

A House in El Salvador
Camila Enea Paggi

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
in Architecture

Patrick A. Doan

H. Scott Gartner

Frank H. Weiner

May 7, 2014, Blacksburg, VA
Keywords: Architecture, house, detail, El Salvador

A House in El Salvador
by Camila Enea Paggi

Abstract

A house composed of two bedrooms and two bathrooms sits in a landscape of towering pine trees, lush orange groves, and tall grasses. Approaching from the west, a stepped lava rock garden wall protects the terraces of gravel and grass that bound and hold the concrete walls of the house. Within these walls an architectural game of turning, pushing, pulling, and shifting begins to play out; found in the shadows of a corner, in the depths of a break, in the repetition of a joint.

Acknowledgements

Thank you,

To Patrick, for bringing out the best in me and always inspiring me to work harder
To my committee, Frank and Scott, for the thoughtful critiques and advice
To my family, for being so incredibly supportive through thick and thin
And to Jon, for all of your patience, love, and kindness

Table of Contents

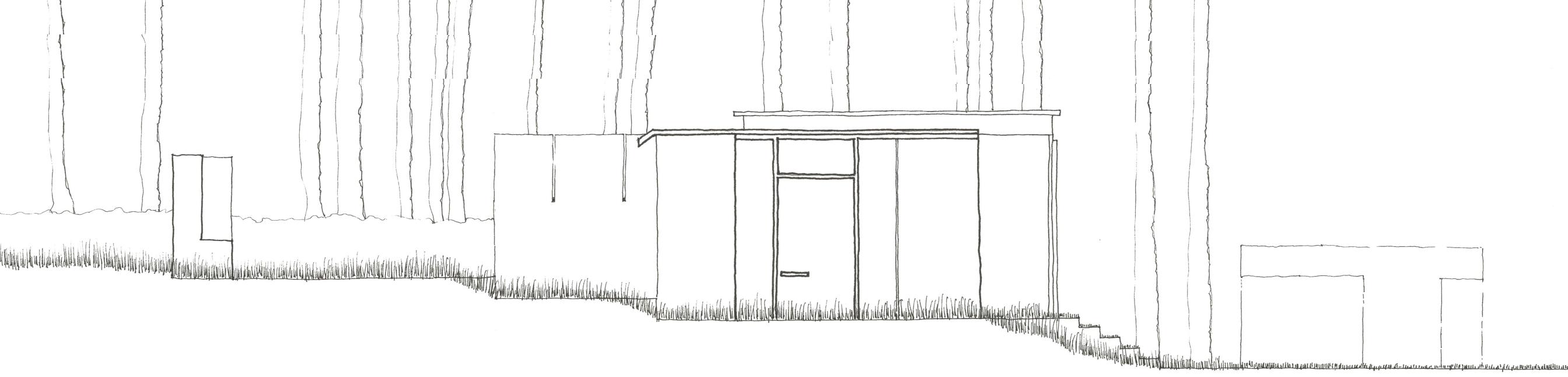
Abstract	
Acknowledgements	iii
the Place	1
the House	3
the Detail	20
the Architect	40
Appendix A: List of Images	42
Appendix B: Detailed Moves	43
Appendix C: Thesis Card	46

the Place.

The story begins with the place, the mountains of El Salvador. Located in the middle of Central America, El Salvador has Nicaragua to the north and east, south is the Pacific Ocean, and to the west, Guatemala. The climate is relatively mild to hot with a strict six months of rain and six months dry. The mountains are rich with an abundance of orange groves, pine, cedar, and banana trees, with the occasional snakes, cockroaches, and chickens. The trees provide refuge from the harsh afternoon sun; as the sun sets and dusk comes, the clean mountain air becomes crisp.



