

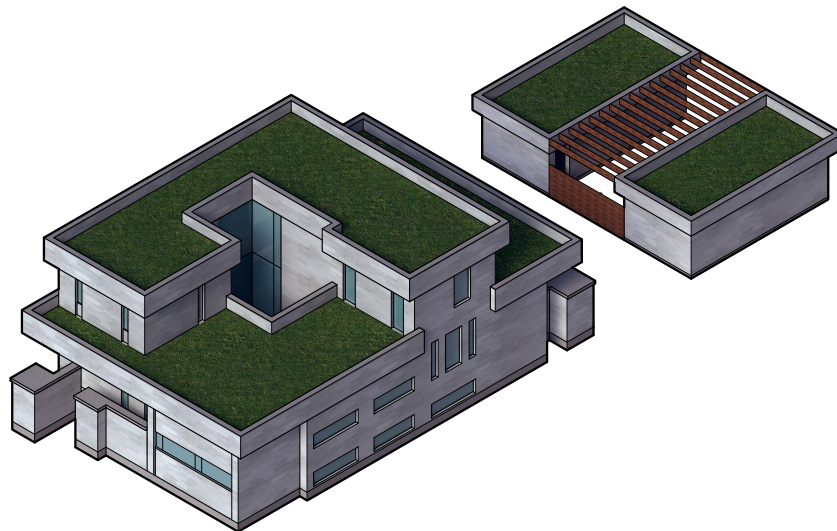
NESTLED

INFILL DESIGN IDEAS COMPETITION

ARCH 686
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Constantly caressing and embracing one another, it is two sides intertwined; each holds their own identities, ideals, senses, yet they affect one another. Like a pair of clasping hands, they share an intimate connection with one another, but remain individual halves of a whole. By selecting *Scenario B*, the proposal is a pair of housing units attached together like a duplex. In typical scenarios of semi-detached dwellings, the two houses are merely mirror images of one another. They may cater to one half of the users perfectly, while leaving the other half to shoehorn their lifestyle into the program. Or, the dwelling becomes a compromise for both parties, ultimately leaving both parties unfulfilled in their needs and desires.

Nestled is an example of many intricate possibilities of unique attached dwellings. The two are different in size, catering to different needs of different families. The unit on the left, the larger double-storey unit, caters to larger families: a three-bedroom house featuring an upstairs entertainment area and a private entryway study parlour on the ground floor. The dining area flows from the courtyard corridor into a sunken, heightened living room overlooking the shared back yard. Conversely, the unit on the right caters more to a smaller family, perhaps a young professional couple, or even an older couple who enjoys having guests. The smaller, single-storey unit holds two bedrooms with a study that can be converted into a bedroom at anytime. Instead of the living room facing the backyard, it faces the front of the house, with a reveal window that is designed to anticipate forthcoming guests.



Proposal Isometric: Front

An interesting feature of *Nestled* is the shared outdoors spaces. The private interior courtyard, the shared backyard patio, and the communal porte-cochère, is designed to encourage an intimate relationship between both parties. The two dwellings clasp together to provide growth of an intimate relationship between the two unit dwellers, but still providing private and enclosed areas within their respective homes.

Privacy is an important factor in private homes. There are no panoramic windows or expansive exposures in the house, with the exception of the corridors. Even so, they face into a private interior courtyard, only accessed by those who live in *Nestled*, or those who are invited to visit. Even with the stairwell featuring a full floor-to-ceiling, double-height glass wall, the glass itself is frosted to maintain the privacy of the occupants of the house. All spaces throughout the homes are attuned with specific apertures that provide day-lighting and controlled views to the outside world. Not only is this a feature of privacy, but also the increased amount of solid wall leaves the architecture better to be thermally controlled in dramatically varying climates.

In designing the proposal, the first aspect looked into was the contextual situation of the competition. The competition itself is not set on any particular site, it simply gave a 'generic site', free of any specific locations and characteristics. In the brief, it provided four scenarios¹, and supplied several screenshots of a generic suburban grain in Edmonton, specifically in the blocks along 97th Avenue between 148th Street and 145th Street, as well as along 120th Avenue and 119th Avenue along 127th Street and 124th Street. Accompanying these aerial images are some generic streetscape photos, though it was not specified whether or not they match the aerial images or not. The competition itself is kept very vague, perhaps intentionally, to instigate a broad and openly applicable design proposal. For the current proposal, the second scenario was chosen: the existing house demolished in favour of building a semi-detached dwelling.

Despite having vague site information, the competition gave setback and height restrictions, to enforce retaining the existing suburban grain of the area. With these parameters, some further research of the area was made through Google Images and Google Maps. Surveying the area by viewing the given blocks with Streetview and Earth options, it can be concluded that the area itself was originally

¹ From the competition brief, four scenarios are described on a generic, 15.2m×42.7m lot: 1. The 'clients' wish to retain their existing home and build a carriage house, 2. The existing house is demolished to build a Semi-Detached house, 3. The site is halved and sold; leaving a slim lot to build a single detached dwelling, 4. The clients acquire the neighbouring lot to build an 'open' scenario.



Sample Aerial Maps provided by the competition brief

developed during the Depression era and expanded in the Post-War period. Throughout the years, changes have been made to the neighbourhood, with a few of the older, modest soldiers' and catalogue housing converted into larger, contemporary new-builds, liberally expressed, with some having contemporary aesthetics and others lavishly built McMansions with faux-European flourishes. However, with the stylistic liberties of these new-builds, many of the older houses in the area remain considerably intact. In this context, the proposal was to be a duplex that combined sensibilities of a traditional house and a modernist dwelling, as well as designing a type of building that was robust, contemporary, and non imposing in its mass against its neighbours.

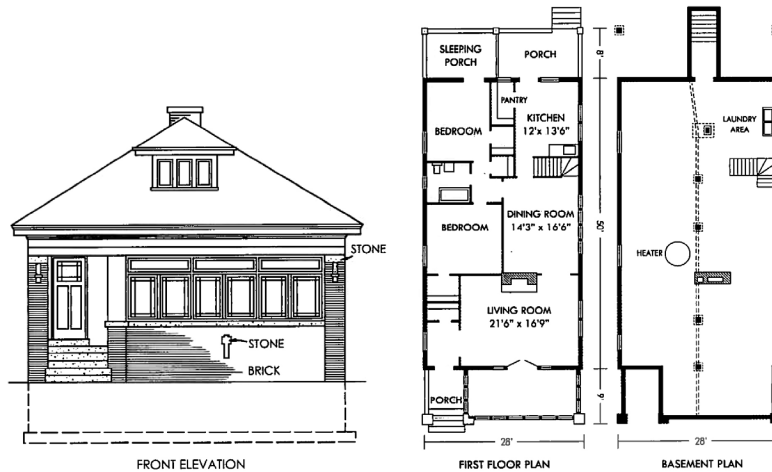


Sample Street Photos provided by the competition brief, showing a variation of houses in the area.

Houses of the Edmonton region reflected styles of suburban developments that were popular during the '20s and '30s throughout the Midwest, particularly in Chicago. Houses in these areas were built on rational, grid-like blocks, featuring long narrow bungalows that featured a façade greeted with a living room, a kitchen in the rear, and paired along a short corridor of bedrooms.² By the postwar period of

² Barbara Miller Lane, *Houses for a New World: Builders and Buyers in American Suburbs 1945—1965* (New York, New York: Princeton University Press, 2015), 305.

the '50s and '60s, many of the houses widened, but became shallower. In this period, basements were raised and exposed, garnering the style known as 'split-level'. These houses focussed on the horizontal, with wide windows, set back garage doors, and heightened basement windows.³ The mid-century split-level was a direct influence on the proposal itself for raising the basement level. The new proposal was a merger of these mentalities: horizontal like a post-war bungalow, but compact and humble like its prewar counterpart.



Elevation and Plan of a Prewar Bungalow, showing the narrowness, and compact practicality of the home; the raised ground floor allowed for heightened windows in the basement and easier access.

Even before any formal design began, the desire for this proposal was to create a semi-detached dwelling that was not a mere mirroring of one another. A mirrored pair of houses is not particularly clever, radical, nor exciting as a design proposal. The idea for a nestled pair of houses attached together came through studying the plans Eichler of homes, where the Californian aesthetic purposely decided on having private, high-fenced forecourts that concealed activity from the street. However, the high fences, and lack of fenestrations on the façades of these Eichler homes leave neighbourhoods looking uninviting and sombre.⁴ While privacy is extremely important in domestic architecture, there needs to be some apertures that expose the interiors of a space onto the street. While exposure onto the street is important, it is to be noted that it cannot be overdone; too much of an opening is off-putting to occupants, only to result in hanging privacy curtains to shield out prying eyes, and ultimately, preventing light from entering a space.

³ Miller Lane, *Houses for a New World*.

⁴ Paul Adamson and Marty Arbutich, *Eichler: Modernism Rebuilds the American Dream*, First ed. (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2002), 240.

Comparatively, a Frank Lloyd Wright designed house, specifically the Martin House, has fenestrations exposed on the façade that are not so small they deter any street frontage, but not so large they leave occupants feeling overexposed. Wright's houses usually feature fanciful picture windows in gathering spaces, and opting for high clerestory windows that allow light and privacy for intimate ones. Despite his awareness for privacy and aperture in his designs, Wright's masterfulness is realised more clearly in the progression through space, and his manipulation of pace through lowered and raised ceilings.⁵ The clear division between the public and private, paired with a deliberate manipulation of pace become important aspects for the proposal.



