

# 50 Years of Houses

Brian Shawcroft AIA

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By Brian Shawcroft AIA

With an introduction by Paul Tesar PhD



## Modern beyond their years: The Houses of Brian Shawcroft

For almost five decades now many of us have been aware of Brian Shawcroft's many notable contributions to the architectural and artistic culture of this state, and there probably is no better way to demonstrate the architectural values and principles that inform his prolific oeuvre than this collection of his houses. All twenty-three of them were built in North Carolina between 1961 and 2007, all but a handful in the Triangle area, and most of them for clients who were faculty members at either Duke University, UNC-Chapel Hill, or NC State University. Perhaps more than any other architectural project, the house – the most fundamental of all architectural tasks – offers us the most revealing opportunity to assess what an architect is really made of. In many ways the history of Modern Architecture can be written by the seminal houses designed by its most distinguished protagonists.

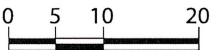
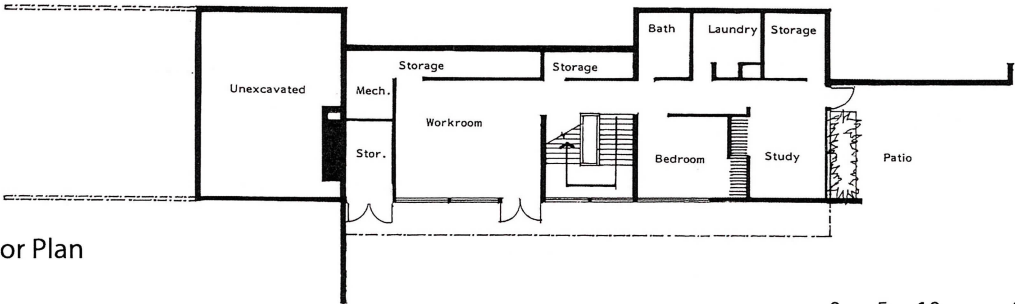
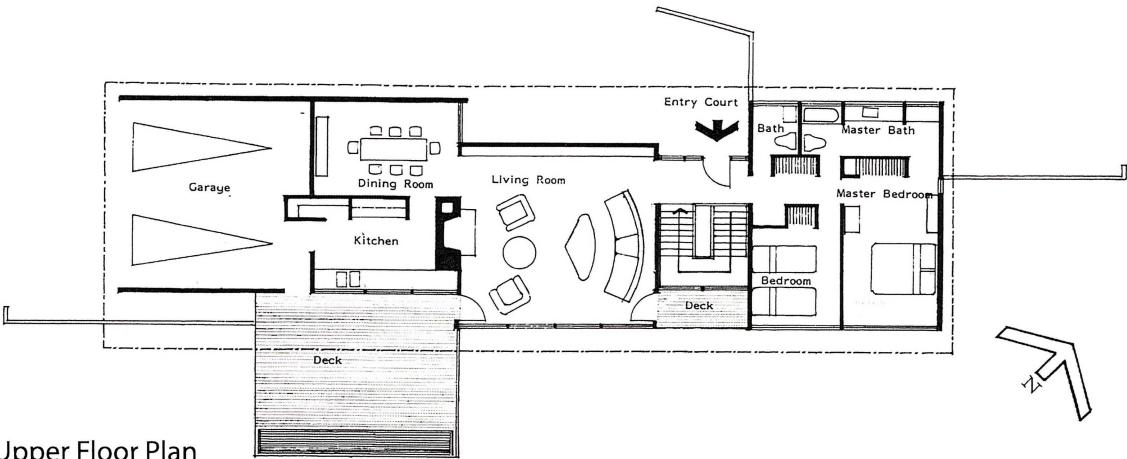
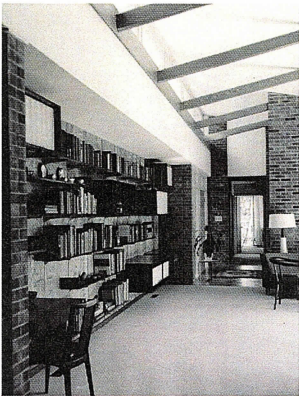
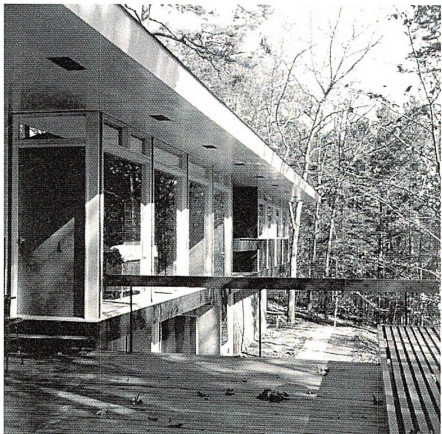
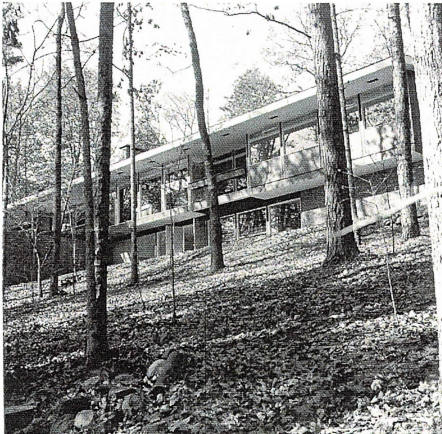
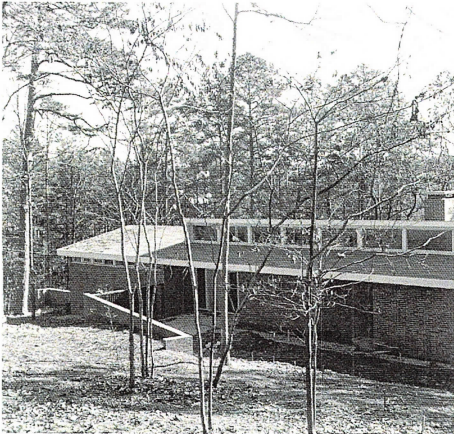
From the very beginning, Brian always seemed to know with unerring certainty what he was after in his houses: an architecture that is functional, unpretentious, site- and climate-specific, responsive to the needs of clients, and well-built out of appropriate local materials that withstand the test of time and the elements. Yet saying only the obvious would miss the their less apparent qualities: embedded in this economy of means flourishes a rich world of well-proportioned spaces of simple elegance – sometimes intimate, sometimes dramatic – seamlessly flowing into one another and connecting inside and outside as if they were one. The houses dare us to step out of our patterns of conventional domesticity: they inspire patterns of living that are more rational, more poetic, and more in tune with the rhythms of nature, of place, and of the seasons than the ones we have inherited from tradition. These houses are provocative

Without imposing an ideology; they are intimate without promoting any sense of complacency; they challenge our preconceptions without compromising our need for comfort and security. And yes, they also have been “green” long before that term was even invented.

Upon closer examination we discover other dimensions they have in common: a predilection for floor plans that are based on squares; clear volumetric compositions; carefully studied entry sequences, often leading over decks, terraces, or through entry courts; no aversion to sloping roofs and – where appropriate – overhangs; the thoughtful use of clerestories and skylights to illuminate and to articulate interior space; and always an uncompromising attention to details. We also notice that the most recent houses have lost nothing of the youthful spirit of the earlier ones. If anything, they have become only truer to their own most essential qualities, qualities that had the opportunity to evolve over half a century of single-minded practice.

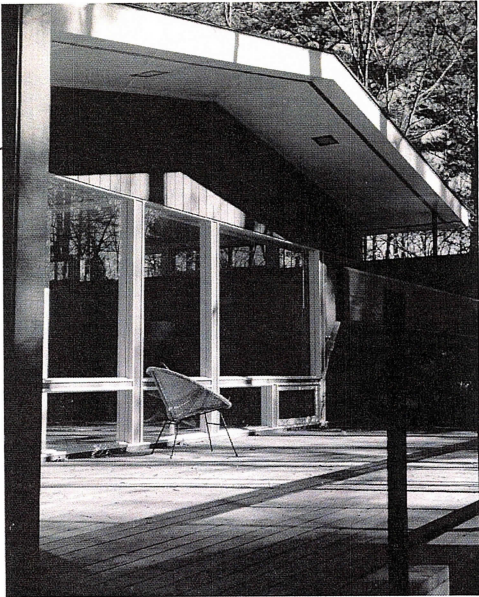
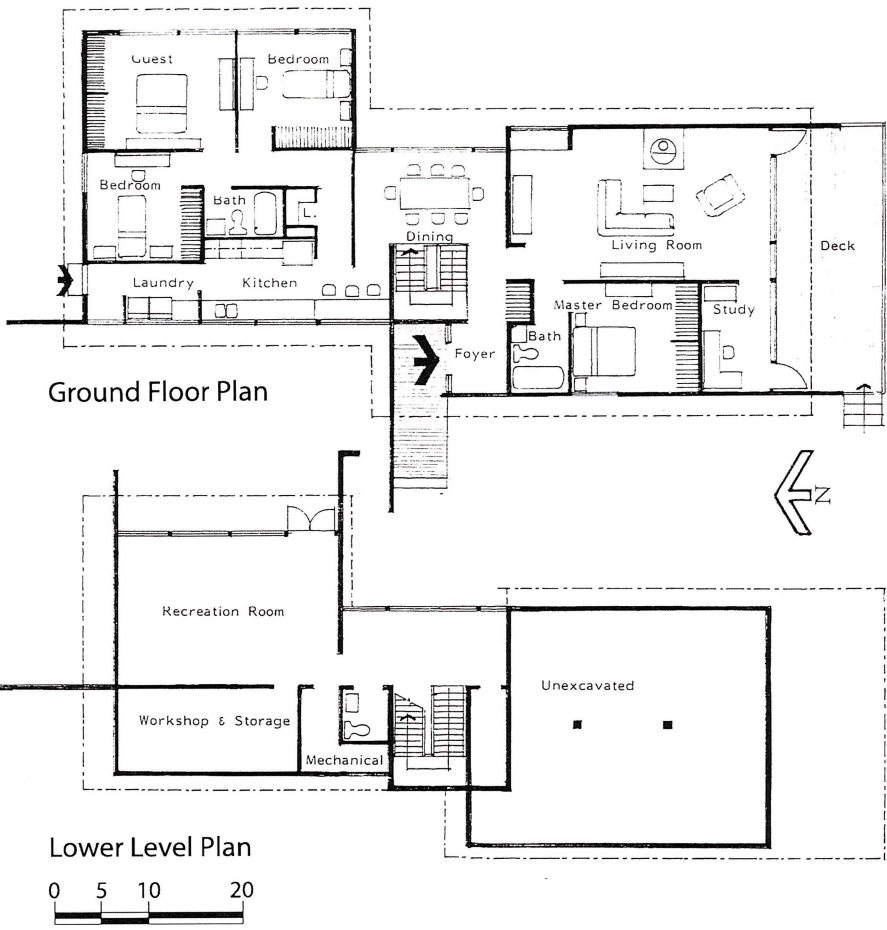
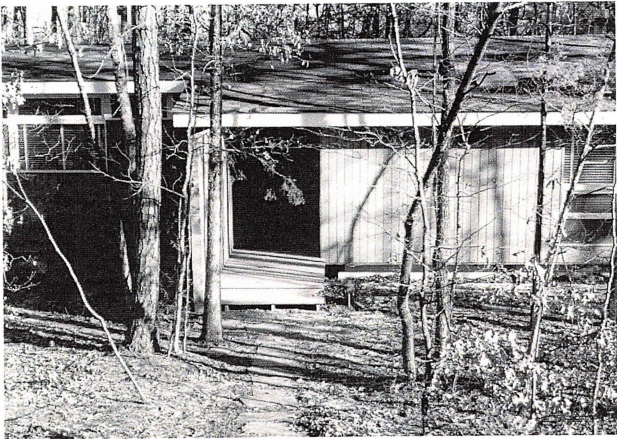
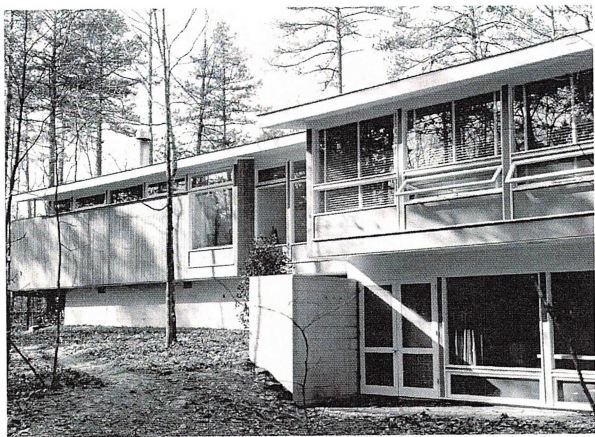
Paul Tesar PhD  
Alumni Distinguished Professor of Architecture  
North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
June 2011

