CASE STUDY 2.0
REBUILDING LOS ANGELES

A Visionary Catalog for Resilient and Sustainable Homes

SOTO

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COMPANY / FIRM SUMMARY

Ismael Soto, AIA is a California-licensed architect with over a decade of experience designing and delivering high-profile projects. He has held key design roles at globally recognized firms including Zaha Hadid Architects, Foster + Partners, and Bjarke Ingels Group.

He holds a Master of Architecture from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Bachelor of Architecture from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. His academic work has been exhibited internationally by the Vitra Design Museum.

He currently serves as design faculty at Cal Poly and has previously taught at the Architectural Association, UCLA, and USC.

SOTO is a Los Angeles-based architecture practice dedicated to fusing global design excellence with local insight. Our mission is to create inspiring, resilient architecture that elevates everyday life by making the luxury of thoughtful, well-crafted spaces more accessible.

We provide comprehensive architectural services — from conceptual design to construction administration — bringing together multidisciplinary expertise through a trusted network of partners.

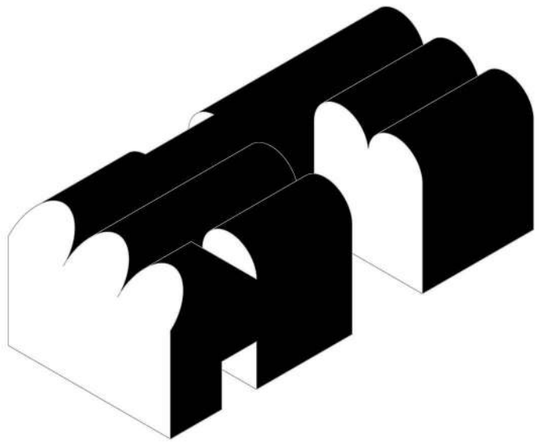
Rooted in European human-centric design principles and shaped by the California lifestyle, our work prioritizes honest materials, natural light, and seamless indoor-outdoor connections. Each project begins with listening — to the site, the climate, and the people it will serve — allowing us to design environments that are intuitive, adaptable, and deeply responsive to their local context.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Lot Area:
6,500 sf

Building Area:
3,900 sf

Program:
3 Bedrooms
3.5 Baths
2 Car Garage
Office
Living Room
Kitchen
Dining
Pool



Tres Arcos Residence
Pacific Palisades, California

On a standard 50’ lot—enclosed by neighboring homes and without ocean views—the residence turns inward, reimagining domestic life around a serene courtyard. A screen of compressed earth blocks defines the entry, offering privacy and a tactile, memorable welcome. Three low-carbon concrete vaults—made with fly ash and recycled aggregates—organize the plan and draw daylight deep into the home. A timber-framed second floor spans lightly across the concrete, introducing warmth and contrast. Each room opens outward—through courtyards, balconies, and framed garden views—embracing California’s climate and dissolving the boundary between inside and out.

Social spaces occupy the lower level, enhancing permeability and connection to the landscape. Water features animate the ground floor, creating a cooling microclimate. Paired with drought-tolerant planting, the landscape becomes a seamless extension of daily life. Passive ventilation and thermal mass reduce energy use while elevating comfort. Rooted in material honesty and natural light, the home proposes a new model for fire-resilient living in Southern California.

DESIGN FEATURES

FIRE RESISTANCE

The home uses non-combustible materials and tightly sealed assemblies to enhance fire resistance.

ROOFING

The home features high-performance roofing systems designed for durability, energy efficiency, and resistance to fire.

BUILDING SIDING

The exterior is concrete and compressed earth blocks, both of which are fire and heat resistant.

WINDOWS & DOORS

Equipped with high-performance windows and doors featuring dual or triple glazing, low-E coatings, and tightly sealed frames to enhance fire resistance.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE INTEGRATION

A 6' zone around the house will be have the most intensive defensible space with ember resistant planning.

VENTS

The building envelope is air tight in order to prevent smoke infiltration and smoke damage. Any necessary vents are to be properly capped and sealed with fire resistant materials.

EMBER-RESISTANT FEATURES

Fire-rated roof, no eaves, fire resistant materials, and ember-screened vents.

SUSTAINABILITY

Large openings allow for passive cooling most of the year. Photovoltaic panel ready roof.available as alternate.

