

# A Camp on Cat Lake

Rocky Mountains of Colorado

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Critics:

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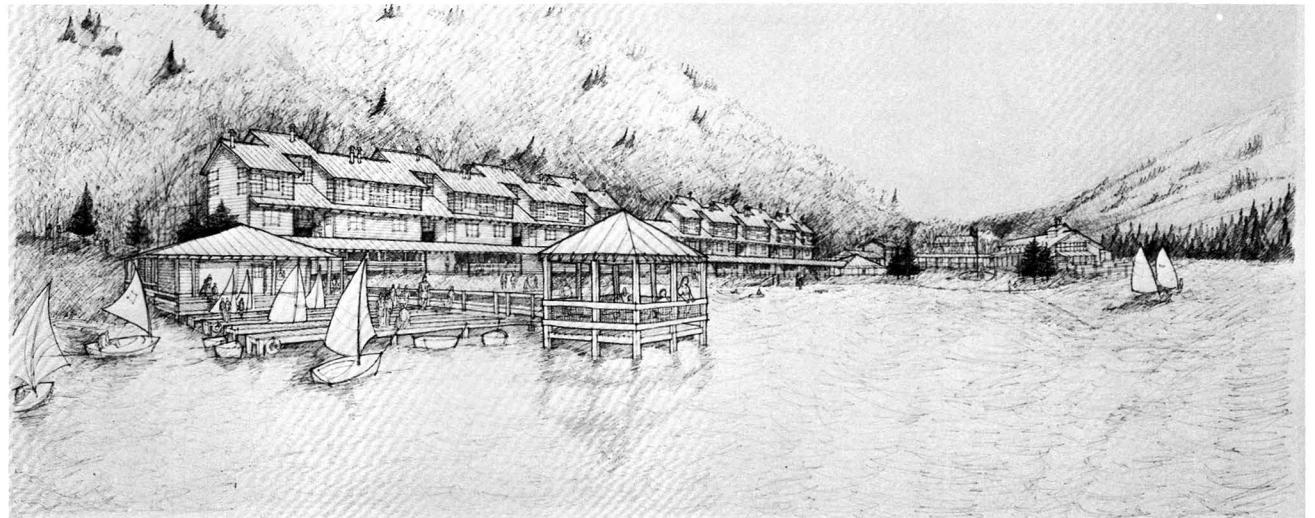
Lewellyn Seibold

Robert Burnham

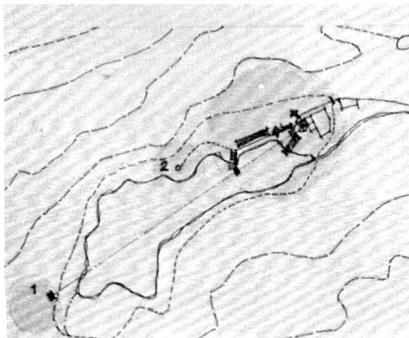
Lower Cataract Lake is set in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado under the auspices of the 14,000 foot peak of Eagle's Nest Mountain. The northern slopes are densely populated with a variety of pine while the southern slopes, where the camp is located, are covered with stands of aspen and bluegrass meadows. A campground and a number of hiking trails make this area popular to the general public despite its inaccessibility to the automobile.

The camp is to be functional year-round; however, only during the summer months will it be a fully-staffed private camp with organized activities for two-hundred people. The intentions of the camp are to emphasize interaction with the natural environment, other guests, and self. Facilities to be provided include living quarters for staff and campers, a caretaker's residence, a dining hall, a barn, a crafts cabin, a dock with boat storage, indoor/outdoor activity areas, a campfire, and a retreat shelter. The site is to remain open for the general public as well.

