

The little house

Low House - Guest House

A project by Andreas Buijs

Rotterdamse Academie van Bouwkunst / Tutors: Sereh Mandias, David Schmidt, Bas Leemans

THE LITTLE HOUSE

Het gastenverblijf wat stond achter het Low House³, was een kwartslag gedraaid ten opzichte van het hoofdverblijf. Het Low House versterkte de monumentaliteit van het gastenverblijf door zijn contrasterende positionering en proportioneel gelijke vorm³. Hoewel de dakvorm afweek van de klassieke proporties van het Low House, vertoonde het in aanzicht veel overeenkomsten met het naastgelegen hoofdverblijf³. Net als het Low House was het dak het hoofd bepaalde element wat eerst opviel². De trim die McKim, Mead & White toepaste bij de beëindigen van het dakvlak zijn in hun proporties en gebruik gelijk. De trim snijdt diep in het gebouw waar het eindigt boven de veranda⁵. De veranda⁴ die zich bij het Low House enkel aan de zijkanten bevinden, is nu doorgezet aan de achterzijde, waardoor het bijna aan alle zijde open is uitgewerkt². Men betrad het huis middels het terug liggende entree, verscholen onder een porte cochère¹, die toegang bood tot de woonkamer van het gastenverblijf. De plattegrond vertoont een eenzelfde kruisvormig plattegrond met in één richting de vertrekken en in de andere richting de trap^{2,5}. In eerste oogopslag leek het gebouw symmetrisch, maar bij nadere inspectie zag men het afwijkende raam patroon, het gevolg van het achterliggende huislijk programma³. Het dak was bekleed met leien en de gevels van de licht houten constructie waren bekleed met shingles in verschillende vormen en patronen. De shingles waren verkleurd van een donkere naar zilvergrijze kleur¹.



1. Rhode Island Architecture, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 1939: "For the disciplined design of the Low House is the best tradition of Richardson's later houses, not academic but intrinsic the detail is reduced almost to zero; the light wooden construction is quite directly and simply expressed;... where the natural wood turns not dark but silver grey. Colonial influence appears here in the plan and even in the detail of the entrance door hidden under a plain porte-cochere." Hoofdstuk 6, pagina 60

2. The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright, Vincent Scully, 1955 "It has a truly classic unity without classicizing detail. Again it attacks the classic problem of the pediment or gable, and the great roof slope defines the mass with majesty and calm, while the windows are banked in grouped bays, contained by horizontal overhangs. From the plan it would appear that McKim was attempting to create order 2

by means of crossed axes a little like Price's houses and much like the later plans of Wright. Also, as later with Wright, McKim originally intended to use a broad terrace as a base for the gable shape of the house but this feature was eliminated because of excessive cost" pagina 152

3. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Robert Venturi, 1966 "Instead, the window pattern is the result of earlier renovations, and it breaks the dominant order of the central pediment and symmetrical wings. In McKim, Mead and White's Low House (72) the blatantly exceptional window positions in the north façade contradicted the consistent symmetrical order of the outside shape to admit the circumstantial complexities of its domestic program."

7. Contradiction Adapted, Pag 48

"But the juxtapositions of elements contrasting in size yet proportional in shape, like the pyramids of Gizeh, characterize a primary technique of monumentality.

The guest house which stood behind the Low House by McKim, Mead and White was a miniature imitation of that house in its distinctive overall form." 8. Contradiction Juxtaposed, Pag 58

4. McKim, Mead & White, Architects, Leland M. Roth, 1983 "The classicizing unity was enhanced by the square-cut shingles covering the entire house - walls and roof - for there were no picturesque bands of notched or rounded shingles as in the Bell house. The continuity of that surface, moreover, was strengthened by the way the wall bowed outward to form the bays and the roofs over the bays; even the veranda was pulled under the continuous plane of the roof so that no subsidiary extension or projection would compromise the elemental triangle." Pagina 77

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"The problems of the dominant form were apparent in the eccentric fenestration patterns and the plan, where six different interior levels were used. A straight-through living hall divided the house on the ground floor in one direction, and cross-axial corridors separated it in the other. Interior trim was minimal-some turned balustrades and moldings for doors and mantels"

The Atlas

DAKVLAK

In het boek McKim, Mead & White, Architects van Richard Guy Wilson (1983) schijft hij: *"In the Low house McKim gathered all the elements of the house and submerged them under a great triangle gable or pediment. The roof was the house. Slight eruptions occurred with the twin bulging bays on the bay side, and deep penetrations of the porch but overall, the predetermined form was paramount". Straight-cut cypress shingles covered the exterior surface, other trim was confined to whit moldings.*

Een van de belangste, misschien wel hét belangrijkste element van het huis was het dakvlak. Om recht te doen aan het Low House heb ik referenties gezocht van daken in dezelfde architectuur. Hiernaast een overzicht.

Belangrijk hierin het de zoektocht naar een dak wat kan refereren aan het Low House, maar toch zijn eigen identiteit heeft.



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1. Whitehall, the Bishop Berkeley House, Newport, Rhode Island
2. McKim, Mead & White, The Isaac Bell House, 1883
3. McKim, Mead, and White - The Metcalfe House, Buffalo, New York.
4. A Cottage Collection - Fine Homebuilding, Charlevoix, Michigan
5. The Hazel Gates Woodruff Cottage, Colorado Boulder
6. Pettengill House, Freeport, Maine. Saltbox House.
7. The Clemence-Irons House Richard Clemence in 1691
38 George Waterman Road,
Johnston, Rhode Island
8. Tranarossan House, Edwin Lutyens, 1907
Carrigart, County Donegal, Ireland
Tra Na Rosann Hostel
9. Earl Young - Boulder Playhouse, Charlevoix, Michigan

