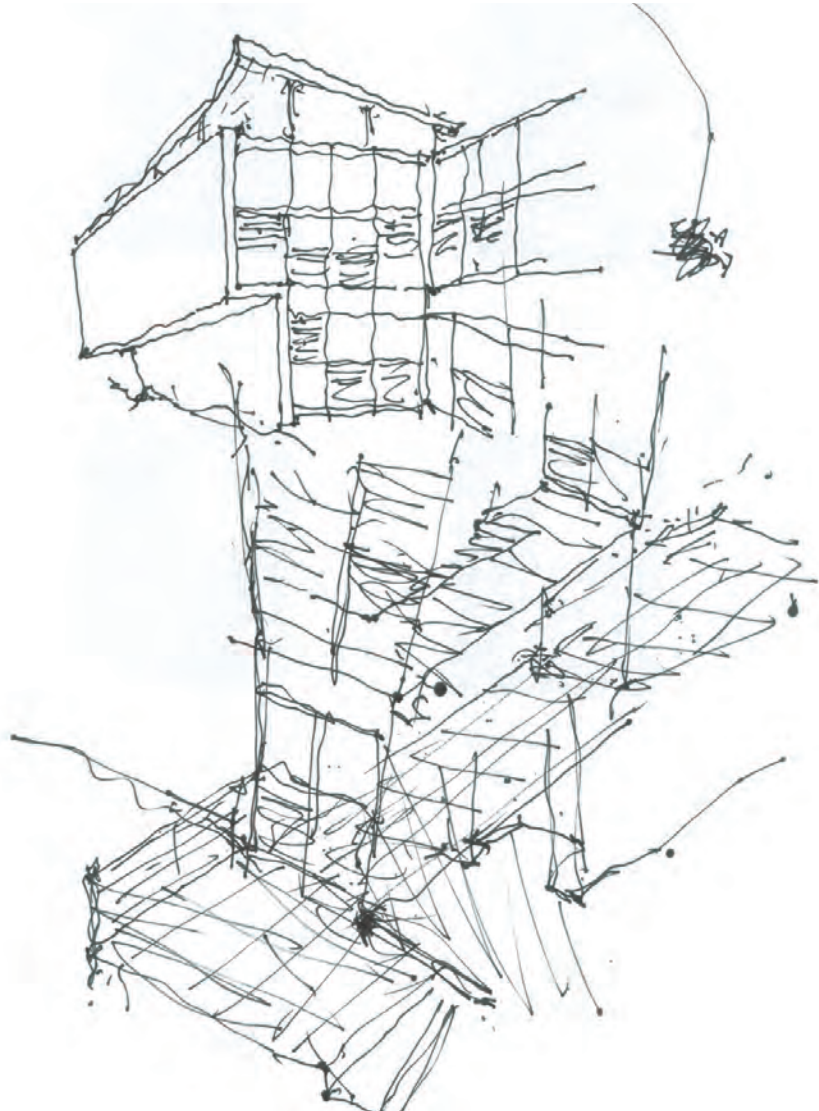


# Four Houses

and Two Projects



DAVID YUM ARCHITECTS

Four Houses  
First Edition- Web Publication  
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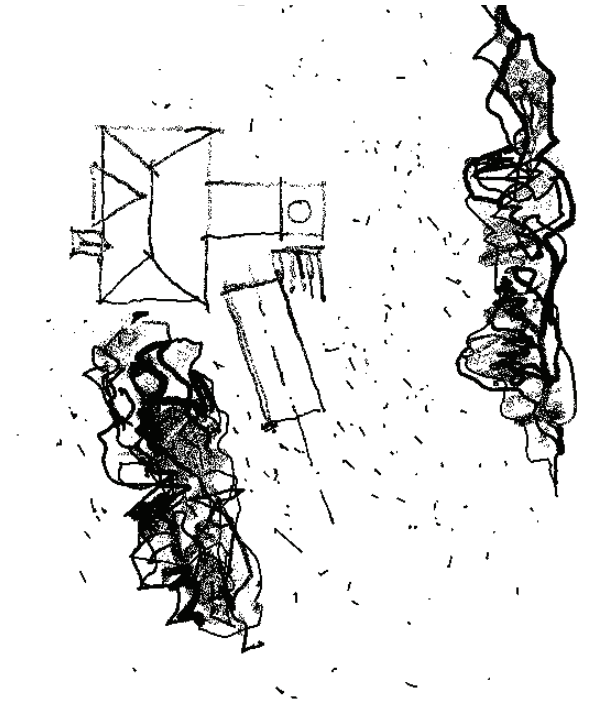
Written by David Yum Architects  
Cover Sketch from High Ridge Residence

[www.dyarchitects.com](http://www.dyarchitects.com)

*“We are fooling ourselves a little when we think we have experienced a building when we have seen it in its images.”*  
  
*-Rafael Moneo, John Heyduk Soundings Lecture, 14 September 2020*

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*"In Design, we set out to create a place for the way we live and work,  
but in fact, we seek to change the way we live and work."*

## Preface

In describing the work of our office, people are often impressed and confused that we span Historic Preservation and Modernism. Only occasionally will the conversation lead to more involved discussions of language, syntax and meaning in contemporary building. Though we work hard to keep the critical mindset of the academy in our studio, most of our time and energy goes into the issues of practice. The strands that tie together all our work, from those found in our preservation efforts to our new, ground-up structures, have evolved through actual practice. Though the sites, programs, budgets, and myriad of other parameters have produced the very different projects depicted in this book, I believe not only our approach, but also our understanding of home has remained incredibly consistent. Putting this book together has underscored that for us and reveals a thread that we hope the reader will discover.



## Introduction

In this book, we look back at four houses and two projects or, yet un-built works. The grouping reflects the range of house types, situations and programs that we have addressed over the years, with an emphasis on key projects for the firm and, the conceptual threads that we started investigating early in the life of the office, continued to intrigue us and persist as tenets in our current work.

For the CPW Townhouse just off Central Park West in Manhattan, a classic brownstone just off Central Park West had survived a common history. Started as the aspirations of an upper middle-class family, the great wars forced subdivision into two, then many, separate dwellings. The work had been done with no regard to structural soundness or infrastructure. A warren of dark, dilapidated rooms, little hope existed for the house. Much of the work to restore this building involved fundamental repair and new systems, all hidden in the final spaces, but essential to reviving the life of the home. Only a few decorative elements survived, and care was taken to restore them properly; the baluster and rails, the fireplace surround, the casings, and shutters. Several key custom furnishings such as the Parsons table in the Living room, its upholstered stools, and the coffee table, allowed us to reinforce the proper scale of the room. Fabrics, colors, and finishes reinforce the historic shell abstractly while allowing for a fresh, modern style to emerge.

In the next project, R.H. Robertson appears to be the original architect of the Tudor style barn and carriage house built in 1910. Again, its existence must be attributed to its re-purposing, this time as a single-family residence in the 1970's. And again, the renovations had no regard for structural integrity. The creation of new floors and double height spaces in fact made the present structure fatigue and even instable. The double height space of the carriages and hay lift was restored. Modern life as a country house required a larger program and thus the need for more area. The kitchen and informal dining areas formed an addition at the rear, deferential in scale and position, its clean modern presence would not compete, nor be conflated with the charm of the original structure. Views to the open lawns and orchard beyond were pinned by a small, pointed rock out cropping. The axis of the infinity pool and the broad expanse of glass of the addition are inflected at a slight angle to align to the crest of the rock, enlarging the scale of the rear pool area and subtly reinforcing the separation of the addition from the Dutchess Carriage house.

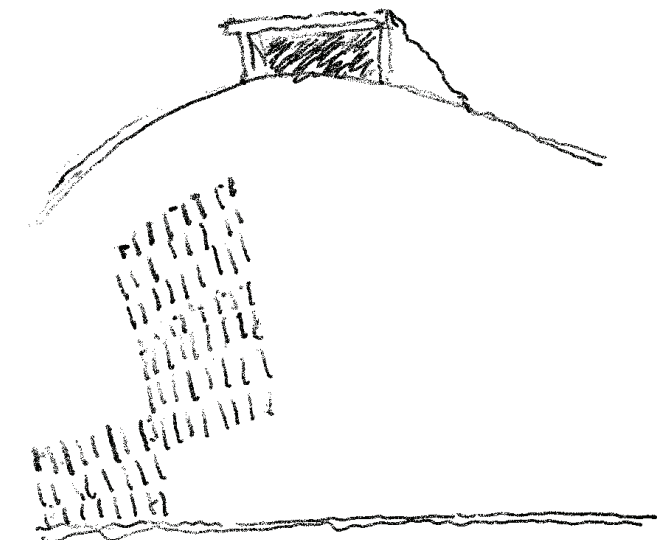
On a prime street in East Hampton, Linden Cottage reflects the client's passion for the Arts & Crafts style country houses of 19th century Britain. Within, the language continues, with many of the particular elements referencing the historic houses that were part of the research phase in this project. Extensive studies in drawing, rendering, cardboard modelling, digital modelling and full scale prototypes were essential in producing the rigor and detail of concept to reality in this house. One of the strongest aspects of the project is the delightful variation in sectional form, scale and texture that one experiences moving front to back, vertically and to the gardens front and rear.

In the Gilded Age, for Cornelius Vanderbilt, a guest cottage for his favorite niece was conceived as a 12,000 square foot, stacked stone, wood shake house. Over its 125 year history, conversion to a Girls School dormitory, ravaged by a nearly all consuming fire and back to a single family home with a low budget 1970's renovation all left traces behind in the layers of debris, ash and boarded over repairs. Our historic preservation skills in research, methodologies and execution were honed over a five year period. This house synthesizes research, restoration, adaptation and balance, their challenges, and opportunities.

Though contemporary in language, the High Ridge Residence shares much with the previous projects. This house required the renovation and addition to an existing structure, in this case a white Modernist box from the 1980's. More importantly, the idea of focusing on the, promenade architecturale, the carefully planned experience of moving thru paths of the house, horizontally overlooking the creek, vertically through the levels, from the woods to the courtyards drove the layout and shaping of spaces. Views were carefully studied and made to vary in aspect and openness; volumes shift from horizontal to vertical, square to elliptical. In this regard, High Ridge and Linden Cottage share an extremely close relationship.

Walnut Creek Reserve is our latest work of the group and has the most open existing condition, a wide-open pasture in the Blue Mountains near Ashville. Movement, light and space are in constant play and juxtaposition. As in the Dutchess Carriage house, key landmarks in the distance, though this time fifty miles away in the form of shear white cliffs, inform the orientation and inflection of

key facades. The absence of an urban context, or original structure pushed us to focus on the presence of the land and sky. As a home for retirement, the client's memories, aspirations, and lifestyle formed the dense, interrelated web of context for the program. We began delving, resolving the complexities and developing a coherent composition of space and light. We aspired to create a sense of delight. In the end, this is the hope of all the houses we design.



Facade prior to restoration



# CPW TOWNHOUSE

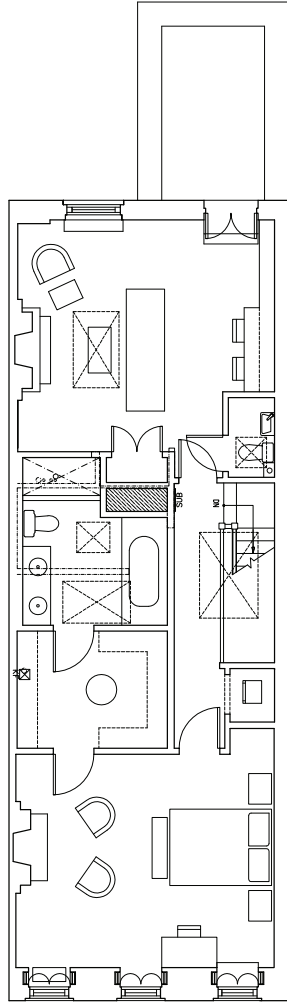
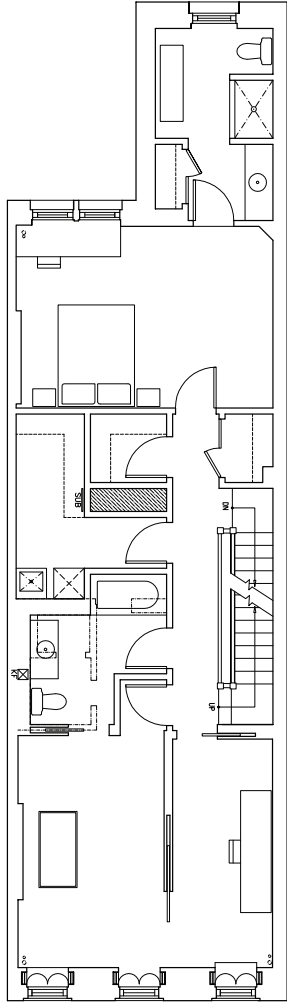
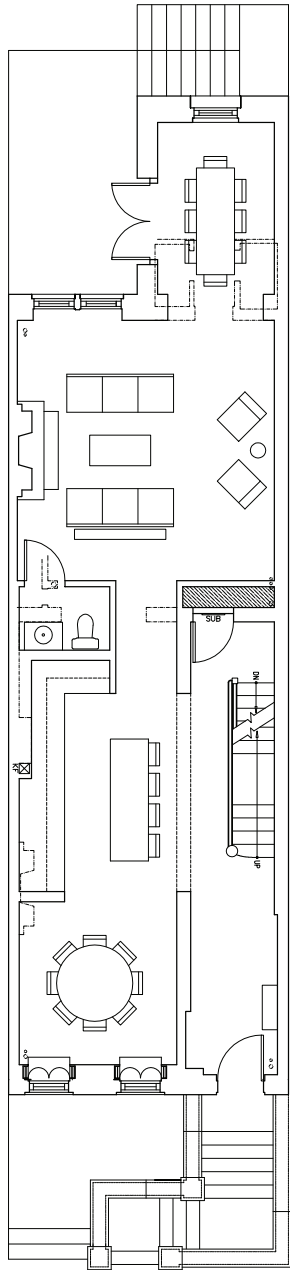
This classic brownstone off Central Park West had the common history of being brutally chopped up and repurposed over the last century. After the Second World War, many townhouses were converted into single room boarding houses for young men coming to the City looking for work. A couple of decades later, these same houses were converted again into apartments, typically one or two per floor. By the late eighties, gentrification began to push these buildings back to their original use, single family homes. Our historic preservation experience guided the process of restoration and renovation. Significant original details remained. In many cases, elements were refabricated to complete missing or broken sections of wood and plaster detail. Historic research informed the Landmarks approved recreation of the Brownstone stoop and stair, torn down sometime in the 40's, as well as the historic façade restoration.

At the core, structural restoration was needed to repair worn and poorly executed prior alterations. This project required extensive structural work to secure internal framing and garden retaining walls. Mechanical, electrical and communications systems were updated to current standards while maintaining the integrity of the original building. All systems, including plumbing, electrical and networking were replaced. A modern central air system was discreetly integrated into every part of the home, in addition to nearly invisible security and AV systems. Modern lighting and décor, including several custom **dyD** pieces underscore the historic spaces while expressing the vital contemporary life of the family who live here.

Restored entry way, stair and cellar entry

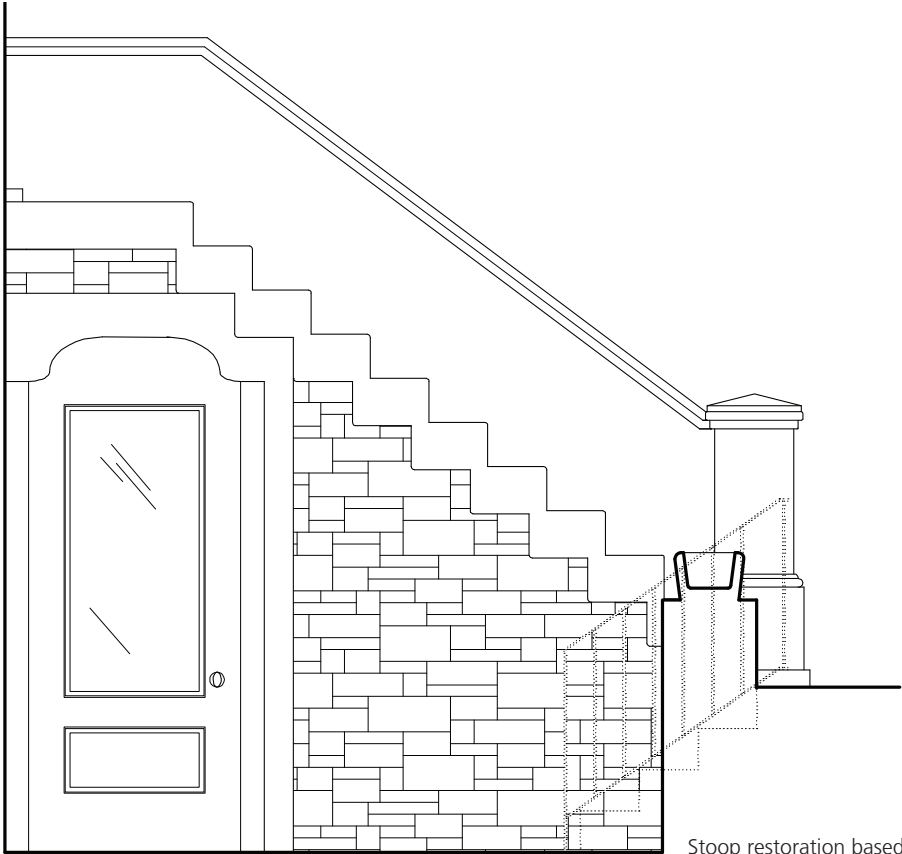






Facade restoration based on historic photos and adjacent houses

In large cities such as New York, London or Amsterdam, the historic townhouse is still a valued commodity. At the same time, even in these cities, the townhouse as a typology for growth or development has not had a revival for over a century. The economics of real estate certainly do not provide an incentive for a relatively small area of housing per square foot of buildable lot space. Ever taller high rises command the luxury market. Affordable housing must also seek height to be viable. Whether the townhouse remains in favor as a single-family typology may not be purely economic. As noted above, the townhouse has shown its resiliency to accommodate different social and housing needs. Lifestyles change with technology, family structures, social norms, and lifestyle. The next era will certainly be reflected in the townhouse, much of which will be recognizable to us, but more interestingly, much will be surprising and delightful.

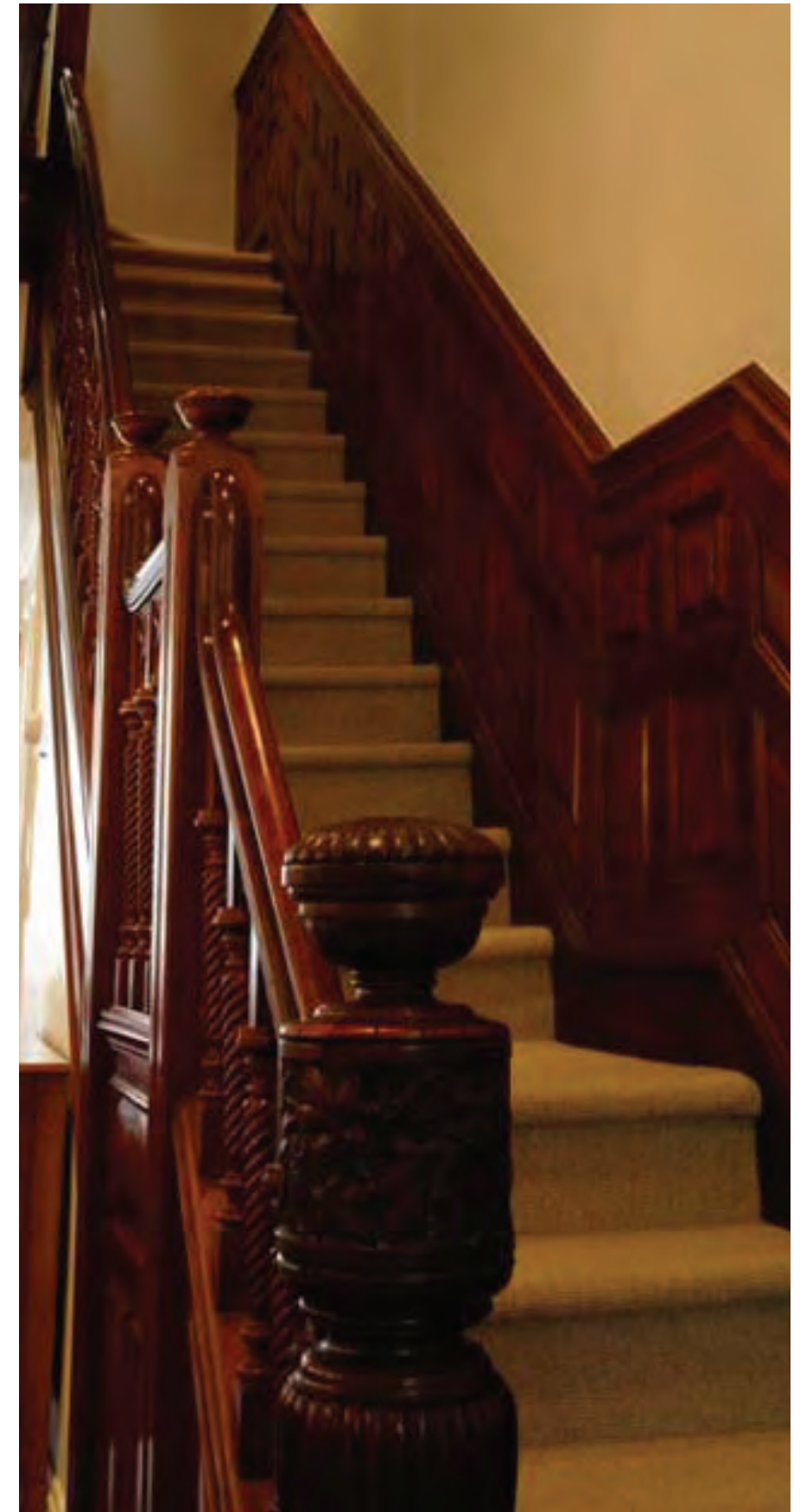


Stoop restoration based on historic photos



Demolition, structural, stabilization framing





Original staircase, once incomplete and in disrepair



The interiors of a brownstone balanced carefully restored original woodwork and moldings, with a modern lighting sensibility, classic contemporary furnishings and key custom designed pieces. Open, warm, lively spaces exist within the clearly present historic structure.

Original mantle, mirror and surrounded restored







DYd custom coffee table



DYd custom credenza occasional seats and two sided benches







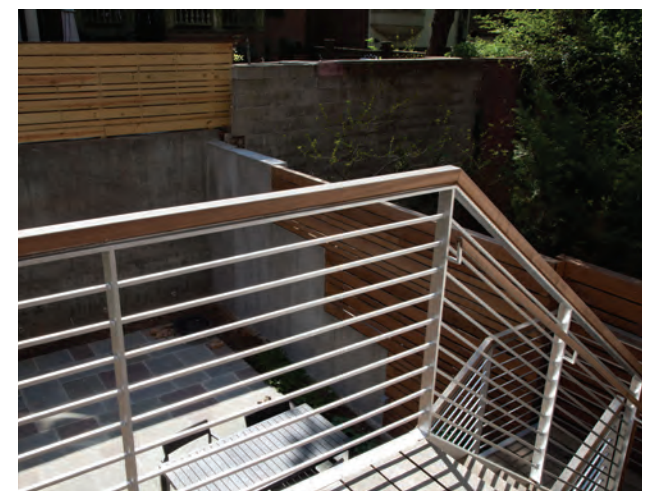
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Adjoining neighbor's lot was collapsing into the garden







Original facade

# DUTCHESS CARRIAGE HOUSE

The program to revive a horse carriage house into a summer guest house was comprised of a typical contemporary summer house program, which could not fit into the 1898 structure. An addition allowed the layout to flow more graciously and, provide a better foundation for the mix of modern and historic spaces the homeowners desired. Originally a double height space, the hay loft is now the Great room, where musical gatherings will occasionally take place. The kitchen and dining rooms start at the back and push thru the exterior wall to form the Addition. Large planes of glass overlook the edgeless pool, inflected away from the carriage house to align its axis on the peak of a pointed rock outcropping, 200 yards away. The pool and addition in sync allow the building ensemble to root itself to the immediate slopes of the terrain and command the vista to the grassy fields and knolls beyond. The two properties were now visually and functionally tied, a goal of the original program.