finca en El Salvador

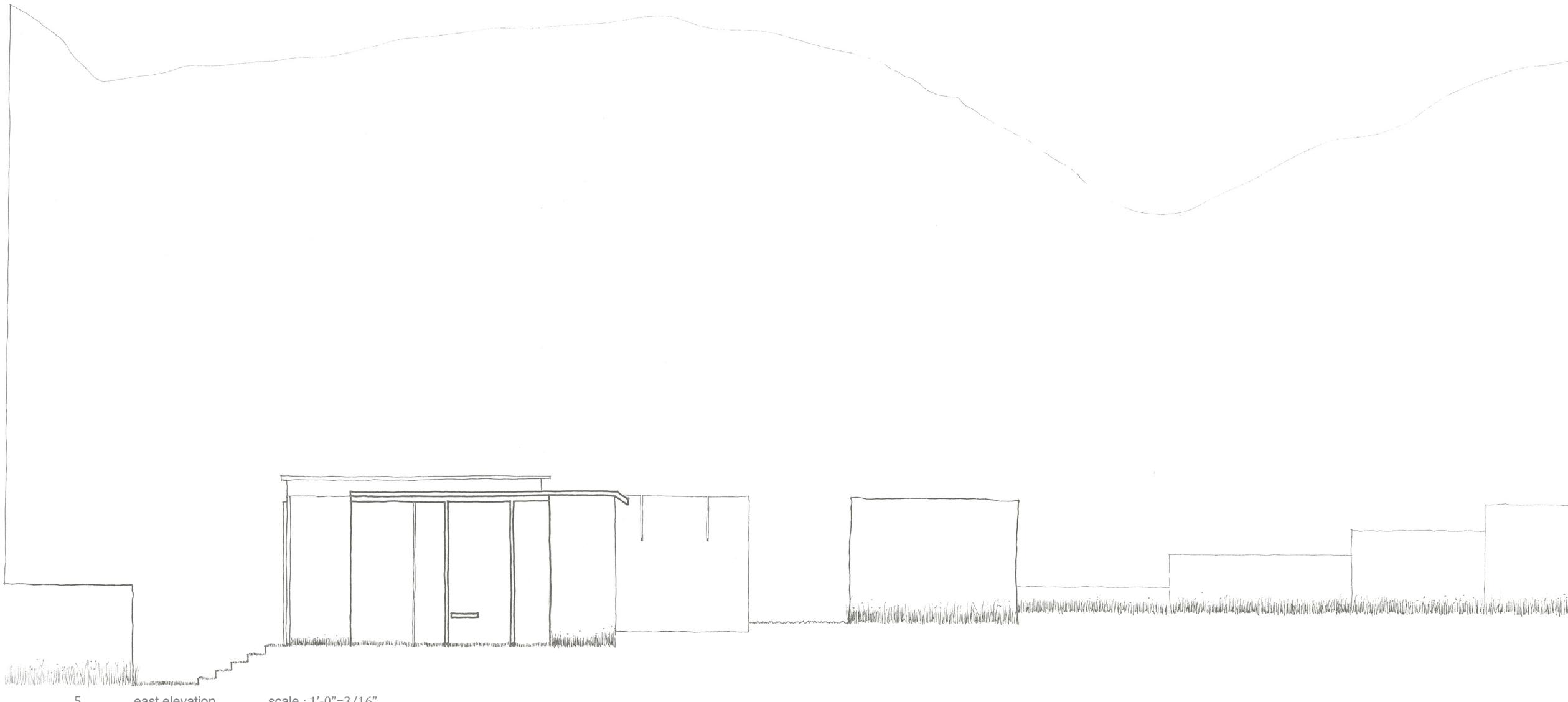


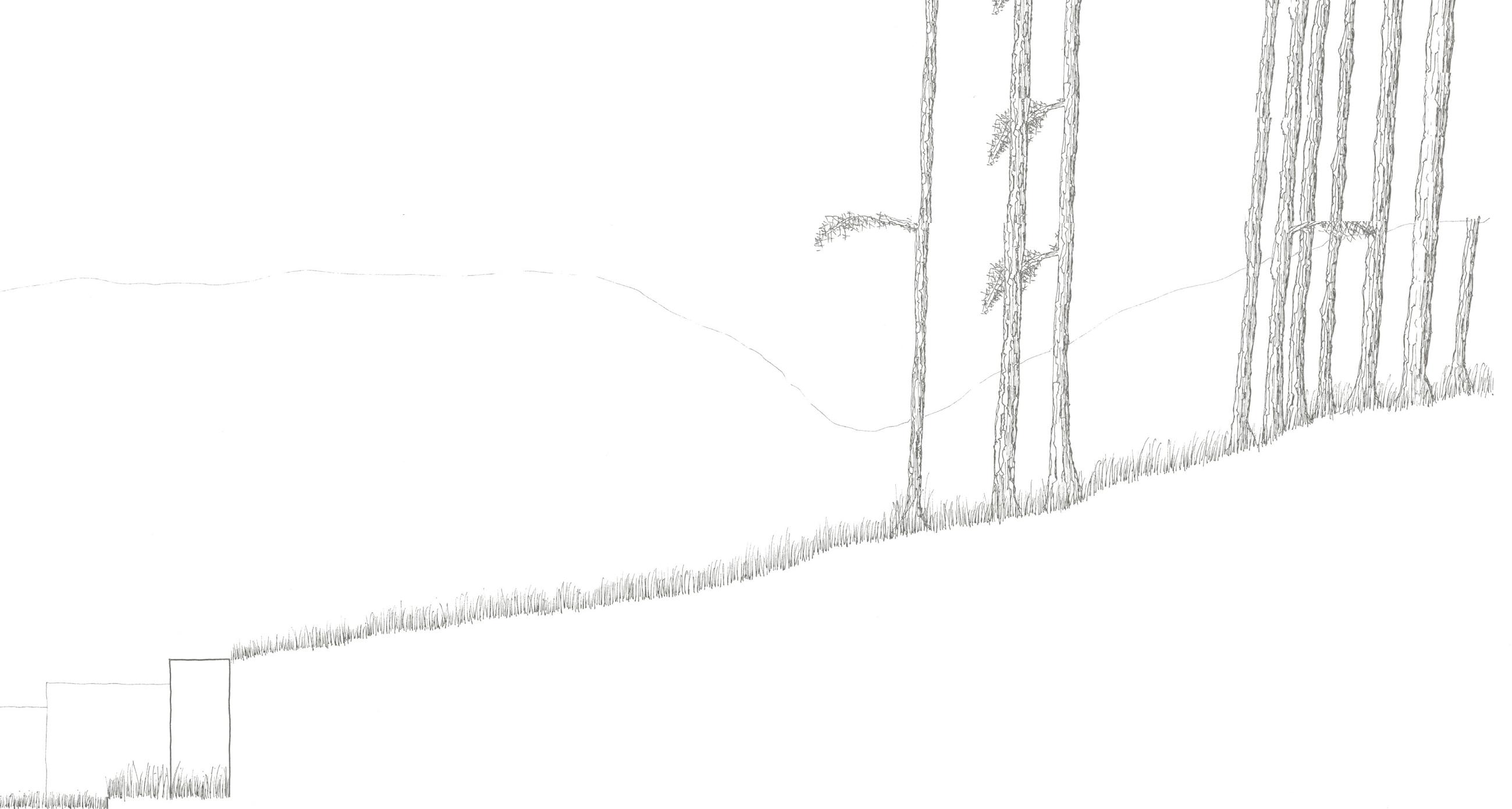
the House.

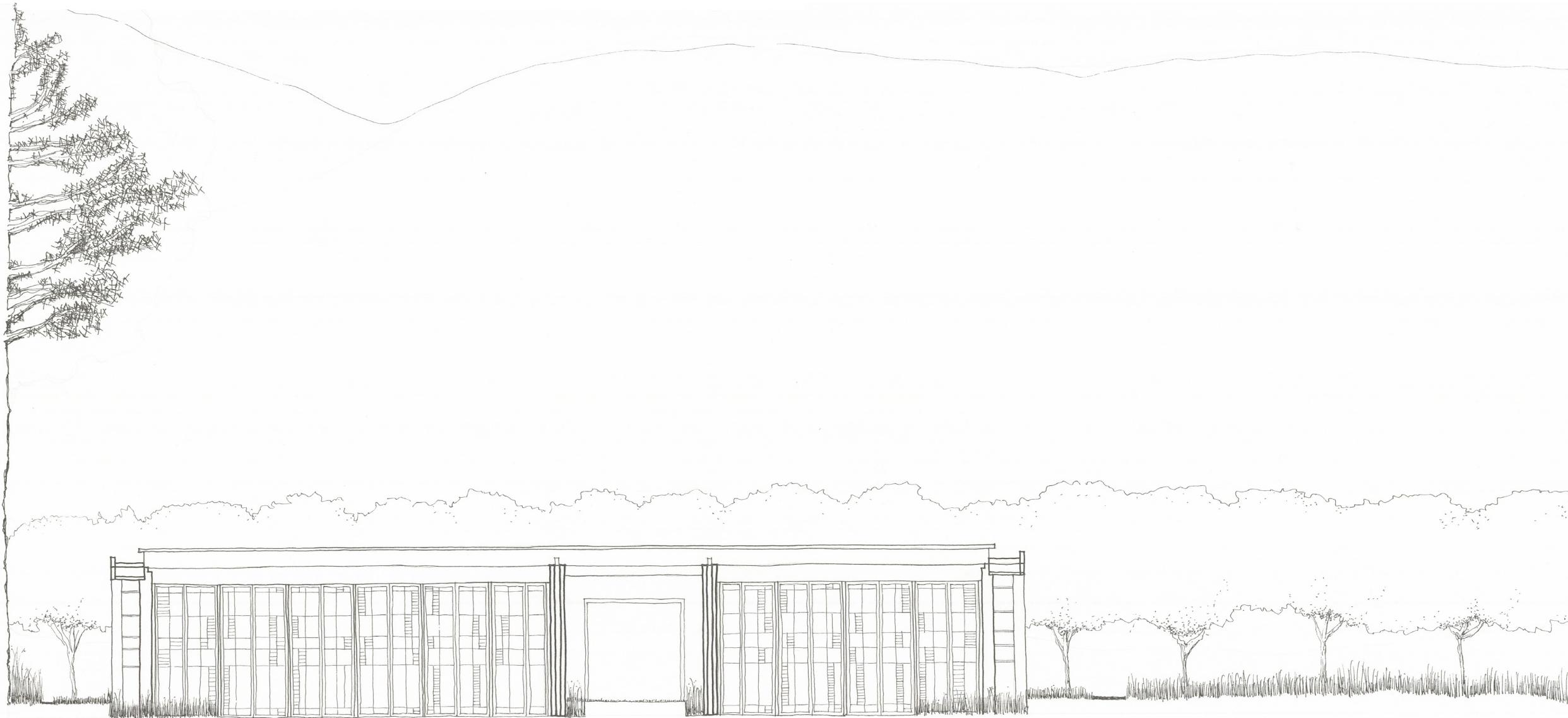
During the weekends when the weather is beautiful, mainly during the dry season with occasional visits in the rainy season, families go to the mountains to enjoy the country life. When in the mountains life is slower, the sunrise and sunset are the only tellers of time, hikes happen often and dinners occur outside.

The design of the house stems from that lifestyle - a weekend house composed of two bedrooms and two bathrooms. A shelter for rest and sleep, constructed of smooth concrete walls and rough wood beams, bounded by a lava rock garden walls. The house becomes a detail in the landscape.





