



Tokyo Infill

a survey of small houses;
byproducts of city planning

James Masman

Byera Hadley
Travelling Scholarships
Journal Series
2018

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James Masman was awarded the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship in 2017

Cover image:
a narrow path,
a deep suburban lot

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What characteristics of a city produce small houses?

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This report examines the
qualities that small houses
in Tokyo return to the street
in an attempt to better
understand the presence of
architecture in our cities

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1

Introduction

Harry Seidler once described the transformation of inter-war Sydney from a suburban landscape of detached dwellings to one 'dominated' by near-identical, low rise brick apartment buildings as truly horrifying.¹ Lot after lot barrack type buildings reign where cars dominate the ground plane, backyards are denuded of vegetation, and living rooms of adjacent blocks face each other across deep, dark and narrow canyons. These 'walkup flats' are a residential building typology that was applied en masse over 70 years ago to house previous generations of Sydney's population. Throughout Sydney's suburbs the sprawling detached house typology echoes the same architectural stagnation, a result of infrastructure policy satisfying the whims of government unable to plan ahead. Cities are products of planning policy and architecture is the medium in which we gauge their success.

Over the next 40 years, Greater Sydney is set to almost double in population from 4.8 million to around 8 million people, an unavoidable increase in density.² While medium and high-rise apartment buildings may provide a lot of additional dwellings, a one-size-fits-all approach to the solution is neither realistic nor suitable. The diversity of the Sydney population should drive housing policy. To address Sydney's lack of appropriate housing, policy must engender sustainable housing typologies through diverse tenure types, building types, dwelling sizes, floor space configurations, lot arrangements and location.

Where land is scarce and expensive, a sustainable city is one where land is used intensively, where we can live with low ecological impact, and where social life defines neighbourhoods. Sustainable, social, and small housing is 21st century living.

Tokyo is known for its unusual urban pattern, and is a city where architects have designed more small houses than any other city on earth. Small houses in this case being those using their site intensively, inevitably small due to the inherent size of the lot. Built form is undefined by rigid urban axes, varied in lot configuration and encourages intensive use of space. Tokyo's residential districts seem bereft of planning policy as we know it in Sydney. The product of Tokyo's planning policy is a dense, diverse, complex, green, and walkable suburban realm - a genuine assortment of old and new, form and function, that genuinely engages with the street. Tokyo's character creates small houses. What characteristics of a city produce small houses?

This report examines small houses in Tokyo and the qualities they return to the street in an attempt to better understand the presence of architecture in a city. Case studies are presented through the lense of a particular facade condition, a building's immediate relationship to the street, and city. Maps are drawn to investigate connection with neighbours, street patterns and contrasting scales in the urban landscape.

1. Harry Seidler, 'Afterword 1979', in Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Melbourne, F.W. Cheshire, 1960), 255.

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Population Projections, Australia, 2012 to 2101*, Catalogue 3222.0.

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2

A Suburban Tokyo Landscape

2

Tokyo's history of contemporary housing began during the post-war period; a time where traditional and modern Japanese culture clashed introducing numerous experimental ideas on housing, all expressing change in the social, political, and economic setting. Over the past 70 years, generations of Japanese architects have added to the Tokyo landscape - a pattern of streets and neighborhoods reasonably unchanged since its ancient formation. A noticeable difference is the abnormally wide range of street types. Soaring expressways over 30m wide join local streets and pedestrian paths that zig-zag through the suburbs. The transport network of Tokyo defines the city's formal arrangement, distributing and connecting its parts, where cars, trains, and pedestrians seamlessly weave together.

Japan's urban grid also relies heavily on pedestrian movement between adjacent suburbs and here in the fine grain is a common theme of beautification, simplification, and uniqueness in the nature of pedestrian experience. Dense, walkable, and healthy suburbs provide opportunity for local economies to emerge and thrive. Hairdressers, chemists, pet shops, laundromats, restaurants, and clothing stores give streets and suburbs

unique character. In Tokyo, it is difficult to walk one block without seeing a local resident providing a service at the street front of their residence. Local economies provide for local residents, encouraging intensive use of limited space. Neighbourhoods where this occurs are well organised, spatially compact, and distinct where social life is intertwined with contemporary living. The relationship domestic architecture has with the street in this context reveals the essence of Tokyo's urban condition.

Birds-eye view of Tokyo,
sprawling to the horizon





A highway,
cutting through Omotesando





A small *roji* (alleyway),
communal space for residents



Under the train line,
intensity of use

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3

The Japanese House

8

Society in post-war Japan was all consuming bringing the comfort and utility of Western living into the design of the modern house. The 1960s through 1980s was a time when Japanese people were family focused and private. Homes no longer provided efficient and flexible traditional open-plan rooms. Instead, functional room types emerged to fulfill the particulars of modern living. Houses grew in size leaving little landscape behind while equipment for specific rooms such as air conditioners, TVs, and radios not only had an impact on a house's ecological footprint but gave reason for the house to turn its back to the street, where interior life became the focus. In this sense, Japan's modern house is not dissimilar to Australia's where oversized buildings fill the site edge to edge, unused ceremonial entries front the street, and unsustainable gardens litter leftover spaces.

World War II devastated Tokyo where swathes of houses were razed. New houses had to be built and during the years following World War II, Japan experienced an economic boom peaking in the early 90s. During this time, the Japan Housing Corporation (now the Urban Renaissance Agency) began filling the suburbs with affordable Western style homes.³ As this insular mode of living began to take over, Japanese architects started questioning the Japanese house and sought to improve it. In the 1990s, recession hit and the housing market flopped forcing the Japanese government to begin promoting development and home ownership through

various means. High inheritance taxes meant it was cheaper for subsequent generations to subdivide and sell land so many standard sized lots were subdivided without minimum controls. Depreciating house values became tax deductibles so building new houses meant every 20 to 30 years land was being subdivided, sold and new houses built. Over the past 80 years, distinct generations of architecture have emerged from this 'scrap and build' culture. Architects tasked with designing homes for clients of the 21st century sought to engage with the city on small lots of land with very little street frontage. Houses were being designed for a single generation and their individual qualities. From this unique context, many residential experimental architecture byproducts emerged as the idiosyncratic housing lots we see today in Japan.

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3. Nuijsink, C., How to make a Japanese house (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2015), 26.

A residual lot,
an opportunity



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4

Small Houses Byproducts of the City

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Houses are derived from a city's unique character. Tokyo's character produces small houses - something Sydney should strive for. What characteristics of a city produce small houses?

Building regulation in Japan contains some of the strictest controls in the world. The form of a building can be predetermined by stipulated heights and maximum volumes, requisite side setbacks of a minimum 500mm, signage on operable windows, earthquake resistance measures, restricted views, and solar access regulations for neighbours.⁴ Due to these restrictions and the fact that most sites in Central Tokyo are already quite small, contemporary architects are obliged to fill these limits leaving the repetitive nature of building codes apparent in their work. However, there is minimal legislation dictating overall appearance, facade materials and neighbour relationships. In this case, inventive arrangement and unexpected form are the byproducts of regulation. To the casual observer at a street scale it appears buildings of Tokyo are densely arranged but on a larger city-wide scale, building codes specifying these measures result in large amounts of dead space. When seen from this measurable perspective, it clearly makes

an impression on the urban realm. The case studies to follow demonstrate where architects have seen potential in these leftover spaces and how on one hand building regulation creates chaos in the details, but on the other creates a framework that brings order and structure to the nature of Tokyo's urban fabric.

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4. Yoshimura, Y., *Super Legal Buildings* (Tokyo: Shokokusha, 2006), 36.

“Inventive arrangement and unexpected form are the byproducts of regulation”

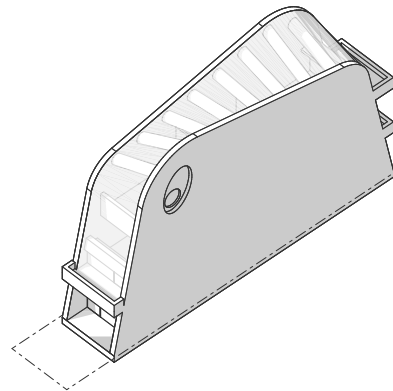


A typical suburban house,
ready for something new

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5

Case Studies

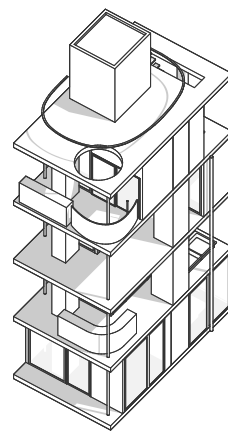


Transparency

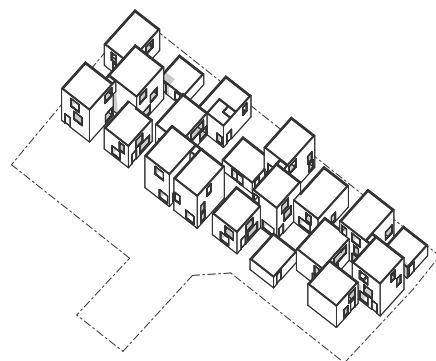
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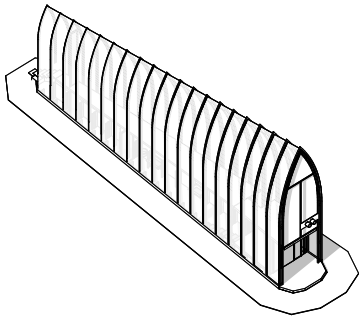
The following case studies provide insight to distinct contributions building facades give to the life of a street. Specific facade conditions inherent in each design focus the study. Each building is accompanied by figure ground diagrams to understand context, floor plans are redrawn to understand spatial layouts and 3D drawings shown to appreciate connection with the street.



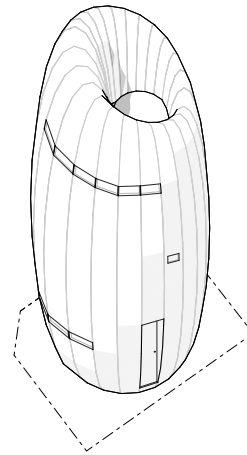
Nature



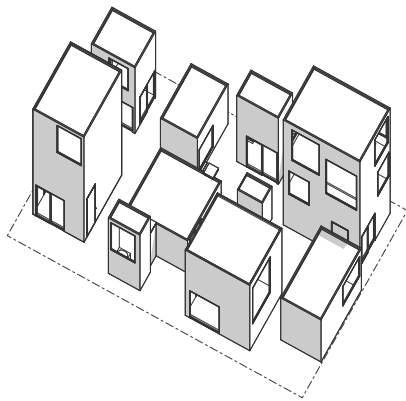
Connectivity



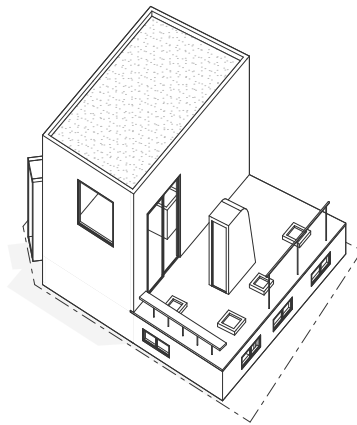
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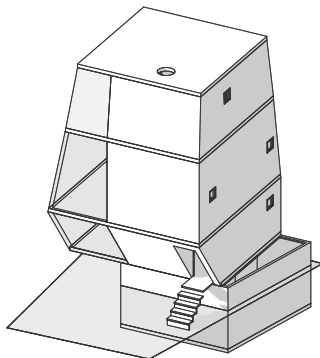
Privacy



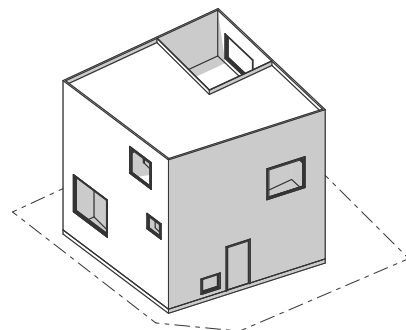
Flexibility



Sociality



Verticality

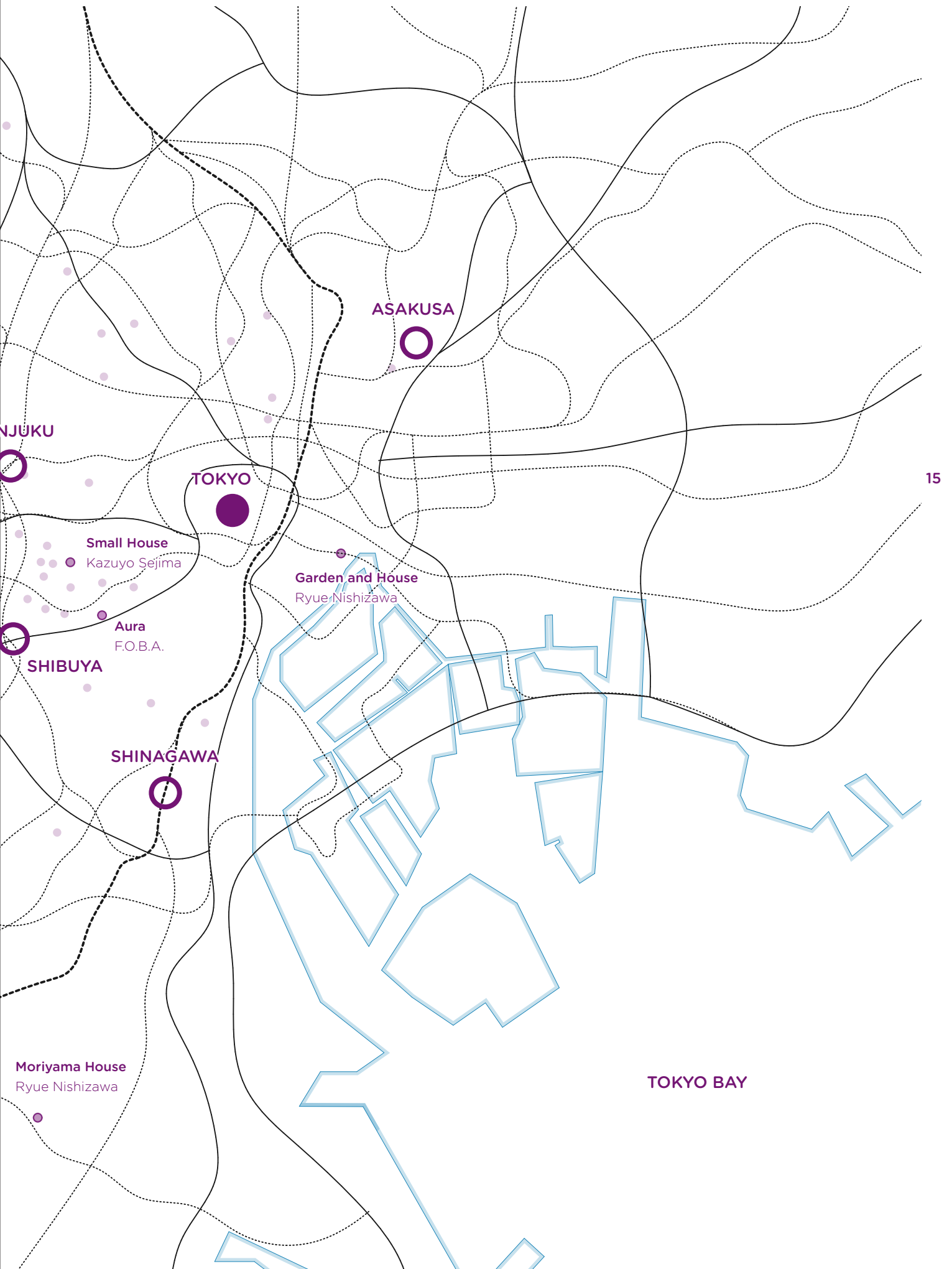


Openings

This map of Tokyo locates nine case studies among train lines, arterial roads, the shinkansen, and Tokyo Bay - the vessels of the city.

