

TOWER HOUSE

Charles Frank Wysor

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fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture in Architecture

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an architectural investigation of a house as a rational object imbued by memory. The place is a wooded hill on the border between a hundred acre farm and the marshy ravine of the Totopotomoy "Totomoy" Creek in Mechanicsville, Virginia. The farm dates back to the Civil War when the Totomoy was no man's land between Union and Confederate earth works. It has been farmed by my grandfather since the late 1940s.

The house is a pair of rectangles separated by a stair. The concrete block walls are punctured by large windows, aligned to define interior passage and establishing clarity of spatial and formal relationships. The tower house is the reduction and rational manifestation of familial memory.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, grandfather, and my many scout masters and professors. To paraphrase Sir Isaac Newton, if I see further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am forever grateful to my thesis chair, Patrick Doan, for without your constant guidance and support this book would not exist. The rigor of your teaching will stay with me, keeping my pace steady like the oarsman's drum.

I wholeheartedly thank Frank Weiner. The wisdom and compassion you shared with me have been irreplaceable. I know in the coming years your lessons will grow with me, slow but rooted, like an oak tree or mighty redwood.

With deep appreciation, I thank Hans Rott. Both the knowledge and food you have shared with me have been wondrous. Your advice has so often mirrored the thoughts I didn't have the confidence to share that I have now trust in my instincts more fully.

I thank Steve Thompson for the many conversations shared these three years. You have always challenged my preconceptions and lessened my ignorance; for these things I am sincerely grateful.

I thank my mother, Grace Wysor, for the near constant remodeling of our house as I grew up and for pushing me to be both mathematic and artistic.

Lastly, but no less, I thank Kalee Hartman, my dear friend, travel companion, and studiomate. Without your friendship and support, I would not have lasted these three years.

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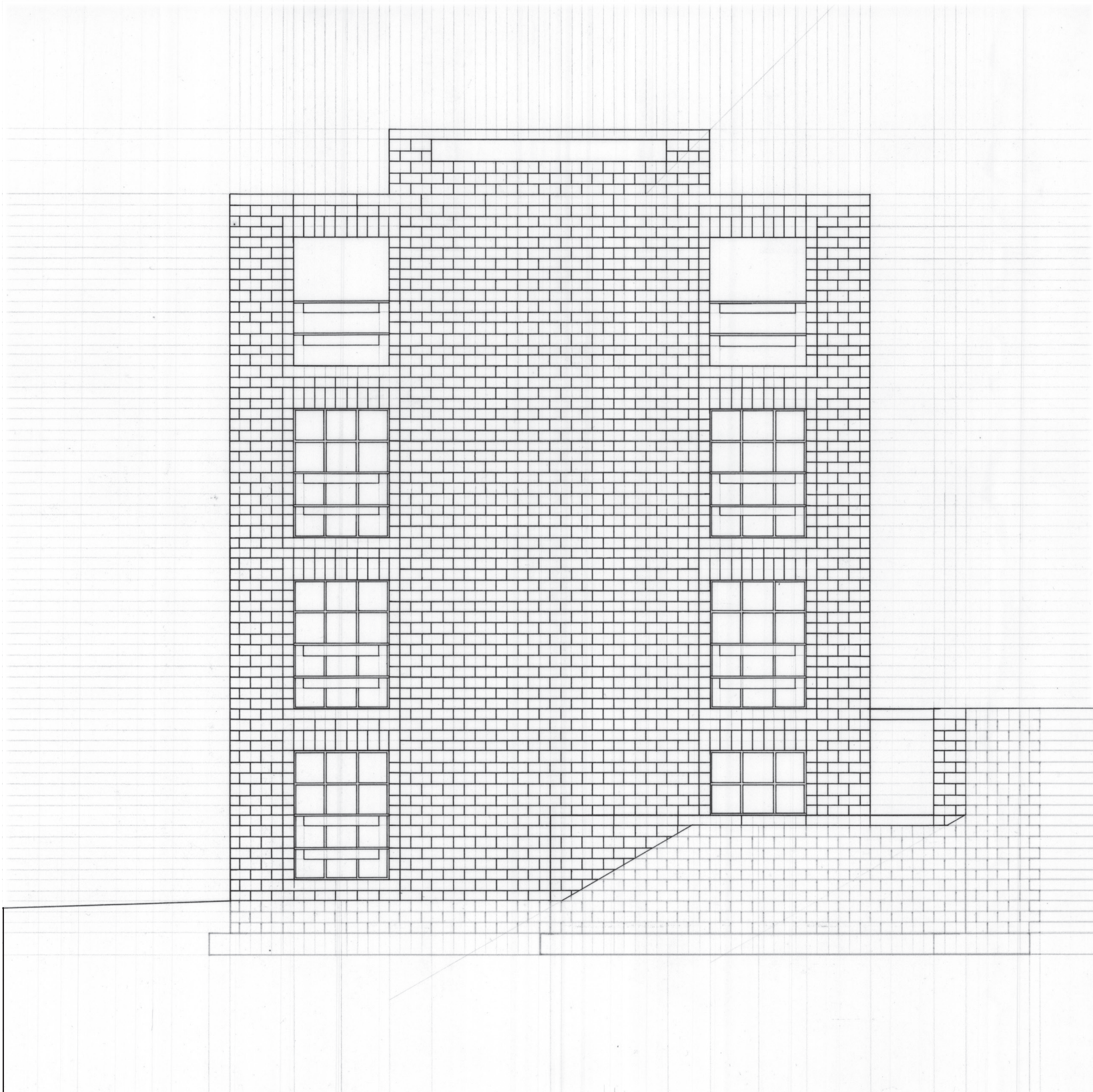
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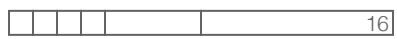
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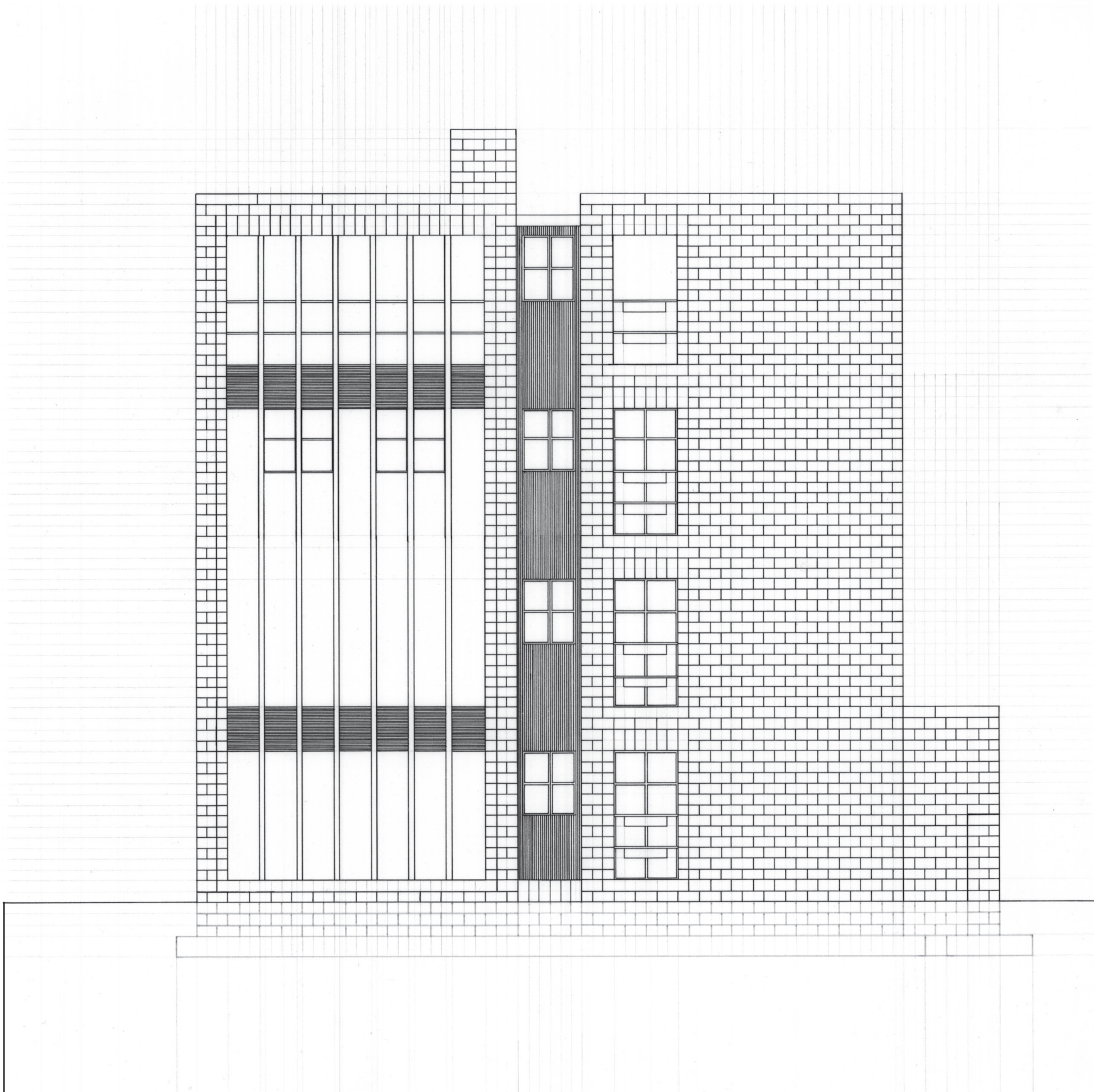
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All works in this book including, written components, photographs, and hand drawings, are original works by the author.



