

Sacred Grounds:

A Landscape Vision for St. Martin's

Report of the Landscape Planning Task Force

Episcopal Church of St. Martin

Davis, California

Drafted December 2020, Revised May 2021 and June 2021

Introduction

This report represents the work of the St. Martin's Landscape Planning Task Force, with input from a presentation to members of the Vestry and Ministry Council.

- It constitutes a vision that can serve as a framework
- Our landscape should be flexible and evolve as St. Martin's changes
- Report contents:
 - Purposes: charge to the Landscape Planning Task Force
 - Background: information about our campus
 - Guiding Principles
 - Existing Spaces
 - Potential New Spaces
- We envision **discernment** among parishioners as the next step in development

Purpose 1 (verbatim from the charge)

The Landscape Planning Task Force was commissioned by the Vestry in July 2020 to develop an overall landscape vision for the Episcopal Church of St. Martin in Davis, California. It was charged with:

- Considering how our landscape exemplifies our values as a congregation and our understanding of our mission in the community and the world.
- Making wise decisions about maintaining current investments in irrigation, trees, and the meditation garden, integrating the new with the old whenever appropriate.
- Planning for the unified, intentional organization of our grounds. This might include an overall theme (such as native plantings, food production, bird/insect plantings) or a series of micro themes for specific areas.
- Recognizing that we live in a Mediterranean climate during a time of climate crisis, leading to the strong possibility of extended periods of drought in future years and planning accordingly. We must commit to balancing beauty with efficient water use and soil health.

Purpose 2 (verbatim from the charge)

- Considering creative use of currently little-used or less developed areas to fully use our space to best advantage.
- Considering the various space needs of the community groups using our grounds, as well as the needs of youth and adult groups within the congregation.
- Being open to the possible need for new and more frequent uses of our outdoor spaces due to the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identifying what general type of plantings go into which spaces, with individual choices and design of individual spaces to be determined by a Gardening Committee.
- Offering suggestions about how to prioritize the implementation of the plan.

The Task Force was asked to take approximately six months to complete its work and conclude by developing a visual representation of its plan which will be available to the congregation.

The Landscape Planning Task Force

- Dorothy Brandon
 - Steve Coffeen (from 1/2021)
 - John Dolan (through 11/2020)
 - Pamela Dolan, Rector
 - Carole Hom
 - Janet Lane
 - Beth Robbins
 - Jim Schaal
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- Jessie Ann Owens, Junior Warden, *ex officio* (from 4/2021)

Background: Locale, Site, and Land Use

- Founded in 1953, the Episcopal Church of St. Martin serves the community of Davis, California (home of UC Davis) and surrounding communities in Yolo County.
- Since 1962, St. Martin's has developed a 2.6 acre parcel at 640 Hawthorn Lane in West Central Davis. Major buildings were completed over 40 years: Parish Hall and Rooms 2-4 (1963), Sanctuary (1967), Rooms 5-9 (1993), Administration Building (1998), and Narthex (2011).
- The parcel is bounded by single-family residential homes to the north and west (across Hawthorn Lane), by the Davis Medical Center complex to the east, and by the Sycamore Lane Apartments to the south. Further south are University Mall and the UC Davis campus.
- Pre-pandemic: the campus is frequented by an average of 160 worshippers on Sunday mornings, with up to 140-150 persons on campus on weekdays and Saturdays for church and community service programs.
- The St. Martin's campus is unfenced and open to visitors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As such, the campus welcomes many pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers, and other passersby. This traffic represents a significant opportunity for positive community interactions shaped by well-designed landscaping. The congregation places high value on hospitality and service to the community.

Background: Site Soils, Slopes, and Drainage

- According to USDA soil maps, the native soil underlying the St. Martin's campus is 85% Brentwood clay loam, 5% Yolo, 5% Zamora, 3% Rincon, and 2% Myers. This soil mix is fertile, friable, well-drained, and considered highly productive for agriculture when irrigated.
- The campus site is mostly level and well drained, with a modestly raised path through the redwoods south of the Sanctuary. There is a purposely depressed area south of the Narthex, designed as a bioswale for periodic drainage of the baptistry and percolation/drainage of surface flow due to precipitation.
- The campus site has a typical suburban land use allocation of roofed building area, pedestrian hardscape, asphalt parking lots, and landscaped areas.
- There are significant opportunities for rainwater harvesting for irrigation (which would require installing gutters on most building roofs as well as rainwater storage tanks) and for groundwater recharge (which would require installing permeable paving in parking areas and walkways).

Background: Local Climate, Microclimates, and Climate Change

- Davis, California has a hot summer Mediterranean climate, typical of the California Central Valley with cooling breezes from the San Joaquin Delta. The Köppen-Geiger climate classification is Csa (Hot-Summer Mediterranean), the Sunset Climate Zone is 14 (Inland with Some Ocean Influence), and the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone is 9b.
- The campus of the Episcopal Church of St. Martin has distinct microclimates influenced by sun exposure, tree cover, and buildings. The sunny central Great Lawn, for example, is noticeably warmer than the shaded Redwood Path south of the Sanctuary due to solar heat gain by day and re-radiated heat gain from buildings by night. These microclimates should be considered in landscaping decisions.
- The Davis climate is projected to grow warmer on average in the coming decades. Climate change will likely result in longer and hotter droughts, more extreme heat days, and more severe storms with greater potential for wind damage and rain flooding. Extended droughts and extreme heat days will require more irrigation to maintain even the most drought-tolerant plantings. Mitigation measures may include xeriscaping, mulching, subsurface and drip irrigation systems for specific trees and plantings of high value, rainwater harvesting, and greywater recycling as appropriate and affordable.

Background: Tree Canopy and Species Diversity

Common	<i>Genus species</i>	Number	Origin	Climate Adapted?
Coast Redwood	<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>	43	CA coastal	No
Chinese Hackberry	<i>Celtis sinensis</i>	9	East Asia	Yes
Chinese Pistache	<i>Pistacia sinensis</i>	7	East Asia	Yes
Japanese Zelkova	<i>Zelkova serrata</i>	4	East Asia	Yes
Incense Cedar	<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	3	CA, OR, NV	Yes
Italian Cypress	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	3	Mediterranean	Yes
Crape Myrtle	<i>Lagerstroemia</i> hybrids	3	South Asia	Yes
Pin Oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	2	East, Central US	No
Live Oak, Valley oak	<i>Quercus sp</i>	1 of each	CA	Yes
Cherry, Crabapple	<i>Prunus, Malus</i>	1 of each	Horticultural, not CA	No
Catalina Cherry	<i>Prunus ilicifolia</i>	1	CA chaparral	Yes
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	1	CA, riparian	Yes

Background: Tree Canopy and Climate Change

- The campus of the Episcopal Church of St. Martin is blessed with an extensive canopy of 80 mature and well-maintained trees.
- A healthy tree canopy provides shade, shelter, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic beauty. Well-placed trees reduce summer cooling loads on buildings through shade and evapotranspiration and reduce winter heating loads by sheltering buildings from wind. Thus, trees lower the climate change impact of energy used for heating and air conditioning. Trees also sequester carbon, filter particulates, and improve local air quality. Finally, studies show that trees promote a sense of connection to nature and thus enhance the well-being of people as well as wildlife.
- For people in faith communities, the stewardship of trees can evoke biblical and theological reflection as well as a spiritual connection to nature as divine creation.
- All of the trees at St. Martin's are well cared for through a regular schedule of maximally efficient irrigation (given their substantial water needs), mulching, trimming, fertilization, and integrated pest management.
- Unfortunately, the 43 Coast Redwoods—comprising more than half of our trees—are not well-adapted to the local climate and must be supported through costly subsurface irrigation. This maladaptation will grow worse as the climate grows warmer. Climate change may also cause more severe storms to damage trees of all species.

Guiding Principles 1: developed by consensus after fall discussion

Enhance Environmental Sustainability:

- **Maintain Tree Canopy:** prune, mulch, and irrigate existing trees for to reduce building HVAC loads and provide shade, carbon sequestration, and particulate filtration
- **Cultivate Resilience:** select climate-adapted, drought-tolerant, and preferably native species for all new plantings; prepare for potential tree damage due to severe storms
- **Conserve Water:** remove non-native turf grass (except for the central Great Lawn), replace with drought-tolerant plantings or arborist wood chips; repair or replace inefficient irrigation with water-wise irrigation systems as needed
- **Reduce Toxics and Emissions:** reduce non-native turf areas needing fertilizer, herbicides, and mowing; replace gas-powered equipment with electric
- **Build Healthy Soil:** under trees, maintain deep layer of leaf and needle litter; on turf areas, use mulching mower; invest in wood chipper and leaf shredder to make use of tree trimmings and garden waste on site; set up and maintain compost bins for landscape waste (not food waste)
- **Enhance Wildlife Habitat:** select plantings to support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators; add bird houses, bat houses, solitary bee houses, and small water feature for birds and amphibians; obtain Audubon Society Backyard Wildlife Habitat Certification

Guiding Principles 2

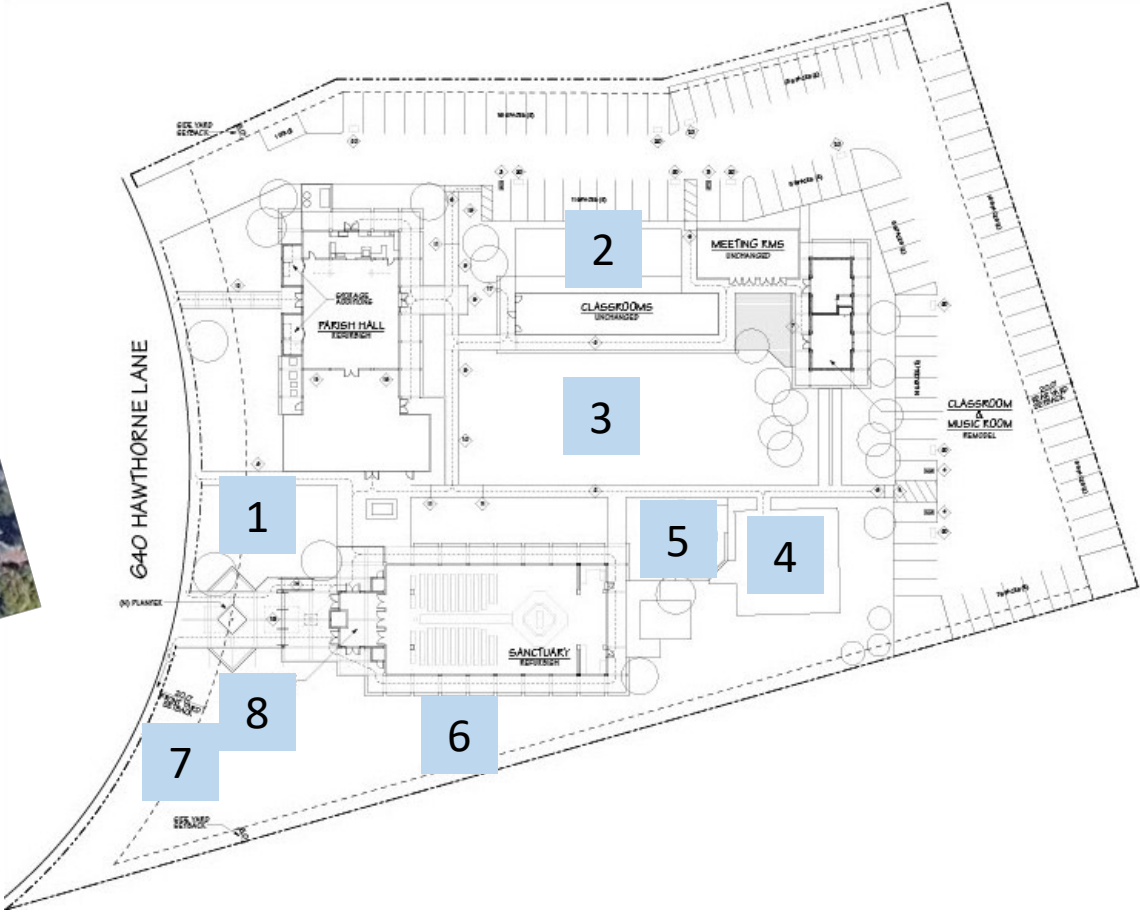
Ensure Financial Viability:

- **Preserve Existing Assets:** maintain existing tree canopy and landscaping, except where irrigation or maintenance costs are disproportionate to aesthetic value and practical use
- **Budget New Projects for the Long Term:** plan projects carefully to make use of the most cost-effective contractors and materials; budget for long-term maintenance of each new project
- **Develop Volunteers:** recruit, train, and retain volunteers from the congregation and the community to reduce use of paid contractors and cultivate sense of shared stewardship
- **Fundraise Effectively:** group planned improvements into distinct projects that can serve as focus for effective fundraising

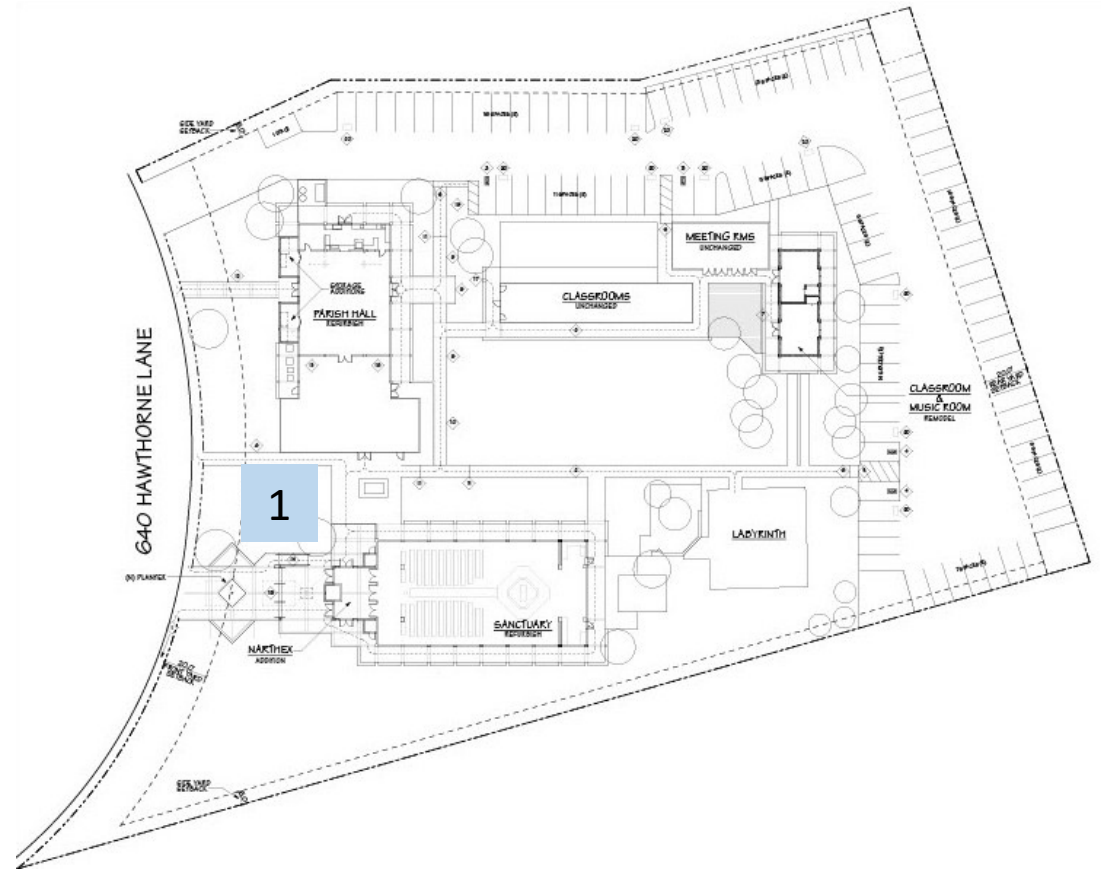
Create Liturgical and Community Spaces:

- Develop underutilized area west of the Parish Hall to create new Holy Ground Living Classroom for community dialogue and learning
- Install raised beds near Parish Hall to create kitchen herb garden for Davis Community Meals *(note, 5/2021: this was suggested prior to development of the Grace Garden partnership)*
- Add communion table and temporary seating to create an outdoor Chapel of the Redwoods on the existing Great Lawn *(note, 5/2021: this was suggested prior to use of labyrinth for outdoor worship)*
- Add seasonal Stations of the Journey throughout the campus *(note, 5/2021: this was suggested prior development of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday outdoor meditations)*

Existing Spaces

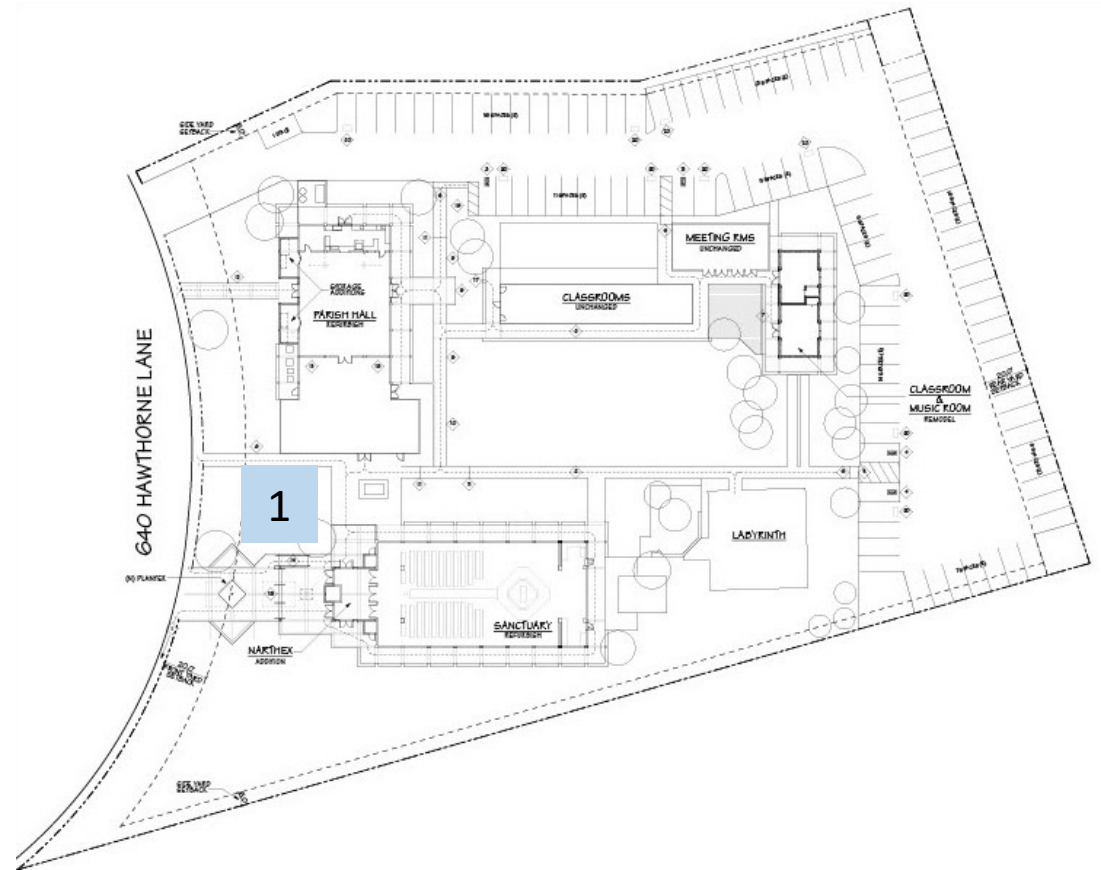


Existing Spaces: The Meditation Garden [1]

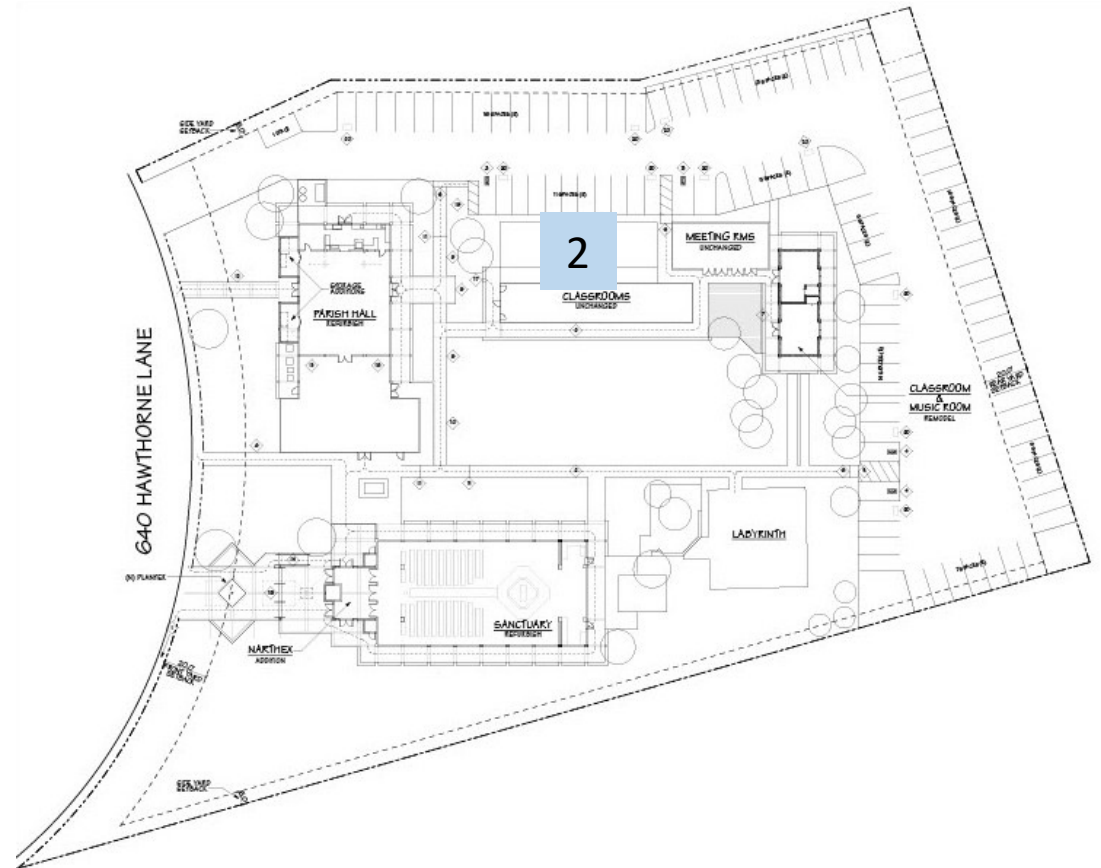


Existing Spaces: The Meditation Garden [1]

- Meditation garden with native plantings, stone benches, and a small water feature under a valley oak and 3 crape myrtles
- Offers naturalistic setting for meditation, contemplation, conversation, and small gatherings
- Set at main pedestrian entrance to campus from Hawthorn Drive, between the Narthex and the Administration Building
- Designed by parishioner Greg Webber and built by Dan Garrett Landscape in 2015
- Recommendations: **Maintain in present form.**

