

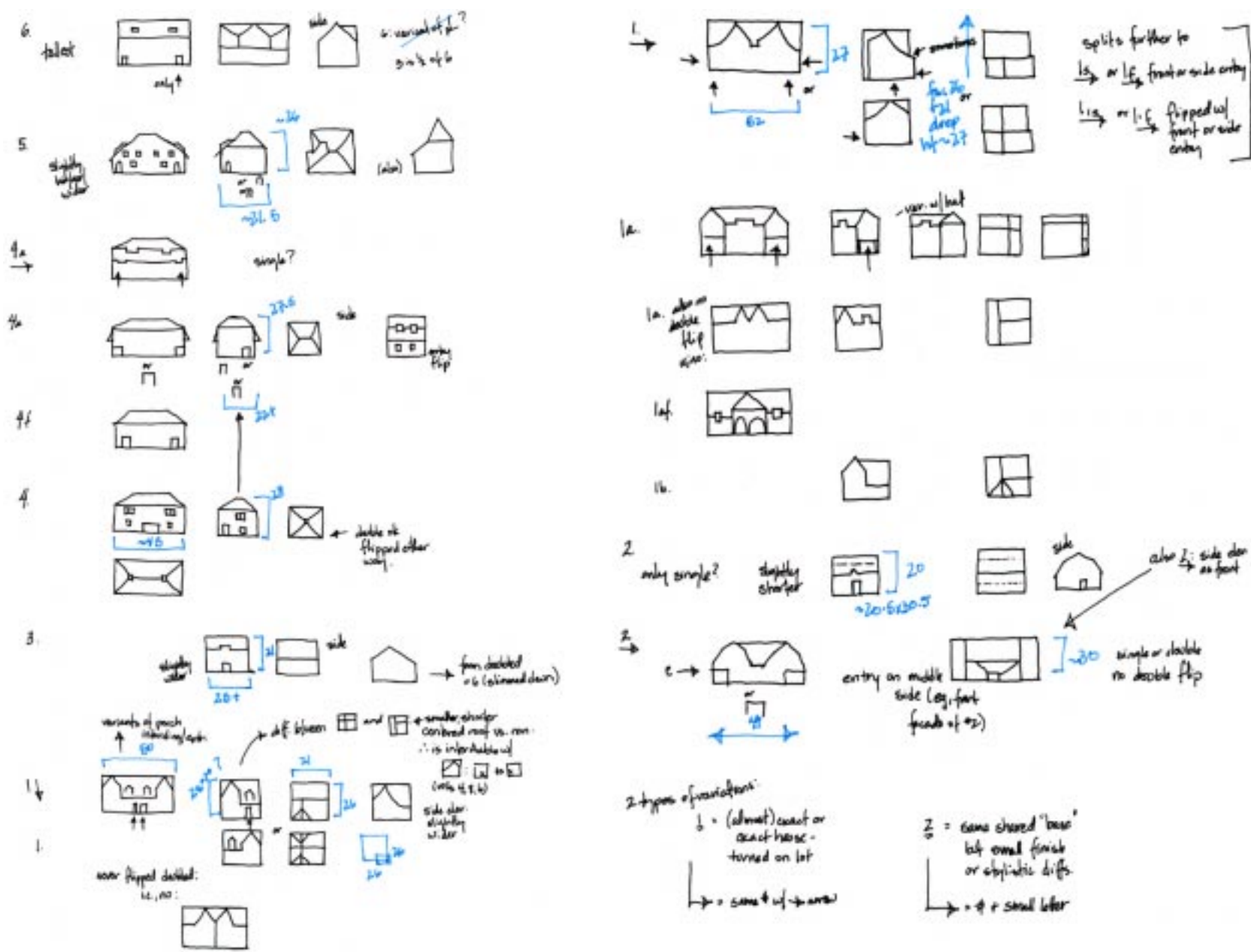
### house pattern studies

In order to avoid the danger of endless repetition so common especially to low-cost housing, Joannes designed eight different house types of varying sizes. The houses are all wood-frame structures originally finished with stucco or shingle exteriors and slate roofs. Measurements were standardized for all the houses to allow for an assembly-line like cutting and framing procedure.

The aesthetic influence of the English cottage tradition is clear. Gables, gambrel and hip roofs, the steep pitches, and the picturesque accents all reference the traditional cottage ideal. So all of the houses are variations on the same theme. But each has a distinctive character that makes it stand out from the others. The houses are like brothers and sisters - there may be a noticeable family resemblance, but each one is an individual. This family resemblance, the fact that the houses look similar but not the same, gives the neighborhood an extremely cohesive but lively visual texture.

Within the given structure, rules were set up to govern the many small variations contributing to this similarity without sameness. Some houses were simply turned on their lots so that what was once the front elevation became the side. Some of the house types were combined to make double houses, creating another strata of possible iterations. Some of the houses are found in both their single and their double versions; some are always single and others are always double. So there is constant repetition, but never an exact replication of a sequence of houses along the street.

In fact, the very nature of the double house itself as having two owners instead of one, contributes to this visual texture because of the differences in how the owner treats the house. The result is sometimes what looks like a house with a split personality - one side painted a slightly different color than the other, one side well kept and the other not, one side added to or otherwise structurally changed and the other not. The houses, their variations and their rhythms, are another set of threads that make up the fabric of the village.

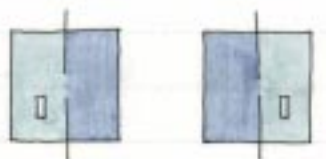




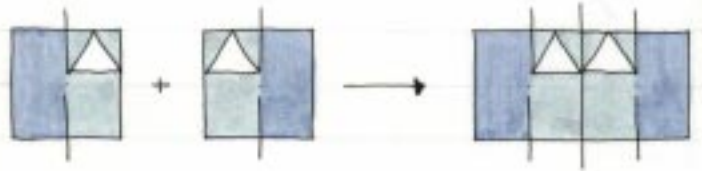
if: two sets of two keys each  
are pooled with key 1:



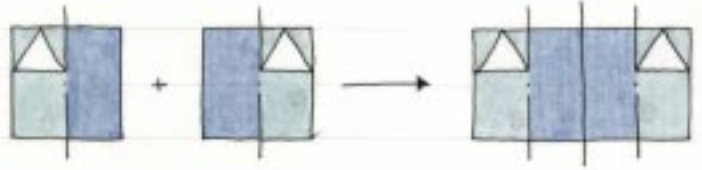
and key 2:



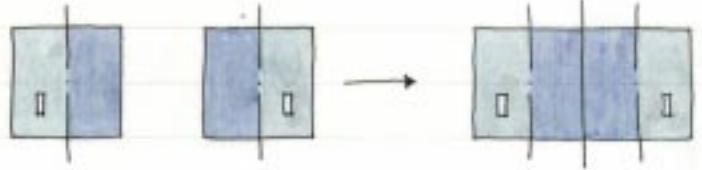
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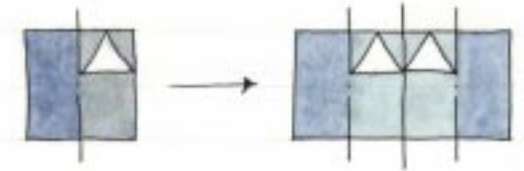


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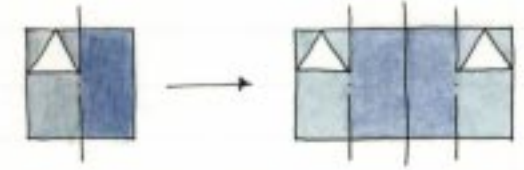


or, to simplify matters, each  
set can be reduced to one  
key paired with its mirror  
image (or flip)

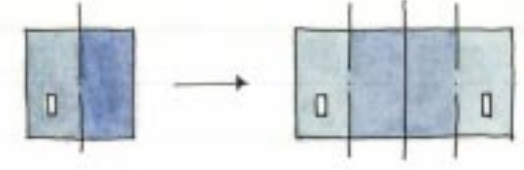
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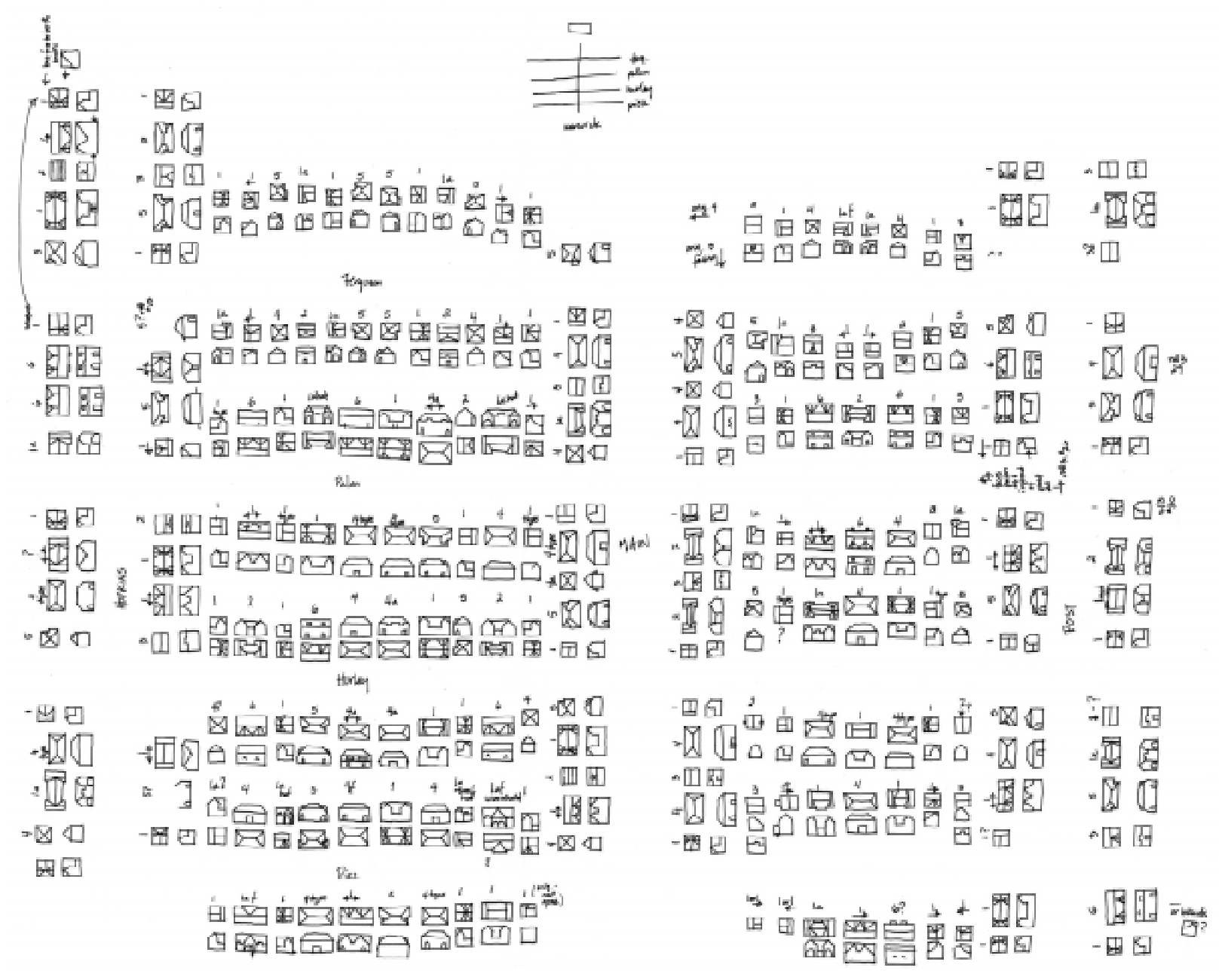
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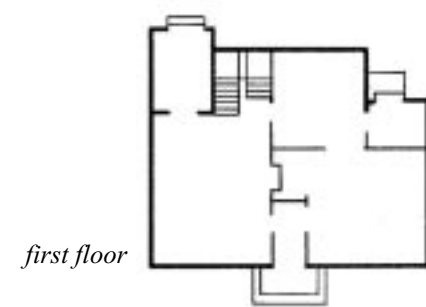
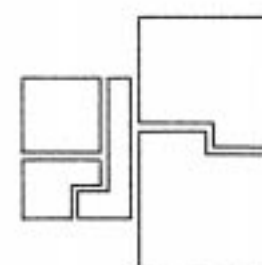
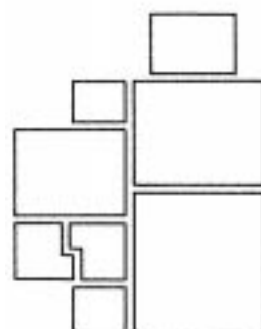
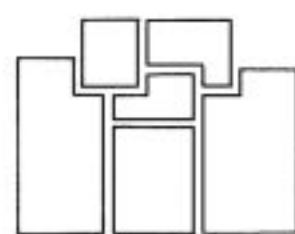
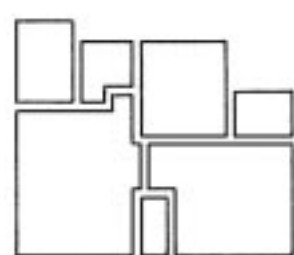
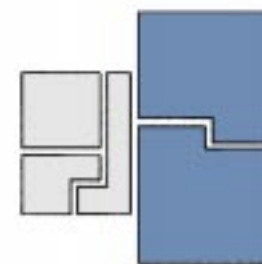
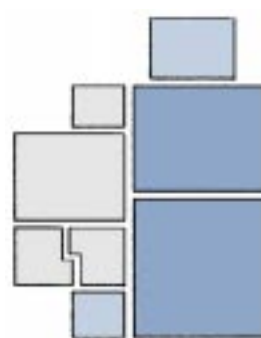
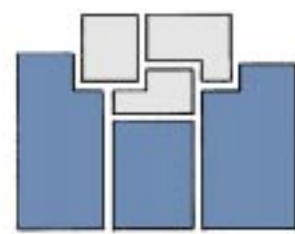
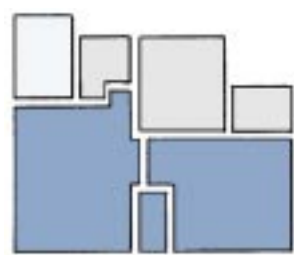


