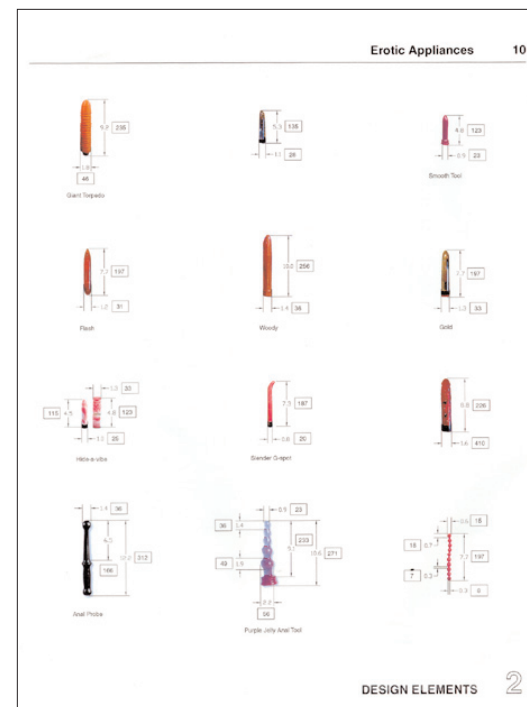
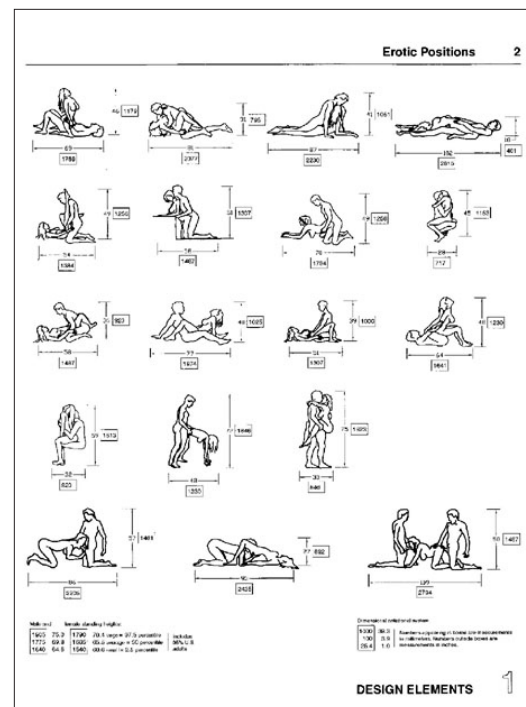
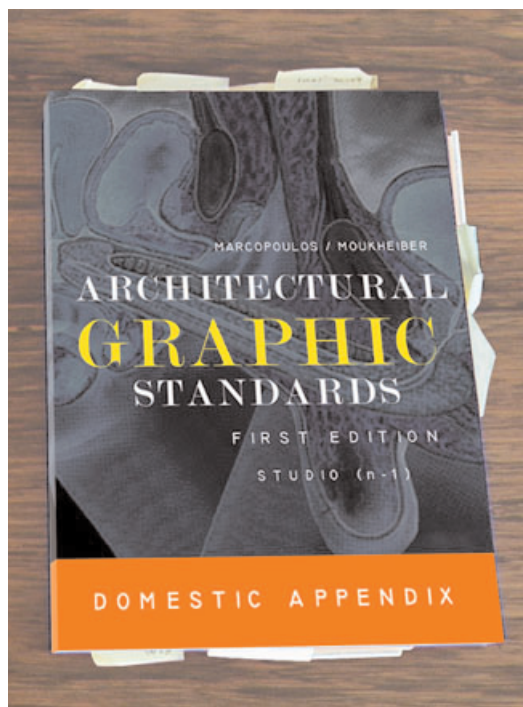


Dream Houses by Studio (n-1)



The house has never been just a house. It has always been a vehicle for aspirations—a dream—as much as an armature for quotidian life. As such, we see its performance beyond mere material form—it offers solace against the tribulations of the ‘outside world’; it is a home. These expectations are so culturally ingrained that Freud described psychological disturbance as its inverse—the *unheimlich*. Critics since have seen the uncanny not as an opposite but a double: the haunted house offers an image of a deeper truth hidden in our fears. These are not extremes. Every house is a container of such a rich variety of human activities that it is simultaneously the most disturbing and the most stable space in our lives.

Even as the psychological complexity of the house has been increasingly acknowledged, the mainstream discourse about it has become increasingly shallow. As the home has become the locus of individual capital acquisition and display, it has become more a sign than a shelter. Real-estate agents boast of features and styles that actuate a buyer’s self-identity (a house offers the ultimate “life-style”) that make it more about exposure than shelter. Whether ‘traditional’ or ‘modern,’ ‘manufactured,’ ‘custom’ or ‘designer,’ the magazine photo and curb-appeal have become the determinants of success. For the average homeowner, architecture has become an exaggerated projection of their identity—a drag costume for daily life.

