

Web-City Museum

Strategic Revitalization of Cordoba's Historical Center Using Tangible and Intangible Local Cultural Resources

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Abstract

Heritage cities have become premiere international tourist destinations. At the same time, historical centers have been excluded by socioeconomic polarization and related consumption patterns.

The **Web City Museum** is a new mixed institution which links networks for cultural promotion at the local and global level from the historical center of a city, fostering sustainable cultural tourism as a source of local development. This new building-network, designed as a cultural services infrastructure, links the existing architectural heritage and main buildings to the proposed management and services area by means of two new access networks: a local underground and aerial pedestrian way and an interactive global communication system. It generates new movement flows for the promotion of culture, tourism and business superimposed on the once-impooverished multifunctional area transforming the museum space into a local and global urban network. Due to the international touristic inflow, it materializes global communication systems, reinforces local identity and the City takes part in the worldwide touristic network to stimulate the regional development of the territory.

1 Project

This sustainable urban project is based on linking the existing architectural heritage and main buildings, to a management and services area by means of two new access networks: a local underground and aerial pedestrian way and an interactive global communication system.

This new archetype generates exchange among stakeholders who experience and promote local culture in order to transform it into a global one using physical and virtual interactive information networks. Physically, the museum building comprises a network of meaningfully connected spaces in the local area. Virtually, the same architecture is created digitally and connected to the Internet. Mutually interconnected, they update each other simultaneously in real time based on their interaction with the local and global community.

A Web-City Museum is conceived in its local community, managing its own resources for sustainable cultural tourism, transforming community links into spatial links. Bridges, footbridges, terraces, agoras, tunnels and the Internet serve as a connecting thread.

This transfers connecting value to matter and space, the community and spatial dimensions to citizens, in reference to their identity, an informative summary to tourists, with a mixture of services, the benefits of group work to stakeholders, and building agreements to the State.

This connection is the supporting structure for community life which can reconcile participation with heterogeneity⁴⁰ through local political, social and economic agendas.

2 Strategy

Revitalization through the Exchange of tangible and Intangible Local Resources

Exchange is a continuous natural process of regeneration, and it is currently a cultural pattern where intangible values govern tangible assets, including the novelty and speed of change. Information exchange through a network of links, or hypertext⁴¹, is the most widely used communications system: the Internet. Interrelated content nodes create and spread a sense of community, increasing man's cognitive ability and challenging space-time boundaries in the non-virtual world. Global society uses this means of communication⁴² to build relationships, experience space, and consume goods and services.

Building upon this system, the Web City Museum will generate new cultural, tourist, and commercial flows; simultaneously, it will transfer local products and services to the digital network, freeing them of their ties to a physical location, creating a new *transterritorial* cyberspace center⁴³; where information travels, transmits and transforms. A magnet for global cultural tourism, it will transpolarize and multiply exchange over the global network of interconnected cities, stimulating local and regional development.

2.1 In Cordoba, Argentina, it is conceived from its intangible local cultural heritage as the realization of the popular legend which unites all Cordoba natives in the fabric of collective memory. Every year, new archaeological discoveries give new vigor to research into the legendary network of mythological tunnels built by the Jesuits, to escape towards the main city buildings in case of native rebellion, in the Colonial period. Legend becomes a reality as the expression of culture materializes in the city. Traditional oral expressions sharpen knowledge⁴⁴ and consolidate cultural awareness.

Cordoba is a geographical center of the Argentine Republic. Commercial ties with neighboring countries and provinces in *Mercosur* and *Region Centro* drive development.

Established as a colony in 1573, it has been a melting pot which in time became a multifunctional service center⁴⁵ at the local, national, regional, and international levels. In 1970, the creation of the Pedestrian Area originated new flows through commercial arcades and passages.

This city has had several names that described it. It was called the *Dry Customs* owing to its flourishing trade with the northern provinces which spurred its growth; the *Learned City* after the country's oldest and most prestigious university and printing press; *City of Bells*; *Cordoba of the Jesuits*, *Underground Cordoba*⁴⁶ for its valuable architecture, currently regarded as World Heritage; and *City of Conferences* for its capacity for knowledge creation and development. Today, it has been named *Cultural Capital of the Americas 2006*.