The programmatic requirements created two major design issues: making of place and responding to context. The issue of place involved several concerns. First, the arrangement of buildings in a natural environment of such large scale and beauty required that the buildings should not

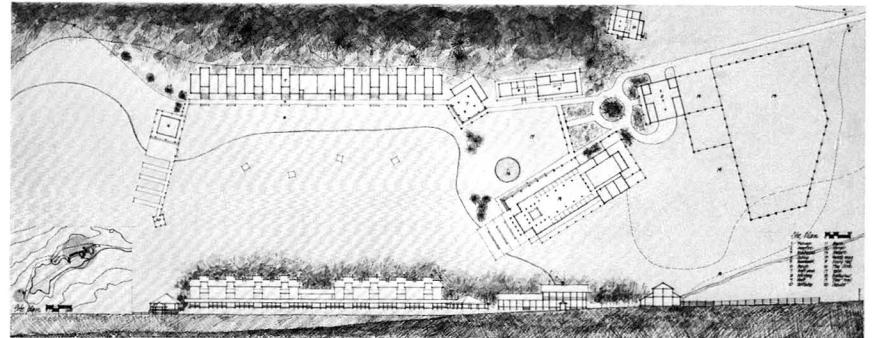


View of Camp from Lake



Location

dominate this landscape. Second, the variety of activities created a complex planning situation. It was necessary for the settlement to occur in such a way that the group of buildings would have cohesiveness and meaning. Third, since the continued use of the site by the general public was required, the need was present to

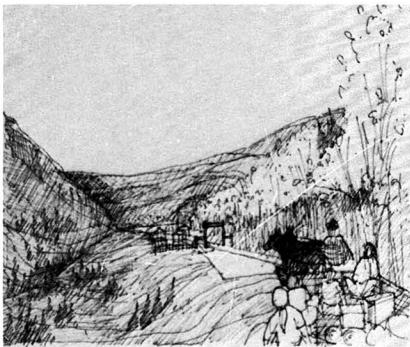


Site Plan

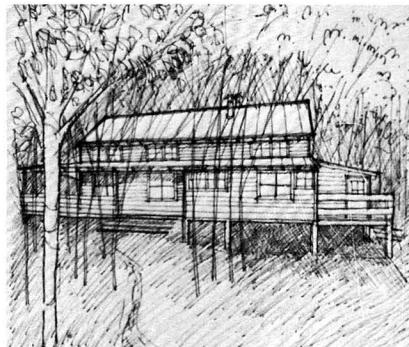
define clearly the boundaries of the private campground. And finally, it was necessary to pay special attention to the experiential qualities of the site and the needs of the individual in this setting. The concept of the camp was to carve out a section of the lake and land to claim for itself. Strategic physical and visual connections, com-

mon materials, and a specific vocabulary of forms and details allow the scheme to read as a unified whole.

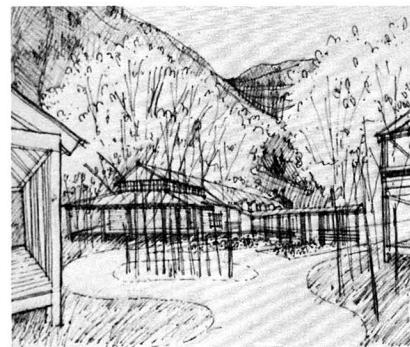
The second issue, contextual response, was addressed by associating camp buildings with the surrounding rural vernacular of farms, ranch buildings, and existing ex-



