

A House and A Workshop

Daniel Beck

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture

Steve R. Thompson

Chair

Hans Christian Rott

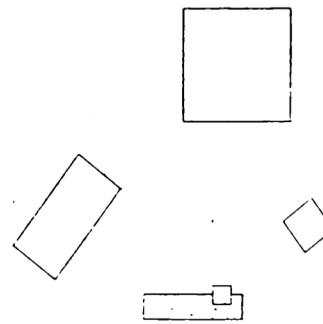
Frank H. Weiner

April 29th, 2011
Blacksburg, Virginia

house workshop form making world routines

A House and A Workshop
Daniel Beck

abstract



This thesis is a series of projects that attempt to create a fully imagined and described world for a woodworker. Each project, titled A House and A Workshop, focuses on different ideas as the imagined world becomes clearer. A House and A Workshop 1.1 explores my own images of the two buildings and how that influences the world that I describe. It also focuses on how the building type can inform the physical shape of each. A House and A Workshop 1.2 begins to investigate the daily rituals and routines of the imagined inhabitant. The question is raised of how those things can and should influence the architecture. A House and A Workshop 1.3 explores the physical relationship of the two buildings and the movement that the relationship implies. The idea of a room within a room emerges as the imagined world of the woodworker comes into focus. A House and A Workshop 1.4 seeks to clarify the ideas that I had been working with during the year by describing a more idealized world than the other versions. The value of making things and choosing to live that kind of life is an important aspect of this project. Finally, there is a project titled, A Chair, that lies outside the series of houses and workshops. It's a demonstration rather than a description of the ideas that were explored during the thesis year.

to my love
Marie Christine Beck

Thank you, Steve,

Thank you, Hans,

Thank you, Frank,

Thank you to my Family,

Louis
Sissy
Morgan
Nicholas
Zachary
Shannon

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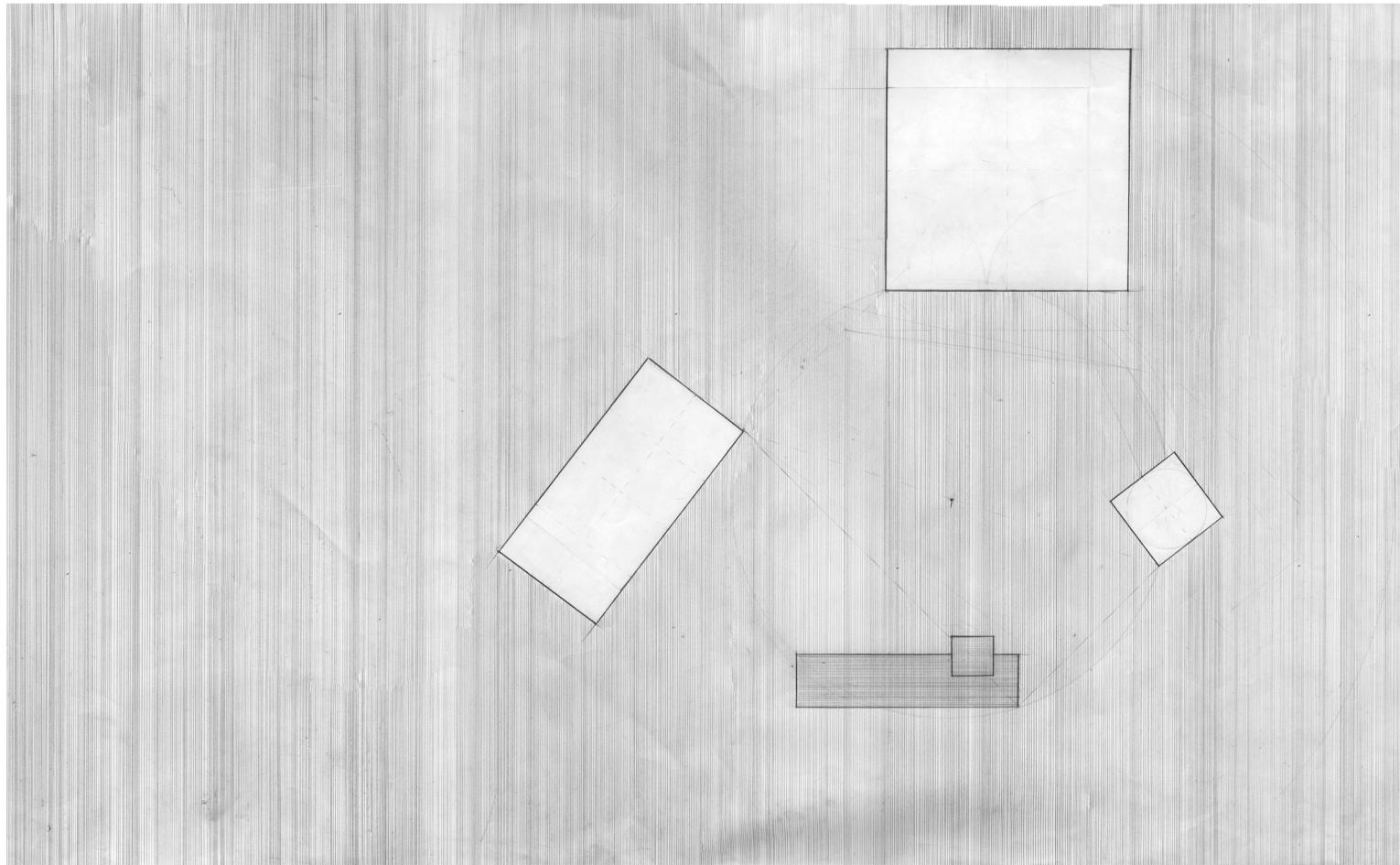
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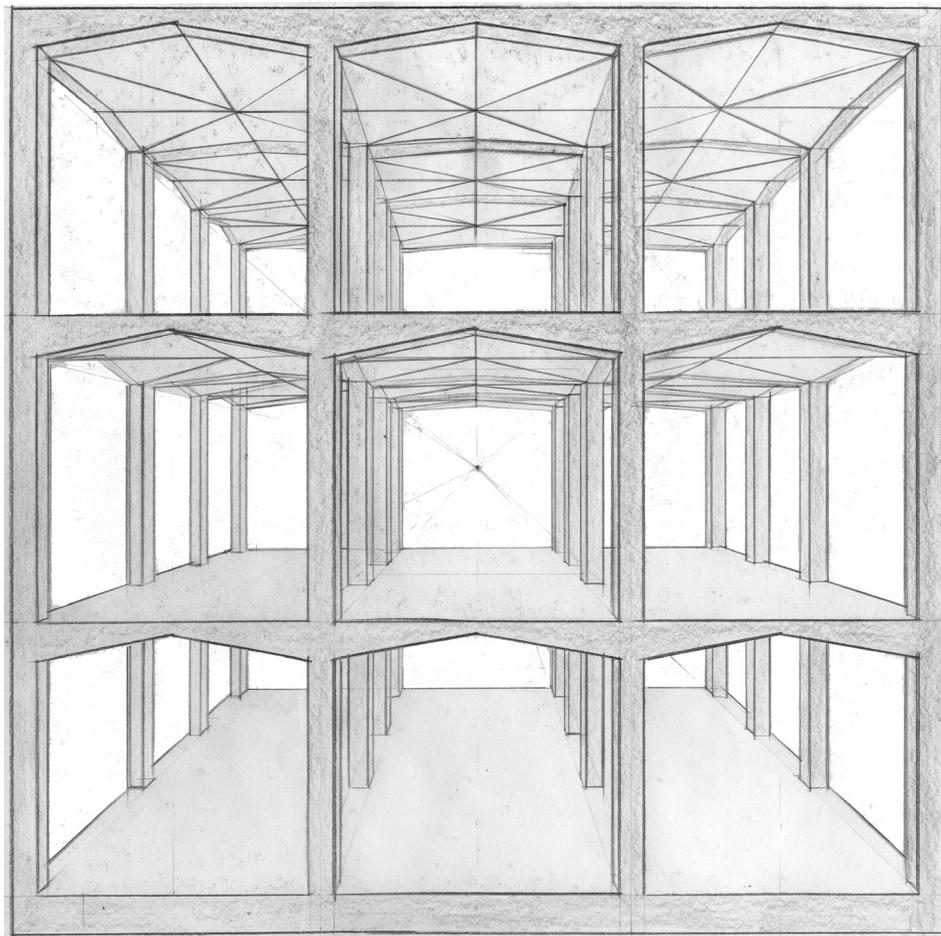
"This conception in all its forms, Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Christian, and Oriental alike, I shall henceforth refer to for brevity simply as "the Tao". Some of the accounts of it which I have quoted will seem, perhaps, to many of you merely quaint or even magical. But what is common to them all is something we cannot neglect. It is the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are."

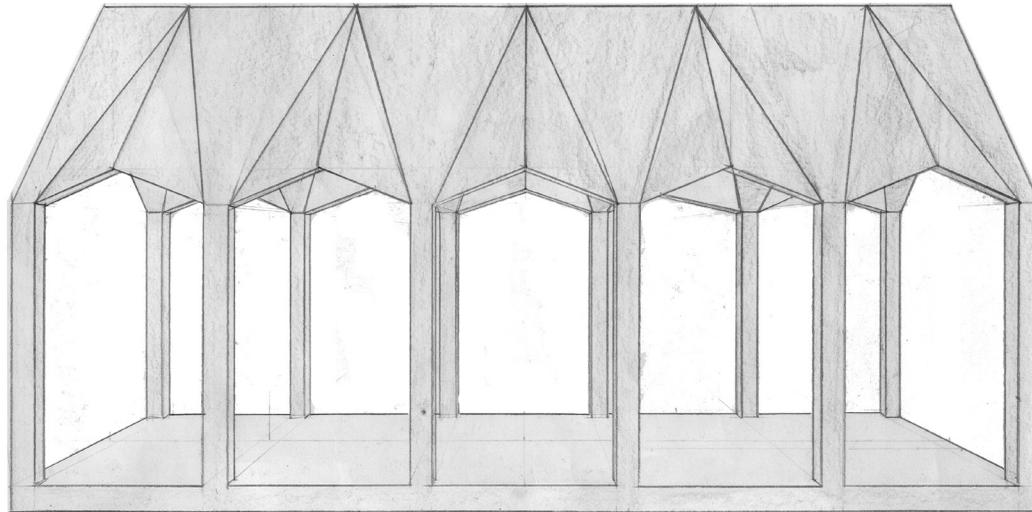
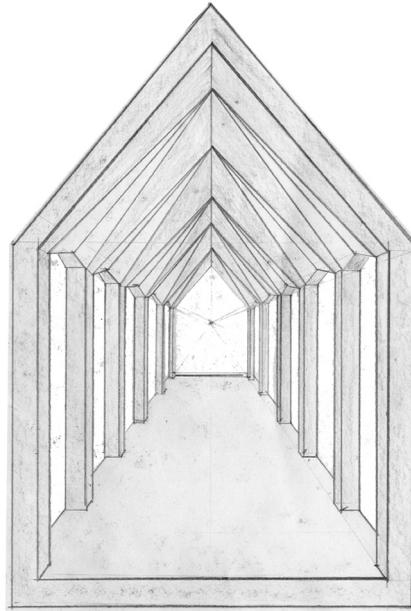
The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis, 18

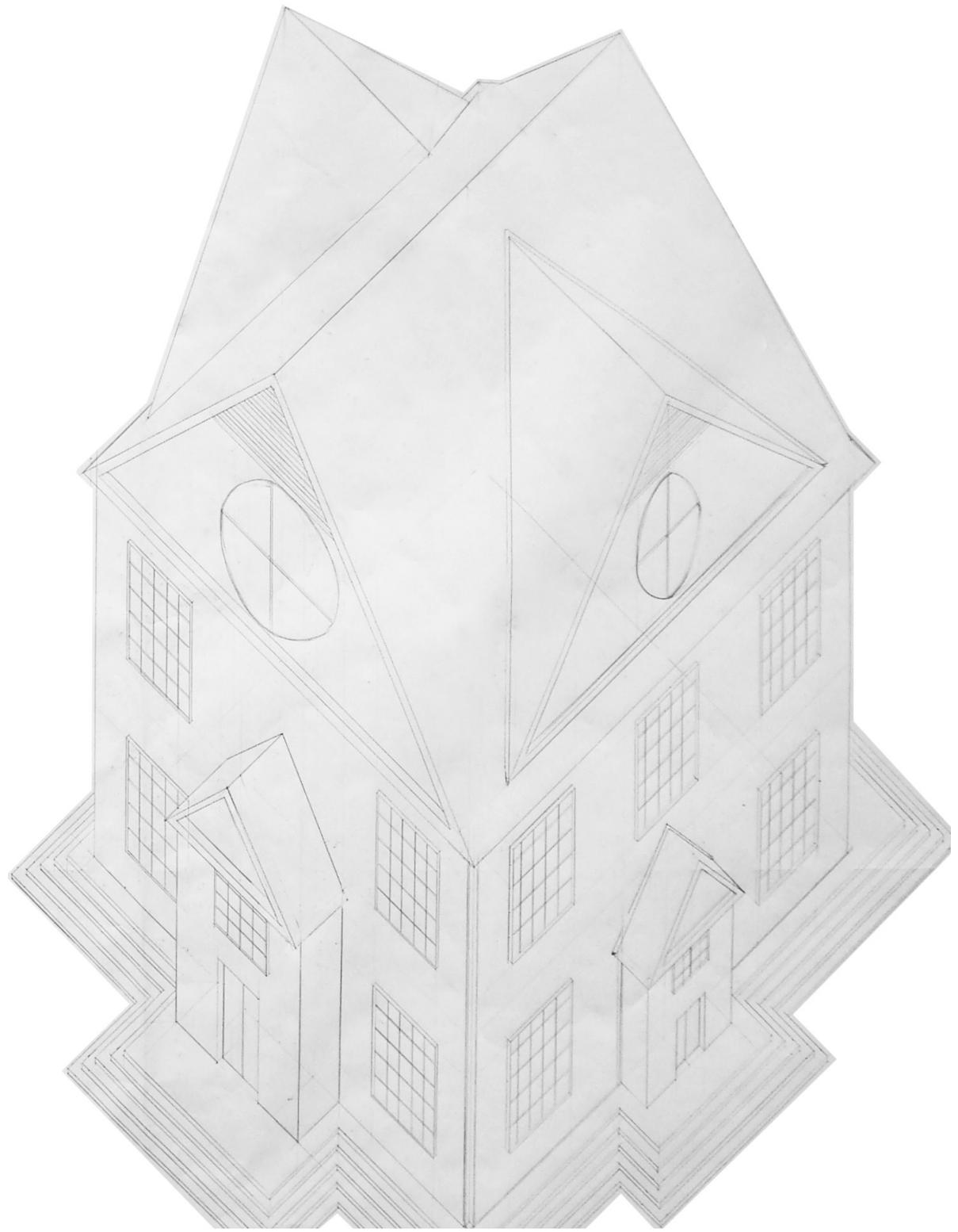
This thesis is comprised of a series of projects all titled A House and A Workshop. Each one was an attempt to create a discernible world in which the house and the workshop existed. This world was imagined for a woodworker who would live and work in the same place. Each version built upon the ones that came before it, but they are all unique. Each project was fully described through drawing and then the design was critiqued. Judgements were made and the process began again.

