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ABSTRACT

The religious topography of German cities diversifies in terms of both the social spaces of faith and the built presence of religions and denominations. This challenges established Christian congregations to preserve architectural places and Christian spaces while simultaneously advancing interreligious interaction with the city and society.

This paper summarises and discusses insight from a recently completed research project. By synthesising quantitative and qualitative data, it analysed churches that have undergone architectural or functional changes over the last decades. Cases range from interior design changes to the abandonment and even demolition of buildings. We found a wide variety of approaches to balancing the spatial and social needs of congregations.

The paper presents four cases of re-ordering parish functions, both spatially and architecturally. The communities all face the challenge of maintaining post-war structures on the one hand, and declining funding and participation in church service, on the other. The different solutions chosen allow for discussion of the role of parish centres beyond architectural questions alone, considering the broader picture of urban space and social networks.

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Parish Structures and the Urban Environment Considered Spatially



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The religious topography of German cities has diversified over centuries in terms of social spaces of faith. For a long time, however, this had only a marginal impact on the urban structure. The built presence of various religions and denominations has become noticeable only in recent decades with the (re-)emergence of prominent buildings such as synagogues, mosques and independent churches. This development coincides with the decline in church attendance within the two major Christian churches and challenges the established Christian congregations to preserve places and spaces of faith and community within the competitive real estate market, while continuing to uphold inherited responsibilities, be these social, religious, cultural or architectural. At the same time, it requires them to consider interaction with a heterogeneous urban society. Against this background of significant changes in the religious topography of Germany, this paper discusses architectural strategies for the interplay between different built elements of a parish centre, such as the worship space

and parish hall. It specifically addresses Roman Catholic and Lutheran parishes that are tasked with managing post-war parish complexes in a time of dwindling funds and refurbishment requirements, on the one hand, and growing awareness of the cultural values of post-war architecture and design, on the other.

The four examples presented here come from an extensive research project that traced the broader changes in the religious topography of Germany over recent decades. They serve as representative cases among many similar examples all over the country.¹ The project documented more than 1.000 instances of building activities in churches and parish centres, ranging from installing a wheelchair access to repurposing of former churches as dwelling or gym, from the restructuring of a former supermarket into worship spaces to attention-grabbing new designs in church architecture. Between these extremes, we found a broad variety of approaches aimed at balancing the spatial and social needs of the congregations – approaches that

- 1
The former Church of St. Martin, seen from the East, 2024
(Beate Löffler).
- 2
The former parish hall of St. Martin, seen from the West, 2024
(Beate Löffler).
- 3
Orthophoto of the neighbourhood in Aachen-Haaren with the
T-shaped former Church of St. Martin in the upper centre, and
the folded roof of today's Church of St. Martin and the parish
centre to the southeast (Geobasis NRW, dl-de/by-2-0).
- 4
Today's urban layout with the church of the Vineyard
congregation in the background and the Church and the parish
hall of St. Martin in the front, 2024 (Beate Löffler).

offer insights into how Christian parishes are coping with the shifting significance of their role in contemporary society. The Roman-Catholic parish of St. Martin in Aachen (North Rhine-Westphalia) formed in 1954 in response to new housing developments. Initially, the faithful gathered in an interim space inside a nearby factory hall. That same year, a T-shaped church was consecrated – a hall with a single side aisle on the south side. It was designed by Friedrich Wilhelm Bertram (1919–2014) and Elmar Lang (1920–1981) as a concrete skeleton structure with brick infill and a pitched roof. **Fig. 1** Shortly thereafter, a bell tower was added, and in 1966, the community was able to construct a parish hall across the street.² **Fig. 2 | 3** A fire in 1970 made a refurbishment of the church interior necessary, and the exterior was retrofitted with thermal insulation.³ During the 1980s, a decline in membership numbers became evident, due in part to the cultural and religious diversification of the neighbourhood. Over time, the large church building turned into an economic burden for the parish. After years of deliberation, the community decided to sell the church to a Free Evangelical congregation and to establish their own worship space in the parish hall. In 2005, the church was profaned and taken over by the local congregation of Vineyard, a charismatic evangelical movement.⁴ In the meantime, the Roman-Catholic community used temporary spaces within the parish hall

while refurbishing parts of the building. The new church was consecrated in 2006.⁵ **Fig. 4** The parish hall was – and still is – a modest single-storey building, harmonizing in both material and form with the surrounding residential architecture. The new church occupies the north-western section, roughly one quarter of the building. The interior, a nearly square room measuring approximately 10 by 10 metres, fosters close interaction between celebrant and congregation. White walls and wooden floor create an atmosphere that balances openness with a sense of warmth and intimacy. Today, the two churches stand almost side by side on the same street. From a social and pastoral perspective, the solution chosen by the Catholic parish was sensible, as it preserved the local presence of pastoral care within the wider network of parishes in this part of Aachen. However, in terms of the architectural language of religion, the current disposition communicates a sense of ambiguity. The historically evolved visual experience suggests reading the large church as the worship space of one of the two major Christian denominations, rooted in centuries of doctrine and deeply embedded in social and urban systems of order. On the contrary, the present reality reveals this as the spatial dominance of a young congregation belonging to a relatively new church with an alternative interpretation of Christian teaching. At the same time, the Vineyard



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community's adoption of the former Catholic church contributes to maintaining a well-established architectural landmark in the neighbourhood, thereby helping to buffer the social and spatial transformation of contemporary urban society.⁶

Moreover, the coexistence of two congregations at a single location enhances the visibility of faith in the urban landscape. Here, two different catchment areas overlap: the Catholic parish whose members predominantly live within walking distance and a regional meeting point of a minority denomination, whose members likely commute from across the greater Aachen area. As a result, all worship and social activities are effectively doubled – bringing increased pedestrian and public transport traffic, as well as a higher demand for parking space.