Work Residence  
Chapel Hill, NC 1961  
The American Institute of Architects, in cooperation with House & Home and Life, Award of Merit  
North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects Award of Merit



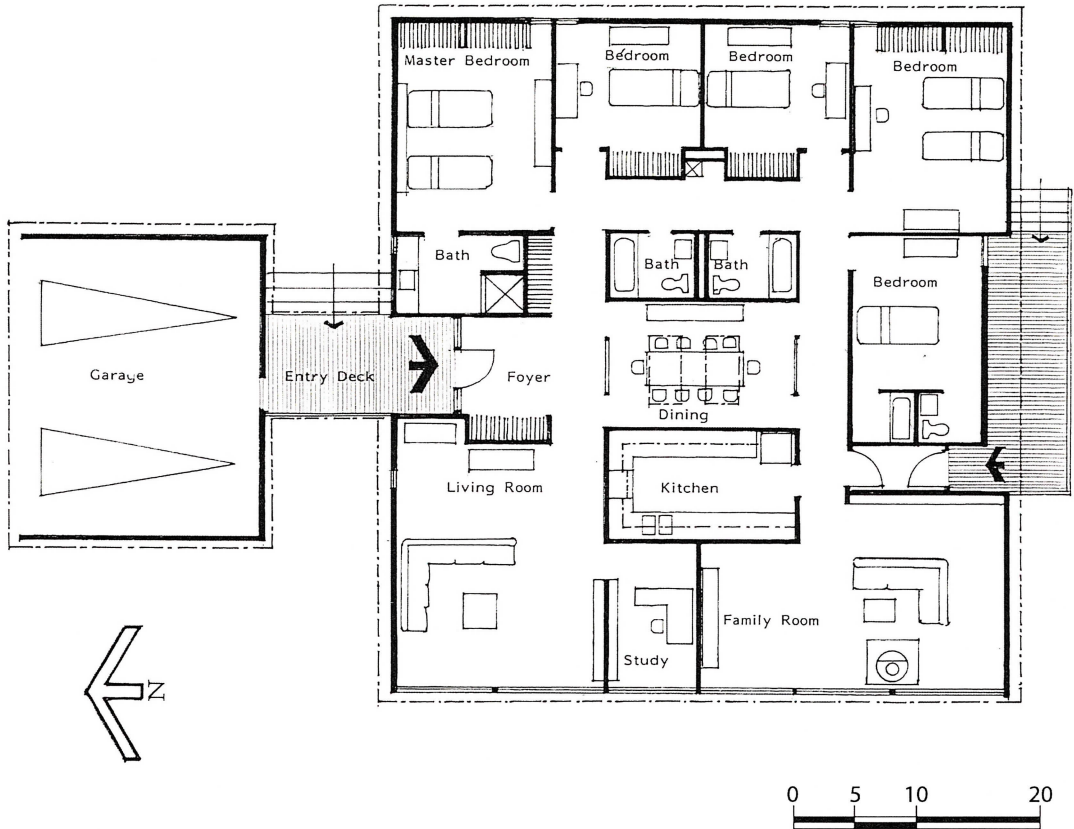
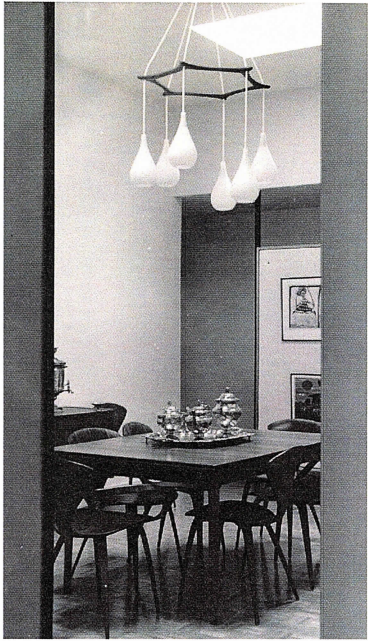
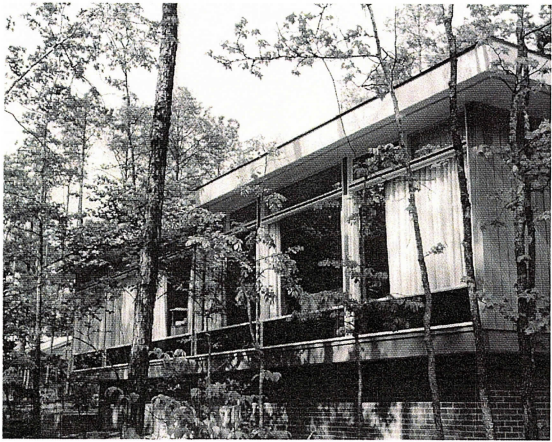
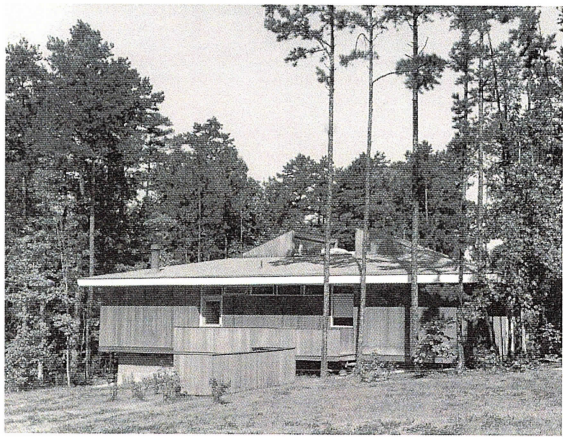


Gerhard Residence  
Durham, NC 1962





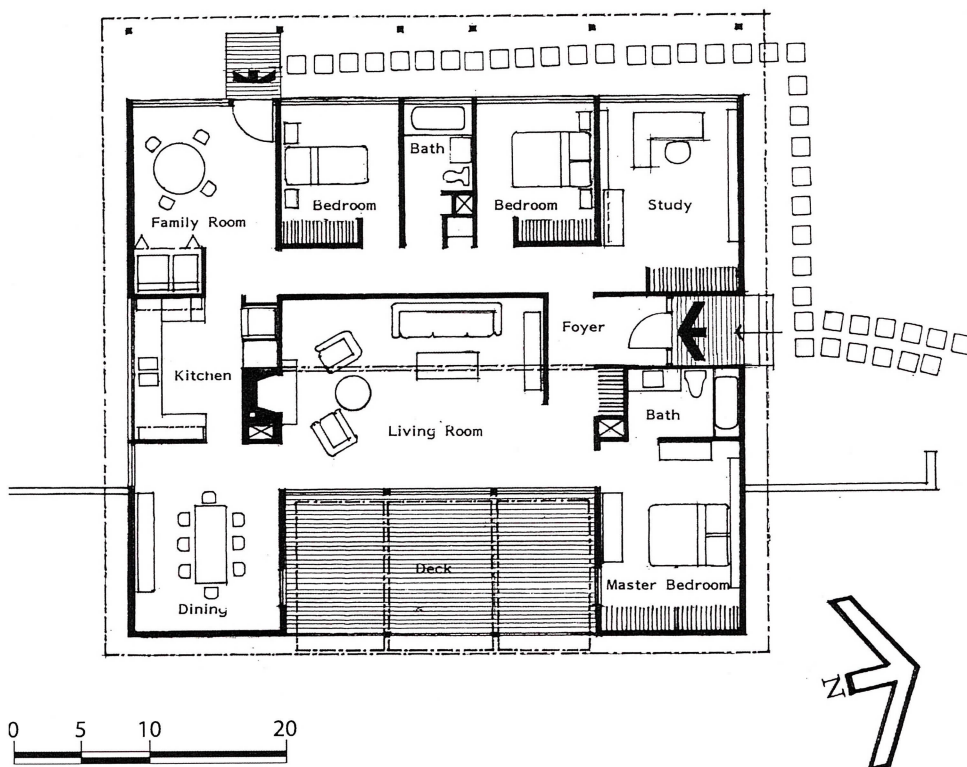
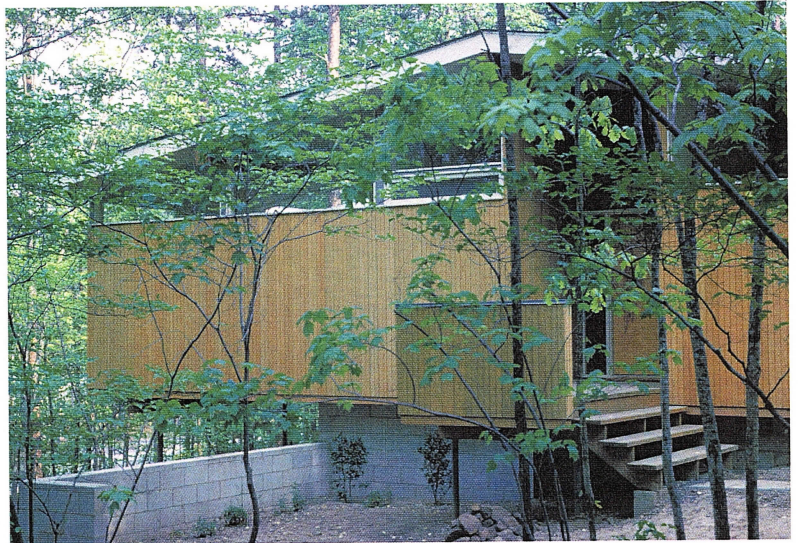
Kaufman Residence  
Durham, NC 1962





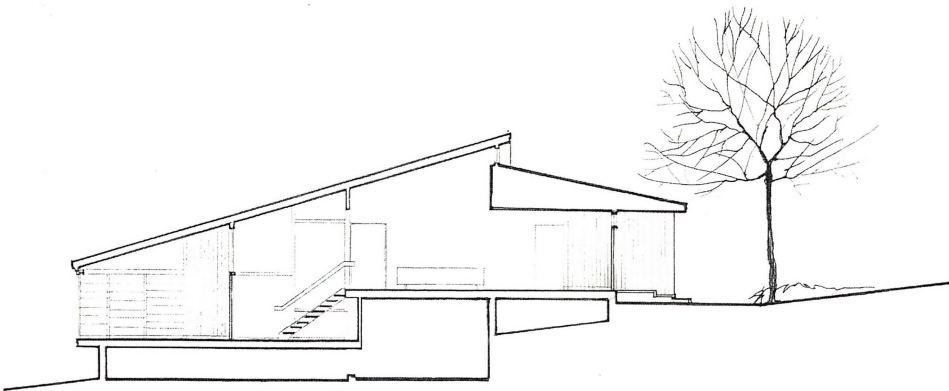
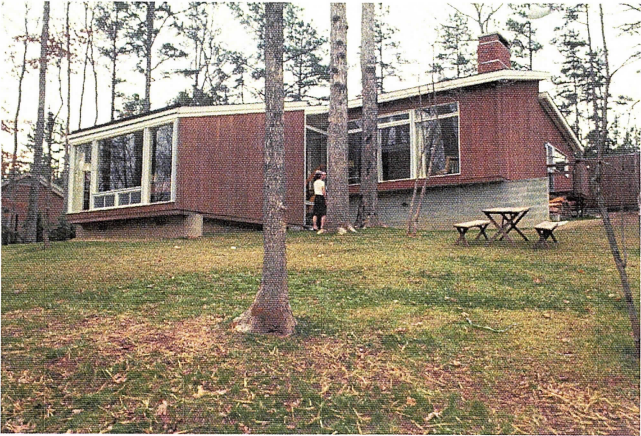
# De Alessi Residence

