

Hello — and thanks for taking a look at my work!

My name is Rich Kurz and I am an experienced graphics design professional. My philosophy has grown simpler through the years. Good design is not about me, but about us. I want to do good work that serves the needs of my client and that I am proud to put in my portfolio. This pdf shows some of my capabilities.

Note that these concepts and original drawings are owned by myself. The images in this document are my own and are under copyright to Rich Kurz.

This was a special, one-quarter long design project led by guest designer Bill Stumpf, the designer of the Herman Miller Aeron chair. The project was to design one's own living environment. The project booklet, reproduced in the following pages, describes my solution. The presentation consisted of the booklet and a model and any illustrations one provided. Perhaps the most gratifying comment came from my architect roommate. He said it was "pretty good for a first year architect student."

Deliverables: 5-1/4" x 8-1/2" presentation booklet, marker on yellow bumwad paper, xerox copies provided to each classmate. HO-scale (1/87) model, approx. 36" x 36", cardboard and foamcore

I am available to discuss your design, illustration, marketing, and advertising needs. Let's talk!


Rich Kurz

COMMUNITY
a pattern problem

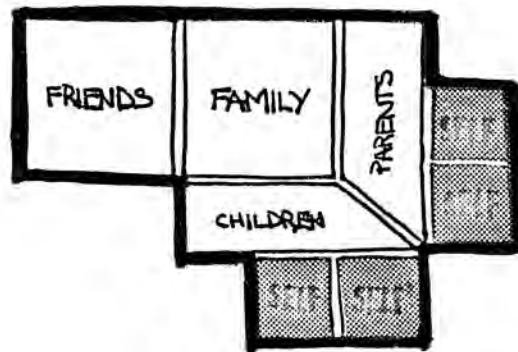
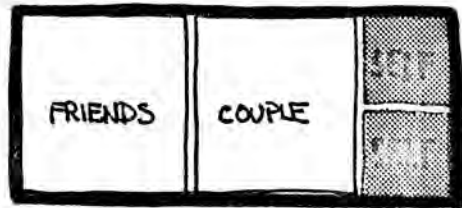
RICHARD KURZ
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
WINTER 1976

THE PROBLEM

The problem as given is to take stock of one's own dreams, life patterns, and desired lifestyle, and order them into a structured reality in the form of a living unit that is both personally expressive of, and individually responsive to that person.

After examining my own life patterns and giving some thought as to what I wanted in a living environment, I discovered that the feature I most desired of a home was that it be situated among friends, instead of in some secluded, wooded refuge. The idea of having people around is a comforting thought, as well as a daily reality. My design then is from a group social context approach rather than one that deals only with an individual insulated from people. It is an environment shaped by relationships.