The community of the Lutheran Melanchthon Church in Hannover (Lower Saxony) took a different approach to a similar challenge. Founded in 1955, the parish initially used an interim space until a building site and the necessary funding became available. Designed by Karl Heinz Lorey (1908–2001), the church – built on the plan of a Greek cross with a separate bell tower – was dedicated in 1961. **Fig. 5 | 6** Over the following decade, the parish complex was expanded to include a parish hall, a kindergarten, and a rectory, located to the west of the intersection of Rimpaustraße and Menschingstraße.⁷

Faced with rising maintenance and HVAC costs after the turn of the millennium, the community decided to address two issues simultaneously. It sold the rectory and parish hall, secured subsidies from public and religious institutions, and raised additional funds through parishioners' donations to prepare the parish for the future. Between 2009 and 2013, the church building underwent energy-efficient refurbishment and was simultaneously restructured to integrate the functions of the parish hall. The project was carried out by dreibund architekten (Bochum). **Fig. 7–9** Meeting rooms, offices and building services are now distributed across different levels in three arms of the cross-shaped layout. The sanctuary, located in the eastern arm and at the core of the building, remains dedicated to worship.⁸ Here, the congregation has replaced the traditional pews with a variety of different movable chairs, allowing for flexible spatial arrangement and easy inclusion of wheelchairs and baby carriages.

As in Aachen, this case of spatial adaptation did not compromise pastoral care within the parish. Unlike St. Martin, it did not significantly affect the architectural character of the neighbourhood, as the shape and function of the church remained unchanged, and the bell tower continues to dominate the intersection in front of the church. The only architectural change was the replacement of the parish hall with a larger building with owner-occupied flats. **Fig. 10**



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	5
The bell tower of the Melanchthon Church in Hannover, seen from the neighbourhood, 2019 (Beate Löffler).	
	6
View of the Melanchthon Church from the North, with the base of the bell tower at the right edge, 2019 (Beate Löffler).	
	7
Interior of the Melanchthon Church before refurbishment (© dreibund architekten).	
	8
Ground floor plan of the Melanchthon Church for the refurbishment (© dreibund architekten).	
	9
Interior of the Melanchthon Church after refurbishment (© dreibund architekten, Ph. Fabian Linden, Bochum)..	
	10
Satellite view of the neighbourhood in Hannover-Bult, with the church and the bell tower in the centre. The flat-roofed buildings in the west replace the former parish hall; the kindergarten adjoins to the south (© 2024 Geodaten des LGLN, dl-de/by-2-0).	

However, this case highlights a broader issue with many of the current conversions: the sale of real estate acquired during more prosperous times is a one-time solution to financial shortage. Within a few decades at most, questions of maintenance and refurbishment will require new answers.

At the same time, the sale of church-owned real estate to private owners affects the urban fabric by reducing shared public space. While church property is not public in a legal sense, the areas surrounding churches – such as church squares and graveyards – are commonly understood as shared spaces, held in trust by the parishes as part of the cultural heritage. If parishes feel compelled to relinquish buildings and retreat from the urban space, this shared commons is at risk of disappearing.

The two cases discussed – maintaining a parish on site by either relocating the church into the parish hall or the parish hall into the church – illustrate efforts to respond to declining memberships and financial resources. Other parishes have adopted different solutions, such as moving the kindergarten into the church or repurposing the refurbished space as housing for the elderly. Still others have abandoned certain locations entirely and established new structures for pastoral care.

These approaches require re-thinking the architectural embodiment of a contemporary parish centre – not only

in terms of architectural expression, but also in terms of communicating with and integration into the urban environment, as the following examples will demonstrate. Here, too, post-war structures form the background for architectural and spatial considerations.

The building of the Roman-Catholic Trinity Church in Leipzig (Saxony), dedicated in 2015, represents a special case in several aspects: it is the third new church built for the parish at a third location within just 160 years. Nevertheless, it serves to highlight the interaction between religious institutions and their buildings in the modern urban environment, as well as the often complex – and sometimes even contradictory – expectations placed upon them.⁹

In 1847, the Catholic minority in Leipzig – situated in the heartland of Protestantism – dedicated its first church since the Reformation, located in an urban expansion just outside the city centre. The freestanding Gothic Revival structure presided over a small town square but was severely damaged in World War II. While the parish prepared for its reconstruction, urban development plans – shaped by the ideas of a socialist city – envisioned the area being redeveloped with modern residential buildings and without a church.