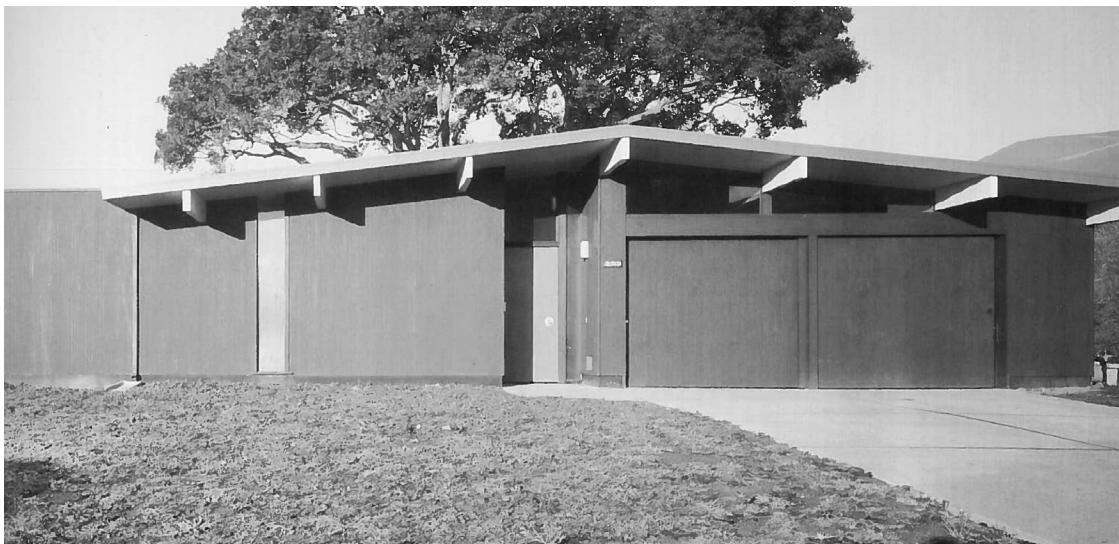
Left: Entryway into the Martin House; the concealed entryway increases privacy for those who live at the complex, and a secluded exclusivity for both the residents and select visitors.

Right: Loggia connecting two ends of the complex, from the main house to the conservatory; many of the views and portals of the Martin House are deliberately framed, showcasing views and program to visitors and residents, whilst manipulating the pace and rhythm of the architecture.

⁵ Jack Quinan, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture* (New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 248.

The proposal itself borrows from some of Wright's motifs, as well as Eichler's. The extended overhangs, and raised privacy walls paired with proportionally controlled fenestrations evoke the Wright aesthetic. Eichler directly influences the concealed courtyard spaces and the focus of privacy, paired with lofty gathering spaces in the two dwellings. With Eichler's homes, the privacy was only to the outside world. The openness and glassiness the houses possessed were faced into private interior courtyards, and to rear fenced yards.⁶ Eichler understood the importance of privacy and the turning away of prying eyes from the street.

As for the Martin House, the complex is artfully designed to create complex and articulated moments through the openings of the art glass windows. Every notion is deliberately framed, and purposefully designed. The house itself is a complex series of experiences, with every moment curated by the architect himself.⁷ Comparatively, houses like the Wittgenstein house is another example of a house precisely proportioned and curated. Every space of the architecture is carefully considered, all the way down to the height and articulations of the handles in the doorways and windows. All the rooms in the Wittgenstein are finely tuned to have the perfect proportion.^{8,9}



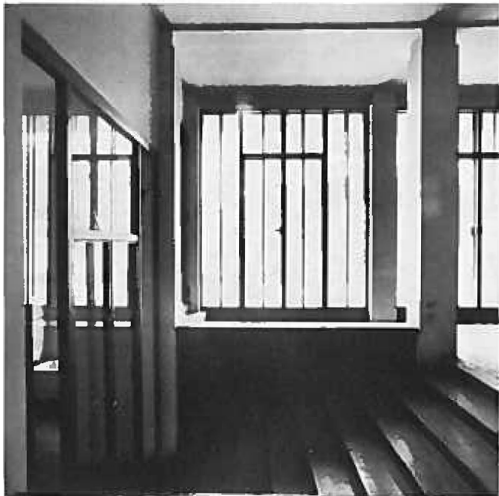
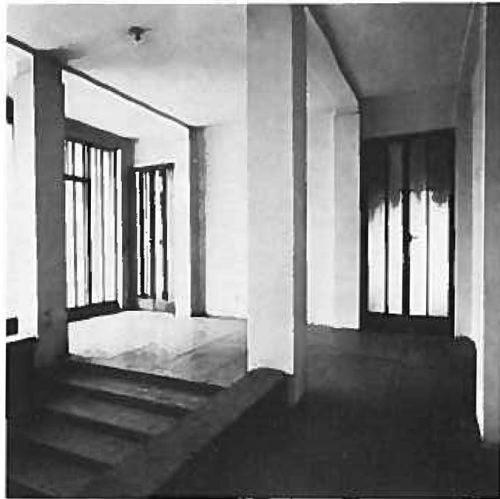
A typical Eichler house conceals much of the activity of the interior on the street elevation. Very little is exposed onto the street, focussing on privacy of the owners and residents of the property.

6 Adamson and Arbunich, *Eichler*.

7 Quinan, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House*.

8 Bernhard Leitner, *The Architecture of Ludwig Wittgenstein* [Die Architektur von Ludwig Wittgenstein], trans. Dennis Young (New York, New York: New York University Press, 1976).

9 Gunter Gebauer, *Wien, Kundmannngasse 19 : Bauplanerische, Morphologische Und Philosophische Aspekte Des Wittgenstein-Hauses* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1982).



The Wittgenstein House is a painstakingly refined and proportioned house. Each fenestration and threshold were meticulously designed to be perfectly proportioned with the spaces, creating visual harmony throughout the villa.

As for proportional and aperture control, architects Shim Sutcliffe were masters of this domain. Their designs, in particular the Urban House, Laneway House, and Thousand Island House, utilises sophisticated openings to direct views of the users in and out of the architecture.¹⁰ Shim Sutcliffe place their openings very strategically. Entryways are often under-articulated to appear a part of the window system, and picture punch windows are placed in places to direct views at particular features, like a bucolic landscape, or sculptural water feature.¹¹ The pair, also concerned with the quality of light, employ frosted glass as a material to bring in light but maintaining the privacy of their occupants.¹²



*Right: Entryway to the Urban House by Shim Sutcliffe
Below: Elevations and Section of the Urban House*

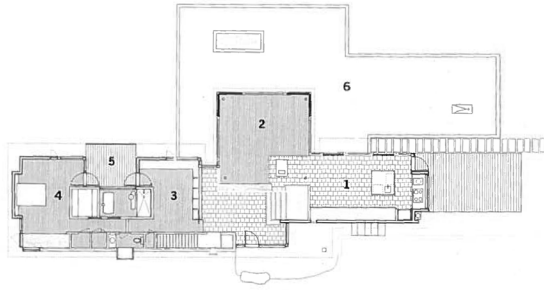
The Urban House has its main entry tucked into the side of the alley, giving the appearance of a concealed doorway into the house. The shifting, split-level like articulation of the levels allows for connection between floors, and for spaces in the upper floor to feel grander, and to imply a sense of importance to the overall scheme.



10 Brigitte Shim and Howard Sutcliffe, *Shim • Sutcliffe* (University of Michigan: Michigan Architecture Papers, 2002).

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.



Above: Plan of the Thousand Island House
 Right: Photograph overlooking living room and reflecting pool

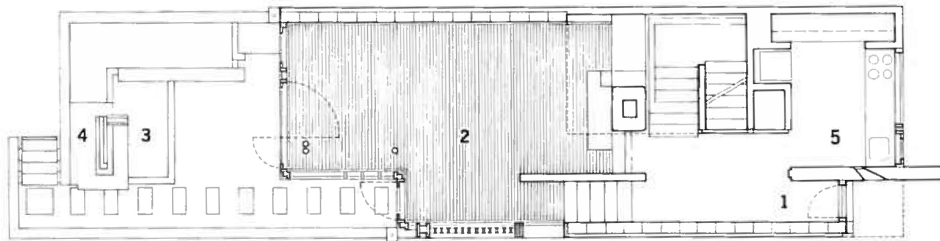


The Thousand Island House not only expresses a free-flowing plan lacking swing doors in many cases, but it utilises translucent material to filter light without losing the privacy of its occupants. The double height living room is light and airy, but the privacy of those within the space is protected from above.

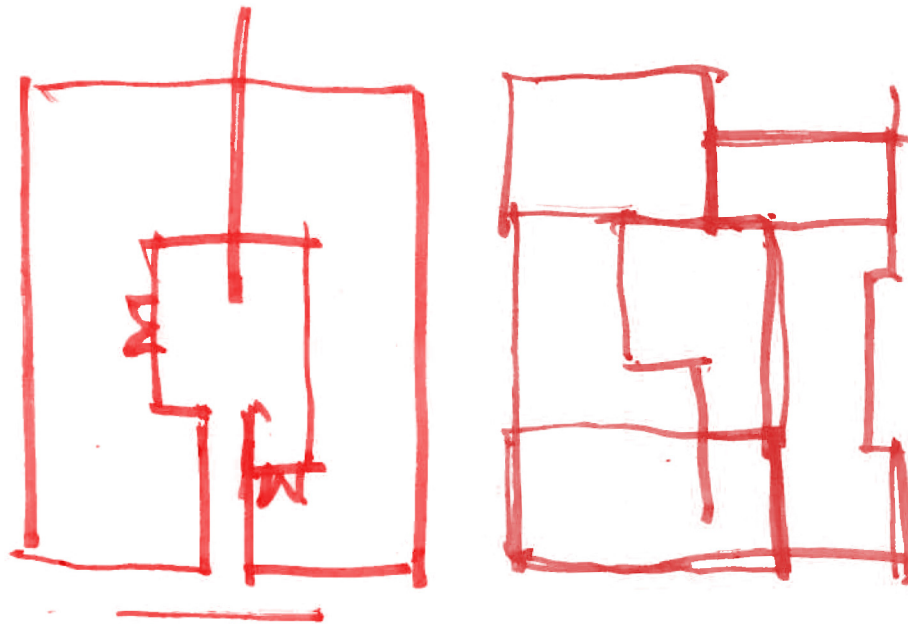


Left: Frontal view of the Laneway House
 Below: Main Floor Plan of the Laneway House

The Laneway House perfectly demonstrates the diversion of views into and out of the house, utilising architecture to direct occupants into certain views and sights. Front the oblique gun-slit window in the foyer, picture windows in the upper floor, to the partially-frosted swinging glass wall in the lower floor to direct gaze into the water feature—the Laneway house is a director of scenes.