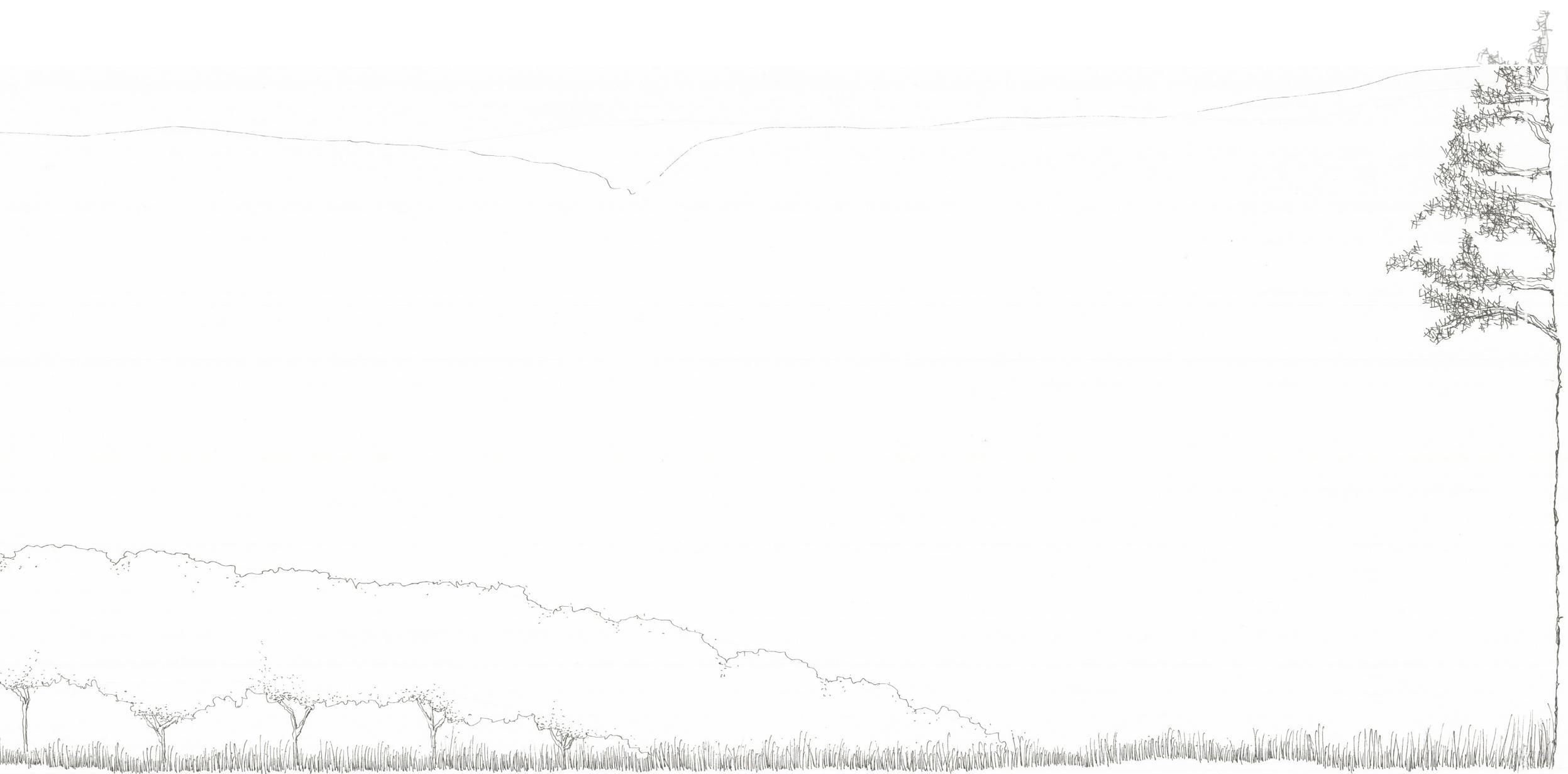


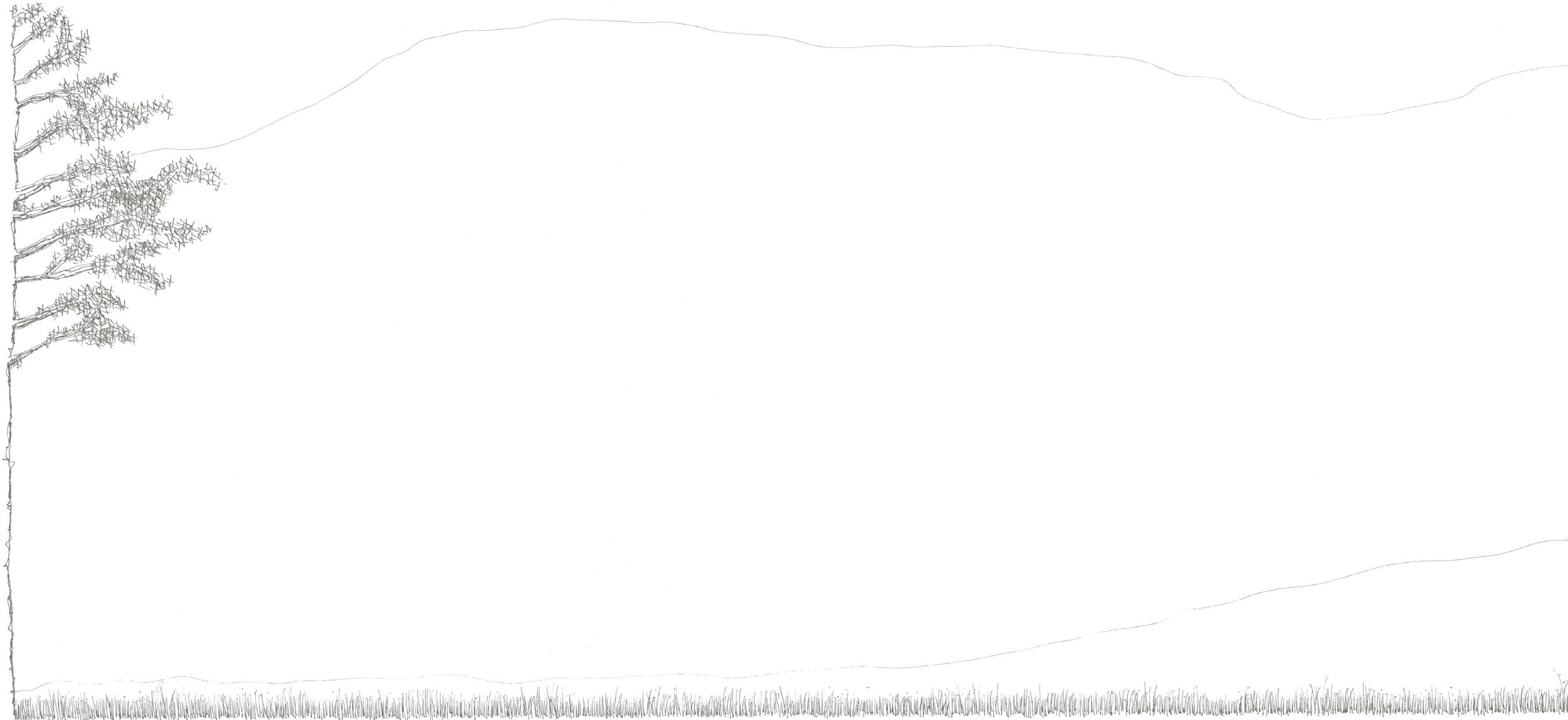


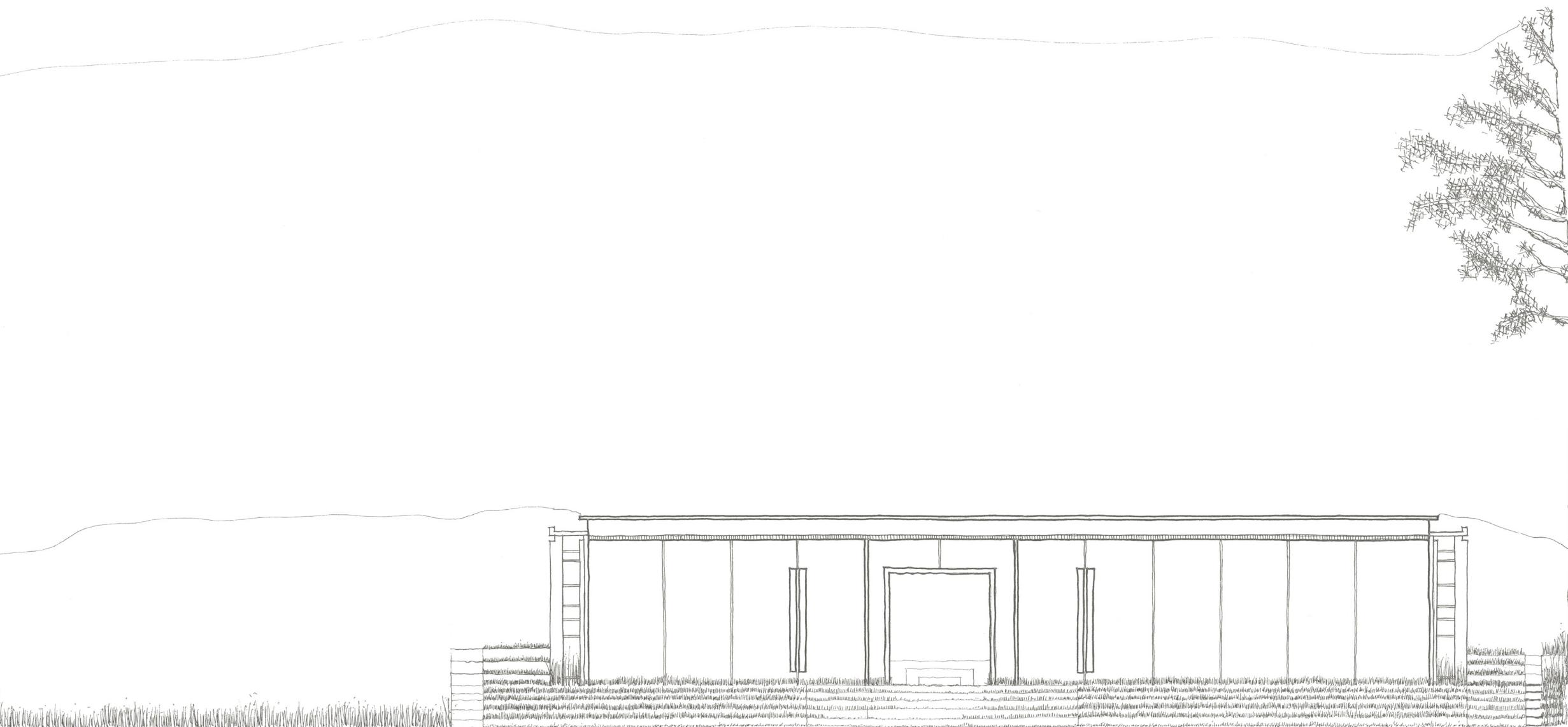
7

north elevation

scale : 1'-0"=3/16"



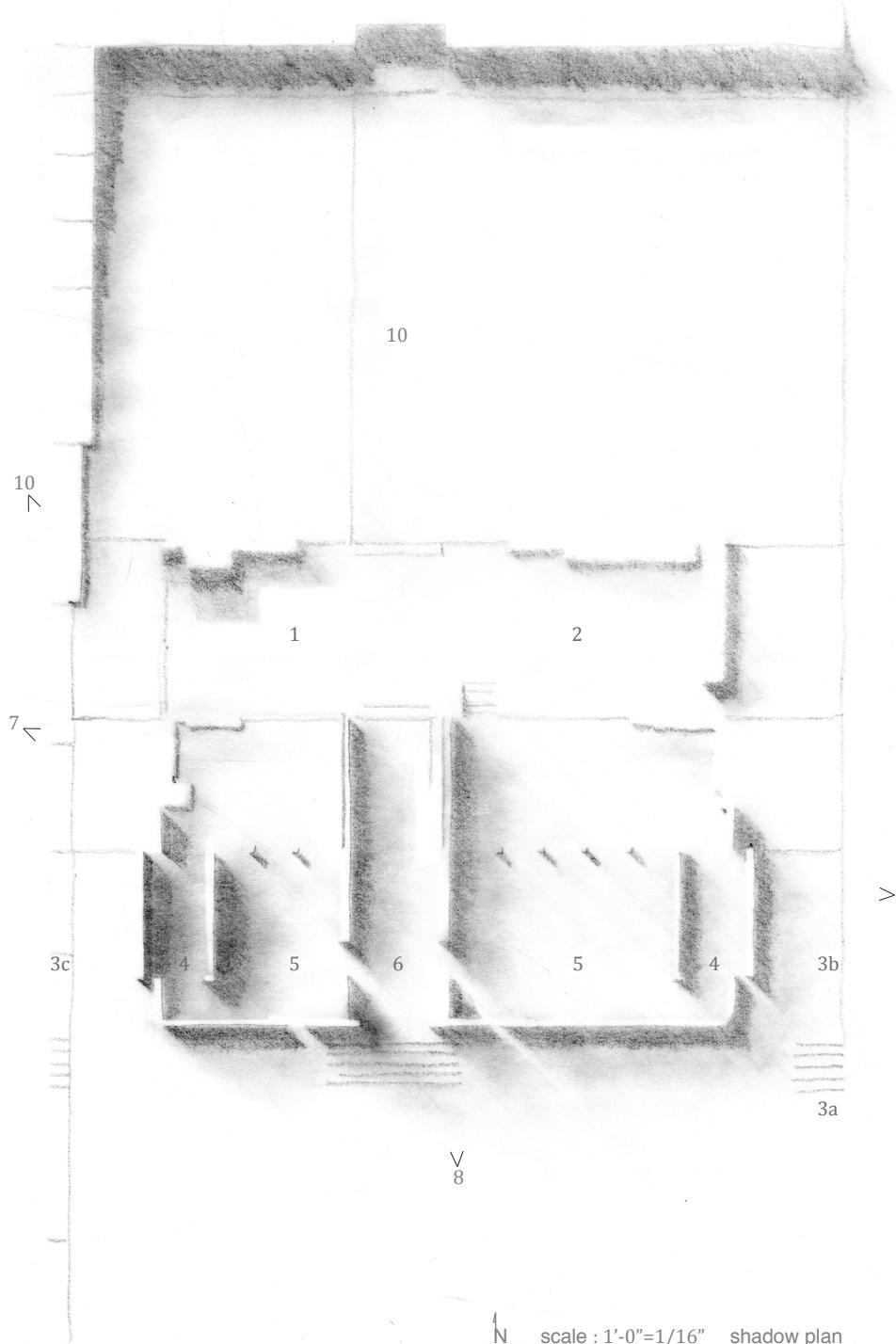




scale : 1'-0"=3/16"

south elevation

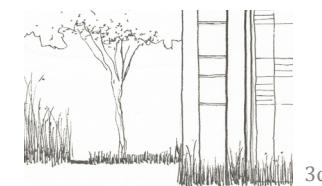
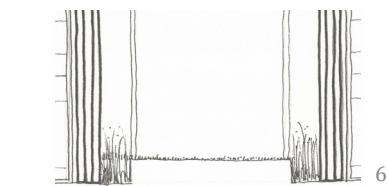
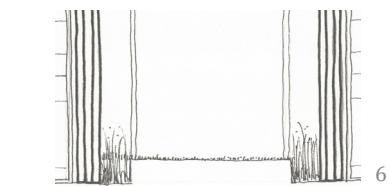
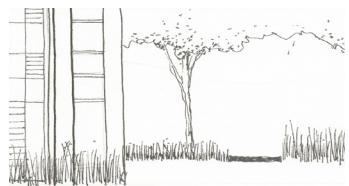
10