rules governing the  
formation of the  
double houses

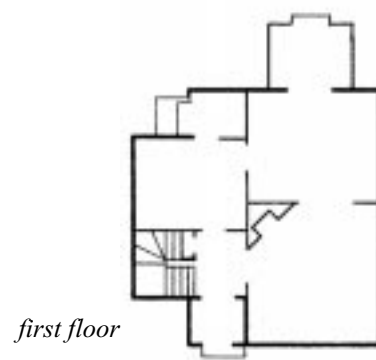


the village by house type





- service*
- exterior public*
- interior public*
- private*

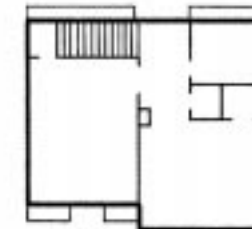
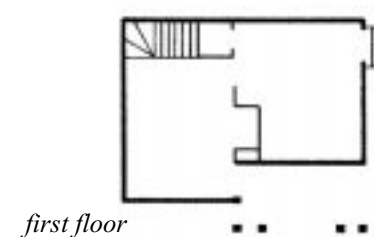
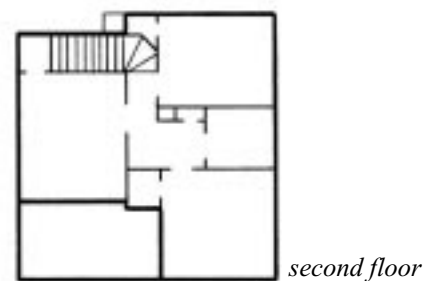
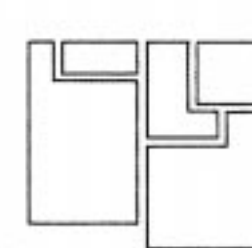
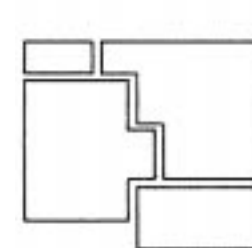
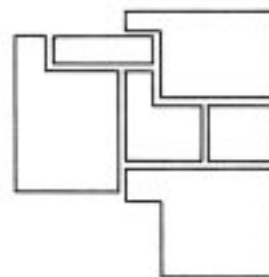
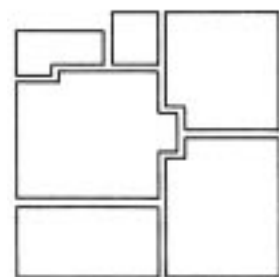
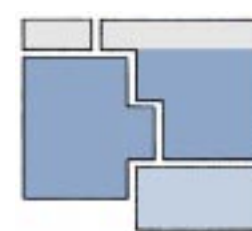
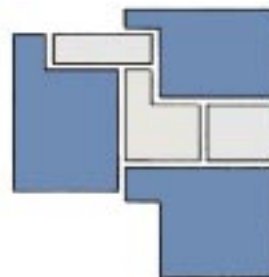


*five room house: type 3*



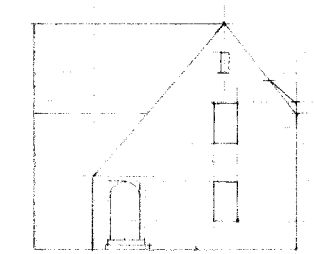
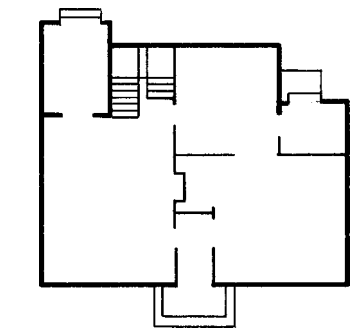
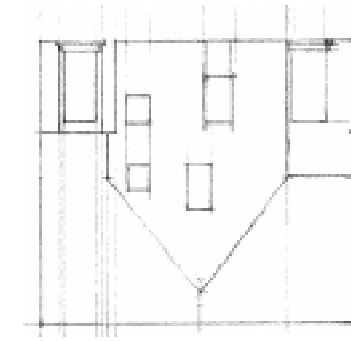
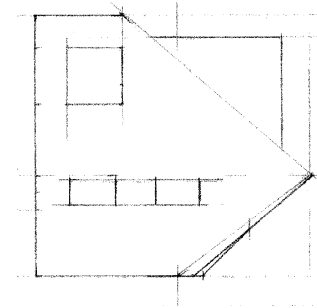
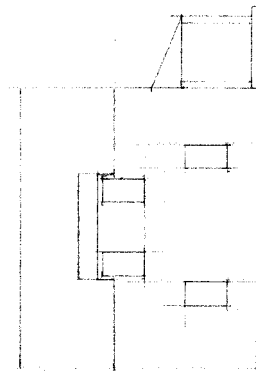
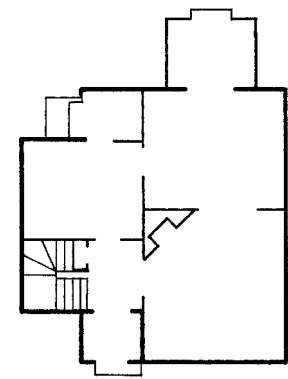
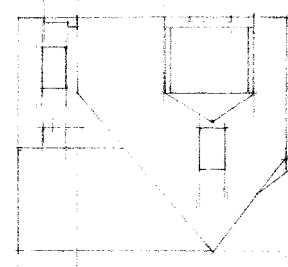
*five room house: type 2*