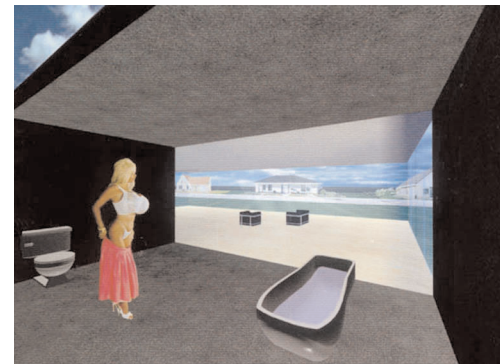
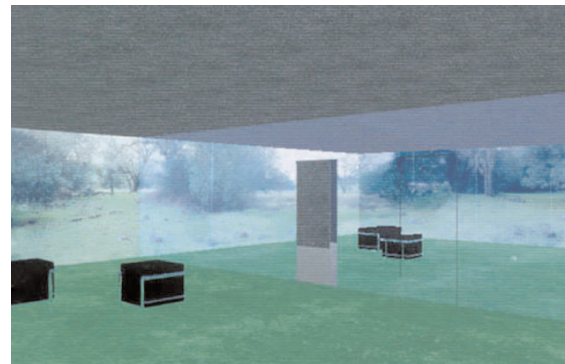
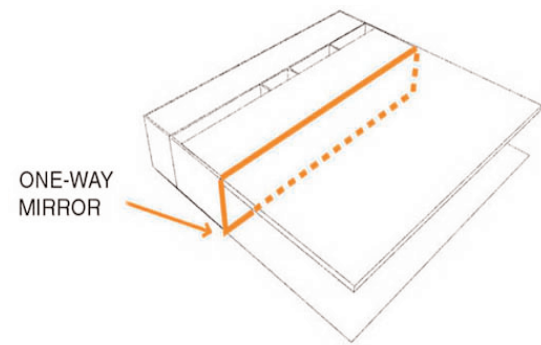
Carol Moukheiber and Christos Marcopoulos, partners in the architectural collaborative Studio N Minus One, take this situation as their starting point. The house is a performance of oneself. As such, the effects by which it acts become mechanisms that deepen the domestic experience. The domestic projects included here—some speculative, others commissioned—aim to operate directly with the inherent psychological, spatial and political tensions of the domestic sphere. Nothing is safe; nothing is sacred. Although a “House for Mom” could find its place amongst these proposals, the studio might propose a meditation on oedipal space that mom herself might find every bit as unsettling as appealing.

For them, even the simplest request for a stone countertop or glass shower resonates with an unspoken discourse. The Domestic Appendix was conceived to reveal a persistent undercurrent in discourse about the house. Architectural Graphic Standards purports to be a comprehensive encyclopedia of programmatic activity that includes all acts of hygiene, eating and socializing. Yet in deference to prurient good-taste, the manual eschews all discussion of the space required for sexual and procreative acts—arguably an activity that encodes much of the house’s spatial hierarchy. No one has designed a bedroom without carefully tending to the particular concerns and enthusiasms of its potential inhabitants. Through the lens of metric examination, the Domestic Appendix was developed as a kind of anatomy of this sub-text and a tool for surfacing this key component of architectural practice.

Similarly, the four house projects included here offer hypotheses about domestic life. These speculative propositions collide opposites to reveal architecture in their performance.

