

A SPATIAL
HISTORY OF
CHURCHES

P O R T F O L I O

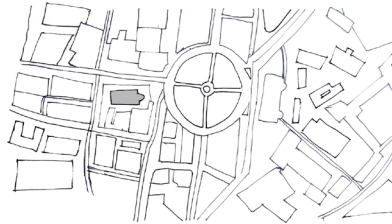
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LOCATION PLAN

St. Michael's Church (1537)

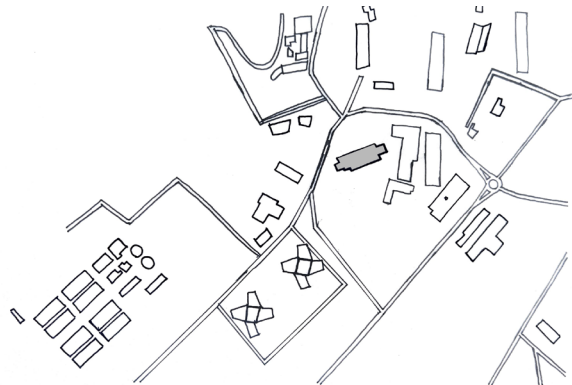


LOCATION PLAN

St. Thomas Cathedral (1676)



St. John Baptist Church (1579)



Afghan Church (1847)



LOCATION PLAN

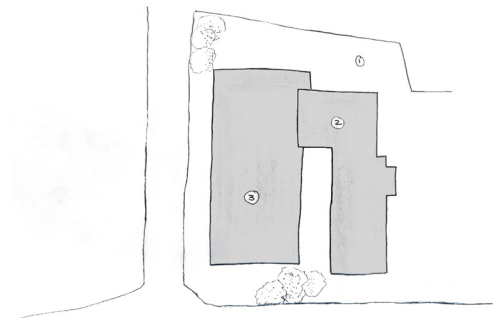
Our Lady of Egypt Church (1606)



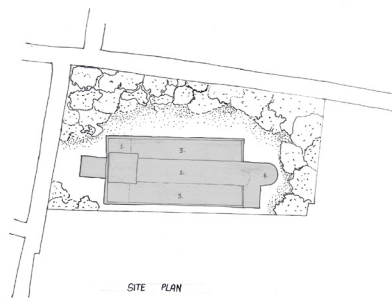
Portuguese Church (1977)

The St. Michaels Church, St. John Baptist church, Our Lady of Egypt church and the Portuguese church are all located in residential neighborhoods. The Afghan Church is located in Navy Nagar and the St. Thomas Cathedral is located in a corporate neighbourhood. We observed that the neighbourhoods did not dictate the forms of the church as the churches were built before, they did however shape the purpose these spaces served. The St. Michaels church built in 1534, the space becomes a part of daily life for people who reside nearby and in doing so it forms its own community. The St. Thomas Cathedral on the other hand becomes more of a formal space which may not have its own daily community but attracts more tourists.

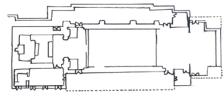
LOCATION



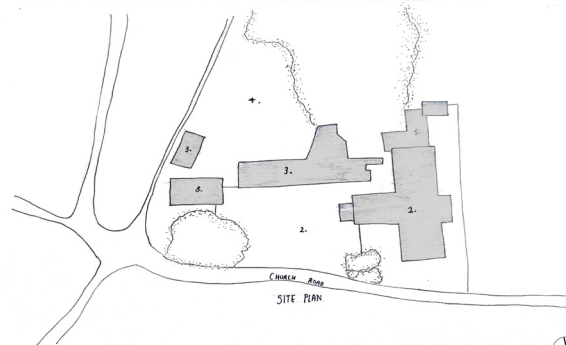
St. Michael's Church (1537)