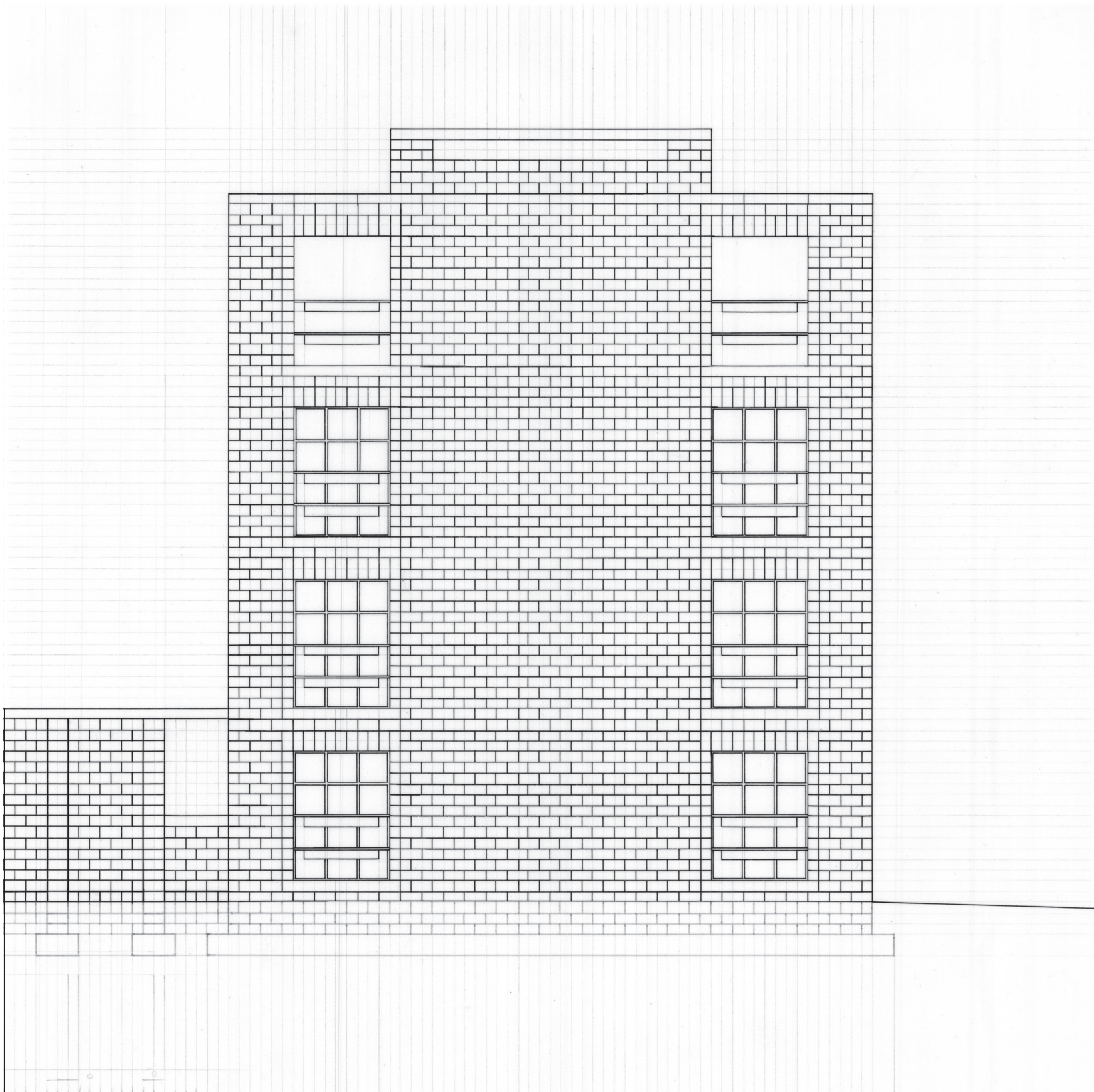
NORTH ELEVATION



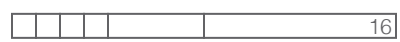


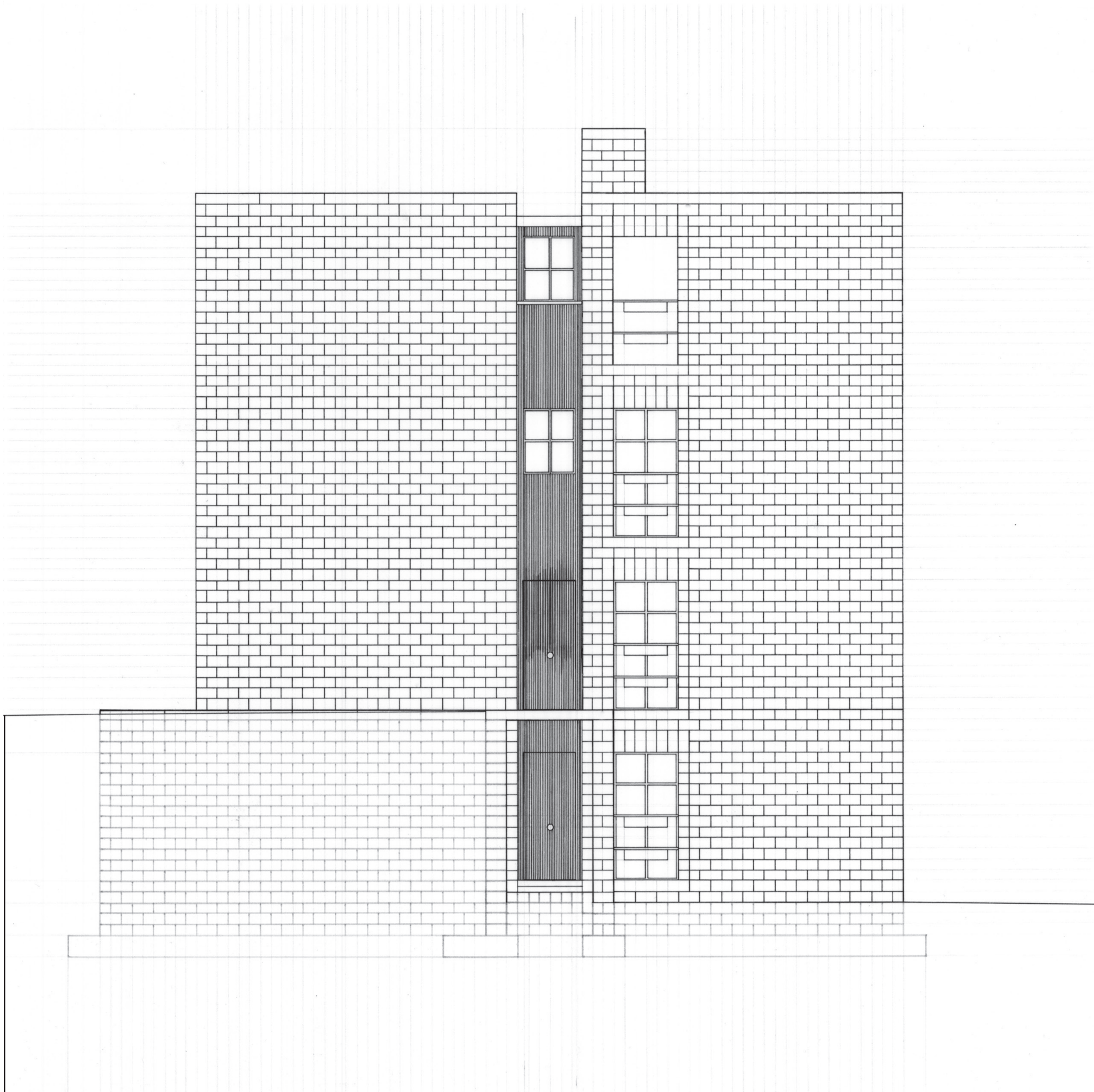
EAST ELEVATION



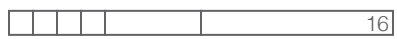