HOUSEHOLD RELATIONSHIPS



THE APPROACH

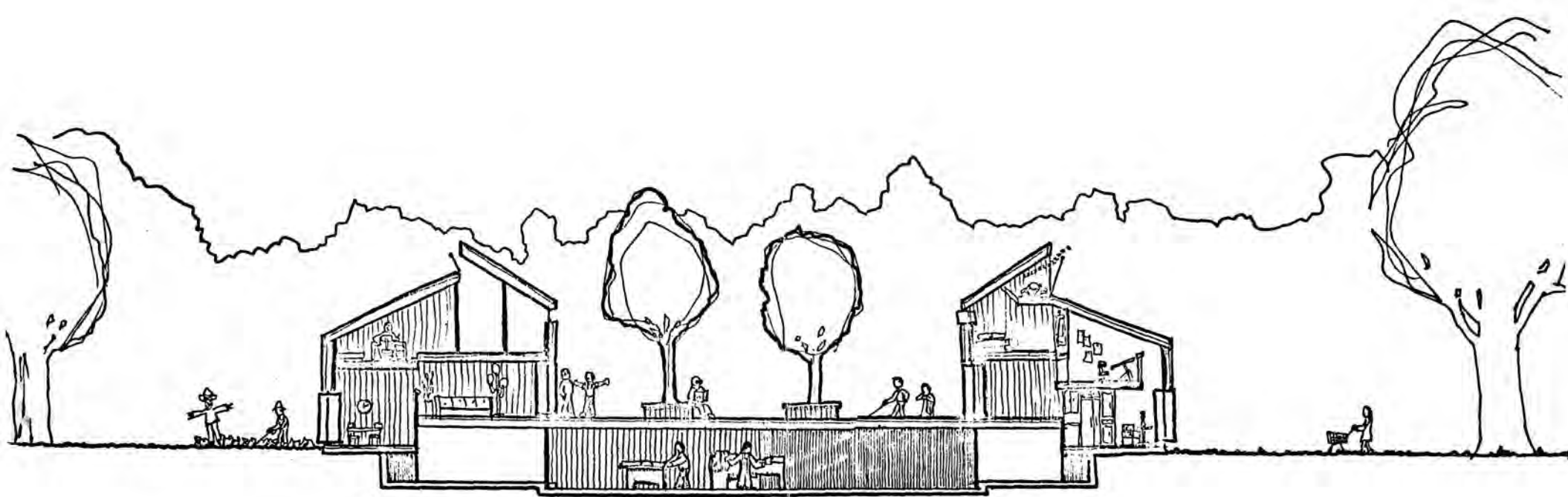
"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"
 And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment. And the second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Social interaction is inevitable, requiring only two people, and hopefully the ensuing interaction will result to the benefit of both. Relationships are implicit in social interaction, in fact in the above passage, Jesus teaches of God's desire that all relationships be properly pursued and fulfilling. What is a community but a web of relationships, and what is a dwelling but a smaller unit of relationships. If we accept that a person is molded or at least influenced by his environment, it becomes desirable then to provide him with a balanced set of relationships that can fulfill an individual's needs, such as love, security, acceptance, as well as to provide a situation for growth and challenge, and even restraint. At the same time, a person also requires privacy and solitude, to feel unencroached upon by society. This is expressed and partially fulfilled in one's sense of territoriality and his ownership of his own home. I object to what can happen in a housing flat where it's too easy to draw the curtains over the picture window and establish one's own kingdom, or really a retreat. I wish to encourage social interaction and still maintain a sense of individuality.

After examining relationships and levels of interactions, two general classifications resulted that molded the arrangement of the spaces. These are the external relationships or the different household situations, and their relationships to the environment and to each other, and the internal relationships that account for the interactions that take place within the dwelling.

I first of all looked at a typical individual's social life cycle from the time he establishes his own household. These resulted in three household situations, the individual, the couple, and the family. These then formed the three basic lifestyles and dwelling units that the community I developed would contain. Because of the common interests of each group, family units were clustered at one end of the court and the single units at the other, with the couple units in between.

Internal relationships deals with the individual interactions that occur within each classification. These in turn would dictate the spaces necessary to accommodate each group's lifestyle. The chart on the opposite page shows that breakdown. With each lifestyle, additional sets of relationships between the individual and his friends are added. The plan must reflect an additional set of relationships between that of the individual and his friends, those outside his household.



