

LIGHT AND AIR HOUSES



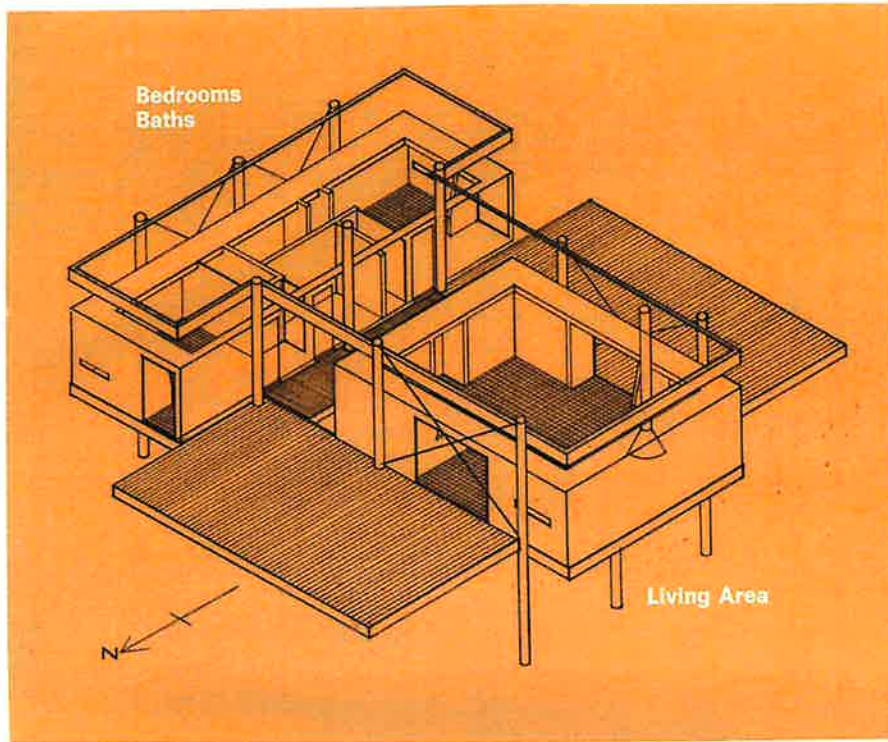
Photos, except as noted: Peter Gluck

One hot afternoon in 1963 found two young architects, Peter Gluck and David Sellers, getting hotter and hotter. They could not understand it. All they were doing was sawing up telephone poles for the foundations of a house designed by Gluck for his parents on the beach in West Hampton, Long Island. As it turned out, flying Creosote was a sort of super Man-Tan that gave them a super burn. The only relief was a cool dark bar that turned them out at 2 A.M. when all they wanted to do was sit in front of the air conditioner.

Gluck, like many of his Yale contemporaries (MAY and NOVEMBER 1965 P/A), is plunging head-on into architecture — designing, building, and developing — without wading through a long apprenticeship, or waiting for the client to come to him. He graduated in 1965 and to date he has designed four houses, which have been completed, and has two others on the boards. The first, for his parents, was designed and built during two summers while in architectural school. "Since they don't teach much about construction during the first year," says Gluck, "I had to learn as I went along. When I started on foundations, I read up on foundations, when I got to windows, I reviewed all the windows in the book, looked up and down the beach and finally made up some of my own." During two summers of living on the beach, Gluck got some first-hand knowledge of wind and weather. From his experience, he has designed volumes tailored for air circulation, privacy, and protective outdoor spaces, all of which are developed in his later houses.

Like many young architects, Gluck is concerned with the lack of quality in standardized building products and in protest he has designed his own fireplace (with movable hood) and furniture system, both of which he hopes to put into production.

Gluck has also purchased 100 acres of ski country near Warren, Vermont, and has plans for designing and constructing 80 vacation units (in three or four stages) while leaving 70 to 80 per cent of the land untouched. "The only way to save land," says Gluck, "is to do it yourself." And that seems to be the spirit of Yale in the 1960's.



First Beach House, Westhampton, L. I.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Gluck, the architect's parents, requested a vacation house that was easily maintainable, contained two bedrooms, two baths, and a large living room. For privacy, the architect separated the living room from the bedroom wing, and the latter took on the minimum dimensions and shape required by the bathroom core and bed space.

