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**A COMMUNITY OF INDIVIDUALITY...  
OR THE INDIVIDUALITY OF A COMMUNITY:  
AN ARTISTS' HOUSING FOR MISSION HILL**

by

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**A COMMUNITY OF INDIVIDUALITY...OR THE INDIVIDUALITY OF A COMMUNITY: AN ARTISTS' HOUSING FOR MISSION HILL**

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Committee Chairman: Prof. Joseph Wang, College of Architecture And Urban Studies.

**(ABSTRACT)**

A community of individuality allows each person an opportunity to grow and to see himself in his environment, both physically and spiritually. The individuality of a community is realized in a collective identity, shared qualities and physical boundaries which foster a sense of security and the peace of mind to pursue ones individuality.

### **Acknowledgements**

This thesis is dedicated to those whose friendship, support and guidance has enabled me to get through it all. Thanks to my dad for his support; Ron and Peter for their inspiration and guidance. Thanks to my friends Carlos, Chris, Jack, Tom, Huon, Shaun, Robert, Michael, my buddy Lynnette, and my best buddy John.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
1964  
COTTON

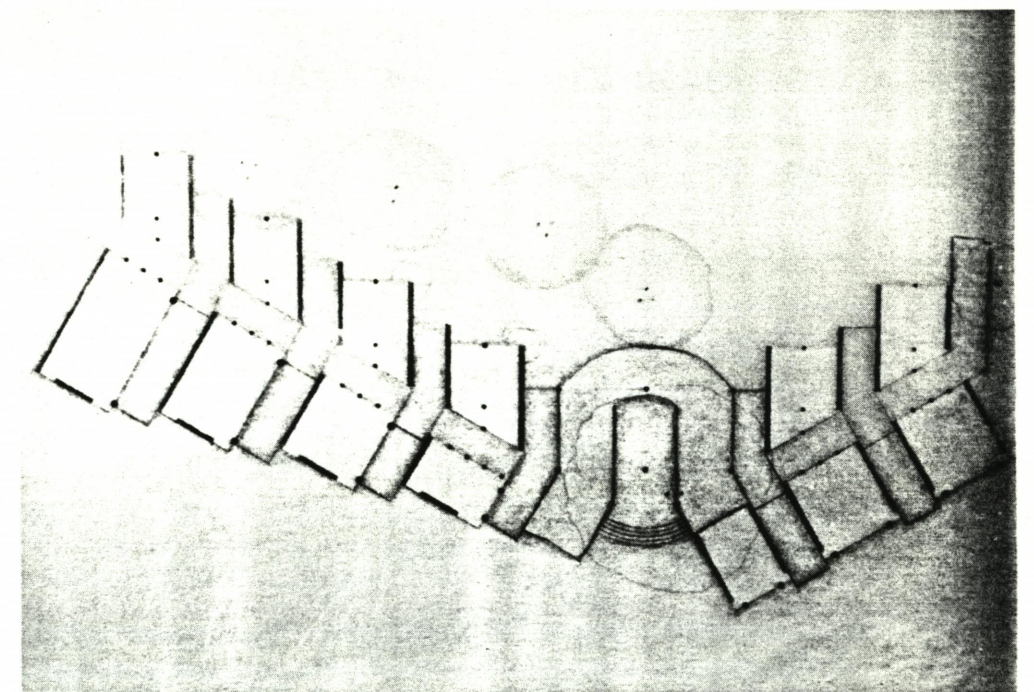
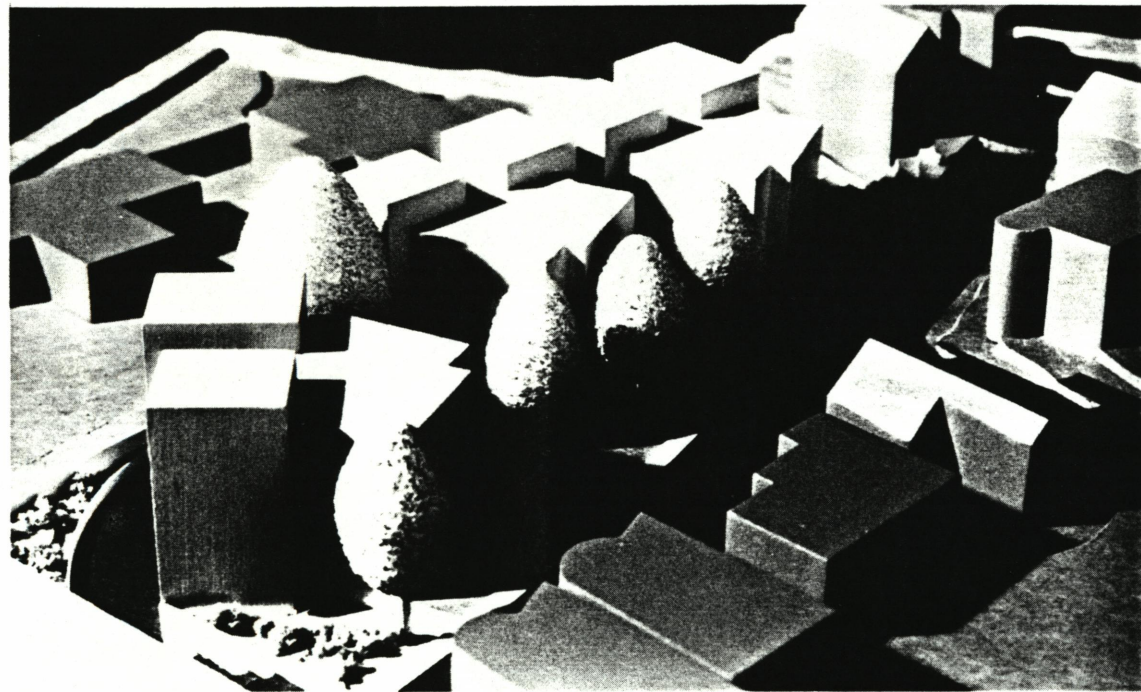
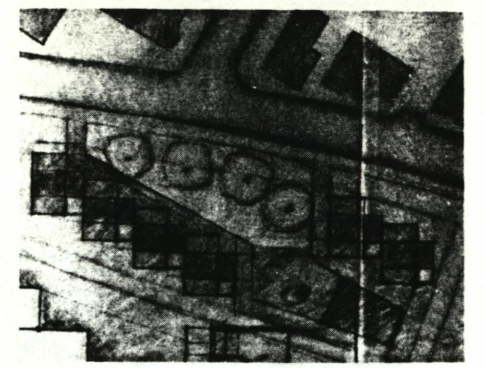
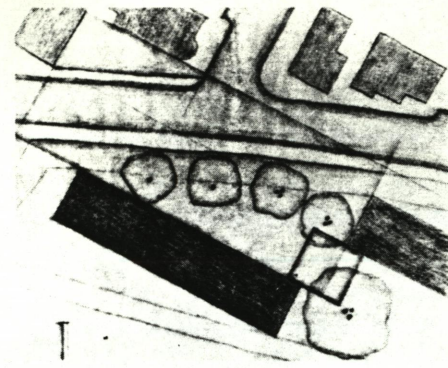
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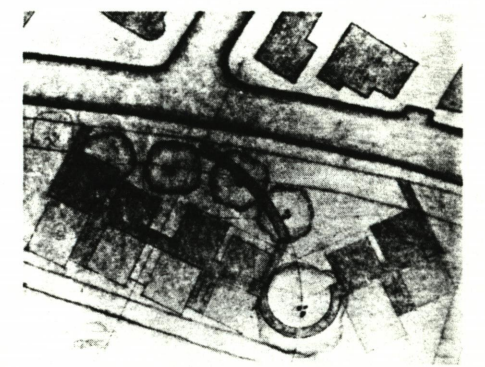
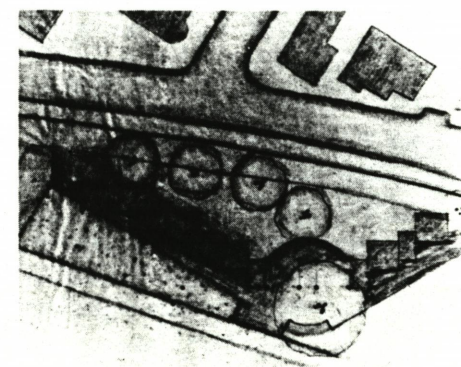


