

MAKING OF PLACE: THE WALL

by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

approved:

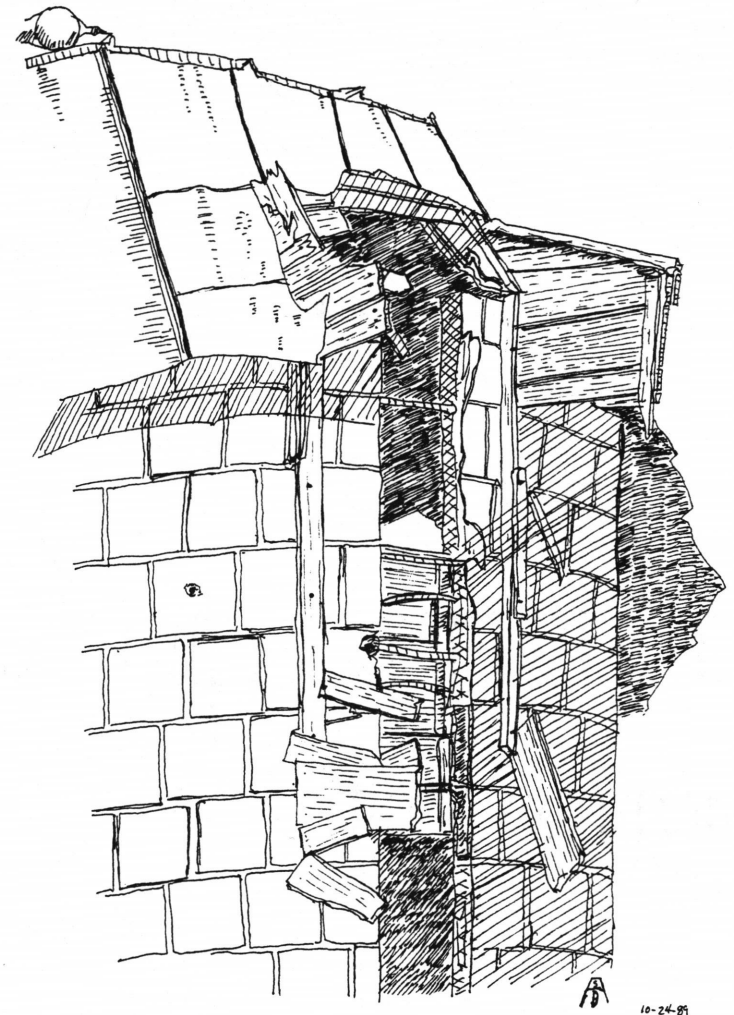
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MARCH 1991



Abstract

The thesis of this project focuses on the making of place in architecture. The erection of a wall is the initial act in the creation of a sense of place. Three walls separate the homogeneous world of the countryside to establish a zone for a winery complex.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee members and classmates for their guidance in the development of this project.

Dedication

To _____ whose undying love and devotion has
made a new life possible.

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Making of Place: The Wall

The existence of two separate zones is basic to one's concept of place. There is the immediate zone of where one is now versus where one is going to or coming from. Friedrich Bollnow, in his book, *Mensch und Raum*, wrote about this separation of space.

The double movement of departure and return reflects a differentiation of space into two zones, a smaller, internal one and a surrounding, external one. The first is the intimate world of the house and home the second the outside world, into which man departs and from which he returns. The distinction of these zones is of fundamental importance for the structure of lived space.¹

The Great Wall of China, begun in the 4th century B.C., is man's greatest attempt to divide space into two zones. The Chinese emperors built this wall in order to separate their subjects from the nomadic tribes of the northern steppes.

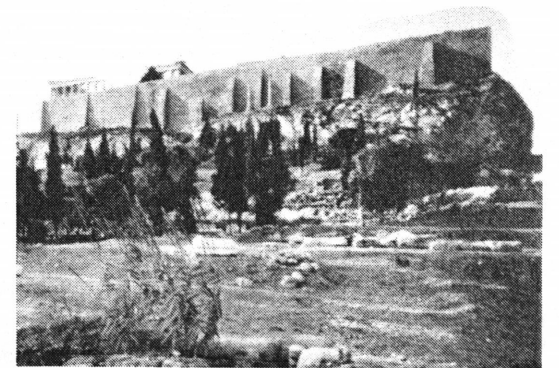
This desire to create a sense of place within the limitless boundary of the environment under an open sky has been linked to the development of civilization around the Mediterranean Sea. Jose Ortega y Gasset describes this development, in his book, *The Revolt of the Masses*.

[The] Graeco-Roman decides to separate himself from the fields, from "nature," from the geo-botanic cosmos. How is it possible? How can man withdraw himself from the fields? Where will he go since the earth is one huge, unbounded field? Quite simple: he will mark off a portion in the field by means of walls, which set up an amorphous, limitless space. Here you have the public square. It is not, like the house, an 'interior' shut in from above, as are the caves, which exist in the fields. The square, thanks to the walls which enclose it, is a portion of the countryside which turns its back on the rest, eliminates the rest and sets up in opposition to it. This lesser, rebellious field, which secedes from the limitless one, and keeps to itself, is a space "sui generis," of the most novel kind, in which man frees himself from the community of the plant and the animal, leaves them outside, and creates an enclosure apart which is purely human, a civil space.²

The establishment of an enclosure to contain chief municipal and religious buildings was a primary element in the development of any Greek city. This special zone was known as the "acropolis." The Acropolis at Athens is western man's most well-known act of creating two distinct zones. The walls of the Pecile at Hadrian's villa separated Hadrian's compound from the rest of the Roman empire. It is within this bounded space that Hadrian claimed as his special place. In more recent times, Aurelio Galfetti uses a wall to create two distinct zones, so that one zone becomes a place for a tennis club.



1. Great Wall of China



2. Athenian Acropolis



3. Aurelio Galfetti: Tennis Club

A place should possess certain traits that provide an image of the structure of the environment so that all the senses can be utilized in experiencing it. One's activity in a place should involve not only seeing and hearing, but also touching, smelling, and tasting. These activities are vital in creating a necessary ambiance. For example, Marcel Proust tells how he regains his sense of Venice in his book, *Time Regained*.