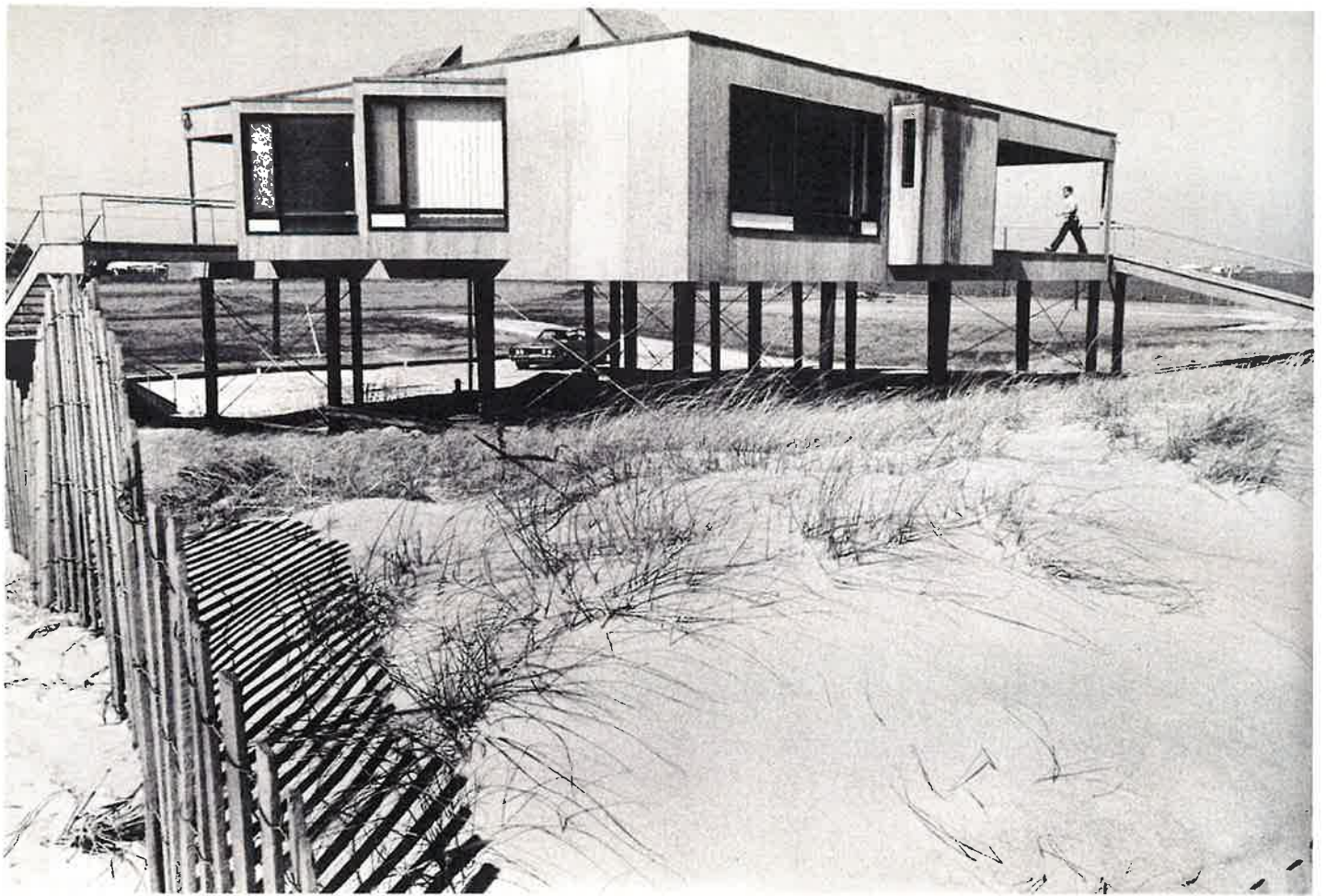
The structure is supported by 40-ft telephone poles sunk 23 ft into the ground. Floor and ceiling platforms are hung from poles, and the walls are independently supported by a ring of 2-ft-thick plywood box beams that house the cupboards, kitchen unit, and a bank of seats. The interior is finished with tongue and groove cedar boards and rosewood trim (salvaged by the architect from a local tree). "Things happen when you begin to build yourself," says Gluck. "The buttresses, for instance, turned out to be perfect storage spaces for the window shutters; from regular working drawings this would not have been obvious." One lesson learned from the parental house was how to and how not to handle the wind: The space between the two units becomes a veritable wind tunnel on a blowy day — a real chiller in cold weather — but when it is hot, it is the one cool, shady, and breezy spot on the premises. Cost: \$13,000 for 820 sq ft of interior space, 700 sq ft of deck, and — two summers of filial labor.