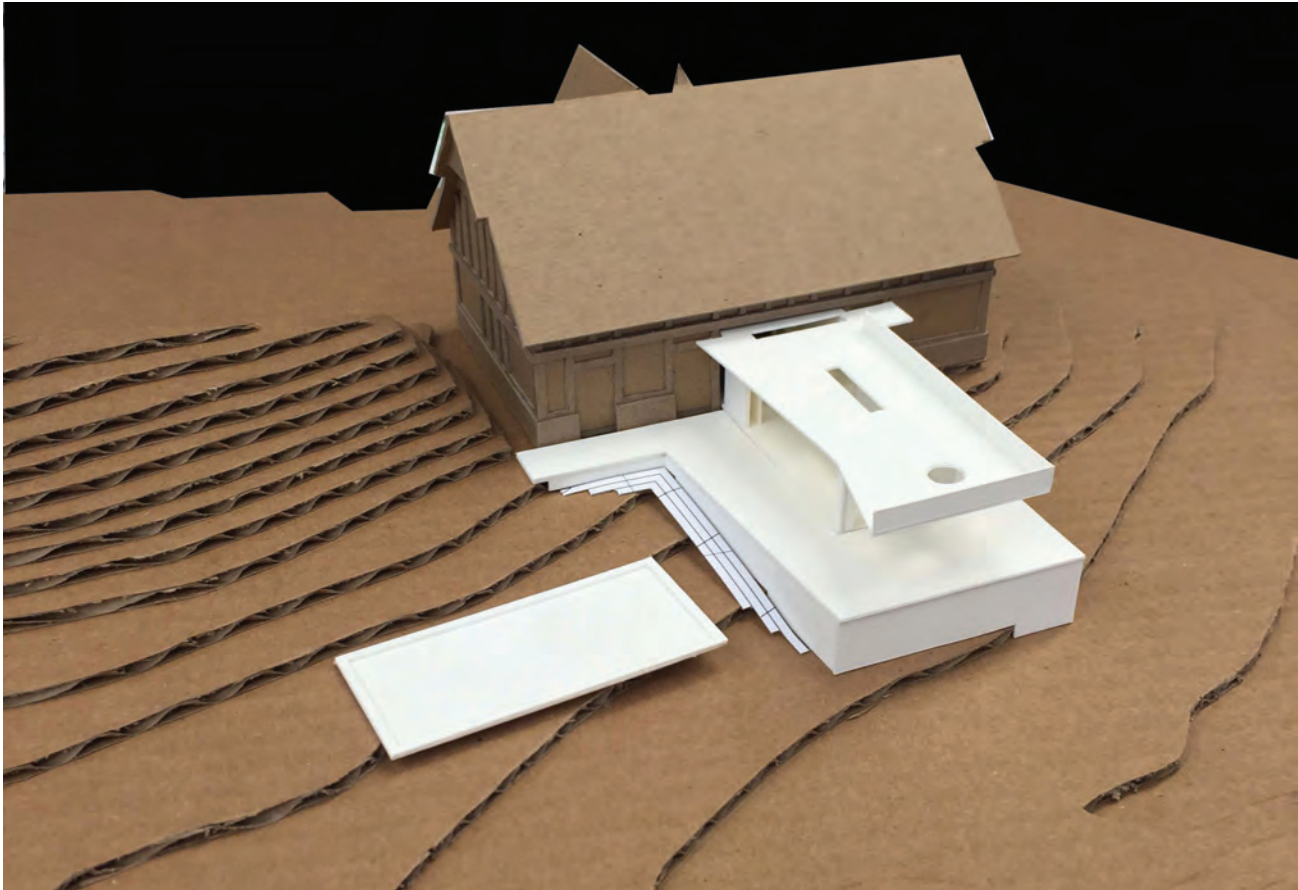


Original rear elevation





The Moorish style of the original Carriage House, in pebble dash and Tudor timbers, is firmly rooted to the ground, its tectonic articulation expressing a greater weight than its original hay storage and horse stalls that stood within. The addition expresses an idealized foil, light, transparent, immaterial with a wing like roof that could float away. Within the addition, the dark, natural stone floors extend to the terraces of the pool, giving gravity and weight to the ground plane and thus, a permanence to the footprint its form has established.



Early addition study



Early study of the entry canopy

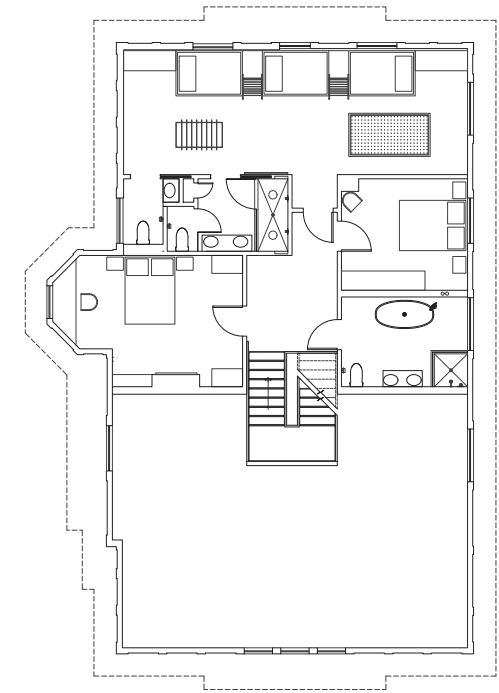
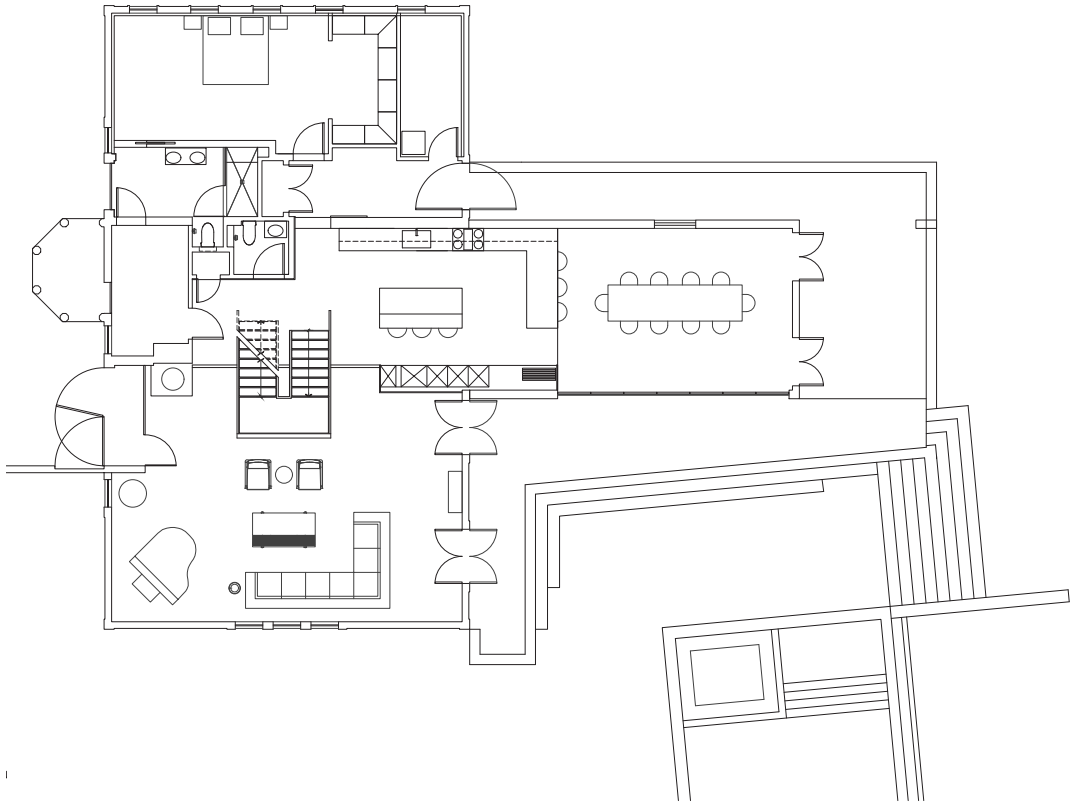


Study model of existing



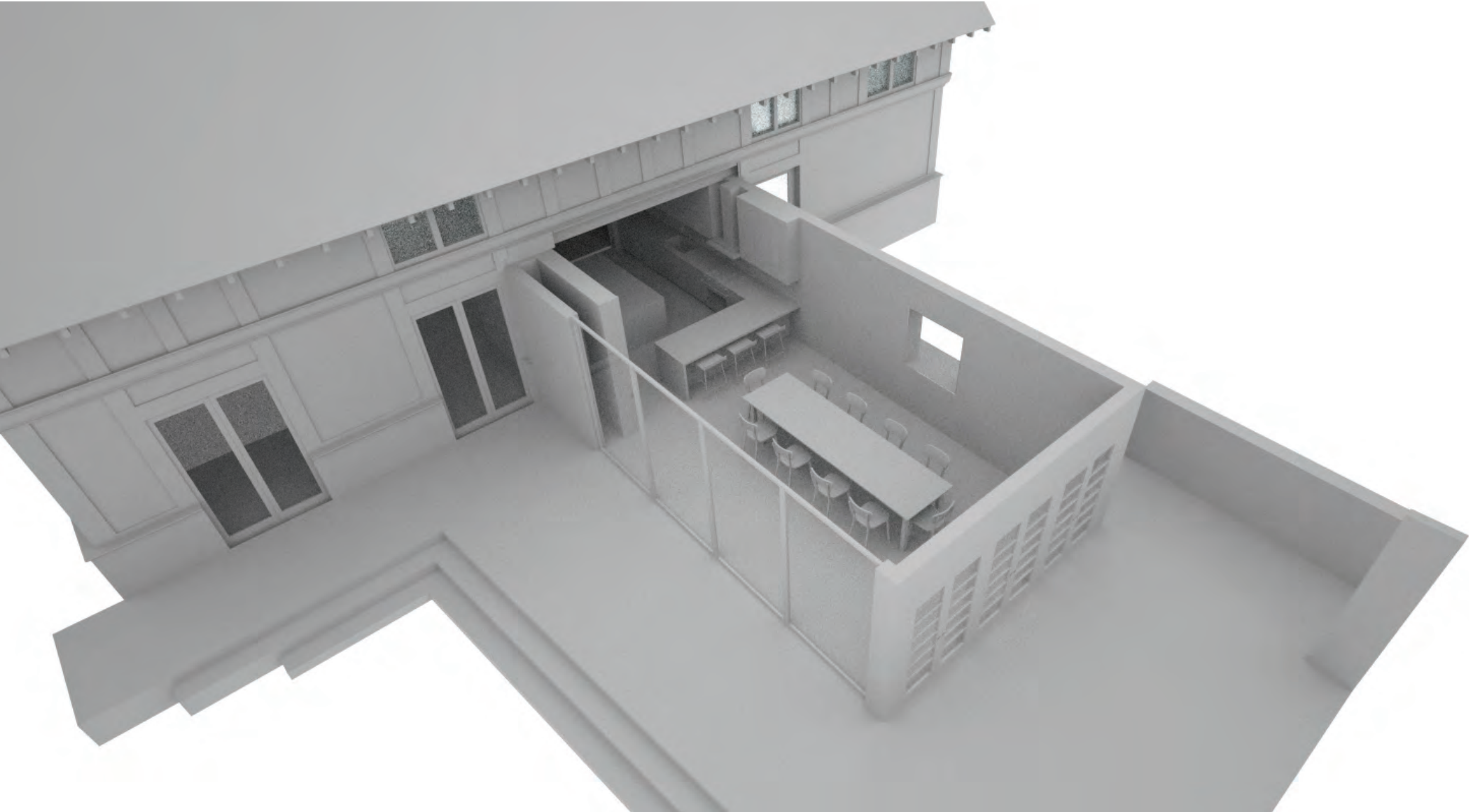


New standing seam zinc roof. New trim color, restoration of the original pebble-dash finish

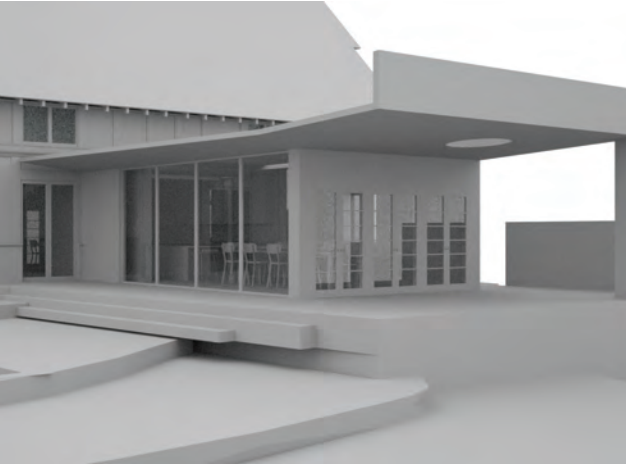


Proposed ground and upper level

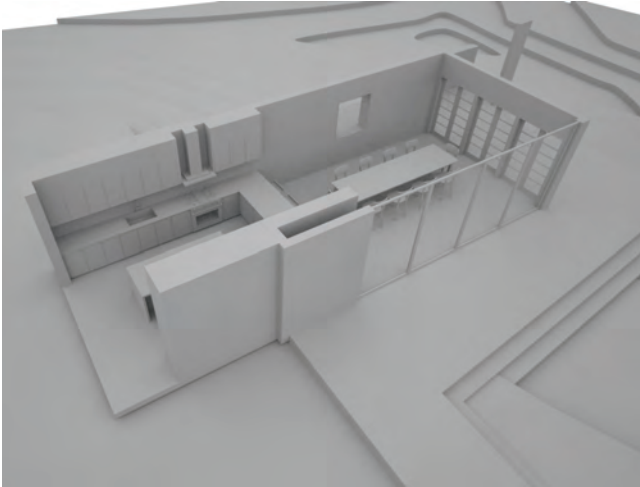




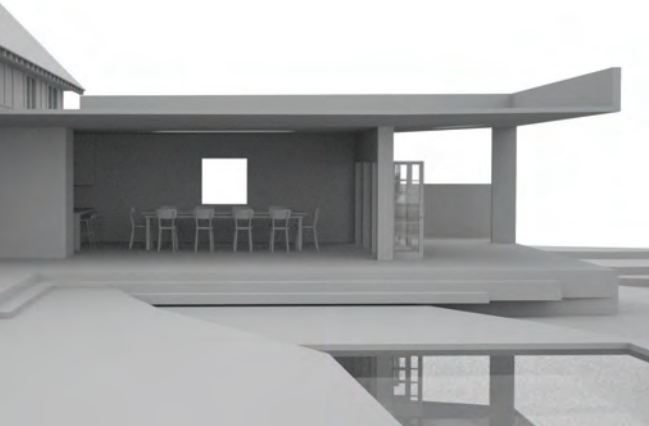
The questions of preservation abound in this project. How does one define the degree of respect for the original structure, balance the needs of present use, needs that justify the resources that will allow the building to continue into the future as an active, vibrant vessel for life and memory. Keeping the essential characteristics of the building, those that allow it to be read as the structure it once had been, rely on the sensitivity and deftness of the architect but are verified by the actual experience of the building today. In the end, we hope those critical essences have persisted, but also, that the adaptations transform the house into something new, unique to this family and to our current age. If the structure is fortunate enough to last another century, certainly, a new inhabitant and a new architect, will ask these same questions. I wonder if our transformations will have the strength to persist, to seem essential to the spirit of the place that is important to preserve. This would be the effort of architecture to provide continuity to the new family, the town, county, region, culture and history that we can all share in part, or in depth.



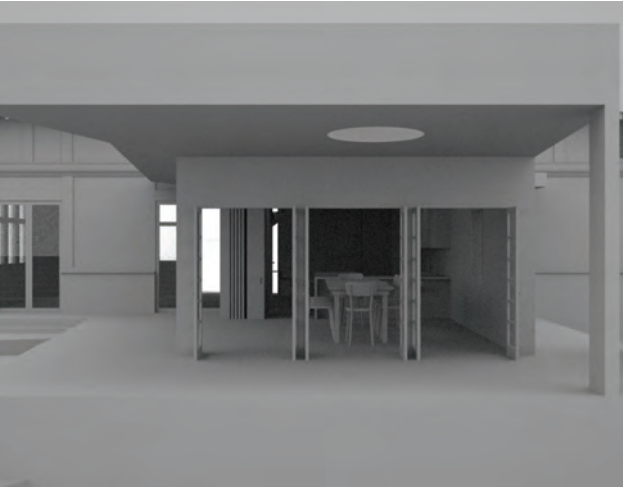
Proposed addition from great lawn



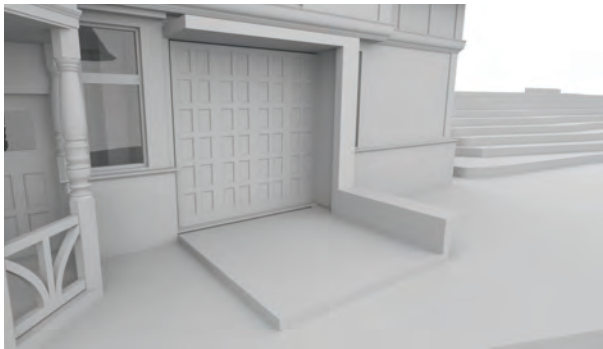
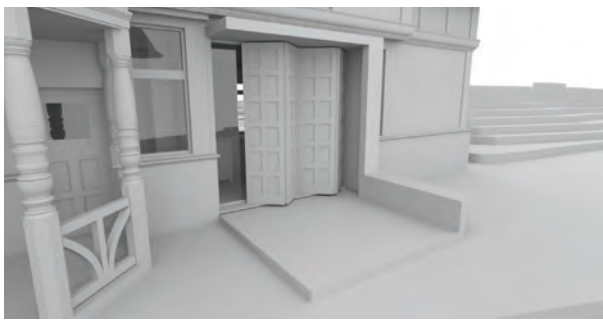
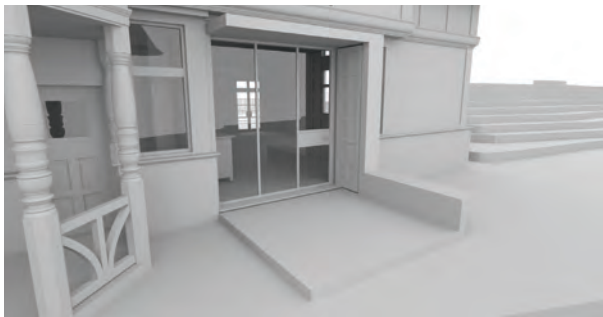
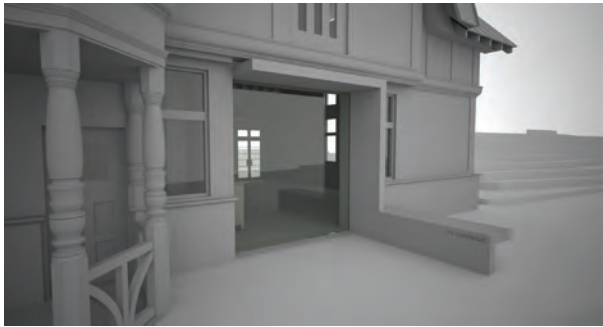
Interior view



View from pool back to operable window wall



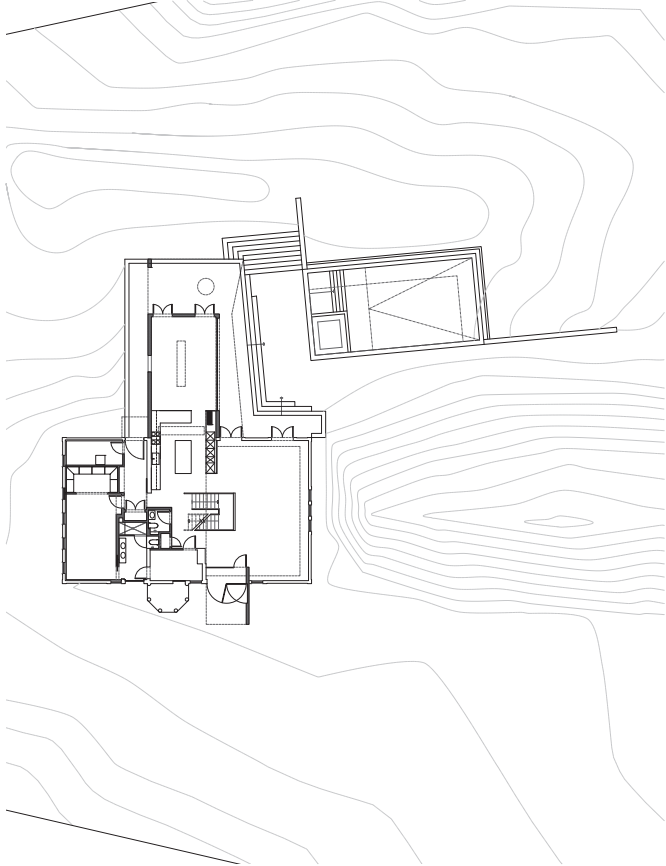
View from covered deck



Sequence of new entry glazing and winter doors



Sequence marble panels an east interior elevation







Original hay bale winch truss

New addition framing







Infinity edge pool on axis toward the pointed rock that mediates the landscape zone