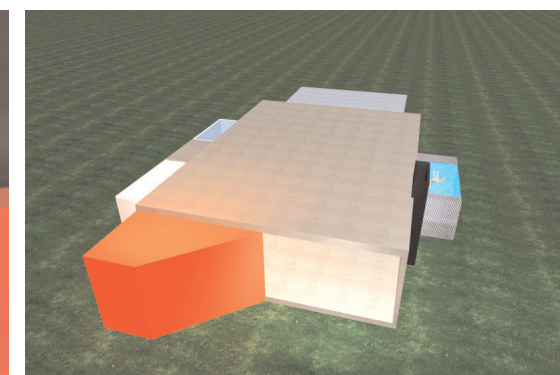
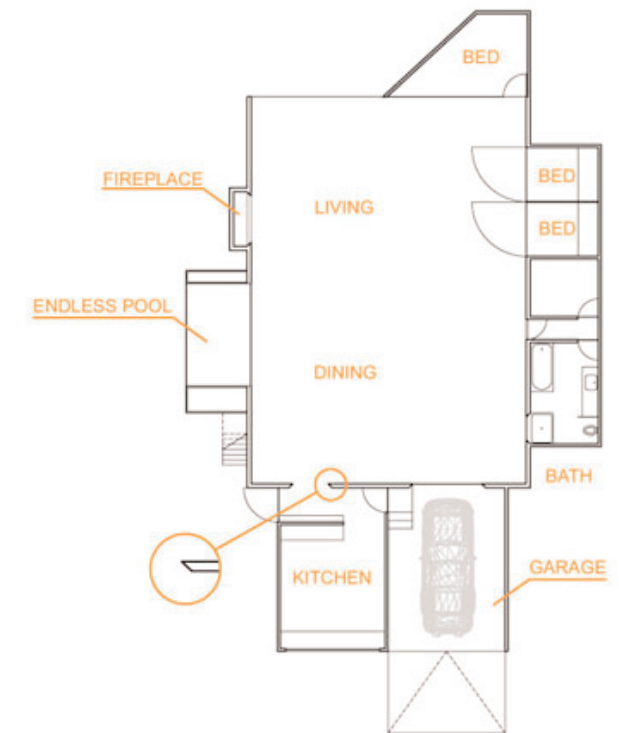
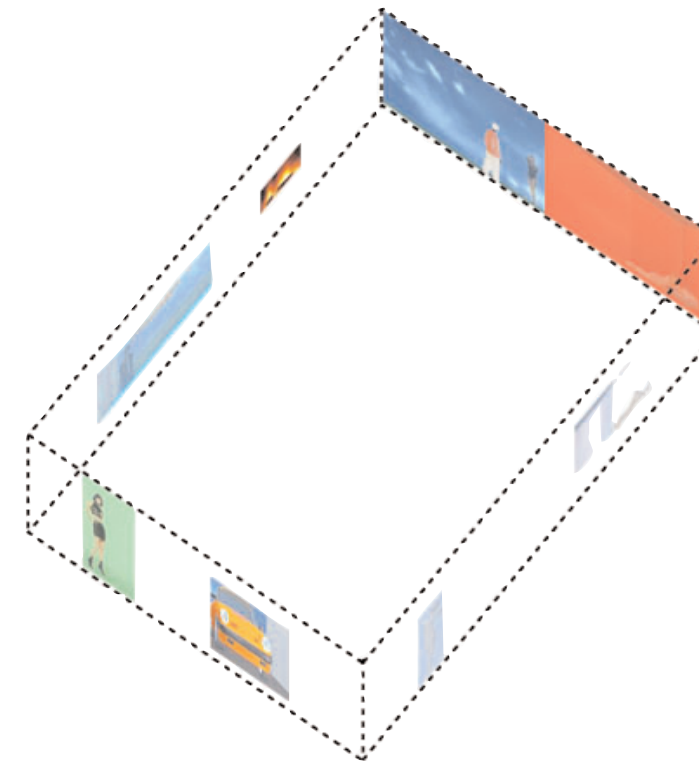
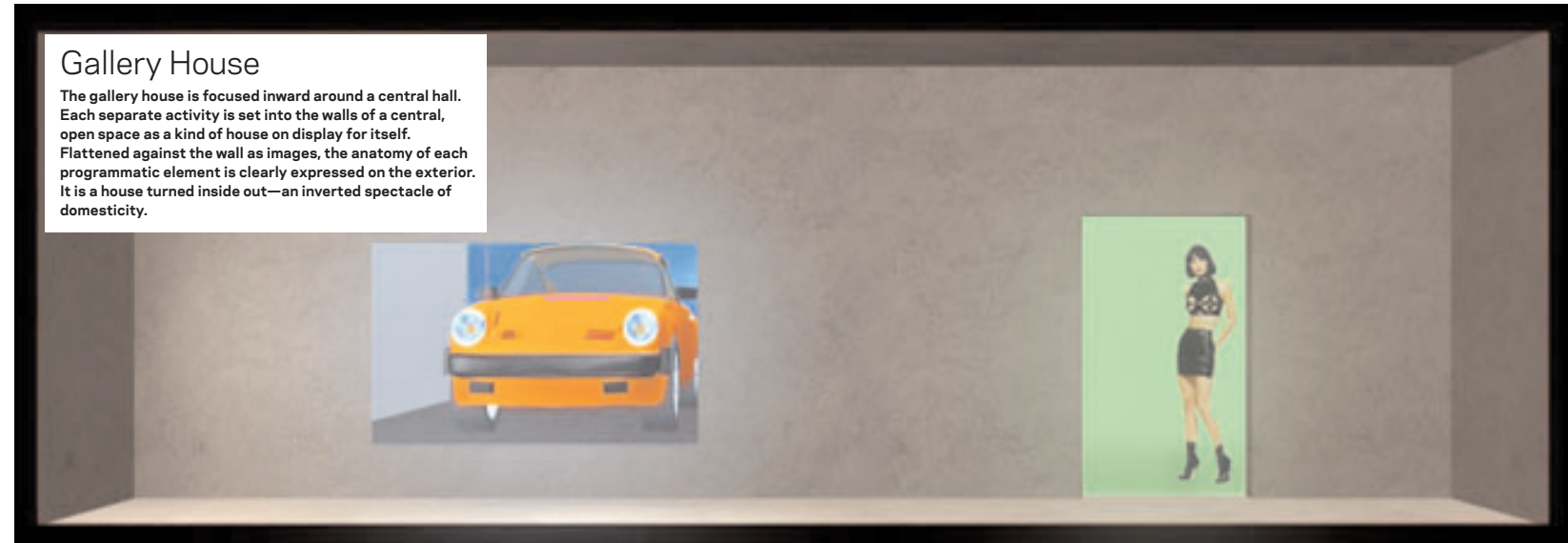
Mirror House

In plan, the mirror house seems to offer a clear delineation of public and private spaces. In effect, however, the one-way mirror renders their division ambiguous. Private spaces are hidden from view by reflectivity while the public spaces are doubled. The mirror repeats (and inverts) the modernist trope of transparency. At the same time as the living room offers a pure Miesian experience in 360 degrees, the private spaces have unnervingly panoptic exterior views themselves. No space is spared seeing itself or wondering if it is in fact being seen.



