

# Three Places, Three Houses

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The house is the simplest and yet most complex piece of architecture most people will have to deal with during their lifetimes. Being so, it is invested not only with a person's physical resources but his emotional ones as well. Houses, as real estate ads want to refer, are "dream houses" and architects perform as dream makers.

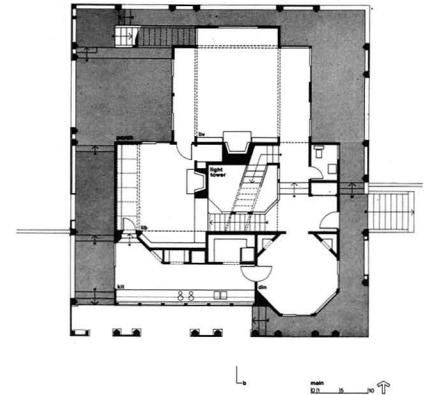
Dreams, as any psychiatrist will tell you, are potentially unstable combinations of desires and necessities, a fact substantiated by the number of divorces, at least in California, generated by the act of two people trying to build a house with an architect.

But with such volatility comes a marvelous occasion for making something special. Not the "here today gone tomorrow" fashion of the spectacular, but the enduring interweaving of poetry and pragmatism that will delight the eye and intrigue the mind through countless seasons.

A good house is born from the idiosyncracies of the owners, those qualities and desires that set them apart as individuals from others of the same age, background, and economic means. The other factor in the equation is the ground upon which they choose to build, for it too is filled with natural idiosyncracies of wind, weather and landscape. The catalyst for a conceptual design will come from



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1. Zimmerman house, view from the lake
2. Zimmerman house, main floor plan
3. Zimmerman house, exterior view of porch



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which entity speaks most clearly and persuasively.

If, however, you are not listening closely, all you will hear is statistics—three bedroom, two baths, a family room to incorporate the forty-two-inch television, etc.—as well as a budget that will build only half of the list of desirable spaces. Statistics and budgets have to be accepted, but one should be listening between the lines for the important clues to life styles.

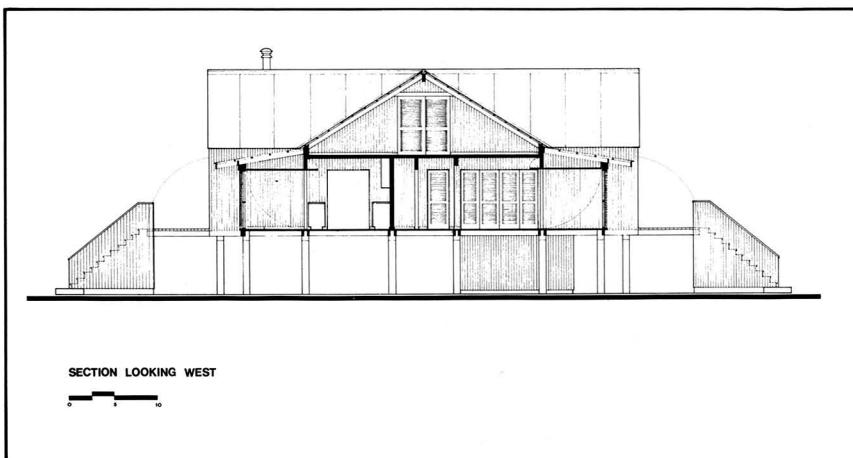
The Zimmerman house was born from a confrontation of opposing concerns: he desired a sunny bright house, and she wanted one filled with porches like her grandmother's summer house in Maine. The conceptual image turned out to be a house that was a skylight porch (Figures 1-4).

On a more pragmatic level, the Davidow house in Hawaii was forced off the ground by the Tsunami wave restrictions. As a vacation house, it had the needs

