



Shingle Style

There is no house in the neighborhood built entirely of the shingle style but a few houses have what might be called echoes of it. At 1707 and 1709 Ashwood are two informal, somewhat picturesque houses which have in their gables patterned shingle work. True shingle style houses would be entirely shingled. Here shingles are used only in small areas which serve as a patterned accent for the whole house.

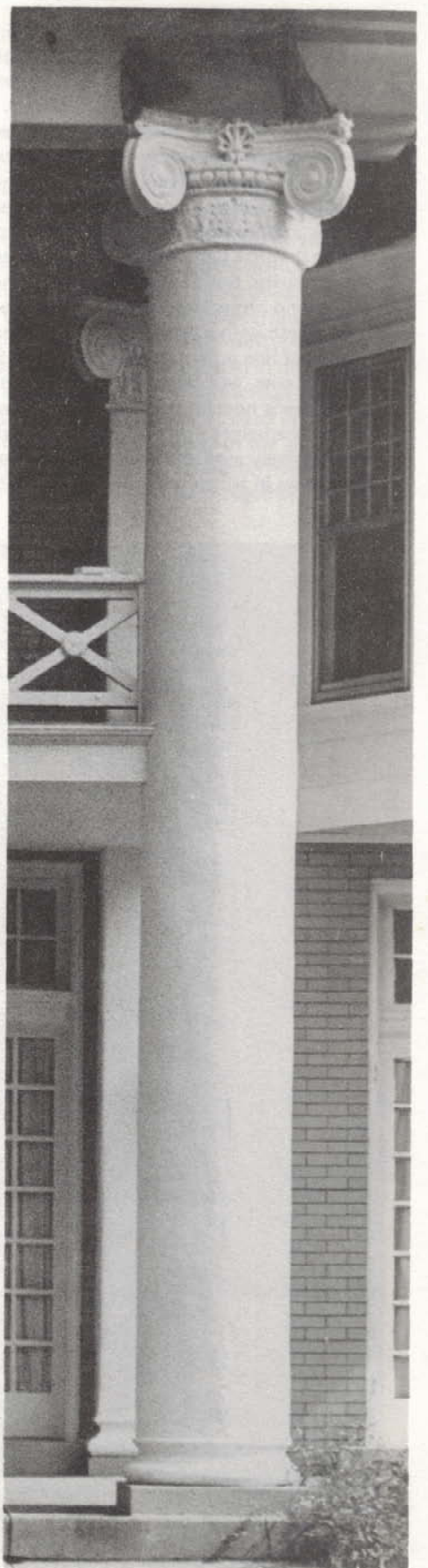
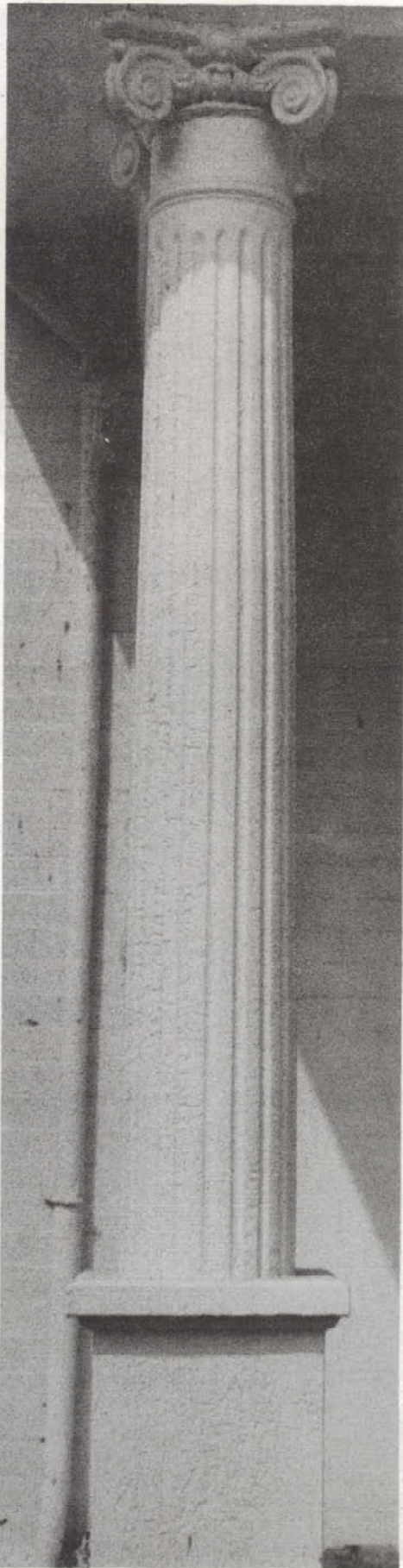
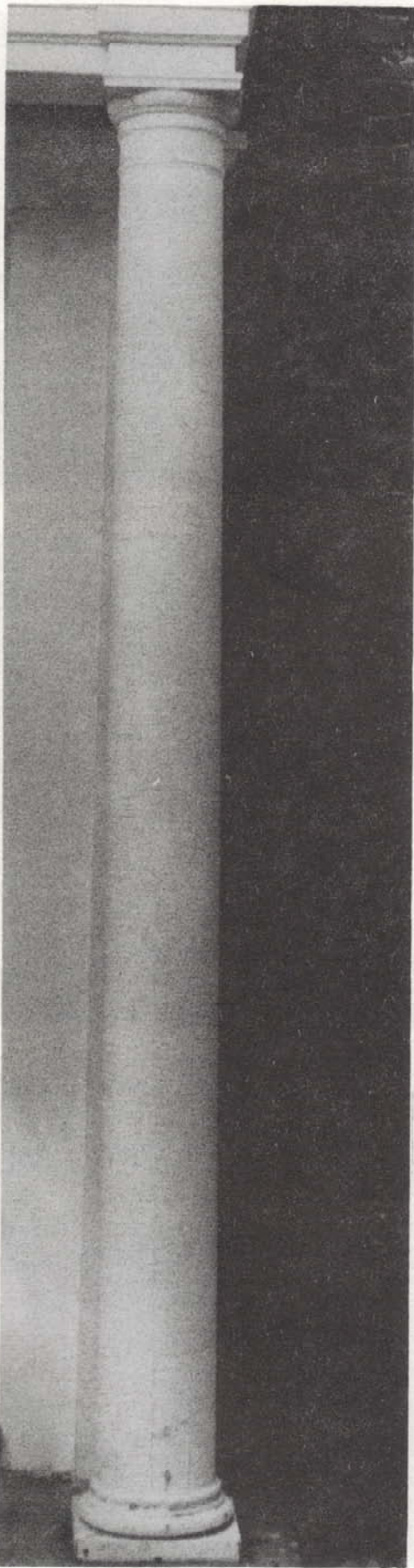




GREEK AND COLONIAL MOTIFS

The "Greek revival" style flourished early in the 19th century and then had its own revival at the end of the same century. Typical Greek motifs are a triangular pediment at the end of the gables, a row of "dentils" along the top of wall surfaces, and, of course, Greek columns and capitals. In addition to the strictly Greek motifs there are others belonging more generally to the "colonial" revival which slowly accelerated after the Centennial of 1876. Typical features are the two stories, balanced design, smooth brick walls, smooth stone window sills and lintels, and wide roof overhang. These two houses at 1900 Linden Avenue and 2509 Oakland Avenue exemplify many of these features. While unostentatious, these houses have a reserved dignity which makes them quietly imposing.



