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### Windows of Change: A Transitional Dwelling for Milton Julian

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dwelling in memory





*dwelling:*

*A dwelling can be known as a home or a place of residence. When considering the meaning of home, it is a distinct place that gives identity to us and grounds our family roots.*

*The action of dwelling means to stay or sustain one's presence in a particular location for a prolonged period of time.*

*memory:*

*Something remembered from the past: a recollection, a reminiscence, a trace. Memories are unique to everyone and are a reflection of self, not only applicable to people but places, time and events.*

dwelling in memory





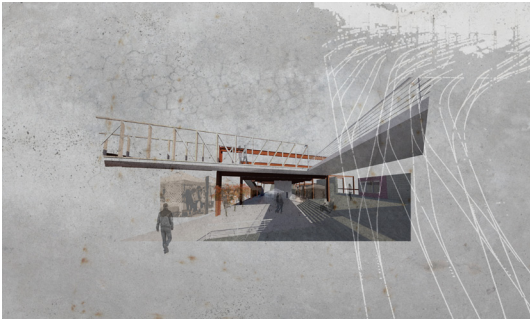
dwelling in memory

- [2] distilling  
*essence of previous investigations as a sense of direction*
- [4] framing  
*meaning of home, cultural influence on home, forever dwelling place*
- [18] supporting  
*client, program elements, qualities, spatial overlap*
- [30] locating  
*sense of place, 4 aspects of meaning, site location and characteristics*
- [42] forming  
*phased approach as a home develops over time*
- [46] referencing  
*precedent analysis*



Architecture is, by its very purpose and definition, meant to be inhabited by the human. It is the role of the designer to dictate the relationships of those people to spaces and influence their experience as a result of that. The feelings, experiences and interactions that occur within are meant to be personal and unique to each individual. Architecture not only becomes a place, but an identity. This thesis seeks to investigate the human connection with their most intimate spaces, and to explore the ways that architecture is affected by that bond.

previous investigations through various projects and programs begin to highlight themes and focuses



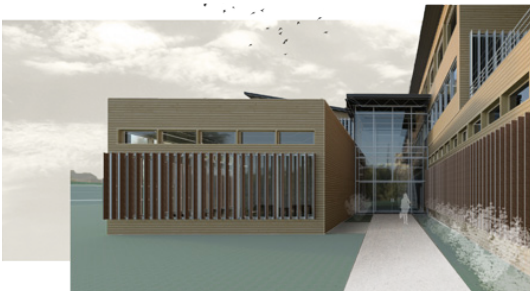
an artist's journey: the balance between external inspiration and internal reflection

development of an artist live/work environment through a reactivation of an old city district into an cultural hub



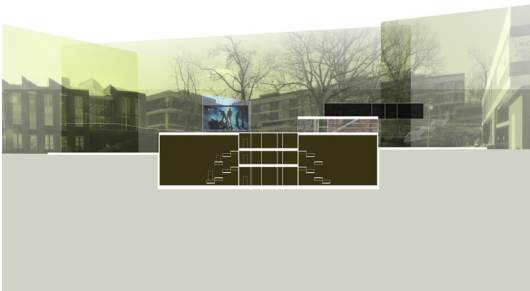
living among the ruins: student dormitory set within a historical context

establishing individuality while maintaining memory and respecting existing character



boathouse on the river: a central hub for recreation and community interaction

different strokes for different folks approach to a mixed use community space to create unique experiences



provoking the peculiar: film institute based on the works of Stanley Kubrick

counteracting the human perception or 'normal,' the elements begin to create a distopia in reflection of the nature of his films

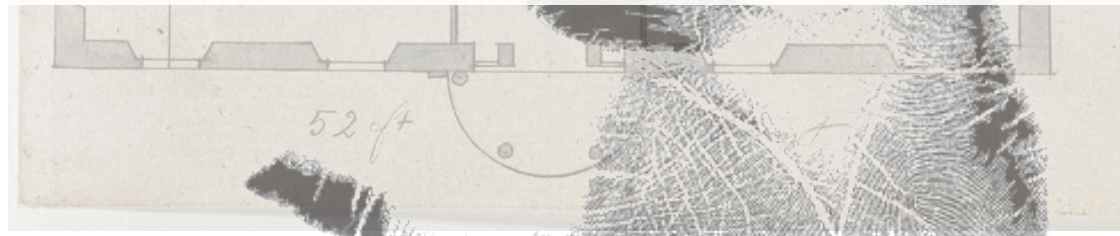


Molitor, Samuel. Phipps House. First floor plan, 1804-1805. Photograph. The Carnegie Arts of the United States Collection. University of Georgia Libraries. 30 September 2013.

shelter of memories

sanctuary for life

connection for growth



As we shape our architecture, architecture begins to shape us. And what has a more powerful impact in this regard than the place we call home? We know home as a place of beginnings, a place of fond memories that we can recall with yearning, a place of learning and growth. Our home grounds us within the world in our place and time.

A home should be viewed as a place within an overall time continuum that is constantly revolving around past, present, and future as multiple life stages inhabit it over time.

*If the house is the first universe for its young children, the first cosmos, how does its space shape all subsequent knowledge of other space, of any larger cosmos?*

John R. Stilgoe | Foreward to *Poetics of Space*



[home]

The home is more than simply the physical dwelling place. It is the place where one lives, including the people who live there and the collections of items that fill the spaces, that is part of a greater whole in the context of culture and society. The home is a place of deepest meaning and identity that grounds the roots of family history. It provides the setting for our fondest memories and is inherently laced with emotional ties. It is a nest, a shell, a shelter for memories that is unique to each individual as it becomes a reflection of self and cultural identity.<sup>1</sup> The definition of home would truly be different for each and every person as home gives identity to those that inhabit it while also gaining identity from those people and the way in which they live.

the second to last step that always creaked under  
feet

the sunken spot on the living room couch mark-  
ing the spot where I always sat

the stockings ritualistically hung every year at  
Christmas time

the feel of the tile on my bare feet in the  
kitchen when getting a glass of milk in the  
night

the unfinished projects my Dad never got around  
to doing

the view towards the backyard bordered by the  
bordering forest beyond

the laughs shared among family and friends

the painting I did as a kid that my Mom refused  
to take off the wall

the yard where I used to escape in the summers to  
practice gymnastics

the place where everything seemed normal while  
the way of others seemed weird



Sullivan, Larry. Nine Stills From My Families Home Movies.  
1985-1992. Photograph. 16 3/8 x 21 3/8 in. Corcoran Gallery  
of Art, Washington, D.C. 30 September 2013. Digital image.



After 20 years, in spite of all the other anonymous  
stairways, we would recapture the reflexes of the 'first  
stairway' we would not stumble on that rather high  
step. The houses's entire being would open up, faith-  
ful to our own being. We would push the door that  
creaks with the same gesture, we would find our way  
in the dark to the distant attic. The feel of the tiniest  
latch has remained in our hands.

Gaston Bachelard | Poetics of Space





Native American Tee Pee homes in Alberta, Canada



Adobe homes of New Mexico



Log cabin home in the countryside of Tennessee



Wooden frame houses of Germany



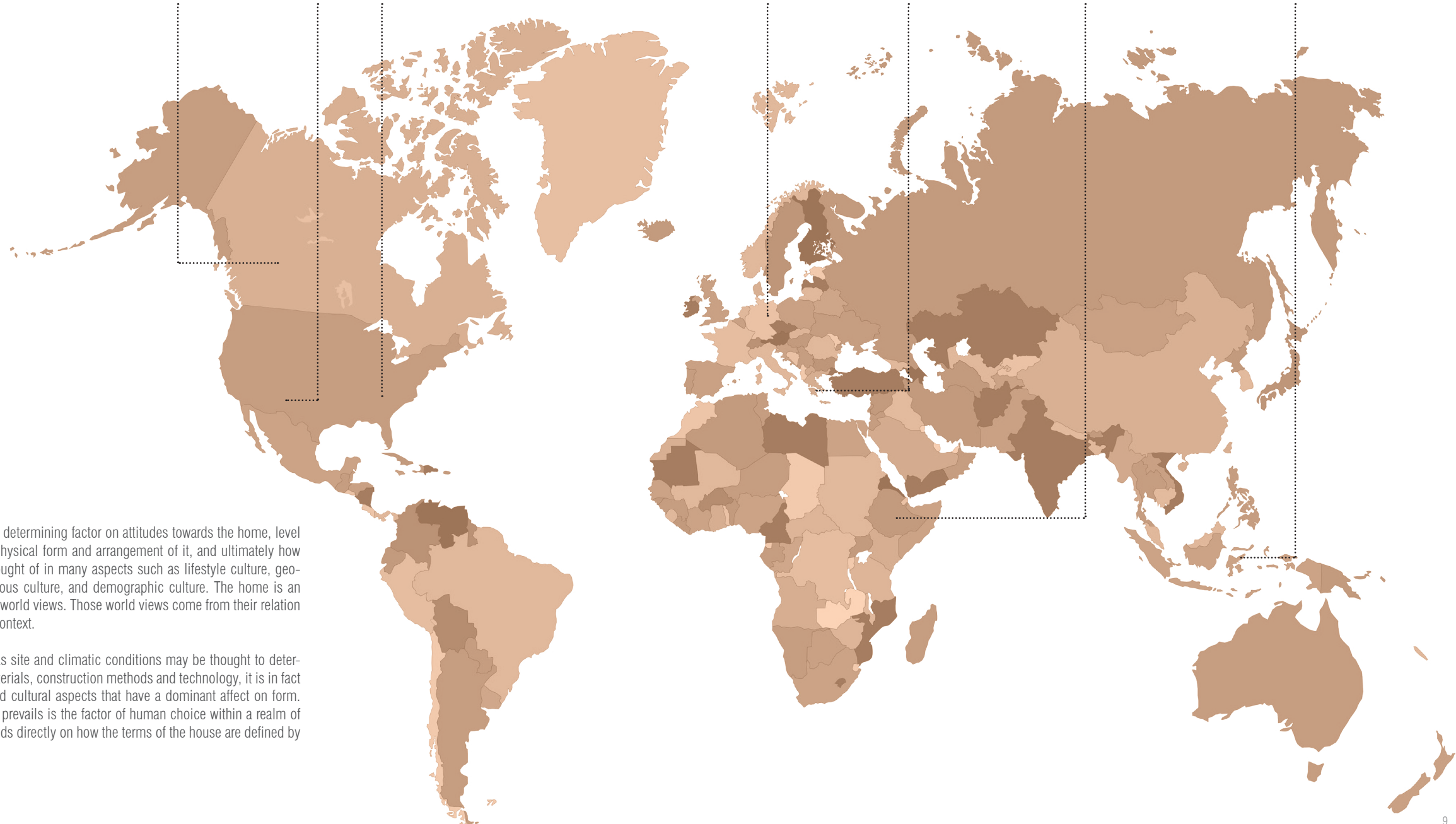
White wash houses on the cliffs in Santorini, Greece



