Two Scupper Houses or the Shotgun and Dogtrot Revisited

Pensacola, Florida
Ridgefield-Unit #5 and Parcel B

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The roofs of these two northwest Florida houses are designed as inverted sloping gables. These upside-down gables function as large scuppers. The ceiling shape, a result of the shared contour with the roof configuration, is a primary consideration in developing the internal spaces of the dwellings. The slow downward longitudinal slope of the ceiling is a constant reminder of the full downpours of the Gulfcoast. The faster lateral ceiling slope to the clearstory windows trace site lines to the open view of the sky.

Types and site. The roof represents a response to geographic location. An exaggerated roof configuration brings attention to the tropical locale. In addition to moving and shedding water these roofs work to make a dwelling.

As dwellings among other dwellings both of these houses were developed in relation to known house types. The house at parcel B is patterned after the vernacular "dog trot" house. The house at unit #5 is related to the spatial structure of the "shotgun" house.

Construction, cladding and proportion. The primary rhythm of both houses in plan and section is an eight foot bay over a four foot module, in relation to standard material dimensions. The construction and material make-up of both houses are identical—a wood platform frame on concrete piers. The dwellings are sheathed on the exterior with cypress siding bleached to light silver-gray. The interior walls are made of painted pine siding and the floors are natural cypress. The ceilings inside and out are painted pine. A row of trees divides abutting shell driveways.

Storing water—use and conservation. Traditional responses to climate include high ceilings, louvered window openings, and ventilation near the ceiling. The gardens are watered with rain water collected by the scupper/roof. The site plans show the location of these gardens which include compost areas. Clothes lines are planned to provide a supplement for electrical dryers. Purple martin birdhouses attract birds which consume vast numbers of mosquitoes, reducing the need for pesticide.