A House on a Hill

by Scott Randolph Hambrick

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture

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Abstract

The design of the house began with a response to topography. The placing of the house at the bend of a hillside prompted a rotation of axis in the plan. As a result, the thesis becomes about the architectural implications of this rotation.

Through formal studies in plan, what was originally conceived as a rotation of axis developed into a rotation of volumes. The interaction and transition between the two volumes becomes critical in mediating the rotation. The rotation can be signified by a change of material, or a change of volume, making it a point of emphasis and a part of the architecture.

Materiality is important to the transition between volumes, as well as to the composition and expression of the elevations. The composition of a material in elevation can serve as an indicator of the quality and function of the interior spaces and its relation to the exterior spaces.

New solutions to particular problems, such as the bridge element between the two parts of the house, are found through exploring and ultimately deciding upon the best architectural resolution. The means for exploring in architecture are drawing and building.
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Much appreciation should be extended to my thesis committee for their patience and wisdom in steering me through a tumultuous beginning that, I believe, culminated in a somewhat successful ending. This year, undoubtedly, will have a lasting effect on the direction of my architectural education. Hans Rott, Hunter Pitman, Frank Weiner; I thank you.

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Much thanks to my studiomates for all the help and motivation through times of need and doubt. You know who you are, thanks for everything.
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The house is composed of two buildings that have been separated by a rotation around a shared pivot point. To increase the inhabitable space created by the rotation, the two buildings are slightly shifted farther apart. Each building has a similar order of spaces that is a reflection of the other. Stone walls enclose the servant spaces that are restricted to the interior courtyard side of each building. The served spaces are wood framed and allow for more penetrations. The change in material signifies the transition between buildings while the bridge allows a view of the rotation.
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References


Keiding, Martin. *The Utzon Library: Utzon's Own Houses.* The Danish Architectural Press. 2004