Water fall edge of pool from ground lawn

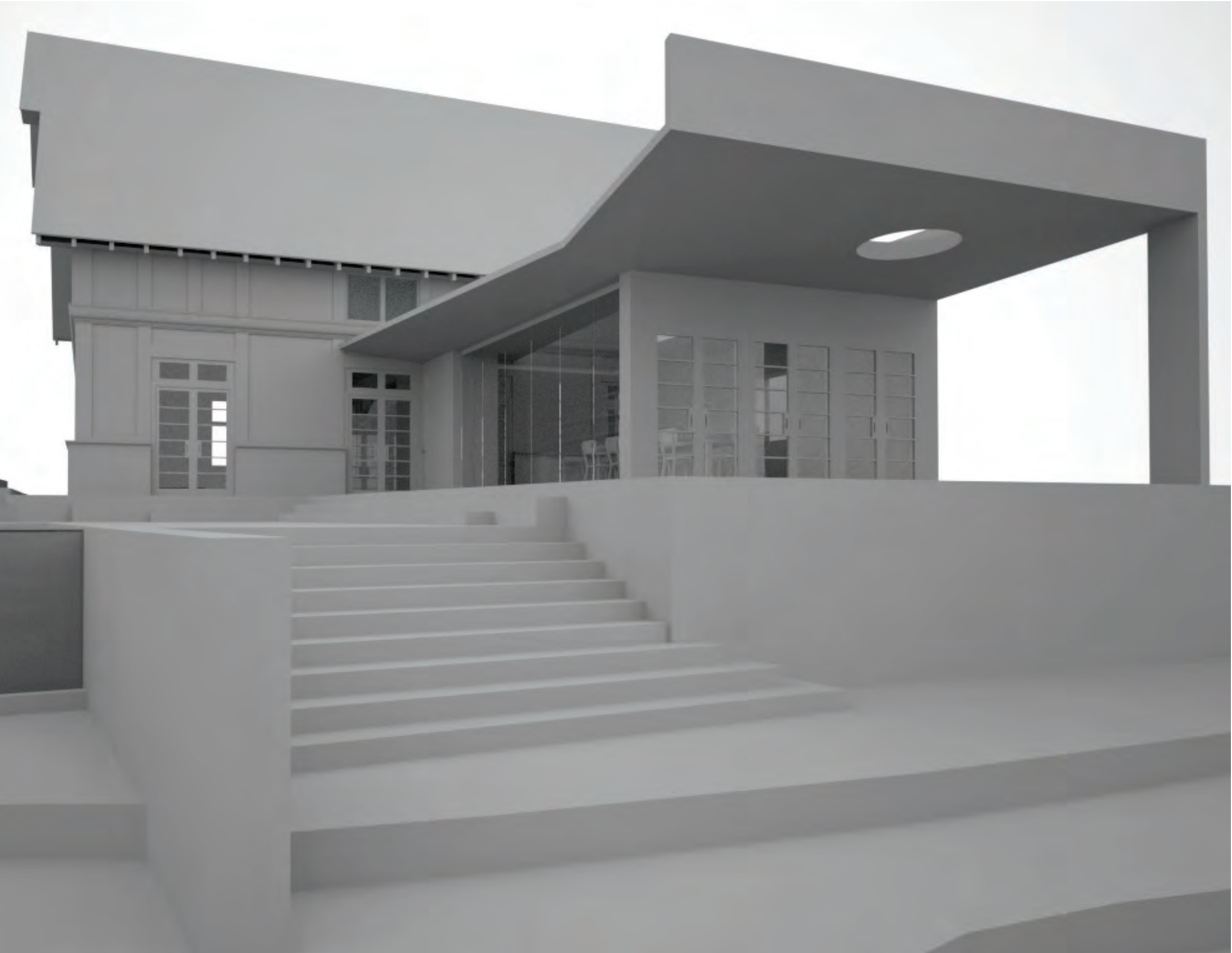


Floating roof



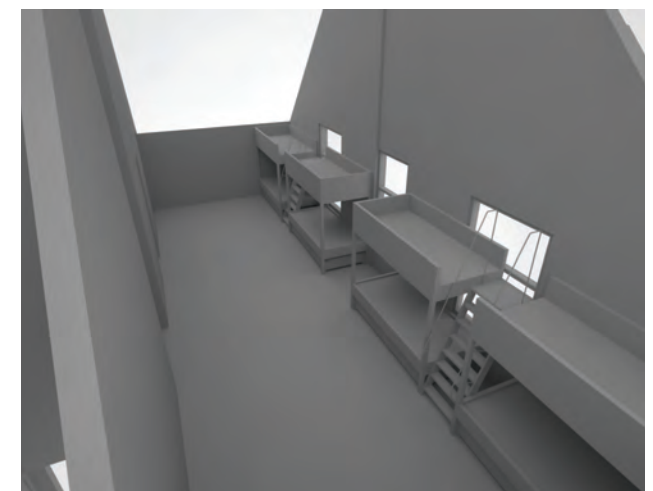


Model views from original scheme





New music and great room

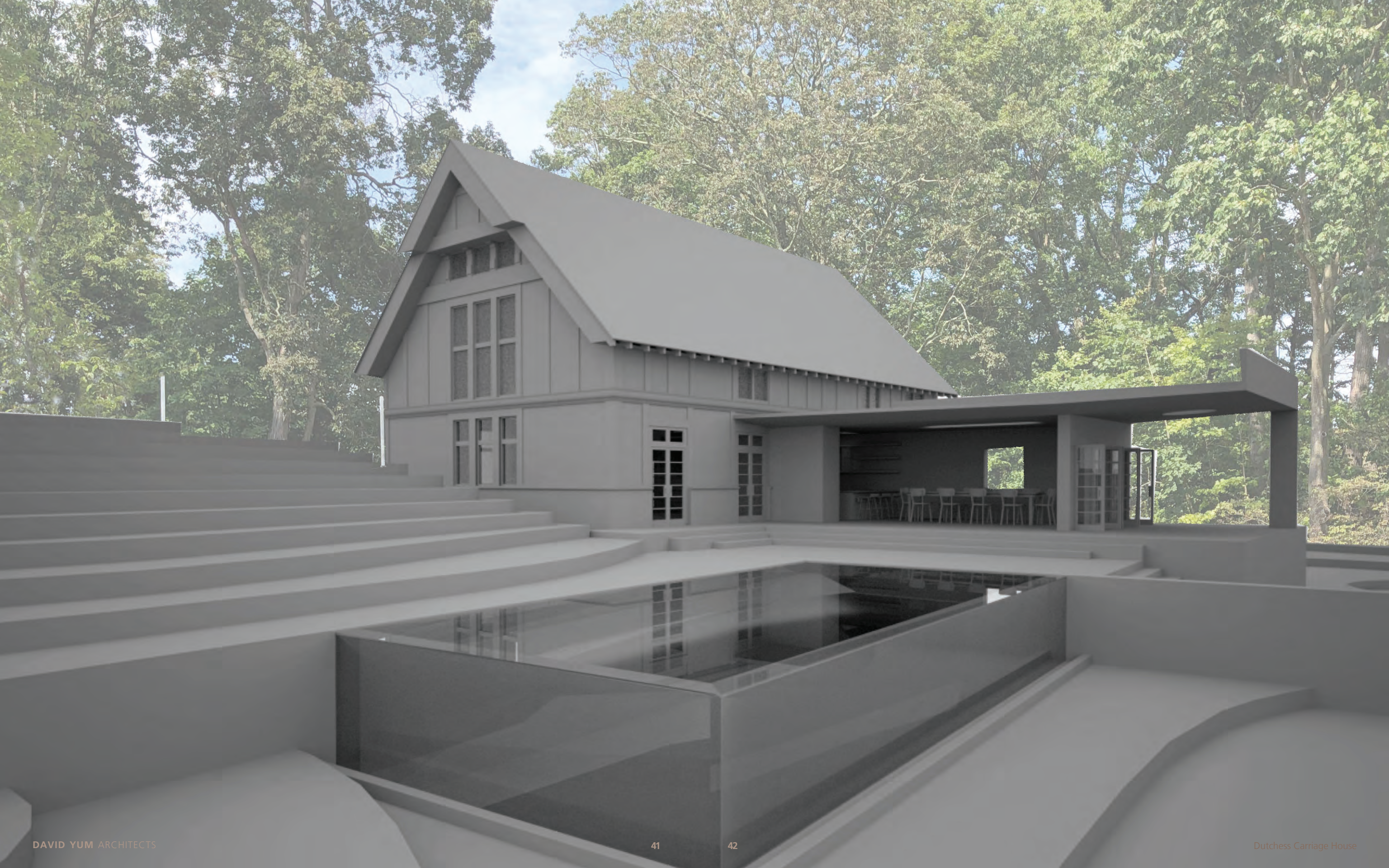


Sleep over play room



View from entry into great room and new addition beyond



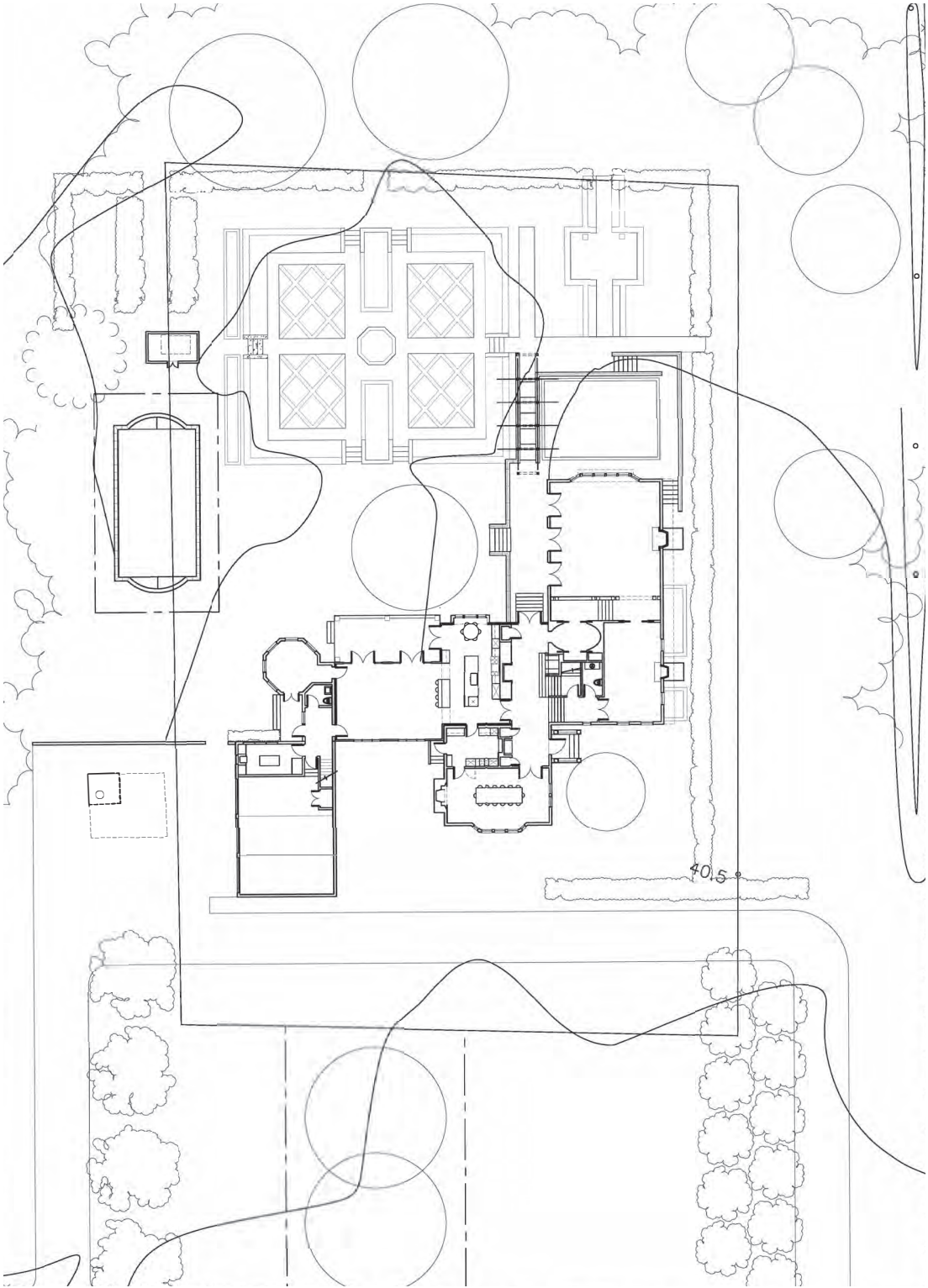






# LINDEN COTTAGE

An existing house has been almost entirely replaced by a new structure. The interests and needs of the homeowners have been integrated into a solution heavily based upon historic research of Long Island residences, the Arts and Crafts movement in Great Britain, and the specifics of the natural site topography and orientation.

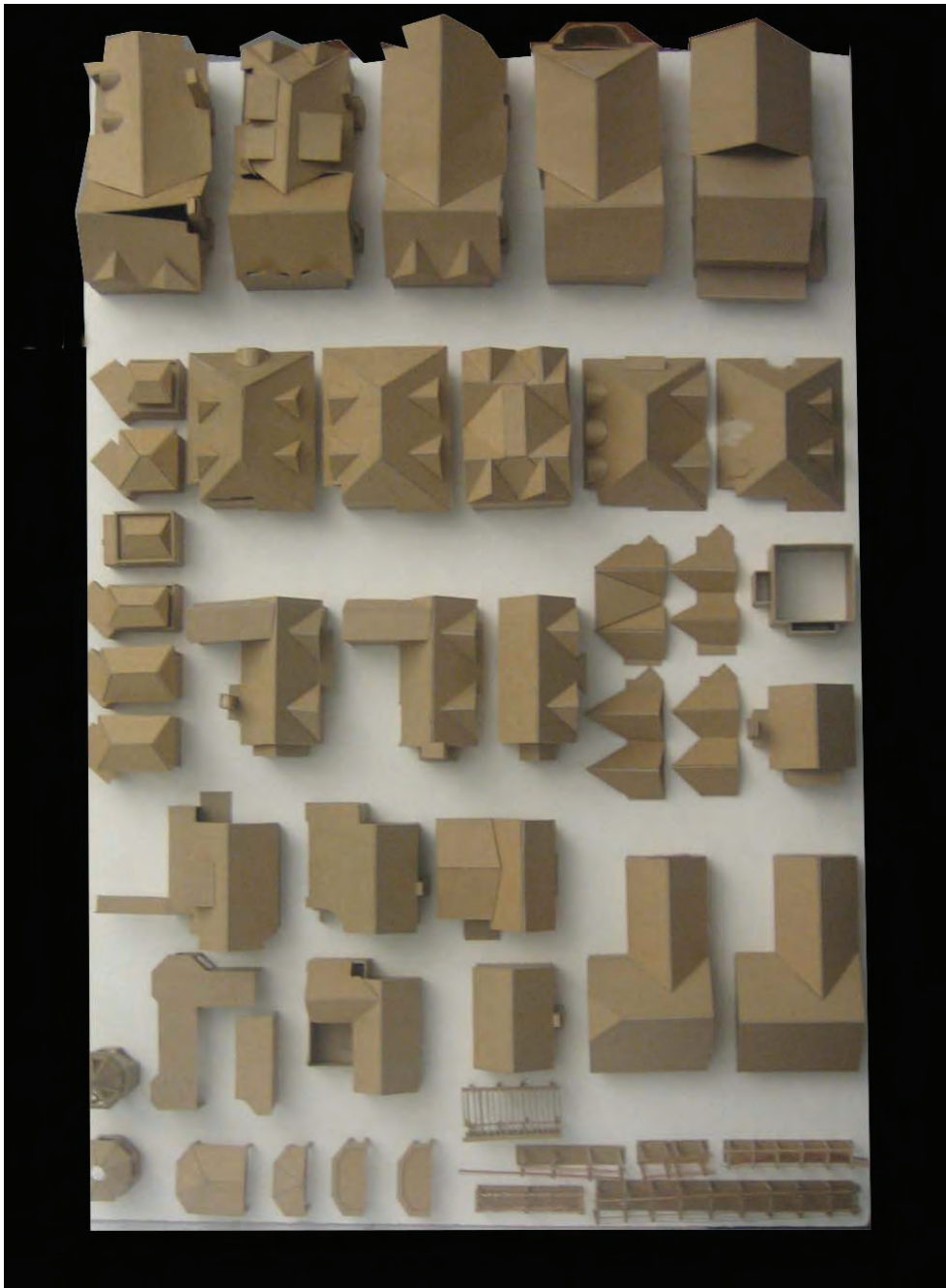


Site plan with new gardens

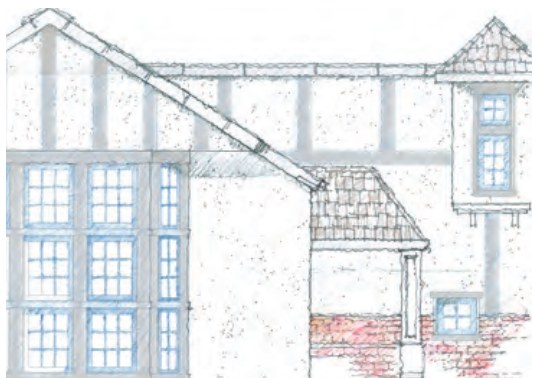


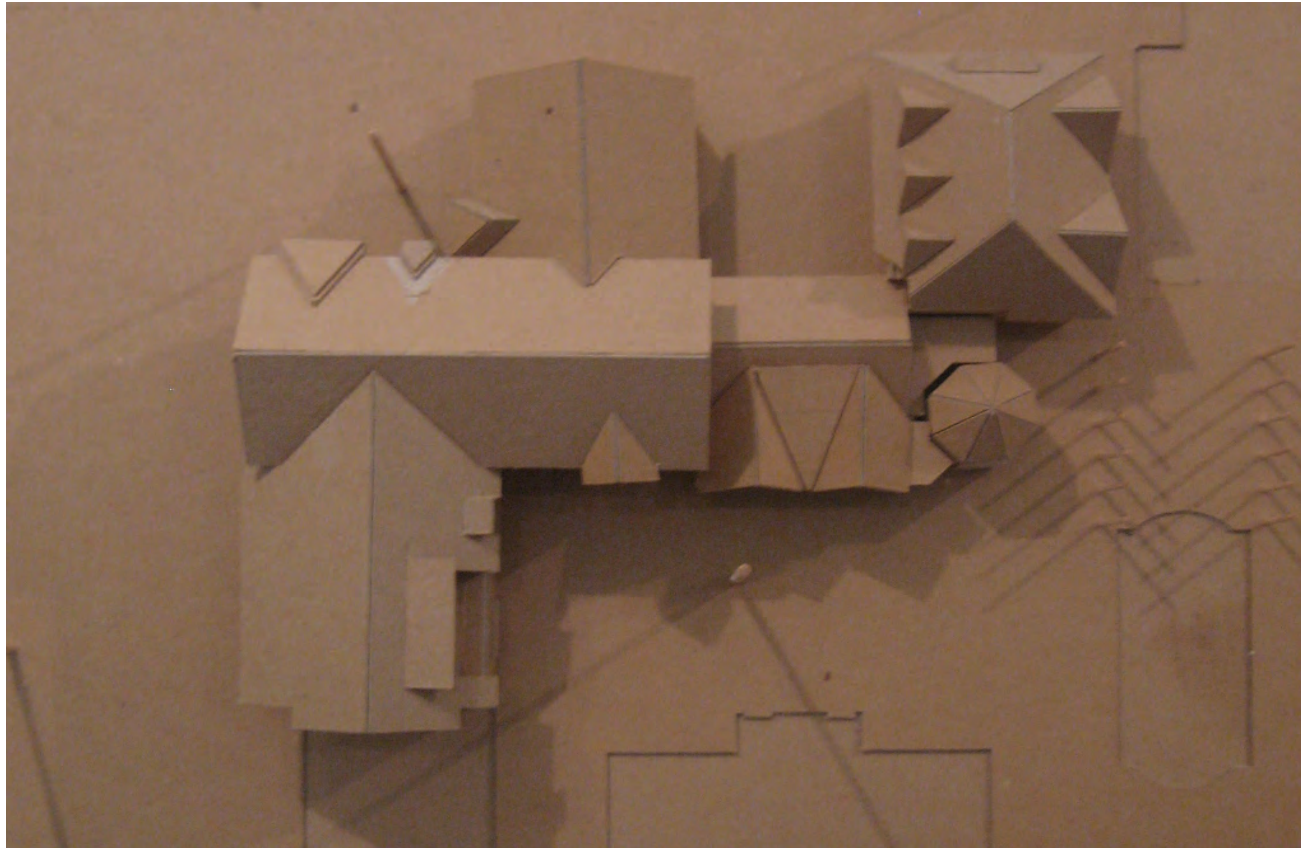


Given the Homeowner's strong desire to work within the language of 19th century English country houses, we were able to focus much creative energy on the, promenade architecturale, or narrative sequence of space and sectional variation, or the proportion and shape of the rooms. The familiar and orthogonal site plan belie a more empirical strategy. From the gateway, approaching the U-shaped driveway, the house is constantly revealing different angles and the whole can never be comprehended in just one, or even five views. Dozens of massing studies, on paper and in cardboard, explored the house as singular object and as volumes that continually shifted in aspect.

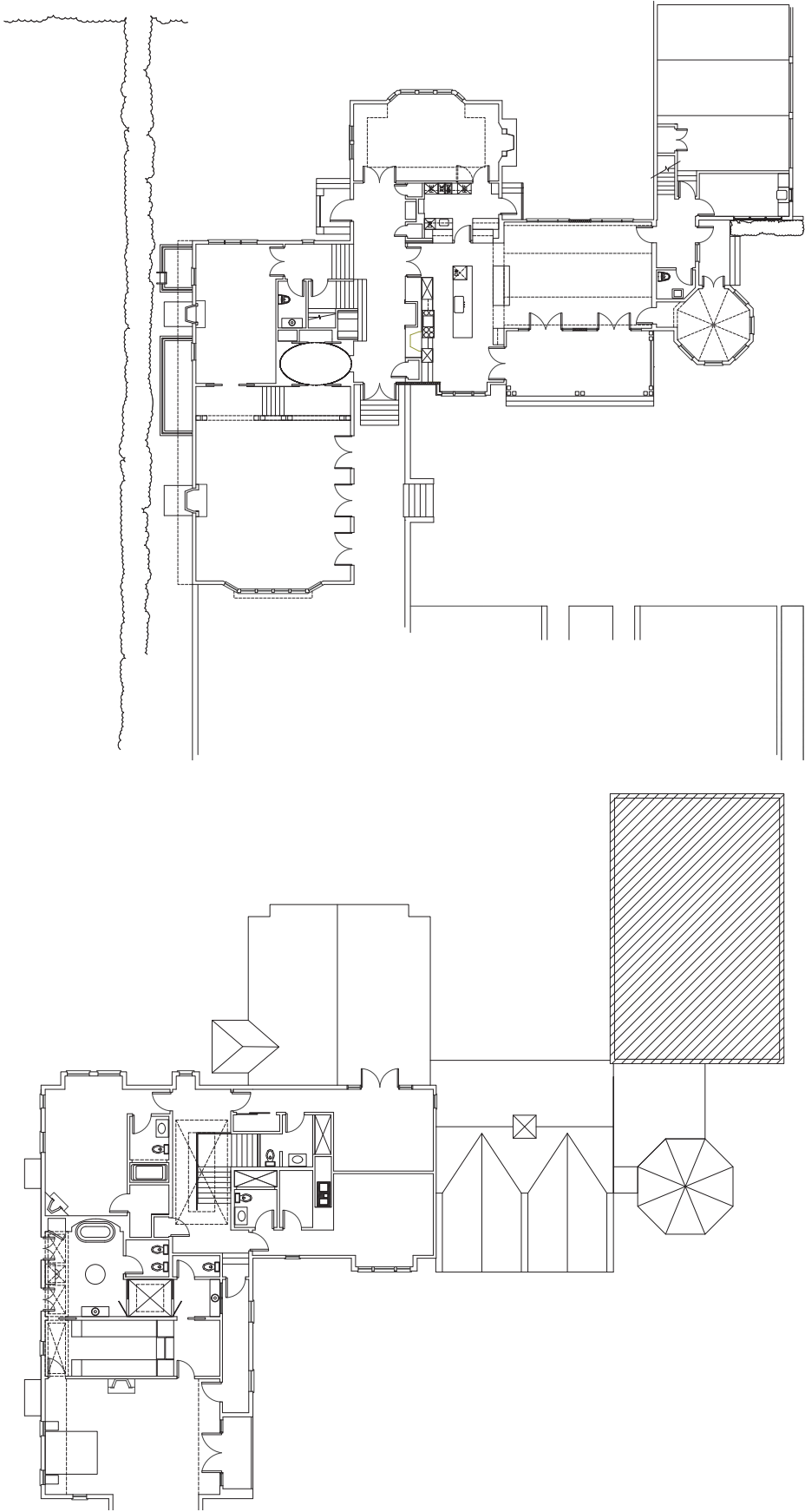


Massing models





Design development model

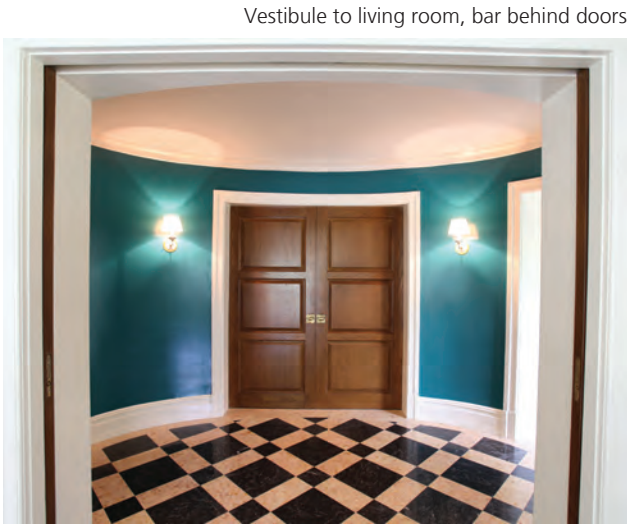








The large formal bay of the Dining room has no entry door. Instead, a smaller scale portico is set back on one side, and a more human scaled portico allows one to enter. Greeted by a formal niche, a long axial hall ends in a view to the rear gardens. An elliptical foyer holds an elegant bar behind doors and then, down a set of stairs, the largest scale room- the formal living room. This sequence comprised axial targets, ninety degree turns and shifts in parallel corridors. Scale, volume, texture and sectional shape are continually changing, both subtly and abruptly. The stylistic language of this house provided a comfortable and easily referential quality- a strategy to provide a Vitruvian firmness. The guided movement and cinematic variation of scale and space provided the remaining required, commodity and delight.