Anuak tribe village in Ethiopia



Batak houses of Indonesia

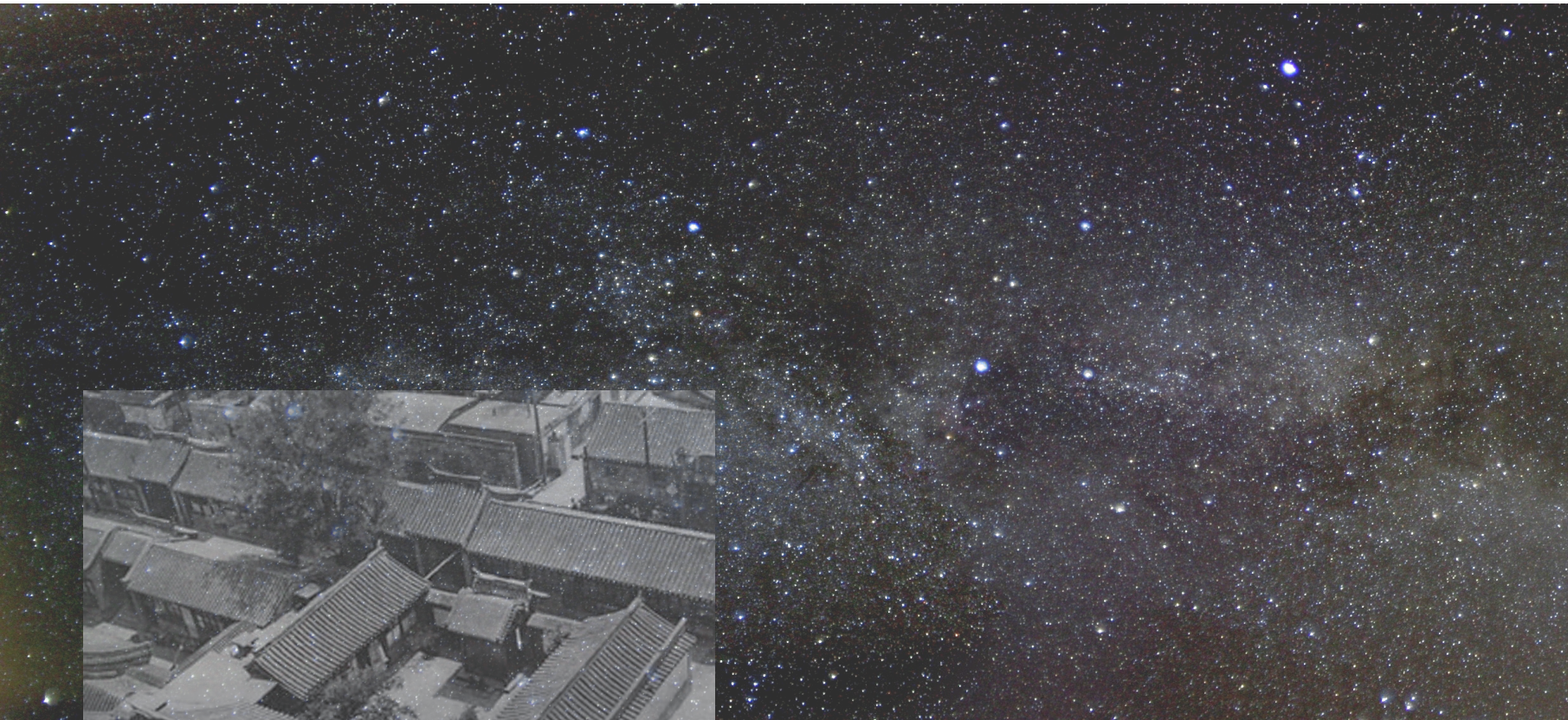


## Cultural Influence

Culture becomes the ultimate determining factor on attitudes towards the home, level of importance placed on it, physical form and arrangement of it, and ultimately how it is used. Culture can be thought of in many aspects such as lifestyle culture, geographic related culture, religious culture, and demographic culture. The home is an expression of the inhabitants' world views. Those world views come from their relation to the greater socio-cultural context.

While physical factors such as site and climatic conditions may be thought to determine house form, or even materials, construction methods and technology, it is in fact the ritualistic, ceremonial, and cultural aspects that have a dominant affect on form. However, what fundamentally prevails is the factor of human choice within a realm of existing possibilities. It depends directly on how the terms of the house are defined by that cultural group.<sup>2</sup>

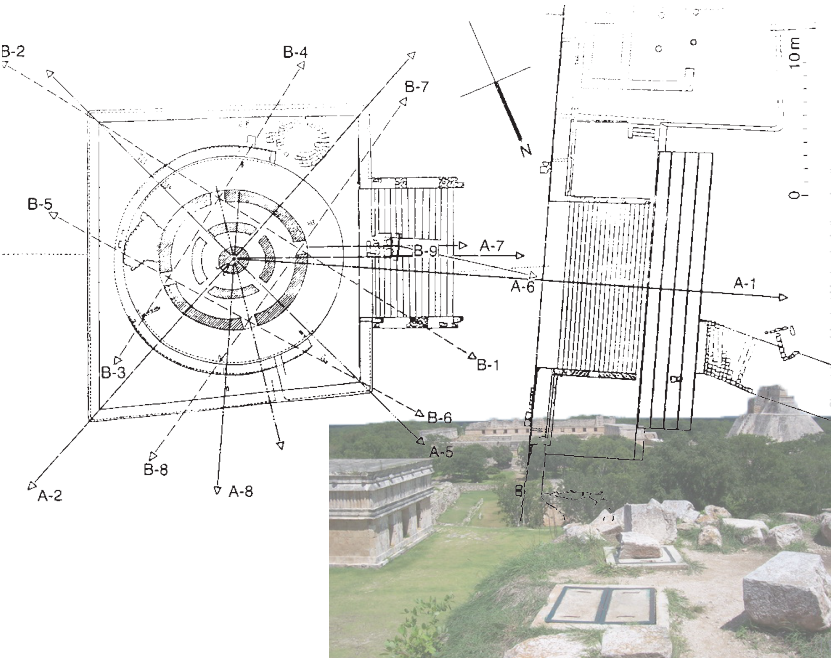




[Home] to most other non-American cultures is typically very traditionally and symbolically based and one can tell a lot about the culture from their home. In African cultures traditional values are not questioned and there is a large amount of symbolism in the house as a building, the artifacts within it, and the whole land overall. For example, villages are created in pairs to represent heaven and earth and they are laid out according to the way the parts of the body lie. Polygamous vs monogamous cultures differ in house complex arrangement. In general the family is all grouped together and migrates as a unit. In European peasant cultures, Solskifts (solar villages of Baltic countries) replicated the daily path of the sun. Main street runs north to south and the houses on both sides are arranged in order of status starting on the west side. . In most other non-American cultures, multigenerational homes are very common. The family develops and grows bigger as a whole around the home as a center or base of culture and tradition. Adding more houses or adding on to existing ones for family expansion is much more common.<sup>2</sup>



Journal of Architectural and Planning Research 15:4 (Winter, 1998)



Stylizations of Ancient Mexico, by Anthony Aveni



A favorable feng-shui site



An ancient map of an ideal feng-shui site



The design concept of the Beijing courtyard house



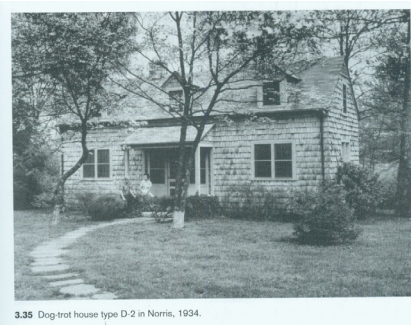
The Beijing courtyard house

Left: Feng Shuei has a great influence on the arrangement of the home in the Chinese culture. The spatial form of the Beijing courtyard dwelling is a physical embodiment of the ideal feng-shui model of landforms. Opposite: Some cultures organize their village according to astrological alignment, for example, the Mayan village of Uxmal.





The planned community of Norris, TN illustrates the symbology of the American home. Each family got their own individual plot of land with their own moderately sized house. These images show the original house as well as the modern interpretation of those values.



3.35 Dog-trot house type D-2 in Norris, 1934.



taken by Ken McCown

[Home] to adult Americans typically means living independently in single family units-this is and has been our cultural tradition. Permanent tenancy is challenged in today's society due to the costs of maintaining that independence and feasibility of obtaining supplies and assistance with the occurrence of functional decline. Physical layout and structures of our houses today do not lend themselves to changing and adaptation for multiple life stages and inhabitation by multiple family generations. Also, our culture has developed an attitude towards a home and lifelong dwelling places that encourages a family growing up and splitting off into separate directions and establishing their own new homes. There is an emphasis on independence and autonomy.<sup>3</sup> America has a laissez-faire attitude towards our built environment that allows for a more open ended, process oriented attitude towards building development and planning.<sup>2</sup>

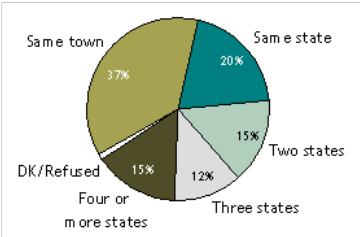
However, the modern house is still related to symbology. The modern house orients itself to the view, the beach, the sun, the sky. This replaces the religious symbolic orientation of the past. These become the new symbols.<sup>4</sup> The typical 'American Dream Home' symbolizes more of an aesthetic quality while showing security and prestige. Its structure of a single family, free standing unit on its own plot of land represents independence, privacy and territoriality. But although this is highly coveted by most Americans, on average, we rarely stay in one home more than 5 years. This begins to show the home as more of a symbol than an actual need.<sup>2</sup> How can I begin to impose the attitude of permanence back into the idea of the home, an attitude in which families find a sense of attachment to their roots and identify with that place?

This painting by Norman Rockwell illustrates the idea of the typical American family home around the 1940s. It also shows a whole family all gathering together in an assemblance of generations as an idea of permanence and family ties that we need to regain.