3 Conclusion

This new institution offers a space for community participation and exchange where urban needs can be met through equal socialization and education opportunities, articulating local behaviors with global processes.

⁴⁰ See Max-Neef M. (1993, p. 26)

⁴¹ See Orihuela J.L. (1999, pp. 38-46)

⁴² See Cáceres (1998)

⁴³ See Sassen Saskia (2000, pp. 109-111) *Las nuevas formas de centralidad*

⁴⁴ See UNESCO (2003)

⁴⁵ See Venturini E. (2006)

⁴⁶ See video: La Otra Córdoba: Mitos y Leyendas de la Córdoba Subterránea (2002)

Given the exclusion, violence, and exhaustion of resources, the Web City Museum will generate reflection and cultural sensibilization, promoting organic and molecular action by every citizen in their community. It will condense cultural actions of local citizens in a global communication scale, in order to build cultural support for a global union with the aid of nature and technology of the civil society together with the state.

The purpose of this project is to complement political proposals for the state government from the perspective of stakeholders. This strategy can be replicated on any heritage center which manages its resources for the promotion of sustainable tourism as a source of local development. The way this strategy is realized in a city will depend on the local resources and capabilities to face challenges. While basic people’s needs are the same in every nation, the form these are met vary according to the culture; therefore, human transformation is necessary in order to attain urban transformation.