Photo: Maude Dorr



Living room includes kitchen (in far corner), dining area (right), and U-shaped bench wrapping around west end (foreground).





Second Beach House, Sagaponack, L. I.

Here, Gluck improves on wind control, views, and volumetric articulation. The clients for this house wanted every room to have a view of the ocean, and preferably, the entire façade of the house would be glass. Deck space was also important. Gluck raised the house above the level of the dunes and slanted the bedrooms out to the side, skillfully providing views for each while avoiding an enormous "picture window" façade. Each room has cross-ventilation with low windows opening to the south (on the beach side), and high clerestory windows facing north. A mechanical core runs through the center of the building separating living from bedroom quarters. The structure is supported on telephone poles braced with cross ties, and the main deck is situated so that it is sheltered from the prevailing winds. Wooden panels, sliding on garage door tracks, can be used to protect the living room window or be moved around to the sides of the deck to provide additional privacy and protection. Materials and finishes are inexpensive: Texture 1-11 plywood covers the interior walls, beams are stained dark brown, railings are made out of plumbing pipes and joints. Cost: \$26,000.



Bedroom window (left) looks out on beach; clerestory (top) helps air circulation and brings in northern light.

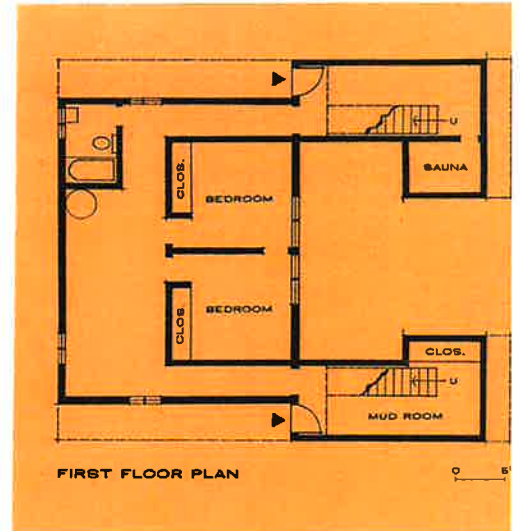
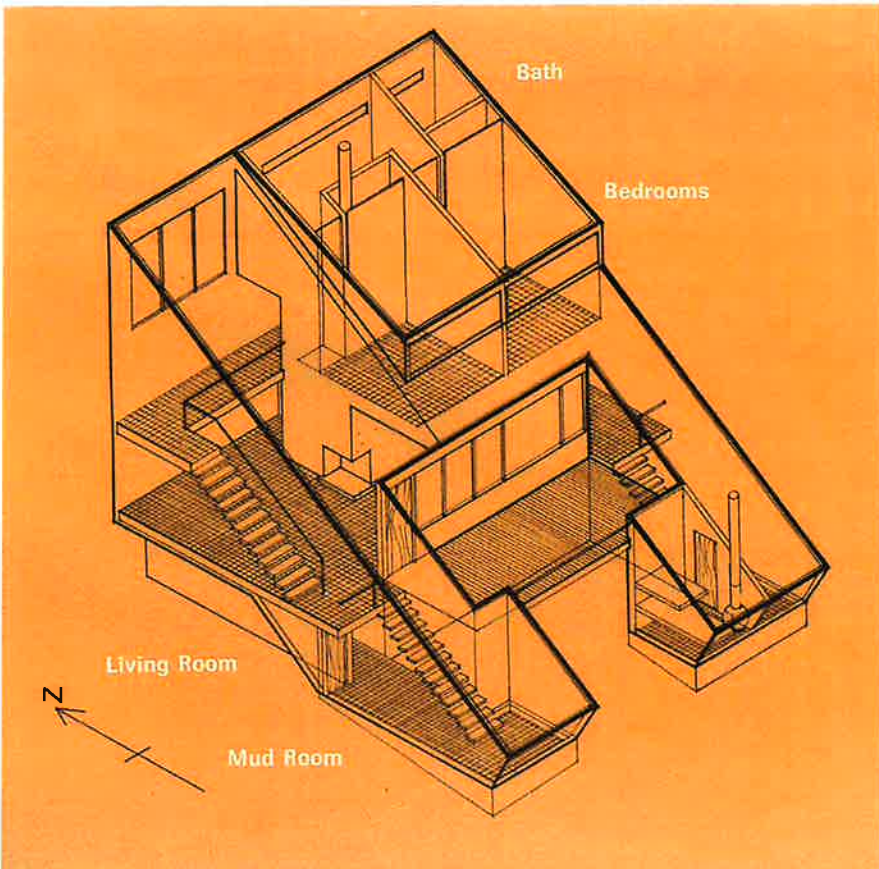