A SOLUTION

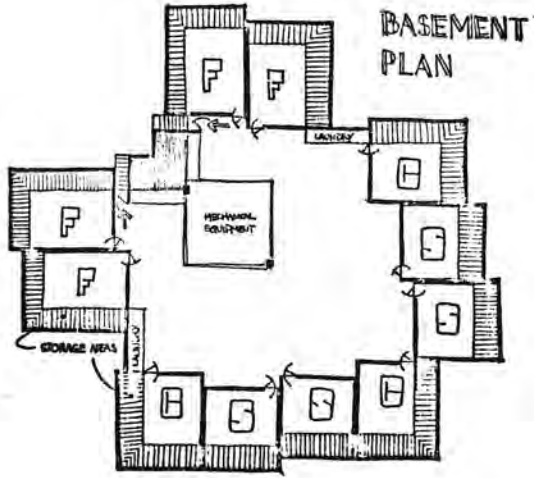
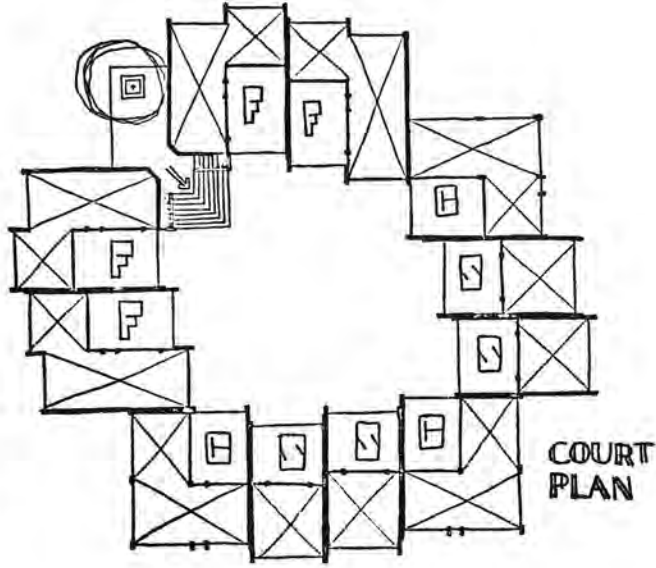
My solution is to design a community situation. The solution is a condominium of eleven units grouped about an enclosed court. The courtyard is the central concept of the solution. It is intended to provide an area of common interaction and to act as an extension of the living room of each unit. It is intended to provide a stimulus for such interaction thru the visible reminder of the adjoining units and thru the placement of public and semi-public spaces within the units that adjoin the courtyard. This is to be a friendly space, enhanced by the control of the scale of the units and the sense of security as an enclosed area. To further facilitate the community concept, the basement area immediately under the court is an open public space subject to the community's wishes for development.

I realize that all too frequently, courts can become a no-mans land and therefore useless. It is at this point that the designer yields control of the problem. A community can only overcome that by forming relationships with each other. This can better happen if there are a manageable number of people to relate to (30+ in this case) as well as a quality of long-term stability (thru ownership). I have made a compromise here. A variety of households was important to me, so to prevent a sedimentary situation in which in ten years all the units are families, I made no planned provision for individual unit expansion. Within each unit, there is the space capability to step up one household classification, at least temporarily, but the units are really only designed to be an individual unit, a couple, or a family of four or five.

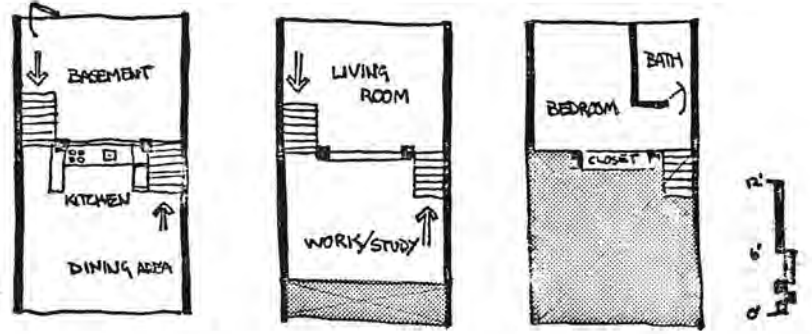
The interior concept of each unit deals with privacy and activities. With the courtyard being the most public space, all directions radiating from it go towards privacy, both out and up. Family activities are located on the ground level towards the outside, with spaces becoming more individual in nature with each higher level. The levels have been staggered to define activity spaces, as well as to provide a feeling of openness, and more importantly space. This is further enhanced by balconies and the high, sloping ceilings. The basement room has no assigned function and may be used for expansion. A storage area is provided in the recessed area at basement level under the ground level floors.

Clustering living units in this manner has the benefit of opening up large areas of land between blocks, while maintaining the same population density per area. This land becomes available for a variety of community purposes; recreation, conservation, future development, farming, or whatever. The outside orientation of each unit provides an unobstructed view of the landscape and a resultant sense of privacy. The area of grass outside ones window is his own turf, while the land beyond is held in common. Parking is isolated from 100 to 300 feet away from the community to minimize the intrusion of the automobile and its social ramifications within this social environment. Carry carts could ease the package carrying distance to and from the car.