After decades of temporary solutions, a new church was finally consecrated in 1982, several kilometers



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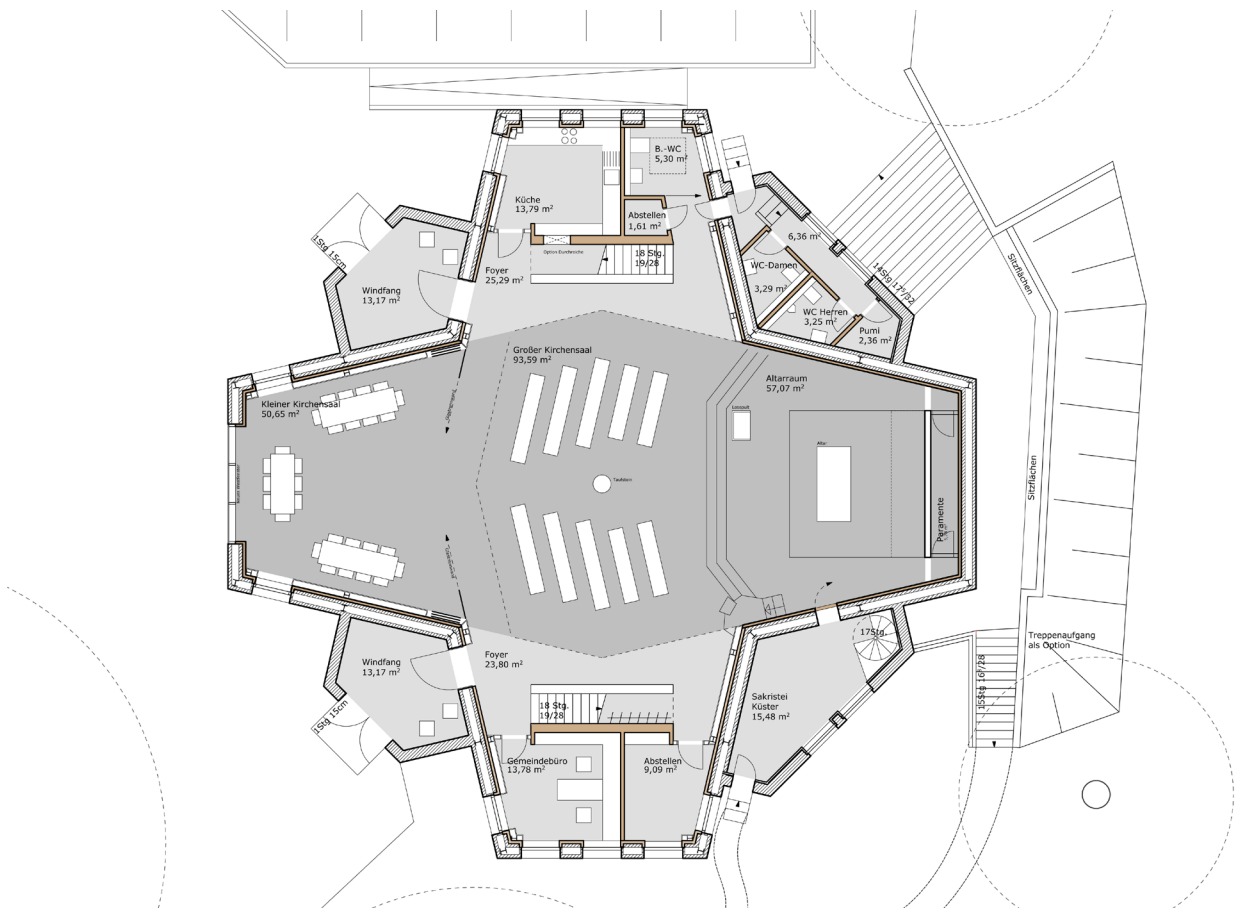


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northwest of the city centre. This was made possible through involvement in a building program financed by the West German churches. Designed by the Deutsche Bauakademie/Udo Schultz, the steel-frame structure employed a Brutalist-inspired architectural language and formed an ensemble with the community centre and rectory. The complex engaged with the surrounding streetscape through a freestanding bell tower.

However, the complex suffered from structural issues due to a faulty foundation, which required ongoing maintenance. As a result, in 2003, the parish decided to build a new church, selecting a triangular plot near the site of the original church, directly opposite the defining southern façade of the New Town Hall. **Fig. 11** By doing so, the new church became part of the urban reorganization of the area and was intended to make a formative contribution to its future development.¹⁰

The call for the architectural competition used the parish's history to frame the project as a new beginning for a lively and growing community. Beyond fulfilling liturgical, social, and practical functions, the new church was expected to symbolize a revival of the Catholic faith in Germany. The subsequent public discourses reflected these ambitions but also introduced additional perspectives. Some contributors discussed the architectural and historical value of the 1982 church or questioned the necessity of constructing a new church building at all, given the very low number of

active churchgoers. Others viewed a church building as an essential architectural element for the aesthetic and social revitalization of the proposed area, while still others emphasized the need to deconstruct the historical symbols of power traditionally embodied in church architecture.¹¹

This discussion highlights how church buildings – and the practice of church building – exist at the intersection of private and public, religious and secular interests. All the factors mentioned here, alongside the specific concerns of liturgy and pastoral care within the faith itself, are equally relevant to other instances of change in the religious topography. However, they are rarely as visible as in the flagship project of Trinity Church in Leipzig, where debates about the broader context at times appeared to overshadow the architectural question at hand: the new parish centre.

