

# GREATER MT. BAKER BAPTIST CHURCH

CHAPTER EXCERPTED FROM:

## BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY

ENVISIONING  
THRIVING FUTURES  
FOR BLACK CHURCHES IN  
SEATTLE'S CENTRAL DISTRICT

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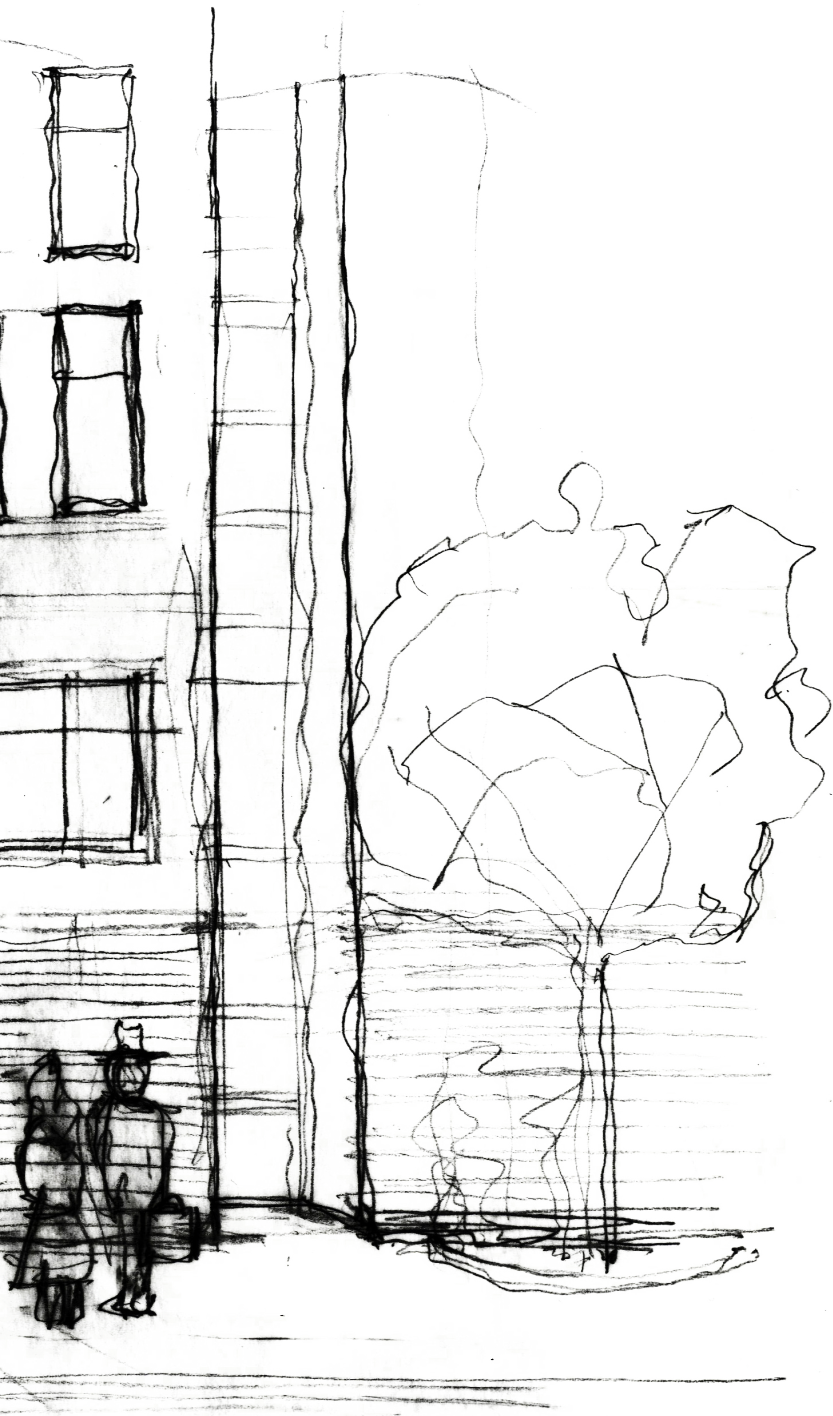


# GREATER MT. BAKER BAPTIST CHURCH



*Envisioning the new church building with an active street, and apartment housing behind*





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## GREATER MT. BAKER BAPTIST CHURCH

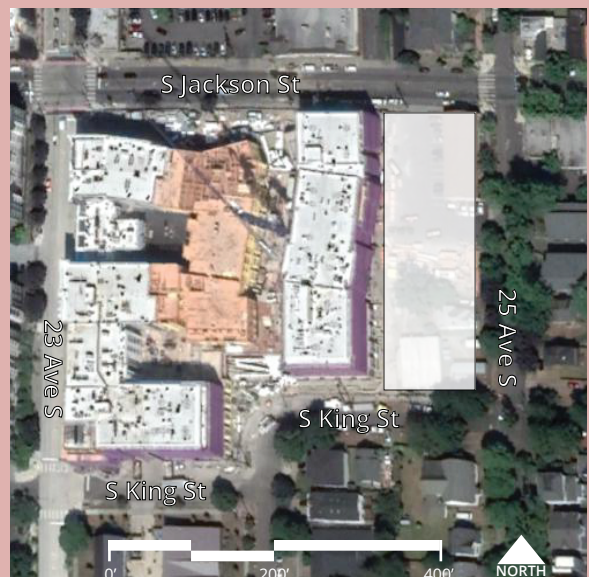
2425 S Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98144

Pastor Kenneth J. Ransfer, Sr.