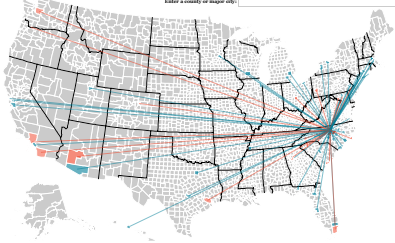
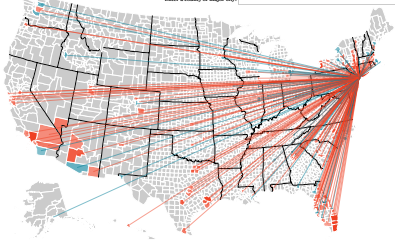
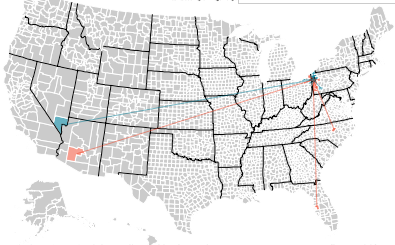


Rockwell, Norman. Freedom from Want, 1943. University of California San Diego.

### How Many Places Have You Lived?



PewResearchCenter



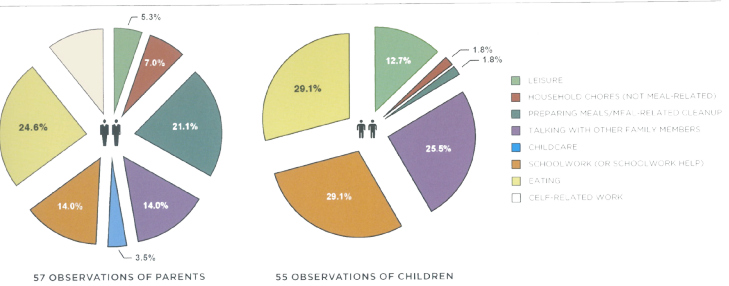
These diagrams show inward and outward migrations of Americans in various counties of differing populations, locations, and densities.



In American homes, the kitchen is the single most intensely used space for various kinds of activities.



WEEKDAY SCAN-SAMPLING OBSERVATIONS OF FAMILY ACTIVITIES IN THE KITCHEN



Homes are a reflection of how people live and how they use space. This is once again culturally linked, whereas different cultures place hierarchy among different spaces in the home. Attitudes towards common factors such as privacy, hygiene, behavioral patterns, and government differ from culture to culture and it is evident within the home. For example, the form of the bathroom results from attitudes about body, relaxation and privacy. Although hygiene has always been an issue, the importance attached to it varies by culture. American homes advertise number of bathrooms when selling a house, which is a big factor when building and buying a house. Family behavioral patterns impact form. Another example lies in eating habits: do they predominantly use a formal dining room or eat in the kitchen? Do they eat as a group or individually when convenient? Los Angeles homes place such prevalence on the BBQ so not only is the form affected to where the backyard/pool area becomes much bigger, but also it is the center of life. A study which is culturally aware of the dominant spatially hierarchies and uses is important for such a program that involves such everyday ritualistic use.

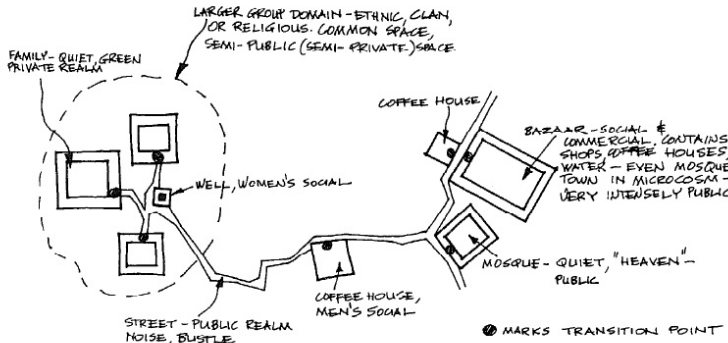


Diagram of the house settlement system in Moslem town, which indicates arrangement of the site according to activity





Meaning is the product of an interaction between our flow of present experience and things which act as symbols to signify and recall past experience.

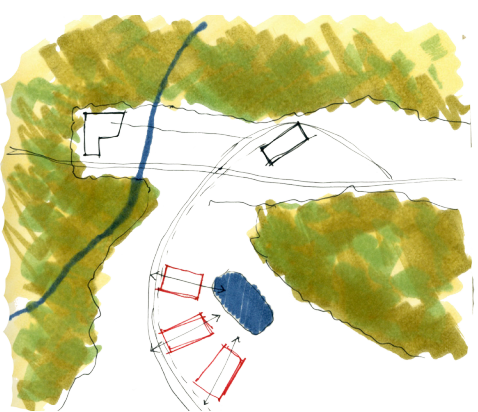
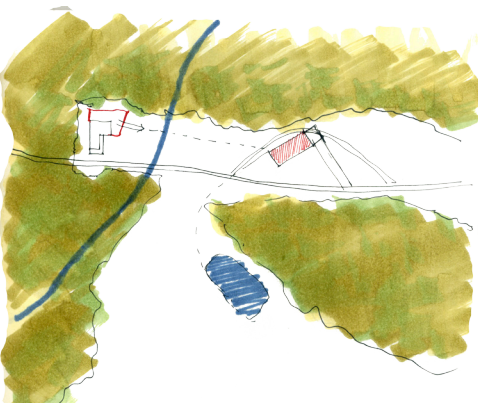
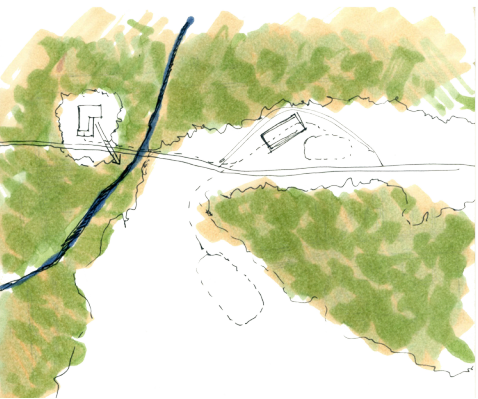
Eugene Gendlin | Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning

In order to impose the idea of a forever home, this requires an investigation of how the home and its context change over time with the inhabitation of multiple family generations. With multiple generations inhabiting the same place, there will be many stages of life overlapping one another simultaneously as well as changing over time. We all have special definitions of what home means to us, and that will begin to mean different things as we go through different phases of our lives. Those phases will inherently require different needs and wants out of the place to call home. How do we prepare and design a home while recognizing these stages? And how does their overlap and interaction inform our architecture?

In today's world of progression and change, the attitude of preserving the past is crucial to giving us our sense of place and maintaining our cultural identity. However, we must embrace the fact that change is inevitable and it is precisely that change that makes tradition possible, it allows us to trace our place within the array of changes over time.<sup>5</sup> It is not to say that we should try to live in the past or imitate its architectural styles, but more so that we can take familiar things and create modern abstractions.<sup>6</sup> This will require a sensitivity towards the past, an embracing of the present, and preparation for the future; an eternally cyclical view toward inhabitation.

House, patch of meadow, oh evening light,  
Suddenly you acquire an almost human face.  
You are very near us, embracing and embraced.

Gaston Bachelard | Poetics of Space



looking to the **past**

### shelter of memories

We can begin to look at the home in its inception and development. During this time a couple may be just starting their life together and beginning to establish a home where their lives can flourish from there. Home is a place for children and adults together, a place for teaching and learning, a place for growth in love, and for both privacy and interaction. The memories will be long lasting and will establish a base for the future.

living in the **present**

### sanctuary for life

In the midst of literal and figurative deterioration of life around us as we age, the home should be a place of sanctuary and comfort that aids in the process. Although most aging adults would prefer to age within their current homes, most houses today are not designed to support that kind of permanent tenancy and make poor end of life environments. Therefore, the challenge becomes, how can an existing dwelling be redesigned to be reinhabited in this new way.

planning for the **future**

### connection for growth

As a family grows and expands the home should be a place of connection for everyone and encourage development for future generations and draw them to this area of origin. This should encourage the idea of multigenerational living or simply prepare and provide a framework for inhabitation of future family generations with the passing of an elder.



*The ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture.*

*Juhani Pallasmaa | The Eyes of the Skin*

Homes and their spaces should be of a nature that supports lifelong residency and beyond. Each addition or stage of development over time within the home should be marked of its time as to let the progression and evolution be evident. They should be reflections of those who lived there, an imprint left behind.

As a jumping off point for my studies, I have chosen to investigate a specific project opportunity, the AIAS 'Reliving Home' competition, to meet the needs of a specific client as a way of investigating the issue of aging-in-place homes and creating a space in which they can "Re-live Life." Going beyond the program brief I would like to study the patterns of how his family used the space before and how they can continue to occupy the land over time. So I would like to take a past, present, and future approach to the project to get a coherent investigation of how to improve our general attitude towards home in today's world.



[client]

Deep investigation of the life of a client will enable the most authentic and richest solution to the design problem.

Milton Julian worked as a men's clothier all his life and was known for bringing the Ivy League look to the South over fifty years ago. He still occasionally does special orders and fittings.

*Milton Julian is the personification of joy. Of all the people I knew growing up in Chapel Hill from the 1950's through the 1990's, no one seemed to enjoy what he was doing more than this Franklin street merchant. His fame is derived from his store, Milton's Clothing Cupboard, which he operated from 1948 to 1992, selling upscale men's, and often women's, clothing. Milton was also always a man just a little ahead of his time, and continued to adapt to fashion trends better than any other store in town. While his brother's store Julian's for example maintained the Ivy League look throughout its existence, Milton's continued to evolve without ever feeling dated or trendy. Milton was also a visionary. It was his imagination that created the most original and enticing newspaper and radio ads in Chapel Hill. He also was the only local merchant to successfully expand outside the confines of Chapel Hill, eventually opening stores in Charlotte, Dallas, and Atlanta.*

Charly Mann | Chapel Hill Memories



*This is the happiest day of my life [when they moved to live on their farm]. Now I have all the things I love in one place: my horses, Milton, the farm, the deer and birds, and my garden.*

Virginia Julian

Currently he is a warm, wonderful 95 year old widower who lives alone, drives legally, and cooks and cleans for himself. Stands 5' 4" tall, and weighs 155 pounds. He is sharp-witted and cheerful. He drives legally, visits his gym three times per week for bicycling workouts, shops regularly, and loves to cook. He watches sports and news shows for about 2 hours per day, he has always enjoyed a world filled with rich colors and subtle textures, and loves seeing nature, but rarely walks in the woods because he says he has "always been a city guy." While his health is excellent for his age, he wears hearing aids, and he drives during the day using distance glasses. As befits his age, his balance has diminished and he has taken a few recent falls, but has sustained no injuries. He is working on improving his balance with a new lightweight mobility assistant called a "3-wheel cruiser rollator". He has an iPad, several phones, and many friends-- and almost all his children live within 100 miles of his farm.<sup>1</sup>

His wife, Virginia, operated the horse farm on which the cabin sits from 1960 until her dementia advanced in 2009 due to Alzheimer's disease. Because of this, it caused a major change in her lifestyle. She lost her independence and had 24/7 care at the farm. Now after she has passed away in 2010, life for Milton is very different. She infused his life with a strong energy and artistic flair all through their 65 years of marriage. Seeing how difficult it was for his wife to age at home until death, he wants to make the transition more smooth and manageable.<sup>2</sup>



1. A Young Milton when he was a UNC student. 2. Milton's Clothing Cupboard, 1979. 3. People heading for Milton's 1971. 4. Milton and two of his boys. 5. Virginia and 6 of the 7 children they had. 6. Virginia and Milton 2005.