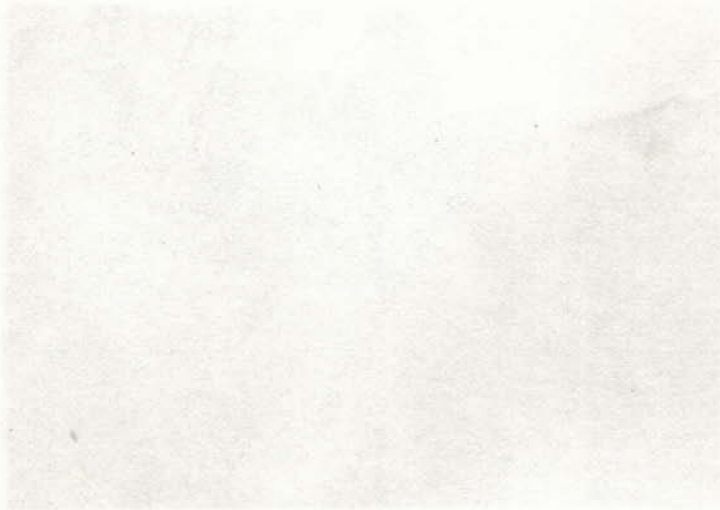


An enduringly popular type of house, bungalows are one of the most prevalent and varied styles of house in the neighborhood. The basic bungalow form came to this country from India; the name is from the word *bangla*, meaning "belonging to Bengal." In India bungalows were one-story houses surrounded by a veranda, and were frequently built as rest houses for travelers along the main highways. They were never a permanent, but rather, a temporary or seasonal dwelling. American bungalows have been built since 1880, and especially during the first two decades of this century swept the country in popularity. Built in endless variety, the basic type has a low profile and projecting eaves, is one-storied, and has a large front porch with a broad gable whose angle is repeated in the main roof line or in a dormer behind it. So eclectic have bungalows become, with Japanese and Spanish and American features, that there is now little Indian about them except their name. During the height of their popularity mail order plans were inexpensively available and hence it is possible to find identical bungalows in widely separated parts of the country.



BUNGALOWS





A notable example of the Prairie Style is the house at 2616 Belmont Boulevard, built about 1918. So-called prairie houses were developed early in the century by Frank Lloyd Wright. He felt that the horizontality of the prairie should be reflected in the design of its houses, and so he built them with low, gently sloping roofs and with low horizontal sections. Prairie houses are ordinarily of no more than two stories, and they never have dormers or other features which would distract from the quiet roof line. Their windows are presented in horizontal groups which appear to be a continuation of the wall surface. The horizontality of the prairie style is emphasized in the Belmont Boulevard house by the strong lines of the widely overhanging roofs, which literally intersect the different volumes of the house and seem to lock them together.

PRAIRIE STYLE



PICTURESQUE

These houses, which are typical of many buildings of the 1920's and 1930's, are designed in a generally historic mode but in the freest possible way. Tall entrance gables, steep roofs, impressive façade chimneys, half-timbering, and mixed use of stone and brick and stucco, all were used to create attractive homes with a consciously historical flavor, usually Elizabethan. Just as with bungalows, mail-order plans were easily and widely available. These houses, especially when surrounded by trees and shrubs, succeed in evoking a comfortable type of solid charm. They vary tremendously in scale, some being built low and close to the ground, others impressively large. In the Belmont-Hillsboro neighborhood Elizabethan features, especially half-timbering, are found on houses large and small, and even on some apartment buildings.



A mixture of materials give a varied look to this large house at 1715 Cedar Lane, built in 1912 for Paul L. Sloan, president of Cain-Sloan. Stucco, brick and wood, and irregularly placed windows give the house its comfortable and informal air, large though it is. The facade features two large gables, and a third appears between them over the large dormer above. The main entrance is placed on the right side of the facade and its small porch is roofed with protruding brackets reminiscent of the Western Stick Style. The house's corner placement seems to really give it almost two facades, and the west side has a partially embedded chimney. The bricks of the chimney are roughly rather than smoothly laid, contributing to the casual effect of the house. Many windows are filled entirely or partially with diamond-shaped panes; others feature a row of small, decorative square panes.



This two-story house at 1703 Ashwood is built in two materials, shingles for the upper part and brick below. A band of wide boards marks the beginning of the second story level. There is a centrally placed triple-windowed dormer with a sloping roof, unlike that of the porch below which features a pediment. Characteristically there are two chimneys, one near the front of the left side and one near the rear of the right side. Like other houses of this type, it is set on a rough stone foundation.



This fine stone house at 1704 Sweetbriar Avenue has a porch which extends not only across the whole facade but becomes a carport to the right. The porch has stone pillars and a low wall. Windows are paired or occur in threes; each has a large diamond pane in the upper center. There are wide roof overhangs, with built-in gutters and a pair of decorative supporting brackets at each corner. The houses at 2509 and 2511 Belmont Boulevard are of similar design.



CONTRACTOR MODERN



The most contemporary houses in the neighborhood are designed in what is often called "Contractor Modern." These houses usually have the uncluttered simplicity, and sometimes the severe plainness, of modern architecture. Picture windows, low roof lines, and utterly compact one-story design all stamp these houses as being of the recent past. They are the result of the contemporary demand for neat, efficient, inexpensive houses. Like many older homes in the neighborhood they indicate how great is the need

for basic and inexpensive house design, whatever the current mode.

This modern brick duplex at 1712 Sweetbriar Avenue is designed to have general architectural harmony with the neighborhood's older houses. It has a wide facade, making its scale compatible with earlier homes even though it has only one story. It also has a real porch, like so many older houses.

Options

The Belmont-Hillsboro neighborhood is perhaps the most diverse and fascinating in Metropolitan Nashville. There is an extraordinary mix of old and new. Many fine old buildings in a once proud and prestigious neighborhood have been destroyed, allowed to fall into disrepair, or remodeled in ways insensitive to the historical continuity of the neighborhood. Simultaneously there is strong evidence of a counter trend. Many old homes have been renovated; new apartment buildings, duplexes, and office buildings have been constructed in recent years.

This situation raises the question what attitude should be adopted toward the past, toward buildings which were constructed 50 to 75 years ago—and what should be the relationship between new and old buildings as they jointly form the texture of the neighborhood.

On June 23, 24, and 26, area meetings were held for the purpose of sharing perspectives. Helen Baldwin showed slides and commented on the neighborhood and its houses; Berle Pilsk brought some sketches of future possibilities and discussed not only some alternative goals but different ways of reaching those goals. Residents had plenty of suggestions on the basis of their own experience of living in the neighborhood. After those meetings, more alternatives were explored. Here are some of the results for the further consideration of residents and policy makers.

The over-all plan of the neighborhood is compact, laid out on a grid pattern, criss-crossed with alleys. Lots are relatively small. There are scattered commercial areas and apartment buildings of a scale harmonious with a residential setting. The homes express a solid and secure, yet open and friendly attitude; the compact land plan, the strong sense of neighborhood, the diversity of life styles, and the energy of the residents help to make this neighborhood a viable alternative to the suburban life style.