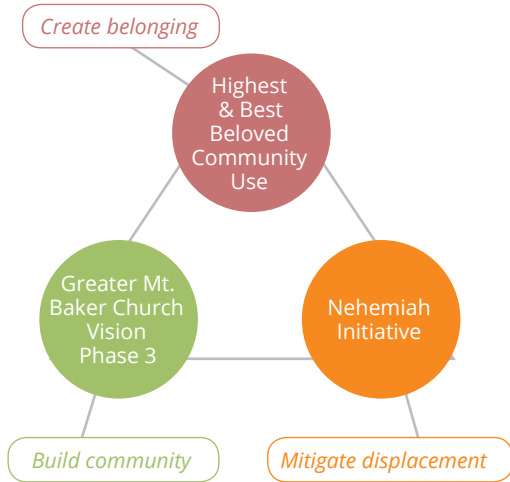
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### ***Designing for a Community Here to Stay***

Greater Mt. Baker Baptist Church began a visioning process in the 1990s, which brought the church in 2019 to consider how best to redevelop its property. The church wants to mitigate displacement, create belonging, and develop community. As part of one of Seattle's urban villages. Mt. Baker has a locational advantage. Because of this, redevelopment of the church site can accommodate affordable housing units and support community and arts events along with ongoing church activities.



Mt. Baker Baptist Church Site GOOGLE EARTH



Three sets of guiding values contribute to Mt. Baker's project vision

## SITE & PROPERTY CONDITIONS PROJECT VISION

Greater Mt. Baker Baptist Church began a visioning process in the 1990s, which brought the church in 2019 to the point of readiness to consider how best to redevelop their church site. During the studio, the vision and values were honed to reflect the following:

- Mitigate displacement through the Nehemiah Initiative
- Create belonging through Beloved Community
- Develop community through Greater Mt. Baker Church Vision Phase 3

The team's concept and response became:



## DESIRED PROGRAMMING

1. Replace or renovate the church
2. Create affordable housing
3. Provide food bank and homeless services
4. Provide parking for congregants
5. Offer education and youth programs
6. Host community events such as weddings and funerals
7. Provide meeting spaces
8. Host arts and cultural events

## THE SITE

Greater Mt. Baker Baptist Church is located on S Jackson St, near the corner of S Jackson St & 23rd Ave S. Historically, Jackson St has been a major cultural hub and a center of African American culture in Seattle. The site is located in a neighborhood commercial zone with enhanced pedestrian focus and it borders a low-rise multi-family area with apartments and single-family homes. The area is home to parks, schools, museums, and a library and is in close proximity to transit. Next door is a new Vulcan development.

Mt. Baker owns two properties. Site A is located at the corner of S Jackson St & 25th Ave S; Site B is located directly south of A, along 25th Ave S. The surrounding area is part of a Residential Urban Village, and part of the 23rd Avenue Union-Cherry-Jackson Action Plan.



Elements for a new Mt. Baker design



## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

### Neighborhood Strategic Plan

- Race and Social Equity
- Culture
- Mobility

### Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines

- Interior Use
- Facade
- Movement/Street

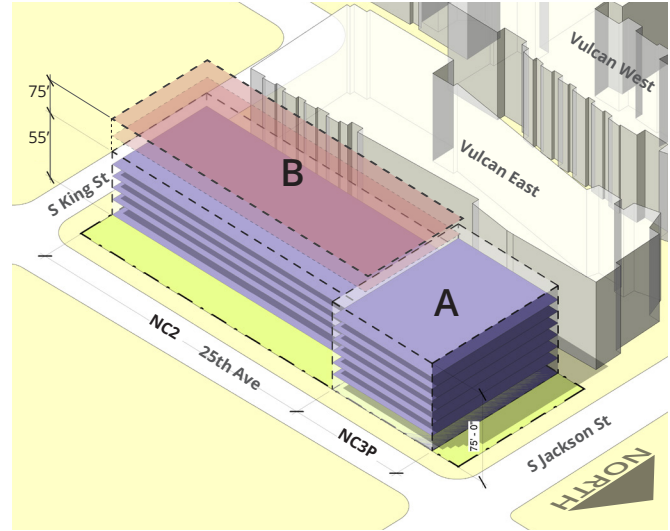
## ZONING

### Zoning Regulations

- Upzoning
- Setbacks/Height
- Floor Area Ratio

### Proposed Upzone for site B

We proposed an upzone for Site B to match site A, moving B from 55 feet to 75 feet in height. The added height is in keeping with the Vulcan development’s size next door, and would better allow the team to fulfill the client’s wishes of maximizing housing on site.



A	B	B
NC-3P	NC-2	NC-3P
(current zoning)	(current zoning)	(if upzoned)
Max Ht: 75 Ft	Max Ht: 55 Ft	Max Ht: 75 Ft
Max FAR: 5.5	Max FAR: 3.75	Max FAR: 5.5
Max SqFt: 79,200	Max SqFt: 108,000	Max SqFt: 158,400

*Allowable maximum building envelope under current zoning versus with proposed upzone. An upzone of Site B to match Site A’s NC-3P zoning (75 ft height allowance and pedestrian zone) would match neighboring buildings.*