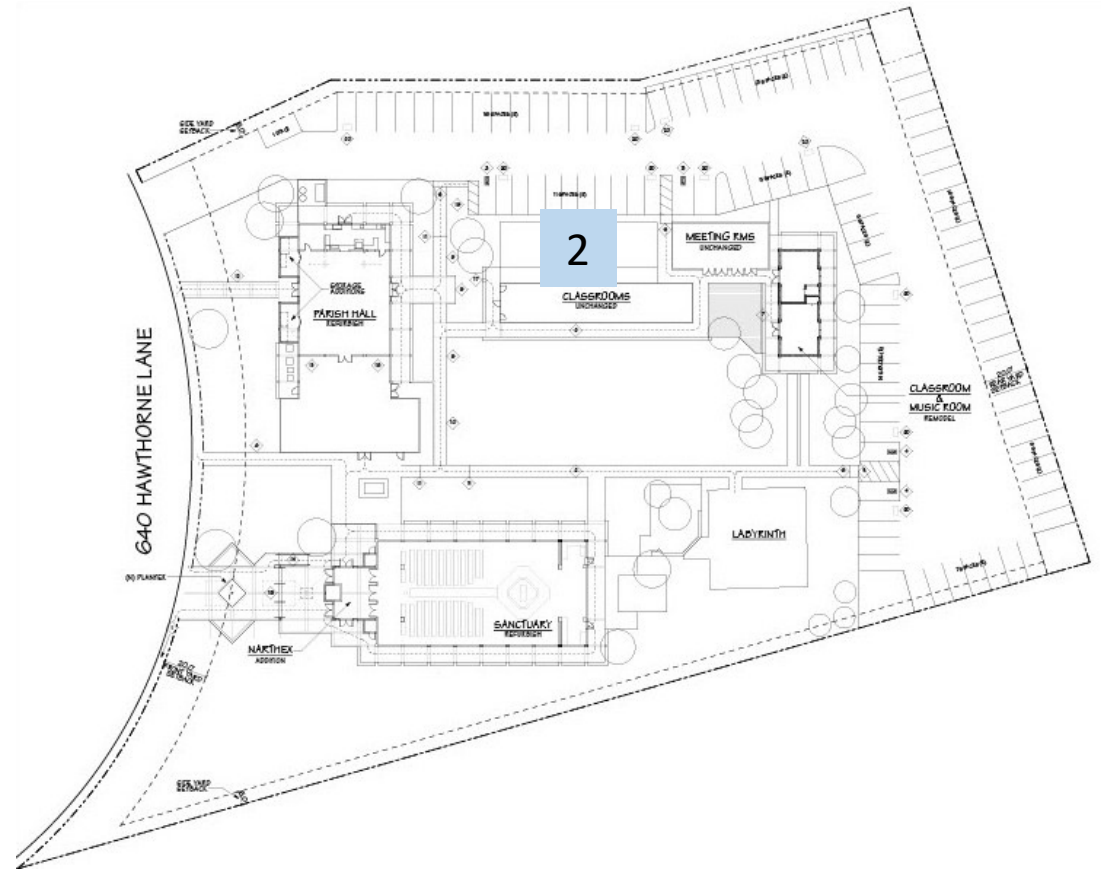


Existing Spaces: The Children's Play Area [2]

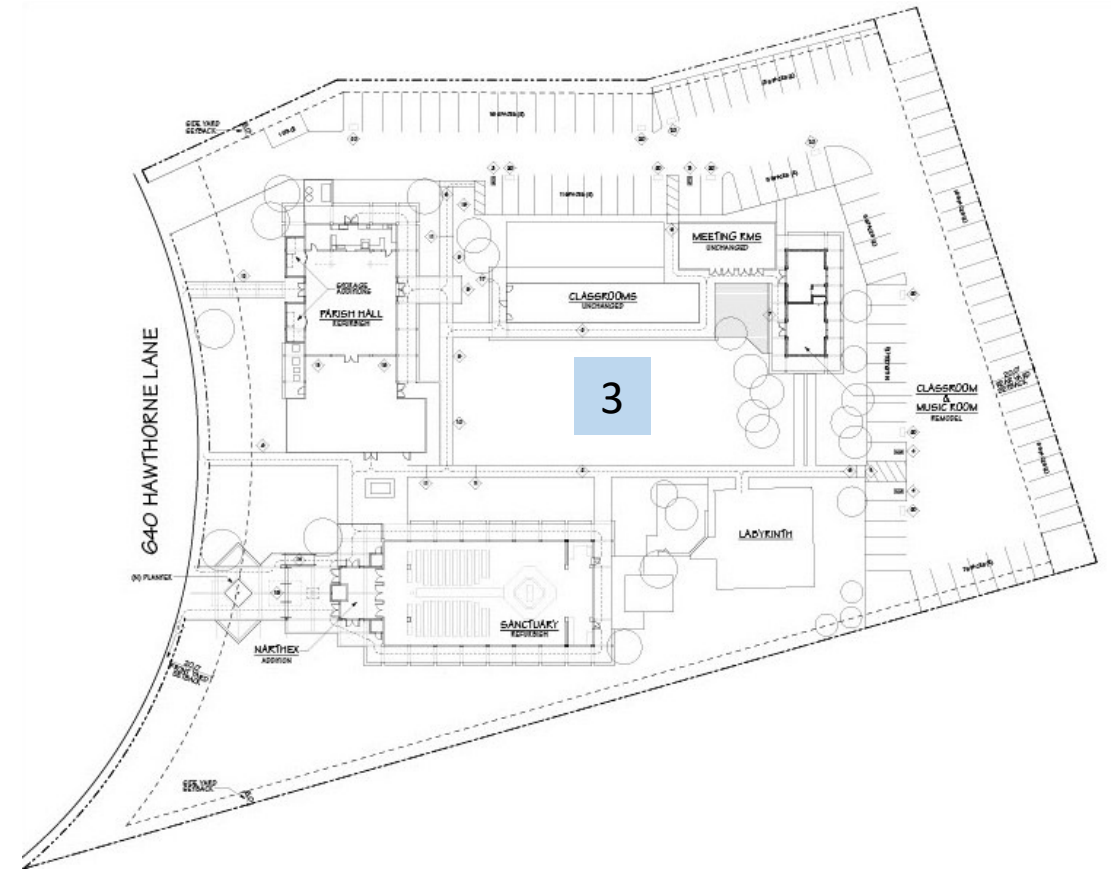


Existing Spaces: The Children's Play Area [2]

- Nature play area with a grass, a willow tunnel, a footbridge, and a bark area surrounded by plants; a concrete tricycle riding area surrounding a concrete raised planter with native plantings; an elderberry tree will eventually provide shade
- Provides secure, fenced play area visible to teachers and parents
- Adjacent to the Nursery (Room 2) and the Godly Play rooms (Rooms 3 and 4), next to the north parking lot
- Designed by parishioner Greg Webber and built by Everyday Ecology in 2019
- Recommendations: **Maintain in present form.**

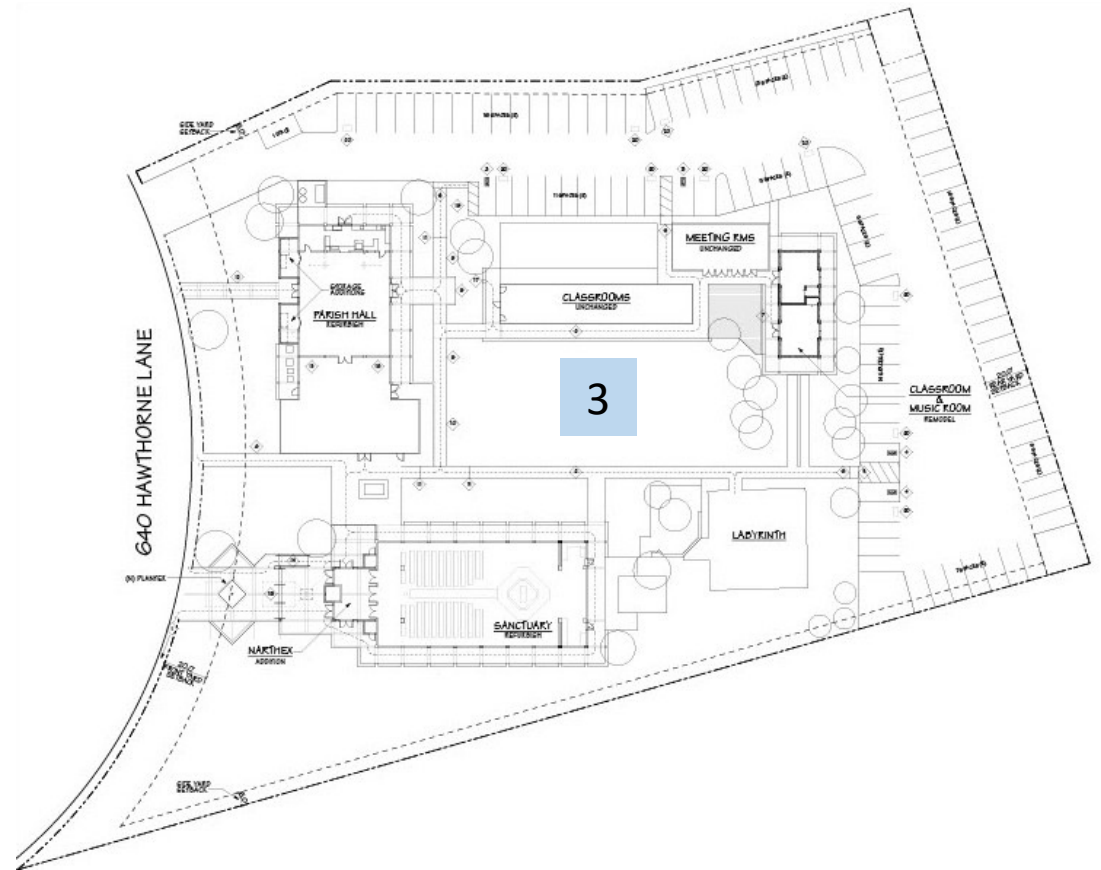


Existing Spaces: The Great Lawn [3]

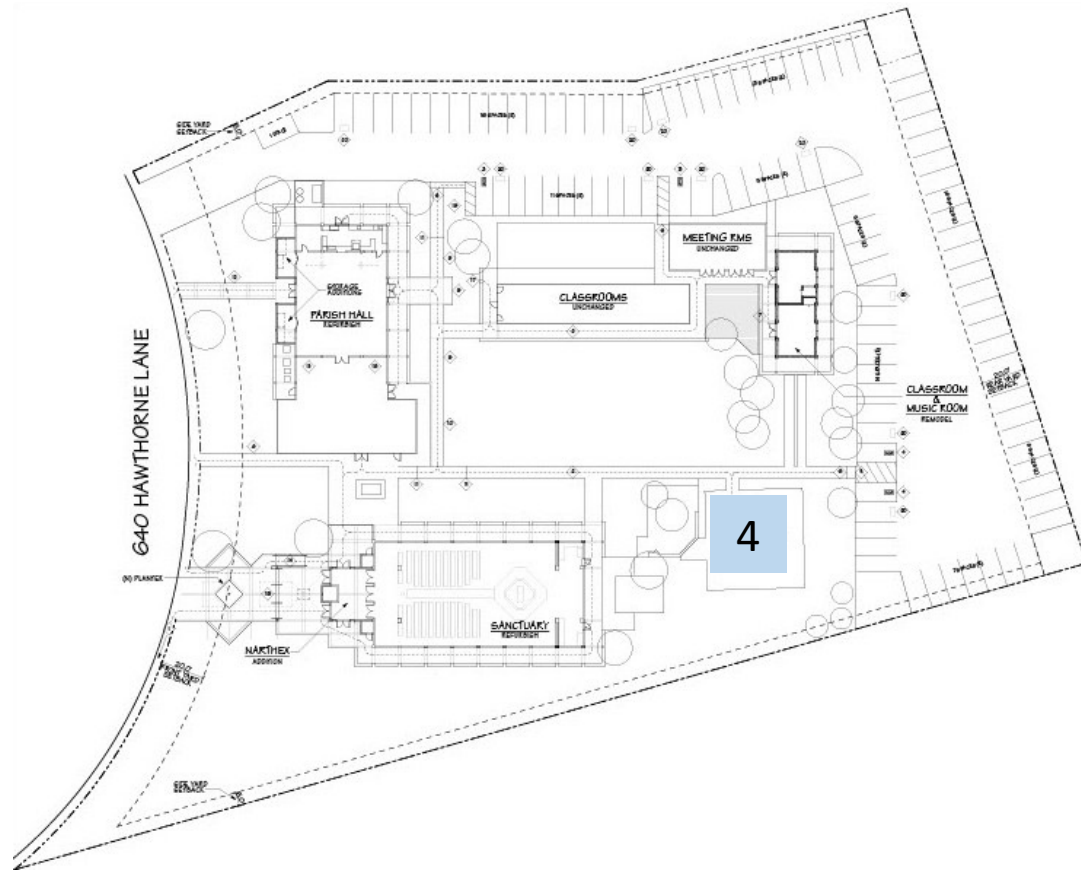


Existing Spaces: The Great Lawn [3]