Durham, NC 1962

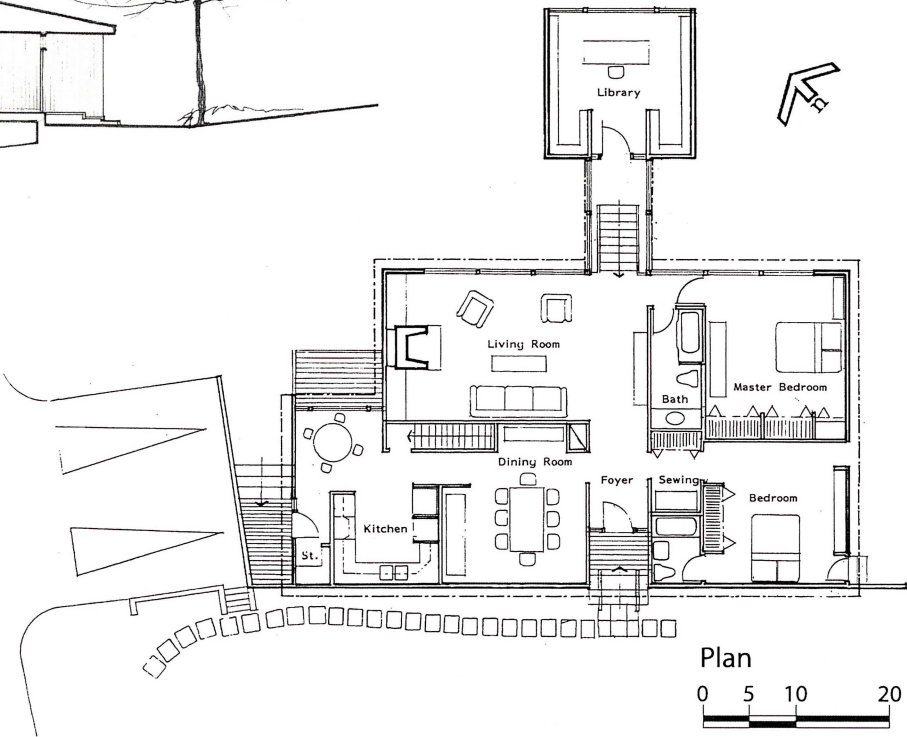
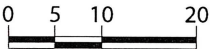




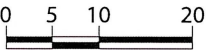
Wardropper Residence  
Durham, NC 1963



Section



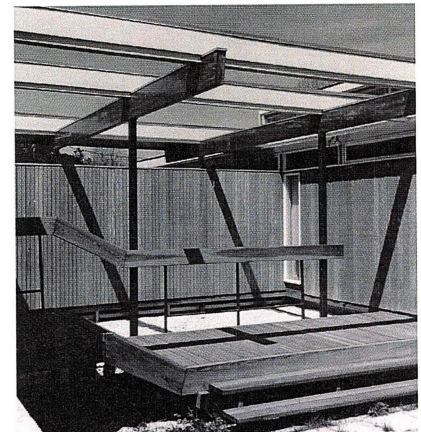
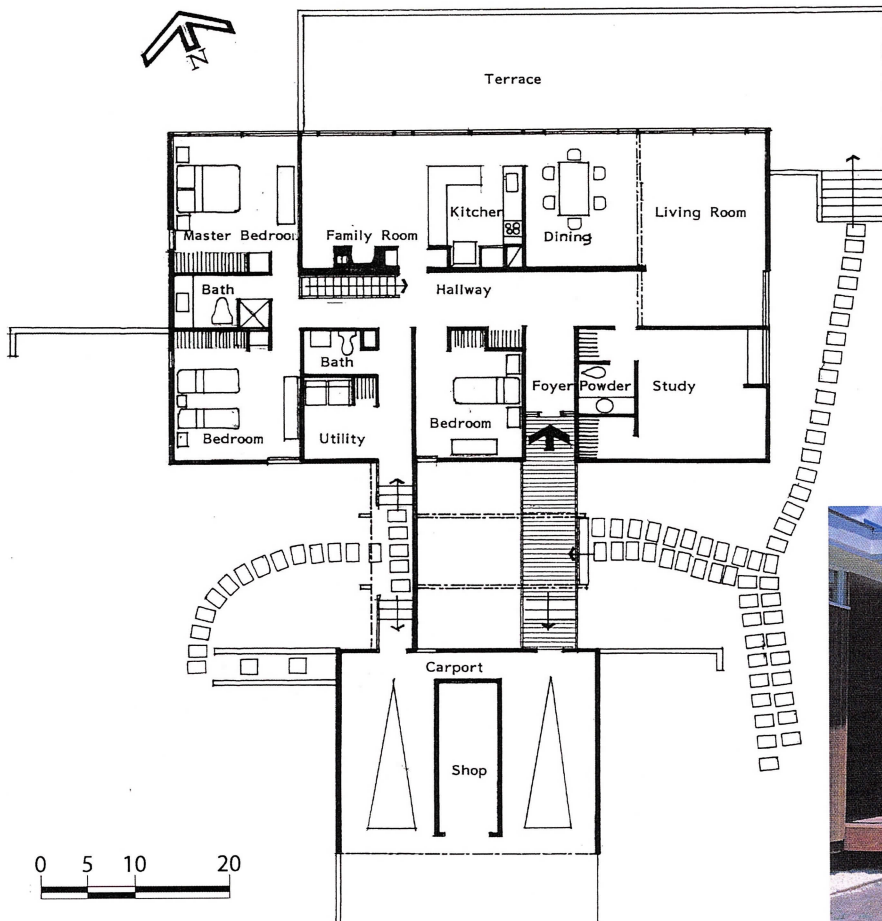
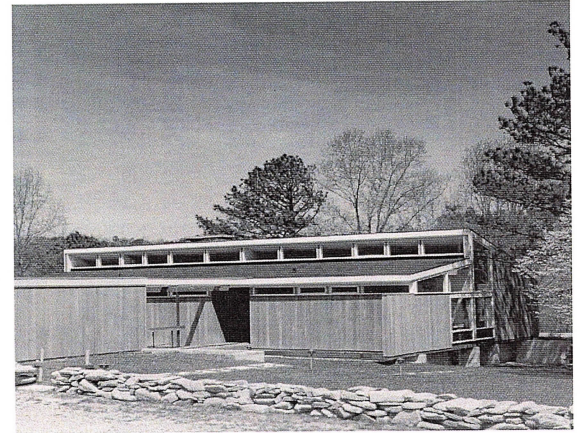
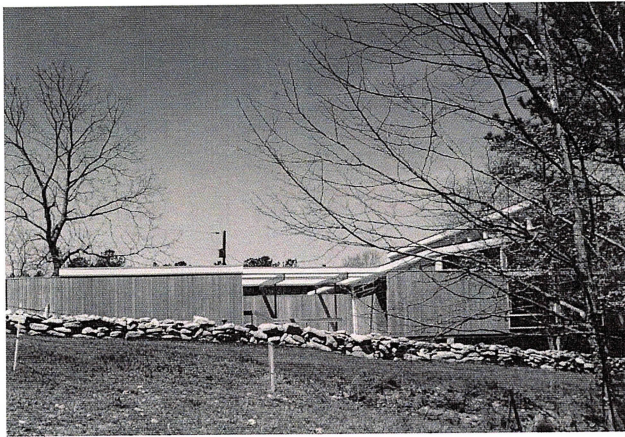
Plan





# Martin Residence

Raleigh, NC 1964  
Demolished





# Seanor Residence Chapel Hill, NC 1965

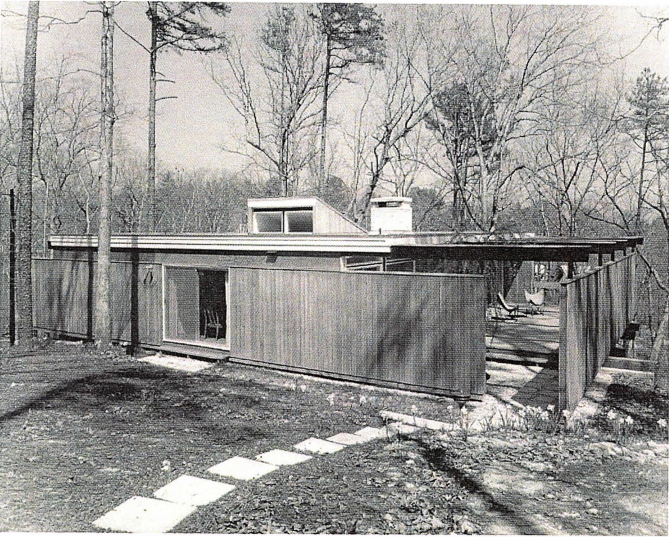


Photo Credit: Taylor Lewis & Associates

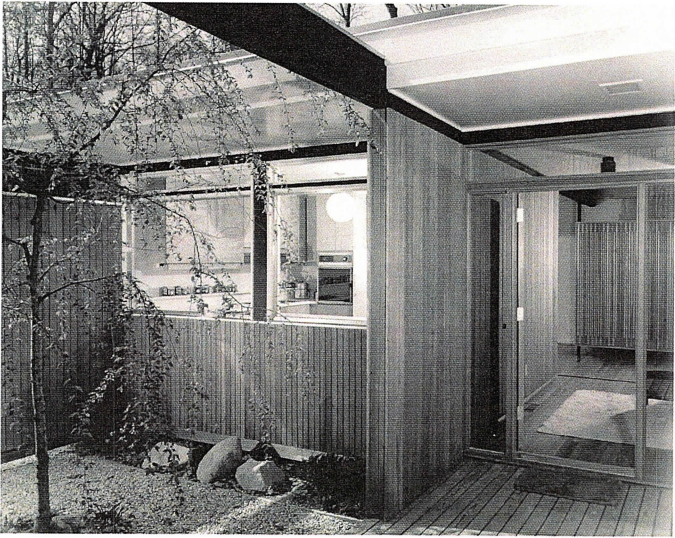
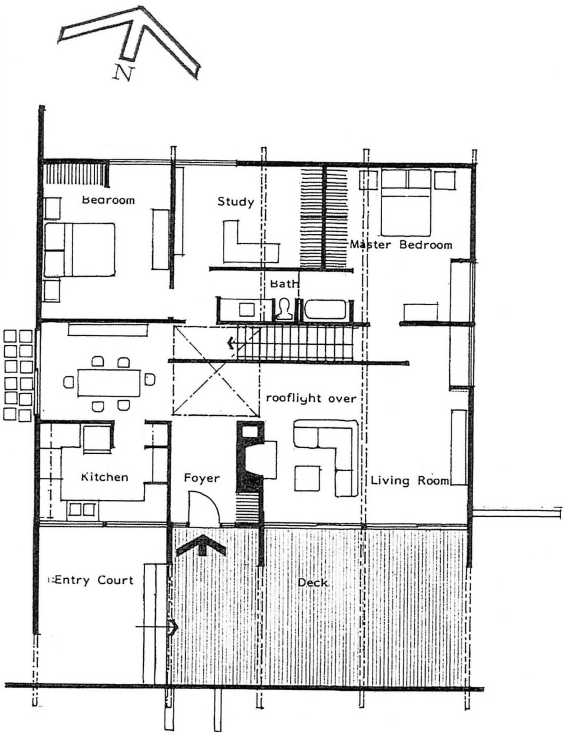
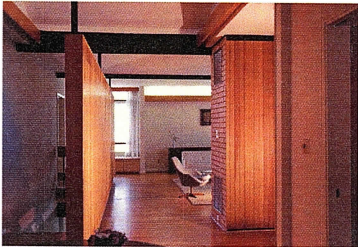
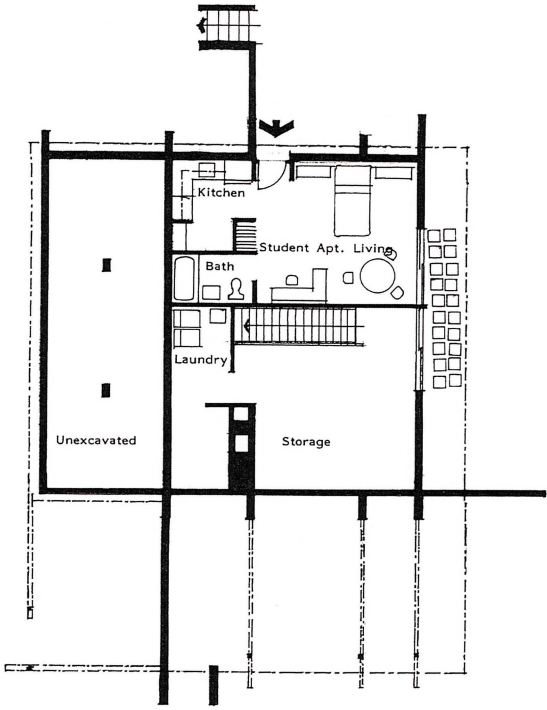