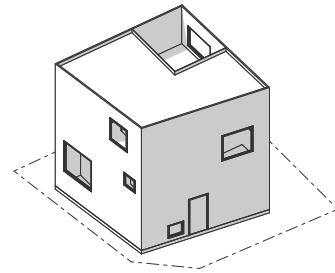
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5.1

House in a Plum Grove Kazuyo Sejima



16

OPENINGS

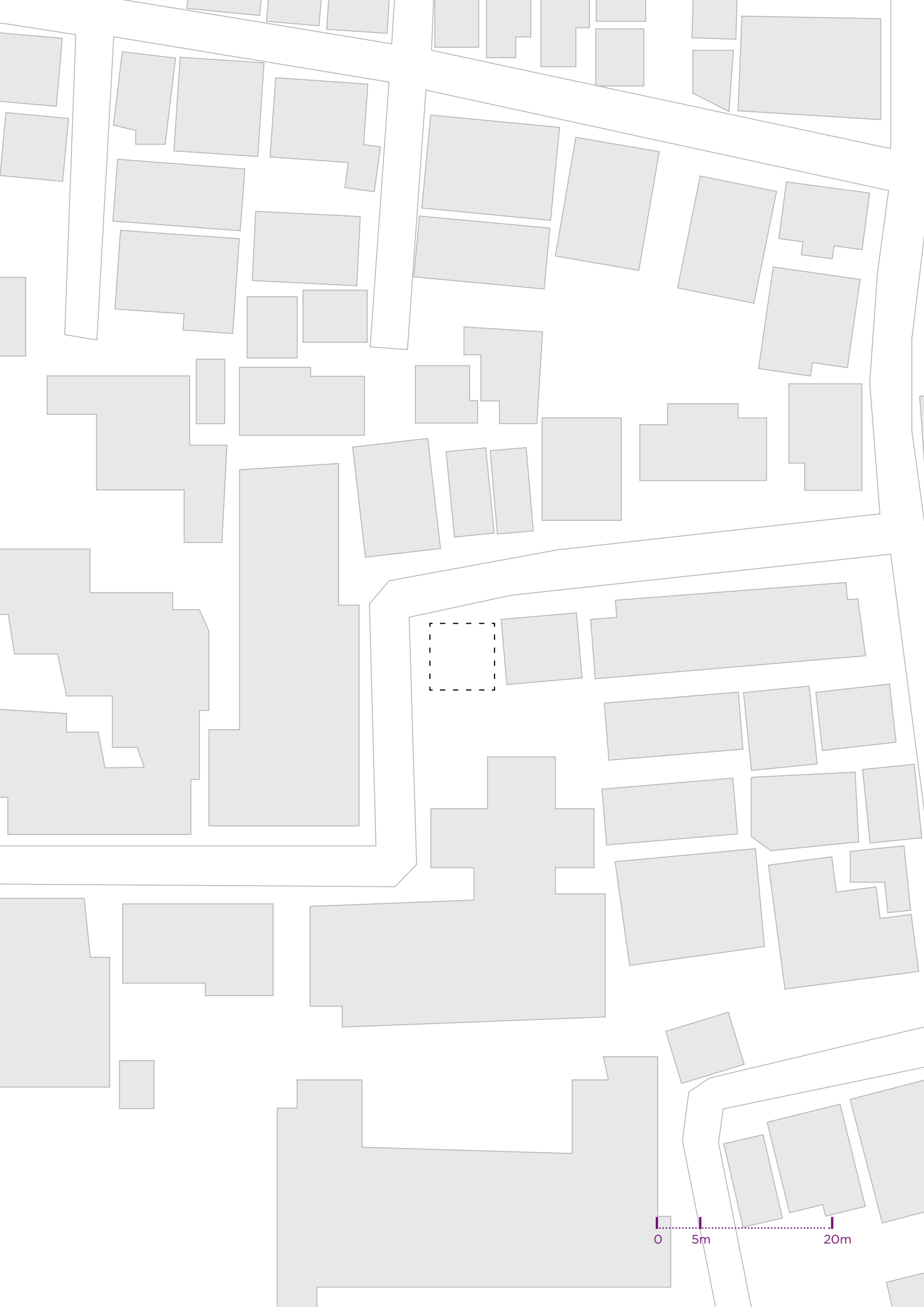
House in a Plum Grove lies on a corner lot next to a pocket park, one of many such sites in Tokyo. From the street, each face of the house is on display to passersby with numerous openings connecting the building with the city. A kind of street decorum can be observed here, where a thin facade behind a row of trees delineates the experience of the street with that of the occupants poised somewhere between inside and out. Openings appropriate the landscape defining the urban condition of connective space between public and private life.

Openings are large and small, controlling the interface with the city. Large windows provide a sense of openness and transparency allowing the world outside to influence the lifestyle of the occupants. Daily rituals and lifestyles in a dwelling become part of the street. Small windows offer privacy where it is truly needed, but also create individualistic connections between house and street, occupant and neighbour, nature and domesticity. The architect, Kazuyo Sejima explains the arrangement of individual rooms relies on views both into adjacent rooms and through to the view outside.⁵ Contemporary life is cultured by our interaction with the environment.

Openings between inside and out add to the depth of that experience, whether the view is of an intersection, a pedestrian crossing, a footpath, a house, a shopfront, the sky, a cafe, a forest, or a park. In dense cities, the richness of city life is derived from a collection of experiences at this local scale.

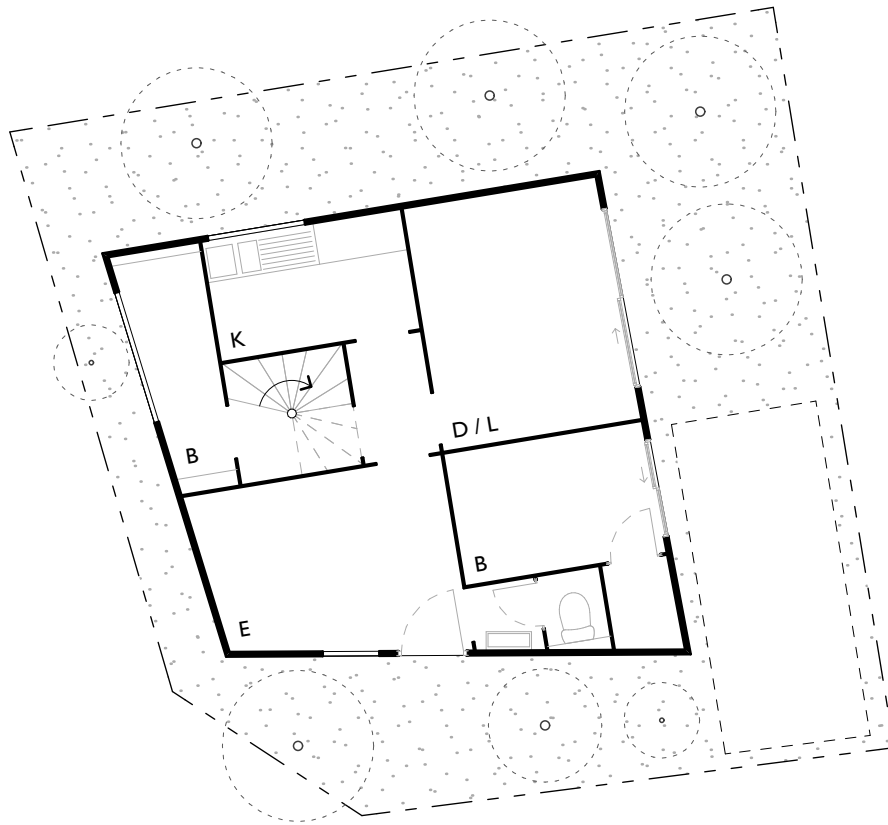
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5. Sejima, K., 'Living Space, Kazuyo Sejima', *The Japan Architect* 99 (2015), 64.

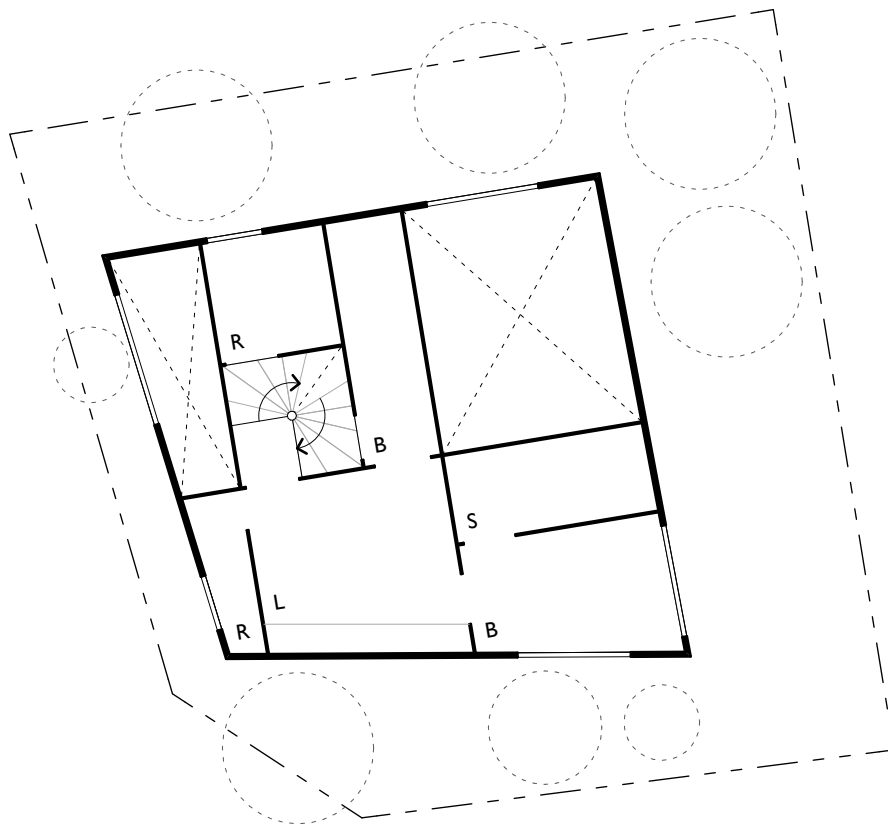




Openings front the street,
connecting occupants with the city

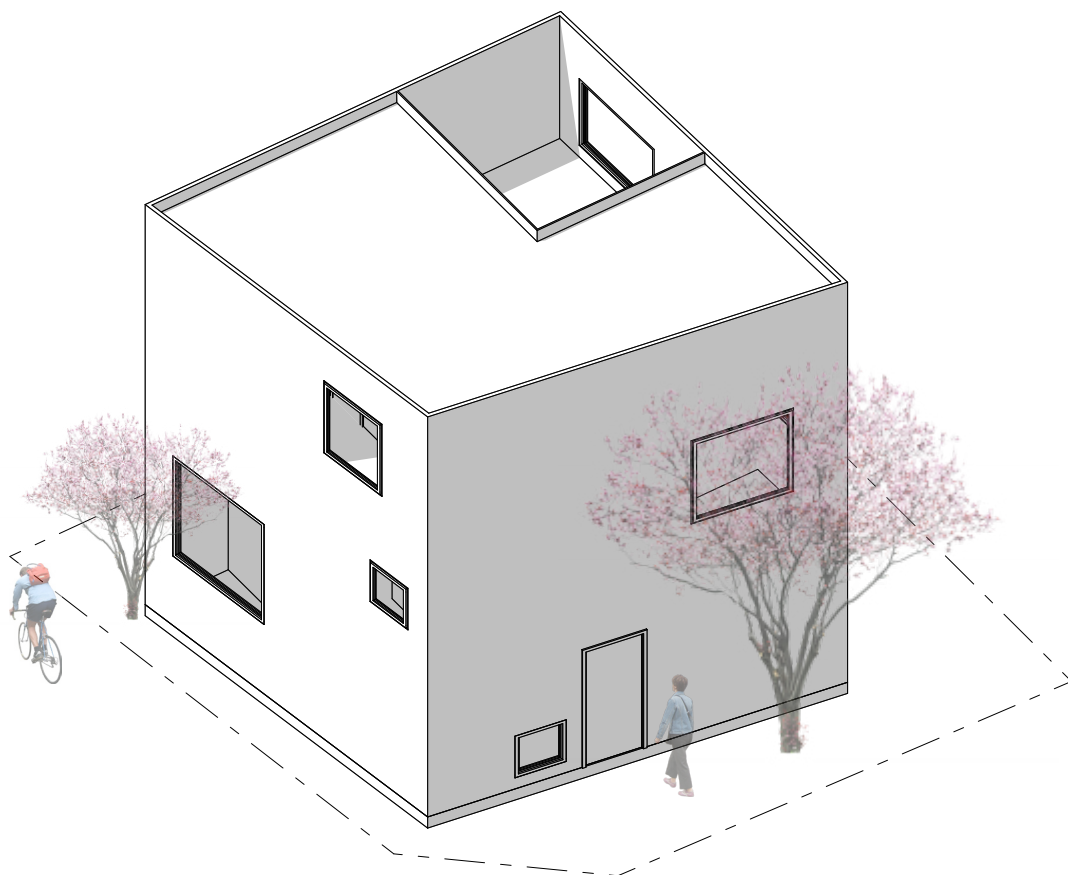


Ground Floor



First Floor

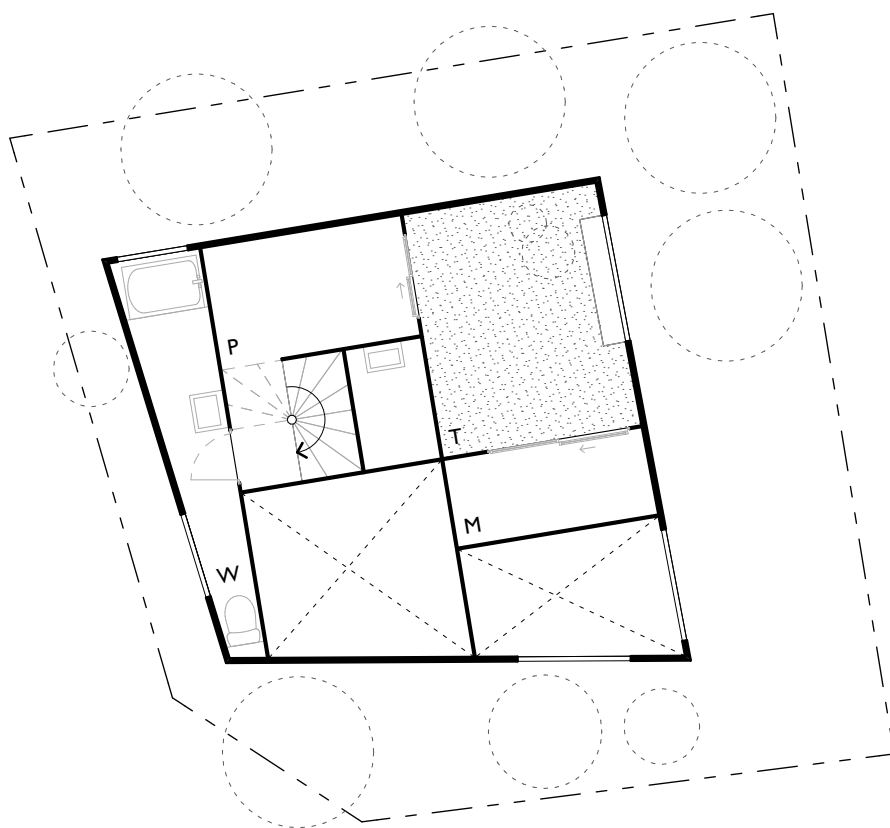




Site area : 92.3m²
Building area : 37.2m²
Total floor area : 77.6m²
Maximum height : 7.1m
Structure : steel frame
No. of storeys : 3
Completed : 2003