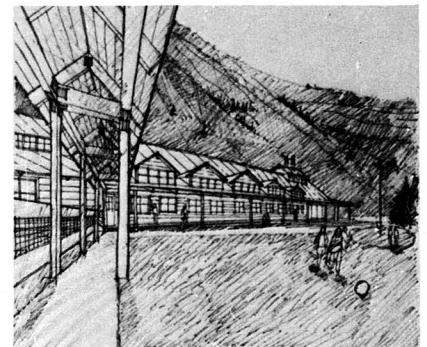
**Camp Approach**



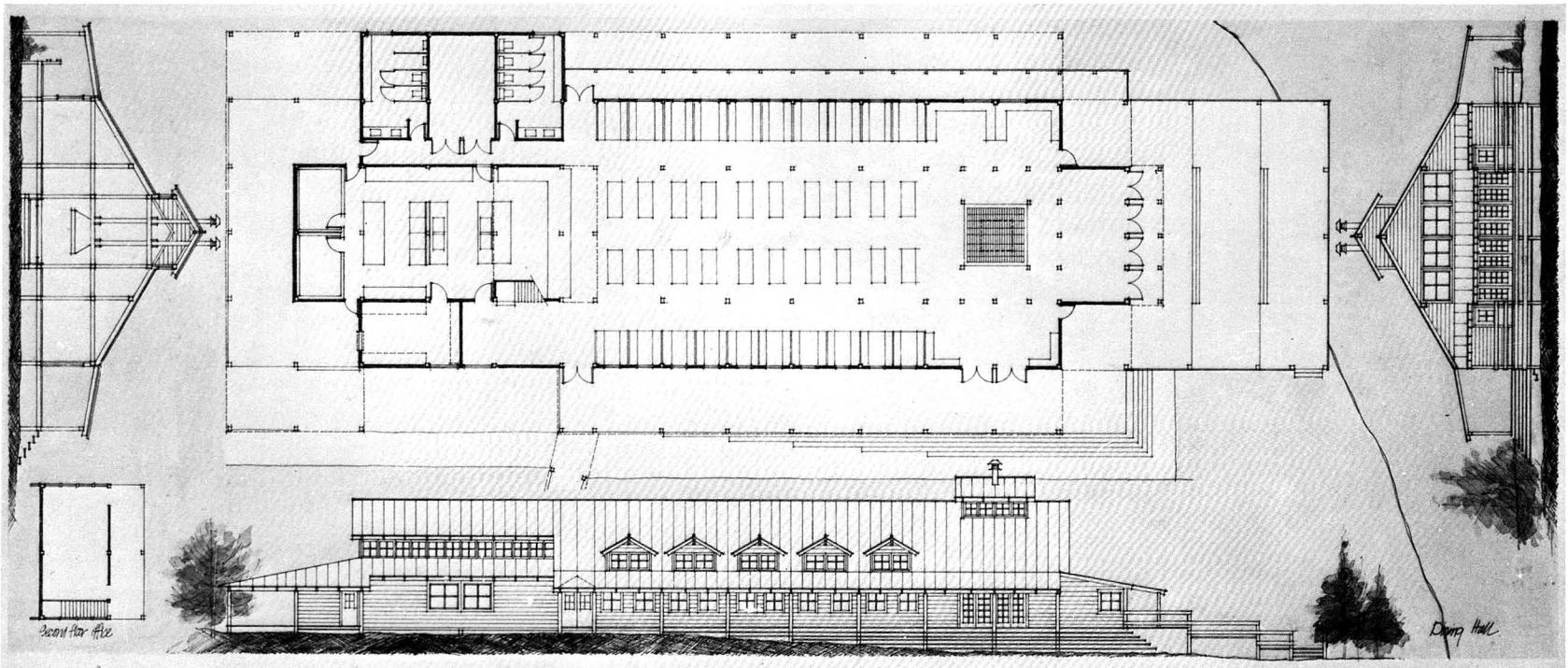
**Caretaker's Cabin**



**Entrance**



**Dining Hall**



**Dining Hall Plan**

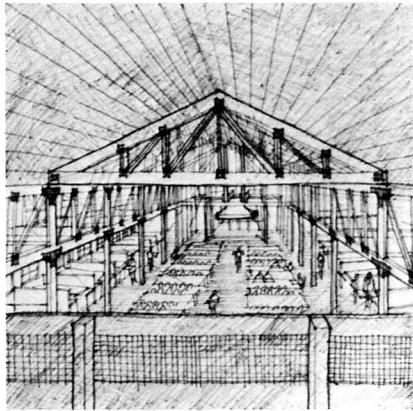
amples of camp architecture. Camp buildings became simple forms of heavy timber construction set above the ground on pole foundations. This building type allowed for mountain

run-off, easy access in the deep snows, and adjustment for irregular terrain. Wood siding, metal roofs, metal structural connections, and wire mesh railings were used throughout.

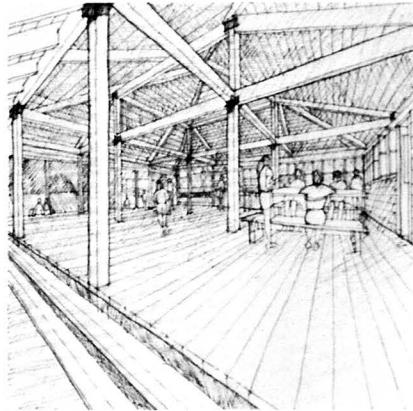
Detailing was critical as a means of expression.