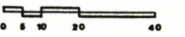
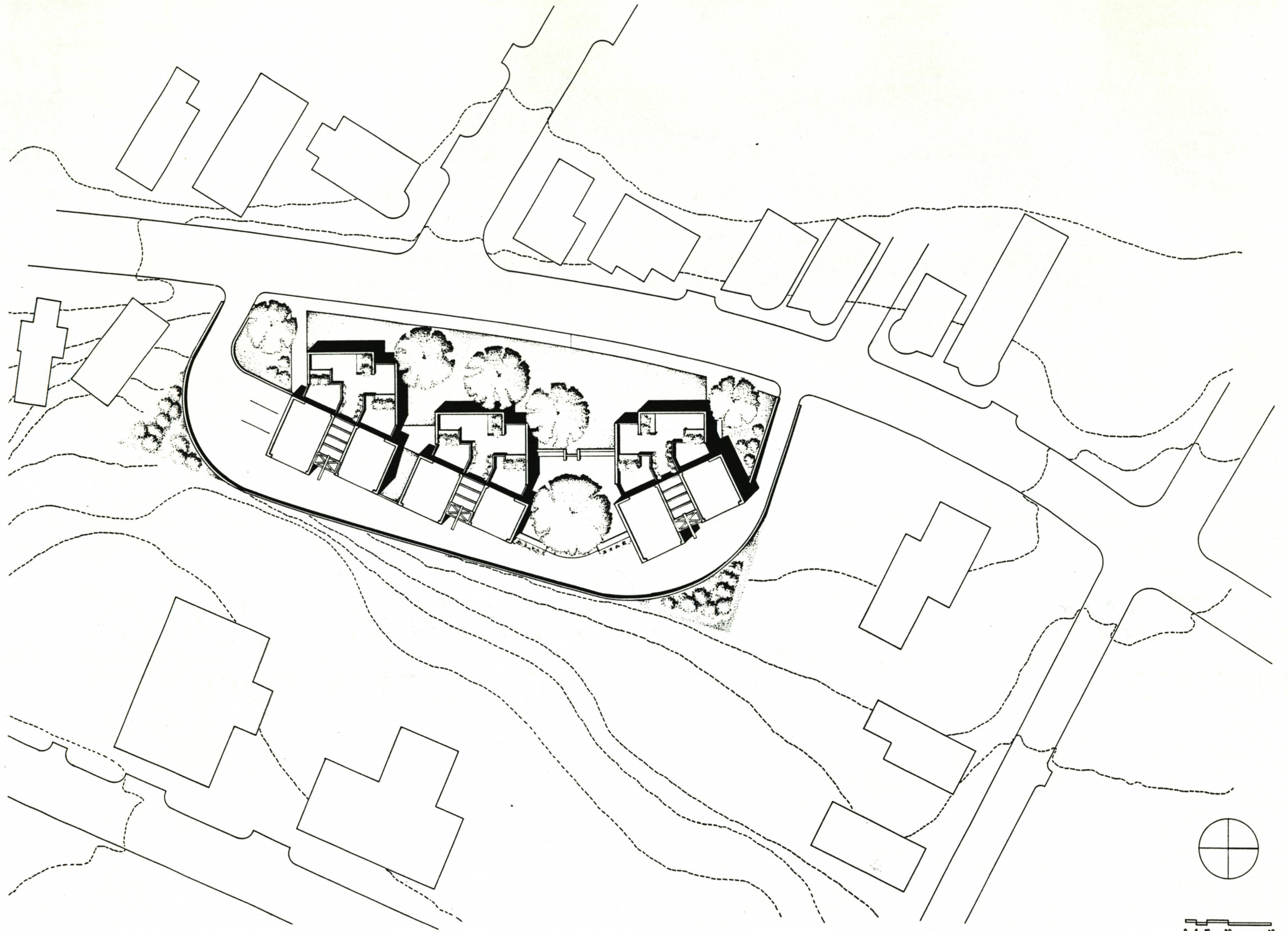
The site and the program for this thesis project was adapted without modification from a national competition for artists living and work space. The program called for 12 units of low-cost housing, between 1,200 and 1,500 square feet, to be built on a vacant lot in the Mission Hill area of Boston. Mission Hill, though somewhat neglected, is an old and established, low-to-middle income residential neighborhood with an increasing number of medical and educational facilities. Its appeal as a home for artists is primarily due to its proximity to the growing art scene in downtown Boston, and its relatively inexpensive real estate. The physical characteristics of the area include a very tight massing of two and three family wood frame houses closely spaced along the sidewalk perimeter. This effectively eliminates any frontage green space making the few existing trees all the more valuable. The effect of this building massing, where there are no vacant lots to break continuity, is that of a "street wall" and an intimate containment of Parker Street, a narrow and heavily traveled road running north to south adjacent to the site. The intimacy of Parker Street is contrasted in looking east at the back of the site. Here, the terrain grades down dramatically, revealing a vista of open landscape. In the foreground are some unattractive, underutilized industrial buildings. To the north is a view of the Boston skyline. These qualities become the basis for much of the decision-making in an effort to successfully integrate the project with its context.

