who helped bear the load of the Cross
VII, VIII, IX, X	Christ bears his Cross; Christ as redeemer of the one and the many
X, XI, XII, XIII	The crucified Christ: these events take place on the same spot, where Christ hung upon the Cross
I, XIV	A direct connection from the end to the beginning: an acknowledgment that the terrible events of the Passion leading to Christ's death and burial are part of the divine mystery of mankind's redemption from sin and proof of God's love, which is itself undying.

Figure 2.16: Simplified connections between stations

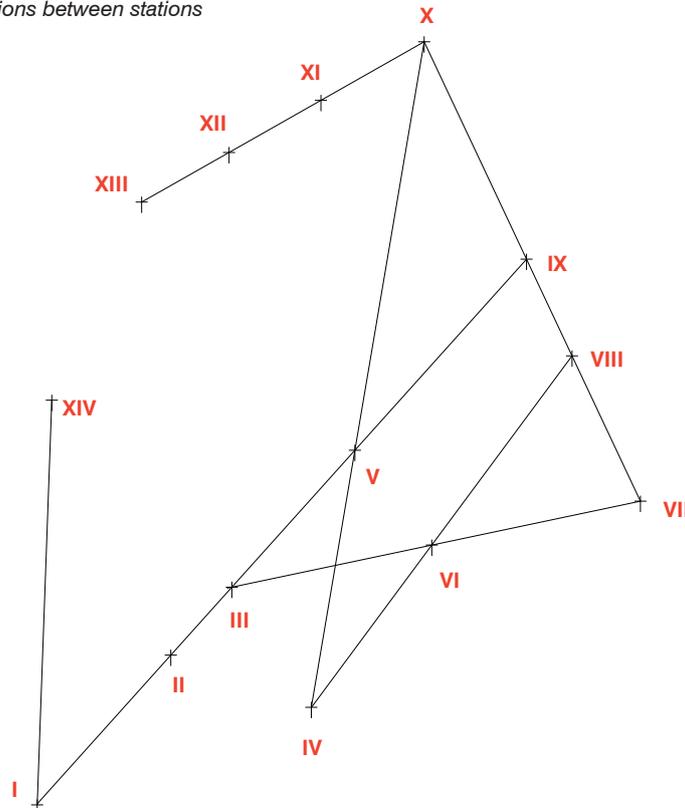


Figure 2.17: Connections between stations, as they were eventually laid out on site

The process of clarifying the thematic connections also allowed for the repositioning of some stations into more desirable, interesting, or feasible places in the landscape. Stations V, VI, and XIV were finally situated through this logic.

Articulating connections

Of course, the clarity of these connections is entirely dependent on their material representation. Several initial attempts to represent the connection lines, either visually or suggestively (i.e. through repeated materiality or formal cues to a larger connection) were rejected.

This first pass at a design (Fig. 2.18) sits pleasingly enough on the page; however, like most of my early attempts at design, shows too forcefully the hand of the designer in the landscape. The confusion of materiality and the haphazardness of the suggested connections inspired the decision to return to the base material of the Stations of the Cross and reevaluate the thematic connections being made.

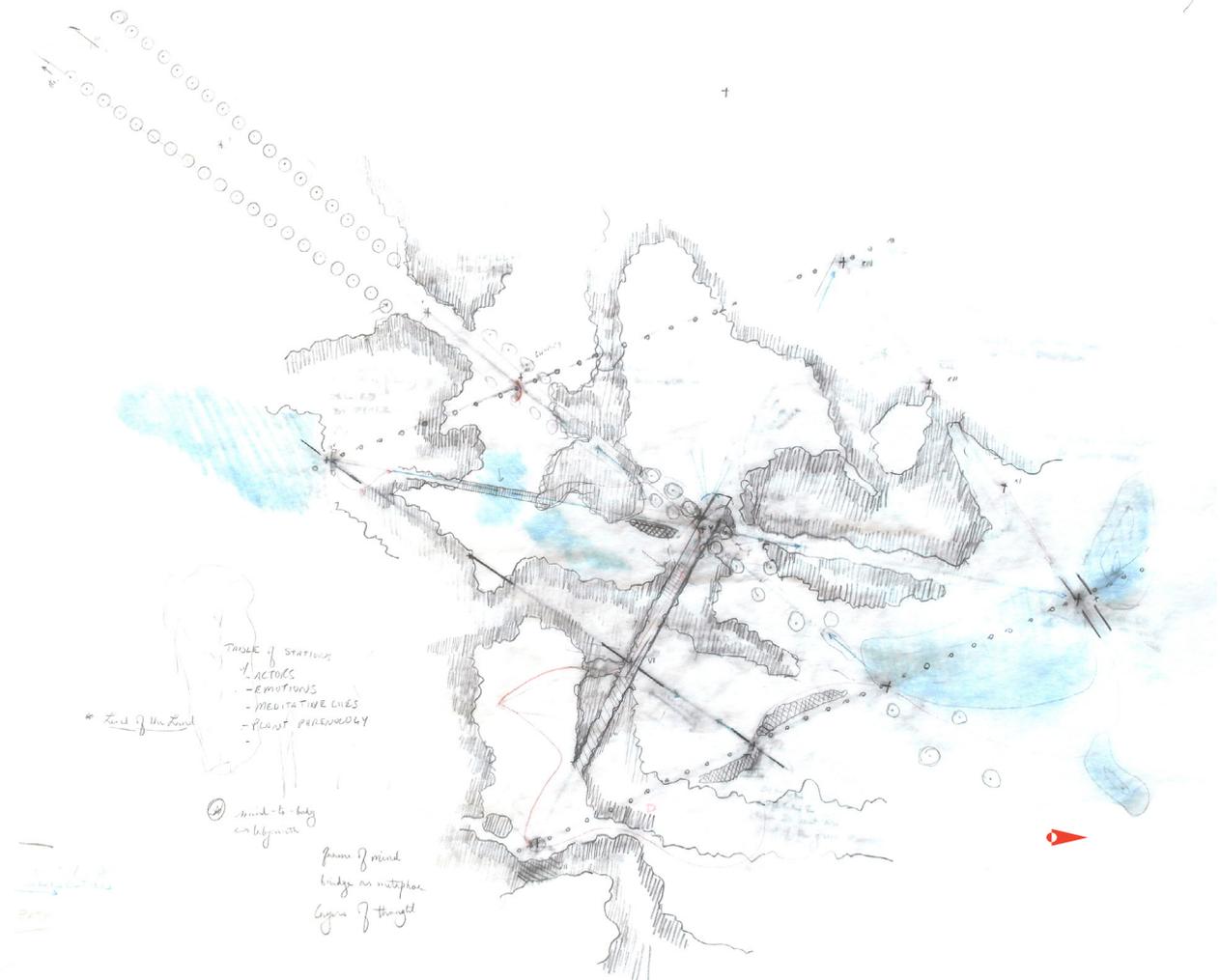


Figure 2.18: A first pass—overly complicated, with connections between stations a little too strongly made



Later passes met some goals at the expense of others. The next rendition of the plan achieved material simplicity through the use of walls (either concrete or drystack fieldstone), which intersect the boundaries in the landscape to suggest continuity between stations and across the site (Fig. 2.19). During the course of development for this concept, certain ideas from the earlier “walls” scheme, discarded after Phase III, were adapted to the purpose of the “connections” scheme. In terms of pure modernism, this scheme could be

considered successful: stations are marked by the moments where all visible walls are viewed head-on, instead of obliquely, becoming solid lines, rather than planes, in the landscape. The idea is beautiful and simple, but by my estimation was too cold, lacking any sense of human scale. In that regard, the scheme might possibly serve to distance the faithful from the Stations, rather than underscoring and complementing the relationship between the terrain and the narrative of the Stations of the Cross.



Figure 2.19: Walls created legible connections across the landscape, at the expense of the warmth the human scale provides

The essential idea of the final scheme was introduced with the idea of a simple garden of trees and stones. The pared-down inter-station connections resulted in themes that could be very simply expressed: a single stone representing the individual, clusters of stones representing the many, and trees, existing and selectively added, to serve as cues to understanding Christ's (and the faithful's) emotional and environmental conditions (Fig. 2.20). With as light a hand as possible, the final iteration of the design took form (Fig. 2.21).