Photo Credit: Taylor Lewis & Associates



Ground Floor Plan



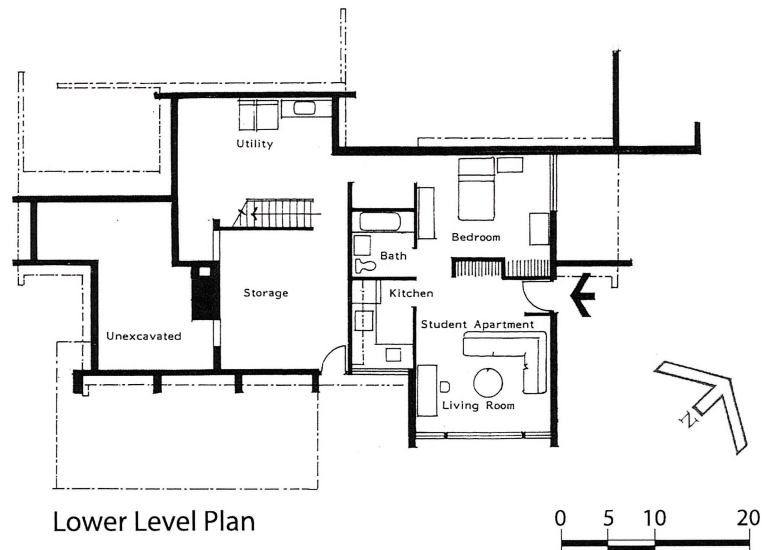
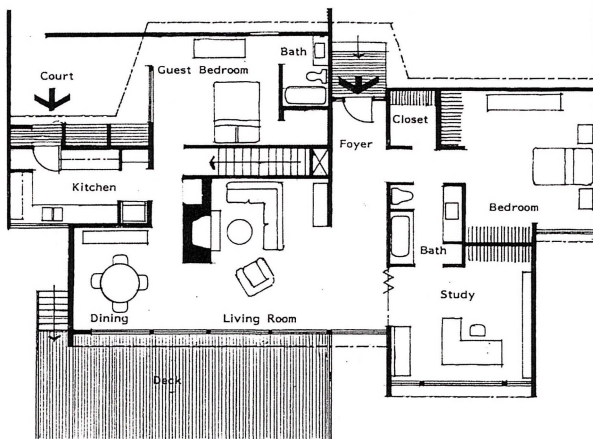
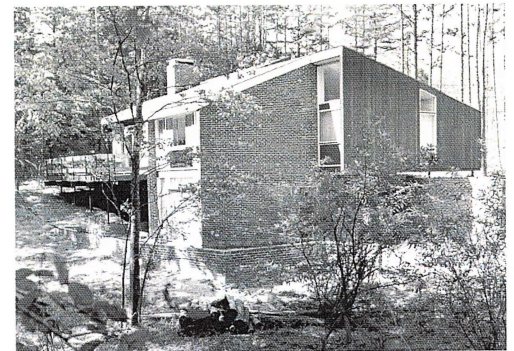
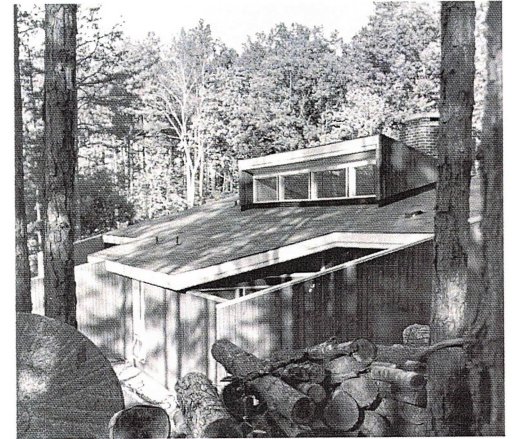
Lower Level Plan





# Watkins Residence

Chapel Hill, NC 1966





Work Residence  
Raleigh, NC 1966

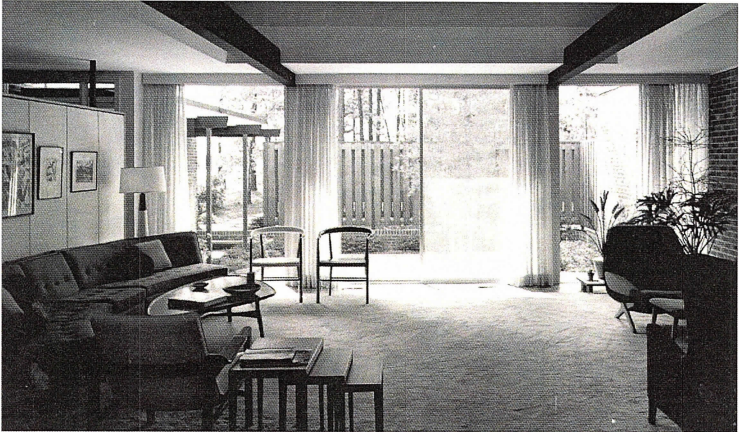
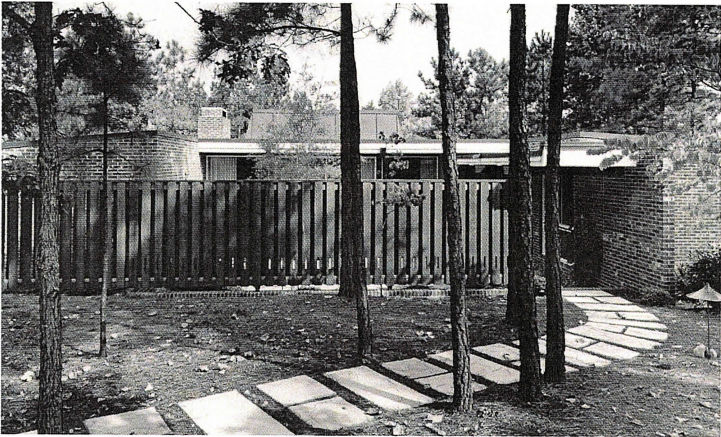
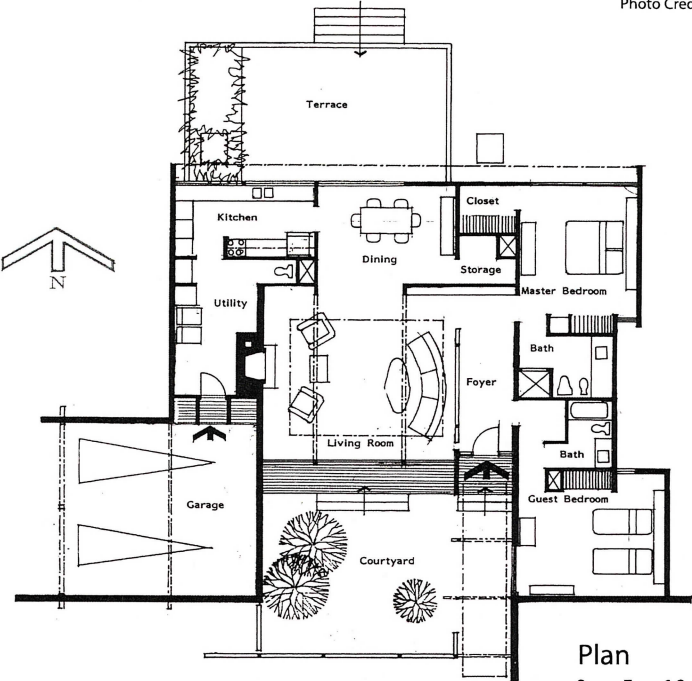
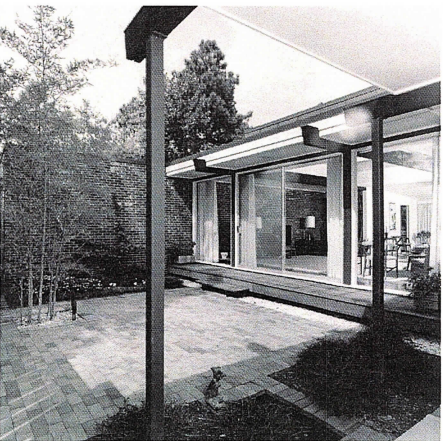
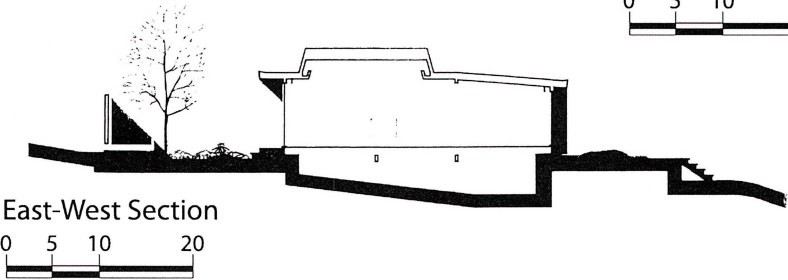


Photo Credit: Taylor Lewis & Associates



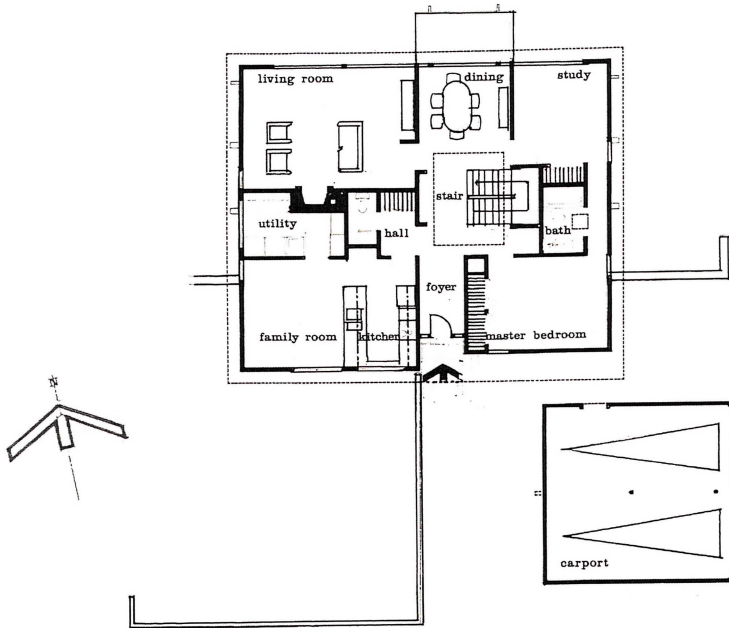
Plan  
0 5 10 20



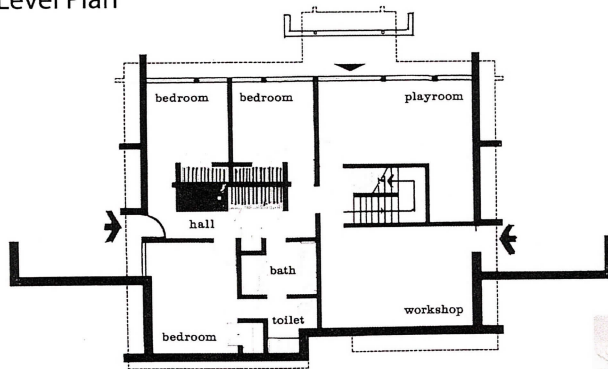
East-West Section  
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# Knoerr Residence Durham, NC 1968

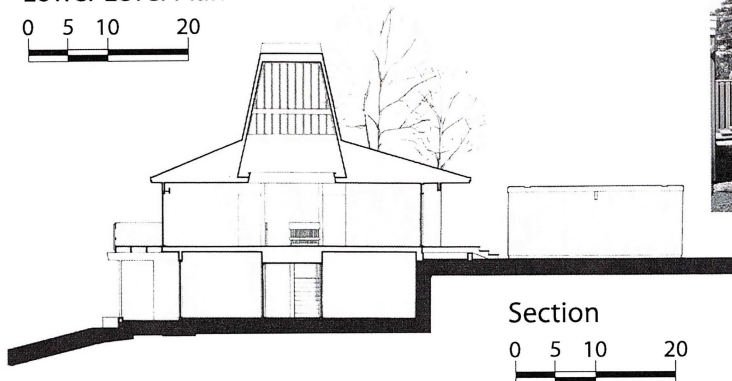


Upper Level Plan



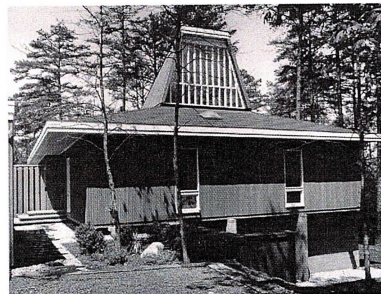
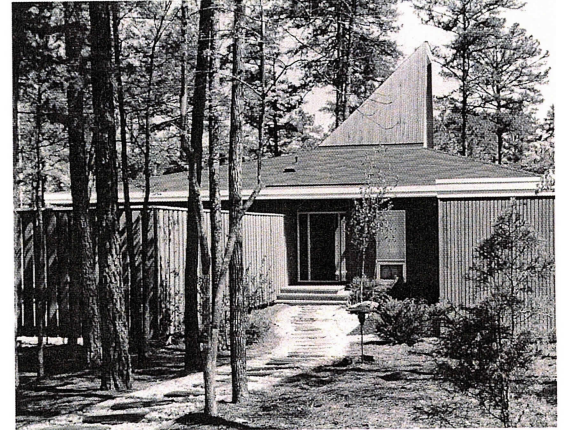
Lower Level Plan