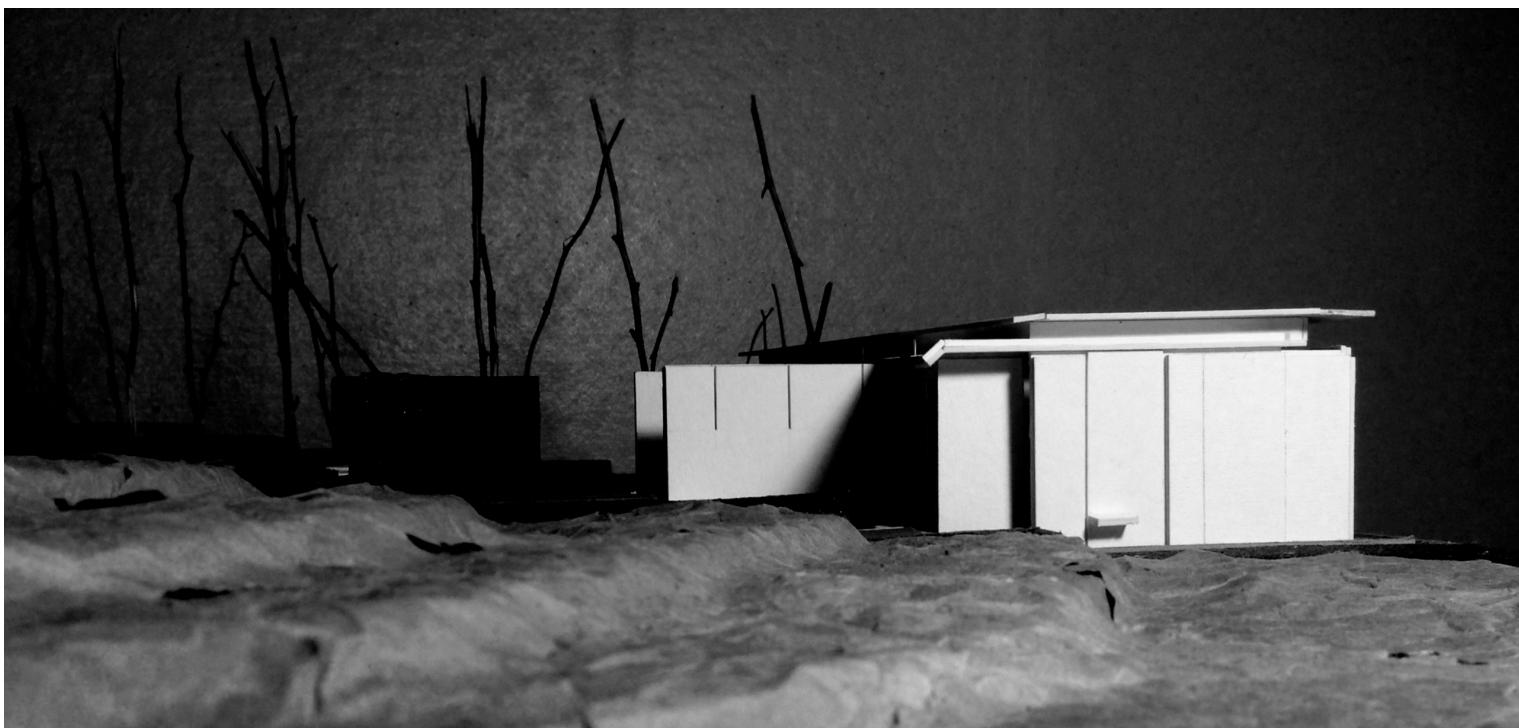


a key to the house

- 1 kitchen court
- 2 gathering court
- 3 lava rock boundary
- 4 bathroom
- 5 bedroom
- 6 hall
- 7 the Field [pg. 13]
- 8 the Stairs [pg. 14]
- 9 the Jungle [pg. 15]
- 10 the Terraces [pg. 16]