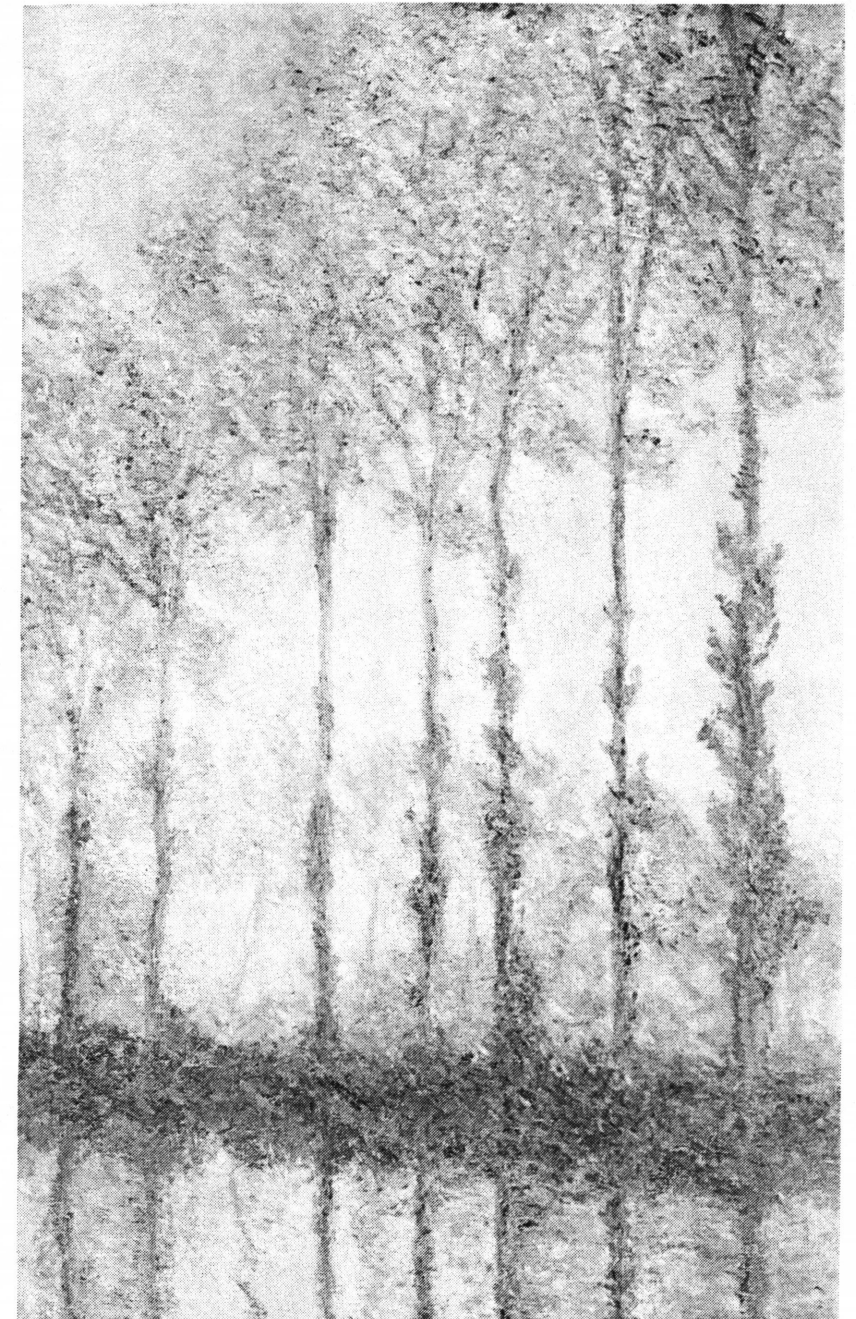
...One of my feet stepped on a flagstone lower than the ones next to it...and then, all at once, I recognized that Venice which my descriptive efforts and pretended snapshots of memory had failed to recall; the sensation I had felt on two uneven slates in the Baptistry of St. Mark had given back to me and was linked with all the other sensations of that and other days which had lingered expectant in their place among the series of forgotten years from which a sudden change had imperiously called them forth.³

The sense of place is evident in Claude Monet's poplar series of paintings of 1891. These paintings were beloved by his native rural Frenchmen because these trees meant more to the French people than just a source of revenue for the local governments. To the French people around Limetz, these poplar trees served as decorative beauty, marked the boundary of roads, property lines and districts, served as effective wind barriers, lined the entrance to large estates, as well as, carried patriotic meanings as the "tree of liberty" during the French revolution.

Delaunay's Eiffel Tower series are another example of an artist trying to capture a sense of place. Delaunay captured many views of the tower, because he felt the tower, as well as Paris, carried more information about itself than was immediately comprehended from only one perspective. One's view of the tower, from somewhere in the city, was just as important as another view in terms of capturing the sense of place that Paris possessed.

The architect describes and investigates sense of place in terms of spatial order or activities and the embodied character of the various components or zones. This spatial order of zones of activity is known as "topology." Topology's most basic concern is the distinction of "inside" and "outside"- the separation of homogeneous space to create heterogeneous space. It is the initial act in the creation of sense of place.

The floor, wall, ceiling, and roof are the architectural elements that create spatial boundaries. The articulation of these boundaries that defines the character of a place is called "morphology." How does a form stand on the earth, rise to the sky, extend along the horizon, and open and close itself to a place are morphological questions that are resolved in the making of place.



4. Claude Monet: Poplars (Banks of the Epte)

In the development of my thesis project, I explored ways in which I could create distinct zones. An emphasis was placed on the use of walls to establish a fundamental separation of space. Three walls provide a sense of enclosure to create a place for a winery. One wall extends across the horizon in such a fashion as to transform itself from an element connected with the horizontal line of the earth to a vertical line belonging to the sky. It is both wall and tower. A second wall acts as a filter or screen, opening and closing itself to the outside. The third wall separates the limitless field in order to make a civil space.

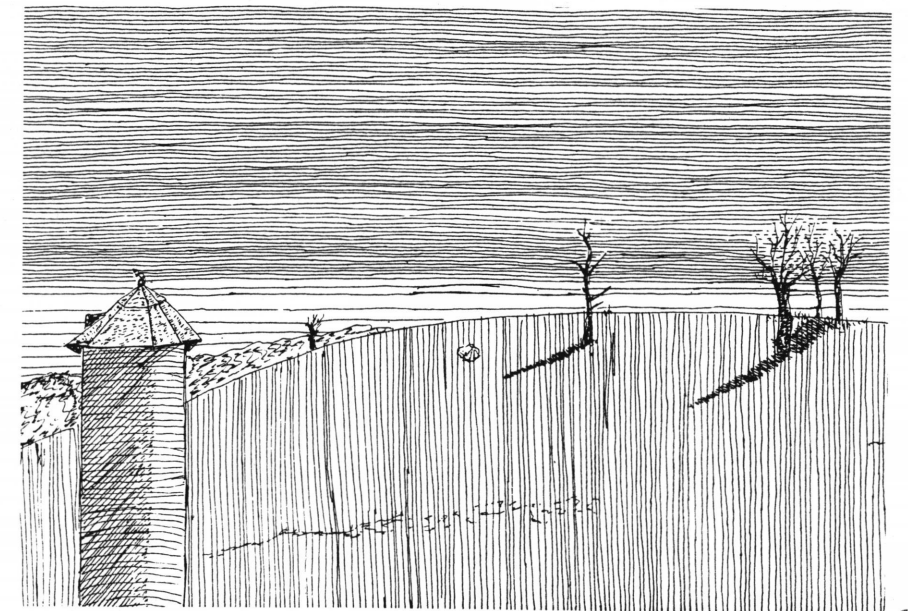
The inspiration for the forms of the buildings located within the perimeter walls can be seen in the vernacular architecture surrounding the site. The main building possesses physical characteristics of a barn and the towers resemble silos. The walls of the main building possess a certain hierarchy. Two primary parallel walls separate the wine making process zone from the business, laboratory, and public zones. The zone between these walls creates a place in which the main circulation of men and machinery occurs. All circulation is deferred to these walls. Secondary parallel walls separate zones in order to provide a place for the fermenting tanks, bottling room, and workshop/mechanical room. Tertiary walls are used to provide enclosure. Because wine making carries with it a strong connection with the earth, the public and business zones are housed within towers. The three shorter towers contain a laboratory, library, and an office on the upper level, respectively. The lower level of each is used for storage. The tallest tower is the public space used for tasting the wines and for special functions. This tower consists of only one level.

Notes

1. Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture: Meaning and Place*, New York: 1988, p. 31.
2. Kent C. Bloomer and Charles W. Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture*, New Haven: 1977, p.5
3. David Canter, *The Psychology of Place*, New York: 1977, p. 9.

