

THE HURRICANE HOUSE- ROOM ONE.

A packing crate containing domestic rooms is delivered. A Totem is uncovered as its steel armature is dismantled.

Eight rectangular plywood sheets are laminated in four fold layers, twice over to form an eight square.

THE NOMAD OF THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY DWELLS IN ONE ROOM .

The Totem records the moments of routine life. Messages and secrets are stored in the most accessible drawers and the most hidden of compartments. The Totem is transformed into a Cabinet.

Two arcs are projected upon this square, and then cut out as the first maps of the land. Steel belts hold these concentric laminations in place.

THIS ROOM HAS COUNTLESS EYES BUT ONLY ONE GREAT PORTAL. WITHIN THIS BIRTH CHAMBER, TIME IS MEASURED BY A STICK WHICH FURROWS THE HORIZON. WITHOUT THIS CABINET IS THE THINNEST OF METAL ARMOURS.

One day at a time, the Cabinet yields its mysteries. A Garden unfolds. The Tomb -or parquet floor- assembles landscapes yet to be told.

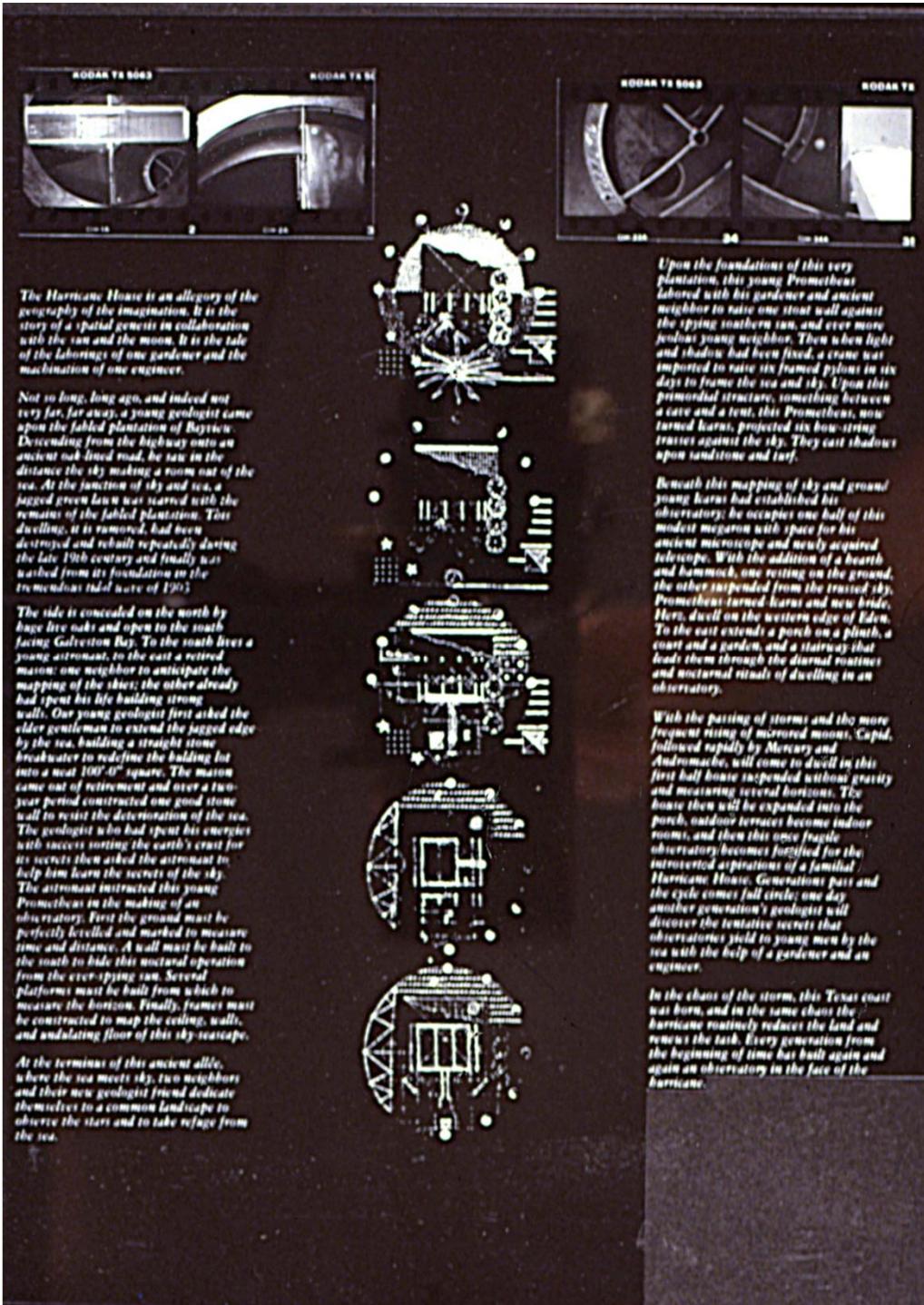
This Cabinet has a back, two sides and a front. They shield themselves in armour while enlisting one-hundred eyes to keep watch from behind. The front unveils itself only at its head.

THIS ROOM IS BOURNE ON TWO CONCENTRIC CARRIAGES, WHEELS WHICH MEASURE THE WORLD OVER AND OVER WITH THE AID OF ASTRONOMERS AND LUNATICS ALIKE.

From Totem to Tomb, an eschatological manual is proposed. This text of endings marks the surface of the space with the imprint and the shadows of its inhabitants.

In this rectangular Room time measures itself by the interrupted brutality of its own cyclic topography.

DURING THE JOURNEY THE WHEELS BECOME SCARRED, BURNED, AND USED BY THE ACRETIONS OF TIME. THIS IS THE SPATIAL TALE OF ORIGIN OF ONE VOYAGEUR, ONE VOYEUR TO THE NOMADIC CONDITION OF THE NEXT MILLENIUM.



The Hurricane House is an allegory of the geography of the imagination. It is the story of a spatial genesis in collaboration with the sun and the moon. It is the tale of the labors of one gardener and the machination of one engineer.

Not so long, long ago, and indeed not very far, far away, a young geologist came upon the faded plantation of Bayview. Descending from the highway onto an ancient oak-lined road, he saw in the distance the sky making a round out of the sea. At the junction of sky and sea, a jagged green lawn was scarred with the remains of the faded plantation. This dwelling, it is rumored, had been destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly during the late 19th century and finally was washed from its foundation in the tremendous tidal wave of 1905.

The side is concealed on the north by huge live oaks and open to the south facing Galveston Bay. To the south lives a young astronomer, to the east a retired mason; one neighbor to anticipate the mapping of the skies; the other already had spent his life building strong walls. Our young geologist first asked the elder gentleman to extend the jagged edge by the sea, building a straight stone breakwater to redefine the holding lot into a neat 100' x 0' square. The mason came out of retirement and over a two-year period constructed one good stone wall to resist the deterioration of the sea. The geologist who had spent his energies with success sorting the earth's crust for its secrets then asked the astronomer to help him learn the secrets of the sky. The astronomer instructed this young Prometheus in the making of an observatory. First the ground must be perfectly leveled and marked to measure time and distance. A wall must be built to the south to hide this nocturnal operation from the ever-spring sun. Several platforms must be built from which to measure the horizon. Finally, frames must be constructed to map the ceiling, walls, and undulating floor of this sky-seascape.

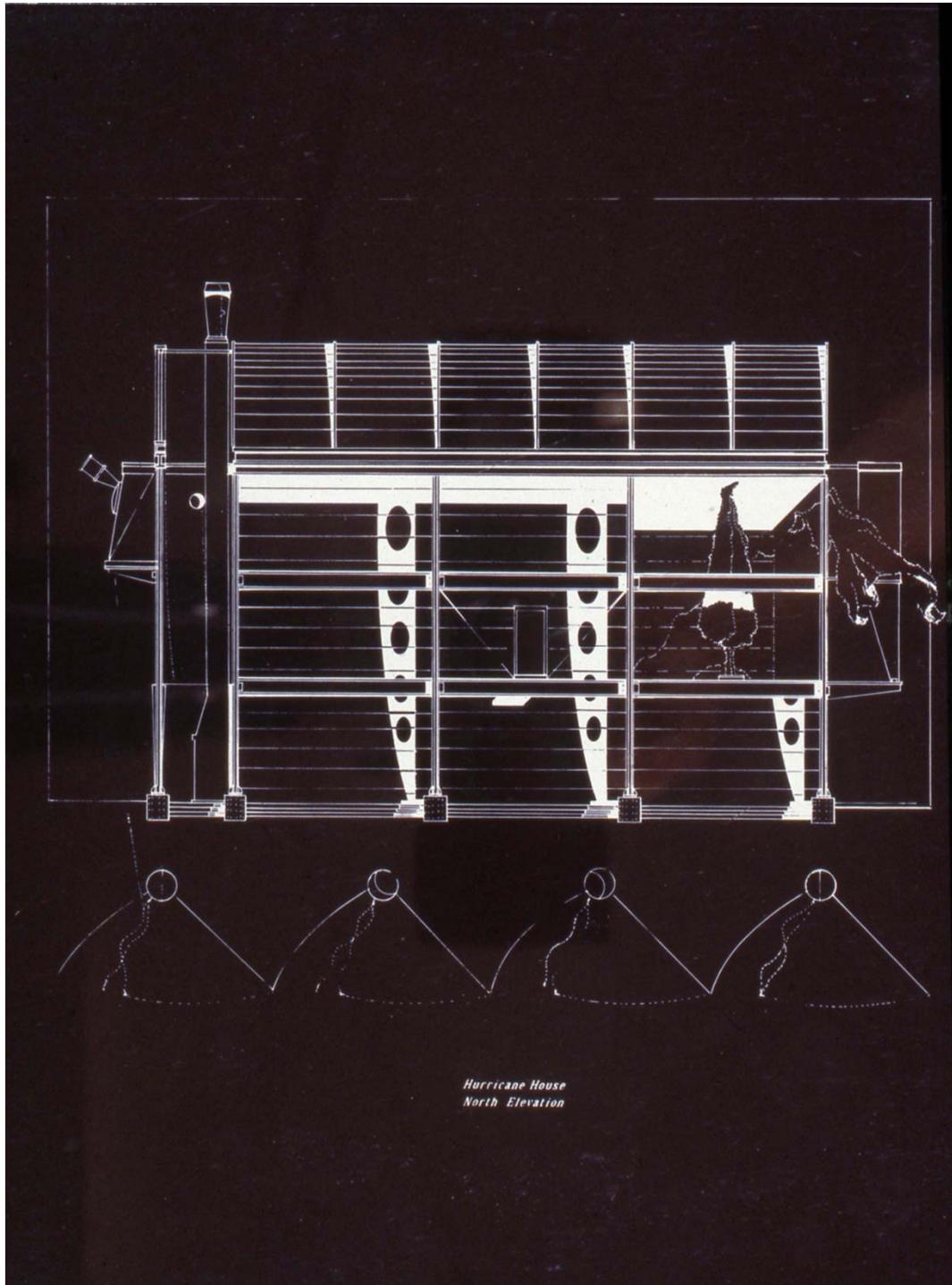
At the terminus of this ancient aisle, where the sea meets sky, two neighbors and their new geologist friend dedicate themselves to a common landscape to observe the stars and to take refuge from the sea.

Upon the foundations of this very plantation, this young Prometheus labored with his gardener and ancient neighbor to raise one stout wall against the spring southern sun, and ever more jealous young neighbor. Then when light and shadow had been fixed, a crane was imported to raise six framed pylons in six days to frame the sea and sky. Upon this primordial structure, something between a cave and a tent, this Prometheus, now turned hermit, projected six bow-string trusses against the sky. They cast shadows upon sandstone and turf.

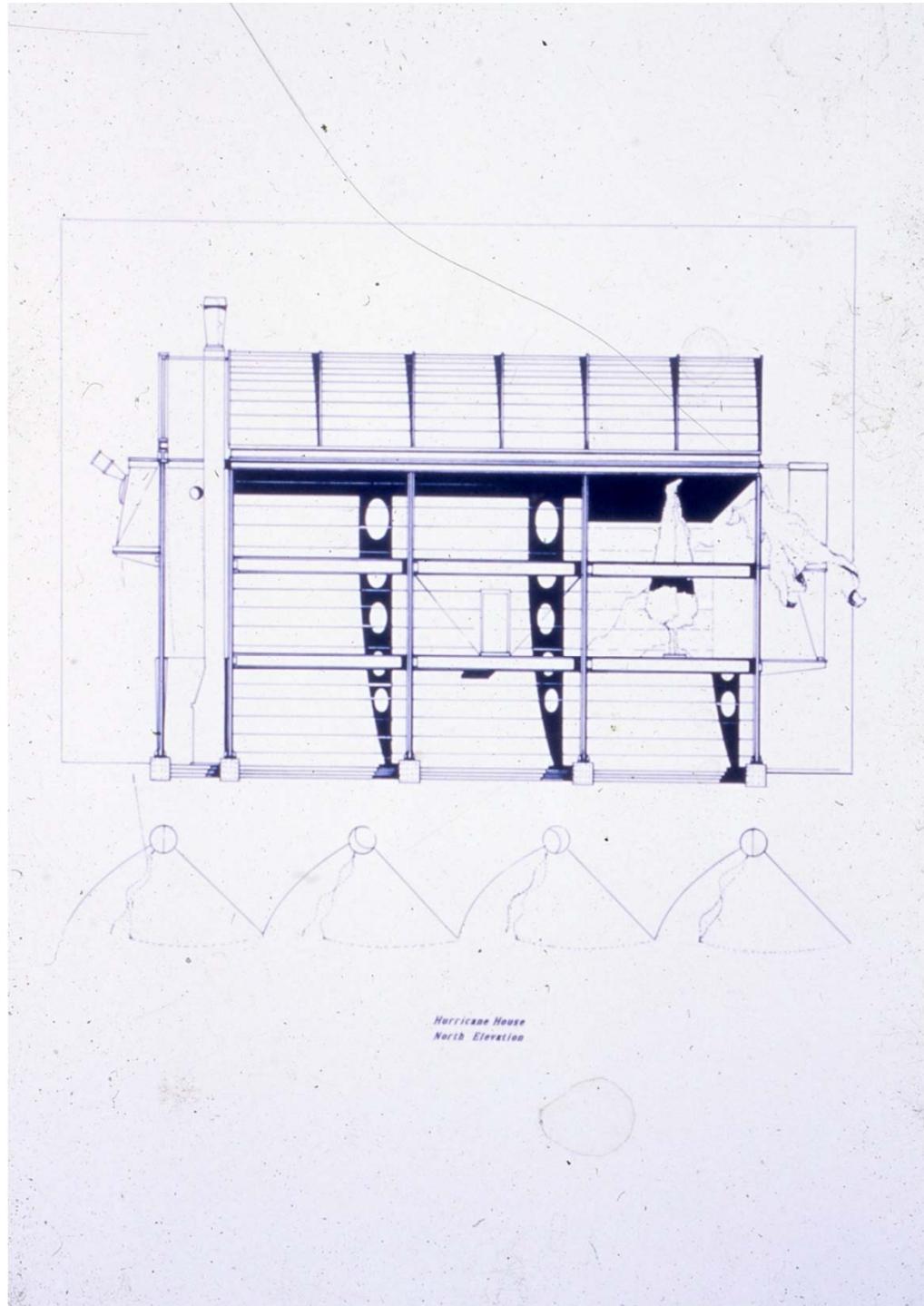
Beneath this mapping of sky and ground young hermits had established his observatory; he occupies one half of this modest meadow with space for his ancient microscope and newly acquired telescope. With the addition of a hearth and hammock, one resting on the ground, the other suspended from the trusted sky, Prometheus-turned hermit and new bride, Hera, dwell on the western edge of Eden. To the east extends a porch on a plinth, a court and a garden, and a stairway that leads them through the diurnal routines and nocturnal rituals of dwelling in an observatory.

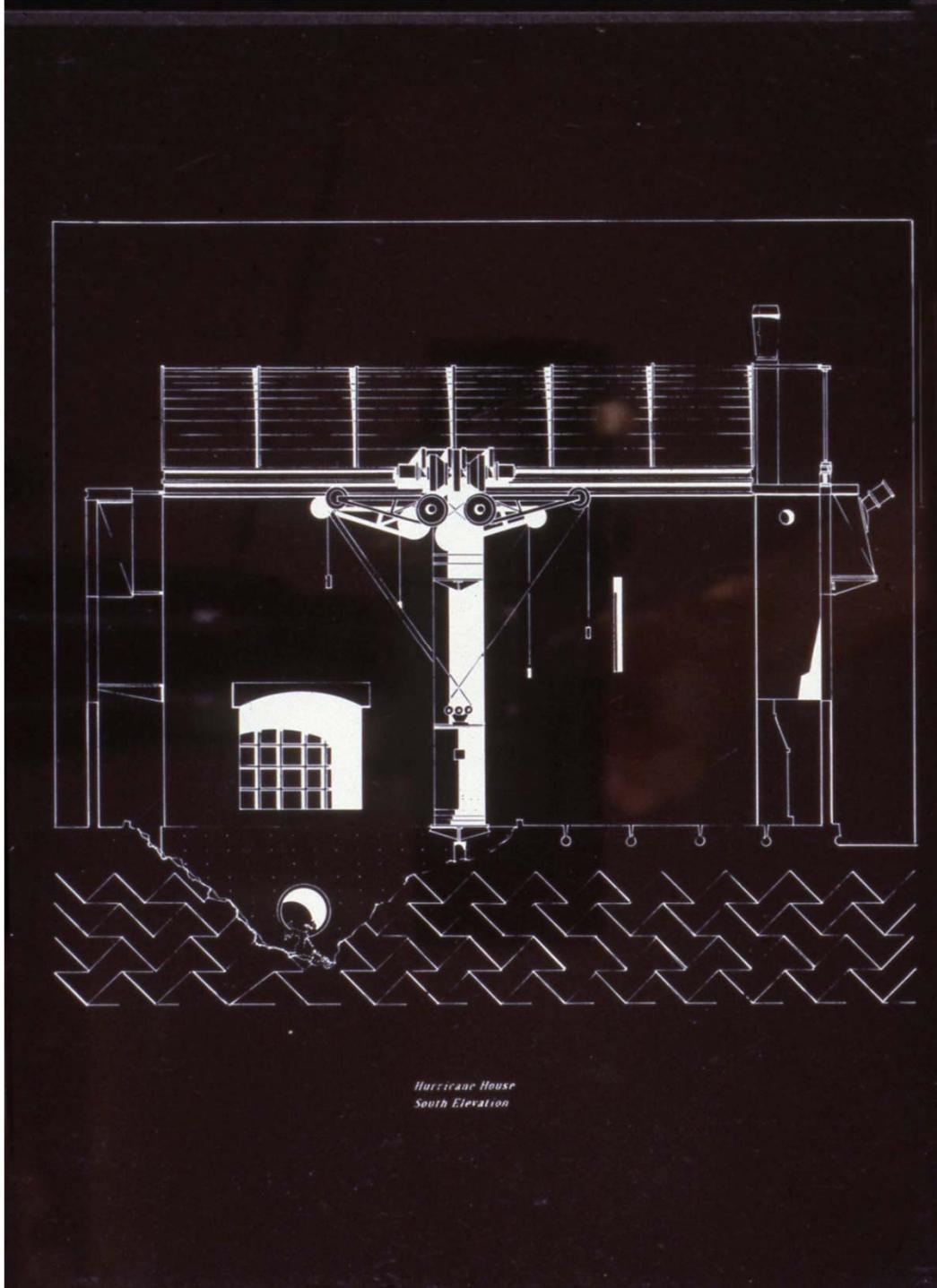
With the passing of storms and the more frequent rising of mirrored mists, Cupid, followed rapidly by Mercury and Andromache, will come to dwell in this first half house suspended without gravity and measuring several horizons. The house then will be expanded into the porch, outdoor terraces become indoor rooms, and then this once fragile observatory becomes fortified for the introverted aspirations of a familial Hurricane House. Generations pass and the cycle comes full circle; one day another generation's geologist will discover the tentative secrets that observatories yield to young men by the sea with the help of a gardener and an engineer.

In the chaos of the storm, this Texas coast was born, and in the same chaos the hurricane routinely reduces the land and renews the task. Every generation from the beginning of time has built again and again an observatory in the face of the hurricane.