The architectural firm Schulz und Schulz (Leipzig) won the international competition in 2009 and was awarded the commission. The different parts of the parish centre remain spatially separate, yet come together to form a unified building block clad in red porphyry – robust enough to withstand both the dynamic of the urban environment at the intersection of busy streets and the imposing volume of the New Town Hall beyond. **Figg. 12 | 13**

The comparatively low parish hall mediates between the two vertical elements on the site – the church to the east and the bell tower to the west. The key feature, however, is



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11
Orthophoto of the area around Trinity Church in Leipzig, with the parish church in the centre, the bell tower in the west, and the worship space to the east. To the north is the New Town Hall; to the south and east the areas that have not yet been rebuilt (GeoSN, dl-de/by-2-0).

12
Ground floor plan of Trinity Church in Leipzig
(© Schulz und Schulz).

13
First floor plan of Trinity Church in Leipzig
(© Schulz und Schulz).

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View of Trinity Church in Leipzig from the northeast, 2020
(Beate Löffler).

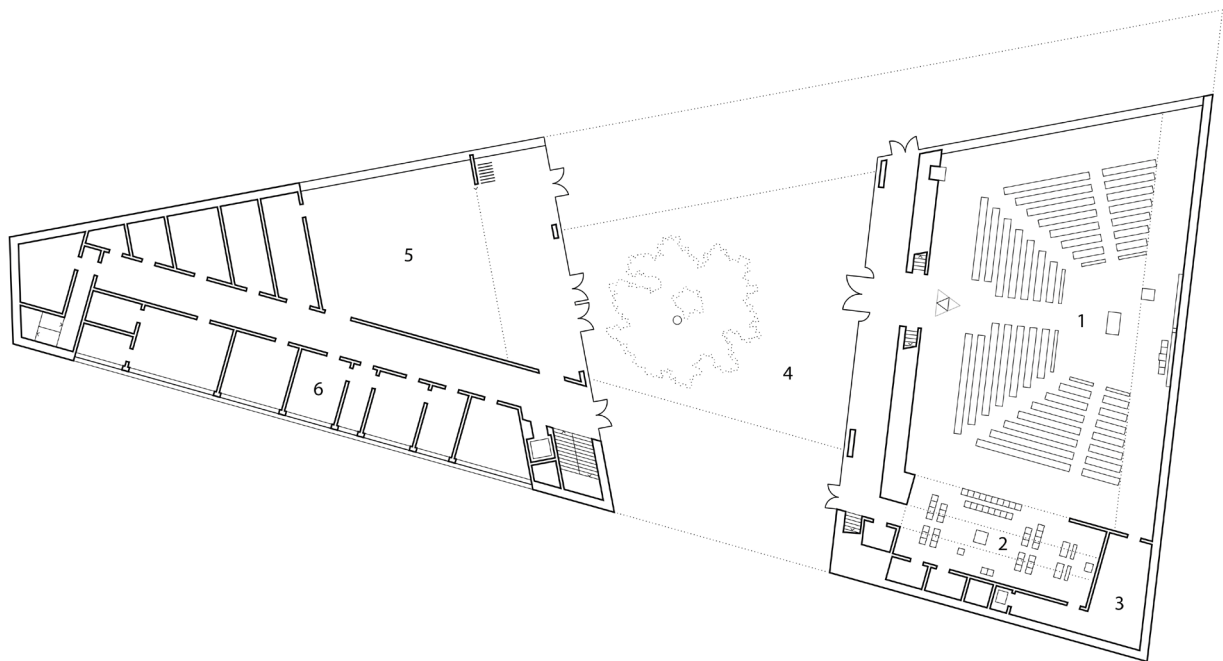
15
Transition from the urban space to the church courtyard of Trinity Church, 2020 (© Dunja Sharbat Dar).

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Visual connection from the courtyard of Trinity Church to the New Town Hall, 2020 (Beate Löffler).

a small square situated between the hall and the church, which simultaneously opens the complex to the city and defines its boundaries. This space enables cross-access through the building block, provides entry to both church and parish facilities, and offers a space for gathering, whether in activity or quiet reflection.¹² **Fig. 14–16**

In this way, the parish centre echoes the traditional role of the church square: serving as a hub of social activities while remaining somewhat removed from the routines of everyday urban activity. It remains to be seen to what extent the religious and social initiatives of the Trinity parish and the neighbouring Catholic institutions will shape the evolving fabric of the emerging area in the long run. For now, the parish centre provides a strong yet discreet architectural contribution.