VLAKKENSPEL

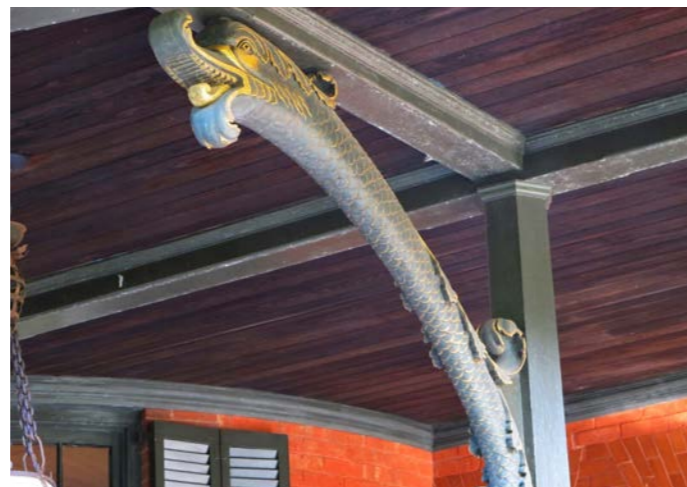
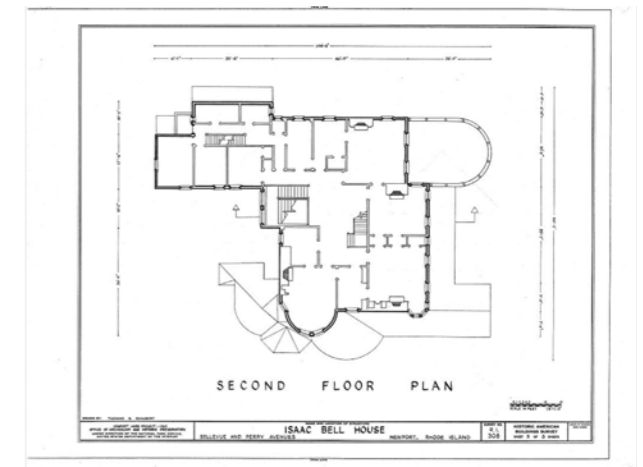
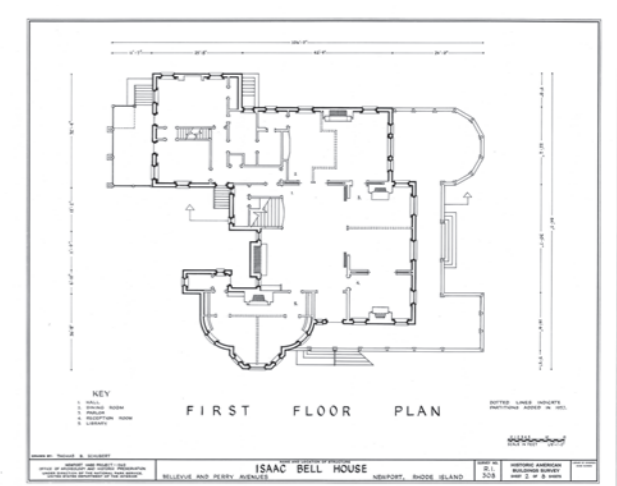
Aandachtspunten voor verdere ontwikkeling compositie. Een single style woning speelt in basis met meerdere vollumes. De materialisatie is hoofdzakelijk shingles, maar kan voorzien zijn van wisselende pateronen.

Een herenbaar element is een veranda, waarbij gebruik gemaakt kan worden van een lage doorval rondom. In het geval van de Isaac Bell House is de onderste gevel voorzien van ramen tot op de vloer.

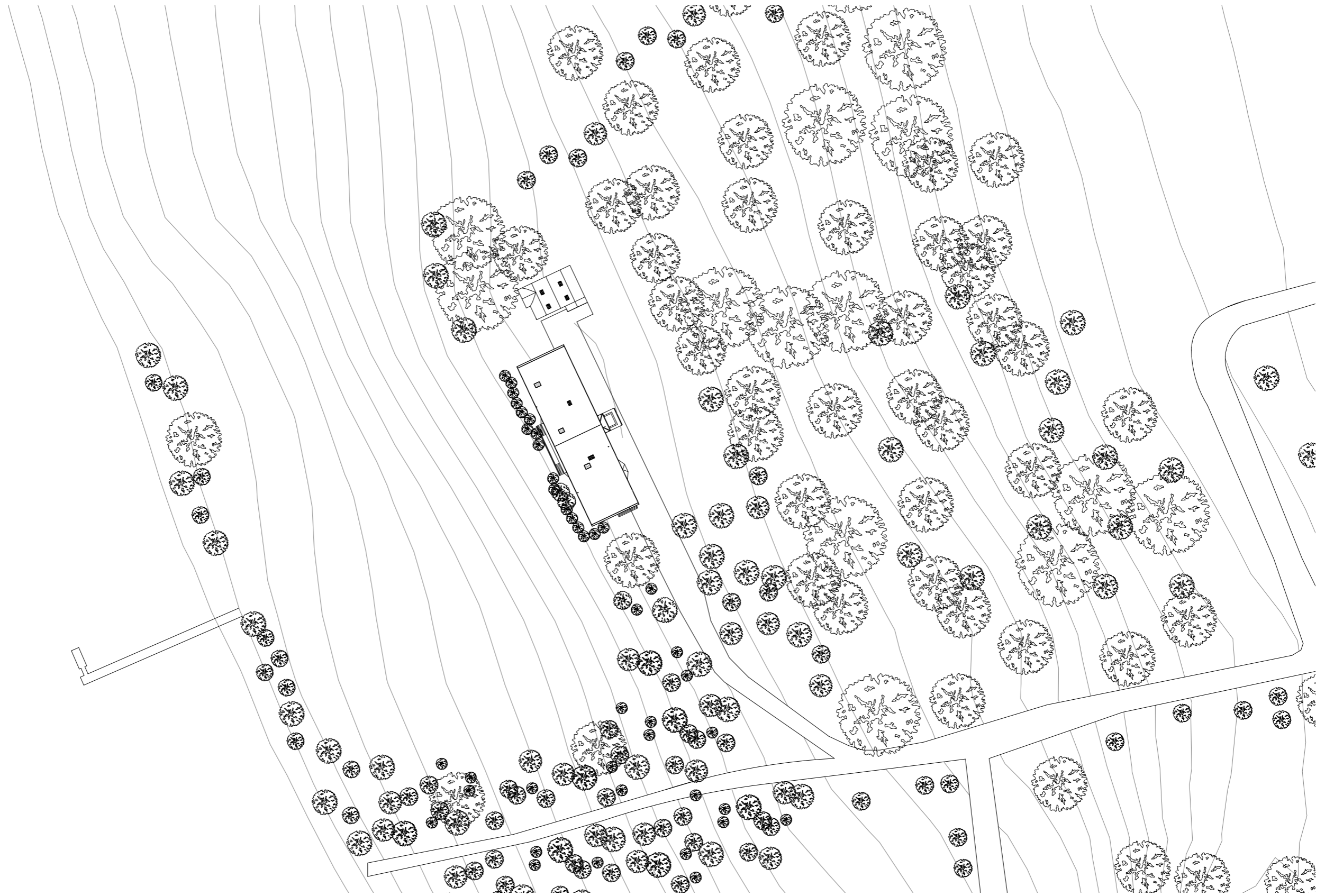
Voor de sonstructie met men gebruik van een hibryde systeem van staal en hout. Het staal is voorzien van ornamenten, net als de gevel die versiert is met veel details.

Belangrijk voor de plattegrond zijn de kleine centrale open haarden en is de woning voorzien van geïntegreerde meubels

