

Field, Lines and Drawing

Joshua Brisbin Skiles

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

Frank Weiner

Steven Thompson

Kay Edge

June 15, 2010

Blacksburg, Va

Keywords:

field, line, drawing, architecture, house, abstraction

Field, Lines and Drawing

Joshua Brisbin Skiles

Abstract

An architectural idea has been drawn out in a row house on an imaginary site. Architectural drawings in plan, section and elevation, as well as diagrams, sketches and graphite renderings show a process of working that presupposes existential questions as necessary for making architecture.

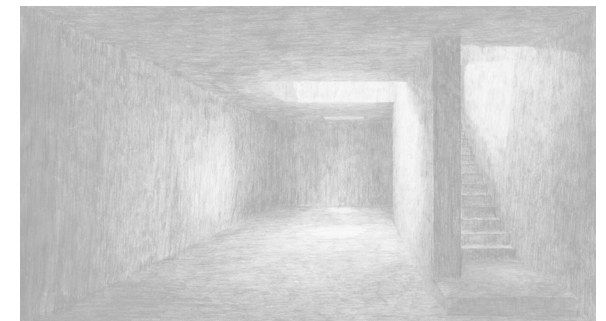
Table of Contents

Situation	2
Field + Line	8
Abstraction	10
Shadows of an Idea	12
Corner	14
Openings	20
Void	26
Shadows	34
Drawing	38
End	40

List of Figures

- 1 *Light makes a room.*
- 2 *Architecture exists in the place in between.*
- 3 *An imagined situation*
- 4 *The tree is a symbol of desperation.*
- 5 *Roof*
- 6 *Mound*
- 7 *Hearth*
- 7 *Wall*
- 8 *A field of lines*
- 9 *A field of lines*
- 10 *Lines weave a field, and the field draws out potential.*
- 12 *Field, lines and shadow*
- 13 *Field, lines and shadow*
- 14 *Axonometric drawing of typical corner condition*
- 15 *Sketch collage of corner situations*
- 16 *Plan + Section 1*
- 17 *Plan + Section 1*
- 18 *Roof Plan*
- 19 *First Floor Reflected Ceiling Plan*
- 20 *Studies of openings*
- 21 *Studies of openings*
- 22 *Plan + Section 2*
- 23 *Plan + Section 2*
- 24 *Front Elevation*
- 25 *Front Interior Elevation*
- 26 *Studies of primary voids in section*
- 27 *Studies of primary voids in section*
- 28 *Section Study*
- 29 *Section Study*
- 30 *Plan + Section 3*
- 31 *Plan + Section 3*
- 32 *West Interior Elevation*
- 33 *North Interior Elevation*
- 34 *Study of Corner Detail*
- 35 *Cross Section Perspective*
- 36 *First Floor Perspective*
- 37 *Second Floor Perspective*
- 38 *Drawing lines and shadows*
- 39 *Drawing lines and shadows*
- 40 *The "end" of architecture*

Field, Lines and Drawing



Light makes a room. 1

Situation

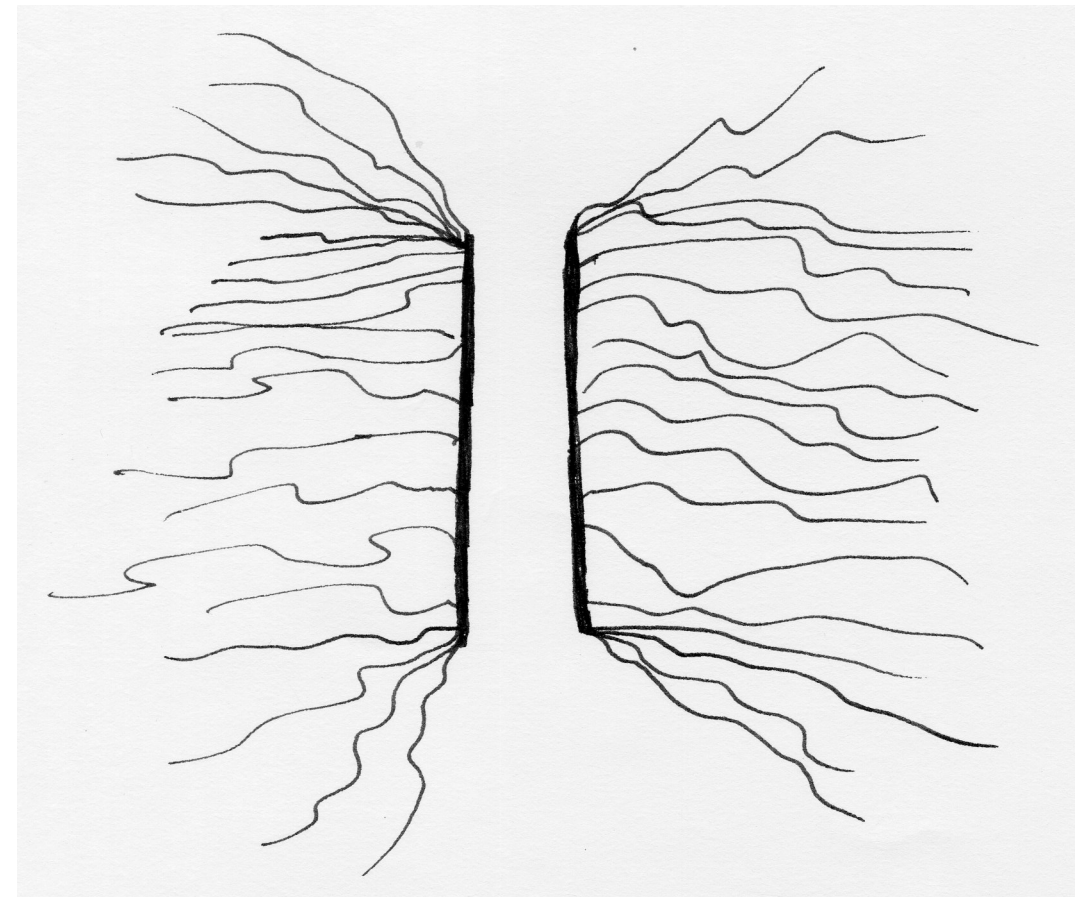
In between the dense earth and dark sky, there is a thin, habitable meniscus. Within this line, we make rooms, buildings, and cities. This narrow cushion billows as buildings rise and fall, like the breath of culture itself.

There is another line, where our constructed environments expand and contract against Nature. What we as architects make cannot sustain itself against this pressure from natural processes. Given enough time, things fall apart.

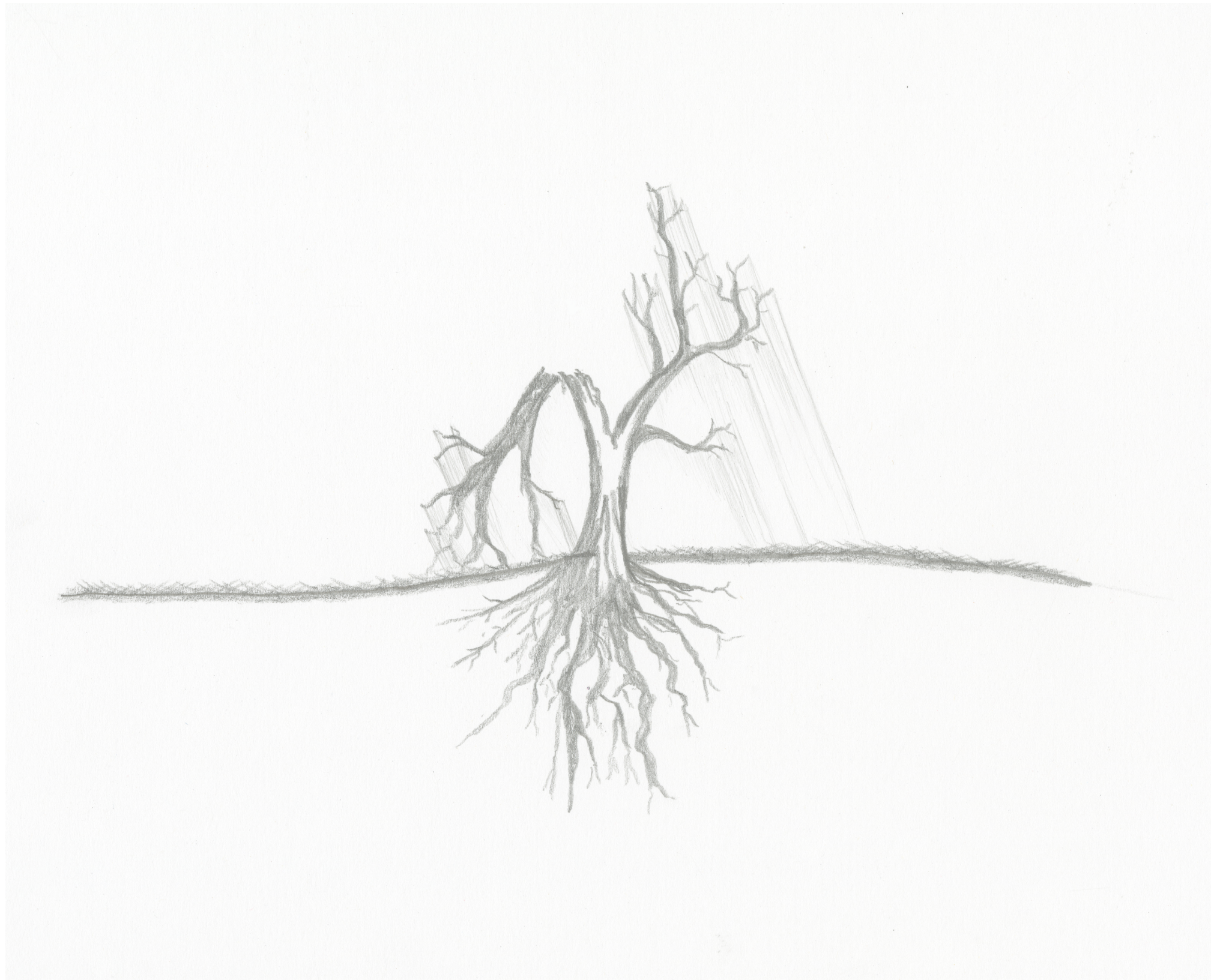
Ruins are the end result of an architect's work, for buildings are merely the artifactual remains of an architect's creative process. Buildings, unlike architects, are inanimate and inert. Like the shell discarded by a cicada, buildings eventually crumble, disappear and are forgotten.

Architecture exists, but not as a building, construction, material, structure, form, or practice. These are all part of what we call architecture, but this is not what propels it forward or gives it direction. Architecture exists in the line between man and nature, as a fight against the desperation of life, and for the singular moment of rest and contemplation.

This is the situation of architecture. The architect struggles with its absurdity.













Hearth

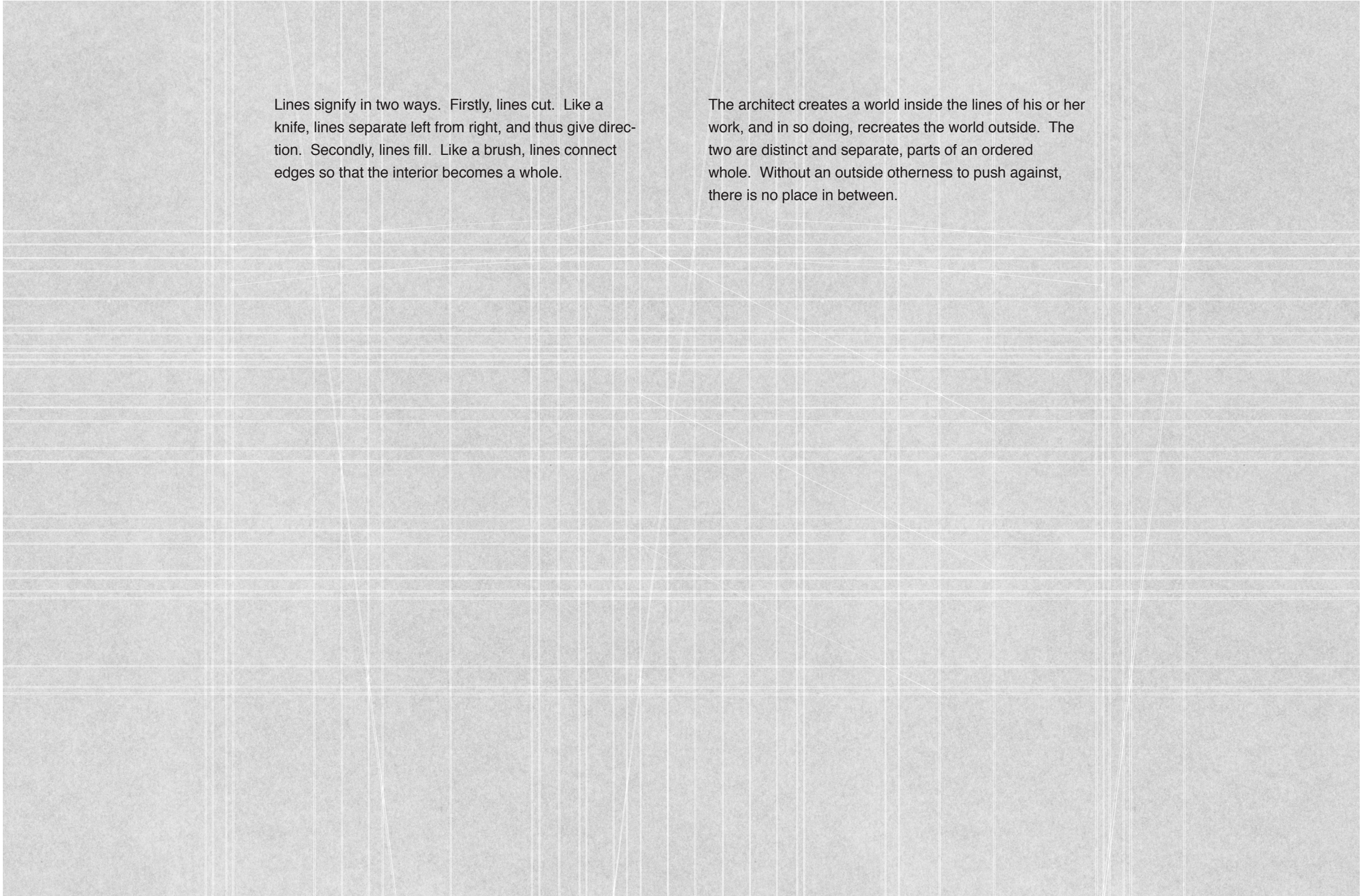


Wall

Field + Line

The field responds to the dialog of architecture and nature by making lines present in the reality of the situation. The field does not come first. Lines begin to cut away, and then fill in, and gradually build up a network of separations that is both remainder and generator of the abstract idea. The field presents the idea at its most abstract, and with its most potential.

There is no line without thickness. Every line has two edges and three regions: outside, inside, outside. It is not possible to make a line that has no thickness, for the making of a line, even if a single stroke, is inherently tied to an identifiable, if infinitesimal, thickness.

