



**A Home For  
Delinquent Children  
Muncie, Indiana**

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An Architectural Thesis  
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Department of Architecture  
Ball State University; Muncie, Indiana

I would like to thank the following people for their guidance throughout my thesis: Thesis Committee Chairperson: Bruce Meyer Committee Member; Andrew Seager. And a special thanks to Dr. Kenneth L. Joy, Clinical Psychologist, who served as my outside resource person during my thesis.

## **Acknowledgements**

Arch  
Thesis  
1997  
1998  
1999  
2000  
2001

The intent of the following thesis examination is to define the problems of delinquent children and translate the solutions into workable architectural ideals. The primary focus of my thesis is to study the needs of the children to be housed and utilize architectural planning, along with expression, to meet those needs. The children's perceptions of spaces and how they utilize those spaces, are primary considerations in the design of a youth shelter facility.

## Preface

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# Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a major problem in the United States, today. There are many reasons for juvenile delinquency. Perhaps the most important, or most distressing, reason for delinquency is the lack of a substantial home life.

A lack of a substantial home life is a major cause of delinquency. In the definition of home life, a child lacks the family unity that he needs to develop in a normal manner. A majority of juvenile delinquents come from broken homes, or homes in which the parents lack understanding, or are physically abusive. This type of home environment does not provide the child with any real stability, physically, or psychologically. Somehow, somewhere, this stability must be provided, if not in the home itself, then it must occur outside of the home.

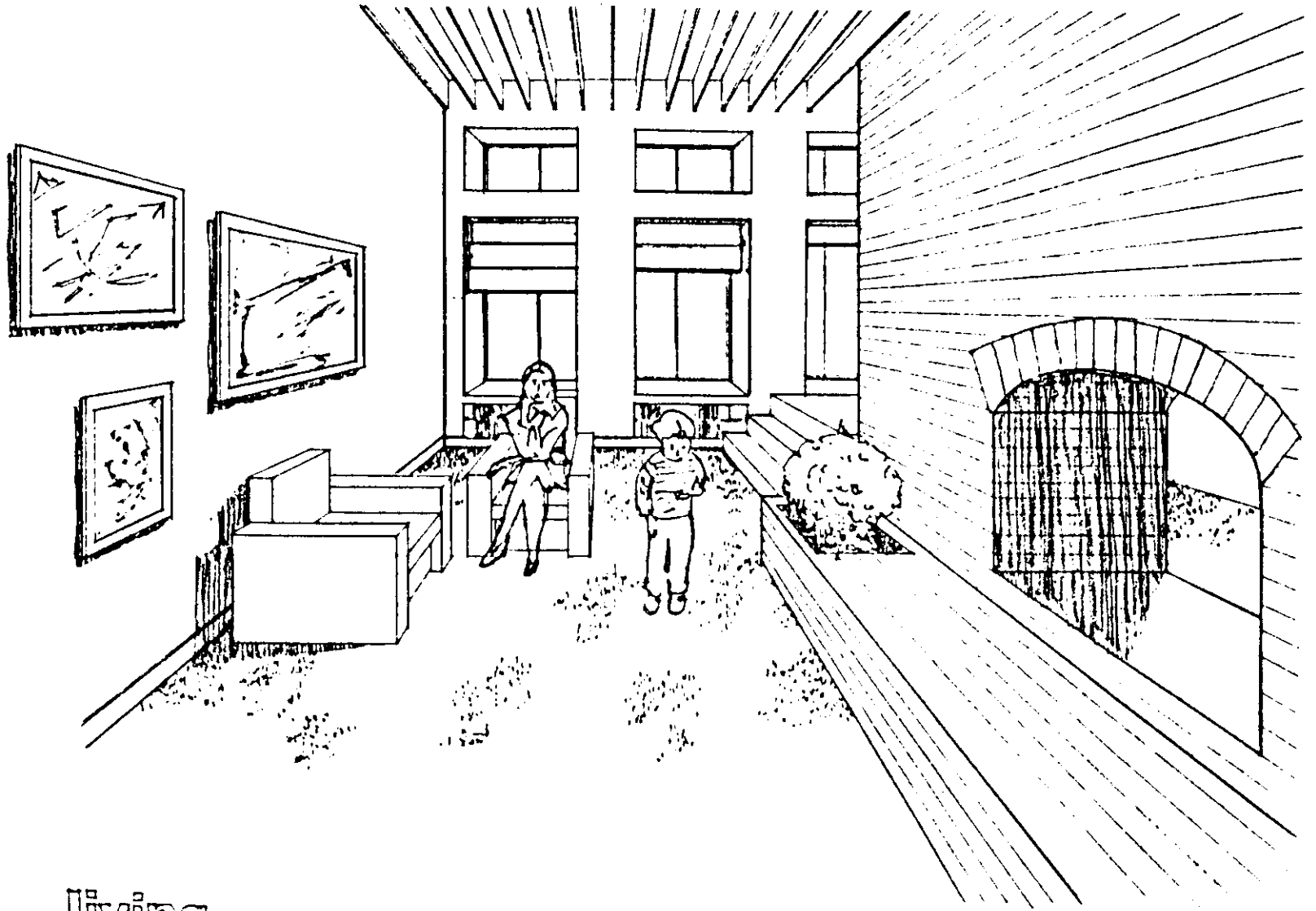
The concept of the needs that a juvenile delinquent must obtain raises some interesting questions. If their home life is not adequate, then what could provide for an adequate setting? A typical response would be to institutionalize the delinquent children. Is institutionalization the right answer? Or does institutionalization further reinforce their unhappy beginnings? What should the solution to institutionalization be?

I believe that there is an alternative to the institutionalization process. Why not provide the child with the exact substance in which they are lacking? This substance being, a suitable "home environment". The "home environment" would seek to enhance the child's feelings of family relationships. It could be a place that would symbolize what a "home environment"

should be. Above all, it should be learning environment. Its sole purpose, whether through social/psychological counselling, or in its relationship to the community that houses/supports it, should be to re-socialize the delinquent youth. There should be an attempt to teach the child how to deal with the environment in which he came from, and ultimately, to return and build new relationships.

The thesis in which I am pursuing deals with the architectural aspects of such a home for delinquents children. If, through conscientious architectural thinking, a design can interpret these needs and a strong, non-institutional solution may emerge. Since a majority of existing group homes for children are largely institutional in nature, a need for a non-institutional solution exists. I believe that through proper architectural expressions and considerations, a therapeutic group home environment can be obtained.

The resolution of the current problems in the design of group homes will make significant contributions to both the architectural and sociological fields. In resolving the basic problem of insitutionality, the initial step towards rehabilitation/re-socialization will be accomplished. This concept also deals with how the child will perceive the "home". If the child can relate to his new surroundings in a favorable manner, then his perceptions of the "home" will have to be responsive.



living

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project in which I chose to demonstrate my thesis contentions is a group home for delinquent children. The home is to be located in Muncie, Indiana. Juvenile delinquency, as described earlier, is a distressing problem. The need for such a home in Muncie is evident. The two existing structures, The Delaware County Children's Home, and The Youth Service Bureau; Muncie, Indiana, are well-staffed and well-cared for, but they both exhibit a lack of spacial/aesthetic requirements. In addition to this, neither facility was originally designed for the housing of juvenile delinquents. A new "home" will allow for the design to be expressly limited to the housing of delinquent children.

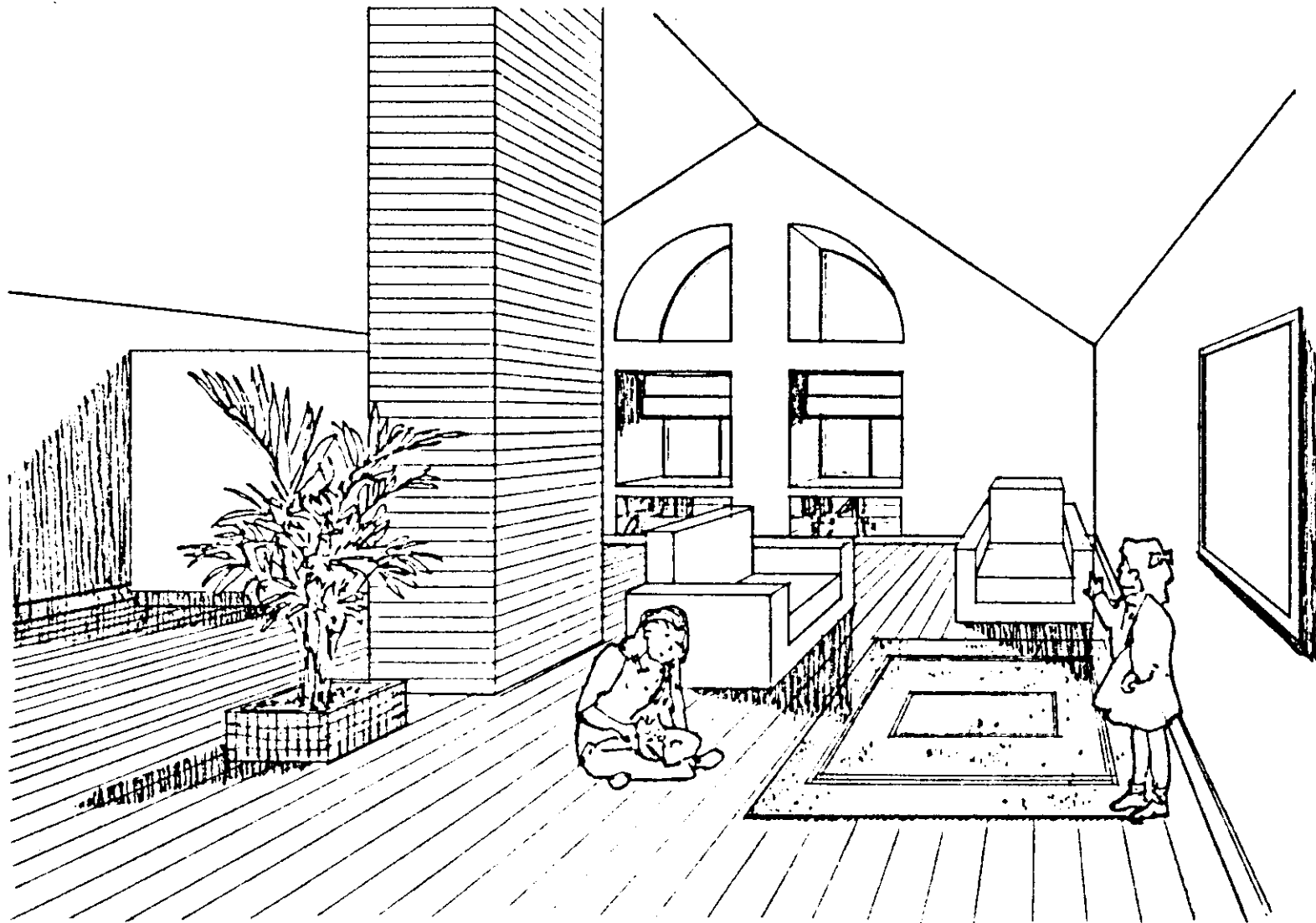
The group home will house twenty-four children and six house-parents. The children range in age from ten years to sixteen years old. The duration of stay within the home may range from six weeks to several years, dependent upon the reasons for their delinquency and family backgrounds. The children attend school on a regular basis (in fact, it is in the program of activities that they must attend school). The children's activities within the home are very structured and organized. Freedom of movement, both in and out of the home, is restricted. The challenge is to create a "family atmosphere" while recognizing the limitations of the children.

Within the group home reside three sets of two house-parents. A ratio of two house-parents per eight children is typical of group homes that currently exist. The

house-parent's duties are much like that of an actual parent. He or she must remain with the children (except when the child is at school) at all times. The house-parents are actually full-time inhabitants of the group home. Things such as meal preparation, house-cleaning, and other house-hold duties are the responsibility of the house-parents, along with the children. The house-parents and the children should portray a parent-child relationship.

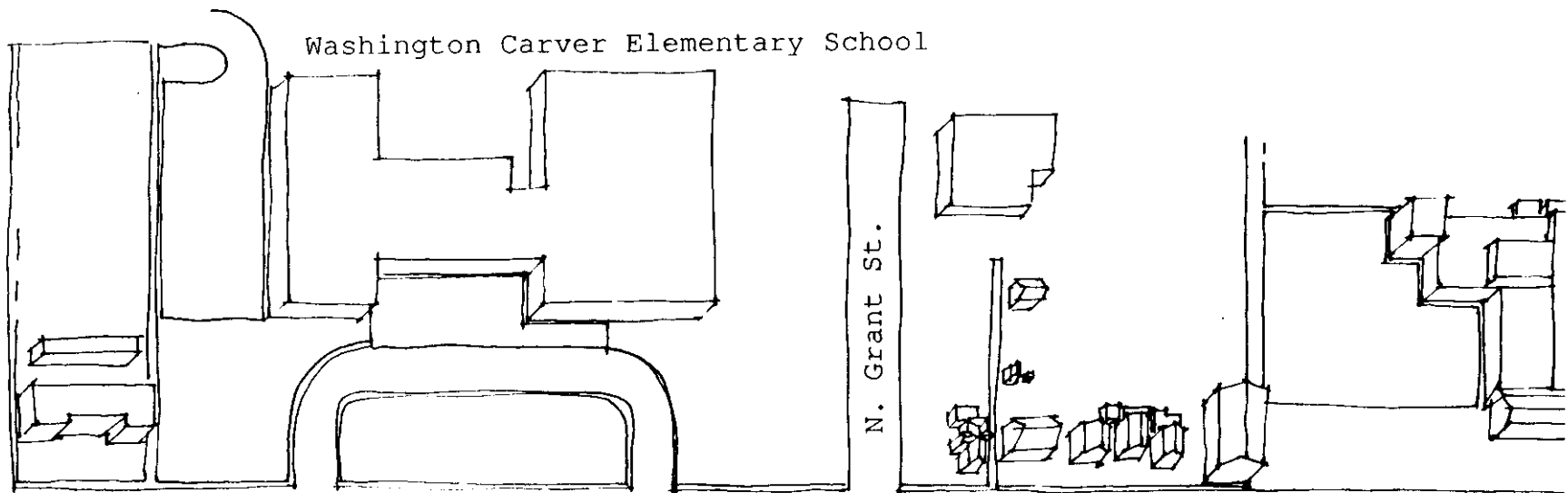
The idea of housing twenty-four children and six house-parents within a single structure may inhibit the idea of creating "family relationships". To reinforce the idea of a family unit, the "home" is divided into three distinct units. Dividing the home into three units allows for eight children and two house-parents to live in each unit. Smaller "family groups" can be created with this arrangement. Although each unit will be independent in its daily routine, they will be considered as an entire complex. Actual physical separation will occur, but the adjacency of the units will make travel within the complex minimal.

An administration center is also located on the site. It shall be independent of the "homes" themselves, but travel between them will also be minimal. The administration center will serve to house administrative functions. Also, all records and files concerning the children are housed here. Space for board of director meetings and family group sessions should also occur within the administration center. The administration center should be separate, as to not interfere with the daily activities of the group "homes".

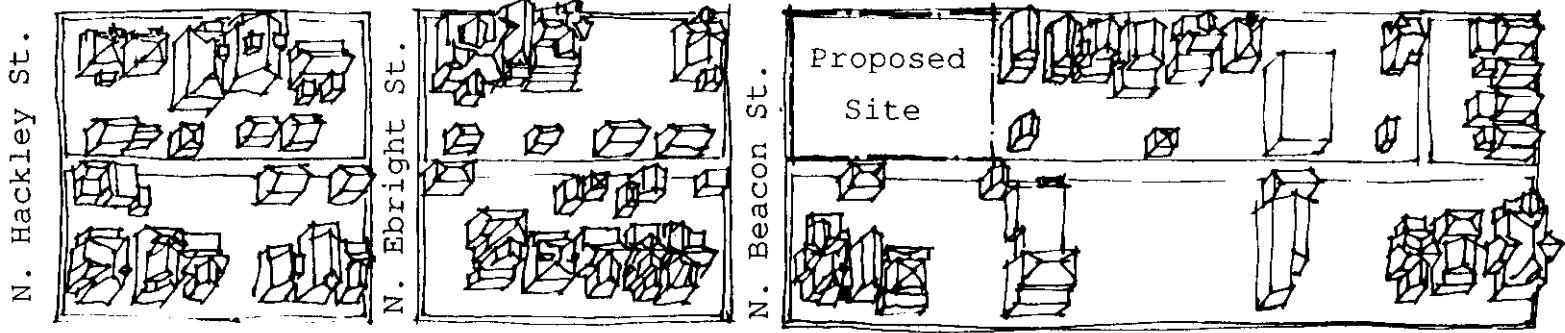


children's bedroom

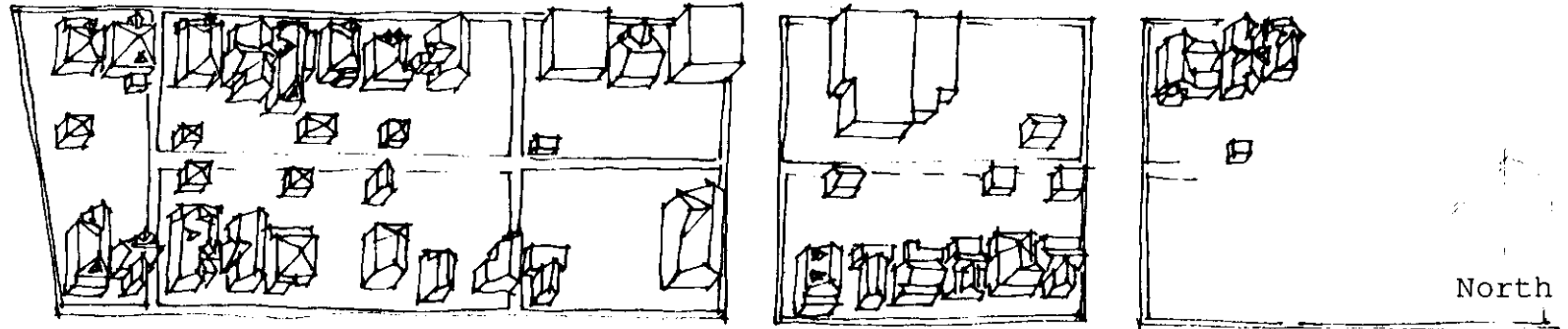
Washington Carver Elementary School



E. Washington St.



E. Main St.



Adjacent Neighborhood Map; Muncie, Indiana

## SITE SELECTION

The site chosen for the location of the group home is at the corner of E. Washington and N. Beacon Streets in Muncie, Indiana. Located across Washington Street from the site is the Washington Carver Elementary School. The neighborhood in which the site is located has a strong residential/family context. Small grocery stores and other shopping areas are located nearby. A primary consideration in the site selection process is its location with regards to "typical" neighborhood characteristics. The existing neighborhood is a good display of a strong urban fabric. In locating the home here, a sense of family awareness and neighborhood responsibility may be maintained and nurtured.