The camp utilizes the edge of the lake and an axis as ordering elements. The

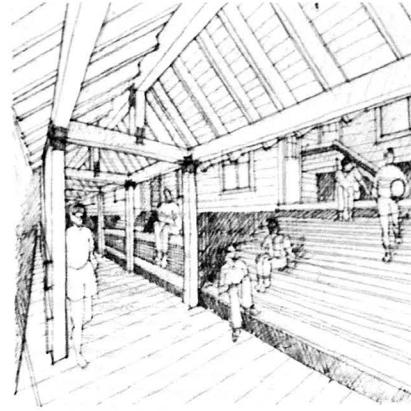
axis, acting as a continuation of the proceeding valley, visually connects entry, the floating gazebo, and continues through the center of the lake where it terminates in the most sacred



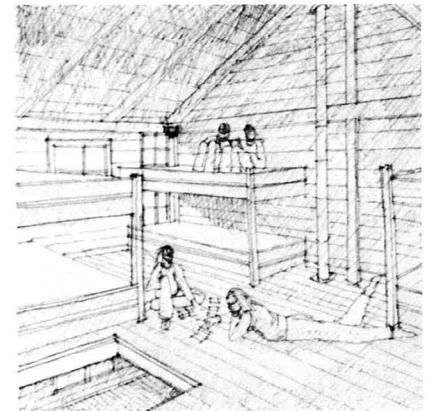
**Interior of Dining Hall**



**Craft's Porch**



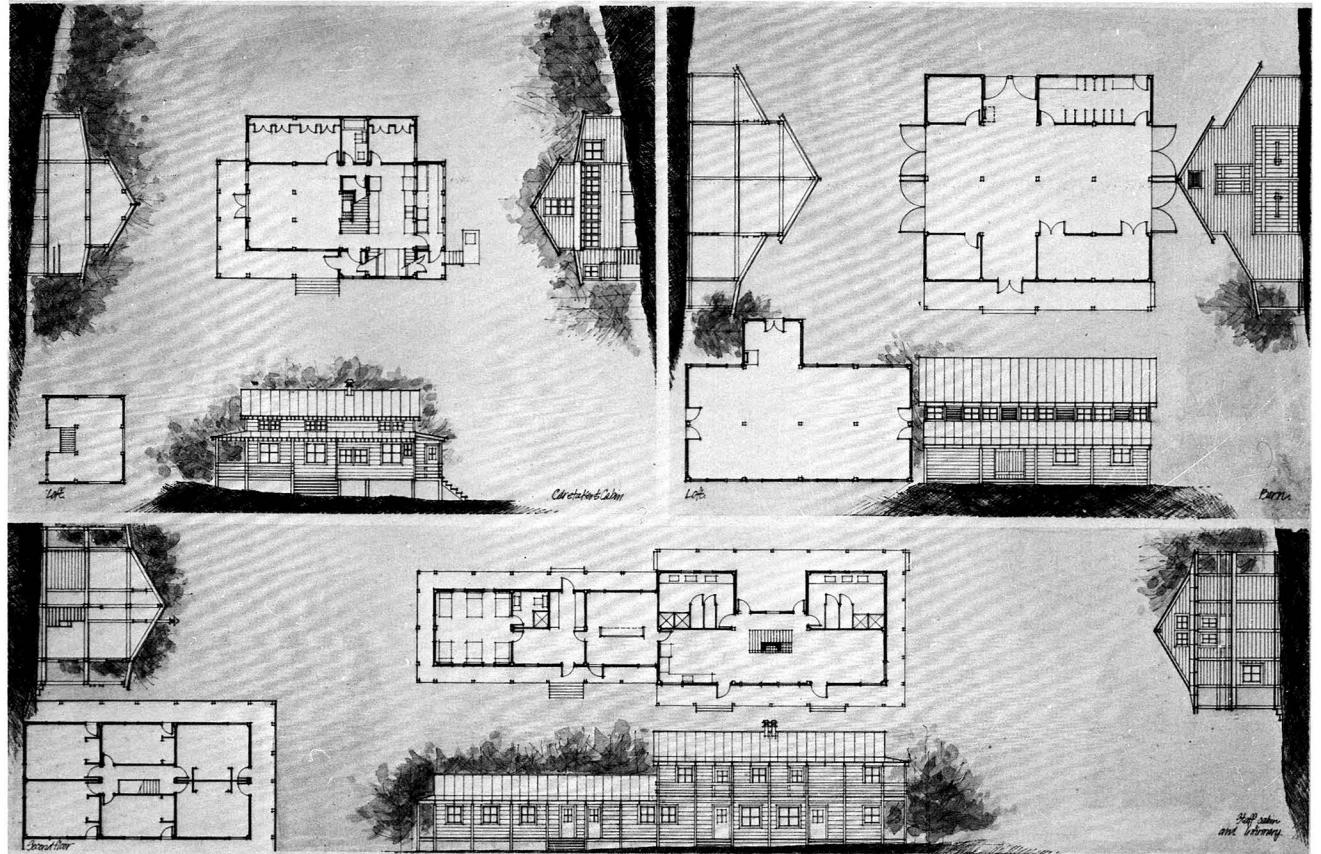
**Boardwalk**



**Cabin Loft**

place—the retreat. The edge of the lake gathers the rest of the camp around itself into clustered groupings so as not to impose on the open terrain or existing trails.

A linear organization and a balanced composition of building forms and events occur along the water's edge. The outer face of these building forms define the confines of the campground on both land and water. A strong sequential hierarchy prevails and results in a differentiation of public activities to private activities. Entry to the camp occurs along a remote valley road by horse-drawn wagon. Entry is then defined by crossing underneath the threshold, an entrance gateway, which separates the working yard from the major outdoor public camp area. Here, the dining hall, staff quarters, and gateway enclose an outdoor gathering