

## Two Houses

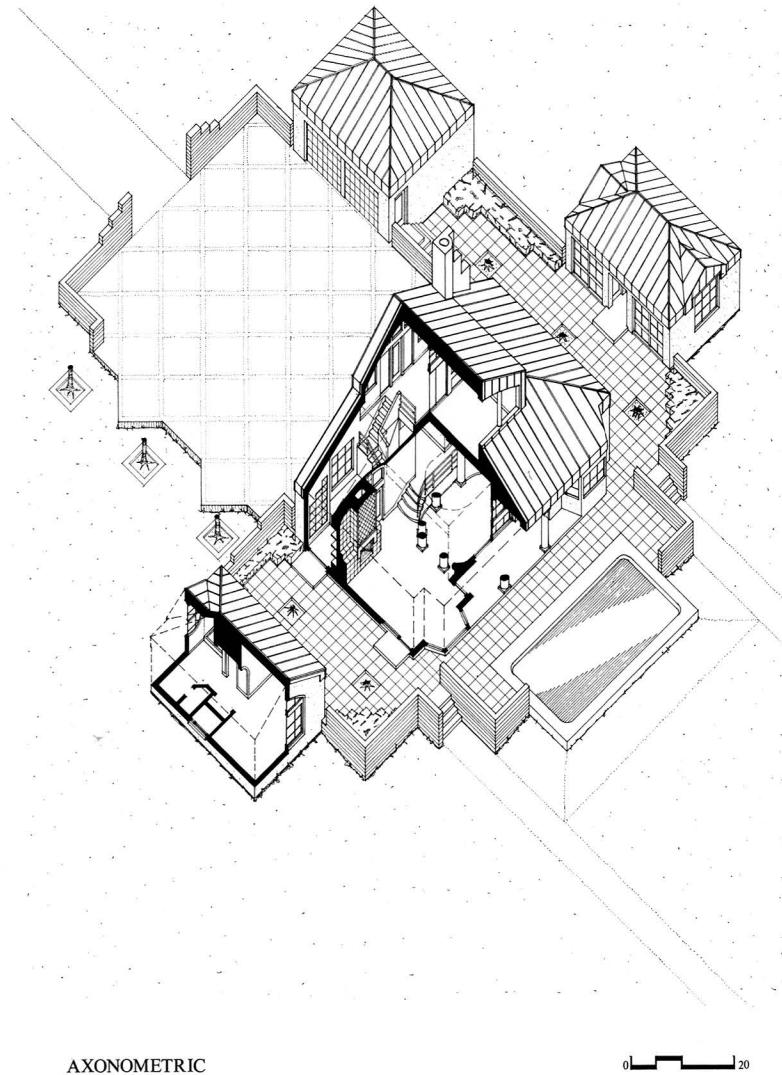
Tucson, Arizona

William C. Miller

*Architecture creates the semblance of that world which is the counterpart of a Self. It is a total environment made visible. There the Self is a collective, as in a tribe, its world is communal; for personal Selfhood, it is the home.*

*Susanne K. Langer  
Feeling and Form*

These two houses in Tucson, Arizona, embody similar architectural concepts which result in different yet related design solutions. Their differences are acknowledged through the programmatic requirements of each client and the particular site; however, they contain common organizational concerns, formal ideas, and material usages. After analyzing each client's program and site, the design for each house developed from a simple and direct formal conception. For the Stewart residence, this is a pavilion *patri* based upon references to the villas of Palladio. A large shed or "great house," as exemplified by McKim, Mead and White's Low house, was selected for the Woodward residence. While the primary formal image of the two residences differs, a common set of concerns or ideas can be found in both. Each house stands as a significant and identifiable object upon its respective site, yet acknowledges the particulars of the immediate context. The primary orientation and organiza-



AXONOMETRIC

Stewart Residence

tion of the major living spaces in both dwellings is to their southern edge to take advantage of dramatic views and maximum exposure to sunlight during the winter.

The exterior order of each residence is modified by development of "autonomous" rooms inside. While there is some correspondence between external form and interior spaces, a number of rooms are allowed to consummate their particular needs through the independent manipulation of their enclosing walls and ceilings. This leads to an independence, in plan and section, between the internal bounding surfaces of the spaces and the external enclosing skin. Although this idea is derived from the architecture of Alvar Aalto, these two houses lack the casual quality that characterizes Aalto's manner of assembling spaces and forms.

