subterranean and first levels
second level
south elevation
Conclusion

The degree to which this matter interests society in coming years will likely determine whether our profession continues to address environmental matters through mere surface manipulation, or, instead, revise its deepest principles according to ecological processes. In preparation for this, before any subscription to technical strategy must come the full exploration of one's conception of nature. Before the "how" comes one's resolution of essence: the "why" that the work of architecture asks as a concise question before shaping into a cogent position. This is how we will eventually learn to separate out our attraction to nature's forms from our non-aesthetic requirements for a healthy environment.

Through the course of this exercise, my friends and their view of humans as external to the machinery of wilderness held an idea of nature that was different from my own. In the end there was no clear victor, only different expressions of essence. My own view, though it remained grounded in a belief that the essential signature of humaness involves a strong expression of reason, was nonetheless tempered by their perspective that we are best represented by our symbolic and mimetic capacities. In the final analysis, it is likely a synthesis of the two that constitutes the true image of our being, whether we view ourselves as one species among many, or as a separate and transcendent category.

But in that architecture remains a discipline—at least within Western societies—that is dedicated to critical ends, it is clear to me now that it is strongest when posited from a singular position. Here at full circle, my sense is that our experiment succeeded as far as it sought to humanize its technological foundations and foster dialogue between these and the owner's sense of place for their site and its surrounding community. In addition was also the valuable experience the thesis provided as to just how far one must go to reasonably plumb an architectural question.

Given that, I now see that the building's design ultimately suffers in so far as it is a blending of its contrasting ideas. From the outset, the house was conceived by both parties as an expansion from earlier readings of nature in the region to the broader views of an imminent ecological ethos. Though instead of "expansion," perhaps a better conceptualization would have been transition, since the latter does not necessarily require the presence of both points of view within the final result, but rather a self-contained stage of evolution. In the final analysis, our search for a satisfactory balance between ethic and aesthetic, pragmatic solution and inspiring ideal, would have perhaps been better served from a singular perspective. It is the development of such a perspective that is the range and responsibility of the architect.
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vita

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