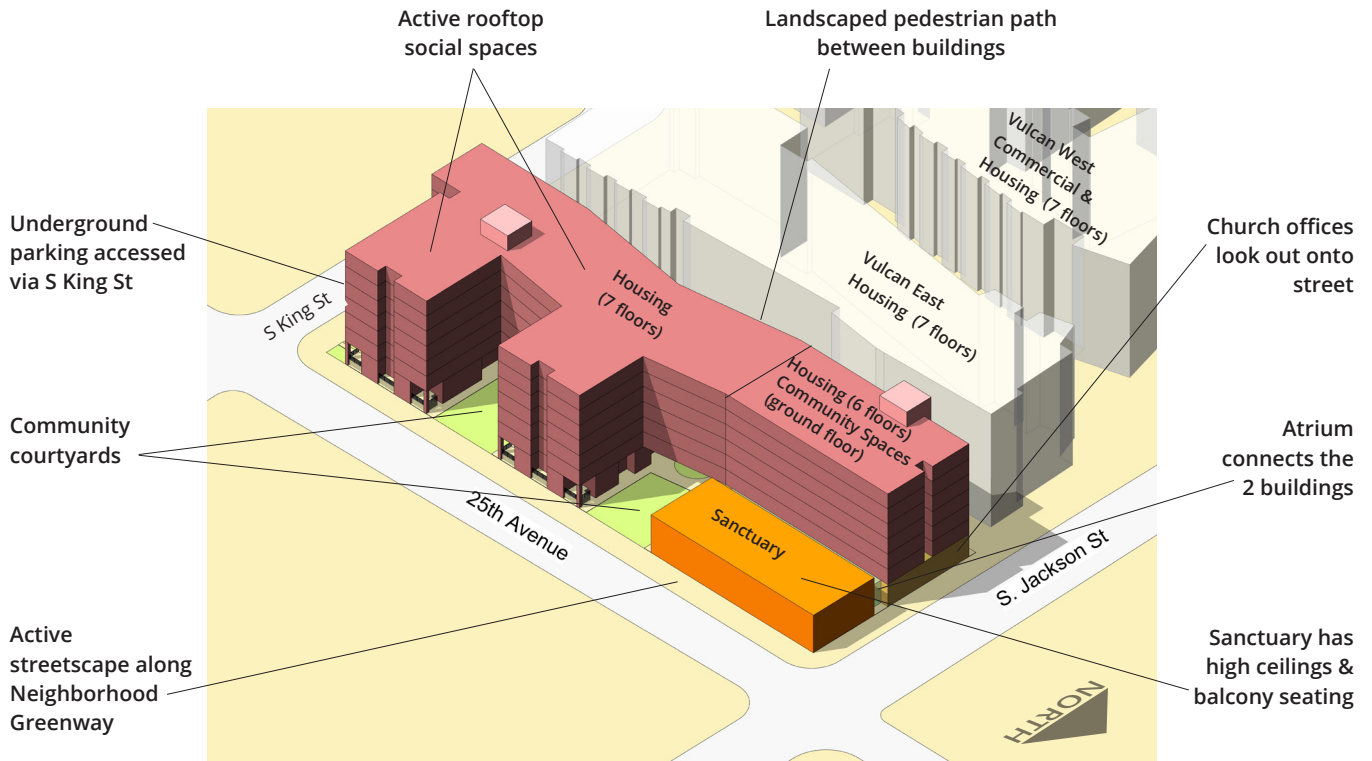
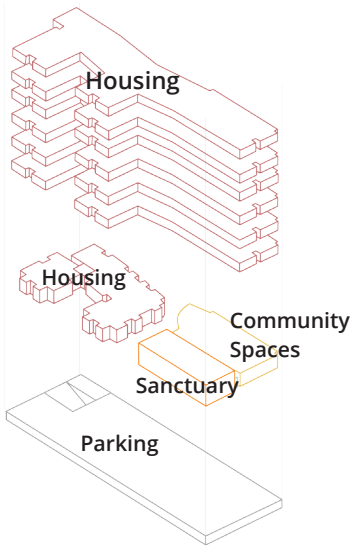
## APPLYING NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

Interior / Use	Exterior / Facade	Mobility / Street
Family-size Apartments	Weather Protection	Multi-generational Spaces
Grade level Businesses	Porches & Stoops	Play Areas
Common Areas	Urban Farming	Neighborhood Nodes (corner church)
Ground Plane	Active Frontage & Frequent Entrances	Ample & Protected Sidewalks
Art Expression	Transparency	Bicycle Parking
	Setbacks	Landscape Buffers
	Art Expression	Landscaping
	Usable Rooftops	

The Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines (CANDG), adopted in 2018, help ensure that development suits local context and needs. Seattle’s Central District is growing rapidly. New development especially affects existing small businesses and residents. The CANDG direct neighborhood investment by suggesting uses, architecture, and site design and mobility options.

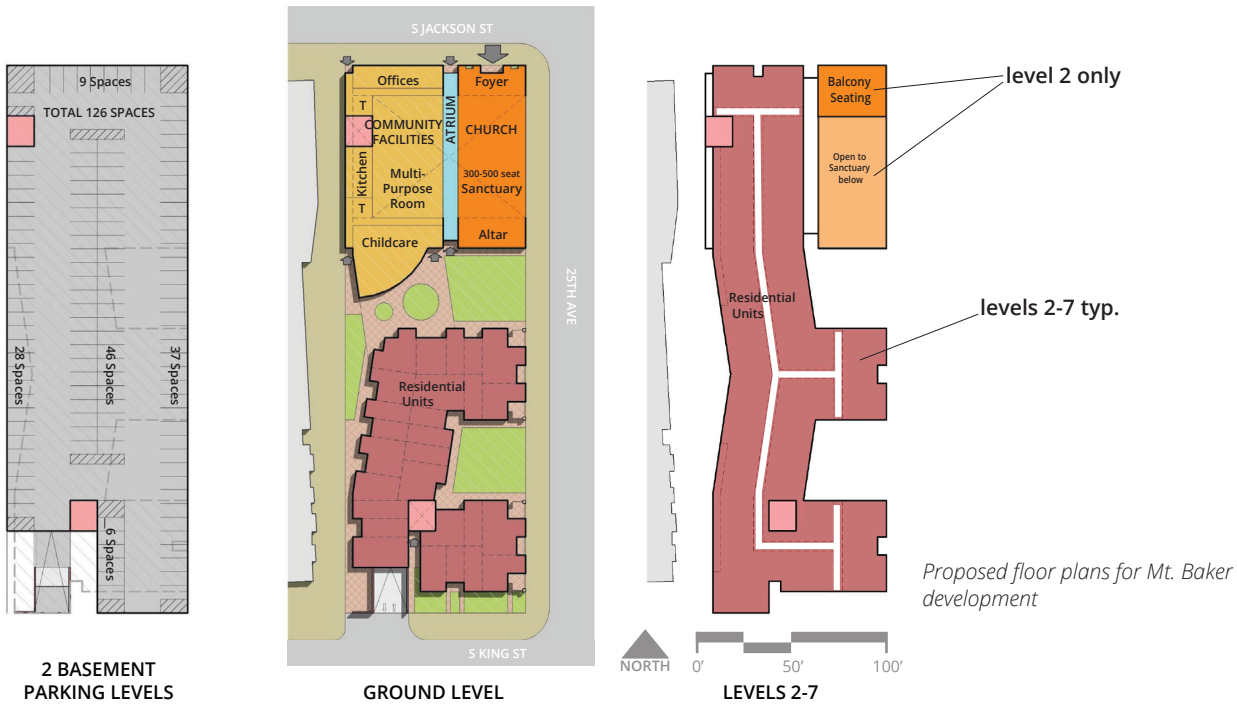
# PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