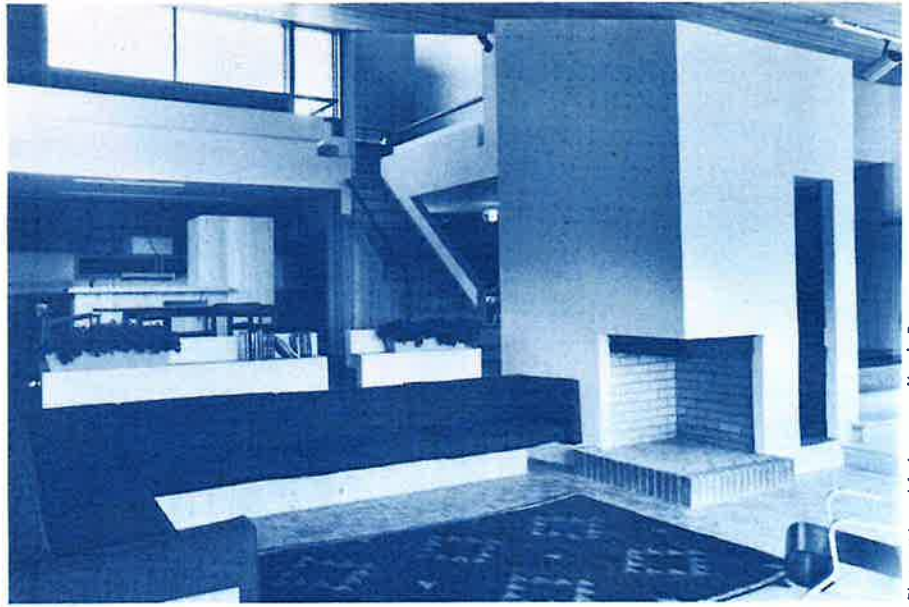
Photos this page: Maude Dorr



Leisure House, Happy Adventure, Newfoundland

Happy Adventure, Newfoundland, 60 miles from Gander, has been burbling for months about its first piece of modern architecture — a house designed by Gluck for Daniel J. Fraad, president of Allied Maintenance (the company that sweeps up around the world — from JFK to Orly airports). There is absolutely nothing to do in Newfoundland, and Fraad's house is not a ski house or a beach house: It is a do-nothing house — a place to sit, contemplate the view, and relax. At its most active, it is a small museum to house Fraad's collection of contemporary paintings and sculpture. Besides ample wall space, the client also specified a full basement, "mud room" (for cleaning off boots, etc.), a Sauna bath, and four bedrooms. The architect fit the house snugly into the hillside and wrapped the structure around a central deck to provide a sheltered outdoor space overlooking the water. Since the house was to be built by a man who could not read, the architect drew up the structure in isometric form instead of making regular working drawings. One of the few structural problems involved the foundation, which had to rest on a rocky ledge susceptible to freezing, expansion, and flaking. To solve the problem, Gluck placed the house on a ring of steel beams, so that if one side tilts, the whole house goes with it. Major materials are local; inside is finished with pine boards, exterior with horizontal bevelled siding. Cost: \$7000 (Construction wages in Newfoundland are \$1 an hour.)

