



eames house

charles and ray eames, los angeles, california, 1949



katelyn correia and angela ngo
arch 245-01
fall 2008

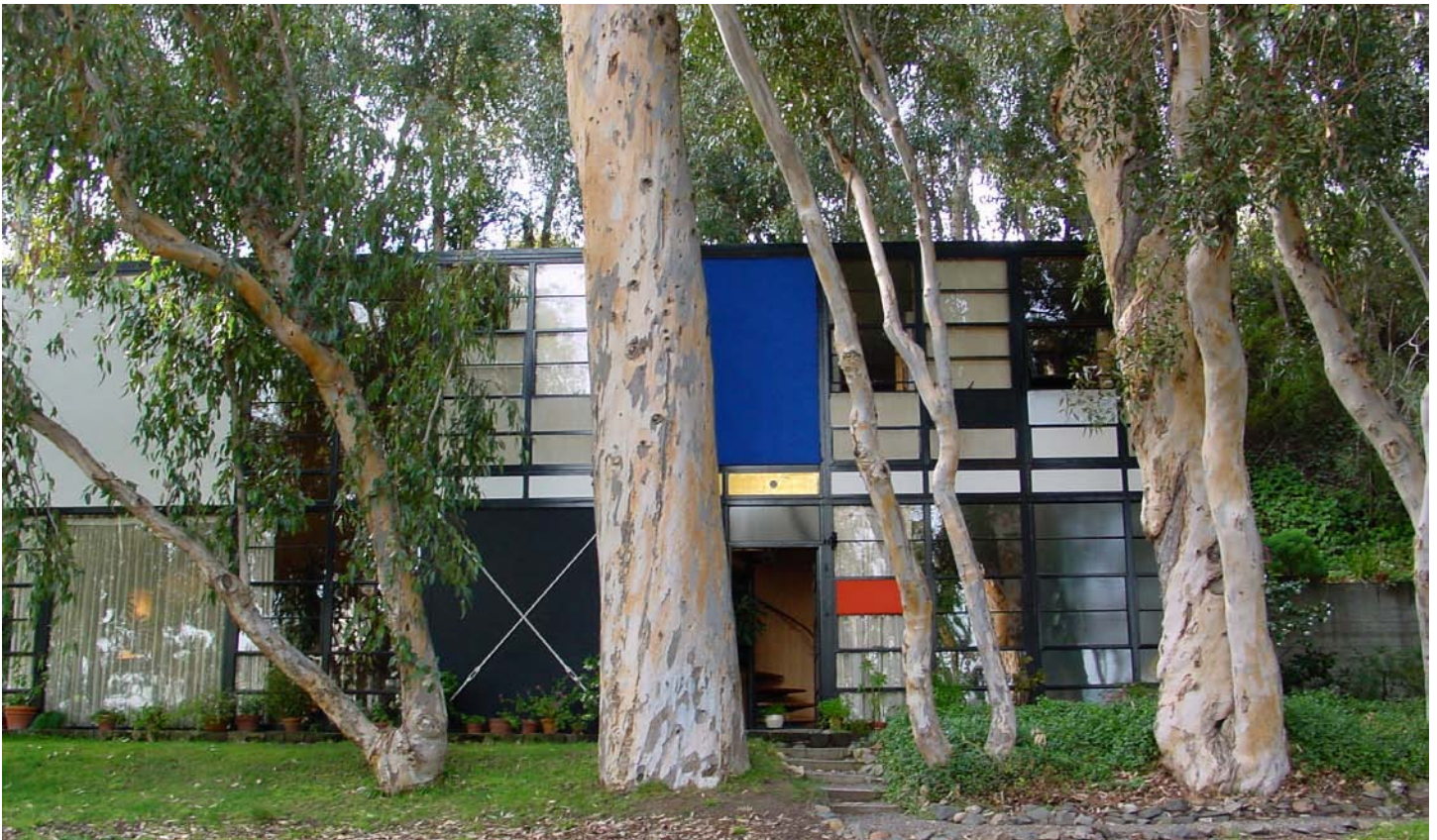
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introduction to the eames house

The Case Study Houses were experiments in American residential architecture sponsored by John Entenza's *Arts & Architecture* magazine. Husband and wife Charles and Ray Eames, along with many other architects, were commissioned to build inexpensive and efficient homes in California for the United States residential housing boom caused by the end of World War II. The Eames House (Case Study House #8), constructed in 1949, was designed for a three-acre lot in the Pacific Palisades of Los Angeles, California. The house, which served as both their home and studio, is made with a prefabricated steel frame, accented with an array of windows and brightly colored panels. There is also a long concrete retaining wall that is set up against a 150-foot high cliff that overlooks the Pacific Ocean. The landscape of the site was so beautiful that the Eameses changed their original design of the Case Study House #8 so that there could be a stronger connection between the interior and the exterior eucalyptus trees. Their lifestyle between home and work connected well, leaving no hierarchy to be conversed amid the two buildings. The transition from the home to the studio through the landscape gives a subtle exchange through the passage from building to building.