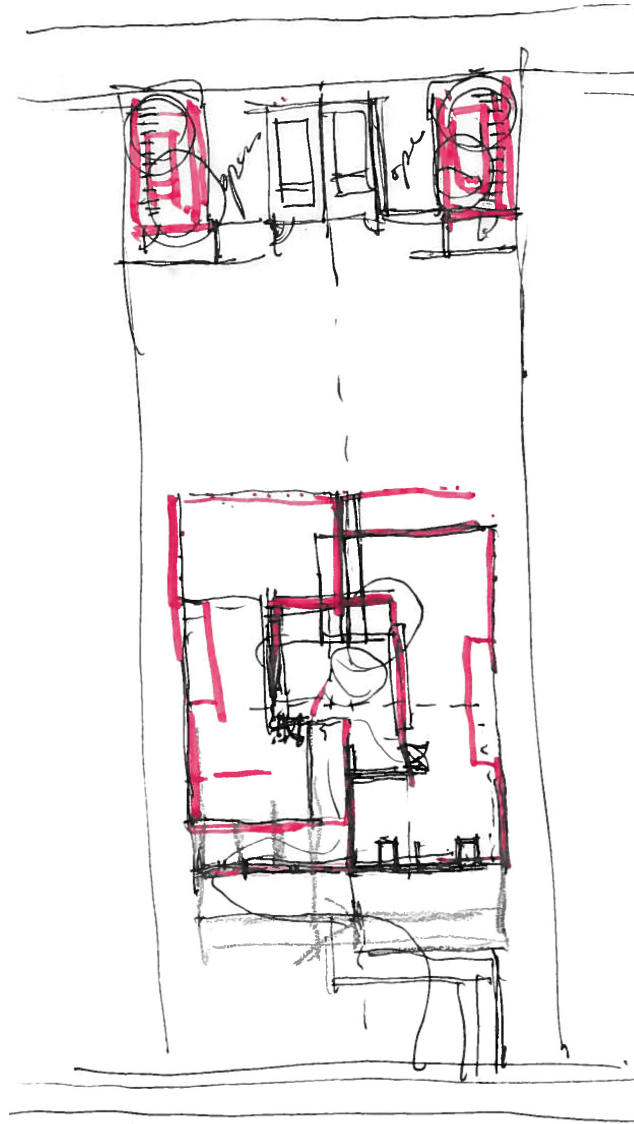


The semi-detached is articulated as a 'concealed duplex'. The two nestled dwellings appear as one large house from the street, only to reveal itself as two separate homes when entered. The two addresses share one entrance staircase, rising up through a raised stone-clad wall. Upon reaching the top of the steps, visitors and occupants must pass through a covered walkway, turning before an interior courtyard, flanked by floor-to-ceiling glass walls, looking into the stairwell of the larger unit, and the corridor of the smaller. This particular expression of glazing is very unlike Eichler or Wright, but the intention is to have full exposure in circulation spaces, so it allows an exhibit of the occupants without losing much privacy. It is also a deliberate device to quicken the pace of the users in those circulation spaces; the repose happens in spaces with smaller, better-controlled openings. Both main entrances are directly exposed into the communal courtyard, to further reinforce the intimacy between the two dwellings.



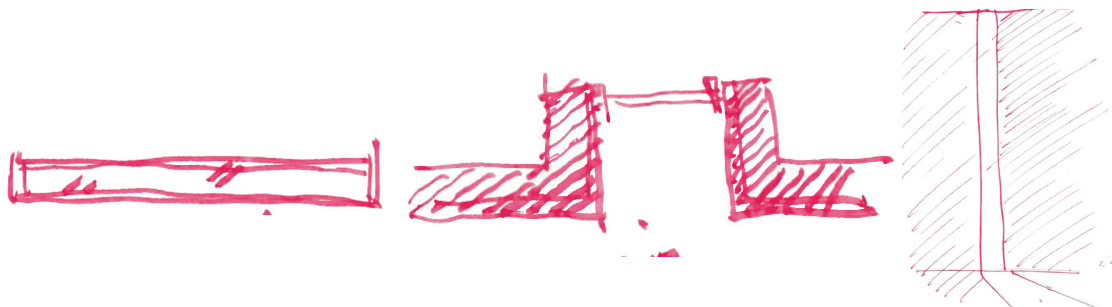
Two preliminary Parti sketches of the proposal; the initial desire was always to create two shared halves of differently designed units, to cater to two different scenarios.

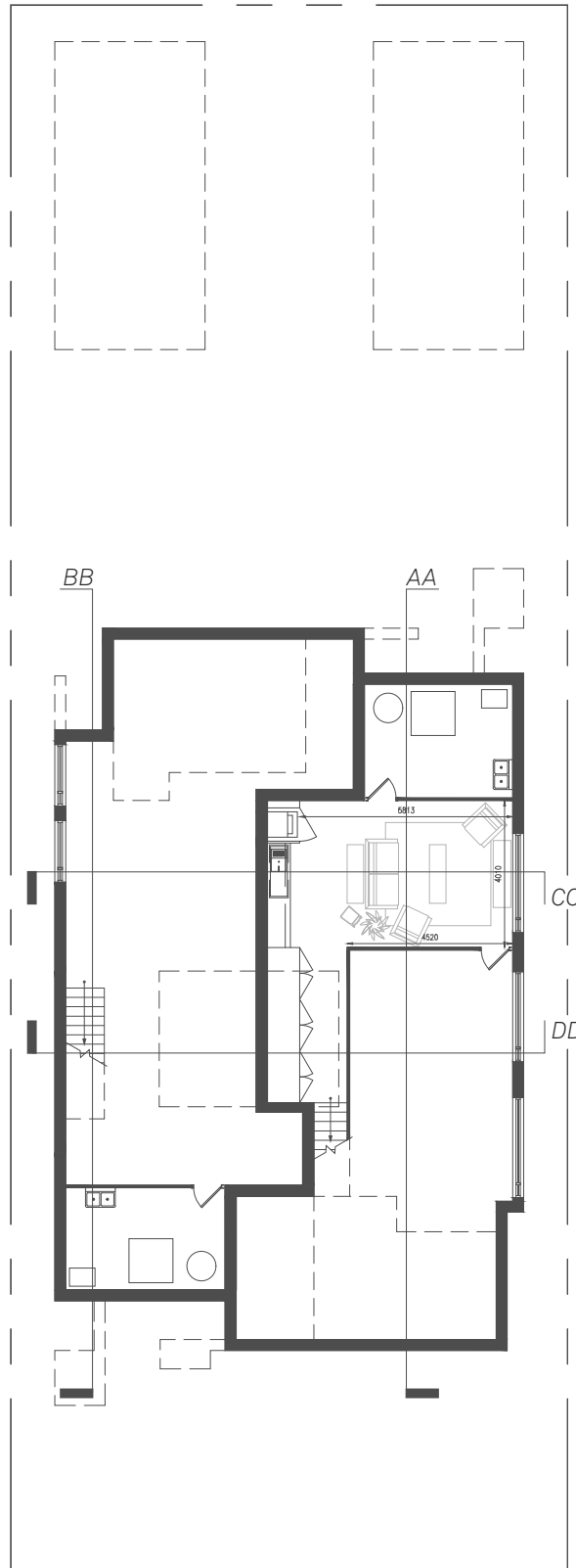
The two halves are not of equal size. One, the left, is larger, and is a double storey, three-bedroom home with a study. The other, the right, is smaller, and is only a single floor dwelling, two-bedroom home with a study that can be converted into an extra bedroom. The intention is to integrate different types of people living together: the larger may be suited to a family, whereas the smaller could potentially house a young family, a childless couple, or even an elderly couple who enjoys entertaining.