Dining room

Vestibule to living room, bar behind doors









Guest room, living room



Main house stair hall

Hall to guest suite







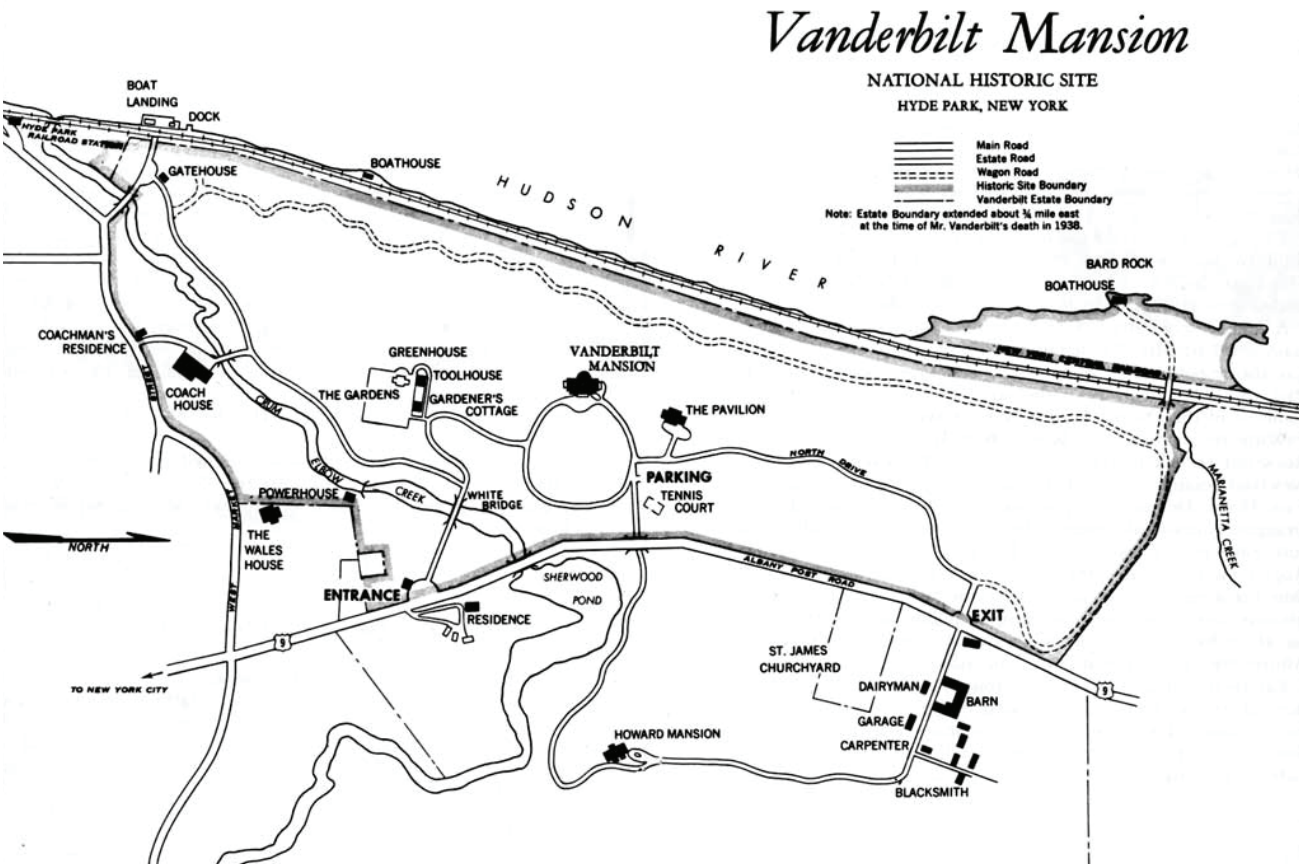


Restoration of front drive walls and new stone stair to tennis court

# VANDERBILT GUEST HOUSE

This project was essentially the restoration and renovation of a historic Hudson River Valley home in Dutchess County, New York. The endeavor balances careful, historic restoration with sensitive renovations that accommodate present day use. Our approach combined extensive historic research with modern technical solutions.

Over a six-year period, we researched, developed and deliberated on the renovation and restoration of this McKim Mead & White house built in 1896. Unraveling the history of the house, searching for its origins and finally, restoring parts of the building and its grounds has been a deeply fulfilling experience. The project brought together a homeowner passionate and committed to architecture, a curator focused on McKim Mead & White’s Vanderbilt Mansion and me, an architect. In addition to being a story about renovation and architecture, I think one finds a story about archaeology, investigation, oral history, and contemporary values.







Cornelius “Commodore” Vanderbilt amassed a fortune through his ventures in the shipping and railroad industries. By his death in 1877, Cornelius had accumulated \$105 million dollars, most of which was left to his oldest son and Frederick’s father, William Henry Vanderbilt. Within eight years, William doubled the family fortune, which according to present currency is equivalent to more than \$3 billion, rendering William H. the richest man in the world. Although Frederick received only \$10 million dollars when his father, William H. died, he succeeded in multiplying his inheritance to nearly \$80 million dollars through investments in railroads, steel, coal, oil, and tobacco. By Frederick’s generation, the Vanderbilt Family symbolized America’s Gilded Age in which high society lived like royalty.

During this age, aristocratic families typically owned country estates not far outside New York City that were used as retreats, seasonal residences, and places for entertaining. In keeping with this social trend, Frederick W Vanderbilt and his wife Louise bought an estate in Hyde Park, NY to be occupied during late spring, early summer, and consistently throughout the fall and the Christmas Holiday. Charles McKim of McKim, Mead & White, a prominent New York architecture firm, was commissioned to design the Vanderbilt Mansion as well as the Wales House and Howard House.



The Howard House, built for Vanderbilt’s favorite niece, Rose, and her husband, the New York Socialite Thomas Howard, was located about a half mile away from the mansion and was completed, along with the Wales House, a year prior to the mansion. The house is currently included in the National Historic Register. Intended primarily as a summer residence, the house sits atop a steep rock ledge and looks over a flat plain.

The 12,000-sf house, which is comprised of three stories of stacked fieldstone, featured a mixture of styles that included Tudor and Neo-classical elements. Over the last hundred years, the house has been renovated many times over, the last iteration being the least sensitive and the most invasive.







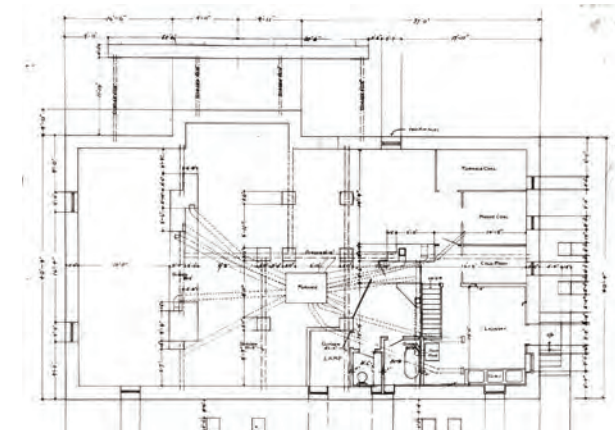
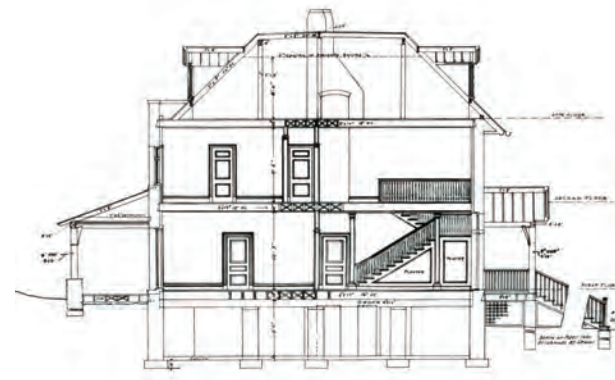
Restored walls over entry bridge



Facade, roof and dormers restored to the earliest McKim, Mead and White sketches

Calvert Vaux, who was the landscape architect for the concurrent construction of the Vanderbilt grounds, may have designed the gardens. Prior to ascending the hill where the Howard House sits, one crosses a massive, stacked stone bridge. This bridge had been in great disrepair. One hypothesis is that locals took the cut stone from the bridge to create their own garden walls seen along many of the later homes on route. Our thoughts on Vaux and our examination of the site lead us to a design for restoring bridge. As we dug the curved foundation for the bridge wall extensions, we uncovered the old wall foundations. Our reconstructed design closely mimicked the original. Once more, two feet down, we discovered the original capstones to the end piers.

A fire in the 1970's destroyed half the roof and attic floor. Miscellaneous doors, partitions and millwork had been added and removed. The basement and attic appeared more like ruins since subsequent renovations had largely ignored these levels. Fragments of the original furnace and coal areas in the basement, and hanging rods in the attic, hinted at the rooms that originally comprised the service, servant, and storage levels. Later, from our discovery of original drawings, we learned the furnace fragments actually evidenced one of the first centralized heating systems ever installed in the area, a spider like machine once dominating the center of the lower level.



Original McKim, Mead and White drawings

In a sense, the house is a labyrinth of historical layers, records of which were not extant.

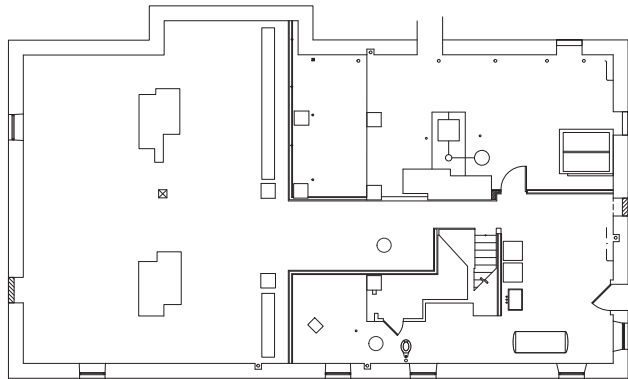
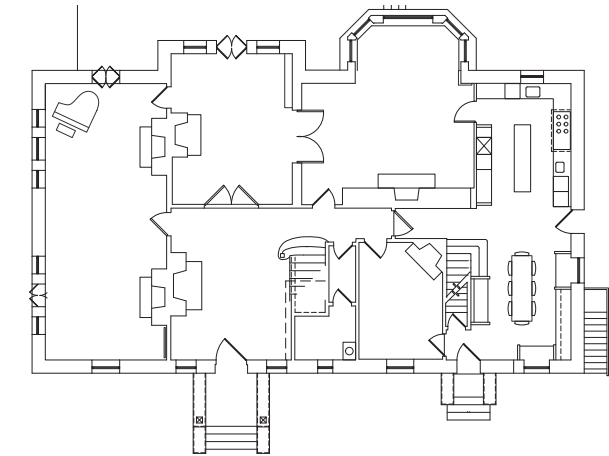
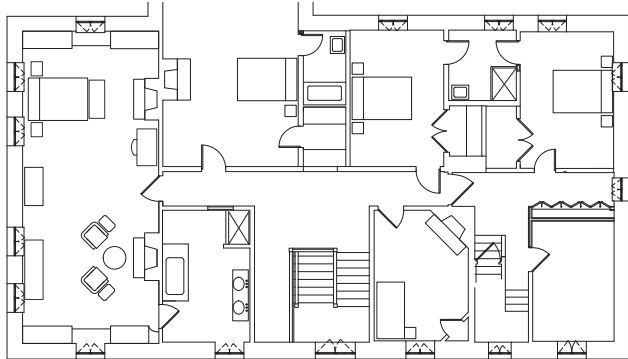
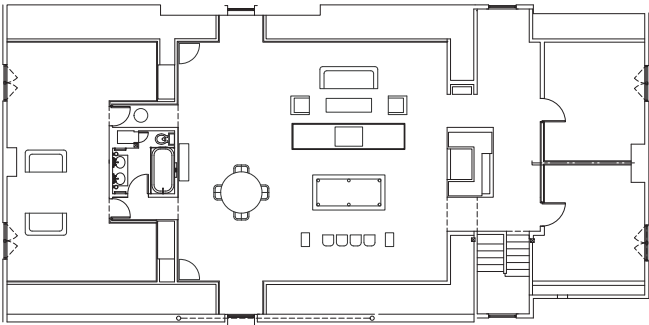
We were able to locate architectural drawings of the Howard House ranging from mid-century to 2000. After we made exhaustive searches in the New York Public Library, the Vanderbilt Mansion, Avery Library of Columbia University and the New York Historical Society, a stroke of luck occurred. The current Curator of Decorative Arts asked a colleague who formerly worked at the Vanderbilt about records of the Howard House. Having worked at the NYHS a number of years ago, she distinctly recalled seeing drawings of the Howard House and referred back to one of her old notebooks. Much to our relief and great delight, she found drawing inventory numbers. In returning to the NYHS, we finally obtained the drawings, which had not yet been indexed or catalogued due to backlog and budget constraints.

Nine drawings were retrieved, forming a record of the original design's intent. Fundamental changes in plan seem to have been made on site during construction. Whether it was the architect tinkering with the design or the client rethinking what had been planned is unknown. Furthermore, additions, such as the south side terrace of the 1930's reflect alterations due to contemporary fashions. The latest of these changes was the predominately plastic laminate kitchen of the 1970's.

Several sub-contractors, who have been in their respective trades for generations, shared recollections of their fathers working on various aspects of the house, and the various people who inhabited the home. In speculating on the authenticity of the plaster detailing on the ceiling of the drawing room, an elderly woman told us about visiting the house as a child, playing in the drawing room and being fascinated by the delicate leaf patterns in the ceiling.



The present scope of work stretches across the entire house and grounds. On the first floor the parlor, one of most intact spaces, still had delicate plaster detailing largely. In fact, the effort in this room will largely be of restoration, though the fireplace surrounds, that have been lost without any clue, will be simple, black stone slabs- a nod to the present, but also completely reversable should new evidence surface. The second level, in need of structural repair on the north end, that had been altered to form a series of awkward bedrooms and baths, will be renovated to form a simpler, clearer plan with finishes closer to the original. The attic, once servant quarters and storage rooms, will be turned into guest rooms, offices and a large informal living room. More importantly, the roof will be reframed since the fire and dangerous alterations left the current structure in a near tenuous state. The basement will return to use as storage and services; updated modern HVAC equipment, electrical services, laundry and a large wine cellar.



Proposed plans







The main stair and entry hall, the grandest public space, has few clues remaining. Based on the detailed millwork and drawing details of the Vanderbilt, only recently surfaced through our research, we reconstructed a McKim like space, through restoration of the staircase spindles and balustrade and, the fireplace mantle, to our interpretation of the wood paneling that will define both stories and extend to down the east-west corridor. Originally, the kitchen was a series of pantries and servant preparation rooms. A more open layout will be combined with millwork and textures sympathetic to the original house.





Primary vanity



Guest bathroom





Third floor loft, once servant quarters



The second level, in need of structural repair on the north end, that had been altered to form a series of awkward bedrooms and baths, will be renovated to form a simpler, clearer plan with finishes closer to the original. The attic, once servant quarters and storage rooms, will be turned into guest rooms, offices and a large informal living room. More importantly, the roof will be reframed since the fire and dangerous alterations left the current structure in a near tenuous state. The basement will return to use as storage and services; updated modern HVAC equipment, electrical services, laundry and a large wine cellar.







Proposed garage, garden shed and workshop

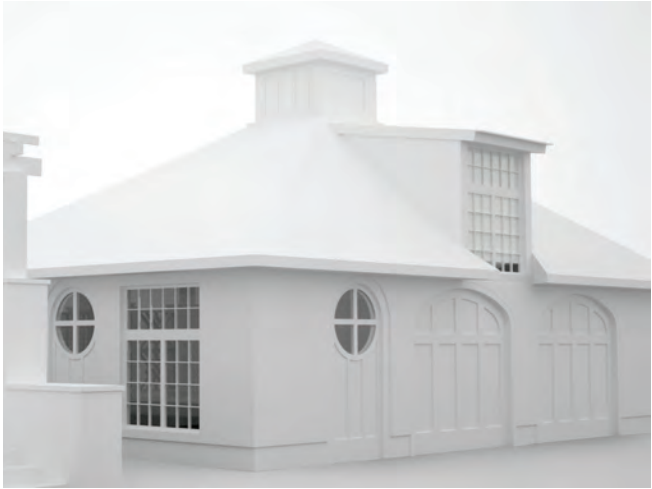
As we have developed this project, the issue of restoration versus renovation has continually arisen. Balancing a respect for the original architectural conception with the needs of a modern lifestyle affected every decision. At the same time, the house has no evidence of being a prize jewel by either the architect or owner. McKim, Mead & White’s focus at the time was the Vanderbilt Mansion. The owner built the House out of consideration for a favorite niece to have a place nearby in the summer months. The stylistically inconsistent building failed to even survive the original construction without undergoing fundamental alterations to the plan. We have often considered how past alterations, some near 75 years old, and part of the recorded and oral history of the home can be reconciled to any effort at restoration. Where, or by what criteria, do decisions regarding the alteration take place? As the renovations and restorations still move forward to this day, balancing original intent, historical perspective and the living present chapter of the building’s story continue to challenge the people involved.



Connection to main house



Early study



Variations



New gardens after Lutyens



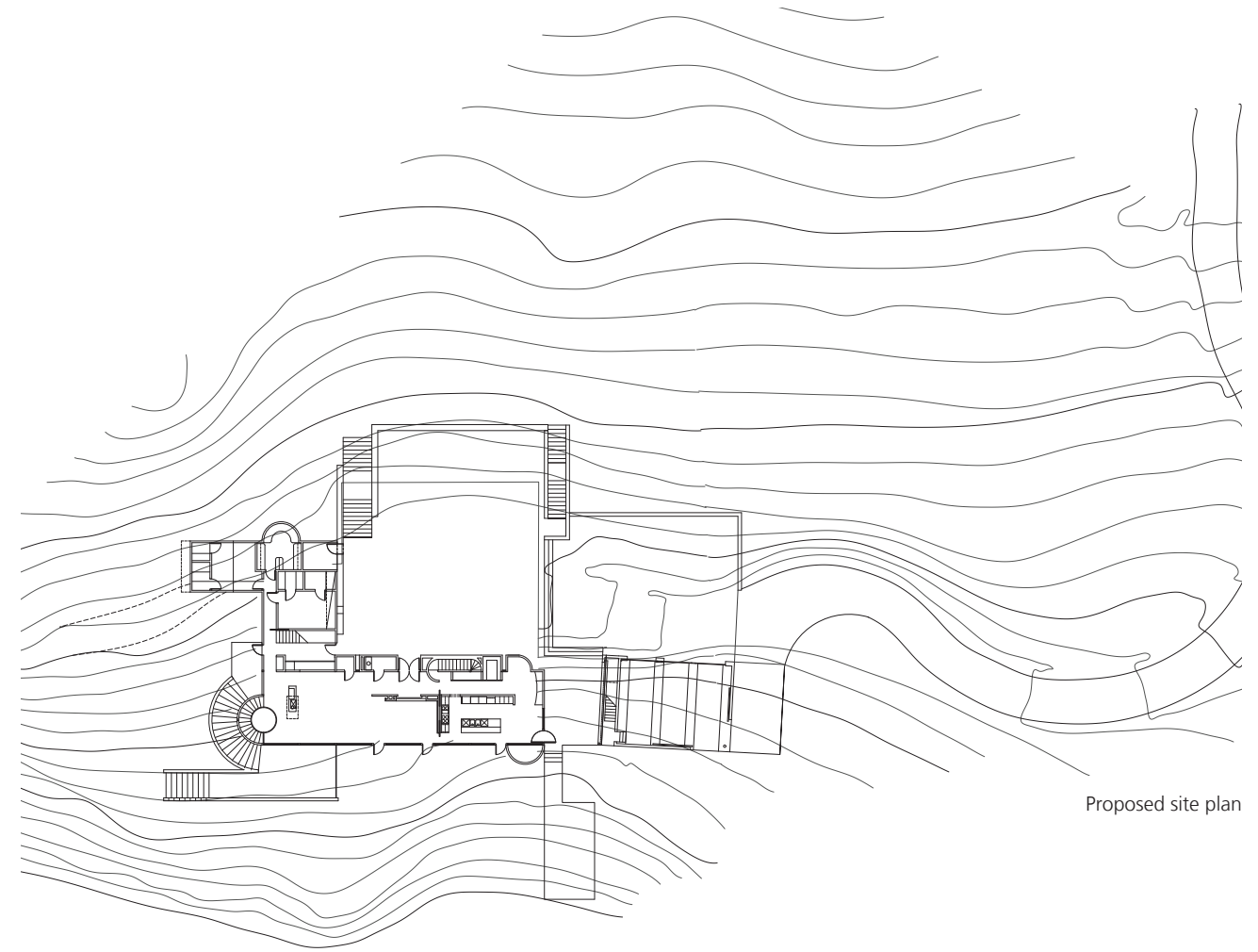


Existing House

# HIGH RIDGE RESIDENCE

*As a project from the early period of the office, this contemporaneous description reflects the struggle and development of our conceptual interests. Seeing how much of that conceptual foundation has persisted to later works has been one of the most rewarding outcomes of this book.*

For this house in Pound Ridge, New York, we were asked to re-imagine the entire house as well as add a garage-studio. When I initially visited, I was taken with how private and remote the house seemed. The small, painted white, wood clad, house was perched parallel to the contours of a very steep hillside, overlooking a rapid brook 150 feet away. Almost no glazing faced the uphill, motor court side. Along the downhill side however, large expanses of full height glass formed a curtain wall facing the brook below. All rooms faced the brook. The lower level was dark and damp. Bedrooms at the half buried lower level faced the downhill



Proposed site plan

view, though with smaller strip windows. The building was relentless in orienting the occupant toward the view.

