

Housing Diaspora: Scattered Infill for Little Haiti, Miami City, Florida

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This is a proposal for affordable, single-family residential infill designed for scattered empty lots throughout the Little Haiti neighborhood of Miami, Florida. It is an entry to an international design competition directed by the Little Haiti Housing Association of Miami (LHHA). The design solution grows out of contextual and cultural studies – of the Diaspora Caribbean community that currently resides in this neighborhood, and of the physical built form that defines the place they have inherited: Miami's Little Haiti is a neighborhood whose residential and urban fabric were principally constructed between 1920-1960. Inhabited by a series of sequential constituencies, it has suffered from years of neglect and disrepair.

The project has distinct urban aspirations. In response to cultural cues, it challenges local zoning law, redefining the residual open space of traditional suburban development -as well as the mechanisms that typically distinguish between the public and private realms of suburban domestic life. For this community of unique culture, the house defines a new, subtle range of indoor and outdoor spaces. A mutable armature designed for appropriation and interpretation, the residence is comprised of two independent structures with identical foot-

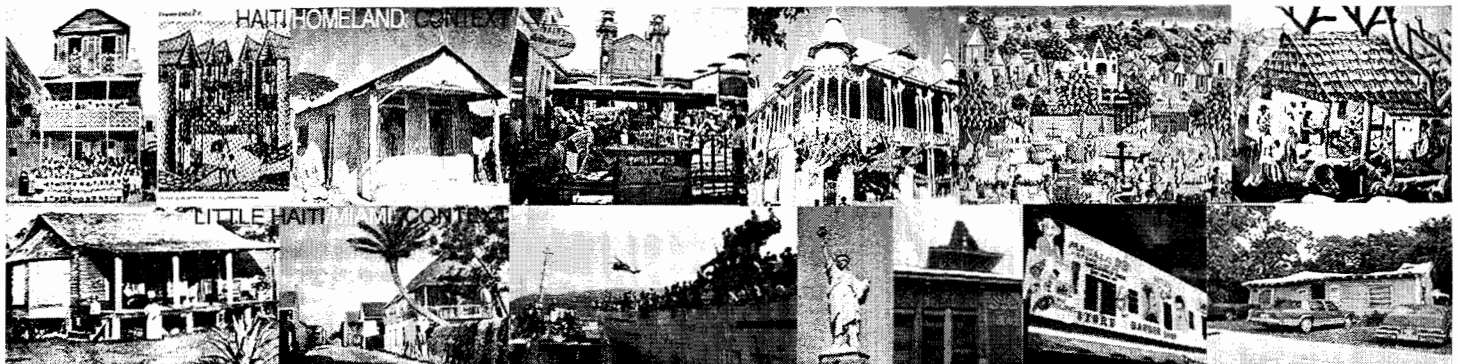
prints but distinct character. These flank an outdoor garden/living room that responds to cultural needs, while collecting the open space that, in most suburban development, remains undefined. The structures can be built either simultaneously or sequentially, as future residents' finances and preferences allow:

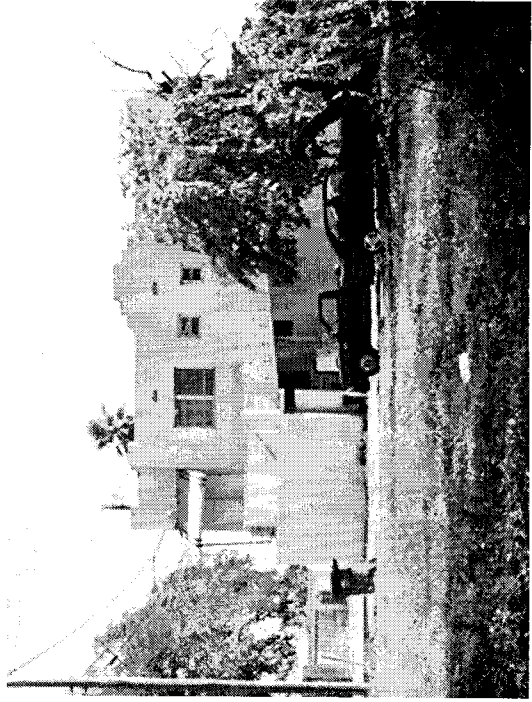
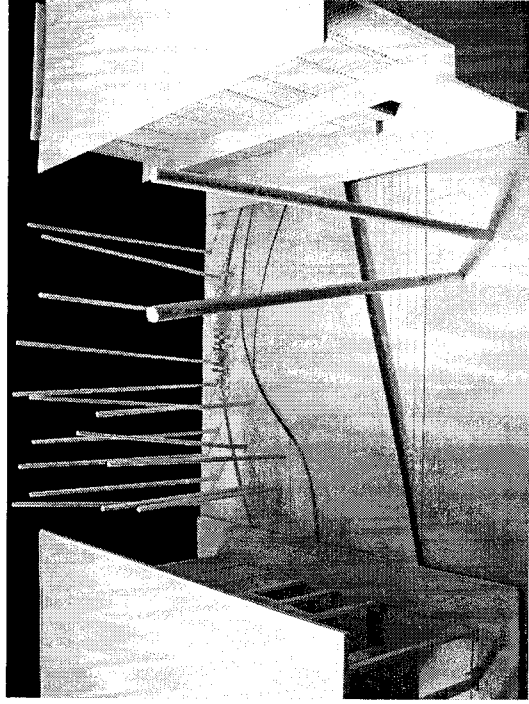
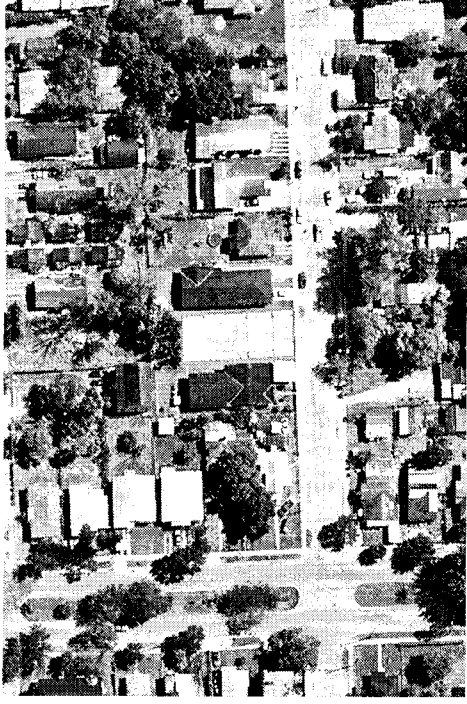
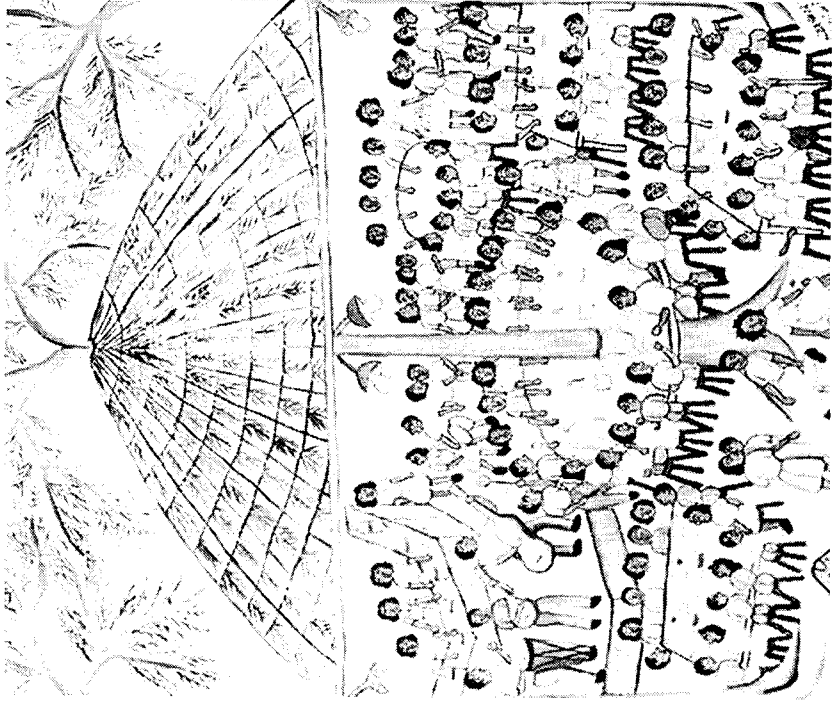
Peristyle/Veil:

Based on the Haitian peristyle of Voodoo ritual, the front portion of the house is a wood frame porch/scrim of shuttered, semi-enclosed and open spaces that can include a carport. This part of the house addresses and defines the street, identifying it as the locus of community interaction. The peristyle is both threshold and veil for the private life it obscures and reveals. It can be built either as a single-story or a two-story structure with upper level sleeping porch.