 Openings inwards,
 outwards, and upwards

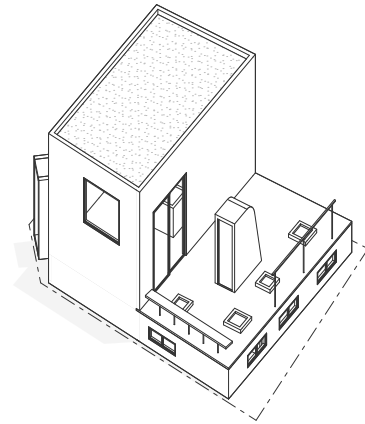


Second Floor



5.2

House in Komae Go Hasegawa



22

SOCIALITY

House in Komae is an architectural experiment where half the site is open on all sides to the street inviting the life of the street into the realms of the dwelling. The house was built for a couple and their child occupying a corner lot, divided in half - part living and part garden, with semi-private bedrooms and bathrooms below. The architect, Go Hasegawa, observed neighboring houses were built so densely there was no open space left for gardens and that their curtains were all drawn closed for privacy.⁶ So, he decided to moderate this portion of the street by opening it to the sky.

The main structure, 5m tall by 8m square, houses an open plan living space with large high windows on three sides, an entrance portal projected from a corner, all wrapped in shimmering metal sheet - a simple space behind a controlled street edge with an appropriate level of privacy. Two sliding doors open to the garden, an elevated platform, 1m above the street delineating space through only a change in level. Bedrooms and bathrooms are located below, accessed through the main living space or through a pop-up stair in the garden, and washed with light by small skylights above and low operable windows facing the street.

A new threshold is created between street, garden,

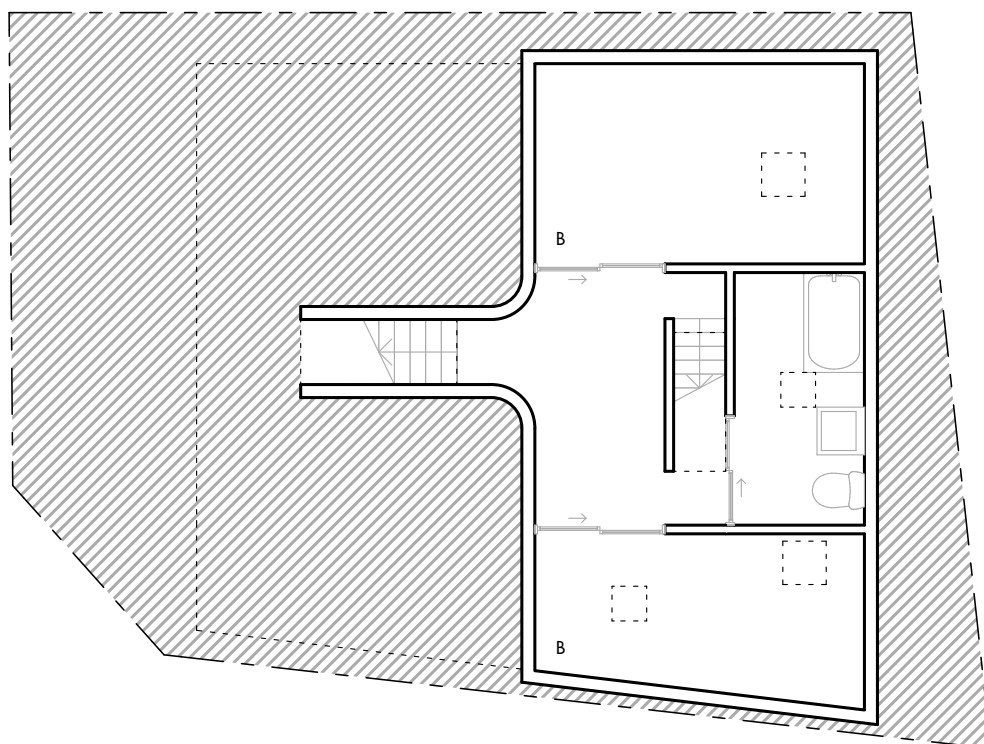
occupant and house where conditions assist social interaction. Occupants give themselves over to the street, while in turn the street reciprocates its quality to the house. A spatially compact and private interior is balanced by the radical manner in which the deliberately social and neighbourly garden borrows the space and atmosphere of the street connecting house with city.

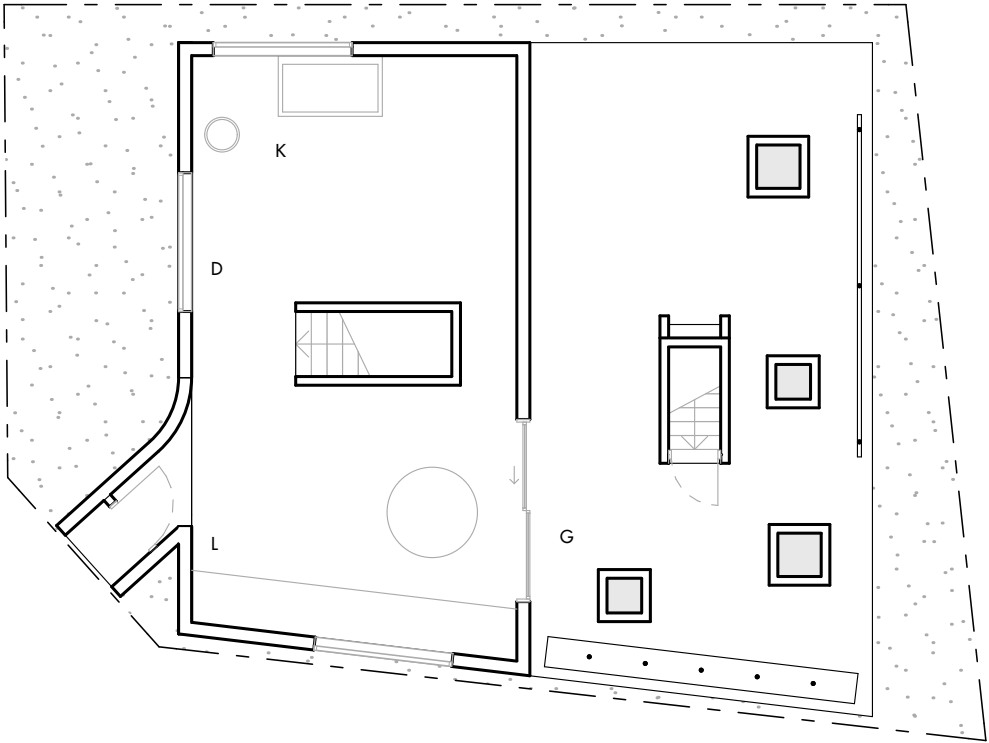
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6. Hasegawa, G., *Go Hasegawa works* (Tokyo: Toto, 2012), 58.



0 5m 20m

**Basement**



Ground Floor





Site area : 109m²

Building area : 39.6m²

Total floor area : 86.7m²

Maximum height : 5m

Structure : reinforced concrete + timber frame

No. of storeys : 1 plus semi-basement

Completed : 2009

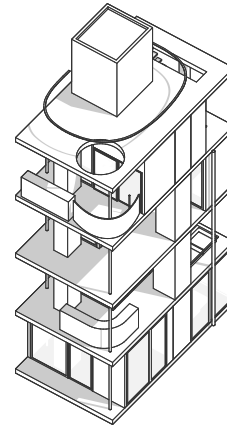


Living with neighbours
in a garden above the street

Photograph: Shinkenshiku-sha

5.3

Garden and House Ryue Nishizawa



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NATURE

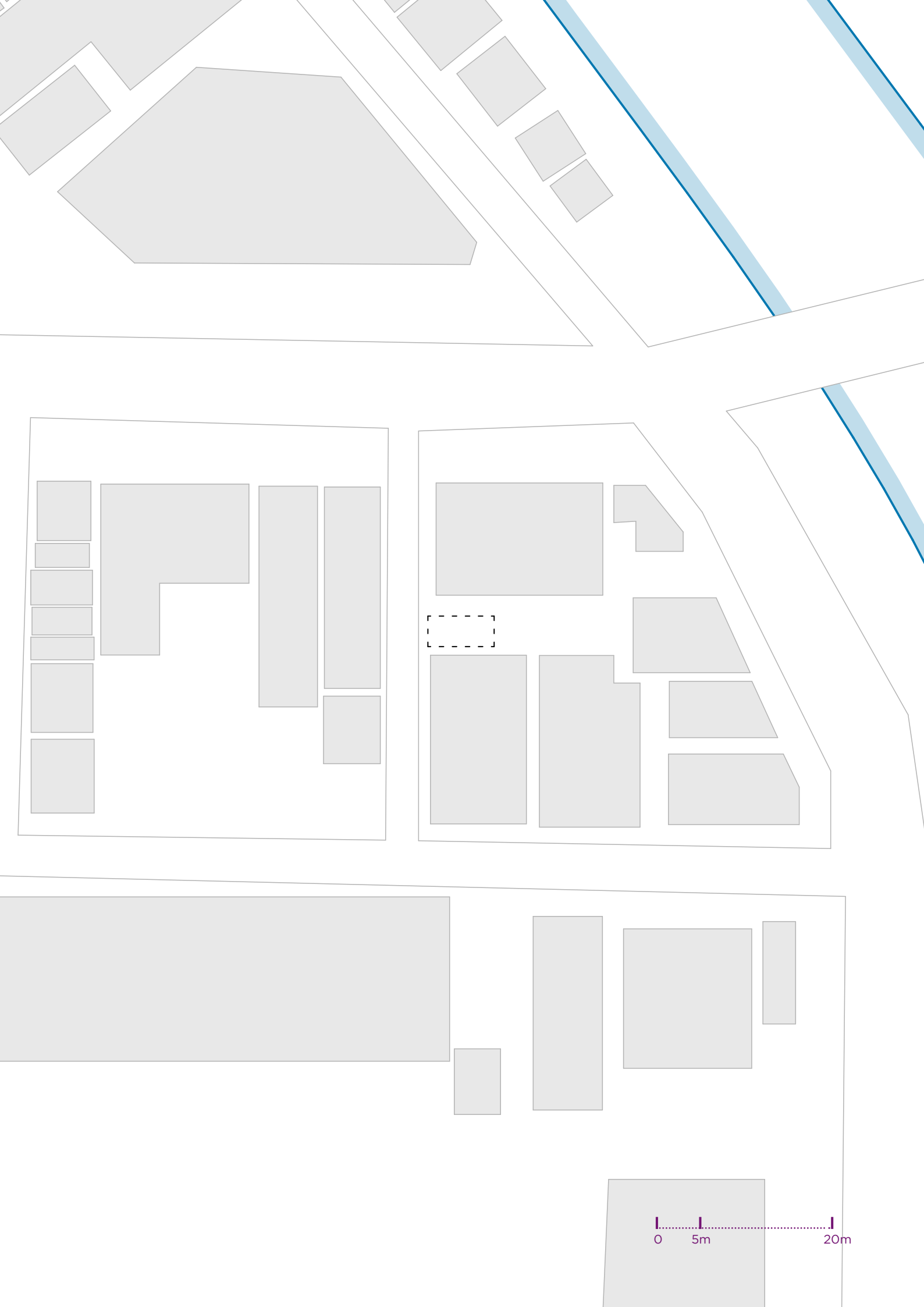
Garden and House pushes the unique role of nature in a dense urban condition to its extreme. The house is squeezed onto a very small site, 8m x 4m, surrounded by mountainous apartment blocks and office buildings. Like a rainforest, each floor is layered with plant life paired with function. Each room is paired with garden, guiding a lifestyle. As the occupants ascend the building, rooms change in size and function creating new experiences and connection with the gardens. This insertion into one of Tokyo's dense, urban, commercial districts has irrevocably altered the condition of the street. The architect, Ryue Nishizawa explains, "No matter how small it may be, architecture always exerts an influence on its surroundings. When you insert a building, the landscape of the street changes. Not only the street, the atmosphere of the town changes. To create architecture is also to create an environment."⁷

Here, Nishizawa explores architecture constituting our struggle between man and nature, a medium we

can use to connect with each other. As architects, we are constantly striving to achieve the delicacy intrinsic to nature where details define the whole. Where this unity is lacking, we as humans and occupants, search for our inherent desire of balance through physical connection with the natural world. Nature's disposition creates divisions and boundaries between layers of space, between inside and out, and between public and private life. These revelations are alike to the streets between houses, in which they generate connection and segregation, allowing a progression through space.

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7. Nishizawa, R., 'Feature : Ryue Nishizawa', *Architecture and Urbanism* 512 (2013), 12.



