

# Unit 3

The entry area of Unit 3 is similar to that described for Unit 2. What will follow is an explanation of the movement sequences and spatial characteristics of the ground level.

This level, the ground level, shares the organizational attitude of the other units. A description of this level, within Unit 3 can easily be correlated with Units 2 or 4.

Having passed through the forecourt, the entrance and bedroom or office suites, one arrives at the balcony. This internal balcony overlooks the major living area of the house. This balcony opens to many views of the interior, exterior, and distant cityscape. It, therefore, has the responsibility of not only connecting space internally but has the more fundamental responsibility of connecting the inhabitant

to the city beyond. From a practical perspective the balcony serves two functions. First it is a transitional element from inside to outside as it passes through the exterior wall and becomes the outdoor bedroom balcony. Secondly, the balcony takes you to the major



staircase of the house.

The staircase is placed outside of the living space, forcing the resident to experience a space that is neither inside of the house nor in the garden. This staircase is all about event and spatial experience, it is a staircase to see and to be seen upon. The staircase is bounded on the earth side with a sculpted concrete wall (see sketches on page 50.) This wall is patterned in a variety of ways and is an element that can become highly personal, similar to the garden. The mid-landing takes the inhabitant to the upper hardscape garden. Once on the upper-garden terrace, one can continue to the edge of the garden. From this edge there are three choices, proceed to the shared hillside garden, to the private observation deck (a space neither of the garden, nor of the common hillside orchards), or descend to the backyard, or lower green garden.

Returning to the interior staircase, from the mid-landing of the stair the inhabitant can descend into the major living space of the house. This arrangement, forcing movement through rooms that in a typical suburban house plan are seldom used, makes every space in these houses necessary. For example, a familiar suburban house plan of the 90s has the entrance taking the inhabitant directly into the kitchen or a point of vertical circulation. This kind of arrangement bypasses the more public rooms of the house, living and dining rooms, leaving them oft times little used. Given the interpretation of living chosen here, by forcing the circulation to pass through the living and dining space, one is assured that these rooms will be used consistently.

Within the double volume living room there are several architectural elements worth mentioning. One is a significant element that encourages internal focus. This element is the fireplace. The fireplaces in Units 2, 3 and 4 are monolithic concrete masses that contribute to the structural integrity of the roof system. The fireplace has a simple hearth that rests upon the exposed concrete floor slab, it is made of either granite or marble. The fireplace has a simple granite/marble mantle, this abstract element is used only to signify the top of the hearth and the beginning of the flue. Additionally at the roof deck, the fireplace becomes a source of warmth during the cool Southern California evenings

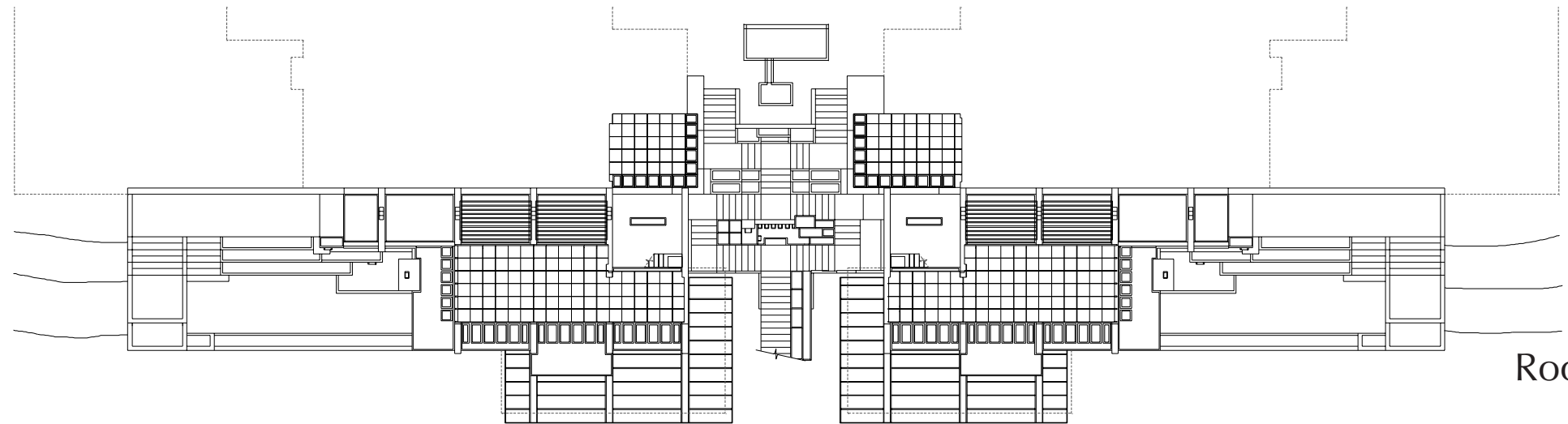
and a place to cook meals out-of-doors.