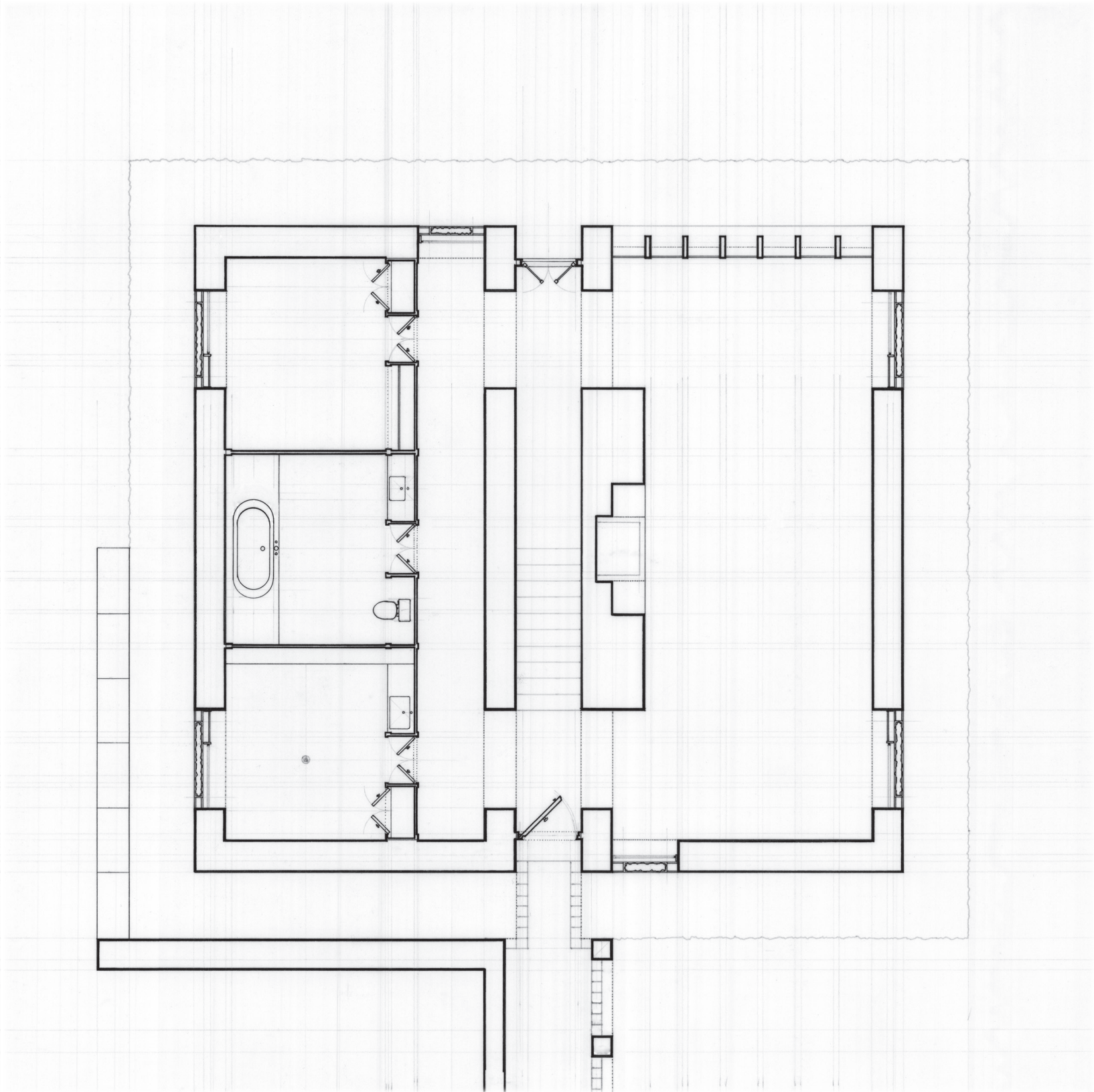
SOUTH ELEVATION





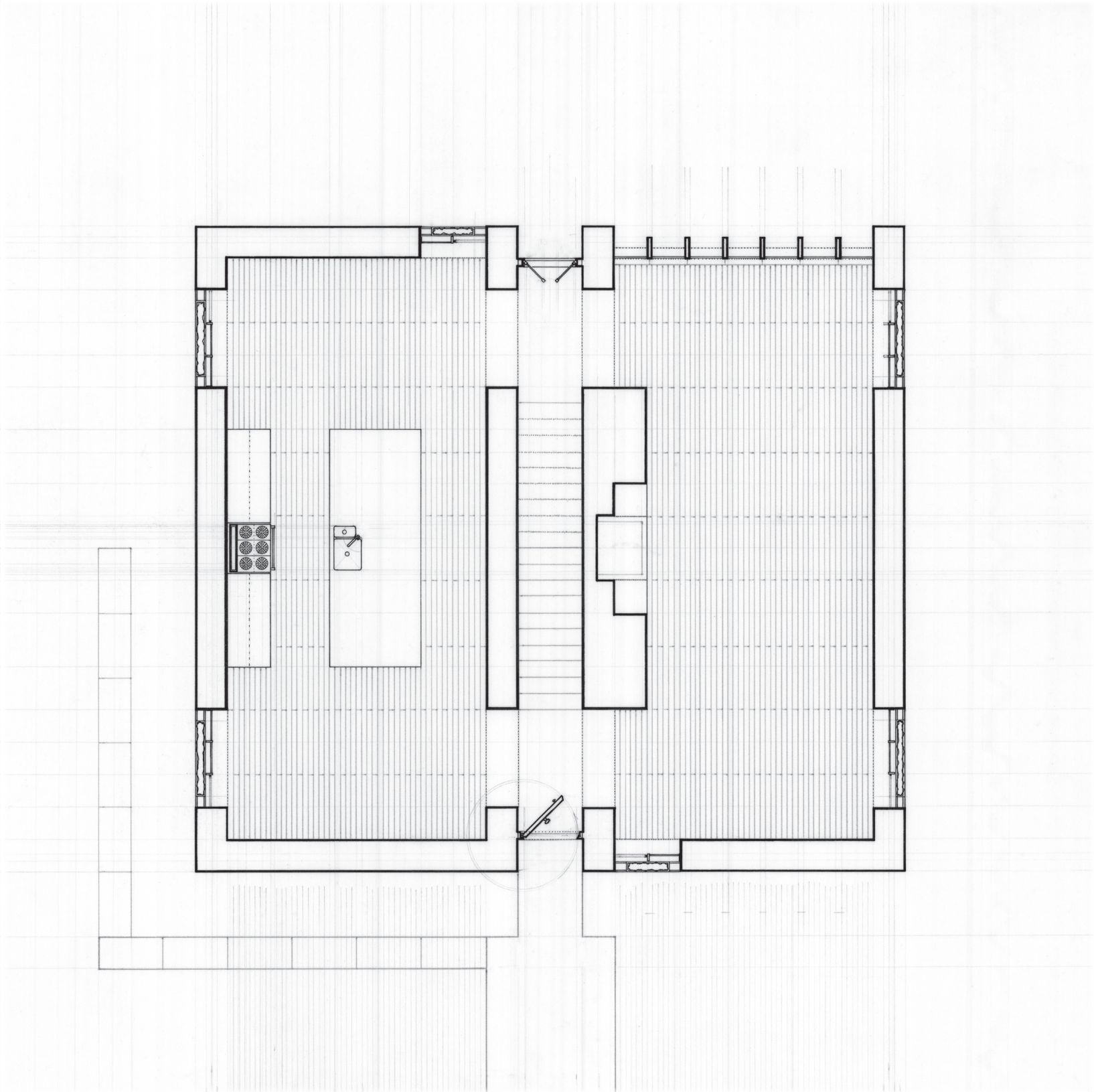
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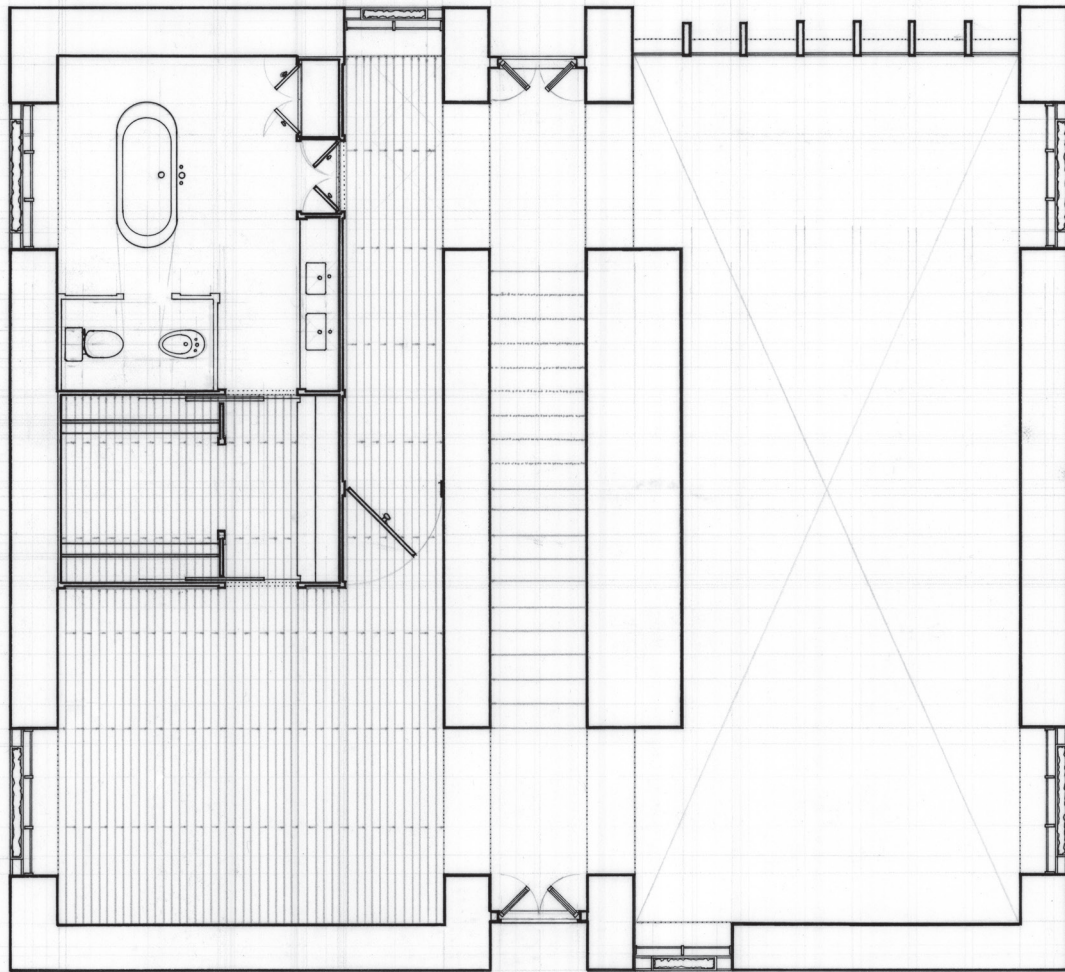
GROUND FLOOR