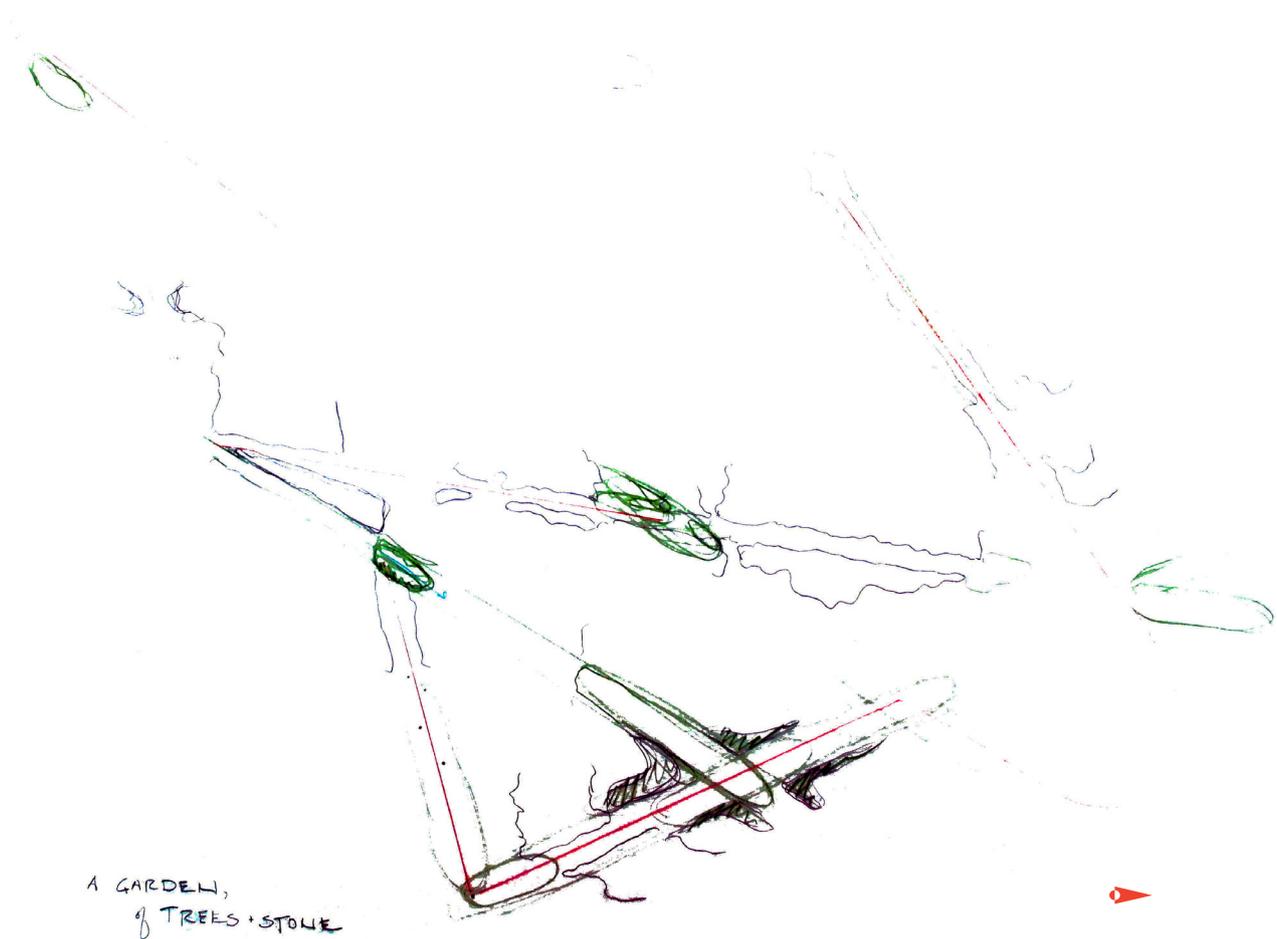


Figure 2.20: The final form of the design begins to take form: a garden of trees and stones

As the design moved from paper to the computer, greater precision in the drawing medium allowed for a more granular degree of design development (and, it hardly bears stating, greater flexibility and ability to make changes to the design). Most notably, the axes were calibrated to align more exactly within desired (i.e. buildable with minimal added infrastructure) locations, and the stones representing “the many” in stations I, II, III, V, and IX received a more exact, sophisticated configuration through computer-aided drawing. If anything, this project has, in my mind, refined my understanding of the role that media plays in design development and the potential impacts of various types of drawing and representation tools on the overall nature of a design.

In a similar sense, this project benefited (as I believe I have demonstrated) from work over the course of several months that moved between scales and locations, concepts and forms, contexts and constructs, abstract and concrete. A linear design process does not provide for cross-pollination and mutual improvement of ideas; in research-through-designing, such a process would have been impossible and stultifying for the final product (Fig. 2.22).

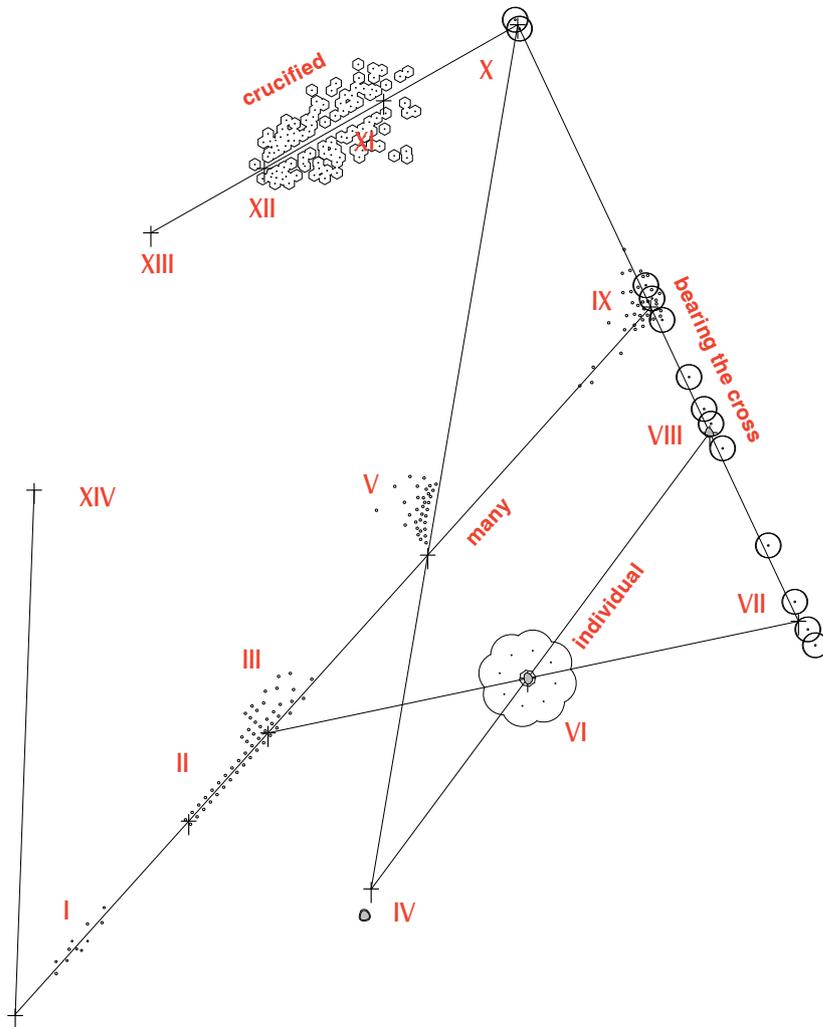
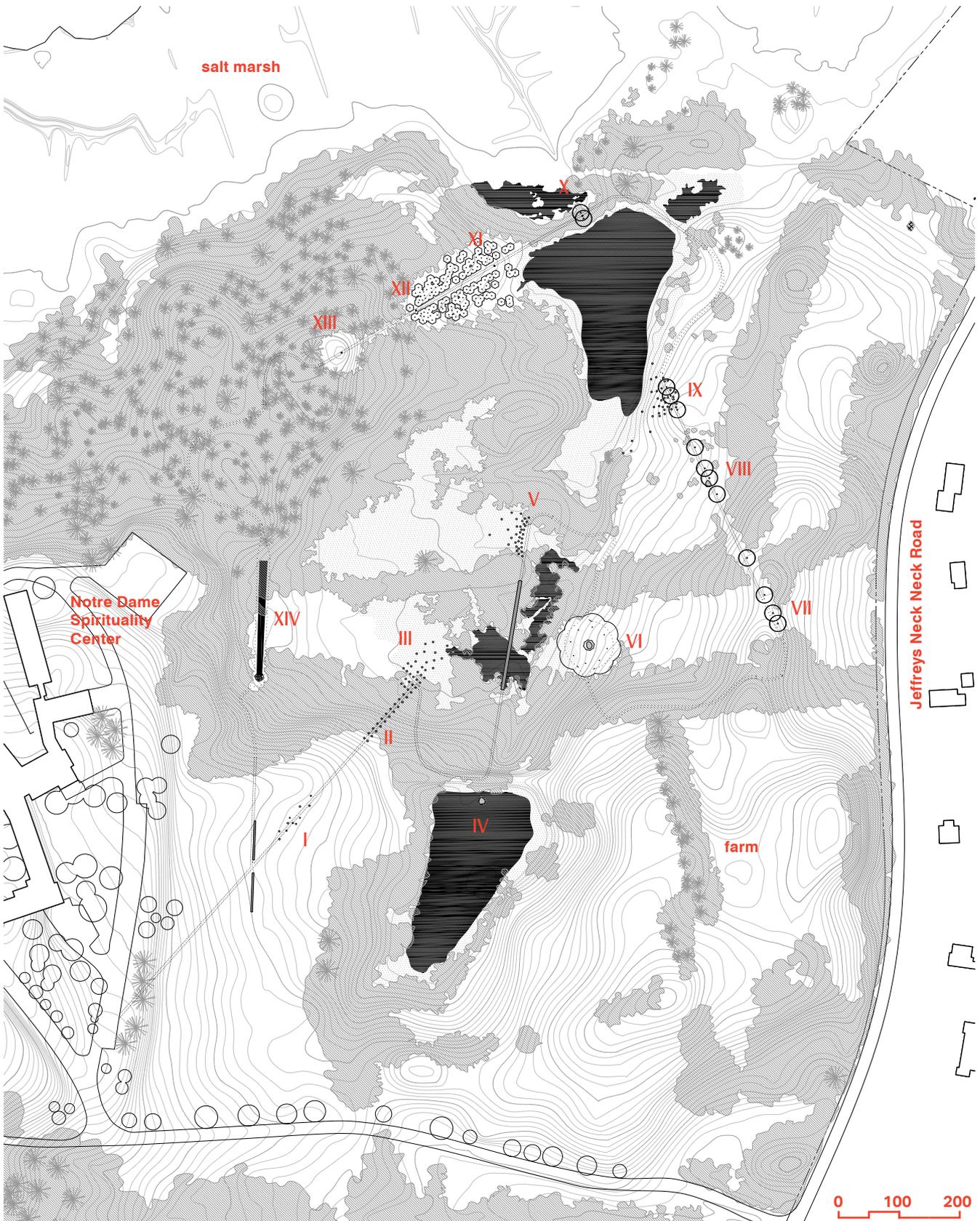