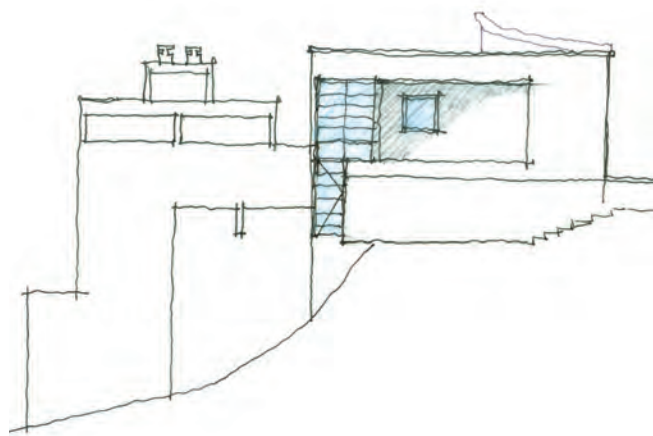
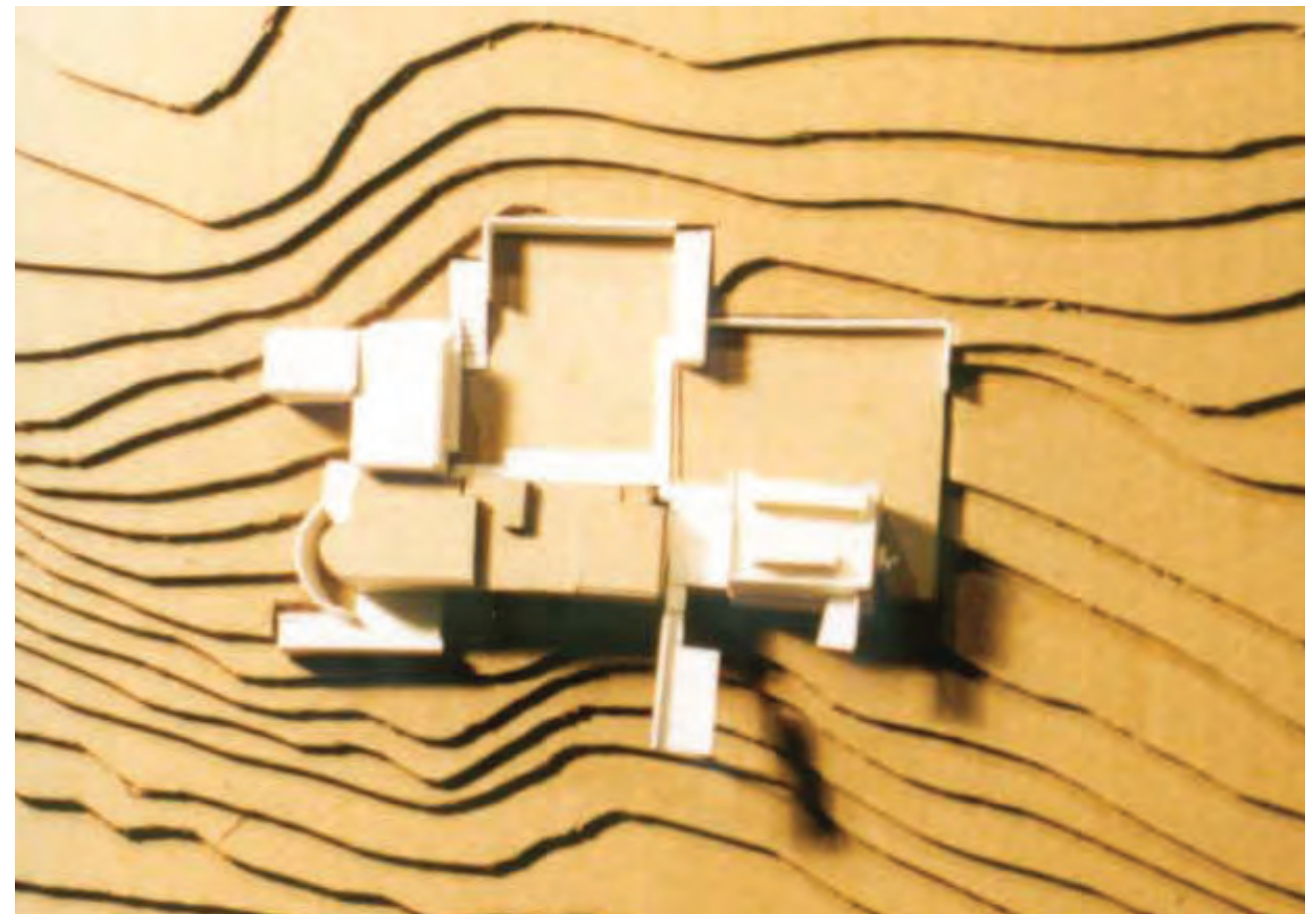
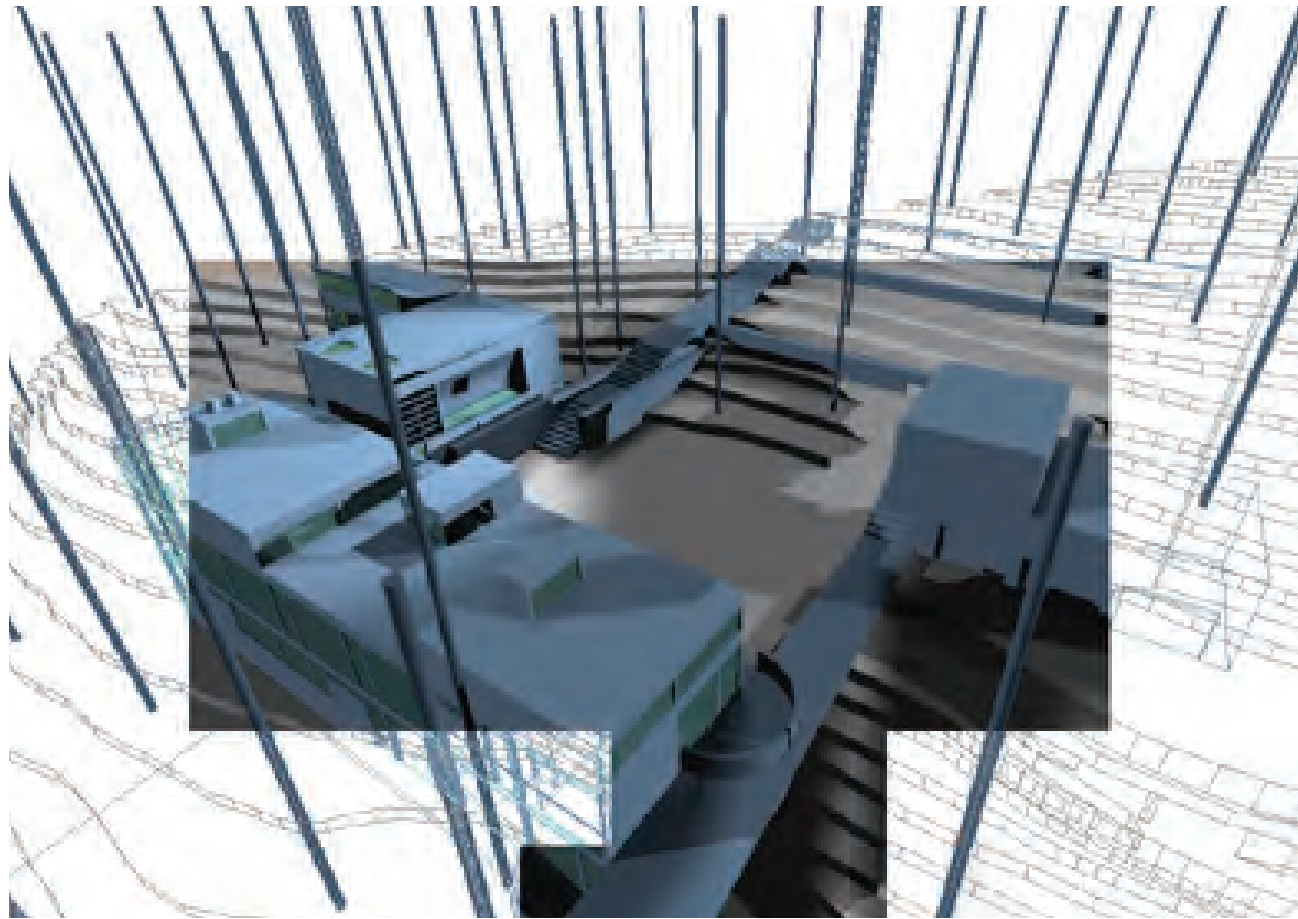
## Defining Dwelling:

Home is most often defined by memories and uniquely personal associations. Shelter addresses the pragmatic requirements of protection against the elements, a division between public and private, and the containing of domestic functions. For this project, we made a distinction to explore the idea of Dwelling as a vehicle for providing psychological rooted-ness and fields for memory.

In an age of an increasing universality stemming from Production and Reproduction, the single-family home is ever more a precious refuge for creating an individual

idea of Dwelling. Another defining of Dwelling maybe the unique place that a family or group seek to establish as not only their place of Shelter, but also the place which identifies and expresses their origin, their relationships, their achievements, and their identities. Motivation thus exists, compounded by the notion of individualism and forces of capitalism, to make the primary dwelling a unique place. Trends in consumer home furnishings, and even the productions of complete lifestyles such as Martha Stewart's Living, evidence this force. Antithetically, the forces of Capitalism which allowed these consumables to make their presence known and their goods available, are also the ones which make them uniform, consistent and above all, repeated. Not only are the forms repeated, but slight variants on the form, only superficially



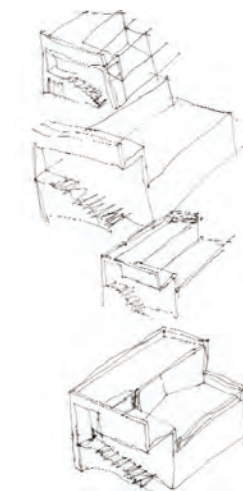


Proposed primary suite addition

distinct in the guise of packaging, are also multiplied beyond count, often due to the mass appeal of those searching for a homey uniqueness.

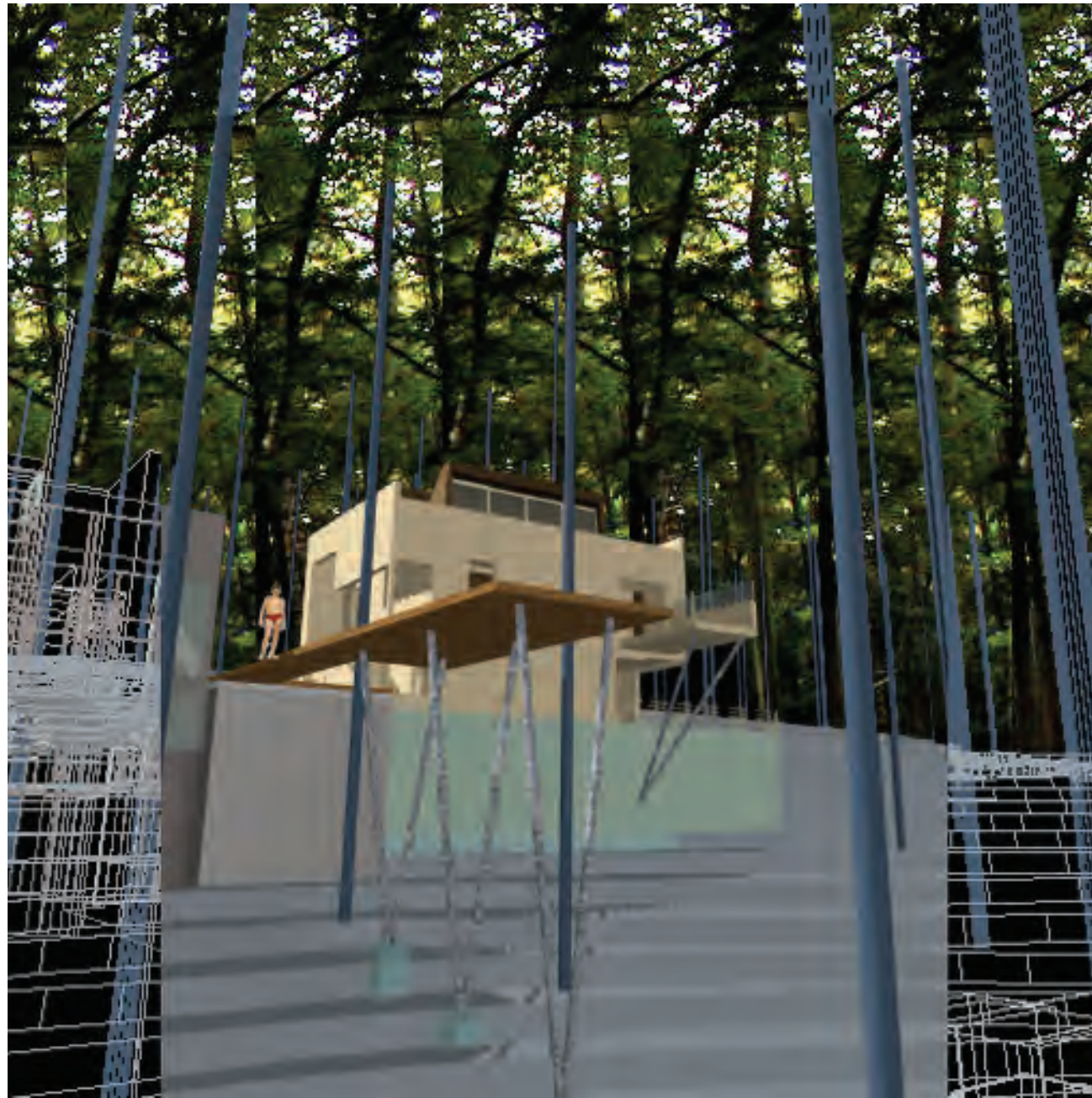
Response:

Dwelling is pursued through an understanding and manipulation of the site. The site is argued as singularly possessing the grounds for creating Dwelling. These ideas are not new as we pursue notions already so well explored (genus loci, critical regionalism). Thus, our response is structured by a meshing, even grinding, of site with interpretation. In its essence, this architecture seeks to elevate, consume, exploit, and reveal the land. Interwoven is a layering of spatial constructs that define an interpretation of not only the program, but also the site. Finally, the architecture's defining, framing and sequencing of space; the collaging of texture and scale; and the variability caused by season, time and light compose the elements of this Dwelling and, vehicles of memory so central to the initial yearning to create Dwelling.



Massing and facade studies



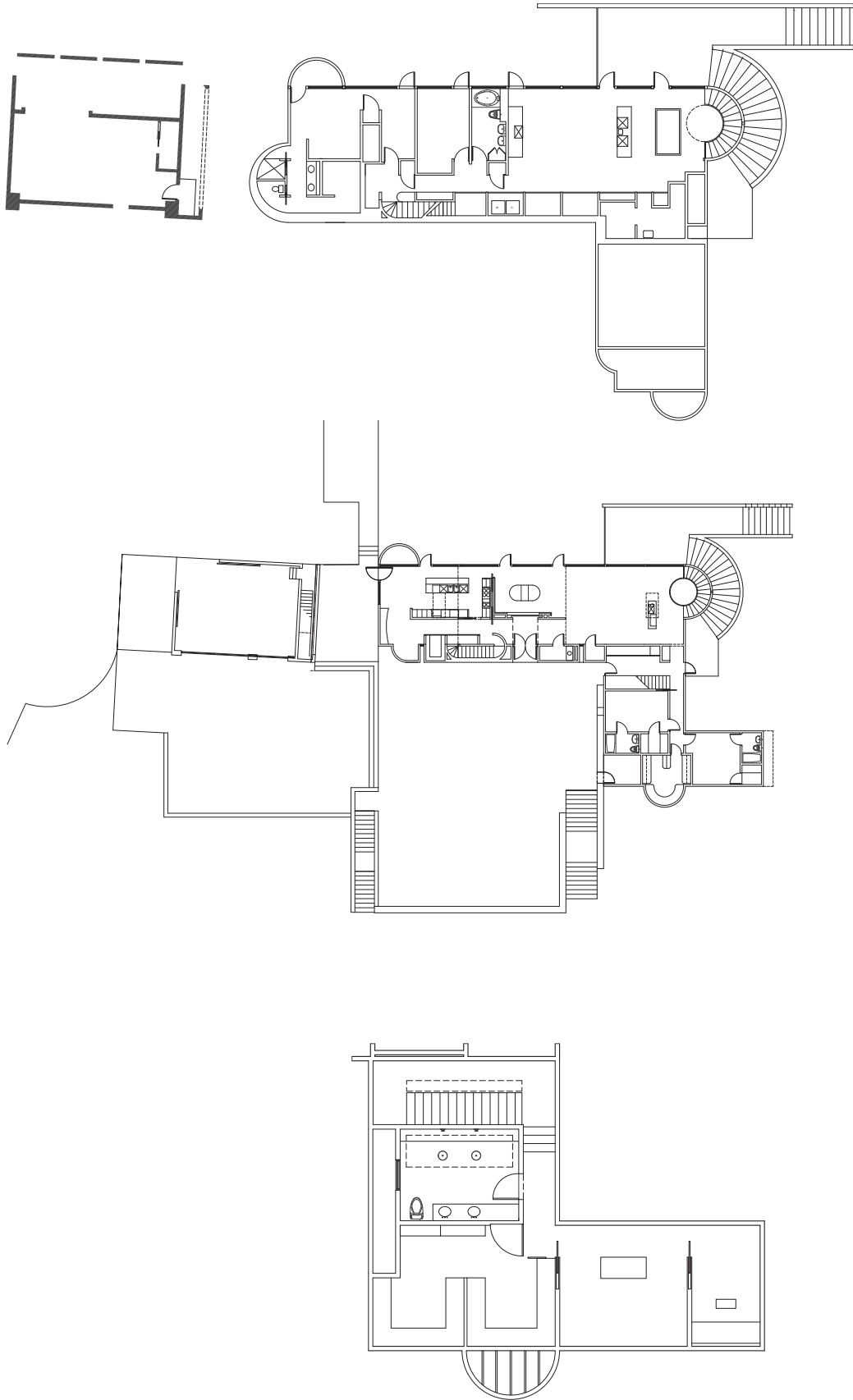


Description of the Project:

The response sought to preserve the essence of the original house, its parti, and at the same time, continually counteract the singular, relentless focus on the parallel view to the stream. The existing building marked a primary attempt to create dwelling. Though limited, the existing building produced a dwelling for a certain period, for a certain family. By preserving parts of this building, and more importantly, parts which relate to its Typology, a layered foundation is started and, the revised, additive, new Dwelling takes its first cues.

Syncopation. The attitude toward addition:

Addition always meant a certain respect for the original structure, not only as a valuable, material structure, but also as a link to the owners' memories of the original house. Addition presented an opportunity to express new ideas to the possibilities for living and perception of the site. A critical look at the strengths and weakness of the present project initiated the process of exploring, reacting and ultimately expressing a revised attitude about the site, domestic spatial organizations, tectonics, movement, and view.

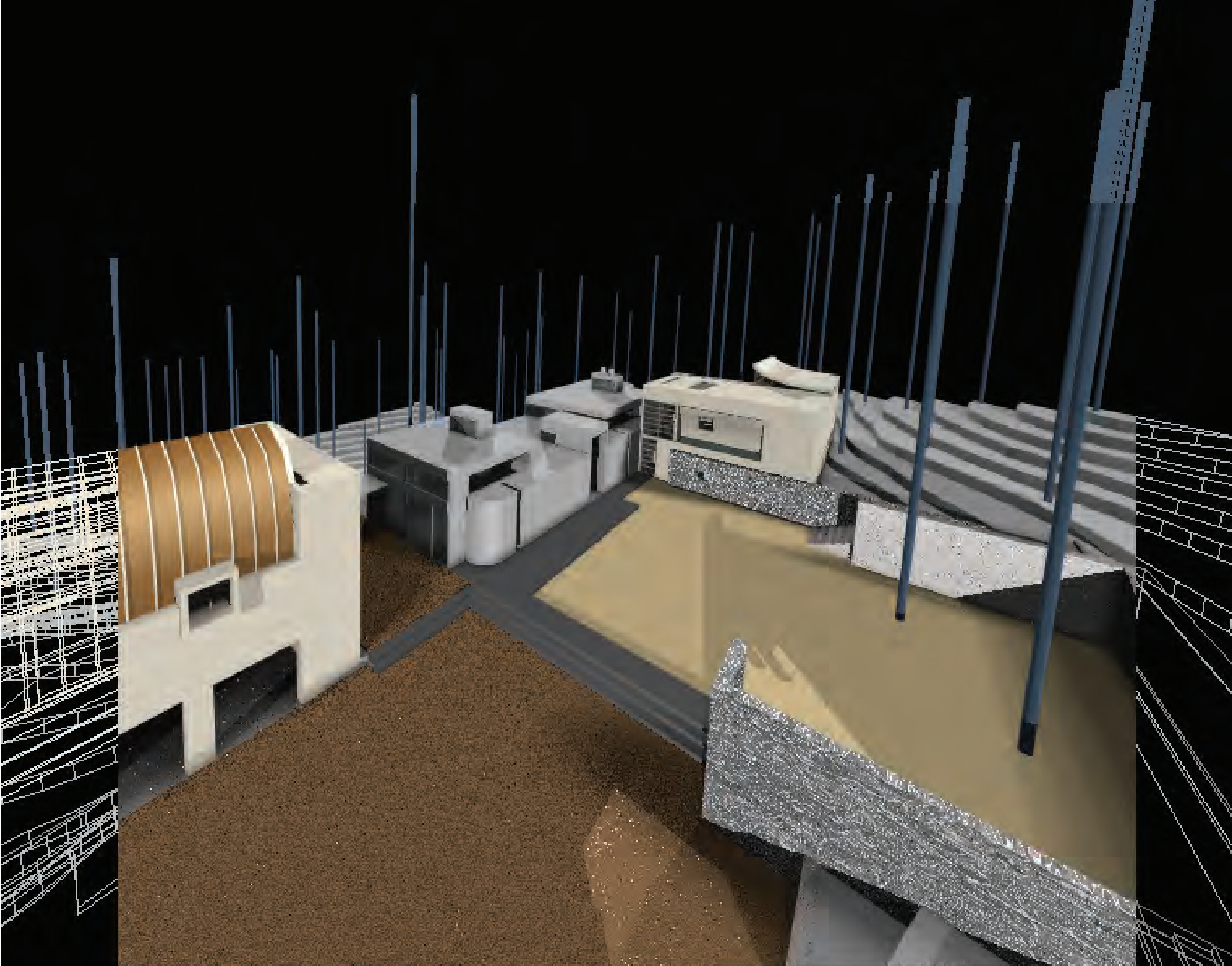
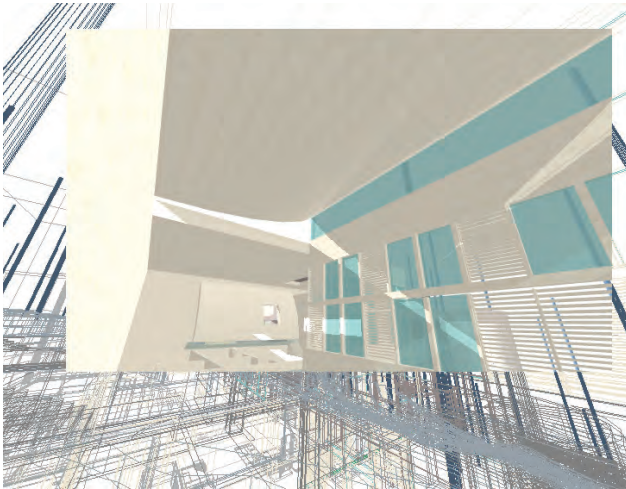
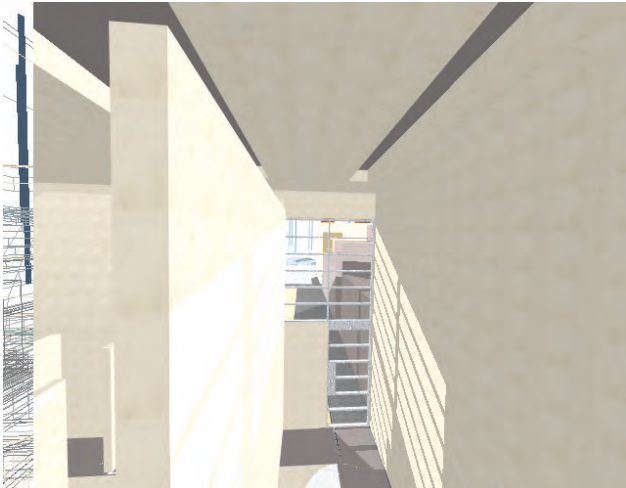




In the proposed scheme, a sequence of stacked stone and poured in place concrete walls creates an architectural promenade. The promenade guides one perpendicular to the hillside contours. The site will be experienced both along and against the steep ridge of the site. Changes in elevation along the promenade allow new perceptions of scale, distance, and light within the context of the ridge, the valley formed, and the buildings and walls placed midway.