ground conditions







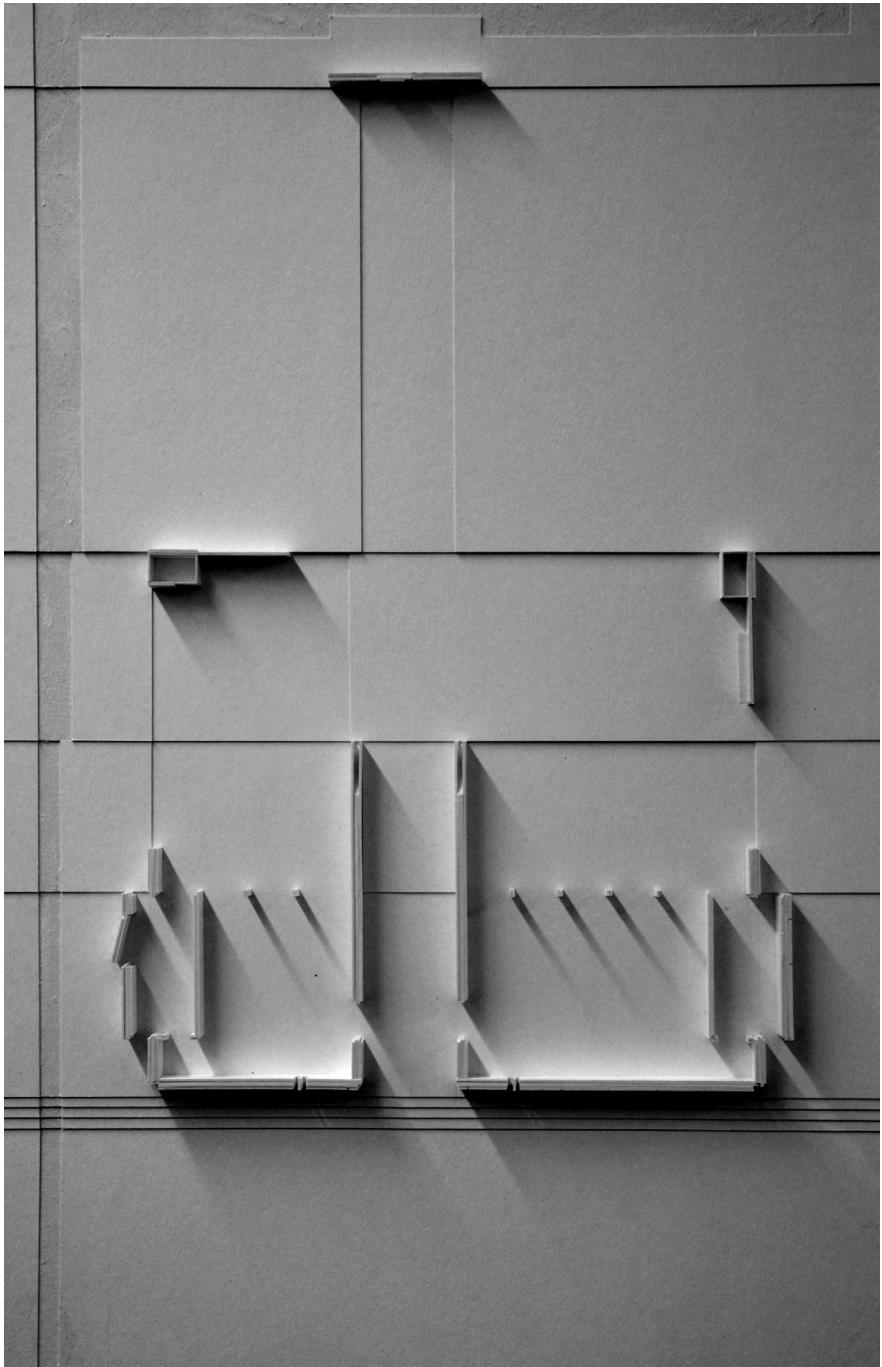
the Stairs

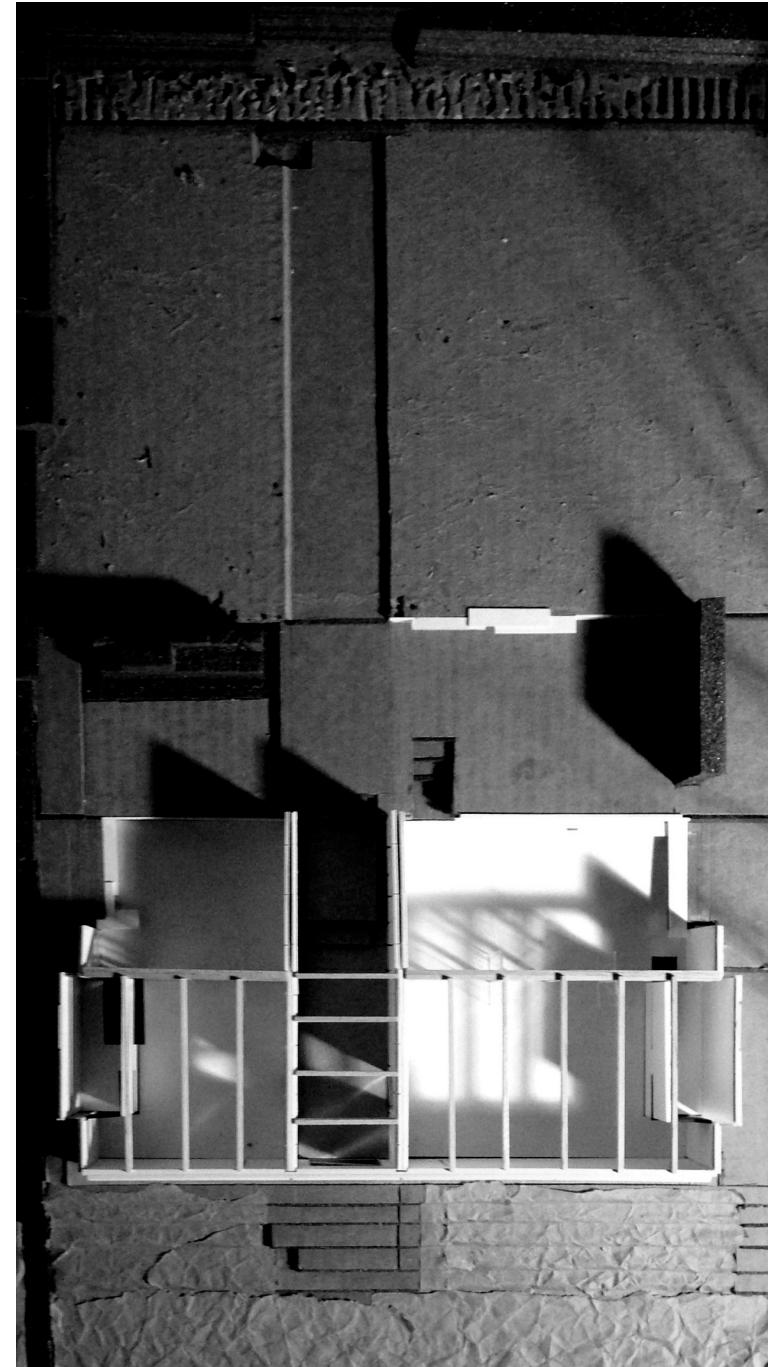


the Jungle



the Terraces





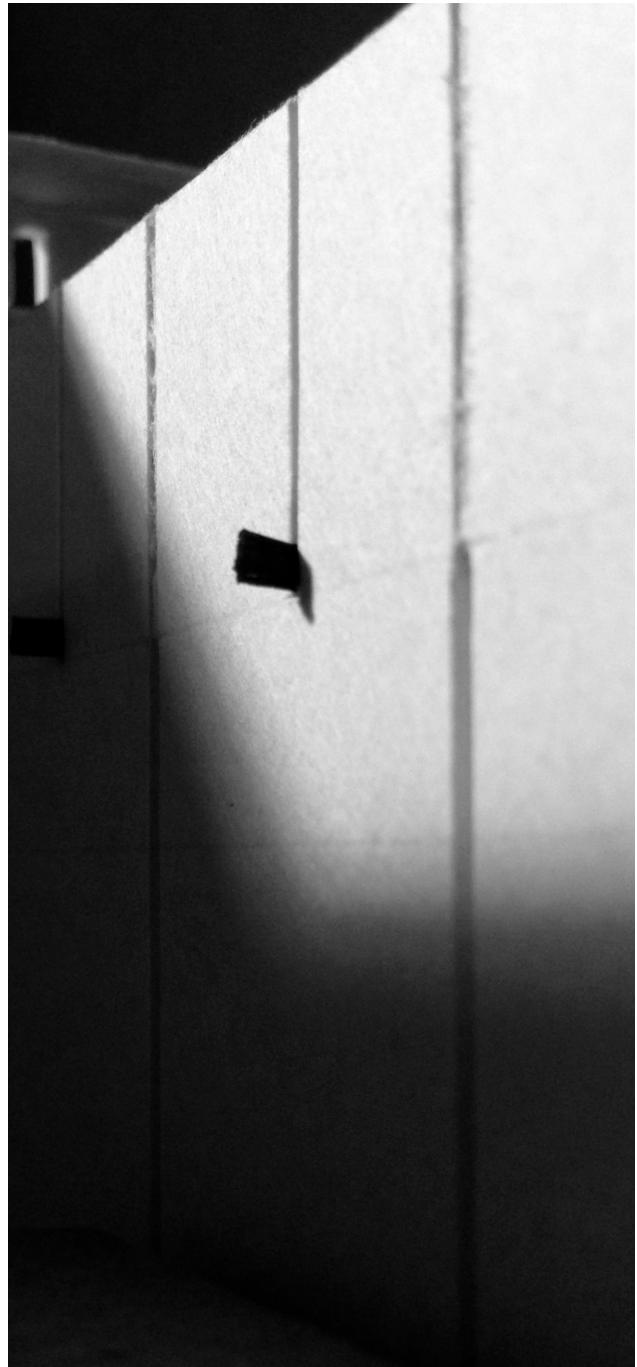
the structure

the Detail.

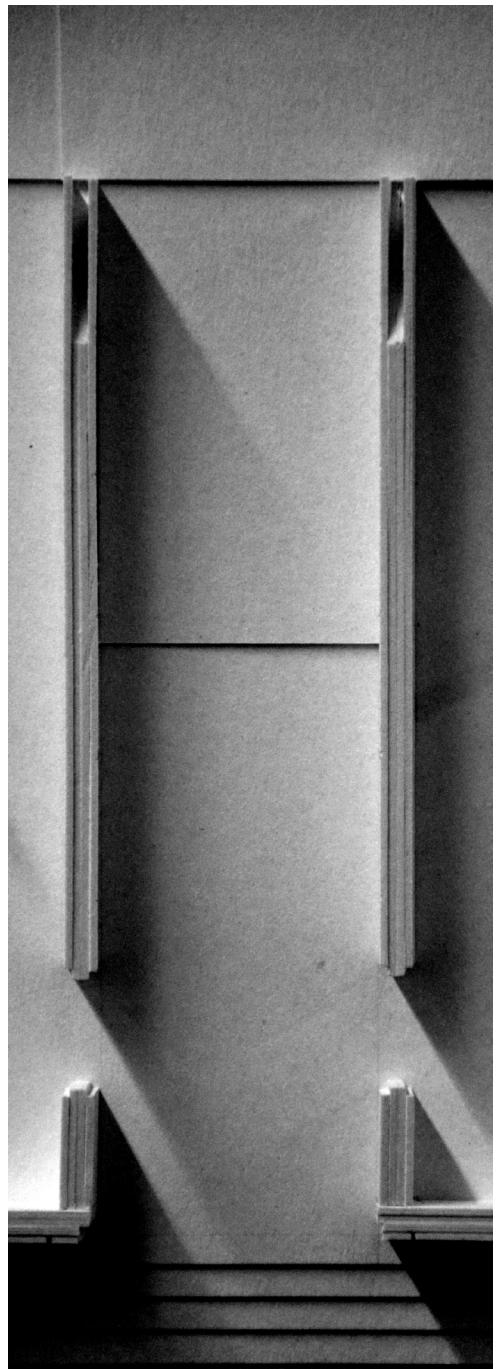
A detail is a joint, a slight push, a gentle break, a moment shared by two parts.
It is found in the texture of the material, in the way a window is placed, in the way the ground is touched.