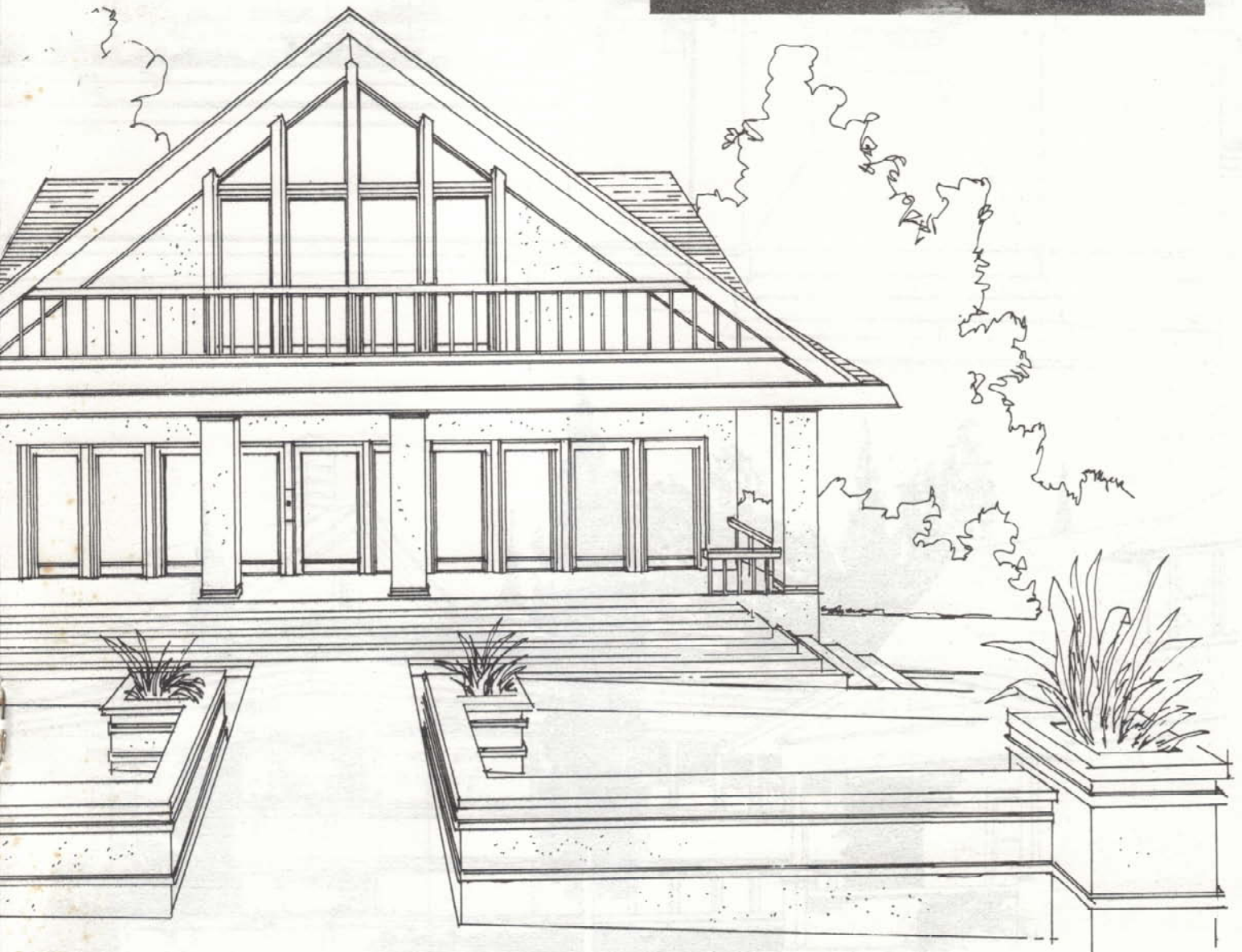
The present trend is a conglomeration of differing styles, scales, and materials. The older buildings, primarily through the use of similar architectural features and the maturity of the vegetation surrounding them, tend to unify the neighborhood despite their diversity. As an example of the way buildings of differing size and use can be visually integrated, consider the various apartment buildings scattered through the neighborhood. These older apartments, such as Ivy Lodge, achieve a humanity unmatched by newer buildings because of their residential scale and the use of "warm" materials and colors. Contemporary needs can be met, while maintaining historical continuity, through design with appropriate style and scale.

The following alternatives are offered as possibilities for further discussion. All of them were developed in response to suggestions made by residents, though some suggestions were made more enthusiastically than others.

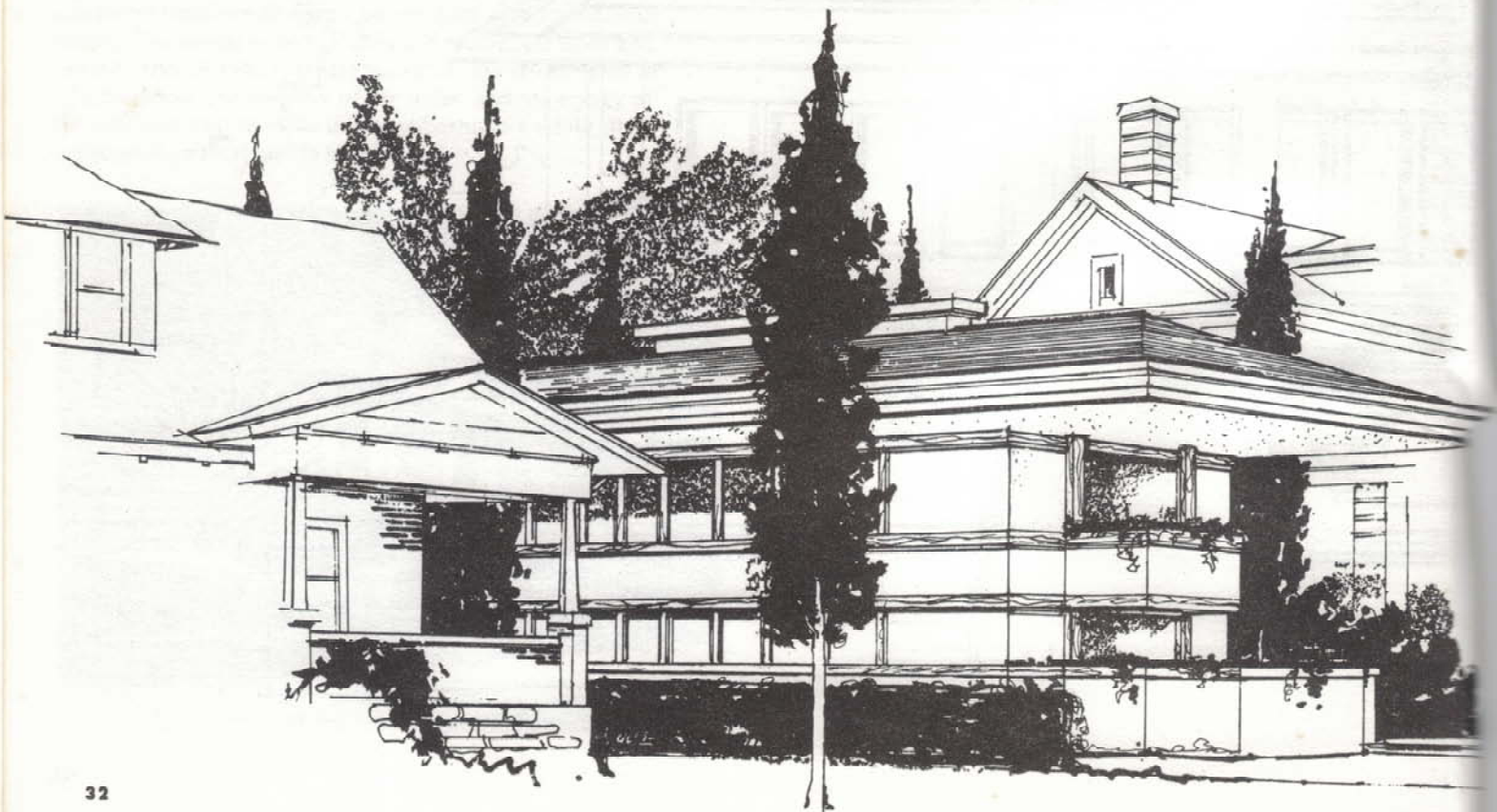
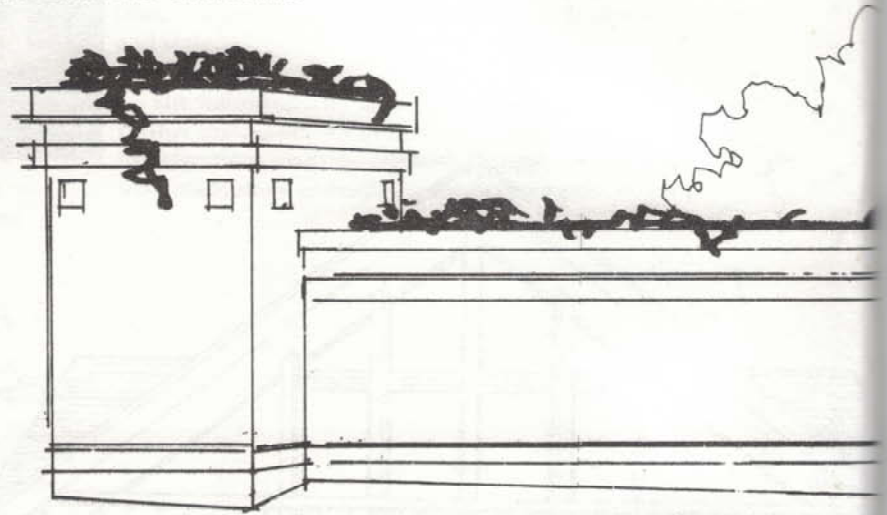