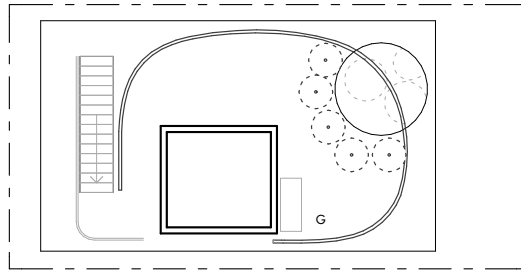


Layers of plant life,
an altered street

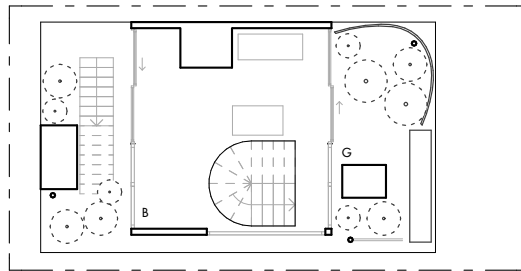




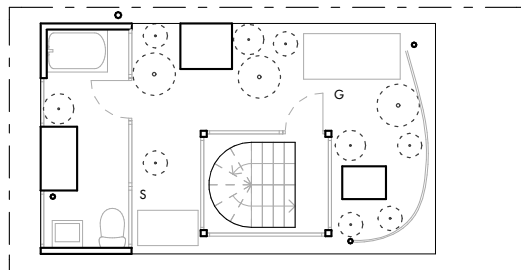
Site area : 37.8m²
Building area : 24.6m²
Total floor area : 66m²
Maximum height : 13m
Structure : steel frame + reinforced concrete
No. of storeys : 4
Completed : 2011



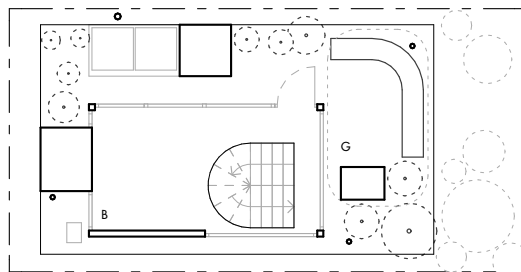
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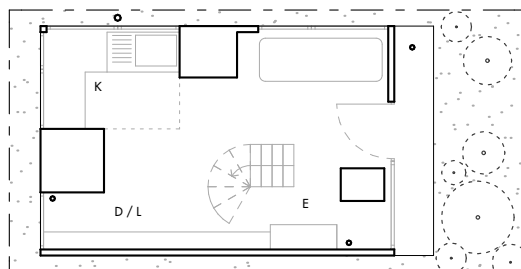
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2



1

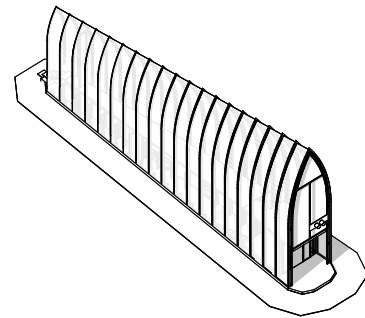


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33

5.4

Lucky Drops Atelier Tekuto



34

LIGHT

Lucky Drops is the most unusually small house I visited. With a building footprint narrowing from 3.2m wide to 0.8m wide and 29m long, this house is an exploration in compactness. With these constraints, the architect Yasuhiro Yamashita at Atelier Tekuto explains the form of the house as being depicted from the full extents of the boundaries, a basement living space, and an exposed structural system that allowed light to permeate the building.⁸ Designed for a couple and their cat, this house demonstrates a unique approach to living in a dense city, where the occupants have learned to live in a fundamentally new and minimal way.

The form of the house impacts the street. The primary street frontage stands tall, in relation to the building, but similar to its neighbours. The roof is pitched slightly rising from rear to front defining its form. An adjacent empty lot brings the entire west elevation into view from the street, making visible the structure wrapped in transparent plastic sheeting. This material creates a secondary edge where light can filter into the house and where the occupants shadows are layered onto the facade.

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8. Yoshimura, Y., 'Lucky Drops', *The Japan Architect* 60 (2005), 127.





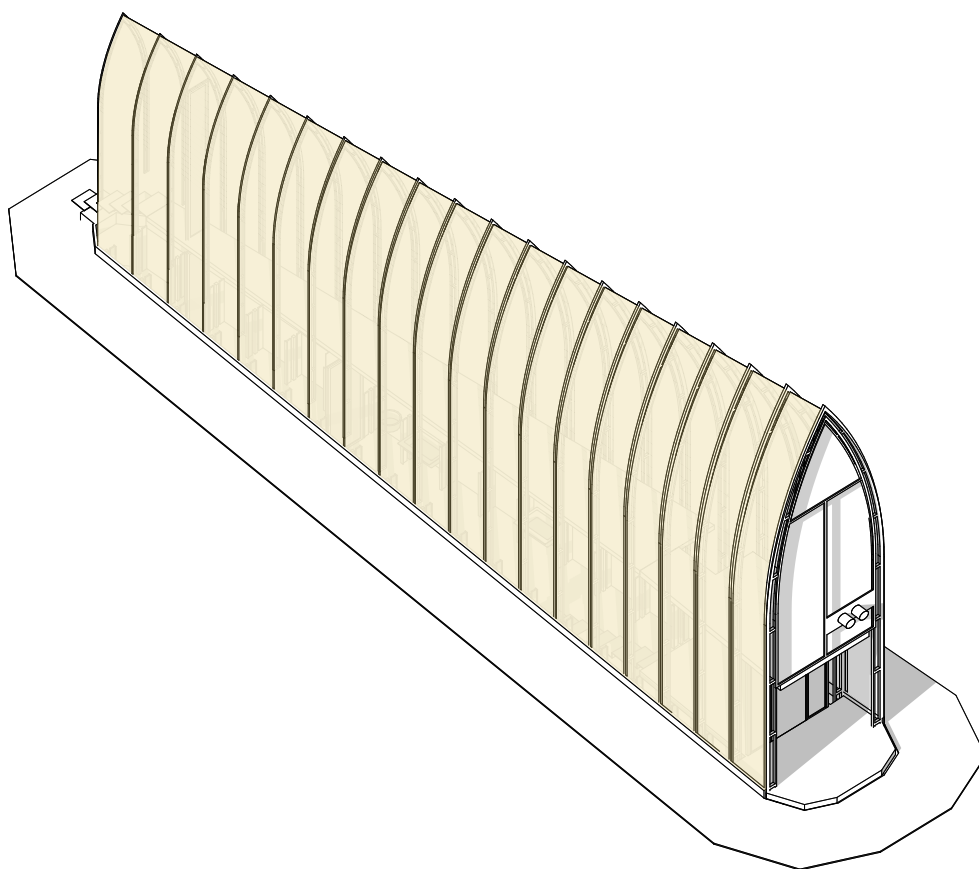
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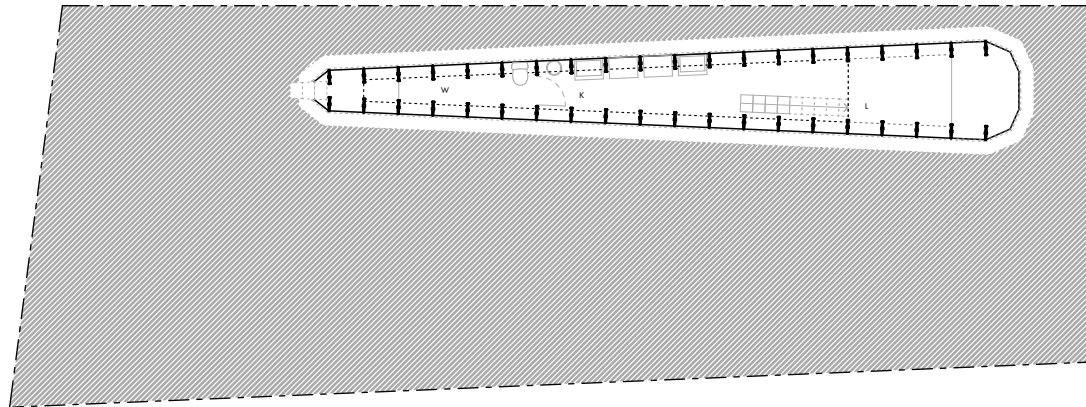
ここは水道用地ですから、
オートバイ、自転車など物
置かないでください。

東京都 水道局

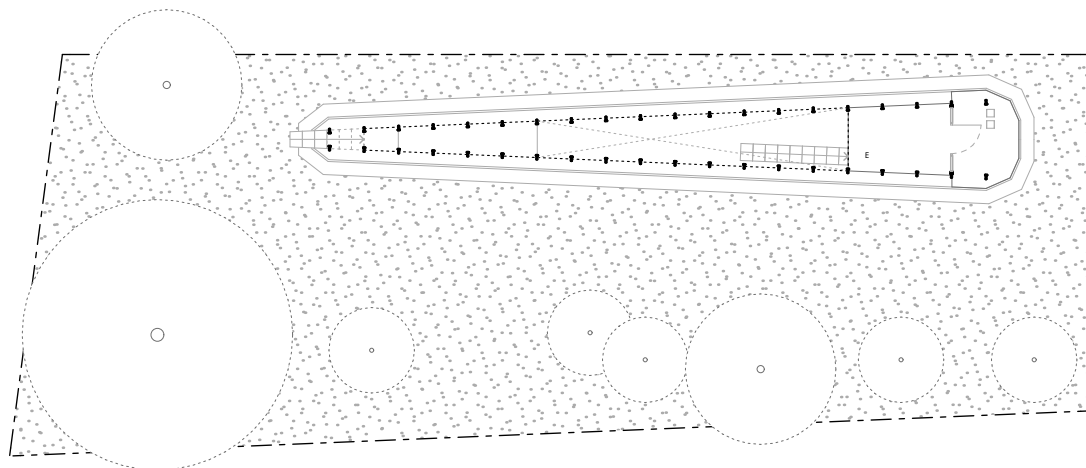
Shadow and light
a layered facade







Basement

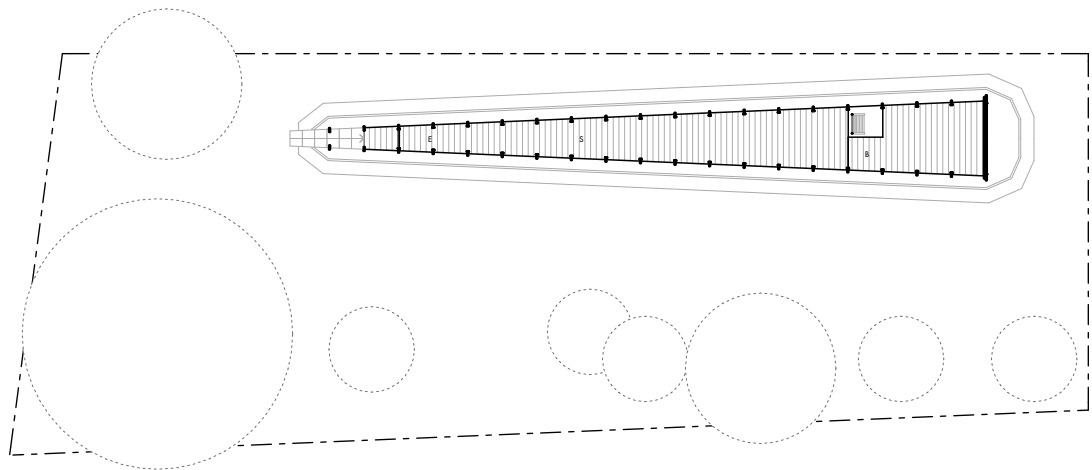


Ground Floor





An exploration in compactness,
a learned way of living

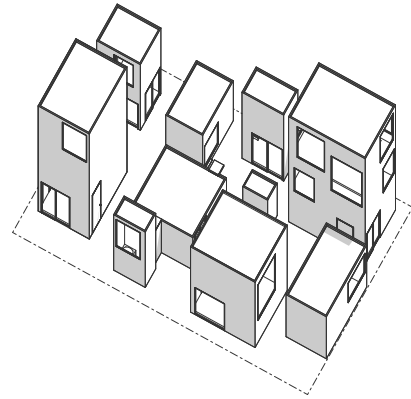


First Floor



5.5

Moriyama House Ryue Nishizawa



42

FLEXIBILITY

The Moriyama House is a collection of houses exploring a new mode of flexible living where each house can be lived in separately, or combined while in-between each house functions as semi-private open space for all. Each house is small and distinct in both proportion and programme. In a way, the neighbourhood pattern of single detached houses is repeated, but here the space between is opened up for use and connection. Arranging the houses in this way means a diverse programme could be established providing for a range of residents. The design of the house allows the mix of people accommodated to change as the owner requires. A variety of spaces all connected with the street, able to be inhabited as the residents see fit. In an interview with Cathelijne Nijisink, Nishizawa explains he “wanted to make an atmosphere, a total environment of architecture, city, garden and many other things in one. Instead of putting up a fence around the plot, I opted for a comfortable continuity throughout the house, the garden, the roji (alleyways) and the city, like one gradual movement.”⁹

Of the thirteen houses, each facade is treated in a similar manner. Openings are placed in ways that allow an appropriate level of privacy whilst at the same time

allow the spatial arrangement a considerable degree of flexibility. The Moriyama House is not for everybody but it does critique contemporary life and its necessities. The Moriyama House is an attempt at redefining typical Japanese residential design and created a new type of private and communal living typology.

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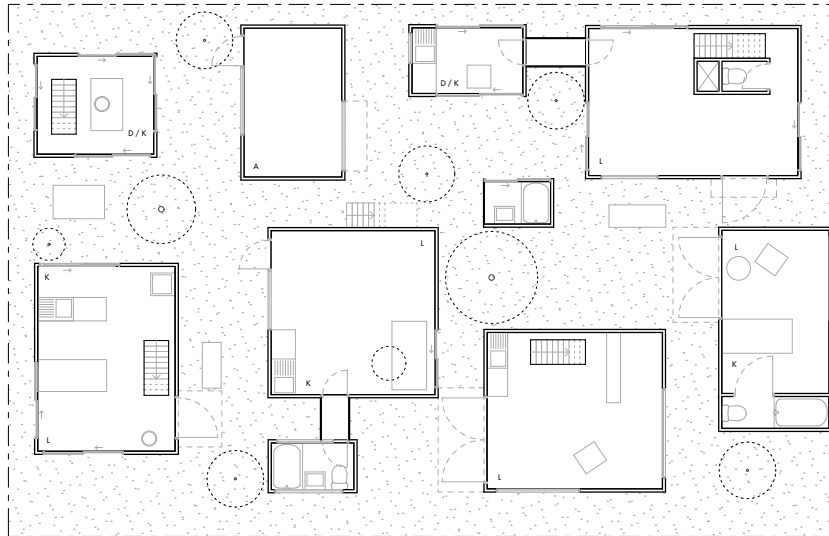
9. Nishizawa, R., 'Community Spheres', in Cathelijne Nuijsink, *How to make a Japanese house* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2015), 130.