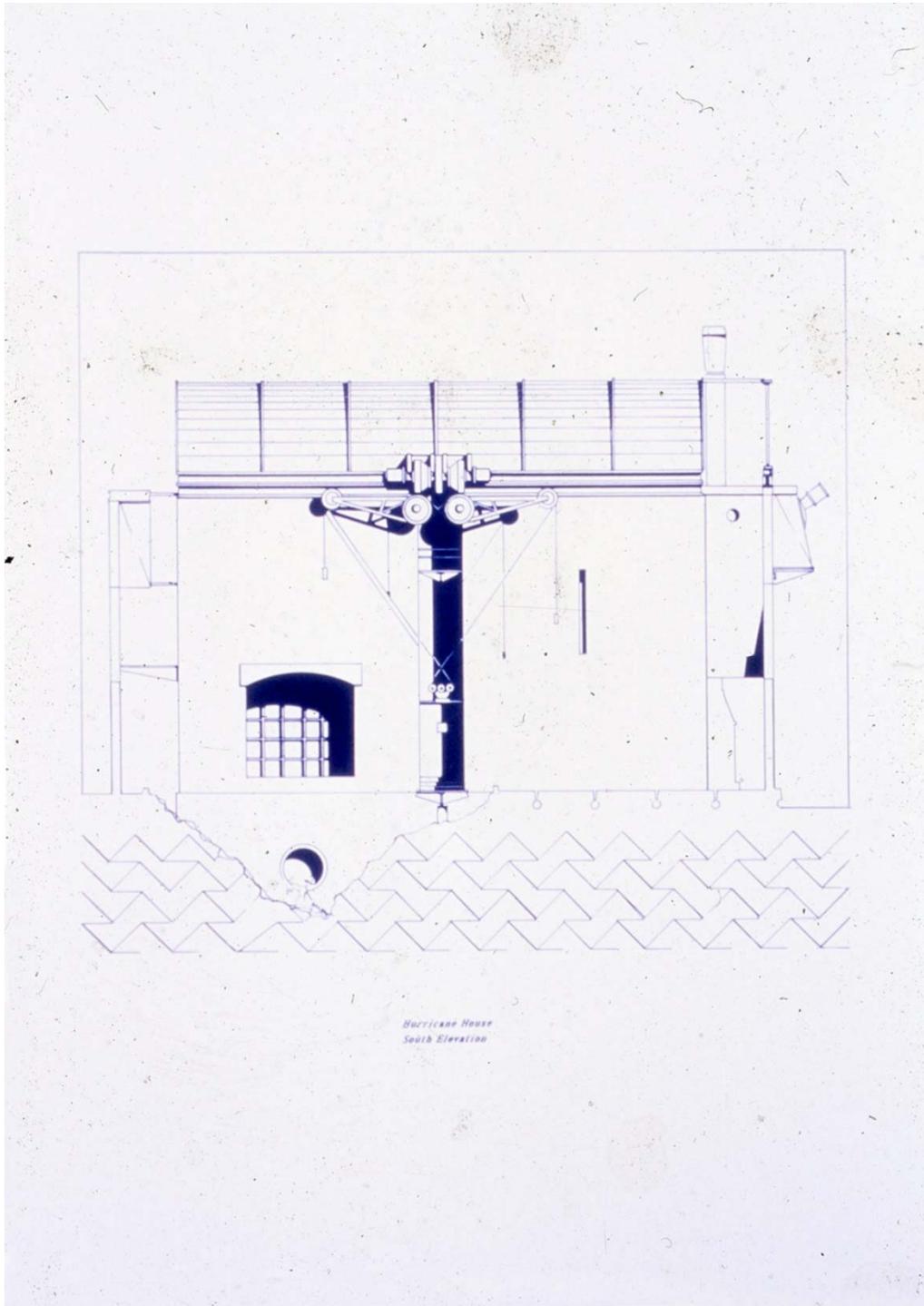


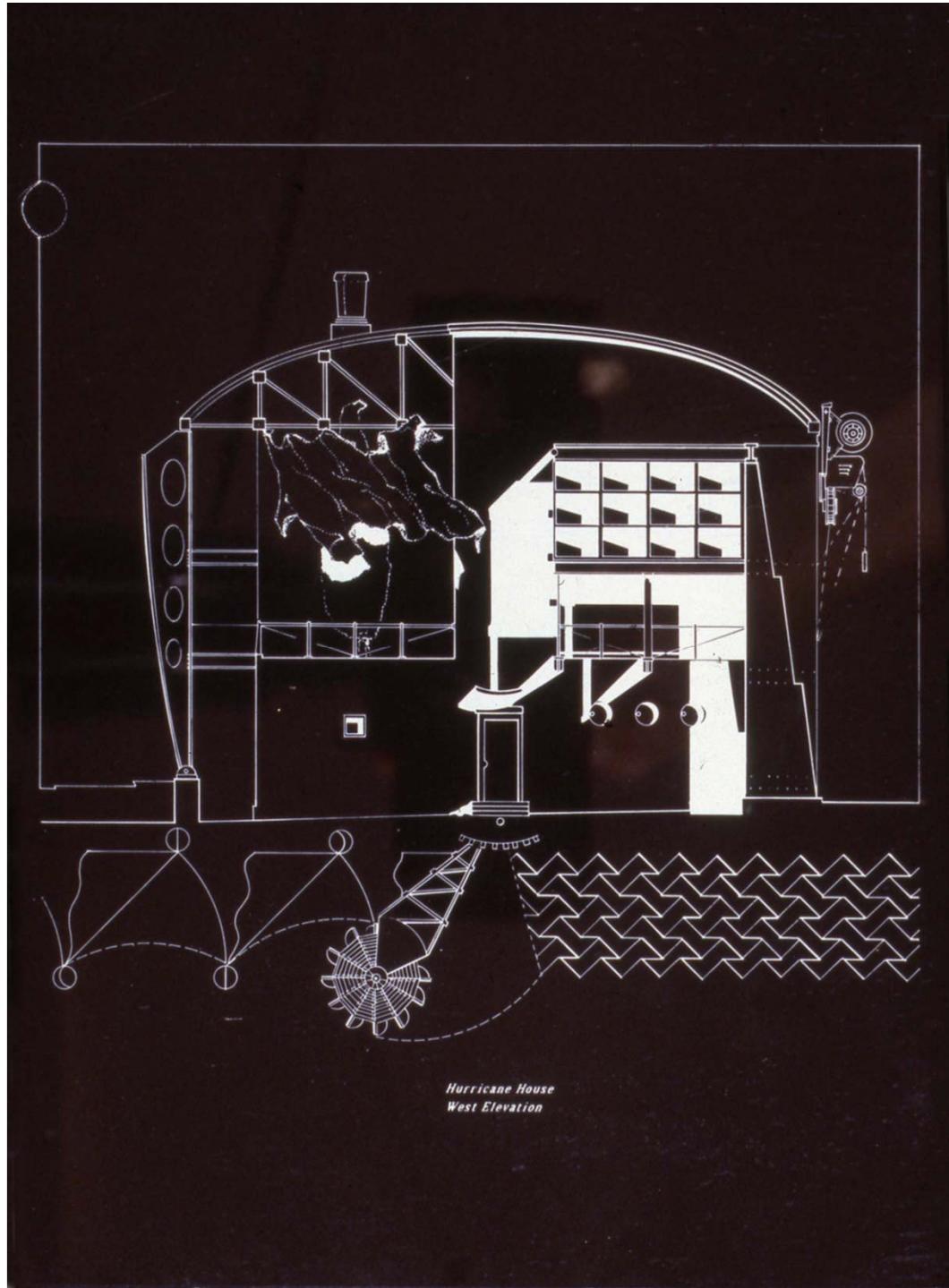
*Hurricane House
North Elevation*



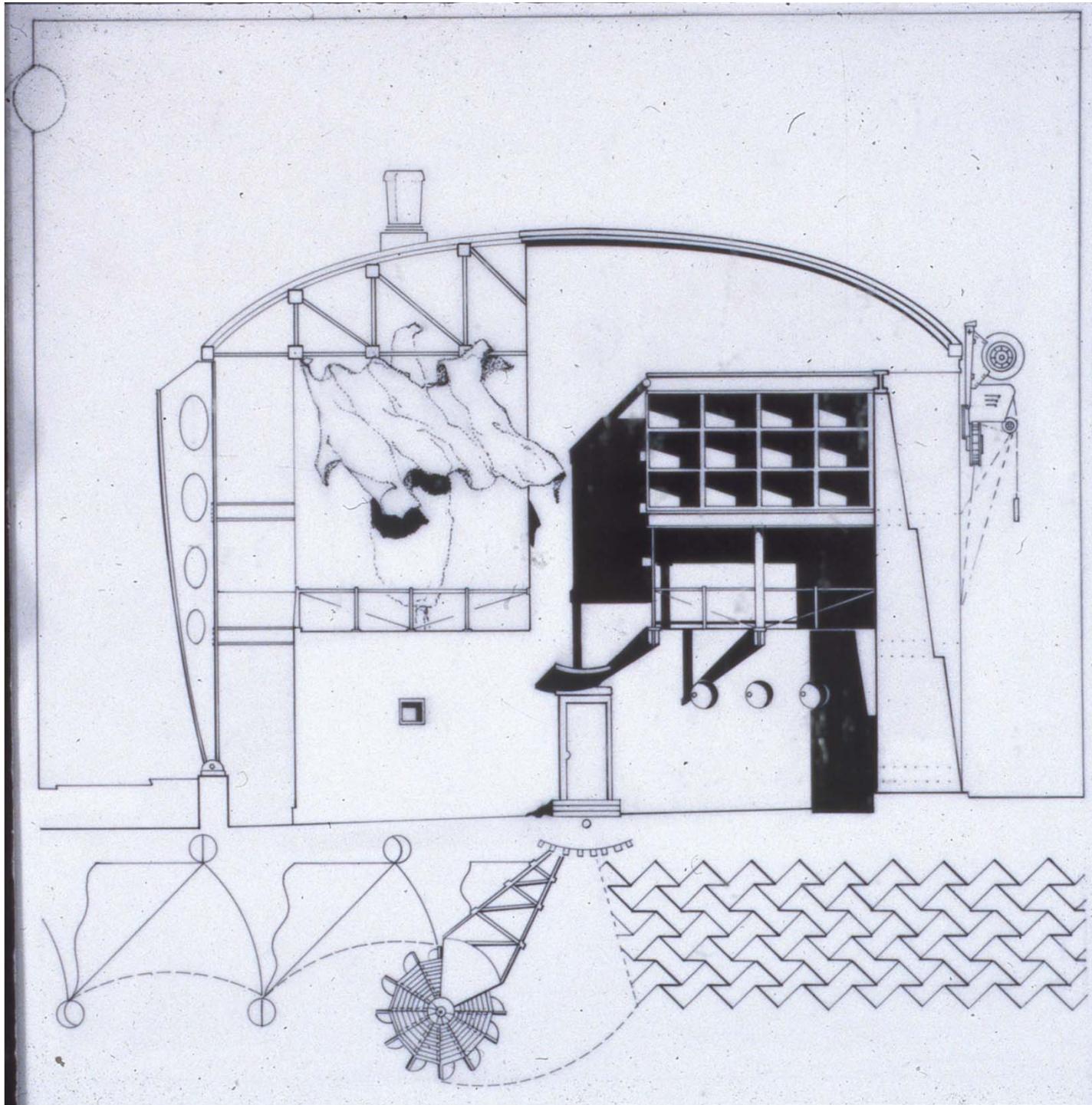


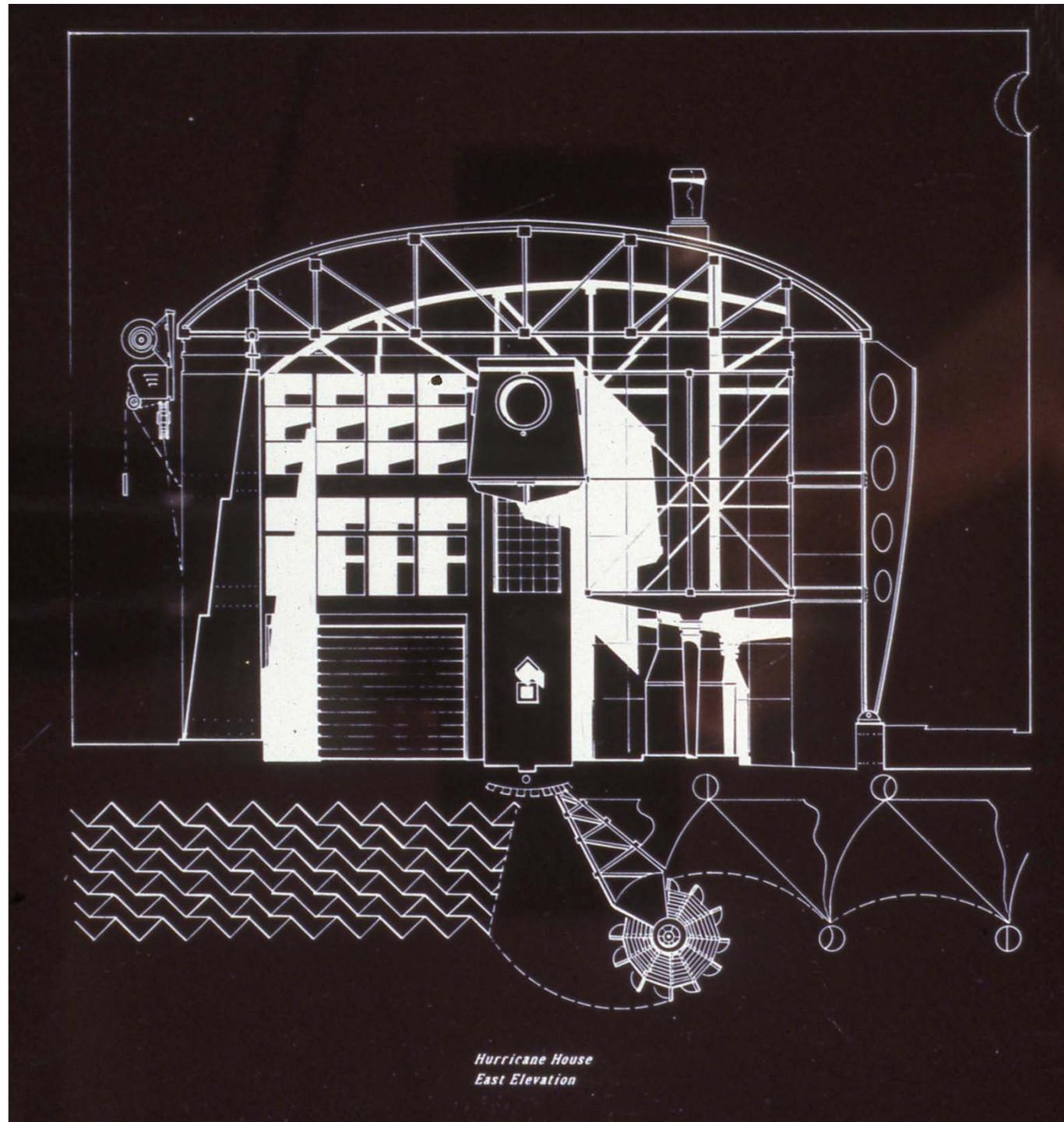
*Hurricane House
South Elevation*

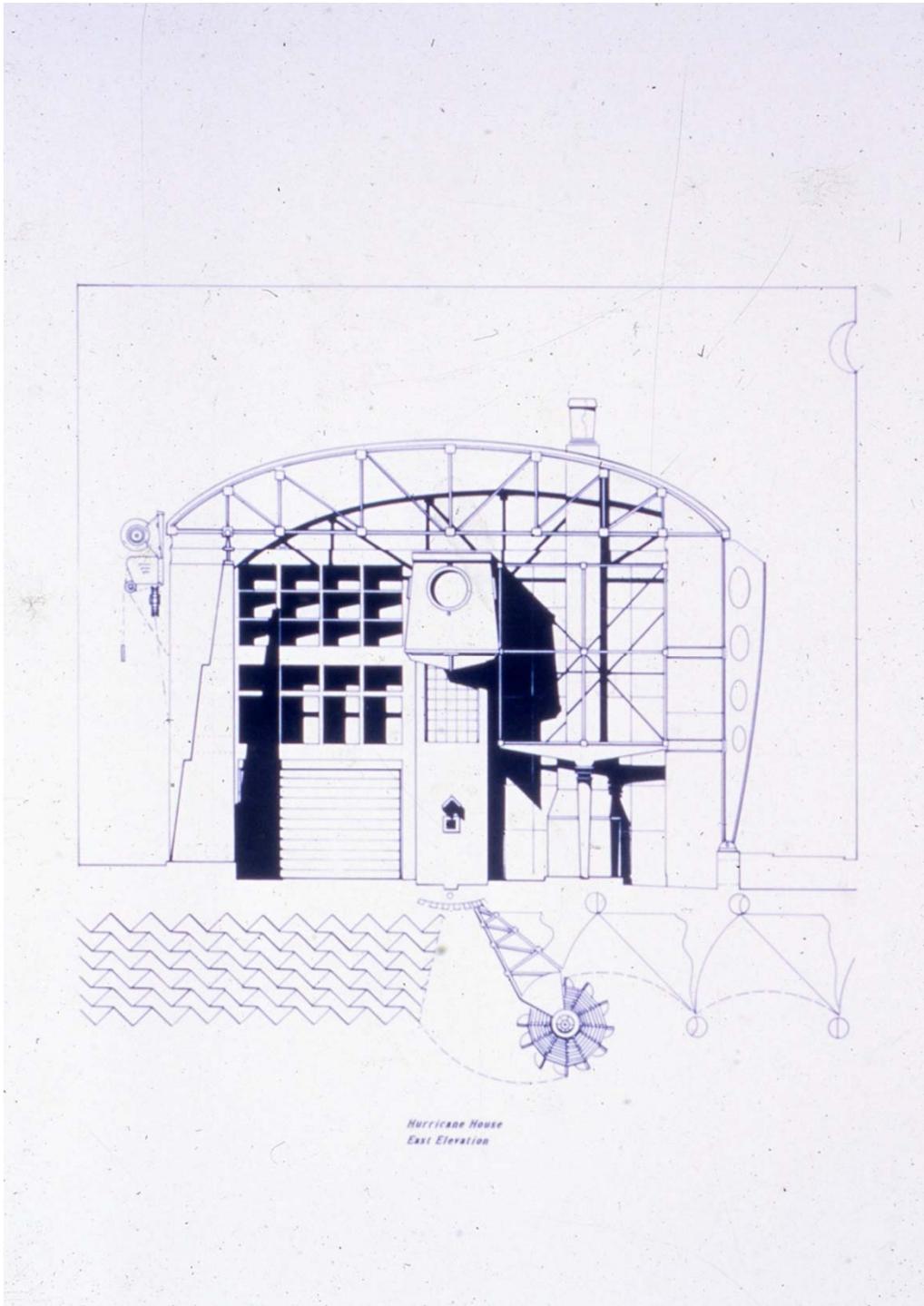


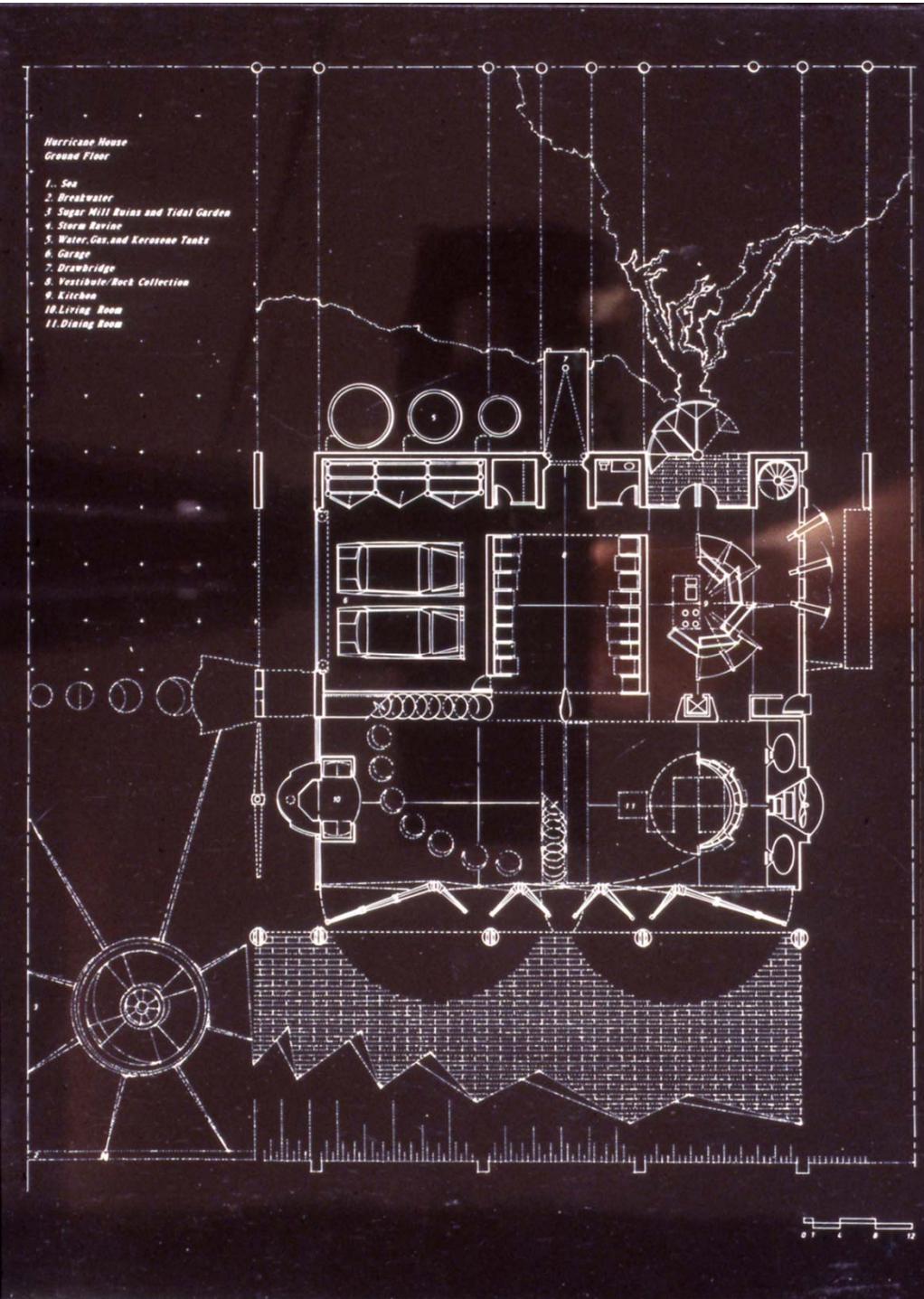


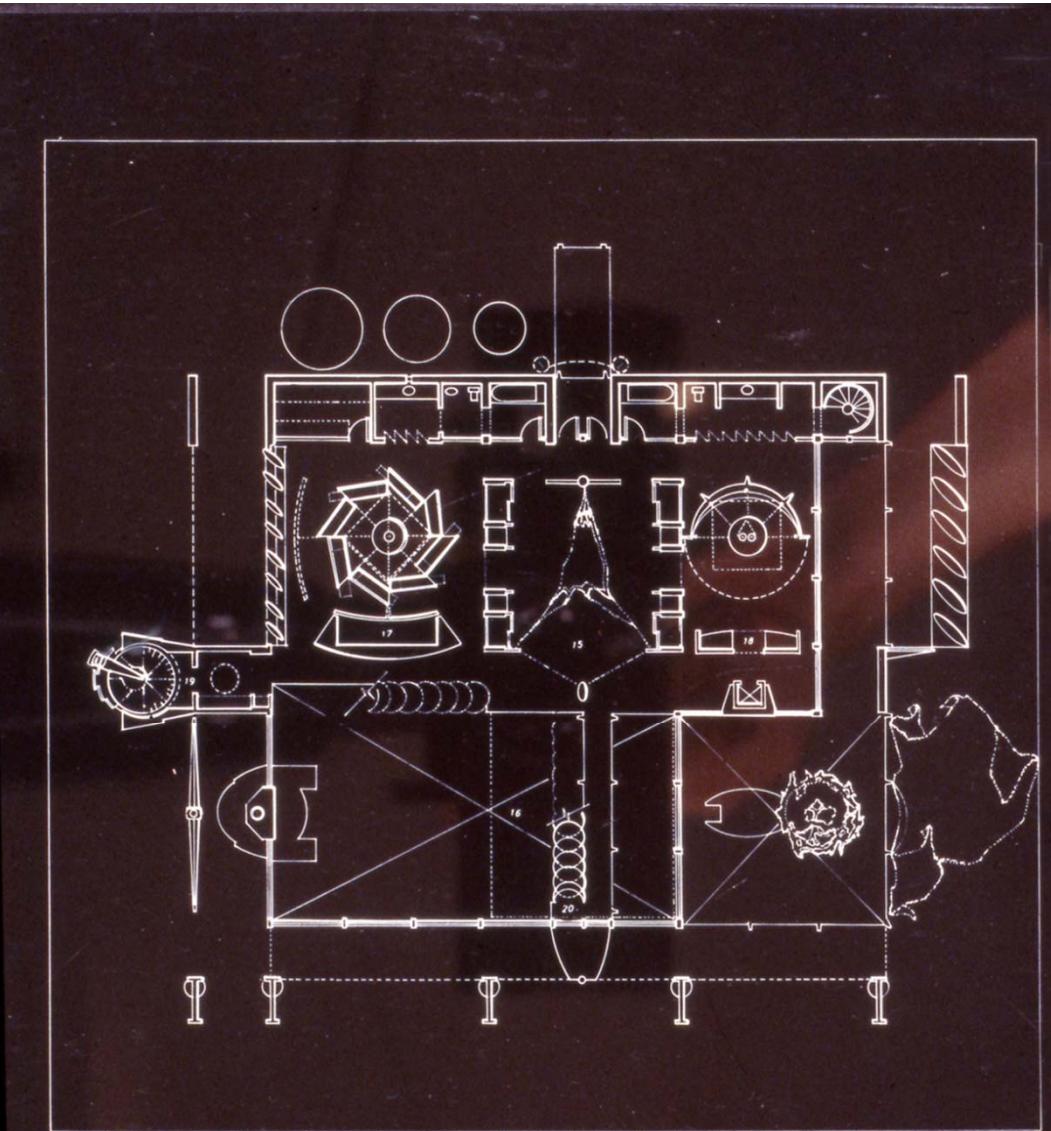
Hurricane House
West Elevation





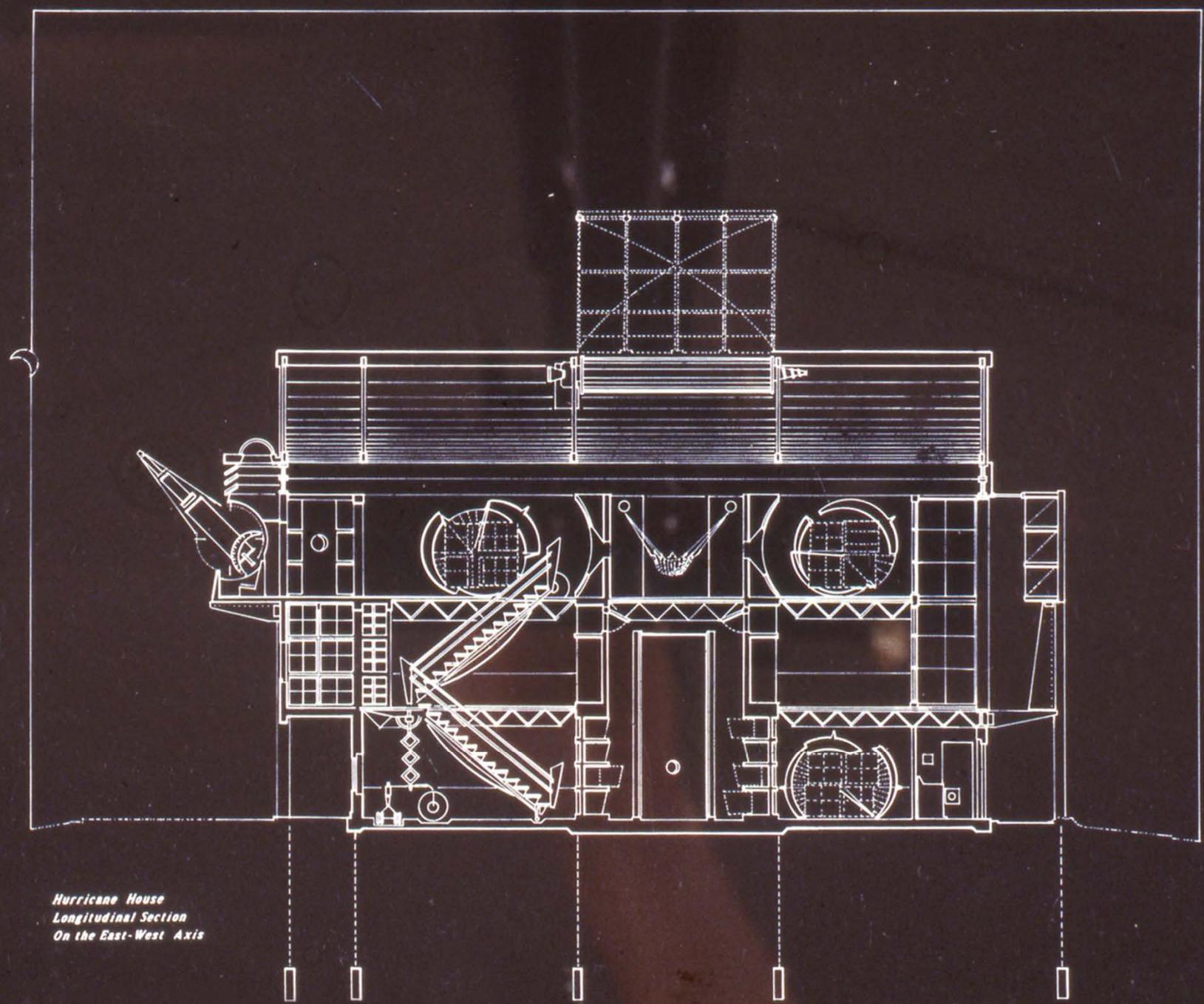


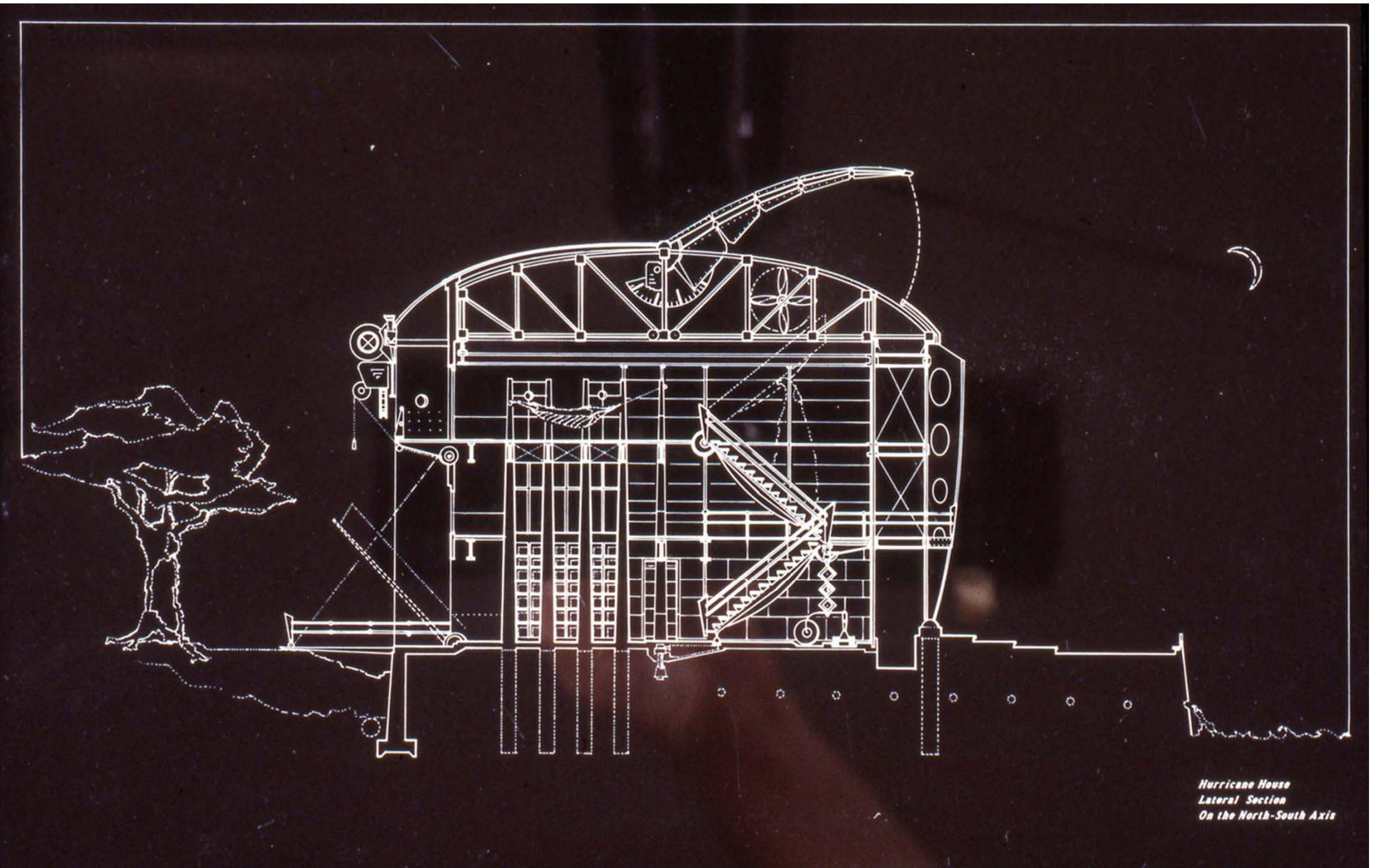




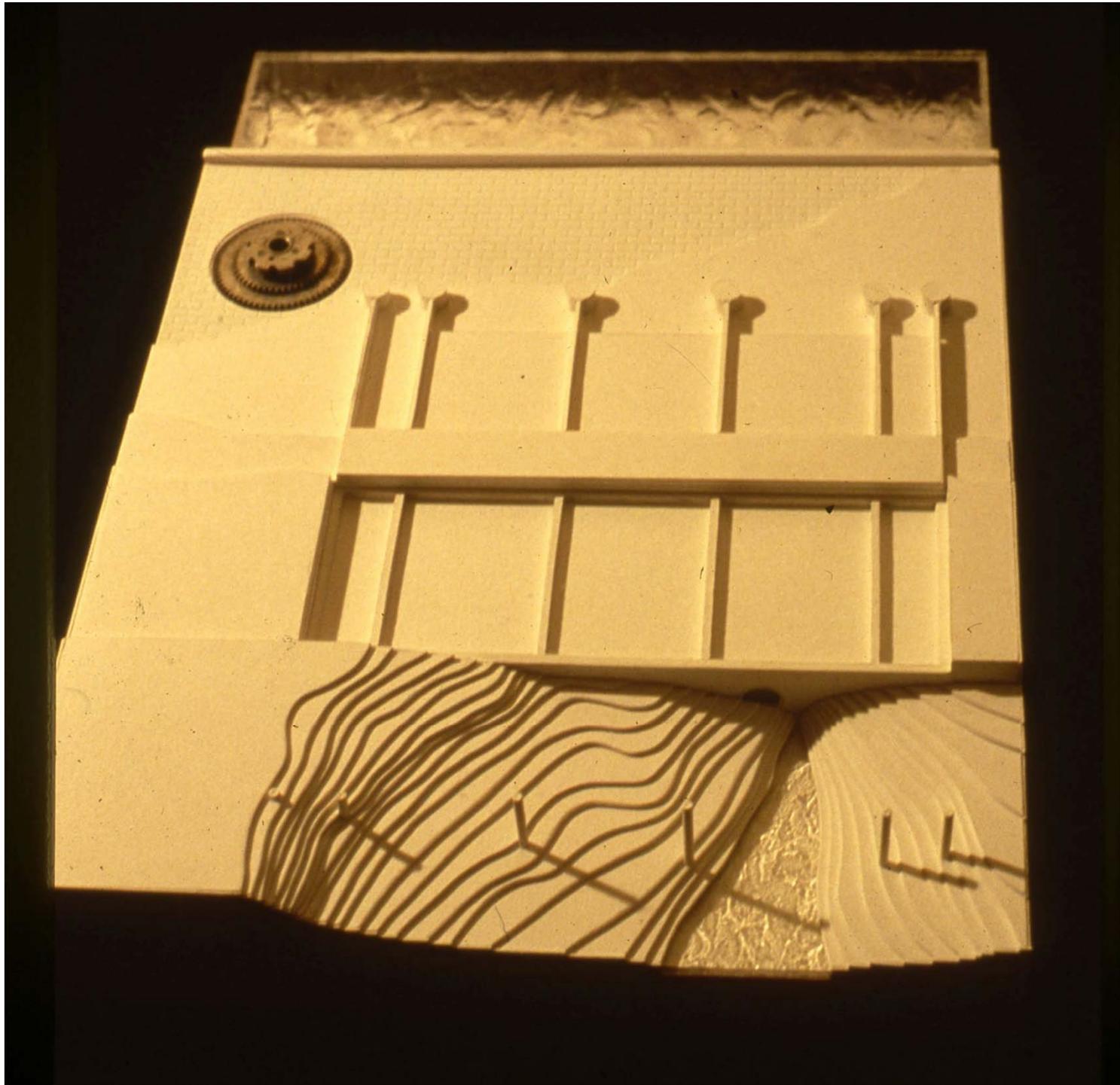
Hurricane House
Sky Level

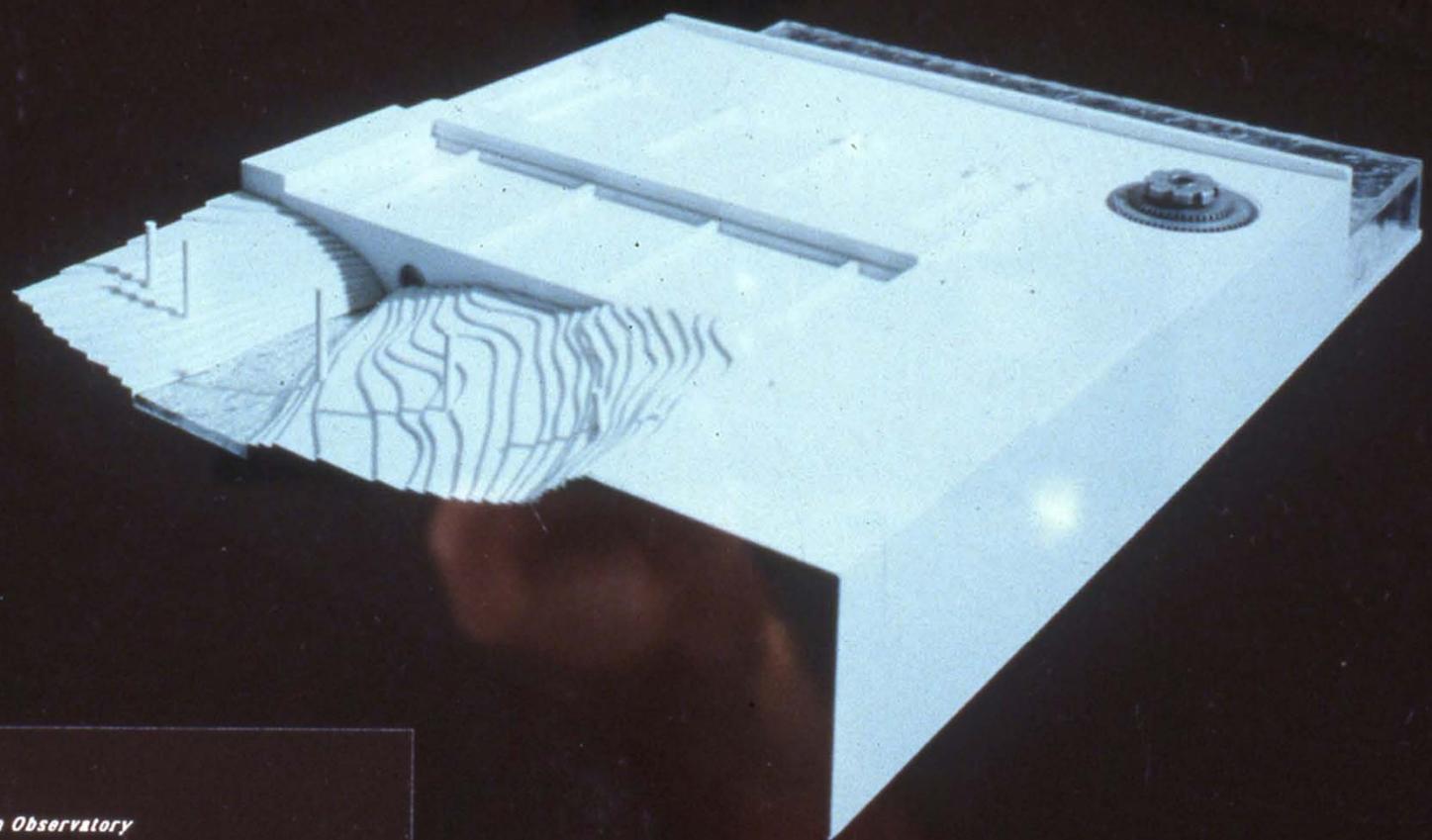
- 15. Master Bedroom/Hammock Loft
- 16. Open to Below
- 17. Bride's Dressing Room
- 18. Geologist's Dressing Room
- 19. Study for Telescopes & Microscopes
- 20. Stair to Roof-Top Observatory