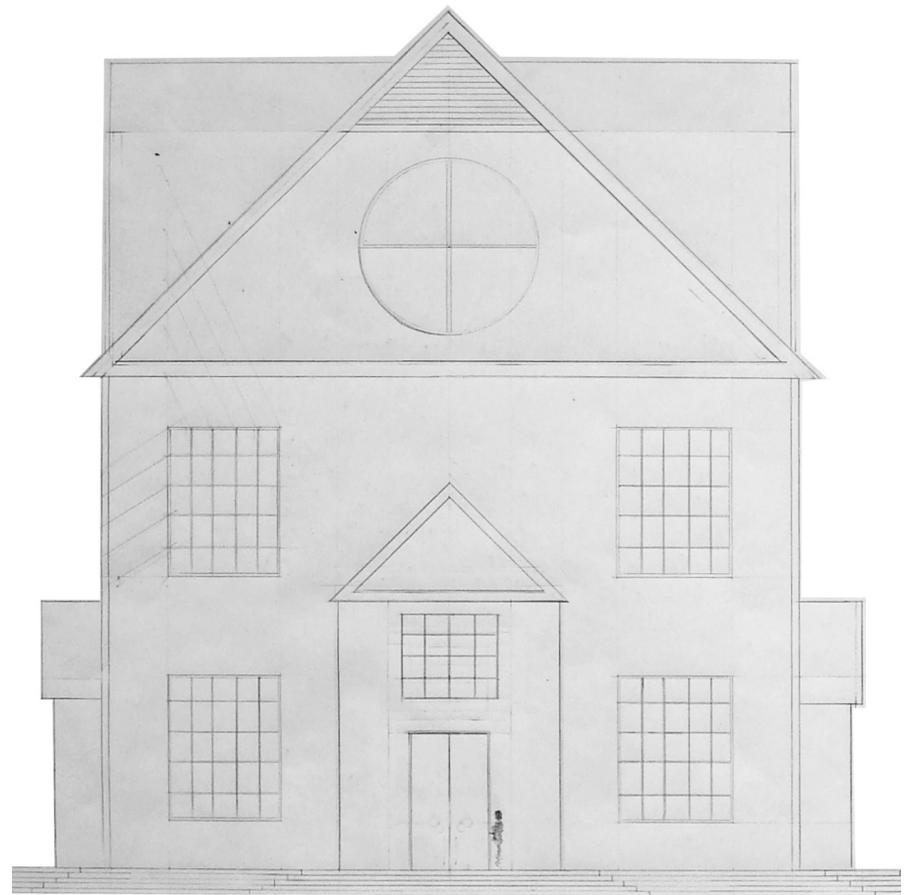
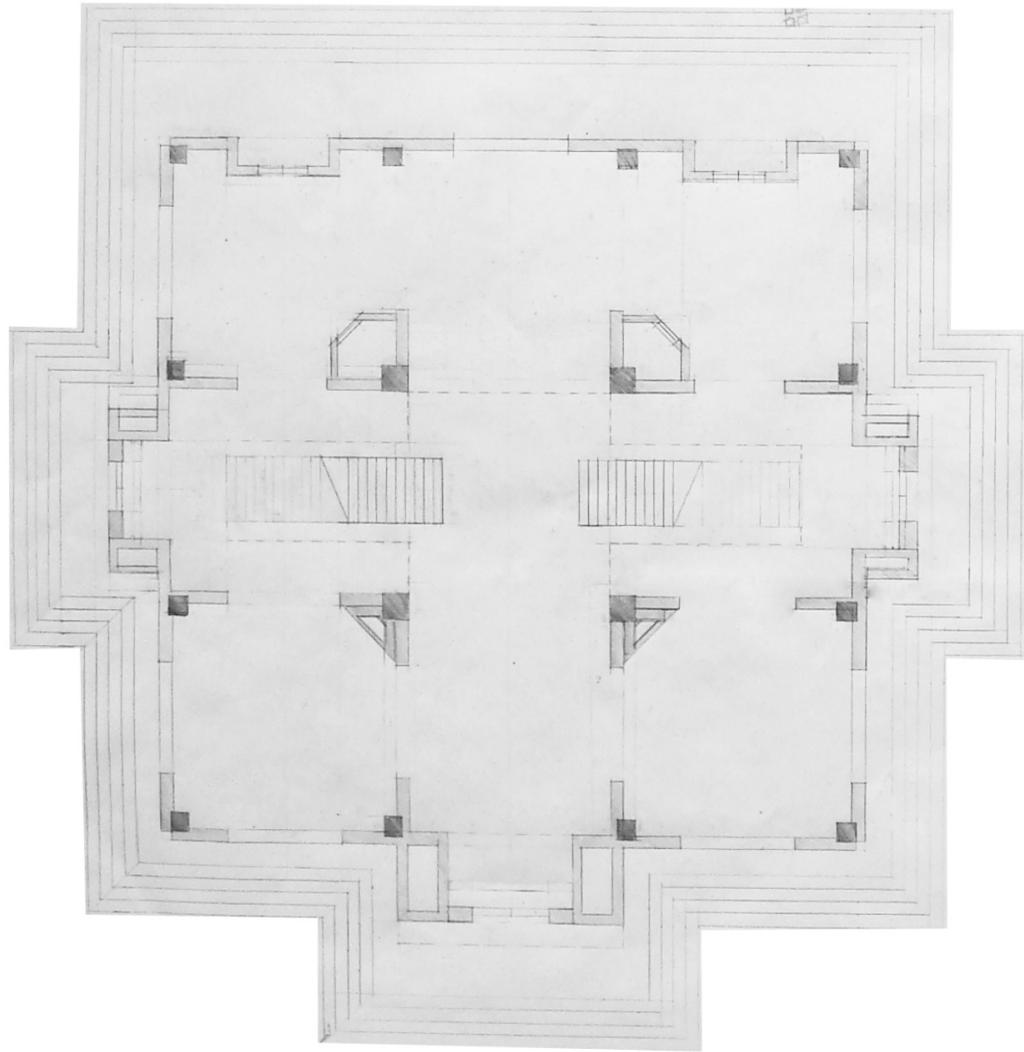
A House and A Workshop 1.1

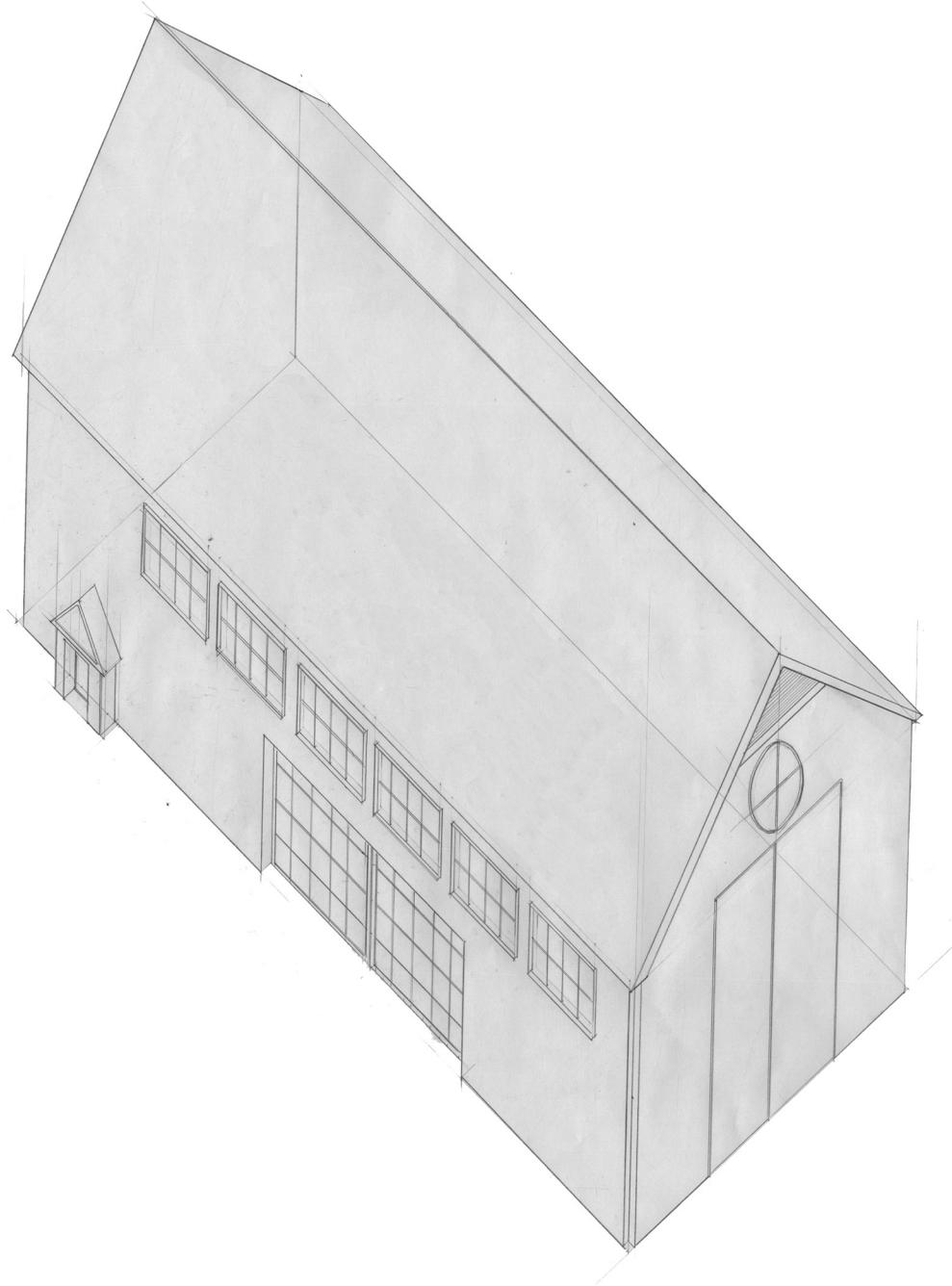


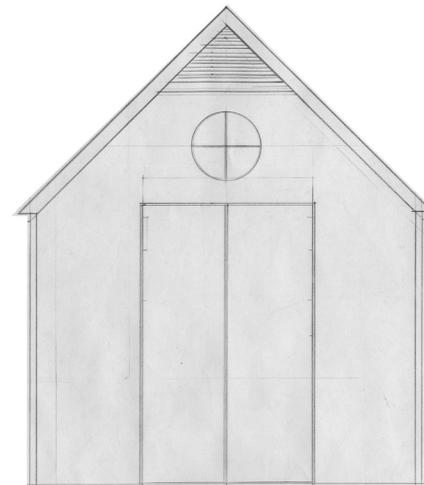
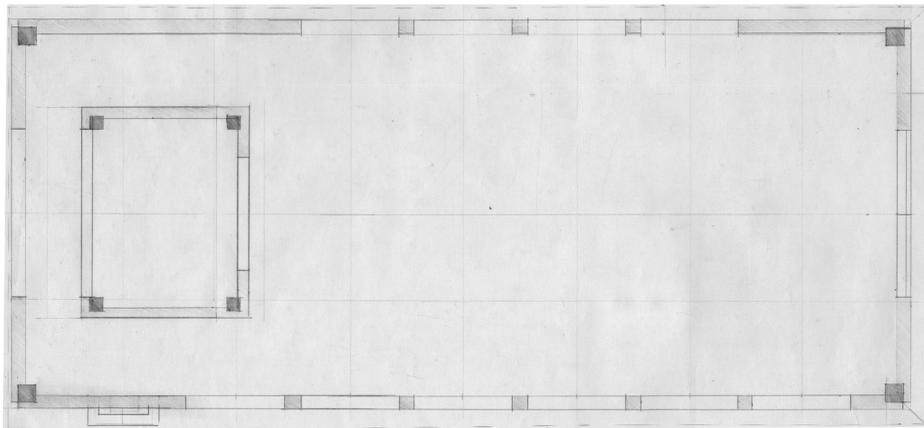
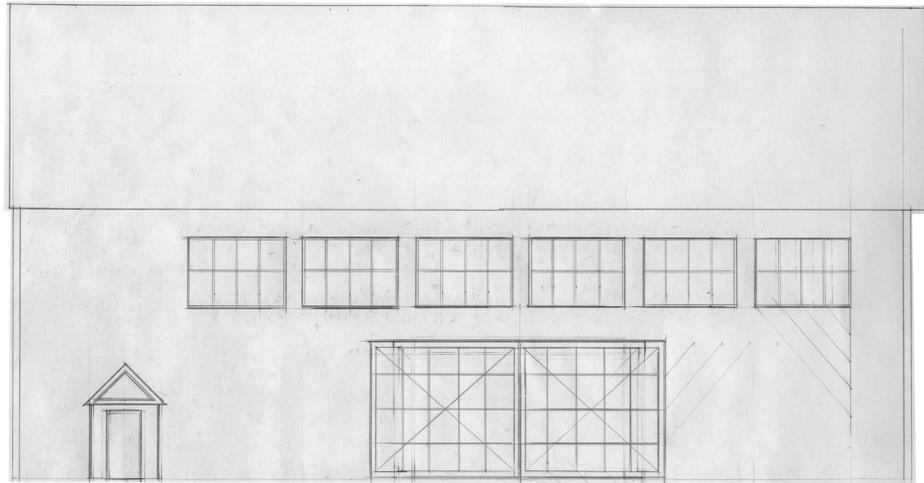