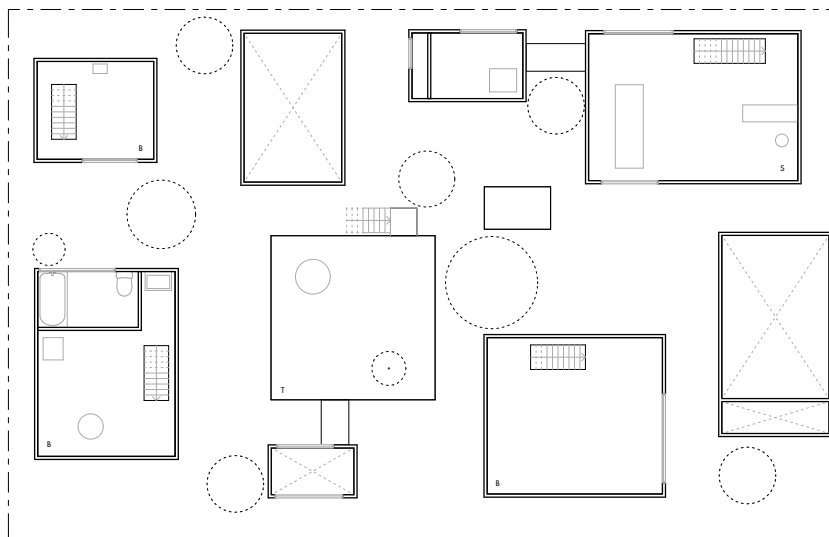
0 5m 20m



The space between,
flexible and connected



Ground Floor



First Floor



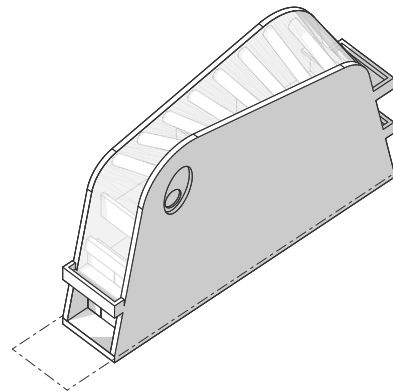
Site area : 290m²
Building area : 130m²
Total floor area : 263m²
Maximum height : 2.1m - 7.8m
Structure : steel panel
No. of storeys : 3 storeys + basement
Completed : 2005



Connected with the street,
full of nature

5.6

Aura F.O.B.A.



48

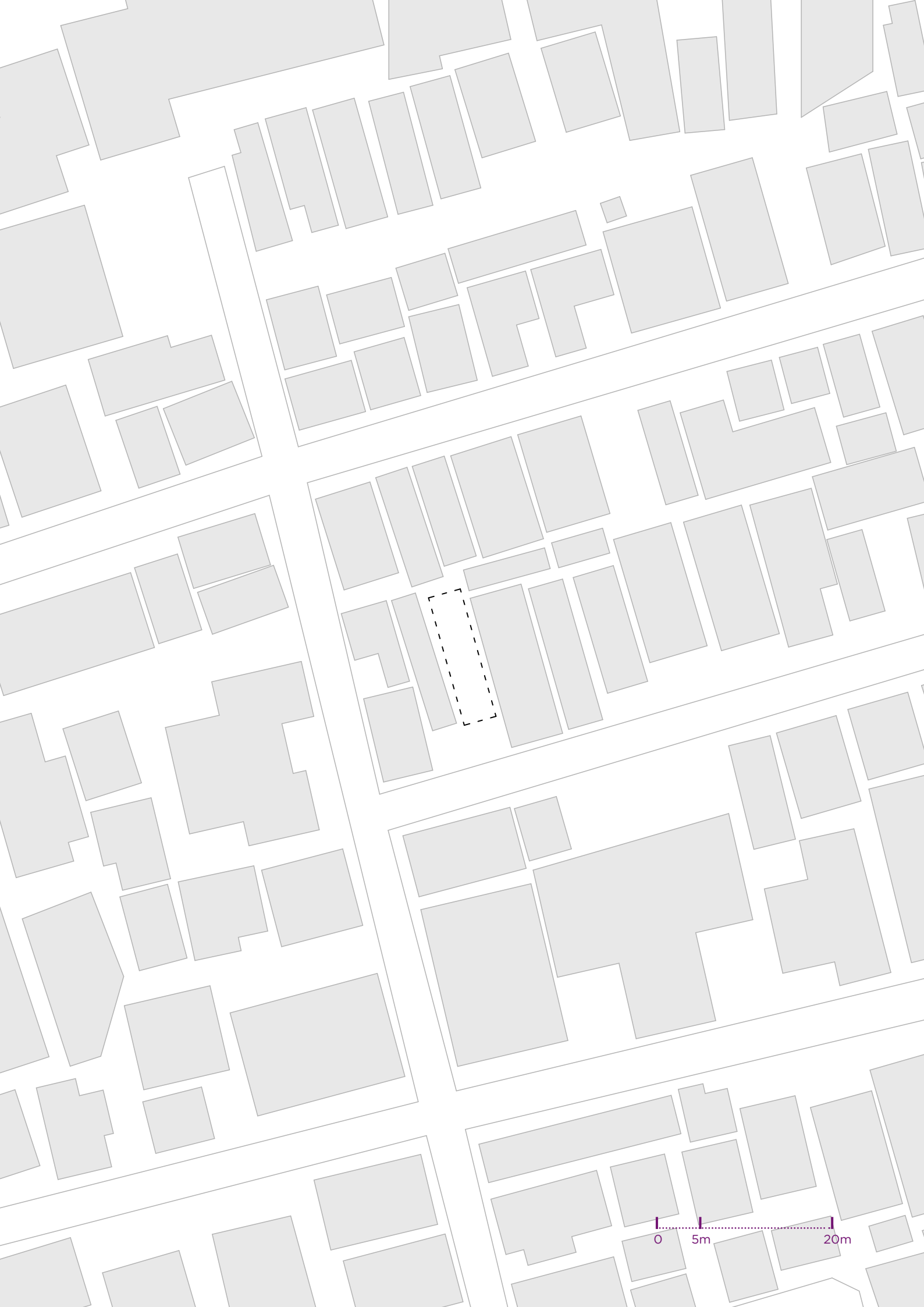
TRANSPARENCY

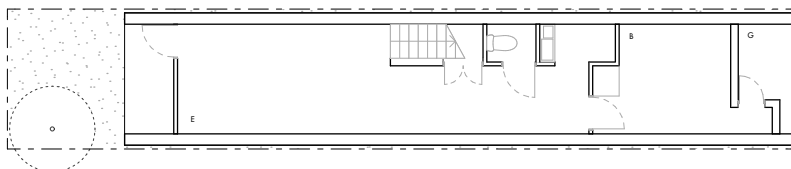
Aura shifts private life to public life in an urban setting. Tucked into a deep and narrow site 4m wide by 21m long, this house establishes a dialogue with the city through a semi-transparent skin that reveals the interior. Each room becomes part of the street where the separation of private life with that of the city dissolves. Two long curved concrete walls form boundary walls, braced by large structural cylindrical beams, encased in a tight expressed translucent fiberglass waterproof membrane. The curve of each boundary wall is opposed forming a seamless sculptural fabric orienting the occupants upwards and outwards, into the city. Throughout the day, the fabric veils shade and sunlight while by night it shines like a beacon. As Katsu Umebayashi of F.O.B.A. describes, “Privacy, but no program. Space, but no form.”¹⁰

This house is eccentric, but its design reveals much of what it means to live in Tokyo. Where the typical requirements of a house are provided by a city, what does domestic life involve?

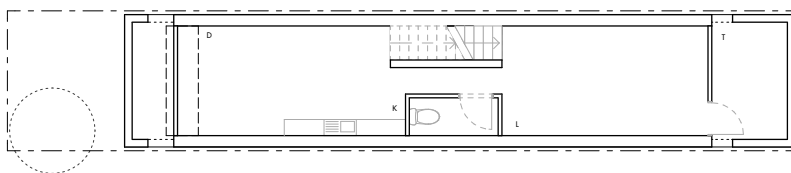
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10. Umebayashi, K., FOBA/buildings (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005)

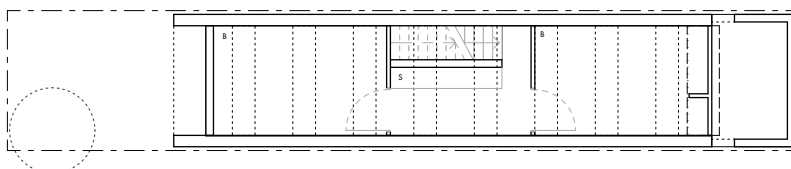




Ground Floor



First Floor



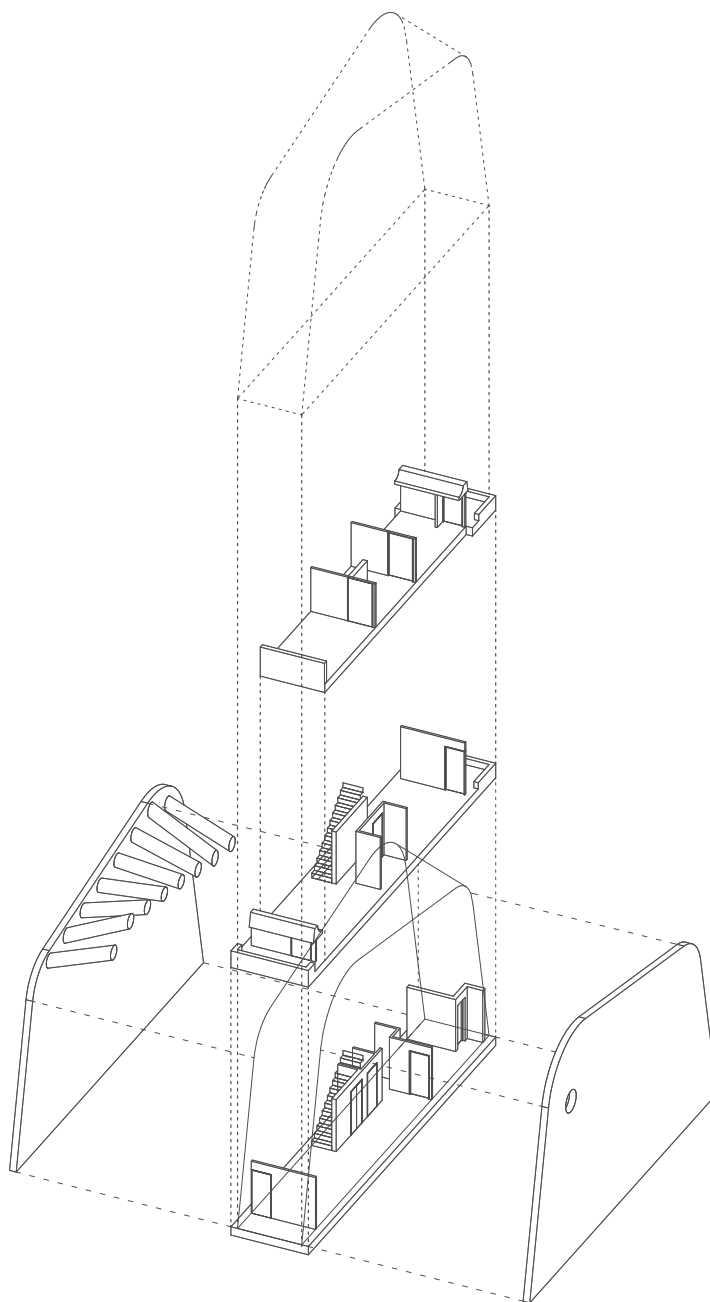
Second Floor



image

Tucked between,
privacy in space

Photograph : Tohru Waki / Shokokusha



Site area : 77m²

Building area : 62m²

Total floor area : 134m²

Maximum height : 11.1m

Structure : reinforced concrete

No. of storeys : 3

Completed : 1996

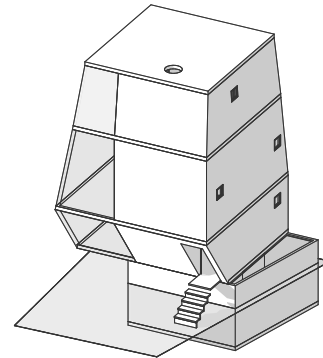


Open to the sky,
a room in the city

Photograph : Tohru Waki / Shokokusha

5.7

Small House Kazuyo Sejima



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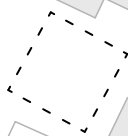
VERTICALITY

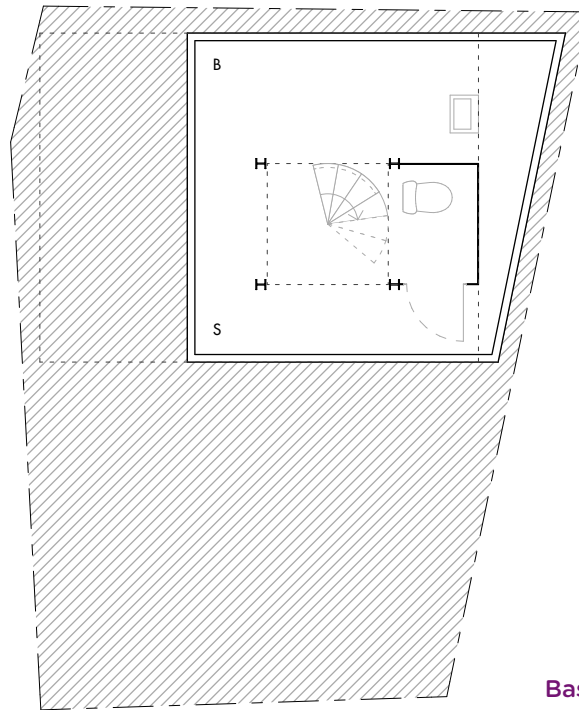
Small House occupies a small 60m² residual plot at the end of a short cul-de-sac, surrounded by dense multi-residential buildings. In this context, this house doesn't appear extraordinary. Dull metal sheet and perforated mesh line the primary street frontage. A short set of steps lead up to a small front door, recessed into the splayed wall above. A circular air-conditioning unit protrudes from the second floor. Each floor grows in size relating to the neighboring buildings, the prescribed 500mm setback and the internal function of each room. Each surface is skewed following the internal room layout forming a distinct edge easily apparent when viewed from the street. An adjoining empty lot displays the full eastern elevation, where the verticality of the floors and facade materials can be appreciated.

A unique identifiable street facade, with layers of transparency controlling the intimacy of the private home and expressing the buildings simple form. As Sejima describes, "Designs are recognized by their forms, and moreover, the public or social aspect of architecture resides precisely in an understanding of the architecture and its relations to the structures surrounding it"¹¹

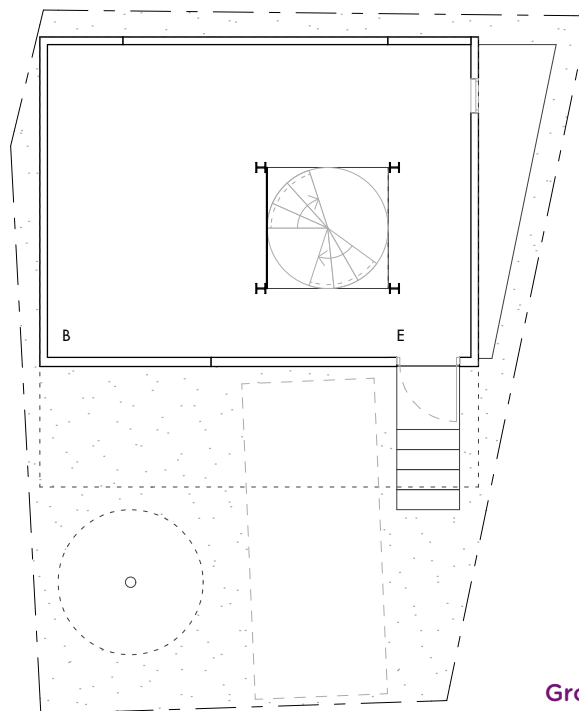
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11. Sejima, K., 'Living Space, Kazuyo Sejima', *The Japan Architect* 99 (2015), 52.

