

“ the dream is a lie, but the dreaming is true”

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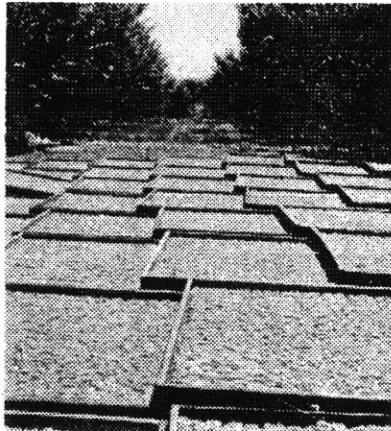
Carmen, Lenny and Joe por el apoyo y ayuda en ésta larga y lejos carrera.

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Abstract

This thesis is about establishing the attributes of sense of place, rather than placelessness, through the observation of what makes a community have the qualities that it does. What is it in its physical, cultural, climatic and historical forms that affects building and spatial form that, through transformation can be used in creating an identity of the new place I am proposing.

The thesis is an exploration and proposal for changing the way town extensions, as opposed to suburbs, are thought about in the California context. It is this changing of the way we think about ourselves and our surroundings that evolution comes about.

The thesis is about examining the design of the spaces between buildings and the relationship of those spaces to the buildings. It is about the making and building of transition and access between the objects which define the space, and the space itself. The importance of these relationships and their form lies in the fact that the streets and the spaces of a community are the setting for the life of the community at all levels of interaction, from the public to the private realms, and from the understanding of the individuals relationship within the system of sizes, from the regional size down to the dwelling size. It is about the building of community.



" I concieve that land belongs for use to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless members are still unborn."

A Nigerian tribesman





Introduction

California has always been looked upon as a place far away, on the edge of the continent, the end of the frontier, the terminus of the American Expansion. It has also been thought of as the Garden and the Golden Dream. That is why nearly a million people a year move there and why the very virtues which make it a good place to live will soon bury the Dream if a change in thinking does not take place in the way the state's cities and towns are built.

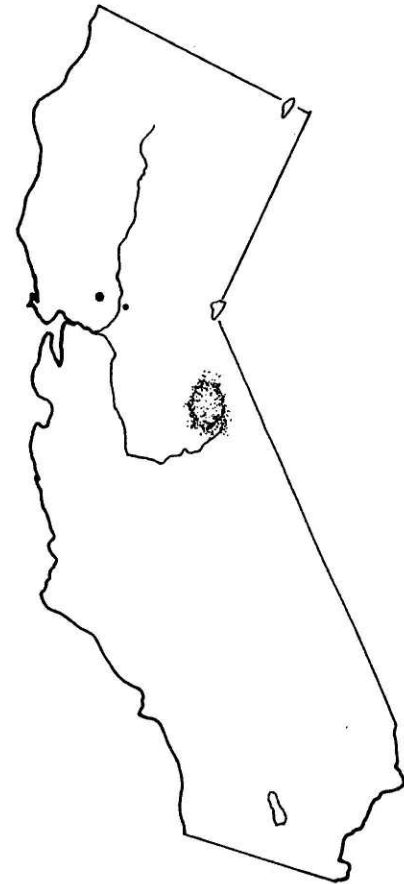
When one thinks of suburbs the image that comes to mind is that of some endless sea of houses covering the landscape, each sitting amidst its chunk of land, lined up along a street whose access was designed primarily for the use of the automobile, not the person. The repetition seems endless for there is no recognition of block or neighborhood in any

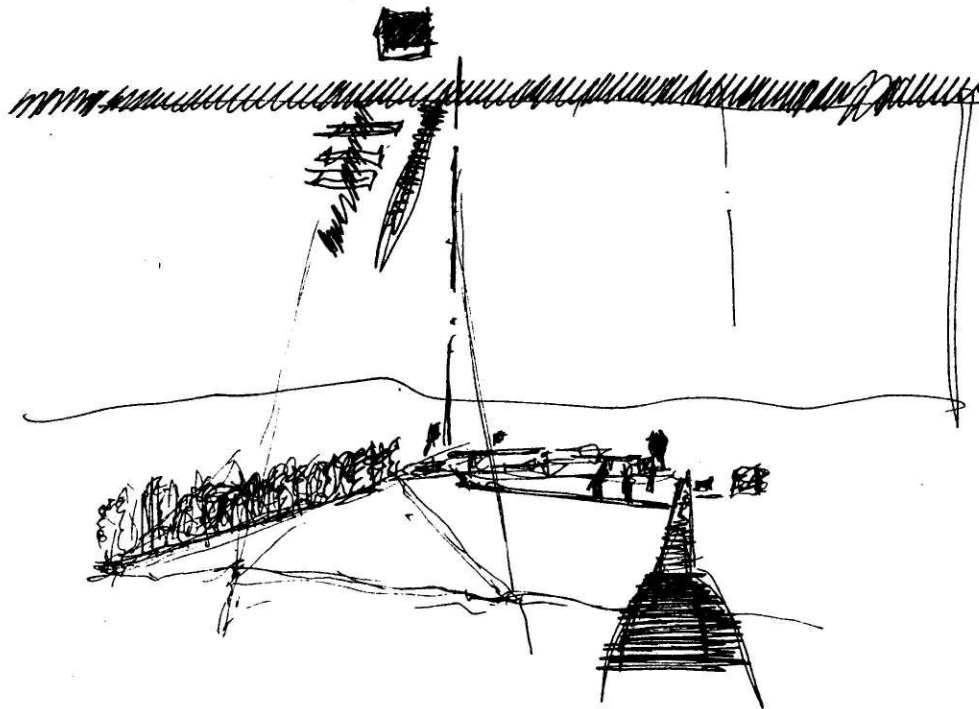
systematic arrangement that becomes recognizable to the casual observer. There seem to be no beginnings, no endings. Arrangement stems from the economic subdivision of the land into maximum number of parcels for a given amount of infrastructure (roads, utilities). This model is quite efficient from an economic measure in the short term, but is it so for the long term? Does it work efficiently in terms of quality of life and land use in the long term. I do not believe so and I believe we can do better, much better.

Historically the building of communities had better results. What is it about many of our old towns and cities that gives them the structure that we identify as the old fashioned, American town? It does not lie only in the facades and architectural styles that make the built form of the town. It is the

structure of the grid and the spaces within which provide the basis for identifiable, but not always tangible character. It is the combination of built form and space that the structure supports. It is the layers of systems of dimension which build access, arrangement, edges, transition and margins. These in turn support systems of public and private and in between. These taken all together form the supports for community life.

The site I have chosen for my thesis is in the City of Winters, California. Winters is a small, agriculturally based community with a population of 4,639. Approximately 50% of the community is Latino and within the community as a whole, all economic classes are represented, although the largest groups are the middle and lower income levels. It is "a valley town", that is, a small rural,



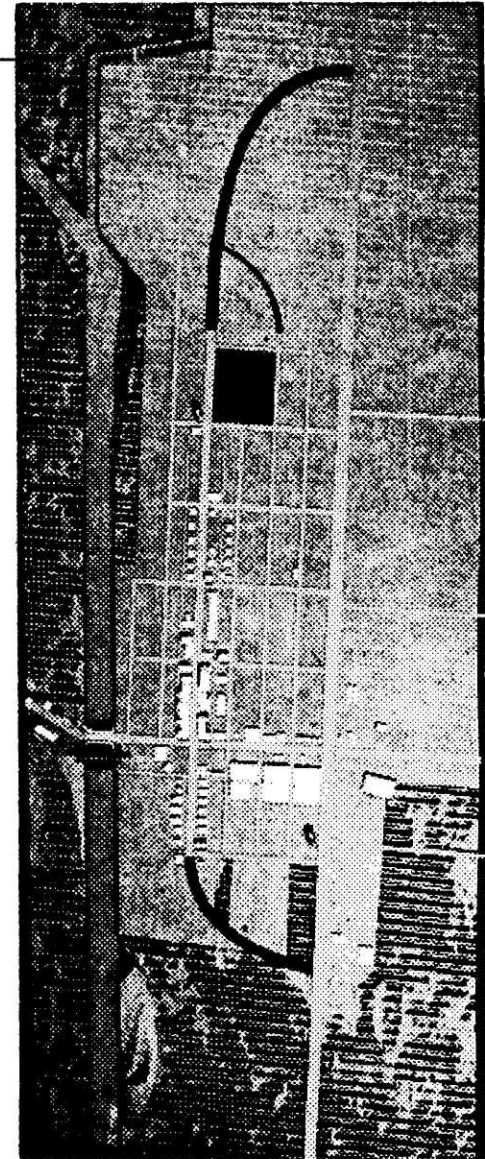


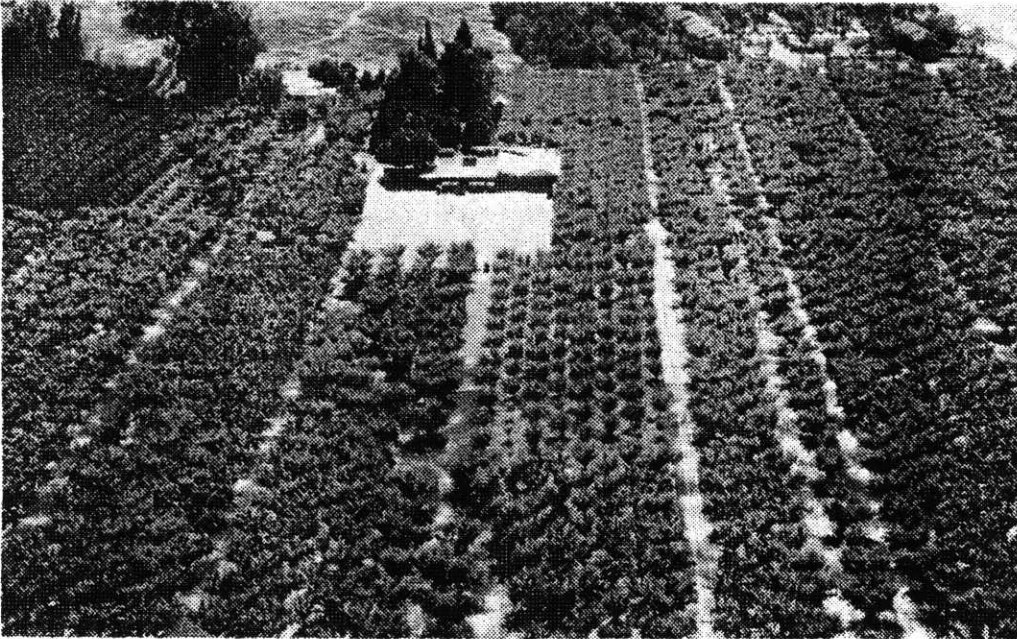
and as viewed by the more urban culture of coastal California, a not very sophisticated town on the western edge of the Sacramento Valley, at the base of the inner margin of the coastal mountains. The proximity of Winters to Davis and the University of California campus there, adds a cultural dimension not found in most valley towns, although traditional small town values still are the operational value system in Winters. The sense of community and place are strong here, as is apparent in the many community oriented activities such as the construction of the first Leather's Playground in Northern California by members from the very diverse groups across the community. Many of the university and non-university associated residents, have come to Winters to live somewhere pleasant and off of the main path. They come to

live in a small community where the individual can still have political and social impact . The climate in the winter is usually very wet, and in the summer is hot and dry. The town is situated atop 30 feet of class 1A sandy loam topsoil. The farming cultivates a mixture of of apricots, peaches, prunes, walnuts and other assorted orchard, vineyard and row crops. Farming has historically been the basis of the economy. In more prosperous times Winters was a full service, self-sufficient community, including the ability to support two new car dealerships and a railroad station. The train and its tracks disappeared in the sixties, and the auto dealers hung on well into the seventies, but eventually succumbed to the development of regional marketing places in neighboring communities.

From downtown Winters one can

drive to Berkeley in 70 minutes and to downtown San Francisco within 90 minutes. To the east is Davis 15 minutes traveling by car with downtown Sacramento, the state capitol another 20 minutes of travel beyond Davis. Winters, despite its backwater ambiance, is in the path of progress. By the year 2000 the General Plan now being adopted projects a population of 14,000 people. Many of those people will come from the more costly and urban coastal areas of the state looking for a piece of the Dream at a more reasonable cost. Three hundred acres to the north of the town are now slated for annexation and development. If developed like many other towns or cities in the state, another piece of California's lesser known rural soul will die and with it a community form that now is an endangered species. Rural California is being made

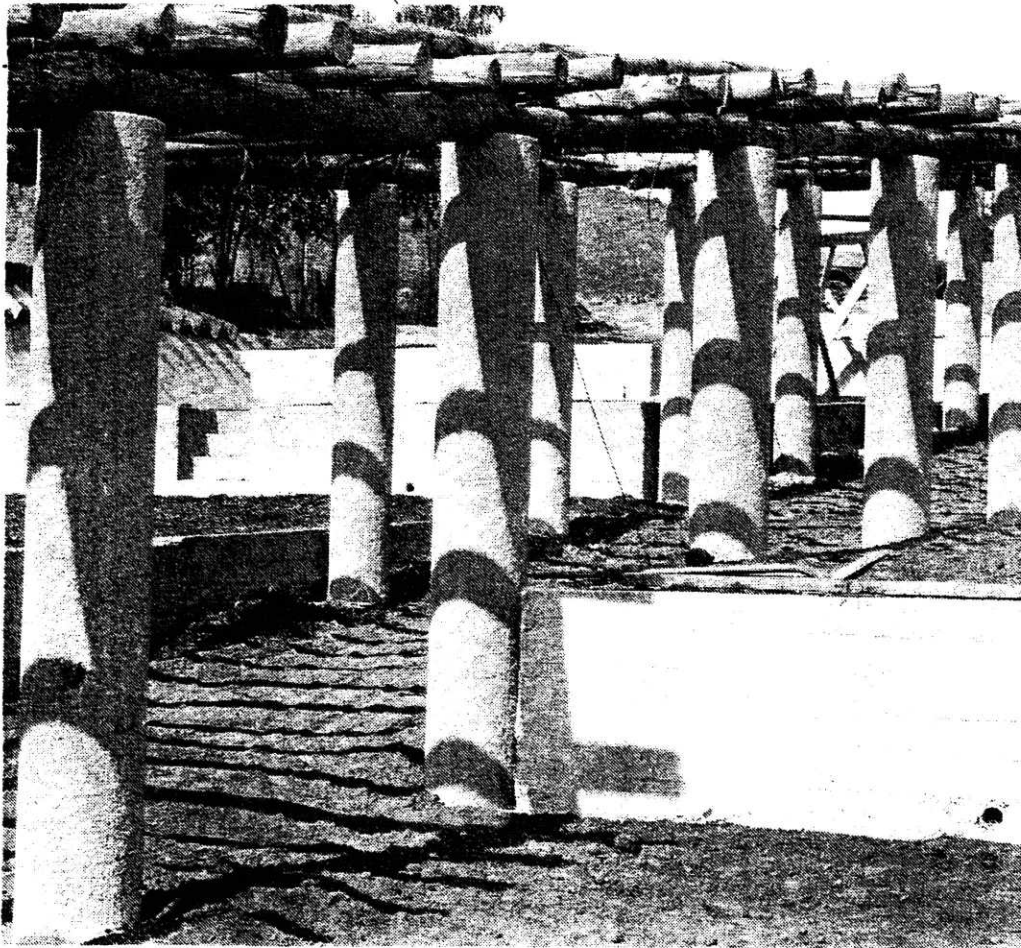




'placeless' at a rate that seems irreversible.

The site I chose is in an area of Winters now slated for development, but still within the bounds of the current city limits. The site offers constraints in definite boundaries formed by the the old section of town, Putah Creek, a riparian area, Interstate 505 and State Highway 128, locally known as Grant Ave. The constraints of this site offer an opportunity to intervene using the characteristics of the existing fabric as a building block towards establishing the "sense of place" for this new town extension.





Form and Identity

What in Winters and in a larger understanding, California can be identified as being of this “place”. What forms an identity for this new town extension? I am not promoting the appropriation of forms in a stylistic sense to give a certain flavor, although operationally the forms could, as a net result be identified with a particular style. To appropriate blindly would be no different than the way post-modernism takes historical form and applies it without a true understanding architecturally or culturally of the form, and creates a “Disneysque” pastiche. What I want is to identify those forms or elements which for cultural, climatic or historical reasons exist and can be transformed to bring forth that sense of identification which can collectively work to give the town extension an identity which is based on the way form does work and the way buildings are built.

The Grid

The grid is the primary element in to establishing the character of this place. In observing the fabric of the existing town, it is Winter's standard american town grid, used to layout hundreds of towns across the country, that is the basis for the town's character. It is the first layer of structure, which becomes the foundation and primary network for the succeeding layers to work within. Within the grid, additional networks can be placed to support a rich and diverse environment.

The grid structure is a highly democratic form, allowing all members of the community equal access to any point along it. Existing within its network of streets is the capacity to allow inhabitants to make choices about where they go and how(what path) they get there. It is this feature that allows a grid to ab-

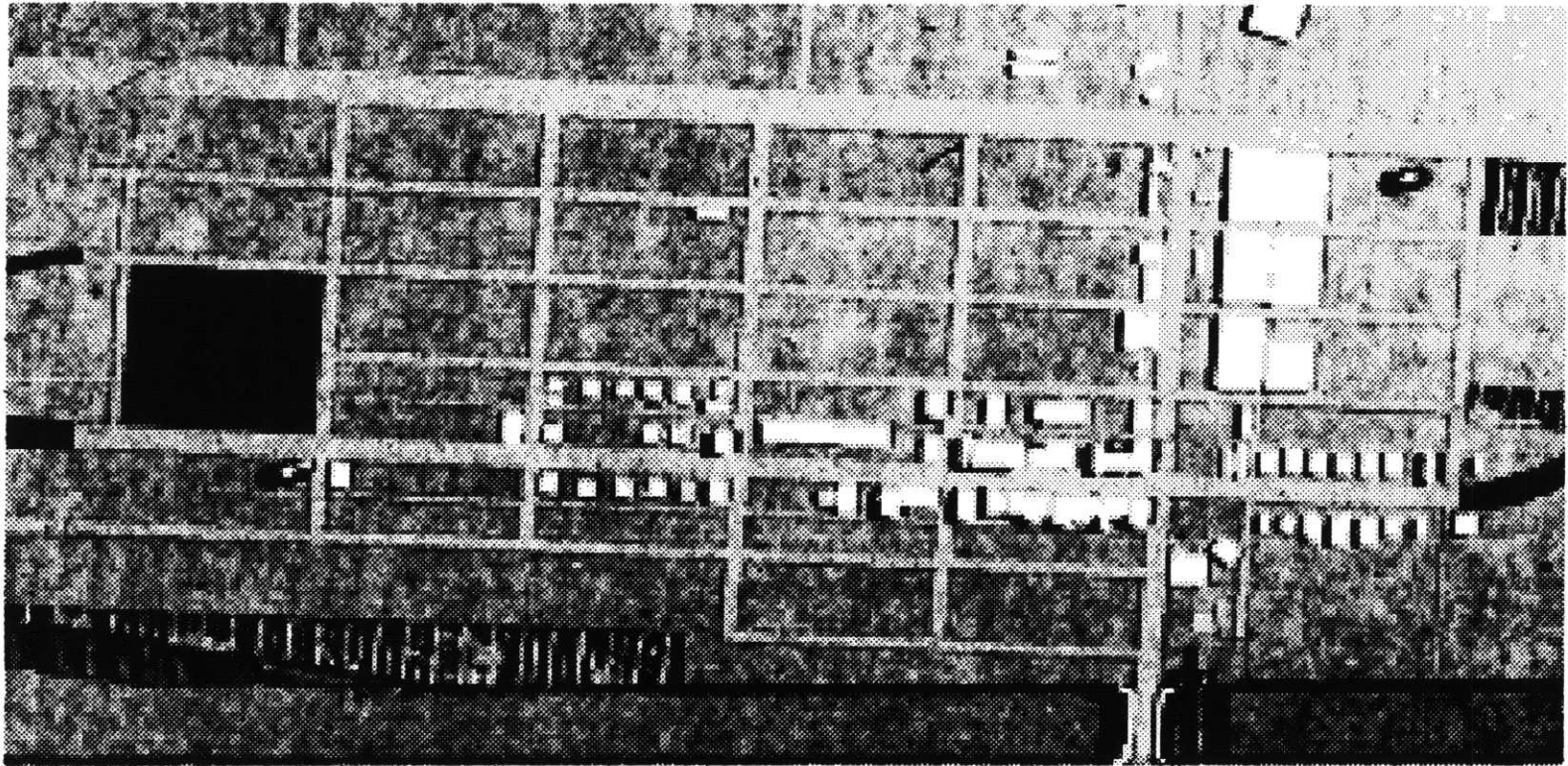
sorb many more car trips, than say an equivalent number of dwellings on a cul-de-sac and collector road system with less congestion. Put in another way, it allows for streets to be smaller in size to handle the same volume of traffic for a given neighborhood. With smaller streets comes a more intimate perception of the street due the closer dimensional spacing within the street space. An additional desirable aspect is cooler neighborhoods and energy conservation due to less street surface being exposed to solar gain, which is enhanced further through the creation of microclimates by planting arboreal canopies.

The grid establishes the street, in the wider architectural definition of street and not the traffic engineer's definition, as the setting for the communities activities. They are the rooms of the com-

munity, public in nature, extending public life into the neighborhood. By contrast, the typical suburban system of collectors and cul-de-sacs is an extension of the private realm of the dwelling extending to the street. Within the grid their exists a greater oppurtunity for interaction between its inhabitants due to a higher degree of connectedness to the street. Embedded in the structure of the grid is the differentiation of regional streets and neighborhood streets, that is, one takes you in and out of neighborhoods and the other moves you across many without entering any. The grid enables choices to be made by the people who use it.

