

JOHN DALE, AIA, WITH ALEKS ISTANBULLU ARCHITECTS

Cleaver Hall and Grace Chapel, San Gabriel

Set on a quiet church campus consisting of historic, traditional buildings, lawns and mature trees, the new parish hall and chapel act as mediating pavilions between semi-enclosed courts and open meadows, and between active social spaces and meditative gardens. The older buildings reflect the tradition of English Country Gothic architecture. The new buildings emulate the steeply pitched slate roofs, light plaster walls and timbered gables. Detailing of the eaves and timber screens, grills and lighting, and contrasting use of aluminum, stone and Douglas Fir, is contemporary. The new spaces turn outward, embracing the larger campus and its natural beauty. Three sides of the sky-lit chapel are surrounded by ten-foot high tri-fold doors that reduce the walls to a series of slender piers. A stone floor extends from inside to outside, emphasizing the connection to nature. Intended for families' and children's worship, the chapel invites wonderment through the play of natural light, and treats the adjacent meadow as an extension of the worship space.

Designed with conservation in mind, the new buildings, a 6,000 square-foot Parish Hall and a 1,500 square-foot family chapel, were carefully positioned to preserve the heritage trees and adjacent historical struc-

tures. Each structure is sited to maximize natural light and cross ventilation. Deep overhangs and heavy timber screens protect the east, south and western exposures.

Grace Chapel acknowledges the former chapel by including its stained glass and tapestries within an alcove. The new chapel's cross incorporates a stained glass roundel of "Christ the Redeemer" from the older building. The artist who was commissioned to create an iconography celebrating the lives of families and children, both living and departed, adds art to architecture and landscape to make a unified whole.

The project is realized in interlocking symbols. In the stone around the eaves of the chapel are engraved the words Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, Sister, Brother, Friend. Like echoes, the names are etched faintly, in different languages, as though everybody in the world were whispering together. The chapel's altar is touched by a reflection of golden light from the south clerestory window. Hanging lamps cast drifting light over the ceiling, an evocation of heaven. The passage from Isaiah, "I have called you by name and you are my own," is carved into the altar. The names of the memorialized children are etched in the glass walls of the chapel. Outside, a reading cir-



A view of the exterior of Grace Chapel highlights the natural setting around the building



A stone floor in Cleaver Hall extends from inside to outside, emphasizing a connection to nature

cle of stone surrounds a large pepper tree in the meadow. It is marked by twelve boulders, a reference both to the twelve stones left as a memorial after crossing the Jordan and to the twelve Apostles. This is the place where the children learn about their faith.

Excerpts from an interview with John Dale

Church of Our Saviour is one of the oldest Episcopal churches in California. Built in the 1870s, it is the "mother church" of the Episcopalian church in the San Gabriel Valley. It is a Victorian Gothic building, a very modest structure, which over the years has been expanded.

My building tries to make a bridge between what is there, what is history, and something that is more of today... I was looking for a more minimalist expression. I don't think its possible to emulate a kind of Victorian gothic style successfully in our language of construction, so I wanted to take the elements and get them down to basics.

I think the central idea is that you could worship in the round, instead of the traditional approach where everyone is facing toward a distant altar. The sacrament could be in the midst of people and they could be distracted by the things around them. I think

sometimes worship can take place with a broader awareness of what is going on in the surrounding environment.

John R. Dale, AIA, biography
John Dale received a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Toronto and a master's in architectural science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His professional career includes several years as a designer with Ron Thom in Toronto, a long affiliation with Barton Myers Associates as a Senior Associate, and four years with Perkins & Will as Design Team Leader and Associate Principal of the Pasadena studio.



Grace Chapel, corner detail



Original church and Cleaver Hall



Independently, he has designed a variety of residential and institutional projects, including an ongoing series of projects for the Church of Our Saviour in San Gabriel, California. He is currently Associate Principal and Studio Designer for the K-12 Studio of Harley Ellis Devereaux Architects and Engineers.

Dale's projects have been honored with numerous awards at the national, state and local levels. A regular instructor at USC's School of Architecture since 1999, he has also lectured and taught at MIT, UCLA, and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and participated in symposia, design reviews and competition juries. His articles and projects have

appeared in books, monographs and journals, including *LA Architect*, *Spazio e Società /Space and Society*, *Architectural Record*, and the online newsletter of Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design.

2004 president and longtime member of the Board of Directors for the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the California Council of the AIA, Dale also co-chaired the Urban Design Committee and the Urban Design Task Force for AIC CC. In addition, he is an active Board Member of the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena and the A+D Museum in Los Angeles.

Aleks Istanbulu Architects biography

Aleks Istanbulu Architects is a design studio generating works of various scales and project types. The firm works in a creative environment committed to producing contemporary architecture. A high ratio of built projects demonstrates their realistic approach to design and experience in guiding projects throughout the construction process.

With an aesthetic foundation rooted in the Modernism of Europe, Chicago and Southern California, they respect the nature of materials and carefully detail buildings to celebrate professional craft, while optimizing the effectiveness of current technologies and labor. Their aim is to craft buildings that last and inspire.

The balanced approach of this firm resists niche marketing and affirms the values of a generalist "Chicago style" architecture practice, addressing design challenges that range from smaller single family housing to community institutions. They maintain a continued commitment to teaching, competitions and collaborations, creating an intellectual rigor and contemporary spirit.

Grace Chapel exterior, north side, with Cleaver Hall on left