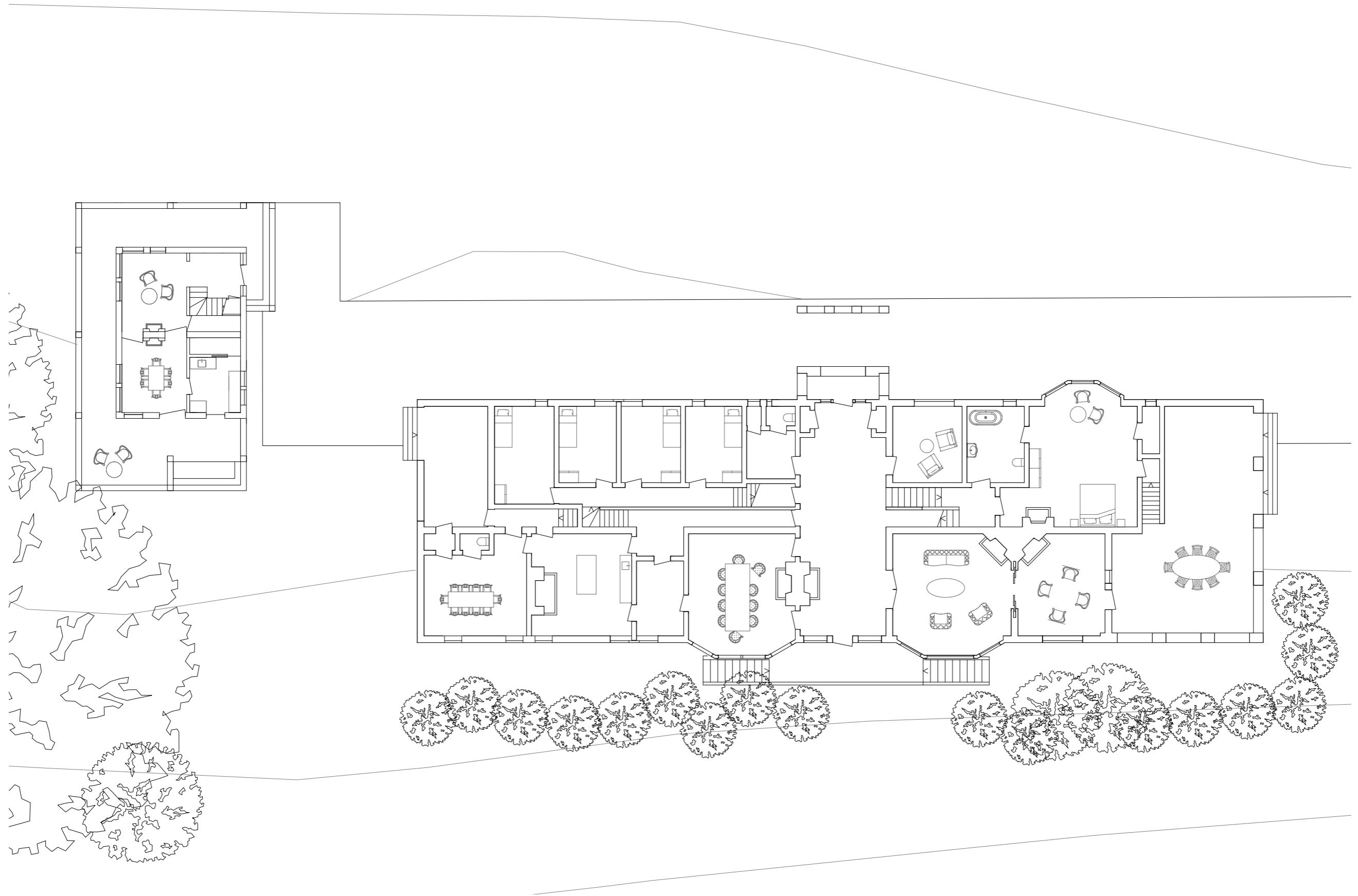
McKim, Mead & White, The Isaac Bell House, 1883



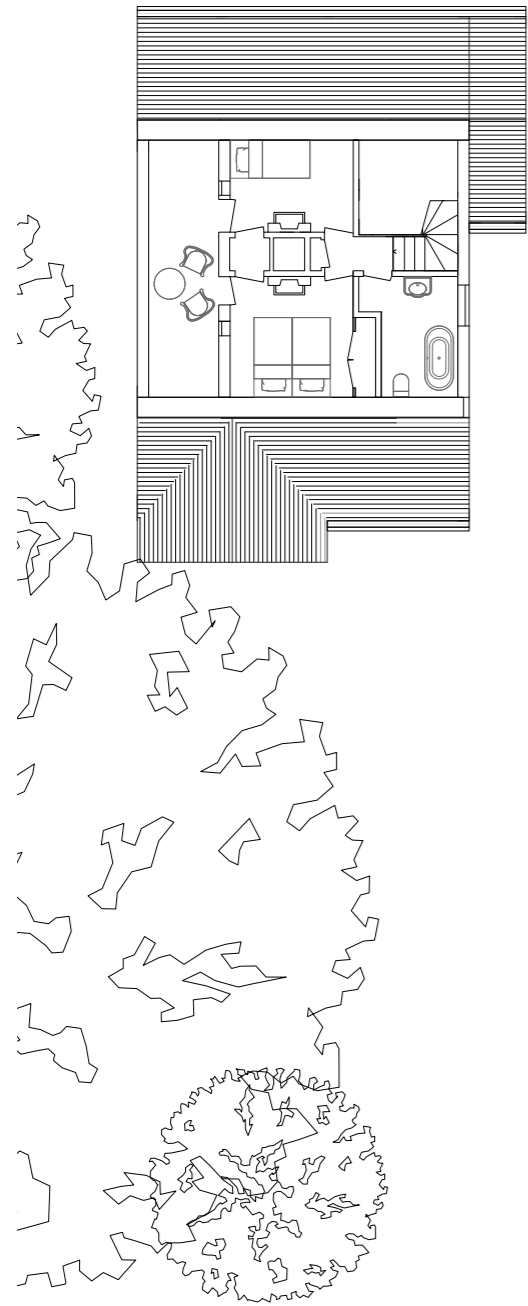
Drawings



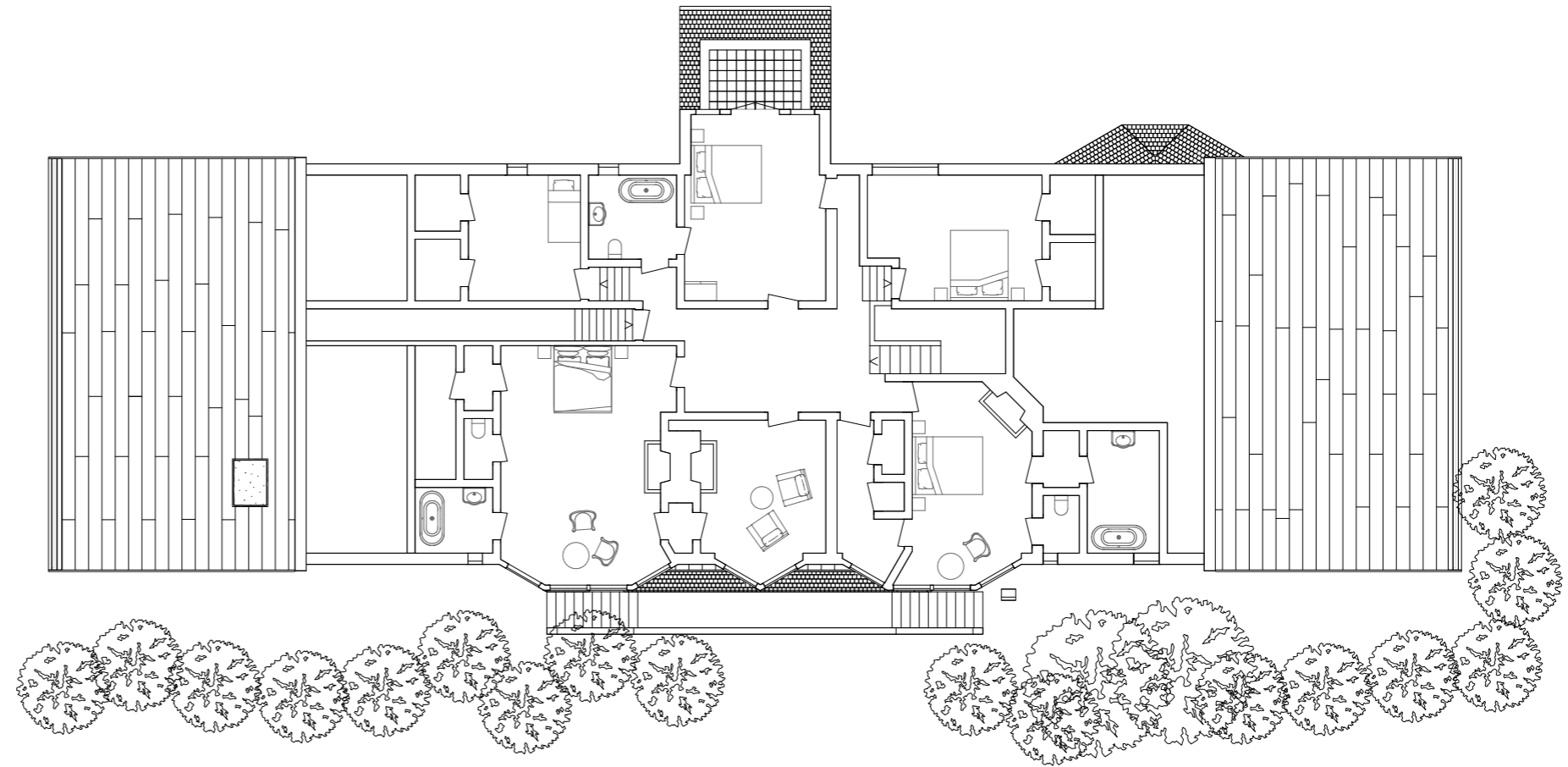
situatie tekening
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plattegrond begane grond
1:200