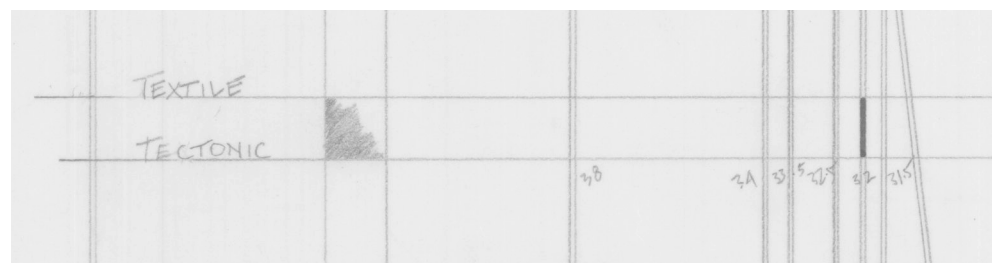


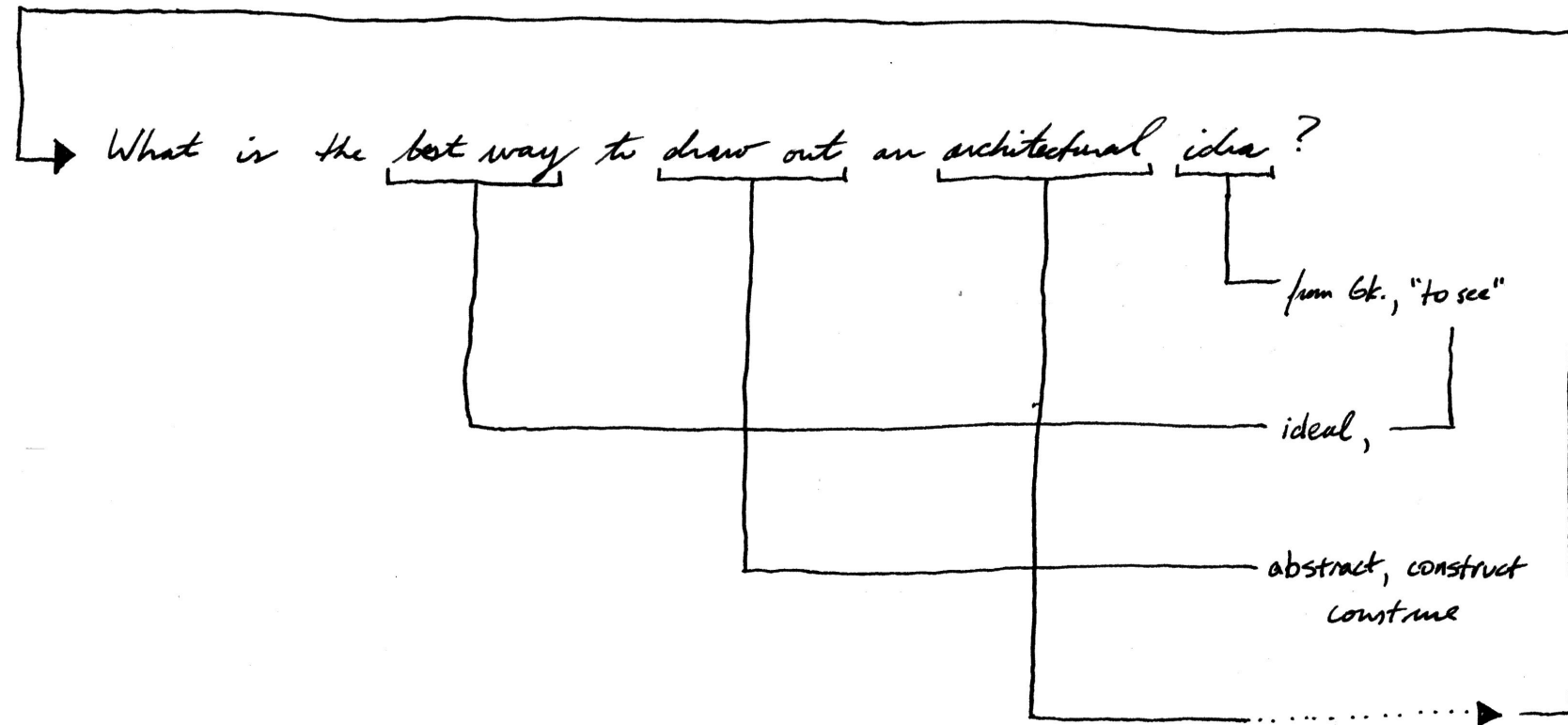
Lines signify in two ways. Firstly, lines cut. Like a knife, lines separate left from right, and thus give direction. Secondly, lines fill. Like a brush, lines connect edges so that the interior becomes a whole.

The architect creates a world inside the lines of his or her work, and in so doing, recreates the world outside. The two are distinct and separate, parts of an ordered whole. Without an outside otherness to push against, there is no place in between.

Abstraction is the drawing out
of an otherwise invisible order.

Abstraction



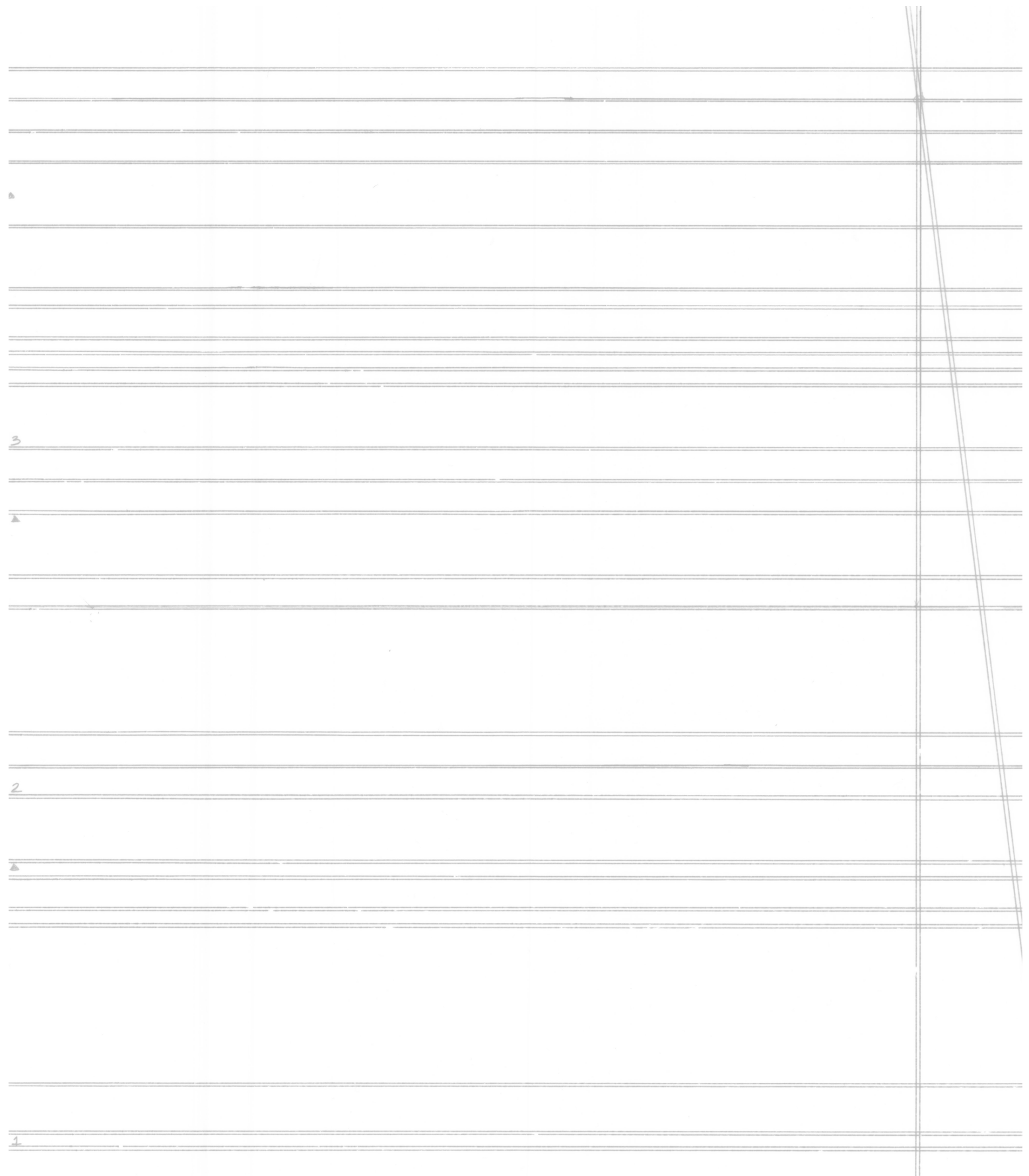


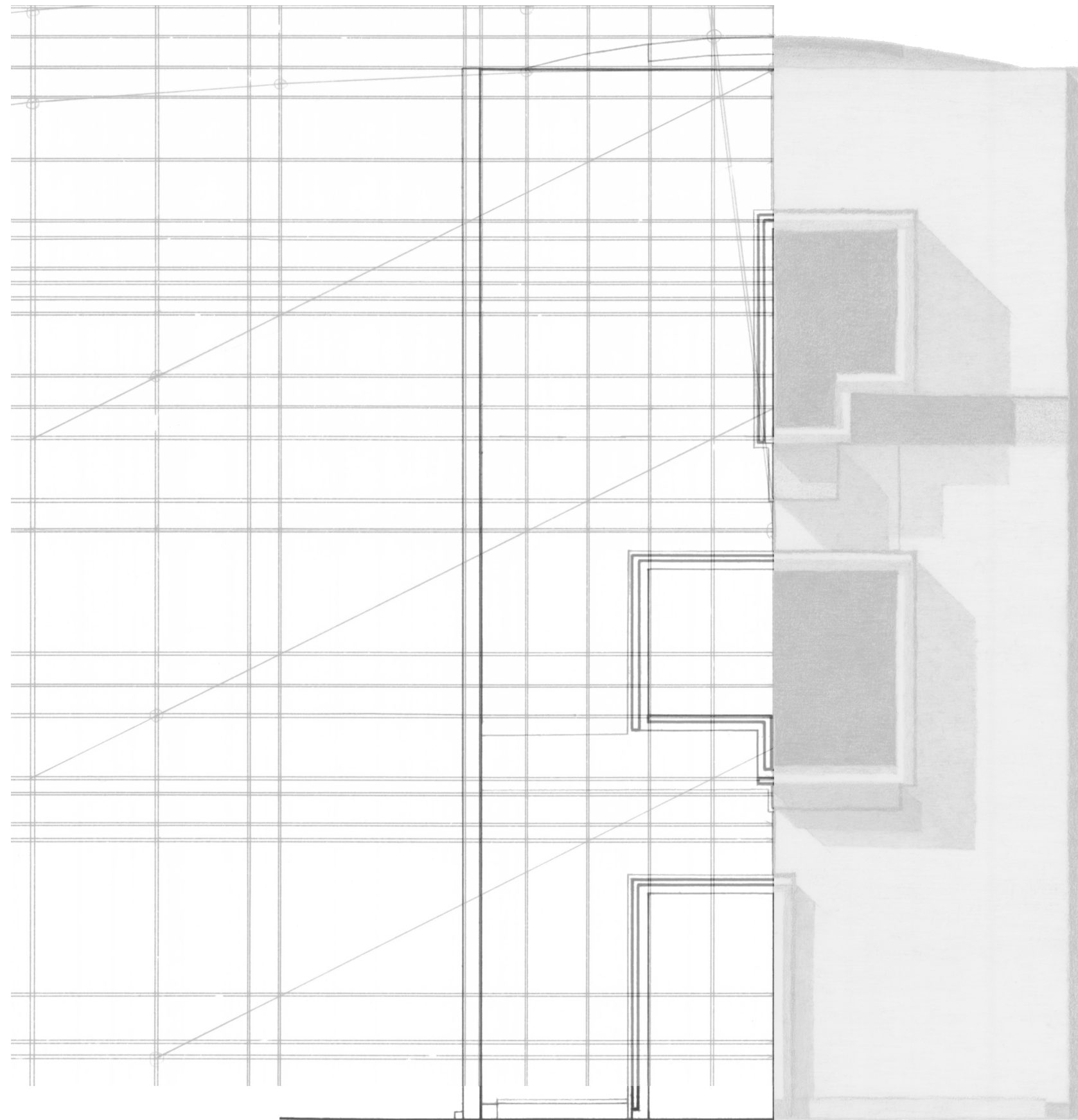
Shadows of an Idea

It is important not to remain in an abstract world, for at its best, architecture has presence in physical reality. This may seem obvious, but when architecture is approached rationally, abstraction begins to compete with the immediacy of presence. The elements and qualities of architecture - such as light, shadow, space, void, rhythm, and stillness - these are not abstractions of an idea but the realization of an idea. They are present in every building ever built. They may rely on material for existence, but they are not material themselves. Furthermore, these concrete qualities cannot be reduced to only information. These architectural elements and qualities are shadows of an idea cast on the drawings of architecture.

Ideas cannot be drawn out of hiding very easily. As a process, abstraction is not the best for presenting, demonstrating or judging the qualities that make the best architecture. These qualities must be realized, not abstracted, in physical media. The best way is by making something, whether it be a drawing, model or the building itself. For the best drawings, the poetic act is not a process of abstraction, but the making of an analogy.

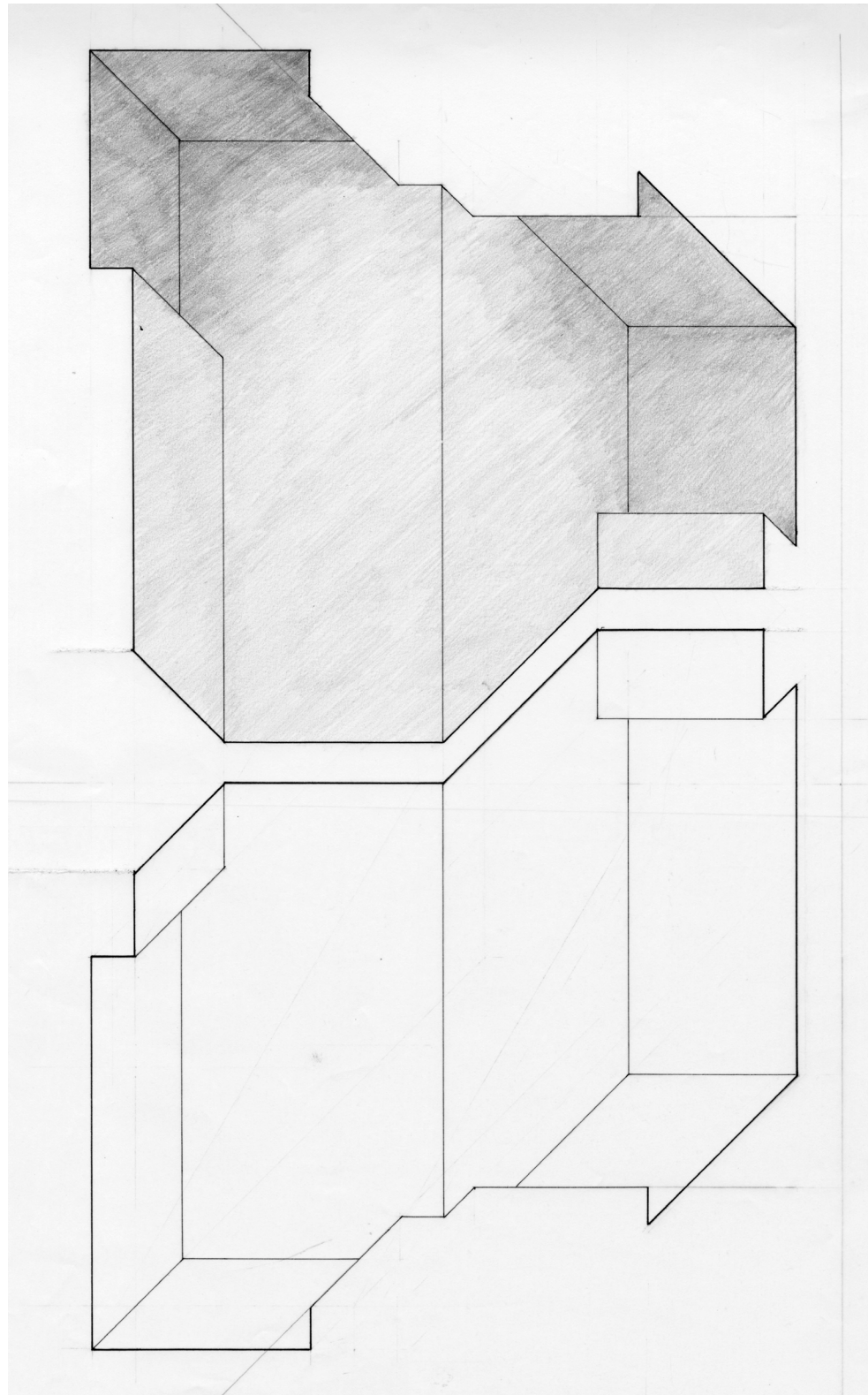
The reality of a representation (such as a drawing) should reflect the potential of a physical, architectural reality. Drawing and building should share analogous qualities, and the representational means of the drawing should not replace or merely stand in for an imagined architectural quality (i.e., it should not be metaphorical). Instead, the best drawings bring the qualities of architecture to the present reality of our existence and show them on the page, not as rational abstractions or merely ink on paper, but rather as the representation of an idea.