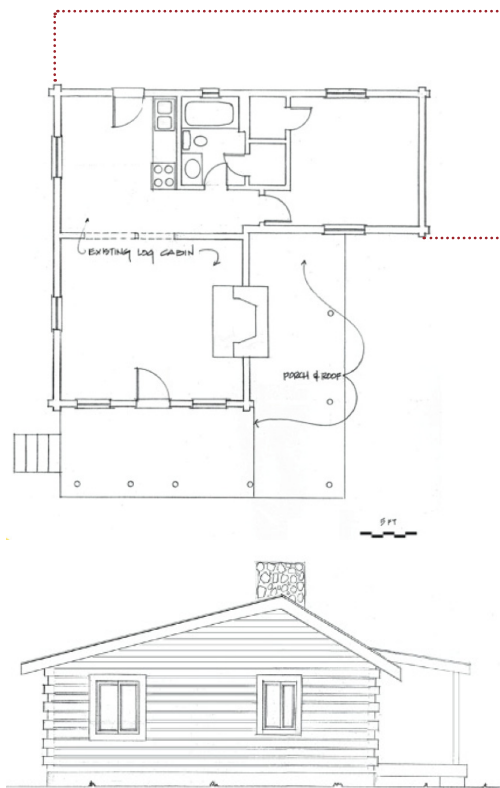




## [program elements]

renovation and addition to existing cabin  
totalling 1,500 sf.

In the case of a renovation, it is particularly important to preserve what is already full of meaning that has been built up over a lifetime. Homes serve to ground people in the world around them, now these spaces need to help the client look beyond.



Refining Home program brief

He wants a fresh new design to enlarge his log cabin in an affordable manner that will also allow him to care for himself and maintain his independence. In this renovation it will be important to maintain the character of the vernacular log cabin typology and translate it to other areas of design in a contemporary manner.

Due to issues that come with the aging process, the spaces have to have certain qualities to accommodate that. The spaces should be open with few tight curves and corners and transitions. Diminished senses demand an increase in lighting, increased redundancy, multiple modes of sensory stimulation, and alarms and interconnections for monitoring and reaching help. Slower neural transmission rates demand the use of familiar, and repetitive, and redundant cuing to create and maintain a sense of place that grounds continuous lifetime activities. Diminished immunological resistance calls for easy to clean spaces and keeping pathogens in check. Future need for possible mobility assistance calls for level floors and low resistance coverings.<sup>1</sup> Consideration should be given to how this renovated home will then be used after the passing of the father when other family members possibly inhabit it.



photos taken by Joe Dempsey



This barn renovation could involve using the existing shell and/or structure with more of a substantial envelop developed behind it, or simply repurposing the old wood and making a new structure that resembled the old form in a more contemporary fashion. Either way, this is a good way to place housing on the site while still being sensitive to remnant of the past. There have been many precedents dealing with the repurposing and renovations of barns.

renovation of the horse barn into a guest house

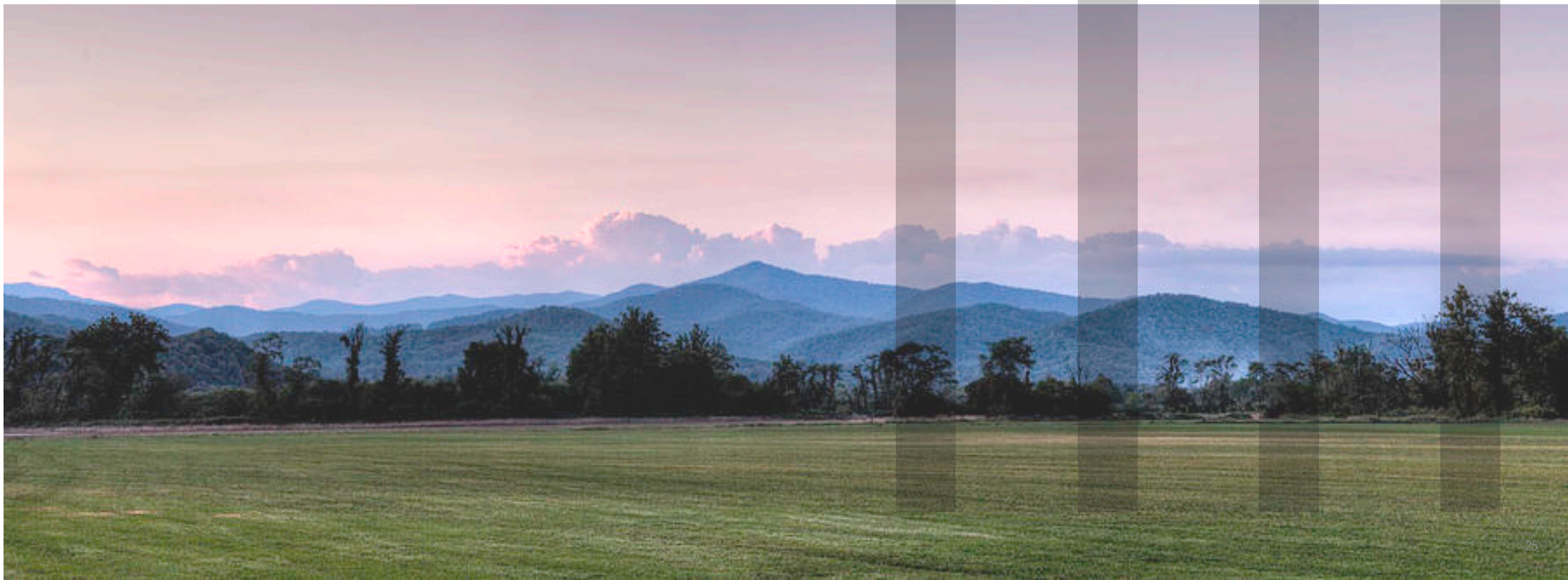
As the horse farm was a large part of this home as a place, I would like to reactivate it in a way that encourages family visits and guests to keep the site full of life as it once was.



additional homes on the farm

When the time comes that their father passes away, the thought is that the six children and their families will begin to inhabit the land that their parents once owned. So over time they can begin to inhabit the existing houses in a new way and there will become a rhythm of new houses built on the site, all within the same language but specific to each individual family. As these homes begin to inhabit the overall site, how are they connected in a grand gesture?

photo taken by Robert Travis



House 1

House 2

House 3

House 4



"Aging in place" is the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.<sup>3</sup> Aging in place offers numerous benefits to older adults—including life satisfaction, health and self-esteem—all of which are key to successful aging.<sup>4</sup>

Aging within one's home presents a whole set of challenges and issues to be addressed to support that transition so that they can maintain their independence and functionality as long as possible. For the renovation and addition to Milton's existing cabin, these design considerations should be implemented so that he can age in place in his own home.

90% of Americans over the age of 65 wish to stay in their home as long as possible, but only 1/3 of them actually stay.<sup>5</sup> How can design address this disconnect? Explosive growth of internet and aging-in-place technologies continue to open up a wide range of opportunities in which designers can create community within virtual space and connect homes remotely. This means that there is less need to move people around to provide them with proper care.

Studies show that elders prefer the assistance of robot care rather than moving into an assisted living home, however, they prefer them for doing house hold chores over personal care needs. Although full robots are not feasible at this time for individual home applications, many more simple robot-like devices can be combined to do many of the same functions such as cleaning, health and safety monitoring, and being a responsive companion.<sup>6</sup>

Obvious issues revolve around the aspect of isolation. Aging seniors need to be linked to others: this is architecturally achieved in group homes because of adjacency but must be met in other ways when they live along in single family settlements.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the project will seek to always connect with the wider world and context. Through telehealth systems, seniors can be virtually connected to all of their doctors and agencies and monitored health information can be easily accessed by all. Devices that allow for virtual connection can also help them maintain connections with friends and loved ones as well.

# The Principles of Universal Design

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

## 1 Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Assisted shopping cart with a ramp to allow use by all people, regardless of their ability.

## 2 Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

A person that may trigger a vital sign response (e.g., a heart rate monitor) can use the scissors to cut the fabric of the garment, allowing the person to remain comfortable and safe while using the device.

## 3 Simple and Intuitive Use

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or education level.

Pushing a button is a simple action that requires no special knowledge or skills to use. A person with a physical disability can use the button to control the device.

## 4 Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Small buttons on a cell phone are difficult to see and use. A person with a visual impairment can use the large button to make a call.

## 5 Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

A person that may trigger a vital sign response (e.g., a heart rate monitor) can use the device to cut the fabric of the garment, allowing the person to remain comfortable and safe while using the device.

## 6 Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

A person that may trigger a vital sign response (e.g., a heart rate monitor) can use the device to cut the fabric of the garment, allowing the person to remain comfortable and safe while using the device.

## 7 Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

A person that may trigger a vital sign response (e.g., a heart rate monitor) can use the device to cut the fabric of the garment, allowing the person to remain comfortable and safe while using the device.

