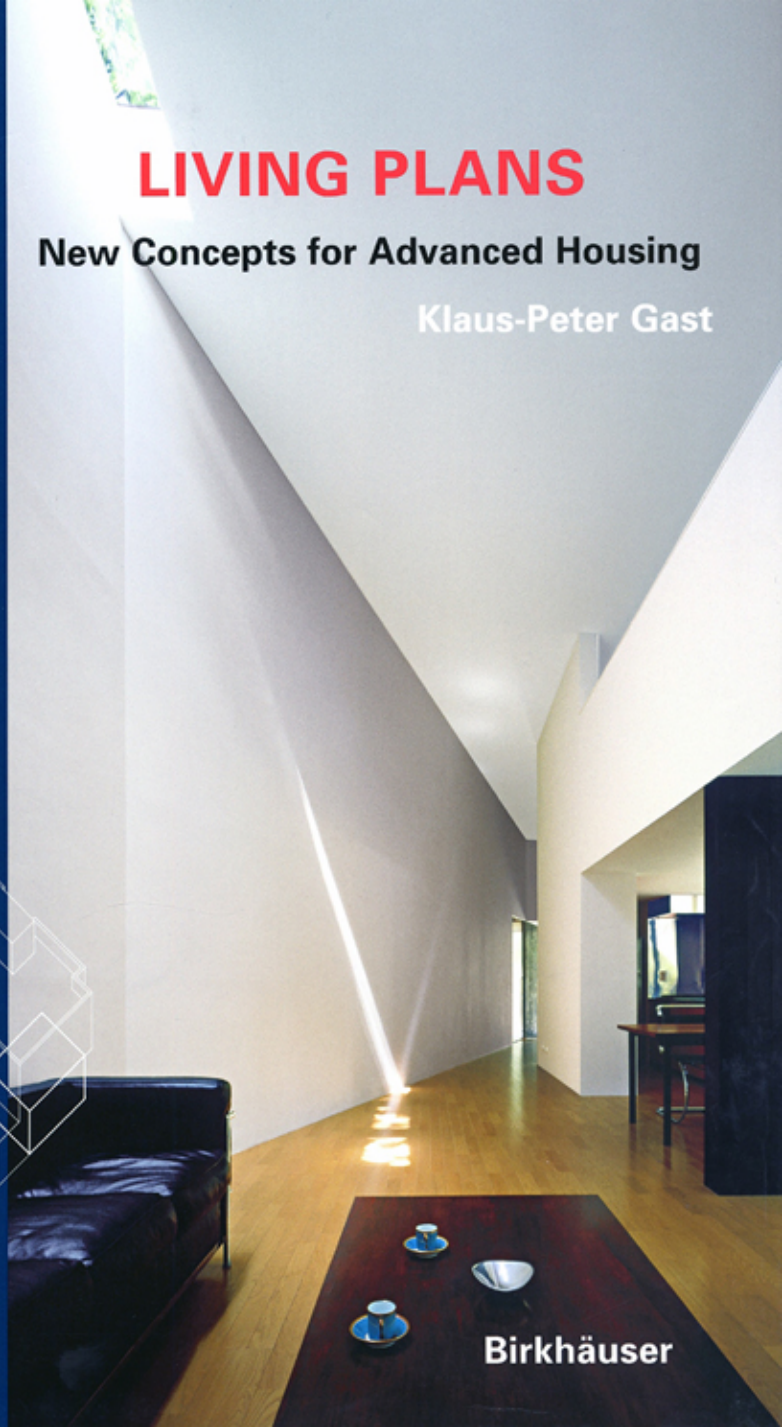


LIVING PLANS

New Concepts for Advanced Housing

Klaus-Peter Gast



Birkhäuser

Migdal Arquitectos

Nautilus Villa

Family home in hilly terrain with suburban structure
Guerrero, Acapulco, Mexico
Masonry structure, rendered
Total usable area: 500 sq.m.
2000