The site itself covers 22,460 S.F. in area. It is bordered by E. Washington Street to the north, N. Beacon Street to the west, and an alley to the south. Adjacent structures within the neighborhood consist of single-family dwellings ranging from a single story to two stories in height. Some light manufacturing and commercial structures are also located within the neighborhood. The existing site is presently undeveloped, and contains sparse vegetation, including a few trees, and grass.

Site selection was an important factor throughout my design process. Neighborhood context should play an important role in how the children view the "home". If the "home" was isolated from any neighborhood or family situations, the connections between the "home" and family orientation within a neighborhood will be lost. A

traditional urban fabric must be maintained or some alienation of the children may occur. In locating the home in an urban context, community interaction and feelings of neighborhood are achieved. Reinforcement of traditional family values and ideals should occur from within a "traditional" neighborhood context. The existing residential neighborhood in which the group home will be located is an excellent opportunity for the children to get involved with other residents and experience "normal" home life.

Neighborhood context in which the "home" is located is as important as the "home" itself. A strong sense of place must be obtained. An urban context is a good way to obtain this sense of place.



Looking south from Washington Street



Looking east to adjacent properties from Washington Street

# **Design Development**

The design process is a difficult task in itself. Many problems arose in the design of this juvenile group home. Throughout the process, I tried to adhere as closely to my thesis as possible. In the design, I concentrated on several items. First, the home's relationship to the neighborhood must be addressed. Second, the home must portray the image of a family dwelling. Finally, a variety of spaces and uses need to occur to maintain the children's faith and notion of "home life".

To begin with, the relationship of the home to a neighborhood context was explored. The neighborhood, as it exists, has a definite character, in terms of front yard spaces and distances between houses. The neighborhood also has a definite vocabulary regarding scale, and use of materials. This vocabulary was addressed in the design process. I wanted to retain the character of the neighborhood, while still allowing for the home to have its own sense of identity. It was also my intention to see to it that the home would not conflict with the neighborhood's character.

With regards to imagery of the home, it was not my intention to let the home become "institutional". I worked to achieve a recognizable "home" image. The use of materials such as wood siding, stucco, and paint, helped me to obtain this image. The use of hard, impersonal materials such as steel, concrete masonry units, and concrete was kept to a minimal and not used in any of the primary living/sleeping spaces. In addition to materials, traditional residential forms were used. The gabled roof, exterior decks, a front porch, and the bay window are some of the forms that I studied. One element, the front porch, is a highly recognizable residential element.

Traditionally, the porch was a gathering point for the family. It was my intention that the porch should be used in much the same way in my design.

In a home that houses disturbed children, desirable interior spacial characteristics are a must. A problem that I encountered during design development was with the number of residents within the home. Ten people, eight children and two house-parents, in a household sets certain limitations on public and private spaces. To avoid any crowding or confusion, a variety of spaces were worked with. The bedroom and living spaces were designed to be not only functional, but adaptable. Spaces such as the living rooms and indoor recreation areas were designed to be multi-functional. The indoor recreation spaces allow for a multitude of activities to occur at the same time. The living spaces must also be adaptable to meet the needs of changing activities throughout the day. Above all, spacial characteristics in the group home should be comfortable and inviting.

**Program**

ADMINISTRATION CENTER 575 S.F.  
 Office.....80 S.F.  
 Administrator's office.....100 S.F.  
 Waiting.....75 S.F.  
 Reception/Secretary.....70 S.F.  
 Conference.....100 S.F.  
 Therapy.....125 S.F.  
 Restroom.....25 S.F.

TYPICAL INDIVIDUAL HOME 2488 S.F.

Visitation.....185 S.F.  
 This space should provide a relaxed home-like atmosphere for visitation by parents or friends of the children. Adequate light and ventilation is desirable. The space also needs to be acoustically isolated from adjoining spaces. Above all, this space must be private, relaxing, and comfortable.

Study/Therapy.....190 S.F.  
 This space is provided for the children to study in. Natural light and ventilation is desirable. Acoustic privacy is desired but not strictly necessary.

Dining.....320 S.F.  
 The dining area needs to provide ample space for all children and house-parents to eat their meals. Natural light and ventilation, as well as views, are highly desirable. The dining room should also have access to other spaces (such as the kitchen) within the house.

Kitchen.....270 S.F.  
 The kitchen must provide ample space for the preparation of three meals daily for all children and house-parents. The kitchen should also have ample storage space. Natural light and ventilation is desired.

Bath.....25 S.F.  
 The bath should provide adequate space for everyday use by residents.

Living.....360 S.F.  
 The living space is the main gathering point within the group home. A cozy atmosphere should be provided. Activities include television watching, game playing, and "family" sessions. Natural light and ventilation are a necessity. Access to the outdoors, as well as adjoining interior spaces, is desirable. This space is the main living space for the home, it should be comfortable and pleasant.

House-parents living.....150 S.F.  
 This space should provide for privacy for the house-parents. It is a place where they can relax and be alone. Light and ventilation are necessary. Also, acoustic privacy is desirable.

House-parents sleeping.....175 S.F.  
This space should provide a private area in which the house-parents may sleep. Accessibility to the children is desirable. Natural light and ventilation is also desirable. There is also a need for acoustic privacy.

House-parents bath.....75 S.F.  
The bath needs to provide adequate space for its everyday use by the house-parents. Light and ventilation are desirable.

Children's bedroom (3-bed).....360 S.F.  
This space should provide for sleeping and to a certain extent, living. It should provide a comfortable, home-like atmosphere. Adequate space should be provided for each child in the bedroom. The space should also allow for each child to mold it to his/her own needs. Natural light and ventilation is needed. Some acoustic privacy should also occur.

Children's bedroom (2-bed).....288 S.F.  
This space should provide for sleeping and to a certain extent, living. It should provide a comfortable, home-like atmosphere. Adequate space should be provided for each child in the bedroom. The space should also allow for each child to mold it to his/her own needs. Natural light and ventilation is needed. Some acoustic privacy should also occur.

Children's bath (2 baths).....90 S.F.  
The baths need to provide adequate space for the children's use. They must be able to withstand much wear and tear of everyday use.

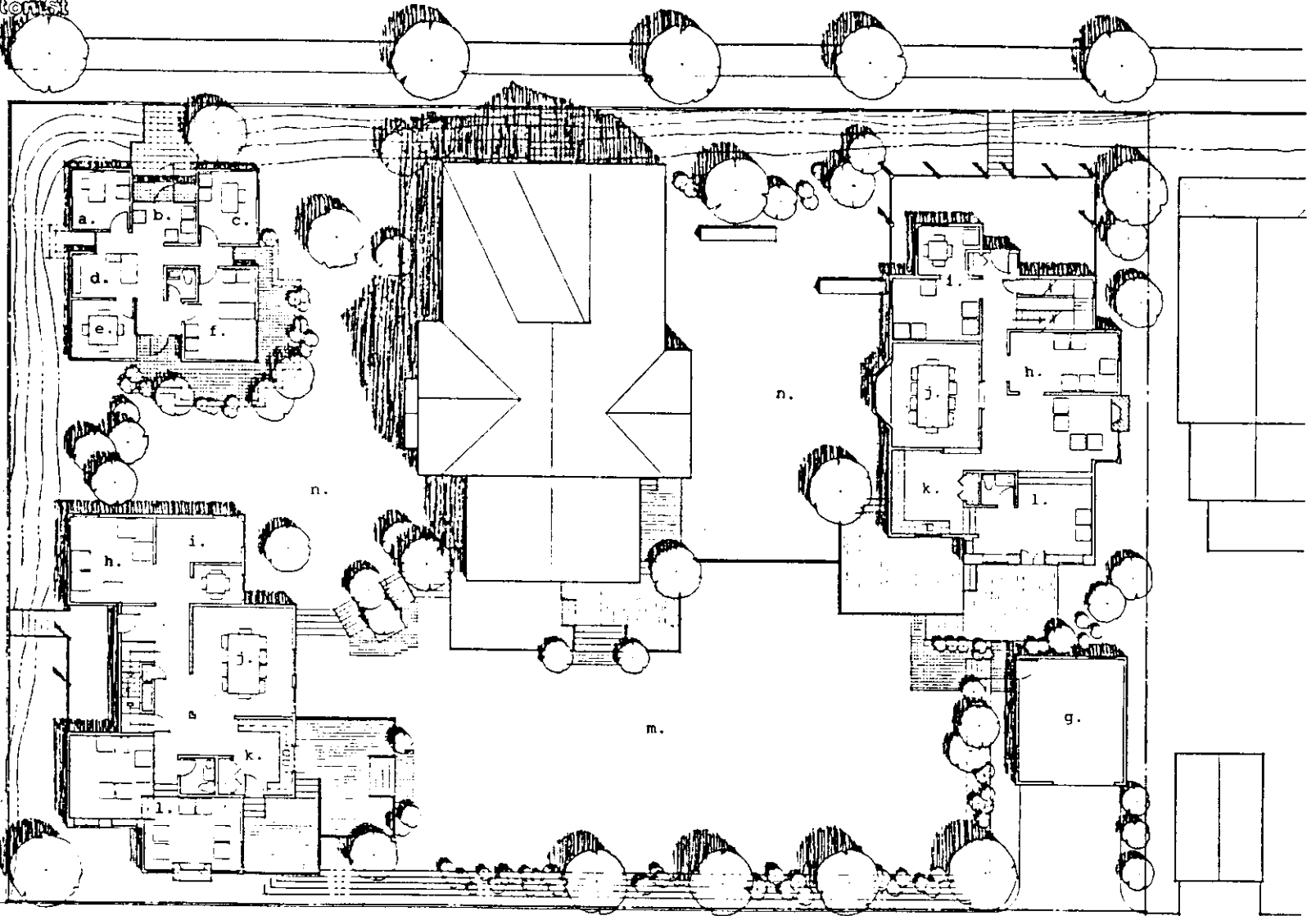
Lower level recreation.....4990 S.F.  
This space should provide for a variety of spaces for a variety of activities. The activities include: billiards, table-tennis and assorted table and card games. Adequate light and ventilation should be provided. Access to the outdoors is also highly desirable.



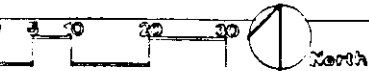
**Project**

Washington St

N Beacon St

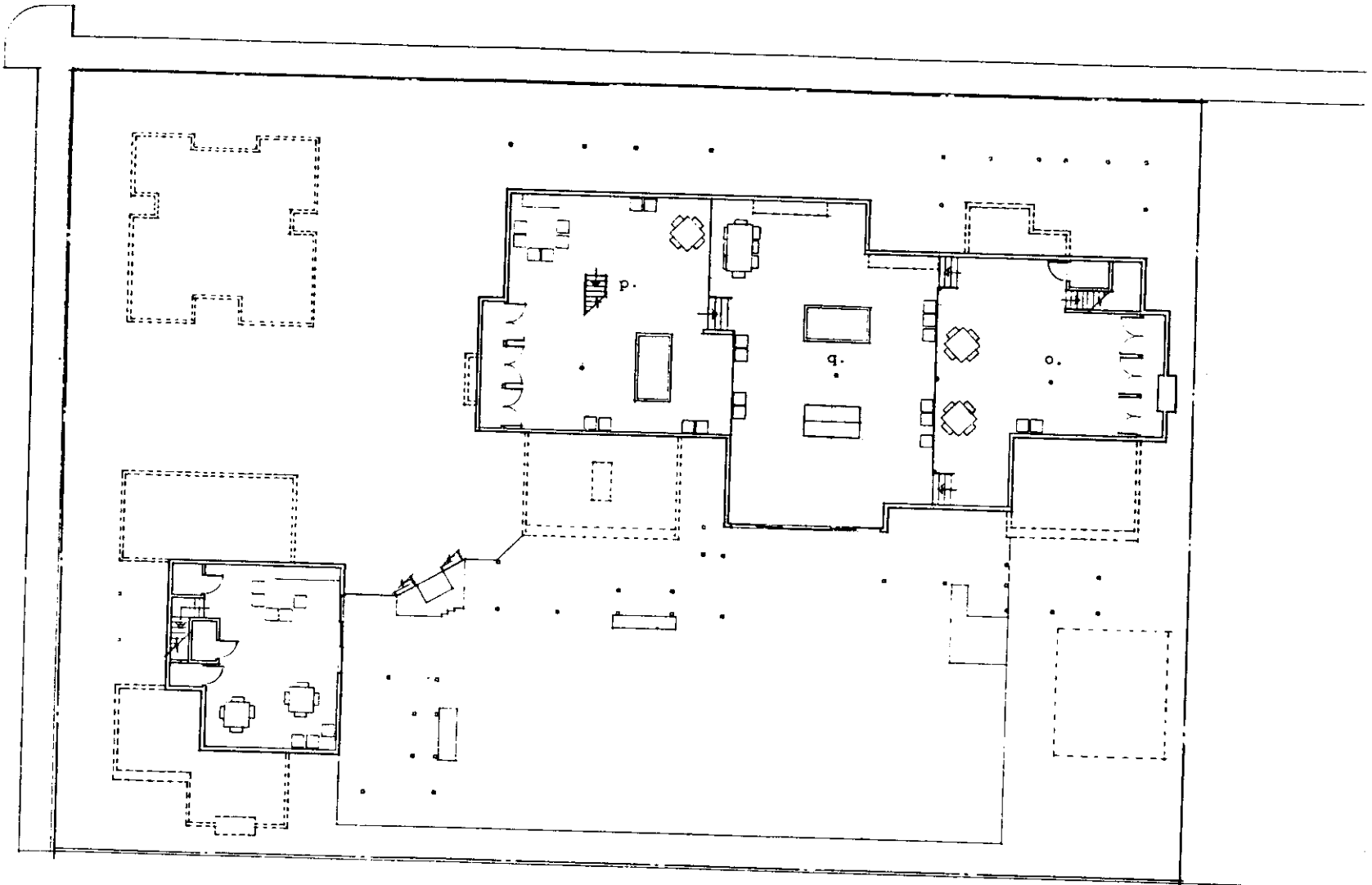


# Site Plan



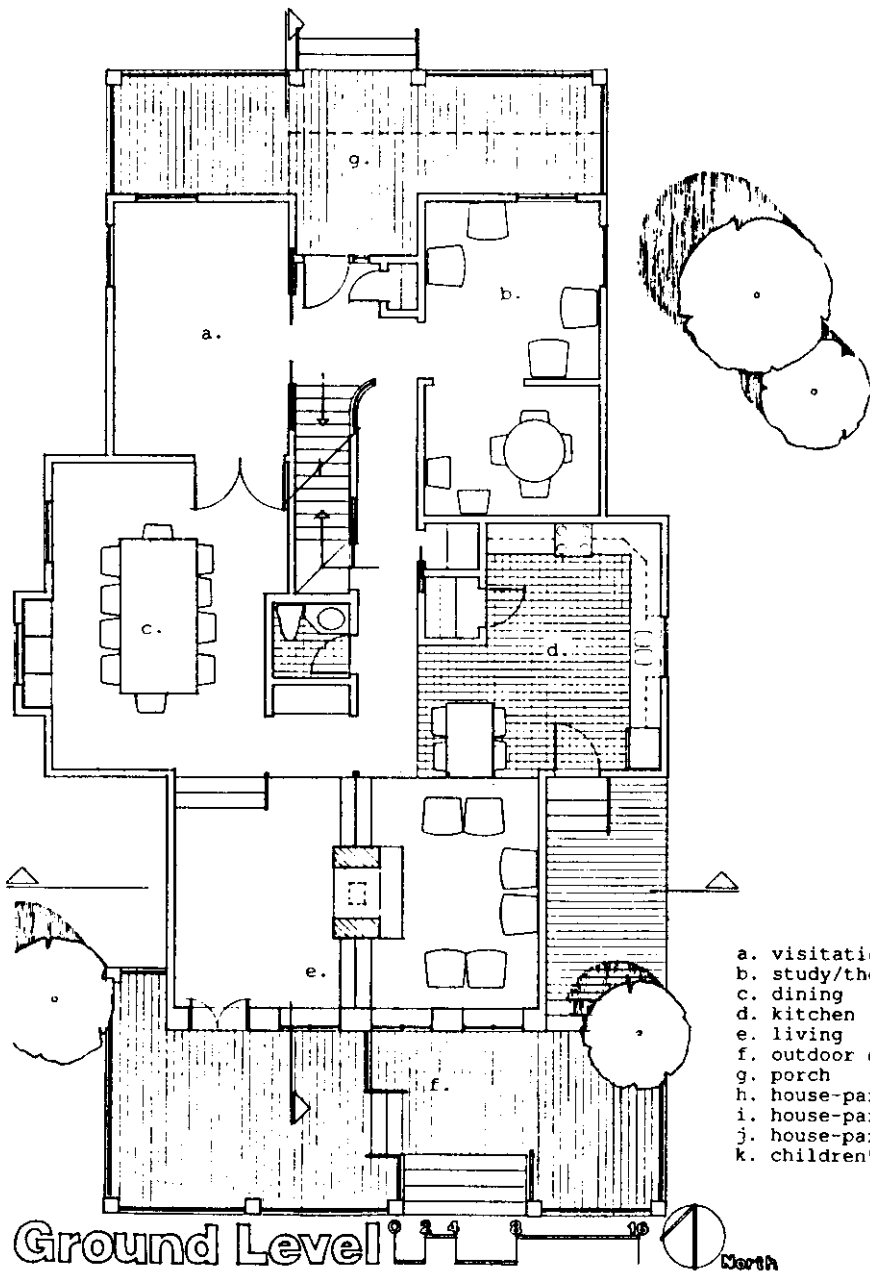
- a. office
- b. waiting
- c. administrator's office
- d. reception/secretary
- e. conference
- f. therapy
- g. garage/storage
- h. visitation

- i. study
- j. dining
- k. kitchen
- l. living room
- m. outdoor recreation area
- n. "shared" yard spaces