Figure 2.21: Thematic connections between stations

Figure 2.22: The Ipswich Stations in their final iteration



A LANDSCAPE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The remainder of this chapter provides a narrative summary of the design for the Ipswich Stations in its final form. This method is eminently suitable for describing a built Stations of the Cross, for the simple reason that the experience of the Stations is primarily narrative in nature. My goal, in this description, is to provide the barest outline of the experience, explaining only the types of landcover being moved through by the pilgrim (this is, after all, a pilgrimage) and the interventions which my plan will entail. I make no effort to describe the emotional or spiritual character of the experience. That dimension is unique to each person as they traverse the landscape for themselves, and as I have placed great faith, throughout the design process, in the dramatic capacities of the Stations of the Cross and of the landscape in which they are set, to prescribe emotions might run the risk of cheapening the overall effect.

I: Jesus is in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

II: Jesus, betrayed by Judas, is arrested

The sequence begins in the established row of pine trees at the edge of the parking lot. The pilgrim descends in a direct line across the sloping pasture, passing through a fieldstone wall which marks the entrance to the landscape of the Stations (Fig. 2.23). Midway through the pasture, the pilgrim passes through a grouping of eleven granite stones: the first station, Jesus' night of agony in the garden of Gethsemane. The eleven stones (representing the eleven apostles who accompanied Jesus into Gethsemane at the beginning of his Passion) introduce the language of the "many" axis. Within this set of connected stations, the seemingly paradoxical relationship of Jesus' suffering and death to the masses is represented by various configurations of multiple stones (Fig. 2.24).

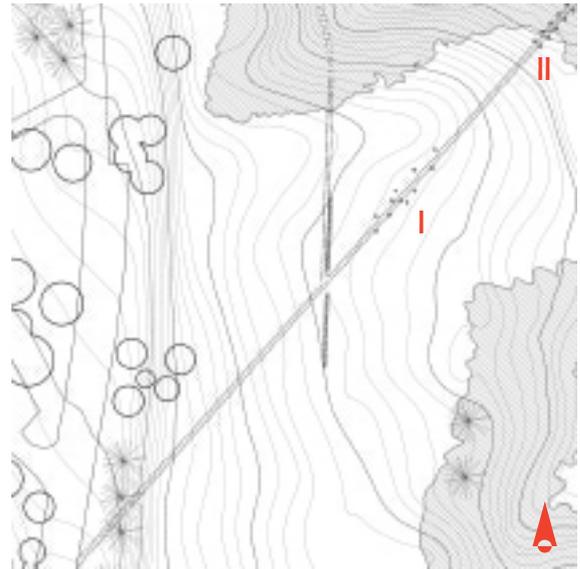


Figure 2.23: The first and second stations



Figure 2.24: Entrance to the Ipswich Stations, viewed from the pasture to the east of the main building



III: Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

The pilgrim leaves these stones behind (as Jesus did), progressing alone into the wooded edge of the pasture, where regimented rows of stones betoken the second station (Jesus is arrested, Fig. 2.25). This row of stones guides the pilgrim through the stretch of woods to a clearing on the far side, where the row multiplies and extends into an open wetland landscape (Fig. 2.26). At this moment (the third station), the pilgrim encounters the Sanhedrin, the council of Jewish priests who condemn Jesus as a heretic and send him to his doom.

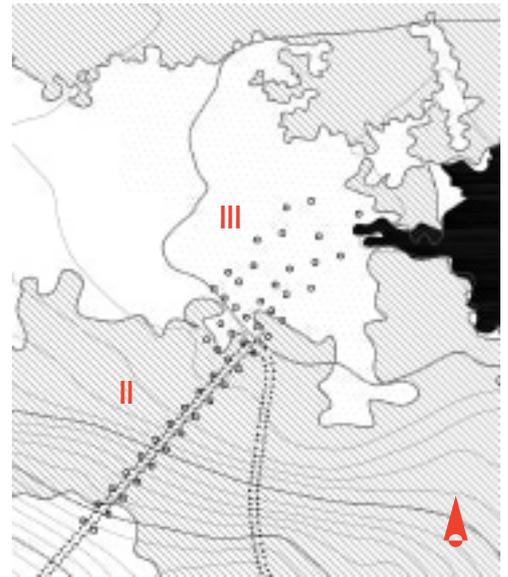


Figure 2.25: The second and third stations



Figure 2.26: Emerging from the woods of the second station, the rocks of the third station disperse across a wetland meadow

IV: Peter denies Jesus

The pilgrim, rejected by the authorities of Jesus' ancient faith, changes direction and turns his feet back into the woodland towards the pond (Fig. 2.27). At the water's edge he encounters a boulder, floating weightlessly on the surface of the pond (Fig. 2.28). This is the fourth station, and the introduction to the "self" axis, represented in the stations by a single large boulder. This axis interrogates the relationship of the individual to Christ; at the fourth station, the pilgrim faces the reality of Jesus' denial at the hands of his closest associate, Simon Peter, the cornerstone of the faith who in good time became the first Bishop of Rome. As with the third station, no answers are found here; the pilgrim again must dramatically change direction and cross the swamps at the interior of the site.

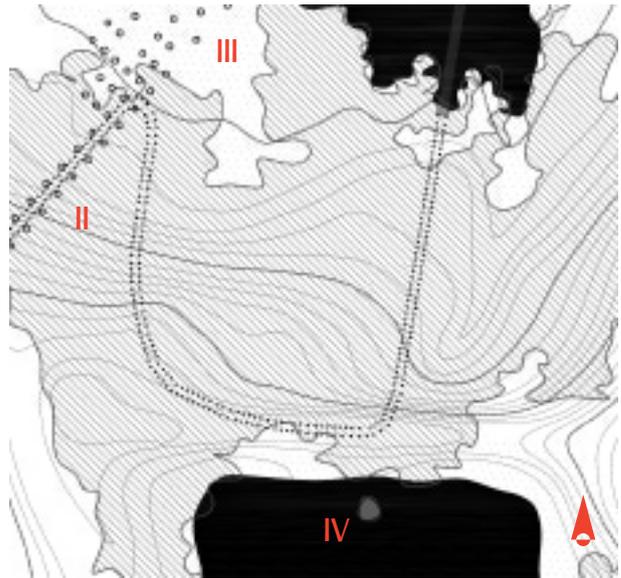


Figure 2.27: The second, third, and fourth stations



Figure 2.28: Pictured in late summer with water levels at their lowest, the boulder appears to barely skim the surface of the pond



V: Jesus is judged by Pilate

A narrow boardwalk leads to the fifth station, where the “many” axis is again apparent in a configuration of stones as the mob demands that Pontius Pilate, prefect of the Roman province of Judaea, order Jesus’ crucifixion (Figs. 2.29, 2.30, 2.31).