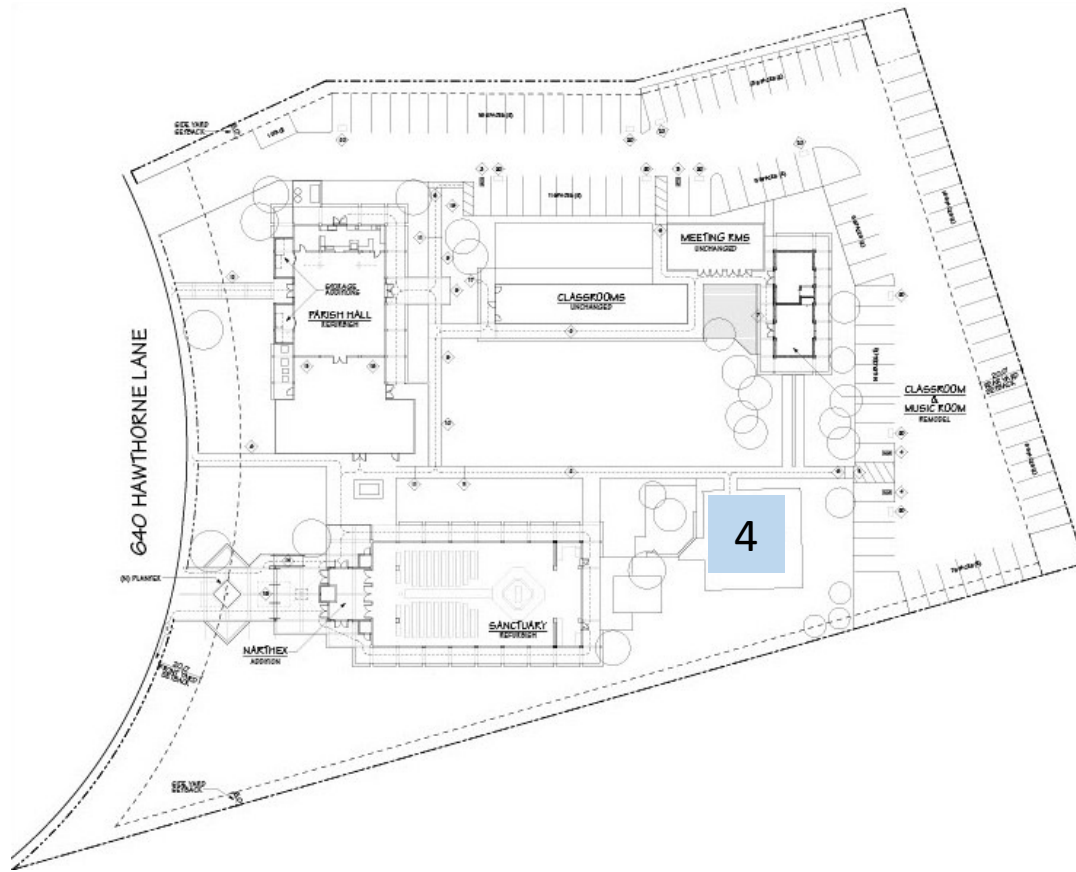
- Large, sunny central lawn area used for outdoor gatherings, processions, and intergenerational play
- Graced by a small grove of coast redwoods on the east end and a hackberry on the west end
- As the largest open expanse on campus, offers best location for outdoor worship
- As the sunniest unpaved area on campus, also offers the best potential for food gardening
- Bounded by Sanctuary, Columbarium, and Labyrinth to the south; Parish Hall and Administration Building to the west; and Rooms 3-9 to the north
- ~8600 square feet
- Recommendations: **Maintain in present form.**



Existing Spaces: The Labyrinth [4]

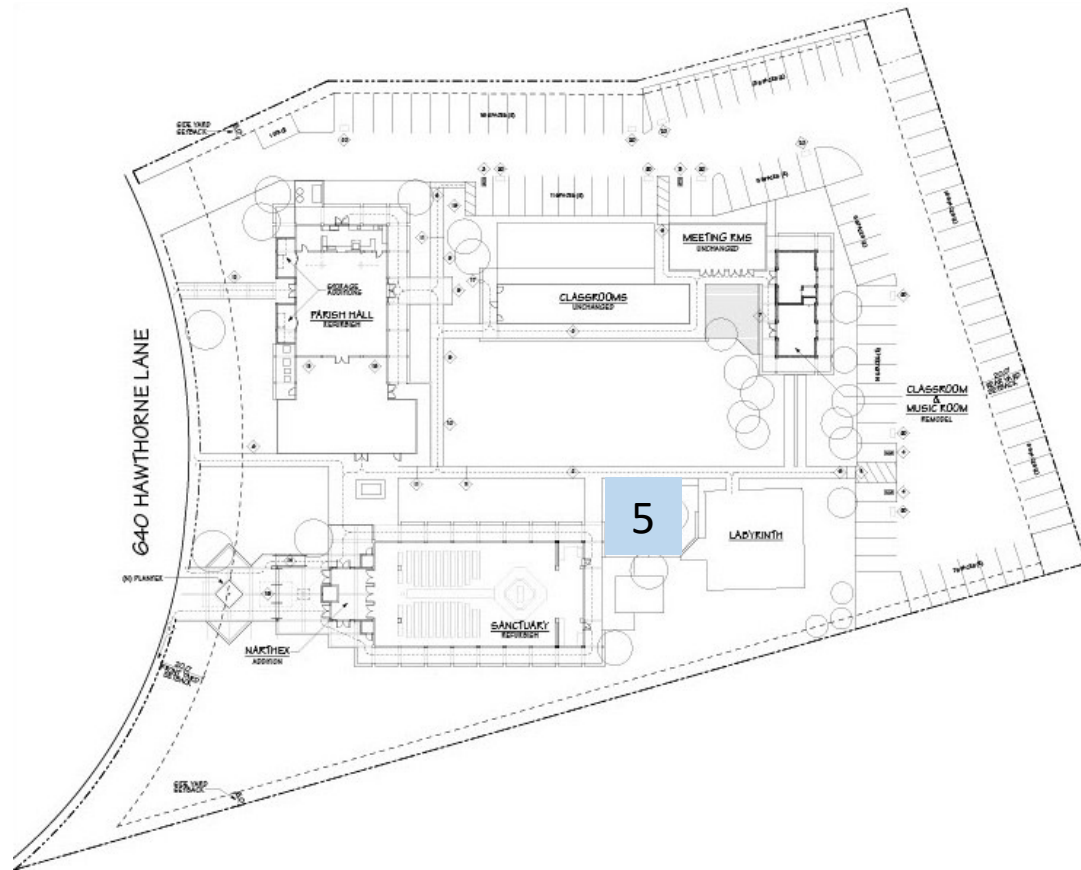


Existing Spaces: The Labyrinth [4]

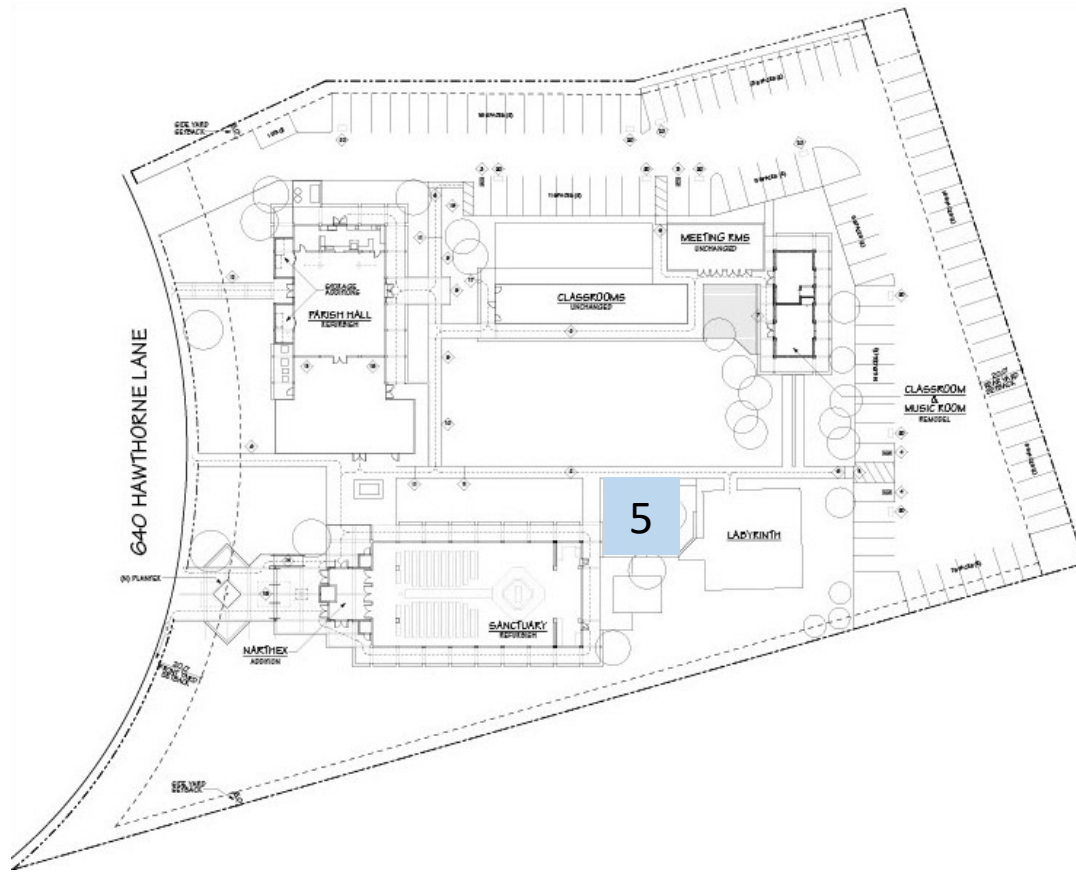


- Outdoor labyrinth patterned after the indoor labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral
- Offers graciously fenced public space with four wooden benches for walking meditation, sitting contemplation, conversation, and community gatherings
- Built from concrete and granite resin and shaded by coast redwoods and Mediterranean cypresses.
- Adjacent to the main pedestrian entrance from the east parking lot
- Designed by artist Robert Ferré and built by church volunteers in 2009
- Heavily used by the wider community
- Recommendations: **Remove grass but otherwise maintain in present form. Consider ways to add shade.**

Existing Spaces: The Columbarium [5]

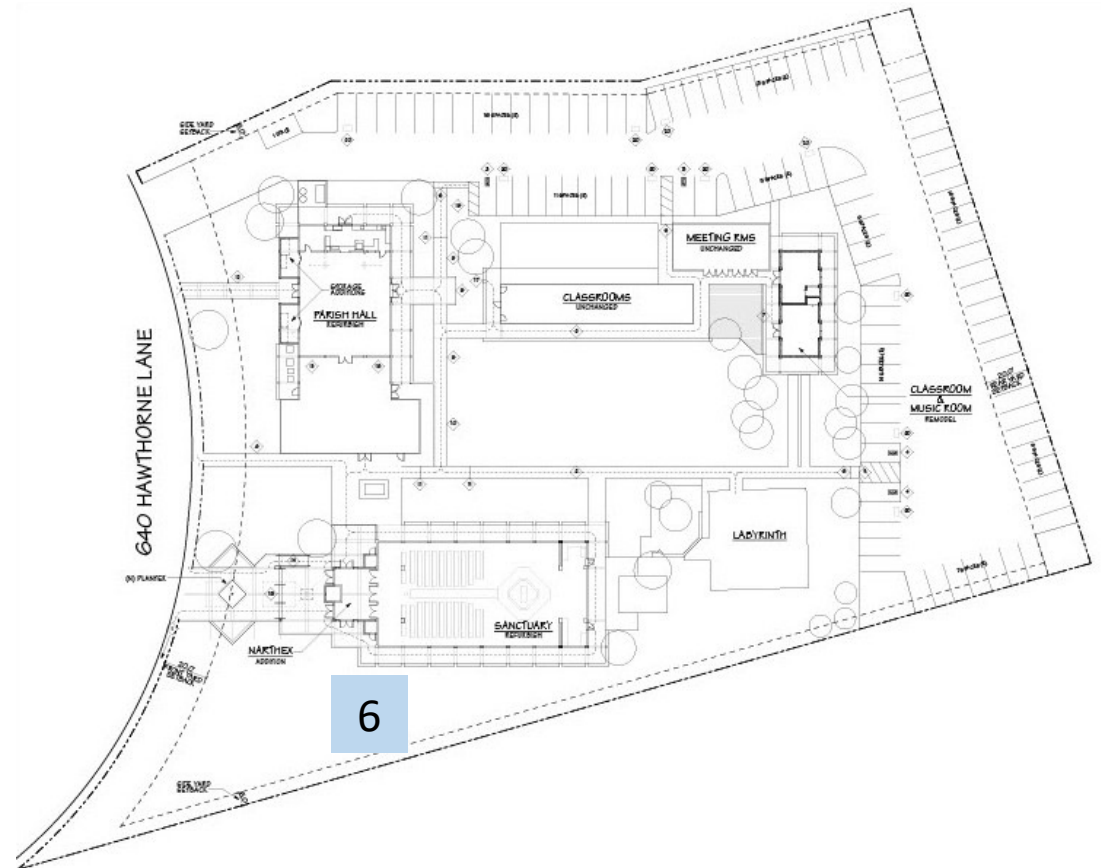


Existing Spaces: The Columbarium [5]