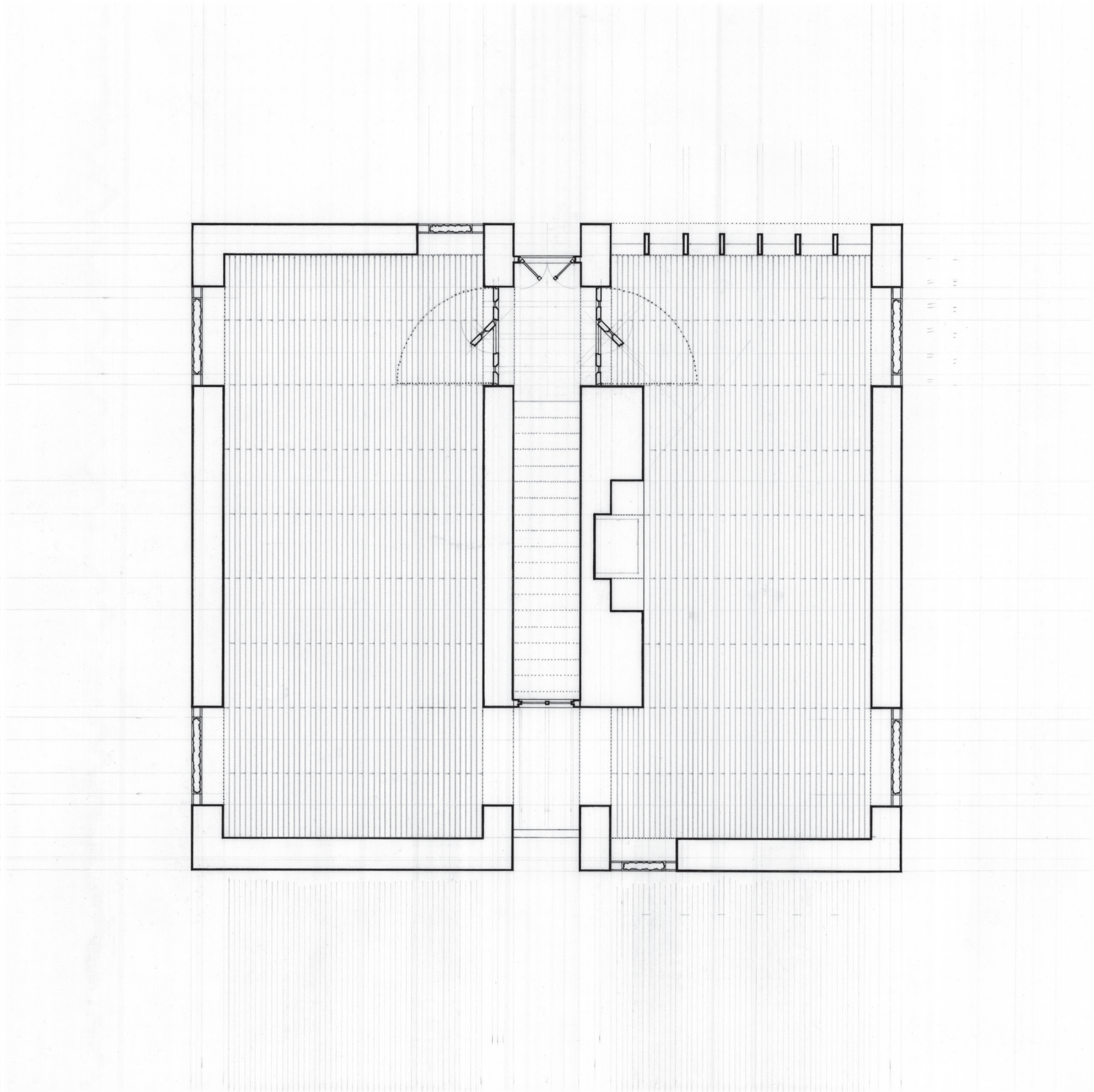
PIANO NOBILE





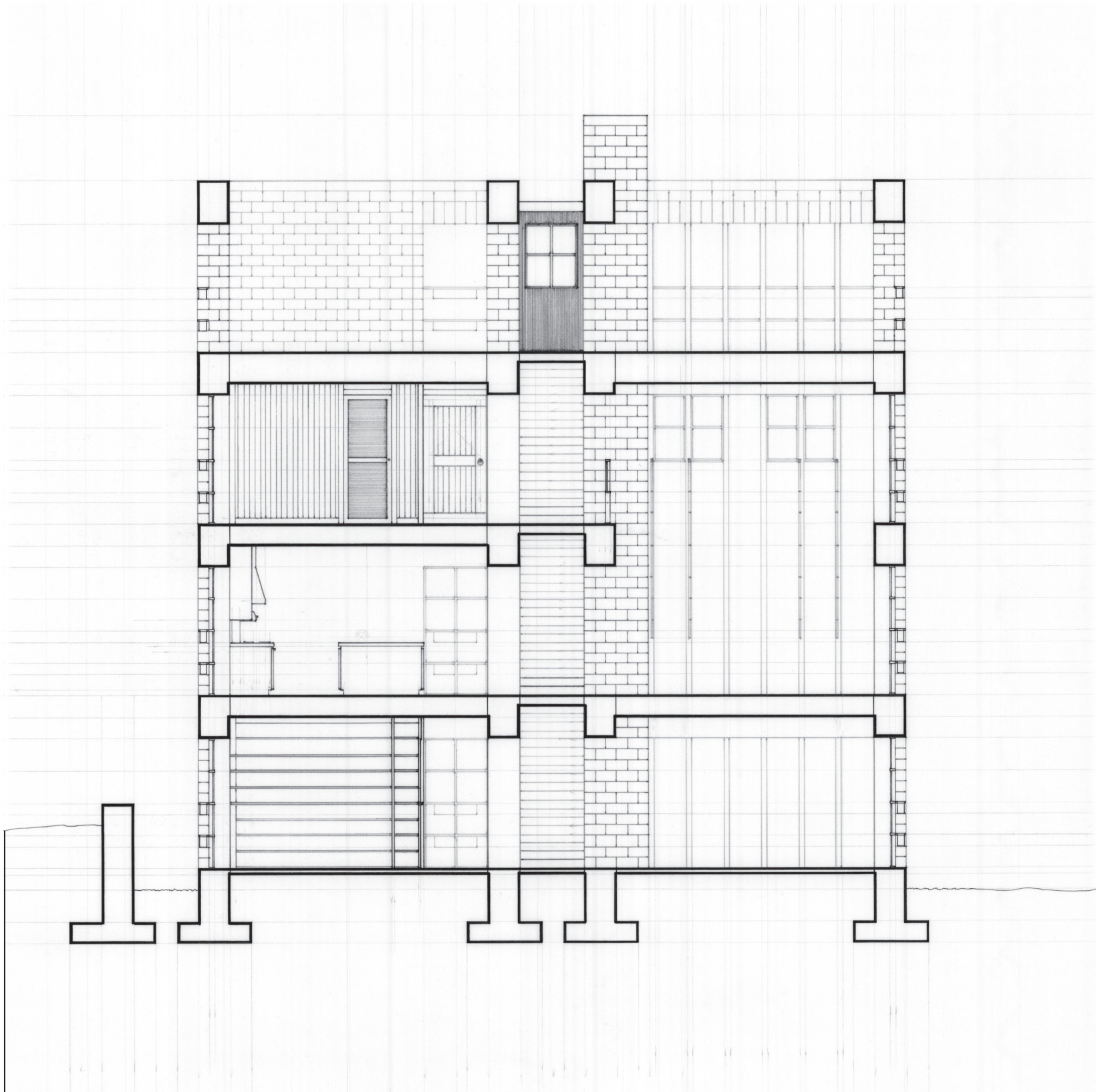
THIRD FLOOR





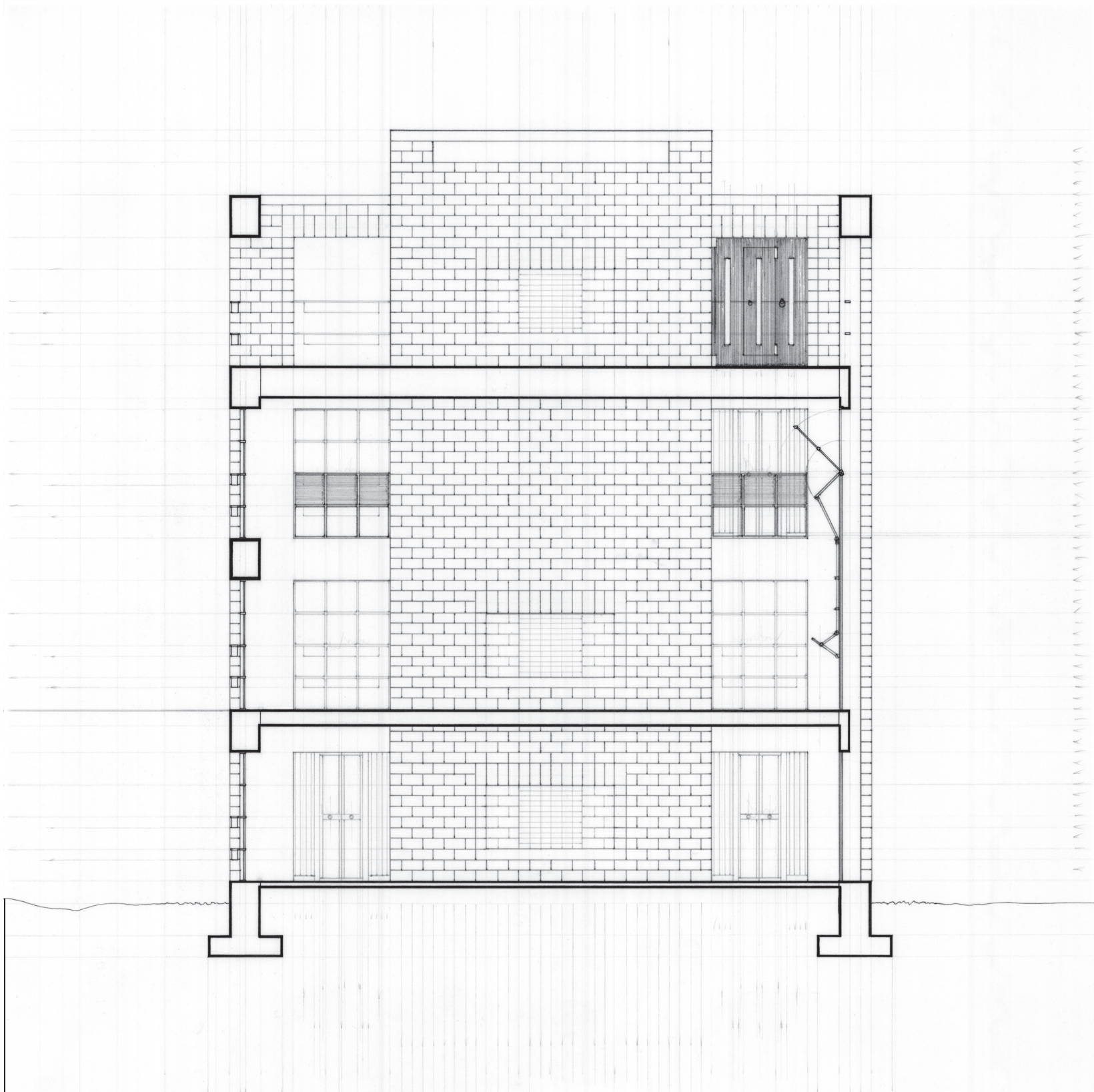
ROOF TERRACE





EAST BUILDING SECTION





NORTH BUILDING SECTION





MY MOTHER'S KITCHEN
DESIGNED & BUILT BY HER IN THE SHELL OF THE
OLD GARAGE



MY MOTHER'S LIVING ROOM
MYRTLE BEACH, SC



MY GRANDMOTHER'S LIVING ROOM
MECHANICSVILLE, VA

9:30 Thursday
April 30th
20min Presentation



Bird Cage
Museum +
Guarded Womb
Fall of the House of Usher

Or is it an escape from these things?
From Legacy, familial duty, the rootedness of
Custom + Conservative Responsibility to
land + time. A Tower in the Woods to
~~escape~~ +
Retreat to With a beloved partner,
Conspirator, + Confidant.

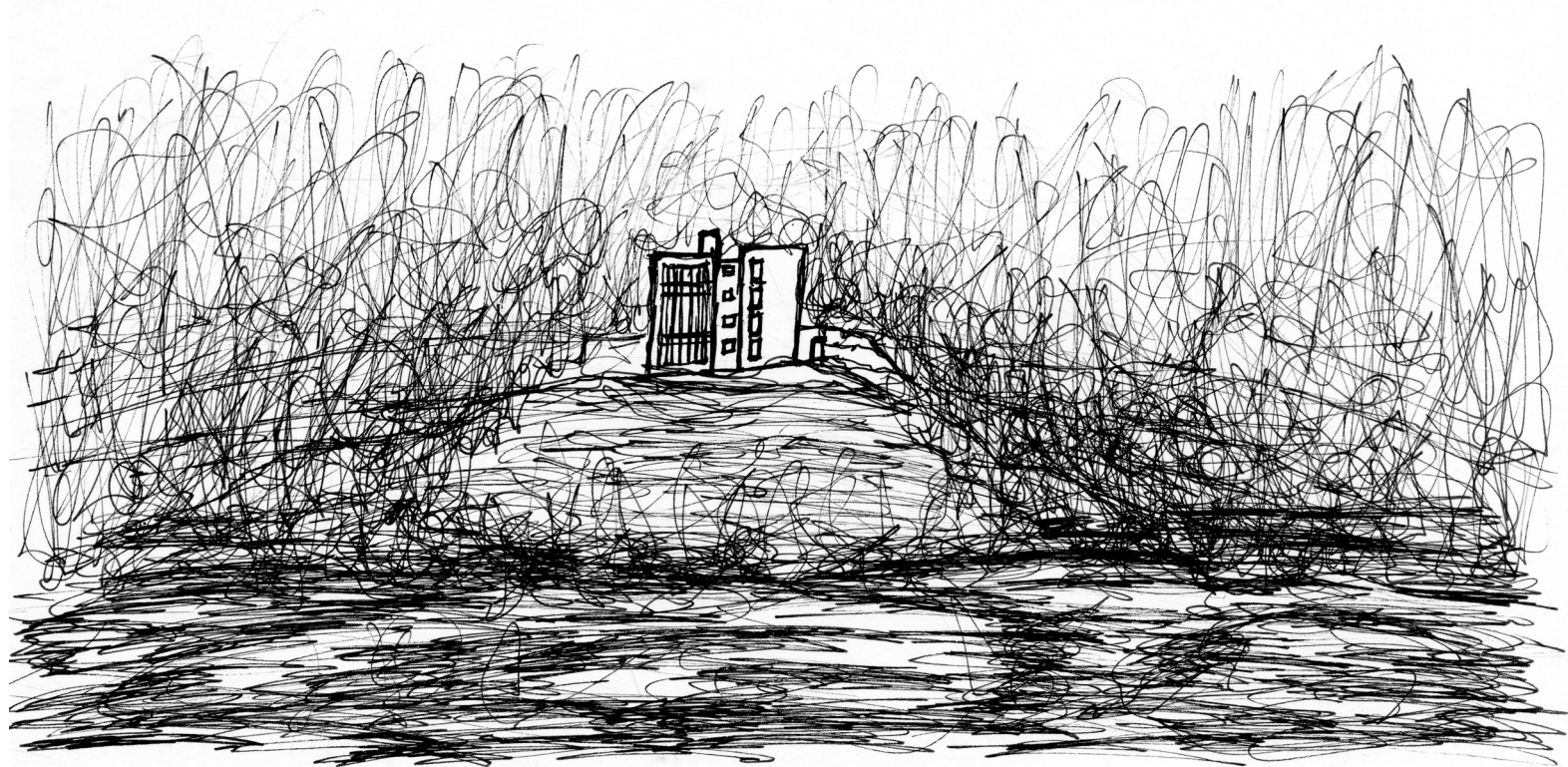
A hermitage hidden behind the ~~city~~ house
of family + society