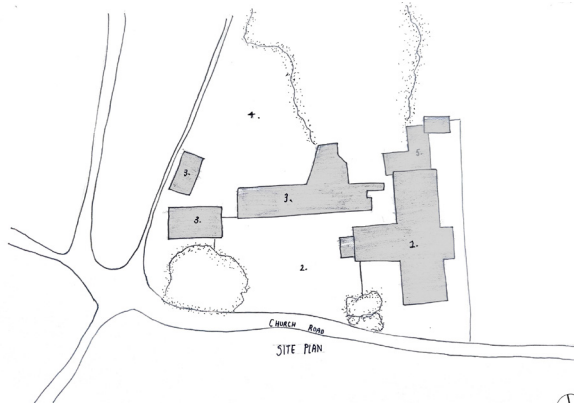
St. Thomas Cathedral (1676)



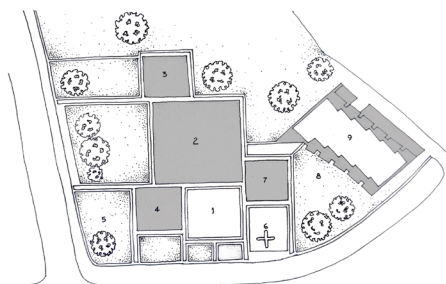
St. John Baptist Church (1579)



Afghan Church (1847)

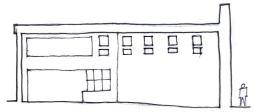


Our Lady of Egypt Church (1606)

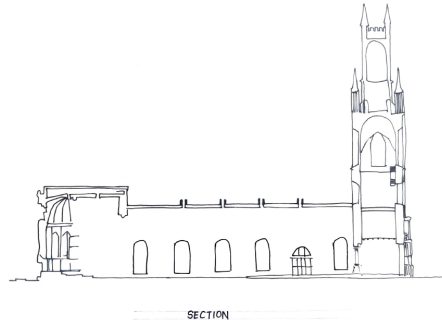


Portuguese Church (1977)

The scale of each of these churches is derived through the purpose they were built for. That purpose is more generalized than unique with respect to the time period the given space was built in. The three oldest of these six churches were built in the 16th century by the Fransiscan order, a group founded by Saint Francis of Assissi that focused on building a Christian community across countries and continents.

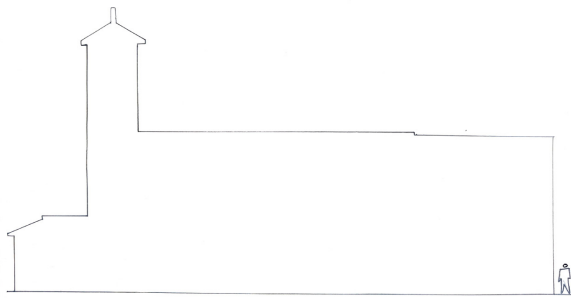


St. Michael's Church (1537)

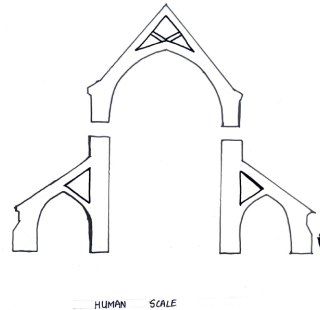


St. Thomas Cathedral (1676)

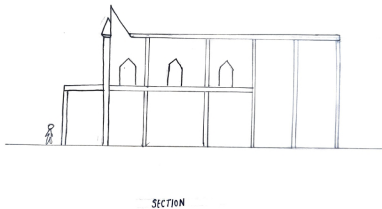
The Afghan Church however, built in 1837, was built as a memorial to all the lives lost in the first Afghan war. Churches earlier were largely looked at as statements of political strength and thus called for grandeur through scale which was not the case in the modernization of the church with the Portuguese church built in 1977 in Dadar.