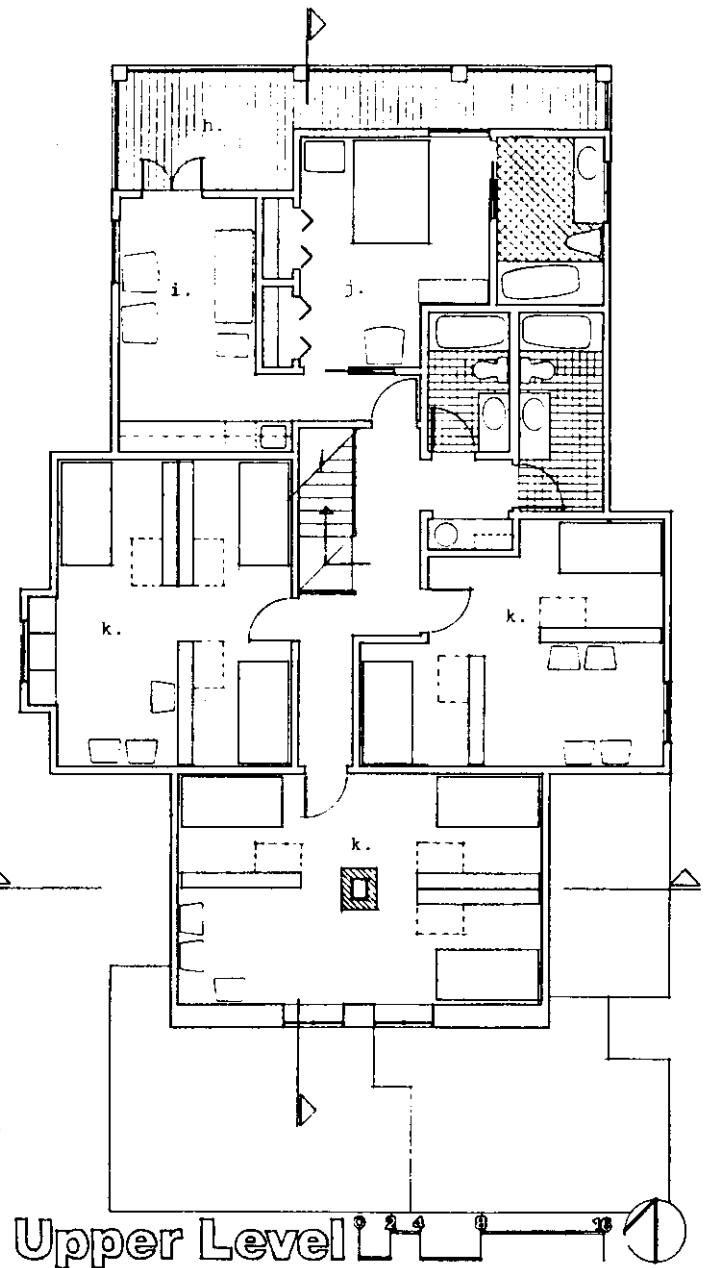


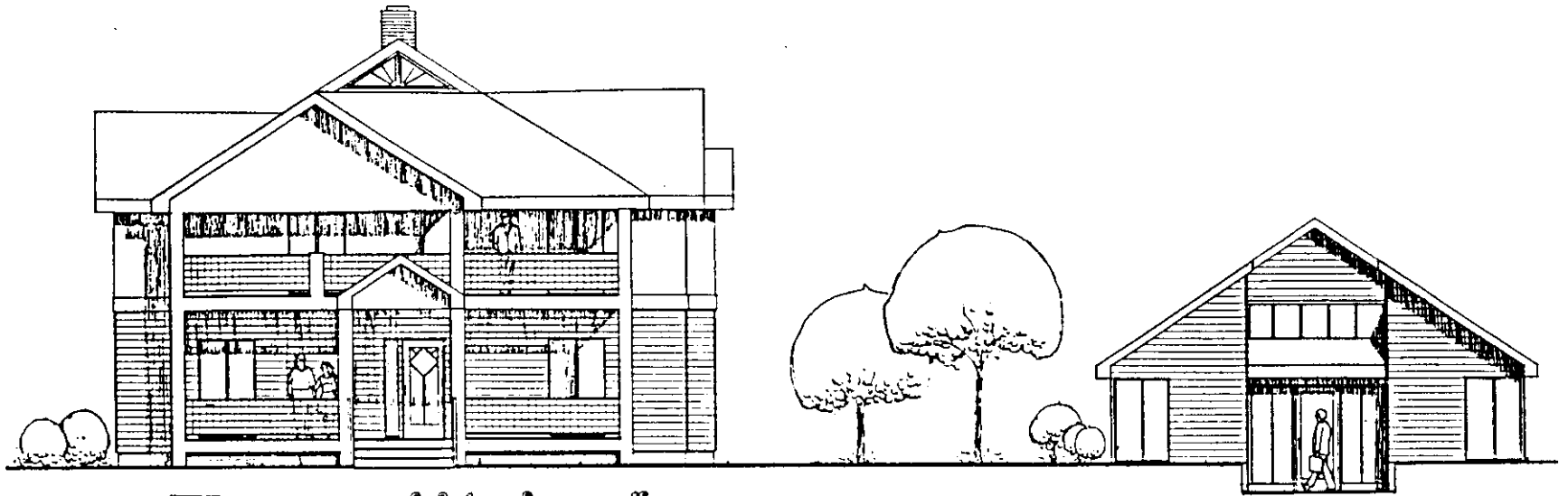
- o. small games area
- p. games area
- q. table-tennis and billiards

Lower Level Plan   North

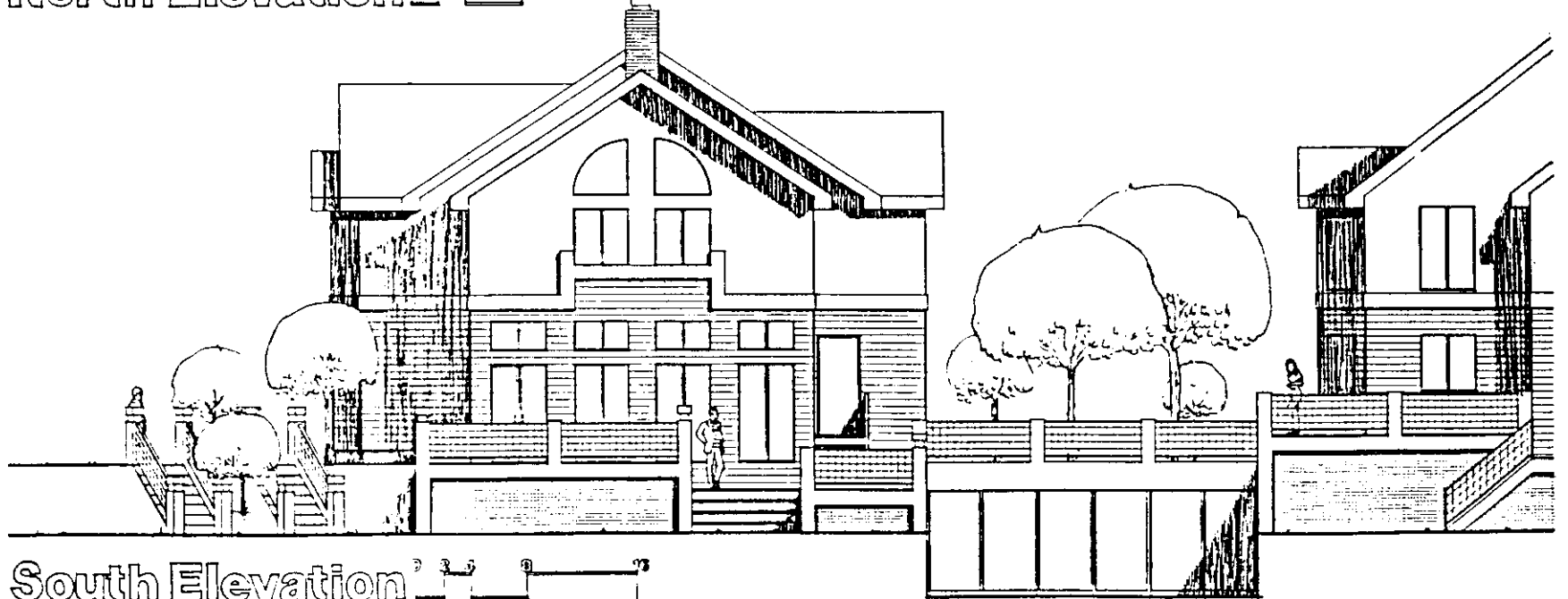


- a. visitation
- b. study/therapy
- c. dining
- d. kitchen
- e. living
- f. outdoor deck area
- g. porch
- h. house-parent's balcony
- i. house-parent's living
- j. house-parent's sleeping
- k. children's bedrooms