DESIGN QUALITIES

Building materials and structure are part of the feature of the house, not to be disguised behind cladding.

CONSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY

The house features both a cast-in-place concrete structure and timber beams with a CLT diaphragm to enhance sustainability and warmth.

EFFICIENCY

Optimized energy use, superior insulation, airtight construction, and integrated smart systems.

STYLE FEATURES

Seamless indoor-outdoor connections, designed to reflect both elegance and beauty.

ADDITIONAL SPECIAL FEATURES

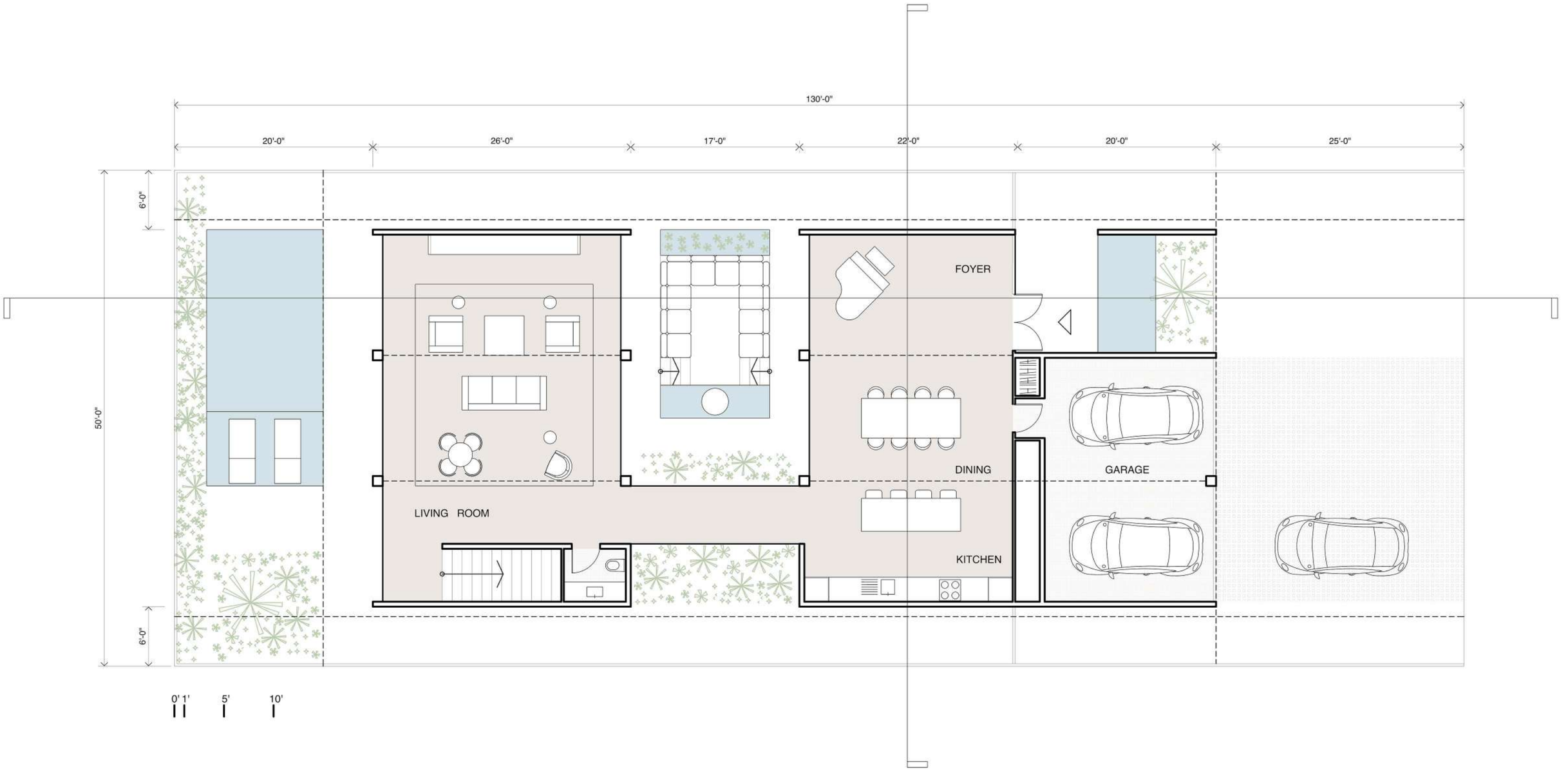
Natural light and ventilation embrace california lifestyle.