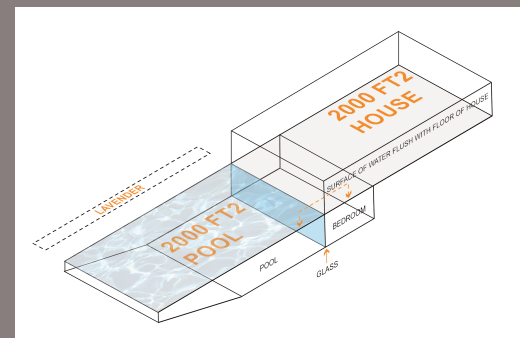
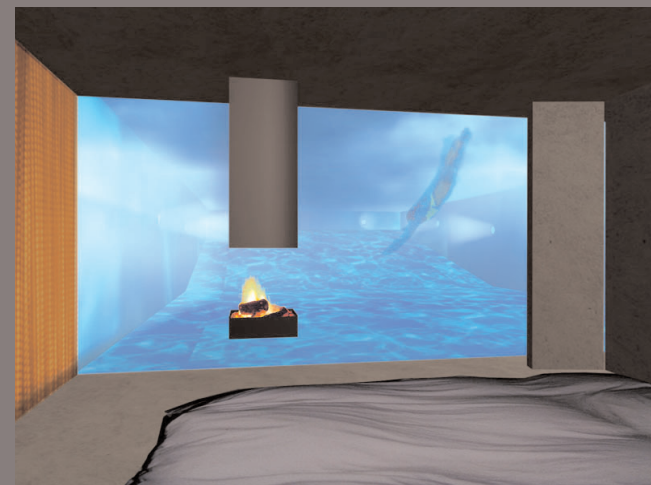
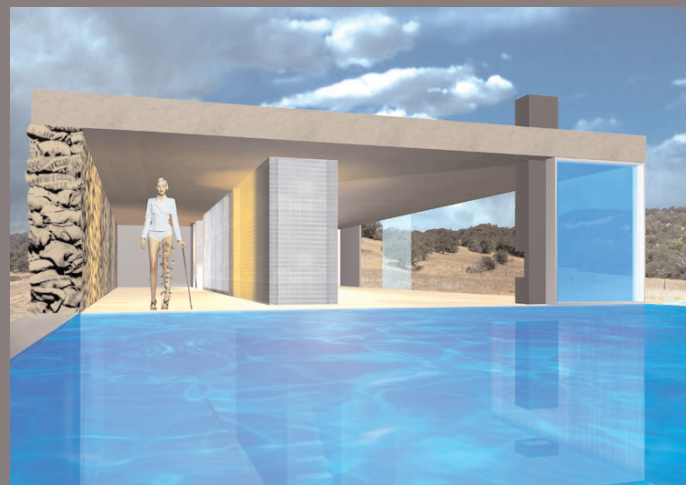
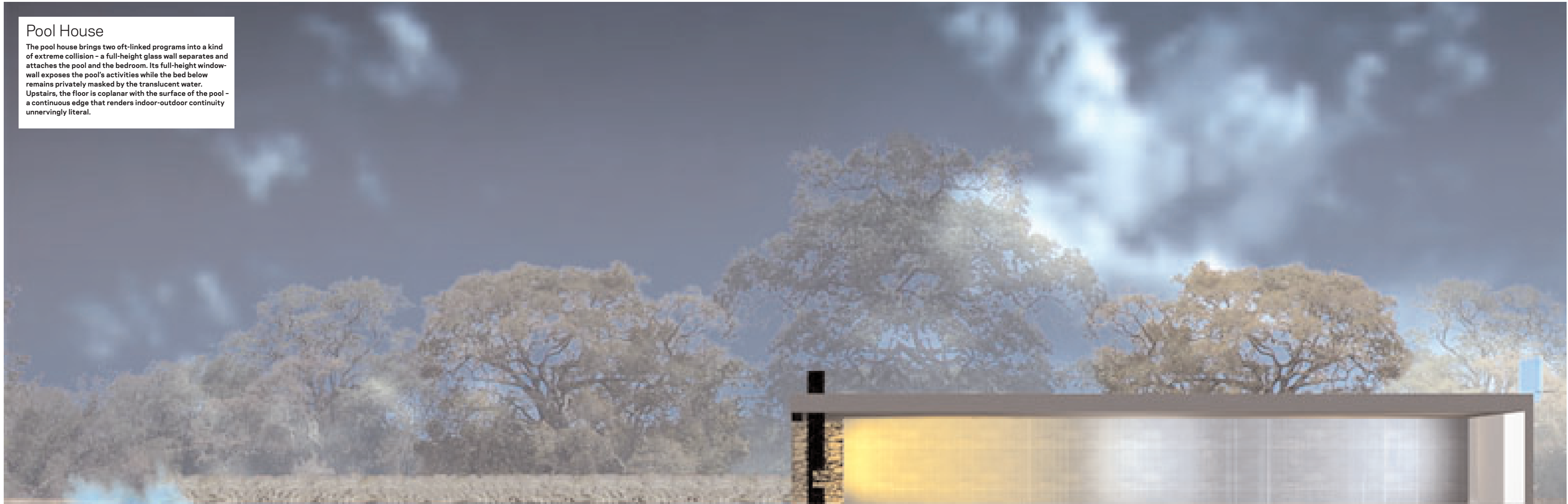
Gallery House

The gallery house is focused inward around a central hall. Each separate activity is set into the walls of a central, open space as a kind of house on display for itself. Flattened against the wall as images, the anatomy of each programmatic element is clearly expressed on the exterior. It is a house turned inside out—an inverted spectacle of domesticity.