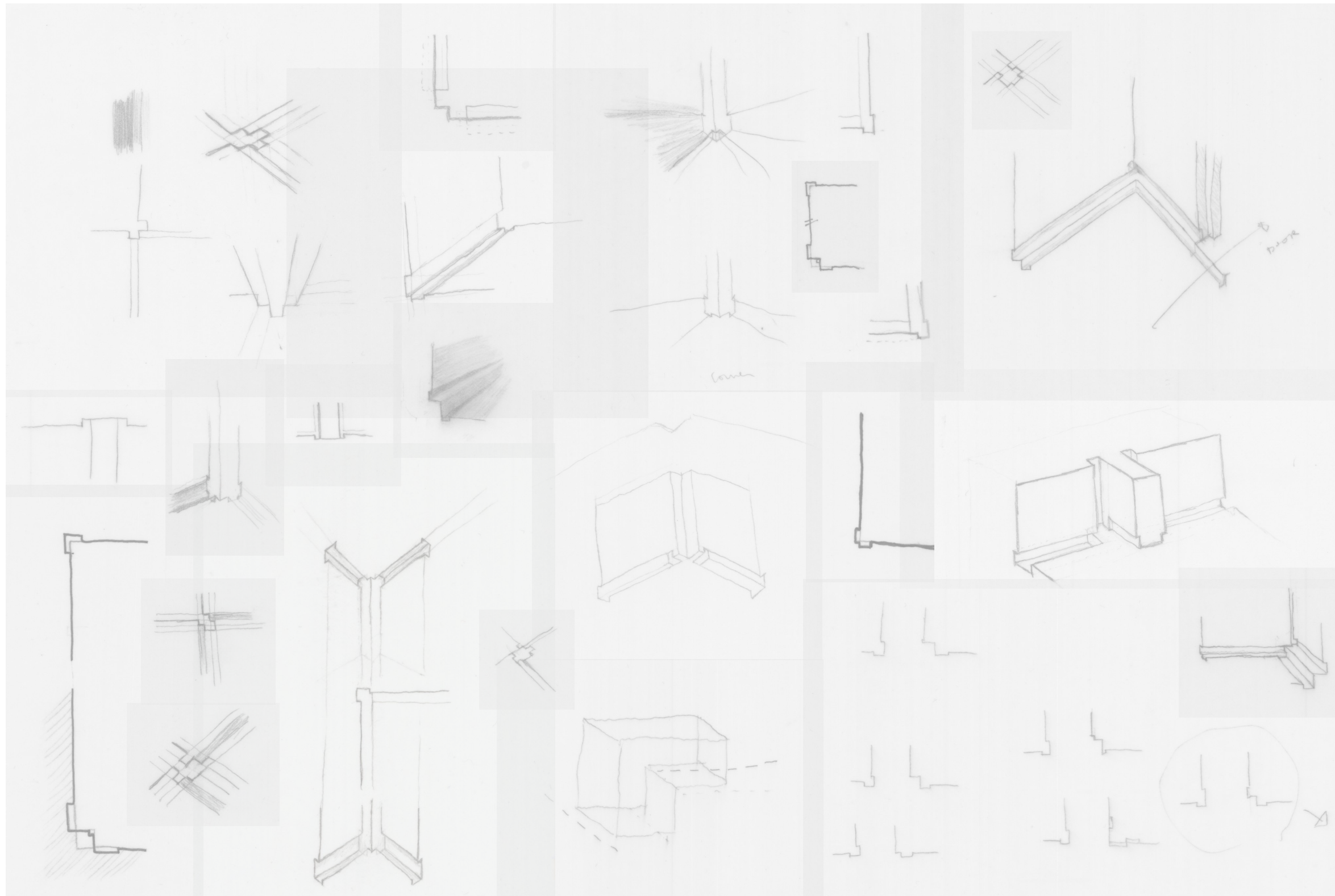


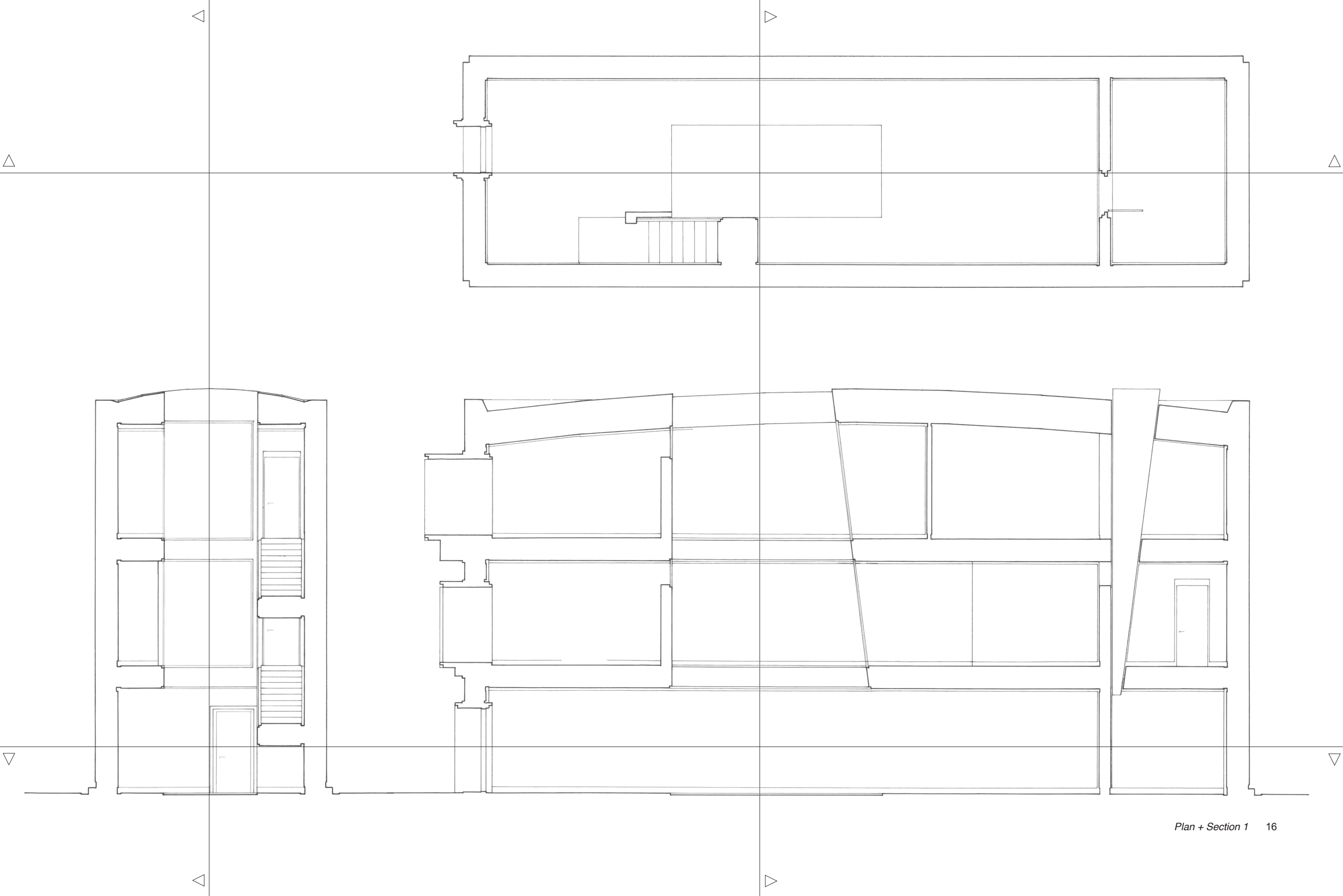


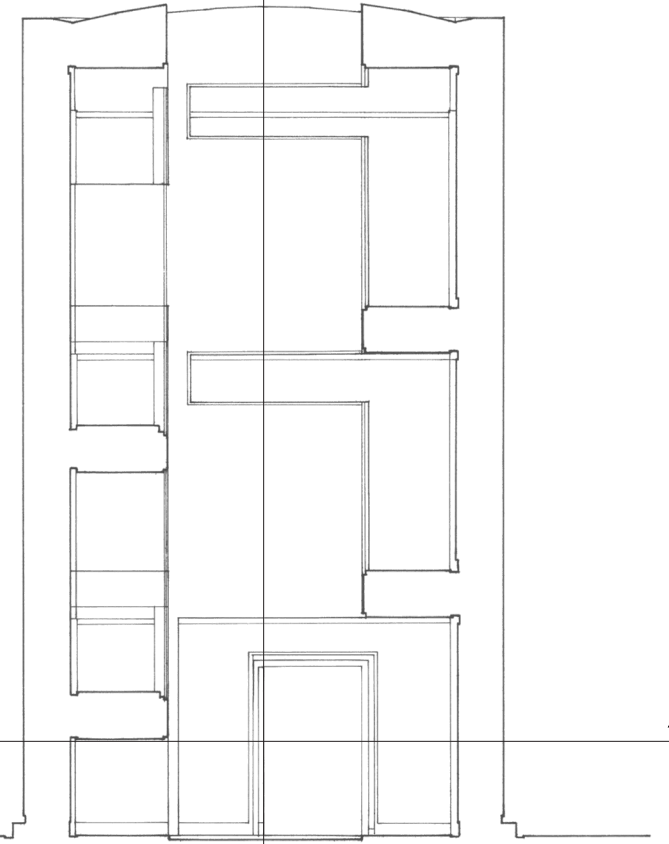
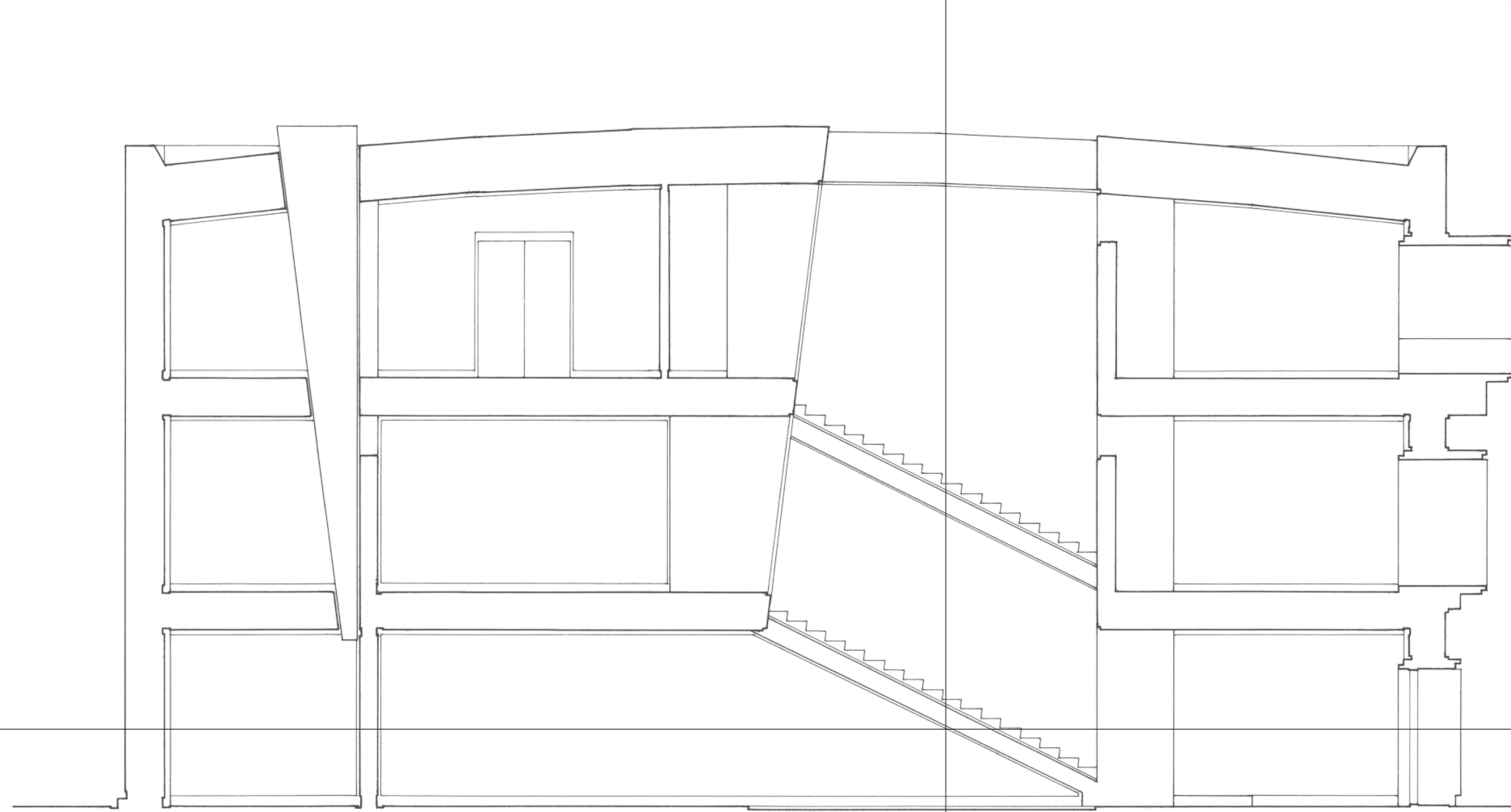
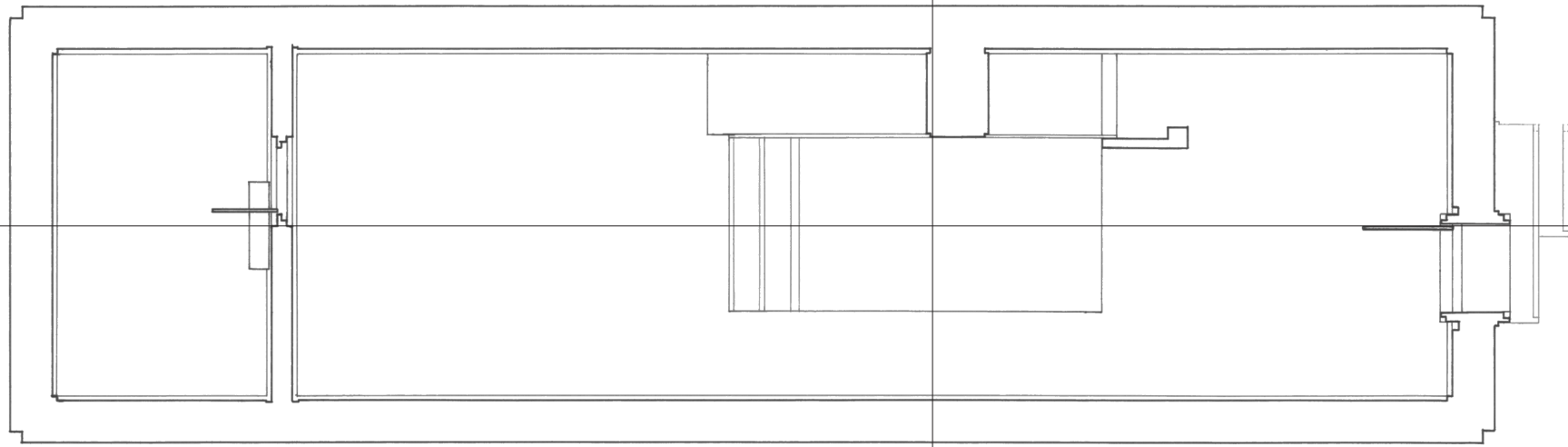
*Lines meet, and thick-
nesses shake hands.*