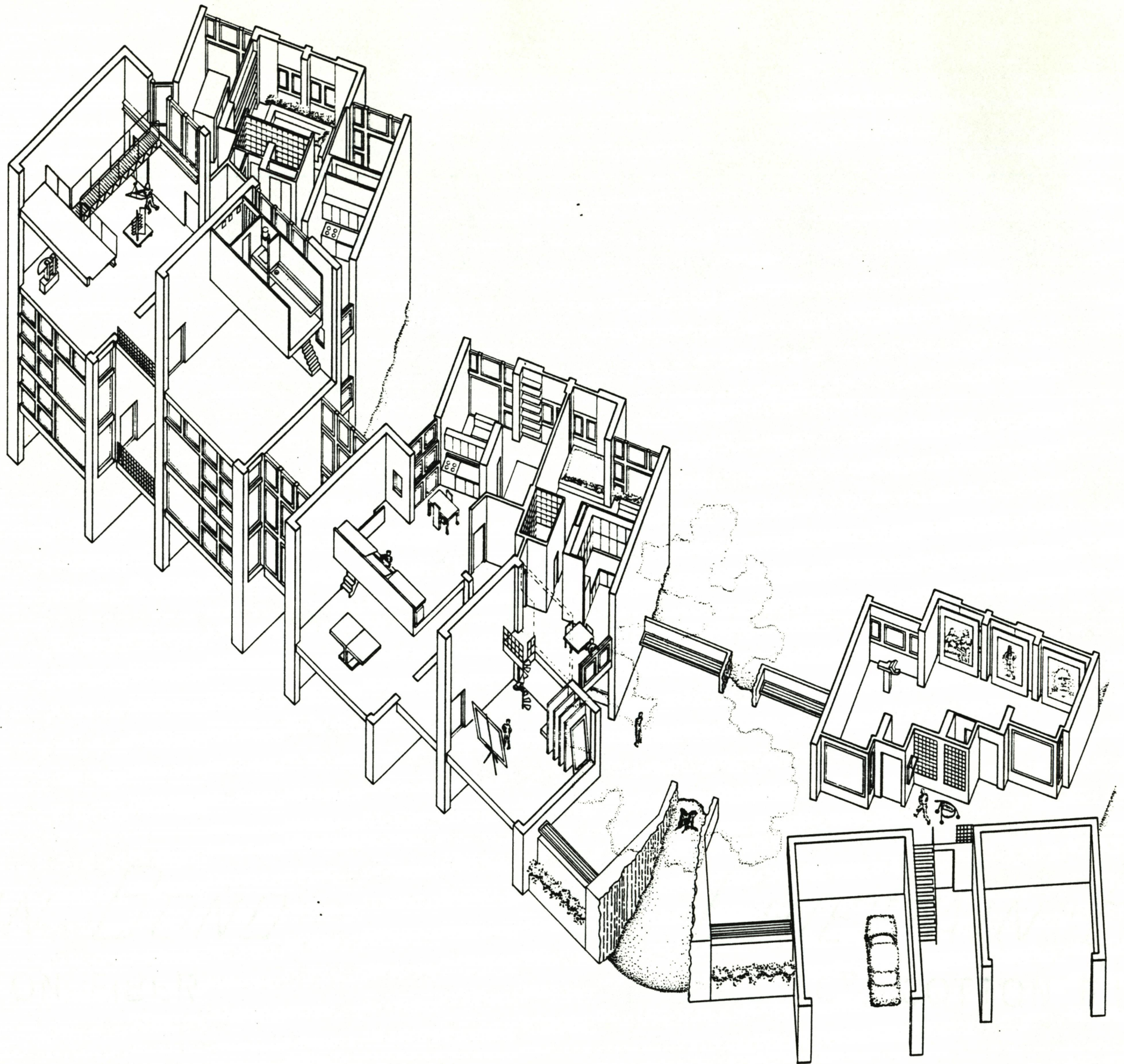




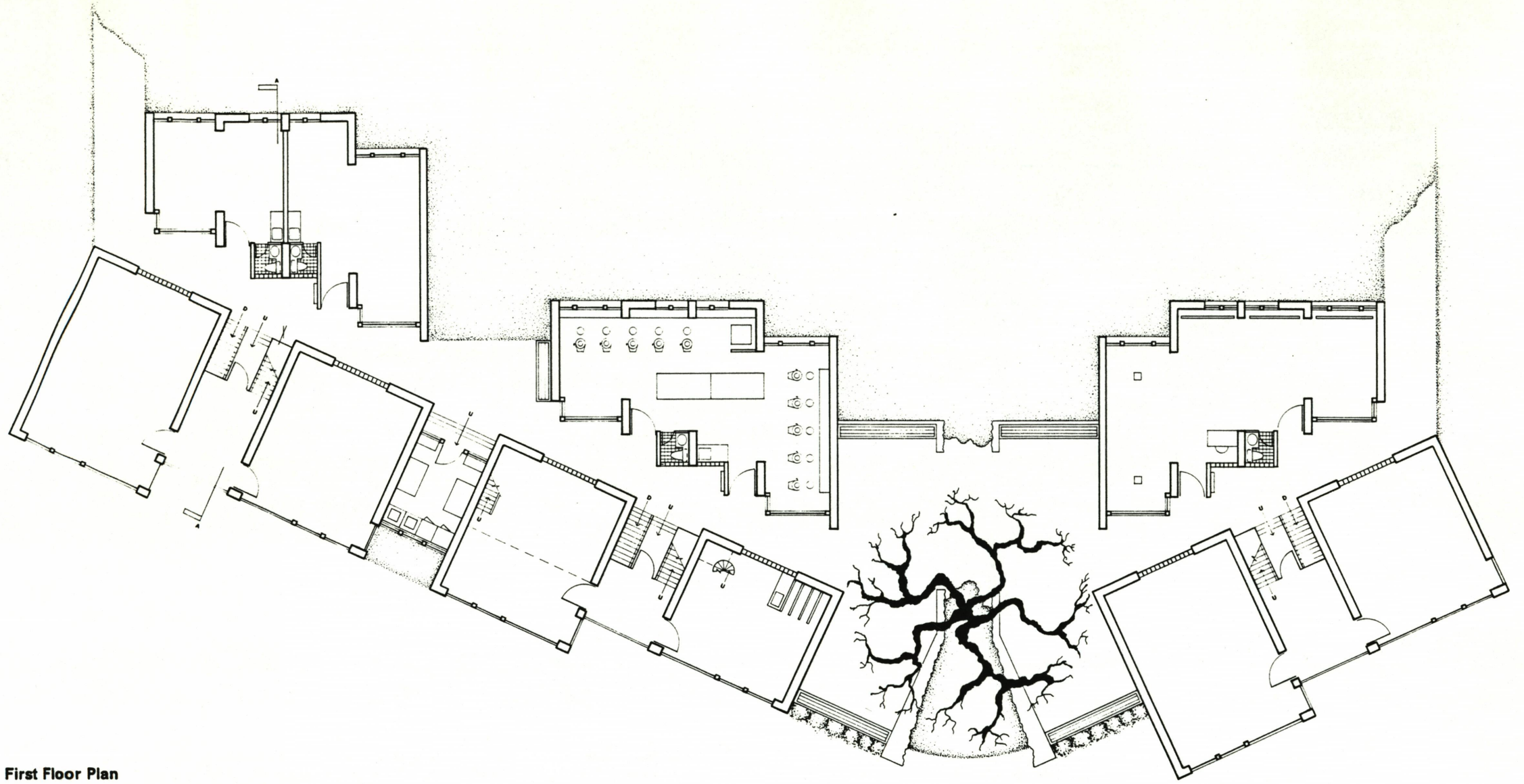
It is important that a newly created community of artists does not exist autonomously from its host community. There should be something to unite them in a mutually beneficial way. At the same time, the artists should have some sense of community among themselves as it is important for colleagues to exchange ideas and promote common interests. As a first step toward fulfillment of these goals the formal qualities of the context are considered. The twelve units are divided into three structures of four units each, in keeping with the character of the community. Setting these units back gives some relief to the street wall, yet their proportions and placement are such that the original intimate character is maintained. At the same time, a substantial front lawn is established for Parker Street and all but one of the existing trees of the site are preserved. A small piece of open green space in an already dense and developing urban community is certainly an asset. As a place for sculpture exhibitions its value to artist and layman is further enhanced. The community of artists begins to take on an identity apart from the larger community as a result of this front lawn and the fact that the building set back breaks the existing pattern. Yet, continuity is maintained and a relationship between active creator and passive observer is established.