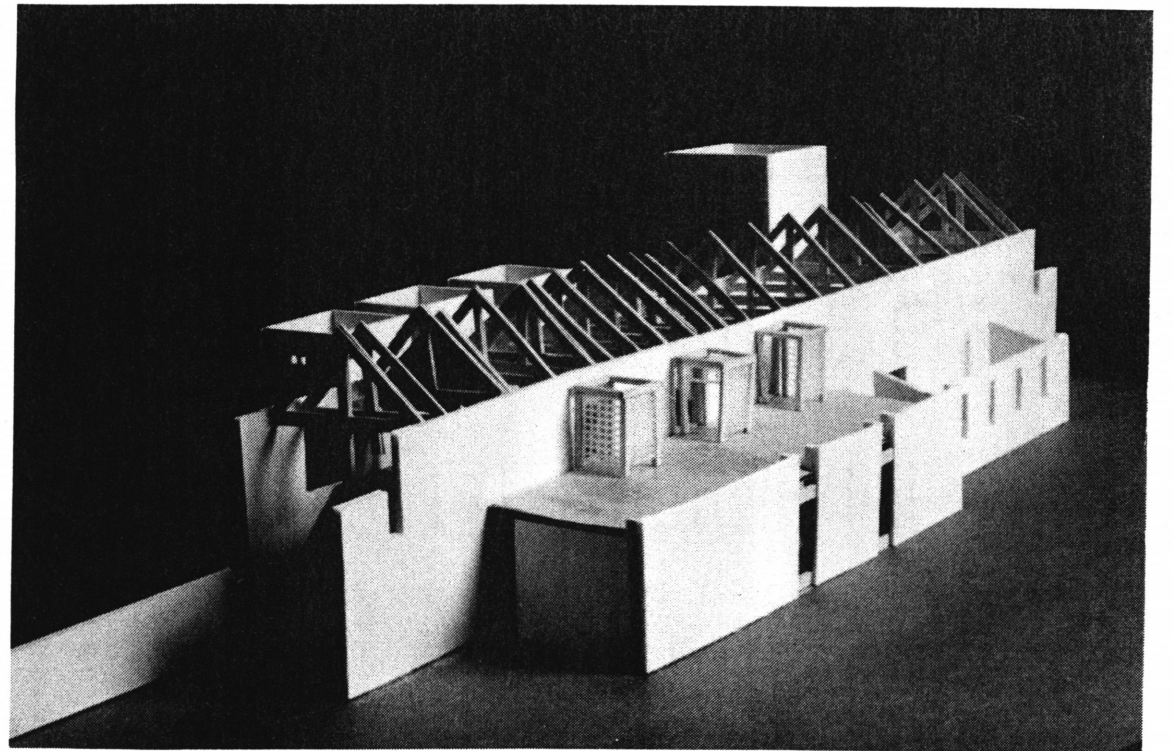
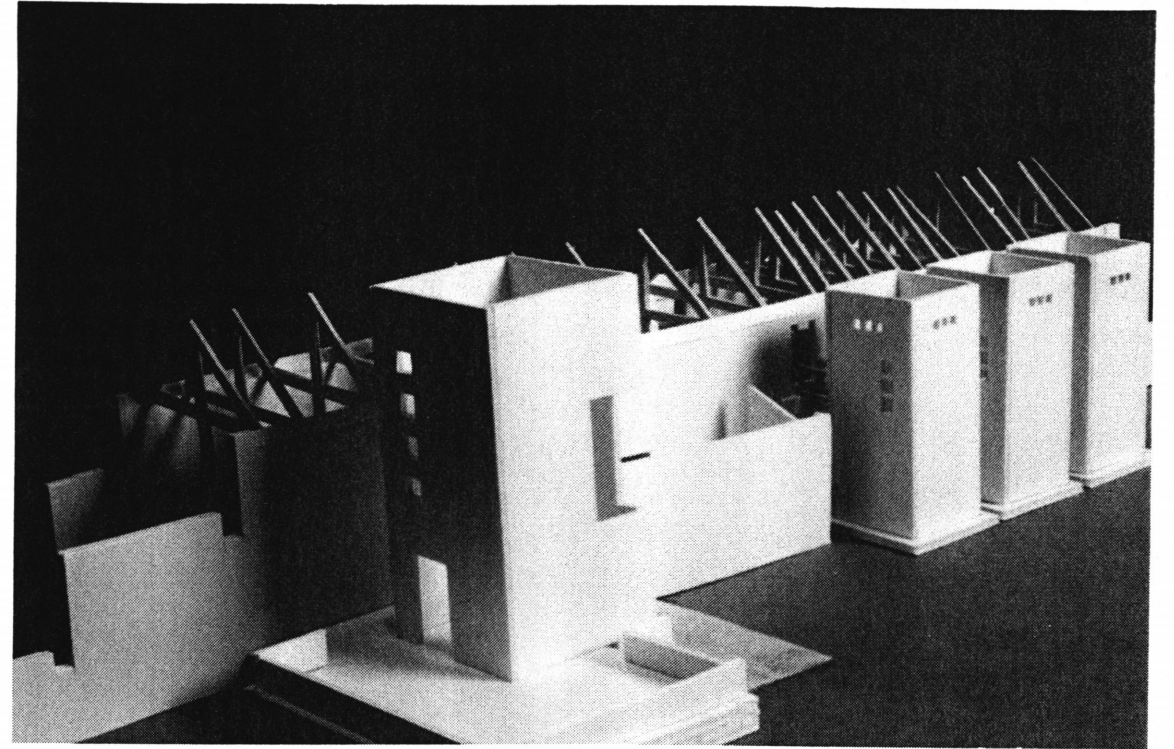