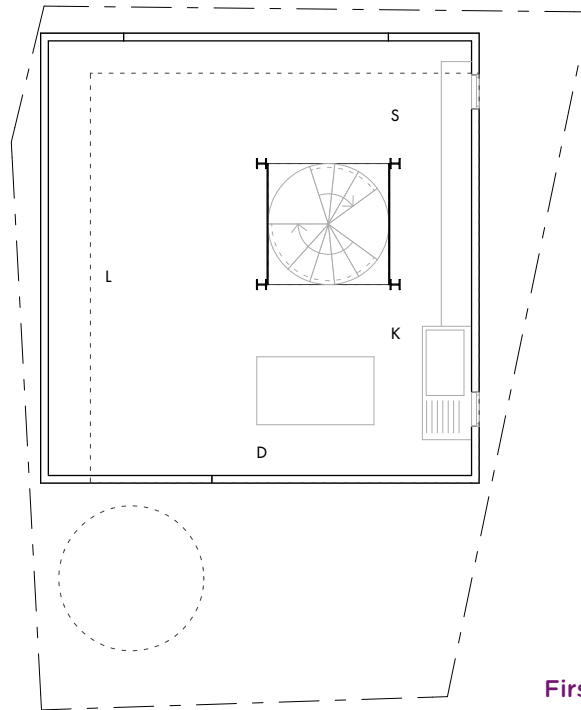




Basement

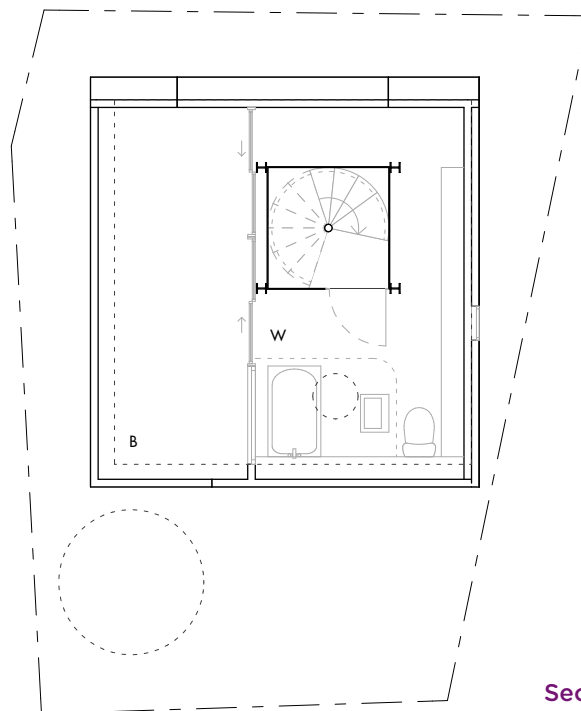


Ground Floor



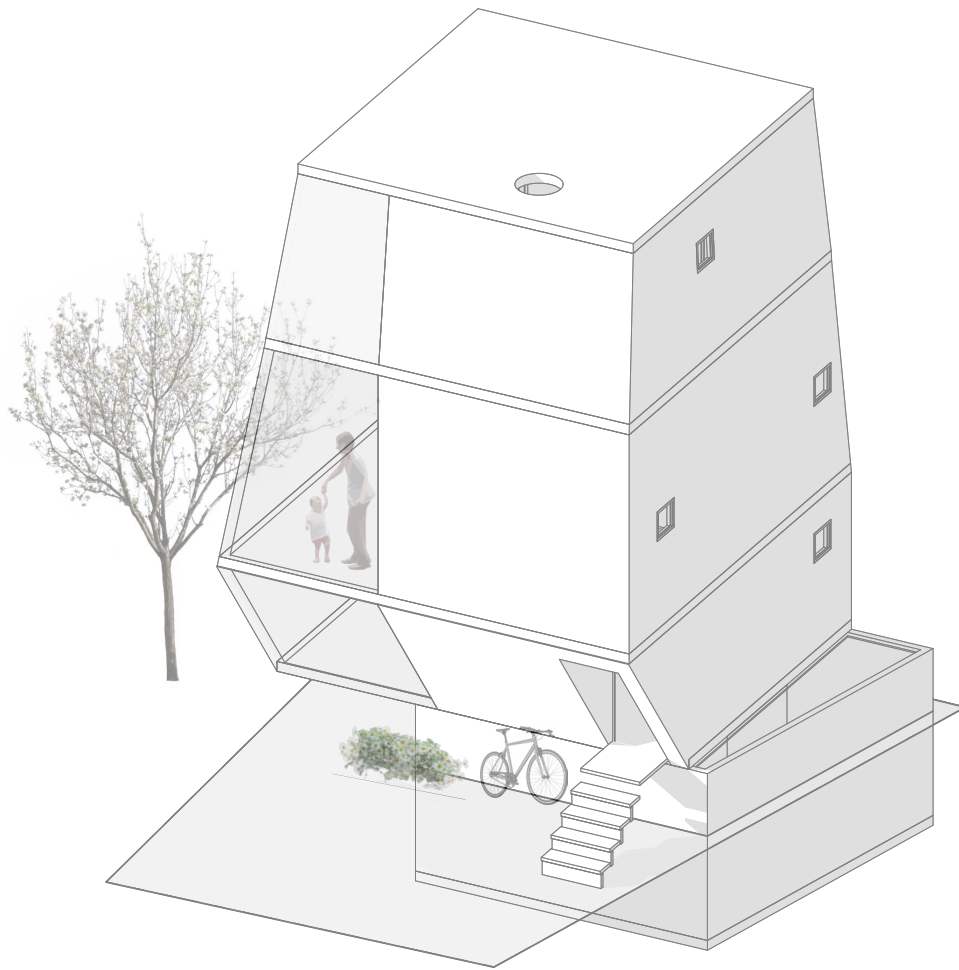
First Floor

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Second Floor





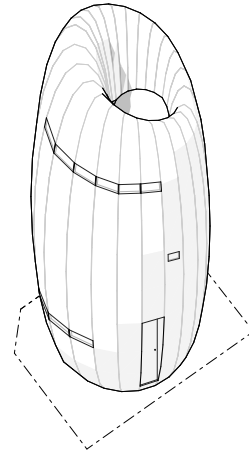
Site area : 60m²
Building area : 34.51m²
Total floor area : 77m²
Maximum height : 9.9m
Structure : steel frame
No. of storeys : 4
Completed : 2000



Layers of transparency,
a recognizable form

5.8

Natural Ellipse Masaki Endoh

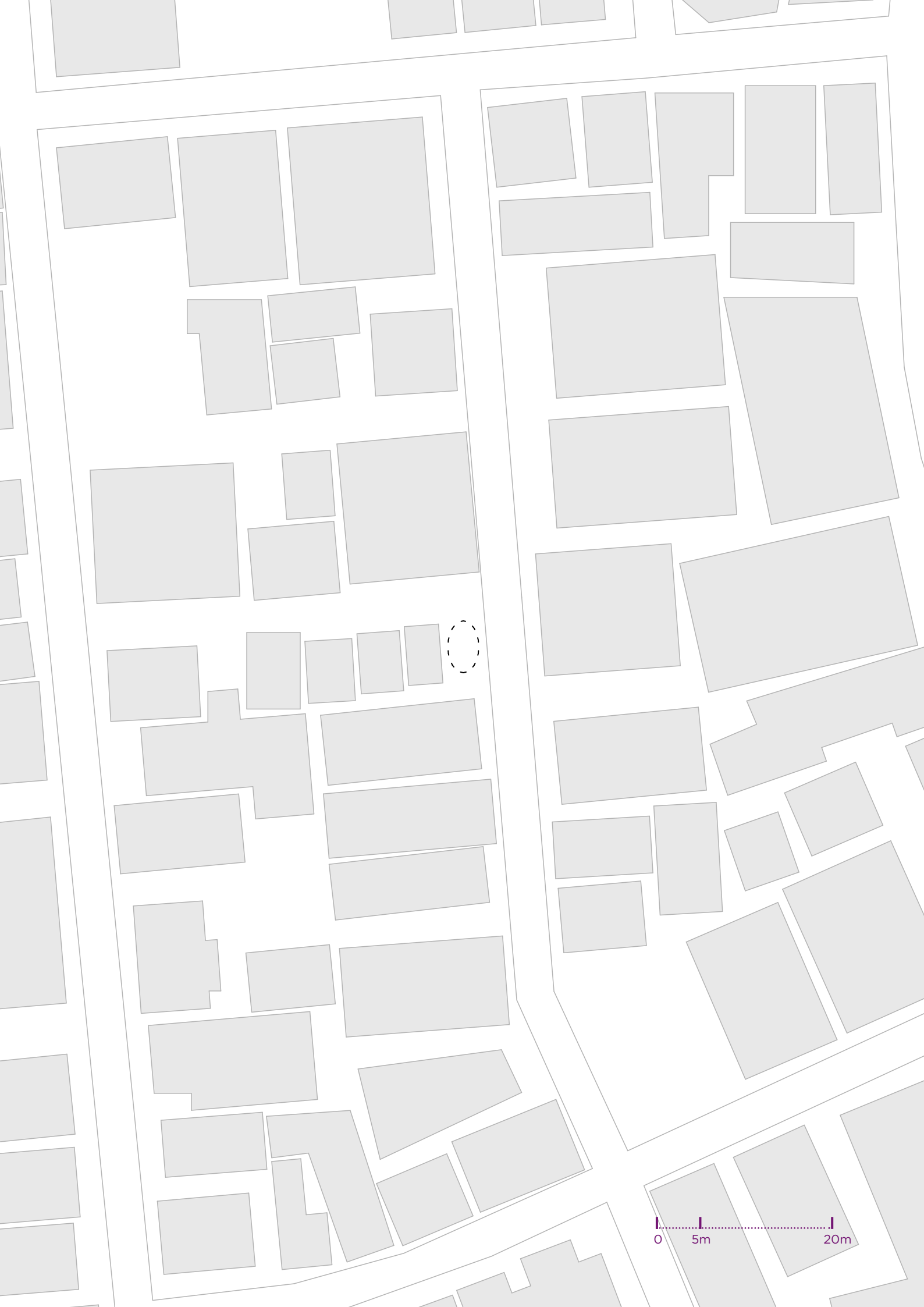


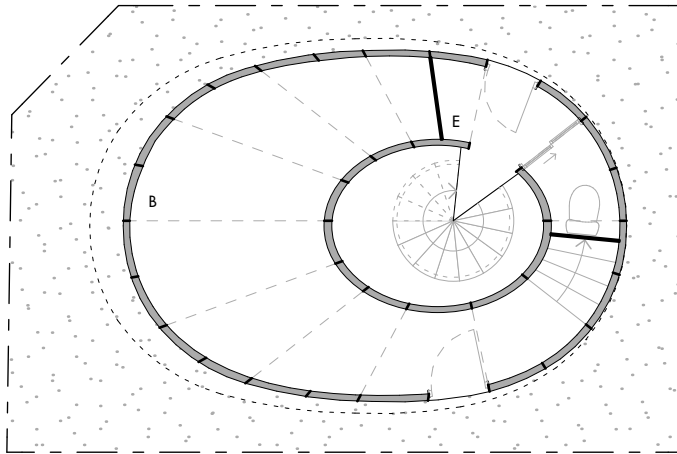
60

PRIVACY

Natural Ellipse is a direct result of Tokyo's historic development as a city. After Japan's housing bubble burst in the 90s, lots of land were subdivided to pay for the debts of subsequent generations. This lot, only 38m², is a typical subdivision - too small for anything but a unique housing solution. This house is located in Shibuya, one of Tokyo's vibrant entertainment districts. To set the scene, when I was growing up in Tokyo, I stumbled out of the nightclub on the opposite side of the street with, as you can imagine, little regard for the neighbours. The walls are constructed of fiber-reinforced polymer sheets laid on laser-cut flat iron plates that allow openings big and small to moderate light, heat and specific views. Elliptical steel rings are exposed internally, while their form is exposed on the facade, wrapped by the polymer sheets creating a bare, minimal aesthetic.

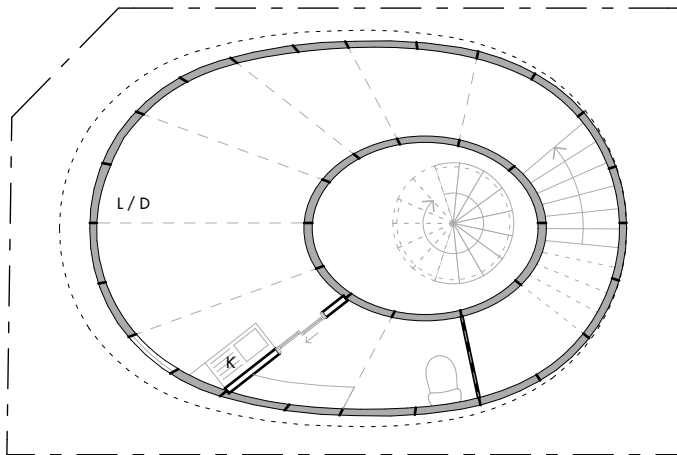
Dense apartment buildings, love hotels, and bars surround the house so privacy became paramount to the design where it is balanced through sequential layers of material connecting with the street below. A small rooftop terrace provides a retreat from the chaos below, allowing the occupants to enjoy dense inner-city living in the metropolis of Tokyo.