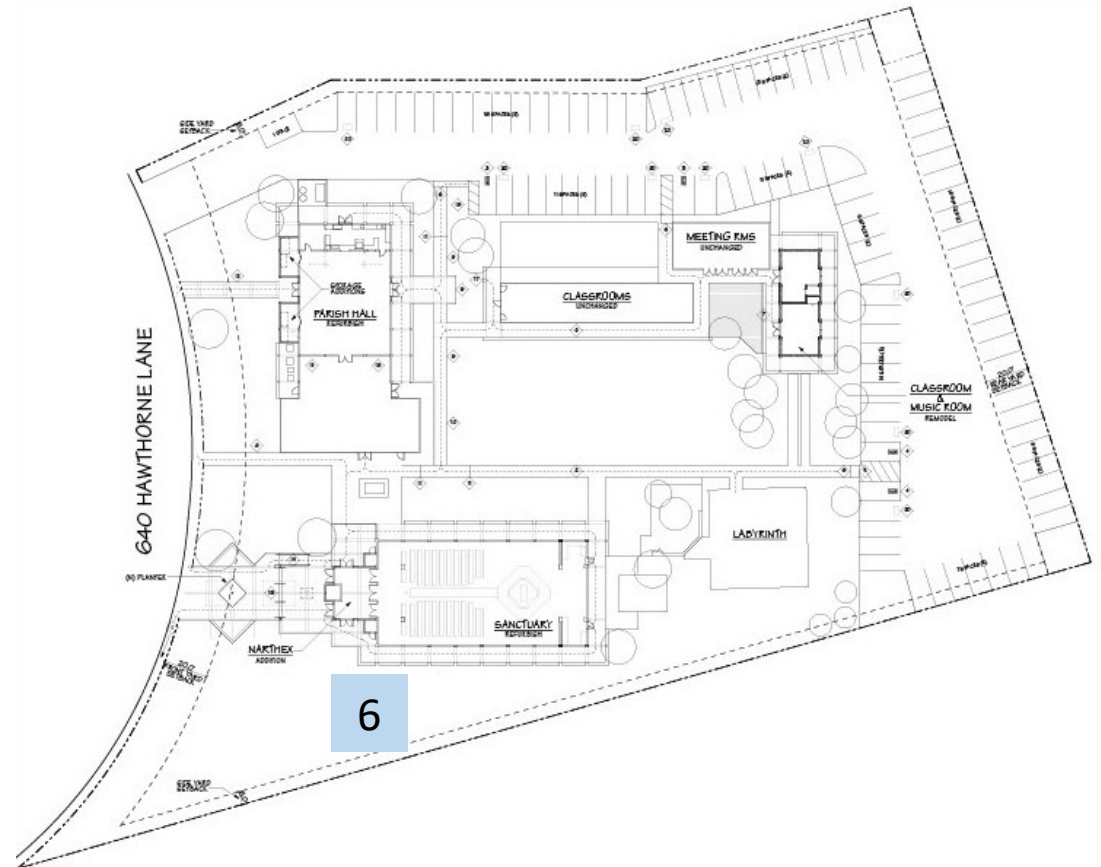
- Outdoor columbarium for the inurnment and repose of cremated remains of loved ones
- Provides small, quiet space with seating for remembrance and reflection
- Built of stone block with 120 metal niche inserts, surrounded by wrought iron fence under coast redwoods and a cherry tree
- Set adjacent to the Labyrinth, east of the Sanctuary
- Designed by Maria Ogrydziak, built in 2005, and expanded in 2016
- Recommendations: **Maintain in present form.**

Existing Spaces: The Redwood Path [6]

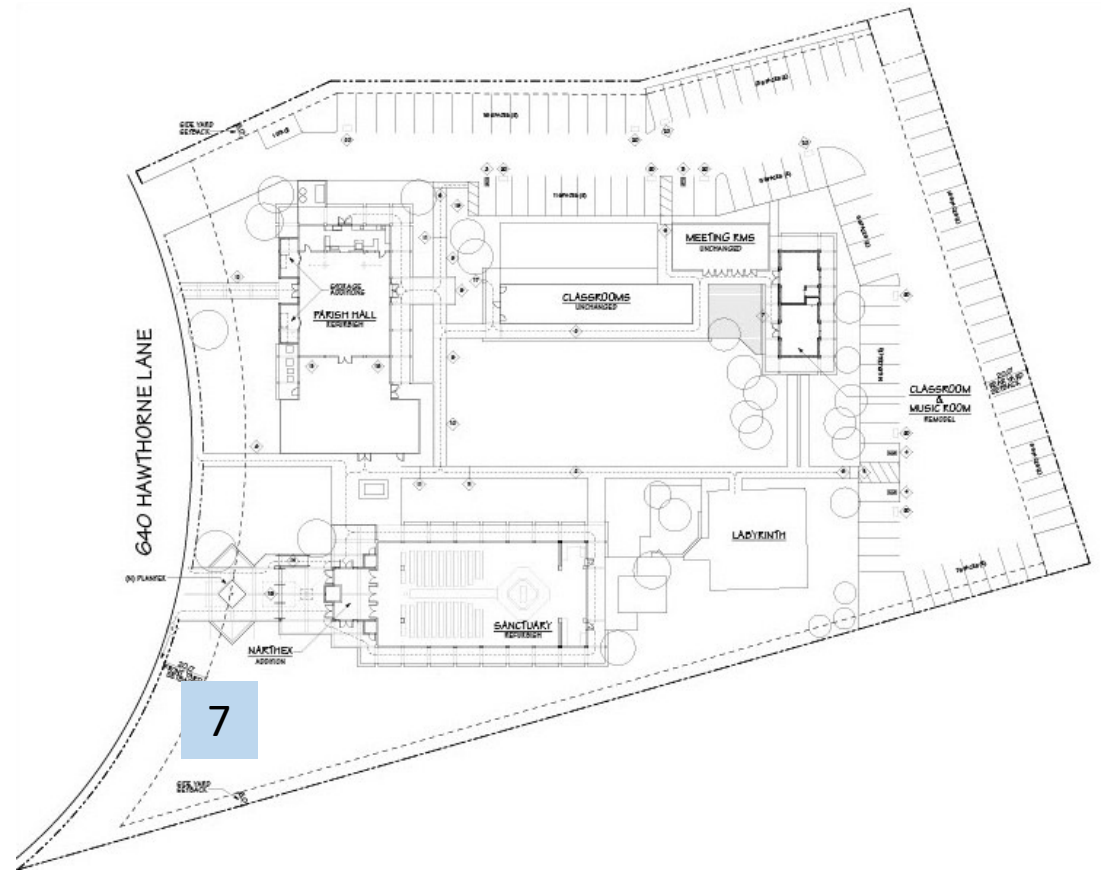


Existing Spaces: The Redwood Path [6]

- Winding, slightly elevated walking path of decomposed granite, surrounded by redwood mulch under south grove of magnificent coast redwoods. Heavily used by the wider community to reach Labyrinth
- Offers cool, deeply shaded path between the Labyrinth and Columbarium to the east and the Lych Gate to the west
- South of the Sanctuary
- Recommendations: **Maintain in present form, possibly add shade-adapted California natives.**

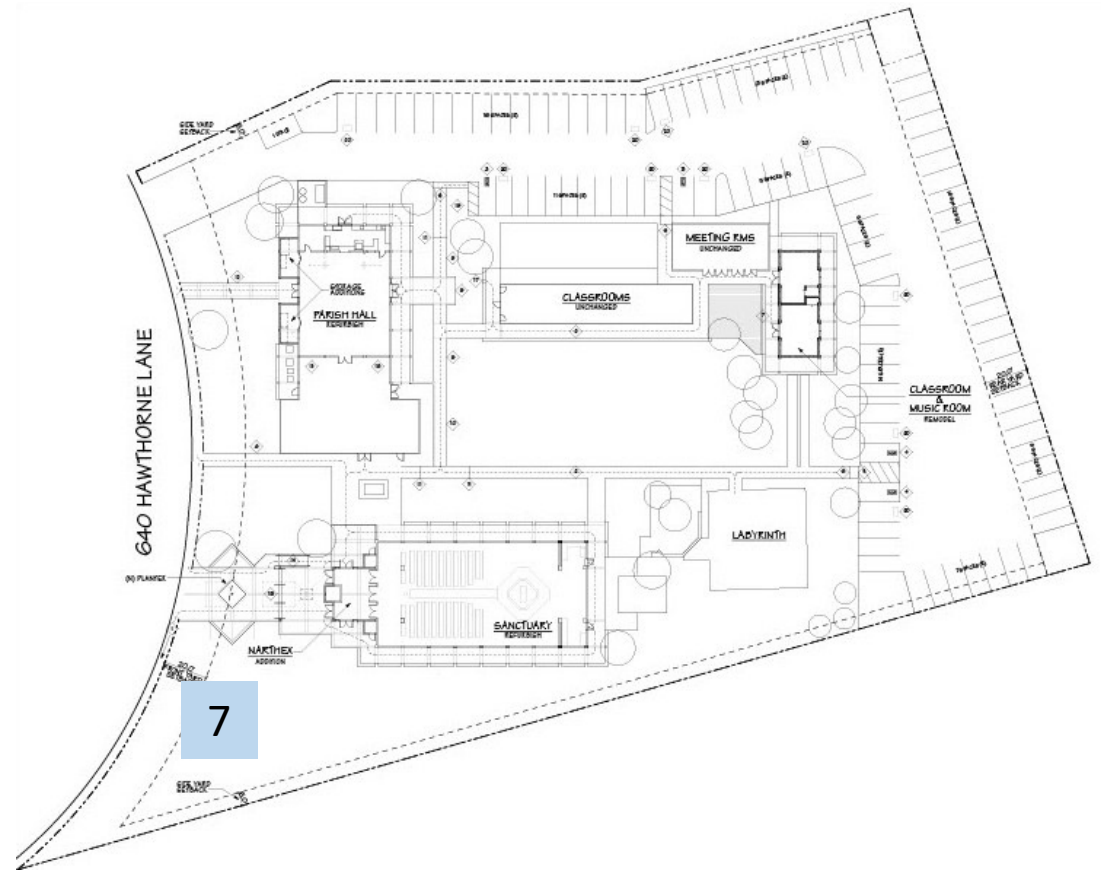


Existing Spaces: The Lych Gate [7]

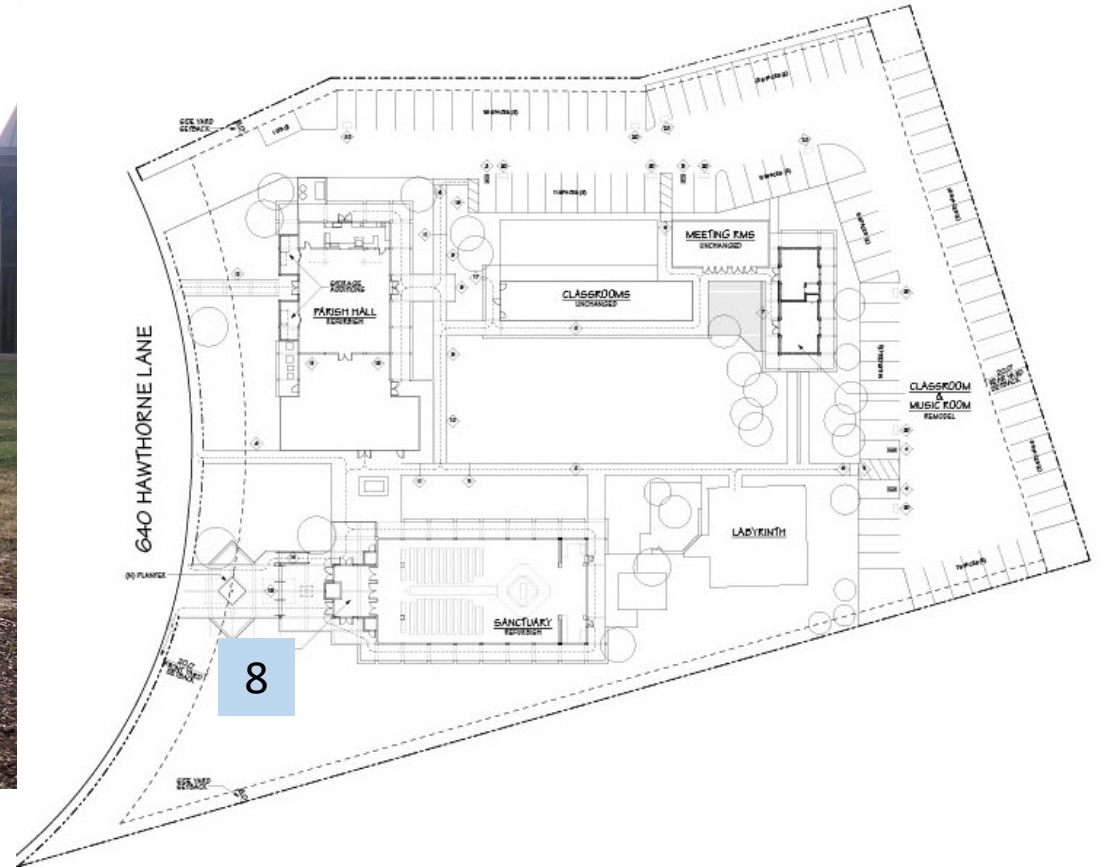


Existing Spaces: The Lych Gate [7]