5. Robert Delaunay: La Tour Rouge

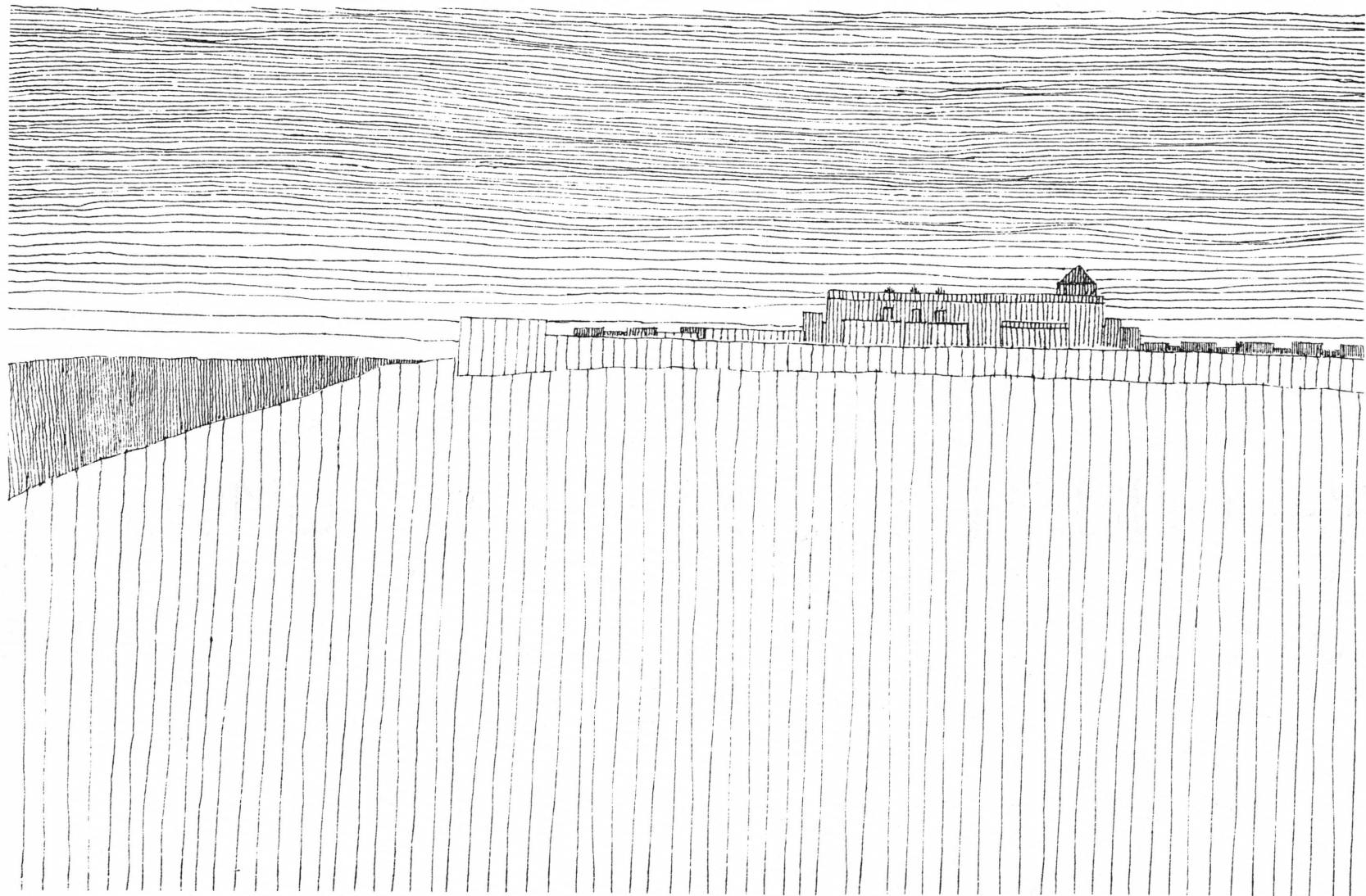


6. Proposed Site

THE PROJECT



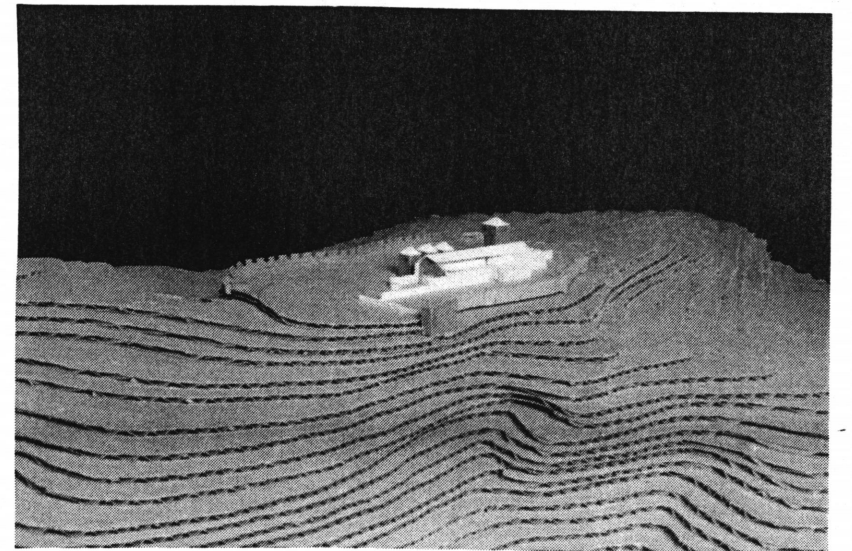
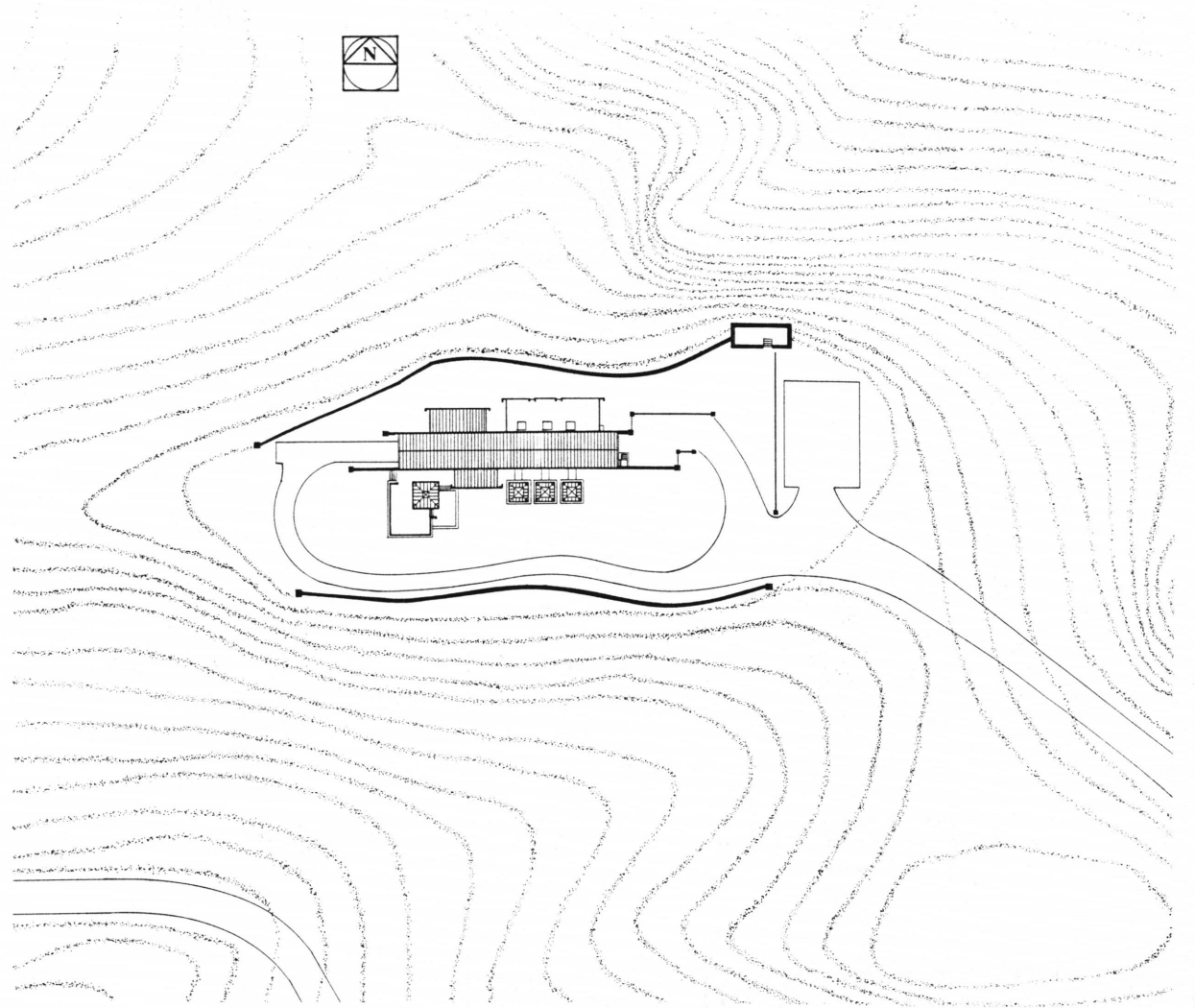
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fanatanstically set
With cupola or minaret.---Walter Scott