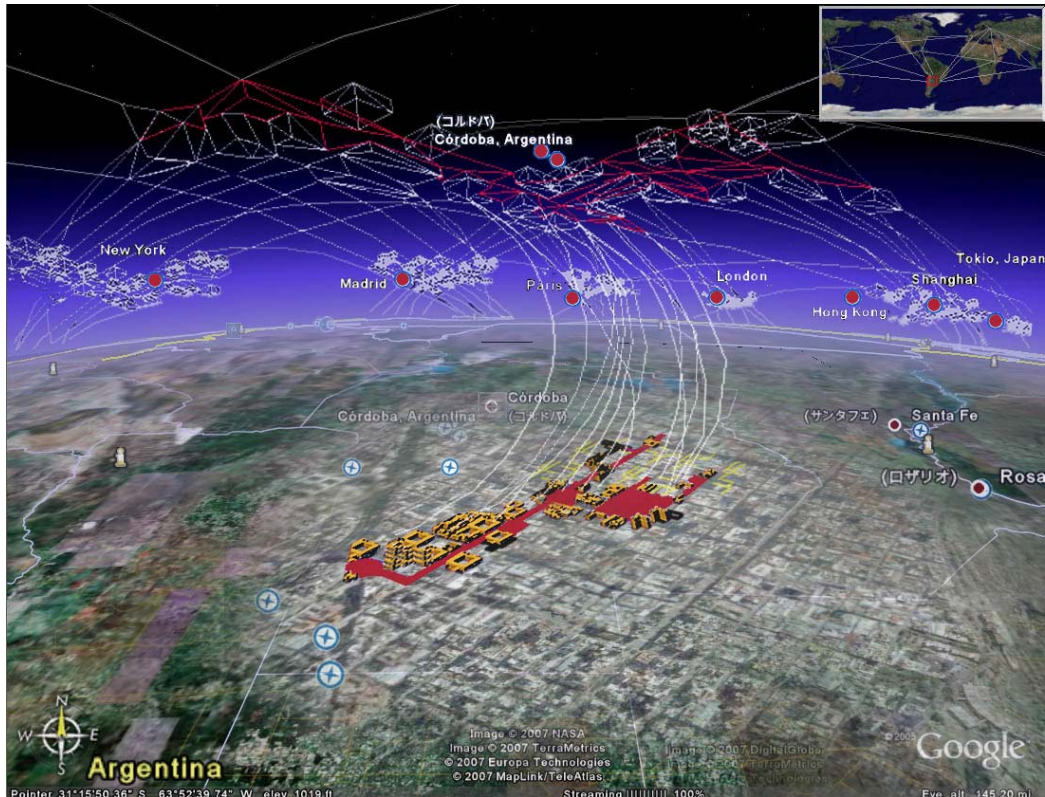


Figure 1: Web-City Museum. Local-Global Interaction

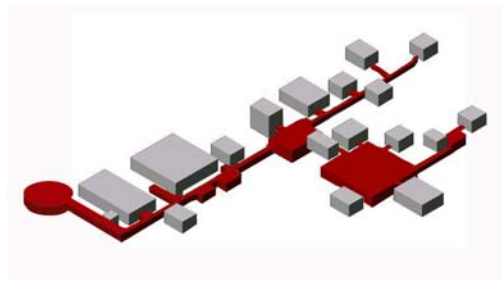


Figure 2: Hypertext network system = Internet.

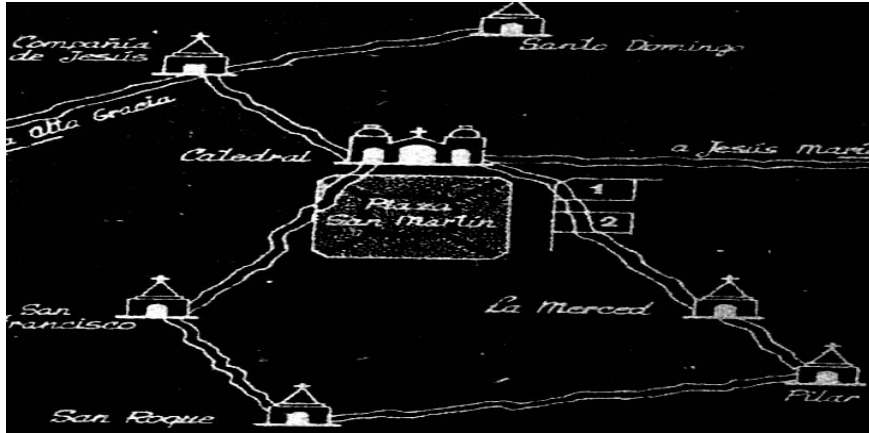


Figure 3: Legendary network of underground tunnels. 1792 graphic.



Figure 4: Web-City Museum: Urban typology and institutional program

Management Center: Public Government Utilities (City, Province, Regional, National) and Private Stakeholders

Educational network: Museums, theaters, libraries, media libraries, universities, colleges.

Cuisine network: City market, bars, restaurants, and a regional food court.

Commercial Recreative network: Shopping malls, movie theaters, arcades and craft booths.

Nuclear network: Amphitheatres, agoras, show rooms, convention centers.

Production network: Import/export market exhibitions and e-commerce.

Service network: Hotels, travel agencies, tourism operators, health assistance, tourist assistance etc.