1

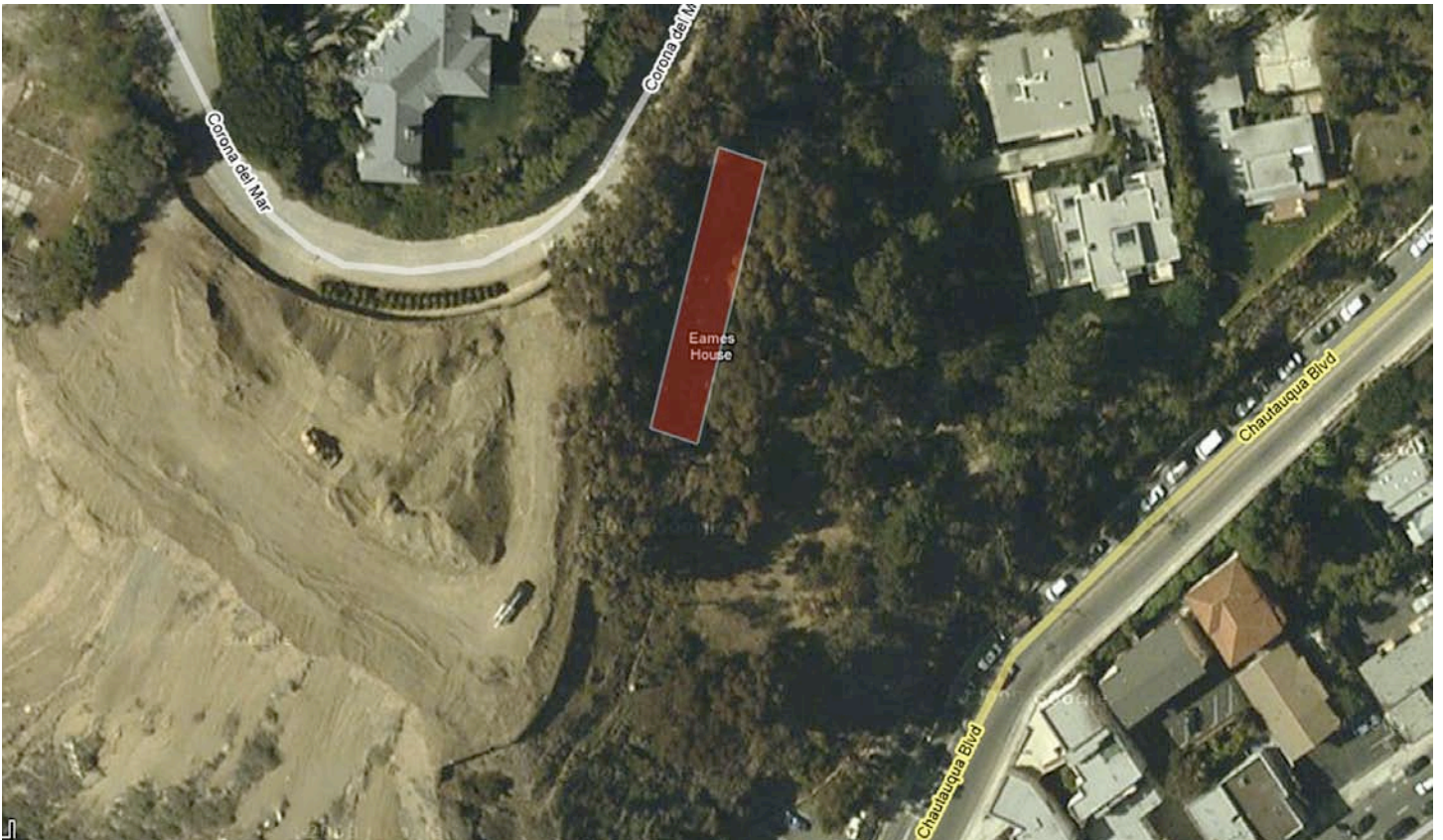


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site plans



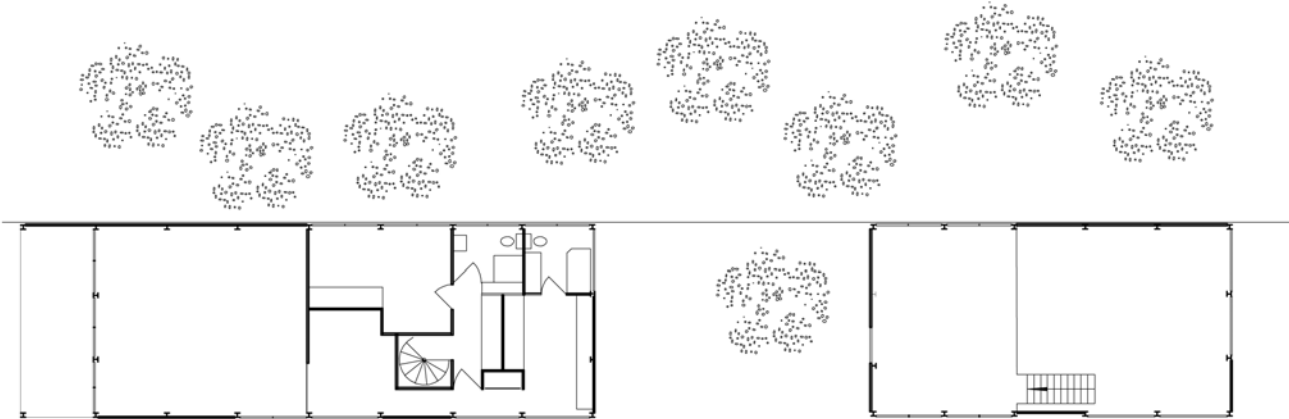
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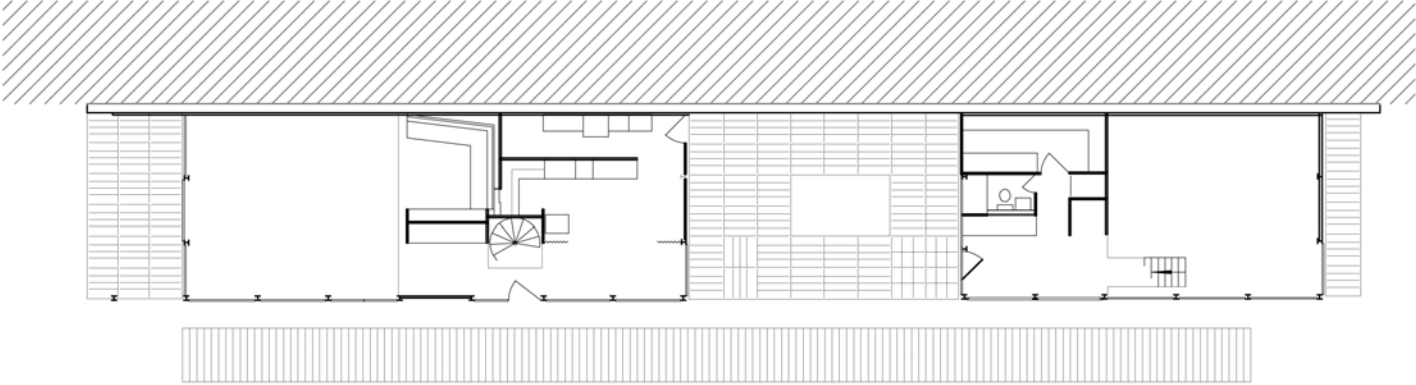
plans