- Covered seating structure modeled on the traditional gate to an English churchyard and burial ground, built of same lumber and roofing as the Narthex shade structure
- Offers shaded, calming space for remembrance, rest, and conversation
- Set at southwest corner of campus, at entrance to the Redwood Path
- Designed by Eric Doud and built in 2013.
- Recommendations: **Maintain in present form.**

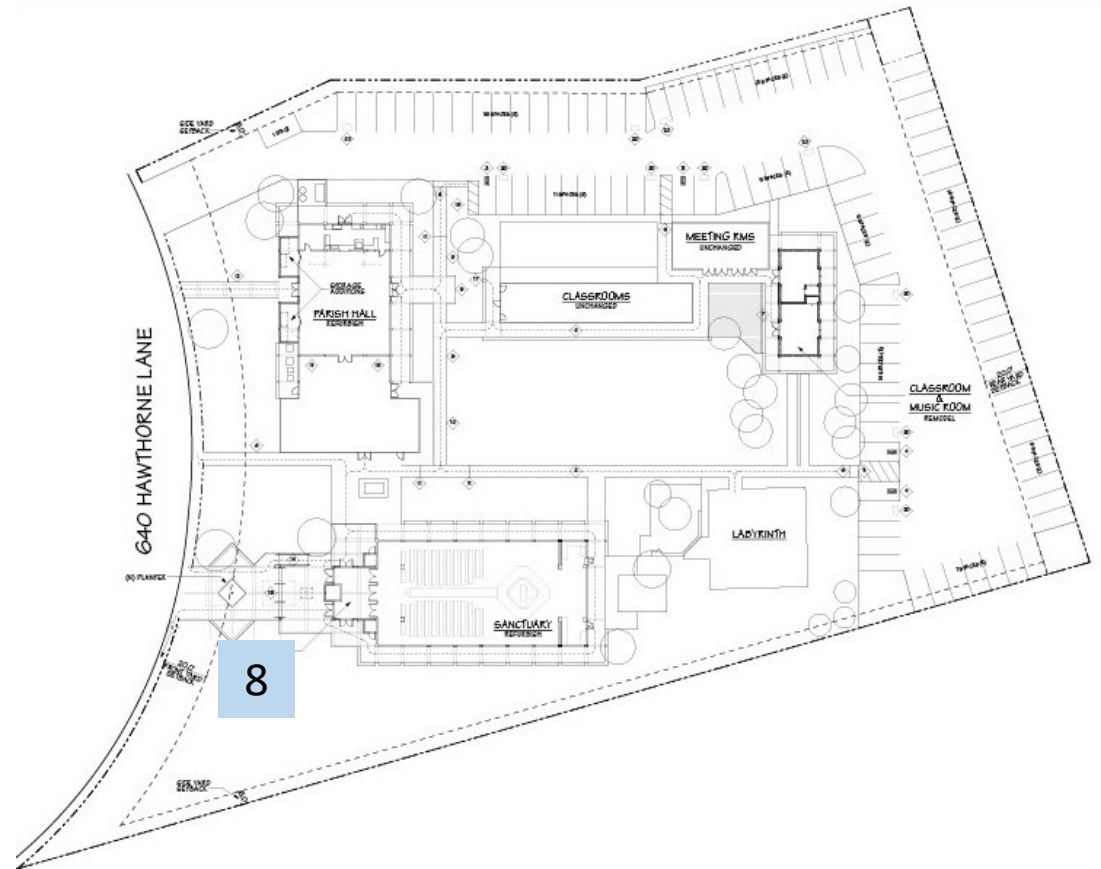


Existing Spaces: Bioswale [8]



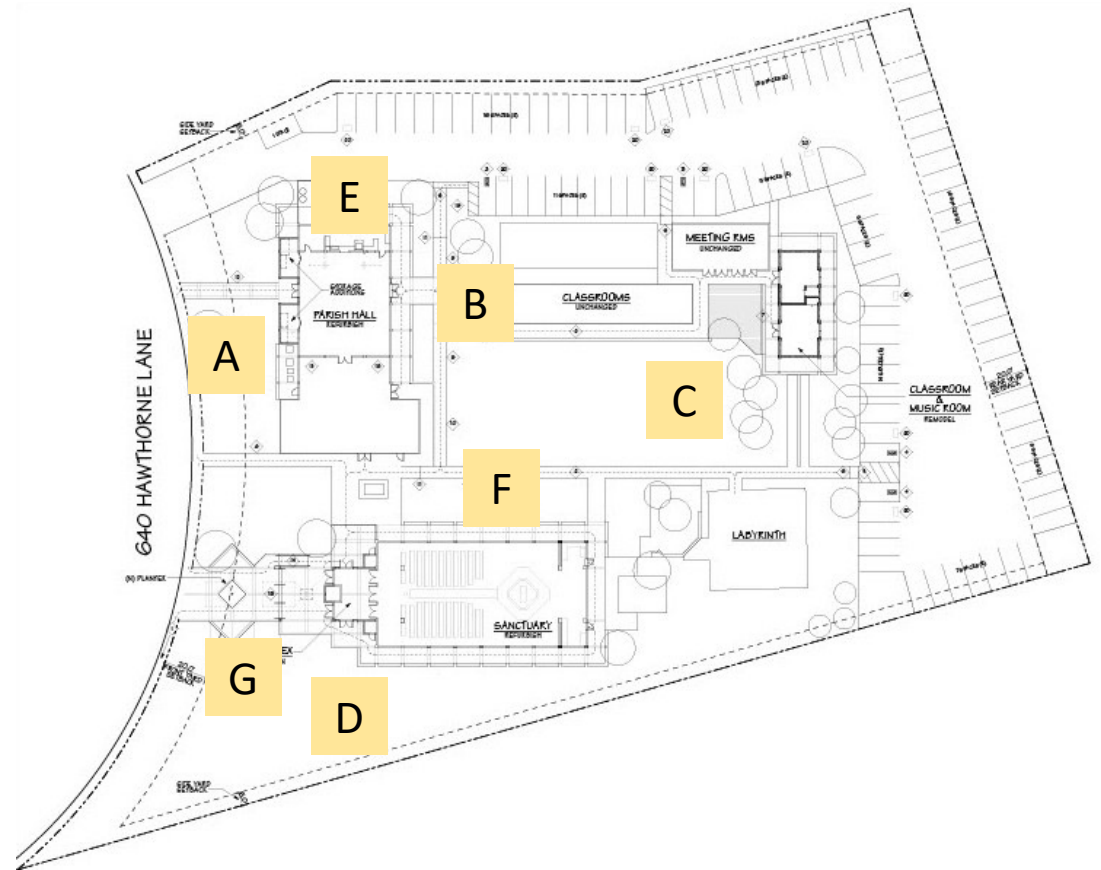
Existing Spaces: Bioswale [8]

- Currently planted in grass and used for underground drainage of the baptismal pool and surrounding area
- Slopes from the Narthex level to an area in the middle of the region
- Cools the area north of the lych gate and provides a green face to the street
- Established in 2011 as part of the a series of renovations to the church
- ~2560 square feet (ca. 1/3 the size of the Great Lawn)
- Recommendation: **engage in further consideration of possible improvements (area [G])**



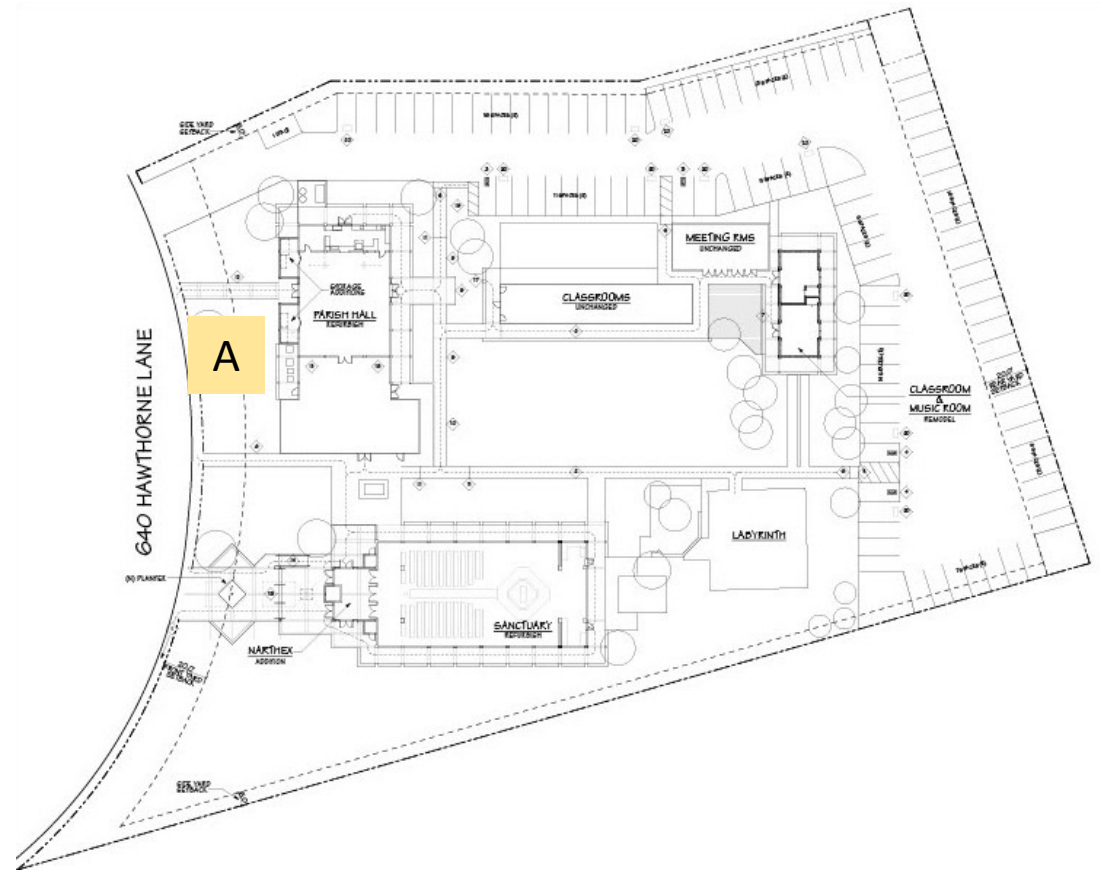
New Spaces:

- Holy Ground Living Classroom [A]
- Feed My People Garden [B]
- Chapel of the Redwoods [C]
- Stations of the Journey [D]
- The Back of the Kitchen [E]
- Pistache Grove [F]
- Bioswale [G] (*added after the presentation to the Vestry and Ministry Council*)