-  *service*
-  *exterior public*
-  *interior public*
-  *private*

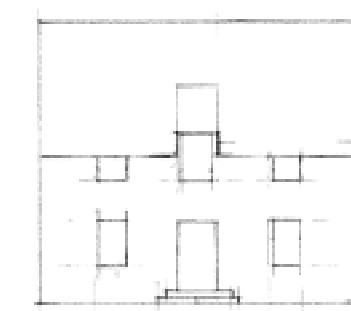


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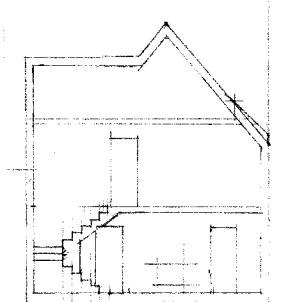
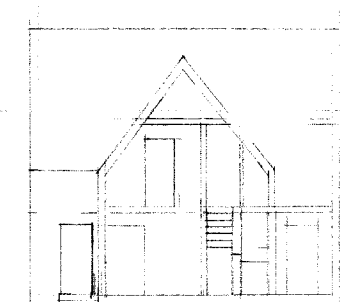
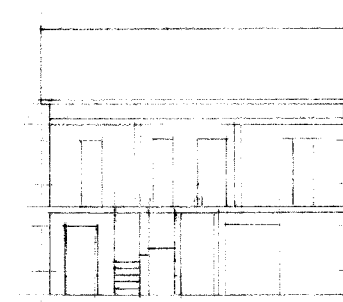
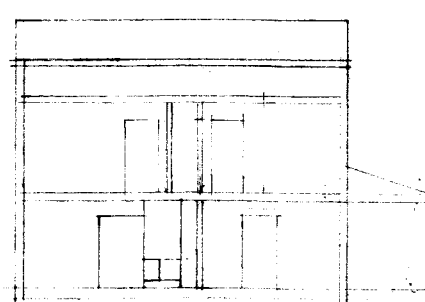
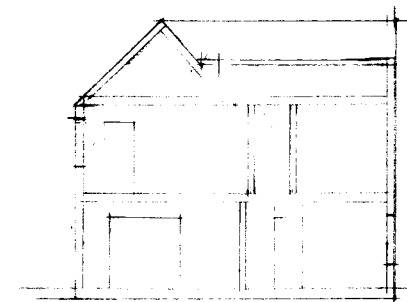
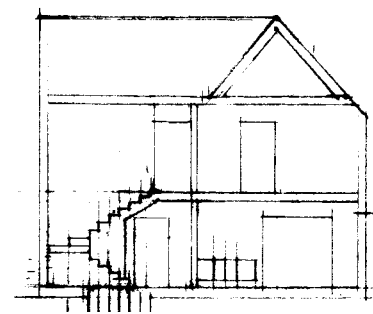
*four room houseP type 7*

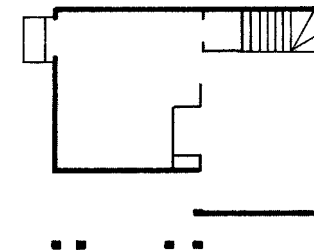
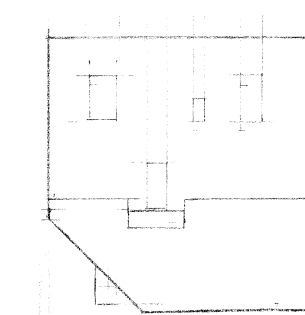
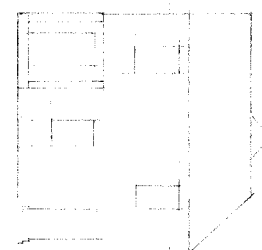
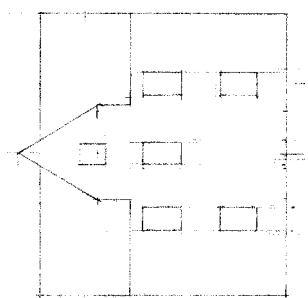
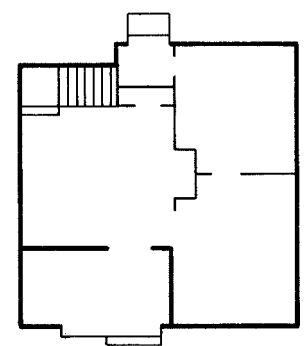
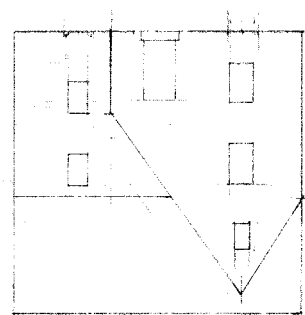


*five room house: type 2  
plan, sections and elevations*



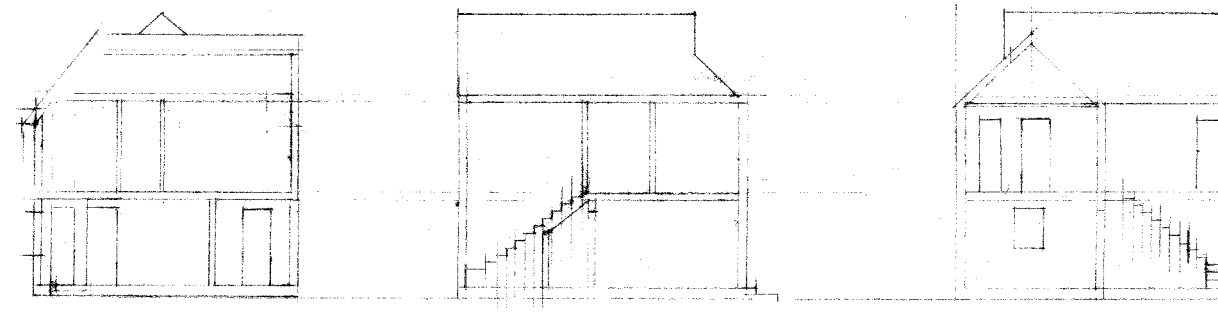
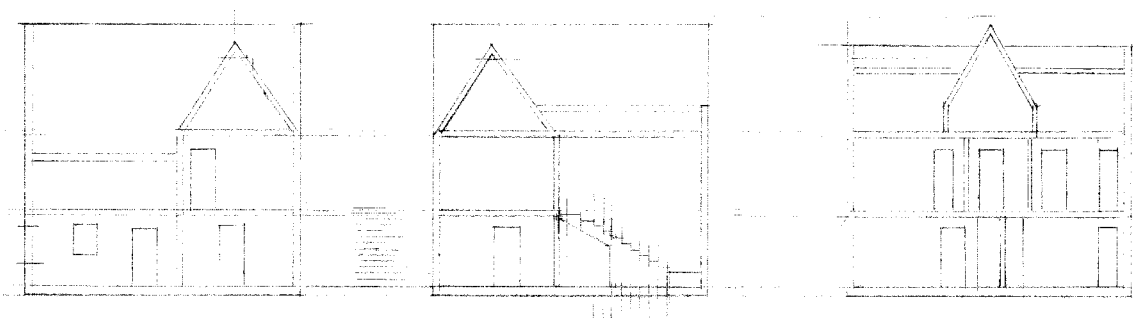
*five room house: type 3  
plan, sections and elevations*





