

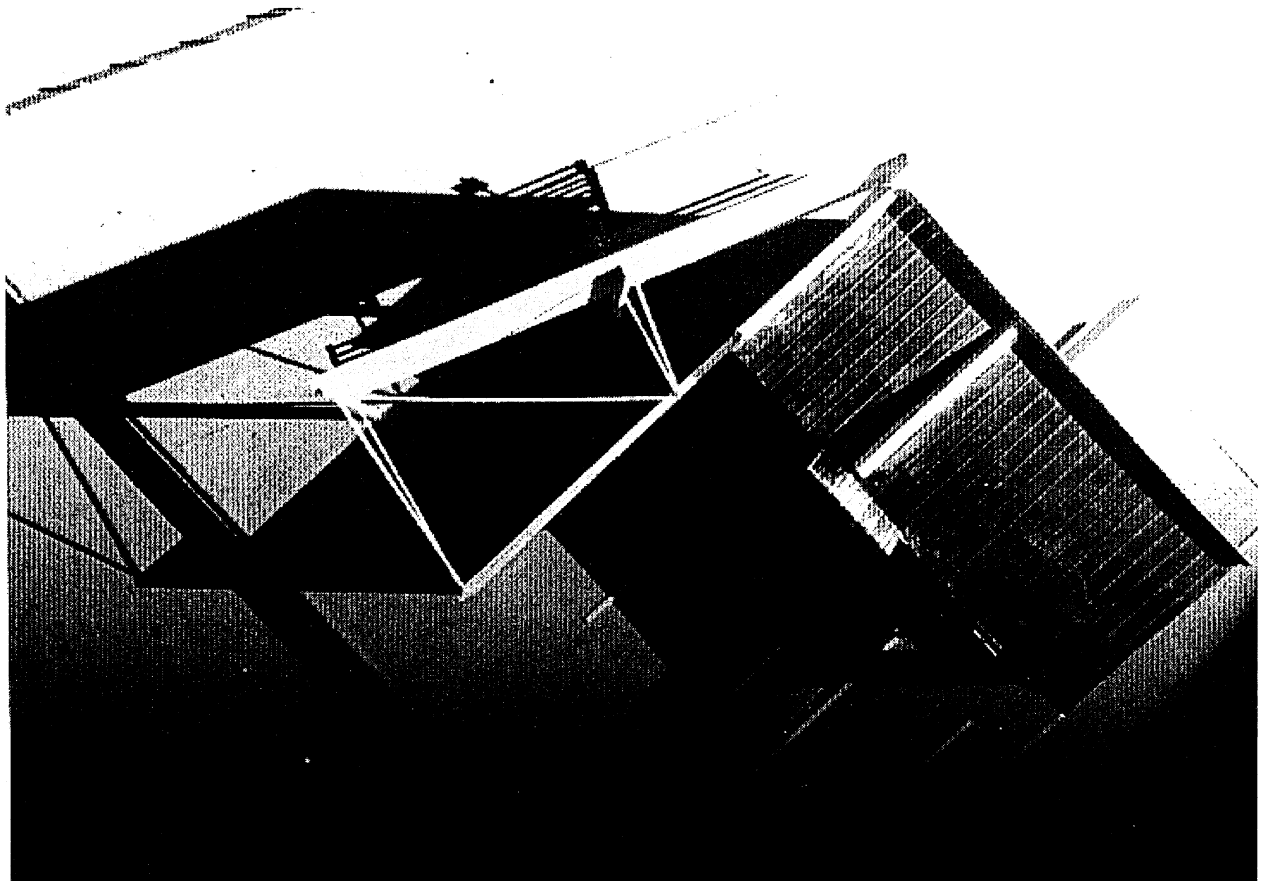
Inexpensive Housing near Ponchatoula Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

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American conditions—a semi-rural highway interchange, a forest of southern pine, cypress, live oak and palmetto, a still pond, a very low budget and an intense programmatic mix—provide the opportunity to push certain conditions, materials, methods and architectural figures into new configurations at several levels of detail. Near the point that US55 rises onto the causeway above the southern Louisiana swamp, the highway passes under LA 22: a perfect cloverleaf. The site faces this interchange and its frontage road. Most of it is a pond. The new apartment complex lies between the pond and highway: the river of cars and the placid field of water. The zigzag of apartments divides the site between garden and parking.