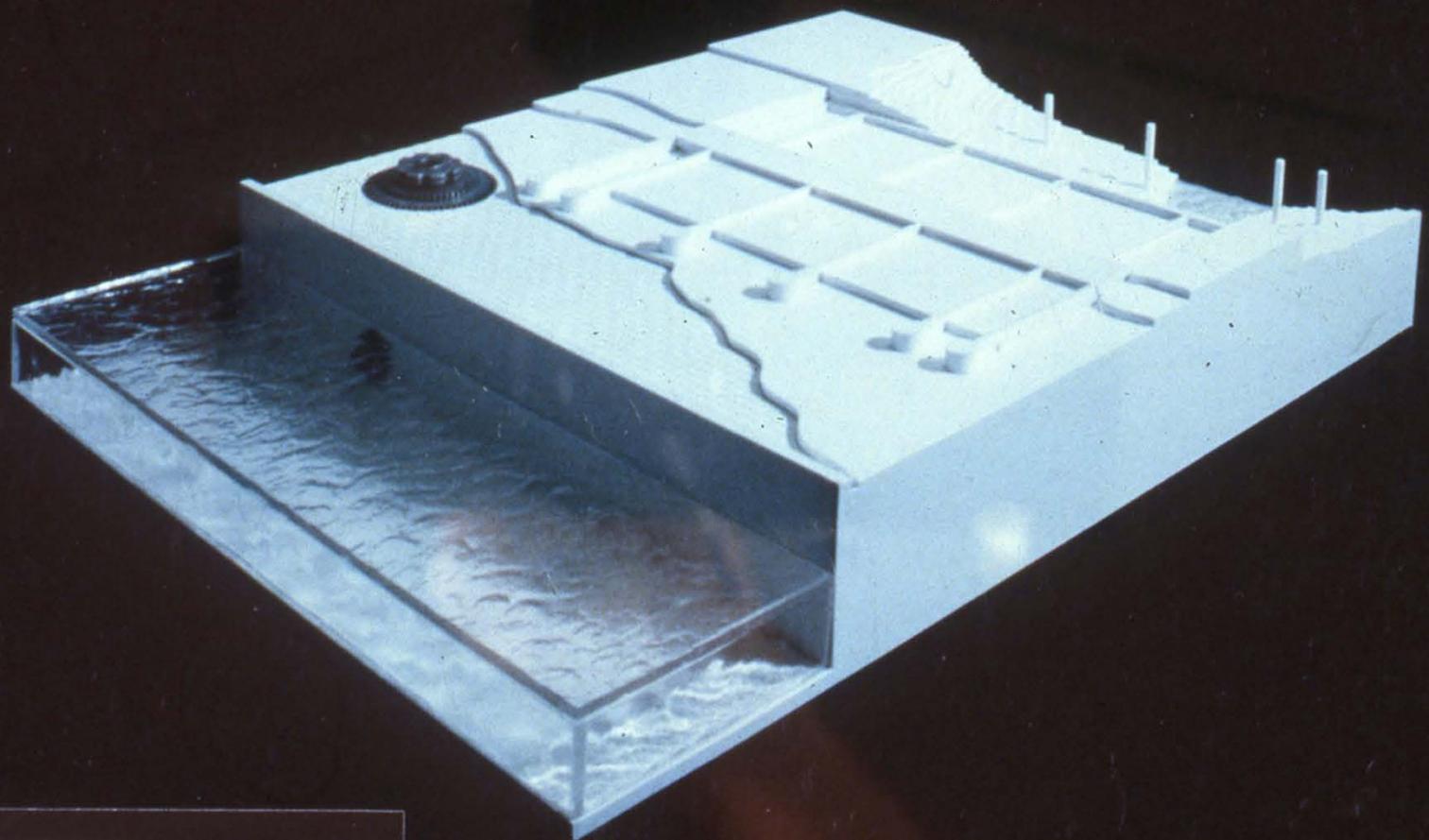


*Hurricane House
Lateral Section
On the North-South Axis*

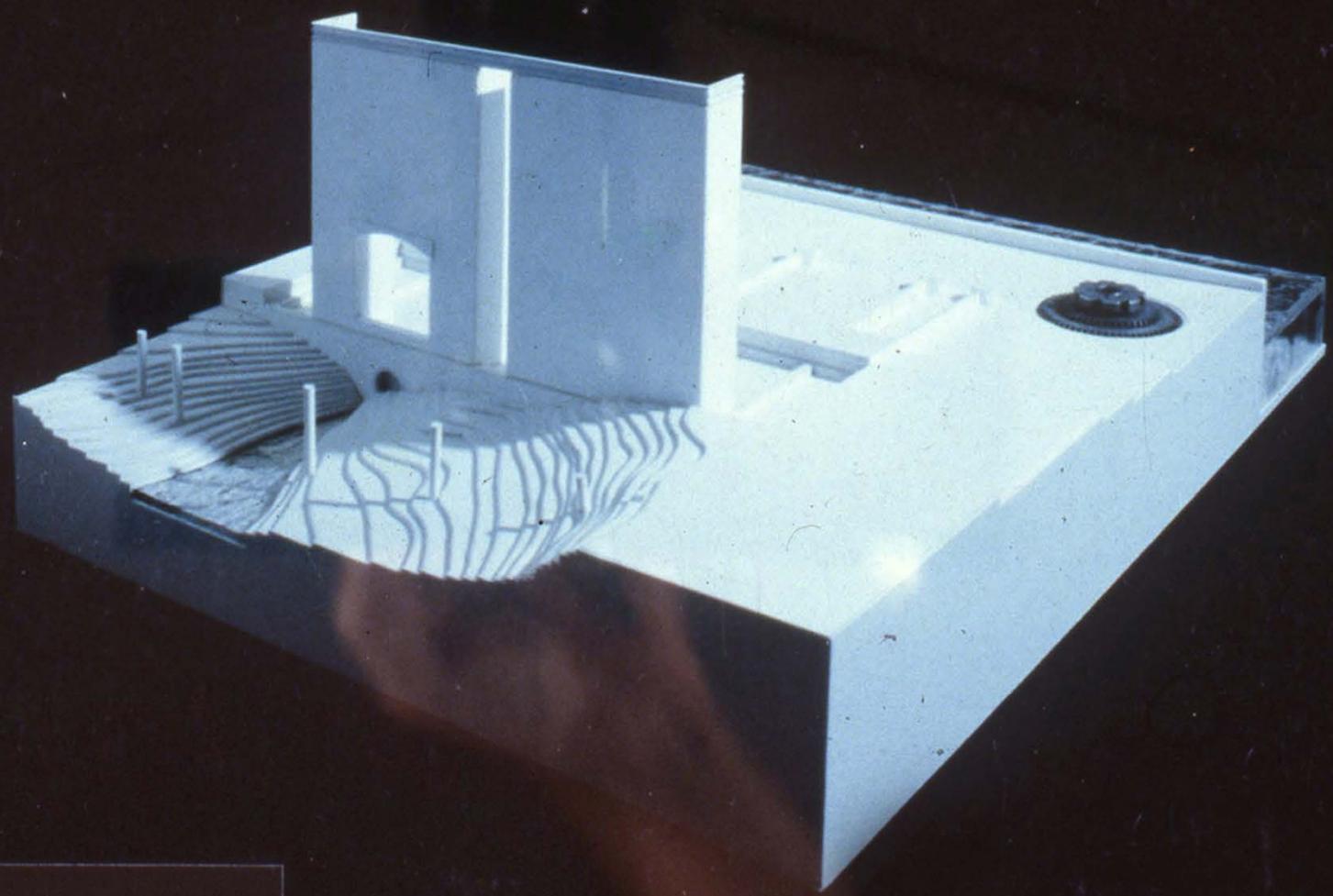




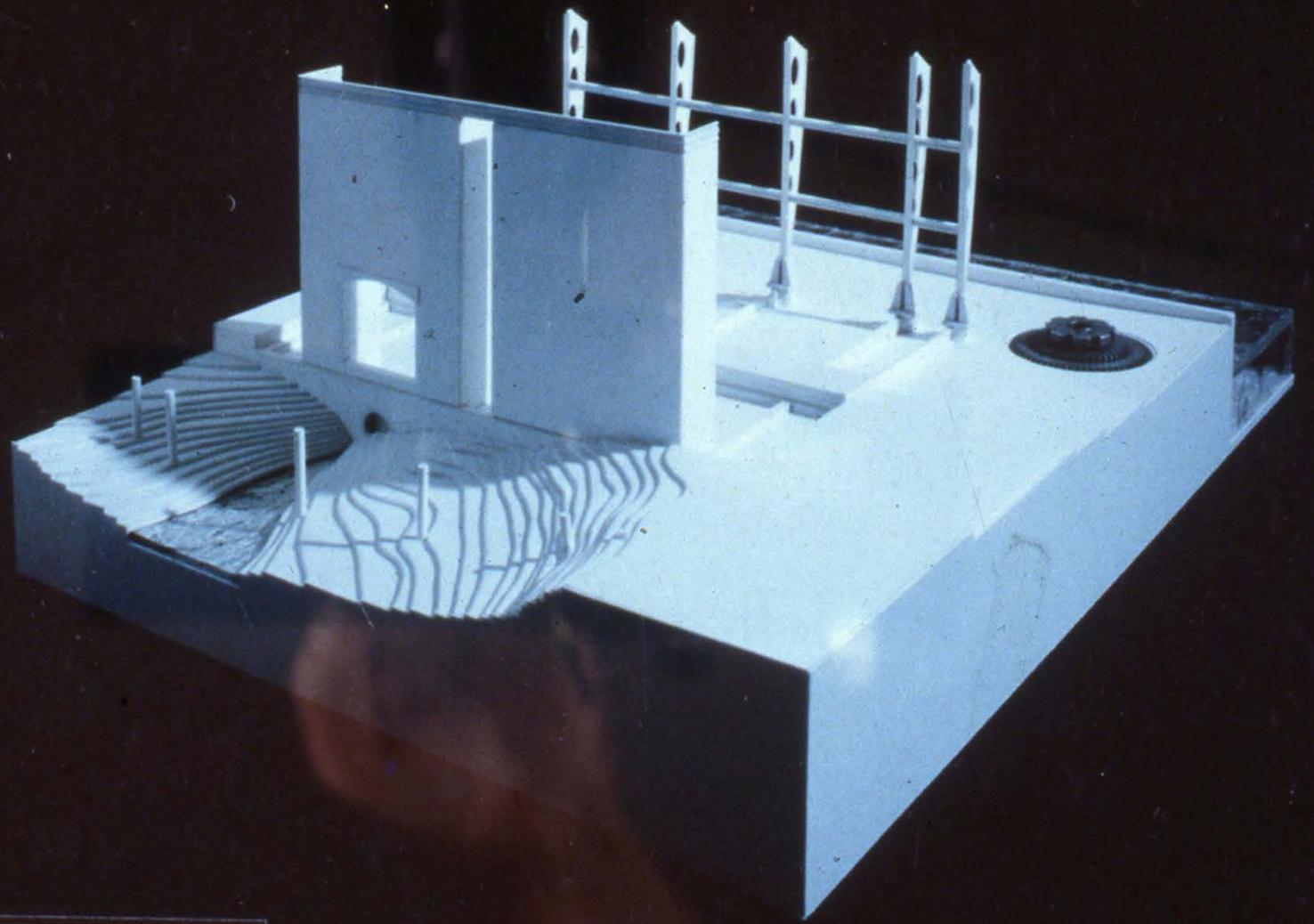
*Hurricane House
The Construction of An Observatory
Site Preparation
Channel the Storm Ravine;
Upon the Plantation Ruins Raise
An Observation Deck Above the Tides*



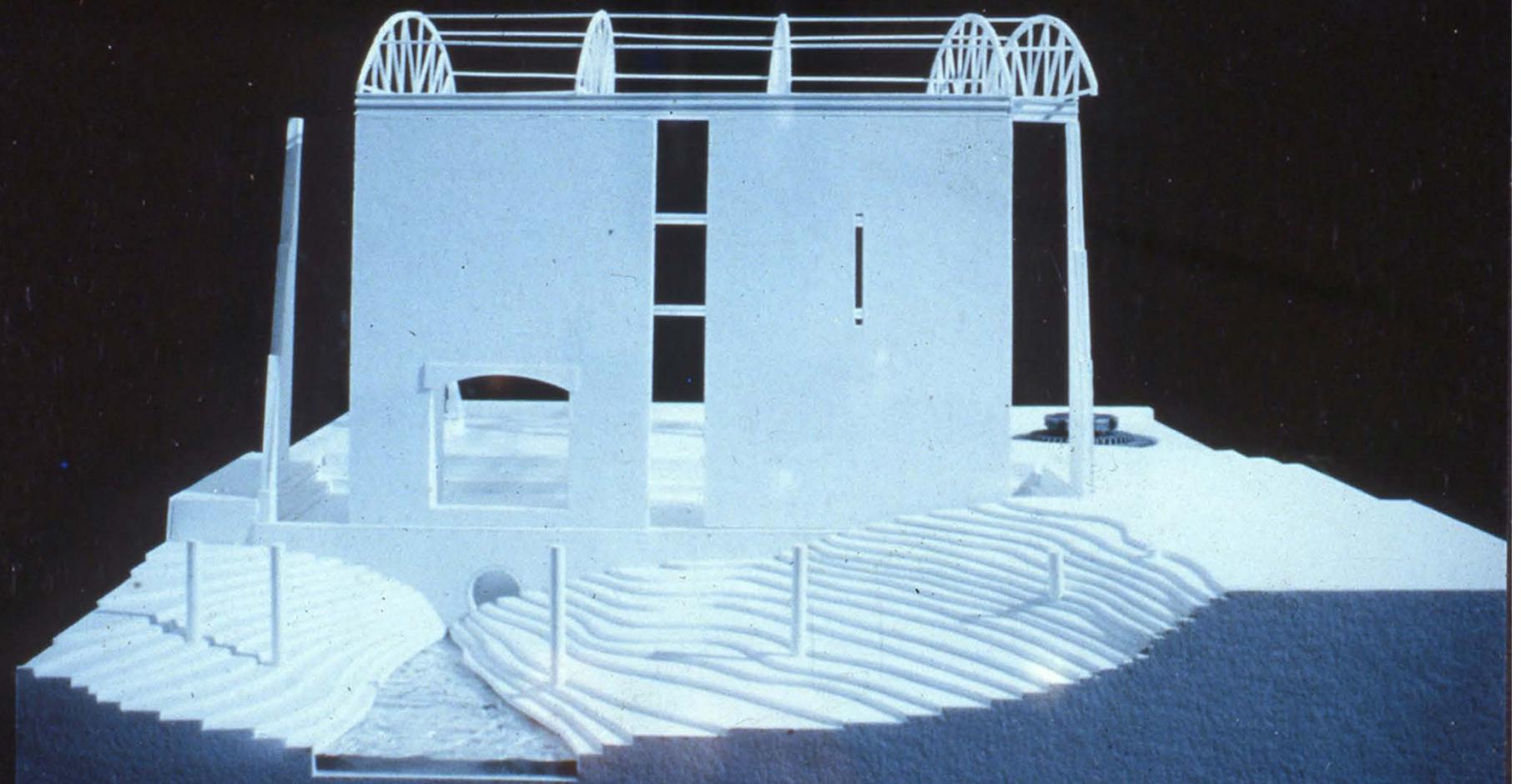
Hurricane House
The Construction of An Observatory
Site Preparation
First Build a Breakwater;
Then Stake-Out the Site



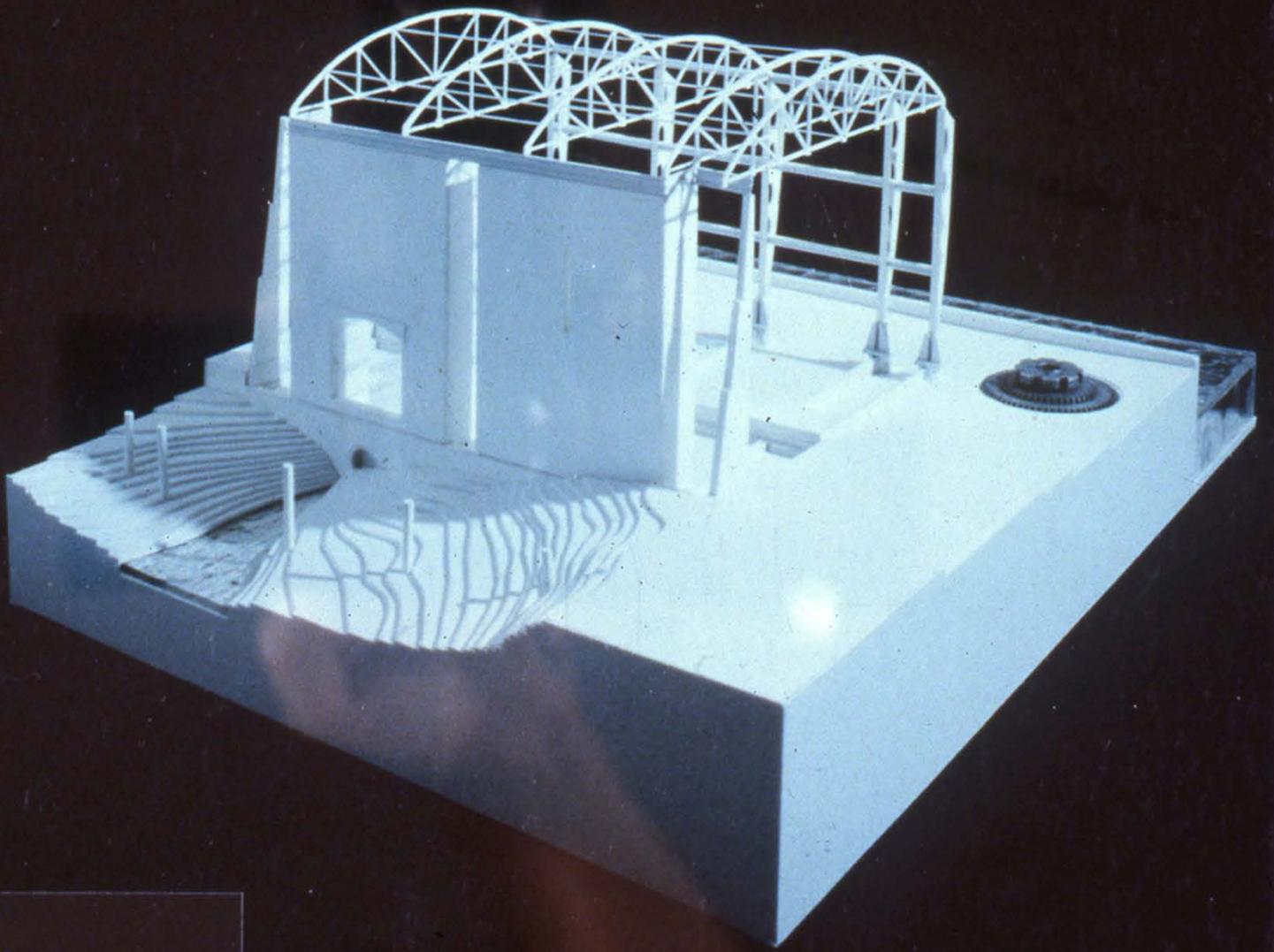
Hurricane House
The Construction of An Observatory
Site Preparation
Raise a Garden Wall to Shade the Site



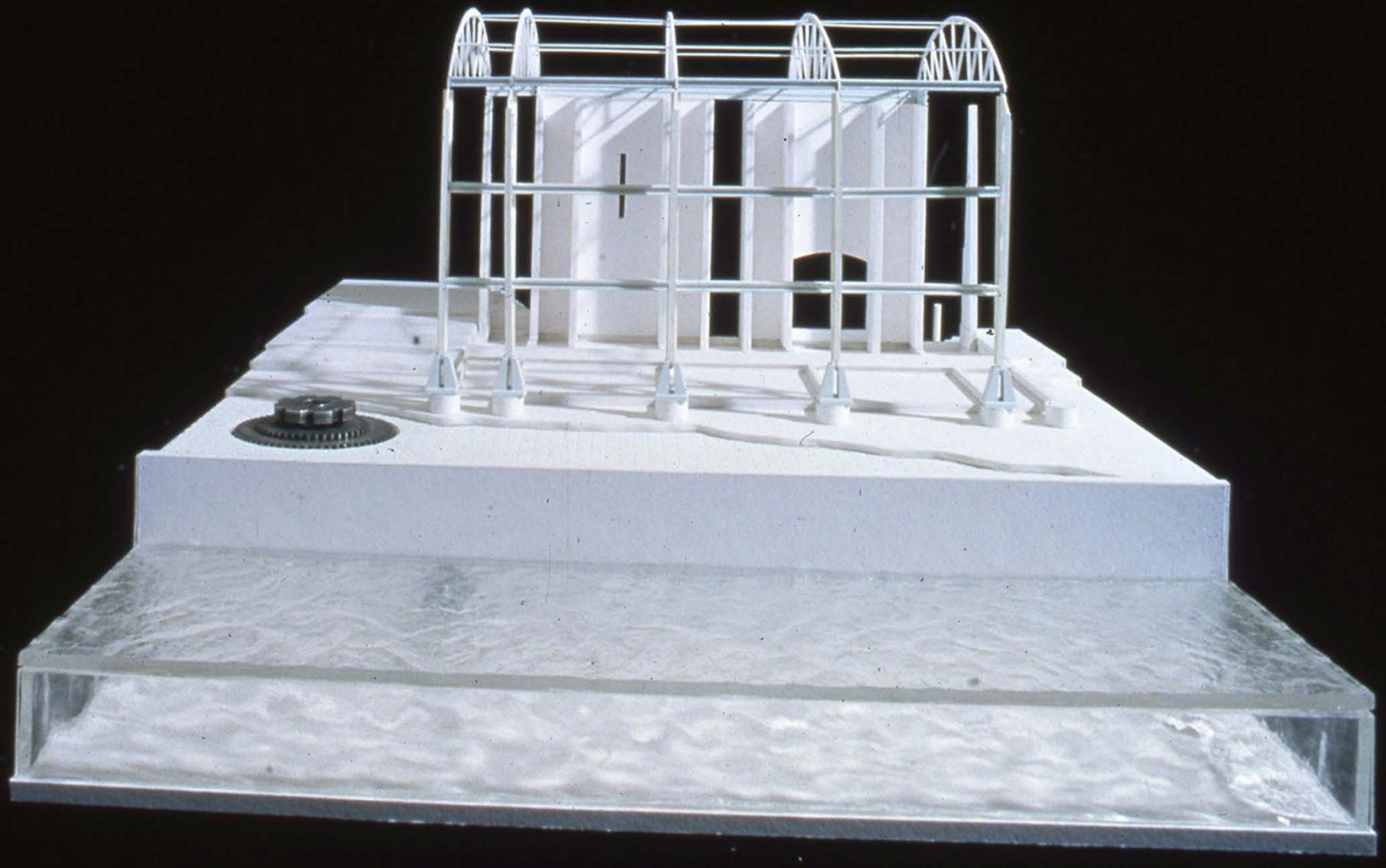
Hurricane House
The Construction of An Observatory
Site Preparation
Steel Pylons rise to measure the Horizon