*six room house: type 1  
plan, sections and elevations*

*four room house: type 7  
plan, section, and elevation*

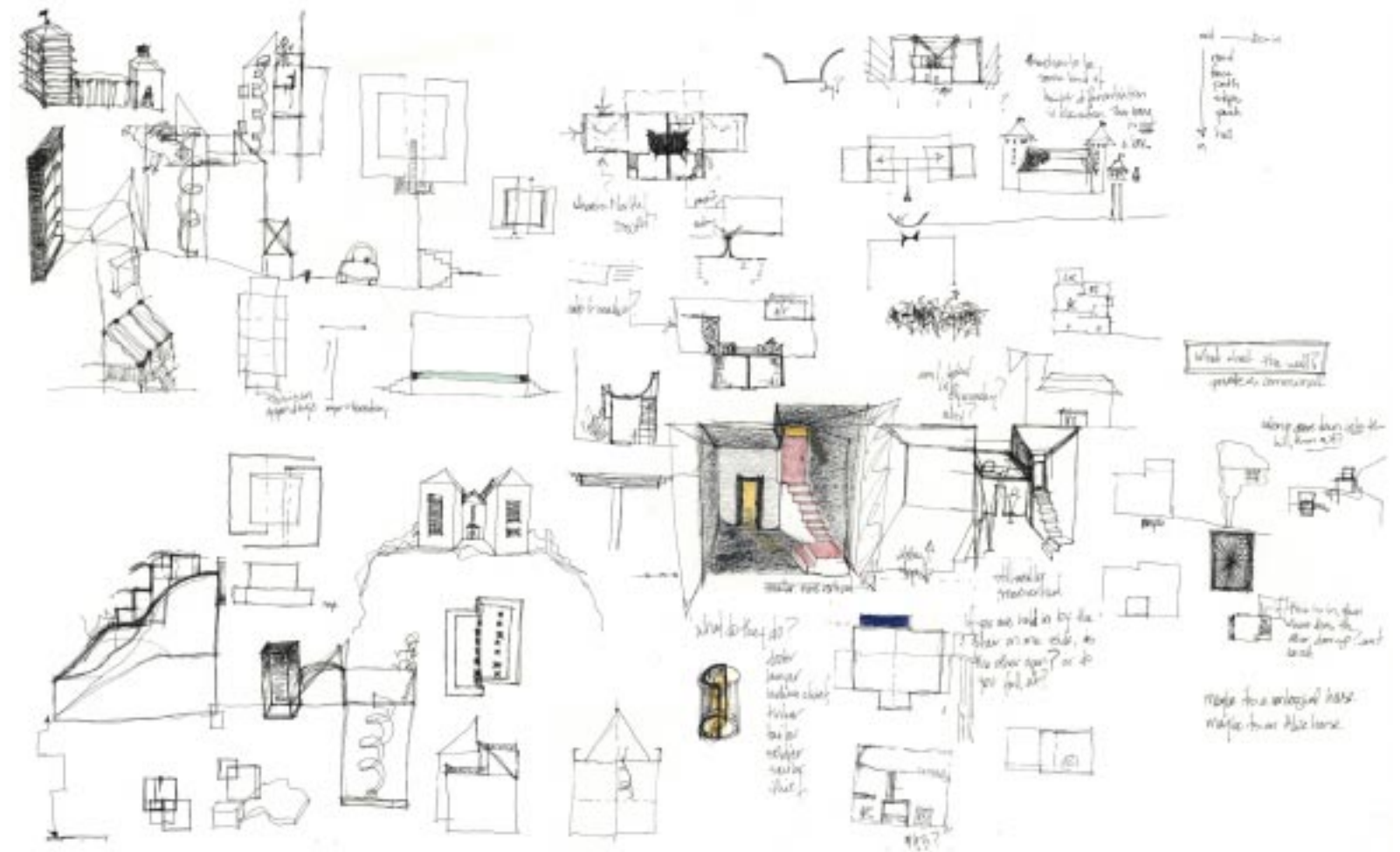




## possible new patterns

An intervention necessarily involves the alteration of the existing. It can be additive - an imposition upon the structure already there, or it can be subtractive - a clarification, perhaps, of some key element which had gradually become lost. The understanding of the layers and of the pattern of an existing neighborhood allows for possible interventions at those different layers. The question then becomes how to weave a new thread or threads into the existing framework and pattern of the place.

In this case, thoughts of intervention began with thoughts about a house. It is at once the layer of the most minimal and yet also the maximum intervention, because the house is the focus of Hilton Village. From there, possibilities extend outward to the block and the neighborhood. And finally, a possible intervention is proposed that, like the other thread elements of the fabric of the village, acts across these structural layers.



The most minimal intervention in the fabric of the village would be to work only within the given house structure itself. The double houses are already divided vertically and horizontally - the vertical an economic division (separating ownership of the house) and the horizontal a functional split (separating public and private areas of the house). The living/working or the horizontal/functional split can be emphasized to create further divisions in the house. Such divisions, deviating as they do from the one house-one yard model, would necessarily have implications for shared and private outside space.

Figures 1 and 2 show how the double house could be further split, maintaining the current division types, into a total of four parts, each of which could become a separate functional entity. Figure 2 looks at two possibilities for such a four part division of the house and yard, based on both horizontal and vertical variations. Figure 3 shows a graphic consideration of the possibilities for outside and private space with each.

From the initial concept, various divisions can be investigated. Figure 4 is an investigation of one possibility i.e, transforming the ground floor of a double house into one functional entity and dividing the second floor into two separate functional entities. Again, various possibilities for the division and allocation of outside and private space must be considered.

