Floodtown, U.S.A.: An Ecological Response to Temporary Flood Housing

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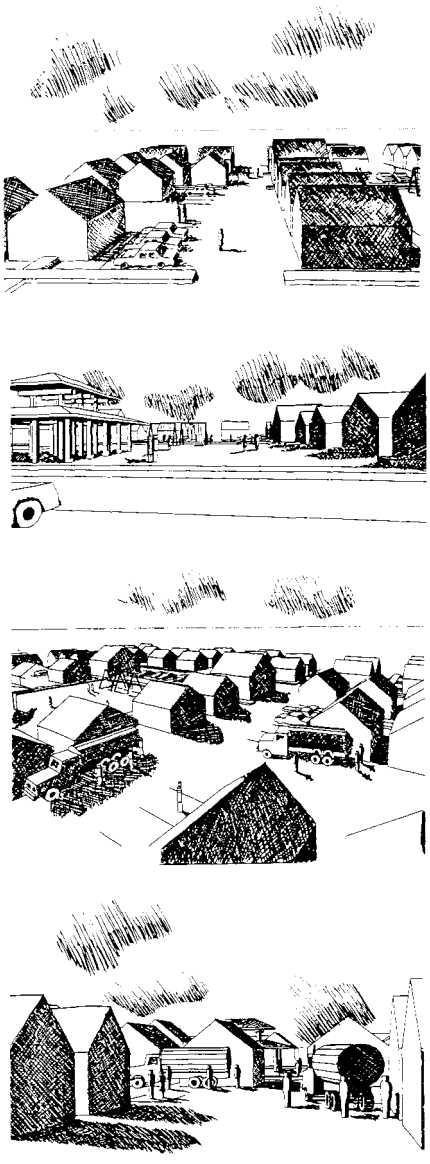


Above: representative sketches of Floodtown, using student generated student generated set of rules

Many schools of architecture jumped at the opportunity to design temporary housing for disaster victims in the wake of Hurricane Andrew. In 1993, however, a different kind of disaster became the focus of attention in Middle America — severe flooding. While the victims of flooding need temporary housing, just as victims of the hurricanes or earthquakes, there is a twist on the problem. The victim's property is also inundated, eliminating the possibility of temporary housing on the homeowner's own land. Entire towns may need to be relocated to higher ground, creating a whole set of urban design issues. This project looked at temporary housing from a community planning standpoint — designing a sustainable community that was low cost and easily assembled, but comfortable for its inhabitants.

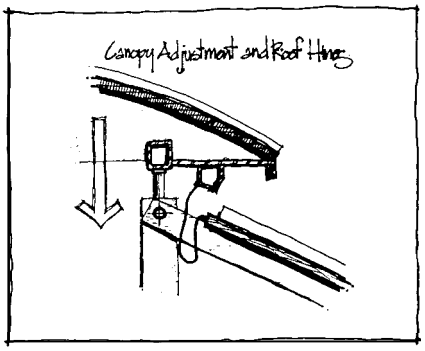
The site for this project could be anywhere — an athletic field, a large parking lot, a farmer's field or a national park — in any part of the country. The students determined that they would concentrate on setting up the community in the parking lot of a large discount store. The users would be a determined, but crestfallen group of ordinary citizens just like you and I. There would be families, couples, senior citizens and single people.

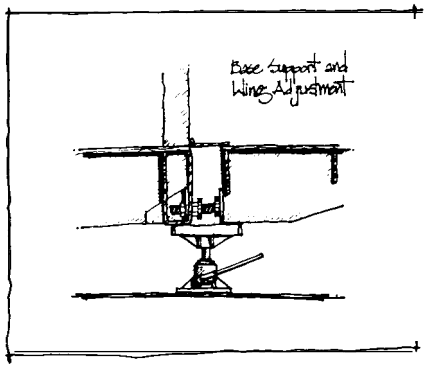
The first phase of the project consisted of programming. Each student researched a different issue: sustainability, urban planning, housing types, or materials and construction.