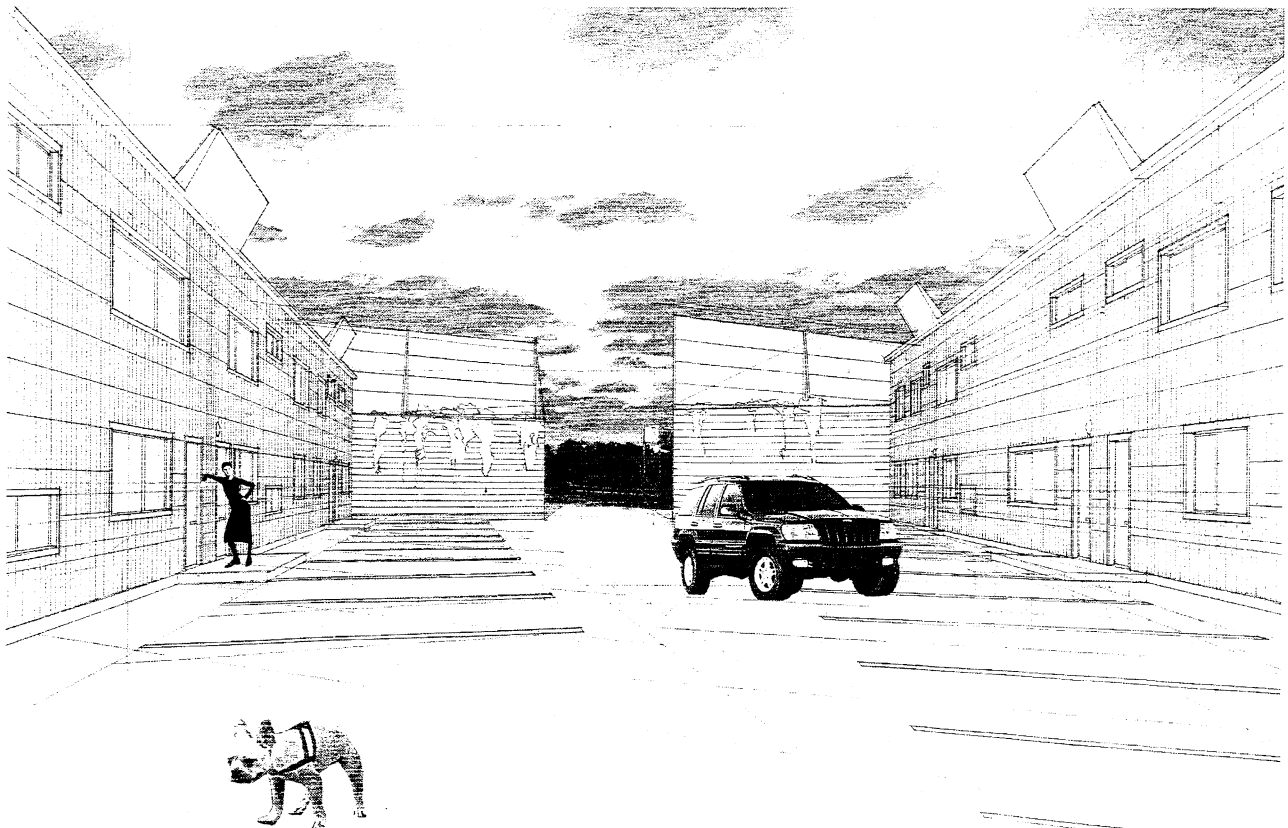
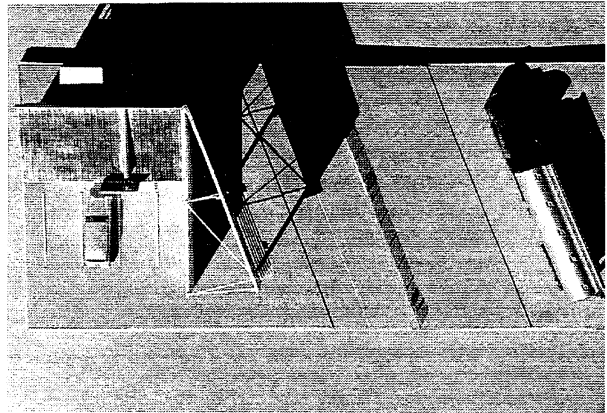
On the site now sit five mobile homes and a cottage. All stay. The owners wish to keep them as long as they are serviceable. This and an extraordinarily low budget provide possibilities to reassess conventional architectural strategies and construction procedures. Much will be decided on-site. Thus, by design, the project will employ local materials and labor in this poor but skill-rich place and local building strategies pushed into new formats.