Another of the significant architectural elements is the door to the lower green garden that is adjacent to the fireplace and

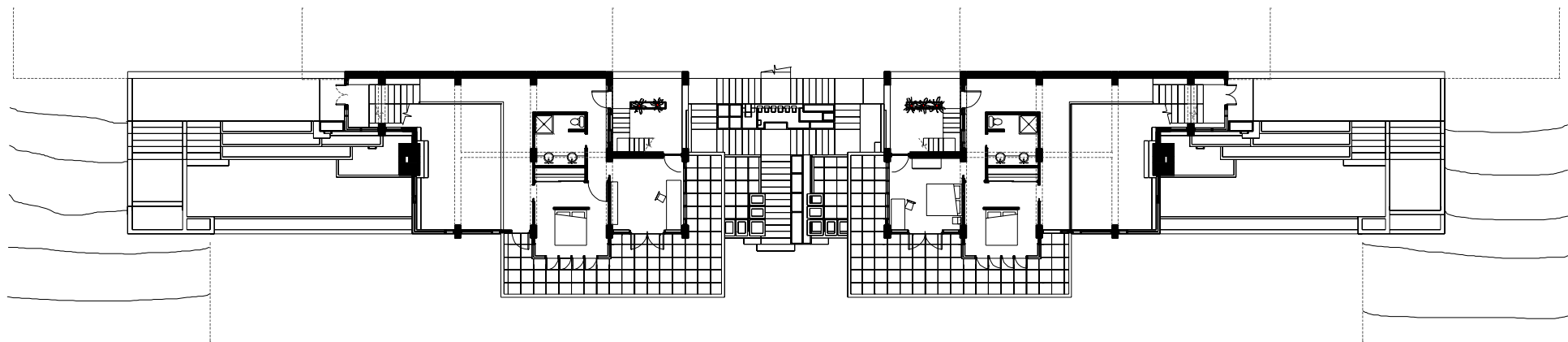
the window wall. This door, similar to all exterior doors in this development, allow a free flowing access to the garden from the ground level of the house. The window wall



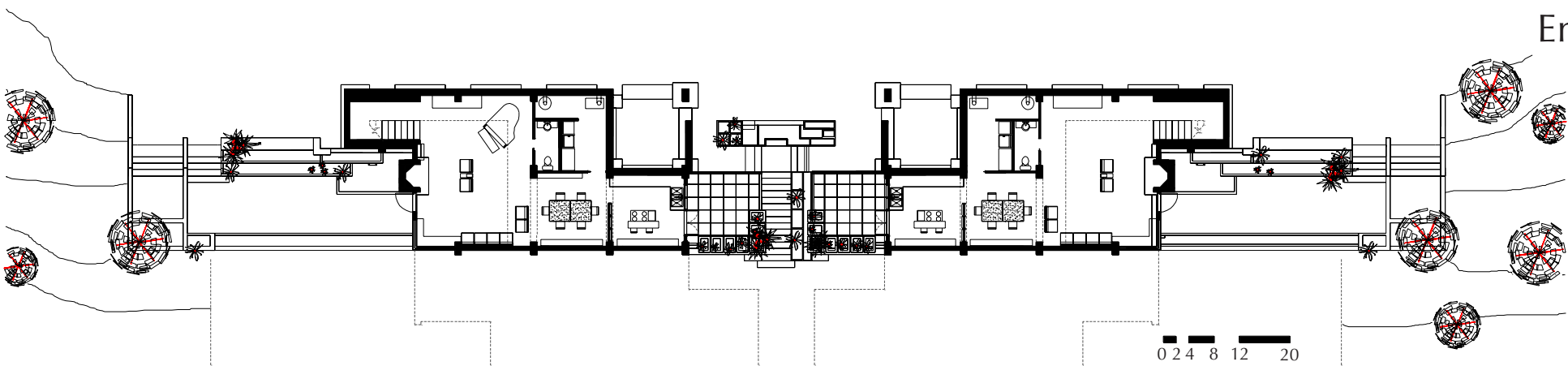
*An idealized view from the bedroom balcony of Unit 3. This study shows the earlier placement of the staircase within the main living space. It was later decided to move the staircase into its own space.*