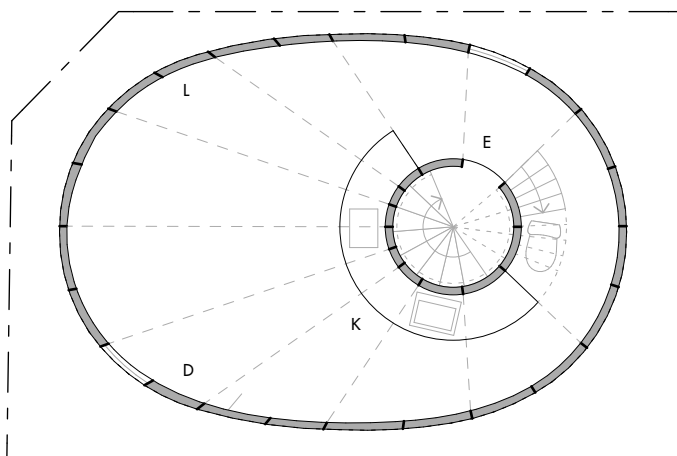


Ground Floor

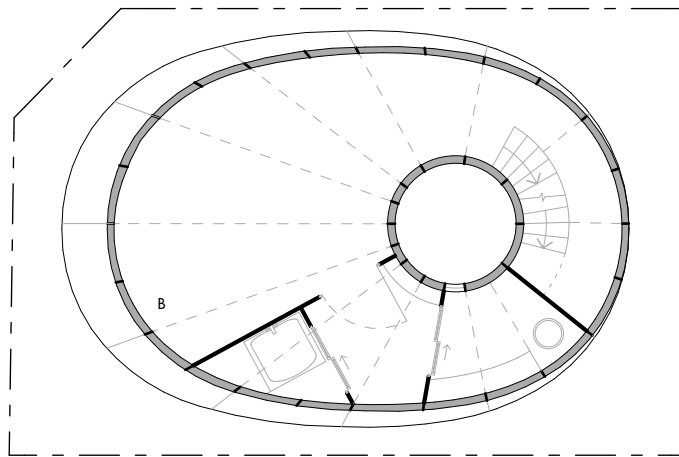
62



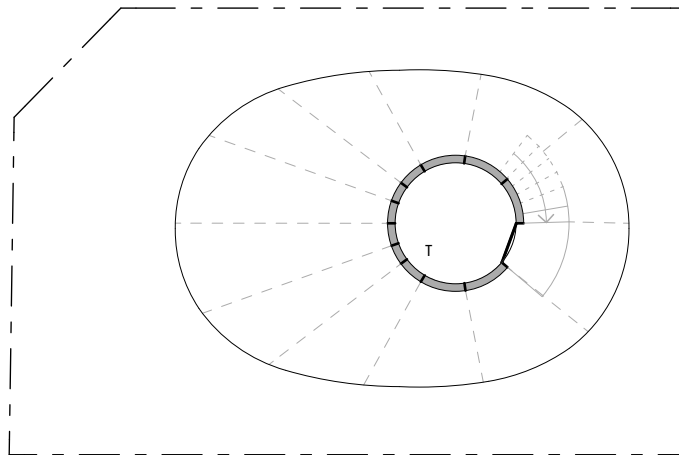
First Floor



Second Floor

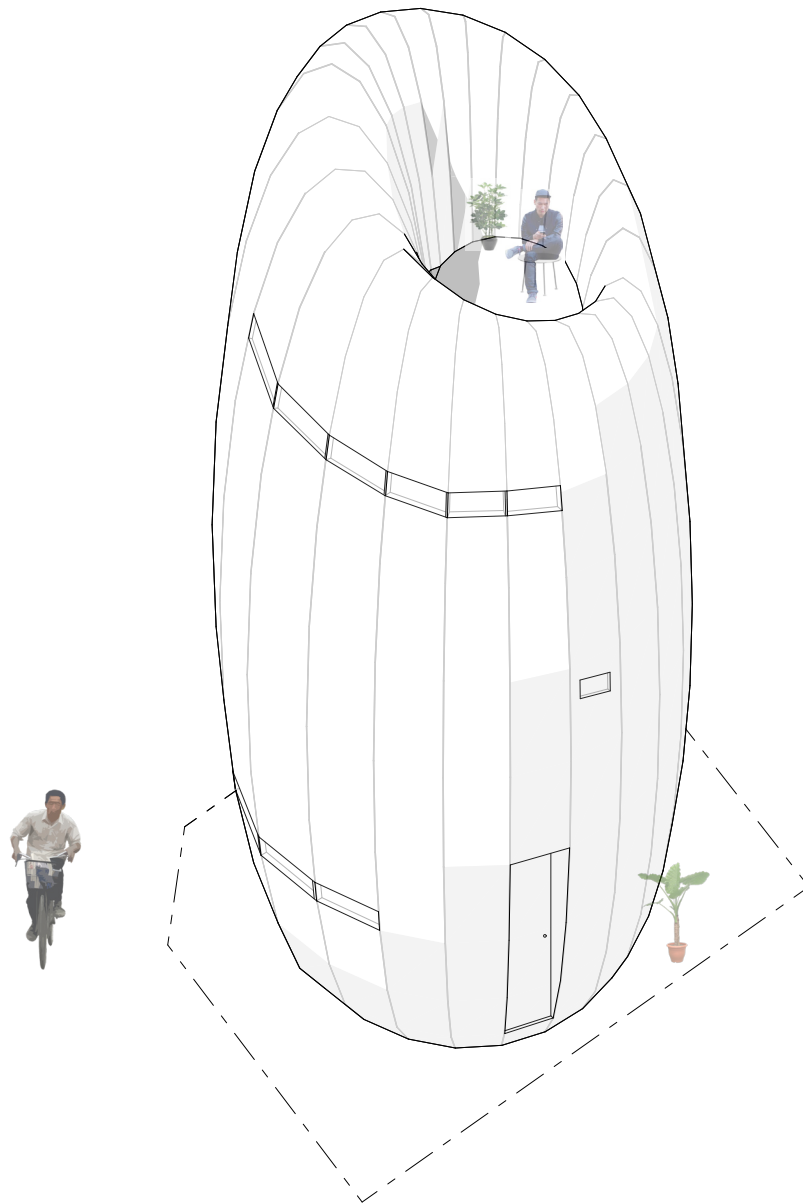


Third Floor



Roof





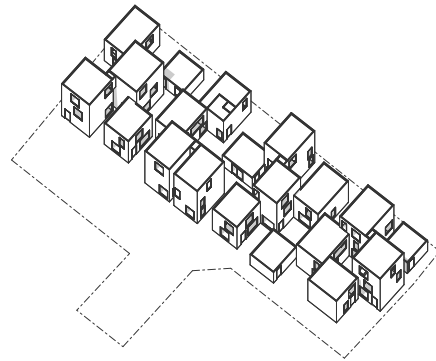
Site area : 38m²
Building area : 25m²
Total floor area : 132m²
Maximum height : 10.3m
Structure : steel frame
No. of storeys : 4
Completed : 2002



Retreat from the city,
bustling below

5.9

Seijo Townhouse Kazuyo Sejima

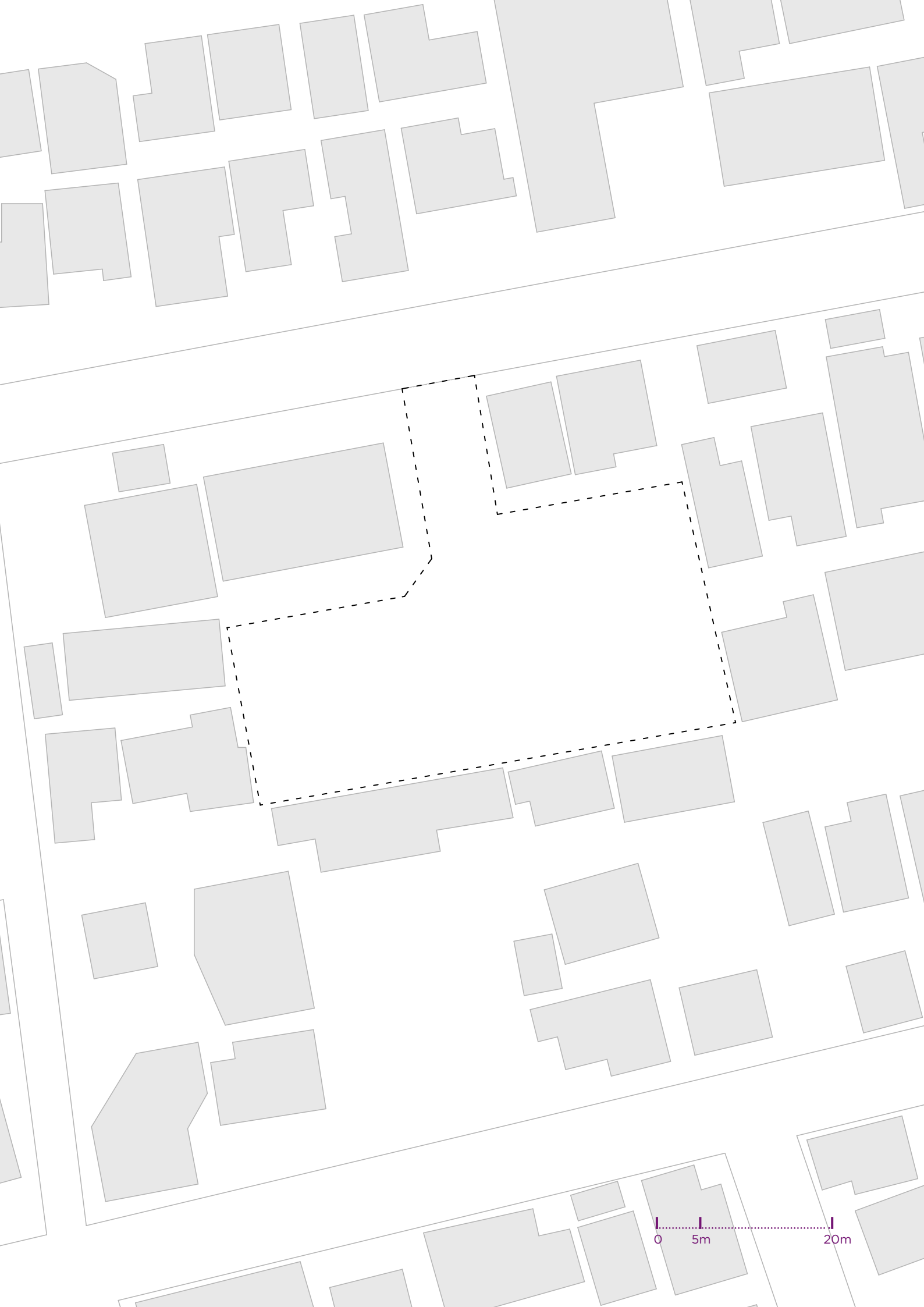


66

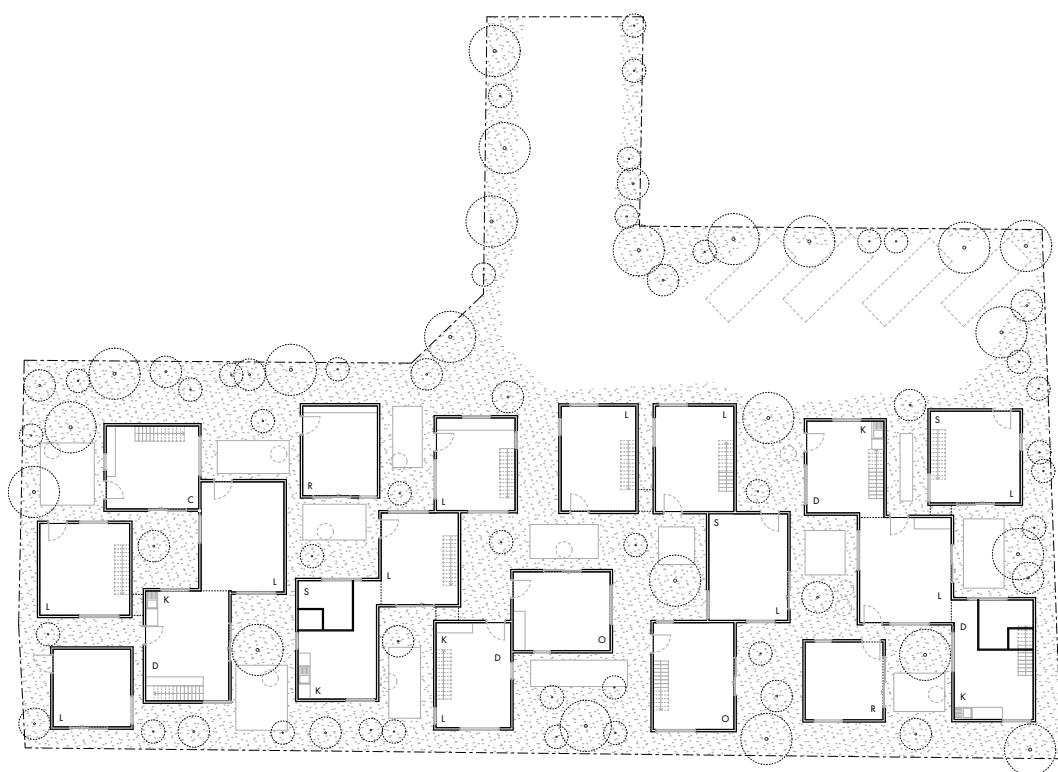
CONNECTIVITY

Seijo Townhouse fills the center of a block, a leftover battleaxe lot. Although a relatively unusual site, this assembly of buildings connected by gardens is a model for a unique lifestyle.

The building typology is an assortment of houses all linked by passageways and gardens on the ground floor. This complex is technically a collection of townhouses, but each is individual. Larger homes of 2 - 3 storeys are scattered around the site, with single storey open plan communal areas located between for teaching, reading, or eating together. Each building is connected to its own garden, usually on multiple sides of the building and each strategically opens out in all directions, controlling privacy and views. This typology is something that works at both a small individual house scale, but also larger where an entire community could live together. Where residents require refuge from the city, here in this haven they can relax.