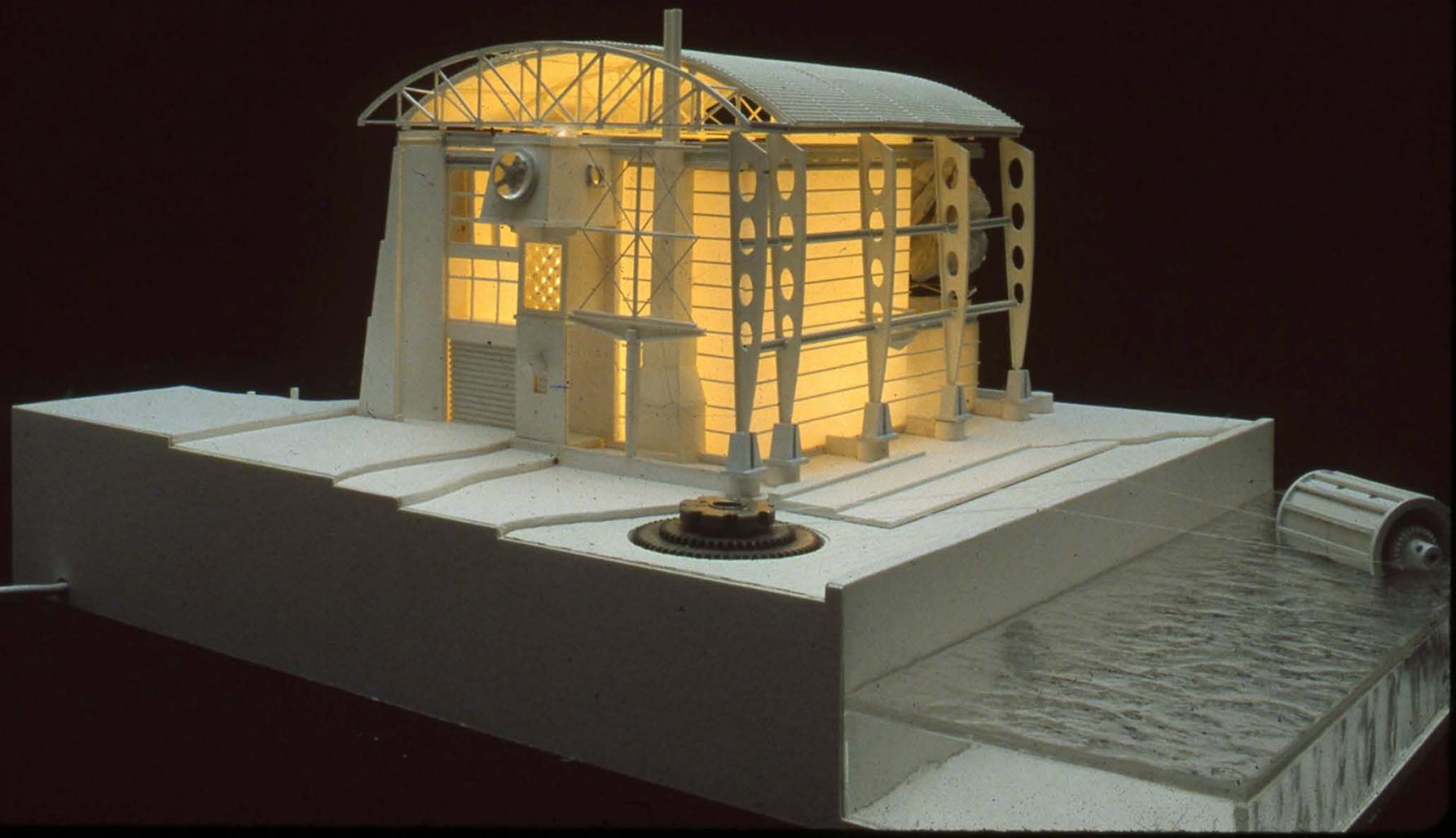


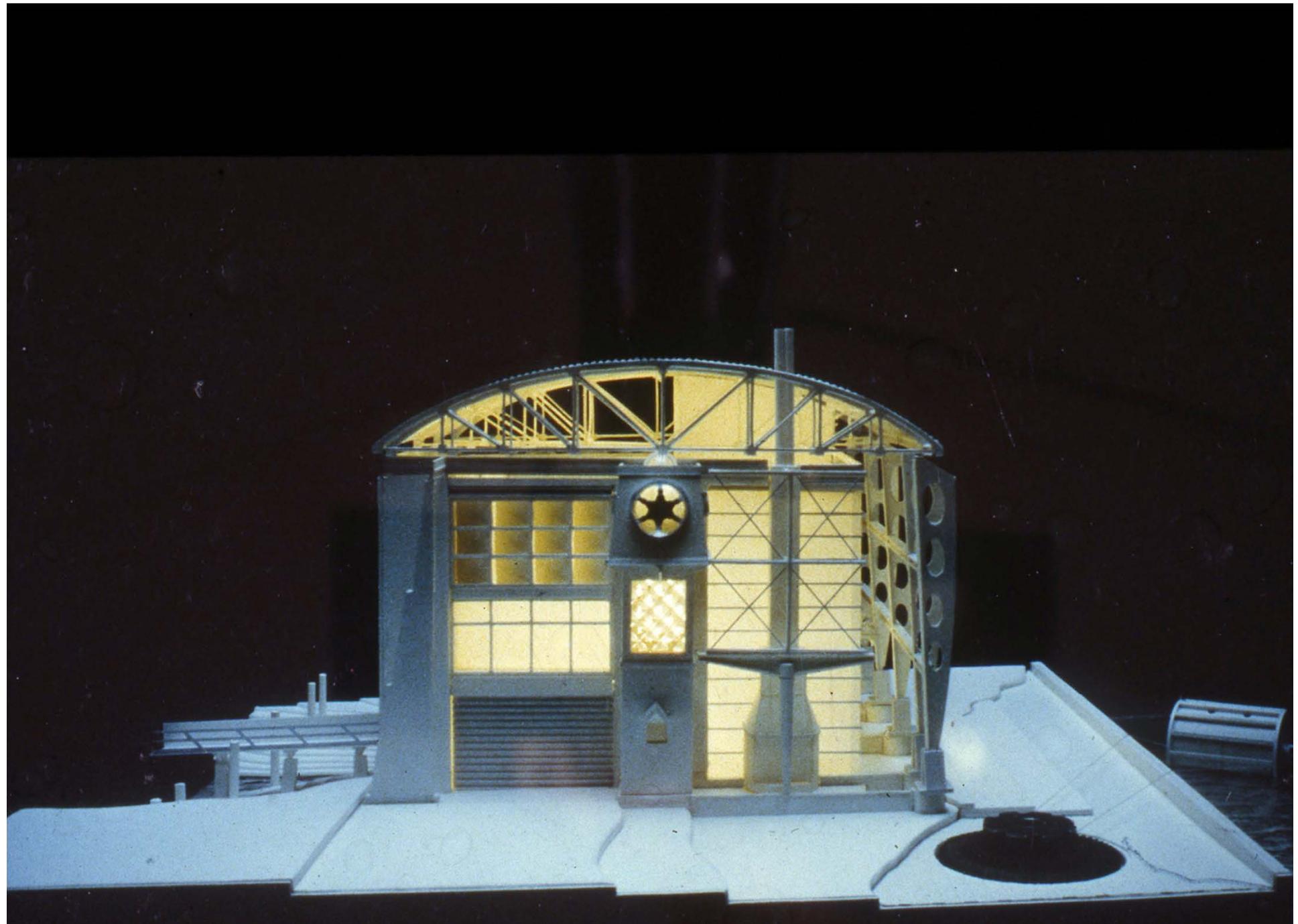
Hurricane House
The Observatory from the Land

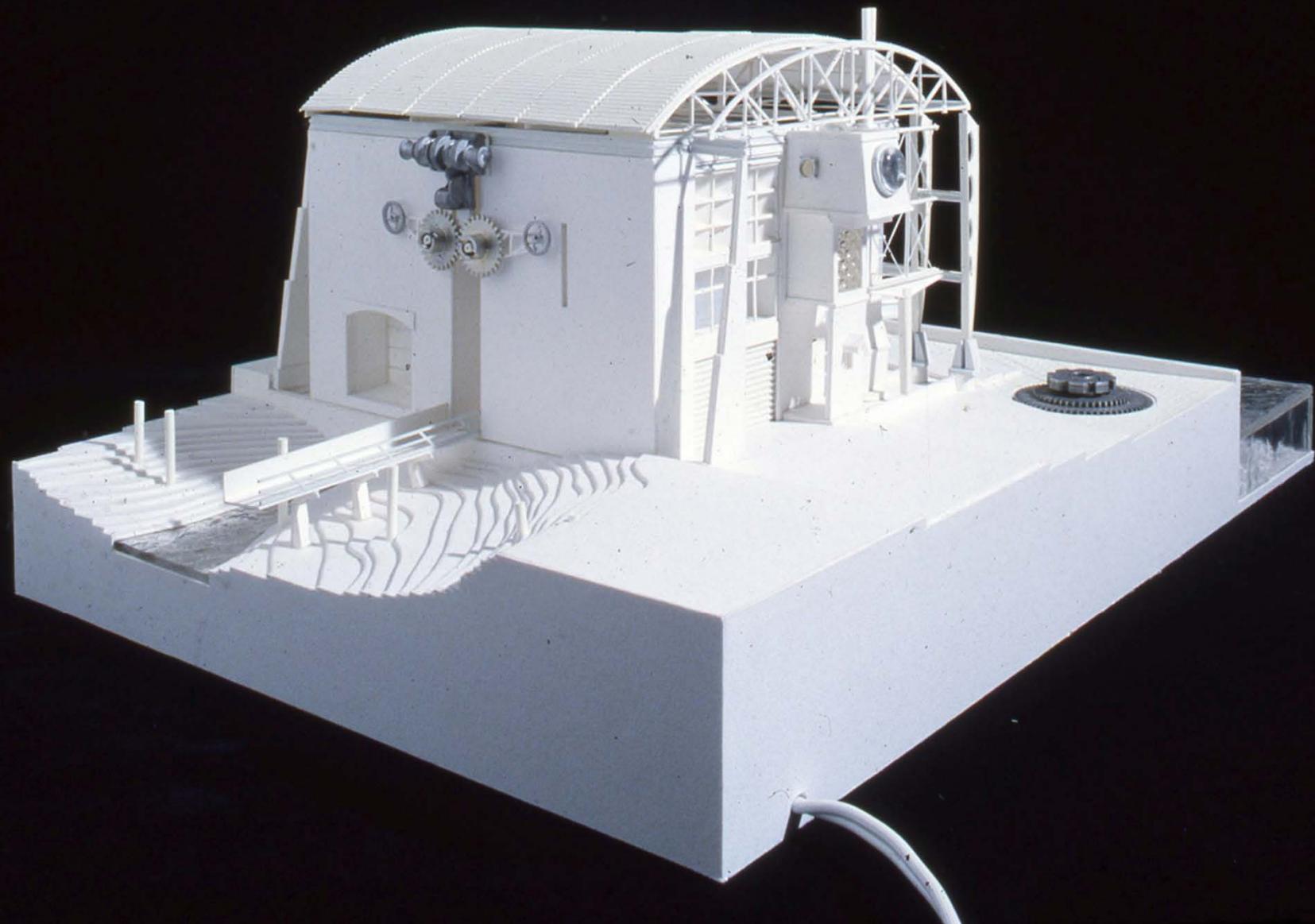


Hurricane House
The Construction of An Observatory.
Site Preparation
Bowstring Trusses Give Coordinates
For Mapping the Skies