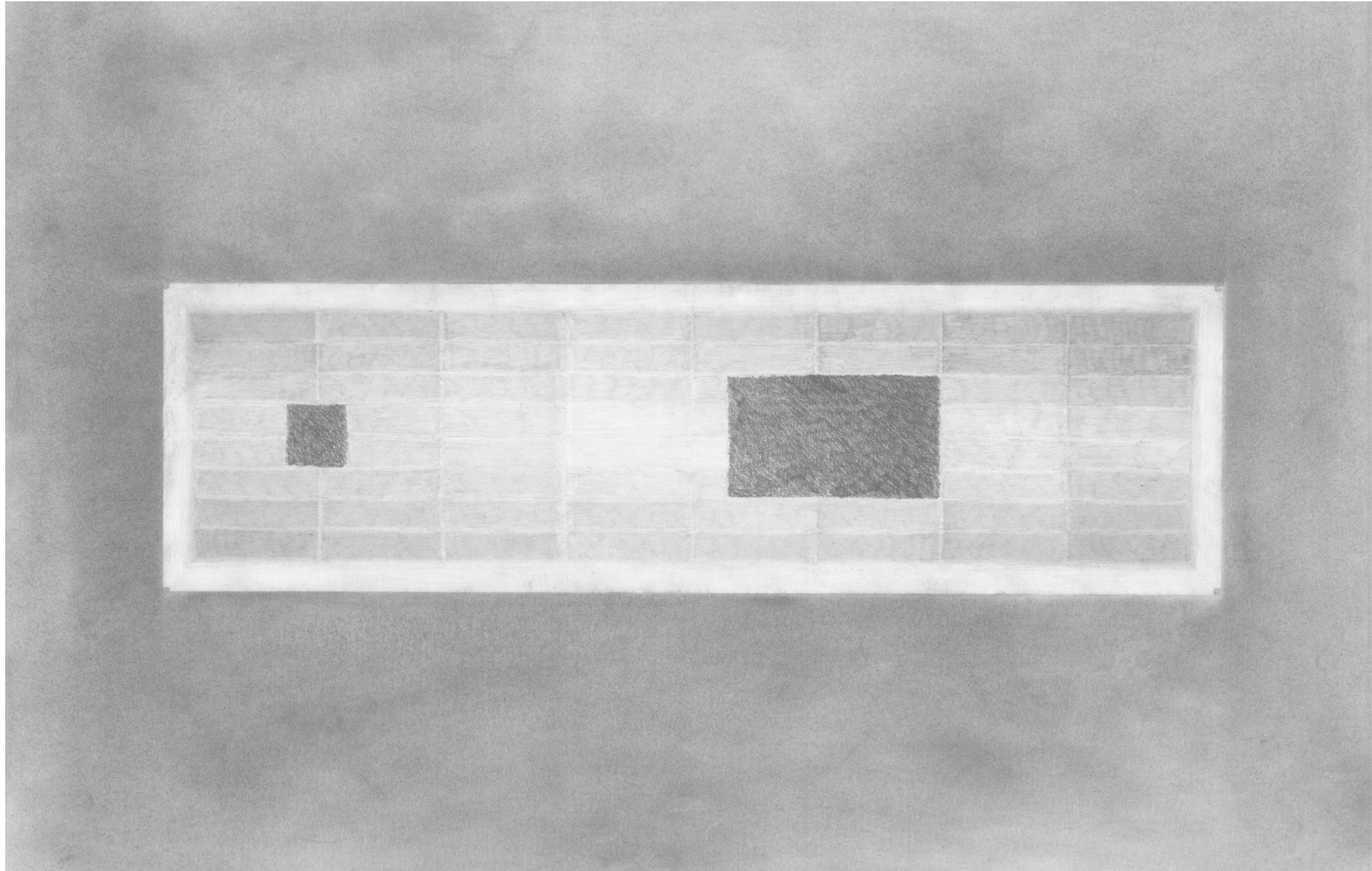
Corner

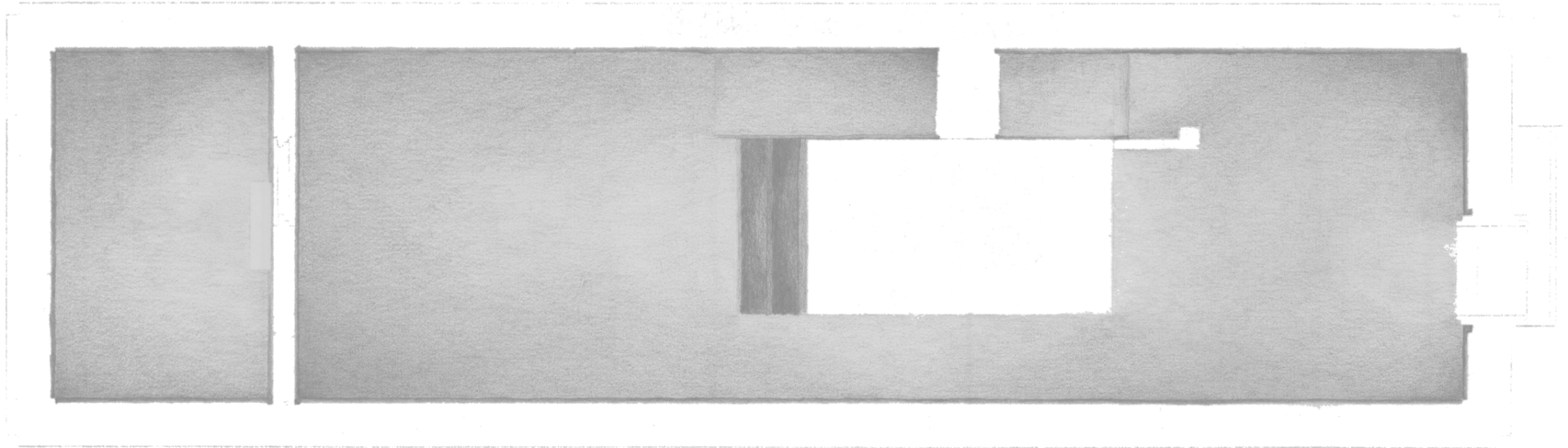






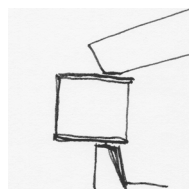
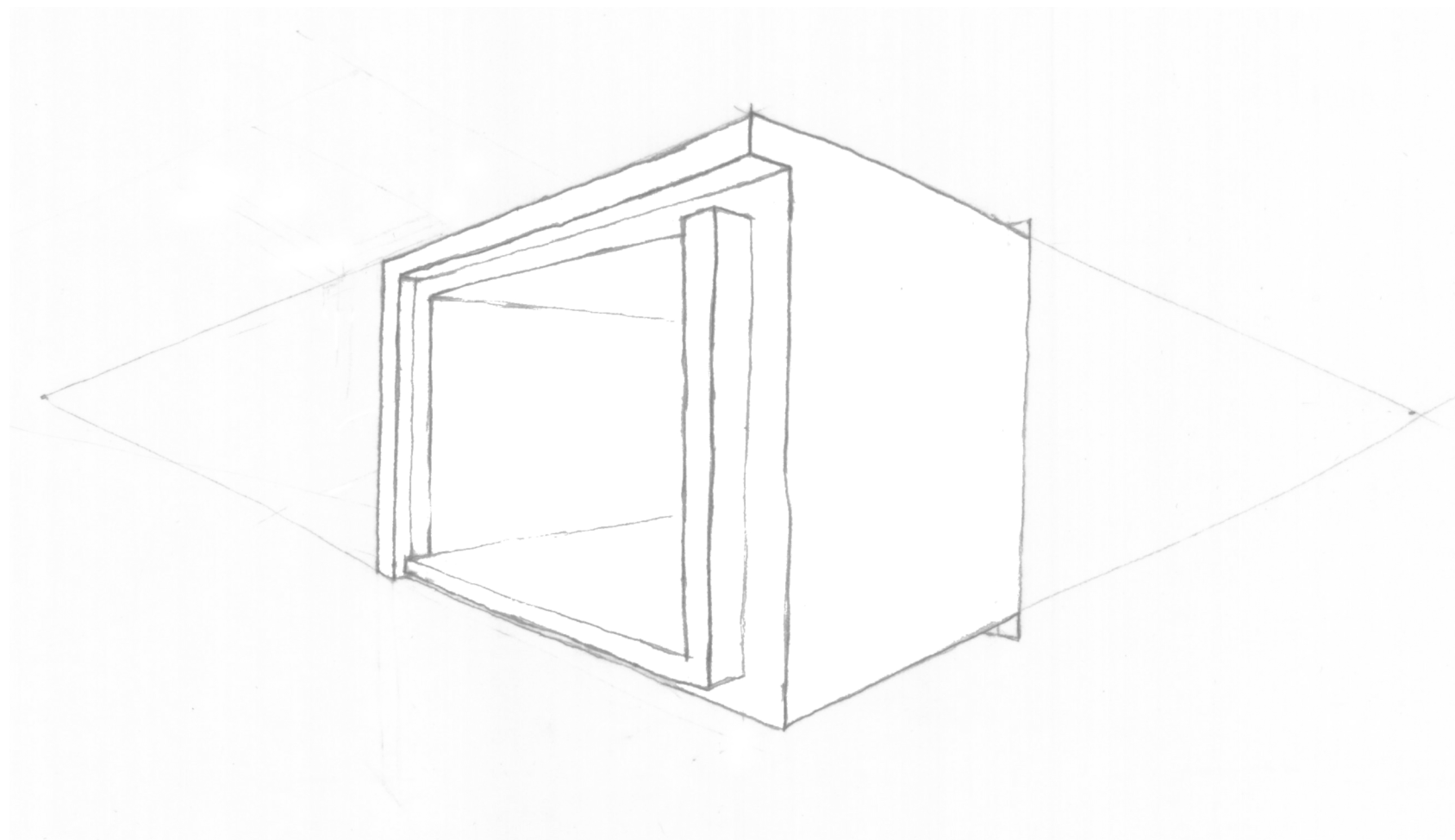


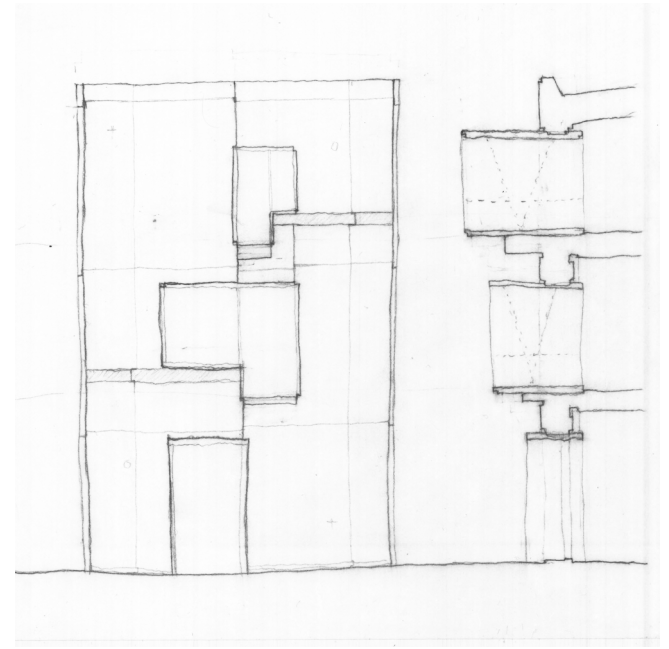
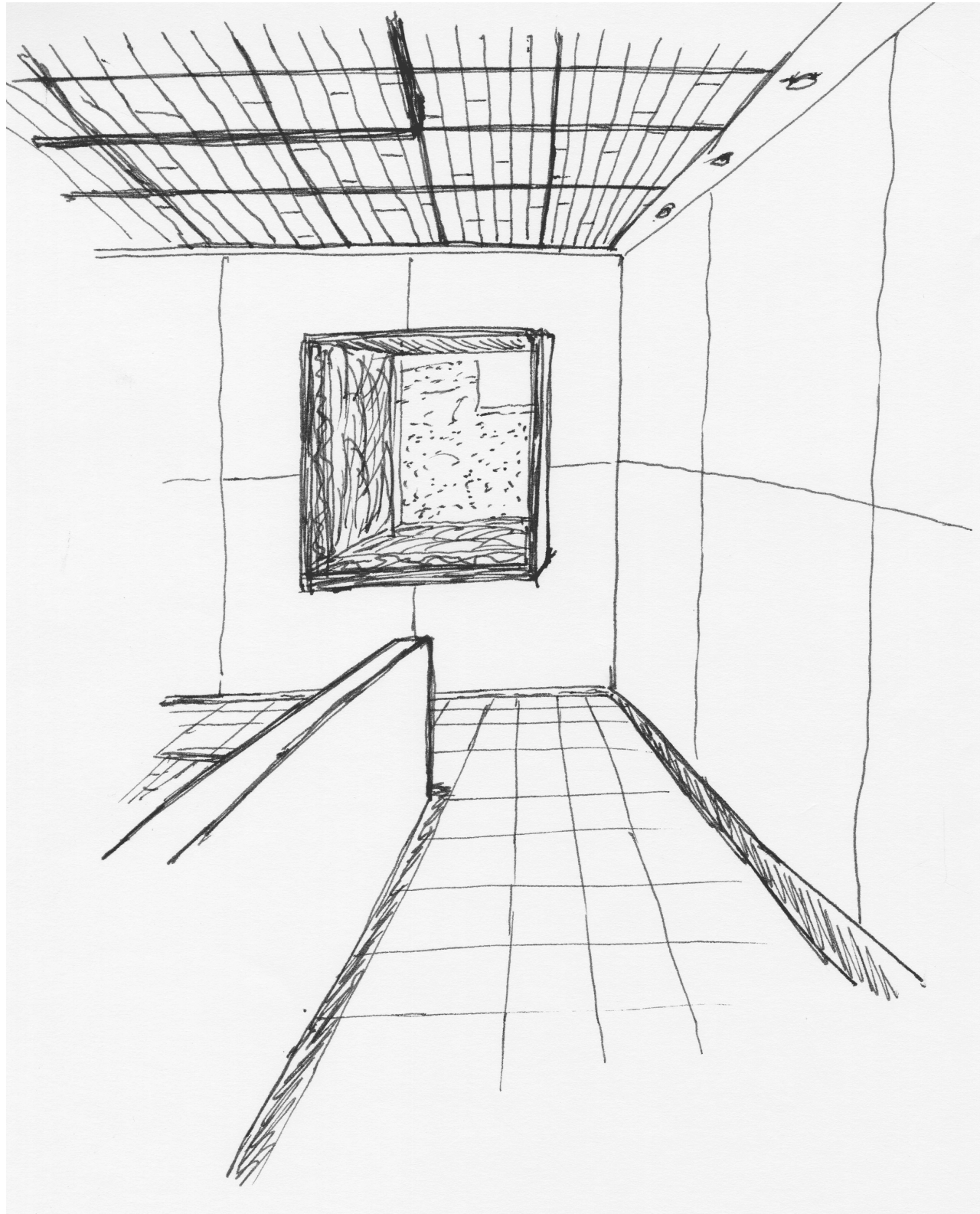