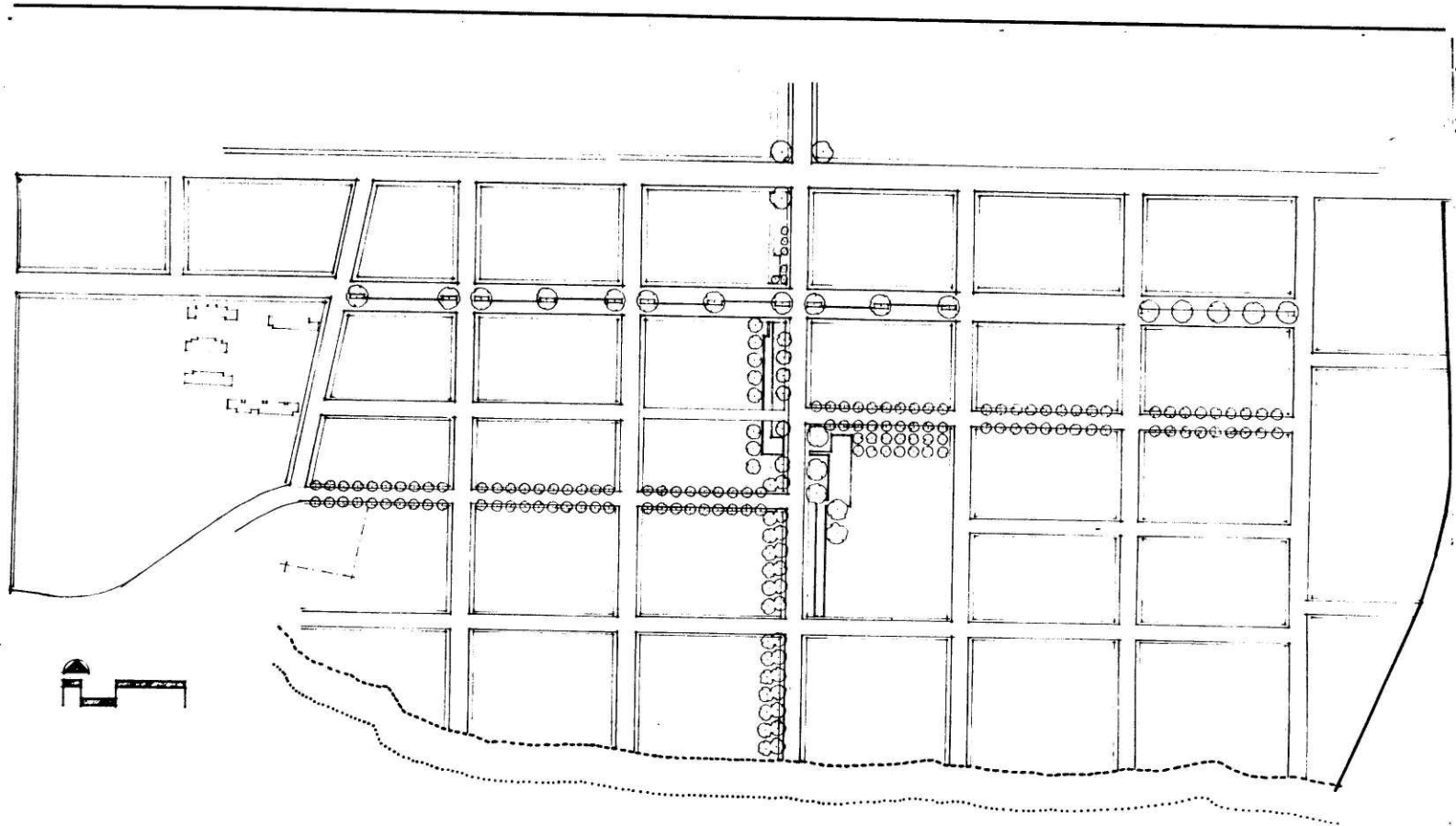
Landscape

The Sacramento Valley at the time of its early settlement was described as a virtual Garden of Eden. It was was full of wildlife;



*"...the scale and spatial organization of the traditional town is the
basic building block for human settlement."*

Alex Krieger





“...The radiant, honeyful corollas, touching and overlapping, and rising above one another, glowed in the living light like a sunset sky-one sheet of purple and gold, with the bright Sacramento pouring through the midst of it from the north, the San Joaquin from the south, and their many tributaries sweeping in at right angles from the mountains, dividing the plain into sections fringed with trees.”

John Muir

antelope, tule elk and grizzly bear grazed across the landscape. Salmon spawned in places as far up as Calistoga on the Napa River and possibly in Winters on Putah Creek. Bunch grasses were the natural species of grass, now long since out-competed by the wild oats and star thistle which came with imported livestock. Forests of native oaks of various species dominated the floor of the Valley and the surrounding canyons. Predominant here were stands of California Live Oaks, reaching upwards to 60 feet high and as big in circumference in their canopies as they were tall. There were the red buds, the manzanita, madrone, cottonwoods and bay laurels. With settlement came the varieties of cultivated orchard trees and vines; olive, walnut, almond, grapes and orange among many others. These landscape elements I identify as the

second layer of structure in the building of this town extension that establish character and identity to specific streets, and become the edges of neighborhoods within the community.

Too often trees are just an afterthought to the architectural idea. My intent is to use them as structural elements of space, particularly in the public realm. By working with their arrangement, repetition and spacing to supply a source of identity to a given place I use their inherent ability to create space at a range of sizes and to filter and alter light. As well, trees can create or control views, support wildlife and replenish the atmosphere with oxygen.

By using members of the naturally occurring flora community, a direct, physical connection can be made to the natural landscape of the creeks riparian area, building an extension of that area reaching

into the towns fabric, therefore directly establishing a regional connection .

From a cultural or historical point of view the planting of species such as the live oak, which take 50 to 60 years to reach their mature size, is perpetuating an understanding of what was there for the a generation yet unborn. In this way a species is preserved but not as a specimen in some reserve but as a functioning, contributing member of the environment. If we need to plant landscape, it, in my opinion should include many species which are indigenous to the region. The naturally occurring species bring with them characteristics for that landscape such as resistance to drought, disease and predators.

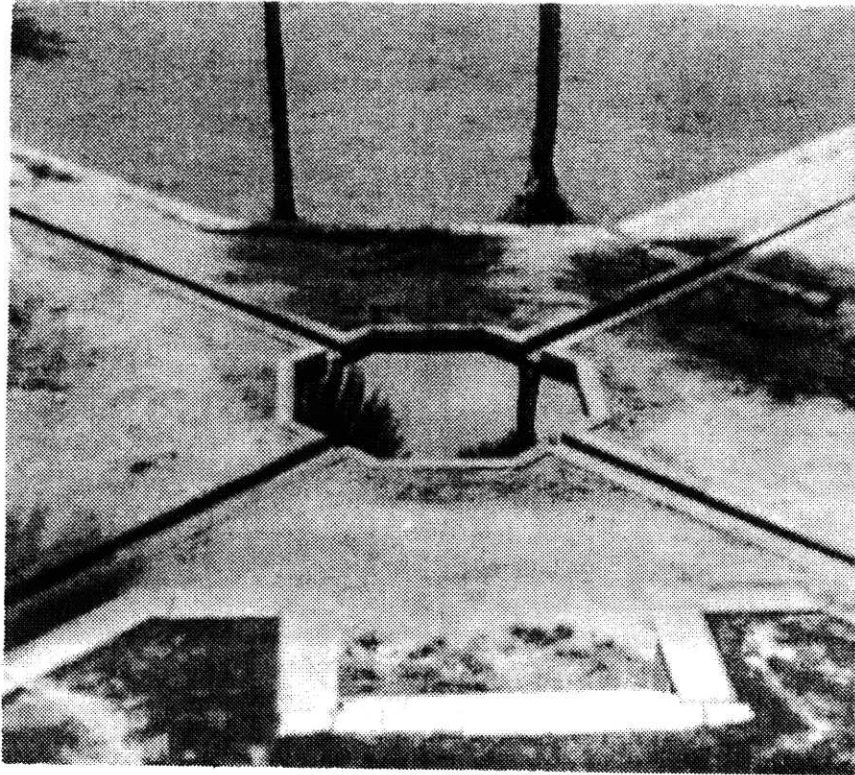
As agriculture has been an important part of the history of this place culturally, economically and

historically, it follows that plantings reflecting the value of orchards and vineyards should be included in the landscape architecture. Included species are the olive, almond and the orange tree, among others, as elements in the landscape.

These plantings would be used as orchards and vineyards within the communities fabric providing spatial definition and the other contributions that trees make, as well as a consumable crop. The caring and disposition of the them would be a matter to be determined within the claiming members of the community.

Water

Water is life, and California by nature is a desert. The seasonal cycle alternates between a wet season and a dry season with a gradation of change typical of change between shifting seasons. In most of the state it is water



which makes possible the abundance of agricultural output as well as whether we can live there or not. The issue of whose water and where it will come from will continue to play a large role in the future of California. In this thesis I wish to look at water as one of the design elements which works to establish a sense of place.

Winters is surrounded by a system of irrigation canals and ditches. These are the sources of water for agricultural production. I am proposing a system of architectural irrigation ditches with holding areas extending into and through town as a network element within the town structure furthering the identification of place. Formally these canals and ponds would be used as spatial definition in the establishment of public gathering places, analogous to the town fountain in some cultures. The canals or

ditches could become boundry elements defining an edge between public and private realms or two private realms.

Physically the canals would be no more than one or two feet wide and quite shallow, functioning as gutters. The holding ponds could take on larger dimensions to suit there placement within the arrangement of the community.

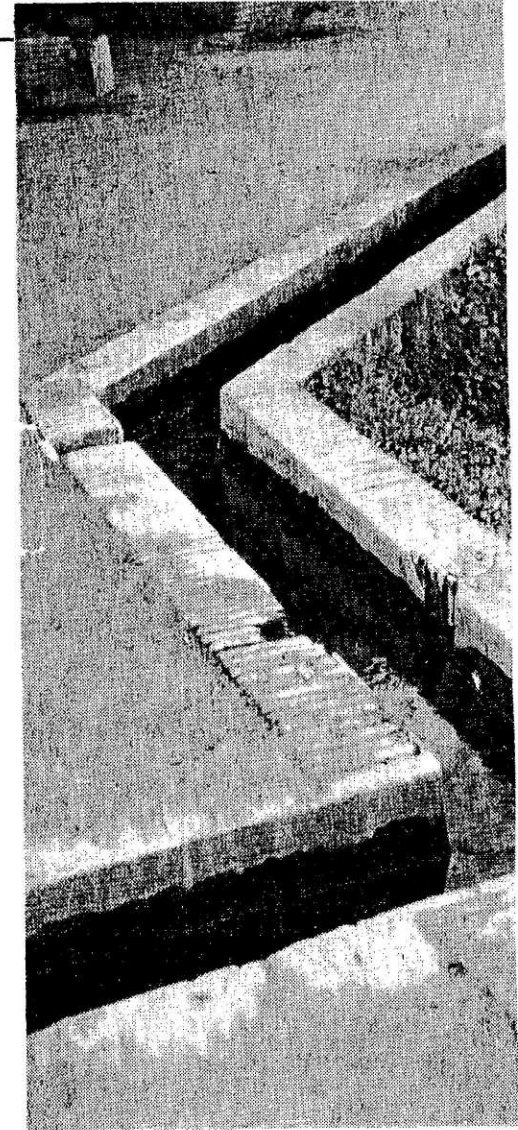
From an experiential point of view, small bodies of water could contribute a great deal of positive experience to the members of the community. Water is a modifier of light. Water is a reflector of light. In the hot, dry summer the presence of water becomes a psychological coolant, not only for its visual qualities, but also for its auditory qualities. Neighborhood wading pools, water sculptures for small children to play in, children sailing sticks in the ditches, sitting and reading the Sunday paper

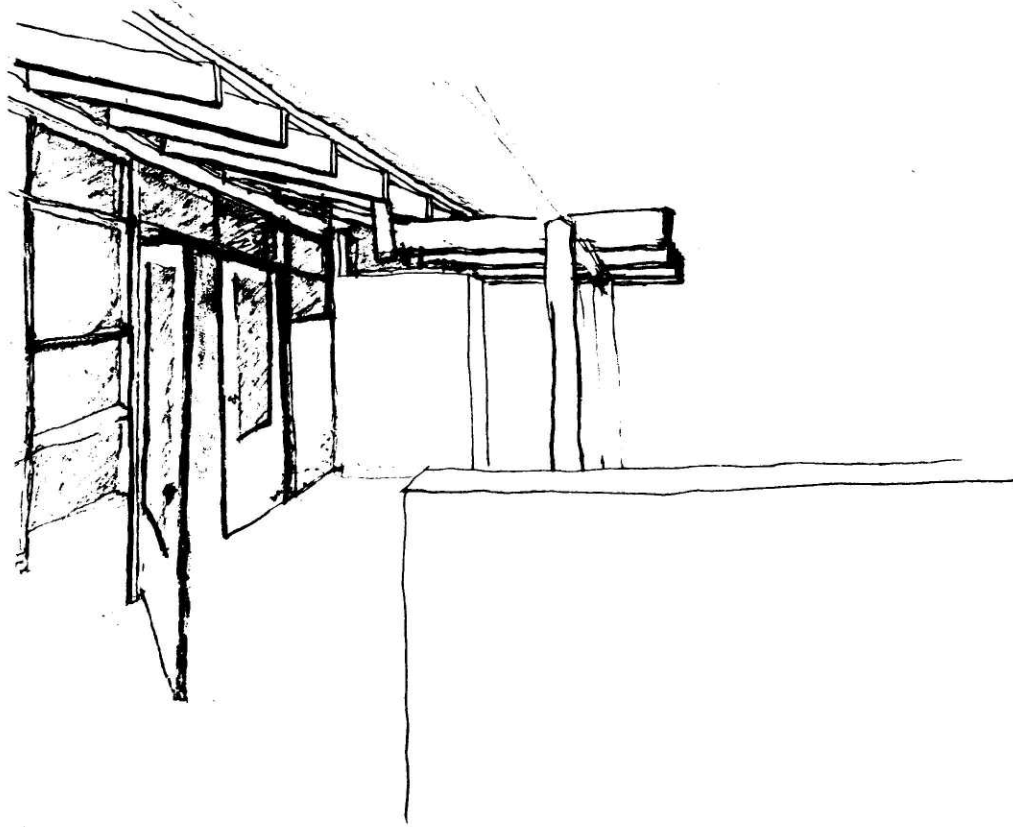
next to the reflecting pool; all these activities would be possible through the intervention of an irrigation system transforming the town as a garden in the desert, an oasis.

Pragmatically speaking the water system would serve as a source of irrigation to the community's gardens and orchards. The system could also serve as a reservoir for fire protection, backing up the towns fire protection system.

Light and Form

In this place, where it is hot for 4 to 5 months of the year and predominantly sunny for 9 months out of 12, light should play a major role in determining the form of the built environment. In the Sacramento Valley it is more important to keep the sun (and heat out) than it is to capture it in the winter, which tends to be overcast or

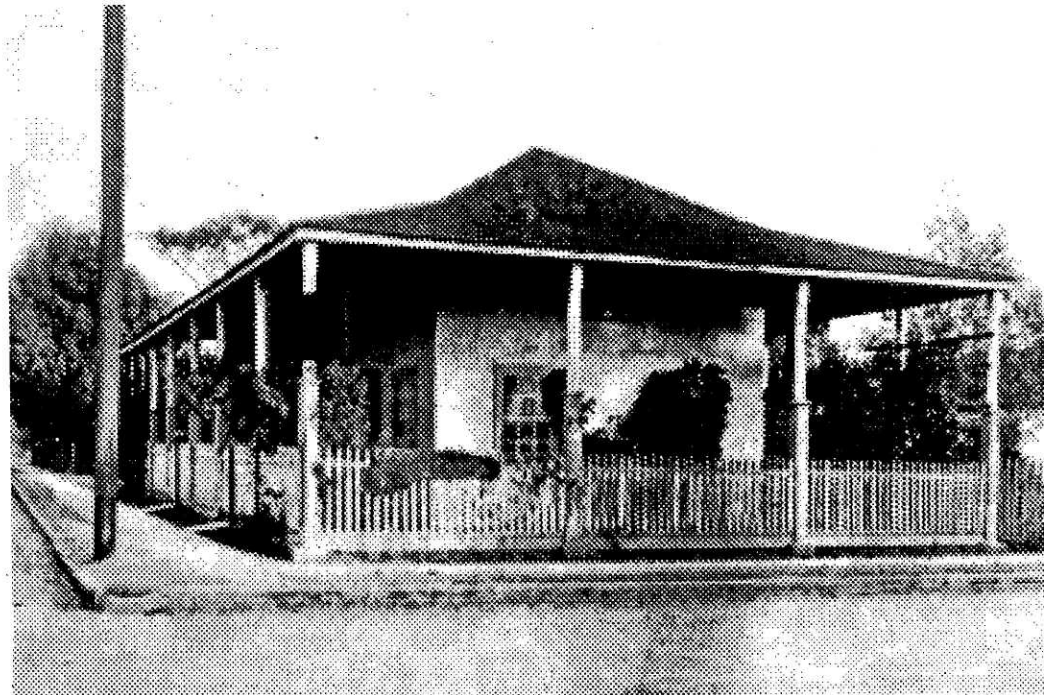


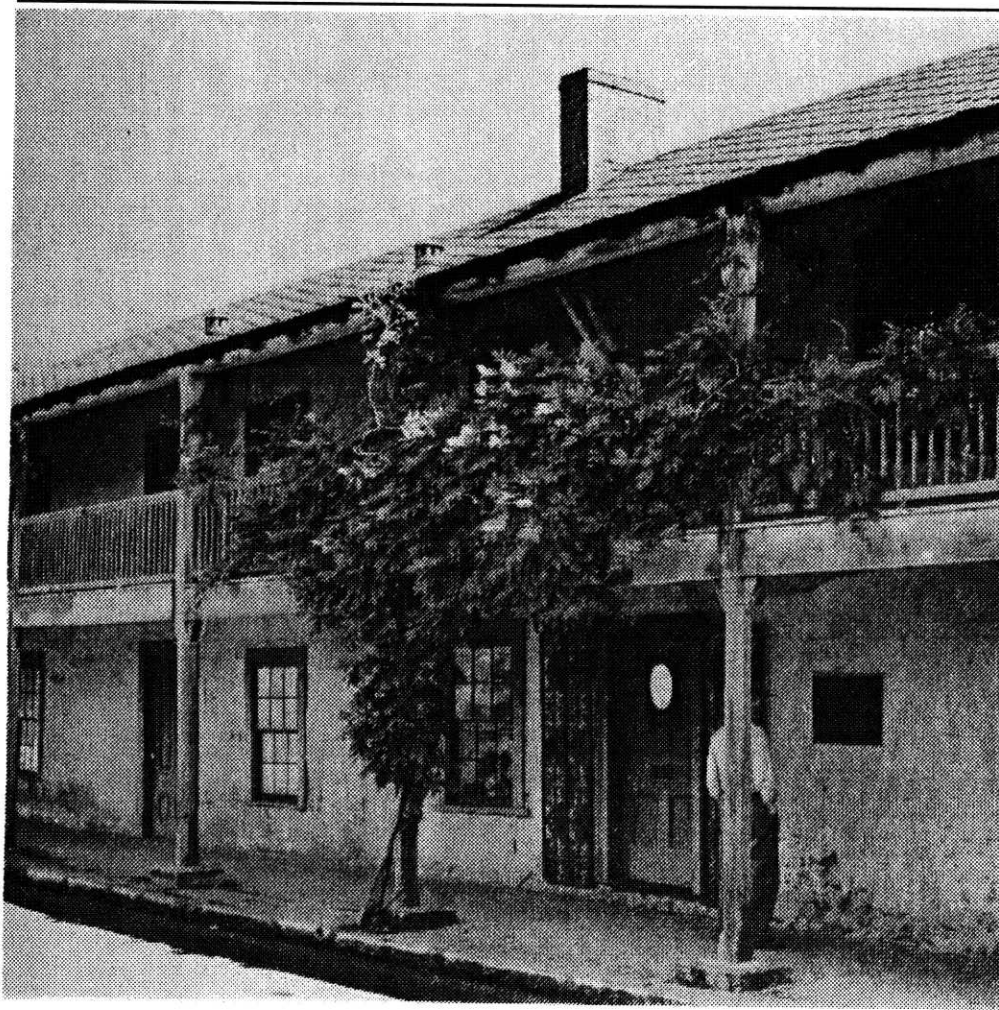


foggy 75% of the time, making dwellings more difficult to cool than to heat. In summer the light coming from the sky is relentless and hot, beating everything in its path, till it descends and casts those long shadows across the valley floor in the orange light of the sunset over the mountains. Light upon entering a building brings with it its heat. As a result, the form of buildings, when attention was paid to the affects of light and heat, has taken a shape of controlling direct sunlight through the use of various shading or screening forms.