plattegrond eerste verdieping
1:200

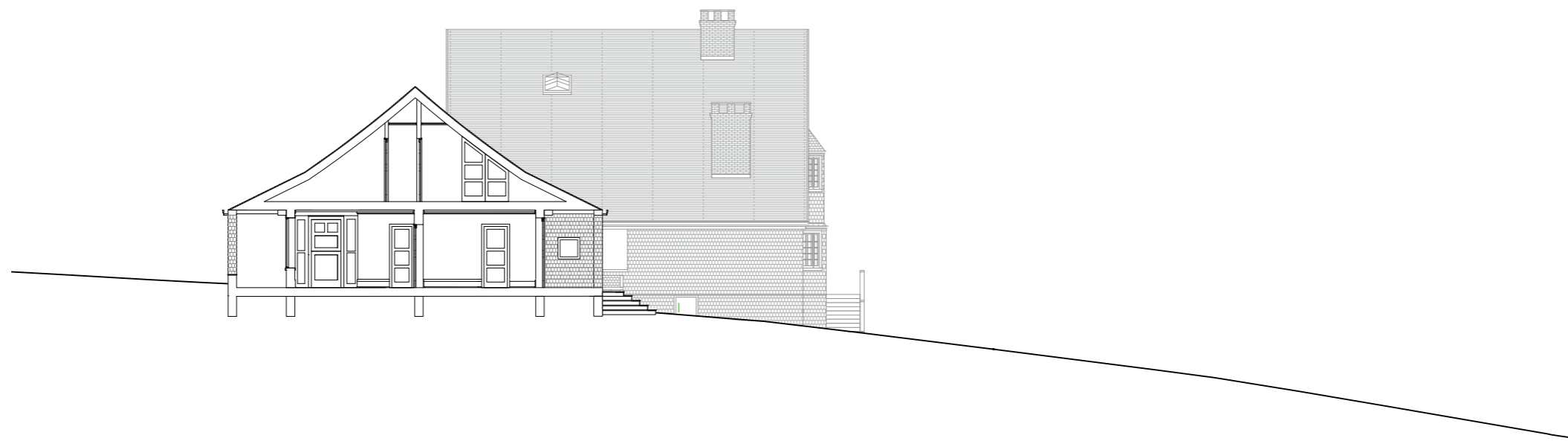




Aanzicht west en zuid
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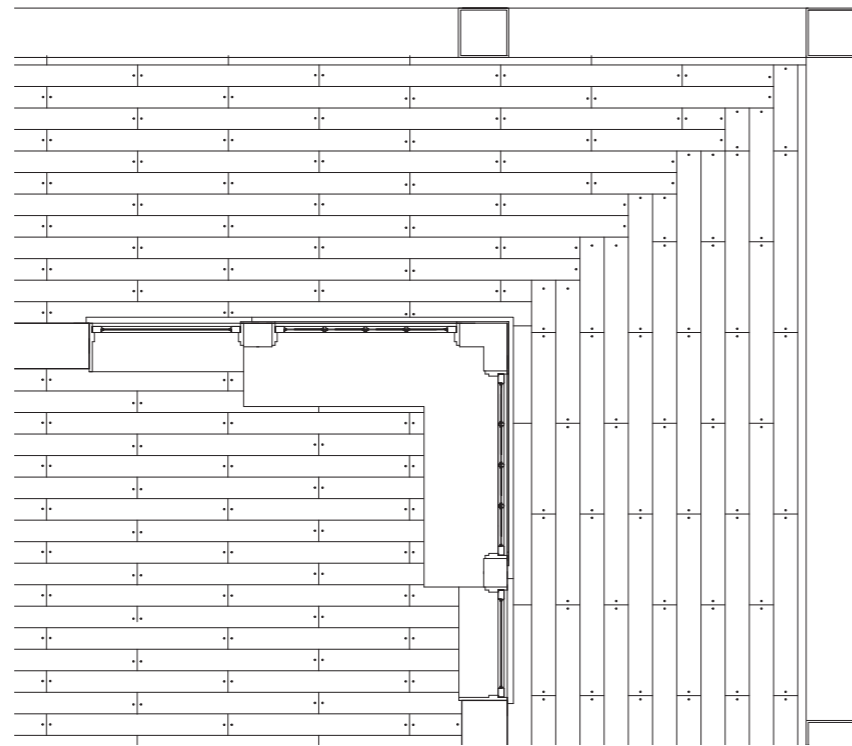
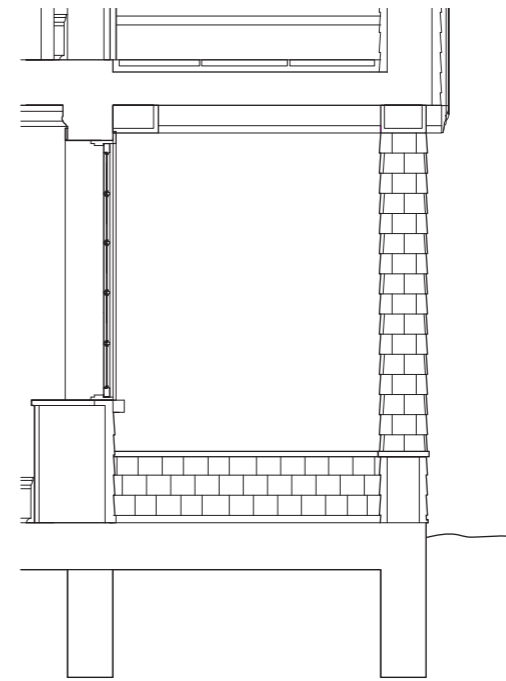
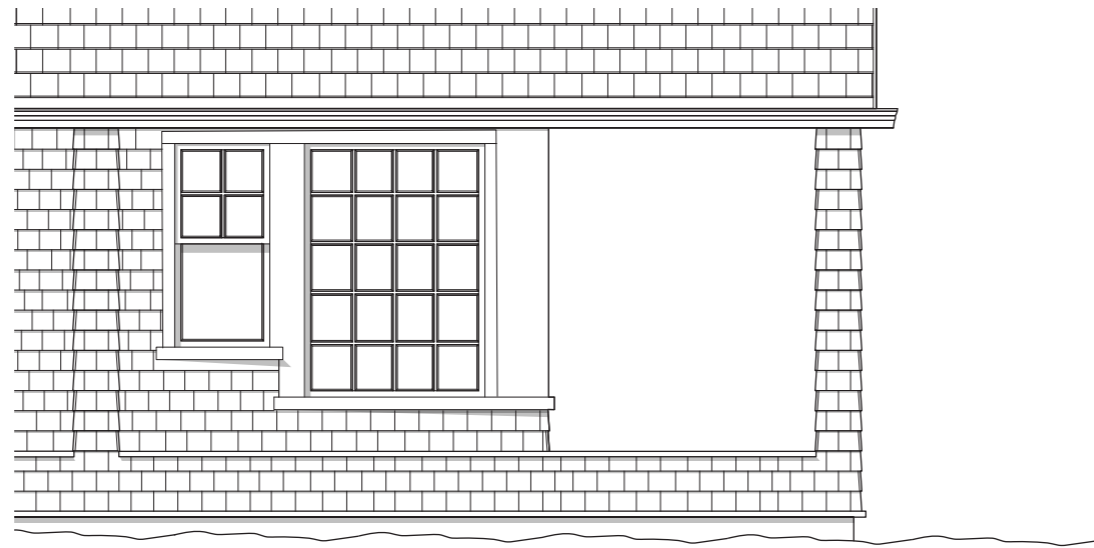
Aanzicht oost en noord
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doorsneden
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The Tour