The essential action in this proposal is to place the new sanctuary in its historical location and footprint on a prominent corner along the S Jackson St corridor, at 25th Ave S. As a sacred space, the sanctuary is freestanding, and has no development proposed above it, despite the zoning to do so. This decision maintains the church's legacy and tradition on S Jackson St and ensures excellent visibility and accessibility. To help connect the church offices and sanctuary to S Jackson St, we promote transparency in the form of building material choices and window placements, and framed views in and out of the site along the atrium. The main entrances will be highlighted by color and material differentiation to activate the streetscape. The sanctuary is connected on the south to a church and community green space and on the west to childcare, office, and community spaces in the new apartment building. In response to client goals, we developed 301 units of apartment housing for seniors and others. Other project highlights include a second green space for the apartment residents and a green roof. We also proposed using 25th Ave S at select times as a play street or festival street.



Massing diagram of the proposed Mt. Baker development showing the sanctuary (orange), open spaces (green), and apartment building (pink) (viewed from the corner of S Jackson St & 25th Ave S looking SW).





## PROGRAM

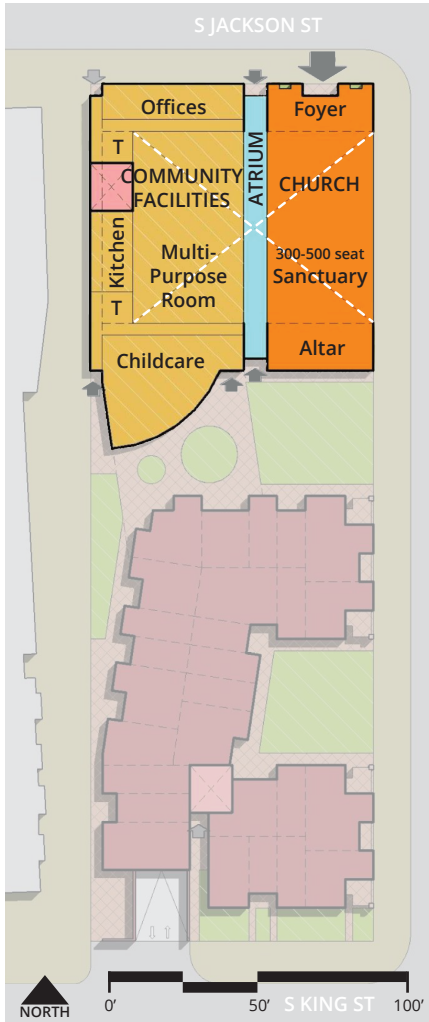
The first floor (ground level) has direct sidewalk access. It includes the sanctuary, church offices, classroom/childcare room, and community spaces in the northern part of the site and residential units in the south. Floors two through seven are apartments served by a double-loaded corridor (apartments on both sides of the hallway). The basement floor provides 126 underground parking stalls, accessible by vehicle from S King St, and by stairs or elevator at two locations in the building. The pink squares represent vertical circulation cores containing the elevators and stairs.

The apartment building design responds to the Vulcan development on the west by creating front porches and building's overall shape. On the east side, the building design meets the lower-density part of the neighborhood with two green open spaces. The open spaces are primary sources of green space for congregants and residents and connect to the secondary open spaces of the sidewalk and 25th Ave S, a low-volume street.

*Desired project uses and their projected sizes*

## SPATIAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Use	Square Footage	Units
Indoor-Total Floor Area	195,685 SF	
Church Sanctuary	6,885 SF	
Community Spaces	9,800 SF	
Multi-purpose Room	3,760 SF	
Classroom/ Preschool	2,030 SF	
Event Space / Restrooms/ Circulation	2,600 SF	
Admin / Offices	800 SF	
Kitchen	610 SF	
<b>Residential</b>	<b>178,960 SF</b>	<b>301 units</b>
Studio	432 SF/unit	237 units
One-Bedroom	612 SF/unit	48 units
Two-Bedroom	900 SF/unit	16 units
Outdoor spaces		
Parking	43,200 SF	126 stalls
Landscaped	12,600 SF	
Green Roof	5,400 SF	

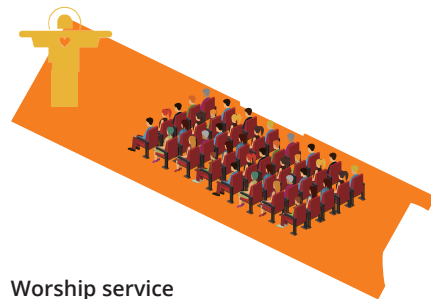


Ground floor plan showing sacred and community spaces

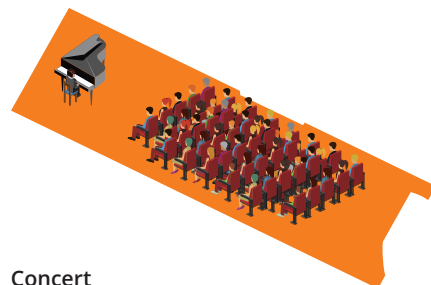
## SACRED SPACE

One can enter the sanctuary (shown in orange) via a foyer directly from the S Jackson St sidewalk, or through an atrium space (shown in blue) that links the sanctuary with the church community space. The south end of the sanctuary contains the altar, beyond which lies the church green open space. A balcony in the sanctuary increases seating capacity, allowing for 300-500 seats. The church offices are located directly off the S Jackson St sidewalk. In addition to the sanctuary, they provide physical and visual connections between the church and the neighborhood. Adjacent to the offices lies a flexible, multi-purpose space that includes a kitchen and a childcare facility. The versatile space (shown in yellow) is designed in parallel to the church sanctuary.

For large events, the multifunctional space, atrium, and sanctuary can function as one grand space, as shown by the white X. Mt. Baker serves the broader community as a site for significant life events, including funerals and weddings. The new design provides optimal flexibility for different activities to meet community needs, while also offering the possibility of revenue to the church to support operations and maintenance.