Historically the methods and forms used in California for controlling light can be found in other places and other cultures. Yet in California particular combinations of form came together and evolved to become identified with the region. Elements of built form which are often associated with

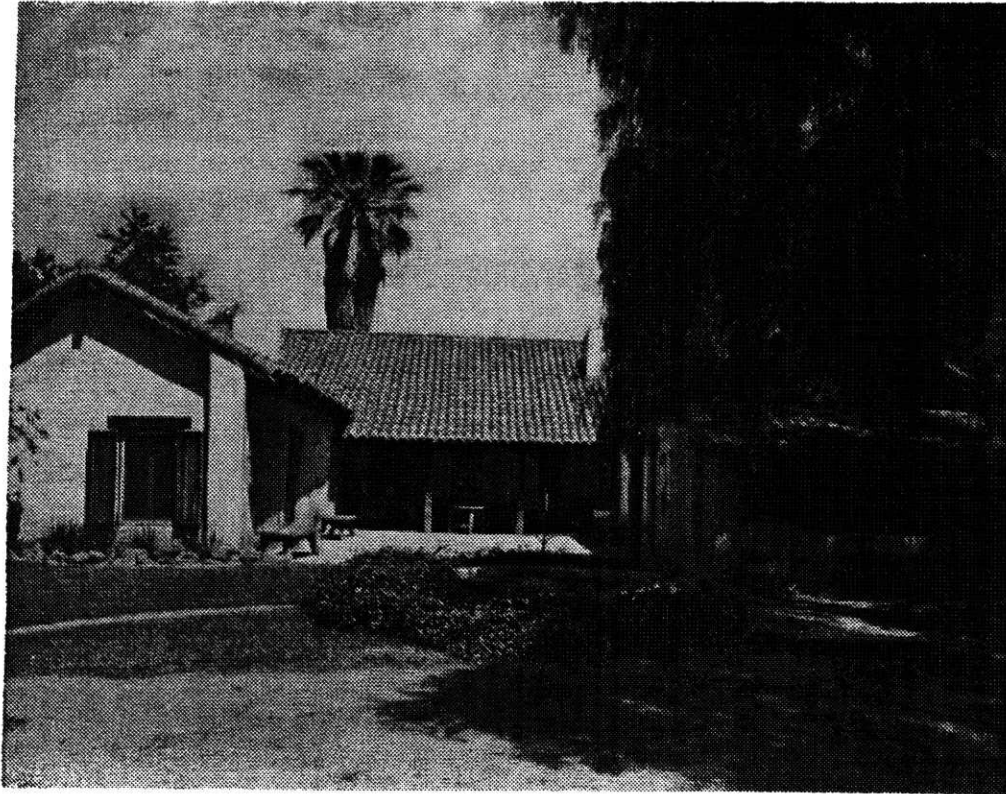
the region are deep overhangs on buildings often creating covered access or transition zones which we call porches and arcades. Not seen as being of particular importance at the individual occurrence, it is when the form begins to aggregate and form a larger size, such as porches on a row of houses, that an element of identification begins to become visible at a size larger than the individual building but smaller than the community. This same deep eave can move up the elevation of the building, forming similar zones on the second and third stories. Depending upon the level of public space within, these transition zones may be public or private or somewhere in between. These zones may operate as public or private access as well. Again this is dependant upon the level of activities which the margin serves and what it is connecting.





Related to the overhang by virtue of controlling light is the trellis and pergola. The trellis is often associated with its building in the same manner as the overhang defining a transition or margin between the inside and the outside. The difference is in that the trellis is a screen in its behavior and at times acts as a support for natural screens such as vines or climbing plants. A trellis may be horizontal or vertical in its placement and often behaves more independent of its building than an overhang or eave would. A pergola is similar to the trellis but tends to be independent or free of a building. It is a structure unto itself, a pavilion behaviorally and often defining a space of more private nature than of the greater space that it sits within. Often a pergola will behave as an arcade and define an access route or a space along it.

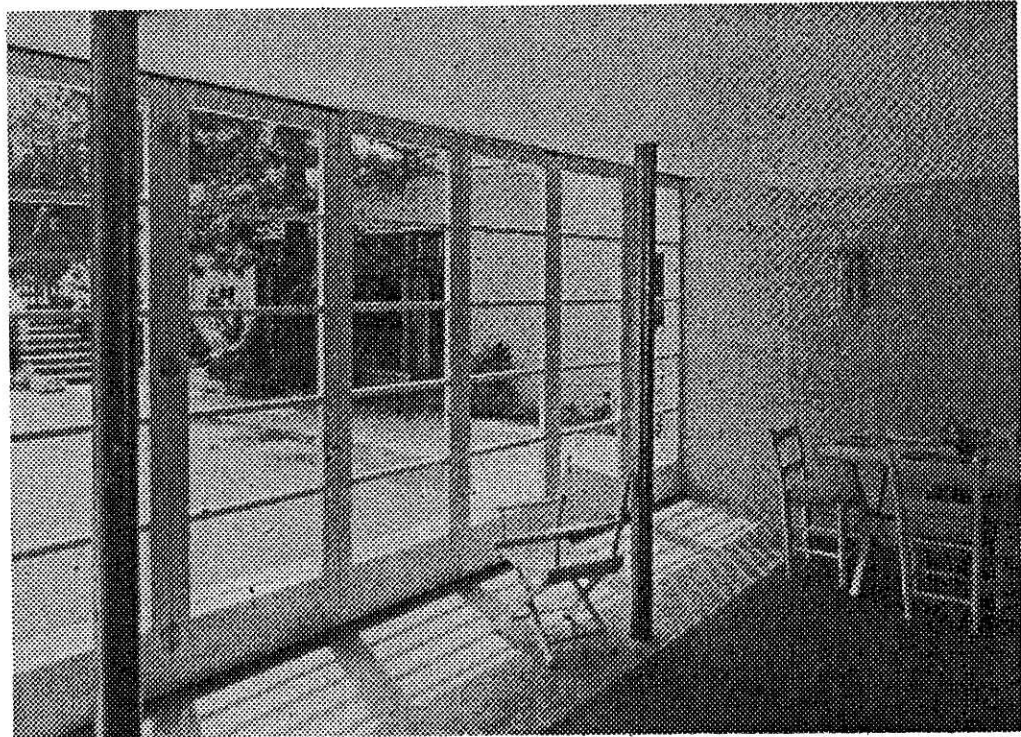


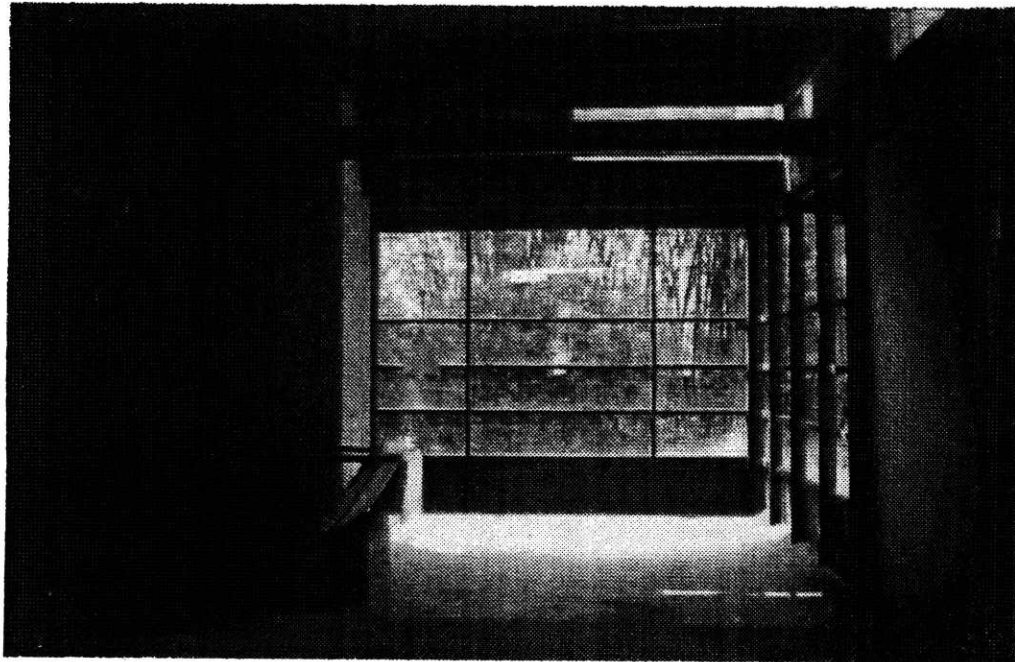


The third form in relation to light is the court or patio and its behavior both as a room and a transitional space connected to the interior of the house. This space, although found in form throughout the world and within many cultures is quite often associated with life in California where it has become part of the way of life. In the early days the hacienda houses of rancherías were of the courtyard form. Later with settlement came the sleeping porches and terraces as in the houses of the brothers Green and Irving Gill. Still later we see the work of Rudolf Schindler who wholeheartedly accepted the idea of living in nature for one's health. His own Kings Road House and his Pueblo Ribera apartments are examples of living within the continuity of space that exists in those houses. Contemporary to Schindler is William Wurster

whose work in Northern California was always designed with a margin that was part of the inside space and simultaneously part of the outside space. These spaces eventually became the “rooms with no name” that were part of his vocabulary of working, and again spaces that were continuous from the inside to the outside. All these are examples of how the architecture supported living within that margin that belongs to both worlds. Life in the edge if one thinks of the margin as an edge.

What does this all have to do with light? Everything, for light is continuous, space is continuous. Light and space are virtually synonymous. For light creates space. Without it space, in architectural terms, does not exist. The courtyard form, as used in the work of Schindler and Wurster is about building light and space in a very large dimension, the dimen-



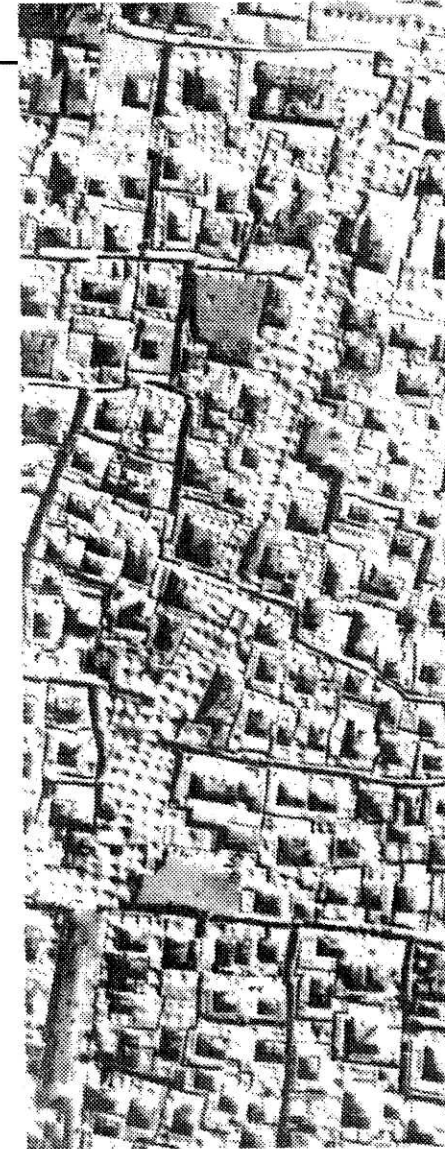
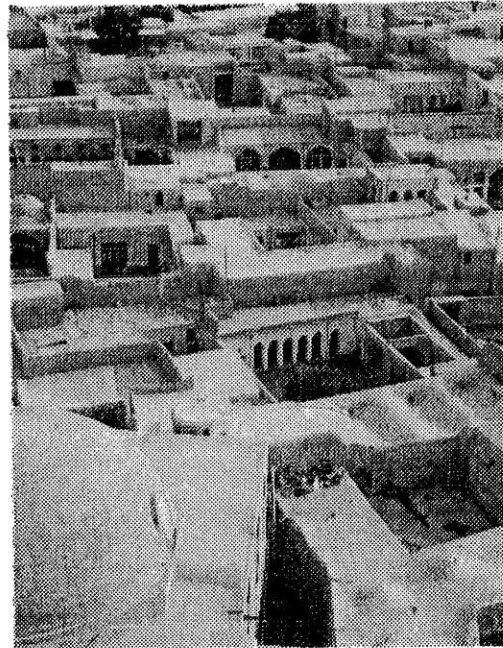


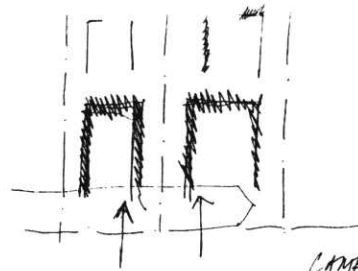
sion at the room and even the dwelling level of intervention. That dimension of light builds the continuity of space. The continuity of space as used in the courtyard form can be used in structuring the building of a community.

The fourth condition of form working in a relationship to light is the clustering of dwellings or buildings. By arranging the buildings in close proximity to one another areas of protection from the sun are created. In intensive vegetable gardening, there is the concept that by maintaining a tighter than usual spacing between plants, say 6 inches versus 12 inches for basil, the individual plants create a clump or cluster. The advantage of this is twofold. First, the basil plants, in being close together out compete any weeds from coming up between them. Weeds are simply crowded out. Secondly, the close spacing

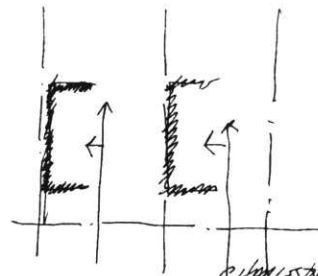
of the mature plants creates an umbrella or canopy, similar to a forest, creating their own mulching system and micro-environment maintaining higher moisture content in the soil and canopy. The clustering or close spacing of buildings creates analogous micro-climates around the buildings and pockets of cool to give relief from the relentless sun.

Examples of such building form strategy can be found in many cultures. In Persian cities, such as Isfahan the dwellings are packed together, creating a continuity of built form with only the internal courtyards and the streets breaking the continuity. In the U.S. Charleston, South Carolina provides an example where the usually wasted space between houses is used. The arrangement of the form and the access to the dwellings is such that outdoor pockets of shade are created



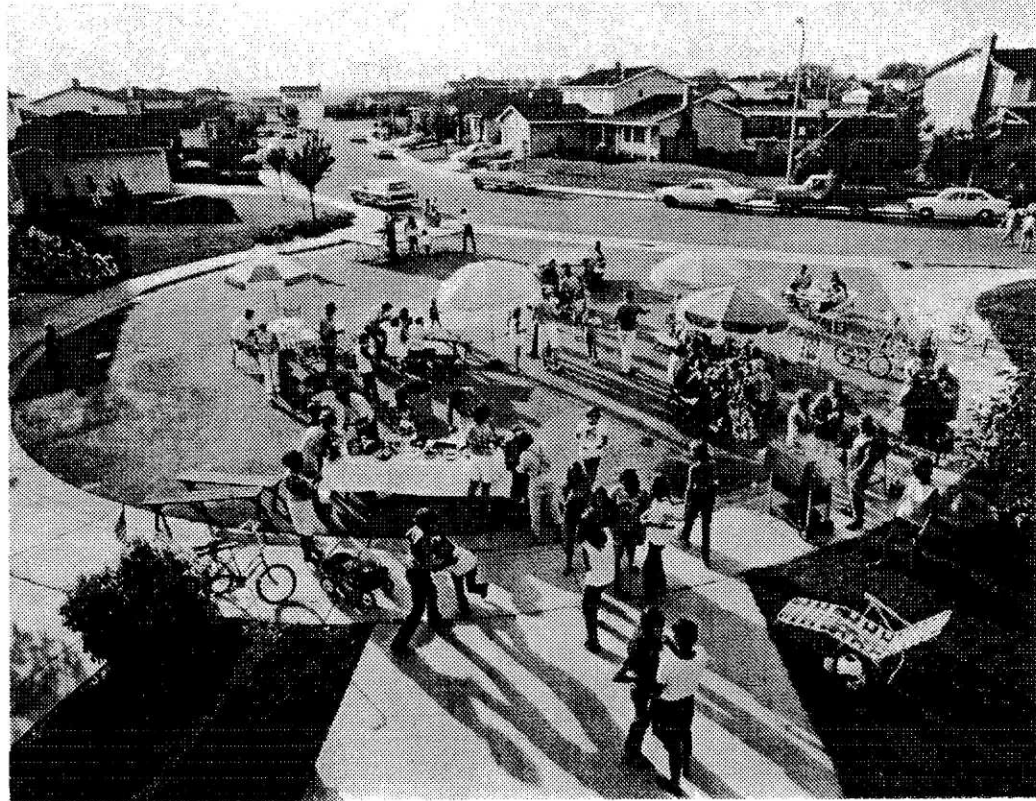


CAMBRIDGE PORT,
MA.



CHARLESTON,
S.C.

as usable space for living. The form and arrangement of the dwellings creates protection for each other from direct heat gain just as in my gardening example above, the plants themselves create their own microclimate. A similar idea of close arrangement and dimensional spacing can be used in Winters to create pockets for living protected from the harsh summer sun and when used with the idea of associating cluster size open space with the clustered dwellings, and a pattern of access is introduced, a pattern of the physical structure of the community begins to emerge and form the identity of the place.



"...the street is not only a means of access but also an arena for social expression."

Alison & Peter Smithson

Levels of Intervention

There exists within the built form of housing a territorial framework which works at different levels and sizes. I identify those levels as the regional, community, neighborhood, block, cluster, dwelling, room and individual sizes of intervention. Within this range of sizes there exist relationships of form and space which effect the way in which people share and claim space through the arrangement of public, semi-public, semi-private, private and transitional zones or margins within and connecting those spaces. The organization of the public-private zones embedded in the town fabric will have an effect upon the arrangement and disposition of the dwelling, and the way the dwelling's organization reflects private/public uses within it and adjacent to it. The public-private organization will also influence the relationship of the dwelling to

dwelling, the relationship of the dwelling to the street, and the form of the street and neighborhood. There are several important points to understand about the determination of the level of intervention.

1. the level of the intervention
2. the level at which the perceiver of the intervention is at.
3. the location of the intervention (accessibility & public-private).
4. the determination of the perspective of the level of intervention.

The levels of intervention as used in this thesis are:

The regional level of intervention establishes a connection to the outside world beyond the community. Its connections are important in terms of identity to the culture at large and the landscape at a regional size. For Winters I identify the region as the Sacramento

Valley and beyond, reaching into the San Francisco Bay Area, to the Sierra Nevada Mountains and down the San Joaquin Valley. Regionalism goes beyond political and geographical definitions of region. Criteria which can be used may be cultural as well as biological.

The community level of intervention is inclusive of all members or segments of the Winters community. A community level intervention would be public in nature and inclusive of all members of the community. A recent example of a community intervention would be the designing and construction of the Leather's Playground with involvement by all sectors of the community including the municipal body. I categorize this as community level because it is a public project, accessible to all members of the community to use although geographically it exists in one

neighborhood, albeit in the community park. My project is at the community size with regional implications.

The neighborhood level of intervention is that which effects a smaller group than at the community level. Involvement in the neighborhood level would constitute those people who live within a given sector of 2,3 or 4 blocks encompassing possibly up to 45 families or households in this setting. (Interventions at this level from the perspective of the individual or the dwelling tend to be public). The establishment of a convenience store on the highway 128 would be considered more at the community level but placing the same store within the structure of the grid would make it a neighborhood intervention but still accessible to the community.

The block level of intervention affects the families of one street,

on both sides, 12 to 16 families or households. Perhaps not all people would be well acquainted with each other to have dinner together, but there would be an understanding of who belongs and who does not. If there are children, they may play together. At this level, the individual may perceive activity on the block as public when viewed from within the block level, but not as community level public or neighborhood level public. At those levels it would appear private.

The cluster level of intervention affects 3 to 12 families or households. I identify this group as those people who probably know each other, at least casually, in a neighborly way. If there are children they most likely do play together if the age range is close. Some people in this group may eat together more than occasionally. Activities within the cluster

are semi-private to the individual

The dwelling level of intervention is the unit of the single household or family. Generally speaking interventions at this level are rarely public, but could be semi-public to private depending on location and point of perception.

Streets



In the section design intervention I have identified three basic types of streets. They are the vehicular street, the pedestrian street, and the green street. I will briefly describe each as I intend to use it.

The Vehicular Street

The vehicular street is the principle street of the grid system. At its highest level it exists as a grid of cross streets with the north-south streets being the regional streets, running across the narrow ends of the blocks. These streets take one across town and eventually connect with Grant Ave. on the north and terminate at the creek on the south. These streets function in much the same way as 1st through 4th Sts. due in the old section of Winters. Dimensionally a regional street is 75 feet wide with a 13' pedestrian zone, an 8'6" parking zone, a 4' bicycle

lane and a 12' travel lane in each direction. A provision is made for the planting of trees.

Running perpendicular to this system is the neighborhood streets which, even though continuous across the entire community, pass in and out of the neighborhoods or long sides of the blocks. These streets run parallel to Grant Ave. and Putah Creek, terminating at one end at the Interstate 505 right of way and at Morgan Dr. on the west. Dimensionally they are 53 feet wide consisting of a 7' pedestrian zone, an 8'6" parking zone and a 12' travel lane in both directions. A provision is made for the planting of trees.

Because the proposal is at a higher density than is usually used in suburban developments and because there is habitable territory in the center portion of the block the community has

smaller streets to gain access to the interior of the blocks. For this purpose there are lanes 26 feet wide with 4' pedestrian zone and 12' travel lane on one or both sides. When parking exists it happens on only one side or in special parking areas. A provision is made for the planting of trees.