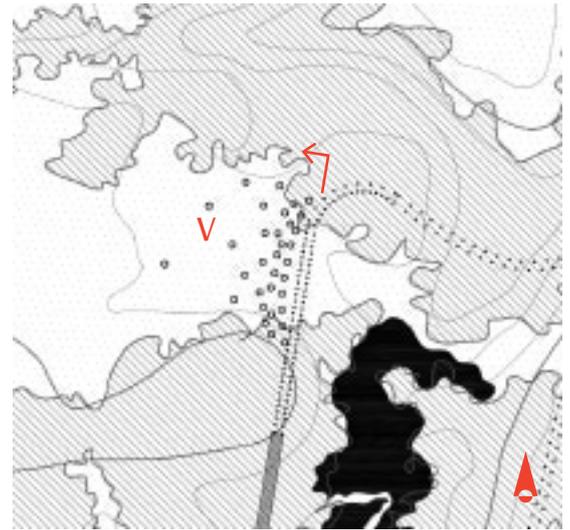


Figure 2.29: The fifth station, reached by a boardwalk



Figure 2.30: Section across fourth and fifth stations

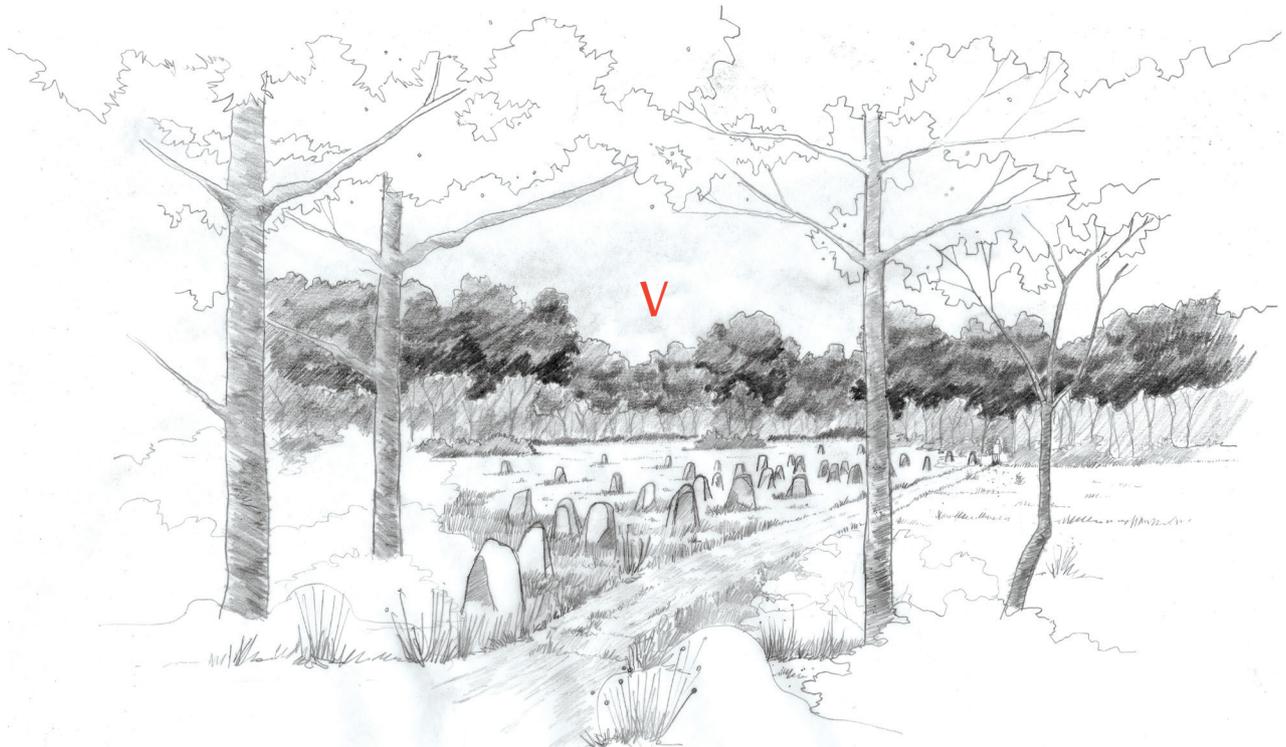


Figure 2.31: Again emerging into a meadow, the mob of stones corrals the pilgrim back into the woods on the far side

VI: Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

VII: Jesus bears the Cross

Led away from Pilate's presence, the pilgrim encounters the sixth station, which is marked by a large boulder (we are again back on the "self" axis) at the center of a council-circle of *Gleditsia triacanthos*, honey-locusts covered in dramatic (some would say dangerous) thorns (Fig. 2.32). The path crosses through this ring and meanders uphill through another stretch of woodland before emerging at the top of the hill (Fig. 2.33). There, the pilgrim encounters the seventh station, where Jesus bears the Cross. This station begins the third axis, marking the period during which Jesus carries the burden of the Cross (representing humanity's sins); the axis (which, unlike the previous two, is represented by a visual as well as a material connection), is marked by a line of *Quercus coccinea*, scarlet oaks (the oak being one of the traditional trees of which the Cross was built), extending down to the edge of a second pond.

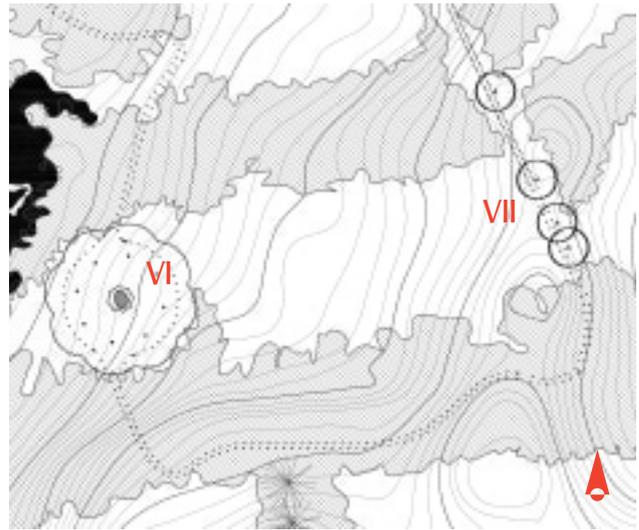


Figure 2.32: The sixth and seventh stations

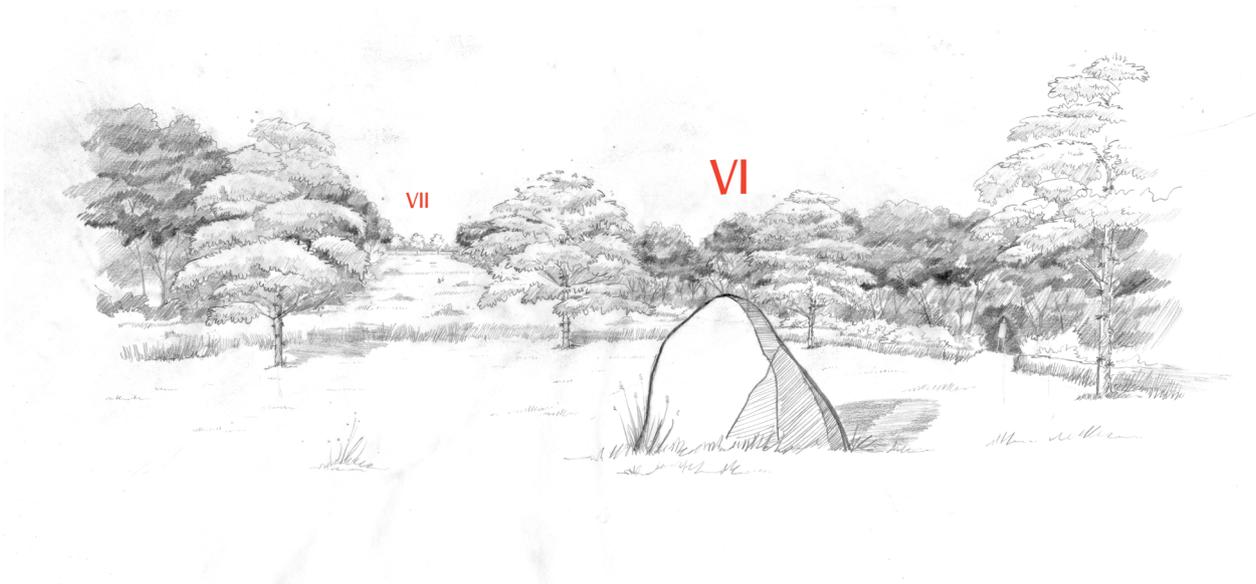


Figure 2.33: A solitary boulder at the center of a circle of honey locusts, with a view across an unmown meadow towards the seventh station

VIII: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his Cross

IX: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Following this strongly marked visual and material axis, the pilgrim first encounters a solitary boulder marking the terminus of the “self” axis (Fig. 2.34). This boulder directly recalls Peter’s denial of Jesus in the fourth station; while Jesus’ friend denies him out of shame and fear, the greatest comfort he is given comes from a total stranger, Simon of Cyrene, who is coerced by the Roman soldiers into helping Christ with his burden (Fig. 2.35). The pilgrim next encounters another field of boulders, as Christ encounters the women of Jerusalem. This cluster, arranged by no logic, is the terminus of the “many” axis; just as the mob has called for his death, Jesus implores the multitudes to weep, not for him, but for their own great sin.

