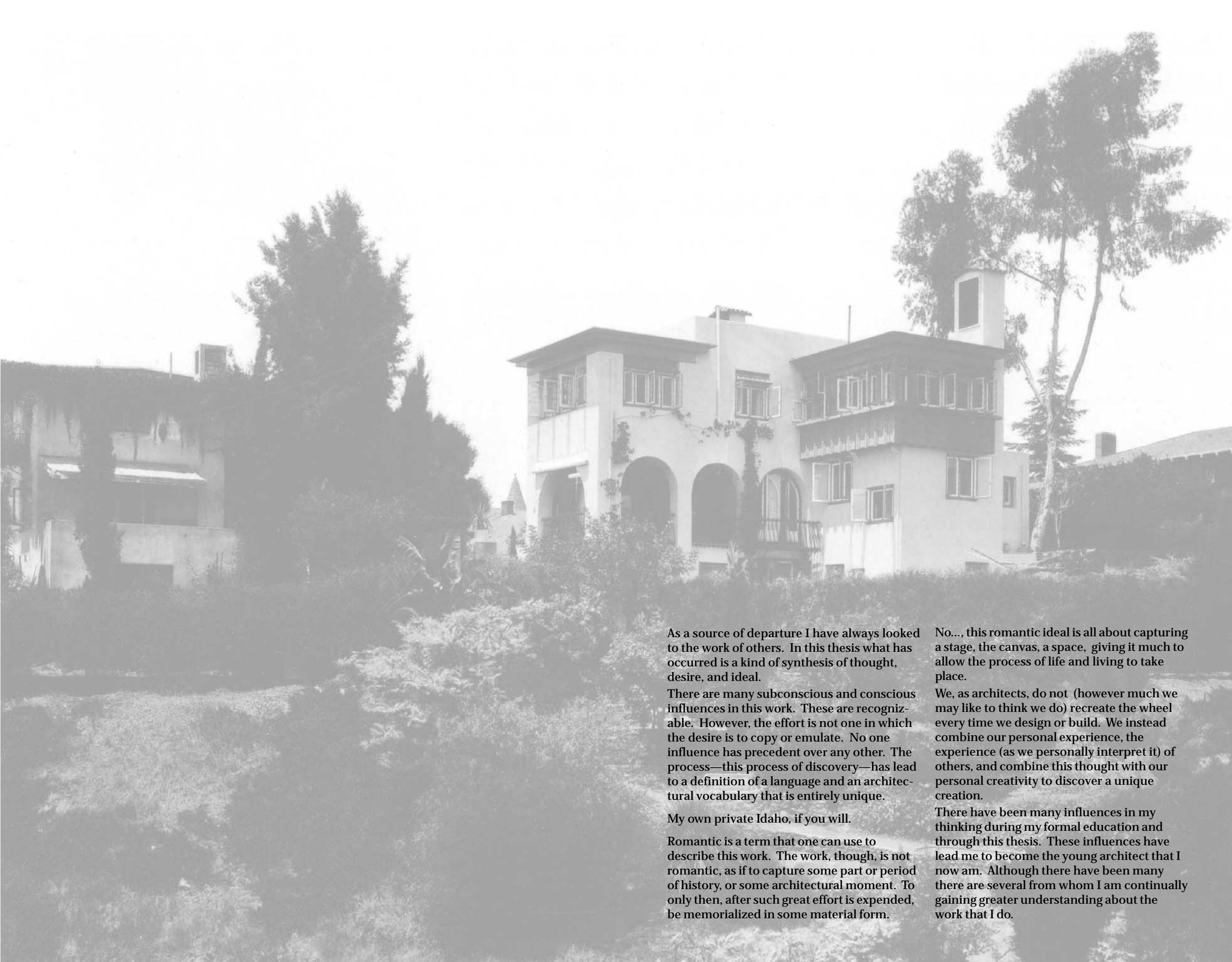


*"We should build our house simple, plain and substantial as a boulder, then leave the ornamentation of it to Nature, who will tone it with lichens, chisel it with storms, make it gracious and friendly with vines and flower shadows as she does the stone in the meadow."*

Irving Gill, *The Craftsman*, May 1916



As a source of departure I have always looked to the work of others. In this thesis what has occurred is a kind of synthesis of thought, desire, and ideal.

There are many subconscious and conscious influences in this work. These are recognizable. However, the effort is not one in which the desire is to copy or emulate. No one influence has precedent over any other. The process—this process of discovery—has led to a definition of a language and an architectural vocabulary that is entirely unique.