Het gastenverblijf wat stond achter het Low House³, was het een kwartslag gedraaid ten opzichte van het hoofdverblijf. Het Low House versterkte de monumentaliteit van het gastenverblijf door zijn contrasterende positionering en proportioneel gelijke vorm³.

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Het dak was bekleed met leien en de gevels van de licht houten constructie waren bekleed met lange houten latten. De latten waren verkleurd van een donkere naar zilvergrijze kleur¹.

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"For the disciplined design of the Low House is the best tradition of Richardson's later houses, not academic but intrinsic the detail is reduced almost to zero; the light wooden construction is quite directly and simply expressed;...where the natural wood turns not dark but silver grey. Colonial influence appears here in the plan and even in the detail of the entrance door hidden under a plain porte-cochere." Hoofdstuk 6, pagina 60

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profession as eleemosynary to make the world amore beautiful world, a kindlier world, a happier world for mankind generally. The chances are they are still figuring very closely with American cuiming and expediency for commercial martinetts; whose favor means the largest commissions.⁶²

Dow also referred to earlier American invention in domestic architecture as "The Reign of Terror."⁶³ He himself stated very clearly the attitudes of the eclectic architects of the early 20th century. For example:

Invention belongs to science. Happily, in the field of art, everything was planted, arranged and cultivated for us ages ago, so that we have only to wander as children, in an enchanted garden that our days are not half long enough to encompass.⁶⁴

For the earnest idealisms of an earlier generation Dow thus substitutes an unpleasant mixture of cynicism and sentimentality. Insisting upon "adaptation" of the "traditional," he and his eclectic colleagues appear to have rejected some of the most potent aspects of their own tradition.

In general, the larger future of domestic desi_gn in the east after 1887 was charted by the Taylor House. Arthur Little's House for George D. Howe at Manchester-by-the-Sea (Figs. 151, 152), dated immediately after the Taylor House, certainly shows influence from it, especially in plan.⁶⁵ Any flow of space was blocked.

McKim, Mead, and White built yet another shingled house which has been much admired-and which was at once a climax and a kind of conclusion-the Low House at Bristol, Rhode Island, 1887 (Fig. 153).⁶⁶ This is rigidly frontal, if large and simple in conception. It has a truly classic unity without classicizing detail. Again it attacks the classic problem of the pediment or gable, and the great roof slope defines the mass with majesty and calm, while the windows are banked in grouped bays, contained by horizontal overhangs. From the plan it would appear that McKim was attempting to create order by means of crossed axes-a little like Price's houses and much like the

62. Dow, *American Renaissance*, pp. 130-1.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-18.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

65. Sheldon, 2, 141-3. It will be recalled that Little always had particularly colonial tendencies. His book, *Early New England Interiors*, appeared as early as 1878. Furthermore, his Shingleside was a large salt box, and all his detail was colonial. Yet with all this he combined a sense of spatial volumes. It is typical of a real lapse into academicism that such should disappear.

66. Hitchcock, *Rhode Island*, pl. 67.

later plans of Wright. Also, as later with Wright, McKim originally intended to use a broad terrace as a base for the gable shape of the house, but this feature was eliminated because of excessive cost. In general, the Low House, however ample and powerful, must be seen as a kind of arbitrary final effort, the swan song of McKim's shingle design, and so far as articulation and the expression of wooden pavilion is concerned, it compares badly, I think, with the Cyrus McCormick House (Fig. 122). Its archaically powerful gable of wood, like some prototypal form from the beginnings of design, was almost immediately to be abandoned for the more conventionally conceived columns and pediments of McKim, Mead, and White's later buildings. The guest house seemed inspired by the composition of the Low House, but its aesthetic was rooted in the classic single style which McKim, Mead, and White's had left behind after the design of the Low House.

Perhaps midway in conception between the McCormick and Low houses is the Atwater-Ciampolini House on Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut (Fig. 154), built in 1890 by the New York firm of Babb, Cook, and Willard.⁶⁷ Here the simple gable shape with its continuous horizontals in the window bands and the voids of the porches extends more subtly hut with less expansive power than in the Low House. A feeling for the continuity of interior volumes gives meaning to and articulates the exterior mass. The Atwater-Ciampolini and Low Houses show how the sense of control which had developed by the middle 80's did not necessarily entail academie precedent or antiquarian detail. They could have demonstrated to their own time how classic order had nothing intrinsically to do with classicistic archaeology in desi_gn. Babb, Cook, and Willard never built another such house, nor, after 1887, did McKim, Mead, and White, who were from then on fully embarked upon their renowned academie career.

While McKim, Mead, and White were to build other interesting and important houses, such as the E. D. Morgan House at Newport, 1888-91,⁶⁸ they were never again to strike out consistently in domestic architecture into what

67. Babb, Cook, and Willard's De Vinne Press building, Lafayette Street, New York, 1885, should also be mentioned in this connection. A simple block with a gable roof, it is a masterpiece of what we might call the "free classic" urban architecture of the middle 80's. It is very similar in conception not only to Babb, Cook, and Willard's Atwater House of 1890 but also to McKim, Mead, and White's Low House of 1887. Hitchcock, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the 'Academie Tradition,'" p. 52. Since Babb and Wells were close friends-and furthermore since Wells used the De Vinne Press as a model for the Judge Building, 5th Avenue and 16th Street, New York, built in 1891-it is reasonable to assume a strong influence from Babb in the Low House as well.