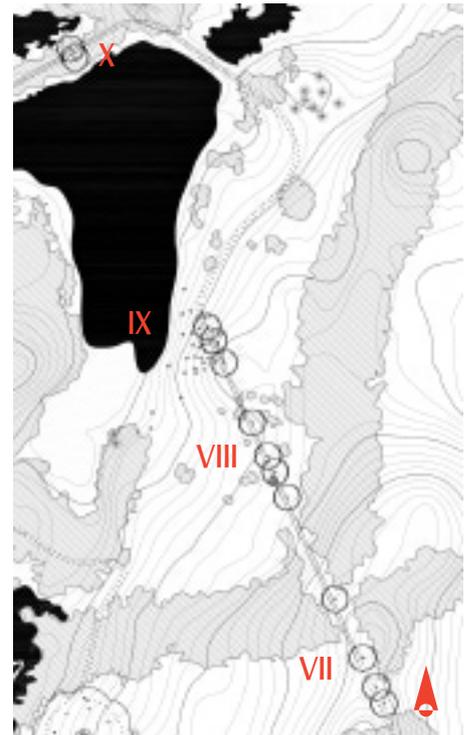


Figure 2.34: The seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth stations

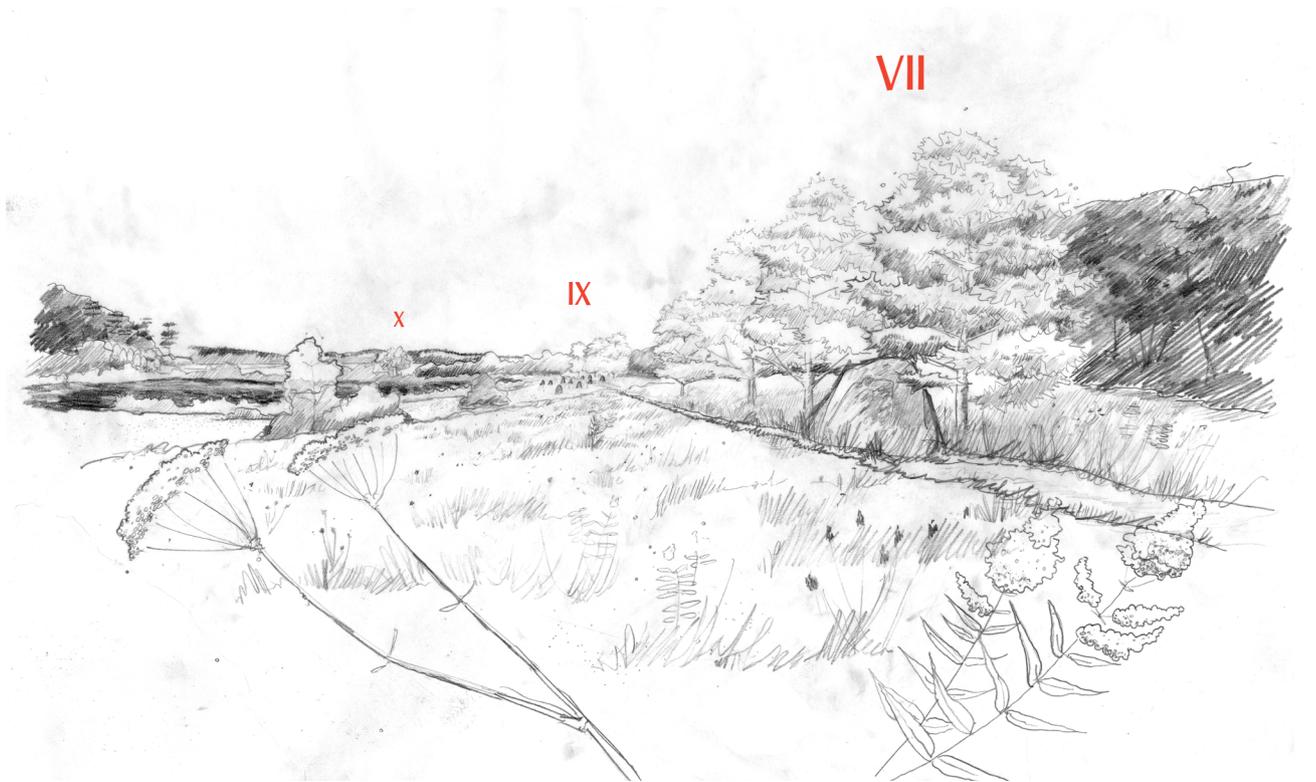


Figure 2.35: The straight line of scarlet oaks cuts directly through the meadow, skipping another pond to terminate at the tenth station

X: Jesus is crucified

XI: Jesus promises the Kingdom to the Good Thief;

XII: Jesus on the Cross, his Mother and the Disciple

XIII: Jesus dies on the Cross

The pilgrim comes to the tenth station, where Jesus is nailed to the Cross. This station is both the terminus of the “burden of Christ” axis and the beginning of the “crucifixion” axis (Fig. 2.36). This set of four stations, logically, all occur at Golgotha, the spot of Jesus’ crucifixion. Specifically, they all occur as he hangs on the Cross, and thus at the same point in space. The pilgrim moves through a series of four stations which, though represented with the same materiality (Fig. 2.37), nevertheless convey the emotional journey undertaken by Jesus during the time of his torturous execution. This axis

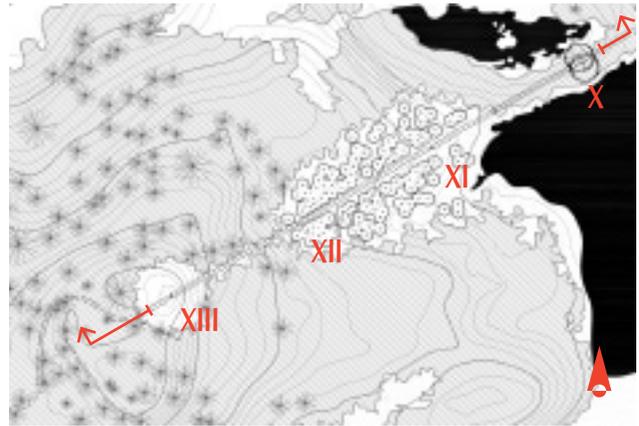


Figure 2.36: The tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth stations

is suggested by an allée of *Populus tremuloides* (aspens another tree from which the Cross was supposedly built), which slowly narrows as the path ascends a hill to the ultimate spot of Jesus’ death at the crest of the drumlin (Fig. 2.38).

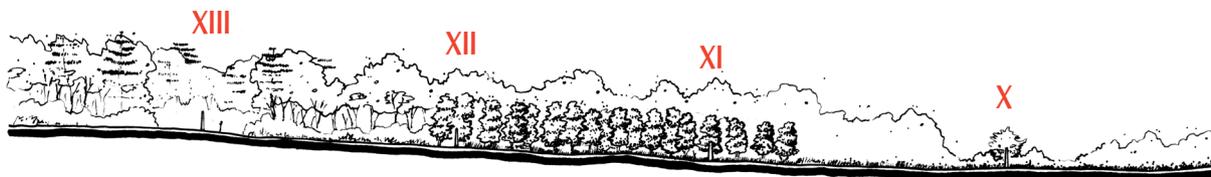


Figure 2.37: Section



Figure 2.38: From the exposure of the ecotone between meadow and saltmarsh, the allée of aspens leads into the darkness of the upland forest



Each of these stations, wherein Jesus is crucified, is marked by a single post of white pine (*Pinus strobus*); the thirteenth station, the death of Jesus, is located at the top of the hill, in a clearing in the forest.