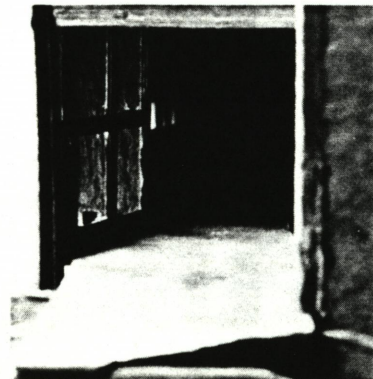




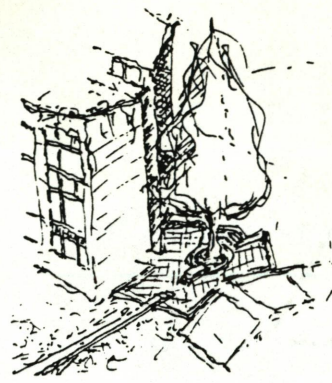


**First Floor Plan**

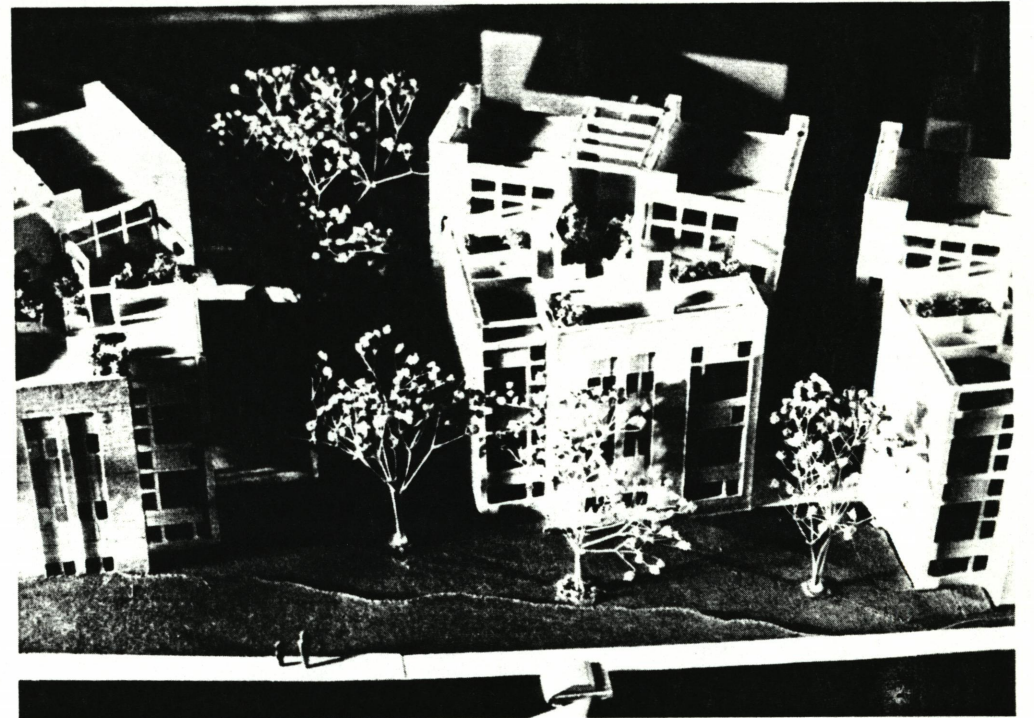
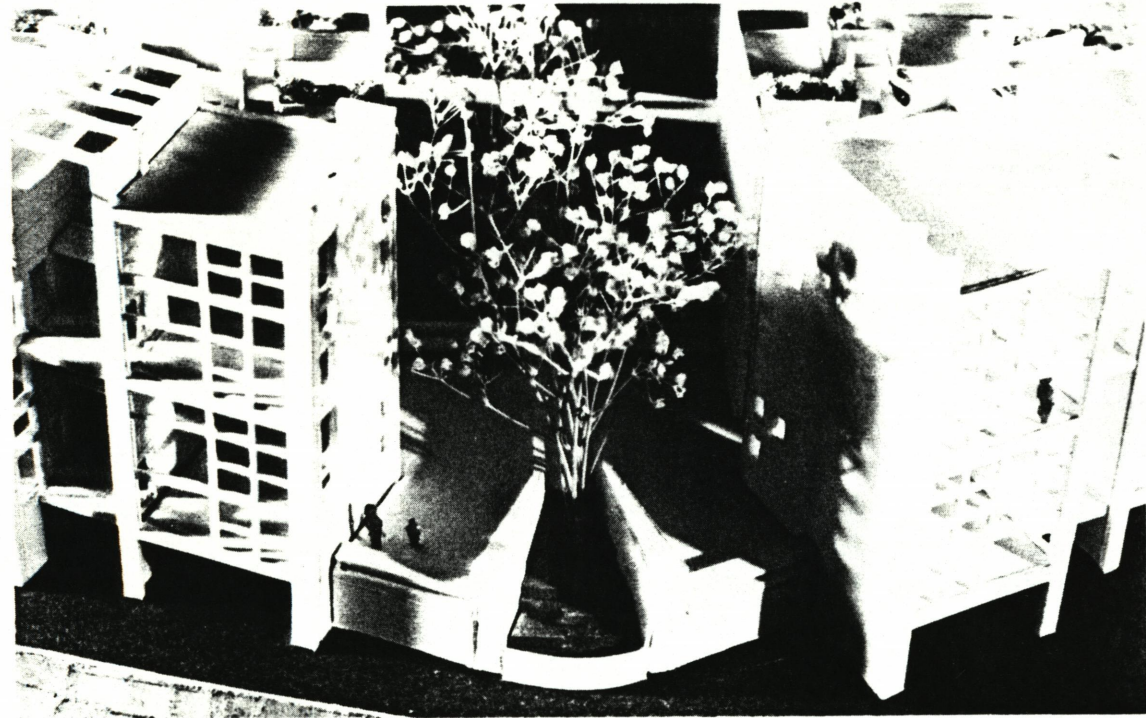
The main axes, from which everything is accessed, are unifying elements connecting the community of artists to the neighborhood and to themselves. It promotes interaction by bringing together various functions common to both Mission Hill and the artists. The alternative schemes as shown above illustrate this intent. A gallery (3) is an important meeting ground for artists. It is also a place of education and enjoyment for non-artists. A ceramic studio (2) as a part of the curricula for the nearby Mission Church High School reinforces the educational character of Mission Hill. It can also provide employment for the artist residents. Two additional studios for outside artists (1) further helps alleviate the already severe shortage of affordable studio space in Boston. It can also provide fresh ideas for a stale mix of characters. The scale of this interaction, while significant enough to enable integration, is restricted primarily to insure that individual privacy of the residents is not violated.