first floor



plans

ground floor



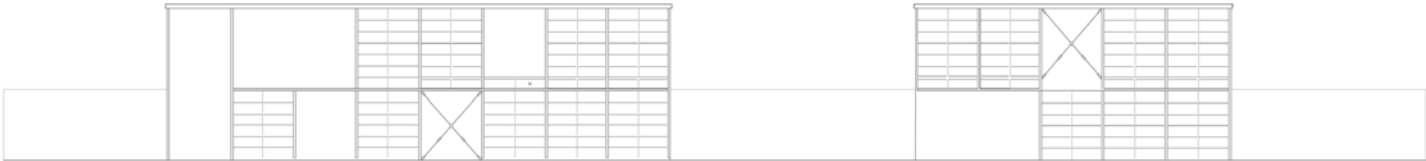
elevations

west



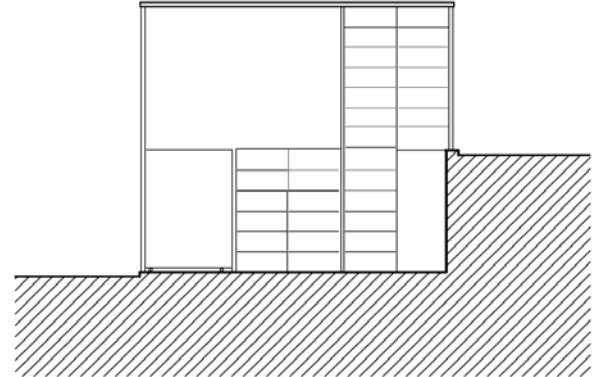
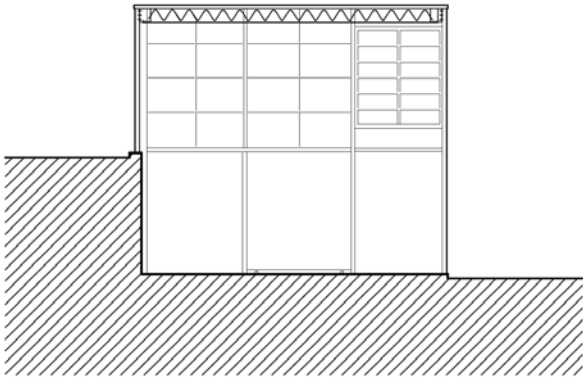
elevations

east



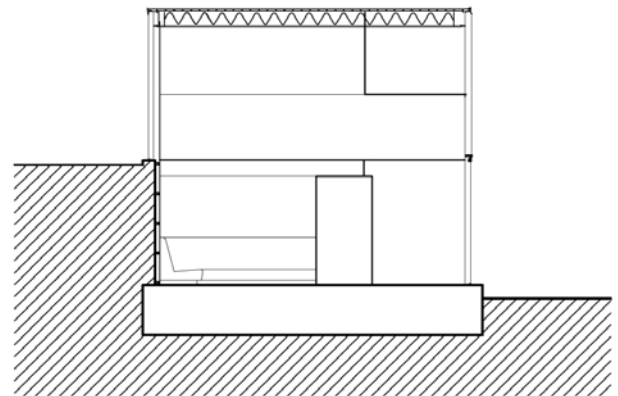
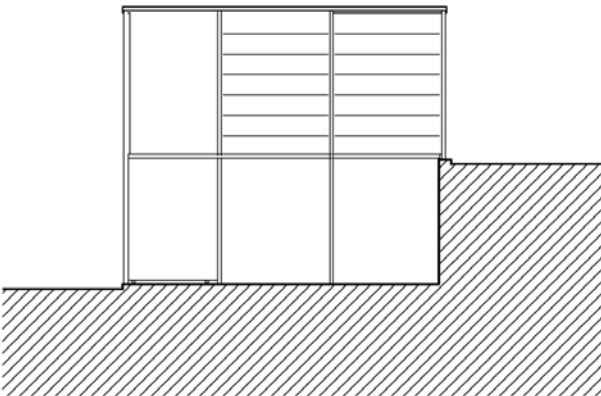
elevations