0 5 10 20



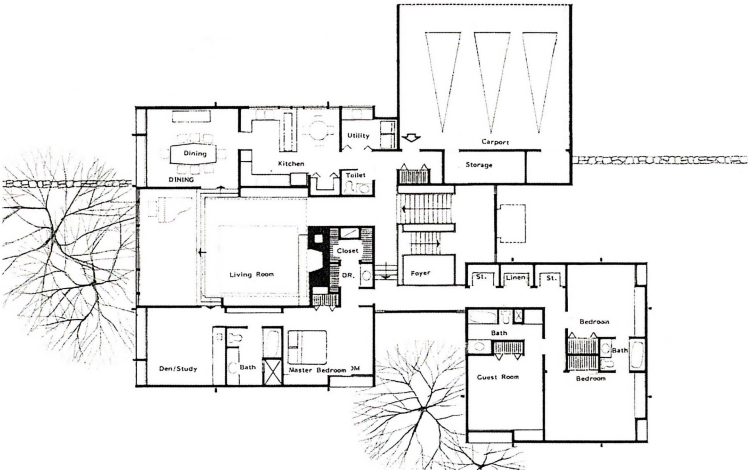
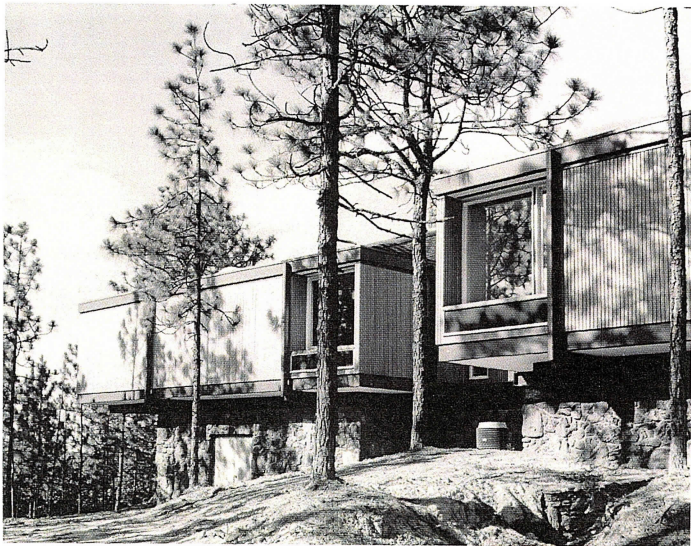
Section

0 5 10 20

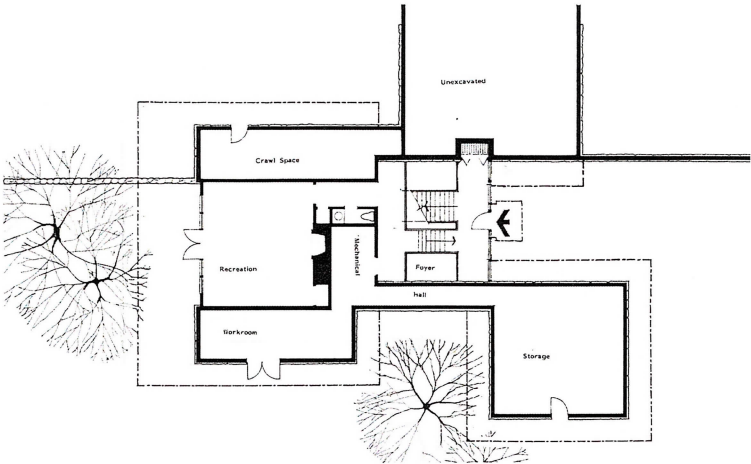




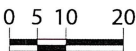
Stack Residence  
Fayetteville, NC 1971  
Destroyed by fire



Upper Floor Plan

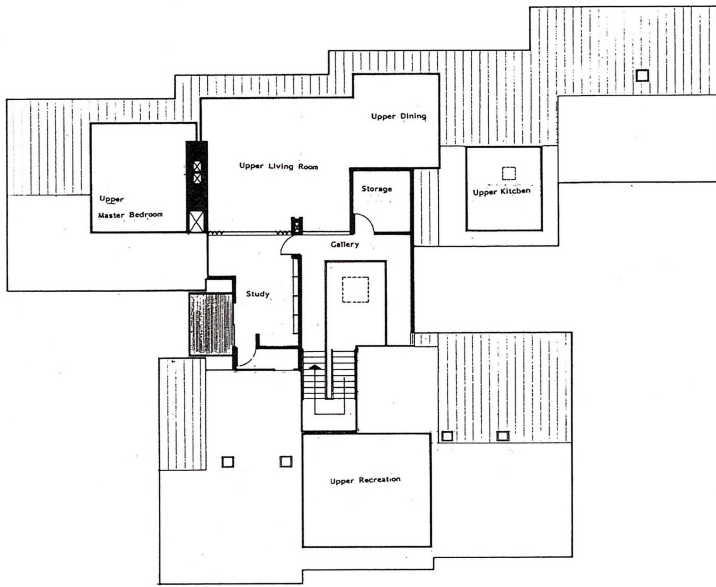


Lower Floor Plan

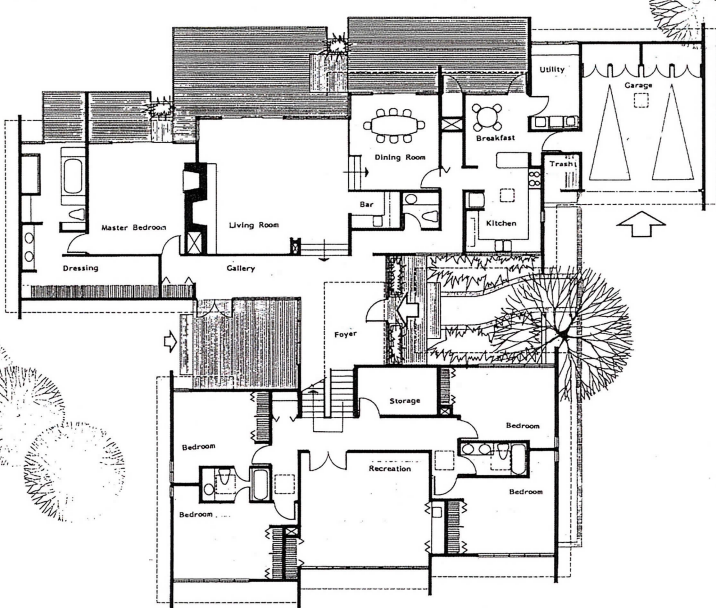


# Fulton Residence

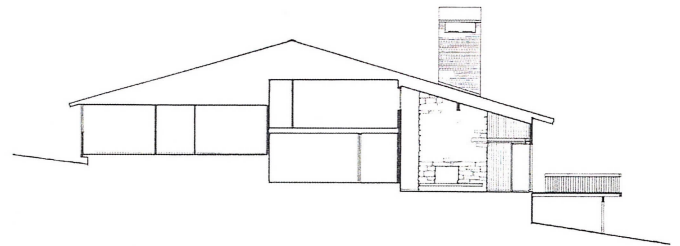
Raleigh, NC 1975  
Demolished



Upper Floor Plan



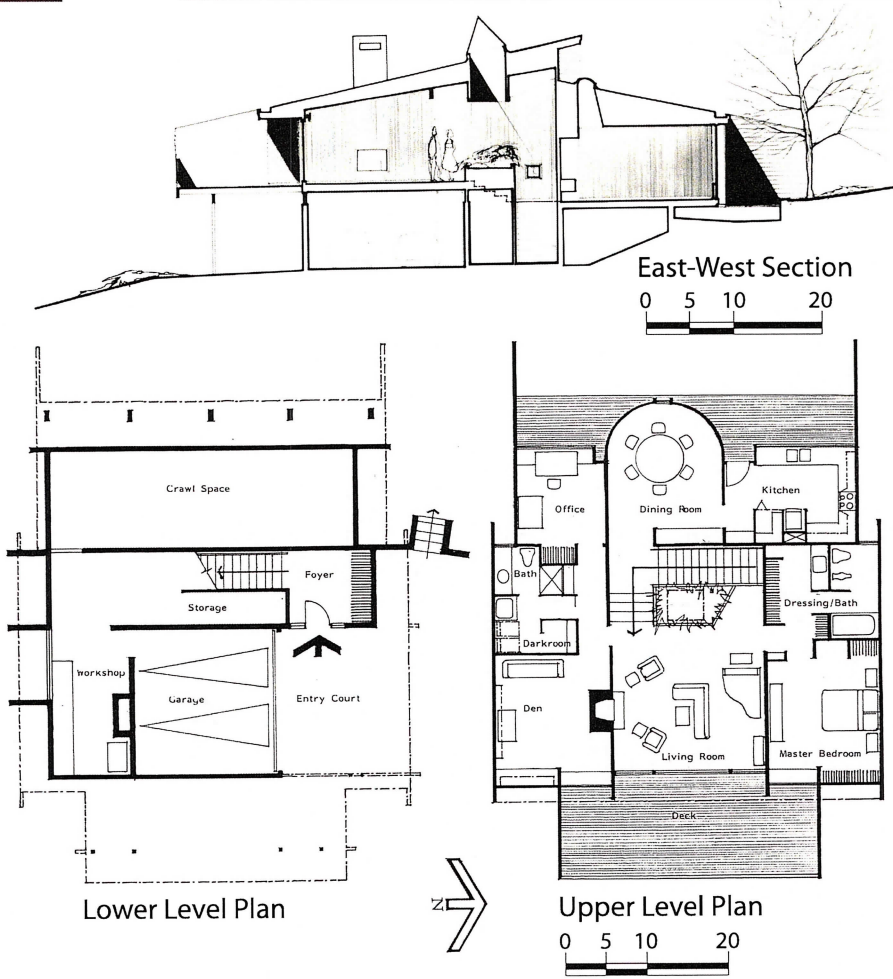
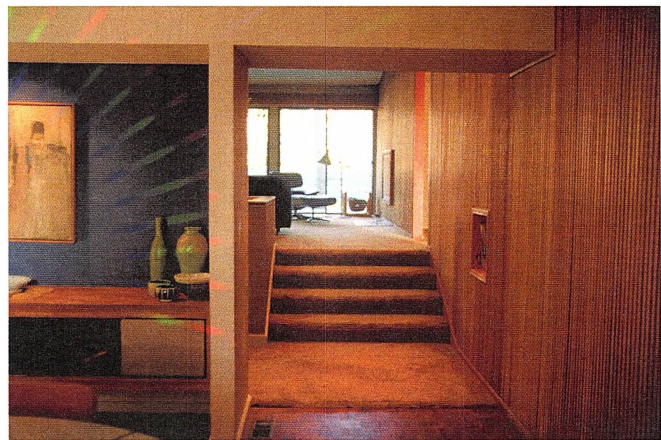
Lower Floor Plan