The construction and building materials are similar in both residences. They were selected as references to the vernacular Hispanic buildings of the region and the adaptation of this tradition made by early Anglo settlers. The thick-walled building, made of concrete masonry units and wood stud framing, is a gesture to the images and qualities found in regional adobe construction. The external masonry walls are rendered in stucco, again recalling local traditions. The wood

stud construction used for the interior partitions and framing allowed for a somewhat independent manipulation of the internal spatial needs. Although variations occur, the primary internal finishes of both houses consist of gypsum board walls, wooden ceilings and tile or wood floors. The sloped roofs of standing seam metal acknowledge a major modification to local tradition made by early Anglo settlers, who "gentrified" flat roofed, thick-walled houses by adding pitched

roofs or corrugated metal. In addition, the inset wooden casement windows, although larger in glazing area, recall regional building images.

#### The Stewart Residence

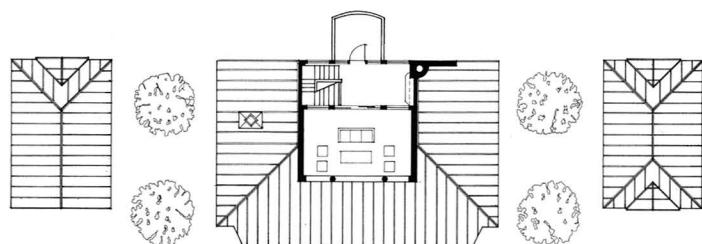
*Symbolic expression is something miles removed from provident planning of good arrangement. It does not suggest things to do, but embodies the feelings, the rhythm, the passion or sobriety, frivolity or fear*

*with which any things at all are done. That is the image of life which is created in buildings; it is the visible semblance of an "ethnic domain," the symbol of humanity to be found in the strength and interplay of forms.*

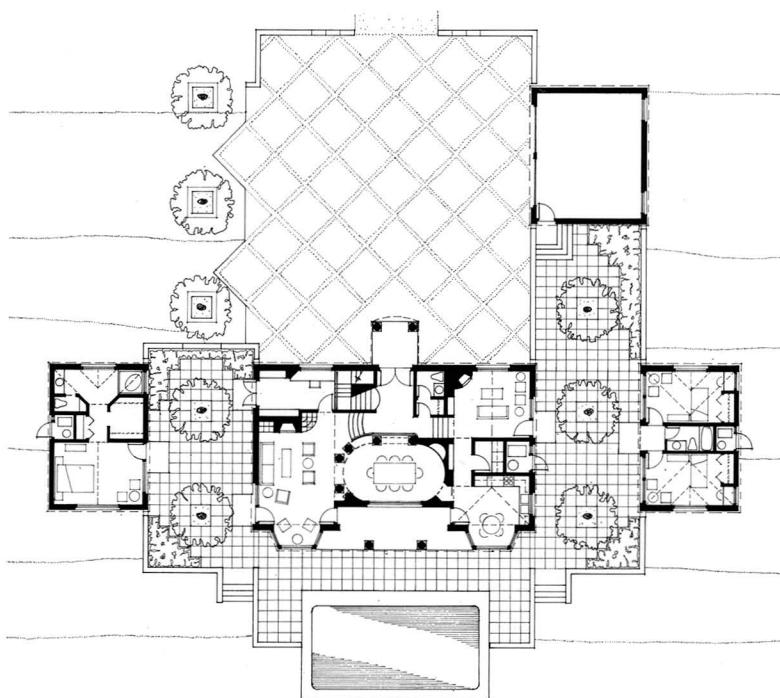
Susanne K. Langer  
*Feeling and Form*

The Stewart residence is located on a ten acre rural site twenty miles north of Tucson. It is

situated upon a high portion of the property overlooking an arroyo which marks the site's southern boundary, taking advantage of the prominent views toward Owl Head Butte and the Catalina Mountains to the south. The initial design decision to separate the sleeping areas from the main living spaces of the house allows for the creation of a large central pavilion flanked by two smaller ones. Palladio's work, especially the Villas Barbaro, Badoer, and Godi provide the

