

Project Row Houses: An Intervention

1997 ACSA Design Award

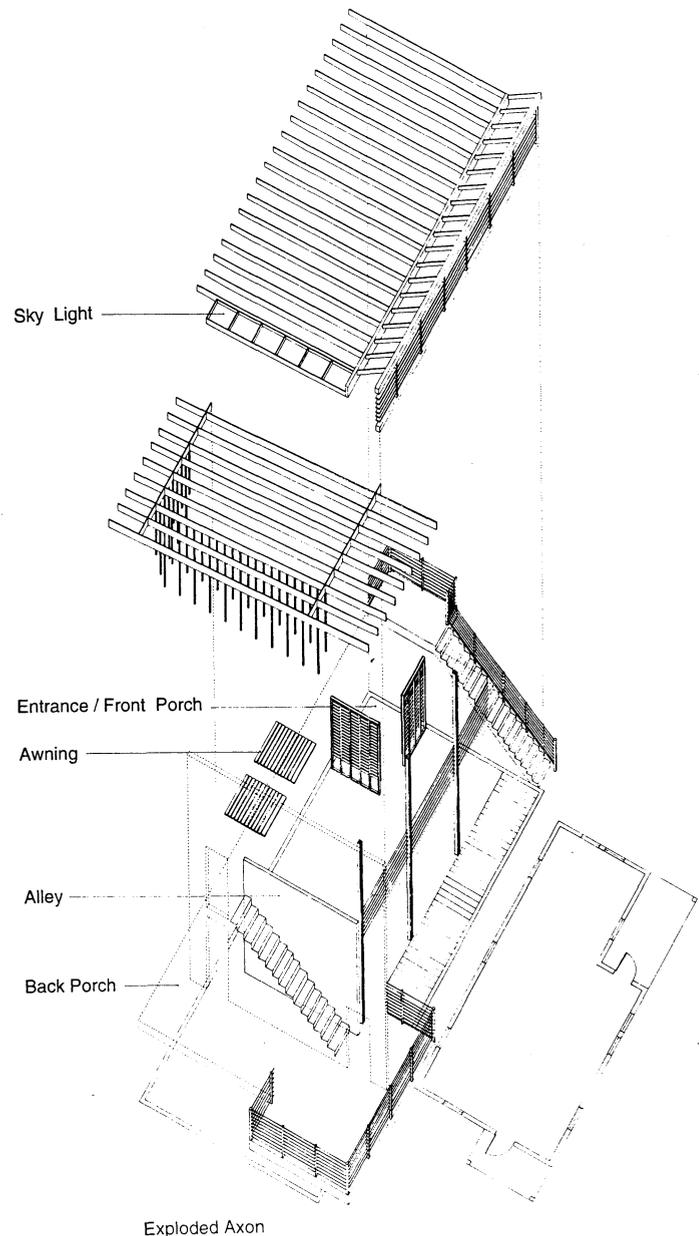
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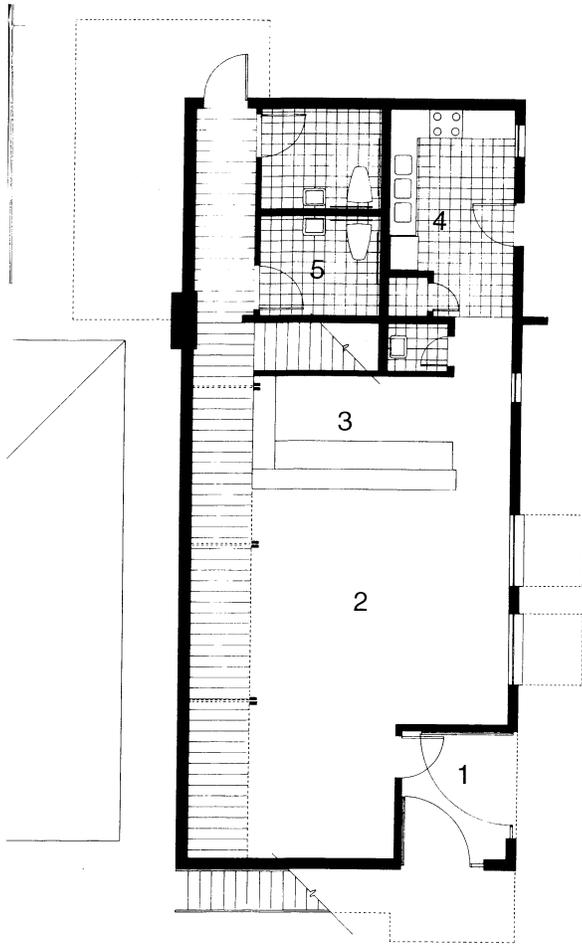
The site is an existing 2,000-square-foot brick storefront on an corner lot adjacent to two rows of identical shotgun houses in a predominately African-American inner city neighborhood, now considered one of Houston's pockets of poverty. Reclaimed by Project Row Houses, a public art project whose mission is to establish a cultural dialogue between African-American artists and their community, the project's twenty-two houses have been restored as revolving art-installation sites, housing units and community resource spaces. The program for the storefront called for an artist/community gathering space with kitchen and rest room facilities as well as an adjacent sculpture/vegetable garden.