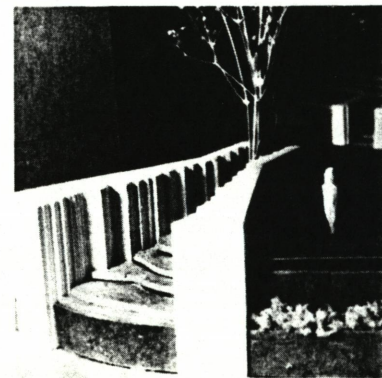
Garrett Bond  
October

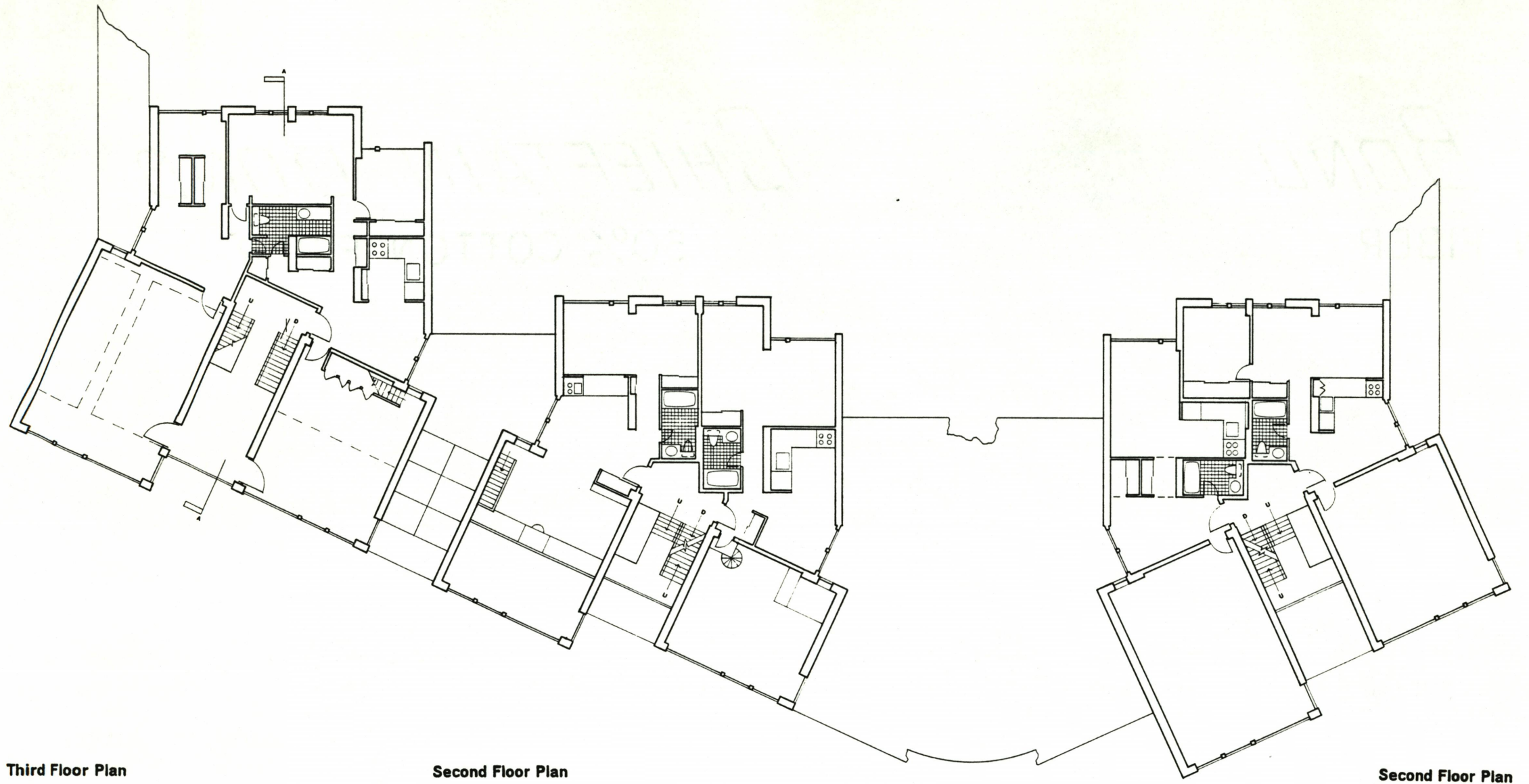


Shutrain  
50% Cotton



From the site plan a progression of the existing trees, climaxing with the largest of them at the back of the site, establishes the point of origin for the axes as well as the point of resolution for the two geometries comprising the studio and the living units. The duality of the natural and the artificial working together mark this as the visual focus of the site. From Parker Street the eye is lead here. The small, open plaza/seating area unites the two sides of the site. The experience is both intimate and vast. In its potential as a reception space for exhibitions or simply as a place of repose for the whole community, it is appropriately manipulated around this dominate shade tree.