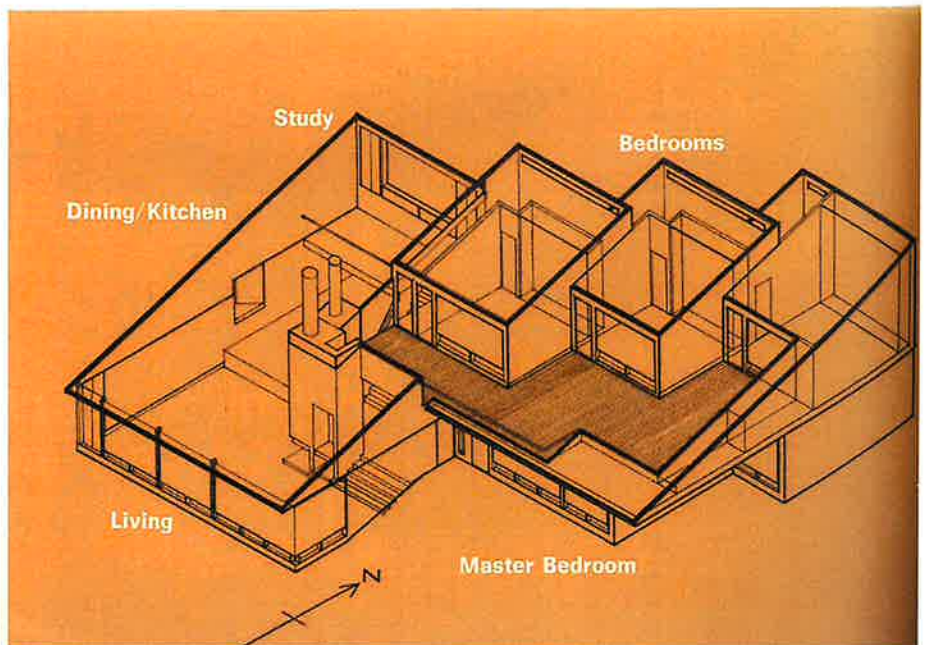
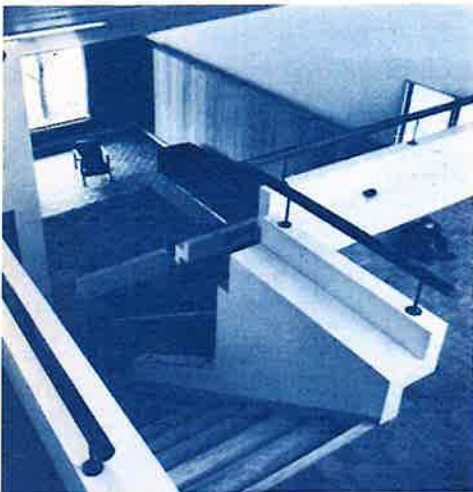