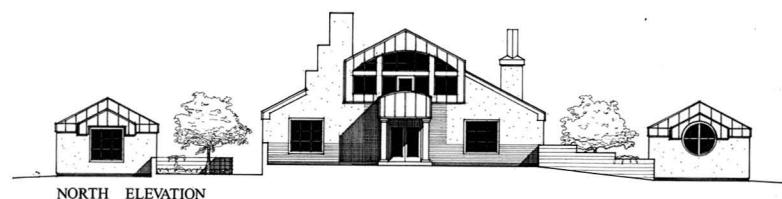


SECOND FLOOR

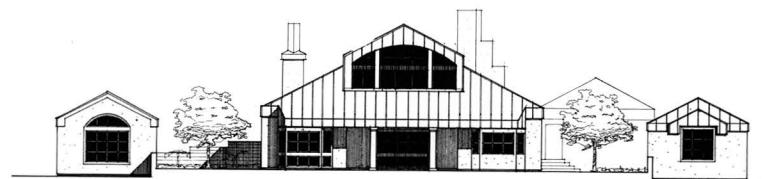


FIRST FLOOR

FLOOR PLANS



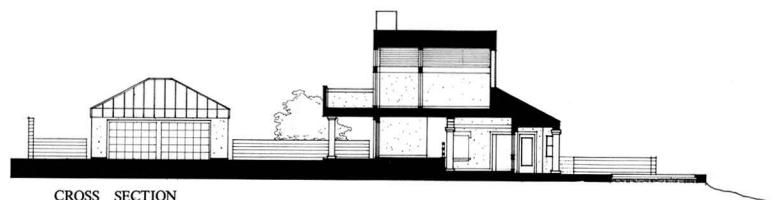
NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



CROSS SECTION

ELEVATIONS & SECTIONS



models for the initial ordering concepts. A walled enclosure incorporates the three pavilions and garage together; it marks the separation of the complex from the desert and allows for the development of landscaped patio spaces between the pavilions. A forecourt, or *cour'd honneur*, establishes the automobile entrance on the north side of the central pavilion. This court provides entry into the compound by articulating the passage from desert to house, while reinforcing the axis of the symmetrically arranged complex.

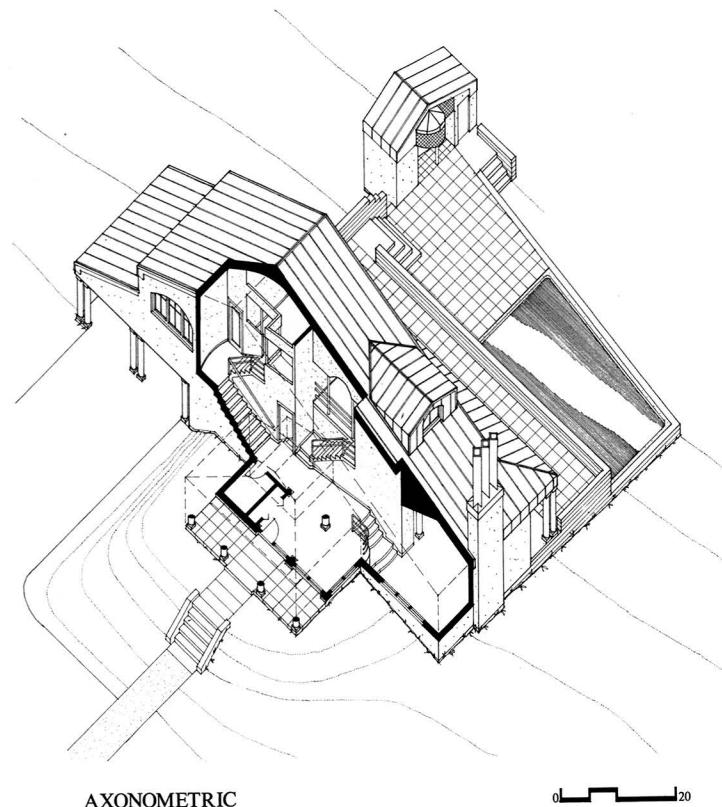
The major living spaces—living room, dining room, and the kitchen-eating area—are organized along the southern face of the central pavilion for view and exposure. The dining room is elliptical in configuration to mark its place in the composition and to act as an internal terminus of the organizational axis. The study and family room, located in the central pavilion, and the sleeping pavilions (located in the flanking pavilions) are oriented to the mediating, or more private, patio spaces. A second-story belvedere in the central pavilion provides for an elevated view of the surrounding desert.

The overall form of the complex appears symmetrical: a dominant central pavilion flanked by two hipped roofed sleeping pavilions. The north facade of the central element appears as a great sloped

#### Woodward Residence

wall, stepping to acknowledge the belvedere. A projecting balcony over the entry and a large stepped, asymmetrically placed chimney mass contrast with the simple outline of the form. On the southern elevation, the roof slopes to provide a large shaded porch between two bay windows. This hipped, shed-like form is interrupted and surmounted by the belvedere. The two flanking pavilions and garage are smaller units, rectangular in form with hipped roofs. Within

the apparent symmetry of the complex, elements such as chimneys, window configurations and placement, dormers, and interior wall locations, acknowledge the exigencies of program within the compositional order. Thus a tension is intentionally created between the primary formal organization of the complex and the less formal placement of specific elements.