house: north and south

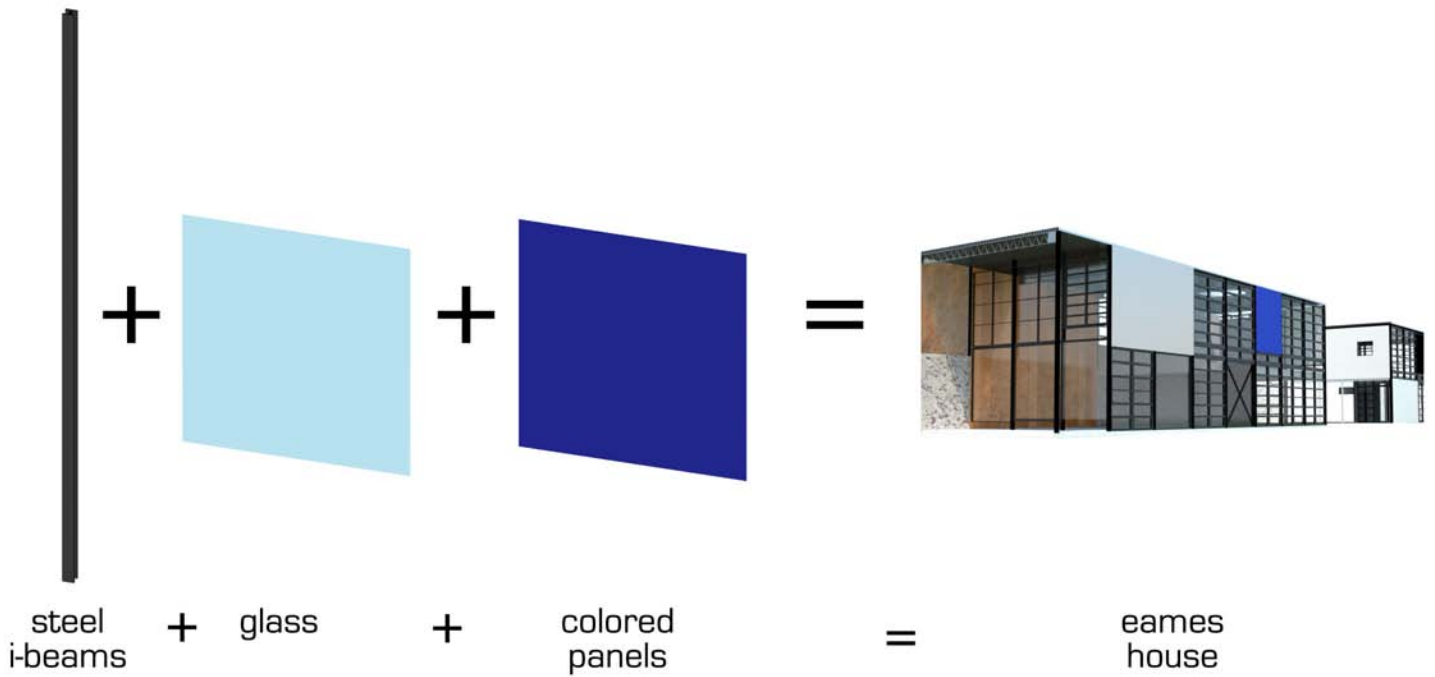


elevation

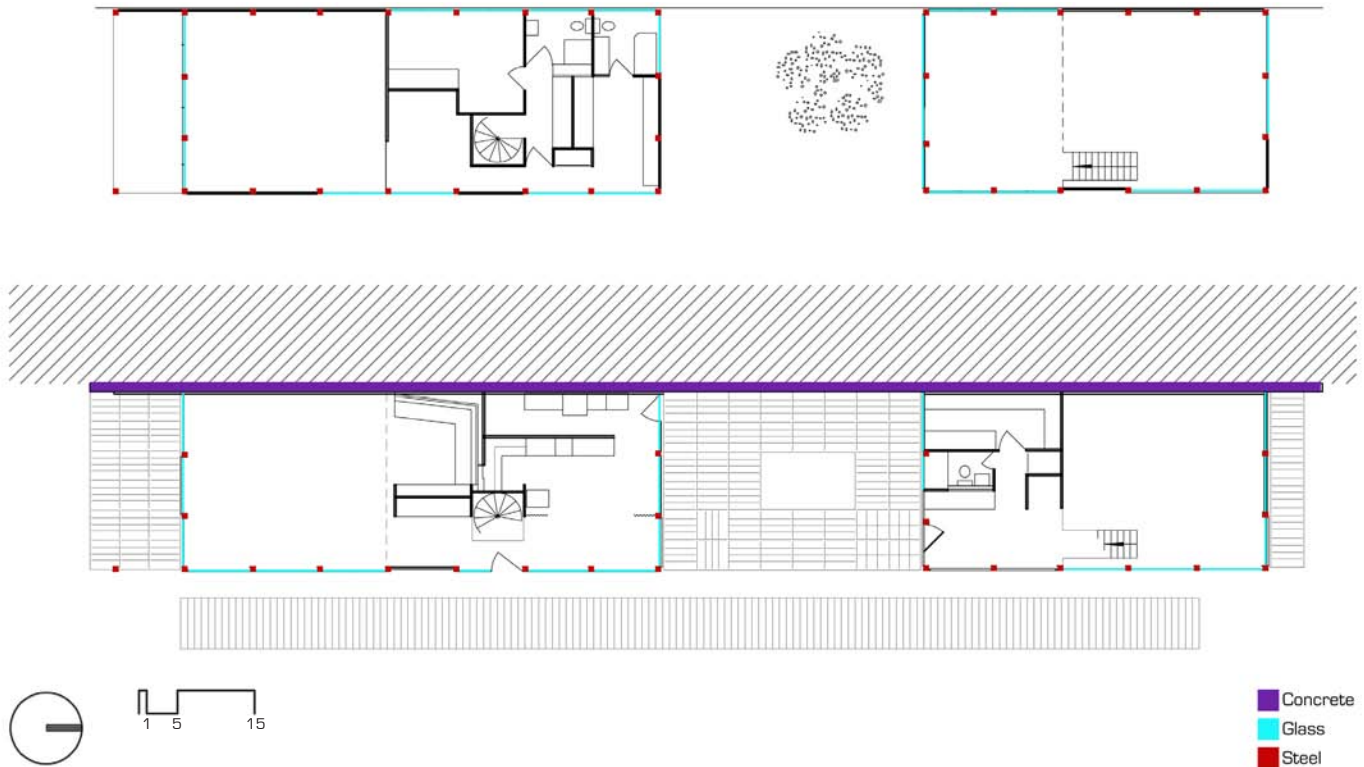
studio: north