Solitude

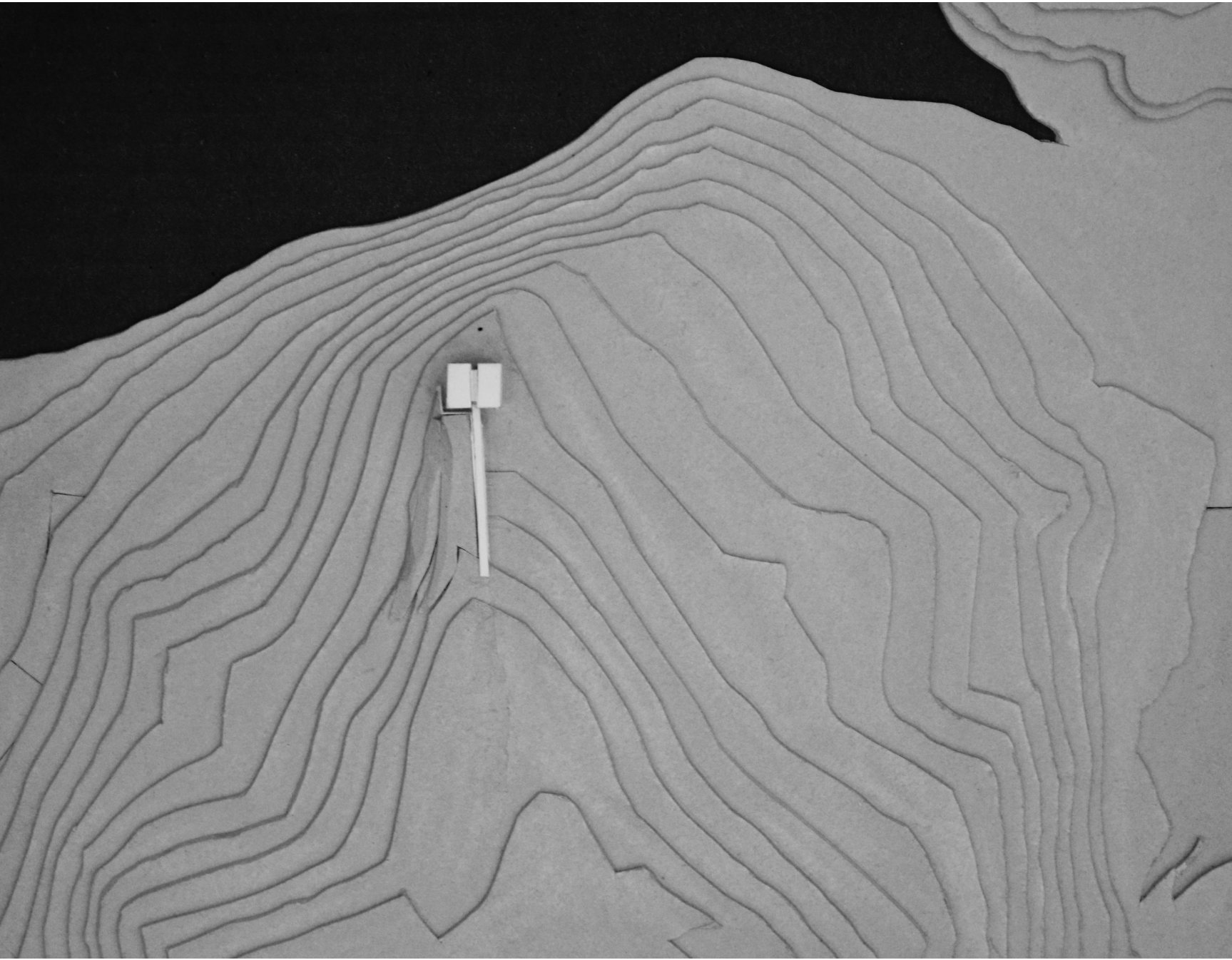
Typology - Study of



SITE SKETCH



SKETCH OF THE HOUSE FROM EASTERN WETLAND



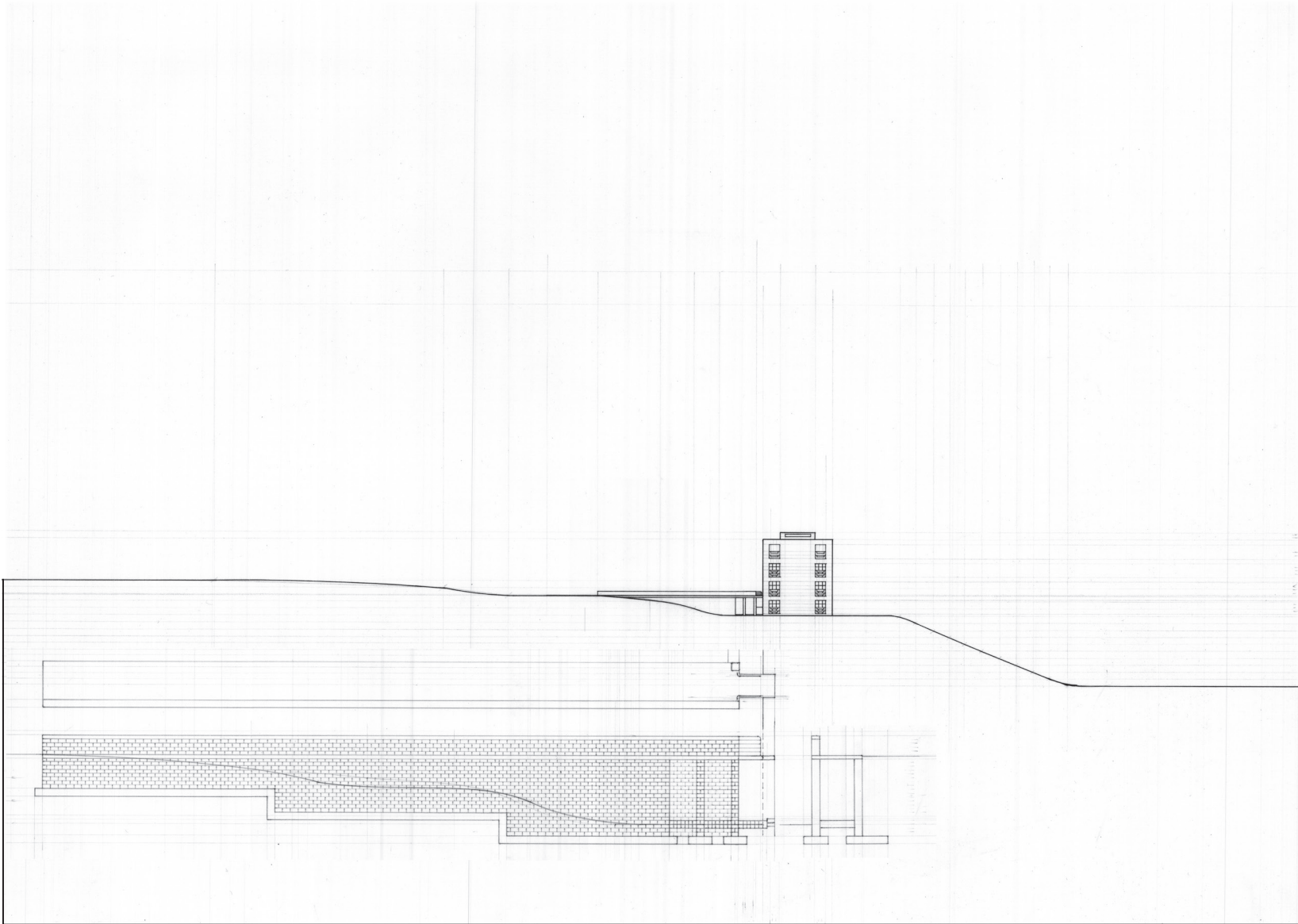
SITE MODEL





SITE TOPOGRAPHY





SITE SECTION
WALL SECTION, PLAN, & ELEVATION





ROAD TO THE HOUSE BEFORE THE WOODS





WOODS' EDGE & ENTRANCE TO THE SITE





VIEW EAST OVER THE SWAMP FROM THE HILL'S EDGE





VIEW THROUGH THE WOODS & GENTLE,
SOUTHERN HILLSIDE

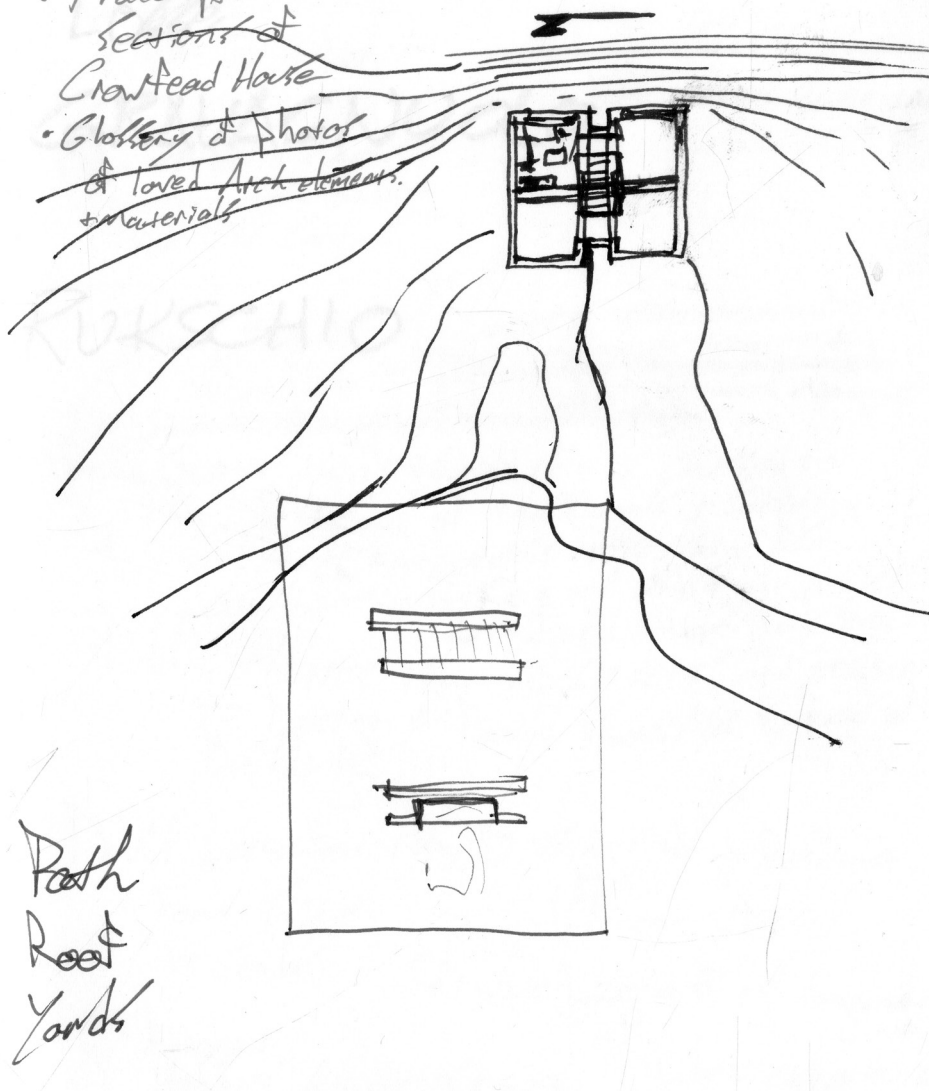


Clarte
Botta

Site sections
interior + exterior
walls

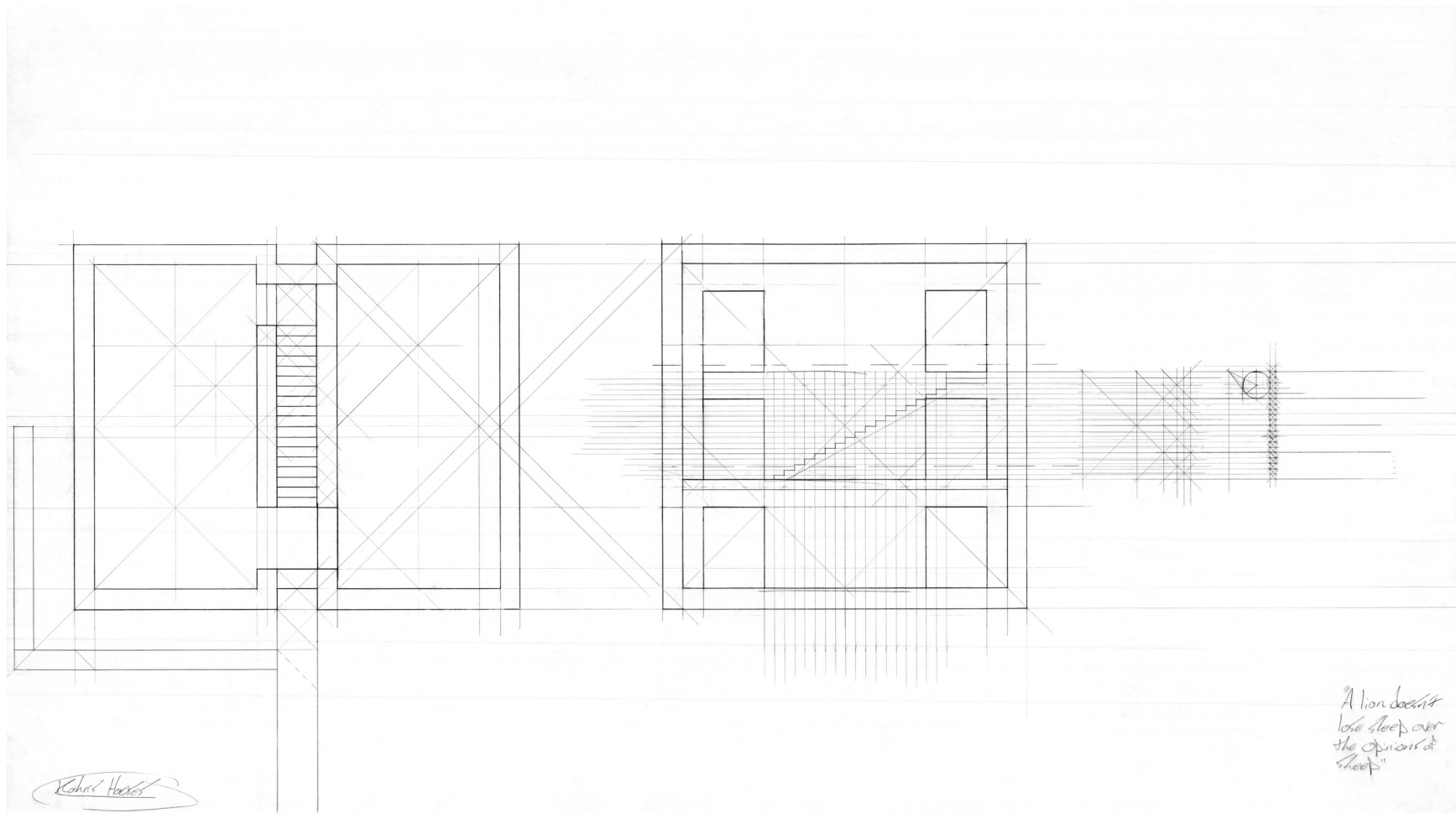
Wednesday
Afternoon

- Trace Plans +
Sections of
Crowhead House
- Glossary of photos
of loved Arch elements
+ materials