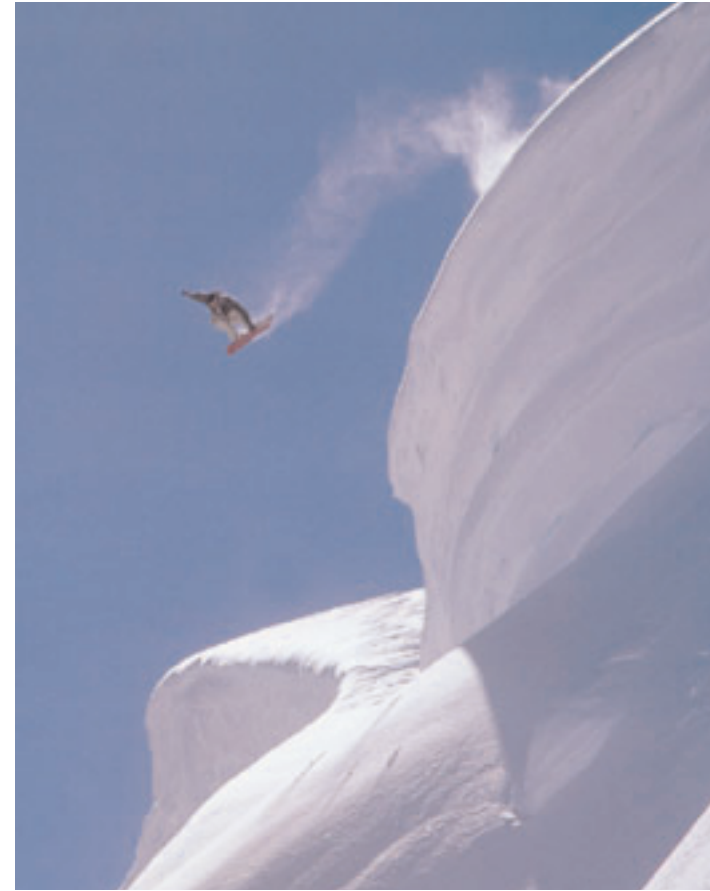
Pool House

The pool house brings two oft-linked programs into a kind of extreme collision - a full-height glass wall separates and attaches the pool and the bedroom. Its full-height window-wall exposes the pool's activities while the bed below remains privately masked by the