The community of the Lutheran Church of Salvation in Cologne-Weidenpesch (North Rhine-Westphalia) developed a similar response to that of the Trinity parish, aiming to unite two parish centres – albeit with a different spatial expression. The Protestant minority in Cologne expanded rapidly in the 19th century, and the industrial settlements in the surrounding area further encouraged the influx of people from other denominations. In 1889, the first Lutheran church in the northern district of Nippes was dedicated: a representative Gothic Revival structure serving a large catchment area. Over time, the congregation split, and



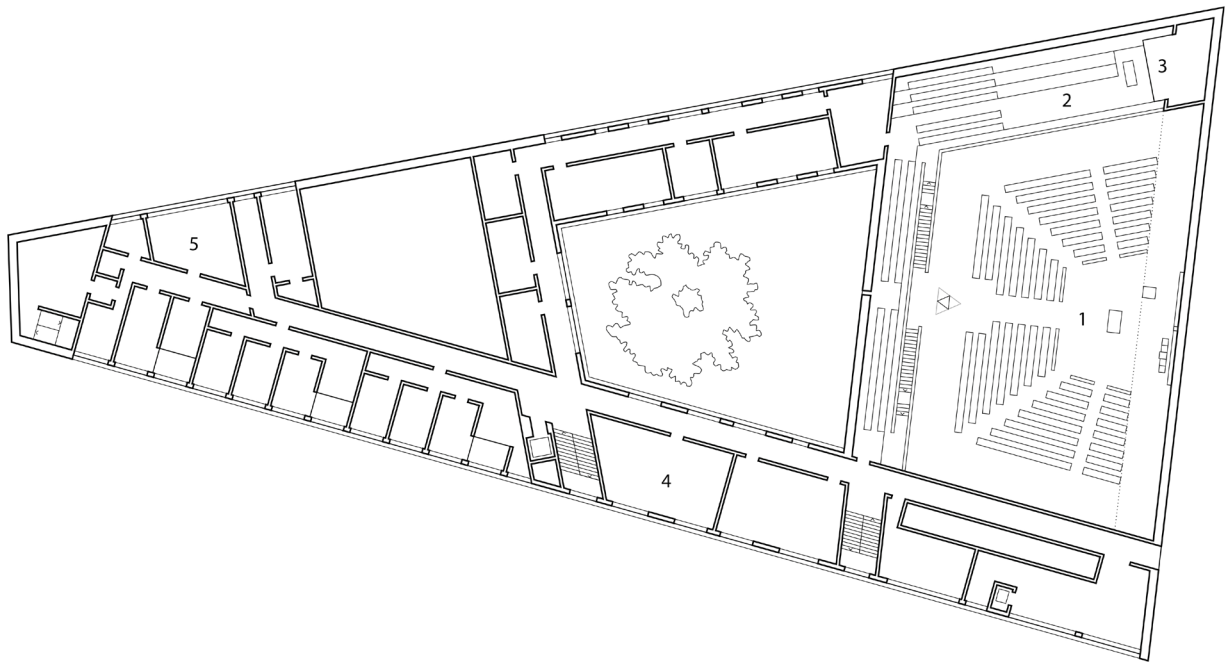
Erdgeschoss 1:500

- 1 Kirchenraum
- 2 Werktagsskapelle
- 3 Sakristei
- 4 Pfarrhof
- 5 Gemeindesaal
- 6 Gemeindebüros



SCHULZ & SCHULZ

PROPSTEIKIRCHE LEIPZIG



Obergeschoss 1:500

- 1 Luftraum Kirchenraum
- 2 Chor
- 3 Orgel
- 4 Unterrichtsräume
- 5 Priesterwohnungen



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PROPSTEIKIRCHE LEIPZIG



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View of Salvation Church Cologne-Weidenpesch, 2011 (© Christoph Stein, Köln).	17
View of Philipp Nicolai Church Cologne-Mauenheim, 2018 (© Christoph Stein, Köln).	18
View of the new Church of Salvation Cologne-Weidenpesch, 2023 (Chris06, CC-BY-SA-4.0, Wikimedia Commons).	19
Ground floor plan of the new Church of Salvation Cologne- Weidenpesch (© Harris + Kurrle Architekten).	20
Section of the new Church of Salvation Cologne-Weidenpesch (© Harris + Kurrle Architekten).	21
Orthophoto of the area around the new church (centre) showing the residential character (Geobasis NRW, dl-de/by-2-0).	22

new parishes emerged to take on pastoral care in their respective neighbourhoods, eventually gaining the means to build their own churches.

In 1951, the Church of Salvation was dedicated, a simple hall church with steeply pitched roof, designed and built by Gottfried Tucholski (1917–1973) und Karl Köhler (1909–after 1970).¹³ A decade later, the neighbouring community in Mauenheim secured a suitable site and commissioned Werner Haupt (1914–1973) to design a parish centre. The Philipp Nicolai Church, a hall structure with indented choir, along with the accompanying buildings, was inaugurated in 1965.¹⁴ **Fig. 17 | 18**

As early as 1982, the two parishes joined forces while keeping both sites fully operational.¹⁵ However, a reassessment of functions and spaces was only a matter of time, as the upkeep of the buildings required increased attention. In 2015, an architectural competition was launched to gather ideas for reorganizing parish activities at the Derfflingerstraße location, with the entire Philipp Nicolai Church complex on Nibelungenstraße – comprising the church, bell tower, parish hall, rectory, staff housing, and kindergarten – set to be decommissioned.