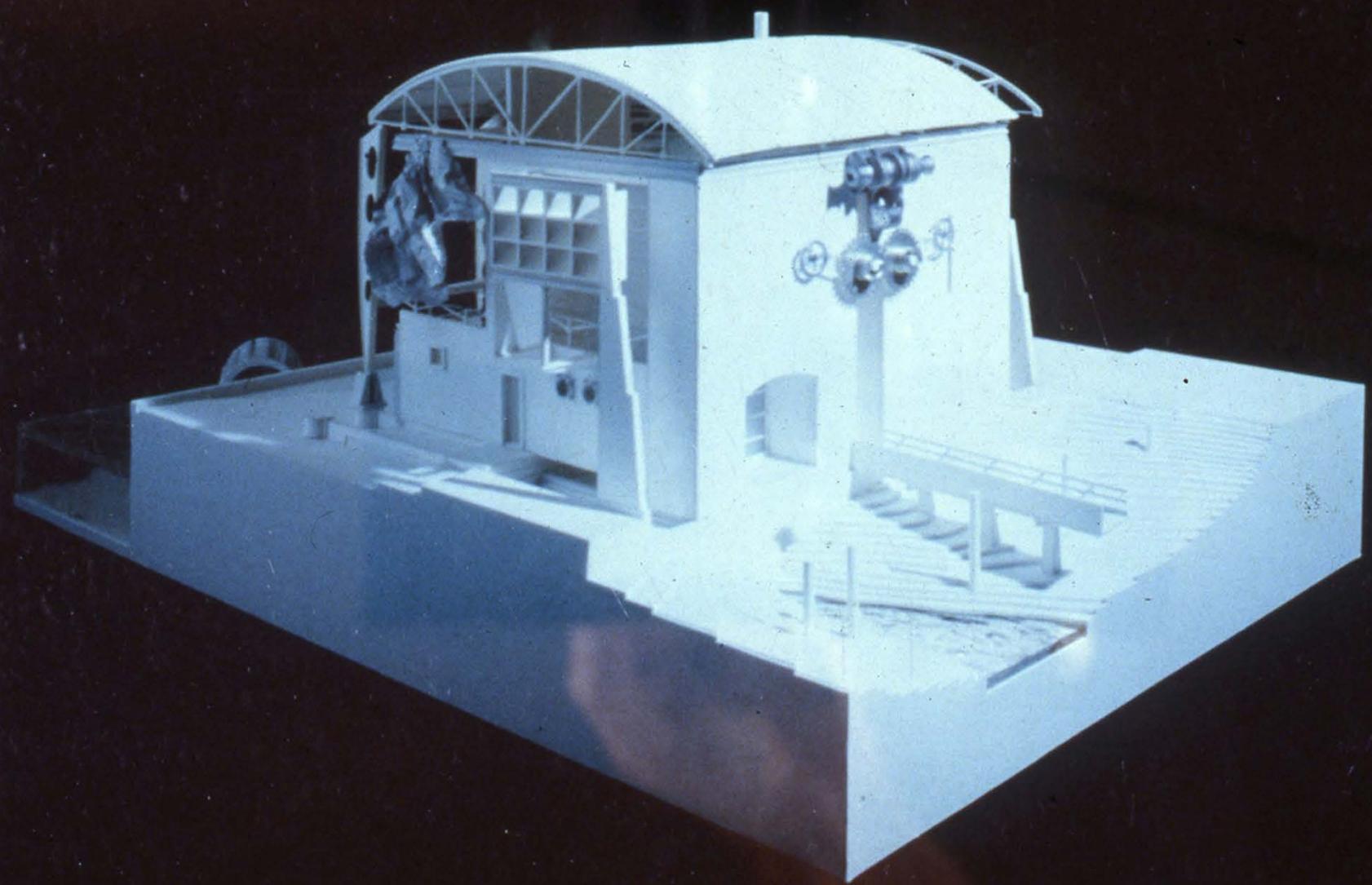






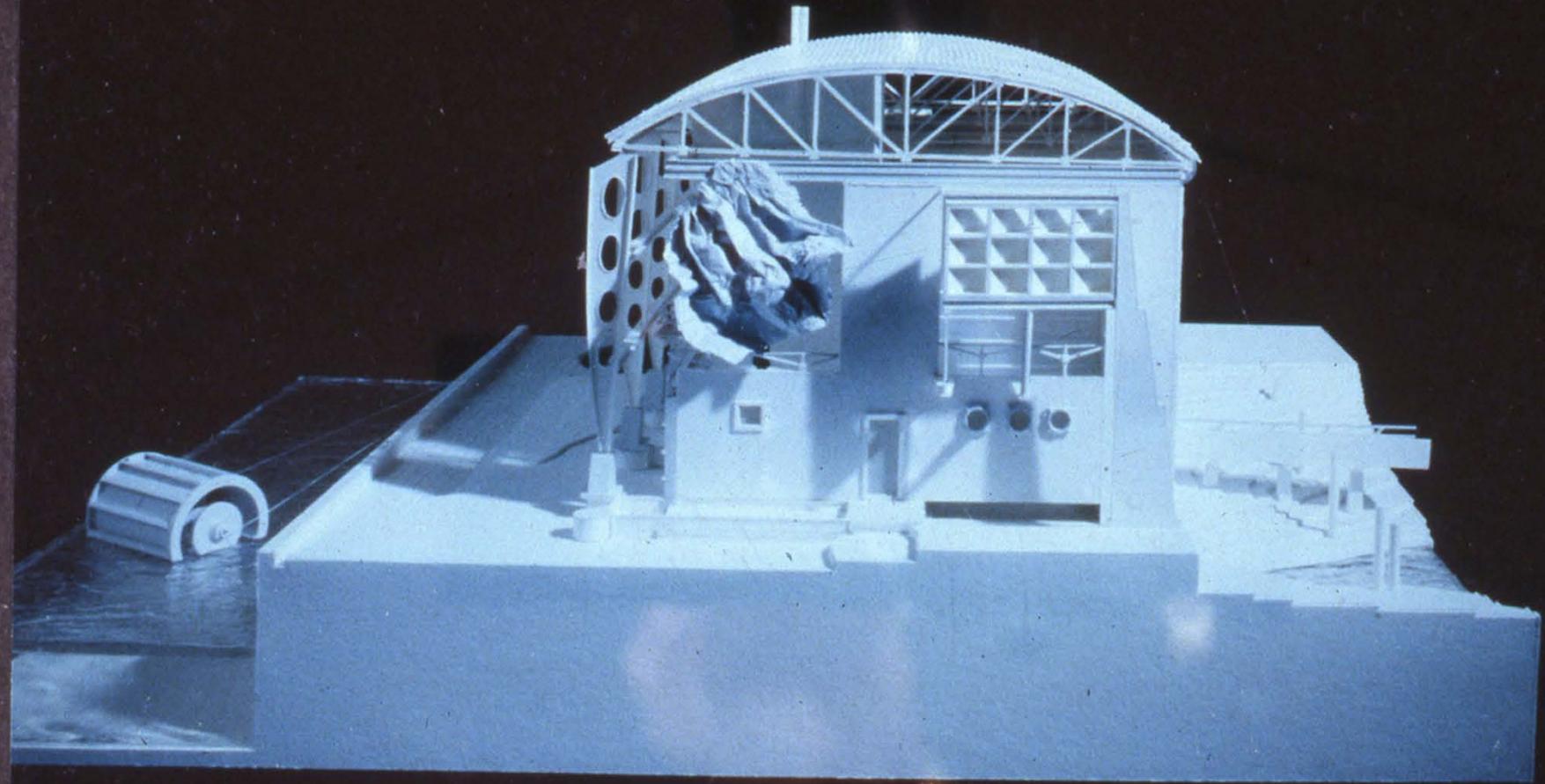




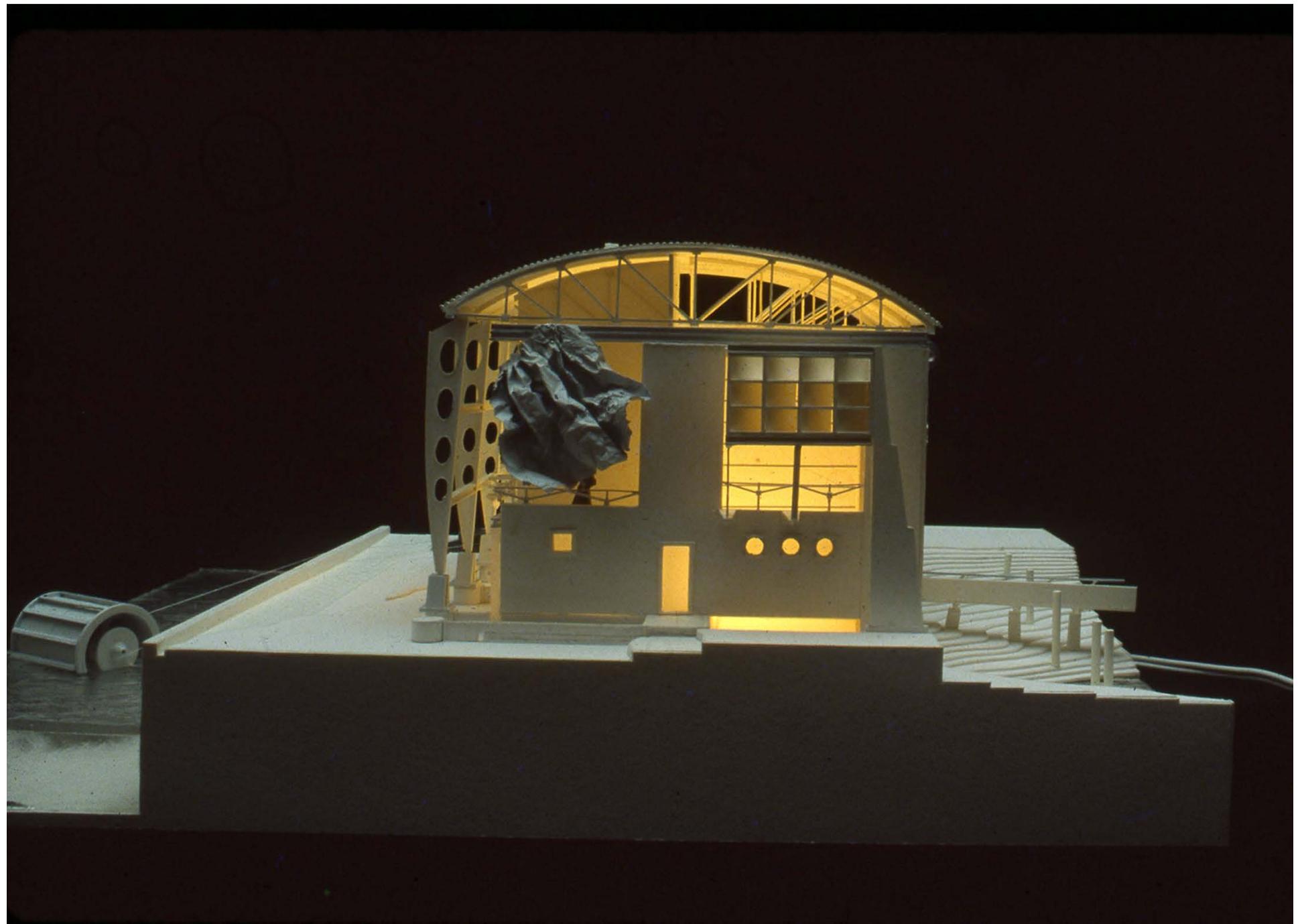


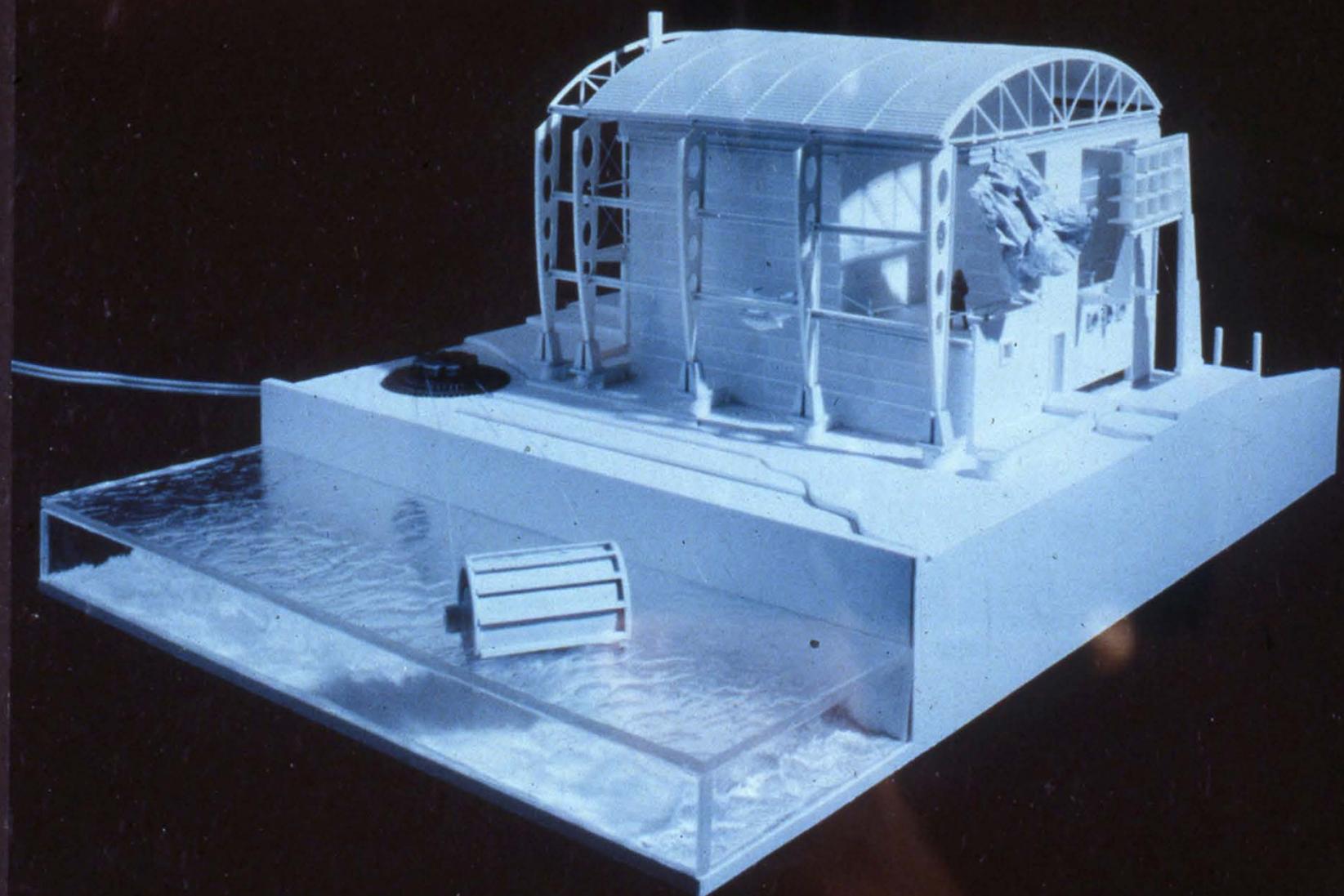
Hurricane House

The Construction of A Temporal Dwelling
Day View from the South West

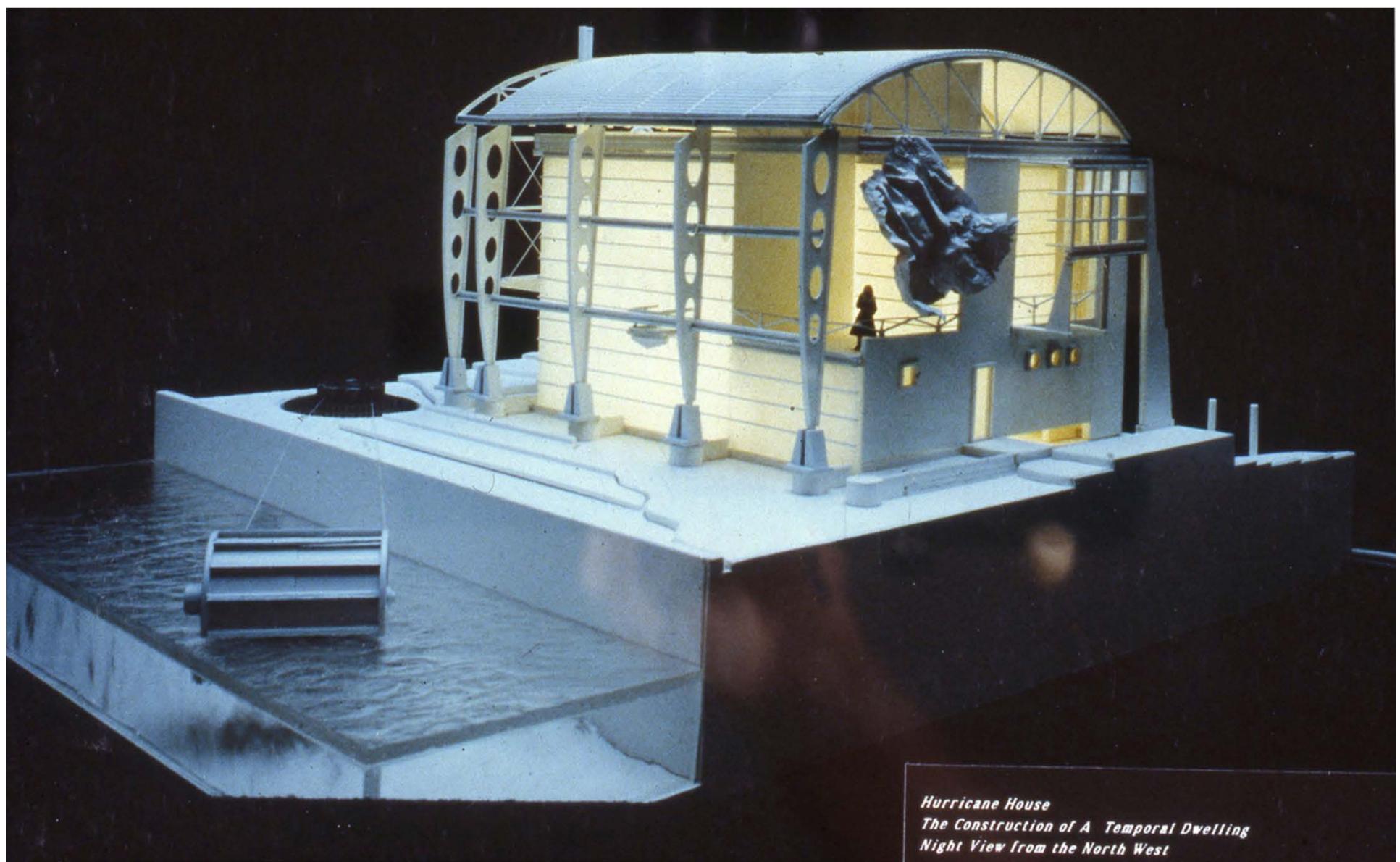


Hurricane House
The Construction of A Temporal Dwelling
Afternoon
West Elevation

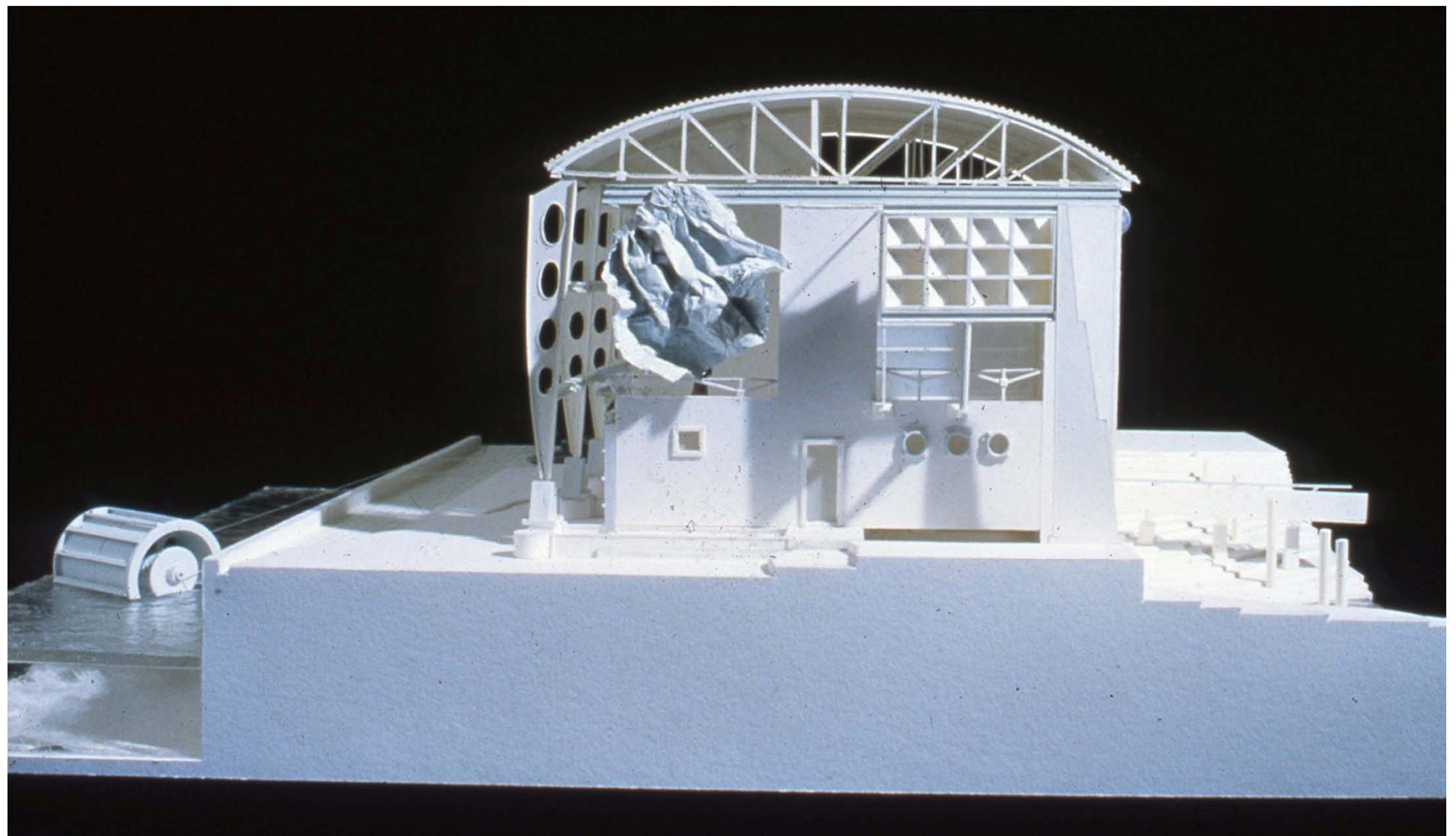


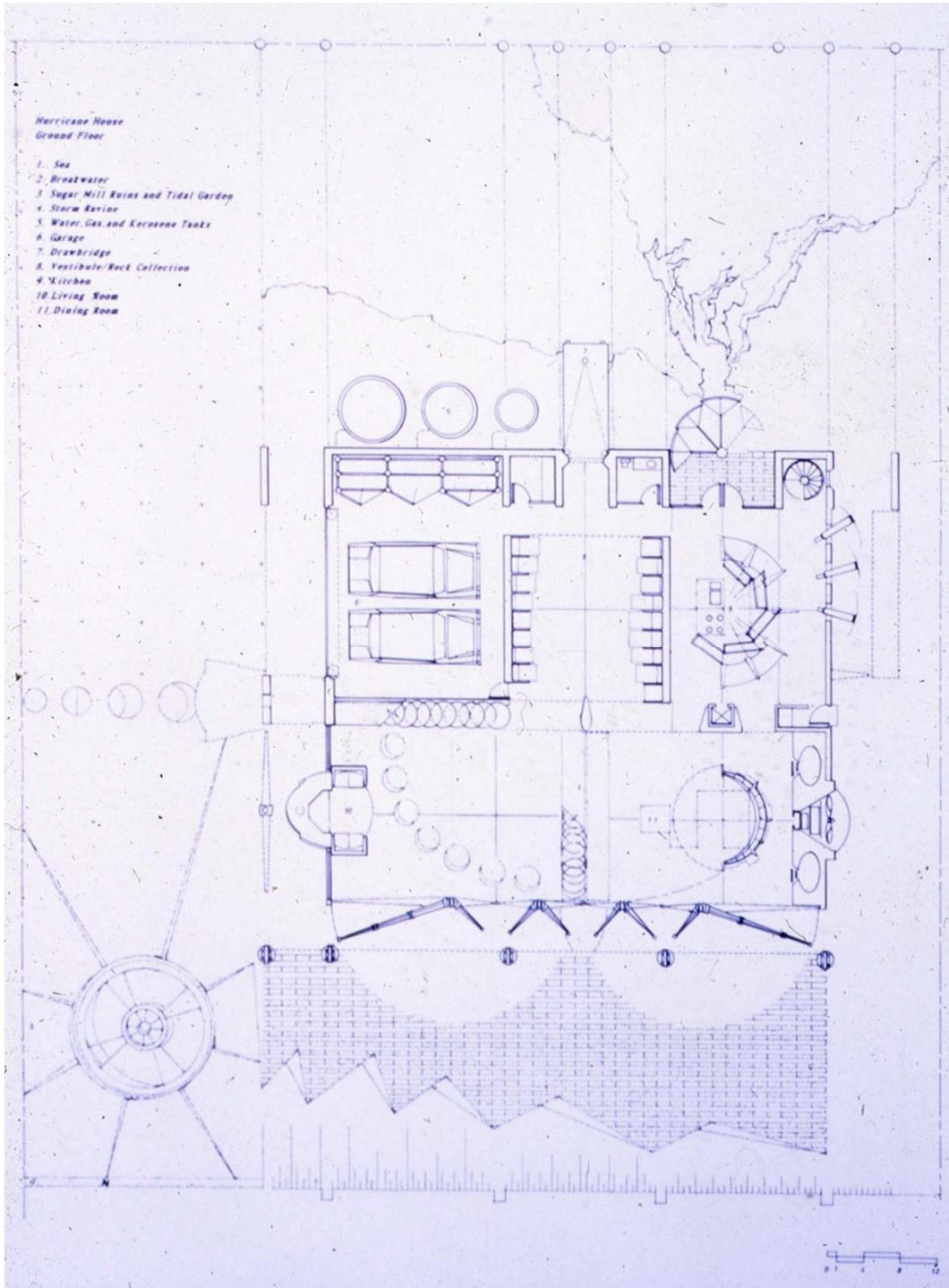


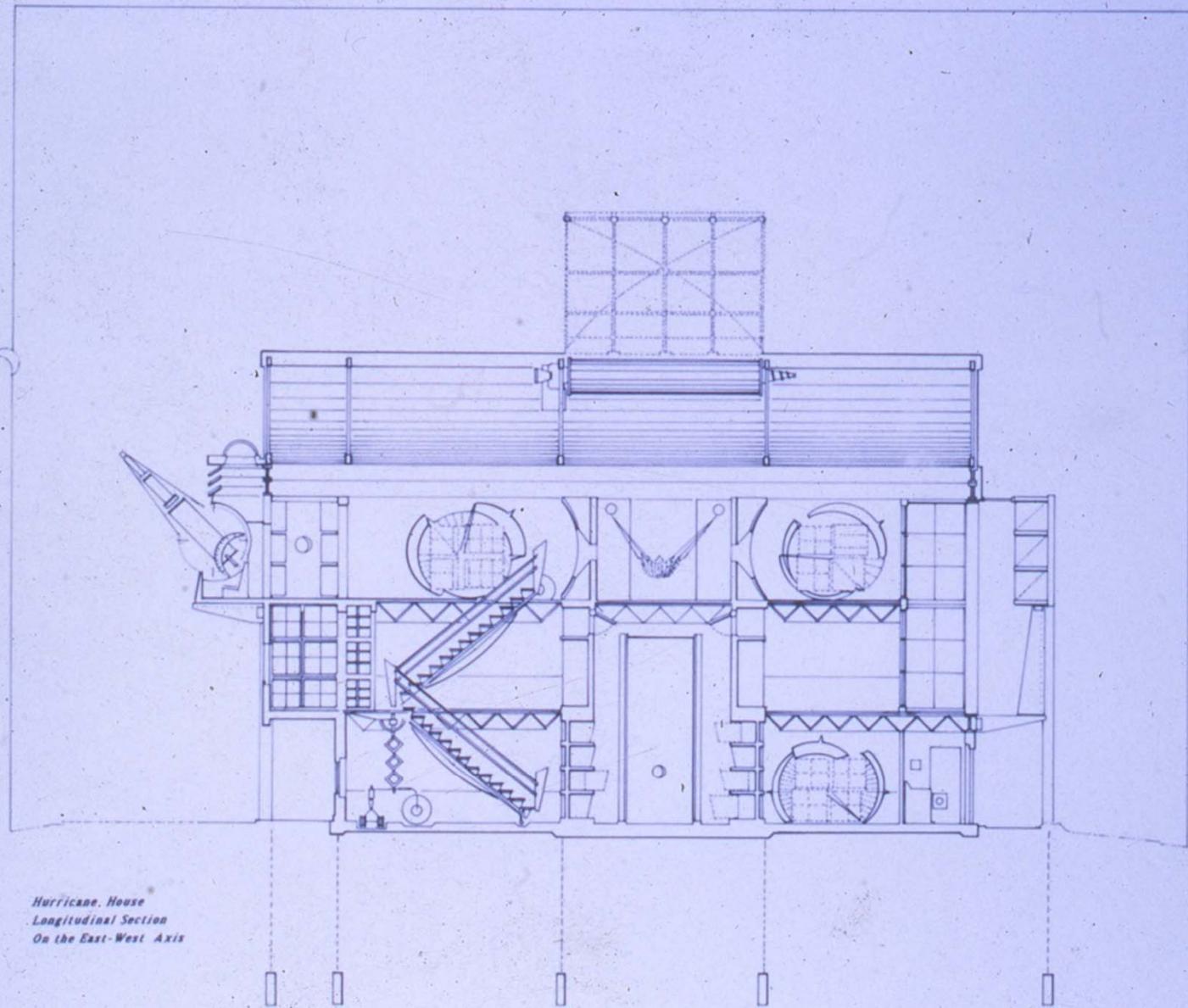
Hurricane House
Evening View from the North-West



Hurricane House
The Construction of A Temporal Dwelling
Night View from the North West

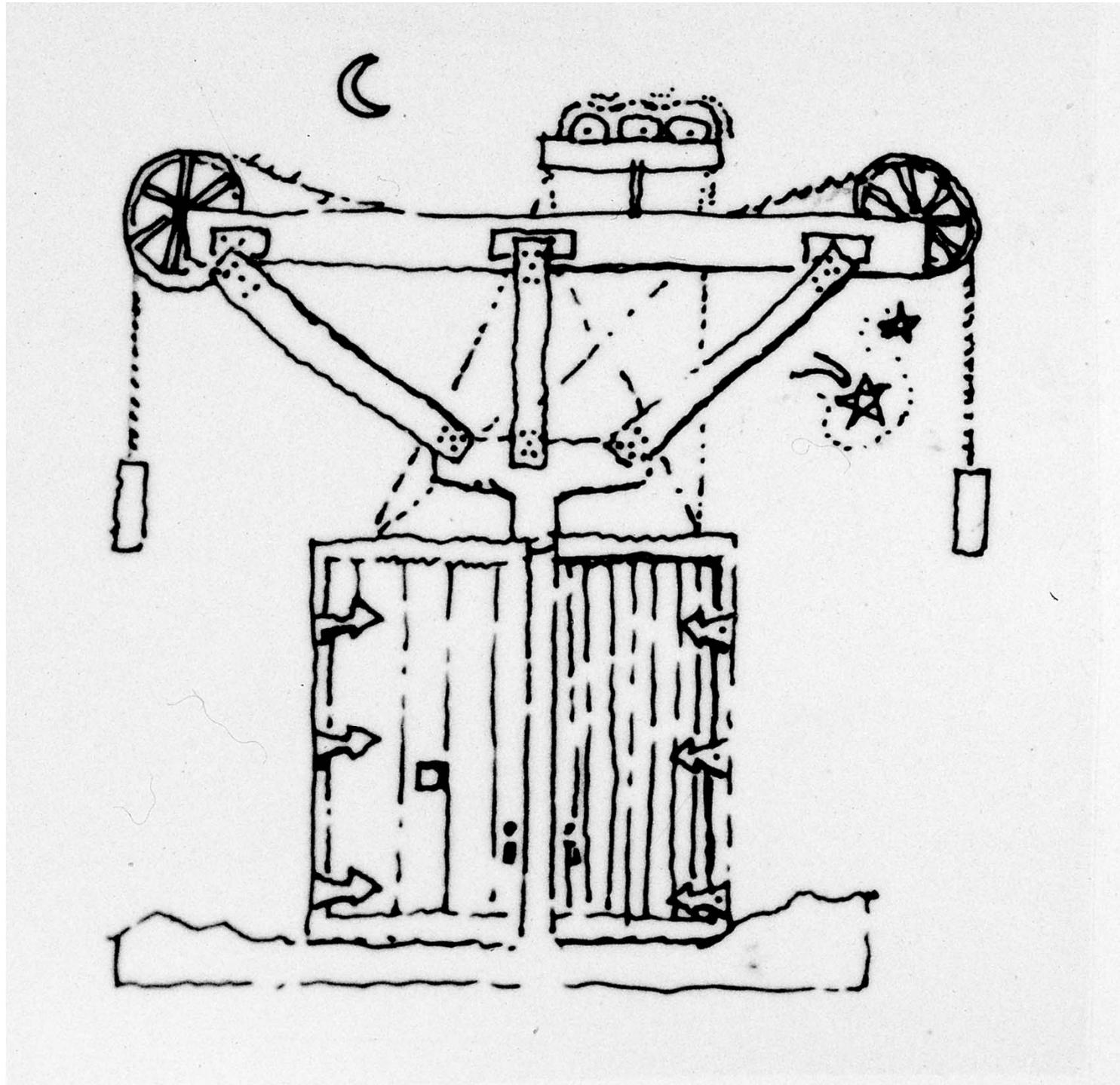


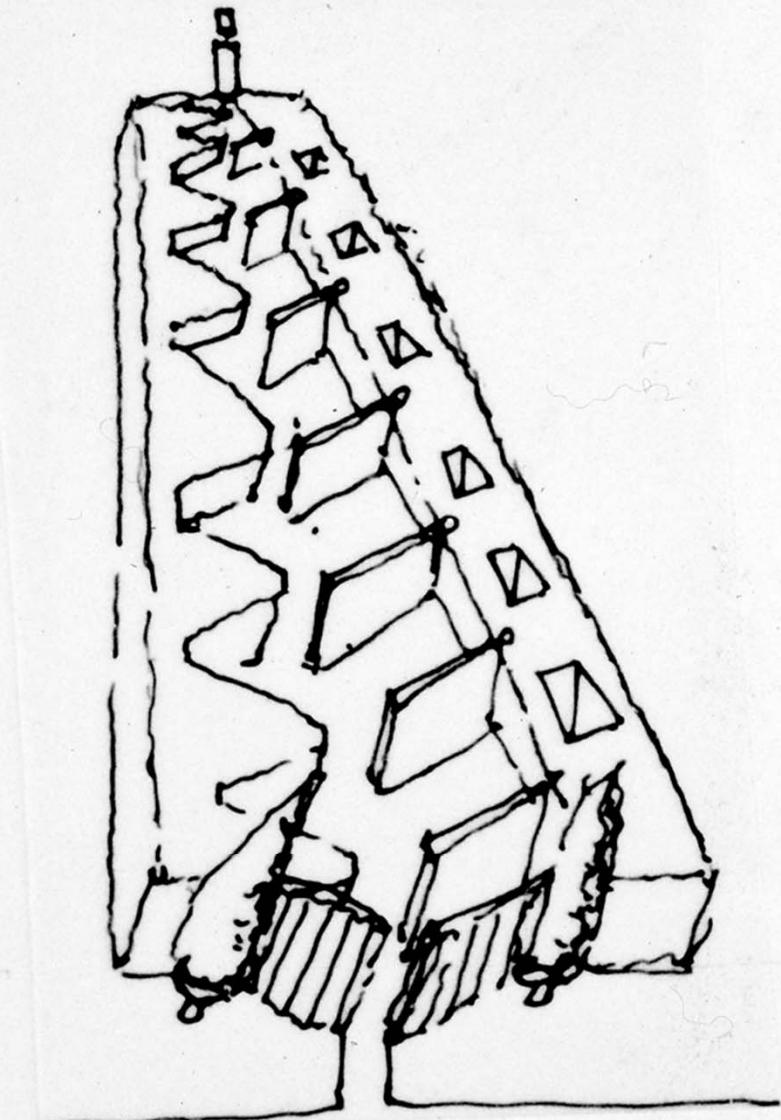
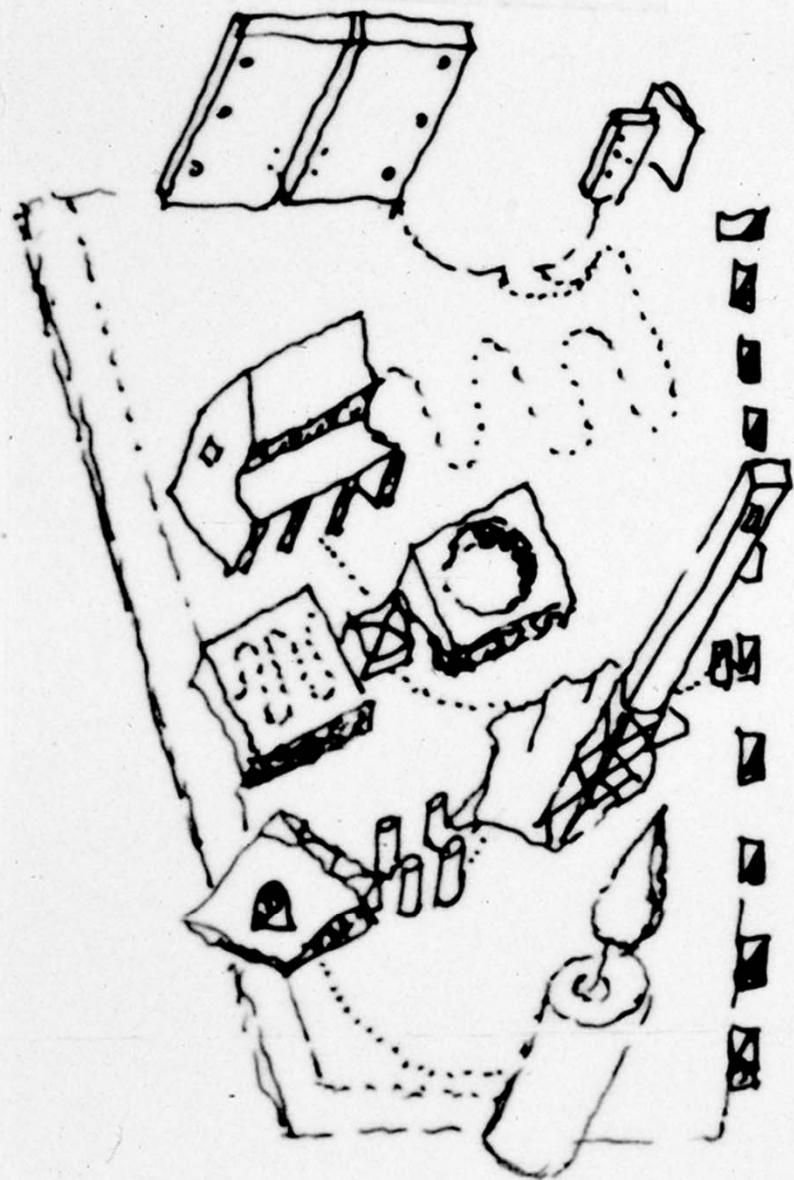