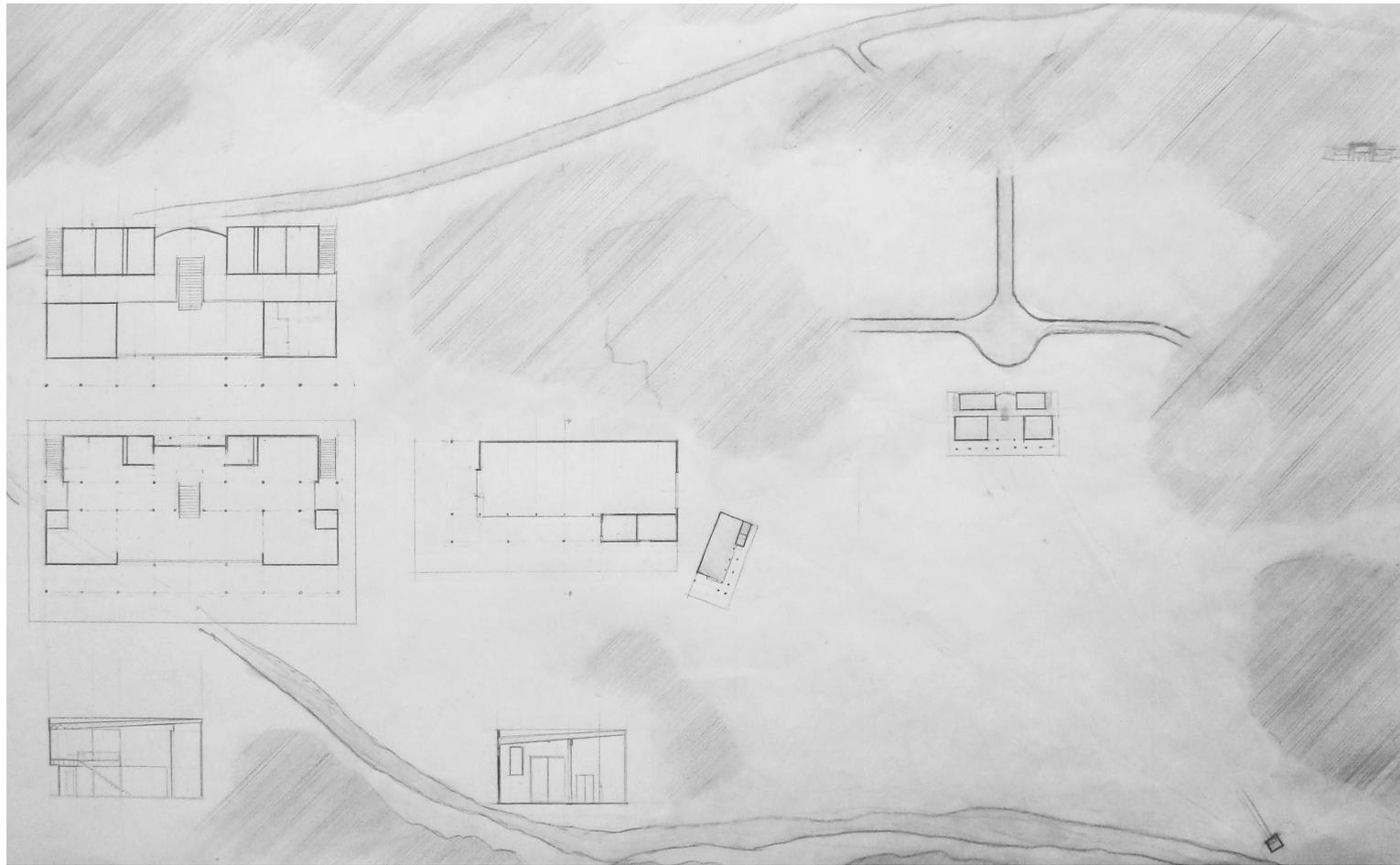


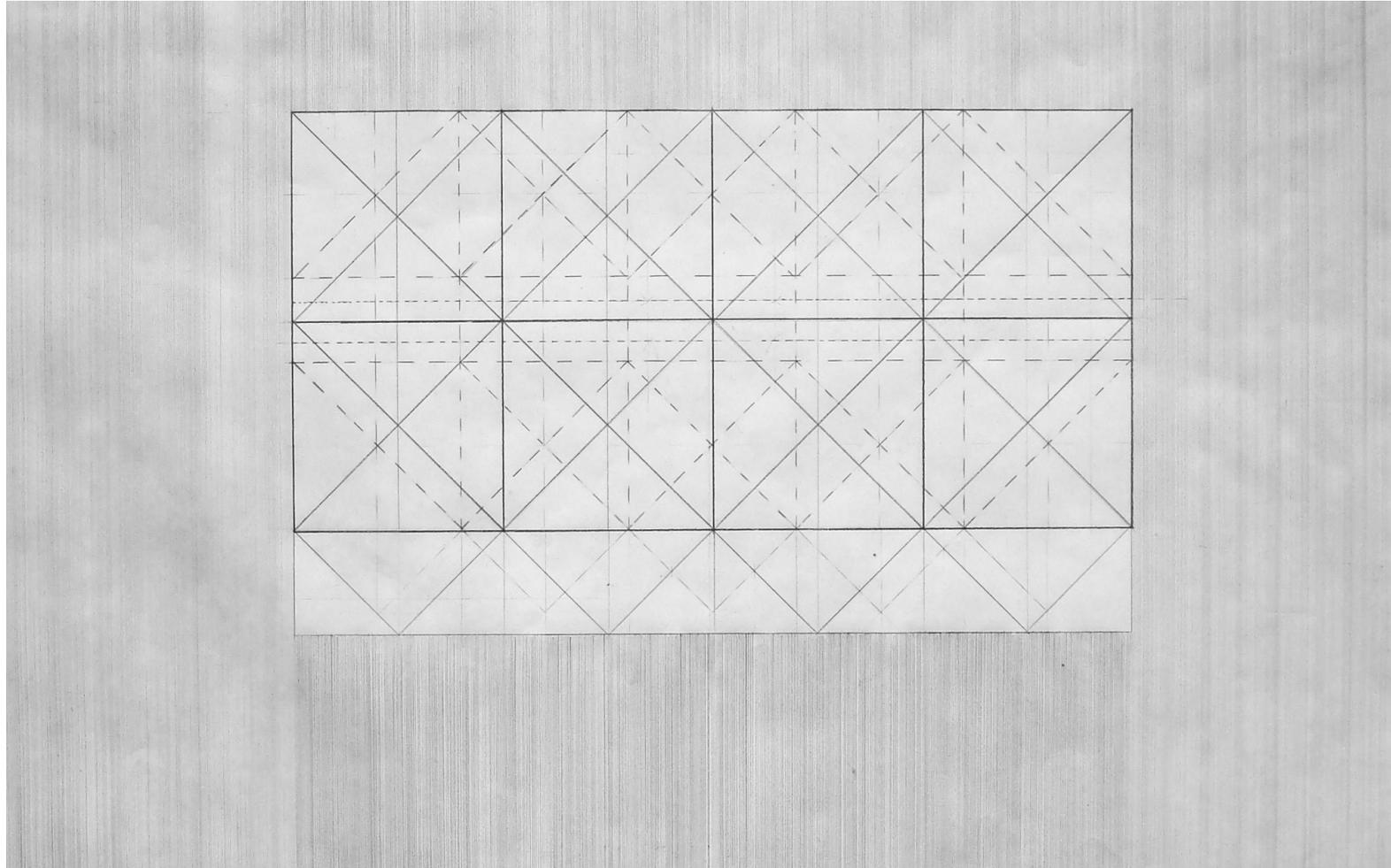
"It is not that they are bad men. They are not men at all. Stepping outside the Tao, they have stepped into the void. Nor are their subjects necessarily unhappy men. They are not men at all: they are artefacts. Man's final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man."

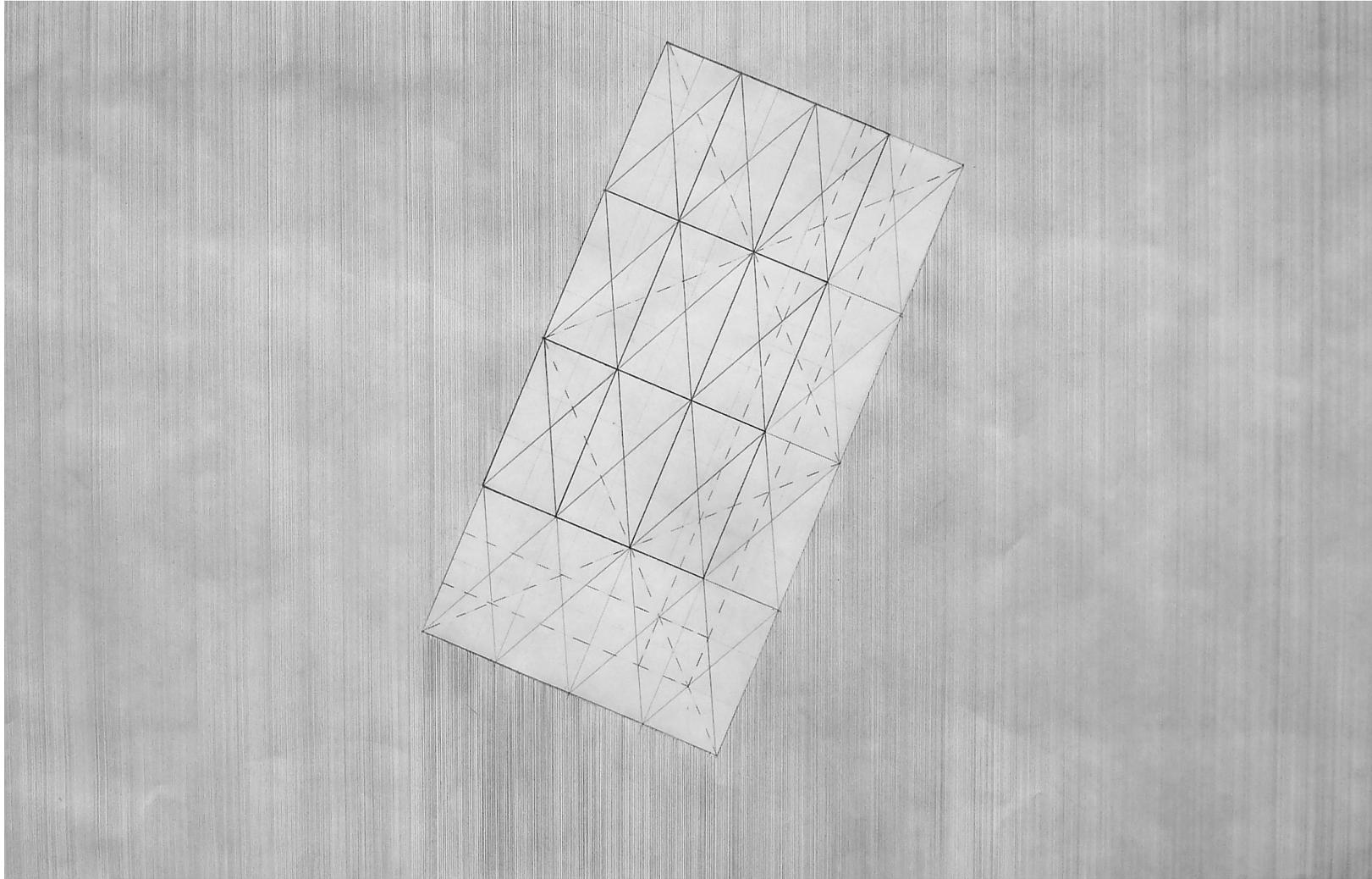
The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis, 64

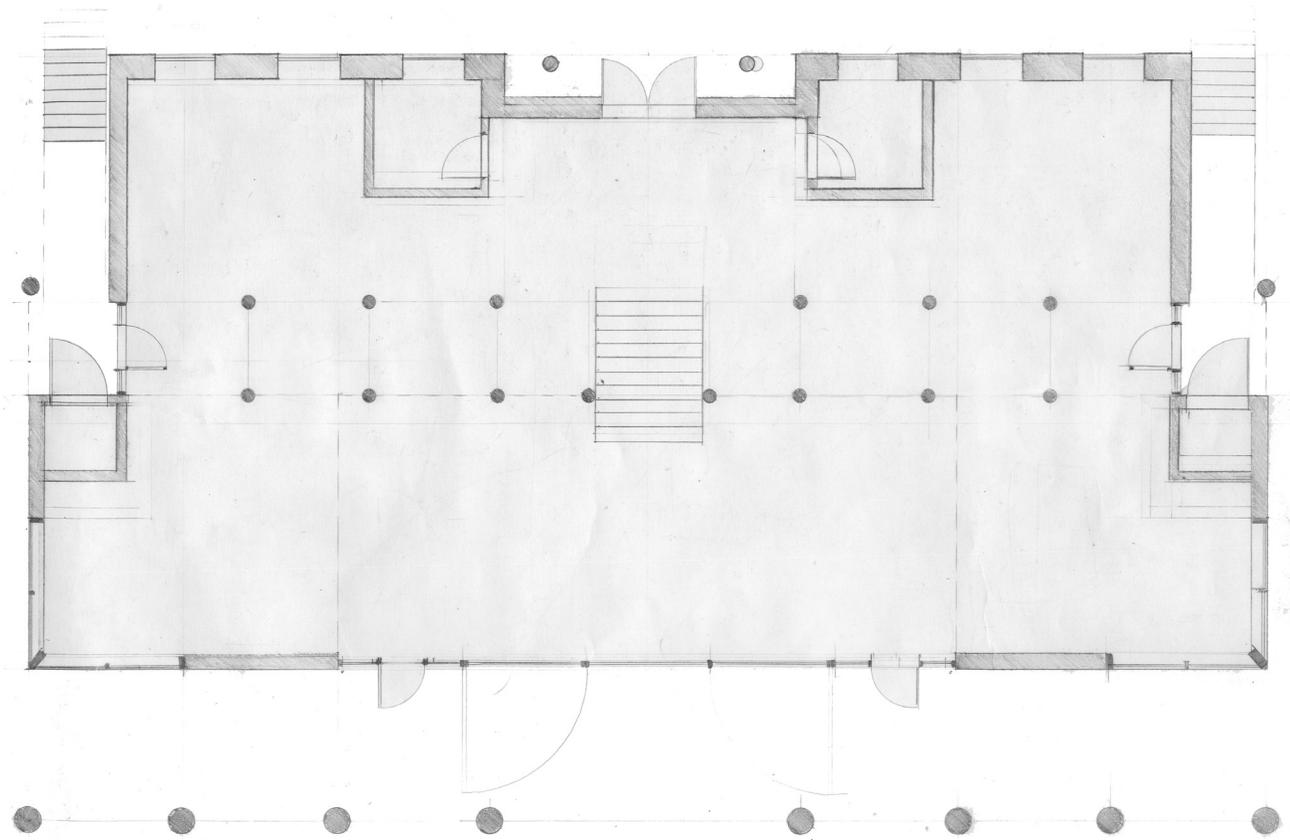
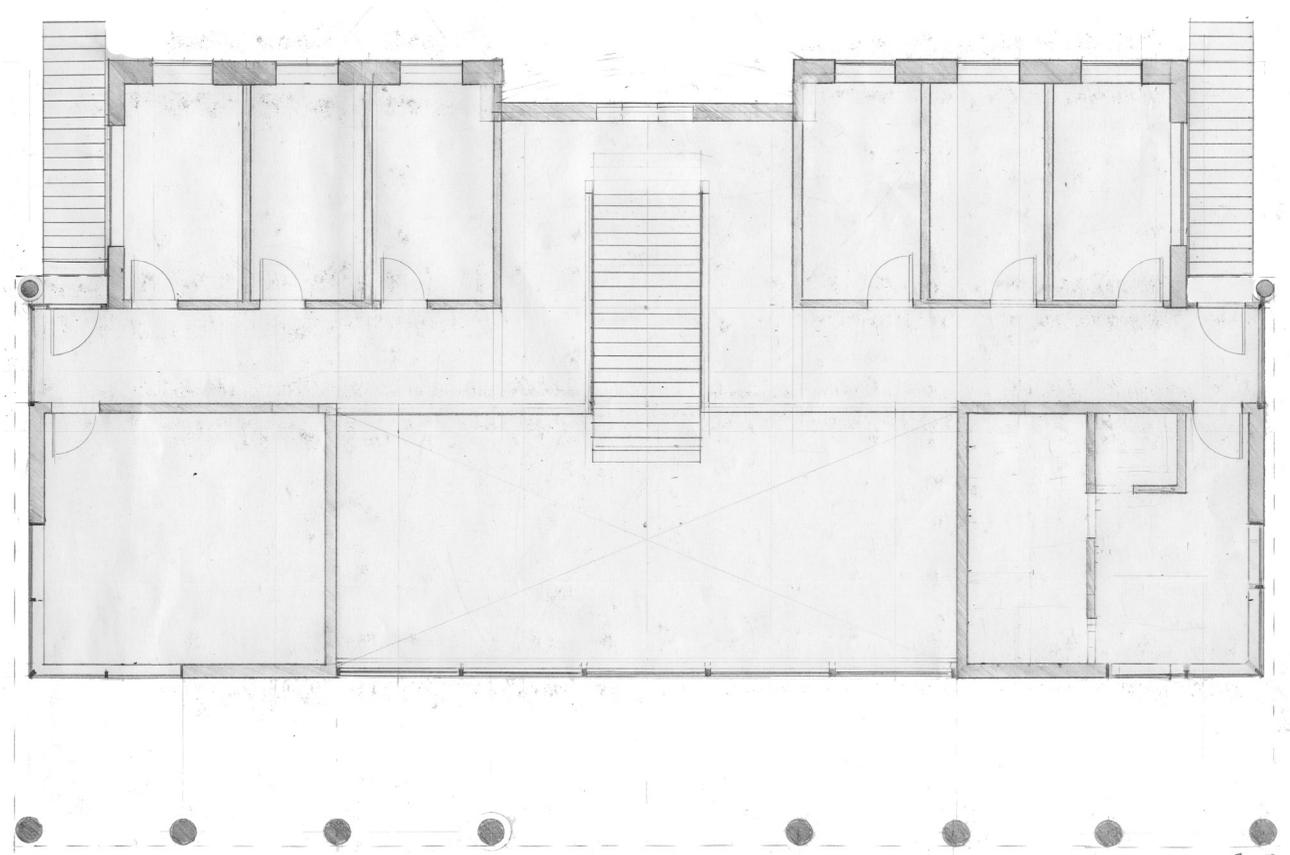
The first project turned out to be only images. The house and the workshop were merely ghosts and shadows of a world not able to be fully described or imagined. They were fragments from my own memories that had been exaggerated as if in a dream. I found it impossible to imagine a life inside this world, but nevertheless enjoy the drawn artifacts from it.