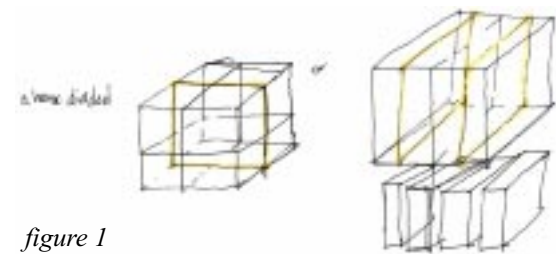


figure 1

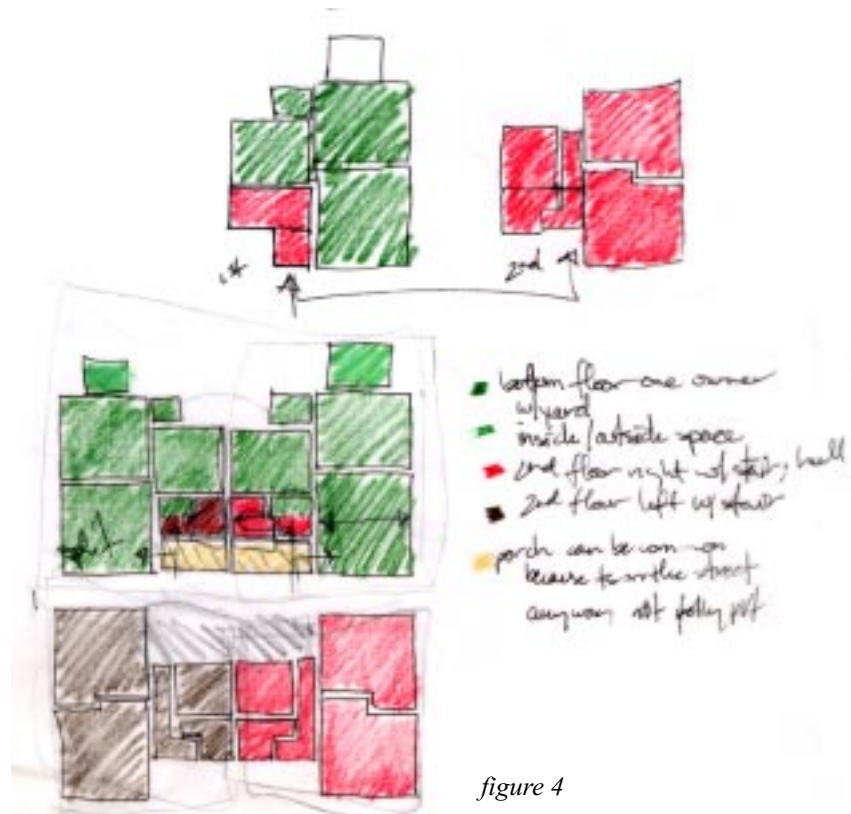


figure 4



figure 3

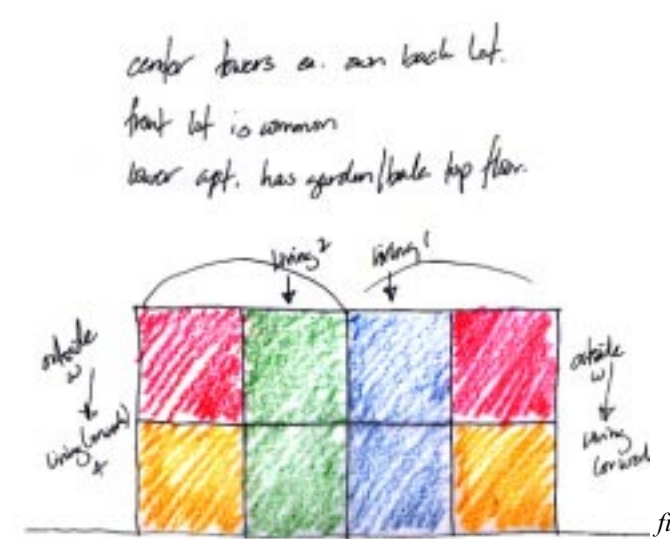
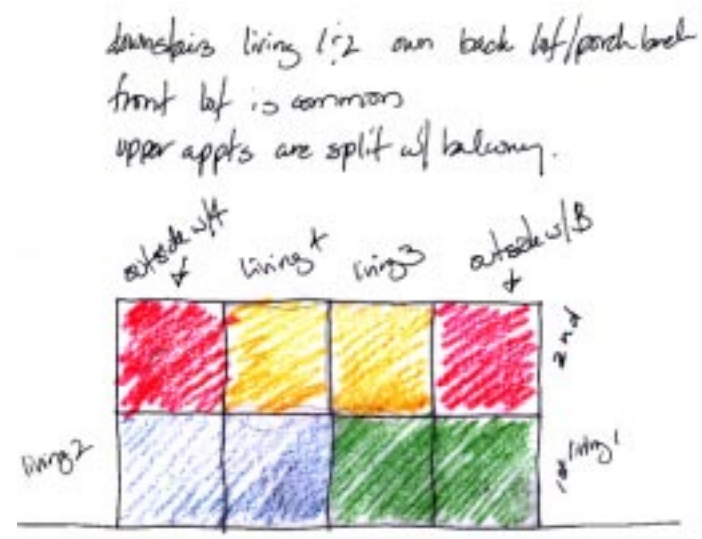