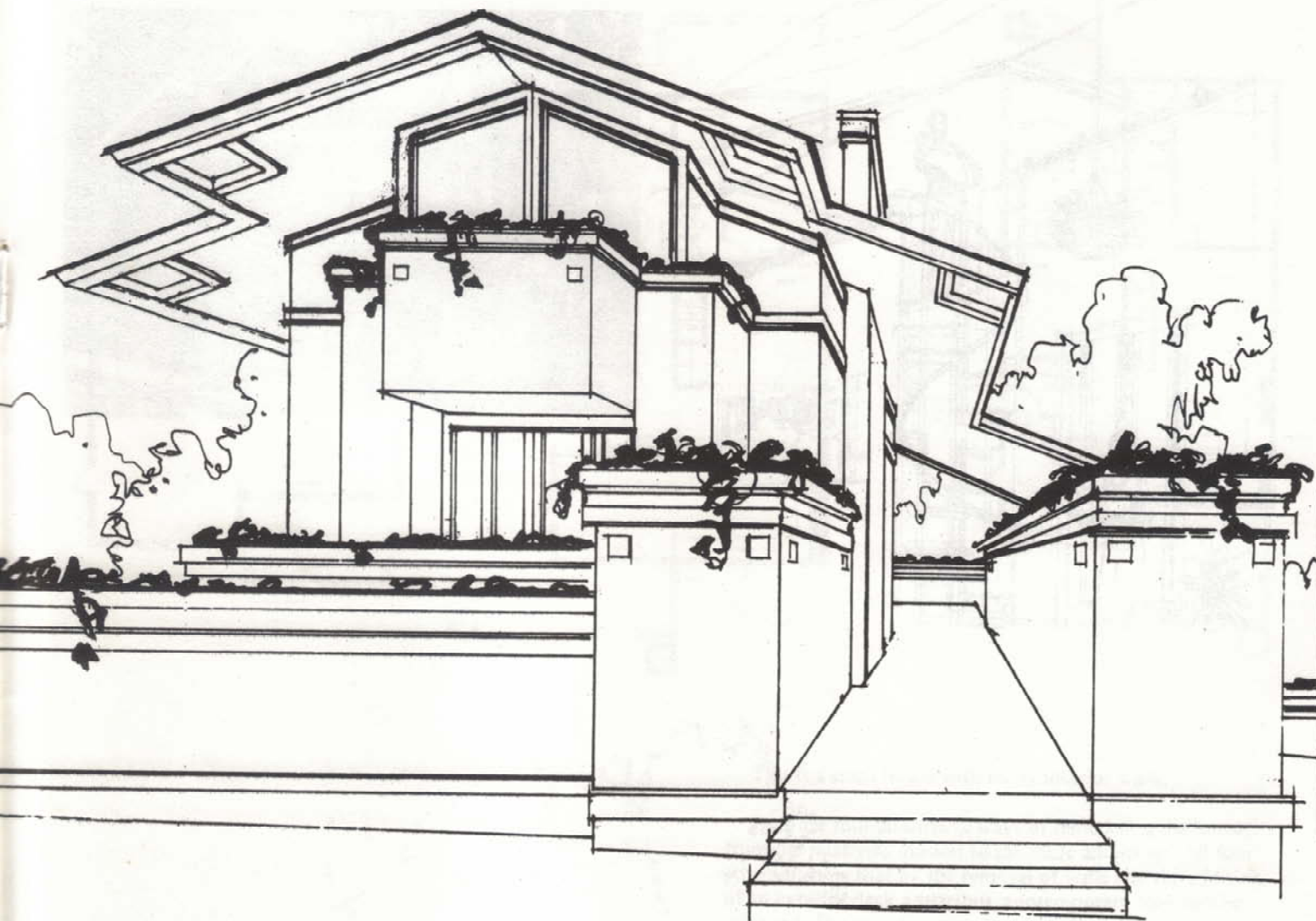
Here is a typical home built over fifty years ago. There are many small rooms, with a closed-in feeling.

Walls can be removed; the front porch can be enlarged to give a more open, flowing plan suited to contemporary life styles. The wall at the sidewalk gives visual privacy and "presence" to the home. Enlarging the dormer helps unify the composition, and the second-floor deck gives a feeling of expansiveness to the house. Note that no new rooms must be added; the existing size is adequate for a family home.



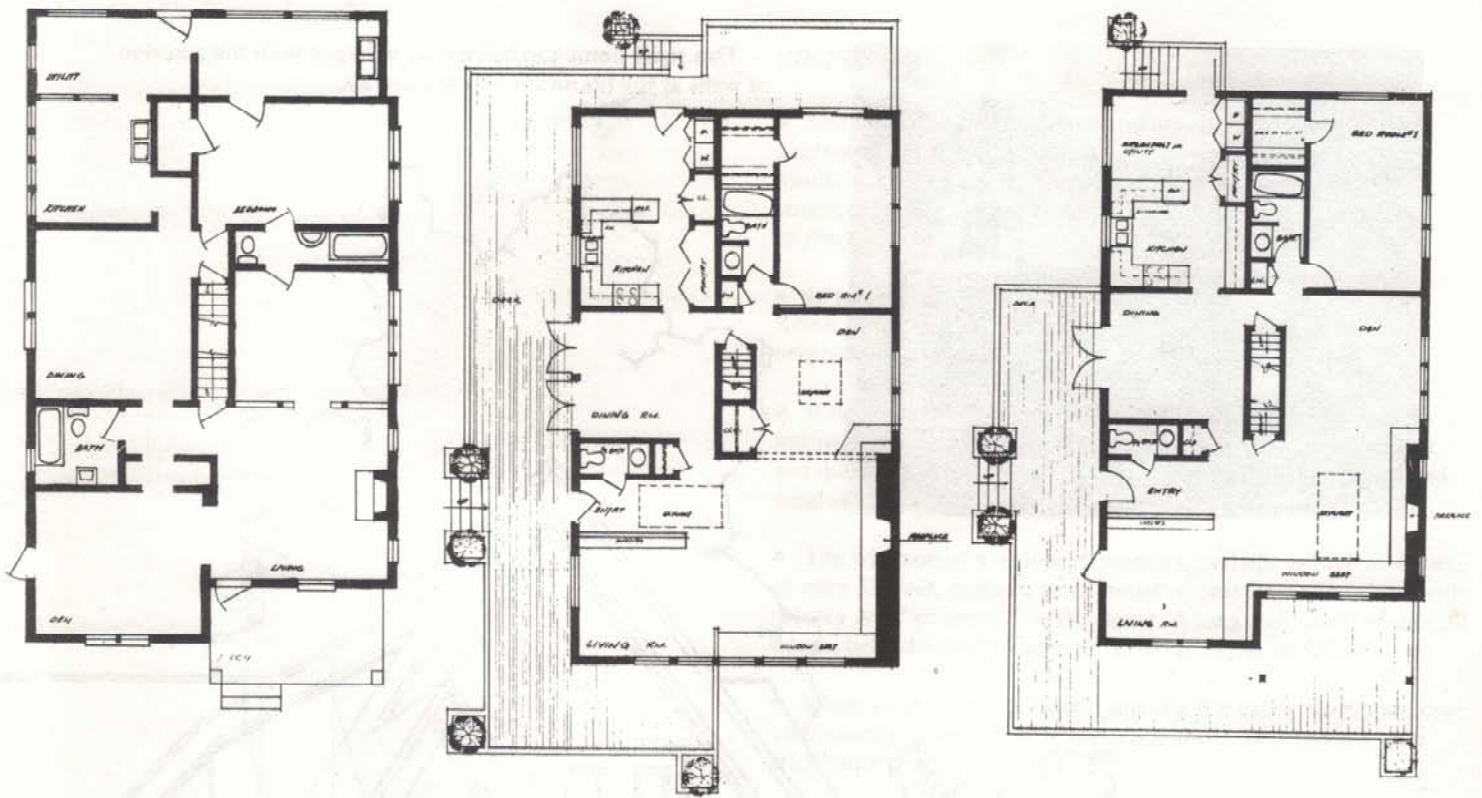
This basic plan can be adapted to single family or duplex usage. The plan has privacy as well as easy access to the outside. Cars enter from the alley. The exterior can be brick, stucco, or wood shingles to harmonize with neighboring houses. The sloping roof, similar scale, and the wall at the sidewalk help this design to blend with older homes.