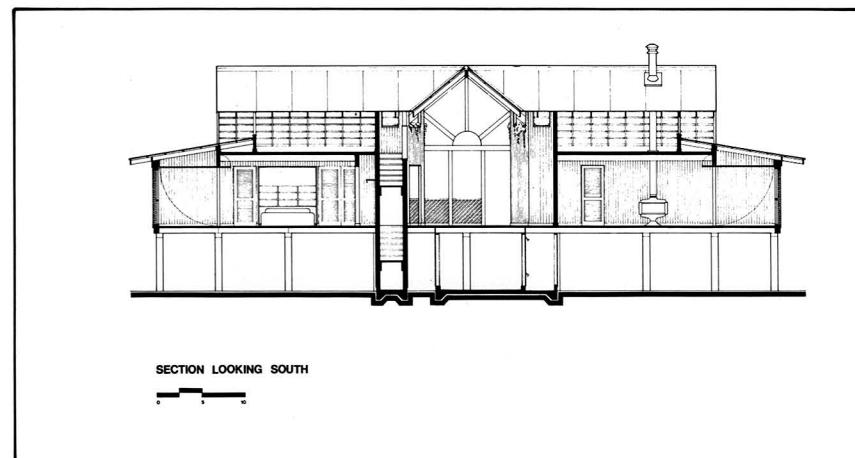
of a mini-hotel and the tropical micro-climate suggested through breeze ventilation. The traditional center hallway became a giant outside lanai with rooms clustered around it, each with its own private porch. Fiberglass roofing invites the filtered jungle light to enter the interior of the house and casts all the spaces in a cozy glow (Figures 5-10).

Another twist on the conventional appearing house is the Allewelt residence located in

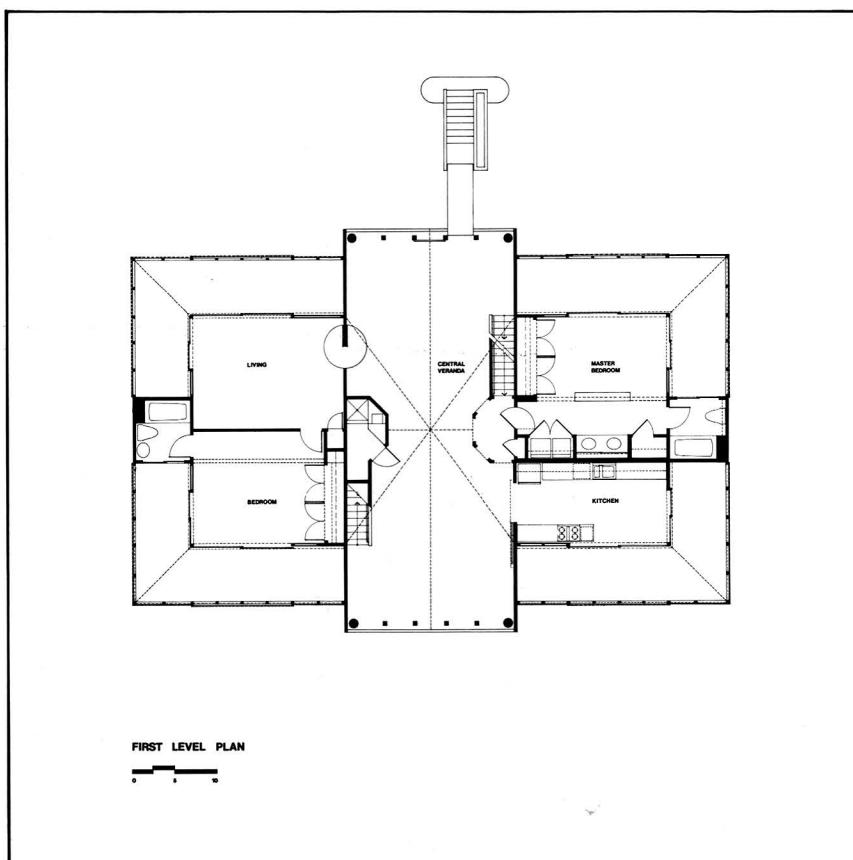
4. Zimmerman house, interior of porch  
 5. Davidow house, southeastern view  
 6. Davidow house at night