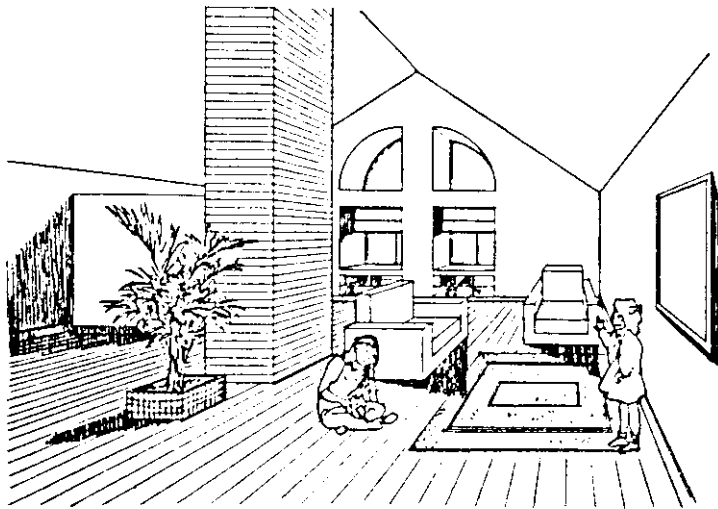




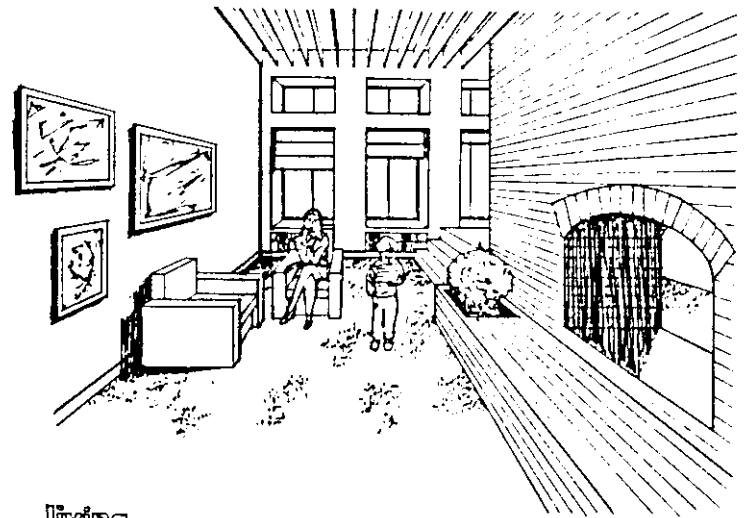
North Elevation



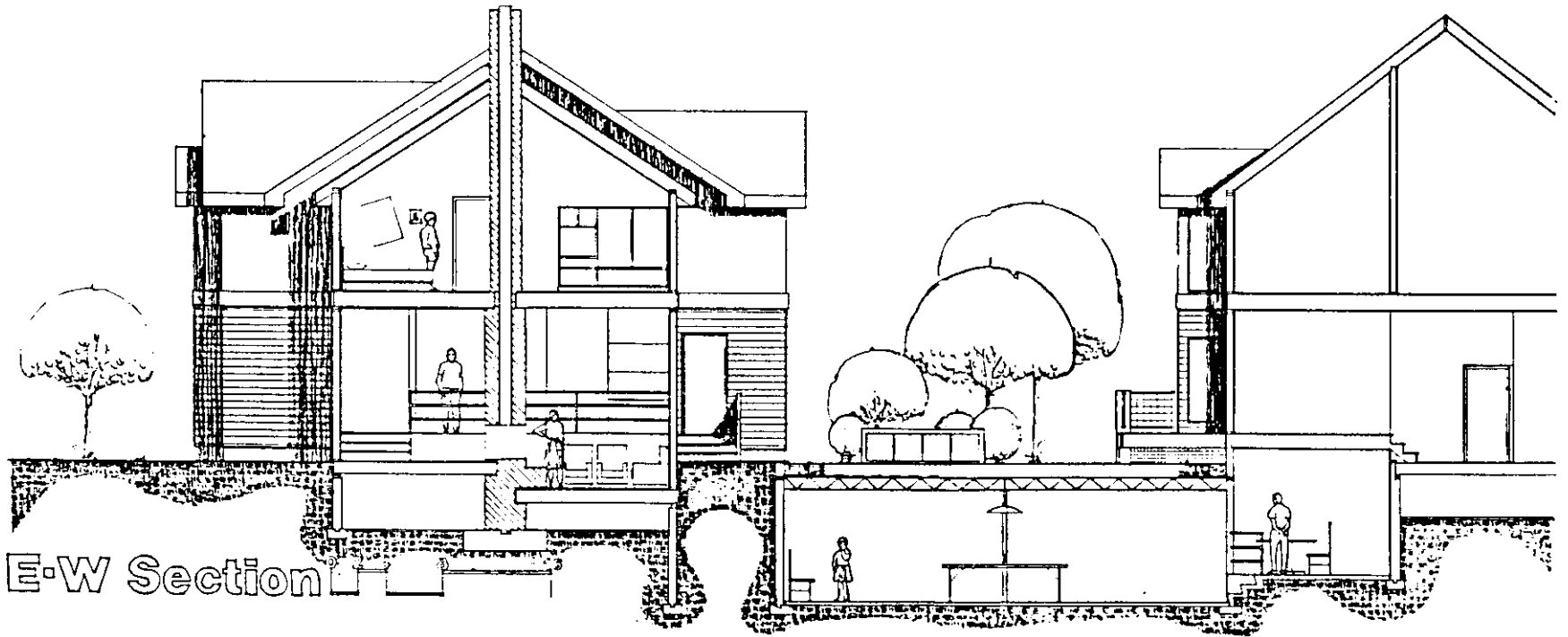
South Elevation



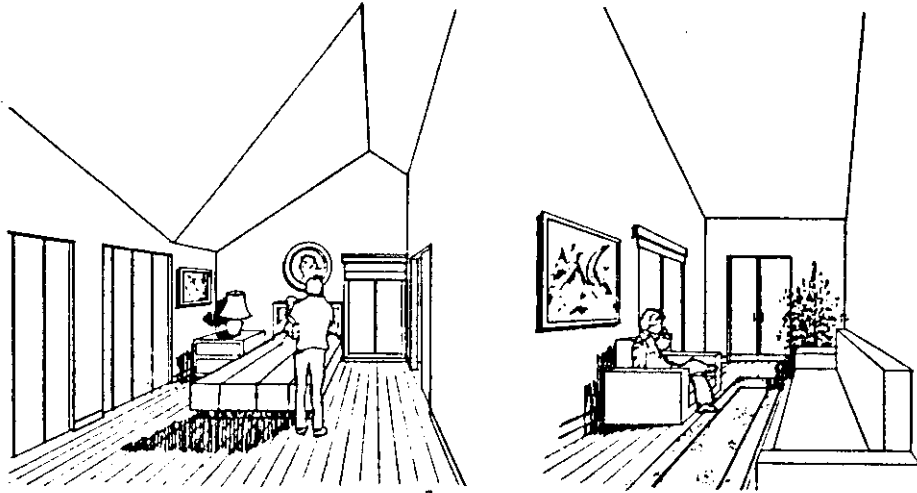
children's bedroom



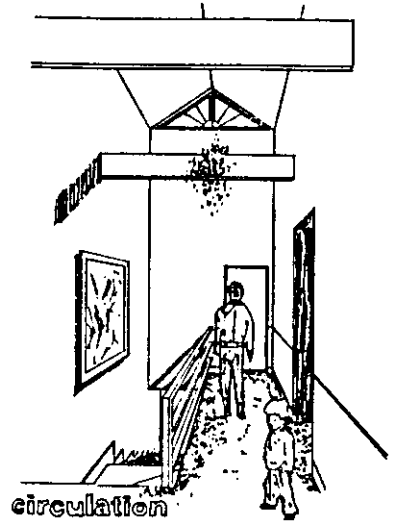
living



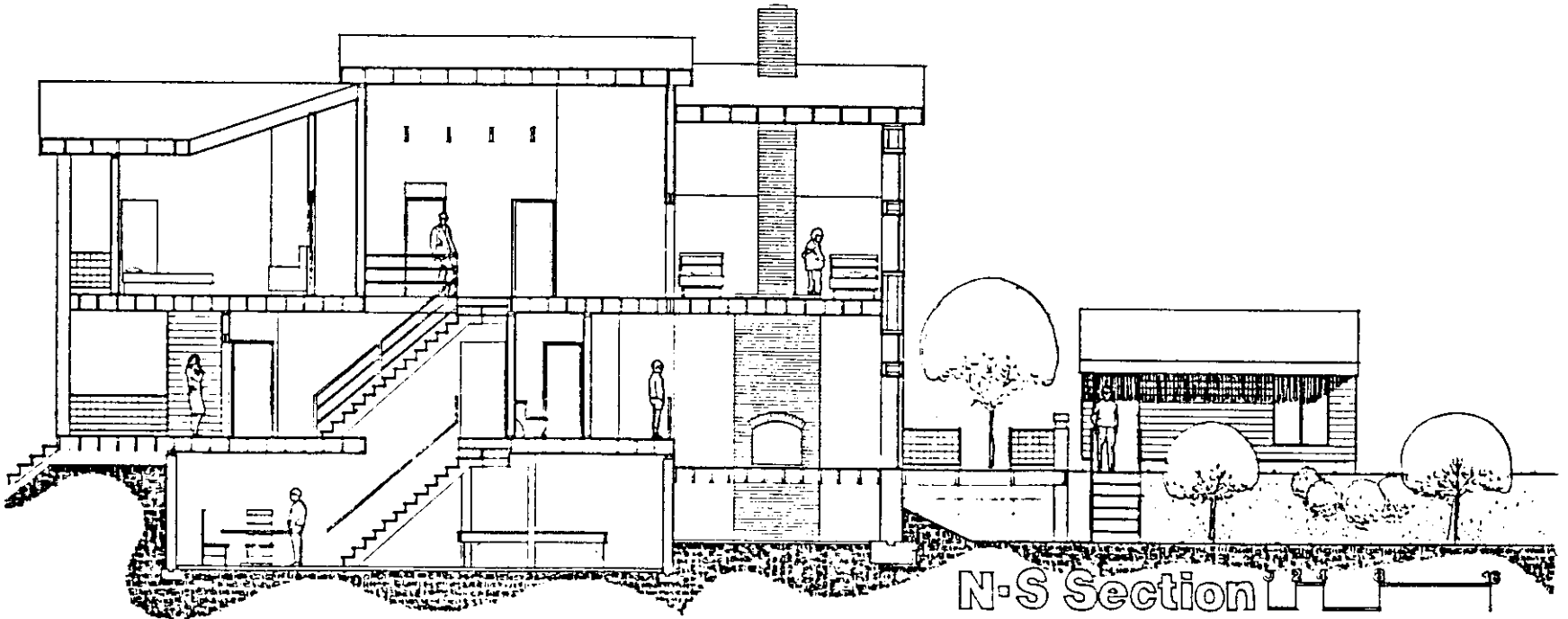
E-W Section



house-parent's



circulation



N-S Section

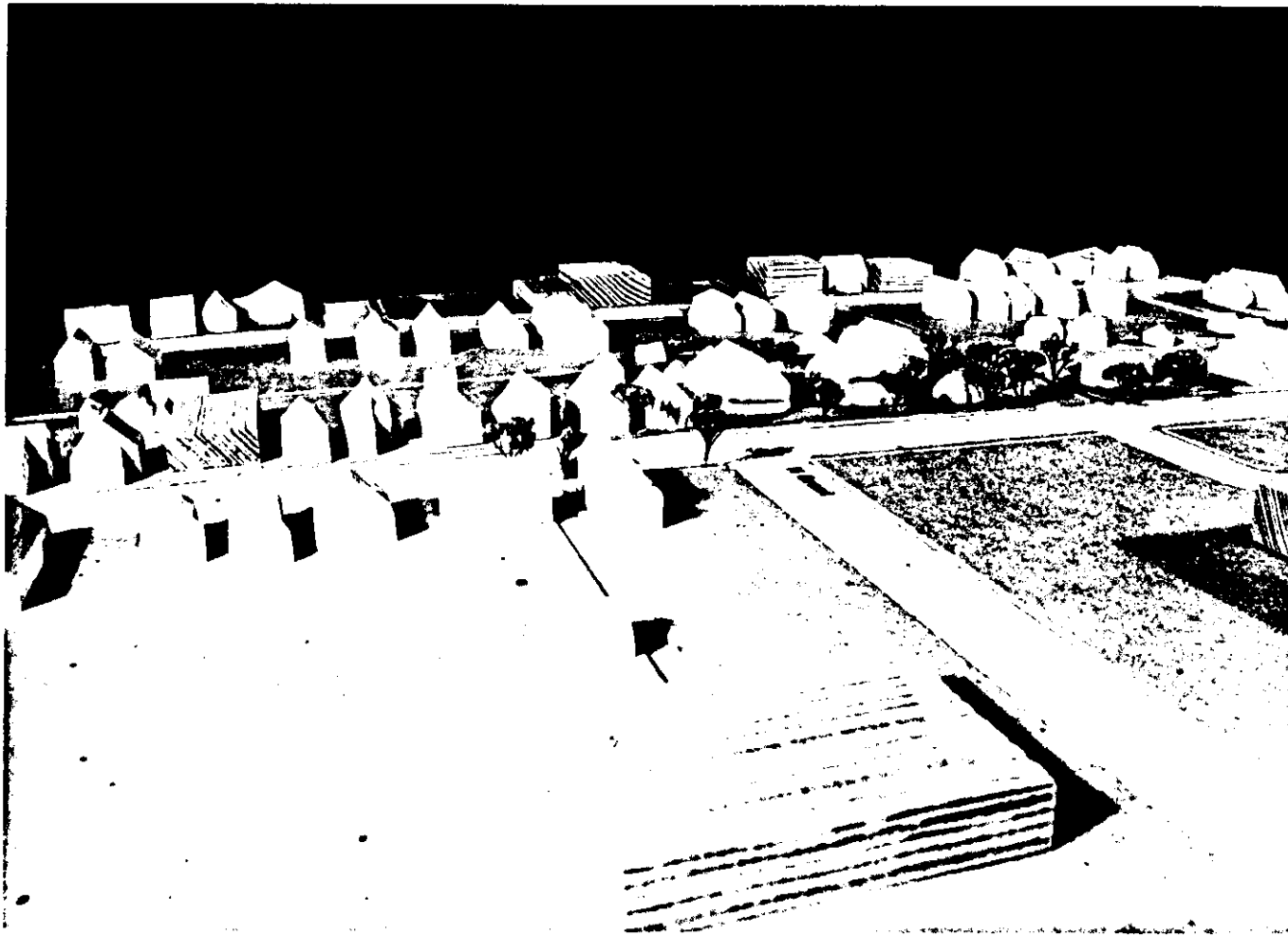


Photo of the context model looking south. The proposed site is located at the center-right portion of the photo. The context model was used to study existing massing and how the group home buildings were to integrate within an existing context. The model incorporated a three and one-half block area.



The photo is of the final model looking southeast on Washington street.



The photo is of the final model looking west on Washington Street at the group home complex.



This photo was taken at eye-level from the third house (the house that occurs at the northeast corner of the site) looking east from the site.



This photo depicts the view of the group home complex as seen looking northeast from the alley south of the site.

## **Conclusions**

Through my thesis research and project development I have encountered many new ideas and ideologies. I have also learned of the concerns and problems that delinquent children face. In addition to the children's problems, the problem of providing suitable housing for them has also been explored. The need for a "good" group home is strongly evident.

I believe that several of the ideas in which I explored have been successful. First is the idea of site and its relationship to the neighborhood and context. A residential neighborhood seems to provide the proper setting in which the children may live and learn. If no residential or family neighborhood exists, then the children will lose this identifiable structure. Second is the idea that "family" orientation, as in the use of residential materials and forms, is a necessity in the design of the group home. A relationship to identifiable forms and materials is helpful in this association with the "family" atmosphere. Third is the idea that through proper design of private, as well as public spaces, a child can learn to relate to others.

In conclusion, delinquent children need a strong family environment to overcome what may have been lacking in their lives. In designing a facility that closely approximates a "normal" background, including neighborhood and residential considerations, the child has a good chance of overcoming his or her hardships and becoming an asset to the community.

Design Resource File: Planning Justice  
Facilities: by A.I.A.

Juvenile Detention: An Analysis of  
Function, Tentative Objectives and  
Educational Implications: by Gary B. Balbo

The Arrell Home, Detention for Juveniles:  
by John A. Byles

A Sketch Study of Regional Detention Needs  
in Indiana: by Third Year Class 1969-70,  
CAP

Juvenile Delinquency and its Origins: by  
Richard E. Johnson

Open Residences: An Alternative to Closed  
Correctional Institutions for Hardcore  
Juvenile Delinquents: by Michele Lioy

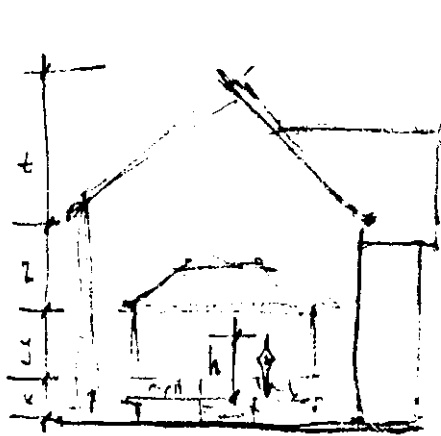
Mt. Lemmon Indian Youth Rehabilitation  
Center: by Youth Studies Center, U.S.C.

A Rehabilitation Model for Juvenile  
Offenders: by Morton Zivan Ph.D.

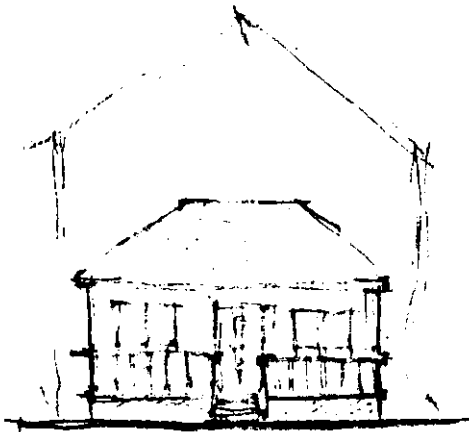
## Bibliography



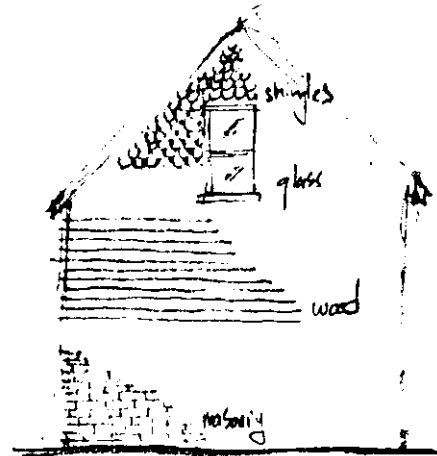
# Appendix



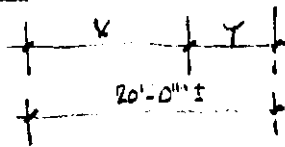
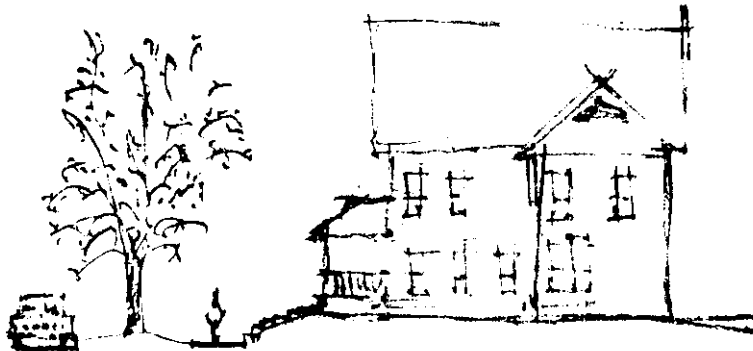
heights (scale)



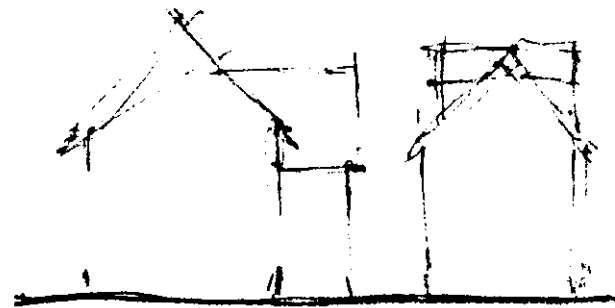
porches



materials (traditional)



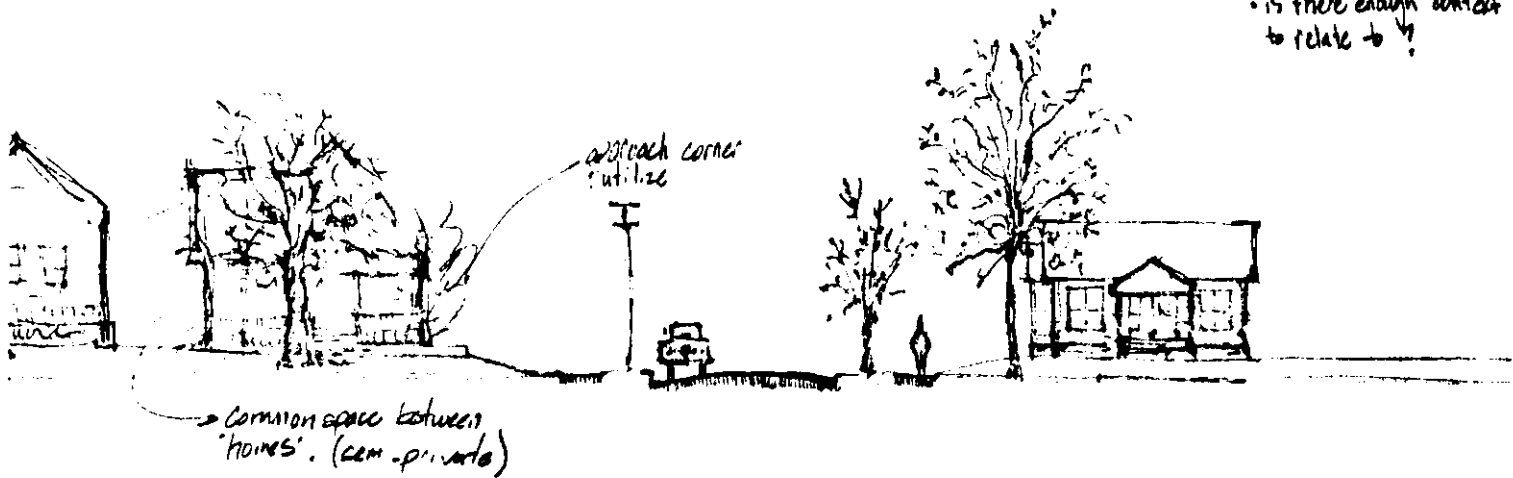
relationship (distance) to sidewalk & street.



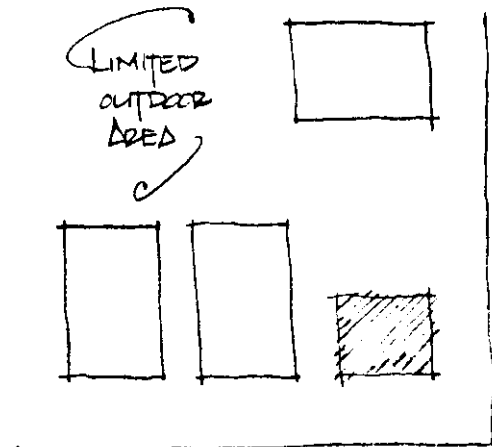
relationship (distance) to other dwellings.

Contextual considerations of the existing neighborhood

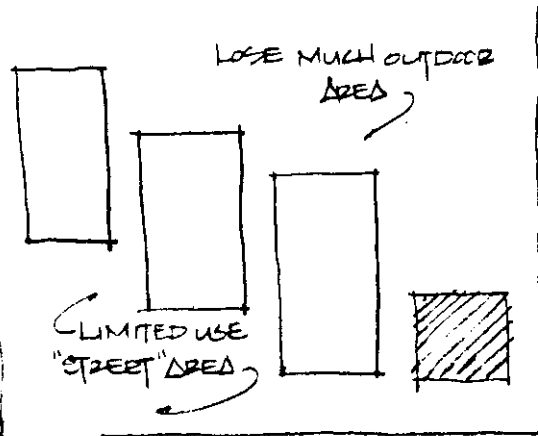
- what characteristics to follow?
- is there enough context to relate to?



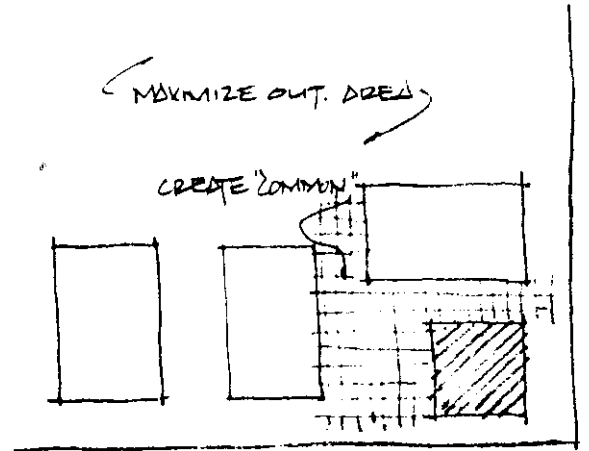
Relationship of the corner to the street



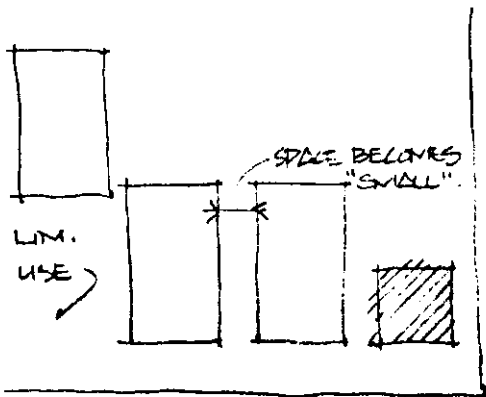
1. RETAIN WASH. ST. RHYTHM



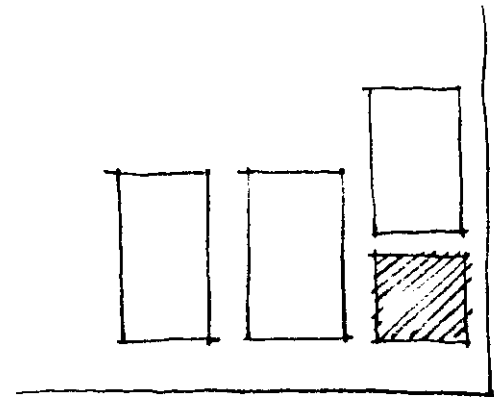
2. RETAIN RHYTHM BUT IGNORE EST. SETBACKS.