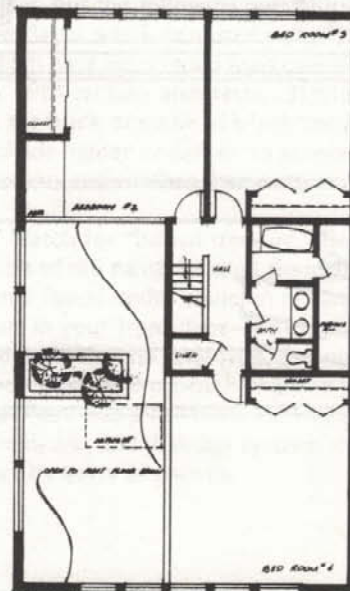
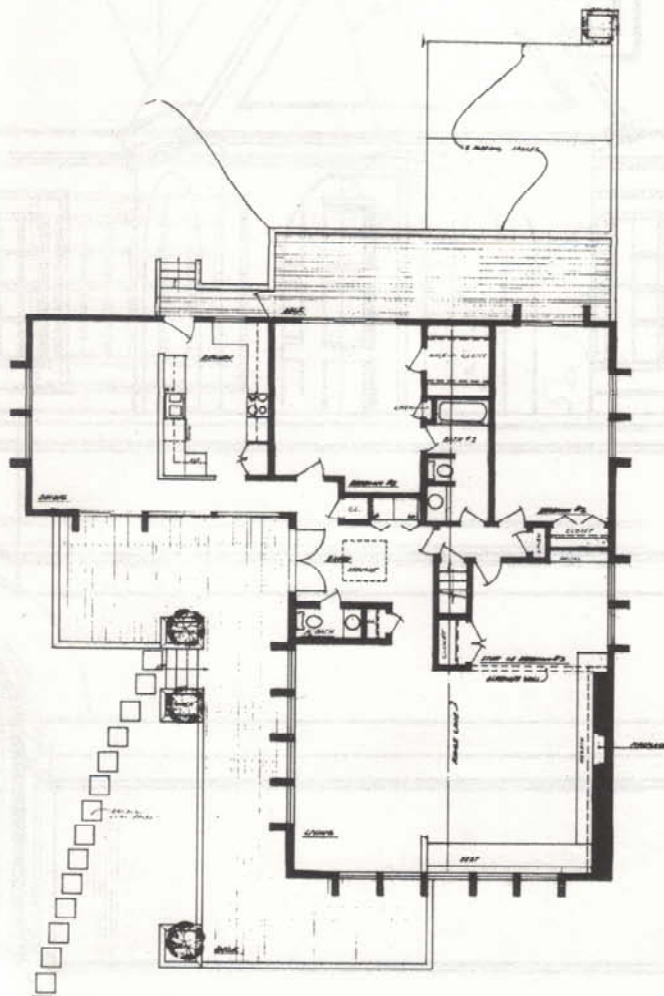
Here is an alternative design for a developer duplex on a narrow city lot. The larger roof, windows scaled to neighboring homes, similar materials, and low walls give the house a scale and appearance in harmony with its neighbors. The wall with planters at the sidewalk helps to unify differing styles and gives privacy.





This is a small house with many interior walls.

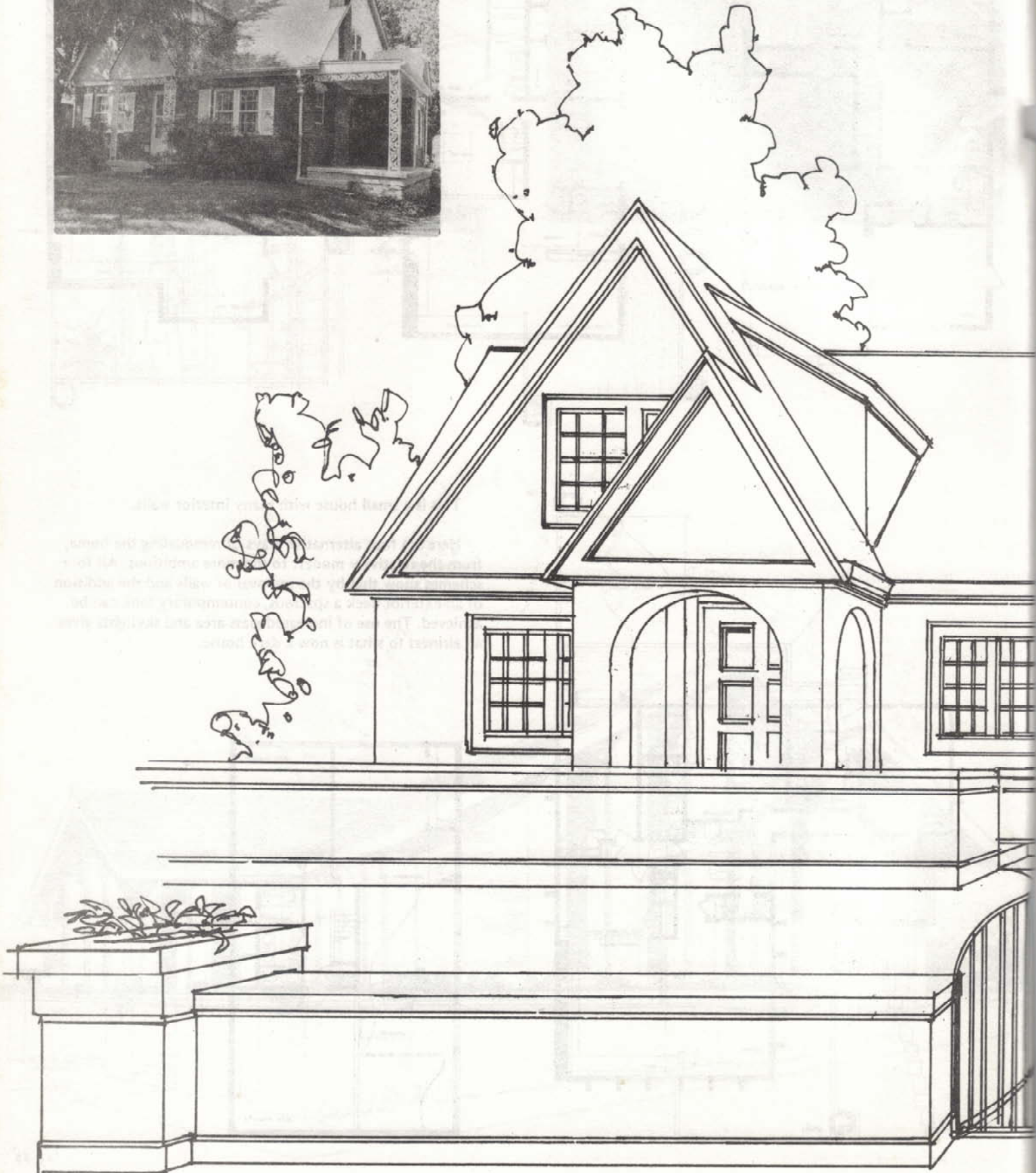
Here are four alternative ways of remodeling the home, from the relatively modest to the more ambitious. All four schemes show that by the removal of walls and the addition of an exterior deck a spacious, contemporary look can be achieved. The use of increased glass area and skylights gives an airiness to what is now a dark house.