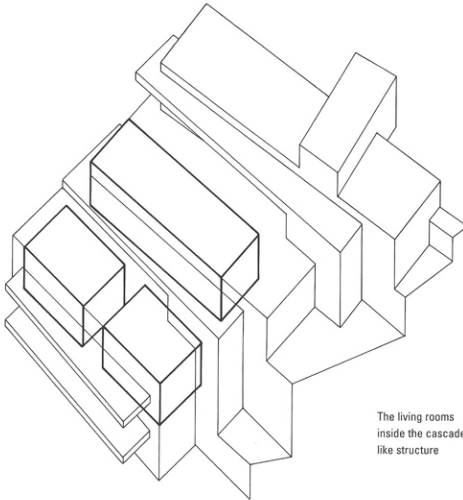
A steep slope and panoramic view determine the distribution of functions and form of this lavish house on Acapulco Bay in Mexico. The subsoil in hilly, partly wooded terrain needed particular structural measures to anchor the building firmly. As public access was by a link to the road on the topmost level, all the other levels had to be arranged below it, following the slope. So Migdal Arquitectos opted for developing a terraced, staggered figure extending over five levels. The overwhelming view on a diagonal plot contour and the north-facing aspect, turning away from the sun as much as possible, determine the splitting up of the mass into individual cubic prisms and their slightly slewed positions. This means that the building does not brace itself against the slope, but snuggles up to it. Hence numerous platforms emerge as living and terrace areas, with the internal spaces continuing outwards via lavish glazing, creating an experience of differentiated spatial sequences marked by an assertively horizontal quality. The result is a mobile body producing a contradictory calm that exercises a powerful hold over the occupants. The large window areas with their narrow divisions into a peaceful rhythm also contribute to this.

There is a separate apartment on the topmost level (0), under that are the main living zone with wide terrace and link with the swimming pool. Then two separate sleeping/living spaces follow on level (-2) and (-3). So here "living" also means experiencing the situation on the slope.

The building has high walls screening it off from the neighbours. The markedly horizontal sections of the building gleam in the glaring sun in their monochrome white. Complete rejection of varied materials makes the differentiated structure flow together again, uniting everything as a homogeneous structure. The rounded edges of the building sections is reminiscent of traditional Mexican architecture, resulting in a strangely 'gentle' appearance. There is a high degree of creative charm in the way the horizontal roof and terrace sections run together with the lateral building volumes, which are merely 'perforated' and grow together with the ground. In a tropical climate with intensive light conditions the white does not just afford maximum light and heat reflection, but also a bright, stimulatingly cheerful atmosphere.



Main view from the west



The living rooms inside the cascade-like structure

View of the bed-/livingrooms





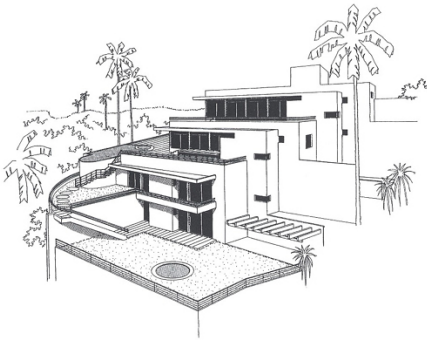
Main living area (-1)
with terrace and
separate bedrooms