A series of courtyards defines other spaces. The driveway now descends into a new parking court. The hard surfaced area, the geometry of the site traced into the concrete with metal joints, will become the roller blade, hockey area. The geometric lines provide reference points for the movements of the skaters.

An inward-looking courtyard formed by the house, the new addition, and a series of retaining walls enclose a grass lawn. Steps along the addition are squeezed between two parallel walls, slipping relative to each other. At the upper level, a decorative garden





contains a view overlooking the lawn. A secondary stair loops one back down to the main level; a square opening in the stone wall frames a view out to the deck. The axis is extended from the stair, across the edge of the lawn, onto the deck and beyond.

Through the glass connecting volume, one can move into the private court formed by the proposed bedroom wing. Closed off from the more public courtyards, the bedroom court has no lawn or garden, but a remote grove of trees. Even the brook is obscured from this vantage point. Exterior stairs continue along the west side existing house, eventually twisting a path down to the beginning of an existing hiking trail.

Movement through the scheme, framed by the new built elements, produces shifting views of the volumes of the house, and the landscape.

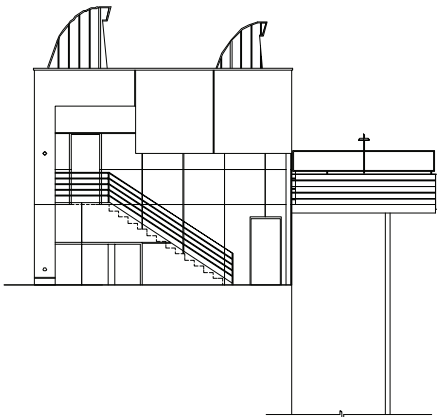
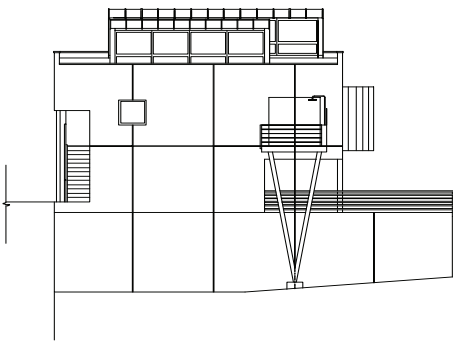
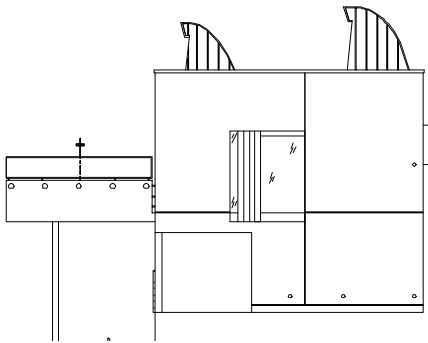
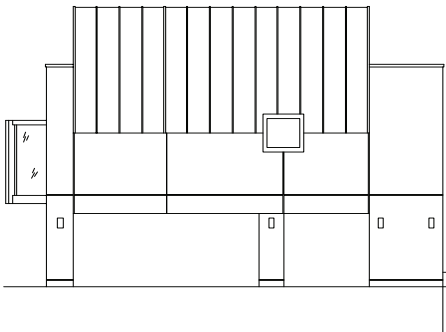
Counteracting:

Organized like a machine for living, the relentless curtain wall of the existing main level was reiterated in the cellular line of bedrooms at the lower level. A non-domesticity emerged in which all bedrooms had an equality and an almost antiseptic relationship to the corridor which spanned the length of the house, east to west. Clarity of the programmatic relationships was simple to the point of stiffness.

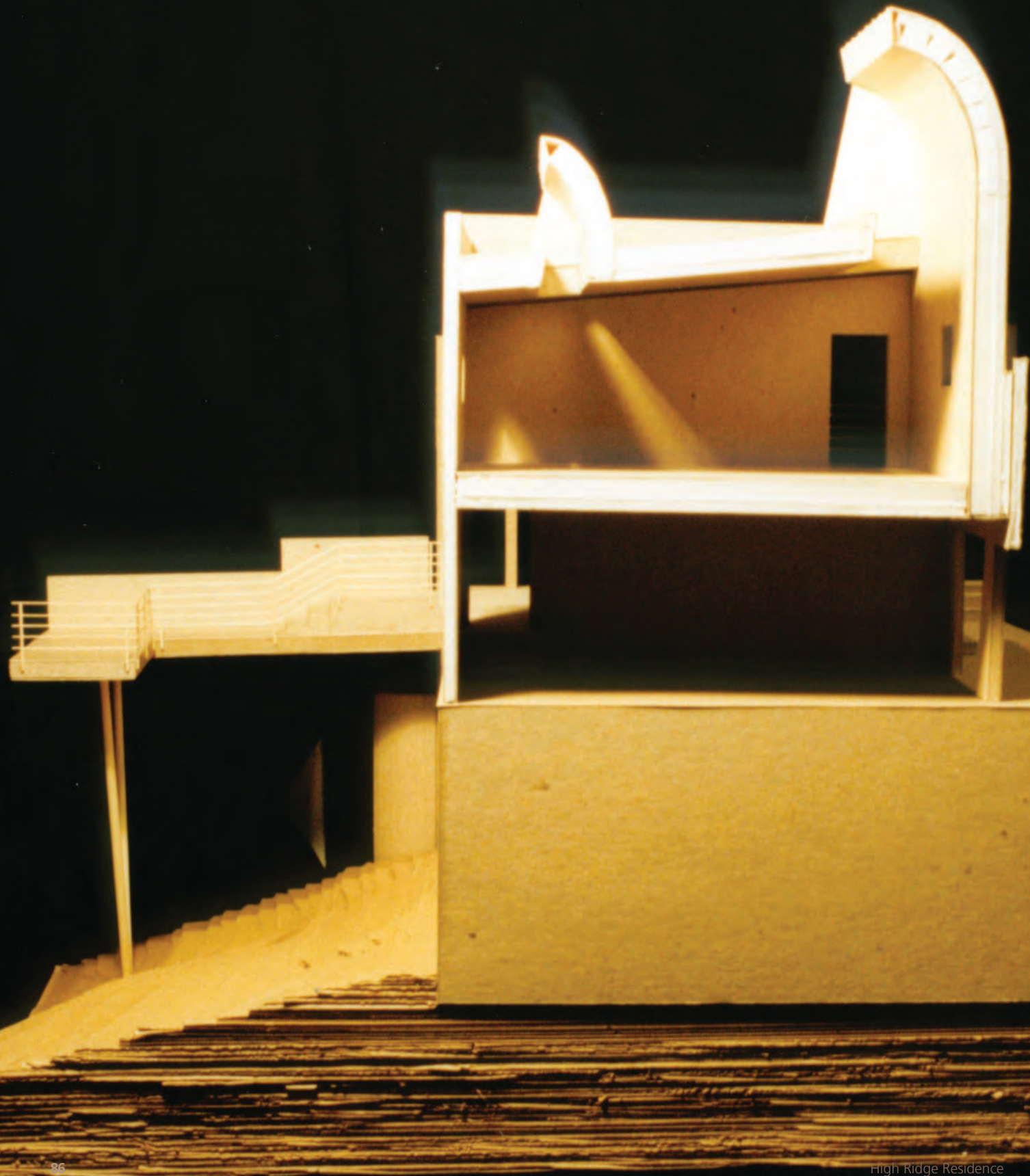
The proposed scheme brings certain ideas of the traditional home, such as the bedrooms located separately and above the public areas. At the same time, there are a multiplicity of living areas, gradations of public and private space, and varieties of inside/ outside relationships.

The experience of a resolutely static volume will be displaced by the sliding planes of the garden walls, masses embedded into the earth and; subtractions, movements and transformations of new tectonic elements.

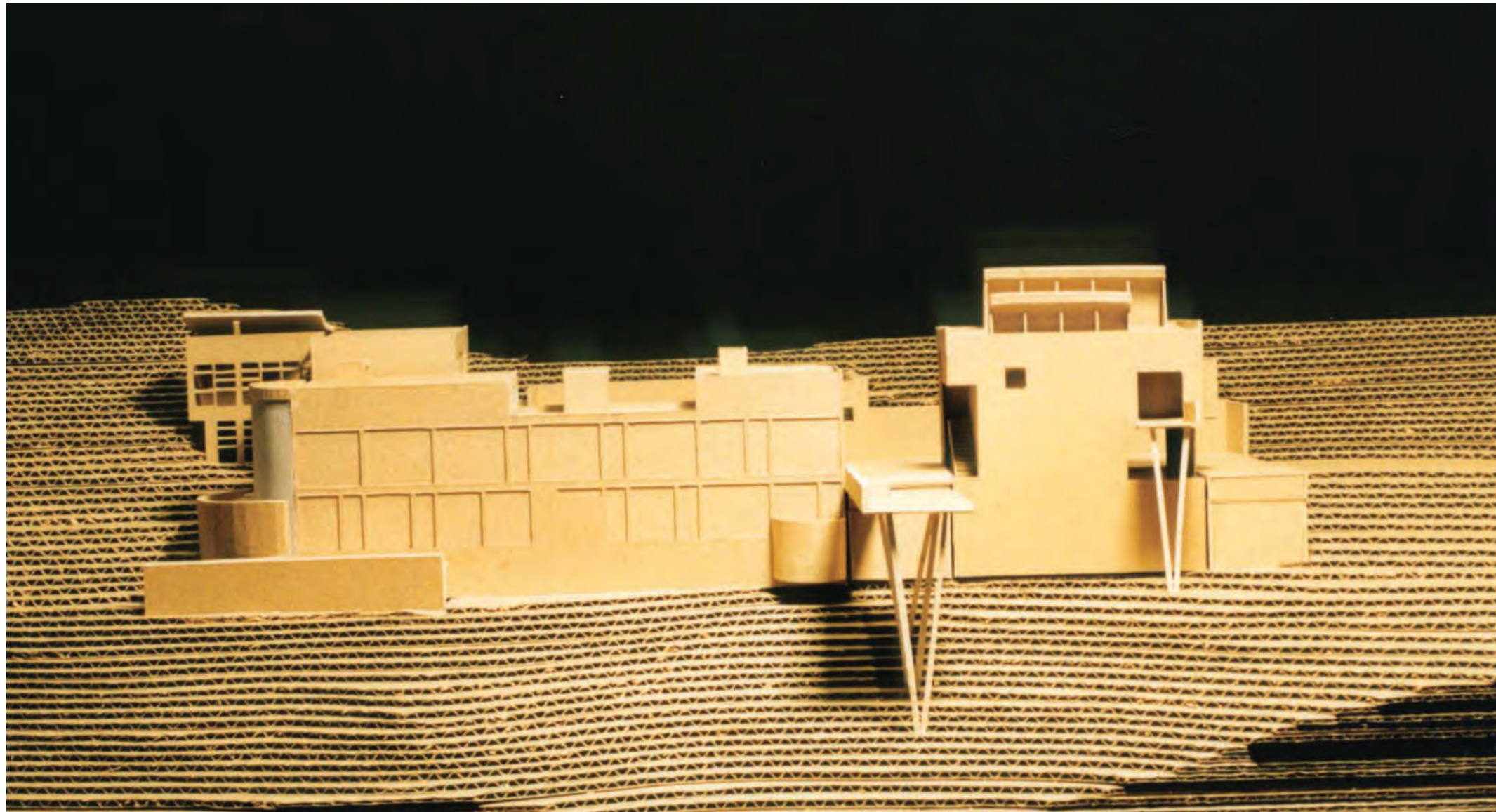
In the existing house, one could sense a clear idea and an uncompromising use of language. In the end, the proposed scheme attempts to have a dialogue with the existing house and its ideas, as opposed to overwhelming, defining as insignificant or destroying the original. The scheme attempts to act in counterpoint, responding to the gestures established, though not in necessarily the same beat, or even language. The rhythm formed is one more of syncopation. Our responses seek to contrast and juxtapose textures and scale. The new scheme attempts to be critical of the established notions of plane, compactness, linearity, and geometry. Recently, our client said she really liked how she could still see and sense the



Garage and studio addition







house she originally fell in love with and have all the things the original house lacked.

Re-appropriating. Subverting the idea of original.

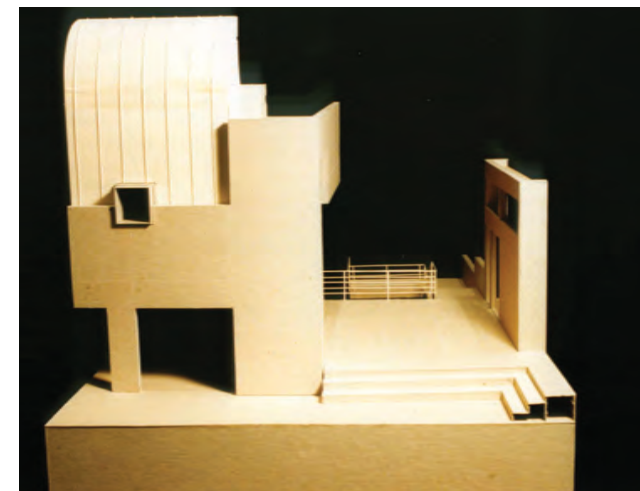
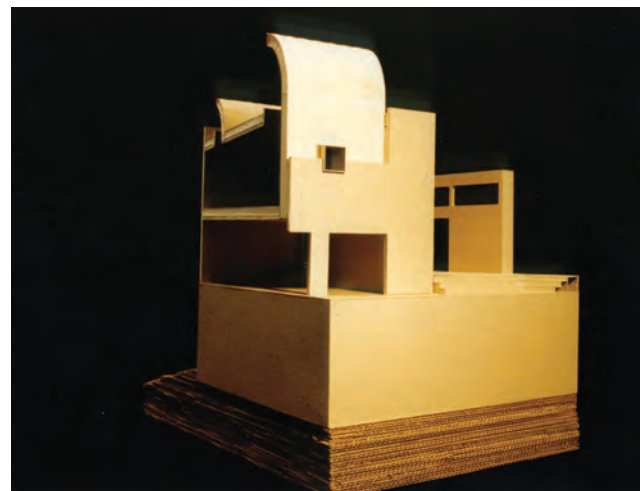
Elements of the existing house have been re-appropriated for use into the new scheme. The semicircular deck niche at the west end now becomes the foundation for the semi-circular stair leading from the main level Living room to the Den below. As one descends from the Living room, the volume is illuminated by the glass block enclosure, a single clear glazed window frames a view of a mini waterfalls in the brook. The center point is shared by the radius of the exterior stair descending from the bedroom area courtyard.

The skylight in the children's study traces the outline of the previous condenser pad. Now, light filters from above into the sitting/ table alcove.

Once a static volume set on a hill, the proposed scheme integrates itself into the earth. The new structures call into question which buildings are original, or how an addition can subvert the reading of original versus added; one might imagine the bedroom wing as the first structure, embedded into the hillside, against the stacked stone retaining walls.

Movement, Twisting, Leaves:

The profile of a quarter ellipse is taken, rotated and flipped to form the essential openings of natural light in the new structures. The skylight of the gym/ studio forms a convex arch of standing seam copper over the new garages. Designed as light scoops, the south facing glazing brings indirect light down into the studio area. The two scoops vary in height and length, opposing and conversing, making major and minor incidents in the illumination of the space.







That convex arch is made concave at the front façade of the addition. In contrast to light, metallic, and articulated, the ellipse becomes massive and rough. The ellipse forms the knife edge which carves a groove into the rectilinear volume of stone, concrete and stucco. The elliptical, concave carving forms the skylight for one bedroom and the adjacent shower compartment.

Twisting one more time, the ellipse takes form under the Master Bedroom. Like a flat roof peeling upward on one side, the ceiling lifts to gently roll light under the surface of the roof. The surface realizes a soft gradation of light, much like the studio vault, only rotated 90 degrees, convex and reclined above the actual bed.

#### Precedents. Living Like Ewoks on Endor:

The deck sits isolated, among the trees. Like cruising from an imperial 74-Z speeder bike used by the Empire on Endor, Episode VI, ROTJ, one can experience a new plane, the mid trunk level of the eighty-foot pines. Previously rooted to the perch formed on the ledge, the deck allows habitation among the trees, 35'-0" above the ground, detached from the plane of the earth.

#### Dissonances:

One could sense the very pure order and clear set of scales rendered by the original house. In counteracting and syncopating, the range of scales could be expanded. The proposed scheme attempts to introduce contrasts in texture, mass, scale and light. In contrast to a house that was singularly about one type of material, volume, and orientation, the range of these dimensions was expanded or countered in order to reveal more about the site, its variations in flora and terrain, from the upper ridge to the bottom of the stream valley: across the ridge, from a eastern to a western exposure.

The final composite of the natural site, the existing structure and the proposed intervention contains individual chords which in isolation are distinct and even discordant. The absence of pervasive harmonic lines allows a controlled dissonance; a texture of interactions and inter-relationships which work only as a whole composition, expressing coherence only as the cumulative effect of textural contrasts and tensions, rests, and movements. In the end, this composition of dissonances and sonances comprise the synthetic, interpretive proposal for Dwelling on this site.