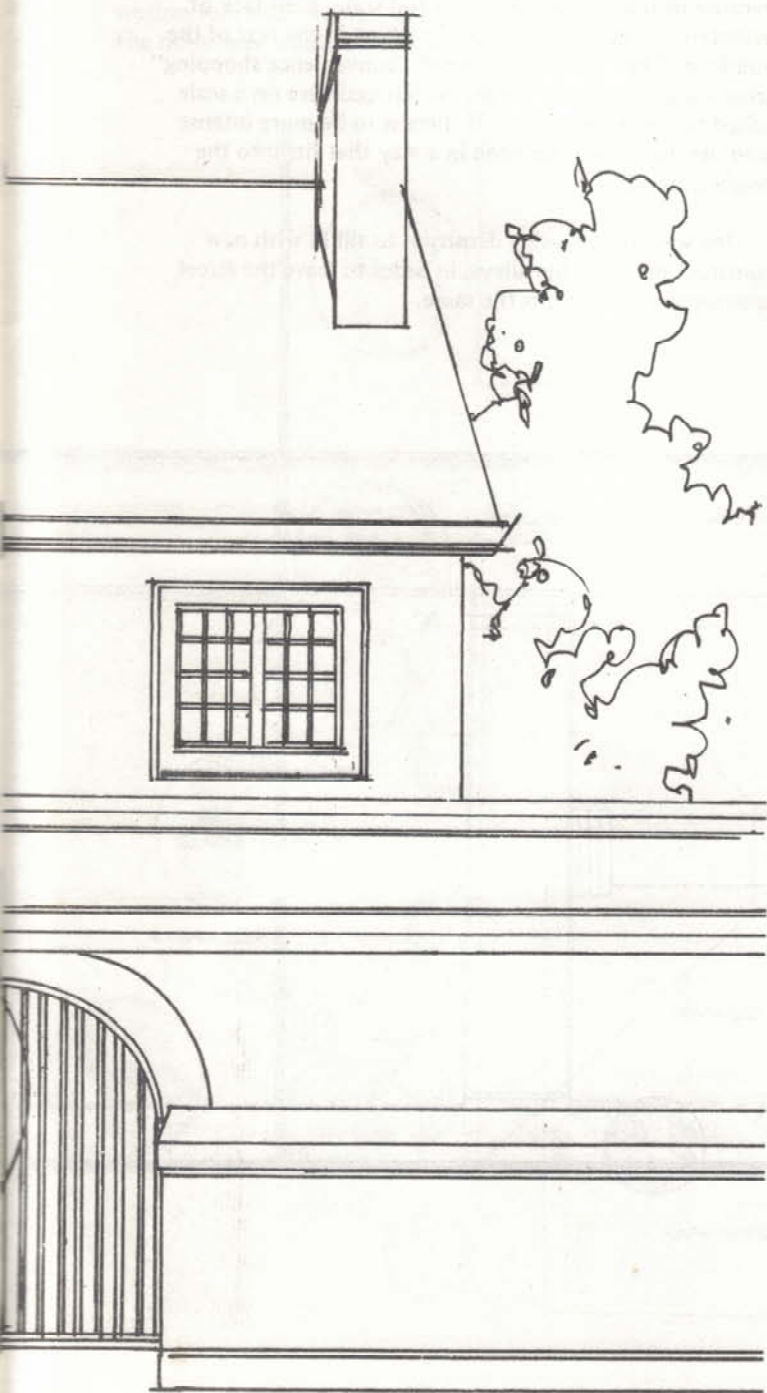


SCHEMES #1, #2, & #3: SECOND FLOOR PLAN



This small home can be visually enlarged with the addition of walls at the house and at the sidewalk.