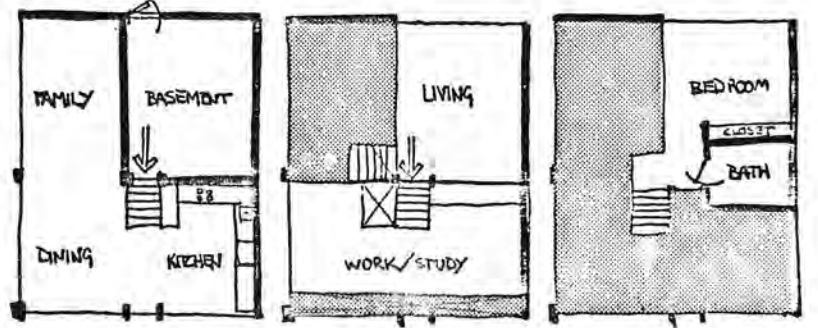
SITE PLAN



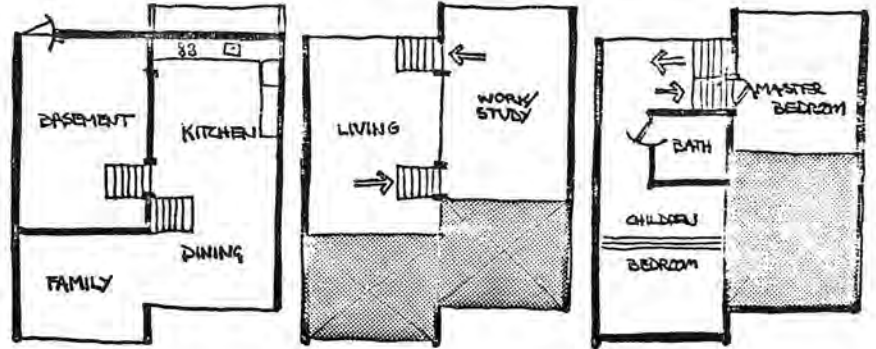
SINGLE



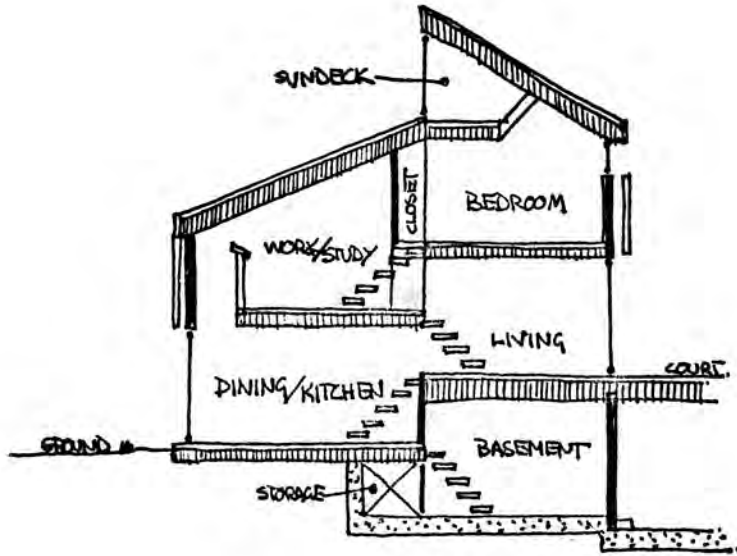