area for camp activities. The daily ceremony of flag raising occurs in this area. The kitchen is in the rear of the dining hall, in close proximity to the working yard and the dining/activity area adjacent to the outdoor activity area. The campfire area opens onto a large porch, visually extending the space towards the lake. The porch steps down into the water to further acknowledge the building/landscape relationship.



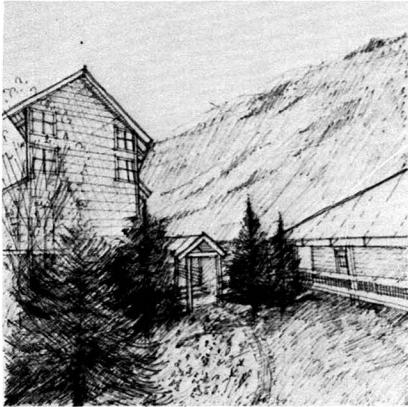
**Caretaker, Barn, Staff Cabin, and Infirmary Plans**

The crafts building and porch become nodes which connect and also separate the public camp area from the living quarters and water-related activity areas. A covered boardwalk defines a beach front on one side and links all the cabins together on the op-

posite side. Twenty-four, nine-person cabins are ordered in groupings of three; each sharing a common porch and stair. Each window, associated with a built-in bunk, is an expression of the individual person. The boating and swimming dock extends into the

water to ultimately wrap and define the campground. A floating gazebo articulates the end of the dock and culminates the sequence.

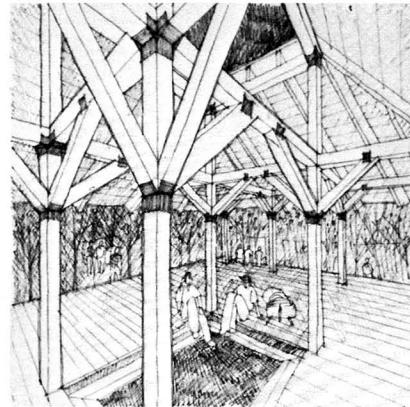
The end of this procession signifies a departure from the well-defined