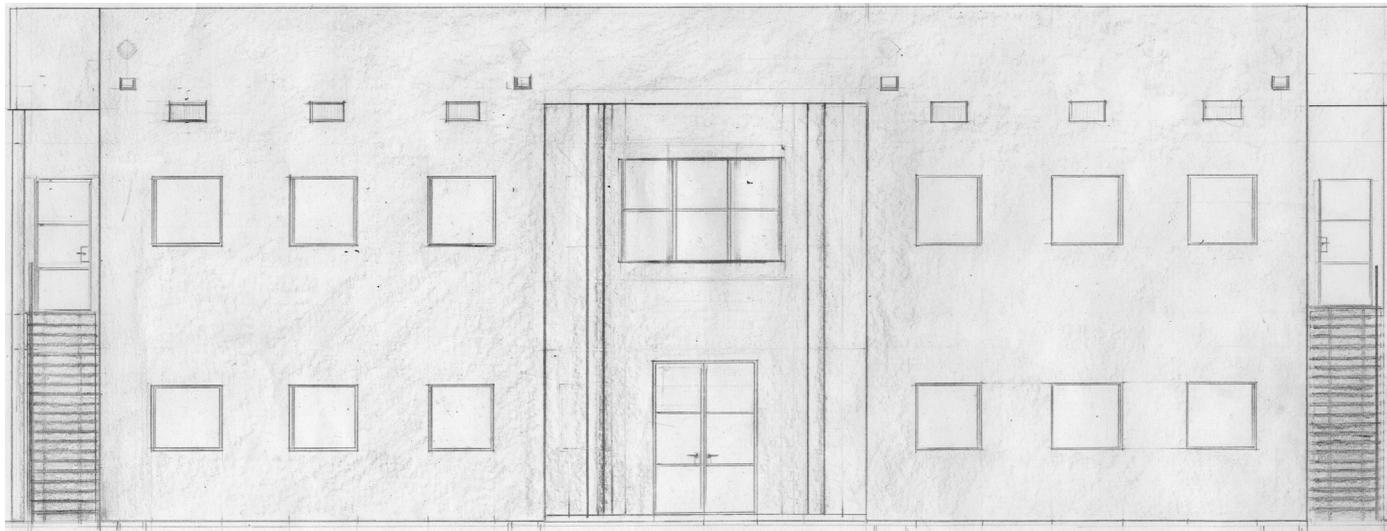
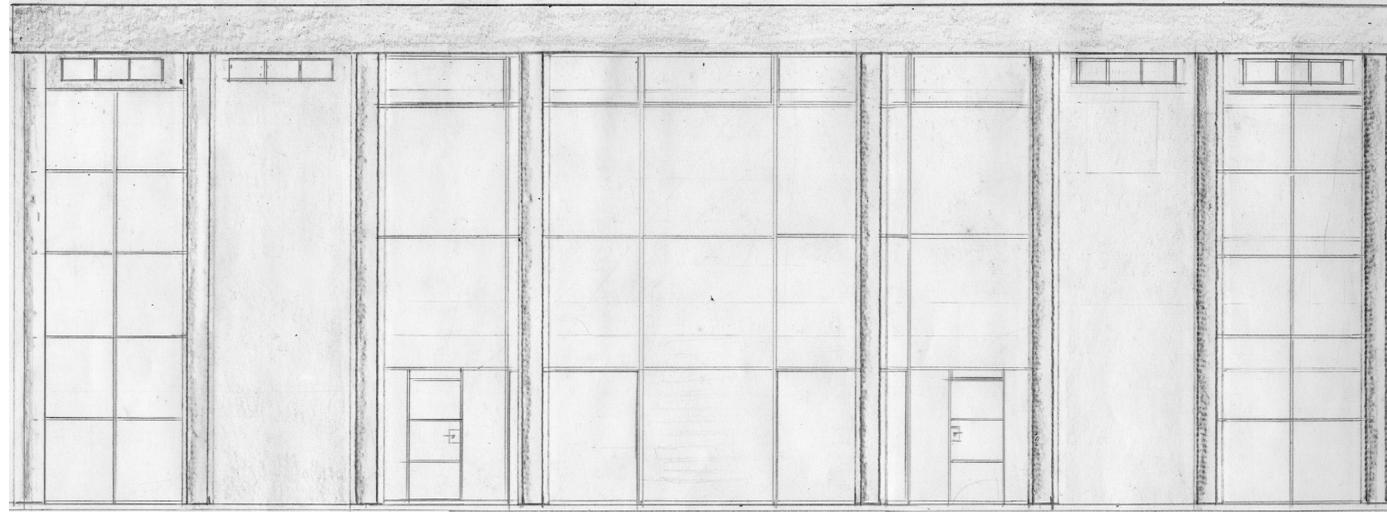
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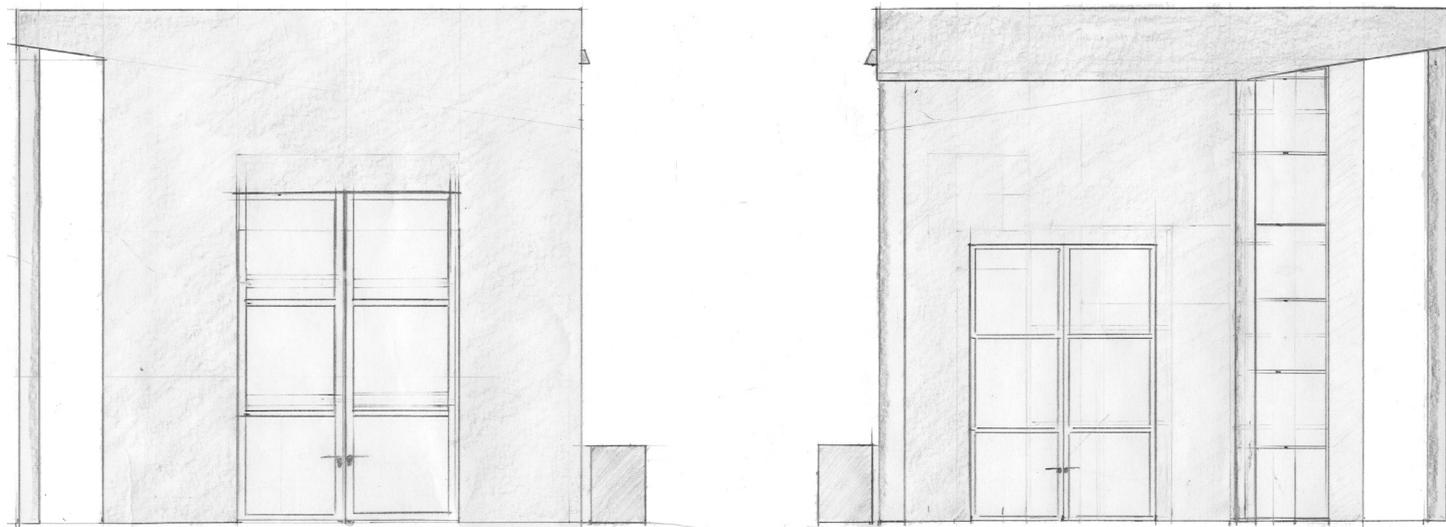
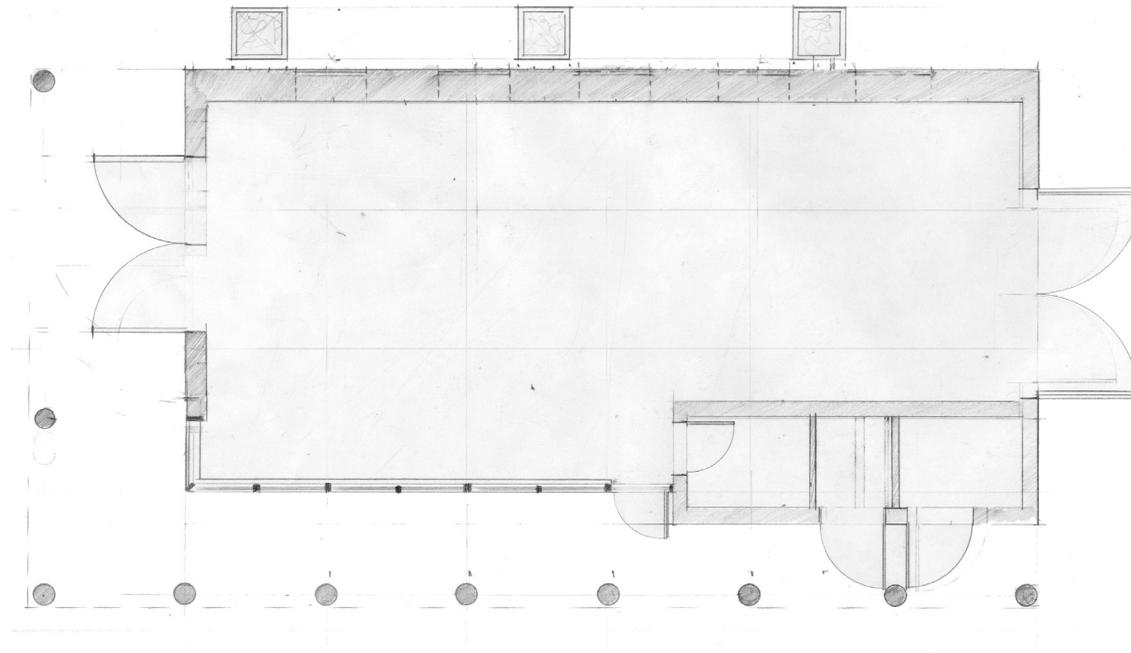


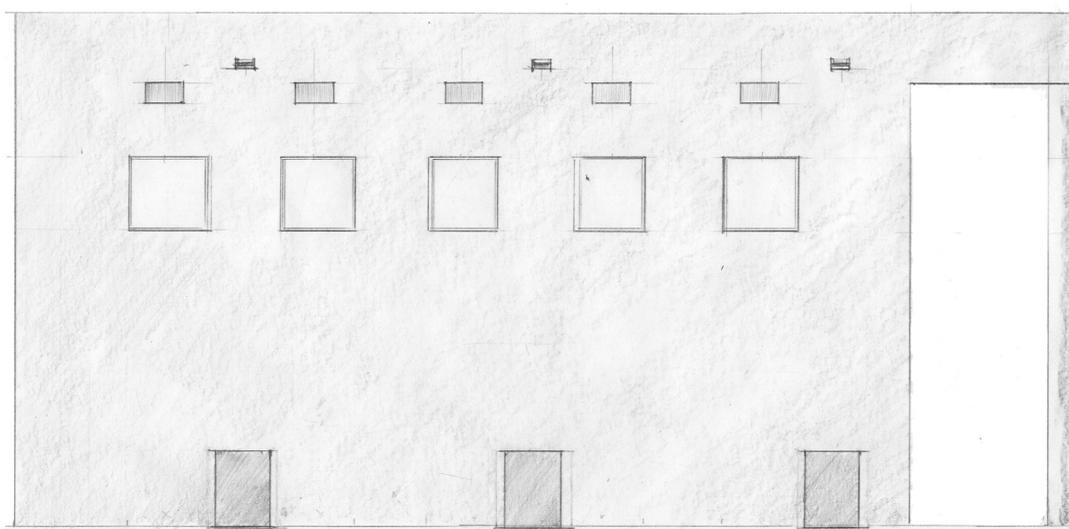
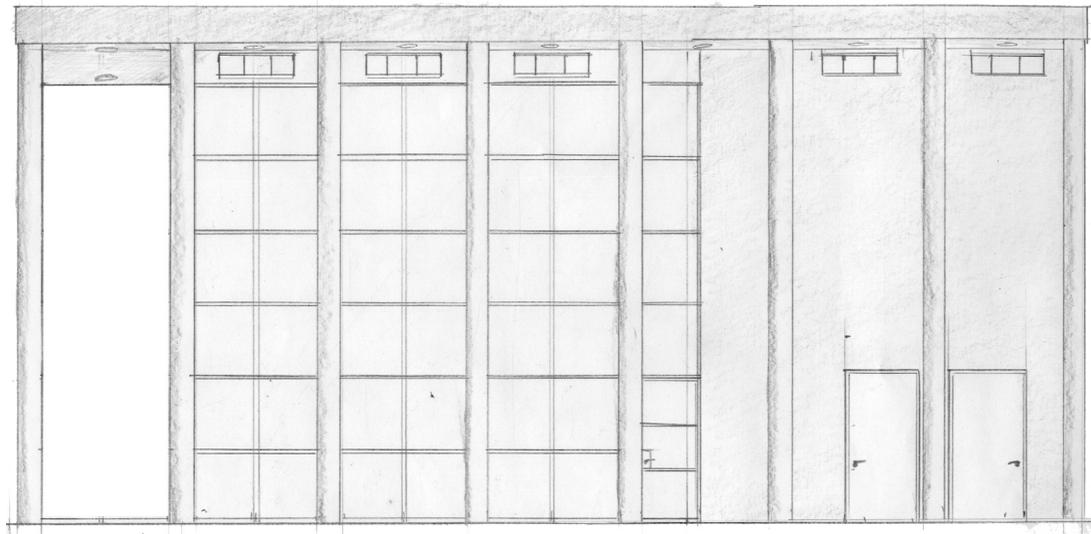