Residence:

The rear volume in the ensemble comprises the principal living spaces of the house, rendering the garden room that separates it from the peristyle, an integral part of the home. Typologically - and like the peristyle – the residence is a variation on the dogtrot house of the Caribbean region and the American

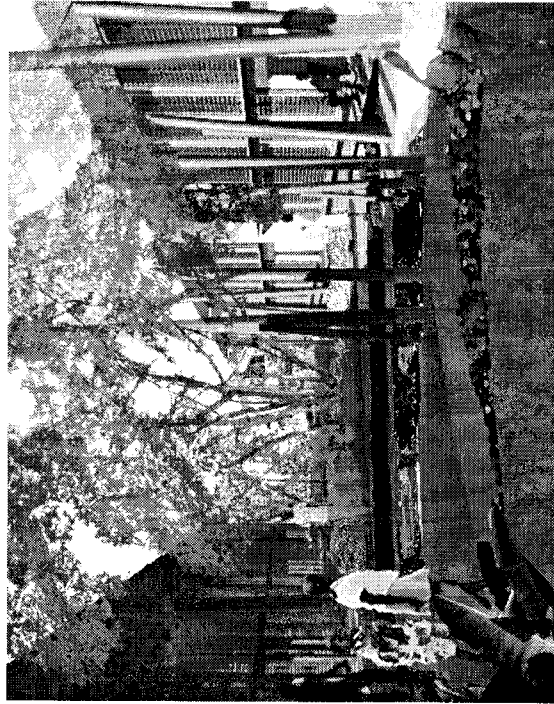


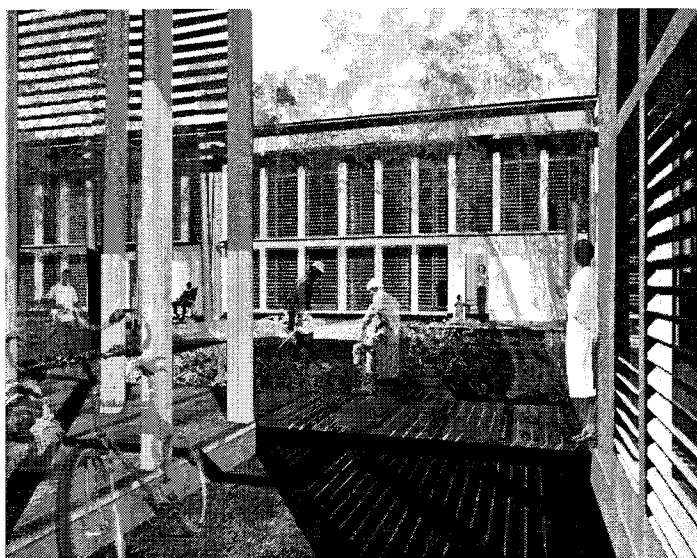
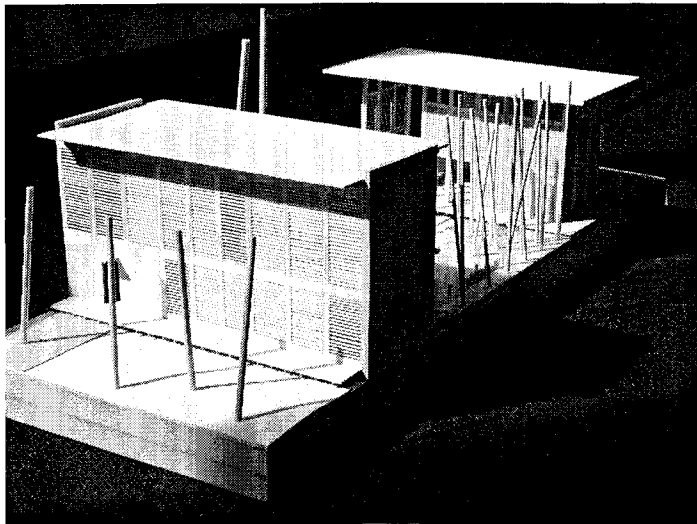


Southeast. It provides cross ventilation, shade, and hurricane protection in a compact footprint that accommodates three bedrooms and two baths in two stories. Constructed of masonry, concrete, and steel where the peristyle is built of wood, the house, too, turns a changeable face to both city and outdoors.