An architectural game is played between...

pull	wall
reveal	floor
separation	joint
shift	shadow
depth	corner
turn	window
intersection	door



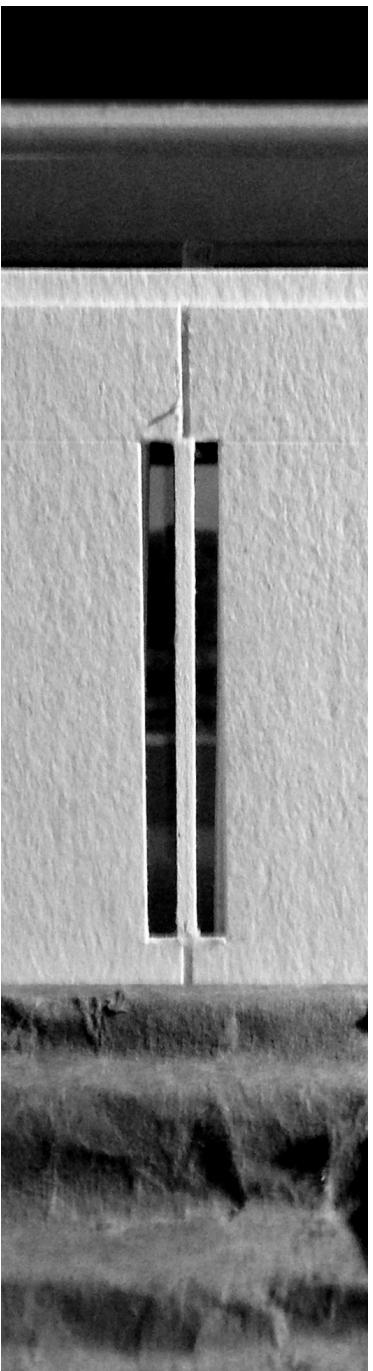
Detail Move | One



Detail Move | Two



Detail Move | Three



Detail Move | Four



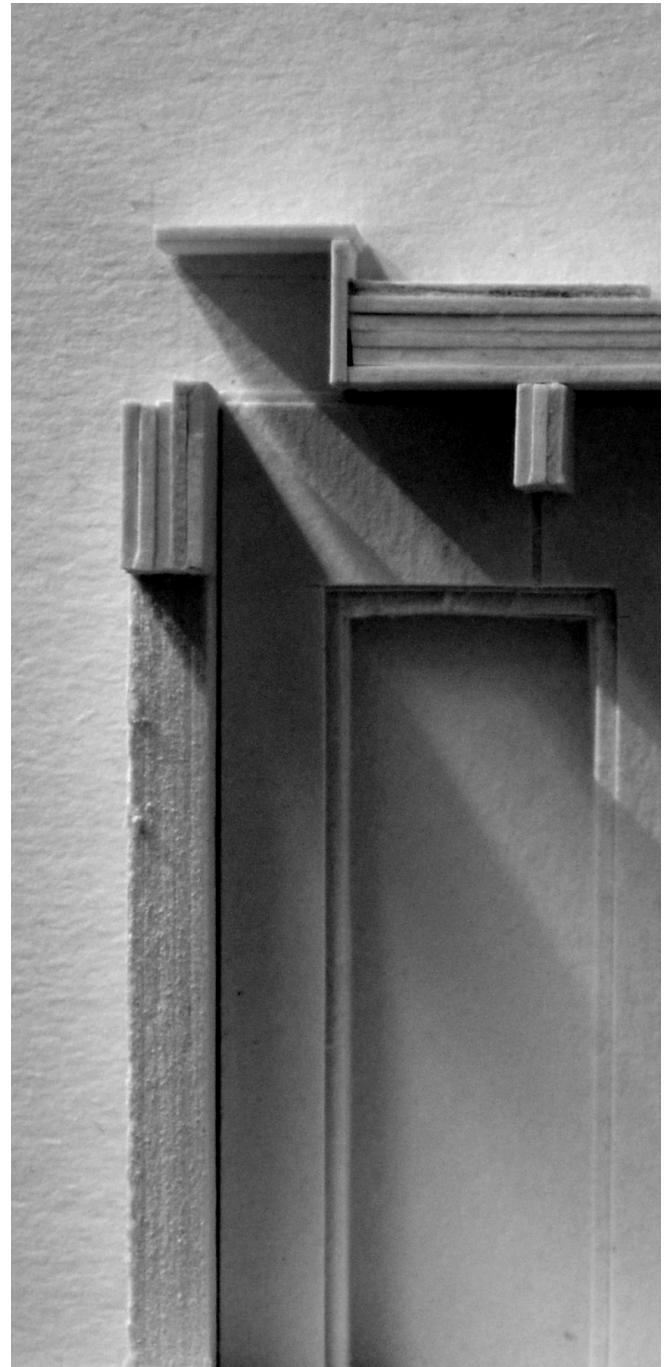
Detail Move | Five



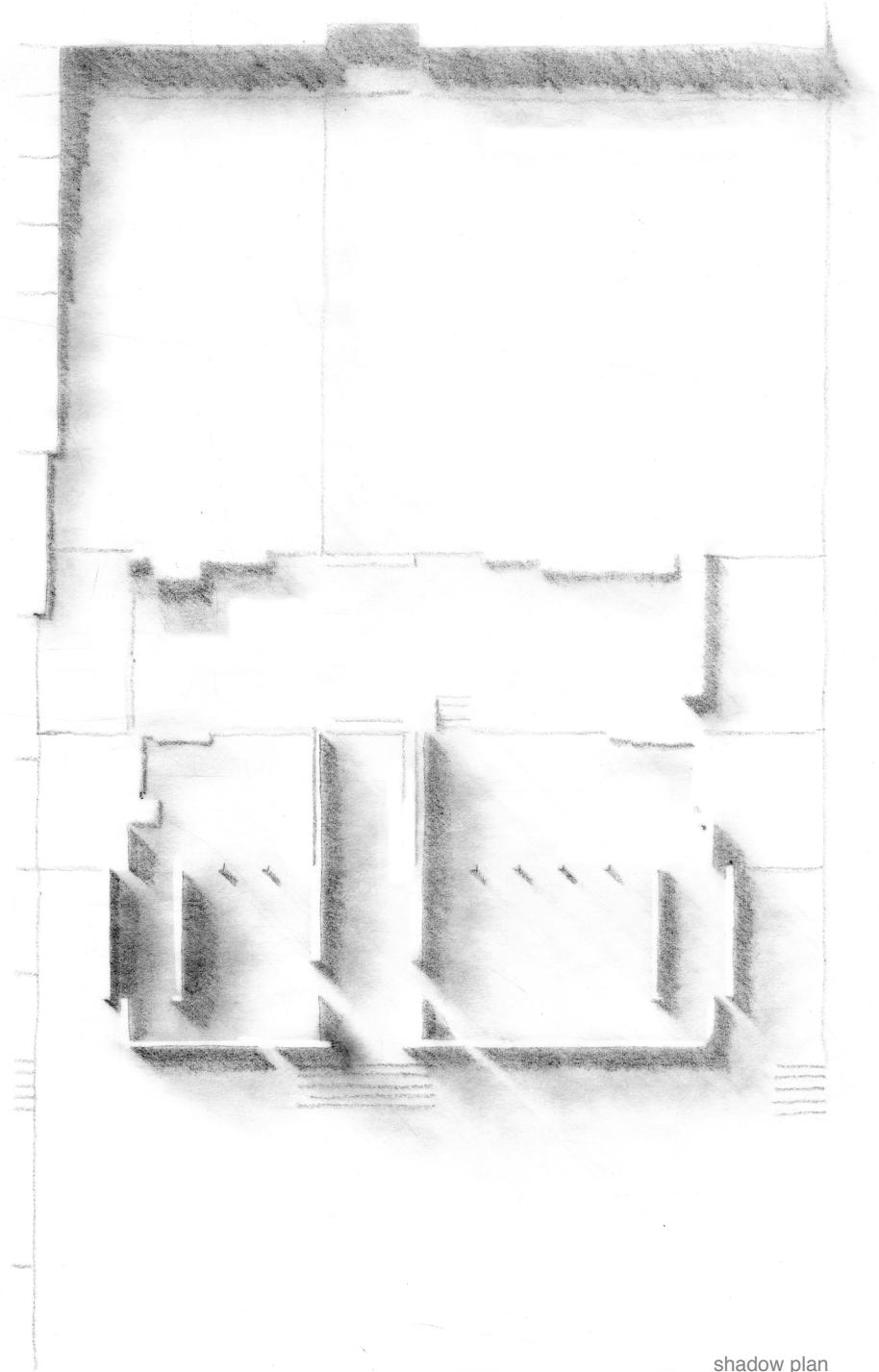
Detail Move | Six



Detail Move | Seven



Detail Move | Eight



shadow plan

the Architect.

“And where does the architect sit? He sits right there; he is the one who conveys the beauty of spaces, which is the very meaning of architecture. Think of meaningful space and you invent an environment, and it can be your invention. Therein lies the architect.”

