

Price House

Manhattan, Kansas

David Sain

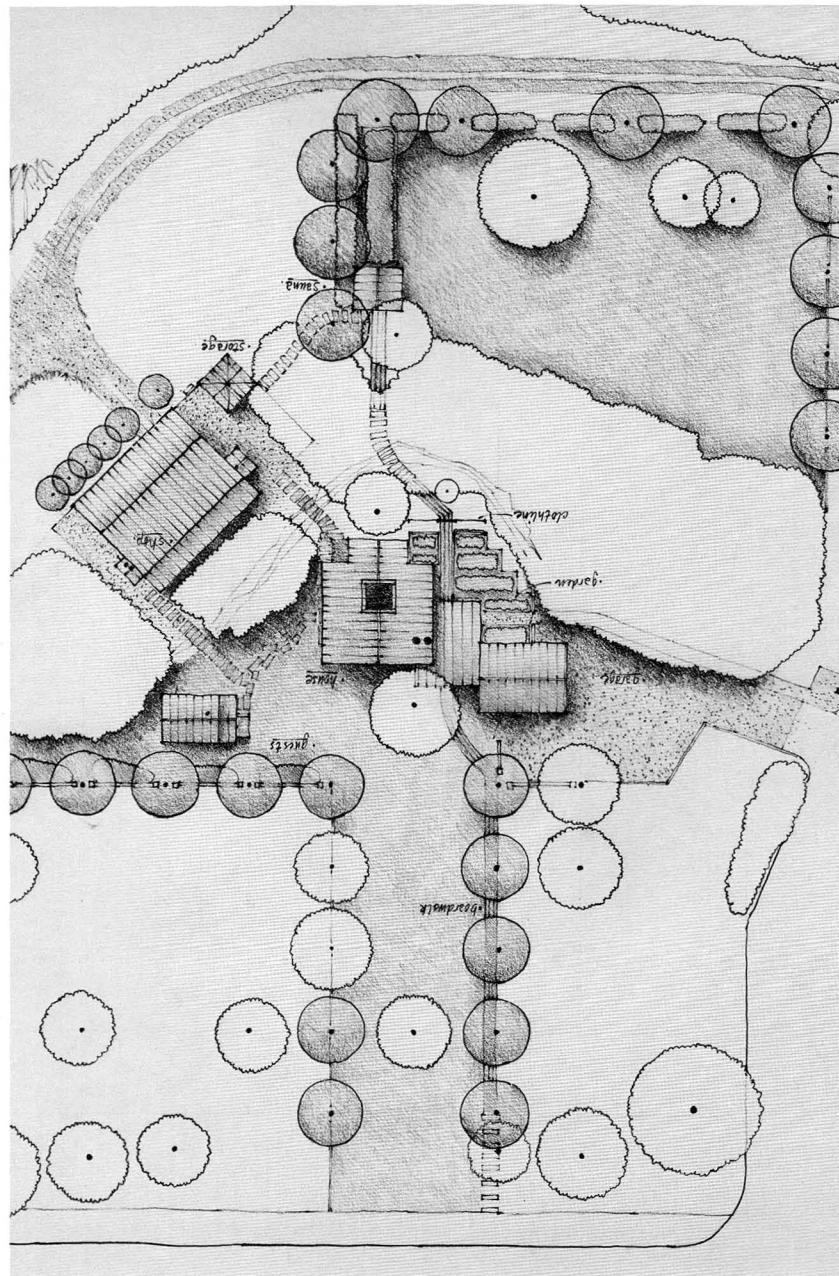
Critic: Lew Seibold

A dwelling should have a strong relationship to its cultural and natural surroundings. The Price House brings form, order and details together in a unified response to the natural setting as well as to Mr. Price's requirements.

Mr. Price is a retired furniture manufacturer and wants to build a dwelling where he can spend his time at a leisurely, tailored pace. He will spend his days gardening and working on furniture in his new workshop. The site is a densely wooded tract of land on the outskirts of Manhattan, Kansas. Winding through the center of the site is a small ridge of stone and trees that isolates the private space from the public front facing the street.