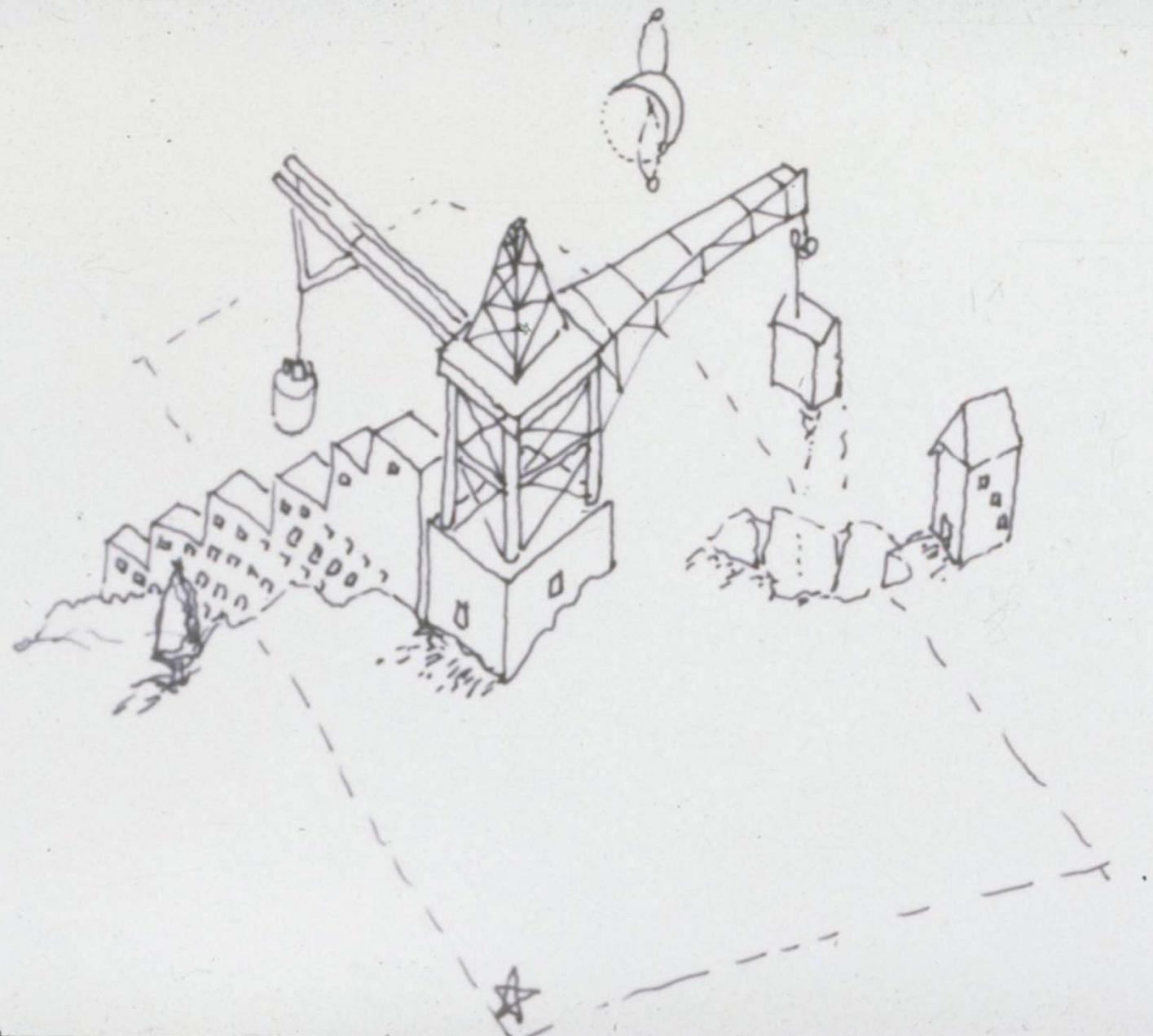


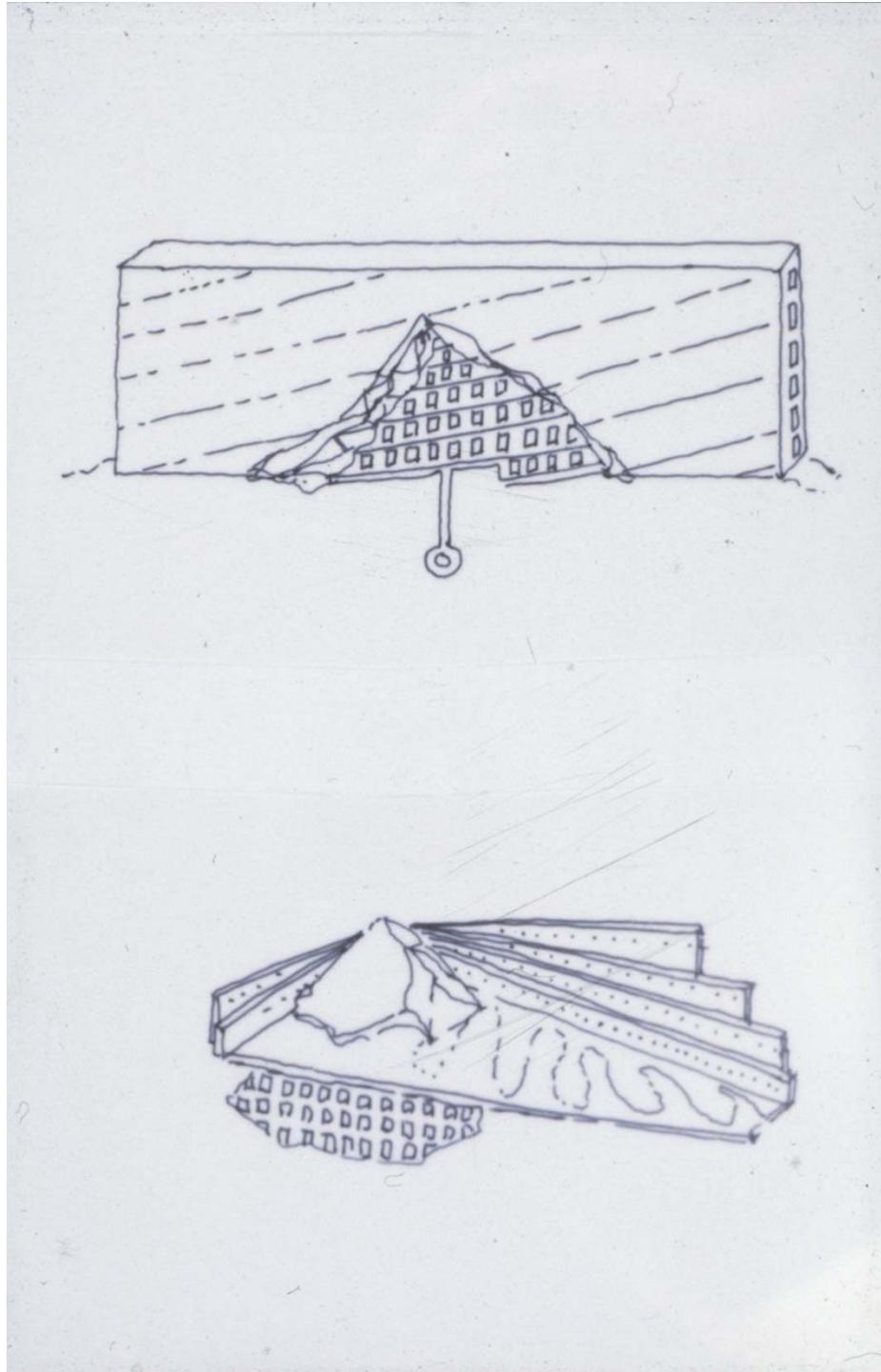
*Hurricane House
Longitudinal Section
On the East-West Axis*