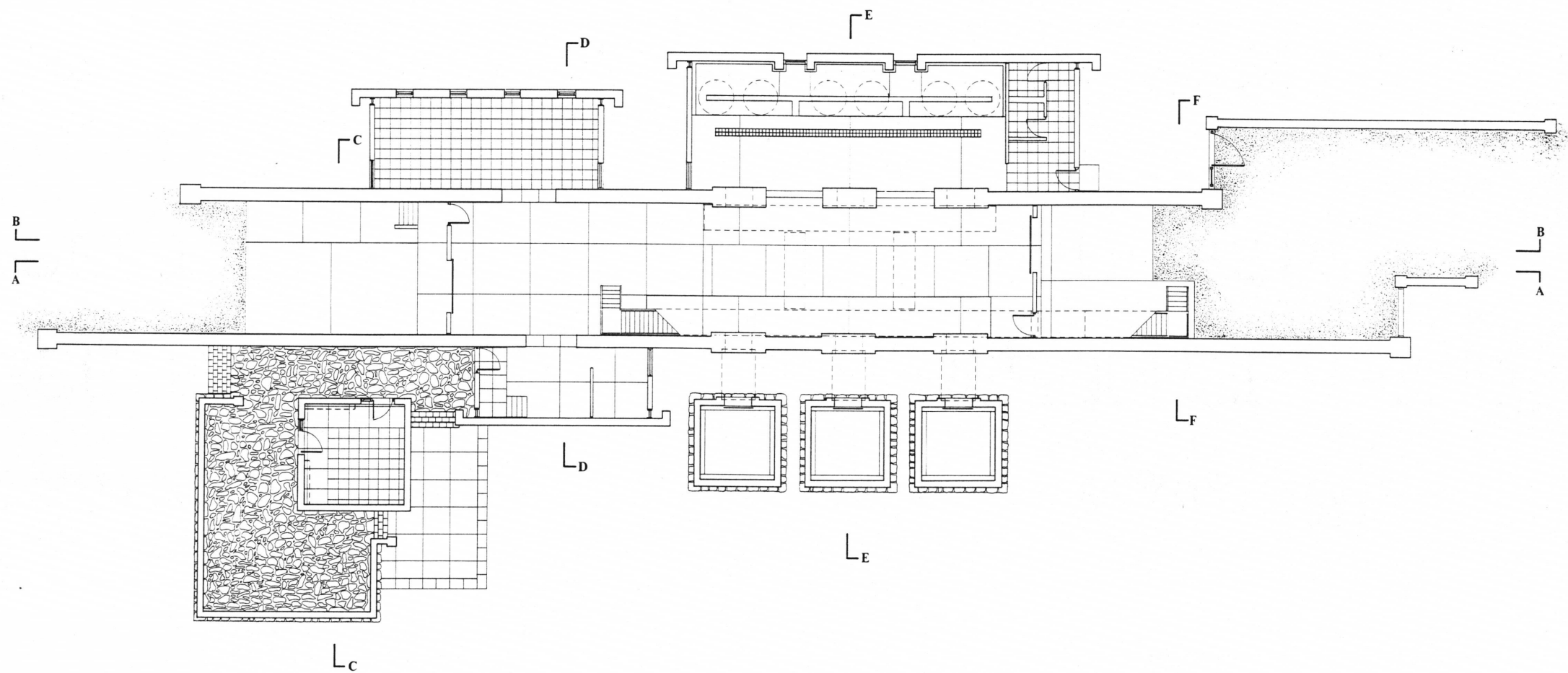


ANGEL'S REST WINERY

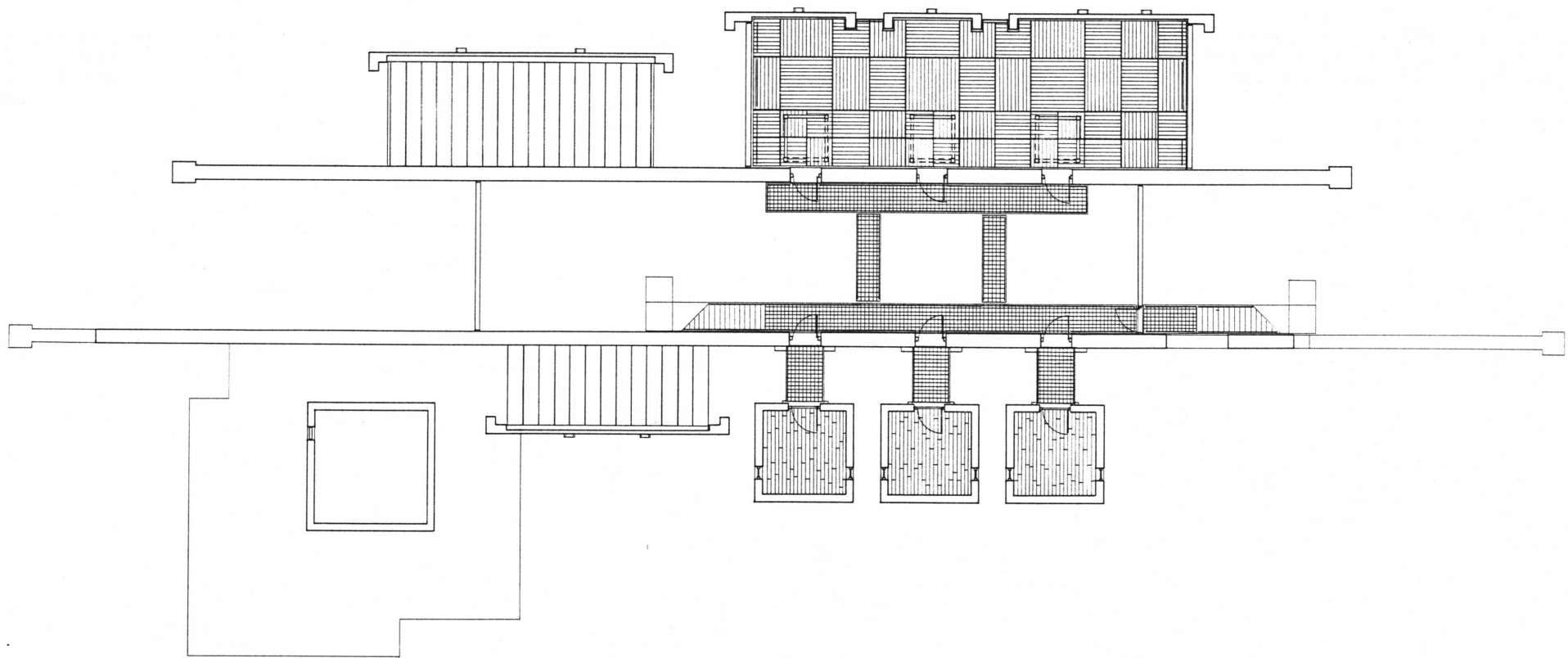
Site

The site of the project is atop a small hill in Montgomery County, Virginia. The surrounding countryside is open pasture land. The major axis of the main building follows the topography and is terminated by Angel's Rest Mountain located near the West Virginia border.