While the refurbishment of the old Church of Salvation remained an option during the competition, the winning office of Harris + Kurrle Architekten (Stuttgart) opted for

a new approach: a highly condensed arrangement of functions, with volumes stacked and interwoven both vertically and horizontally.¹⁶

In 2018, the congregation bid farewell to the old church in Derfflingerstrasse and temporarily relocated to the Philipp Nicolai Church for the duration of the demolition and new construction. Four years later, the new parish centre was dedicated, adorned with memorabilia from both former parish churches. In the same year, the parish buildings on Nibelungenstraße were profaned and subsequently replaced by residential structures.¹⁷

The new building accommodates the church, parish hall, parish administration, apartments, and kindergarten in a relatively small area. In contrast to the Trinity Church in Leipzig, which adopts a neighbourhood-like ensemble of separate volumes, Harris + Kurrle have taken a vertical approach, creating a single structure in which the various functions are interwoven yet clearly distinct.¹⁸ The compact building with church and parish hall at its core, has been described by some observers as “fortress church,” due to its castle-like appearance – marked by the bell tower, the residential wing, and the stone-faced exterior.¹⁹ **Fig. 19–21**

At the same time, despite its substantial volume, the complex does not dominate the surrounding area. Instead, it helps define the transitional space between older and

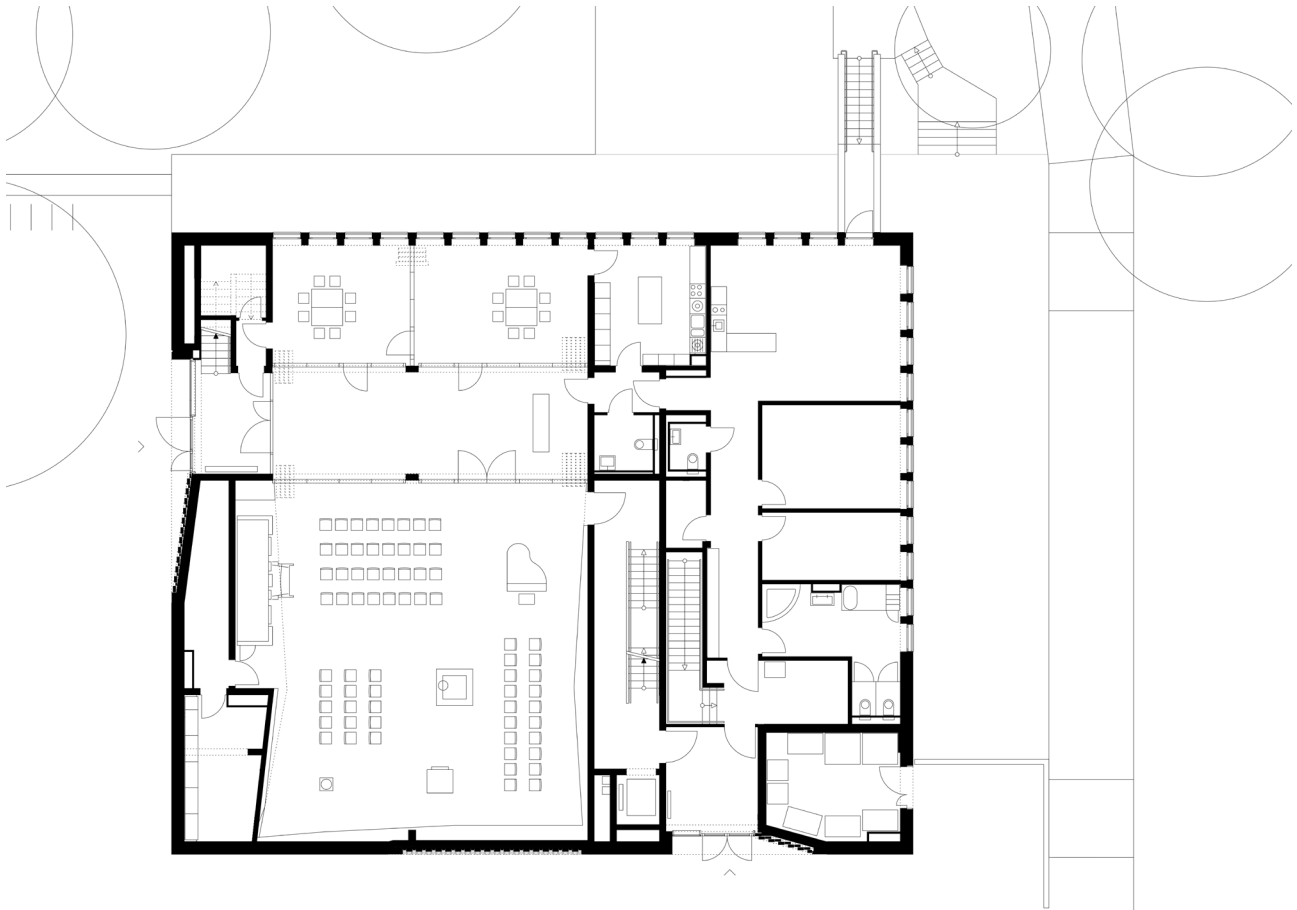


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newer residential buildings, while providing inviting areas for people to gather and linger beyond the strictly religious functions of the parish. **Fig. 22**

The reorganization of the parish centres in Weidenpesch and Mauenheim entailed a reduction in the urban presence of a large Christian church. Here, too, urban commons ultimately became private, although the parish, as a building owner, continues to be present as a social actor. At the same time, this case highlights two more important issues. First, the role of the community and its leadership in managing such changes transparently, allowing a balance between mourning what is lost and embracing new beginnings. Second, the role of architecture in facilitating discussions about spaces and forms of a religious community amid the ongoing changes brought about by religious diversification today.