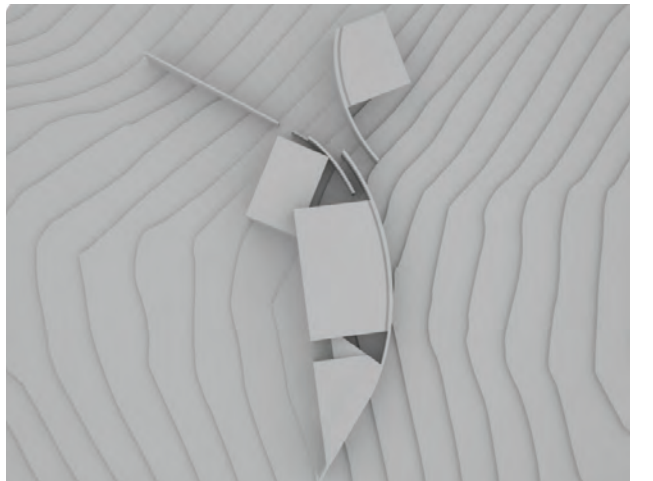
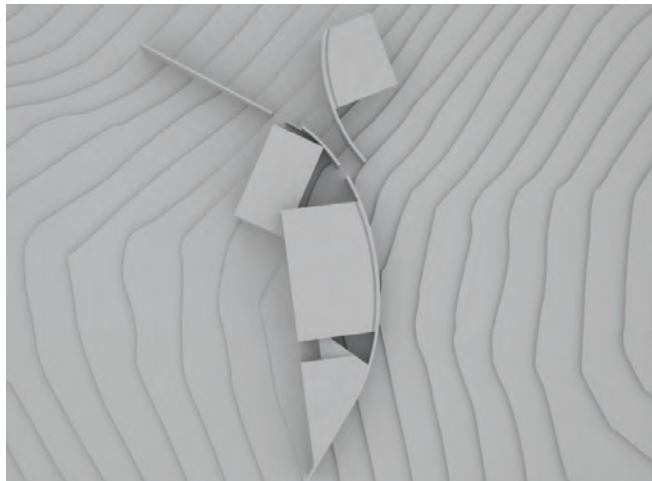
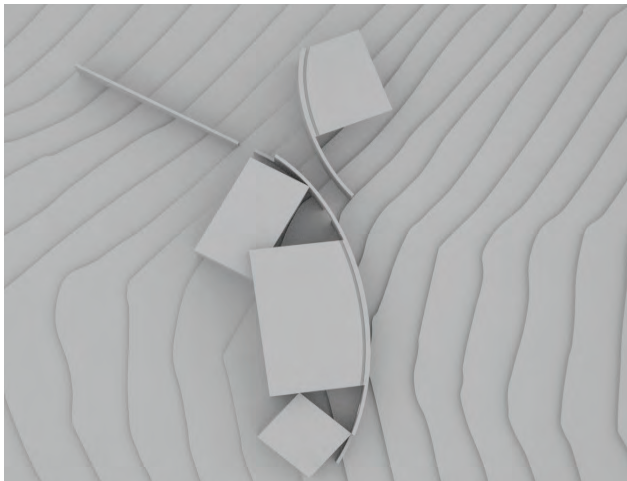
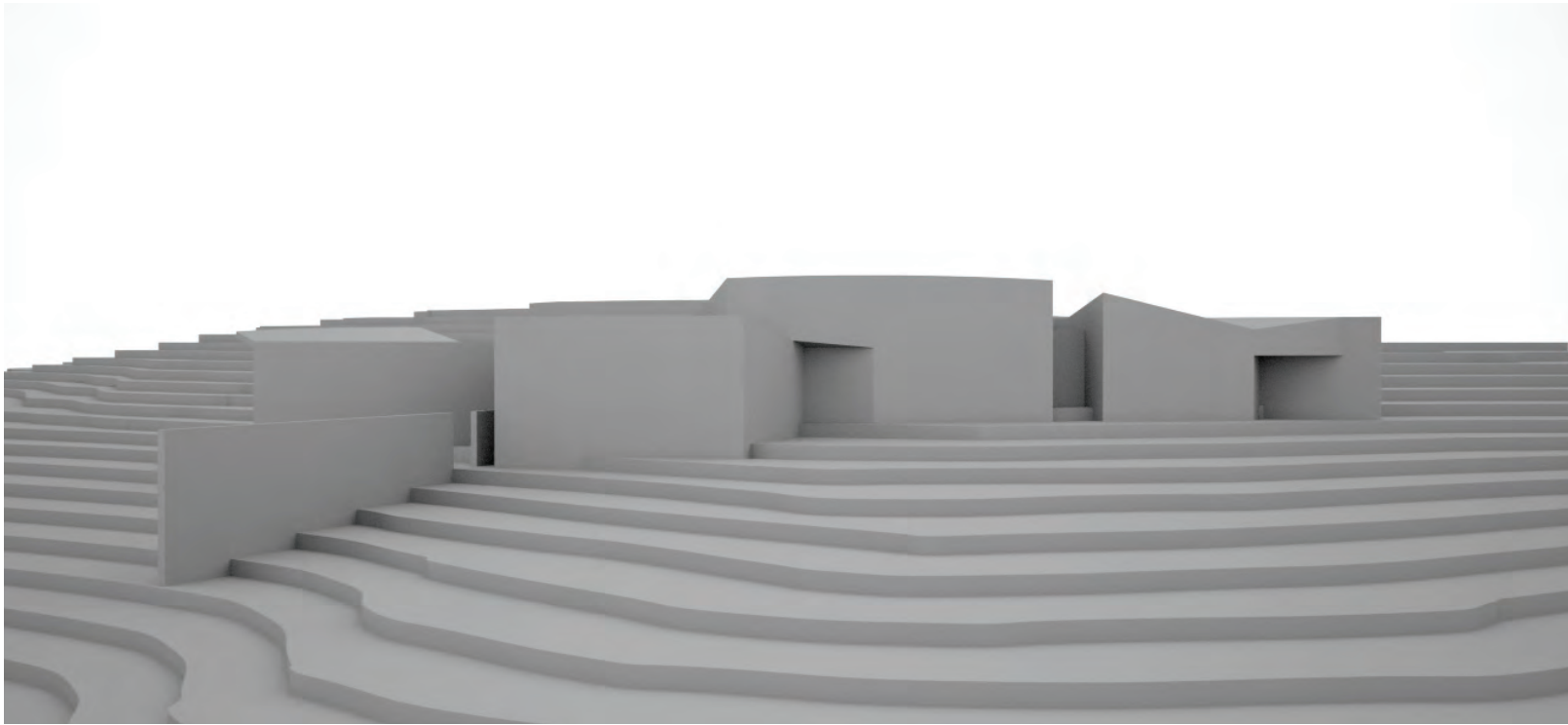
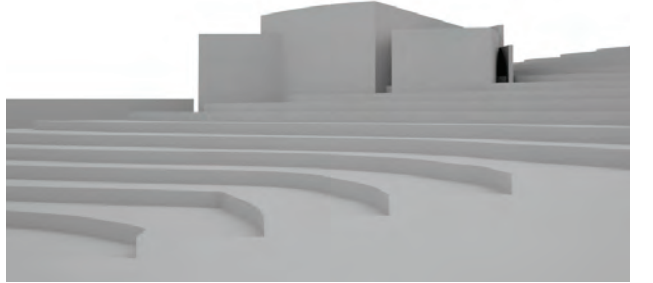
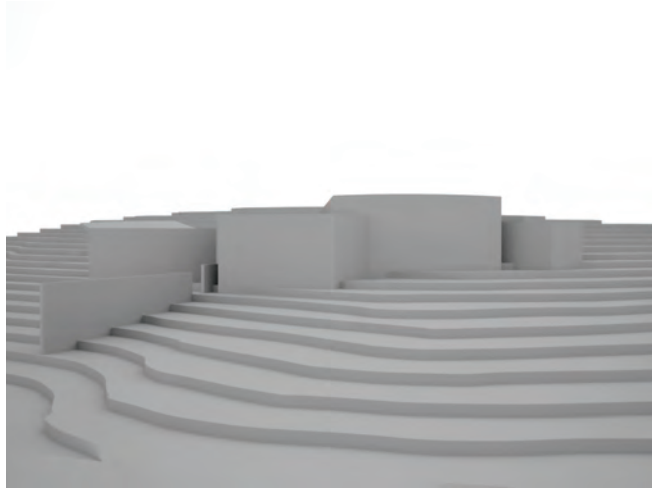
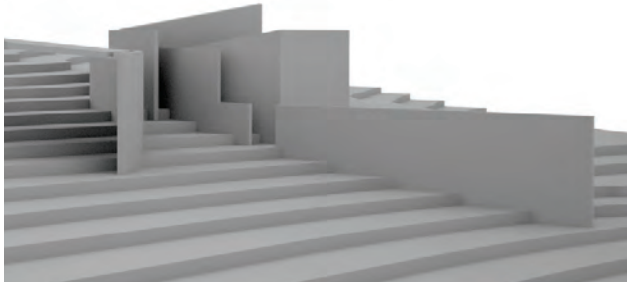
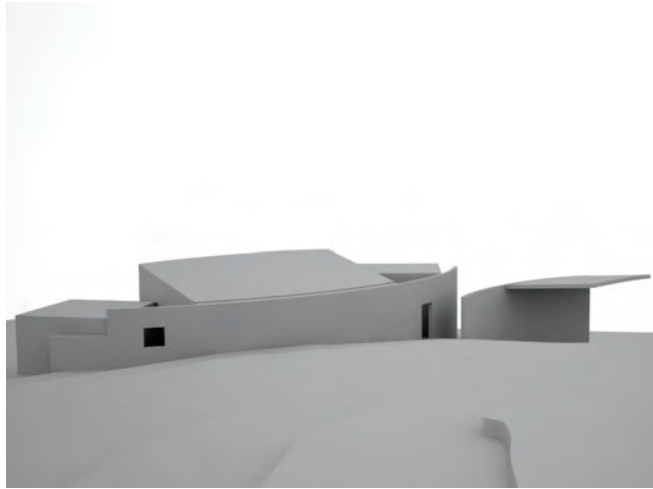
View from top of hill and proposed house location

# WALNUT CREEK RESERVE

This project is a home for a retiring physician in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. The homeowner was a child prodigy at the piano who developed hand injuries early in his career. Part of retirement was a chance to return to the piano and in this house, a special music room. Large, open views and a guest suite were the other key requirements for the home. In the panoramic view, we found two special vistas; a long face of shear rock to the south west and, a small peak directly to the west.

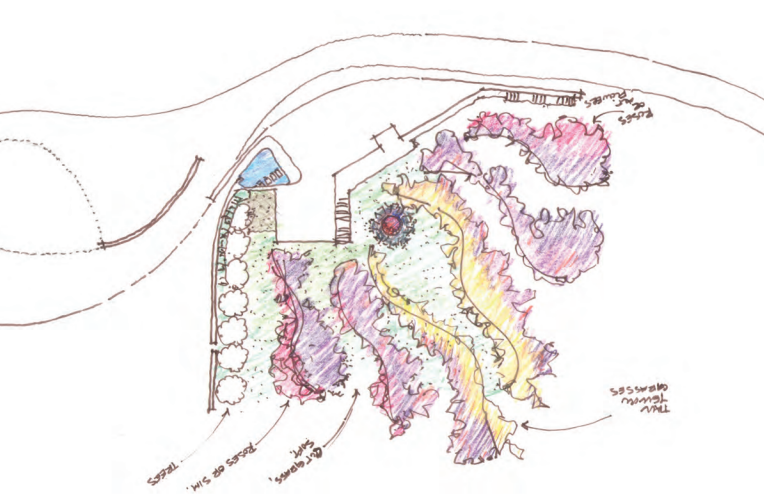
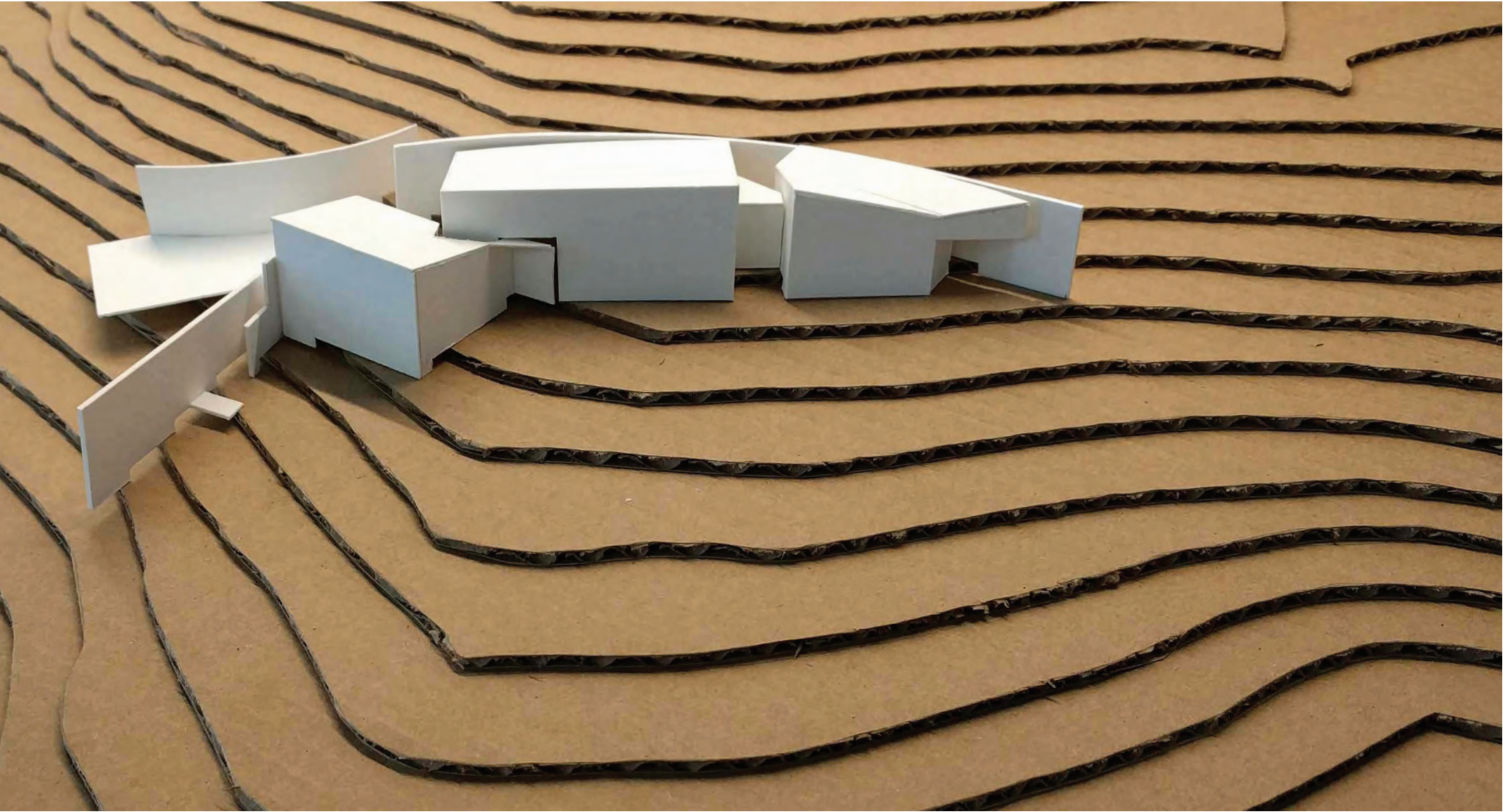




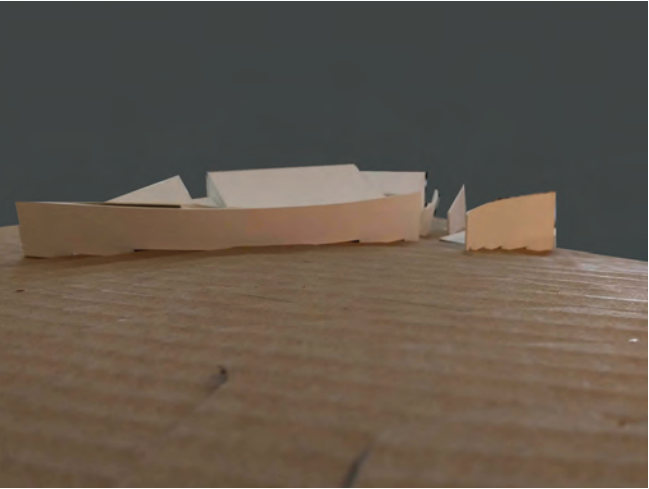
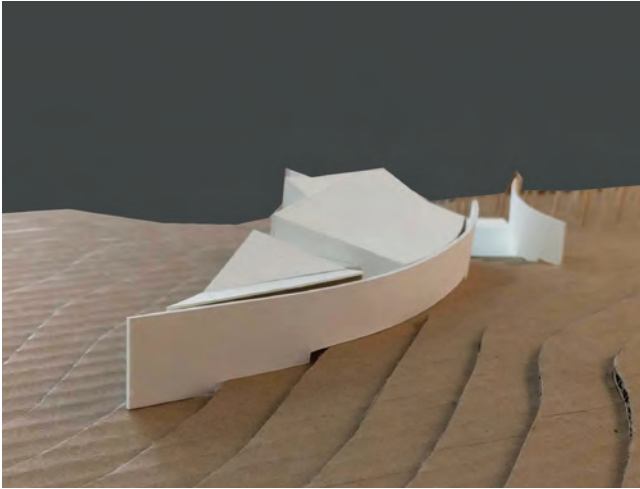
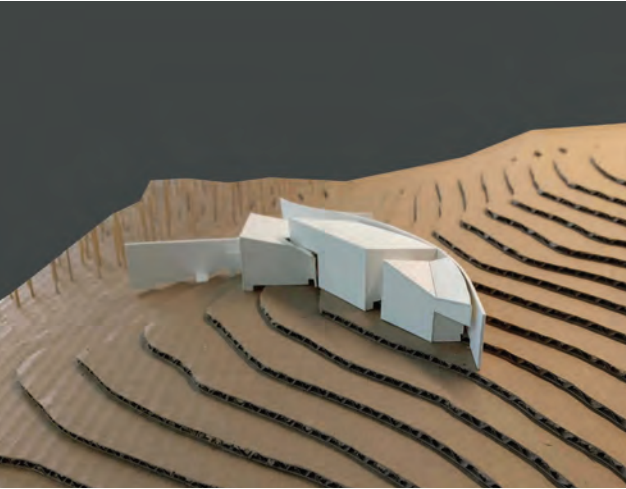


Massing and form studies





Garden design study

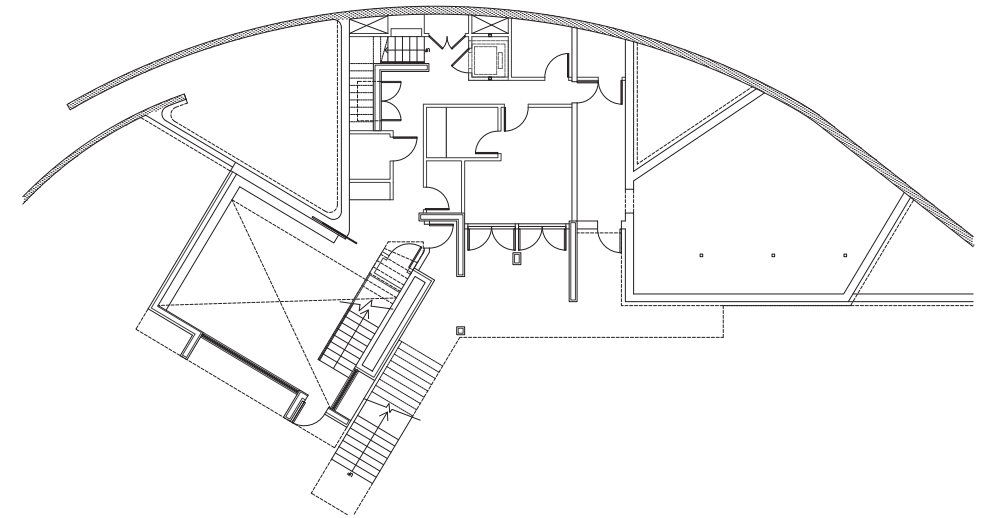


Design Development model studies

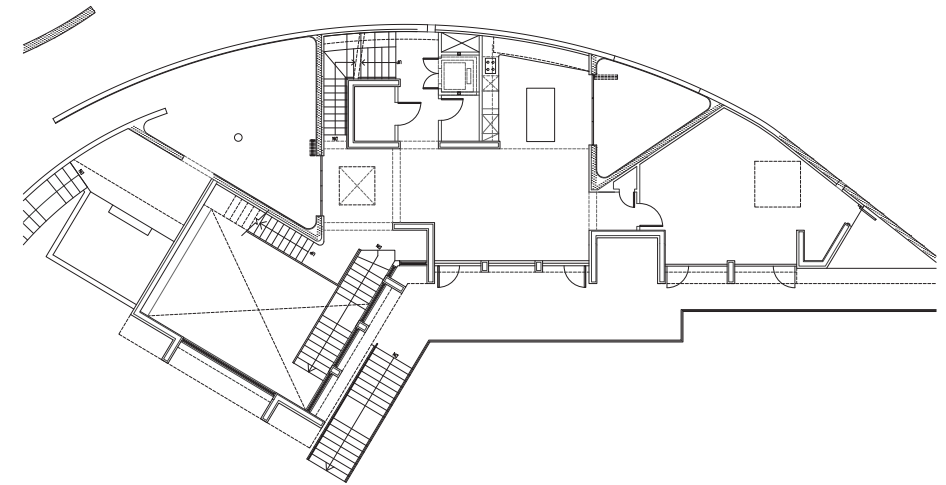




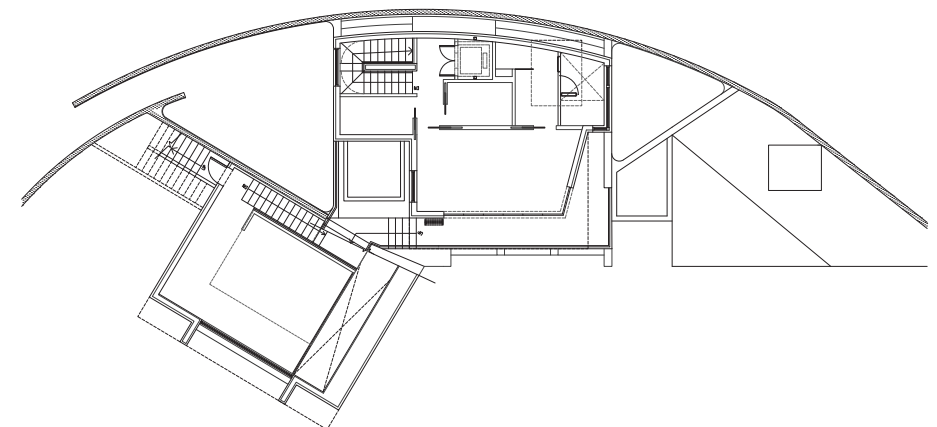
The two primary rooms, the living room and the music room, point to these respectively. The approach from the access road, up the crest of the hill, is met by the long arcing concrete wall of the house. At the end, passage between the tall concrete walls brings one to the entry courtyard and reflecting pool. Upon entering the building, the double height foyer hints at the second-floor master suite, the gym and roof deck levels above. The living room and dining are beyond, with large open views to the Blue Ridge mountain range, previously obscured by the arcing wall. In the other direction, one descends to the music room with the grand piano, bookshelves, canted to view to the shear faced range. Passage through the house is intended to provide a constant changing of section and scale, modulating further with the changing light of day and season.



Music room and lower levels



Main level



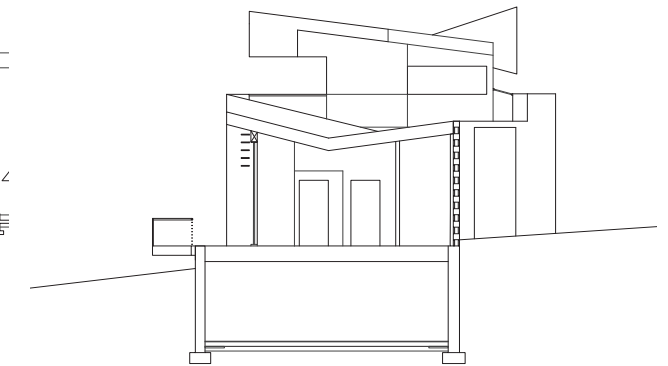
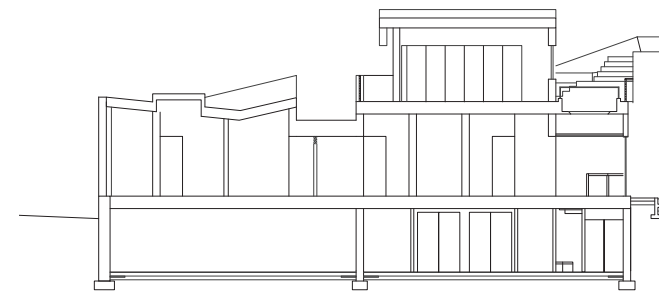
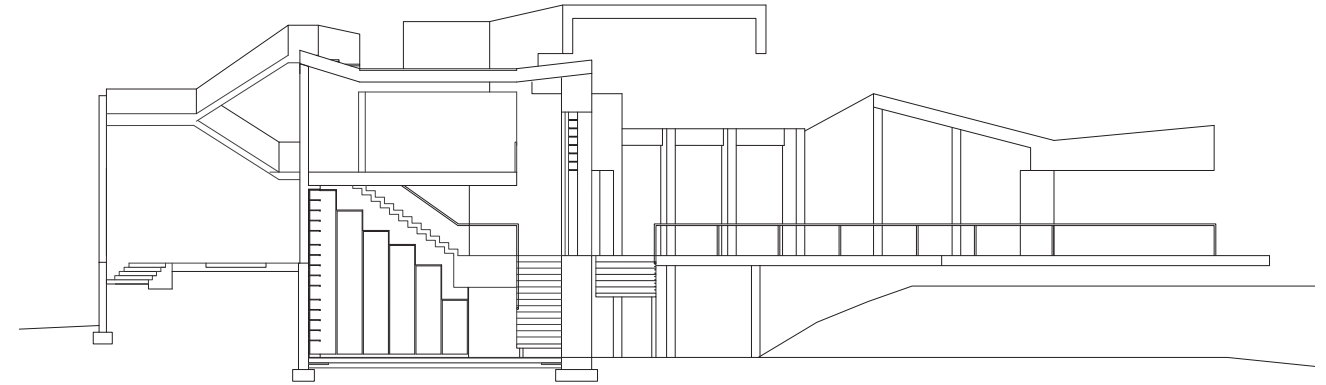
Upper level; Primary suite