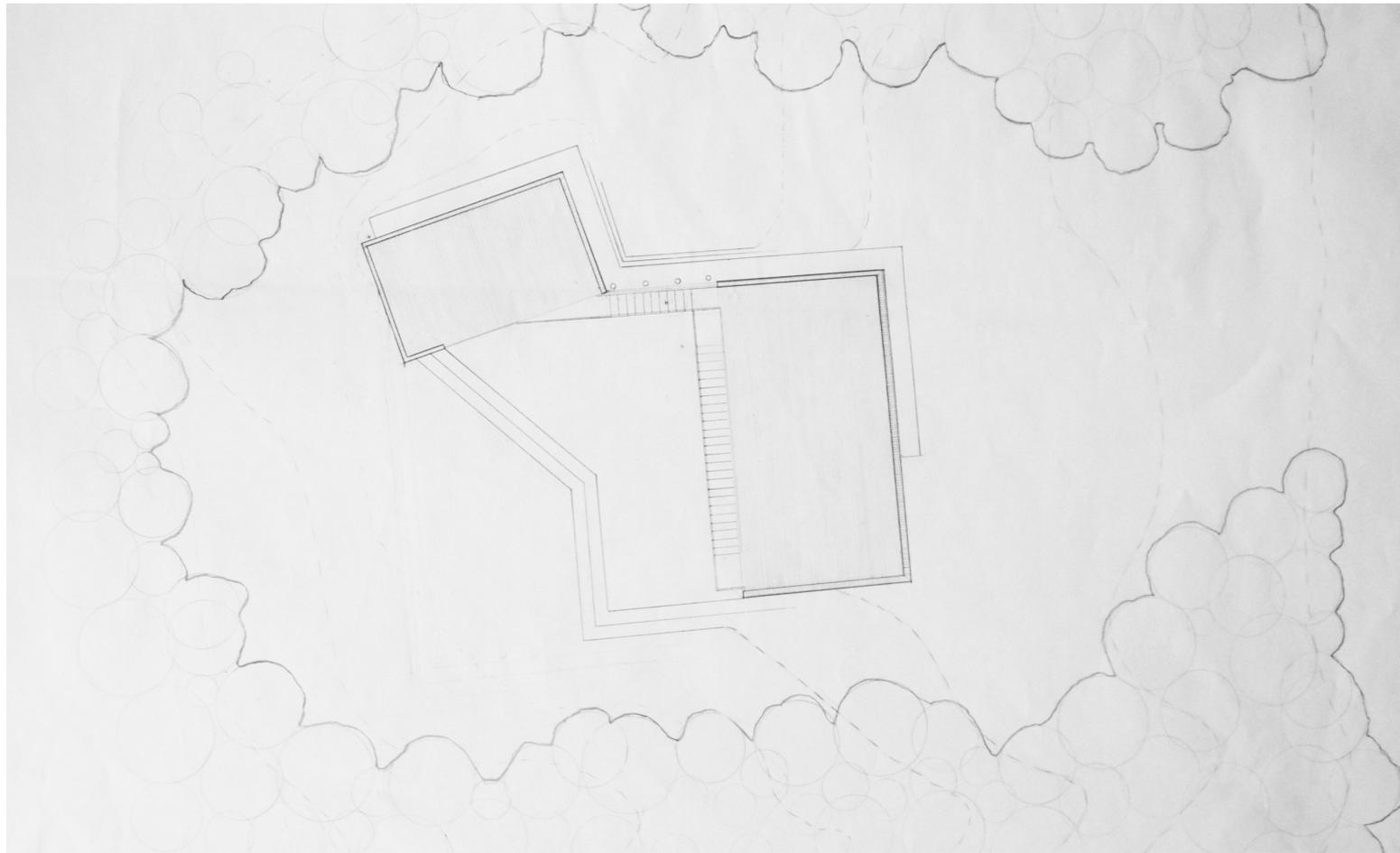


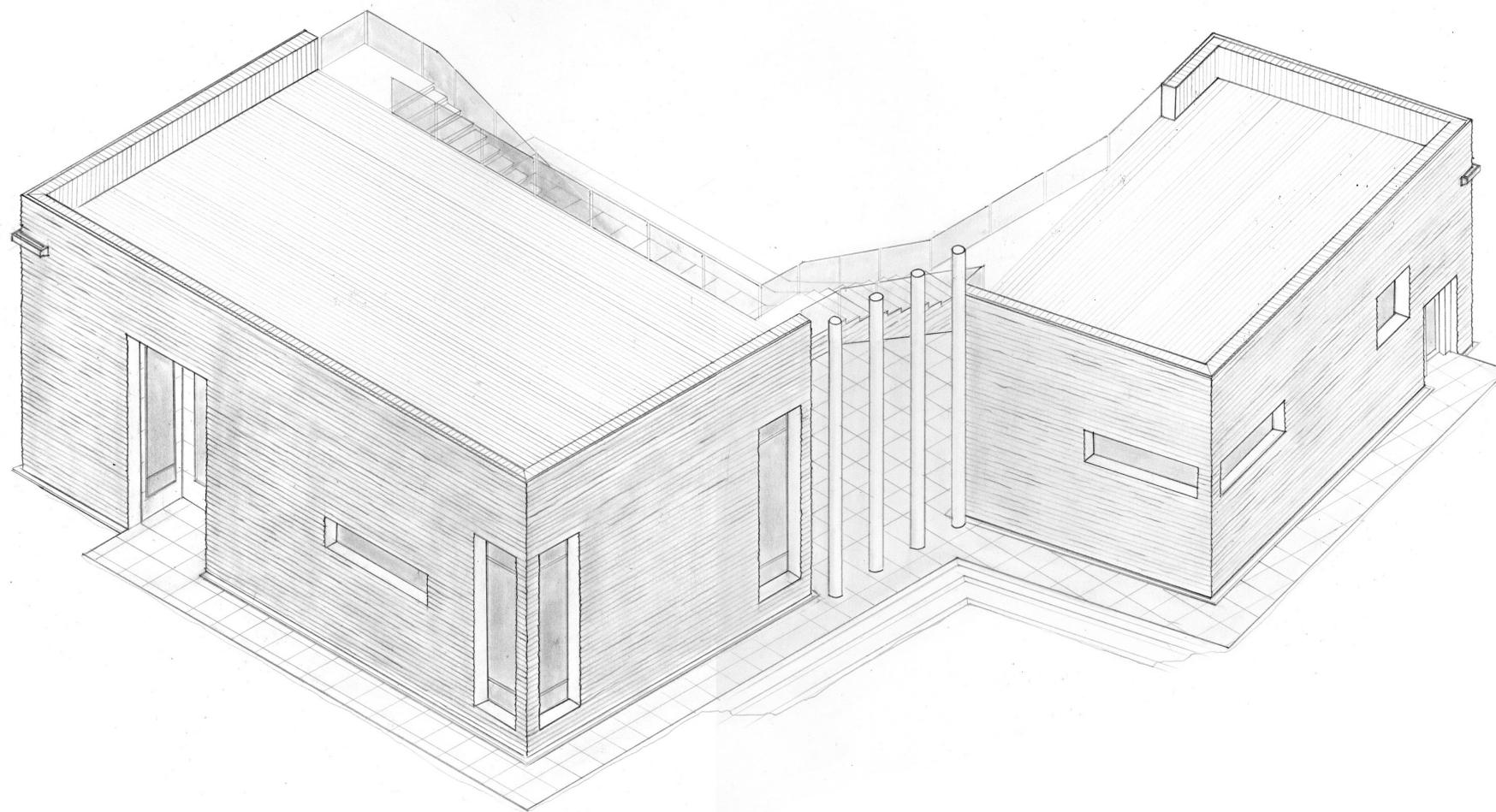
"In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

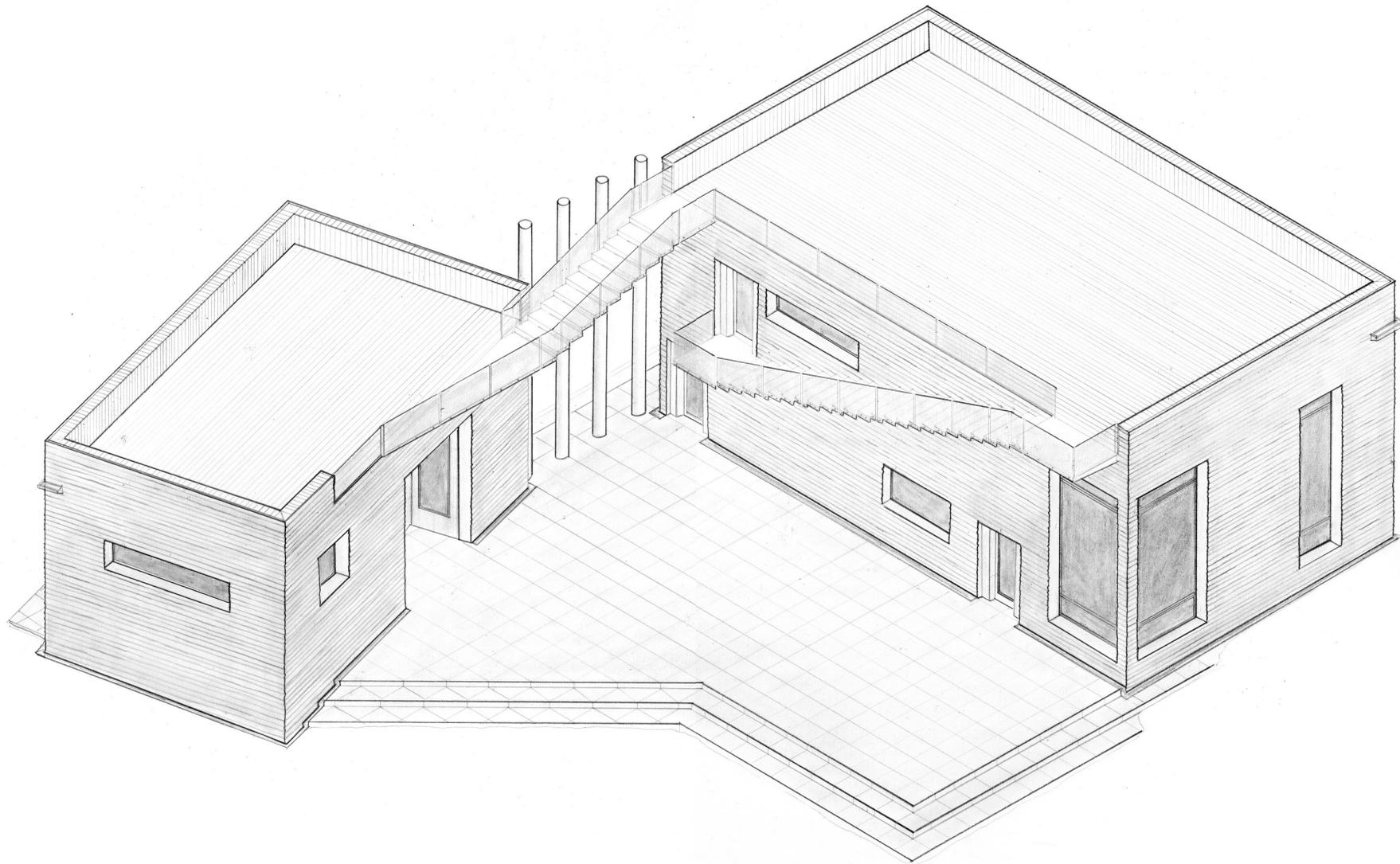
The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis, 26

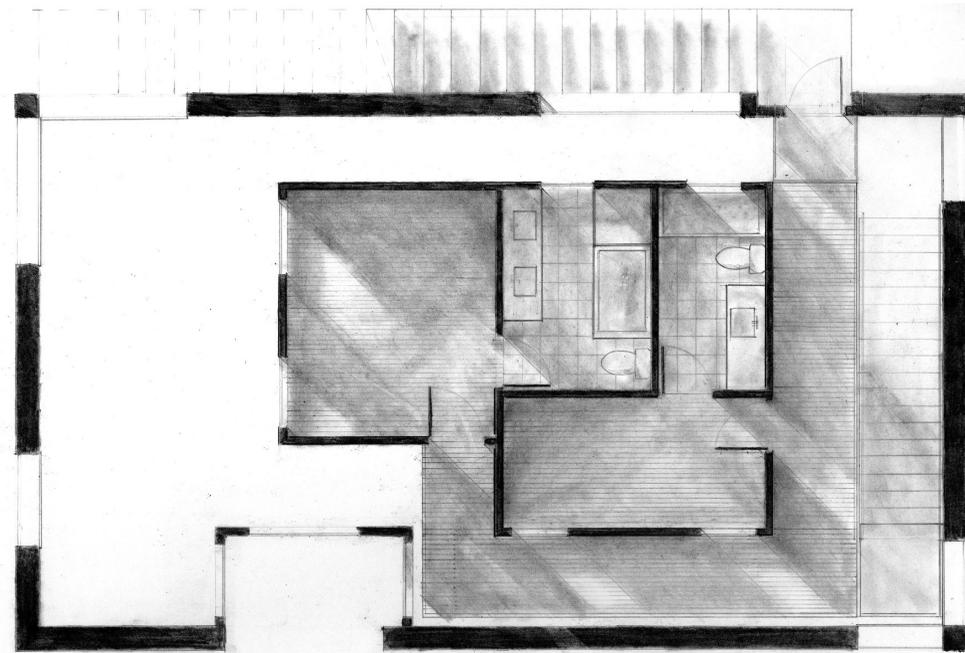
The second project began to describe the imagined world for a woodworker. The rhythm and order that would accompany the cycle of each day began to breathe a sense of life into the work. The movement from rising in the morning to working in the workshop to retiring at night was considered. The architecture was influenced by these imagined routines and I began to find it easier and easier to inhabit this world as I described it through drawing.

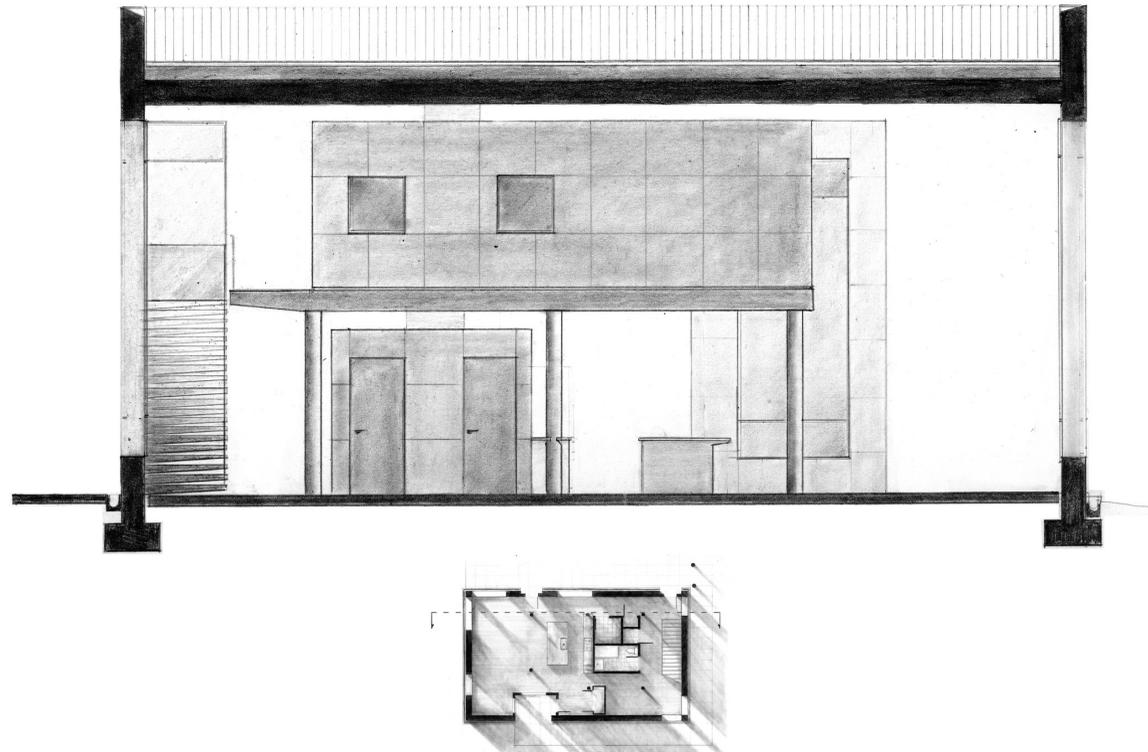
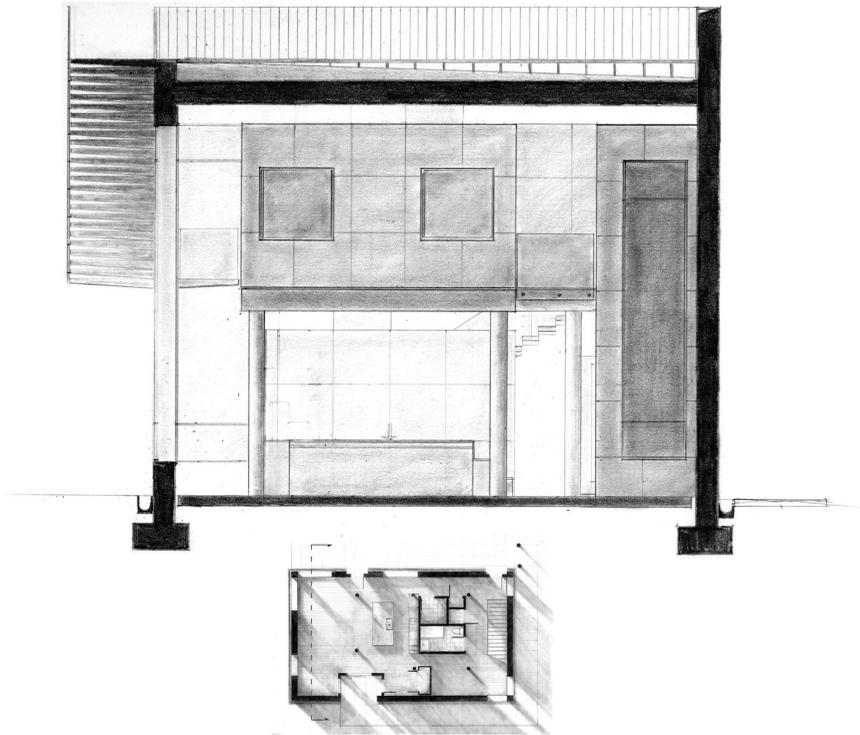
A House and A Workshop 1.3