Center for Universal Design at NC State

Web: design.ncsu.edu/ucd Email: ucddesign@ncsu.edu

Universal Design is a design approach that aims to create products and environments that are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Robot and Frank – Old School Meets High Tech In Buddy Heist Diemery, Intellectspace.net



seniorsdriving.com

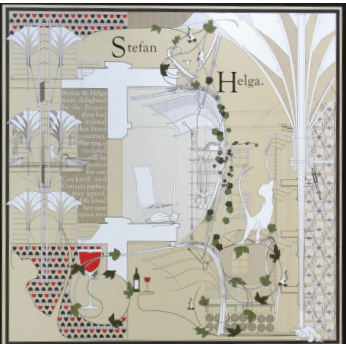
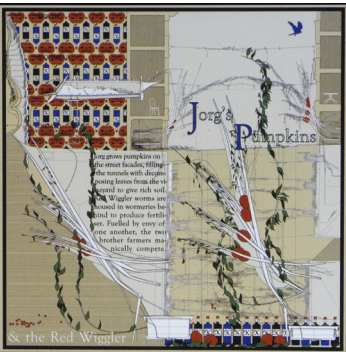
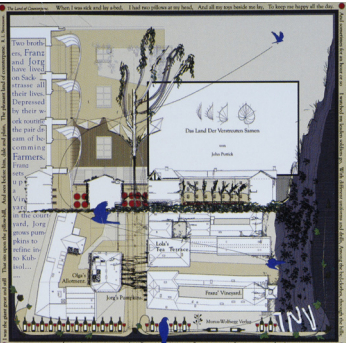
Familiarity with concepts of Universal Design is crucial in supporting a multi-life stage transition. These concepts call for spaces to be versatile and usable regardless of age or skill level, therefore, helpful when thinking about the home for an elderly man or a growing child in the future. These aspects become extremely important due to the ever deteriorating physical and mental health of those that are aging. Some specific issues to keep in mind are cognitive loss, loss of vision, dizziness, and loss of balance which are all important when designing living spaces.<sup>7</sup>

*The first barrier to Universal Design is the human mind. If we could put a ramp into the mind, the first thing down the ramp would be the understanding that all barriers that people face in the environment are the result of narrow thinking.*

George A. Covington

social and spatial interaction

With the potential for multiple characters' lives and spaces overlapping, one must consider their relationships to each other over time, and within the greater context.



Land of Scattered Seeds by John Puttnick

This project investigates the interaction of the lives of different characters and the consequences due to that overlap. When two brothers convert their home into a bunch of farms, vineyards and gardens, the ambitions of these characters (and others close by) lead to conflicts and collaboration which evolve through the development of exquisite new constructions. It also investigates the relationship between humans and nature by ways in which humans try to control nature and how we see its cold indifference in return. In regards to their relationship to place, it investigates the individuals as they attempt to find their places in a modern city. How do they begin to make it their own and give themselves a sense of identity within each space in the context of the greater city and society?

In relation to my proposal, although it is sited in a more rural setting and each individual's spaces do not as closely overlap each other, it is important to still consider that overlap. The implications of one person's actions can affect how another person lives. How can I begin to turn that overlap into opportunity and make it a unique condition? These areas will not only serve as spatial overlap, but temporal overlap as well. The question of place within a larger context can also certainly be applied here. As discussed previously, each family's own element within the context needs to provide them with a unique sense of identity.

transect:

Geographical section of a region used to reveal a sequence of environments.

Transect Planning ideas by Andres Duany

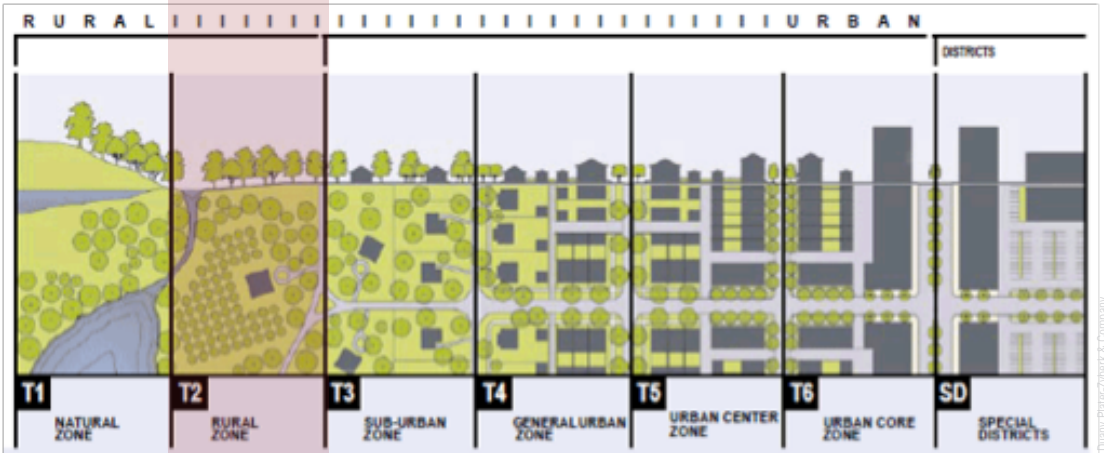
Human environments are used to identify a set of habitats that vary by level and intensity of urban character, rural to urban. The range of environments is the basis for organizing components of the built world. Immersive environments are achieved by specifying and arranging elements that comprise that environment in an expected way or in a way that feels appropriate to that location. It is about finding an appropriate spatial allocation of the elements that make up the human habitat. This concept is based on the idea that planning must be based on finding the proper balance between human-made and natural environments.

Four ecological principles that this theory is based on:

- 1. Sequence of habitats. Variety of human habitats must be planned for.
- 2. Within a specific area, there is a functional link between organisms and their physical environment
- 3. Habitat requires a certain degree of internal diversity – complexity.
- 4. Ecological principles work simultaneously – in different ways and spatial scales.

Even though these strategies are mostly geared towards a new urban strategy, the concepts can be applied on a smaller scale and more personal level and begin to inform how the spaces of a home related to each other and their surroundings. Types of spaces should be clearly differentiated by spatial and material qualities to give individuals a sense of where they are and the activities that go on there. For example, in living spaces or common spaces, there should be a sense of openness and wide, free flowing spaces that are well lit and encourage gathering, whereas, towards the bedrooms or more private areas there should be smaller corridors or other key indicators that these areas are geared more for specific people. Considering the habits and daily life activities of each of the characters is crucial to a functional space. By creating a diverse and changing environment with many influential characters and cultures, each inhabitant benefits from the richness and complexity that is brought into their life. All of the principles that begin to inform how the spaces within the house interact should also be applied at the scale of how the house interacts with the context and surrounding houses. As a simple example: just as a street network can be developed to increase walkability and pedestrian emphasis to certain destinations within the city, certain paths of travel within a home can emphasize important areas.

6 Transects or Eczones





*The place is the concrete manifestation of man's dwelling, and his identity depends on his belonging to places.*

*Christian Norberg-Schulz |  
Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*



photo taken by Joann Seibung, Baker



vernacular:

- 1. Belonging to, developed in, and spoken or used by, the people of a particular place, region, or country; native; indigenous
- 2. Characteristic of locality; local; as, a house of vernacular construction

Context, including the immediate site and reaching to the world beyond, will be incorporated as a key element, physically, spiritually, and virtually, within the design of the project to keep the client connected to their home and spaces surrounding as well as aid in easing the difficulties of living alone.

In this project, locating goes beyond physical location or the lay of the surrounding land and becomes more about preserving the sense of place, which involves embracing the history, the vernacular. It is about discovering how they built, where they built, and why they built and using that to guide our designs within a vernacular landscape. Locating involves giving meaning to a place through the elements of **possession, identity, orientation, and wholeness**.<sup>1</sup> While a culture begins to determine architectural form, vernacular is the result of place on a culture.<sup>2</sup>

*The nature of building is letting dwell...Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build. Let us think for a while of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. ....Our reference to the Black Forest farm in no way means that we should or could go back to building such houses; rather it illustrates by a dwelling that 'has been' how 'it' was able to build...  
...The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, **that they must ever learn to dwell.***

*Martin Heidegger | "Building Dwelling Thinking"*



*The basic need springs form a fundamental human requirement to be able to reach out and to be able to touch and feel and see those things that provide hard physical evidence of our passage in the stream of tradition. It is a need that transcends social organization or geography.*

*Robert Stipe | “Carolina Dwelling”*

Locating within the context of time and tradition

In today’s world of change and progression, it is becoming increasingly important to preserve places and things of the past. It is not for mere pleasure or luxury, but it is essential. For “all old things and places, and some new ones, give meaning to our daily lives in ways we rarely consider except when they are gone.” However, we must realize that change is inevitable and it is precisely that change that makes tradition possible, and tradition helps us to know our place.<sup>3</sup>

In this particular project, it will become helpful to establish the links to the past in order to help the aging client recall certain experiences by maintaining the surroundings and circumstance in which those memories were grounded. When all other things begin to be lost in the aging mind, he will be reassured with the basic truths regarding who is and where he lives. This is why it becomes so important to conserve our sense of place and where we are within our environment. By designing with a sense of stewardship towards place we can also maintain those memories for the family when the elders are no longer there.

To understand the influence of our surrounding environment we have to investigate how we interact with it and what gives meaning to it. It is through the interaction of experiences and symbols that give meaning to our world.<sup>4,5</sup> Our physical environment encourages these associations. But despite particular individual associations with place there are certain aspects that are universal regardless of cultural values.<sup>6</sup>

possession

identity

orientation

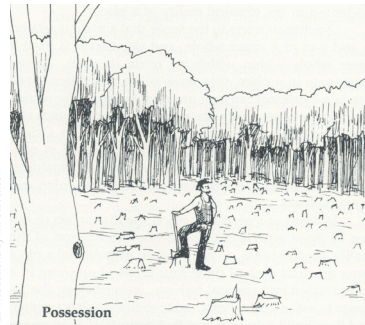
wholeness



With each of the four aspects of meaning, they can each be related to one another. When compared, they have specific oppositions and compliments by which we can begin to study in order to create meaning in a place.

Possession

The sense of belonging in or having some claim on a place. To possess a place is to make it your own, whereby, the place becomes a part of you and you become a part of it. It has to do with the degree that a place can personify or symbolize our emotions.<sup>7</sup>

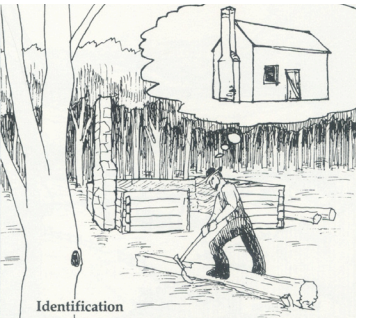


Orientation

Refers to the sense that a place is related to and part of a larger whole, and also that it is itself a larger whole within which we relate its parts. As we participate in a place, this sense of its orientation gives rise to a locational sense of our own being in the world.<sup>6</sup>

