

Masjid Proposal

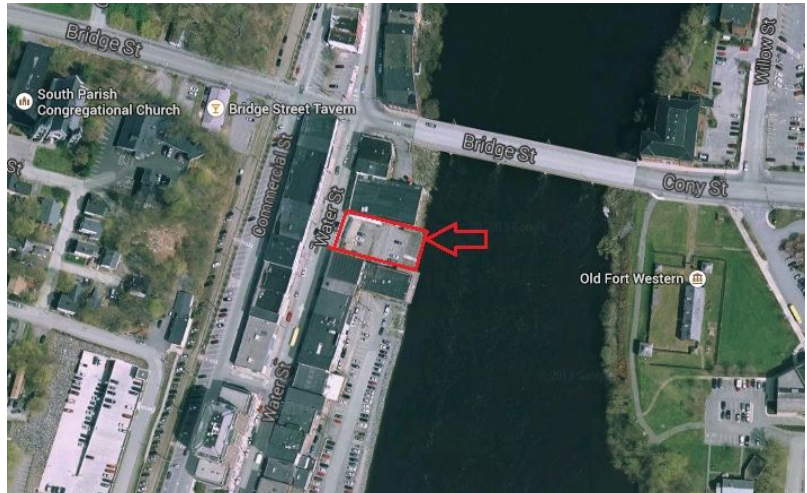
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Overview

The Maine Muslim Association is commissioning a new masjid to serve as a meeting place, place of prayer, and community center for the City of Augusta, Maine. In a world of growing tension over faith and acceptance this building is an important investment for the community as a whole.

Existing Site

The roughly 83'x125' parcel located at 189 Main St. in Augusta, Maine (also known as the "Segal Lot") connects two different ground planes. The first of which is the Main St. which sees the highest percentage of foot traffic. Dropping down 15' to the lower ground plane by way of a retaining wall, the site abuts the Kennebec river but requires maintaining a right of way to the all the river-adjacent buildings. Another major design factor is the FEMA floodplain which will require the design to sit off the lower ground plane approximately 10'.



Design Intention

Like many river communities in Maine, the downtown Augusta fabric is rich with brick and masonry construction, much of which is painted in bright lively colors. The buildings are also flush to the sidewalk as they line Water Street with heights generally around three stories.

One point of concern was the street presence of this project which should work to unify and enrich the downtown experience and not divide it.



Masjid Architectural Details

Inspired by the existing fabric this project will make use of color and mass as a way to connect to the existing downtown. The footprint of the building will be reduced to maintain public access to the waterfront to the south of the building. This shift will allow more light to spill on and into the new Masjid.

The facade will continue the fenestration rhythm already established along the length of the downtown district with colored glass highlighting traditional 10 point mosaic patterns made from high performance concrete. The colors, blue, red and green, pull from the existing downtown color palette, with this project introducing fuscia as a new color to add its mark to the tradition.

The **minaret** at the corner rises to reach the surrounding buildings and extends slightly further to allow patrons to locate the site from further away and clearly marking the primary entrance of the building. It is also modern in design, continuing the language of the of tilt up concrete construction. At the top it is adorned by a **crescent moon** in gold leaf.

There are two entrances that worshippers and visitors will pass through, one for men and the other for women. Once through the **arched portal** a restroom and **ablution** unit are directly off the **sahan** maintaining separation for men and women. A riwaq lines all the sahan and leads toward the prayer hall beyond. The **design module** for the structural bays is 10'x7 ½'.

The **sahan** is the heart of this project. Light pours through another 10 point mosaic pattern in the roof plane creating a bright interior space reminiscent of outdoor courtyards in warmer climates. The ten point star mosaic is the the repeating pattern that anchors the buildings detail. It can be found adorned on the minaret, behind stained glass along the facade and it makes up the massive overhead canopy.

A **riwaq** surrounds the **sahan** and **prayer hall** dividing the shoe zone from the no shoe zone. At the rear of the prayer hall is a prayer space dedicated for women, with spatial divide further reinforced by a colonnade.

There is one primary office which is dedicated for day to day operations and public relations. Accompanying the office is conference room which can also double as an educational space for Qur'anic classes. Below the office spaces is a full basement for all mechanical services with void at the center of the foundation for front street traffic to continue uninterrupted.

Summary

This modern interpretation of masjid connects the rich history of the city while continuing to move the aesthetics of the downtown forward. It encourages connections with the public and a peaceful space for prayer.