The frontage road will be edged by new billboards to buffer highway noise. The housing units attach to the billboards. Formed by the splayed apartment bars, the voids toward the pond are green. The trailers will be relocated overhanging the

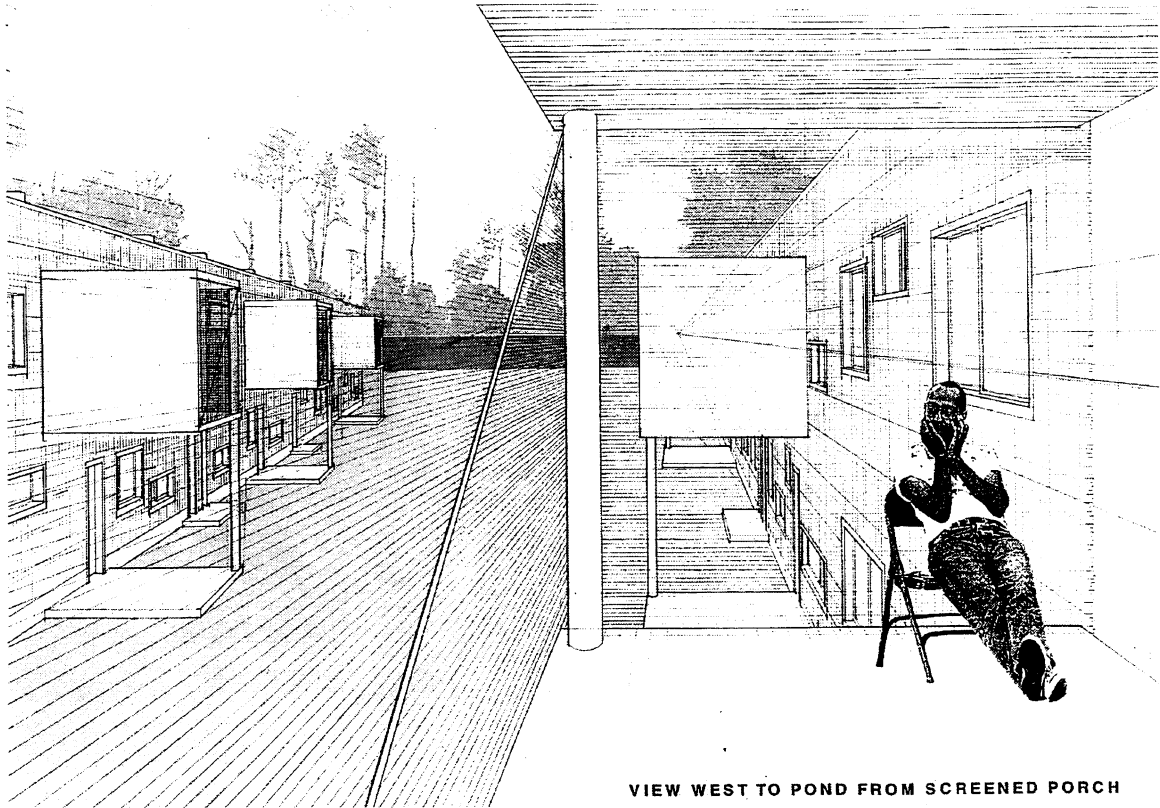


pond as will the southernmost hosing bar. On water or land, all will sit on piles as must every structure in a place where the line between liquid and earth is so ambiguous. Since the three types of housing units can be combined randomly, phasing allows analysis of use that will direct program choices as the project develops. Suburban forms are recognized here, and reassessed in juxtaposition to Louisiana's rural and nautical forms.