Devoid of ornamentation, the power of the shotgun housing site comes from the rhythmical repetition of simple geometric forms and elements that link the houses to modern architecture. Utilizing the essential elements distilled from the site — the front and back porches and the narrow three foot side yards that separate the houses — the solution provides a flexible indoor/outdoor gathering space.

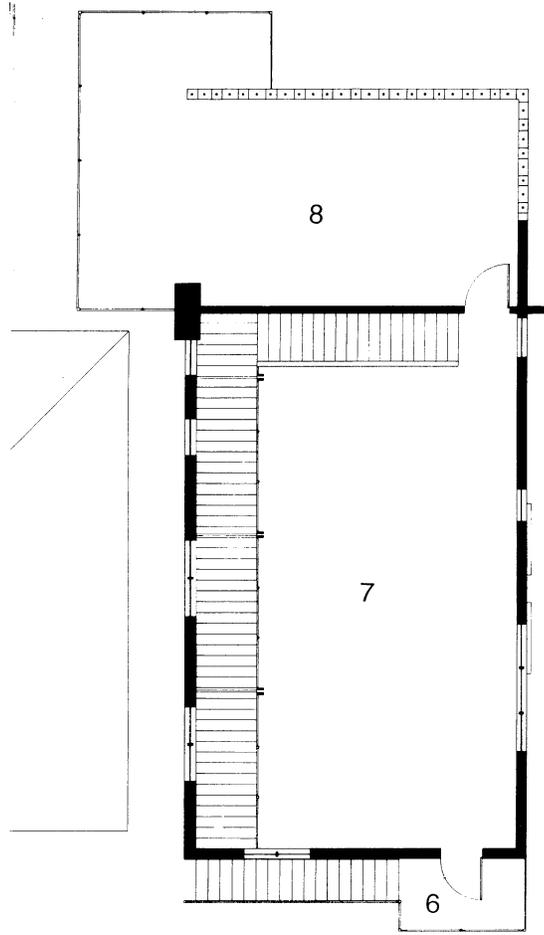
A two-story slot is carved out of the second floor echoing the site's narrow side yards and providing a large surface area for paintings to hang. Metal louvers above the west wall filter western light. A plumbing wall marks the rear edge of the row of houses and separates public and service areas on the first floor and interior and exterior space on the second floor. The balcony, screened with one inch steel tubes that play on the structure's brick pattern, provides a view into the courtyard space created by the two rows of houses.

Design/Construction Document Assistants:
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1st Level



2nd Level

LEGEND

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 ENTRANCE | 5 REST ROOM |
| 2 LOBBY | 6 FIRE EXIT |
| 3 SERVING COUNTER | 7 SEATING |
| 4 KITCHEN | 8 BALCONY |