68. Downing and Scully, p. 158; pl. 214. Moore lists the Morgan House as of 1891. However, the building was apparently almost complete as early as 1888.



153. William Low Guest House, Bristol, R.I., by unknown, front facade 1903 (Andreas Buijs)



155. Frank Lloyd Wright House, 428 Forest Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois, by Frank Lloyd Wright. 1889. (Photo courtesy of H.-R. Hitchcock)



154. Atwater-Ciampolini House, Whitney Avenue and Edwards Street, New Haven, Connecticut, by Babb, Cook, and Willard. 1890-91. (Mrs. Charles Wakeman)



156. W. Chandler House, Tuxedo Park, New York, by Bruce Price. 1885-86. (*Architecture*, 1900) Published as a perspective rendering in *Building*, 1886.

Process and Materials

LOCATIE

De locatie van het gastenverblijf is nooit helemaal duidelijk omschreven. Op de meeste foto's lijkt het gastenverblijf niet te bestaan of gebouwd nadat het Low House is gebouwd.

Robert Venturi schuift in zijn boek *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966)

"The guest house which stood behind the Low House by McKim, Mead and White was a miniature imitation of that house in its distinctive overall form."

8. *Contradiction Juxtaposed*, Pag 58

Mogelijk is het ook eerder gesloopt doordat de constructie de constructie der mate

was verslechterd dat het niet de moeite

waard was om het op te knappen. Robert

Venturi omschrijft ook dat er verschillende

renovaties hebben plaats gevonden: *"Instead,*

the window pattern is the result of earlier

renovations, and it breaks the dominant order

of the central pediment and symmetrical

wings. In McKim, Mead and White's Low

House (72) the blatantly exceptional window

positions in the north façade contradicted the

consistent symmetrical order of the outside

shape to admit the circumstantial complexities

of its domestic program."

7. *Contradiction Adapted*, Pag 48

Mogelijk hebben deze renovaties ook

gevolgen gehad voor het Low House.

Voor ons naratief zullen we er van uit dat

hij is gebouwd kort nadat de Low House is

gebouwd. De positie zal bepaald worden aan

de hand van compositiestudie.



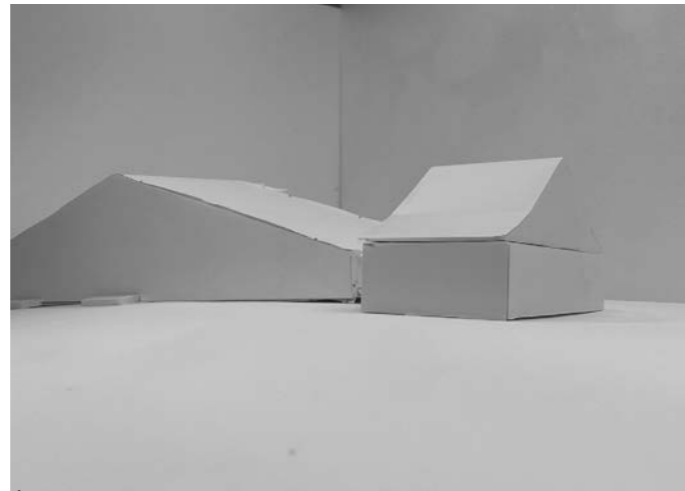
COMPOSTIE STUDIE 01

De zoektocht naar de juiste compositie op basis van de beschikbare foto. In dit geval de foto vanaf de rechtersvoorgevel hoek van het huis.

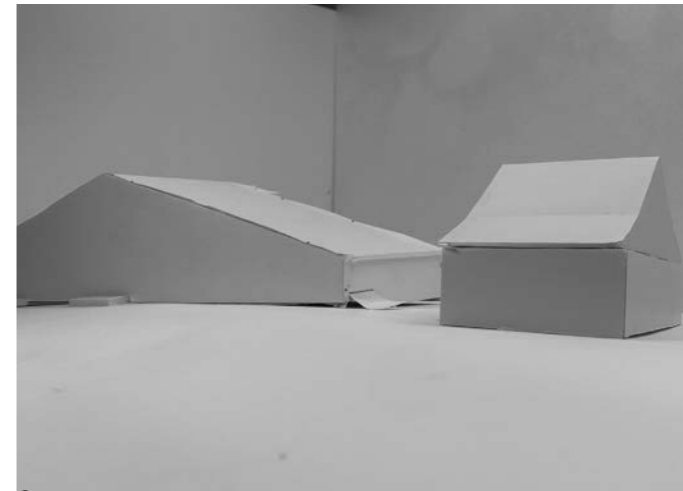
De studie laat duidelijk zien dat er een bepaalde ruimte nodig is tussen het Low House en het gastenverblijf. Het uiteindelijke beeld waarbij de twee gebouwen elkaar versterken niet goed uit de verf te komen.