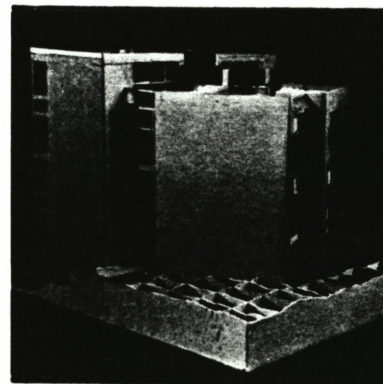


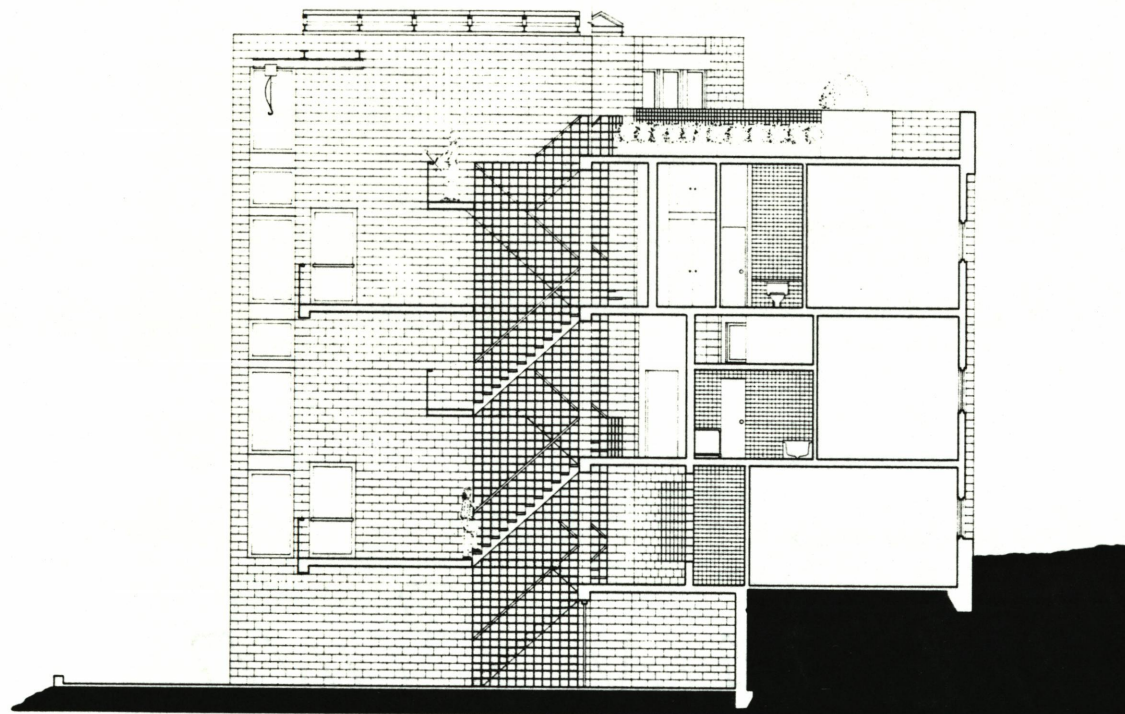
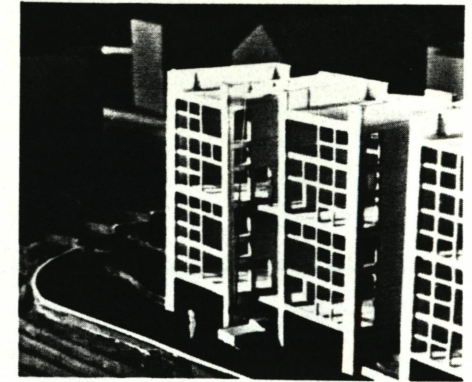
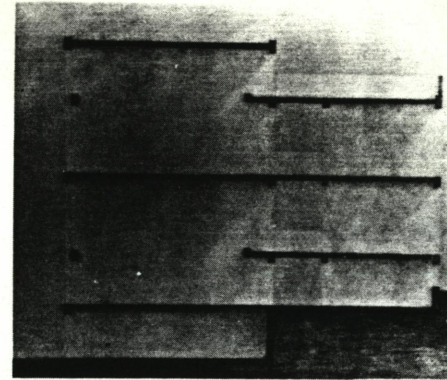
Third Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

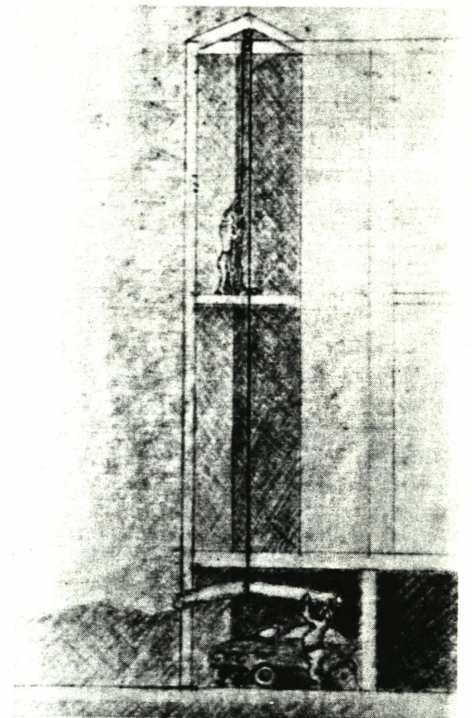
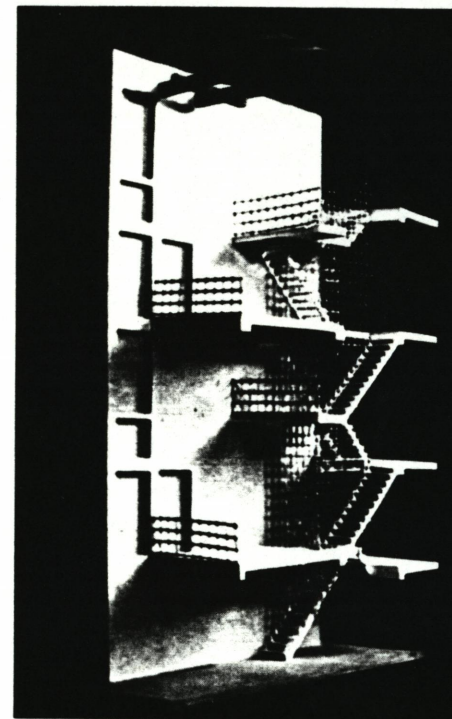
Second Floor Plan

Various factors including natural ventilation and lighting, site restrictions and circulation conditions the final skewed and fragmented scheme. The living space, which appropriately faces the residential side of the site, was so arranged as to avoid any feeling of introversion resulting from setting the units back off the street line. The units face the existing community and not each other. The studio units are perpendicular to the axes and work with the back boundary, varying in size to accommodate vehicular parking and circulation. Considered from the inside the important issue is the relationship between the living and the work space; since artists have differing feelings regarding the degree of separation or integration between them. In response to this, two distinct volumes of space whose character is conditioned in part by the external factors mentioned above, are established on either side of the axes. The in-between entry space, more loosely defined, has its own character in its potential as an open balcony. The importance of this space lies in the fact that the artists must finish their own units as a way to defray the cost of the project. This requirement enables them to impact their own environment in a significant way. Thus, they can determine for themselves not only their studio and living arrangements but to some extent the degree of separation or integration between them. The alternative schemes above, the first two of which are shown in isometric on page four, is an attempt to demonstrate this flexibility.

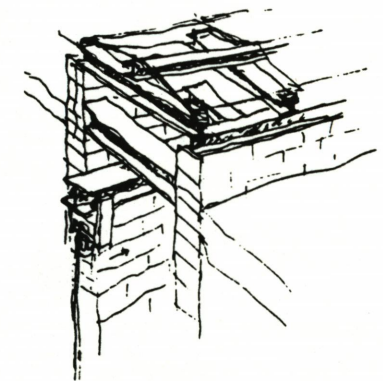
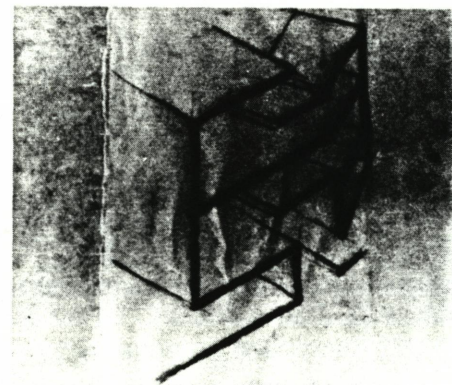