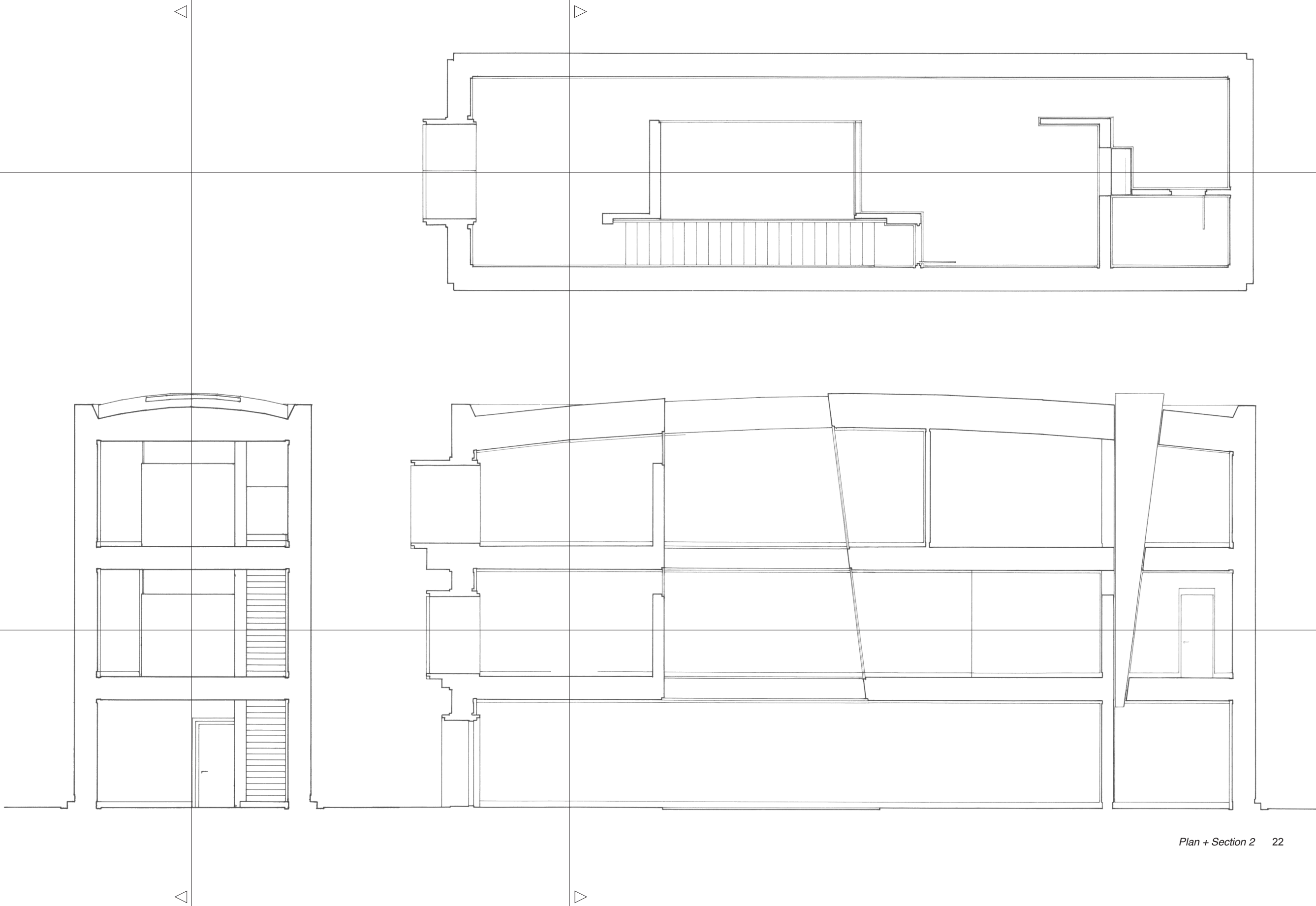


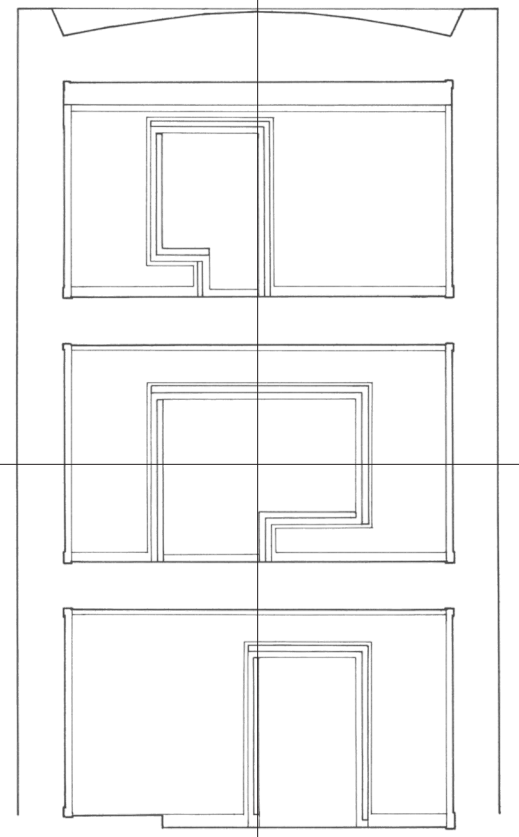
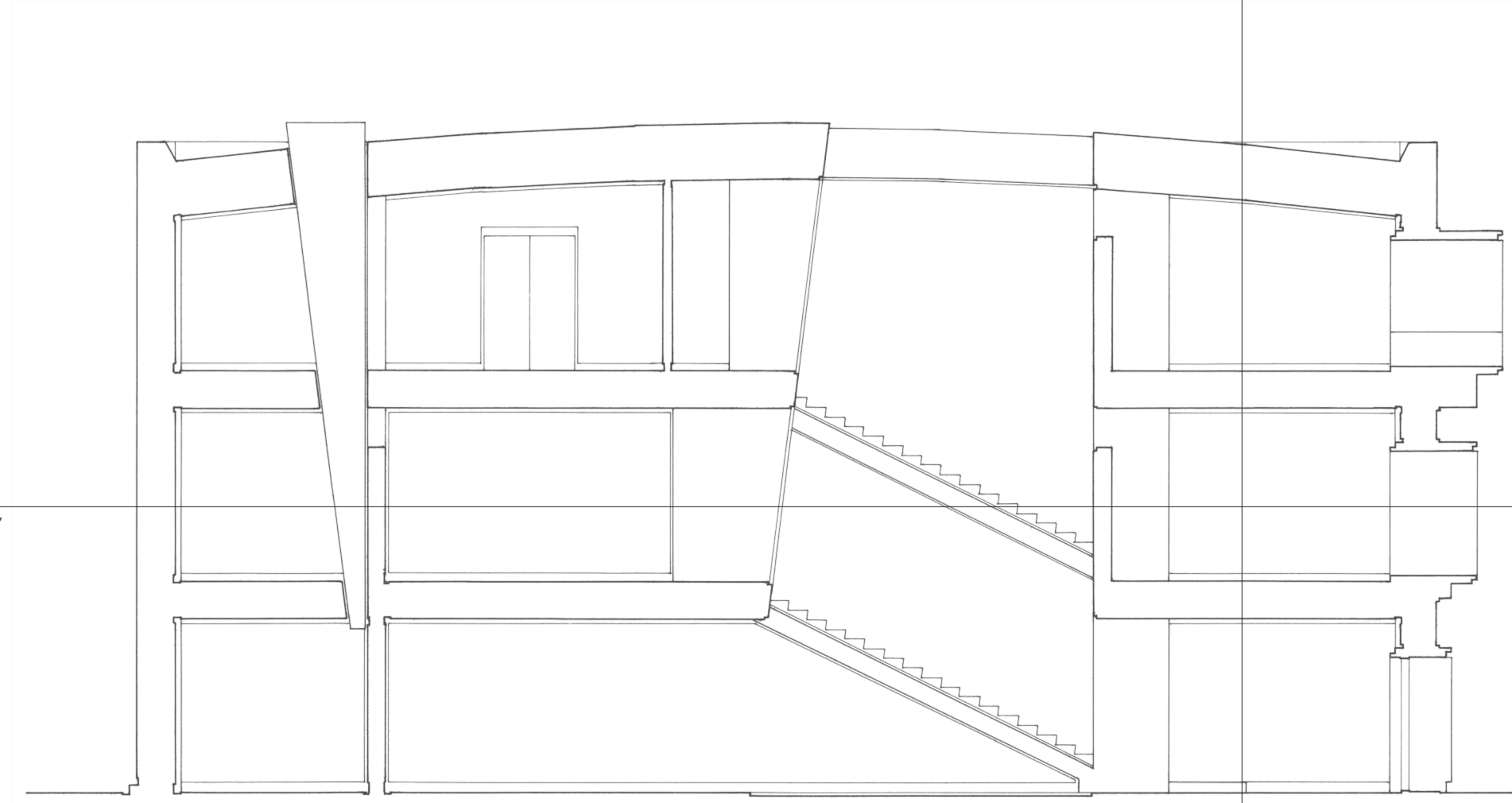
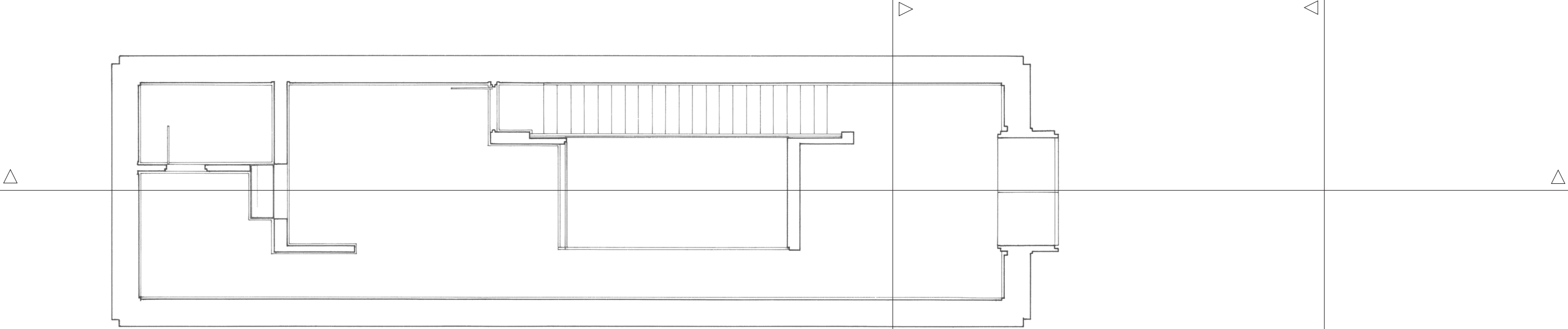
*Light from the other side
draws us through.*