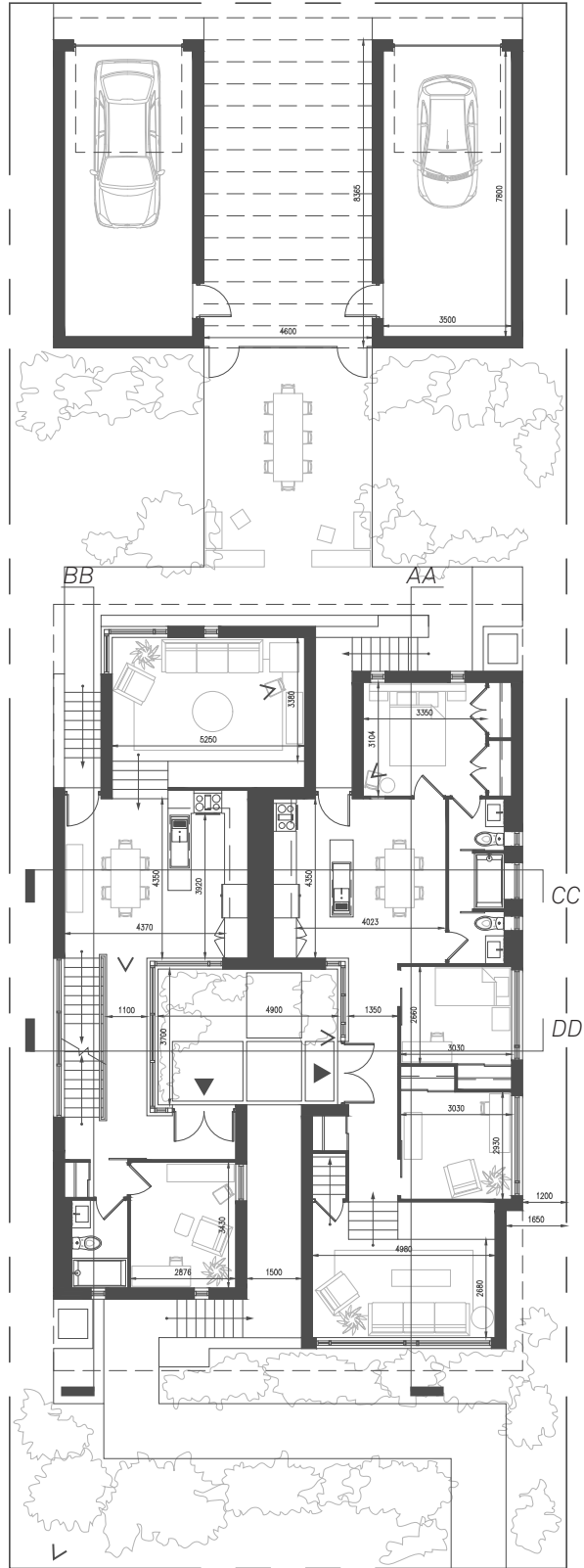
Above: An initial sketch of the design; articulations were beginning to take shape, with all considerations of the form, flow, and outdoor spaces.

Below: Quick sketches of particular architectural moments the proposal is to have in order to achieve its goals regarding privacy, directed views, and light quality.

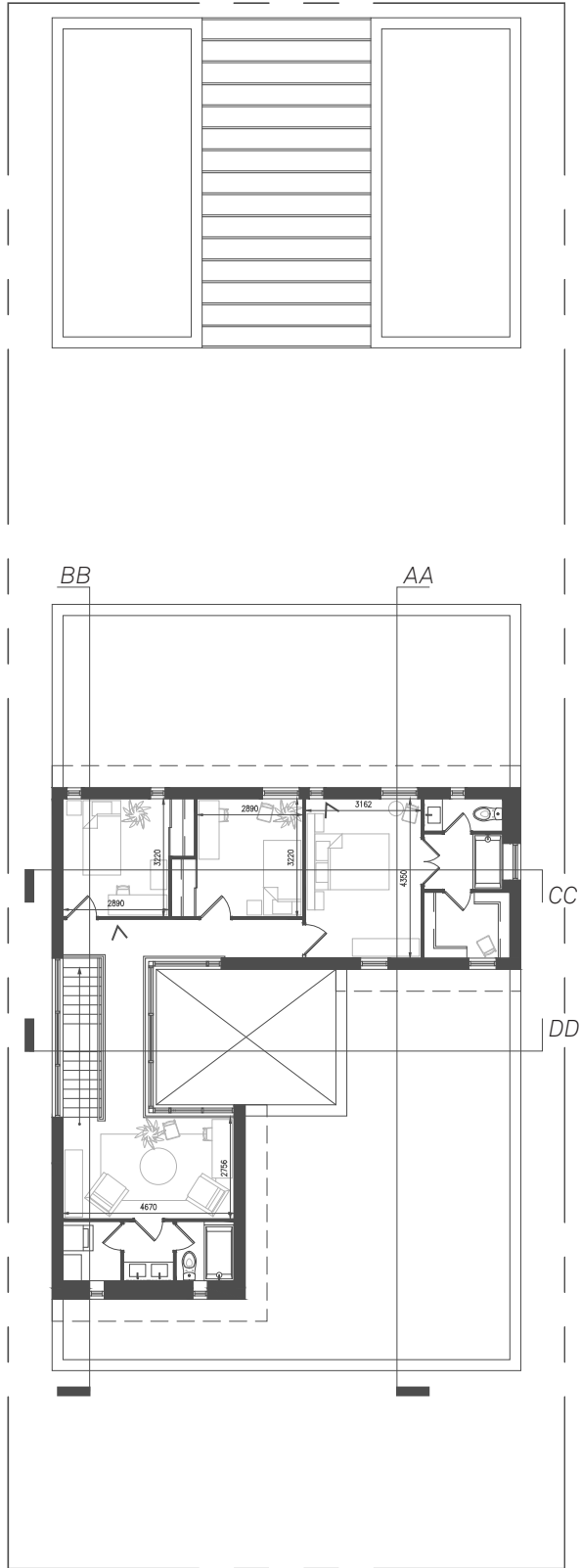




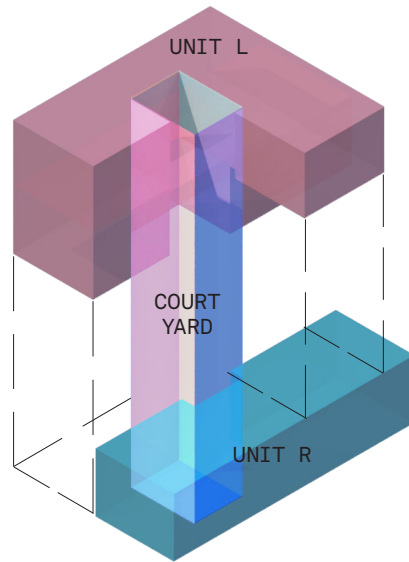
Basement Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

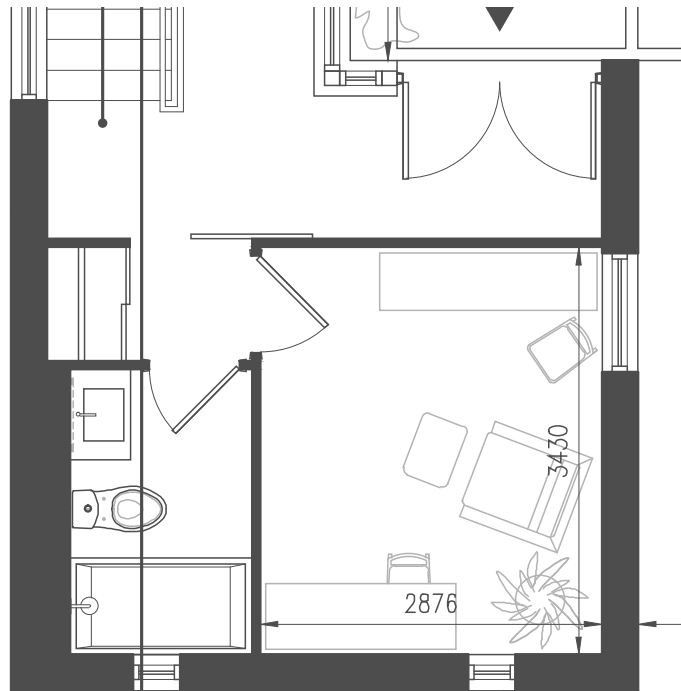


Upper Floor Plan



Exploded Unit Diagram, showing the articulation of the courtyard.

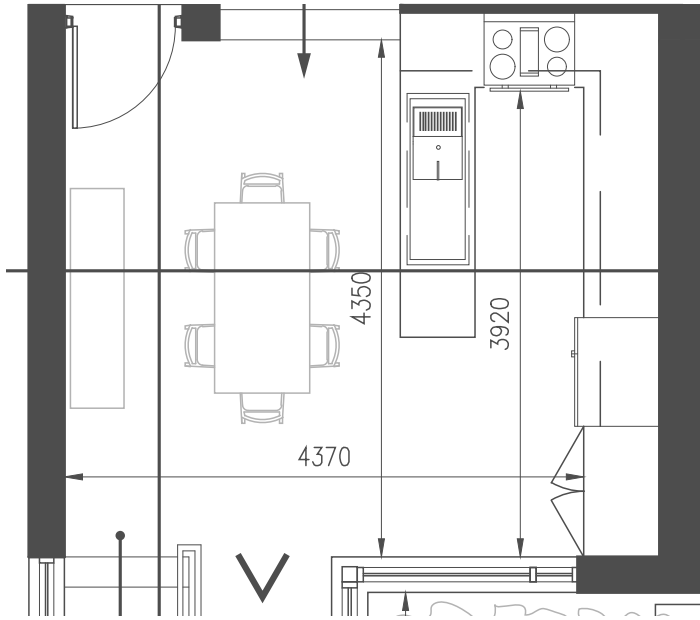
The unit on the left, the larger, enters into a short, abrupt corridor. The doors open quickly to a wall, instructing guests to quickly turn and walk towards the glassy corridor. Concealed behind a pocket door is the hall closet and guest bathroom, adjacent to a private study that looks into the covered walkway into the dwelling. This private study, while lacking in a built-in closet, is not considered to be a bedroom, but its size allows for the conversion into a guest suite if the occupants require it. The concealed study is to be a polarising space: an extremely intimate and private space that faces the high-traffic corridors outside.



Unit L Entry Plan, showing abrupt entryway, and concealed corridor into hallway closet, bathroom, and study.

*Right:
Unit L Kitchen Plan, fed
into by the glassy corridor,
flowing into the sunken
living room beyond.*

*Below:
Image of the kitchen,
expressing a softened
boundary between the
communal court, the
glassy corridor, the
kitchen-dining area, and
further into the living
room. The openness of
a space shows off the
changing privacy levels in
the flowing spaces.*



Continuing through the glassy corridor, users are flanked by an open riser stair on one side, atop a lower staircase leading to the basement, and looking into the communal courtyard in the other. Eventually, one arrives at the kitchen and dining area, where a peninsula kitchen and dining table fill the space. Through this space, one can see into the sunken living room beyond the dining table. To the left, in the corner, is the doorway into the shared rear yard. The kitchen itself includes a full height pantry, as well as extended height upper cabinets.