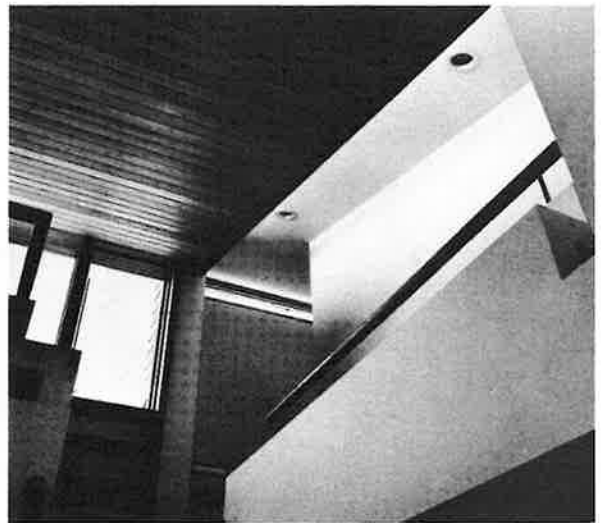
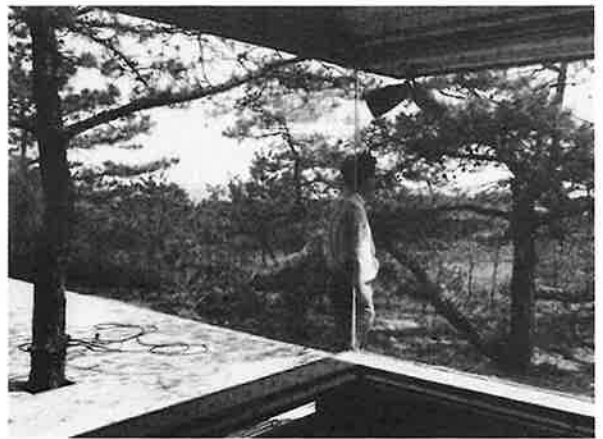