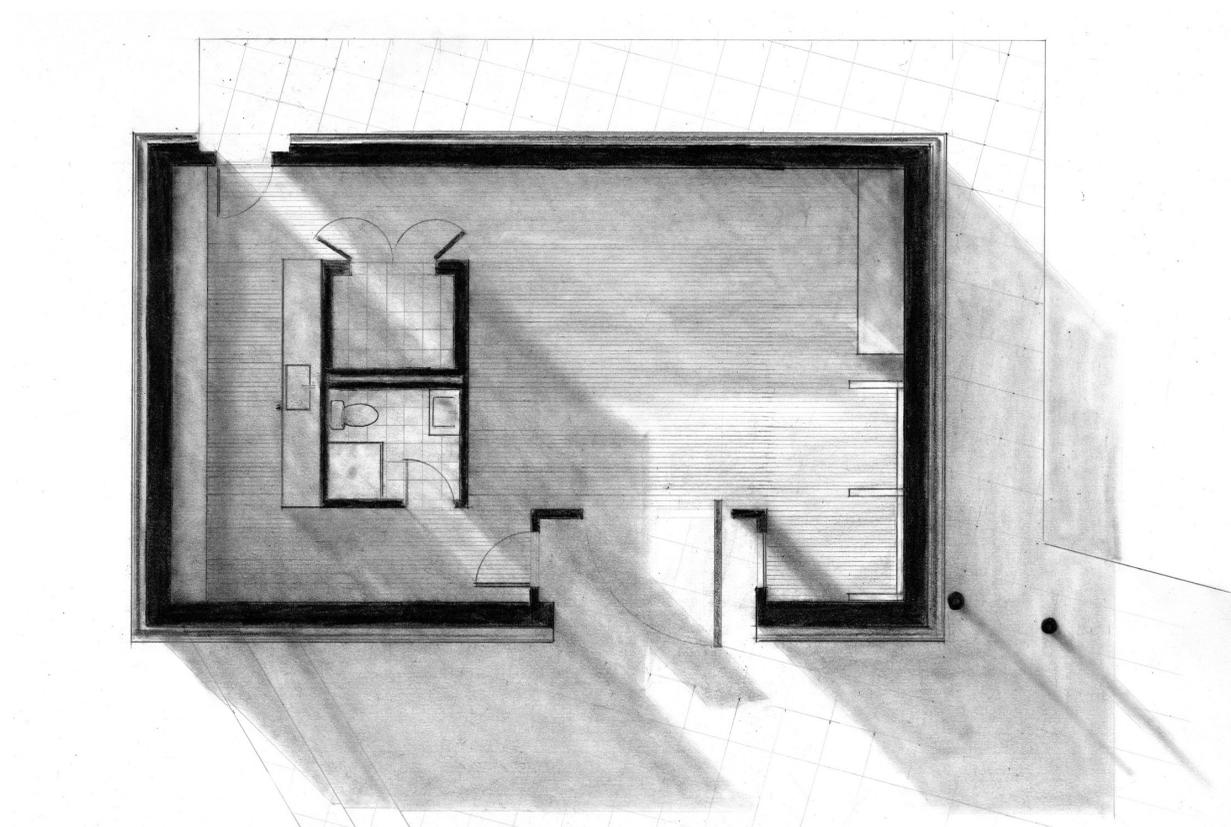


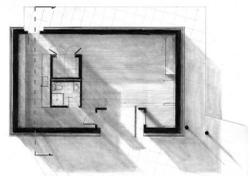
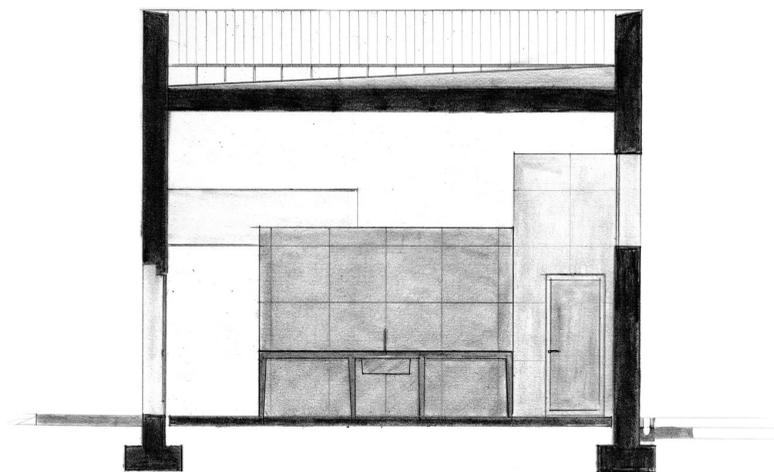
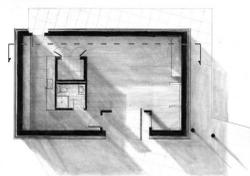
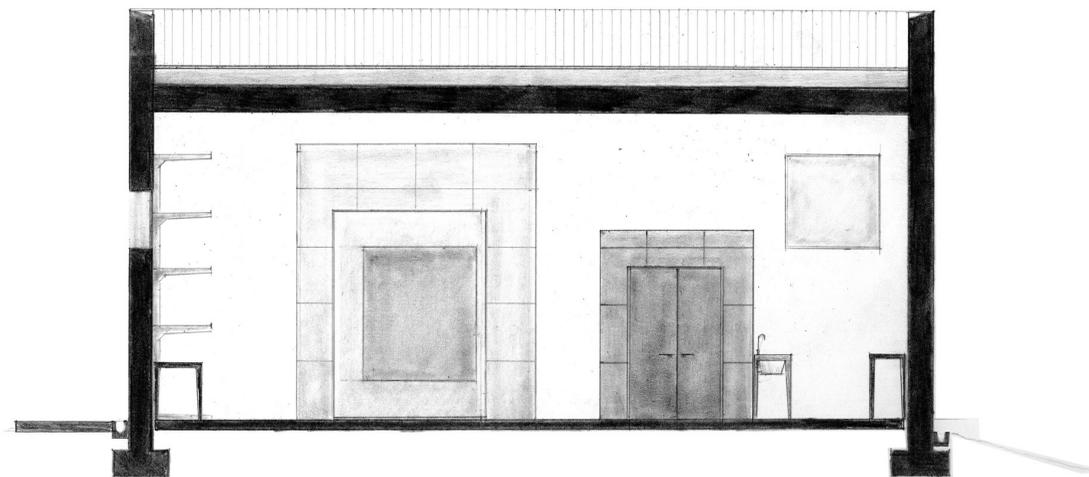










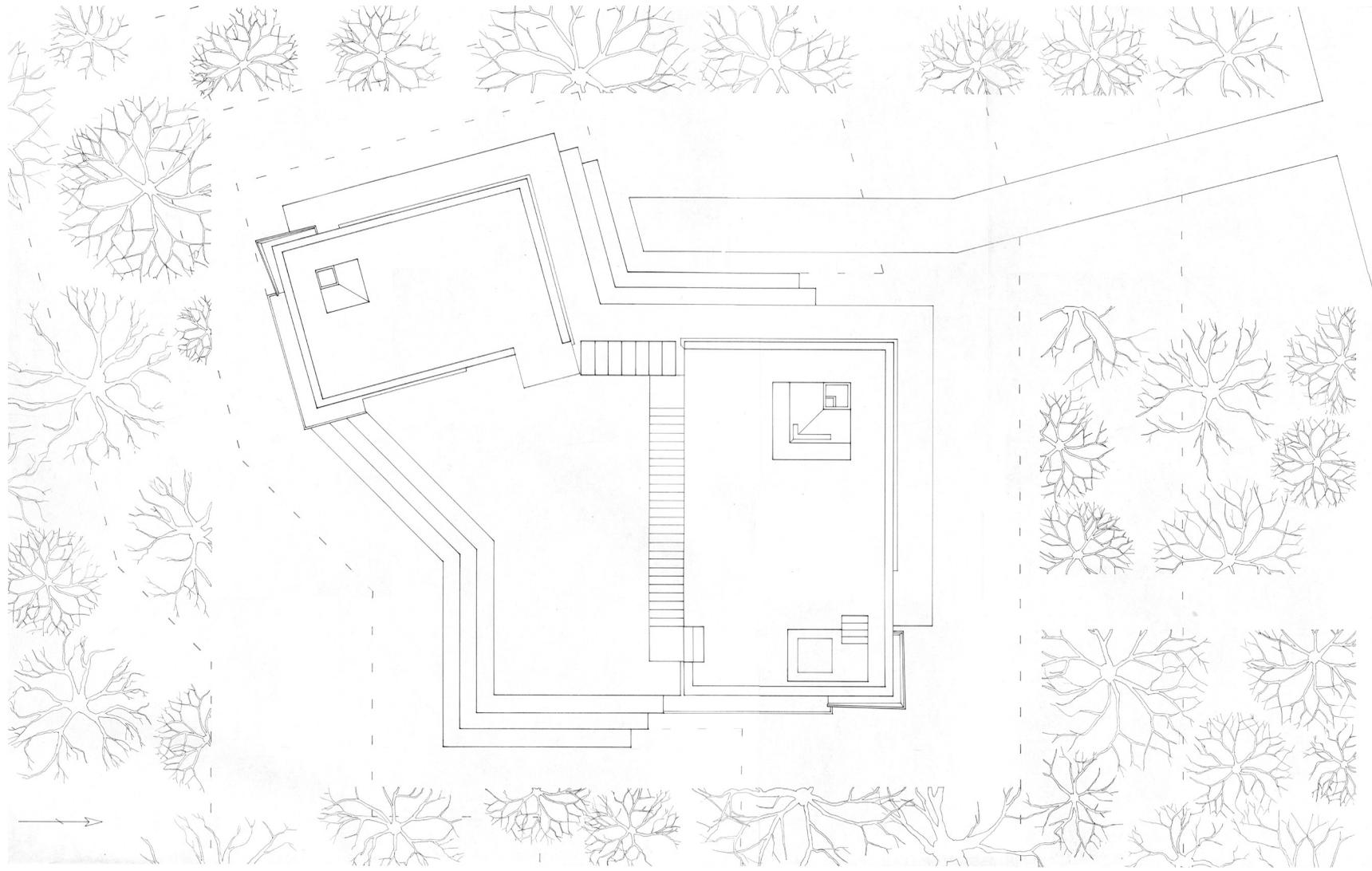


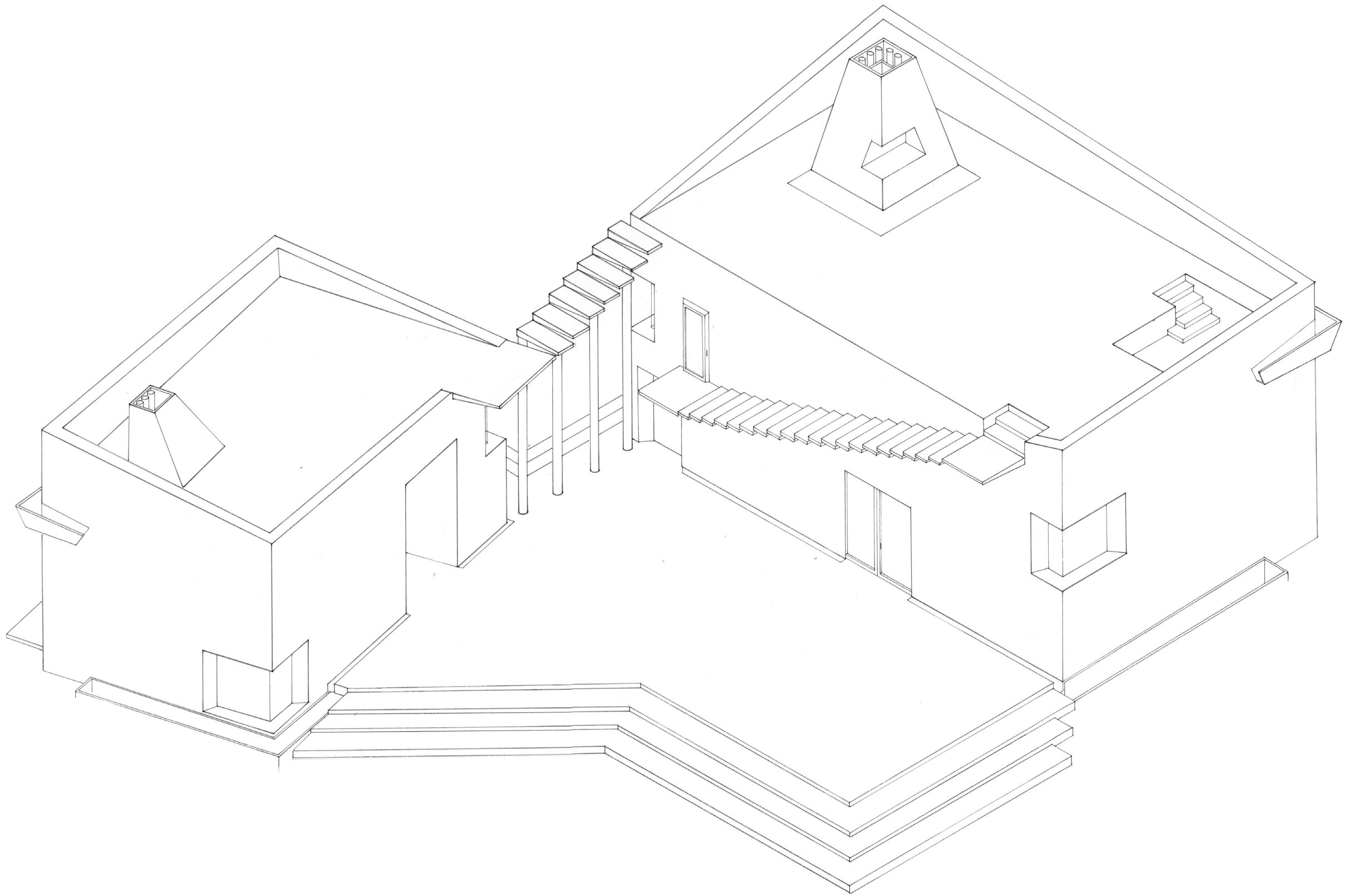
"A great many of those who 'debunk' traditional or (as they would say) 'sentimental values have in the background values of their own which they believe to be immune from the debunking process. They claim to be cutting away the parasitic growth of emotion, religious sanction, and inherited taboos, in order that 'real' or 'basic' values may emerge."