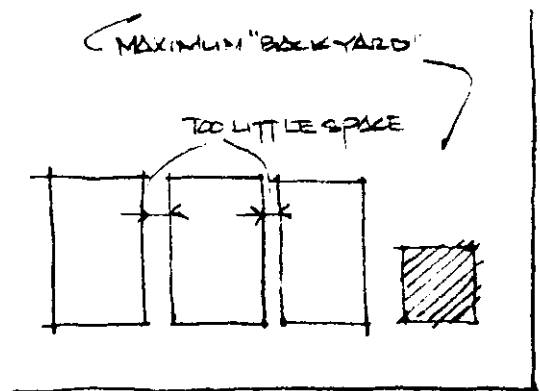
3. CORNER AS FOCUS OF SITE



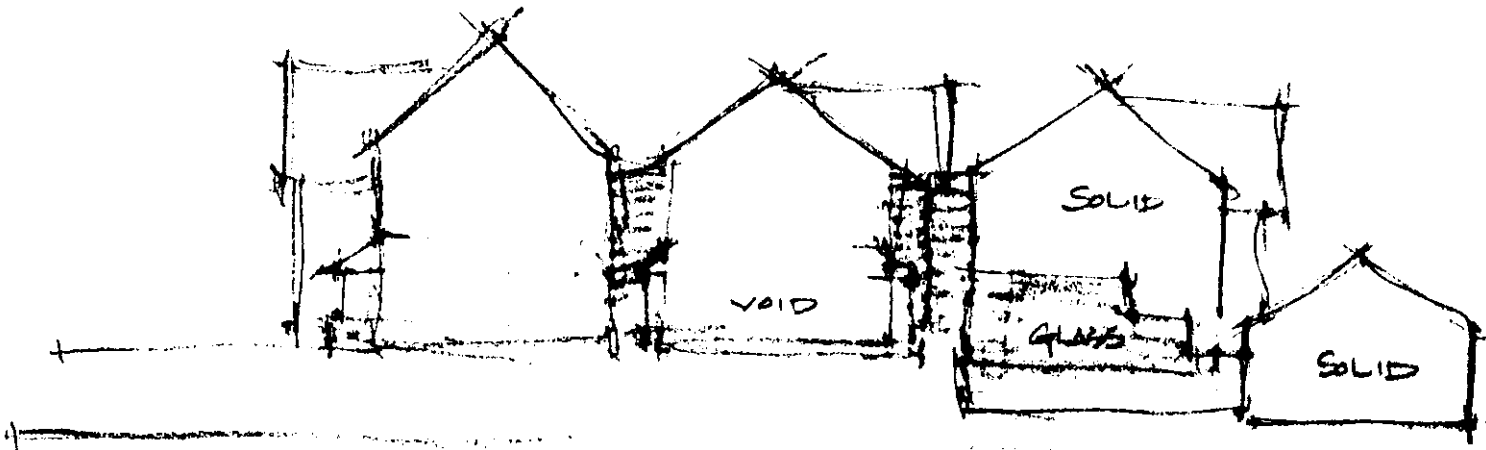
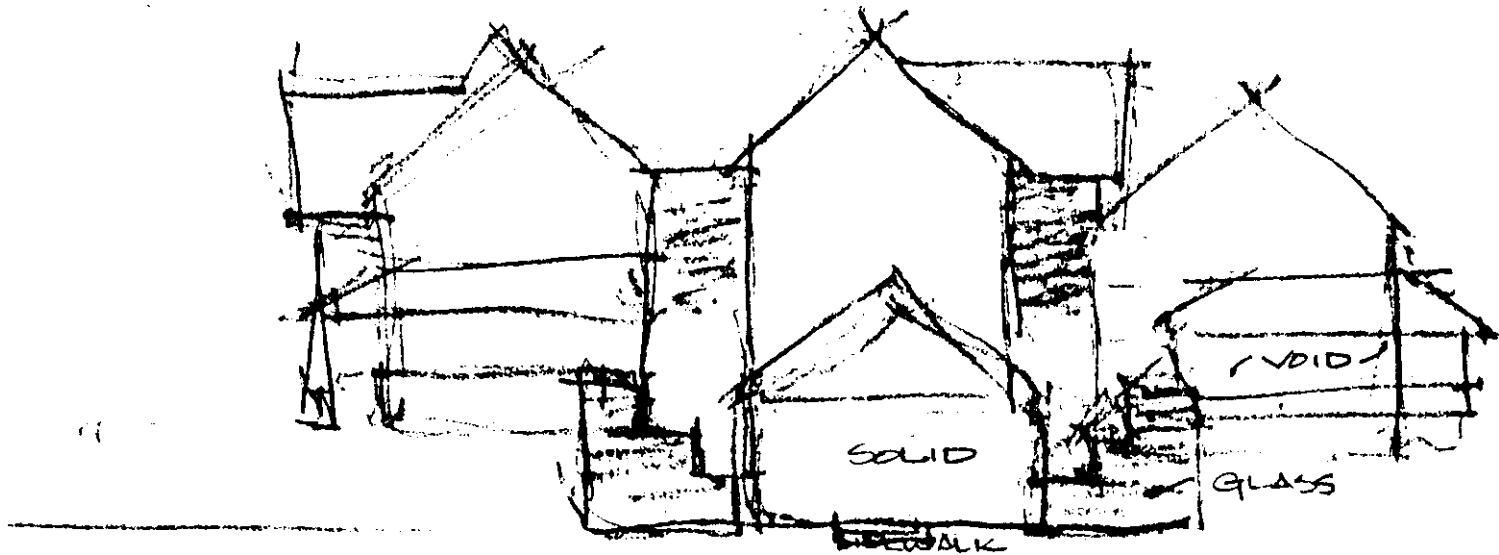
4. ALTERNATE RHYTHM ON WASH. ST.



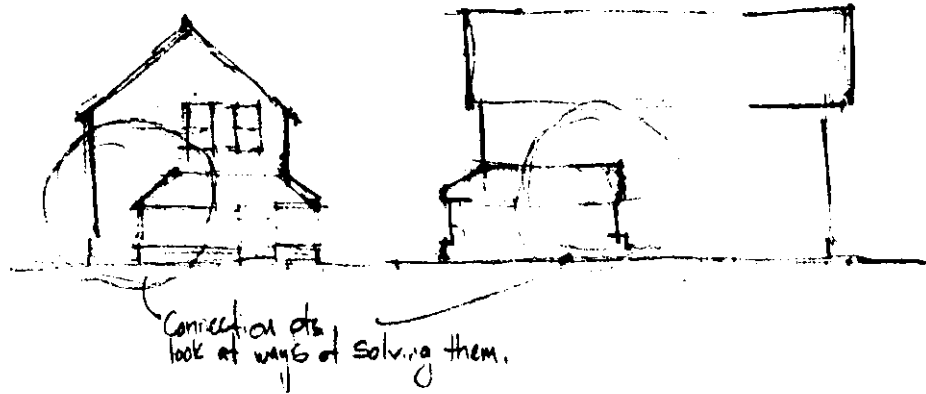
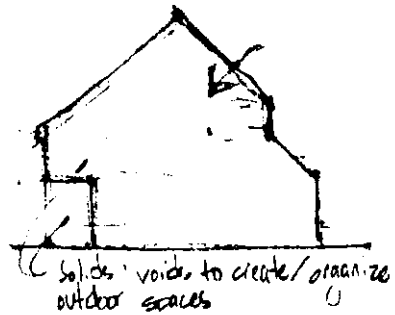
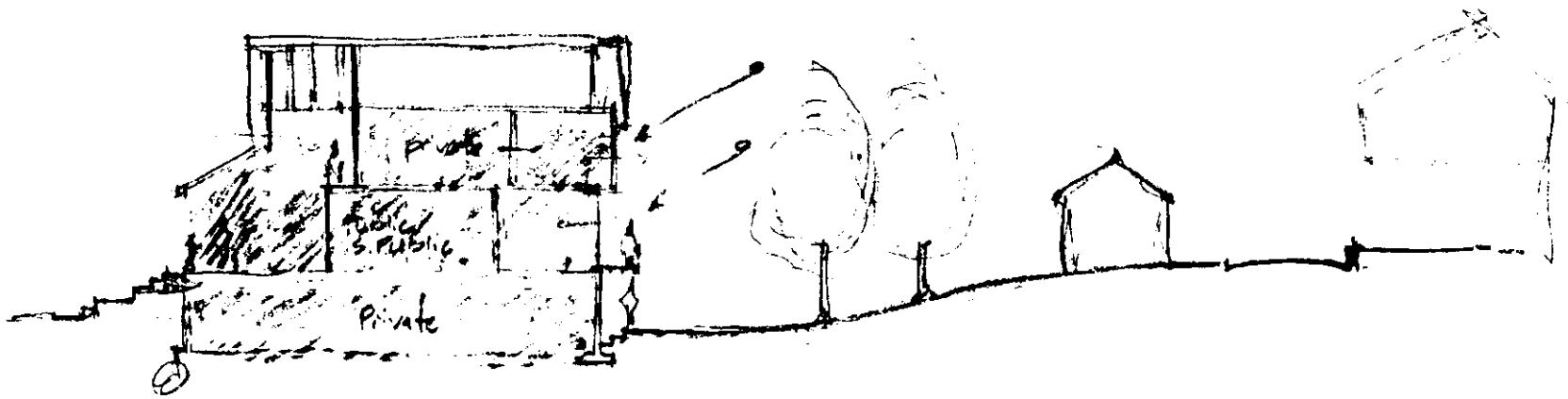
5. MAXIMIZE "BACK" YARD AREA



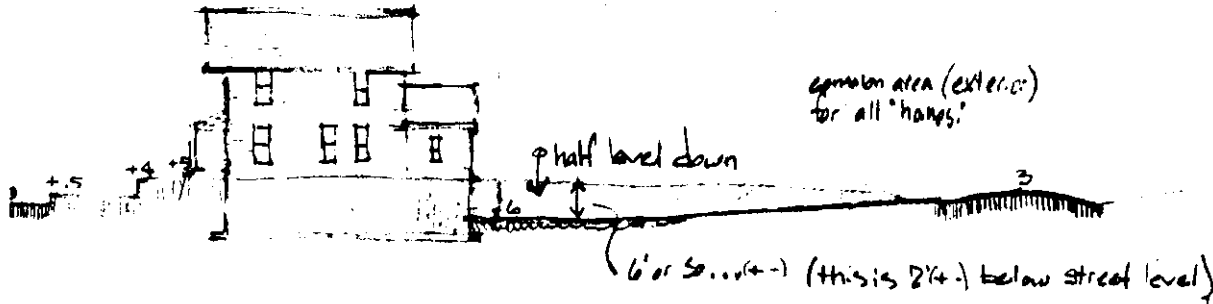
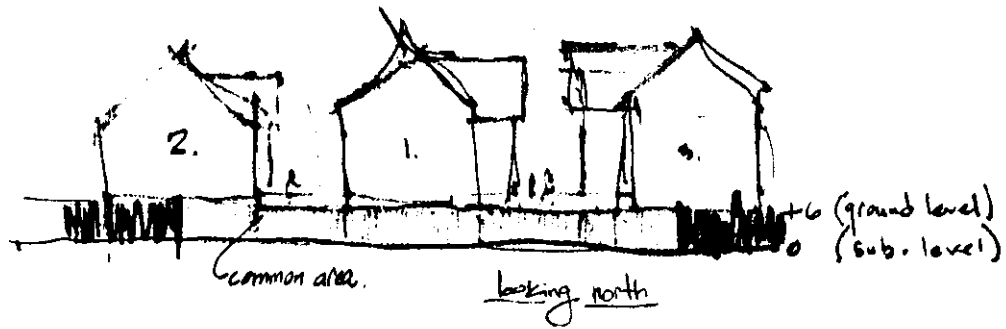
6. RETAIN BOTH RHYTHM & SPACING



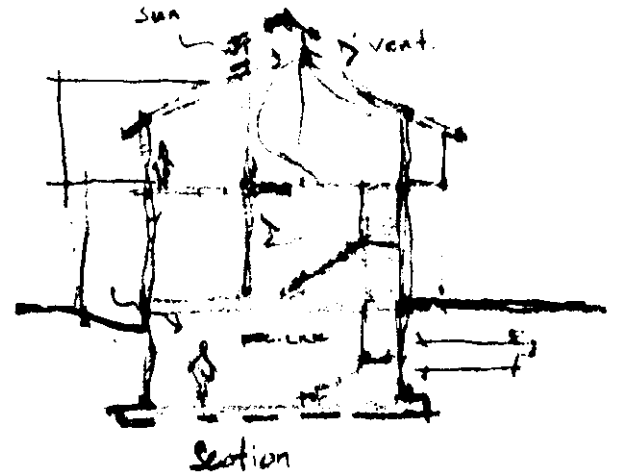
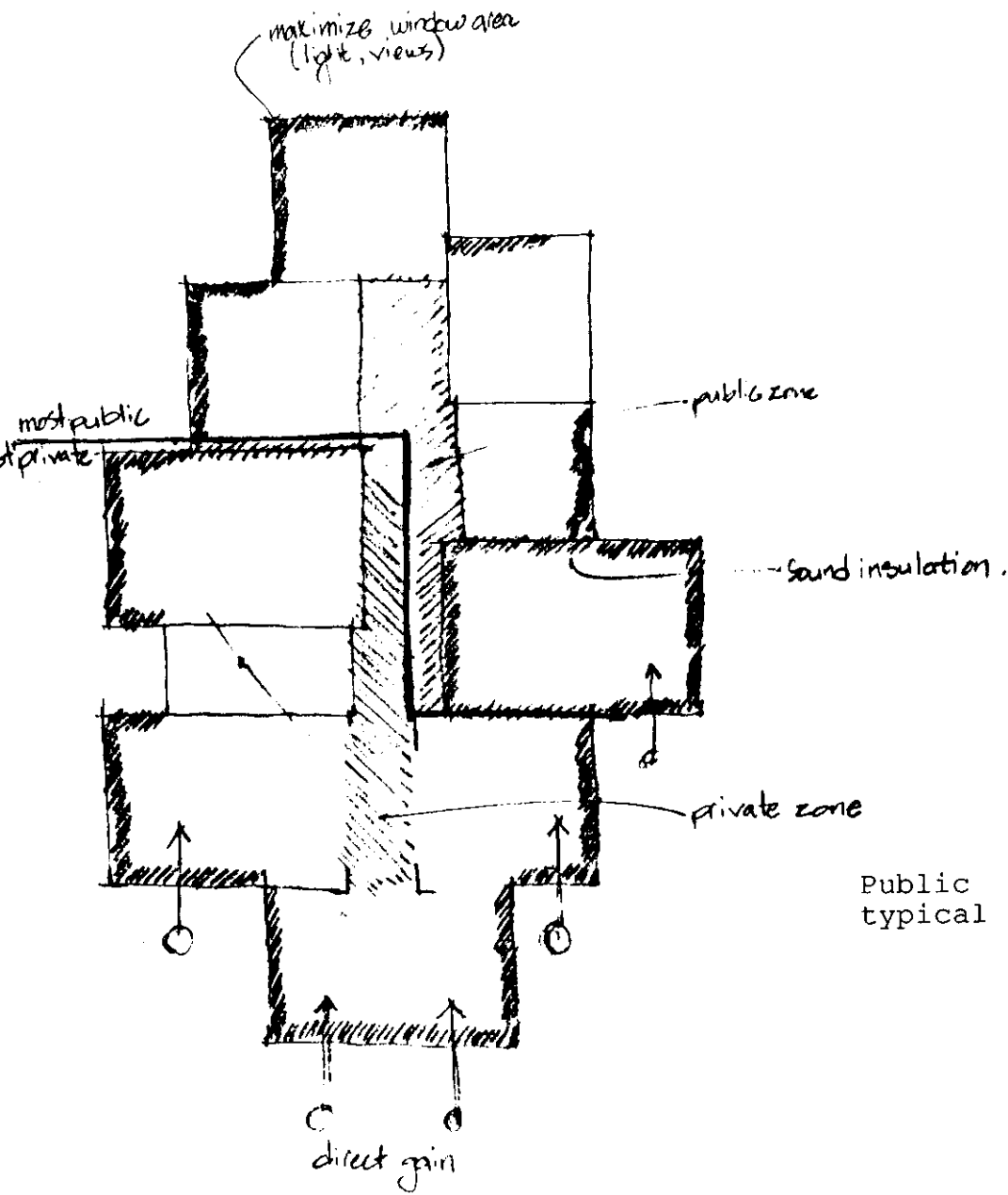
Solid/void studies



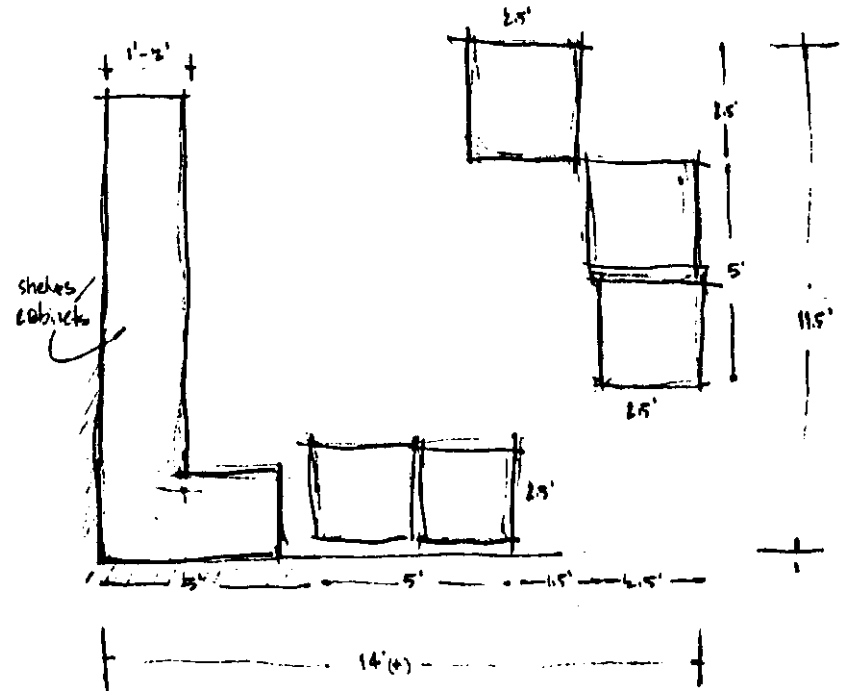
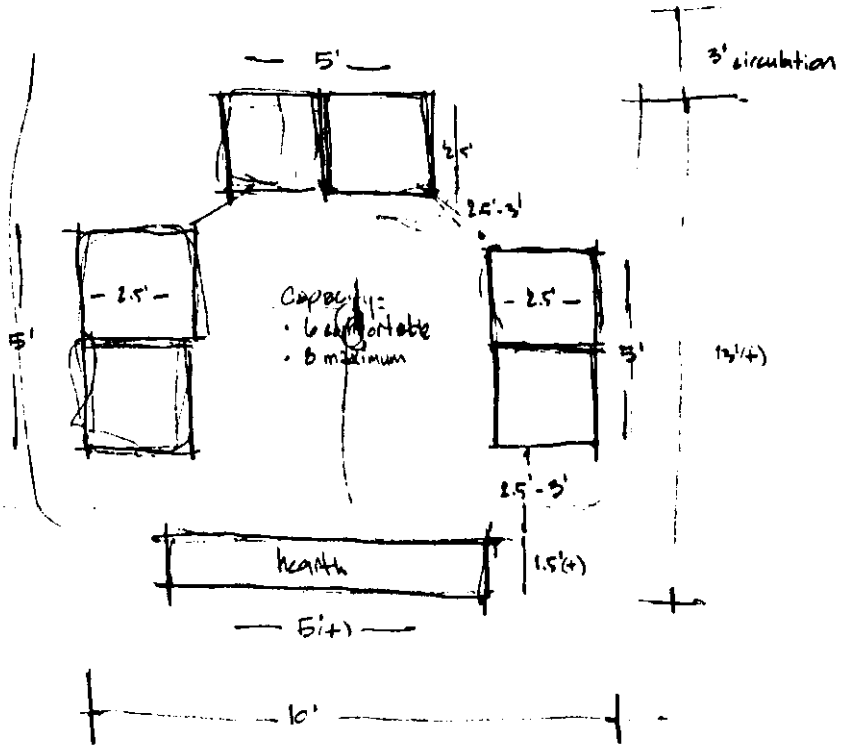
Study of connection points between forms