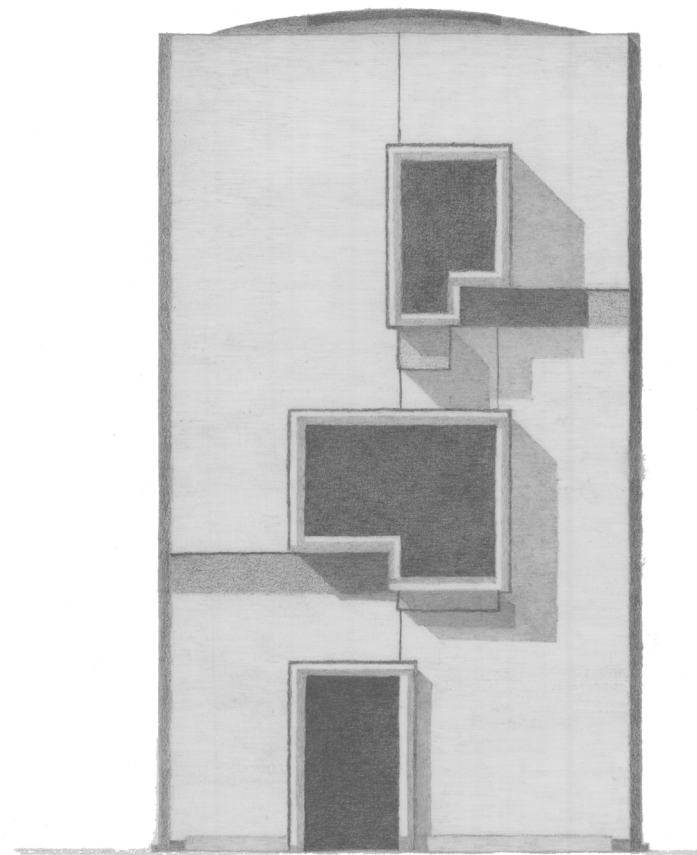
Openings

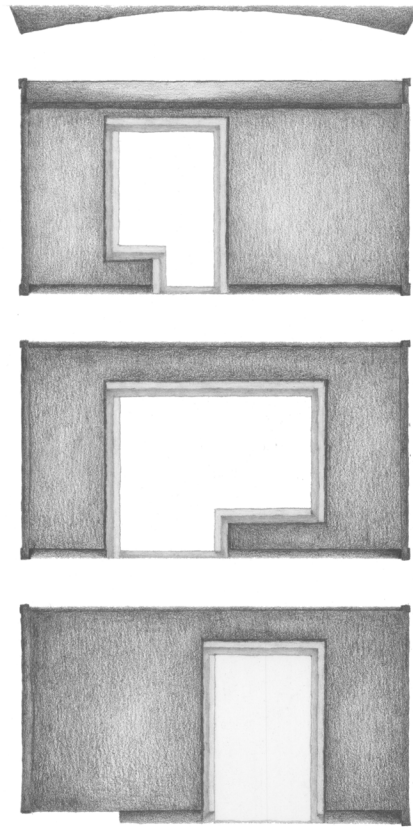




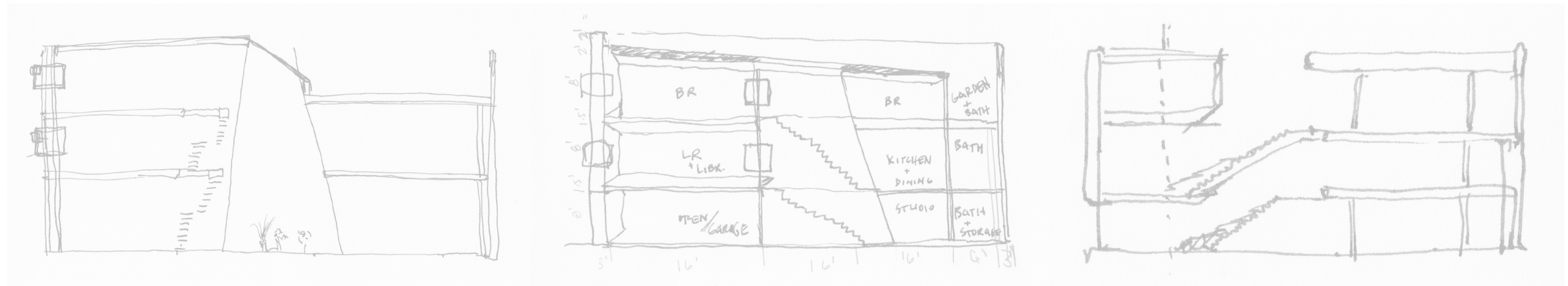
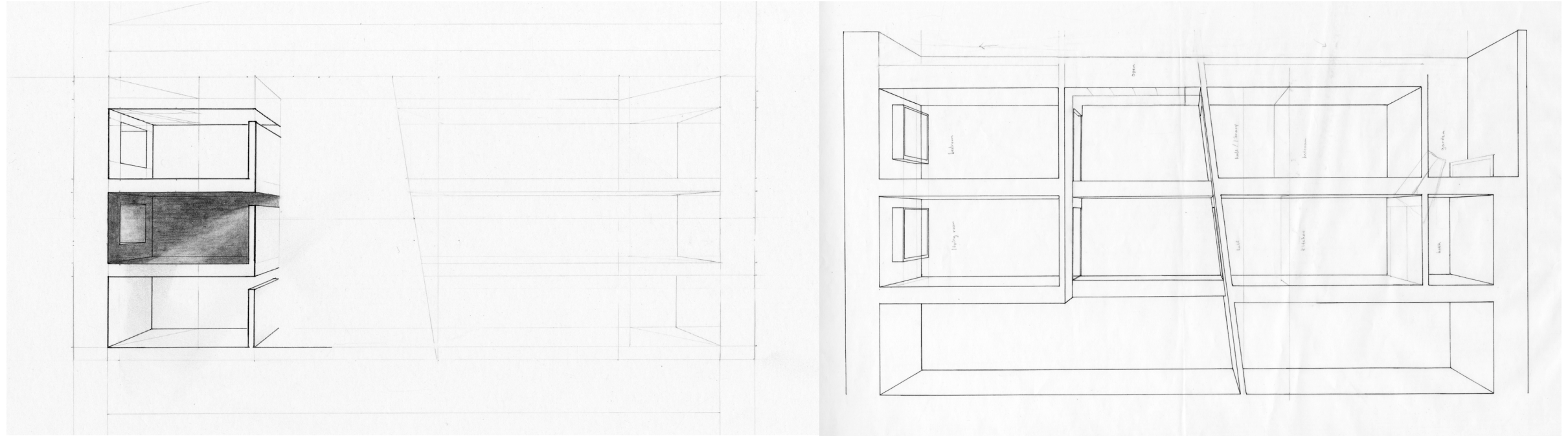


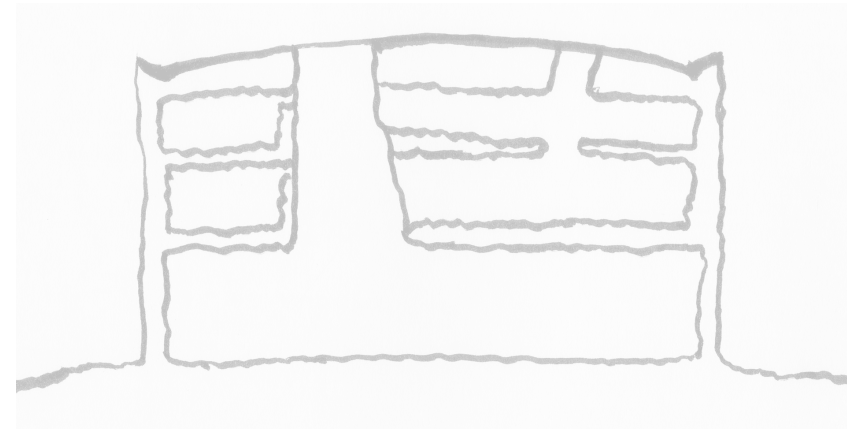
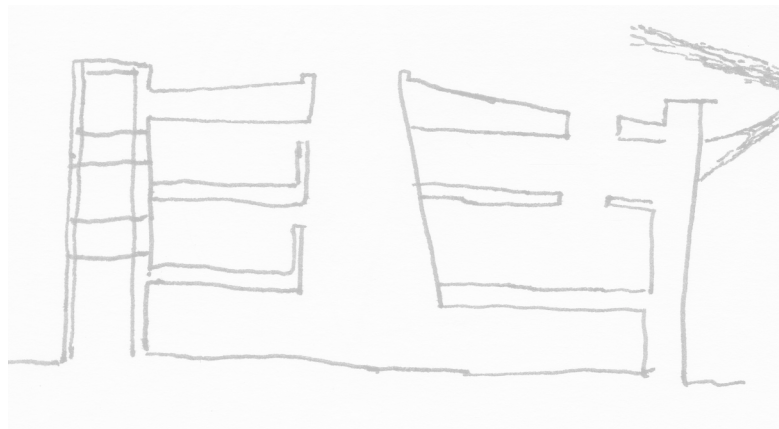
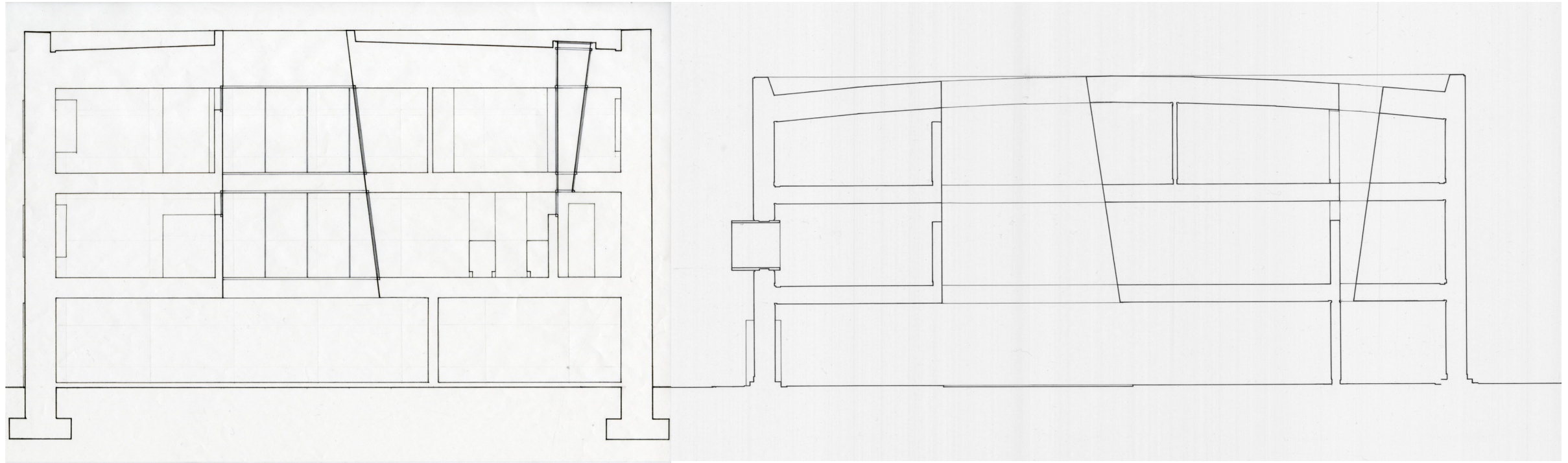




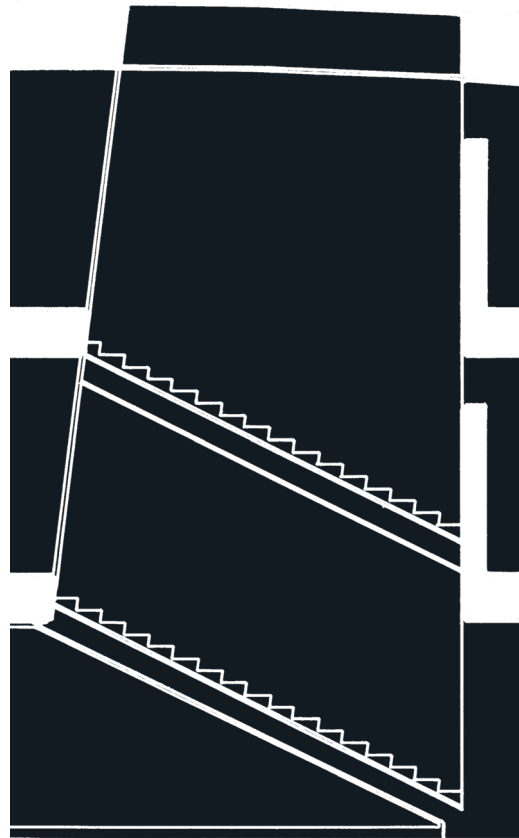


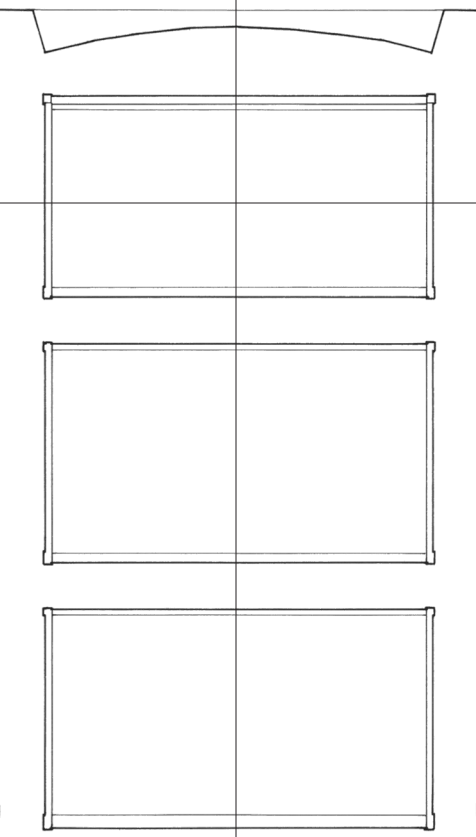
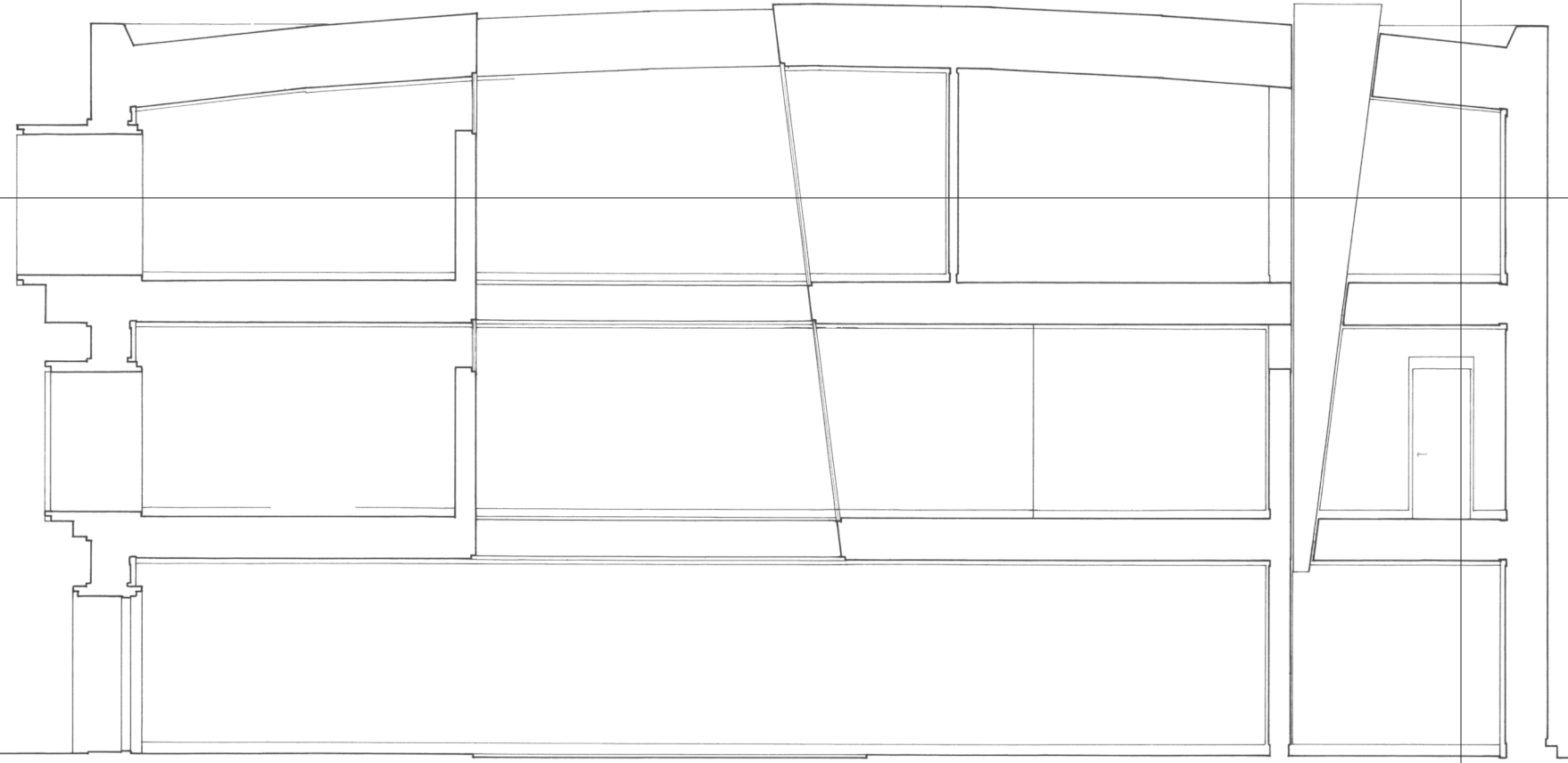
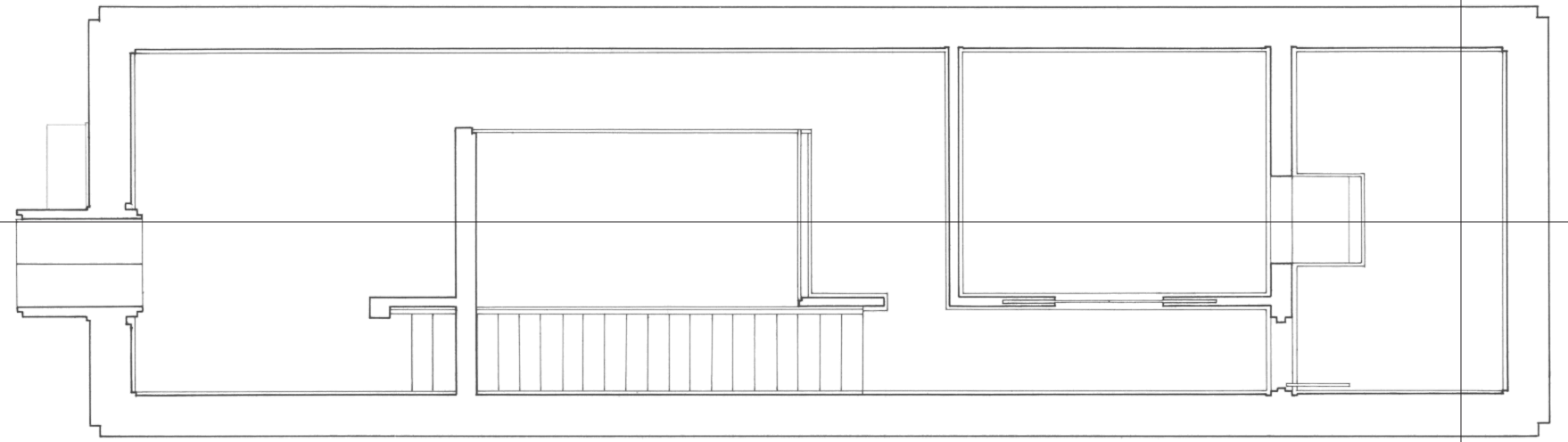
Void