Worship service



Concert



# FLEXIBLE COMMUNITY SPACE

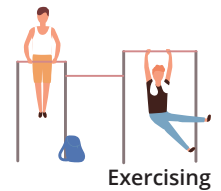
The flexible community space responds directly to the Greater Mt. Baker Church Vision Phase 3. It does so by providing space to gather people together, being adaptable for multiple uses, generating revenue, and being accessible to the broader community. The multi-purpose space is an open plan that allows activities to flow freely and connect to the atrium, sanctuary, and open green space. The atrium links the multi-purpose space and the sanctuary. It is a light-filled gallery-like space that can be used for study and small meetings. It also allows people to move from the sidewalk to the open green space and back again.

Part of the multi-purpose space is used during the week as a preschool for indoor play. Weather permitting, the childcare room can open up directly to the green open area, and activities can be separated from the sidewalk. The church would use the preschool spaces during weekends for Sunday School and meetings. The preschool tenant would provide approximately \$34,000 in rent annually.

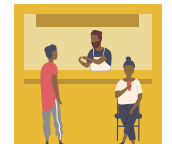
The multi-purpose community space is available for event rentals. There are modular walls that can be used to create space for meetings and classes. The team estimated approximately two and a half events per month at \$1,100 per event, which would generate \$33,000 annually. A warming kitchen is provided in this space to be shared by the church, preschool, and event users.



Meeting



Exercising



Sharing food



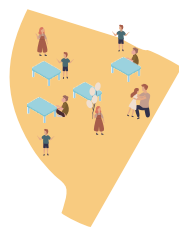
Working



Socializing



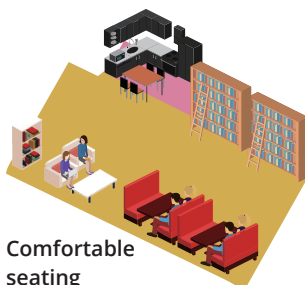
Smaller rooms



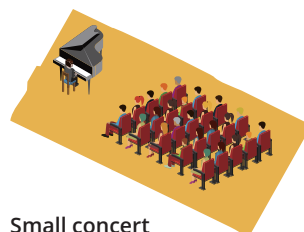
Childcare



Sunday school



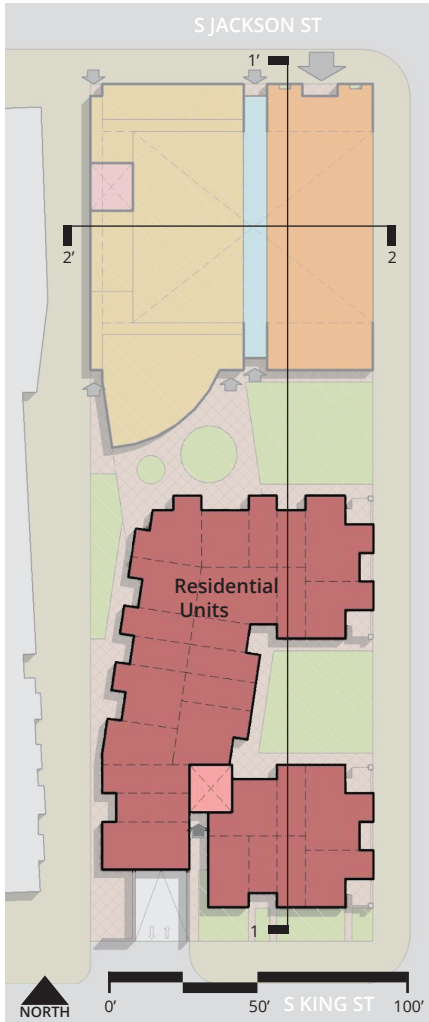
Comfortable seating



Small concert



Learning



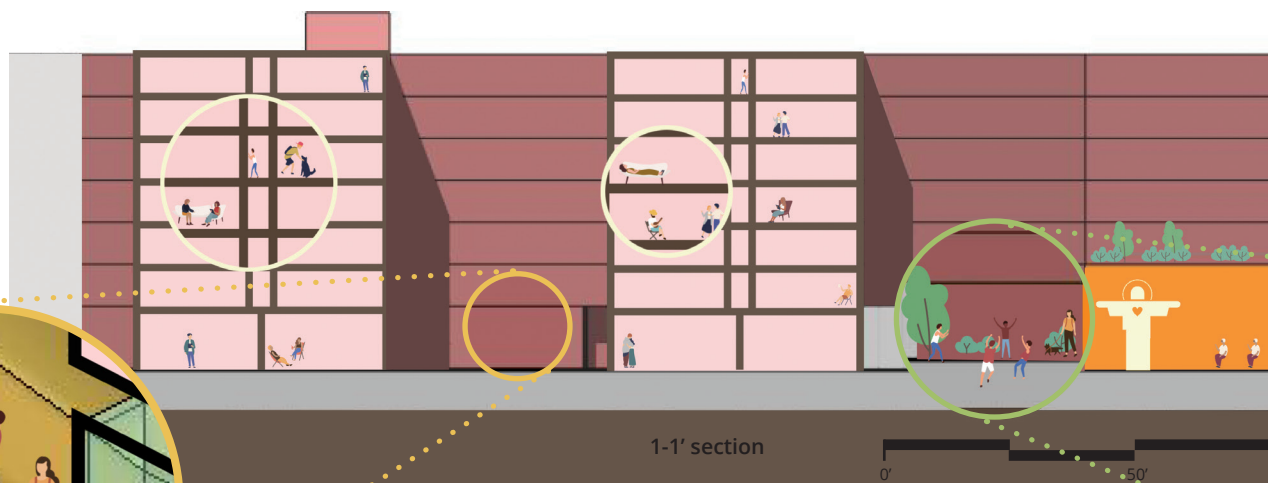
Ground floor residential floor plan showing individual porches

## HOUSING LEGACY & NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Providing housing in the Mt. Baker project is the key to supporting the church's ongoing legacy. This part of the development makes the rest of the project possible. The rents will provide a revenue source to help fund the project. The housing creates density and opportunities for many church congregants to live in the Central District. The residential portion of the project includes seven floors of housing pending the successful rezone of Site B to match the 75-foot height of Site A along S Jackson St. The overall project reflects the neighborhood design guidelines and the neighborhood strategic plan. People who come to live at Mt. Baker will benefit from a highly "walkable" neighborhood that has nearby transit, shopping, open space, and other amenities.