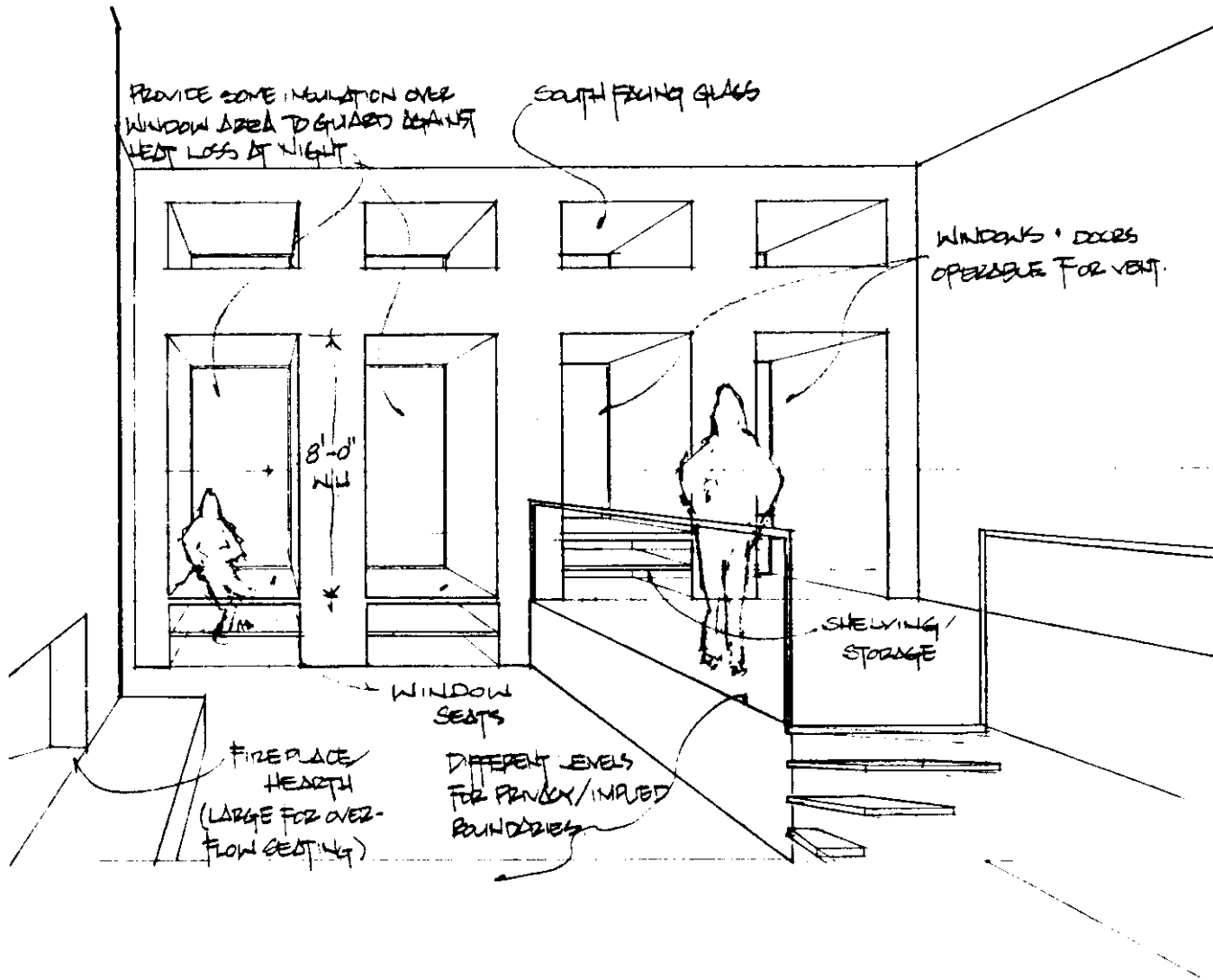
A preliminary scheme concerning the relationship between indoor recreation and outdoor recreation areas. This was also a study into level changes to maximize southern exposure for the lower level space.



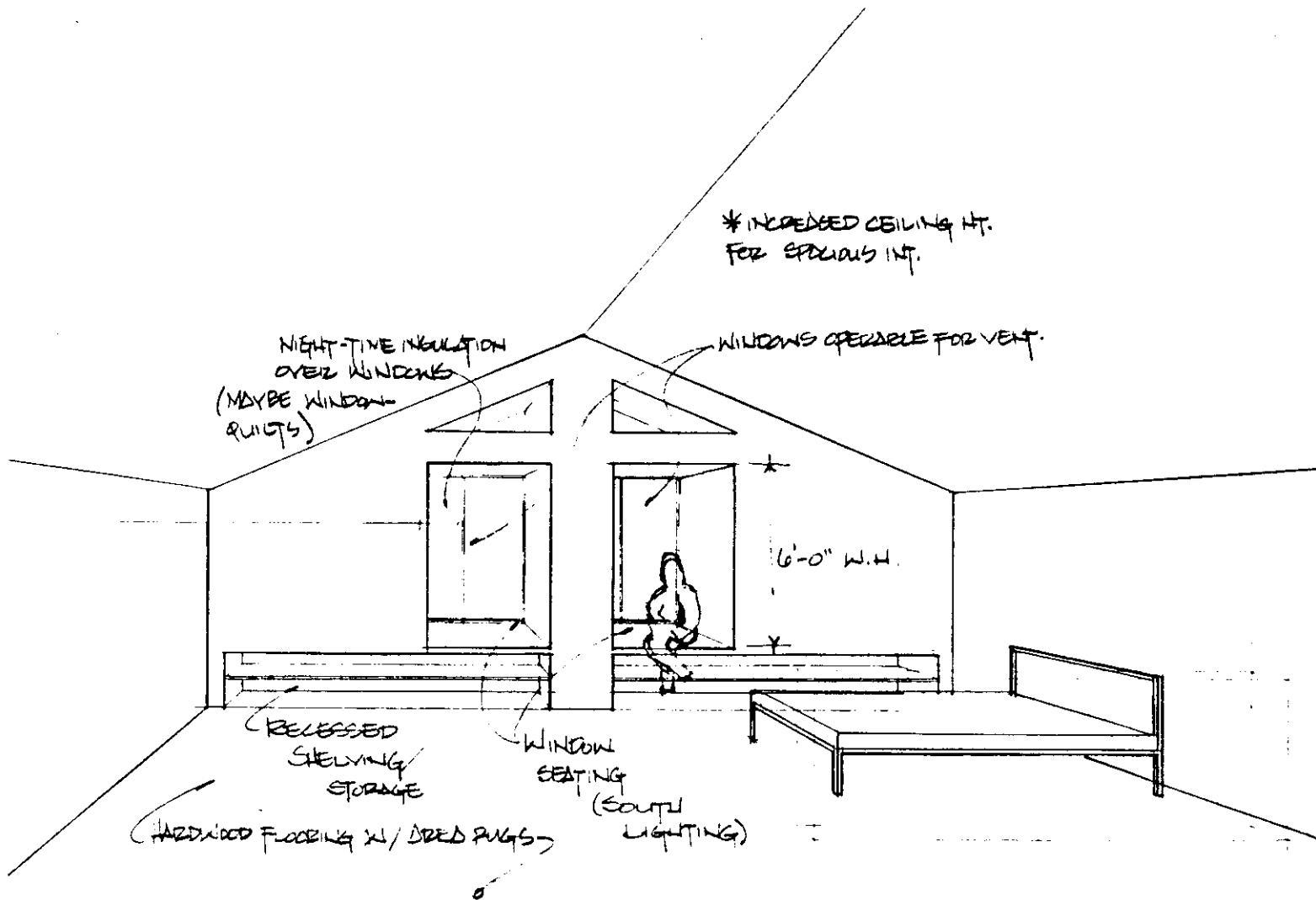
Public space versus private space within a typical home



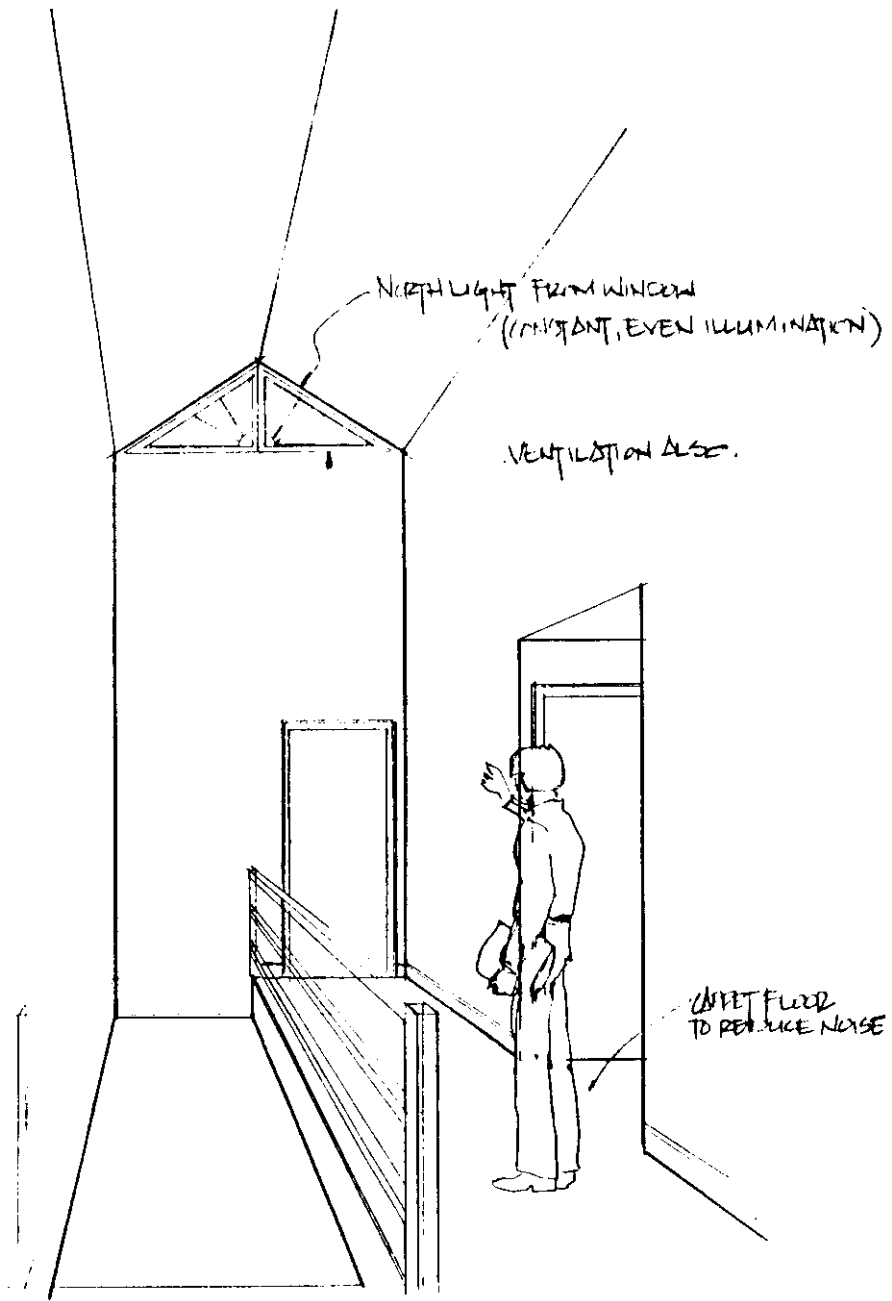
Typical living room arrangements, trying to maximize seating capacities and also maintain some privacy considerations.



Preliminary study of living room

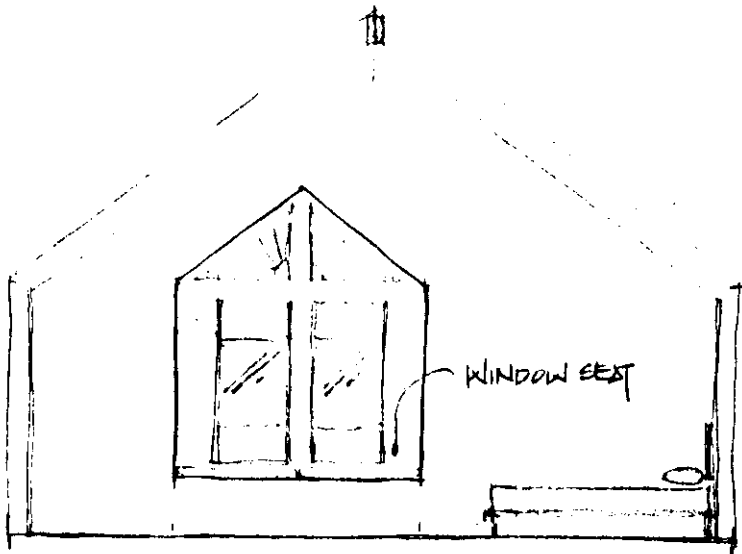
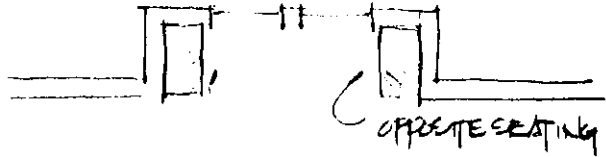
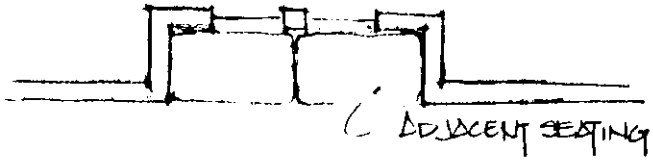


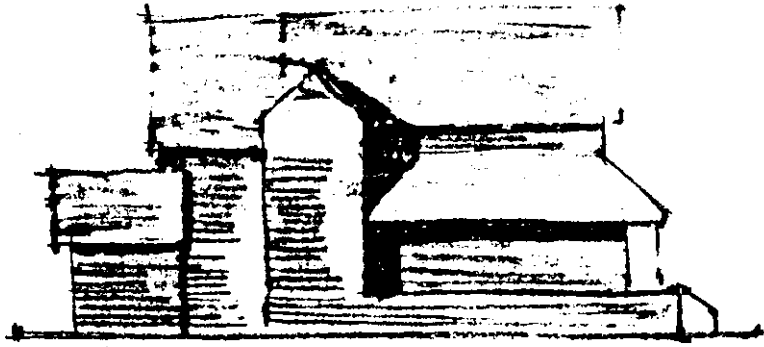
Preliminary study of children's bedroom



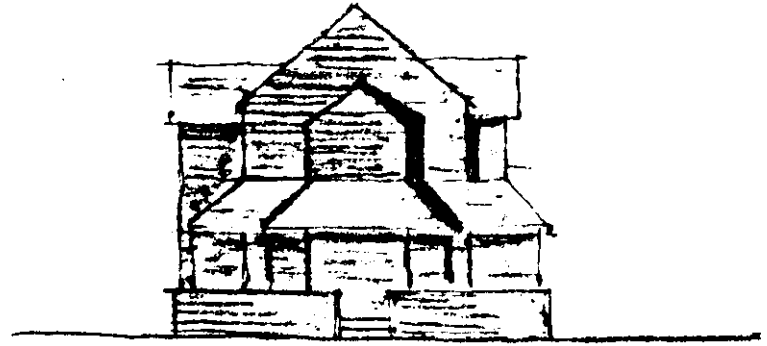
Preliminary study of second level circulation

Preliminary studies of window seating possibilities. The intent is to provide a "comfortable" area in which the child or children can go to be alone, to read, or to just look out a window. The window seat may be another way to provide an additional level of privacy for the children. One aspect of a group home is the need for personal space. Although it is not possible for everyone to have privacy at all times, he or she should be allowed an option for privacy.