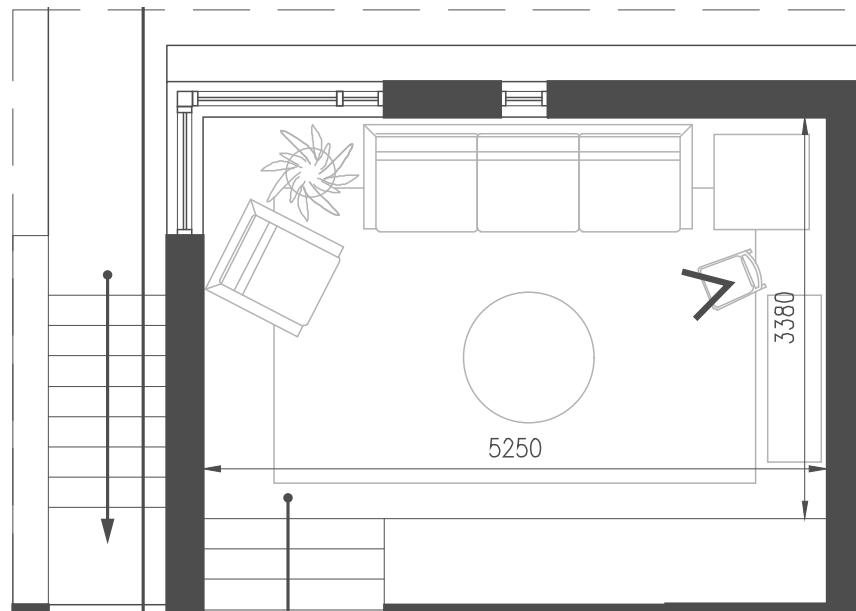




Beyond the kitchen, occupants descend a number of steps into the sunken living room. The lowered floor increases the overall height, and the depth of the steps provide an extended ledge as a place for objects, art, or electronics in the living space. Extended and deep, the space also allows for overlooking into the communal backyard whilst lounging. The room placed in the rear of the house also infers to a kind of slowness in the program, designed for a group of people who prefer a calm afternoon nap when monitoring the activities in the private backyard.

*Above:
The lofty living area
sunken into the
ground to provide a
closer relationship
to the ground plane
outside and grandeur
in a semi-private
gathering space.*

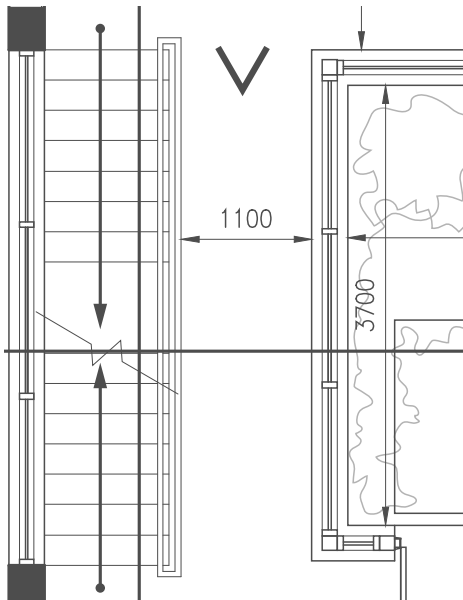
*Right:
Plan of the sunken
living area, showing a
slim gun-slit window
into the rear yard,
as well as a glassy
corner to frame views
out and in.*



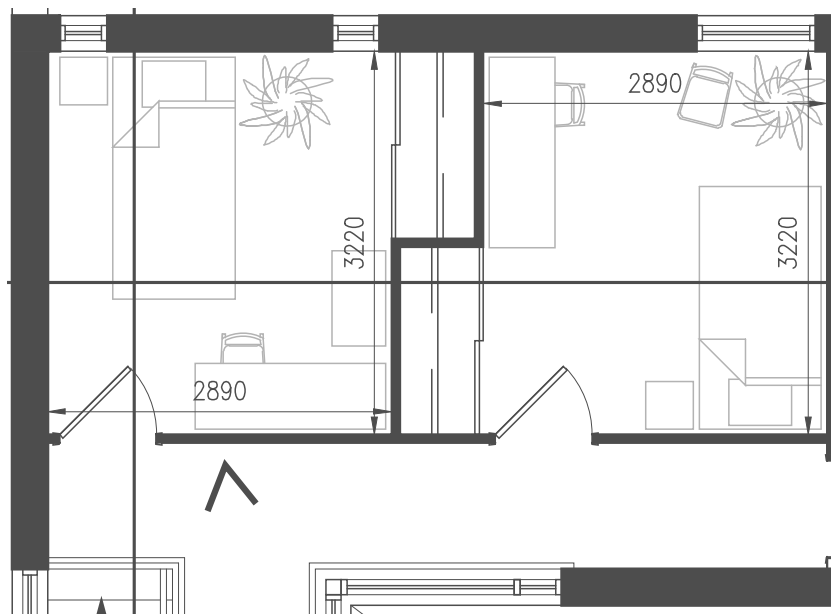
Through the kitchen, one can ascend the staircase into the upper corridor. On the upper level, the corridor continues to feature the floor-to-ceiling glass throughout the corridor. There is a full, double-height glass wall against the side of the staircase also. However, because this wall faces the neighbouring lots, the glass wall abutting the staircase is frosted; the featherweight glass allowing for light to enter the corridor, whilst preserving the privacy of the occupants and directing gazes toward the interior courtyard. A middle landing in the stair allows for a slower pace, to take in the lightness of the corridor as one passes from one floor to the next. Upon arriving at the top of the steps, occupants and guests are met with the entertainment space: an open play area that is flexible to be a gathering space more privately situated for familial rendezvous. Beyond the door is a double vanity bathroom, flanked by a private water closet and laundry area, designed to be the shared bathroom for the children of the family. The entertainment area leads further into the glassy corridor before being met by a series of bedroom doors.

Right:
 The glassy corridor feeds vision glass into the interior court only; the glass wall facing the outer edge of the property is frosted, to provide light whilst maintaining privacy.

Below:
 Plan of the glassy corridor in question; this is the most public area of the entire unit, the glassiness and narrowness is to express also a quickened pace when interacting with the space.



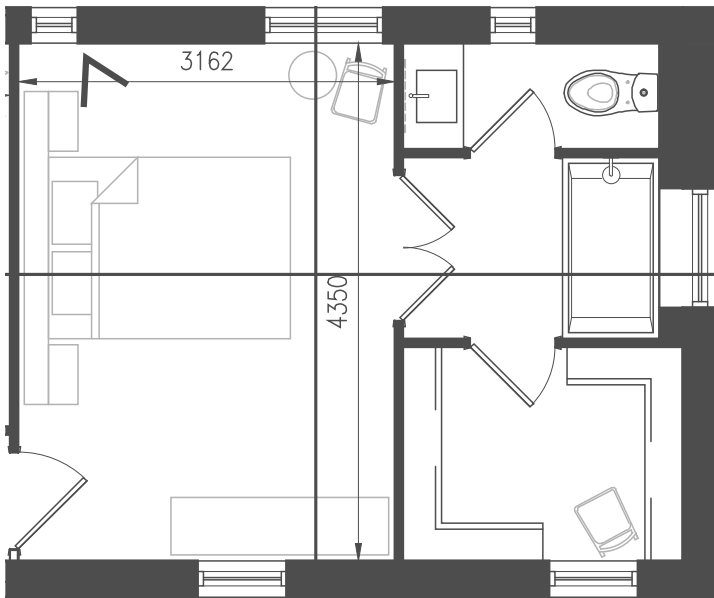
The two smaller bedrooms are identical in size, with identical closets. While the windows for the two bedrooms are articulated differently, the both straddle the line of exposure and enclosure. They are private, slim windows, but they still reach the height of the space, exposing occupants to the outside world, but set back deeply along the extended green roof, leaving them unseen by those looking upwards at grade.



The Plan of the two bedrooms are expressed as 'twins'. The windows are articulated to provide light yet maintain privacy. Looking out of these thin, tall windows one will see an expanse of green-roof, and not the rear yard below.



Met at the end of the hall is the master suite. The room is large, with windows on either side, again, slim yet tall, set far back from the parapet of the building. The bedroom opens through a double swing into a bathtub chamber, this time flanked by a powder room and a generous walk-in closet. Windows leading into these spaces are frosted, further providing the privacy needed to those who use it. All the spaces that look outward can see beyond the property, but they are set back enough to provide privacy from those peering from beyond. Each of the bedrooms is designed to be private retreats, pulled away from the frontages of the street in the front and the laneway in the rear.