CUSTOMIZATION POTENTIAL

The exterior concrete can accept other pigments for coloration.

PLANS

GROUND LEVEL



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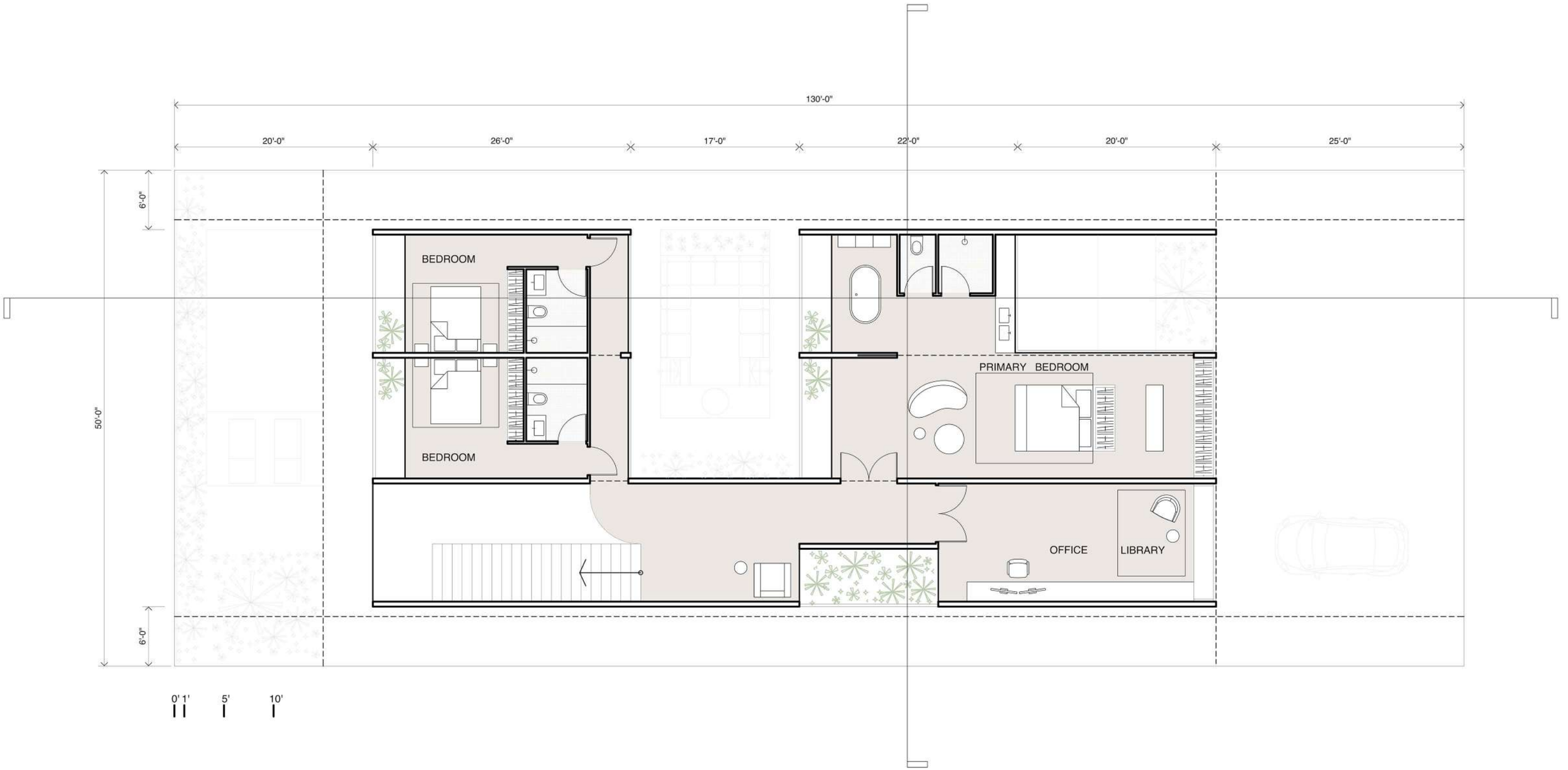
UPPER LEVEL



