The new courtyards formed by the layered glass loggia to the left, with the historic Cathedral façade beyond.
The Cathedral project involved a master plan for the entire Cathedral block, which led to the removal of a vacant and dilapidated building to create a new garden courtyard, a narthex addition to the Cathedral, and the renovation of the Cathedral worship space and old school into a new parish center, and an old convent into a homeless woman’s center. Conveniently, the building that required removal faced Cathedral Square, the city’s oldest public space. The removal of this building created a courtyard space that opened the block up towards the square, establishing an entry point into the Cathedral precinct that faced the right direction. The courtyard, fundamental to the history of liturgical architecture, allows the Cathedral to be entered through a choreographed sequence from public square, through a garden gate, under a grove of trees, through a garden room, into a glass loggia, and finally turning to enter the worship space on axis with the tabernacle. The new loggia, envisioned as a series of transparent layers open to and part of the garden, was constructed of the lightest possible steel profiles clad entirely in clear glass walls. The regular bay repetition of the 1854 Cathedral is used for the new addition, as well as the same proportioning system (2-squares tall, divided vertically into three parts) that was used to design the original bays.

**ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHEDRAL PROJECT, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2002**

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The transparent layers of the new Loggia as seen from the Garden Courtyard
Two existing crème city brick facades were captured as interior walls within the new steel and glass loggia.
The new loggia remains separate from the existing historic wall of the parish center by means of a sky lit slot of space (at left).
A new garden wall made of recycled brick, salvaged stonework, and wrought iron establishes a sacred precinct for the Cathedral.
The single most significant accomplishment of the project is actually a void; a new garden courtyard was created at the center of the Cathedral block by removing an existing building (see “Before” and “After” images above). The demolished building was a 1950’s school that had been vacant for 24 years. This 4-story building was tall, appearing to shoulder aside the historic Cathedral and block the day light into its north stained glass windows. Removing this structure re-established the impression of the Cathedral as “tall” (it was for many years the tallest building in the city), but also restored the north light into the Cathedral’s glass. This demolition also opened up space for a new garden courtyard, now a central organizing element of the Cathedral block. Brick and limestone was salvaged from the demolition to build a new garden wall along the street, a wall which establishes a sacred precinct for the Cathedral. From this garden the restored north façade of the historic Cathedral can now be seen in all its glory; a view lost for over a century. The new garden features a grove of Little Leaf Linden trees which flower white for much of the month of May. This grove helps to establish a sense of repose and separation from the bustle of the city beyond the wall and gate.
The renovated worship space, with a new work of art by Italian sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro.
As a part of the project, the main worship space of the cathedral was renovated with new lighting, new mechanical systems, a new sound system, new liturgical furnishings and a new arrangement for the altar and seating. At the request of the Archbishop, the altar was removed from a deep 1940’s era apse addition, and was placed out in the main worship space to be more central to Cathedral worshipers (see plan diagrams above). The 1940’s apse was re-purposed as a music area with a new pipe organ, serving the huge choir and orchestra that previously had no dedicated space large enough to accommodate them.

In the most controversial aspect of the project, the Cathedral was renovated to conform to published Vatican directives governing the position of the Tabernacle in Cathedral Churches. This meant that the Tabernacle was removed to a separate side chapel, as it is in St. Peters in Rome. This move was highly objectionable to conservative Catholics, who had experienced the tabernacle under a baldachin within the main worship space since a WWII era renovation.