

# ST. GREGORY'S PARISH COMPLEX IN AGRIGENTO

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**[Giuseppe Pellitteri]**

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The complex of Saint Gregory is located in the coastal plain of Agrigento, between the Valley of the Temples and an archaeological site of Cretan origin. The main body consists of an imposing segmented parallelepiped coated in travertine and rotated from the road according to the classic East-West direction. Here, a great plane covered in Cor-Ten - symbolizing a door always open to the community - stands between two towers slanting toward the city and of different heights. A colonnade of seven items, as many as the Bishops of Agrigento who have become Saints or beatified, punctuates the side front facing towards the Valley; the opposite side is marked by openings that recall the notes of the Gregorian Ave Maria. The presbytery is featured by a skylight consisting of a hollow parallelepiped - rotated and clearly visible from the outside - that looks like the continuation of a basement that encloses the entire church. At the top is suspended a large bronze Christ in the act of resurrection - placed beneath a velarium sloped like the sepulcher tombstone and flanked by light beams. The bell tower near the road is a slender and tall prism clad in travertine and cut diagonally. The vicarage, immediately behind, is aligned with the street and can be seen as a modest urban residential unit in the background. Sideways, a kind of cloister opens up and is connected to the courtyard through a staircase that also becomes a cavea. The cloister is punctuated by the rhythm of the pillars that frame the classrooms for catechesis, the parish hall and the chapel used for ceremonies during the week. This can be accessed directly from the centre of the cloister - passing in dim light under the massive cantilever of the church

jutting out from the basement whole - where a crypt perfectly aligned with the presbytery and the velarium houses a chapel and opens only sideways to a small triangular garden. The church and the bell tower are clad in travertine slabs that recall the solidity and the foundational importance of the Roman Church and emphasize the sacredness of the landscape with its light and bright colours. Pivotal elements both of the entry and the central tower that culminates with the velarium are clad in Cor-Ten and reflect the colours of the earth, highlighting the shift from the physical dimension of Christian building (caducity of things) to the spiritual one (vivifying and salvific action). The floor-to-ceiling windows become a place for storytelling of artistic-religious themes, also expressed in the mosaics and other sacred items.

## CREDITS

Location: Via Cavaleri Magazzeni, Contrada Cannatello, Agrigento, Italy Client: Curia Arcivescovile di Agrigento Completion: 2009 - 2012 Gross Floor Area: 3.300 m2 Cost of Construction: 3.284.000 € Architects: Giuseppe Pellitteri Collaborator: Dario Riccobono Artist: Enzo Venezia General Management: Giuseppe Pellitteri and Dario Riccobono Contractor: Azzurra Costruzioni S.r.l. Photography: © Alessia Riccobono and Giuseppe Pellitteri