Roof terrace

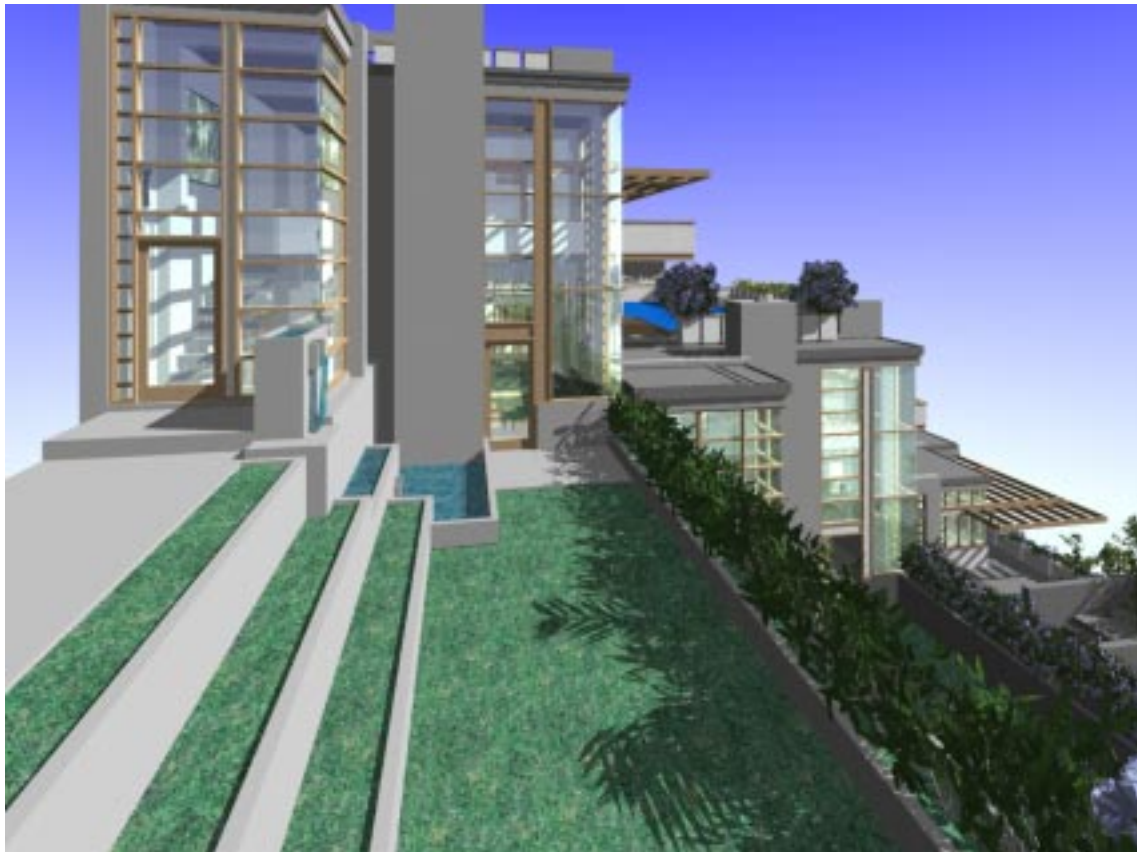


Entry level



Ground level





*Perspective rendering of the green garden elevation of Unit 3.*

is 17'-4" in height, it is divided into several variously sized panels by a system of wood 2x mullion sections. The wall is constructed with insulated green glass. To reduce the massiveness of the window wall vertical bands of square operable windows are placed as end anchors. In Unit 2 and 3 the window wall at the cantilevered corner of the living room is unique to the other units. These are the only units in which a butt-glazed condition occurs in the major living space.

Since the concrete floor slab at this level (ground) is on-grade it houses the heating elements for the house. Incorporated into the floor assembly is a radiant heating system. The system is composed of plastic piping, gravel and concrete. The furnace is located along the earth wall of each unit, within, adjacent to or behind the utility room in a mechanical room. All exhaust is taken through a common duct work to a location away from the adjacent houses.