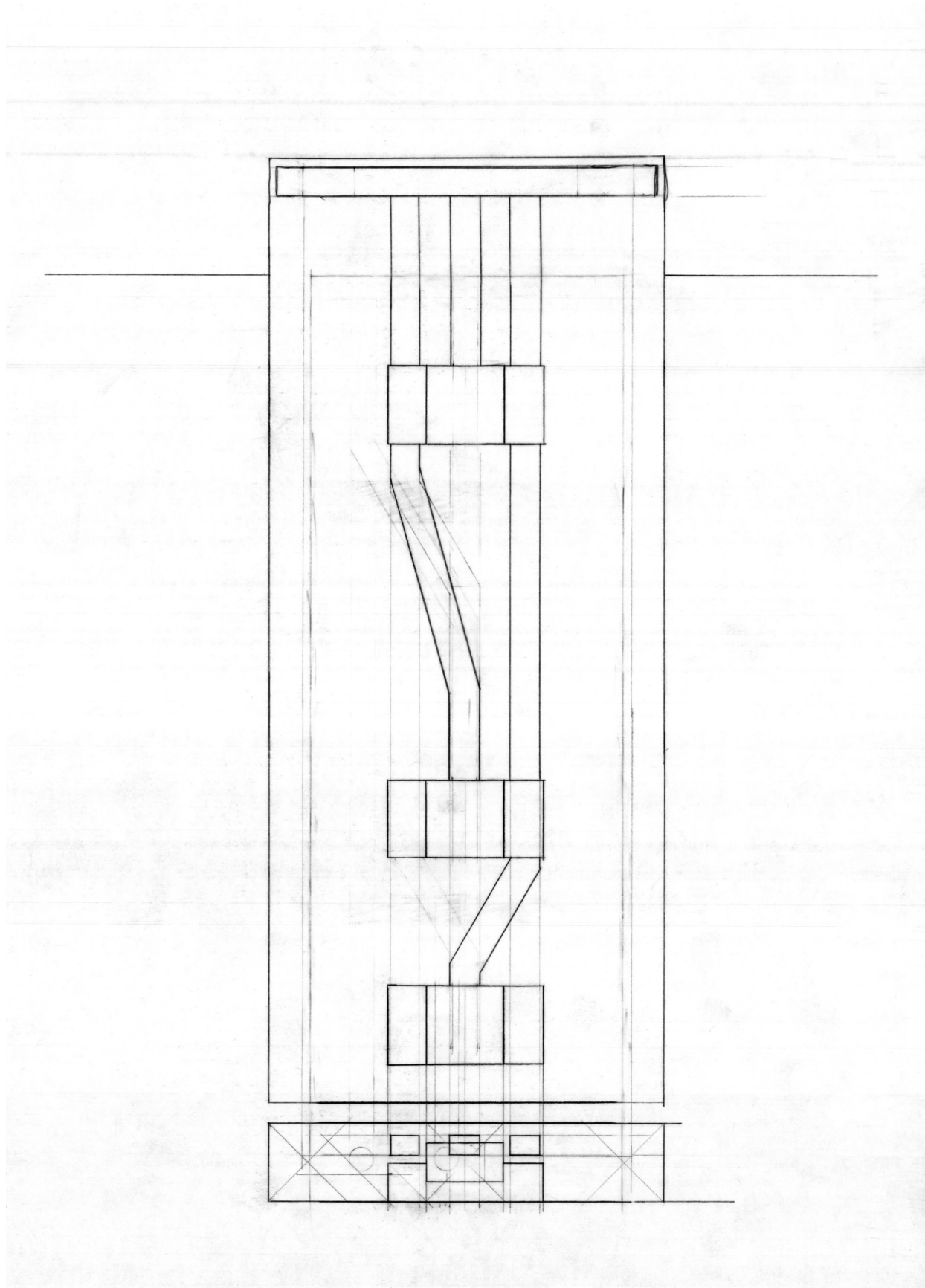


Path
Roof
Yards

FIRST SKETCH

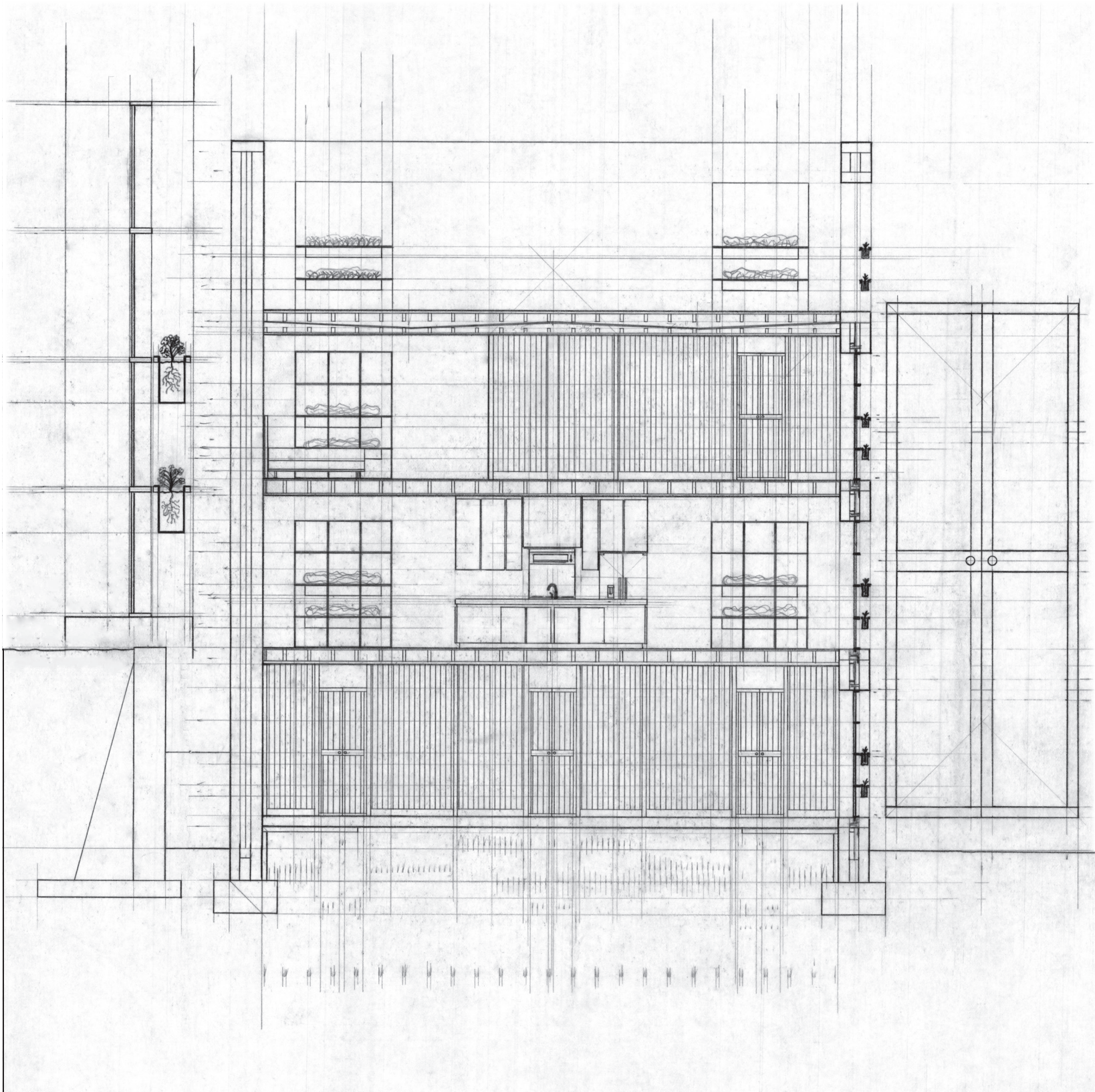


EARLY PLAN & SECTION WORKING OUT THE STAIR



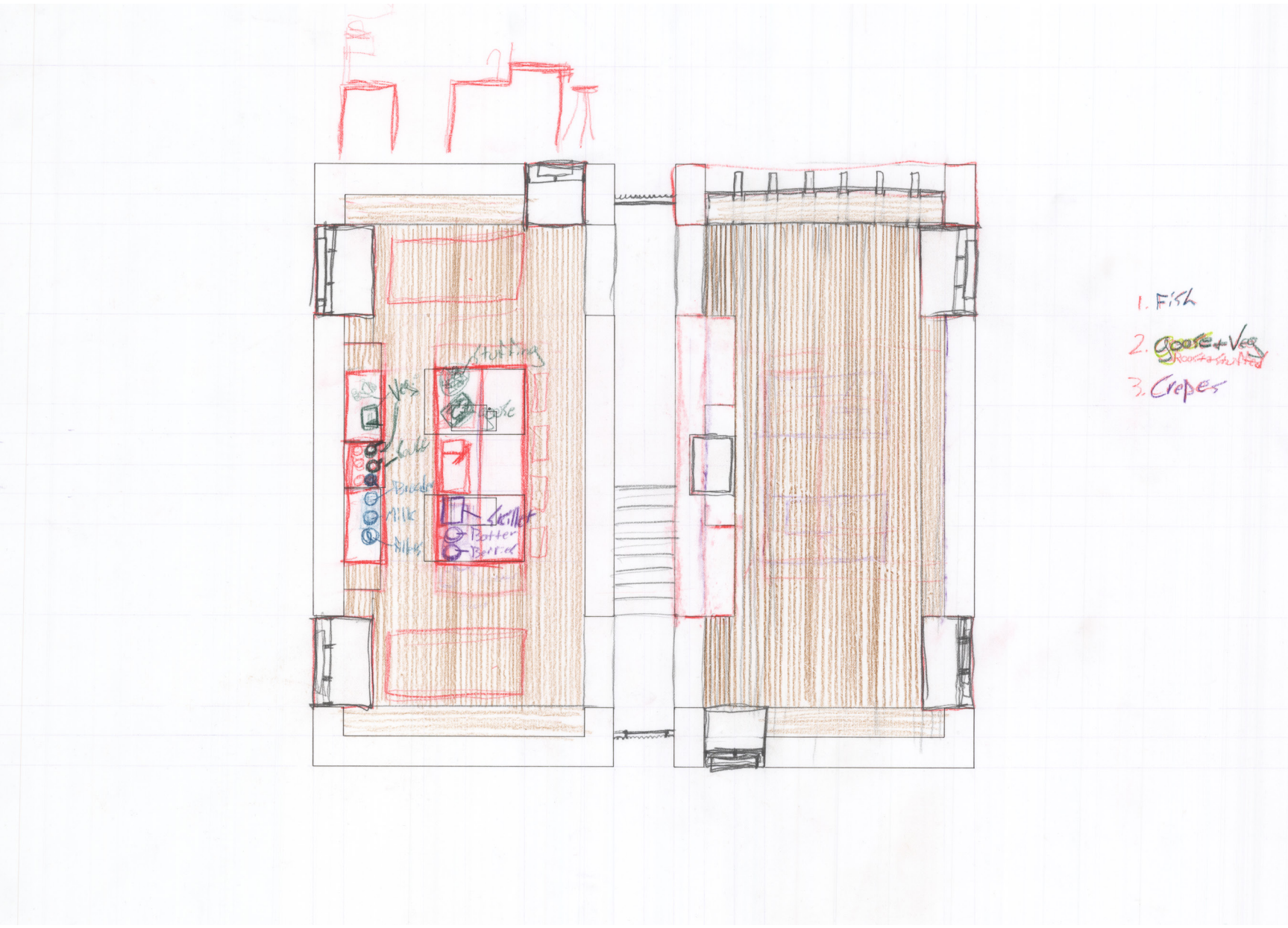
FLUE & HEARTH SECTIONS



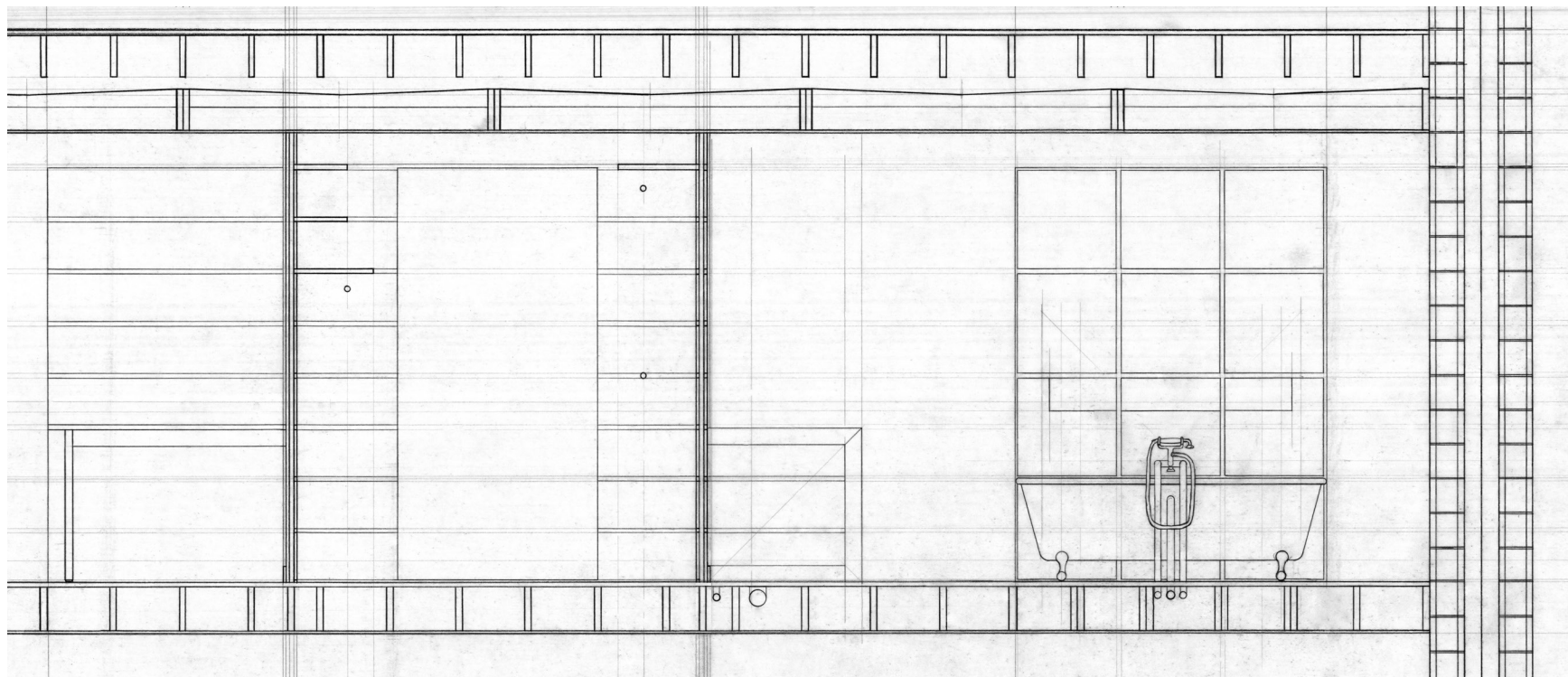