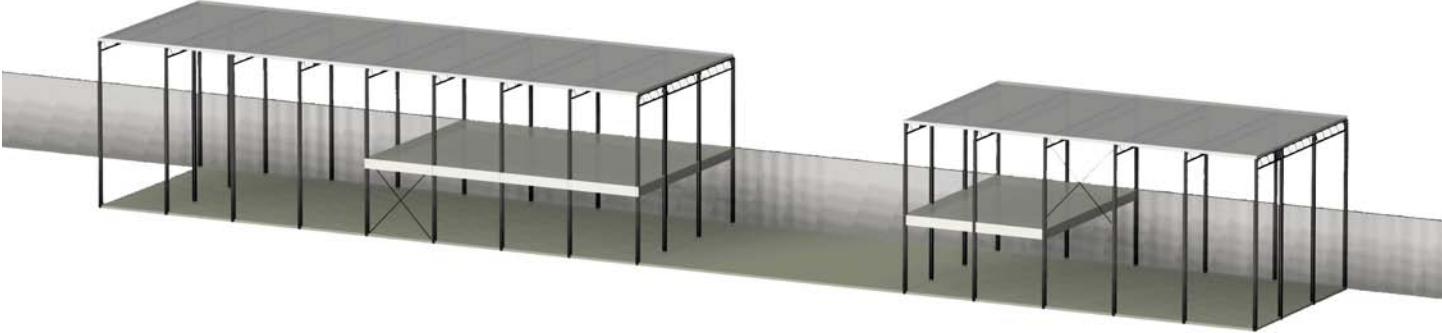
kit of parts



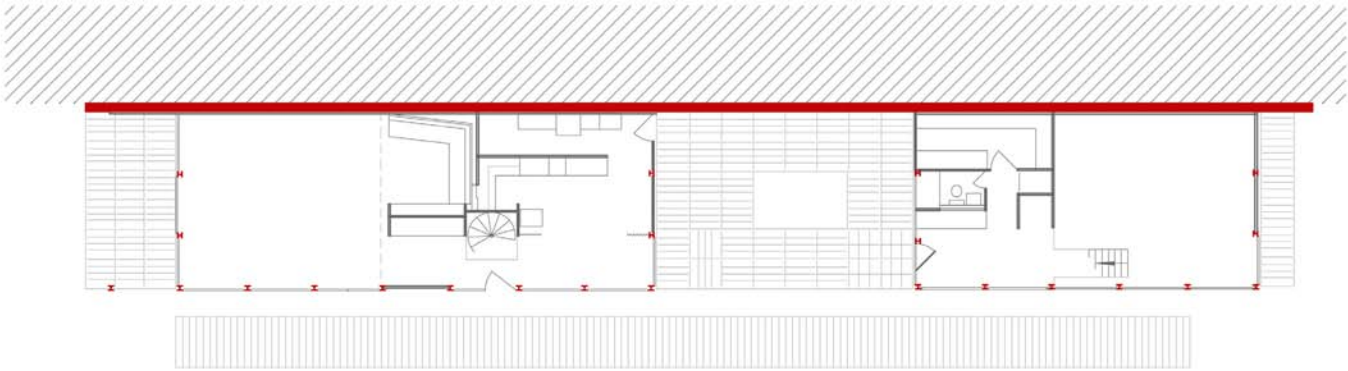
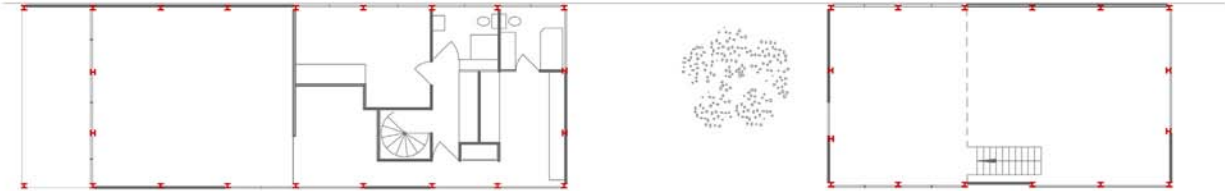
materials