## UNIT MIX & AFFORDABILITY

The residential portion of the project provides 301 units of housing. The mix of units includes studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. Nineteen units, including 16 studios, 2 one-bedrooms, and 1 two-bedroom apartments, are affordable under Seattle's MHA requirements to those earning less than 60 percent of the area median income. The team discovered that there is less interest than expected in three-bedroom units in the city's rental population. So, we chose to focus on a range of smaller units to maximize the number of apartments.



Section view facing west into the building, shows apartments and sanctuary. Behind the sanctuary (so not visible in this image), the first floor has community facilities and the second floor has apartments. Closeups feature active courtyards tucked in along the east side of the building.

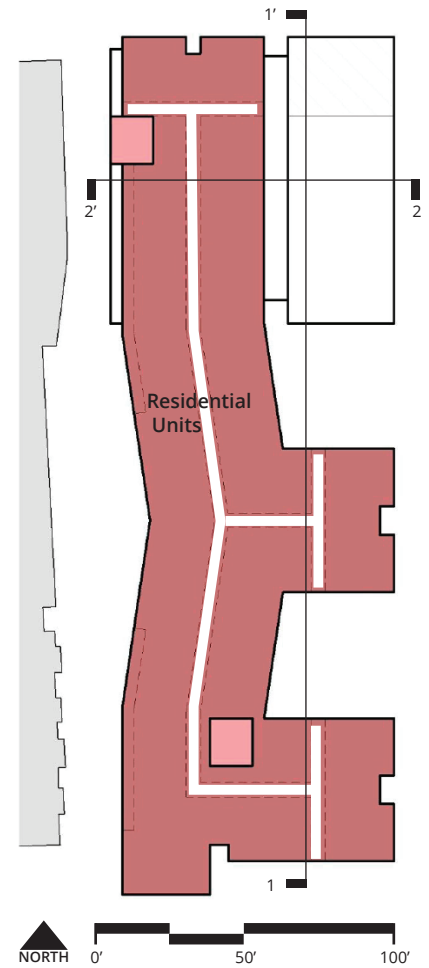


## RELATIONSHIP TO THE SITE

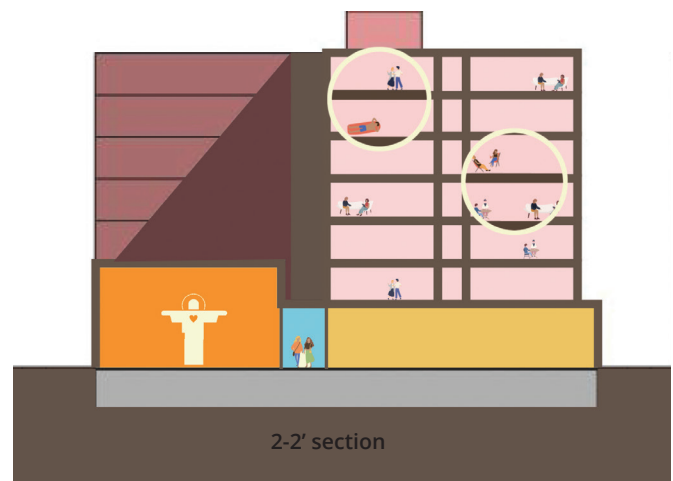
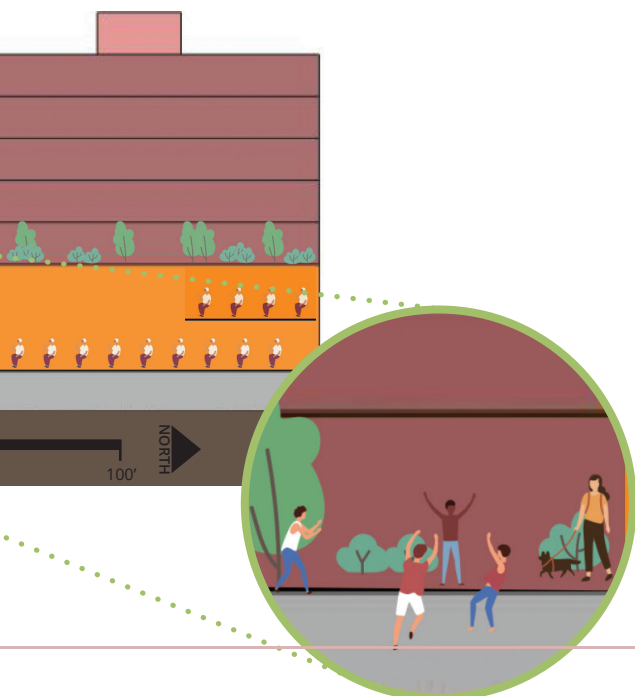
The residential development is deliberately not located over the sanctuary. Instead, it is situated over the multi-purpose space to create sheltered outdoor green space for the preschool and church. All ground-level residential units are designed with porches to create comfortable places to sit outdoors. The porches provide a welcoming space and a transition from the more public area to the private space of the units. Along the west side of the ground-floor residences, the porches echo those of the Vulcan development units located directly across from the pedestrian walkway that runs between the Mt. Baker and Vulcan sites. The upper six levels of apartments share the same layout, using double-loaded corridors (a central hallway with units on both sides). Double-loading the units creates an efficient floor plan (floor plate). This efficiency allows us to maximize the number of units the projects can provide, and decreases the construction and operation costs, allowing for more affordable units.

## PARKING

Of the 126 parking spaces provided one level below ground, 60 are for residential use. We provide a further 60 spaces for congregational and public parking. A final six spaces are permanently designated for the pastor, church elders, and the church's commuter van.