Each house has a formal dining room adjacent to the unit's main living space. This room is typically located so that the windows are above eye level. This offers privacy to the resident who may be dining, while the inhabitant of the adjacent lower unit are on their rooftop deck. An additional screening element is found just outside of these operable windows in the form of a planting shelf. On these shelves the dweller would be

encouraged to plant and maintain growth that does not necessarily limit light but does limit sight into this dining space. The maintenance of this plant shelf is the responsibility of the owner of the lower unit.

The dining space is directly adjacent to the half-bath, that each of the larger units has, the mechanical/utility spaces and the kitchen. The kitchen is a carefully-conceived room. It is the master control center of the public staircase and courtyard. Each of the kitchens in Units 1-4 overlooks the staircase in an effort to provide security. The kitchens are outfitted efficiently with modern and practical devices. They are conceived to be highly personal spaces. The layouts shown only demonstrate one planning possibility, there are many other possible alternatives.

To complete the ground level system of interaction with internal and external space is the breakfast patio. This is now the fifth of six outdoor spaces defined for each unit. This small semiprivate patio is intended for morning use; however it can just as easily be used at any time of day. Due to its proximity to the cascading water of the public staircase courtyard conversation can remain relatively private, and with the evaporative cooling and wind funneling of the staircase courtyard, this patio would more than likely become one of the more comfortable places in the cluster.

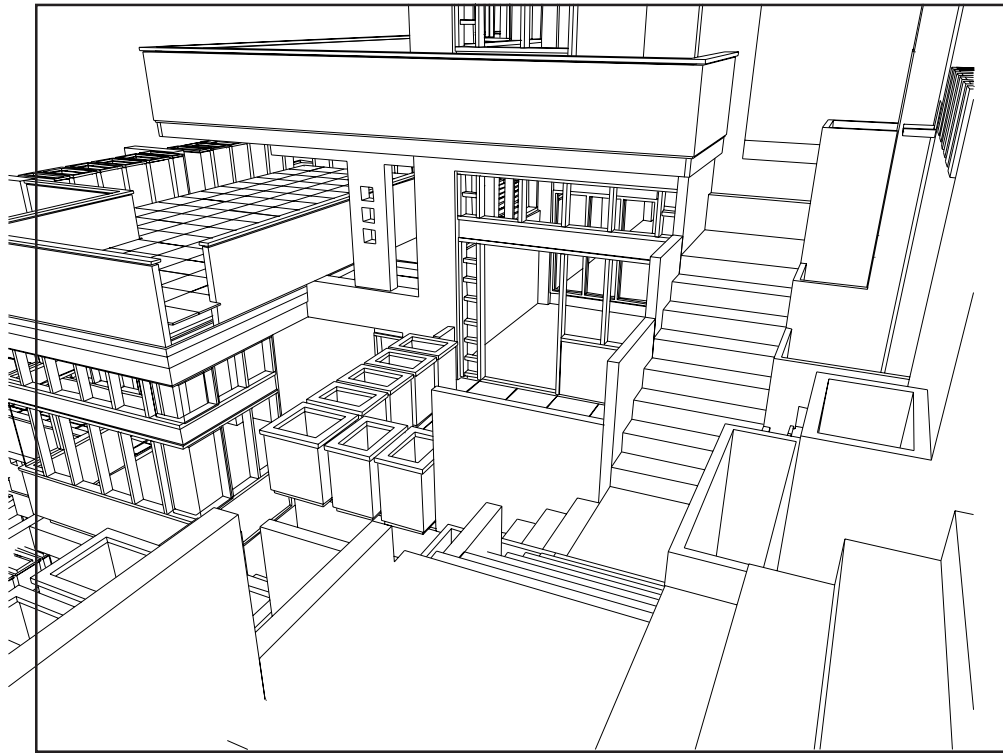


*Interior study rendering, a view of the living room, taken from the entry level balcony.*