Here, the public discourse remained largely local and is therefore more representative of the typical transformations observed in the overall data of the research project than the processes surrounding Trinity Church in Leipzig. Nevertheless, both examples contribute valuable insights into the ongoing changes in the sacred topography of Germany.

Faith transcends space and time and can be confirmed and renewed at any moment through prayer and worship, whereas church buildings and parish centres remain

subject to the immutable laws of physics, maintenance and real estate markets. The four parishes discussed above each found different approaches to address this challenge – balancing changing needs and possibilities arising both from within the parish and from broader society. Their solutions suggest that a parish centre, with its spatial and architectural characteristics, should not be seen as fixed in function or form. Rather, these buildings are capable of conceptual fluidity, accommodating the complex social and religious roles of a parish independently of their originally intended architectural design or typology, while reflecting the wider context of the urban environment and local community.

The cases discussed here, and even more so the many additional examples in our data sets, underline that the separation of church and parish hall is a modern concept with significant functional meaning, but not necessarily an architectural one. Shrinking communities might reintegrate the functions of worship, parish life and even caritas into a single building. Others opt to replace their buildings with separate functions arranged in spatial relation to one another and their surroundings, thereby ensuring great flexibility of use.

Heritage law and custom often protect existing church buildings, while kindergartens are integrated into broader social frameworks and are similarly limited. As a result,



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parish halls and rectories become the spaces where functions and uses can be most readily negotiated – especially when a congregation is no longer able or willing to maintain *the status quo*.

Some research as well as conference papers in Germany point to a closing of ranks within congregations – a retreat behind the walls of the parish centre to tend to the wounds inflicted by the loss of social significance. Others underline efforts to create spaces for urban activity where parish and neighbourhood can intermingle, fostering a sense of local belonging that transcends faith, parish and social responsibility – especially through the designs of new buildings.

In any case, the complex and often-contradictory demands placed on parish centres – both architecturally and socially – remain a subject of ongoing research. This is especially true for post-war complexes, which are still rarely acknowledged in terms of their architectural value and spatial potential. Parishes that seek to remain connected to their urban environment face new responsibilities, akin to those of religious minorities striving to find places for their presence today.

As theorists and practitioners, we are thus called to move beyond a focus on Christian churches alone, to recognize the role of religious communities for the urban structure – both structurally and socially – and to support their efforts in fostering urban coexistence.

¹ The project was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) between 2018 and 2022. Headed by Wolfgang Sonne (Dortmund) and Volkhard Krech (Bochum), the team included Kim de Wildt, Dunja Sharbat Dar, Martin Radermacher, Julia Poganski (Bochum) and Carlotta Esser, Beate Löffler (Dortmund). For an overview about research questions, data and insights see Beate Löffler and Dunja Sharbat Dar, eds., *Sakralität im Wandel: Religiöse Bauten im Stadtraum des 21. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Jovis, 2022). At the end of the survey in 2021, the database comprised 1517 buildings, 771 locations, 392 organisations and 548 people, with a strong bias in favour of various processes affecting Christian churches due to the research question, the current state of research and the epistemic interest.

² The address of the church building is Liebigstraße 10, the parish hall is located at Heinrich-Hollands-Straße 6, 52070 Aachen.

³ Martin Bredenbeck, *Die Zukunft von Sakralbauten im Rheinland. Katalog* (Schnell und Steiner, 2012), 33–4; "Wir über Uns. Chronik," Gemeinde St. Martin Aachen, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://st-martin-aachen.de/wir-ueber-uns/st-martin-geschichte/chronik/>.

⁴ "Die Geschichte der Vineyard Aachen," Vineyard Aachen, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.vineyard-aachen.de/ueber-uns/die-vineyard-aachen/>.

⁵ Bredenbeck, *Die Zukunft*, 33–4; "Wir über Uns."

⁶ Processes of adopting church buildings by other Christian denominations are quite common and rarely raise public attention. The phenomenon is understudied yet consequential for the transformation of urban context towards addressing a multi-faith society.

⁷ Address of the church is Menschingstraße 12, the kindergarten is located at Rimpaustraße 4, 30173 Hannover; "Melanchthonkirche und das zugehörige Gemeindezentrum in der Menschingstraße," in *Wiederaufbau und Zerstörung; die Stadt im Umgang mit ihrer bauhistorischen Identität*, 2nd rev. ed. (Schlüter, 2001), 331; Wolfgang Puschmann, ed., *Hannovers Kirchen. 140 Kirchen in Stadt und Umland* (Ev.-Luth. Stadtkirchenverband Hannover, 2005), 94; Karl-Heinz Lorey, "Die Bauten des Gemeindezentrums," in *Melanchthon auf der Bult. Eine Kirchengemeinde und ihr Stadtteil*, ed. Melanchthon-Gemeinde Hannover (Melanchthon-Gemeinde, 1997), 60–3.