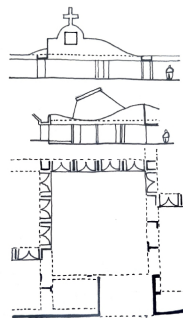
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Afghan Church (1847)

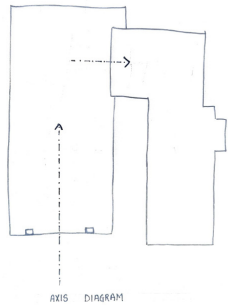


Our Lady of Egypt Church (1606)

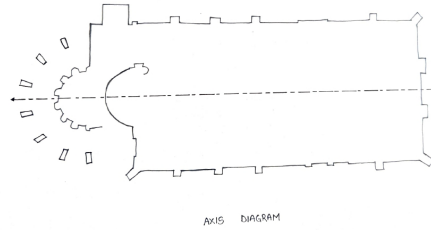


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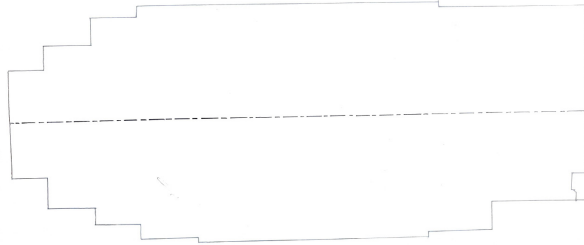
SCALE



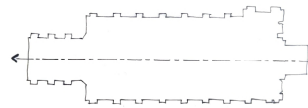
St. Michael's Church (1537)



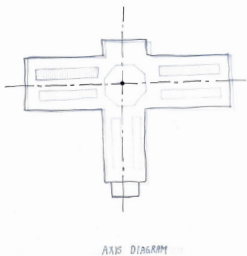
St. Thomas Cathedral (1676)



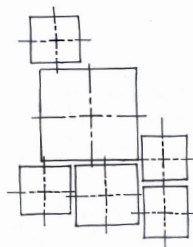
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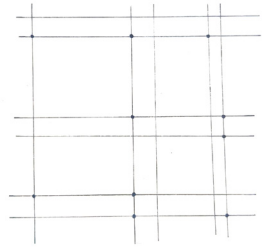


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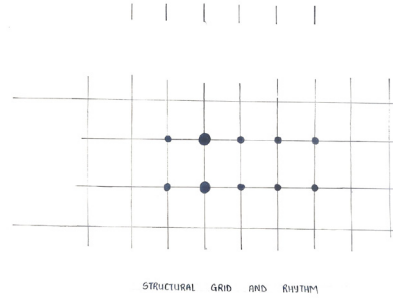


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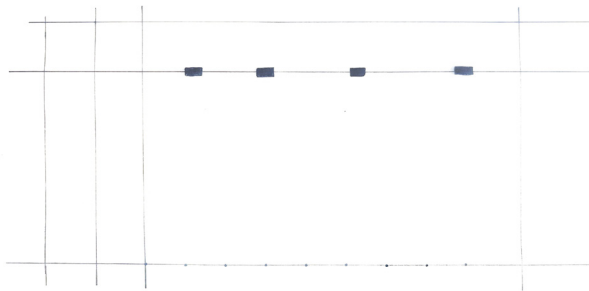
Churches built before the modernization obey either a linear plan or a cruciform plan, both of which are derived from the initial designs of the Roman Basilica. The St. Michaels Church, St. John Baptist Church, Afghan Church and the St. Thomas Cathedral each obey a linear form. Our Lady of Egypt Church follows a cruciform plan. It is in the renovation of the Portuguese Church that Charles Correa breaks away from this pattern. Now there is no compulsion of tradition which allows him to look at the spaces of the church separately and design them for their purpose, thinking through their experience.