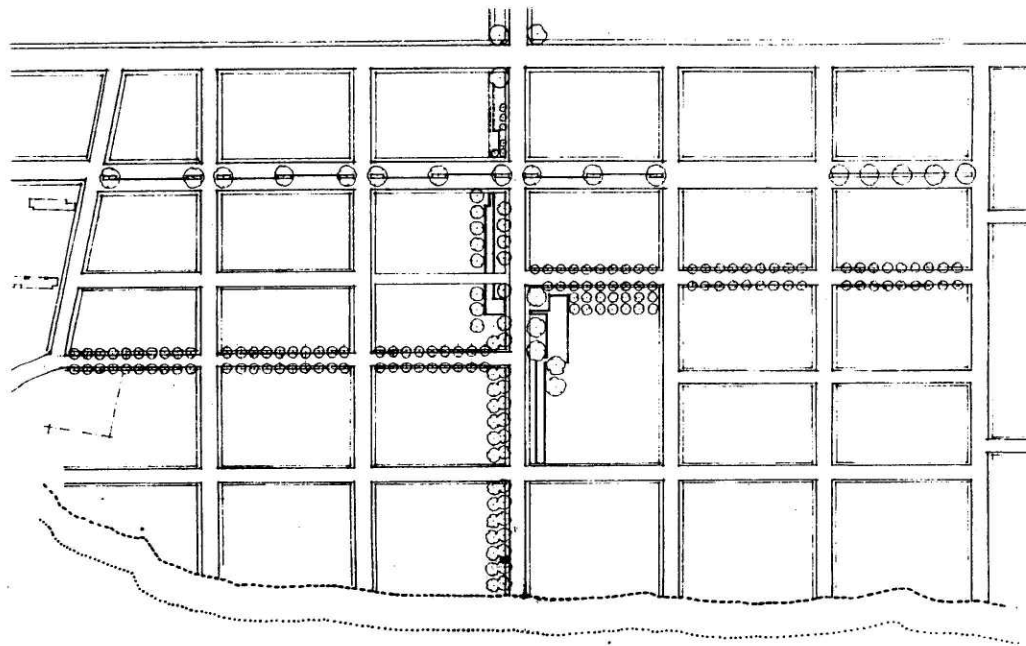
Firelanes do exist throughout the community in those areas where access is necessary for the purpose of fire protection. In these cases, where a lane or street does not exist, pedestrian access does double as a firelane and has a minimal width of 12'.

There are three exceptions to the street pattern; the extension of Main St., the commercial street and the main regional street running along the eastern side of the park.

The first exception is the extension of Main Street. The extension of Main Street is to identify with

the western end of old Main St. to create a specific identity, recollecting the spatial structure of western Main St.. To do so it will be built with an additional 20' pedestrian zone on each side till it tees into the "reflecting pool park". After the exchange past the reflecting pool the 20' pedestrian zone runs down only the south side of Main St.. This is because of the exception in the depth of the blocks running along the north side of the street. This additional pedestrian zone is planted with fruitless olive trees on forty foot centers creating a walking park or green zone in reference to old Main St's. 20' setback.

The second exception to the street pattern is the commercial street running east to west, one block south of Grant Ave. This street is a higher density, multiple use street combining dwelling, commercial and office uses. The



majority of space is allocated to housing with some commercial and office use existing on the ground floor, dwellings and offices on the second and dwelling only upon the third story. To the eastern end is the area used to support special uses associated with interstate highway travel. The intent here is to bring this activity into the fabric of the town and not segregate it completely from the town structure. Uses along this section of the commercial street are lodging, restaurant and other travel related business. To the back of this block, along Grant Ave. is more commercial space related both to highway travel and the community. In physical terms of form and its placement these structures would have to be built to the edge of the pedestrian zone, building the street edge, encouraging pedestrian usage and building character into the

main entry point into Winters. Parking would go in mid-block in the space between Grant Ave. and the commercial street. Building within these parameters will prevent the effects of an unstructured commercial strip environment and contributes a structured environment with architectural order to the commercial district, building these places more like Main St. than like Las Vegas.

The third exception is the main regional street running along the eastern side of the park. Along this street my intent is to establish a connection to the riparian area of Putah Creek to the town. From the natural area at the creeks edge a canopy of eucalyptus trees follows a 50 foot wide lineal parkway north till it reaches the central park. Once across the commercial street, the lineal parkway continues northward across Grant Ave. where it connects with the park

that marks the entry into town and the reconciliation of the northeastern Winters grid, where the direction of the grid plan shifts to a true north-south orientation. The nature of this parkway is a place to walk, gather, and build an understanding of the connectedness between the different sectors of Winters.

The Pedestrian Street

As I described in the vehicular street section, it can be seen that each one has within its structure a pedestrian zone that coincides with the street path. The street is the room of the community, that is, it is the place where the towns public discourse takes place. To support this activity, then there must be a high enough number of people to use it for walking, playing and socializing. The street is where you see your neighbors, stop and chat and get caught up

with news. By providing a place for people to walk that is pleasant, walking is encouraged. If walking is made a viable method to take care of the daily routine of buying food or getting the paper then it will become an alternative to automobile usage. To do this, services must be within a 10 minute walk or within 400 yards of services. This exists in the old section of Winters, although less effective now since the food market has moved out onto Grant Ave..

Working in conjunction with the street paths for pedestrians is a second system of pedestrian paths which takes its own route through the interior of blocks. In some cases it follows lanes into the interiors, sometimes following the water ditch, sometimes tree covered. In places it becomes semi-public or even semi-private depending upon the defining

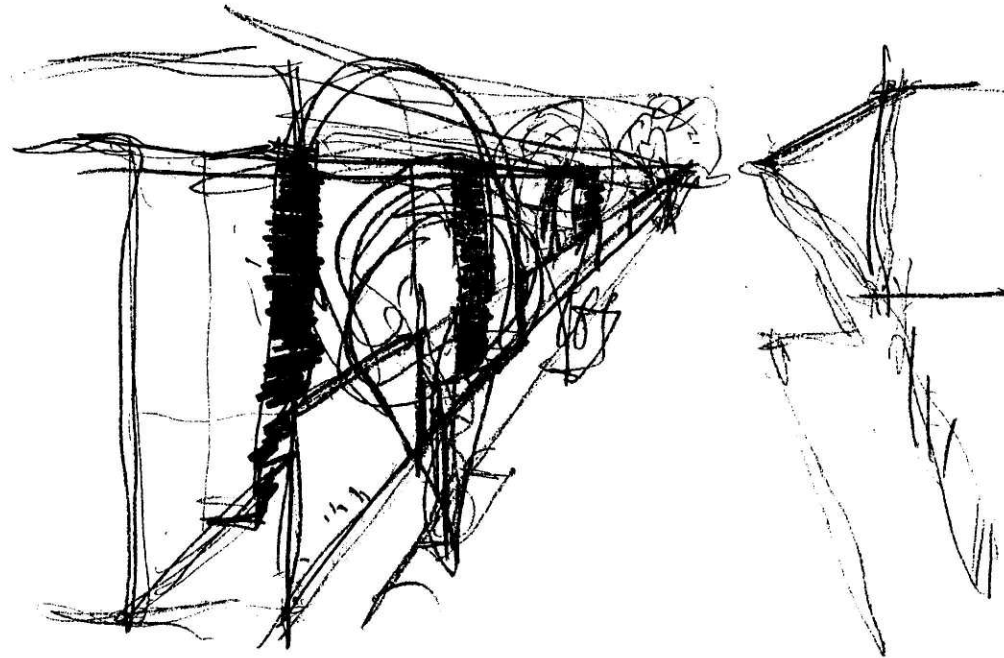


forms level of public/private and physical proximity.

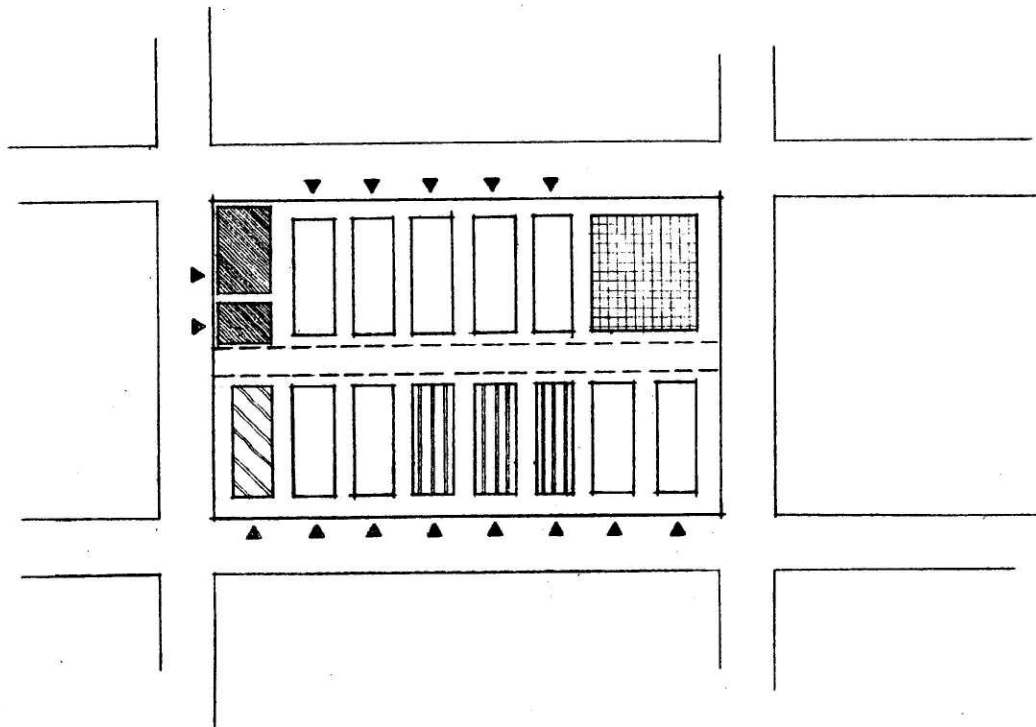
The Green Street

The green street is the concept of pathways and use areas passing through the center of the block. In most cities these zones would belong to the private realm. The idea came to me upon seeing the gardens in the interiors of the block system of Amsterdam. To have access into such a space, if only to pass through on a path and visually enjoy it would make living in an urban environment a richer experience. The idea also comes from seeing experiments where people form common green areas through the removal of the boundary fences between their backyards in conventional suburban and urban neighborhoods. In my proposal I am advocating that these areas become more public in their nature. The green streets

would be extensions of the public street system further into the interior of the block. They would exist at the semi-private, semi-public and public levels. Diagrammatically these streets would alternate with the vehicular street system. In some instances they would coincide with the vehicular system, but generally not. More often they would be coincidental with the pedestrian path. At all public-private levels it could exist as a shared space. The spaces level of public-private has more to do with its arrangement and dimensions in relation to the dwellings which define it and by who and how it is claimed.



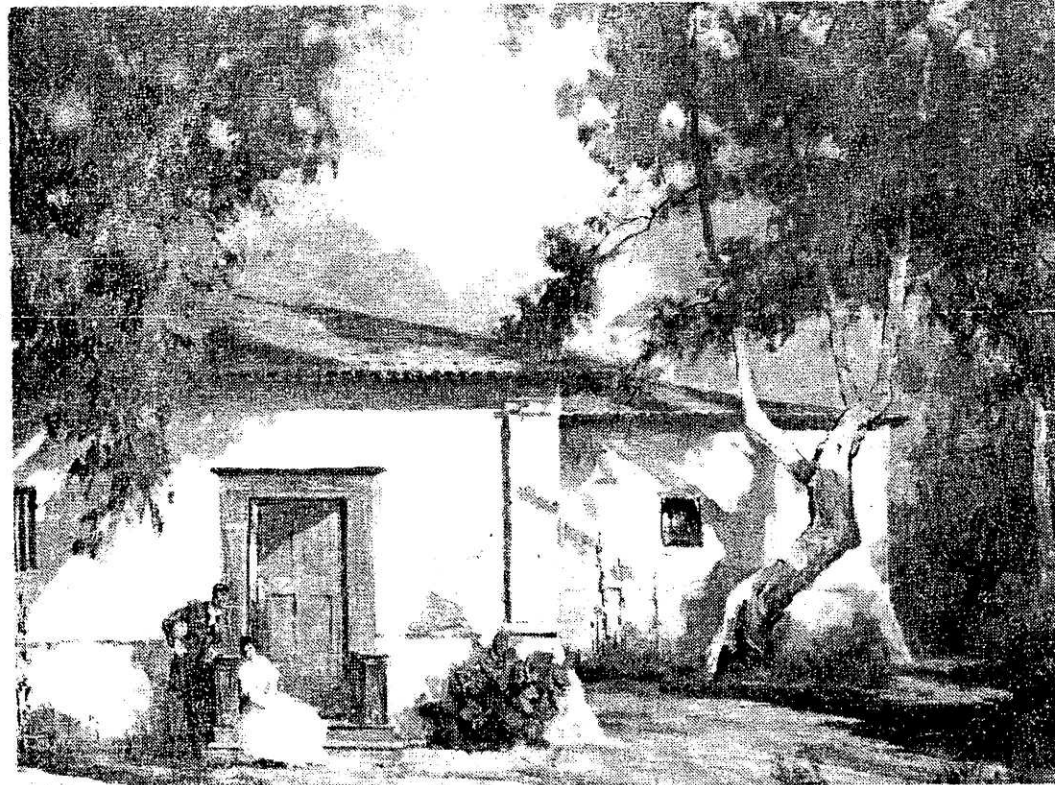
Block Structure

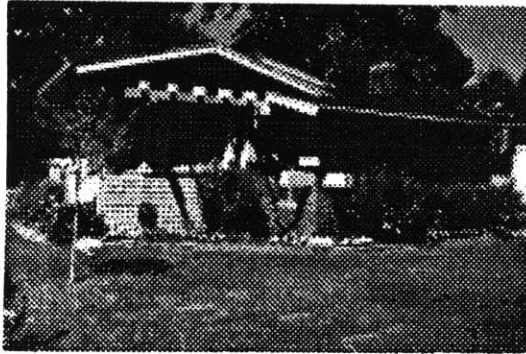


In the discussion earlier about grids and streets I spoke of the streets as being either a regional street or neighborhood street. This is in a relationship to the block, the other constituent component of the grid system. The regional side, fronting the regional street is the short end of the block, the neighborhood side is the long dimension of the block, fronting the neighborhood street. This is the structure of the block I determined through observation of the existing block system that has existed in Winters since the town was laid out in 1875. I identified within the block system the two characteristics of neighborhood and regional streets. I made my observation and found that for most dwellings the main access comes from the neighborhood side of the block where the front of the house (in most cases) faces the street across the transitional

zone of the front yard. It is here, on the neighborhood street, where automobiles are parked and more importantly where visitors approach the dwelling. It is on the neighborhood street where the majority of living takes place. Within the neighborhood side of the block there is no variation to this access pattern. Variations to this access pattern occur at the ends of the block. It is at the ends of the block that not only access varies, but also use. In addition, some blocks have an alley running through the center of the block in the long direction giving those houses an access to the rear of their parcels.

Houses sited on corners oriented their access, depending upon age, either to the neighborhood side (homes built prior to the 1930's) or to the regional side (built after the 1930's). It is also interesting to note that the



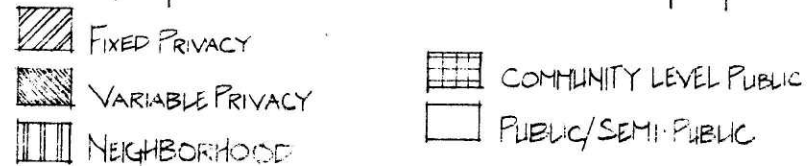
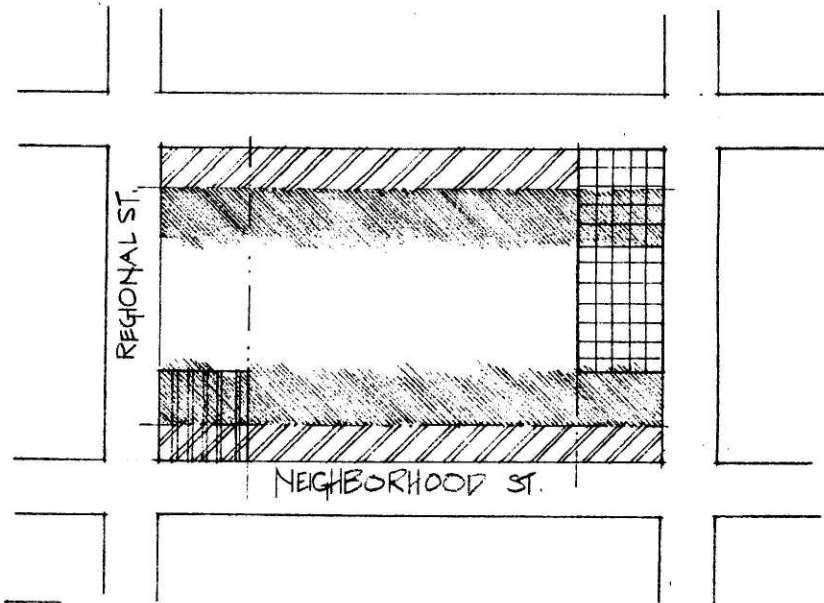
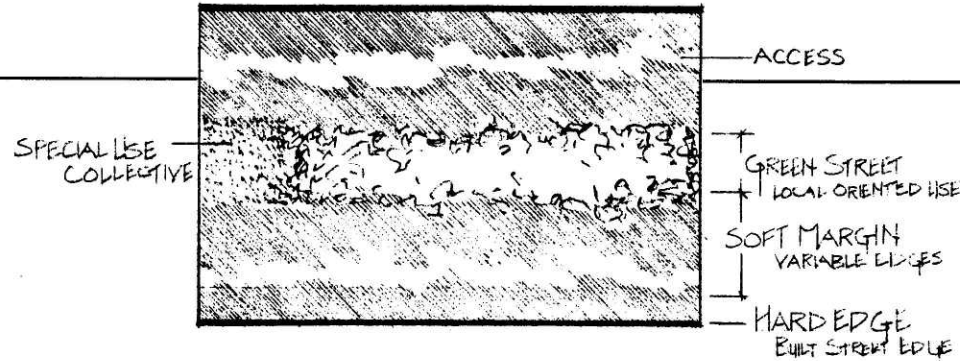


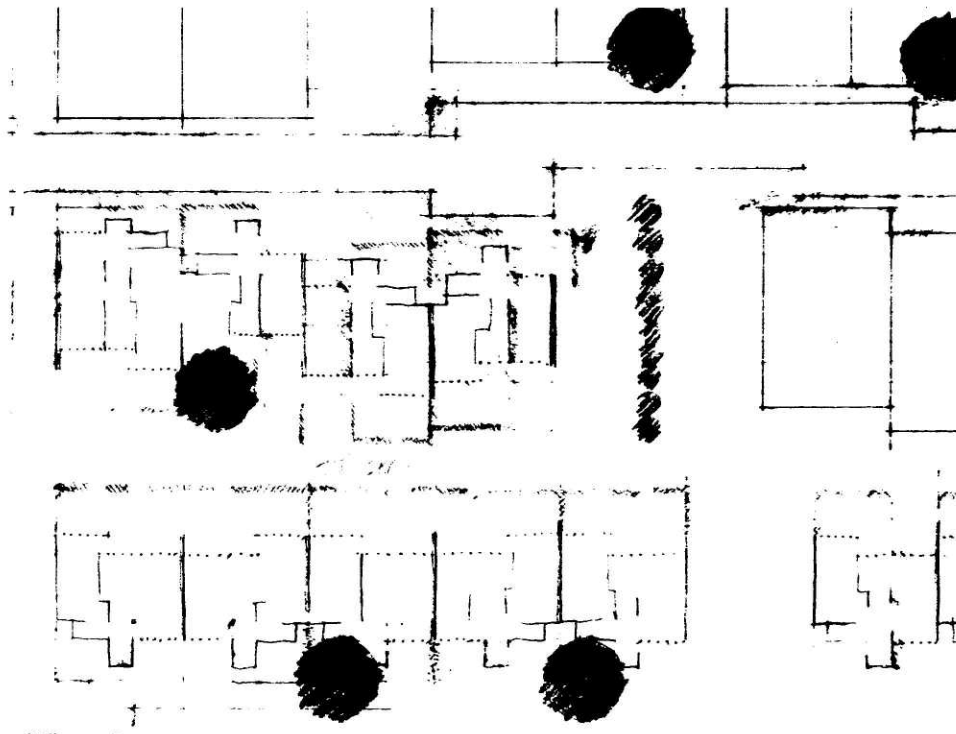
arrangement of the dwellings public-private zones changed along the same age demarcation). Houses cited on corners built prior to 1930's tended to have their access to the neighborhood side of the block and the public areas, such as living rooms and dining rooms toward the regional street, which is a public edge. The dwellings built after the 1930's and especially since the 1950's the houses entire organization is shifted away from the neighborhood side to the regional side with public and private spaces of the dwelling fronting equally on the public edge.

Other exceptions to the access system are the dwellings built in the pattern of a neighborhood street house, with their public areas arranged to the front and privacies to the rear and the entire organization shifted to access the regional street.

At the corners of the blocks uses can also change to what I call "special use collective". A special use collective, as used throughout Winter's old section are community level, public/semi-public places for gathering such as churches, church halls, day cares and even the City Hall. With the exception of the day care school and the City Hall, which have their access from the regional street, all have their main access from the neighborhood street.

It is from these observations that I decided to adopt the grid and block pattern of the old sector of town. Also figuring in this decision was that the block structure of the old town reinforced the directional field of the communities physical place in the region, dominated by the field created by Putah Creek and the statehighway and the towns organization between them





along the rivers edge. A directional field is akin to the grain on a piece of wood. One might say it is the grain of the landscape.

In establishing the dimensional system of the block system it became necessary to also look at the dimensional needs of the dwelling units simultaneously. This became a cyclical process of design, test, design. Into this process were introduced other ideas and principles influencing the quality of the environment being invented.