NORTH BUILDING SECTION & DETAILS



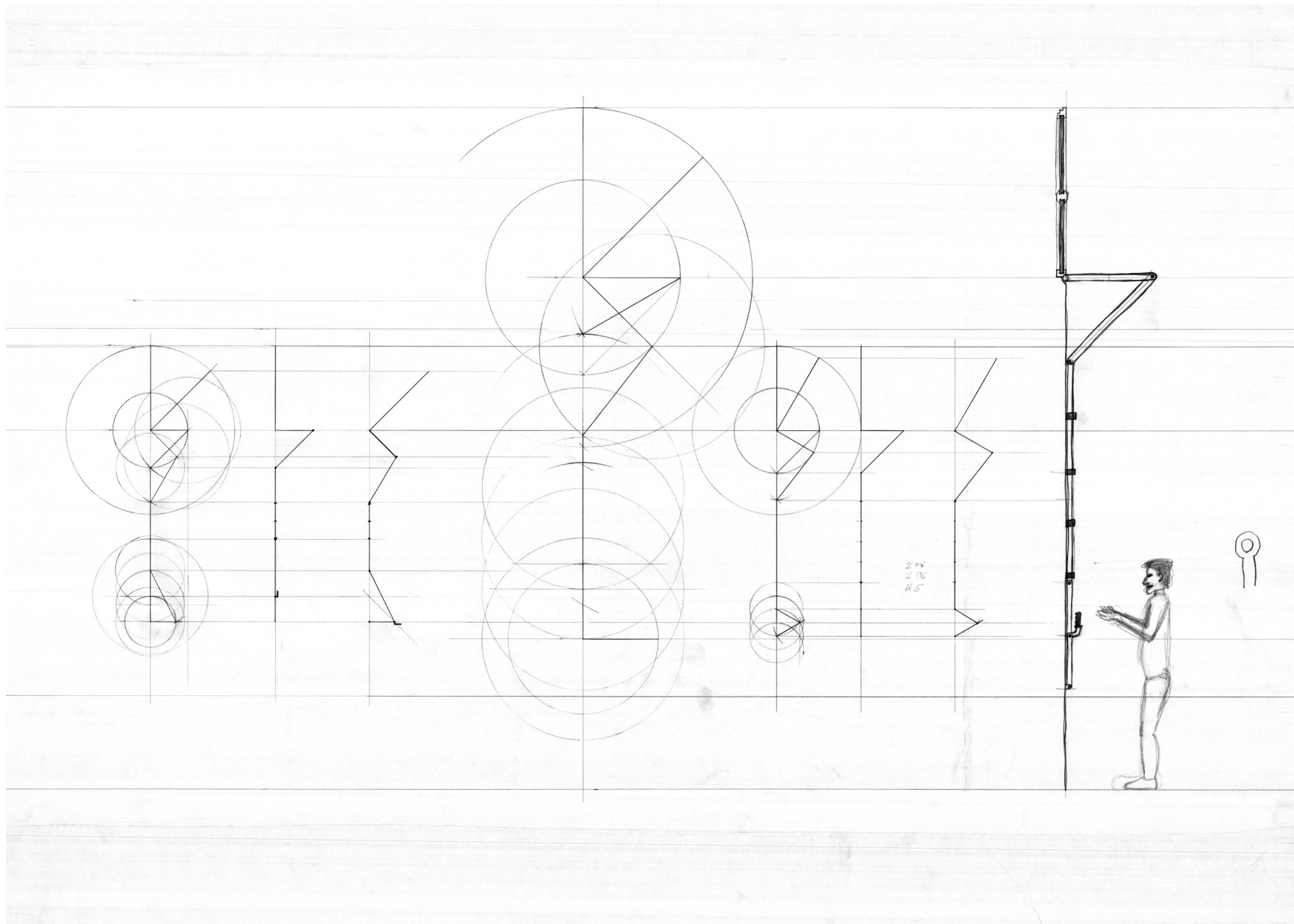


DEVELOPMENT OF KITCHEN BY PLANNING THE PREPARATION OF A THREE COURSE MEAL

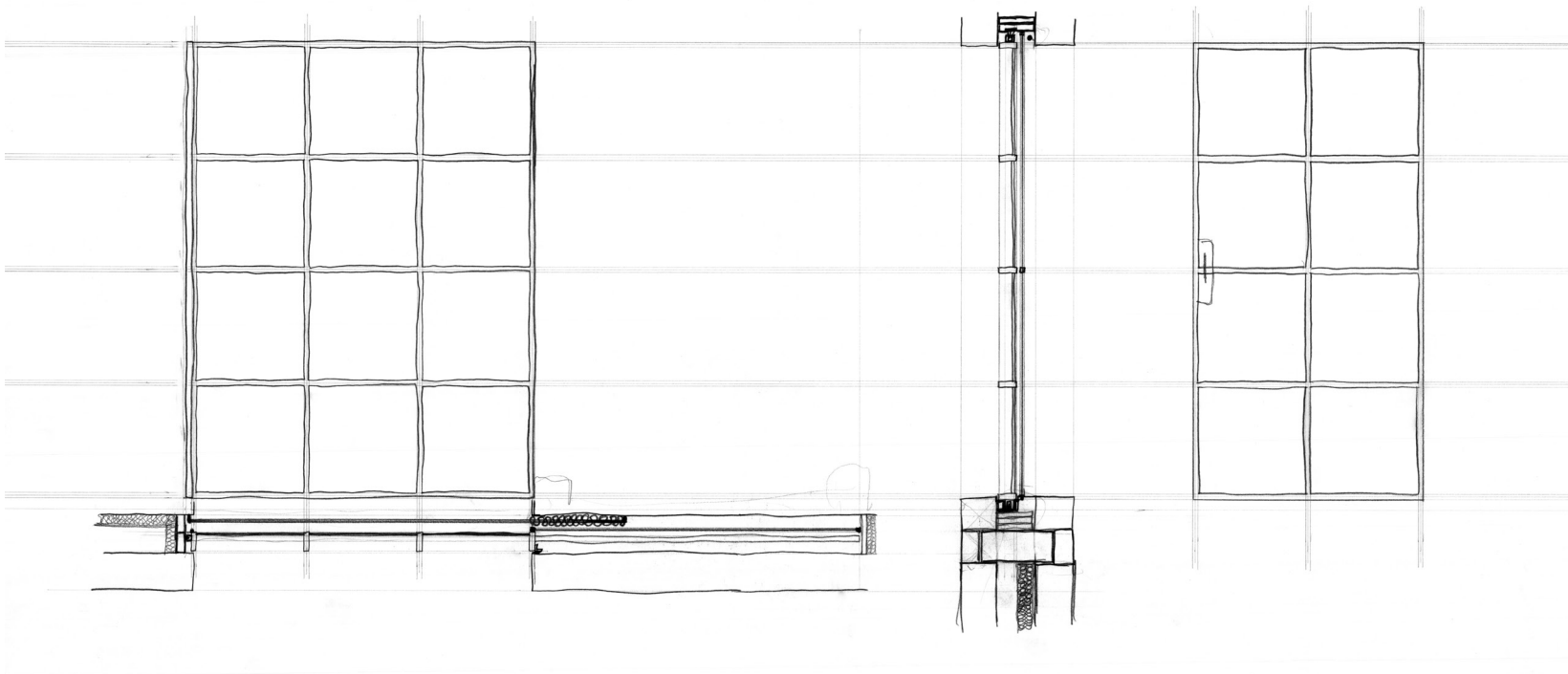
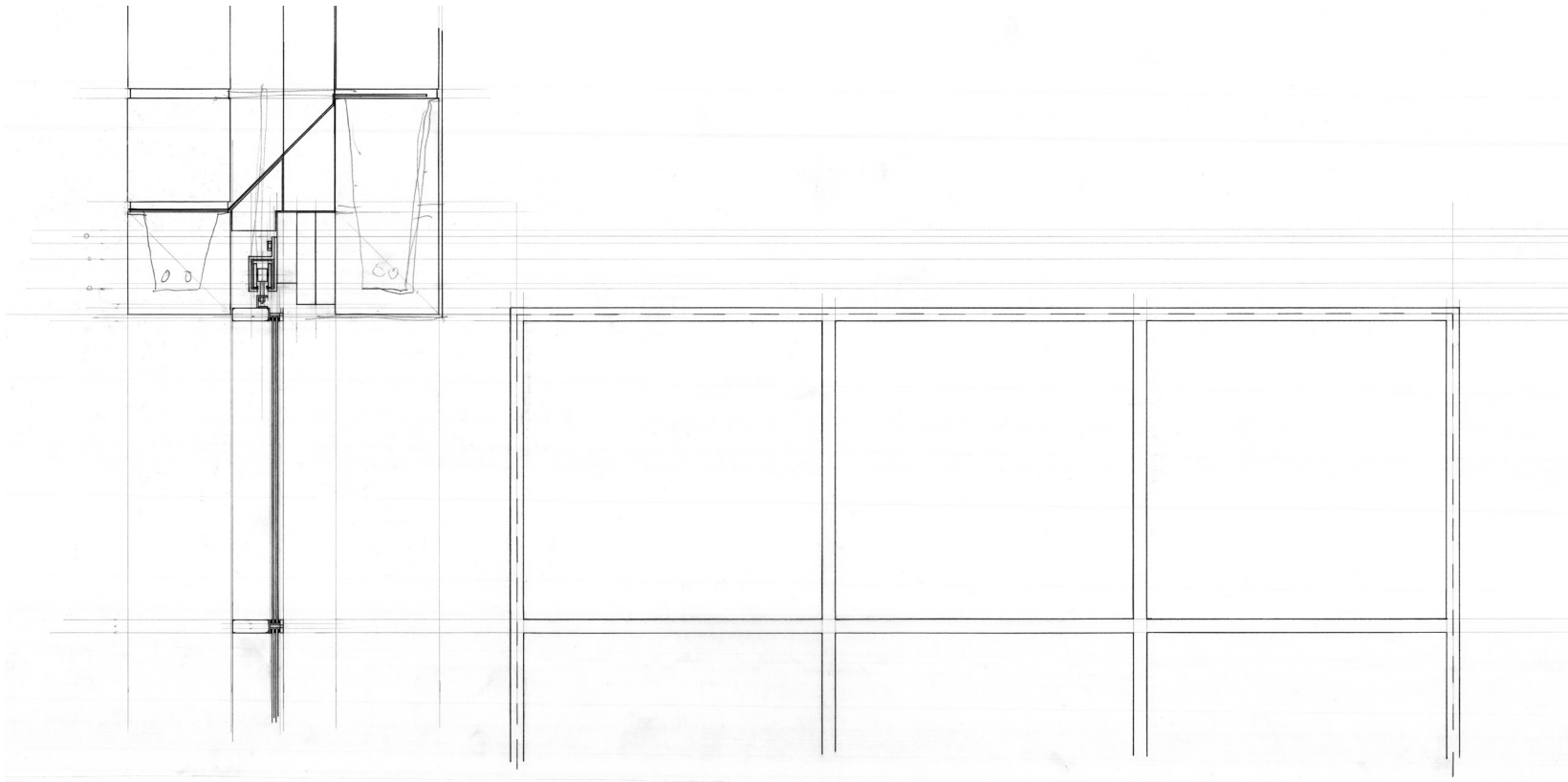