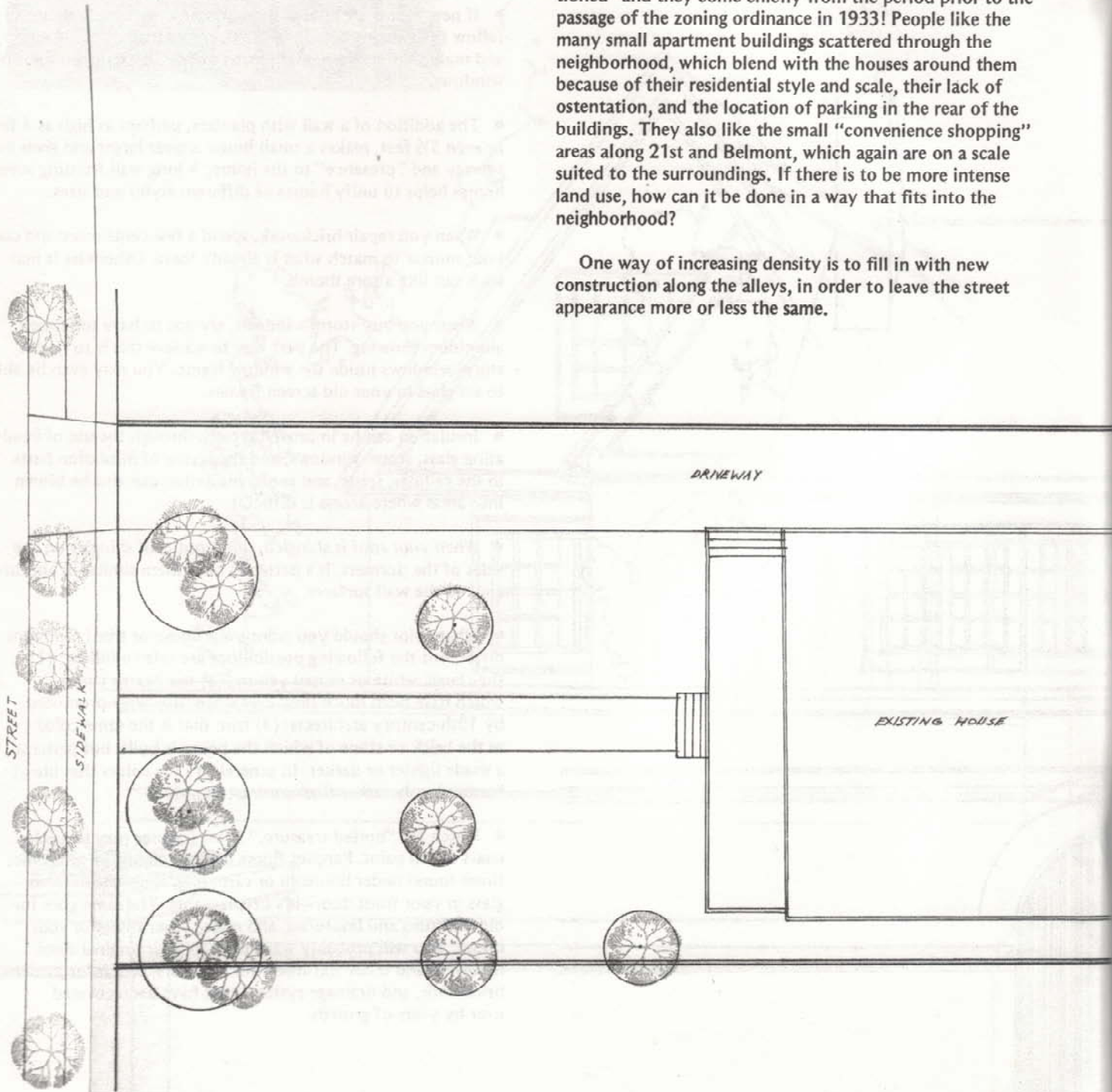
HINTS

- The homes in the neighborhood are spacious, but for contemporary needs some people may want to open them up inside. Walls can usually be removed without damage to the structure, giving a more open plan and a more expansive feel to the house.
- In many cases these older homes have distinctive features which, if emphasized during remodeling, can highlight the original design with even greater visual unity.
- If new rooms are added, some simple rules of thumb are to follow the existing roof line, use the same materials and colors, and match the size, proportions, and style of existing doors and windows.
- The addition of a wall with planters, perhaps as high as 4 feet or even 5½ feet, makes a small house appear larger and gives both privacy and "presence" to the home. A long wall fronting several homes helps to unify homes of different styles and sizes.
- When you repair brickwork, spend a few cents more and color your mortar to match what is already there. Otherwise it may stick out like a sore thumb.
- When you buy storm windows, try not to have too much aluminum showing. The best way to achieve this is to fit the storm windows inside the window frame. You may even be able to set glass in your old screen frames.
- Insulation can be improved greatly through the use of insulating glass, storm windows, and the laying of insulation batts in the ceilings, joists, and roofs. Insulation can also be blown into areas where access is difficult.
- When your roof is shingled, don't put roof shingles on the sides of the dormers. It's better to have them similar in appearance to the wall surfaces.
- What color should you paint your house or trim? Opinions differ, but the following possibilities are safe to follow: (1) the classic white or muted yellow; (2) the "earth colors," which have been much used ever since they were promoted by 19th-century architects; (3) trim that is the same color as the brick or stone of which the house is built, but perhaps a shade lighter or darker. In general, try for colors that blend harmoniously rather than contrast sharply.
- Watch for "buried treasure." Brass fixtures may be under coats of old paint. Parquet floors in good condition are sometimes found under linoleum or carpeting. Keep the beveled glass in your front door—it's irreplaceable. The same goes for old bathtubs and lavatories, and many other things in your house. You will probably want to keep your original door hardware and other fixtures. And outdoors, watch for gardens, brickwork, and drainage systems that have been covered over by years of growth.

In neighborhood discussions thus far, most people have been appreciative of the neighborhood as it is and want to preserve its basic character. But they also recognize that life styles and energy costs have changed, and that there may be more "intense" land use in the area ("intense" is a nice way of saying more crowded). There is almost no undeveloped land in the neighborhood. If the present buildings are well maintained, the neighborhood will retain its character. But if there should be clearance and rebuilding, or if there are zoning changes to more intense land use, even then most residents hope to see basic continuity with what is already here.

Some good examples of more intense use were often mentioned—and they come chiefly from the period prior to the passage of the zoning ordinance in 1933! People like the many small apartment buildings scattered through the neighborhood, which blend with the houses around them because of their residential style and scale, their lack of ostentation, and the location of parking in the rear of the buildings. They also like the small "convenience shopping" areas along 21st and Belmont, which again are on a scale suited to the surroundings. If there is to be more intense land use, how can it be done in a way that fits into the neighborhood?

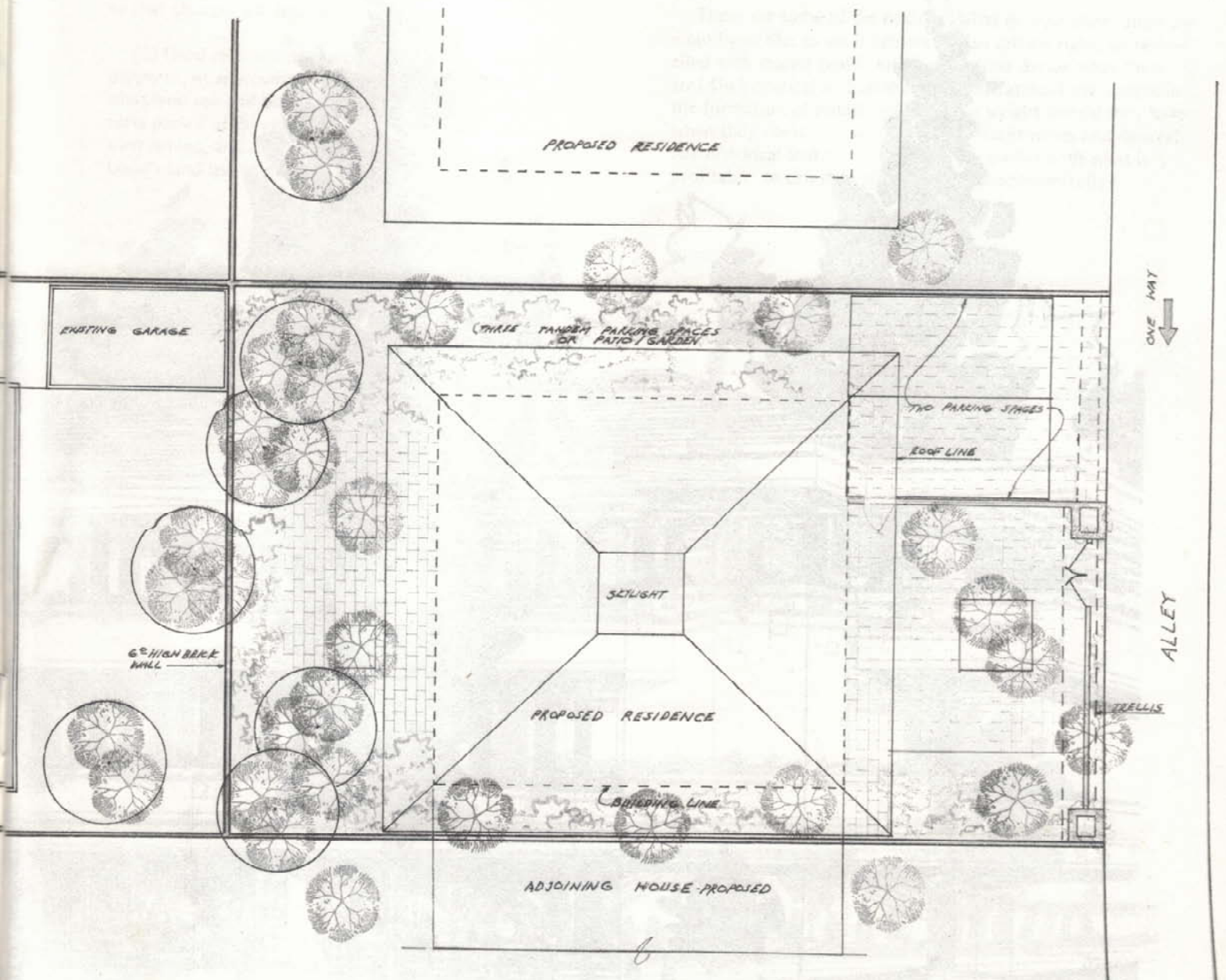
One way of increasing density is to fill in with new construction along the alleys, in order to leave the street appearance more or less the same.



Another possibility is suggested by the new condominiums that are being built. They place the individual living units close together, with very small patios taking the place of yards for each unit, and then have large "common areas" which are jointly owned and are shared by all. The idea could be transferred to an existing neighborhood. Adjacent property owners could agree to join their properties in various ways. If they really get along, next-door neighbors could simply merge their property, owning it together but making agreements for the use of certain portions. Or if that seems rather utopian, there are two other methods. One would be to reduce the individual lots to 8000 square feet, the minimum size allowed under R8 zoning (a 50-foot lot would have to be 160 feet deep), and merge the rest into a common space jointly owned and used. All that would be required is approval by the Planning Commission for re-subdivision and the filing of new deeds. The other way would be to assemble enough lots to

total an acre, and then file for a "PUD" (Planned Unit Development), which could permit larger common spaces and smaller individual lots. This would require not only Planning Commission but Council approval.