①



① NORTH ELEVATION (STUDY)

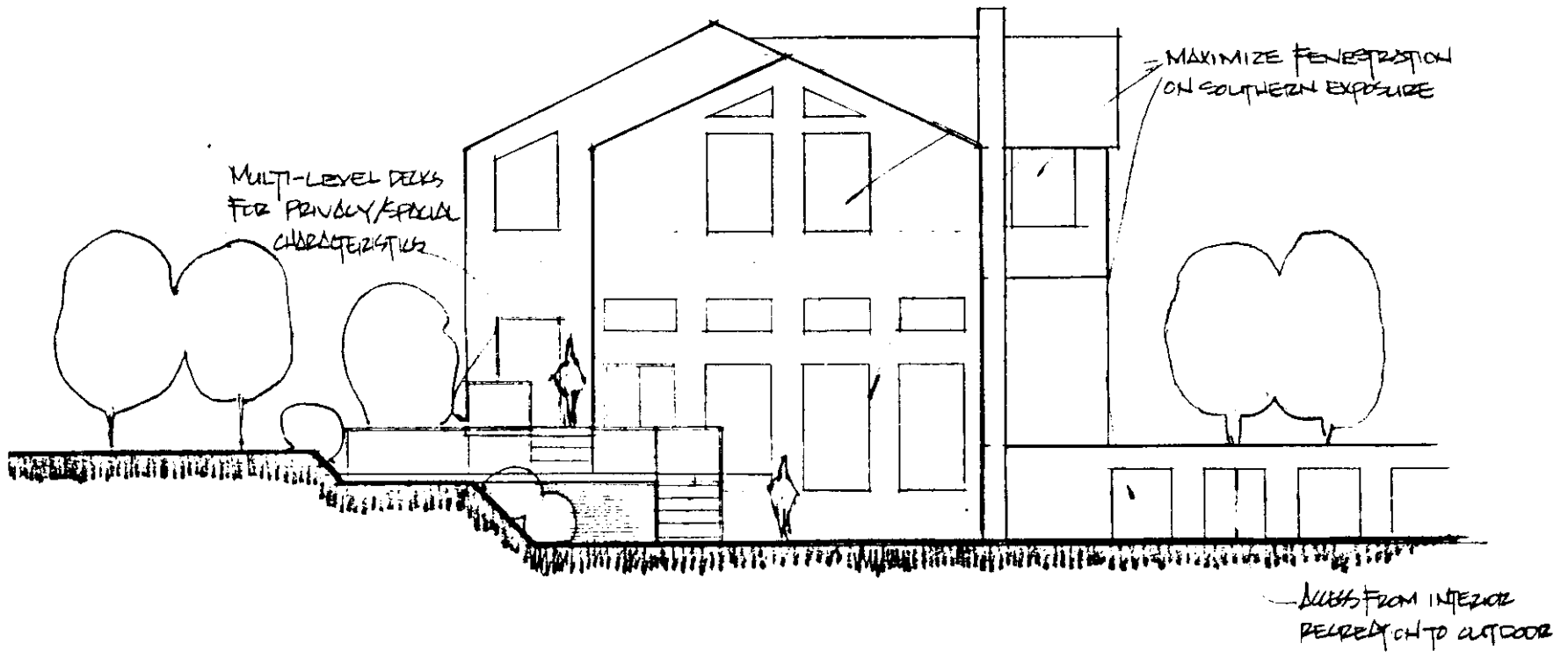


②

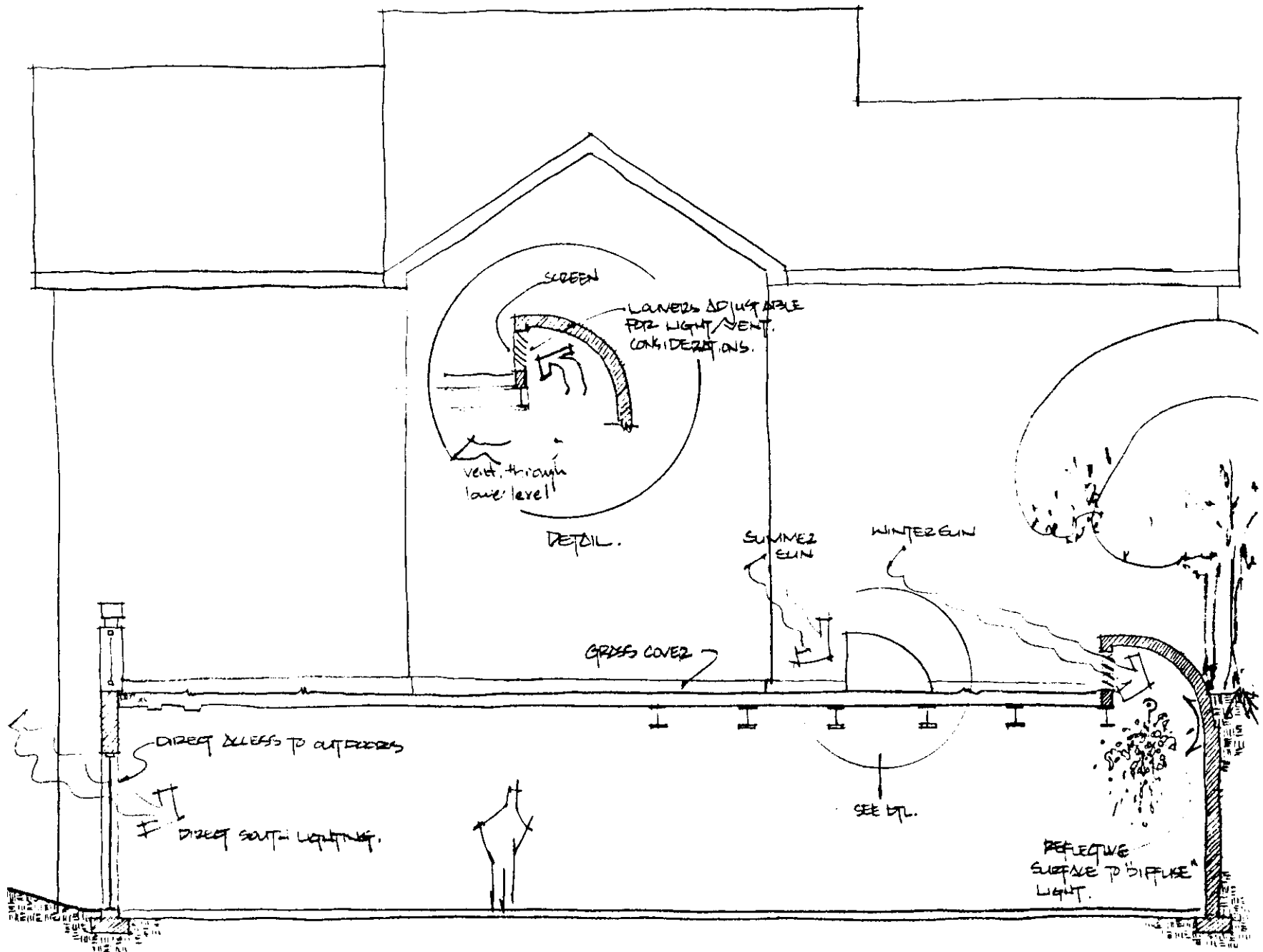


② NORTH ELEVATION (STUDY)

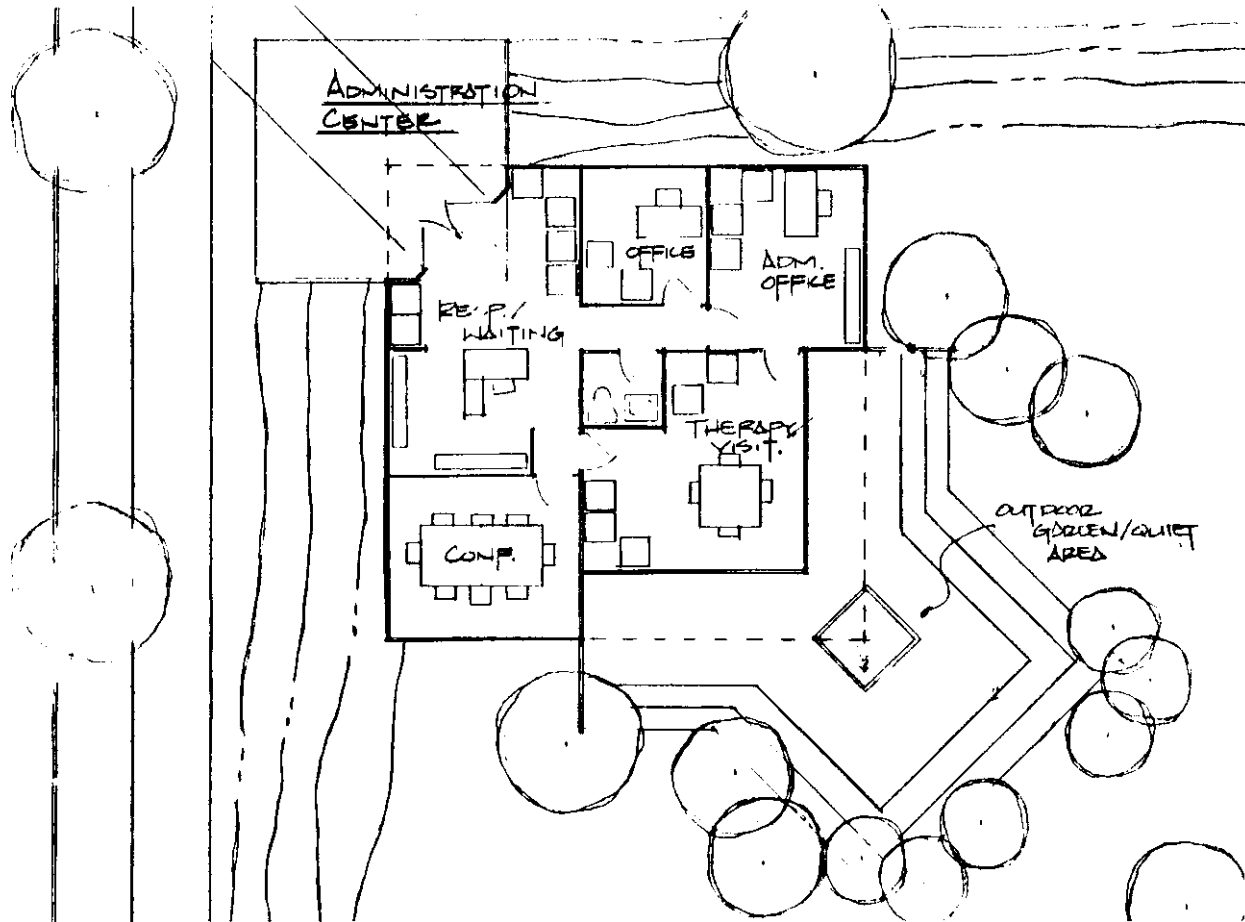
Elevation and massing studies



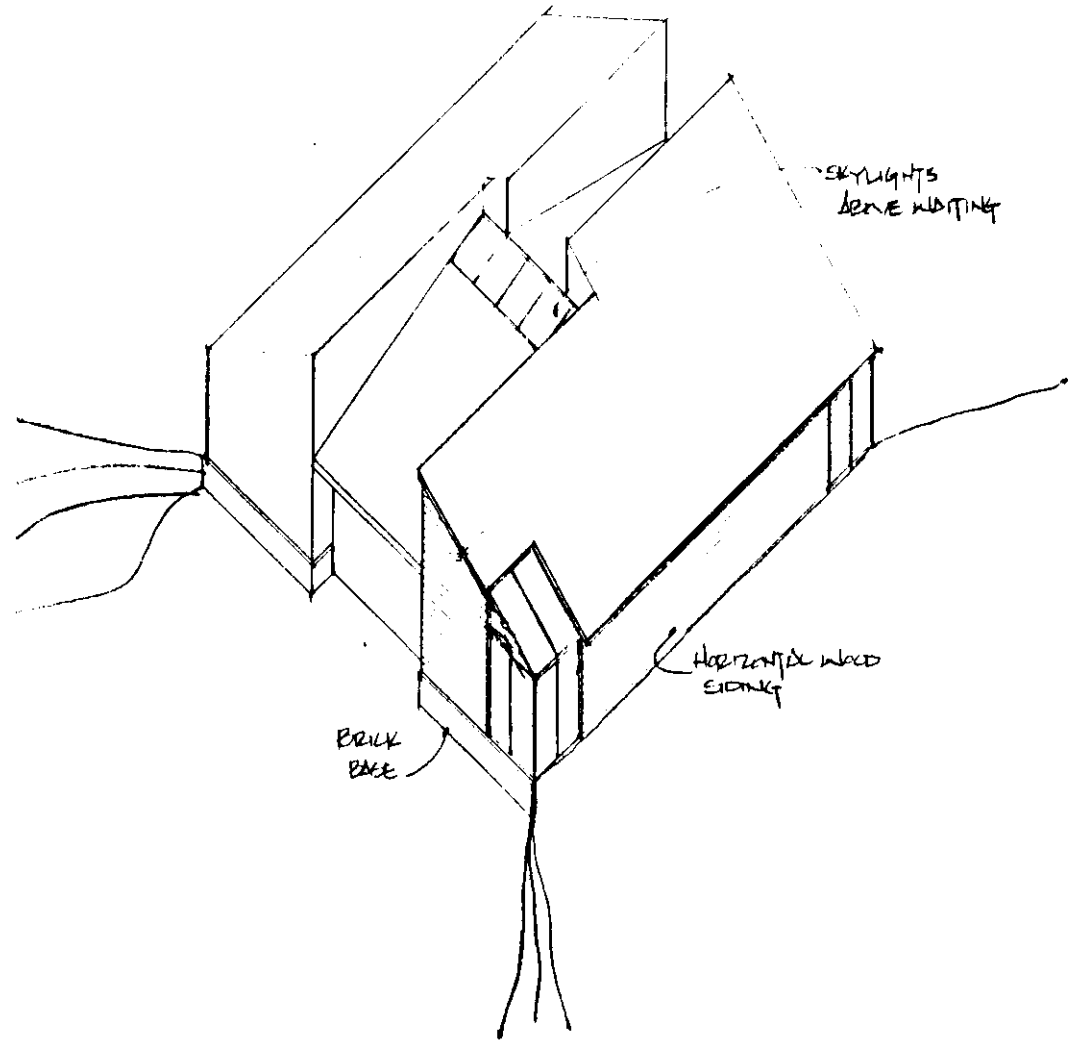
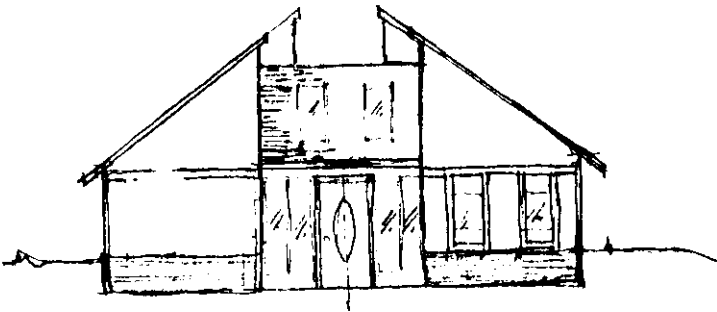
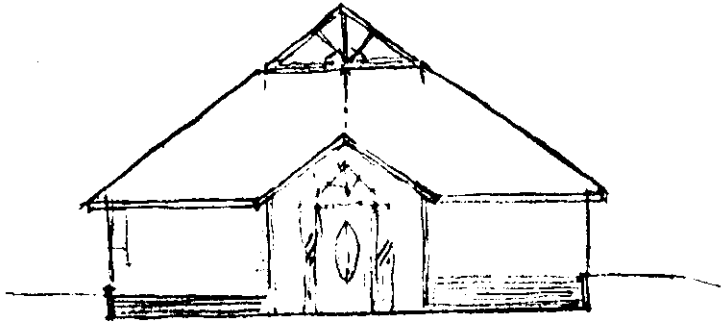
Preliminary study of south elevation and grade changes



N-S section through indoor recreation area studying possible skylight details



Preliminary study of administration layout.  
This solution utilized the northwest corner  
of the site as its entry.



Preliminary elevation studies and material selections

The following is a list of questions that I used in interviews with Dr. Kenneth Joy and Rai Johnson, director of The Youth Service Bureau; Muncie, Indiana. These questions were helpful in my interview process so that I could learn about the juvenile delinquent and his/her problems. The questions also established what was currently being done and what problems (if any) were being encountered. The questions were used as a starting point with which I could base a design solution upon. They are included in this appendix as resource items.

-What are some causes (social/psychological) of juvenile delinquency?

-What issues concerning rehabilitation or prevention methods are important?

-What may be some useful activities within the group home?

-What are some of the community needs of the juveniles in regards to group sizes and social relationships within the home?

-What freedoms do the children have within the home?

-How is the status of the group home portrayed in a neighborhood context?

-How much privacy is needed within the home? House-parent's privacy and children's privacy.

-What are the advantages or disadvantages of residential versus institutional atmospheres?

-What are some of the reasons for placing a delinquent youth into a group home?

-What should a group home provide for the children?

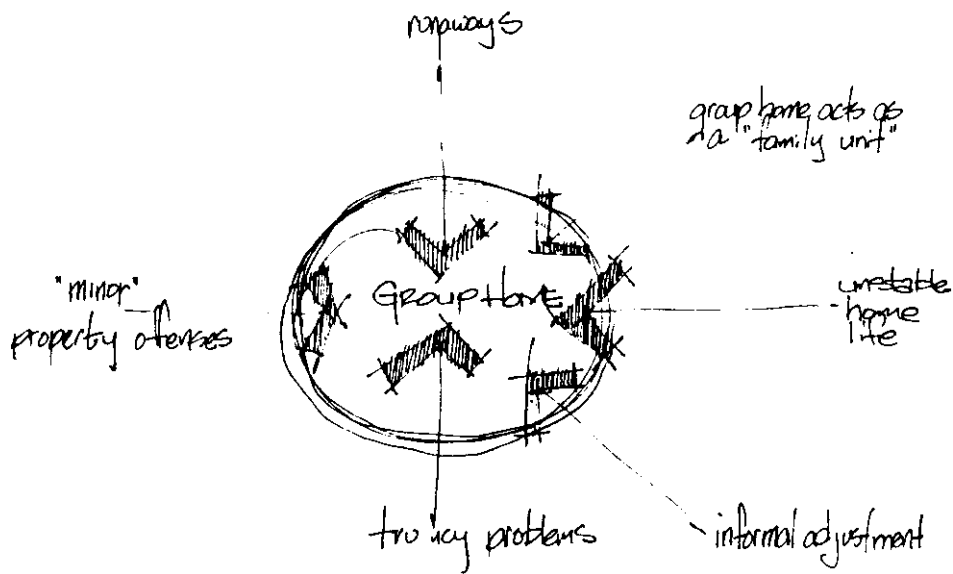
-What kinds of security, both internal and external, should be maintained?

-How much outside freedom should be allowed to the children (work, school, etc.)?

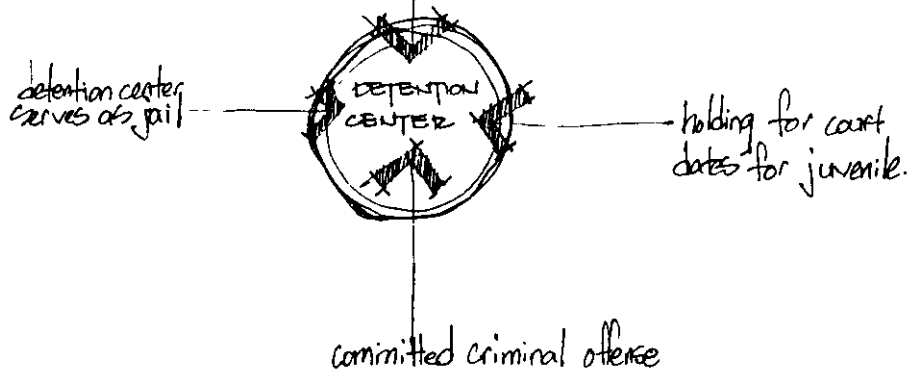
-What types of crimes are the delinquent children involved in?