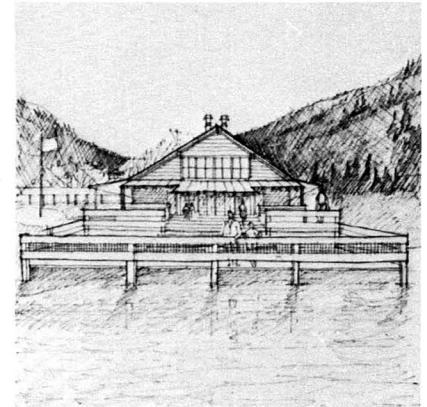
**Camptrail**



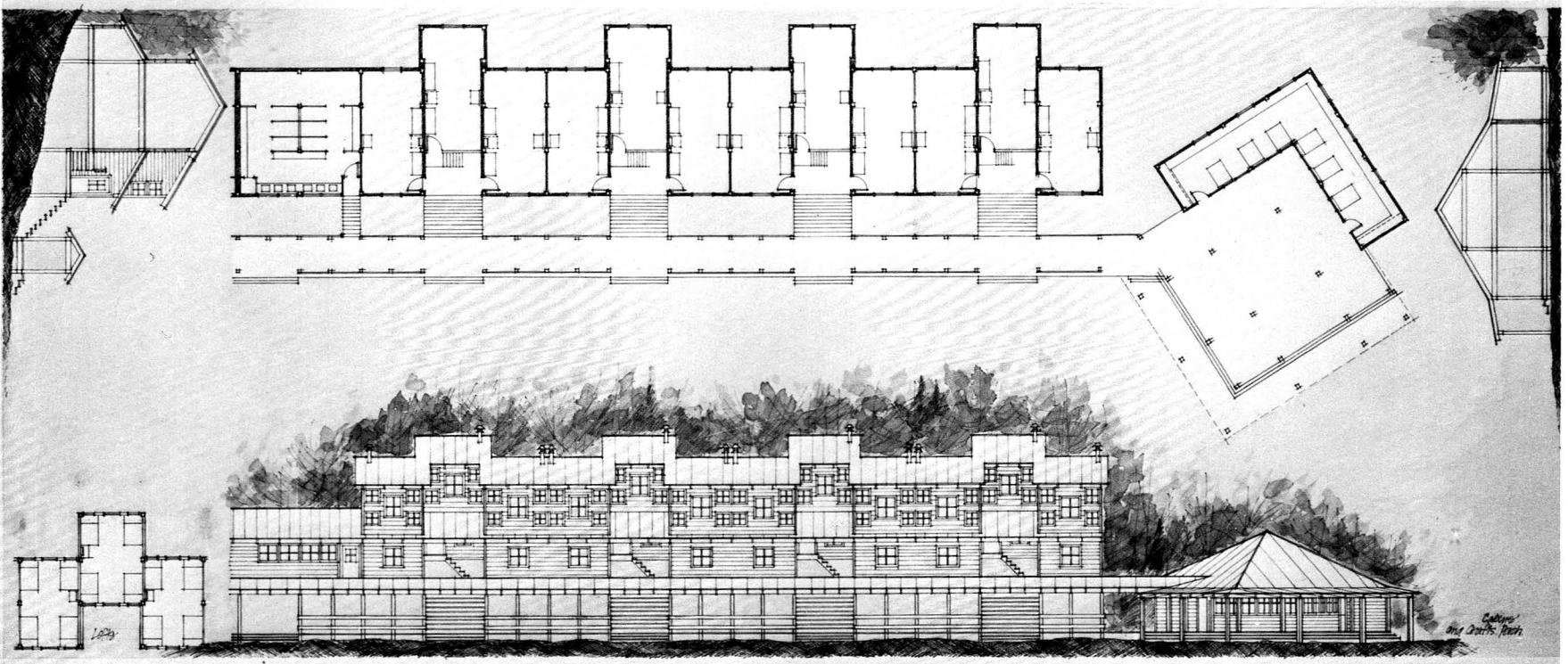
**Campfire**



**Retreat**



**Dining Hall**



**Guest Cabins and Craft Porch Plans**

campground and a venture into the wilderness. The first element beyond the camp perimeter is the campfire area. Located at a high point, the campfire area draws attention to itself. It is enhanced as a unique experience. Carved from steep rock outcroppings in a semicircular shape, it is oriented toward the lake below. The final element in the sequence is the

retreat which has been strategically positioned and is visible from the main area. Although it is the most isolated place, the retreat maintains a strong visual connection with the campground. Columns represent trees and lateral bracing represents branches in this structure. An opening in the roof allows for a campfire within.

In essence, the camp achieves a certain harmony through the interaction with the landscape and the clear definition of the man-made boundaries. As a place, it clearly represents the sanctitude portrayed by its surroundings.