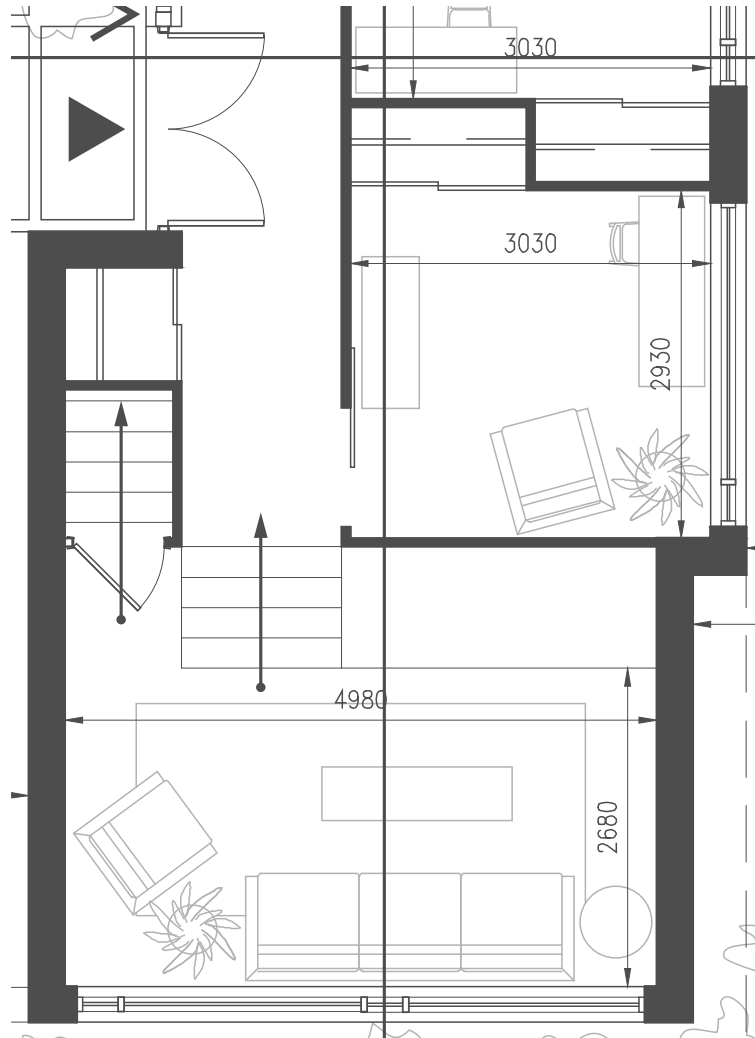
Above:

The intention of the master suite is to have the bedroom bleed into the bathroom, a mixing of the two most intimate program in the home.

Left:

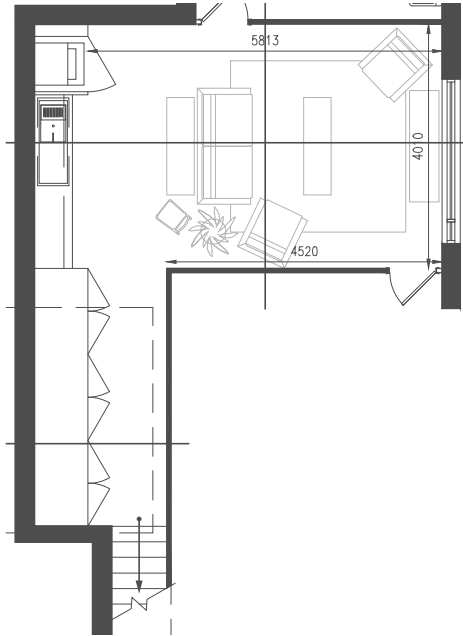
Plan of the master bedroom in Unit L, where a double door swings into a bathroom set under a large picture window. The play between privacy and frame is constant, blending private and intimate moments between the owners whilst separating themselves from the rest of the house.

The entryway in Unit R opens into a two-way corridor, though not anymore deep in comparison to its left-side partner. The corridor is purposely narrowed to instigate movement. The plan of the living room in Unit R is very much like its counterpart.



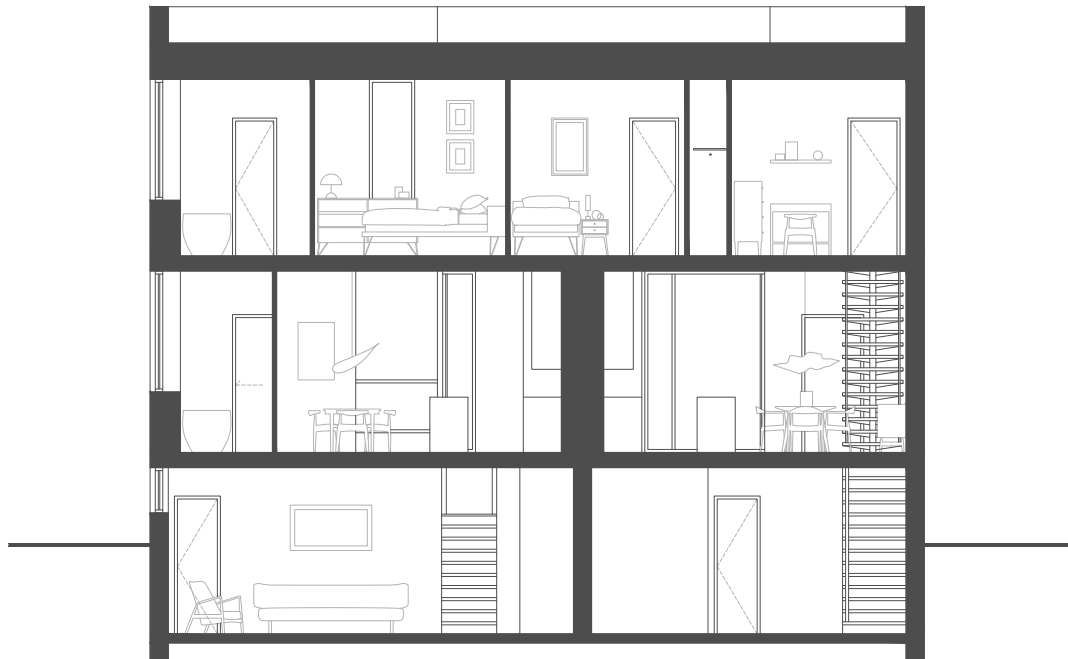
Comparatively, the smaller, right side unit follows similar sentiments. However, this front door opens directly into the centre of a corridor, and acts as a fulcrum between the gathering and intimate spaces. To the right of the front door, at the end of the corridor, the slider opens into a study. This study is equipped with a built-in closet, to easily be refurnished into a third bedroom for the unit. Guests would travel further down a set of steps into a living space sunken to once again create a lofty ceiling height. The window in this living room, however, is a full-width, short reveal window, with the lenth lowered like a hooded eyelid, attuning the horizon beyond the façade of the house. In this unit, the living room faces the front of the house, so the focussed window can anticipate any arriving guests to whom the owners of the unit are hosting. This living room is slightly smaller and more intimate. To the left corner is the doorway leading to the basement.

Down the staircase, through a corridor and series of cabinets, one is led to a finished entertainment area, a quiet place tucked away from the hubbub of the activity above. This small and private gathering space is best suited for get-togethers and games with close friends.



Right:
The plan of the basement entertainment space contains the laundry appliances for Unit R.

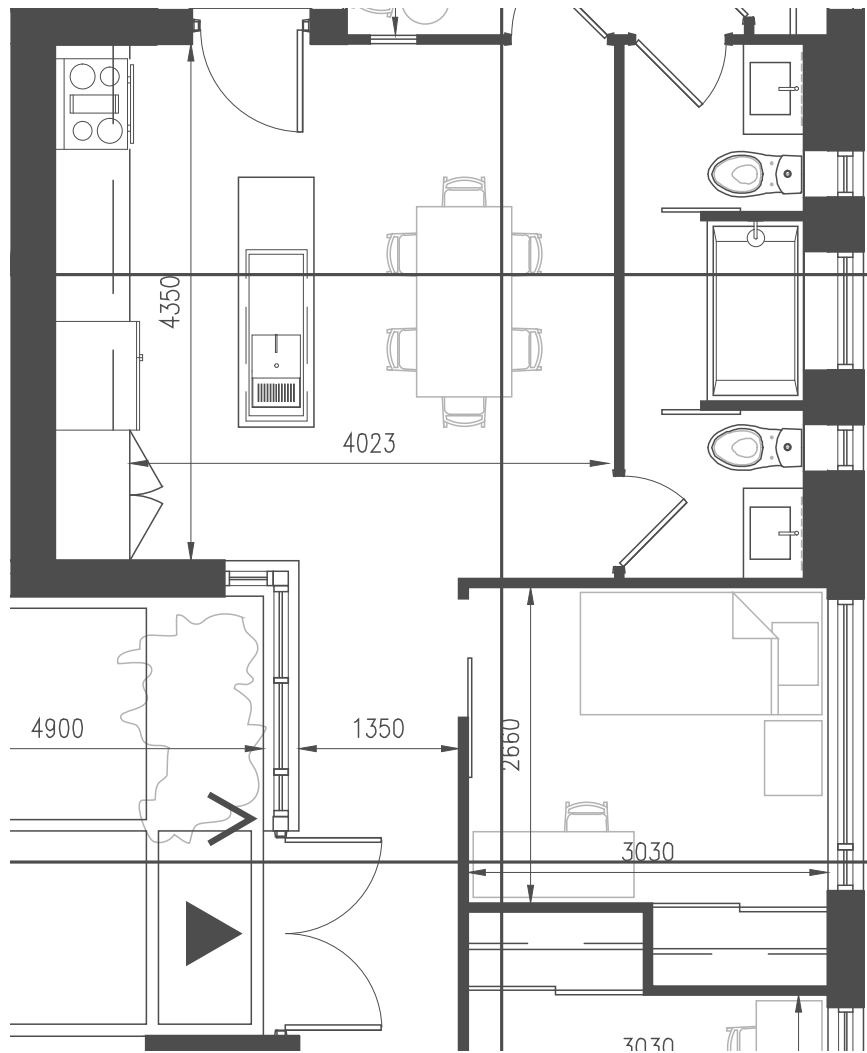
Below:
Section CC, cutting through the upper bedrooms in Unit L, the kitchens of the two units, and the basements, as well as the lower level entertainment space in Unit R.