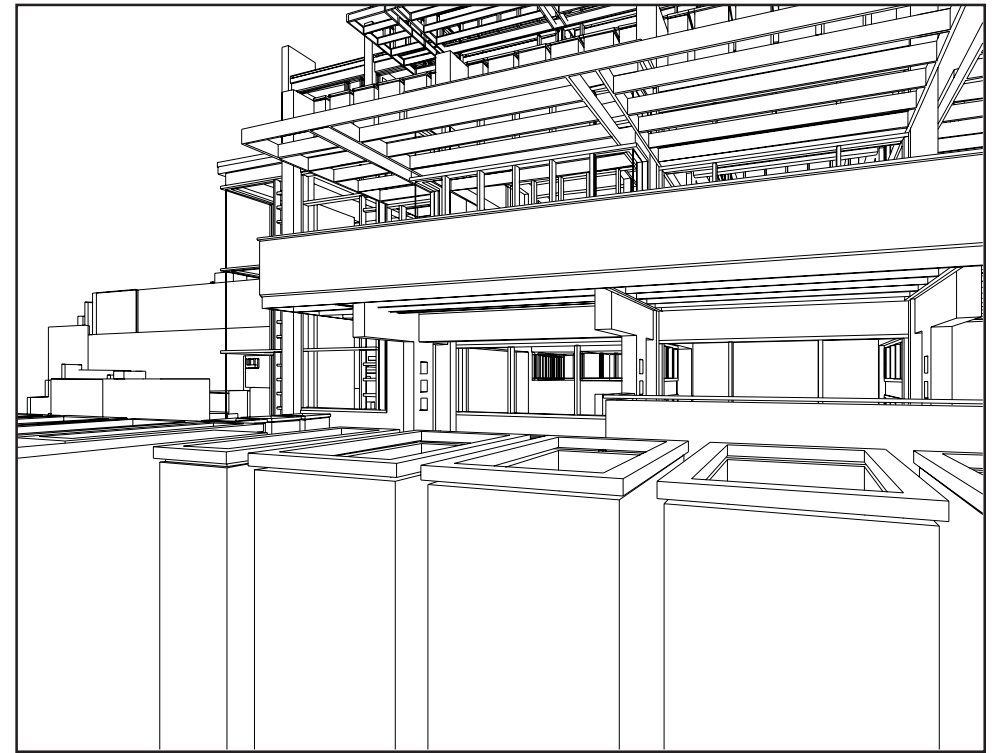


*Perspective sketch of Unit 3 from the staircase.*

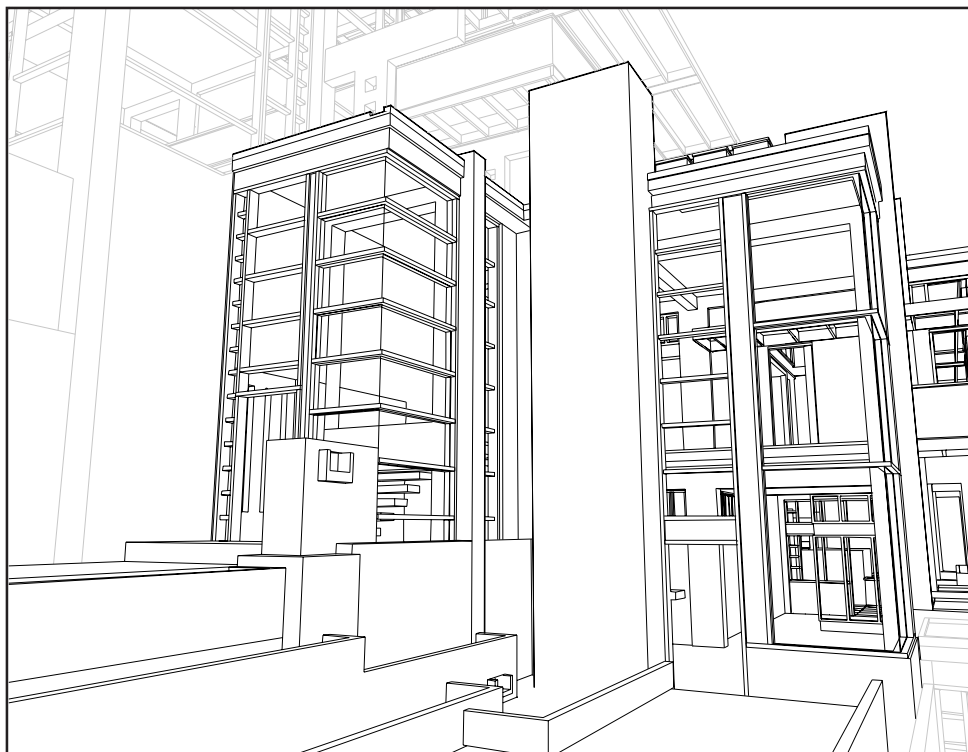




*View to the entrance of Unit 3 from the staircase courtyard.*



*A view from the roof terrace of Unit 2.*



*Elevation of the stair tower, fireplace and garden entrance.*



*The living space of Unit 3.*