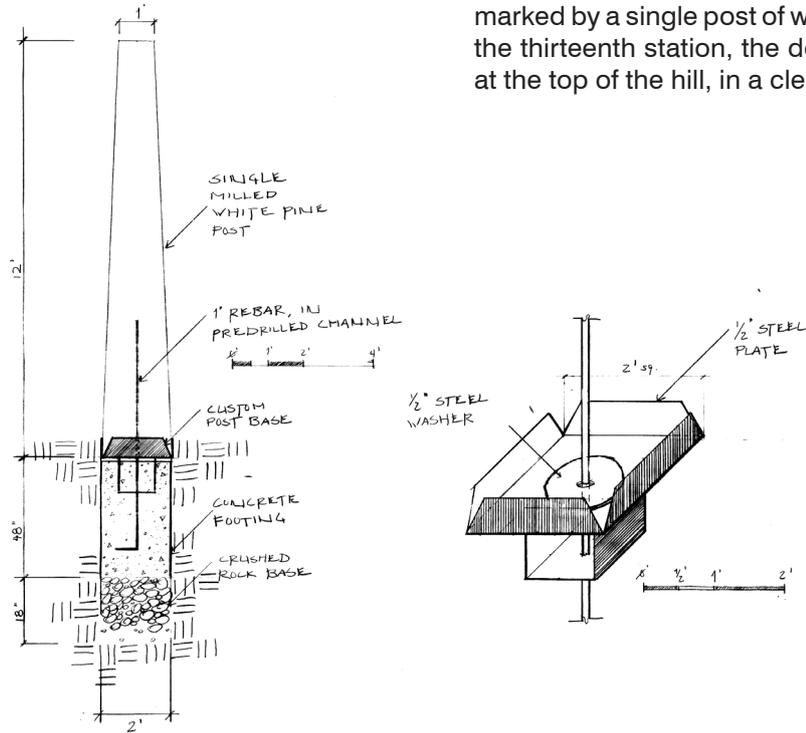


Figure 2.39: Detail of white pine post and base

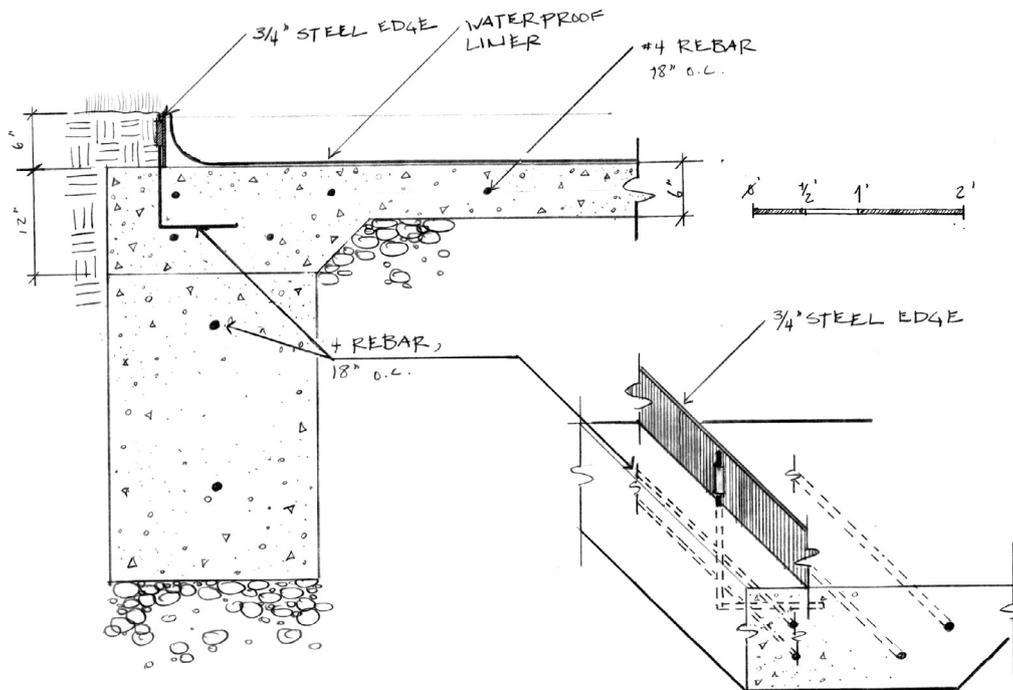


Figure 2.40: Detail of pool in section and axonometric views

XIV: Jesus is buried

After the death of Jesus, the pilgrim passes from the clearing onto a path which meanders across the summit of the drumlin. Descending, the pilgrim suddenly encounters a long, narrow reflecting pool, perfectly carved out of the existing forest floor. The pool passes through woods and clearing before terminating in a glade. A single apple tree (*Malus* spp.), surrounded by water, marks its far edge, recalling both man's original sin and Jesus' victory over death. After walking along the edge of the pool, the pilgrim follows the path back to the fieldstone wall, marking both end and beginning of the Ipswich Stations.

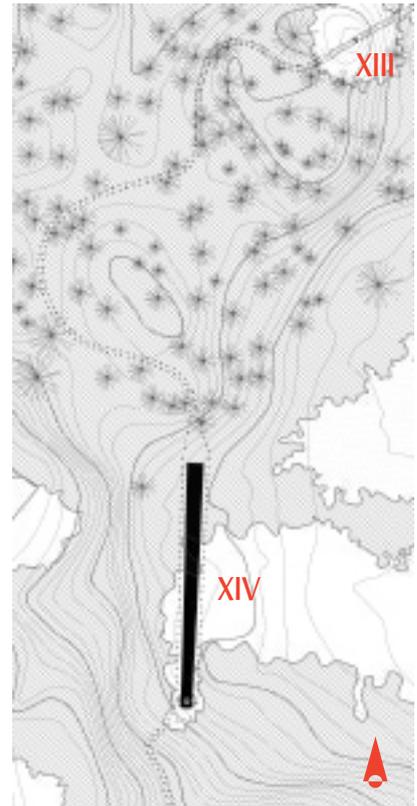


Figure 2.41: The fourteenth and final station



Figure 2.42: One of the only constructed interruptions to the existing landscape at the NDSC, the fourteenth station's reflecting pool measures 220 feet in length and narrows slightly at its far end to create the illusion of even greater length

III. CLOSING

The work of the landscape architect is never complete.

Plans may be stamped, ribbons may be cut, but as vegetation grows, dies and is replaced, as the people using the site pass into and out of its sphere of influence, as paving cracks and erodes, the decisions made by the designer never reach a truly final form. In that regard, it seems inappropriate to offer conclusions for this project, though the development of the Ipswich Stations has largely ceased, for now. Instead, I offer, by way of conclusion, some remarks addressing the success (or failure) of the project.

Success for the design undertaken by this project can be described in many ways: broadly, as a work of art and of design; dogmatically, as a Stations of the Cross; geographically, as a localized, site-specific intervention; critically, as an analysis and presentation of new knowledge. The constructivist approach to research through designing also offers another means of evaluating the success of the design: whether the parameters based on the literature review and site analysis outlined in the first chapter were adequately met. In that regard, the conclusion of the work on this project presents an opportunity to revisit the principles outlining a modernist conception of the Stations of the Cross, and to determine if they were successfully accounted for during the design process. The question is simple: did my design meet my own criteria for a successful modernist Stations of the Cross? A brief walk through these principles and a reflection on their presence in the finished design begins to give form to an answer.

The first principle demanded the prioritization of “the experience of the individual in the landscape,” while “allow[ing] for both individual and group observance of the Stations.” If these principles were all of equal importance (which, theoretically, they were), then this principle is first among equals. In its somewhat paradoxical call to provide for both individual and community, it embodies the very paradox, the principal thrust, of modernism itself.¹ The spatial, social, and material concerns of the modernist creators—and, by proxy, the other four principles I generated—were the products of a new attitude concerning the importance of the individual and his new place in society. Within the Ipswich Stations, the most obvious manifestation of this axiom lies in the design of the path and the spaces in which the Stations may be observed.

With the exceptions of the boardwalk, the council-circle of honey locusts at the sixth station, and the reflecting pool of the fourteenth station, the mown path throughout the site remains a constant four feet in width.² The narrowness is deliberate: a four-foot path only allows two to walk shoulder-to-shoulder.

1 Crouch, *Modernism*, 6.

2 That is, of course, depending on the skill of the groundskeeper and the width of available lawnmowers

Ideally, the path is experienced by one person at a time. Because there is no one perspective or, really, focal point of any station (as there would in a typical Stations of the Cross), the scheme also accommodates a crowd.

This flexibility is the direct result of the second principle, which called for the absence of representational artwork or concrete representation of the events of the Stations. In this arena, my success is mixed. The use of multiple boulders to represent the axis of the many (stations I, II, III, V, IX) and one single boulder to represent the stations along the axis of the individual (stations IV, VI, VIII) is heavily metaphorical, if not outright representational.³ However, these are stones—they are not sculptures of people, they are not bas-reliefs—and the power is still in the mind of the observer to cast the events as she sees fit, and to see them in her own way.

This liberty of imagination is largely due to what I consider the successful implementation of the third principle, the use of the landscape itself as outdoor sculpture. As described in the chapter outlining the research methods, my design process prioritized the innate drama of the Passion narrative and the existing landscape. The material palette of the Ipswich Stations consists almost entirely of “naturally occurring” objects. My goal was that the hand of man was apparent only in the distribution of these objects: an enfilade of oaks, a gentle arc or a double row of stones. By the size, geometries, and distribution of these objects, I aimed to bridge the gap between the scale of the surrounding landscape and the scale of the very deeply human experience of the rite. It is very possible that the very simple touches to the landscape in the Ipswich Stations would work as intended—providing material cues to supplement the experience of the Passion and landscape while emphasizing pre-existing thematic connections.