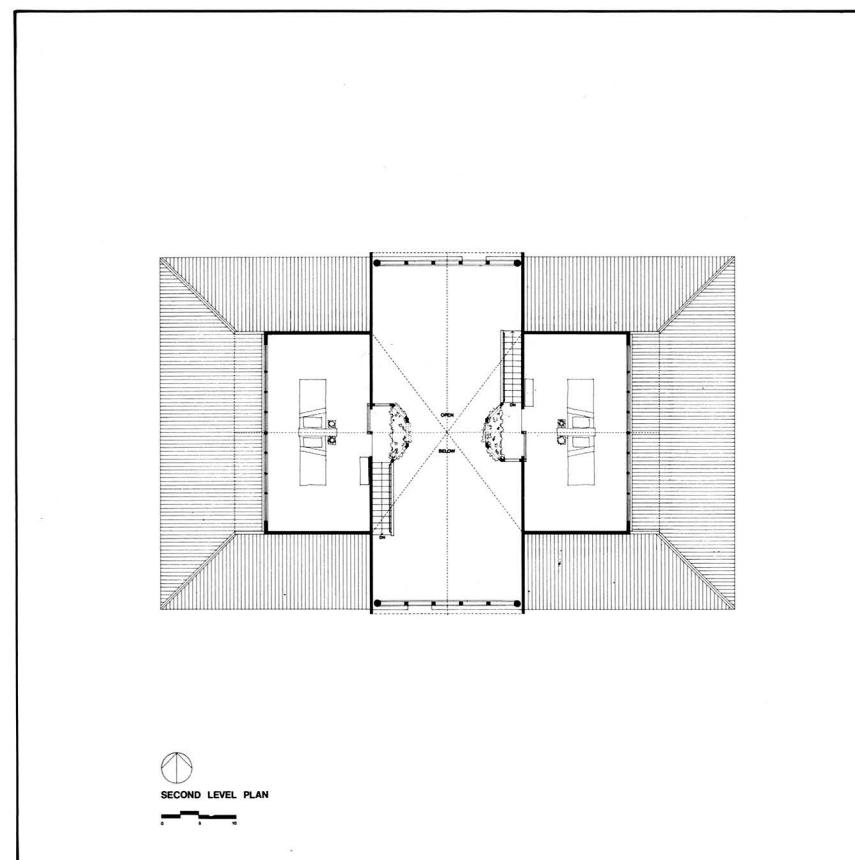
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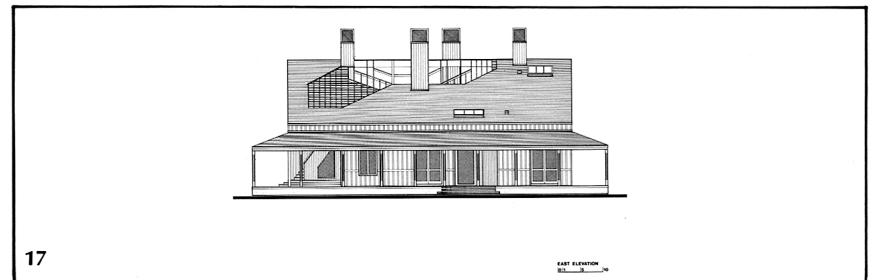
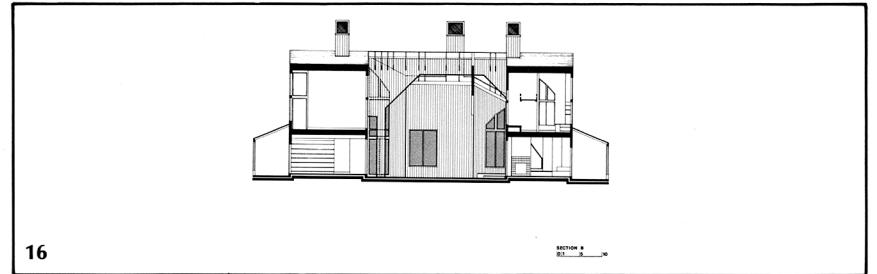
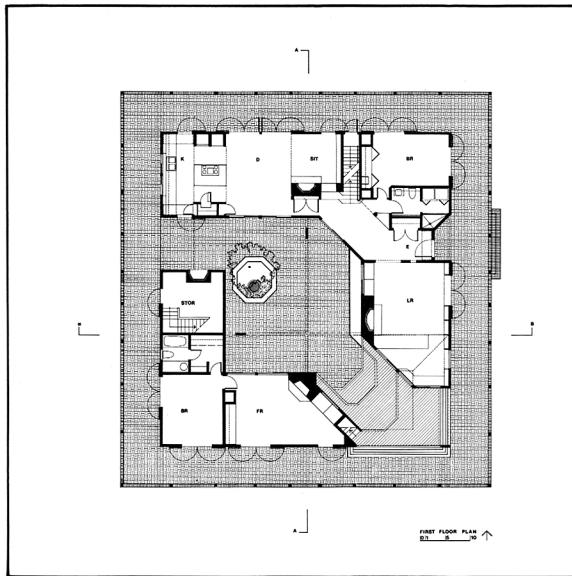
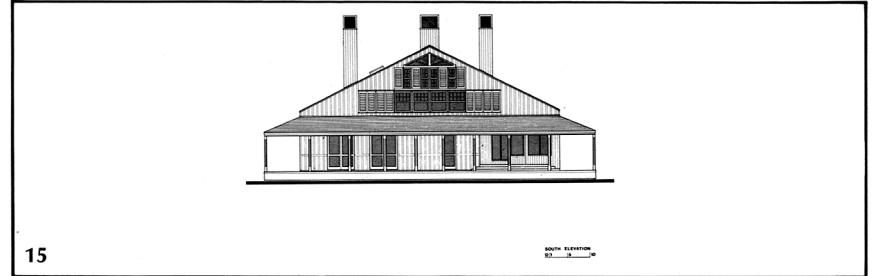
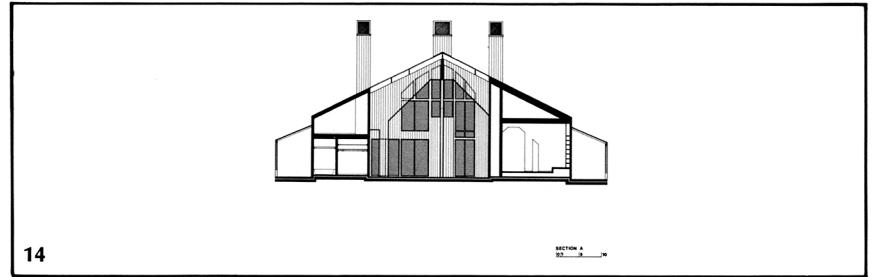
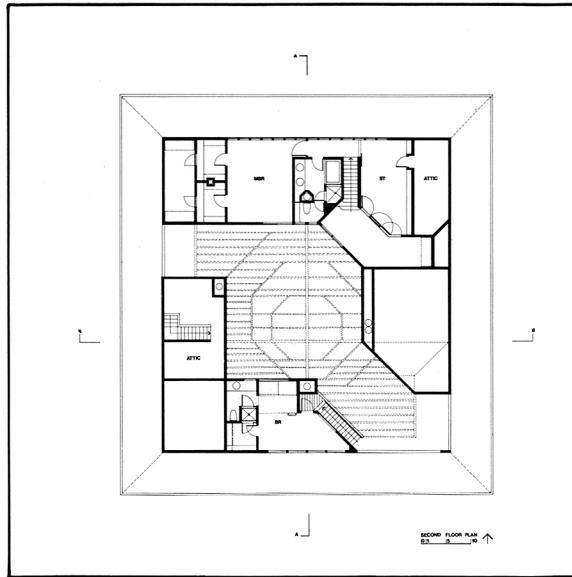
Modesto at the heart of the California Central Valley. To cope with excessive summer heat, the house becomes an inside-outside gazebo with trellised roof screening the hot sun. Errant breezes are invited through porch openings at either end of the house. This response to microclimate creates a new form for the familiar bifurcated Bauhaus

plan so popular with the modern architects of the 1950s (Figures 11-18).

These three houses illustrate the need that people have to make special places to inhabit and invest with their care and love. We call the design process "place making," and the art is one of creating memorable realms of

spaces in light for inhabitation. The secret is to set up opportunities to inhabit and suggest, but not dictate, how spaces might be used. Intrigue the mind, delight the eye, and seduce the senses—but do not offend the pocketbook—and you stand a chance of making a wonderful house.

7. Davidow house, section looking west
8. Davidow house, section looking south
9. Davidow house, first floor plan
10. Davidow house, second floor plan
11. Allewelt house, second floor plan
12. Allewelt house, first floor plan
13. Allewelt house, southwest view
14. Allewelt house, section A
15. Allewelt house, south elevation
16. Allewelt house, section B
17. Allewelt house, east elevation
18. Allewelt house, site plan



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