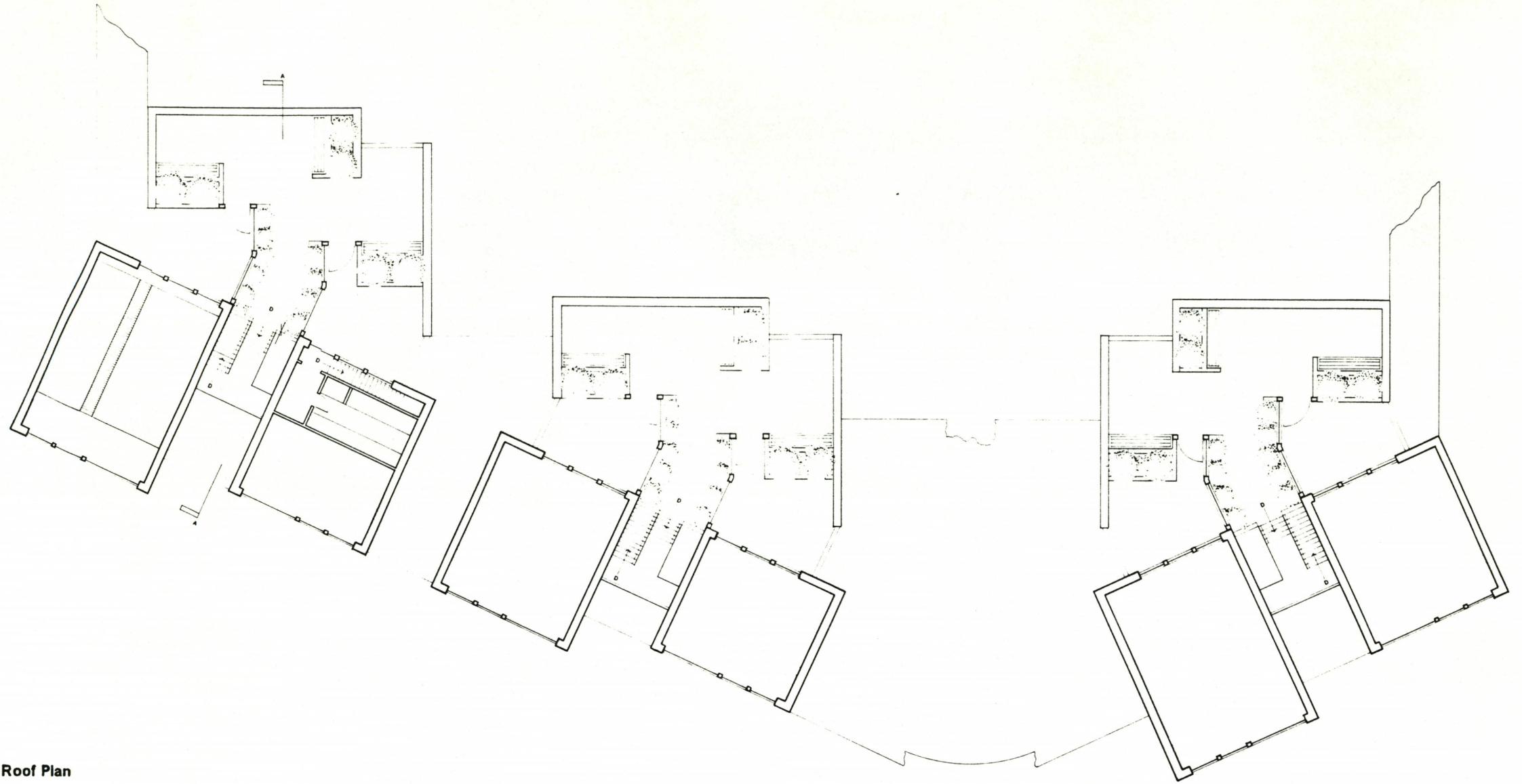


Section A-A



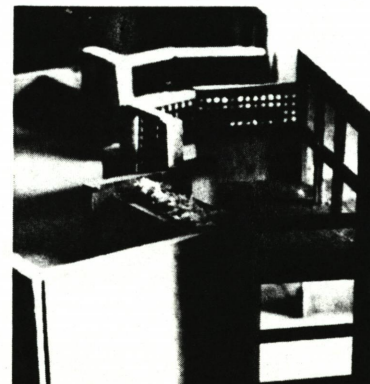
The configuration in section permits greater flexibility and variety within the units. The twelve foot high living space, which permits loft space for sleeping or storage, works with the twenty-foot eight-inch high studio to allow for the possibility of subdividing the studio volume into two levels of twelve-feet and eight-feet. This could accommodate the artist who works on a small scale and requires more workable floor area; or it could permit greater integration of work and living, if so desired. In any case, the intent is to stimulate creative input and to enable a variety of spatial possibilities. The natural grade down from Parker Street, which prevents the double height studios from becoming too imposing, allows rear parking for at least fifteen cars and provides an inconspicuous and unimposing area for loading and unloading furniture and artist materials. The hoist system for each building facilitates such needs.

