

Chicago Row Housing

Bryan Sechrist

Critics: Gordon Ashworth
Richard Wagner

Background

The program called for the design of seven partywall houses to be located in a Victorian residential neighborhood north of Chicago's Gold Coast. After years of decline, the area is experiencing a comeback with a considerable amount of renovation and new construction occurring over the last few years. The six-parcel lot is located near the intersection of Halstead and Willow Streets.

Site conditions allowed for a building coverage of twenty-one by fifty feet per unit. Local zoning ordinances required height, materials, and window location to be sympathetic to those of the existing neighborhood, in addition to zero lot line setbacks and no projections over the property lines.

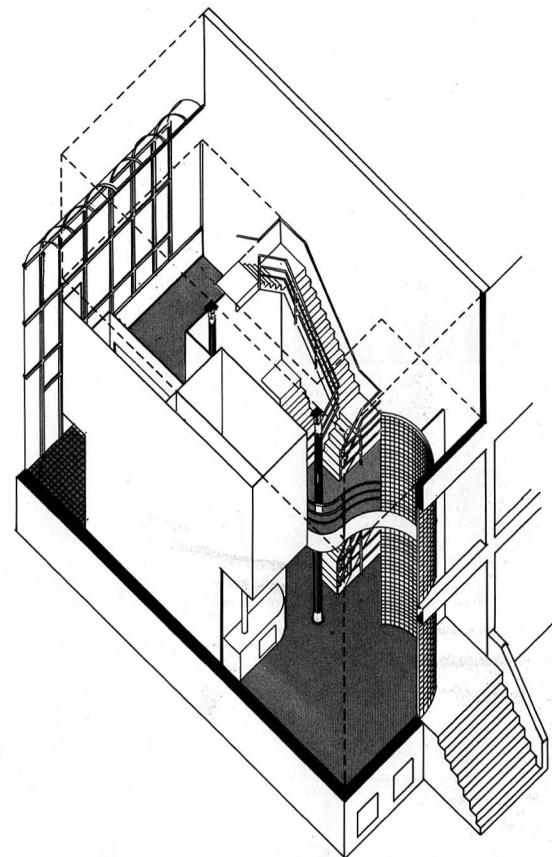
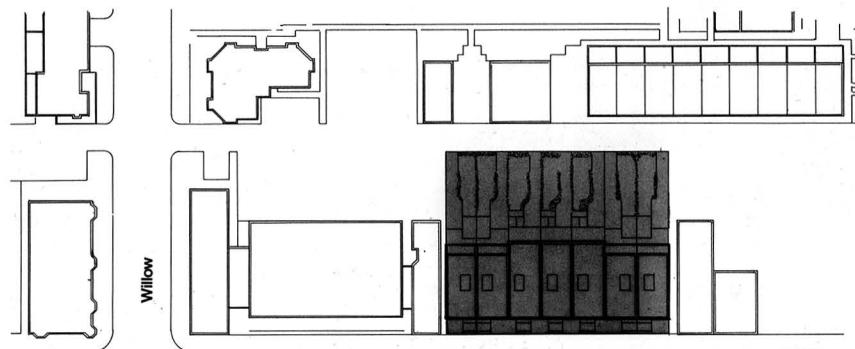
Solution

Since window placement was limited to the front and back of each unit, every effort was made to maximize these elevations. The plan is divided into three vertical zones. The living space and a third floor studio are located in the zone closest to the street. Vertical circulation and the service spaces are contained in the middle zone. Private areas, such as the bedroom, dining room, and conservatory, are located in the zone furthest to the rear. This sequence aids in achieving efficient circulation, both horizontally and vertically.

gallery in diffused natural light. The curving surface directs passage from the entry porch into the living space. A conservatory connected to the kitchen and dining room extends to the ceiling height of the master bedroom above. A moveable glass partition between the conservatory and living space eliminates excess solar gain. To further reduce heat gain, insulated shutters might be employed.

The intent of this design is to respect the neighborhood's physical characteristics, imparting a sense of continuity, while also being clearly a new scheme which reflects contemporary values. Elements derived from older houses in the district are abstracted, not copied. On the east facade, the floorlines and cornice correspond to those on the adjacent buildings; however, the entrances are raised six feet to differentiate their residential use from the stores nearby.