It is also possible, despite my best efforts, that these light touches would function in the exact same way as a traditional Stations of the Cross: no more than a series of objects which the faithful approach, observe, and move past. In that regard, my satisfaction of the fourth principle (establishing

3 Having a boulder “walking on water” represent Peter practically qualifies as a pun.

a logic of free-flowing, overlapping stations) is, perhaps, the most questionable. Conceptually, the idea of the axial thematic connections between stations, represented in such simple materials as stone and tree, might simply be too abstract to be of use. That question cannot be adequately answered without the actual completion of this work—that is, the construction of the design and the production of a meditative guide which would clue in the practitioner to the visual markers within the landscape. Whether the experience comes across to all visitors is another matter. Ideally, the Ipswich Stations would be best experienced through a set of meditative texts written specifically for use at the Ipswich Stations, emphasizing the thematic connections made concrete in the landscape. If this text, like the Stations themselves, could be composed in a way that folded over space and time, drawing out the experience between stations instead of emphasizing a single point in space, the legibility of the design choices would be eminently clear.

Where the experience is concerned, I believe that the Ipswich Stations do successfully meet the criteria of the fifth principle. If anything, too much time between stations, allowing for prayer, reflection, and meditation, might have been provided—but I do not believe this to be the case. The Via Dolorosa is an experience on the scale of a city; if Stations of the Cross are to be a translation of that experience, I see great benefit in reproducing something of the scale of that road and those events. During this design process, I have made no attempt to account for the actual length of the Via Dolorosa (something which was very precisely accounted for in many medieval European Stations of the Cross, down to the number of footsteps between Stations). Ipswich, it hardly bears saying, is not Jerusalem—its grandeur is of an entirely different cast. Yet as the Via Dolorosa winds through the topographic lows and highs of the ancient city of Jerusalem, revealing the glories and drama of that city, the Ipswich Stations offer a similarly varied and in-depth experience of a place. At any rate, the Ipswich Stations allow for the pilgrim to experience the Stations at their own pace; there is doubtless time for any chants, songs, prayers, and meditations that the visitor wishes to incorporate into their practice.

Having addressed the criteria for a modernist Stations of the Cross, one other question arises:

does the Ipswich Stations, as a sum of its parts, offer a new experience of the Stations of the Cross? Or are the Stations of the Cross, through their age, strict doctrinal requirements, and sheer spiritual weight, an immutable experience, unchanging across their varied material incarnations?

I do not believe this is the case. By its scale, the thoroughness of its composition, the regularity and elemental purity of its materials, I believe that the Ipswich Stations is a successful manifestation of the spatial type of Stations of the Cross, and as such, provides a new experience for the faithful. Changes in perspective, density, pattern, sight lines, sight lines, and even vegetative communities create an experience of constantly shifting spatial environments. The landscape itself has become the sculpture being experienced, and that sculpture cannot be experienced from a single viewpoint or even within a single moment. In that regard, I hold that the Ipswich Stations make, at the very least, an aesthetic statement operating within a modernist sense of space, time, and the individual.



AFTERWORD

The previous discussion has, in its scope, addressed the success of the Ipswich Stations as the product of a research through designing process. We might also consider them as the product of a devotional exercise.

I do not intend, here, to make a statement as to the design of sacred places by agnostic or atheist designers. I believe that a contemporary, secular designer, by duly undertaking a constructivist (or perhaps pragmatic) research-through-designing practice, might achieve success with the design of a sacred space—I am sure many have, in the past, and having taken far fewer pains than I have taken in this project regarding deliberate design choices.

But I would be remiss to neglect to make some brief remarks on the process of designing a Stations of the Cross as a Roman Catholic. The nature of my personal Catholicism is my affair, and my own relationship with my faith is certainly not intended to be a legible part of the Ipswich Stations (or to play any role whatsoever in the academic work of this project). As outlined in the introduction to this document, my choice of the Stations of the Cross as a subject of inquiry is linked to intense feelings of devotion towards the practice. I have striven to create a Stations of the Cross that would provide, with neither sentimentalism (recalling Père Couturier) nor postmodern cynicism, an experience at least as powerful as that which could be gained in the quiet pews at Our Lady of Hope. My only metric to that end has been my own judgment. Success in that regard is deeply personal, and I cannot say (feel no need to say) whether or not it has been achieved. But it has been a great challenge and pleasure to try my own hand at something mysterious and ancient—to see if I could join the ranks of men and women of faith who, through the mystic beauty of creative effort, have contributed something to the way in which the great body of the faithful might experience something of God on earth, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

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APPENDIX A

Site photographs
January 3, 2017



From the rear of the NDSC main building, across the drive to the Searle mansion



The NDSC building, from the bottom of the pasture





The entry to the cemetery



A statue in the overgrown garden behind the Searle mansion



The Mary shrine, with farm fields beyond



A line of Pinus strobus along the west edge of the parking lot



A stand of woods, near the Mary shrine, along the pond



Looking towards Jeffreys Neck Road from the hilltop





Entrance to the public right-of-way trail along Jeffreys Neck Road



Pastures, shrubby marshland, with upland forest in the background



Shrubby marshland, bordering the wetlands



Northernmost pond, looking south



The salt marsh, part of Sandy Point State Reservation



Looking from the upland woods, north over the salt marsh





*Juniper clumps
in the shrubby
marshland*



*Entering the
upland forest
along the public
trail*

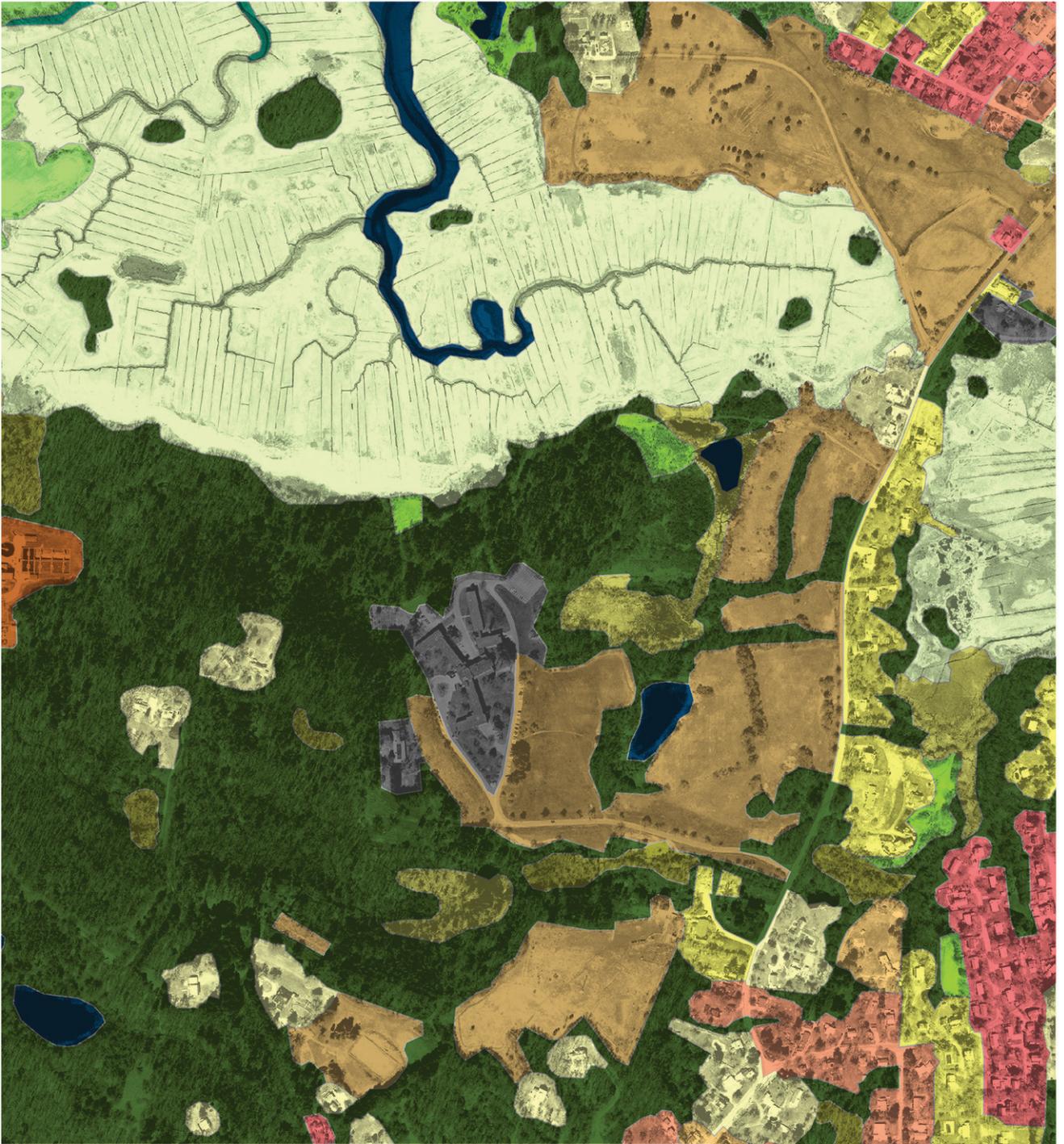


*The public
right-of-way trail
leading to the
Ipswich Waste
Water Treatment
Plant*