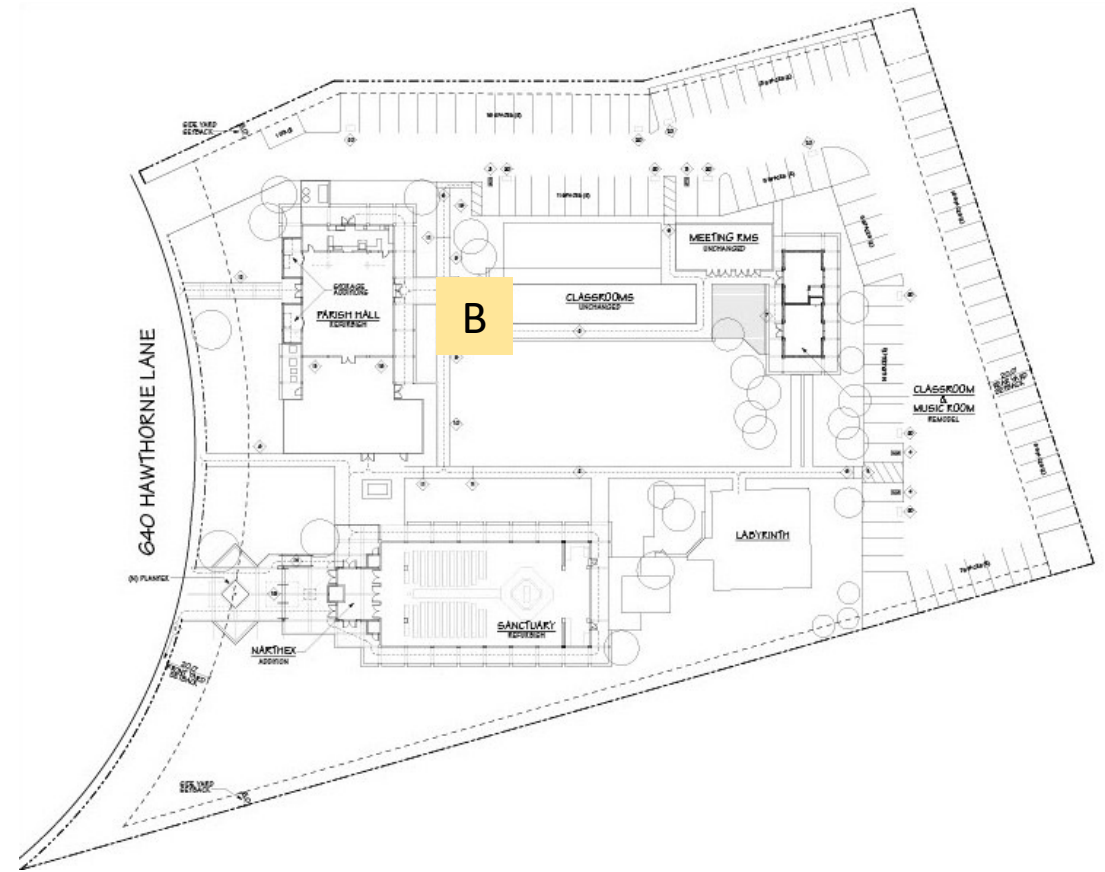
New Spaces: Holy Ground Living Classroom [A]

- To be set on Hawthorn Lane frontage west of the Parish Hall west entrance
- Based on modification of current Prayer Blackboard, created and maintained by Building and Grounds.
- Dedicated area for community dialogue and learning, with public chalkboard, small teaching garden, and bench seating
- Promises engaging interface with neighborhood
- To be developed jointly with the Care for God's Creation Committee, Building and Grounds, and the Social Justice and Outreach Committee

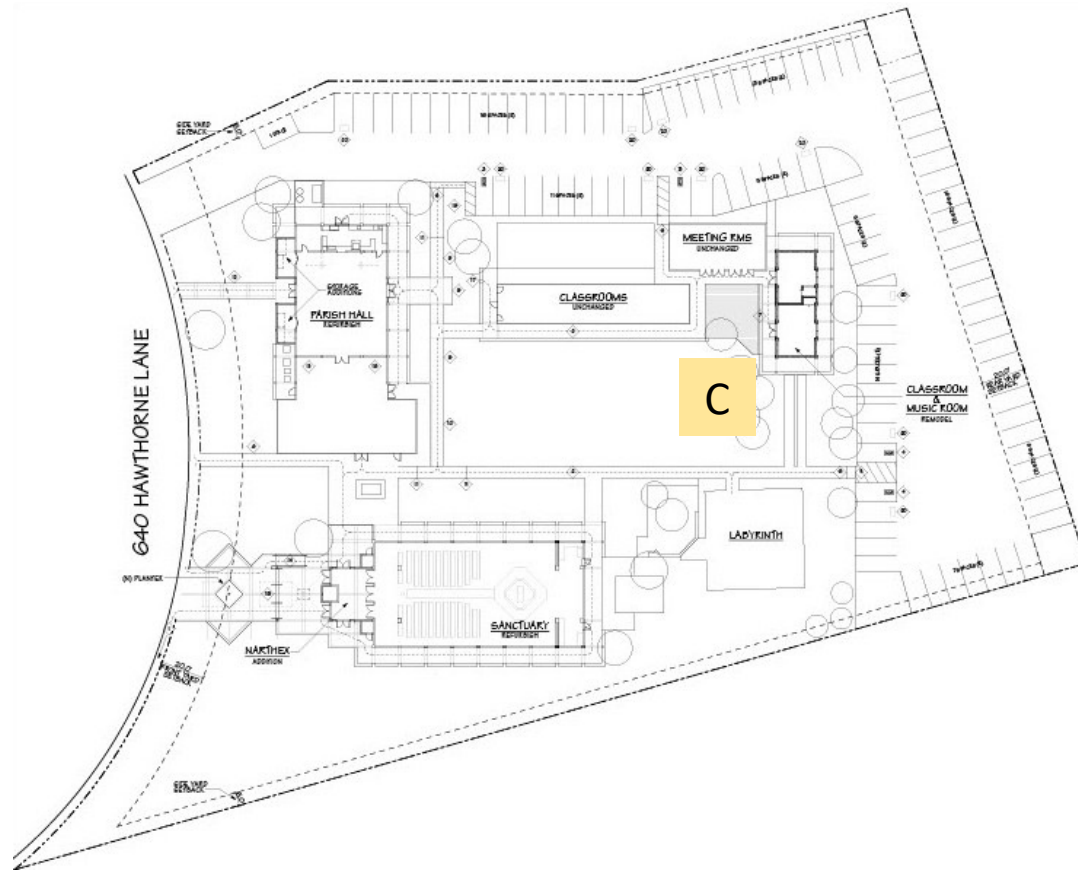


New Spaces: The Feed My People Garden [B]

- Raised beds for small kitchen garden focusing on culinary herbs and edible flowers
- Offers enhancement to thrice-weekly Davis Community Meals program and church meals
- To be set in area between west entrance to Parish Hall and Classroom Wing restrooms, south of the north parking lot
- To be developed jointly with the Care for God's Creation Committee, the Social Justice and Outreach Committee, Building and Grounds, and Davis Community Meals and Housing



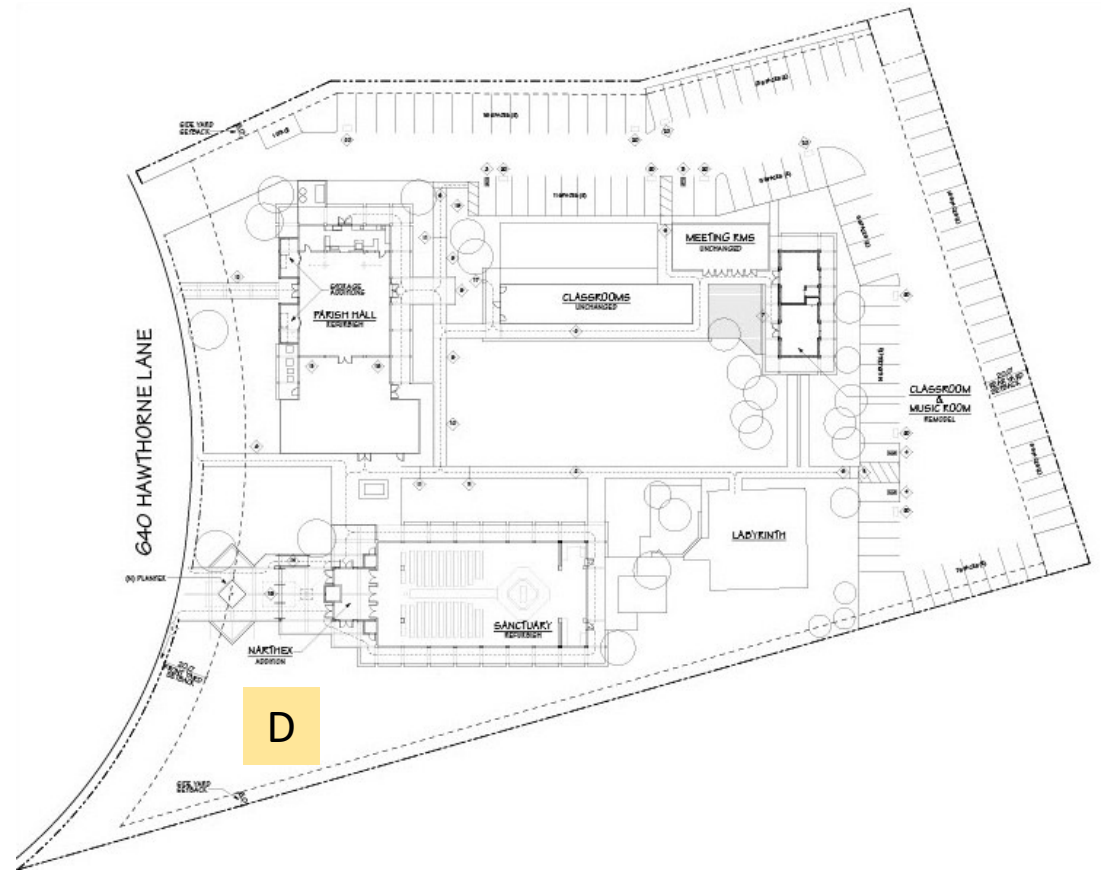
New Spaces: The Chapel of the Redwoods [C]



- Outdoor worship space set on the existing Great Lawn, with communion table under the east grove of coast redwoods and temporary congregational seating on the lawn
- Promises expansive, flexible space for outdoor worship, with good options for sheltered installation of outdoor sound system and possibilities for shade sails in summer
- Could include baptismal on west end, or could use existing baptistry in Narthex.
- Centrally located and aligned on same axes as the Sanctuary
- Proposed *prior to use of Labyrinth for outdoor worship*, to be developed jointly by the Building and Grounds Committee and the Worship Commission

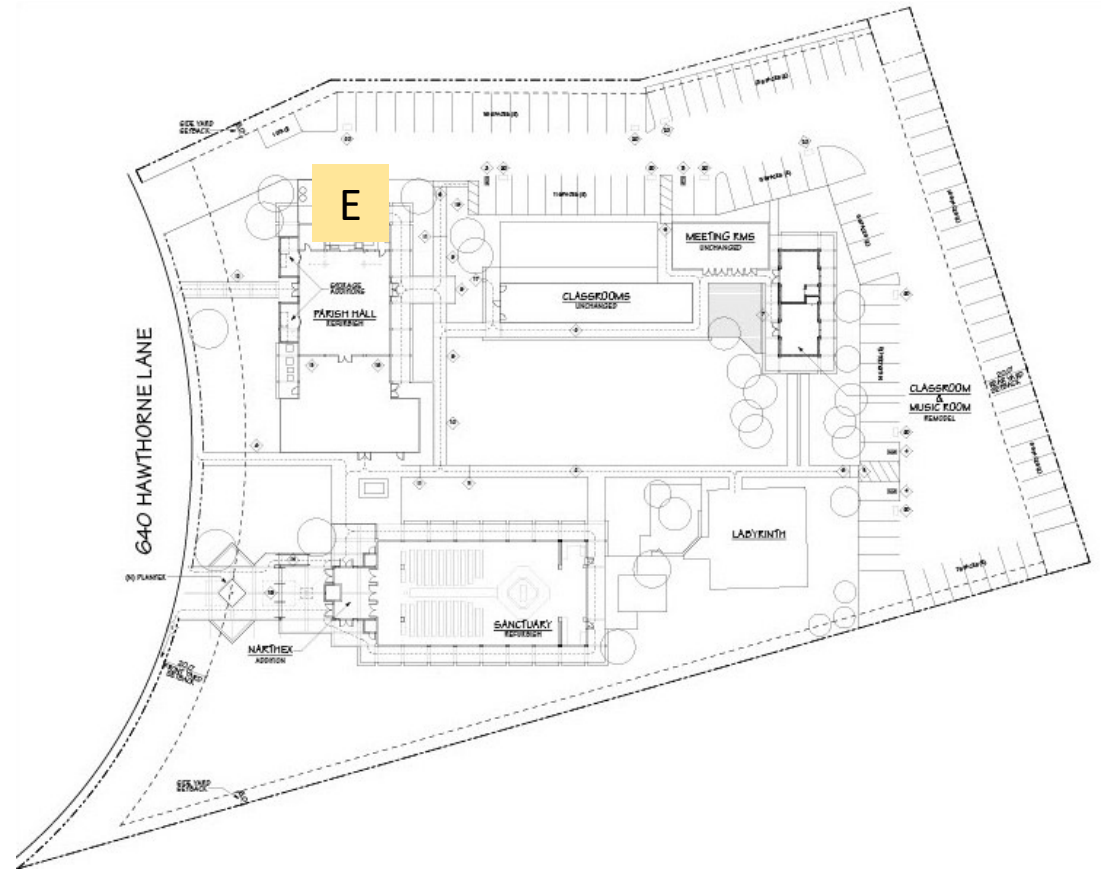
New Spaces: The Stations of the Journey [D]

- Art and signage installation across the campus, to be used seasonally for Stations of the Nativity (Advent), the Ministry of Jesus (Christmastide), the Cross (Lent), the Resurrection (Eastertide), the Spirit (Pentecost), and the Creation (Ordinary Time)
- Offers spiritual enhancement to campus and affords opportunities to engage local artists in collaborative design
- Proposed *prior to development of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday liturgies*, to be developed jointly by the Building and Grounds Committee and the Worship Commission.
- Could lie along the redwood path or be expanded to span the entire campus as an artistic endeavor.