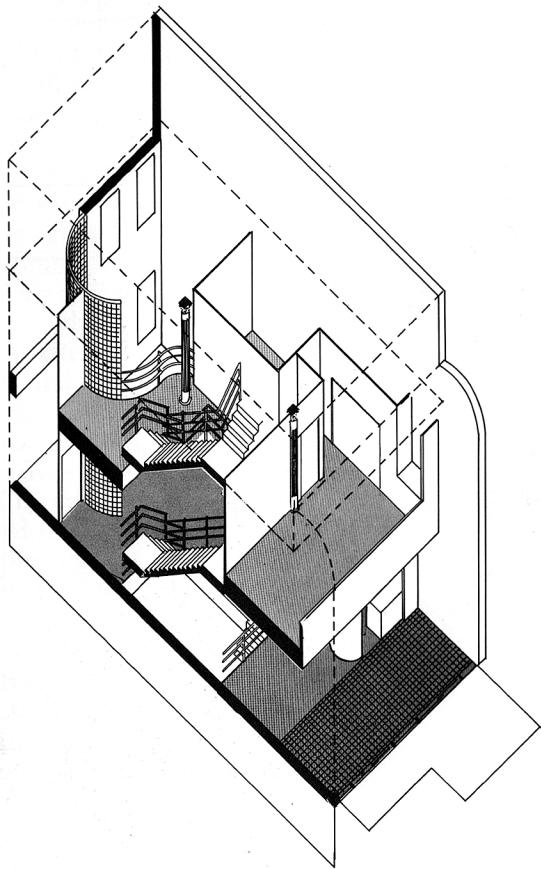
Site plan



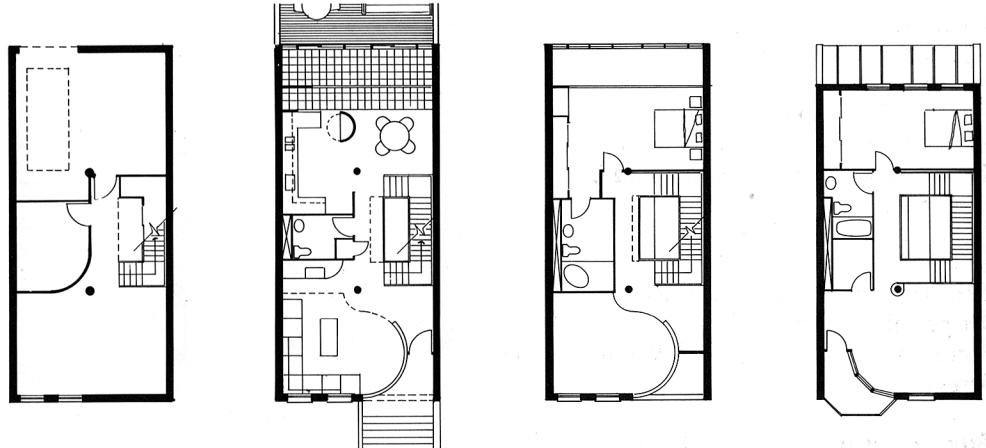
Axonometric from northwest



West elevation

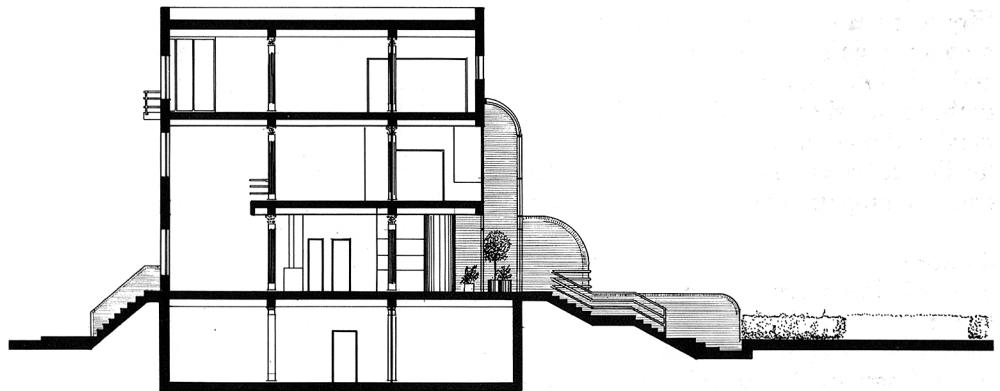


Axonometric from southeast



Floor plans

Longitudinal section



East elevation