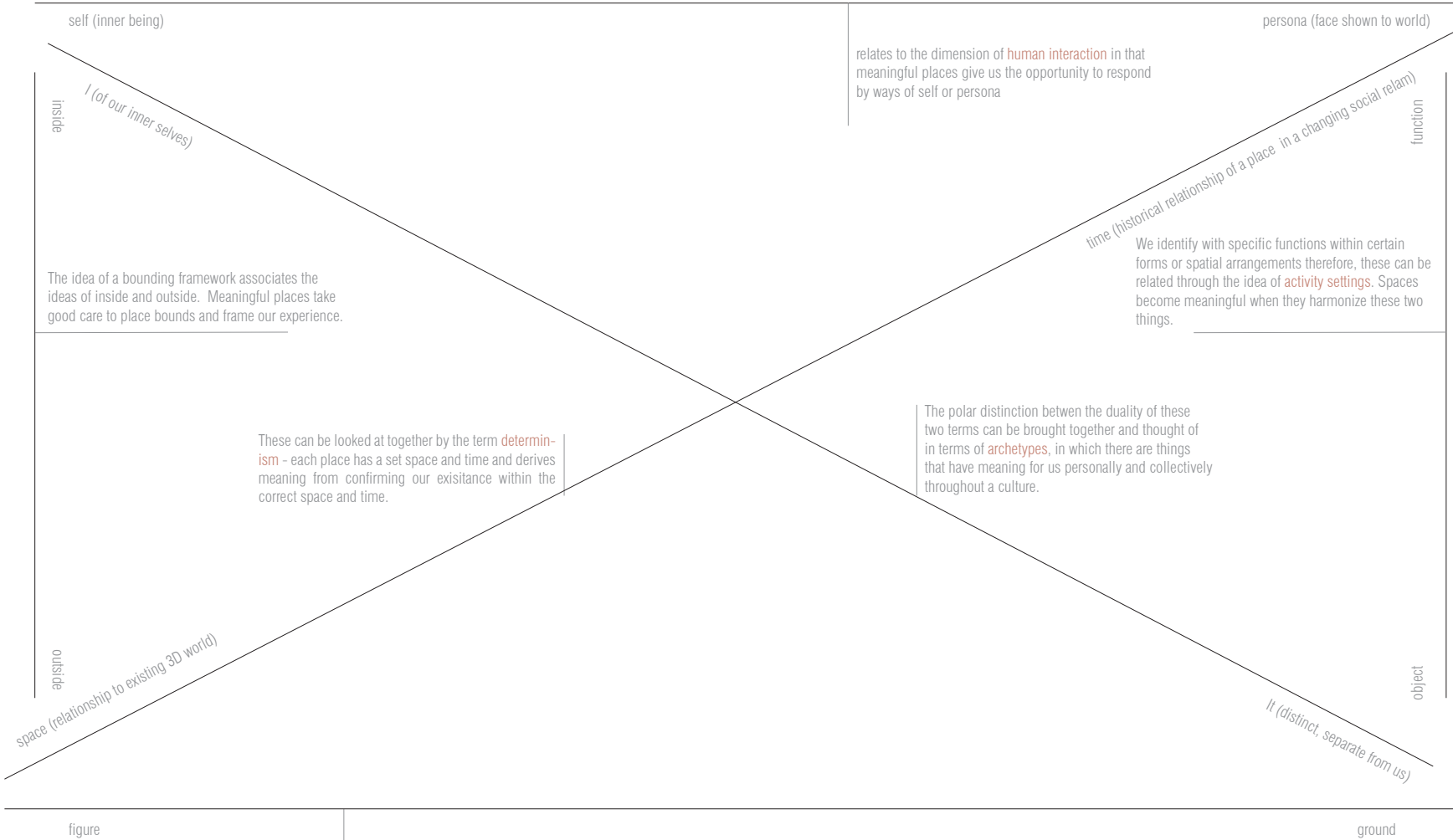
Identification

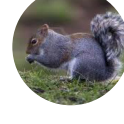
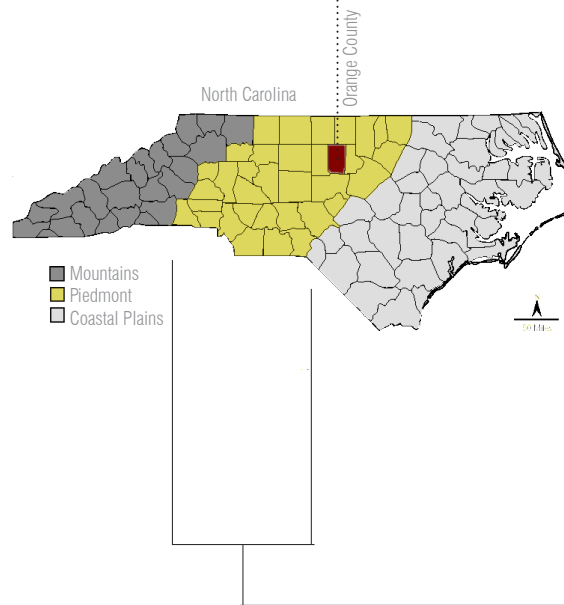
The sense that a place reflects the social surroundings within which we share a common world. It is a process of recognizing the familiar symbols and settings within which we carry out our daily activities. To identify a place is in a sense to name it by reference to past experiences. It is identification of the physical world with an acculturated world view.<sup>8</sup>



Wholeness

Refers to the sense that a place is a discreet entity, complete in some respects in itself. Wholeness in a place refers to how we perceive its internal relations. It need not relate to us or the world in any direct way. Wholeness is dependent on a sense of completeness, uniqueness, balance, and legibility, and while it may refer to place qualities other than the physical, these must be evidenced in the physical reality of a place.<sup>8</sup>





The Piedmont is a plateau region located in the eastern United States between the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the main Appalachian Mountains, stretching from New Jersey in the north to central Alabama in the south.<sup>9</sup> It is characterized by low rolling hills with a few areas of steeper ranges. Soil is clay like and moderately fertile – in North Carolina, tobacco is the main crop, but it is also known for hay and cattle production. This region of NC is home to the state's largest cities and financial institutions.

Carolinian forests are extremely diverse and contain some of the most ornamental of all the native species in North America, e.g. native flowering dogwood, flame and swamp azaleas, mountain silverbell, Carolina laurel, trailing arbutus, wintergreen and many, many more. The native forests and natural tree succession involve sweet gum and tulip poplars springing up beneath pines, later giving way to a deciduous mixed beech and oak-hickory climax forest.

Rainfall averages 43", and average humidity through the four seasons is 70%,. The warm-season average temperature has a range of 89 to 70 degrees and cold-season averages between 49 and 30 degrees, with hot and humid summers and some freezing in the winters. The spring: warm days and cool nights. Abundant moisture, fertile soils and high temperatures encourage a lot of growth. There is no dry season in this zone. Also, the mountains tend to block most of the cold weather and snow from entering the Piedmont.<sup>10</sup>



Perdue, Donald Lee. 2015. "Fields of Gold". Taken in Chatham Co., NC. other images from googlemaps.com and wikipedia.com

Piedmont Region



Durham

population 239,358

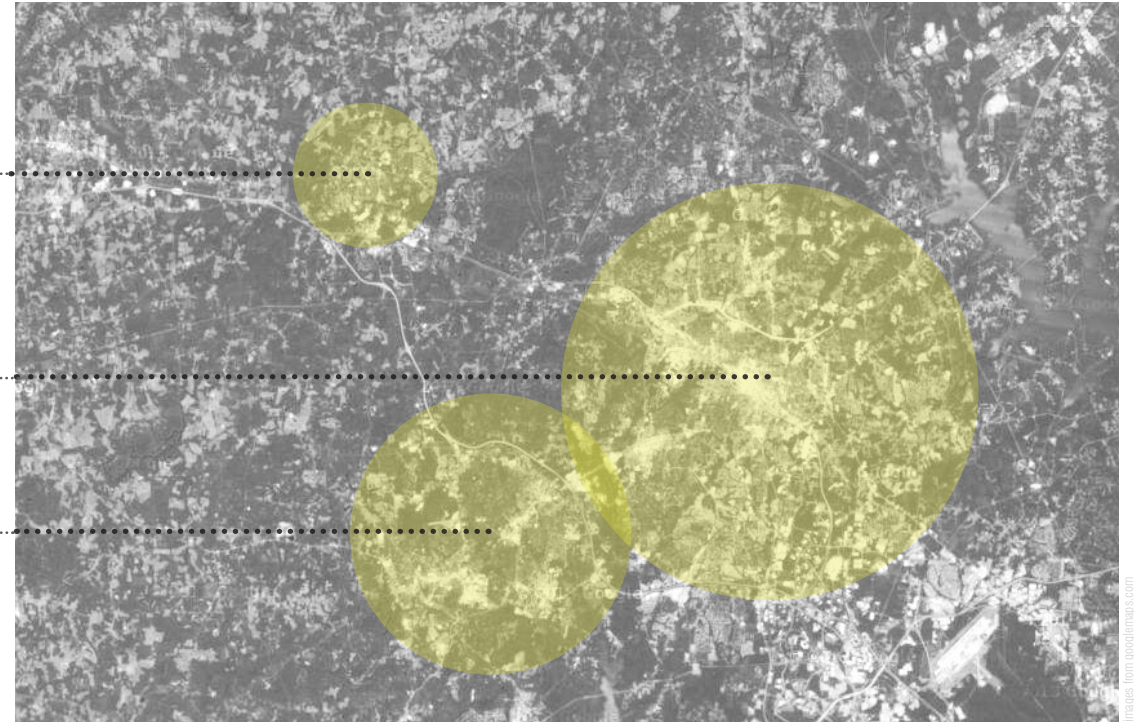
Hillsborough

population 6,271

Chapel Hill

population 58,424

project site



images from googlemaps.com



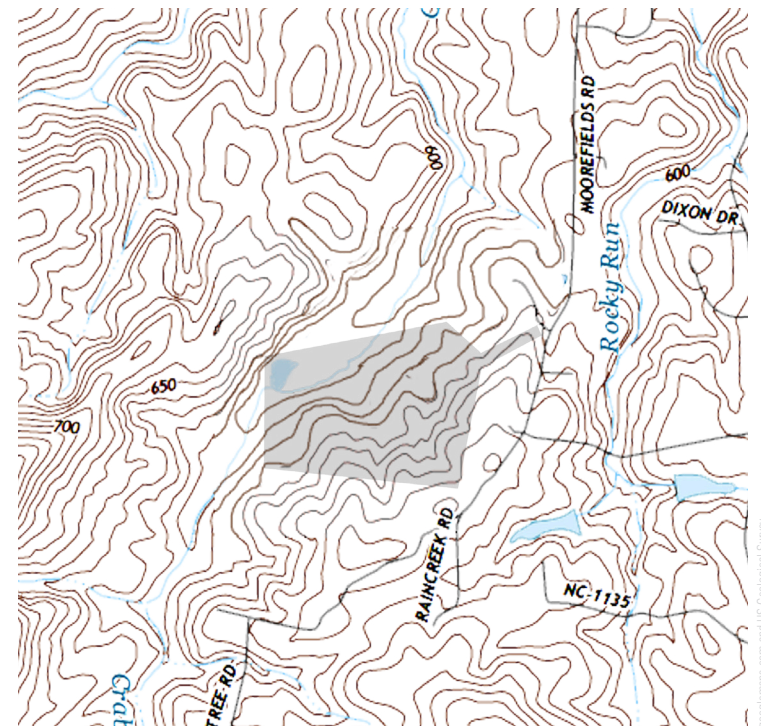
map from US Geological Survey

There has been a village in this area for hundreds of years, beginning with three successive Native American villages spanning from AD 1000 to 1710. Orange County was founded in 1752.<sup>11</sup> In the nearby area are three population centers: Durham, Chapel Hill, and Hillsborough. Although the particular project site is located just southwest of Hillsborough, all three cities are important in the life of the client and his family. Chapel Hill is where Milton spent most of his life. That is where his business developed and where he raised his family, so there are definite ties here. Durham is the biggest populated area nearby and, therefore, would most likely be a location where he would go to more larger scale activities or have doctors appointments.