NGOs network: Non-governmental social foundations and associations



Figure 5: Participation

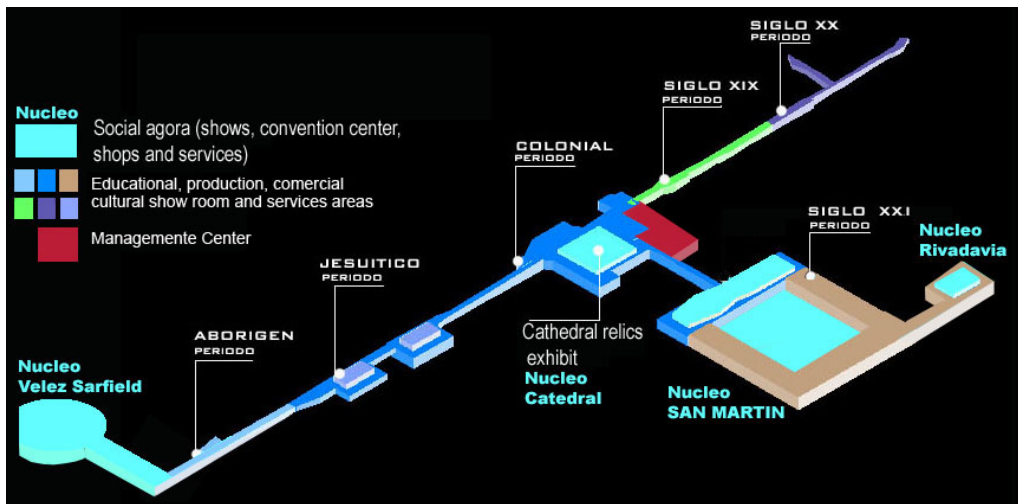


Figure 6: Thematic and chronological flow for the museum

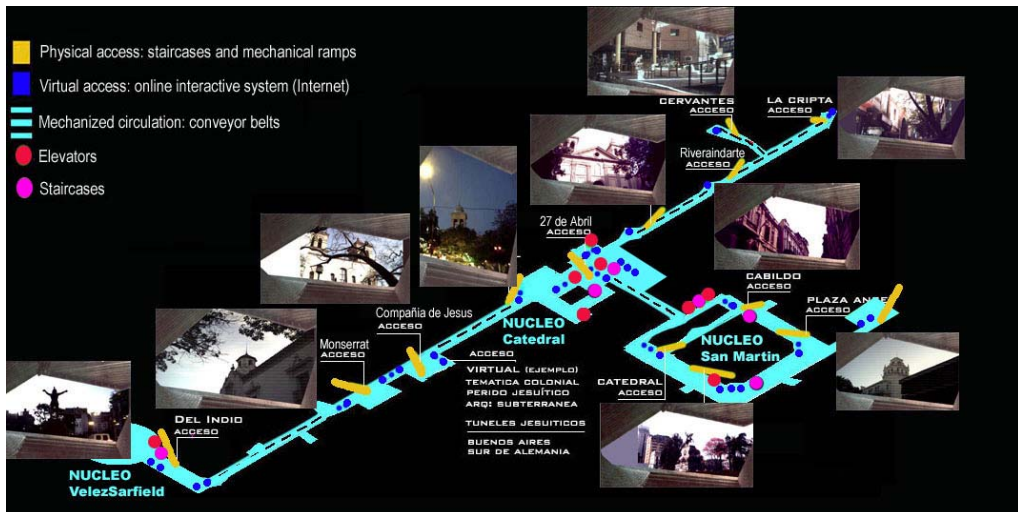


Figure 7: Flow and access

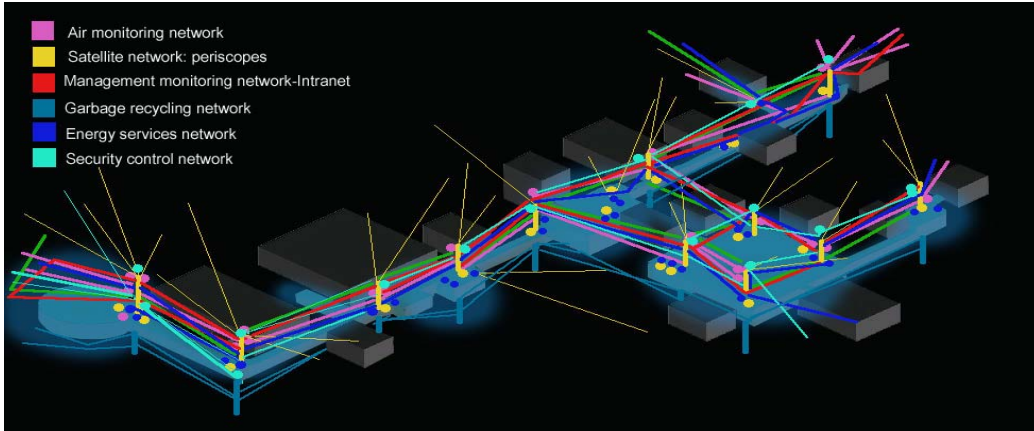


Figure 8: Flow control monitoring



Figure 9: Site Plan. Architectural pedestrian, aerial and underground connections linked