Hard Edge

An important issue was the building of the edge of the street as a hard edge. The intention of this was to build containment for the street and to a lesser degree for the interior of the block which I have called the green street. I believe that the street is the room of the community where social discourse can take place. By

defining it strongly and giving it order, it will be a good environment to be in, designed as a place. The setbacks from these streets would be very close by suburban standards, 0 to 14 feet. The reason I do this is twofold. First to bring the dwelling closer to the street edge. If the street is the interface between the dwelling and the community, then to work as such it has to be dense along its edges in terms of activity. Where no setback exists, it is the result of the house configuration having a courtyard which serves the purpose of the setback as a transition and buffer zone from the public edge. This is a very urban characteristic in terms of siting, but it is my belief that to make suburban communities more viable in community form and in land use, then higher density strategies will have to be applied. It also comes from a belief that

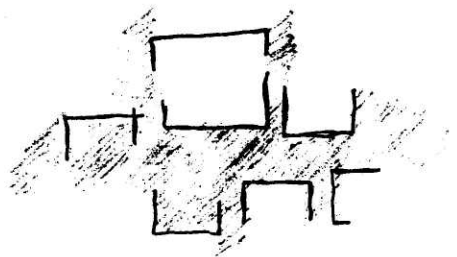
traditional suburban front lawns are a waste of valuable space and resources in their care, particularly in California's desert like climate where water is valuable. The second reason for bringing the dwellings out to the public edge was to create more available space to the interior of the block in the green streets for both dwelling siting, open space use and the creation of access.

Edges and Margins

Edges are places of transition or change and are places to which territorial claims can be marked or registered. A margin could be thought of as a spatial edge, that is defining space. A margin is a zone.

It is important that a mechanism is necessary to control dimensions and edges. Important as well is a way to allow for variation within the system, particularly in





"the form builds the access"

M.K. Smith

establishing the edges and margins as they will define the green streets and public access to the interior of the blocks.

The line or wall formed by the aggregation of dwellings at the vehicular street edge is a hard edge, always registered from the edge of the street, always built solid, with the exception of open-

ings in the wall for access routes to the interior of the block. The non-street side of the edge, commonly thought of as the rear lot line of the edge housing territory is free to move back or forward within a specified margin. From this margin towards the center is either a vehicular or pedestrian access, dependent upon the housing type or use occupying the center of the block. Dimensionally this access can be no narrower than 12' for the pedestrian path or 18' for the automotive path. The next row of housing is also to be free to move backward or forward from the registration or hard edge at the street edge. This second row of housing has more latitude in setting down its plot, having both the inner and outer edges free to move within specified margins. This edge/margin system can be used at either the neighborhood street side or the

regional street side of the block, with limitation as to what type of house can be used; townhouse vs. detached garage. The townhouse type can only be used on the neighborhood side while the detached garage type is predominately used on the regional street. Once at the interior of the block I have generally only used the detached garage and courtyard type houses, which continue to work from a grid street edge registration. I reserve the use of the townhouse type to block edge conditions.

This system of edges and margins allows for individual intervention at the level of the dwelling within a set of prescriptive rules or supports describing spatial boundaries and setbacks. The variation in setbacks allowed for in the margin allows for a variation of the green street and access walls which in turn create a variety of

spaces at a range of sizes and shapes, although limited. These when taken with and as a framework for the desires of individuals wants and tastes will create a rich and diverse environment.

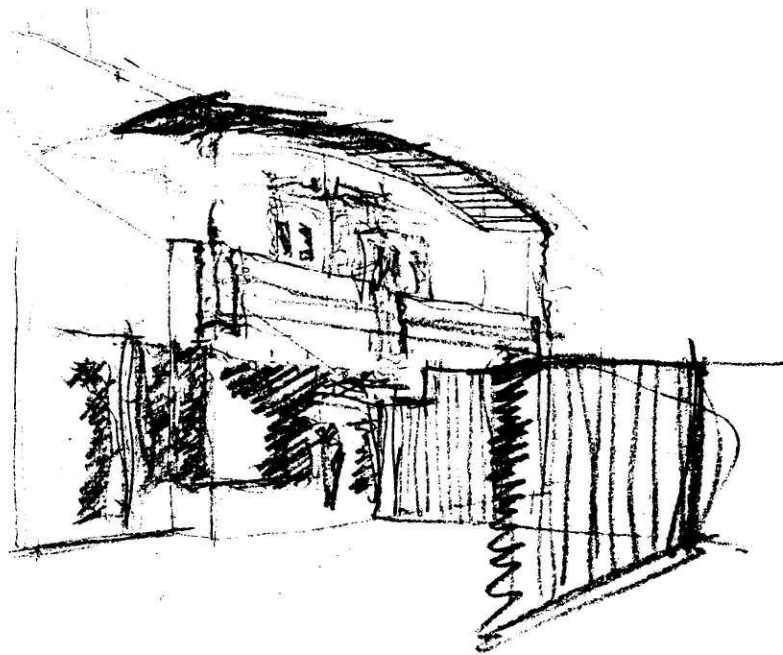
Also working at the block level is a system of public-private zones defining use areas not by function, but by environmental quality. Again starting from the hard street edge and moving towards the center is a zone I call the fixed privacy zone. In this zone only private uses (from the community level perspective) would be built. My intent is to place dwellings in this zone, although certain types of business endeavors are not ruled out. The key is its level of privacy in relation to its neighbors. The next zone, moving in will be the variable private/semi-private zone. Again, this zone is predominantly dwellings with the possibility of more public activities taking

place within and around the dwellings. Conceptually I imagine the non-dwelling space in this zone serving a form of cottage industry or small professional practice or even a nursery or gardening endeavor. Moving on further to the center, the zone becomes public/semi-public/public, moving from block end to block end. In these "special use zones" activities accessible to the community at large will reside with the very public of these being placed at block ends on the regional streets, working the same way as the special use collective zone I described earlier does in the old section of Winters. Activities and uses associated with these public zones would be a community health/swim club, a school or a church. Within the public/semi-public/public zone there would exist a two layered system of use. If the intended use is a very pub-

lic, regional or community intervention it could claim the corner territory as well as the section towards the center. If the activity were public but only of the neighborhood level of intervention it will claim the public sector centered on the end of the block.

In the semi-public zone towards the center their will be uses such as daycares and uses more public in nature-doctors, attorneys and architects offices, community gardens or orchards and artisan and craft shops. In zoning this way it is possible to integrate a variety of compatible uses within the fabric so that it is not only residential in nature but supports small businesses at a residential size. Such a system will make it possible for people to be within a bicycling or walking distance to their occupations.

Dwellings



The exploration of the dwelling began when I needed to determine dimensional information about the block size. To be informed about the block size I needed to know more about the dwelling and its dimensional needs. So began my exploration of housing arrangement and form. What I had in mind was a form that would cluster well and perhaps be double fronted. I also had the idea that it was very important for housing in this context to have an outdoor privacy, for it was privacy I felt was a key to developing a housing prototype for the California context. My explorations led to some interesting discoveries, however I did not come up with a new prototype. There really are no new types, but there are new arrangements and relationships between access and dwelling, dwelling to dwelling, and dwelling to street among the many

relationships existent in housing and communities.

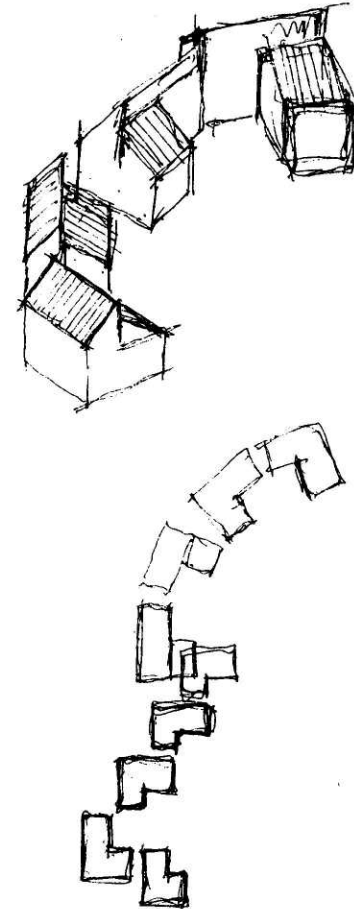
Some of the key points I found were;

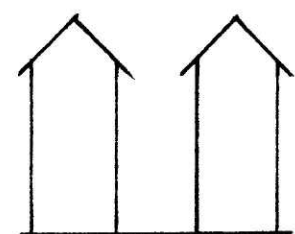
-Understanding privacy and its role in our culture is a key to beginning to design housing for our communities. Americans from the poorest renter to the wealthiest mogul think of their homes as their castles where they may do as they like, when they want and how they want. It is important to understand the relationship of access to the privacy issue. That is why the front yard transition zone is important and why there must be some form of mitigation if that relationship is altered.

-It is important to conceptualize the house and its outside space as a single entity. The exterior space can not be an afterthought or added on as it is today in production housing. The dwelling and its outdoor space must be thought

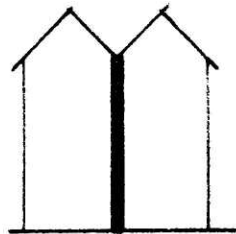
of as a whole, a continuity. This continuity will enable the household to make full use of the territory that it controls. This will bring down the cost of the housing due to less spent on land costs, as land is used more intensively to accommodate household needs and to enable the density to be built to a higher level which extends the land resource.

-a community fabric can not be built from one type of dwelling or one type of occupancy type. There must be a range of sizes as well as types not only for the reasons of physical form but to accommodate people at different sizes and types, that is the community must be able to accommodate all kinds of people of different family types, income levels and backgrounds. To accomplish this I chose the following occupancy types to build the new community and town extension:

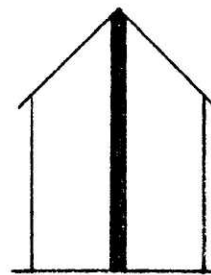




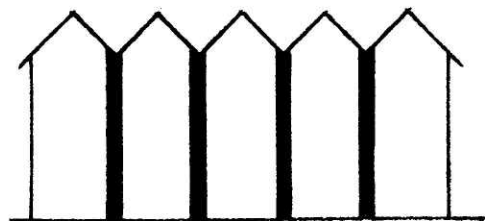
SINGLE DETACHED



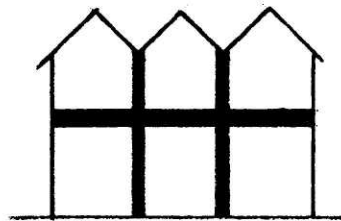
SEMI-DETACHED



DUPLEX



SINGLE ATTACHED



DUPLEX TOWNHOUSE

-single detached: two story minimum, a private courtyard, access at ground level, individual ownership or household.

-semi-detached: two story minimum, a private courtyard per unit, access at ground level, individual ownership or household per unit.

-single attached: townhouse, three story minimum, a semi-private courtyard, shared or individual access dependent on household, individual or co-operative ownership or individual ownership w /rental.

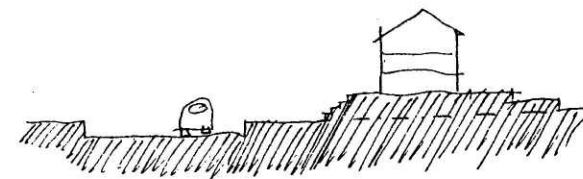
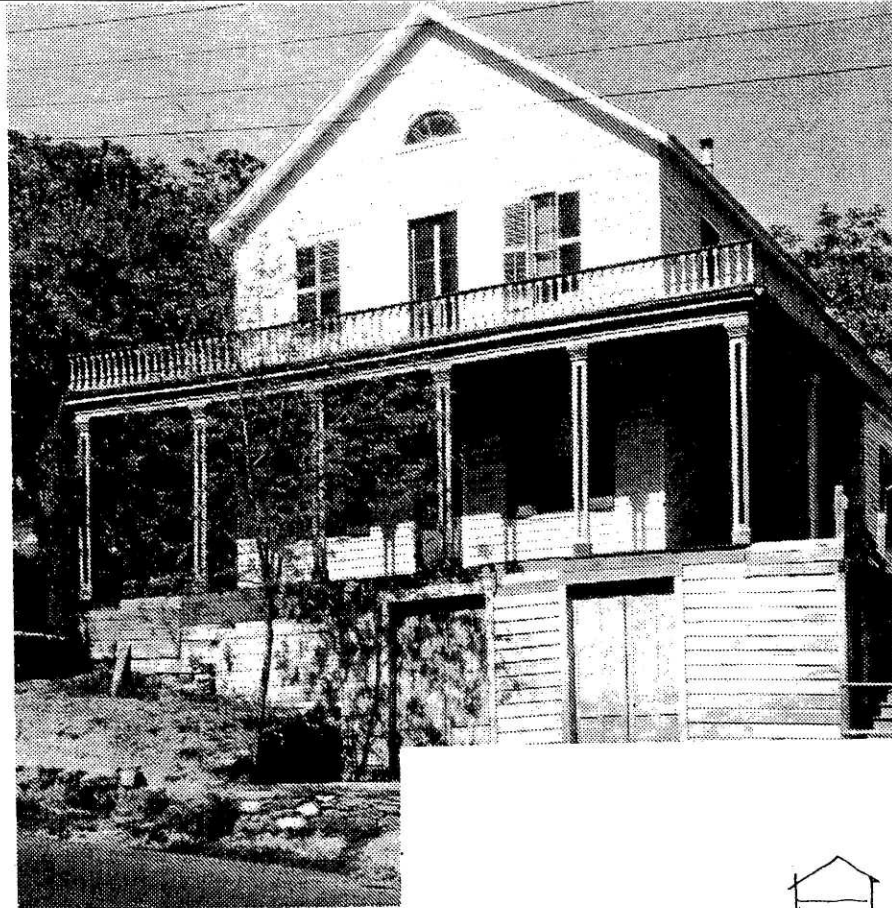
-duplex: two family detached garden apartment or rowhouse, two story minimum, a private courtyard per unit or single shared semi-private courtyard, common access, individual household per unit, individual ownership per unit.

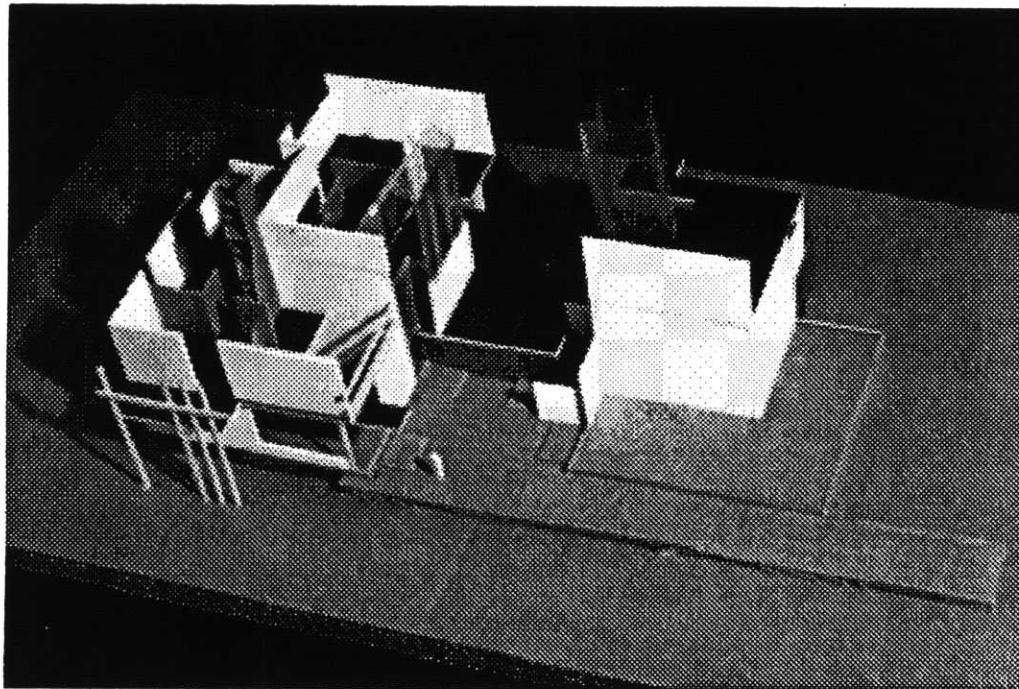
-duplex townhouse: two family attached rowhouse, three story minimum, a semi-private ground level courtyard or/and private

elevated garden or deck area, individual access per unit, individual or co-operative ownership, or individual ownership w /rental.

Other issues were raised as I continued to work throughout the semester in dealing with privacy and access. I did an exploration of the pattern of terracing to elevate the dwelling above the public access paths, yet keeping the path in a close proximity to the dwelling. which led to the adoption of the terracing or level change strategy The proximity of dwelling to public access is important because I believe that by placing the access and the dwelling in a close proximity the probability of social interaction is increased, whether it leads to continued interaction is anyone's guess.

A great deal of exploration was devoted to vehicle access to the dwelling, and to the relationship of the garage to the dwelling in

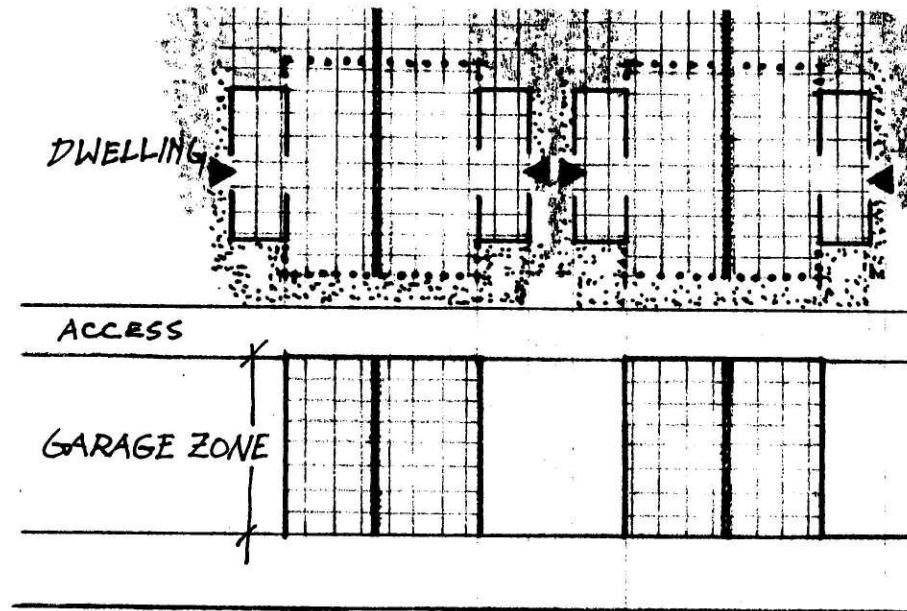
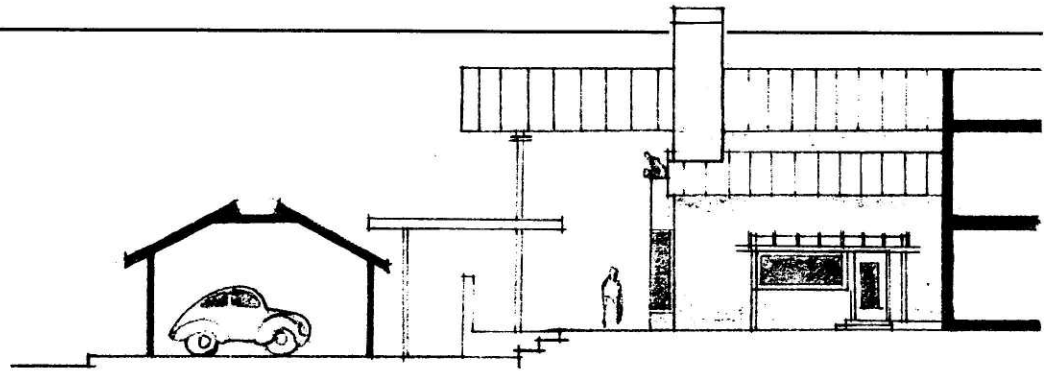


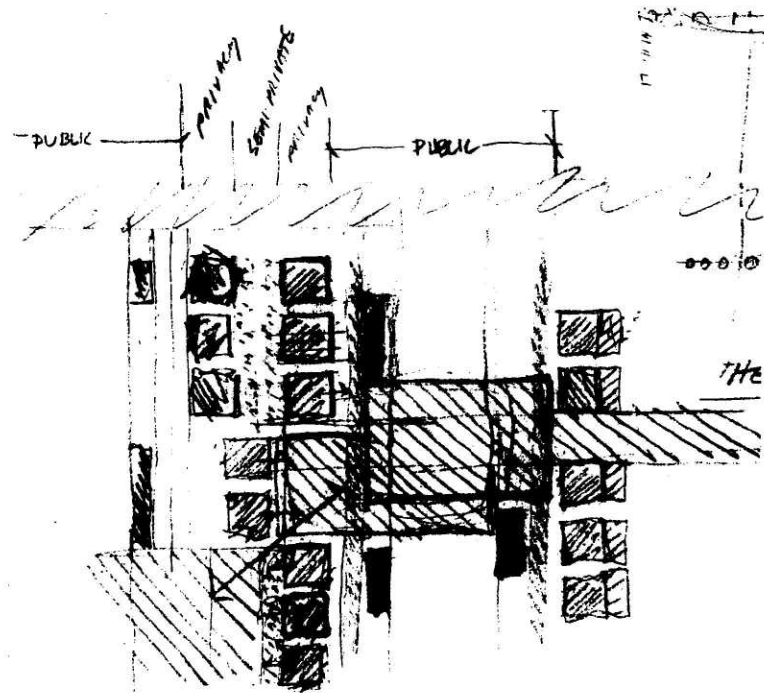


terms of placement and the creation of space. I came to the conclusion that the garage could be used as a spatial element to define space in relation to the dwelling. People in Winters will still have automobiles for some time to come. The issue of vehicle access and storage is central to the issue of housing there.