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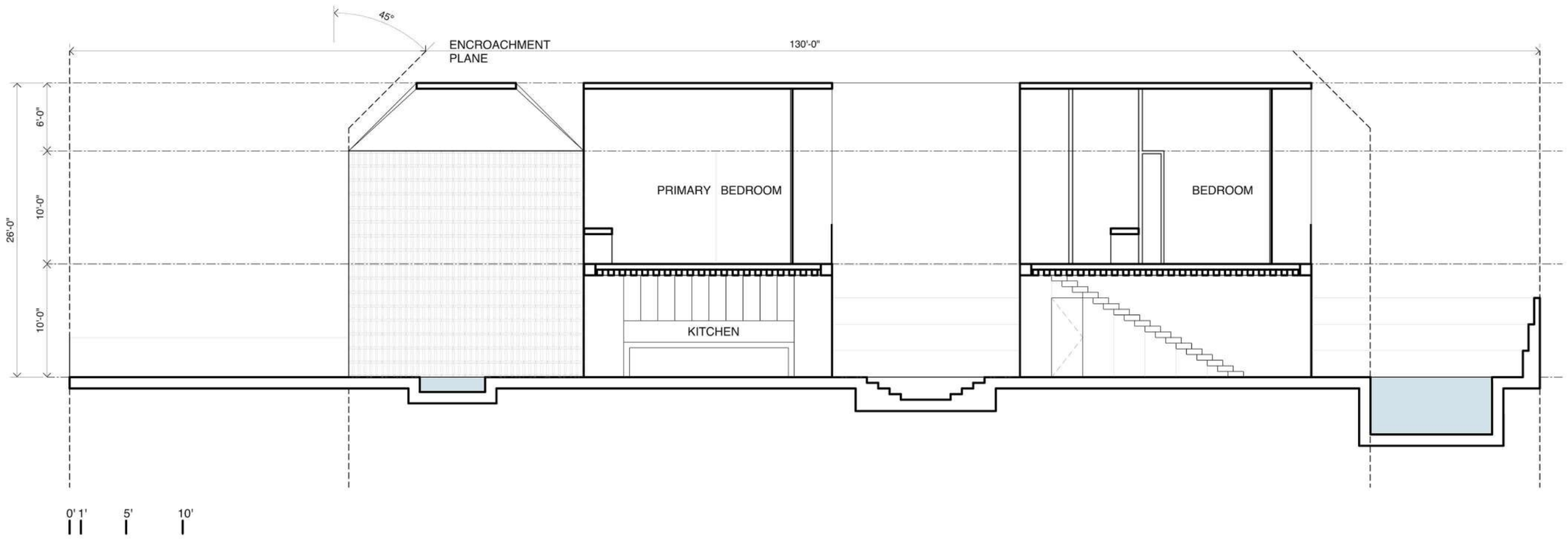
SECTIONS

