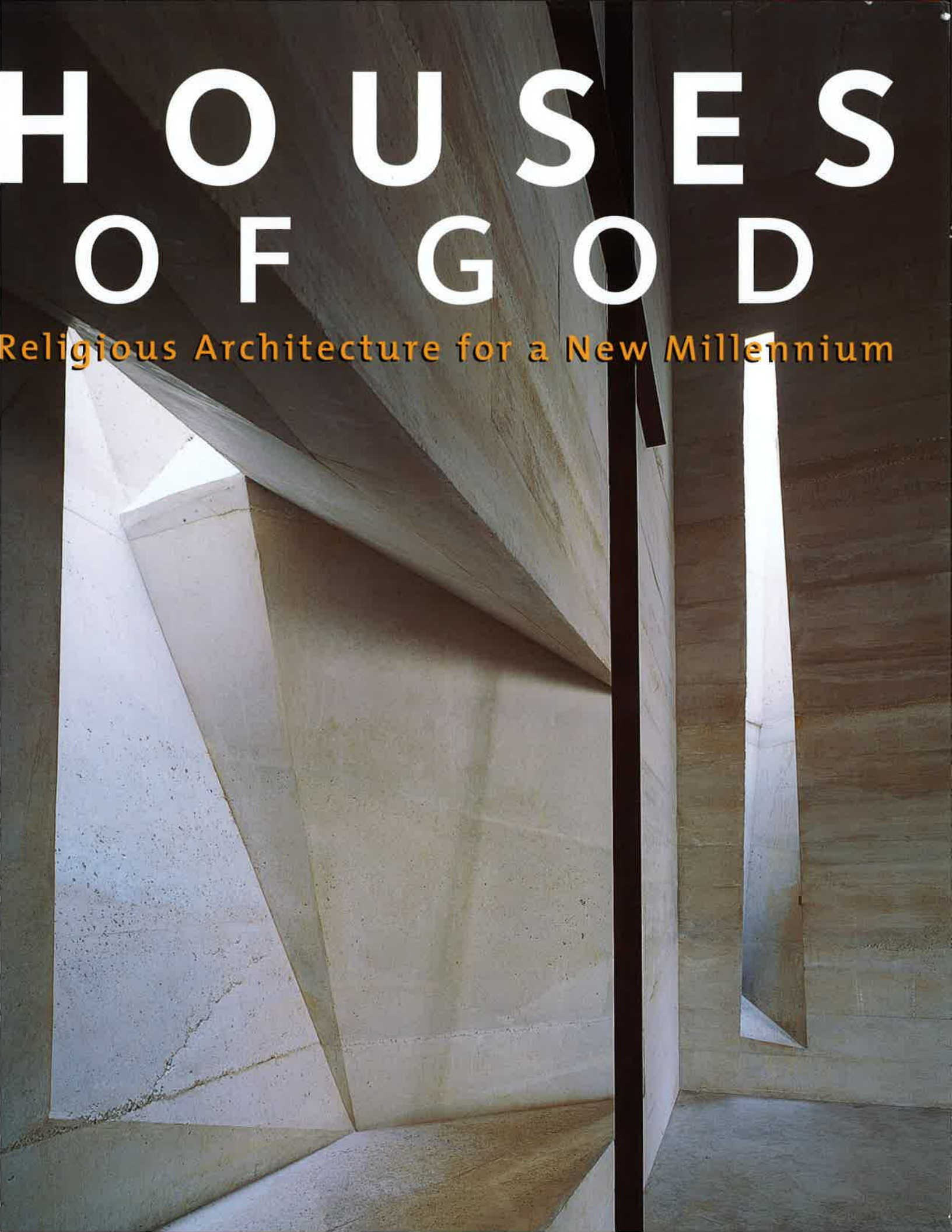


HOUSES OF GOD

Religious Architecture for a New Millennium



Tzemach Dovid Synagogue

Arcari & Iovino Architects

This small neighborhood synagogue for a congregation of 100 persons is located on the edge of a residential neighborhood in Teaneck, New Jersey. The residential structures in this community originate from the 1920s and 1930s, and are a mix of Craftsman and Tudor styles. Typical lot sizes are 50 by 100 feet, as is this site.

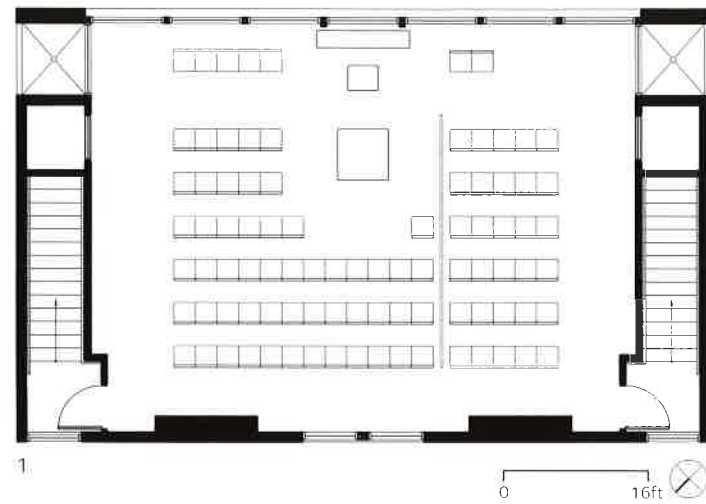
While the site alone would dictate that the resolution fit the scale of the neighborhood, the design challenge was to create a structure that reflected the character of the surrounding houses to appease the local zoning board, yet compose a building that was clearly not a house.

The client's program called for three primary spaces: worship, study, and gathering. Within the worship area there was to be ample yet controlled natural light with a visual separation from the busy street outside.

The solution evolved as a structure with three floors. By creating a sub-grade level for the study, which also serves as a play area for the youngest visitors, a zoning limitation of two stories above grade was met. The gathering space is entered at grade via front and rear entrances. The main and sub-grade levels allow the worship space to occupy the entire upper floor.

The building volume is clad in three basic materials: brick, metal, and stucco. The composition of these three, together with the thoughtful use of solids and voids, results in a form that reflects the programmatic elements inside. Converging shed roof lines at the stair towers and worship space emulate the "sloped-roof" character of the neighborhood while clearly being unique to this location.

The interiors are intentionally sparse in aesthetic quality. The clean lines of the walls and directed views outward and upward toward the mature trees create an interesting backdrop for the services.



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1 Sanctuary level plan

2 Interior allows views up to mature trees

Opposite

Synagogue's compact form on small lot