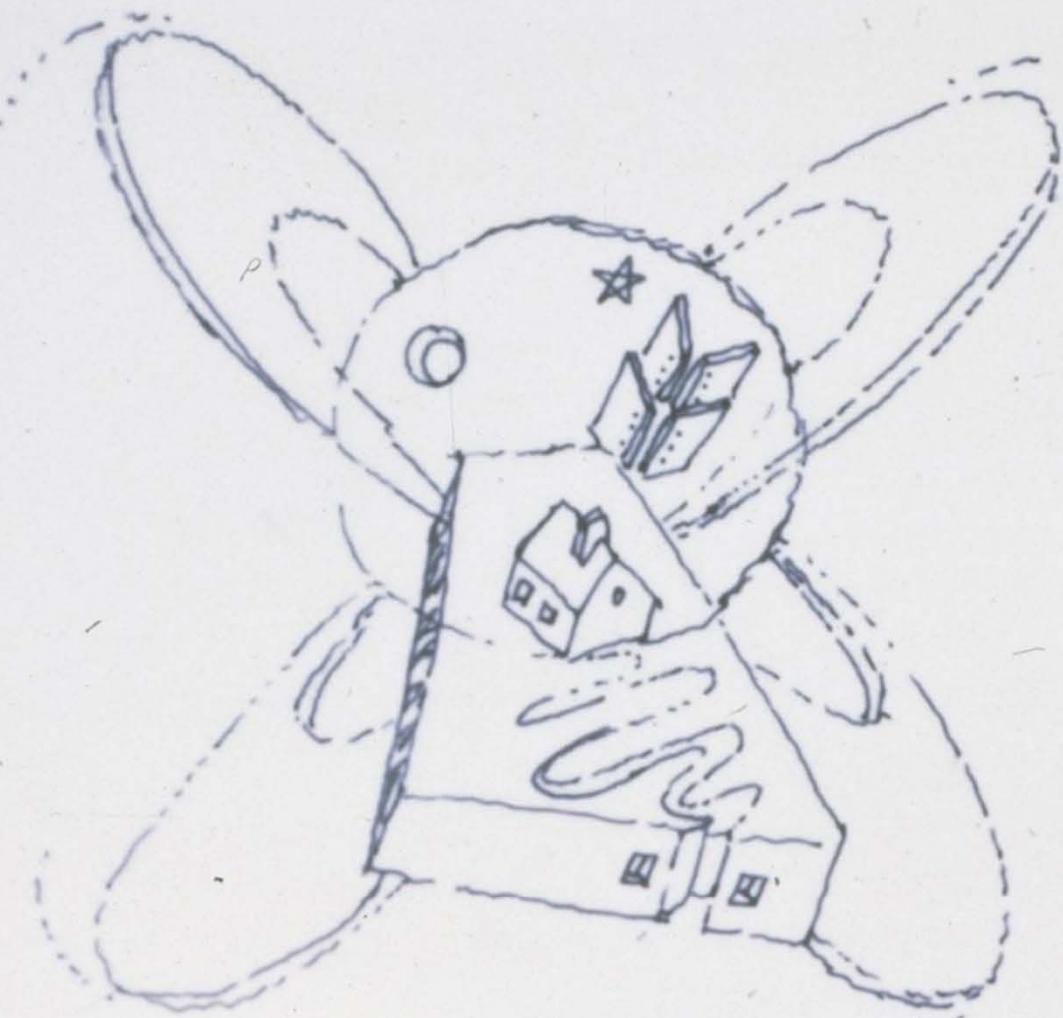


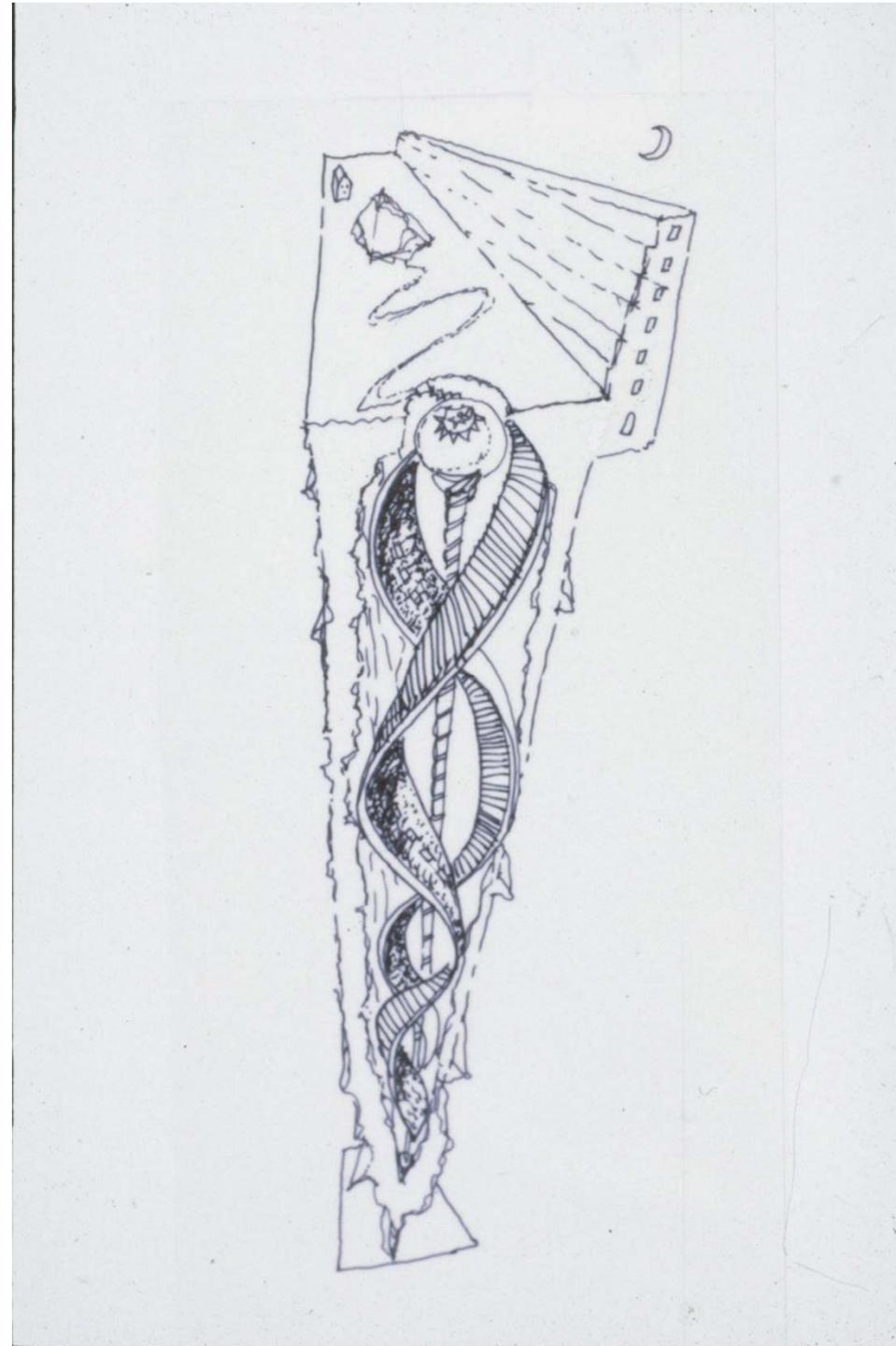


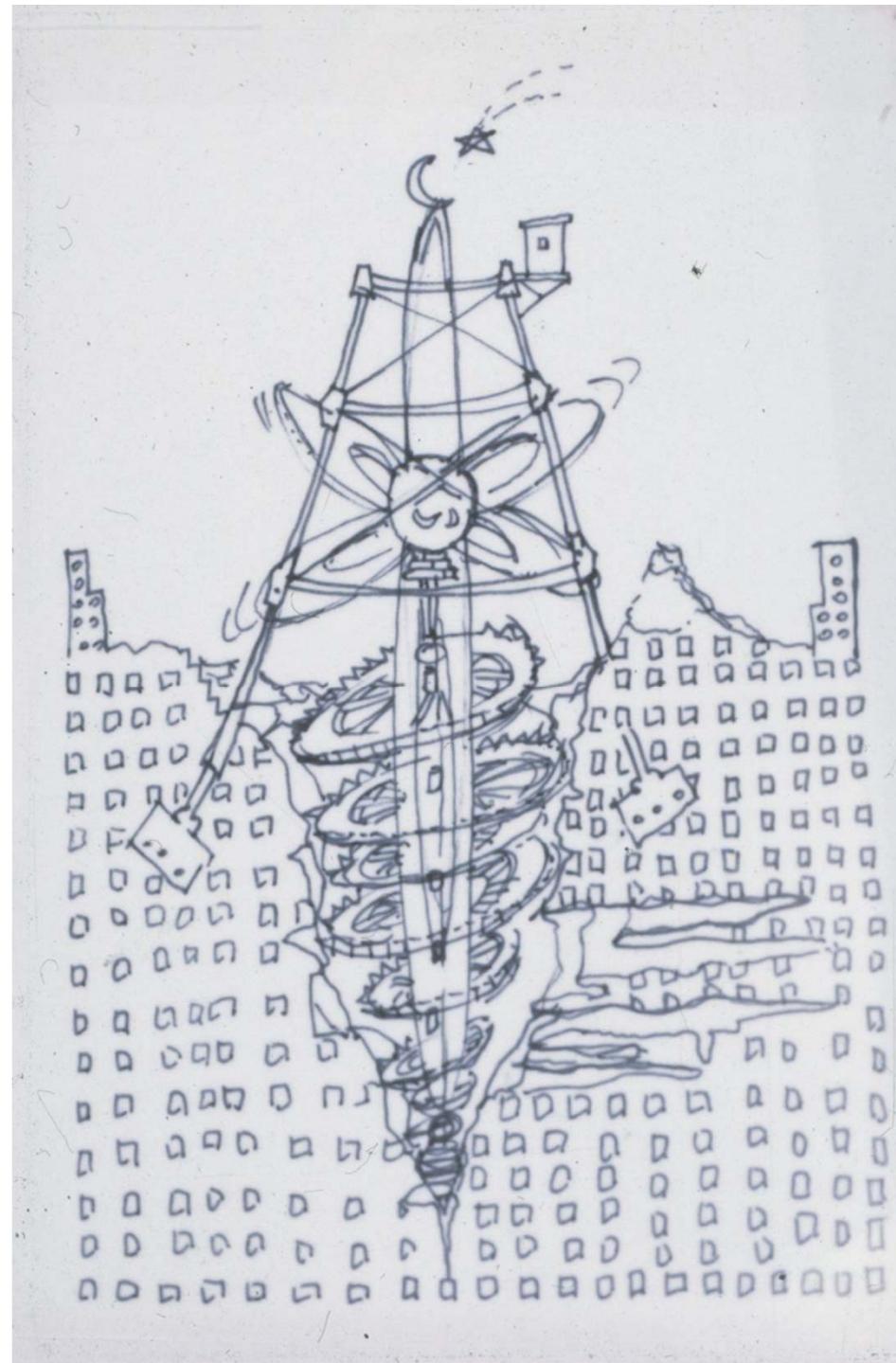


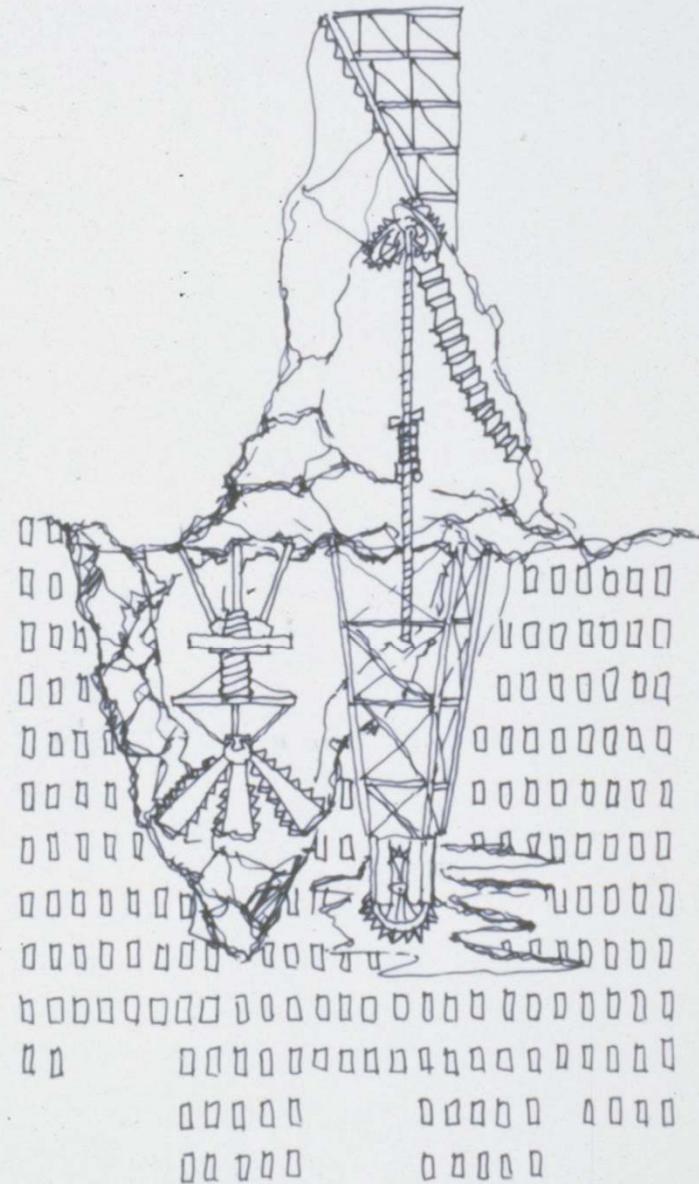


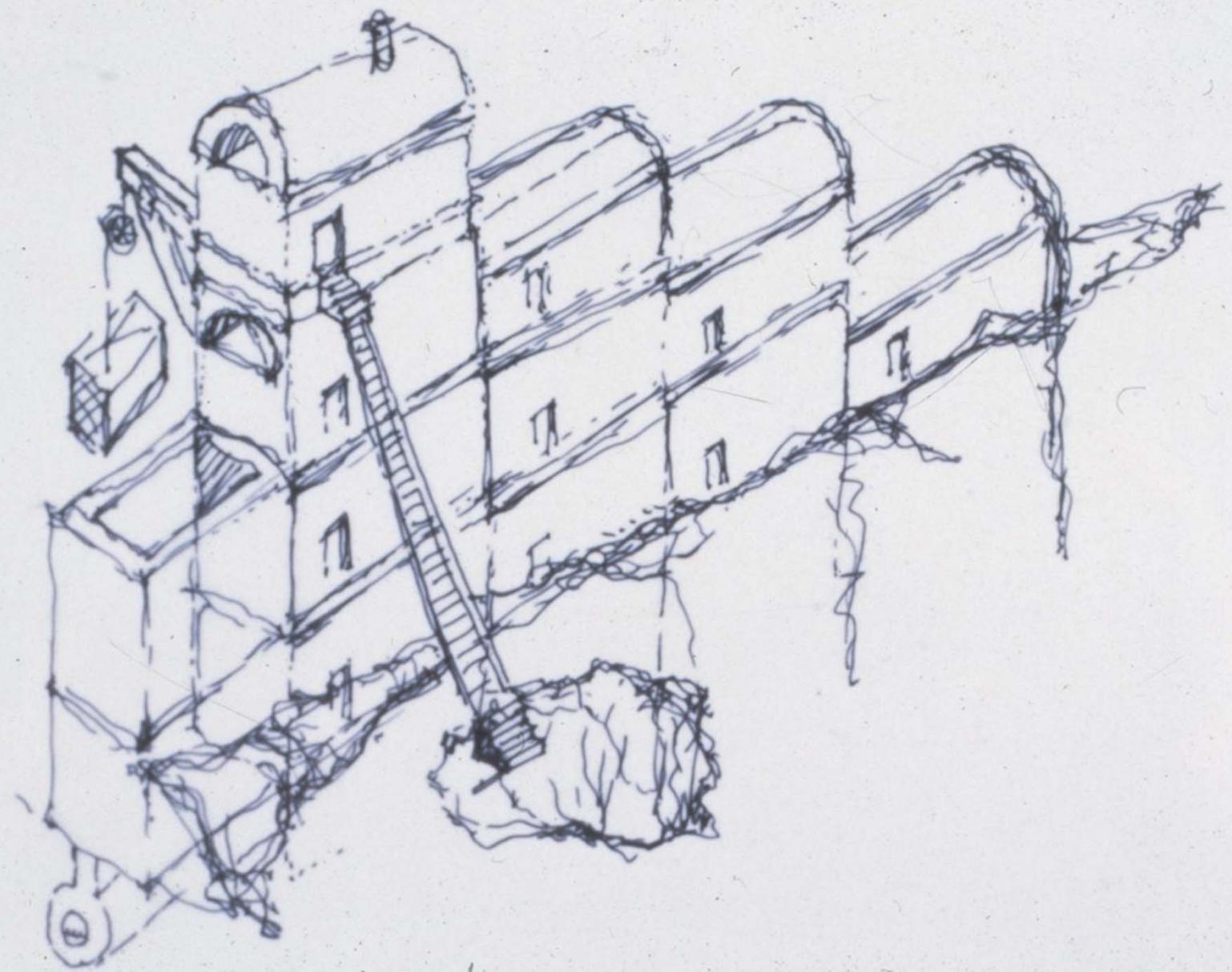


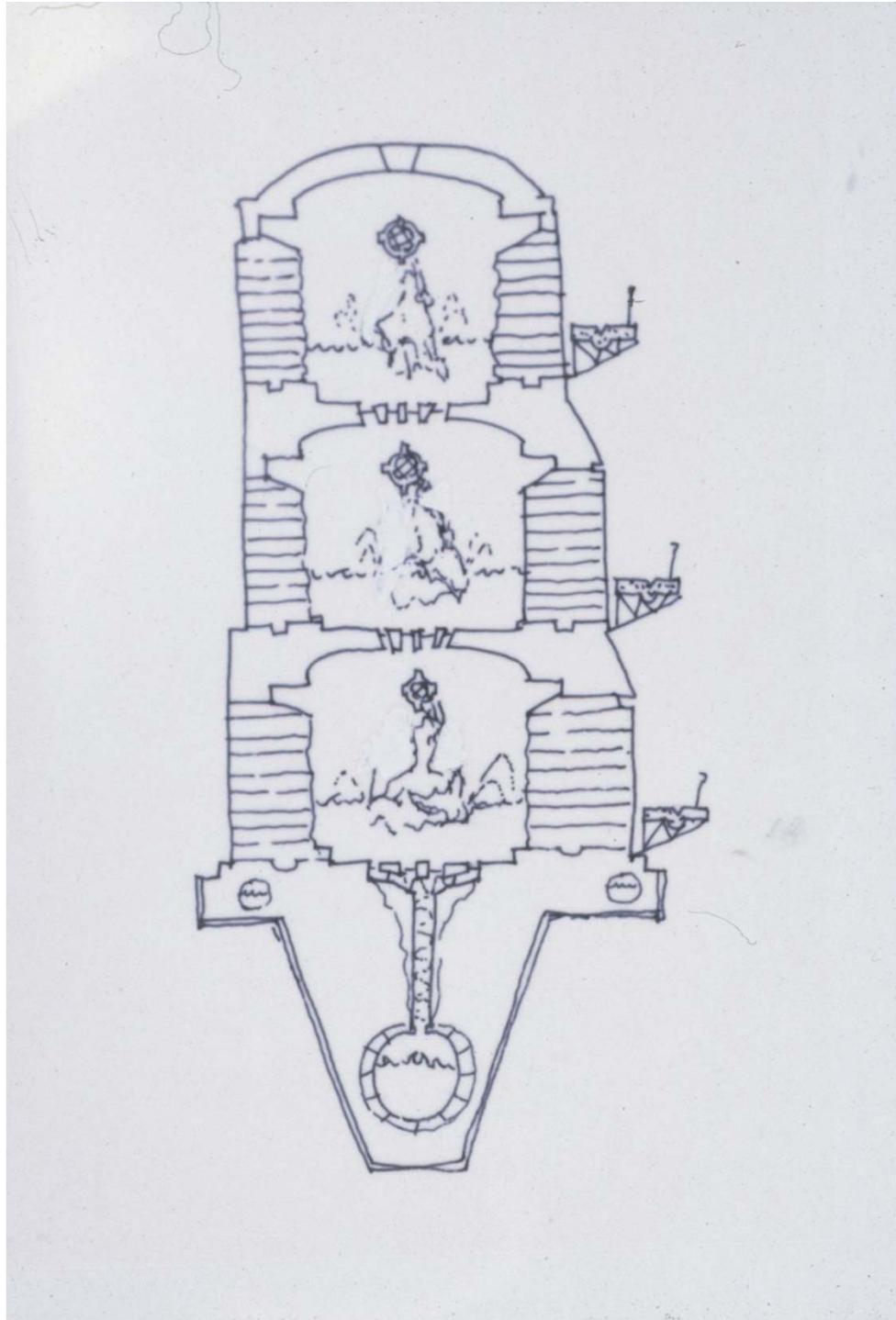


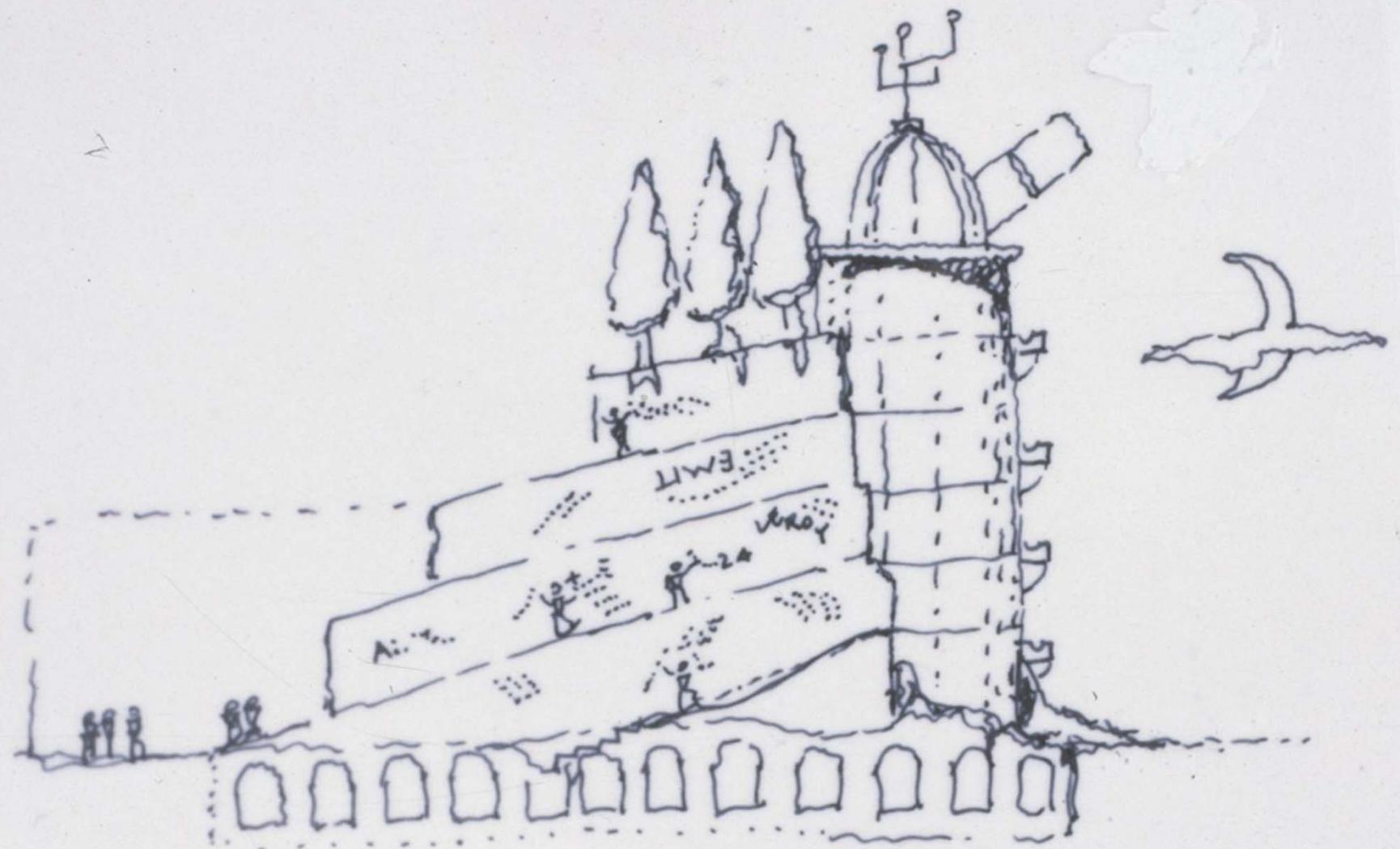


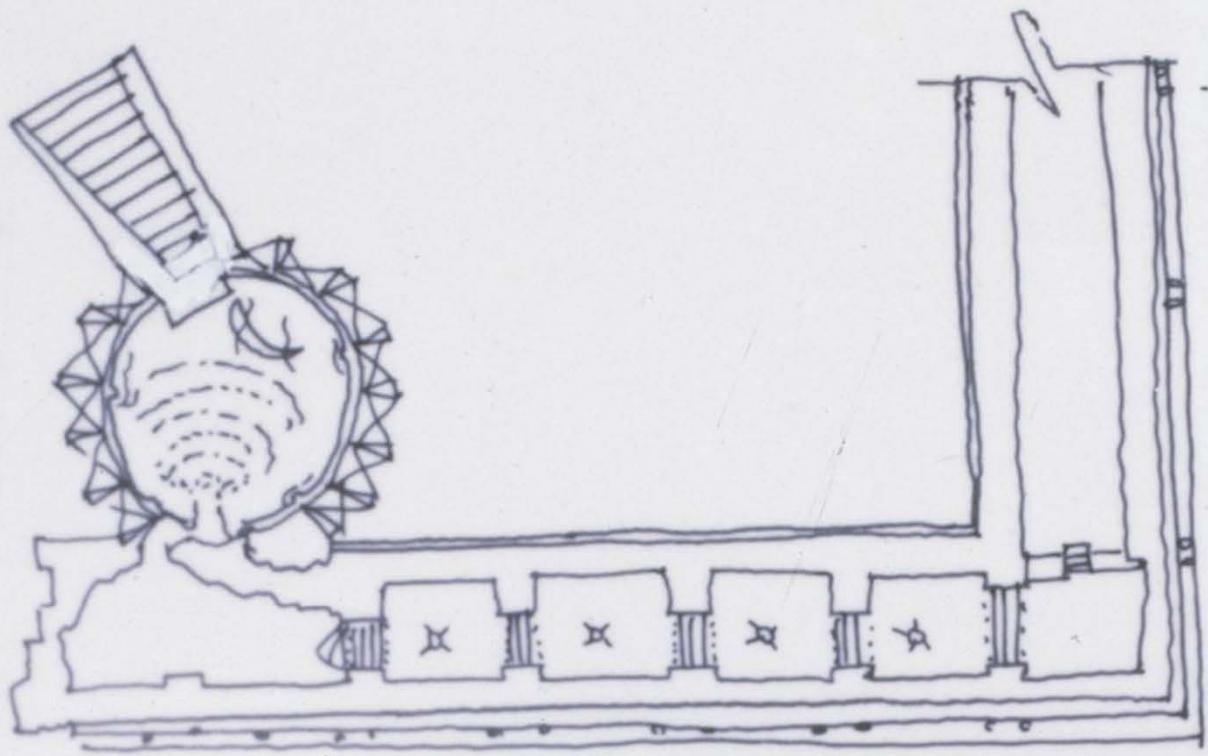


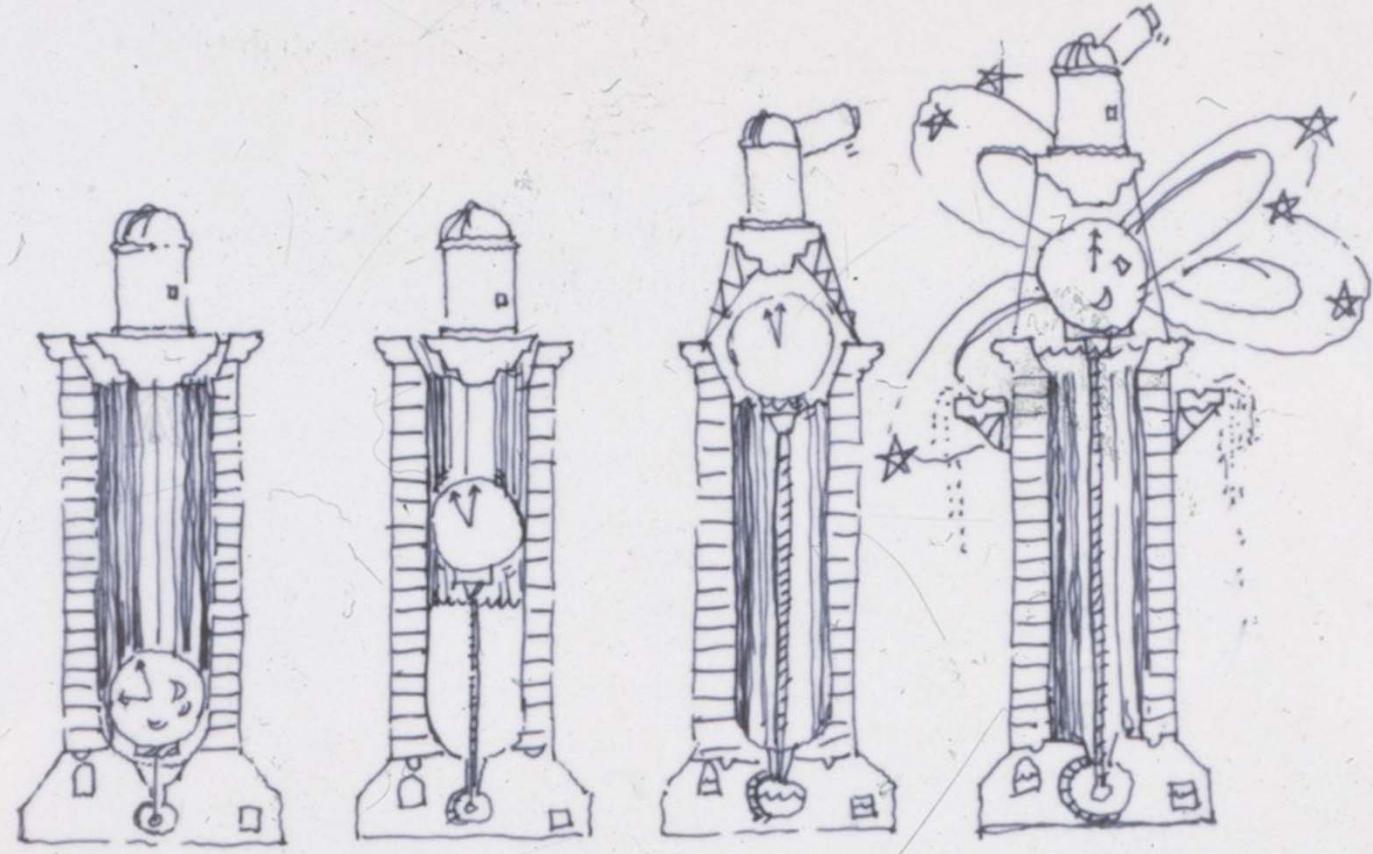


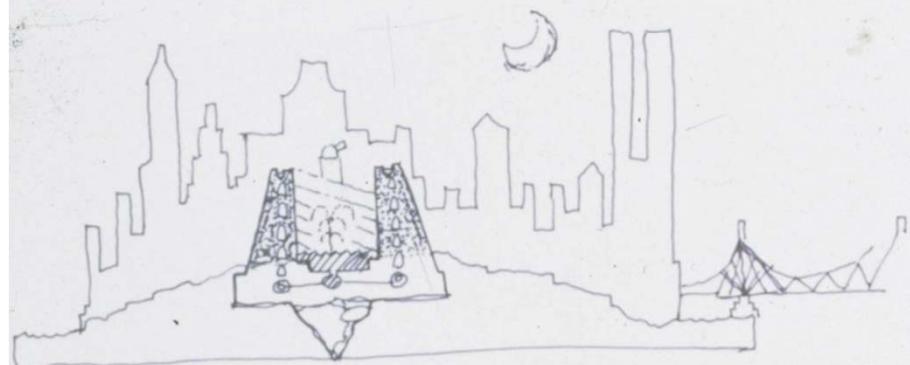
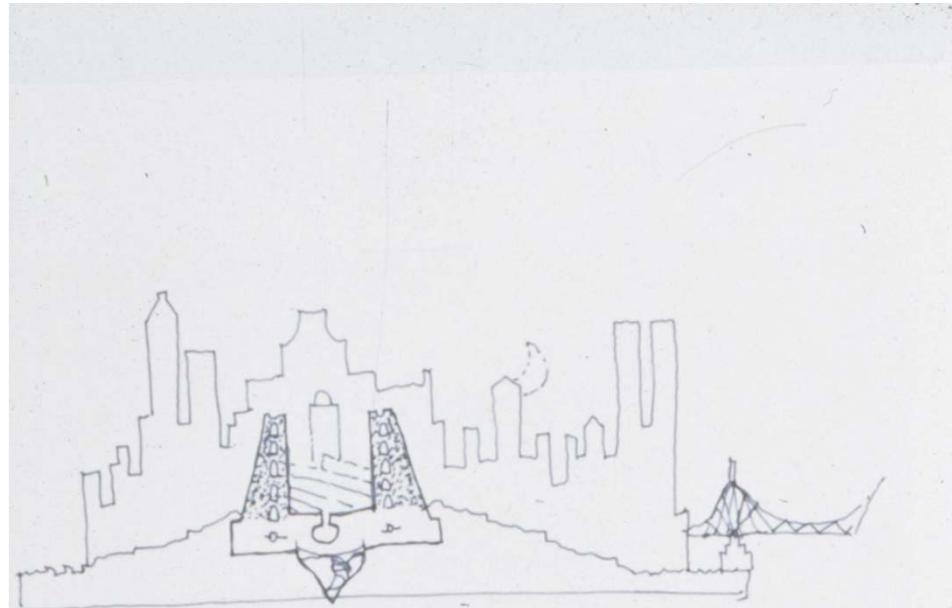


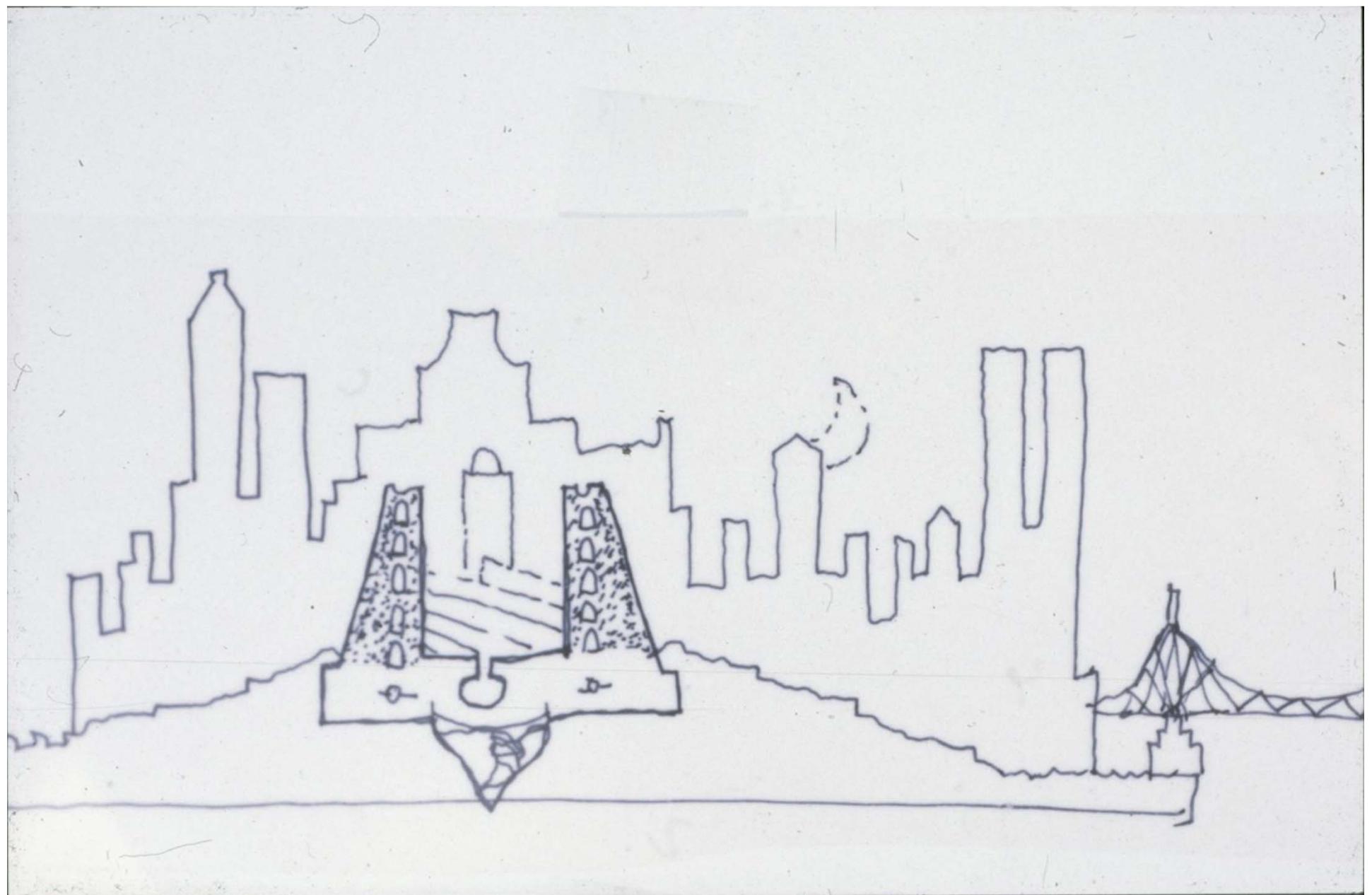


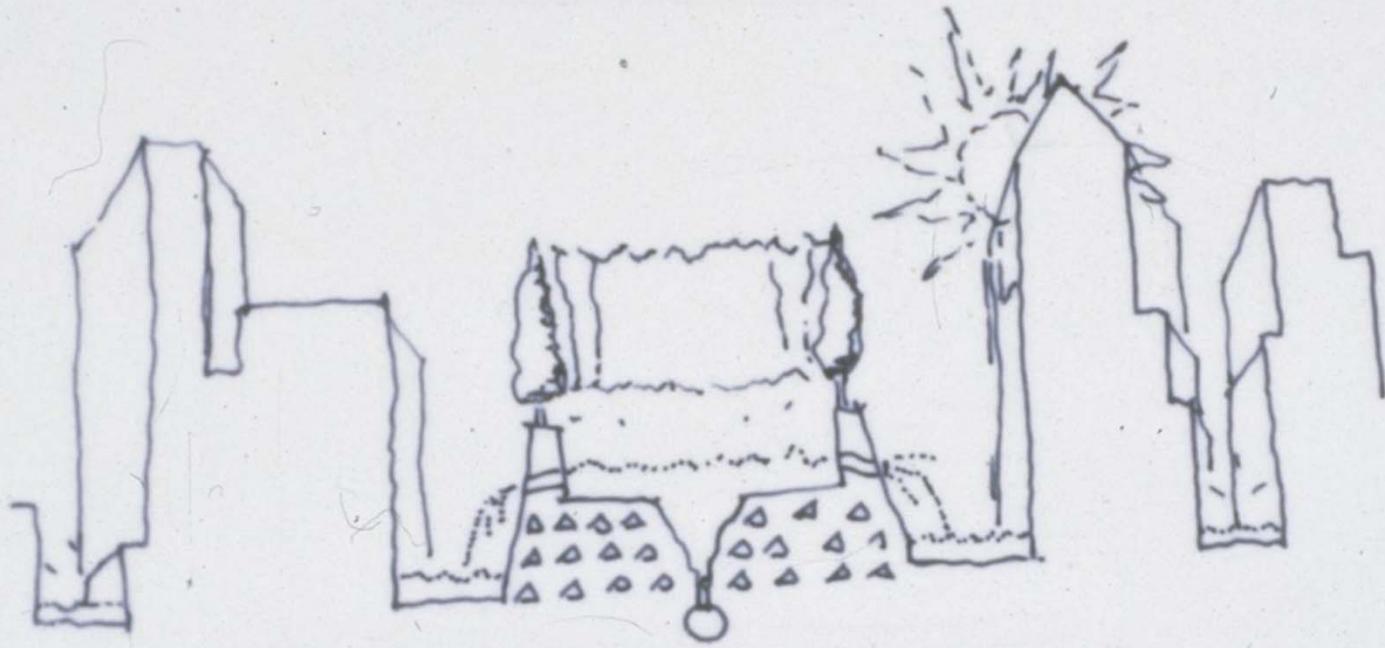


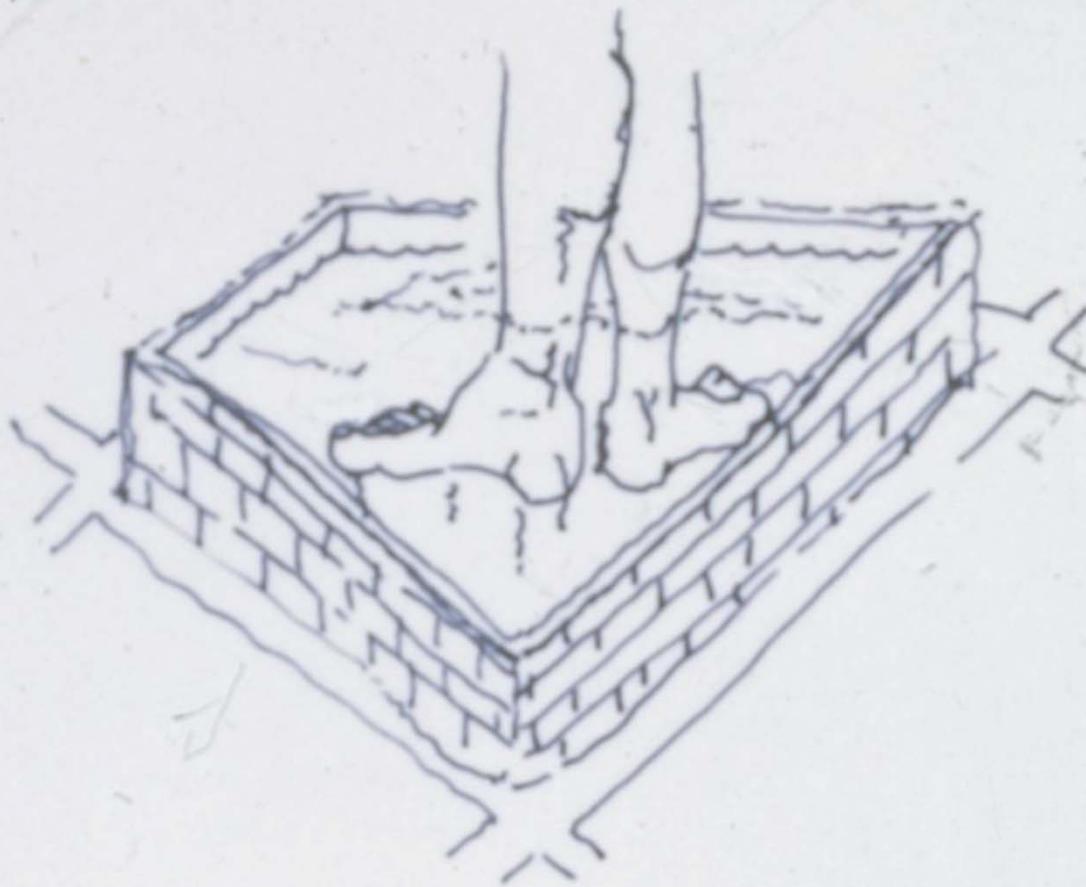




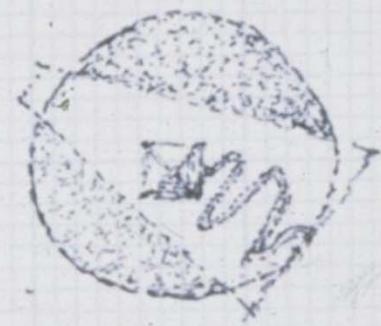
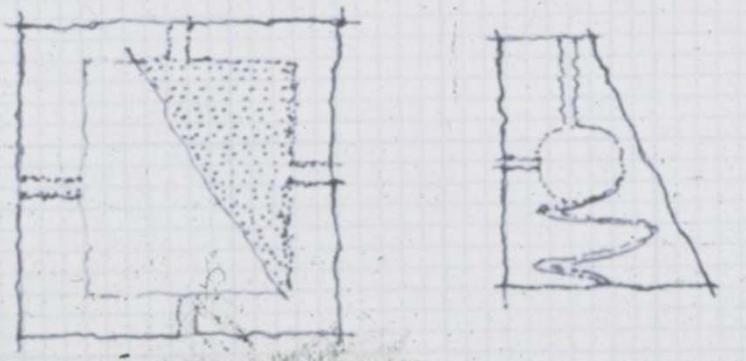