LONGITUDINAL SECTION



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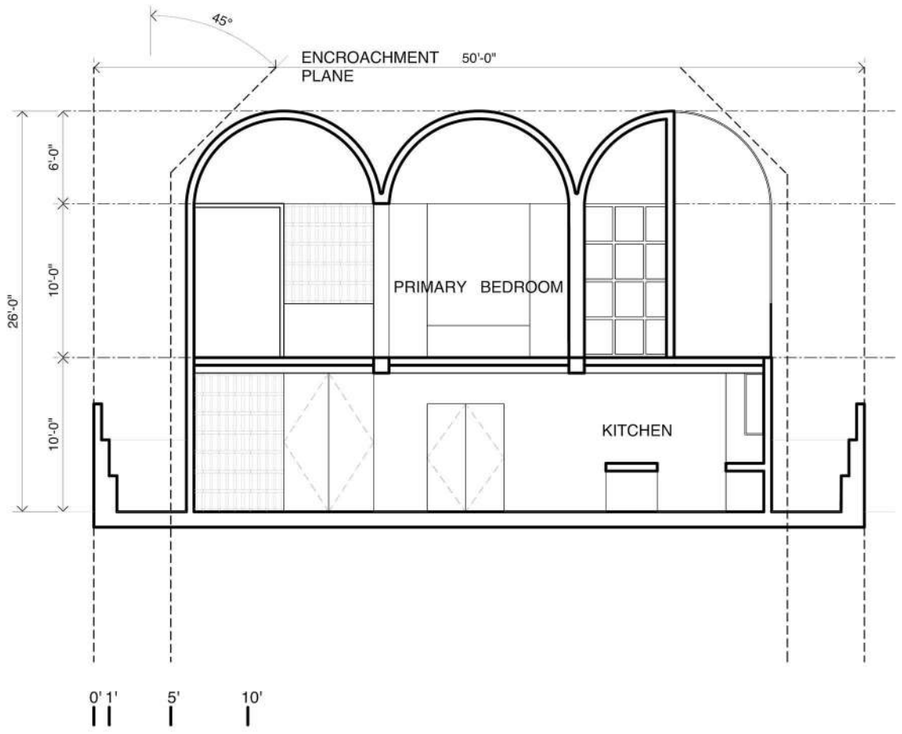
LATITUDINAL SECTION



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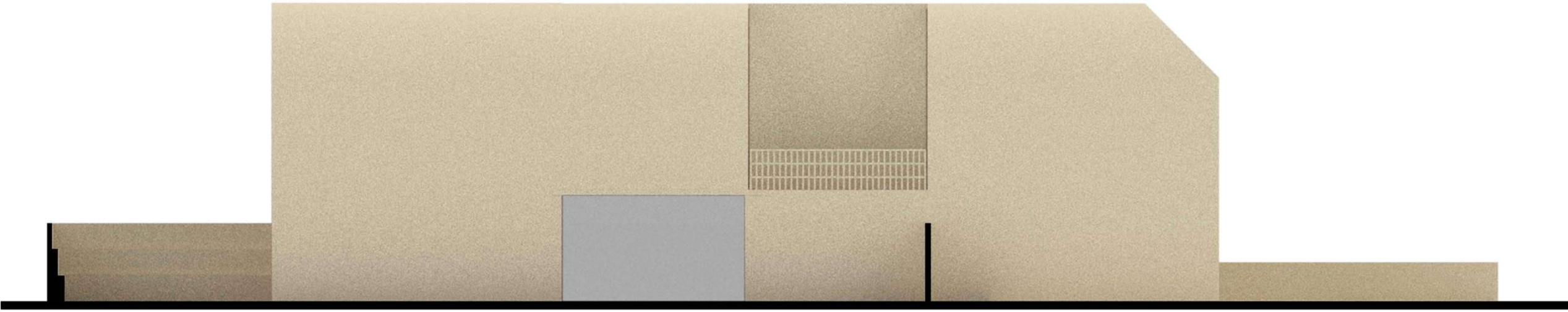
ELEVATIONS

SIDE



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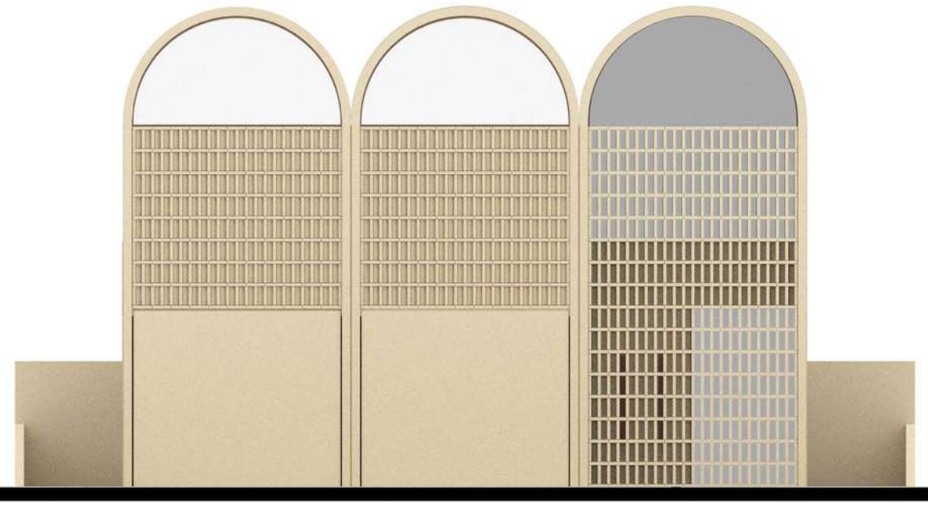
FRONT