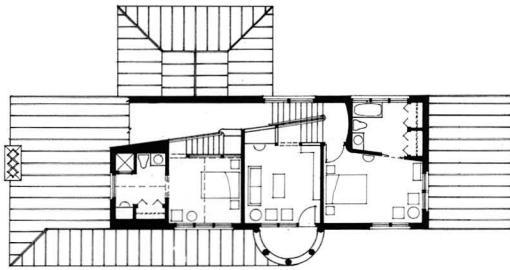


#### The Woodward Residence

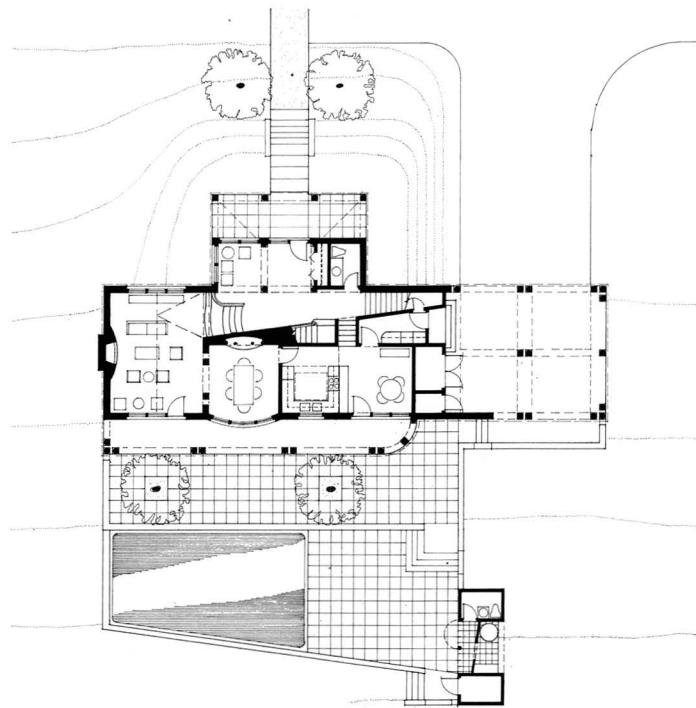
*But architecture is a plastic art and its first achievement is always unconsciously and inevitable, an illusion; something purely imaginary or conceptual translated into visual impressions.*

Susane K. Langer  
*Feeling and Form*

The Woodward residence is located on a suburban site in the Catalina foothills area of Tucson. Positioned on the northern edge of the property, it dominates the site's sloping terrain. As in the Stewart residence, the major rooms are placed along the south face to view the city below and to gain maximum sunlight. The entry, circulation, and support spaces are located on the north side. The interior is ordered by a seven-degree diagonal line separating the entry and circulation areas from the major activity spaces. Gunnar Asplund's Villa Snellman provides the model for this idea, but, unlike Asplund's design, the diagonal becomes a three dimensional wedge defining the great entry hall from the particularized living spaces. The wedge is a mediating element between the two zones of action. It contains support spaces and staircases, and stands like a large wardrobe within the shed form of the house. The diagonal's widest opening is to the living room, while the narrow end becomes a staircase to the master bedroom and study.



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

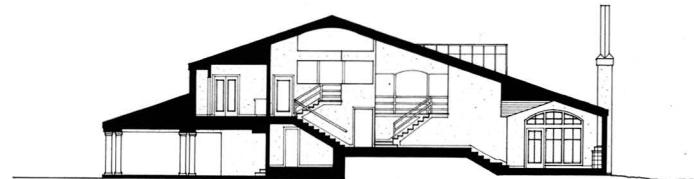
FLOOR PLANS



NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B

ELEVATIONS & SECTIONS



The overall form of the house was conceived as a great shed which embraces the activities within. Besides the Low house, MLTW's Sea Ranch condominiums and Robert Venturi's mother's house provided sources of inspiration. Like the entry hall, the shed provides a sense of grandeur to the entire composition, making the house seem much larger than it really is. While the southern facade makes use of a substantial amount of glazing, north elevation has only selected openings to

capture particularized views to the Catalina Mountains. Two major elements are attached to the shed to accentuate its simple form; the entry pavilion on the north facade and the porch with balcony tower on the south elevation. The large sloping roof planes are interrupted twice. There is a step in the east slope that acknowledges the master bedroom located over the carport. A dormer on the west slope accommodates a bathroom space. On the south side of the

dwelling, a stepped terrace provides for exterior activities and a pool area. The pool house is a miniature recreation of the house's primary order and formal image, adding a whimsical counterpoint to the scheme.