structure



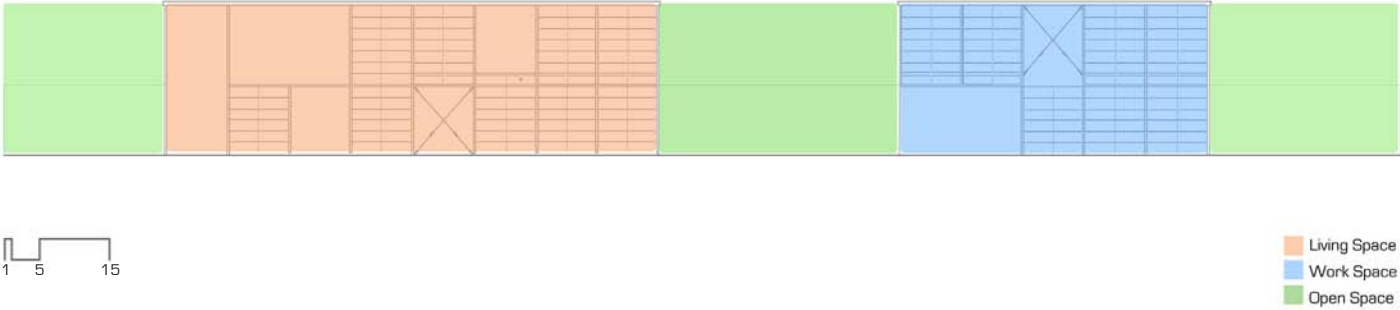
structure



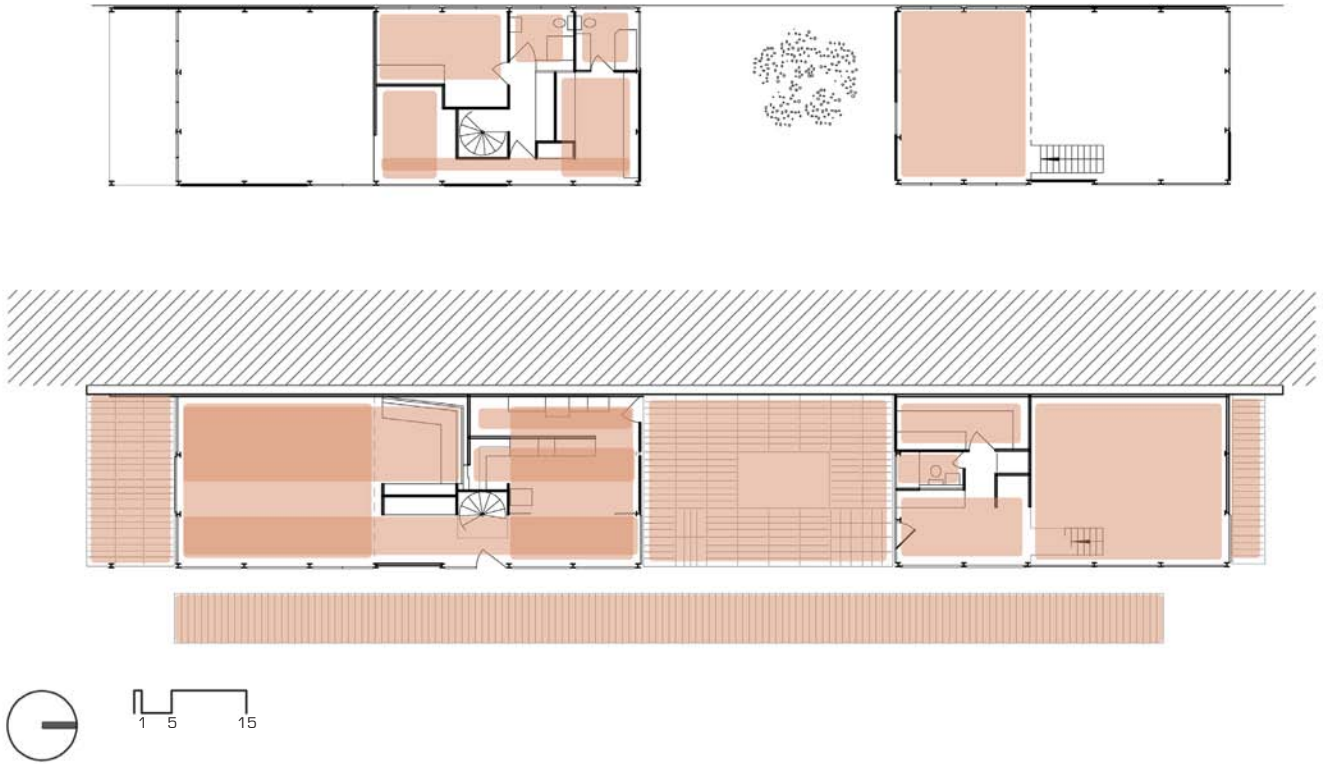
structural grid



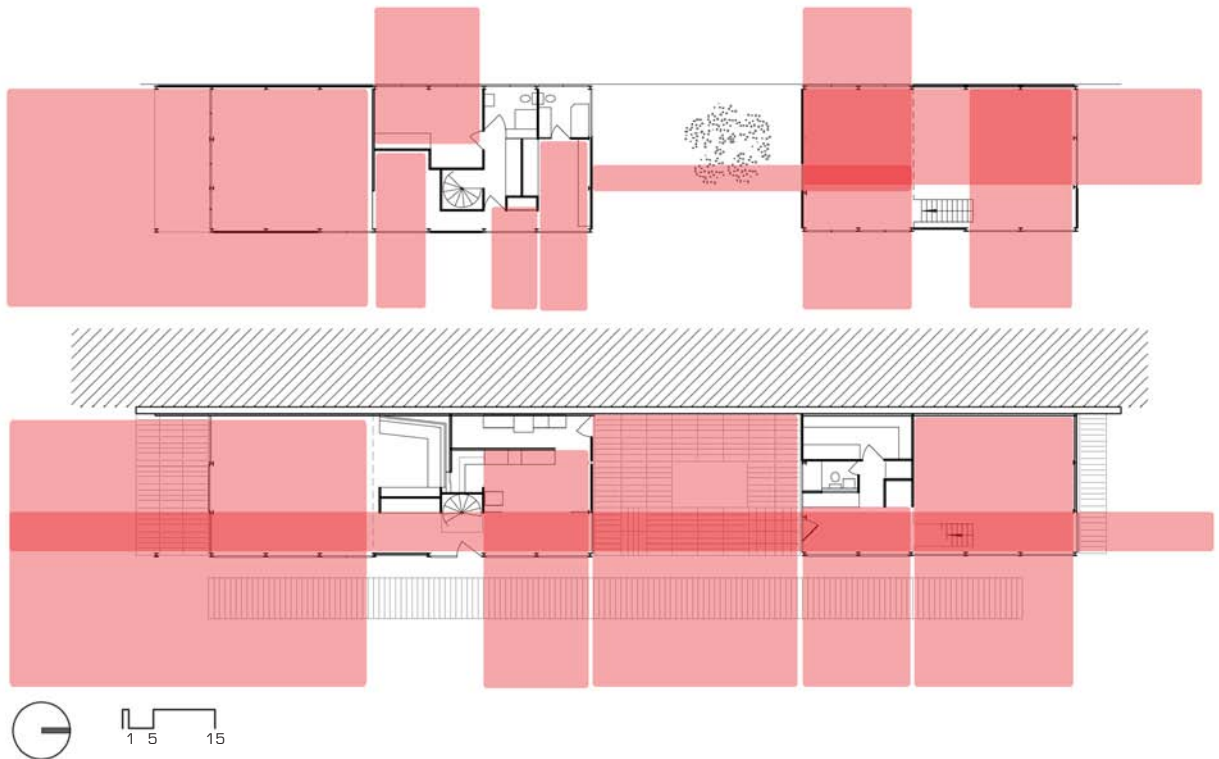
program



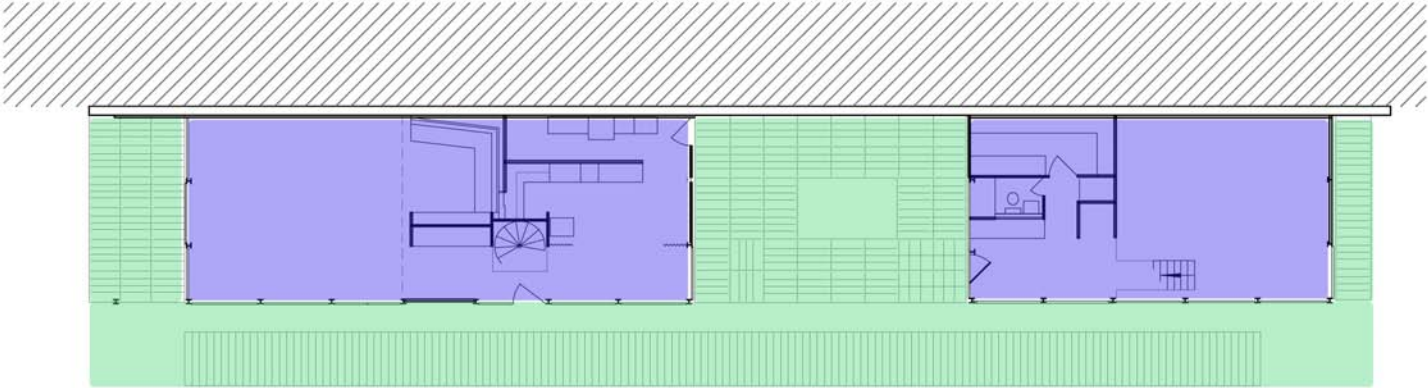
actual spaces



suggested spaces

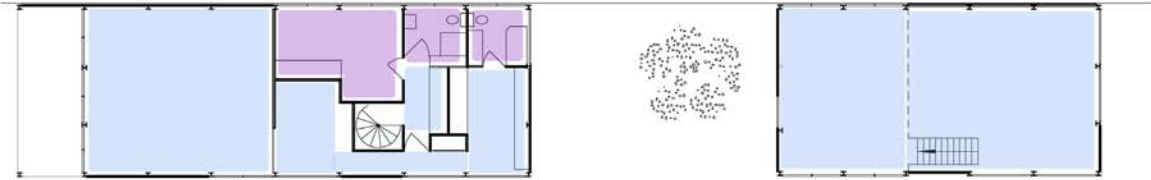