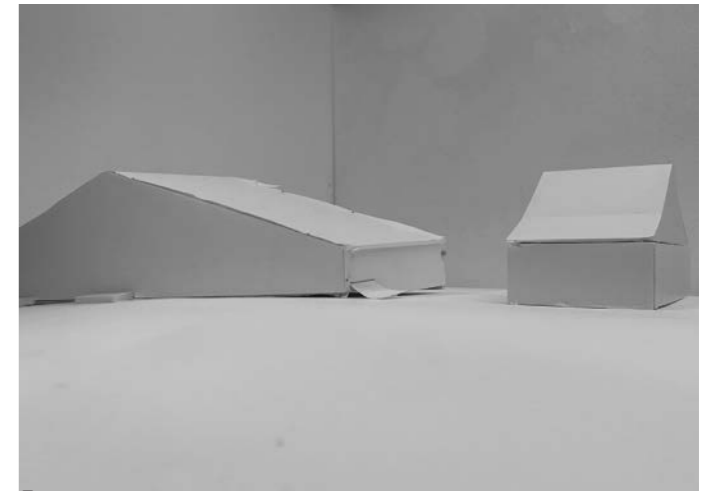
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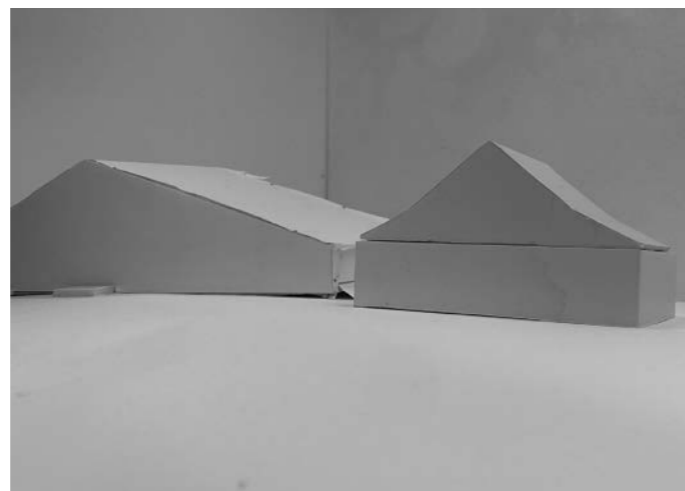
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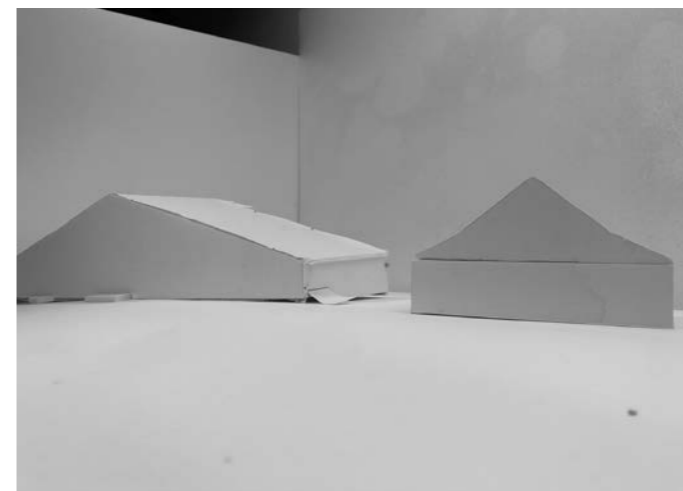
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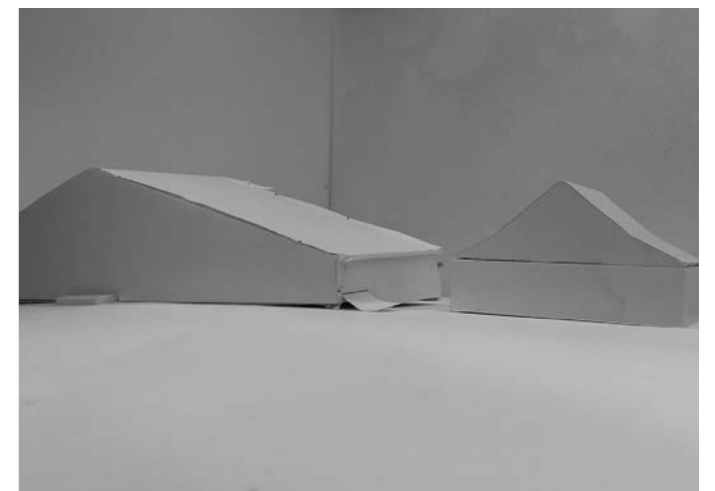
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COMPOSTIE STUDIE 02

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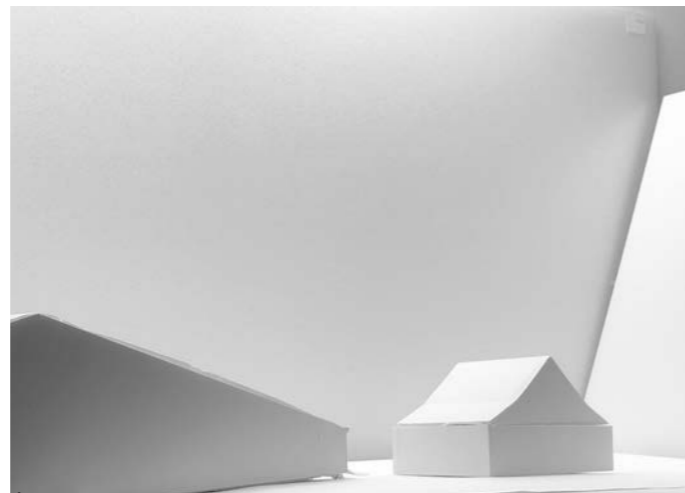
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8. Contradiction Juxtaposed, Pag 58

Door gebruik te maken van deze techniek in de compositie, is het mogelijk dat de twee gebouwen elkaar versterken in hun architectuur. In tegenstelling tot de eerste studie heeft compositie 4 een sterke voorkeur.