One scheme with which I worked a great deal was the placement of the garage in a semi-public zone between the street access and the dwelling. This arrangement net a semi-public space between the garage and the dwelling which I came to think of as a pedestrian access within the neighborhood which worked locally, within a small number of dwellings. This new path runs parallel to the main street access running on the street side of the garage zone which I identify as being in the

community realm, therefore outside of the neighborhood. Along this neighborhood path, at the intersections with the access path leading to the dwelling are exchange areas which function as shared transition zones by the two adjoining dwellings. Also created within this garage zone are pockets of space, which exist because garages do not fill the entire zone, even though in my site drawing they do so. My drawing is drawn filling the whole zone to show the possibility of positioning within that zone. The open spaces within the garage zone are semi-public in nature and are available to claiming by the adjacent dwellings. These spaces are possible locations for garage zone sized spaces for some types of cottage industry or for other shared or individual uses such as gardens. Also possible along this zone is the shifting of the garage spaces



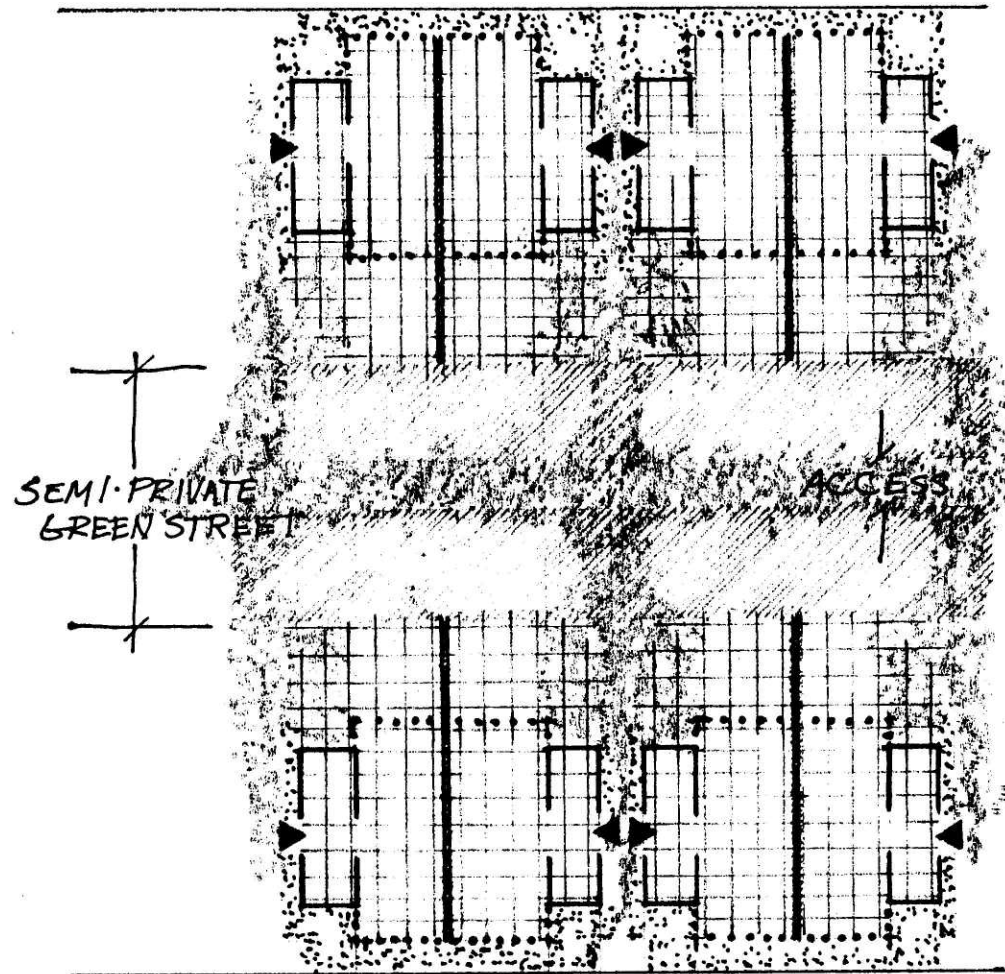


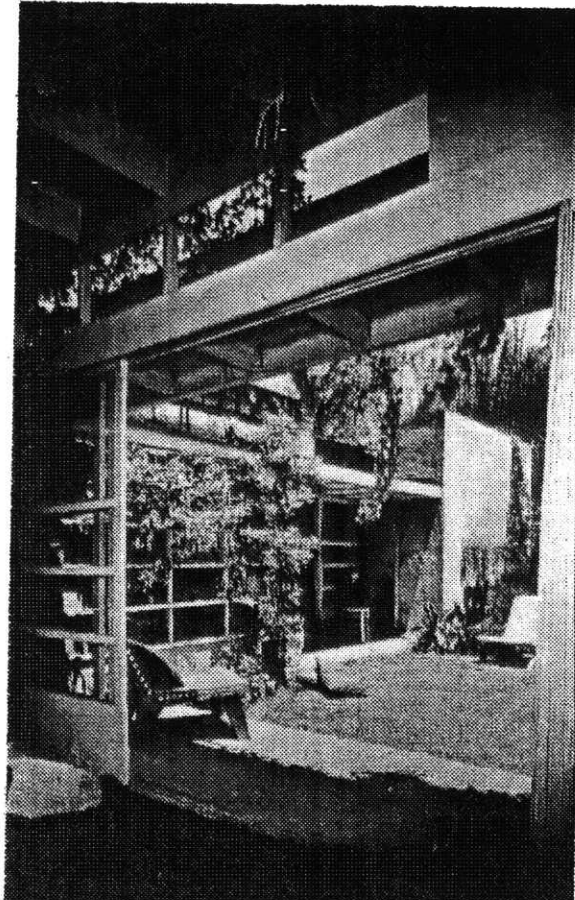
to one end collectively, creating a larger size open space fronting the street, between the dwelling and the street. With a corresponding move across the street in the opposite garage zone, a larger size public/semi-public space is created which in turn could be joined to a green street access, forming a continuity of access and public space. My explorations of this system are incomplete, but I believe there are possibilities here. for further exploration

From the neighborhood access-dwelling access exchange we move up through the transition area between the two adjacent dwellings and enter a semi-private zone which acts as a green street for the cluster of dwellings forming the space. The semi-public space is built by extending the individual dwelling's private outdoor spaces into the semi-private zone where the exchange between the oppo-

site spaces forms a semi-private access. The nature of this space is semi-private because it is claimed by the adjacent privacies and is intended to be accessible only to those within the cluster forming the definition.

The outdoor privacy is an important element in our culture. People spend a lot of time outside in the climate of the Sacramento Valley. As privacy is an important issue to most people, it would follow that a place that is private and outside is necessary, just as it is as necessary to have a public area that enables people to assemble and gather. As I mentioned earlier, it is also important, in designing the dwelling, to think of the outdoor space as a continuity with the dwellings interior space. They are one space but function with two dispositions. To be effective and be utilized by the household there must be a substantial amount of



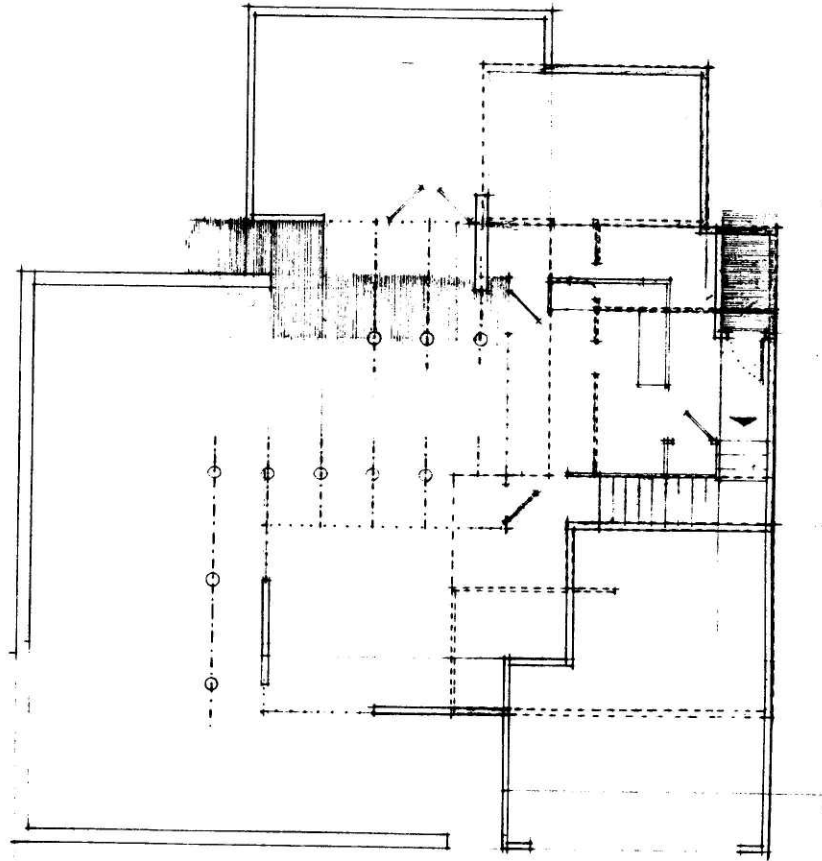


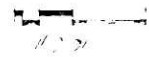
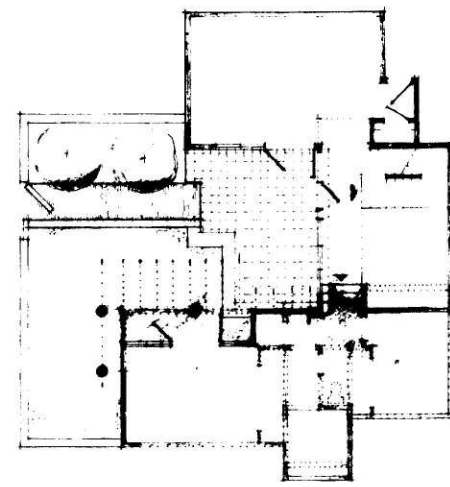
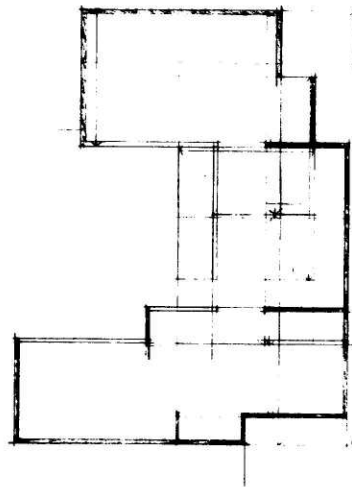
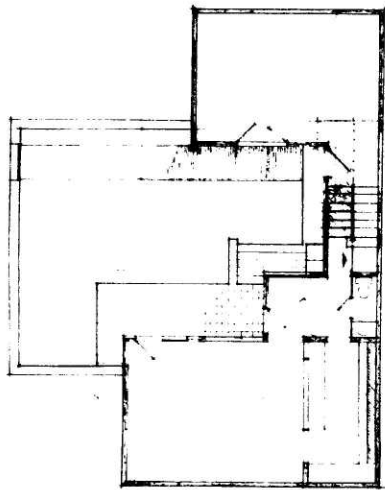
outdoor privacy that is private to the public realm that the dwelling can claim as its extension to the outside. This extended territory from the dwelling should become more public as it moves away from the dwelling, building a transition to the more public world outside of the dwelling.

The Courtyard House

In exploring the form of the outside privacy I examined the courtyard form as a possible way to build the outside privacy. It is this exploration that led me to draw the conclusions I did about the continuity of the inside to outside, life in the transition zone and the duality of space and light and light being built in the large dimension of the courtyard. I have spoken of these issues earlier. What led me to those conclusions was the research and development of a courtyard house in

which the courtyard is one with the dwelling, with the court being essentially an outdoor room. In my exploration I arranged the most public rooms at the ground level around the courtyard. To one side, in one wing, are the most public rooms, the living and dining room, adjacent to the access. In the center is the kitchen and in the remaining wing forming the third side of the court is the family room set back a ways from the public access to the house. The more private sector of the house I placed on the second floor, running across the closed end of the "u" forming the courtyard. The interior space is to be separated from the exterior space by a screen that could vary in density, maintaining the continuity but providing for different levels of privacy and closure in relation to the dwelling. Moving from the street through the courtyard into



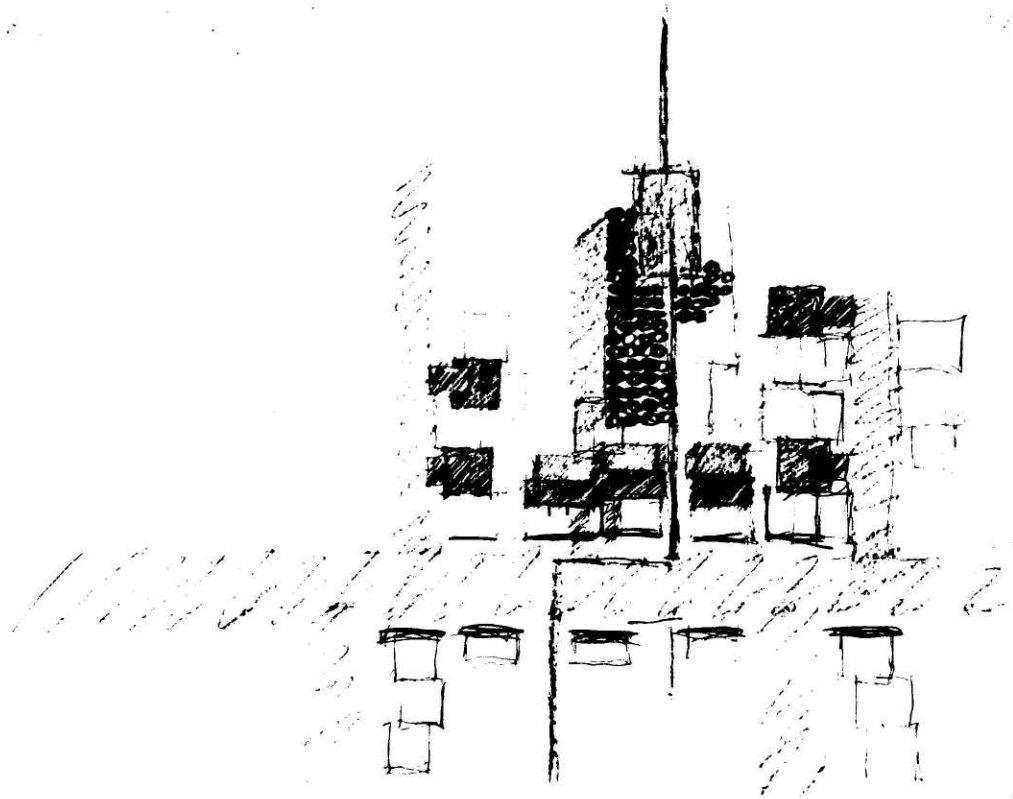


the dwelling a person would move constantly up, one or two steps at a time, each change establishing a change in the privacy level from the street. Upon entering the court comes the first change of three steps, moving across the open side of the living room one can choose to enter there by turning into it. If one were more familiar with the household, you can proceed to the kitchen entrance. Continuing around the inside of the screen towards the family room another step up can be made at the entry point of the family room wing. Once in the family room one can proceed back out to the family side of the courtyard, also up a step from the more public entry level we entered on. On the backside of the family room you could exit into the service yard where things like motorcycles and canoes are kept. The most private of levels are on the

second story where the bedrooms, sleeping porch and balconies are located. The balconies, depending upon their location in relation to the street or the court are semi-private/semi-public extensions, bringing life and activity up the elevation of the dwelling. The sleeping porch is a privacy or semi-private at least, being an extension of the bedroom into a more public realm. The sleeping porch in this hot and arid climate can make sleeping on those 95 degree nights very bearable if situated to catch a prevalent breeze blowing through the hot, summer night and would also provide for not incurring a large energy debt for cooling.

During the work of developing the courtyard house it became clear to me I would need to build the community as I imagined it, even to a low design development stage, as the courtyard house had

reached. I then began researching some modern house types that I felt had merit in their design principles that could be applied to the town extension and be modified to suit my more particular needs. In my research I discovered several types which I felt could be modified to fit the requirements needed to work in this place and then begin to "play" with the arrangement of the middle landscape. The middle landscape is the size that I believe is missing in today's housing developments. It is the size between the size of the community and the size of the dwelling. In contemporary suburban development it is non-existent. A person leaves their dwelling and driveway and instantaneously enter into the Twilight Zo..., no, the large size of the community; a too large street with little or no differentiation of the sizes that can and should occur in

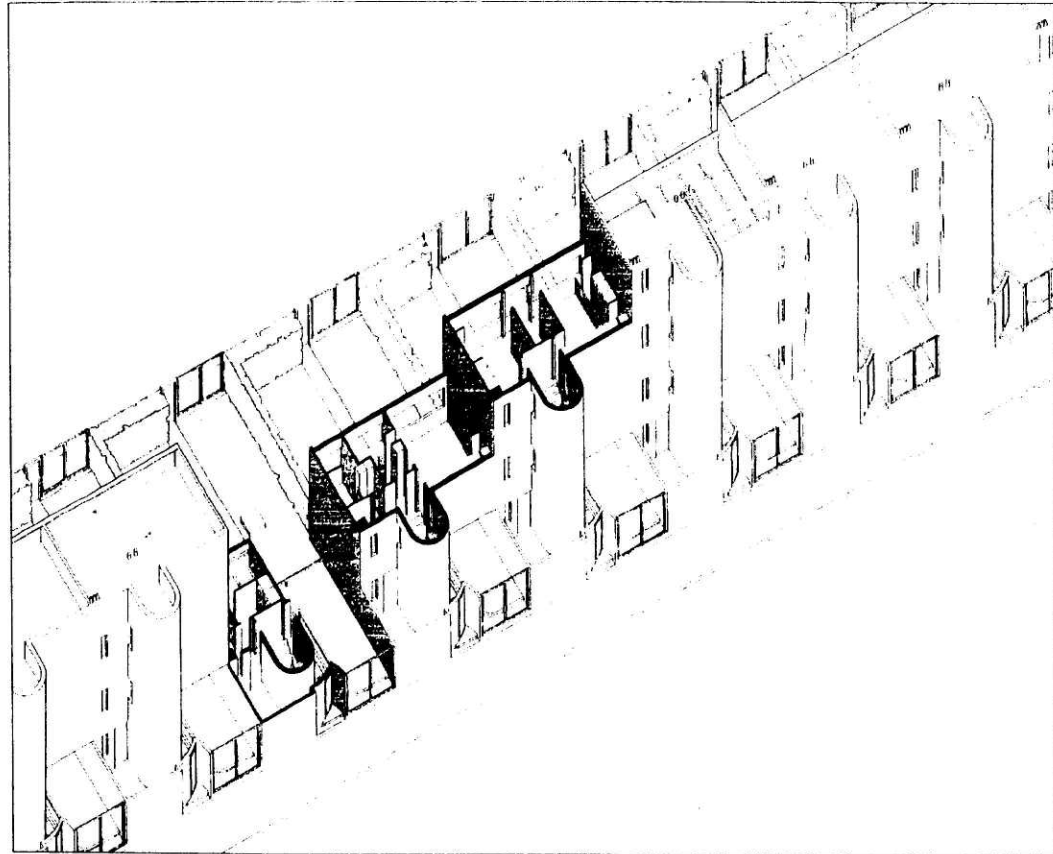


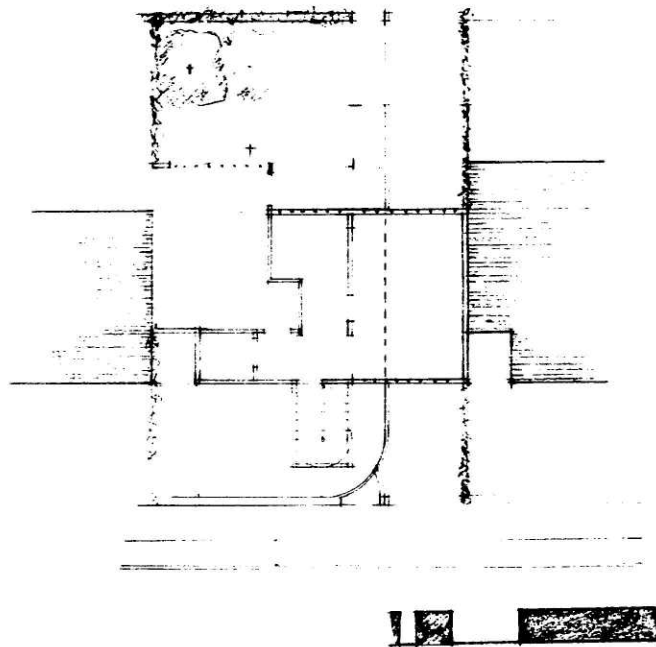
between. Without the existence of the middle sizes there is no way to build an understanding of the grain of the fabric that can exist and the individual's place within it.

From my examination of modern house types I chose to work with two which were European in origin, which at first concerned me due to the cultural differences between American and European cultures, but in working with them I found certain stabilities in their dimensional structure that coincided with the dimensions of the houses in which Americans live. Other factors, such as too solid a facade or roof form, could be modified to be a fit in the context in which I would place them. The things that made me choose these were the form of their access, the possibilities of arrangement, the form or possibility of vehicle access and their spatial organization.