indoor/outdoor



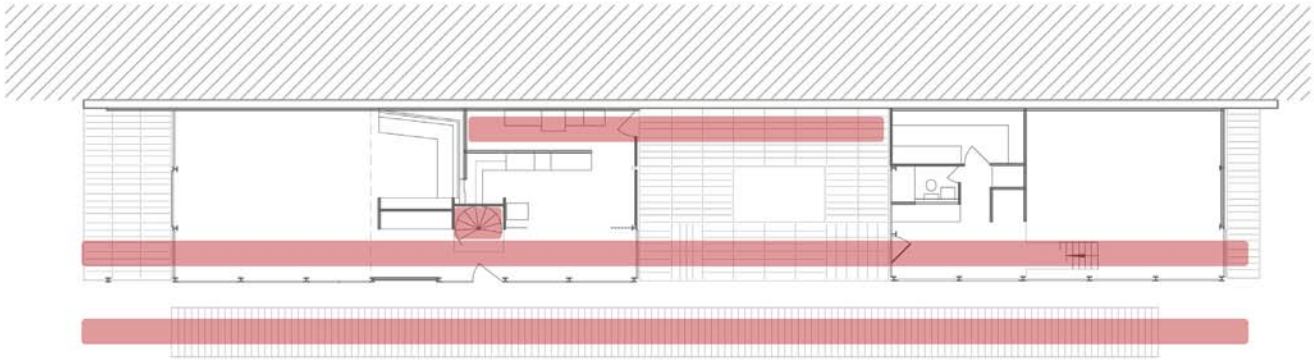
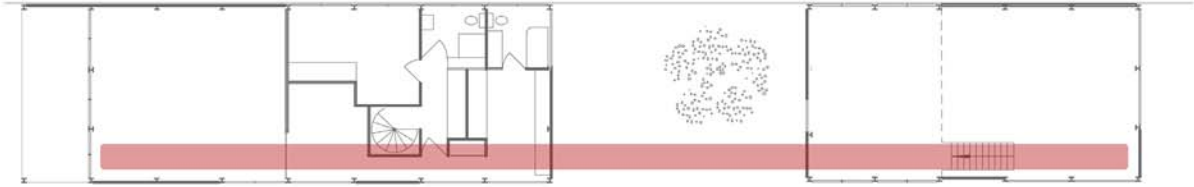
Indoor
Outdoor

public/private

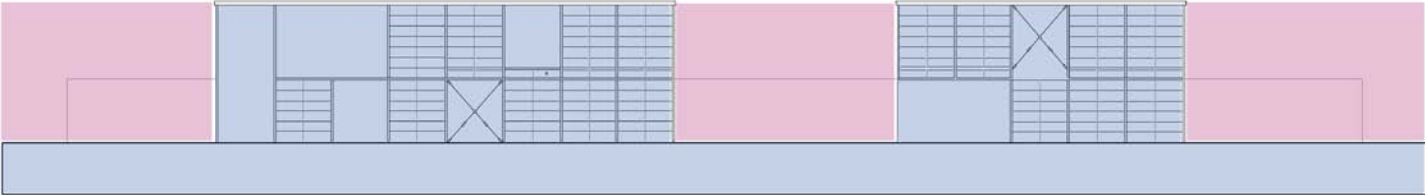


Public
Private

circulation

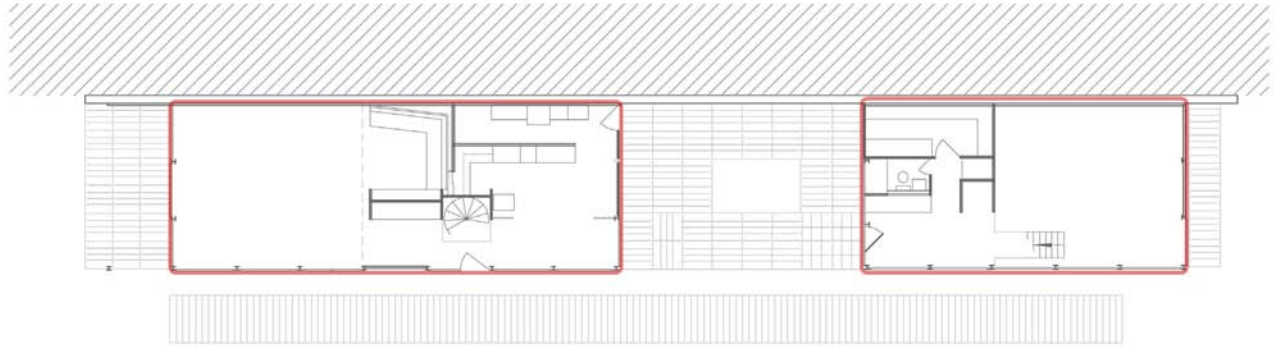
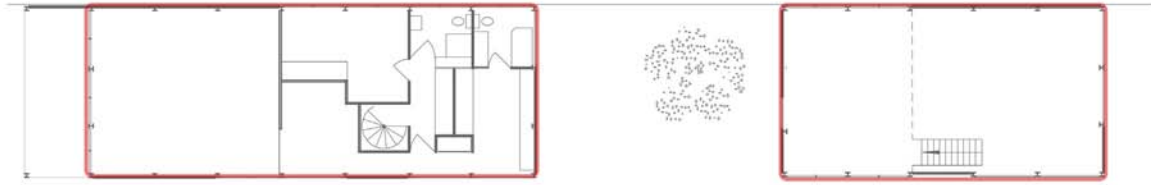