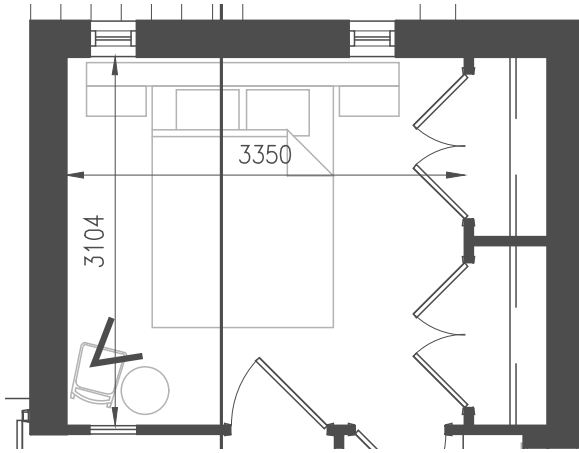


The second bedroom in the unit shares a wall with the study. Both the bedroom and the study are similar in size, both featuring a full-width reveal window that faces the side of the lot. Much like the window of the living room, these windows have a raised sill and a lowered lenti, as to a squinting eye.

Beyond the main corridor that looks into the shared interior courtyard, users are led to the kitchen dining area, an enclosed area in the heart of the unit. As one approaches the window, one can see a frosted glass panel that thinly veils the master bedroom. The kitchen houses an island with a sink, to encourage interaction between those sitting at the dining table and those standing in the kitchen. The door in the rear leads to a covered walkway before turning and descending to the shared yard beyond.

The glassiness of the corridor bleeds quickly into the kitchen dining area of Unit R. Through the corridor, one can glimpse into the master bedroom through a thin, frosted gun-slit window, much like an obscured veil.





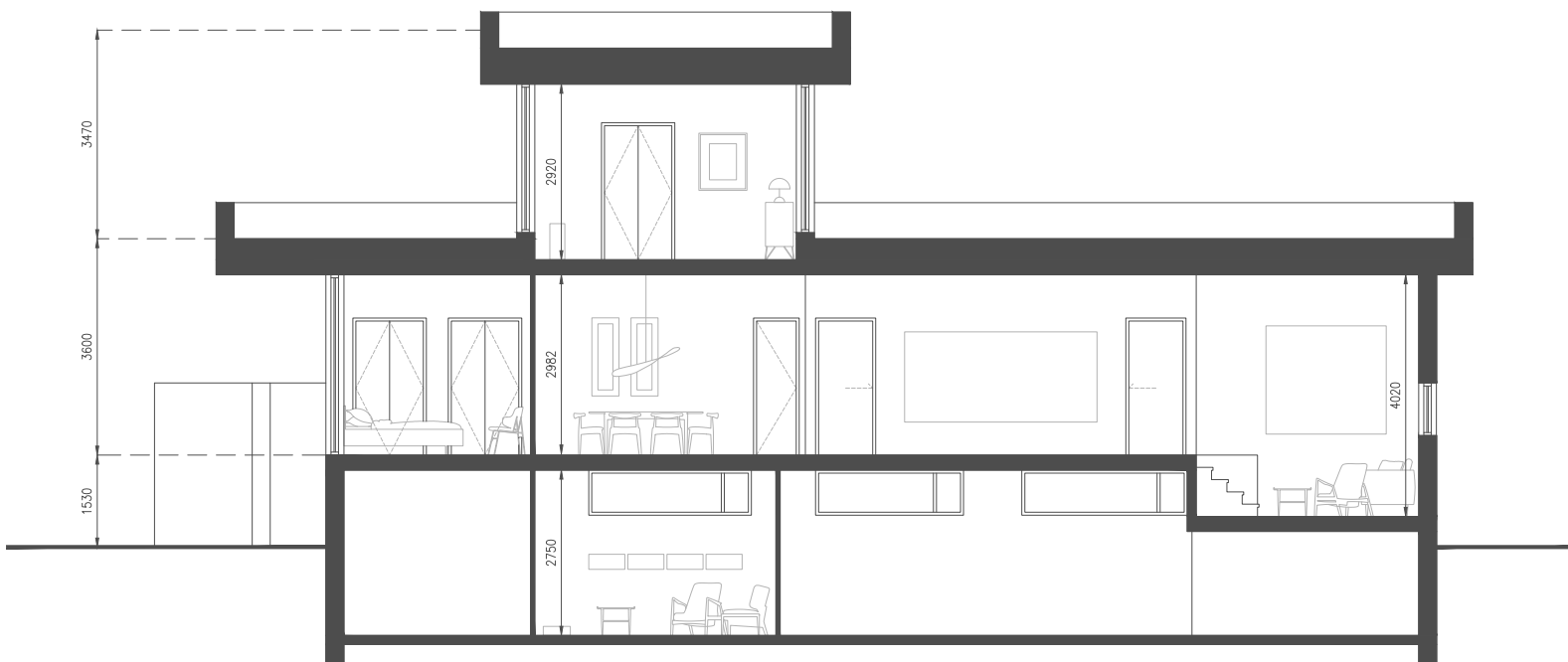
Right:
The Unit R master bedroom faces the rear of the house, overlooking the rear yard, but only in small, thin apertures. The bedroom is concealed from the front and sides, so maximum privacy is maintained.

Below:
The bedroom designed to be a play between concealed and open, especially with the frosted window beyond the foot of the bed.

Through the final door is the master bedroom. The bedroom, aside from the frosted veil peeking into the living area, contains two gun slit aperture windows into the rear yard. The bedroom is private, and the thin windows tucked under the extended overhang of the roof provide that privacy. Through a door, the bathroom is shared between all people living in the unit. Two water closets sandwich a familial bathtub, concealed by pocket doors. The single floor unit focuses more on concealment and privacy, in contrast to the larger family unit that features a fully exposed stairwell.



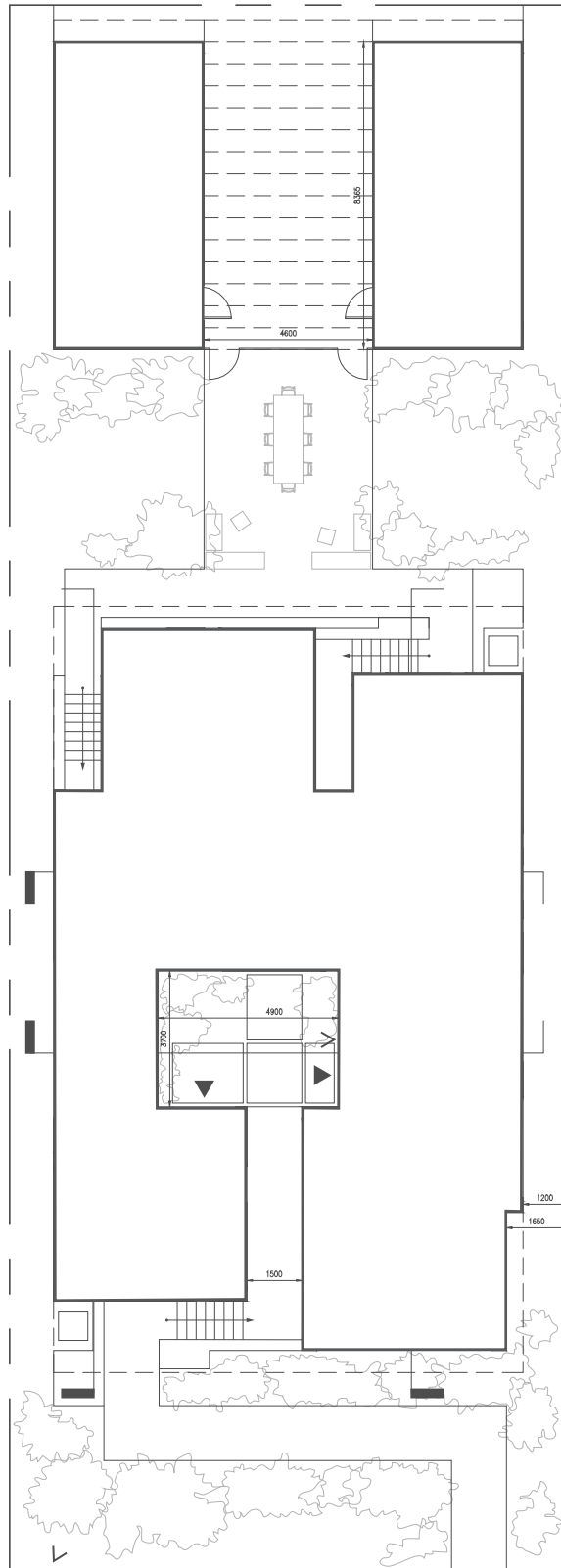
The dwelling requires occupants and guests to ascend a number of steps to enter it, stepping upward over a metre and a half to reach the interior courtyard. The raised ground level is not only to create more of a private domain shielded from the public, but also the raised floor plane creates a sense of lavishness in the two houses. The raised plane acts as a kind of *Piano Nobile*, raising the intimate program beyond the gathering and public spaces below. The lifted ground floor also allows for the basement floor to benefit from larger amounts of day lighting in the building. Basement floors usually are neglected in terms of natural lighting, due to houses being so close to the ground; they are typically left with small, thin windows that serve neither as a cross ventilation device, nor as a day lighting strategy. The *Piano Nobile* of the proposal allows for the underground floor to be more exposed, allowing for larger and taller windows to be present. The spaces then can benefit from windows that are operable for ventilation, as well as allowing for light to carve into the basement areas.



Section AA cuts through the Unit L upper master suite, and the majority of Unit R. It also shows off the changing levels in the unit, from heightened *Piano Nobile* into a lofty, sunken living room.

