





KAHN RESIDENCE

WASHINGTON, LOUISIANA

The client for this project wanted a 3000SF residence that could become a private retreat into the wetlands of South Louisiana. The building was to be easily secured (in case of hurricanes) and completely off-grid. Programmatically, the client asked that the design feature many outdoor areas to access the swamp and provide ample storage for his impressive collection of hunting paraphernalia.

JUNE 2006- SEPTEMBER 2006





In order to pay homage to the distinct sensibility of the site's agrarian community, the economy of the project, and the leanings of the client, sgsa+d based their design response upon the simple, straightforward stance assumed by the metal barns, silos and grain elevators surrounding the site. Perhaps the most obvious move to this end was to use a rigid frame steel structure for the main volume of the home and then work to minimize digressions from this basic aesthetic. The only major deviation from this bare-bones approach occurs at the entry, where a large incision into the main structure creates a breezeway through the home as well as a point of emphasis. Smaller incisions are carved into other areas of the home as demanded by the requirements of the interior program. These moves lend a degree of specificity to an otherwise anonymous facility, while remaining faithful to the aesthetic offered by the surrounding landscape. During periods of non-occupation, these openings into the interior logic of the work can be completely covered by integral wall panels that slide or pivot closed, allowing the work to provide a 160mph rated cocoon in case of hurricanes. Additional site treatments such as the narrow walkway canopy (which also serves as a rainwater collection system), seat walls, and decking further articulate the large volume of the metal building, allowing the work to greatly limit its reliance upon external energy sources, while maintaining a low profile that was appropriate to the scale and character of the site.

The sensibility and efficiency of the surrounding landscape is carried to the interior volume of the work as well, where the vast majority of the programmed activities of the home are grouped within a series of three pods that march down the length of the building. These pods, which are articulated as large pieces of furniture, provide areas for the more complex activities of the house, resulting in greater overall efficiency and economy. This also frees the other areas of the home to become a celebration of the volume offered by the metal building, ensures ample cross-ventilation, and provides unbroken views into both sides of the site. The alignment of these pods along a single axis toward the front of the home creates a single corridor, allowing the home to enjoy the efficient circulation employed by the region's many shotgun homes. In addition, this arrangement, when combined with the structural rigidity of these elements, allows the pods to become the primary structure for the second floor mezzanine, which was also articulated as a piece of fine furniture. The warm material palette offered by both pod types carves intimate areas into the home, while lending greater warmth to the overall volume. The interplay between insertion and volume effectively organizes the entire work, creating zones of compression and expansion, adding spatial hierarchy and offering a clear sequence of experiences in a manner that celebrates the sensibility of the site.