*Residential floor plan for upper floors 2-7*



*Section view facing south showing the sanctuary and community spaces, connected by the atrium. Six stories of apartments are shown above the community spaces, but not above the sanctuary. Beyond the community spaces, the rest of the building has apartments on all 7 floors.*

## PUBLIC SPACES



*Streetscape along S Jackson St in front of the church looking south*

*Plan view sketch showing landscaped walking path between Mt. Baker and Vulcan buildings that leads to neighborly porches of ground floor apartments of both buildings.*



## STREETSCAPE

We proposed two additional things to support the integration of the project into the neighborhood. The first is to suggest church-specific uses of 25th Ave S at certain times of the week and year. The other is to augment the local site design (sidewalk planting strips and a roundabout) to beautify the streetscape and connect to the range of mobility options in the neighborhood.

The City of Seattle designates 25th Ave S as a neighborhood greenway, a local street chosen and signed to prioritize walking and biking. The city also has various programs and permits that would allow Mt. Baker to temporarily close down the road for community gatherings such as play streets, festivals, and block parties. We envision 25th Ave S as a spacious “outdoor room” that can augment the project’s green open spaces at certain times. 25th Ave S also provides limited short-term parking and a quiet drop-off and pick-up location to come and go from childcare.



Plan view of the Mt. Baker site design showing streetscape improvements, landscape design, and people-friendly courtyards



A peek into the semi-public north courtyard used by the church congregation as well as by building residents and neighbors



A peek into the semi-private south courtyard used primarily by building residents

## COURTYARDS FOR MULTIPLE COMMUNITIES

We proposed two flexible green outdoor spaces that respond to church desires. The northern one is a multi-purpose space for use by the church community, the preschool, and for special events. The southern one is a green open space created for the residents. These spaces can accommodate BBQs, kids' play, sports, performances, and other community gatherings. Both outdoor spaces are open to the sidewalk along 25th Ave S, which is a quiet local street.



Green roof provides outdoor spaces for active use by building residents

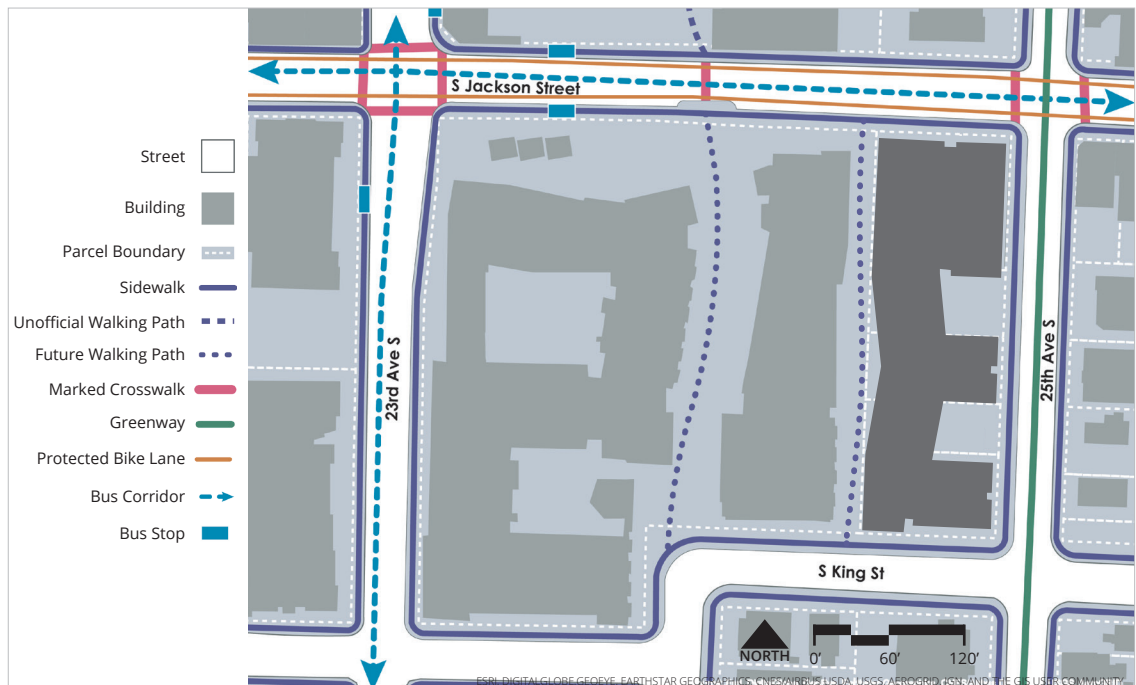


## MOBILITY & CIRCULATION

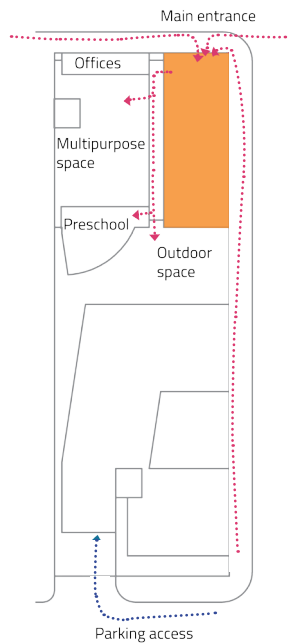
Maintaining the church's presence on the corner of S Jackson St & 25th Ave S was essential to our client. As a result, the church building and its main entry are located there.

Because the project lies within an urban village and a neighborhood commercial zone with enhanced pedestrian focus, many mobility options including sidewalks, walkways, and bike lanes connect the site to neighborhood amenities. We also included several pedestrian realm design elements including protective overhangs, multiple entrances, windows to create a visual connection between inside and outside, and porches for the ground-floor apartments to provide visual interest and a transition from public to private space.

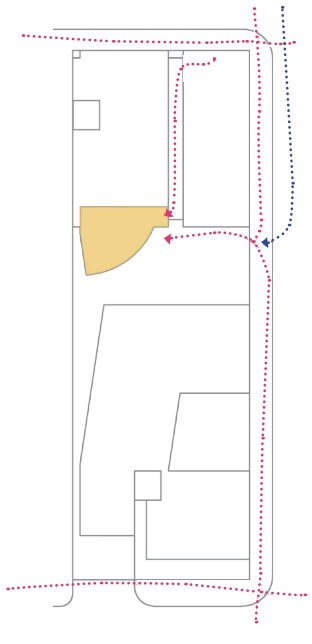
The childcare room and other church facilities are accessible from the atrium or the north courtyard. Residents access their home via one of two stairwells or elevators. Residents living on the ground floor enter their homes directly through their front doors.