Section through living room



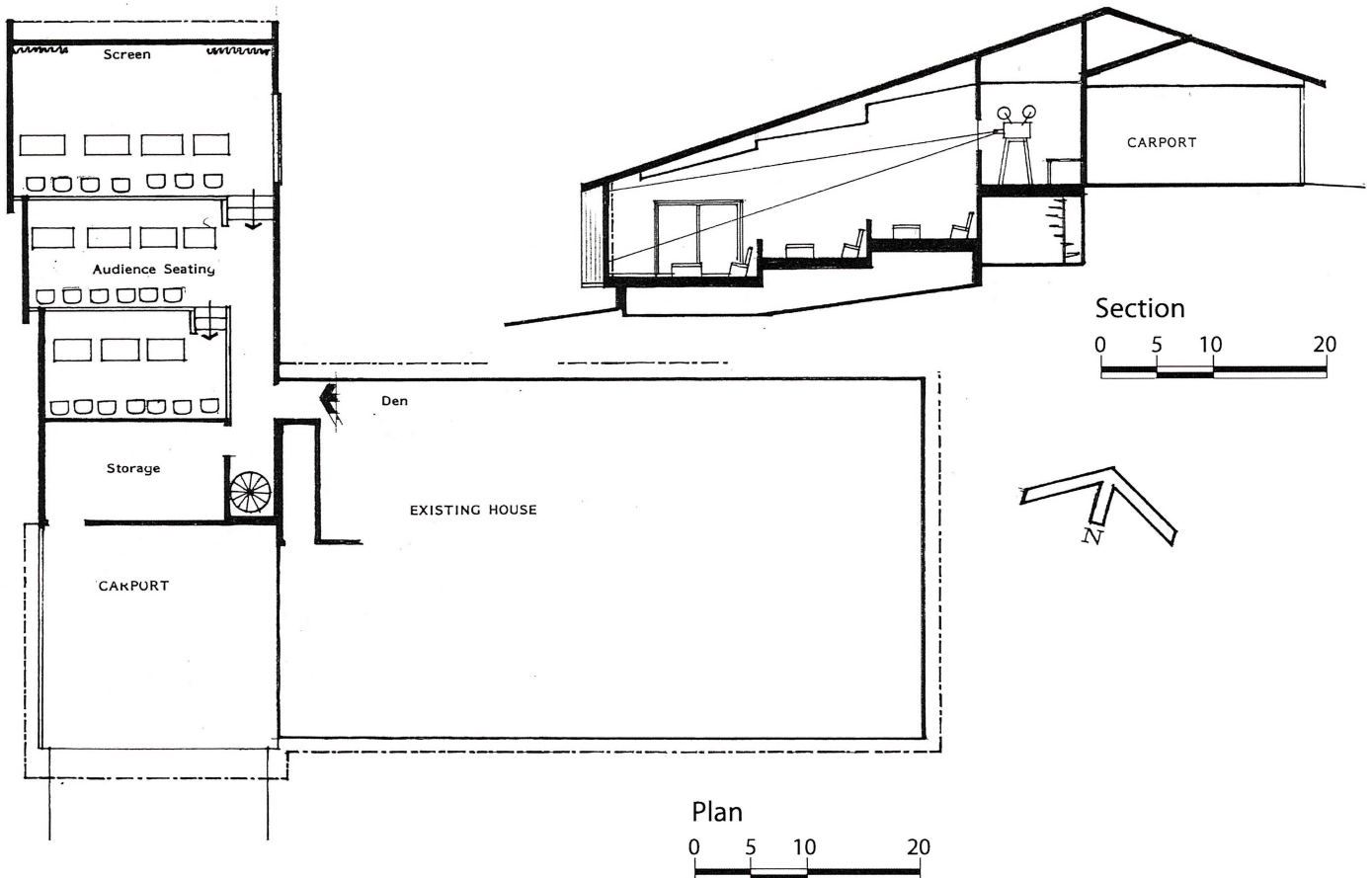
Shawcroft Residence  
Raleigh, NC 1976





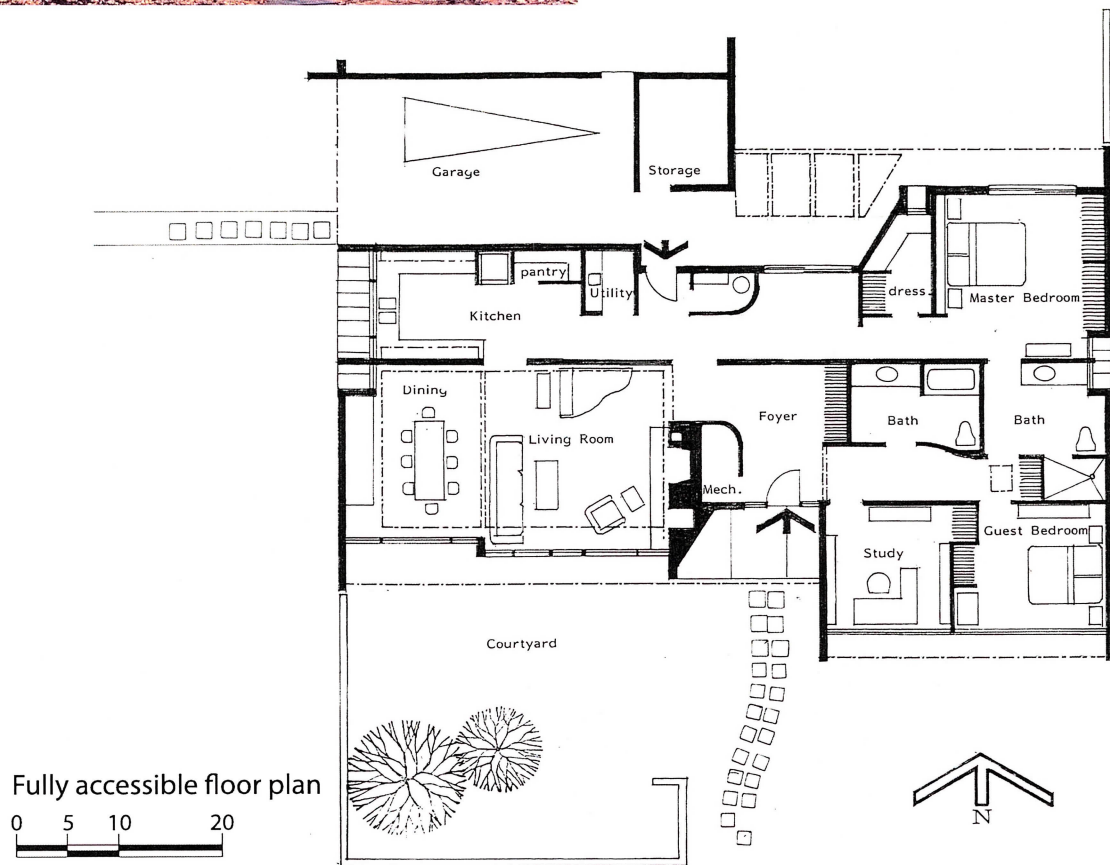
# Wolfheimer Theater Addition

Raleigh, NC 1976





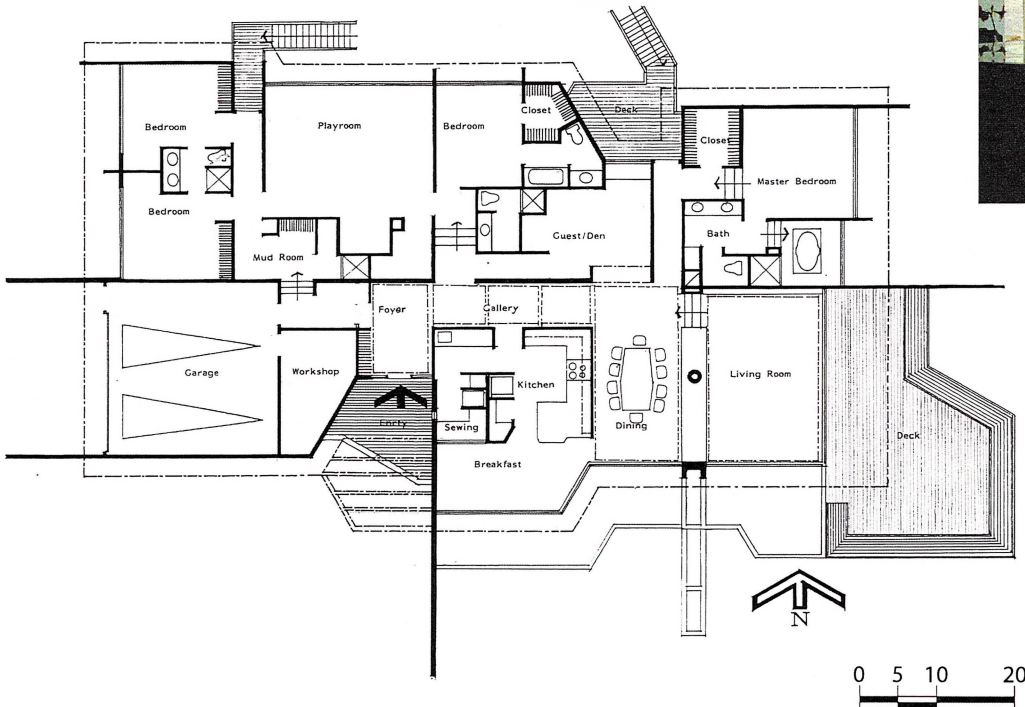
McVay Residence  
Raleigh, NC 1982





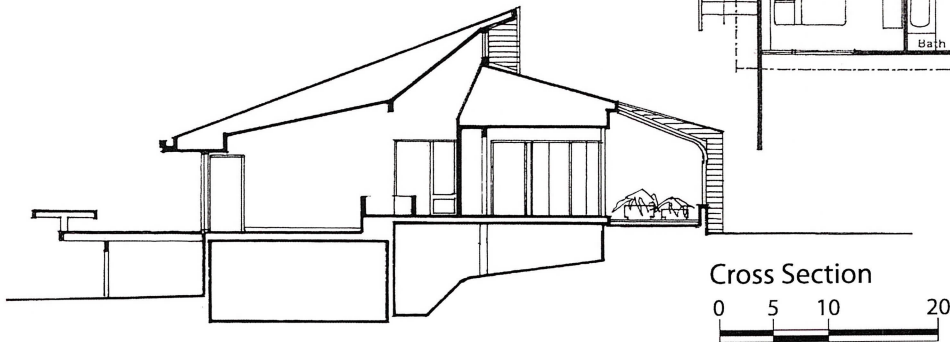
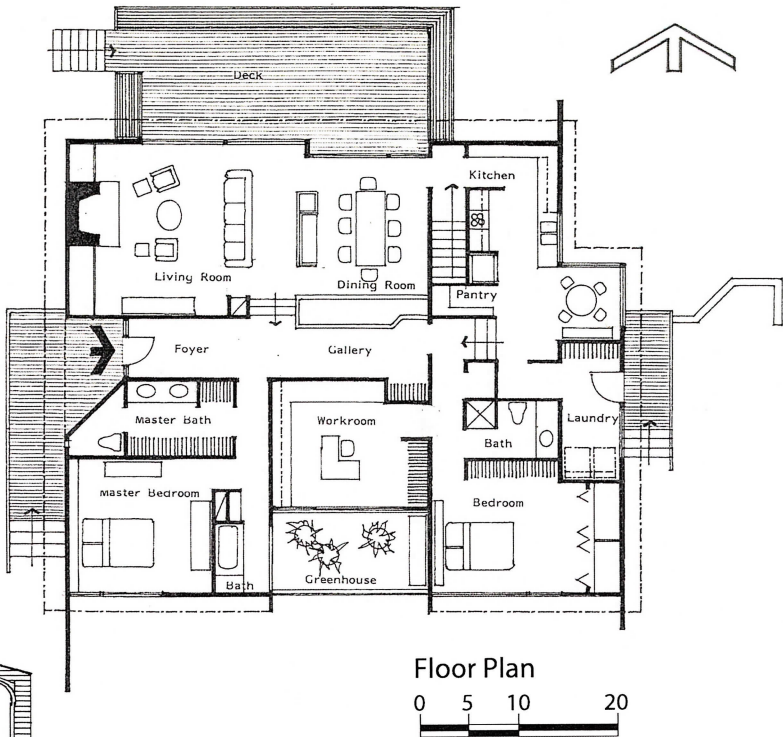
# Haakenson Residence

Raleigh, NC 1983





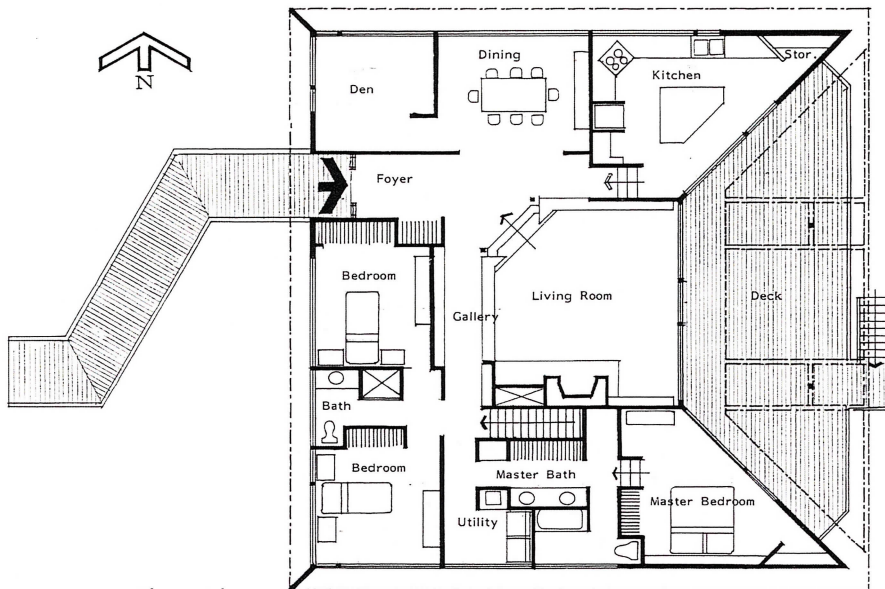
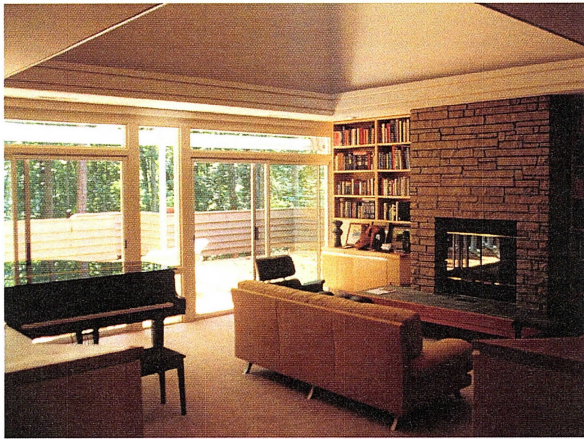
Finkel Residence  
Oxford, NC 1990