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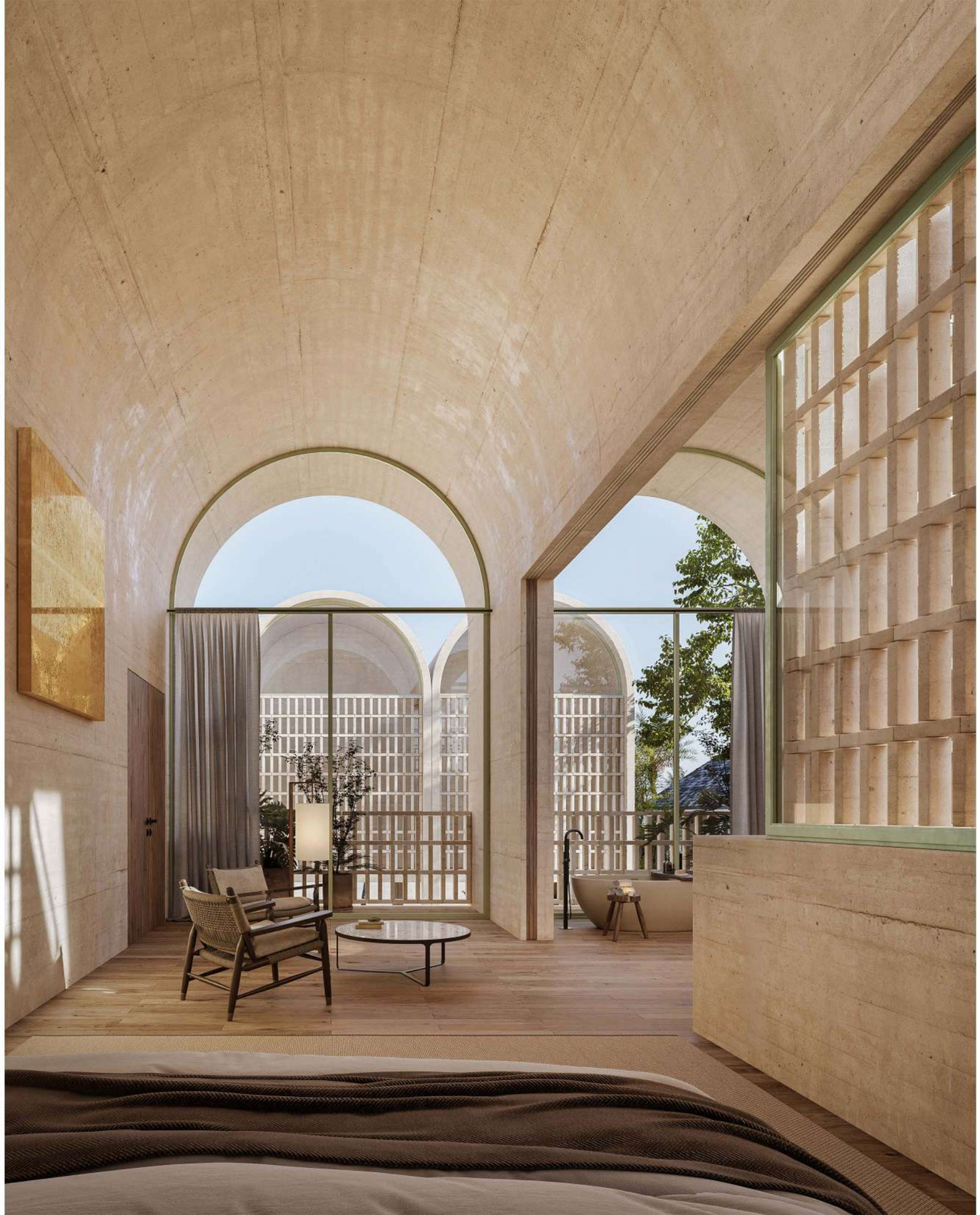
RENDERINGS



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