mass and void



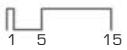
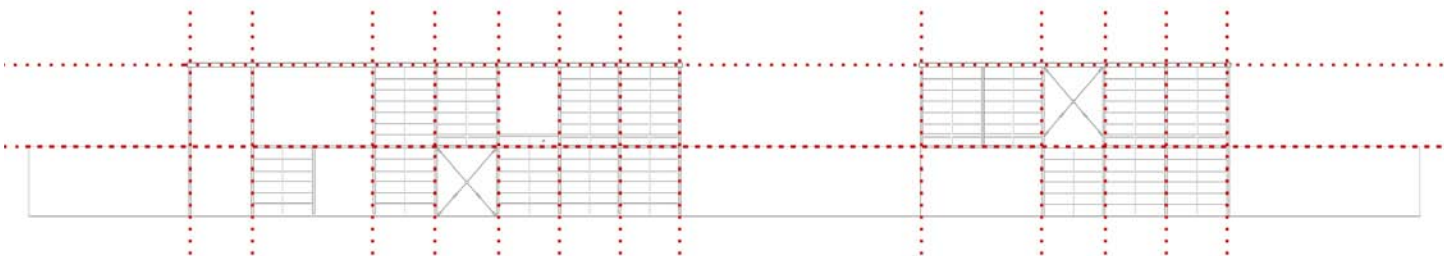
■ mass
■ void

hierarchy



Because the Eameses wanted to integrate their personal and business life, the house and studio were treated with equal importance, giving neither hierarchy.

gravity loads



photographs

north elevation



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photographs

interior of studio



front entrance of house



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photographs

courtyard connecting house and studio



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photographs

interior of house



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photographs

view from backyard



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thesis

The Case Study Houses were intended to put industrialization into effect and promote the ideas of modernism. Their goal was to create a new way of building and designing houses using a kit-of-parts construction that consisted of building components that were pre-designed, pre-engineered and pre-fabricated. Therefore, the house was made cheap and assembled quickly in order to be able to house the WWII soldiers. Even though the house was built for the Eameses, this was a new technique for the booming housing market. The nature of the site flows through the transparency of the house, giving a feeling that this home ceases to exist. They also have a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean connecting the house's transparent skin with the natural landscape. Their busy lifestyle made it essential for the plan of the building to equally integrate life and work. Having a studio detached from the main household was a way to separate their personal life from their professional life yet keeping them both equally important by connecting through the outside.

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annotated bibliography

Albrecht, Donald, ed. *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997.

The Work of Charles and Ray Eames is composed of multiple essays focused on different topics relating to the life of the Eameses. The book is about 200 pages, with pages 127 – 149 focusing on the Eames House. Beatriz Colomina, the author of the essay “Reflections on the Eames House,” is a professor of architecture at Princeton University. She has edited and written a few books related to modern architecture. In her essay, the text is simple to read and is full of detail. Colomina provides context for the Eames house, talking about the Case Study program and how it related to the post-war era. There are many images from the 1950s ranging from sketches and models to magazine covers and layouts. The book is useful for anybody interested in the house; it is informational and easy to read. The book itself is a great compilation of the works of both Charles and Ray.

Kirkham, Pat. *Charles and Ray Eames Designers of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995.

Kirkham, a professor of Design History and Cultural Studies of Design at De Montfort University in Leicester, England, has written a very extensive book filled with 486 pages of information on Charles and Ray Eames. The first eight pages of the book offer the reader a dedication page, table of contents, acknowledgements,

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and introduction pages. With this, there is a section on the Eames house (pages 105-120). Although the focus on the Eames house in the book is small, they elaborate on the house and give many pictures, all in black in white, to provide the reader with different perspectives. In conclusion, this book can be read by anyone who may be interested in architecture and the case studies and is very informational.

Smith, Elizabeth A. T. *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.

Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses is a compilation of 36 Case Study projects that were exhibited at The Museum of Contemporary Art. Elizabeth A. T. Smith, the author of the book, was the curator of the exhibition. The book provides an abundant amount of information, starting from the initial history of the house to the function and spaces of the house. There are also quotations from *Arts & Architecture* magazine from the 1950s. The book contains an equal amount of images and text. It is very informative and goes into detail about the design, structure, and space of the House.

Smith, Elizabeth A. T. *Case Study Houses: 1945 – 1966 The California Impetus*. Germany: Taschen, 2006.

Elizabeth A. T. Smith, James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator and Deputy Director of Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, gathers information on a number of Case Study houses. The book gives a brief glimpse at 35 different case studies during the mid-twentieth century. It consists of 96 pages, but the book is mainly images of the houses. For each house, there is a short one-paragraph summary of why the house

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was significant. There is very little information, but the book is good for a quick reference.

Steele, James. *Eames House Charles and Ray Eames*. New York, New York: Phaidon Press, Inc, 1994.

Steele, currently associate professor in design and history at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles, has written a lucid sixty-page volume on the Eames' couple and their home. This book offers many photographs, both black and white and in color, as well as text and a series of drawings. While this book is written for architects, it can be read beneficially by anyone interested in architecture and the case study houses. There is no index however; the last page of the book has information filled with notes, acknowledgements and a bibliography. All in all, this book is a more than worthwhile read because of the information given.

Steele, James. *Twentieth-Century Houses*. Hong Kong: Phaidon, 1999.

James Steele has practiced and taught architecture in Philadelphia as well as in Saudi Arabia. In addition, he has written for *Architectural Review*, *Architectural Design*, and wrote his own book, *Los Angeles Architecture*. *Twentieth-Century Houses* is a compilation of three essays about three different houses. Of the 182 pages, a third of the book is dedicated to discussing Charles and Ray Eames and the Eames House. The essay by Steele goes into great detail beginning with Charles' childhood. Steele goes on to give a brief summary

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of Charles' schooling and how he ended up designing Case Study #8, partly inspired by Mies Van der Rohe. Steele further discusses how the Case Study House program began with *Arts & Architecture* magazine and what the program was about. Steele writes about Eames' progress throughout the program and what came about after the house such as the short films "House After Five Years of Living" and "Powers of Ten." The text is matched by an equal amount of images, both in black and white from the '50s and in color. Images include Charles and Ray together, sketches of initial ideas for the house, exterior and interior photographs of the house, and detailed plans, sections, and elevations.