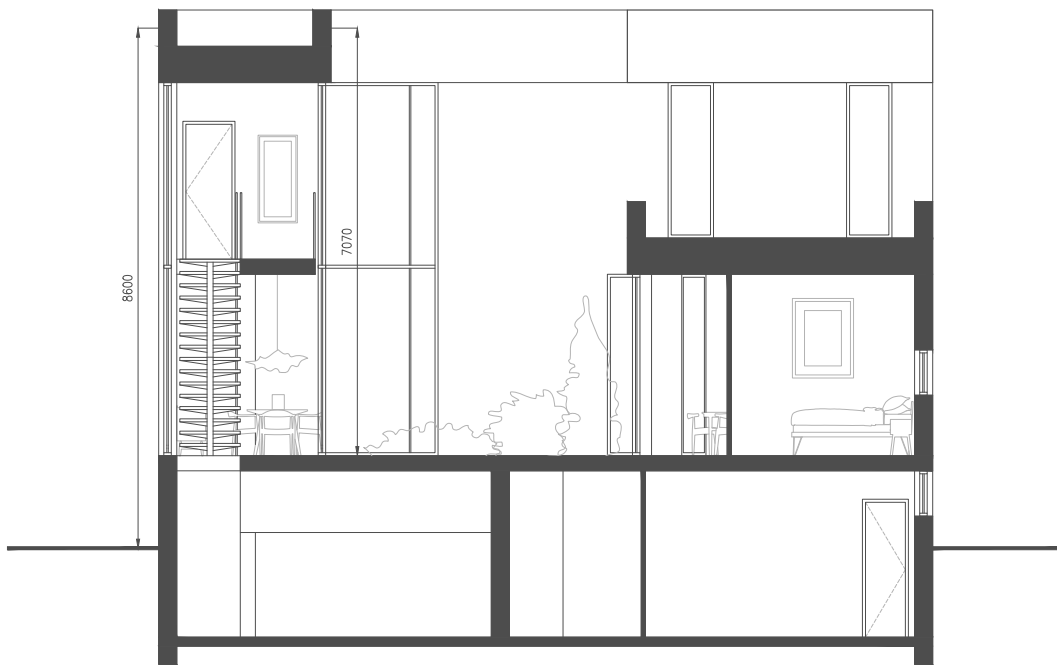
The underground floor houses the mechanical spaces, with each unit housing a separate mechanical system. Despite the encouragement of sharing outdoor and social program, the two dwellings are still distinct and different from one another, with two families that have different requirements and needs for day-to-day comfort. Both mechanical rooms are large enough to be equipped with fully functioning machinery, as well as a close proximity hook-up to the air conditioner unit outside the houses. All mechanical devices and spaces are deliberately concealed away from the rest of the programmed house. The air conditioner unit is hidden behind a heightened stone pillar, away from view as one approaches the house from the front or back. To a visitor or owner, the house has all its mechanical parts hidden away so that one can forget about the inner workings of the architecture within their everyday life.

As mentioned, a typical semi-detached house one that has been duplicated and mirrored with one another. In many cases, the two groups sharing the party wall have little to do with one another, and potentially not even know one another at all. Semi-detached houses and duplexes should connect two parties together, if they do not share an intrinsic familiarity with one another already. Part of the rationale for the proposal is to encourage a more intimate relationship between two families whilst maintaining their separate identities and individualities. Because of this encouragement, all outdoors spaces should be shared. The most private and intimate moments of the architecture are nestled inside with highly controlled apertures and fenestrations to the outside world. As one approaches from the cocoon of privacy toward the exposed exterior, the gradient of privacy and intimacy quickly becomes public and shared when the interior is crossed into the exterior. While the building features no full-window glass walls to the outside—with the exception of the shared interior courtyard, although this is considered a shared private space—the outdoor programs, like the front pathway, the rear yard and patio, as well as the shared porte-cochère, are shared spaces to instigate social interaction between two parties. Two groups that share a party wall should have a relationship with one another, to better empathise with their neighbours' lifestyles. With this distinction of the exterior being in the public realm, the front and rear yards are designed to be social spaces, organised in a co-op like fashion. Two groups are to share the outdoor spaces in hopes of building new bonded relationships, or reinforcing existing ones.



Ground Floor Plan, interiors blanked to highlight outdoor spaces

This distinction of the exterior in the public realm, and the interior in the private, causes the house to be highly enclosed. All outward facing openings are highly controlled, but not overly shielded. Many of the windows, while full floor-to-ceiling height, are considerably narrow in their proportion, similar to that of a fortified gun slit or narrow passageway. Conversely, some other windows span long widths of a space, but are quite short in height. Its proportion is borrowed from extreme landscape paintings and horizon attunement devices. Openings in the building fully emphasise the verticality or the horizontality of a space, and never fully expose the interiors to the outside world with full, floor-to-ceiling glass. The sole exception to this rule is the glassy inner courtyard, and the glass wall adjacent to the staircase. The intention in that area is to provide light, airy circulation spaces for the two units. The shared entry courtyard is intended to be a 'private' public space, a shared gathering area for those who inhabit the houses and those select guests who are invited to visit. Lastly, as previously mentioned, the glass wall beside the staircase is merely an exaggerated aperture to bring in light and evoke a featherweight quality, with privacy maintained in the frosted glass finish.



Section DD shows the vertical relationship of the courtyard between units. Both units can look into the communal court, and into each other's spaces. This deliberate openness towards one another is to indicate the public nature of the two corridors.

Combining the intention to retain individuality and personality within each unit, with the controlled aperture to ensure privacy, the building has many solid wall surfaces. These solid wall surfaces are created so those who inhabit the dwellings can have an opportunity to hang artworks that reflect their personality and style. With the advent of full-height, full-width glass walls, it diminishes the opportunity to hang artworks and pieces that reflect a person's tastes and sensibilities. Much of these windowed, glassy houses leave little for the individual to express himself in his space, while fully exposing his objects and himself to the eyes of the outside world. This proposal runs the opposing route, providing privacy, apertures to the exterior, as well as ample space to proudly display his objet d'arts.



Four examples of ample wall space in the two units to hang artworks, as to reflect the personality and choices of the residents of the duplex.

The slim and controlled windows in the building are to enforce privacy and allow for a better expression of its occupants, but the limited amount of openings also allow for a better handle on the thermal control within the architecture.¹³ With glass being such a poor thermal mass, the more glass means the more heating and cooling escaping the envelope of the building. The building, being as solid as it is, can have more wall area containing insulating materials, thus leaving a better control of the thermal changes both internally and externally. The material palette of the architecture also assists the heating and cooling of the building: dark slate tiles and stone exterior cladding all come together as additional thermal mass, absorbing the heat of the sun and slowly releasing it into the spaces they finish.¹⁴ While

¹³ Norbert Lechner, "Design Strategies," in *Heating, Cooling, Lighting*, Third ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009a), 122 - 129.

¹⁴ Ibid.

aesthetically influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, the exaggerated overhangs in the building help shade the interiors in the summer, without obstructing low-level sunlight in the winter.¹⁵ The entire building is also fitted with a green roof to retain a considerable amount of rainwater, as well as reducing the cooling load of the duplex in the hotter, summer months.¹⁶ The overall build uses these passive strategies to assist in the betterment of the architecture.



The exterior takes cues from great house builders, like Shim-Sutcliffe's deliberately controlled windows, and lengthy overhangs from the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Two edges come together and they touch. As the caress continues, they intertwine into each other. They twist, and grasp. The two forms adhere to one another but they never blend and mix, they simply remain affixed. Both objects remain their own selves; the two are *nestled* together.

The competition brief asked for a design through four separate scenarios. By choosing the attached dwelling, or semi-detached, scenario, it freed up a design in which a different kind of duplex can be realised. Typical semi-detached homes are mirror images of one another, either favouring one party over another, or leaving both parties compromised in their desires. In this proposal, the two dwellings are

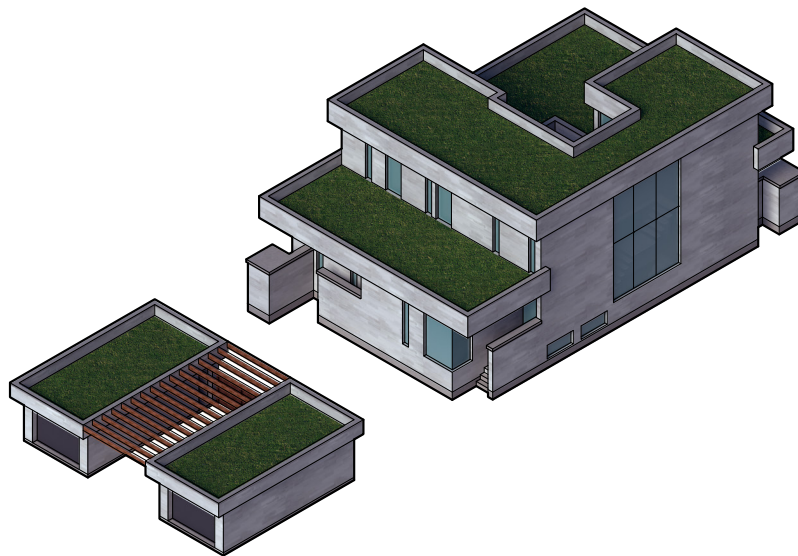
¹⁵ Norbert Lechner, "Fixed Exterior Shading Devices," in *Heating, Cooling, Lighting*, Third ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009b), 217 - 219.

¹⁶ Norbert Lechner, "Green Roofs," in *Heating, Cooling, Lighting*, Third ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009c), 328 - 331.

entirely different, and cater to different families who have different aspirations for what their ideal living space should be. One unit, the larger, spans over two floors and houses more space for a larger, growing family, while the opposite unit, the smaller, remains a bungalow suited for a smaller family who may enjoy entertaining.

The two units appear to be one house from the exterior, with its main entrances quietly tucked away from the prying eyes of the street. The private entrances and openings into the interiors are contrasted by the open, communal outdoor spaces. While the two houses are private and individual, the shared gathering spaces outside are designed to encourage flourishing relationships between the two neighbours, and to build bonds with the two parties.

By taking inspirations from the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright, Eichler, Wittgenstein, and Shim Sutcliffe to name a few, the house itself is an homage to great house builders of the modern-to-contemporary era: a select few masters who built with a consideration for beauty, poetry, and comfort of the residents who live in them.



Proposal Isometric: Rear

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