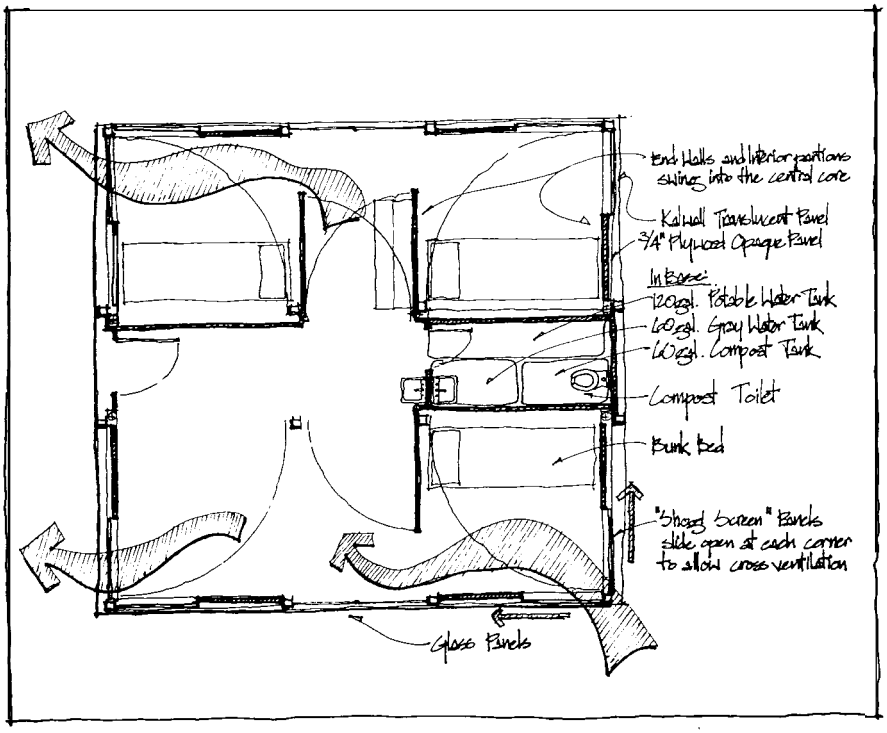
During the second phase of the project the students developed a set of rules for community planning of the temporary city, which came to be known as "Floodtown." In the first week each student developed a plan using a different planning strategy and then, as a group, determined which aspects were most important and appropriate from each design and developed a final set of rules for the city.

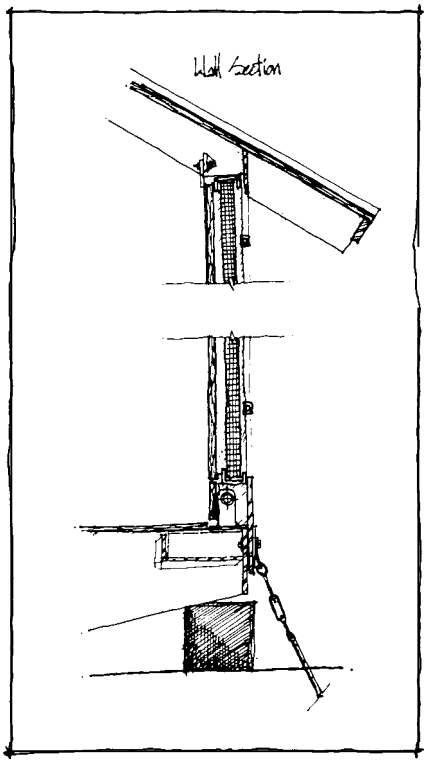
In the final phase of the project, each student designed one housing unit for the city. The units had to be assembled and disassembled easily of materials that were sturdy enough to last for five years and were easily maintained. Each unit had to contain sleeping quarters for 4 - 6 people, some provision for cooking, toilet facilities and possibly showers.

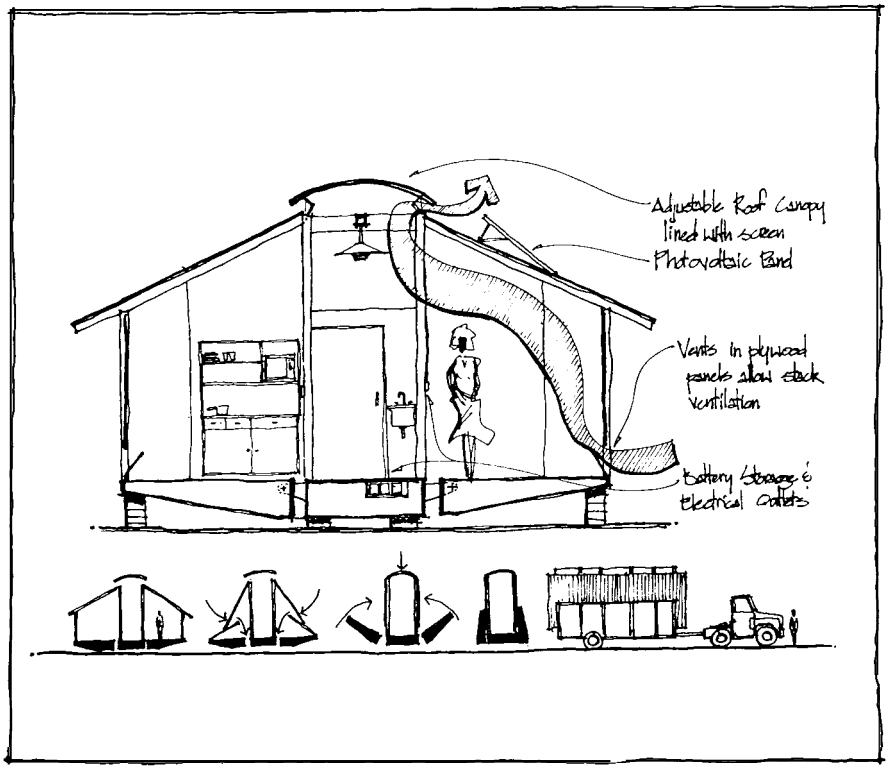
Opposite: temporary flood housing unit











TEMPORARY FLOOD HOUSING