translucent water. Upstairs, the floor is coplanar with the surface of the pool - a continuous edge that renders indoor-outdoor continuity unnervingly literal.

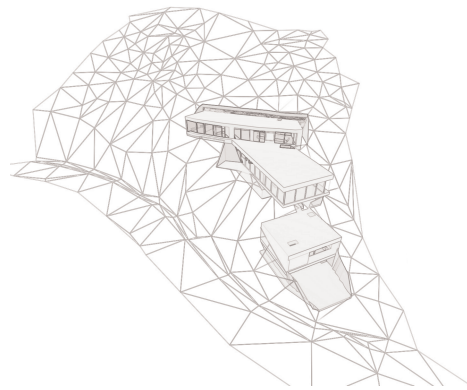
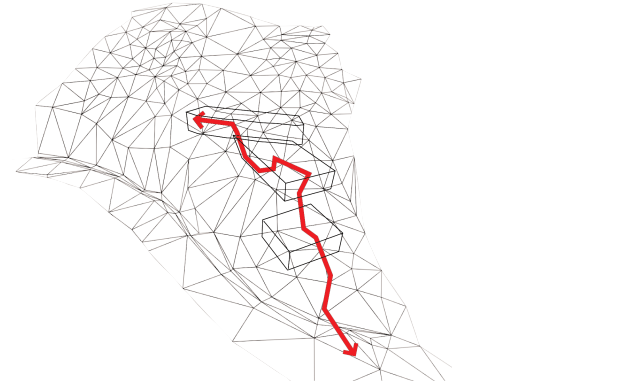
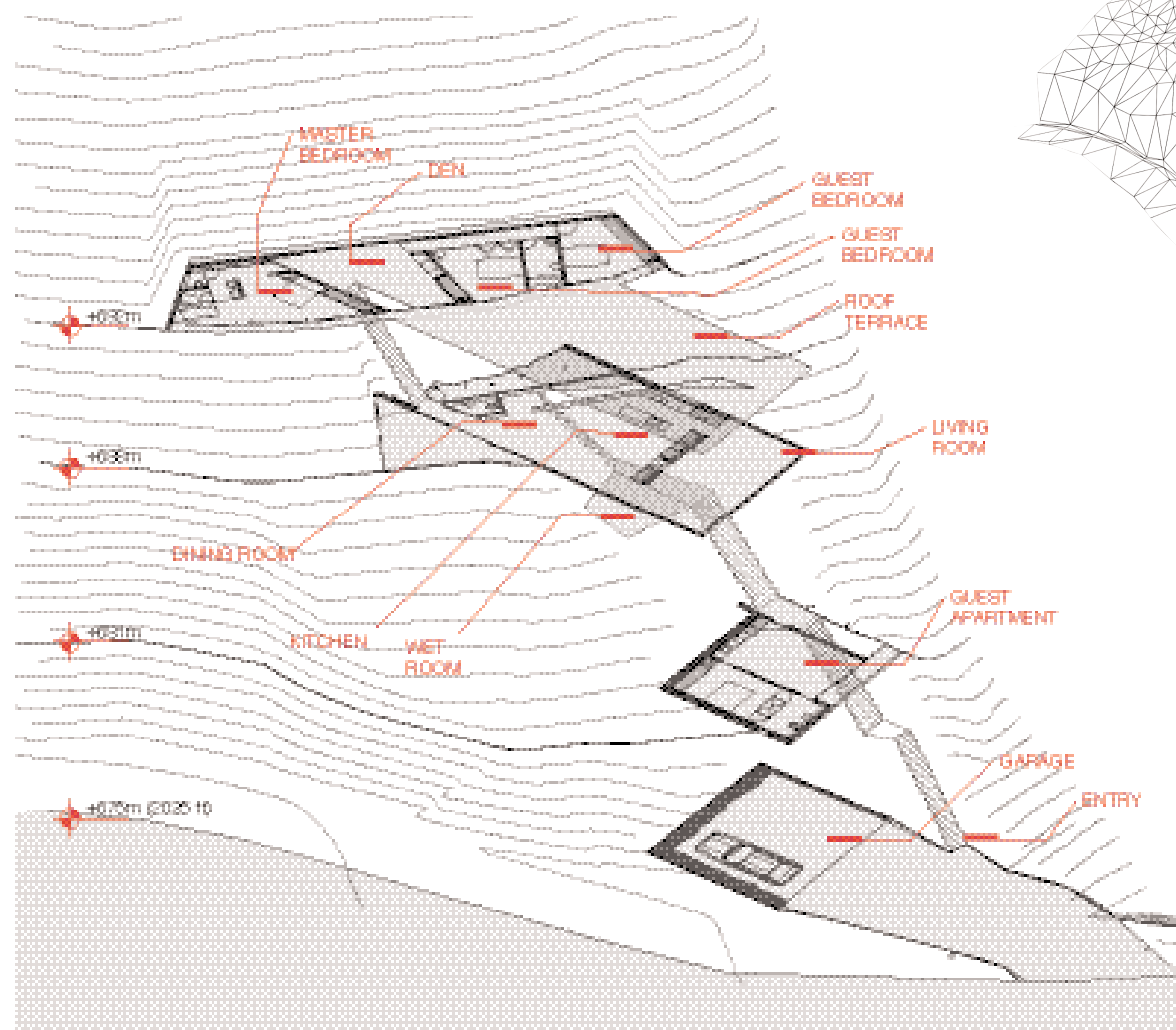
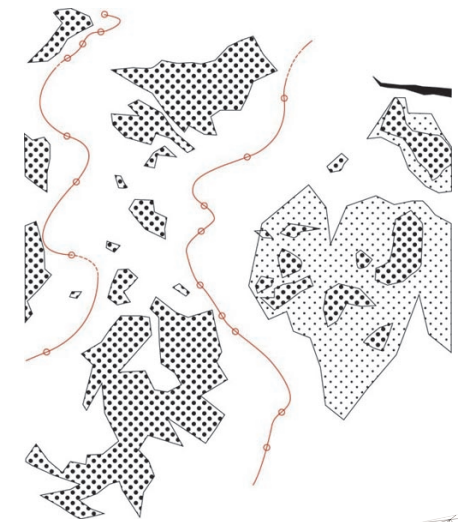