THIRD FLOOR BATHROOM & CLOSET SECTION

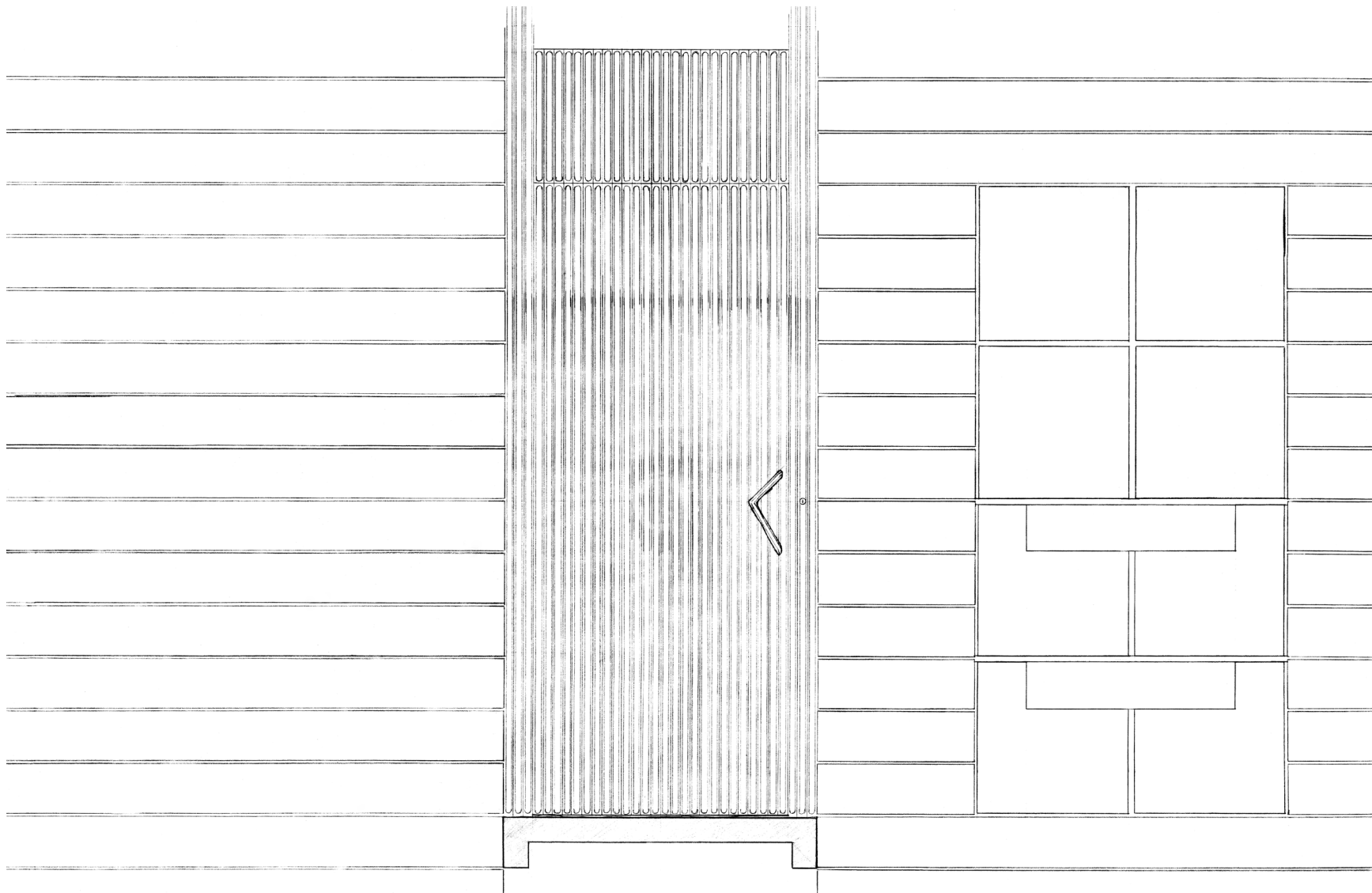




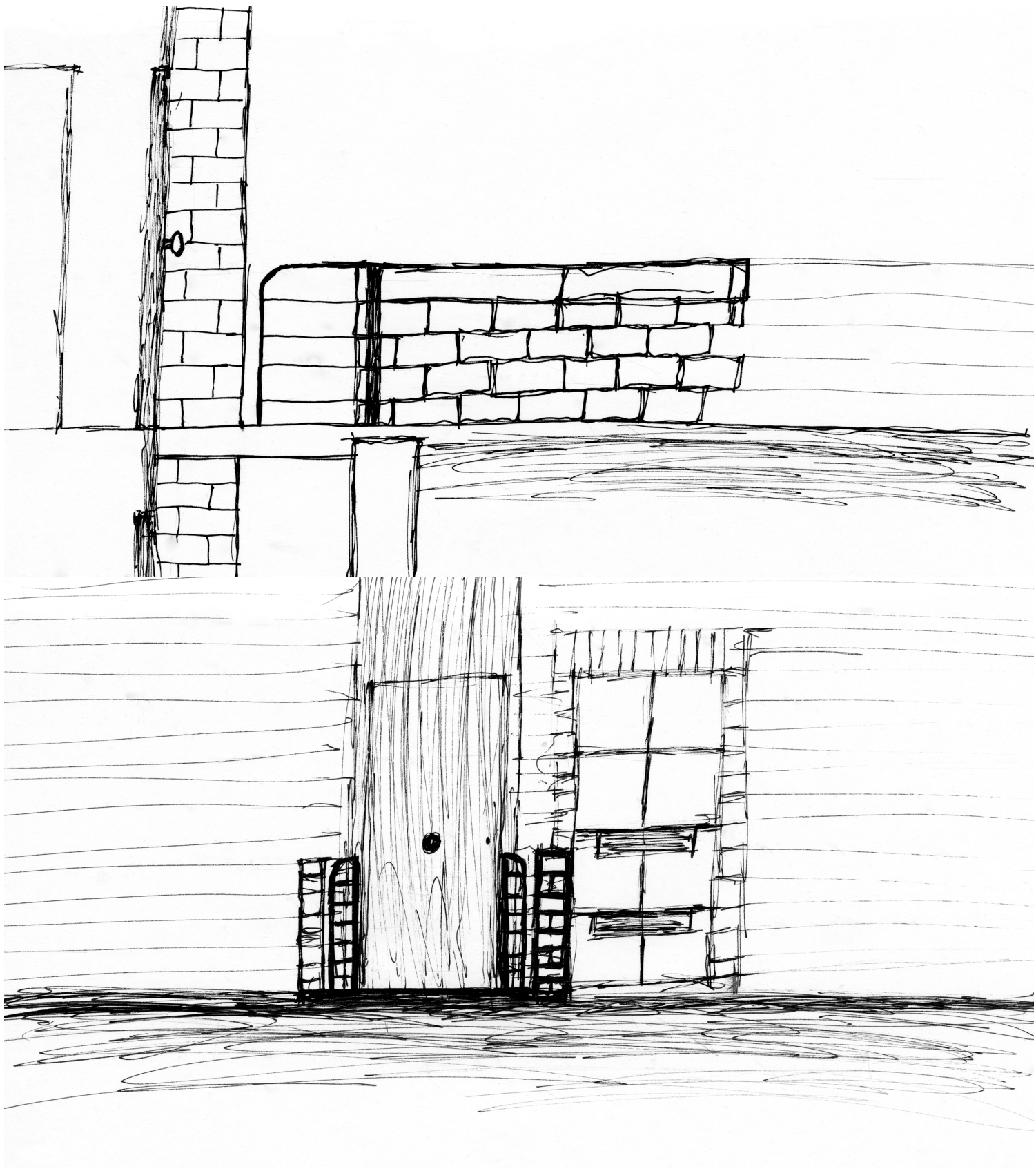
ROD & LEVER MECHANISM FOR
THE HIGH LIVING ROOM WINDOWS



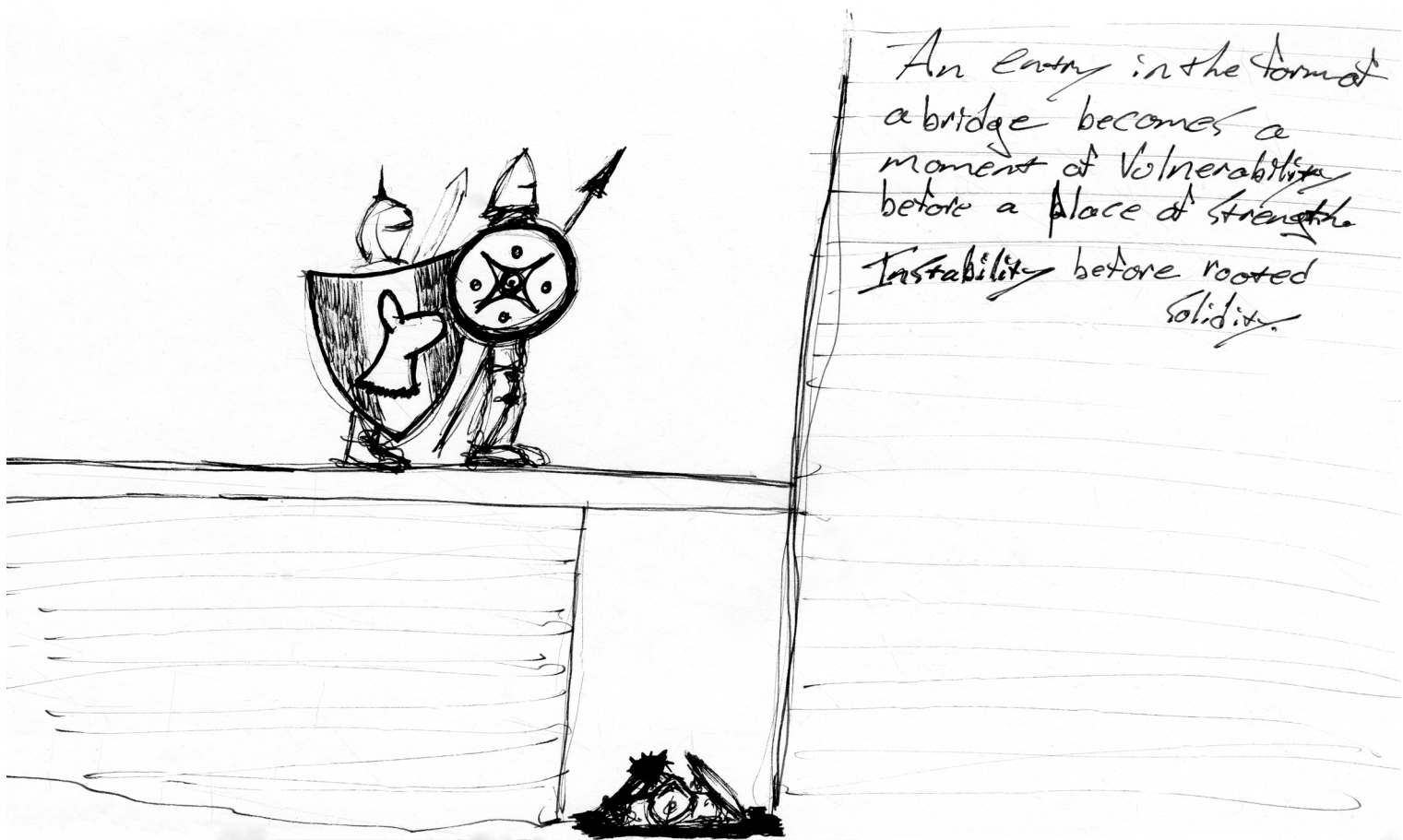
DETAILS WORKING OUT
SLIDING WINDOW MECHANISM



FRONT DOOR



SKETCH OF THE START & END OF THE WALK



An entry in the form of
a bridge becomes a
moment of vulnerability
before a place of strength.
Instability before rooted
solidity.

BRIDGE SKETCH

Everyday my grandfather coming off the farm would enter the house through a side door; A door only he used. Inside he would sit on the stairs across from his door, trading his muddy work boots for a pair of proper shoes. With his coveralls removed my grandfather would climb the half-stair, entering the house.



DOOR HANDLES
SOLOTHURN, SWITZERLAND