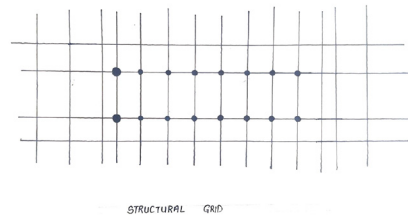
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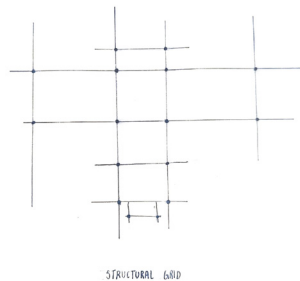
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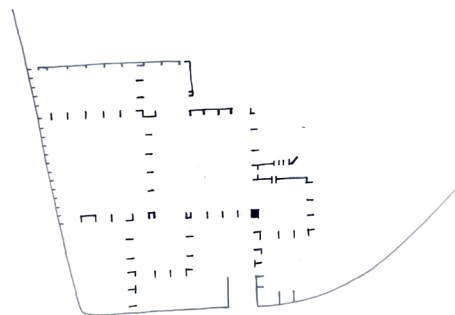
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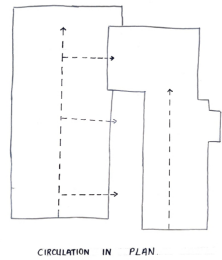
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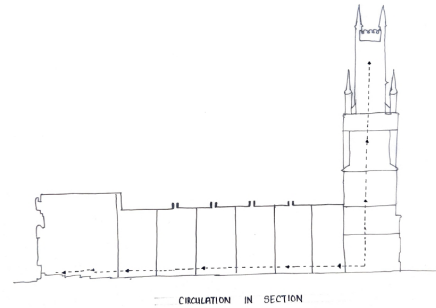
Portuguese Church (1977)

Initially, during the early Portuguese period, the geometry of the church plans were often simpler and more functional. These structures typically feature rectangular or cruciform layouts, with their thick walls and robust constructions. There was symmetry present but often less ornate than later periods. As the British influence grew and the city developed, the geometry became more formal and elaborate. St. Thomas Cathedral adopted a more defined basilica plan with a distinct nave, after which the Afghan Church adopted a more Victorian gothic style of architecture with longer naves. The trend of imposing foreign geometries continued till 1977. The radical shift can be seen when Charles Correa renovated the Portuguese church. Here the traditional geometry was dismantled entirely, the perfect symmetry and straight lines were changed into asymmetrical fluid-like spaces more connected by light and air.

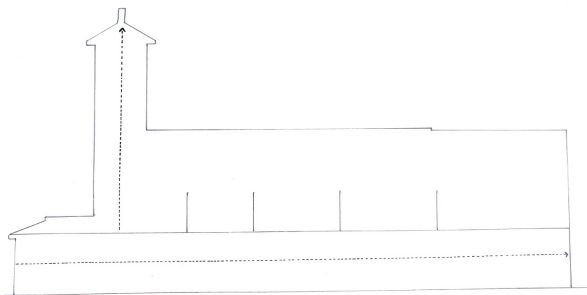
GEOMETRY



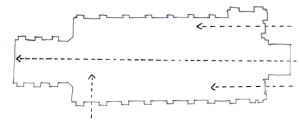
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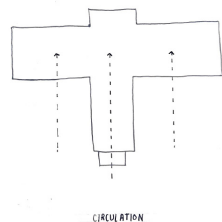
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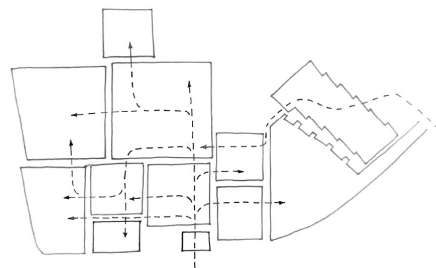
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Afghan Church (1847)



Our Lady of Egypt Church (1606)



Portuguese Church (1977)

The shift we observe is not one that comes gradually with time, for 300 years churches maintain their linear integrity. It is a change that comes when we look at the space differently, without compulsions and influences. The church is not seen as a political statement but as a place of worship. There are no compulsions of replicating the building elements of Europe, we could now design for what India needs. For the first time in this study, you see a central courtyard, open and closed spaces interspersed. These elements become a response to climate here while still preserving a movement where you'd first walk up to the nave at the end of which you'd have your altar. One may still enter the church through the office or access the Baptistry, Oratory, or Sanctuary through the Nave.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Prerita Bagdia
Jiya Bhandari
Presha Bhattad
Vidhi Budhlani
Tarun Jain
Upamanyu Sensharma