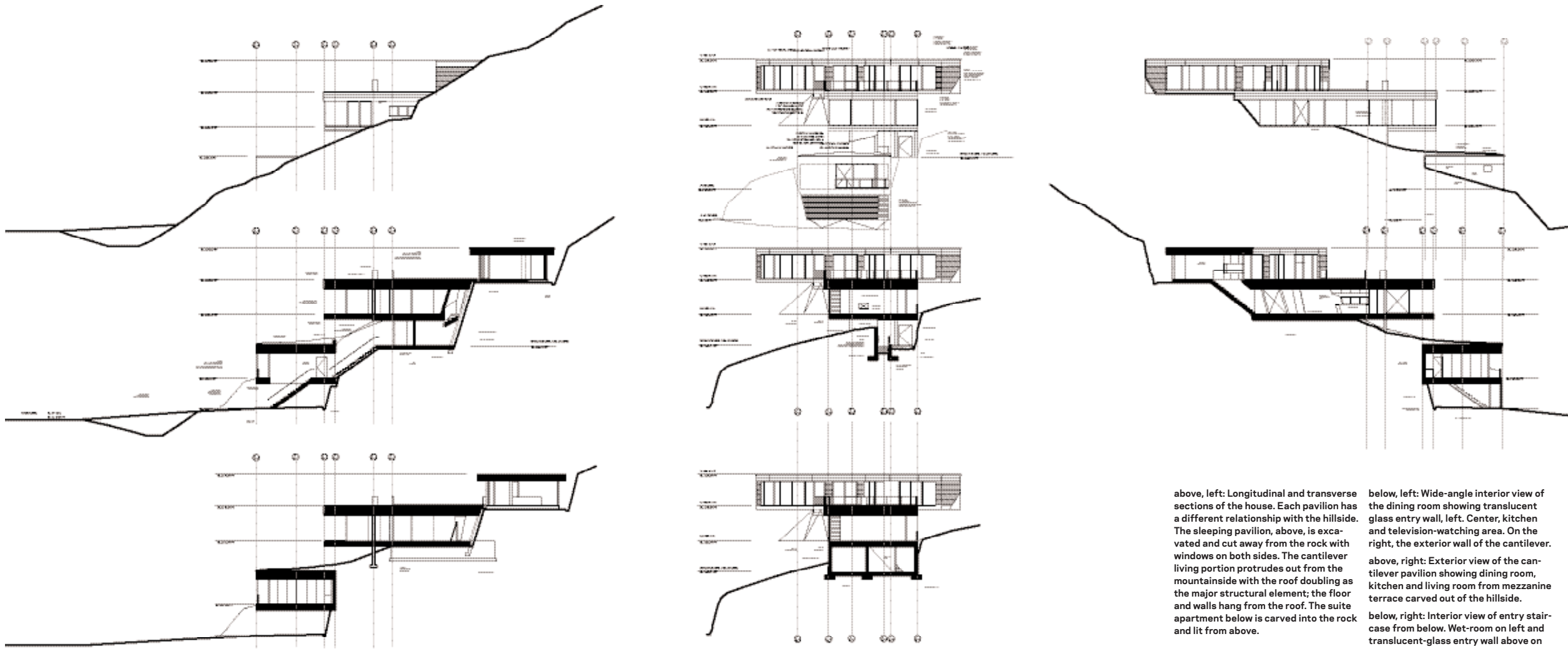
Mountain House

In the mountain house a series of pavilions are arrayed along the steep slope. By digging into the rock and projecting out from the hill, a series of possible views are opened up both between the landscape and the different components of the project. Cut into the rock, the lowest pavilion looks inwards while directly above that, the cantilevered pavilion suspends an enclosure within the view itself. The free-form social pattern of the building's inhabitants yields a continuous, spontaneous recombination of each of the spaces - made all the more possible through their ambiguous interconnection to the mountain, the view and to each other.



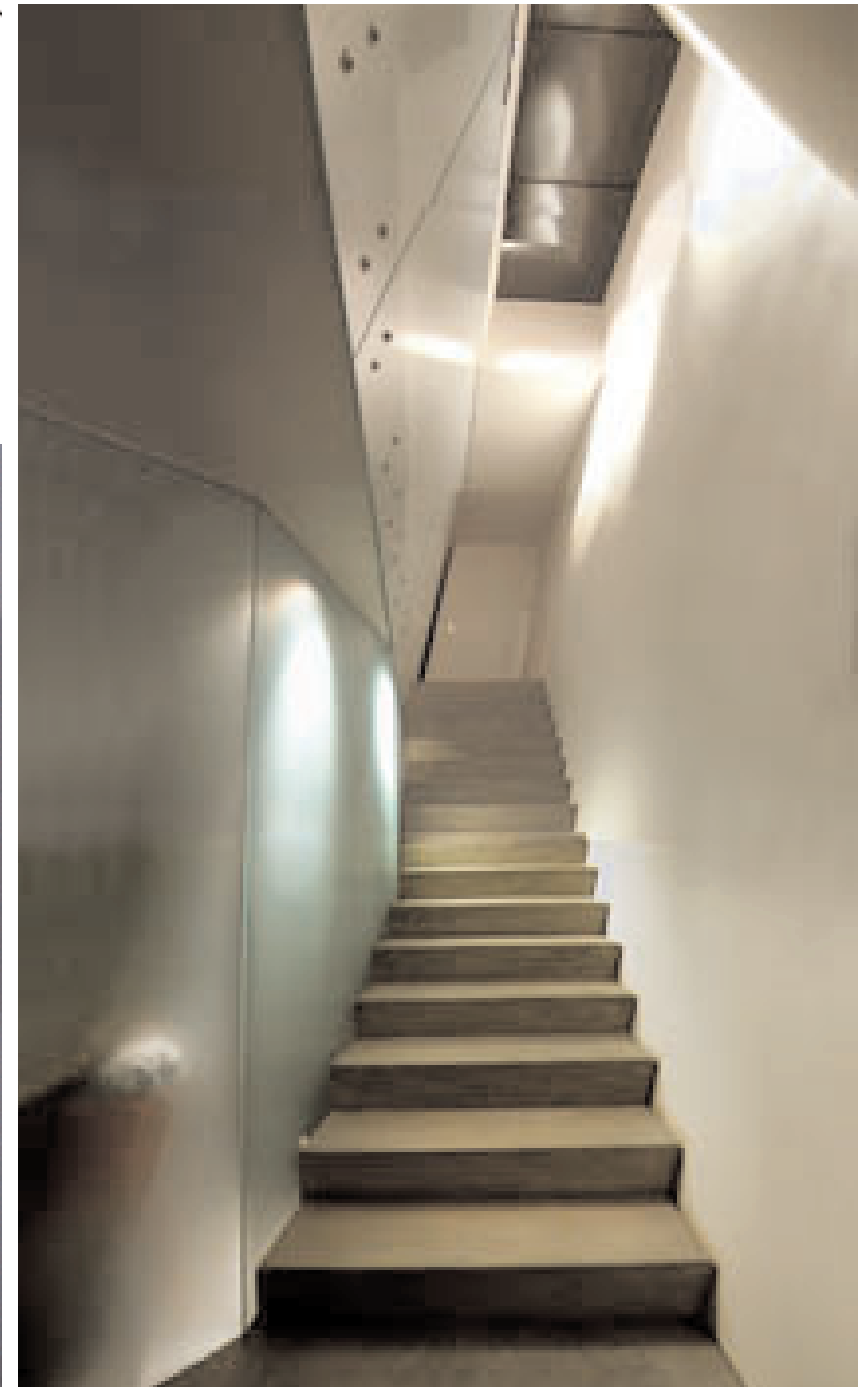
left: The client of the house at work.
below, left: Exploded axonometric diagram showing each of the levels and their related connections.
below, right: Diagram illustrating the real-time spontaneous landscape interpretation of the snowboarder.
below, right center: Diagram illustrating the site and a possible strategy for inhabiting the site.
below, right bottom: Perspective massing diagram illustrating final strategy for the house.