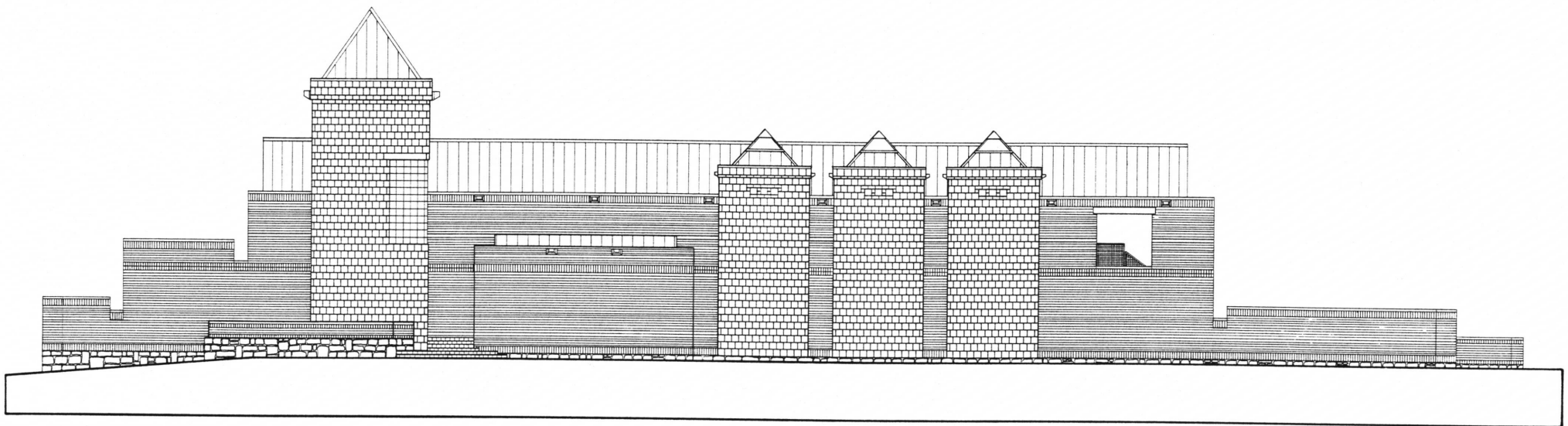




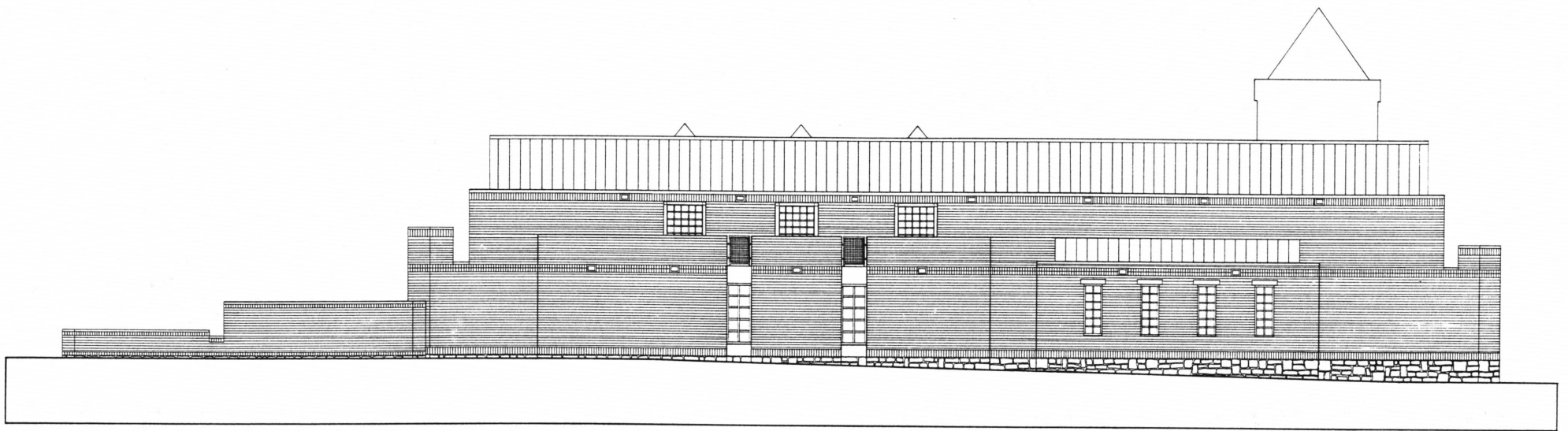
FIRST LEVEL PLAN



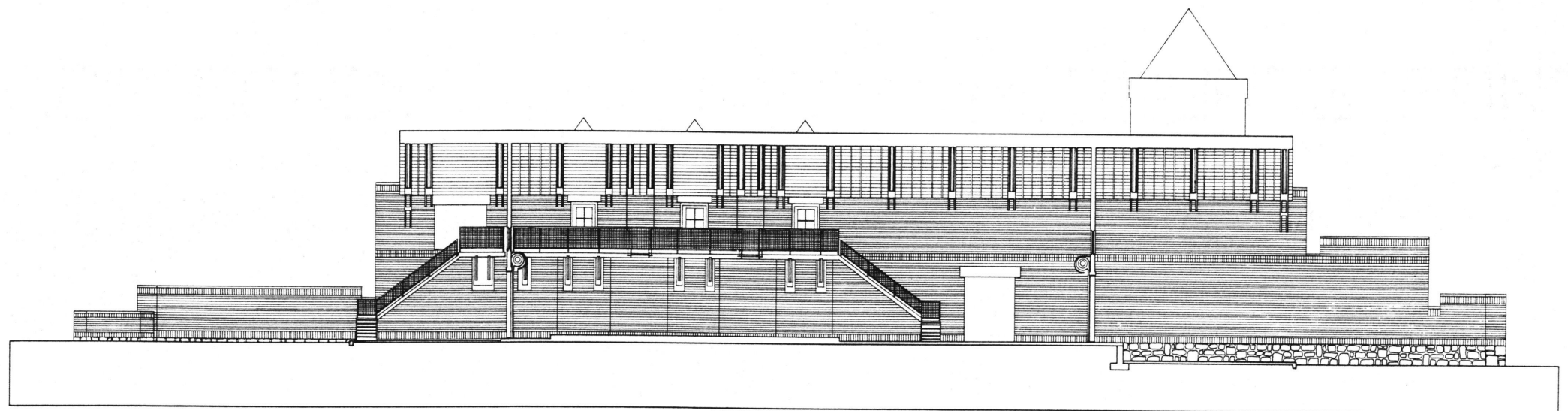
SECOND LEVEL PLAN



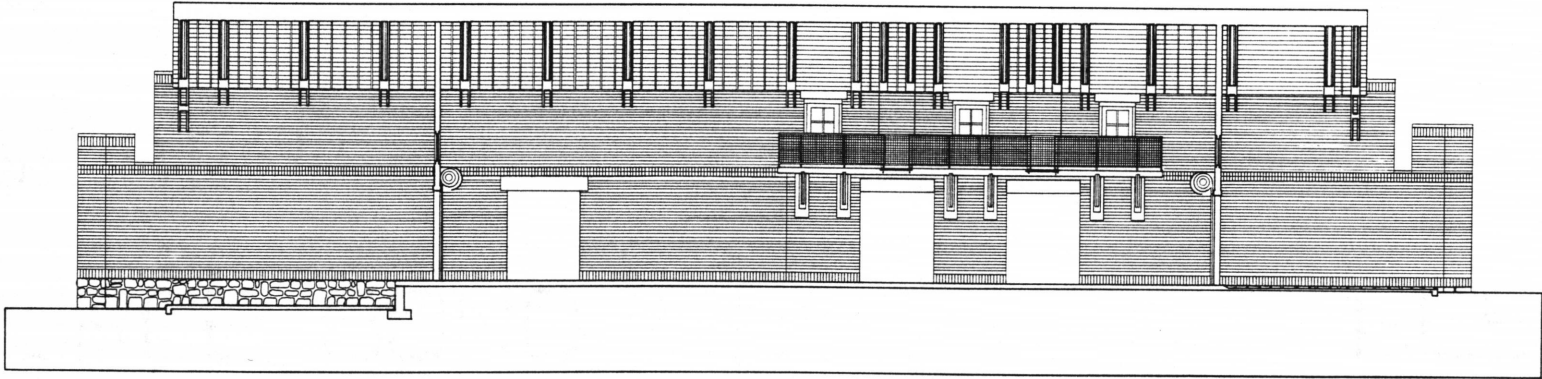
FRONT ELEVATION



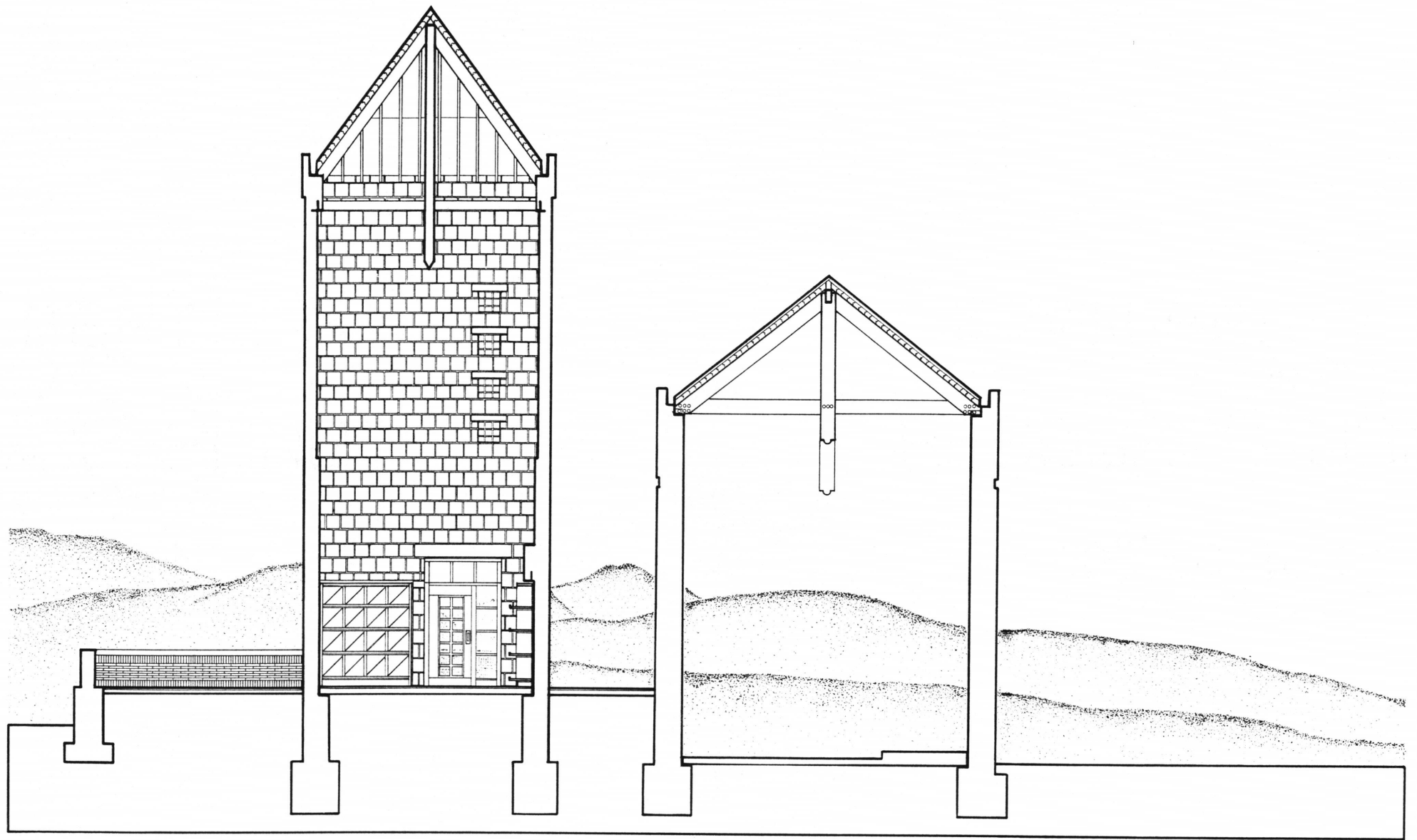
REAR ELEVATION



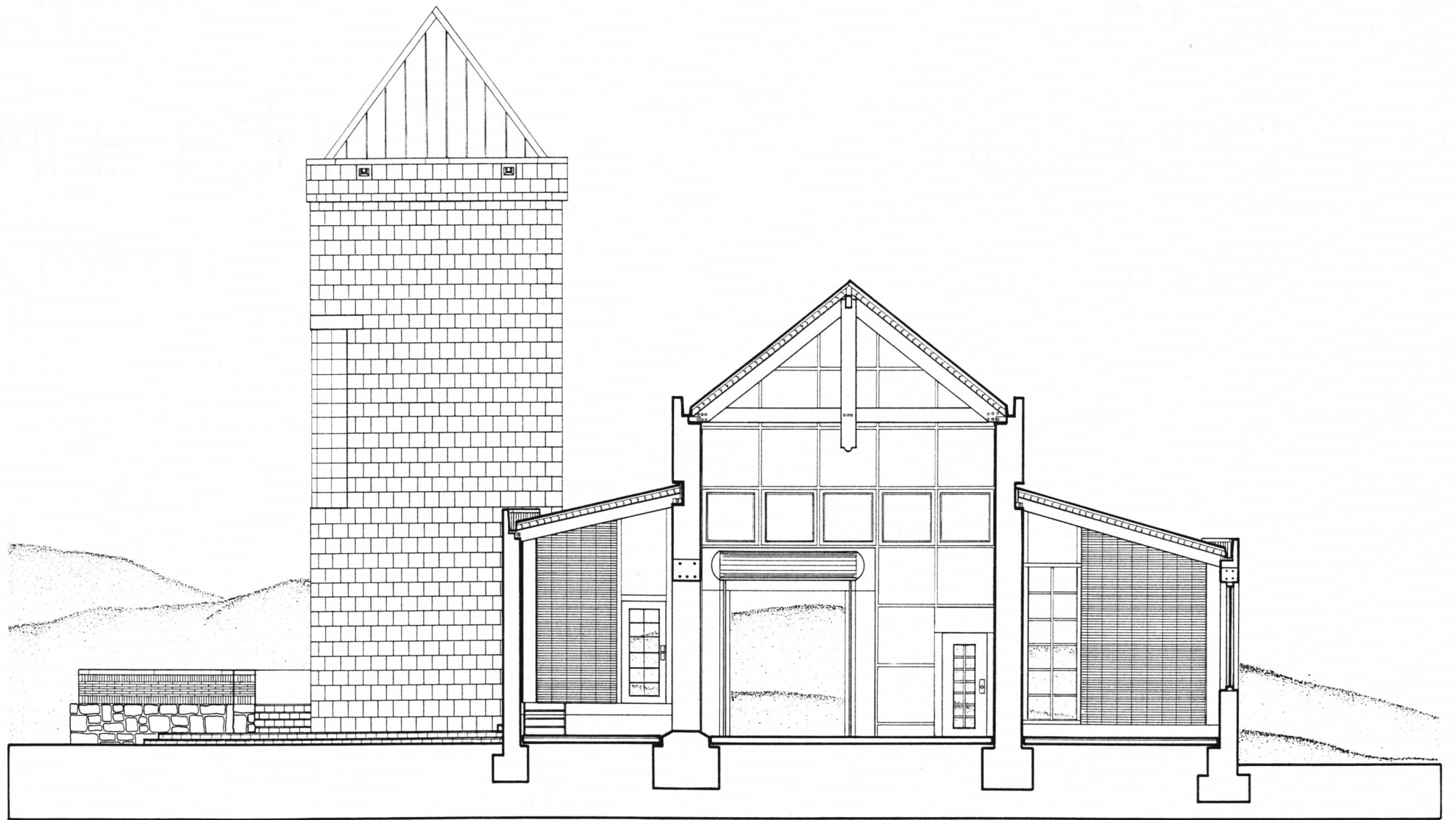
SECTION A-A