In locating spaces on the site a harmony is created between the natural and ordered landscape, yet the cultural expectation of middle American housing is retained. The house, porch, and garage terminate a long front yard of bluegrass that extends through the grove of fruit trees to Clafin Avenue. The porch is located at a point of natural repose on a small promenade reaching out from the ridge. From this point one can see from the back of the site to the street and yet feel enclosed within the trees. Entry to the house occurs at the covered porch which also serves as a place of transition from the public realm of the street, to the private realm of the backyard.

The backyard contains both a formal and informal space which is separated



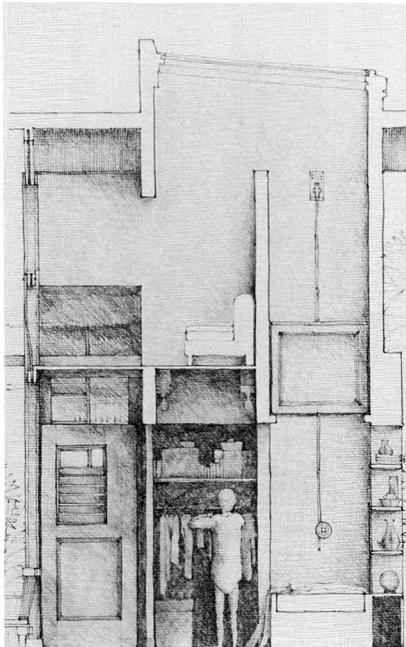
Site plan.

by the location of the sauna. The informal work area is a natural clearing that remains rugged and accentuates the western front of the workshop. The formal area is defined by the sauna, garden plantings and the existing ridge.

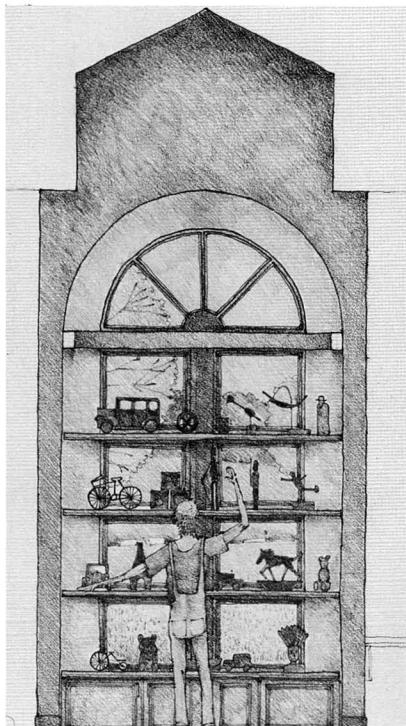
The buildings are simple in form, yet rich in spatial quality. The heart of the dwelling is a centrally located bedroom. With the doors and skylight open, the bedroom becomes the place where a horizontal extension of man and nature intersects with a vertical extension to the sky. Surrounding the bedroom are spaces which correspond to distinct parts of the site. The living room mediates with the formal front yard through a large window. The kitchen and dining room open to the garden and the washroom faces the trees for privacy.

Door openings throughout the house are designed to provide efficient use of space, yet allow a metamorphosis to occur for special occasions. For example, when the washroom door is closed the hallway becomes a place of movement, but when opened, the door defines the washroom space. In the kitchen closed doors conceal pots, pans, and dishes, but when fully opened provide separation from the living and dining rooms.

In developing the concept of bedroom as the heart of the dwelling and simultaneously designing the detail elements to support the concept, an examination of common actions occurs.