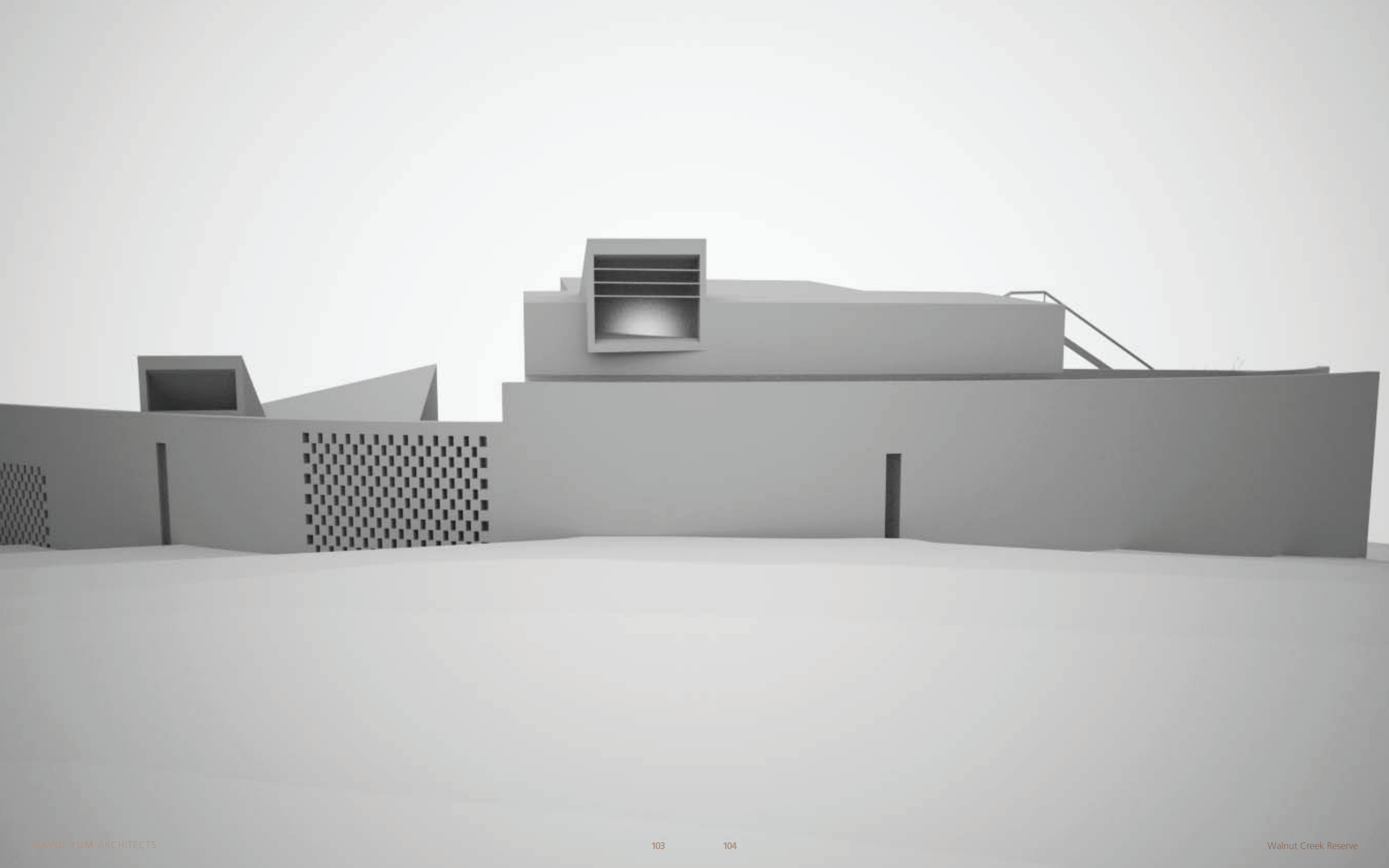
South elevation at music room

East elevation at music room



Building sections

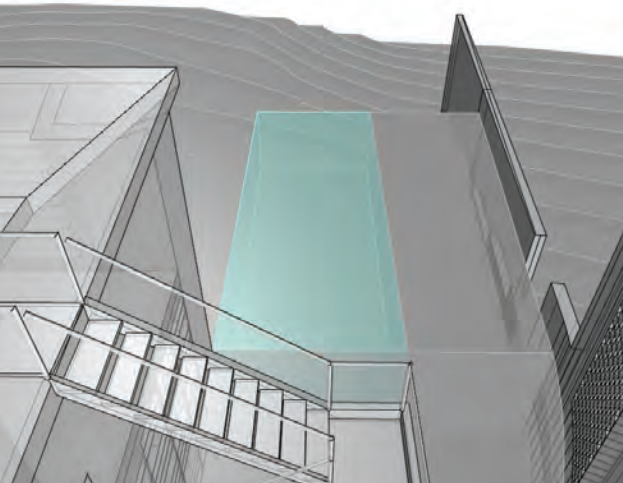
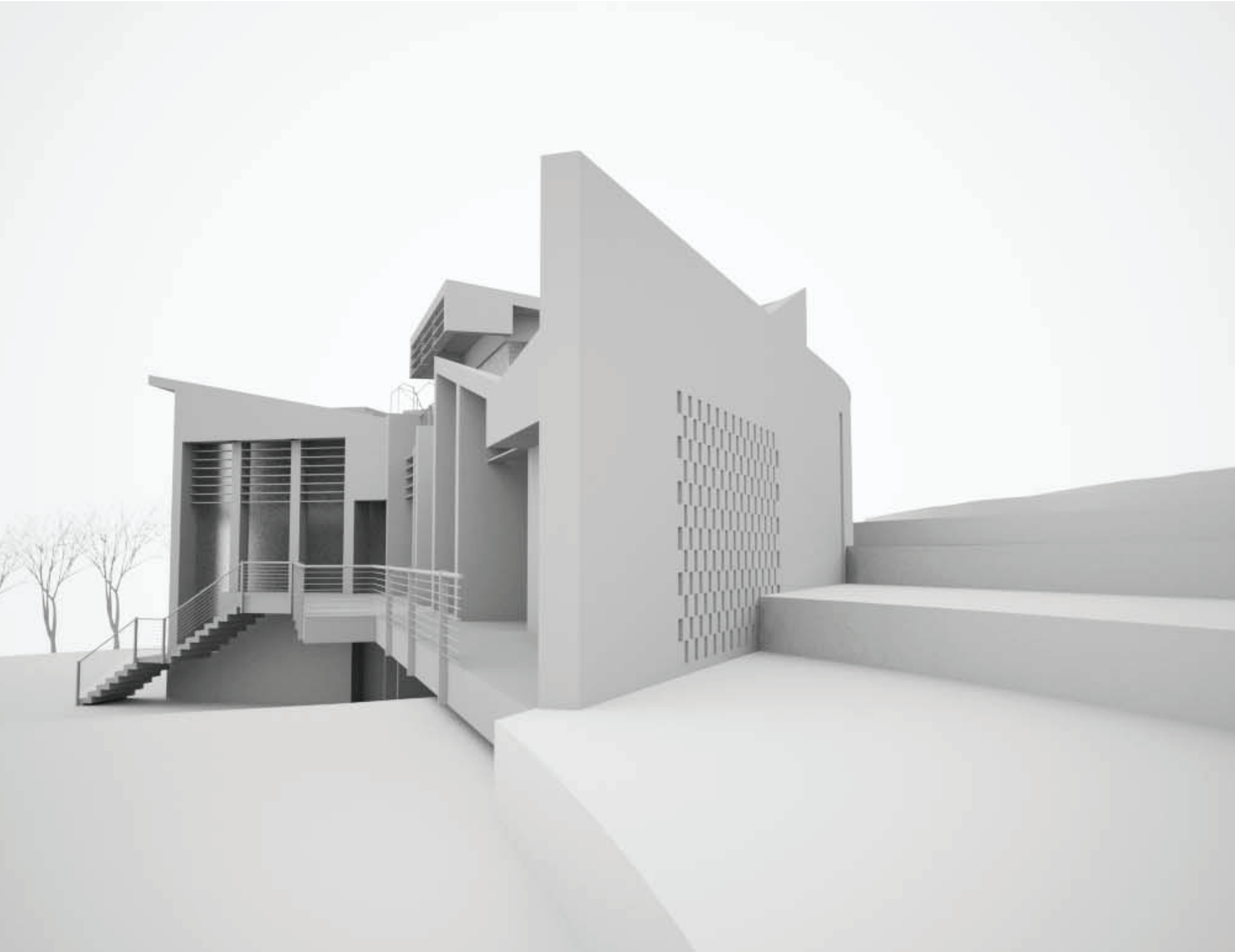




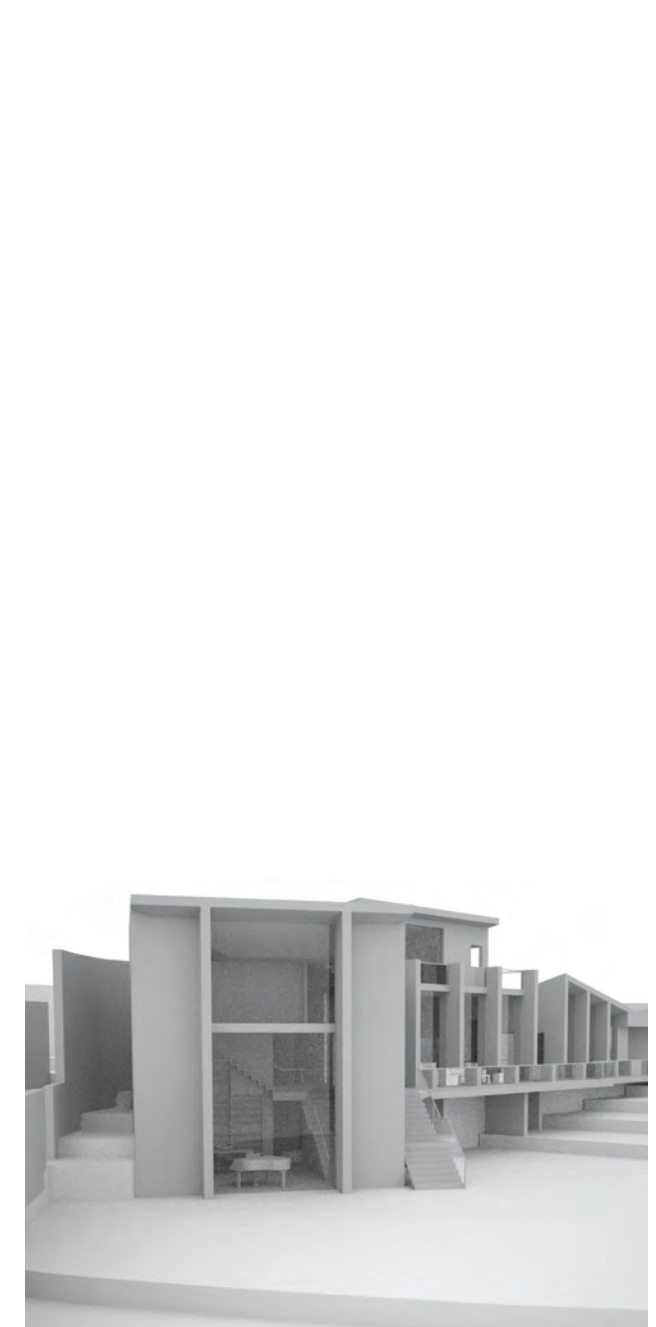




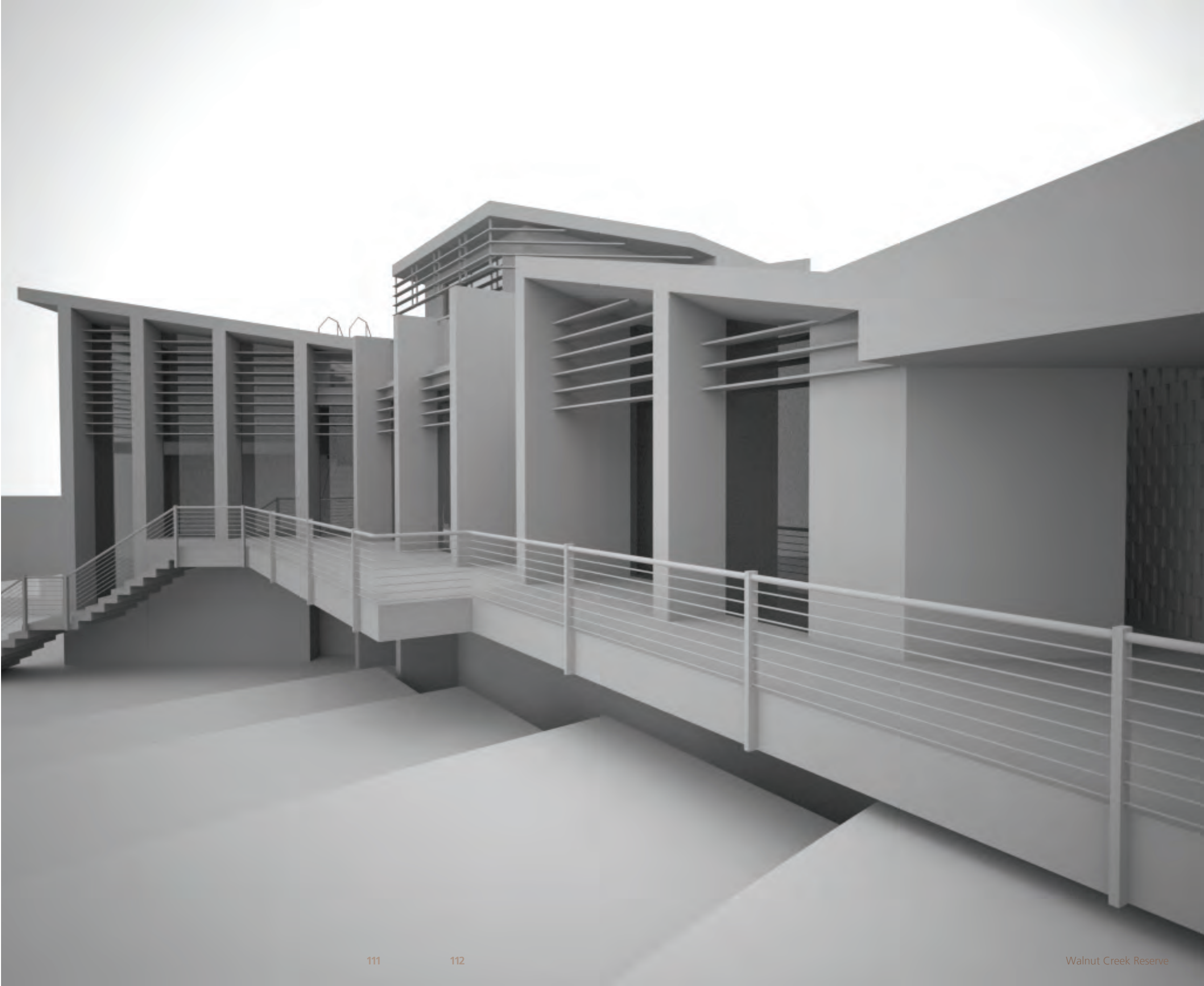
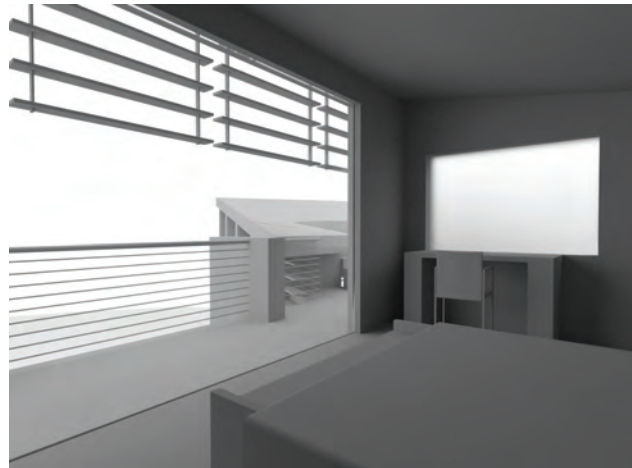


















*"Of all the pitfalls in our paths and the tremendous delays and wanderings off the track, I want to say that they are not what they seem to be. I want to say that all that seems like fantastic mistakes are not mistakes, all that seems like error is not error; and it all has to be done. That which seems like a false step is the next step."*

— Agnes Martin

While working on our holiday card this year (2021), the newest member of my staff asked, what do all the letters and numbers mean? I diverted in a lengthy manner, because as the others in the studio knew, I was not entirely sure either. As she smiled in acceptance, I responded, "I know I didn't answer your question". I wanted to use one of the working sketches from a current project. Overlaid on a render, lines, notes, arrows, and numbers recorded the studio dialogue of space and form. Then, there was the freedom of drawing a holiday wreath but, I realized the wreath had taken on the nervousness and searching of the design flow beneath. The next layer wanted to reveal the anxiety of the markings of the wreath, the exploration of sequence and series, a tension between the geometric series conceived in the mind against the visual affirmation confirmed by emotion. In this sense, in this moment of the process, drawing is speculation, letters are deliberation, markings are contemplation. The sketches are archaeological remnants of the striving for resolution, indicators of indecision; but also, the evidence of possibility, the intrigue of a pathway and the glimmer of something lyrical.

High altitude sickness is very real. In 2002, I found this out after a few long nights in the studio, scrabbling to get things together before the flight to Santa Fe from New York City. Some of you will



know the elevation of Santa Fe and our ultimate destination, Taos, is over 10,000 feet. My wife was doing research on her doctoral dissertation and in the days of written letters, the painter Agnes Martin agreed to her request for an in person interview. Even back then, Martin was considered an iconic

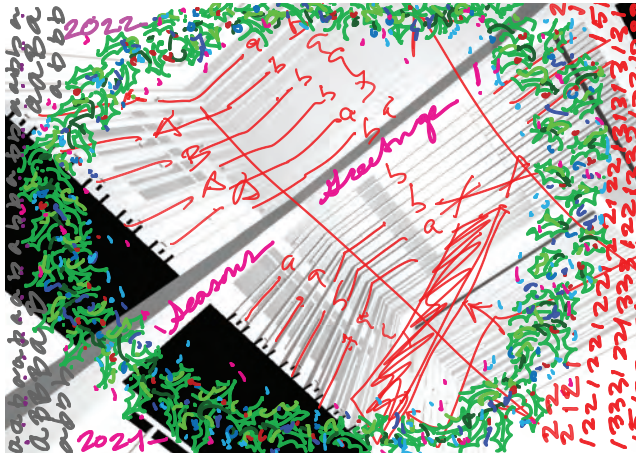
Modernist, whose seven figure works and museum retrospectives were regular news makers in the Art world. The idea of meeting Ms. Martin was thrilling for both of us. More directly for my wife, as a central figure in her dissertation research; for myself, to meet the painter that had influenced many in the then new European school of architects such as the firm of Hertzog & de Meuron. Abstraction, rhythm and repetition made with the imperfection and irregularity of the human hand. I am not sure how much Martin's writings elucidate her work. She, like many in her early circle, spoke of uncovering the spiritual, of being purely abstract in her work. I wanted to find the connection to the desert, the mountains, and the sky. These were all rejected by her as influences. Yet, how often does an artist's words really help the viewer in understanding? The interpretation and contextualization of the third person critic, the art historian, seem more fertile and thus, the contribution of critical art theory. Even so, Martin's work was compelling without any text, as I think all great painting finds a way of being.

"Let's go for a drive, and take my car, it's much nicer than yours, but you drive". More or less, that's what Ms. Martin said to me after having lunch at a local restaurant. She and my wife had been taking all morning, so lunch was a big break and I think going for a drive was a way to call it a day from all the talking. For me though, this was my chance to ask my own questions.

The three of us in a big Mercedes, driving literally for hours down the highway in a straight line. My head pounding and near nauseous from altitude sickness. I could not keep thinking, austere, minimalist, infinite, the terrain must be an inspiration for the work. Ms. Martin each time, with every variation and shading in my questions said no, I just paint abstractions. The ride was becoming very quiet. After the first hour, I said, would you like to turn back? "No, let's keep going a bit". Hour two, the same response.

Hour three, the same response. Her bigger interest for conversation was the baby in my wife's tummy, how the pregnancy was going, the wonders of children and, how raising them would be tough. I surrendered to all the baby talk. My stomach slowly began to settle, the pounding in my head began to subside, the miles started to glide by a bit easier.

In her studio, Agnes Martin had these small pieces of paper. Numbers in sequence, with no apparent order,



but enticingly close to something rational. I asked what she was working out on those slips of paper. She said she was calculating the divisions of the grid, but I don't think that to be the case. I have worked out countless divided grids, for paving patterns, ceilings, drawing details and building structures. Those slips were not about the canvas grid. I also knew, I was not about to get any clear answers. But something else happens when you spend two days with a person. Something happens when you simply feel someone's presence for a substantial block of time. So much was happening internally with Agnes Martin. The paintings are more than repetitive grids. Her searching for the inner world and the spiritual pulsates between the lines, in the field, at the edges.

I did not include many sketches in this volume, nor the rougher, early models. Most clients see a small fraction if any of these drawings. In whole, those would create a volume many, many times larger. Elucidating would take too many words but also, architecture is in the end about built space and form. Even the photos that follow fall short and, though the topic of another essay, as Adolf Loos would argue for his own work, I too am glad the projects do not really photograph well. Each project though, had its own literal, and unique markings, sequences and series, dead end pathways and confused translations. Each project found in its site, or program, or aspirations, a structure amidst complexity and, a calm amidst dissonance. Like our interaction with a painting, we do not need to see the working sketches to feel a space. Because in the architecture of a home, we search to reflect who we are and thus, we delight in the wonderful tension between its rationality and its underlying emotional resonance

# Addendum

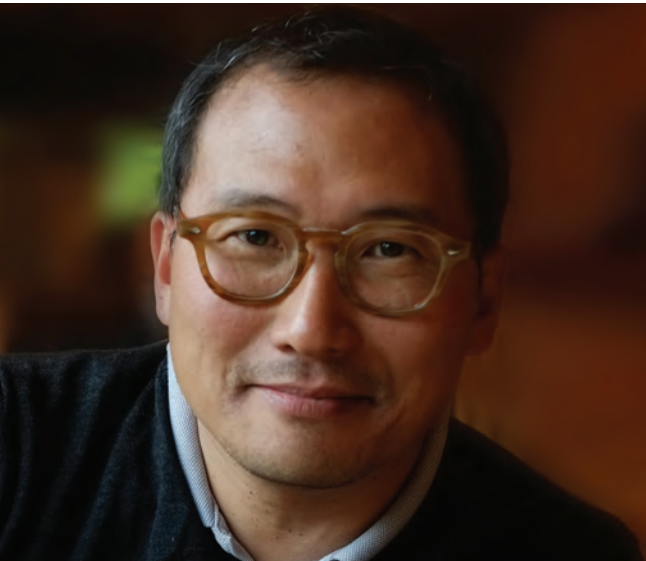


David Yum Architects was established in the year 2000 and is a leader in the design and execution of high-end residential, institutional, and commercial projects.

The firm has received numerous awards including the Honor Award in Design from the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Design Awards from the New Jersey AIA and, the Boston Society of Architects. Our work has been published in periodicals widely, and has appeared in Architectural Record, Interior Design and The Style. David Yum Architects reflects a unique combination of experience, energy, and agility. We continue to research, innovate, and build a track record of successfully completed projects, constructed to the highest levels of technical, managerial, and design skill.

As Principal, David Yum brings over 30 years of professional practice experience to each project. He has worked in the offices of Shelton Mindel; Gwathmey Siegel; Mark Horton Architecture; David Chipperfield Architects; and Pritzker Prize-winning architect Alvaro Siza. David has taught design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, the Boston Architectural Center, and at FIT, where he received a Teaching Merit Award in 2004 and 2006. In 2011, David was the Sybil Bruel Scholar in the Attingham Trust Summer Program dedicated to the study and preservation of the English Country house. He has lectured at the Syracuse University, Taylor University, and the University of Michigan. He has been a guest critic at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Arizona State University, the California College of Arts and Crafts, and the University of California at Berkeley. David holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture from Columbia College and a Master of Architecture degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

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## Acknowledgements

In setting off to build a new house or renovation, most set an expectation that at minimum, the way they live, feel, and grow will transform. This has been the expectation of architecture for most of history. From the smallest of make-overs to the largest of estates, designing a home can become one of the most daunting but incredibly hopeful endeavors a person will ever undertake. We grateful to the Clients who have entrusted us and, to the Builders, Engineers, Designers, Trades-people and Crafts-persons who were such essential collaborators to these homes.