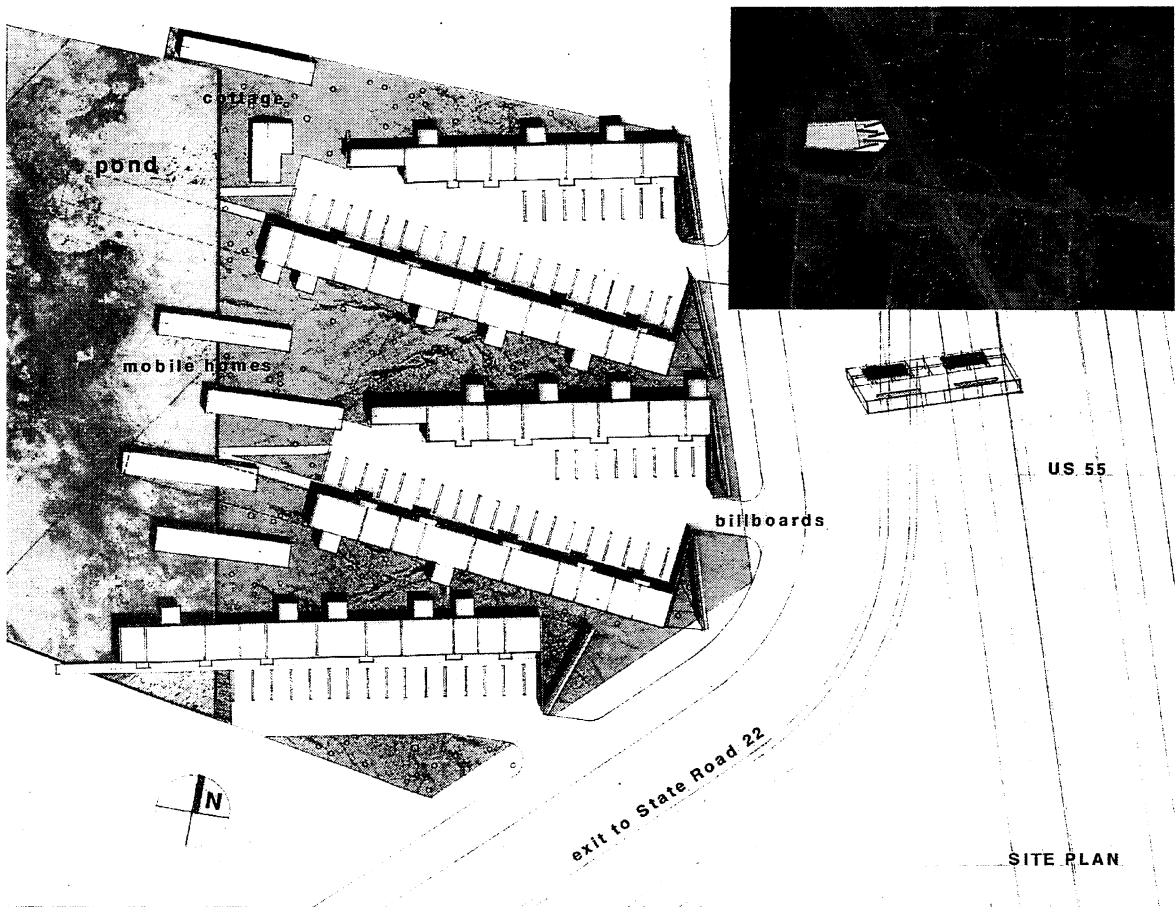
Concrete slab on grade rests on piles. Block walls separate the units. Frame construction is clad in corrugated metal cut into strips that can be put up like shingles by a single worker. The corrugated panels are set with ridges aligned rather than nested, forming a breathing wall. The metal surface reflects the intense sun but also the sub-tropical green of trees and lawn on the park side of the units and the parade of vehicles on the parking side. In this project, inexpensive materials and techniques combine with suburban "readymades" to produce innovations. Strategies of collage and juxtaposition combine with the recognition of labor markets, economic politics, reassessed forms and materials to produce new configurations.



VIEW EAST TOWARD HIGHWAY FROM PARKING



VIEW WEST TO POND FROM SCREENED PORCH



SITE PLAN