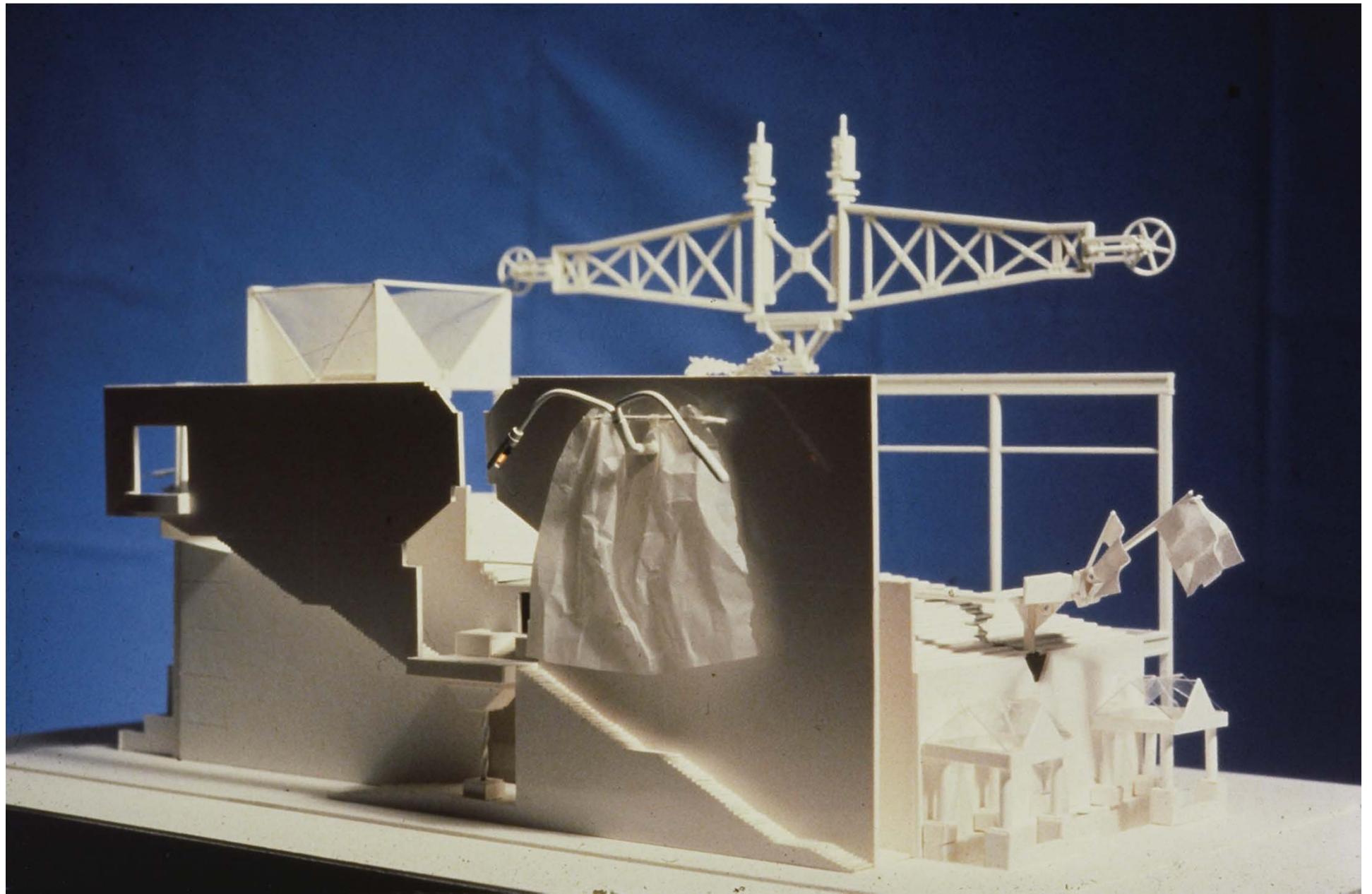




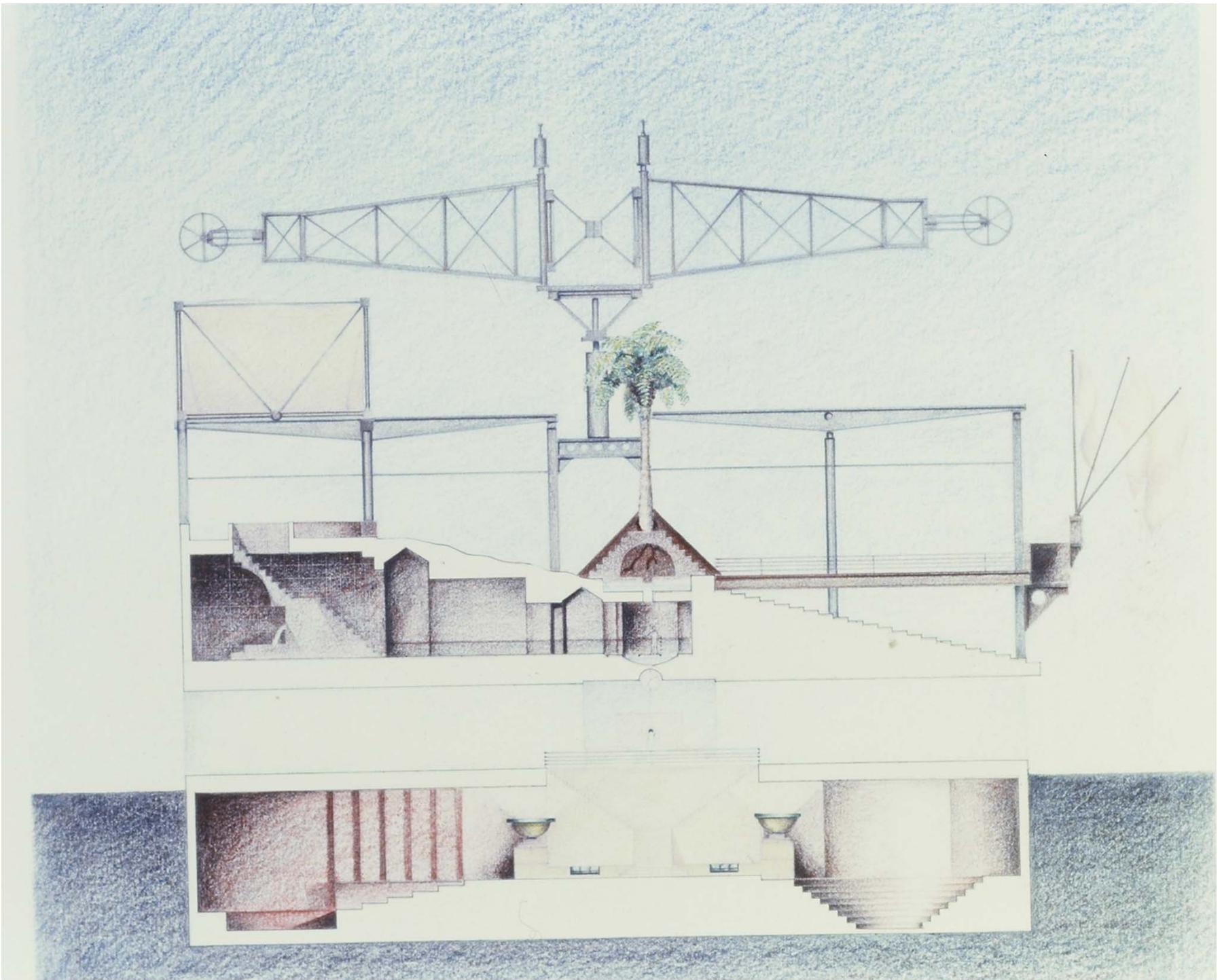


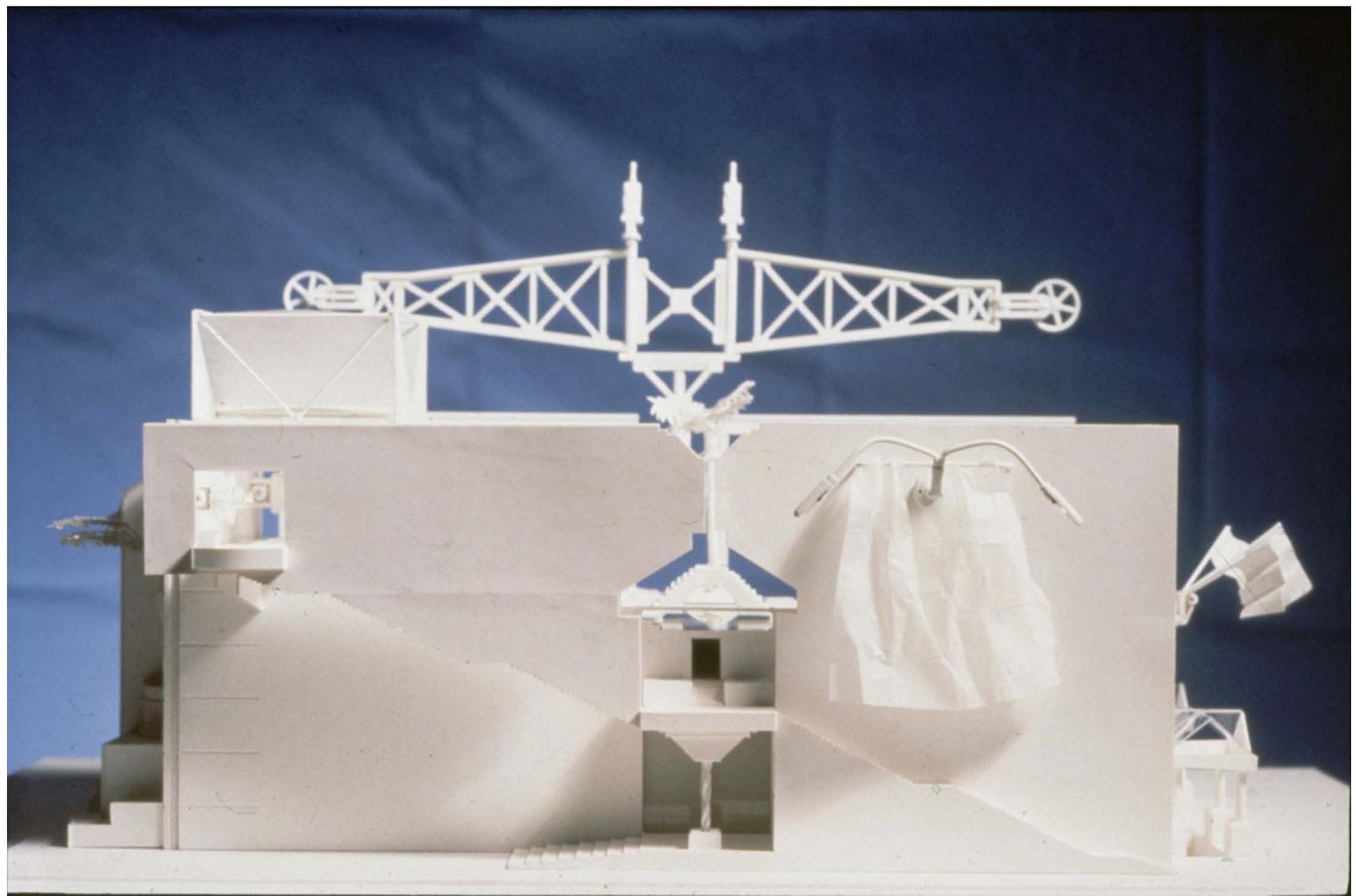


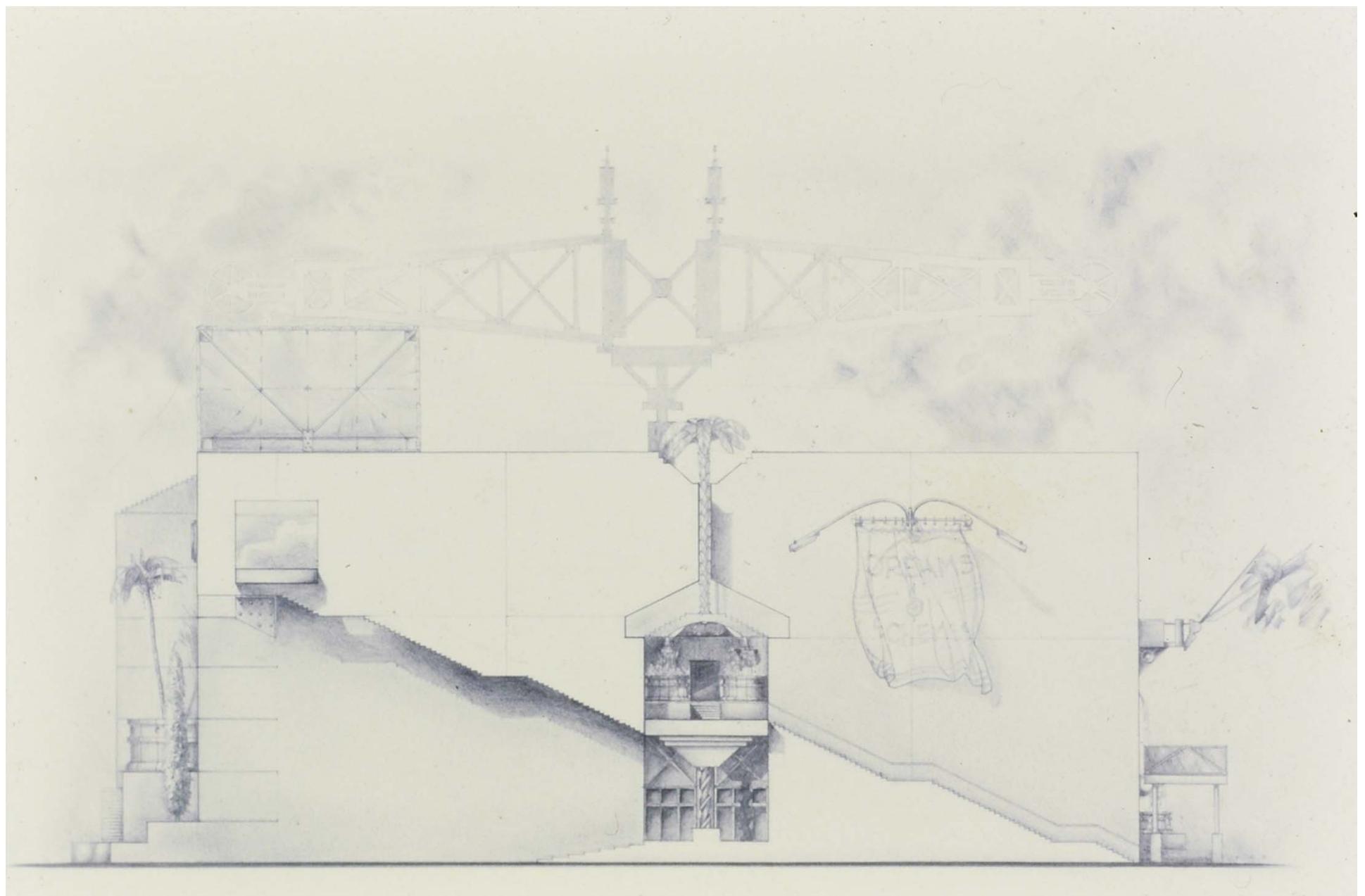


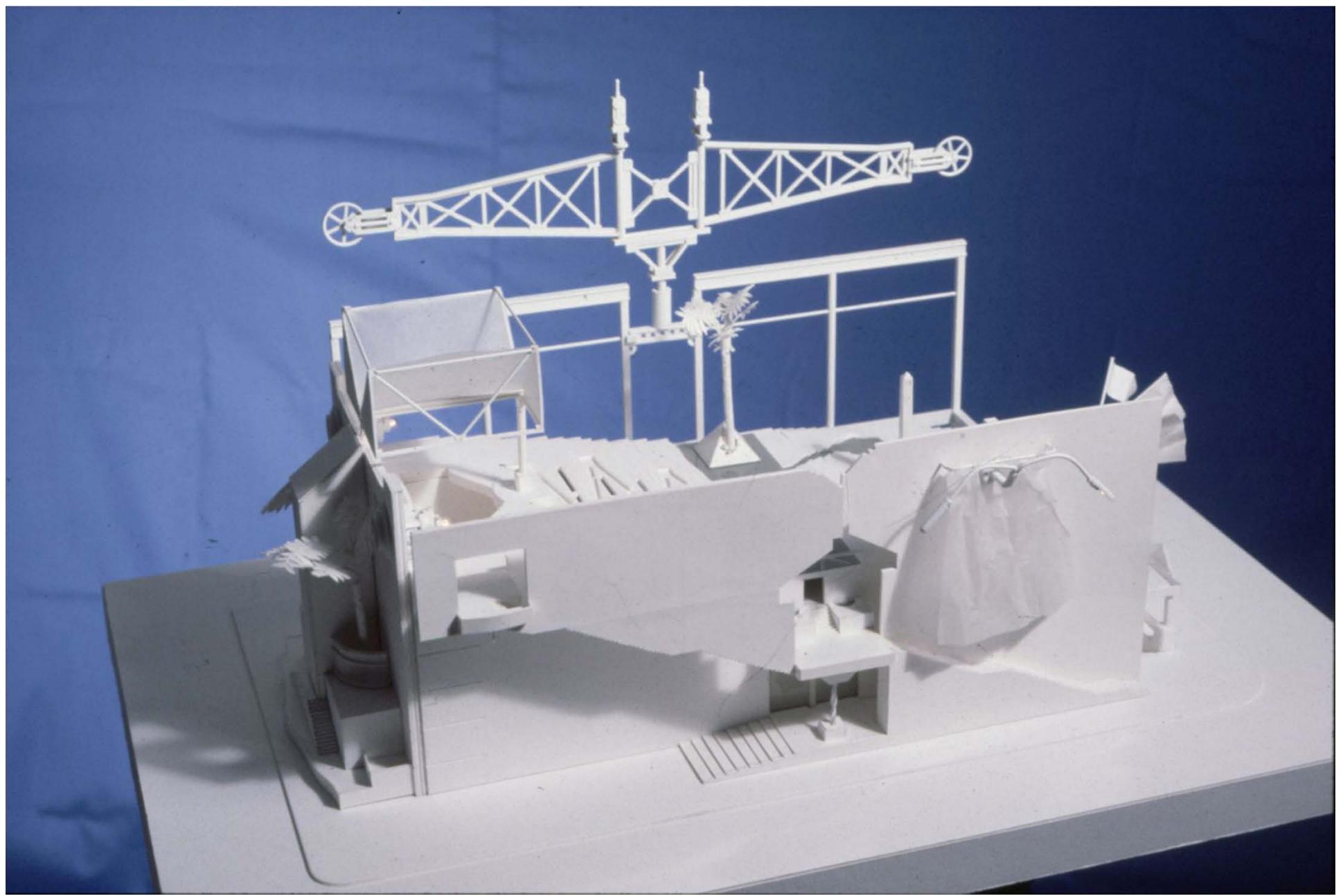


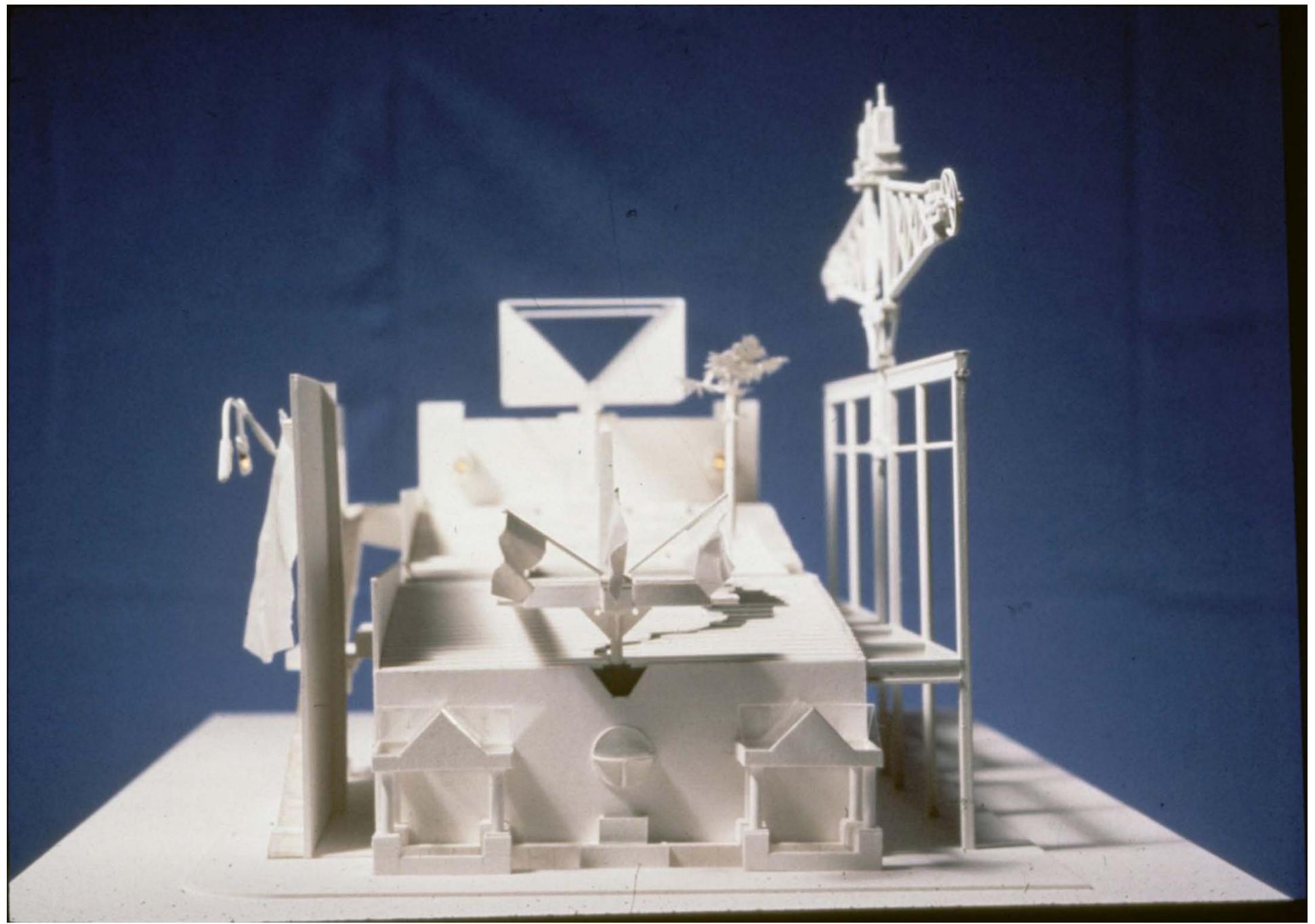
Houston Museum

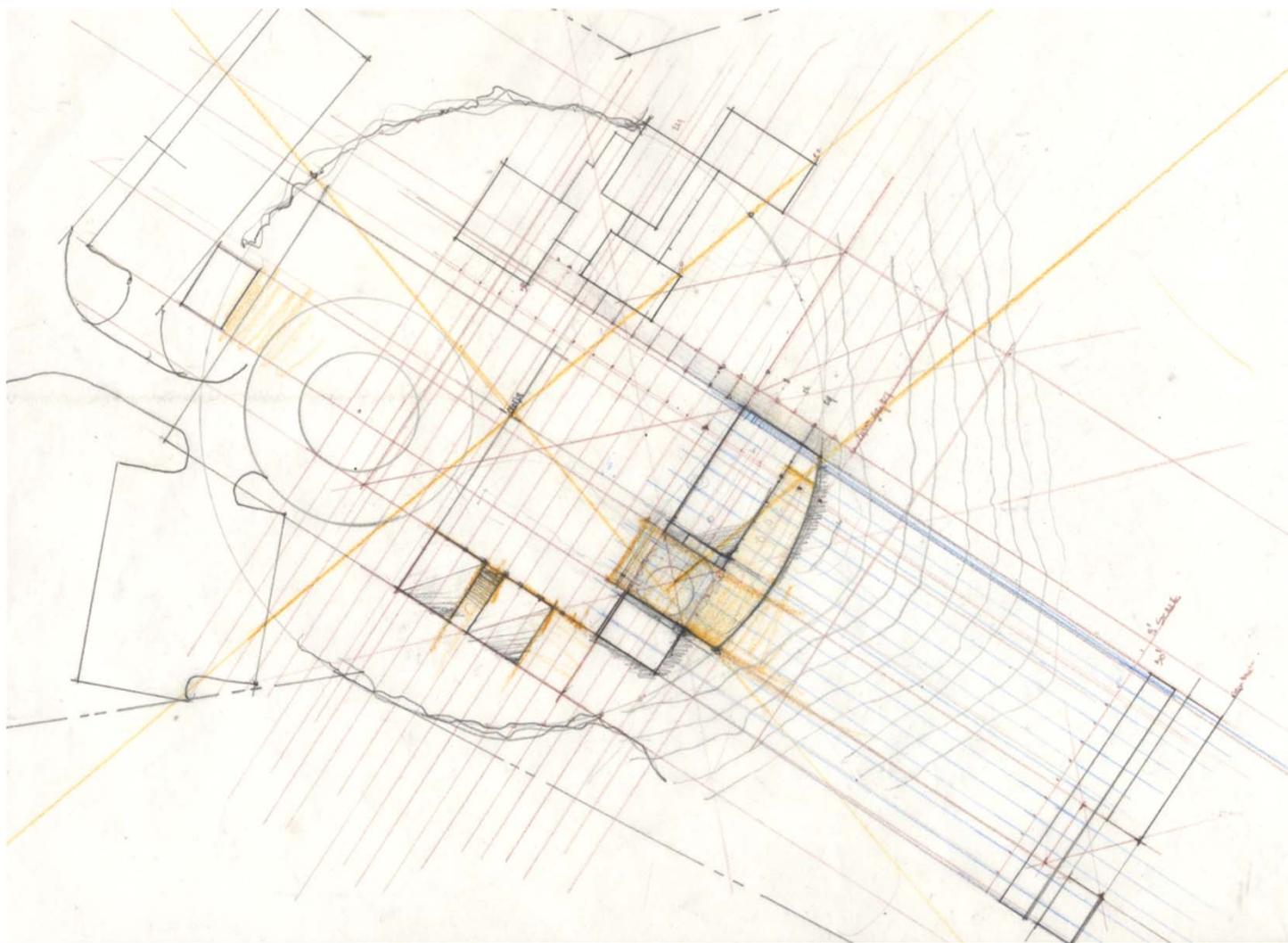




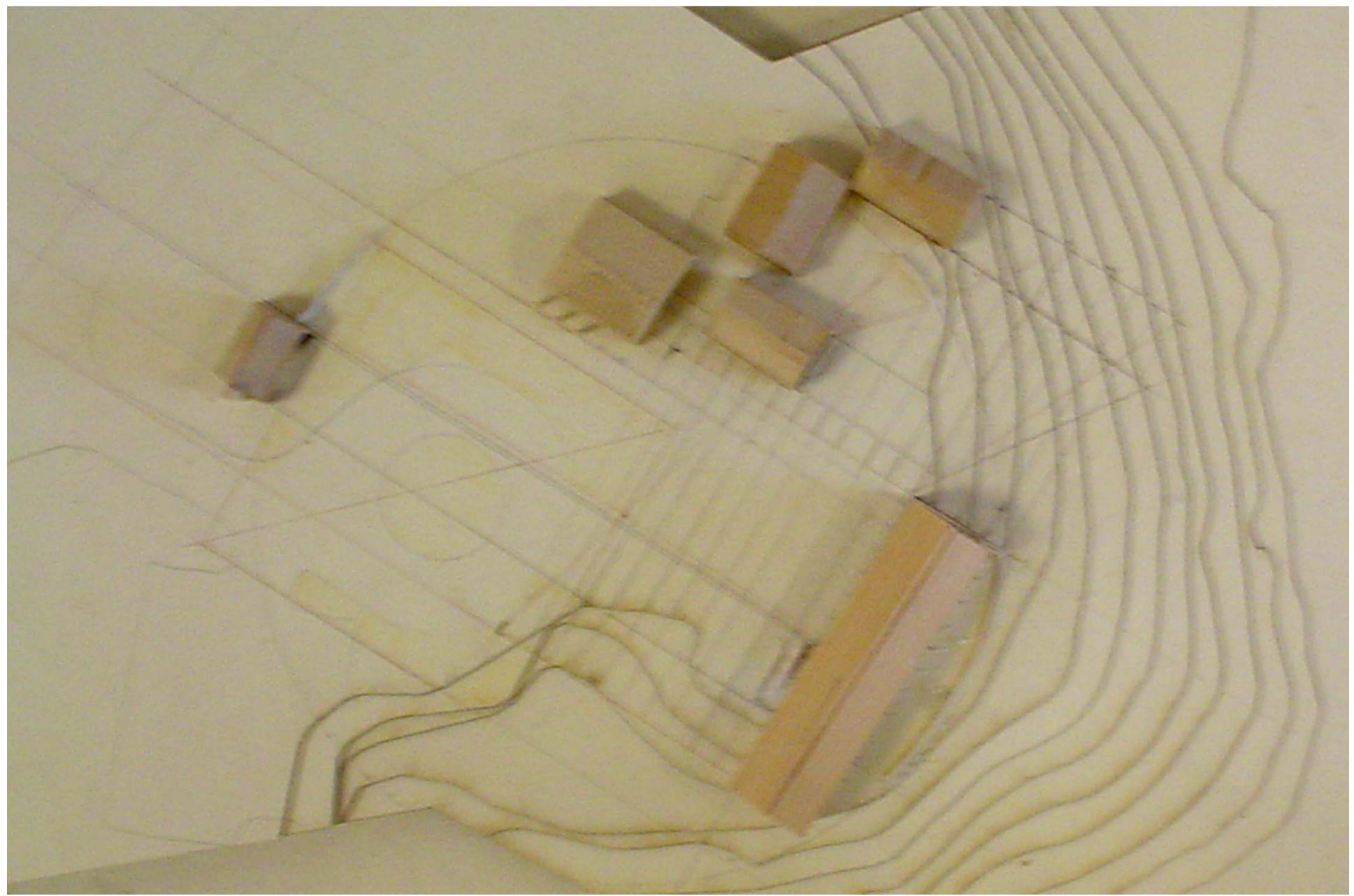








Free Union Country School



Specifications for Construction

We are responding to the pre-conditions of this place.
This school is conceived as part of a larger community housed within a vernacular building type.

This school currently embodies Nature sensibly through the Porch and the elevated porch shared by all structures.

We propose to enhance the buildings relationship to the Ground and to the Sky.

We wish to enhance not to compete with the natural orders of the Horizon and the Ridge, with the under canopy shade of trees and the shelter of mountain ridges.

We specify step-leap strategies for Constructing Site and revision Building spaces as a Yo-Yo, and to serve as an enhancement of the school curriculum for years to come.

We see in the ancient vernacular cabin recently revitalized all the clues we need for the Specifications for Construction of this extension of the Free Union School.

We offer not a replication of those qualities so substantially there:

We offer rather a complementary condition:

We hope to revision one large sun-filled open space, a circus ground, perhaps of meter and grain to unite the disparate parts now isolated by the school's footprint.

We offer a space both engaged with the ground as well as framing views from elevated wood terraces (rainy day/holiday room) in the sky.

We conceive of the current disconnected two-part building programs as now united as a complementary new L configured edge forming the western corner of the new Community Court in response to the existing historic Calm.

We envision a reversal of phases for fund-raising and construction: a large shed roof over a Common Room shingled box with no eave entry porch and adjacent prismatic twin classroom Calm would be built first, within 2 to 3 years if foot print, and later the other classrooms/break away spaces and administrative needs would be accommodated in a 3000 sq ft second phase.

We seek to offer one good room with one good Door, one good Window, one good Basement, and one good Attic.

This school is a public realm with civic dimensions where one should learn the ground-rules of Citizenship.

On the Relocation of Site

We relocated the Site of the major Common Room from the center by the septic field as currently planned to a location front and center with the scale of the mountains to the South and the Village road to the North.

A simple long shed roof held up on posts and hand hewn framing connects the original site in the shade of its dependable mature trees to the gable of existing cabin to the East.

The ambient log cabin is in axis and spatially pushes through this site to the South to make a Community Porch both grand in dimension and intimate in scale, on axis with the original cabin.

To the East, adjacent to the existing classrooms, a star bokken makes us rise up to the meadow porch above the Common rooms.

The Common Room is accessed by a gentle ramp that leads one onto a pretty sunken space with the ground at a child's eye-height to the entrance porch. The ramp is a series of steps and a bench to the rear. The barn ridge above. The outdoor, but covered Entry Porch is penetrated by a lantern/light that directs light all day long onto the first of three packing areas forming a podium or stage for the school. The third packing area is tucked in to the rear of the school day and to recognize the importance of locating oneself within the recurrent pattern of a Temporal World beyond of the West.

The Common Room glows as a Prism from sunrise to sunset. This room is also fitted with louvered shutters and sliding barn doors on the outside to the North and to the South. Inside opaque vertical panels are used to control the light and to provide a controlled rhythm of the shutters beyond and the storage cubbies below. A community porch occurs under this singularly sheltered shed by the placement of two classrooms and two mezzanine/gathering spaces to the West.

In counter-point to the Stable/Common Room, the singular Cabin like volume has both a substantial basement engaging the ground as well as creating a loft or entry Attic under the shed above. The stable is a single large room with a large multi-purpose room to the east, the first new school Cabin to the west makes this upper level interior. There is a restroom and other work rooms to the rear. To the rear of the stable and other adjacent outbuildings and barns etc were the Common Room at the extreme Eastern end.

On long rainy summer afternoons, generations gather under sheltering eaves to recollect the lessons of a bear, a dog and a duck or two. The Garden of Abdal Gazar by Christ Van Alburg projects Alan and his menagerie now on the porch of an old log cabin, looking out to the horizon and the world beyond. This space as a crawl space is dug for Fries while the excavated earth is piled nearby to make the distant view close. The earth is piled on the side of the hill to make vertical the horizontal view. One prominent and shattered Common Room emerges within the frame as a Stable for two packing crates, known as the Calm.

On occasion the Centipede and the Mouse move out of the Stable and up the ramps to make a Play Ground on the grass-crete Common Room. The Mouse is a small creature of Troya (Horse), stars reflected near the haystack in the loft on the entry porch. The duck flies up to the roof terrace above the Stable to get to the Attic. The duck is a small creature of Troya (Horse) and the consequential. The Blue Ridge now is framed through a familiar window both far and near. Black boards shield all the transient walls from West winds. The student is both and sees the Old Cabin right on axis. He is both grounded and taken to worlds beyond through the ongoing process of this simple yet profound construction site.

Free Union Country School: On the Utility of Parasols, Prisms, Packing-Crates and Porches