One way of achieving greater intensity of land use and increasing opportunities for work—and for shopping—within a residential neighborhood is what the zoning law calls "accessory use." It is possible to work and do business where you live—but under some strict guidelines. The business cannot generate traffic, customers cannot be served on the premises (no beauty shops or restaurants), no more than four pupils can be taught at any one time, the business area cannot be more than a fifth of your total living space, and there cannot be display windows. Would you like to see the provisions for accessory use broadened? If so, what would the limitations be?



Because of the increasing costs of transportation and the needs of many people for a more urban life style, the option of living, working, and shopping in close proximity is becoming increasingly attractive. This multiple-use building is one possibility for an area along 21st Avenue South which has already been zoned for light commercial use. The design harmonizes with the existing residential scale through use of the sloping concrete or clay tile roof, horizontal and vertical lines and massing, breaking up of the facade into smaller scaled elements, use of stucco or brick, trellis overhangs which cast shadows dividing the building into smaller elements, and use of trees, benches, and planters. It is set well back from the street, with a landscaped plaza to encourage pedestrian use. Vehicular access is from the rear.

The question that many people have asked is how they can be sure that new development will be compatible with the character of the neighborhood that is already here. What kinds of control can be exerted?

The variety of the neighborhood is usually pleasing, because few houses call loudly for attention, and the similarity of lot size helps to make most houses equal citizens. But at times variety can mean that diverse styles or sizes of architecture will visually "clash" with each other. We have given some examples of ways in which greater visual harmony can be achieved. Generally what is needed is some kind of continuity, whether in height, proportions, window or door patterns, projections, texture of materials, or geometrical shapes.



How much harmony would you like to see? At what point do you think diversity becomes objectionable? Would you like to see some kind of regulation of building sizes and styles?

One of the purposes of zoning is to limit the "bulk" of buildings so that they will not be too dissimilar from other structures or cut off their light and air. But zoning laws do not involve any consideration of the design and external appearance of buildings.

Citizens have asked that we explore various procedures which might help to preserve the quality of neighborhoods and ensure harmonious design. Here are the main possibilities:

(1) If property is rezoned, the Council can insist that it be rezoned only for a specific purpose; even the design of the building can be included in the rezoning bill. Residents often express a desire for safeguards of this sort, so that changes will not be unpredictable.

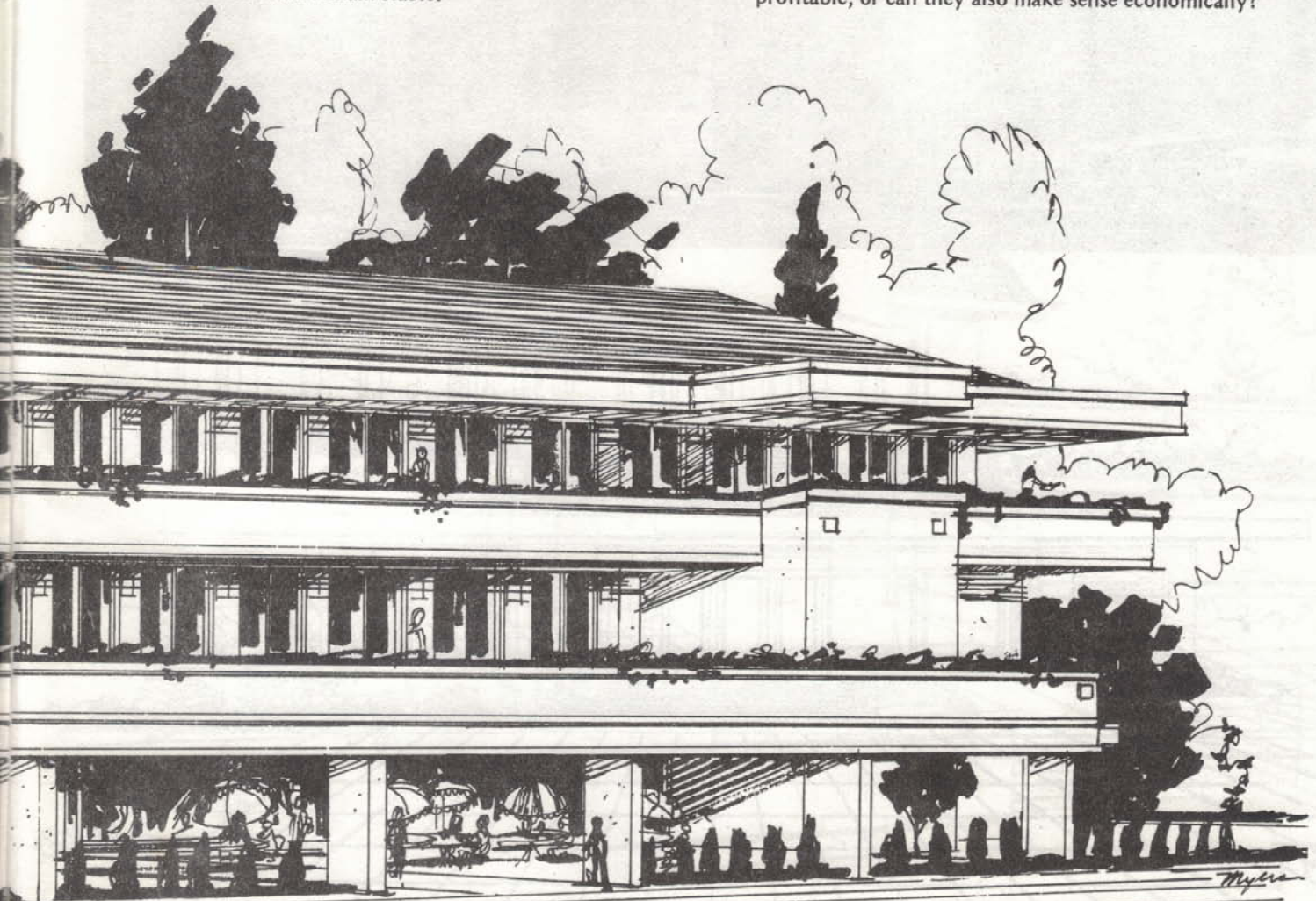
(2) Deed restrictions can be added by any owner of property, or any combination of owners, specifying what land use and building design are permitted (usually for a period of 20 years). This is a way of doing one's own zoning, and assuring future owners that a neighborhood's land use will remain stable.

(3) The zoning laws could be written to include various "performance standards" for design, obstructions, visual impact, and the like. These could either be requirements to be observed in all cases, or "trade-offs" which would reward good design with larger floor area.

(4) Zoning laws could also be written to require neighborhood approval for new construction which involved a change in land use—a kind of public review and comment on new buildings.

(5) The most effective—but also the most controversial—is "design review" by a committee of citizens including architects. This is already done in many cities, and there are some residents who spoke in favor of it; but others felt that it is too much of an intrusion into private rights, even though they may admit that it addresses a genuine problem.

These are some of the options. What do you want—and how would you like to see it achieved? Can private rights be reconciled with shared goals? And how do you decide what these are? Do historical and aesthetic considerations have a place in the formation of public policy? What weight should they have when they come into conflict with present needs and desires? Are historical and aesthetic values in conflict with what is profitable, or can they also make sense economically?



The following are some possibilities offered for discussion, showing how buildings already noteworthy for their architectural quality and value to the neighborhood might be altered with a view to increasing visual continuity, should it be desired.

This building differs radically in architectural style, scale, and materials from the ante-Bellum style of the office building across the street.

A possible remodel of the same building, with the addition of a sloping roof and windows and color matching those of the older building, could maintain visual continuity. The low wall with planters screens the parking area, and the exposed aggregate concrete pavement separated by ground cover gives a softer look to the front area.