The Townhouse

The first of these house types was a dwelling designed for the 1932 Werkbunde Exposition in Vienna by Andres Lurcat. It was one of a series of four row houses built in Vienna. The house is approached from the street through a small yard along a stair tower to the entrance in the side of the stair well, in the breezeway passing through from the front garden to the rear garden. Once in the entry hall at ground level one can choose to turn to the mechanical and service room on the ground floor where facilities such as laundry and garden storage are. or turning in the opposite direction, move up the stairs, doubling back on themselves at the half story, and landing on the main living floor. The main living floor is comprised of the living room to oneside, the kitchen dead ahead and in the



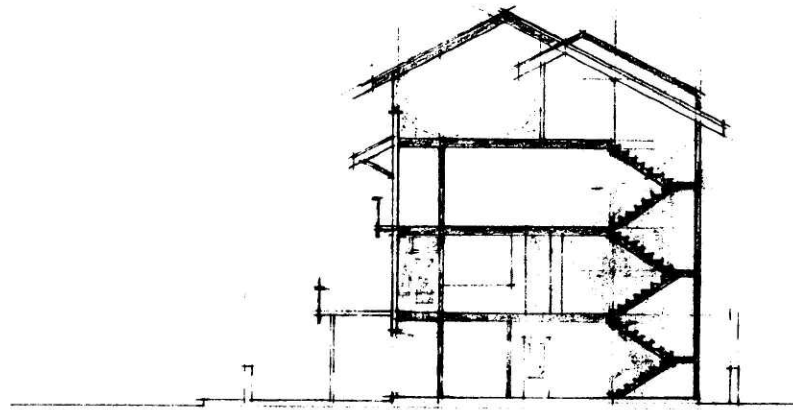


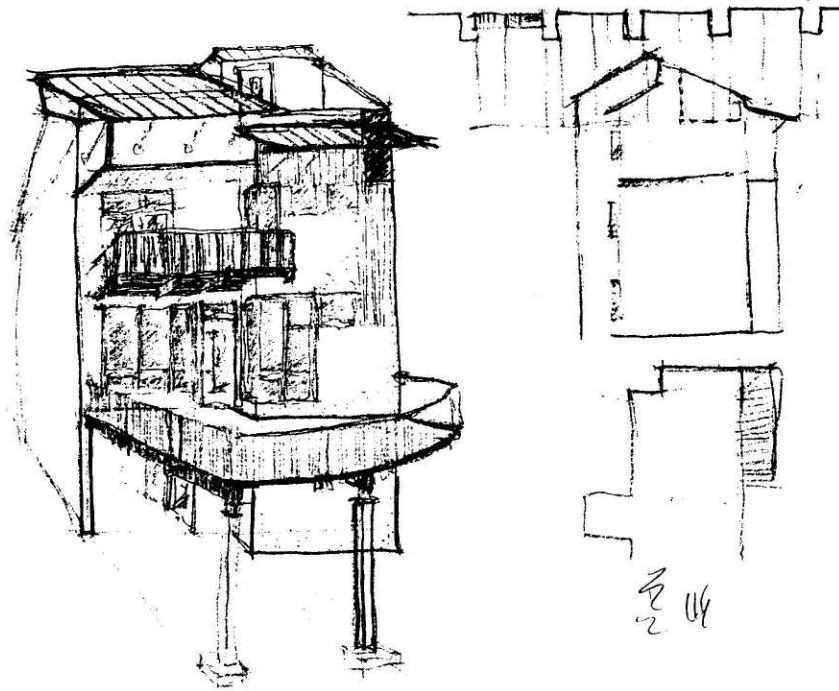
center of the plan, a study or bedroom next to the kitchen and a bathroom adjacent to the stair landing where we stand. Moving up the stairs again we come to the bedroom level where there are two bedrooms flanking a central bathroom core. Moving up again we arrive at a roof terrace. What I particularly liked about this house was the continuous front to back connection of the garden space on the ground floor, the orientation of the house's wide dimension to the street which provides better daylighting for the interior space, the feature of being able to use the roof as a terrace from which views of the California mountains not to distant orchards can be seen and the strong element of the stair tower which gives the street wall articulation. What I did not like about the house was the too singular reading of the aggregated facade,

which for American culture may not provide enough identification of the individual dwelling. In response to this I added another dimension of the houses access, 5 feet, to the houses long dimension (across it) as well as displacing the new 5 foot section back 5 feet from the main facade of the stairtower face, building a spatial break at the joint of two houses. In this same move I also displaced the section of the house, pulling the rear facade at the study wall out 5 feet into the rear garden.

The Detached Garage House

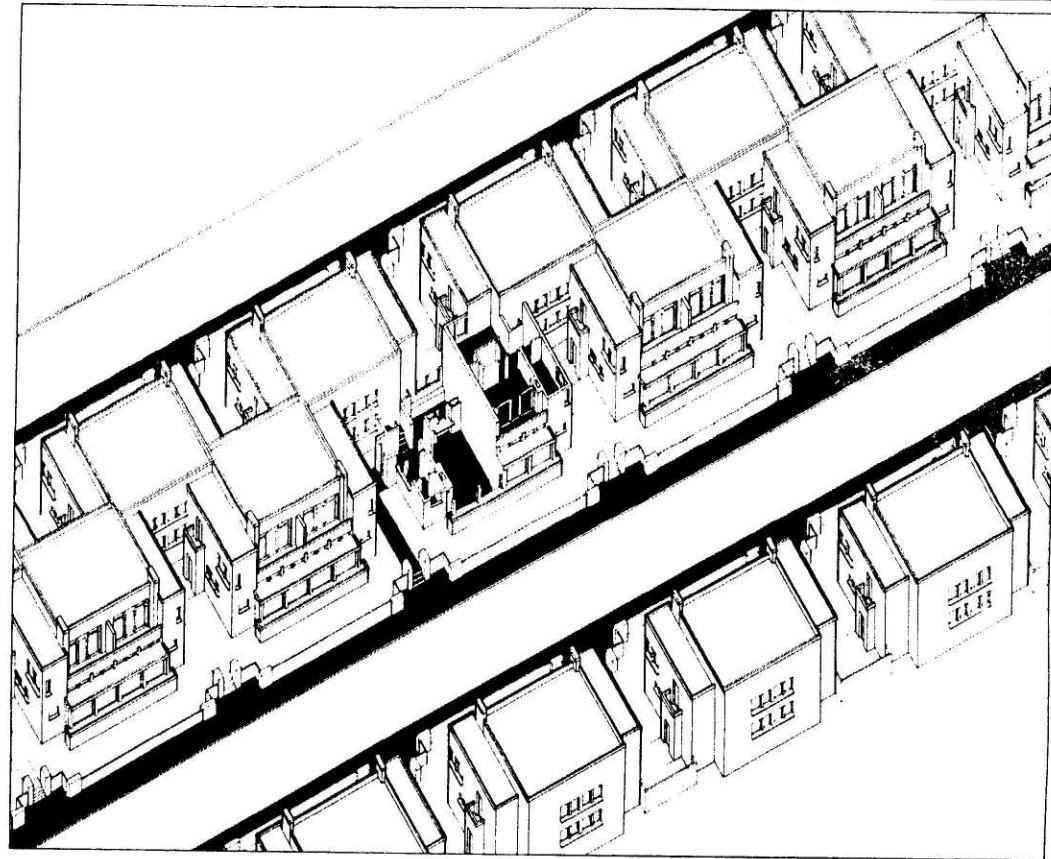
The other housetype adopted is derived from the Daal en Berg Duplex Houses designed and built in 1920 by Jan Wils in Den Haag, The Netherlands. I chose this plan mostly for its back to back, interlocking arrangement and the access, shared by two units across a small, shared semi-

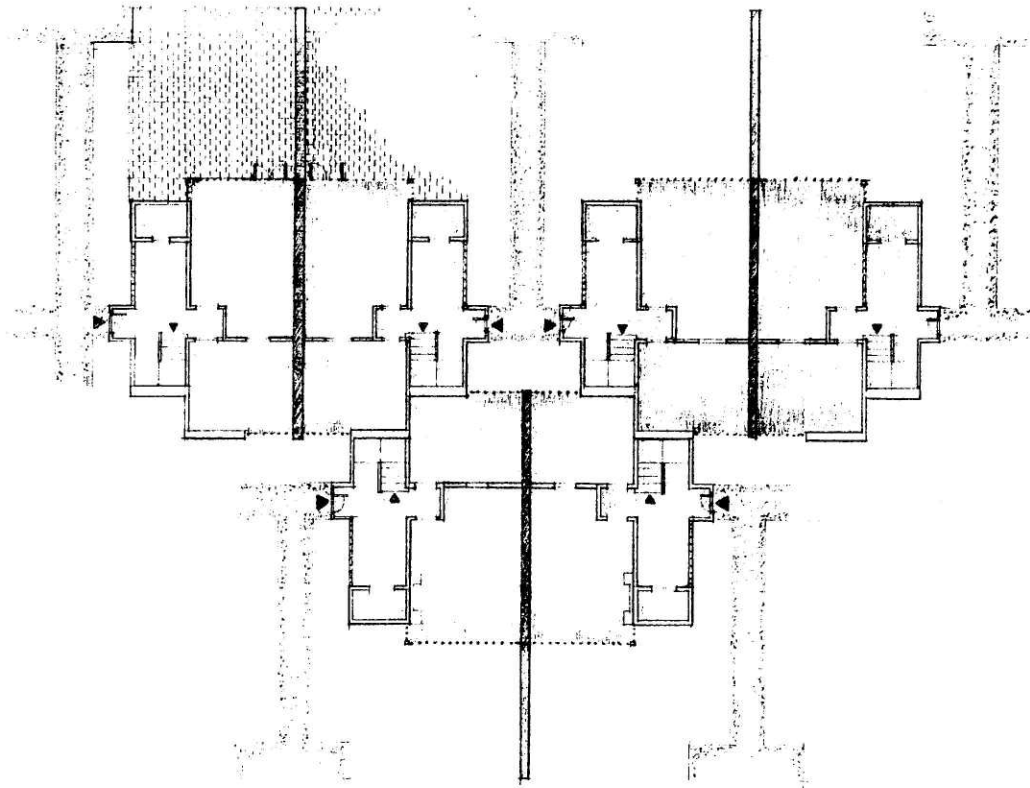




public entry court. The solid corners of the stairwell and the entry hall/bathroom create zones at each corner of the duplex unit that maintain the privacy of the dwelling, and the displacements that Wils builds from them, build the light and view in the appropriate public and semi-public spaces. Also of note is the procession of the access which passes back from the street to rear of the entry court, where one enters by turning to the side, passing the threshold of the dwelling into an entry hall. From the entry hall one can turn to one side and move back towards the front of the house to a bathroom, or turning in the other direction one can move up the stairs to three bedrooms and a bathroom. Continuing straight from the entry hall a couple of steps more, one has to decide to turn towards the rear, where the kitchen is or to the

front of the house, where the dining and the living rooms are. This pattern of movement takes one to the back of the site, then brings one forward to the front again to the public space of the house. It is here where I added the outdoor extension of the dwelling creating an outdoor living space or patio. I experimented with the placement of this and the dwellings orientation in relation to the public territory or street. In the final pass at design and arrangement I settled on placing this space oriented away from the street towards the semi-private green street or commons I spoke of earlier. This organization places the kitchen to the street, placing it in a more public position, allowing the dwelling to claim the portion of access between it and the garage zone, thereby building and reinforcing territorial claims, yet allowing for a connection and interac-



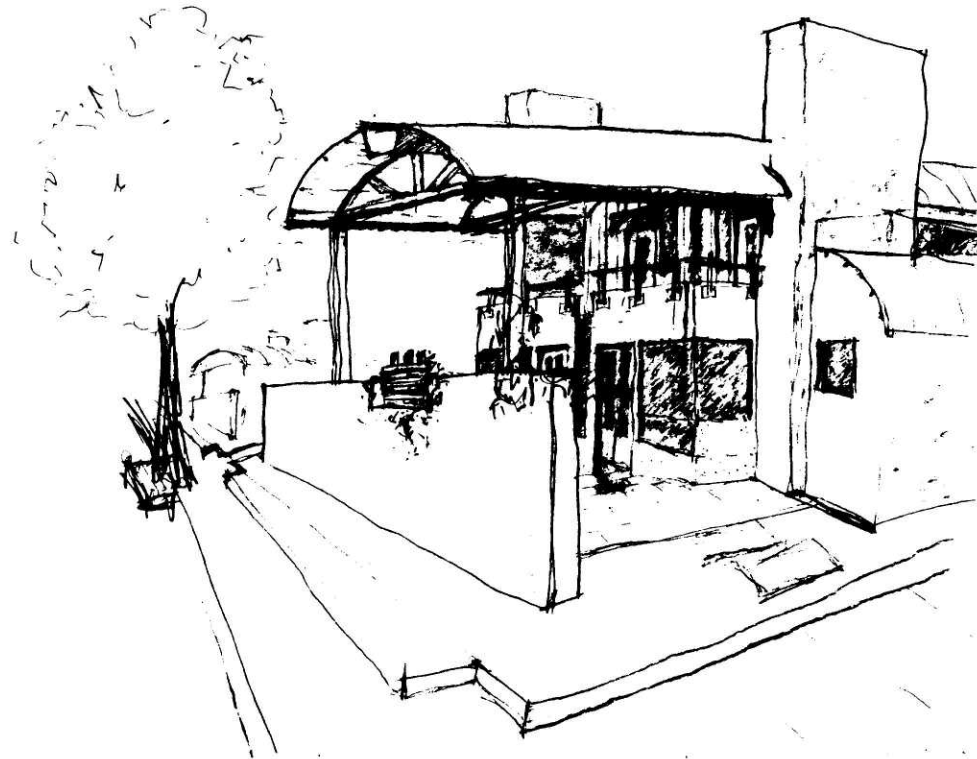


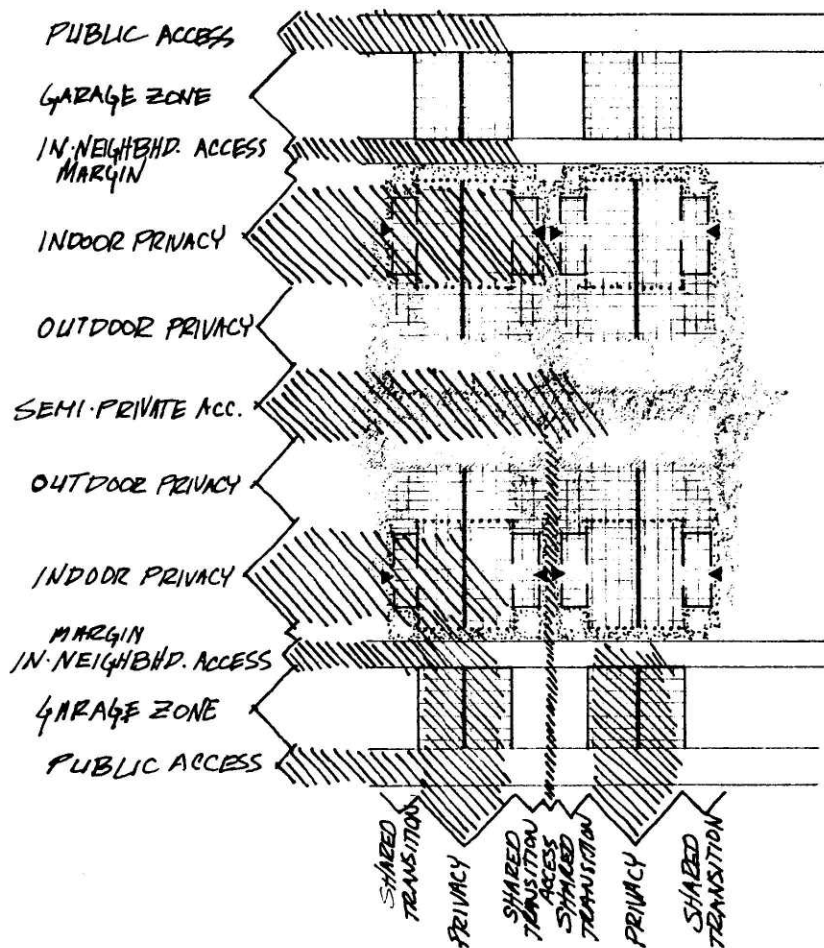
tion with the street at a neighborhood level. This positioning is very similar to the standard backyard arrangement now found throughout the United States but differing in the addition of shared space beyond the dwellings outdoor privacy.

The other modifications to this plan came from the influence of the place and climate upon the structure. The incorporation of garden walls, overhangs and trellises onto this type establishes the cultural identity of the building as belonging to this place and culture through the application of the ideas of form and identity I spoke of in chapter 2.

The two dimensional (in plan) public-private system. of this type is also interesting in reference to American suburban housing There are two systems of public-private zone working in plan, one from the front to the back, the

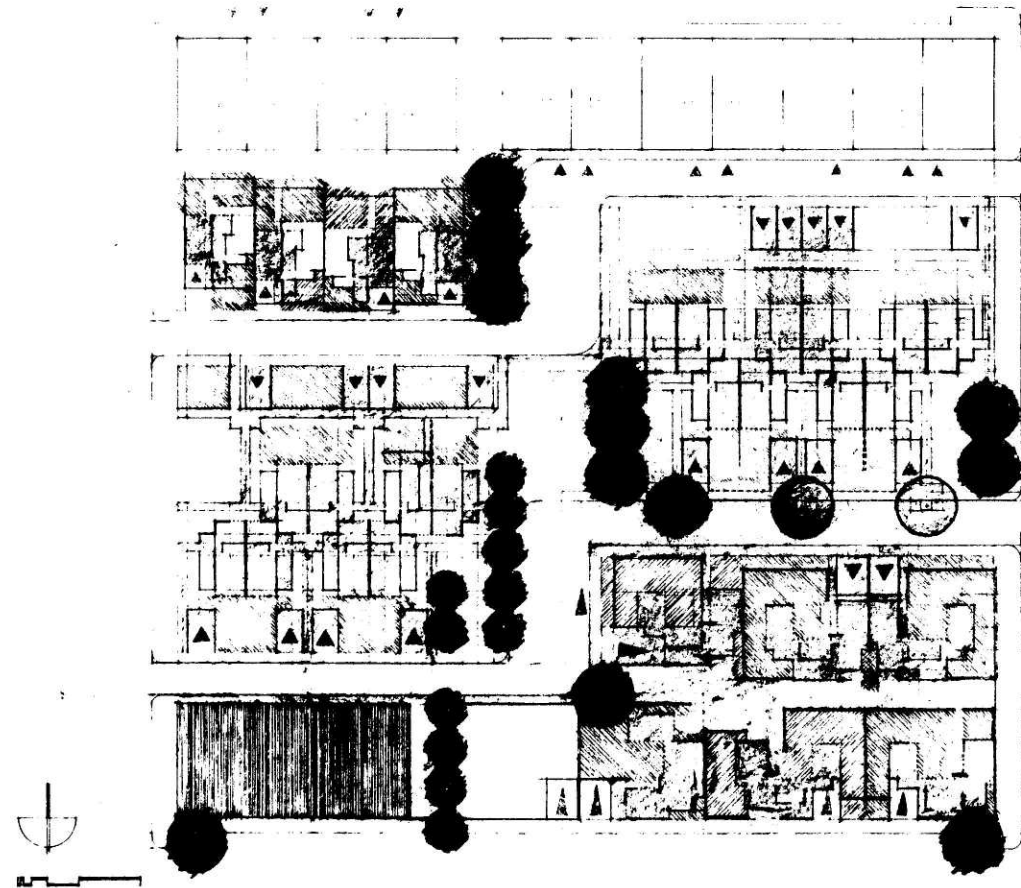
other from the side to the opposite side. This is very different than John Habraken's descriptive system which is one dimensional in plan, working from the front to the rear only. That works well in the Dutch context, but American suburban housing requires a two dimensional descriptive system because there are zones which exist across as well. Suburban houses tend to be three sided from the public-private perspective; front, rear and one side. The fourth side is very often a dark or a non-use side, functioning generally as a territorial margin with very little if any activity taking place within it. The functioning side, dependent upon the screening present at the property line, functions as a semi-public or semi-private zone. Interaction between the adjacent dwellings is minimal at best in the space actually between the buildings on