The site is a former horse farm consisting of about 47 acres with the hundred year old log cabin tucked into the back corner. The cabin is sited amongst trees in the climax forest overlooking a small perennial stream. A one-lane gravel drive connects the cabin to other structures on the farm and the road beyond. The cabin overlooks Crabtree Creek and then the rest of the site slopes upward to the south east. The clearing around the log cabin is somewhat irregular, with approximately 20 feet at the front (south) and side (east), but roughly 8-10 ft to the back (north) and west. The client's preferred view corridor is to the south and southeast. This is the view from his existing porch that captures both the drive and the ravine holding the stream. The trees near the cabin are principally climax hardwoods with a relatively sparse understory of flowering trees. There is also a pond along the back edge of the site.





taken by Sharon Thomas



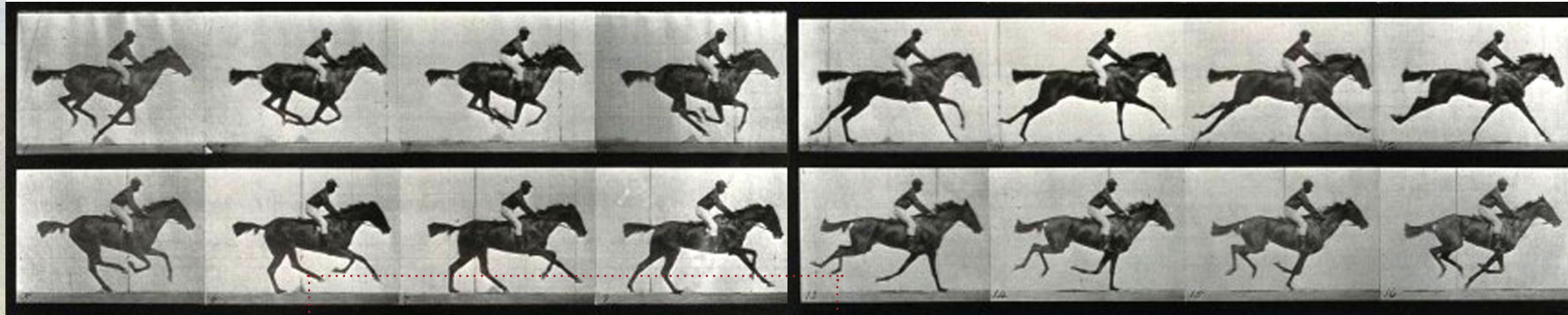
Taken by Anna J. Kutor.

Learning from the past, living in the present, and preparing for the future require an oscillation between looking back and looking ahead. As a way to begin giving form to these abstract ideals I will think of the project as a phased approach over time, looking at the changes of life and migration to the site. Each additional building will physically represent a slight uniqueness among a framework set up for the overall project in order to show a layering of space and time.



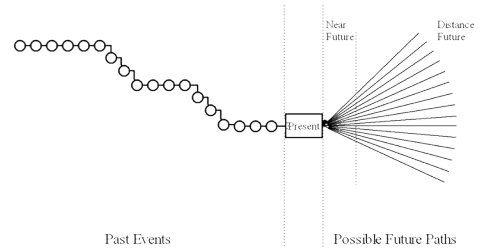
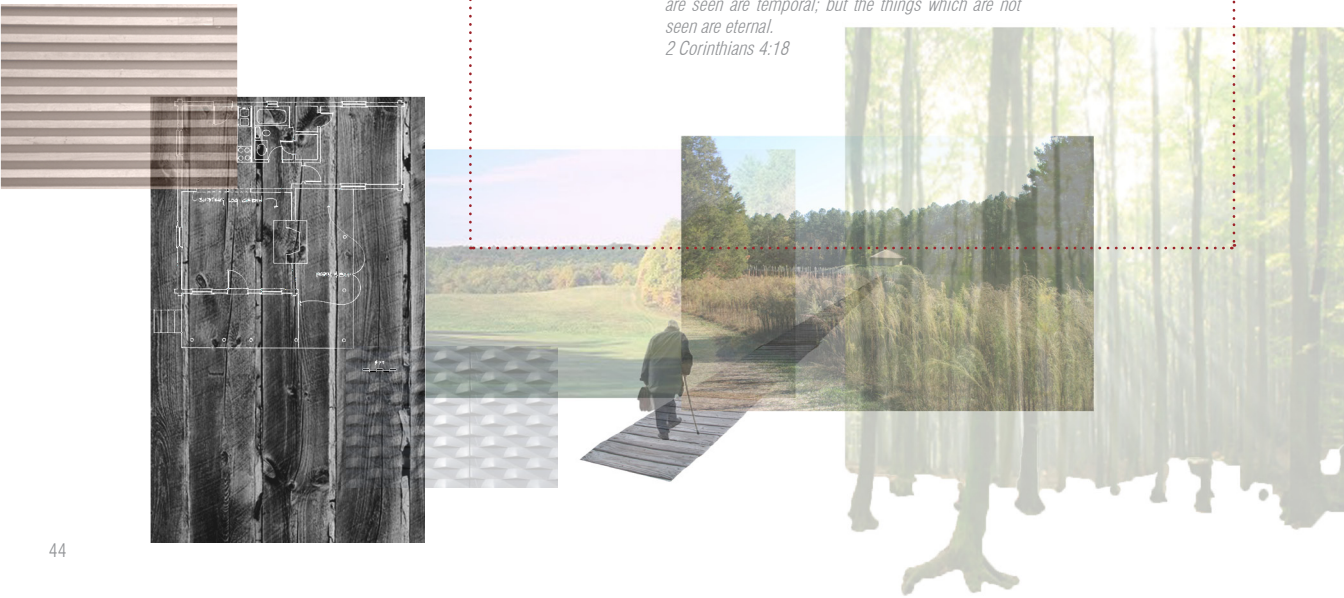
"Hand in hand" taken by Chris K.



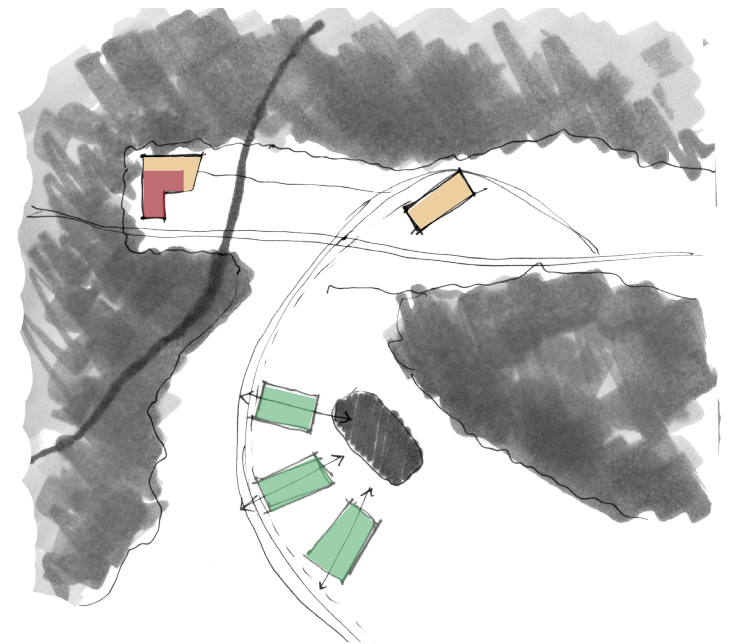


Reactivation of old purposes on the site become therapeutic in the way that they bring a fresh life to an old memory. The horse farm provides a specific vehicle to bring development back to the site. Physical changes to the existing buildings provide an opportunity of living in a familiar, yet more functional, space. Additions of new dwelling(s) provide a framework for future development as a basis for permanency.

*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*  
2 Corinthians 4:18



The oscillation between all of these elements is the key to understanding their interrelationships. This undulation between looking back and looking ahead can be exercised through all of the senses helping to evoke memories and connections deep within the being of the human spirit. These intangible memories are the link between the times that make up the forever home.



The red indicates the existing cabin on the site which will be renovated in phase one to be more universally design friendly. The orange areas indicate phase two in which there is an addition added on to the log cabin to support additional needs. It also includes the renovation of the horse barn into a residence. At this stage, this would be most likely a guest house for family members to stay temporarily while the client is still living. The green areas indicate a series of houses developed throughout the future that would provide homes for all of the remaining children to live back on their parents land.

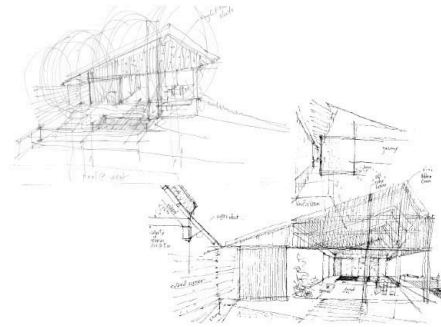


Throughout my research process, there have been many projects or ideas along the way that have contributed to the development of my own ideas. They can serve as a precedent in terms of physical form or function, or in the way they deal with the site, or in the overall ideas and concepts behind the project. I have included just a few of those precedents.



Painting by Shona Macdonald

A reference can be a book, a project, a painting, or song, anything that provides inspiration.



family inhabitation over time  
building upon memories  
site stewardship

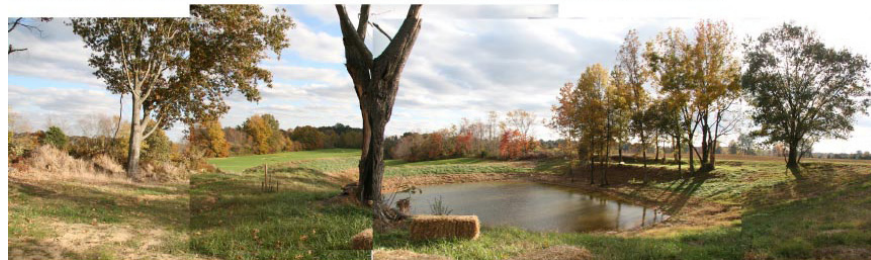
## O'Dell Residence Gates, Tennessee

T. Stuth, T. Shelton, B. Ambroziak + K. Ambroziak

The O'Dell Residence is a home in rural west Tennessee. The clients are a couple who, for career reasons, have lived in Chicago for the last twenty-five years. They are now retired and intend to spend much of each year in Lauderdale County, where they grew up. They envision this house being an anchor for their family and, particularly, a magnet for their grandchildren and generations yet to come.