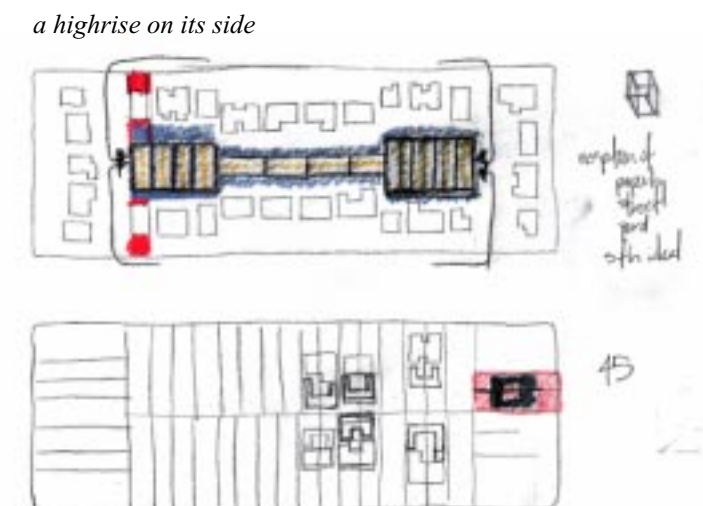
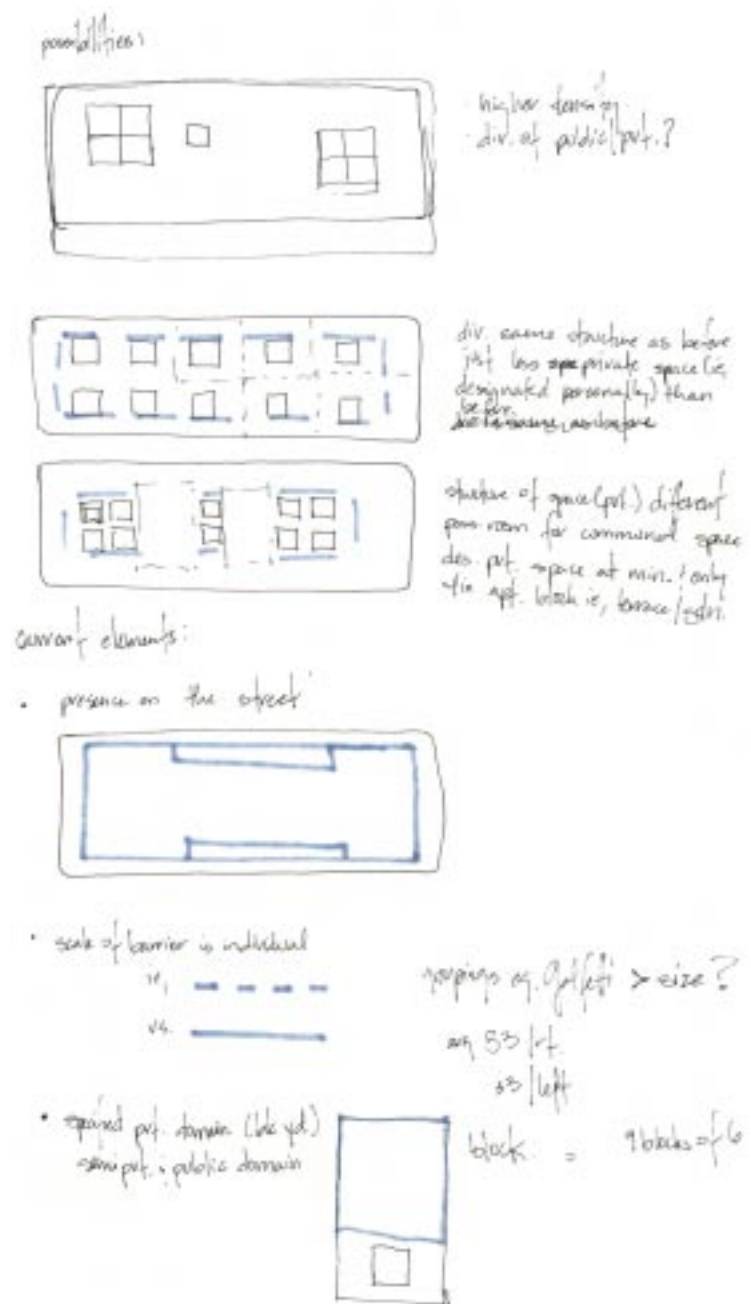
figure 2

The next layer of possible intervention is the block. The strong structure of the existing neighborhood limits the possibilities for rearranging or reworking the density or distribution of the houses.

Given this existing structure, there are two basic possibilities for change on the block layer. Density could be increased by adding an alley down the middle of the block and a second row of houses, back to back with the first. The houses could be placed so that each retained a small front and back yard, or grouped with a shared yard.

Density could also be increased by filling in the backyard with housing. This scheme is derived from the idea of a highrise on its side. What if the entire central block space were filled in with row houses?

But both of these schemes directly contradict the existing fabric of the neighborhood, denying or ignoring either some or all of the architectural elements that constitute the basic structure of the Village.



The plan of the village as it might look after implementation of one of the schemes. Density has been slightly increased by splitting certain lots and constructing houses in a secondary layer. A mid-block alley and side alleys have been added for access.

Even without the addition of houses on the back of some of the extended lots, the interior blocks are strongly reminiscent of the shape of a village green. The lots were originally set aside for individual gardens, however, rather than as common ground. Instead, the islands planned for the middle of the streets, were to provide the “green” area necessary for play and informal community gathering. Even had they been constructed, however, it is not likely that the islands would have retained this function today, given the drastic shift in the role played by the car in today’s society.

In its infancy, the village belonged specifically to its residents. There would have been few cars and few people casually passing through on their way to somewhere else. And although the street was technically a public area, the “public” was basically those who lived in the village, and especially those who lived on the particular street. Life turned outward, to the neighbors and the street; the number of porches on the front of houses rather than on the back attests to this fact.

Today, on the other hand, life tends to turn inwards. The street, with cars passing and parked all along it, is no longer a such a private nor a pleasant, nor a safe place to be. So the village green space can also turn inwards, each full block having its own center space. What if everyone in Hilton Village gave up some of their back yard?