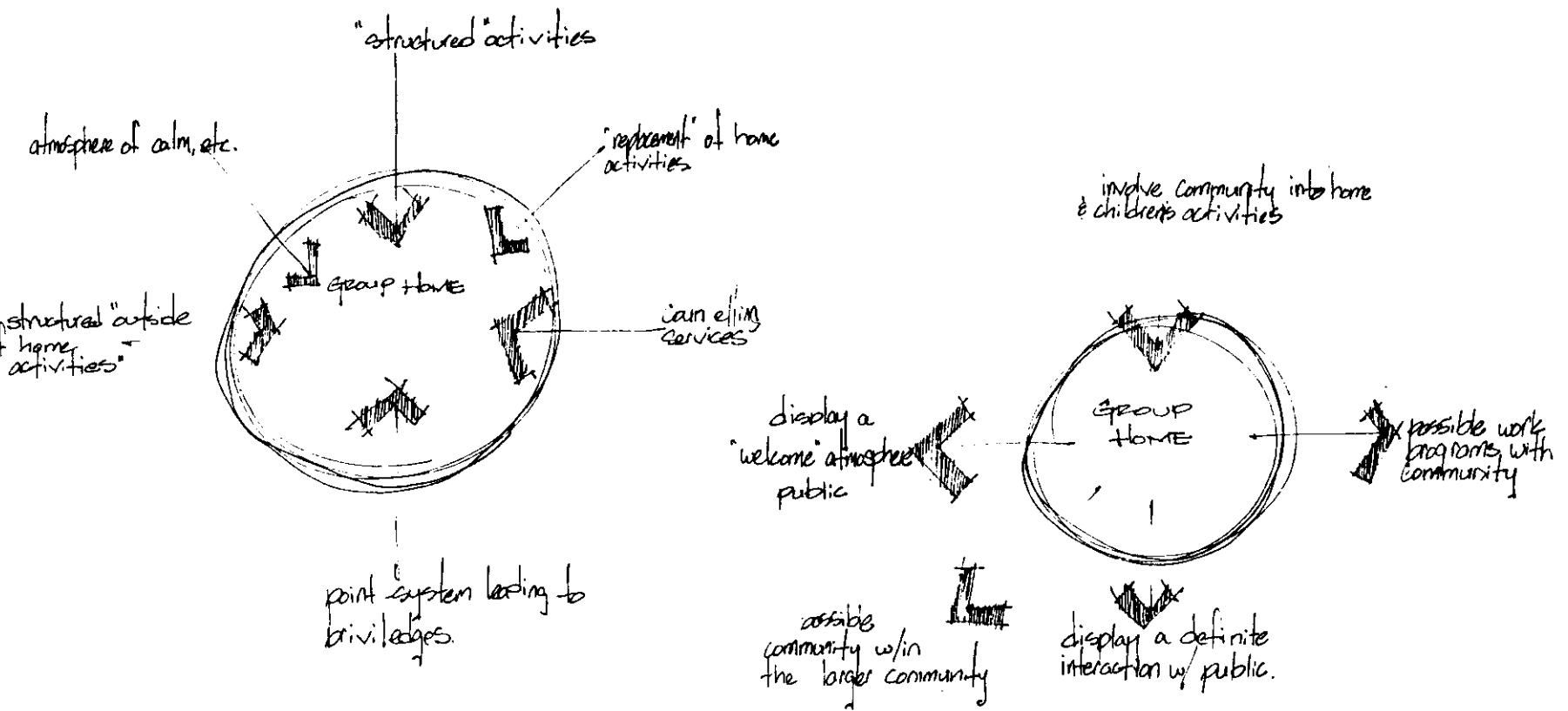
-What is the relative effectiveness of the existing group homes?

-What types of counselling services should be provided?



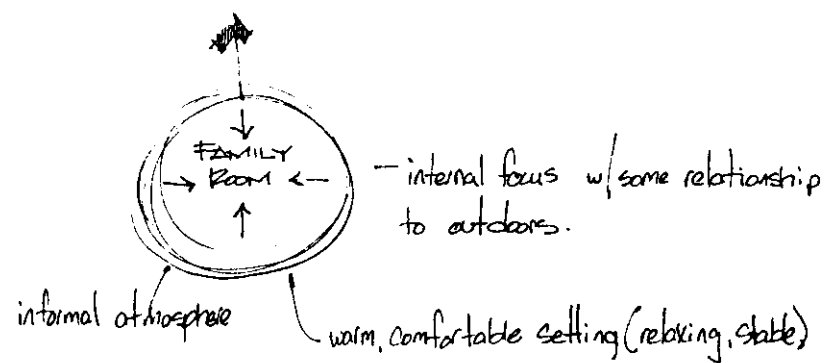
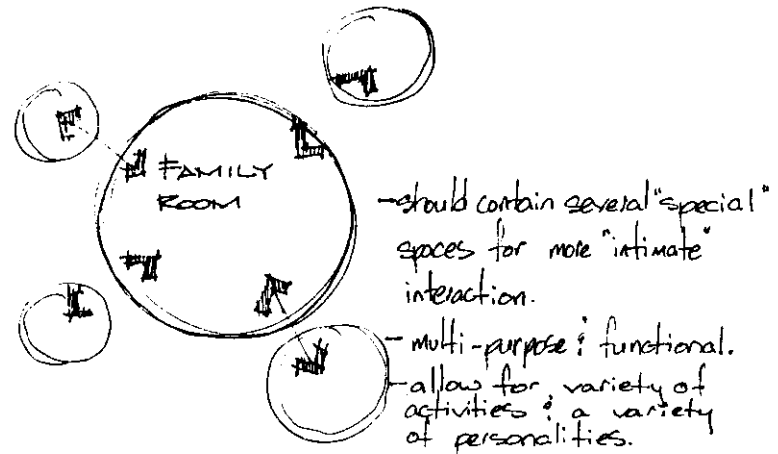
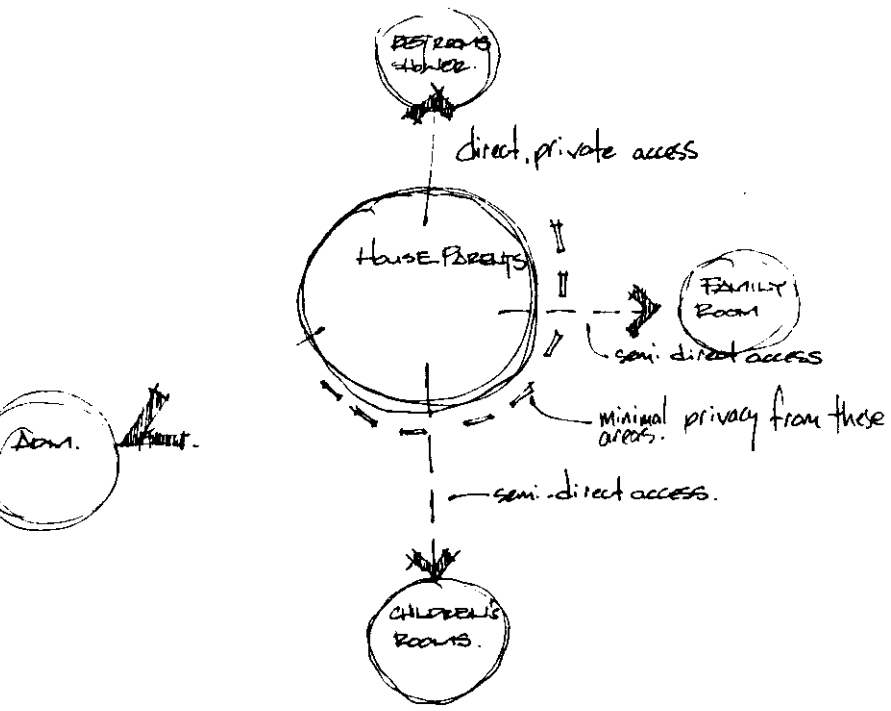
• Group Home vs. DETENTION CENTER  
 "institutional atmosphere"

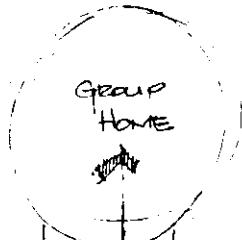




- NEEDS TO BE PROVIDED BY HOME

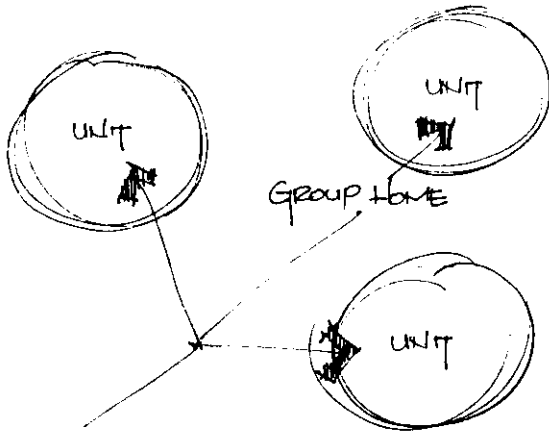




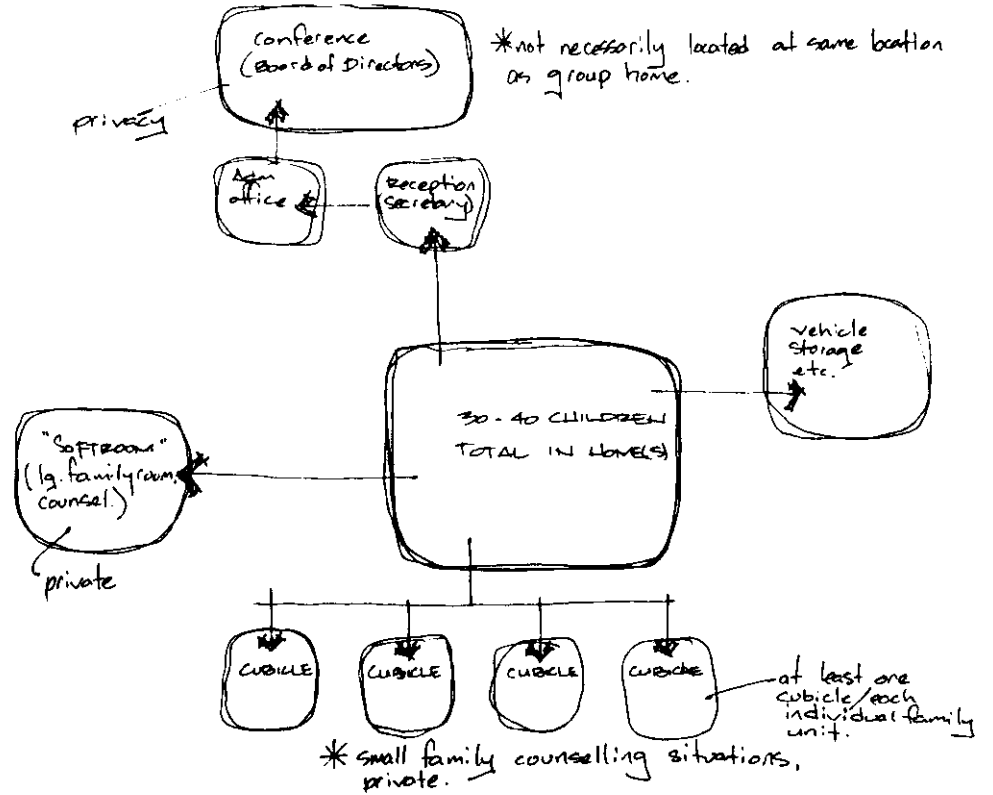


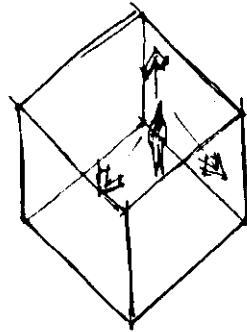
total capacity in one complex

- or -



capacity into smaller units, all working toward a total environment.

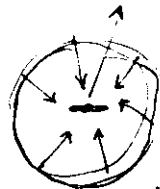
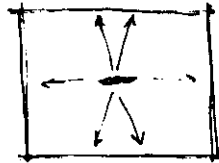
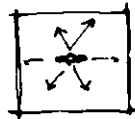




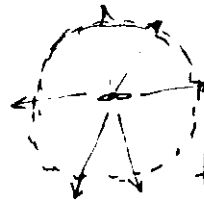
individual rooms, how confining should they be?  
 - restrictive to give opportunity for socialization, but also allow for enough personal privacy.



- special restrictions to "personalize," or to imply comfortable/uncomfortable atmosphere?

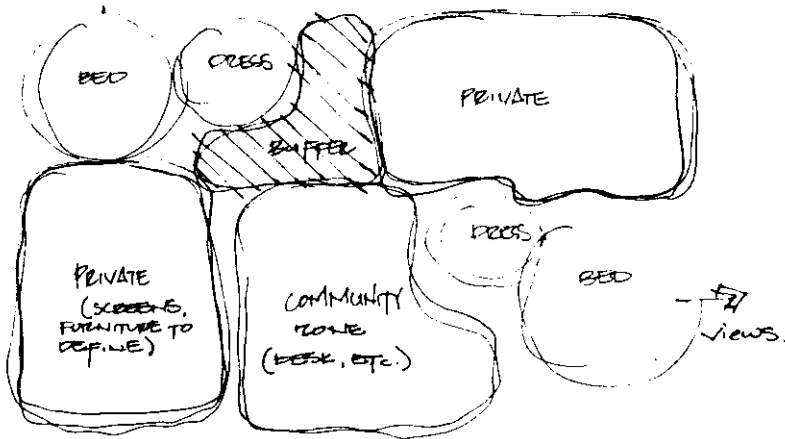


- inward focus for individual rooms



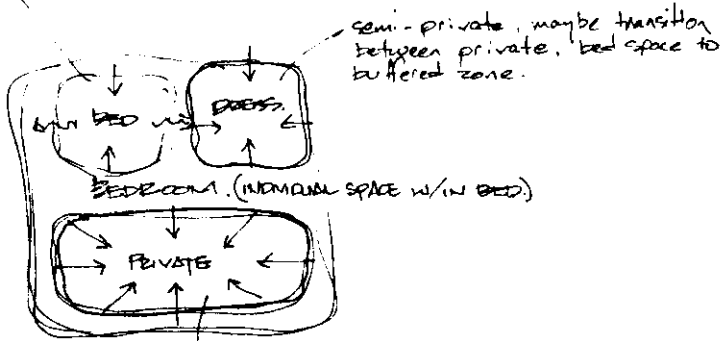
- outward focus.

views.

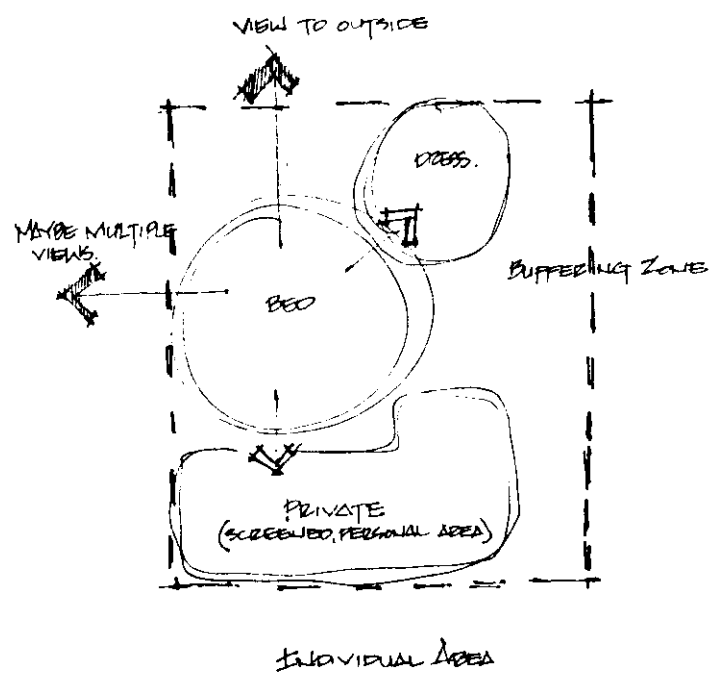


2-BED AREA.

semi-private, also some outward focussing.

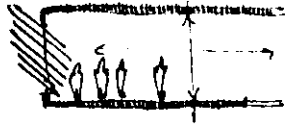
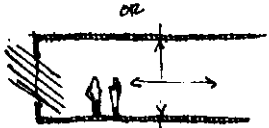


inward focus, somewhat, children are limited by restrictions governing amount of time spent in this area.

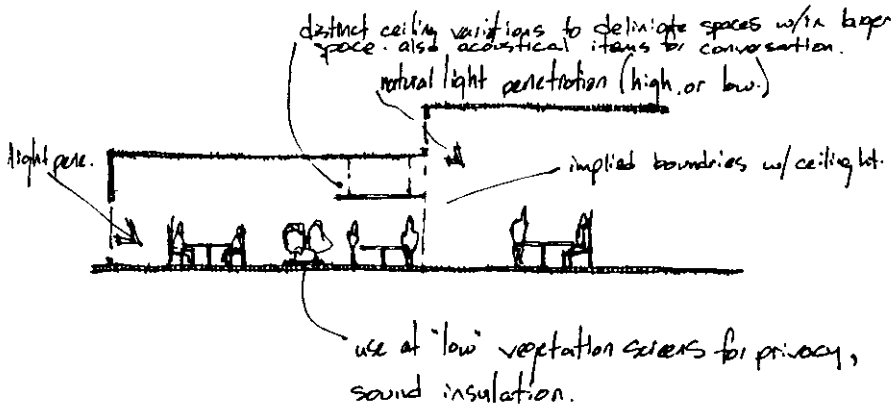
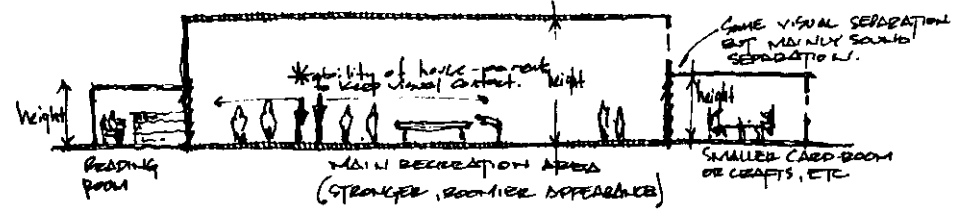




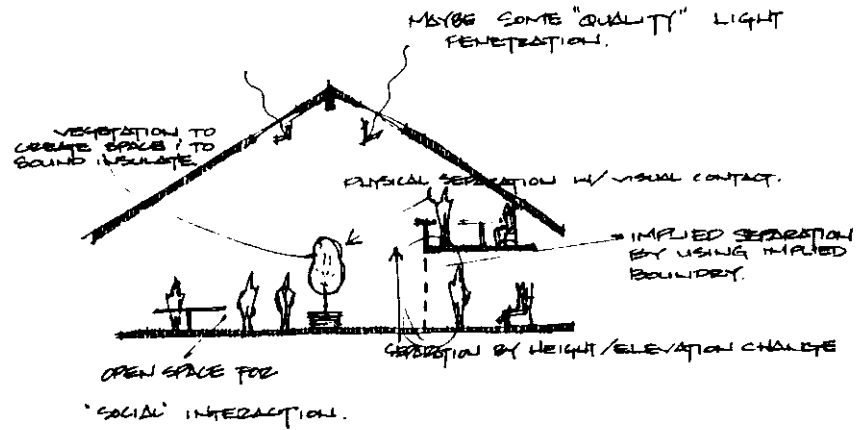
comfortable height to width area?



\* idea of 'comfort' w/in an area in terms of volumes, occupancy, light penetration.



DINING ROOM



FAMILY ROOM.