COUPLE



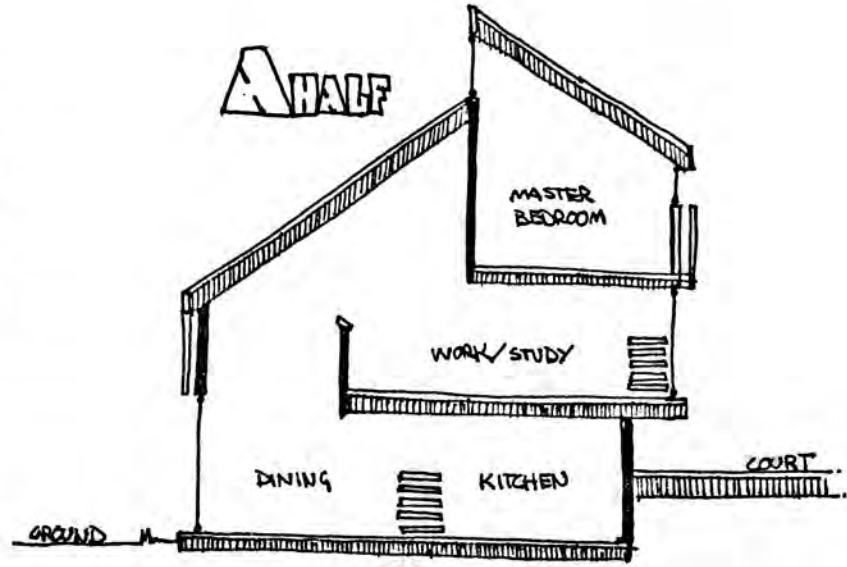
FAMILY



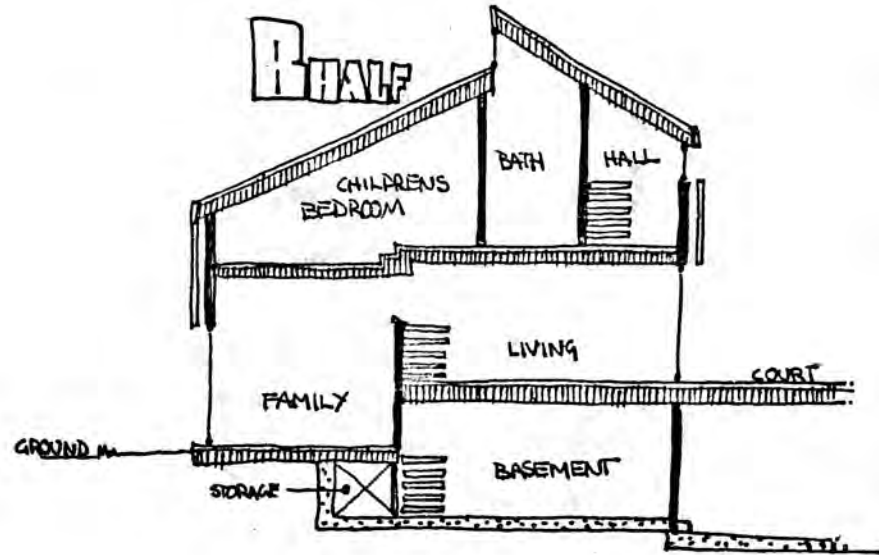
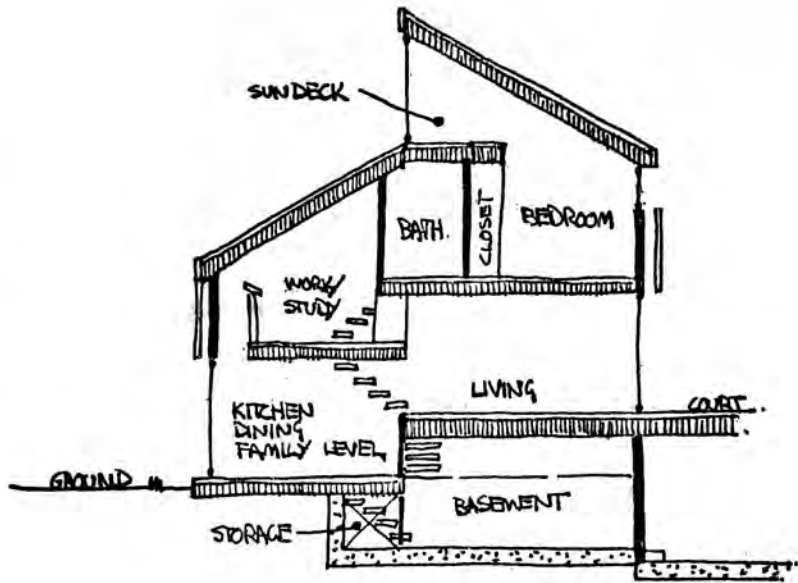
SINGLE