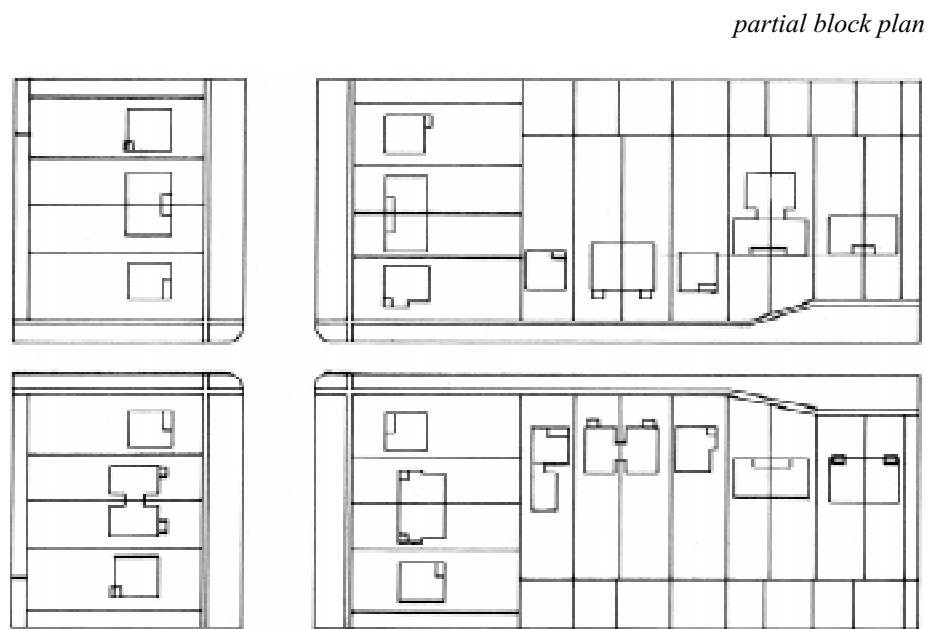


*hypothetical village plan*

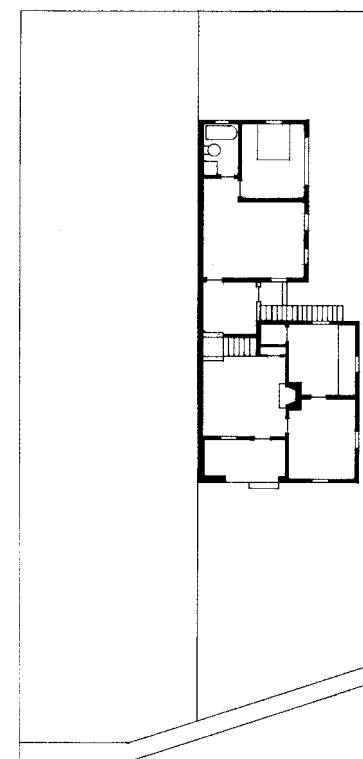
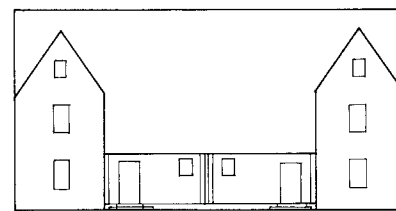
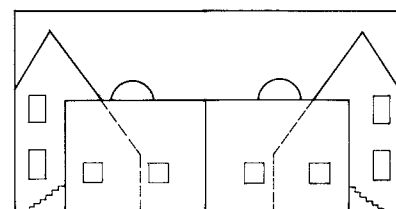
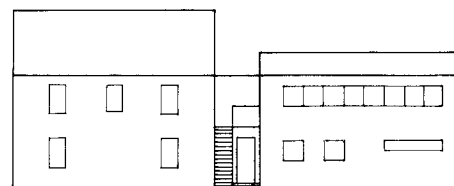
A third possibility combines the first two, working across the structural layers, both within the texture layer of the block and the texture layer of the individual house. The one constant in the structure of Hilton Village is that there is no set constant. The threads that combine to form the fabric of the neighborhood do not run in an endlessly repeating pattern, but instead are shifted and shuffled so that they interweave themselves in new ways. So the intervention can take place on this same level, becoming another element, another thread in the fabric of the neighborhood.

The houses in Hilton Village were built for a specific segment of the population according to a specific model of society. Needless to say, much has changed since 1918. What to do with a neighborhood that is coherent, cohesive, and architecturally vibrant, a neighborhood that has a complex structure and texture, but that is faltering because it is out of step with the current model?

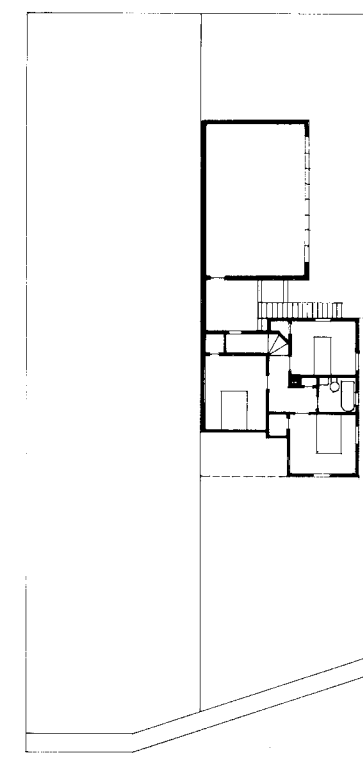
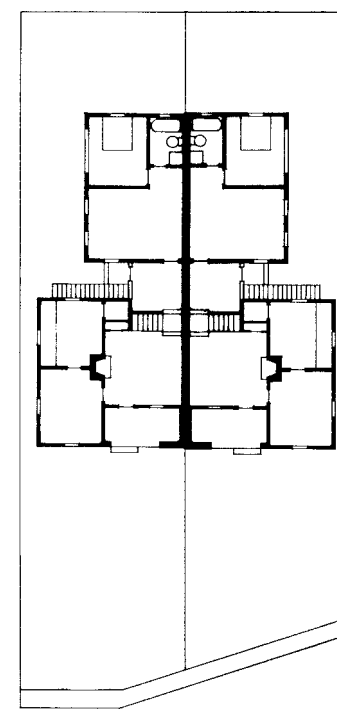
In this scheme, an addition is added as a “random” element into the neighborhood. This addition could be a separate apartment for extended family, a separate office or workspace, or simply an addition to the existing house. The addition, like the original houses themselves, could be duplicated to become a double addition to a double house. The language of the facades is consistent with the original language, but is not a replication.



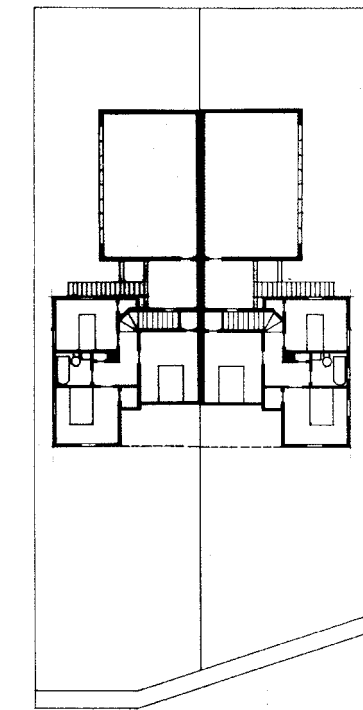
*double house elevations*



*single house, 1st and 2nd floor*



*double house, 1st and 2nd floor*



### **conclusion**

The thesis here presented is a record of a method of inquiry and as such, reveals a process of discovery. Discovery of the structure of the fabric of a neighborhood and discovery of how to dig for and find that fabric. Discovery of a way of working and discovery of a personal way to approach architecture. Although the study began as the initial step in a project for designing a new house, it soon took on a strength and life independent of that project.

The study was completed in the spring of 1995. The book was put together in December of 1998. The extended lapse between the two enabled me to see the project at a distance, through new eyes. Thus, for the second time, the project became a question of looking, sifting, examining, and pulling out threads which then could interweave to make a whole. This is the way I operate - in my work, in my weaving, in everything I do. It is the way I see and interpret the world.

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- Oslip material courtesy of Hans Ch. Rott.

## **vita**

Susan Perkins was born in 1962. She received her B.A. in International Relations from Pomona College in 1984 and entered the Master of Architecture program at VPI&SU in 1989. In 1991 she moved to Switzerland to work in the office of Bruno Keller in Lugano for one year, finishing her coursework at the Center for European Studies and Architecture in Riva San Vitale. She was the Assistant to the Director of the Center from 1996 to 1998 under Lucy Ferrari. She is also a translator for the Swiss architectural magazine, *rivista tecnica*. The thesis book was completed in December 1998.