Main entrance on
the top level (0)
with garage and
separate bedrooms



Stepped levels with
main entrance at
the top



Sketch of the full
view of the differen-
tiated body of the
building

View of Acapulco
Bay from the living
terrace





Migdal Arquitectos

Paseos Urban Quarter

New housing estate structure with 1,400 terraced family homes
Izcalli, Mexico

Masonry, rendering

Total usable area per house: 83 sq.m.; reduced unit: 65 sq.m.
2000

This large housing estate project addresses Mexico's great need for high-quality social accommodation. Despite the relatively small area of 65 to 83 square metres per unit, the occupants have an entire house to themselves, an enormously important psychological feature within high-density structures. The estate tries to take up the traditional urban qualities of a residential area like scale, a good balance between private and public space, good distribution of commercial and public facilities, right down to the semi-public areas in front of the houses. The overall intention is to produce an independent, fully functional, almost independent urban structure, offering the occupants, who are mainly on low incomes, all the facilities they need. The architects aimed particularly to make it possible for occupants to identify with their place, so that atmospheric qualities were to be put in the foreground: differentiated vigour for the house units through façade articulation and 'cheerful' paintwork, avoiding an unduly abstract and elegant appearance in favour of essentially traditional formal elements, treating the units equally so that social differences were not intelligible, creating front and back gardens and leaving enough public space for communal interaction. The houses are linked to form double units, with enough space at the front to park a car or establish a garden. The ground floor has an all-purpose living area with built-in kitchen equipment, two smaller rooms and a washing yard. The bedrooms are upstairs. The greatest possible 'neutrality' for the spaces leaves considerable scope for the occupants' various requirements.

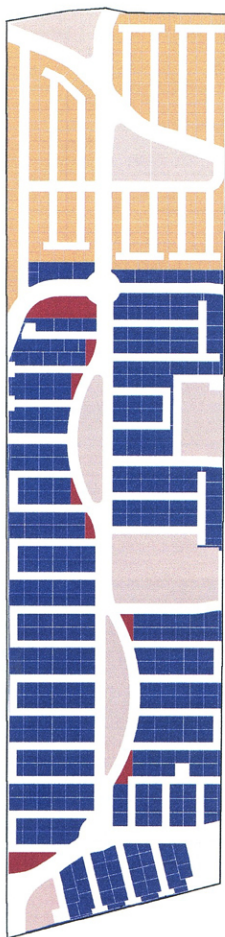
View of the estate

El Encanto
500 houses

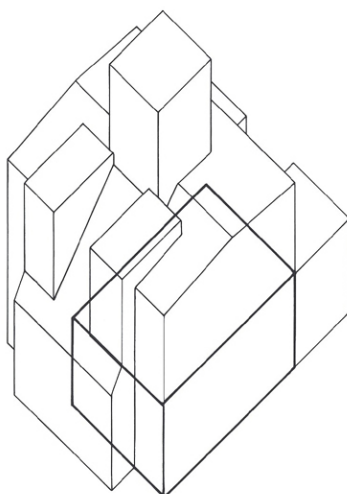
Paseos
1400 houses

Urban
equipment

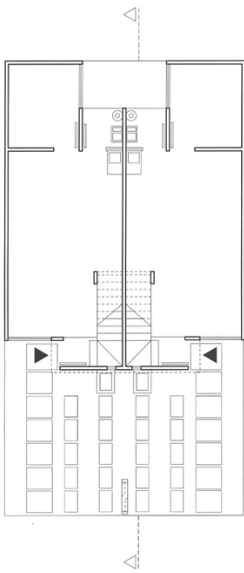
Commerce



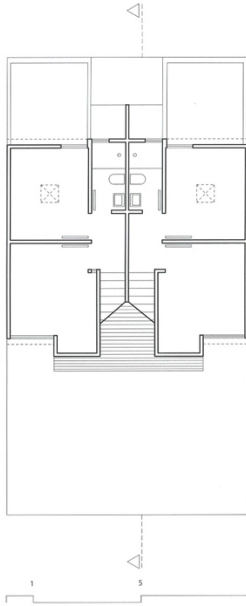
The whole estate
with 1900 house
units



House dimensions
with ground floor
living area



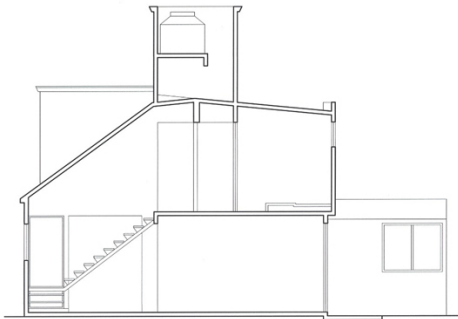
Main entrance to the living area with cooking/dining facilities, room and washing yard



Upper floor with bedrooms and bathroom



View of the estate



Longitudinal section through the stairs and the living and bedroom area with superstructure for the water tank



Typical view of a double unit

View of the estate