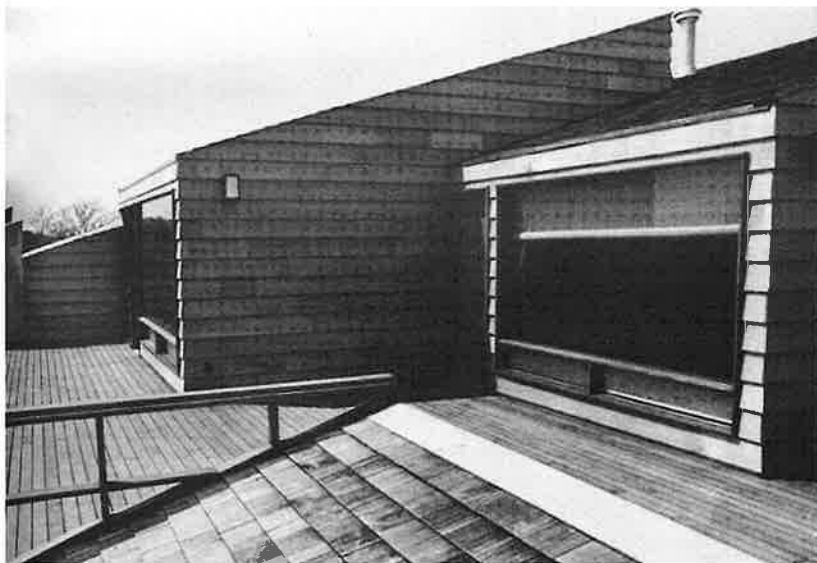
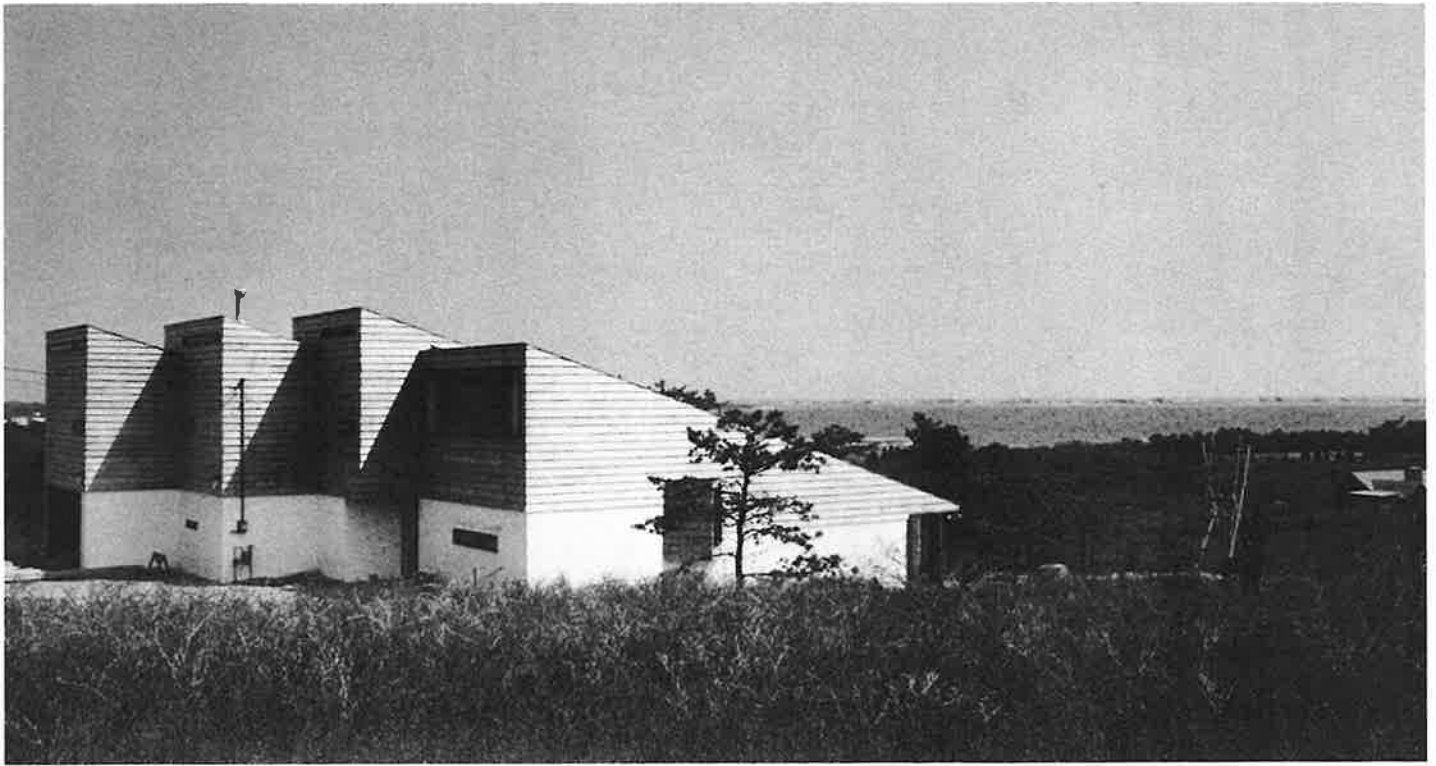