Figure 10: Plant Level -7m

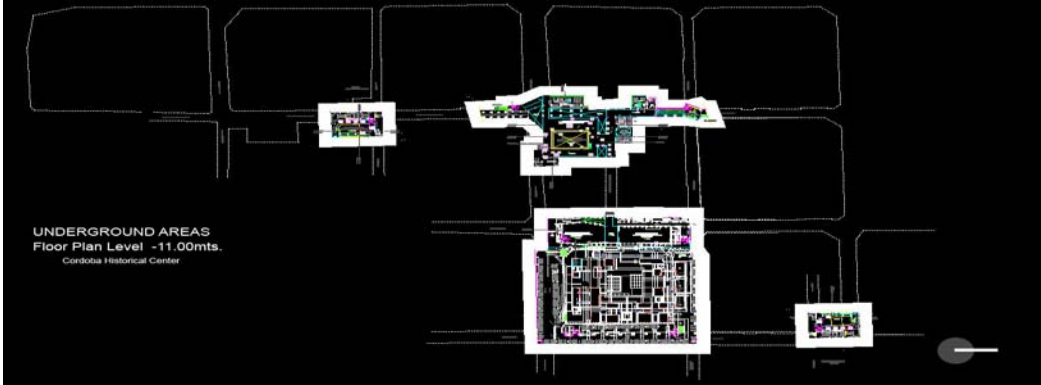


Figure 11: Plant Level -11m

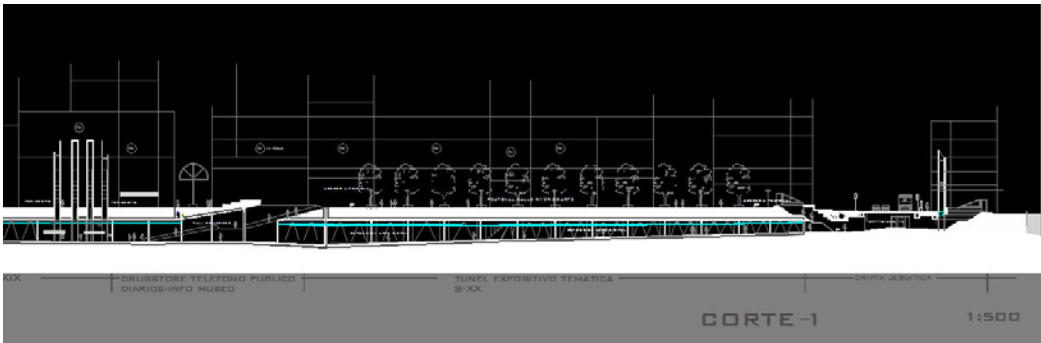


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

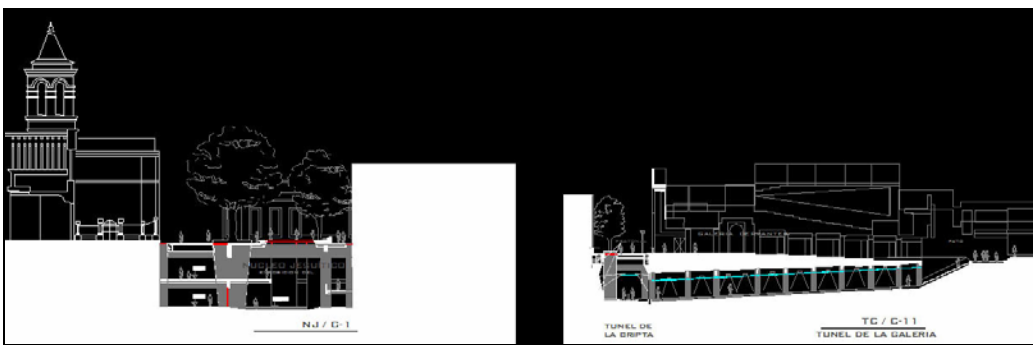


Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

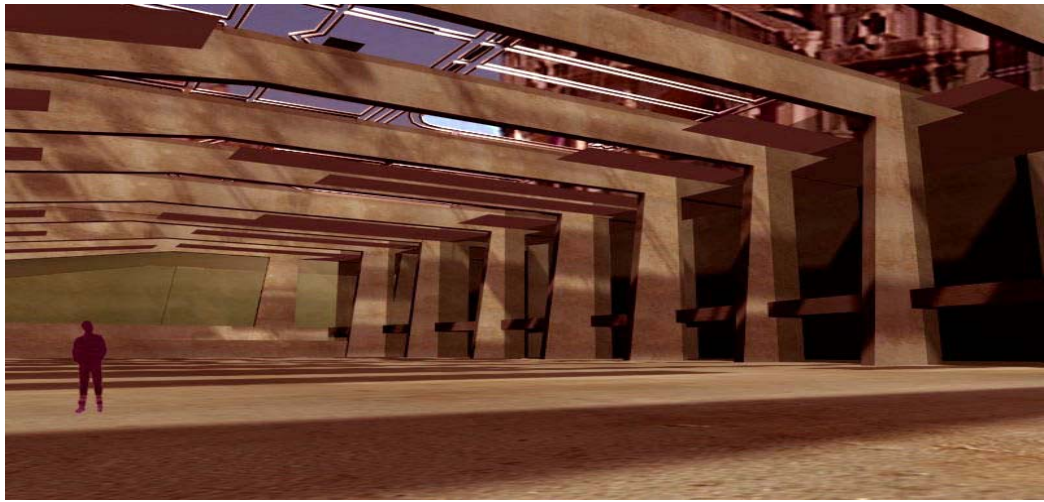


Figure 18

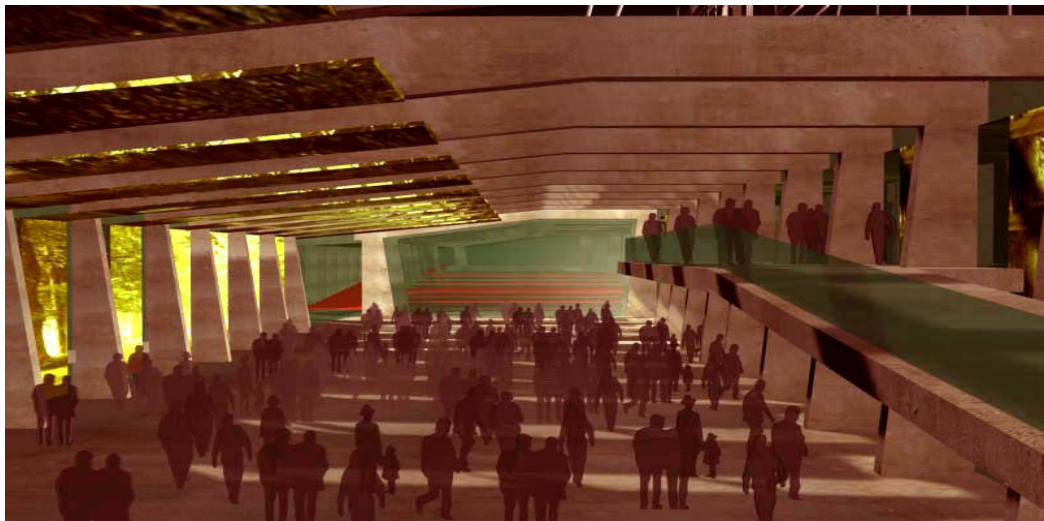


Figure 19



Figure 20

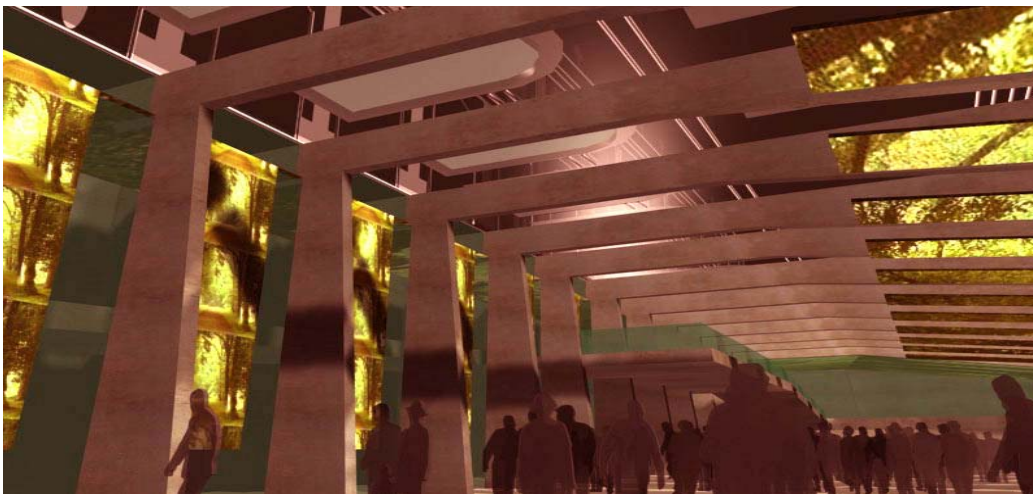