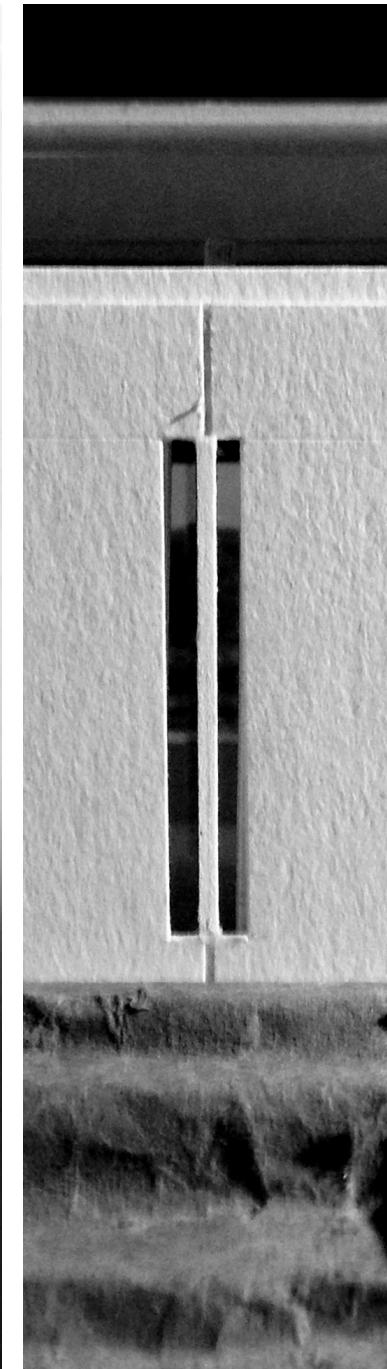
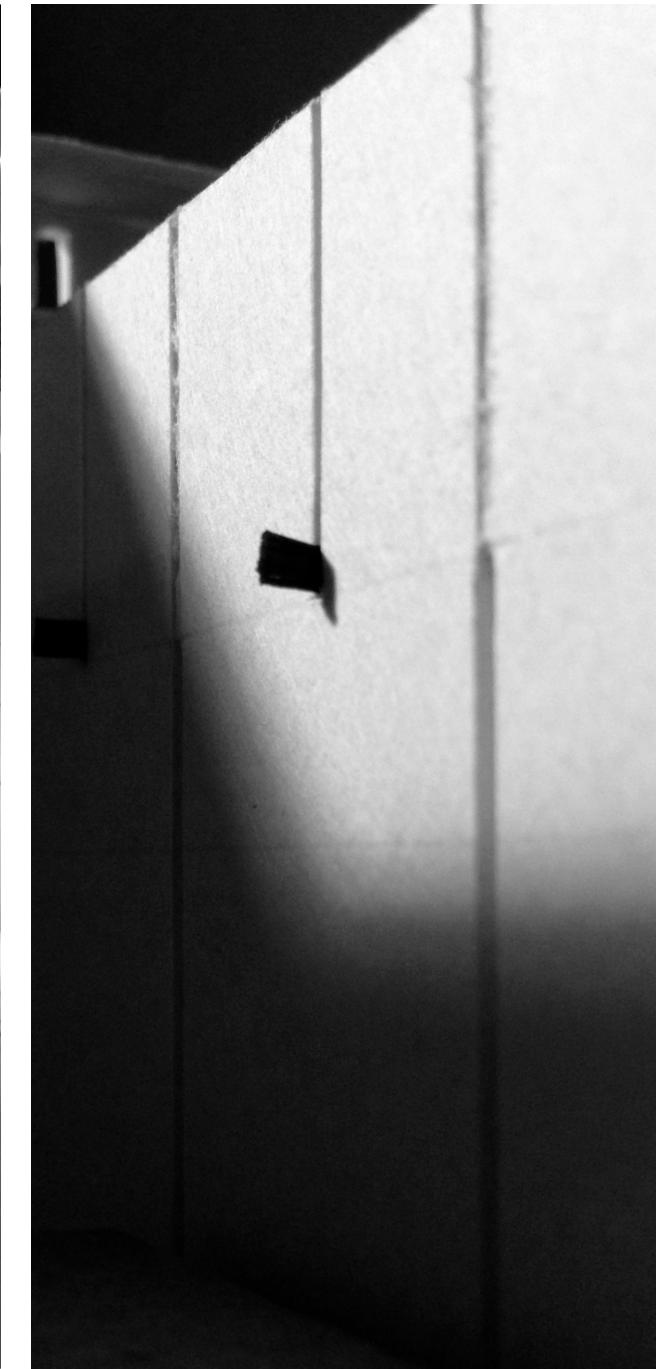
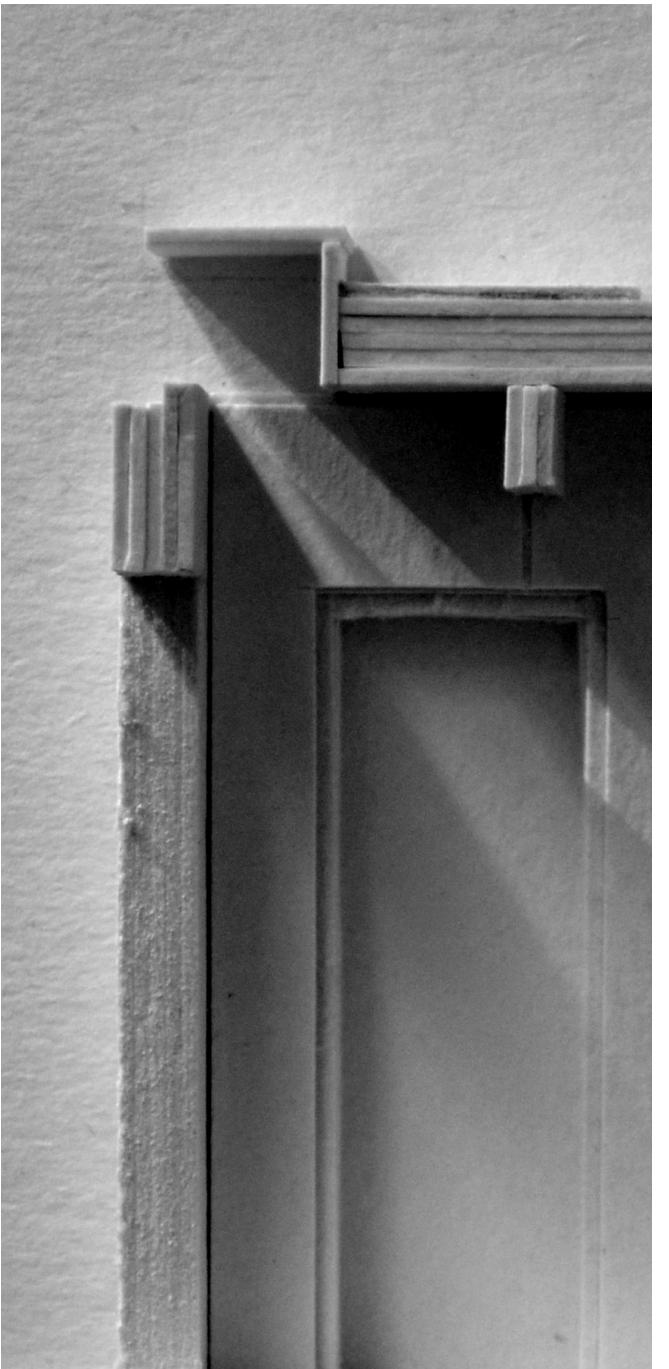
Louis I. Kahn

excerpt from, *Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn*, page 50

Appendix A : List of Images

finca en El Salvador	2
west elevation	3
east elevation	5
north elevation	7
south elevation	9
shadow plan	11
ground conditions 3 a-c, 6, 8	12
the Field	13
the Stairs	14
the Jungle	15
the Terraces	16
constructed shadows	17
the structure	18
Detail Move One	24
Detail Move Two	26
Detail Move Three	28
Detail Move Four	30
Detail Move Five	32
Detail Move Six	34
Detail Move Seven	36
Detail Move Eight	38
shadow plan	39
detailed moves	43
thesis card	46

*All images by author



Appendix B : Detailed Moves