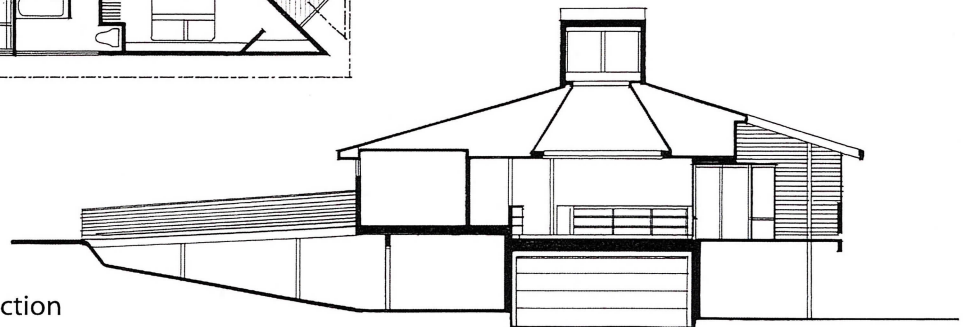


# Nelson Residence

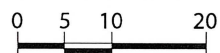
Raleigh, NC 1993



Floor Plan

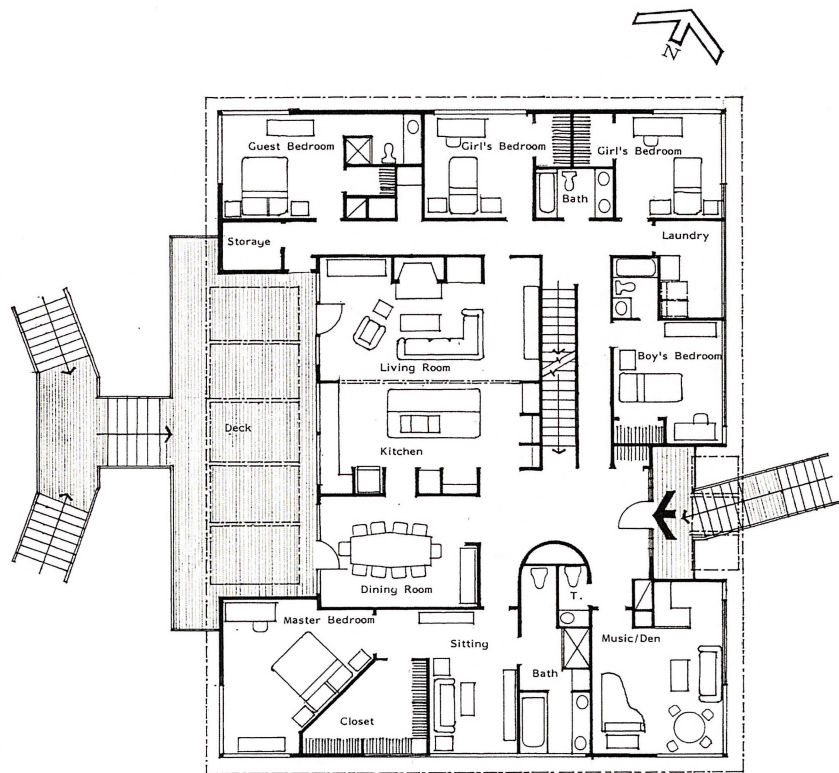
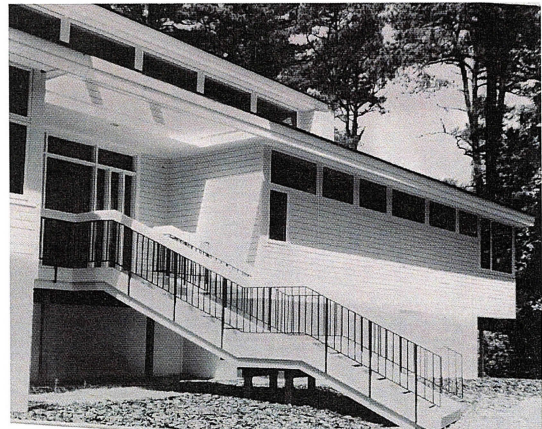
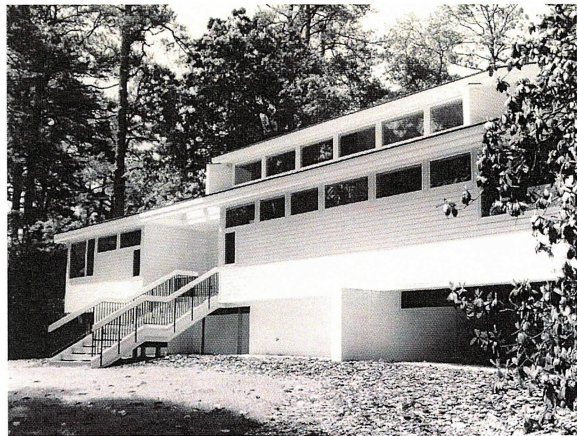
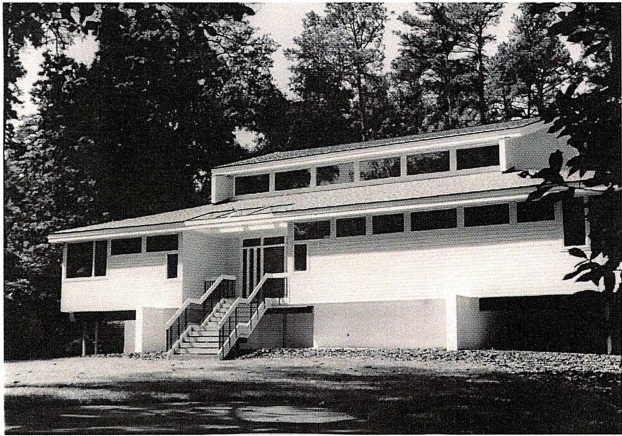


East-West Section

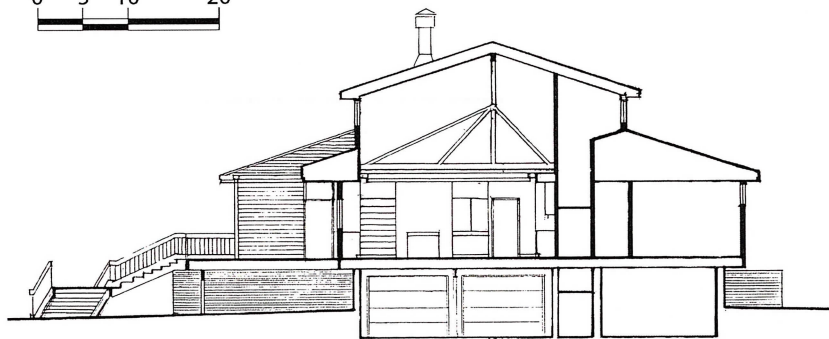




Browder Residence  
Rocky Mount, NC 2000



Floor Plan  
0 5 10 20

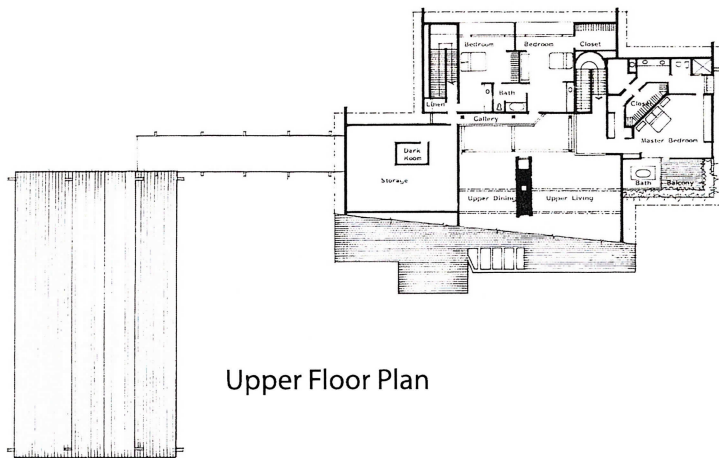
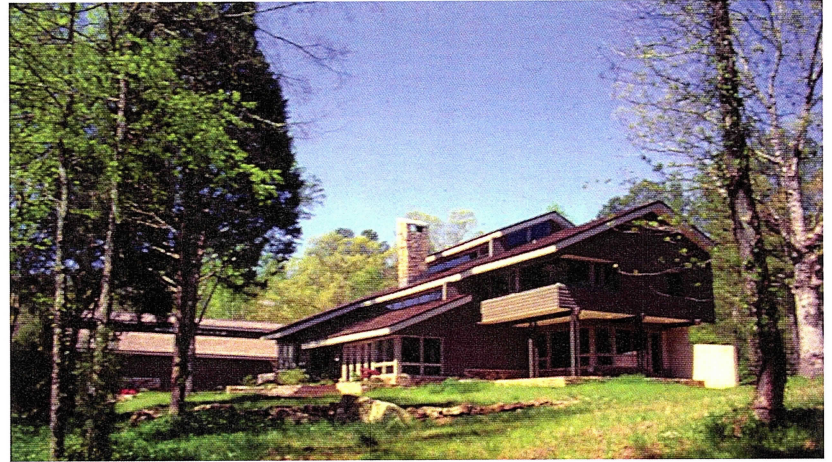


Cross Section  
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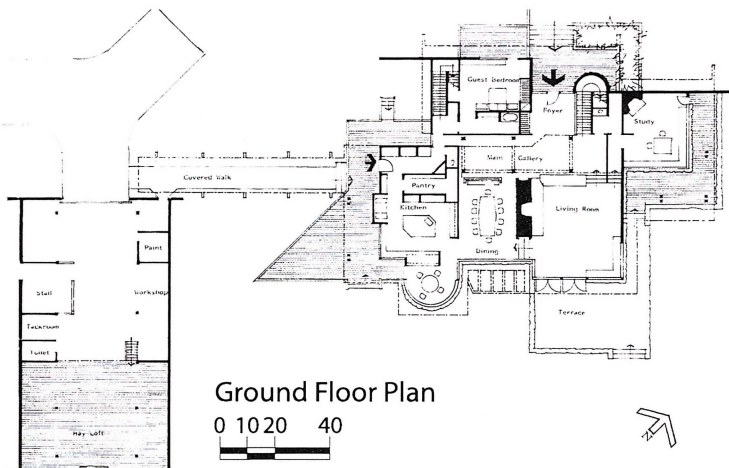