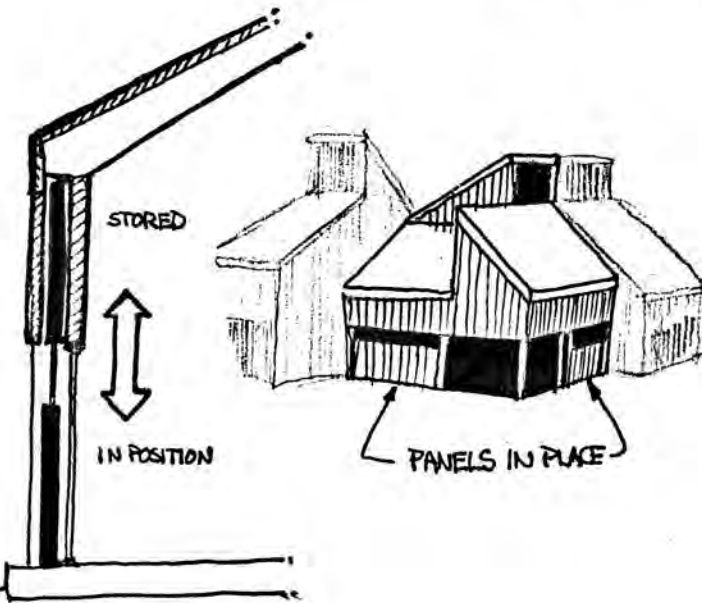
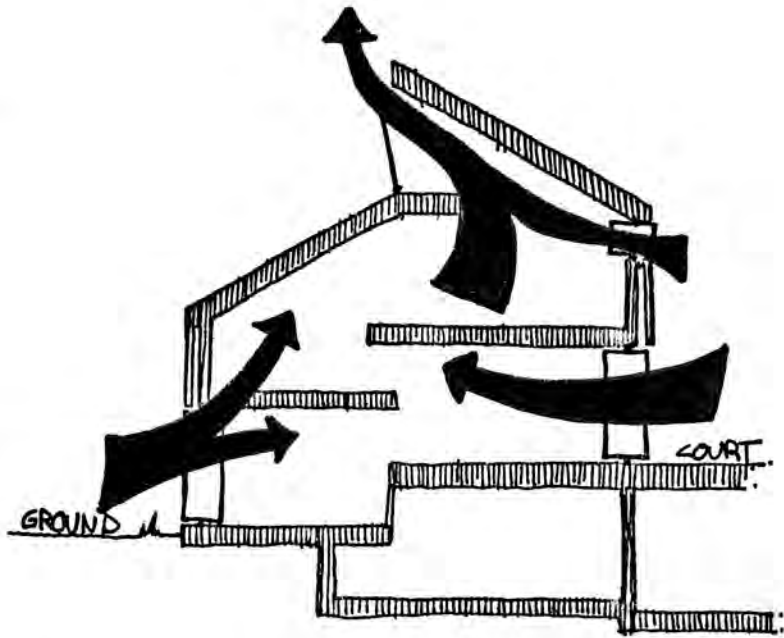
FAMILY



COUPLE



PRIVACY PANELS • VENTILATION



A PROPOSAL

To further enhance the image and the success of the community, I propose to situate it within the larger scope of a village. Additional communities and structures could be situated within walking distance of each other, some serving as dwellings, others as shops to provide day to day products and services, others as offices, and others as civic centers and facilities.

This also provides the basis for an energy intensive and self-sufficient community. Starting with the units themselves, the roofs of the structures can be used not only to hold solar panels, but to induce ventilation of the unit thru funneling breezes on a windy day as well as inducing pressure differentials thru roof radiational heat on a still day, a feature utilizing the open plan interior. Wind generators can also be used in conjunction with the wind obstruction capabilities of the structure. The nearby location of shops combined with the possibility of individual or community scale food gardens also reduces the reliance upon the car resulting in another, indirect, energy saving and allowing for roadway land reclamation, all from a downward scaling of its priority in daily living.

I have enumerated some of the envisionsable, quantitative advantages of this proposal. It is not interded as a whole to be a better solution to todays problems, but as a viable alternative. Qualitative advantages are impossible to predict, but I can see the development of a new, reordered lifestyle, recalling the better common sense features of past communities, and providing a response to todays impersonal housing approach.