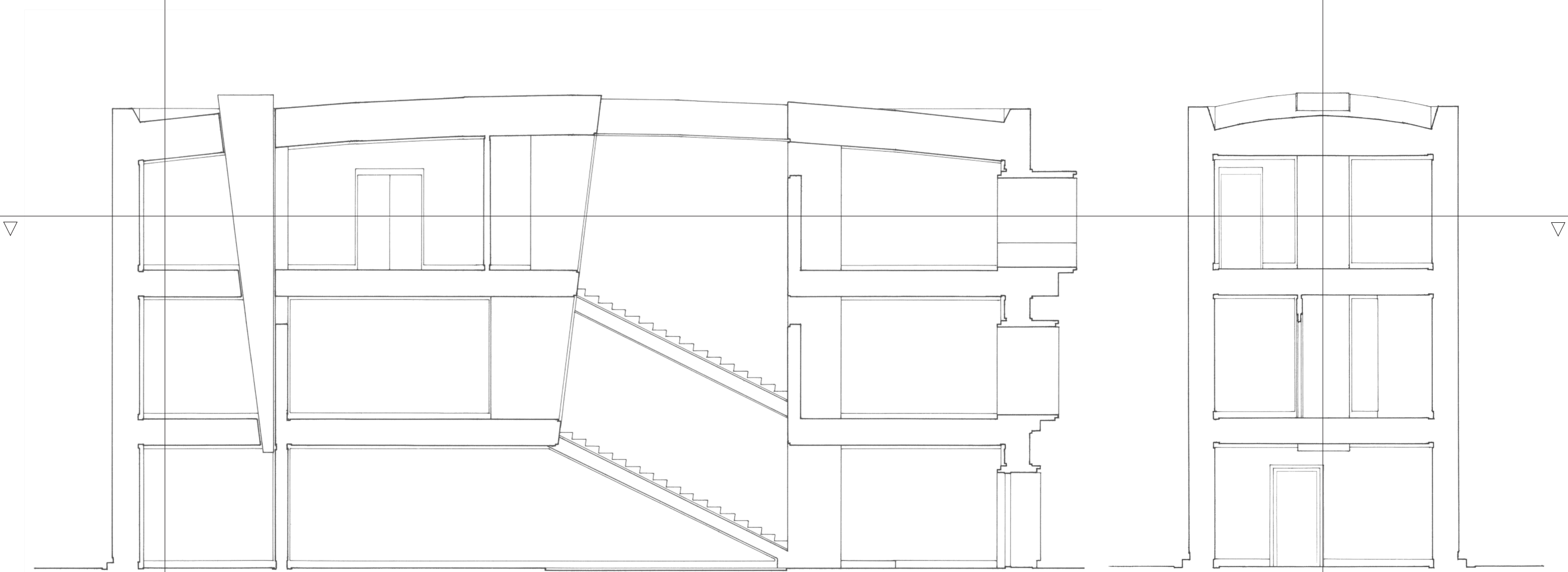
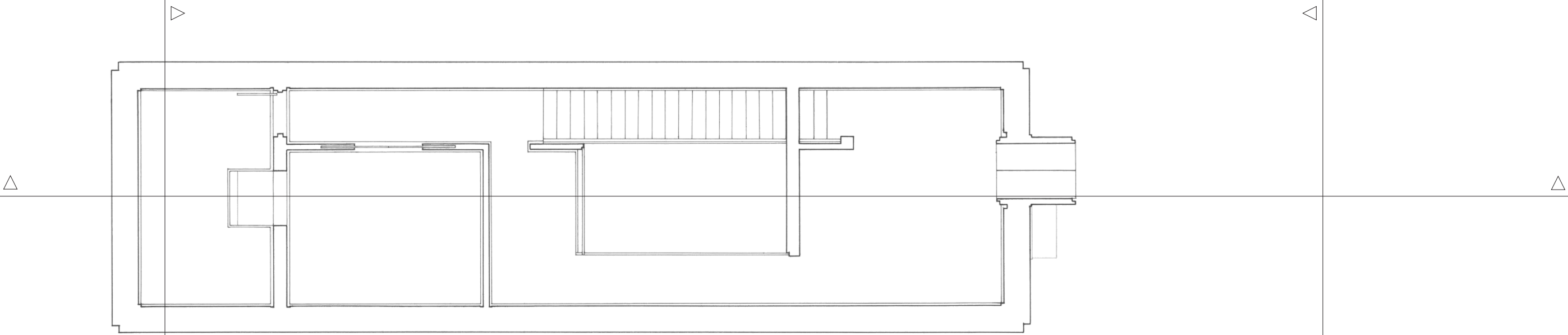


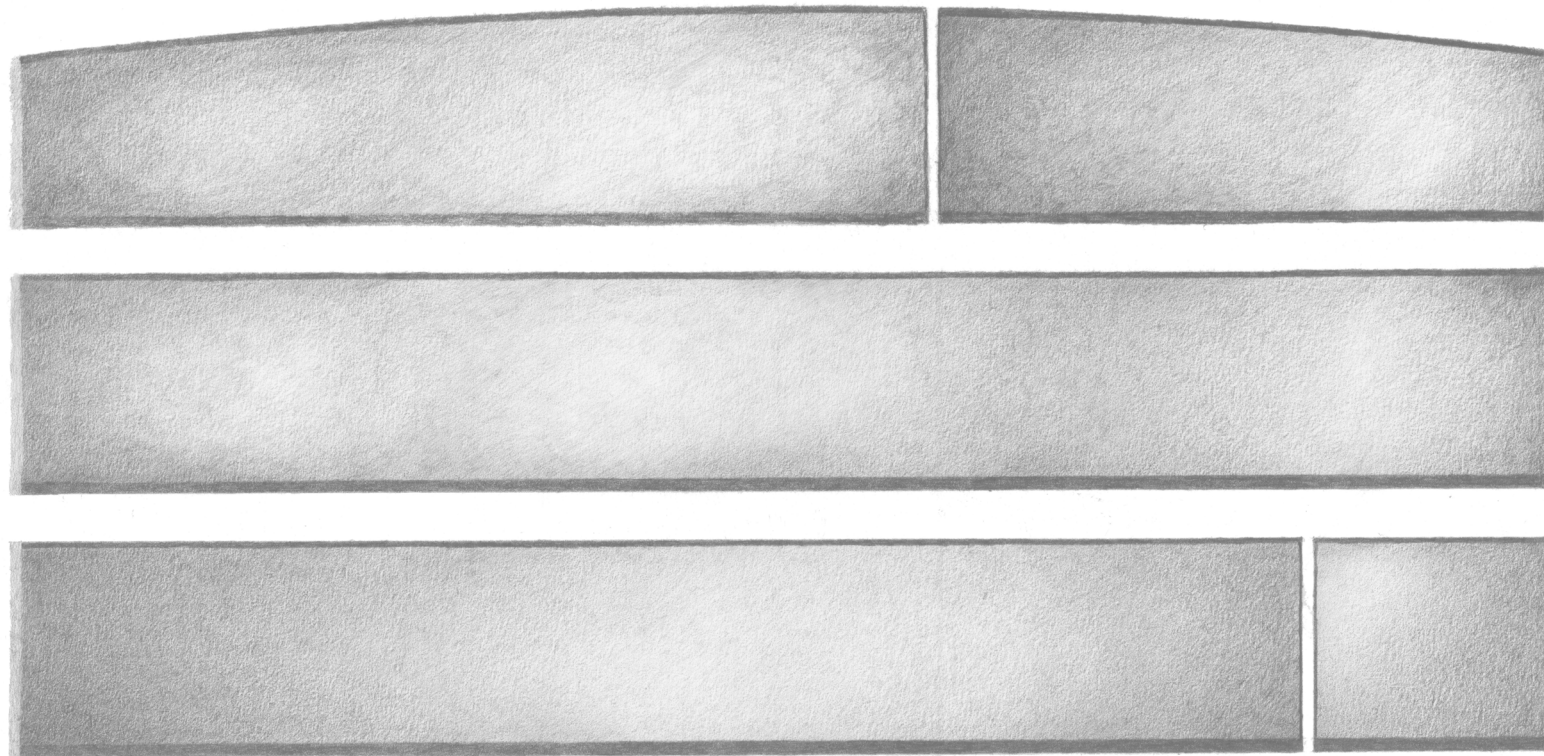


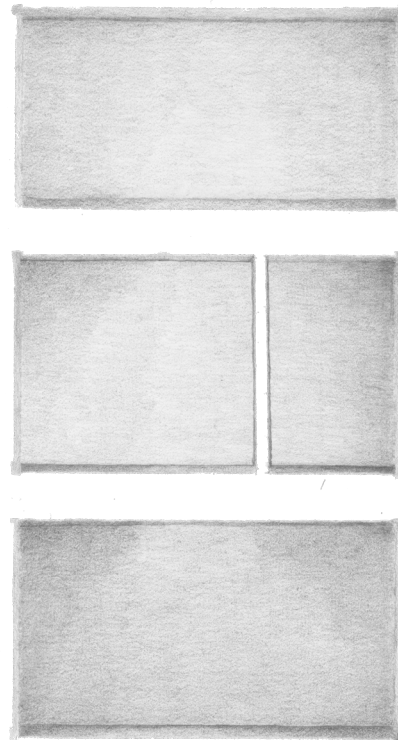






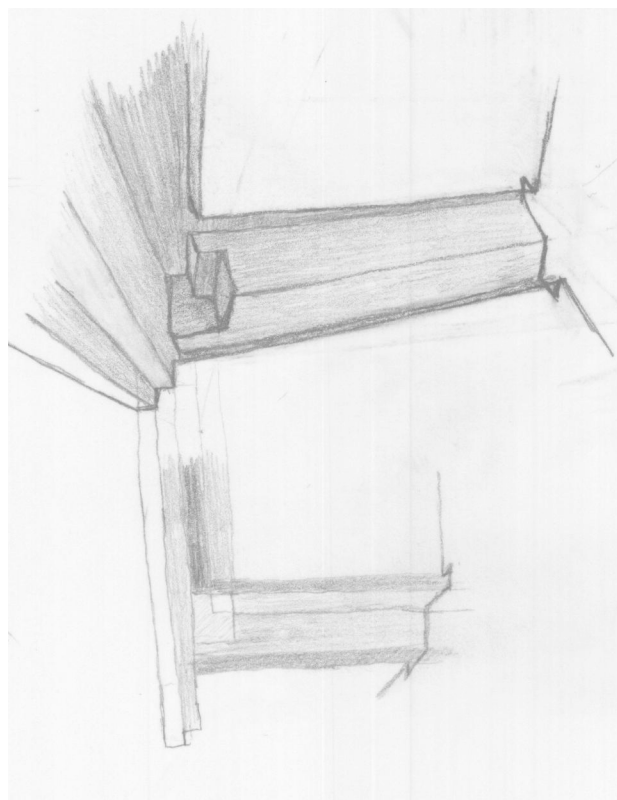


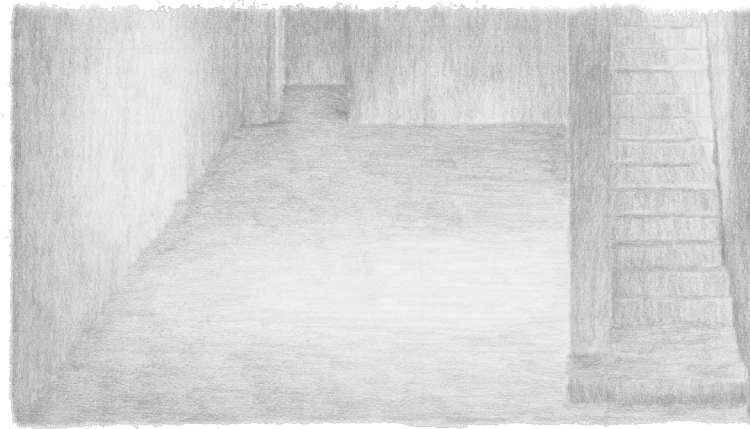
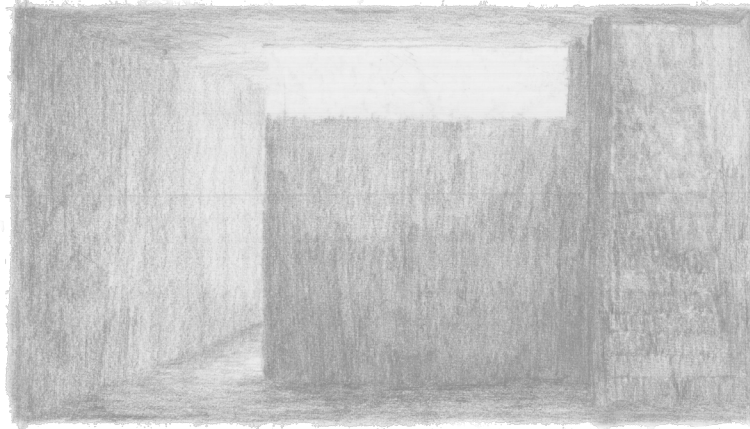
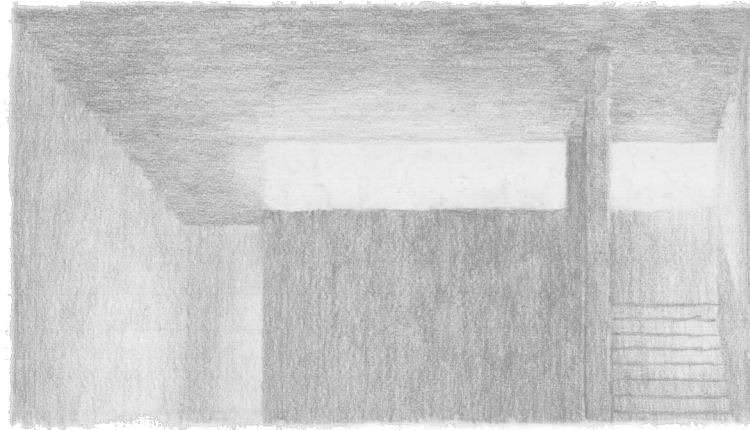


