The five foot spacing of the grid is present throughout the house. How one inhabits the house depends on how one interacts with the grid. It is expressed as isolation and expansion joints in the concrete and terrazzo flooring, and defines the edges of wood flooring in the dining room and tile in the kitchen and bathrooms. The floor lines inform the placement of furniture, a personal decision which may vary with each house. Similarly, the grid becomes lines in the concrete party walls, which also suggests zones for art and decorations. The steel grid of columns and beams running the length of the house holds built-in maple counters, closets, and dressers for personal belongings.
Transition from floor to floor is different in the two housing types. The row house has stacked stairs with glass treads on steel rails spanning between the sloped concrete party wall and the vertical steel structural grid. This arrangement accentuates the height of the house by placing light and translucent materials in a three-story space roofed in glass. One is instantly aware of being in between floor slabs, and, more dramatically, between ground and sky. The alley house stairs are concrete steps growing, rising, and turning to separate the two component additions. The stairs provide the necessary distance between the two most private functions of the dwelling: the twin bedrooms. An aluminum and glass roof above the stair enhances the finality of ascending. Under feet is concrete, above is sky and glass, and to the left and right are bedrooms.
Row houses with the additions adapt to the increase in size not merely by housing more functions, but by becoming more flexible. The first level gains a light filled sun room. The addition at this level is not clad in corrugated steel and perforated shutters. The sun room flows into the patio and then into the courtyard. It is a semi-private room for plants, casual dining, reading, or a studio. At the second level, this space and adjacent room are a flexible suite. The room within the main house becomes a “swing” room which is opened or closed to the hallway by sliding aluminum and translucent glass panels. The addition can be closed off with bi-fold doors of similar construction. Various combinations of opened and closed doors and panels result in spaces for reading, media, extra bedrooms, or a guest suite. At the third level, the addition becomes a roof terrace and the swing room has the similar panels as below and its own door to the terrace.