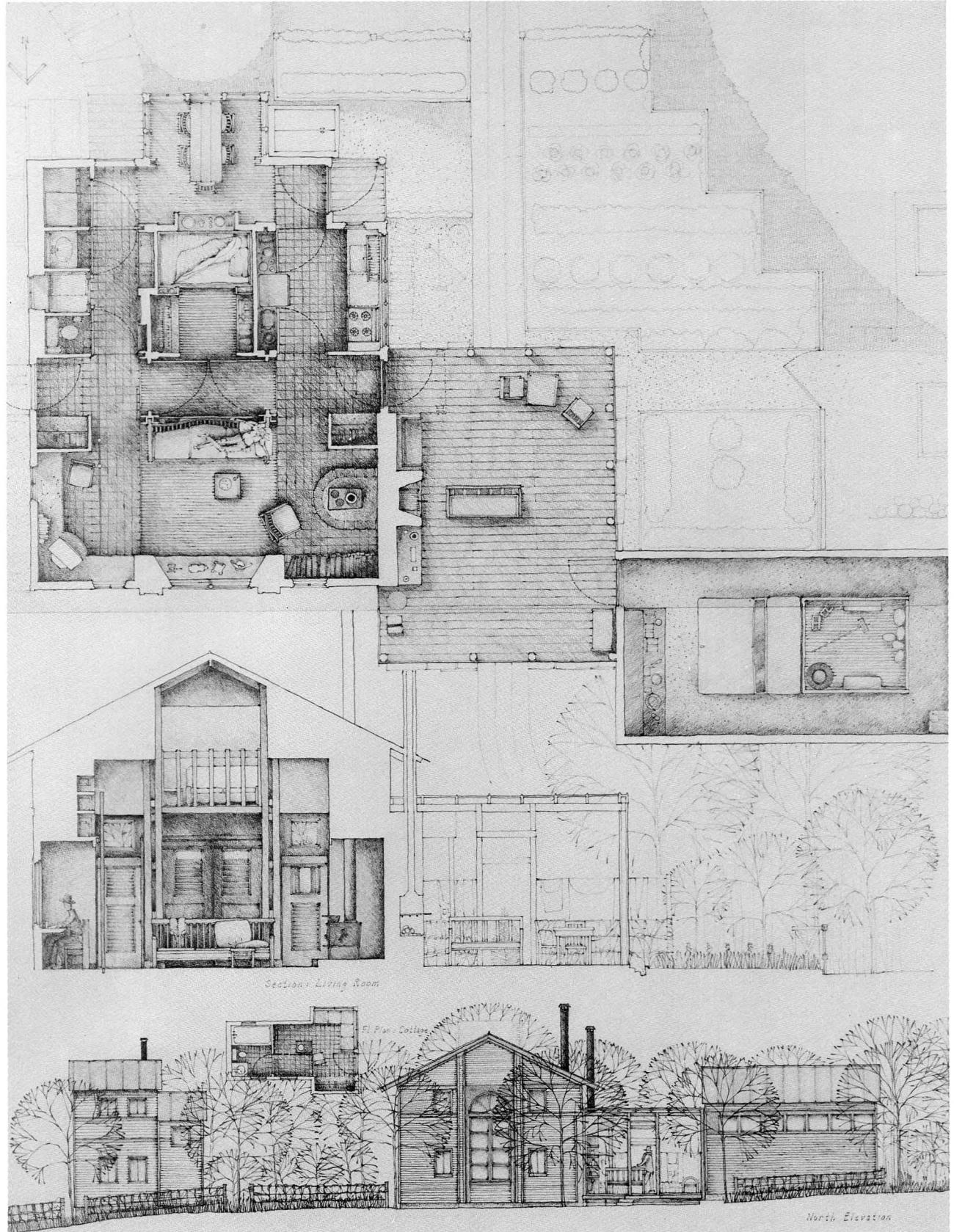


Bedroom section.



Living room window.

Washing dishes, opening a door or placing objects on a shelf become celebrated events because the architectural details which support these activities directly relate to the overall concept. The result of this synthesis of concept and details is a cohesive solution which allows one to appreciate the dwelling through its special details.



Plans, sections, and north elevations.