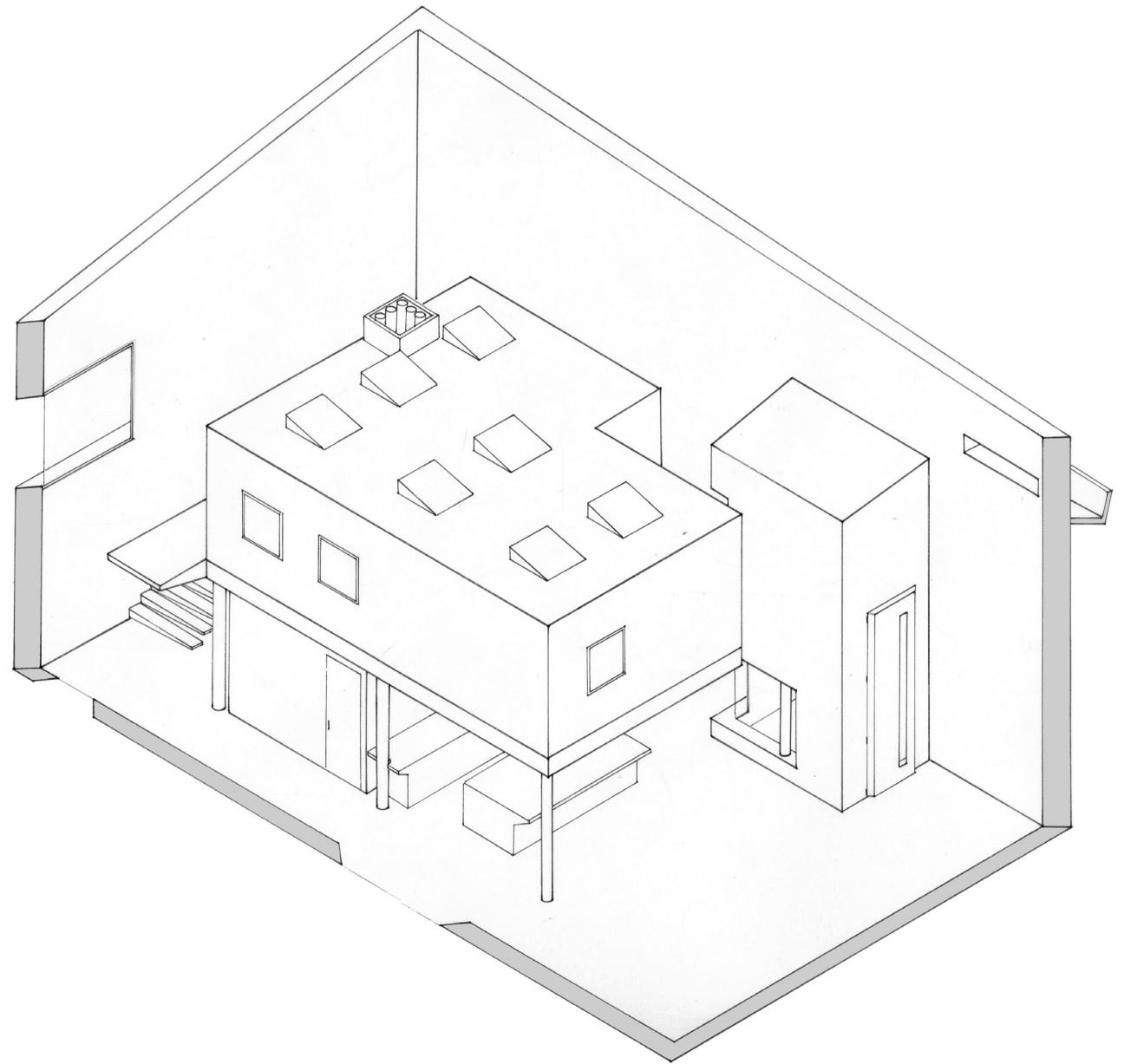
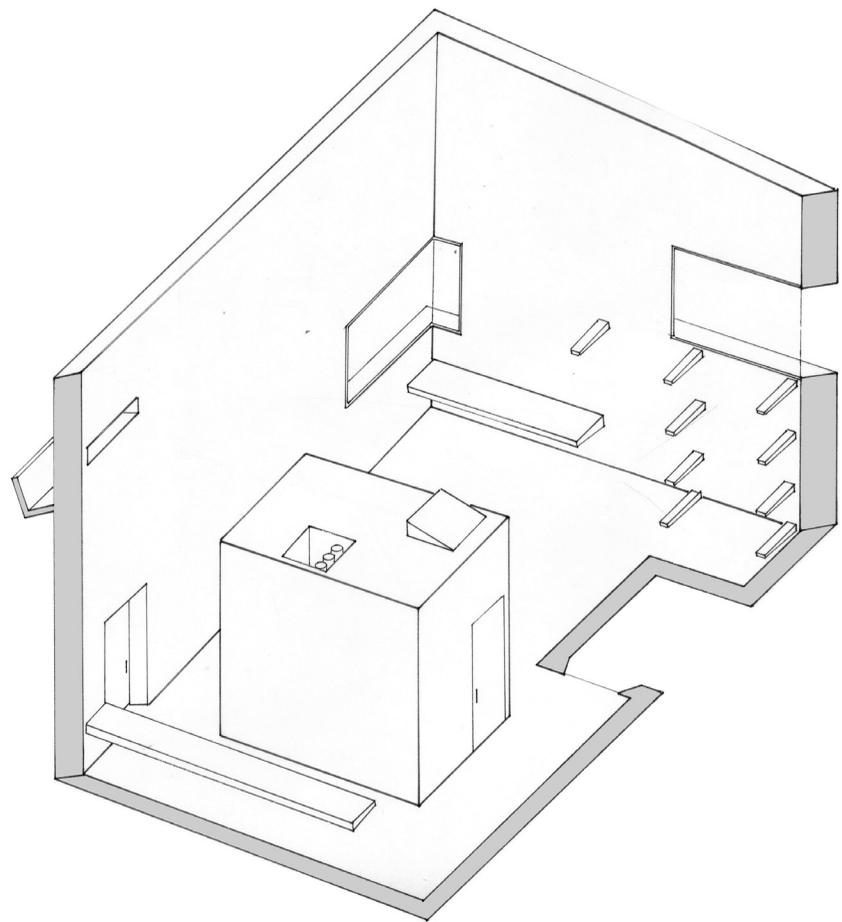
The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis, 29

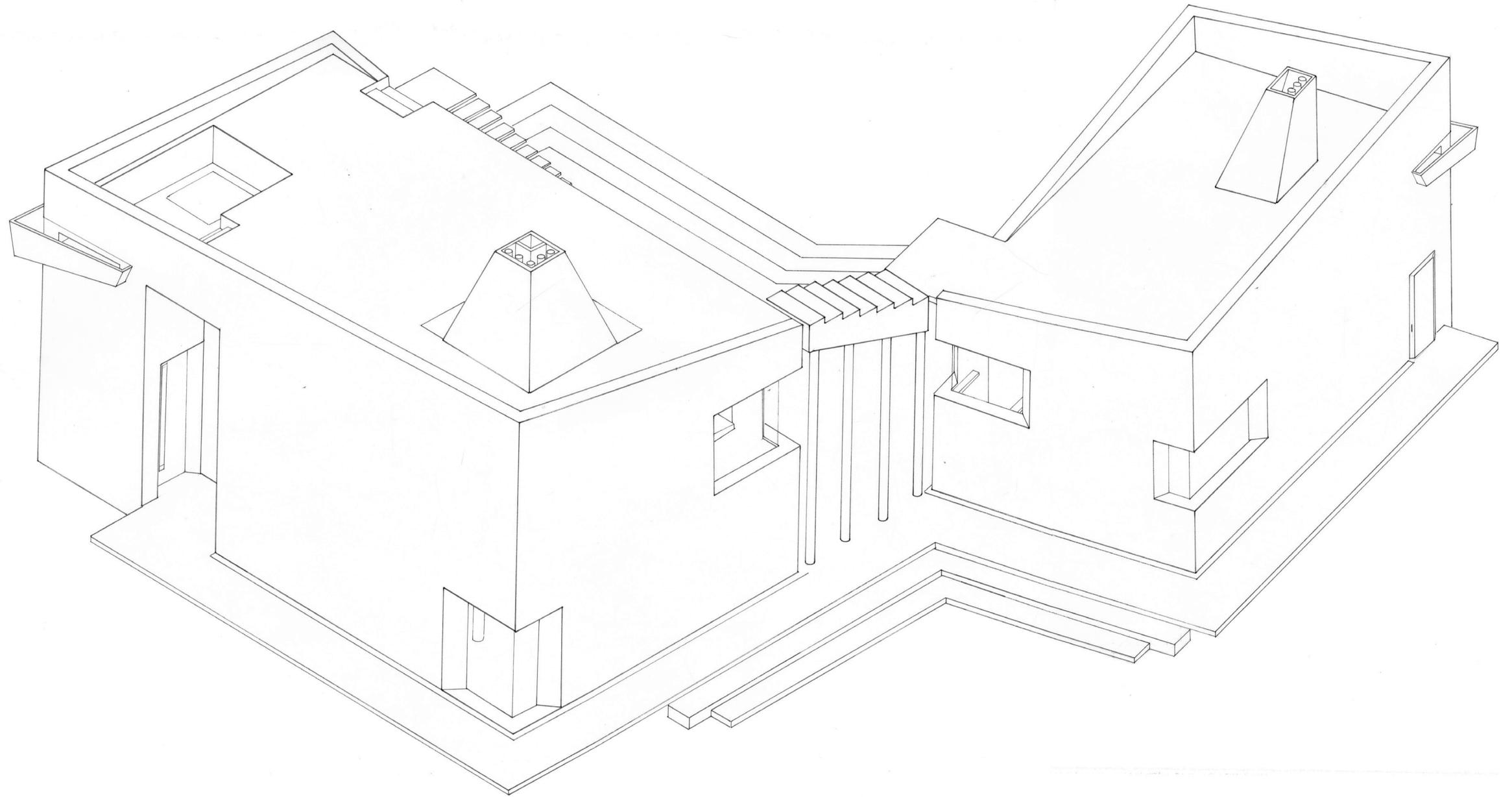
The third project investigated the physical relationship between the house and the workshop. The described world of the woodworker was set apart from the outer world. This idea was expressed by situating rooms within rooms. The entire life of the woodworker was imagined to express itself in the habits of a single day and these habits and routines were considered to have been handed down. Living and working in the same place then became more than just a lifestyle choice. It was a judgement made about an existence based on traditional values.