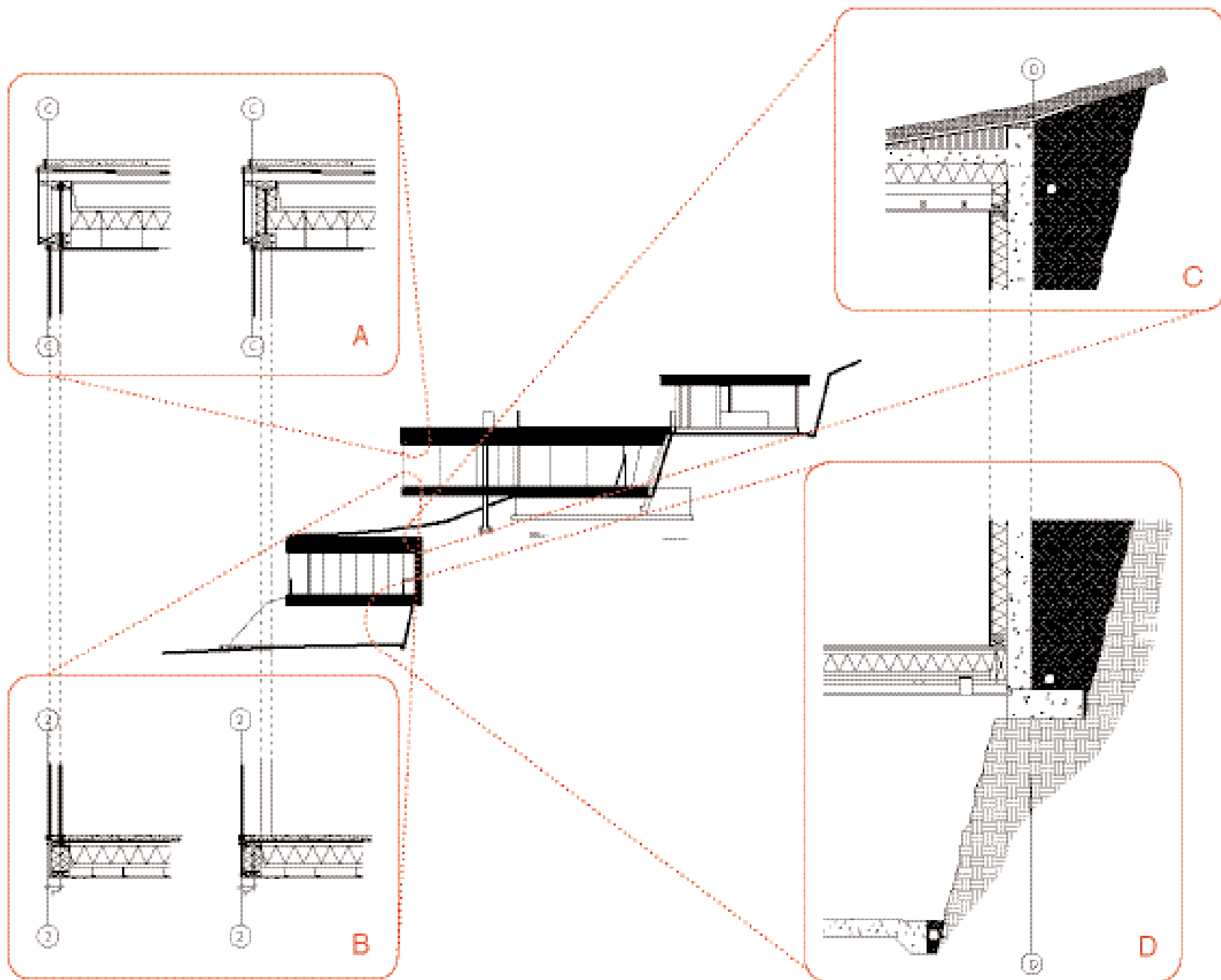




above, left: Longitudinal and transverse sections of the house. Each pavilion has a different relationship with the hillside. The sleeping pavilion, above, is excavated and cut away from the rock with windows on both sides. The cantilever living portion protrudes out from the mountainside with the roof doubling as the major structural element; the floor and walls hang from the roof. The suite apartment below is carved into the rock and lit from above.

below, left: Wide-angle interior view of the dining room showing translucent glass entry wall, left. Center, kitchen and television-watching area. On the right, the exterior wall of the cantilever. above, right: Exterior view of the cantilever pavilion showing dining room, kitchen and living room from mezzanine terrace carved out of the hillside. below, right: Interior view of entry staircase from below. Wet-room on left and translucent-glass entry wall above on left. Excavated retaining wall on right.





above: Details of cantilever and suite show how the house engages and springs away from the mountainside. Details A and B show the cantilever roof and floor-structure that both resists snow loads and hangs the walls and floor through a series of stainless steel rods. Detail at left shows the typical glass condition. Detail at right shows a section through the rod. Details C and D illustrate how the building digs directly into the hillside. In detail C, a concrete retaining wall seals the rock and waterproofing runs above, allowing surface drainage to run onto planted roof and treating the house integrated with the hillside. Detail D shows how the area below the building exposes the rock and emphasizes the cut.

left: Exterior view of cantilever.

facing page, top: Interior view of den showing transparency of upper pavilion.

facing page, center left: Exterior view of mezzanine terrace showing how cantilever intersects rock.

facing page, bottom left: Model showing layout of sleeping pavilion, its relationship to the hillside and its organization according to different views.

facing page, bottom right: Interior view of glass hanging wall at cantilever.