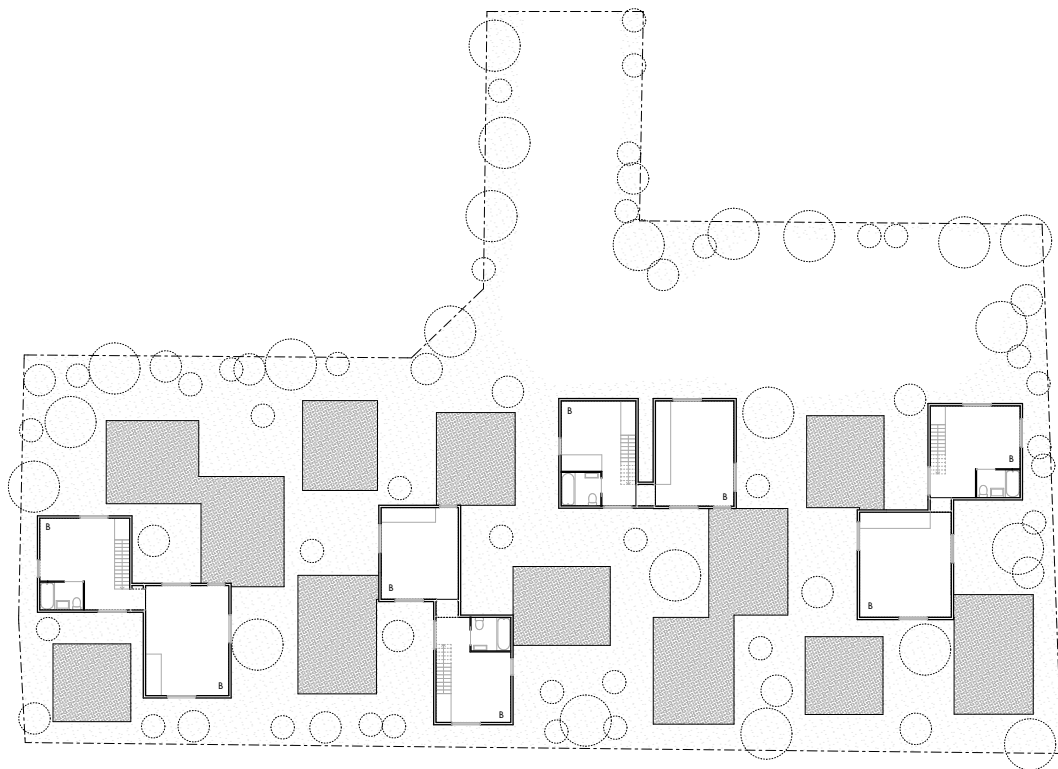
0 5m 20m



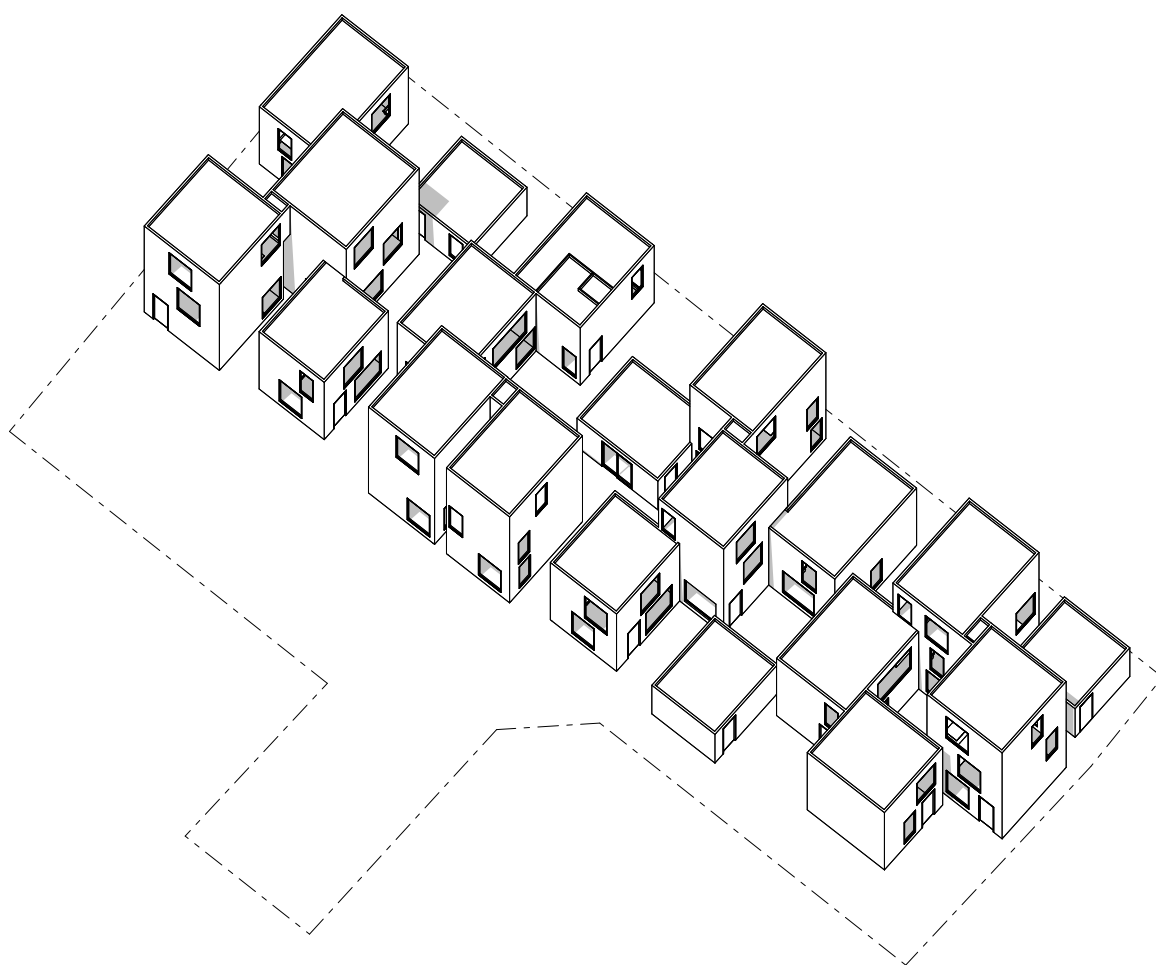
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Site area : 1,397m²
Building area : 418.3m²
Total floor area : 1,467m²
Maximum height : 8.5m
Structure : brick
No. of storeys : 1 - 4
Completed : 2007



Passageways and gardens,
connectivity for occupants

.....

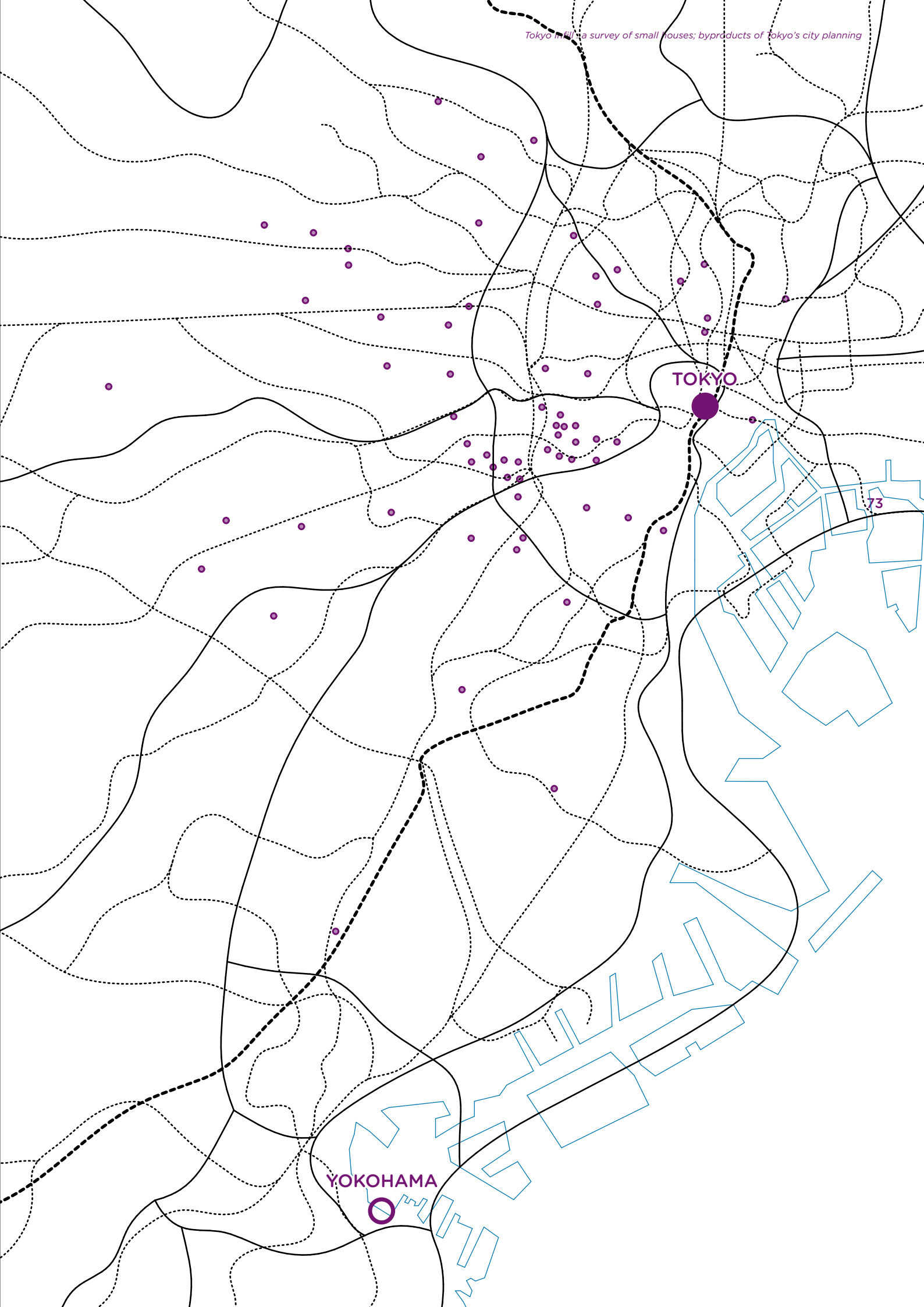
6

A Survey of Tokyo's Small Houses

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The following map and images are a selection of small houses in Tokyo that serve as a reference to residential architecture that relates to the street through various means. A large part of my task during this study was locating these houses in Tokyo, a daunting challenge. I had with me a guide map, research undertaken prior to the trip, and along the way found many more. Over 3 weeks, I walked over 200km through the back streets of Tokyo in search of these buildings. What began as a study of individual houses became one focused on the city in its entirety. Over the page, I was able to visit the houses highlighted in purple while the rest are those I have discovered in further researching this topic. A map can be found [here](#) for those wishing to explore too. The outcome for me was not only a brief visit to many of these houses, but I was able to gain a deeper understanding of Tokyo's urban layout, street hierarchy and organised density.





1. House Tokyo
ALX Jun-Ichi Sampei



2. North Site Rail Side
ALX Jun'Ichi Sampei



3. Delta
Architecton



4. Tower Machiya
Atelier Bow-Wow



5. House without a kitchen
Atelier Takuo Iizuka



74 6. Lucky Drops
Atelier Tekuto



7. Magritte's
Atelier Tekuto



8. Penguin House
Atelier Tekuto



9. Reflection of Mineral
Atelier Tekuto



10. Aura
F.O.B.A.



11. e-House
FT Architects



12. Moya Moya
Fumihiko Sano



13. House in Gotanda
Go Hasegawa



14. House in Komae
Go Hasegawa



15. Life in Spiral
Hideaki Takayanagi



16. House SH
Hiroshi Nakamura



17. i House
Jun Aoki



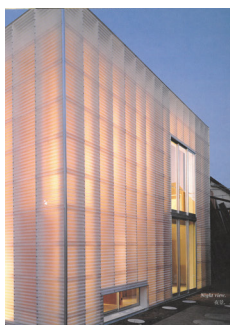
18. Higashi Tamagawa House
Kazuo Shinohara



19. House in Uehara
Kazuo Shinohara



20. House in a Plum Grove
Kazuyo Sejima



21. S House
Kazuyo Sejima



22. Seijo Townhouse
Kazuyo Sejima



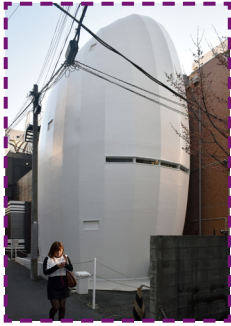
23. Small House
Kazuyo Sejima



24. Tsuchihashi House
Kazuyo Sejima



25. Steel House
Kengo Kuma



26. Natural Ellipse
Masaka Endoh + Ikeda Masahiro



27. Natural Wedge
Masaki Endoh



28. Ame | Hare
Mount Fuji Architects



29. Near House
Mount Fuji Architects



30. House no. 21
Naito Architect and Associates



31. Shimokitazawa House
Niizeki



32. Hut and Tower House
onishimaki + hyakudayuki (o+h)



33. Yokohama Apartment
ON Design Partners



34. Minami-Asagaya House
PRIME



35. A House
Ryue Nishizawa

75



36. Garden and House
Ryue Nishizawa



37. M House
SANAA



38. Moriama House
SANAA



39. House NA
Sou Fujimoto



40. House H
Sou Fujimoto



41. Tokyo Apartment
Sou Fujimoto



42. SHARE Yaraicho
Spatial Design Studio / A Studio



43. Inokashira House
Studio NOA



44. Tower House
Takamitsu Azuma



45. Swimmy House
Starpilots



46. Mosaic House
TNA Takei Nabeshima



47. House in Sakurajosui
Toyo Ito



48. Laatikko
Workshop Kino



49. Window House
Yasutaka Yoshimura



50. House in Nakameguro
Yoritaka Hayashi Architects

8

Conclusion

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In most areas of Sydney, there is a clear distinction between the private life of residents and the public life of streets. Houses in Australia are built to conquer nature and a wall becomes the principal driver of separation between public from private life, interior from exterior, and humanity from nature. The division present at the boundary line forms a barrier encouraging a life looking inwards, away from the street and its potential to give back. The dreariness and monotony of the Australian suburb deserves criticism for its layout and for the architectural and environmental standards it produces.

Sydney's first few streets followed the tracks of local aboriginals, then replaced by goat and bullock tracks by the first European settlers. As the city expanded, political agendas impinged on the existing streets and drove new layouts where efficiency reigned and quality was rare. Swathes of bush were cleared then replaced by terrace houses and cottages abutting each other and the street, denuded of trees, plants, gardens and animals - essential sustenance for the betterment of human life. This, the product of a land-subdivision system that imposes identically sized plots on all development; of social prejudice that makes home ownership the ambition of every individual; demands a separate identity for every dwelling and causes cheap synthetic materials and flimsy brickwork to be regarded as preferable. Problematic characteristics arise in deep floor plans, uncomfortable levels of light and ventilation, introspective rooms, dismal views, useless landscaping, a significant amount of unoccupiable land, forgotten common and open spaces, poor-quality construction, and most consequential - a disrespectful interface with the street.

The structure of Sydney's suburban street hasn't changed in over 100 years, their building facades are identical. The footpaths, the road, and electricity poles are all unchanged.

Of deep concern to Australians is the appearance of a dwelling to the street, how an occupant may be perceived - a 'telltale' sign of who they truly are. Over the years, this culture has become ingrained within legislation with the large majority of homes restricted to a building typology relating to this desire where controls are in dire need of revision. A diverse, dense and healthy city should provide diverse building types at all scales that interact with the street.

The role a buildings street frontage plays in the development of Sydney must be reconsidered to bring people out of their homes to a place of communality, a shift from the backyard to the front yard, from private life to public life, a new form of the Australian dream.

As Sydney's density increases, changes in policy must reflect the current paradigm and be integrated with the urban fabric of the city. Planning systems in Tokyo shine light on the potential residents have when given power over their neighbourhoods. For years, Tokyo underwent comparable increases in density and, like Sydney, their planning systems separated use and limited density. In 2002, the 'Urban Renaissance Law' was passed allowing owners of land to construct buildings with wide varieties of use, freely able to navigate around resistance from local government and neighbours. The products of this deregulation are the small

“The role a buildings street frontage plays in the development of Sydney must be reconsidered to bring people out of their homes to a place of communality, a shift from the backyard to the front yard, from private life to public life, a new form of the Australian dream.”

houses presented in this study. The power councils hold over the outcome of built form in our suburbs must be reconsidered. Diversity will naturally follow where owners of land have control over their individual means of living.

Our pleasure in architecture is primarily one of the mind and the spirit conveying to us a sense of place and community. In what seem to be concentrated locales scattered throughout Sydney, residents are realising the potential life a public street can provide when the connection between public and private life is managed through purposeful interaction. This should be encouraged. Living close to the city means we must live with small private spaces, but these can be improved by engendering connections with the street, creating cities full of all forms of natural life that are beautiful, useful, and a delight to be in.

.....

9

Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank Byera Hadley and the NSW Architects Registration Board for the opportunity to complete my travels.

I would also like to personally thank Jon Jacka as my mentor as well as Alison Nobbs and Andrew Daly for their guidance. To Hugo Chan, Trevor Hamilton, and Michael Morgan for their recommendations. With thanks also to Tim Horton, Sarah Marshall, Nigel Bell, and Gerard Reinmuth for their endorsement.

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I would also like to thank Simone Daly for her assistance throughout the scholarship and my family for their tireless support.

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About the author: James Masman

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James Masman received the Byera Hadley scholarship as a student of architecture at the University of New South Wales. Prior to this, he spent 5 years living in Tokyo with his family. During this time and at university, James developed a keen interest in the way houses shape our cities and the ability of architects to instigate change.

As a student, James worked at Nettleontribe Architects and upon graduating began working at the spatial communications practice, Akin Atelier, working on residential and commercial projects. James has also taught as a tutor at UNSW and continues his own study to further understand alternative approaches to housing that ensure density, diversity, and affordability for our city of Sydney.

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Photography on page 74:

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