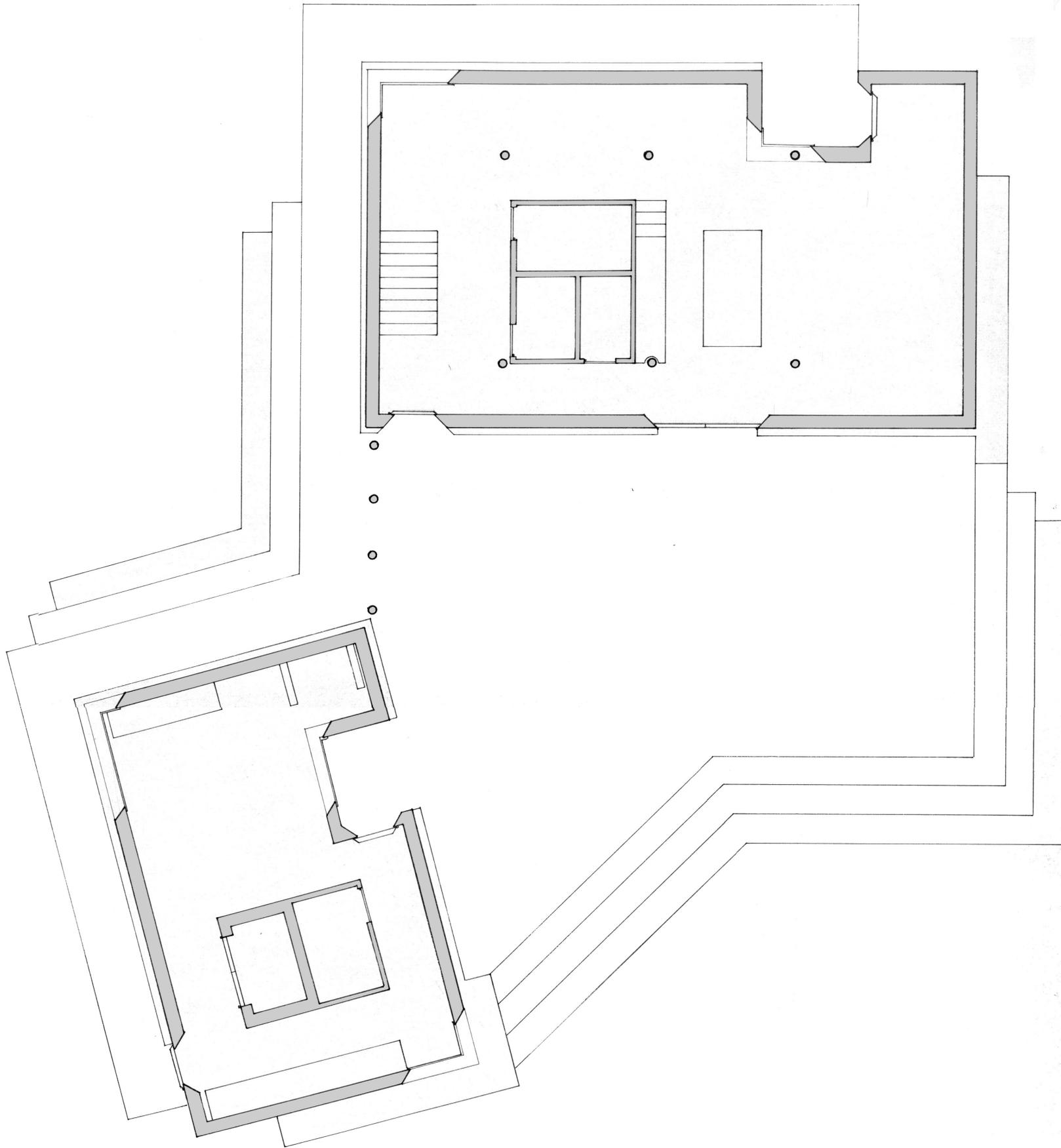
A House and A Workshop 1.4

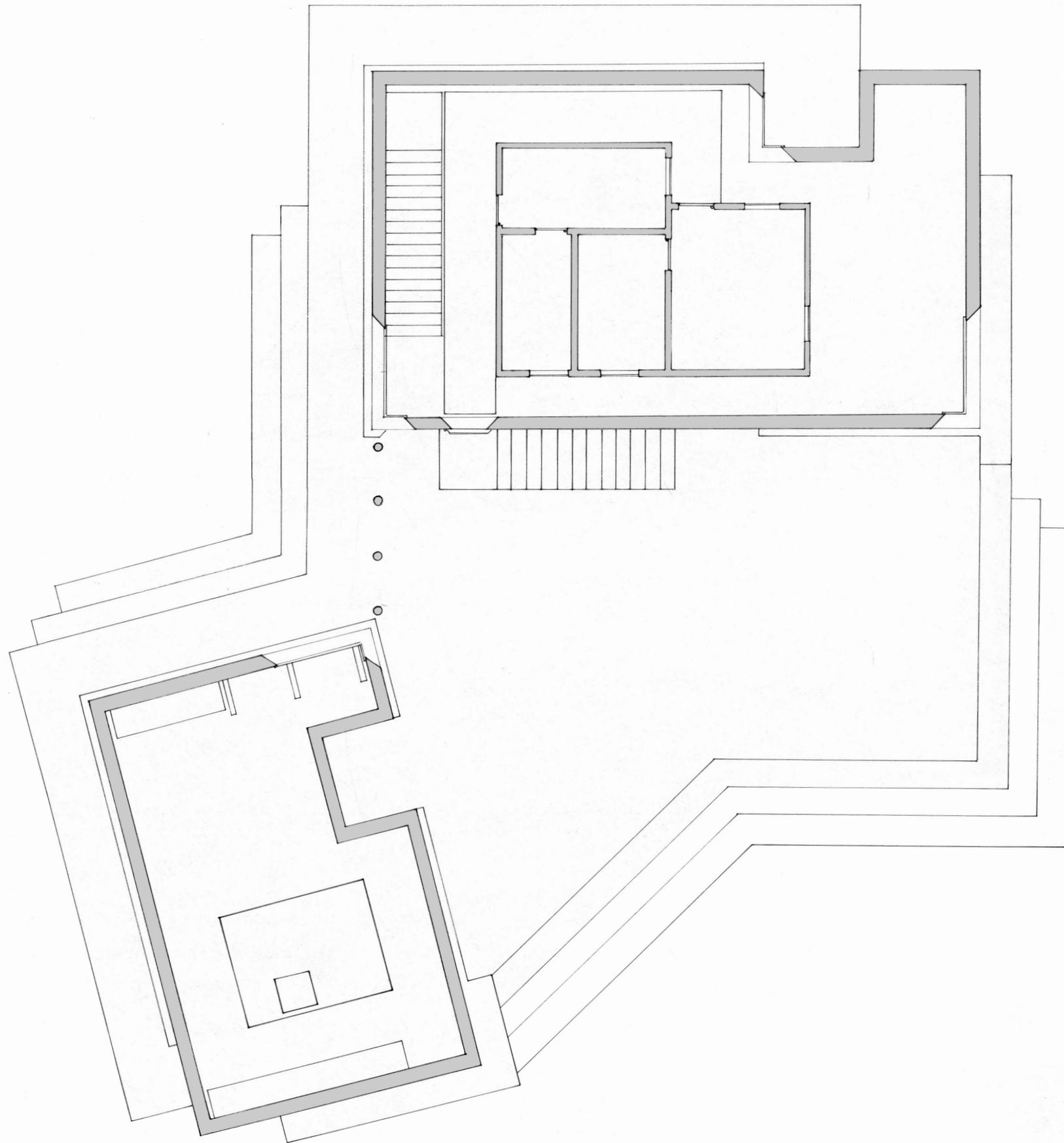


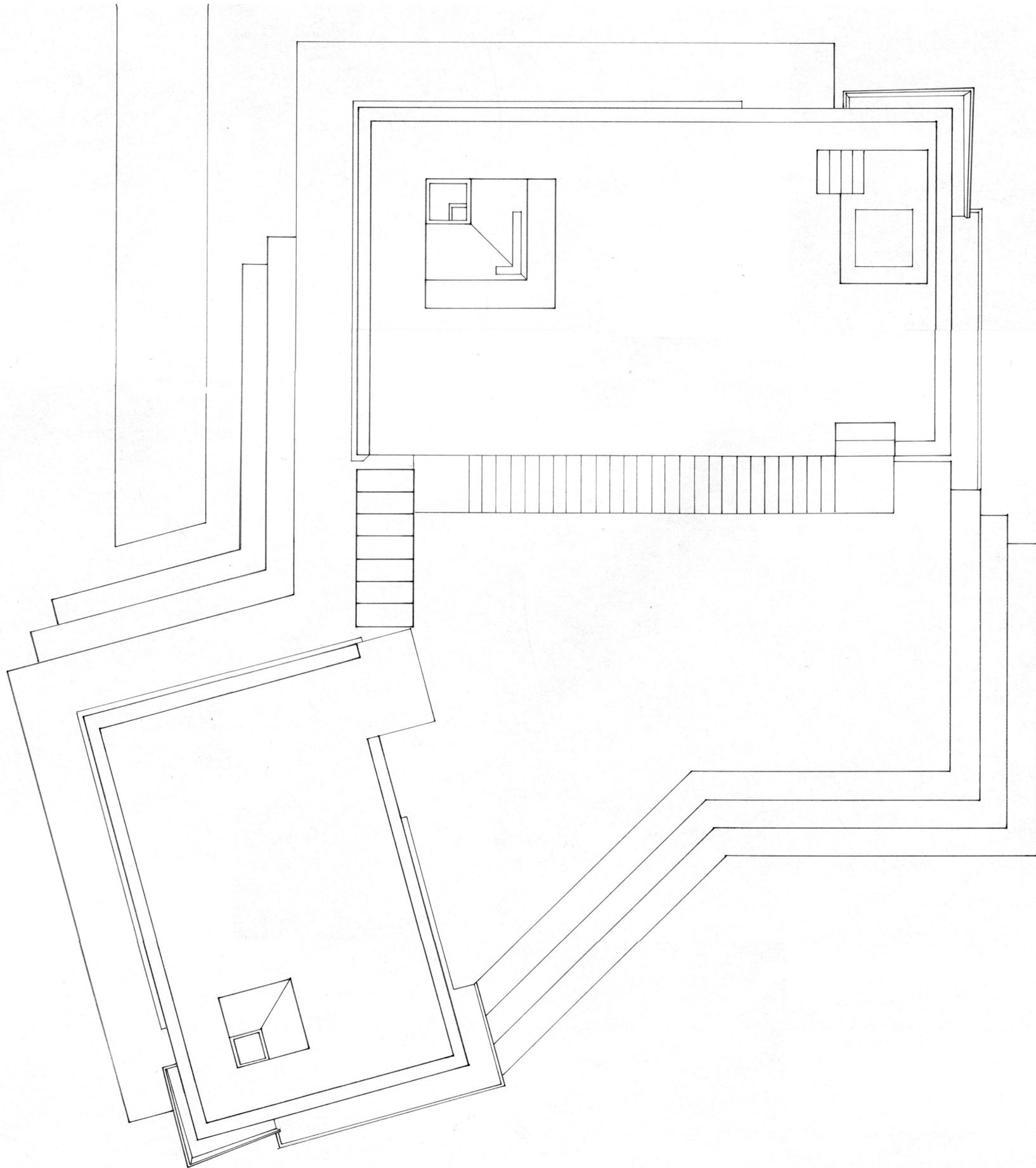


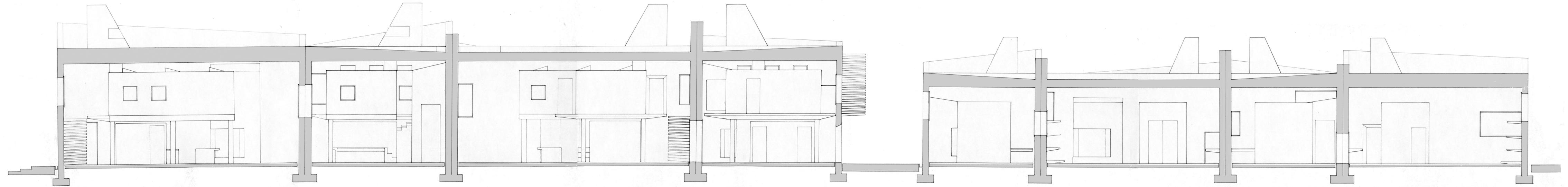


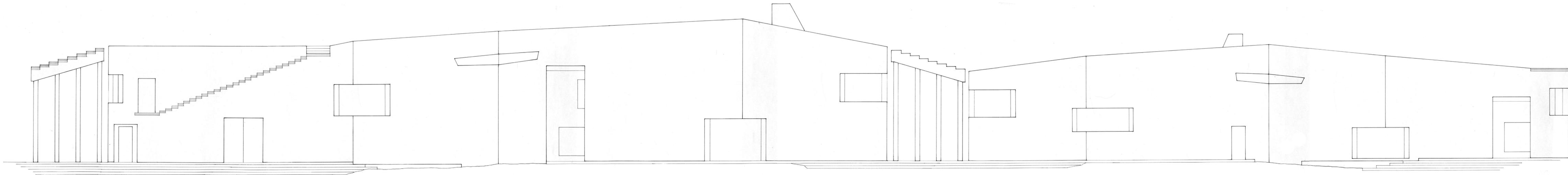










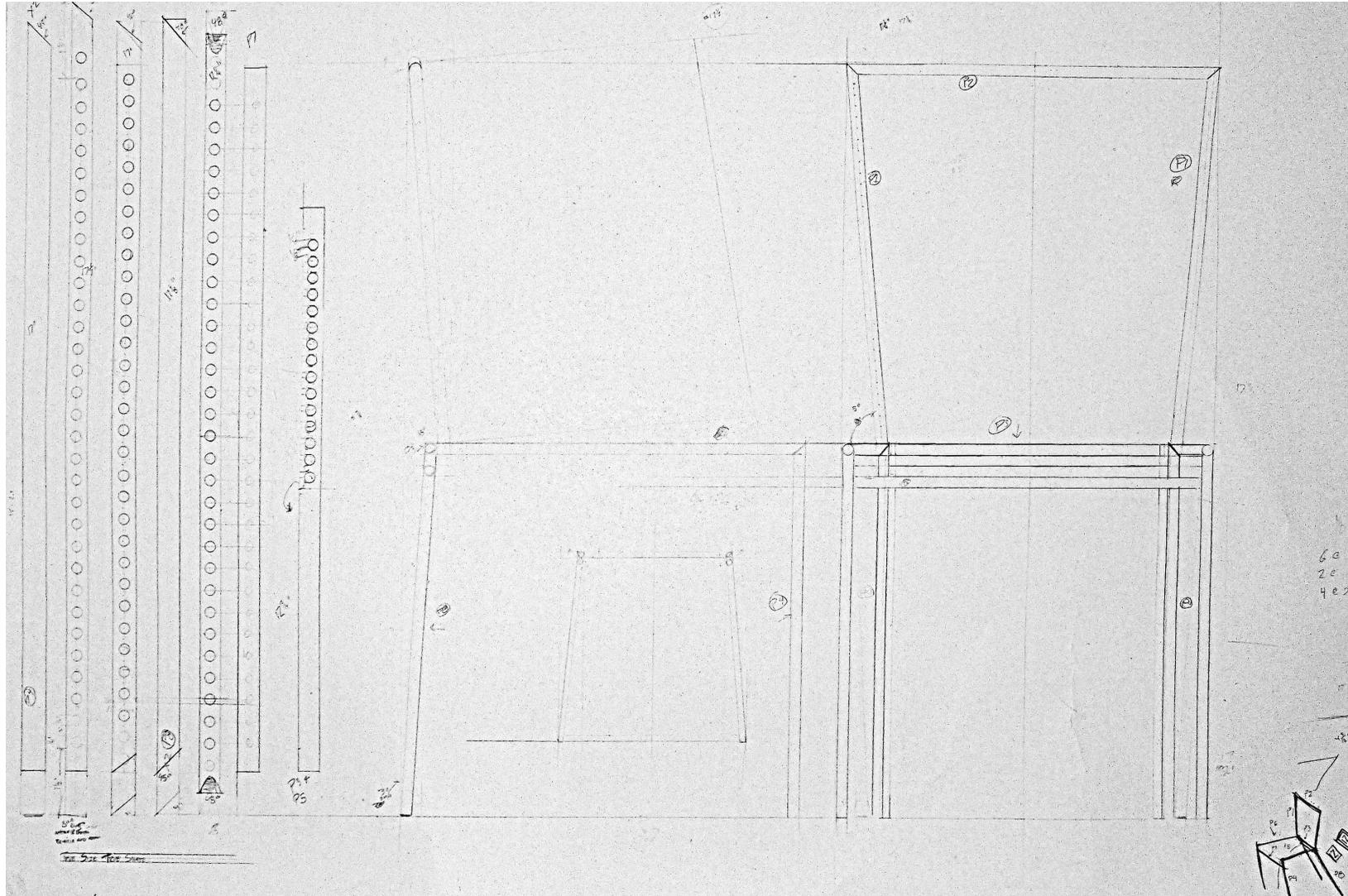


"A dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which is not tyranny or an obedience which is not slavery."

The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis, 73

The final project in the thesis is a clarification and expansion of the ideas that I had been working with all year. The tightly wrapped world which I had created was unwrapped and revealed. It is a world of ideas that have been judged to be of great value. A life filled with the tradition of making things is not considered to be a world of work but rather one of leisure. It is an idealized world where the woodworker can verify and speak to his existence through the movements and routines of daily life.

A Chair







In the midst of working on A House and A Workshop I decided to design and build a piece of furniture. It was a chance to demonstrate some of the ideas I was working on in the drawings as well as a chance to spend time in a workshop. I settled on a chair for a writing desk because I enjoyed the formal characteristics of that particular style and felt that the act of sitting down at a desk and working was a nice compliment to the idea of making things by hand. A Chair is constructed out of 1/2" steel rods that were cut, coped, and drilled before being welded together. The seat and back of the chair were fabricated by weaving a flat grey cord through the holes that had been drilled through the frame. The order and spacing of the holes offered a framework for the weaving to take place, but they were not the cause of the pattern. The set structure actually allows for a nearly endless variety of patterns that are determined by the weaver. In some ways its analogous to A House and A Workshop. The formal arrangement and order of the two buildings is what allows the variety of movement in the daily rituals and routines to be discernible.

appendix

A House and A Workshop 1.1

- 3 geometric plan
- 4 perspective study - house
- 5 perspective study - workshop
- 6 exterior isometric - house
- 7 first floor plan and elevation - house
- 8 exterior isometric - workshop
- 9 plan and elevations - workshop

A House and A Workshop 1.2

- 13 site plan
- 14 proportion study - house
- 15 proportion study - workshop
- 16 first and second floor plans - house
- 17 elevations - house
- 18 first floor plan and elevations - workshop
- 19 elevations - workshop

A House and A Workshop 1.3

- 23 site plan
- 24 northwest isometric
- 25 southeast isometric
- 26 first and second floor plans - house
- 27 sections - house
- 28 first floor plan - workshop
- 29 sections - workshop

A House and A Workshop 1.4

- 33 site plan
- 34 southeast isometric
- 35 interior isometric
- 36 northwest isometric
- 37 first floor plan
- 38 second floor plan
- 39 roof plan
- 40 unfolded interior elevation
- 41 unfolded exterior elevation

A Chair

- 45 construction drawing
- 46 photographs - chair
- 47 photographs - chair

work cited

Lewis, C.S. *The Abolition of Man*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1974