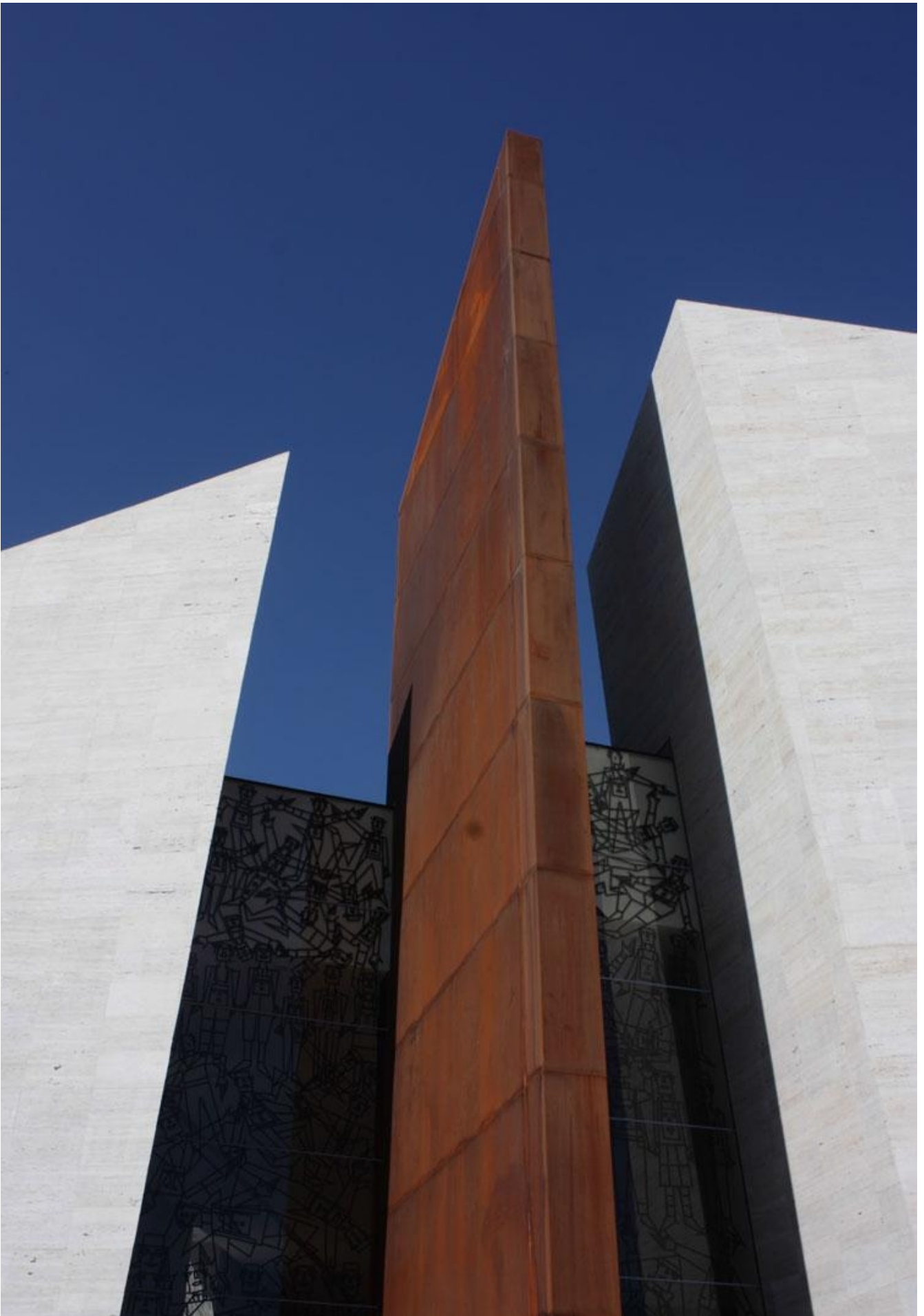




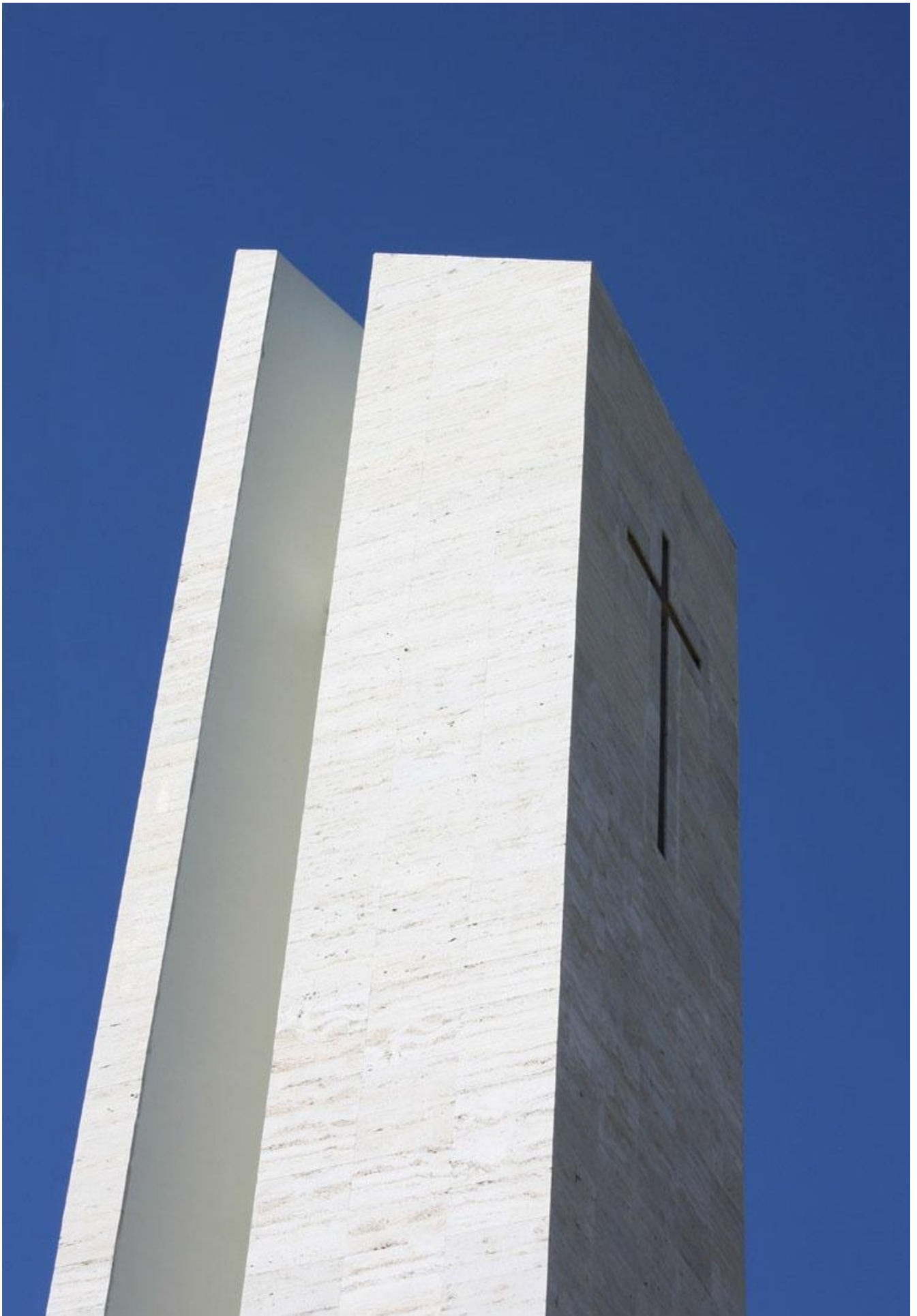
External view



External view



Detail