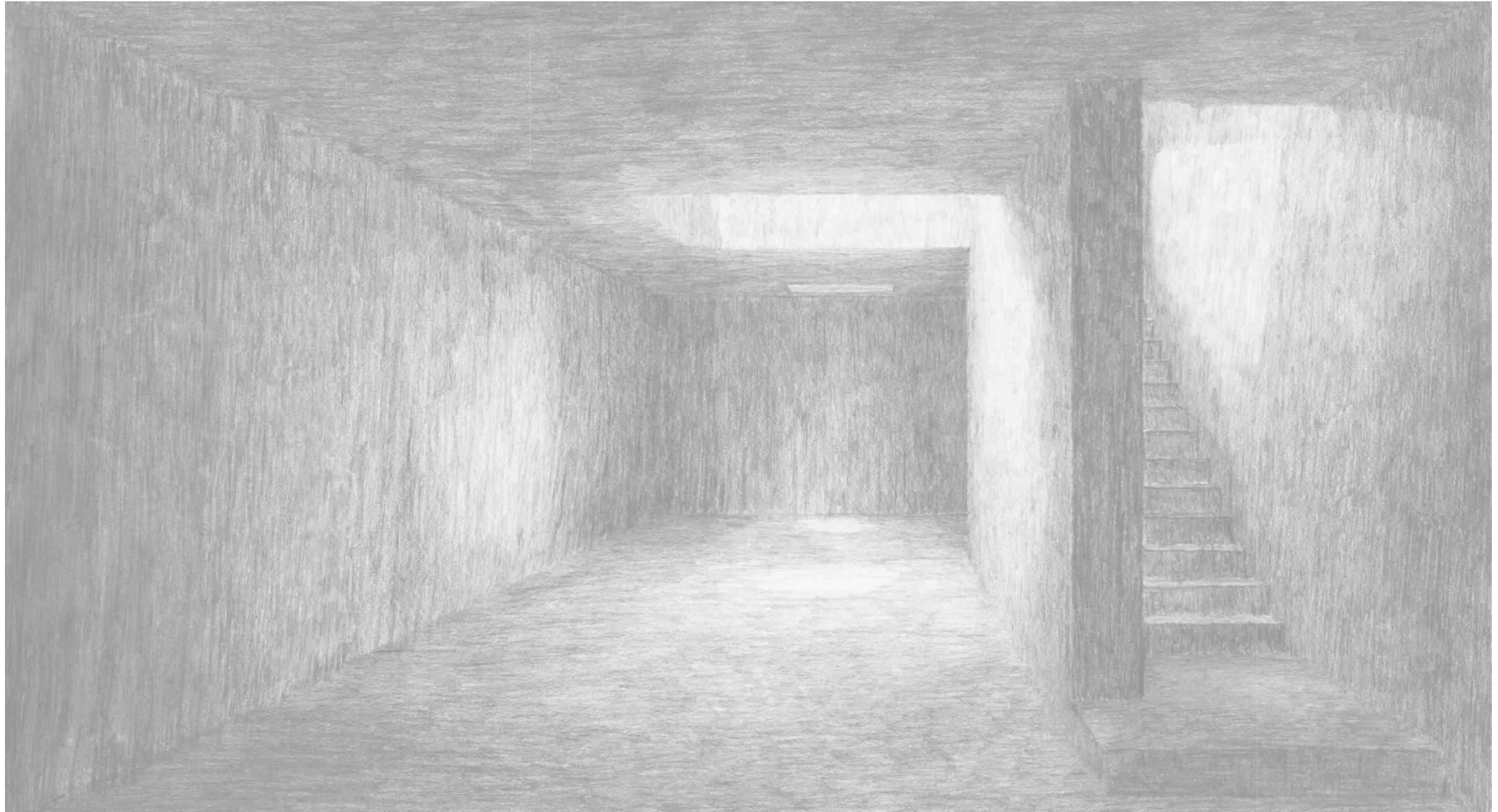


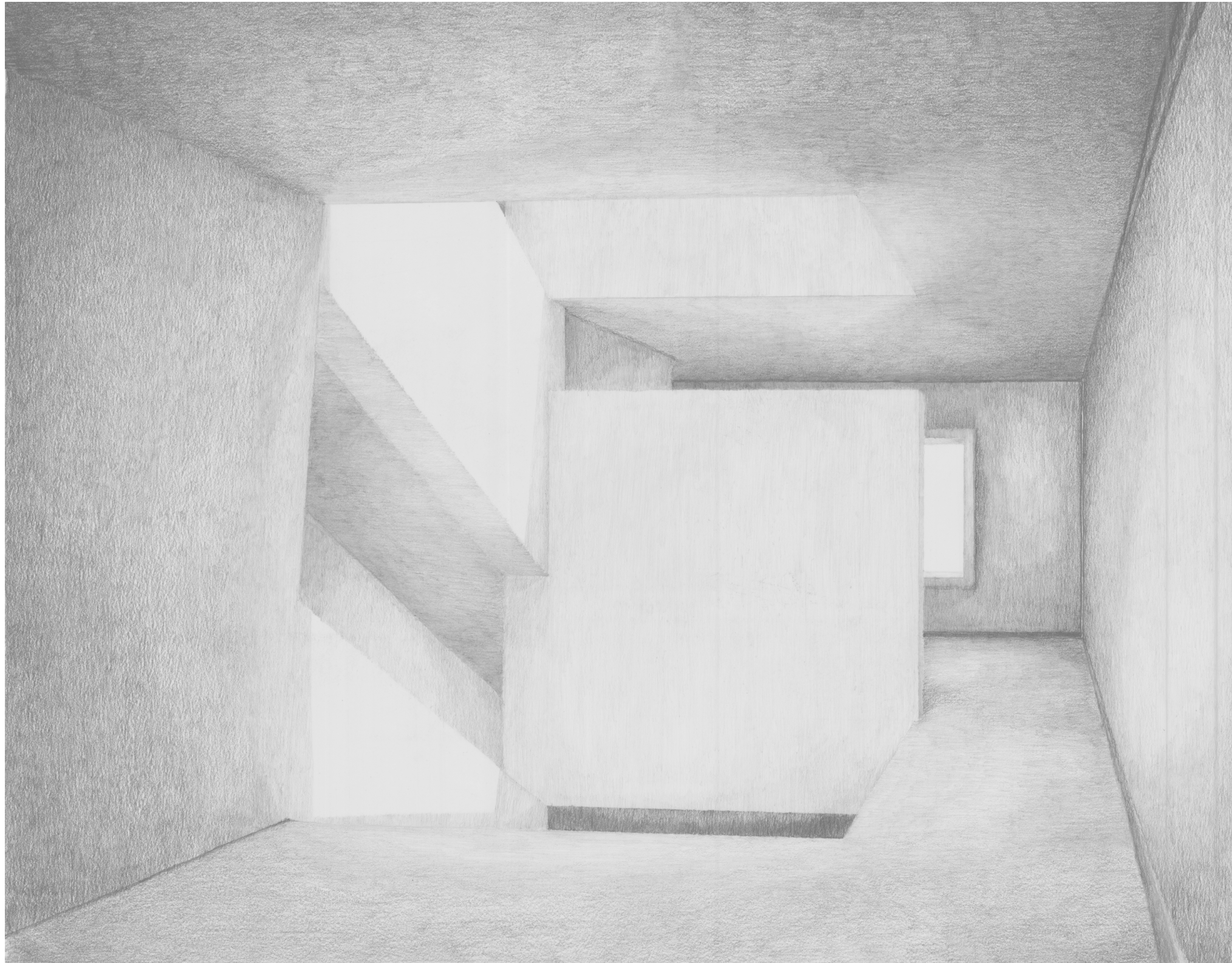
Shadows make present qualities of form that lines alone leave absent.

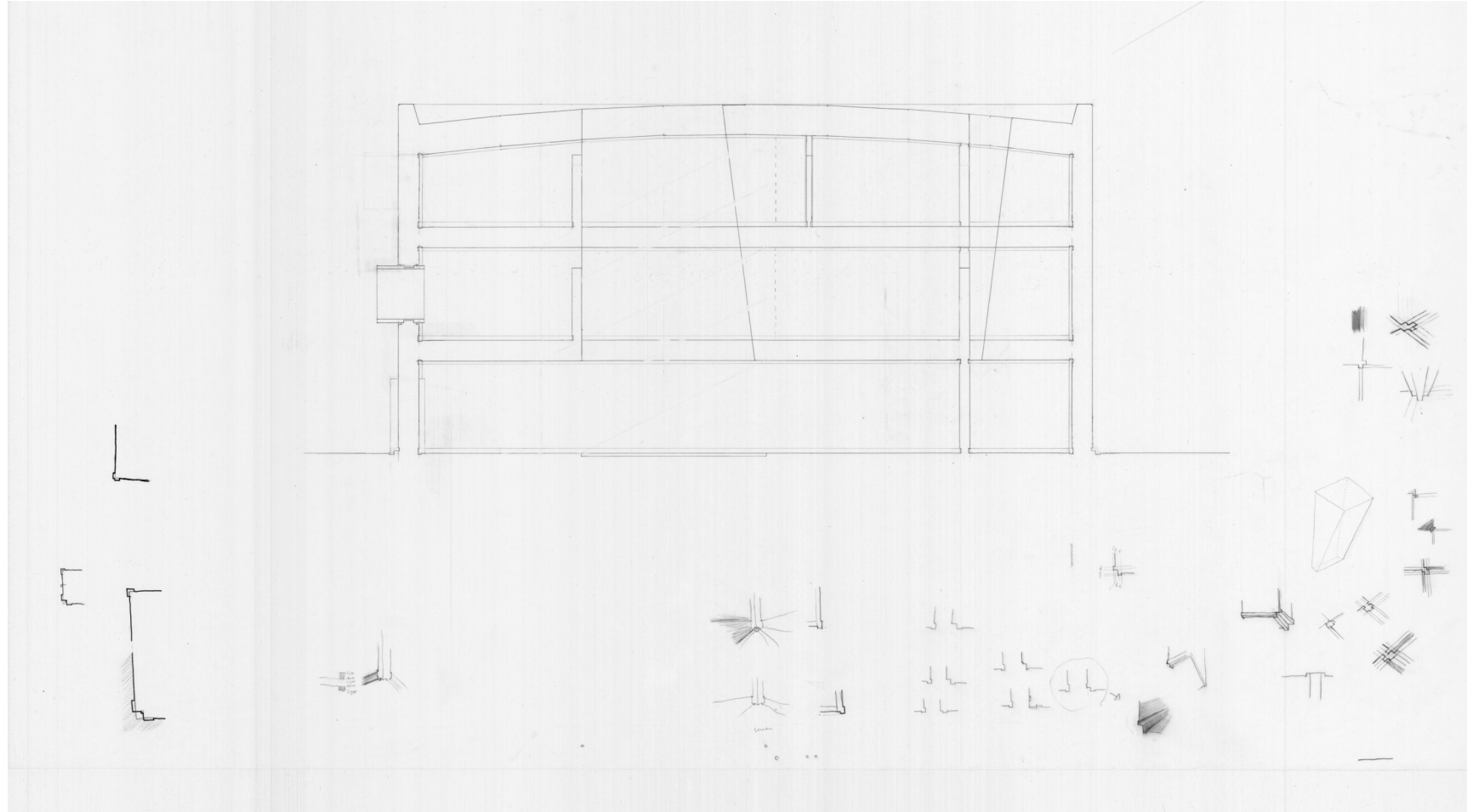
Shadows

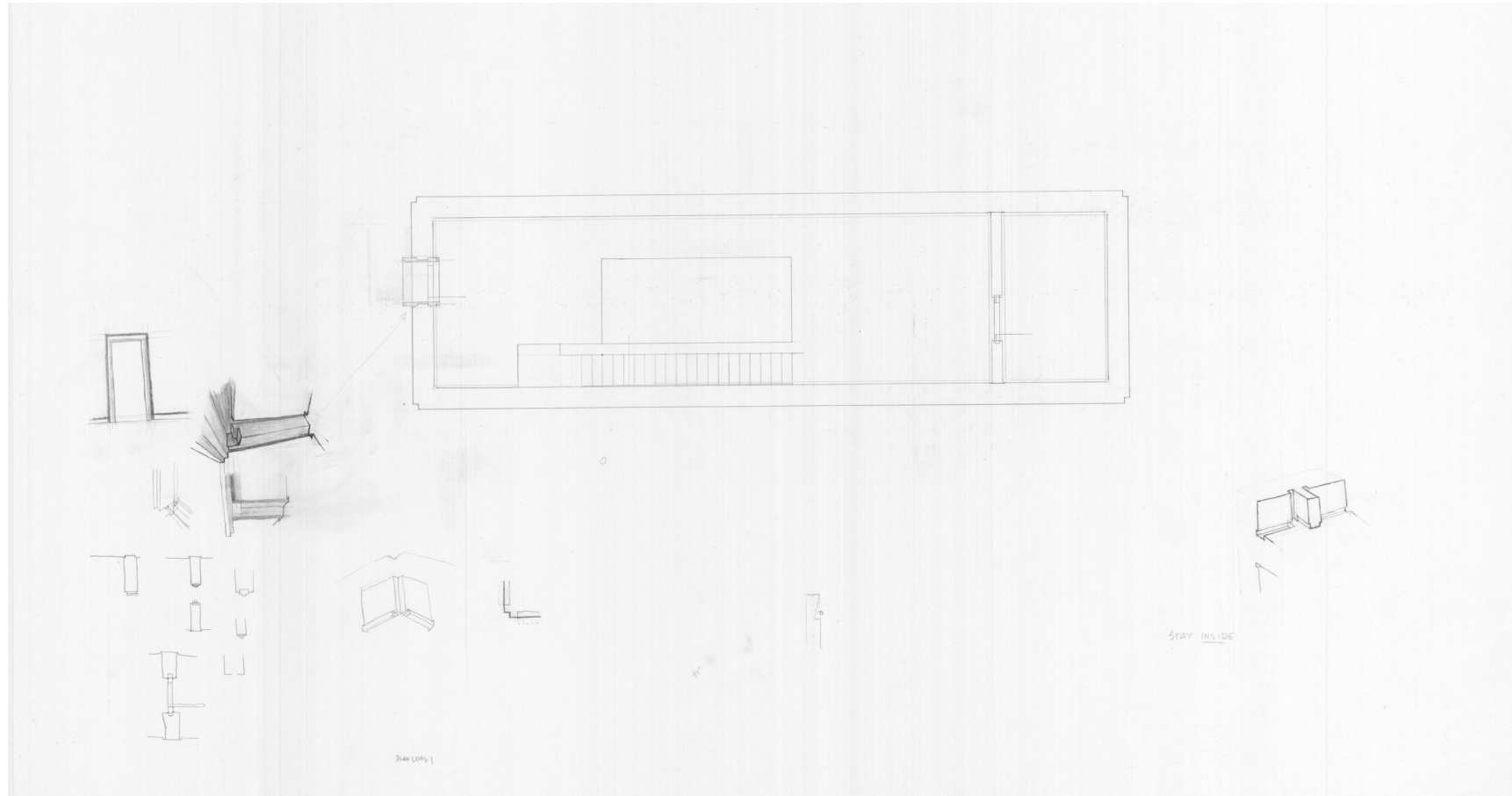












*cirrus stirs my thoughts
in between lines, I draw on
stillness and shadows*

End