# Meadows Residence

Sanford, NC 1995  
Destroyed by fire in 2009

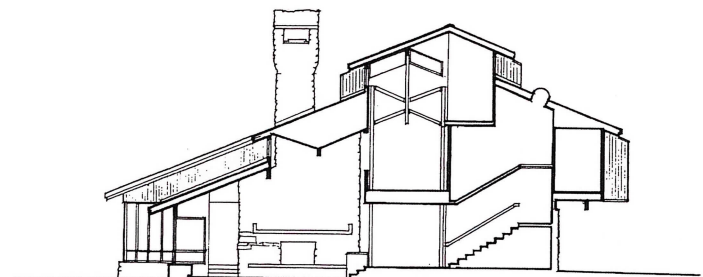


Upper Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

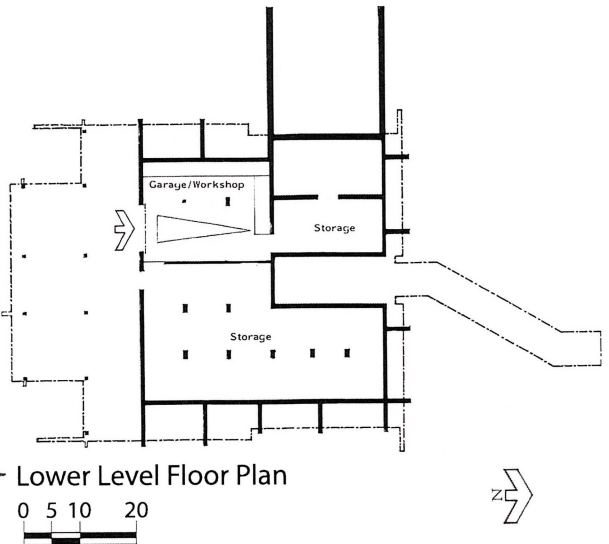
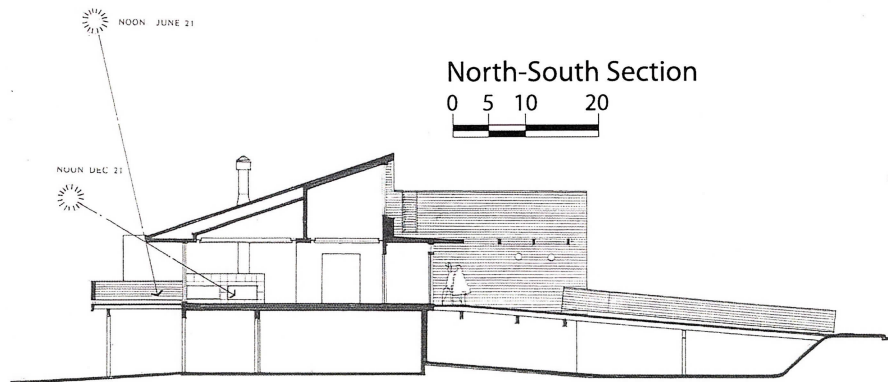
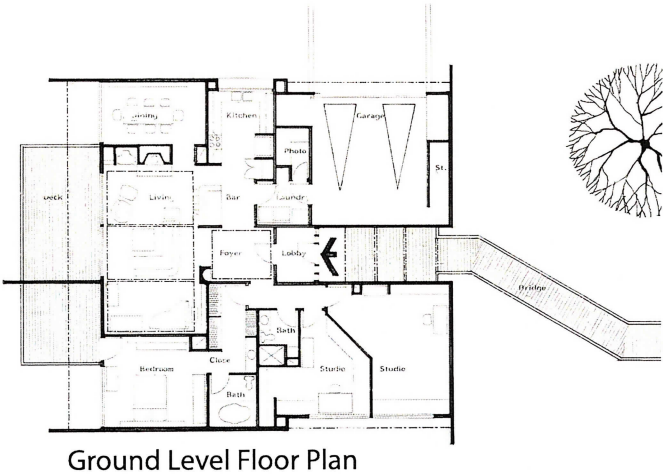
0 10 20 40



Section

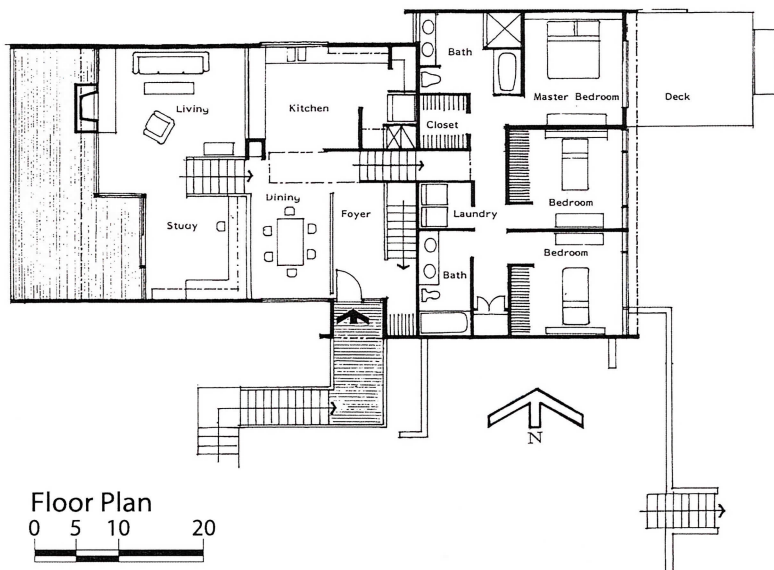
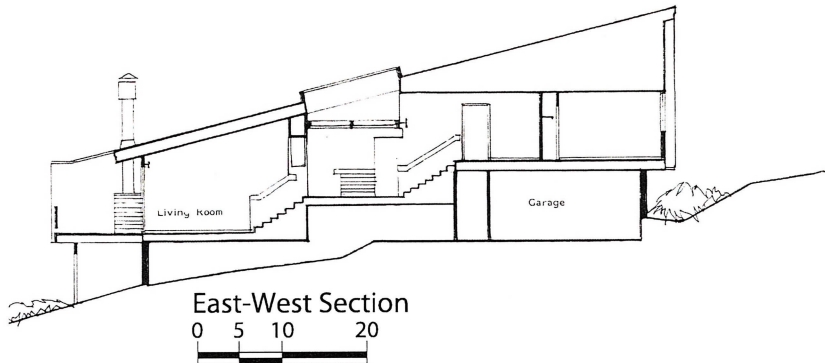


Gruer/Shawcroft Residence  
Raleigh, NC 2003



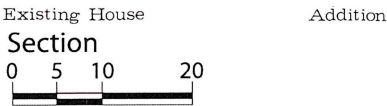
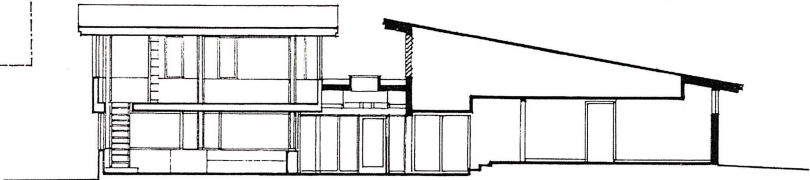
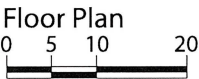
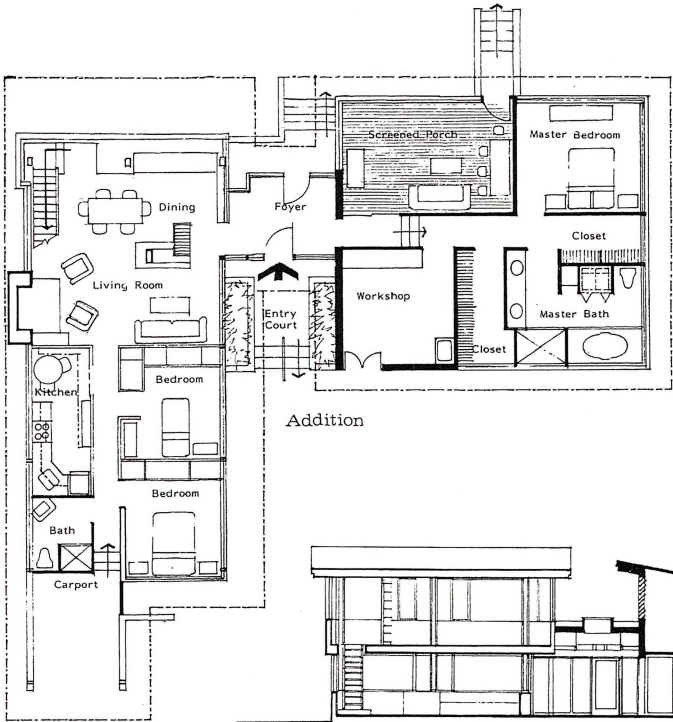


# Kuehn Residence Raleigh, NC 2005





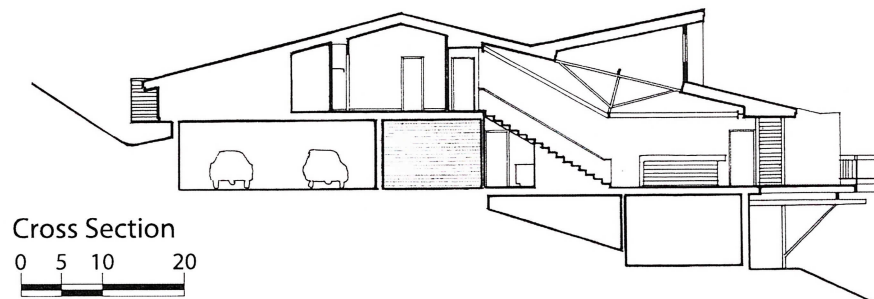
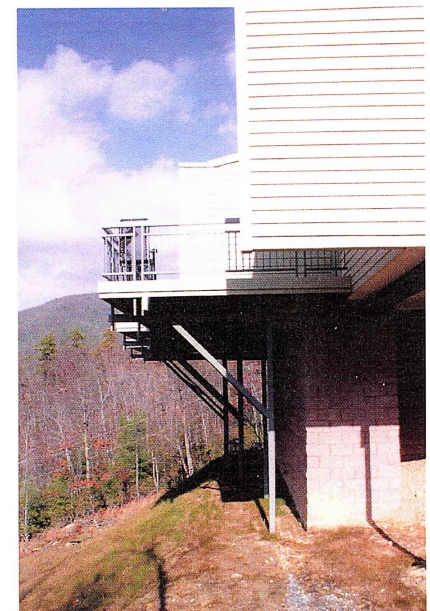
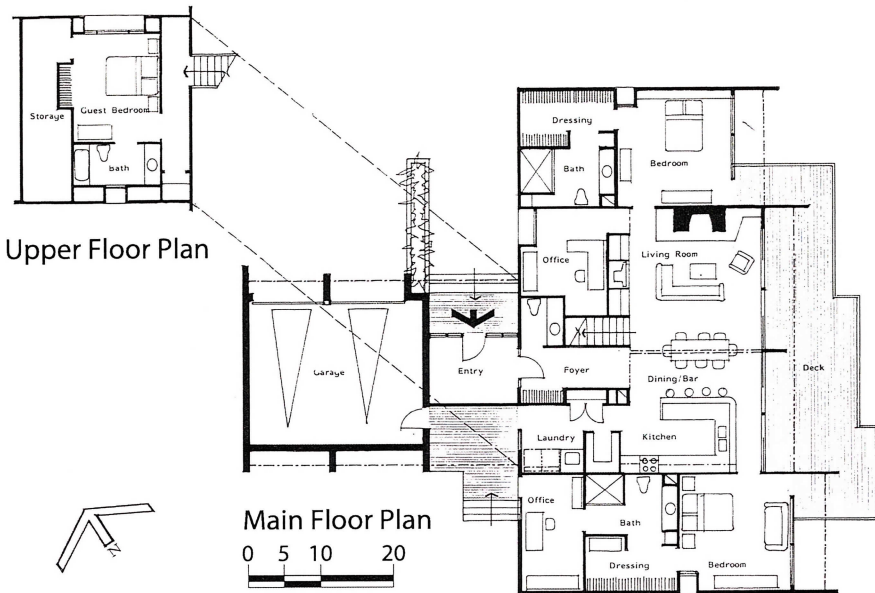
Fadum/Fountain Addition  
Raleigh, NC 2005





# Fulton/Puckett Residence

Linville Falls, NC 2007









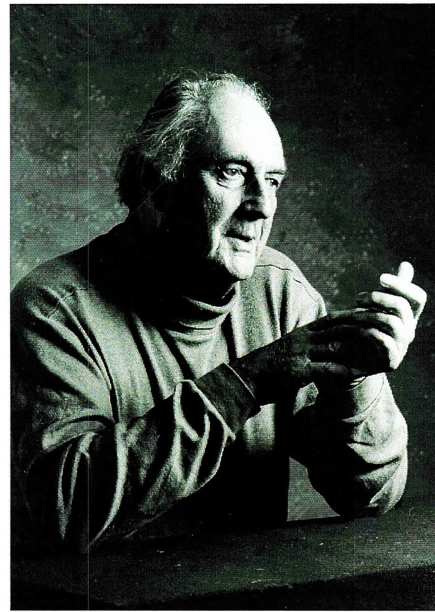
Brian Shawcroft MArch, AIA, was born in Nottingham, England, in 1929. After completing a five-year course study in architecture at the South West Essex Technical College & School of Art in 1953, he was engaged in the design of schools and studied photography at the Central School of Arts & Crafts in London.

In 1956 he joined the office of Page & Steele, Architects in Toronto, Canada. Later, he served as a design critic at the Boston Architectural Center while completing a degree of Master in Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University in 1960. From 1960 to 1968, he was an associate professor of architecture at the (then) School of Design, NCSU, teaching both architectural design and photography.

He was a co-winner of the 1962 AIA and House & Home, Homes for Better Living Award of Merit and in 1968, he received an Award of Merit for the Addition to Davie Hall on the UNC-Chapel Hill, NC campus as a consulting architect to Holloway-Reeves, Architect, Raleigh, NC.

After establishing a practice in Raleigh, North Carolina, he joined as a partner with MacMillan MacMillan Shawcroft & Thames before establishing the office of Shawcroft-Taylor in 1971. This office was responsible for a large number of buildings in institutional, airport, commercial and education categories.

In 1991, as a result of this body of work, Brian Shawcroft was awarded the Kamphoefner Prize in Architecture for his integrity and devotion to the Modern Movement in Architecture.



Diane Henry, Raleigh, NC