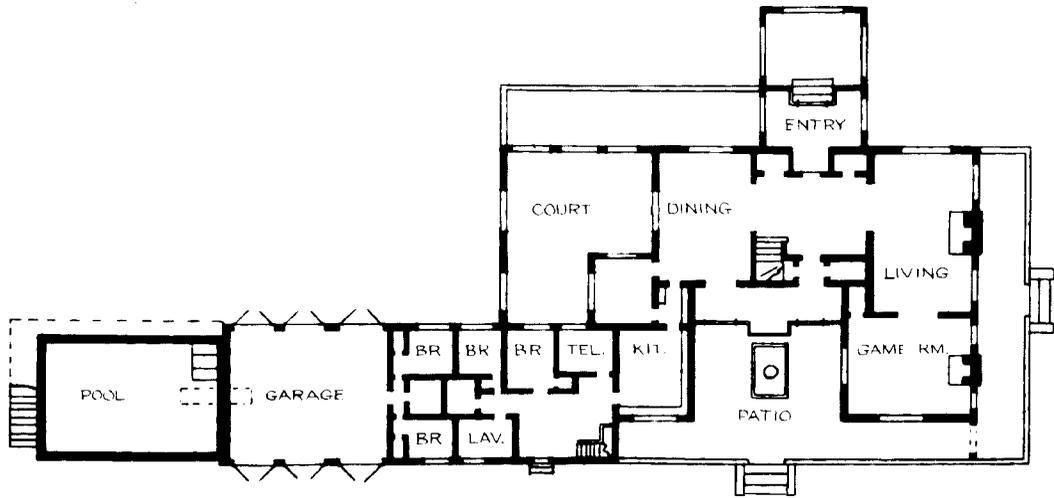
My own private Idaho, if you will.

Romantic is a term that one can use to describe this work. The work, though, is not romantic, as if to capture some part or period of history, or some architectural moment. To only then, after such great effort is expended, be memorialized in some material form.

No..., this romantic ideal is all about capturing a stage, the canvas, a space, giving it much to allow the process of life and living to take place.

We, as architects, do not (however much we may like to think we do) recreate the wheel every time we design or build. We instead combine our personal experience, the experience (as we personally interpret it) of others, and combine this thought with our personal creativity to discover a unique creation.

There have been many influences in my thinking during my formal education and through this thesis. These influences have led me to become the young architect that I now am. Although there have been many there are several from whom I am continually gaining greater understanding about the work that I do.



*The main floor plan of the Dodge House, West Hollywood, California, 1916.*

*Photograph by Marvin Rand.*



*The Dodge House, 1916, King Road elevation.*

Irving Gill's work is the first—chronologically and spiritually—to have made an impact on my process. Gill was not educated as an architect and so, in a sense, he was unaware of “styles”. Granted, he must have seen and understood their existence; he did not, however, use “styles” of architecture as a basis of his work. He was, however, a master of form and form languages.

In his Southern California work there exists a significant convergence of what is Romantic California with the power of a visionary future. The essence of Gill's work lay in his interpretation of the indigenous Californian form realized with modern materials and building methods. He understood the formal functional architectural elements of the California of the past, and was equally adept in re-examining their usefulness in a contemporary urban setting.

He first and alone understood the significance of merging the outdoor garden with the indoor living spaces. This great accomplishment remained in all of his work through out his career, achieving the desired environments through transitional architectural and landscaped elements.

In Gill's work...the richly planted, thickly vined garden, populates a pergola that covers a verandah that in its way creates a room. In this room one can sleep or read in the early morning light that falls just outside the bedroom wall...

Of Gill's work there are several projects that have significance to this thesis; Lewis Court, a workers' housing project at the foothills of the San Bernadino Mountains, in Sierra Madre of 1910; The Dodge House in West Hollywood of 1916 (demolished 1976 while the building was owned by the Los Angeles Board of Education); and the Horatio West Court Apartments, Santa Monica of 1919.

Each of these buildings offers architectural wisdom and tempered design experience. The Dodge House (a gracious 6,500 square foot dwelling on a 11,000 square foot lot) is truly opulent not only in sheer volume, but in the materials from which it was made. However, it has a confluence of spatial elements seldom found in the single-family house genre.

The house is surrounded not only by beautifully landscaped space but is also surrounded by courtyards and patios, each of varying size and complexity. Addition-

ally, each of these “rooms” faces a different cardinal direction, thereby enhancing the diversity of environmental experiences.

The element of greatest significant outside of the formal planning is the use of natural light. In this dwelling light is precious. Instead of designing a large lumbering mansion filled with dark spaces where light can not reach. Gill created a dwelling filled with natural light. His efforts to bring natural light into the house was not satisfied simply by placing windows strategically about the envelope of the building. Instead, Gill took the light and “borrowed” it from adjacent space. Light gently caressed the mahogany storage wall of the upper floor balcony by bathing the space from high windows in the bedrooms. The