Detail



Night view



Night view

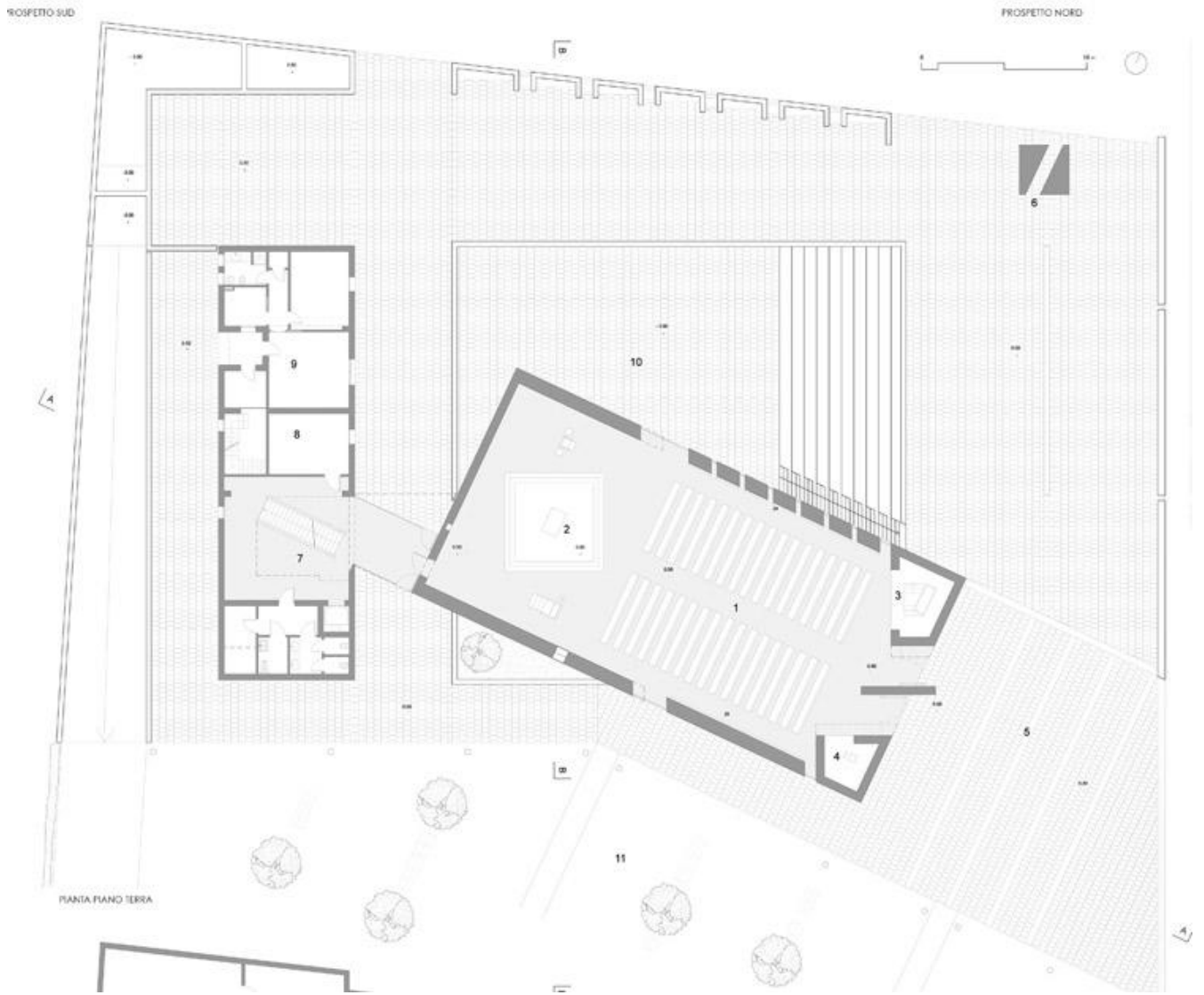


Internal view

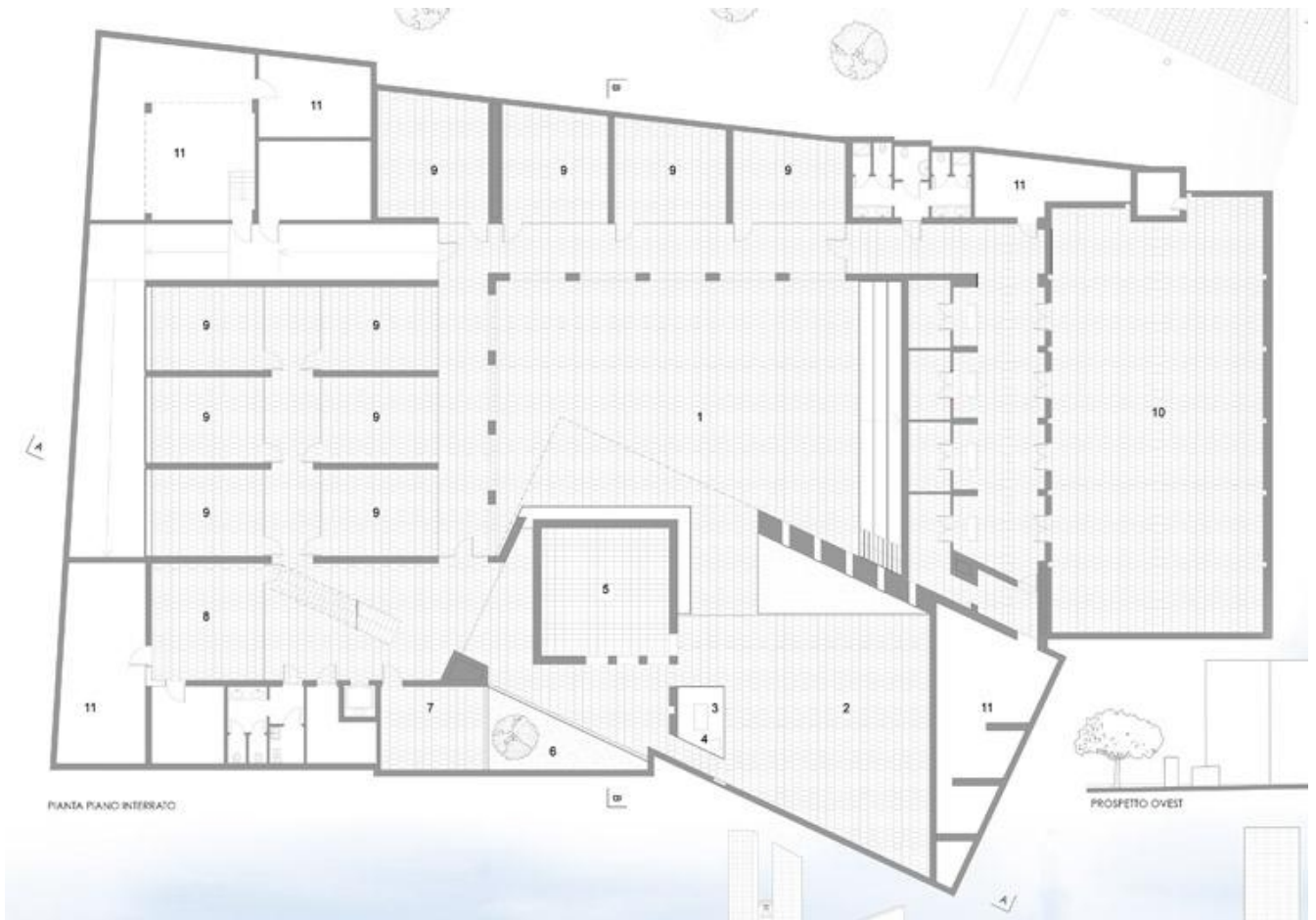


Internal view





Ground floor plan



Underground floor plan

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