APPENDIX B

GIS mapping

Source: MassGIS Data Layers

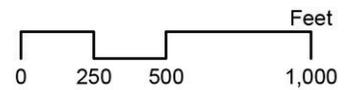




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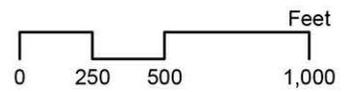
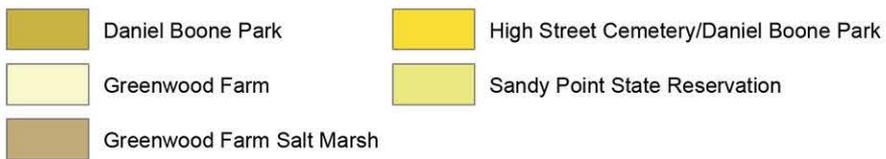
- Brackish tidal marsh
- Coastal forest
- Maritime oak-holly forest
- Maritime shrubland
- Salt marsh
- Tidal flat

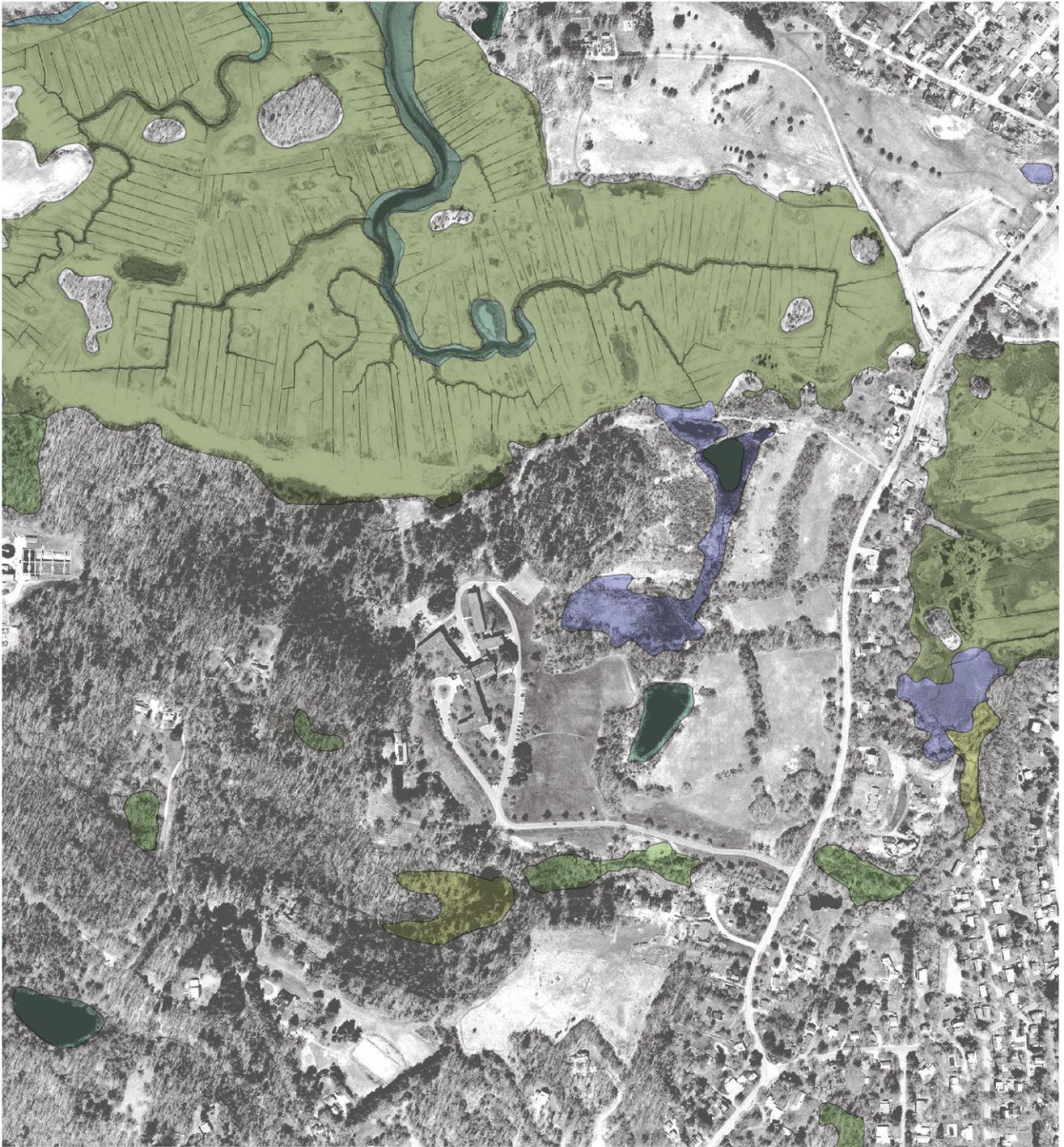
Coastal vegetative communities





Open space

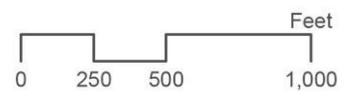


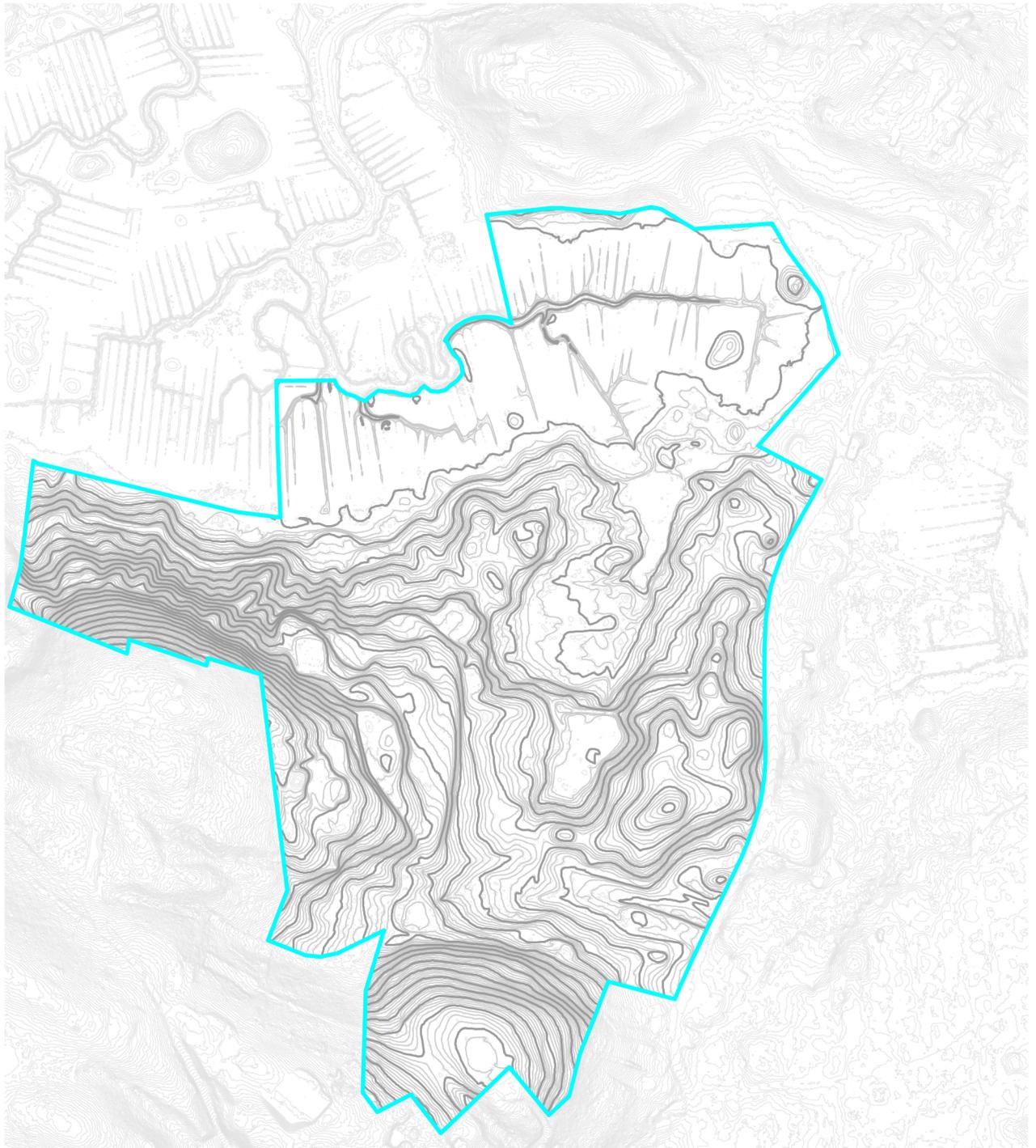


B

**Department of
Environmental Protection
Wetlands**

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Coastal bank bluff or sea cliff |  | Shrub swamp |
|  | Open water |  | Tidal flat |
|  | Salt marsh |  | Wooded swamp (deciduous) |
|  | Shallow marsh meadow or fen | | |





1-foot contours