*Photograph by Marvin Rand.*



*Second floor storage gallery, Dodge House.*

*Photograph by Marvin Rand.*



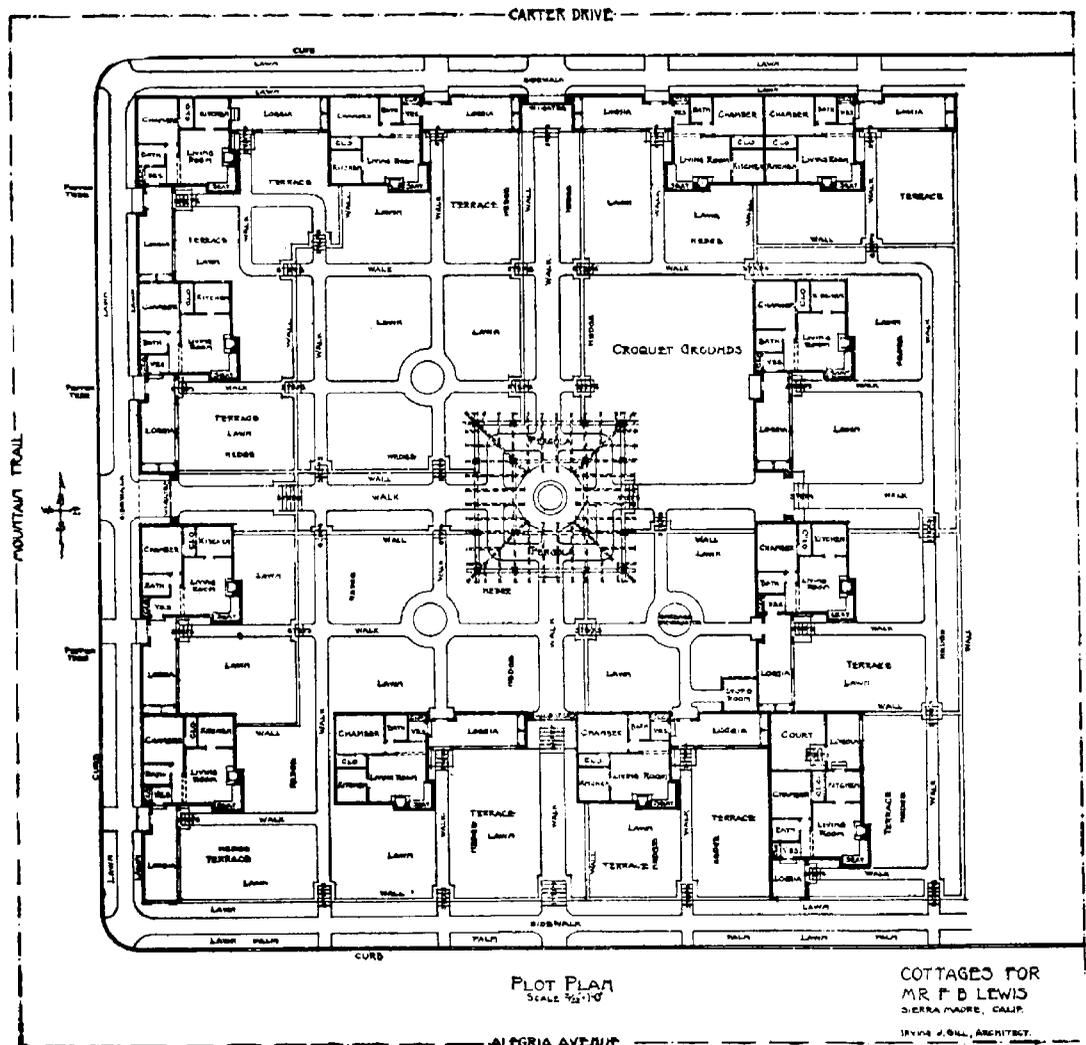
*Staircase to the north light, Dodge House.*

Photograph from Craftsman.



Lewis Court, worker's housing, 1910.

Housing...the Hillside Los Angeles



Plan of Lewis Court, Sierra Madre, 1910.

lower treads of the staircase were illuminated by an abundance of northern light that cascaded down the stairs from the upper northern window walls.

The Lewis Courts are significant from perspectives other than a richness of material, spaciousness and light. These homes were built as workers' houses. Gill used elements of Mexican architecture, such as courtyards and walls fronting the street to give these units an appropriateness which others of its type simply did not, nor do now, have. The wall is a privatizing element, used to make the garden space of these homes belong not to the neighborhood, but to the inhabitant. These individual private garden spaces did not end the juxtaposition of outdoor space. Gill also used a large central courtyard community garden as the formal organizing element of the entire community.

Utilization of land in this project was minimized, using only 1/3 of the available land for the development. This concern for open space gave the inhabitants a green environment. The houses were separated

from one another by a long loggia. This loggia was for lounging, reading or sleeping.

The Horatio West Court Apartments are significant for their compactness, placement of living elements and transparency of space.

On a typical building lot of 60' x 150' Gill designed a plan for four housing units and four garages. Each unit has a small garden space and ample connection to the out-of-doors. The small site precludes the occupants from having an enclosed private garden; however, planters abound.

The units are set on a lot that is perpendicular to the ocean (Santa Monica Beach is two blocks to the west of the units.) Therefore a traditional spatial arrangement of public spaces placed on the ground floors would not have allowed the occupant to enjoy the views. Gill placed the living rooms of the four-room units on the upper floor of the apartment. This allows each apartment to enjoy the south-facing beach and mountain views of Malibu to the north.

Photograph by Marvin Rand.



Horatio Court Apartments, Santa Monica, 1919.