⁸ "Kirchenvorstand," Melanchthon-Gemeinde Hannover-Bult, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.melanchthon-hannover.de/kirchenvorstand/>; "Umbau Melanchthonkirche," dreibund architekten, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.dreibund-architekten.de/kopie-von-266-gemeindezentrum-st-to>.

⁹ Beate Löffler and Dunja Sharbat Dar, "Propsteikirche St. Trinitatis, Leipzig," in *Sakralität*, 133–51.

¹⁰ Löffler and Sharbat Dar, "Propsteikirche," 137–38.

¹¹ Löffler and Sharbat Dar, "Propsteikirche," 139, 143–44.

¹² "Katholische Propsteikirche St. Trinitatis," Schulz und Schulz Architekten GmbH, accessed May 12, 2024, <https://schulz-und-schulz.com/projekte/katholische-propsteikirche-st-trinitatis-leipzig/>.

¹³ The address of the church building is Derfflingerstraße 9, 50737 Köln. In 1951 the church belonged to Merheim (linksrheinisch), today to Weidenpesch; "Über Uns," Evangelische Begegnungsgemeinde Köln, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://begegnungsgemeinde.de/geschichte-der-gemeinde/>; Wolfram Hagspiel, *Lexikon der Kölner Architekten vom Mittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, 3 vols. (Böhlau, 2022), 2, 302–03, 3, 589.

¹⁴ The address of the church building was Nibelungenstraße 62, 50739 Köln, while further buildings of the parish centre had separate numbers between 50 and 58; "Über Uns," Hagspiel, *Lexikon*, 2, 48.

¹⁵ Hans-Willi Hermans, "Veränderungen in Mauenheim und Weidenpesch," *Evangelischer Kirchenverband Köln und Region*, December 23, 2016, <https://www.kirche-koeln.de/veraenderungen-in-mauenheim-und-weidenpesch/>.

¹⁶ "Church Complex Derfflingerstraße, Cologne," *Wettbewerbe aktuell* 5 (2015): 63–6.

¹⁷ Bernd Schöneck, "Aus für Erlöserkirche in Köln-Weidenpesch," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, July 24, 2018, <https://www.ksta.de/koeln/nippes/abschiedsfest-von-einer-kirche-aus-fuer-erloeserkirche-in-koeln-weidenpesch-127120>.

¹⁸ "Kirchenstandort Köln," Harris + Kurrle Architekten BDA Partnerschaft mbB, accessed May 12, 2024, <https://www.harris-kurrle.de/projekte/kirchenstandort-koeln>.

¹⁹ See e.g. "Eine feste Burg in Köln. Kirchenzentrum von harris + kurrle," *BauNetz*, April 17, 2023, https://www.baunetz.de/meldungen/Meldungen-Kirchenzentrum_von_harris_kurrle_8203551.html. See as well Stefan Rahmann, "Neue Erlöserkirche in Köln-Weidenpesch eröffnet," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, November 29, 2022, <https://www.ksta.de/koeln/nippes/weidenpesch/koeln-zukunftsprojekt-neue-erloeserkirche-in-weidenpesch-eroeffnet-374458>.

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Le strutture parrocchiali e l'ambiente urbano considerati spazialmente

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KEYWORDS

trasformazione; chiesa; centro parrocchiale; spazio sociale; spazio architettonico

ABSTRACT

La topografia religiosa delle città tedesche si diversifica sia in termini di spazi sociali per la fede sia di presenza architettonica delle diverse religioni e confessioni. Ciò sfida le congregazioni cristiane consolidate a preservare i luoghi architettonici e gli spazi con connotazioni cristiane, e, allo stesso tempo, a progredire nell'interazione interreligiosa con la città e la società.

L'articolo riassume e discute alcuni risultati di un progetto di ricerca recentemente concluso. Sintetizzando dati quantitativi e qualitativi, analizza le chiese che sono state soggette a cambiamenti formali o della destinazione d'uso negli ultimi decenni. Nei casi di studio selezionati, le modifiche al design degli interni da un lato, e l'abbandono e la demolizione degli edifici dall'altro, hanno evidenziato un'ampia varietà di approcci per bilanciare le esigenze spaziali e sociali delle congregazioni.

Nello specifico, sono qui presentati quattro casi di riorganizzazione delle funzioni parrocchiali dal punto di vista spaziale e architettonico. In tutti e quattro, le comunità si trovano ad affrontare sia la manutenzione di strutture risalenti al secondo dopoguerra che la diminuzione dei finanziamenti e della partecipazione dei fedeli. Le diverse soluzioni scelte permettono di discutere il ruolo dei centri parrocchiali anche al di là delle sole questioni architettoniche, nel quadro più ampio del contesto urbano e delle reti sociali.

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