Garden/Room:

Employing the combined repetition of images and themes, Haitian naïve landscape paintings indicate a strong sense of

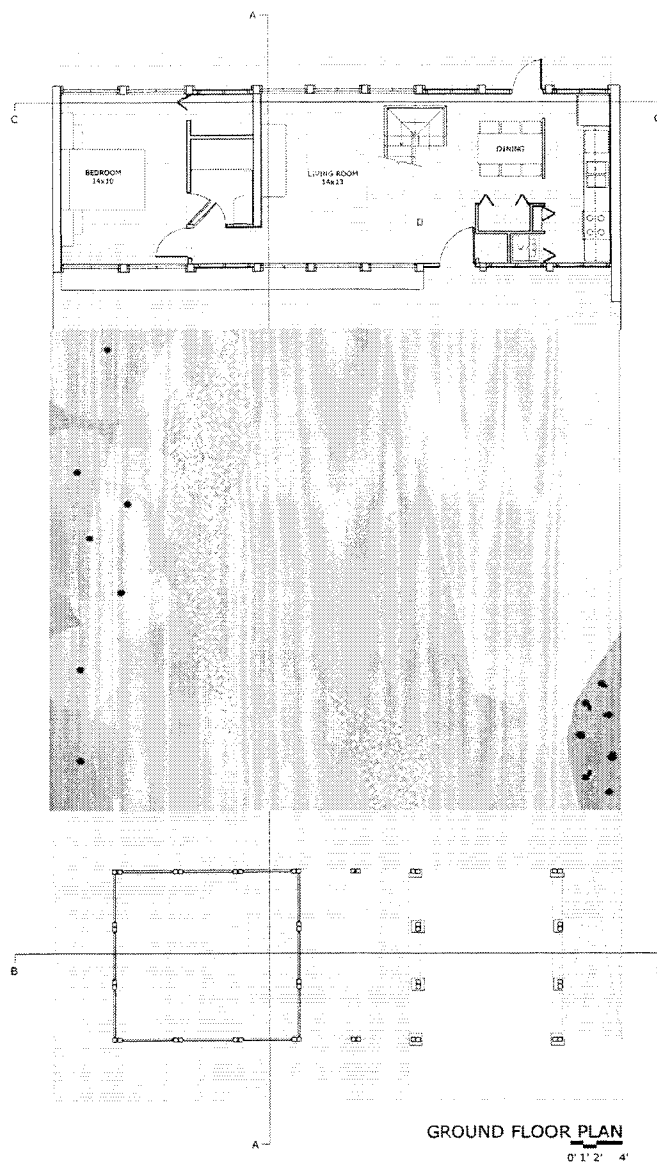




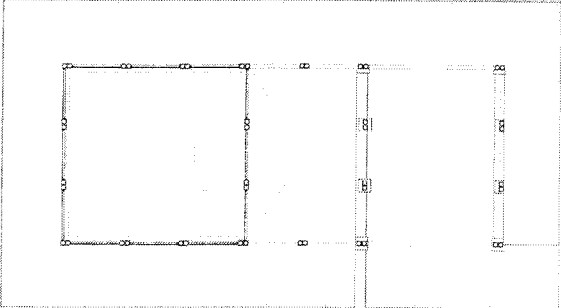
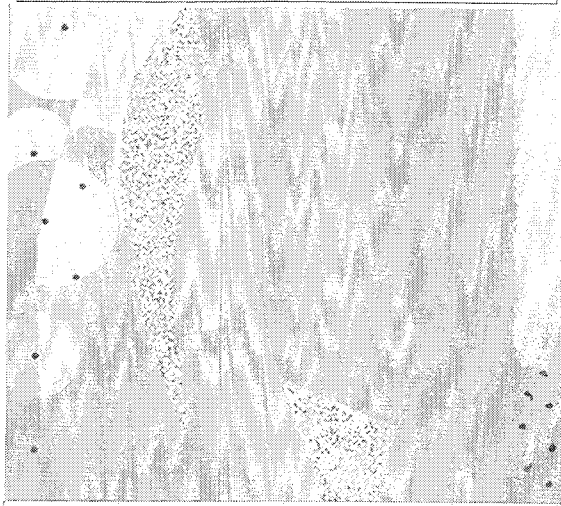
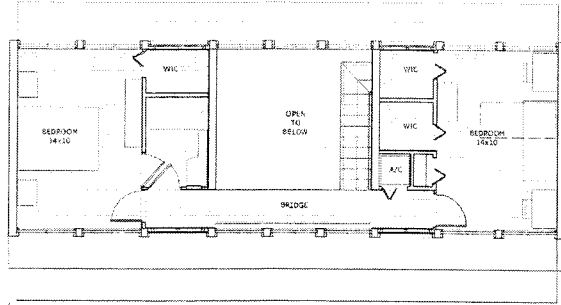
memory woven through gardens and domestic scenes. Artists use simple forms and bold color to evoke remembered agrarian panoramas. Unique places of personal and cultural expression that allow residents to revisit physical and cultural landscapes of the homeland left behind, the gardens proposed for the outdoor room of this house are intended to extend binding ties between the communities of Haiti and Miami.