The site is 80 acres of productive agricultural land that is rotated between soybeans, winter wheat, and cotton. The clients are conscious of being stewards of this land and have already worked with the state department of natural resources to mitigate topsoil erosion; a significant problem in this part of the Lower Mississippi Basin. Accordingly, the house is placed fairly close to the road and avoids the steeper portions of the site. Nestled next to an existing hedgerow it engages two ponds that are important locations for gatherings of the couple's family and friends. The house is rotated to mediate between optimal solar orientation and distant views.

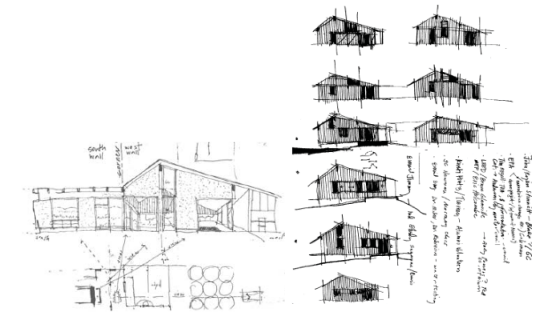
The clients wish for the home to not be ostentatious. In response, the form of the house is dominated by an asymmetrical gable roof that allows the living spaces to open up to vistas of the farm and provides an ideal slope for solar hot water panels on the south while, on the north, sloping down to present a humble face to the road. A wooden screen stretching along the north elevation provides privacy for the small pool and presents the image of a utilitarian agricultural structure upon approach.



The O'Dell Residence serves as a precedent for many of the ideals and concepts with in my project, particularly those of families coming back to homelands, building a home to draw future generations, preservation of memories, and stewardship towards the site. The house placement, orientation and design are useful examples of how a home can begin to be reminiscent of the past and family traditions while also illustrating modern abstractions of those concepts.

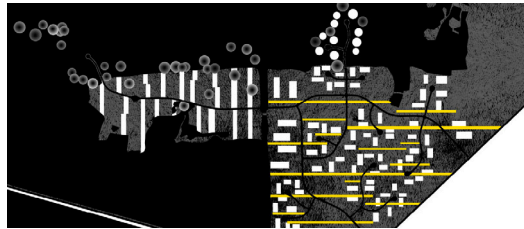
The design is rightfully situated within its context of the rural farmland culture and poses a humble expression. Just as farm houses should, it maintains a strong connection between living space and the land. It is simple in its form and the roof line unifies the home throughout. This guides the carefully considered connection and spatial transparency from interior, covered exterior, and then out to the landscape.

In thinking ahead to the future, the design takes into account many sustainability issues that will help maintain the home and its environment so future generations are able to enjoy it as well. These include implementations in response to ground, wind, sun, and rain.





development of farmland  
site stewardship  
sensitivity to place  
changing typical view towards housing



## Mayo Woodlands Rochester, MN

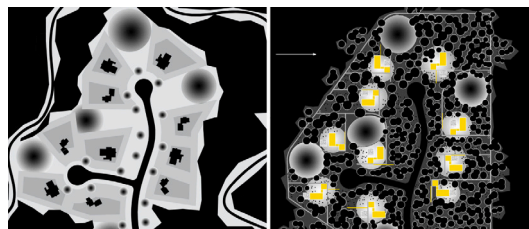
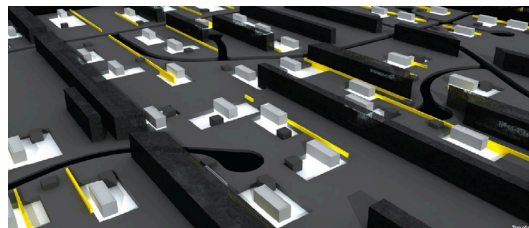
David Salmela, Shane Coen, Tim Alt

Mayo Woodlands is a development on the former land owned by the famous Mayo family (founders of the Mayo Clinic). When this design team was given the project, a local engineering firm had already developed a plan for the development, which followed the typical suburban model of curvilinear cul-de-sacs with little relationship to the context of this former agricultural land. Therefore, the challenge was to provide a more sensitive and fitting scheme while still keeping the same plat and avoiding having to obtain additional permits. Without the possibility of altering lot or road configuration, Coen + Partners strived to reduce the impact of the platted circulation pattern, provide both a physical and psychological framework linking the disparate cul-de-sac neighborhoods, and optimize the architecture as a mechanism for community identity.

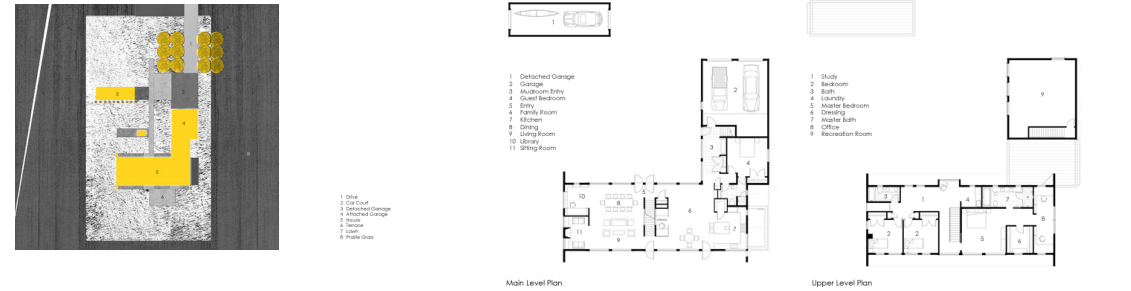
Coen & Partners blanketed the open fields with high-grass prairie, to both recall the history of the farm and erase the lot lines. They imagined long rows of native red pine and fences along walking paths. The yards would be set between the windrows of trees and the walkways. But the designers went beyond mere landscape architecture. Taking cues from agricultural patterns and solar aspect, site elements such as treelines, fences and buildings are organized with a strong east-west orientation. The architecture emerged from the site strategy. Contemporary homes, marketed to the medical community in Rochester, feature clear distinction between public and private spaces, direct connection to nature through views, trails and conservation of green spaces. Attention to solar orientation maximizes winter daylight within each structure.

This forward thinking design reflects the innovation and forward thinking approach to medicine of the Mayo family. It seeks to change the way we think about the typical American suburb and says that homes can be more than that; they can be designed in a way that is more sensitive to the land and the functions previously held there.

They are using familiar, regional elements to divide the land but in a more democratic way. But dividing the land up with this system of tree rows and fences, it becomes less about the division made by the roads and feels more like an open communal landscape that still has a sense of privacy. By using a straightforward, simple systems of organization with all the houses oriented the same way it in fact empowers each resident and enables everyone to take advantage of natural light, views, and the indoor/outdoor relationships to the landscape. These overarching ideals and common factors that everyone wants in a home allows for a mixture of clients from all generations and all walks of life to come together.



Info and Images: Aline Ravel, "Habitat in the Grass" | Lecture: "Drawn Here, Tim Alt, Shane Coen, and David Salmela in conversation with Thomas Fisher" | www.altsal.com/prairie\_2



This was the first custom house designed at Mayo Woodlands. The sculptural simplicity of the forms of the house are dramatized by the materials and colors. The main house is rendered by a folded plane of smooth stucco that captures a natural Cedar expression of the north and south faces of the main house as a pair of bookends. The main level is open and transparent to the front and back court spaces, allowing the client to observe their boys playing wherever they are on the site. This level also creates several activity spaces within a larger volume, such as a hearth space, library and informal workspace.



This is the second house in the Prairie neighborhood. The materials and color of the house relate to but distinguish themselves from the neighbor to the east. A folded stucco wall becomes a threshold of arrival to the main house and establishes a sloped metal roof. The dark stained siding, black at the garages and midnight blue on the house, allow the project to recede into the forest wall upon approach and dramatize the house from the site below.

Village House 1 is designed to express the design philosophy at the Woodlands through an east/west site placement that echoes windrows of Red Pine trees. As well, the transparent main level creates a strong relationship with the outdoor spaces. The natural Cedar pergola provides sunshade for the main floor and establishes a modern veranda. The design also incorporates a standing seam metal roof, European smooth stucco and an open floor plan

conversion  
contemporary vernacular typology  
landscape and building connection

## The Barn House Flanders, Belgium

BURO II & ARCHI+I

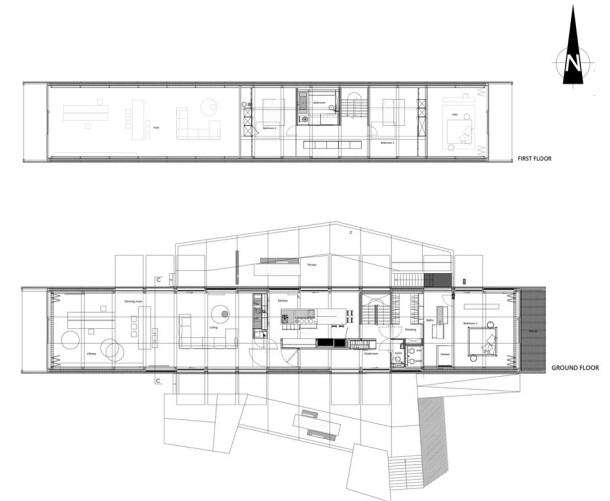
For BURO II & ARCHI+I, the central principle for the farmhouse conversion is the relationship between the building and its outside space, and the connection with the surrounding environment.

The client was emphatic that tradition, innovation and respect for the landscape be combined in a single project. The structure of the landscape and research into rural building in Flanders stand in reciprocity to the design process and the final built environment.

Crucial in this thought process is that the landscape confirms the footprint of the buildings and farmhouses in origin and as tradition. Here respect and tradition create a need for a contemporary continuity, reflected in the search for a new meaning for the farmhouse in its varying scenic mutations.

The project is a spatial and architectural quest for methods to offer new perspectives in the relationship between landscape and architecture.

The Barn House beams with clean, updated lines that emphasize the structure's surrounding natural setting. The indigenous building principles of the barn — to both protect from and connect to weather and nature — are brought into a new light with daylight filled living spaces that boast inspiring views. Openings at either end of The Barn House frame the bucolic landscape, while operable sections of the shuttered facade swing open to let daylight and natural breezes into the home.



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