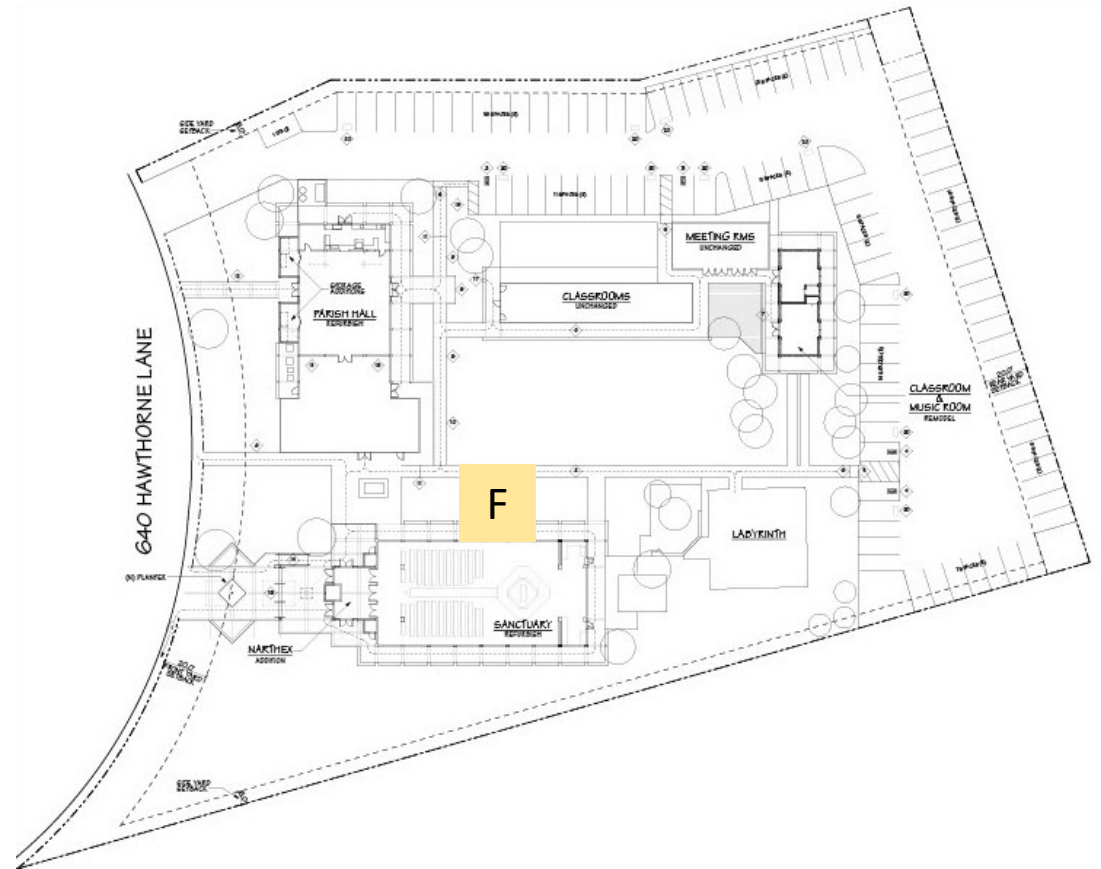
New Spaces: The Back of the Kitchen [E]

- Functional and aesthetic improvements to the area north of the Parish Kitchen
- Will address practical needs for this heavily used and somewhat neglected area
- Outside the north door of Parish Kitchen
- To be developed in conversation with Davis Community Meals and Housing
- Recommendations: remove eroded turf, replace with permeable pavers



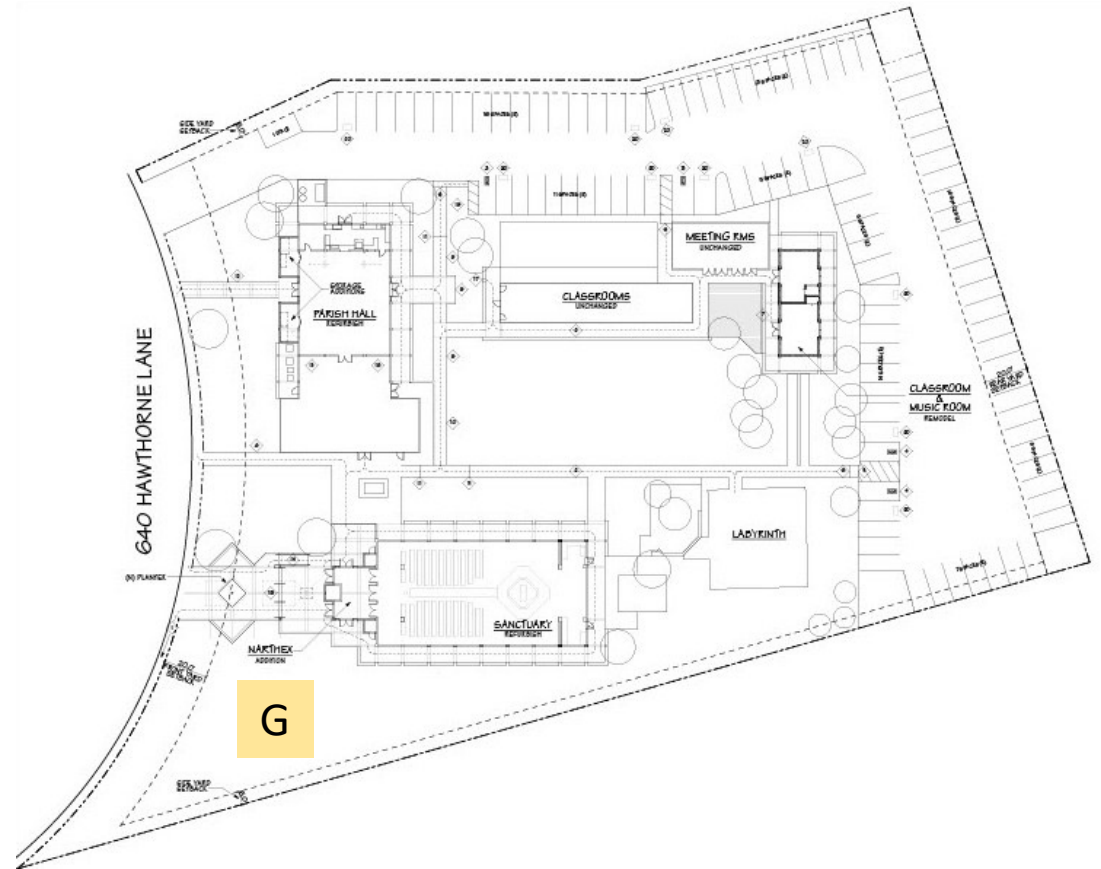
New Spaces: The Pistache Grove [F]

- Beautification, irrigation improvements, and scattered perennial plantings in the mulched area under the three Chinese Pistache trees north of the Sanctuary
- Promises to extend the planting theme of the Meditation Garden to the west
- Offers opportunity to engage volunteers in short-term project
- To be developed by the Buildings and Grounds Committee (irrigation) and volunteers (planting)

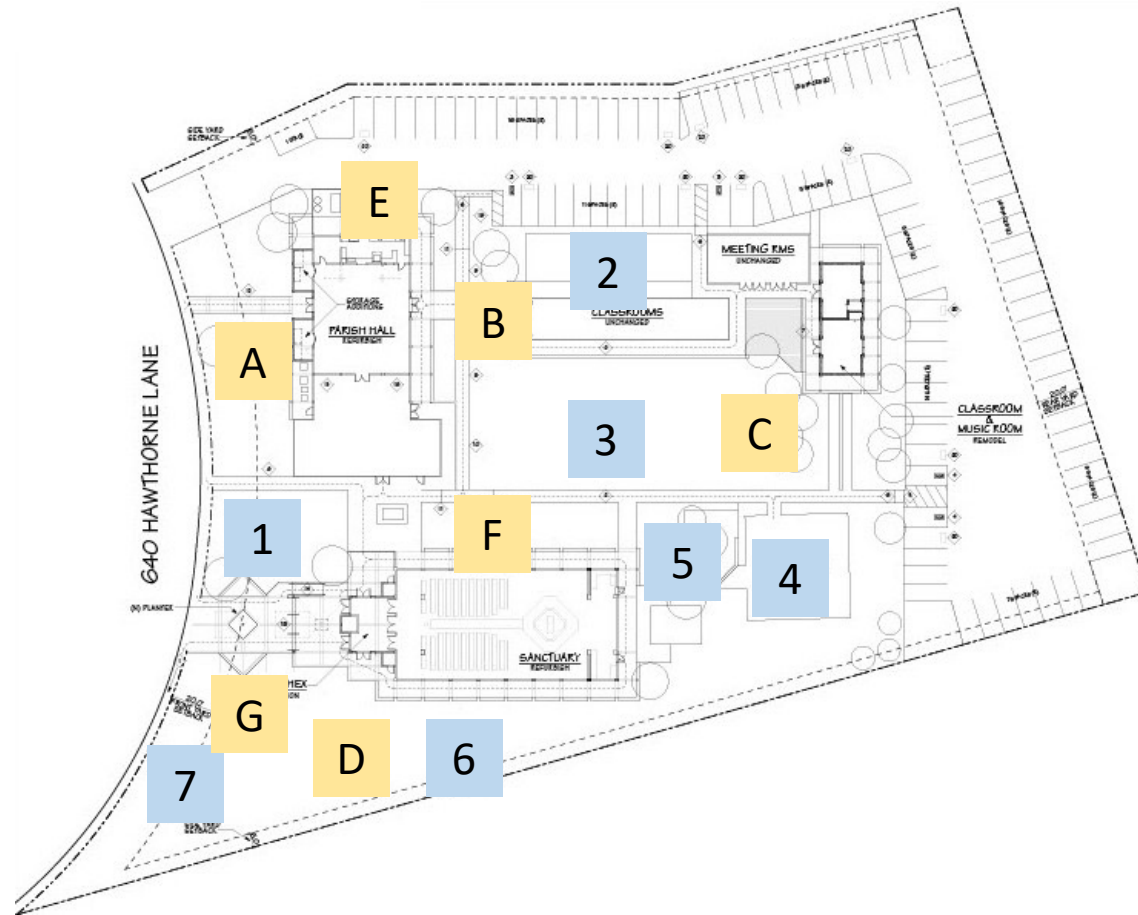


New Spaces: Bioswale [G]

- Currently planted in grass and used for underground drainage of the baptismal pool and surrounding area
- Slopes from the Narthex level to an area in the middle of the region
- Consider options such as replacing grass with appropriate plants



Closing Thoughts



existing (blue) and proposed new spaces (buff)

- This is a vision
- It can serve as a framework
- It should be flexible and evolve as St. Martin's changes
- We invite your comments