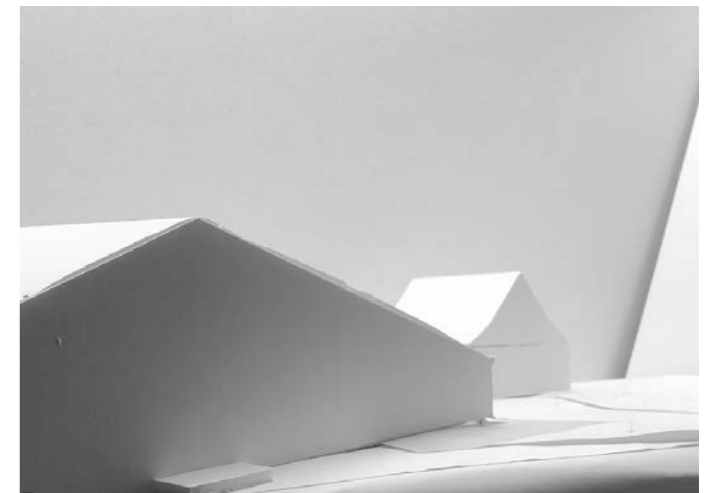
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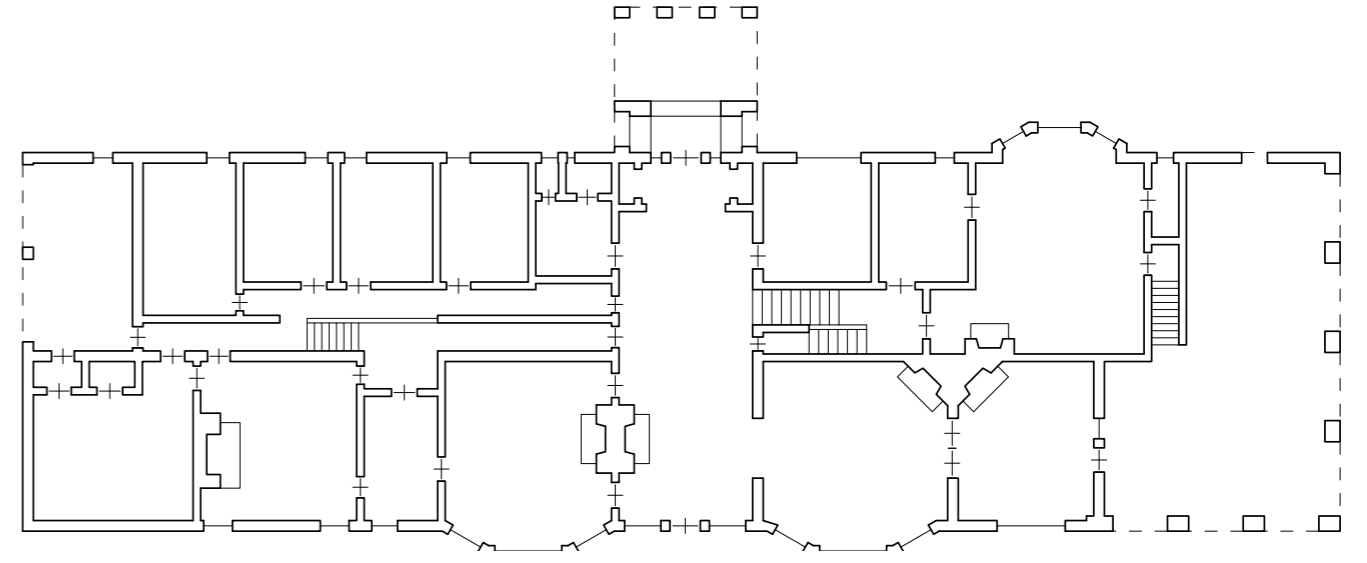
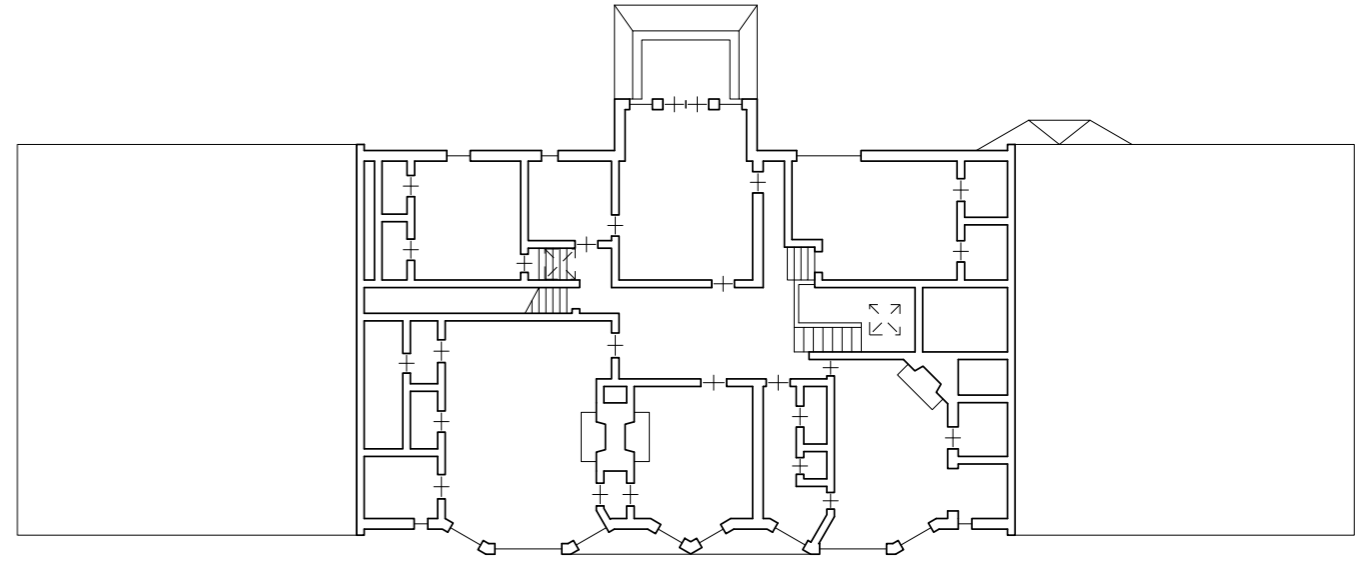
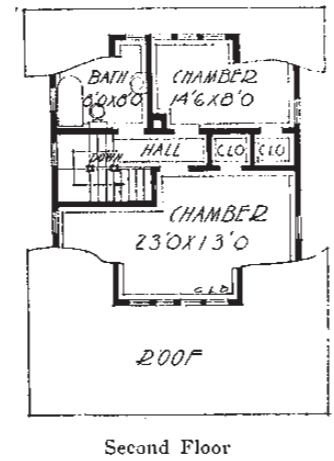
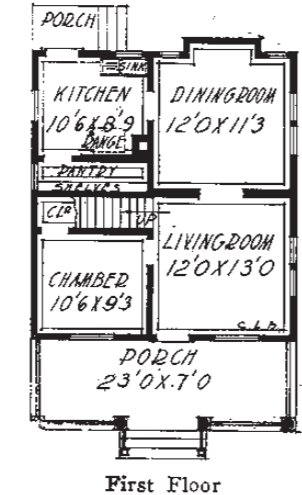
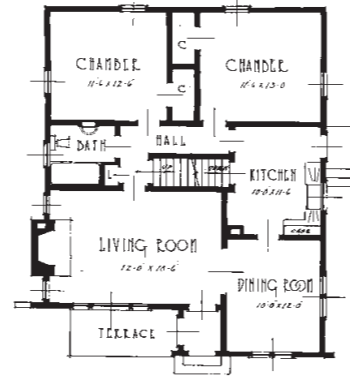
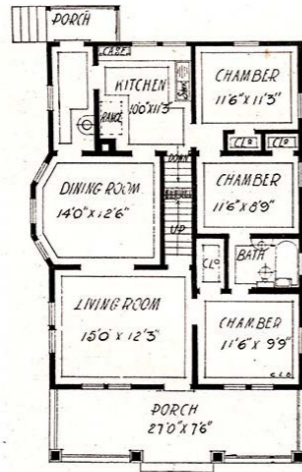
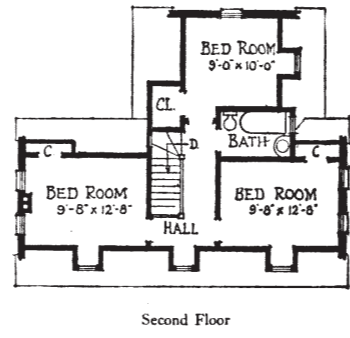
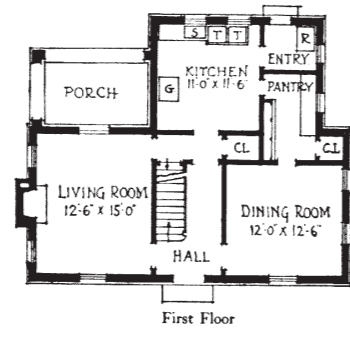


6.

PLATTEGROND

In het boek "The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design van Richardson to the Origins of Wright (1955) van Vincent Scully 1955 word de plattegrond omschrijven in vergelijking met plattegronden van Wright "It has a truly classic unity without classicizing detail. Again it attacks the classic problem of the pediment or gable, and the great roof slope defines the mass with majesty and calm, while the windows are banked in grouped bays, contained by horizontal overhangs. From the plan it would appear that McKim was attempting to create order by means of crossed axes a little like Price's houses and much like the later plans of Wright. Also, as later with Wright, McKim originally intended to use a broad terrace as a base for the gable shape of the house but this feature was eliminated because of excessive cost"

Om tot een bepaalde plattegrond te komen ben ik op zoek gegaan naar vergelijkbare plattegronden uit die tijd. In de periode van begin 20^{ste} eeuw waren er veel boeken over woningen en architectuur waaruit men inspiratie kon opdoen en zelf woningen bestellen.



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sfeerbeelden interieur
Keeping room in a Cape Cod house in coastal Maine, built 1819. - Brian VandenBrink
Bedroom in a Cape Cod home - Franklin & Esther Schmidt



Low House interieur

THE LITTLE HOUSE

is a project by: Andreas Buijs

Studio: Low House Guest House

Tutors:

Sereh Mandias - TU Delft, De Dépendance

David Schmidt - Site Practice

Bas Leemans - TU Delft

Rotterdamse Academie van Bouwkunst

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