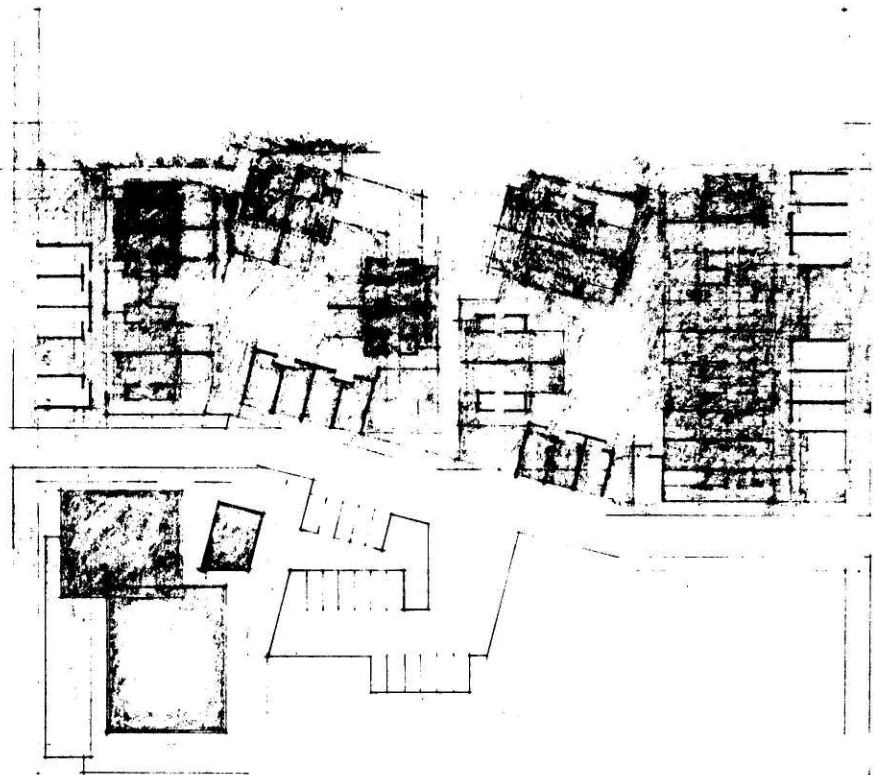


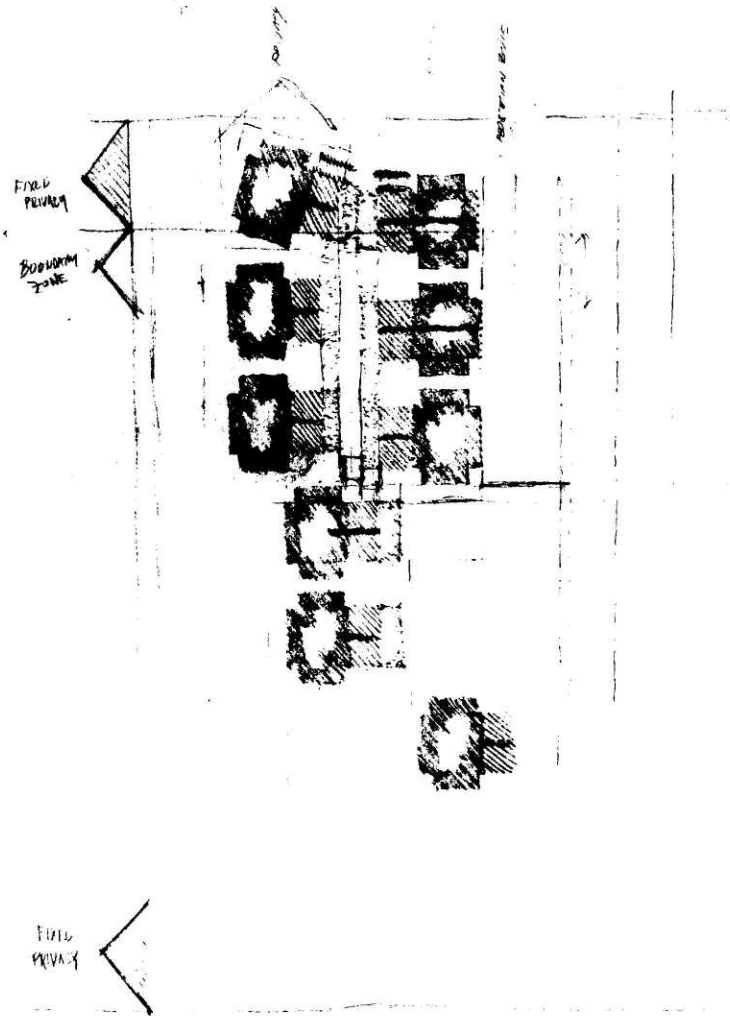
the active side because of the fence usually in place . More interaction takes place at the transition zone in the vicinity of the two opposing corners (you know, were the trash cans are kept). In this area a higher degree of interaction can take place. With a marginal(or lineal zone) discriptive method, as Habraken's it is very difficult to describe this space in terms of public-private. I believe that a matrix system may be useful in describing these "odd" zones which occur in the two dimensional system where the two systems intersect.

This type offers a form that can work independently or as a part of an aggregated whole, potentially working as a collective form towards building this community extension through its clear access and public-private pattern.



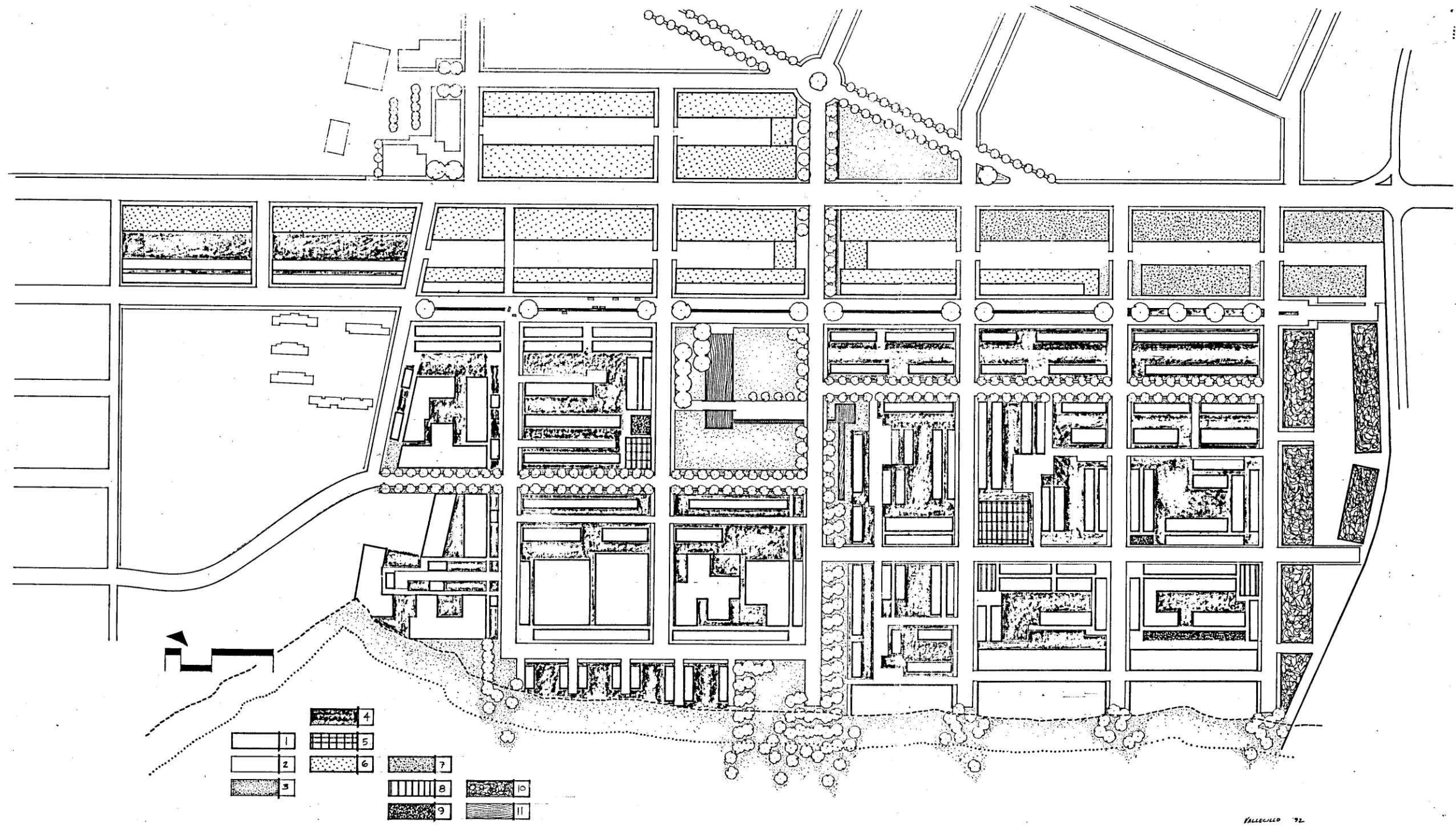






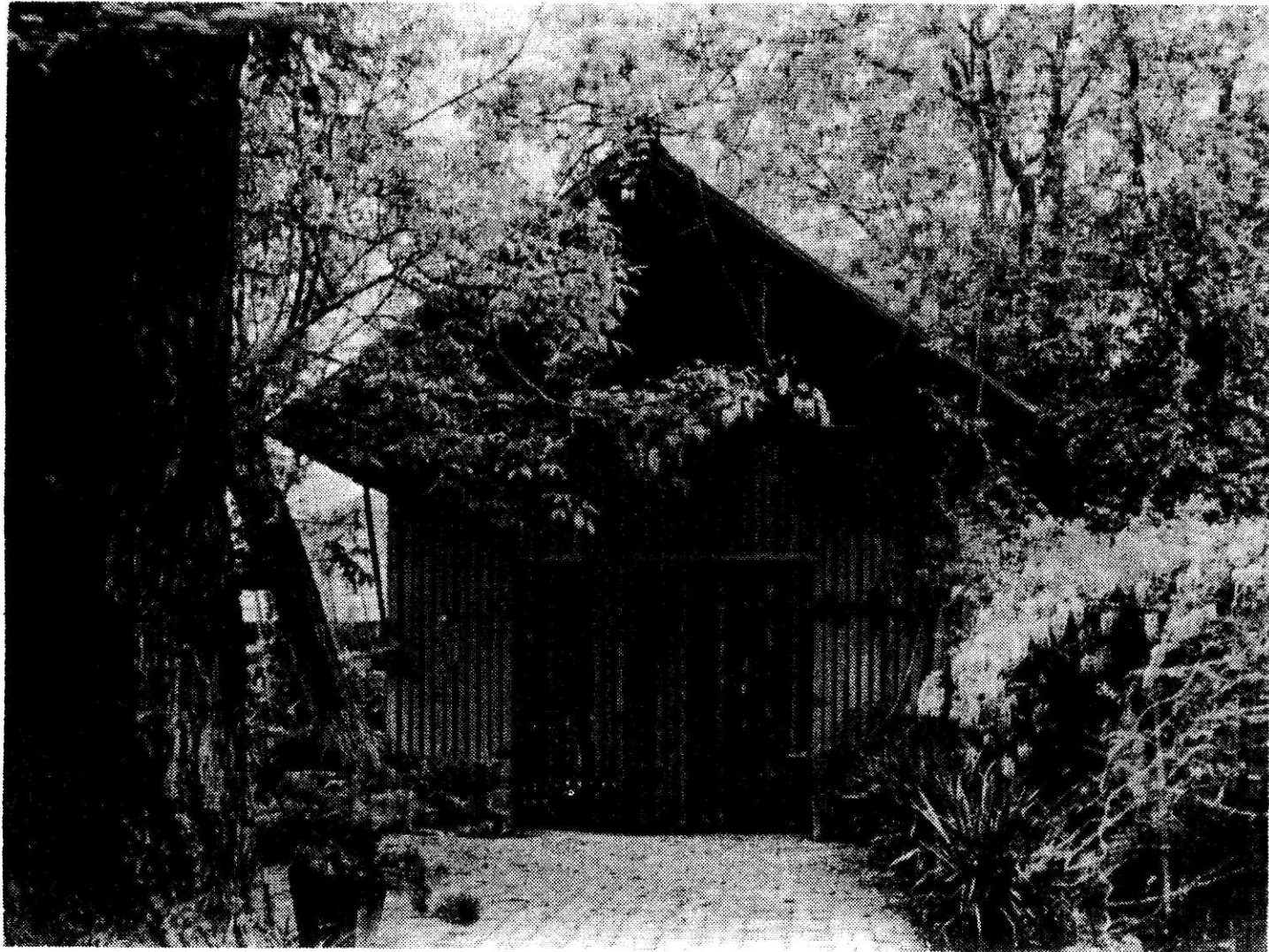
Legend

- 1 Dwelling Zone
- 2 Public Access
- 3 Public Outdoor Space
- 4 Semi-private/Semi-public Outdoor Space
- 5 Community Special Collective
- 6 Community Commercial
- 7 Highway Commercial
- 8 Neighborhood Commercial
- 9 Cottage Industry
- 10 Industrial
- 11 Water

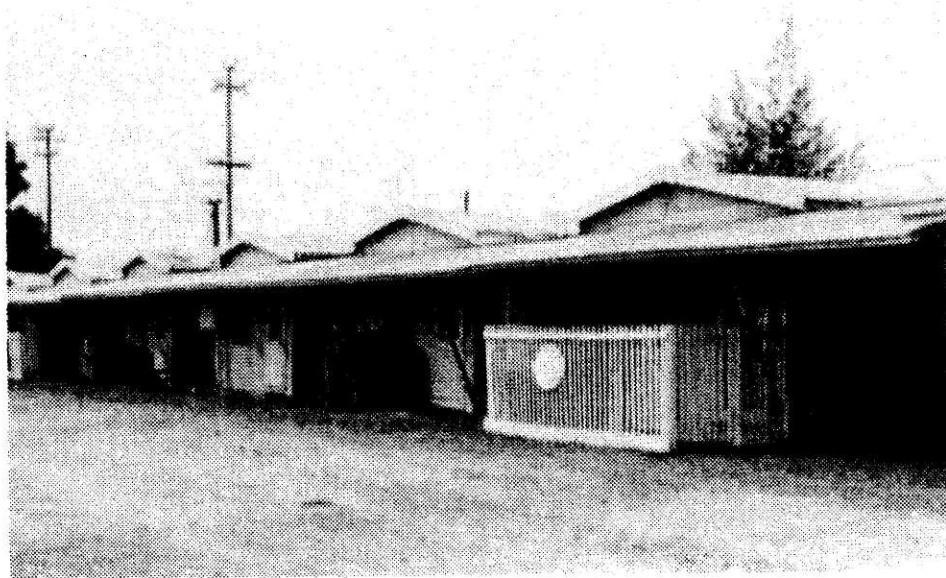


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Closure



A final note on the housing and the outcome it has had for me and the way I have worked in producing this thesis. I chose these housing types and plans for reasons I have spoken of. Through the past few weeks I have manipulated their arrangement in relation to the block and the space. In the work the housing plans were thought of as those in particular. It has become clear to me that these were merely tools to drive the exploration and I now recognize those as types. The duplex does not have to always be a duplex. What is important about it is its organizing principles that make it work as part of a greater whole. If someone wanted to, they could place another occupancy type in the duplexes place as long as the relationships established by the type are recognized and adhered to. This allows for individual expression yet



simultaneously build the larger size of the collective unit. I believe this makes the argument for the zoning of quality I spoke of earlier. Housing is not about the style of the dwelling. It is about the principles of access, privacy and territorial claims structured into a system that gives a clear understanding of that structure working at various levels and sizes so that people using the environment can know where they can move and when they can stop with clarity. The system has to be "loose" enough to allow for change over time as people change their needs. The structure of the paths and places should remain as the framework for the change to occur within.

This thesis as well is concerned with the process of designing. It is about recognizing the method or methods by which I design. This process is not linear in nature, but

is indirect, often obscured, hence the exploratory nature of the work; a solution is searched for, a foothold is made and a step forward is taken. At the outset it was my intention not to work in an A to B to C fashion. Such a process runs the risk of rendering the work flat and mechanical in nature. My intent was to work at as many sizes as possible, simultaneously, each with its own, independent train of thought, moving in a parallel fashion with the other sizes, each influencing the other. The building and design of the environments which we inhabit are not products of linear thinking and reaction processes, nor are our lives. Then why should the environments we inhabit be designed that way?

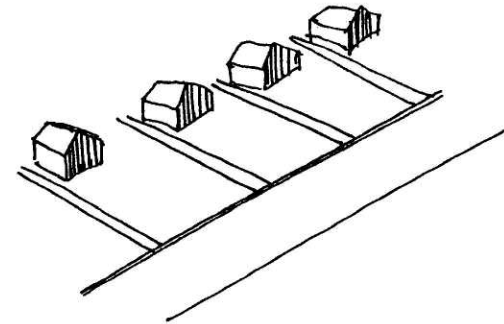
In working at several levels simultaneously I was able to test my intuitive way of working against more rigorous methods

and principles. The process of testing and claiming certain methods enabled me to gain trust in my intuitive methods of work. The design thinking and principles I came in contact with at MIT added yet another layer to my own processes of working and thinking and enabled me understand my intuitive thinking at a deeper level. I believe it is this synthesis of rational, systematic training towards design thinking and the understanding of my own working process that provide an environment for rich and rewarding work.

What became clear to me during the thesis process, was about how we think about; problems, people, environments and the attitudes we hold towards them. It is the issue of attitude which is all important here. It is from attitude that values and direct action come. In housing, often the design issues are marketability and

profitability with habitability a lesser priority. We end up with housing as a commodity which the American suburban house is an example of.

A second issue that came to bear during this process was that housing built as commodity produces a fabric of "objects in space". In the process of exploration it became clear to me that as a physical form, a fabric of objects in space does not work and can not work. Within such a fabric too much undefined space exists to form a greater, cohesive whole at any size larger than the individual dwelling. The only result is a collection of objects in space. True, this is the land of boundless resources, but should we squander land as a resource just because it exists? What about the form of community which takes hold in these collections of objects, that primarily emphasize the



“So while Americans keep dreaming of a good place to live, many of our dreams-to live in the presence of nature; to live near city and country; to own and control our own property; to have constant freedom of movement; to move up; to move away; to start again; to portray our individuality; to cherish our privacy-all tend to work against establishing good communities in which to live.”

Alex Krieger

individual over community? As we move into the next century, what are the implications on our Society stemming from the divided concerns of many individuals rather than as communities speaking towards the common good. Often the form of suburban development goes against the the common good. by not articulating collective space. If we do not learn to deal with one another, then we will not learn from one another.

I believe it is our responsibility, professionally and as members of the culture at large to be involved in the building of our communities. For who has the training to manipulate space and form? We do. Who understands the problems of access in relation to form and space? We do. This is not to say that as architects we can solve all the problems of building communities. The building of towns and

cities is carried out by many who work in many arenas of life, but as professionals we must assume our roles based on what we can do and what we can contribute. One does as one can.

"A good thesis asks more

questions than it answers."

Tom Chastain

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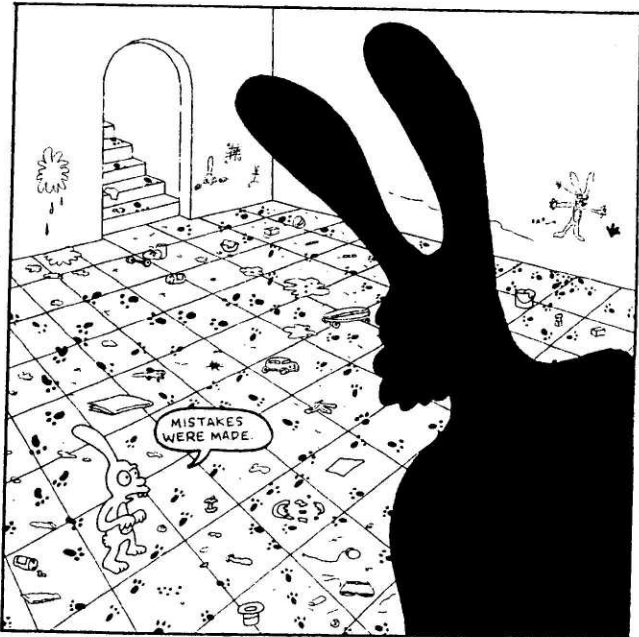
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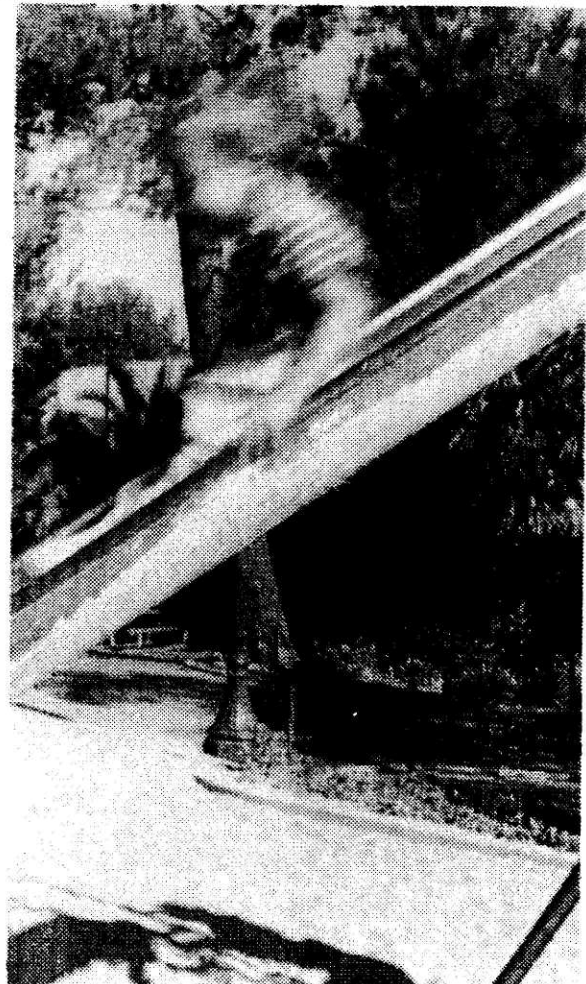




Al, Cynie, Daniel & Julia



Emilio



Stefan

Appendix

Illustration Credits

- pp.5 Marcel Bruan.; "California Valley Farms" from Plein Air Painters of California: the Southland.
- pp.6 Dublin, California from Suburbia.
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- pp.29 access and sideyard of house, Charleston, South Carolina; Julia Nugent, photographer.
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- pp.64 Daal En Berg Duplex Houses; Jan Wils, architect from Modern Housing Prototypes.

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- pp.75 Barn, Alameda County, California from East of These Golden Shores: Architecture of the Earlier Days in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.
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