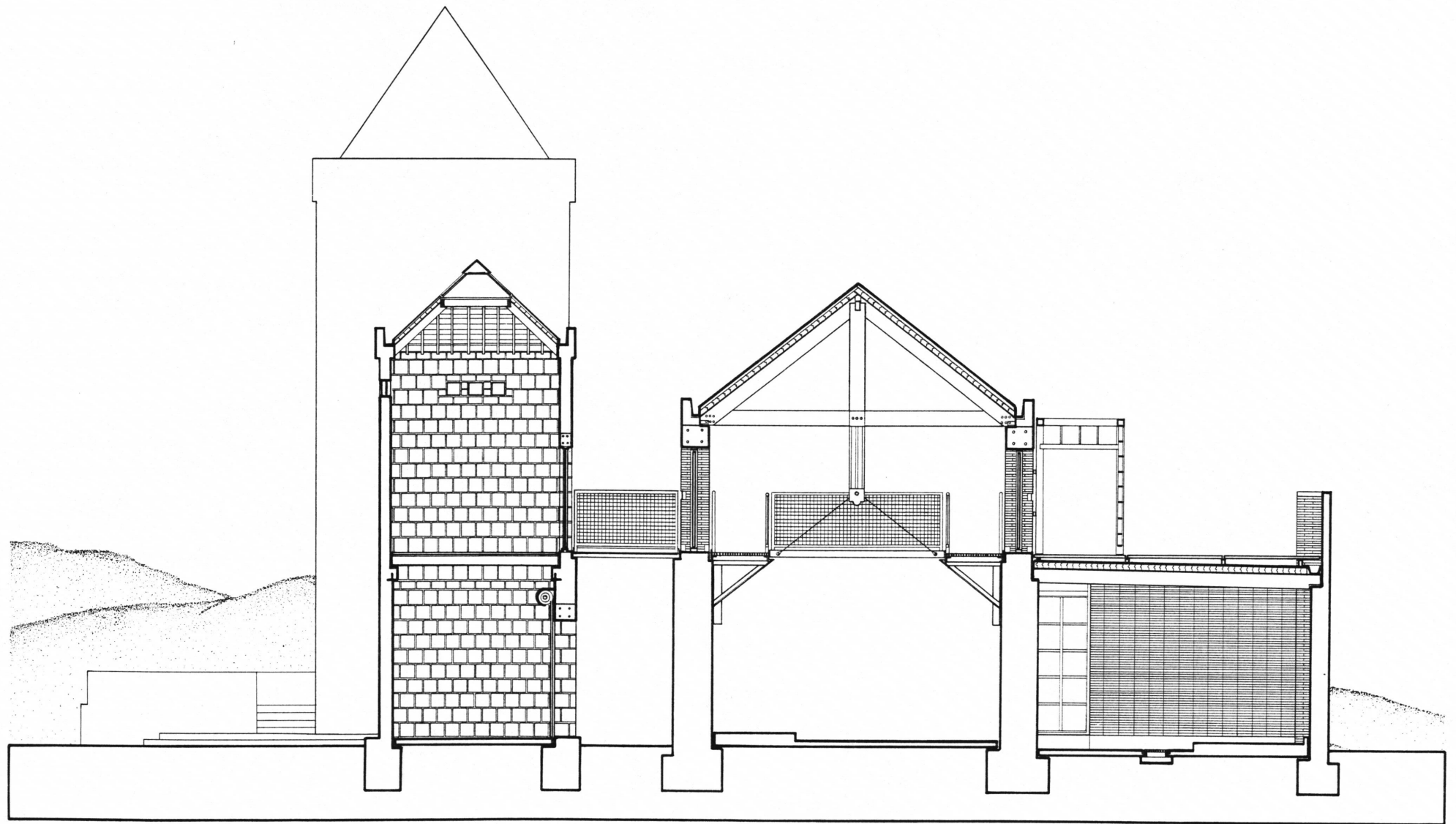
SECTION B-B



SECTION C-C



SECTION D-D

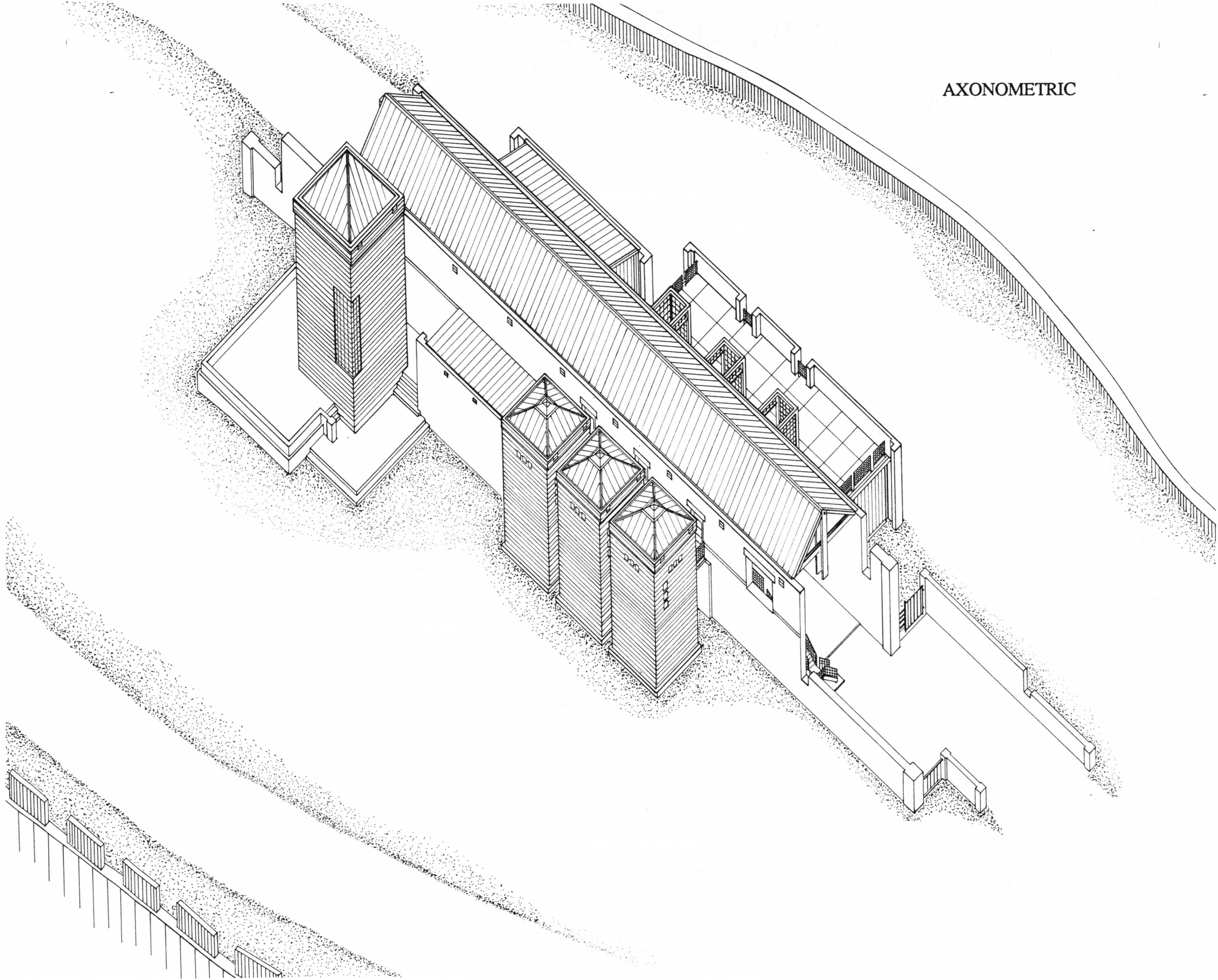


SECTION E-E

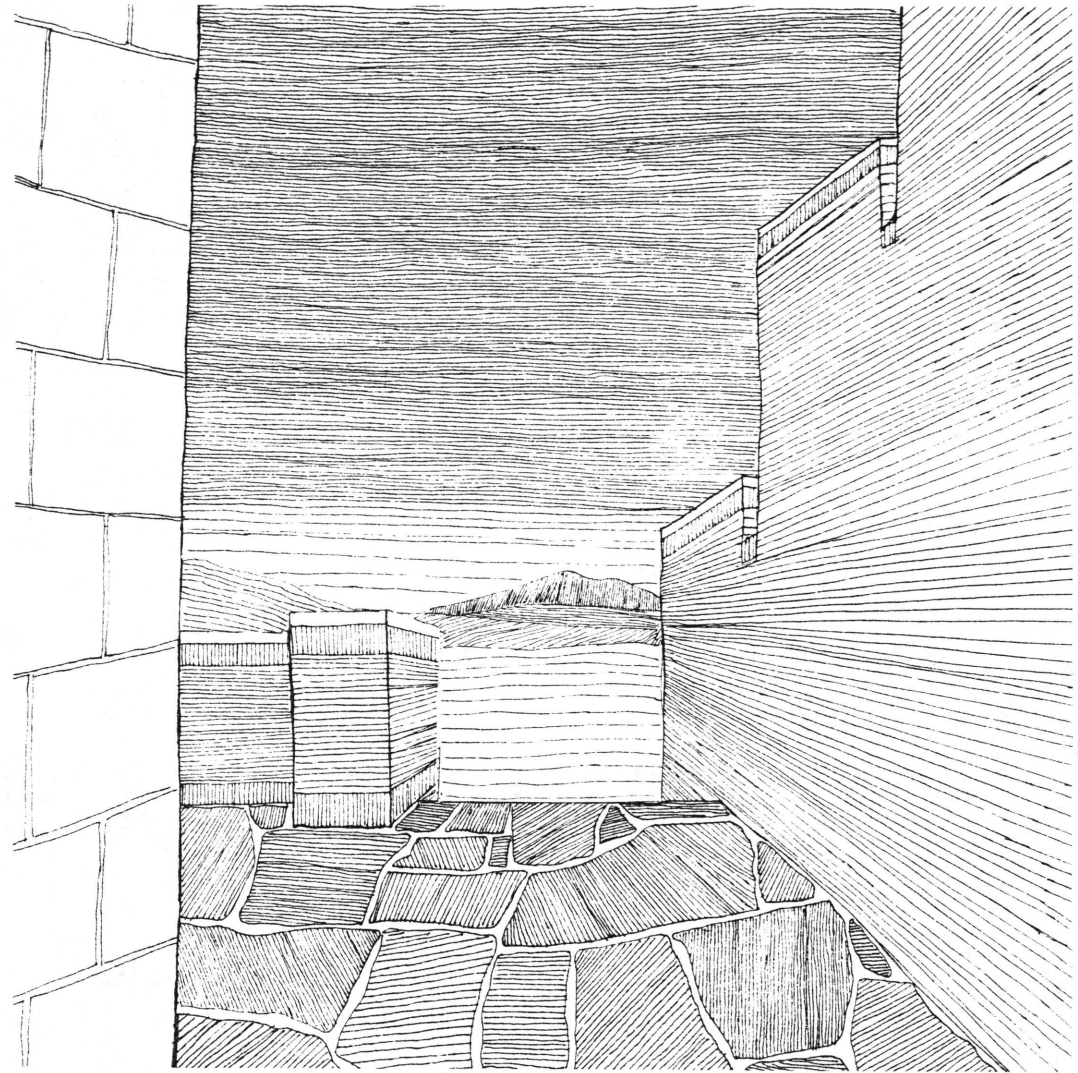


SECTION F-F

AXONOMETRIC



Kilimanjaro is a snow covered mountain 19,710 feet high, and it is said to be highest mountain in Africa. Its western summit is called the Masai "Ngàje Ngài," the House of God. Close to the western summit there is the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard. No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude.---Ernest Hemingway



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Note: All other photographs and sketches by the author.

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