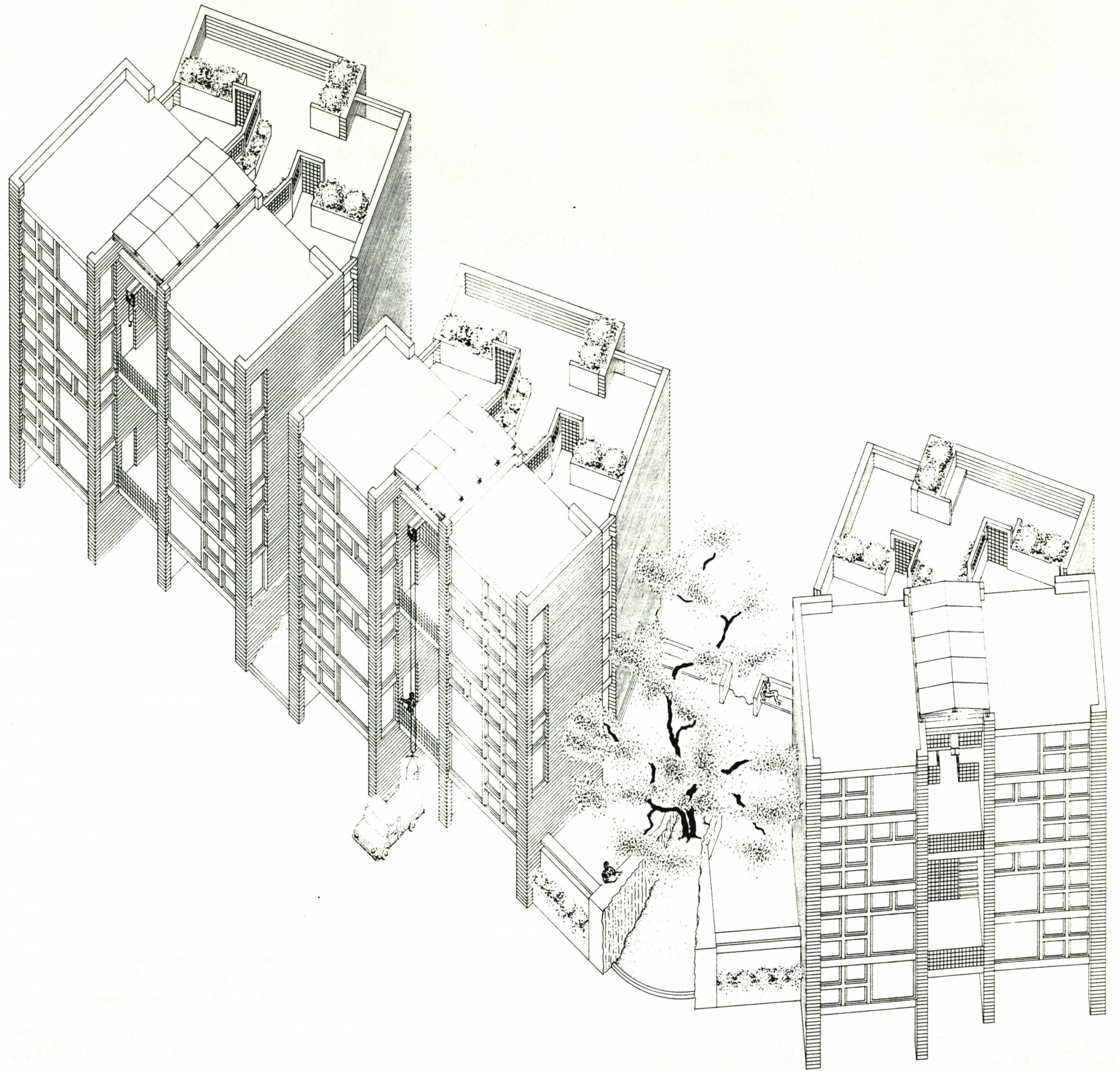


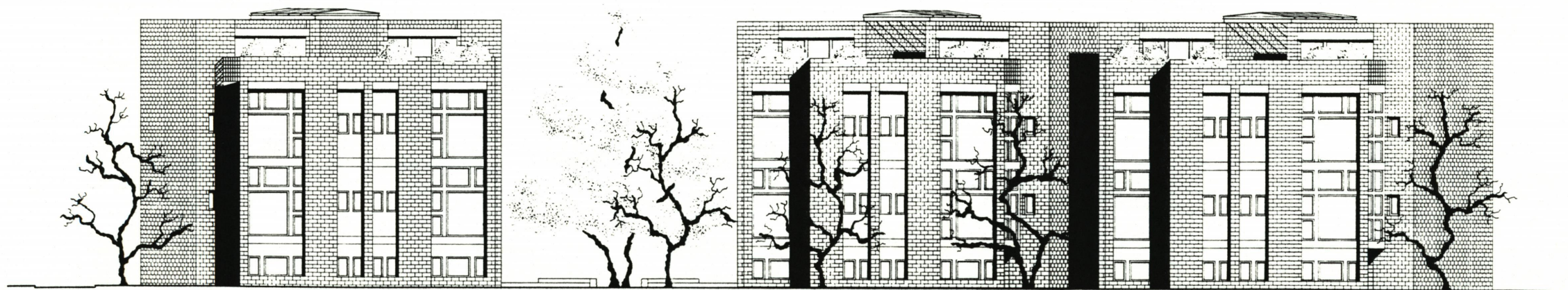
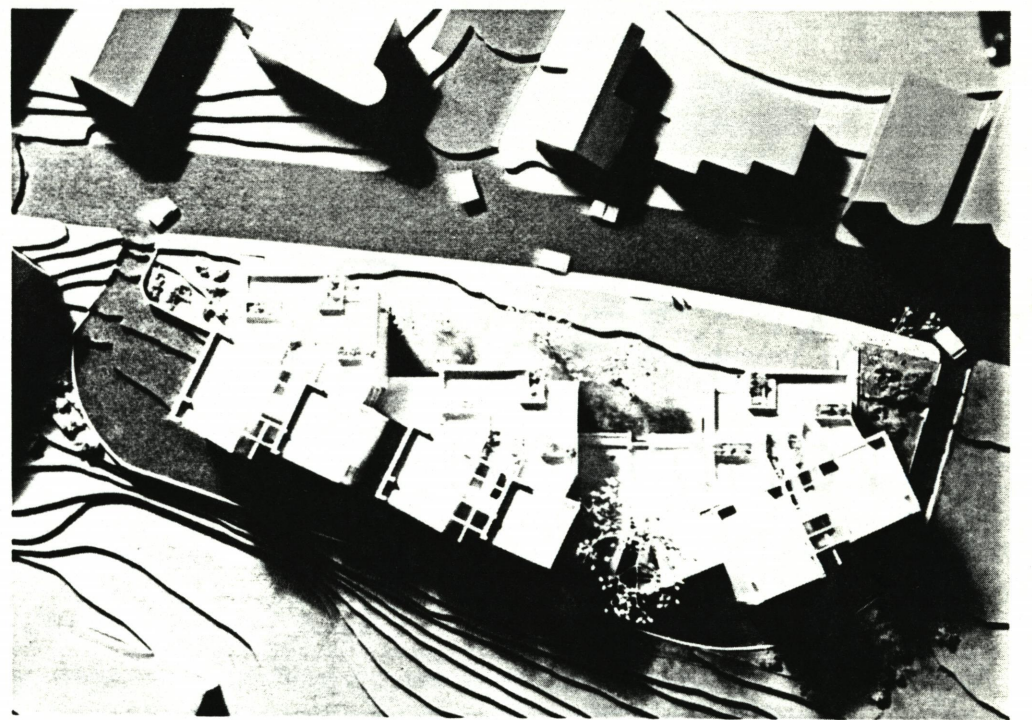
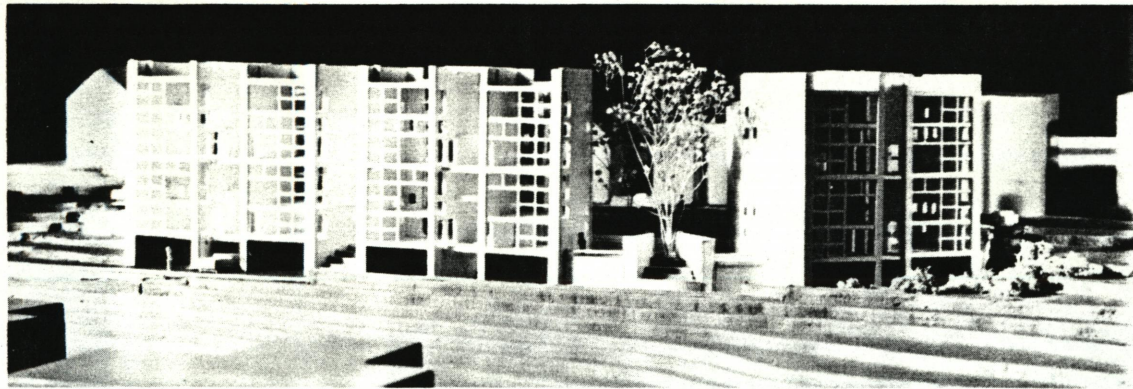


**Roof Plan**

The roof garden is an extension of the work space and a place of chance encounters exclusively among the artists of each building. The reduced scale of interaction can create a greater sense of intimacy and comradary among them. The roof is loosely divided into smaller spaces by planters and seating to make it attractive as a place for sketching or meditation. The spaces directly off the 2nd floor studios are more rigidly defined to insure sufficient privacy. Yet, the axonometric drawing and the model show this to be too much of a barrier and in response to this, in the section, I lowered the privacy screen and gate to visually unite the spaces. As an extension of the work space these studios obviously have the most potential.











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