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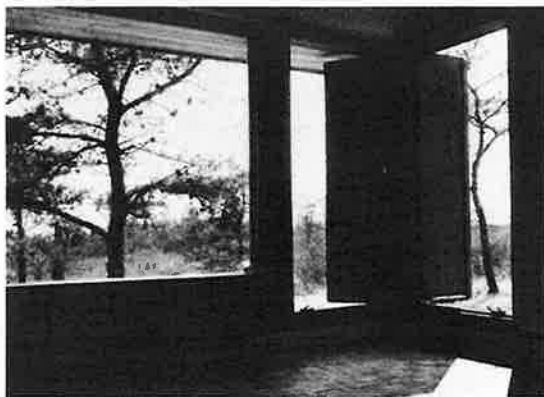
House, Southampton, L. I.

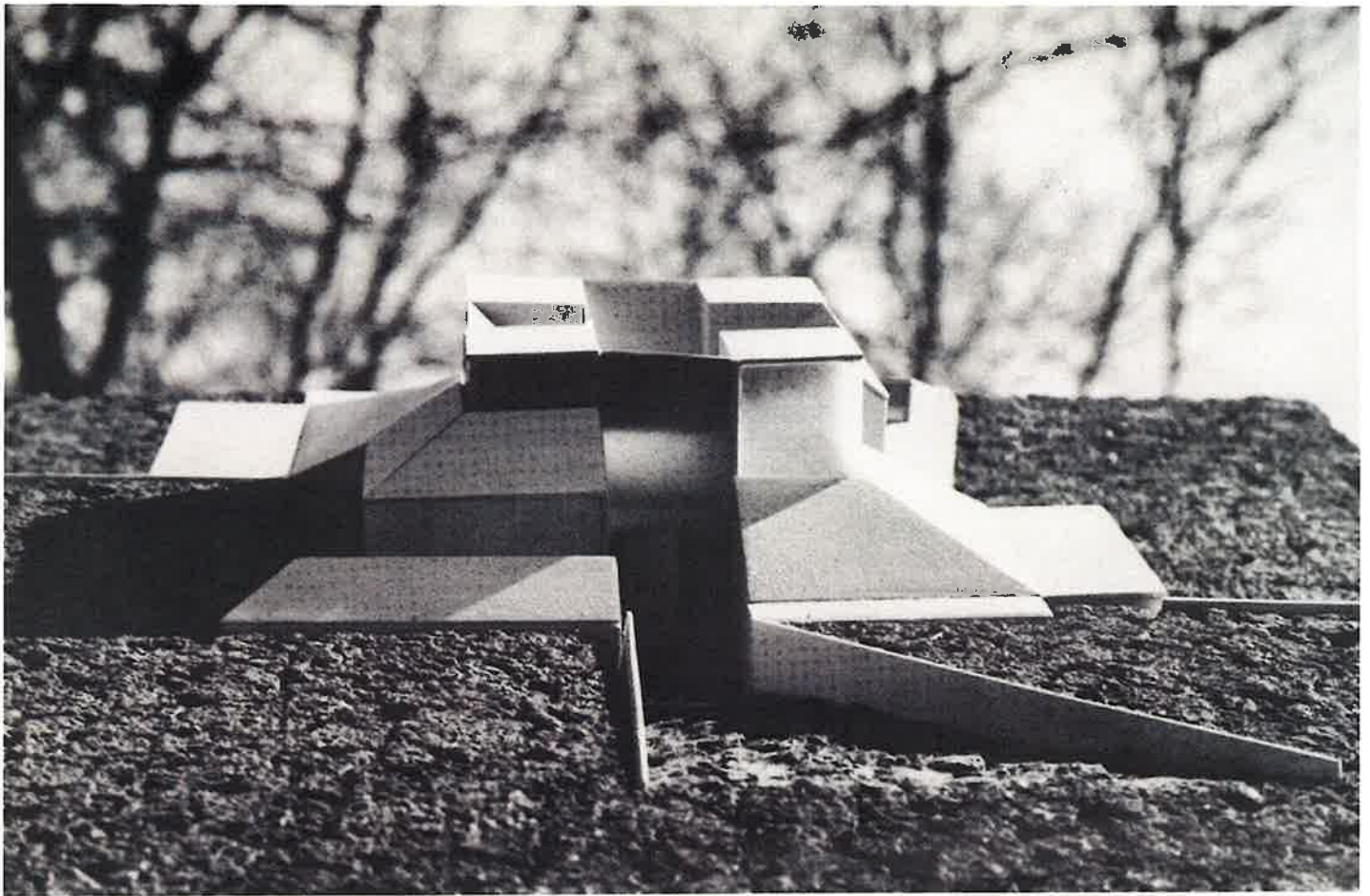
This permanent residence is the most complex of Gluck's finished designs, and the most sophisticated in its arrangement of spaces. Privacy, which is again stressed by placing the bedrooms in a wing separate from the living room area, is reinforced by staggering the rooms so that there are individual sheltered spaces on the adjacent deck and in the corridor. The client, who wanted a large living room and a kitchen adjoining the dining room, got one huge space terraced up the hill, with living, dining-kitchen, and study areas on different levels. Since the owner is in the lumber business, he also wanted his house to be a showcase for his materials; the floors are finished in teak, and the walls partially covered with Obecke mahogany. The house slopes down the hill with the site overlooking Shinnecock Bay, and is positioned so that the corner living-room window takes advantage of one spectacular craggy pine. All the glass windows in the house are fixed and the space is ventilated with movable wooden shutters in screen casings. Air will flow naturally from the bottom of the living room, up past the kitchen, and out the openings at the top. Cost: Approximately \$50,000 for 3500 sq ft.





*All glass in house is fixed;
wood shutters below or to
the side of windows open
out for ventilation.*





Model House, Armonk, N.Y.

As luck would have it, the client decided not to build the last of these Gluck houses, which is the most interesting of the five designs. The house, which was to be situated in the middle of the woods in Armonk, N.Y., is shaped like a pinwheel. The numerous projections and indentations of the exterior circumference were designed to carve out different outdoor spaces in a fairly homogenous landscape. Since the thick woods would keep out a great deal of sunlight, the center of the structure reaches up like an enormous funnel, bouncing daylight into the rooms at the four corners and into center of the house. Again, the geometry of the plan grows out of requirements for privacy. The main rooms are isolated from one another, with central pivot point holding them loosely together and providing a common circulation area. This central court was to have a small garden.

"There are many different kinds of spaces and places in this house," comments Gluck, "— ledges and roofs to walk on, on the outside; corners and different levels of rooms on the interior. Perhaps someone someday, will build it."