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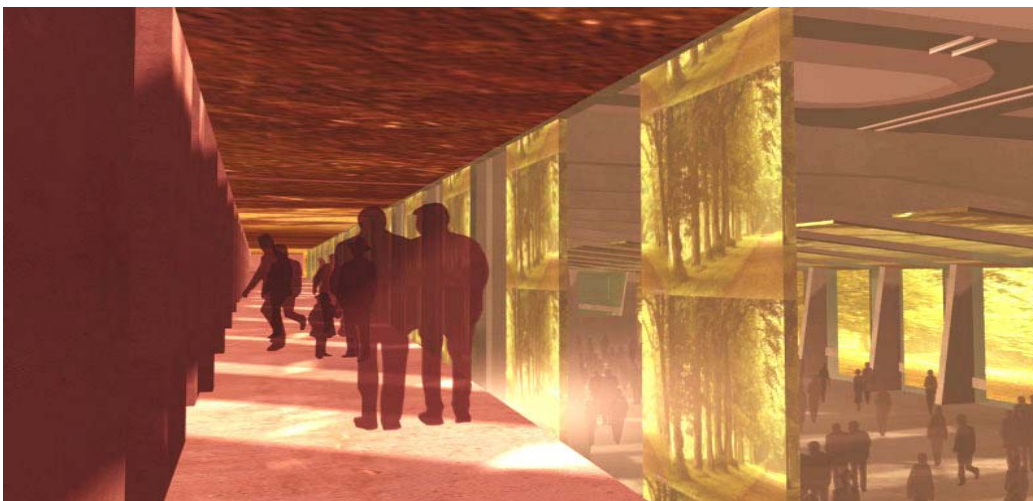


Figure 22

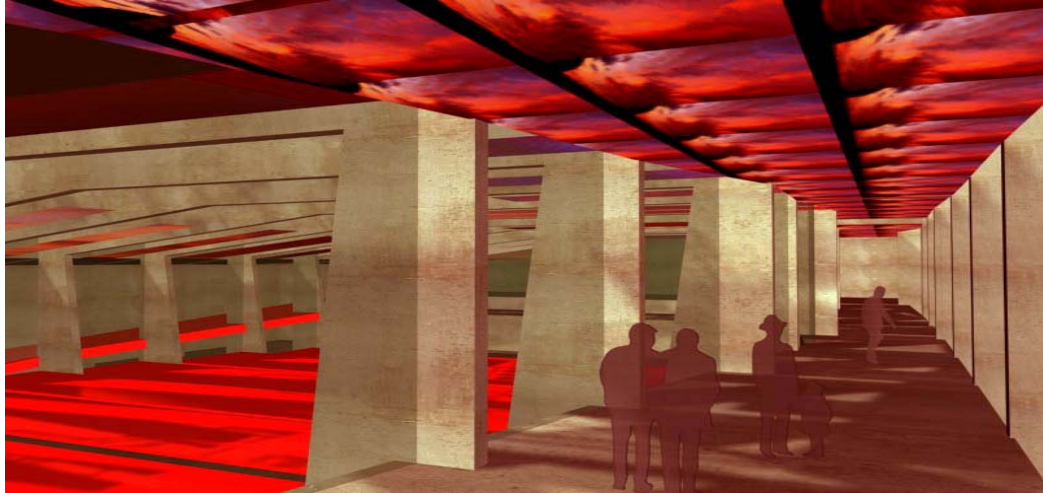


Figure 23



Figure 23: Jesuit Architectural Heritage

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