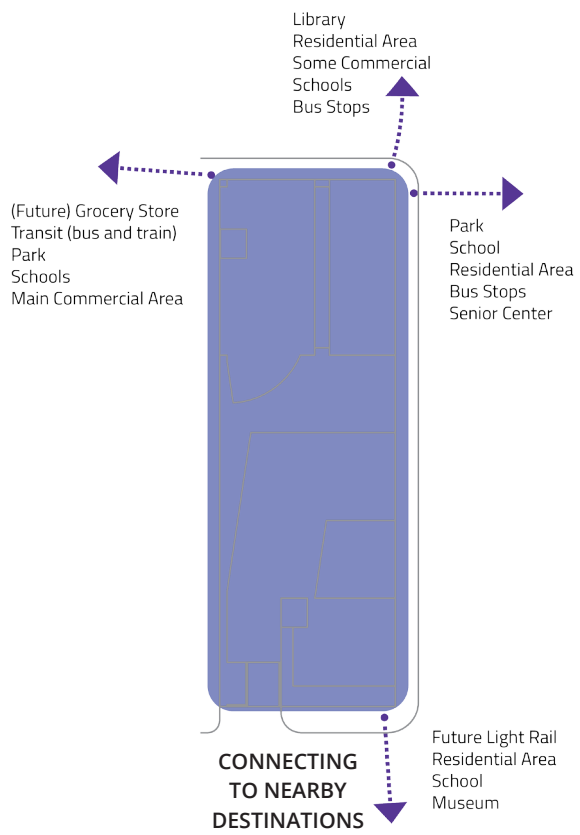
Mobility map showing the many modes and routes of travel near the site



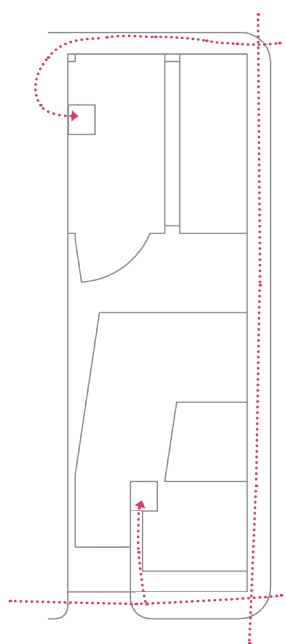
**CHURCH ACCESS**



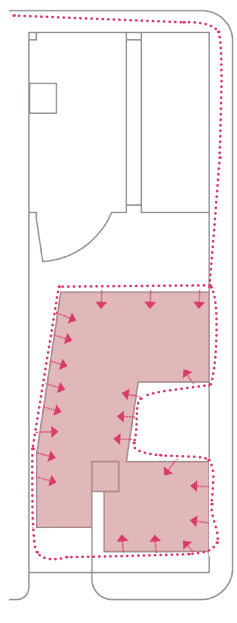
**CLASSROOM/CHILDCARE ACCESS**



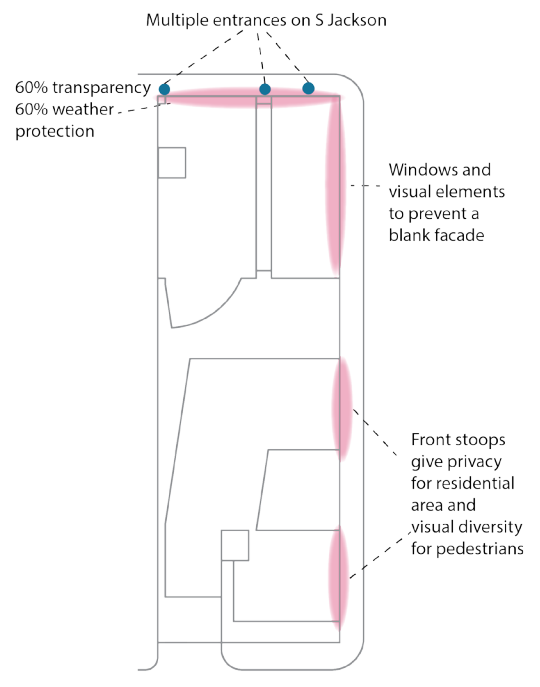
**CONNECTING TO NEARBY DESTINATIONS**



**UPPER FLOOR RESIDENT ACCESS**



**GROUND FLOOR RESIDENT ACCESS**



**PEDESTRIAN REALM CONSIDERATIONS**

Access and site circulation diagrams showing how people get to and move through the site

## FINANCING

To fund this project, Mt. Baker will likely acquire construction and permanent loans to finance a portion of the total project cost. The church has property equity and can use that to their advantage in the financing process. We suggest seeking out additional funding sources that are targeted to particular uses including those for affordable housing, multi-family housing, childcare, and church facility development. In addition, we believe the church will be well positioned to secure some financing through fundraising, philanthropy, and/or social impact investors.

Projected rental income from the apartments, preschool, and special events should allow the church to secure substantial long-term financing.

## LEGAL STRUCTURES

To support flexibility, we propose the property be divided into four commercial condominiums by use. The community and childcare spaces would comprise one condominium, and the other three would be the sanctuary, the residential spaces, and parking. This has the added benefit that lenders are typically more willing to finance with the uses broken out and funded separately.



*Team working with studio mentor Julie Howe* TEACHING TEAM



# TIMELINE

We believe that the Site B upzone application and process should be started immediately and will take approximately 24 months to complete. At the same time, the church can begin to work on financing for the sanctuary and community spaces, which we estimate will take 18 months to fully secure. Following capital sourcing for the church, design and permitting for the overall project will commence and will take approximately 18 months to complete. During the second half of the design and permitting phase, financing for the residential portion of the project including the parking, should be advanced.

Once construction financing, design, and permitting are complete, construction can begin. We estimate that construction will take 24 months. As the project nears the end of construction, marketing and leasing can begin. After the project is complete, the church should move all construction financing into permanent financing.