City/House:

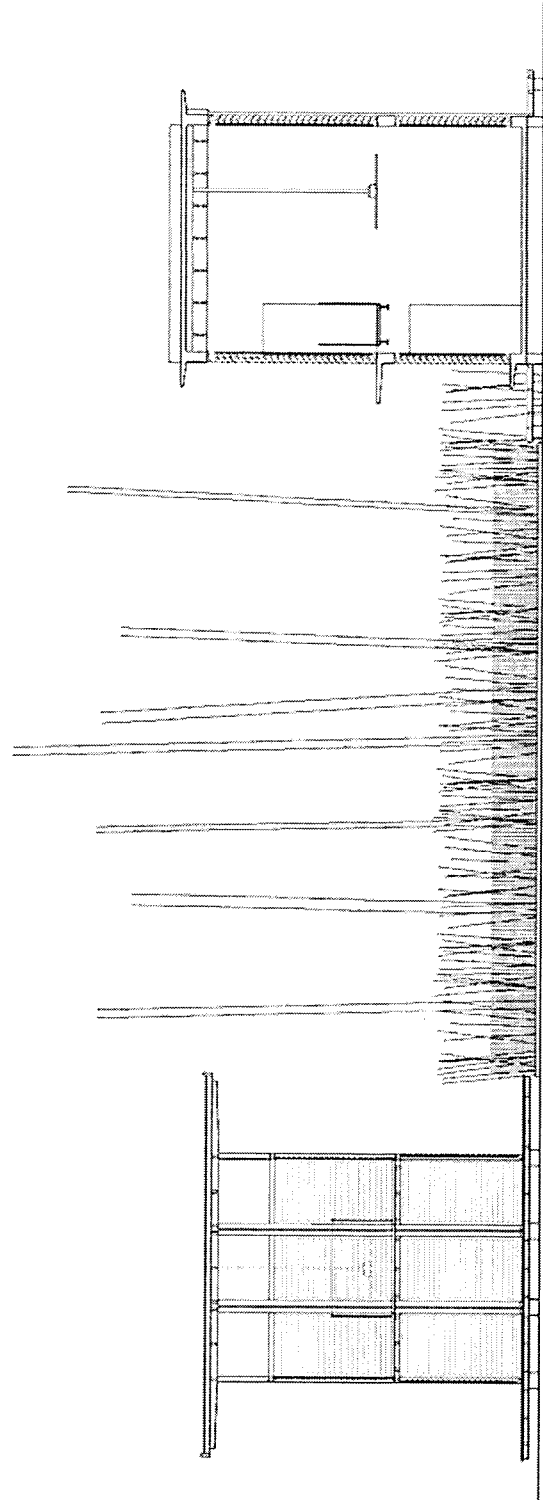
The house was designed to occupy either singular infill sites or contiguous lots in the Little Haiti neighborhood of Miami. Spaces identified by LHHA and slated for construction include



a narrow through-lot condition that is repeated throughout the city. This urban configuration demands that each of the two structures that define the house effectively function as a building 'front', its facade a ceremonial signifier of entry. Additionally, the narrow width of each lot suggests that the houses be built in a zero-lot configuration. In turn, the Haitian traditions of outdoor living and extensive social interaction also suggest that the garden rooms of contiguous houses might aggregate across lots in mall or park-like fashion. The resulting semi-public space transforms the morphology of this historic Miami neighborhood in response to the needs of a Diaspora community that has made it its own.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
0' 1" 2" 4"



SECTION A-A
0' 1" 2" 4"

